

Student raises hand on field trip, walks away with job offer



Student Matt Harris works at the radio station while attending school.

Brad Collins of the Z103 Morning Show handed student Matt Harris the script. Harris would have preferred a sports story, but Oprah Winfrey would have to do. Surrounded by other broadcasting students and his instructor, Brother Jay Hildebrandt, Harris announced the practice radio spot inside the studio of Riverbend Communications' Z103 radio station in Blackfoot.

When Harris walked out of the studio, he held a business card and a job offer in his hand.

"I have learned that when an opportunity presents itself, you need to take hold of it," Harris said. "When I raised my hand to try the radio spot, I knew this was an opportunity to try something new. I read it how I thought a DJ would read it. Then the DJ edited it, threw some music behind it and played it back. After that, Brad Collins turned to me and said, 'Wow, that's amazing—that's really good.'"

But being successful in the broadcasting world isn't easy. Brother Hildebrandt said there are "two main qualities a person needs to succeed in broadcasting: passion for the job and talent. Matt has both those qualities. He's excited about the business and he's a natural when it comes to announcing."

Before the field trip to Riverbend Communications, Harris had a background in public address announcing and a knack for improvisation. But Harris had no idea that this field trip would lead to a job with Idaho's No. 1 hit music channel.

"These field trips show the students how the skills they learn are actually used in real-life situations," Hildebrandt said. "After seeing first-hand how the broadcast operations work, it helps the students figure out if it's really a career they want to pursue. Some students tell me it's a life-changing experience that confirms they've chosen the right major."

Harris explained that these learning opportunities are available to any student at BYU-Idaho—as long as he or she is willing to work for them. "I started as a volunteer in Activities, now I am a student director in Sports. You can start out small and work up to being a leader."

Although Harris is still a student, Z103 saw his talent and hired him as a part-time DJ. Harris said that working with Z103 has given him a confidence boost that is affecting his classes and preparing him for his future career. "I can bring my experience back here and know that, 'I can do this.' Now I can help teach other students what I have learned," Harris said.

NEXT WEEK'S DEVOTIONAL CRAIG BELL



Brother Craig Bell currently serves as department chair and faculty member in the Department of Business Management at BYU-Idaho.

Brother Bell graduated with an associate degree in health science from Ricks College, a bachelor's degree in psychology from BYU, a master's degree in business administration from Portland State University, and is currently working toward a PhD in educational leadership and administration from the University of Nebraska.

Before coming to BYU-Idaho, Brother Bell worked at Woodgrain Millwork, Inc. as the manager of market operations. He also worked for the Church Educational System as a seminary instructor in Oregon, Idaho and Utah, and was the seminary principal at Ontario High School.

Brother Bell has served the Church in many capacities, including as an elders quorum president, Scoutmaster, stake clerk, and as a counselor in the bishopric. Currently, he serves as the bishop of the Hibbard 3rd Ward.

Brother Bell and his wife, Susan, have six children.