

## Musical Smoke & Mirrors

### Continuing Education For The Dedicated Radio Programmer Rotational

#### Secrets You Need To KNOW

The "PD" *Hot-Clock Games* series will return again in issue #28, shining the white-hot spotlight on Country (and in future issues: Oldies, Mainstream AC, Modern AC, Urban, Classic Rock, Rock, and Smooth Jazz).

Before diving headfirst into actual clock-structure again, there are some useful background techniques that deserve discussion (and your strong consideration). Most of them you're probably already aware of and/or are doing.

But just in case . . . may we present . . .

#### The Case Against "Hold" Categories

Some programmers have utilized a special "hiatus" category to "rest" songs which they judge to be acquiring too much burnout or "developed-dislike". (Developed dislike = dislike + hate + burnout; it is a percentage used in music research to identify how many people already dislike a song alongside those who may at times be "annoyed" by it).

**Here's the problem:** Too often, **burn-thresholds** (the level where burnout is considered to be "critical") are **set too low**. I've had several fellow research consultants jokingly say that it's all *my* fault because back in the 70's, when I marketed the very first system of callout research (version 1.0 of the MARS System, Mass Acceptance Research Study), we set the automatic "highlighters" in the MARS computer

(Continued — See **Musical Smoke** on page 2)

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**Programmer's Digest** Publisher/Editor **Todd Wallace** is a 30-year programming veteran — as a #1 jock, PD, GM, and station owner. Over the past 24 years, he has provided programming consultation services to over 100 radio stations. Internationally recognized as the "founding father" of the "callout" research concept, over 200 stations have used his systems of "in-house" music, tracking, and perceptual research.

# Musical Smoke & Mirrors

(Continued . . . from Page 1) program to flag any song acquiring over 15.0% burn with an "X" and any song with over 25.0% with "XX". In that way, a PD's eye would be instantly drawn to any songs that were approaching "the danger zone" (where a song's burn should be scrutinized relative to its performance in positives, favorites, familiarity, and its remaining "hit potential"). Well, as so often happens in this business, many programmers ignored our instructions and chose to interpret these flags way too literally. Some PDs would yank a song as soon as it hit 15% burn! (When in doubt, read the directions!)

What these misguided idiots were missing is *the big picture* — that 15% burn means 85% UN-burn (in other words, 85% of your target audience is *not* tired of hearing the song). Even a relatively high burn-score of, say, 30% means 70% unburn, which in some cases can be deemed "acceptable", if said song still maintains 70% Positive Acceptance (Like + Love votes) with 35% Favoriteness.

In fairness we have to say that proponents of these "rest" or "hold" categories usually have the purist of motives at heart:

- They're trying to *minimize* programming factors (songs, in this case) that their audience might consider a negative or annoyance
- They're trying to preserve the song's *long-term* potential as a "classic" (which won't happen if every ounce of enjoyment is drained out of it as a current). Remember "You Light Up My Life"?

Here's the other side of the equation —

If you concentrate too intensely on eliminating negs and annoyances, you may overlook (or eliminate) audience *attractants* (reasons listeners tune-in). It ignores the concept of "the passing parade", which notes that *not everybody* gets on or off the bandwagon at the same time — so when you *totally eliminate* a song just to "please" one constituency you think may be "tiring" of it, you've simultaneously taken away a reason another (albeit slower) constituency might find to seek out your station (especially if the "favorite" levels are still high on the toasty song in question).

The will to win is not nearly as important as the will to **PREPARE** to win

TW Tip #6080, #7153, and #8040

Remember burnout does not always equate to tune-out, especially the way most radio

listening is done (passively). And particularly when listening is done at "background levels" (like in a long-listening workplace atmosphere), tune-out on a song-by-song basis just plain doesn't happen.

Another danger: Frequently songs in a "hold" category get "forgotten" about. As a consultant visiting a new client, many times I'll ask innocent questions like, "Why aren't you playing 'X' or why aren't you playing 'Y'?" (proven hits in the client's format) only to be told that the proven hit in question was being "aged" for 6 months to lower its burn (thereby depriving listeners of the opportunity to hear it while it ages). Trouble is: I've seen many situations where, because of the busy-ness of our programming lives today, this 6-month "rest" turns into a 12- or 18-month holding-pattern (until someone finally gets around to reviewing the hiatus-category, which oftentimes never happens)

The solution: Instead of "resting" a song completely, just bump it "down" one *additional* rotational tier (so, for example, instead of moving from a 9-hour slow-current rotation into a priority-recurrent 14-hour rotation, a toasted song might move straight to a secondary or tertiary recurrent tier (maybe 35 hours or more). You'll be amazed at how quickly it loses its high burn. Then a few months down the line, you can move it into higher recurrent status (minus its burn).

