

# The Industry According To....Dave & Mahoney, Compass Media Networks

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Thank you for checking out '[The Industry According To](#)'. This series runs each Tuesday, and features radio and record industry executives, managers, programmers, talent, artists, and professionals from all areas of the business world. To be considered as a future guest, email me at [keithblackboxgroup@gmail.com](mailto:keithblackboxgroup@gmail.com).

Today we check in with the hosts of a the very successful syndicated morning show, "**The Dave and Mahoney Show**." Alongside **Audrey Drake** and Producer **Chris Jackson**, the team has piled up an impressive list of affiliates, mastering the ability to get their content to work across different formats and psychographic groups. In the latest Barrett Media Top 20 of 2025 lists, the show was voted in the Top 5 for both [Alternative](#) and [Classic Rock](#). Quite an accomplishment, as voted on by peers.

"*The Dave and Mahoney Show*" broadcasts live from Phoenix. Their show is heard across the country on Rock, Alternative and Classic Rock brands in Las Vegas, San Diego, Reno, Albuquerque and many more.



So, let's dive in.

## What the Real Secret?

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**Keith:** What's the real secret to winning in morning radio beyond just talent and smarts?

**Dave:** Picking the right team and the right content for that team. Being in a room with anyone for 4+ hours a day can be a grind if you're not creating content with people you like and respect. We are very fortunate to have a talented team of people that genuinely like and care for one another. And then finding the content that will resonate with those key players. It doesn't have to be the biggest story of the day. It just has to be something that will get a passionate response from one of the cast members.

**Mahoney:** Us having the combined tallest and pound for pound best pompadour hairstyles out of any radio show in America hasn't hurt us either.

## The Morning Show Model

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**Keith:** The model isn't broken but it also hasn't evolved much in decades — 6a-10a, stopsets strategically placed, shows with familiar cast arrangements covering similar topics, benchmarks at specific times, all built around linear listening. If you were hired to reinvent radio's morning show model, what would you change?

**Dave:** I think social media has shown us the way. Creating clocks, bits, etc., is still important, but one thing we've struggled with as an industry is how we promote it. Not every break is going to be a home run. That's ok. Are we showcasing the highlights as far and wide as possible?

How many people do we know that say they are fans of Theo Von or Tom Segura's podcast and have never listened to a single full episode? A lot. Because they see the clips and know they produce funny or relatable content. We need to promote to those listeners that are in the market, to give us that invaluable TSL and occasions, but they need to know where to start their search on the dial by giving them a level of familiarity with the show.

## The Belief Radio Still Believes

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**Keith:** What's the one belief radio — especially morning shows — still believe about itself that isn't true anymore?

**Dave:** That having the platform itself is enough. "If I could just get on a winning station or into a major market I would be set" gets said way too much. Radio still has incredible reach, but we don't win by default of being on anymore. Everyone has a platform, and we have to stick and move with the audience. That's not just a challenge for morning shows. Seemingly infallible platforms go away or morph overnight – but if we are creating good content and never stop seeking the audience, we will win. Morning shows know how to grind out content nonstop which is what kills off so many potential competitors.

**Mahoney:** Being a historic winner isn't good enough. Just because you've hit #1 at some point in your career doesn't mean you can ride that out for another 5 to 10 years. We have to be focused on what comes next and how we can do it again but better.

## National vs. Local

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**Keith:** The industry debates local vs. syndication constantly. From your vantage point, what advantages do a syndicated show bring to a station? How do you make content feel local across several markets?

**Dave:** There is great value in both. Being a syndicated show with a couple of decades of experience means we can offer a product that takes a lot of the guess work out of production. We've vetted and tested our content and bits, and know what works with our cast of characters. While highly localized content is great, a lot of daily local news is more doom and gloom than the deeply unserious content that our show thrives off of.

**Mahoney:** Great chemistry is universal. It doesn't matter what city you're in, people just want to laugh and have some fun before the workday starts beating them down.

## Audience Trust + Connection

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**Keith:** With more competition than ever for attention, what's the leader in making a listener repeatedly choose a morning show today — laughter, authenticity, vulnerability, strong opinions, subject matter, or something else?

**Dave:** We are all complicated human beings that deal with all of the things you listed. All of us on the show come in with an open mind each day about what each member of the show is dealing with. Many days we just dive right into life's least important issues, which is what listeners expect from us. Other days we are talking about losing a loved one, fertility issues, money problems, or what to do about that little a\*\*hole that is bullying my 7 year old. We have an overall tone for the show of levity, but we are living our lives in real time like everyone else. When those more serious moments call, we lean in.

**Mahoney:** I walk into the studio every morning trying to make my partners laugh. If we're genuinely laughing, listeners know it's real. I think that's part of what keeps them coming back.

## Personality vs. Content

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**Keith:** Both can't be 10s. Please rate individual personality first, then content subject matter on scales of 1 to 10, with 10 being "very important" and 1 being "not important," and explain why you gave the ratings.

**Dave:** Individual Personality = 10. Content Subject Matter = 5.

The personality traits and quirks always lead the way for us. If I told you owning a pet cow was a content choice, you may think that's pretty dumb...until you hear how passionately Audrey talks about that. Is doing a quarter hour on Arbys a wise choice? Probably not, unless you understand that no living human loves The Meats more than Mahoney.

The dumbest content choices, if they elicit a passionate response from a cast member, can become some of the stickiest.

