

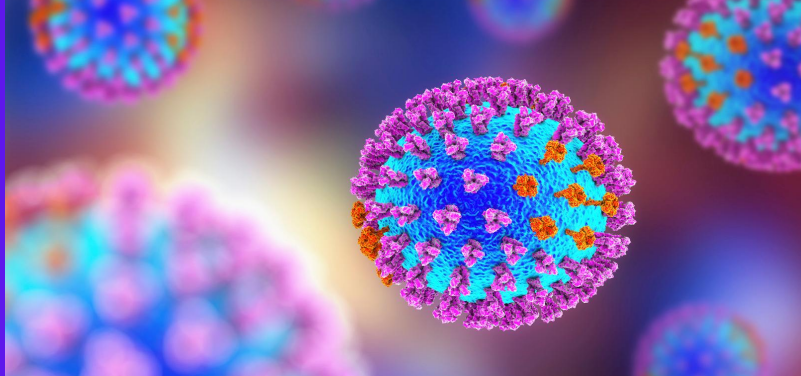
RISING TO THE CONTAGION

SOUTH AFRICA'S
COMMERCIAL
RADIO SECTOR
RESPONSE TO
THE COVID-19
PANDEMIC



A "POWER OF
RADIO" CASE
STUDY

ABOUT THIS REPORT



The SARS-CoV-2 virus (COVID-19) outbreak was first reported in Wuhan, China in December 2019. From January 2020, many countries started to report cases of COVID-19 infections as the virus rapidly spread around the world. In response, countries moved quickly to contain the spread by locking down borders and implementing lockdown measures. On 15 March 2020, a national state of disaster was declared in South Africa, and the country entered into an unprecedented nation-wide lockdown on 27 March 2020.

The South African Government recognized the critical role broadcasters play in keeping the public informed and engaged and designated the sector as an essential service. Commercial radio stations quickly adapted to meet the changing information, entertainment and lifestyle needs of listeners and actively supported government's efforts to contain the virus by keeping citizens informed. This report is a summary of the response by commercial radio broadcasters in South Africa to the COVID-19 pandemic.

ABOUT THE SURVEY

A survey questionnaire was completed by commercial radio stations who are members of the National Association of Broadcasters. The survey covered the period 26 March to 8 May 2020, which corresponds to the first 6 weeks of the lockdown. 20 radio stations responded with a cumulative reach of 12.2 million adult South Africans, and coverage of 30% of South African adults and 32% of adult radio listeners. The radio stations broadcast in all 9 provinces of South Africa, and cumulatively broadcast in 7 of South Africa's official languages.

20

**No. of commercial
radio stations
surveyed**

12.2
million

**No. of South African
adults* listening
each week**

30%

**Coverage of South
African adult*
population**

Radio stations covered in this survey include 947, 702, KFM 94.5, Cape Talk, Kaya FM, Power 98.7, Capricorn FM, YFM, Smile 90.4 FM, Radio iGagasi 99.5, OFM, Metro FM, 5FM, Good Hope FM, Classic 1027, Algoa FM, Jacaranda FM, East Coast Radio, Heart FM, and You FM.

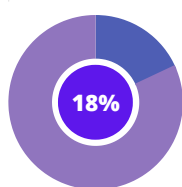
THE POWER OF RADIO



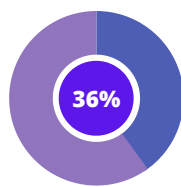
Globally, people are listening to more radio as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak. As community and connection have become more valued, radio's ease of access and ability to connect to local conversations in real-time makes radio the perfect companion during a crisis.

Multiple surveys in South Africa and across various other countries have consistently found that listeners are increasingly turning to radio for trusted news and information and a sense of connection to their community, country and the world.

