

Life Is A Contact Sport!

Continuing Education For The Dedicated Radio Programmer

Career Strategies That Work!

From The 'PD' Bookshelf:

Very rarely do you find a body of work that is so all-encompassing that it applies across *many* areas of your life. I recently came across such a book that's a little hard to find (you'll probably need to special order it), but *well* worth the effort. I'm such a believer in the power of its contents, especially for these uncertain times we live in (what with consolidation, downsizing, etc.), that I'm eagerly devoting front-page coverage to it. The book ...

Life Is A Contact Sport

(10 Great Career Strategies That Work)
by Ken Kragen

You probably recognize the name Ken

Kragen from his stellar career as the personal manager of stars like Kenny Rogers, Travis Tritt, Trisha Yearwood, the Smothers Brothers, and Lionel Richie. And as the organizer of the *We Are The World* and *Hands Across America* events which raised money to fight world hunger.

(Continued ... See Life Is Contact On Page 2)



Do you have a Control Room policy that **keeps distractions to an absolute minimum** when a personality is on-air? If not, consider implementing one. You'll see an *immediate* improvement in the consistent quality of each break.

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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.

Life Is A Contact Sport

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Kragen is arguably the most successful behind-the-scenes operator in show business. As a personal manager, TV producer, deal-maker, and world-class fund-raiser, he has literally *transformed* the lives he has touched. And has changed the world he lives in, very much for the better.

So when the opportunity presents itself where you can learn the secrets to his success, the dedicated professional *lunges* for it.

Not widely known is the fact that Kragen has created one of the most popular (and successful) courses ever taught at UCLA's renowned Extension Program – called “*The Stardom Strategy*”. In it, he has shared his ten key principles of success with thousands of students (who have gone on to prove that the strategy works – both in the entertainment business and *everyday* walks of life).

✓ **The Event Strategy**

Kragen encourages students to build their career by concentrating several events into a short period of time to create a bigger *impact*.

✓ **Creating Your Personal “Balance Sheet”**

Enables you to identify, and therefore better utilize, your assets while minimizing your liabilities, so you come away with a clearer outlook on life – and your career

✓ **Backward Thinking**

By thinking backward from your ultimate goal, you can create a step-by-step roadmap that can help propel you forward to achieve almost any profession or personal goal.

✓ **Your Life Is Not Your Career**

As Kragen so aptly puts it, your career is *only* a tool to use for a *better* life!

✓ **Optimism & Enthusiasm** are 2 vital keys to success.

Kragen points out why he *always* mixes business with pleasure and why “no” is not in his vocabulary.

✓ **Life Is a Contact Sport**

You should start developing your network *today*; you never know just who you'll meet and what role that person might later play in your life or career.

✓ **Everything In Life Is An Opportunity**

Even the negatives. Especially the negatives. You learn more from the mistakes in life than you do from the successes.

✓ **Absolute Honesty Is The Best Gimmick**

Sincere honesty is the key to getting business to beat a path to your door.

✓ **Timing Is Everything**

When you do something is as important as *what* you do.

✓ **The Power Of Giving**

When you volunteer your time to help others, you truly *do* get back more than you give – and it keeps on giving.

Kragen has crystallized the essence of his UCLA course into this 15-chapter book, giving vivid examples and numerous entertaining anecdotes from his own star-studded life to illustrate his key concepts.

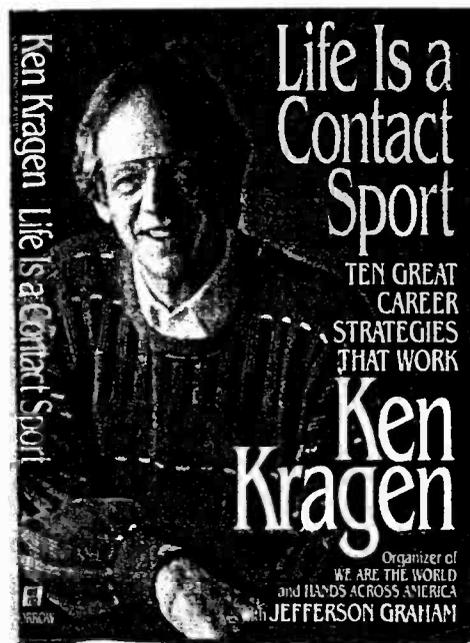
If his writing style has a “signature” quality to it, it would have to be his *enthusiasm*, as evidenced by gems like these:

- If you have a choice between working on a project that's been done a million times before or a trailblazing project that's a bit

(Continued . . . See *Life Is Contact* on Page 3)

If you have a choice between working on a project that's been done a million times before or a trailblazing project that's a bit risky, go for the *breakthrough*.

