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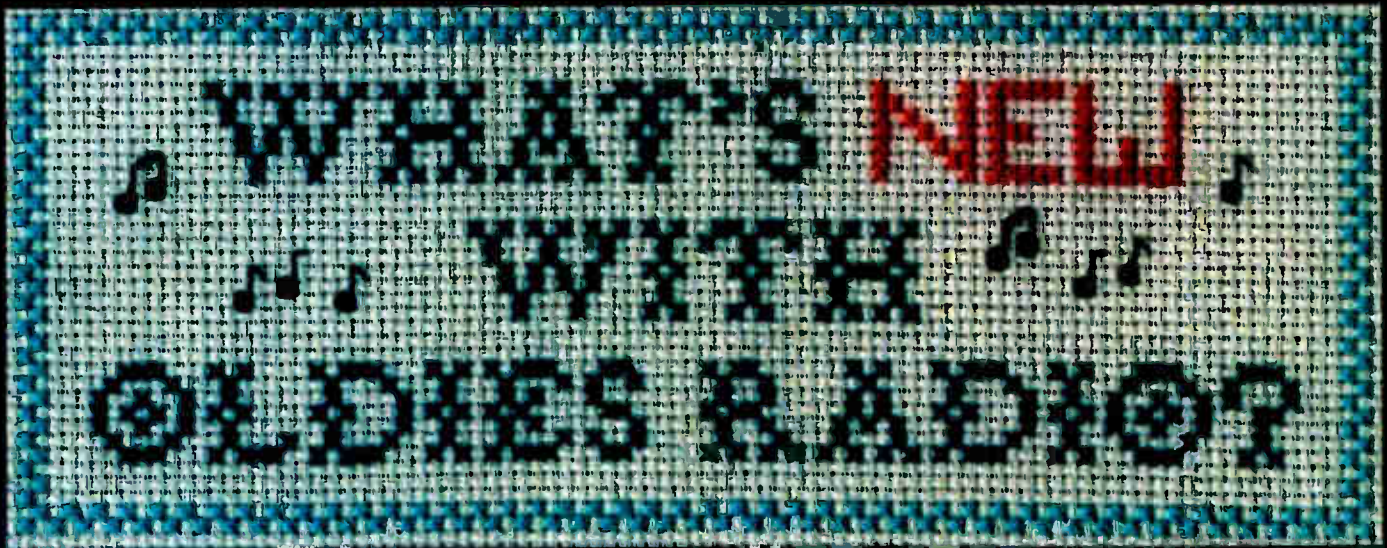


Joan Rivers Talks!



RADIO WORLD'S MANAGEMENT MAGAZINE

vol. 4 no. 10
Oct. 1997



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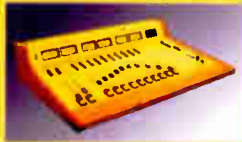
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*Cover: Sampler cross-stitched by Janet Haber.
Joan Rivers photo courtesy WOR Radio Network.*

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Tuned 
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Time Spent Listening

Alan Haber



Cousin Bruce and Alan Haber share a microphone

Not the Same Old Song

I believe it was Beatle George (Harrison, of course) who once theorized that there is only one heavy metal lead guitar player and he goes from studio to studio playing the same lick over and over again and nobody ever notices.

I must confess that I am not a heavy metal kind of guy, but even this oldies-loving 40-something knows that this can not possibly be true ... more than likely. (Well, you never know...)

I *do* know, however, that The Beatles, The Beach Boys and other men and women who are played day and night on oldies stations across the country would never tolerate this kind of behavior. No, I can pretty safely state, as a card-carrying member of Oldies Lovers Anonymous, that there are at least *two* lead guitar players who have been shared by so-called "oldies acts" over the years.

So-called? Well, I'm not a big fan of labels — to me The Who, The Guess Who and ? and the Mysterians are simply great groups with great songs. But without the oldies label, you wouldn't be able to hear ? belt out "96 Tears" on the radio. Lesley Gore wouldn't have a place to have a party. Tommy Roe wouldn't be in a position to be "Dizzy."

So, oldies it is. We've got a whole lotta oldies for you this month, and not the same old songs, either — a special section, in fact. Within it, our Doug Hyde dives into the proverbial stacks of wax for a comprehensive state-of-the-state format overview. And consultant E. Alvin Davis weighs in with "The Consultant's Perspective" on oldies, asking if the numbers are anywhere near what they could and should be.

While we're in an oldies frame of mind, we've got the ever-popular Cousin Bruce Morrow in our Famous Last Words corner, waxing poetic about the bond between air personalities and audience.

We have lots more between this month's covers. I spent a couple of hours with veteran comedienne and now-WOR Networks talker extraordinaire Joan Rivers — you'll find my report on page 16 (yes, she *can* talk).

We also have a report on the 1997 NAB Radio Show, prepared live from the show floor. And that's not all. We have the latest missives from our regular columnists, The Tuned In Quote Board, and Bob Rusk's look at the goings-on in Seattle-Tacoma (our regular Market Watch feature). Next month, we'll have a whole lot more, including a Market Watch report on Kansas City, Mo.

Until then, let me know what you think about what we're doing here. You'll find the contact information listed below. And, for all I know, the phone number of that I'll-play-anywhere heavy metal guitar guy. ▼

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Are stations playing the same old song? How are things in the land where The Beatles, The Beach Boys and Elvis are forever “king”? As Doug Hyde and consultant E. Alvin Davis report, life could indeed be a dream ... and sometimes, it is.

What's New With Oldies? Doug Hyde provides the answers

Every day, in big cities and small towns across the country, people are turned on by the sounds of Elvis Presley, The Beatles, The Beach Boys, The Temptations and other greats from yesterday. They're turned on by some of the most time-honored air personalities ever to grace a microphone: Cousin Brucie, Robert W. Morgan, Dan Ingram and Dick Biondi, to name a few.

Every day, 20 million people are turned on by the sounds coming out of more than 700 oldies radio stations throughout the United States. Even as some experts feel oldies is experiencing some growing pains, the format is widely seen as engaging and powerful, able to bring back memories for listeners and deliver a desirable audience for station operators and advertisers.

“In the early days of the format, there was more music from the 1950s and the music was much broader, including classic rock artists like Bachman-Turner Overdrive and middle-of-the-road artists like Pat Boone,” says Chris Elliott, a Denver-based oldies consultant.

Early oldies stations, he says, focused less on personality, in part because it was difficult to nail down talent from the 1960s. Things changed in the late 1980s as radio realized an opportunity. During that time, “broadcasters came to the realization that oldies could do extremely well, so they brought back the big name personalities and

researched the music to zero in on the highest-testing titles,” he says.

Today, the audience for oldies radio consists largely of 25 to 54 “baby boomer” adults, although there is some disagreement on the exact “core” of the format. According to a report published by Interep, 77 percent of all oldies radio listeners are



between the ages of 25 and 54, a higher concentration of adults in “the money demo” than jazz, AOR, and AC formats.

But where is the primary focus? And does everybody agree? “The core of the oldies format is (ages) 35 to 44,” says Marianne Deluca, senior vice president and New York regional manager for Interep. Larry Johnson, vice president of Research for Paragon Research, looks at

the question another way. He has concluded through Paragon studies of oldies listeners that the core of the format is men 45 to 54 and women 40 to 54.

“It’s real tough to find core 35 to 39 listeners to oldies, and it’s tough to recruit 35- to 39-year-olds for an oldies lifegroup,” he says.

Whatever the core, adults have a strong emotional bond to the oldies format because stations play records that bring back memories.

“It’s the music that our listeners danced, pranced, and romanced to,” says John Morgan, program director at Clear Channel WWBB(FM), B101 in Providence, R.I. “Baby boomers want to hear the oldies that they connect with their most emotional memories.”

This emotional connection is a major component of the appeal of oldies. “Music is registered in the part of the brain that controls emotion,” says Andrea E. Bachrach, Ph.D., a Fairfield, Conn.-based board-certified clinical psychologist. “When people hear an oldie, it retriggers the emotions from the first time they heard that song.” The enjoyment of familiar music also has a strong psychological base. “People like music that is familiar to them, because it is comforting,” she adds.

Where does this attachment come from? According to Jim Richards, vice president and general manager for ARS station WGRR(FM) in Cincinnati, it starts in an adult’s teenage years. Tom Hanks’

film *That Thing You Do* "shows the passion that kids had for radio, record hops, concerts, following the charts to see what the pick hit was," he says. "You don't see that kind of passion today with CHR or AOR stations."

Passion

Passion, demonstrated by listeners' attachment to the music, is something that is at the heart of the oldies format. The format's center, songwise, is the span of hits that came out of the years 1962 to 1969, says Paragon Research's Johnson. "We test songs from 1962 to 1965 and from 1966 to 1969, and find that the two groups are pretty compatible," he notes.

