

Forgotten Basics

Continuing Education For The *Dedicated* Radio Programmer

What Goes Into A Successful Morning Show

In previous issues of **Programmer's Digest**, we've highlighted some of the world's most effective Morning Show features (See *Bedrock Breakfast Benchmark Bits* in "PD" Issue #4, page 4; Issue #5, page 4; and Issue #7, page 4).

Now comes the obligatory warning:

If you don't have **THE BASICS** firmly in place, your flares and frills won't come off! Or if they do, they won't be nearly as effective as they would have been when surrounded by a solid foundation that addresses listener-needs and accentuates listener-benefits.

Some personalities think having to do mundane things like the basics is some-

how "beneath them". That's unfortunate, because they're missing a great opportunity to be *even more effective*. (It's as if some air talents are determined to succeed in spite of themselves — ignoring the basics just to prove that they can get away with it!)

(Continued... See *Forgotten Morning Basics* on page 2)

MUSIC FOR Dummies

The Long & Short Of It

In the summer of '74, the lead headline on the front page of R&R was:

WALLACE NEW PD AT KLIF Playlist May Shrink from 55 to 15

(By the way, it did!) And so my love affair with the record companies continued. (By then, I was already notorious for my 20-record CHR

(Continued... See *Music* on Page 3)

Inside "PD" Issue # 11

Page 2 How To Convince A Stubborn Personality To Say The Calls
Page 4 The State Of The Station (Part 3): Annual Action Plans
Page 5 WWWWebWWWise: *Whirl Til You Hurl* Coasterthon (KFMB-FM)
Page 5 Elements Of Stationality: Sweeper Potpourri
Page 6 *Snap11!* Color Radio (Chuck Blore)
Page 6 Lifestyle File: Quality Time For Your Kids
Page 7 Ocean Toons (Bobby Ocean Cartoon Strip)
Page 7 Help Your Receptionist Communicate With Diarykeepers
Page 8 News: Broadcast News; NY Post Angles; "Official" Weather
Page 8 Cool Concert Contest: *The Concert Countdown*
Page 9 About Audience Loyalty & Exclusive Cume



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

Forgotten Morning Basics

(continued from page 1)

See How **YOUR** Morning Show Stacks Up

Just to make sure we're all singin' from the same songbook, perhaps you might find this "check-list" of Morning basics useful. Listen tomorrow with a critical, technical ear. I'll bet you'll hear a lot more "missed" basics than you thought you would.

❑ **Station Identification.** You can be the funniest and/or most outrageous jock in the world. But if you don't get proper call-letter credit in an Arbitron (A.C.Nielsen/McNair, BBM, etc.) diary, your numbers will never match your full potential. Tell 'em who you are (call letters or identifier) and what your address is (frequency). And, at least occasionally, what you've got to offer ("the new country leader").

Be cautious about overt sloganeering in Morning Drive. A positioning slogan or sweeper that goes by smoothly and effectively in PM Drive may stick out like dog's balls in Mornings/Breakfast. *Spontaneous reinforcement works best in Mornings.*

But you can still casually claim credit for services "X109 News time, now 6:15"; or "Sport-Lite" (on a Lite Rock station), etc.).

TW Tip #5048, #9070, and #6035

❑ **Time.** Give time-checks regularly. At least every 3 or 4 minutes. Twice a set is not too often (once in a backsell, once in a frontsell). Even in the middle of (longer) newscasts, a timecheck is a useful punctuator. Preferably "double-time", digital time followed by old-fashioned analog, which reinforces the fact that you're giving the time. ("It's 6:43, that's 17 before 7"). In Morning Drive, time is usable information to the average listener. Fact is, most listeners won't notice that you gave a time-check if you only give single-time (in their busy morning routine, it's too easy to miss it). (Rule of thumb for the analog reinforcement: use the :30 mark as the "dividing line"

On Commitment To Winning —

"If I have to, I'll commit murder to make sure Kiss continues to win!"

— **Richie Balsbaugh**
CEO of Pyramid Broadcasting

(Talking about keeping WXKS-FM/Kiss 108 #1 in Boston)

TW Tip #7057 and #8018

for whether you use "after/past" or "before/till"; "43 minutes after 7" sounds "awkward"). *TW Tip #5049, #9071, #6036, and #10026*

❑ **Weather.** You can't give weather often enough in a Morning Show (as long as it's concise). You should be giving the current temp, sky-weather, and a capsule forecast (including the high) every 3-4 minutes. *TW Tip #5080, #9072, #6037*

How To Convince A Stubborn Personality To Say The Calls

If your star Air Personality has a problem remembering to mention your station's call-letters, here's a simple little exercise I've found works wonders...