— Ken Kragen



Concentration!

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A personality who's not focusing 100% on what's coming up next tends to sound like it. They may be able to "fake their way" through many, if not most, stopsets, but when they get "caught" with their carts (or mouse) down, it can really sound downright ugly!

Whether it be requestlines or CR internet-access, diverting attention from the next live break should just plain *not be tolerated*. (I've seen jocks doing production, running down the hall between breaks! Not exactly the way to do an "inspired" show!)

One of the biggest distractions, of course, is **other people** – maybe a sales rep discussing a client's spot or another staff member just shooting

the breeze. Whatever or whoever, it *interferes* with a personality's ability to concentrate. Yes, they should have enough pride in their workmanship to not allow the distractions, but sometimes they need a little help (nobody like to be the heavy).

Policies vary, but the stronger they are the better they work. The late **Ken Palmer** (former owner of KIMN in Denver) made it a *firable offense* if a salesman went in the Kim Control Room! My policy when I was OM/PD of KTAR/KKLT was that intruders would be *shot on sight* (my office overlooked CR, and I kept a rubber-band gun on my desk at all times — always cocked!)

But it all comes down to the fact that **the personality must have the responsibility to enforce the policy** — *all the time, every time*. I used to

encourage jocks to blame it on *me* when kicking someone out of CR (that way, I'm the asshole, instead of them).

If you're an on-air PD, remember, you must lead by example. I know with all the multi-tasking responsibilities, it's too "convenient" to try to conduct other business when you're on-the-air — but you know and I know that your show will suffer when you do. **Gary Stevens** will tell you the story about when I kicked him out of the Control Room when he was my GM. He understood — in fact, he respected me for having the guts to do it (but all it came down to was the fact I was one of those jocks who *had* to concentrate or I'd sound terrible).

Remember the magic words of **Ron Jacobs: Preparation! Concentration! Moderation!** They still ring true today!

TW Tip #7097, #9102, and #6058

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risky, go for the breakthrough.

- Never take "no" from someone who can't say "yes".
- There's nothing stronger in any presentation than allowing your emotions, enthusiasm, and passion to carry the day.
- "I really try to teach people that you've got to invest in your own career. You've got to look at your career as an opportunity, then you've got to insure that it's successful. If it means you've got to put up your own money, then you do it — it takes a certain amount of money to make success".
- "Even in the most negative circumstances, including the death of a close friend, you can turn your anger, your hurt, your frustration into something that reaches out to other people".

Wallace Wisdom: Personal Endorsement: This is one of the finest, most well-reasoned books I've *ever* read. Bar none! So logical, and entertaining at the same time. You can't help but come away absolutely *pumped!* It's a book every member of your staff should read (and they'll thank you for it, since it will help them for the rest of their career — it's really a lifeplan).

I've only had the opportunity to meet the man once (in a "sea of faces", backstage). But after reading this book, I feel like I have really gotten to *know* him. And "knowing" a Ken Krage is a cool feeling — and very inspiring. As *Miami Heat* Head Coach **Pat Riley** puts it, "When it comes to the principles of what it takes to get yourself and other people to a higher level, Ken Krage has the formulas". (Available in hardback for \$23.00 from William Morrow & Company 1-800-843-9389).

TW Tip #22013, #21020, #7096, and #8022

Snap16!

Communication
Excitement
& Buzz!
an On-Air

One of the most influential programmers of the 1970's was the deep thinking, always unpredictable **Buzz Bennett**. He implored his jocks to make something "magic" happen every time they opened the mike. And they usually did!

As a PD, Buzzy made Radio "mental" for his reflective disciples, always making analogies in the vernacular of the day, making it possible for him to sell his staff on *anything* he needed done. The "recurrent category" became the "stash". Promotions included "The Great Rip-Off". He once welcomed Cheech & Chong on stage by presenting them with a "key" to the city.

