

Word Of Mouth

Continuing Education For The Dedicated Radio Programmer

Best Advertising Money Can't Buy

One of the most powerful influences on American consumers, especially radio listeners, is what most marketers refer to as "word of mouth". Friends telling friends. About things they like. And especially things they don't like. (A recent study revealed that *satisfied* customers tell 6 friends about their experience, while *disgruntled* customers tell 22!

But it goes much deeper than that.

Recently one of the the world's premier marketing research organizations, Yankelovich Partners, released a report about what they call "the power of pals". Their *Yankelovich Monitor*, which is the longest-standing study of consumer social values, set out to gauge the actual strength of that influence. Their premise is that understanding today's consumer's values and attitudes enables the prediction of *future* marketplace behavior.

Here's the gist of what they found —

- 65% of consumers say they seek advice from friends when they're contemplating the purchase of a product they know little about
- 57% believe advice from a friend or relative is an inducement to try a new product or brand
- 46% say they get information about

(Continued . . . See "Word Of Mouth" on Page 2)

The
O.K.O.P.
Factor

A Hiring "Secret" You Should Know

Is there a trick to achieving consistency in great hires? May be.

To find it, we all might be well served to look beyond our own industry.

To, of all the places, the NBA.

(Yes, the National Basketball Association).

(Continued . . . See "O.K.O.P" on Page 3)

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

Word Of Mouth

(continued from page 1)

- new styles by taking note of what their friends are wearing
- 40% report that advice from friends has a strong influence on their own purchase decisions
- 31% turn to friends/relatives for info on money or investing

Bottom-line: When Americans want advice about shopping, they often turn to their friends and relatives for input.

And the same applies to when they "shop" for radio stations to listen to.

TW Tip # 1021 and #3043

For more information about the Yankelovich Monitor, you may call Amy Schafrann at (203) 845-8253

"Curiosity Cume"

In many markets (especially one where a "new" radio station or format has been launched (or re-launched), "word of mouth" can account for a significant amount of the "trial-listens" of the new product. This is one of the reasons why many successful "new" stations reach 95% of their eventual cume in the first 6 months of their product life-cycle. In fact, it's not uncommon to see an early curiosity-cume "surge" that exceeds the lasting cume-base (as "nomad" listeners get caught up in the hoopla of the groundswell).

How To Start The Ball Rolling

Is word-of-mouth really "advertising money can't buy"?

Yes and no.

Yes . . . in the sense that "you can't sell a flop". In fact, advertising your blind aspirations can actually hurt you. Example: one station that had gone "out of fashion" decided that the way to get back in listeners' good graces was to plant the seed with an outdoor campaign:

"Magic 88.8 - It's "In" Again!"

(The actual name of the station has been changed, to protect the stupid.)

Of course, most listeners needed only 3 seconds to chew that one up and spit it out.

Wallace Wisdom: If you have to *advertise* that you're "hip", you aren't. If you ain't "got it", advertising that you "do" won't make many people think you do - in fact, they'll probably think just the opposite. To stretch an analogy a bit - it's like Radio programmers - there are "those who know", "those who don't know", and "those who don't know they don't know". You never want to be seen by listeners as "not knowing that you're terminally unhip".

TW Tip # 1022 and #3044

And No . . . in the sense that monetary incentives-to-listen can bring listeners out of the woodwork. Especially when your contesting is cleverly concealed as a reward, as opposed to blatant attempts to merely "buy" listenership.

This is where *loyalty marketing programs* (frequent listener cards, fax clubs, data-base follow-up programs, etc.) can have a big payoff. With a loyalty-marketing program in place, it's a natural extension to reward listeners - *and their friends*.

Example: "Operation: Tell A Friend" or "Operation: Pass It On" could incent your P1's with the following gentle call to action:

"Send us a card with your name and phone-number - along with the names and numbers of 3 of your friends you've told about Magic 88.8. When you hear us call any of your names on-the-air, call us within 8 minutes and 88 seconds and everyone on your card wins \$88".

Word of caution: Be careful not to make listeners "jump through too many hoops". That's one of the reasons "Op: Tell A Friend" works very effectively (it spreads the "burden" of listening over 4 people; no one person on the "team" has to shoulder the responsibility, but the likelihood is that you'll have all 4 listening longer).

TW Tip # 1023, #3045, and #4021

"Nothing we have ever done in the past will ever be good enough again!"

— *The Late Ken Palmer*

Sign posted in the KIMN/Denver Control Room, circa 1967, by the then Owner (and Visionary)

"Would YOU listen to you?"