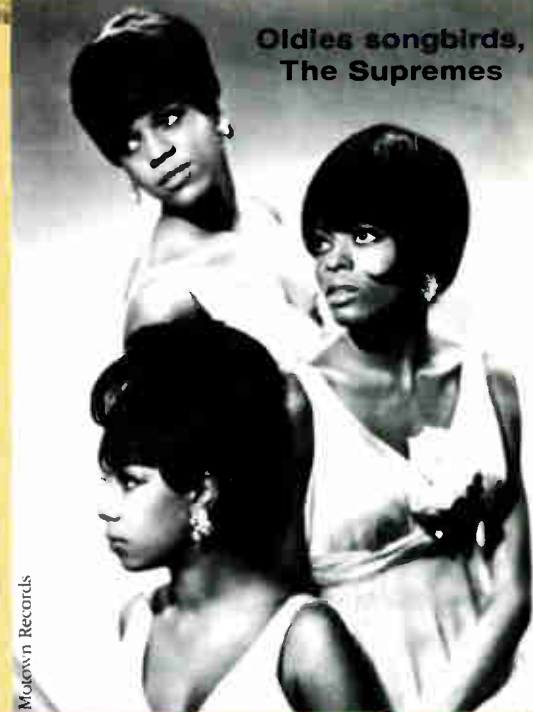
The typical oldies station, says Rick Peters, a Fort Lauderdale, Fla.-based oldies consultant, plays 5 percent of its music from the 1950s, 17 percent from 1960 to 1963, 55 percent from 1964 to 1967, 14 percent from 1968 to 1969, and 8 percent from the 1970s. (Some oldies stations, like WCBS-FM, also play songs from the 1980s, although Elliott notes that this is the exception to the rule.)

Motown, in particular, brings a stellar response from listeners in Cleveland, according to Denny Sanders, program director for Nationwide station WMJI(FM). "Among all of our listeners in any age, income, or geographic bracket, the most universally loved music is Motown," he says. "There is such a



Motown Records

Marvin Gaye



Motown Records

**Oldies songbirds,
The Supremes**



Motown Records

The Temptations

Station Profile: WCBS-FM The Hits Just Keep on Coming



Oldies giant WCBS-FM has come a long way since its long-gone album rock days. On July 7, 1972, the New York powerhouse made the switch to solid gold music from the 1950s and 1960s and has never looked back.



Joe McCoy, WCBS-FM PD

Today, more than 1.7 million people a week in New York, New Jersey and Connecticut rock 'n' roll to their favorite songs and the voices of their favorite WCBS-FM DJs.

Celebrating its 25th anniversary this year, WCBS-FM is a ratings leader. The station posted a 4.7 12-plus share in the Spring '97 Arbitrons, good enough for third place in the Big Apple. In the lucrative 25 to 54 demo, the station ranks second behind soft AC WLTW(FM). Program Director Joe McCoy says that success comes as

timeless quality about Motown music." And not only do the sounds from Hitsville USA work well on WMJI, but so do "well-selected" Beaties and Elvis Presley records and soul artists like Aretha Franklin, Wilson Pickett and Otis Redding.

Research

Whether or not oldies stations play Motown, put emphasis on the 1960s or mix up the decades, research can be key.

Sometimes that means research, auditorium-style.

Consultant Elliott says that auditorium tests are vitally important for finding songs that excite oldies listeners. What's more, he says, "Without getting new music, every record becomes more important. If there is a fatigue that builds up with certain records, that will cause listeners to tune out, resulting in a lower TSL."

Speaking of listeners, is the target market for oldies starting to show its age? Peters sees the progressive aging of the format's core audience as a major concern. "The number one issue facing oldies stations is the aging of the format," he says.

In an effort to attract a younger audience to oldies radio, Peters has developed "Oldies II," which is musically anchored in the 1960s but prominently features 1970s pop records "to bring the median age of the format down." "Oldies II" might feature a segue between Martha and the Vandellas' "Nowhere To Run" and Elton John and Kiki Dee's "Don't Go Breaking My Heart."

"We will play 1970s records that test well with the 1960s audience," says Peters. "Oldies II" will give existing oldies stations somewhere to go. It's not a format to compete

against an existing oldies station." Peters says that something on the order of such a twist on the format is necessary for oldies to remain viable saleswise.

"It has to be done or oldies stations will be out of business in a few years," he says. He might have something there. As Sanders says, "If you do an auditorium music test once a year, you will notice that the target starts to drift upward. You can't allow that to happen. You must bring in new listeners on the low end without alienating your core."

Sanders attracts younger listeners by downplaying the nostalgic aspect of the oldies format to make listeners of all ages feel welcome. "You won't see our staff doing the Fonzie 'thumbs up,'" he says. "We try not to frame things in nostalgia. We want the music to be timeless, and we want young people to love the music and not be alienated because they should remember the music and don't."

Incorporating the '70s

There are those who feel differently about incorporating 1970s records into oldies radio. "The early 1970s ... doesn't really test well as a segment, so that raises a red flag to records (from that era)," says Johnson. Elliott agrees. "For many oldies stations, it's a mistake to play too much 1970s music, because a lot of the music is out of place with the 1960s," he suggests. Some songs from the 1970s, such as Elton John's "Crocodile Rock," are a natural fit with the 1960s oldies audience.

But the age consideration may come down to listeners being as young as they feel. Kent Jones, program director of legendary Oklahoma City stations KOMA-AM-FM says, "The listeners may be aging, but their attitude is that they are still 25 and not getting older. With all the oldies that are in movies and commercials, this format has a long life left."

On the way to that long life, it is important to devise the right on-air approach. KOMA relies heavily on its roots as an AM top 40 powerhouse to add excitement to the oldies format.

"We understand what people who grew up listening to AM top 40 radio really appreciate," Jones says. KOMA utilizes Pams jingles from the station's AM days, as well as heavy personality and phones, all "updated for the '90s," he notes. "It's a little toned down, but still fun with a lot of friendly energy."

Personality also fuels the sound at WWBB. Morgan says that personalities on the station "must have a passion for the music, a relatability to the demo and be local as all get-out."

Fun

Even though opinions differ on some aspects of the oldies format, consultants and station staffers seem to agree that fun is a key issue.

"Oldies radio must possess a fun style

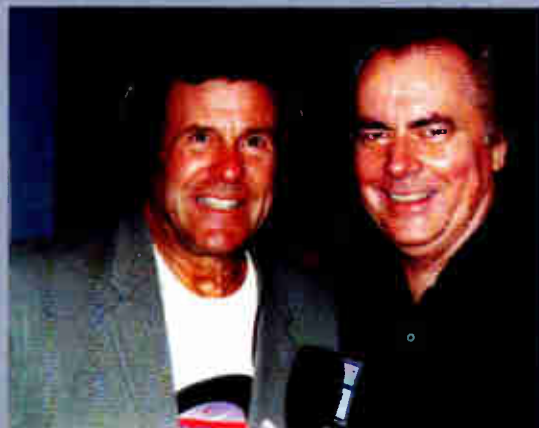
➤ WCBS(FM) continued from page 9 a result of being able to satisfy listeners' needs.

"We are focused on giving the audience exactly what they want," he says. "We take the oldies and make them very special."

The WCBS-FM sound is largely reminiscent of classic New York top 40 AM radio.

**Right: Dan Ingram,
WCBS-FM**

**Below: Cousin Bruce
Morrow with Norm N. Nite**



"We are similar to the old WOR-FM, WABC(AM) and WMCA(AM)," he says. "We are the melding of an FM and an AM station, and the result is a great FM station in New York City."

Familiar voices

The WCBS-FM on-air lineup features voices familiar to New Yorkers, including WABC alumni "Morning Mayor" Harry

Harrison, weekender Dan Ingram and "Cousin" Bruce Morrow. The station also features Norm N. Nite and Bobby Jay, musicologists who McCoy says provide listeners with thorough information about the music they play. "We have the greatest personalities in the world, who genuinely enjoy playing the music," says McCoy.

WCBS-FM embraces a wide range of rock 'n' roll hits from the 1950s, 1960s, 1970s and occasionally even the 1980s. One of the more unique aspects of the station music mix is the emphasis on late 1950s to early 1960s doo-wop, much of which originated on the street corners of the five boroughs of New York.

"We play the music that is indigenous to New York and made by New Yorkers," says McCoy, referring to doo-wop artists such as Dion & The



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**The Beach Boys (above)
and The Monkees (below)**



and attitude," says Elliott. "It must be exciting, bigger than life, and it must come out and engage the listener."

And attract advertisers. Oldies is "a tremendous environment to be in, because of how we rate in the marketplace," says Harvey Pearlman, vice president and general manager of CBS Radio station WJMK(FM) in Chicago.

"We have a better mix of adults 25 to 54 because we have a 50-50 split between males and females, while lite AC will skew female and classic rock will skew male," he notes.