TW Tip #2124 and #19053

Next Week: "The Curse Of The 5-Hour Rotation"

Programming Note

The 2nd Quarterly "PD" Index Of

**TW Tips**

Will Appear In Issue #27

## Dealing With Talent 'The Asshole Factor'

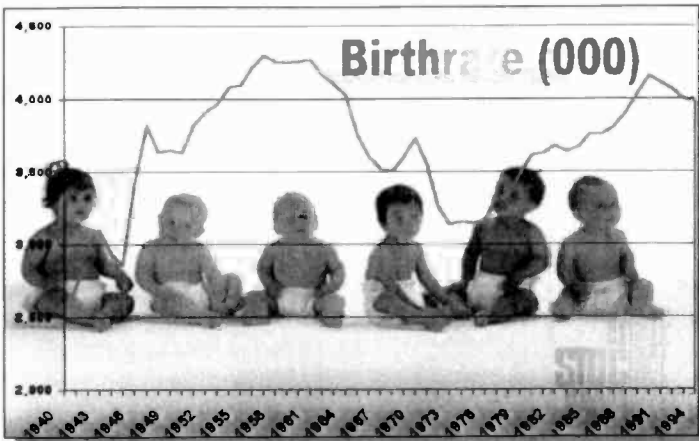
Jacor CEO Randy Michaels classic answer to a curly question during Q&A at the NAB's *Has The Fun Machine Run Out Of Gas* session in Seattle.

**Q: Often it's hard to get "big" air talents and upper tiers of management fully involved in spreading the "fun". How do you do it?**  
"It's one of the hardest questions — and it's not always possible. I mean, there's no question that a certain amount of psychosis goes along with anyone who has a lot of talent. You ask 'em to sit in a little room, talk to people they can't see, and they're very insecure and they get their reassurance in strange and unusual ways. It's often true that the people you'd like to have be the biggest cheerleaders feel that they're "above" going to a bowling party with the rest of the staff. The most effective thing I've found, and it doesn't work all the time, is to explain what I call "the asshole factor". The more talent you have, meaning the higher your ratings, the more revenue you produce, the more tangible benefit, then the bigger asshole you can be and get away with it. I mean, if you've got a 20 share in morning drive and you're a total miserable S.O.B. around the halls, you'll probably keep your job. But, things go up and down, life cycles! And if that 20 share starts to slip, and you've just held the manager up for doubling your salary every year for the next three years, and you don't want to do live copy, and you don't wanta' have any fun, and those ratings start to slip, *bang*, you're expendable! And someone across the street, who doesn't realize what a turd you are, will maybe hire you. I have found that there is no solving that sometimes, but by explaining the asshole factor to them, 'Look, you can get away with that, you don't *have* to come to the party, if you want to use the bathroom on my desk, you probably ain't gonna' get fired for that either, go ahead, but when you leave, we're all gonna' say "what an asshole", and if that's what you want, go for it. But it would be a lot more fun if you could take that big head off and kinda' join your team.' And I'm not gonna' tell ya' that's a foolproof solution, but I've actually had some pretty good results with that. Now it doesn't last a long time, you've gotta' every once in awhile pull 'em aside and just whisper, y'know it's like Pavlovian, "Asshole Factor" — and they'll respond, 'Oh! Okay!'"

TW Tip #6061, #7155, and #8041

## Baby Boomers: As We Age, What Do We Listen To?

Just when you think you've got Boomers all sized-up and segmented comes another landmark study that introduces new perceptual facts and figures you *must* take on board. Critical Mass Media's presentation, by **Carolyn Gilbert** and **John Martin**, on the lifestyle and radio listening habits of the Baby Boomers painted a very complete picture of listeners between the ages of 40 and 54 (based on a nationwide research study of 1,605 interviews completed during the month of September '98). Some highlights . . .



TW Tip #1077 and #19051

### Who They Are

- Boomers born between '46 and '64 total 78 million post-war babies!
- They are the first **TV generation**. The **Rock & Roll** generation. And the **Top 40 Radio** generation. (Their parents were the first "mass media" generation).
- They all lived somewhat the same lifestyle, liked the same songs, watched the same TV shows. And – liked the same kind of radio stations (some stations experienced 60-shares when boomers were in their teens).
- This common experience continues as America homogenizes (a mall in one city looks just like one in another, a Big Mac in Cincinnati takes like a Big Mac in Salina, Kansas).
- It's a group that wants to hang on to its adolescent rebellion (at least "theoretically").
- The most well-educated generation in history – and into high-tech.
- Their leisure time is shrinking because they manage so many responsibilities.
- They're more prosperous – and more cynical! They didn't trust anyone over 30 — and they don't believe

everything they read (or hear on the radio).

- They look forward to a healthy, active, and fun-filled retirement. Middle-age is 15 years older than you are (when you're 15, it's 30; when you're 45, it's 60, and so on).
- Two-thirds are married. They're approaching their income peak. And ailments of aging are just beginning.
- The biggest similarity is their tendency toward individualism, according to **Cheryl Russell** (author of *The Master Trend: How The Baby Boom Generation Is Remaking America*): "People born after World War II are different than people born before the war. They're much more individualistic."

**"Middle-age" is 15 years older than you are (when you're 15, it's 30; when you're 45, it's 60)**

- As a result, this generation that is supposed to be one cohesive group is actually two (or maybe as many as *four*) separate generations: the rebellious older portion (the Beatle boomers), the followers (the Brady boomers), and the "me" generation.
- This difference applies to all walks of life: politics (Clinton to Gingrich), music (Yo Yo Ma to Natalie Merchant), TV (the Big 3 to cable networks to *none!*) And to Radio, where deep fragmentation is a fact of life (from Limbaugh to Stern, NPR to CHR).