- ✓ In your next Perceptual Research Study, include the questions: **"Are you familiar with Johnny Jock?"** **"What station is he/she on?"**
- ✓ Usually a surprisingly high percentage of the respondents will mistakenly credit the wrong station's call-letters.
- ✓ Show this portion of the study to the personality, adding, "According to this, (18)% of your listeners are listening to your show but writing down KKKK's call-letters in their Arbitron diary — you're getting cheated out of (one-fifth) of the ratings you rightfully deserve."
- ✓ Miraculously, the next morning you'll hear more call-letter mentions. *TW Tip #5052, #9074, #6039, and #1046*

❑ **Strive For Funny.** Or at least humorous. Even on a so-called "serious" station, something "magic" happens when you don't take yourself so seriously. Most listeners want to hear something that amuses them. Personalities who have a good sense of humor about everyday life occurrences are just plain *fun* to listen to. Especially so, when the humor is *positive* (instead of degrading, or poking fun at someone else's expense). (One of the forgotten hallmarks of the "Drake"/"Boss" format was *no negatives!*) All too often, these days, we're hearing semi-talented personalities attempting to out-Stem Stem (on the outrageous scale). *TW Tip #5051, #9073, and #6038*

❑ **Music.** While most musicradio listeners tune a morning show primarily for reasons other than music, they don't like to wait *too long* to hear a song as part of their morning entertainment mix.

A mistake I think many music station make 6-9am: programming music-sweeps (often just for the sake of sweeping). (Note: For point of clarification, I'm not talking about "more music Morning Shows" here, which serve a contrarian purpose, I'm referring to sweeps on full-blown personality shows). (Continued... See Forgotten Morning Basics on Page 9)

MUSIC FOR Dummies

(Continued from page 1)

playlists at KRUX, KRIZ, and KTSA, which didn't exactly place me high on the recording industry's Christmas card list). Because this was during the early phase of tight playlists, the record folks just didn't seem to "understand" what "drove" a PD who was more interested in getting great ratings than he was in getting gold records. (Put it this way . . . when I left Dallas, the record reps all threw a "Todd Wallace Going Away Party", and I wasn't invited!)

Reason for mentioning this is: as a PD, you have a decision to make when it comes to your music programming policy . . .

Are you going to be in total control of your playlist? That is, reflect each song in the appropriate way at the appropriate time, based on what the song has "earned", in the way of listener-appeal, at each turning point of its product life-cycle (or reflect your gut-hunch of how you truly *believe* the song will perform)

OR

Are you going to succumb to record company pressures which coerce you to add songs "ahead" of (or in spite of) the musical tastes of your target audience? There's usually no "in-between". Either you're in all the way . . . or not at all.

Radio And Records = Oil & Water*

"Why can't we all just get along?" There are some in the recording industry who feel we *all* need to take steps to "get along better" and "compromise" more. With due respect, compromising your station's music integrity can be hazardous to your ratings health.

* This headline is in no way intended as a slam to Erica Farber's fine publication which is the best in the business!

I feel it's vitally important for a PD to clearly understand, early-on, that the

music-related objectives of the Programming Department of a radio station (that is, playing music-product that perfectly mirrors the collective tastes of your target audience) are *rarely* in sync with the objectives of a record rep (who is being pressured to get an "add" at practically any cost) or a record company (which is to move units as quickly as possible).

Fortunately, in the overly-niched, hyper-targeted Radio world of the late 90's, record company promotion departments seem to be a lot more understanding and tolerant of the necessities and realities of limited-lists than they were in the 70's.

But there still are moments when push can come to shove. Worst-case scenario: sometimes when personalities clash, a PD/Record Rep relationship deteriorates to an adversarial relationship — with each person trying to put the other in "the penalty box" resulting in petty threats and silly tactics.

What To Do If You're On A Blacklist

For various and sundry reasons, a PD or a station can be placed on a record company's shit-list — sometimes to the point where service is withheld or altogether discontinued.

If this happens to you, the first thing to do is: try to *rationaly* deal with the other person and/or their superior (minus any emotion). Try to get them to acknowledge and understand the fact that your job security (especially in these insecure times of downsizing and consolidation) is directly tied to *ratings*-performance, *not* how many songs you add, which is *why* you have to have to be very "careful" about every song you add. (The wrong songs played several times a day can chase audience in droves). From personal experience, however, I can tell you some people just don't want to hear that explanation if it means you're not going to add their record (they just consider it an "excuse").

If all attempts at reconciliation fail, remember: it only costs you a couple o' bucks to buy the CD or CD-single of just about any song whenever you're ready to add it. If you're properly networked, you can get a DAT-club from a colleague Fed-Ex'd to you so you never miss a hot one. Unfortunately, this may also have some promotional consequences. Your direct competitor may get the inside road to concert tickets, CD's, and other paraphernalia. In which case, you need to be prepared to throw cash at this situation. Remember, money screams! (Much louder than a "Spice Girls" weekend!) (Really, I'm not picking on them, just illustrating a point!). (See how careful you have to be, not to say the wrong thing???)

