



JOEL DENVER

TOPS ARBITRON, BIRCH

WNTQ Rules Syracuse

When J.J. Cook became PD at WNTQ (93Q)/Syracuse last August, he made a winning situation better. The fall '90 Arbitron 12+ jumped 9.4-11.1, and though the Birch was off 14.8-12.2, 93Q still led the market in both surveys. In Arbitron 18-34 it ranks a close fourth behind AC WYYY, and it's second in that demo to Classic Rocker WKFM in Birch.

This isn't Cook's first successful programming shot. He's achieved good results at KFRX/Lincoln, NE; KWTO-FM/Springfield, MO; KGGG-FM/Rapid City, SD; KKXL-FM/Grand Forks, ND; and KREO/Santa Rosa, CA.

Broader Music Posture

His biggest change was to broaden 93Q's musical approach. "We used to lean much more dance, but now I've adopted the [Top 40 pioneer] 'Todd Storz' CHR philosophy of playing all the hits. I guess we can really get away with it since we're the only true CHR in the market. Syracuse isn't as segmented as other markets, so I can play music from all genres, including Queensryche, Anita Baker, R.E.M., and Bell Biv DeVoe.

"Some might find this a strange combination of music for one station, but it's all in how you put it together. Just slot it in the appropriate dayparts. Put the right breakers and sweepers between dissimilar songs, teach your jocks about making transitions, and it can work. A good song is a good song is a good song."

Promotion Motion

Cook keeps 93Q in a "fun" mode at all times. He believes in contests, though research suggests many listeners never get involved. "Offering prizes, large or small, on a consistent basis generates excitement. It keeps the energy level up and really makes the jocks feel good about working at 93Q. Without



J.J. Cook

such energy a station can quickly become boring. While many listeners never call in for them, I see contests as positives — when people hear others having a good time and winning, those good vibes are bound to rub off."

93Q has used billboards, TV, and a lot of print media. Cook cites great success in a couple of areas. "Our newspaper mail-in coupon contests, designed to improve cume, have generated a healthy 10% return. Our database direct mail promotions give us 50%-60% returns. They're totally off-air promotions and they give listeners a chance to win. We basically use this type of promotion as a questionnaire for callouts and listener database management. We've got information on over 6000 winners in our computer.

"Our biggest promotion in the past six months was the 'Scav-

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The 93Q morning show's Chocolate Valentine Party benefited the Heart Association.



The 93Q Beach Bus transports sun worshippers from shopping centers to the beach every weekend for free in the summer.

Z89 — The 100-Watt Flamethrower

WJPZ (Z89)/Syracuse, one of Syracuse University's two campus stations, isn't your typical non-commercial college station. It's CHR; it scores decently in Birch with just 100 watts at 89.1; and it receives no financial support from the school.

PD Hal Stevens is a senior and an English major carrying a 17-credit load. He spends about 30-35 hours a week at the station, has a Thursday night 7-11 airshift, and works weekends at WYYY.

He explained how Z89 competes. "There's no shortage of people here. We have over 150 staffers, including promotions personnel, clerical help, and 95 jocks. Each jock has one shift a week, with 50 regularly scheduled and the other 45 waiting in line for a steady shift."

This year, all of Z89's management is in the senior class. Their replacements will be decided by elections. Many of Z89's staffers work at commercial stations in town: Chief Announcer Brian Lapis and APD Dave Gorab do weekends at WYYY, several news staffers work at AC WSYR, and air talent Darren McKee produces the WKFM morning show. Some of Z89's illustrious alumni are WVEE/Atlanta morning man Mike Roberts and WSB-FM/Atlanta PD Phil LoCascio.

First On New Music

Stevens continued, "MD Darla McClovich has done a great job of getting us label service. Before, most record companies only saw us as a college station and only sent us alternative music. She's proven we're a force for new music in the market... particularly the dance stuff.



