

Radio Jockey - Incessant 'Talkathon'!



RJ Dhvanit

Whether you are making the first cup of coffee in the morning, clearing your cupboard, cooking or driving through roads jammed with traffic- you have this voice that keeps playing in the background, playing music that most people in the nation enjoy. The radio has always been an integral part of our lives. Its importance, as a medium of information and education is particularly great in a developing

country like India, where the reach of the printed word is neither wide nor deep. What makes or breaks a radio channel is the voice behind it- the Radio Jockey- the chirpy, gungho and ever engaging voice that greets you in the morning and entertains you through out the day with your favourite music.

To the uninitiated, the job seems simple enough- stand behind a microphone and make a few announcements and at other times just play songs. Read on to understand and appreciate what it takes to be a successful Radio Jockey.

(Excerpts from an interview with RJ Dhvanit of Radio Mirchi by Jasmine Parekh, Consultant TVRLS)

Humble Beginnings

Radio happened to me quite early in life. My father and grandfather would read the morning newspaper with the radio playing in the background. This habit grew into an addiction with me, to the extent that I had to have the radio playing in the background even while playing or studying.

My dreams of becoming an engineer and then a scientist were rudely broken when my father passed away. On completing my post graduation, I took up a job with the Life Insurance Corporation of India where my father had worked. I took my job





seriously and cleared the Insurance exams. During this 3 year period, I developed an aversion to Radio Mirchi, seeing some of my seniors ignoring work and listening to match scores. As I was passing by a mall one day, I noticed auditions taking place for Radio Mirchi. Private channel RJs did not enjoy the popularity and recognition they do today. As I had no clue about the nature of the job, I naively asked the organisers to explain the role of an 'RJ'. My first thoughts were 'Oh! Its the same person who keeps blabbering on the radio and boring people. I knew it was not my kind of a job but felt that there was no harm in giving it a shot. I went ahead, gave the auditions, cleared several rounds of interviews, and finally won the contest!

Creative Dilemma

With a secure and pensionable job in hand, it made no sense to risk giving it up and taking a job at Radio Mirchi, which 10 years back was neither a profitable company nor had a brand name like it has now. At the back of my mind, I knew that my father always wanted me to do something in Arts. Adding to my confusion, my mother said that if I did not take up this opportunity, I should not later regret that I had missed the bus. She also told me, "In the worst case scenario you will fail, but I have not brought you up in a way that you fail and fail for

life". This led me to introspect. I concluded that I had age to my advantage and I could afford to take the risk. I had a job, but I did not have an identity, and this was the time to prove to myself that I could achieve something good on my own. I took this as an opportunity to develop my own perspective on RJs.

The Road Less Travelled

Honestly, I did not have a great voice when I began my career as an RJ. It was just an ordinary voice. The same could be said about my diction. Actress Anushka Sharma made an interesting observation that, there was a time when people imitated their favourite actor /actresses' style, now it was the actors who wanted to imitate what a common man does. This was a very important statement. Those days, RJ was a desirable profession with not many people into it, but gradually attracting many. Common perception was that one had to have a great voice, style and language to be an RJ and I wanted to break that perception. I had no specific aspirations other than to portray myself as the 'boy next door'; I basically wanted to be just the way I was. I knew what my strengths were and I wanted to capitalise on that. I did make mistakes, and now I can confess that I made most of them consciously. It is human to err and I was being a human. I

realised that in doing so, the masses could relate to me much better. Of course these mistakes were the casual ones that you take the liberty to make with your friends or dear ones. I wanted the listeners to find a friend in the RJ and share a unique bond; I did not want to create a 'wow' factor about an RJ.

Motivational Aspirations

I think I have been chosen as an instrument to connect to the sub conscious of the city; I become a part of the collective happiness of the city or the collective emotion. When the World Cup was being played out, we ran a 10 day campaign at the quarter finals stage, that whatever happens we will win! My actual objective was to get everyone to collectively think positive. Just as prayers have a strong impact; a positive thought also has an impact. When we actually won the world cup, I told my listeners that we would celebrate the victory by sharing sweets together at 12 am with whatever we have access to (be it sugar, chocolate, rasgulla or cake). This was at around 11 pm, but in no time there were hoards of people in front of the Radio Mirchi office just to share the moment. Imagine the euphoria of the moment from 11 pm to 3 am! It made me realise the impact an RJ has on collective emotion and the tremendous responsibility that goes with it. Whatever I do, I do to bring a change and I am not talking about a social reform





here. I am talking of something as simple as bringing a smile on someone's face. I want to plant positivity in the listener's mind and the radio is such a beautiful medium for that. If out of the 5 lakh listeners at 7 a.m. or the 15 lakh listeners at 11 a.m., I am able to make a difference to at least 5 people, I am a satisfied man. You don't know which listener is going to be influenced by what you say, but this gives me the drive to do much more.

Talent Insecurities

Inherent talent always blossoms; it's like water that makes its way through the smallest crevice. Unfortunately, the education system has not equipped the individual to identify his talent; things are just enforced on children. In a recent RJ hunt, the promotion tagline was 'Karo Dhvanit ki Chutti'; we wanted to find someone who was unlike me, someone unique in his own way, having a

Top 5 RJ Qualities

- Talent
- Personality
- Voice modulation
- How to use the language/Effective communication
- Subject Knowledge

RJ Dark Days

We too are human and face personal, physical and emotional problems. As a performer, our responsibility is to fulfil our commitment, in spite of the challenges faced. Even as we go through an emotional turmoil, we have to have a smiling tone and the same enthusiasm in the voice. Surprisingly, discerning listeners are sensitive to our bad days.

You have to be true to yourself, be open to feedback. It starts with your personal characteristics and extends to upbringing, schooling, and education. Very important is developing one's creative excellence. RJ is a profession that is not defined by the number of years of experience, but it is defined more by the talent. It's important to continuously discover yourself for delivering creative excellence.

different personality and perceptions.

The RJ hunt did not create any insecurity in me. If I had any insecurity in my early years, it was already dealt with. If there is a talent better than mine, then the radio industry gets to benefit and the audience also gets to benefit. If you look at cricket, there is Sachin, there is Sehwag and there is Dravid also! There can be creative differences at my level but not insecurity.

What Next?

The average span of an RJ depends on the RJs personality, his endurance and talent! I released a music album called 'Majani Life' in 2008 with SaReGaMa HMV. I believe that language should be celebrated, and this can happen through music. Now, if I quit doing my RJ job, I am not sure what I will do, but I am sure that I will not quit being a performer.

My message to youth:

Don't stop thinking! Keep your grey cells ticking and stop 'googling'!