Opportunities for local sales categories abound, he says. "In anything 25-plus, like banks, automotive, real estate, and home furnishings, there is a tremendous opportunity. It is a very advertiser-friendly, wholesome, American pie kind of format that the whole family can agree on."

"Oldies listeners index above the norm in income, homeowners, college graduates, and professional/managerial occupations," she says. "And the incomes continue to grow among 35- to 54-year-olds. This is money that advertisers need to reach."

The main challenge in selling oldies radio, says Richards, is educating media buyers on the value of the 35 to 54 and 45 to 54 age cells, as opposed to the traditional 25 to 54 demo, where oldies stations face opposition from formats that are top heavy 25 to 34. However, he says, the upper end of the 25 to 54 demo, where oldies radio is strongest, offers some important benefits.

"We deliver an audience that is at the pinnacle of household income," he says. "We also have large families and a lot of empty nesters who have tremendous discretionary income." Strong local client categories at WGRR include major grocery chains such as Kroger that look to reach families.

So that is oldies radio in the 1990s. After all the research, statistics and promotions that get the word out on a station, it is important to remember what above all else makes oldies radio tick.

Sanders: "You have the '50s architects, Phil Spector, the British Invasion, the American garage bands like The Outsiders, ? and the Mysterians, female performers like Nancy Sinatra and Dusty Springfield, psychedelic pop, and songs from the early seventies like 'Layla' and 'Walk On The Wild Side.' It's just such a mix of vibrant material that is very vital to American culture."

Oldies remains a powerful force in today's overall radio landscape.

Drive through large metropolitan areas and small, rural towns, and things remain constant: the rhythm and soul of Motown and the excitement of the British Invasion, which can be found at the push of a button on car radios, in the home and on the go. ▼

► WCBS continued from page 10

Belmonts and the Cleftones and the appeal they have to Big Apple listeners.

McCoy came to WCBS-FM in 1981 and immediately made a few changes. At that time, the station ratings had dropped to an all-time low 2.2 share, 12-plus.

First, McCoy changed the positioner from "Solid Gold Music" to "New York's Oldies Station." Then he revamped the music to highlight more from the 1960s. "We could tell right away in our first focus group that we needed to highlight the 1960s in order to win," he remembers.

WCBS-FM used to feature songs that were dubbed "future gold," playing top 40 currents twice an hour in addition to oldies. But future gold plays were eventually dropped as McCoy determined that the currents were not compatible with the rest of what the station played.

The hits keep on coming

WCBS-FM relies on specialty programming, airing shows that highlight a particular year or musical style. These include "Soul of the City" (1960s and 1970s rhythm and blues) and "The Heart of Rock 'n' Roll" (late 1950's and early 1960s artists like Buddy Holly and Dion).

On weekends, the station features the "Top 20 Countdown," in which the music chart from a particular year is spotlighted, and Cousin Brucie's Saturday Night Oldies Party. Sunday night is home to the "Doo-wop Shop," hosted by Don K. Reed since 1975.

Keith Hill, a New Rochelle, N.Y.-based consultant, says that the localized nature of the station presentation is a main reason for its success.

"It's the most New York of any New York radio station, in (its) sound, character, and stationality," he offers. "WCBS-FM is as distinctive to New York as barbecued ribs are to Kansas City. That's the reason it can't be replicated." ▼

- Doug Hyde



Doug Hyde, a freelance writer based in Tampa, Fla., is a regular contributor to Tuned In. He can be reached at (813) 948-7815, or doug601@aol.com

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Oldies Radio: The Consultant's Perspective

by E. Alvin Davis



Oldies is one of the most powerful radio format franchises. It delivers strong ratings and performs better than many formats the industry may perceive as being more exciting.

An Interep analysis of the Spring '97 Arbitrons shows oldies averaging a 5.4 12-plus share, up from 5.1 last spring. Oldies delivers a higher share than AOR (5.1), new rock (3.7), classic rock (4.2), hot A/C (2.6), and NAC (2.6). The true strength of oldies is not reflected in its 12-plus numbers. Oldies stations are huge in the 35 to 54 demographic, which translates into big 25 to 54 numbers.

As good as these numbers are, they are nowhere near what they could and should be. More than 90 percent of the FM oldies stations in this country are less than eight years old. Prior to switching to oldies, they had one thing in common: they were all dissatisfied with their ratings and were willing to take the risk on a format change.

As consultants who specialize and work exclusively with oldies stations, we see the format as it can be. The fact is that there are many fine oldies stations in this country, but many are way off the mark and don't even know it.

Many of these stations lacked marketing and promotional resources, had inferior signals or were run by less-than-capable management. Most were mom-and-pop operations that often did not use consultants, researchers and other tools employed by successful stations. These characteristics were still in evi-

dence after the change to oldies.

Many of these stations did better in the ratings after they changed to oldies, because in most cases they were the only oldies stations in their markets. Many of the operators did not have especially high expectations and were content with their improved market positions.

As radio consolidated, these stations were sold to new operators, most of whom did not know much about oldies (outside of the top 20 markets, few oldies stations were owned by group operators prior to consolidation). These new operators looked at their numbers, compared them to general format norms and used them as benchmarks against what they believed was possible with oldies. Perhaps not surprisingly, they saw the world of oldies radio as it existed at the time and not as it could have been.

Oldies stations are delivering dramatically lower numbers than are possible. The lack of big numbers and the ratings inconsistencies that many stations experience from book to book support this contention.

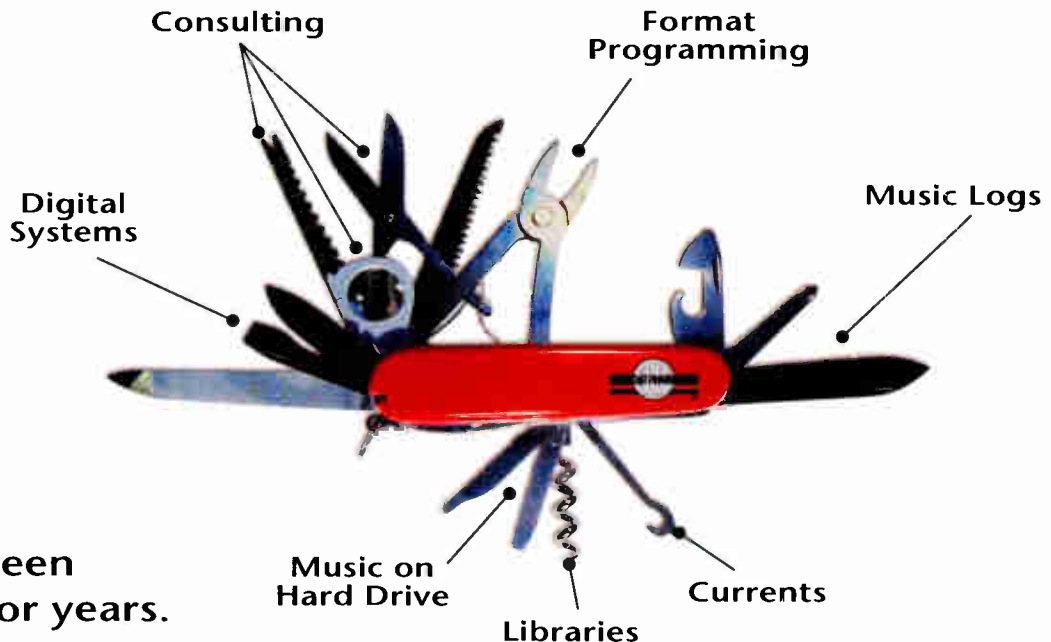
The lessons about what works and does not work in oldies are not widely known yet. There are a variety of reasons for this. First and foremost, it is important to understand that oldies is a unique format with its own singular archetype. Many of the strategies and techniques successfully employed in other formats simply do not work in oldies.

Relative to other formats, most oldies stations have done minimal audience research. As a result, the knowledge base is not as broad as it could be. Also, there is only a handful of program directors with extensive experience and successful

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track records in oldies.

Because the majority of oldies stations are less than eight years old, few people have spent much time with the format. It seems to us that many PDs work oldies for a while and then move on. When they leave, their accumulated knowledge leaves with them. Often, their replacements are new to oldies. These new PDs begin the learning curve at point zero and learn through trial and error.

All of this combines to produce a format that is still in its early developmental stages, even though it is more than 25 years old.

How high is high?

Perhaps the most important question that oldies stations need to answer is "How high is high?"

Our belief is that in most markets where there isn't a direct format competitor (there rarely is), an oldies station should be top five 25 to 54. But top five 25 to 54 is really only the beginning. Too often, stations are content and satisfied to be fifth or sixth 25 to 54, when the numbers could be so much higher and more consistent from book to book.

As evidence supporting this, here are some statistics on a few of our client stations (the numbers in parentheses indicate each station's share before becoming our client and its peak 25 to 54 share as an oldies station).

