CHAPTER 8

DISCUSSION

8.1 Introduction

This chapter is intended to provide information on what has been learnt in this study about radio broadcasting and communication in general, with special focus on SAfm. The presentation of this chapter will begin with a discussion of aspects of radio programming that appeal simultaneously to both blacks and whites. This part of the chapter is paramount because it is both a presentation and a discussion of the most important attributes of a presenter who is most likely to succeed in attracting a multicultural and multiracial audience to SAfm. This will be followed by a discussion that will bring to the fore some interesting insights that presenters - as communicators - need to take into consideration in order to appeal to their listeners. In essence, this will be a discussion of some of the factors identified in this study of which communicators or radio presenters should be mindful of so as to ensure successful communication between themselves and the audience.

The next section will determine the extent to which group membership had an influence on the importance, or a lack of influence, on certain aspects of radio programming. This information would enable one to know whether the five cultural groups that would comprise SAfm's audience differ in what they regard as important aspects of radio programming. This part of the chapter will then be followed by an examination of the emotional and mental readiness of South Africans to have a multicultural English radio station, including the secondary part that SAfm could play in nation building. Cross-cultural differences in the level of support for this kind of radio station will also be examined.

The following section, which is on the influence of English culture, will examine the standing of English and its influence as a language of radio communication. Issues of cultural identity and their influence on potential listeners' need to identify with English culture, or readiness to listen to an English radio station, will also be discussed. This part of the chapter is intended to highlight some weighty considerations and insights based on

the respondents' reactions and attitudes to a typical English radio station, including the current SAfm. In closing, a number of recommendations for SAfm, including some of the important factors identified in this study that could contribute to the success of (radio) communications in a multicultural environment, will also be presented.

8.2 Aspects of Radio Programming that Appeal Simultaneously to both Blacks and Whites

In the light of what has been discussed in chapters 1 and 2, this researcher believes that there is now ample evidence, based on the research results, that SAfm could be steered to become a truly multicultural radio station and one that could succeed in South Africa. One of the main goals of this research was to provide a practical solution to the problems facing the station. Given the responsibility and challenge for SAfm to serve a multicultural audience, and the absence of any practical guidelines that could be used to solve this problem, research had to be undertaken to identify common elements of radio programming that would appeal to all the segments of SAfm's audience.

It is important, however, to note that the aspects of radio programming that will be discussed and presented in this section are those that have been identified in this study as crucial to the success of any radio programme or presenter by both black and white potential listeners. An insightful and more in-depth discussion that is based on most, if not all, the elements of radio programming that were included in this study will be discussed in the sections to follow.

There are three major aspects of radio programming that have been identified in this research as being likely to play a significant part in attracting a culturally diverse listenership to SAfm: (1) quality of broadcasting atmosphere; (2) emotional reaction to an announcer; and (3) knowledge and professionalism of an announcer.

Whatever the reasons for people to listen to a radio station or programme, the kind of atmosphere that presenters create for their listeners and the manner in which they deal with them are crucial to the success of any programme. The kind of atmosphere presenters create is particularly valuable in setting the mood for a programme in a way that would

result in the listener's developing a positive or negative attitude to the presenter or programme.

Creating a type of atmosphere for a radio broadcast that would give the listener a positive experience would most probably require (1) a presenter with a good sense of humour; (2) a presenter who can make people laugh; (3) a presenter who is able to capture listeners' imagination; (4) programmes that interest listeners; and (5) an announcer with a creative flair in programme presentation.

Whereas these attributes of a presenter are crucial in terms of what potential listeners to SAfm would expect from their presenters, they are in no way sufficient to guarantee success for the station. Therefore, there is a second category of aspects of radio programming, mainly to do with qualities of presenters that are also regarded as extremely important by potential listeners to SAfm. These are: (1) announcers who come across naturally on air; (2) presenters who speak good English; (3) presenters who give background information on music, artists, celebrities and so on; (4) announcers who do not talk to the listeners as if they were reading to them; and (5) announcers who are themselves during broadcasts.

Similarly, emotional reaction to an announcer, which has to do with the manner in which presenters deal with their listeners, could also be a major determinant of whether people would listen to a presenter or programme. This research has shown in particular that an announcer with a good voice makes listening to a radio a pleasant experience. There was also overwhelming support among respondents for radio announcers who are polite when talking to listeners. The attributes of presenters that were ranked second in importance by close to a majority of respondents were patience and sensitivity towards their listeners.

The third aspect of radio programming, namely, a presenters' knowledge and professionalism, says a lot about the type of person who would listen to SAfm, and especially about the kind of presenter that he or she wants. More will be said on this important aspect of radio programming in the next section of this chapter.

Since most of the aspects of radio programming that have been presented here deal mainly with the attributes of presenters, SAfm management would have to make every effort to find the right calibre of presenters with these attributes, and to invest in their training and development. This excludes the high salaries they would have to be paid. The natural abilities of the presenters in terms of their aptitude for this kind of work, as well as training to ensure that they act as professionals, are therefore crucial.

8.3 A Perspective on Certain Programming Issues

This section of the chapter is vital to this research in more than one way. First of all, it provides presenters with information on the desirable elements of programme presentation, and on those aspects of programme presentation that they should avoid or take certain precautions in dealing with. Secondly, by examining the respondent's reactions to certain aspects of the standard of English that was deemed undesirable or unacceptable on SAfm, this researcher has been able to identify the possible cause of this problem as well as the solution to it. Thirdly, it has enabled this researcher to identify a new programme opportunity for SAfm that could be used to increase public awareness of certain issues that are of concern to the nation. Finally, it provides insights into the kind of music or programmes that would be suitable to a multicultural English radio station such as SAfm.

As in any job, a certain level of professionalism is required of presenters if they are to do their job well and to the best of their ability. This research has shown clearly that listeners regard professionalism of radio announcers as one of the things that are very high in the list of what they want or expect from them. There are several aspects of the professionalism of a radio announcer that have been identified in this study: (1) a good voice; (2) the ability to capture the imagination of listeners; (3) knowledge of what he or she is talking about; (4) creative flair in programme presentation; (5) politeness when talking to listeners; (6) good interviewing skills; and (7) the ability to say constructive things on air. The content of these aspects of professionalism appears to emphasise the importance of radio announcing as the delicate vehicle that transports information from a source to a listener, and this puts announcers in a position where they are the masters of

their own destiny.

What is patent in some of these aspects of professionalism is that presenters must also be seen as knowledgeable. This is vital because listeners tend to like and respect presenters who are well informed, or those from whom they can learn something. In addition, such a presenter could also play a crucial part in making a radio station a credible source of information that listeners can rely on. Another point worth mentioning, which has to do with presenters who have good interviewing skills as mentioned above, is that listeners in general acknowledge the crucial role of presenters as a link between themselves and a third party.

