

RADIO'S TOP 20 LEADERS

We first launched our Top 20 Leaders List back in 2017, asking readers to choose and vote on the people they believed were the best people in the radio industry to work for.

And today, more than ever, radio needs strong leadership.

We set only a few rules before the nomination process began. They were: the

person must be active in radio today and have at least five years of experience in the industry. And executives who were on our most recent 40 Most Powerful People in Radio list could not be nominated for this list.

We did not ask any questions about the coronavirus crisis for this feature; we address that topic extensively

in our cover story special report and elsewhere. We did ask radio's top 20 leaders how they became great leaders, how radio can get revenue growing again (post COVID-19), and what they are doing to mentor the next generation of leaders.

Here are Radio's Top 20 Leaders for 2020.

APRIL 27, 2020 RADIOINK.COM 33



1 **SUSAN LARKIN**
COO
Entercom

2 **GARY SHORMAN**
Chairman, CDO
Eagle
Communications



L-r: Eagle Chief People Officer Shannon Wiederholt, Eagle Manhattan-Junction City, KS DJ Dan Michaels, Eagle Radio St. Joseph, MO Creative Miles Ramsay, Gary Shorman, Exec. Asst. Andrea Clinkscales, and Cole Grieves, Talent Development

Gary Shorman tells *Radio Ink* that our question about what has made him a great leader is one of the easiest to answer: create the vision, and find great people to work with you to make it happen. “The best business builders create a fun work environment where individuals can hone their skills, grow professionally, and be successful financially, all at the same time,” he says. “Our employee-owned philosophy has allowed us to create an entrepreneurial environment, letting everyone share in the success and growth of the company. In a challenging time like it is right now, our Eagle employees also own shares in the company, and that is a big incentive.”

On getting radio revenue growing again, Shorman says it will not be easy: “We will have to focus on the real needs of the customer, not just selling them radio. Smaller-market stations need to be zoom-focused on local business. A majority of

our revenue comes from small and medium-sized businesses who need our help more today than ever before. This means helping them with all types of marketing, including digital, video, and creative content.”

Shorman also chimes in on the important topic of developing radio’s future leaders. “Taking time to coach and mentor is very important,” he says. “Two years ago, we started our Leadership 2020 program that allowed us to spend time training and educating our future leaders about our company, our businesses, and our expectations. We spent multiple days in different locations and combined training with leadership coaching. It was a very rewarding experience for everyone. We continued the program for a second year and plan to resume it again in 2021.”



3 **MARY QUASS**
CEO
NRG Media



4 CHRIS FORGY

Sr. Vice President /
Operations
Saga Communications

“My leadership roadmap has always consisted of an acronym I call G.R.E.A.T. In my world, G.R.E.A.T. means Gratitude, Respect, Enthusiasm, Accountability, and Teamwork,” says Chris Forgy. “I would also say I am sincere in my communication with others. People you interact with don’t always remember what you said, or even what you did, but they do remember how you made them feel.”

“I approach my roles from a place of servanthood first! To serve the people I am responsible for, and to serve Saga, which has given me the freedom and responsibility to do so. I am extremely curious – seeking new solutions to old problems. By doing so, it helps keep the organization and our employees competitive and innovative.”

When it comes to growing revenue, Forgy says it has to start with pricing, and it has to include digital. “First of all, from a pricing perspective, we can stop the race to the bottom! Radio is not a commodity like rice or beans. However, many of our larger competitors are training the buyers to become commodity buyers, as if we’re selling rock candy: ‘Rock candy is 49 cents per pound. How many pounds would you like to buy?’ (Not even ‘What flavor would you like?’) Migrating local accounts to national and then attempting to ‘rake in’ huge shares of business at the expense of rate integrity and good business is also an issue we deal with.”

“Radio is not declining in demand, but radio pricing is spiraling out of control. The selling of more commercials for less money must stop because the reaction to this action is advertising budgets shrink and monies saved are divested to other media.”

Forgy concludes, “Finally, digital and audience extension is a valuable tool to work in concert with radio as a 360-degree wraparound to expand the customer’s reach, frequency, share of voice, and ROI, but not instead of local radio like many companies are doing. In order for radio to increase revenue once again, we must become better storytellers. We need to search for and discover new, emerging categories of business and go back to generating great ideas that make customers shop and cash registers ring.”