After changing to oldies seven-and-a-half years ago, WGRR(FM) in Cincinnati has never been outside top five 25 to 54. In 13 of its 30 books, the station placed top three 25 to 54. Its highest 25 to 54 placement is an 11.3.

KODJ(FM) in Salt Lake City (3.2 to 9.6) has been top five 25 to 54 in its last nine Arbitron books, including three at number two and three at number three. WSYN(FM) in Myrtle Beach, S.C. (7.1 to 14.0) has been number one 25 to 54 in three of the last four years. This station's performance is a great benchmark for those who think oldies cannot be tremendously successful in the south or in more modest-sized markets.

Oldies is a great format that is probably much stronger than most radio executives realize. Well executed, it can deliver big numbers and impressive revenue. ▼

E. Alvin Davis is president of E. Alvin Davis & Associates, "The World's Most Experienced Oldies Consultant." His firm specializes in, and works exclusively with, oldies radio stations in the United States, Canada, Europe, and the Pacific Rim. Reach him at (513) 272-2300 or at ealvin@compuserve.com

Goodbye, Luv! WCBS-FM's Ron Lundy retires

It is the end of an era. After 41 years on the air, one of the great rock 'n' roll DJs has retired. On Sept. 18, Ron Lundy, the possessor of one of the warmest, most affable radio voices around, said goodbye to his WCBS-FM listeners.

Throughout his career, which included a landmark 17-year stint at WABC(AM) in New York, Lundy has captivated listeners with his warm delivery and signature "Hello, Luv" greeting.

Where did "Hello, Luv" originate? The answer may lie in the British Invasion. "I was in St. Louis in 1965 at a Beatles concert, and when I met Ringo backstage, he greeted everybody with 'Hello, Luv' he remembered. The greeting has stood Lundy in good stead. WCBS-FM Program Director Joe McCoy says that "When people heard Ron Lundy say 'Hello, Luv,' it was a reminder that it was a special time on the radio."

Lundy stayed at WABC until the station went talk in 1982. In 1984, he made his way to the FM dial, landing at oldies powerhouse WCBS-FM, where he attracted a loyal following of listeners living in what he called "the greatest city in the world."

"(Lundy) made us better when he walked in the door," says McCoy. "Ron (is) ... a great technician, a fun guy, and a feel-good person who kept the station moving forward."

In addition to taking quality time off, Lundy plans to write a book describing his experiences in radio. "It will be about the funny, nice things and the people (whom) I have met," he says.

— Doug Hyde



**Ron Lundy (r) and fellow
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Live! From the 1997 NAB Radio Show!

It was just this side of oppressively humid in the land of gumbo and jambalaya, but that didn't stop the National Association of Broadcasters from putting on one solid 100 percent Radio Show.

The spirit of AM and FM, in fact, was alive and kicking in New Orleans — it was dancing, too (see below). A strong sense of community was part of that spirit: Hicks, Muse, Tate & Furst, and the two media companies in which it has a financial interest — Chancellor Media and Capstar — announced the kickoff of "Cap Cares — Radio Reaching Out," a national public service program designed to strengthen the bond between stations and the communities they serve. Big Brothers Big Sisters is a big part of the program; on the first day of the show, a check for \$100,000 was presented to the organization. Nothing demonstrates radio's connection with the listening community more than this type of announcement; hopefully, more such high-profile commitments will be forthcoming.

There was quite a bit of activity on the more-often-than-not busy exhibit floor: 190-plus companies showed their wares in the 50,000 square foot space, which doubled successfully as a lunchroom (a Mardi Gras-style meet-and-eat) and the site for the it-should-be-held-like-this-every-year opening reception, complete with festive music, clowns and conversation. A nice touch.

The Ernest N. Morial Convention Center practically screamed opportunity to the 7,246 show attendees (this was the largest NAB Radio Show ever). Attendees were exposed to the latest and greatest hardware, software and services and soaked up tons of need-to-know information at more than 80 sessions. Exhibitors reported strong traffic and lots of business throughout the two full days the exhibit floor was open. (Next year, NAB, why not leave the exhibit hall open on the last day of the show? Two days just doesn't seem long enough.)

Among the show floor highlights: IBM's surprise stab at radio dollars, StarTrax, an integrated broadcast management system, and Metro Source, a comprehensive information service and digital audio workstation from Metro Networks.

There was quite a bit of webcasting-oriented activity on the show floor, proving that the bond between radio and the

Internet is only growing stronger.

Microsoft drew interest in its NetShow multimedia streaming platform and ASF, an open standard file format for storing and streaming multimedia content. The Audionet booth buzzed with the announcement that an agreement was signed with SFX Broadcasting to be the



company's exclusive webcaster using NetShow. This adds over 70 stations to Audionet's stable, for a total of around 250.

Web design services offered by Radio-Active Net-Works and ElectricVillage were also in the exhibit floor spotlight. A new-generation Audioactive player with more bells and whistles was demonstrated at the Telos booth; a slew of Audioactive stations was slated to hit the cyber-bricks just after the show.

Hoopla

Amidst all the show floor and other Big Easy hoopla, which included the standing-room-only Group Heads session, was the unveiling of the Arbitron At-Work Listening Study. The study pulled the rug out from under the widely-held belief that at-work listening occurs mostly between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. Surprisingly, the study found that 36 percent of people are at work by 8 a.m. and a further 21 percent are at work by 7 a.m. The study also found, rather surprisingly, that only 3.7 percent of full-time workers work from 9 to 5. Who would have thought? Whether this will translate to increased targeting of potential at-work listeners (particularly on the Internet) remains to be seen, although the possibilities certainly are present.

Who would have thought that the musical question "Who is going to buy who next?" would be answered by the time exhibitors and attendees rolled out of New Orleans? Well, probably everyone.

The question was answered at the Radio

Show luncheon in the form of the following bombshell: Westinghouse/CBS signed an agreement to buy American Radio Systems, the fifth largest U.S. radio company.

The price tag: \$2.6 billion. The deal, if okayed by the FCC and the Department of Justice, would give Westinghouse/CBS 177 radio stations and likely peg them as the largest pure radio group. And what about the timing of the announcement? Don't let the fact that CBS Station Group Chairman and CEO Mel Karmazin was receiving the NAB National Radio Award during the luncheon convince you that the timing was anything other than sheer coincidence...

The industry's heart


Being in New Orleans for the 1997 NAB Radio Show was hardly a coincidence for anyone present. People were in The Big Easy to see new products and learn a little bit more about their industry. That some of them learned a little bit more about what lies at the industry's heart was a warm bonus.

About mid-way through the hugely entertaining Marconi Awards ceremony (not a full-house, unfortunately), musician Boz Scaggs — the evening's entertainment — played his song "Lido Shuffle" to the obvious delight of the crowd. More than a few industry folks formed a conga line that happily shuffled along in the direction of the stage.

Don't kid yourself. This reaction could not have been prompted solely by home play. "Lido Shuffle" was a number 11 Billboard chart hit back in 1977 and has been a classic rock radio staple ever since. It was more than likely radio's influence that in large part prompted such a strong reaction from the audience.

Polish your dancing shoes in time for the 1998 NAB Radio Show, being held in Seattle, a "wonderful city," according to NAB President and CEO Edward O. Fritts. (Whet your appetite for the city with Bob Rusk's Market Watch feature, which begins on page 26 of this issue.)

- Alan Haber



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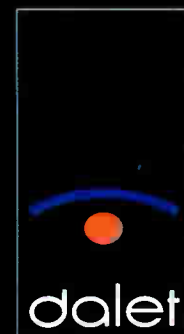
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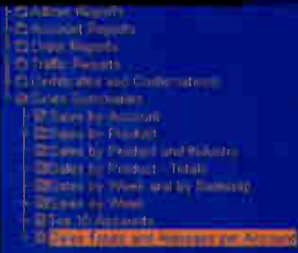


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your station will stay on the air. Dalet was one of the very first providers of digital audio systems.

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Why accept a system that won't do everything your station needs? Each Dalet installation is fit like a glove to your specific station needs.

4. Dalet Is Flexible To Your Future

How many radio stations do you know that stay the same for any length of time? Things are always changing in radio. You change formats, add more stations, need more news, more people, more studios. Do you want to get stuck with a "box" that won't grow or change with you?

Dalet's technology and design allows you to make changes as they are needed. You won't have to worry that a solution you bought today will be put on the shelf a year from now because it can't be adjusted to your new needs.

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World Radio History



Kim Komando

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OVERLOAD

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This is generally a good thing. However, with fax machines, the Internet and other sources bringing us a flood of information every day, it is easier than ever to get hit with that most horrible of modern-day afflictions, information overload.

The more information you receive, the harder it is to keep it all organized. What can you do? How can you take control of the information you receive and get only the information you want? If you are online, it is easier than you think.