Sign posted in the KLIF/Dallas Control Room by **Gordon McLendon**

Quote Worth Requoting

Well, would you?

TW Tip # 6011

Forgotten Basics: Music Radio

Have you ever noticed how some Oldies stations (especially in medium/small markets) don't seem to have quite the same familiarity and hipness of their counterparts in major markets (even though the "biggs" all seem to be playing the same 500 songs sideways)? Ever wonder why?

Usually it's because a station loses its "Teen-touch" - by including too many songs that, indeed, may have achieved so-called "hit" status in the 60's or 70's - but - they were

"adult-oriented" hits (Dean Martin, Charlie Rich). Or maybe they have only achieved "secondary" hit-status (barely a Top 15 chart position, instead of Top 5). Both factors can make a big difference

Oldies Rule Of Thumb

When selecting *which* oldies get played - and which get "rested" (perhaps forever) - I like to apply three criterion . . .

Top 5 Hit. The song must have been a Top

Part Two Quantifying Oldies "Hit" Status

5 hit (chart position) when it was popular. To accept "less" means playing a mid-chart "stiff" that probably won't have the true broad appeal that a bona-fide *smash "hit"* will.

Teen Hit. The song must have been a *hit with teenagers* when it was popular. "For What It's Worth" by Buffalo Springfield has a whole different appeal than "Please Release Me" by Englebert Humperdink even though they were chart "hits" in the same year. (cont. on page 3)

The O.K.O.P. Factor

(Continued . . . from Page 1)

The Phoenix Suns have long been recognized as one of the best-run organizations in all of professional sports.

Why is that? It starts with their mission statement, which stresses *excellence* and providing value for the fan's entertainment dollar. But the real secret is in how the Suns hire and treat their personnel.

Suns CEO Jerry Colangelo places a high premium on the importance of hiring *character*. That may be one of the reasons why the Suns organization seems to have fewer of the problems many other NBA teams face.

And "the character thang" is viewed in both directions. Management goes out of their way to demonstrate respect and fairness for employees, above and beyond the "letter" of the law. Suns players (and all employees, for that matter) *know* they will get a fair shake.

Good example: a few years ago, Forward Danny Manning was signed as a free-agent from the LA Lakers. Because Manning so wanted to be a part of a team he felt could "go all the way" (win the championship), he agreed to a one-year contract to help the Suns deal with salary-cap constraints.

What happens in training camp?

Manning blows out his knee (a potential career-ending injury). Now, the Suns could have *legally walked away* from Manning, and Manning's problems would have easily gotten lost in the shuffle of the constant bombardment of new thrills and spills in sports. But they didn't.

Colangelo announced they would sign Manning to a multi-year contract. Colangelo's comment: "He had my word that he'd be here for more than one year. And after all, he helped *us* by agreeing to just a one-year contract last year".

That's the kind of action that makes any employee's heart swell with pride and know they're in the right place! "The rest of the story" has a great ending . . . Manning recently won the NBA's 6th *Man Of The Year* honor, voted on by his peers league-wide.

O.K.O.P.: Hiring Character

One of the keys the Suns (and all of their "sister" teams – the Arizona Diamondbacks, Phoenix Mercury, and Arizona Rattlers) use in finding "the right fit" during their scouting or recruiting process is a factor they call "O.K.O.P." Is the prospective employee "Our Kind Of People"? Meaning: does he/she have the right kind of *character* to represent this organization, both on- and off-the-court? And please know, this has no gender, sexual, or ethnic overtones – we're talking about what the late Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. referred to as "the content of a person's character".

Certainly, O.K.O.P. is not the only factor considered (may not even be the deciding factor). But it's always a *part* of the consideration process. And it's one of the many reasons why the vibe is so genuinely *positive* around America West Arena, nearly all the time. It's also why you won't find Dennis Rodman being signed by the Suns anytime soon (even if they, like any team, could use some prominent defensive help).

How Does This Apply To Radio?

- Take the extra time to get to know prospective employees (be they Air Talent or support staff).
- See who's willing to follow "extra instructions" to "earn" a job interview with you.
- Then ask the right kind of probing questions to help you zero-in on Y.K.O.P. (*your* kind of people).
- The right kind of little "tests" can speak volumes about a candidate's attitude (and true colors)
- Classic illustration: it's said that a certain Fortune 500 company tests prospective VP's when they fly them in for an interview by offering to fix male prospects up with a hooker overnight. (Their reasoning: if he'll cheat on his wife, he'll cheat on anything – and thus is *not* their "their kind of people").
- You generally *know* when you've met someone who is truly *compatible* with your team and will represent your station in the right way "off the field".