In the light of what has just been discussed, it is important for SAfm management to make certain that the presenters they employ for the station have the right qualities and training or experience to allow them to do their work as professionals.

Another important finding that has emerged from this study has to do with the tendency of presenters to impose themselves on the listeners. Self-imposition is denoted in the Concise Oxford Dictionary as 'a task or condition imposed on or by oneself, not externally'. Presenters can impose themselves on listeners, to a greater or lesser extent, and this could irritate listeners to a point where some stop listening to the radio station or programme. Some aspects of radio programming and/or programme presentation where announcers do not impose themselves that have been identified in this study are: (1) not talking a lot about themselves on air; (2) not making listeners feel that they are being lectured at; (3) sensitivity to listeners; (4) patience with listeners; (5) being themselves during a radio broadcast; (6) a well-modulated voice; (7) giving good but brief background information; and (8) coming across as natural, on the air.

The self-imposing manner of programme presentation that is of a gross nature and could lead to a loss of listeners to the station or programme, is best represented in the following behaviours of presenters that have been identified in this study: (1) intellectualising issues; (2) sensationalising issues on air; (3) impartiality in almost everything that is done on radio; and (4) rudeness. One of the best ways to minimise the negative effects of a

presenter who is self-imposing is to conduct research aimed at eliminating those aspects of a programme or programme presentation that contain self-imposing elements. Given that the above facets of a self-imposing personality were less popular among respondents in this study, it is imperative for presenters always to guard against adopting this heavy-handed approach in their programmes.

The self-imposing style of presenters, and the risk that it could alienate most listeners from the station, was well demonstrated in one of the image studies that this author conducted for Ikwekwezi FM. Ikwekwezi FM is one of the African language stations that was targeted for this kind of research because of the pressing need to align the station's programmes and presenters with the needs and tastes of its listeners (DSI, 2000). The results of this research showed that the station had a greater appeal to groups of older listeners because most of the station's older presenters provided them with programmes that were more in tune with their needs. This group of listeners seemed to enjoy the station's primary focus on promoting the Ndebele culture, language and traditions in addition to broadcasting dramas or stories, music and other programmes (e.g. funeral notices) that were geared to their tastes.

However, the same older presenters on the station were not popular with younger listeners, who perceived the station as 'too cultural'. Although younger listeners to the station tended to recognise the importance of culture and tradition, such emphasis was too heavy for them, especially the way things were put to them. The station's presenters tended to be dogmatic, heavy-handed and self-righteous in their approach to programme presentation. For example, some of them would say things such as, 'ancestors will curse you if you don't go to initiation school' and 'if you have not done this or that you are not a woman'. The presenters also criticised young people for abandoning their culture when they spoke English during a phone-in programme. Young people on this station tended to resent being forced into a pattern, or what they considered a narrow-minded approach to life. What young people wanted on this station was something that would educate them, or open their eyes. This self-imposing approach of presenters was one of the primary factors that caused young people to stop listening to the station.

One of the interesting observations that has come out of this study is the manner in which potential audience members have reacted to what they regard as humour and wit. The Concise Oxford Dictionary denotes humour as 'the quality of being amusing or comic'. The same source denotes wit as 'the unexpected, quick, and humorous combining or contrasting of ideas and expressions'. Humour has the announcer as a target, and wit is more likely to have a member of an audience as a target. The overwhelming support that respondents in this study have shown for announcers who have a good sense of humour or can make people laugh, as opposed to announcers who are witty, indicates listeners' clear preference for humour over wit.

Perhaps the main reason for listeners to be more in favour of humour than wit is that humour can be linked to a person's 'natural' quality of being amusing or humorous, whereas wit involves the clever use of words that may be intended as a joke or 'humour' but is aimed at another person and can often be hurtful. The main problem with someone who is considered witty is that targets of the wit are often left to interpret for themselves what is being said. In many instances people see wit as a way of making someone feel foolish. Another reason for wit being less popular than humour could be that it has the elements of a self-imposing personality that have been discussed.

However, there are situations where presenters with a good sense of humour can also get themselves into trouble. Consider, for example, a situation where such presenters make a joke about something to their multicultural group of listeners. The cultural angle from which the joke is being told could lead to confusion or even misunderstanding among the listeners because they may be operating from a different frame of reference. This could easily make what was intended as a joke mean something else, or nothing at all, in another person's culture. To be on the safe side, communicators or radio presenters should make sure that those for whom a joke was intended understand it and the message behind it. Another significant finding that has emerged from this study is that traditionally African and European music would not appeal to potential listeners of SAfm. This is understandable, especially in the context of a multicultural audience where it would be easy to alienate listeners who did not identify with this kind of music. The lack of enthusiasm among the respondents could also be an indication that traditional music in

general has fallen out of favour among a significant number of radio listeners.

Contrary to what some may believe, the popularity of international music was shown to be limited in this study. This is important because it means that South African presenters also have wider scope for putting local music on their play-list as well. However, something that presenters or radio stations need to guard against, because of its potential to reduce the appeal of music, is that they should not get into the habit of overplaying certain music or songs to their listeners. Doing this also has the potential for killing the songs or music concerned.

Yet another of the significant findings of this study is that there was general support among respondents for programmes that would appeal to a multicultural audience on SAfm. The percentage of respondents who resisted multicultural programmes outright was small. This is a positive sign that programmes with wider appeal across cultures on SAfm would contribute to the station's success. Such programmes would have a greater chance of succeeding, especially if they were of such a nature that listeners could relate to them, or if they dealt with issues or topics of national importance that could be of interest to both blacks and whites.

The issue of topics of national importance indicates clearly the significance of programmes that listeners can relate to, or those that are relevant to them. Relate is denoted in the Concise Oxford Dictionary as 'bring into relation to or with anything we know'. The same source defines the term relevant as something that has 'bearing on or is pertinent to the matter'. With these definitions in mind, it therefore means that SAfm would have a better chance to succeed if it featured programmes that related to, or were pertinent to listeners' experience or condition, and/or those that dealt with things that were familiar to them. By implication, programmes that were devoid of these important elements would be meaningless to the listeners, or of no value to them. This would be tantamount to broadcasting in a vacuum.

The importance of programmes that listeners can relate to was also evident in the response pattern of respondents in this study with regard to announcers that are perceived to be 'too

black' or 'too white' in their programme presentation. The low level of support that potential audience members of SAfm showed for such presenters indicates that they would not be suitable to work for SAfm. It simply means that potential listeners to SAfm would have difficulty accepting presenters who were seen as biased in their programme presentation. This also points to the importance of programmes that are balanced and inclusive, in tune with the needs and tastes of a multiracial audience.