But the most important thing to remember is: NEVER, NEVER, EVER let your little feud deprive your audience of potential musical enjoyment. What I mean by that is: don't become so vindictive that you "penalize" hit songs from the company that you have the disagreement with. Refusing to play a hit because you're mad at the rep is literally cutting off your nose to spite your face. You're hurting you, not him/her. Worse, you're playing dangerous games with your listeners, *who count on you* to deliver "their" music to them, without fail. **Never break that trust.** They don't understand any mind-games or turf-games that sometimes go on behind the scenes (nor should they have to).

Wallace Wisdom: Simply put, when a song is a *hit* for your target audience, you should be playing it, *no matter what*. The other side to that is . . . you are under no obligation to play it "early" (when it could pose a "familiarity risk"). Finally, always try to maintain a cordial, friendly exchange when dealing with record reps. Treat them with the same courtesy you want to receive.

TW Tip #2016 and #7058

Next Week: Music Science 101

"Subtlety is saying what you think, but then leaving before anyone really understands what you meant".

— Dr. Laura Schlessinger

The State of the Station

Part 3 of a "PD" Management Mini-Series

After you've conducted your Quarterly SWOT Analysis and written your Monthly Management Reports, what's next? Only the most important document of them all . . .

Your Annual *Programming/Marketing Action Plan*

This is the "blueprint" for what you intend to do, and how you plan to do it, for the next year of your station's programming life.

In this article, we'll touch on the main things you'll want to include, to make your Action Plan complete and truly useful. It should, after all, become a *much-used reference tool*, which everyone will refer to regularly throughout the coming year.

Primary Objective

I like to start every Action Plan with a re-statement of the primary objective. Such as . . . *"To Place X-109 in a much stronger competitive position by improving listenership among 25-54 Adults (especially 25-54 females)."* It should be kind of a near-term interpretation of your Mission Statement.

Research Redux

Many stations like to schedule their landmark Perceptual Research Study (perhaps preceded by a Focus Group or two) to coincide with the timeline of when they plan to implement their Action Plan. This is intelligent planning, since it enables you to be *immediately responsive* to the fresh feedback from your target audience. Try to include a quick overview of the "executive summary" of your research study in the preamble of your Action Plan document, clearly spelling out any research-driven objectives that can be met with specific action steps.

Updated SWOT Analysis

Since studies of your Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats so clearly portray the updated lay of the land, consider including an abbreviated SWOT Analysis as part of your preamble. Focus on mainly the "big picture" items. This becomes a useful reference point (especially six months down the line, after the "moving target" has "moved").

Major Decision Issues First

Your Programming/Marketing Action Plan should be a "formal version" of your Monthly Report, listing major "core" issues first before getting into "shoulder" issues or the manicure items of individual components. The most important issues are the ones requiring crucial decisions. Often these decisions must be made before any action steps can begin, or strategies and tactics can be formulated.

Programming Action Steps

Begin by condensing your entire Action Plan into a bullet-pointed one page overview of what you intend to do, and what it will accomplish (the goal it will attain). Stating your strategy with "action" verbs and preceding each explanation with "to" will clearly encapsulate your intentions. For example . . .

Strategy #1:

Improve Ratings Performance In The Morning Daypart

To become competitive 6-10am (yearplan goal: top 5, 25-54), to maximize recycling points for the X-109 Morning Show, and to minimize the recycling and halo-effect impact of competitor Magic 88.8's #1 morning show

Strategy #2:

Music – Recategorize All Songs To Minimize "Harsh" Edge

To strengthen the time-spent-listening appeal of the station.

Strategy #3:

Maintain a "2 x 4" Contest-Marketing Posture

To address our chronic "phantom curse" problem, to apply hourly forced-listen incentives for listeners to find us 7 days a week, and to maintain naturally "bright" listener interaction on-the-air.

Strategy #4:

Affect A Significantly Lower Commercial Profile

To demonstrate to listeners that we are serious about our new commitment to playing noticeably more music every hour. Etc. etc. etc.

Marketing Action Steps

Repeat the same process, outlining your Marketing attack on a 1-page summary.

Then Explain Each Step & Tactic In Detail

Restate the objective of each strategy. Succinctly explain "why" it needs to be done. Note any decisions that need to be made first. Then recommend Tactics that will enable your strategy to be successful (along with any related tactics, or derivative opportunities). Do this for each Strategy in your Action Plan, both for Programming and Marketing.

(Most Action Plans have between 5 and 15 key planks).

In Sum

Summarize your Action Steps, bullet-point style, on the last page of your presentation, along with expected ratings-goal expectations. This leaves it clear in everyone's mind what you're trying to achieve. (And makes you look very organized!)

