

RADIO'S PREMIER MANAGEMENT & MARKETING MAGAZINE™

# RADIO INK

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Country Radio Seminar  
SPECIAL SECTION

## INTERVIEW: LADY ANTIBELLUM

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# Country to the Third Power

**YOUNG, TALENTED, AND HOT,  
LADY A ARE BLOWING THE  
RADIO WALLS DOWN**

{ By Managing Editor Brida Connolly }





## Does anybody remember country radio before Lady Antebellum?

Since their self-titled first album and their first hit, 2008's "Love Don't Live Here Anymore," the trio of lead vocalists Charles Kelley and Hillary Scott and singer and multi-instrumentalist Dave Haywood has become a leading force on country radio — as demonstrated by how many times the name "Lady A" came up when we asked this year's Top Country PDs what's right with the format.

But it's not just country that's been charmed by this threesome: "Need You Now," with Kelley and Scott trading lead vocals on a story of ex-lovers reaching out to one another against their better judgment, went to number one at country, AC, and hot AC in 2009 and 2010, and was a top cross-genre seller on iTunes.

Kelley, Scott, and Haywood are at work on their third album, but they took a little time to talk with *Radio Ink* about country radio, crossing over, keeping in touch with the fans, and their current project.

In fact, Lady A were on a bit of an unplanned hiatus when speaking with us: "We took a little break from the studio this week to play a couple of shows," says Haywood, "and of course the first one was snowed out." (That was a show in Thackerville, OK, which has been rescheduled for June.)

He continues, "We're on the road somewhere between

Oklahoma and Texas, in a blizzard. Maybe there's a song somewhere in there!"

The bandmates are excited to be back in the studio, with plenty of material to work with. "For the first time since we started, we have the luxury of more time devoted solely to the studio," Scott says. "When we were out on tour last summer, we would write songs in our dressing room during the day, and by the time we got to the end of last year, we had 50 or so that we really liked already. Over the break, we wrote a few more with some of our songwriter friends in Nashville too."

The new project will reflect some of the changes Lady A have been through in the past couple of busy years, says Scott: "The three of us have experienced so much in our lives since the last record, and especially since the first one. That definitely comes across in the songs we're

**"WE'LL NEVER FORGET HEARING 'NEED YOU NOW' ON COUNTRY RADIO FIRST, AND ALL THE SUPPORT FROM EVERYONE."**

— *Hillary Scott*



working on for this next project. There is a lot of nostalgia coming out of us for some reason. We're really excited about it."

### Radio Loves Lady A

For all their success, it really wasn't all that long ago that Lady Antebellum were just starting out. So who at radio was first to get behind them?

"There were several early supporters," says Kelley. "The first summer we got together, we played several shows around Nashville and CAA was able to put us out on the road really even before our first single hit radio, especially up in Ohio. That was just before we started our first radio tour, so we had already made some friends along the way."

Additionally, he says, there was a lot of early support for the band in their hometowns of Nashville, Atlanta, and Augusta. But the first time they heard one of their own songs — "Love Don't Live Here" — it was on WBEE in Rochester, NY. Says Kelley, "We were all so excited at the time, I don't think any of us could remember what was said next. Lots of cheers and tears!"

Asked if they have any special relationships with stations and radio people, he says, "Nate Deaton at KRTY [in San Jose] was one of the earliest supporters and has been there for us ever since — and he's a good golfer to boot."

Kelley adds, "There have been so many others across the U.S. and Canada along the way who have really helped make everything happen and have become friends." So does he have any great radio stories? "We'd probably never get another record played if we started telling!"

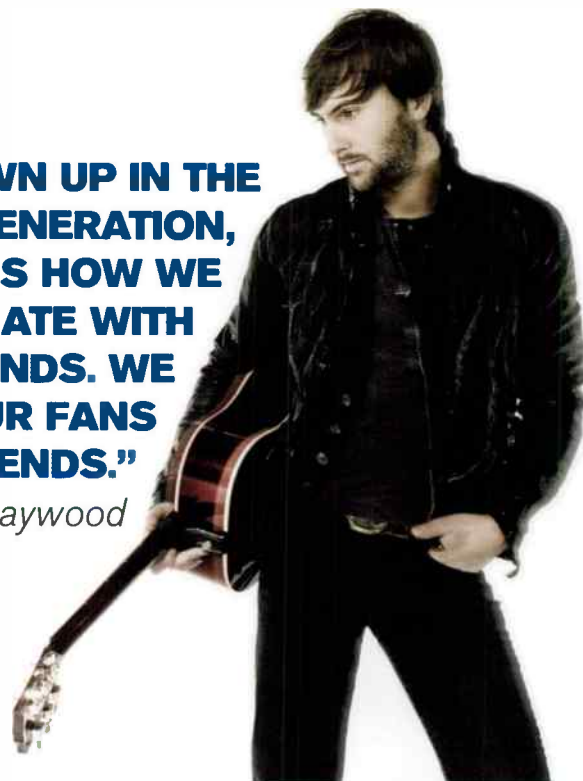
### Crossing Over

As is happening more and more these days, it turned out country was out ahead on an artist who was destined to become a cross-format success story. But that hasn't changed the group's identity, or their goals. "Lady Antebellum is a country act," says Scott, "and we're happy that fans of other genres appreciate what we do. But that is something we never want to chase. We were all born in the '80s and grew up with a pretty diverse blend of music. Our first exposure was through country radio, though, which ultimately led us to the kind of music we make today."