One of the key components of this research that has been a major cause for concern is the standard of English usage on SAfm. The main problem here had to do primarily with the 'bad pronunciation' and 'foreign accents' attributed to the black presenters who were employed on SAfm after its relaunch. Regarding English, the results of this research demonstrated clearly a general preference for presenters who spoke good English. However, the findings also showed a low level of support among respondents for presenters who spoke English with an accent, which clearly indicated a dislike of presenters from other cultures. The general resistance or unwillingness that was shown by a significant number of respondents in this study to listen to a radio announcer who was not from the same population group as the one to which that person belonged, regardless of the announcer's ability to speak the person's home language fluently, could be one of the reasons for the prevalence of negative perceptions of presenters who speak English with an accent. A corrective measure than could be taken in the case of SAfm where a team of multicultural presenters would be employed, would be to offer them English language training aimed at reducing the negative effects of heavy accents to a generally acceptable level and improving their pronunciation. This key component of multicultural radio announcing could lead to a sizeable loss of potential audience if it were not handled well.

Another significant finding that has come out of this research project is that controversial topics that are of a dramatic or traumatic nature, such as too much open sex talk on radio and those that deal with killings and violence, often lead to a split and a diversified response from the audience members. Since sizeable proportions of proponents, opponents, and persons with a neutral stance always accompany controversies, this makes them ideally suited to programmes that will accommodate listeners with different

opinions. Such programmes that allow for a difference of opinion may be the key to setting up a fruitful debate on certain important issues. This could also be a useful approach to the combating of HIV/Aids.

The different levels of response that were observed in this research to the reporting of events that have taken, or are taking, place has yielded noteworthy finding. Altogether 71% of respondents in this study indicated that they preferred to get facts about events that had taken place as opposed to 65% who preferred on-the-scene reporting. This indicates that delayed interpretations or reinterpretations of events are preferred by a sizeable number of potential listeners, compared with the need for up-to-date factual coverage. In addition, this also means that listeners do not necessarily like the type of information that is overwhelming, as is the case with on-the-scene reporting. This is definitely something that broadcasters should try to guard against.

Apart from what has been discussed so far, there are certain aspects of radio programming that have been identified in this research that are worth commenting on. These comments will address certain challenges that a radio stations and presenters in particular may regard as the role of radio and will also examine the appropriateness of taking an educational approach to programme presentation. Besides the self-imposing elements that are present in what will be discussed, there are still certain valuable lessons to be learned on how presenters can approach their programme presentation.

Another important finding in this study that was not unexpected was the support that potential audience members expressed in their belief that: (a) it is the responsibility of any radio station in the country to promote good societal values which are a foundation of every nation; and (b) it is the duty of every radio station to broadcast programmes that could mould listeners to be responsible citizens. These two responses regarding the positive role that radio could play in instilling or promoting good societal values could serve as good indicators of possible programme content that could be broadcast on radio.

Radio stations or presenters could run into a big problem, if their approach to radio programming and presentation were to teach or educate listeners. For example, there is

already compelling evidence in this study that most listeners dislike presenters who tend to lecture to them, or intellectualise about issues on radio.

It appears that listeners prefer to experience what is offered on radio in their own way and resist what they might see as a conscious effort to educate and/or influence them. This is no different from the psychological phenomenon of invading personal space. According to Sommer (1969, cited by Kahn et al, 1984), personal space is an area encircling the body, which others typically don't enter. Some people have referred to it as a body buffer zone into which others may not intrude (Saks & Krupat, 1988). The natural reaction when one's personal space is being invaded would be to say, 'keep out', 'don't tell me what to do', 'this is none of your business' or 'this is mine - tread carefully'. This is certainly one of the pitfalls that SAfm presenters should try to avoid as far as possible. In conclusion, the kind of information that has just been presented shows how important it is for presenters and broadcasters in general to understand their listeners and the way they function. It is through this that broadcasters would be in a position to provide their listeners with relevant programmes that are in tune with what they want.

8.4 Cultural Influence on Certain Aspects of Radio Programming

Given the multicultural nature of SAfm's audience, it was vital to examine further the extent to which group membership had an influence on the importance, or lack thereof, of certain aspects of radio programming in this study. This information would enable one to know whether the five cultural groups that would comprise SAfm's audience differ in what they regard as important aspects of radio programming. This would undoubtedly have implications for the station, especially the presenters in terms of how they prepare for or present their programmes. Probably the most crucial aspect of their job in this regard is how they would be able to deal with a multicultural and racially diverse listenership.

As a starting point, let us examine the importance attached to presenters who speak English with an accent and who are also good at pronouncing words in English. This study has shown that White English-speakers, Indians and to a lesser extent Coloureds, would have serious problems with such presenters. However, given the lackadaisical

attitude that Africans have shown towards the quality and standard of English and the prominent part that SAfm would play as a flagship English radio station in South Africa, it would be wise for the station management to maintain the high quality and standard of English as desired by White English-speakers. This is also important because the station would not be faced with the risk of losing them, as they are a part of its core listenership.

Since English is the second language for most Africans, it is not surprising that they do not attach any particular significance to it. The importance that White English-speakers attach to having presenters on SAfm who are generally good at English was to be expected. English is not just their mother tongue: they also have strong cultural ties to it.

Regarding the role that radio can play in instilling or promoting certain cultural values, both Indians and Africans were shown to ascribe greater significance to radio stations or presenters that instil certain societal values in their listeners, whereas both White Afrikaans-speakers and White English-speakers were shown to be strongly opposed to this. One way to explain this is that Indians and Africans on one hand, and white South Africans in general on the other, have different expectations of what radio can do for them. This may also suggest the presence of external locus of control among Africans and Indians in as far as cultural values are concerned. According to Plotnik (1993), the locus of control that is referred to here has to do with our beliefs about whether we have control over situations, or the situations control us. If people believe they are in control of life's events, and what they do influences what happens, such people are said to have internal locus of control. If people believe that chance and luck mainly determine what happens, and that they do not have much influence, they are said to have an external locus of control. Plotnik (1993) contends that locus of control should be thought of as a continuum, with internal on one end and external on the other (Lefcourt, 1982, cited by Plotnik 1993). What this implies is that both Africans and Indians depend on others to provide direction or guidance in their own lives on how to behave in a way that conforms to societal values or expectations. One can attribute this largely to the apartheid policies in which both Africans and Indians were conditioned to believe that they had no control of their own lives, whereas had complete control of their own destiny and freedom. Though

it may be difficult to speculate why this is the case, what seems to be very clear is that it is important for SAfm presenters to be made aware of these differences so that they may take a cautious approach to presenting their programmes.

Another interesting finding that is noteworthy in this section of the chapter is that White Afrikaans-speakers, White English-speakers and Indians – as opposed to Africans – have shown a strong preference for presenters who come across naturally on air. However, in the case of presenters who are patient with their listeners, Africans have come out strongly in favour of such presenters.