Mental Meets Math

But beneath the kinetic energy and off-beat on-air presentation of dynamic, yet still very *human*, communication was a real understanding of the inherent mathematics that drives listenership. Buzz employed numerous high-cume concepts like tight lists and hot-rotations. (KCBQ, for example, played 186 oldies – with the top 7 currents turning over every hour-and-45-minutes).

There's No Rule To What's Right

And he knew how to keep his stations top of mind, both presentationally ("KCBQ" was always first out-of-the-mouth) and promotionally (Y100 and 13Q kicked off with \$50,000 Cash Calls). One of the all-time great Buzz Bennett quotes: "there's no rule to what's right". That's why he encouraged his jocks to break the format anytime they wanted (just have a good reason for doing so). Timeless advice for us all to reflect on.

TW Tip #7098, #9103, and #8023

Little Known Facts For Your Next Morning Show (Or Cocktail Party)

- Percentage of Americans who have visited Disneyland or Disney World: 70%
- Average cost of raising a medium-size dog to the age of 11: \$6,400
- % of American men who say they'd marry the same woman: 80%
- % of American women who say they'd marry the same man: 50%
- Smartest dogs: 1) Scottish Border Collie 2) Poodle 3) Golden Retriever
- Dumbest: Afghan Hound

Lifestyle File Parenting Tips From One Of The World's BEST

Model Parent Paul McCartney

In response to an Oprah Winfrey question about how and why his kids turned out so centered and balanced . . .

"Every parent wants his kid to be smart, get good grades, and be popular. Linda and I felt it was more important to raise each of our kids to have a good heart. If they have good hearts, everything else just kind of falls into place."

TW Tip #21021 and #7099

The AUTHORIZED "BOSS" Memos

Another Ron Jacobs Master Motivator Memo

BOSS 30
FROM 93/KHJ



Photo: SAM BRIDLE on KJ/OU 9 P M by M. Brough

Flashback with us to April 26, 1966 . . .

The Top 3 songs on the KHJ "Boss 30" are:

- 1 Monday, Monday by the Mamas & Papas
 - 2 Rainy Day Women #12 & 35 by Bob Dylan
 - 3 When A Man Loves A Woman by Percy Sledge
- Boss Hitbound: Paint It Black by The Rolling Stones

And this memo was **FRESH** from PD "RJ"

THE BIG BOSS BATTLE!

Over 100 groups have fought their way to this night! May 10 at the Hollywood Palladium 10 finalist bands battle it out . . . and Sonny & Cher will be there in person to award the prizes! For your free tickets send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to: **BIG BOSS BATTLE TICKETS, Box 38-905, Hollywood.** And listen for how you can win presents during the big BIRTHDAY BASH on . . .

93/KHJ
BOSS RADIO
IN LOS ANGELES

April 26, 1966

To: BOSS JOCKS
From: Ron Jacobs

1. We now have long promos (P-1) in every :56 sequence. One plugs the Souvenir Annual. After this one, don't say anything. The other is a plug for the Big Boss Battle. After this one, if there's space on the following intro, say it's gonna be a gas or something to sell it like you dig it.
2. JOCK MEETING ON FRIDAY AT 10:30 AM SHARP!
3. Never say "waiting for your requests". As I mentioned a few days ago, we mustn't sound like we're begging, and this does.
4. Boss Battles: Always talk about it being a gas and thank 'em when you're next on the air. TAKE THE TIME TO CHECK THE BATTLE SKED and see if any are coming up in the next few hours, or on your shift. If they are /// PLUG 'EM!
5. One of the reasons the jock has sounded muffled on the fone during Roulette is that some time ago they took out the "press-to-talk" switch. That's coming back . . . don't hold the switch down unless you're talking, and it'll sound much better.
6. The new L-7 (jingle) sounds groovy except after records that end clean. ON RECORDS THAT END CLEAN BACK TIME IT so the very end of the record covers the "N-n-n-n" (opening of "N-n-n-ninety-three-K-H-J").
7. Don't leave the studio unless you must go to the john. This is getting lax. This is your best time to answer the Bossline. It's important you answer as many Bossline calls during the news so 1) you know what's happening with the music and 2) we can cut down complaints that the jox never answer and the Bossline is a fake or waste. Also, I try to call the hotline during the news and want to talk to you.
8. BACKPLUG ROULETTE WINNERS.
9. Use once an hour a new one-liner plugging: a. Boss Battle tix b. Souvenir Annual
10. Need jox for the four last Boss Battles. Please check with Shelley.
11. Hooper show breakouts for April (March in parenthesis):