Of course, reaching out to fans and being genuinely

**"WE'VE GROWN UP IN THE DIGITAL GENERATION, AND THAT'S HOW WE COMMUNICATE WITH OUR FRIENDS. WE TREAT OUR FANS LIKE FRIENDS."**

— Dave Haywood



accessible has long been a trademark of country artists, and Lady A are keeping up that custom in modern style.

"We've grown up in the digital generation, and that's how we communicate with our friends," says Haywood. "We treat our fans like friends. The technology changes so quickly, so we try to adapt with it and take advantage of what is available, while protecting the integrity of what we do."

"It's crazy to look at a social network site like Facebook and see that we have over 3 million friends. We're just glad we don't have to send each of them a Christmas card!"

### Lady A Love Radio

Finally, *Radio Ink* asked if the members of Lady A would like to say anything special to the people in attendance at the Country Radio Seminar. Scott replies, "We don't get to thank them enough, but we owe a tremendous amount of gratitude to our family at Capitol Nashville and EMI Music around the world and their promotion teams, past and present."

"Our lives have been forever changed since 'Need You Now' came out. We'll never forget hearing that song on country radio first, and all the support from everyone. We truly value our personal friendships with each of you. It's been fun for us to see many of you take some ownership, along with us and our team, of the success of last year because it truly is a combination of many things clicking to have a year like we had. So thank you!" **INK**

Brida Connolly is managing editor of *Radio Ink*. E-mail: [brida@radioink.com](mailto:brida@radioink.com).

**"THERE HAVE BEEN SO MANY PEOPLE IN RADIO ACROSS THE U.S. AND CANADA ALONG THE WAY WHO HAVE REALLY HELPED MAKE EVERYTHING HAPPEN AND HAVE BECOME FRIENDS."**

— Charles Kelley

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 WDNB/Liberty, NY  
 KABD/Aberdeen, SD  
 KDXY/Jonesboro, AR



WQDR/Raleigh's Q-Morning Crew at the Children's Promise Radiothon. (L-r) Marty Young, Mike Wheless, Mike Raley, and Janie Carothers.



KRLC (Hometown Radio AM)/Lewiston, ID, celebrates years of service to the community at its free Community Concert and Picnic, where traditional Western singers performed, local vocalists competed in the Colgate Country Showdown, and small-town celebrities Coltraine played, all while raising money for the Honor Them Foundation for military servicemen and -women.



Ekonk Hill Turkey Farm and WCTY/Norwich, CT, teamed up this year to create one of the area's largest corn mazes! Over Columbus Day weekend, all military personnel and their families were invited to experience the corn maze FREE as a way to say thank you for their service to our country! Over 300 military families had fun getting lost in the corn maze that weekend.



The crew at WYCT (98.7 Cat Country) in Pensacola helped raise 100,000 pounds of food during the Fill the Mayflower food drive.

RADIO INK's

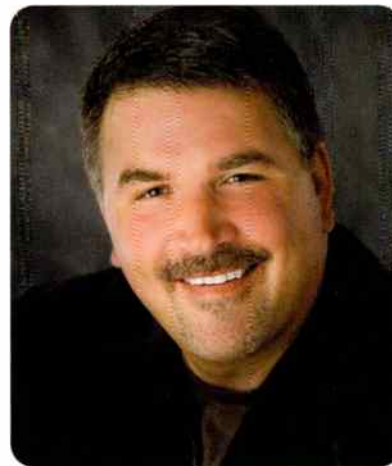
# Top Country Program Directors

It's one of *Radio Ink's* most anticipated lists, chosen, as always, with your input and that of some of the most respected figures in the country music industry. Radio's Top Country PDs are clearly the people to ask about the most exciting, promising developments for country and digital media — so we asked them! We also got their insight on what's right about country radio and, because the best are always looking to get better, what might add even more to this format's enduring appeal.



**NO. 1 MIKE BROPHEY**  
WKLB/Boston  
Greater Media

Country music has always been compelling; it is now more compelling to the masses. Factors include an influx of undeniably great music, perhaps better than at any other time in the format, and larger-than-life artists who look great and are seen everywhere. The format has reinvented itself, and the perception is one of equality with other formats. Translation: Country is more widely accepted. We have to be careful not to take country music for granted. We need to continually provide the listener with a variety of styles and sounds.



**NO. 2 TIM ROBERTS**  
WYCD/Detroit  
CBS Radio

Our air talent are the writers of the majority of the blog content on our site, so it's very user-friendly, in the moment, and timely from every perspective. My basic theory is, if you're talking about a subject on the air, you need to post about it. All our on-air content basically translates digitally to our website.



**NO. 3 MIKE MOORE**  
KWJJ/Portland, OR  
Entercom Communications

Facebook has become an extremely valuable tool for us. Not only is it another touchpoint with our audience, we use it to drive traffic to our own website and as a testing ground for on-air material. Someday, not too far in the future, everything you need will be on your phone. Heck, I have no idea what I'd do without my smartphone now. Radio needs to be available on every mobile platform.



**NO. 4 BECKY BRENNER**  
KMPS-FM/Seattle  
CBS Radio

We converted our website to the Wordpress blogging format in March of 2010, and our Web activity has increased tremendously. Our staff is producing amazing content with a local twist, and the users are responding. Combine that with our Facebook, Twitter, Radio.Com, and streaming, and we have a digital arsenal that is connecting with our listeners on so many levels. We cross-promote constantly between online and on-air.

