

—in successful advertising!

# WHAT ABOUT RADIO??



# KENNETH M. GOODE

HARPER & BROTHERS · ESTABLISHED 1817

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## ABOUT THIS BOOK

This book does two things. It describes in detail how money has been made in the use of radio in advertising and warns the reader away from a repetition of costly mistakes which have been made in this field. Mr. Goode writes out of a successful experience with radio advertising for his own clients and draws upon a wide assembly of information regarding other ventures in radio selling. Everyone directly or indirectly concerned with the benefits of radio advertising will find this book an essential guide and manual. The author's vigorous and entertaining style will be remembered by those who know that he has already written eight other books, all among the most popular and authoritative studies of various phases of modern advertising.

No. 3391

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# WHAT ABOUT RADIO?

KENNETH M. GOODE



HARPER & BROTHERS

1937

NEW YORK AND LONDON

**WHAT ABOUT RADIO ?**  
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● | **WHAT ABOUT  
RADIO ?**

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•

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## INTRODUCTION

**R**ADIO in one respect resembles professional baseball. Both can sympathize with the enterprising little debutante who climbed in her own back window at 3 A.M. saying, "Mother is the necessity of invention!" No way appeared possible to coordinate statistics on one man's catching a ball when, as, and if hit by another man with a hickory bludgeon. In self-defense, therefore, baseball originated its own system of daily fact-research, an endless series of minute records, kept easily by any small boy on a nickel score card, yet so exact and so useful as to put to shame our most serious businesses short of engineering.

So radio broadcasting, starting with no knowledge of a listening audience, has kept many records, made many investigations, and, in one way or another, asked myriads of questions of multitudes of people.

Anyone with patience to assemble this evidence, to sort its essential truths, is rewarded not only with an excellent picture of radio's place in the American home, but gains as well no inconsiderable addition to his picture of the American home. Because they are based on such records—reports of more than seven hundred separate inquiries by at least six hundred different investigators checked, rechecked and



counterchecked in personal contact with the daily habits of at least 10,000,000 different people, statements throughout this small book are made with a positiveness unmodest to mere opinion. Even so, this book disclaims any ambition to authority. Our hope is not to settle anything for anybody: perhaps, with a little luck, to help some more thoughtful reader settle something for himself.

K. M. G.

● | **WHAT ABOUT  
RADIO ?**

## A UNIVERSAL AUDIENCE

ADVERTISING by radio is like sailing the Atlantic Ocean. There's room for everything. Plenty of profits for even the smallest craft that catch favoring currents, tides, and trade winds. Reefs and breakers for even the mightiest that disdain the charted channels.

This, of course, is true in some degree of all forms of advertising. Yet, in a psychological process summarized for sixty years by the N. W. Ayer motto,

*Keeping everlastingly at it brings success*

older slower-moving methods of communication might often prove more safely paced to the plodding mind of man. Successful or not, radio advertising admittedly "shoots the works," as the gambling slang goes, with more money in less time than any other medium yet devised. Above all the others, radio offers an advertiser a spectacular temptation to his favorite vice of confusing the size of an opportunity with the probability of its paying.

Radio does offer advertisers a colossal opportunity. Just as the open Atlantic. Of radio's ubiquity there's no doubt. Nor question! In its cosmic vaudeville,

Boston shares symphony with Banff. Hollywood gossips with Saskatchewan. From Boston to Hollywood a dozen cities join a giant variety show for Admiral Byrd at the South Pole. These cities, in turn, hear, jump by jump, their Irish Sweepstakers lose at Aintree. George V reads a Christmas message to the British colonies: the civilized world as one grand congregation echoes the British anthem. Newfoundland fishermen crowd frozen decks to hear young King Edward's first talk to his new 300,000,000 sunburned subjects in India. The gossip world matinees his abdication. Children sing St. Patrick's Day praise across seas in the saint's native Gaelic. Ninety nations hear Pius XI dedicate in Latin a radio station for the Vatican. Says the *New York Times*:

. . . lone trappers in the North woods, . . . nuns in recreation rooms, neighborhood foursomes at bridge . . . the three-year-old boy and his great-grandmother. The freshman and the college dean. . . . The sub-deb and the President<sup>1</sup>

Or an earlier book of mine:

Monks in monasteries, taxis in traffic jams, solitary lightships tossing on stormy seas, solitary trappers snowbound in winter woods, baseball fans, college presidents, dancing daughters, and Supreme Court judges, babies in arms, and bedridden veterans—listen to radio, the only universal audience in the history of the world.

Mississippi voters hear Republican speakers for the first time in history. The Rocky Mountains argue vocally with the Maine coast.

As I write in Florida, a scant 45 miles away from its lazy

<sup>1</sup> For all references see last page.

brown flow, a thousand Swedes in St. Paul are singing The Swanee River for me—for Europe and South America!

Mussolini! George Bernard Shaw! Mahatma Gandhi! Grand operas and symphonic broadcasts of magnificent orchestras come out cheek-by-jowl not only with Harlem Night Clubs but with impassioned appeals to use Nujol.

Returning to Anne O'Hare McCormick's lyric summation:

Radio is a great unknown force! With the air full of far-flung utterances of music and entertainment, this marvel of science represents a still-to-be-determined power in shaping the world of the future.

Despite radio's still-to-be-determined power to shape the world of the future, even to shape the fortunes of contemporary American advertisers, this small book joins the others gaping. Yet, like sight-seers at Niagara Falls, stunned with the sound and beauty of the Falls, the pages that follow plan to pull on rubber coats and scout the Cave of the Winds stoutly behind scenes.

Historically, the facts about radio are distressingly simple [says Victor M. Ratner,<sup>2</sup> Columbia's able exponent]:

Advertisers first toyed with this noisy thing because it was a novelty. Then came the depression. More advertisers (hooking at any straw to keep a sales-curve from sinking for the third time) turned to the air.

Because the programs (i.e. supplied by advertisers) were there, people listened.

*Because they listened*, the programs were there. In any case, it didn't take much more than a decade for radio families in the United States to reach a total of 20,000,000 homes! . . . And dollar volume (of radio advertising) went up and up, as though hitched to a balloon. . . .

In the emotional excitement of this new form of advertising, prodigal and prodigious, American business executives, quite humanly, have engulfed themselves on a vaster scale than ever before. There's glamour, unquestionably, in being even a tiny part of a magnificent, almost unfathomable, social, moral, political, and educational force. Moreover, as Mrs. McCormick points out, radio

. . . is the heaven-sent opportunity of manufacturers, salesmen and advertising experts to satisfy the secret ambition of all men to put on a show.

So, as David Ross<sup>3</sup> notices:

Many a business executive who would be too timid to join a dramatic club jumps with eagerness at the opportunity to produce a program to entertain millions.

Back in the business offices, however, accountants must coldly enter practically every penny of some \$90,000,000 a year which supports this urge of self-expression as a series of individual advertising appropriations, each supposedly dedicated to a dollar-and-cents job of selling the corporations' cigarettes or coffee. Points Walter Winchell's prying pen:

Major Bowes and Rudy Vallee radio shows should rate high in anybody's book. Yet, the sponsor which owns both, earned 9¢ a share less this year than last. That's a loss of about 10%!

As an argument against radio advertising, this is patently unscientific. Invaluable, nevertheless, as a terse reminder of the unpopular realistic point of view. At the billions of Roosevelt expenditure for relief some cynic hurled a shrewd question:

If the 48 states couldn't afford the expenditures separately, how can they afford it collectively?

Radio's problem is exactly the reverse. There's no question America can afford its radio expenditure collectively. The question is whether advertisers can afford their expenditure separately. Or, stated a bit more justly, how far each broadcasting advertiser may be *allowing* radio to make for his stockholders the money it indubitably can.

This dollars-and-cents viewpoint is obviously unromantic. Yet essentially prophylactic. Year after year some 550 radio stations do collect from some 5,500 American businesses some \$90,000,000. This vast sum is diverted from some other possibility of profit. Somebody, after all, should sell enough extra tooth paste or additional cartons of coffee to salvage the investment at least. Since the first crude broadcasting in 1920 tented atop Westinghouse's Pittsburgh factory, radio has come far. Whatever the advertiser's share may have been, broadcasting has, in less than twenty years, built itself a billion-dollar industry with 15,000 employees' salaries approaching \$30,000,000 a year. Radio remains, nevertheless, as Mrs. McCormick<sup>4</sup> pictures it:

... a kind of infant prodigy, a giant grown to a terrible size and a terrible loquacity, but still very young and gangling.

And with her we agree that

... there's a catch in the radio:

... it can do a marvelous job of loudly broadcasting to the world's end what's hardly worth a passing whisper!

Therefore, as thrifty peasants, here and there

around a raging world, boil eggs for tourists in the hot springs at the foot of vast volcanoes, these pages venture a word toward any advertisers of a more modern school who might figure to have their fun over the radio and still make it pay—pay, not only for itself, but even pay a profit. Toward the sales manager, particularly, our interest extends. Toward the many salesmen who unfortunately now and then must do harshly extra hustling for the pleasure of listening to especially lovely ladies sing to the glory of their firm.

Steadfastly, too, we sympathize with millions of little stockholders. True enough, when the stockholders of a northwestern power company were questioned, "do you approve of broadcasting as a part of the effort of this company?" only one stockholder said "no" and all the rest answered "yes." Yet, given, as extra dividends snatched from the spending, their prorata share of the less conspicuously profitable radio programs, we believe the tax-ridden stockholders of America, generally, could contrive, each on his own behalf, a burst of small-scale individual self-expression that would, on the whole, prove a surprisingly satisfactory offset for large-scale silence on the part of his business corporation.

Not that we advocate this large-scale silence!

Quite the contrary. We seek to avert it by doing our tiny share toward making better and more profitable the prevalent noises.



## THE SEVEN QUESTIONS

**R**ADIO is one of America's three reasonably well-distributed conveniences. Automobile and telephone, the other two, of course. The exact number from year to year doesn't much matter. Radios, telephones, or motorcars. Particularly a couple of million radio sets more or less. A dozen variables are more important. In fact, a radio advertiser fussing about the size of his possible audience suggests a solitary navigator of a birchbark canoe sounding the mid-Atlantic to be sure he has plenty of water.

There's neither criticism nor distrust, therefore, when I say I have before me six different statements as to the total reachable number of radio listeners:

43,000,000  
48,000,000  
50,000,000  
54,000,000  
60,000,000  
78,000,000

All six totals were printed quite recently. Each is backed with about the same show of research and scientific calculation. Says one excellent book:<sup>5</sup>

Seventy-eight millions of our citizens are more or less ha-

bitual listeners; more than 20,000,000 of them often listen to a single broadcast.

With equal appearance of authority, a second<sup>6</sup> says:

During the 8 P.M. to 10 P.M. period, therefore, an advertiser can assume that of each 8,000,000 sets in his area, nearly 4,000,000 are tuned in at his time, with an average of about 3.1 listeners each—a total of 12,400,000 listeners.

Still a third<sup>7</sup> states:

A six-months analysis of seventy-nine programs, based on an October 1934 estimate of a total U. S. ownership of some 19,000,000 radio sets, showed, between 7 and 10 P.M. (the "favorable" hours) the average number of sets actually tuned on

... was 4,546,000

... that the number of listeners per program ranged between 179,300 and 3,760,000

... and that only nine of seventy-nine programs studied reached a six-month average of 2,000,000 listeners.

Twenty million habitual listeners! 12,400,000!! 2,000,000!!! Your radio audience drops thus abruptly with your choice of commentators. When statisticians fall out, there's nothing left but an honest guess. Comparing carefully the divergent figures of sixteen different writers on radio; most of whom, in turn, accept as facts some frankly sketchy estimates by their predecessors, we may safely print for the he-who-runs advertiser these round figures:

In the United States today are about 130,000,000 people. Assembled in, say, 33,000,000 "families." (I quote the word "families" because it becomes in all radio statistics the unit to denote countable groups

of listeners.) These 33,000,000 American "families" own, maybe, 22,000,000 motorcars, 20,000,000 telephones, and at least 23,000,000 radio sets. The number of radios might be nearer 33,000,000—an "average" set to every family—except for rapidly bettering impoverished, unelectrified farming districts. Radio professionals, prosperously grouped in three or four big cities, find it hard to reconcile themselves to a United States that lags along so largely with a semi-rural population, rural even beyond the millions in tiny towns and microscopic villages. On our little cow-and-chicken farms still dwell more than 32,000,000 people; and of those scattered 7,000,000 farm families only about one in three yet owns a radio set. For this reason, mostly, the average for seventeen southern and southwestern states is less than half the national average. So that only 5 in every 100 homes in the state of Mississippi have radio sets as compared with 97 out of every 100 homes in the capital city of Washington. Where Massachusetts lacks only 14 sets for every 100 homes, scanty Arkansas lacks 72.

At worst, however, as we have already suggested, there's a plethora of possible listeners. Probably twice as many radio sets as telephones, counting homes alone, over the whole United States. Mechanically, the radio setup, as it stands, can connect an American advertiser with more people than the combined population of France and Great Britain. Statistically, at any rate, a radio advertiser can reach

easily nine out of ten of the nation's 20,000,000 better homes.

With practically everybody in America in reach of the running radio ten hours for every hour they spend at the movies, surely any advertiser can profitably tap this generous flow. Unfortunately, there are complications. After so gorgeous a statistical start, we come reluctantly to recognize radio's imponderables—those dozen variables more important than statistical set-ownership. Along with Mr. Frank A. Arnold,<sup>8</sup> dean of modern radio writers, the inquiring broadcaster may every now and then find himself saying:

This figure, however, should not be taken too seriously for, while it would be humanly possible for 60,000,000 people to listen at one time to a national broadcast, common sense tells us that this would rarely, if ever, occur.

The practical questions that arise through this simple appeal to common sense are innumerable. This small book must content itself with a glance at seven of the more important; for example:

- (A) *How many listen at a time?*
- (B) *How long do they listen?*
- (C) *How often do they listen?*

These first three questions, answered rather easily, will, as we shall shortly see, establish the regular "flow" of radio listening around, say, 1,000,000,000 per-person-hours a week. The great unfathomable force begins thus unromantically to be reduced to an everyday conception measurable in familiar terms

like gas and electricity. Prosaic as it may sound, this 1,000,000,000 per-person-hours a week of radio listening (as against an equally round 150,000,000 hours, plus, a week of motion-picture looking) is broadcasting's stock in trade. The amazing stock in trade which, identically and simultaneously, serves our more than five hundred time-selling radio stations as both the wholesale basis for their collective support and their respective individual circulation claims made competitively to radio advertisers.

The wiser broadcaster with a good advertising agency adviser will, before signing his thirteen-week contract, still ask four further questions:

- (D) *When do they listen?*
- (E) *Why do they listen?*
- (F) *How do they listen?*
- (G) . . . *and what HAPPENS?*

Let us glance briefly at each of these in the order listed. First how many, how much, and when do they listen?

# 3

## HOW MANY? HOW LONG? HOW OFTEN?

### (A) HOW MANY LISTEN AT A TIME?

Now that radio is as familiar as the family bathtub, people accept it almost as tacitly in their social stride. Few go far to find a radio. Even fewer try completely to avoid one. The only safe formula, therefore, for figuring the number of people more or less constantly, and more or less consciously, within hearing of each running radio set is to figure the customary "family" itself—whatever that may be.

Since the magazines for many years gave themselves the long count of four "readers" to every unit of circulation, radio salesmen today needn't hesitate, in their turn, to claim listeners at 4-per-family. If radio circulation were only as simple as newspaper, magazine, or billboard circulation, we then would need only to group in front of each of our 23,000,000 radio sets one good old-fashioned father-mother-son-daughter family unit clearly to establish 92,000,000 possible listeners.

Statisticians, however, tend to shade conservatively toward the more modern radio family of 3.7

which furnishes 81,400,000 possible listeners. Or toward the 1930 U. S. Census Bureau unit of 3.3 to get only 72,600,000. Many broadcasters prefer to figure the 68,200,000 listeners "without infants" got with Crossley's family figure of 3.1. Or add thereto another ten million possible listeners, equally infantless, by raising the average size of their radio family (excluding infants) to 3.62 persons.

Radio listening, of course, is a family matter. Eight out of every ten sets, perhaps, perform regularly for a real family, big or little. In Minneapolis, for instance, the replies indicated to Kirkpatrick<sup>9</sup> that the average radio "family," whether real or statistically synthetic, included 2.5 persons besides the person who filled out the report. This Minneapolis average of 3.5 listeners, so far as it goes, checks neatly and simultaneously both the time-honored tradition that the whole family listens to the radio and the current estimate that the whole "family," without its infants, numbers from 3.1 to 3.7 persons. On the other hand, Cantril and Allport in their authoritative *Psychology of Radio* calmly cut our possible audience of 78,000,000 listeners in half with this observation:

The number of people who actually listen to a radio set at one time has been established by broadcasters as 2.3 in the evening and slightly more than one in the daytime.

But we merely waste time trying for exact averages. All who offer conflicting counts agree that, regardless of broad mathematical averages, the *actual*

round working minimum average of per-person listening.

(c) HOW OFTEN DO THEY LISTEN?

For a restful change, let's start one discussion with a word about those who don't listen to the radio. Thirty, perhaps, forty out of every hundred people in these United States probably don't. Not during the daytime, at any rate. Nor even at night with any great frequency. This leaves the radio advertiser some sixty or seventy in every hundred people who *do* listen. Even in the daytime. This rather important line of demarcation between listeners and nonlisteners, as a class, gets lost in the quantitative averages so swollen toward the listening extreme as to suggest that radio running is a universal pastime, regularly rotating, and evenly scattered like eating or sleeping. Radio listening, as such, is not universal. On the contrary, listening is a set habit, so to speak, which, considered as a self-contained pastime, say, like playing solitaire, rather than as an occasional opportunity to hear a particularly noteworthy feature, may be found somewhat generally confined to a large but fairly fixed number of regular devotees. Out of this number of those who do habitually listen perhaps 80 per cent will, as a rule, be on every day. This, again we must notice, doesn't mean that 80 per cent of all the radio regulars tune in every day. For even among those favorably enough inclined to enumerate themselves as "listeners," there are in every hundred a bottom ten who admit no regularity whatever, as well



as the next lowest 10 per cent who claim to listen only once or twice a week.

Radio sets, like other machines, have off days. Repairs are prompt, however; replacement is so easy that we needn't bother about the 6 or 8 per cent always temporarily or permanently laid away. Nine out of every ten are ready to flick into effective action at the slightest touch. The comparatively few ailing machines are more than offset by two-or-more-to-the-family sets, by some 3,000,000 automobile sets, and by uncounted thousands of social gatherings around semipublic loud-speakers. So our circulation estimates need make no mechanical allowances.

Thus far, then, we have seen that whenever a radio set is run at all, it has an attendant audience of at least one-and-a-half persons who, in fractional unanimity, are more than likely to run their machines at least three hours. How *often* are these sets thus flicked into action? That is to say, how many days a week is the "average" set turned on? Or tuned in, if you prefer. Crossley's survey held that three out of every four radios are used every day. Dr. Starch more recently raises the Crossley figure for everyday use to practically four out of every five sets.

Let's examine the probabilities. Clark-Hooper figures would seem to indicate roughly that in every million radio homes, on a given evening, there are practically always 150,000 families away. Out of town. At the movies. Guests at dinner. Or the theater. This would, after all, allow for a family being away only one night a week. And so leave at home

850,000 families out of each million. At least 300,000 of them won't have their radio running at any given moment. But some 550,000 probably will at some moment or other. This may be about as far as it is safe to generalize. The percentage of all sets active at any given time varies widely, of course, with the hour itself. At 6:00 P.M., say, activity might run as low as 16 per cent. At 10:00 P.M. it reaches its peak of simultaneous listening around 50 per cent. But including all hours of day and night, the actual radio audience—counted in active sets—is generally granted to attain possibly 80 per cent, certainly no fewer than 70 per cent, of the total number of available *sets*.

I deliberately stress the words "set" and "machine" for the same reason that I started this chapter with a statement of the size of radio's nonlistening non-audience. Working with stupendously large averages, all of us have come more or less recklessly to reckon radio listeners—human beings—with the same statistical detachment with which we reckon radio sets. "Listeners" come thus to be visualized as squads of soldiers on parade, a formal audience of 3.1 persons without infants reporting, let us say, for a daily period of three hours. This conception is calamitous. Fortunately, every broadcaster can check back against his own observations of his family and their friends to correct any such fallacious feeling of statistical solidarity. No matter how many millions a coast-to-coast hookup may grand-total on an advertiser's adding machine, the basic radio unit of circu-

lation remains the little family circle of three or four people, each independently busy with his—or her—individual pleasures and daily duties, each circle committed to radio only so far as those *individual* duties and pleasures may be comfortably conducted within range of the familiar family set.

On that account, the hours each radio is run each day are determined primarily by fixed habits of each family. Clashing this squarely in the face comes the specific appeal of the given radio program which, while able only in the rarest instances to alter the time of family listening, does, nevertheless, determine at any given time the number of *actual* listeners and, infinitely more important, the amount of *actual* listening. This overstates both extremes, of course. Yet any ordinary advertiser might more safely start with this contradictory hypothesis than to believe, on the one hand, that he can alter family listening habits with a striking program or, on the other, that these listening habits, alone, will assure him a profitable audience for an undeserving offer.

A good hour among good neighbors on a good station will furnish ample audience, abundant audience, to any advertiser with the slightest right to be on the air. That the law of averages guarantees. But, with equal certainty, the law of averages will prevent any run-of-the-radio show from getting, even temporarily, anything remotely resembling the fantastically vast audiences that accepted radio circulation statistics so superbly metamorphose out of an unlimited horizon of blue sky.

Leaving the psychology of listening for a later, less statistical treatment, let's here summarize to the credit of radio's magnificent mechanical setup; that some 10,000,000 machines are run each day before sunset, and that the popular evening hours easily bring well over 12,000,000 the total count for the day. Any hour on any station will always furnish a surprising number of listeners. These are thereafter reinforced by a constant stream of new listeners. Tests have proved that. Meantime on behalf of any impatient individual broadcaster we may, perhaps, even this early, break down breath-taking millions into a fairly firm estimate that a good average program over a popular station between 7:00 P.M. and 10:00 P.M. will, in any representative broadcasting district, find

- 65 to 70 out of every 100 available sets tuned in at some time during the night of his program
- 45 to 55 of every 100 available sets tuned in somewhere during the time of his program
- 20 to 35 out of every 100 available sets tuned into some portion of his program.

## TRAPS AND HAZARDS

**B**EYOND peradventure we have established so far that America's potential radio audience numbers

- 1) *in sets*: no fewer than 23,000,000 separate outlets
- 2) *in listeners*: no fewer than one person per set in the daytime; no fewer than two per set in the evening. To cover the entire day, the "pluses," both before and after sunset, justify a combined working average not lower than two persons.

That as to the number of listeners. As to the action of these listeners, we have satisfied ourselves, so far, that

- 3) *tuned in every day*: no fewer than seventy out of every hundred of those 23,000,000 sets running at least once every day seven days a week, do not fall below an average period of three hours a day.

Mathematically, the advertiser has thus a simple problem. He multiplies 23,000,000 sets by two persons apiece to get an audience of 46,000,000 persons—the 46,000,000 persons plus—who, so to speak, go with the machines. These 46,000,000 faithful listeners are multiplied, in turn, by their 3-hour aver-

age of daily listening. This (3 hours x 46,000,000 persons) gives, of course, a daily 138,000,000 per-person-hours as the "total probable average listening audience," if we may excuse so crude a statistic.

Obviously, not all this vast total of generally available is always available. At an ordinary hour of an ordinary day, nevertheless, we had agreed that a run-of-the-radio advertiser might reasonably hope to reach his rightful share of, say, 70 per cent of these 138,000,000 per-person-hours. Theoretically at least, 96,000,000 possible per-person-hours are, thereby, always on tap. Since even this 96,000,000 per-person-hours approaches every day the entire time the whole United States spends at the movies in a week, we can understand any advertiser joyously jumping for his share. Nor can we much blame an enthusiastic station promotion man for attaboying him with this sort of printed assurance:

The whole family listens—and does what it's told—when the telling is as easy-to-take as the family's favorite CBS programs. The world's largest radio network is a swift and lively route to twenty million families—who buy the things they're told to buy.

All of us wish this were true. Sadly practical knowledge of radio, of advertising, of human nature knows there's a catch. When "20,000,000 families buy things they're told to buy," radio will be a miracle, not a medium. A radio set, as such, has no more moral influence than a telephone. Less perhaps. Broadcasting, after all, is but a mechanical method of reaching

simultaneously the presence, often quite casual, of a vast number of people.

In an after-dinner speech deploring the passing of picturesque local dainties, Virginia ham, Maryland chicken, Philadelphia scrapple, a witty southern judge once complained that "the trail of the hot dog smears commonplace across the land." One hesitates to mention radio as America's mental hot dog. Yet the judge's elegy on vanishing individualism characterizes radio as a great degrader quite as accurately as do sentimental attempts to glorify it as a great standardizer. One writer, who knows better, says:

When they are all on the radio, there is little difference in essentials between the family in Hester Street . . . or on a college campus and in a mill village.

They are actually spending the evening together, rich and poor, urban and rural, educated and illiterate, all alike, absorbed by the same music, the same ideas, the same gags, the same entertainment keyed to the same average.

Five million radio listeners, rich and poor, campus and mill village, don't spend the evening together! That would bring out the National Guard. Maybe the Marines. Those 5,000,000 good citizens whose sets happen on the same Sunday morning simultaneously to coincide despite a three-hour difference in their time zones aren't, I imagine, more homogeneous, thereby, by the tiniest tilt of an eyelash than are, say, the similar 5,000,000 Sunday morning readers of the *American Weekly*. Exactly the same rivalrous clashes, oppositions, competitions, and conflicts that

exist in nation, state, county, town, neighborhood, family, continue shamelessly unchanged, whether or not the same radio broadcast happens at any moment loosely to conjoin these nations, states, counties, towns, neighborhoods, and families into shiftlessly kaleidoscopic congregations.

I found Minneapolis crazy about one program with Birmingham thumbs down. There is no way under the sun to standardize the radio programs to please 100 per cent of the big country.

This was not the lament of an advertiser. Inexperienced. Puzzled. Perhaps disgruntled. Quite the contrary. It was the cool, deliberate judgment of NBC's master showman, John Royal, made to a reporter<sup>11</sup> at the end of Mr. Royal's 12,000-mile tour to verify at first hand and refresh into terms of modern mechanisms his memory of many successful years of vaudeville management. Moreover, mere geography, likely enough, is a minor hazard. Mr. Royal's statement probably voices only the beginning of the commercial broadcaster's program difficulties. Long before the ordinary radio advertiser brings himself to consider geographical conflicts in audience, he is, as we have already noticed, confronted with a dozen variables inherent in his medium itself. For want of a better name, let's call them radio's "circulation" variations.

(1) *Varying values of different times*

1. People in profitable quantities listen

(1) How often?



- (2) How long?
  - (3) When?
  2. Methods change in different circumstances; for example:
    - (1) Places where people listen
    - (2) Number of people in listening group
    - (3) Habit with regard to tuning station on and off
  3. Socially, people change occupations with the hours.
  4. Psychologically, people change moods. Even where a listener has formed the habit of hearing a certain program at a certain time, he must often find it more difficult to adjust his fixed mood to its demands.
- (2) *Varying values within the same time*
1. Communities, for example, eat at different hours.
    - (1) A lunch-hour program for farmers, say, sent out from Salt Lake City, for example, at 12:00 noon, would find the Fargo farmers just finished lunch, the Asheville farmers in midafternoon work and the Maine farmers beginning to think distantly about supper.
    - (2) Dinner music, on the other hand, sent out from New York at seven would reach Denver a bit early for tea and Hollywood too late for lunch. John Royal found western businessmen listening to Metropolitan Opera matinees over their after lunch dominoes.
    - (3) Daylight-saving time, similarly, plays havoc with established chain schedules. Crossley found that certain programs lose their listeners, while a few others, like Amos 'n' Andy, carry them along at almost any hour.
  2. Weather conditions keep people indoors to listen or they lure them out. Conventions, political campaigns, big fights, startling continuing news, local calamities, bring more listeners but subtract as strongly from *regular* listening.

(3) *Competitive value of same time*

1. More people listen
  - (1) Immediately before or after some program of established popularity.
2. Fewer people listen
  - (1) Immediately before or after some negligible or unpopular program.
  - (2) In competition with notable "opposition" feature on another major broadcast or some particular favorite on local station. At Evanston, for example, the A & P Gypsies found themselves with one-fourth of the "available" Monday audience, but with only one-sixth on Thursday evening, when their program competed with Lucky Strike.

These variations in advertising values so far noticed are weaknesses more or less peculiar to the radio. Not until a prospective broadcaster has considered them need he recall that besides these idiosyncrasies radio, like a store window, a poster, or Sunday newspaper, or any other medium attempting to deliver a universal message, regularly finds its human audience triturated beyond Mr. Royal's geographical bafflement, somewhat along these broader lines:

(1) *Racial variations*

Three out of ten persons are of foreign-born stock; in New York six persons out of ten are foreign born. Almost 38,000,000 Americans are of foreign or mixed parentage. They read innumerable newspapers printed in forty-one different foreign languages. Each of these groups evolves its own idealism, practices its centuries-old culture and tradition, creates its own vital, spiritual life.

(2) *Residential variations*

1. Section of the country in which they dwell.
2. City, backgrounds, tastes, and habits vary
  - (1) New York
  - (2) Other metropolitan cities
  - (3) Small cities
  - (4) Towns and villages
  - (5) Farms.

(3) *Religious variations*

(4) *Occupational variations*

(5) *Variations in social opportunity*

Will Durant, the famous writer, was asked to examine professionally a large sample of typical radio fan mail. He came to the conclusion that most of the letters were from invalids, lonely people, the very aged, the hero worshipers, and the very youthful. In the huge mass of mail Mr. Durant, strangely enough, found few letters from the "average" man or woman to whom the program was directed.

(6) *Educational variations*

(7) *Income and cultural variations*

(8) *Intrafamily variations*

1. Sex
2. Age
3. Personal preferences and interests.

And here, with this last, and apparently the simplest of variations, the *normal* differences in taste, training, and activity between different members of the same family, all theoretically listening always to the same thing, we probe a finger toward one of the two major weaknesses of radio advertising. Statistics justify the commercial broadcaster who counts his radio circulation in terms comparable with the distributed copies of newspaper and magazine circula-

tion. Yet a too-optimistic advertiser might find himself like a careless sales manager allowing his traveling men to report a couple of quick words over the telephone as numerically equivalent to the delivery of a requested catalogue, a specific sales letter, or even to a personal call. For, *other* than radio, practically every advertising medium is, on the one hand, either

- (a) *selective* enough to choose its own natural audience; *or*, on the other hand,
- (b) *enduring* enough to allow each of the several sections of any random assortment of people the time necessary to choose in fairly leisurely turn its own mood and convenience to consider each message.

