

From Fortune 500 financial institutions to community banks, our services and solutions help maximize selling efforts, reduce overhead and exceed customer expectations.

Software • Project management • Custom development • Strategic internet services

Radio stations cozy up to common space

By Robert Mullins

Milwaukee oldies radio station WZTR, country station FM-106 and urban contemporary station V-100 couldn't be further apart from each other in terms of musical format. But their studios are actually side-by-side.

A visitor walking down a single hallway in the newly-remodeled studios of Clear Channel Communications Inc. 12100 W. Howard Ave., Greenfield, will pass the on-air studios of WZTR-FM (95.7), WKKV-FM (100.7), WOKY-AM (920) and WMIL-FM (106.1).

Common ownership, not common listenership, brings these different stations under one roof. The projects present some unique design, technical and logistical challenges to station owners and the architects they hire.

Government deregulation of the broadcast industry since 1996 has prompted consolidation as companies buy several radio stations in the same market. Rather than leave station studios scattered all over town, the new owners are building new structures to house all the stations they own.

In addition to Clear Channel, two other group owners of Milwaukee radio stations have built new facilities, or expanded and remodeled

Please turn to page 28

Radio stations get cozier quarters

Continued from page 21

existing ones. Sinclair Broadcast Group Inc., and Lakefront Communications Inc. have renovated local facilities to accommodate new station acquisitions.

It's the new, consolidated way of life in the radio industry.

"When you have one general manager for one market, it makes no sense to have four offices," said Terry Wood, vice president and general manager of Clear Channel Milwaukee. Its San Antonio-based parent firm owns 480 stations nationwide.

A \$1.2 million construction project expanded Clear Channel's building, which already housed WMIL and WOKY, to hold WKKV and WZTR. The expansion doubled the size of the broadcast facility to nearly 20,000 square feet.

As of April 17, all four stations were broadcasting from the Greenfield site, said Wood.

Clear Channel chose to locate the four on-air studios of the stations adjacent to each other for technical reasons, Wood said. Electrical and computer cabling, and the wiring to link the studios to the transmitter are concentrated in one area of the building. Production studios, in which commercials and some programs are prerecorded, are contiguous to the on-air studios.

Station management and contractors approached the project by determining which functions are unique to each station and which are common to all of them.

Each station has its own sales force, one thing that hasn't changed with consolidation. Clear Channel believes that, because each station has a different format, each offers a different audience to advertisers. Sales representatives work from one large office area that is sectioned off in cubicle clusters for each station. There are separate offices for each station's program director and for some of the on-air talent.

COMMON FUNCTIONS

Another part of the building contains functions common to all four stations, Wood said. Clear Channel has a traffic and continuity department that serves all the stations. The traffic and continuity department keeps track of station logs and schedules commercials and promotional spots. Clear Channel also has a publishing department that produces magazines for fans of each of the station's music formats. Other business functions, such as accounting, human resources, and the general manager's office, are in the same wing of the building.

The construction manager Clear Channel hired was the Milwaukee office of Trammell Crow Co. Trammell Crow sees a business opportunity in radio station consolidation, said Jack Quinlevan, vice president.

Quinlevan also managed the expansion and remodeling of a station complex in Virginia Beach, Va., and the Hales Corners facilities of Sinclair Broadcast Group, 11800 W. Grange Ave. Quinlevan helps clients design a site plan, coordinate construction, and get approvals from municipalities.

The Sinclair project brought together



Terry Wood... Needed design plan for consolidation.

and WCGV-TV (Channel 24) in Milwaukee — and 51 radio stations in 10 markets.

"The consolidation has changed everyone's building arrangements," Hodgson said.

In designing its new building, completed in 1996, Sinclair wanted to showcase its stations for visitors and acknowledge the difference in the "culture" of each station, he said.

BOTH SIDES NOW

On one side of the lobby is a large glass window into the on-air studio of WMYX, an adult contemporary station. On the opposite side is a window into WXSS, which last summer became a Top 40 station known as "Kiss-FM."

Making the studios visible to visitors helps further promote the stations, said Robert Wold, president of Robert Wold Architects Inc., the Brookfield firm that designed the Clear Channel and Sinclair buildings.

"When people bring a sales client on location, the first thing they want to show them is a little glimpse of show business," Wold said.

Wold sought to create a more dramatic entrance for the Sinclair building than people have come to expect from a radio station, he said. Years back, radio station buildings typically were small, drab and unassuming.

"You would win the free coupon or Brewers tickets on the air and go down to the station and pick them up. You'd roll up in front and think, 'I think I must have the wrong place,'" Wold said.

Saga Communications, Grosse Pointe Farms, Mich., made so many Milwaukee radio acquisitions, it has expanded its local broadcasting facilities twice. In Milwaukee, Saga owns WKLH-FM (96.5), WLZR-FM (102.9), WPNT-FM (106.9), WFMR-FM (98.3) and WJYL-AM (1340).

It expanded its 7,000-square-foot studios at 5407 W. McKinley Ave., Milwaukee, to 10,000 square feet in 1993, and to 14,000 this year as it bought stations, said Tom Joerres, president and general manager of Lakefront.

Unlike Clear Channel, Saga kept some studios separate. The studios of classic hits station WKLH are on the opposite side of the building from those of rock station WLZR. Each has a highly competitive morning radio team.

"Because they are competing stations, it

g
& Safes
ure & Organizers & Shelving
e
Blueprint Storage

orporate