Street Fleets Ready To Roll

Continuing Education For The Dedicated Radio Programmer

The Radiation Theory

Many programmers and marketers firmly believe in the promotional concept of "radiation". It calls for reaching out and touching listeners, a handful at a time, at numerous small promotional events, in such a way that the *cumulative effect* after several months (or years) is *massive*. (Another example is using small contest prizes so you can give away *lots* of them, but personal touch seems to work best).

TW Tip #1054, #3106, and #4050

One of the most effective methods of "radiating" your station's reach (both to P1 core listeners *and* prospective cumers, who maybe haven't even *found* you yet) is to shake hands and kiss babies. And one of the most effective ways to "get out and meet 'em" is maintaining a fleet of street-mobiles. A street fleet enables you to spread your reach into every corner of your metro (the larger the metro, the more important it is that you do so, to give your station a "face" in every neighborhood of your MSA). (Continued . . . See **Street Fleet** on Page 2)

Part 2 of a "PD" Mini-Series
Music Science 101

What's Wrong With Quick & Dirty Research?

In these days of downsizing (or *right*-sizing, as the case may be) and the increasing pressure for bigger bottom-lines, some stations are finding their research budgets slashed (if not entirely eliminated).

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.

Street Fleets — Ready To Roll

Many PD's look, as they should, at station vehicles as a moving, multi-functioned "billboard" for the station, seeming to adopt the theory "the more you put in it, the more you can take out of it".

Depending on the format, fleet-marketing can include everything from mobile news units to station prize vans, from "boom-box" remote vehicles and sets to even more exotic travelling studios and stages (each with their own aura and charm). Sometimes looking back at some of the more "original" station vehicles can be a useful exercise for sparking new ideas that will benefit you in the future. So get ready to roll.

Mobile News

The "original" street fleet was born when radio stations realized they could enhance their image of local news and immediacy by broadcasting live reports from the scene of breaking news. (Unfortunately, over the years, Radio has abdicated this advantage and local TV news operations have picked up this fumbled ball and taken it into the end zone – adding pictures, no less!).

Leave it to **Gordon McLendon** to bring show-business flair to mobile news in the 50's. McLendon flagship station KLIF had only two 2-way radios, but McLendon labelled his fleet "KLIF Mobile News Unit #4" and "KLIF Mobile News Unit #6" (so listeners perceived a much larger fleet of news-cruisers).

Then in 1965, Gordon invested big bucks in a state-of-the-art "Headline Cruiser", with an electronic sign atop the van which bannerlined the latest news headlines (like you'd see on the Times Square sign), followed by the tag "details in minutes on KLIF/1190"). The Kliff Headline Cruiser spent all day on the road, building news image throughout Dallas – and inducing cume by the thousands, one day at a time (radiation).

KIMN/Denver, one of the great Top 40 stations of the 60's, also had a first-rate *news* image, with a 6-man department led by News Director **Don Martin** (who was also the station's morning and afternoon "Air Alert" traffic reporter). News reporter **Tony Lamonica** was designated "Kim's Man On The Move" with a job description of finding and following breaking news. One of his old tricks to capture live siren-sound for the feel of immediacy was to park outside an ambulance station near a hospital and stick his 2-way mike out the window as soon as he heard emergency vehicles pulling out. (In Radio, you can paint great mental pictures with audio smoke and mirrors).

Aside from news-gathering, often the mere *presence* of a news unit suggested that a station was "on top of the news". A clever maneuver 1ZB in Auckland (New Zealand) used to do was to park one of their mobile units on the side of the road at a high-volume Motorway location, where thousands of drivers could clearly see the call-letters. It made drivers think ZB was there to report something, thus forcing *immediate* tune-ins.

The Driving Force Of The Music Biz

"It's all about da benjamins, baby".
— *Puff Daddy*

"It's the low-rated full-power stations you should fear the most. When they're on the bottom, they have nothing to lose. So they get religion real fast, they get all their ducks in a row, and come out blasting."

TW Tip #7091

How "Worst-To-Firsts" Happen

— *Super Broker Gary Stevens*
(Circa 1985 when he was President of Doubleday

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

Did You Know . . .

- Coca Cola was originally green.
- Every day more money is printed for Monopoly than the U. S. Treasury.
- It is possible to lead a cow upstairs, but not downstairs.

- Barbie's measurements if she were life size would be: 39-23-33
- The average number of people airborne over the U.S. in any given hour: 61,000. A literal airborne "city".
- Average life-span of a major league baseball: 7 pitches

Street Fleets

Kansas broadcaster **Mack Sanders** once used a Rolls Royce Silver Cloud III as the mobile-unit for one of his Country stations. It became the talk of the town (always notice wherever it went). *TW Tip #10034 and #3107*

Prize Vans

Seems radio station "Prize Patrols" have been around since God was a boy! (Certainly for longer than there's been a Publisher's Clearinghouse.)