5 SCOTT MAHALICK

Interim Market Manager
Hubbard Radio
Seattle

Scott Mahalick tells *Radio Ink* great leadership starts with trust, communication, and bonding. “I live my life by the four F’s: Fair, Firm, Factual, and Friendly. My uncle Richard Smego gave this great advice many years ago.”

To grow revenue again, radio needs to pay better attention to advertisers’ needs and help them craft messages that can play on multiple platforms, according to Mahalick. “We no longer have the luxury of just audio spots airing terrestrially. Our brands need to be connected and plugged in where our advertisers’ audiences are.”

“Radio is the original king of the audio space, and we need to be proud of this and own it! It never hurts to remind everyone how much consumption of legacy radio brands is occurring, not only over the air but online. Many brands are now heard more through smart speakers, apps, and other online stem platforms than our over-the-air signals.”



6 BRIAN MAYFIELD

Executive Vice President
Ramsey Media

Brian Mayfield tells *Radio Ink* he doesn't take the responsibility of leadership lightly. "Every day, I look for opportunities to learn so I can continue growing into a better leader. Throughout my career, I've been blessed to have strong mentors, role models, and experiences that have had a direct effect on who I am and how I lead today. To be a great leader, I'm then compelled to give that same level of mentorship and influence to the teams and people I lead.

"I believe in leading by example. I see myself as a field general – in the trenches with my team, driving the initiative forward together. True resolve is infectious, so I lead with 100% confidence because I know my team will respond accordingly."

When we ask Mayfield what it's going to take to get radio revenue increasing again, he points out that increased revenue is a net effect of increased value. "Radio's strongest asset today is the power of the local market, and it must learn to leverage that position in order to increase revenue. I've been in the media industry for over 30 years now, and if it were up to me, I would choose a talented local sales team over a higher-rated station all day long.

"Radio needs to shift its focus from Madison Avenue to Main Street. Imagine if local sales were so strong that it put a strain on overall inventory. If that were the case, who would once again have the upper hand in a CPP or CPM negotiation on the national level? That's how I believe radio can take control and increase revenue."

And how do we groom future leaders? "That's such a tough question – not because I don't know the answer, but because the answer involves my most precious and protected resource: my time. I may be busier today than any time I can remember, but it's imperative that I make time to stop and mentor my direct leadership team as well as leaders throughout my organization.

"The growth our company is experiencing is exciting, but it creates a new level of responsibility that demands we focus on leadership development. That is essential not only so we can adapt to the needs of our growing business, but to protect the culture we've worked so hard to create. Mentorship at Ramsey Solutions is intentional and structured and is provided through individual, small-group, and company-wide interactions. And it is focused on building leaders who can lead a team that will serve our customers with excellence now and into the future."



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7 ALBERT RODRIGUEZ
COO
Spanish Broadcasting System

Albert Rodriguez tells *Radio Ink* he wouldn't be the leader he is today without his ability to set clear, focused goals and empower his team to turn the company vision into reality. "In the audio industry today, especially in the Hispanic market, we're always faced with new challenges and opportunities, and it's our job to set the bar high," he says. "My strong adaptability skills have also helped me become a stronger leader through the years. I learn something new every day from my team; we inspire each other to embrace change and new ideas."

On the subject of increasing radio's revenue, the SBS COO says that will require an unwavering commitment from all groups and agencies. "We have to work collaboratively to reinforce the fact that radio is powerful, consistent, and cultural. Its reach and frequency are invaluable, and no other forms of media can compete with that. The numbers don't lie. Especially when it comes to the Hispanic market – 96% of Hispanics listen to radio, more than any other form of media, because of its immediate cultural connection."

At SBS, according to Rodriguez, the reward for good work is more work. "I'm very passionate about growing talent from within and also opening the door for people who are out-of-the-box thinkers and are excited to make significant contributions for the Hispanic community," he says. "Although we are the largest minority-certified multimedia company, we're also a close-knit family. My door is always open to listen to recommendations and to mentor individuals who have the fire in their belly to continue radio's legacy."



