



# The RAB's 'Radio on Main Street' featuring Gordon Borrell

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## Radio on Main Street Webinar Summary – May 9, 2025

### Overview

In this episode of \*Radio on Main Street\*, RAB CEO Mike Holvey sits down with Gordon Borrell, CEO of Borrell Associates, live from the NAB Show floor in Las Vegas. Their discussion offers a candid look at the state of the radio industry, its evolving relationship with digital, and the urgent need for innovation. Borrell's experience and insights, paired with fresh data from the Digital Benchmark Report, highlight both the opportunities and the missed marks facing broadcasters today.

As the former Chief Digital Officer at Beasley Media Group, I couldn't agree more with Gordon's perspective. Far too many companies in this space remain committed to an outdated belief- that they can cut their way to profitability. Instead, this conversation is a timely reminder that transformation requires courageous investment, bold leadership, and an all-in commitment to digital evolution.





Want to watch the replay yourself? Here's the [link](#).

### Summary





Borrell underscores that while radio continues to maintain impressive reach and local trust, those strengths alone won't guarantee a sustainable future. What's missing? Investment in R&D, digital-first strategies, and strategic resets that match today's media landscape. He reveals that 24% of radio revenue now comes from digital, up sharply since the pandemic, but that growth is threatened by a lack of training and strategic alignment. The data from Borrell Associates signals a shift in focus: training is now seen as the single most important factor in driving digital revenue. The takeaway? **Radio's future depends not on nostalgia, but on bold, future-forward execution.**

## Key Takeaways:





### The Investment Imperative

-  Most radio companies don't report any R&D spending. *Zero investment in innovation should be a red flag.*
-  Tech giants like Meta invest 50%+ in R&D; Netflix invests ~10%. *Radio needs to catch up fast.*
-  **Cutting costs isn't a growth strategy.** True transformation requires financial commitment from ownership.
-  *Radio must invest in digital capabilities, video production, and cross-platform storytelling.*

### Digital Sales Readiness & Strategy

-  24% of total radio revenue now comes from digital, spurred by pandemic-era urgency. That's great, but *it needs to grow!*
-  *Training is now the #1 need for driving digital sales, above tools or headcount.*
-  Strategic plans are losing relevance, and *most station leaders now rate their digital strategies as weak.*
-  **Digital and station strategies should be revisited at least annually to remain competitive.**

### Perception, Positioning & Growth Mindset

-  *Local advertisers view radio sellers as personable and increasingly credible in digital, a major advantage.*
-  *Radio sellers must be fluent in TikTok, SEO/SEM, social media, and streaming to guide clients credibly, not just the "basics" (CTV, audio, branded content, display, marketing services, etc.)*
-  Radio remains powerful for emotional connection, but *must modernize how it builds and monetizes relationships.*
-  **Exponential growth will only come from bold innovation, not incremental optimization.**