The more unusual the vehicle, the easier it is to gain attention (and therefore an impression). Hummers still turn heads. So does the new Beetle.

In fact, If I was the PD of an Oldies station, I'd make sure to seal off the "Beetle/Beatle" angle before another station in town preempts you. ("The 5ⁿ Beetle" and "Meet The Beetles" are just *too natural* a tie to an Oldies station to be ignored). *TW Tip #3114*

20 years ago, when the "old" VW Beetles were seemingly everywhere, one company had the brilliant idea of painting the cars with advertising messages – and *Beetle Boards* were born. The owner got free paint job and a small stipend each month. The advertiser got a moving message (many radio stations used this concept to improve their visibility.

We borrowed that concept for a few of my Pacific Rim clients in the 80's. 2UW/Sydney (Australia) sent forth the "2UW Mini-Mob" (in some countries, Mini's are more ubiquitous than Beetles!) And 2ZB in Wellington (New Zealand) launched "The 2-Zed-Bee-tle Brigade" (with a clever promo song that made it cool). *TW Tip #3108 and #4052*

But sometimes *it's all in how you sell it on-the-air* (and I don't mean via the Sales Department). The best example I know of: Early in the 90's, the Austereo group did such an incredible job at ingraining the term "Black Thunders" in Australian listeners perceptions that many programmers Down Under believe the term "Thunder" is as generic as Kleenex and Xerox are here in the States (when talking about tissues or photocopies). The key to their success story was rolling Thunders into place at multiple locations *every* hour, day after day (radiation), using an efficient beat-check of who had what prize at what location (broadcast

live, or apparently so, on-the-air). Sounds downright exciting – like the station is *everywhere!* (In actual fact, it *is!*)

Virgin Radio in London got great mileage out of sending a team of good looking young ladies on mini-bikes to remotes. Young, hip, stood out from the crowd. Really turns heads, regardless of gender, when 10 beautiful women arrive at a promotional venue on yellow Virgin Bikes! (Talk about a grand entrance!)

Remote Vehicles

Remotes from an advertiser's location have long been the lifeblood of weekend events at many radio stations – generating revenues, building visibility, and satisfying advertising clients. Often on-site remotes were to the detriment of a station's airsound — until **Eric Rhoads** (now Publisher of *Radio Ink*) came to the rescue with one of the breakthrough concepts in remote broadcasts.

He created a large, flashy remote-set based on the look of a "boombox" radio. It was large enough (24' by 10') to contain a full working studio (so on-air quality would no longer suffer). Stations liquidated the cost by selling quarterly sponsorships (usually to non-traditional national radio advertisers, so it didn't place any pressures on spot inventory). The concept was so hot Rhoads' Boombox Technologies went on to sell hundreds of these oversized radios to stations all over the world. New variations on the theme include The Giant Jukebox (which many oldies stations, like KOOL-FM in Phoenix, use) and a "sky-high" version of the boombox (that jacks up, placing the remote studio 40 feet in the air so you can't miss it). KDWB in Minneapolis calls theirs *The Coca Cola Skybox.*

When I was OM/PD of News/Talk KTAR, we launched *"Roadrunner One,* the KTAR Mobile Newsroom", housed in an oversized van (the size of the big Hertz vans at major airports). The unit contained a full talk studio complete with Board Op bay. A retractable mast extends up to 45 feet in the air, making Marti contact possible, thus enabling live broadcasts from *anywhere* in the greater Phoenix area. It gives KTAR the ability to place its "live and local" talk shows at the scene of breaking news on just 30 minutes notice. In fact, popular Talk Host **Pat McMahon** (known for his ability to "work a crowd") created an on-location

event *every* weekday afternoon (using a program he called "McMahon About Town"). *Roadrunner One* was particularly useful in giving KTAR visibility at high profile sporting events (like the Super Bowl, the NBA All-Star Game, NBA Playoffs, etc.).
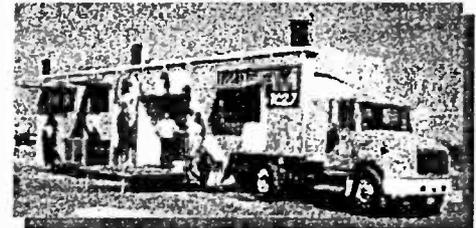
Perhaps the most audacious and innovative undertaking for a remote vehicle occurred three years ago in LA with the unveiling of the *KIIS-FM Megacruiser* – measuring 46 feet long by 13 feet high, containing *two* complete broadcast studios, a 4800 watt Bose Audio System and a 70" TV monitor.

