

Radio Awards: How radio gives a voice to the voiceless

By  [Luise Allemann](#)

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South Africa's Minister of Communications Yunus Carrim was that rarest of things - a politician with a personality - last night (Saturday) as he opened the fifth Annual MTN Radio Awards.



Yunus Carrim: "Radio plays a huge role in our ability to reach the illiterate in South Africa; a large part of this is driven by South Africa's more than 200 community stations."

Carrim saluted the South African radio industry and its ability to give a voice to the voiceless and said this was why it is such an integral part of the fabric of South African society.

"Radio plays a huge role in our ability to reach the illiterate in South Africa; a large part of this is driven by South Africa's more than 200 community stations. Through smart choices, talent, hard work, skill and perhaps most of all a love for [the] medium, radio owners continue to provide compelling content that ensures that listeners remained dialled [tuned] in to the station of their choice."

He pointed out that another key strength of radio was its ongoing integration with technology channels, which means that in social terms 21st century radio is an interactive medium - just look at the number of people following the Oscar Pistorius trial on radio.

Come on ladies... step into the studio

Carrim alluded to the fact that radio is still largely a male-dominated industry and challenged the industry to embrace initiatives such as the International Girls in ICT day on 24 April, to increase the already significant role that women play in radio.

As the headline sponsor of the awards since their inception, MTN has always had a fondness for the medium. Proof of this is its choice of radio as the platform for its first-ever ad, which aired in 1995 and was played again at the awards evening. MTN Chief Marketing Officer Brian Gouldie commented that; "We are really happy with the way that these awards have been accepted by the players in the local radio sector and by the broad participation that they generate across all sectors of the radio industry."

Awards creates opportunity for greater involvement in radio

"The MTN Radio Awards is an important initiative for MTN as it creates the opportunity for us to increase our involvement with the radio industry, which has played a vital role in the life of the MTN brand. We have always recognised the potential of this event, which constantly reaffirms our belief in the medium."



Brian Gouldie: The awards constitute excellent recognition for best of breed.

He added that for the 95 stations that entered this year; the awards constitute excellent recognition for best of breed and have made a profound contribution towards raising the standard of the industry.

Gouldie concluded that technological progress also means that barriers to access to the broadcast industry were constantly being removed. "Thanks to the Internet, the role and structure of radio is being redefined with the new LTE network, for example, enabling technology and driving the convergence of devices that make radio even more accessible wherever you go."



MTN Radio Awards Station of the Year Community

Overall, this year's awards carried the theme of "reach", as in the age-old reference to radio being the reach and frequency medium. In a 21st century context, however, this was also seen to allude to its ability to reach even further than before, thanks to its innate ability to resonate even further by utilising its synergies with new technologies on the digital platform. This means that perhaps more than any other medium, radio remains relevant and real.

[View images of all the winners here](#)

ABOUT LUISE ALLEMANN

Luise Allemann is a communications specialist with more than 20 years experience in the media and marketing industries including her time as a newspaper and magazine journalist and editor. She founded Medialnk Communications in 2004 with a primary focus on content generation with a subsequent specialisation in PR & social media and has worked with iconic South African brands such as FNB, MTN and Hollard Insurance and most recently @NelsenAfrica and @Sassda_sa.

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