8 BETH NEUHOFF
CEO
Neuhoff Media



9 PAT PAXTON
President of Programming
Entercom

CONGRATULATIONS
 TO OUR
 CHIEF OPERATING
 OFFICER
ALBERT RODRIGUEZ
 FOR BEING RECOGNIZED
 AS ONE OF RADIO'S
TOP 20 LEADERS



NEW YORK	NEW YORK	MIAMI	MIAMI	MIAMI	LOS ANGELES	LOS ANGELES
SAN FRANCISCO	CHICAGO	PUERTO RICO	PUERTO RICO	PUERTO RICO	PUERTO RICO	NETWORK



SPANISH BROADCASTING SYSTEM



10 KEVIN GARRITY

CEO
Gen Media Partners

Leadership begins with a vision, according to Kevin Garrity. “It’s a leader’s ability to effectively and passionately communicate that vision to inspire and motivate the team into realizing that vision,” he says. “For me, I’ve always tried to build teams that reflect my core values so we are all aligned in how we move forward and the manner in which we go about exceeding our goals. I want each team member to know that I care about them and am interested in them both personally and professionally.

“Part of leading is listening and taking into consideration the team’s point of view. I respect my team, and trust and empower them to do their jobs. I have always tried to lead by example – I don’t think there is anyone on the team who wouldn’t say I give 200% every day, and I expect the same from them.”

In order to increase its share of the revenue pie, Garrity says radio has got to do a better job of talking to decisionmakers who can understand the real power of radio and capitalize on the unique relationship radio has with its listeners. “DTC clients are now using radio with great success. Radio’s power to build brands is again front and center. It’s what we’ve been doing for years. We need to capitalize on that.

“At Gen Media Partners we bring our advertisers and their agencies a number of different platforms that can be utilized to target the consumers they most value. With thousands of radio stations, compelling network content, platforms that target both general-market and Hispanic consumers, digital and mall-media and out-of-home opportunities to extend audio’s reach, our clients are seeing how radio can build businesses.”

Garrity tells *Radio Ink* two areas come to mind to develop future radio leaders. “The first is training and providing the needed resources to be fully armed to sell. The second is providing new opportunities to sell and pushing sellers into being uncomfortable, because out of that comes the strength of knowing they can learn and grow and succeed.

“When you find the right people, you’ve got to give them responsibility and the accountability that goes with it. Give them the runway to be successful and to know that it’s OK to fail, but learn from those mistakes. Provide training and resources so the people on your team can grow. Empower employees and encourage them to contribute their ideas and opinions in your decisionmaking process. Seek their input – they need to know their voice is being heard. In the end, you’ve got to be very supportive.”



11 CRAIG SWAGLER

General Manager
CBS News Radio Network



L-r: Fran Caracciolo, John Caracciolo (holding Penny), and Noelle Caracciolo

12 JOHN CARACCIOLO

CEO
JVC Media

CONTINUING MURROW'S TRADITION



CRAIG SWAGLER
ONE OF
RADIO INK'S 2020 TOP 20 LEADERS

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FROM YOUR TEAM AT





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JASON BAILEY

President & Founder
Sun Broadcast Group

Jason Bailey tells *Radio Ink* he believes he's been a strong leader throughout his career because he's always been willing to do every job himself. "In our early days at Sun I did traffic, affiliate sales, ad sales, accounting, and everything in between," he says. "This gives me the knowledge and respect from my team when communicating with them. They know that I have done the job and understand what they need to grow as a team member."

On the topic of mentoring future leaders, Bailey says the best thing you can do is listen to people. "I find that rather than push my point of view or the habits that I've picked up over my 27 years in business, just hearing their ideas and helping motivate them to accomplish those ideas in new and exciting ways gives them the hope and foundation to become the great ones that will lead us into a new generation."



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MIKE TARTER

President/CEO
Forcht Broadcasting

Mike Tarter tells *Radio Ink* he's been able to become a great leader by following the Golden Rule: he treats people the way he would want to be treated. "I was mentored by some of the absolute best in the business – Nolan Kenner, Ed Henson, Ray Holbrook, and Mr. Terry Forcht – on how to be a broadcaster, how to serve your community, and how to work hard and enjoy it," he says. "I have been so very fortunate to have been able to surround myself with talented, smart, innovative people. I try not to micromanage our folks and let them do their jobs – give them the tools and grow their ability to get the job done."