Ubiquitous radio is neither selective nor enduring. Admittedly, quite the contrary. Radio proudly contracts to force or wheedle the whole world simultaneously to consider a single message in the same terms. As a sort of compensation, perhaps, to offset the prodigal superiority with which, gorgeously transcending all other advertising media, radio does simultaneously sprinkle the whole family, whether or no, for a fixed period every day, radio lacks completely, for one example, the grand flexibility of the Sunday newspaper in which each member may select, in turn, those features which particularly interest him, passing around and saving for universal reading only the features that happen to interest everybody. Radio lacks, as well, the durability of the reference-book type of magazine like *Good Housekeeping* or

*Reader's Digest*, set aside sometimes for months until those particularly interested shall have found congenial leisure. In other words, contrasted, at one extreme, with the Sunday newspaper neatly divided into sections for immediate personal perusal and, at the other, with the more mentally durable magazines filed away for deliberate, purposeful reading, all members of each radio family are autocratically assembled to listen to the same message at the same time. And, as the gangster movies say, "And *like* it!"

Thus the ordinary American home-radio-group becomes, as everyone knows, a constant listener; but it may also become, as fewer realize, a constant listener: not in hearing (a) something completely new, comparable to a chosen change of films at the motion-picture theater; nor even in hearing (b) a regular and expected continuation of the same material subsequently reorganized into a later, fresher form, like the successive editions of a newspaper; but (c) in hearing, hour after hour, day by day, week after week, essentially the same material repeated by different people, completely without a larger pattern, with no stated plan and no perceptible common purpose. As a result of this extraordinary external aural stimulus, three or four hours a day for weeks and months, a considerable part of almost any group of regular listeners must tend subconsciously to protect its comfort, if not its sanity, by becoming to a surprising extent a radio-inoculated audience. Psychopathically, many of the millions composing the more

sedimentary layers of radio's most habitual audience must become in no small degree:

### 1. SOCIALLY ARTIFICIAL LISTENERS

Socially considered, radio entertainment offers rather a skim-milk fare. Despite Will Hays's best censoring, the movie, in contrast, notoriously furnishes an antisocial "escape" that takes mere murder in its stride and delightfully threatens maid, matron, and debutante with the fate that is worse than death. All this is a theater darkened just enough to enjoy the moral support of one's beshadowed neighbors without actually suffering their active chaperonage. Motion pictures thus become, in a milder degree, a recognized mechanism for multiple defrustration, like mixed bathing and the country club drink-and-dance. Radio, on the other hand, representing these same people, openly intermingled in their tamer domestic practice, neither joins the Wednesday night meeting—political or prayer—as a complete satisfier of the gregarious trilateral audience instinct, on the one hand, nor, on the other, even remotely rivals the movies as a antisocial vehicle for robustly individual emotional escape.

### 2. HABITUAL LISTENERS, RATHER THAN INTENTIONAL

The first act by the first member of the family to wake up is, in countless American homes, turning on the radio. [Robert Littell<sup>12</sup> speaking.] The house is filled with organ music, weather reports or pollyanna setting-up exercises, but the household is too busy shaving, finding a clean shirt or percolating coffee to take any serious notice.

In the evening when the family is assembled once again, the radio is still going. Sometimes they tune in on a particular program, more often they let the radio drip along like a leaky faucet.

### 3. OCCASIONAL LISTENERS, RATHER THAN CONTINUOUS

Even when a family unit seriously settles down to listen to a given program, the rapport remains tenuous and unnatural, easily broken by the ringing of the telephone or the doorbell. Distraction in radio listening results not merely from an occasional clean-cut physical change (such an interruption, say, as happens when a person must leave the dinner table to answer a phone call). Less fortunately for the advertiser, the major radio hazards include not only an unsettled mind, but an unestablished mental attitude. Contrasted with the familiar older types of audience, to quote Cantril and Allport,<sup>13</sup> the typical radio listener

. . . has no sense of the occasion and is not on his good behavior. In front of the radio he is not conspicuous if he reads or plays cards, things he would never do before a rostrum or stage.

### 4. DIVIDED LISTENERS, RATHER THAN EXCLUSIVE

Father goes to work, the children to school. [Robert Littell again speaking.] The housewife is left alone—alone with the radio. . . . She makes the beds, she peels the potatoes, she listens once in a while, but most of the time the wave lengths, now commercial, now musical, flow into her ears and out again without leaving a trace.

It doesn't seem to interfere with father's reading of the

evening paper. It doesn't even seem to distract the children's preparation of their school homework.

But don't be too sure about that. Not long ago two psychologists (Hadley Cantril of Teachers College and Gordon W. Allport of Harvard) tried to find out just what effect the constant campus blare of radio was having on the acquisition of knowledge by the young.

The students were asked if they studied with the radio on. Sixty-eight per cent answered "yes." Then they were asked if they thought they studied less effectively with the radio on.

Sixty-eight per cent again answered "Yes."

Students, however, shouldn't be too severely chided for attempting unsuccessfully to accomplish two things when the entire family sets them the same example. Concentration may become a nationally lost art within a generation or two. By way of compensation, the survival of radio's fittest may evolve a race of Americans trained to so much negative ability to withstand any sort of distraction and conditioned so habitually to disregard the most subtly insistent high-pressure sales suggestion as to have no further need for the positive quality of attention our grandfathers believed so essential to success.

While listening to radio music, not unnaturally, two-thirds of the audience are likely to be engaged in some other activity. This rises to three-fourths for listeners under thirty years of age. There are obvious difficulties in finding out from a person himself how much attention he pays to anything. Kirkpatrick, nevertheless, made a bold attempt to get those who answered his questionnaire to differentiate between the hours they *did* listen to the radio and the hours



they *could* have listened merely by paying attention to a machine within their hearing. Those able to attempt so nice a distinction estimated an average of fifteen hours of this easy inattentiveness in a probable twenty-eight-hour week of radio running. Many Chicago housewives, for example, were found at cleaning house, cooking, sewing, reading, washing, tending children while the radio was on during the morning. Fewer than one in four women reported themselves idle even part of the time. Nearly half of them claimed, nevertheless, to have taken some sort of notes on morning broadcasts, usually about recipes. While sewing and reading in the afternoon, twenty-two in that hundred claim complete attention. Around eighty in every hundred women, who concede that they listen only now and then morning and afternoons, feel that they give their entire minds to the radio during the evening. Before committing himself too far on this somewhat exceptional period of fancied concentration, however, a commercially-minded broadcaster might well recall Hettinger's<sup>41</sup> caution:

There may be a question as to the best type of program for Saturday night, especially in view of the prevalence of entertaining at home. Under such conditions a broadcast which will constitute a pleasant background for conversation or bridge, will make possible dancing, may be the most desirable.

So much for radio's more obvious weaknesses—traps and hazards only for an unwary advertiser. Readers will discount them differently, each according to his own experience and personal interests.

That the habitual radio listeners, as a class, no longer represent an average cross section of the great mass of normal American society in its ordinary state of activity, none, I believe, will seriously question, despite some tremendously impressive and reasonably desperate "research" reports offered to prove the contrary. Television, no doubt, will, for a while anyway, come near achieving, as radio did at its start, that average turnover of all Americans of every class in more or less regular rotation. Meantime, twenty years of national dissipation in utterly undisciplined radio running has created for the broadcaster a vast special audience. Roy Durstine, who, as intelligently as any man in America, has worked to better the conditions he complains of, says:

The typical radio audience is a tired, bored, middle-aged man and woman whose lives are empty and who have exhausted their sources of outside amusement when they have taken a quick look at the evening paper.

They are utterly unlike those who are most vocal in their criticisms of radio programs—people with full lives, with books to read, with parties to attend, with theaters to visit, with friends whose conversational powers are stimulating.

While all will not acquiesce entirely in Mr. Durstine's drab etching, printed, by the way, primarily to prove that radio's real listeners aren't the class to criticize its artistry, all will, I believe, assent to the probability that if there *were*, unfortunately, in America, say, thirty millions of the sort of people Mr. Durstine so deftly sketches, their specific tendency to gravitate to the radio somewhat regularly

for their evening's entertainment—rather than to read, think, play poker, or dash off to a dance—would be as inevitable as their tendency to Ford down to Florida winterly for their more gregarious tussles with horseshows, shuffleboards, and daily thermometer readings.

Careful broadcasters will, of course, make their own allowances as to how far continuous causes, practically incessant and admittedly abnormal, must be expected to produce correspondingly abnormal effects. Just a word, though, as to possible symptoms of acute radiodosis. Your overindulged listener might, for example, be expected to show traces of four sorts of symptoms:

#### 1. BECOME NERVOUSLY FATIGUED

Conscious, intentional radio listening, as we noticed a few pages back, contends not alone against physical distractions by other people, but against mental distractions through the interruption of other thoughts. Unless relief intervenes, deliberate or accidental, even the average person in listening his average stint of three or four hours daily must either

- (a) be faithful to himself and fight off the radio, or
- (b) be faithful to the radio and fight off everything else.

Attention fatigue follows almost inevitably. In either case. If, on the other hand, the listener finds himself faithful to neither his intrinsic reactions nor the radio's extrinsic, there comes, with equal cer-

tainty, perhaps, the confused states of which we have just complained. Merely to establish a reasonable antecedent probability, we recite that there has been shown, experimentally, a natural increase of 16 or 18 per cent in energy expenditure working in a noisy environment as compared with quiet. Equally established is the fact that healthful development of infants and young children is menaced by constant loud noises; and the suggestion from Dr. John De-Boer's three-year study at the Chicago Normal School that any sleeplessness and overexcitement in children caused by radio comes not, as supposed, from emotional suspense over the stories they are told, but from "sound effects" when even slightly abused.

2. BECOME EASILY IRRITATED—HYPERCRITICAL—  
PERHAPS, UNREASONABLY PREJUDICED

Dr. Foster Kennedy of Bellevue Hospital told Mayor LaGuardia's Noise Abatement Committee that measurements showed the pressure of the human brain raised as much as 400 per cent by the mere explosion of a blown-up paper bag.

The first effect of noise is one of disturbance, of excitation and of irritation [he continued]. These effects have consequences of many kinds in conduct. They cause loss of temper, they play a part in quarrels and they prevent deep and sustained thinking. In attempting to overcome the effect of noise, great strain is put on the nervous system—leading to neurasthenic and psychosthenic states.

Even as more modern psychologists are pondering on the effect persistent overuse of the radio is

having on American powers of concentration, so inquiring American physicians may someday be asking the same question about American nerves. Many, if not most, of the bitterest complaints about "too much advertising," about lack of originality in programs, about the repetition of familiar tunes come, no doubt, from stale, overstrained habitués actually lacking courage to turn off their sets.

Says a squib in the London *Radio Times*, the official program of British Broadcast that sometimes sells as many as 3,000,000 copies:

Golf players and tennis players get stale. Literary critics and radio critics get stale. When the listener gets stale he loses much of his enjoyment in listening. And usually lays the blame at the door of the program.

Obviously, the remedy for staleness is to listen less, and from time to time give listening a rest altogether.

An even more serious question: Do our program makers get stale? It would be a miracle if they didn't. To supply a continuous and varied entertainment for perhaps 20,000,000 people 365 days a year!

And under the most exacting of all possible conditions. The ordinary impresario works hard for weeks to put a show on the stage; but once on, if he has any sort of luck, it stays there for months, for a year, perhaps; and he has time to recoup and refreshes himself for the next effort.

No such relief is possible to the builders of wireless programs. They put on a show, then—poof! and it's gone, and they have to begin again. And always the critics yapping at their heels for something fresh and original.

The American advertiser, for the moment, is keenly concerned not with the weariness of the program builders nor the irritation to the 10,000 strings

of Corti's organ, but only whether enough irritation may be accumulated to cause in the all-important listener a real sense of relief when at last the radio is turned off. Asked how many of their everyday programs were put on by advertisers, a representative group of listeners estimated 40 per cent too high. Asked what per cent of the entire radio time was taken up by advertisements, they guessed from 1 to 40 per cent.

### 3. NOTICE, NOW AND THEN, COMPARATIVELY LITTLE

A newspaper item, for example:

In Atlantic City court, Patrolman Bauer stood beside the accused and read off the charge "speeding 53 miles an hour."

"When I stopped the prisoner's car and made him pull over to the side of the road, he looked at me and seemed sort of dazed," the police officer said. "And the radio in the car was on strong and do you know what the program was, Your Honor?"

"No, tell me," the Recorder answered.

"It was a lecture on the dangers of speeding being broadcast by Station WPG."

Further less dramatic testimony to a more or less universal recourse to a saving slackness in the matter of continual concentration—which, of course, is not a reflection on radio, but on its abuse—surveys suggest that while six or seven out of every ten people can name the station tuned in at the moment they are being asked the question, only four or five can name the program or sponsor and less than two in ten are able to name the performing artist.

## 4. AND SELDOM REMEMBER MUCH

Even calling the listeners at the time the radio was running, Miss Arnold's telephone investigators found that out of the 19,000 in 36,000 who could, at that moment, name what advertiser's program they were running, nearly half were inaccurate in their memory when called the next morning about programs they were thus *known* to have heard the night before. Lumley's Ohio State College interviewers found that three to six out of every ten radio programs broadcast day by day make so little impression on anybody that they are never recalled in conversation by a representative group of listeners, even in response to an interviewer's prolonged questioning, deliberately turned toward reminding those listeners of those practically forgotten programs. Lumley further revealed that, confronted equally with names of programs actually broadcast and fictitious names of programs never broadcast, listeners are about as prone to report having heard the fake programs as the real.

## 5. BECOME INEPT AND SOMETIMES SLUGGISH IN ACTION

Says Douglas McGregor in the *Harvard Alumni Bulletin*:

The radio has a somewhat dulling effect on the higher mental processes of the listener. He is definitely less critical, less analytical, more passively receptive, when listening to the radio than when he is face to face with the speaker.

This slackness of lazy, habitual nonattentiveness of

the relaxed listener, due largely, no doubt, to excess radio running, must be distinctly distinguished from the scientifically regulated comparisons of *conscious* ear-versus-eye effectiveness, in which, as we have noticed, the ear makes always an excellent showing. Technically, in its more serious aspects approaching the educational, the radio makes a surprisingly good competitive showing, both against the normal reading by a person visible to the audience and the normal methods of hearing various sorts of talk directly from a speaker. In the telling of jokes, on the other hand, or other forms of trilateral audience participation, the same jests that set the crowded classroom into a social roar, when repeated by an absent professor over a loud-speaker, in exactly the same setting, evoked only a single embarrassed snicker.

Smart Boston psychologists arranged a radio overflow meeting to a popular evangelist's preaching. Trained observers in each hall gathered facts to compare emotional behavior of those downstairs with those who sat personally face to face with the evangelist. The upper group joins at once the singing choir, but it takes six hymns to make those downstairs begin to hum.

On the final appeal, upstairs, nearly fifteen hundred hands are raised.

Downstairs only two.

Again where readers of printed advertisements will seldom mistake the most elaborate directions, radio listeners—in ordinary listening circumstances—are likely to jumble unfailingly the most simple. The



U. S. Department of Agriculture reports that its broadcasters found extensive proof of the need of extreme care in giving specific directions over the radio. Ludicrous mistakes occur when the directions are partly forgotten. Experience proves that such forgetting is inevitable with most listeners. Lumley<sup>18</sup> adds the fact so familiar to all who handle radio mail:

The mail received in connection with the Monarch Mystery Tenor program is a peculiar commentary of the listener mind.

. . . Mail was not requested and there was no mention of a premium or prize.

However, hundreds of letters were received from listeners who were sure they guessed the identity of the mystery tenor. Many of the letters contained such phrases as "I hope this wins," or "Please mail me the prize."

One broadcaster, interested in the phenomenon of mental wooziness as well as in getting the maximum value from his requested response, urged the women listeners in advance to be sure and have a pencil in hand to write down important directions. And, particularly, to be prepared to take down the address. Even so, an actual count revealed 34 per cent of the mail received had one or more errors in the carefully spelled out firm name and address.

With its vast miscellaneous scattered audience, which must, notwithstanding, be induced to pay both advertiser's and broadcaster's profits for entertainment it might never buy at any box office, radio's never-ceasing combination of circus parade and Fuller Brush canvassers indubitably creates a social condition unique and utterly unprecedented. No

practical advertiser can afford offhandedly to ignore the psychopathic aspects of our national self-inflicted overindulgence in so splendidly operated an antidote for silence and solitude. Once actual conditions are fairly visualized, every advertiser may, as we shall see, design his technique profitably to defeat the fact rather than fail with the fable.

Better, perhaps, frankly to recognize from the beginning that America's firmly established physical and social radio-running habits tend so strongly to induce a new sort of normal abnormal reactions that the greatest danger confronting a radio advertiser may be his own failure to grasp the real situation. The threat to profitable broadcasting may, then, reside not in radio's peculiar circulation conflicts, nor even in the normal human conflicts—but in the advertiser himself, his own equally human failure fully to apprehend his audience and clearly to comprehend his medium.

*Modern radio is a flow, not a show!*

Immediate acquiescence on this point is not asked. Or, for that matter, on any of the others so far mentioned. Rather, open-minded consideration in other chapters under our three remaining questions:

- (E) *Why do they listen?*
- (F) *How do they listen?*
- (G) *—and what happens?*

## WHEN DO THEY LISTEN?

**H**ow does the average woman spend her day? This may be the most important single question that confronts a radio advertiser. As purchasing agents for the home, a comparatively small group of women influence 85 per cent of all money expended in retail trade. One great department store through questionnaires to its customers obtained a most interesting cross-section picture. As the *Radio Broadcasting Manual for Retailers*<sup>16</sup> warns, "both customer and listener behavior vary in different sections," which we should, of course, take into consideration in reading the following points:

- (1) She (our average woman) tunes her radio in at 7:20, 8:00, or 10:00 A.M.  
(44% tune in at these three periods)
- (2) Her favorite types of morning programs are Music and Exercises.  
(34% of those who answered the question preferred Music and 28% expressed a preference for Exercises. 58% of those mentioned a favorite station)
- (3) Her family gets up at 7:30 A.M.  
(42% get up at this time)

## WHAT ABOUT RADIO?

- (4) Her family has breakfast at 7:30 A.M.  
(35% have breakfast at this time)
- (5) Her husband leaves for work at 8:00 A.M.  
(31% leave at this time)
- (6) Her children—if she has any—leave for school at 8:30 A.M.  
(49% leave at this time)
- (7) She washes her breakfast dishes at 8:30, 8:45, or 9:00 A.M.  
(54% of those average women do dishes during these three periods)
- (8) The 68% who leave their homes during the morning are away on the average of four mornings a week.
- (9) The 68% who do go out on an average of 4 mornings a week leave home as a rule at 9:00, 9:30, or 10:00 A.M.  
(64% of these women leave during these three periods)
- (10) She comes to the city to shop about .87 times a week (i.e., once a week five weeks out of every six).
- (11) On these trips to do her city shopping, she leaves home at 9:00 or 10:00 A.M., or at 1:00 P.M.  
(64% leave at these three times)
- (12) 85% of the women regularly listen to Amos 'n' Andy.
- (13) 18% of the women regularly listen to Miss X — the store's own broadcaster. Adding the extra 10% who listen only once and those who listen occasionally brings the total up to 28%.

Incidentally, the store discovered through this analysis that its own eleven-o'clock morning hour broadcast was not a particularly fortunate choice.

As all women know and neighborhood stores show, housekeepers the world over finish their tasks shortly after ten, and shortly after eleven start dashing out for gossip and groceries. Macy's of New York, I am told, had a somewhat similar experience. As a result of a house-to-house canvass of Manhattan homes, Macy's likewise changed its 11:00 A.M. broadcast to 8:30 A.M. The radio hours of 82 department stores all over the country may be worth much to other stores and something to other radio advertisers. Follows, therefore, an analysis of their combined use of radio—a sort of national referendum reported in the valuable radio book<sup>17</sup> of the National Retailers:

7 to 8 o'clock	A.M.	9 stores use
8 to 9 "	A.M.	8 " "
9 to 10 "	A.M.	12 " "
10 to 11 "	A.M.	6 " "
11 to 12 "	A.M.	7 " "
12 to 1 o'clock	P.M.	3 " "
1 to 2 "	P.M.	1 store uses
2 to 3 "	P.M.	3 stores use
3 to 4 "	P.M.	3 " "
5 to 6 "	P.M.	6 " "
6 to 7 "	P.M.	11 " "
7 to 8 "	P.M.	4 " "
9 to 10 "	P.M.	4 " "
10 to 11 "	P.M.	2 " "

A Dartnell report on retail stores showed 46 per cent of them broadcasting in the evenings, 34 per cent mornings, 12 per cent afternoons, and 8 per cent on more than one period. In their order, the most popular hours were 8:30 to 9:30 A.M.; 10:30 to 11:30 A.M.; 6:30 to 7:30 P.M., and 9:00 to 10:00 P.M.

So much for judgment as to timeliness of the broadcasting department stores. Reports on that

point from listeners will be heard from farther along in this chapter. Meanwhile, here follow a few less statistical observations for the benefit of the reader who is not immediately interested in buying himself an advantageous radio hour. Starting with

#### EARLY MORNING

The earliest morning commercial was the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company's Tower Health Exercises broadcast over the NBC network from 6:45 to 8:00 A.M. every weekday. This, obviously, a "natural" for that time of the morning. The general broadcaster rather fears that from 6:00 to 8:00 A.M. too many people are fairly busy getting the day started. Nobody has much time, that early, for entertainment, radio or otherwise. Nevertheless, wide experience of retail stores agrees that, depending upon the type of community, morning broadcasts may be effectively scheduled between 7:30 and 10:30 o'clock. The early morning hours (6:00 to 8:00) are, therefore, apt to contain rather businesslike local programs. Hettinger<sup>18</sup> observes:

This period lends itself to news broadcasts, shopping periods, and entertainment. In the case of one station—a local company, broadcasting from seven to eight o'clock in the morning, with inferior talent, secured enough orders in the first six days to pay for its entire 26-week radio contract.

and continues:

Educational programs, too, have been found very successful during the eight to half-past eight period by station WMAQ, Chicago. These programs were broadcast directly from class-

rooms at the University of Chicago, and were accorded a splendid reception by the more cultured listeners, who tuned in on them prior to leaving for work. This again indicates the potentialities of the early morning period if the right kind of program is presented.

There's an increasing appreciation of the selling possibility of the early morning hours, especially from 7:45 to 8:30 o'clock.

#### MIDDLE MORNING

The midmorning hours, on the other hand, are likely to devote themselves to bringing the busy housewife elementary technical instruction on how to beautify herself. And her home. Since the listening audience at all hours of the morning is composed overwhelmingly of women, three-quarters of whom are frankly preoccupied with household tasks, the morning programs, sugar-coated with entertainment, thus demand the minimum of attention.

Hettinger usefully applies the principle of light music rather than too-serious speech:

A restful semi-classical concert, popular music done in recital rather than dance style, or an interesting dramatic sketch with sufficient romantic appeal should be very well received. In the rare cases where this reasoning has been followed, the results attained have been uniformly successful. The program in one instance accomplished even more satisfactory results than it had when broadcast over the same stations during the evening hours.

Adds Frank A. Arnold:<sup>19</sup>

It has been discovered that the daytime periods prior to

the six p.m. sustain to the evening commercial program much the same relationship that a specialized magazine like *Good Housekeeping*, appealing to the home, sustains to other media of more general interest.

This "class" circulation value of morning radio hours indicates the obvious way to reach responsible women actually at their housework. As T. L. Burch, advertising manager of Borden Sales Company, once put it:

We feel that daytime radio hours are an outstanding value for us because they give us, at reasonable cost and with little waste, a selected audience of active, practical housewives. In daytime, the housewife is alone at home. She not only seeks the companionship of radio but in her solitude is likely to devote closer attention to really informative commercials. Program competition is less keen, and our money buys a maximum number of the only listeners we seek—those who buy.

Yet not until seven or eight years ago was this opportunity grasped by advertisers generally. Since then, morning advertising has grown regularly both in quality and in volume. Food and cosmetics chiefly, so far. But no advertiser with a special appeal to women should neglect these morning hours. For any who can legitimately utilize her, woman at her home-work is radio's best buying audience. As G. S. Howland<sup>20</sup> reminds us:

Women, as you all know, are our major customers. They are said to buy 80 to 90 per cent of all the things which go into the house. In fact, some figures given to me some time ago show women buy 48 per cent of the hardware, 41 per cent of



the automobiles, 34 per cent of the men's clothing, and 63 per cent of men's own neckties!

One department store found that 55 per cent of its own customer list listened to daytime broadcasts. Forty-six per cent of all women then interviewed said they used their radio sets regularly every morning. The Major Markets survey in five cities checks this with an average of 43 per cent listening mornings to some radio program. For details, a simultaneous telephone survey in Milwaukee once showed as six weekday averages for the percentage of radio owners found at home with sets tuned in in the morning:

	Per Cent
7 to 8 A.M.....	8
8 to 9 A.M.....	11
9 to 10 A.M.....	18
10 to 11 A.M.....	21
11 to 12 noon.....	21

For Syracuse, the same percentages were:

	Per Cent
6 to 8 A.M.....	9
8 to 10 A.M.....	28
10 to 12 noon.....	21

On the Pacific Coast, Briacher and Staff's survey found the women listening:

	Per Cent
7 to 8 A.M.....	11
8 to 9 A.M.....	11
9 to 10 A.M.....	16
10 to 11 A.M.....	18
11 to 12 noon.....	23

The half hour from twelve to twelve-thirty was men-

tioned by 25 per cent, while 12:30 to 1:00 was mentioned by 28 per cent.

#### NOON HOURS

Radio has no midday hour off. It works harder at lunchtime. Owing largely to the rapid development of the farm and home programs, the noon hour gets the attention of four or five times as many families as listen to the ordinary run of the day.

Friends of radio, by the way, do the noon-hour spot a distinct disfavor in allotting it to farmers and other special programs. Farmers or not, Americans habitually lunch at home, wherever accessible, and a great many of them run their radio for short extra periods. An analysis of the Philadelphia survey, for example, shows at lunchtime a distinct midday peak—let not only in the small towns, but in the city suburbs as well.

#### AFTERNOON

One needs no statistics to support the common knowledge that afternoon brings department and specialty stores their most customers and their greatest sales volume. On the other hand, the nonmercantile broadcaster may well remember that few women really do "go to town" for an afternoon's shopping oftener than once a week. Plenty are always at home. Flying flatly in the face of stores full of women every afternoon, trustworthy surveys in Milwaukee, Buffalo, and Philadelphia corroborate each other's indications of really imposing afternoon radio audi-

ences, even larger, in those three cities, than the most-sought-after morning hours. At the highest point in the morning, 18 per cent of the Buffalo audience tuned in, as against that city's highest 25 per cent in weekday afternoons. Pittsburgh also showed that 38 per cent of those with radios listened in the morning as against 59 per cent in the afternoon, and 71 per cent in the evening. The afternoon hours of the Pacific Coast survey were mentioned by the following percentages:

	Per Cent
1 to 2 P.M.....	26
2 to 3 P.M.....	30
3 to 4 P.M.....	46
4 to 5 P.M.....	48
5 to 6 P.M.....	41

Weighing afternoons against evenings, Milwaukee divided thus the women listeners:

	Per Cent
12 to 1 P.M.....	31
1 to 2 P.M.....	24
2 to 3 P.M.....	27
3 to 4 P.M.....	27
4 to 5 P.M.....	26
6 to 7 P.M.....	51
7 to 8 P.M.....	50
8 to 9 P.M.....	46
9 to 10 P.M.....	51

In Syracuse, for comparison, the audience mostly of women afternoons and evenings ran:

	Per Cent
Noon and 1 P.M.....	26
2 and 4 P.M.....	33
4 and 6 P.M.....	38
6 and 8 P.M.....	86
8 and 10 P.M.....	87
10 and 12 P.M.....	48

Mr. Hettinger again makes my point for me:

Research shows that the afternoon audience is generally comparable in size to that of the morning hours . . .

Moreover, there is not as much distraction afforded by housework in the afternoon as in the morning. The heavier duties have been completed, lunch is over, and the housewife desires relaxation.

. . . the afternoon hours constitute an almost unlimited field of development for the broadcast advertiser interested in the female listening audiences.

Dr. Starch, still another, approaches the afternoon radio tea from quite a different angle. In discussing income groups, he says:

The hour from four to five o'clock in the afternoon was found unusually popular with members of the highest income groups.

#### LATE AFTERNOON

Late in the weekday afternoon, although, as we have just noticed, the audience interest holds surprisingly well, advertiser's interest tends to drop even more sharply than in the early afternoon. Sponsored programs for children, mostly between half past four and six o'clock, alone prevent a negligible advertising volume in late afternoon. This "Children's Hour" utilization of otherwise wasted time is a particular tribute to the dominant power of an idea in selling. The fact is that children are found regularly preferring the grown-up programs. For example, New York's "young persons," Dr. Eisenberg's little survey found, "made no distinction between adult and

juvenile programs." Instead, the time of the broadcast principally determines the size of a child audience. Dr. Eisenberg learned:

Children preferred the evening for listening because they would rather spend the daylight hours outdoors. Late afternoon was their second choice, while Saturday and Sunday mornings ranked last.

The comparative disfavor of afternoon advertising other than Sunday may someday be found resting more on prejudice than upon any sound general conclusion. Against that prejudice, radio's time sellers seem so far to have overlooked their strongest argument: Starting with getting up to an early breakfast, increasingly more and more people are up and about as the day ripens. Enterprising advertisers, for their part, may reason out that the law of chance with an audience that grows rapidly with the aging hours indicates a better opportunity in available under-used afternoon periods than in a disadvantageous struggle against already firmly established programs for evening attention. Procter & Gamble, one of the largest single national network advertisers, devotes 80 per cent of its appropriation, more than \$2,000,000, to daylight programs of a typical daytime effectiveness. Whether or not advertisers come to recognize its significance, this steady growing of the size of the potential audience as the day goes on remains one of radio's more interesting points. Lumley,<sup>21</sup> telling of simultaneous surveys which called the set owner between seven and nine in the morning

to ask whether his radio set was running, suggests what might seem a vitally important side light:

The simultaneous survey indicated that *an average of 10 per cent tuned in at each moment of the two hours.*

It is important to know that from three to four times as many sets will have been turned on some time during the two hours, as are tuned in at one particular time.

