

Believe Me, I Tried!

Why Country Radio Hasn't Splintered

by Jaye Albright

Is Country now the *only* radio format that has not been successfully fragmented?

At the recent state convention of the Missouri Broadcasters' Association in Kansas City, I hosted a programming roundtable and posed the question of a number of multi-format PDs who oversee a number of different stations if there was *anything* that made programming country different from other formats. The consensus: NO! Good radio is good radio and the basics apply across the board.

Generally, I agree. However, there is one amazing difference that has defied the predictions of many researchers over the years and seems still to be true today. I say "amazing" because country's target demo is incredibly broad — it
(Continued — See **Believe Me** on page 2)

Concepts

A weekly series of forgotten basics in bite-size doses

ID Placement

FIRST and/or LAST?

In this day of increased fragmentation (in even the medium and smaller markets) call-letter recall by listeners (especially diarykeepers) has become increasingly important.

(Continued — on page 6)

Continuing Education For The *Dedicated* Radio Programmer

Inside "PD" Issue # 42

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Programmer's Digest Publisher/Editor **Todd Wallace** continues to maintain his Phoenix-based programming consultation firm, **Todd Wallace/Associates**. He has provided programming consultation services to over 100 radio stations in the U.S., Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and the Philippines. Believing that "good logic, solid strategy, and cunning tactics know no boundaries", his clients have included formats of all types in markets of all sizes. Reach TW at (480) 443-3500 or e-mail: TW3tw3@aol.com

Believe Me, I Tried!

(Continued — from Page 1) probably remains the only format that *really does* have listeners from teen to retired *all* of whom call the same station their favorite.

For every other music format, the rule "25-54 isn't a target demo, it's a family reunion" is true. But — for Country, failing to target broadly enough in your research (I do not recommend targeting only females or only 25-44, for example) can *limit* your potential for success.

Rather than using cluster analysis to narrowly define a target, I make use of Critical Mass Media's TrueCore targeting, Coleman Research's FACT, or the Research Group's ListenerLink and QE products to find broad coalitions of listeners. As a matter of fact, it often seems that *Country fans seem to like it all* when you look at auditorium music tests or callout. Even burn scores among country fans are invariably much lower than any other format.

I just did a Mediabase 24/7* analysis of all country station monitors nationwide. The consensus of *all* of those station playlists combined was, according to Mediabase, that there really are only about 200 truly "safe golds" being played by most winning country stations today.
* (www.mediabase247.com)

It really hit home this week as I worked on the third of McVay Media's quarterly national research updates and category recommendations of 1999 for our clients. Many of our clients have widely different targets for their local research, and I analyzed each one separately without comparison during the process.

"New Country/Young Country" stations' usual target is age 32 (20-44), 60% female/40% male (one station I work with targets *all* female). My typical Mainstream client uses the positioning statement "Today's Best Country", sometimes adding "And All Time Favorites" and sees 41 as the core of the target's mean age (25-49), 55% female/45% male.

As a result, I really looked at completely different research crosstab data and radio station monitors in building the library updates for each one.

That's why I was very surprised, when I had completed the process, to discover that *both* playlists contained only 265 gold songs!

Interestingly, 40 to 50 of them are different tunes — demonstrating that as much of 20% of our potential musical universe is beginning to fragment a bit, depending on age or gender target. Men, for example, rate songs generally *lower*, as a group, than women do.

Also, the way the categories are structured

is quite different: "New" stations turn over power currents in 3 1/2 hours, 23% quicker than Mainstream stations do. "New" stations play two more current/recurrent titles per hour, giving Mainstream stations a slightly more '90's gold sound and a bit less current-based.

"New" stations rely very heavily on an extremely *tight* list (around 100) of immensely popular early 90's Power Golds for most of their non-current/recurrent material, whereas the Mainstream stations continue to tier 250-300 "oldies" (though hardly *very* old) in three categories, one of which plays 3 or 4 times per week, one which plays 2-3 times weekly, and a light gold category that repeats about once per week (or longer). Their current-recurrent/gold ratio, on average, is 50/50.

As I discovered how little pre-1989 material was in our playlists, and felt compelled to try to force more of a difference between the two approaches, I ran MMR 24/7 monitors of the past 30 days of airplay of every Country station in Phoenix, Baltimore, Atlanta, Dallas, Houston, Boston, Minneapolis, New York, Portland, Seattle, Salt Lake City, Cleveland, Pittsburgh, Cincinnati, Denver, Chicago, Lexington (a great country record sales market), Albuquerque, Little Rock, among several other mar-

kets to see if my research information was keeping pace with what winning Country broadcasters were playing nationwide. Sometimes, these national safe-lists lag 90 days behind fast-moving changes or trends.