"We have nine markets spread across three states. It is important that I trust the judgment of local management who live in the markets and work there every day. I try to give them the autonomy to make decisions."

To grow revenue, Tarter says radio must embrace digital. "All aspects of it. Not be afraid of it. Learn it. Know it. Make it part of all aspects of what we do. Social media, our websites, put it in sales presentations. It is our business today. For long-term survival, we must accept digital radio as a part of radio, and embrace it."

On the topic of grooming future leaders, Tarter says he always tries to encourage his leadership team and staff and help them grow. "We want their ideas, their participation in training, conferences, in anything that will help build their career and knowledge of the business. I am able to participate in the Kentucky Broadcasters Association/WKU Radio Talent Institute. It is amazing to see the number of smart and talented college students who are very excited about getting into our business. I still believe the future is very bright for our industry."



JIM LEVIN
President

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On being a leader, Jim Levin says, “I have been fortunate over the last 50 years to have had the privilege of being a broadcaster. After a half-century, one would think I might have learned a few things along the way.

“At Pilot Communications, my first broadcasting company, and Community, I have tried to attract the brightest, most talented people I could find to join the team. Most of the best ideas have been generated by them. In the early '90s, my team came up with the idea for virtual radio and we started to voicetrack – not to save money at the time, but to improve our products in our smaller markets. Brainstorming with one’s teams and trusting that they have better skill sets than you at certain times always elicits superior results.”

Bruce Mittman says his experience, starting at entry level and working his way up, lets him empathize with employees. To him, being a strong leader means “the integration of the many experiences, positions, companies, and personal interactions that form your style.”

On the topic of increasing revenue, Levin says, “A bit of swagger goes a long way. Our on-air reach is undiminished. We are free of cost and ubiquitous. We need to reach out to CMOs and CEOs to tell our story – and we have to cease the constant commoditizing and rate-cutting we see. The fact that we are tops in smart speaker listening, easy to listen to with our apps and in-car – we need to remind advertisers we are everywhere.”

Mittman notes, “Radio works, even though it’s always been considered the stepchild of the media landscape. Now it’s even bigger and better. With all the tentacles – HD Radio, web, digital, streaming, NTR, podcasts, promotions, personalities – radio has tons to offer the advertiser as the core of an integrated audio strategy. It’s time to stop apologizing and go sell radio.”



BRUCE MITTMAN
CEO
Community Broadcasters

Leadership Starts in the Community.

Community Broadcasters is honored that RadioINK has chosen to recognize our leaders, **Jim Leven and Bruce Mittman.**

We’d also like to recognize the great work of all our people at the local level. In a time of consolidation, our growing independent radio group of 36 radio stations in New York, South Carolina and Florida communities, is a confirmation of our community-based mission, leveraging our assets to support each community in finding and expressing its own voice.



Community Broadcasters, LLC



16 CHESLEY MADDOX-DORSEY

CEO
AWMC
Superadio
American Urban
Radio Networks

Chesley Maddox-Dorsey tells *Radio Ink* her role models are a big part of why she's been able to excel at leadership. "I had the privilege of being mentored by the industry's most creative broadcasters with the highest integrity," she says. "This taught me how to choose and lead a great management team of smart, innovative, and empathic professionals who individually are the 'best in class' leaders."

Intimacy with and relatability to radio's core audience gives radio a unique connection, according to Maddox-Dorsey, and she says that's the key to increasing radio's revenue. "Radio must market this value-creating proposition to both our listeners and our advertisers in order to drive revenue. In my opinion, radio is still significantly underutilized and undervalued."

AURN has an active intern program, and that's one of the ways Maddox-Dorsey and her team are grooming radio's future leaders. "In addition," she says, "we use our social media platforms to attract new talent and retain cutting-edge talent. This combination serves as a great pipeline for future employees and future leaders. And we actively participate in several organizations that have mentoring programs for both women and minorities."



Steve Smith (l) rocks out onstage with Eddie Money

17 STEVE SMITH

VP/Programming
Cox Media Group

What's made Steve Smith a great leader? Here's a killer checklist he shared: "Being a great listener, being a positive motivator, balancing that with being very direct and transparent. I try to express clear goals and expectations. I'm very, intensely passionate."