### Music Genres

- **By Sex:** Music momentum ("listening *more* than 5 years ago" scores minus "listening less") is more "down" than "up". Males are up in Soft AC, Smooth Jazz, and Classic Rock. (Continued — See **Boomers** on page 6)



## Elements Of Stationality

## Slogans, Sweepers, Promos, & Tit For Tat

### New York City

**CBS's WCBS-FM** "From The King (Elvis: "Warden threw a party in the county jail") to The Queen (Aretha: "R-E-S-P-E-C-T"), we play the BEST oldies, CBS-FM, 101.1"

**Chancellor's WHTZ-FM** "If you wanta' hear *all* the hits non-stop, you want Z-100."

"(female) Z-100 (male) where at least 45 minutes of today's best music (female) today's *best* music (male) starts *now!*"

**Chancellor's WKTU-FM** "Keeping New York energized (female) The Beat Of New York (male) 103.5 new (female) new (male) K T U"

"Now (now) another 40 minutes of back to back hits (back to back hits) custom-designed exclusively for New York!. The Beat (the beat) is ON! The Beat of New York. 103.5 K T U".

**Chancellor's WBIX-FM.** "While PLJ is yakkin' all afternoon, we're kickin' off another 40-minute music block right now. That means the best songs with the most variety. (jingle) "New York's Big 105".

**ABC's WPLJ-FM.** "(female) The BEST Mix of the 80's, 90's, and today. (male) P L J. (female) P L J".

**Emmis' WQHT-FM.** "Hot 97, representin' Hip Hop to the fullest." "The hottest station in the world is . . . Hot 97, representin' Hip Hop and R&B flava, son. Word up!"

### Los Angeles

**Bonnevill's KZLA-FM.** "TV kinda sucks anyway, so why not try **Marina Wilson** with your requests and dedications, tonight from 7 to Midnight on 93.9, KZLA".

### Boston

**CBS's WODS-FM** "Workdays f-f-fly by – with non-stop oldies. Oldies 103.3."

"Oldies 103.3. n-n-Nobody plays more Motown." (played into a Motown oldie)

### Atlanta

**Jacor's WGST AMFM.** (Montage of storm coverage soundbites starting with "the storm is moving") "And you thought Monica was a big blow job!" (more montaged reports) "Hurricane Bonnie. All the details. Atlanta's only 24-hour news center. Newsradio WGST."

### Tampa-St. Pete

**Jacor/Clear Channel's WAKS-FM.** "Today's hits, your all-time favorites, and the *most* free money (free money), (montage of winner soundbites). All on *one* radio station. Kiss-FM Tampa Bay"

**Clear Channel's WSRR.** "Portable for your busy lifestyle. Up to 30 minutes of today's music alternative – start's NOW. The new Star 95.7."

TW Tip # 9138 and #18014

## Capsule Combat

### Contest War Heats Up The Great White North Fun and Games in Edmonton, Alberta (Canada)

**Volley 1.** Power 92 (CKNG-FM) offers a \$100,000 cash prize (to one randomly called listener who knows the Phrase That Pays, "Power 92 plays today's music – now show me my money".

**Volley 2.** Throughout the Fall sweep, Mix 96 (CKRA-FM) features a \$96,000 Song Of The Day Contest with three \$96 winners daily (one of whom would win \$96,000).

**Volley 3.** Power 92 got hit on October 29<sup>th</sup> (two weeks before the end of the Fall BBM ratings sweep). Power claimed it was the largest single cash prize to one winner in radio history\*, promoting that they were applying for Guinness certification.

\* Guinness does not count KIIS-FM's recent \$1,000,102.7 winner because it was to be paid out over 40 years, and taxes have to be deducted. Whereas in Canada, a winner takes *all* (and the prize is a one-time payout)

**Volley 4.** Mix 96 took out a full-page newspaper ad congratulating Power's winner – and reminding other listeners that there was still a total of \$110,000 to be won on Mix (until November 13<sup>th</sup>, the last day of the book). "Oh, and we neglected to mention one little thing – if the winner is a member of Club Mix (CKRA's listener database program), they'll win a bonus prize of \$5,000." (Database sign-ups suddenly were running at record pace).

**Volley 5.** At the Mix \$96,000 Drawing Party, which was covered by local TV, the winner indeed was a Club Mix member – thus winning the new Guinness record radio contest amount of \$101,000 cash..

Don't touch that dial — Next BBM sweep starts in January (and "PD" will be listening!).

TW Tip # 3152, #4079, and #7152

# MORE of THE NAB Pith RADIO SHOW

## The CHR Format Session

This format session turned into an excellent tutorial/refreshers on the why's and how to's of branding (as it applies to radio) — and the importance of focus. Get set for dozens of notable points from this fast-moving discussion featuring four of the brightest minds in the business. I think you'll find that their observations cross many (if not all) format boundaries.

