Mary’s Prayer

Emmis’ Charlie Morgan emceed Keynote Speaker: Radio Today with Cumulus Media CEO Mary Berner, which focused on Berner’s vision for the radio company and the industry as a whole. She addressed the panel’s tag line, that this was her first time speaking publicly since taking her post, joking, “That makes me sound like some Howard Hughes recluse, but in reality I wanted to spend 100% of the time fixing the company.”

Morgan guided the conversation through Berner’s transition from publishing – helming publications TV Guide and Glamour – to becoming the first female board member of Cumulus. “It’s the same church, different pew,” she said of the move to radio. Berner also explained that her unfamiliarity with radio is what has been her greatest asset in terms of programming. “I told [EVP/Programming] Mike McKay, if I ever give you my opinion, don’t listen to me.” This also brought on the company’s shift to put programming decisions back in local markets, giving PDs the responsibility, while holding them accountable. “That’s the only way to attract the best and brightest,” she explained. “If you’re the best, you don’t want people telling you what to do all day.”

Berner also addressed the fact that Cumulus is currently in bankruptcy, stating, “It has no effect on our day-to-day operations.” She expects the company to emerge from bankruptcy in late March or early April.

She also championed the radio industry, saying, “Radio has the ROI and the audience.” However, she recognized that the industry “acts like someone’s ugly stepchild. The radio industry needs to grow a pair. We undersell ourselves in many aspects, especially pricing. This industry has the goods.”

—Erin Duvall

Speaker Of The House

The CRS Research presentation is always a big draw and this year was no different. Edison’s Larry Rosin and Megan Lazovick presented Country Radio Is At Home With Smart Speakers to an overflow crowd. Two things were abundantly clear: Smart speakers are here to stay, and they could be very beneficial
ZAC BROWN’S

SIR ROOSEVELT

SOMETHING ‘BOUT YOU

GOING FOR ADDS

NEXT MONDAY!

‘THIS SONG IS A HIT! I first heard this song at the end of last year, and I could not stop listening. We decided to take a chance and give this some real, daytime airplay—and turns out that our research says that our listeners love it too! The early research on this song says that it is a hit. Zac’s vocals are unmistakable, and sound as clean and pure as he ever has. This is a song worth playing!!’

— Lance Houston, WBWL PD

@SIRROOSEVELT
to Country radio in the coming years. Though just 16% of Americans 18+ own a smart speaker, that’s 39 million people, a number that’s growing rapidly. “These really have the potential to bring radio listening back into the household,” Rosen suggested, noting the sharp decline in the number of homes with traditional radios in recent years. (The percentage of U.S. households without a radio in 2016 was 21%, compared with 4% in 2008.)

Understanding the potential for radio begins by understanding why people are buying smart speakers. And expectedly, music tops the list. Among owners who are fans of Country music, 96% said that’s why they wanted one in the first place. Perhaps more importantly, 68% of them wanted one “to listen to AM/FM radio.” People are putting these into their houses “for the very reason we were hoping they would,” Rosin indicated.

Edison’s data also suggests the devices are changing the way audio is consumed at home. For example, 75% of “Country” owners agreed that they “entertain friends or family” with their smart speaker. Further, 57% reported using their device with others in the household “most of the time.” Finally, 66% of those devices reside in a family room. A video segment depicting a family of four illustrated that point, as they sat around the device, sharing songs and playing games. “This probably hasn’t happened since the old days of radio,” Lazovick noted. “It’s made audio social and communal.”

There are some security concerns among owners of smart speakers and potential buyers, however, and there’s still much to be learned in order for radio to take full advantage of the technology. Integrating early and developing useful interactive features is key, Rosin argued. “The smart speaker absolutely brings technology. Integrating early and developing useful interactive features is key, Rosin argued. "The smart speaker absolutely brings radio back into peoples’ homes, but it doesn’t bring it back in the exact same way that it left," he concluded. “You’re going to have to be the ones who bring these changes to listeners.” The entire presentation can be viewed on Edison’s website. –Russ Penwlll

The Book Of Faces
Facebook: Still Our Strongest Ally offered loads of evidence to support its title. “The relationship you can create with your audience is unparalleled,” said Bryan Moore, social media strategist for Garth Brooks and Trisha Yearwood. Brooks and Yearwood engage with fans via Facebook Live, where both have weekly livestreams. Moore said regularly scheduled shows are key because fans expect and look forward to them. It creates a sense of community and offers exclusive access, such as following Brooks on the journey of making a surprise appearance at Nashville’s Bluebird Cafe. Yearwood’s Facebook Live show spurs sales of her merchandise and viewership of her television show.