As stated earlier, professionalism of presenters has been shown to be one of the major factors that could help drive SAfm to success. However, the results of this study have once again indicated that the various cultural groups do not attach the same value to this attribute of a presenter. For instance, Indians and particularly White Afrikaans-speakers and White English-speakers attach greater significance to presenters who are professional, as evidenced by good interviewing skills, than do Africans and Coloureds. This indicates that white South Africans in general have a strong preference for presenters who demonstrate competence and high levels of skill in their work. The lesson one gets from this is that white South African listeners are very particular and more demanding of presenters compared with Africans and Coloureds. In other words, White listeners in South Africa seem to know exactly what they want from a presenter with regard to this important aspect of radio programming.

A similar observation to that of the low level of significance that both Africans and Coloureds attach to the above aspect of radio programming has been made in the case of the aspect of radio programming that has to do with teaching or educating the listeners. For instance, Indians, White Afrikaans-speakers and White English-speakers have been shown to have a strong dislike for a presenter who gives the feeling that the audience is being lectured at, or taught, when listening to the radio, whereas the opposite was true for both Africans and Coloureds. This could also suggest that Africans and Coloureds are more tolerant of, or receptive to, this kind of presenter than is the case with Indians, White Afrikaans-speakers and White English-speakers. This is again one of the instances where

SAfm presenters need to be cautious, especially in programme presentation that could make some listeners feel that they were being lectured to. In this way, the presenter would avoid the risk of losing listeners.

As a further illustration of the possible effects of culture on the way people experience radio and what they expect from it was evident in one of the aspects of radio programming that deals with announcers who undersell or oversell themselves on air. For example, with regard to listeners who find it a waste of time to listen to a presenter who does not know what he or she is talking about, White Afrikaans-speakers and White English-speakers gave a stronger indication that they would not tolerate such an announcer than Africans and Coloureds did. The 'know your story' approach that White South African listeners expect from their presenters is again evident here.

One of the mistakes radio stations and presenters could make is to assume that there is always a right way of doing certain things when presenting a programme. Consider, for example, the importance attached to presenters who are perceived to be impartial in what they say or do on air. Not only does this research indicate that almost half of the respondents in this study would not be excited to have such presenters, it also shows that White English-speakers would even find such presenters less appealing. This research finding suggests that White English-speakers would be more in favour of presenters who were able to take a stand in what they say on radio. White English-speakers probably learn more from such presenters than from those who choose to take a neutral position in their programmes. It is also no wonder that White English-speakers would not even mind presenters who talked a lot about themselves on air.

Africans have also indicated to a certain degree that they are not in favour of this type of presenter. However, this is not surprising because Africans have been shown to like presenters from whom they can learn something. The only cultural group that seems to be greatly in favour of presenters who don't talk a lot about themselves on air and who are also impartial, is Indians.

The way in which people from different population groups experience radio sometimes

goes beyond the role that culture plays in this regard. Historical and sociopolitical factors could also play a part. However, it may be difficult to identify which of the three factors has a dominant role, as historical and sociopolitical factors combine to shape a person's group culture. Consider, for example, the discussion of issues or topics that are emotionally draining, such as violence and killings, which would cause a significant number of respondents in this study to avoid listening to programmes that carry such content. White Afrikaans-speakers were shown to be the only group that would have a serious objection to this type of programme content. Could this be attributed to the fact that White Afrikaans-speakers were protected by the previous regime from experiences of this kind that were frequent occurrences in African and other communities? This could well be the case, because it was shown to be less of a problem in this study among Africans, Coloureds and White English-speakers.

However, there are instances where cultural factors predominate. Take for example programmes that feature too much open sex talk, which this study found would put a significant number of listeners off. Compared with White English-speakers, Africans and Coloureds, who had some interest in this type of programme content, White Afrikaans-speakers and Indians seemed to have no interest at all.

It appears that talking about sex openly is still taboo among Indians and White Afrikaans-speakers. Listeners in general, especially those who come from Indian and White Afrikaans-speaking communities, would probably feel embarrassed if presenters were to talk openly about something they regard as private and personal, such as sex.

The two cases presented above probably offer the best example of aspects of radio programming that require presenters who show understanding and sensitivity towards their listeners. This would entail, more than anything else, showing appreciation of cultural differences that are accompanied by a deep sense of awareness of other people's conditions and circumstances.

Even though certain aspects of radio programming were generally regarded as important to most of the respondents in this study, they still differ subtly in relative importance from

one cultural group to another. For example, in the case of radio presenters who are patient with their listeners, this type of presenter was shown to be more important to Africans than to White English-speakers. White English-speakers were shown to be more tolerant of presenters who are insensitive to listeners than were Indians, Coloureds and Africans.

Coloureds and White English-speakers were shown to be more tolerant of presenters who are rude than were Africans, White Afrikaans-speakers and Indians. Could this be saying something about White English-speakers in particular, in the way they deal with what could be perceived as insensitivity or rudeness? This may well be the case.

Consider for example a situation where a person is forthright and open. A talk like that, 'calling a spade a spade', is not necessarily rude or insensitive but some may regard it as such. It could just be the person's way of talking. Sometimes there is no 'better' way of saying something in one's language, and the person would be compelled to say it as it is. Again there is a risk of offending someone in the same way that being forthright would. It would seem that White English-speakers have developed a level of tolerance of certain things that may be seen as rude and insensitive in other cultures.

Contrary to the expectation that listeners generally prefer presenters who have good and well-modulated voices, this study has shown this not to be true among Coloureds. Could this be an indication that Coloureds are indifferent to the way they talk and that it has become culturally acceptable to speak anyhow, in as far as voice control is concerned? However, this is not surprising given that only a limited number of Coloureds indicated that they would be annoyed by a radio announcer who talks to them as if he or she were reading what to say to them.

Of particular significance in what has been said above is that people may attach different value or meaning to the same thing. In other words, what may be regarded as important and meaningful in one culture may not be regarded as such in another. In view of this, it appears that SAfm could play an even bigger part in promoting understanding and tolerance between people of various cultures in South Africa.

Since it is not possible to discuss the remaining aspects of radio programming taking a similar approach to that adopted in discussing this part of the chapter, the reader should refer to Chapter 7 for more information. In the light of what has just been discussed, it appears that SAfm presenters who know and understand people from other cultures would be in a better position to deal with their listeners.

8.5 Emotional and Mental Readiness of South Africans to have a Multicultural English Radio Station

One of the most crucial aspects of this research was to determine the extent to which potential listeners of SAfm are mentally and emotionally ready to embrace a multicultural English radio station in South Africa. As the first step to the discussion that will follow, a general overview will be presented that will look into whether there is a certain level of support for this type of radio station, and the implications this would have for it. The second level of this discussion will examine the level of support for this kind of radio station among the various population groups.