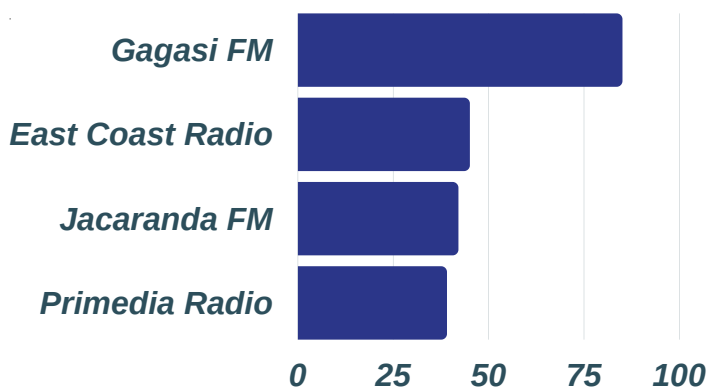
Listening to more radio



All Countries



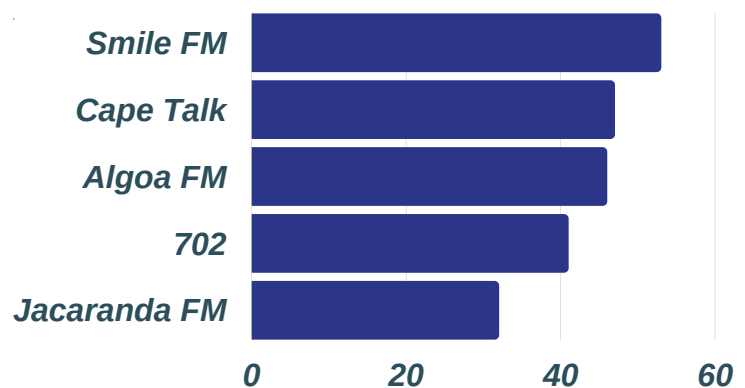
South Africa



"As radio consumption surges, audiences are turning away from disconnected music services."

Entercom Insights: Amid Crisis, Radio Delivers

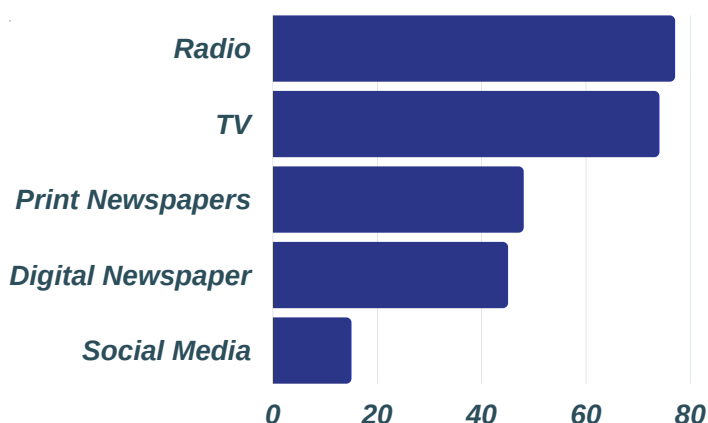
Increase in streaming (%)



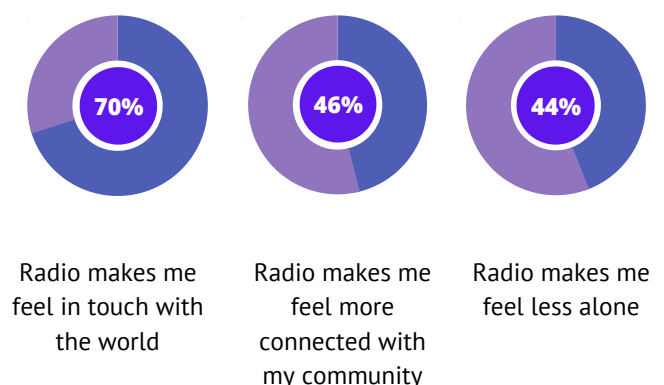
"People seek voices they know during trying circumstances"

Entercom Insights: Amid Crisis, Radio Delivers

Trust for news stories



Connection to community



TRUSTED NEWS AND INFORMATION



32 279
minutes

Listeners rely on radio broadcasters to provide credible and verified information. In light of increasing disinformation circulated during lockdown, broadcasters used their platforms to provide listeners with accurate news and to engage medical and educational experts and government officials to dispel false information. Over 32 279 minutes of COVID-19 related content was broadcast across the 20 commercial stations (an average of 1 614 minutes per radio station) through a variety of formats including dedicated timeslots, content features, news updates, expert interviews, podcasts and digital articles and video content.



Over 7555 minutes of health-related content was broadcast. Topics covered included delivery of health facts and advice to prevent the spread of the virus, general health tips, managing mental health, physical exercise tips and classes, maintaining a healthy diet, management of chronic health issues, and sexual health.

378

**average
minutes
per station**



Over 8918 minutes of educational content was broadcast. Topics covered included subject lessons for matriculants, storytelling for pre-schoolers and young children, financial planning and management, as well as educational information on the regulations, relief measures and citizen rights under lockdown.

446

**average
minutes
per station**



Over 15806 minutes of news and information content was broadcast. These included reports on latest statistics, global news coverage, discussions with experts on facts related to the virus and government relief measures, as well as live broadcasts of the Presidential and Ministerial updates.

790

**average
minutes
per station**

CREATING PUBLIC AWARENESS



Even before the lockdown, radio stations had already taken a proactive approach to broadcast messaging in line with the recommendations from the World Health Organisation (WHO). However, as South Africa entered the nationwide lockdown, informing the public on the measures required to stay safe and helping them make sense of the regulations became one of the most important and immediate tasks.

72 790
PSAs

In total, over 72 790 PSAs were broadcast. These were made up of 28 different PSA executions broadcast in all 9 provinces in 7 of South Africa's official languages.

This included PSA messages from government, NGOs and the radio stations own PSAs, and were supported by discussions with relevant experts to reinforce the messages and provide clarity and deeper explanations where required.