While there certainly were isolated instances on almost every playlist of some individual Crystal Gayle, Don Williams, Anne Murray, Ronnie Milsap, Kenny Rogers, Waylon & Willie, Merle Haggard and Mel McDaniel type songs that came up on mostly quite light rotations, taken as a *composite* our playlist census last week really totally confirmed that there *definitely is* a very short list of less than 300 consistently high-testing researched titles that you can say are being played more than once a week by almost every station monitored.

Studying the ratings of stations (like KSCS, WKHX, and KNIX) that still do play a comparatively long list of that 1980's Country material and comparing their latest ARB audience composition to stations that do *not* (like KYGO, KMPS, WYNY, KZLA, WGAR, WPOC, and WMZQ), I am at a loss to see what positive difference they make.

(Continued — See **Believe Me** on page 3)

On Theatre Of The Mind

"See you on the radio!"

— **Charles Osgood**

CBS Radio/TV Personality

TW Tip #1103 and #6211

**For Country,
failing to target
broadly enough
in research can
limit
your potential
for success.**

Believe Me, I Tried!

(Continued — from Page 2)

There are two genres of Country music that all age groups agree they like most: today's **new traditional** (George Strait, Randy Travis, Vince Gill, Reba McEntire) and the **upbeat new modern country** (Shania, Garth Brooks, Tim McGraw, Trisha Yearwood). No other group of song titles possess the wide appeal of these two types of country music today. Interestingly, I went back to data I did five years ago and only the names Tim McGraw and Shania Twain have been added!

Looking at the spring 1999 recommendations I made to my clients last March (do you really think I'd "give away" the *latest* info?), Core Artists continue to dominate the Top Testing Songs.

- 72% of the Top 50 Like-A-Lot songs were from Core Artists (consistent with 72% from last winter and 69% from last fall); 61% of the Top 100 Like A Lot songs were from Core Artists (vs. 63% in the first quarter).
- Placing the most songs in the Top 100 Like-A-Lot Sort were: Garth Brooks (with 13 songs), Shania Twain (with 8), Alan Jackson (6), George Strait (6), John Michael Montgomery (5), Alabama and Reba McEntire (with 4 each) and Tim McGraw and Vince Gill (3 apiece).

The other common threads between Mainstream and "New" Country nationwide (and this is a *change* from 1993): a very heavy reliance on golds from 1989 to 1994. Both young-targeted and more 35+ oriented stations play about 100 golds from the most recent high water mark for the country format.

In 1993, there wasn't a major market country station we monitored that wasn't playing five or six currents per hour ("New" country stations often played seven or eight) and four or five recurrences to boot. In 1993, the thinking was that playing too many golds would not only mean that the *hit songs* would take too long to come up, but you'd have to be playing hundreds of titles that would image your station as "old" — the last thing you need to be at a time when "new" was so *hot*!

Today, both Mainstream and "New/Young" stations are playing fewer currents per hour (average is four) and fewer recurrences (two or three).

All of this leaves a *huge* number of songs that no country station *but* the 35-64-targeted AM is playing.

Some researchers tell us that they are beginning to see a

**All of this leaves
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thirst for more familiar music among 40+ country fans. Will this open a window of opportunity for an oldies-based country format in the near future?

I am 50 years old and nostalgically wish I could parry my more than two decades of first-hand country knowledge from Buck to Glen to Dolly to good effect. But, I simply don't think that's going to happen: as long as current music coming out of Nashville remains as excellent as it presently is. (Aren't you excited about how much better the music has gotten lately? I certainly am. I have a feeling we already know the names of the acts who will lead the way in the next country rebound as the pop culture begins to tire of Hip Hop and look for newer, unique sounds.) Also, we still have a large, loyal and responsive cume from 20-39 demos (especially females).

Face it: today's 35-44 year-old wasn't listening to country radio in the early 80's when Mickey Gilley was singing at Gilley's and John Travolta was riding the bull in his plastic boots. And today's 25-34 year-old was into Michael Jackson and would have bet you a million dollars at about that same time that they would *never* listen to country music!

Times change.

Audiences change.

Tastes change.

And, as a result, so must playlists.