TW Tip # 7017, #8004, and #6009

(Continued . . . from page 2)

25-54 Appeal. The song must have proven *25-54 appeal* today (in music tests). If a song doesn't register on *all 3 measures*, you're usually better off not playing it (except in specialty-exposure situations).

TW Tip #2008

Balance and Texture

Balance: Try to balance "eras". Avoid playing two songs back-to-back from the same era (like '65-67). Quite often when I monitor Oldies stations, I'll hear three songs in a row from 1965 (not as part of a year-feature). Your music-scheduling software's instructional matrix

Quantifying Oldies "Hit" Status

should be filtered to guard against this. If not you should catch it in the manual massage. While it may not necessarily represent an immediate tune-out threat, by spreading those same three songs out over a longer period, you'll potentially "satisfy" 2-3 times as many "cume-pockets" of listeners.

TW Tip #2009

Texture: Avoid two similar-sounding songs back-to-back (especially in sweeps). Two do-wops, two British Invasion, two Motowns, etc. Avoid like the plague playing two "unhip" songs in a row (The Cowsills next to "Sugar Sugar" is the kiss of death to many male listeners, even though they may "tolerate" one or the other if *surrounded* by "hipper" fare).

TW Tip # 2010 and #1029

Successful Morning Show Features

A "PD" Continuing Series Part Two

Bedrock Breakfast Benchmarks (Part 2)

More of the "feature" habits and traits of highly successful morning/breakfast shows world-wide.

"Win A Wish". Listeners call, write, or fax in a "wish" they'd like granted. Works particularly well when an emotional wish can be granted (like sending a woman to Ireland to visit the mother she hasn't seen in 30 years). Other times, it can be a prize that can be easily traded-out. (Like a trip to Walt Disney World). Doesn't have to be a "material" wish, though (like a car or trip around the world). *Variety* is the real key. In fact, one of the most memorable "Win-A-Wish" prizes occurred a few years ago at 2ZB/Wellington (New Zealand). One of the young listeners to the **Lindsay Yeo** Breakfast Show wanted all his teachers to jump in a lake. The ZB staff dutifully organized a "mass jump" with all the school's teachers participating (and laughing as they did it). Made for great headlines in the daily newspapers. And a great visual for the nightly TV news.

Perennial derivative: "The Christmas Wish" (first made famous at KHJ/LA in 1965).

TW Tip # 5016 and #3046

Listener-Interactive "Question Of The Day". Ongoing phone discussion bit to get listeners interacting with your morning/breakfast host. Some classics include: "funniest bumper sticker you've seen", "best Hamburger in town", "most embarrassing moment you've ever experienced", "most unusual place you've ever done it", "grossest thing you've ever seen at a restaurant", "cutest (or coolest) Vanity (License) plate you've seen", "stupid ways you hurt yourself as a kid", "favorite kid stories", "favorite animal or pet stories". Etc. etc. etc.

TW Tip # 5017 and #3047

Trivia-Based Contests. (Quickie-contests like "Fast Money", "Double Your Money", "The Head-Banger", "The

Impossible Question", Triple True Or False", "The \$64 Question", "Scattergories", "Brain-Teasers", "Mind Aerobics", "NewsMaker Quiz", "Tacky Trivia", "Battle Of The Sexes", "Trivia Face-Off", etc. etc. etc.

Listeners love trivia (especially pop-culture trivia). And it's even more relevant when you can tie-it-in with one of "today's birthdays" or a "name in the news".

TW Tip #5018 and #3048

Clever twist: An innovative way **John Blackman** of 3AK/Melbourne (Australia) sets-up and handles a trivia face-off featuring two contestants on the line vying to answer the same question(s):

"Jack on Line 1, you're my "dinger", test it" (Jack says "ding"),
"Jill on Line 2, you're my buzzer, test yourself" (Jill says "buzz").
Adds a "cute" angle of depth to an otherwise simple contest setup.

Sound-Alike Political-Dignitary Phoner. A "phony", "send-up" interview or produced feature with a political leader (President, Prime Minister, Governor, Premier, Lord Mayor, etc.). The more high profile the better. Must be funny. (A good "Clinton" always seems to be!) Mustn't be too long. Should be locked-in at a specific time to become a benchmark listeners will form a listening-habit around.

TW Tip #5019 and #3049

Random Acts Of Coolness. (aka "Good Neighbor Of The Day", "Southlanders To The Fore", "The Breakfast Toast", etc.) A solid-citizen salute where someone who's done something particularly caring or self-less is nominated by another listener (by mail, fax, or phone). Jock then calls the nominee to have them "tell the story". Good "warm fuzzy" that doesn't have to cost much (but the more dollars you attach to it, the bigger the feature becomes).