### Tom Poleman

PD of Chancellor's Z-100/New York

Poleman uses an acronym using his initials, TP3, as a clever, constant reminder of what's important: **Target, Product, Positioning, and Promotion.**

- ✓ **Target:** In Z-100's case, their target is focused on winning women 18-24, with a secondary focus of teens (all the way up to age 28).
- ✓ **Product:** Listener benefits
- ✓ **Positioning:** In Z-100's case, they

own the "Top 40" brand which they reinforce with the "Today's Best Music" statement; plus they feel the need to constantly reinforce "The Z Morning Zoo"). "All the research we do is focused on the target. When we look at that marketing model, it's clear that the people in that demo are looking for a current hit music radio station which is variety based. They're also looking for a fun morning show. **It's important to look around your market at the competitive situation to make sure you can own all of the attributes you're striving for.**"

✓ **Promotion:** Contests can reinforce your music positioning — Poleman noted the example of the Z-100 contest where they're giving away an island based around a phrase-that-pays "Z100 means *today's best music*, now give me my money and my island" (qualifiers won \$100 bills, the grand prize winner won their choice of their own island or \$100,000 cash).

**Branding and having a strategic model to build your station on are important.** "Translating the strategy into reality is the

key. Often we can get caught in the world of the research and the science. Translating that to the passion of the jocks on-the-air is really a fine art."

**Appointment-marketing beats vague teases.** Instead of saying, "your chance to win is coming up in the next 3 hours", you'll have a better chance of getting listeners to actually come back if you say "your chance to win Alanis Morissette tickets is coming up at 12:30". It's more specific.

**How to turn strategy into reality:** "The more I can surround myself with creative, off-the-wall people, the better! I view my job as just to *point the direction*. They're gonna' veer off every now and then, and I think that's great, because the station gets more creative and you develop new ideas. You have to allow them a little latitude, but still have that common vision that you share with them."

**Don't get overfocused on one style of music.** Good example: what happened to Z-100 when it focused on Modern a few years ago (subsequently tightening its callout filter-screen to only that style).

(Continued — See CHR Format on page 7)

## The Most Effective Promotions Of All Time Christmas Wish

One of the warmest Christmas promotions ever devised is the Christmas Wish.

**How It Works:** Station grants listeners wishes that are voice-mailed, snail-mailed, or e-mailed in (or dropped in a box at any advertiser's location). Wishes are then whipped into promos that capture the essence of the season in the fulfillment of each request.

### On-Air Mechanics:

- **Solicitation Phase.** Start with pre-promos inviting listeners to call or send in their Christmas Wish (see the excellent example below). Usually one-week of solicitation is sufficient to generate tons of incoming requests.
- **Award Phase.** Most stations utilize self-contained fully-produced promos with live support liners around the slugline "X109 grants another Christmas Wish in just 20 minutes". To milk \$20 out of every \$5 budgeted, most stations repeat their award-promos several times. While this takes advantage of the "math" of how listeners actually listen to the radio, some stations overdo it. Remember, there's an advantage in having listeners think there's a new prize every hour (which incents them to listen to see if it's their wish). If your prize-grant promos are noticeably repetitive, the incentive to listen every hour diminishes.

### The Total "Public Service" Angle

Some stations prefer using Christmas Wish as a public service project that demonstrates the power of radio, granting only wishes of the truly needy. That's fine. As with most things in radio, there's *always* more than just *one* way to effectively skin a cat.

### Public Service/Sales Coalition

Still other stations try to turn Christmas Wish into a money-maker, aligning the promotion with a major local social-service agency like Goodwill or the Salvation Army and a major high traffic-volume advertiser like a mall, supermarket, or department store.

### To "Sell-Out" — Or Not

Again, different horses for different courses. If the higher principle is that your station "needs" a strong programming promotion leading up to Christmas, it may be best to keep this promotion "pure". But, at the same time, we must be realistic about how, in this day of increased revenue pressures, there is a constant push for NTR streams. In my experience, Christmas Wish is a very *natural* non-traditional revenue vehicle (almost as clean as they come, especially if you involve a well-recognized charity). I make the point that since this promotion

(Continued — See Christmas Wish on page 8)

# Baby Boomers

(Continued from page 3)

## Music Genres (continued)

- By Sex: Females are marginally up in traditionally female formats (Soft AC, AC, Country, and Oldies) and significantly down in Classic Rock. Everyone is showing negative momentum in Oldies, Motown, and AOR.
- By Age: Older boomers (48-54) are listening more to Soft AC, Smooth Jazz, and Classic Rock. Listening less to AC, Country, and AOR. Younger boomers (40-47's) have less interest in Oldies, AOR, and Classic Rock.