Yet, for some amazing reason, Country radio has not fragmented, in spite of excellent defensive attempts to create Gold (and Young)-based Country stations by Mainstream leaders in Sacramento, Las Vegas, Seattle, Cincinnati, Denver, Albuquerque, Atlanta, Houston, etc.

Can you think of another format that can make that statement, now that CHR has been successfully spit into Pop and Rhythmic versions and even Oldies have now started Jammin'?

TW Tip #2154 and #19071

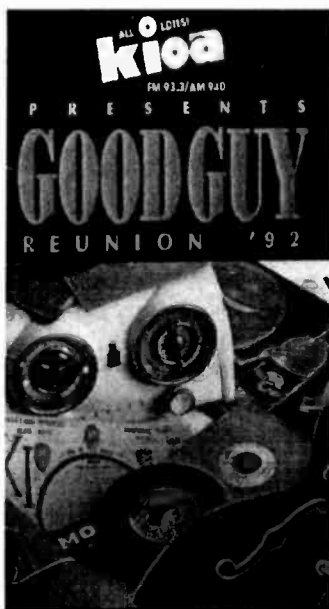
Jaye Albright



first started consulting radio stations and successful groups around the world in 1983 for Drake-Chenault Enterprises (one of the very first Country consultants). She also has been a major market manager, programmer, and air talent. Jaye now serves as President/Country for **McVay Media**. Contact Jaye by phone at (206) 498-6261 or by e-mail at JayeMcVay@aol.com

"The KIOA Good Guy Reunion"

Kipper McGee, OM/PD of KBest95/San Diego, shares with us a successful promotion he ran when he was General Manager of KIOA/Des Moines. It was fun, made money, and helped achieved some key station goals in the area of revitalization. The PR bonanza was overwhelming.



While this promotion is obviously best suited for Oldies stations (especially those with legendary call-letters), it may also be useful for stations with years of heritage or those that stress "localness" as a major part of their image.

Kipper's Tips give you a step-by-step account of how to build this larger-than-life promotion. Also see the sidebar (on page 5) for helpful hints and insider-tips that can help you mother the millions of details.

Background

With 10,000 watts at 940am, KIOA was "the" heritage Top 40 station serving Iowa by day and much of the western plains by night. With Pulse and Hooper ratings hitting the 50 and 60-share levels, many of the KIOA "Good Guys" were often as big a draw as the artists they played.

However, as the AM Rock & Roll heyday faded, so did the station. From Top 40 to "Chicken Rock" to "Full Service/Gold-based AC", and finally (in the late '80's), the evolution to "All Oldies".

By the early 90's, it was clear that, for continued survival, let alone growth, the KIOA brand needed to move to FM. In 1991, KIOA began simulcasting on 940AM and on FM (the 100,000-watt frequency at 93.3).

The Marketing Challenges

- First and foremost, to re-halo the "KIOA" brand, to recapture the vast boomer generation by reintroducing them to "their" station, which was now playing "their" music on FM.

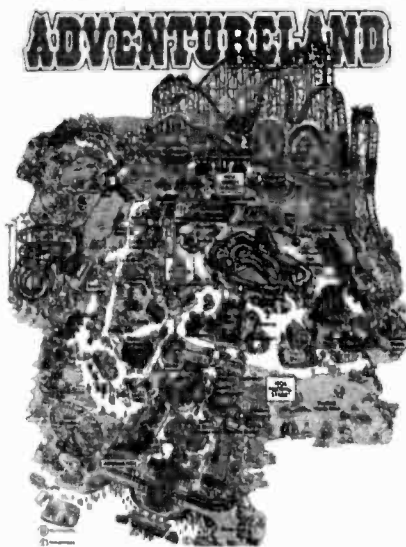
- Second, to build upon the association between the heritage KIOA call-letters and the "Good Time Rock & Roll" music it helped pioneer.
- And finally, to create a larger-than-life event to accomplish all this.
- (With no budget! A fourth challenge.)

The Solution: A "Good Guy" Reunion

The concept was to bring back the most popular former Good Guys for a huge, day-long interactive experience with listeners, both on-the-air and at a fun venue, complete with major, nationally-known Oldies acts and tons of "good time" activities for the whole family.