Take Me To Church
UMG/Nashville SVP/Promo Royce Risser kicked off the ninth Team UMG at the Ryman with an apology to stations he publicly shamed last year for not adding Kip Moore’s “More Girls Like You,” which went No. 1 – and promised to apologize next year to any stations not currently playing Moore’s “Last Shot.” Moore opened with the song, singing the first verse and chorus a cappella. And with that, the 15-act, one-song-each show was off and running, with Jordan Davis’ “Leaving New Orleans,” followed by Luke Bryan, who snuck in two songs – “Most People Are Good” and “What Makes You Country.”

“Speakers, Bleachers And Preachers” newcomer Brandon Lay had plenty of reasons to celebrate, with his first CRS, first Ryman performance and first child on the way. Jon Pardi was up next with “She Ain’t In It,” followed by Maddie & Tae’s “One Heart To Another” and a sneak peek from Eric Paslay’s upcoming album, “Young Forever.”

Brothers Osborne got the first standing ovation of the afternoon with “Shoot Me Straight,” while Travis Denning got quite a few laughs with his song about a fake ID, “David Ashley Parker.” “Do not adjust your set, I am rocking a sweet mustache right now,” said Dierks Bentley, who gathered his band around a vintage mic and performed “Woman, Amen.” Next up: newly signed Kassi Ashton with “The Straw,” Darius Rucker with “When Was The Last Time,” and Chris Stapleton with “There Ain’t No Easy Way.”

Vince Gill silenced the room with a song about abuse he wrote years ago, called “Forever Changed.” “We’re living in a time where finally, people have the courage to speak out about being abused,” he said, introducing the song. “That is beyond healthy, beyond beautiful. Maybe this song came from a personal experience from me. I was in seventh grade and I had a gym teacher who acted inappropriately towards me and was trying to do things that, I didn’t know what the hell was going on. I was just fortunate that I just jumped up and ran. I don’t know why. I don’t think I ever told anybody, my whole life. But what’s been going on has given me a little bit of courage to speak out, too.”

Rounding out the set was: Keith Urban, who dedicated “Female” to all the women in his life, and capped the set with “Wasted Time.”

–Wendy Newcomer

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Facebook reaches all demographics, including younger fans. Girlilla Marketing’s Ashley Alexander noted the platform stays consistently competitive by introducing new technology including livestreams and video uploads.

Before delving into Facebook for marketing, it is important for a brand or radio station to define specific goals. This includes identifying a story, an audience to reach, and selecting storytellers. This is good news for radio, with its plethora of popular storytellers. The message should be specifically geared toward each demographic. FlyteVu’s Jeremy Holley explained how his company successfully promoted a recent docuseries featuring Chris Young by partnering with Cracker Barrel, creating different campaigns for each target audience.

When it comes to social media, content is king, not necessarily the number of posts. This means offering quality content for fans who “like” your page.

Panelists agreed that paid advertisements are crucial to Facebook marketing. “Organic reach on Facebook does not exist without paid,” said Holley. “If you are not willing to invest dollars, you shouldn’t be on Facebook.”

After an audience is built and engaged, spending can decrease, said Sun Broadcast Group’s Fitz. Then, it is important to harness the audience, maintain it, and spread it to other outlets. “Facebook is everything,” summed Fitz, noting the global reach. “It’s no longer word of mouth, now it’s world of mouth.”

–Sarah Skates

I’m Little But I’m Loud

For the second year in a row, Small Market 101: Raising Your Bottom Line, One Strategy At A Time examined two case studies.

WXFL/Florence, AL OM Fletch Brown and Dir./Digital Halley Phillips focused on the increase in engagement they have seen after implementing Text To Win promotions at the station. “The cell phone has changed the way I work,” Brown said. “You have to be where our listeners are.” For this year’s Father’s Day promotion with a local lawn and garden store, the station had “massive success” and earned $1000 a week from non-spot revenue by urging listeners to text to sign up for their giveaway.

WIBL/Bloomington, IL OM Josh Roberts and Asst. GM Jonathan Monk recounted their success with their first High/Low Game, where listeners called in four times a day to guess a random amount of money and were only told if their prediction is too high or too low. “Giving away money is like taking food out of your children’s mouths and not being able to send them to college,” Monk began, before singing the praises of the
promotion, which rose the station's weekly cume to 15.4 and their

tune-in rate to 5.4, the best in years. Over the course of 2017,

the station and its bank partner gave $16,000 to 30 local winners

through the game.