Appendix

Nothing's more empty than "hang-it-in-the-air" promises or observations. That's why I like to include easily accessible "evidence" in a brief *Appendix* (at the back of the Action Plan Report). Things like . . . photocopies of key perceptual research reads that are pertinent to an issue, or specific applicable budget projections, or examples of similar promotions that have worked in other markets, etc.

Wallace Wisdom:

If you substantiate every major statement with proof, you can make every point more emphatically and convincingly. This extra step can often stop heated arguments about touchy issues before they start. When it's already there in black and white, it's seldom disputed.

TWW Tip 7060

Nothin' But 'Net

W W W E B

W W W I S E™

Whirl Til You Hurl – Coaster Marathon II

Last year, then-PD Tracy Johnson (now VP/GM at KFMB-FM/San Diego) said the Star 100.7 *"Whirl Til You Hurl"* Roller-Coasterthon on Belmont Park's "Big Dipper" was the most successful promotion he'd ever experienced.

This year, it's back again. Bigger and better. With a cash prize of . . . are you ready? . . . \$50,000! Rules are tighter, but the big bucks command *much* more attention (and, of course, are getting major coverage from the local TV news operations).

And this year, a new twist: **internet coverage** (updated every few hours). While listeners can follow live, up-to-the-minute coverage by tuning in Star on the radio, they can also get interesting background information about the contestants and their progress (including updated pictures) in the "Star Gazette (*Whirl Til You Hurl Edition*)" on the station's deep website (www.histar.com).

As of this writing, the field of 22 contestants has already dwindled down to 9 hearty souls. But, like last year, this promotion has the potential to run for several weeks.



Best of all, Star is *maintaining a consistency of purpose* by tying ancillary promotions into the event, like *"The Coaster Concert Series"*, featuring hot groups at the Park.

Wallace Wisdom: We've talked in the past about how *money screams* and how *well-planned stunts always attract attention*. Put the two together on one of the

best-sounding radio stations in America, that also just happens to have the market's hottest Morning show, and you've got an absolutely **unbeatable** combination. The internet angle enables average listeners to become even more involved with the promotion (and serves as a daily website "hit"-magnet).

Most of all: Notice how much "oomph" the huge cash prize adds to this already stellar promotion. Your mouth wouldn't have dropped open if only \$10,000 was offered (and neither would most listeners'). *This* is how **Gordon McLendon** himself would have done it!

TW Tip #3096, #4046, #15026, #16026, #1051

Related "PD" Articles About Websites

See "NY Post" on **TR** page 8, "Ocean Toons" on **TR** page 7 and "Radio411" on **TR** page 7

Elements Of Stationality Sweepers

"All radio stations are created equal. Some just play better music. Z107-7."

"Out of all the radio stations in Central P A, we're one of 'em. 92.7, The Eagle. The Classic Rock station."

"The songs you like, without all the songs you don't. The new . . . Z95.7."

"It's not just Radio, it's WSNX. Don't touch that dial . . . you don't know where it's been."

"Depending upon what you had for lunch, in the Bay area, today's best music is on Y . . . Y95"

"Warning: Fox 40 Sports . . . has . . . attitude. Warning: competitors caught copying . . . will be . . . eliminated."

"Houston's Country station for the 90's. 93Q".

TW Tip # 9081 and #18006

Programming Change

Making The Most Of Your Time (Part 2) — Delegation & Communication

Will Appear in Next Week's Edition Of **Programmer's Digest**

Snap11!

Color Radio

The evolution of creative format Radio would not be the same were it not for the influence of Chuck Blore. Blazing new trails both *on* the Radio – and *for* Radio on TV.

As a gifted programmer, Chuck is probably best known for adding the entertainment and showmanship, the dash and the flash, to "Color Radio" KFWB. He didn't need computers and research to make KFWB the #1 station in Los Angeles in the late 50's and early 60's. It was the epitome of on-air "fun" and sizzle, led by unforgettable personalities like B. Mitchell Reed, Gary Owens, Bill Ballance, Al Jarvis, and Gene Weed. And a jingle signature melody ("KFWB, Channel 98") that ranked right up there with "93 KHJ" for retentiveness and memorability.

In the early 70's, the fertile mind of Chuck Blore was the inspiration for one of the most uniquely artistic radio stations ever, KILS-AM (long before there ever was a KILS-FM). The hallmark of the station was its unique manner of "flow". Personalities were said to spend two hours of off-air prep for each hour they were on-the-air, in order to smoothly fuse the music, their meaningful content, the "paint a mental picture" jingles ("share a little kiss with a friend"), and even the commercials, into a polished, seamless, streaming production.

But perhaps the greatest Chuck Blore legacy is the way he introduced Radio broadcasters to the use of television as a useful advertising medium to promote their programming product. But don't get the idea that Blore TV spots were successful only because they were *first* into the marketplace. They were successful because they were so *compelling* to the viewer. 30 and 60-second entertaining pieces of art! *Impossible* to ignore because they were so good.