One of the things that the present study has helped to achieve was to gauge the level of support for the idea of a multicultural English radio station in South Africa. The research results showed that there is wide support for this idea among potential audience of SAfm. However, there was also a clear indication that the support they have for this kind of radio station was for the longer term, as it was still lacking in the short term. This suggests that the idea (in theory) of a multicultural radio station is a good and acceptable one, yet putting the envisaged radio service into everyday practice is problematic. This also stems from the response given by respondents in this study that indicates that a large segment of them get very little from the existing English stations that nurtures and strengthens their ties to a multicultural English radio station.

In addition to establishing the level of support for a multicultural English radio station, it was also necessary to determine the need for such a radio station in South Africa. This was crucial because it gives one a clue to the likely support that such a radio station would receive once it became fully operational. To use the language of marketers, this kind of

information would help determine whether there were a gap in the market that could be filled by this type of radio station. However, this is not meant to suggest that the need for an English radio station that caters for a multicultural audience could not be created either.

The results of this research have once again provided a further confirmation of the need for this kind of radio station in South Africa. This was especially evident in the fairly extensive support among listeners who said that they would be glad to be part of the loyal listenership of an English radio station that served as a unifying force among South Africans through its varied and interesting programmes. However, one must quickly point out that though the level of support for this kind of radio station was at an acceptable level, there was also a big component of those who took a neutral stance. It is important that this should not be seen in a negative light because there is a chance that a sizeable portion of those who were neutral might get to like the station, if they found it appealing.

Something that is also important to note is that loyalty to a favourite radio station among a significant number of potential audience members was grossly lacking. For example, only 46.9% of the respondents in this study said that nothing would change their loyalty to a favourite radio station. It therefore appears as if more than half of the potential listeners are not brand-locked to SAfm or any other English radio station. This was further supported by about half of the potential listeners, who said that they would feel at home when listening to this type of English radio station. This apparent lack of loyalty raises a key question that may be posed: where, when and why did SAfm let down its confirmed loyal listeners?

8.5.1 Cross-Cultural Support for a Multicultural English Radio Station

Owing to the multicultural nature of SAfm's audience, it was important to know whether the station would appeal to all the population groups in South Africa, or to just a few. This kind of information is vital in this study, especially for SAfm, because it would provide useful information on cultural groups that are more likely to listen to the station, and to help it develop a more focused programming and marketing strategy.

As stated, there is a general indication in this study that there is already a certain level of readiness among respondents to embrace a multicultural English station such as SAfm. However, White Afrikaans-speakers were conspicuous in their apparent lack of readiness to be receptive to this kind of radio station.

The reluctance of White Afrikaans-speakers to be part of SAfm could be seen against the background that Afrikaans lost its status as the main official language in South Africa when the new political dispensation came into force. The new government's decision to retain English as the lingua franca and a language for conducting business in South Africa, and to reduce Afrikaans to the status of the nine official black languages in South Africa, was probably experienced as a deep psychological loss by White Afrikaans-speakers. The black languages with which Afrikaans now shares status were never regarded as important by the previous white government.

This kind of development may have led to the fears among White Afrikaans-speakers that too much exposure to English would lead to the demise of Afrikaans. This could be the main reason for White Afrikaans-speakers to distance themselves from SAfm. This clearly indicates that some White Afrikaans-speakers would not find a station such as SAfm attractive.

The need for a multicultural English radio station that would serve both black and white listeners was shown to be far greater among Indians. It is the kind of radio station they are more likely to be proud to be part of. Africans were depicted, as between moderate and high in the level of support they would give SAfm. What is of special significance is that some Africans tended to draw a clear distinction between their desire to listen to a multicultural English radio station and forming a strong bond with it, which shows that their listening to SAfm would not necessarily mean they wanted to compromise their cultural identity.

Though White English-speakers would be happy to see a multicultural English radio station succeed in South Africa, some of them were shown to be less willing to be part of it. This suggests that some White English-speakers feel they should have their own radio

station, which could be partly owing to the fact that they do not have a radio station that is solely dedicated to serving them in South Africa. This is both a challenge and a problem for SAfm. It is a problem because if some White English-speakers became part of a multicultural English radio station such as SAfm, it would mean that they may not get a chance to have their own radio station. This is despite the fact that there are already a number of radio stations that broadcast in English. It is a challenge because it may be difficult to attract some White English-speakers to SAfm. However, considering that English is the dominant language used in almost every type of media in South Africa, and spoken by most people of all races, there is a strong case for a multicultural English radio station such as SAfm. Furthermore, though it is expected that people in general would prefer to listen to their own radio stations, there would still be a significant number of them wanting to listen to other radio stations as well. It appears that SAfm would be better placed for addressing broader or national issues, as there are already a number of local radio stations that could fulfil cultural needs.

The fact that some people from the various population groups, with the exception of some White Afrikaans-speakers, were shown to be ready to embrace SAfm is a clear indication that the station would succeed in attracting a multiracial and multicultural audience, but probably only in the longer term.

8.5.2 Some Insights into the Level of Readiness of South Africans to Identify with SAfm

This section of the chapter should be seen as an extension of the preceding one. The only difference in this section is that it offers additional insights into the level of readiness of South Africans to identify with SAfm. In essence it provides additional clues to the degree of commitment that South Africans of all races would make to listening to SAfm. As it has been indicated in the previous sections, there is already wide support for the idea as well as the need for a multicultural English radio station among the potential listeners of SAfm. The results of this study show that a little more than half of the respondents would identify with SAfm. However, on taking a closer look at how the various population groups feel about SAfm, a different but clearer picture begins to emerge. For example, a

consistent pattern in the way White Afrikaans-speakers feel about a multicultural English radio station has also occurred in this section; there are some who simply do not want to identify themselves with this kind of radio station. At least we now know that SAfm is less likely to attract many listeners from this group. It is not surprising, either, that White English-speakers, Indians, Africans and Coloureds showed greater willingness to be part of the SAfm listenership. Indians, however, were shown to have the greatest need for a station with which they could identify, such as SAfm. The fact that Indians have consistently come out very strongly in support of SAfm is indeed reassuring. It simply means that the station stands a very good chance of attracting a significant number of listeners from the Indian community. This also suggests that some of them are not entirely happy with their current radio station.

8.5.3 SAfm's Secondary Role as a Nation Builder

One important issue that was raised earlier in this study related to the part SAfm would play in creating unity and tolerance among people of all races in South Africa. The unity that is referred to here is something that would develop as a spin-off from what listeners would learn about one another in the programmes SAfm would offer. It is vital that this should also be seen as a measure of the degree to which South Africans are willing to unite, to a point where they are able to develop a common culture and identity. If SAfm is seen by some in that light, it could mean that the station has a solid foundation to build on and develop itself into one of the most successful radio stations in South Africa. Moreover, this would be a further indication of the extent to which South Africans were willing to have a multicultural English radio station such as SAfm.

The role of a multicultural English radio station in unifying the South African nation was widely recognised, but not overwhelmingly supported. Such a radio station would serve a useful purpose in promoting tolerance and understanding between blacks and whites, and nurturing or developing a unique South African culture that everyone would be proud to share. A small percentage was opposed to the idea, while sizeable segments were neutral towards it.

