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THE ART OF FINDING TOMORROW'S TALENTED INDIVIDUALS : THE RADIO NOVA MODEL

by

Marc H'LIMI
Broadcast chief, Radio Nova

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Report by Cédric Vilatte
Translation by Rachel Marlin

Overview

The star presenters of Radio Nova frequently move from the radio station to become television presenters. In order to maintain their staff numbers, Nova constantly has to find and train new talent. In the structured world of radio where demand dominates and where the way in which it works leaves little place for risk-taking both in terms of programming and presentation, Nova can afford the luxury of trying out different methods and has the time necessary for talent to reveal itself. Nova is able to do this because it has an organisation which is capable of managing an economic model applicable to a limited audience while maintaining its objective of not losing money. The aims of Radio Nova are creativity, freedom of speech and the promotion of all kinds of music... in other words how a private company declares a commitment to public service.

*L'Association des Amis de l'École de Paris du management organise des débats et en diffuse
des comptes rendus ; les idées restant de la seule responsabilité de leurs auteurs.
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TALK : Marc H'LIMI

The beginnings of FM

I started in radio in 1981 and joined Radio Nova in 1984. I have done various jobs there on the technical side, in programme editing, production, and musical programming. For the past ten years or so, I have been the head of broadcasting which involves organising the work of all the teams in the radio station including the programmers, journalists, presenters, producers, and the publicity and technical teams.

Radio Nova, like NRJ, is one of the oldest French radio stations. Both have existed under the same name and with the same owner for about twenty-five years. RFM has also been in existence for the same length of time but it has changed owners twice. In order to understand Radio Nova's style and *raison d'être*, one needs to consider it within the wider history of FM radio.

In 1945, the French State established a monopoly with respect to radio stations. However, the public service provided by state-run radio had to exist under the same roof as five powerful, private commercial stations. All the other stations were pirate stations and they tried to break this monopoly. The situation changed in 1981 when François Mitterrand became President and abolished the monopoly. This led to the emergence of independent local radio stations. However, there was not enough room for everyone and many stations disappeared or were simply banned, like Carbone 14.

Jean-François Bizot has been the owner of Radio Nova since its creation in 1981. Before Radio Verte and Radio Ivre asked him to start Radio Nova, he was in charge of the magazine Actuel, the emblematic journal of the 1970's counter-culture. Both Radio Verte and Radio Ivre had actively fought against the State monopoly. Radio Nova was the result of a desire to create a new and different radio station. It showed that it was capable of survival in a difficult world. Over the next ten years, the situation on the airwaves calmed down, but before this, there was a troubled period of buyouts and forced alliances. One should not forget that French radio is not an open market. If the frequency is not needed any more, it is impossible to sell it : it has to be given back to the CSA (*Conseil supérieur de l'audiovisuel* : the body which monitors broadcasting), which then re-allocates it to interested parties.

In 2007, the CSA intends to launch an important project to re-allocate frequencies in order to rationalise the sector. There are, in fact, many frequencies for Radio France, and in the next two years radio broadcasting space ought to be more balanced.

Radio Nova's budget

Our annual budget is approximately two million Euros : salaries account for 45 %, overhead costs amount to 15 %, and diffusion costs represent 20 % (including distribution by satellite and the Internet).

10 % of this budget is used to pay royalties to composers for playing their music. In fact, we actually pay the SACEM (*Société des auteurs, compositeurs et éditeurs de musique* : the body created to collect and distribute royalties to authors and composers) a remuneration which is indexed to our publicity revenues, regardless of the artists whose music we play on the airwaves. It is therefore likely that Michel Sardou receives some of the money which we have to pay out even though we never play his music !

90 % of our income comes from publicity. The remaining 10 % comes from by-products, mainly the compilations which we sell.

The objectives and the identity of Radio Nova

As head of broadcasting, I have two objectives : not to lose money, and to ensure that Radio Nova's image is long-lasting. Of course, we can make a profit, but this is not my priority. I simply have to make sure that we still exist next year and that we are in good financial shape. My objective is to reach audience figures between one-and-a-half and two points, which represent between one hundred and fifty thousand and two hundred thousand listeners. These figures are monitored in terms of audience 'reach' or 'circulation' (the so-called 'cume' or 'cumulative audience') which is independent of the length of tuning-in time and refers to the number of individuals who have tuned in to Radio Nova at least once in the last twenty-four hours. The statistics of audience share take into account the length of audience listening time. From a strictly publicity point of view, it is more important to have a good audience share than a good cume because it is more likely that the advertisements will be heard. In this way, advertising space can be sold more expensively.