Some classic Blore campaigns include "The Remarkable Mouth" series, a close-up of a beautiful model's mouth as she lip-synchs a rapid-fire, 20-second composite audio montage of the station, visually punctuating all the station's listener benefits. The payoff: In response to Mr. Off-Stage Announcer saying "you've got a remarkable mouth", she responds, "X-109 is a remarkable radio station". And "The Janitor's Fantasy", performed by his partner, the late Don Richman, who similarly mouthed an audio montage of a station's personalities and stationality, while settling into the empty Control Room chair.

Chuck Blore was ... and is ... a showman of the highest magnitude. Today, he remains active in the industry, as CEO of The Chuck Blore Company, a Hollywood-based radio and TV commercial production consulting firm.

His company is the most awarded in the history of the business.

TW Tip #7062, #3097, #9082, and #18005

Remember — You Can WIN A \$7,000 Think-Tank Weekend!

Just help us spread the word about **PD** and you could WIN YOUR CHOICE of the following prizes worth roughly \$7,000 —

- A 7-Day Personal Vacation For 2 (including round-trip airfare) at *Observation Lodge* in Forest Lakes, Arizona
- A Think-Tank Weekend For 2, conducted by programming consultant Todd Wallace at *Observation Lodge* (including round-trip airfare)
- A "Buddy System" Think-Tank For 2-4 Stations (we pay for 2)
- A Think-Tank Weekend For Your Entire Programming Staff — OR —
- A 3-Day Think-Tank At Your Station's Venue

See "PD" Issue #10, page 10 for complete details (also page 9 for the fine print and restrictions)

How You Win —

- ① Just Tell 3 of your PD friends about **PD**
- ② Fax your name, address, phone, and fax-number (on your company letterhead) along with the names, addresses, phone, and fax-numbers of the people you've told about **Programmer's Digest** to (602) 948-7800.
- ③ We'll put every entrant's name in a hat and randomly draw one name on August 10, 1998. Winner will be notified on that date and the winner's name will be published in the August 10th issue of **PD**. Good luck!

Lifestyle File™

Quality Time For Your Kids

As your workweeks become increasingly hectic, you may find that it's getting harder to find time for your family. Especially your children.

Best-selling author and world-renowned lecturer Stephen Covey has an effective solution:

Schedule a one-on-one get-together with each family member every week. Actually *book it*, just like any other appointment (when you schedule a personal event in advance, it usually happens!)

Why it's necessary: It's said that most fathers, on average, spend less than 5 minutes a day alone with their children. (Mothers, these days, usually spend less than 20 minute a day.) Covey points out that the greatest need for any child is to feel

he/she is loved — and *special*. One of the best ways to address that need is by giving your kid *undivided attention*.

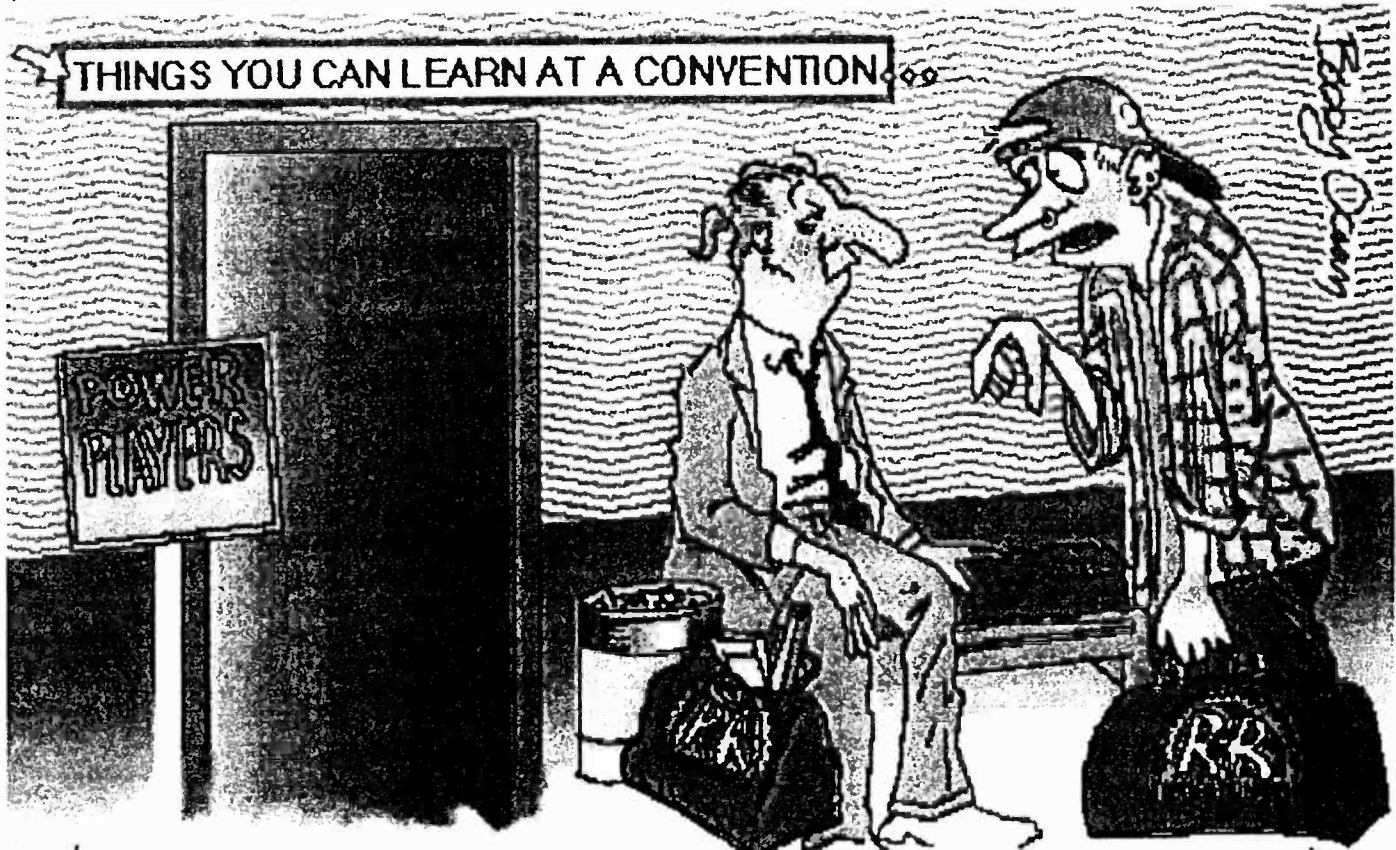
The magic of anticipation. By scheduling in advance, it creates a *shared expectation* of your "date". (Often the anticipation of your quality time together will be as great as the actual activity itself). (See **PD** Issue #7, page 5 for additional insights from Stephen Covey's "7 Habits Of Highly Effective Families"). (Golden Books/\$25)

