

# INSIDE RADIO

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f t r THE MOST TRUSTED NEWS IN RADIO

**Newcomer Compass Media charts a way through choppy radio waters.** A year ago it was arguably the worst time to launch a radio company in decades. But despite a recessionary storm, network radio



veteran executive Peter Kosann's Compass Media Networks debuted with a line-up of sports play-by-play and talk talent. One year later, the company is approaching profitability. "It's been a year of hard work and focus, and the dynamics of the marketplace have worked to our advantage," Kosann says. Cash-strapped networks have cut product over the past year, allowing an upstart to cherry pick programs that needed more development. "There's not been a lot of nurturing in radio for the last five to ten years because everyone is so debt laden," Kosann says. Research and promotion budgets have been cut too, with syndicated talent's market visits becoming a rarity rather than routine. While Compass isn't yet in the black, Kosann notes it is "ahead of schedule" on a course toward profitability and credits Dial Global's sales efforts.

A year after launching, the network now has about 1,000 affiliates. Kosann says he's most thankful for affiliates and programming suppliers that took a chance on his company. Compass Media hopes to grow its station list with the announcement that it has secured a line-up of NCAA Football games for next fall, including five of the seven conference champions and historic rivalries such as Oklahoma-Texas and USC-Notre Dame. "This is a game changer," Kosann beams. "Our schedule of games is the absolute best in the marketplace." Looking ahead, he sees Compass more active in the talk and sports play-by-play space and won't rule out going for additional NFL rights when Westwood One's contract expires, or the NCAA if the rumors of March Madness coverage going into play hold true. "The industry trends are such that the appetite for syndication and spoken word content is increasing," Kosann says, pointing to the fast-growing FM sports and talk formats. "That bodes well for content companies."





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