

## DAYNA STEELE

The Art of Doing Business  
by Kay P. Vincent

Those who were here to enjoy some of the finest days of FM radio in Houston during the 1980's and 1990's know well Dayna Steele's voice and personality. Her years as a deejay, spinning songs on the former rock station KLOL-FM (101), built the Number One midday radio show in the fourth largest media market in the country and amassed a huge fan base, known as the "Steeleworkers."

However, that image just scratches the surface of the 'public' persona for Steele, who started her career in radio during an era when women in radio were a true minority.

"I knew I had to work harder, make more appearances and get higher ratings on a consistent basis or management would find a replacement for me," said Steele.

"Although I was good at what I did, I realized early on in my radio career I would have to turn myself into a 'star' with self-marketing and promotion. I said 'yes' to every charity group that invited me to its events, always had pictures to autograph—even if I had to pay for them myself—and made certain I was seen 'hanging with the cool bands' at all the 'in' places in town," Steele added. "Then, I fed that information to all the gossip columns and trade publications. It was definitely excellent training for me and the new show, the Art of Doing Business."

In 1998, Steele left radio to focus completely on TheSpaceStore.com, a successful e-commerce venture she founded in 1997 and sold in 2000 to SPACEHAB, a NASA aerospace contractor. Also motivating her at that point in her career was a desire to spend more time with her family. (Her husband is a research pilot for NASA, and the couple has three young sons and a menagerie of pets.)

In February 2005, a simple call of congratulations to Brent Clanton, general manager at BizRadio1320, opened the door for Steele to return to the airwaves. Clanton asked her to fill in at the last minute, and when the station management heard her on air, they vowed not to rest until they had her back on the air as a regular. She decided to stay, taking on the 3 to 4 p.m. weekday slot. Her new show addresses the unique challenges and unusual solutions in "The Art of Doing Business."

"The telephone call from Dayna again proves that timing is everything," Clanton says, adding that "for years, she has defined the best of Houston's radio market, and we know her many loyal listeners are thrilled to have her back on the air."

Steele believes that this latest chapter is just the next step in her ongoing evolution of career and life.

“When I did rock in the 80’s and 90’s, AM Radio was a joke. Since then, the radio industry has shifted, and Talk Radio has truly legitimized AM and spawned a very lucrative market for entertainment and information,” she says. “I became a talk radio junkie in the late 90’s, because I loved the give and take, the news, the immediate access to information and the personal relationships that are forged between the host and the audience. In that regard, it is very similar to the way I worked in music radio—as a DJ personality, success was often based on my ability to form close relationships with my listeners.”

Getting to play an active role in the ageless story of David vs. Goliath in the fiercely competitive world of mass-market radio, helped influence Steele’s decision to launch her new weekday show.

“The industry has altered so dramatically and is very competitive with the advent of stations owned by conglomerates and satellite radio options. I liked the idea of being a part of a more ‘independent’ station at KXYZ 1320 AM, ‘BizRadio1320’ – the first radio station secured by BusinessRadio Partners, L.P., a group formed by nationally-known radio personality Daniel Frishberg, The Money Man. It seemed an exciting time to get back into this side of the business and I thought my experiences in radio, television, e-commerce and business gave me a unique perspective I could share with Houstonians — providing knowledge and resources to help them achieve a more successful business and a better life.”

During the last 20 years, enormous advances in technology, as well as a compelling shift to put more ‘business’ into the radio industry, have resulted in a radically different face on the profession.

“In the 80’s, a broadcast on location consisted of a van full of equipment with a radio tower, two or three engineers, additional support staff and a great deal of effort and coordination,” says Steele. “Now, I can operate from almost anywhere with a box that is smaller than my son’s lunch kit. I simply plug into a dedicated telephone line, plug in a microphone and headphones, and it sounds as if I’m in the studio.”

Recently, Steele broadcasted her show from a private jet on the tarmac at Hobby Airport in Houston.

“It is definitely a fun and exciting time to be back in the business,” adds Steele, “The technical advances allow us to work in more creative ways and go to our guests if necessary.”

The flexibility provided by the technology creates an ideal environment for Steele, a busy wife, mother and business professional. Steele continues to do commercial voiceover work and emcee charity events in the Houston area, in addition to her radio show and her Steele Media Services Company, which specializes in marketing, e-commerce consulting and media relations. She also serves on the Dining, Entertainment and Special Events Committee for the Greater Houston Convention and Visitors Bureau, rides the MS150

bike ride from Houston to Austin and works on a regular basis with the Gulf Coast Chapter of Cystic Fibrosis.

“I’ve had a wonderful series of ‘careers’ during the past 20 years,” Steele added. “Pivotal career moments such as being named one of Talkers Magazine’s 100 Most Important Radio Talk Show Hosts, nominated as Radio Personality of the Year by Billboard Magazine and named one of the top female DJs on the Women of Rock CD, were simply stepping stones to where I am now. Looking back, I realize those recognitions, along with reporting for television outlets and serving as a ring announcer for the Houston Boxing Association on FNN/Score Cable, were fabulous experiences. They’ve given me with a unique and broad awareness of the world.”

Delivering an interesting talk show five days a week provides some unique challenges for Steele.

“The biggest difference in creating a vibrant daily show filled with information versus being a Rock n’ Roll DJ is that I’m depending on guests to not only be experts in their given areas, but to be articulate and comfortable in the talk-radio format. Unfortunately, there are some individuals that are great for a one-to-two minute interview but are completely unable to contribute valuable insights and direction for a longer period. As the host of the show, it is critical I be creative and flexible to ensure my listeners are not disappointed.”

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