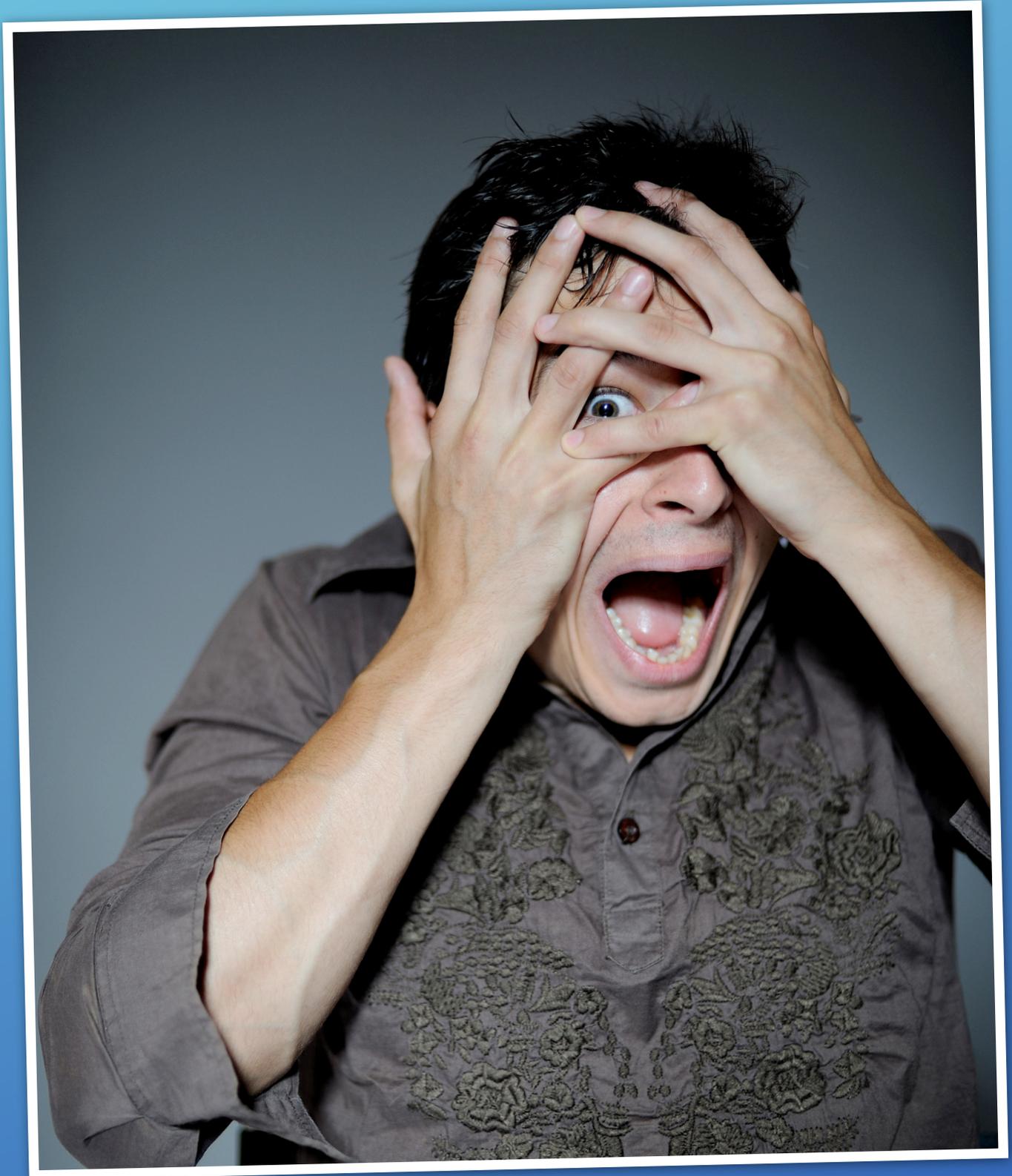


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20 Common Community Presenter Mistakes!

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A typical community presenter mistake is distortion on the microphone. In other words, broadcasting far too loud. When this happens, it means the presenter is doing one or two things.

A. They haven't checked [their levels](#) before opening the fader.

B. They're chatting away paying no attention to the levels on the meters once they play their song.

Always check any levels of any item/person BEFORE you open the fader. And always listen to the output in your headphones.

Constantly ask yourself questions like:

Does this song etc. sound lower or higher than the last item?

Always listen to your output and always analyse your output WHILE presenting. Keep one ear on your levels and one eye on your meters throughout your whole show.



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2. When presenting, always speak to the 'individual' and not the group. This means avoiding generic phrases that speak to a large group etc. Phrases like *'Hello you guys out there'* excludes the listeners.