There are a number of companies doing business on the Internet that specialize in delivering to you exactly the information you want. Each company takes a different approach, so it's a pretty sure bet you will find one that meets your needs. Best of all, most of these services are free.

The PointCast Network (<http://www.pointcast.com>) offers special software you can use to access only the information you want. You simply identify your interests (news, sports, politics, entertainment, finance and more on a local or national level) and download the software, which automatically connects to PointCast and retrieves updated information about the topics that you specify.

If you are not entirely thrilled with the prospect of having to load, run and update another program on your already over-stuffed computer, you may want to consider InfoBeat (<http://www.infobeat.com>). Similar to PointCast, InfoBeat allows you to identify the topics that interest you. However, instead of running a separate program, InfoBeat delivers the news to you via daily e-mail.

One important difference between PointCast and InfoBeat may not readily be apparent. PointCast allows you to access information whenever you want it, while InfoBeat sends you the news at the same time each day that you specify in your user profile.



Spam!

But what about the information you do not want, like that pesky unsolicited junk e-mail affectionately known as spam? It amazes me that even though nearly the entire on-line world is rallying against spam it still exists, but it does. Fortunately, it is becoming easier than ever to stop the spam before it ever gets to you.

Most of the commercial on-line services are now taking steps to control the spam their members receive. For example, the America Online service, PreferredMail, allows you to block all e-mail from a growing list of "spammers." The list is small now compared to the number of spammers out there, but it is sure to grow as AOL receives more input from its members.

AOL also offers Mail Controls, which, among other things, allows you to block e-mail from addresses that you specify. This means you can block e-mail from persistent spammers who aren't yet on the PreferredMail list and those personal acquaintances or relentless listeners you would rather not hear from anymore.

Most current Internet e-mail programs (Qualcomm Eudora, Claris EMailer, etc.) offer filtering capabilities. These filters allow you to automatically handle your e-mail in all sorts of ways, even redirect-



ing e-mail from specific addresses or e-mail that contains specific words in the subject line directly into the trash. The unwanted e-mail may make it to your computer, but it gets nuked before you ever see it.

The Kim Komando Show staff was getting so much junk e-mail that we compiled a list of junk e-mail offenders, and programmed it into a filter that we use directly with Eudora Mail Pro for Windows (the e-mail program the Komando team uses). You can download the filter free on the Internet by directing your browser to <http://www.komando.com/spam>.

Double duty

Software aside, you may want to give some consideration to the equipment you use to receive your information. Most computers today come equipped with fax/modems that allow you to handle both data and fax transmissions from your computer. The question is:

Do you really want your computer doing double duty as a fax machine?

There are advantages. For example, a fax/modem speeds up outgoing faxes of documents you create on your computer by eliminating the need for a printed copy. A fax/modem is also useful for incoming faxes that you want to convert to digital text. With a fax image stored on your computer, you can use OCR (optical character recognition) software to convert a fax to text that you can edit in your favorite word processing program.

On the other hand, what if you need to fax someone a newspaper clipping or other document that wasn't created on your computer? Then you have a problem. And while we're in a problem mode, remember that if you want your "fax machine" to operate 24 hours a day, you have to leave your computer on 24 hours a day. The popular thinking is that this isn't usually such a good idea. It's something to think about.

Many people today find themselves juggling information back and forth between two computers, a regular desktop model and a notebook or palmtop computer. What happens when you copy that important commercial script from your desktop computer to your palmtop and then modify the script while you're in the studio or at a client's office? Now you have two copies of the script on two different computers, and one of the scripts is out of date.

Fortunately, software is available that lets you automatically synchronize files on two systems, thereby updating the oldest ones to match the newest. Windows 95 comes with software that lets you synchronize files on your desktop and notebook systems. Likewise, all Windows CE palmtops include software to help you keep your desktop and palmtop files in sync. The hardest and most important thing is to simply remember to use it.

It is easy to forget to use the information you receive if it's not managed properly. Doing so takes some thought, which is time well spent, especially when your goal is unloading your information overload. ▼

Copyright 1997, The Komando Corp. All rights reserved. Kim Komando is a talk radio host, TV host, Los Angeles Times syndicated columnist and founder of the Komputer Klinik on America Online (keyword KOMANDO). Her Web site can be found at <http://www.komando.com>. Send e-mail to kimk@komando.com

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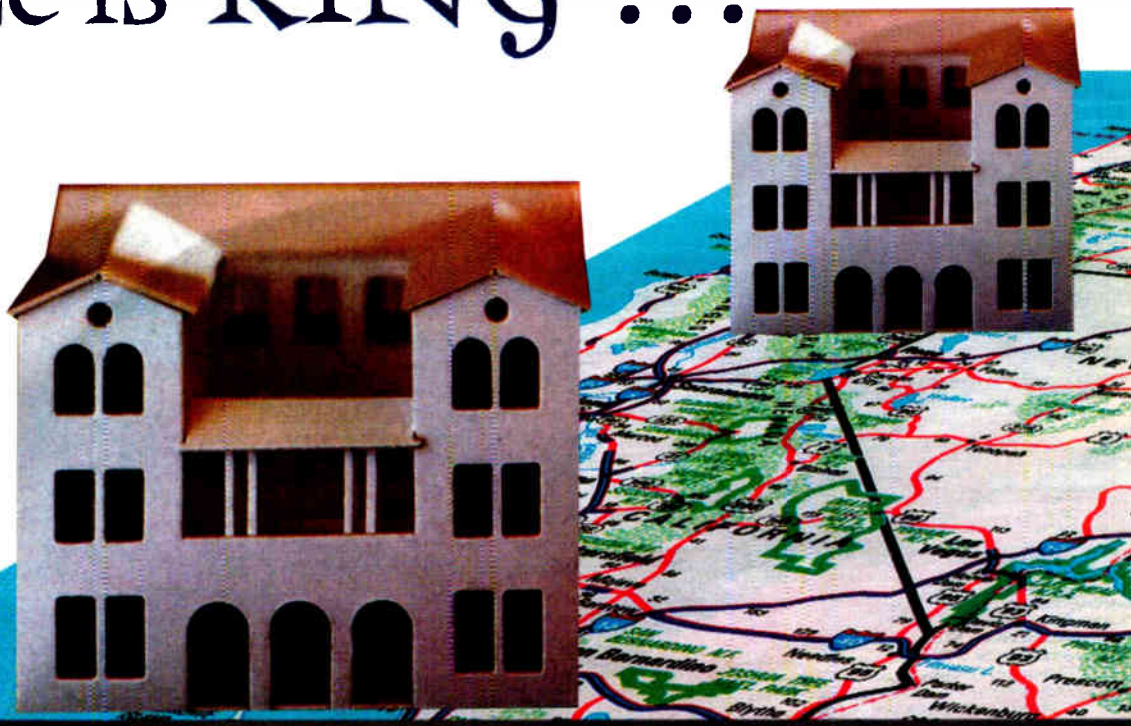
and it may

just be like

your city.

Bob Rusk

reports.



*On the surface, Seattle-Tacoma
But look beneath the*

Consolidation has forever changed the local radio landscape, with large group owners controlling most of the top-rated stations. Listeners and advertisers appear to be responding well to the change. With the typical commute now approaching 45 minutes, more people than ever are listening to the radio for longer periods, according to data compiled by the Puget Sound Radio Broadcasters Association.

The PSRBA projects that radio revenue in the Puget Sound region, encompassing metropolitan Seattle, Tacoma, and Everett, Wash., will approach \$150 million this year.

If last year's figures are any indication, about two-thirds of the money will be deposited into accounts marked American Radio Systems, Entercom, and Sandusky. According to BIA Research, Entercom alone earned nearly \$30 million in Seattle in 1996 (the three stations the company recently purchased brought in about \$20 million). Another \$35 million was shared by the two biggest Seattle-based owners, New Century Media and Fisher Broadcasting. That sets Seattle apart from other markets, where local owners are being squeezed out in this era of ever-increasing consolidation. Between them, New Century and Fisher control four of the 10 highest-rated stations in town.

Fisher, which owns KOMO-TV, the local ABC affiliate, has three radio stations: KPLZ(FM), KVI(AM), and KOMO(AM). The Fisher family put KOMO(AM) on the air 70 years ago, according to general manager Shannon Sweatte.

"They are a family that started out in the timber and milling business," he says. "Being locally owned and concerned about the community gives us an edge."

In 1994, locally based outdoor advertising company The Ackerley Group (which owns the Seattle SuperSonics basketball team) merged its stations KJR(AM) and KLTX-FM (now KJR-FM) with the CHR/rhythmic-formatted KUBE(FM) to form the New Century trio. New Century President Michael O'Shea, who put KUBE on the air in 1981, admits, "it is a little unusual" for



*may seem like other radio markets.
surface, and you might be surprised.*

local companies to own stations in major markets.

