

No justice at SABC radio



By [Bonnie Ramaila](#)

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With all the programme changes that take place around this time on radio stations at the SABC, there are serious casualties that are beyond hospital intensive care, they are probably in need of 'deliverance'.



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I deliberately shut myself out of social media opinion on views and titbits of who got the chop or moved, and I resorted to painstaking research and listening to most radio stations' lineups the entire week.

I will try hard to put my concerns and irritations into perspective, and that's just putting it mildly. Firstly, I was and am mortified to find that Radio 2000 lineup does not make any sense in terms of time slots and new additions.

Lineup changes

Here's the thing, Radio 2000 has earned a reputation of being a station for a mature audience, attracting veteran DJ's and radio presenters with a long history in radio. The presenters are experienced, intellectual, humble and mature in how they handle issues and interact with their audience – colloquially speaking they gel with their audience. And this is my observation.

The music is superb, can't wrong anything about the kind of music they play, they got it greased.

So, my question and concern is; what informed the change to move

Justice Ramohlola from the breakfast show or morning drive of a good three hours, to an evening slot for novices of a mere two and a half hours? Robert Marawa's slot has been cut from two hours to one and a half hours every day. Glen Lewis has a new addition (co-host) in his drive show. Bambo Johnson comes in for only for two hours? What is going on? The lineup was greased. Why fix what's not broken? Who makes these decisions?

Secondly, and in my opinion (and will shed light later why I feel strongly about this) is that:

1. It's too early for Glen Lewis to have a co-host, his show is only a year old. He should have been given at least two more years until a co-host is sought.
2. Robert Marawa's show is the only one of its kind on SABC radio, why cut it to an hour and a half – the time factor is an essential thing for a show like his, otherwise, it'd erode the quality of his show ... he only needs these hours on Thursdays', not every day.
3. Justice could have been left on the breakfast show and add a co-host as done with Glen Lewis. In that way, it addresses the issue of having female presenters and attracting women audience. To put a young lad fresh from a radio station that has a different audience and vibe, to a station with a mature audience is career limiting for the poor girl.

We always joke that Radio 2000 is a retirement plan for all the veteran SABC radio presenters. So, why age a young soul before her time. She is full of a Metro FM and commercial radio station energy and vigour, now throwing her into 'Radio 2000 for the Aged' long before her retirement comes, defeats me.

Equal time slots

Coming to time slots - why can't everyone have equal time slots because the new ones don't make sense at all. Is it part of the cost-cutting measures they have implemented because the human resource is bloated?

I wonder how this decision-making process at the SABC radio is executed. From the concerns outlined above, I smell a rat... there clearly is something fishy at that 'uitsaaiorporasie'.

As a communication consultant with FMCG clients that I advise on which mediums to utilise, which slots to do product placements, live reads or have the radio presenters doing adverts on which time slots (breakfast and drive being popular), I sometimes get to match the brand, product or service with a particular personality on radio. And these decisions and plans are done a year ahead.

So when changes like these happen, they affect clients, but not in as much as they affect and hit the SABC hard where it matters most – the pocket. This might be viewed as a non-issue, but for a financially ailing institution like the SABC, making decisions that have grave financial ramifications is daft.

Costly decisions

It looks like management failed to apply their mind and think of the broader impact of these actions taken. And unfortunately, what was more disconcerting for me was to hear international clients instructing me to channel their £1.2m budget (yes pounds not rands) to other mediums and alternative channels and not use SABC – money they gravely need. Debauched decisions are costly!

At this stage of SABC's financial woes, decisions like these should be in consultation with the big client's consultants and media houses. Unilateral decisions are a thing of the past. Managers are supposed to think about the social impact of their decisions because it has ramifications both intended and unintended. And I'm not only referring to Radio 2000 but other stations too, I just picked Radio 2000 as an example, I could have used 5FM, but my point is driven home better with Radio

2000 example.

I could go on ranting about how favours, political interference, nepotism is at play but that is not the point, although could be an issue. Radio is an emotional thing for consumers, and still the most consumed medium in South Africa. We need astute managers who think things through and broadly and ensure that decisions are taken impact the bottom line positively not negatively.