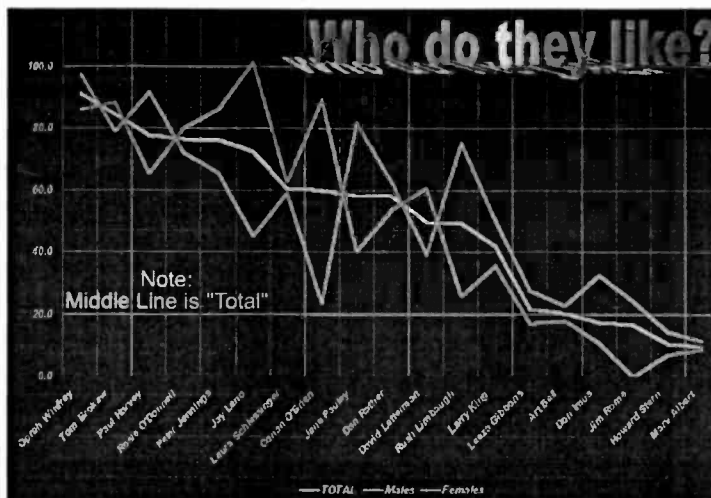
## Format Trends

- Arbitron figures (comparing audience shares in 94 continuous measurement markets from Winter '95 to Winter '98) show a similar pattern – confirming that *no* format has shown increased audience momentum in the last 3 years.
- The younger end (35-44 Adults) younger end is particularly not interested in the Oldies format (dropping from nearly an 11 share of 35-44 Adults three years ago to barely a 6% earlier this year). AC, News/Talk, and Country are the Top 3.
- Oldies, AC, and News/Talk (in that order) are the formats of choice with the older end (45-54s).

## Issue Orientation

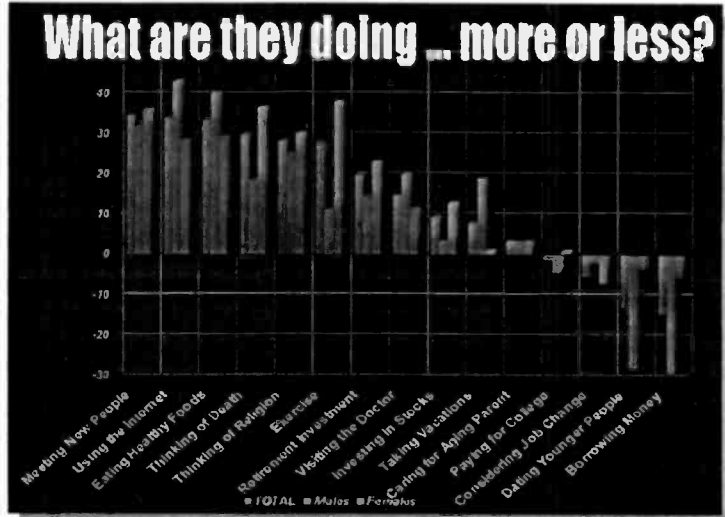
- ✓ Males tend to show more interest in national and international issues (effects of media, morality, scandals, national politics) – while females are talking more about education, drugs, violence in schools.
- ✓ One difference between men and women: "external" vs. "internal" worlds. Women's interests tend to stay "closer to home".
- ✓ Demographically, the problems of aging are creeping up on the older end (though the younger end is more concerned with health care than they ever have been before, too).

## Who Do They Know, Like, and Dislike?



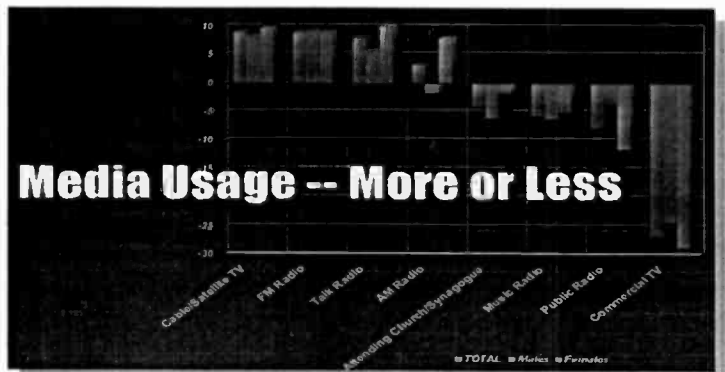
- Over 80% recognize: Letterman, Leno, Rather, Stern, Peter Jennings, Limbaugh, Oprah, Rosie O'Donnell, Brokaw, and Larry King. Stern and Rush are the only radio personalities over 80% familiar.

- Noting that positive emotion is just one side of "passion", Paul Harvey is the only radio personality truly perceived "positively". Using a likeability scale of 150, only Oprah, Brokaw, and Paul Harvey registered over 80. Over 60: Rosie, Jennings, Leno, Dr. Laura, Conan O'Brien, Jane Pauley, Dan Rather. (Stern: 14).
- Who do they hate? Howard (80), Jim Rome (75), Marv Albert (69), Rush (50). Negative emotion is seen most often in radio personalities who rate well (indicating that it seems to be *passion* that counts in a fragmented marketplace)



What are they doing? Compared to 5 years ago ...

- ✓ Women are thinking much more of death and they're exercising more.
- ✓ Men are using the internet, eating better, and taking more vacations than are their female counterparts.



- Commercial TV, NPR, and music radio show considerable negative momentum in terms of perceived usage.
- Cable/satellite, FM, AM, and TalkRadio are marginally in the positive column.
- 52% of males say they've used the internet – 40% of females. These figures are only going to grow.

