



WALT LOVE

URBAN CONTEMPORARY

WGCI-FM Ties WGN For First

9.2 Share Attributed To Teamwork, First Major TV Campaign

WGCI-FM/Chicago turned in a super winter '88 Arbitron performance, tying perennial market leader WGN with a 9.2 12+ share. The station's previous high was an 8.6 in spring '87.

WGCI-AM & FM are Gannett's only UC outlets. Along with KIIS-AM & FM/Los Angeles, they are also among the company's biggest winners. This is due in part to the relationship between WGCI-FM President/GM Marv Dyson and PD Sonny Taylor.

Heated Conversations

"Gannett gave us the promotional dollars to do what we had to do," Dyson pointed out. "And under Sonny Taylor's direction, our staff has done the things that were needed to expand audience appeal. I think that contributed greatly to our ratings success.

"Sonny was the first PD I had a chance to watch and work with in 1972, when I was station manager of a daytimer here (WJPC). When we hooked up again in 1987, we had grown professionally, which I think now helps us understand and do the job better. You have to have a PD you believe in. I couldn't get rid of the gut feeling that Sonny was the right guy. We didn't need a glorified disc jockey, we needed a teacher, a mentor, somebody the airstaff would respect. We certainly didn't need a PD to pick music; that's why we have [MD] Barbara Preiato.

"When Sonny first got here, none of my airstaff respected him. They



Marv Dyson

didn't know him, and his last PDship wasn't successful. After the first and second books under him came out, all that changed. Sonny programs this radio station, and I let him. A lot of the younger PDs out there don't understand that this is a business, that corporate not only wants but expects results. The reason our thing works is because we work together. We don't step on each other's toes. And we never lose sight of the objective — to win."

Taylor added, "Like a marriage, there's often an 'exchange of ideas' here. You also have to be able to offer an honest, objective opinion. Many times Marv will say, 'Don't

tell me your personal opinion, tell me your professional opinion.' And we've had some very heated conversations. We yell, scream, and holler at each other until we come to a meeting of the minds about what's best for the station, not what's best for either of us personally. Our love for WGCI plays a big part in everything we do here."

Heavy TV

Another key to WGCI's success is its on-air staff, whom Dyson and Taylor call the best in the country. The average age of the staff — which includes Doug Banks (mornings), Yvonne Daniels (mIDDays), Tom Joyner (afternoons), Marco Spoon (nights), Chili Childs (overnights) — is 35.

Taylor noted, "We make sure all our people play the right music to

WGCI AM-1390 and 107½ FM

keep our total audience and not turn off the adults, especially in the case of Tom Joyner, who likes to play new music. We're looking for people 18-49 and 25-54; we're number one in those categories in each time period."

The promotional dollars Gannett gave WGCI-FM were applied primarily to the station's first major TV campaign, using Film House's 30-second syndicated "Birthday" promotion spot. There was a twist, however. Dyson, Taylor, Tom Joy-

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— Marv Dyson

ner, and Doug Banks went to Nashville and rewrote all of the spots, using Banks and Joyner in the them — something Film House hadn't done before with other "Birthday" client stations.

Equitable Ad Dollars

The station's strong performance in various demos and day-parts means a good portion of the market is listening. But is that translating into an equitable share of advertising dollars? Dyson said, "It's getting better, but we still

Number One . . .

WGCI-FM finished first in:

- 12+ overall (tied with WGN)
- 18-34, 25-54 (Mon-Sun, 6am-midnight)
- MIDDays 12+, 18-34, 25-54
- Afternoons 12+, 18-34, 25-54
- Nights 12+, 18-34, 25-54

haven't cracked it all the way. I've got a 9.2, and I'm not making my national budget. I've got to believe that WGN, with its 9.2 share, is making whatever its national budget number is.

"We never lose sight of the objective — to win."

— Marv Dyson



Sonny Taylor

"We continue to complain about not getting the dollars this format deserves. But we still haven't gone out there and educated the masses about the power this format possesses. We here at WGCI have dedicated ourselves to educating the buyers at the agency level about what our format can do.

"We've made some progress: American Express is on the air, along with Mercedes Benz, Jaguar, and the Wool Bureau. The Wool

Bureau was a hard sale, but it happened. I feel we're accomplishing something when we get clients on the air like Mrs. Fields' Cookies and Bennigan's restaurants. I don't think these clients are racist, I just think they don't understand how much we can do for them — and it's probably because we haven't sold them correctly."



WINNING POWER — KIPR (Power 92)/Little Rock awarded two listeners tickets to see "The Gloved One." Power 92 PD Kevin Brown (l) congratulates winners Terri Storz and Scott May.



BERNING UP THE CHART — During a recent promotional excursion, Stacy Lattisaw (second from left) found herself at WIKS/New Bem, NC. On hand to greet her were (l-r) WIKS's PD Ceacer Gooding and MD B.K. Kirkland, and Motown's Everette Smith.



WJLB DRIVES INTO DETROIT — WJLB hosted the debut of the Detroit Drive, a team belonging to the Arena Football League. On hand for the game were (l-r) Atlantic's Van James, WJLB's Tuneup Man, Atlantic's Jean Came, and WJLB's Mason in the Morning.