

# Times Media Radio's newbies mint new listener numbers

By Leigh Andrews

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According to SAARF's latest Commercial Radio Listening RAMS figures, all three Times Media Radio stations have increased their listenership. Tony Mallam, Head of Radio: Times Media Limited tells us how they got this right through differentiating their offering...

Times Media Radio comprises [RISE FM](#) in Mpumalanga, [North West FM](#) and [Vuma 103 FM](#) in KwaZulu-Natal.

Vuma 103 FM and RISE FM are also in the top three of the 13 stations that have achieved a percentage increase year-on-year.



Vuma FM team with celebs

That's even more impressive when you consider only 11 of the 38 commercial radio stations measured in the survey showed growth - RISE FM only launched last year, with Vuma similarly acquired by Times Media then.

Mallam shares how Times Media Limited has achieved this remarkable radio success.

## 1. Congrats! Let's start off with a broad overview of the TMG Radio stable.

**Mallam:** Times Media first entered the radio market via Ghana in October 2013. It owns 34% of Multimedia Ghana, which has 6 radio stations and a free to air satellite TV network. The radio stations are 4 in Accra and 2 inland, and are the top stations in Ghana. In December 2013 Times Media purchased 65% of the old MPower FM in Mpumalanga, which had gone into business rescue, and relaunched that in March 2014 as RISE FM, a new urban adult contemporary station. Times Media also bought into Vuma 103 FM in January 2014, and the Radio Africa Group in Kenya, which runs 5 radio stations and a DTT TV network. We also represent NWFM in Rustenburg, terms of national sales, and are looking to play more of an active role for the station.

## 2. That's a lot of growth. How are the stations making their mark on the SA commercial radio landscape?

**Mallam:** Having worked in the industry since the late 1980s, I've seen the changes as radio has evolved from purely SABC, to the privatisation process in 1996, green field stations from 1998, and new licences in 2012. Add in the hundreds of community radio stations that have popped up, and any station wanting to make an impact in the SA radio market needs to

differentiate, as it is highly competitive. Our strategy is very simply to look for the gaps in the market in our areas of broadcast, to make sure we are aiming for those gaps with the right product and then to tell the people about ourselves with as much noise as possible. Research, product development, marketing, repeat!

■ **3. On that note, delve deeper into the marketing activities involved in growing these stations' footprints.**

**Mallam:** It's all about visibility. Using outdoor media, mobile platforms, activations in the area (some with clients, some of our own), road shows, moving around the province, giveaways, social media and more. We need to be seen by our listeners, and for the brand to make an impact.



The RISE FM 'Greatest train set-up'

■ **4. Makes sense. Tell us a little more about the SAARF RAMS methodology.**

**Mallam:** The RAMS research, previously overseen by SAARF, is in the process of moving over to the Broadcast Research Council (BRC), and from Nielsen to TNS. At the time of these results though, the RAMS fieldwork was still conducted by Nielsen. RAMS is based on a statistically valid sample of people countrywide, approximately 25,000 per survey, who complete a diary over the period, recording the stations listened to, amongst other questions, down to quarter-hour segments. These are then accumulated with other data, including AMPS, and a final result is published incorporating all commercial and community radio stations. Previously these were done 4 to 6 times a year, with one annual summary report. RAMS data is heavily relied on by media strategists and planners as the de facto report of radio listenership.

■ **5. Certainly weighty. What's next? Give us a teaser of what to expect in future from the stations.**

**Mallam:** Ongoing product development. New line-ups at both Vuma and RISE are now settling down. Better music through research, bigger competitions. More marketing. Bigger reach through more transmitters. And finally, bigger national sales footprint as we have just signed up with [United Stations](#). More on that to follow!

If that's piqued your interest, you can find out more about Times Media Limited radio by following the stations' individual Twitter profiles: [North West FM](#), [Vuma FM](#) and [RISE FM](#).

## ABOUT LEIGH ANDREWS

Leigh Andrews AKA the #MilkshakeQueen, is former Editor-in-Chief: Marketing & Media at Bizcommunity.com, with a passion for issues of diversity, inclusion and equality, and of course, gourmet food and drinks! She can be reached on Twitter at @Leigh\_Andrews.

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