He goes on, "We use the words in our company: speed, passion, and courage. I try to emanate those words in my leadership style. I try to focus on people's strengths and help them capitalize on that by focusing on the things they are great at. Making them shine."

How does Smith mentor future leaders? "I look for people who have the innate ability to lead. I try to move those people into challenging tasks and see if they can rise up to them, give them the reins to blow it out of the park. I'm always looking for people that are good multitaskers and broad in their scope. I think in this day and age we're not going to survive unless we can wear many hats."

And in order to grow revenue, Smith says we need to rethink every possible opportunity to connect new revenue to radio. "We need to think entirely differently. More than ever, programmers have a major responsibility to aggressively join hands with sales to write the new bible on revenue."

Congratulations to **CHESLEY MADDOX-DORSEY**

for Being Recognized as One of Radio Ink's TOP 20 LEADERS in Radio

The White House
Report with
April Ryan

The Bobby
Jones Radio
Show

Old School
House Party
w/ Gerald
McBride

Buckwild
Saturday
Night
w/ B-Dub

Nessa On Air

The Chubb
Rock Show
w/ Siman
Baby

Most
Requested
Live with
Romeo

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KRISTIN CANTRELL

**Owner & CEO
Seven Mountains Media &
CapCity Communications**

Kristin Cantrell tells *Radio Ink* she's constantly viewing problems and challenges through a positive prism, and she models the behavior she expects from co-workers and staff. "I stay on the front line and connected to the experience of our employees every day so I can help them identify solutions and achieve success. No ivory towers around here."

To grow revenue, radio needs to embrace being multi-platform, according to Cantrell. "Our most successful markets are embracing a multi-platform approach for our listeners and our clients, with great creative at the core of our strategies. We understand that our job is to hire and retain listeners for our stations and customers for our clients. When radio leverages their local relationships into cross-platform solutions, everybody wins and revenue increases. The investment required to get a team to this level is significant, but I believe it is required as the catalyst for long-term growth and viability."

To help move people up the ladder, Cantrell provides one-on-one coaching to employees who aspire to advance. "We actively participate as instructors in the National Radio Talent Institute and support that organization in its mission to create the pipeline for a future generation of broadcasters. I try to listen very intensely, which helps me identify obstacles for young people so they can overcome their barriers and leap up the ladder."



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SHERMAN K. KIZART

**Managing Director
Kizart Media Partners**

What makes a great leader? Here's what Sherman Kizart believes. "Great leaders are the continuous results of hard work, dedication, commitment to excellence, willingness to put the success of others and the team before your own success, listening well to superiors and subordinates alike, leading by example, and being bold."

On the topic of increasing revenue, Kizart believes radio is experiencing a renaissance. "Yes, podcasting is helping," he says. "Marc Pritchard, chief brand officer of P&G, shared with me privately and very enthusiastically about how impressed he and his brand management team are with the evolution and growth of radio. The radio industry is clearly poised for significant growth. This kind of acknowledgement and acceptance is just the shot in the arm that radio has needed."



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BOB PETERS

**Owner/General Manager
WCZY, WMMI, W222CP
Mt. Pleasant, Michigan**

About becoming the strong leader he is today, Bob Peters says, "I have had the experience of all facets of being a broadcaster. I like to lead by example, with enthusiasm, respect for the staff, respect for the listeners and clients. I never have you do something I won't do or haven't done."

How can radio begin to increase revenue again? Peters says three things need to be done. "I'm a believer in content. And sure, I can say all the usual radio stuff, i.e., music, branding, production. But it's more than that. Are you talking *to* your audience, or are you in a conversation *with* them? It's allowing your staff to use their personalities, it's using social media to hear what listeners say, seeing them on the streets, taking phone calls, and learning from them. Listen carefully, and they tell you exactly what they need/want from a radio station."

"Second, listen to your advertisers. Carefully plan their future, and yours will be better for it."

"Finally, and one of the easiest things to do, is to be seen. Take a leadership role in your community and actually care. Attend business functions, volunteer to serve, go to fundraisers, donate locally whether it be time or financially, help your population be better because you are there. As a broadcaster, you were the original influencer. Let's take that title back."