

Are radio and music jobs just for wannabes?

Greg James interview

When I started at Radio 1 I was 21, I was naïve, I didn't really know about the music industry at large. I knew that there were record labels. I knew that there were artists, but I didn't know for example, that there were people called pluggers. Pluggers who will come into a radio station or TV channel and will speak to the music team and will say 'I represent Beyonce and there's a new Beyonce song here it is. Have a listen!'

To be a good plugger you need to first of all believe in what you are trying to sell.

[Does impression of plugger] *'Yeah Greg, hi hi hi, I've got this new record that I'm trying to sell that you should be playing'*

I think you've got to be a nice person because it's quite a cut-throat thing being a plugger, because you have to sell, sell, sell. So, if you can get a personal relationship with people that really helps.

When I started at Radio 1 I suddenly realised how big the operation is. My favourite team in the whole building is the operations team, headed up by a guy called Tony Wood – the most important man at Radio 1! He makes sure that everything works – he makes sure that the microphones are sorted, that the studios are all setup, he makes sure that every outside broadcast is sorted. He has a special Bat phone that he sleeps with which if it rings he's like 'What's happened to Radio 1?'

He is the only man who can log on to Radio 1 wherever he is in the world! So it's people like him and his operations team that I have a lot of respect for.

It's very hard to give advice on jobs in radio and music and the media in general because there's no set way of getting into it and I'd imagine if you've watched a lot of these videos you'll realise there is no set way of getting in.

You have to have a passion for it definitely and you have to be very single minded about it and not worry too much about what other people are doing. When I was 18 I was completely fearless and just wanted to be on Radio 1 and when I got to Radio 1 that's when I started worrying about everyone else. Then I had a word with myself and said 'What are you doing, just focus on what you're doing!'

Don't forget to scratch beneath the surface! Yes these jobs are cool - this is MY dream job, it might not be your dream job! There are loads of other jobs, you don't have to be a presenter or a musician.

Essentially I'm just a puppet and the puppet always needs a master and that master could be you!