For several years, the station had been bringing back former "Good Guys", putting them on-the-air, concluding the day with a record hop at one of the area's remaining ballrooms. Not bad, but it seemed the opportunity existed for a bigger, better, more spectacular event worthy of the new 100,000 watt FM signal. This time the lineup featured: **Hal Moore & Charley Martin, Don Hinson, Bruce Allen, Doug MacKinnon, Bill Allen, Steve Heefner, and Jim Michaels**, plus KIOA news veterans.

Step 1: Location, Location, Location



This event needed to be BIG. No "rustic" 1,500-seat ballroom would do. Instead, the area's leading theme park, Adventureland, was targeted. After assessing mutual needs and goals, a date was selected. By scheduling the event early in the season, the park agreed to offer a deep-discount

advance ticket for listeners to enjoy all the park's rides and attractions — plus the KIOA event. In exchange, the station would provide a superior entertainment lineup for all park visitors (not to mention all the publicity and hoopla that went with it). (Continued — See **KIOA Reunion** on page 5)

Kipper's Tips For Promoting A Station Concert

- ✓ **Contractual details.** All acts have a contract "rider" (covering travel, equipment, hospitality needs, etc.). You should have a rider, too, outlining expectations for phones, interviews, day-of access, etc. These are a lot less of a hassle if negotiated, in writing, in advance.
- ✓ **Non-compete.** If you are booking the show, insist on a "90/60 day" clause. No competing appearance within your metro for 90 days before and 60 days after your event. (You can waive the "after" clause if you sell out).
- ✓ **Plan ahead.** Think through all revenue streams! Start selling well in advance (NTR programs frequently require 9-12 months lead time).
- ✓ **Elite Seats.** Set aside VIP privileges for clients and select listeners. A first-class hospitality area, preferred seating, possible meet & greet, etc. can make for an impressive experience. Take lots of photos and remember to send them out!
- ✓ **Work the door (gates).** Have station staff (in station clothing) welcoming and greeting all attendees. A class move your listeners will remember long after your competition forgets.
- ✓ **Work the stage!** If you have a "station voice" and/or recognizable thematic, pre-record the intro for your announcer. This sounds huge and ties-in to your normal on-air sound.
- ✓ **Gear up your PR effort.** Done right, this can generate substantial media attention. Make it easy for media to cover your event.
- ✓ **Post promote.** Take full credit on-air with "thank you" promos. Keep a clip-pings file for future sales/PR efforts. And use audio from the event (listener reaction, "candid" artist comments, etc.) as you roll out the *next* event.

TW Tip #3213 and #7227

The KIOA Good Guy Reunion

(Continued — from page 4)

Adventureland would enjoy any additional revenues from concessions and parking, while the station retained all sponsorship rights. Picking the right location assured that a first class event was well on its way.

Step 2: Logistics, Logistics, Logistics

Bringin' 'Em Back. The on-air part was a natural. PD **Bill Shannon**, along with 30+ year station veteran (and head "Good Guy") **Dic Youngs** contacted former air-staffers and established the day's lineup. Since KIOA had a year-round storefront-studio at Adventureland, broadcasting on-site was easy. Special production elements, including actual audio archives and vintage "Good Guy" era jingles made the on-air experience complete and memorable. Air staff (new and old) welcomed the crowds and introduced all acts.

Next step: maximize the venue. Three stage areas were established to allow for virtual non-stop entertainment. The Main Stage was where the major acts would play. The Festival Stage would feature the top local/regional Oldies bands, and the Comedy Cabaret lineup was furnished by a local comedy club. (One of the returning Good Guys was also a standup comedian, so he was featured as a headliner) Sponsors of each of these areas received on-air mentions, signage, and prime ad space in a glossy 4-color Souvenir Program (but received no commercial time from the station's ad inventory).

Booking the talent. Obviously, volumes could be devoted to this topic alone. Suffice it to say, if you "do it yourself", work with a good agent *you know* and trust. Understand *in advance* where *every* penny is going and get references on your performers. The acts used in the KIOA reunion (the Buckingham, Mickey Dolenz, Rare Earth, Blues Image, and Sugarloaf) were great on-stage and off. But certain "nightmare performers" can shatter any dreams for a good event. (See **Kipper's Tips** for more timely reminders.)

Step 3: Getting It Paid For

Although this was a few years before the *non-traditional revenue* craze, it was a textbook example of drawing up an "outside the box" game-plan. Going beyond just liquidating costs to making a solid profit on the event (without "trading dollars" from any existing accounts on-the-air).

Three revenue streams were developed: ticket distribution, stage sponsorships, and special on-air sponsorship programs.

