

An Angry Talk Radio Climate Won't Change Todd Schnitt's Approach To Entertaining

"The mainstream talk radio environment may be toxic but Todd Schnitt won't allow it to temper his enthusiasm entertain audiences and stay true to who he is."



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The evolution of Todd "MJ" Schnitt's career across stations, formats, decades and companies is truly a testament to proving that truth always wins. His respect and unique dynamic with his listeners proves his commitment to utilizing growth and development opportunities within radio is stronger than ever. Among his success, accomplishments and accolades in media, perhaps the most significant contribution is his ability to cut through the bull-Schnitt to candidly speak to his audience while honoring the values most important to him.

Through his desire to continue applying innovative approaches to bolster the broadcast medium, Schnitt, known by many as MJ from his CHR Morning Show based in Tampa, added another host role to his weekly routine. This mic was reserved for [The Schnitt Show](#), airing weekday afternoons on news/talk stations. The eloquence he exhibited allowed for him to manage the challenge before him—as his laser-focus, drive and unmatched work ethic effortlessly aligned to make way for such refreshing programming, especially within the news/talk space.

Schnitt’s philosophy took shape as he remained committed to bringing listeners honest content, genuine intention and authentic communication; as opposed to the fleeting, hollow guise achieved through the outdated style of pandering by way of a scripted format. The more Todd exposed his thoughts, takes, beliefs and ultimately, his truth, the bigger the listenership—until Schnitt’s NTS program was captivating audiences in syndication in over sixty markets.

Having studied and developed a keen understanding of the potential pitfalls that could be associated with the news/talk/sports format, Schnitt found a way for his programming to remain dominant, during a time that so many other shows/stations were suffering. Todd was able to identify, comprehend and prepare for what inevitably was hiding in the blind spot for others around the industry, essentially, the Achilles Heel of NTS shows/stations nationwide: format fatigue.

The rigid confines that so many hosts were painstakingly committed to were rooted in fear-based thoughts. The concern of being lost in the shuffle if they failed to carve out their piece of the market quickly enough. This thought process may have had genuine and honesty peppered in the motives however, the rationale lacked the only standard that is absolutely necessary, if not required— creating a connection with the listeners: transparency.

Schnitt’s programs exemplify the importance of this fundamental principle and the value of flexibility, relatability and honesty with listeners which plays an undeniably important role in the foundation for Todd Schnitt’s career in multiple formats.



His eclectic resume paired with his insatiable appetite for radio continues to inspire media junkies to raise the bar while fostering transparency, both on and off the air: a refreshing rarity to the radio medium. Despite the responsibilities, contacts, managing relationships, prep, hosting and social media responsibilities, Todd ‘MJ’ Schnitt agreed to join me to discuss the return of the MJ Morning Show, news talk as a format, advice for others and what’s in store for the medium in the near future.

CP: First, I wanted to congratulate you on the return of MJ. How has the first month been going?



TS: The first month and a half or so has been tremendous. The response has been enormous. And it's been fantastic to get such an amazing welcome.

CP: The reunion podcast received a lot of attention. You certainly want that kind of warm reception. How did the crew manage though to rekindle the chemistry and sound like you hadn't skipped a beat?

TS: The podcast was designed as really a quick reunion. Once we did it, there was an outpouring of people demanding more regular podcasts. Next, we began a biweekly podcast, and then we started doing a weekly podcast in October. I believe, late October of 2019; now, I believe we can wrap up the MJ standalone podcasts. I think that this week's might be our last one.

CP: Because then, listeners can just catch your show in the morning or the podcast or the show itself each day?

TS: Exactly. The show is on daily, Monday through Friday, 6 to 10am on Q105. The legendary WRBQ-FM in Tampa. The station where Scott Shannon invented The Morning Zoo. WRBQ and the history that this station has is tremendous. For us to relaunch the MJ Morning Show on Q105 is a natural progression because it's an 80s and 90s station. The audience that grew up with us are now the core demographic of the radio station.

CP: I was amazed with how you would host The MJ Morning Show from 6-10am, then turn around hours later to run The Schnitt Show. To be the lead host of two different style shows, I wondered, how do you keep your head in a CHR morning show and a conservative news talk program every day?

TS: I've always been able to delineate the content between the two shows. The MJ Morning Show is more lifestyle, entertainment, personal experience and current events; whereas The Schnitt Show was certainly more current events, but you definitely get plenty of MJ that creeps into The Schnitt Show.



CP: With the development of bringing back MJ, are there any big changes or additions that you're trying to implement? In terms of prep or your routine?

TS: No, it's pretty much business as usual. Nothing has really changed. I just formulate each show on a daily basis just based on what's available and what's going on, and what happened in our lives.

