

SHOW PREP 101

Thank you for taking the time to review the information in this document. This is a written version of the information delivered as part of the fourth Soft Skills Workshop of 2025 within the scope of the Radiometres Program. This workshop was entitled “Show Prep 101”, and covered the skills needed to research and prepare a radio program.

Why Do We Prepare Our Shows?

There are many reasons we recommend taking some time to adequately prepare your show each week. Ultimately, doing a little bit of work pays off in bringing three things to your programming: *consistency, professionalism, and growth*.

- **Consistency:** many people listening to your show make CFRC part of their daily or weekly routine. This means they are listening to your show around the same times and settings. They may be at work, in the car, or in between classes, but regardless, it’s our responsibility to welcome them and let them know generally what to expect. What’s more, you deliver an awesome show, and repeat listeners might be able to tell when certain episodes are more prepared than others. Further, a first time listener might not get the best impression from an episode which you haven’t adequately prepared.
- **Professionalism:** We’re looking to strive towards our mandate by delivering quality programming to our community, and continuing to learn more about how to be professional broadcasters, even as volunteers. If you take the time to learn how to prepare for a show now, that saves you a steep learning curve in future opportunities in broadcasting and beyond. Being professional and preparing also means any of your interview guests or co-hosts are in good hands, and are more likely to want to stay in touch and collaborate further. Taking the time to prepare a consistent and polished program also builds a good reputation with the community, and ultimately creates work we are proud to broadcast.
- **Growth:** You work hard and learn a lot, and your program can grow along with you. It’s always a good practice as learners to identify where we would like to improve. Identify areas where you could be further prepared, and think about what you learn from doing your show already. Setting goals may also look like reaching new audiences as you grow as a broadcaster.

How Do I Prepare My Show?

There are three key tenants which go into *how* to prepare: *planning, research, and promotion.*

- Planning:

- The most important element of planning for a music program is to make your playlist beforehand. You need to ensure your content is broadcast appropriate, and that you have enough Canadian and New content. The earshot-online.com charts are one great resource to discover new and Canadian content other stations are spinning across the country.
- Across both music and talk shows, when you have a guest, bring some talking points! Tech Workshop #4, [“Conducting Engaging In-Person & Remote Interviews”](#) is available for more on the technical aspects of interviews and general pointers. Even if you have a guest cohost, make them feel comfortable with a few spots you plan to discuss on air.
- Take a look back at your previous logs to see how much time you tend to spend talking vs spinning music. Plan your playlist accordingly - for the sake of consistency, try not to have 20 minutes of music one week and 50 in another, to use an extreme example. Most music shows aim for about 10 minutes of talk content.
- Be sure to plan out when you’re going to give your station IDs verbally or from the pre-recorded SAM library. For more audio pieces to assemble, consider scanning a website like freepd.com for Creative Commons 0 non-attribution free backing music to use under your talking segments. This can really fill out the sound of your breaks and provide a buffer in case anything goes wrong while live. Consider choosing PSAs and Promos you plan to play ahead of time that might relate to your program or be time sensitive - such as a promo for a show airing a few hours after yours, or an event this coming weekend.

- Research:

- We have to advise against the use of generic or overused music descriptors. Hopefully, your audience agrees with you that a given track was good, but defaulting to just calling the music you’re playing a “banger”, “vibe” or otherwise doesn’t give us much insight. Consider researching points like:

- Who the artist is.
 - Where they are from.
 - What genres they play.
 - Where and when and how that track was released.
 - Pick something specific you like. What about the track speaks to you? Do you have a personal anecdote about that group or song? Do you have a reason the last two tracks are related?
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- For both talk and music programs, if you have a theme, ensure you have the right details about that theme - that you can speak adequately to a genre of music, a period of time, a field of study or a current event as is appropriate. For example, a little reading goes a long way to help bridge the gap between an expert interviewee and a listener, and it's never fun to get embarrassing details wrong on the air about who your guest is. A good research practice is to listen to your favourite CFRC and radio programs and note down what you like about them, then learn from those points.
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- **Promotion:** Lastly, let your research and planning help you promote your show better! This way you can plan to post ahead with details that will make your audience know to tune in - whether you have specials, guests, interviews, show takeovers, crossovers or anything else coming your way. This is all part of growing your show and skills. See [this workshop](#) for more on using social media for your program.