UP

the charts

ACROSS

all genres

SESAC has it

DOWN



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**NO. 5 GREGG SWEDBERG**

KEEY/Minneapolis  
Clear Channel Radio

I think country listeners have a lot of the same favorite digital platforms as anyone. They do their social media, they head to radio sites. But I think the country purists tend to use sites like Pandora less. They like their artists' sites and get a lot of info there. I think country is great for the same reasons it's been great historically. The lyrics are relatable, it's instant sing-along music, and the artists seem like real people. There's nothing I'd change about it. I do wish we'd move our music through the chart faster.



**NO. 6 KERRY WOLFE**

WMIL/Milwaukee  
Clear Channel Radio



**NO. 7 MIKE CULOTTA**

WQYK/Tampa Bay  
CBS Radio

We use digital platforms to cross-promote with on-air through the website, e-blasts, WQYKtv.com, texting, and our social networking. We use them all to drive listeners to the radio by giving them secret ways to win. What makes country a compelling format is great music and a loyal audience that clients want to reach with their message. And a guy's gotta dream, so how about more minutes in the hour? For music and, of course, revenue too!



**NO. 8 MEG STEVENS**

WMZQ/Washington,  
WPOC/Baltimore  
Clear Channel Radio

I am a big streaming fan. We have so much military listening in DC, and lots of them can't listen on the radio — like folks at the Pentagon. But they can listen through the stream or on their phones on iheartradio. I think being able to listen on your phone is amazing. Remember the "bag" phones? Who would have thought we'd be listening to the radio on our phones then?



**NO. 9 D.J. STOUT**

WSOC-FM, WFNZ-AM,  
WBCN-AM/Charlotte  
CBS Radio

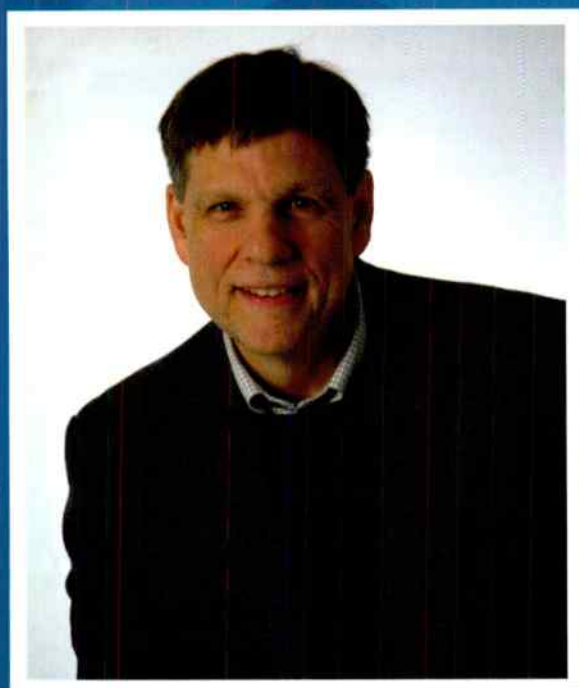
There are several things I think make our format the most compelling format in the industry. First, our artists make it a priority to be very accessible to the listeners and the radio stations. That makes it a lot easier when it comes to building artist brands. We are also lucky that the music that falls under the country umbrella has become very diverse.

**NO. 10 DAVE KELLY**

KSCS/Dallas  
Citadel Broadcasting



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**NO. 11 BUZZ JACKSON**  
KIIM-FM/Tucson  
Citadel Broadcasting

Country radio is adult, mass-appeal radio. We're lucky in that we have a fresh crop of new music to play while at the same time great music is still coming from superstars like Reba McEntire and George Strait. Some of our artists are fantastic ambassadors for country music and country radio. But I think we still have an inferiority complex because we don't get the same kind of attention as Hollywood and pop music do in places like Entertainment Weekly and Access Hollywood. I think we as a format can work harder to get exposure outside the traditional "country press" without sacrificing what makes us country.



**NO. 12 MARK MEDINA**  
KNIX/Phoenix  
Clear Channel Radio

I find the country audience, in general, hasn't moved quite as quickly to the digital space and some of the social platforms as some other formats' consumers. But while they are a tad behind the early adopters, I don't think they're too far behind, and we must engage those who are there. We cross-promote in all the typical manners — tweets, status updates, etc. It's also important to use your social platforms to be social, interact, respond to direct messages, and "socialize" with your audience. It can't just be a tool to push out your agenda. Folks will lose interest in that quickly.



**NO. 13 JOHN PAUL**  
Hot Country Format  
Dial Global Radio Networks

I would make sure PDs are looking for the most variety in adding new music. We need to make sure we avoid playing songs that all sound the same. While the poppier sound is good, we need to make sure we aren't afraid to be a country station. We need to always be looking for songs and artists unique to our format.

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**NO. 14 BEVERLEE BRANNIGAN**

KFDI/Wichita  
Journal Broadcast Group

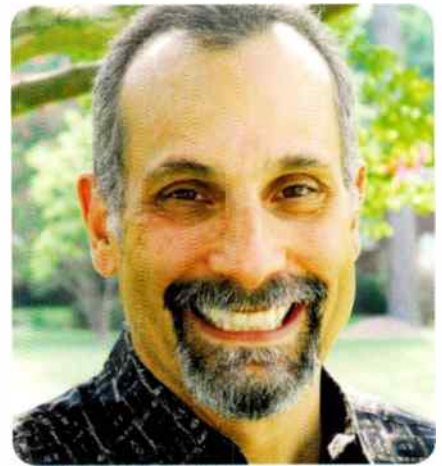
Country's lyrical base keeps it real. That's always been its strength and still is. For decades there's been this discussion of what is and isn't country. It's as if all of us self-appointed gatekeepers have been carefully guarding the format to be sure we keep it pure. And the ironic part is that the music that tests the "country" boundaries is what keeps the music and the format strong.