(Continued — see **KIOA Reunion** on page 6)

Concepts

CapCon

Call-Letter/ID Placement: First and/or Last?

(Continued — from page 1)

Many programmers, particularly consultants (who have the luxury of imparting their expert advice without having to stick around town long enough to hear what it sounds like on-the-air, repeated day-after-day), adhere to a blanket policy of having air personalities say the call-letters (or station identifier) **first and last** out-of-the-mouth in all frontsell/backsell situations. All the time, no exceptions.

On the surface, this may seem to be prudent advice, to help a station's name cut-through and *be remembered* in an over-messaged world full of marketing volleys coming from all directions.

But, as with any "absolute" guidelines, there are additional considerations which the wise programmer will factor-in (and pass along to his/her on-air staff) when putting such policy into practice.

Simply put, there are times when implementing a "first and last" procedure can sound downright

awkward. When this happens, the *station* sounds awkward — enough so that, even if the well-intended goal of "memorability" is achieved, it may not end up being the kind of "positive" recall in the listener's mind that you really desire. (You *never* want your listeners glancing at their radio after they've heard something that sounds strange and wondering, "Why the hell did they do that (or say that)?")

Backsells Into A Stopset

ID First. When stopping down for commercials, it's important to (Continued — see CapCon on page 8)

The Most Effective Promotions Of All Time

KIOA Good Guy Reunion

(Continued — from page 5)

Ticket Distribution. Advance distribution of discount tickets was sold to a convenience store chain (which had never advertised on the station before). This was a "double-win" for the station since

- these were "non-spot" dollars, involving no commercial inventory
- the sponsor's multiple locations and high-volume traffic patterns made it convenient for listeners to easily get tickets

Since KIOA had arranged with Adventureland to "mark up" the discount price by \$1 to help defray costs, the revenue stream from "Tickets" flowed well (especially when the station's allotment of 6,000 tickets sold out in 37 minutes!)

Main Stage. This was sold as the "Coke Classic" stage, using non-advertising "community funds" at the agency's discretion. (Remember, the Oldies format is well outside of a soft drink sponsor's stated 18-34 demo!) The Festival Stage was sponsored by an airline, who also provided travel for the returning Good Guys (as well as the bands), thus eliminating what would have been another major expense. The Comedy Stage was sold to a family fun center.

On-Air Ad Sponsorship and Participation. The

station created a special "Good Guy Rate Reunion" package. Ad rates were "rolled back to the 60's" (for select, early-week 24-hour/ROS flights prior to the event), plus premium-priced placements were available during the actual on-air reunion broadcast.

Souvenir Program. Smaller advertisers had the opportunity to buy "stand alone" ads in the Souvenir Program, which helped cover the cost of printing.

Epilogue

The KIOA Good Guy Reunion was a tremendous success, which helped set Oldies 93.3 on a course for continued growth and stature among advertisers and listeners alike.

The station's "glory days" continue today — now part of the Saga Communications 6-station Des Moines cluster, the station continues to be one of America's highest-rating Oldies stations.

Wallace Wisdom: This is a perfect example of how *consistency of purpose* and *clarity of focus* will produce a winning promotion (in this case, with a long afterglow in listener's hearts and minds).

Special thanks to Kipper McGee for sharing this rich experience. Contact **Kipper McGee** by e-mail at kippermcgee@compuserve.com or by phone at (619) 718-7151.

TW Tip #3212, #17050, and #7228

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Hub & Spoke:

The Next Phase Of Consolidation

As the radio industry rapidly consolidates, the first phase appears to be pretty well over. Most markets are now controlled by a handful of players.

The next move: for those consolidators to begin to build regional clusters around their larger markets. These spokes involve the addition of smaller stations in immediately adjacent marketing areas.

The old limits on numbers of stations owned kept this logical development from occurring. Now radio operators are extending their reach in the same way newspapers have done for years with regional editions.

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in issue #44 of **'PD'**

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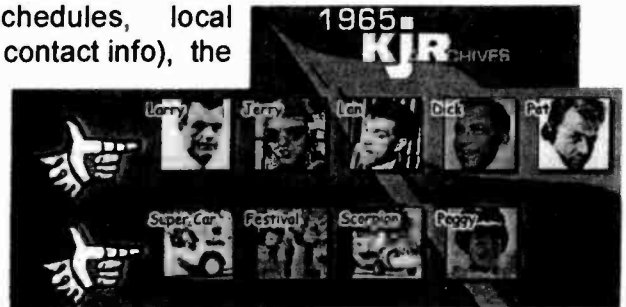


W W W E B

W W W I S E ™

A Seattle site worth seeing belongs to Ackerley's KJR-FM (www.kjrfm.com).