## What About The Future

- ✓ This generation is more prosperous, more educated, and more cynical than any generation before it. It is *not* just one generation. Interests are disparate (and generally self-centered). All they've got in common is their age.

(Continued — See Boomers on page 9)

**CHR Format Session**

(Continued — from page 5)

When Poleman took the filters off, suddenly Z-100's cume shot up from 1.6 million to 2.6 million!

**Developing the right combination of music and personality creates a multi-dimensional experience for listeners.**

**Guy Zapoleon**

President of Zapoleon Media Strategies

**The role of the PD has changed over the years.** "You can be a music person, and have skills in other areas, but today, you have to be an expert in marketing and branding." So true.

**Zapoleon recalled the unique branding he used during the launch of KZZP in Phoenix in the 80s.** "We were trying to figure out a campaign to brainwash the listeners of Phoenix and take credit for being the #1 hit music station. We believed the station was catching fire, but needed something to get the message out. We created the phrase-that-pays 'KZZP 104.7FM, the #1 hit music station'. By pounding that phrase, over and over, on-the-air and through marketing (including primitive telemarketing done personally by the jocks), the station rose into the double-digit range and stayed there for years."

**Interpret research findings loosely.** "Sometimes research *can't* answer things. Sometimes only if you probe and talk to that person one-on-one can you find something deeper that is driving their listening behavior. I always say that research is a snapshot of today, or maybe a snapshot of perceptions over a period of time leading up to today. You have to be able to see beyond that. That's where the intuition and experience of the PD comes in."

**Understand what drives people to listen to Top 40.** "It's fun, it's variety, it's being on top of what's happening today. Understand what that is and what it means to the listeners."

**Adopt a collaborative management style.** Zapoleon encouraged programmers to "hire to your weaknesses and encourage controlled craziness". (See **"Pith"** issue #7, page 1 and issue #8, page 7 for more details about "Participative Management" style.)

**CHR goes through many "music cycles".** This is a philosophy Zapoleon is famous for discovering and articulating very effectively. "A good example was in '96 when Top 40 rediscovered rhythm and pop and dance music and the numbers were way up. In '97, that music began disappearing and modern music became a staple. Result: CHR stations suffered some ratings losses. But in '98, the year a lot of pop and rhythmic hits balanced out with modern hits, numbers seem to have rebounded. This is a real strong balance so it has been a very good year for Top 40."

**Better balance of all styles of music** will prevent your Top 40 station from getting caught up in one of the music cycles (especially the polarizing ones). "Avoid getting overly focused on just one style of music."

**Consolidation to the rescue.** "Once upon a time, in a radio industry different than the one today, there was tremendous pressure for CHR programmers to deliver a 25-54 audience. When those numbers failed to arrive, a PD could be deemed a failure for not being able to attract the right demo. Fortunately, consolidation has permitted CHR to again focus on 18-to-34-year-olds. For the first time in years, Sales Managers are actually *proud* of the demos they sell and GMs embrace marketing and promotional concepts they may have rejected as "too young" just a few years ago."

**One of the more salient points of the CHR session** went by very quickly (so quickly it was *not* picked up or reported by other trade publications). **It's hard to define Mainstream Top 40 in a research project, so it often doesn't "research" well in format-search studies.** "But you could probably put one on in every market and be very successful with it."

**Michelle Stevens**

VP/Programming Nassau Broadcasting Partners

**A Top 40 station needs to sizzle and be exciting.** "It needs a fresh attitude and it has got to have an essence to it."

**The importance of the brand model cannot be overstated.** "The more we learn about branding, the better our stations perform."

**Radio branding is different from other**

**products.** "Our performance relies solely on unaided recall, which is very different from any other product on the market. To be that top-of-mind, you have to leverage an extremely well-focused brand image."

**Keep your product totally focused.** "Sometimes it involves *knowing what you have to "give up" to gain (true) focus*". (Wallace Wisdom: re-read this point, take it to heart, and put it in practice!)

**Key words for branding:**

Emotion – Attitude – Feel.

**Key words for positioning:**

Strategic – Functional – Carving Out Niches.

**The key to these keys:** "Having PDs understand that attitudes and emotions are what drive consumer behavior. Radio is 100% emotional."

**Emotional leverage is the key to making anything a great brand.** "Here's where we establish the difference between positioning and branding. Positioning is tangible, you can touch it; branding is intangible, you can't touch it. Positioning is carving out a niche in the market (e.g., the amount of music you play, or type of music). It's functional, strategic in nature. Branding is emotion, attitude, and feel. It's your full and total identity. It gives your product personality and this is what makes people feel passionate about your radio station."

**Consistency of purpose is another key that enables you to create a "total package" for focus brand development.** "From station voice" (Stevens noted the example of a female image-talent who sounded like "a best friend") "to the station name" (Stevens' example: "The Point" which generated high recall because it wasn't generic). "And don't forget the *visual* representation of what your station is – is it *consistent* with your sound?"