✓ Before a remote, the Megacruiser would pull into the parking lot with music playing.

✓ A huge door on the side opens down, revealing a curtain with the KIIS logo.

✓ As the music gets louder, the curtain opens, and the stage (containing the KIIS-FM air personality/furniture/console rolls out into the crowd).

✓ With a wireless mike, the KIIS jock can then jump down into the crowd to talk with them *live.* First-rate theatrics.

✓ A reinforced stage on the roof has enough room for a dance troupe (complete with guard rails and ladder for safe access).

A "tech deck" at the front of the semitrailer even carries a complete *video*-editing facility and racks of equipment with enough amps to run both the radio remote and the massive PA system. *TW Tip #3109 and #17017*

Wallace Wisdom: In these days of larger and larger clusters, don't overlook the cost-efficiency of sharing your street-fleet over *several* stations. Especially between *nearby* markets. Large magnetic signs can be designed to smoothly blend with other station artwork, making it practically imperceptible that, for example, X-109's Summer Hummer this weekend will also be the vehicle used as Magic 88.8's Yellow Thunder next weekend. *TW Tip #3110, #7092, #17018*

The same expenses that are usually cut during a protracted recession – R&D, advertising, and support-staff jobs – are the exact same things being targeted for scrutiny during this period of profit-maximization.

✓ Many stations that were used to doing *quarterly* auditorium tests are now conducting only one or two tests a year

✓ Many stations that were doing *weekly* local callout, are now cutting back to fortnightly or monthly research (or relying on syndicated national callout, like Premiere's *Mediabase Music Research* or R&R's *Callout America*)

✓ Some stations that were farming out their research tasks are now internalizing the process to save money (using turnkey systems like *TW//A Systems)*

✓ Or turning to alternative methods, like the interactive computerized system being touted by **Bill Moyes** *(Music Technologies)* or internet-music-testing which is now being endorsed by programming consultant **Bill Richards** *(RateTheMusic.com).*

✓ And, sad to say, some stations are being forced by budget pressures to go back to "square one" – often eliminating correct research procedures (throwing the baby out with the bathwater, I would say) in favor of much cheaper, "quick and dirty" research "the *real* old fashioned way" (the way it was done before I pioneered the concept of local callout music research back in 1971).

(Surely this doesn't mean that consolidation is setting radio programming back 27 years, does it?!?!? That's a separate issue we'll delve deeper into in coming issues of **TII**!)

Old School Music "Research"

Before callout, PD's had to supplement their gut-hunches with a combination of retail single sales reports, call-in requests, national trades, and maybe an eye on bellwether markets or stations. Each method had (and still has) its flaws.

■ **Retail.** At least there's been improvement on this front. Used to be, the way stations found out what was selling was by calling several record stores and asking what the top 10, 20, or 30 songs were. Usually the minimum-wage clerk would just pick up your hitlist and parrot back the same songs to you (with their own personal faves embellished a bit). Fortunately, today it's possible to get a more accurate count on actual local sales. However, because single sales no longer drive total record sales, it requires a lot more "gut" interpretation (aka *guesswork*). Did a consumer buy the CD because of the *song* – or the *artist* – or *other* songs on the same CD? (Or did they buy it as a gift?) Yes, retail is an indication of positive acceptance – but there's no indication of dislikeability (it's possible to like one song on a CD but hate another, perhaps even the new release). And there's no provision for local timing (a CD or CD-single could still be selling very well at the very moment in time that it's developing *major burnout).* If you rely on retail, you won't know! (And if you rely on your gut to pinpoint burn, *you'll* probably tire of the song *much sooner* than your target audience will). And, of course, there's no demographic data to help you know if a strong-selling song is "right" for your target audience.

TW Tip # 2018 and #19030

■ **Requests.** Call-in requests can be a useful indicator of extreme positives ("loves", "like a lot's", "one of my favorites"), which *is* what usually drives most true hit songs. But there's a problem: the further up the demographic scale you go, the less requestline participation you find amongst radio listeners. (Most 35-44 females don't have time to spend requesting songs from radio stations, but 12-17 year-old girls sure do). Hence, requestline tabulations skew young. One solution: only tabulate requests from listeners 18-and-over (or maybe 16 and older, depending on your target). But even then, you're relying on the honesty of the caller to give you their *true* age (which they might fudge, if they think it will improve the chances of getting their favorite song played). Another problem: Call-in requests, like retail, only tell you positives (about the songs listeners really like). You're on your own when it comes to pinpointing negatives or burn (on songs they're *not* so hot about). Possible solution: keep a running requestline-tally of "songs listeners hate" and "songs listeners are getting tired of" (again, with a demographic filter that weeds out undesirables).