Support for this kind of radio station among the various cultural groups was higher among Africans and Indians. There was some support for this kind of radio station among Coloured respondents as well. White English-speakers were shown to be neutral in their support for this kind of radio station. The only group that showed a low level of support for this kind of radio station was White Afrikaans-speakers.

Since it has been shown in this study that some White Afrikaans-speakers are uncomfortable with anything that could undermine their language, it is not surprising that they would not support this kind of radio station. As has been pointed out, this does not mean that SAfm would not be able to attract some listeners from this population group.

The slightly more than average level of support among respondents for different radio stations to serve each of the population groups in South Africa suggests that there is still wider scope for other radio stations to succeed in this country. It also indicates that there is still almost half of the people who are not loyal to any particular radio station and may want to listen to SAfm.

Although all indications so far are that there is a great need for a multicultural English radio station in South Africa, and that this station is likely to succeed, it was also important to ascertain the viability of such a radio station in this country. The viability aspect of SAfm was in essence a measure of how successful the station is likely to be in South Africa.

The research results have once again confirmed the acceptability and viability of a multicultural English radio station, though there were also signs of noticeable resistance that were depicted in very limited and nowhere near overwhelming preference for such a station because of the perceived threat it would pose to the different cultures. What was even more surprising in this case is that both White English-speakers and Africans were convinced that a multicultural English radio station would succeed in South Africa. A further indication of the success that SAfm would have, especially among Africans and White English-speakers, was evident in their readiness to listen to presenters from different population groups. White Afrikaans-speakers were predictably less optimistic

about the success of this kind of radio station in South Africa.

Given this kind of positive attitude that some people have towards SAfm, and the fact that all the available evidence presented shows that the station has every chance of succeeding, the challenge is now to SABC top management to seize the opportunity to create a proper foundation on which this kind of radio station could be built.

8.5.4 Conclusion

This section of the chapter has shown that there is a definite need for a multicultural English radio station in South Africa. Given that the success of this kind of radio station has been predicted in the long term, it is of paramount importance that such a station should lay a solid foundation for future growth in the short term. The general widespread support for the station among potential listeners, with the exception of White Afrikaans-speakers, indicates that the station's support base already exists. The most encouraging aspect of this type of radio station is that it is assured of definite support among Indians, who were shown in this study to be in dire need of this kind of radio station.

The viability and success of this kind of radio station was also assured by the goodwill that it is most likely to receive from Africans and Indians if it is seen to be contributing to nation building. The importance that these two population groups attach to nation building is a clear indication that there is a strong desire in certain segments of the South African population to see radio playing this role. Though a significant number of White English-speakers were lukewarm in their support for a radio station that would bring people of all races together, this does not mean that they would not listen to it.

8.6 Influence of an English Culture

This chapter consists of three sections. The first will examine the standing of English and its influence as the language of radio communication. The second part will look into the part that English culture and values play in determining a need among various population groups to listen to an English radio station. There are two subsections under which this part of the chapter will be presented: (1) cultural identity issues and a need for an English

station, and (2) identification with English culture.

8.6.1 The Status and Influence of English in a Modern English Radio Station

Perhaps one of the things that some people in South Africa and elsewhere take for granted or as a given – as was the case in this study – is that English is popular and enjoys a high status as a preferred language of communication. The results of this study have clearly shown that this is not necessarily the case. For example, a significantly low number of potential listeners have indicated that: (1) the high status that the English language enjoys internationally makes them feel good about listening to a good English radio station; (2) they find it appropriate to listen to an English radio station because English is their mother tongue; (3) they listen to an English radio station because it helps them speak good English; (4) they listen to an English radio station like most of the educated élite in South Africa; (5) they listen to an English radio station because they find it a 'cool' thing to do; (6) they listen to an English radio station in order to maintain a high standard of English because of the pride they take in speaking good English; (7) they listen to an English radio station in order to improve their English; and (8) they listen to an English radio station because it helps to refine their English. This shows that the popularity of English as local and international language of radio communication is limited. Furthermore, this also calls into question the importance attached to the quality and standard of English in radio communication, which is looking suspect in this case. This interesting finding has obviously cast some doubt on the status of English as a lingua franca in an era that is witnessing the rise of the European Union and the trend towards globalisation.

There are several pointers in this study that could explain what has been said above. One of them has to do with the apparent lack of emotional or cultural ties between certain cultural groups and White English-speakers. In the context of South Africa, this shows that very little or nothing has been done to improve the social and cultural integration of the South African people. This has been well demonstrated in this study by a significantly low number of respondents who said that they feel a sense of belonging when they listen to an English radio station.

Another possible reason for the low level of affinity among the potential listeners of SAfm is that the station has lost, or still lacks, credibility in South Africa. This **may** not be far from the truth, given that the station is struggling to attract more listeners. It therefore appears that certain fundamental changes should be introduced on SAfm in order for it to be acceptable and accessible to the different communities that it is supposed to serve. These changes require, in essence, that the station should be relevant to the target audience in every possible way that would make the listeners feel comfortable with it.

Furthermore, this study has also shown that cultural factors play a part as well in creating a lukewarm reception of an English radio station among potential listeners of SAfm. This was evident in the small percentage (21%) of respondents who said they preferred to listen to an English radio station that broadcast programmes that were typically European, as opposed to 52.4% of them who did not show a preference for the kind of radio station that had a Eurocentric focus in its programmes. This important finding appears to suggest that people find it difficult to listen to a radio station that is not relevant to their own way of life (i.e. culture) and values. In other words, they cannot listen to a radio station that does not reflect their own culture.

Such a finding has an important implication for a multicultural English radio station such as SAfm. It simply means that the station would have to attract a multicultural team of presenters that could relate to, or deal with, a culturally diverse audience in the present-day South Africa. To take this further, it would require the mindset of an SAfm presenter to be open and receptive to the political and social changes that have taken place in South Africa in order to be successful in this radio station. This finding has further highlighted the importance of programmes that reflect the lifestyle of listeners as a crucial component of any radio station or programme.

8.6.2 Cultural Identity Issues and the Need for an English Station

It was also necessary in this study to look into the current SAfm, as many people in South Africa still regard the station as an English radio station, in the sense that it is designed to meet the needs of White English-speakers. Assuming that the station is still seen by many

people in that way, it would then be possible to find answers to questions in the following four areas that were of special interest in this research because of their implications for the 'new' SAfm:

1. An assumption has been made in this study that certain cultural groups would choose to listen to an English radio station, or seek to attain perfection in use of English, because they identify with English culture

2. The extent to which perceived personal status and the perceived status of English would increase people's desire to listen to an English radio station

3. Since the proposed 'new' SAfm would be designed to serve a multicultural audience in English and not a specific cultural group, it was important to determine the part English would play in attracting a culturally diverse listenership to the station. This is based on the assumption that people would be motivated to listen to any radio station that broadcast in English because that would help them improve their English

4. The extent to which the prevailing English culture on SAfm has contributed to the failure of the station to attract a multicultural and multiracial audience

The first three areas will be presented in the order in which they occur, though not in a strict sense, owing to some overlaps that may be expected, and because of the discussion format that will be used here. The fourth and last issue was not necessarily meant to be a separate discussion, but a combination of what would have been learned from this section and the implications of this for the future SAfm.