Williams 3	YAY!
Morgan 1	BOO!
TERRY 3	YUZAH!
Mack 5	ZAP POW
	HOOLAH!
Steele 2	YAY?
Mitchell 4	BOOLAH!
Riddle 0	HISSSSS!

	KHJ	KRLA	KFWB
Morgan	10.7 (13.8)	4.3 (8.2)	2.1 (7.5)
Terry	12.1 (8.3)	7.9 (5.3)	4.8 (8.3)
Mack	13.8 (7.5)	11.4 (3.8)	3.6 (5.3)
Steele	18.2 (23.9)	13.1 (6.9)	2.2 (1.3)
Mitchell	19.4 (17.9)	15.9 (11.4)	4.0 (5.7)
Riddle	16.2 (12.0)	12.0 (7.0)	6.0 (6.0)

12. My door is always open!
Anyone who thinks KRLA is out of it is mistaken!!!

Today, you can e-mail RJ at whodaguy@lava.net

Coming in "PD" Issue #20 ... KHJ Boss-Memo dated May 25, 1966
Sneak Preview: "The Big Kahuna is in Los Angeles
— he could be looking for YOU!"

UP!! PUSH, BABY!!

TW Tip # 7100 and #8024

Leadership Cliff's Notes

Audio "Sticky Notes"

I'd be lost if I didn't write notes to myself – in my dayplanner, on daily "to do" lists, in files, and on sticky-notes (for immediate action items or reminders). When I'm in the office, most of these notes are paperless (thanks to 3 computers near my desk). Keeps me from forgetting important things (and ideas).

That's easy enough to do when you're in the office, but when you're "on the go" (especially when driving), suddenly jotting down little reminders becomes harder to do. Let me share with you my secret for never losing a thought . . .



The IQ Voice Organizer.

- ✓ It's actually a complete organizer, including a calendar, phone book, alarm-timers, expense-files, work-files, and a memo-dictation unit.
- ✓ It's actually a high-tech little unit that activates all of these features via voice-recognition of your voice (for example, just say "Dr. Jones" and it will regurgitate the phone number on the display (and "say it" for you with the click of the play-button). But I personally prefer to use it only as a memo-dictation unit.
- ✓ The inexpensive model (\$59 at Sharper Image) has 512 Kbytes of memory, enabling up to 99 recordings (depending on length), 10 files, 12 expense categories, with 400 stored phone numbers.

My personal experience has been that it's like your microwave or fax machine . . . it ends up getting used a lot more than you ever thought it would!

TW Tip # 7101 and #14002

Congratulations!

To our "\$7,000 Think-Tank Weekend" Winner — **Steve Jones, PD of Mix 96!**

Steve will be joining us at *Observation Lodge* in Forest Lakes, AZ the weekend of Sept 24-28th.

On Kick-Starting A Re-Launch

"Some TV campaigns, like the Free Money Birthday concept, are capable of *instantly* taking a radio station to #1! You can't really say that about an outdoor/billboard campaign".

— **Scott Shannon, PD, WPLJ/New York City**
(said when he was PD of Z-100)

TW Tip 3117

Pet Peeve: How To Avoid Looking Terminally Unhip

When are radio stations going to learn not to put "dorky" synthesizer music in the background of their website? Don't they realize how dumb it sounds (and how silly it makes them look!)?

Service Of The Week: Sweeper Database

Voiceover guy, J. J. McKay, (www.jjmckay.com) is offering a great free service — a database filled with off-beat, cutting-edge, and humorous sweepers Well over 100 of them to choose from. "Cutting edge thinking, cutting edge technology, and we don't understand any of it! X-109FM". More? "Walking the fine line between genius — and insanity! Magic 88.8FM". Is too such a thing as free lunch!