TW Tip # 5020 and #3050

Coming In "PD" Issue #7: Bedrock Bits (Part 3)

I'm often asked which of my colleagues in the brotherhood (and sisterhood) of consultants I respect the most. Who... are the best at what they do? Right up at the top of the short list is **Lee Abrams** (of Lee Abrams, Inc.). Perhaps best known as the creator of the "Superstars" Album Rock format in the 70's (during his collaboration with **Kent Burkhardt**) and the innovative **Z-Rock** format for ABC's Satellite Music Network in the 80's and 90's. Lee has always been at the forefront of Rock programming. And has done more to perpetuate Radio that has an infectious energy than anyone I know.

You can always tell a station Lee Abrams is directly involved with -- by its swagger. Stationality that Lee calls "over the top"... with the kind of sassiness and chutzpah you'd expect from a John Wayne, Mick Jagger, or Frank Sinatra. It's the kind of maverick approach to programming that fosters the kind of out-of-the-box thinking that leads to outrageous interpretations of even the simplest of marketing efforts. Like an airplane-banner fly-by over a stadium full of people with a sign saying "Hit this plane, and win \$500 from KFOG". It happened because Lee (and then-PD Dave Logan) fought the suits in the boardroom (and their button-down "what if we get sued?" reasoning) to create an "event" that got talked-about by Bay-area Rock listeners (because it left such an indelible impression in their minds). TW Tip # 3053

One of my all-time favorite Abrams quotes came during a Q&A at a Radio convention a few years ago. Lee was asked about what's needed to bring programming back to the way listeners think. His reply: "We need more PD's in T-shirts". Too true. The mentality of the "young banker" (who thinks and acts even more conservatively than he/she dresses) has replaced the "free spirit" (who's not afraid to "obey that impulse" to seize a magic moment of great Radio that will get talked about -- and, therefore, "connect", big time, with the listener).

And talk about energy! At the recent *Radio Only Management Conference*, Lee conducted a session about timeless basics any station can use to win. You could literally "feel" the intensity and animation as he conveyed how to add "life" to simple promotions. (Like how to perceptually "steal" a concert right out from under your competition that has the "official" sponsorship).

An original-thinker like Lee Abrams is the kind of person I want in charge of any major market radio station I'd ever own! TW Tip # 7018

Snap5!
Swagger!
Energy!
Originality!

The Beginner's Guide To The Internet

A lot of stations (especially those who let the "techies" run their website) make the mistake of assuming that every surfer who comes across their website is a fellow geek who's already totally "up to speed" with the high points and nuances of being, ahem, "web-wise". 'Tain't necessarily so.

That's why a growing number of stations are including a review of internet and web basics as one of their helpful website features. One of the best such "primers" is provided by Virgin Radio in London (in association with The Microsoft Network of the UK). (www.virginradio.co.uk/promo_msbeginners.html).

It features such topics as Keeping In Touch, The Basics, Modern Basics, Hardware Basics, Costs, and also explains (in plain English, or the King's English, anyway) how the hyper-links to entertainment, music, travel, educational websites work.

Taking Credit: This is a very promotable feature on-the-air. The occasional plug might say,

"If you don't know much about the internet, but you'd like to, have we got the website for you! It's got all you need to know about the Internet - telling you what you can do with it and how". Just one more way to "get credit" in the listener's mind.

TW Tip # 1024, #3051, #15019, and #16018

Stealable Line:

(for next time you're talking computers with the techies . . .)

"Remember, "icon" contact is no substitute for eye-contact"

— Todd Wallace, May 25, 1998

TW Tip # 15020 and #16019

Related "PI" Articles Involving Websites -

- Robert W. Morgan Bossography on page 9
- KGB Recycle Documentary on page 10

Sponsorable "Pods" Unobtrusive Sales Features PD's Will Love

Is the Sales Department bugging you for "sponsorable" programming features? And you're horrified at the possibility of having imposed on you from above something like, "this 40-minute music marathon is brought to you by the good folks at Joe's Sausage Works, for all your sausage needs". Well, here's a unique approach I came up with when I was OMPD of KKL/Phoenix . . .

"Spot-Lite Pods" (Call 'em whatever you want, they do serve the purpose of eliminating "sponsorship" as an issue).

