Audio Streaming
Radionomy: Streaming For Everyone

by Mark Shander

[December 2014] Many stations have tried streaming to expand their audience. – only to find the outlay in time and money too high for what they got. Mark Shander checked out a new service and says it is worth a look.

Perhaps you have seen the ads for Radionomy. They seem to be focused at people who would like to start their own radio station, and offer the tools to stream a station at no cost.

That could be rather disruptive to the streaming industry.

So why did the company recently send out an email blast of an online Website newsletter that very heavily targets radio programming executives and talent, etc. Why are they targeting broadcasters, with their "free streaming" offers to professional broadcasters whose entry into radio streaming still carries some rather high costs?

DISRUPTIVE INNOVATION

It is because Radionomy is working to succeed in the online radio broadcast/streaming industry

by using a relatively new business technique called "disruptive innovation."

The term means they are intentionally disrupting the existing business model in order to establish a business leadership by offering a unique model that changes the way "it's always been done." They want to make it more desirable (usually financially) to do business with them than competitors that do not offer as many goods and/or services.

Radionomy's business model is affecting several industries at once, which puts them within the true definition of a disruptive business.

MITIGATING STREAMING COSTS

Radionomy is disrupting the streaming industry by changing the way broadcasters are required to think about paying for streaming bandwidth.

Options in the past have always required careful budgetary consideration to handle the various costs related to program streaming.

Among them: the cost of music programming, cost of commercial talent and programming during breaks (or making sure the ability to switch out to alternate commercials or "fill" is set up). Then there is the tracking of what has been played, the reporting, and the fee submissions to the right groups.

It is okay if you want to have more than one station, and it is okay if you have a few hundred listeners, a few thousand listeners, or even a few hundred thousand listeners. You are promised unlimited listeners, HD Sound, and *no cost*, with very few "gotcha's" or things to worry about down the road.

Radionomy has got you covered, with a mix of a proprietary network, Content Delivery Network, Audio Distribution to Mobile Devices, Distribution Assistance to places you want to be, like iTunes and TuneIn, as well as a bunch of other places. Radionomy's sheer size and volume of stations can help make your audio available as a resource in places where you may not have even known there was an audience for you to serve.

WHO ARE THESE DISRUPTORS?

So where did these folks come from?

Perhaps you remember the discussions we used to have on the broadcast boards regarding which streaming codecs and which servers (both consumer and pro) were the best on the Internet? For example, we used to analyze RealAudio (then Real), WindowsMedia, Ogg, Shoutcast (Server), Winamp (the player with plug-ins), as well as AAC+ and the like. Later on, we found out that AOL had acquired Winamp and, sometime after, they decided to stop development and divest themselves of the streaming stuff.

Then Radionomy acquired Winamp and Shoutcast, as well as other companies, displayed on their website, http://radionomy.com. (If the site pops up in French, just check the bottom of the page for English). In 2014, Radionomy won the 2014 "Best Overall Digital Strategy Award" from RAIN (http://www.rainnews.com) – they were up against iHeart Media and NPR.

WHAT DOES A USER GET?

Radionomy provides a number of free streaming services that even can be used to drive traffic to your main station.

Not just broadcasters, anyone can set up a radio station and partner with Radionomy to create an online radio station. They provide you all of the tools you need to run a major market radio station, including one of the most elaborate (and deep tracks) licensed music libraries available to any broadcast entity in the USA.

You can actually make two or three sound-alike stations to drive streaming traffic to your broadcast station, as long as the stream traffic remains above a certain threshold nine months down the road. In fact, users are encouraged to create a whole tuner-full of streams, including mobile apps, and some have done just that.

HOW IS THIS MODEL SUPPORTED?

The Radionomy service is a barter.

While they do not charge a penny for the streaming service, instead of bartering programming, Radionomy barters the streaming service for airtime within your broadcast, at a rate of two minutes every half hour. All you need to do is make just four minutes per hour available to them and they will give you an unlimited number of free streams indefinitely, so they say.

Furthermore, after hitting a particular number of listener hours, virtual station owners start sharing in the revenue that comes from the advertising that Radionomy airs during the breaks that run on those stations - and you can sell your own local ads too.

You may have to reformat your programming clock a bit for Radionomy to insert commercials into your stream. But it is definitely worth it for many of us who have been spending more for streaming each month than we are for some employees.

If you sign up, nine months down the road, your streams will be audited, and any that have less than a certain amount of traffic – the required level is fairly modest – you may be asked to pay a small amount for your streaming to keep your low volume streams up.

Interestingly, it is even possible to start the nine-month ticker over again if you go back, make some changes, and resubmit a business plan for how things would be different this time around.

According to Radionomy's leadership they are all about being creative and trying new things, They say they never want someone to feel stuck and are very easy to work with; they even will help you attract an audience and build an audience using techniques that may easily translate to your terrestrial station as well.

A COMPLETE SERVICE

Besides providing streaming and a full-featured scheduling tool for the station, Radionomy provides a branded player for your mobile listeners. It works on iOS devices and Android Devices.

All in all, Radionomy offers broadcasters free streaming with unlimited bandwidth, unlimited listeners for unlimited hours, custom mobile apps with your logos and art that keeps your stations with your listeners as they move through their day. Additional benefits include no music licensing costs and one of the broadcast Industry's largest licensed and tagged legal music libraries at your radio station's disposal; you can even upload your own music or plug in your air signal.

Next, we will take a look at what it takes to put a station on the air using the Radionomy tools, how easy it is to stream our terrestrial or HD stations, and compare the sound of the free service to what we are paying for at the Phoenix stations where I am working right now.

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Mark Shander, KB7ZHT, is a regular BDR contributor and a computer show host and syndicator. He is based in Phoenix, AZ and can be contacted at mark@shander.com

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