Since publicity receipts are indexed according to the audience, my role is to make sure that we do not drop below one-and-a-half audience points. Conversely, exceeding two-and-a-half points might also put the radio station's image in danger : if Nova were to have too many listeners, this would signify that we have lost the distinctive character which attracts our listeners. This distinctive character allows us to sell our advertising time more expensively than our commercial rivals because our station has a public of so-called 'early adopters' which is very unusual. These listeners are really at the forefront of new trends. We value the uniqueness and the curiosity of our audience and my work consists of keeping a balance between these two factors.

Programming

One third of the music we play is sent to us from major radio publishing houses. Another third comes from the personal record collections of employees at Nova, ranging from the receptionist to the directors. The final third comes from records which have been bought by Radio Nova at the flea market or from trips abroad. In these three thirds, there is also the famous Nova 'fourth third', the non-commercial, amateur music ('demo tapes') which the public sends us. It represents a small percentage of what we play on air, but people know that we are ready to play music which has not yet been distributed. Several artists, such as Avril, have been discovered in this way. This music accounts for 5 % of what we play. We have to listen to everything we receive and define strict criteria to manage this constant influx of music. We are interested as much in the musical quality as in the written accounts which come with the CD, the effort taken with the artwork on the jacket and the cover presentation. We listen to everything. This method of working differs from commercial stations which only transmit music which has already been distributed.

We play about two hundred different tracks every day whereas commercial radio stations play, on average, sixty. Radio Nova's programming therefore offers a very wide range of music. The maximum number of times a track is played in a day on Radio Nova is five, and this is only the case for a single track and not two. On some radio stations, this rate is as high as eighteen times per day which corresponds to hearing the same track almost every hour !

The trickiest problem with our programming is preserving our identity. This happens when we are the first station to play a previously unknown title which later is played by a national network such as NRJ. We then have to ask ourselves whether we should continue to play the song : Mattafix, for example, was played by NRJ two months after we first played it, and became the number one single that Autumn. Should we stop playing it because the other stations play it ? This would then make us appear to be influenced by rival radio station programmers. Should we choose to continue to play the track and risk losing our image as a 'different' radio station ? We finally decided that the status of being independent was more important than our image, because we did not consider that our image could be undermined in the long-term by a single track among two hundred others played in the course of a day. This decision meant that we sent out a clear message to our listeners so that they would know that

when we play a certain piece of music, it is we who discovered it before the others.

Discovering talent

We are the people who discovered important musical trends by artists such as Khaled, Toure Kunda, Césaria Evora, and more recently, Yuri Buenaventura and Amadou Mariam who are now well-known. We were also one of the first radio stations to play Rap music in France, and the first radio station to let young people from the suburbs voice their opinions on air in a very liberal environment. We discovered groups such as NTM and IAM even before they had made an album. The rapper MC Solaar also performed on our radio station before he had made an album. In fact this is how he found a record producer. We also discovered artists such as Daft Punk or more recently Avril, who received the Constantin Prize (a prize given to an artist discovered during the year) last year.

A breeding ground for television presenters

In addition to musical talents, Radio Nova specialises in discovering television presenters. Our original presenters who became TV presenters are Jean-Yves Lafesse, Karl Zéro, Philippe Vandél and Frédéric Taddei.

They were followed by Ariel Wizman, Édouard Baer, and finally Jamel Debouze. Jamel Debouze's notorious rise was meteoric : a year after presenting a show on Radio Nova, he was hired by Canal +.

Most of our presenters are journalists because we expect our presenters to tell stories, to be capable of talking enthusiastically about different topics, to have wide interests and to be very inquisitive. It is also important that they have a little touch of '*folie*' or madness which characterises the spirit of Radio Nova.

Édouard Baer is a typical example. He started broadcasting at Radio Nova at the beginning of the 1990s. At the time, Ariel Wizman was a journalist at *Actuel* and had a small, 5-minute radio show on Nova during the summer, between 6pm and 7pm during which he presented his 'good ideas for the summer'. One evening, he did a show at Radio Nova with Édouard Baer – whom he must have met in a bar – and they started improvising. In September, they teamed up to do a programme called '*La grosse boule*' ('*The big head*'). They started with a two-hour show every night and then changed to two hours every morning, and which they continued on Canal +. Finally, Édouard decided to become an actor rather than continue in television. But his break came as a result of the freedom at Radio Nova where an unknown can go on air and show what he is capable of. We are easily accessible : on the ground floor of our building, there is no night watchman and there are only a few metres between the front door and the recording studio ! Sometimes, our wish to let new artists have airtime has not been a success, but this method of working helps to discover new talent.