**NO. 15 MIKE HAMMOND**

WIVK-FM/Knoxville  
Citadel Broadcasting

Country music is compelling because it tells a story, and it's about everyday life. The variety of the artists makes it compelling, from Brad Paisley to Kenny Chesney to Taylor Swift to Carrie Underwood, to the Band Perry to Colt Ford to Jamey Johnson. Country music is diverse and attracts a diverse audience. Country radio, in my opinion, needs to embrace this diversity and use it to our advantage.



**NO. 16 JOHN SHOMBY**

WGH-FM/Norfolk-  
Virginia Beach, VA  
Max Media of Hampton Roads

If you'd asked me a year ago what digital platforms our audience finds most appealing, I would have said, unequivocally, Facebook and our website. But in the past year we've seen increased interest in Twitter, YouTube, Flickr — and, of course, interest in having all that coming from their smartphones and/or iPads. Our goal is to create as many connections as we can with our audience, on as many platforms as possible.

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**NO. 17 KEITH KAUFMAN**  
WSIX/Nashville  
Clear Channel Radio

We've been on iheartradio for several years already, and we are completely and totally accessible from anywhere. Facebook has made us a medium with pictures. There is no more "man behind the curtain." We give the audience total access to the radio station, as well as our personalities. Not sure that five years ago you would have seen my morning guy check in from five different bars on Lower Broadway, then see a picture of his buddy passed out on his bathroom floor. (It's only sometimes that I cringe.)



**NO. 18 JOHNNY CHIANG**  
KKBQ & KTHT Houston  
Cox Media Group

Take away all the modern advances, all the bells and whistles, what makes country music compelling today is what made it compelling decades ago, and that's the connection the artists and the songs make with the audience. There is no other music genre in the world that does a better job of that. What would make country radio better? How about a successful station in New York?



**NO. 19 SHELLY EASTON**  
WXTU/Philadelphia  
Beasley Broadcast Group

I think the music is incredibly strong, and country artists are more widely recognizable than ever. Other formats want to play our artists and music, giving the country format more exposure and a stronger foundation in the Northeast. We have seen significant growth in our 18-34 audience. Probably the biggest advantage the country format has to be compelling is its fans. They identify with the product. The artists are approachable to them. They bond with radio station causes and personalities, and they are generally eager to take ownership of the brand.



**NO. 20 LISA MCKAY**  
WQDR/Raleigh  
Curtis Media Group

Without a doubt, Facebook is our most powerful connection to our listeners from our digital platform. We use it to provide value to our most loyal listeners and to increase listening occasions. Country's artists are glamorous, generally exceptional people, talented, and accessible to fans and radio shows. The songs are well produced and mass-appeal, and the lyrics universally resonate with listeners who are experiencing the ups and downs of life. Now that I'm knee-deep in programming a CHR, I would say other formats could learn from how we do things on this side of the charts!





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# Not Your Daddy's Country

Shortly after arriving as GM of WXTU in Philadelphia, I walked into the program director's office with what I thought was a very legitimate question. "Why," I asked, "are we playing Jim Brickman?" Pushing his chair back from the desk, Ken Johnson smiled and said, "We're not. We're playing Martina McBride." For those with short memories, the song was "Valentine."

Most people have a favorite country song. Some just don't realize it, and a few are disinclined to admit it. But country music, and country radio, transcend lifestyle and

attach the old "lower-end qualitative" stigma to country stations and country listeners. If that were even remotely close to the truth, how do they explain the fact that the country stations are always among the top-billing stations in a cluster, if not the top billers?

Providing sellers, agencies, even other station employees with proper qualitative and listener-sharing data is the answer. And luckily, those misconceptions have dwindled significantly as country music has risen to its current pinnacle of popularity.

**"BELIEVE IT OR NOT, THERE ARE STILL SOME AGENCIES AND EVEN STATION PERSONNEL WHO CONTINUE TO ATTACH THE OLD LOWER-END QUALITATIVE STIGMA TO COUNTRY"** —Rusty Walker

virtually every socioeconomic class and demographic, from Park Avenue to Park City, TN.

With early roots in Appalachia and the South, country has evolved, morphed, and meshed into a genre of artistic talent stretching from Hank Williams and Ernest Tubbs to cultural icon Elvis Presley and today's record-breaking Taylor Swift.

Unfortunately, as the saying goes, getting there is only half the battle. Misperceptions about the profile of the "typical" country listener continue to abound, as though "mass-appeal" can be uniformly described. To set the record straight, and offer some perspective on digital and country, I called two respected country radio consultants. Here's what Jaye Albright, of Albright and O'Malley, and Rusty Walker had to say.

## What are the biggest misperceptions about country radio and country radio listeners that persist today, and what suggestions can you offer stations for overcoming them?

Jaye Albright: The very first Country Radio Seminar I ever attended was in 1974, and I remember the legendary Kansas broadcaster Mike Oatman saying, "Country listeners have more green than just their teeth." It's sad to say that, in spite of Taylor Swift, Keith Urban, Rascal Flatts, Garth Brooks, and many others' huge success in the intervening years, we still hear the "pickup trucks and gun racks" stereotype from large-market media buyers.

Country's qualitative story refutes that belief, of course, but perhaps it's just that buyers like to hear our latest counterarguments to it. Because there's so much great news about country radio, the music, and the audience that it's a joy to share it.

Rusty Walker: Believe it or not, there are still some agencies and even station personnel who continue to

## How have digital platforms (social networks, mobile, etc.) benefited the on-air programming elements of country radio? Which are the most effective, and why?