A confirmation of this important principle was, interestingly enough, one of the first facts divulged by Elder's audimeter. In Boston programs running several times a week, he found an especially large audience turnover. One little broadcast that showed only a 3.5 per cent audience for any given performance had, counting in all the different persons who listened at one time or another during the week, a surprisingly satisfactory 12 per cent. Even the least effective programs seem to have a far larger itinerant following than the daily records reveal; and the best-loved radio serials apparently carry along an incredibly large floating audience. A more modern conception of broadcasting will replace the old tradition of a necessary continual defense against an impatient, even ill-tempered tuning-out with a more positive theory of program attraction based on this incessantly fluttering testing-in—momentarily—changing audience. The method of those who strive to build a radio audience by intensely interesting the fleeting thousands who flit every minute through a program and the method of the old-timers, who still conceive each broadcast as a complete show with a neatly established audience sitting tight to the end provided

they aren't bored or offended to the tuning-out point, need not necessarily be very different. But there will be practically no resemblance in the points of view.

Local programs continue, meantime, to make up most of the middle-of-the-afternoon entertainment. They share as well the 6-to-7 dinner hour, which, by the way, is supposed to have about the same size audience as the noon luncheon, only to resume again the whole burden of local entertainment late in the evening when the big chain hookups have discontinued.

#### NIGHT

Between the evening hours of six and ten any broadcaster can be reasonably certain that a large majority of the American people will be, more or less quietly, at home. Most of them, more than likely, will not be too greatly preoccupied with other things to have the radio running. Telephone calls in the evening indicate conclusively that about half of those answering the telephone and possessing radios will have them turned on. The evening peak plateau, so far as the listener's time is reckoned, will start not at eight, as our metropolitan influences often imply, but immediately when the family gets up from supper, which, for all classes the country over, is likely to be much nearer seven. Moreover, while the periods between nine and ten remain about as popular with the lower-income groups as the earlier hour preferred by all, seven to eight, the number of listeners in the

higher-income group tends to fall off rather rapidly in the later hours of the evening.

So much, then, for the several periods of the day as a whole. Let's try to gather some recapitulative impression of the comparative values of the individual hours right through from the getting-up music until the tired American family gratefully tucks out the radio and turns out the cat. WCKY,<sup>22</sup> through 2,500 interviews in listeners' own homes somewhat flatteringly concludes:

	Per Cent
Listen in the morning.....	43.05
Listen in the afternoon.....	63.76
Listen at night.....	95.57

Hettinger and Mead's survey at Philadelphia showed the average hourly load:

	Per Cent
Morning (8 A.M. to 12 noon).....	about 12
Afternoon (12 noon to 6 P.M.).....	about 22
Evening (6 P.M. to midnight).....	about 67

Lumley adds:

The proportion of such listeners for different periods of the day was:

	Per Cent
7 A.M.- 9 A.M.....	27
11 A.M.- 1 P.M.....	28
6 P.M.- 7 P.M.....	40
7 P.M.-11 P.M.....	55

Cantril and Allport's summary:

Various surveys on the hours when people like to listen have been summarized by Lumley:



First	preference	7 to 9 P.M.
Second	"	9 to 10 A.M.
Third	"	6 to 7 P.M.
Fourth	"	10 to 11 P.M.
Fifth	"	12 to 1 P.M.
Sixth	"	5 to 6 P.M.
Seventh	"	11 to 12 mid.
Eighth	"	10 to 12 noon
Ninth	"	8 to 10 A.M.
Tenth	"	3 to 5 P.M.

And for advertisers here is a new set of figures roughly covering choice of hours worked backward from Crosley's comparative use by listeners of all radio sets on any given night:

1/2	are in use at	9 P.M.
1/2	are in use at	10 P.M.
2/5	are in use at	8 P.M.
1/3	are in use at	7 P.M.
1/3	are in use at	11 P.M.
1/4	are in use at	12 P.M.
1/6	are in use at	6 P.M.

So much for the hours of the day. Now a moment for the days themselves.

#### WHICH DAY IS BEST?

All radio machines run some of the time. Some machines run all the time. Most of us know that from personal experience. So if radio advertising cost nothing, any business man could safely—and profitably—harangue the circumambient atmosphere at any hour of the day or night that pleased him.

Even with radio's lowest broadcast rate, however, no advertiser takes quite that chance. Intuitively, the least scientific of them asks, "What is the *best* day of the week?" The most scientific correctly answers him that—other than Saturday and Sunday—

there's so little difference between days that most of this difference seems itself to rest largely upon the respective popularity of each day's customary programs. Not forgetting, of course, local daily customs. Boston, for example, surrounded by sea beaches, will show quite a different pattern in its summer radio listening audiences when compared with Philadelphia or Kansas City. And, at any season, fine outdoor weather reduces everywhere the week-end afternoon audiences.

Sunday, perhaps, scores the highest percentage of morning listeners. Saturday morning is probably the low. Monday scarcely higher. As to afternoons, Wednesday and Saturday have been said to have a slightly greater number of listeners than the other weekday afternoons; but, quite naturally, not so many as Sunday. Otherwise there doesn't seem to be any marked distinction between one day and another.

Or, safer to say, perhaps, there seems yet obtainable no particular recognition of a favorite day for universal listening. A KDKA survey, for one, showed no choice of days for listening. This was confirmed apparently by the even distribution of the various programs mentioned. On the other hand, Professor Elder's audimeter proved for Boston at least that days, including evenings, ran:

Sunday (far ahead)  
Wednesday (poor second)  
Thursday  
Monday  
Friday  
Saturday  
Tuesday

## WHAT ABOUT WEEK-ENDS?

Saturday, Sunday, and the Saturday-Sunday "week-end" may be, for all practical purposes, the only really disturbing differences in choosing days for your broadcast. Where some response is desired at once, the Sunday interruption to retail activity constitutes, naturally, a definite handicap to Saturday broadcast advertising. On the other hand, the admirable Philadelphia and Buffalo studies suggest that Saturday listening varies slightly from that of other weekdays except, perhaps, a slight tendency toward a smaller audience in the evening. Since Saturday borrows, in no small degree, both the week-end and the holiday characteristics of Sunday, we may assume a particularly wide swing between hot-weather and cold-weather Saturday nights. Sunday, besides emphasizing the seasonal trend, of course, brings marked social and religious differences. Since life on Sunday is less circumscribed by the rigid routine of daily living, it tends to emphasize a greater individual variation. In possible competition with church services, morning advertising is wisely discounted by all concerned. Sunday afternoon broadcast advertising, on the other hand, is somewhat greater than that of other days of the week.

## WHAT IS FAVORITE LISTENING NIGHT?

So much for days. Nights seem slightly more regimented. For every person who claims to listen regularly on one night more than another there are at least three listening all evenings more or less indis-

criminally. On the other hand, in St. Louis at least these figures seem hardly to hold. The Washington University<sup>23</sup> questions brought these answers:

Do You Have a Favorite "Radio Evening?"

	Yes	No	No Answer
Mothers . . . . .	27	13	3
Housewives . . . . .	16	3	7
Farm Women . . . . .	13	0	2
Wash. Univ. Students . . . . .	59	16	18
Iowa Students . . . . .	12	7	10
Miscellaneous . . . . .	16	26	60

Roxy chose Monday evening for his radio because it was a bad night for theaters. Monday would probably be considered the best evening to reach the largest number of listeners. On the other hand, the WTMJ simultaneous survey for Milwaukee showed Monday evening low and Saturday evening high for weekday listening. *Radio Broadcasting Manual for Retailers*, speaking for and to its retail dry-goods stores, concludes:

Certain evenings attract a wider listening audience. In their order of importance, they are said to be:

Saturdays  
Sundays  
Fridays  
Wednesdays  
Thursdays  
Tuesdays.

and Mr. Arnold:

Reliable figures establish

Saturday  
Sunday  
Friday

as having the largest evening audiences, followed in order of preference by

Wednesday  
Monday  
Thursday  
Tuesday.

Amos and Bevis report Wednesday evening as the preferred time. Kellogg and Walters report Monday, Wednesday, and Friday the best evenings for housewives, Monday particularly.

Clark-Hooper, again, with figures at least equal in reliability to any of these others, shows by actual count Thursday with nearly three times as many listeners as Saturday:

Thursday.....	30.9
Sunday.....	27.6
Saturday.....	26.4
Tuesday.....	25.8
Monday.....	25.5
Wednesday.....	24.7
Friday.....	23.3

WCKY seems to support Clark-Hooper and thereby help contradict the others' generalities with these specific figures:

Answers to the question regarding the listener preference for special nights brought out the fact that Thursday is the night with the largest audience. The following table gives the percentage of listeners to preferred nights:

Thursday.....	20.05 per cent
Sunday.....	14.40
Tuesday.....	13.26
Wednesday.....	11.82
Friday.....	9.64
Monday.....	9.12
Saturday.....	7.80

And in Boston, as noticed a few pages back, Wednesday, Thursday, and Monday evenings seem better for more advertisers in most cases than Friday, Saturday, and Tuesday.

Conflicting as all these varying statements appear, they are not necessarily contradictory. Within its own special sphere, each survey, no doubt, is strictly accurate. Each was necessarily strongly affected by its own local, seasonal, and program influences. Their differences merely emphasize the continual difficulty in getting adequate background for a safe *general* judgment.

A wise man would sooner select a wife for another man than take the responsibility for his radio hour. It was easier to guess in the old, poorer days when we rated radio an entertainment coequal to the theatre and movies and, like Roxy, chose the times people didn't do other things as the times they were likely to *substitute* the radio as entertainment. While it is still true that when people aren't out they are in, more recent surveys show that their *attitude* towards the use of leisure, holiday time—as against resting and refurbishing—comprehends listening to the radio as well. That at least seems the most reasonable explanation of the indication by the combined judgment of eight or nine authorities whose figures may be taken to suggest very roughly a *general* comparative value to the *average* advertiser for the several days of the week. Sunday seems almost in a class by itself. Then, in general, Thursday and

Wednesday. Then Saturday, varying widely. Then comes Friday. Then Monday and last of all, apparently only on account of its general lacklustre, Tuesday.

To say that Monday night at seven is worse or better, for any given broadcaster, than Sunday night at eleven is patently impossible. The best anyone can do—and even that is, perhaps, inexcusably rash—is to set down for the benefit of the run-of-the-mill broadcaster that *all other things equal*, the fact that apparently more advantageous days combining with apparently more advantageous hours would seem to indicate certain hours on certain days as probably generally the most favorable.

Nevertheless, treading lightly where statisticians rush in regularly, by grouping all these surveys together and endeavoring to weigh not only the internal variations of each, but to weigh, as well, the relative importance of the surveys themselves, I venture to submit some such a comparison for the convenience of the average advertiser, in ordinary circumstances.

For general trend, and not for specific value, I suggest the following table, not for radio statisticians, tempted quite properly to find professional pleasure in pointing out its many seeming contradictions, but for these advertisers with little time for technicalities and a particular eye to the basic buying audience of women:

## WHAT ABOUT RADIO?

HOURS	DAYS						
	Mon- day	Tues- day	Wednes- day	Thurs- day	Fri- day	Satur- day	Sun- day
6 a.m.	C-	C-	C-	C-	C-	C-	C-
7 a.m.	C-	C-	C	C	C-	C-	C
8 a.m.	C	C	C+	C+	C	C+	C+
9 a.m.*	C	C	C+	C+	C+	C	C+
10 a.m.**	C	C	C+	C+	C+	C	C+
11 a.m.**	C+	C	C+	C+	C+	C+	C+
Noon	C+	C	B-	C+	B-	C+	B-
1 p.m.	B-	C+	B	B-	B	B-	B
2 p.m.**	C+	C	C+	C+	C	C	C+
3 p.m.**	C+	C	C+	C+	C	C	B-
4 p.m.**	C+	C	B-	B-	B-	C+	B-
5 p.m.**	B-	C+	B-	B-	B-	B-	B
6 p.m.	B-	B-	B	B	B	B	B+
7 p.m.	B+	B-	A	A	A-	A-	A
8 p.m.	B+	B	A+	A+	A	A-	A+
9 p.m.	B	B	A+	A+	A	A	A+
10 p.m.	B	B-	A	A	A-	A-	A+
11 p.m.	B-	C+	A-	A-	B+	A-	A-
Midnite	B-	C+	A-	B	B-	B	A-

\* Two out of three listeners probably women

\*\* Four out of five listeners probably women

## WHICH SEASON IS BEST?

After finding what seems to him the best day and hour, the advertiser asks the other quite natural questions:

"How about the seasons?"

"What about the summer months?"

"Doesn't the audience vary importantly during the several seasons?"

No one can answer more exactly, but, taking the conventional "100" to represent the yearly average for the daily use of sets, one might guess that the ordinary variation among the best-to-worst months will not run far from



January.....	97
February.....	98
March.....	95
April.....	96
May.....	99
June.....	98
July.....	94
August.....	92
September.....	99
October.....	99
November.....	98
December.....	98

In other words, seasonal elements may safely be rated inconsiderable when compared with the other variables we shall discuss later. The vital importance of holding a good hour far transcends any possible seasonable loss. Furthermore, the station's 52-time rate more than likely transfers any possible loss into a probable slight gain. So that at least a quarter of radio's best business these days stays on the air throughout the entire year. And, in the main, finds that the size of its audience varies less with its months than with its week-ends. Eighty per cent of the regular radio listeners nowadays probably keep their sets going the whole year round.

Wealthy executives generously visualize everybody's summer in terms of their own peripatetic week-ends. When seven out of ten in a salaried group get vacations, seven out of ten of their workers do not. So that midsummer itself finds only about 12 per cent of the radio audience away on vacation over any two-week period. Literally everybody is away "over" the last Sunday in July and the first in August. Even at this climatic vacation peak, how-

ever, radio still finds faithfully at home one listening Cinderella for every five of its ordinary midsummer audience, and so, likely enough, not less than seven out of ten of its regular year-rounders.

In radio, then, as in business generally, summer is far more largely a sellers' holiday than a buyers'. One company that took the trouble to check up against its ten-month average the eight vacation weeks of July 6th to August 30th found their average response for these eight successive weeks respectively: 112; 92; 100; 88; 76; 90; 77; 91.<sup>24</sup> Columbia Broadcasting System, moreover, is our authority that in June, July, and August—by the calendar, of course, a normal 25 per cent quarter of the year —

34.2% of all passenger cars are bought . . .  
28.0% of all cigarettes are bought . . .  
28.3% of all cigars are bought . . .  
25.6% of all 5¢ and 10¢ merchandise is bought.

The mail response to a program on foods showed that January gave the highest number of returns. The Association of National Advertisers named February as the high peak in fan mail, which, by the way, follows closely enough the general trend of business activity. The Foreign Policy Association mail response showed June lowest and February highest. The Columbia Broadcasting study of 300,000 returns from 56 stations found January, February, and November the three high months, with lows in March, June, and October. Summer response compared favorably with that received in the winter; August

with them was above the yearly average. As Edgar Kobak expresses it:

As a matter of fact people save up all winter for their summer vacations and we as salespeople don't help them spend it. Salesmen should take advantage of the fact that sales resistance is much lower in the summer time.

This is particularly true of goods whose consumption grows with summer habits. Flit, the outstanding example, chose the five spring and summer months with their greatest demand for an insect killer.<sup>25</sup> Ice cream, soft drinks, sunburn lotion, sporting goods, do the same in lesser degree. Furthermore, since radios run riot in camps, summer hotels, and 3,000,000 more or less, automobiles, many of the habitual listeners may be reensnared away from home even when theoretically vacating the list of active listeners.

The advertiser's real hazard in any summer audience is, perhaps, more largely psychological than numerical. The serious young housewife who frowns prettily over her morning household problems most of the year escapes in her summer leisure even a radio reminder of them—we hope.

## 6

## WHY?

WHEN a third of the great American public spends a third of its waking time doing the same thing every day, every week, every month, every year—that's news. News—important enough for any psychologist to ask, *why?* Radio must somehow satisfy human wants. It would never have got far simply as an eternal concatenation of invisible vaudevilles. Most radio commentators, nevertheless, offer us entertainment as the chief, if not the only, answer to the question why people listen. Hear their dean, Frank A. Arnold<sup>26</sup>:

For a solid hour, and from a station that I never knew existed, I heard everything offered for sale with price quotations ranging from drygoods and women's wear to meats and groceries, while the makeshift of a program was so absurd as to lead me to wonder if there really was any audience at all interested in that type of thing . . . especially as at that very hour and within reach of every receiving set in the same territory there were going out on the air programs of national and even international importance that could just as easily have been obtained by the listener.

Obviously, Mr. Arnold was not being entertained. He was being infinitely bored by talks on dry goods and

groceries, meats and women's wear. Yet thousands of local women, whose interest in their own petty needs conflict with Mr. Arnold's superior interest in radio's magnificent opportunities, regularly find this crudely broadcast information not only interesting, but invaluable—to them, perhaps, the real reason for the radio. Mr. Arnold, of course, writes as only one man; but what he writes is surprisingly typical of all who sell, operate, or write about radio programs. More detached and less irritated observers go so far as to allow two explanations of radio's universality. People, they say, listen:

1. For entertainment
2. For information.

Without essaying to qualify as the shrewdest of radio commentators, we still might add still a third reason.

1. For entertainment
2. For information
3. By habit.

This third classification—*habit*—being excellently exemplified by Mr. Arnold, who did, nevertheless, listen. Habit has a later chapter of its own.

Why a given number of people listen to a *given* program scarcely needs inquiry. Except in the case of an outstandingly popular personality—like Will Rogers or Kate Smith—which personality regularly transcends all ordinary factors—the success of any given radio program depends directly upon

1. Judgment with which program is designed
2. Intelligence with which it is placed
3. Skill with which it is delivered
4. Luck with which received.

Without getting into too much detail, we may examine a bit further the half dozen potential forces, excluding mechanical transmission operations to which beneficial forces, broadly speaking, must be ascribed the credit for the size of the radio audience for any single given show:

- (a) Number of stations carrying the program; their power; as well as their location and quality of transmission
- (b) The individual and collective reputation of those stations for good programs; hence, the normal circulation "belonging" to station or stations during the time of the broadcast
- (c) Listening habits, local and general, in districts each station reaches, including, of course, all questions of weather, time, season, and listeners' holidays, expected and unexpected
- (d) Inherent appeal and intrinsic attractiveness of the given program, both as to general type and special showmanship
- (e) General ranking already gained by program, through frequency of performance and length of time on air. Also publicity of one sort or another already gained by the program and its personalities
- (f) Competition, or lack, from other broadcasts simultaneously reaching same territory, on the one hand; on the other, the amount of "listener continuity" established by regular repetition of a

series of popular programs, before and after the given program.

But we are concerned here with radio's audiences. Not with its programs. People don't, as a rule, habitually listen to radio to hear anything in particular. Rather to participate in a somehow satisfying situation. Whatever sort of general or specific satisfaction each person derives, that person desires. As Mr. Lumley suggests:

According to some experience . . . there are no preferred types of programs; *execution* of the program determines its appeal.

Nobody can take this answer quite literally, of course. Telephone surveys have shown a single station commanding 80 or 90 per cent of the listening audience within its area at a given time. An Evanston survey, an Omaha survey, and a Boston survey, independently reveal the same phenomenon: an entire audience following a favorite program from one station to another. Even to another network. Mr. Lumley would be the last to imply that such an old-fashioned matinee idol devotion was the result of the "execution"—i.e., the technical excellence with which a particular program is performed. Startlingly enough, the very opposite is likely. All other things equal, sheer *technical* excellence of execution is, perhaps, the factor least esteemed by the radio public. As we shall notice later, artistic excellence has, broadly speaking, no relation to radio success. What Mr. Lumley undoubtedly means is the degree of

“personality” or “color” or “winsomeness”—to revive a rarely used old word—revealed in the doing of any program rather than the kind of thing that happens to be done. His point there being of the utmost importance: that outstanding distinction, intrinsic individuality, personal attractiveness, in almost any type of program seems far more valuable, of *itself*, than the mere fact that a given program belongs to any given type. In other words, if you’re effective enough over the radio at what you do, what you do over the radio doesn’t make much difference.

In his CBS booklet, *What Does Jake Say?* George Bijur puts splendidly this indefinable personal element that makes success over the radio practically impossible to classify.

Most folks are lonesome. . . .

Friends is what they want most. . . . That’s why the women keep organizing clubs, and the men are always comin’ from lodge meetings or goin’ to conventions. Folks everywhere are most interested in people than in things. Listen to ’em talk, and all you hear is “He said,” “They came,” “Mamie got,” “Zeke went,” “Bill’s coming.” . . .

And they act just the same when they’re wrastlin’ in their minds whose goods to buy. That’s where radio comes in, as I figure it. When my sister hears Bing Crosby over her radio, she don’t think of him as a stranger. ’Course she’s never been formally introduced, never even seen him, but she figgers he’s an old friend. And it’s that way with most people. The voices they hear all the time over their radios ain’t the voices of strangers. They’re voices they heard in their homes before. They recognize ’em right away, same as you know a friend’s voice over the phone.

And you pay attention to what they tell you to do, too,



just like you pay attention when a friend says you oughta see some particular movie, and you don't pay no attention when a stranger hands you a card that reads "See Love-birds . . . it's the greatest picture ever made."

Mr. Bijur himself steps out of character to add:

To 21,450,000 radio families Myrt and Marge (or Kate Smith or Buck Rogers) aren't hired entertainers. They're friends who just naturally come to visit every evening at 7. They're friends whose advice people follow, friends to whom they even write letters. Friends they miss if they're not there when they expect them to be . . . friends for whom a steadily mounting affection develops, the kind of warm emotion which advertising has never before been able to inspire.

Beyond habit and beyond, too, this dominating demand for continued contact with familiar friends, we find people listening for four chief reasons:

#### 1. ENTERTAINMENT

Just as the demand for sheer entertainment, as such, increases rapidly with lower intelligences, so it diminishes rapidly as radio gets into cities big enough to furnish other excitement. Laboring groups everywhere require "variety," melodrama, and "popular" music. They have a real distaste for "classical" music or any sort of attentive listening. The young, too, prefer jazz singers, dance orchestras, tennis and hockey broadcasts, phonograph records, and fashion reports. Music and homely drama, Hettinger finds, not surprisingly, more popular in rural districts. But in town as well, among the adult poorer classes, children's programs and drama—simple and easily un-

derstood—are prime favorites. That's no sign, however, that richer and better educated people don't also like simple entertainment.

Women like symphonies best of all. Women also enjoy operas and dance orchestras, while men are less appreciative, particularly of operas. Women like, too: literature, short stories, poetry, organ music, classical music, church music, educational methods, even sermons, and, of course, fashion reports and recipes. Evidently any woman whose duties confine her largely within the house calls upon her radio more for entertainment than for edification. Professional women and others whose work keeps them away from home during the day are, on the other hand, more likely to prefer cultural, serious programs.

Listeners over thirty mention news, old song favorites, and humor as their favorites. And older people are, of course, more likely to tune in on operas, church services, news events, vocal artists, talks by famous people, politics, church music, physics or chemistry, poetry, and language instruction.

The two top income groups, not unnaturally, have a somewhat better informed and, therefore, more than an average interest in special features, news, informational programs, and instrumental music. There is, however, less association between wealth, education, and occupations in program preferences than one might expect. In Philadelphia, for example, the survey showed little or no increase from low- to high-income levels, in desire for educational or self-improvement programs. Those in the highest income

groups rate religious and political programs low. Professional people, Kirkpatrick found, rate news reports, classical music, and even political talks higher than do nonprofessional people. Children's surveys find mothers liking the funnies, while boys' fathers turn to the sports. The highest common denominator, for both sexes and all ages, Cantril found to be old song favorites. Even the jazzites turn to old song favorites as second choice. The lowest agreement, no doubt, is on sports, to which housewives as a special class enthusiastically share women's general aversion.

## 2. INFORMATION

In cities large enough to furnish a variety of other sorts of amusement, businesswomen begin to turn to the radio for educational and general talks. Housewives, too, welcome a variety of programs that apply culture without too hard a polish. Besides changing thus roughly with the size of the community, taste in programs varies no little with the changing hours of the day. Women, for instance, who will listen profitably to morning and afternoon programs which deal in a businesslike fashion with their special interests are, in principle, somewhat inclined to resent this same aggressive selling in evening hours unless it particularly concerns them. The fact is, of course, that whenever they hear anything likely to benefit *them* they go for it utterly regardless of hour, station, or program.

Sports, especially football, get men's hearing.

Next, their own business affairs; then news broadcasts, market reports, and weather. Students, as apart from men, rate news broadcasts low. But they, too, go in strong for sports. Men, besides their sports of all kinds, like detective stories, talks on national policies, talks on engineering, physics, or chemistry. Men prefer advertisements to fashion reports, just as women prefer almost anything to sports broadcasts.

Or take, for example, our recently exalted farming class. New England farmers were asked by Rowell's questionnaires what information they wanted most from the radio. The information they most desired was, naturally enough, current prices of farm products and market conditions. In order of their choice, other subjects requested were:

- Poultry (far in lead)
- Fruits
- Dairying
- Marketing
- Vegetables
- Practical experiences of other farmers.

And, tested by the U. S. Department of Agriculture with five varying styles of presentation, the farmers demanded that which gave "educational details of specific operations."

This all reinforces two points we begin to recognize: first, that information is an important element in attaining radio listeners; and, second, that "information" as a classification of motives for radio

listeners must, itself, be further split into two subdivisions:

1. Facts for themselves: News flashes, market reports, etc.
2. Facts for self-improvement: Informational and cultural talks on art and literature or current topics.

### 3. SELF-IMPROVEMENT

No better statement of the great self-improvement for radio, or any other advertising medium, for that matter, can be found than that made by Mr. Lyman Bryson in his excellent booklet, *The Use of the Radio Leisure Time*:

Among other things the modern woman asks [points out Mr. Bryson] is that her leisure time may count not only for rest and relaxation but also for the enrichment of her life. She uses her free time in order to understand better her place in the world, to do better the work she has to do, and to appreciate and enjoy the finest pleasures. For all these purposes the best use of leisure time is with friends and among those friends is her own radio.

That this cultural ambition is truer of women than of men is equally easy to understand. Where most men sally forth to make money out of other men in assault softened only by sales conventions and business lunches, women stay at home to make what they may of themselves. This doesn't, of course, entirely account for radio having twice as many regular women listeners, but it does help account for women making "opera" their fifth choice where men, off at

golf or otherwise recovering from a hard day's work, make opera their twenty-fifth. Moreover, the radio advertiser must never forget that this latent feminine ambition is the driving mainspring in most American homes. Despite Mr. Arnold's quite natural disaffection, small talks to little women in medium-sized towns constitute radio's big business. The head woman must be most seriously considered by every advertiser contemplating selling goods to any member of the family.

Ambition for personal growth—mental, cultural, social—on the part of American women—home-keeping and home-kept—together with a somewhat similar, and not altogether unrelated, sense of soaring liberation to the ill, the old, and the feeble, is, I imagine, the vital salt that savors the whole ridiculous business of millions of people keeping running hours and hours every day, in the heart of their homes, noise-making machines at the mercy of any broadcaster who will pay the price.

One thing, at any rate, becomes more and more apparent. "Entertainment" alone falls ridiculously short of explaining the phenomenon of America's continual and continuous radio running. When the best entertainment of earlier days has been free, or practically free, and within easy reach, there have been no audience figures remotely comparable to radio's. Even "entertainment" rewarded with self-improvement and crystallized by constant habit may fall short of accounting for radio's unique place in the entire history of man's diversion. There is, of

course, a further reason—ininitely more driving than all the others put together. That is:

#### 4. SELF-EXPRESSION

Big metropolitan broadcasters regularly receive toll calls for request numbers from faraway points in Texas or Canada. With a quarter hour voting "contest," any village pianist can get fifty fellow townspeople to telephone in on the laziest afternoon. Everybody knows why 5,200 people applied within twelve days to a Boston retail merchant for auditions in his coming amateur hour. Few, however, stop to puzzle out the reason why 2,600 listeners telephoned that many "votes" or messages to a single one of those girls one night.

Radio philosophy has for years, with the keen self-consciousness and by no means unmerited conceit of a tremendously successful novelty, watched itself, extrovertively, working always outward, carrying itself *in* to millions of listeners. To *reverse* this long-accepted viewpoint—to induce the extroverted broadcasters introspectively to realize their institution in its larger sense—to get anyone, in fact, to recognize the radio primarily as a *medium of self-expression by the audience*, a new and still fairly startling development was necessary.

Until Major Bowes came along the idea of self-expression over radio, except as a scheduled performer at the mike, had seemed as incongruous as the idea of tap-dancing over the radio. The revolution of enthusiasm for his revival of an idea that

had immortalized Minor's Eighth Avenue Theatre a full half century earlier demonstrated for radio, as it had already demonstrated for the older advertising media in turn, that, given the tiniest opportunity, the always self-centered and somewhat exhibitionistic impulse of the *individual*, that dominating universal self-centered struggle for self-expression, will burst through the thin, cold, conventionalized crust of professional entertainment as hot lava erupts from Vesuvius.

When Sun Oil took over Lowell Thomas after five years of fairly uneventful broadcasting, a simple announcement over the radio that anybody who wanted to that evening could send *his* word to Mr. Thomas free paralyzed Western Union. Two hundred and sixty-six thousand telegrams brought in 9,000,000 words. When Andy happened to mention his need for a typewriter, an 1880 vintage arrived in perfect working condition. When Andy had to write an important letter with the edge of a nickel because he could not find a pencil, nearly five gross of pencils came in. Bushels of bones and dog biscuits were sent to Amos for his dog. When Amos and the Kingfish opened their bank, hundreds of listeners sent in dollar bills for credit in savings accounts.

Busily engaged in the mechanics of pumping information and entertainment to millions of our less lucky countrymen, most of us working at radio are likely to forget that . . . easy, instant, and riskless . . . the radio does *emotionally* for America's millions just what the telephone and the automobile do



mechanically. All three—automobile, telephone, radio—have one thing in common: they provide *self-escape* into a bigger, more interesting, outside world.

The greatest of radio's many paradoxes, therefore, may turn out to be the millions listening in in order to be lifted out. To comprehend the probability of this apparent impossibility, pause a minute to recall a somewhat similar paradox: sound in the movies did infinitely more for *drawings*—animated cartoons naturally silent—than for any other class of motion pictures. Within a half block of Carnegie Hall, I have seen Walt Disney's drawings of immortal Mickey Mouse billed bold over Charles Laughton playing *Henry VIII* ably, personably, and most picturesque. In a very different way, but for much the same basic human reasons, radio, the most unrelenting unilateral audience suppressor the world has ever tolerated, has become, in a fantastic reversal of the regularly to-be-expected, America's accepted medium of mass-produced self-expression.