"It goes against the grain of the current radio operating dynamic," he says. (See sidebar on KUBE.) But people in Seattle have always gone against the grain, he notes, harking back to the pioneer days when fishermen and lumberjacks relied on their own brute strength to battle rough seas and stormy skies, and still got the job done. Today, with their clout and financial strength, both New Century and Fisher can afford to remain locally owned.

Perhaps the best known local broadcaster was the late Dorothy S. Bullitt, whose King Broadcasting Co. served Seattle for nearly 50 years. In 1994, following Bullitt's death and the subsequent dismantling of the company (which included KING(AM) and KING-TV, KING-FM was donated by the Bullitt family to the Seattle Symphony, Seattle Opera, and Corporate Council for the Arts.

One of the most highly regarded commercial classical stations in the country, KING-FM, a two-time Marconi Award winner, consistently scores strong ratings. In the Spring '97 Arbitrons, the station notched a 4.3 (12-plus), placing seventh overall in the market.

Among the 20 highest-rated stations in Seattle, KING-FM is the only standalone operation. General Manager Peter Newman, however, points out that the station has a sales marketing agreement with Entercom. Like other managers in the market, Newman says Seattle has entered a quiet period, as the consolidation frenzy has slowed somewhat.

"Things have pretty much settled down," he says. "I don't

know that there are going to be any great changes in the foreseeable future. We have settled into Entercom, (Sandusky), and American Radio Systems as the dominant groups."

Hot town

Entercom Seattle President G. Michael Donovan agrees. "This is a very hard market to get into because it is so valuable," he says. "When you ask people in the business what markets appear to have the best chances for significant and sustained growth, Seattle is one of those mentioned. People do not want to leave the market."

Seattle, the 13th largest market, is "very hot right now," he says. "With all of the economic activity brought on by Boeing, Microsoft, and the trading we do with Pacific Rim (countries), the future is bright for the Pacific Northwest and Seattle in particular."

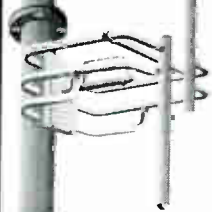
Entercom beefed up its presence here in January, and now owns eight Seattle stations, thanks to its acquisition of three properties from Bonneville International — KIRO(AM), KIRO-FM and KNWX(AM), formerly KING(AM). In the deal, Entercom also acquired Bonneville stations in Kansas City — KCMO-AM-FM, KLTH(FM), and KMBZ(AM) — in exchange for a station in Houston, KLDE(FM), and \$5 million.

"The industry has been fundamentally changed by these new opportunities," says Donovan of consolidation. "Every issue that I face as the head of a group in this market is impacted by the fact that we are now eight stations, not just one. Every issue, whether

continued on page 30 ➤

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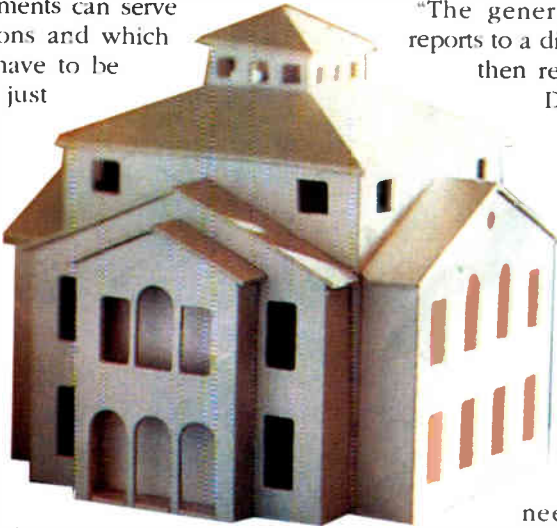
READER SERVICE 79

it is staffing, dealing with vendors, dealing with clients, the FCC or the community, is impacted by our size. Because this is so new, every group is approaching this challenge in various ways.

"What structure works best? Can you have one engineering department? Which departments can serve multiple stations and which departments have to be dedicated to just one station?"

"I would venture to say that all of the men and women who are in my position (in the industry) ran one or two stations for years. If you were to put all of us into one room, we would probably ask each other the same questions about multiple station responsibilities. We are all encountering these same issues."

Under Donovan at Entercom Seattle,



each station has a manager taken from the programming ranks. At KMTT(FM), for example, the manager, who retains programming responsibilities, serves as the go-to person for all departments except sales. The sales staff reports to the general sales manager.

"The general sales manager reports to a director of sales, who then reports to me," says

Donovan. "The sales departments have a

clearer line of association among themselves than the programming departments. My philosophy is that in the product end, programming and promotion,

our stations still need to be fiercely independent, passionate,

and selfish about their mission.

"Is that the right structure? We have been doing it for about a year and I am very pleased with it. With our music stations, we have been able to

develop a very good balance of individuality for each of them, as well as a group feel at the same time. You can do a lot more with the consolidated voice of large groups, instead of having 30 individual stations that are all screaming for attention.

"Groups can nurture and keep niche formats alive; for standalone (stations), I think this would present such a risk to the ownership that they would opt for being a second oldies station or a third country station, rather than trying to put something on the air that was less broad in appeal. Ultimately, I think the consumer gets more choices."

Record revenue

On the sales side, Donovan, who has been with Entercom Seattle for nearly eight years, says there is a newfound power with consolidation. "We get more respect and attention," he says. "I can sit down with the vice president of marketing for a large corporation and represent an audience among these eight stations that (sometimes) dwarfs (the coverage of) a television station or newspaper."

George Nadel Rivin, partner-in-charge of broadcast services with the Los Angeles accounting firm Miller, Kaplan, Arase & Co., says "it is quite a change" for radio to attract such a huge cumulative audience. "This really gives radio a tremendous advantage in its efforts to take a greater share of the advertising pie," he points out.

According to Rivin, from January through July of this year, Seattle radio revenue was collectively up 13.1 percent over the same period last year. In July alone, it was up 17.7 percent. Year-to-date revenue through July in the market topped \$81 million. These figures are in line with the numbers compiled by the PSRBA, which expects a 12 percent revenue increase this year.

PSRBA Executive Director Cathie Valentine-McKinney says Seattle stations did \$132 million in business last year, which was 8.7 percent above the 1995 total. If the market reaches the projection of \$150 million in revenue this year, it would be more than double the \$64.8 million earned 10 years ago.

Last year, though, as consolidation was beginning to rear its head and forever change the way Seattle stations do business, many advertisers were unsure of what to think.

"They were sitting back and waiting to see how this was going to work," says Valentine-McKinney. "Now clients are beginning to see that it is a good thing."

continued on page 33

Seattle-Tacoma Radio Market Overview

Station	Freq.	Format	1996 Est. Rev. in \$ Mil.	Owner	Arbitron 12+ Spring '97
KIRO(AM)	710	News/Talk/ Sports	19.1	Entercom	8.3
KUBE(FM)	93.3	CHR	7.8	New Century Media	7.1
KBSG-FM	97.3	Oldies	11.0	Entercom	5.3
KMPS-FM	94.1	Country	9.0	American Radio Systems	5.2
KIXI(AM)	880	Adult Standards	2.0	Sandusky Radio	4.6
KVI(AM)	570	News/Talk	6.0	Fisher Broadcasting	4.6
KING-FM	98.1	Classical	3.3	Beethoven	4.3
KNDD(FM)	107.7	Modern Rock	5.5	Entercom	4.3
KISW(FM)	99.9	AOR	5.0	Entercom	3.8
KPLZ(FM)	101.5	Adult CHR	6.3	Fisher Broadcasting	3.8
KZOK-FM	102.5	Classic Rock	9.2	American Radio Systems	3.7
KJR-FM	95.7	1970s Oldies	6.5	New Century Media	3.3
KYCW(FM)	96.5	Country	5.0	American Radio Systems	3.3
KLSY-FM	92.5	AC	6.7	Sandusky Radio	3.0
KOMO(AM)	1000	News/Talk	5.2	Fisher Broadcasting	2.9
KMTT(FM)	103.7	Adult Rock	6.2	Entercom	2.9
KWJZ(FM)	98.9	Smooth Jazz	2.6	Sandusky Radio	2.6
KRWM(FM)	106.9	Soft AC	3.5	Sandusky Radio	2.6
KJR(AM)	950	Sports	4.0	New Century Media	2.5
KBKS(FM)	106.1	AC	2.7	American Radio Systems	2.4



Stations are ranked in order of Arbitron Spring '97 12+ ratings. Copyright 1997 The Arbitron Company. May not be quoted or reproduced without the prior written permission of Arbitron. Other information provided by BIA Research through its MasterAccess Radio Analyzer Database software.



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High School DJs Rule at KUBE(FM)

It is not unusual for small market radio stations to hire high school kids to work on the air. It is unusual, however, for major market stations — let alone top-rated ones — to do so. Enter KUBE(FM) in Seattle, a station that has been drawing from the high school talent pool for years and reaping the benefits: the CHR/rhythmic-formatted station consistently ranks as the most popular music outlet in town.