RW: It's no different in country than in other formats. Digital platforms provide additional avenues to touch, and communicate with, our fans and consumers. As with other formats, social networking, texting, and loyal-listener databases are the most effective.

JA: Country is the original social network. Just listen to the lyrics of the biggest hit songs. It's all about community and family, emotions and stories, connecting our family reunion within a target age. Interactivity and engagement with our artists, our personalities, and our loyal listeners is nothing new.

## What's the next hot country format trend? Who does it appeal to, and why does it matter?

JA: It matters because, like Top 40, country is a transitional format that has successfully targeted the middle of the 25-54 demographic for the more than six decades it has been a radio format. To achieve that, we have constant evolution of our artist base and music style to reflect the tastes of 25-44 while holding on to 45-plus too.

It's more important than ever right now, with new superstars like Lady Antebellum and Zac Brown Band, while Taylor Swift follows in the shoes of Faith Hill and Shania Twain from a generation ago. The guard changes to reflect the values of Generation Y and the millennials, the largest demographic segment in the population.

RW: "Does it matter?" Sorry — if there's something happening there (and I'm not saying there is), I'll have to keep it close to the vest! **XXX**



Jaye Albright,  
Consulting Partner,  
Albright & O'Malley Country  
Consulting/RadioIQ



Rusty Walker  
Rusty Walker Programming  
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# Streaming For Money

Generate Revenue From Every Client in Town. Here's How

I'll be the first to admit our company was not an early adopter of digital media. But our then-general manager was instrumental in rallying our sales staff to embrace the advent of social media, designing marketing campaigns that would put clients in front of new consumers via our online properties.

Just months after our flagship station, WFMV, began streaming, hits to our media player rose by 382 percent and unique visitors rose by 249 percent. A better number — and the one we care most about — was the monetization that came as a result of that kind of traffic to our website.

A local client became the first sponsor of our Web stream. That sponsorship package included banner placement on our media player, commercials within the stream, and on-air promos touting the client as the sponsor of the stream. Not only were we able to offset the hard costs for the stream, we were able to generate profit that was nonexistent before.

## Make It Make Sense

A key to making digital revenue consistent is not just pitching clients on the plethora of digital options you have to offer, but making sure the digital offering makes sense. Our digital media clients seek to brand themselves with our listeners, and what better way to do that than to be associated with the brand-new way our listeners can consume their favorite radio station?

Another successful form of digital revenue has been the sale of banner ads and commercials within the online radio stream. We allow banner ads to remain on the site in increments of 30 days, but that could be longer or shorter, according to your client's needs. By offering full, skyscraper, and box ads, among other sizes, you can adapt to the client's budget.

It's so important that you have a sales team educated on your digital products. They must be able to:

1. Pitch the products in an educational way
2. Teach the client who has a hundred other things to do with his or her day
3. Explain to the client what results to expect

(And if you don't know the answer to number three, you have to ask yourself why you're even pitching the product.)



## Streaming Superstar

By running 60- or 30-second commercials within the stream, your client can reach a dedicated sector of your listeners — the listeners who choose to hop from the car to their desktops, making sure they don't miss what's happening on your station. (On that note: Keep your product compelling.) Your commercials should be competitively but respectably priced. A client who may not have the budget for an on-

air commercial schedule may become a superstar in your online stream.

Recently, a local hat boutique advertised extensively in our online stream. A listener stopped me in a store to tell me, "I don't know who that client is, but I hear that commercial so much while I'm listening to your station online, I'm going by there to pick myself up a new hat to wear!"

Make sure to tell the client that radio station is running an on-air branding campaign to push people to the station website. But if you're going to drive listeners to your website, you must keep compelling content there. If the website gets stale, or if the viewer feels like the same information is there every time they come back, they will stop coming altogether, no matter how many on-air promos you run. We must invest in ourselves as much as we expect our clients to invest in us.

## Don't Give It Away

In developing your Web sales strategy, remember that the goal is not to get more followers on your social networking sites. These sites are a (free) vehicle to promote your radio station's website.

Again, compelling content is vital. If your radio station has 5,000 "likes" on Facebook but you don't get a significant fraction of those people to return to your site, you are leaving money on the table.

The sites (yours and the social networking sites) should be complementary, neither existing independently nor duplicating one another. It would be a sad commentary if Facebook and Twitter were to monetize the traffic flowing to your station's pages on their sites more than you monetize traffic to your own site. The goal in establishing social networking pages is to show your listeners that you are where they are, but don't forget to invite your listeners back to your site. **INK**

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# Country Radio Embraces Digital

**C**ountry radio stations are converging on Nashville for a week of learning, sharing, music, and a few cold beers.

The Country Radio Seminar will greet attendees with a new, aggressive focus on digital, and with the tools, support, and curriculum to succeed. Facebook, Twitter feeds, and a newly designed website are just the beginning for CRS 2011: Video and audio of the convention will be part of the mix, with frequent Web updates. A new, robust app for your iPhone, Android, or BlackBerry does more than give you the schedule, it puts special content and on-demand features in the palm of your hand.

It's all yet another illustration of how country radio is embracing digital like never before. Bob Barrett, OM for Entercom's WBEE/Rochester, NY, cluster and PD of country WBEE, says his listeners are fully engaged, keeping wired to the station on their smartphones through WBEE's new JacApps mobile app.

Barrett says the app permits a "360 approach" for WBEE, adding, "Mobile drives terrestrial listening, and we drive our terrestrial listeners to mobile."