**A good (non-radio) example:** Disney remains true to the core of their branding essence as they expand into new areas.

**Turn behavior into commitment to make quantum leaps.** "A station that captures your *mind* will gain *behavior*. A station that captures your *heart* will gain *commitment*. Let's capture more *hearts* with our programming!"

(Continued — See NAB Pith CHR on page 10)

# The Most Effective Promotions Of All Time **Christmas Wish**

(Continued — from Page 5)

will (should!) usually run during an out-of-sweep period, "programming purism" is not as high a priority as it might be during the intense heat of an important sweep. In my experience, if there's any one time you can "get away" with a multitude of programming sins, it's during the 10 days before Christmas, when PUR-levels are extremely low (believe me, you *don't* want to know *how* low!) because of the busy-ness of the festive season. Caution: Christmas Wish should never be turned into just a "sales promotion" or it could turn into a tacky, over-commercialized affair that represents what many people think is "the worst side of the holidays" (green Christmas).

**Behind The Scenes:** The easy way to do this promotion, of course, is to simply "throw money at it". But, with a little planning and ingenuity, you can preserve more your prize budget for times when there are real, live, breathing diarykeepers hanging on your every word.

**Granting Wishes:** It's best to classify all the wishes into "categories of likelihood":

- "Town Talk" (wishes that will cause positive word-of-mouth about your station; you *must* find a way to do these!)
- "Definitely" (easy to grant wishes)
- "Maybe" (wishes that are possible if the sales department or promotion/marketing department hustles to make the magic happen)
- "No" (grandiose wishes or blatantly selfish wishes).

**Why It Works:** Warm, emotional promo's that tug at the heartstrings can be built around many of the requests, especially the "needy" or unselfish wishes (including those who can't afford to buy something for a friend or loved one who deserves it). Gracious prizes (a puppy to replace an old dog who died last Christmas, a five-hour international phone call to the sister that a listener hasn't talked to in years, a new dialysis machine, etc.) can effectively counter-balance the blatant commercialism of "straight" prizes (color TVs, cars, trips to Hawaii, etc.).

**How To Make It Work Better:** Try to use the real voices of the people (either using a voice-mail mechanism to begin with or calling-back all the mail-in "winners" to voice their wish). Adds so much actuality and legitimizes the process!

**Sales involvement:** Even when done as a "pure" programming promotion, often key advertising clients can be tastefully worked into the promos to help liquidate costs (and/or share in the glory).

**Timetabling:** While Christmas Wish is a great "warm fuzzy" that generates lots of positive goodwill, it is generally *not* considered an *efficient* promotion that causes diarykeepers to systematically write (or remember to write) your call-letters in their Arbitron (Nielsen-McNair/BBM/RAJAR/ResearchInternational/etc) diary. Therefore, I recommend that you save it for use during "out-of-survey" periods. (In the U.S. this year, the Fall Arbitron

sweep runs through December 16<sup>th</sup>). A December 17 start-date will also help limit the costs (which, remember, will occur at a time when there are *zero-diaries* out there tracking your every movement).

**The Original Is Still The Best:** Let us flash back 33 Christmases ago for a glimpse into how KHJ presented the very *first* Christmas Wish to Boss Angeles. Here's is the promo, impeccably written by **Ron Jacobs** and superbly voiced by the late **Robert W. Morgan** —

"Ladies and gentleman, many wonderful things have happened at KHJ during 1965. As the holiday season approaches, for the first time since Boss Radio began on May 5<sup>th</sup>, we're *stopping* the constant contests to present . . . the KHJ Christmas Wish. This is *not* a contest. You don't have to answer any questions. There's nothing to buy or mail. And *everyone* has an equal chance. To make your Christmas Wish, just call HOLlywood 1-9461, follow the instructions you'll receive and make your Christmas Wish, either for something for yourself or make a wish on behalf of a friend or loved one. This special number operates 24 hours a day and extra lines can handle many calls. Christmas Wishes will be granted hourly on KHJ starting Thanksgiving until Christmas Day. In appreciation of the marvelous response you've given KHJ, we'll be granting as many of your Christmas Wishes as possible. And all of us at KHJ hope that all *your* Christmas dreams will come true."

**How effective was it?** It shut down the entire HOLlywood (46) phone exchange! (No small feat!) KHJ had prepared well for this contest, setting up *30 answering-machines* to handle the load (mind you, in 1965, this was *very* high-tech! (Only big companies could lease an answering machine from the phone company). But after just a few days, they had to air a promo featuring a Ma Bell exec stating that the overwhelming response to the KHJ Christmas Wish was jamming the phone exchanges and requesting that the station use an alternate method. (KHJ, of course, complied — and thus was born the mail-in version of Christmas Wish).

**Success Key:** "PI" Contributing Editor Ron Jacobs says the real secret to why it worked so well is that **KHJ announced a new winner every hour** ("picking out the most pathetic, exotic, cheap prize with righteous intentions" mixed in with all the budgeted biggies). Obviously the bigger prizes were announced in prime times, movie-tickets on the all-night show. The prize-an-hour deployment made the station sound larger than life (and listeners listened to see if their wish was the next to be granted).