—Erin Duvall

The Day Ahead

7:30am

Women Mentoring Breakfast

Carolyn Gilbert, Beverlee Brannigan, Jinny Laderer, Lisa Smoot,

Sunny Leigh, Lisa Ballance, Melissa Kent, Whitney Allen, Shelly

Easton, Katie Bright, Sarah Frazier, Charlie Dean, Katie Dean, Lisa

Wall, Erica Farber, Alison Bonaguro, Becky Brenner, Jacquelyn

Marushka, Mandy McCormack, Rafaella Braun, Lori Lewis,

Stephanie Theisen, Lee Adams, Ashley Sidoti

Sponsored by NuVoodoo Media Services

Omni, Level 3, Cumberland 3-4

7:30am

Digital & Tech Breakfast

Bryan Moore, Jeff James, Tim Gerst, Kristin Dick, Jeff Zuchowski

Omni, Level 3, Cumberland 1-2

8am-5pm

Music Row Rooms

SSM Nashville, In2une Music Nashville, Parenting Today’s Teens

Omni, Level 2, Legends Pre-Function

8am-5pm

The Row

Riser House, Westwood One, Jamtraxx Media, Yellowtec, vCreative

Omni, Level 2, 5th Ave. Pre-Function

8:30am-5pm

Shakti Mediation Room

Omni, Level 3, Mockingbird 1

8:30am-4pm

St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital Internet Cafe

Coffee, beverages and free wifi

Omni, Level 2, Music Row 4

9am-4:30pm

CRS Media Center

Sponsored by Parenting Today’s Teens

Omni, Level 2, Broadway Halfway

9am-11:30am

St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital Juice Bar

Omni, Level 2, 5th Ave. Pre-Function

9am

Daily Featured Speaker: Talent Coaching with Randy Lane

Omni, Level 2, Legends Ballroom D-G

9am

Yoga Class by Shakti Power Yoga

Omni, Level 3, Mockingbird 1

10am

No Artists, No Problem: Revenue Generating Ideas

Judy Lakin, Beverlee Brannigan, Sarah Harris, Dan Lawrie, Matt

Yazge

Omni, Level 2, Legends Ballroom A-C

10am

Interactive Learning Workshop #2: Production for Radio

Omni, Level 2, Broadway Pre-Function, Encore Stage

10am-4pm

Children’s Miracle Network Hospitals

Omni, Level 3, Mockingbird 3

10am-4pm

Hocatt USA

Email Megan Zarling at megan@hocattusa.com to schedule your

appointment for the Hocatt steam sauna.

Omni, Level 3, Mockingbird 2

10am

CMA’s 2017 Country Music Streaming Study: The Way

Forward to Drive Consumption

Karen Stump, Andrew Hare

Omni, Level 2, Legends Ballroom D-G

11am-2am

Rebel Engine Lobby Bar

Omni Lobby

11am

The Matrix of the Metrics, How to Make Sense of All this

Data

Greg Frey, RJ Curtis, Jeff Green, Katie Dean, Michael Levine

Omni, Level 2, Legends Ballroom D-G

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11am
Podcasting: Where the Passion Pays Off
Greg Frey, Tom Baldrica, Chris Peterson, Rachel Belle, Steve Goldstein
Omni, Level 2, Legends Ballroom A-C

11am
Workshop: Shelley Greenwald “A Conversation About Harassment”
Location: Omni, Level 3, Cumberland 1-2

11:45am
Acoustic Stage Performance Featuring Kaylee Rutland
Omni, Level 2, Broadway Pre-Function, Encore Stage

12pm
Lunch & Performance
Sponsored by BMLG
Sugarland, Brett Young, Drake White, Trent Harmon, Josh Phillips and Tyler Rich
Omni, Level 2, Broadway Ballroom

2pm
Workshop: Shelley Greenwald “A Conversation About Harassment”
Omni, Level 3, Cumberland 1-2

2pm
You Are A Brand: How to Build a Fan Base You Can Monetize
Jay Cruze, Becky Brenner, Bobby Bones, John Zarling, Joey Tack, Mandy McCormack
Omni, Level 2, Legends Ballroom A-C

2pm
Interactive Learning Workshop #3: Video Creation for Radio People
Omni, Level 2, Broadway Pre-Function, Encore Stage

2pm
Radio 2025: The Future is Now
Judy Lakin, Bob Richards, Pat Paxton, Rod Phillips, Mike McVay, Larry Miller
Omni, Level 2, Legends Ballroom D-G

3pm
Artist Interview with Brad Paisley: “The Art and the Artist”
Beverlee Brannigan, RJ Curtis, Brad Paisley
Omni, Level 2, Legends Ballroom D-G

5:30pm
New Faces Cocktail Reception
Omni, Level 2, Broadway Pre-Function

5:30pm
New Faces of Country Music Dinner and Performance
Michael Ray, Carly Pearce, Lauren Alaina, Luke Combs, Midland
Sponsored by ACM and St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital
Performances powered by Live Nation
CRS/Country Aircheck Awards Presentations
Omni, Level 2, Broadway Ballroom

5:30pm
CRS/Country Aircheck Awards Presentations
Omni, Level 2, Broadway Ballroom

10pm
New Faces After Party
Sponsored by Radio Disney
Omni, Level 2, Broadway Pre-Function

10pm
Presley & Taylor Heart Over Mind After Party
Omni, Level 3, Cumberland

Begging Darling Please: Pearl’s Garth Brooks at his CRS show, during which 180 lucky attendees (venue Layla’s fire marshall-mandated capacity) set the playlist via requests.