## HOW DO THEY LISTEN?

**M**AGAZINES and newspapers waste a lot of energy sniping at the probable size of radio's audience. Radio ought to have a vast audience. The only form of entertainment always on tap absolutely free. Not a penny to a newsboy, nor a nickel to a ticket taker. The \$11.00 a year charge for electricity and the initial set cost seem, so far as one can observe, mostly forgotten, imperceptible influences. No immediate effort is necessary. Not even the nominal payment of momentary attention. Stations sell at excellent rates the air they get for nothing. Advertisers pay, nearly 600 stations, around \$90,000,000 a year to shoot out messages to an elaborately calculated but utterly unknown fraction of 23,000,000 "families" who, in turn, at their own expense—paying out maybe ten times as much as the stations—keep 600 manufacturers, 1,500 wholesalers and nearly 4,500 retailers busy selling and maintaining some \$3,000,000,000 worth of receiving machines.

Any competition in point of size with circulation of this sort is fantastic. Billboards, car cards, direct mail, magazines, and newspapers—the whole field of advertising media—might gracefully grant radio its

unique universality. Then reach more reasonable bases for competitive comparisons by working backward along the premise that radio, like other Goliaths and Sampsons, suffers the extreme weakness of its greatest strength. This small book glories in the grandeur of radio. Gladly we testify to its colossality. Thereafter, with curiosity, fair as skeptic, we feel free to examine actual workings—not the workings of the towering \$500,000 steel structure that zooms the radio program out but the little wooden \$15 set that takes it in. Our studies are of listening. Millions and millions of people do listen. That is common knowledge. We have set down figures on “when.” We have guessed “why.” Now, quite naturally, we reach the question, “how”—a question that must some day be applied equally to all forms of sold circulation. Radio listeners, in the main, if we correctly interpret the many reports of varying listening, may tend to divide into four classes:

- (1) *Regulars* who habitually turn to one of two or three stations, or rotate, more or less regularly, among one, two, or three stations.
- (2) *Take-a-chance listeners* who snap on their radios and shop around the dial until they find a type of program they happen to fancy. A majority of the quite young.
- (3) *Time-minded listeners* who consult the clock and seek out the favorite programs they know—or can find out—are on the air at this definite time. A majority of the quite old.
- (4) *Special listeners* who dust off their machine only to hear some individual program, some unusual

feature. Contrary to accepted traditions, there are, no doubt, millions who practically never use their sets except for extraordinary occasions. The startling rise in the use of electric current testifies, now and then, to their hearing a Presidential speech or a big prize fight. Amos 'n' Andy, at peak of popularity, vacated not a few motion-picture houses until the theatres themselves brought in that broadcast.

These four classes of listeners would tend logically to arrange themselves in ascending order of importance to the advertiser. The "regular" listeners, with a multitude of notable exceptions, would likely be most prevalent among the middle classes in the middle-sized towns where, by the way, most comparable activity is numerically concentrated. The New York school children, for example, whom Dr. Eisenberg found running the family machine an average of six hours and sixteen minutes a week apiece, would

. . . rather listen to the radio than read, play a musical instrument or solve a puzzle, but they ranked the radio below the movies, the "funnies," and listening to a stage orchestra.

Selectivity would, no doubt, tend to progress roughly upward from the "Regulars," through the "Take-a-chance" and "Time-minded" toward that class—however small—of busier and more active adults who listen only when there's something special they want to hear. Dr. Starch found for CBS that the "very rich" in Boston had not only as high as fourteen machines in some homes, but did their regular three-hour stretch at an average of three machines.

Splendid! Without slight to Boston, or to many millions of rich or poor elsewhere, to whom, for many reasons, radio listening may be the principal—and even the only—form of entertainment, we may, perhaps, fairly reiterate a general principle that the more intelligent, the more active, the more wealthy people are, with the more sorts of other entertainment competing for their time and attention, the less likely they are to be dominated by the mechanics of listening to the radio merely for the sake of something to do: and to suggest, as a not improbable corollary, that this more intelligent, more active, more wealthy class of people are the more likely—when they do listen—to seek out only known-in-advance programs rather than take a dull chance on anything that happens along.

Leaving open for the moment the probably unanswerable question as to how many of radio's millions ever sit with one eye on the dial and the other on the clock neatly to nail Gracie Allen, Father Coughlin, or Major Bowes, let's see how the great and habitually careless majority decide where to turn the dial. As an incidental start, let's look at Washington University's St. Louis questionnaire:

## DO YOU LOOK FOR LISTS IN PAPER?

	Yes	No	No Answer	Total
Mothers.....	23	19	1	43
Housewives.....	14	10	2	26
Farm Women.....	13	0	2	15
Wash. Univ. Students.....	52	25	16	93
Iowa Univ. Students.....	8	12	9	29
Miscellaneous.....	72	17	13	102
	—	—	—	—
Total.....	182	83	43	308

Similar questionnaires in other cities found: In Omaha, 45 per cent looking in the newspaper; Minneapolis, 25 per cent; New Orleans, 31 per cent; Birmingham, 34 per cent. Bevis and Amos found that 30 per cent had looked at a newspaper page, which agrees roughly with Gallup's figure in another survey. Finally Orrin E. Dunlap Jr.'s<sup>27</sup> questionnaire to the farmers: "Do you read advance program notices in newspapers or farm papers to learn about radio programs or do you just tune in?" The vote was fairly even: 51.6 per cent read the printed program notices and 47.4 "just tune in." Many of these, no doubt, are "show-off" answers. One radio company cites with charming insouciance, that only 35 per cent of those asked in a survey

Do you listen to your favorite station because you like its programs? or because it's easiest to get?

were ungracious enough to admit the latter.

Broadcasters generally wouldn't willingly realize how apathetically the public receives their best—and often extremely able—efforts to "merchandise" a radio program. Three people out of four closely questioned will disclaim ever writing down any memorandum of the time of any coming broadcast, while the others admit doing it only three or four times a year. Even the comparatively few who report consulting more or less regularly any sort of guide claim, as a rule, to discover through its advice an average that falls below one station a day.

With the radio, no doubt, as with the rest of mass

habits, most of us compromise between the ideal that would involve quite a bit of effort and the absolute shiftlessness that involves none. People, as a rule, no doubt, discover sooner or later the station which, good and bad together, with least trouble gives the most continuously pleasant satisfaction. And the minimum irritation. *Broadcast Advertising* has quoted surveys to show that about half of the radio audience has the habit of turning thus regularly to certain stations. Felix, too, believes it definitely proved that the average radio listener comes almost automatically to snap on the "loudest station which serves him day and night." As more politely epitomized by L. D. Batson of the Electrical Equipment Division of the Department of Commerce:

Ultimately the owner tends to reach a stage where the one or two stations most easily tuned will be sampled and if one has a satisfactory feature the dial is set for it and left until something discordant with the listener's mood develops, when the set will be shut off or another station tried.

Whether people use chance, memory, habit, enterprise, or hang-over to get their first station, comparatively few stick with that station continuously regardless of programs. One Chicago study, for instance, showed that while about a third of the women tune in only one station during the morning, all the others readjusted their dials from time to time in order to get something somewhere else. Hettinger points out that 94 per cent of persons interviewed utilize regularly at least two stations; 74 per cent,

three stations; 41 per cent, four stations; and the final 16 per cent, bored and restless, call upon no less than five stations. He concludes that the ordinary listener regularly uses from two to four stations with three as the safest working average.

On the other hand, few radio listeners are conspicuously promiscuous. Stated another way, five people, say, in every hundred remain true to their choice of a single station, while not more than twenty-five in that hundred will allow their choice to roam beyond three stations. Counting, for one side, the hang-over audience picked up from the preceding program, and, for the other, the temporary loss to competing programs, we might safely conclude that nine out of ten people stick largely to the two or three stations bringing them chain broadcasts. As a result of this chronic constancy, after allowing for the more or less regular upset by the comparatively few outstandingly notable programs elsewhere, every good radio station, actually, "owns" a good big "average" audience.

Every broadcaster must, of course, rationalize his own radio bill. As each advertiser expensively puts on his favorite show each, quite naturally, has the same picture. Each imagines millions of people sitting, like himself, awaiting with tingling ears the opening notes of his particular program. Each broadcaster visualizes a vast audience listening—as he listens—to his program as a whole, a few millions even turning off the radio, as he does, with a satisfied sigh. It would be absurd to deny that many millions do



have their favorite programs. It might even be true that hundreds of thousands do turn on a given station at a fixed minute. But now the novelty has worn off, your average radio listener is probably no more enterprising than any of the rest of us.

Observation, reasoning, and just plain common sense conjoin to tell us that when you get around eight (or even seven) out of every ten radio machines in America turned on regularly four (or even three) hours every day, every week, every month, with three (or even two) people constantly in attendance, any claim as to actual *listening* of any sort above the sub-conscious may be a bit reckless. Robert Littell<sup>28</sup> furnishes an extreme example:

The Smiths' radio was playing when I arrived. We sat in the parlor and talked. All through our talk the radio, which was turned down very low, kept up a subdued and monotonous burble alternating between faint jazz and a confidential male voice praising some article of commerce the name of which I could not catch. The Smiths did not pay the slightest attention to the radio, and went on talking as if the sounds that came from the little box were only wind in the trees outside.

All through dinner and evening after dinner, the radio crooned and announced and crackled and rang bells and gave us hillbillies and sermons and saxophones and crop reports and advice on care of the scalp.

Meanwhile the Smiths talked on to me as if the radio didn't exist. They didn't fiddle with the knobs or change the programs, they didn't mention it, they probably wouldn't have realized that it was playing at all unless I had turned it off again.

Clearly the Smiths have moved out of the field of radio listening. And into the field of radio running! They have quit the field of intellectual activity. Or even emotional. And entered the semimechanical. As Mr. Littell goes on to explain:

There is no word in the English language to describe the state of mind of the Smiths.

A word to describe hearing without listening, a word to describe what goes on inside the heads of people who live near waterfalls or elevated railroads but do not notice them until a drought or a strike turns them off.

The missing word would be something like "sub-hearing" or "infra-listening."

Every radio advertiser, present or prospective, is free to decide for himself, as a buyer of circulation, how far Littell's satire may be founded on fact. Some of our minor publications used to multiply their circulation responsiveness by somewhat similarly reckless claims of "four *readers* to every copy." Every broadcaster according to his temperament, will cheer the outstanding overplus of radio running. Or fear its psychopathology. But anyone who sells an advertiser hours of radio *running* as hours of radio *listening* may therein be allowing his imagination to transcend his science, for here, plainly, he deals not with numbers but with psychological conditions. Real friends of radio saw long ago the dangers of proving too much. An excellent speech of Donald Shaw's once warned:

No printed medium has ever been foolhardy enough to claim that their entire circulation reads every advertisement

in the book. That would be absurd and they have never made that claim.

One radio writer, nevertheless, carelessly phrases:

Audience records shows that a major cigarette advertiser in four months of broadcasting over one of the largest commercial hook-ups (90 network stations) reached 36,000,000 actual listeners.

However correct his figures as to the "reaching" of 36,000,000 within its hearing, the term "*actual listeners*" seems inexcusably to exceed the bounds of statistics.

And the probability of truth.

One of radio's most important questions has been whether to precede or to follow a big popular spot. All are agreed that it's better to do either than neither; but there's little visible evidence beyond that. My own reasoning and observation have led me to disagree with the, perhaps, more general preference for following a popular hit in favor of preceding it. Not only is there an avoidance of the emotional and mechanical reaction of those who have "timed"—comparable with that following *the* big act in a vaudeville show; but there is the positive advantage of sampling all the strangers to your program while they are waiting for the big show that follows yours. Elder's phonographs recorded typical Bostonians tuning in regularly five or ten minutes earlier for this purpose. A natural corollary, superficial perhaps, suggests doing one's heavy advertising early in the program. More careful consideration will, I believe,

suggest a pair of more intelligent alternatives: (1) a superhuman attempt right at the beginning to interest the crowd still hanging on after a big show and (2) the most skillful placing of one's most important selling points at that point of your program—whether beginning or end—that most closely connects—at one end or the other—with its most popular neighbor.

William Benton<sup>29</sup> told the A.N.A.-ers:

I saw some figures showing that there are 124 programs daily on the air in St. Louis and 149 in Boston. The lowest city I saw—Nashville—had fifty-one programs daily. And, believe me, even that is a lot of competition.

To every radio advertiser, of course, this seems competition. In a sense it is. But, to the individual radio listener fifty-one programs or five hundred and fifty-one are just about the same. Except perhaps as they make it harder for him clearly to tune-in his favorite. The fact that several thousand broadcasts are going out every week over the big WEAFF, WJZ, WABC, and WOR chains, as we noticed early in the chapter, doesn't worry individual one-station, two-station, three-station fans in Boston, New Orleans, or Seattle any more than the fact that let's say 5,000 newspapers are being published regularly in the same territory worries the man who regularly reads one, two, or three of them. Each habitually "hears" his one or two or three of radio stations just as he reads habitually one or two or three newspapers; and, quite naturally, he "hears" the various radio

advertisements more or less in the same manner as he reads—or doesn't read—them in the newspaper or magazine.

Your average radio listener, probably, turns on from nine to eighteen different programs every day. These, in turn, are selected after a fashion, out of thirty to seventy programs broadcast during his average "listen" by the two or three, sometimes four, stations he regularly utilizes. So that, in all probability, any radio listener worthy of the name exposes himself and family every day to four, six, or eight advertisers. Say six a day. Over and above the "spots." This amounts above 1,600 to 2,000 radio advertisements a year. There are, we know, some 2,400 announcers running relays in six or eight shifts—talking thirty deep in especially good territories.

If all these broadcasters acted, as many of them do, as tactful visitors—not as broadly benevolent entertainers—even 2,000 advertisements a year might not prove too many for a good sturdy "actual" listener. Two thousand a year, however, may be a good many too many for the attention of any reasonably sane man. On the other hand, since each advertisement lasts only half a minute, it's certainly too many for any reasonably intelligent man to seek escape by turning his radio on and off. Against even 1,600 commercial plugs a year, your active nonlisteners would be like the farmer who wouldn't sell the railroad right-of-way through his barn because he didn't have time to keep opening and shutting the doors every time a train went through. Therefore,

despite all the talk one constantly hears of turning off the dial, most radio running is in the main *continuous* running on the same station.

So, as the novelty of each new machine wears off, its "listeners," like Mr. Littell's patently hyperbolic Smiths, doubtless become less and less turner-offers and more and more attention protectors. Every ear has intensely personal standards of what *it* enjoys as soothing, stimulating, and satisfying, and what *it* resents as harsh and jingling. Every sort of person tends, of course, to set up his own private formula of defense. This defense is by no means attuned against advertising alone—as many eloquent guardians of the public weal would have us believe. Again and again, radio shows have been splendidly successful with advertising long and harsh; and unsuccessful with advertising shushed to a short and timid whisper. A notable feature of the *Literary Digest* radio questionnaire was that the 10,000 people who wrote objections to "jazz," matched almost exactly the number who objected, in any way, to every form of radio advertising and its abuses. Listeners protect themselves indiscriminately against *all* unpleasant, unfamiliar, and uninteresting sounds.

This natural, inevitable system of self-protection, I submit, alone has enabled to endure the great American institution of running the radio machine three or four hours each day. Or the equivalent of three full eight-hour working days each week. Some of our less elastic citizens are, of course, congenitally unable to make the necessary adjustment to radio

running. But those Americans not actively participating in nonlistening are comparatively few, of course. For radio dominates our homes as motor-cars dominate our highways. And, as some youthful wit explained the latter:

The "quick and the dead" is right: You gotta be quick—or you're dead.

## ... AND WHAT HAPPENS?

A THREE-INCH praying mantis flew into a little radio station one day. A quick-witted announcer made the visiting mantis, too, follow the inhuman human tradition of saying a few words to the folks out there. Moreover, with a shrewder commercial eye than most, he immediately supplemented these sounds—like a diamond scratching glass—with an appeal for mantis food. The results, according to *Tide*, were “pretty fair”: 43 flies, a bee, 22 Japanese beetles, 3 bedbugs, and a box of turtle food. This shower of etymological tidbits furnishes at least one answer to Mr. Lumley’s<sup>30</sup> proposition:

Any survey of radio work must take as its starting point the objectives to be attained by the broadcasting. Broadcasters ask, “Is my program effective?” And the specialist in survey asks:

“What do you want your program to do?”

“Do you want it to educate?”

“Do you want it to please?”

“Do you want it to motivate?”

All this may be phrased as a simple question: *What do people do after hearing a program?*

A broadcasting British ornithologist asked listeners



everywhere for the dates when blackbirds might lay their first eggs. Although it obviously involved visiting nests every day, sixty listeners scattered all over the British Isles went on record. In answer to a hospital appeal over WRVA for an immediate blood transfusion, more than two hundred offers came in. Twenty-five hundred cars drove from a city some distance away to lend their headlights in response to a radio announcement that fourteen airplanes were forced to land on a dark field. Plenty of people are always doing surprising things like this. In the 1937 Ohio-Mississippi catastrophe, the neighborhood telephone reinforced by the powers of radio furnished as nearly as we may ever witness a man-made omnipotence wherein only one life was lost for every thousand homeless and every million dollars worth of property destroyed.

Except where broadcasting is admittedly philanthropic, however, the response must be definitely profitable to the broadcaster. In all these cases, both request and response were ostentatiously benevolent. Something profitable, however, should *happen* in roughly equivalent exchange for every penny spent commercially. As Frank A. Arnold<sup>81</sup> puts it:

Broadly speaking, the question "Does radio pay?" depends entirely on what the broadcaster expects to get in return for his money.

It is something like defining the phrase "a successful life," for the attainment of success depends almost entirely upon the objective sought.

A coast-to-coast hookup costs an average adver-

tiser about \$175,000 a year. If, to take an example fantastic enough to be simple, this broadcaster happened to be a good retail store, with no legitimate objective other than to turn over stock at a sales cost of 4 per cent, its broadcast by its own power must move merchandise at the rate of some \$4,000,000 a year to break even. Bamberger's WOR did, under Ira Hirschmann's inspiration, sell directly, among other things, around \$10,000 worth of pongee and \$5,000 of women's stockings. Few radio advertisers would expect such selling. But they expect some. The businesslike broadcaster, before spending considerable sums of stockholders' money, would likely budget, in fairly definite dollars and cents, whatever return he does expect. Not direct sales, perhaps. Possibly not even traceable indirect sales. There are forty things, more or less, people can do after hearing a program. Comparatively few of them, however, would be counted profitable by a commercial broadcaster. Starting with the absolute minimum of response and working steadily upward toward an ideal maximum sale, a listener can:

- (1) *Turn off the radio machine entirely.* In Germany where the postman collects two marks monthly from each radio-set owner, and those who stop listening stop paying, when the number of listeners to propaganda fell off alarmingly the government hurriedly reengaged less orthodox and more popular radio stars.
- (2) *Tune out, temporarily, an undesired station,* as a complete intermission in his radio running. Or to find a more pleasing program. This thumbs-down

factor, I believe, overtalked and overfeared. But, as these twenty top and bottom names on Kirkpatrick's research table prove, no strongly individual broadcaster may always dismiss too lightly the element of complete tuning out:

	Favorable Mention	Mentions of Tuning Out in Disgust	Popularity Balance
Amos 'n' Andy.....	160	42	118
Myrt and Marge.....	112	10	102
Seth Parker.....	98	9	89
Father Coughlin.....	94	25	69
Col. Stoopnagle & Budd..	62	10	52
Ben Bernie.....	51	3	48
Kate Smith.....	69	22	47
Walter Damrosch.....	42	2	40
Guy Lombardo.....	40	1	39
Eddie Cantor.....	35	2	33
Lowell Thomas.....	28	0	28
Cecil and Sally.....	11	12	- 1
Sisters of the Skillet.....	8	10	- 2
Old Dutch Girl.....	2	6	- 4
Myndall Cain.....	1	5	- 4
Morton Downey.....	17	24	- 7
Eva Ray.....	0	7	- 7
Walter Winchell.....	2	12	-10
Rudy Vallee.....	13	31	-18
Luke Rader.....	6	29	-23
Edna W. Hopper.....	1	51	-50

Next in degree less drastic to snapping off his machine, or turning even temporarily to another station, would be for the listener to *let the radio continue to run*, and

(3) *Turn off his attention*

1. Completely
  - (1) through disfavor of broadcast
  - (2) through his own mental distractions
  - (3) through distractions by other people and other things
2. Partially for the same reasons.

Those listeners who neither turn off the station, nor yet their attention completely, may still

(4) *Listen with varying degrees of concentration and without suggestion of response*

1. Subconsciously
2. Reasonably
3. Attentively
4. Enthusiastically.

And so on. No action yet. Passive listening only. Now, jumping our list considerably forward, let's observe the several kinds of tangible response. Broadly speaking, there may be, after all, but two kinds of tangible response likely to affect the broadcaster:

I. *Change in attitude*, with or without further appropriate subsequent action such as buying or recommending to friends. Apparently about one person in every ten frequently, and nearly twice that number occasionally, get "fed up" to the point of resentment with some broadcaster and his program.

Kirkpatrick<sup>32</sup> found that, in general, about one-fourth of the persons questioned had resolved not to purchase certain goods because of their resentment to what they regarded as objectionable advertising.

More constructively, on the other side, while again regretfully reminding that any survey of what people *say* they do must, in the interests of even rudimentary accuracy, be carefully sifted through a psychological sieve; and thereby interpreted in the light not only of what would happen if what that sample

happens to report were universally true, as well as in the light of what people are known to do regularly in somewhat parallel cases, I am setting down as a matter of record the reputed effects of radio advertising as reported, in response to questionnaires, by the listeners themselves. Readers who haven't at hand enough collateral facts for comparison I remind that out of every hundred who go to a gasoline station to get, say, a free blank for a free chance at a big prize only ten, twelve, possibly fifteen even send in their blanks.

II. *Active response*, either by mail, telegram, telephone, or by personal visit.

Despite the known facts of human failure to make adequate response, one mail survey flatly asking a miscellaneous mailing list the frank question

Did our radio program influence *you* to buy XYZ?

got a 47 per cent affirmative response! There is a perfectly legitimate error here that everyone who has handled this sort of response understands. But if its implications were generally true, in a reasonably broad sense, all any advertiser has to do is to buy his radio time—and retire on his income. Half of the members of a Boston advertising club said they had bought in response to radio advertising. Colorado answered “yes” to the extent of 47 per cent, and a Minneapolis survey showed as high as 56 per cent. The same question to Pittsburgh women found 64 per cent answering yes, with 28 per cent definitely

no. Sixty-two per cent of the women who responded to a general questionnaire were equally affirmative. Chicago women, one out of every four, said they had bought from morning broadcasts. Hettinger's personal survey found 28 per cent of those interviewed stating they had consciously purchased products "mentioned over the radio." Starch found the same of 26 per cent of those interviewed who had radios. In the five Major Market cities the corresponding response was 19 per cent, 24 per cent, 24 per cent, 30 per cent, 31 per cent, respectively. The American Household Furniture Company reported a noticeable improvement in goodwill shown by women toward its house-to-house salesmen. The Davey Tree Company, too, reported that a substantial majority of people upon whom Davey salesmen called mentioned the radio, and knew about the Davey Company in a favorable way. Without wasting any more time on the purely psychological rungs of the ladder ranging from actively aroused antagonism at the bottom to enthusiastic recommendation at the top, let us turn to those familiar forms of radio response more generally recognized by broadcasters as the ordinary forms of fan mail.

To answer the question "How many write for each hundred who listen?" or more properly, perhaps, "How many listen for each who writes?" is, of course, as impossible as it is desirable. In calculating the value of ordinary radio correspondence, each letter or card is variously assumed to represent 300 listeners; 500; 1,200; 4,000. In its very broadest as-

pects, the radio flow from one of the great networks may, year in and year out, produce a total mail response roughly equal to 40 letters for each microphone performance, 60 letters for each station broadcasting hour—one a minute—and, taking all things with everything else, a continuous average possibly as high as 4,000 letters per network program. Those who listen regularly are likely to write often. Kirkpatrick's survey suggested as high as four letters a year to each habitual writer. In contests, however, the "repeaters" are likely to run under 3 per cent. Women's letters run as high as five to one, almost always three to one man. Children will not, as a rule, run as high as one per cent. Seldom over two, except where especially enticing free gifts may lift the number toward five in a hundred.

Forker once established to his own satisfaction a response as high as 3 per cent to a broadcast offer of a free dusting mitt. This is, no doubt, high even for so appropriate and generally useful a gift. Other similar gifts, similarly estimated, showed 1.2 and .7 per cent. Any wide general average, however, might—even for fairly alluring free gifts—run well under  $\frac{1}{2}$  of 1 per cent of those listening at any given moment. Studied from the other end, 500 New York families seemed to indicate that about one in every five had, at one time or another, written a radio fan letter. This reported response ran from about one in eleven in the top income class to one in three in lowest. One thousand high school students reported that about one out of three had at one time or an-

other written for something: 70 out of their number had written for photographs, 48 for free samples, 45 for booklets or pamphlets, 42 to request numbers, 30 for jigsaw puzzles, 27 for information, 26 to enter a contest, and 20 in praise of the broadcast.

Houser's survey showed, too, that 23 per cent of all persons interviewed had at one time or another written some sort of letter. Here are a few random, almost haphazard, records of the sort of letter they tend to write. A typical radio listener, for example, may:

I. *Uninvited, unsolicited:*

(1) Volunteer letters of comment, favorable or unfavorable:

1. To Artist
2. To Program

The British Broadcasting Corporation tells about a London talk that was attacked on these grounds:

- (a) it had a communist bias
- (b) it was sectarian propaganda
- (c) it was frivolous; and, finally,
- (d) it was overintellectual.

Hard tells of a time when Senator Borah was addressing the radio audience. The telephone girls of the studio spent the whole period of Borah's broadcast answering not applause and congratulations, but remonstrances from listeners who wished to listen to the professional entertainment the senator had displaced!

One night "Great Moments in History," which had brought in but few letters, was canceled for a special concert. Five hundred telephone calls were received asking why. On the other hand, a pro-



gram not distinctly different from others with a strong appeal to any particular body may stop practically without comment. "Ipana" and "Clicquot Club" shifted nights without loss and almost without comment.

Protests against a change of program are notable when a unique program that appeals definitely to a certain group is withdrawn. When the "National Opera" over the WEAf network and the "Slumber Hour" over WJZ were running they brought in hardly any letters. Discontinued, many protests were received for months and years afterward. Thousands of letters were received in protest against the withdrawal of the "March of Time" and, as everybody knows, the practice of rebroadcasting was invented to satisfy the hundreds of thousands of complaints when the original Amos 'n' Andy program given at ten o'clock in the Middle West was shifted to seven o'clock Eastern Standard Time.

### 3. To Station

For every eleven seconds the station was on the air in 1934, says *Radio Art*, someone wrote a letter to WLS. Letters came from tots of six and from centenarians; from college presidents and ditchdiggers; from farmers and bankers, ministers and taxicab drivers, mothers and fathers, and from boys and girls about to get married, and they wrote concerning almost every conceivable subject.

### 4. To Advertiser

(2) Uninvited—or invited—the listener may write, telephone or telegraph requests:

#### 1. Tickets to the broadcast

When Gracie Allen visited Boston there were on file five days before the scheduled date 9 requests for each of WNAC's available 900 seats; in other words, 6,500 requests for tickets.

2. Photographs or signatures of artists
3. Request numbers
4. Requests to be mentioned personally on program

One station maintained for months a feature called "the longest song in the world." Additional verses written by listeners were sung and the name of each announced on the program. As a follow-up the verses were published and distributed free. Two hundred fifty thousand copies of the song were distributed monthly. WHIO offered Dayton children a chance to hear themselves talk to Santa Claus over the telephone. 5,000 calls in the first half hour brought a swift veto by the local telephone company.

5. Requests for other things

(3) Uninvited he may send:

1. To Artist

Forty different bottles, in almost equal variety, of cold remedies were mailed in response to one announcement that the singer had a cold. Similarly, a statement by Guy Lombardo concerning the broken strings of his violin brought him by mail 193 yards of violin string.

2. To Program
3. To Station

Henry Field, who built station KFNF on his own unpretentious personality, received more than 125,000 messages of congratulation in response to an anniversary program.

4. To Advertiser

II. Invited, the typical radio listener may respond:

- (1) With letters of comment, favorable or unfavorable:

1. To Artist

Burns and Allen, I am told, once got more than 360,000 letters in four days. Senator Huey Long, so goes the legend, after only four radio appearances, enrolled the names of more than 5,000,000 citizens

for his "Share-Our-Wealth Society." Father Coughlin took only a few months of broadcasting to secure for his National Union an alleged membership of 8,000,000. Brinkley, the gentleman with the goat glands, with no organization, no press, no support except the broadcasting station, in a three weeks' campaign induced almost half the Kansas voters to write his name on their ballot.

## 2. To Program

An announcer and an organist for WLS bet as to whether more than 500 were tuned in at 6:05 A.M. The organist lost the week's breakfasts if more than 500 did not respond. Two thousand listeners wrote in to rescue the organist.

## 3. To Station

A Montgomery Ward retail store, placing local radio advertising contracts, asked for a hundred letters a day as proof of effectiveness. Hire's Root Beer Company, somewhat similarly, selected station to carry its program on the basis of the number of requests for a free sample received by each station. WLW received 20,000 fan letters in one day on a single children's broadcast.

For every piece of mail addressed to a given station, three, four, or five go direct to the broadcaster; moreover, more than half of any station's network mail is likely to be addressed to the familiar letters of the coast-to-coast hookup rather than the station's own call. Some programs can collect 99 in every 100 letters, some only 70 or 80. The "slip" mail that goes to the station even when writers are particularly asked to write the station, on the other hand, runs well over 5 per cent.

## 4. To Advertiser

Attempts to belittle radio response as illiterate or impoverished have fallen flat. Each broadcaster gets

just about the type of answer his program deserves. Where advertiser's offers have been as restrained on the air as in the magazines, the "quality" differential in any mass of replies has been practically negligible.

(2) Invited, he may request:

Something free—not for sale

The local telephone company made a bakery discontinue its WCCO announcement that angel-food cakes valued at 49 cents each would be given free to the first ten people requesting them. More than 7,000 calls were identified out of the tied-up telephone service.