In addition to the obligatory features on an action site (jock profiles, contest rundowns, event/concert schedules, local links, advertisers, and station contact info), the station takes full advantage of its legendary call-letters with a flashback feature called **The KJRchives**, spotlighting some of its hall of fame



personalities from the 60's (like **Larry Lujack**, **Pat O'Day**, and **Lan Roberts**).

The station offers free e-mail privileges to listeners.

Streaming audio includes a live stereo feed, the morning show rewind of **Gary Bryan & The Nut Hut**, and selected comedy cuts.

Like many Oldies stations, KJR lists a complete rundown of area high school class reunions. But they win the gold star for the cleverest web-tease for this feature —

"Did you graduate from a class ending in a 4 or a 9? If yes, click here."

TW Tip #3214, #16078, and #15067

ARBITRON EXIT POLL

Perceptual Attribution Meets The Diarykeeper

Many of us have been doing attribution research benchmarking for years via callout research. Trending these images (or what I like to call *Winning Positions™*) can

- ✓ help us better position our stations, based on areas of perceived strength
- ✓ help us better understand perceived weaknesses or warning signs of potential problems, in relation to our vertical competitors, and
- ✓ enable us to pinpoint our *progress* (or lack thereof) in improving or maintaining strengths in product-attributes we feel are important to our station image and overall health.

Best Music, News Reliance, Best Morning Show, Most Music, Repetition Perception, and TV Campaign Awareness are just a few of the *Winning Positions™* most stations regularly measure. (See **"PB"** issue #2, page 7 for a list of key factors you should consider regularly benchmarking, if you aren't already.)

So when Arbitron announced the deployment of their new Exit Poll studies earlier this year, some programmers didn't fully grasp the significance of this service, thinking it was merely a duplication of something they were already doing.

Exit Poll is an important breakthrough — because it adds a *perceptual* link to *actual* Arbitron diarykeepers. (Not *all* of them, but a statistically-valid number of them). As we've discussed, the key to cutting-through is not as much about understanding target *listeners* as it is understanding what

makes *diarykeepers* tick (programming to your audience through the methodology you're being measured by).

How it works: Arbitron *re-interviews* at least 300 diarykeepers (during the Spring and Fall sweeps), asking them basic image questions which can provide insights into *why* the numbers change. (The service is available in 15 U.S. markets right now with more to come in the Fall '99 sweep). The interviews occur 4-5 weeks after a diary is returned, with results available approximately 7 weeks after the book.

Each Exit Poll is format-specific to a customized pattern of Preferential and Cumulative listening for your station and your highest cume-duplicating stations and/or direct format competitors (pinpointing image-association for both total cume and P1 listeners).

Final reports are delivered via software that allows you to view and print the full report. Clients also receive an open data file which can be used to do customized crosstabs and further analysis using off-the-shelf software.

Cost is structured toward group-operators. An Exit Poll subscriber in one format (AC, for example) will pay \$15,300 per year, but a group checking on three of its formats in a cluster will pay \$13,500 per Exit Poll.

It is not market- or format-exclusive, so one downside is that your direct competitor could be getting the same perceptual information, just as they get the same ratings information. (The other side to that is: can you afford to *not* see what they're seeing about diarykeeper *perceptions*? I think not.)

TW Tip #1104, #19070, and #20033

Next

An Exit Poll Case Study Identifies An Actionable Perceptive Trend

News & Surveillance

StyleGuide

Does every news anchor and field reporter at your station fully understand your philosophies about how contemporary radio news should sound?

If not, one of the best ways to bring everyone fully up-to-speed *fast* is to compile a **News Policy StyleGuide** which outlines the basics, the advanced techniques, and all the picayunish details that contribute to your station's unique stationality and news image.

Heritage All-News stations like KFVB, WINS, and WCBS-AM have utilized StyleGuides for years to make sure every member of their news-staff understands their station (and corporate) culture. (Could this be one of the reasons why these stations ooze such consistency on-the-air all the time?)

When putting your StyleGuide together, don't assume that *everyone* knows every one of the basics. (You'd be amazed how many super-pro's *don't*!) Use this exercise as an opportunity to remind every journalist of basics they may have forgotten — or perhaps never learned!

