Programmers Guide To Omnia.11

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As a person who was a Programmer and Operations Manager in the broadcast industry for many years, I realize the constant battle that one has when it comes to audio processing. On one hand, there is a need for audio integrity, that is to say the clarity and definition of the program feed. On the other hand, we have the commercial realities of the marketplace, which is to punch your station through the competitive fray with loudness and impact. Until now, this has always been a tradeoff. You gave up some of one for some of the other. Or a lot of one for a lot of the other.

Until now, the tradeoff of sonic integrity to many was not so critical. So long as the station sounded loud and somewhat dynamic on the FM band, all was well in the world.

But at Team Omnia, we realized that the old rules were rapidly falling away. We needed to address the fact that there are now competitive playback options and streams coming from a variety of different sources, many of them with superb audio quality and integrity. Your competition is not simply on the FM band anymore. Yet, you still have to face your FM competition. You really have two battlefields which, until now, were pretty difficult to address simultaneously.

Team Omnia has wrestled with this dilemma, and proudly introduces The Omnia.11.

The Omnia.11 has been designed from the ground up to put FM radio on par with the sonic integrity of all modern competitive media feeds and playback options, while retaining—and actually improving—the capability of presenting your station with unparalleled dial impact and loudness on the FM band.

The first thing you will notice is that the Omnia.11 has a very high level of transparency, much higher than any other processor that you have ever heard. You may actually be startled the first time that you listen because of the absolute clarity of the audio. It pretty much sounds like a clean board feed. Gone is that “processor sound”, which we have been used to for many years, which is actually a low level of distortion and artifacts. Some confuse this with a sign that the processor is “working” but that’s old school and no longer applies.

With Omnia.11, you'll learn to listen to the radio all over again. In place of that traditional, heavily compressed, smashed, squashed sound, is a sonic signature which presents itself as open, natural and refreshing, yet retains the clarity, warmth, and detail of the original source material.

The advantage of such transparency is that you now have a completely clean, white canvas to paint on. The biggest, widest, tallest canvas that you can imagine. You can make your station sound EXACTLY the way that you want to without ANY disruption and/or limitation from distortion and artifacts. And because you are starting with such clean source material, the sky is the limit when it comes to headroom. So the sound which you sculpt will retain its shape and integrity as you make it louder, louder, and louder still. Effortlessly loud.

So, the result is the dual advantages of dial dominance on the FM band to separate yourself from your direct competitor, while simultaneously retaining audio integrity.

Audio integrity? As in, those few audiophiles with fancy systems?

No. I am talking about people like my daughter. And, believe me, Daddy didn't buy her anything fancy!

My daughter is a typical under 25 year old, who now gets a great deal of her music from sources other than radio. Internet feeds, Pandora, iTunes downloads, you name it. Not long ago, she asked me why some of her favorite music "sounds weird on the radio". This is on the FM radio which is embedded in her iPod, I might add. When I asked her to elaborate, she simply said that everything sounded "kind of fuzzy" to her ears.

Fuzzy. As in old school FM processing, where a certain amount of distortion and artifacts were a fact of life.

But life has changed. The competition has changed. Hence, Omnia.11 and the entirely new approach to FM processing specifically designed to address the new challenges in today's marketplace.

Let's get specific:

Take a song like "Viva La Vida" by Coldplay, one of the most widely played songs of the past few years. The bass drum in that song is actually not a kick bass from a drum set, but a free-standing, marching band bass drum struck with a mallet. You can always hear the distinct sound in direct playback, but on-air—up to now—the low level distortion inherent in FM audio processors mixed with the source material. The result was a mushy bass sound. Sure you might be able to get the processor "down there" for a pretty good bottom end, but the bass was not tight. I won't stoop so low as to say that the bass is now tight as a drum on a processor like the Omnia.11, but I will anyway!

There is another data point to consider when it comes to the commercial advantages of clean, open audio: the minimization of listener fatigue.

As you know, the name of the game in radio is to increase Time Spent Listening. Programmers spend all kinds of time and money to create contests, forced listening calls-to-action, you name it, in order to get people to listen longer. Yet, one of the hidden killers of Time Spent Listening is listener fatigue…..the side-effect of listening to a mushed-up music feed without the proper amount of definition to keep the ear from getting "tired".

Now, in terms of a programmer getting the sound just right, the Omnia.11 is designed to not only be transparent in sound quality but totally transparent when it comes to adjustment and setup. Remote access to all controls is available via any web browser, as well as a local onboard WI-FI connection. Laptops to iPads will have access. What this means to you, the programmer, is that your engineering crew—or even you (don't be afraid…its easy, believe me)—can make adjustments to your on-air processing in a real-world condition. That is, sitting in your living room, car, office, etc, while monitoring not only your own station, but comparing your changes instantly to your competitor.

By the way, the Omnia.11 is a dual analog/digital processor. That means that this single box will process both your traditional analog transmission AND your HD-1, with the ability to independently adjust each side for the specific characteristics of each method of transmission.

In closing, I will say, without fear of overstatement, that the Omnia.11 is a quantum leap in not only processing quality, dial impact and flexibility, but in terms of ease of setup and accessibility.

And, of course, Omnia 24/7 support is available around the clock in case you need us. Your station is on 24 hours, so we are too.