Phil Cook's morning program for Quaker Oats brought in thirteen weeks 130,000 requests for Quaker Crackels Dolls. The Mennen Company offered over CBS a free sample of its three products for men. From the first five broadcasts, 65,000 requests were received. A popular "blues" singer on an early afternoon program offered a full-sized sample drug product—53,000 requests in less than a week. In one month Ovaltine, sponsors of "Little Orphan Annie," distributed 174,000 children's mugs. In six years, radio brought the Metropolitan Life well over a million requests for exercise charts.

The Ipana Troubadours one night played five selections; the announcer offered to send free the sheet music for any one of them—55,000 requests were received. WBBM received 15,262 replies within thirty-six hours to a one-day offer of a certificate good for a jar of beauty cream at any drugstore. The offer was made in the afternoon. A free thermometer offered by the Wieboldt Stores at Chicago to anyone writing in for a card to present at any of the four department stores on three weekly musical

programs brought in 1,000 requests for cards, nearly all of which were exchanged for thermometers.

Lum and Abner's "Pine Ridge News" over four stations brought in 360,000 requests from 44 states. For the fourth edition of the "Tompkins Corners Enterprise" 250,000 requests came in: 5,000 within 24 hours, 50,000 within three days. For copies of W. J. Cameron's informal talks on the Ford Sunday Evening Hour over CBS around 6,000,000 requests have come from members of all professions and in every walk of life. While only 56,000 copies were needed to supply requests for his first talk in the 1934-35 series, 75,000 copies of the opening talk of the 1935-36 programs were necessary, more than 100,000 prints of each later talk. The Tide Water Oil Company broadcast, celebrating the return of Admiral Byrd, distributed—from one program—more than 150,000 souvenir booklets.

Portraits of artists are particularly popular. One free offer of a Myrt and Marge portrait calendar brought in 50,000 immediate requests. An offer of their photograph—made twice—drew 133,903 requests. More than 150,000 asked for a picture of the wedding of two characters in the WOR "Main Street Sketches."

(3) Invited, the listeners may send or make:

1. Requests for musical numbers
2. Requests for personal mention on program

An Australian station once sought to determine its most distant hearers. The competition which continued a week brought in more than 15,000 letters.

3. Entries for contest prizes

One Limerick contest, during one month, pulled for each evening an average of 1570 answers. At the end of 13 weeks 659,000 slogans had been received by the Carnation Milk Company. Station WTMJ

sold 27 tons of Betty candy in five weeks in the midwest territory by playing old musical favorites and giving the audience "contest" prizes for naming them.

4. Seek reward for action other than purchase

In return for the name of the nearest local dealer, a shoe manufacturer offered a nine-inch play ball. Made three times: 2,600 dealers' names.

5. "Proof" of purchase of goods

42,000 cigar bands came in to a CBS offer of Kate Smith's portrait. Twenty Mule Team Borax explained its "Death Valley Days" in booklet form. At the end of six months this souvenir book was offered in return for the top from a borax package. Three broadcasts brought in requests—and package tops—for more than 75,000 books. Pillsbury got positive proof of purchase of 250,000 sacks of flour by offering a booklet summary of their "Today's Children" broadcast for incoming sack labels.

Procter & Gamble require two Ivory Soap wrappers and 4 cents in U. S. postage stamps to be sent to the station in return for packets of stamps from various foreign countries. In four ordinary days, I am told, they received some 79,000 letters full of paid-for wrappers and prepaid postage. Henry Balkin produced for the Ben-Hur Coffee Company in thirteen weeks more than 20,000 proofs of sale from only three programs per week over one station. For the White King Soap Company, he pulled 57,000 box tops (30 cents each) in fourteen weeks from California only. A preliminary test over WLW brought 10,000 wrappers from syrup cans for Colonel Cook's dramatization of air aviation exploits.

6. Service and information towards buying

Perfection Stove Company once had one hour each

week a morning radio cooking school and signed up a class membership of 35,000. The R. B. Davis Company, manufactureres of baking powder, in six months received over 200,000 requests for recipes on their "Mystery Chef" program. WTMJ invited listeners to write or telephone if they wished to know where any of the new articles could be found. For two or three hours after each broadcast, various stores, shops and offices, Mrs. Grey and her assistants were kept busy on the telephone answering inquiries.

Johns-Manville in successive radio years got 50,000, 60,000, 100,000 invitations to send salesmen to visit people about to build.

7. Direct buying orders, with or without cash

Henry Fields of Shenandoah, Iowa, long a skillful advertiser, built his plant and seed business to \$950,000 a year on simple, friendly sales talk. He credits and increase of \$2,000,000 a year to the use of his own radio station. Station KTNT, another mail-order catalogue seller of general foods, credits a \$1,000,000 a year business entirely to radio.

III. In action other than writing, telephoning, or telegraph, he may respond:

(1) By visiting studio:

A broadcast on personal problems, "House of Dreams," over KPO brought many people in to see the speaker.

(2) By visiting place other than studio or store:

The Sohio Treasure Hunt held over radio which for two months rewarded finders of gems of state history got 20,000 letters and made it practically impossible to borrow any book on Ohio history at any public library. One retail store judged the effects of its program by the number of children required to go to the store

for application cards applying for auditions to perform on a special program called the "Little Red Schoolhouse Hour."

A Baltimore program centered its drama about the building of a home, actually constructing in one of the suburbs. Crowds of people went out to watch the putting up of the featured house. Conversely, the Buffalo House Wrecking and Salvage Company, reported that it had to call out the police reserves to protect it from the mob of people who came to see how a house could best be torn down.

A teacher of botany for the Ohio School of the Air reported that the enrollment in a regular university course taught by him had doubled because of his broadcasts. The Great Northern Railroad found a distinct increase in travel when broadcasting. A New York piano teacher reported 21 pupils from among those in his neighborhood who followed the radio piano lessons of the National Broadcasting Company. The German opera in New York some years ago saved itself by broadcasting its performances to prospective patrons in neighboring states.

*Abie's Irish Rose* was broadcast from the Studebaker Theater stage while in Chicago. Actual count at box office showed 2,786 persons mentioning within forty-eight hours after the actual broadcast, when buying tickets, that they had heard the show over the radio. Others telephoned to the theater to find out when they could get tickets. There is serious lack of agreement about the value of radio sampling of public spectators. Baseball games and other events have found radio can stimulate attendance at specific advertised performances and yet decrease attendance as a whole to similar events. The answer is simple enough. When the radio "sample" is such that the audience is enthused to see



the show, attendance is increased. Otherwise, the radio showing itself satisfies or disillusion.

(3) By visiting store:

1. For extraneous reasons

Once a sponsor tested his program by announcing twice that the radio cast participating in his show would, on a certain evening, be at the company's place of business, to greet any listeners who might appear; 4,000 persons came to shake hands with the players.

2. To look at goods

Announcements were made over four stations of a free offer of house painting and special prices on paint. 3,108 people who came into the stores of eleven dealers were asked which station brought them the announcement. Costs were allocated per return per station: 9.2 cents, 9.8 cents, 34 cents, and 25.5 cents.

Over 600,000 men, women, and children went to Skelly Oil stations to get a lucky coin similar to one supposed to have been found by "Jimmie Allen and his Friends" on a transpacific flight to China. A similar number again visited these oil stations to receive a copy of a four-color pictorial map of Jimmie's flight. 50,000 etchings of Edgar Guest's poems were called for at dealer establishments in consequence of 26 weeks Graham-Paige program. Goodrich's offer of free radio logs some time ago sent 14,000 people to their dealers within four days; 600,000 called in a few months. Chrysler's broadcast, we are told, once brought 3,000,000 to dealers' showrooms to see new models. Sinclair's Red Grange 11 week radio show was sales-engineered powerfully enough to induce 39,000,000 calls for football scoring sheets with appropriate sales increases, immediate and unmistakable.

## 3. To Buy

Mandel Brothers at Chicago in a few months sold 50,000 contract bridge score pads at a price of four for 25 cents; also sold 10,000 books on bridge, written by Mr. Lagron, at a retail price of 15 cents. At eleven o'clock in the morning a Rochester department store broadcast a special offer of card tables at 79 cents, and sold 140 of them that afternoon. At a Chicago shoe store, a hundred women bought \$1.95 hose of a new shade mentioning having heard it advertised on the radio. One announcement sold 50 pairs of hose at \$1.35 for a New England department store. From 9:00 to 9:45 A.M. Bamberger's exceedingly clever dramatization of a woman in her own home, sold directly and definitely 4,000 breakfast sets, 5,000 pairs of stockings, and just short of 24,000 yards of 44-cent pongee . . . the sales total in these three items alone mounting well toward \$20,000.

## WHAT PEOPLE SAY THEY LIKE

THE famous historian, James Bryce, stated many years ago that the trouble in trying to run a government by public opinion was finding out what is public opinion. To ask people what *sort* of program they prefer is easy enough. But, in radio as in most other problems where an investigation may swing itself advantageously to anybody's advantage, there are two almost insuperable obstacles to a primarily statistical approach. The first difficulty, of course, is the one Mr. Bryce mentions: the great mass of people don't prefer—consciously—any *sort* of program.

They *like* this comedian.  
And that singer.  
This orchestra.  
And those tunes.

As John Eugene Hasty<sup>33</sup> expresses it:

Asks the questionnaire, "Do you prefer classical or popular music?" The only correct reply I can make is, "Both—it depends upon the composition and my mood." "Do you like soprano voices?" to which I can only reply, "*Whose* soprano voice?" "Do you listen to wisecracking programs?" If it is the station announcer who does the wisecracking, probably not;

if it is Will Rogers, decidedly yes. "Do you like Blatz Brothers' program?" Perhaps I do; but this permits no logical conclusion that I will like the Smith Gadget program because it follows a similar pattern.

So before you reach the second most popular choice of any given type, your respondents will be praising, with equal enthusiasm, some particularly favored performer of an entirely different type. In fact, a thousand people, asked what type of program they wanted to hear more of, voted a majority for *all* types except sermons, recipes, political speeches, business reports, and advertisements.

A few important generalizations may, nevertheless, be drawn from almost any majority, provided one never forgets that individuals run "wild" when it comes to radio rules, that personality transcends statistics. Pitts Sanborn's inquiry for a favorite program among a comparatively small group of America's recognized leaders in several fields found named nineteen news programs alone, split as to lead among Boake Carter, Edwin C. Hill, and Lowell Thomas. Forty different "educational" broadcasts were nominated and fifty-five different musical programs!

With this warning, then, let us go ahead with an examination of what our pseudo-scientific slang loves to call people's "reactions." Four methods are suggested by which an inquiring commercial broadcaster may evoke, a bit more definitely than Mr. Sanborn anyway, a fair picture of habitual likes and dislikes of the average radio audience; and, perhaps, infer with more than ordinary accuracy their prob-

able response to his own program. Also a few elements of a fifth and broader "background" method through one's own general study of the never-changing fundamentals of human nature. The four obvious ways directly to approach the question, then, are

- 1) Ask people what *type* of program they prefer.
- 2) Ask people what *programs* they prefer. Sort their choices into program types for yourself.
- 3) Ask other people—presumably those in the best position to know—what sort of programs people generally prefer.
- 4) Study audience response. Check its intensity. Observe its perseverance. Work back indirectly through your own inferences to a specific judgment on particular programs.

There's still a fifth way, best of all for those who have time and patience: educate *yourself* through a "background" study of the great box-office successes: opera, plays, motion pictures, books, songs. With such guiding knowledge of eternal humanity one can't go far wrong commercially over the radio. As Edmund Burke once observed, there's very little new to be learned about human nature. As a part of this broad background of general "showmanship," it will harm no man who spends money for radio to realize, on the one hand, that Dick Powell, not inordinately glamorous to the adult urban eye, averaged the world's record weekly fan mail of 10,000 letters; and, on the other hand, that, by the simple expedient of attaching two reply postals to a recent run-of-the-mill advertising page, the International Correspond-

ence School got four times as many answers as from the best previous advertisement in their history.

The successful radio advertiser will keep the closest possible check on audience response in all its manifestations. The skeptic who said there are only three kinds of lies, "Lies, damn lies, and statistics," was born too soon. Today he would have triumphantly climaxed with a fourth class "surveys." Meaning, of course, statistical surveys *psychologically unadjusted!* The successful radio advertiser must, nevertheless, learn to use figures. Adjust them freely. Fearlessly. To draw his own inferences. For there's only one thing more important than keeping the closest possible check on audience response—and that is knowing how to utilize every variety of response to *interpret* audience attitude.

When to take literally his brickbats and bouquets.

When to disregard them altogether.

And then to follow the same course with his radio program he does with his Ford: listen carefully for all squeaks, being extra careful when he doesn't hear any.

The first thing to remember about any kind of comment by anybody, whether voluntarily written or gathered by plain unlettered canvassers, is that, while every note of praise or complaint *may* be a significant straw showing which way the wind blows and so worth your careful study, it *may* equally well be a perverse straw floating directly against the truth. The most trivial solitary comment may be worth \$10,000 as a single dissociated suggestion for

specific improvement. But, statistically, neither swooning praise nor scathing anathema is worth the writing paper until counted into a sufficiently large anonymous average to point definitely toward a trend. In other words, radio response, when scientifically tabulated and correctly interpreted, may be made as accurate as daily thermometer readings from the U. S. Weather Bureau. Or time signals from Greenwich. But, up to the time this response has attained that dignity of coordinated statistics, fan mail and all other audience comment are, in their probable relations to the entire truth, no more significant than your guess as to the official weather report from Washington. Or my guess as to Greenwich time. Outside comment is always interesting. It is important only as it *happens* to be true. And truly representative.

Nevertheless, profitable radio broadcasting depends so largely upon adequate handling of myriad response that we may, perhaps, devote a minute here to examining another reason for not taking outside comment too seriously—whether volunteered in a single letter or answered to armies of imposing research questions. Expressed about radio or anything else, practically all opinions are primarily flights for personal self-expression. Find out, then, as experienced and scientifically impartial research workers do, how much “bias” to allow for undivided vanity. (Impartial authorities tell me, for example, that any survey by mail, telephone, or personal call, in which the beneficiary is even dimly apparent

either to the one who asks or to the one who answers the questions, becomes lamentably unreliable within the few first days unless rigidly checked directly against conscious and unconscious dishonesty of human nature seeking to make a response gratifying to its own vanity and generously satisfactory to the man who pays the bill. There's at least one test case on record where people have, in this large open-mindedness, signed petitions for their own hanging.)

So, try in every case to guess why any particular person would be likely to say what he—or she—does say. A first step in that direction is to keep always in mind the important fact that only an entirely unjealous man will praise unqualifiedly the work of another. Out of a thousand people 999—particularly those who know least—feel that too enthusiastic approbation of anybody's creation may be taken somehow as a reflection on their own critical ability. So beware of anybody's intense interest in minor faults. Mostly it means inability to distinguish what is really important.

That unfortunate ambition to show oneself a wee bit keener than others is not confined to zealous employees. When 424 New York University students were asked to tell the difference among four consecutive samples of musical reproduction, 383 of them—nearly 96 per cent—were able to describe all sorts of shades and distinctions where no difference whatever actually existed among four identical samples. This phenomenon of showing off by criticizing negligible and even nonexistent faults in others



is familiar in one form or another to everybody connected with radio. So many letters and telephone calls went to one San Francisco station about errors in pronunciation that a special teacher of speech was engaged for the announcers. When a Detroit sports announcer credited a touchdown to the wrong half-back, the self-important audience broke all records for telephone calls on that program.

Hastening back, however, to our four ways of getting an accurate line on popular preferences as to programs, we come first to that of asking people directly what type of program they prefer. Here, as well as in the three other classes, examples almost at random have been collected.

One agency survey made a quick cross section of 500 New York families. They criticized, of course, the lack of variety in programs, long tiresome announcements, and advertising claims in extravagant and in questionable taste. Besides these more or less stereotyped criticisms, the things disliked were:

	Per cent
jazz and crooners . . . . .	21
low standards . . . . .	18
lack of variety . . . . .	11
sketches growing stale . . . . .	11
women's voices . . . . .	9
talk . . . . .	8
religion . . . . .	8
announcers . . . . .	6

Clifford Fitzpatrick reports, too:

. . . 54.4 per cent of those making suggestions commented unfavorably on radio advertising. Of the 163 persons making suggestions, 36, or 22.1 per cent, desired less jazz, cheap music

or blues or crooning. There are 14 persons who suggested more cultural, informational or educational programs. There were scattered suggestions for less mechanical or recorded music, better talent, more newspaper information about future programs, less religion, fewer stations and less local talent."

And to quote from *Advertising and Selling*<sup>34</sup>:

The types of programs for which the negative votes in the Literary Digest Radio Test were heavier than the votes of approval include jazz and jazz orchestra singers—which rolled up together a total of over 11,000 dissatisfied "no's"—crooners, sob-singers, blues and torch singers, sopranos, hill-billies, and mountain music. Advertising which is excessive, absurd, cheap, or too insistent was emphatically condemned by approximately 10,000 participants, and more than 5,000 censured cheap humor, comedians who are not funny, stale jokes and wise crackers.

Five hundred and seventeen of the approximately 1,500 teachers attending the summer session of New York State College for Teachers, were asked by WOKO to check their preferences on a questionnaire. Interesting and unique viewpoints have been brought out by a survey of the returns of the questionnaire:

News Broadcasts . . . . .	416
Popular Dance Music . . . . .	361
Symphony Music . . . . .	294
Drama . . . . .	258
Light Opera . . . . .	257
Band Music . . . . .	238
Educational Programs . . . . .	206
Sports Broadcasts . . . . .	201
Amateur Programs . . . . .	194
Comedy . . . . .	189
Opera . . . . .	185
Singing . . . . .	185
String Ensemble . . . . .	167
Mixed Music and Plays . . . . .	142
Hawaiian Music . . . . .	137

Political Speeches.....	67
Children's Programs.....	51
Crooning.....	51
Hillbilly Music.....	45
Transcriptions.....	24
Recipes and Cooking Talks.....	20
Stock and Market Reports.....	13

### Hettinger<sup>35</sup> reports:

In a survey made by the Ohio School of the Air, pupils were requested to say whether they would like to listen to certain suggested types of programs. The combined ranking from most preferred to least preferred was:

plays from books  
 biographical dramalogues  
 international broadcasts  
 historical reports  
 talks by famous persons  
 songs to sing.

### Lumley<sup>36</sup> similarly for Wisconsin:

The First semester programs of the Wisconsin School of the Air which had the greatest number of listeners were

story time  
 song  
 art appreciation  
 health  
 rhythmic.

The smallest number of listeners followed

talks by government officials  
 talks on girls' problems in the home  
 talks on poetry.

And

Of the programs offered, principally by the American School

of the Air, pupils liked history best. As methods of presentation they liked dramatization and story-telling. The rankings of the methods were: dramatization, 97; story-telling, 82; debate, 60; interview, 41; and lecture method, 25;—the figure referred to the percentage of pupils in favor of the method.

The *Tower Radio Magazine*<sup>87</sup> report on what the colleges think of radio:

College students like  
 Soft music  
 Good music  
 Sports broadcasts  
 Intelligent comics.  
 College students hate  
 Excessive advertising  
 Stale jokes  
 Educational features  
 Drama.

The *Radio Broadcasting Manual for Retailers* reports:

According to numerous surveys, fan letters and consumer reactions, the order of preference to radio programs by the largest number of listeners is as follows:

1. Orchestral Music
2. Popular Entertainers
3. Dramatic Programs
4. Short Talks on Interesting Subjects
5. Reports on Athletics, Weather, Time, Market
6. Religious Service
7. Grand Opera
8. Educational Talks
9. Children's Programs
10. Domestic Science
11. Physical Exercise.

In Otto Kleppner's<sup>38</sup> radio advertising textbook supplement is an excellent paragraph:

WHAT DOES AUDIENCE WANT—Entertainment, diversion, education—these are the qualities radio listeners seek. According to the findings of Dr. Starch, the order or preference by the largest number of listeners is as follows:

- Orchestral Music
  - Popular, but not necessarily jazz
  - Semi-classical
  - Classical
- Popular entertainment
- Drama (prepared especially for radio)
- Comedy
- Athletic Reports
- Religious Service
- Grand Opera
- Crop, Market, Weather and Time Reports
- Educational Service
- Children's Programs
- Domestic Science
- Physical Exercise.

Turning to more local treatment, WCKY reports, for example, from a Cincinnati survey:

Answers of the 2,500 persons interviewed showed the following preference in the matter of type of programs:

Popular music.....	53.27%
Plays.....	47.12
Comedy Dialogue.....	41.04
Sports Reviews.....	25.43
Semi-classical music.....	21.07
News events.....	20.04
Classical music.....	19.80
Children's programs.....	10.10

From the St. Louis study<sup>38a</sup> this music table:

	<i>classical</i>	<i>popular</i>	<i>jazz</i>	<i>organ</i>
Mothers.....	13	34	6	2
Housewives.....	3	7	11	
Farm Women.....	2	11		1
Iowa Students.....	5	17	17	7
Wash. U. Students....	24	73	24	2
Miscellaneous.....	46	65	13	5
Total.....	93	207	71	17

And Hettinger adds, somewhat similarly for two other cities:

	<i>Philadelphia</i> (%)	<i>Buffalo</i> (%)
	Percentage of Listeners Liking Program	
Music.....	99.8	(Not asked)
Comedy.....	74.6	76.6
Drama.....	66.1	83.5
News.....	54.7	53.1
Sports.....	62.4	63.4
Religious.....	39.9	46.9
Educational.....	19.3	43.7
Special Features.....	27.6	43.1

Clifford Kirkpatrick<sup>39</sup> contributes more data of the same sort from the Minneapolis survey:

	Mentions	Preference Rank Ext. Div. Study	Preference Rank Kirkpatrick Study
News and Information.....	31.0	1	1
Dramatic (including Amos 'n' Andy)	21.0	2	4
Dramatic (excluding comic char.)..	10.5		
Popular Music (incl. jazz).....	15.2	3	3
Classical Music.....	11.2	4	2
Sports.....	7.7	5	5
Religious and Inspirational Talks..	7.2	6	6
Political Speeches.....	1.3	7	7
Unclassifiable (horoscopes, advertising, local talent, fashions, parties, bridge games, health exercises, etc.).....	5.5		

Also, Mr. Kirkpatrick reports:

Mean rank order of seven types of radio programs ranked in the order of preference by 413 persons in the main sample, giving complete data:

	Mean Rank Order
1. News and Information.....	2.7
2. Classical Music.....	3.3
3. Popular Music (including jazz).....	3.7
4. Dramatic programs (with or without music)	3.8
5. Sports.....	4.2
6. Religious and Inspirational Talks.....	4.6
7. Political Speeches.....	5.6

Not unexpectedly, a most scientific and generally helpful method of audience appraisal is disclosed by Cantril & Allport in their excellent book.<sup>40</sup>

A questionnaire listing 42 types of programs was distributed to 1,075 people as representative a sample of listeners as it was possible to obtain, drawn partly from an urban community in Massachusetts and partly from small towns and rural areas in New York State. Both sexes were equally represented. The group included approximately the same number of people over and under 30 years of age. The occupational and cultural level of both men and women represented a typical crosscut of the American population. The questionnaires were personally distributed and collected. No names were put on the questionnaires, but data on sex, age, and occupation were obtained. All individuals were told to be frank and honest in expressing their opinions. Considering the radio audience only as one large undifferentiated group, it is clear that music heads the list of prefer-

ences, with other forms of entertainment following in favor as listed.

Program	Median Rank Order
Music.....	2.5
Popular.....	2.0
Classical.....	4.5
Comedy.....	2.5
Dramatic programs.....	3.4
Sports Broadcasts.....	4.0
Talks (general).....	6.0
Religious programs.....	6.5
News and Market reports.....	7.0
Educational programs.....	7.0
Children's programs.....	7.5
Special Features.....	8.5
Women's programs.....	10.0

So much for the simple method of asking people directly what sort, class, or type of programs they prefer. Our second way to get a line on popular trends, as you may remember, was not to invite any introspection or evolve any generalities, but to ask a direct, definite question as to whether they like or don't like certain specific programs. This subdivides, naturally, into a number of heads: notably interviews, surveys, voting contests.

#### (1) INTERVIEW

Mr. Frank E. Mullen, director of agriculture broadcasts for the National Broadcasting Company, for example, once told a *New York Times* reporter<sup>41</sup> that in his ten years of contact with broadcasting he had read probably 200,000 letters from listeners on the farm. Usually friendly. Seldom critical. Leave no doubt that the program rated high in the city is also a favorite on the farm.



In fact [says Mr. Mullen], the United States for the most part is still rural-minded. Amos 'n' Andy are at the top of the preferential list, as are the Rudy Vallee program, the Goldbergs, Kate Smith and Sherlock Holmes.

Again, Orrin E. Dunlap Jr. asked Mr. Royal:

"What programs do the rural sections favor?" "Strange as it may seem," Mr. Royal replied, "the dance band is the popular broadcast on the farm.

"From the comments I heard straight across the land, I consider the Metropolitan Opera the biggest thing on the air last season.

"On the West Coast, in clubs and grills, where business men gather at noon, dominoes are a main attraction during the lunch hour, but, believe it or not, the opera from Broadway, reaching the West around noon, stopped the domino games while groups listened to the music."

Or this from an interview by Orrin E. Dunlap Jr. (in the *New York Times*), also three or four years ago:

"Is there any one program that stands out in front from coast to coast—in other words, one of universal popularity?" the inquirer asked.

"Amos 'n' Andy," quickly replied Mr. Royal.

## (2) SURVEYS

Surveys range from questionnaires that are scarcely more than simultaneous identical interviews to the weekly or monthly statistical ratings made to clients regularly by the professional research institutes.

From *News-Week*,<sup>42</sup> the first example:

*Listeners Prefer Good Music, Upsetting an Alibi*—Composers, the quick and the dead, have just competed in a nationwide popularity contest. To pick numbers for an all-request program—celebrating the New York Philharmonic Symphony's 200th broadcast over CBS Dec. 1st, 12,112 radio listeners voted for 219 composers.

Four of the most serious composers piled up a third of the total vote to win landslide victories. The result upsets radio's appraisal of popular taste. For stressing inconsequential music, sponsors have alibied: the public won't stand for anything else.

My own class at Columbia<sup>43</sup> voted their favorite program:

Rudy Vallee .....	13
Jack Benny .....	12
Showboat .....	12
Ed Wynn .....	11
Eddie Cantor .....	7

A survey made in 32 boys' colleges and 8 girls' colleges of the leading orchestras and leading tunes started:

<i>Orchestras — Group 1</i>	<i>Songs — Group 1</i>
Glen Gray and his Casa Loma Band	The Isle of Capri
Ray Noble's Orchestra	Fare Thee Well, Annabelle
Hal Kemp's Orchestra	I Believe in Miracles

Coming now to the use of the professional surveys, the ten programs most frequently mentioned by March, 1934, according to the Cooperative Analysis of Broadcasting were:

Chase and Sanborn  
 Captain Henry's Maxwell House Showboat  
 Fleischmann  
 Gulf Headliners  
 Texaco Fire Chief

Bakers Broadcast  
 Ben Bernie  
 Amos 'n' Andy  
 Sinclair Greater Minstrels  
 Cities Service Concert

A year later, according to Martin J. Porter<sup>44</sup>:

Final ratings of the dozen major radio shows for 1935 have just been listed by the survey to which sponsors subscribe—the survey that makes 400,000 calls a year on listeners in 40 representative cities. The newest figures cover the past two weeks, and are perhaps interesting when compared to the same period in 1934, as follows:

1935	1934
1. Major Bowes Hour	1. Rudy Vallee
2. Jack Benny	2. "Showboat"
3. Rudy Vallee	3. Joe Penner
4. "Showboat"	4. Jack Benny
5. Fred Allen	5. Ed Wynn
6. Whiteman-Crosby	6. Operettas
7. Burns & Allen	7. Fred Allen
and	8. Opera Guild (Succeeding Cantor)
7. Robert Ripley (tied)	9. Lombardo
9. "Hollywood Hotel"	10. "First Nighter"
10. Wallace Beery	11. Chicago Minstrels
11. "One Man's Family"	12. Ben Bernie
12. Manhattan Merry-Go-Round	

Still another year later, a random New York *Journal* clipping from Aircaster Porter:

New figures are due the end of this week and it is said they will show a phenomenal rise in the WABC Community Sing prestige. As matters now stand, the Major Bowes Hour still leads the pack of full-hour shows with a rating of 27.5. Second place goes to Stoopnagle and Budd (17.9) with "Showboat" third (14.3) and the Monday night Radio Theatre fourth. Hollywood Hotel ranks fifth.

Burns and Allen are tops for half-hour network shows. The

Jack Benny spot, which rated 20.9 before Benny vacationed, is now held by Tim and Irene, with a percentage of 12.3. One Man's Family is third and Manhattan Merry-Go-Round, fourth.

One of those things is the rating of Pick and Pat, who, according to the survey, are ahead of the Paul Whiteman series, and ran ahead of Fred Waring before he went on holiday.