To begin with, let us a look at the first area of interest presented above. In general, less than half of the respondents in this study indicated that they listened to an English radio station in order to improve their English. As expected, only a few White English-speakers said they listen to this kind of radio station to help them speak good English like an English citizen. This appears to suggest that White English-speakers are very happy with the way they speak English, and that they have no need to sound British. Furthermore, this apparently high degree of satisfaction with the way they speak English could be a further

indication that they have come to accept their own version of English with pride, as being both good and of a high standard. In this study, Indians were also shown to be quite happy with the way they spoke English.

Contrary to expectations in this study, only a few Africans were shown to listen to an English radio station to improve their quality or use of English. This shows that though the need to improve their use of English may be important to a few Africans, it is not the most important thing they are looking for when they listen to an English radio station. Coloureds and White English-speakers were shown in this study to be the most likely to take pride in listening to this kind of radio station.

A point closely related to the one above is that it was also shown in this study that the reason Africans would not listen to an English radio station was not that they did not consider themselves English, but for other reasons. What is evident in this case is that a number of Africans still take pride in their own cultural identity. This also supports the finding earlier in this section that showed the important part that culture can play in preventing people from other cultures from listening to a radio station that is targeted at those who belong to a different culture. The higher than expected level of affinity among Indians and Coloureds for English as their home language was shown as one of the main factors that would make them listen to an English radio station. Unlike Africans, Coloureds and Indians were shown to be more at home with both English and the English radio station.

The apparent lack of strong cultural ties between South African Indians and their native country of India, which may have caused them to adopt English as their home language, could explain their strong desire to listen to an English radio station. They probably see English as the best language of communication that would facilitate their integration into South African society.

In the case of Coloureds, both historical and social factors appear to have played a part in making it impossible for this group to develop their own culture. Their 'culture' may be described as a hybrid of white and black South African cultures, though political factors

appear to have made Coloureds see themselves as closer to White South Africans. Their apparent need to listen to an English radio station could be explained partly by their strong desire to identify with White South Africans.

There is a strong indication among a number of White Afrikaans-speakers that it would not be appropriate for them to listen to an English radio station because they do not identify themselves with it. This clearly indicates that some White Afrikaans-speakers would not listen to this kind of radio station, even if it broadcast good programmes that they might find interesting.

One of the wrong assumptions that could easily be made is that educated people would, by virtue of their education, listen to an English radio station. This kind of assumption was proven not to be true by 53% of the respondents in this study who indicated that their listening to an English radio station would not be influenced by their education. This shows that a person's educational status is not necessarily the reason for listening to a particular radio station. It simply means that there are other more important factors that would influence people to listen to a radio station.

One of the important findings based on the results of this research indicates that Africans listen to an English radio station in order to improve the way they speak English. This finding is not necessarily surprising, in the sense that the need to learn to speak a foreign language does not make the same demands as the wish to refine one's use of that language. The former is more of a case of people picking up a few things from native speakers of a language. Whatever new knowledge and insights second language speakers acquire from native speakers of a language would help them understand or speak that language better. The latter case involves more of a conscious effort on the part of the people who speak a foreign language to learn to speak it perfectly, with all its subtle nuances, in the same way the native speaker of a language does. This kind of finding is in no way insignificant, because we now know one of the factors that would make Africans listen to a multicultural English radio station. It also serves to underscore the need for SAfm to employ presenters who speak good English.

8.6.3 Identification with South African English and European Cultures

This section of the chapter was important in this dissertation because it allowed the researcher to determine whether the extent to which people identified with their own cultural group would influence their need to listen to an English radio station. The rationale for doing this was to identify those cultural groups that show a strong desire to be part of English culture simply because they identify with it. In addition, it is important to deduce the implications that those groups with a strong sense of cultural identity would have for SAfm.

There were marked differences between the population groups in the way they identified with an English radio station. White English-speakers were shown in this study to identify more strongly with an English radio station than Africans and White Afrikaans-speakers. The tendency for White English-speakers to listen to an English radio station is again a clear indication of the powerful role that culture plays in the choice of a radio station. It is not surprising, either, that most White English-speakers indicated that they listened to an English radio station regardless of where they were in South Africa.

Given that both Africans and White Afrikaans-speakers have shown a strongly negative identity with an English radio station (i.e. they do not identify with it at all), one may safely assume that this kind of radio station would not appeal to listeners from those two population groups. However, on a broader level and within the context of this study, this finding strongly suggests that for a station such as SAfm to succeed, it should avoid programmes and presenters that are biased towards meeting the needs and interests of only certain cultural groups.

The population groups that seemed not to be on the extremes in the way they identified with their own cultural groups were Indians and Coloureds. However, there were a few instances in this study where Coloureds were shown to have a strong need to identify with an English radio station. For example, the research results have shown that Coloureds readily feel a sense of belonging when they listen to an English radio station. They also

came out strongly as listeners of an English radio station because they identified with what the station represents. Perhaps what is fundamental in this regard is that Coloureds seem to find more meaning when they listen to this kind of radio station. What is also quite apparent is that Coloureds show a greater psychological need to belong to the English culture, which in this case might indicate a certain level of dissatisfaction with 'their own culture'. The fact that Coloured respondents came out strongly in this study as people who would continue to listen to an English radio station as long as it catered for English-speaking South Africans shows that they have little or no interest in strengthening their own group culture and identity.

Indians were generally shown in this study to identify less with an English radio station. In particular (1) they were shown to identify less with what a station meant to them, (2) only a few of them readily felt a sense of belonging when they listened to it, and (3) only a few of them would listen to this kind of radio station because it suited their lifestyle. The only instance where Indians showed higher than expected support in this study was when they were reported to feel comfortable about listening to an English radio station because they were always in the company of others who spoke English. This seems to support the observation that was made earlier in this chapter that English enables them to be part of the mainstream society. This is probably the main reason that they have been shown in this study to be more in favour of a multicultural English radio station. In fact they seem to be ideally suited to this kind of radio station because they have no strong need to identify with both Indian and English cultures.

In the light of what has been discussed so far in this part of the chapter, it is not surprising that the research results have also shown that Indians and Africans did not identify with White presenters. As expected, White English-speakers showed a strong sense of identity with White presenters. This also indicates that racial considerations with regard to preference for radio announcers of a particular skin colour are alive and well among potential audience members. The problem of identifying with particular radio announcers has been highlighted by a little more than half of the respondents in this study, who indicated that they would not listen to an English radio station because they could not identify with White radio presenters.