**Mahoney:** Individual Personality = 10. Content Subject Matter = 3.

I'm lucky to work with two of my closest friends who let me be myself. I never feel like I have to hold back how weird I really am. Their trust makes everything easier and it's why personality will always matter more than subject matter. People connect with people, not topics.

## Everything is Political

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**Keith:** Many shows are scared to touch sensitive topics but even having an opinion on the Super Bowl halftime show comes with a perceived political label. How do you handle sensitive topics knowing you broadcast in red and blue states?

**Dave:** Oh boy do we have some opinions on politics...but we make a conscious decision to avoid overtly political content. It's because there is so, so, so much of that everywhere else. I would rather be the place that people can come to get a breather from the nonstop barrage of that than think that I need to espouse some wisdom that's going to change the world. I think there are more and more people that just need a damn break from it all. We want to be that for them.

**Mahoney:** If I ever decide to get political on our show, it'll be about the most important issue facing this country... the shocking lack of bidets in both public and private spaces.

## Cast Roles

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**Keith:** The "Dick, Dork, Deer" roles model was something countless shows used to be built around and while yours may not precisely follow that model, it's clear all of you understand the roles within the show. Please explain the importance of role definition and how they relate to your overall success?

**Dave:** I'm the driver, the instigator, and the "voice of reason" in most cases. Mahoney is the bombastic one that has the hilarious take you never see coming. Audrey will call anyone (especially us) out on their BS in a hot second. But it's more than that; for example...I'm the one who is supposed to have it all together, but honestly, I'm a hot mess at times too. Mahoney can unexpectedly be the most empathetic and understanding one in the room. Audrey will offer up the most intimate details of her life, despite the tough exterior.

**Mahoney:** We all take turns being the dick, the dork, and the deer at different times. For us, the show is the real star. We each have our roles but at the end of the day, we're doing everything we can to make everyone else sound better. When you put the show first that's when the best moments happen.

## Who's Leading the Huddle?

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**Keith:** Being on multiple stations with several PDs and ownership groups, is anyone coaching the show? Who tells you what's sticking or not? How do you decide to adjust when something is working in Phoenix but struggling elsewhere?

**Dave:** We have worked with Mike Stern for many years now. He has been an invaluable resource for the show. Our take on coaching is simple: Even the most experienced players need a good coach and they have to show up to practice. Because every game (or in our case market) needs to have the proper game plan. Our PD at KSLX, David Moore, has been a wonderful sounding board these last few years. So many affiliate PDs know exactly what's right for their market. It's our job to put the ball where they want it.

**Mahoney:** We've also been fortunate to work with Steve Renyolds and Mike Peterson over the years. Each of them brought a different perspective and helped us grow as talent and as people. Having coaches who are passionate and honest with you makes a huge difference.

## Personal Lives

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**Keith:** Your personal lives are very much woven into the show. How do you decide what's off limits and what's interesting enough to spend time with on-air?

**Dave:** We are all respectful of the other cast members' choices of what they want to share, but literally nothing is off limits. We've talked tragedies, divorce, suicide, foreclosure, miscarriages, and so much more. We also have a motto that "life is content" – meaning that if someone accidentally craps themselves or forgets their sex toy in their luggage before going through TSA, it's going to have its place on the show.

**Mahoney:** Nobody likes someone pretending to be perfect. We will always highlight our flaws and failures. The great thing about that is the calls we get letting us know we aren't alone.

**Keith:** Has airing personal details ever created unforeseen problems?

**Dave:** Me talking shit about my mother-in-law coming to crash with us for three weeks at the time hasn't been a GREAT idea, but I'll sort that out with Shelly over a bottle of wine.

**Mahoney:** I'm currently banned from my HOA ZOOM meetings but other than that noreal unforeseen problems.

## The Subject That Matters Most

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**Keith:** For young and aspiring shows, if you could waive a magic wand and make one piece of overused subject matter illegal to air, and a second that is a “must master” area, what are they?

**Dave:** If you don’t have an angle on something, you can probably skip it. Find the things, no matter how trivial, that you really care about. No one is going to care that you are aware the Grammy’s happened last night, everyone is. But if you’re on a GLP-1 or weight loss journey of your own and you have a take on Jelly Roll losing 300 pounds, your listeners are going to remember that.



**Mahoney:** Nobody likes someone pretending to be perfect. We’re honest about our flaws and failures and the best moments are when listeners call and say, “I thought I was the only one.” That’s when you know the connection is real.

## The Best Story Ever

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**Keith:** What’s the one “The Dave and Mahoney Show” story we need to hear? Guest explosion, mayhem, big mistake, wild success?

**Dave:** One of my personal favorites is the night at our annual holiday concert in Las Vegas many years ago when Mahoney got too drunk, tried to stage drive, accidentally grabbed our bosses ass, got ditched by his girlfriend (who is now his wife), barfed in my car, and had me drop him off at the wrong house...who then called the cops on him and his accomplice (turns out I was “the accomplice in the car”)...and that horsin’ son of a bitch still made it to work at 6a the next day.

**Mahoney:** About 20 years ago when I was leaving to do my first morning show at 91X, Dave and I got into a faux Muay Thai boxing match on Fremont Street during my going away party. Dave “accidentally” landed a shot that destroyed my gallbladder. He claims those gallstones had always been there and I spent the next five days in the hospital and checked myself out early so I could drive all night to make it on time for my first show there. My bowels have never fully forgiven him.

**Dave:** I saved him from those deadly gallstones that night. He owes me his life.

To learn more about carrying “*Dave and Mahoney*”, click [here](#).

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