### (3) CONTESTS

Leaving interviews and surveys and turning to "popularity" contests we have, of course, such interesting events as the annual *Radio Guide* figures:

#### "CONTINUITY" VOTE

(Twenty Most Popular Teams in 1933 Radio Guide Ballot)

<i>votes</i>			
1)	105,000	Amos 'n' Andy	Quiet darky serial
2)	103,000	Burns & Allen	"Dumb girl" in low comedy
3)	30,000	Myrt & Marge	Stage girl serial
4)	(22,000	Mills Brothers	Musical team)
5)	19,000	Benny & Mary	Boy and girl serial
6)	15,000	Stoopnagle & Budd	"Dumb" comedy
7)	14,000	Olson & Johnson	"Dumb" comedy
8)	13,000	Gene and Glen	Boy and girl serial
9)	(8,000	Maple City Four	Musical team)
10)	7,300	"Baron & Sharlie"	Jack Pearl (who also stands 22nd on list of stars)
11)	7,000	Molasses 'n' January	Negro low comedy
12)	(6,500	Landt Trio	Musical team)
13)	(6,400	Dragonette & Parker	Chesterfield Duet)
14)	(5,500	Boswell Sisters	Female Trio)
15)	5,500	Betty and Bob	Boy and girl serial
16)	4,700	Gail and Dan	Boy and girl serial
17)	(4,500	Easy Aces	Light comedy—music)
18)	(4,500	Vic and Sade	Boy and girl serial)
19)	(3,500	Don Hall Trio	Musical Team)
20)	2,800	Baker and Bottle	Phil Baker—Armour

Twenty Most Popular Features in 1934 Radio Guide Ballot

1)	130,000	Wayne King Orchestra	Soft familiar music
2)	105,000	Amos 'n' Andy	Negro conversation
3)	103,000	Burns & Allen	"Boob" girl comedy

4)	93,000	Joe Penner	Low comedy monologue
5)	85,000	Rudy Vallee (prog.)	Fleischmann program
6)	74,000	Bing Crosby	Simple crooner
7)	63,000	Guy Lombardo	Soft orchestra
8)	51,000	ShowBoat	Straight "village" comedy
9)	46,000	Ben Bernie Orch.	Orchestra plus personality
10)	42,000	Rudy Vallee	Flatfoot music
11)	41,000	Chase & Sanborn prog.	Durante-Rubinoff
12)	39,000	Jack Benny	Wisecrack—low comedy
13)	38,000	Eddie Cantor	" " "
14)	30,000	Myrt and Marge	Stage girl serial
15)	28,000	Chevrolet Program	Jack Benny
16)	26,000	Fred Waring	Pleasant music
17)	23,000	Rudy Vallee	Simple singer
18)	22,000	Mills Brothers	Harmony singing
19)	19,000	Benny & Mary	Boy and girl serial
20)	18,000	Lanny Ross	College boy singer

And 1,250,000 written ballots returned these winners in *Radio Guide's* "Star of Stars" election poll:

In 1935	In 1936
Showboat	Show Boat
One Man's Family	One Man's Family
Wayne King	Wayne King
Amos 'n' Andy	Jack Benny
James Wallington	James Wallington

And there is, of course, that well-established New York *World-Telegram* poll on newspaper radio critics. As reported by the *World-Telegram*:

In the tabulation of the 239 editors' ballots on leaders in the various departments of radio entertainment three votes were allowed for a first choice, two for a second and one for a third. The vote on the editors' favorite programs follows:

1. Jack Benny . . . . .	240
2. Rudy Vallee Hour . . . . .	91
3. Fred Allen . . . . .	90

Major Bowes' finishing fourth may surprise many fans.

Many listeners' surveys show him first. The critics' poll however, in the past has foretold changes. Last year's listeners' survey still showed Eddie Cantor near the top, but the critics' poll indicated that he was slipping. . . . This year's listeners' survey bears that out.

And by the *World-Telegram*, in its reports on radio favorites of 1934 as revealed by newspaper radio critics' vote:

1934	Class	1933
Jack Benny	Favorite program	Rudy Vallee Hour
Jack Benny	Comedian	Jack Benny
Jane Frohman	Popular songstress	Ruth Etting
Bing Crosby	Male popular singer	Guy Lombardo
Mills Brothers	Harmony team	Boswell Sisters

Now just a moment for the *third* method of popularity survey, the scientific analysis of active audience response qualitatively as well as quantitatively. As a sample of the really scientific study of human habits as such, take a few words from Miss Arnold's notable survey of surveys:<sup>45</sup>

Anyway, these are the first ten programs that these 36,000 people were listening to when we caught them, in order of the size of the audience:

1. Ed Wynn
2. Robert Burns
3. Maxwell House
4. Goldbergs
5. Blue Ribbon
6. Buick
7. Amos 'n' Andy
8. Pond's Orchestra
9. Barbasol
10. Eno Crime Club

Remember that these are in order. This is important for the drop from the top to the bottom is pretty great. Seventy-four per cent of those who were using their radios on Tuesday evenings at 9:30 were listening to Ed Wynn, while 34% of those who were listening in at the time the Eno Crime Club was on the air, were listening to that program.

So, the *next morning*, we asked thousands of people what programs they had heard the night before. (You will have to take our word for it that this was all very scientific, with adequate samples, proper distribution, duplicated methods of analysis, same hours and same cities use, etc.—all the safeguards of sound research.)

This was the way this list looked when we got what they *remembered*:

1. Ed Wynn
2. Maxwell House
3. Goldbergs
4. Amos 'n' Andy
5. Robert Burns
6. Eno Crime Club
7. Myrt and Marge
8. Blue Ribbon
9. Sherlock Holmes
10. First Nighter.

This completes our quick ruffling of random samples of stray results in these first three general classes of current surveys of radio listeners' likes and dislikes. Elderly miscellaneous dusty fragments, already "outmoded" by more recent stylists, these rankings are assembled here, as I have already explained, primarily as passing examples of a method. Please suspect in them no attempt to influence any

generic principles of judgment; or even remotely to suggest anything approaching a composite choice. On the contrary, we urge a far closer individual study of the future judgments of original authorities whose examples I have the honor of quoting here so roughly.

#### (4) PERSONAL BACKGROUND STUDY

So much, then, for the several ways of finding out what people think of some programs already on the air. Now for a way to check back these sketchy surveys of passing fancy against a general, all-time popularity background in a number of other comparable sources of emotional stimulation mostly utilized long before the radio arrived. In other words, the opportunity for every advertiser to assemble behind his own broadcast the seasoned showmanship of the old-fashioned arts suavely successful when radio was only unsuspected static. Such wisdom, for example, as a *New York Times*<sup>46</sup> reporter ascribes to Paramount Pictures:

Paramount feels that any stories that had such a pronounced hold on the public must have picture possibilities, for the same kind of people go to the movies that read the books. Martha Finley sold 2,500,000 of the twenty-five "Elsie" stories. The eleven volumes of Laura E. Richard's "Hildegard Margaret" sold 300,000. Six volumes of Pollyanna, by Eleanor H. Porter, sold 800,000. And so on down through Louise M. Breitenbach's fourteen "Haddon Hall" books, the eleven volumes of "Captain January," L. M. Montgomery's "Anne" books, to the high of all time, Louisa M. Alcott's stories, which sold 5,665,000 copies and which still sell from 10,000 to 12,000 a year.



Any inclined to sniff at the *practical* value of such wisdom need only remember that it took a film of Louisa M. Alcott's *Little Women* to rescue Mr. Rockefeller's vastly modern Music Hall from an appalling succession of spectacular goose eggs. Anybody would know, offhand, of course, that *Klondike Kate* and *Little Caesar* are more popular with American audiences than are *Abraham Lincoln*, *Alexander Hamilton*, and *Alice in Wonderland*. But for those who want this sort of safeguard, here are lists we would like to credit to the unremembered but enterprising publication that compiled them for our borrowing—of the popularity tops in motion pictures, legitimate stage shows, songs, and, finally—for close-up comparison—the enduring radio shows.

## MOTION-PICTURE BOX-OFFICE TOPS

Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse	Beau Geste
Ben-Hur	The Champ
The Big Parade	City Lights
Birth of a Nation	Daddy Longlegs
Cavalcade	Four Sons
The Covered Wagon	The Merry Widow
The Jazz Singer	Safety Last
Broadway Melody	Hot Water
The Gold Rush	The Lost World
The Kid	Arrowsmith
Little Women	Bring 'Em Back Alive
Cimarron	Connecticut Yankee
Rio Rita	Song of My Heart
The Sea Hawk	Grandma's Boy
State Fair	Amos 'n' Andy
Girl Shy	The Miracle Man
	Smilin' Through

## WHAT ABOUT RADIO?

## RECORD RUNS OF LEGITIMATE SHOWS

## LONG RUNS BY ROAD SHOWS

Rip Van Winkle . . . . .	40 wks	Turn to the Right . . . . .	40 wks
Uncle Tom's Cabin . . . . .	40 "	Lightnin' . . . . .	40 "
Ben-Hur . . . . .	40 "	Green Pastures . . . . .	52 "
Music Master . . . . .	50 "	Abie's Irish Rose . . . . .	40 "
The Man from Home . . . . .	40 "	The Fool . . . . .	40 "
Arizona . . . . .	40 "	Friendly Enemies . . . . .	40 "
Charlie's Aunt . . . . .	40 "	Of Thee I Sing . . . . .	78 "
Wizard of Oz . . . . .		78 wks	

BOOKS THAT SOLD A MILLION  
OR MORE

Freckles	David Harum
Ben-Hur	Shepherd of Kingdom Come
Girl of the Limberlost	Five Little Peppers and How They Grew
The Harvester	Huckleberry Finn
Tom Sawyer	Pollyanna
Winning of Barbara Worth	Black Beauty
Laddie	Treasure Island
The Virginian	Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm
Call of the Wild	Pilgrim's Progress
Trail of the Lonesome Pine	Robinson Crusoe
	Swiss Family Robinson

## SONGS THAT SOLD MORE THAN A MILLION

Keep the Home Fires Burning	Ramona
There's a Long, Long Trail	Sidewalks of New York
Down by the Old Mill Stream	Smiles
Marcheta	Tipperary
Pack Up Your Troubles	When You Were Sweet Sixteen
Sweet Adeline	Poor Butterfly
Bicycle Built for Two	Valencia
After the Ball Is Over	Oh How I Hate to Get Up in the Morning
Just a Love Nest	Rose Marie
Little Grey Home in the West	Sweet Rosie O'Grady
Madelon	Who
Over There	Kiss in the Dark

## MOST ENDURING RADIO PROGRAMS

Morning Devotions	Kate Smith
Uncle Don	The Goldbergs
National Farm and Home Hour	Morton Downey
Lady Next Door	Major Bowes (Capitol)
Orphan Annie	Gypsies
Amos 'n' Andy	Clara, Lu 'n' Em
Guy Lombardo	Singing Lady

## A FEW MUSICAL NOTES

A CHAPTER on radio music would take a whole book. For one reason, if for no other, that book will not be written. To acquire facts accurately to publish the truth, its author would have to know rather well a lot of hard-working, pleasant people whose friendship he would not willingly sacrifice. Much in the spirit of beauty specialists for wealthy dowagers and affable maîtres d'hotel, this colorful radio crew provides atmosphere—style, vivacity, personality, and charm—to ease the broadcasters' pain in passing out his money. To compare with the geisha girls of Japan, these artists, musicians, sales agents, and business managers in and out of the big radio stations, would stretch our analogy far too far, yet might remain more accurate than any comparison with clerks in Macy's, stenographers for the Metropolitan Life, store clerks for the A & P, or even vice-presidents for the Chase National Bank.

Human vanity that supports at \$10,000, \$20,000, \$30,000, even \$50,000 and \$60,000 a year apiece half a hundred violinists, saxophonists, traps-players, and trombonists, anonymously hopping back and forth to repeat the same, sometimes fairly banal notes suc-

cessively for half a dozen different orchestras, should, of course, some day bring its own downfall. Meantime, radio's elaboration does lots of good and little harm, except where some too susceptible advertiser ambitiously mistakes himself for a Belasco or a Billy Rose and attempts to force circulation by speculating with a more expensive show, rather than adapting the simpler, surer expedient of buying more stations—and more appearances—from those whose business it is to sell him more circulation.

The never-to-be-written book on radio music would, I imagine, contain at least one exciting chapter on the musical pluggers. It might even praise by name twenty or thirty of the personable, persistent, amazingly resourceful young men and women who "put over" the stream of self-styled popular songs. Broadway's indefatigable music publishers, I have heard, spend around \$100,000 a year getting the right artists to play and sing their products while hot ink's still wet on the advance prints. A score of the more famous firms have staffs numbering from two to eight, who strive constantly to maintain for the house an aggregate average of two renditions a day on each of the three big chains. Thousands of dollars are lost yearly, publishers claim in court, merely by bootleg public sale of the sheets furnished free for professional use. All this probably exaggerates. Regardless of amount, however, a disinterested logician might be puzzled to reconcile any part of the admittedly feverish plugging with the simultaneous

lament, loud and endless, that radio kills off new songs so fast that popular music no longer profits.

The golden days of sheet music sales faded along with the horse and buggy, for reasons earlier and other than radio. In the harsh old civilization when everybody had to make his own music, song hit sales used to rival—and even beat—the sales of Gene Stratton Porter's novels. In the course of the eighteen months it then took to grapevine a song from the big cities to the small towns, as many as 2,000,000 copies might be sold. Now, although the sheet music demand for "Dinah," "Glow Worm," and a dozen others continues in fair proportion to the present number of pianos, a new hit like Romberg's "When I Grow too Old to Dream," that samples simultaneously the week of its "release" a majority of America's quasi-musical homes, requires only three months to fill the current demand for four or five hundred thousand copies. Despite the savage ingenuity and competitive clamor of the promotion crews of some dozen New York publishers, the three big networks alone repeat the two or three currently most popular songs 25, 30, possibly 32 times a week. Or nearly a time and a half a day for each tune over each station. "Love in Bloom," I believe, stuck at top popularity for sixteen weeks. That comes near being a record in any vicinity.

At very worst, however, if I am correct in my recollection of hearing Gene Buck or Rudy Vallee once say for the Music Writers that \$2,000,000 or more is

split every year in royalties, nobody can justly claim that everybody isn't doing all he can to make the best of an unfortunate fact. At any rate, short of the Paris fashion exploitation to make the world's women throw away old clothes, I doubt whether there is anywhere a more powerfully organized or splendidly effective effort than the corresponding operation of the New York professional to make American people quickly forget their old music.

Nobody can quarrel with this high-pressure music promotion, since, as we have noticed, the regular revenues from radio must replace not only the phonograph royalties, but the profits from outmoded sheet music that vanished with the old-fashioned girls who earned their Sunday afternoon Huyler's pianoing with their own fair fingers an armful of Jerome Kern, Irving Berlin, and Victor Herbert. In fact, strictly commercial broadcasters might well pass over all this behind-the-scenes plugging as none of their affair. Except for one word. That word, as you have guessed, is the weasel word "popular."

Popularity—intrinsic, essential popularity of *any* kind—is, as all know, the certain key to radio success. Music, admittedly, is the backbone of radio. One department store, absolutely open-minded as to a program, found that nearly four-fifths of its customers preferred musical programs. Scientific, painstaking inquiry among twenty thousand listeners led to a well-balanced orchestra playing concert, dance, march, operatic, and semiclassical selections.

Since eight or nine out of every ten people will thus agree on music as against anything else, established musical favorites—whether the singers or the songs—become, patently, radio's highest common denominator. Therefore, the advertiser who solves the problem of popular music—actually popular music—need worry about nothing else. That he will find harder than one might think! Not too scientifically, but with admirable effectiveness, the term “popular” is habitually and universally used as a blanket classification indiscriminately to designate all fairly light new music, utterly regardless of its popularity, its merit, or its sales. This trade practice produces a real problem for the businesslike commercial user of radio—the *impopular* popular song! (“Im” not as in *immoral*, but “im” as in *impersonal*.) His first shrewd question is, “When is a popular song *not* a popular song?” And his answer generally, “When it's a plug!”

Much as all congressmen are politely called “Honorable,” all *new* music not ambitious enough to be classified as “classical” or “semiclassical” is called “popular.” Whenever a song is composed for wide acceptance, i.e., written in a simple rhythmic melodic idiom for the great mass of musically uneducated, it automatically, thereby, achieves “popularity” #1. Like the extra polite golfer who concedes all his opponents' putts, the entire popular-music profession lists as “popular” any song obviously so intended. If on account of this deliberately broad ap-

peal, or sometimes despite its lack, a new dance or a movie lyric actually makes good and becomes "popular" in fact as well as in designation, that is popularity #2—the established popularity the wise advertiser waits for. Eighty or ninety songs are, I am told, repeated at least 10,000 times a year over the two bigger networks—their million and a quarter repetitions taking one-sixth of the musical time. Two or three at the top will, over all stations, run a yearly total as high as 25,000 repetitions. Until some such enthusiastic active demand for a new song by the public—200 dancers in Central Park one night *asked* for "A Thousand Good Nights"—becomes clearly distinguishable above the generic brevet that comes, often enough, from having been composed by a not-overcultured musician, a careful commercial broadcaster avoids expensive gaps in his progress. He is not unreasonable. He simply realizes that it costs no more, fundamentally, to play nine "ace" selections than to play nine less successful. As a simple business precaution, he insists that every new tune prove its popularity through a certain amount of observational seasoning. This self-protection is needed not because radiomen are less able or less honest than producers of plays or motion pictures, but because of all the theatrical professions, radio alone must form its judgment without the constant protection of a daily checkup at the box office.

Particularly handicapped are New York radio directors, their associates, and advisers. Seeing every



day 250,000 swirling Manhattan visitors enjoying the professionally gay side of metropolitan life, New Yorkers easily forget to keep themselves reminded of the highly specialized nature of this entertainment. It's easy to assume those gayeties constant. And universal. The "D" deck bartender on the *Queen of Bermuda* must, in the course of years, grow fairly skeptical as to the tonic values of fresh air. A Central Park taxi driver doesn't gain increasing faith in the precepts of Miss Emily Post; and it must be hard indeed for any busy Broadway waiter to believe out-of-towners are interested in anything but eating amid the maximum distraction. So, keen men whose whole social life, business interests, and professional reputation are localized in midtown Manhattan find it hard even to conceive the possibility—much more to visualize the fact—that the really notable local entertainments they themselves take so seriously are, even for the hickest of their New York visitors, mild dissipations, as a rule, deliberately chosen for a change. And, therefore, dangerously misleading, likely as not, in any general application to any entertainment intended to pursue these Broadway visitors returning homeward into any considerable number of average American families.

Part of the human plan of "escape" is to have some place to go *to*. To leave home *for*. Americans go to Paris. Parisians go to Montmartre. Montmartre goes somewhere worse. But there's always a catch to it! The place to go to is equally a place to come

away from. Homing, your good American parks in a secret pocket his Paris postcards. Many a good Southerner, New Englander, Texan or Oregonian dines every night in New York at the Cotton Club or French Casino, but that, unfortunately, is no sign he desires, or will even permit, the savage exhilaration of the Broadway night-off to pursue him into the bosom of his family. Even in New York, the audience fails now and then to live up to its metropolitan obligations, if we may take the word of the one man able to interpret us in rustic terms of rural America. Says O. O. McIntyre himself:

Swing music may become the national nuance. Certainly the vogue shows no sign of abating. The same was said of jazz. But this can be chalked up for the lilt of other days: It has lost none of its charm.

On a recent hodge podge program the biggest hand went to a Gay 90 quartette singing "Only a Bird in a Gilded Cage." For an encore, it offered two modern songs and went off to scant applause.

A popular band the other night failed to hook the crowd until it rendered the "Old Gray Bonnet."

There was, too, that pretentious music show that stumbled indifferently through modern song numbers and then lifted the audience to its feet by having Irene Franklin warble a rip-roaring music hall favorite.

A Ziegfeld show registered its biggest hit when Ruth Etting impersonated Nora Bayes with that old favorite "Shine on, Harvest Moon." Egbert Van Alstine, too, knew the trick of popular tune composing when he turned out "In the Shade of the Old Apple Tree."

Radio programs started quite naturally with the

simple playing or singing of a wide and uncontaminated choice of these established musical favorites. As in other forms of advertising, however, enterprising and resourceful sellers—artists' managers, orchestra business agents—talent promoters of every kind, whose professional pride and prosperity depend more immediately on what the advertiser pays out than what he takes in, soon found plausible ways effectively to key up radio production expenses to a tremendously more congenial pitch. So that the radio advertiser's first safe reliance on established music of proved popularity dripped off to almost nothing, while the conventional "variety" program established its growingly elaborate formula quite as conventionally as the evening clothes for its performers.

Movie, theatrical, circus, and even Chautauqua men might easily make the same mistake. But they can't! They are protected against radio's possible misconceptions of what may constitute pulling power because every new road show is a nightly referendum on what people will pay to see and hear. Advertisers, above all other broadcasters, should not be dazzled by bright lights, charming people, pleasant noises. Their stockholders pay for all these. Above all other broadcasters, advertisers shouldn't allow technical chatter around the studios to high-hat them into confusing a new song written to be "popular" with popularity already achieved—and ready to work for *their* benefit. Dazzled broadcasters have sought to rid their own products of the curse of newness by hooking them up over the radio with even newer musical

products equally unaccepted. "Newness" isn't the point. But lack of popular acceptance, already *existing*, is. A famous enough singer or orchestra leader can risk an unpopular popular song; *his* reputation, able arrangement, and brilliant rendition go far toward protecting the broadcaster. The shrewdest radio advertiser, nevertheless, plugs for nobody but himself. He makes every element in every program carry him—increase his popularity. So, unless there is some very special *audience* reason why an advertiser should as a considered policy—or for a needed variation—play some special song or songs not already established in universal favor, he can never lose by riding along with unmistakable popularity, whether his tunes are favorites of thirty days or thirty years.

Professional radio workers will sincerely disagree. Every self-respecting orchestra leader must buttress himself with the supposition that he has a million followers who sit in rapt attention to his entire program—no matter what he plays—because *he* plays it. Every chain broadcaster—to feel more comfortable about his radio appropriation—must feel that there are millions who practically memorize his program from week to week. There is plenty of truth in both assumptions. But not enough to make it unwise for every radio artist—every radio advertiser—to start each performance anew from scratch. To forget broader artistic niceties, to recognize the realities of radio as an incessant flow; and, so, exactly as if nothing had ever been done before, consider

*anew* at every broadcast the absolute strength of each artist, each musical selection.

I have seen that kind of musical bundling double the recorded audience between the first and the second half of a single performance. Other records seemed to indicate that we kept the audience doubled for the last seven weeks of one little Philip Morris broadcast by repeating in a regular pattern the songs that had proved most popular in the first six. That adds a new—repetition—element to those of attractiveness, caliber, radiability, and recognition. Knowing that repetition is inelegant only when unintentional, the trained writer repeats deliberately strong words for strong emphasis. Similarly the wise orchestra leader fearlessly plays and replays those tunes that peculiarly fit his program. Or his individuality. These planned repetitions reinforce the theme song. The only danger in the constant repetition of the same songs, or the same class of songs, is of giving his program, *unintentionally*, a reputation for something or its lack. So a strong advertiser plans dominantly to use old music relieved by new, or new music of known popularity skillfully relieved by old, to convey positively the impression he desires to exactly the audience he seeks.

The one thing that will certainly improve the selling value of a radio program, obviously, is the thing that will create a keener *interest* among the millions who more or less apathetically keep their radio running from one to five hours a day. To assume that such an audience—or any ordinary audience—is go-

ing to recognize a fine musical balance among six or eight numbers on any one given half-hour program shows an amazing faith in one's fellow men. If in addition to unmistakable popularity in the tunes themselves, this balance can be attained, it will, no doubt, be subconsciously pleasing to many listeners. But, if and when attained at the tiniest sacrifice of intrinsic popularity of a single song, it may prove an expensive concession to the technical tradition. A DuPont poll showed that the five most popular standard songs were

Silver Threads among the Gold  
 When You and I Were Young, Maggie  
 Let Me Call You Sweetheart  
 Wild Irish Rose  
 The End of a Perfect Day.

Seth Parker, in a similar poll, asked listeners to submit their ten favorite hymns. The following hymns were most mentioned among the more than six hundred different hymns sent in:

The Old Rugged Cross  
 (which received almost 27,000 votes)  
 Nearer, My God, to Thee  
 Abide With Me  
 Lead, Kindly Light  
 Rock of Ages  
 Jesus, Lover of My Soul  
 In the Garden  
 Onward, Christian Soldiers  
 Church in the Wildwood  
 Let the Lower Lights be Burning.

To no advertiser in the world do I suggest playing "Silver Threads Among the Gold" or "Rock of Ages." But to every advertiser I venture to point out their popularity. They are "popular" in the broad sense of the word. When the British Post Office changed young Edward's portrait from an engraving to a photograph, 30,000,000 copies of the new stamp were sold in a single day. I never heard a single New Yorker—except taxi-drivers who parked there for fares—mention *The Great Waltz* as a great hit, yet for months and months its weekly take doubled the current Broadway sellouts. Probably none of us think of the Bible as a "popular" book. Yet it sells 80,000 copies a day—beating probably every day, year in and year out, the combined sales of any twenty best sellers currently popular on any given day. For a radio popularity comparable to these, consider the 5,000,000 answers a day Lucky Strike received by letting people guess at their ranking of three current song hits. These are mentioned here simply to serve as a sort of mental glove stretcher for a prospective broadcaster. However much he pants for Fannie Brice and deplores Seth Parker, an advertiser who happens seriously to seek large-scale popularity towards a notable advertising success might better comprehend the American radio as a mechanism built solidly on the favor of the Bible-buying and song-recognizing millions.

For years I have been suggesting to sundry broadcasters that someone capitalize the reported demand for music continually new by working openly with

the music publishers in a "FIRST TIME ON ANY AIR" program and playing as a policy nothing but virgin hits. This *idea* would, I believe, collect an audience with even mediocre ephemeral melodies. On the other hand, whenever a mushroom like "The Music Goes Round and Round" collects quickly for any reason a *sufficiently* adequate following, that fact, regardless of all others, should recommend its timely utilization by, perhaps, nine out of ten radio advertisers.

Sharply novel modern tunes, interjected now and then with adequate showmanship, are tonic as a mid-banquet ice, and valuable indeed to carpet-slipperish types of advertisers whose elderly reputation requires such reinvigoration. But the ordinary advertisers of an everyday article running in regular radio routine would probably not go far wrong if, making sure first of the utmost flavor of attractive personality in their rendition, were thereafter to utilize, in about the order here given, the following elements in judging the musical value of any—and every—number played on his program.

#### (1) RECOGNITION VALUE

The first thing is to have *recognized* every tune—as early as possible in every tune and, as far as possible, every portion of every tune. Service to a self-gratulating public demands the quickest possible identification of every broadcast element. The value of this recognition in the case of music will, of course, vary infinitely with what it is recognized as. Proper timing on current hits enables a master bandmaster



to get the slower vast majority of his audience saying "There's that new song of Fred Astaire's that I have been waiting to hear again," long before the keener minority begin to say "There's that old Fred Astaire song again." But, generally speaking, don't risk recognition by trying for novelty. Commercially, for ninety-five out of a hundred programs, it may be far better to have your tune recognized as Grandmother's Wedding March than not recognized as Broadway's latest sellout. The shrewdest radio musician goes even further. Rather than risk even a half minute of nonrecognition, he follows the sales practice of the phonograph record, and anticipates each song with a pretty definite suggestion of its familiar chorus. Only after thus attracting favorable recognition does he venture the generally less catchy and the almost always less familiar verse.

## (2) CALIBER

A radio concert is played more or less blindly out into the air to choose its own audience, largely among the fitting multitude who happen to be dialing around while it is on. This contrasts—drastically—with the carefully integrated types of audience in the ordinary older forms of musical recital where the audience by the fact of its attendance—whether paid or unpaid—selects quite deliberately the particular *type* of artist, of music, or of program it is desirous of hearing. This older eclectic concert audience, in contrast with the more or less accidental radio audience, will, quite understandably, not only tolerate,

but will thoroughly enjoy and even demand, for the sake of virtuosity, variety, and range, many numbers without strong individual, intrinsic appeal that would quickly lose that *raison d'être* when heard over the radio as a single unit of an unassociated variety show. There would seem, therefore, only one utterly safe, foolproof rule for music over the radio: when you have six songs to play, select the six most popular you can discover—all things considered—and play them to emphasize the basic elements of that popularity. Where equal popularity allows, choose different types of songs. Place them, as best you can, for dramatic contrast. At any rate, play them so differently that the careless listener's ears, hearing the same band, will not think it the same tune. Strictly speaking, no musical director—except a personal showman of undeniably demonstrated success with radio audiences—should be allowed to select a musical program, any more than any unvulgarized art director should be allowed to dominate an advertisement for the eye.

### (3) RADIOBILITY

Some skillful showman will someday proclaim his discovery that music over the radio suffers from much the same sort of disabilities as does speech over the radio. And that, therefore, for its utmost effectiveness, radio music has certain peculiar requirements not at all essential where singer or orchestra is seen. Successful radio music, in contrast, may demand an almost instantaneous attention catching-and-holding

quality in the way of simple, easily and quickly grasped quality of rhythm and melody which provokes immediately and holds throughout an increasing desire to hear an easily and definitely anticipated repetition.

#### (4) MELODY

Melody, in the not-to-be-written book, will be analyzed as the pattern of a tune, over and beyond the rhythmic basis of its time beat. "Vox populi; nux vomica" parodied one cynic—possibly with popular melodies in mind. Honestly nauseated with a perpetual overdose of mawkish, sentimental musical molasses, your radio professional quite honestly seeks refuge in clever, tricky rhythms and interesting-to-him arrangements. But, considered commercially, the broadcasting musician has no more right to resurge against the public than the professional street cleaner to complain about secondhand garbage. The more profitable remedy, moreover, may be the other alternative: so well done so often: the forcing of smartness, style, and compelling rhythm into a pleasing melody, new or old. Radio, in most circumstances, best combines a simple line of seductive melody with a pronounced and insistent rhythm, both being quietly overemphasized—exaggerated—superconcert-pitched at least one-fifth beyond that degree allowable in any other type of concert. For showmanship in radio music doesn't stop with Tin-Pan Alley's speed, noise, and intricate arrangement. At best it may be more like editing a popular newspaper. Or

drawing a famous comic strip. As we have already agreed, the smartest musical director plays no tune—old or new—that hasn't certain *individual* characteristics of a caliber distinctive enough, on one account or another, to intrigue the public ear. Then, like the cartoonist who gains recognition of his own skill by making his interpretations of Donald Duck or Calvin Coolidge whimsically apparent to others as their own, the most effective modern maestro will arrange and play each rumba, waltz, or swing with such added emphasis on its peculiar characteristics that, even the first time on the air, the public will almost instantaneously recognize its peculiar distinguishing allure; and realize why he selected for them this tune.

#### (5) ASSOCIATION VALUE

“Our own doings and sufferings are in these songs; it is as if we all had helped in their making.” This, Storm wrote to explain the eternal survival of folk music. Letters to great orchestras, even to little tenors, prove that radio music thrives best through this self-identification of its listeners. Like all other renditions, music by radio has various “levels” of appreciation. Association, of course, rises up the scale from the simple recollection, conscious or unconscious, of having heard the same song in unusually congenial circumstances to an intense and pleasurable identification of one's own moods and aspirations, oftentimes heightened by an intellectual and informed understanding of the circumstances of the

song's own history. From elementary atavistic sensual enjoyment of a rudimentary irritation of the ear by a more or less intricately repeated pounding on the drum, the quantity and quality of musical understanding climbs steadily up the scale to the heights of delicate discrimination in emotional, and even mental, interpretation of a supremely personal message from the arranger, the conductor, the composer.

## HOLD THAT AUDIENCE!

**T**HE quick, easy way to succeed in radio advertising is to find yourself a Kate Smith. Or a Fred Allen. Or Eddie Cantor. Or Jack Benny. A personality outstandingly *popular!*

*Popular*, mind you.