The Concept

- ✓ **Dealing With "Value-Added Help".** To maintain the *integrity* of our stationality elements and features, we gave the Sales Department one 30-sec promo an hour to use as they wished. Only proviso: the call-letters could *not* be attached to a promotion (unless we all agreed it had a programming benefit and value) and the station's recognizable address, fax, or phone number could not be used for any contests, on the theory "your contest perception is only as strong as your weakest prize". (We set up a special "dummy" mailbox and direct-fax-line to deflect any "connection" to the station) Otherwise, the sky's the limit. The net effect: Instead of "K-Lite invites you to win a free gallon of ice-cream" the promo might say "Shamrock Foods is giving a free gallon of ice-cream to the first 10 people to fax 765-4321 right now". It just went by as a quick commercial with an easy call-to-action payoff. Most importantly, the listener never came away thinking we thought a gallon of ice cream was a great prize.
- ✓ **A "Pod" Is Born.** We offered to *combine* the hourly sales promo with an existing 60-second commercial avail, to form a 90-second "Spot-Lite Pod". An advertisers own "mini-program". Same ground rules as the sales promo (no call-letter tie-in's, etc.).

It's a "WIN-WIN-WIN-WIN-WIN" arrangement . . .

- ✓ The advertiser now had a 90-second "mini-program" that fit *their* specific psychographic target which they could *sponsor*. ("Blockbuster presents "the Valley Video Update").
- ✓ To the listener, it went by as a more entertaining commercial than most (there was actual entertainment value within the "spot").
- ✓ And, since listeners tend to notice "units" more than "length of spot", the Programming Department was happy to burn off "two units" of commercial avails that hour by replacing it with one.
- ✓ The sponsor had the flexibility of putting their commercial message anywhere they wanted within the 90-second pod (and their actual commercial could be any length, up to 60 seconds).
- ✓ And in this way, the Salesperson could sell virtually *any* kind of program subject (whatever most closely matched the client's focus or desires). After all, it was part of the station's commercial-content so it no longer needed to be scrutinized as closely and intensely as a station programming feature would be.

Logistics:

- ✓ **Participative Management***: An effective way to kick-start this kind of program (and promote camaraderie at the same time) is to call the jocks together for a 90-minute brainstorming luncheon. The objective: come up with "ideas" for sponsorable program vignettes. We applied various doses of common sense, niche-magazine titles, newspaper features as thought-starters. In the K-Lite example, the prolific staff hammered out 105 features covering the full range of advertising sponsorship (and, I might add, had lots of fun doing it!)

* Quick plug: In Issue #7 of "PI", we'll explain the finer points of PM in a feature article:

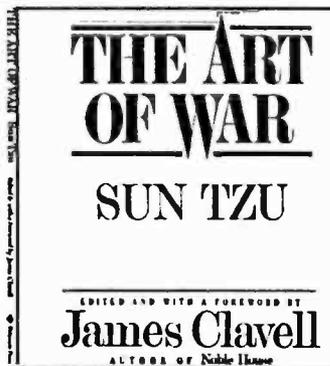
"Participative Management: Synergy That WINS". TW Tip # 7019, #17004, #9037, and #3052

- ✓ The Salesperson then had the option of writing the program feature him/herself or paying a talent fee for one of the jocks to do it.

The "PD" Bookshelf

This is a book that should not only be read by every commander-in-chief and military officer – but also by every person who makes their living in the competitive trenches of marketing warfare. (That's all of us!)

In 1983, best-selling author James Clavell (*King Rat, Tai-Pun, Shogun, Noble House*) edited a 1910 translation of the 2,500-year-old document by the Chinese philosopher Sun Tzu (pronounced "zuh", not "zoo") – making it more accessible and contemporary, while preserving its great charm. (Available from Delecorste Press).



Sun Tzu discusses all aspects of war, from the tactical to the human, in language that is both penetrating and poetic. Editors/translators Clavell and Cleary take Sun Tzu's precepts and show their application to today's world – to the world of business and marketing (as well as the world of daily life). It makes one of the greatest Chinese classical texts immediately relevant.

Sun Tzu starts with the laying of plans. Moves on to waging war. Then to the sheathed sword ("to fight and conquer in all your battles is not supreme excellence; supreme excellence consists in breaking the enemy's resistance without fighting"). He covers the weak points and strong ones of an army (with

"If you know the enemy and know yourself, you need not fear the result of a hundred battles. If you know yourself but not the enemy, for every victory gained you will also suffer a defeat. If you know neither the enemy nor yourself, you will succumb in every battle" — *Sun Tzu*

In 1989, Dr. Thomas Cleary published his interpretation of same (for Shambhala Publications, distributed by Random House). Also available on cassette. Both versions are compelling. It was the original document that brought Sun Tzu to the attention of the King Of Wu, who appointed him General of his army (the armies of Wu were victorious over their hereditary enemies in every battle for nearly two decades).

uncanny analogies to teamwork). Ways to maneuver. Special tactics for special situations. Armies on the march. Dealing with different kinds of terrain. When to fight – and when *not* to. Attacking by fire. The physics, politics, and psychology of conflict. And the use of spies. Remind you of any **Radio battles** you've fought? (Or are fighting?) Thought so.