Another problem: It only reflects the "active" fringe, instead of the silent "passive" majority. But you should also consider the devil's advocate argument: most requestline callers *are* P1 "fans" of your station (otherwise they'd be calling another station's requestline). But the biggest problem: Requestline activity can be easily *hyped,* and thereby *sabotaged,* by your competition, which has the potential of *invalidating* your entire request-tabulation-process! I remember the days when, as a swashbuckling young PD, I would "program" my competition's *Hot 8 at 8* every night by making repeated calls for stiffs – the sweet innocent young interns answering the other station's requestlines dutifully registered my requests, not suspecting a thing! (Of course, *now* I feel really *terrible* about doing such a dastardly deed! *Not!)*

TW Tip # 2019 and #19031

Wallace Wisdom: The most accurate method of requestline-tabulation I know of is a module that is part of the *TW//A Systems* in-house research computer-software package, called *New ERAA (Efficient Requestline Active Analysis).*

> ## A Centering Thought About "Research"
>
> "Col. Tom Parker once taught me an important lesson — getting people's asses *in seats* is a whole bunch better than measuring them once you've sold the ticket. A glance at the auditorium is the only 'rating' that matters."
>
> — Ron Jacobs

World Of Wavs

If you're looking for a great source for audio drops, there's a new website that serves as a sort-of clearinghouse and free exchange service, *Mulderr's World Of Wavs* (www.wavsounds.com).

At last count, there were at least 3,500 wav's available, free for the downloading. A complete list of wavs can be accessed alphabetically, or more complete information is available by clicking on a page-number, which lists various wav titles, along with corresponding file-size, the verbatim quote, and attribution. For Example:

🖫 Hardyhar.zip   51k
   Ralph Kramden   (Jackie Gleason)
   "Har har Har-dee har har!"
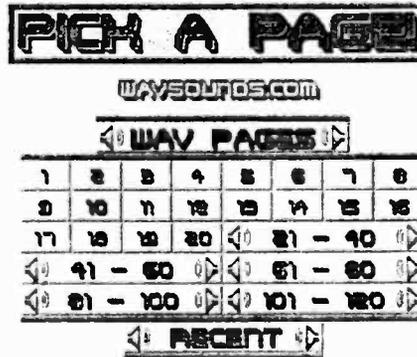
Most waves are zip-compressed to minimize download time.

If you've been wanting to get on a wav mailing list, have a wav list (or just a wav) you'd like to share, or are looking for a particular wav you can't seem to find, this might just be the place for you.

TW Tip #9097, #18009, #15034, and #16036

Related "PD" Stories wwwith WWWebsites:

■ The Wimmer-Hudson "Sampling Error" Calculator (see "PD" page 6)

■ Bill Richards "Rate The Music" (see "PD" page 4)

Pith 3 More Conclave Highlights & Insights

Edie Hilliard, President/GM of Broadcast Programming, and **Jason Kane**, Exec VP of The Research Group brought everyone up-to-speed on digital voice-tracked automation (more commonly genericized as "Virtual Radio").

☑ "Don't go VR to save money, do it to WIN. Don't go VR unless it's going to upgrade the quality of programming or significantly lower the expense-line."

☑ "We're not saying you don't need people, just *fewer* of them"

☑ "To make VR work, you need an extensive 'system' that assures *localization*"

☑ Virtual stations can still do remotes (some of them designate one local jock as the "remote personality"

☑ You can feign an "interactive liveness" by including "virtual requests" as part of your stationality (staged calls by behind-the-scenes staff and/or spouses)   *TW Tip # 7093, #9098, and #5068*

The KDWB/Minneapolis management team of GM **Marc Kalman** and PD **Rob Morris** shared the keys to interpersonal station relationships in the multiopoly world we program in:

☑ You need *great* department heads. "If they're not great, you may need to upgrade"

☑ Precision time management: know where you're going to be all week. "But if something urgent comes up, the schedule needs to be *preemptable* at any time".   *TW Tip # 7094*

Arbitron's professional tag-team of **Bob Michaels** and **Gary Marince** conducted two excellent sessions, full of basics (and far beyond).

☑ "Study your successes with the same zeal and objectivity that you study failures". (Why is it that PD's never see a *high*-spike as a fluke?)

☑ "The rule of shrinkage: if left 'unattended', cume will shrink". (So try to alternate your promotions between Cume-oriented and TSL-oriented)

☑ To determine an OES model (Optimum Effective Scheduling) for your station: multiply your Turnover (which is: cume divided by quarter-hour) by 3.29. This will show you the number of record-spins, promos, or commercials needed to reach *half* of your cume *3 or more times*.

☑ "Keep things overly simple on-the-air". (When you're "explaining", you're losing).