He credits staff support and a focus on hiring for Entercom/Rochester's digital success; in fact, new WBEE 7 p.m.-midnight personality Justine Paige was hired both for her air sound and for her digital savvy. It's all about interaction, Barrett contends, noting that staffers use both Facebook and Twitter to keep a dialogue going with the listeners. That relevant conversation drives WBEE's success in social media.

## No More Faceless Listeners

At Citadel, Regional Digital Director Harry Tomasides, who has a long history with loyalty programs, says that at country KSCS/Dallas, "We have a big cume, so it doesn't make sense for that cume to remain faceless." The station's Triton Loyalty programs reward listener participation and help in understanding the audience. The goal of the program is to increase KSCS's loyal audience by 10 percent per month, using concerts, VIP rewards, and engagement; there's a weekly digital meeting to ensure that the station, and clients, are getting the desired results.

Cox Radio was an early adopter in the digital space, and its latest focus is on the creation of strong content, with video playing a critical role. At the website for KCYY/San Antonio, listeners can download concert audio and view their favorite artists in special "Up Close and Personal"



performances. Cox Radio's WZZK in Birmingham and KKBQ/Houston feature video on demand, while WKHK in Richmond is using its website to conduct an online auction to benefit St Jude's.

## Weight Loss, Sales Gain

Carole Bowen, GSM at Beasley's WKSS/Miami, is using the power of video and the station's air personalities with real success. Weight-loss campaigns have always been a money-maker for radio, and WKSS has taken the effort to the Web, with personal video blogs of station personalities' efforts to lose weight. It is real, personal, and compelling, and Bowen was able to sell the idea to a longtime client.

Additionally, WKSS recently used video to capture South Florida's passion for high school football, with an online "Battle of the High School Marching Bands" competition. The battle drove listener passion and strong sales.

Larry Downes, director of digital media for country WLHK (Hank FM) and the Emmis/Indianapolis cluster, doesn't talk about having a radio job, but about content creation. At Hank FM, intimate, eight-song mini-concerts are recorded in the lobby at Emmis' Indianapolis headquarters. Listeners make up the audience, and top-quality video of the shows are posted online. Among newspaper, radio, TV, and the Internet, Downes says, "Technology makes us all equal."

Downes is also a longtime listener-database aficionado, and he's thinking a lot about social media and databases. "The database has been turned upside down," he says. "Today it's, 'Let us into your club.'"

CBS Radio has long been aggressive in digital, and the past year has seen some strong initiatives, including a relaunch of all station and music websites on the Wordpress platform to allow greater local input by station staff. For country, CBS leveraged *Late Night With Dave Letterman* to create a series of special performances featuring a who's who of country music, creating exclusive content for CBS Radio's country stations.

Additionally, strong support at Radio.com means the CBS country stations are everywhere their listeners are.

Country radio was late to the digital party, but this snapshot shows that it's now embraced the challenge. Country is engaging the fast-paced digital world with hard work, creativity, and a big dose of can-do attitude. **DK**

Dan Halyburton is VP/Innovation at McVay New Media. Email: dan@halyburton.com



# Start Telling The Truth

Get real, and you'll empower your listeners

**M**ore than a half-century ago, legendary ad man Bill Bernbach said, "I've got a great gimmick. Let's tell the truth."

Why is that such a powerful principle today? Because today's overcommunicated audience has heard it all. They've been hyped, duped, cajoled, tricked, and yelled at for too long. Your commercial is just one of the 5,000 advertising messages they're bombarded with every day.

Our commercials often say, "We have the best ... the most ... we've been in business for..."

Meanwhile, listeners are saying, "Who cares? Won't anyone tell me the truth, level with me, just give me the facts?"

## Steps For Getting Real

**Collect information from your client, her customers, and her competitors:** Just Google "What are (your specific target audience) feeling?" Examples: car buyers, dieters, home remodelers, single moms with two kids, early adapters, retired bricklayers who raise parrots. That will give you insights to write relevant stories about them.

**Truth-finding:** What does your client not have? What don't they do? Who can't they help? Look for the "chinks in the armor" and include them in the campaign. That will help humanize your advertiser.

**Examples:** no fancy showroom, not open Mondays, out-of-the-way location, tacky sign, bad coffee.

Don't be afraid to share the advertiser's little faults with the audience. The 5 percent of things that aren't ideal lend credibility to the other 95 percent.

Your research in step one will help you come up with relevant touchstones in the lives of your client's target audience. What are they thinking or feeling, about life, about the client, about the advertising category? Describe it, and show that your client understands their pain and has a solution.

### Examples:

"Wouldn't you like to have home delivery of food that wasn't pizza?"

"Don't you hate it when car salespeople try to trick you?"

"Isn't it aggravating when you pay more in late fees than the original video rentals?"

"Why is it that whatever you bought breaks down the day after the warranty runs out?"

"Aren't you tired of trying to meet someone special in a noisy bar?"

## Peel The Onion

What emotional need does the client's product or service meet? Ask a series of questions ("peel the onion") until you uncover the deepest and most basic needs.

**Examples:** to feel safe, to be loved, to be accepted.

If you can truthfully show how the benefits to the buyer will address those needs, you'll connect with your audience. Find true stories from your client's or your own life. Real stories have power. Use them.

Tell stories that don't sound like commercials. Have a conversation with the audience. Dramatize it. And replace the clichés, hype, unsubstantiated claims with regular conversation, explanations, and understatement.

**Example:** Don't just exclaim that you're having a sale on an item, explain why. Maybe you overbought, or you're selling the item at a loss to bring in new customers, or you want to introduce people to a new line of items.