TW Tip #7020 and #22006

Leadership Cliff's Notes

Achieving Discipline & Order

One of Sun Tzu's anecdotal examples reminds me of a favorite radio" to Radio New Zealand's Top 40 "ZM" network.

True Radio Story

Sun Tzu tells of a plan to train 180 of King Wu's concubines as a protection unit. During the first training session the young girls all giggled as Sun Tzu issued every order — only half-heartedly, haphazardly carrying them out. "Turn left". "About face" (giggle-giggle). You get the picture. When the disarray continued, Sun Tzu instantly ordered the *beheading* of two of the women. *Suddenly*, all of the remaining "trainees" took every order thereafter *seriously*.

"When you've got 'em by the balls, their hearts and minds usually follow"

— *John Mitchell*

Former Head of the Committee to Re-elect The President (Nixon)

Reminds me of the time (in 1980) when we brought the finer points of "advanced format

Despite many patient attempts to get the jocks of 3ZM in Christchurch to properly use sweepers (over the lip of the 2nd song of a transition, *without talking*); for some reason every jock still felt compelled to talk after the pre-recorded sweeper (time-chex a cheerio or two, or some similar tidbit of

mindless babble). Repeated warnings continued. Finally, it became necessary for the GM and PD to issue an ultimatum: **next jock who talks after a sweeper will be fired.** And he was. Sending a clear message to the entire staff, "do it right, or get canned". News of the firing

reverberated throughout the North and South Islands of New Zealand. Suddenly, as if by a miracle, *all* jocks at *all* RNZ stations quickly "learned" how to program sweepers *correctly*.

Post Script: The Air Talent who was fired (who shall remain nameless) went on to become one of the very *best* format jocks in all of Australasia. (And never talked after a sweeper again!)

Wallace Wisdom:

Certainly, the job of the PD is not always easy. But, from personal experience, I've found you don't always have to "break thumbs" to get your air-staff to follow a plan you really believe in.

Key: Clarity in communication. An effective way to *earn*, and *win*, a staff's trust is to explain each policy with a *good reason* "why" it

should be implemented. Most staffs would rather *follow* you into battle than be "ordered" into battle (without any supportive reasoning about why the plan will work).

Keep an ear open for logical rebuttal. Just because you're in charge, doesn't mean you're right

100% of the time. As a PD, I've always tried to foster a spirit of glasnost (openness) where the air-staff (and the general staff,

for that matter) isn't afraid to offer constructive, caring comments. That kind of atmosphere provides a great "check-and-balance" system. It often improves on the original concept and can catch "mistakes" or "mis-steps" *before* they get to air.

Either way, **you win!**

TW Tip #7021, #6010, and #8005

NOTICE
DAILY FLOGGINGS
SHALL CONTINUE
UNTIL STAFF
MORALE IMPROVES!

News & Surveillance Ingredients

News

News-Writing Styles Of The Rich & Famous (Part 1)

Radio News would do well to take notice of the efficient systemization and clockwork consistency that goes on within local television newsrooms. In nearly all of the Top 150 markets, Local TV News is *one big, movin' machine!* Just as the long paragraphs and stuffy style of local print news has been upstaged by *USA Today's* bullet-point approach, so too has TV news-writing been dragged kicking and screaming toward 2000. And so should *Radio's* news-writing style!

Even for a music station, *news done well* has a value (and can help you gain audience). But remember, music-based stations don't win a market's "Best FM News" perception by programming *longer* news. They do it by programming *better* news. My objective in this article is to help you better organize your "story-budget" (or "news playlist") and learn (or re-learn) how to acquire a more "toward 2000" style of news-writing.

