

# KFM's Stephen Werner talks us through their station refresh journey

KFM is celebrating three years since its station refresh, which saw the launch of KFM Mornings and The Flash Drive with Carl and Zoe. We spoke to Stephen Werner, station manager at KFM 94.5 about the third anniversary of the KFM rebrand and the highlights along the way...



Stephen Werner, station manager at KFM 94.5.

■ **Happy third anniversary! Has the rebrand been as successful as you hoped it would be? What is your measurement of success?**

It has been a huge success and then some. The true mark of a great radio brand is the way that it connects with the people who make it what it is: the audience. Over the past three years, we have reimagined and reinvented our relationship with the people of the Western Cape who choose to spend their time with us on a daily basis. The success of our approach has reflected in our results: we are the biggest station in the Cape and have managed to deliver record audience numbers (BRC Rams).



Kfm 94.5 breaks Western Cape BRC RAMS record

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We have also shown significant growth in our target market since launching across all shows. Audience engagement is critical, and we are seeing increases in responsiveness and engagement from our listeners – not only in our morning and afternoon drive shows, but across all key shows, daytime and evening shows.

“ There is one vital ingredient which is critical to our success: our people. People are at the core of who we are and everything we do. You can't always measure the culture of team in an organisation, but you can feel it. The KFM team is collaborative, has an incredible work ethic, drives high levels of innovation and is prepared to take smart risks. I truly believe we have the finest radio team in the country right now. ”

■ **What are some of the highlights since the brand refresh?**

Definitely our Vinyl Classic parties – an organic extension of a feature that translated across the station's lineup.

Life-changing campaigns such as Big September and We Are Family where we were able to make a significant and meaningful difference in the lives of our audiences and communities, which included giving R1m to one listener. The team also won several radio awards and broke BRC audience listenership records over the past year.

■ **What excites you most about the station and where it's going?**

The incredible ability of radio to connect people and pull communities together, especially in a time of crisis. It's the original social media and we have seen that more than ever during this lockdown period, where every single one of us has been taken out of our comfort zones. It's been amazing to watch our listeners share their personal realities and come to us for much-needed escape and relief in this, the strangest of times. This level of momentum and engagement can only continue to ramp up as we make our way through this period into a post-Covid world.

■ **What do you love most about your work as manager and what do you envision going forward?**

Working with people and coaching both new and existing talents on- and off-air. There's something magical about bringing together multiple disciplines and specialists to create one beautiful splash. The level of laughter, love and team spirit that embodies the KFM culture is one of the reasons I love what I do.



#BehindtheSelfie with... Stephen Werner, station manager at KFM

Leigh Andrews 27 Nov 2019



Looking ahead, our focus remains expanding our lead in the market, building deeper connections with audiences, and continuing to make a meaningful difference to a society that is changing in ways we could never have imagined at the beginning of the year.

■ **With the ever-changing times, how do you stay relevant and constantly integrated into your listeners' daily lives? We listen to them. We reflect their stories. We become vulnerable and share our own stories to create connection, relatability and importantly, stay true to our promise as a source of entertainment, relief and escape – especially over this challenging time.**

■ **Tell us a bit about your experience during Covid-19 and what are the challenges you are facing?**

Initially, our main priority was to get people off-site and to define a new cadence and way of working under lockdown. We had to ensure we stayed true to delivering not only light relief but also relevant and timely information within our format and brand print. We have, like any business, had to overcome challenges. The loss of the traditional expression of team (remote working and isolation) and the lack of 'corridor creativity' and incidental ideation when working remotely. We have also been acutely aware of changes in listener patterns and behaviour during lockdown. Agility, communication, trust and self-leadership from every single team member is critical over a time like this.

■ **What are you most looking forward to/enjoying so far?**

I'm excited at the prospect at one day being able to interact face-to-face with the team again. I'll also be celebrating the province and nation getting over the hump and getting through this stronger, wiser and more appreciative of each other and of what we have.

■ **What's at the top of your to-do list (at work)?**

Right now our people are my number one priority. Surrounding the team, making sure they remain in touch with the business, the audience and each other as integral parts of our brand.

Cross-platform storytelling and an even tighter integration of radio and digital remains a key priority.

■ **What are you currently reading/watching/listening to for work?**

*Do Nothing: How to Break Away from Overworking, Overdoing, and Underliving* – a fascinating read. I've also recently gone back to Valerie Gellar's book, *Beyond Powerful Radio* – a good lesson on powerful storytelling and how to connect with audiences in their world around what matters to them.

■ **Tell us something we don't know about the team and/or a memorable moment that happened behind the scenes.**

Darren, Sherlin and Sibs do not, in fact, live together, although many listeners believe that they do! Carl Wastie and Zoë Brown are not dating, despite the rumours. Tracey Lange is our hard-working head girl, EB Inglis is actually an incredible singer and music producer, and Brandon Leigh turns off the lights in studio for his show, every single evening. In short, yes, our team and presenters are as crazy, talented and wonderful as people think they are!

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