TW Tip #9105, #15035, and #16036

The Most Effective Promotions Of All Time**CC III****Cash Call — Part 3**

Over the past few weeks, we've spotlighted the two primary methods of deployment of a "Cash Call" style of contest —

"Don't Say Hello" Cash Call (see "PB" Issue #14, page 8) and "Jackpot Cash Call" (see "PB" Issue #15, page 7)

This week we look at different ways of adding pizzazz.

Tweaking It Further Still

- ✓ Always try to get through to a "person" for the actuality (nothing sounds more boring than a busy-signal or a ring-out). It will require that you make more calls each hour to reach a real human, but it will sound much better on-the-air.
- ✓ Strive to get a soundbite actuality on-the-air every hour (it is, after all, a cash call!)
- ✓ Avoid saying "we just called the Robert W. Jones residence in Scottsdale, and no one answered". (Calling all thieves, calling all thieves!) Two options for such a situation: call other numbers til you reach a person or use a liner to convey "Just called the Robert W. Jones residence in Scottsdale, and they didn't know this hour's Cash Call jackpot".

Workforce Targeting

You can target businesses just as easily you can home phones. In fact, I recommend that any station doing hourly Cash Calls reserve their 9am and 1pm calls for business calls and promote that fact ("every day, in our 9am and 1pm hours, we always call a business somewhere here in the Podunk area"). Method behind the madness: if you get workplaces in the habit of listening at 9, they'll very likely be with you the rest of the morning; get them at 1 and you'll probably have them the rest of the afternoon.

Double Cash Calls

Some stations have done double-calls hourly -- one to a home, one to a business.

In-Car and Out & About Targeting

You can target the on-the-move audience by including random cellphone numbers in your callout repertoire.

Variations On The Theme**The Prize Is Right Cash Call**

For stations that can't afford a cash jackpot, you can involve advertisers in the promotion by having them contribute a prize worth over \$500, which goes in a rotation with other prizes in your total stash. The new rules:

(Continued . . . see **CC III** On Page 8)

(Continued . . . from Page 7)

"Tell me, to the penny, what this hour's prize is worth and you'll win it". TW Tip #17020, #4057, and #3115

Fun story: One station in an agricultural area of New Zealand included 500 pounds of fertilizer as one of their prizes. Generated lots of talk (helped along by the jocks having fun with it).

The Cash Call Jetaway Getaway

Instead of hourly cash amounts, use hourly locations an airline flies to. Know the location when we call, win \$1,000 cash plus two tickets to anywhere (America West) flies.

Daypart Recycling: Bonus Hours:

Pre-promote a specific hour will be a "double-cash" hour, to induce additional cuming in that hour. Include it in an efficient jock-plug.

"Today at 2pm, Joe Blow will have a double-cash bonus hour – if you know the Cash Call jackpot when he calls, you'll win DOUBLE THE MONEY!"

Daypart Recycling: Passwords

Listen at 7am for the Cash Call Password – and write it down. If you win the hourly Cash Call contest, we'll ask for the password. Know it, and win double.

Other Variatons

Code Call. Use a code word (or password or "secret word") instead of know-the-amount.

Money Under The Music. Know this hour's artist (or hit song) when we call, win the money.

Second Chance Calls. "If we've already called you, remember you still have a second chance to win. At least once a week, we make a second-chance Cash Call."

Lucky Numbers. Know this hour's numbers, win \$1,000 cash (always a fixed amount).

Prize Variations

Charity. You'll win \$1,000 for you, and the rest

of the money goes to the charity of your choice. In this way, you get many charities advertising your contest ("If you win the Magic 88.8 Cash Call, remember the United Way!"). Makes for a nice warm fuzzy on-the-air as you ask which charity they'd like the money to go to. (Almost as good as having a winner an hour!)

Employment. In an area hard-hit by unemployment, add this tweaker: "If you're certified unemployed, you'll win double". Forces lots of long-listens by people who have nothing else to do but sit around all day (and listen to the radio!)

TW Tip #11008, #3116, #4058

Long Listener Reward: Cash Call Recall

In the 6am hour (too early to make an actual Cash Call), solicit for a call-in ("I've got \$109 cash for the first person to call me right now and tell me the sum-total of all of yesterday's X-109 Cash Calls". If you've been writin' 'em down, now's your chance to call-IN and win!"). Listener gets on the air and plugs the fact that yesterday you made \$85,238.59 worth of Cash Calls. Sounds like a lot of money. Big.