Due to its easy and affordable access, extensive reach, versatile schedules and trusted news, radio was perfectly suited for this task. Recognising this, commercial radio stations responded quickly with an immediate and extensive Public Service Announcements (PSA) campaign.



health

Department:
Health
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



World Health
Organization

A primary aim of the PSA campaign was to support government's effort to inform and educate citizens about the regulations and the steps they can take to help to prevent the spread of the coronavirus. In addition to broadcasting government messages, radio stations also pro-actively developed their own PSA messages informed by the Department of Health, the WHO, health care professionals and other relevant NGOs.

PSAs were broadcast in 7 official languages, including English, isiZulu, Setswana, Afrikaans, xiTsonga, Sepedi and TshiVenda

A diverse range of topics were covered by the PSAs and a wide range of organisations were supported. These included messages that:



encouraged listeners to adopt measures to counter the spread of the virus such as washing hands regularly, wearing masks and social distancing



supported fund raising efforts by encouraging listeners to donate to the solidarity fund, NGOs and other corporate funds providing relief to communities in need



directed listeners to sources of official and credible information



educated listeners about government relief measures and local community support



encouraged listeners to provide support for healthcare and other frontline workers

HELPING COMMUNITIES



WHILE WE CAN'T HOLD HANDS,
WE CAN HOLD HEARTS.

To mark the days of the national lockdown, many of South Africa's radio stations who form part of the NAB will be broadcasting our National Anthem on Friday at 13h00.

Lock in to your favourite frequency and let's stand together.



Radio has a unique ability to mobilise communities due to its live engagement and deep connection with listeners. Commercial radio stations used their platforms to support local businesses, raise awareness about national issues and provide local community support during the lockdown.

SUPPORTING LOCAL BUSINESSES

During the lockdown, small businesses were particularly badly affected. Commercial radio broadcasters supported local businesses by providing free advertising spots for businesses to promote their services, encouraging listeners in local communities to support their favourite local small businesses, and helping businesses to access relief measures. Over 500 businesses were helped through these efforts.



STOP GENDER BASED VIOLENCE

As part of the NAB's Free Radio Initiative, The "Turn Down Your Radio" campaign aimed to raise awareness of the disturbing prevalence of Gender Based Violence ("GBV"). Through promotional messages, discussions, social media messaging and recorded music, listeners were encouraged to help identify and eradicate GBV. Victims and whistle-blowers were also directed to places where they could get help.

PROMOTING LOCAL MUSIC

The local music industry was negatively impacted by the social distancing measures, with all live events being cancelled. Recognising the important role radio plays in the local music industry, radio broadcasters made a collective effort to support local artists by playing more local music, promoting online music events in support of local artists, creating dedicated local music slots and collaborating with TV to create local music broadcast events.



COMMUNITY ASSISTANCE

Through partnerships with a number of corporates and charity organisations, radio broadcasters implemented various relief programmes including food parcel deliveries, fund raising and other community assistance programmes. Some radio stations also provided direct financial relief to families in need.

BUILDING NATIONAL UNITY

In a showing of national pride, unity, and heeding the President's call at the commencement of the lockdown period, NAB radio members launched a National Anthem campaign on 27 March. For three weeks, radio stations played the national anthem at 13h00 to help build social cohesion, unity and solidarity amongst fellow South Africans.



ABOUT THE NAB



This report was produced by the National Association of Broadcasters South Africa (NAB) on behalf of its Commercial Radio Committee members. These include the following radio stations: 947, 702, KFM 94.5, Cape Talk, Kaya FM, Power 98.7, Capricorn FM, YFM, Smile 90.4 FM, Radio iGagasi 99.5, OFM, Metro FM, 5FM, Good Hope FM, Classic 1027, Algoa FM, Jacaranda FM, East Coast Radio, Heart FM, and You FM.

ABOUT THE NAB:

The NAB is a voluntary association that was formed in 1993 to foster and promote the development of a sustainable and robust broadcasting system in South Africa. It supports the principles of democracy, freedom of expression and the diversity of voices. As the leading representative of South Africa's regulated broadcasting industry, the NAB members comprise all three tiers of broadcasters (public, private and community) as well as signal providers and industry associates. It has since the dawn of SA's democracy, engaged in policy and regulatory processes that affect the broadcasting sector. The NAB is funded entirely by its members and responds to a broad range of needs and developments to strengthen and create a favourable climate for a vibrant industry. It established the Broadcasting Complaints Commission of SA (BCCSA) that is recognized by the sector regulator, ICASA.

ABOUT THE CRC:

The NAB Commercial Radio Committee (CRC) is a Standing Committee of the NAB. It represents the majority of all licensed commercial radio broadcasters in South Africa. This includes the three commercial radio services of the public broadcaster (SABC) as well as media groups such as Kagiso Media, Primedia, AME, MSG Afrika, MRC Management Services, eMedia and independents.