Basics

- Newscasts on a music station should not exceed 3-3½ minutes of actual "news-body" length (not including spots, traffic, and weather).
- Refer to the News Grid (page 6 of "PD" Issue #4) for more specific details about "types" of stories to use for balance and pacing. But the general overview is that your "newscast playlist" should consist of: The Big Event (*always first*), big news of local importance (which still might be a national or international story), heart-warmers (or tuggers), stories that affect the pocketbook (including stories that help listeners improve their safety), health (especially medical breakthroughs or "how to relax or deal with stress"), entertainment, and other local, national, international news of local interest.
- Always be on the lookout for the story that will cause "water-cooler" talk (it can be any "type" of story, but more often than not will be of the "human interest" variety).
- Ideal story-length on a music station should be two sentences (preferably a sentence-and-a-half). The shorter the story, the higher your story-count in each newscast. The higher the story-count (in an acceptable period of time), the more "satisfied" your listeners will be that they haven't missed anything. (And thus won't be tempted to tune elsewhere for it).
- Local sports shorts, drive-time traffic reports, and especially weather should be included toward the "end" of each newscast (which is where listeners *expect* to hear it). At certain times of the year, of course, "weather" will qualify as "the big event" (leading the news); but even then you should also wrap-up the newscast with the complete forecast and current conditions at the end.
- Delivery should be natural. Just as the great jocks have mastered the art of "one-to-one" communication with the listener, so too, should news anchors.
- Most music stations will figuratively gain 90% of their news credibility between the hours of 6 and 8:30am. Which makes a strong case for not programming news at any other time. There are exceptions to every rule, of course, but generally listeners are not tuning a music station for news after 8:30am. Some stations add news to their PM Drive plan between 4-6pm. But research shows that most listeners expect to get their afternoon news as "viewers" (that is, from TV), and thus would prefer that the "interruption" not be there when they listen to the Radio in the afternoon.
- The "if it bleeds, it leads" approach, that is so overdone in some big city TV markets, usually does not translate well to Radio news (probably because listeners are usually tuning a Radio newscast in the morning, to be reassured that their world is still in tact).

The Elements Of Style

Here's what the successful TV newsrooms of today are doing to hit their viewers smack between the eyes with a rifle-shot of usable news. Simply put, the goal of the process is to **get 'em, grab 'em, hold 'em, keep 'em, push 'em, and please 'em** with *each story* (as we'll explain in full next week). Do all that, and you've "got 'em". But doing all that requires getting *inside the ear and the mind* – not just "hitting" the ear.

TW Tip #10015 and #9038

Next Week:

The Intricacies Of "Toward 2000" News-Writing Style

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

Robert W. Morgan July 23, 1937-May 22, 1998

One of the *true* all-time Radio legends, **Robert W. Morgan**, has "logged-off" and "left the studio", losing his courageous battle with lung cancer, Friday night (5/22).

Robert W. was considered a "jock's jock" (because of his quick wit, perfect timing, succinct lines, and warm sense of humor). He was a positive influence on literally *thousands* of aspiring young personalities of the 60's, 70's, 80's, and, yes, the 90's, who all yearned to "arise and Morganize" (just like their hero).

But he was also considered the perfect example of "a PD's jock", too, by the great programmers he worked for, like **Bill Drake**, **Ron Jacobs** and **Mike Phillips**. There was no one better at interpreting a format — and making it *come alive!*

To get a sense of the magnitude of Robert W's influence on Radio, I urge you to check out the *Robert W. Morgan "Bossography"* profile, which is being offered (free) on **Rick Irwin's Reel Top 40 Radio Repository** Internet site. (www.reelradio.com/morgan/reelboss.html). **Worth** going out of your way to watch (and to save)! And worth telling others about!

The *Bossography* is a 36-minute RealVideo salute (also available in RealAudio), voiced by Casey Kasem, originally produced by Hard Copy/Real-TV Associate Director Kevin Gershan to be played at the *Retirement Tribute For Robert W. Morgan* (hosted by the **Beverly Hills Museum Of Television and Radio** earlier this year). It features such luminaries as **Dick Clark**, **Chuck Blore**, **Gary Owens**, **Monty Hall**, **Drake**, **Jacobs**, and **Don Imus**, among many others — all paying their respects and tributes to this outstanding air personality.

Donations may be made in his name to The Robert W. Morgan Cancer Awareness Fund, 19528 Ventura Boulevard, Suite 603, Tarzana, CA 91356.

Coming Next Week —

In *The World's Fastest-Growing Programming Newsletter*

The
Authorized
"Boss" Memos
Ron Jacobs' Inspiring Memos From KHJ

And

VR: Making It Sound
"Apparently Live"
and Very Local

And

Music Rotations:
How "HOT" is HOT?
(The Audience Speaks)

Also

Name Equity:
The only REAL
"loyalty" in Radio

On . . . Knowing "When"

"The Television business has a way of seeing something
that's very successful and saying 'let's do too much of it'"

— TV Producer **George Schlatter**

(proving that Radio is not the only industry that has to deal with a "lemming effect")

TW Tip #1028

Programmer's Digest

Food For Thought

About That "Major Announcement"

A Karmic Connection. Funny how karma works. Please indulge me for a moment as I tell you about how "mysterious forces" can make great things happen.