Bonus Prizes

Cash Call Jetaway Getaway. Know the amount, win the money plus a bonus vacation for two.

Cash Call Drive-away. Know the amount, win the money plus a brand new car.

Clean Sales Sponsorship

At KTAR we sold Cash Call sponsorship to a local TV station. They funded the contest in return for a quick tag. "KTAR Cash Call, brought to you by Arizona 5, CBS". Crisp and clean. The radio station retained perceived ownership of the contest. But it effectively increased the cash contesting budget by \$75,000.

Also note the "Prize Is Right" concept (on page 7). Contest funds itself.

TW Tip #9106, #3118, and #4054

About "TW Tips"

Watch for the free Quarterly "PD Index", cross-referencing all TW Tips into the following 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

Ocean Toons®

Check out Bobby Ocean's creative website (www.bobbyocean.com). Full of interesting ideas, links, quotes, production and voiceover demos. E-Mail Osh at oceanvox@pacbell.net
 Jeff Young's Radio 411 (www.radio411.com) is the cyber-home of Ocean Toons and the Bobby Ocean Cartoon Gallery.

Then there's that story going around about the consultant who uses a Palm Reader...



Publishing Schedule: Hiatus Week

Crankin' 'Em Out

Every week, since April 27th, I've been slaving over a hot keyboard, turning out fresh issues of **Programmer's Digest** for our eclectic mix of subscribers-to-be-proud-of. It's a real labor of love — and I'm havin' a ball! As you'll recall, our original promise was to give you 8 unique pages of programming theory and promotional thinkabouts every week, 51 weeks a year.

Proof Of Performance

Under-Promise, Over-Deliver has always been my motto in business. And we always try to apply that guiding philosophy to our mission here at "PD". You've probably noticed (or have you?) that most of the weekly issues have been 10 or 12 pagers (instead of just 8). How this nets out: You've actually received 30 extra "bonus" pages thus far — that's the equivalent of over 3½ extra bonus issues. (You're welcome, you're welcome, you're welcome, you're). And we're only beginning!

Time-Out!

Later this week, I'll be taking off on a 12-day visit with friends and clients in Australia, where I'll be addressing at the ACNielsen/McNair "Radio 2000 & Beyond" Seminar. In addition to speaking (on the topic: "Consolidation's Impact On Programming"), I'll also be listening. And

reporting back. Programmers around the world have a lot to learn from the many sharp minds in The Land Down Under. I always find my visits with the Aussies to be stimulating, so I know I'll be coming back totally re-charged and rarin' to go. Because of a grueling travel schedule, I'm going to apply this year's hiatus week to the date of August 17th (instead of Christmas/New Years week as originally scheduled).

Here's The Schedule

- There will be no issue of "PD" on August 17th.
- Issue #17 will be dated August 24th. It will actually be published on the 26th, immediately upon my return Stateside (if you see smoke coming out of my laptop on a 12-hour flight at 35,000 feet, you'll understand). This will be our special "Koala Edition" full of Oz notes and anecdotes.
- We'll be back on our regular weekly schedule by August 31st (#18).
- To maintain our weekly promise of 51 issues for Volume 1, we will *not* take a hiatus week during Christmas or New Years (when all other radio publications seem to shut down).
- **Best of all:** We plan to continue our practice of giving you baker's dozen "bonus" pages (maybe not every week, but often) so you'll cumulatively be getting several bonus issues every year! That's what value-added is all about!!!

Coming In "PD" Issue #17:	Our Special <i>Koala</i> Edition	"PD" Down Under
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Phone-Starter: The Ultimate Dinner Party

Looking for a good Morning/Breakfast Show (or Talkshow) phone-starter? Here's one I always find interesting to kick around . . . both on-the-air and even to talk about at your own dinner parties.

If you had the clout to plan "the ultimate" dinner party, who would you invite?

Imagine the stimulating conversation of a journalistic roundtable with pro's like Paul Harvey, Tim Russert, Walter Cronkite, Dan Rather, Tom Brokaw, Peter Jennings, Sam Donaldson, Mike Wallace, and Keith Olbermann.

