

Belfast independent local radio licence applications

Questions and responses: Z Rock

These are the responses received from Z Rock to the non-confidential questions asked by Ofcom regarding the group's application for the Belfast licence.

1. Could you please clarify the maximum extent to which Z Rock would automate programming?

To maximise the expenditure on our daytime output and for the purposes of our business plan we have assumed automation between 1am and 6am. In practice we believe that this broadcast period is a great opportunity to nurture new talent and this is something we will review in the early part of the licence period.

2. Could you please clarify whether the group intends to commit itself to broadcast news no more than once an hour as indicated by the following phrase within the Format: “news will be broadcast hourly during daytime” (p.40) or to broadcast news ‘at least hourly’ as indicated by the reference to “additional half hourly bulletins in breakfast” (p.37)?

It is our intention to broadcast news on the hour across the day and additionally on the half hour during the weekday breakfast show. Our consumer research suggested that there was a strong interest in news from the target audience and it is for this reason that news has been given a higher profile at the key breakfast period. We are happy for this to be enshrined in our format.

3. When questioned about their propensity to listen to each format and how they would incorporate any listening to a new station (p.56) were respondents offered a complete station proposal (i.e. including the promised speech) or simply asked to choose between different music genres?

Rather than use the survey to gain reaction to predetermined formats we used the opportunity to get respondents reactions to listen to a collection of different genres of rock music. Respondents were asked to indicate how much they had enjoyed the type of music heard, to state whether or not they felt this music was readily available (and if so where) and finally to indicate how likely they would be to listen to a station playing this type of music. From these findings we were able to build a series of formats which we based on respondents liking varied combination of the rocks genres tested and then evaluated which combination produce strong interest (i.e. potential to listen) and a profile which would address what we had seen to be a gap in the market. To be counted as being interested in a format you had to score the genre 7 out of 10 as music that you like and then 7 out of 10 as a type that

you would listen to. This produced for Z-Rock a format comprising pop rock, classic rock and rock oldies. The survey tabulations were then cross tabulated by those fitting the Z-Rock description so that we could better understand their requirements for news, information and features programming. Hence, we were able to look at propensity to listen by combination of format, knowing that respondents had scored all of the music highly as types liked **and** ones which they would enjoy hearing on a new radio station. This finding was backed up by an earlier question where respondents were asked to listen to 6 format clips and asked to say which they liked most. The clip representing rock ranked 2nd to oldies, indicating a strong interest overall in a rock format, this was then explored more fully as explained above.

4. On what basis did the group select its 25% speech minimum given that the preferred balance between speech and music appears not to have been tested?

We explored in the survey in some considerable depth the interest in and desire for a wide range of news, information items and features. The very strong levels of interest obtained from a wide variety of the tested items determined whether or not they were included in our programming proposal. We have estimated that the planned news, information and features programmes would require a minimum 25% speech content.