

My first run at starting a radio network failed

My first “run” at starting a radio network failed. It happened in the fall of 1968 between my final book summer and starting at KLIK.

My idea was a simple one. I’d charge each station an average of \$10.00 per week for feeding them personalized stories from Missouri’s capital city. Bigger stations would pay more; smaller markets less. All I needed was 20 of the some 70 markets to earn \$200 per week; pretty good pay in those days.

So, I started selling; driving east on I-70 toward St. Louis. KWRE, Warrenton signed on; then St. Louis’ powerhouse rocker, KXOK; then Farmington; then another along I-55 and then Cape Girardeau. At Sikeston in the southeast corner of the state I hit a snag. The owner was a board member of the Missouri Broadcaster’s Association and he reported that he thought the MBA was going to start its own news network. He suggested I chat with the President of the MBA over in Joplin -- on the other side of southern Missouri. I remember clearly driving all night for an early morning meeting with this guy who confirmed that most certainly the MBA was getting into the radio network business and there wasn’t a chance I’d succeed.

So, I drove home. Five hours. A failure. And dejected. The next day I applied for and got my \$85/week job at KLIK.

The rest of the story is that the MBA never moved on its scheme. But I’d had a taste; learned tons; and four years later was much wiser.

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