



Martini Rocks!

One of hundreds of hip programs on BE HD Radio



Jeff Allen, Program Director for KFTK FM



Ever feel like you're stuck on one of those traffic roundabouts, going over and over the same circle of formats in search of a way out of the formulaic programming doldrums?

You're not alone. More than 650 FM broadcasters so far have added a second program channel to their HD Radio broadcasts, and to no one's surprise, the format choices are anything but typical.

In fact, programming on these HD2 channels is all over the road, from jokes and sports to music of all flavors.

Take MyRedLounge, an HD2 station on the same dial position as KFTK Talk 97.1 FM in St. Louis, Missouri. The station is running what is described as "martini music", an interesting mix of jazz, blues, swing and lounge tunes from yesterday and today. Sinatra and Dean Martin follow newer artists such as Diana Krall, Jamie Cullum and Michael Bublé to give MyRedLounge a very unique and contemporary sound.

"We aren't at all hesitant about mixing genres, as opposed to what all of us in the industry were doing seven or eight years ago when we wouldn't dream of it," says Jeff Allen, Program Director for KFTK FM, which updated to digital HD Radio with Broadcast Electronics transmitter gear and gained an entirely new channel in the process.

"It almost harkens back before the old Top 40 days when we weren't afraid to try new things," he adds.

HD2 offers the best of both worlds as a channel separate from, but coexisting on, the same frequency as the main program. What plays on one doesn't affect the other, except to generate some market synergy. MyRedLounge is aimed at the 35- to 64-year-old age group, the very same age demographic as its main talk host, but targeted to a totally different demographic lifestyle.

Because MyRedLounge broadcasts from the same RF facility as the main talk program—and without a separate broadcast license from the FCC to boot—adding the channel required minimal capital outlay. In fact, Emmis Broadcasting had already invested the capital in converting KFTK FM to HD Radio, so adding the second channel became a simple matter of installing another box to generate the HD2 broadcast.

Adding text data or even a third channel will be even easier, requiring a simple setup change to the BE gear. "Another channel has come up in our discussions, yes. It's one of those situations in that the more we do with HD Radio, the more we realize what we can do with it," comments Allen. **BE**