**Keep it simple, and don't be afraid to narrowcast:** "We're not for everyone, we don't sell everything." Address only the group you want. Don't invite everyone to the party, 'cause then no one will come.

**Be natural.** Before you write, grab a recorder and pretend you're having a phone conversation with a friend, or leaving them a message. Tell them in a conversational way what you've discovered about an advertiser, service, or product. When you transcribe what you have before refining it into a commercial, you'll find you have something that sounds more natural than if you'd started writing first.

## Try Asking Instead Of Telling

Would you walk up to a stranger and boss them around? Probably not.

So why do our commercials so often consist of commands? ("Order now!" "Be there this weekend!") With only 30 or 60 seconds to establish a relationship, why spend so much of it demanding something? Didn't your momma teach you better?

**Issue invitations:** Help listeners reach the desired conclusions for themselves:

"Does this sound like you?"

"What would this (decision) mean to you?"

"Would this help?"

"If you come in during our sale on Saturday, think you could save some money?"

If you give listeners the ability to discover something for themselves, they'll have the "aha" experience. They'll be participating with you instead of being sold something.

By asking instead of telling, you'll empower your listeners. They may use that power to enrich your client. **INK**

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# Country Rocks The Big City

<b>Call letters:</b>	WXTU
<b>Ownership:</b>	Beasley Broadcast Group
<b>Management:</b>	Natalie Conner, VP/GM; Shelly Easton, PD
<b>Market:</b>	Philadelphia
<b>Format:</b>	Country
<b>On air since:</b>	1982
<b>Years in format:</b>	27 years
<b>Lineup:</b>	<i>Doc &amp; Andie Morning Show</i> , 5:30-10 a.m., Brian McKay, 10 a.m.-1 p.m., Shelly Easton, 1-3 p.m., Razz on the Radio, 3-7 p.m., Ken Anderson, 7 p.m.-midnight
<b>Target demo:</b>	25-54
<b>Slogan:</b>	Philadelphia's Country Station
<b>Website:</b>	www.925xtu.com



A poster for a fundraiser at one of WXTU's free shows, with a chance to meet artists Joe Nichols and Jake Owen.



Listeners line up their Christmas-themed vehicles in the WXTU parking lot, braving the cold for the annual Toy Truck Parade.



More than 125 decorated SUVs, pickups, dump trucks, big rigs, emergency vehicles, and utility trucks joined the annual 92.5 XTU Toy Truck Parade, hauling over 7,000 toys for the children served by Philadelphia's C.A.P.E.

In this country-focused issue of *Radio Ink*, we feature a format stalwart, Beasley Broadcast Group's WXTU/Philadelphia. The station known as "92.5 XTU" is deeply involved in the community, with annual fundraisers for breast cancer, children's charities, and other causes dear to Philly listeners — and XTU shows its appreciation to those listeners with great promotions, parties, and the much-anticipated Anniversary Show.

WXTU VP/GM Natalie Conner talks to *Radio Ink* about everything that's going on — and it's a lot — at 92.5 XTU.

**>Can you tell us about WXTU's signature event?** Each year 92.5 XTU presents its Anniversary Show, a free concert for 30,000-plus listeners. The daylong event features a mix of new artists and

established headliners — Tim McGraw, Zac Brown Band, Little Big Town, Big & Rich, Alabama, Montgomery Gentry, Reba, Brooks & Dunn — all in a festival setting. The event showcases XTU's strengths: We book the bands, print and distribute the tickets, man the ticket booths, and cue the lights and sound, all while broadcasting, blogging, and posting video for the listeners at home. From the GM and sales to air personalities and interns, this is a real team effort for the station.

The Anniversary Show bonds the station with its listeners. We meet them face-to-face at the kickoff party, and at the 150 or more Ticket Run appearances. At the show, we greet them in line as they wait for the gates to open and welcome them inside with a program book and a "Thanks for coming!" Our staff is on the lawn,

meeting the families, and in the parking lots with the tailgaters. We're not just voices or Facebook images to our listeners, they know us personally!

The date for the 27th Anniversary Show will be announced in mid-March.



## **WE'RE NOT JUST VOICES OR FACEBOOK IMAGES TO OUR LISTENERS, THEY KNOW US PERSONALLY!**

**>How is 92.5 XTU involved with the community?** Our two best known events benefit Susan G. Komen For the Cure and an area children's services agency. 92.5 XTU has been a participant in the Philadelphia Susan G. Komen 3-Day for the Cure from its start and earned official media sponsorship in 2009. The 92.5 X-Tra Mile Team is captained by morning co-host Andie Summers, and more than 30 staff and listener members train, fundraise, and walk the 60 miles together. 92.5 XTU sells souvenir sling bags, hosts celebrity artist raffles, and club nights to raise money, and the team plays carnival games and raffles off backstage meet-and-greets at the Anniversary Show to rake in more. So far, the members of the 92.5 XTU team have raised more than \$300,000, making

them one of the top teams.

Also, every December the station presents the annual 92.5 XTU Toy Truck Parade. Over 125 decorated SUVs, pickups, dump trucks, big rigs, emergency vehicles, and utility trucks braved the cold for the 2010 parade, hauling more than 7,000 toys for the children served by the Child Abuse Prevention Effort organization. The trucks assemble at our studios, then travel across the city to the Wells Fargo Center, home to parade co-sponsor the Philadelphia Flyers. We build "Toy Mountain," and everyone enjoys hot coffee and doughnuts, trophy ceremonies, and a free concert performance by our Nashville recording-artist grand marshals.