The case of Jamel Debouze is different. He was performing in a small show. A member of our team went to see the show and came back full of enthusiasm. Very shortly afterwards, we asked Debouze to do a show on radio called 'Jamel's cinema'. This spot, lasting two minutes, quickly became a Canal + programme.

As far as the other presenters are concerned, the road to recognition has been more traditional. They tend to be journalists starting at Nova as part of their training. In general, they come from journalism schools or have degrees in literature : they rarely come from schools specialising in radio broadcasting. After their training, they have to immerse themselves for quite a long time in our unusual and very distinctive culture. People on the outside have the impression that they are joining a community where professional and personal projects are interlinked. We give the beginners some time to become used to the Radio Nova culture. For example, Tania Bruna-Rosso, who is now a commentator for Canal +, arrived having been an editorial assistant at Nova Mag. Someone suggested that she present a programme from 1pm to 4pm. Initially it was rather disappointing. However, we give presenters enough time to

prove themselves, at least for a season. Generally, we keep people on air even if it means taking a risk but we try to reposition them gradually. For example, we put them on shorter programmes or not at peak times of the day. This minimises the risks without curbing their creativity.

If some of our presenters leave to work elsewhere, it is because we are limited financially. We do not have a great number of listeners and therefore our budget is small : and obviously once they have tasted success, they go elsewhere to earn more money. They do not always do so very happily. Édouard Baer still wants to come back to radio and work with us. When he left Radio Nova, he worked for Canal + and made several films. Then he worked a season for us on his weekly programme '*Secret de femmes*', which was shown two years ago.

To keep our talented presenters, we try to think up television programmes which would allow them to work both in television and radio. For your information, Nova Productions produces all the chat shows for Pink TV on cable. This is a starting point for us. We would like to develop a television *savoir-faire* because, for the time being, we do not have any credibility in television. However, if this experience works and if we can show that we can create a chat show programme, why not produce a prime time programme on channels which have larger audiences ? In this were to be the case, we would not be frustrated any more in seeing the people whom we had trained and taken on for two or three years leave...

The future of Radio Nova

As far as the future development of Radio Nova is concerned, we are great believers in podcasting. This technology automates the downloading of audio or video files onto a digital personal stereo or a mobile telephone from the Internet. Podcasting also makes it possible to subscribe to a radio programme on the Web and to listen to it whenever one wants. Podcasting is rapidly developing on non-music radio because there are not the same restrictions on royalties as there are on music. Almost all the programmes on France Inter, RMC and Europe 1 (French radio stations) are 'podcastables' ! We were the first to propose podcasting for some of our programmes and this made us number one in podcasts on the digital media player application, i-tunes. However, two months later, everyone started offering podcasts and now we occupy a place which is more in keeping with our real weight in the radio world !

I get the impression that the current situation is similar to that at the beginning of the 1980s when FM was getting started. These technological upheavals enable a large number of radio stations to reach a wider audience. In addition to podcasting, Web radios and peer-to-peer (a Web-based network whereby one shares one's private play list on-line, direct from one's hard drive), the distribution of music is increasingly rapid and diverse. This technological change of direction has to be carefully worked out, but for the time being, our main development problem is limited to radio frequencies : over the next two years, we are going to try to obtain new frequencies for some of the important cities in the provinces where we do not yet have a presence.

The reduction in the cost of creating a programme over a larger distribution area should give greater stability to radio's revenues. Even though we are interested in experimenting with technology, this does not necessarily mean that we are ready to abandon the analogue methods. If we consolidate our place on air, this will help our integration into the world of digital radio.