CP: You've been vocal on your show about being an independent conservative with libertarian values. I don't know if you're a Parks and Rec fan, but I like to think of you like a Ron Swanson, except you carry a microphone instead of a mustache. Have you ever felt like it was difficult to appeal to some of the more staunchly conservative listeners or P1's that listen to your show, with it being broadcast on dozens of stations nationwide?

TS: On The Schnitt Show, I just call it the way I see it. The audience knows that I'm a conservative Republican, but I'm also an entertainer first. I'm not swayed by what the audience wants to hear. I just deliver my opinions and what I think is correct. I can't do a show based on what the audience might want. I have to do a show from my heart and mind.

CP: I'm sure you experienced some of that in New York, a very liberal area. You were talking last week about being a realist as it pertains to the election results. During what's been considered by many to be a tense time, with divisive topics dominating our country, what do you think the most important thing for news talk hosts to remember as they're talking to their listeners?

TS: Ultimately, you have to be true to yourself. A lot of hosts these days are held hostage by what they think they're supposed to broadcast and what they think they're supposed to deliver. There are a lot of talk show hosts who are not speaking honestly and will not call true balls and strikes as they see them.

CP: You've had a lengthy career between MJ and Schnitt. What would you point to as some of your more significant moments or special memories from your time on the air?



TS: For The Schnitt Show, I think it'd be George W. Bush's administration, and their decision to launch military action in both Afghanistan and Iraq, plus the election, and eight years of the Obama administration. Then of course there's the campaigning, election, and four years of Trump which really changed everything.

CP: When you think about the news talk radio business in 2020, what do you think are the biggest issues facing conservative talk radio? Are there issues in the industry that you feel are becoming more inflammatory (for example, Twitter/Facebook vs. Parler, censorship issues, etc.)? Will we always have a left vs. right media battlefield?

TS: There is a dynamic that has been brewing for quite some time where the extremes are so polarized, the far right and the far left seem to have zero tolerance for any other ideas, even those that are more centrist. And, I believe that's problematic because not everything lies on the fringes and the extremes. The fact is, this is really kind of a centered up nation for the most part, but the most noise is being made on the extreme wings. There's a degree of hijacking going on. Unfortunately, some folks take things too seriously these days. While there are some very serious topics and very intense subject matters that I cover, you can still present it in an entertaining way without an angry delivery. The mainstream talk radio environment has become remarkably toxic. We need to work on reducing the toxicity while being informative, but most importantly, entertaining.

CP: What is your philosophy for dealing with those who think you're not conservative enough or that you're too conservative for certain people because their personal opinions aren't reflected in yours?

TS: Part of the toxicity that I described, has been if I didn't agree with Trump on everything, or if I criticize Trump, whether it's a policy or whether it's his behavior, I would get attacked by a certain portion of my listenership. People would threaten to stop listening. They call me a RINO (Republican In Name Only). They call me a fake Republican. And that kind of personifies the poisonous landscape that has been developed, there is a lack of tolerance for a diversity of opinion, even within a perceived political group.

CP: When it comes to news talk media figures, who are some people who have been influential to you in your news career?

TS: I came out of entertainment radio, and while I listened to news talk quite a bit, I tried to develop my own persona and just build on my existing personality. But of course, there's Rush Limbaugh who helped reshape talk radio and is deservedly credited with saving a lot of AM radio stations across the country. I can remember as a kid growing up in Virginia Beach, Virginia, a talk show host named Charlie Huddle who made an impression on me. There was also DXing at night, and hearing Larry Glick out of WBZ in Boston.



photo courtesy of South Tampa Magazine

CP: For people interested in pursuing a career in radio, specifically the News/Talk radio format —where you're on the air 40 plus minutes, an hour, what advice would you pass along to them?

TS: I love radio. I've always loved radio. I was bitten by the radio bug, probably at about five or six years of age when I was growing up in New York City, prior to moving to Virginia. My

station back then was WABC, when it was a famous top 40 brand. I just honed in on the magic of what came out of the speakers in the car, or at home, or my little mustard colored RCA 9v transistor pocket radio. That made an impression on me and drove me towards this career path. I have an extreme love for radio and am still in love with the medium. I wouldn't discourage anybody from exploring this career path, but I'd be lying if I didn't say that the radio business on many levels is not the way it used to be. With the rif's (reduction in force) and gutting of many great radio companies and stations, it's a very difficult environment. It's not for the faint of heart.



I'll say this, I'm thankful that I've experienced several decades of amazing radio operations, and am very excited about my new home for The MJ Morning Show and The Schnitt Show-Beasley Media Group. Beasley Media wants to continue to build an environment where talent is appreciated, and that's all any on-air performer can ask for.

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