92.5 XTU and its staff sponsor causes including the USO, March of Dimes, and Caron Treatment Centers and participate in

many annual fundraisers, including events for the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society, the AIDS Fund, and Philadelphia's children's services programs.

**>How else does the station distinguish itself in the market?** It's all about connecting our listeners to the music and artists they love. XTU brings the music to the people, from the Anniversary Show to free concerts with Lady Antebellum or Rascal Flatts in an intimate theater setting, John Rich at a construction-supply company, lunchtime concerts with Carrie Underwood or James Otto, or a surprise performance by Keith Urban at a center city train station. The station presents up-and-coming acts in local clubs or hosts listener showcases at our studios. 92.5 XTU makes country accessible. Our listeners see, touch, and feel the music. **INK**

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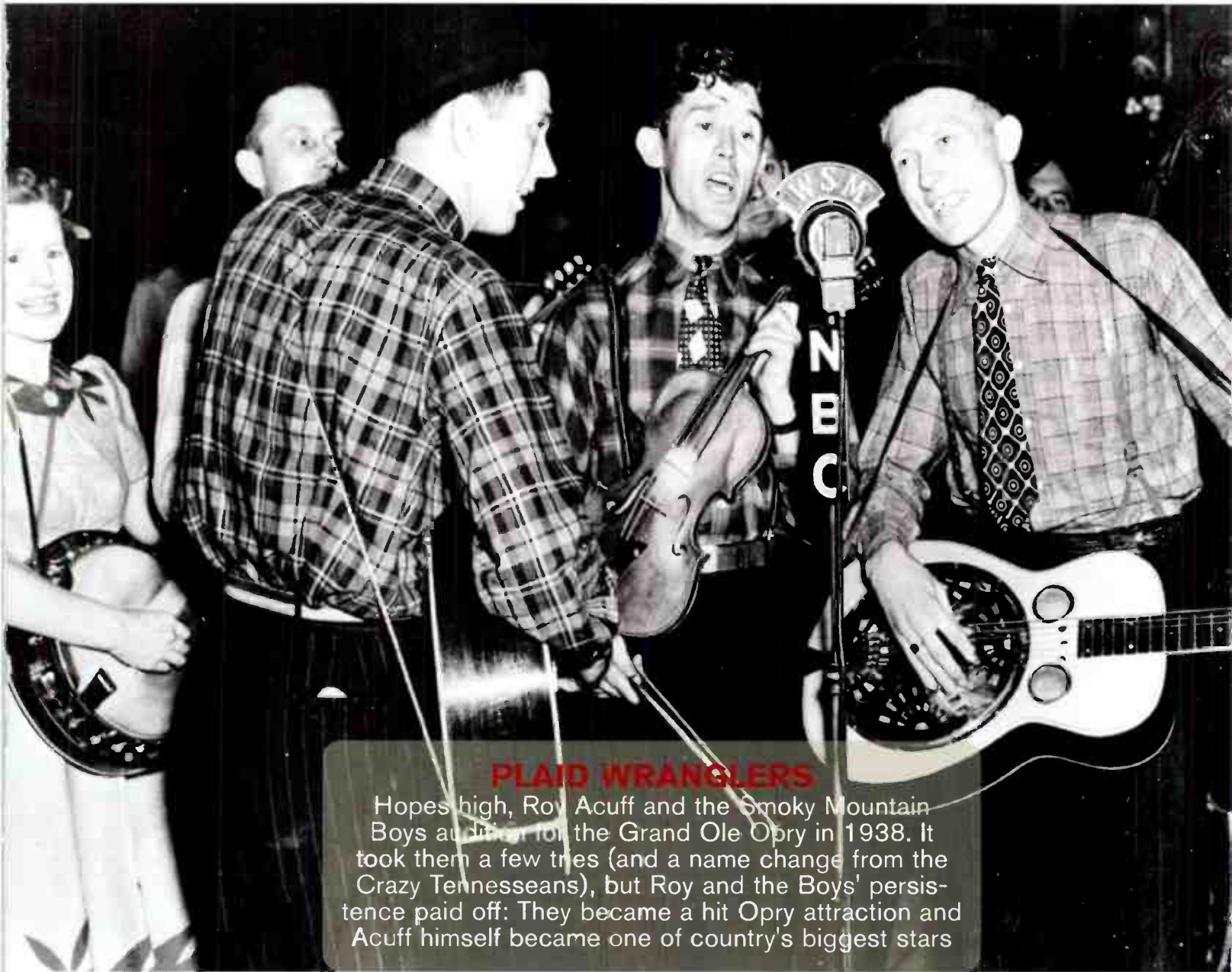


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## PLAID WRANGLERS

Hopes high, Roy Acuff and the Smoky Mountain Boys auditioned for the Grand Ole Opry in 1938. It took them a few tries (and a name change from the Crazy Tennesseans), but Roy and the Boys' persistence paid off: They became a hit Opry attraction and Acuff himself became one of country's biggest stars

**SEARCH YOUR ARCHIVES.** Pull the boxes from your storage closet. *Radio Ink* magazine is searching for old (or should we say mature?) photographs of people, stations, or promotions to use on our Blast page. All photos will be returned, but please LABEL them with identifying captions, including a return address and contact name. Mail to: Editor, *Radio Ink*, 2090 Palm Beach Lakes Blvd., Ste. 300, West Palm Beach, FL 33409. Photo: *Radio Ink* collection

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# the John Tesh Radio Show

## PPM LOVES TESH

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**Barry Fox**  
Program Director  
WRAL/FM-Raleigh



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