☑ Arbitron unveiled their new improvement on the concept of Hot ZIPs: **Block-Code Groups.** Soon you will be able to zero in on "Hot Blocks" (This has the potential of making your direct-marketing expenses even more cost efficient). Interesting note: *some* "hot neighborhoods" may actually be located *outside* of your station's Hot-ZIPs (you'll be able to easily see this with an overlay map).

☑ Starting with the Fall '98 sweep, Arbitron will begin recording workplace-ZIPs (enabling you to construct a "bar-bell" table to efficiently view listeners' Home-ZIPs, commute-routes, and Workplace ZIPs).   *TW Tip #1055, #19032, and #20012*

Author and career coach **Tom Welch** had many persuasive points as he talked about balancing life and your career.

☑ "Yesterday is history, tomorrow is a mystery, today is a gift — that's why it's called *the present*"

☑ "The happiness factor boils down to *how satisfied you are with your job*". (A recent study revealed that people who are happy in their jobs take that happiness home with them after work; those who are *unhappy* at work *also* tend to bring *that* feeling home). (*Not* the other way around). *TW Tip #7095 and #20019*

Note: We'll be spotlighting Welch's new book, *Work Happy, Live Healthy (New Solutions For Career Satisfaction Including More Time & Money* in a future "**PD Bookshelf**" profile.

The Wimmer-Hudson "Sampling Error" Grid

You'll recall our article from a few weeks ago, "Making Sense Of Flukes", talked about the importance of keeping sampling error in mind whenever you assess ratings or research information. (See "PD" Issue #12, page 4).

By definition, **Sampling Error is the degree to which measurements obtained from a sample *differ* from the measurements that would be obtained from the population.** The actual formula is . . .

$$SE(p) = \sqrt{\frac{p(100-p)}{N}} \; x \, 1.96$$ I know, know, gobble-de-gook.

A Simpler Way. If you've ever wondered what the difference in sampling error is between a sample of 300 people and a sample of 600 (or 5,000 for that matter), now there's an easier way. Research consultants **Dr. Roger Wimmer** and **Matt Hudson** have devised two very useful tools to assist you in determining the sampling error calculation (without having to break out a calculator or Boolean truth table every time you want to know).

The first, the *Wimmer-Hudson Sampling Error Table,* appears below (a useful grid you'll probably want to photocopy or clip-and-save). It indicates sampling error at 95% confidence level for various sample sizes and makes it much easier for the average non-researcher to grasp.

Survey Result is.	1% or 99%	5% or 95%	10% or 90%	15% or 85%	20% or 80%	25% or 75%	30% or 70%	35% or 65%	40% or 60%	45% or 55%	50%
Sample of. 10	6.2	13.5	18.6	22.1	24.8	26.8	28.4	29.6	30.4	30.8	31.0
20	4.4	9.6	13.1	15.6	17.5	19.0	20.1	20.9	21.5	21.8	21.9
30	3.6	7.8	10.7	12.8	14.3	15.5	16.4	17.1	17.5	17.8	17.9
40	3.1	6.8	9.3	11.1	12.4	13.4	14.2	14.8	15.2	15.4	15.5
50	2.8	6.0	8.3	9.9	11.1	12.0	12.7	13.2	13.6	13.8	13.9
100	2.0	4.3	5.9	7.0	7.8	8.5	9.0	9.3	9.6	9.8	9.8
200	1.4	3.0	4.2	4.9	5.5	6.0	6.4	6.6	6.8	6.9	6.9
300	1.1	2.5	3.4	4.0	4.5	4.9	5.2	5.4	5.5	5.6	5.7
400	1.0	2.1	2.9	3.5	3.9	4.2	4.5	4.7	4.8	4.9	4.9
500	.87	1.9	2.6	3.1	3.5	3.8	4.0	4.2	4.3	4.4	4.4
600	.80	1.7	2.4	2.9	3.2	3.5	3.7	3.8	3.9	4.0	4.0
700	.74	1.6	2.2	2.6	3.0	3.2	3.4	3.5	3.6	3.7	3.7
800	.69	1.5	2.1	2.5	2.8	3.0	3.2	3.3	3.4	3.3	3.3
900	.65	1.4	2.0	2.3	2.6	2.8	3.0	3.1	3.2	3.1	3.1
1,000	.62	1.4	1.9	2.2	2.5	2.7	2.8	3.0	3.0		
2,000	.44	1.0	1.3	1.6	1.8	1.9	2.0	2.1	2.1	2.2	2.2
3,000	.36	.78	1.1	1.3	1.4	1.5	1.6	1.7	1.8	1.8	1.8
4,000	.31	.68	.93	1.1	1.2	1.3	1.4	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5
5,000	.28	.60	.83	1.0	1.1	1.2	1.3	1.3	1.4	1.4	1.4

How To Find Sampling Error: For example, using the above table, with a completed sample of 500 respondents, if 30% said "yes" and 70% said "no", the estimated *maximum* sampling error is plus or minus 4.0 percentage points. (See the "box" around 4.0 above?)