Not outstandingly able, necessarily, although professional excellence over the radio is not always a detriment. Don't, nevertheless, ever confuse admirable performance with popularity. Or vice versa. To say there's no relation whatever between popularity and artistic merit would start dispute. To suggest a reverse relation would court hot contradiction. Scarcely less foolhardy, however, would be to claim that radio success has any direct relation to absolute merit. "You Are My Lucky Star" or "When I Grow too Old to Dream," quite badly sung, say, by Miss Kate Smith will evoke a tumult of enthusiasm. John McCormack, broken down with age, singing simple old-time melodies, made a sideshow out of the best known, most effective, and deservedly most popular of the young concert baritones.

Radio, these days, is no longer a show. Nor even a series of shows. It is a flow. Therefore, extra money

spent arranging and rehearsing something *known and designed particularly to interest—and SELECT out of that flow—a KNOWN GIVEN audience* will seldom be entirely thrown away. The converse, however, may be equally true. In a broad variety program of the type designed to make a wide popular appeal, perfection of musical arrangement and meticulously artistic performance may—in comparison with other less expensive factors—prove quite as unintelligent and far more wasteful than, let's say, the comparable distilling of sterilized drinking water to serve to the public in unwashed buckets.

A check of spectacularly popular programs, year after year, leaves no illusion as to the unimportance of excellence. Ever since the Greeks banished Aristides because he was too good, human sympathy for human imperfection surprisingly reappears. Circular letter writers testify that their returns improve, now and then, with faulty setup; and, in at least one known case, replies to a circular have been cut in half by correcting its English. No radio advertiser, anyway, can afford to forget that radio's first great mail response—nearly a million letters—the top record for several years, responded to a pseudo-pathetic crack in a Jewish family talk program which most radio advertisers wouldn't deign listen to, much less buy.

Next to giving the audience an active part in the show—even reading fragments from letters helps mightily, tested personality, the old comic strip quality, is radio's one sure-fire investment. Possibly the

only sure-fire, except established, well-loved music. So buy an audience. Major Bowes, Jack Benny, and possibly three others (Will Rogers was one) might be bought profitably at practically any price within reason. They carry audiences with them. Thirty others, in the lower brackets, may be sufficiently established to make a safe investment at prevailing booking rates. After that it's a gamble. If you can't afford an established star or can't find a star that's got your kind of audience, you may be lucky after all. The odds are in favor of the advertiser who will scout out new, young, outstandingly pleasant personalities, and thus develop his show along with his audience. Go to *work* and build your own stars. I stress the word "*work*." For instance, Fred Allen told Louis Reid:

It's like this. I have to go to bed early Tuesday night to get up in time for a 10 a.m. rehearsal Wednesday. I never leave the studio until 3 a.m., Thursday, after the midnight repeat of the Wednesday show, I get home about 4 a.m. When I get up around noon Thursday, I have to answer some mail and write some checks. Then I work until 4 or 5 a.m. and by that time I've got one part of my program done. Friday I answer more letters and if there's any time left Portland and I go to a movie.

Saturday I go through the week's papers and clippings.

Saturday night and Sunday I work on the script.

I read nine papers a day. I look for items that lend themselves to kidding or what ever you call the treatment I give news.

I clip such items as I want. By the end of the week I may have 50 items collected. I go through them and figure out



what I can't use because of broadcaster's "no's." By the time I've sifted through the batch of 50, I'm lucky if I have four I can josh! Monday I go over it again. Tuesday I put it in shape. And Wednesday's the big day of rehearsal—and the show. Some fun, eh?

Once in a long while, success over the radio comes by luck. Or by a victorious bargain. More frequently, like Fred Allen's success, with distressingly hard work at the things most radiomen like least to work at. Six years around the big studios, fifteen years' analytical listening, reading practically everything thus far written, tempts me to record, for busy broadcasters with less time for study, that a commercially serious radio advertiser need worry only about x things. To win success—whether you pack an entire hour with expensive "variety" vaudeville or talk your own modest fifteen-minute monologue—your radio broadcast

. . . should do 14 things  
. . . must do 6 things.

#### (1) YOUR BROADCAST MUST HAVE A PURPOSE:

##### 1) IT MUST AIM TO *ACHIEVE* A DEFINITE THING

Radio broadcasting as a profitable commercial enterprise—for the advertiser—is not an end, but a means; not a medium, but a highly specialized method. In *Broadcast Reporter*, J. T. W. Martin<sup>47</sup> once pointed out:

Radio is just what it is termed—a broadcast. In the final analysis, an opportunity for an advertiser who knows his own prospects to develop an advertising medium of his own.

A \$20,000 broadcast program may set the experts aflutter. Top all the surveys. Be unmatched as an audience getter. Yet flop completely in any profitable commercial sense. An inexpensive program never heard mentioned by anybody might, on the contrary, prove a splendid sales getter. What your broadcast *does* is the only thing that counts. And, all superstition, tradition, and belief to the contrary notwithstanding, a broadcast, as such, seldom does much. You've got to plan the doing—and plant it in the program. *You* must determine clearly not only sales strategy, but the selling tactics. Your purpose as an advertiser should be the prime consideration: Do you spend your \$16,000 a year, your \$60,000, or your \$160,000 on broadcasting, instead of spending it on samples or salesmen, because you propose to:

introduce a new product?

extend the uses of an old product?

get new dealers?

Good! But not enough. You should be able to figure out in advance how the radio response is going, step by step, to do just that.

Unless your every broadcast changes distinctly to your advantage, in some definitely preconceived direction, the commercial position of a profitably large number of people, it, too, may easily join those jovially justifiable, yet slightly pathetic, misuses of stockholders' money that still fill the Sargasso Sea of debate between the newspapers and the radio station owners.

2) IT SHOULD AIM, THEREFORE, AT A DEFINITELY  
SELECTED AUDIENCE

Instead of heeding Mr. Martin's shrewd suggestion about staking out for his own special use a quarter section of radio small enough to prove a profitable medium, each broadcaster seems tempted to stretch his ordinary, everyday business up to the universal grandeur of radio. Magazines and newspapers avoid this hazard by chopping the great aggregate circulation of printed publications into many definite bits and bites for many different advertisers. As a mother cuts meat for a child. In *National Geographic*, in *Vogue*, in the *American Druggist*, in the *New York Times*, or the *Kansas City Star* the advertiser buys a distinct type of audience selected for him by the nature of the publication. The radio advertiser, in contrast, must be prepared largely to carve out his own audience. To do this he must work both ways: not only attract those he wants to hold, but scare away those he doesn't want.

Radio has, of course, its score of greater and lesser *Saturday Evening Posts* and *Libertys*, *Ladies' Home Journals*, and *Woman's Home Companions*. But, radio has astonishingly few *National Geographics*, *Women's Wears*, *Vogues*, *Varietys*, or *American Druggists*. Few advertisers seem yet to realize the possibilities—shown, say, in the Ivory Soap stamp collectors' club—of segregating small special audiences for intimate, even technical talks about their specialties to which talk thousands and thousands of

selected listeners—given time to discover and rediscover the broadcast—would be intensely interested. A notable exception was Edna Wallace Hopper. The most tuned-out, by record, of any program, her strictly business selling talk with almost no expense, was one of radio's comparatively few unmistakable selling successes. Her first broadcast brought 25,000 sample requests. More than 10,000 new dealers were added in the first month.

- 3) EVERY RADIO AUDIENCE SHOULD BE THUS SELECTED ON ONE OF TWO DEFINITE BASES: (A) EITHER SPECIAL CLASS INTEREST OR (B) UNIVERSAL HUMAN INTEREST.

(a) *Choose (either) universal human interest:*

Use either the Hollywood Hotel something-for-everybody formula to attract a wholly random audience as big as humanly possible, or, like Miss Hopper, rigidly direct your appeal to a smaller audience deliberately restricted to exactly your own selling purpose. A paper like the *Daily News* aims at big audience—and is a failure if it gets a small one. A publication like *Iron Age* aims at a small circulation—and is a failure if it gets a large one. So, on the radio, a vast mass audience marks a great success for one radio advertiser, whereas, for another the very size of that audience spells failure.

Few radio advertisers, however, fail at either extreme. The really great danger is to fall between the two, which is exactly where most radio advertisers aim. One almost universal mistake in planning pro-

grams, big and little, is to expect that the general appeal—and with it the size of one's *audience*—and the particular appeal—and with it the size of one's *sales*—may be adjusted together into a measured mixture like the hot-and-cold water in a shower bath. The happy assumption is that a big show of no particularly apparent naturally specialized interest may be arbitrarily pointed up towards some special interest without narrowing it down enough to dedicate it completely to the special group: and, on that account, will thereafter not only appeal particularly to the special group desired but continue to please the larger general group as well. That, probably, is scarcely ever true. Most advertisers have to pay handsomely for any waste audience, either by a program too broad for their selling talk or a selling talk too general for their goods. Or both.

To attain any sort of happy intermediate balance between buyers and listeners is tremendously difficult. The reasons are easy to see: so long as one radio set is kept running to please a whole four-person "family," that set will, in the main, be kept on the broad general programs which please most of the family. But only in theory is the radio a caucus: the minority dissents at will by not listening. When a program thus generally aimed fails, for one reason or another, to hold any particular part of the family, the advertiser must first attract elsewhere new listeners to replace this lost family member—or class of members—before he can hope for any circulation gains. So, while a powerful enough *general* attraction

like Burns and Allen, say, might in selling White Owl cigars, say, find it profitable to throw away the entire female section of its huge general audience, any smaller *special* appeal, such as our Red Grange football program, must, on the contrary, prove itself supremely powerful in its *sales* of Sinclair gasoline to its much smaller selected audience of men to justify risking, in the same way, the loss of any part of the general miscellaneous man-and-woman audience that "belongs" at any good hour to the stations it reaches.

Take one outstanding example: The head woman still buys for the whole family just as she did before radio. Even cigarettes. Washington figures, in conjunction with several college checkups, show that she buys for her home every year around \$40 worth of cigarettes. Twice as much as her husband. Roughly speaking, as much as her husband and their two children put together. To disregard this clearly indicated family purchasing agent may now and then be smart radio. But any advertiser who, consciously or unconsciously, fails to direct his program primarily to securing this one buying woman's favor might well make certain of finding corresponding buying power in any special audience with which he, intentionally or accidentally, displaces her.

(b) *Or choose a highly selected class appeal.* Says the National Committee on Radio Education:

The consumers of radio programs do not fit any one pattern. There are a variety of tastes, a variety of interests and a variety of educational backgrounds represented in the radio audience.

Programs must be prepared for specialized groups of listeners; there is no one audience to be catered to.

In this respect the commercial and the educational broadcasters face the same problem. With each program the essential question must be answered: To what audience will this appeal?

And to apply a bit more commercially that same question Elaine Ivans asks:<sup>48</sup>

Is it to be the young married woman whose buying habits are not well formulated?

Is it to be the elderly men to whom memories are of outstanding importance, or is it to be "the children of the rich"—in other words, the young sophisticates?

Or is it, perhaps, to be the mature housewife or any one of the great number of classifications into which it is possible for us to pigeon-hole a segment of radio audience?

If it is decided that your advertising is to be addressed to the mature men coming home from a tough day at business, plan a program going to hit *him*.

- 4) TYPE OF PROGRAM SHOULD BE PECULIARLY ADAPTED BOTH (A) TO ITS TYPE OF AUDIENCE AND (B) TO THE TYPE OF PRODUCT

(a) *Adapted to special type of selected audience:*

As Miss Ivans suggests, a radio program should be specialized: *specialized* to its audience by the time of its appearance (such as music for dancing), or by the nature of its offering (Davey Tree Surgeons, For Men Only, or Edna Wallace Hopper). A program which for any considered commercial reason is not primarily so *specialized* should, in vigorous contrast, as we have already suggested, be deliberately vul-

garized with all the familiar hokum into an unmistakably universal appeal.

(b) *Adapted to particular type of advertised product:*

To be distinctive is the first duty of any radio program. To every hearer's ear, its entire atmosphere should immediately and unmistakably convey at least one—preferably *the* one—distinguishing quality of the product or service advertised—whether that quality be dignity, exclusiveness, beauty, efficiency. The new streamline program architect starts always directly with the product. And sticks as close to it as he can. William B. Benton, a leader in this modern trend, asks:

Does the product have a background, a need or an atmosphere from which a particular type of entertainment may logically flow?

Can the product be molded right into the program itself?

5) SHOULD PROVIDE INTELLIGENTLY PLANNED (a) AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION AND (b) AUDIENCE ESCAPE

(a) AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

Looking with a coolly commercial eye at the terrifying impermanence of the radio flash and remembering the incessant internal competition for any tiny attention at every moment on every hand, the well-informed radio advertiser, nowadays, practically demands some sort of immediate response from his audience. For years proudly institutional advertisers



who would scorn to put even a post-office address on their "goodwill" publicity in magazine or newspaper, hypnotized by the mystery of materializing mail out of thin air, have fairly begged the "folks" out there to send in free for all sorts of strange extraneous articles. That isn't all I mean, however, by "participation."

In an analysis of more than a million letters made by an advertising agency for several of its broadcasting clients, were found some letters of appreciation, of course: a few even wrote that they liked the program enough to buy the advertiser's product. But 93 per cent of all these letters gave not the slightest thought to the broadcaster's goods. More than nine out of every ten were written for some admittedly *selfish* reason. The wise broadcaster neglects no such hint. He insists the audience take some part in his show! Surveys have shown him extra-enthusiasm for even those programs that merely require hearers to make pencil notes, draw rough sketches, and construct simple charts.

Audience participation, of course, is better a natural outgrowth of both the product and the program. Seems so at any rate. Same sort of "offer" can usually be worked out which simultaneously interjects an element of play and flatteringly ministers to the listener's sense of personal accomplishment. This, I repeat, should somehow be made to pay for itself. One \$107,000 prize contest paid a handsome profit. Moreover, radio has conclusively demonstrated again and again what magazine advertisers already knew:

that it doesn't take expensive offers to draw spectacular response. On the contrary, many inexpensive photographs, printed copies of the talks, booklets, and charts, samples of products, have attracted a large number of requests and most of them can be worked around somehow to bring, in exchange, some sort of wrapper or label representing goods already bought.

The wisest broadcaster gives away nothing. He provides participation for his audience—but not at his expense. The various “sings,” “interviews,” and “amateur” shows are all variations of a single theme. Always the best broadcaster finds a way to let listeners *participate to his profit!* Huey Long used to make his audience call their friends on the telephone to help listen. Alka-Seltzer sends a dance orchestra out for free evening concerts. But 15% of Clintonville's best citizens had to write their names on bought packages to win a visit from Alka-Seltzer's advertisement.

Radio listeners, as we have elsewhere noticed, are peculiarly susceptible to simple social appeals. People from all ranks and sections are glad to join radio clubs and receive buttons, certificates, and other marks of membership. WMCA, for example, once broadcast a Sleep Time Club after midnight. Invited to join the club by telephone calls, more than fifteen thousand listeners enrolled in a few months. With a fifteen-minute transcription, station KOIW had 35,000 boys joining “Jimmie Allen's Flying Club,” whose sole aeronautical activity was to drive with their parents to visit the Richfield Oil dealer.

## (b) AUDIENCE ESCAPE

Radio professionals, critics, and commentators were sanguine about the success of Billy Rose's jumbos and frankly skeptical about Major Bowes's amateurs. Reconciled to jumbo's failure they are, quite understandably, still dubious about Bowes's success. As a visiting Englishman told Alton Cook:

This Major of yours does a whole hour show with only about sixteen or seventeen minutes of actual entertainment—and that's just by amateurs.

Mr. Cook and his fellow critics could hardly concede, much less volunteer to a visiting Englishman that Major Bowes became the most popular of all radio shows because his audiences find in these crude "amateur" performances their most complete "escape." Escape not merely *from* the ordinary radio routine. More important, escape *for* themselves. From a solitary atmosphere to one of apparent social conviviality—that's the reason for stooges, dialogue, and audience applause. The shrewd Coughlin used to reinforce his audience's sense of congregational power by mentioning several times the millions of letters already written.

Radio does what the matrimonial agencies advertise—makes millions of lonely listeners feel less lonely. Invalids; shut-ins; the feeble; the remote. Incidentally, that's also why sad broadcasts always flood the studios with mail. Not because more people like sad broadcasts better, but because they feel the

need to *express* their own sympathies. Even to the chaste Philharmonic, letters prove quite clearly that listeners like the greatest music somewhat less for its abstract beauty than for the chance it gives them to identify their own joys and sorrows with its emotional ups and downs. One New Yorker wrote that the Philharmonic broadcasts had restored her belief in God. A California businessman called these symphonic broadcasts his "only retreat from a hit-and-run civilization."

Now, "amateur" hours, originally conceived, as we have already observed, to pander to the sadistic vanity of the Eighth Avenue gallery gods, not only give contemporary radio hearers always a chance to express their sometimes maudlin sympathy but often to express, in grand, sentimentally sticky social masses, their frustrated superiority. The "gong" is a softened version of the "hook," a less bloody but more noisy descendant of the "thumbs down" on the Roman gladiator. Obviously, even in our modern civilization, any show that seats the listener in the saddle continues ideal in its irresistible temptation to that vast multitude of slightly inferior sedimentary audience that the abnormal conditions of incessant radio running must inevitably sift down. Bowes and his imitators break down, over, and across all social footlights with the best of showmanship. Shrewdly they give audience a sense of equality. Even more. People find themselves not only a part of the show, but the superior part—actual *judges* of its talent. More even than that: every listener after days, weeks, years,

of being urged, advised, and generally patronized by slightly condescending announcers, suddenly finds himself, instead, a half-pint philanthropist dispensing professional futures to hometown talent.

(2) YOUR BROADCAST MUST BE EFFICIENTLY ORGANIZED TOWARD ITS SELECTED PURPOSE

1) MUST HAVE A DOMINANT RADIO ARCHITECT

Hit exactly the right audience. With exactly the right show. Do both so effectively as to get exactly the right result. This calls for a competent radio czar. With a good enough director, a fair idea and mediocre talent can put on a successful show. The best talent, on the contrary, will not save a broadcast built by someone with no particular aptitude for that highly specialized job.

Here is advice from Louis A. Witten:<sup>49</sup>

When your plans for radio advertising come up for discussion, begin with the question,

"Who's going to build the program?"

As William Benton<sup>50</sup> suggests:

. . . a ruthless hand in the studio, and a fearlessness in backing his own judgment. This man should feel free to rip the show to pieces after rehearsal, to reverse its structure even to change or rewrite the commercials. In the four or five hours of intense rehearsals during which the show is crystallized there isn't time to go into many conferences or to stop dead still for fear of being wrong. You must play the averages in backing such a group and such a man.

Taken all in all, there's much truth in John Eugene Hasty's suggestion to radio advertisers:<sup>51</sup>

Get a novel idea, a good program builder, a capable director, a competent cast (they need not be first magnitude stars). Don't attempt to mess with the program yourself, unless you are thoroughly experienced in radio work, something of a playwright and actor, and considerably more of a musician. Otherwise, your particular end of the job—and it's a fairly hefty end, at that—is to pick men who make the programs.

There are two degrees in which you may operate your radio program along Mr. Hasty's general lines:

1. Hire a man completely to supervise as well as to perform,
2. Or, hire a man to perform; and to supervise, under your general direction as to policy.

In all matters of actual performance, the man in active charge should have absolute say in either of these cases. Details of every show should be completely in his hands. Criticisms and suggestions should be formulated regularly *after* each show as *general* policy for improvement of future shows.

2) SHOULD HAVE COORDINATING CONTROL FROM  
AGENCY AND ADVERTISERS

Naturally, as each business magnate manages to gather enough advertising money to take his turn with friends or competitors already advertising over the radio, he comes bursting in with his own ideas. They're new, of course. To him. Just as every baby is magnificently new to its own mother. But to the radio profession—ninety-nine times out of a hundred—

they're about as novel and noteworthy as another baby at an overworked maternity hospital. As Mrs. McCormick, for one, explains:<sup>52</sup>

These amateurs know nothing about the technique or the art of producing entertainment. But, like all of us, they have ideas.

Their wives and chauffeurs have ideas.

Their branch managers have ideas.

The poor anonym who supplies the words for the microphone is lucky if he has a comma left to identify him after his script is sifted through a double series of conferences, one as an advertising feature in the sponsoring agency, the other as a turn of aerial vaudeville in the broadcasting studio.

Louis A. Witten describes two types of these radio sponsors:

"Oh! Yes," says the first. "I've got it. My friend Joe Doak who lives next to me in Mount Vernon; you know the fellow who makes reversible underwear over in Bayonne!

"Well, he had a program on the air last year and it was very successful.

"Let me see what program did he have? Oh yes, he had a dance band and quartet."

I throw up my hands in complete helplessness, and he continues,

"That's it—get me a dance band and quartet."

Secondly, there's the president who wants opera stars or symphony orchestras, either because he personally is fond of them, or would like to pose that he is. There may be another reason for his choice. He can feel proud among his neighbors as he commutes home on the 4:59.

In contrast, give credit to one "sponsor"—Archie

by the conventional bombastic measure, so disappoint their backers. Any advertiser finds it hard to high-hat effectively this vast bored audience who know their radio backward and forward as well as his office boy knows baseball batting averages.

No advertiser who starts with enough modesty to hook up with his audience will ever complain about the changing tastes of the public. The simple, easy way to win favor over the radio might be found in a frank appeal for favor. For each advertiser to study out what his fed-up public really wants—give them that instead of what *he* wants. Theoretically, the perfect radio director—for the advertiser—would never go near the studio. He would spend all his time sitting anonymously around in the homes of typical radio listeners watching the *effects* of his broadcast. Four years before the first radio broadcast, I was fortunate enough to write:

- . . . the psychology of advertising is a buying psychology
- . . . it is not even selling as reversed in the mirror
- . . . it is buying studied from the rear!

Before another four years are over all great advertisers will regularly retain some such supreme authority whose sole duty will be to pass on inherent popularity of every element. He will study radio programs with the ears of the audience and the eyes of the bookkeeper. With their commercial investment thus safeguarded, radio advertisers can safely let



artists, technicians, and experts write the rest of the ticket!

- 3) THE PURPOSE OF THE PROGRAM, ITS DRAMATIC PLAN AND ITS SELLING PLAN SHOULD BE UNMISTAKABLY UNDERSTANDABLE TO ALL CONCERNED—*and unmistakably understood!*

It's hardly enough to have a dramatic and selling plan unmistakably obvious to the members of the orchestra and the brass-buttoned ushers. That is only the first step toward making it evident to the great public. Everyone even remotely connected with the broadcasting enterprise from the assistant stock clerk to the visiting star should be told not only the why of the programs but the how.

- (3) YOUR BROADCAST MUST HAVE PERCEPTIBLE PLAN BUILT UNMISTAKABLY AROUND A SINGLE DOMINANT IDEA

- 1) IT SHOULD HAVE UNITY

As some cynic has remarked, the radio trail is bleached like a Nevada desert with bones of personalities trying to get somewhere without a vehicle. Entertainment isn't enough. Personality, dozens of it, not enough. So far as public recognition is concerned, by the way, an all-star show is pretty nearly as bad as a show with no stars. Johnny, of course, was the keystone to the early success of the Philip Morris show. Otherwise, with three singers, four Etons, and three Sweethearts, there was no one feature (such as

Rudy Vallee, Major Bowes, or even an overall name like "Showboat" that anybody could grasp as its essence). First you need a single outstanding personality. But that is only the beginning. Beyond that, you need what Broadway slang used to call a "big" idea. Your whole broadcast must somehow manage somehow continuously to proclaim *one* theme. From the opening note to the closing, your show, long or short, should knit itself airtightly together around one central idea into a single rhythmic streamline design as gracefully and powerfully coherent as a miniature *Queen Mary*. As Mr. Hasty explains:

Your director must be able to inject into the program a sustaining quality, a continuity which binds it into a coherent production instead of a series of disconnected and unrelated parts. The program is unfolded. Not tossed out in hunks. Avoid changes in tempo and mood. Produce a movement with modulations between selections, musical backgrounds for the announcer, and continuity in harmony with the program itself.

Mr. Hasty is right. There's scarcely more excuse for a break of movement or even a shift of tone in a broadcast than in a sonnet or a symphony. In the "Marlboro Club" of the early Philip Morris success, for example, every element of time, music, and commercial was carefully weighed, set into balance against one central point and skilfully composed into a single unmistakable and unbreakable unit. The idea is carried further commercially by Mr. Benton:

We build the announcers right into the structure of the show if we can, making them human and appealing characters who carry weight in their own right.

This makes it easier to inject human interest into the selling and often the commercial hardly seems to be a selling announcement after all.

If you have developed the proper structural background, the conversation in the entertainment section of the show will get people into the habit of *listening*—so that they will be *listening when the commercials come in*.

And, finally, Louis A. Witten:

The perfect advertisement is that which fits into the entertainment as an integral part. It must be in the spirit and tempo of the show.

This type of "commercial" as a sustained integral contribution to the program took a long step toward perfection in Eddie Cantor's handling of the Texaco football team. One of the great paradoxes in advertising, by the way, is radio's commercial "plug." Advertisers fight tooth and nail to get newspaper "publicity" that looks exactly like legitimate editorial material. Every editor's mail is filled with tons of press "fimsies" written with skill and care to resemble a regular news story. Yet, in their radio commercials, exactly where the editorial advantage so coveted in the newspaper would not only be natural, but most welcome to everybody, these same advertisers rush to the opposite extreme. The nature of radio, from the very beginning, has fairly shouted for a pleasing commercial script tactfully eased *into* the entertainment feature. Early radio advertisers, nevertheless, not only phrased their plugs in dull and affected language, but, for some strange reason, pitched their commercial announcing in a different key, de-

liberately inharmonious. So, where every condition has urged a smart, suave, smooth, sophisticated blending of advertising with amusement, they kept the two elements blatantly apart, commingling as oil and water. In the hands of good showmen, this is gradually breaking. Soon some great showman will dramatize his advertisements into straight entertainment. And let that be his entire show.

## 2) IT MUST HAVE SUSTAINED ACTION

There is a thoroughbred pace to a well-designed show. It cannot lag an instant. Mr. Benton says:

In radio, if the producer doesn't grip his audience and hold it in the first few minutes, it is gone for keeps. And this factor of pace—quick and immediate pace from the word "go"—is one of the biggest problems in radio production.

This, however, doesn't mean the old-time "pep" formula. Lack of enthusiasm can easily kill a good continuity, but no amount of excitement on the part of the announcer can make up for a dull arrangement of his material. It's not enough to keep your radio show hopping up and down in one spot like a stage horse race on rollers. Every radio program of any pretensions whatever should progress—emotionally, dramatically, commercially—from a definite beginning to a definite end—and do it in steps distinctly perceptible to the audience. As Sydney A. Ashe<sup>54</sup> explains:

There must be the same swift action throughout your show that there is in any really good advertisement. By "swiftness,"

however, is not meant rapid reading; but the elimination of every useless word and unnecessary transition. Positively, the slipping so quickly from one idea to another that the interest may be quickened along with the action.

Real suspense, Mr. Hasty says:

. . . might be defined as the property of keeping the audience wondering what is coming next; and movement is the essence thereof.

Your director must be able to bring into your show light and shade and color—give it an arresting beginning, a sharp climax, and a conclusion that leaves the audience wanting more.

Not flamboyancy. Or bombast. Emphasis beyond that which the situation justifies is intolerable. On the other hand, language which makes no energetic effort to communicate an impression of color and motion and emotion is almost equally intolerable. As Mr. Arnold<sup>56</sup> puts it:

If the listener's *feeling*—not the broadcast noise or speed—is allowed to drop quite down to the normal level of commonplace, we not only lose just so much emotional effect, but we experience an unpleasant sense of discord, which is in itself a positive fault.

### 3) IT SHOULD HAVE PROGRESSIVE DRAMATIC DEVELOPMENT

So much for action. But, as we have just been noticing, action alone is not always interesting enough.

A good speech is a winding road through attractive country. Something beyond the curve must always beckon, something that keeps alive curiosity and suspense!

This formula William G. Hoffman<sup>56</sup> gives for a successful radio talk. It's ideal for any radio broadcast, whether a speech, an hour's vaudeville, a five-minute news résumé, or a thirty-second plug. Whether your radio drama is a whole "Roses and Drums" or a one-minute selling announcement, it should try for suspense. Suspense of interest. A natural suspense. Not the threadbare artifice of promising a reward later in the program, as every new broadcaster has done with equal pride and expectancy for the past fifteen years.

Dramatic development—which means "movement" not only through sustained action, but controlled action—is necessary even in short selling commercials. All announcing beyond mere introductions and identifications must, therefore, assume in some degree the form of commercial "drama." And commercial drama to be at its best must be cleverly and aptly based upon the product or upon some desirable feature supposedly inherent therein.

As E. W. Donaldson<sup>57</sup> points out:

Strictly speaking, you do not dramatize the product; instead, you dramatize the situation. The dramatic situation is created, then the solution is achieved through the agency of the product. The more natural the solution, the more believable the drama.

#### (4) YOUR BROADCAST SHOULD HAVE DISTINCTION

- 1) PURPOSE, PLAN, AND CENTRAL IDEA SHOULD BE DESIGNED FOR PRODUCT LIKE A PARIS GOWN AND FIT LIKE A GLOVE

Each radio show should be more like itself than like any other show. Every artist, every program, every station must strive with unremitting vigilance for a "personality" that will identify instantly. Ralph Starr Butler<sup>58</sup> says:

Let me instance Jack Benny and Jell-O, and Show Boat and Maxwell House Coffee. Even when we confine ourselves to straight commercials fore and aft, we do everything in our power to make the program stand for the product and to associate the two so there may be no misunderstanding in the popular mind. While the listeners are absorbed in a Helen Hayes drama we want them to have at least a subconscious realization that it all has some relationship to Sanka Coffee. We build our programs to that end, and if we don't accomplish it, we have a radio failure on our hands.

Practically any part of your program should be immediately recognized through its form of pattern, without the need of ever dragging in your name. But that's no reason for not utilizing every tactful opportunity to use the name as well. It's not the number of times the name is mentioned but the *way* it is mentioned. In the early shows that helped bring the first amazing Philip Morris sales, the name of the cigarette was by actual count used each week from 15 to 20 times in a half-hour program—which I once calculated was at the rate of four times every minute the music wasn't on. Yet we recorded nearly as many letters praising our advertising as our stars. Modesty, brevity, ingenuity, and, most of all, studied variety will determine whether advertising—as a natural

part of the radio flow—will be considered objectionable. Or entertaining.

2) IT SHOULD BE THE BEST OF ITS KIND

A startling headline once ran clear across that admirable professional publication, *Variety*.

“STIX NIX HIX PIX.”