Last Sunday, I'd narrowed my editorial decision about whose programming philosophies to spotlight in the *Snap!* series down to about 5 or 6 possibilities.

As I often do while writing these columns, I'll surf the Internet for a cool RealAudio feed to inspire me (and really get my creative juices pumping). The spark usually comes from listening to great Top 40 stations (like KISS-FM, Z-100, PLJ, Kiss 108, or KHKS). But earlier in the week, Scott Shannon and I were talking about the Robert W. Morgan "Bossography" on ReelRadio (see the article on page 9). So I decided that would be a great site to re-visit while I slaved over a hot keyboard.

Watching the Robert W. salute reminded me of another legend, Ron Jacobs – the original PD of Boss Radio KHJ. I decided there and then that Jacobs would be an excellent subject (especially since I had reams of old "Drake" files and bootlegged Jacobs memos I could instantly access for deep background).

For further illumination, I also clicked-on *The KGB "Recycle" Documentary*, which Jacobs wrote and produced (also available at www.reelradio.com). Two hours later, I thought I'd done a decent job of crystallizing the essence of Boss Radio and RJ into 200 words or less. (See *Snap!* "Circus Radio" on page 7 of "PD" Issue #4).

Not one hour later (on a Sunday, no less), my phone rings. The gruff voice on the other end is . . . Ron Jacobs! He was calling to say he'd received his free copy of our mass-mailing of "PD" and loves it! Just wanted me to know!

Wow! Cue the eerie music, please (ooooh-eeeeee-oooooooh).

"33-And-A-Third Years Ago . . . Today". Mind blown, I proceeded to tell him that ironically I'd just spent the morning listening to KHJ and re-reading some classic RJ memos (especially the one that stressed "preparation, concentration, and moderation") while writing a story about, of all people, *him*. Now Jacobs was mindblown!

As the conversation ensued, I marveled aloud that it's too bad today's PD's don't have access to the great inspirational memo's of yesteryear.

Bing! (The "idea-light" flashes!) Why not . . . re-print the very best of "the Boss memo's" as a regular feature in *Programmer's Digest*? Why not, indeed! Copies of some of them (and copies of copies of copies) have been passed around like secret code for years. Ron's kept all the original memos safely filed away until the right "vehicle" came along that could carefully and lovingly re-expose them to the "right" audience. RJ agrees: "PD" is the right vehicle (where dedicated, caring PD's can access the great programming works, past and present).

The "Authorized" Boss Memos. Long story short, we came to an exclusive arrangement. And starting next week (in "PD" issue #6), we'll begin featuring a once-a-month glimpse

into the behind-the-scenes action that made Boss Radio KHJ such a stunning and stellar success. Now for the first time, *Programmer's Digest* exclusively presents excerpts from the legendary KHJ Boss Memos – the same instructions that were read by the great Boss Jocks like Robert W. Morgan and The Real Don Steele before they opened the mike.

It's KHJ "Behind Closed Doors". You've heard all the rumors (Drake hotlined the jocks from his pool-phone, the Control Room chair had a buzzer which went off anytime the jock talked more than 10 seconds, etc.). Now you'll be able to read the actual "Playbook" (and find out what it was *really* like). You'll learn what made "The Big Kahuna" click. The mechanical underlay that super-sold the "The 7 Car Sweepstakes".

And the vision and motivation that was uniquely "RJ". At the *Boss Radio 25th Anniversary Reunion* in 1990, the original Boss Jocks all presented Ron with a platinum CD, inscribed, "*If Vince Lombardi came back as a Program Director, he would be Ron Jacobs*". Now you'll be able to get a monthly "pep-talk" of basic truths straight from the pen of one of Radio's great motivators. It's like being able to sneak a peek into Lombardi's personal Packers Playbook during the championship years — the closest you'll ever come to being at a Boss Jock Meeting.

Preview: "We must have the same attitude as any winning ball club; brand new day, brand new game. The Dodgers don't get any points this year for last year's wins. And the fact that they're World Champs won't stop any base hits by the opposition unless they play like champs this year." That's timeless! And universally applicable! (And it's only the tip of the iceberg!)

Most Of All . . . One of my goals with "PD" is to have you come away from reading every issue saying, "I've learned something new this week". Let me respectfully submit that sometimes that requires time-warping "something old" to find forgotten gems that can be applied to your "today" filter. I believe you'll find this monthly time-tunnel trip to be very worthwhile. And a lot of fun, too!

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