8.7 Conclusion

A conclusion that one may draw from this study is that SAfm would have a better chance of transforming itself successfully into a truly multicultural English radio station in South Africa if radical changes could be made on the station on the short term. One of the changes that would have to be effected as a matter of urgency is the appointment of a new station manager. This person should be a man or woman who has a commitment and vision to change and lead SAfm in the direction that would generate support and enthusiasm for the station among the majority of South Africans. However, in order for this to become a reality, it would be vital for the SABC to throw its weight behind the new manager and to see to it that he or she succeeds. The person would also have to be supported by a strong management team that would be representative of the station's audience, and should have the same level of commitment and dedication as the manager to implementing the changes that would turn SAfm around. It is hoped that the findings of this research, including the recommendations that have been made, will serve as a valuable guide or reference for what needs to be done to establish a successful and vibrant radio station for all South Africans. Additional information in the form of theoretical models and approaches that could serve as guidelines for developing this kind of radio station will be discussed in chapter 9.

8.8 Important Recommendations for the SABC

- In the light of what has come out of this research, SABC top management needs to make drastic changes that would lead to the transformation of SAfm so that the station could attract a multicultural and multiracial listenership. It is imperative for this to be done immediately, as this study has shown that there is a need for a multicultural English radio station in South Africa, and that most of the potential listeners do not yet have a favourite radio station. It would have to be a unique radio station – the first in the world – that could serve as a model.

- The first, immediate step that would have to be taken is to appoint a station manager who has extensive knowledge and experience of radio, and the propensity

to transform SAfm into a truly multicultural and multiracial radio station. It is important for this person to be given the authority, power and support to move the station in the direction he or she has envisaged. Furthermore, this person should also appoint his or her own team that would constitute the station management.

- The station management should also be tasked with the development of a comprehensive policy for the station to deal with issues such as:

- The scope and objectives that would inform its overall strategy

- The criteria that would be used to recruit or employ presenters

- The kind of relationship the station wants to develop and nurture with its listeners

- Its positioning and how it should be marketed

- A relationship with the government that would not compromise the station's integrity in both the short and long term

- The type of programmes and programme formats that would be best suited to its audience

- The need to introduce innovative or new programme ideas

- Clearly defined guidelines would have to be set that could make SAfm – as national and multicultural English radio service – a station that all South Africans could be proud of.

- The station management should employ a culturally diverse team of presenters that would reflect the profile of the station's audience.

- Such presenters should be able to deal with people from different cultures. More

important, they would have to be open-minded and receptive to the political and social changes that have taken place in South Africa

- Essential to what has been said above is that the programmes broadcast on the station should reflect and be relevant to the needs, tastes and lifestyle of the potential target audience

• The presenters on the station should be able to speak good English that one would expect from an educated person. In addition, they should be able to pronounce English words well, and foreign words (e.g. personal and place names) adequately.

• In order to deal with the problem of foreign accents, it is vital for the station management to offer their presenters English language training that is aimed at reducing the negative effects of heavy accents to a generally acceptable level.

• Improvement of the station's credibility and image among its listeners is something that should also be dealt with as a matter of urgency. This could form part of the station's marketing strategy and should entail the following:

- Visits by the presenters in order to broadcast from places, or at events, where the listeners are concentrated

- Being seen as a good 'corporate citizen' by involving itself in worthy and meaningful social causes in the community it serves

- Assiduously avoiding government or political interference in the running of the station and influence on its programme content, because of the potentially negative image this would create for the station

• Further research would have to be done to identify the type of programmes and programme formats that would be ideally suited to the station. These programmes should be such that they would guarantee a loyal listenership. Another study that

would have to be done as a matter of urgency is one that could help to ascertain the positioning of the various programmes in appropriate time slots.

- A new vision and mission for the station would have to be developed to give the station a direction that every employee could work towards.

- There is a pressing need for a carefully worked out strategy aimed at repositioning and branding the station to be developed and implemented. This would have to be accompanied by a strong marketing effort aimed at raising the station's profile among the general public, and among tourists or foreigners visiting South Africa. This approach is referred to as brand-locking in consumer behaviour.

- The suitability of the current presenters and producers on SAfm would have to be assessed so that those who did not meet the criteria set by the new station management could be replaced. Some of the most important criteria for this purpose would be:

- The presenters' ability to show understanding of, and sensitivity to their listeners. This would also entail knowledge and awareness of the historical and sociopolitical factors that shape a person's group culture

- The presenters' knowledge of how listeners from different cultures experience radio, and what they expect from it

- Their awareness of the pitfalls of saying or misinterpreting things without taking into consideration the cultural context in which they apply

- Whether they have the desired qualities of presenters who would be ideally suited to work for SAfm

- Those who would appeal simultaneously to both blacks and whites which have been

identified in this study

- The new programmes and presenters on the new SAfm should be introduced without delay. The prospect of losing current listenership should not deter the station from making this move, given that most of them would not be part of the target audience the station wanted to attract. Currently, SAfm has a disproportionately large number of White English-speaking listeners who are in their 50s.

- Given the world-wide problem of determining the generally acceptable standard of English – a problem that is compounded by the different dialects that are used in various regions or parts of the country and the world – the station management would have to come up with the policy on this issue. They would have to decide what would constitute the generally acceptable standard of English to be used as an effective means of communicating with their listeners, based on the findings of this research and on other considerations.

- The station would have to feature programmes aimed at increasing understanding and tolerance between the people of all races in South Africa – especially those that examine cross-cultural issues of interest to most listeners. This could be achieved partly by inviting the listeners to make suggestions of what they would like to hear in such a programme, and by asking them to raise sensitive issues from the different cultural groups that could be discussed openly on air. Examples of types of related programmes that could be considered are those featuring women of all races who have achieved something in their own field; those on anything that would be of great interest to most listeners; and those that deal with book reviews from Africa.

- The station would have to be developed as a flagship radio station for the country that would instil a sense of pride in all South Africans. Achieving this would require the following:

- A massive financial injection into the station to ensure that it acquires all the

identified in this study

- The new programmes and presenters on the new SAfm should be introduced
  without delay. The prospect of losing current listenership should not deter the
  station from making this move, given that most of them would not be part of the
  target audience the station wanted to attract. Currently, SAfm has a
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- The station would have to be developed as a flagship radio station for the country
  that would instil a sense of pride in all South Africans. Achieving this would require
  the following:

  - A massive financial injection into the station to ensure that it acquires all the

resources it would need to succeed

- The station would have to be designed as a multimedia facility, which would enable it to be accessible almost anywhere in the world

- If feasible, a network of transmitters should be installed in the neighbouring countries (i.e. Southern African Development Community, SADEC) because of the interest that such a station could generate in those countries