Think about your listener as *'one person only'*. Always talk to your listeners as though you're only speaking to one person.

People always listen to the radio as an individual. If you present your show as though you're presenting to a *'group'* of people, then you can create a distance between yourself and the listener. During my radio training days, the message 'radio is a personal medium' was always drummed into me. Think of your listeners as one person only.

3. Don't crash the vocals of a song. If you're going to speak over a song opening, then make sure what you have to say is a) relevant to your point and b) it's interesting. Ruining a song opening with boring waffle such as time checks, *'you're listening to..'* won't be easily forgiven.

4. Don't bring the fader down so low that you can't hear the music underneath you.

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5. Don't '*fader wank*'. That is pulling the fader down over the music then speaking, then pushing the fader back up again for more music, then bringing the fader back down again for more bland chatting, then pushing the fader back up again etc. This sounds tacky.

6. Don't waffle. Make everything you say interesting and relevant. In other words, don't just talk for the sake of talking. Have a point to make or have something interesting to say. Remove all unnecessary words and communicate your point in the shortest possible way.



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7. Don't make every second word an '*ermmm*' and '*ummmm*' etc. in your links.

8. Avoid using '*filler*' words in your links such as '*like, basically, well, but, sort of..*' etc. as this can annoy listeners. We use these words in everyday life when we're trying to think of what to say next, but using these words on the radio can be quite annoying. Our links need to be focused.

9. Always make a show for your listeners. Don't make a show as a self-indulged piece for yourself. In other words, don't make a self-indulged show that only you will like. Many community radio presenters make self-indulged shows. You may like your show but ask yourself, who'd want to listen to it? Also, don't choose or talk about a subject that only interests you but has no appeal to your audience. A segment on the problems of Mexican immigration in the US, for example, will have no appeal to an audience in south London. Always remember your target audience and always make sure whatever you talk about is relevant to your audience. Many community presenters forget this point. At the hospital radio station, I managed, we had a 'gold' format because most of our patients were old. Many of our presenters wanted to make trans based, hip hop, techno, heavy metal shows etc. that had no relevance to our audience. Remember your target audience.

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10. Get the most important information in at the beginning of your link, so people know who or what you're talking about from the start. As a basic rule (for beginners) keep it to one thought per link.

11. Don't give out lots of information (events, etc.) in the style of a massive list. Listeners don't sit by the radio with a pen and paper. Mention two to three events and then redirect listeners to the website.

12. Keep your speech conversational. Everything should be explained on-air as if you're telling it to a good friend.

13. Consider the point that every time you open the mic there maybe somebody new listening. This means that everything you say must make sense as a self-contained link.



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14. Never repeat the production (jingles, etc.). In other words, don't say something that a pre-recorded jingle says for you.

Example:

You: And here's the news...

Jingle: And here's the news...

15. Always know how your song/jingle etc. ends so you can tailor your link to the ending. Does it stop dead? Does it fade out? If it fades out, then how long is the fade for? Do you have time for a link over the fade-out? This means checking the ending before you play it out live.

16. Always have the timer on the countdown, so you know how long you have left on the song. I've been caught out a few times when the song has suddenly stopped!

17. Always close the fader after the song has finished. The song may have something at the end of it, or it may continue into the next song. If you don't close the fader, then you can get confused with what item you've just played. You may end up playing it twice! (Yup I've done that!) Closing the fader is a good visual stop to let you know where you are.

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18. **START YOUR SHOW ON TIME!** If your show starts at 6pm, then be in the studio at 5:45pm and be ready to sit in the chair at 5:55pm. Don't roll into the studio at 5:59pm and then go on air at 6:05pm. This is just unprofessional, and I see many community presenters doing this. Starting a transmission late as a BBC studio manager was a sackable offence. If you do have access to an empty studio, then get in there thirty minutes before your show and set up.

19. **GET OFF AIR ON TIME!** If your show ends at 8pm, have your last song playing at 7:55pm and get out of the studio ASAP. Let the next DJ sit down and set up for their show. Giving the next presenter no setup time is unfair on them. You wouldn't like it if someone did it to you, so don't do it to someone else. Too many times presenters get really into their shows and end up talking to 58 past the hour. Then they play their last song, slowly move from the chair, and slowly pack up. This gives the next presenter no time to set up. Play your last song on air at 55 past and then get out of the studio!

20. Make your show technically great. No one wants to listen to a technically poor show. Shows, where the levels are all over the place, dead air mixed in with jingles crashing over the top of songs, will push your listener away.

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BONUS POINT: When you're not speaking, always look down and make sure your mic is SWITCHED OFF! It's very easy to leave your mic switched on and record everything you're doing in the studio. This, of course, has never happened to me because I'm a professional..ahem!

Check out the radio DJ course here:

[Radio DJ Course](#)