TW Tip #21014, #7063, and #8109

Ocean Toons®

Starting this week, I'm proud to announce that **Programmer's Digest** will be featuring **Ocean Toons**, a radio-related weekly comic-strip series, created and drawn by legendary air personality, production ace, voiceover artist, and cartoonist **Bobby Ocean**.

I've always found Bobby's cartoons (which, for years, appeared in R&R under the title *Err Waves*) to be cutting-edge broadcast humor at its best, just like his on-air jock content always was, and his voice-artistry and production wizardry still is). And I know you'll agree. This one really strikes a nerve . . .



"TELL ME AGAIN ABOUT PRE-CORPORATE LOCAL RADIO, POPS..."

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o_o_o LIKE YOUR AGE

Check out Bobby Ocean's creative website, which is full of interesting ideas, production and voiceover demos, links, and quotes. (www.bobbyocean.com)

Ocean Toons also appears every week on Jeff Young's extremely well-done Radio one-stop website, **Radio411**. (www.radio411.com)

Radio411 is also the cyber-home of the *Bobby Ocean Cartoon Gallery*, containing dozens of *Ocean Toons* from the past year. Worth checkin' out!

E-Mail Bobby Ocean at oceanvox@pacbell.net

Help Your Receptionist *Communicate* With Potential Diarykeepers

Remind your front-desk and request-line personnel that *all* listeners are our "customers". (And potential diarykeepers!) Even those callers "with an attitude". One way of winning them over is by using polite questions, rather than "control" commands. Examples . . .

Instead of the command

"Wait a minute"

"Hold on"

"I need your name and phone number"

"Talk to programming"

Ask the question

"Would you mind waiting a minute or two while I check that out for you?"

"Would you prefer to wait, or may I call you back when I've located the information you need?"

"Could I please have your name and phone number?"

"May I transfer you to our programming department? I think they'll be able to answer your question."

TW Tip # 1050 and #7061

News & Surveillance Ingredients

News

Broadcast News, 3rd Edition by Mitchell Stephens

Useful advice from the "PB" Mailbag. Jim Farley OMPD of WTOP/Washington, DC writes:

"Merv Block (author of *Writing Broadcast News: Shorter, Sharper, Stronger*, see "PB" Issue #6, Page 2) is a very good TV news guy. Very good. But the ONE book a radio news operation should have is *Broadcast News, 3rd Edition* by Mitchell Stephens, published by HBJ (Harcourt Brace Jovano). It is written as much for radio as TV. I have used both texts in graduate Journalism courses I taught at NYU and Mitch's book is better (for radio) by far." Duly noted. Jim. And thanks for sharing your experience with all of us. TWTip #10027, #7059, and #22011