Leave nothing to chance. Give reporters a checklist of questions to ask about each story (like — Is it worth covering? Does it affect our target? Is it interesting? Entertaining? Riveting? Is the lead strong? Can we use nat sound? How can I "tell a story"? How can we *advance* this story?)

Wallace Wisdom: Compiling and writing a StyleGuide isn't enough (don't expect everyone to read your masterpiece all the way through!). Review the entire contents at a major staff meeting (be sure to invite questions to make sure everyone "gets it").

TW Tip #7229, #9183, and #10063

Concepts

CapCon

(Continued — from page 6)

mention the call-letters or station-name as prominently as possible. The very height of listener anticipation occurs at the very end (or at the appropriate fade-point) of a song. So *what better place* to put the call-letters to make *certain* they're remembered? This insures that an ID isn't "forgotten about", as too often happens once a personality starts

talking and gets caught up in what they're saying. From the air talent's perspective, the advantage of saying calls first is that it gets this required element "out of the way", automatically, right up-front, so he/she can concentrate full attention on the *content being conveyed* (without having to wonder, "Did I remember to weave the call-letters into my spiel?") (This doesn't relieve the personalities of their ongoing responsibility to say the calls *proudly*, like they really *mean it*, that should be a given.)

ID First and Last In Backsells. There are several schools of thought here.

- First, there are the whip-crackers who rigidly insist on a full-repeat

of the complete ID. Downside: many listeners think it sounds very *unnatural* to hear a jock regurgitating the verbatim repeat of an intricate identification-factor ("Hits 108.9, the all new K H I T"), when it's just been said, syllable-for-syllable, only a few seconds earlier. Such scripted robo-jock patter does *nothing* to build a warm bond between a listener and a personality. Sounds "canned".

- The "moderationists" among us (and I admit I am one, so consider this point in that context) think it's a better idea to mention a "formal" identifier first-out-of-the-mouth — but — relate a more *casual* station-reference at the very end, thus "easing it" (or sneaking it) into a listener's mind (in a way that may make it, arguably, even more memorable). An example of this *relaxed reinforcement* is using a second-identifier "nickname" or "extension": "The All New X-109.9" may be first out of the mouth, but instead of parroting a verbatim repeat the jock would say something like "... coming up next, here on the X" or "... which I've got for ya' just ahead, X-clusively".
- And then there's the theory some PDs hold about mentioning call-letters right next to commercials (thinking it may associate the station's name with interruptions-

to-music. My "moderate" view on that is: a "spoken" *casual* reinforcement reference rarely has that kind of subliminal "negative association" effect (unless it's triggered or bolstered by some kind of mnemonic device or specific phraseology that is overly predictable). But there are *some* things to be avoided: logically, you don't want to be promoting "your more music station" as you go into a long commercial island.

Frontsells Out Of Stopset

ID last over the lip. Some programmers think it's more important to say call-letters *last* over the intro-ramp of a song, making the call-letters the last spoken word on a listener's mind as the song rolls, and thereby associating the station's image with music. So jocks are instructed that they can say *anything* first out of the mouth, as long as they *end* with the station ID.

ID first over the lip. The problem I have with this last-over-the-lip philosophy is the result of personal experience as a radio listener. Often when a jock begins his/her intro of a song following a stopset *without* a proper ID, it can sound like the beginning of just another *commercial* in the pod (thereby *prolonging* the length of the stopset, something you don't want to do in today's environment of perceived (Continued — see CapCon on page 9)

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Jeff Young's Radio 411 (www.radio411.com) is the cyber- home of Ocean Toons and the Bobby Ocean Cartoon Gallery.



Concepts

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over-commercialization). (Remember, most listeners are *not* familiar with the musical intros to most songs, even most hits; so, without an ID, it just sounds like the beginning of another voice-over-music commercial to them).

The positive way of dealing with this is very simple: let the music establish for a second (after the last spot)

and give a full "formal" identifier ("86.9, The All New Magic-FM") first-out-of-the-mouth before proceeding with the rest of the intro patter.

Why it works: The very instant you ID the station coming out of a stopset, it sends a clear message to the filter system of a listener's mind that alerts them to the fact that "commercials are over, you can enjoy the music now."

So in my book, *the higher principle* is shortening the stopset by 10 to 20 seconds. Since this happens several times an hour, I think that's much more important than the "ideal" of leaving your ID as the last impression

over music.