What This Means: With 95% confidence, you could say that the estimated population of "yes" responses (30% in this case) is between the range of 26.0% and 34.0%. *TW Tip # 19033 and #20013*

WWWebCCCalc

Simpler still, is an easy-to-use Sampling Error Calculator on the Wimmer-Hudson website *(www.wimmer-hudson.com/sampling_error.htm).*

It's point-and-click simple. You simply . . .

✓ Enter the sample size you wish to see the sampling error for
✓ Click the "Calculate!" button
✓ And *voila!* — instant sampling error!
✓ The screen will display: "The maximum sampling error expected with a sample size of (500) is (4.0%)".

Hats off to Roger and Matt for providing an excellent free service to the industry.

For more information, call (303) 763-4949 or visit their website.

The **KHJ Boss Memo** from April 26, 1966, written by master motivator **Ron Jacobs** originally scheduled for this issue, will appear **next week** in **"PD"**.

The **AUTHORIZED "BOSS"** Memos

The *Most Effective* Promotions Of All Time | *Cash Call*

Know How Much Is In It & Win It

Last week, we covered the *"Don't Say Hello"* Cash Call (see **"PD"** Issue #14, page 8). This week's spotlight is on *another* style of outcall cash contest:

The *"Know How Much Is In It To Win It"* Cash Call (aka *Dialing For Dollars*).

How It Works: When we call you, just tell us, to the penny, what the (ascending) Cash Call jackpot amount is and you win it. Simple premise any idiot can understand.

Why It Works: Like *"Don't Say Hello"*, it combines the allure of big bucks with breadth of scope (that goes beyond just the 1-2% of listeners who are considered *"daily* contest players"). When a jock says, "I've got a feeling I'm going to be calling *you* this hour" it tends to penetrate the listener's filter-system better than it would if he just said "call in to win right now". 98-99% of most listeners *know* they *won't* be calling-in-to-win-right-now, which is why many "call-in" pleas for small/crud prizes seem to go in one ear and out the other. Bigger jackpots every hour make it sound like your cash contesting budget is larger than life.

Upsides:

- It puts big money on the line every hour, without having to actually give it away every hour (thereby *preserving* your contest budget).
- Also puts emotion and the magic of "live" (to tape) callers together on-the-air, as the personality consoles the contestant. Occasionally a contestant will "guess" extremely close, which enables you to produce a short-term "close-call" promo (almost as effective as an actual winner, *without* depleting your budget).
- Most of all, it gives you a *legitimate* opportunity, at least twice hourly, to say *write it down* (which penetrates the filter-system of any *diarykeepers* who are listening, and reminds them to, ahem, "write it down").

Downsides:

- Like *"Don't Say Hello"*, *"Jackpot Cash-Call"* is not *controllable*. You can be "hit" anytime. Once upon a time, 6PM/Perth (Australia) Breakfast Host **Gary Shannon** gave away *three straight* $2,000+ Cash Call jackpots, three hours in a row. True story. (What's "normal"? See "Budget Projections" on page 8.)
- Sales reps will complain that when a contestant says they "don't know" the jackpot, it means they're not listening, so we're "just advertising the fact that no one's listening to us". Again, let's not take ourselves too seriously, here. If you keep the emphasis on "you", meaning *the listener* (". . . that means, next hour I might be calling *you* to give you even more money, so make sure you're listening for next hour's Cash Call jackpot amount, and make sure you *write it down"*), it's not perceived to be much of a negative by *the audience.*

Also see "guesses" below, under **Tweaking Presentation**.

❑ In a hotly competitive situation, one of the more cele-brated "dirty tricks" involves a competitor impersonating your personalities, randomly calling people, letting them take a guess, then saying "you've won – come down to the station, *your* station, to pick up your prize". (Kids playing pranks do this, too). One way of dealing with this, if it happens: earmark some decent prizes in your prize closet for such occasions (even if it wasn't your fault, it's an opportunity to leave a great taste in a potential listener's mouth – in which case, they'll tell many others about how nicely you treated them, even though it wasn't your fault they were duped into thinking they won). **Wallace Wisdom:** *Never* miss an opportunity like this!

Budget Projections: How often you have a winner will depend upon your audience share. Over the course of a 7-day week, most stations would make about 100 Cash Calls (at a rate of 12-15 a day). Figure that out of every 100 calls you make, only between 16 and 26 of them (depending on the daypart) will be listening to the Radio. Of those, probably less than 10% of them will be listening to you. (e.g, If you have a 5 share (12+), then you'll come across .8 to 1.3 listeners to your station (per 100 calls) – and, of course, not all of them will have the jackpot amount written down).
Net take: This usually translates to a winner every 2-3 weeks.