DISCUSSION

Home Radio

Question : *You mentioned the fourth third of programming which comes from suggestions made by listeners (creators), but I think you also have a programme which encourages listeners to create.*

Marc H'Limi : We do indeed have a new programme, Home Radio, which goes out at midnight from Monday to Thursday. It is a reserved slot dedicated to music produced by our listeners. An increasing number of people are now able to produce their own radio programmes from their homes and we want to give them air time. These programmes are varied. They range from amateur musicals to strange musical mixes interspersed with political speeches. It is a way to interact with our audience and to definitively establish our image as a creative radio station. This may even help us discover talented producers. This programme is hosted by the first virtual presenter on FM, Professor Bounce. Many of our listeners think that he is a real-life presenter whereas Professor Bounce is actually the product of software which the programme producer uses to recreate rather realistic synthesized voices. The programme producer integrates the voice into the programme. The day may even come when radio is completely virtual and a person sitting in front of his computer can create a radio programme which is totally coherent, rich and with different voices. We took the risk of talking about Home Radio during the summer without knowing if people were going to send in their productions. We are advancing slowly and we will give more air time to this programme in September if it is successful.

Q. : *Do the creators whom you choose sign contracts ?*

M. H. : No, because the programme, which is also transmitted as a podcast, is free and they remain the owners of their material. I think that there is a formal email exchange but there is no contract to my knowledge since this is voluntary.

Q. : *Do you look for new talent on self-made music sites ?*

M. H. : No, because if we were to go down that path, we would need about ten more programmers. We have enough work created by what we are sent spontaneously. There is an initial selection process built in, because people who send their dustcovers to radio stations do so only to those which are likely to be interested in their music.

The podcast

Q. : *Many artists are not affiliated to the SACEM. So you could transmit their music by podcast without any problem. They receive so little money from this body that they still prefer to distribute their music on the Internet.*

M. H. : We could indeed ask self-made artists to give us the sole right to transmit their music for free. And I think that they would be happy to do so because they are artists in the making, and they really have something to gain. However, they only represent 5 % of all artists. The others have a record label and on the face of it, they are opposed to this sort of practice.

Q. : *If one wants to download a programme as a podcast from a mobile telephone, it is not free. Do you receive money ?*

M. H. : No. You pay for the Internet connection from your telephone operator to visit the Radio Nova website and not the access to the site itself. Our economic model is based on advertising revenues. Our listeners do not pay.

Piloting without instruments

Q. : *You described the marketing and commercial radio stations and you present Radio Nova as a dynamic, independent local radio station which is able to change direction all the time and handles concepts differently. Paradoxically, Radio Nova is piloted a bit like a Formula 1 racing car : it has to remain between one-and-a-half and two audience points ; when you have more or less, you hear the vibrators. How do you handle the contradiction between the requirement to please yourselves by exceeding the established framework and your role as a centralised banker making sure that he does not exceed the central bank rate ?*

M. H. : My role is to provide a structure for those who work every day at Radio Nova. We are not only an independent radio station but also a company. Once we worked with a presenter who only wanted to play new music to listeners. The radio dropped to 0.9 audience points and we had to let him go. His approach was interesting but we needed to restructure his work in order to survive. It is not a paradox, it is just a question of limits which cannot be crossed.

Q. : *What is your turnaround time in these sorts of cases ?*

M. H. : Slower than any other company since, in this case, it took six months. But you should not forget that for radio stations whose audience figures are lower than two points, the audience figures are only available every three or four months. For example, we will only have the figures for the first quarter of 2006 around April 20th. Therefore, we react less quickly when we have a problem to do with the programme balance than other media, such as television, where the audience figures are produced on a daily basis. It is also an advantage because we do not suffer from the pressure of audience ratings from day to day.

The Nova 'building'

Q. : *To extend the car metaphor, Renault makes Formula 1 cars as well as Clios. I wonder if you are lacking another element in your business. You have creative ideas but you have not yet industrialised. I realise that you are not concerned with profits but you are still a company. Perhaps you could make better use of your research work ?*

M. H. : When you talk about 'elements', that would correspond to what we do with the compilations. Radio has a responsibility to detect talent and when we produce a compilation, we enter into the real nitty-gritty of the record industry. We have a distributor and our compilations can be bought at the FNAC ; we are no longer in the musical underground. The sale of compilations is an advantage for broadcasting work and they sell well. It goes without saying that Nova Records, Radio Nova's record label, aims to make profits. However, this profit should help develop the radio station and not fill share holders' pockets. So you can see that we have several elements : the radio, the compilations and also an audiovisual production company which manages our advertising and the layout and design of television stations. It fits into the traditional profit scheme. It has made commercials for BHV, Eurostar and Carrefour, and benefits from Nova's creative image. It occupies a place in the 'building' but not one that I manage.