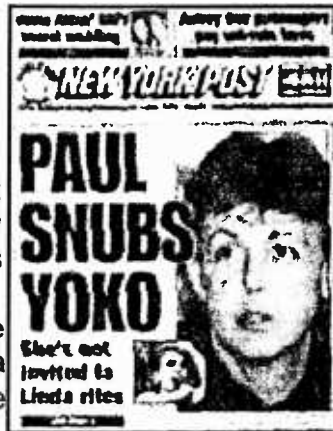
News

Find Interesting Story Angles In *The New York Post*

A great source for news that cuts through the BS of pedestrian copy by offering interesting (often sexy) angles is Rupert Murdoch's *New York Post*. *The Post* has a knack for finding things that seem to hit reader (and, I submit, listener) hot-buttons. Many of their Page 1 headlines are somewhat sensationalized, but the paper really takes pride in what appears on their front-cover (so they go to great pains to substantiate the story, no matter how far-fetched the angle). If you're concerned about proper attribution or legalities, you can always quote, "according to *The NY Post*".

For a great recent example of how they found the "interesting" slant, see the headline on the right. While most media outlets simply covered the official, "polite" story about the New York area memorial service for Linda McCartney, *The Post* ferreted out the hidden-story that would cause water-cooler talk. Three days later, Yoko's publicist confirmed the story for all media.

TW Tip: *The Post's* website (www.nypostonline.com) displays each day's Page One's, with the cover story copy just a mouse-click away. Check it every day and quite often you'll gain access to "news your listeners can't get anywhere else". If you'd done this on the McCartney story, you would have had a three-day jump on lazier competitors. TWTip #10028, #5058, and #1048



Weather

The "Official" Stamp Of Approval

A few weeks ago we talked about ways to use "the filter system of the listener's mind" to your best advantage. (See "PB" Issue #2, Page 1, Issue #3, Page 7, and Issue #4, Page 1). This also applies to your marketing efforts. Sometimes slick ad campaigns are no match for the look of "officialness", however bland. Who would blame a Des Moines area listener for thinking this green and white "freeway sign" wasn't placed there by the Iowa Department Of Transportation?

Wallace Wisdom: When something is perceived as "official", bullshit buzzers rarely go off in a consumer's mind. In this case, WHO-AM out-distanced competitors' outdoor campaigns by imparting information that was able to sneak through the listener's filter-system, unchallenged (because most listeners' subconscious mechanism didn't consider it information that needed to be "filtered"). Remember, what really matters is what "gets through".

TWTip # 10029, #3094, and #1049



Next Week

Compelling Listeners To Go Out Of Their Way For Your Newscast

5 days before a big concert, give away pairs of Row 5 tickets.
4 days before the concert, give away Row 4 tickets. And so on.
Day of the concert, give away pairs of FRONT-ROW seats.
Tease it the week before!

TWTip # 4045, #3095, and #9080

"The X-109 Concert Countdown begins next week, as we give away pairs of tickets to see Friday's Stones' Concert. Monday, you get your shot at downfront tickets in row 5! Tuesday row 4! Wednesday row 3! Thursday row 2! And on Friday - you can win FRONT-ROW seats! Count down to the Stones Concert, X-clusively on X-109!"

Cool Concert Contest

The Concert Countdown

About "TW Tips"

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

- 1000 series - The Audience
- 2000 series - Music
- 3000 series - Promotion/Marketing
- 4000 series - Contests
- 5000 series - Mornings
- 6000 series - Talent
- 7000 series - Leadership
- 8000 series - Morale
- 9000 series - Presentation
- 10000 series - News/Info
- 11000 series - Public Service
- 12000 series - Operations
- 13000 series - Talk
- 14000 series - Technical
- 15000 series - Internet
- 16000 series - Computers
- 17000 series - Sales
- 18000 series - Production
- 19000 series - Research
- 20000 series - Ratings
- 21000 series - Life
- 22000 series - Bookshelf

In Coming Weeks ...

The "PD" Morning Show Series will spotlight —

- ✓ Morning Listen-Spans
- ✓ "Pre-Flight" Checklists
- ✓ "In-Flight" Checklists
- ✓ Spontaneity
- ✓ Camaraderie
- ✓ Show-Prep "AEIOU"
- ✓ How To Hit Hot Buttons

Forgotten Morning Basics

(Continued . . . from page 2)

My question is this: If you have a personality morning show, why make listeners wait for 2 or 3 songs before they hear what they've tuned-in for? In my experience, I've found that *most radio listeners do not wake up in the morning clamoring music sweeps*. When you bunch songs together, you're forced to bunch commercials together to accommodate them. I've heard some morning shows cluster 9 minutes of commercials, back-to-back-to-back-to-back-to-back-to-back-to-back-to-back — plus traffic and a promo!

