

# EMBRACE THE LIVE-NESS!



**RIGHT**

**WRONG**

HzS  G   d

“Fighting to stay free”

#179...December 2013

## And now, ladies and gentlemen...

...in 1979 WCGY, an FM out of Lawrence, Mass., switched from running TM's top 40 Stereo Rock format after five years, to basically the same format with live DJs. To announce the change, they used the phrase "It's good to be alive."

If only more radio stations today took that as the gospel.

Is it me, or does certain live music programming 'off-radio' sound more live than that on terrestrial radio does when it IS live? Let me put that another way: how "live" is breaking in to announce something four or five times an hour – with the remaining song-to-song transitions simply sweeper- or jingle-to-music – when most of what's announced amounts to promos for what's coming up or station events, what listeners can win, or what's on the station's website or social media outlets?

Granted, there is 'live-ness' to all the above, but isn't there a greater opportunity to sound 'in the moment' by talking about what's going on today in listeners' lives, or, heaven forbid, the songs themselves? Or, in the case of the online examples, by providing programming that urges or reinforces live participation?

To see – or, rather, hear – the idea of radio embracing the live-ness in action, one need go no further than the home to the show the site for which is home to *Hz So Good*. It would be enough that Bob Radil's *Friday Night 60s-70s Show* on Rewound Radio has a live participation element every week, through requests and just comments via the [Oldies Message Board](#), [Bob's Facebook page](#) and the old-fashioned phone. But that element takes on an additional element, if you will, in a few weeks when the show goes nuclear to count down the annual Top 77 of All Time, with more hours and far greater listener involvement (you can vote for the Top 77 - the 16<sup>th</sup> annual, by the way – here <http://www.musicradio77.com/voting2013.html>).

It makes you wonder whether oldies-based programming on the Internet embraces that live-ness more enthusiastically than other programming, or radio in general. You'll hear that same enthusiasm during Don Tandler's Saturday "Time Machine" countdowns on Pop Gold Radio, which elicit listener posts during their airtime even if, ironically, there's no need for the show to run live. Yet Don's delivery and jingle-perfect re-creation of earlier eras give it a live feel lacking from so much truly live music-based radio.

Another irony: both shows feature a lot of talk about songs most listeners already know, while the terrestrial programming that could use more live-ness focuses on new music which a good percentage of passive listeners don't already know. Songs that really are 'in the moment.'

As radio's sound moves closer to Internet-originated delivery in terms of less human interaction and interruption, maybe it's worth taking a moment to consider the importance and value of not just live-ness, but a live-ness that makes itself obvious. If more online-only offerings start doing this better, too, what does radio have left?

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