Hal Stevens

"We're generally ahead of [crosstown CHR WNTQ] 93Q on playing things first. We don't air any hard rock or songs without rhythm. The overall sound is high energy without the hard edge, and dance is the core sound. We chart 35 to 40 records a week. Our slogans are, 'Your fresh new music mix,' and 'The music mix is the difference on Z89.'"

Stevens credited 93Q with doing a great job as a CHR, but noted, "93Q has said in the local press that it isn't in the business of making the hits, just playing them. We feel a sense of duty to both ends. One of the reasons we're ahead of 93Q in music is our staff. With all that input we can easily detect what's going on in the streets and clubs."

Overcoming Limitations

While Arbitron doesn't rate non-

commercial stations, Z89 scored 3.6 12+ in the fall '89 Birch, which trended steadily upward. The winter, spring, and summer '90 numbers were up 4.9-6.7-8.9, but dropped in fall '90 to 6.5. Nevertheless, Stevens isn't dismayed. "Considering what we have to work with, I think we're doing really well."

As a non-commercial outlet, Z89 can't sell spots per se to help raise its \$65,000 yearly budget. It offers blocks of time to local retailers who support station efforts. Stevens said, "It's hard to compete on a

promotional level, but we've been able to make the station visible at appearances. Listeners kick our 'Q-Ball' — a huge ball of discarded 93Q bumper stickers — to win prizes.

"We had a station vehicle a local car dealership let us use last summer. We even gave away a Pontiac Firebird last summer. At last year's New York State Fair, we had a booth next to the local NBC-TV affiliate. So we trucked in \$50 worth of sand and held a 'Beach Party' promotion that won lots of TV exposure. The local cable company has allowed us some TV promos during local adjacencies on MTV and ESPN."

Z89's "development staff" solicits off-air donations from sponsors. Stevens noted, "We even pay rent to the university for the studios. It's a nominal fee, but then, we have nominal space. We're housed in one office that's about 17 feet square. We have one on-air studio and one production studio. All that closeness breeds a good togetherness among the staff."

Most CHRs in a market the size of Syracuse would use a computerized music rotation system, but Z89 does it the old-fashioned way. "Music is on cards within categories, and everyone is really good about playing what they're supposed to in the proper order," said Stevens. "We have on-air sweepers courtesy of Brian James from [WFLZ] Power Pig/Tampa, and they add to our professional sound. Every one of our staffers strives to make Z89 sound like a top-level radio station, and I'm proud of that effort. When you do the basics of radio correctly, it pays off in good ratings."

WNTQ (93Q)/Syracuse positions itself as "Central New York's No. 1 Hit Music Station," offering "More Music More Fun." The spot load is 12 units in mornings and nine in other dayparts, with a six-song sweep every hour. Here's a 5pm sample:

MADONNA/Rescue Me
GENESIS/Tonight, Tonight, Tonight
TARA KEMP/Hold You Tight
SURFACE/First Time
JON BON JOVI/Blaze Of Glory
STYX/Show Me The Way
WARRANT/Heaven
JANET JACKSON/Love Will Never Do (Without You)
WHITESNAKE/Here I Go Again
BETTE MIDLER/From A Distance
ROXETTE/Joyride
DON HENLEY/Heart Of The Matter
TIMMY T./One More Try

Here's a typical 5pm hour of WJPZ (Z89)/Syracuse:

C & C MUSIC FACTORY/Here We Go, Let's Rock And Roll
DEPECHE MODE/Policy Of Truth
TRACIE SPENCER/This House
STEVIE NICK/Spring Love
CATHY DENNIS/Touch Me (All Night Long)
FINE YOUNG CANNIBALS/Good Thing
ENIGMA/Sadness Part One
BLACK BOX/Everybody, Everybody
RALPH TRESVANT/Stone Cold Gentleman
MARIAH CAREY/Someday
ESCAPE CLUB/Call It Poison
MICHEL'LE/Something In My Heart
ANOTHER BAD CREATION/Iesha
SHEENA EASTON/The Lover In Me
TIMMY T./One More Try