Maybe it is about time that lineup changes are voted by all stakeholders and not internal decision. SABC radio should adopt an outside- looking in approach, not inside-looking out. It should run quarterly surveys on social and digital media to gauge the mood and satisfaction of listeners and do an annual survey with focus groups to inform their strategic decisions. Radio is for listeners, not management, and therefore every decision taken should be based on consumer empirical research.

Slippery slope

As for our favourite presenters who have been moved around, some who are still making the mistake of mentioning their previous radio stations on new radio stations, its tough guys, and some like Just-Ice who has been sent into 'oblivion' with very little to say ... when we all know that he is intellectually stimulating – is criminal. If he is no longer needed, release him to fly, he is an eagle meant to soar – don't clip his wings.

Unless he has agreed to the change because he is busy with his PhD, and doing a night slot gives him time to go through his research whilst the music is on auto-pilot... I just hope people were consulted and decisions taken were explained to them or the presenters chose those slots, if not... SABC is on a slippery slope to extinction and privatisation.

There needs to be some serious transmogrification at the SABC. I hope the new board will breathe some new life and turn the SABC around, as they have an arduous task ahead of rooting out the old guard, caustic systems and obstructive cabals in place.

Response from SABC

The SABC has sent *Bizcommunity* this press release as right of reply, in response to the above article:

Radio 2000 is pleased to announce that it has made a few changes to its lineup, in order to remain competitive and relevant to audiences across all race groups. New additions to the Radio 2000 family include Phat Joe, Nonala Tose, Nathi Ndamase on its midweek shows and Carol Ofori on weekends.

Phat Joe will start on Monday 08 April 2019 and Carol Ofori will only join the Radio 2000 family on 01 May 2019. The new lineup gives balance to the previous predominantly male heavy prime time slots, with Nonala co-hosting with Phat Joe the Morning Drive from 06h00 until 09h00, Monday to Friday. Nathi Ndamase has joined Glen Lewis on the Afternoon Drive between 15h00 and 18h00, Monday to Friday. Justice 'Just Ice' Ramohlola has moved to the 19h30 – 22h00 slot, Monday to Thursday. Reggie Philander will join the station from 01 May 2019 to present the programme 'Brunch' between 09h00 and 12h00 on weekends.

The station will also automate 00h00 – 06h00 Monday – Monday from May 2019. Radio 2000 continuously aims to grow its listenership across the country and has adopted a 3 pronged approach of delivering its content on air, online as well as on the ground activations. This approach is the station's way of fulfilling the SABC's vision 'to become the leading, credible voice and face of the nation and the continent'.

The full lineup of Radio 2000 is as follows:

Weekdays	Weekdays
06h00 – 09h00	Phat Joe and Nonala Tose
09h00 – 12h00	David Mashabela

12h00 – 15h00	Ntombi Phiri
15h00 – 18h00	Glen Lewis and Nathi Ndamase
18h00 – 19h30	Robert Marawa
19h30 – 22h00	Justice Ramohlola (Mondays – Thursdays)
19h30 – 21h00	Bongani Nxumalo (Friday)
22h00 – 00h00	Bambo Johnson (Mondays – Thursdays)
21h00 – 00h00	Shawny B (Fridays)
00h00 – 03h00	#SoothingSoundsOnRadio2000
03h00 – 06h00	#SoothingSoundsOnRadio2000
Weekends	
06h00 – 09h00	Carol Ofori
09h00 – 12h00	Reggie Philander
12h00 – 15h00	Shawn Bickerton (Saturdays), Bambo Johnson (Sundays)
15h00 – 18h00	Romy Titus
18h00 – 21h00	Bongani Nxumalo(Saturdays), Ike Phaahla (Sundays)
21h00 - 00h00	Tsheko Mbsito
00h00 – 03h00	#SoothingSoundsOnRadio2000
03h00 – 06h00	#SoothingSoundsOnRadio2000

ABOUT BONNIE RAMAILA

Bonnie Ramaila is an international communication consultant. She previously worked in the private and public sector as a communication expert. She runs a consultancy that specialises in bespoke communication for niche clients and individuals. Services include communication and media advice, facilitation, publicity and strategy development. She writes in her personal capacity.

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