

INDIES CLAIM FOUL IN NBC SURVEY

- Leading 'modern radio' operators say 'Top 40' survey was rigged
- They say advertising results prove they have the adult audience

Successful independent radio station operators last week charged that "loaded questions" were used in an NBC Spot Sales survey which found little timebuyer confidence in the selling ability of "Top 40 Tunes" stations [LEAD STORY, June 30].

The heads of four station groups which have been conspicuous in the development of independent radio asserted that the NBC Spot Sales survey:

- Was designed to salvage a foundering radio network.
- Encouraged responding timebuyers to substitute their personal music tastes for objective judgment in evaluating the commercial impact of various program formats.
- Used oversimplified definitions of three types of formats that were bound to produce answers unfavorable to stations which play popular music.
- Ignored the fact that stations which

feature popular music are among the most successful on the air.

The station operators who criticized the survey were joined by officials of three station representative firms.

All three representatives charged that the survey was "rigged" or "loaded."

The survey which came under criticism last week was released June 30. It was made among the NBC Spot Sales Timebuyer Opinion Panel which was formed early this year "to serve as a medium of expression for timebuyers as a group and individually to shed light on the changing nature and increasing problems of timebuying."

Responses were received from 258 panelists representing 203 different agencies or agency offices. Of the panelists 37% were with agencies billing \$5 million or more per year in radio-tv, according to NBC.

In its questionnaire to agency panelists,

NBC defined three types of programming:

"Top 40 Tunes—stations that primarily feature current pop tunes, generally the top 40 hits of the day.

"Standard music and news—stations that feature standard as well as current pop tunes and thus cater to a wider variety of popular music tastes.

"Varied programming—stations that carry such programming as interviews and dramatic serials as well as music and news."

The questionnaire also suggested that panelists, in answering survey questions about the ability of each type of station to produce advertising results, "think in terms of products that are purchased primarily by adults, since most national spot radio advertising falls in that area."

On most of the 15 questions which NBC asked, the Top 40 format came out badly.

This was the result to be expected from

Seven critics of NBC's 'Top 40' survey



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