ID first and last. Of course, the best of both worlds is to strive for an identifier both first *and* last out of the mouth in the frontsell. This is reasonably achievable when talking over a song with a 15-20 second intro-time, but it can sound very cumbersome when you're forced to compress too much verbiage into a 7-second intro. It can end up sounding like you're trying to squeeze 10 pounds of potatoes into a 5 pound bag.

Another problem: When personalities are required to end all frontsells with a multi-syllabic identifier, it usually requires that they *talk longer* (saying more words) to make the ID "fit in" with their content. This can be at *cross-purposes* with a desired goal of achieving brevity in your station's front- and backsells.

One solution: Consider taking the "moderationist" approach noted earlier, using a "formal" ID first-out-of-the-mouth but using a *relaxed reinforcement* toward the end of the sell.

Wallace Wisdom: Remember the power of *nonchalance*. If a format sounds rigid in deployment, listeners may be "on guard" about everything your jocks are saying. But when a personality makes a format sound "effortless" in execution, it better "connects" with your target listener. Your job as PD is to help your staff achieve this kind of "cool" smoothness and flow.

Apply common sense to structured frontsells. There is no rule to what is *right*. Give your air-staff the leeway to "break" any basic format rules, whenever it is logical to do so. A jock should know (or learn) that a 4-second song-intro is no place to be double-IDing (but we've all heard it done, haven't we?). (Why? "Because I was following the rules!", said the well-meaning idiot.)

Breathing room. Above all, help your personalities learn that they need to leave a good amount of "breathing" space between their last syllable and the beginning of a song's vocal. Butting spoken-words too tightly up to the vocal leaves the impression in many listener's minds that you've stepped on the vocal (or as they put it, "Stop ruining my favorite songs!").

Don't Talk Back. One more forgotten frontsell basic to remind jocks about: resist the temptation to "talk back" to the lyrics of an intro to a song. Listeners don't think it's cute (but, for some reason, a lot of DJs, part-timers especially, apparently do). That is one of the rules that should *never* be broken. (But again, *never* say never!)

TW Tip #9184 and #7230

**Next
Week**

**ID Placement In
SWEEPS**

Programmer's Digest

Sweepers/Splitters/Bumpers/Liners/Ins&Outs

(Male): If you want to know what's happening in today's music, you'll find it (Female): On 104 K-R-B-E

(Jock frontsell): Here's a Jammin' Oldie from back when a box of Cracker Jacks had a real prize inside, instead of just a piece of paper, (frontsell of title/artist) on the new Mega 100.

One more pitch and you're back in the jams. KS107.5

(male) The best new music first! (female) New music!
(male) 101.3 KDWB! ((played into exposure category song))

The Mix that works at work, Mix 100.3.

97.9 The Box, blazing R&B and Hip-Hop. Stopless music is on 97.9, The Box.

From Bob Marley and U2 to Smashing Pumpkins and The Cardigans. Now *that's* band-width — Y107.

Radio for people who love Country music. Today's best Country, K-102!

Now, KHMx, Houston's Mix 96.5, your new at work choice, kicks off a long, continuous, 96 minute music Mix, full of variety. Mix *means* variety. Houston's Mix 96.5. Right now.

Repeat after me. I'm going to be an instant millionaire on Kamel Country 108.

Elements of Stationality

The only correct spelling in the Twin Cities for Country is KEEY. Today's best Country, K-102.

Now, back to what we do best — more music on Buckeye Country! (jingle): WCOL-FM, Columbus!

103.7 KVIL means Lite Rock music (2 song snippets) Continuous Lite Rock favorites, so you can listen all day. Lite Rock 103.7, KVIL.

99.9 KEZ, home of the Hard Cash for Soft Rock contest. Whenever a radio station runs a contest, there have to be rules. So sit back and enjoy these. (into laundry list).

Let it be on Earth, as it is in Texas. Welcome to Texas Country, the new 99.5 The Wolf (howl sfx)

The station standing behind the working stiff, Colorado's Classic Rock, 103.5 The Fox.

K104! Arbitron ranked #1, first among *all* radio stations! (Listener clips): Thank you Dallas-Fort Worth, we love you! K104, number one.

106.7 KBPI, Denver with a translator link of K276BJ, Boulder at a frequency of 103.1 megahertz. KBPI. (synthetic): KBPI Rocks the Rockies.

(male) The one, the only (female): The Texas original!

(male): 96.3 KSCS, the Country leader!

TW Tip # 9185

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