

New station adds power to airwaves

By [Gabi Mbele](#)

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With R90m in the bank, the team behind new radio station, Power FM, could afford to splurge on heavyweight talent.



Provided there are no technical glitches at launch hour - 6am on 18 June - those tuning in to the new kid on the block will be woken by veterans Lawrence Thabane and Siki Mgabadeli, formerly of CNBC Africa.

Power FM's owners have forked out more than 20% of the station's start-up cash. The balance of R68m comes from the National Empowerment Fund and the Industrial Development Corporation.

The station has set up studios in Houghton, Johannesburg, where its team of more than 30 journalists and producers hope to step up to the challenge of giving the new Gauteng radio station a competitive edge.

Power FM chairman Given Mkhari said the station planned to reflect the post-1994 South Africa. "We are baggage-free and fresh, like the new South Africa. We will be focusing on issues of class instead of race."

Other well-known names in the line-up include Eusebius McKaiser, who takes on Talk Radio 702's Redi Tlhabi in the mid-morning slot, and media commentator and former government spin doctor Chris Vick, who will step into "power hour" between 1800 and 1900, where he will compete against 702's Bruce Whitfield, SAfm's Masechaba Mtolo and Kaya FM's John Perlman.

A major shake-up of radio in SA

Anthony Duke, who founded Capital Radio in 1979 and managed 5FM and the Western Cape's GoodHope FM, says Power FM's entry into the market is the biggest shake-up in radio since 1996.

He said the new station was challenging Talk Radio 702, SAfm and Kaya FM head on with its list of "authoritative voices", who he believed would be able to get the right guests on air.

Power FM snatched the last commercial frequency available in Gauteng, although it will reach parts of North West, KwaZulu-Natal, Mpumalanga, the Free State and Limpopo.

Power FM is owned by MSG Africa Media, owners of Capricorn FM. Investors include Ndalo Media, African Women Chartered Accountants and MIB Radio and Media Investments.

Media analyst Hanz Stricker said the stations with the most to fear from Power FM were Talk Radio 702 "and perhaps Kaya FM".

Source: Sunday Times via I-Net Bridge

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