"Four of our last six hires have come straight out of KNHC(FM), the Nathan Hale High School station," says KUBE General Manager Michael O'Shea. He points out that Hale is known for its excellent radio program, one that obviously offers no commercial, major market experience. That is one reason program director Mike Tierney puts them on the air.

"Since they haven't worked at any other (commercial) stations, they don't have any bad habits," he says. "I found that what works is that you hire people who are smart first and foremost. Second, they need to be interested and motivated. If they are young enough, they'll pick up the radio skills by osmosis. We are not all 17 here."

While the kids start out doing weekends and overnights, some quickly move up. Hale High alumni Eric Powers, now

24, has been with KUBE full-time for about three years. At 20, he was given a nighttime shift; he now does afternoon drive (additionally, he handles assistant program director duties).

Thanks to the training they get at KNHC, none of the young personalities have immature voices when they come to KUBE, says Tierney. "They sound young in all of the good ways," he says. "They have a hip, happening style. If you went to Antarctica for a year, you could trust them to tell you what you should be wearing and listening to when you came back. They sound like 20-something, fun people who are



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General Manager/WDKB

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READER SERVICE 100

all about the lifestyle."

Even Tierney, 29, who has been at KUBE for three years, does not have a lot of call letters on his resume. Previously, he was music director at KPLZ(FM) in Seattle and before that he worked as a promotion assistant at WQHT(FM) in New York. He got his start at WJPZ-FM, while attending Syracuse University.

"One of the things that brings us together as a staff at KUBE is that we know we are all nobodies from nowhere," says Tierney. "There aren't a lot of people in the business who would have hired any of us." ▼

— Bob Rusk

KUBE DJ "Dangerous" Dave Goodenow: Three times the call letters are better than one

Courtesy of KUBE(FM)

Eddie Bauer."

Seattle is also the headquarters of upscale department store chain Nordstrom, as well as gourmet coffee purveyor Starbucks. With such corporate strength throughout the market, it appears there will continue to be room for major locally owned players in the radio business.

Fisher Broadcasting's Sweatte, for one, would be surprised to wake up some morning and find that the company had been sold to the dreaded "out-of-towners."

"As the company moves forward, Fisher is expanding its milling, real estate, and broadcast divisions," says Sweatte. "The overall plan is to go deeper into the market and become even stronger."

With local ownership comes the ability to stay "very listener-driven," says New Century's O'Shea. "We keep our ear to the streets to find out what music is being played in clubs and what the new trends are."

Perhaps O'Shea echoes his Seattle radio peers, summing up the Seattle radio landscape, when he adds, "We know

Seattle-Tacoma Financial Snapshot


Market Rank: 13
Revenue Rank: 13
Number of FMs: 19
Number of AMs: 30

Revenue 1993: \$103.0 mil.
Revenue 1994: \$115.4 mil.
Revenue 1995: \$125.4 mil.
Revenue 1996: \$132.5 mil.
Revenue 1997: \$139.1 mil. est.

Revenue Growth
'90-'95: 6.9%
'96-'00: 5.9%

Local Revenue: 82%
National Revenue: 18%

1995 Population: 3,299,100
Per Capita Income: \$18,782
Median Income: \$40,363
Average Household Income: \$48,529

Source:  and the Arbitron Company

► continued from page 30

With the advertising-heavy Christmas season approaching, stations expect there will be plenty of good cheer as the first full year in the new world of consolidation ends. Marc Kaye, vice president and general manager of Sandusky-owned KIXI(AM), KEZX(AM), KLSY-FM, KRWM(FM) and KWJZ(FM), anticipates "an absolute killer fourth quarter. Based on what we see in pre-book business," he says, "there is no reason to believe that we won't continue to have anything but double-digit growth."

Corporate strength

In addition to the aforementioned strength of Microsoft and Boeing, whose presence creates about two additional support service jobs in the area for every job they add, additional credit for the growth can be attributed to a rapidly increasing population. There are now nearly 2.7 million people in the Puget Sound region, up from about two million in 1980.

There is a significant migration by Californians, who are coming north to escape crime, floods, fires, and earthquakes. As these newcomers settle in, many actively participate in the outdoor recreation the region is known for, listening to their car radios as they drive to the rivers, mountains, and wilderness areas, according to PSRBA research.

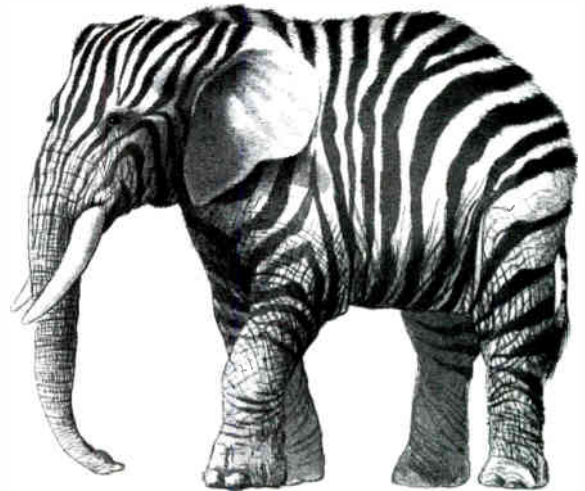
"People in the Pacific Northwest are more likely to be active in the outdoors than people in parts of the Midwest or in some of the major East Coast cities," says Rivin. "You see (a lot) of four-wheel-drives and sport utility vehicles. Keep in mind that Seattle is the home of (outdoor recreation companies) REI and

what people are talking about in Seattle." ▼

Veteran radio man Bob Rusk is a regular contributor to Tuned In.



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The Tuned In Quote Board

What managers are thinking

Q ■ What is radio's biggest challenge in this era of consolidation?

"Learning to deal with larger staffs ... and finding the sales leverage we're looking for to get exponential growth out of our business in the next five years."

Dave McDonald
General Manager
American Radio Systems
KUFO(FM)/KBBT-FM
Portland, Ore.



"Consolidation has not yet had a significant impact on the Christian-formatted station that I manage."

Dan Allen
General Manager
Radio Property Ventures
KXEN(AM)
St. Louis, Mo.



"Still having to cover all of the bases with the same number of hours, but more stations."

Scott Smith
General Manager
Pioneer Broadcasting
KFQD(AM), KMXS(FM),
KWHL(FM)
Anchorage, Alaska

MIX 103.1

KMXS

"There is no one challenge. What you're looking at is trying to find a way to get diverse groups of people to work under one roof. It's a long-term process."

Craig Jacobus
General Manager
South Central
Communications
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Vincent M. Ditingo

Gauging the Impact of Deregulation in Medium Markets

It is no secret that radio deal making in the post Telecom Act era has become front-page news in both the consumer and business press. Perhaps you saw the headlines that trumpeted record-setting acquisitions in major U.S. markets. But many radio business colleagues are the first to point out that very little is heard about the impact of ownership deregulation in the lower market tiers, the medium to small markets ranked by Arbitron.

Consolidation is increasingly in evidence outside of the top 25 radio markets, where a large measure of future revenue growth is now being projected. During the past year, smaller-market radio group owners have been amassing local station strength in certain regions of the country, some quietly and some with fanfare. They, like their major market counterparts, are reaping the benefits from the new consolidating environment in which growing revenues are derived from delivering a greater audience reach for advertisers while administrative costs are lowered.

The proof of this economic performance can be found in the BIA Research revenue-producing radio group listing, which presently includes several medium- to small-market operators (an August release of this listing was consulted for this column). Thanks to deregulation and, consequently, consolidation, numerous other small-market owners with strong cash-flow margins have found their way well into the top 50 grouping.

Because the same basic economies of scale in "multiopoly" operations apply to both large- and small-market station owners, it remains a myth that only the top tier radio groups will be successful in the radio broadcasting business of the future.

Centered squarely

About 30 percent of all radio advertising revenues are centered squarely within the top 10 markets. Operators who capitalize upon the benefits of ownership deregulation in select smaller markets, especially where they already have a presence, will remain key players in those regions. By achieving a broader critical mass in terms of audience demographics, the advertising community stands up and takes notice.

Among the more noted medium-market radio group operators is CapStar Broadcasting Partners, which made headlines in late August with its \$2.1 billion purchase of publicly traded, New York City-based SFX Broadcasting. During the 1990s, CapStar built an impressive portfolio of 175 radio stations in small to medium markets across mostly the Sun Belt regions of the country. That number rises to 243 when LMAs are included. CapStar is controlled by the Dallas private investment firm Hicks, Muse, Tate & Furst, which, as of this writing, was still in the process of acquiring Chancellor Media.