The result? Lots of herky-jerky, "push-me/pull-you" blocks that do anything but flow (lots of talk, followed by lots of music). Since Morning Drive listen-spans are so short, why not *s-p-r-e-a-d* the music, the information, the content, and "the load" more evenly? Make sense? (End of rant!)

TW Tip #5053, #9075, #6040, and #2015

Encapsulate Essentials

Ever heard of "time & temp"? Some things were meant to be together. Putting them together into *info-capsules* gets them out of the way. "6:43, that's 17 before 7, Clear and 68°, heading for a high 85, with a chance of rain around lunchtime". Then the personality can go on to more interesting things and compelling content, without having to wonder, "Did I give the time and temp?" (if they have to wonder, they probably didn't!) By the way, time-checks and weather should never be "teased" (especially in the morning). "Traffic & Weather Together" is another efficient "bundle" listeners "learn" to count on (and seek out).

TW Tip #5054, #9076, and #6041

Quantify Your Features

Especially if your Morning Show is information-intensive, don't be timid in claiming credit for what you do. "Traffic every 7 minutes". "Traffic and weather together (on the 1's)". "A complete, up-to-the-minute newscast every 20 minutes". "News on the hour, on the half, and first when it breaks".

TW Tip #5055, #9077, and #6042

Morning Surveillance Ingredients

Morning listeners simply *expect* to get an efficient package of the information they need to start their day. If you don't offer it, they'll find a station somewhere up the dial that will satisfy their needs.

■ **News.** Enough of a story-count to make listeners feel "up to date" (at least 6 stories, not including weather or sports). And enough "real" news to make a listener feel like they're not missing what's happening in the real world. (If you do a "fluff-cast", you may be forcing your listeners to go elsewhere to get the reassurance that "the world's OK").

(See "TW" issue #5, page 8, and issue #6, page 1 for the fine detail of New Millennium News-Writing Basics).

■ **Weather.** (as noted earlier in this article). (See "TW" issue #7, page 8 for the Components of an Efficient Weathercast)

■ **Traffic.** Usable information about how to get from "point A" to "point B" in less time. Stress ways to detour around traffic jams, to save time. ("TimeSaver Traffic", by the way, is a very descriptive (and strong-testing) signature; if it's not "taken" in your market, I recommend you move to preempt it). (See "TW" issue #3, page 8, and Issue #10, page 8 for fine detail about How To Win The Traffic Reliance Perceptual Attribute).

■ **Sports.** The *local take* on major sports. Be sure to include what the big local teams are up to (first). If the big team is idle, do a short blurb about their *next* game. Tip #5056, #9078, #6043, #10025

Local Topicality

What's today's "big event"? The thing everyone's going to be talking about at work today? It may not necessarily be "local" — but it's what *locals* are (or will be) buzzing about (especially with your help). You need to boil down the hot topic of today's conversation — and keep it going throughout the morning (not just once). Don't think that mentioning it once at 6:18 is sufficient — you'll have a "new audience" by 6:45 . . . and 7:15 . . . and again at 7:45 . . . (and so on).

TW Tip #5057, #9079, and #6044

About Audience Loyalty & Exclusive Cume

"Every significant radio station shares more audience in Arbitron with 10 other stations of *various* formats than they have as *exclusive* audience."

TW Tip #1047, #19023, and #20008

— Doug McCall, Shark TV

(Remember this next time you start feeling cocky about marginal increases in your station's percentage of Exclusive Cume, or the loyalty of "your" audience)

Programmer's Digest

Pick Up The Phone *Right Now*

The recent passing of our friend **Rick Shaw** has served to remind me of the fact that most of us in this business tend to let time and distance separate us from friends we really like and care about (and who we really *mean* to keep in better contact with, but somehow *don't*).

Even though Rick and I were good friends for 32 years (working together at various times for three of those years), I must confess that I let distance come between us and hadn't talked with him for 3 or 4 years until just recently.

I thank God that I had the opportunity to bump into him in the lobby of the Century Plaza before his appearance on the Power Players panel at the R&R Convention '98 (just a week before his death). Our conversation picked up like we'd been seeing each other every day. Ironically, we promised each other that we'd keep in closer touch.

As **Bobby Ocean** recently told me at Rick's memorial service, "With Rick's passing, the urgency to keep in touch with our friends is underscored. Time is precious in more ways than just business." Too true.

Food For Thought

Reason for mentioning all this is to urge you to **not take old friendships for granted** (or let the "inconvenience" of time and distance stand between renewing old relationships). *You never know* when you may not be able to see or talk with them again. And these days, with e-mail so handy (and inexpensive), there's really *no excuse* for not keeping in regular contact with your good friends.

So consider this article a gentle nudge . . . your catalyst to pick up the phone (or get on the keyboard) . . . **right now** . . . and say hello to someone you've often thought of but haven't talked with for eons.

Don't stop with just one person, call several!

And pass the word along for them to do the same.

You can never have enough true friends.

All The Best,

TW

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