Or a gathering of business leaders like Bill Gates, Lee Iacocca, Donald Trump, Richard Branson, Warren Buffett, Victor Kiam, Harvey Mackay, Mark McCormick, Michael Eisner,

Or self-help gurus like Anthony Robbins, Dipok Chopra, and Andrew Weil. Or a business experts like Peter Drucker, Tom Peters, John Nesbait, Ken Blanchard, and Faith Popcorn.

Maybe a media forum with Ted Turner, Bob Pittman, David Ogilvy, Al Ries, Jack Trout, Jay Abraham, Jerry Della Femina, Rupert Murdoch, Kerry Packer, John Singleton, and Ken Kragen.

Even thespians have been known to have heads on their shoulders. Actresses like Liz Taylor, Shirley McLaine, Jodie Foster, Betty White, Jane Fonda, Jamie Lee Curtis, Heather Locklear, Candace Bergin. Actors like Warren Beatty, Harrison Ford, John Travolta, Tom Hanks, Tom Cruise, Larry Hagman, Alan Alda, Jack Nicholson, Mel Gibson, and Rob Reiner, just to name a few. Stephen Spielberg, James Cameron, Ron Howard, and Spike Lee would also add spice to the dialogue. Maybe models with brains, too, like Frederique Van Der Wal, Christie Brinkley, Elle McPherson or fashion types like Tommy Hilfiger.

Throw in comedian thinkers like Robin Williams, Dennis Miller, George Karlin, Whoopee Goldberg, Joan Rivers, Arsenio Hall, Eddie Murphy, Billy Crystal, Bill Cosby, Alan King, Seinfeld, and you won't get a word in edge-wise (nor would you want to).

Musicians have opinions and anecdotes too. Imagine sitting down with McCartney, Elton, or Garth; Cher, Madonna, or Amy Grant. Not to mention the diverse thoughts you'd get from Quincy Jones, David Foster, Phil Collins, Eric Clapton, Billy Joel, Lionel Richie, John Tesh, Kenny Loggins, Sting, Richard Marx, Barry Gordy, Clint Black & Lisa Hartman. And Australian superstar John Farnham. (Add Dick Clark and Ken Kragen — the stories they could tell!)

Interesting couples like Ted Turner & Jane Fonda, Rod Stewart & Rachel Hunter, Clint Black & Lisa Hartman, Connie Chung & Maury Povich, Bill & Hillary, Bill & Monica. (Or for some real fun, Bill & Hillary & Monica!). James Carville and Mary Matalan are a show by themselves.

Sports figures bring a special aura to the party. Think of the exchange you'd get from Rick Pitino, Danny Ainge, Pat Riley, John Elway, Charles Barkley, Michael Jordan, Wayne Gretzky, Joe Garagiola, Jerry Colangelo, Bob Costas, Jerry Jones, Andre Agassi, Pete Rose, John Madden, John McEnroe, Chris Evert, Meadowlark Lemon, Muhammad Ali, Arnold Palmer, Mary Lou Retton, and Yogi Berra at the same table.

Politicians, when they're off the stump, are fascinating, interesting people. Tony Blair, Jimmy Carter, George Bush, Gerald Ford, Ronald Reagan (in his prime), Ross Perot, Ollie North, Margaret Thatcher, Gary Hart, and George Stephanopolous. And think of the perspective Generals Scharzkoff and Powell could lend to the conversation.

For pure entertainment, invite a talk show host. On the Radio side Howard, Rush, and Dr. Laura. Or TV hosts like Oprah, Jerry Springer, Rosie O'Donnell, Tom Snyder, Carson, Leno or Letterman (or Leno and Letterman!)

Wouldn't it be fun to have legal eagles like Marcia Clark, Johnny Cochran, F. Lee Bailey, Jerry Spence, Barry Sheck, and Judge Wopner at the same table?

Or Cronkite in the company of astronauts John Glenn, Frank Borman, and Neil Armstrong.

Better yet, instead of a "theme", pick one name from each list (the more diverse the better).

Last step — localize the list to your city or state, including local media stars (even colorful car dealers would make for stimulating conversation!)

Have some fun with this — and see what your listeners add!

TW Tip # 5090, #7102, and #13001

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