

Pack 113, Item 9

Type: Broadcaster how-to guide

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**BH2 – Developing a run sheet**

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**What is a run sheet?**

A run sheet (also called a running-order sheet or a program lineup) is a detailed plan for a specific episode of a radio program. It enables the host, producer, technician, and any others involved in the program to coordinate their actions around a shared schedule. This is especially critical when episodes require a producer or a technician to play recorded audio or turn mics on and off. But even if you are putting together the program alone, a run sheet is an important tool to keep all your segments organized and on schedule.

**How can a run sheet help me serve my listeners better?**

* A predictable and consistent run sheet is attractive to listeners because it provides them with a sense of comfort, familiarity, and belonging. They know what is coming next and they can look forward to it.
* A run sheet is a standardized but flexible plan for your farmer program that can be tailored to specific episodes. Using the run sheet as a guide for each episode will help you ensure that every episode of the program contains segments that educate, inform, and engage your listeners.

**How can it help me produce better programs?**

* A well-organized run sheet ensures that the program runs smoothly every week—with no unplanned breaks or gaps.
* The run sheet serves as a reference so that anyone in the studio can pick up the program if necessary.
* The run sheet ensures that every member of the production team understands the details of the program from start to finish.
* The run sheet reduces your planning time because you already know how many segments you need to fill, and only a few will change for individual episodes.

**How do I get started?***(Learn more about these and other points in the Details section below)*

1. Design your radio program
2. Develop a communication objective
3. Create a detailed run sheet
4. Gather material for the program
5. Use the clock during the program

**Details**

*Please note: for the purposes of this BH2, FRI uses “program” to refer to the farmer program as a whole, and “episode” to refer to individual (weekly or daily) broadcasts of the program.*

**Design your radio program**

A common format for farmer programs is the “magazine” or “multi-format” program. Magazine programs can incorporate many different elements, for example, field interviews, studio discussions, phone-in or phone-out segments, vox pops, dramas, and more. Run sheets are very useful for magazine programs because they make it easier to arrange the segments in a logical order that fits the allotted time period. For more information about designing a radio program, read [FRI’s BH2 on Radio Formats](http://scripts.farmradio.fm/radio-resource-packs/package-95-researching-and-producing-farmer-focused-programs/radio-formats/).

**Develop a communication objective**

The communication objective names the topic you are covering in an episode, states why you are covering it, and what you want the audience to understand after listening to the program. It should be short and straight to the point. It should address the topic of the episode, the purpose of covering the topic, and who it concerns. Ask yourself what you want farmers to learn from the episode and how you plan to achieve that goal. Each element of the program should relate back to the communication objective.

Here is an example of a communication objective for an episode about guinea fowl farming:

*To engage women and youth and inform them of all the economic opportunities within the guinea fowl value chain.*

Here is another example for an episode about Fall armyworm:

*At the end of this episode, listeners will be able to differentiate the Fall armyworm from other pests and manage the use of chemicals.*

**Complete the run sheet**

A run sheet should include details about *who* is involved, *what* the program elements are, and *how* each element is presented. Print and distribute hard copies of any scripts or information documents with your co-host and guests as necessary. It’s a good practice to create a rough draft of the run sheet well ahead of time (either handwritten or on the computer) and share it with members of the production team who might want to suggest changes and additions before the program goes to air. You could use our empty Farm Radio run sheet template provided at the end of this document, or you could use your own version if you have one, and make printed copies to distribute at your radio station.

First, you must design the beginning, middle, and ending sections of your program and plan which elements to include in each section.

* The beginning establishes contact with the listener. You should introduce yourself, the name of the program, and the name of the station. You should also play the sig tune, welcome listeners, and describe the main topic of the episode. The introduction is like a menu—it lists the main elements of the episode (for example, studio discussion, phone-in, mini-drama, etc.) as well as any feature segments in that particular episode.
* The middle carries most of the content—interviews with resource persons, phone-ins with farmers, vox pops from the field, etc.
* The end summarizes the episode, including any key information. It informs listeners about next week’s episode.

Here is an example of a simple run sheet for a 45-minute program:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Name of program: Time with farmersName of radio station: Host: Producer: Technician: |
|  | Communication objective: *To engage women and youth and inform them of all the opportunities within the guinea fowl value chain.* |
| Time (live) | Time tape | Source (live or tape) | Topic | Format | Who  | Back-time |
| 30 sec.  |  | Tape |  | Sig tune | Technician | 00:30  |
| 2 mins |  | Live | Welcome remarks,introduce topic of the episode,mention studio guests | Intro  | Host  | 02:30 |
| 1 min. | 3 min  | Tape | Voices from farmers in the Yendi community in the Northern Region of Ghana | Vox pop | Technician | 06:30 |
| 8 mins |  | Live | Interview with Mr. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_, veterinary services officer at the Ministry of Food and Agriculture | Information interview (studio) | Host | 16:30 |
| 7 mins |  | Live | What are you learning from this episode? Do you have any questions for Mr. \_\_\_\_\_? | Phone-in | General public, subject matter specialist, host | 24:30  |
| 30 sec | 4:30 mins | Live | Market and weather information  | Script | Reporter | 31:30 |
| 1 mins | 9 mins | Tape | Ms. \_\_\_\_\_\_ of Tamale talks about her guinea fowl business | Storytelling interview | Host & farmer | 41:30 |
| 3 mins |  | Live | Closing remarks, promo for next week’s episode | Music | Host & technician | 44:30 |
| 30 secs |  | Tape |  | Sig tune  | Technician  | 45:00 |