Q. : *How many people work for Nova ?*

M. H. : About a hundred in the whole group which also includes TSF, a jazz radio station. In fact, Novapress, the holding company, is situated in a building in Paris, near the Bastille, in which there are two radio stations, an advertising agency, two production companies, a digital creation company (Novanet) and a record label.

Q. : *Is there an organisational hierarchy ?*

M. H. : Yes. Jean-François Bizot is the CEO, manager, founder and majority share holder. Bruno Delpont is the managing director of the Novapress group, the holding company to which we belong. Each entity in the holding company has a manager : I manage the Radio

Nova entity. Radio Nova is organised into five divisions with someone in charge of production, a technical manager, a sales manager, an editor and the musical programmer. We have recently added a workers' representative.

Contradictions

Q. : *I get the impression that you are caught in an internal conflict between exploration and exploitation. Your problem is that you are unable to choose between doing new things and doing what you already know. Take for example the travel book Le guide du Routard which has not chosen between targeting young people who travel all over the world today and those who, like myself, were students in May 1968 and who have become so middle-class today that they now want to stay in 3-star hotels. Le guide du Routard is losing its readership because it has not made a choice and I sense that you are also torn because you haven't made the choice. One of my friends created the Beaune Festival and she decided to choose the 'exploration' route. She abandoned the successful artists and in so doing, she did not lose her soul.*

Would your listeners follow you if you chose to innovate and become 100 % digital ?

M. H. : I can confirm that we chose not to choose, not to reach a decision, but to keep the balance as it is : to be explorers on the one hand and assume responsibilities like the head of a company on the other. In the long run, even though one's employees may love adventure, they are not ready to experiment with something if there is a risk of not getting paid at the end of the month.

It is true that making sure one does not lose one's soul is important. It is one of the two ways of getting a buzz. We have evaluated it to be worth two audience points. Radio FG was the radio for the gay Parisian community and was quite similar to us in terms of how it functioned. It was a genuine rival which had between one and one-and-a-half audience points. Today, FG has more than three points. Its income has at least doubled but it has lost its soul.

Similarly, if we want to explore new territories such as podcasts or web radios, once again we will decide not to choose. We are not going to stop analogue broadcasting in order to launch ourselves solely in digital. However, if digital manages to develop our media, radio, and if these developments allow us to broadcast music which we want to hear and which we cannot find elsewhere, then yes, we will go digital.

In any case, from now on, we have to think about the fact that in ten years there will perhaps no longer be any FM. But only the broadcasting method will change : radio will always remain a free mass media for broadcasting sounds which make sense.

Associative radios

Q. : *The cost of broadcasting is high and it is particularly difficult for independent and associative radios. Is there an organised protest movement ?*

M. H. : You are alluding to Aligre FM which has major problems paying its TDF (Télé Diffusion France : body which regulates the frequencies) bill. A movement defending associative radios has been started. We support them and we have announced what they do on our radio station. We have a marginal position among the group of commercial, independent radio stations because these stations have no desire whatsoever to help associative radio stations which occupy the frequencies everywhere in France which independent radio itself would like to occupy.

Q. : *Do you have any competitors from associative radio ?*

M. H. : An associative radio has the right to collect only 20 % of its income from advertising ; the rest comes from support funds and various forms of aid paid irregularly. They function with volunteer staff, few resources, and have problems with broadcasting costs. Therefore, they are not serious rivals even though their artistic approach is sometimes similar to ours. However, there are associative radios in the provinces, such as in Nantes, which are very successful and which make it difficult for Radio Nova to establish itself. Musically

speaking, they are quite similar to us, but in their broadcasting methods, they are very different and have the associative 'patchwork' form, generally lacking any group coherence.

Associative radio stations are merely time slots allotted to specialists without general programming. The result is eclectic and this format is too different to be a direct rival to us.

The presenters

Q. : *How do you recruit your presenters ?*

M. H. : It is very rare for us to employ presenters who come directly from outside radio. We prefer to take people already working in radio. In terms of recruitment, we look for unorthodox people, often through chance meetings. There is no set policy. When *Actuel* existed, 80 % of the presenters worked initially for the magazine before working at the radio station. Today, our reputation is well-known and we handle recruitment differently.

Q. : *Do you look for homogeneity in your presenters' voices ?*

M. H. : Not in their voices. Commercial radios have very precise requirements regarding the tone and timbre of a voice. We do not discriminate on this aspect. We give priority to the personality of our presenters.