**Wallace Wisdom:** The warmer the fuzzy, the better the promo and the more likely you'll be able to truly "touch" a listener at a time of year when most people look forward to such heartwarming thrills. (One of my favorite descriptions of the holiday season: "It's the time of year when even *teenagers* become human beings again"). TW Tip #4080, #3153, #9139, and #11013



## About "TW Tips"

At the end of each quarter, we'll issue a free "PD Index", to cross-reference every TW Tip into the following programming categories —

- 1000 series - The Audience
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- 3000 series - Promotion/Marketing
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**MORE  
Pith**

## Boomers —

Continued from page 6

- Health issues, issues of aging and death (or fighting it) will be even more important than they are now.
- Media usage is getting *more* fragmented.
- The need to head out from the pack becomes even *more* pronounced.
- While this was the second (and last) generation to experience "mass" communication, in a homogenous fashion, it's clear that usage is incredibly disparate.
- Music taste is very fragmented. Issue interest is as fragmented.
- No *single* medium is going to impact this generation, unless it's the internet (which by definition, is even *more* fragmented).

### What Can Radio Do?

- ✓ What we do know: this generation is *not*

a cohesive and predictable "generation" — it's a *whole lot* of people (with very disparate interests and habits) who are using radio *less*.

- ✓ But this is a generation *used to* using radio (and there *are* personalities who jump out from the pack)
- ✓ What we know about Radio: Traditional music genres are waning in appeal. Boomers are using Talk and Information radio more than others (background formats are getting ratings (presumably at the workplace).

### So...

- ☑ We must expect to succeed by appealing to a plurality (the days of a "majority" are over in *all* media)
- ☑ We must remember: this audience (like any audience) is a *moving target*
- ☑ You need to appeal to that targeted niche by testing music and marketing to high TSL groups, constantly monitoring

who they are *now*.

- ☑ People listen to the radio for a feeling of *connectedness*.
- ☑ Know what you know and know what you *don't* know — and the things you don't know, know where to find it out.
- ☑ Play the ratings game. Become an Arbitron student. Do homework on understanding their methodology. It is a *phone methodology*. (If the household or individual is not phone friendly, they'll never have a diary).
- ☑ Develop a relationship with listeners in the workplace. Targeting through the use of phones is the most efficient way to. The old notion that one person controls the radio at work is, by and large, baloney.

### A concern for the future . . .

- The generation that's *not* in the habit of turning on the Radio when they wake-up in the morning.

TW Tip #1069, #7151, and #19050

## Programmer's Digest

## More NAB Pith

### More CHR Pith (continued — from page 7)

How to leverage emotional connections with your talent:

"What kind of people would you like to spend time with when you're out? Boring people who are dull and mechanical? Or people who are fun to be around, who have something to say, make you laugh, make you feel, and share their innermost thoughts? Those are the people you want to spend time with in life. On the radio, it's the same thing!"

The best on-air ideas come from real-life situations. "Some of the best ideas happen in the lunchroom, where people are talking about what they did over the weekend. There's 'attitude' going on in there. Reflecting that, and spinning those things into on-air bits and content is where the best stuff is often made."

The misuse of research (or over-reliance on it) can lead to "blanding over branding". "Use research to fine-tune certain elements — or give you clues."

Question for air talent: "What did you do on your show today to bring people back tomorrow?"

How to spread branding culture to all levels of your station: "Hire people who 'get it' and can teach others. And have regular staff meetings so everyone is clear about the station's essence."

Target life-group seminars help your entire staff "get it". "It's where we talk about a specific life group. We talk about the generation we are targeting and the things that shape the way they think. Attitudes drive consumer behavior, so if we can actively reflect their attitudes on our radio station(s), we will win their behavior, building loyal fans because it creates deep, emotional connections with listeners. Those connections come through in your presentation, in the way your talent relates to the audience, in the way your packaging and imaging is designed and that whole feeling you are creating between the songs."

Book recommendations:

- *Selling The Invisible* by Harry Beckworth
- *You Can't Shrink Your Way To Greatness* by Tom Peters
- *22 Immutable Laws Of Marketing* by Ries & Trout TW Tip #22018

**John Peake** PD of Susquehanna's KRBE/Houston

The 3M's are the "blocking and tackling" of radio.

**Music.** "You have to build a foundation with your music, know that it's well-researched, and know its appeal to your target."

**Mornings.** "You have to have an entertaining morning show that's fun to listen to."

**Marketing.** "You have to have the commitment of market the radio station."

**A more effective TSL strategy: increase incidents, instead of QH extension.** "It's the number of times your listeners come to your station, not that they spend a long time with your station while they're there. It's really unrealistic to think that people are going to spend longer periods of time with you because you're going to play a song or have a contest. People don't build their lives or their habits around your radio station. So it's more a function of getting them back. You do that by having benchmark features that are clear and obvious and that are built around the (listener's) routines." For example, "Hollywood Dirt" is a successful benchmark feature that airs at 6:30, 7:30, and 8:30 on KRBE.

Peake's key to achieving "peak" CHR performance:

"Be balanced, be focused, and make it *fun*, because it *is!*"

TW Tip #1071, #3154, #7154, #2123, #19052

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