* **Time (live)** is the amount of time that the live portion of that segment takes.
* **Time (tape)** indicates the amount of recorded time that that segment takes.
* **Source (live or tape)** indicates whether the segment is live or a recorded tape. For example, a host might invite a resource person into the studio for a live interview, but the vox pops will be played via a recording. (The recorded components are digital but since, in the past, they would have been recorded on tape, the term “tape” continues to be used.)
* The **topic** columnshould include a few details about what the segment is about. For example, the vox pop segment features voices of women and men guinea fowl farmers in the Yendi community.
* **Format** indicates the format of the segment (vox pop, drama, phone-in, panel discussion, etc.)
* **Who** indicates which persons are involved in this segment (studio guest, general public, co-host, etc.)
* **Back-time** is where you count up the total time of your episode. For example, if your program is 60 minutes, you will indicate in this column that the phone-in segment will run from the 30th to the 40th minute.

**Gather material for the program**

Gather all your pre-written scripts, scripted interview questions, recorded audio, and music files. Make sure all digital files are properly named so that the technician can easily find them. For more information, read [FRI’s BH2 on saving, organizing, and archiving audio files](http://scripts.farmradio.fm/radio-resource-packs/108-farm-radio-resource-pack/bh2-saving-organizing-archiving-audio-files/).

Before you go to air, produce an episode promo and broadcast it throughout your station’s schedule, especially around programs that are interesting to farmers (local news, market and weather reports, etc.). Read [FRI’s BH2 on how to make ear-catching promos, intros, and extros](http://scripts.farmradio.fm/radio-resource-packs/package-98-groundnuts-the-post-harvest-value-chain/broadcaster-how-to-guide-how-to-create-ear-catching-promos-intros-and-extros/).

Remember that the run sheet is not something that you need to start from scratch each week. Rather, it serves as a guide to help you plan an episode. For example, the order of each segment might stay the same, but you will update the names, topics, and formats. You might also decide to incorporate a mini-drama one week and a panel discussion the next. The run sheet will reflect these changes.

**Use the clock during the program**

A clock is an important component of the run sheet. It helps you stay on top of the program by, for example, scheduling news or commercial breaks at the right time and more generally ensuring that each segment runs on time. Most programs have a designated time slot for each segment (e.g., phone-in, studio interview, vox pops), but a clock will help you follow these timings, making the program tighter and stronger.

Furthermore, the more you understand about using the clock, the easier it will be to produce programs that meet a radio station’s standards and needs. For example, you might produce a great 50-minute program, but it won’t be useful for a 45-minute time slot. Or, you may have a highly engaging recorded interview that runs for 11 minutes, but if your time slot is only 10 minutes, the last minute could be cut off by news, weather, market information, or a commercial break.

***Other points about run sheets***

A run sheet should be easy to read and simple to understand. At the end of this document, there is a blank template for a Farm Radio run sheet. You can add or remove as many rows as necessary for your program.

Try to keep your run sheet consistent every week. Always use the same sig tune. Think about the main types of information your listeners need and any other recurring segments of the program (e.g., farming news, weather information, market information, deep-rooted issues that affect farming in the long term, etc.) and arrange them in the same order every week. This will create a sense of familiarity for your listeners. Once you have chosen something that flows nicely and responds to your listeners’ needs, you can then think about your communication objective and which formats will work best for your weekly topics.

Depending on the tone of your program, you may choose to tightly script every word to ensure accuracy and clarity, or you could script only basic intros and extros and jot down some notes to keep a discussion or an interview on track and on topic.

Remember to include names and details of your interview subjects in the run sheet to avoid making any mistakes on air.

**Where else can I learn about run sheets?**

24 Hours in Newsroom: *Tips for making run sheets* <http://www.24hdansuneredaction.com/en/radio/16-the-running-order-sheet/>

BBC, Undated. *Running order: What is a running order?* <http://www.bbcmundo.com/academy/production/article/art20150407134609399>

99 Percent Invisible, Undated. *Episode 88: The Broadcast Clock* <https://99percentinvisible.org/episode/the-broadcast-clock/>

PRX, Undated. *Network Clocks,* <https://exchange.prx.org/tools-and-resources/for-producers/network-clocks>

**Acknowledgements**

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**Run sheet template from Farm Radio International**

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| --- | --- |
|  | Name of program: Name of radio station: Host: Producer: Technician: |
|  | Communication objective: |
| Time (live) | Time tape | Source (live or tape) | Topic | Format | Who  | Back-time |
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