Wallace Wisdom. Here's how to make Cash Call sound best.

Tweaking Presentation:

✓ First, unless it's a stunning "close call" with a contestant who wreaks of "good copy", don't play the entire call on-the-air. Just *cut to the chase* – start with an efficient lead-line and then play a short soundbite to "legitimize" that the contest was actually played, demonstrating the crux of their response.

✓ Remember to use some type of touch-tone effect (which subliminally delivers the "cash call" message instantly in a listener's mind).

✓ *Off* the air, give the contestant a chance to take a guess, using a "window" somewhere close to the actual amount ("it's between $2,140 and $2,160 and it *ends* in 55 cents"). In this way, it sounds like the contestant *knows* about the contest because they're taking a "close" guess. (See how much better this sounds than playing back a soundbite of some ignoramus saying "I don't know"?) Note: Never say it's a "guess" on-the-air (the object of the game is *know*-how-much-is-in-it-to-win-it, not *guess*-what's—in-it).

✓ Budget-planning addendum: make your guess-suggestion-window *wide* (otherwise you'll go through your budget much faster, just from lucky guesses).

✓ Some stations use dollars and cents, others just round off the dollars. It's a judgement call. Personally, I like to use dollars and cents because it sounds like *bigger money* to the casual listen (because of the number of syllables). One neat little technique I used to use when I was consulting KTSA/San Antonio: every amount always ended with 55 cents (so even the "guesses" sounded like the listener was *aware* of the contest *and the station)*.

✓ Then quickly tag the actuality with forward momentum into the next hour (and take advantage of the obvious opportunity to casually mention "write it down" again).

> **Example:**
> "X-109 just called the (Smith) residence in Bumpkin Acres, where we talked with (Bill Smith), hoping he'd win our Big Money Cash Call jackpot of $2,148.55. But he was just a little off"
> (play soundbite saying
> *"Ummm, ah think it's 2,144.55")*
> "Oooh . . . so close. But, you know what that means to *you*, don't you? *Next* hour, I'll have an even *bigger* Cash Call jackpot – and I might be calling YOU – so make sure you *write it down* and keep it near your phone".

✓ Note that this example only requires about 20 seconds of on-air time. And the jackpot "set-up", which can be done in simple "liner" form, only takes about *10*. It's this kind of crisp presentation that helps *Cash Call* become the backbone of a "stealth" contesting underlay (*there* for those who want it, but seemingly *not* for those who don't).

✓ Make sure your jackpot is *ascending*, rather than random numbers. It enables you to stake claim to "stronger jack-pots every hour", which can create better momentum.

✓ Remember the importance of promotional announce-ments (especially elaborate production values). Winner promos (especially montages demonstrating *several* win-ners, which *prove* it's "winnable"), close call promos, and clever twists ("They'll *never* call *me* . . . that's what *I* used to say", meet X109 Cash Call winner Betty Smith . . . "). If your promo inventory is limited, consider *consolidating* promo's and amount set-ups (the new hourly jackpot amount can simply be *tagged* onto the *end* of the promo).
TW Tip # 3110, #4053, #9101, and #18101

| Next Week | *Cash Call III* | ■ Clever Variations |
| | | ■ Tweaking It Further |

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.*

MY SOURCES TELL ME YOU'VE BEEN **PRAYING** FOR A **LIGHTER COMMERCIAL LOAD.** I DON'T LIKE DISC JOCKIES WHO TRY TO GO **OVER** MY HEAD...

Music Science 101

It involves snorkeling through your volume of call-in requests and asking selected callers if they'd also like to take a short 10-minute music taste-test, rating 30-40 other songs, including their favorite, using our 7-point semantic differential scale (Love, Like, Liked But Tired-Of, Neutral, Dislike, Hate, Unfamiliar). In this way, you get "Q-score" likeability responses for *every* song on your playlist (or being considered), instead of just the song the caller requested. I don't recommend it as a *replacement* for traditional callout (with a properly selected sample and other integrity-safeguards). But it is an *inexpensive indicator* that is much better than traditional requestline tallies. Many stations have used it as a *supplement* to their traditional callout (to get a gauge on what the active "leaders" are into). Warning: Any requestline analysis, including *New ERAA,* is still vulnerable to calls from "moles" (competitive trying to trip you up). One way of minimizing this possibility is to *randomly* select callers for inclusion in your likeability-sample (but even that is no failsafe).

