

Fine-tuning talent with the #LibertyRadioAwards



By Leigh Andrews

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Lance Rothschild first coined the 'real-time audio decision-influencing opportunity' mnemonic for radio back in 1987. It's more relevant than ever 30 years later, with the 2017 #LibertyRadioAwards just around the corner.

On 17 January 2017, the Liberty Radio Awards roadshow kicked off at the Radisson Blu Waterfront, the first part of a three-stage show that also covered Durban and Johannesburg this week.

This was an informative information session and well-received by all who missed the awards in 2016, with new sponsor Liberty rekindling the flame for excellent radio content late last year. Awards convenor Rothschild spoke through the history of the awards, which began in May 2010 as a small pilot project and have experienced monumental growth since then [until 2015](#), with a break last year when former sponsor MTN cut back on sponsorship. The awards are now facing renewed enthusiasm in an attempt to make radio the foremost media choice in the country. Rothschild explained that listeners don't just listen from a sense of duty but for what they can get from the medium, whether that's information, entertainment or something else entirely. Key among this success is the independent, audited and transparent process of the awards, with tasks allocated in such a way as to prevent any conflicts-of-interest, such as judges with vested interests in commercial stations judging commercial station entries, and each adjudicator entering scores online with no way to access any other adjudicators' scores.



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The awards are open to all ICASA-licensed radio stations in the country and intend to celebrate the radio industry overall across the four pillars of campus, community, PBS and commercial by [promoting excellence in broadcast radio](#) – just not internet-only radio, which Rothschild says is seen as a hobby, not business – through acknowledging “fine-tuned talent”. That said, only online entries are being accepted, with the day of accepting CDs, flash drives or other physical submissions now over as it's too intensive an administration process and the majority of entries over the past few years have been digital.

How to enter the #LibertyRadioAwards 2017

If you're interested, you'll need to register and create a profile on the [entry section](#) of the website, then upload both the entry and the audio, and do so sooner rather than later – [hundreds are already in](#). It's a bad idea to leave it all for deadline day, which is 31 January, as traffic to the site is at an all-time high on the day and you'll also need time to carefully

motivate your entry. Remember that many of the judges work outside the sector, so it's better to overshare than to leave something out because it seems obvious. Responding to a comment from the audience that there isn't much time to do so, Rothschild explained entries have already been open for a few months now and that there are roughly 3,000 hours of intensive listening overall ahead for the judges, so the better your motivation or explanation, the more likely it is that your entry will stand out.

Judges will be listening for excellence in radio across aspects of creativity, presentation, production and value to listener, all of which are based on **compelling content** that attracts listeners and strengthens their loyalty to the show or station and ultimately the medium – reputation will not come into the mix.

You'll also need to ensure the material you're entering was broadcast between 1 January 2015 and 31 December 2016 or it faces disqualification. You're allowed a maximum six minutes of audio – that's either six continuous minutes or six minutes of 'moments'. To keep things snappy you'll need to edit out songs, jingles, stings and bumpers and note that you're only allowed one entry per presenter or show per category, with a maximum of three entries per station per category, such as breakfast show, traffic presenter or the [following](#):

CATEGORIES

	Commercial	PBS	Community	Campus
Afternoon Drive Presenter	X	X	X	X
Afternoon Drive Show	X	X	X	X
Breakfast Show	X	X	X	X
Breakfast Show Presenter	X	X	X	X
Business and Finance Show	Combined			
Community Project	X	X	X	X
Content Producer	X	X	Combined	
Daytime Show	X	X	X	X
Drama Programme	Combined			
Field News Reporter	Combined			
Multi-Channel Promotion	Combined			
Music Show	X	X	X	X
News and Actuality Show	X	X	Combined	
News Bulletin Reader	X	X	X	X
Night-time Show	X	X	X	X
Station Imaging	X	X	Combined	

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CATEGORIES

	Commercial	PBS	Community	Campus
Radio Innovation	Combined			
Promotions Stunt/Event	X	X	X	X
Radio Documentary	Combined			
Sports Presenter	Combined			
Sports Show	X	X	Combined	
Traffic Presenter	Combined			
Weekend Radio Show	X	X	X	X
Bursary Award				
Bright Star	Nominations only			
Hall of Fame	Nominations only			
Station of the Year	X	X	X	X

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Further sweetening the deal, the Liberty Radio Awards also offer a bursary scheme as an initiative to further build or fine-tune talent within the radio industry for the future. It does so by allowing a deserving individual with the right aptitude, who would otherwise not be able to afford the course, to complete the Advanced Radio Certificate programme offered at Wits University. [Click here](#) for a reminder of past recipients' success stories.

Seems it's time to get your broadcast ducks quacking the same song, stat! Entry remains free but note that the entry deadline is strictly 31 January - less than two weeks away - with ticket sales for the gala award ceremony open from 6 February and adjudication taking place from 13 February to 10 March. Finalists will then be announced on 22 March, with the radio awards conference set for 7 April and the gala banquet on 8 April, this year being held at the always-impressive Emperor's Palace.

[Click here to enter](#), and be sure to follow the #LibertyRadioAwards hashtag, [Twitter handle](#) and [Facebook page](#) for the latest updates. May the best 'real-time audio decision-influencing opportunities' win!

ABOUT LEIGH ANDREWS

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