Q. : *In order to keep your presenters, is it possible to copy what happens in football ? In football, clubs transfer players and make them sign a medium-term contract which forces their future employers to pay compensation if the player breaks this contract.*

M. H. : We have already thought about this possibility but it raises two problems. Firstly, a longer contract which prevents the presenter leaving would necessarily mean paying him a higher salary than that which we are able to offer. Secondly, the risk-taking is twice as high because, before suggesting such a contract, we really have to be certain of the result. Our way of working is more experimental. In addition, keeping people by force is totally against Radio Nova's principles.

We cannot present ourselves as a free, independent local radio station which exercises freedom of expression while at the same time issuing very restrictive contracts which are validated by lawyers. This is not compatible with our culture.

The listeners

Q. : *You have only spoken about the listeners in terms of audience. This is a bit of a paradox for a public which you classify as 'high quality' ? What are the characteristics of your listeners whom you classify as 'high quality' ?*

M. H. : I have to use figures in order to characterise them. They tend to be young, on average twenty-eight or twenty-nine years old. The majority are men (70 %) although the proportion is changing. Our typical listener is a city-dweller with an above-average social status and standard of education. He has a close relationship with Radio Nova and this is sometimes difficult for us to manage.

In the context of the development of new technologies, we have created an Internet site with a newsgroup which allows us to be constantly in touch with our listeners. We often have to handle demanding listeners who are capable of telling us that at such-and-such a time on such-and-such a day what was said about an artist was not exactly correct. On the other hand, we have never done any interactive radio, (such as phone-ins), as other young music radio stations call it.

We try to have an intelligent and positive editorial line with our listeners. We see interaction differently : we create meeting points with our presenters. For example, on Friday evenings, concerts are recorded at the *Scène Bastille*, a Parisian club which has a capacity of six hundred. The public is made up purely of Radio Nova listeners who receive free invitations. It is a place where people can talk. We try to stage these concerts in the provinces so that Radio Nova has coverage in towns where we are not very well known at the moment and where we

would like to become established.

Q. : *Your aspiration to allow listeners to discover different music is practically a public service mission. How do you rate Radio Nova by comparison with stations such as Le Mouv' or France Bleue ?*

M. H. : It is true that we carry out public service missions with private funds. The Minister for Culture recently came to our radio station and made the same remark. Le Mouv' is quite a formatted radio which for the most part plays rock music because obviously its manager thinks that they can reach out to young people in France by playing such music. I think this is absurd : you just have to look at the *Île-de-France* (area around Paris) region to see that most young people do not listen to rock music at all. Some essential public service missions have not been taken up and our position is to do so. The day a radio station is introduced which takes on this role, we will have a serious contender.

The rules of internal functioning

Q. : *For Radio Nova to be a forum for freedom of expression, you have to organise the work according to precise lines. What are these lines ?*

M. H. : There are no rules, just limits that have to be respected and not crossed. Everyone at Nova knows these limits. Employees can arrive late as long as they do the work for which they are paid. There are no fixed working hours and this contributes to a feeling of freedom at Radio Nova. However, in return, I can ask someone to do overtime without this being a problem. But subsequently, he will take his Monday morning off without having to be told he can !

Therefore, there are no rules, just a sort of auto-regulation. All the same, over the past five years, we have been trying to put some rules in place. At the beginning of the season, in September, during an individual interview with each of our employees, we create a job description which acts as a reference point for each employee for the whole season. This document serves as the basis for taking stock of the situation in June and seeing what has been successful and what has not. It is new and necessary : one has to be able to ensure that each person fulfils his contract and if not, to warn him early on that his contract will not be renewed in September.

Q. : *The objective of not losing money is unusual in a private company. You are not an association. How does this affect your in-house culture ? Because, if I have understood properly, this applies to Radio Nova but not to all the others in the group.*

M. H. : Radio Nova is self-made company belonging to a single person, and it is precisely this which enables us to remain a forum for free expression. Everyone knows and respects this principle. When employees ask me for a rise, I always start by reminding them that the company does not make any profits. This is an important part of our identity. Everyone here is perfectly aware that we only exist because of one person, Jean-François Bizot. The station functions very well as an independent local radio station, but without this *modus operandi*, one might question the station's long-term existence the future of the whole group.

Presentation of the speaker :

Marc H'Limi, head of broadcasting. Having completed his engineering studies, specialising in electronics and computer science, he started working for the only radio station he has ever known, Nova.

Translation by Rachel Marlin (rachelm@tiscali.fr)