TW Tip #2110 and #19034

■ **Trades.** R&R, Gavin, FMQB, Bilboard (and Airplay Monitor), Hitmakers, etc all have excellent methods of reflecting the national (and in some cases, even regional) music scene. But they cannot reflect *local timing* (which is, after all, what rotations are all about). The key factor in assessing a song's life-cycle is *how many impressions it has made on target-lifegroup listeners* (to measure when "developed dislike" begins to enter the picture). Unfortunately, you can't get that kind of local information from a trade publication. *TW Tip #2111 and #19035*

■ **Bellwethers.** It's usually a good idea for you to keep your eye on other markets that are similar to yours (and/or other stations that are experiencing a similar competitive complexion). This is where using *Mediabase Music Research* and/or *BDS* can be very helpful. *Mediabase,* in particular, enables you to construct a custom-monitor comprised of several key stations you regularly watch. The downside is that, like National Trades, watching other "sister" markets doesn't do anything to help you pinpoint *local timing* in *your* market. *TW Tip #2112 and #19036*

How Consolidation Can Add *Cost-Efficiency* **To Your Research**

Powerball & The Law Of Diminishing Returns

The recent feeding frenzy surrounding the $295,000,000 Powerball jackpot provided another interesting study into human nature – and audience behavior – we should all take note of.

Remember the first wave of "Powerball-mania" two years ago? It occurred when the first "big" cash jackpot rolled over to roughly $50,000,000. Seemed *everyone* was falling all over themselves to get a ticket. (True confessions: even I bought one, something I rarely do!).

What happened next time the jackpot hit 50 mil? Not much (in the way of delirious consumer behavior, anyway). But . . . by the time it approached 95 million, the fever was back.

In the case of Powerball, the consumer appeal seems to undergo somewhat of an "upward-ratcheting" effect – no one seems to get really excited until the last "high" is hit – and *exceeded*. My prediction: you won't see the *next* wave of Powerball-mania until the jackpot escalates into the *200's*. (How ya' gonna' get 'em excited about $50 million when they've already seen $295 mil?)

So what's happened here? It's simply the "law of diminishing returns" in action.

Wallace Wisdom: The Law Of Diminishing Returns, as applied to radio programming and marketing, states **the exact same contest, staged in exactly the same way,** *rarely* grows **in popularity once it achieves critical mass satiation. In fact, its appeal usually** *declines*.

TW Tip #1056, #3111, #4054, and #9099

Keep this in mind next time you're inclined to let a contest or marketing campaign "coast" a little too long (thinking it's not really losing much momentum). But at the same time, just because a successful promotion has been on-the-air for awhile is no reason to arbitrarily *pull it* because of an imaginary, self-imposed "use-by" date. Especially in the case of a "mechanical" underlay contest (that forces listens, and thus diary-entries without being imposing). *Unless* you have a replacement that's *equally effective* at forcing listens, you're probably better off running with the tried and true. (Remember, in most cases, burn-out *burns-in* slowly).

TW Tip #19037 and #1057

The better option, I believe, is to figure out *new ways* to *add pizzazz*, making a monolithic contest fresh and more appealing. (See next week's "Variations On The Cash Call Theme" for examples). Adding more money, of course, is the easy option. But that's *too easy* (and sooner or later, usually sooner, your budget *will* catch up to you). (As the late Senator Everett Dirksen used to say, *"A billion here, and a billion there, and pretty soon you're talking serious money")*.

If a long-running cash contest has run into declining momentum, how can you *titillate* a listener's jaded senses? The right bonus prize (a trip, a car, a pool, etc.) can often give it new life.

Might be an opportunity to tie-in a value-added Sales prize, but be *careful* about tarnishing a winning promotion – *your contest image is only as strong as your weakest prize*.

*TW Tip #3112, 4055, and #17019*

Sometimes new *mechanics* can add the right new wrinkle or sparkle (maybe, "This hour, we'll be taking *triple*-calls – one from a business, one from a carphone, and one from someone at home"). (This would also work in a call<u>out</u> promotion). *TW Tip #3113, #4056, and #9100*

Take a good, honest look at *your* station's promotional thrust. And see what a few tweaks here and there could do to add some life to any of your perennials. You'll be glad you did (and so will your audience).

All The Best,

TW
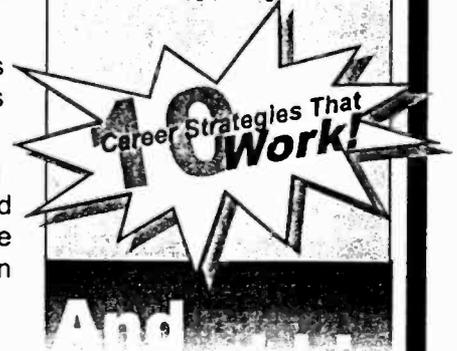
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