Before the announced SFX purchase, CapStar ranked eighth in the BIA top radio group listing with \$293 million in annual estimated gross revenues. Many industry analysts saw the CapStar/SFX deal as a good fit because SFX, which was ranked seventh among all radio groups with \$280 million in estimated gross revenues, owned and operated 72 stations in

some of the more lucrative medium markets. The combined total of owned and/or operated facilities, before any spin-offs, would give CapStar 316 radio stations nationwide.

Among the top 25 medium-market groups, which are neither part of any large conglomerate nor constantly in the spotlight, are Citadel Communications Corp., based in Bigfork, Mont., with estimated annual gross revenues of approximately \$94 million, and Saga Communications, headquartered in Grosse Pointe, Mich., with estimated annual gross revenues of some \$64.5 million. The revenue earnings of all these companies demonstrate that by taking advantage of the expanded duopoly provisions of the Telecom Act, radio profitability, for the most part, has returned to the heartlands of America.

Future Perfect

Based upon a number of inherent economic and population factors, many medium markets in the late 1990s are poised for significant radio revenue growth. This is particularly true for the Sun Belt regions of the Southwest and Southeast. In fact, some of the most active station trading in the first half of 1997 occurred in California, Texas and Florida.

According to BIA Research, Austin, Texas, ranked 51st, and Charlotte-Gastonia-Rock Hill, N.C., ranked 37th, are the top radio growth markets. They are both projected to register a compound annual radio revenue growth rate of 7.2 percent through the year 2000. Other leading growth markets, according to BIA: Raleigh-Durham, N.C.; Orlando, Fla.; Biloxi-Gulfport-Pascagoula, Miss.; Tampa-St. Petersburg-Clearwater, Fla.; and Beaumont-Port Arthur, Texas.

Stumbling Blocks

Despite all this growth, there are occasional stumbling blocks. While bank loans for radio deals have substantially climbed over the past two years (one recent report puts the loan increase figure at nearly \$7 billion during that period), financing can still be a problem for some medium- to small-market owners looking to expand. This is key to the survival of remaining independently owned groups.

If there is any downside to consolidating within the smaller markets, it is in borrowing money from banks or other senior lenders in the region, says New Canaan, Conn.-based radio broker Gary Stevens. Many of these banks, he says, remain reluctant to lend money to radio operators because they do not fully understand the dynamics of the changing radio station industry.

In the final analysis, as radio station groups become more decentralized, creating a series of regional bases through local station clusters, a framework for future stability is created, even if the economy experiences a downturn. ▼

Vincent M. Ditingo is a business writer, media consultant and educator, as well as president of Ditingo Media Enterprises, a New York City-based strategic communications company. Contact him at (212) 308-8810.

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Famous

Last words

Vox Pop and Mom

by Cousin Bruce Morrow

So who are these people out there? Who are the pops and moms and guys and gals and construction workers and taxi drivers and fast food workers? They are your listeners, the radio-loving inspector generals who march to the beat of a different drum yet share at least one precious thing in common — they tune in to your stations.

These people, my Cousins, are your “family.” Every single day, you invite them to share an emotion with you. They are your audience, and they’re always there for you. So what have you done for them lately?

Close your eyes and cast your minds back. Do you remember when you didn’t work in radio and simply listened to it? Why did you dial in to your favorite station? Was it the music? The news? Or was it the personalities that spoke to you and touched your very soul?

I bet it was a combination of all of these things, a seemingly intangible collage of sound that travels mysteriously from a transmitter to listeners’ ears. Amazing, isn’t it?

Radio continues to be the most personal mass communications medium ever conceived. It’s no accident that we have such a grand effect on our listeners first thing in the morning, at night after the day has wound down and at all times in between.

Whether we are playing rock ‘n’ roll or country or oldies, whether we are news-talkers or talking about sports, we are one with our audience, part of the fabric of their lives. Just as people are everywhere, so is radio, keeping pace with the present and reminiscing about the past.

But it is important to keep our eyes and ears squarely on the present, even if our programming concerns itself with yesterday. We have to keep up with our listeners’ ever-changing world if we are to maintain their loyalty.

These days, Cousins, we are transistorized, digitized, pasteurized and sometimes even homogenized, thanks to the influence of new technologies. Progress is all well and good, but only if these whiz-bang high-tech engineering miracles exhibit the attributes that result from following the most important “ized” of all — “humanized.”

Listen to your audience. Hear what your listeners say to you. You can dabble in focus groups, consultants and statistics — they’re great tools and helpers — but there is only one positive tried-and-true method that will lead you to the much-sought-after golden goose: trust in your soul.

Trust in what your listeners tell you. After all, they’re just like you. I mean, have you ever met a loyal listener who wasn’t a general manager or program director at heart? All listeners want to put their thumbprint on their favorite radio station. And, ladies and gentlemen, they should!

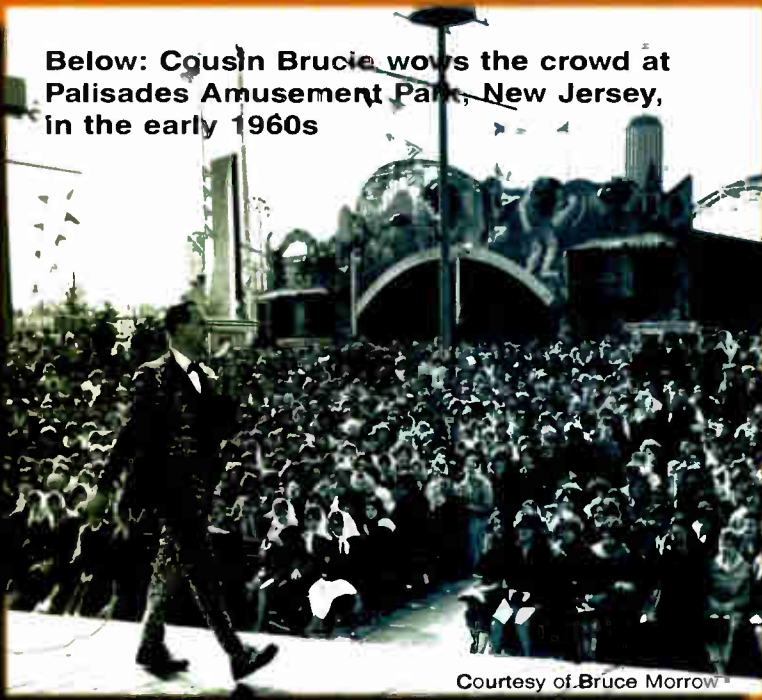
But loyalty and devotion don’t come cheaply; they are earned by your careful and proper presentation of emotions and ideas to your audience. When you’ve done that, then and only then will you approach radio heaven. ▼

Veteran personality, station owner, consultant and everybody’s favorite Cousin Bruce Morrow spins the platters that matter at oldies giant WCBS-FM in New York City. When listeners hear him utter his joyful positioning statement “Yeeeeee!!!”, all is right with the world.



Courtesy of WCBS-FM

Below: Cousin Bruce wows the crowd at Palisades Amusement Park, New Jersey, in the early 1960s



Courtesy of Bruce Morrow

There Are Two Ways to Run Your Radio Station!



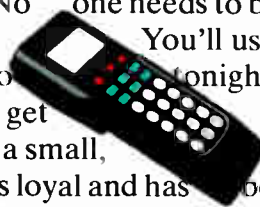
The Handcuff Approach

Small and medium market operators literally handcuff themselves to their stations. We know we've all been there. Get up at 4 am, sign on the air at 5 and the cuffs snap shut, chaining you to the operation for yet another day. You can't afford to hire another air personality to get you off the board, and that means you can't spend enough time on the street selling. You work hard to serve your community, but there's a real limit imposed by financial considerations. You'll work all day on air, selling, managing, and trying to pay the bills, then go broadcast a ballgame that night. You sign off knowing that a good chunk of your nighttime audience just tuned away to a competing station, and you'll have to fight to get them back the next morning. Then you do it all over again the next day.

You and your spouse haven't had a weekend off, let alone a vacation in the last 5 years. You feel lucky you have a dedicated staff, but it takes so many people to run the station that you simply can't afford to pay them what they are worth. You end up losing them as they move on. Your love of radio is frayed now by the financial realities of the business. You need to find a way to break out of the cycle and make station ownership what you always dreamed it could be.

The SMART Approach

You wake up at a reasonable hour in the morning. Your station has been on the air all night, and sounds great, using a SMARTCASTER Digital automation system. You make news calls and would normally drive in to the station to do the morning news report. But not today. You're going to take a well deserved day off and go fishing! The news still gets on the air because you use a SMART Touch digital remote control system for the SMARTCASTER, and can do it from a cellular phone. No one needs to be back at the station. You'll use the SMART Touch to do tonight's game when you get home. You have a small, well paid staff that is loyal and has been with you a long time. The community loves you and the station because that staff isn't chained to a control board, but is able to be out and about in the town, keeping your station involved with your listeners and your advertisers every day. You're making money, and you love being a part of the broadcast industry.



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