Transliterated, it meant merely that some substantial owner of motion-picture houses in Iowa had told *Variety's* correspondent that the small country towns refuse absolutely to patronize minor second-rate shows, especially those with a Broadway or Hollywood “angle.” The merry villagers would get *David Copperfield, It Happened One Night, Little Women, Top Hat*—or they would take nothing. Radio people all read *Variety*. But, like the rest of us, apparently, they believe their peculiar audience problem is painfully dissociated from any other. As a matter of fact, they are there both right and wrong. If radio listeners had in every case to pay considerable admission to each radio program, as in the movies, and so were continually turning their machines on and off in the same clean-cut, decisive way, radio producers no less than movie producers might find *Variety's* “STIX NIX HIX PIX” an admirable motto to tack up in their rehearsal studio. As Owen Davis once told the *New York Times* reporters:

When the silent pictures started, authors were warned that they were “playing” to millions and therefore must play down to the audience. That idea was false. They argued we must make the boobs understand. But that was wrong. The secret



is to hunt for some universal appeal, just as Henry Ward Beecher did. Entertaining subjects must have wide appeal. It is a false notion that the public can only understand hokum and bunk.

### 3) IT SHOULD HAVE CHARACTER

George Horace Lorimer once told me about editing the *Saturday Evening Post*:

I, personally, chose every story, every article. Not because I am so much better than all the rest of you; but because the paper must have *individual* character. If the readers like my strengths, they may also like my weaknesses.

No broadcaster—no matter how inane—can ever hope to suit all listeners. So he, like Mr. Lorimer, might as well risk a vigorous and decisive script as try to play safe with a flabby one. In dealing with people over the radio or otherwise, individual courage—individual character—alone can achieve supreme distinction. As a Canadian radio official better states the same proposition for our use:

It's far better to overestimate the capacities of the radio audience than to underestimate them, for something worth while may result from the former course, whereas only successive vacuities can be the product of the latter.

No "average" man exists to enjoy the average show. So an "average" radio show will not exist very long. A compromise of judgments that aims no higher than not offending the dead-average intelligence will bring its share of safety. It may, in fact, bring complete freedom from major mistakes. But no such compromise can ever bring much more than safety. To

trained in the technique of writing light verse. Or, trained by long intelligent practice to pointedly rhythmic prose. Not enough to edit out awkward words. Not enough to challenge in repeated readings aloud the necessity for every single word. Important words must be set up for the announcer's emphasis as deliberately and skillfully as George M. Cohan and George S. Kaufman time their lines for a star actor. Moreover, just as a professional actor can make his acting voice sound more sincere and natural than can the inexperienced sincere and natural person he represents, so a highly educated professional writer can, infinitely better than can that simple, ordinary, uneducated man himself, write continuities representing the everyday conversation of a simple, ordinary, uneducated, everyday man.

## 2) IT SHOULD HAVE PERSONALITY

Pleasing personality may be radio's single *sine que non*. If the nature of the program makes hard the development of one or more outstandingly *popular* personalities among its talent, don't take any chances. Establish a popular pseudo personality—create, especially to represent you, the most pleasing character you can imagine. Follow Mr. Hasty's advice:

Introduce into your program a special announcer, or master of ceremonies, or some one who has the knack of projecting his personality over the air and making people like him, and I'll risk my reputation as a prophet that you'll have a greater

number of people listening to what he says about your product—and what's more, believing it.

3) ABOVE ALL OTHER THINGS IT SHOULD HAVE SIMPLICITY

"All great things are simple," Sir Joseph Bose, the famous Indian scientist, once told Yeats Brown.<sup>60</sup> Only the near-great are complex. Ninety-eight people in a hundred would, perhaps, rather hear light dance music than anything else. It tickles their senses without challenging their sense. Ninety people in a hundred, perhaps, would for the same reason rather risk any kind of music than any kind of speech. Any pleasant tune is easy to listen to. Talk, on the contrary, tends immediately to awaken a slight suspicion of unpleasantness because talk isn't always easy to listen to. But, *if* we must have speech, and *when* we must have speech, what kind of radio speech is most acceptable? Speech that is pleasing to ear and mind. The first duty of a program maker, therefore, may be to see that every speech, short or long, commercial or entertainment:

(1) Makes the program easy to hear

Amos Parrish, asked what he considered wrong with the average radio program, said:

Nine out of ten radio advertisers would sell more on the air if they (1) cut out their generalities, (2) their insincerities, and (3) their so-called trained voices—and had human beings talk for them—and replaced their blahing with sincere selling talk.

## (2) Easy to understand

Running all through the critical comment on the presentation of educational material by radio [Lumley reports], discriminations were made between programs on the basis of easy to understand and plainness of statements. . . . From the first to the last, a distinct demand for more details and more information was clearly indicated.

As for easy-to-understand music, take the contrast between Fred Waring and Wayne King. Henry Ford, having made his fortune, not only can afford—but needs—Fred Waring's sophistication exactly as he can afford—and needs—no commercials other than "The Ford Motor Company presents." But the reverse of this proposition may be equally true. It took six years for Wayne King's unpretentious orchestra of ten or twelve pieces playing in familiar small-town home musician's idiom from the "printed" sheets, i.e., regular Woolworth music, to travel from Chicago to the top of the Waldorf-Astoria; but, each year on the way, he made a new fortune for his Lady Esther sponsor.

(3) Easy to believe; and, most of all,

(4) Easy to agree with.

Just as there's no discharge in the war, so there's no argument over radio. Since your listener can't argue back, his spirit of frustration stops you off. One-fourth of the radio listeners questioned admitted that they tune out a speaker when they don't agree with him. Rather than any man with a new message, most people much prefer a speaker with whose message they already entirely agree and with

whose mission—even though that mission may extend to abstracting a share of their money—they entirely sympathize. More positively, once your hearers agree, your fight becomes their fight. Not only do they enjoy more; but they may actively espouse your propositions.

## THE HOOKS OF HUMANITY

A LONG chapter, that, for the old familiar mechanics of a radio broadcast, which, after all, lose importance as they lose novelty and become routine expected commonplaces. More is needed. As Mr. Hasty<sup>61</sup> points out:

Granting that a given program strikes an average taste level, that its musical selections are melodic and varied, and its artists competent, there is still nothing in it that would intrigue Mr. and Mrs. Joe Doakes, of Kokomo, to pick it out of the ruck and run of an evening's radio presentations.

It may fall pleasantly upon their ears; but they're not going to put down the newspaper or a bridge hand in order to listen or twist the dial to find it.

It is minus a point of contact with its audience.

What we pay for our money at the theatre box office [concludes Mr. Hasty] is the *experience* of laughing, crying . . . having OUR emotions stimulated in one fashion or another.

The vitally important human point of contact divides itself in broadcasting, as everywhere else, into two elements:

1. Sensuality
2. Sentiment.

In our everyday life, the two are hard to separate.

But, commercially, the line is clean cut. As a saleable commodity, the two don't mix. Since radio, for reasons already noticed, concerns itself solely with what we might call an above-the-belt appeal, broadcasters will one day discard the last lingering shreds of a Broadway night-club tradition and realize, as a matter of broader business, that sentiment outnumbered sex, say, six to one. And outlasts it sixty to one. Three elements—suspense, laughter, tears—are the only elements in broadcasting likely to make any tremendous difference. Suspense, laughter, and tears cover a tremendous lot of territory. Therefore, Leonard Lewis's<sup>62</sup> formula for successful radio programs:

Mix skillfully a combination of ingredients that tickle the palate of the average American . . .

- 1) . . . human appeal
- 2) . . . naturalness
- 3) . . . sincerity and straightforwardness
- 4) . . . situations which play on our normal emotions

. . . add incidents easy to believe, together with the fundamental spices; such as:

romance  
loyalty  
humor  
patriotism  
kindness  
pathos.

*And add as well*, all those attributes that make up a real human being that we mortals can appreciate and understand.

This "human appeal," as Mr. Lewis explains:

When the love bug hit Andrew H. Brown, president, or Brother Crawford announced that his wife was very unhappy, when Seth Parker and his wife, after the guests at his home for a Sunday evening hymn-sing had departed, sat down at a little harmonium and sang a gospel hymn before going to bed, or when Singin' Sam sang a sentimental heart ballad for a dear old lady in Kalamazoo, the simple, fundamental drama struck a responsive chord.

Next after a point of human appeal, and naturalness in its representation, comes basic honesty. Says I. Keith Tyler.<sup>63</sup>

A final standard which can be applied is that of *honesty*. The program should represent an honest attempt to be what it purports to be.

Is the speaker, for example, an authority upon the subject on which he is speaking? Or is he voicing mere opinion?

Are the musicians appearing on the program persons with real musical training and background? Or are they lacking in reputation and ability?

Is the drama written by a dramatist of merit, or is it a bit of "hokum" prepared to order by a cheap writer?

Radio success, as we have seen, like kissing, goes by favor. "Simpática," the Spaniard calls it.

Good showmanship [as Mr. Hasty observes] works to produce a definite and predetermined emotional effect. Even a troupe of acrobats will do a bit of clowning now and then, not because their merit is judged by their ability to get laughs, but because that is the sure-fire way of gaining the sympathy of the audience.

The game of radio—even in its most wildly ambitious, circulation-forcing aspects—is won, nine times



out of ten, by a colorful individuality tactfully doing some absurdly simple things. Kate Smith, Bing Crosby, Ben Bernie, Guy Lombardo, Wayne King are popular, then, not because they are great. But because they are not great. Pleasantness—ease of manner—gentle good-natured adequacy. Being simple and unradiolike, the really successful stars make their audience feel pleasant and at ease. Speaking of the same quality in the short but well-deserved stage success of Ed Sullivan, the newspaper columnist, O. O. McIntyre wrote:

Even in the Broadway picture houses . . . there is these days a definite hardness among audiences toward that arrogant assumption by actors they are the last word.

Genius no longer has to declare itself. The trend is to meekness in every endeavor.

Think, then, what would happen in Ed Sullivan's place to a typical radio announcer! Jack Benny and Phil Baker, to repeat, are notoriously meek. They keep the jokes on themselves. They never patronize their audience. More radio experts than you know realize that the amazing success of Amos 'n' Andy comes largely from the fact that they keep every listener completely comfortable, flatter the ego of the most ignorant. Sympathy-winning individuality comes so far first that there scarcely is a second. Winsomeness is much like Sir Philip Barrie's definition of "charm" in a woman. If she has it, she needs nothing else; if she hasn't, nothing else helps.

There's one successful program that utilizes sym-

pathy so perfectly that nothing else is necessary. "The Forty-Niners," or "Clem 'n' Tina," is a continued story of a middle-aged, small-town, Kansas couple, Clem and Tina Hinkle, who pack their "model T" and "head West" with total cash assets of \$49. Clem and Tina have a dog named Prosperity. Clem discloses that at one time he considered seriously naming the dog "Depression" because "nobody knew where he came from and nobody knew how to get rid of him." The Ford is named Malaria, because "it gets hot and cold and shakes all over." This program is a fine example of Mr. Hasty's statement:

Most people are not so much interested in events as in the character around which the events center.

Novelists and playwrights do not deal simply with things happening, but with the individual to *whom* they happen.

The entertainment, then, becomes something of a personal matter between this individual and each listener.

To establish this personalized relation—this human contact—a bigger show on a broader scale, William B. Benton<sup>64</sup> advised his A.N.A. audience:

Put your talent into the most highly personalized situations you can devise. Most of you probably saw Grace Moore in "One Night of Love." Even before she sang a note, you perhaps felt, as did most of her audience, "That girl's going to be great and I want her to succeed."

If you saw Mr. Rockefeller's "The Great Waltz" you saw the audience crying when an orchestra took the stage and played "The Blue Danube" and Straus' old tune thus became one of the song hits of the year.

Take Fred Allen. He is original, sophisticated, clever, a little too fast for many people. He seemed to lack the sym-

pathetic human quality found in Rogers, Wynn or Cantor at their best. So we tried to put that sympathetic quality into Fred's show, too. We experimented. "The Hour of Smiles" merged slowly into a new background for Allen which we called "Town Hall"; we incorporated an audience into the show and finally gained all the friendly atmosphere and homespun illusion of a local town hall.

We staged Lanny Ross in a setting, too. We gave him an orchestra, made him a leader and a master-of-ceremonies and further built an atmosphere around him. Lanny's audience likes him as a person, follows his radio love affairs, wants him to make good on any program he undertakes.

This whole factor of personalization, of sympathetic settings and background, of illusion is, in our judgment, the most fascinating and important in any study of the future of the radio:

How to get more of it

How better to personalize the stars

How to put them into situations where the public is with them

And wants them to succeed

And your product along with them.

The successful radio show is high in *emotional* appeal.

Such shows set the stage for the product . . . command a loyalty to the product from a very high percentage of the audience . . . help to make the public *want* to believe the commercials.

I realize, of course, how petty and carpet-slipperish all this talk about sympathy sounds to men spending millions to bowl over the millions through sheer gorgeous exuberance of their show. Before brushing it too scornfully aside, however, hear one practicing expert:<sup>65</sup>

Five years of creating and writing women's radio programs

have proved conclusively that there are certain fundamentals to which everyone invariably responds.

Basically these fundamentals are the simple, primary emotional instincts to which all human beings react.

Once a listener's interest is gained through these fundamentals, the listener will continue to respond day after day, week after week, year after year.

There's no business profit in stirring up people's emotions unless the finally dominating emotion can be crystallized profitably into strong sympathy with the advertiser. Whoever the audience feels, rightly or wrongly, represents you must win enough sympathy to sell your goods. So much, then, for these pages of advice on how to build a sure-fire radio success, observed in real practice or borrowed from working authorities. Rather than attempt to furnish further example of their success I will call upon two further authorities, Orrin E. Dunlap Jr. and Louis A. Witten:

First hear Mr. Orrin E. Dunlap Jr. He lists twelve qualities that made for success in twenty well-known programs:

1. *Naturalness* (Amos 'n' Andy, the Goldbergs)
2. *Voice personality* (Bing Crosby, Alexander Woollcott)
3. *Friendliness* (Kate Smith, Cheerio)
4. *Timeliness* (March of Time, Edwin C. Hill, and other commentators)
5. *Diversity* (Vallee revue)
6. *Suspense* (various serial sketches)
7. *Drama* (Grand Hotel, First Nighter)

8. *Education* (Damrosch concerts, Schelling children's concerts)
9. *Melody* (various dance bands)
10. *Individuality* (Mills Brothers, Phil Baker, Joe Penner)
11. *Quality* (New York Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra, Metropolitan Opera)
12. *Humor* (Will Rogers, Ed Wynn)

While Mr. Witten, reversing Mr. Dunlap's method of approach, lists the names of twenty well-known programs and furnishes sixteen reasons for their success:

1. *Joe Penner* and *Ed Wynn* are what might be called "out and out gag comedy programs with musical support."
2. *Phil Baker, Fred Allen, Burns and Allen, Eddie Cantor*—situation comedy employing several stooges and musical support, either orchestral or orchestral and vocal.
3. *Will Rogers*—humorist with musical support.
4. *Walter Winchell*—America's greatest gossip with musical support.
5. *Sinclair Minstrels*—as it suggests, another type of comedy with musical support.
6. *Amos 'n' Andy*—script, comedy, and pathos.
7. *Red Davis*—script, sketch of American life.
8. *Grand Hotel*—drama of life as it flows through a grand hotel.
9. *Roses and Drums*—Civil War drama.
10. *Lowell Thomas*—news commentator.
11. *March of Time*—dramatization of news with mood music.
12. *First Nighter*—out-and-out dramatic show presented in typical theater manner.

13. *Fred Waring*—a musical variety show wherein the comedy and drama are supplied by song lyrics and musical arrangements.
14. *Guy Lombardo*—popular dance music.
15. *A & P Gypsies*—concert music.
16. *Paul Whiteman*—symphonized popular music and guest stars.

## PRO AND CONTESTS

WHETHER or not you or I “believe” in contests makes ridiculously little difference. The contest idea is sound psychologically; and its intelligent use, as a rule, indicates a shrewd appreciation of the principles of mass bargaining. Just a moment to check up. Except to gratify self-expression in some other form, no great number of valuable people are going to do something for nothing—even buy goods you most urgently recommend. That’s why established advertisers buy around \$500,000,000 a year (at wholesale figures) worth of “premiums.” Fifteen or sixteen a year, I am told, for each American family. I haven’t checked these figures back because it’s the principle—not the sales—that concerns us now. To stimulate into action the rather jaded interest of regular “listeners,” except, of course, those who with equal regularity send for everything offered free, the radio advertiser also will find himself literally obliged to pay—in one way or another—for every extraordinary action in his favor. When it comes to paying off by the hundreds of thousands, obviously, it’s infinitely less expensive to reward with a *chance* at a series of valuable prizes than to handle them individually with even the cheapest trinkets.

When the contest is deliberately underplayed as a game, rather than overplayed as a lottery, where the prizes are many rather than big, when the requirement for entry is reduced almost to an absurd minimum; where the personality element on the side of both the advertiser and the contestants—in those circumstances the radio contest is probably the one best bet in all advertising. As sure-fire as the bargain sale of shoes in the department store basement. George Hill, after hopping around like all the other cigarette advertisers, on the conventional pseudo-scientific overclaims, went back to a simple game of rewarding with a free *sample carton* all who could guess in advance the first three most popular tunes to be played on his next program. Within a month, I believe, the Lucky Strike factories were reported running at full blast and threatening to go into overtime. Everybody will, in time, be tempted to imitate this apparently ridiculously simple success; but few have the natural advantage of

- 1) A universally desired prize that costs the manufacturer so little that he's glad to give it as a sample.
- 2) A contest idea, just between a guess and a gamble, requiring no effort and practically no intelligence.
- 3) And, most of all, the sustaining power of the greatest force in radio, frequent repetition of really popular "popular" music, particularly with the marked dance rhythm.



## NOTHING'S WRONG WITH RADIO BUT THE BROADCASTER

**N**IAGARA FALLS made one of radio's few rigidly scientific tests: over the same CBS network at the same hour the same man made exactly the same offer as on the same day a year before. Requests resulting from a free carborundum penknife sharpener: the first year, 5,190 from 1,281 cities; a year later, 13,408 requests from 1,936 cities. Since this pleasant little program was a frankly unpretentious local production, the test reveals with gratifying clearness the "standing" audience—the growing standing audience, so to speak—furnished to any effectively sincere program by any first-rate radio station.

The truth is that every broadcast on a reasonably good station will, if given a chance, collect, in time, just about the audience that its entertainment or service deserves. Good hours and good stations all own a "natural" circulation. This "natural" circulation consists, of course, of habitual, occasional, and accidental listeners in ever-varying proportions. Unless killed by the advertiser, or the programs that surround him, it is inherent. Unavoidable almost. Each station's "natural" potentiality, in turn, is, as we have already noticed, increased or decreased by

the aggregate average attractiveness of that station's current programs.

As "belonging" to the station, this "natural" circulation is not only robustly claimed by its legitimate exploiters, but is recognized by everybody. This recognition, unfortunately, grows not only less general but surprisingly less definite as soon as an analyzing broadcaster starts to subdivide a radio station's "natural" circulation into the circulations that belong naturally to each of the twenty or thirty programs that bring it to that station.

This, in fact, is doubly unfortunate. Because utilizing only the natural circulation which "belongs" to any program on any station at any hour, radio, without question, offers the advertiser thus able advantageously to utilize it the quickest, cheapest, and most effective advertising in the world.

Contrariwise, whenever any hour on any station is ambitiously attacked by an advertiser for purposes of *forcing* an increase beyond its natural circulation, radio is easily made not only the most expensive of all advertising, but the most unreliable.

The reason for this atmospheric Scylla and Charybdis is not far to seek. Nor hard to see. In fact, we have already noticed that the normal unit—the practically unchangeable unit—of radio's circulation is the average family group. And, with exceptions few and notable, radio no longer alters in any commercially worth-while degree the regular home relations of this average family. Quite the contrary! With exceptions few and notable, as we have already seen,

each family radio set throughout the entire nation is "run" to conform comfortably with the long-established routine of *that* family.

One of the most astonishing of the American family habits, astonishingly well established, is to run the radio an astonishing number of hours every day. Almost equally well established are three other things that then happen in the American home, as radio's intrinsic novelty wears away:

- 1) The set is likely to run more rather than less; longer rather than shorter time.
- 2) People learn to pay, in the average, less complete attention to the radio, to do more of more other things.
- 3) Rather than make even comparatively infrequent changes on the dial during incoming programs, individuals tend, instead, to turn off their own attention.

In other words, instead of millions of families rushing about the sitting room tuning the radio, on and off, as conventionally pictured in the broadcast studio, the great American audience has learned to let the radio run—and turn *itself* on and off.

Collectively.

And individually.

A public benefactor named Floyd G. Caskey has patented at Washington a device called a crooner-choker. From your easy chair it will shut off the radio set for one, two, three, five, or fifteen minutes. Its sale, I fear, will be far less than anticipated. Most of us discovered long ago that few nuisances

—crooners or commercial “plugs”—last longer than the time it would take to get adapted to another station. So when an announcer is too insistent or some performer overdiscordant, the modern radio listener protects himself, not by turning off the radio, but by turning off his attention. Even this isn't literally true. The vitally unfortunate fact—vital and unfortunate to the advertiser at least—is that the American radio “listener” has learned to let his machine run about as carelessly as his electric lights and listens as lazily as he reads his newspaper. Busy on and off with other things, the ordinary listener in ordinary circumstances reverses completely the radio station's circulation story as it is—and must be—sold to the advertiser. Instead of turning off his machine—or even his attention—only when he dislikes something and listening all the rest of the time, he tends rather to busy himself with other things and turns his attention *consciously* toward the entertainment only when he hears something that particularly concerns or pleases him.

Radio, thus, comes to be listened to much as the daily newspaper is read—*by its headlines!* And high lights! While listening to the radio can never be quite the same in quality as reading a newspaper, the difference in the operation of man's attention mechanism as between the two actions is rapidly actuating itself into comfortably similar terms. “Interest” in listening as in reading is strictly within the individual. Sounds and headlines—uninteresting to

him—are equally unnoticed. Interesting-to-him noises get the same sort of attention whether bright tunes or helpful commercial plug. As many people complained of “jazz,” remember, as of all forms of advertising abuse. On the other hand, when a Hollywood comedian sang unexpectedly to a German nonsense folk tune a rhymed commercial broadcast, literally thousands of letetrs forced an encore the following week. The most helpful thing a radio advertiser may learn, therefore, may be that, commercially speaking, broadcast is not a flash of lightning—but a lightning *rod*! There’s scarcely such a thing as intrinsic radio interest. The interest and attention dwell outside, within people themselves, to be attracted toward the radio.

Radio comes, thus, to be understandable in ordinary, everyday terms. Radio advertising, after losing its overwhelming, intrinsic novelty, thus becomes recognizable in its resemblance, attentionwise, to a billboard on a busy boulevard, a store window on a crowded corner. Plenty of wise advertisers have realized this. Comparatively few, nevertheless, seem yet to have visualized the inevitable corollary:

*. . . contrary to the almost universal conception of the radio and all the long-accepted traditions of the radio profession, the radio advertiser’s battle is not to get people not to turn off their sets but to get them to turn on their ears.*

Bernard A. Grimes expressed it exactly:

How many listeners are reading over their papers, or books? How many more in a game of bridge? And again how many

are holding conversation? . . . so many radio listeners have learned to shut their ears to the commercial plugging.

The success you have in *opening* their ears lies in the twist you give to what you say.

This not always overemphasized fact may explain to the puzzled radio advertiser some things otherwise hard to reconcile. It confronts him, on the other hand, with a problem far harder than the noisy old-fashioned formula of drumming up the largest possible vagrant crowd and harpooning in one bold thrust all of them not mentally and physically agile enough to escape the lumbering "commercial."

Plenty of advertisers, of course, have been commercially aware of the discrepancy between the incredible potentiality of the radio mechanism as an always amazing far-flinger of messages and its not always equally amazing reciprocal returns. But, with a few notable exceptions like Wrigley, Pepsodent, Procter & Gamble, Major Bowes, General Mills, Palmolive-Peet, these same advertisers seem to have been rather regularly misled as to the right remedy. Or, likely enough, have misled themselves. In his *New York Day by Day*, O. O. McIntyre splendidly describes a confused state of mind:

. . . no form of entertainment ends in such quick oblivion.

Ten of the most popular features on the air have come to a full stop this year . . .

Because of the times or that the novelty has worn off, there has been a big slump in fan mail. The star who used to receive thousands of letters weekly now numbers them in the hundreds.

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The biggest audiences are recruited for the single night broadcast built up by an extravagant ballyhoo.

The always amusing tradition, so cleverly newspaperized by Mr. McIntyre, that the public—in mass—is fickle and unfathomable has, I fear, been revived by radio to explain to itself its own mistakes. The answer, obviously, is not newness. Or even change, as such. From food they like, people don't change until they are thoroughly "fed up." Coca-Cola is, perhaps, the world's most completely successful business. By sticking simply to one simple thing. "Myrt and Marge," somewhat similarly, has been repeated by the Wrigley Company five times a week every year since November, 1931. During the whole period, this fifteen-minute serial has consistently outranked whole armies of newer and vastly more expensive commercial programs directed and sponsored by admirably able businessmen.

Any radio advertisers who care to cheer the sturdy procession of the successful old programs, like this Wrigley feature, or Wyeth, or Coca-Cola, instead of mourning the glittering funerals of the unsuccessful new, will find no cause for panic. When they told Mr. Hearst he couldn't get Opper, the famous comic artist, because the *New York Herald* had him under contract for two years more, he said, "That's all right, sign him up for then." Similarly, instead of lamenting that a fickle public refused steadfastly to be stampeded to the big new ballyhoo shows, radio critics may well marvel that Singin' Sam and the

Singing Lady have held so long so loyal a crowd. Most shows of any kind that lose favor rapidly are the shows that somehow fooled themselves or the public in the beginning. "Popular" features mostly remain popular. Few readers of this small book, probably, have heard of the syndicate novel *Sandy*. It is the "Myrt and Marge" of the newspaper serial field. Some of the same newspapers must have reprinted this simple story a dozen times continued from day to day for months at a time. Some years back, I knew one great New York newspaper then on its seventh serial reprinting of that very simple romantic old novel, *The Wings of the Wind*. To mention two similarly threadbare examples in radio: you will find on page 240 of this book two shows that, given the opportunity, made startling success of selling goods direct. At the time of this direct sales experiment these shows were respectively twelve and ten years old. Over the radio, as over the sales counter, the real test of popularity is the *reorder*.

In radio, even more than in other forms of business, it's hard, nevertheless, not to flirt with temptation to change. Easy to forget that while practically everything old has some followers, newness, *as such*, starts with none. Change—novelty, *as such*—is much like reopening a restaurant and trusting the sign "Under New Management" to bring in business. Every change, even for the better, is a risk. Salesmen and officers who now and then demand an entirely new radio program would be utterly aghast if anyone suggested a corresponding change in the size, color,



and packaging of the goods for which they have worked so hard to build a familiar name and friendly welcome. Treasurers who, without flickering an eyelash, will risk goodwill surplus invested in their established radio program would, quite justifiably, yell for the police were a corresponding risk to threaten their surplus in the bank. Yet there's no essential difference.

Never let your radio show stand still! Be always eager to improve! Test constantly for more popular features, for more effective ways to do things! Work your heart out to get just the right amount of variety. Sit up nights finding a touch of freshness. But don't risk too much newness until you are convinced your show is so unpopular you couldn't possibly be worse off.

This cloud brings its own silver lining. Were the millions of American radio listeners anywhere near so apt—so keen for this—so tired of that—so starved for novelty—so bent on change as they are generally represented to be, no radio advertiser could ever be sure of catching himself an audience, far less certain of building one. Successive yearly popularity contests show the same tops more regularly than not. Four WOSU program popularity tests showed in three years' changes variations of only about 7 per cent. Even the annual *World-Telegram* nation-wide poll of radio editors—surely the keenest to scent a change and best placed to report it—will repeat rather regularly each year ten or twelve out of the previous sixteen choices.

tentional status of the daily newspaper, where we all habitually dispose of twenty hours of possible reading in twenty minutes of intensely selfish selection. Keen interest in any of those once wonderful novelties comes today, therefore, mostly through their applied usefulness as public-minded machines able to convey and sprinkle out *personal services* to selfishly intent individuals alert only to their own fairly constant needs and ambitions. And, even more, to a guzzling gratification of their pent-up emotions.

Least of all can real interest or lasting popularity be domineered by bigness. Attention is like quicksilver on a glass table. It scatters irresistibly to the nonprofit-paying spots. Effort to *force* a radio circulation carries, therefore, what footballists call a "double threat." To the radio advertisers, its two dangers are:

- 1) Circulation, it wears itself out by its own intensity
- 2) Advertisingwise, it too often kills the effectiveness of the message for which that circulation is supposed to have been gathered.

Few broadcasters seem to remember that competition knows no brother. Radio showsters, like too-ambitious copy writers and publication layout men, are apt to overlook the fact that they can't get 300 per cent attention by bringing together six 50 per cent features: The ideal maximum of attention adds up to only 100 per cent. Worse yet, that 100 per cent attention, when, as, and if caught, divides itself illogically and often perversely. Unless all are coordi-

nated by skillful composition to reinforce the money-message, all combine to distract from it. Even when they follow in rather remote succession, every part of his own show competes like the overtones of an organ with every other part.

Features not naturally related to the product, therefore, are likely enough to distract therefrom in proportion to their general ability to attract. Borrowing once again from Mr. Benton's A.N.A. speech:

Fourthly and finally—and this in our opinion is one of the most important factors which give other types of programs the commercial break against these stars—the star is likely so to steal the center of the stage that the product doesn't get the break to which it is entitled.

Although the great commercial success of many of the stars should not be minimized, yet it must be admitted that, with a different type of show, frequently appealing to a smaller audience, it is often possible to do a better commercial job—or at least better per thousand of listeners per dollar.

To quote Frank W. Harrold<sup>66</sup>:

In those rare instances where an artist can, through sheer virtuosity, hold his audience, the chances are that he will crowd the sponsor entirely out of the program.

On the other hand, when a broadcaster, in self-defense, attempts to key up his necessary commercial announcements to compete with his stronger extraneous attractions, the audience may resent their blatancy. Again in Mr. Harrold's words:

Truly the sponsor can—and frequently does—announce his presence by shoving the star away from the microphone; but

such a practice simply defeats his purpose as a sponsor. He is put down as an intruding pest, a blatant bore, and a crude, commercial fellow who probably sleeps in his underclothes.

The older sorts of shows—from flea to elephant—learned long ago that a philosophy of attracting through newer, bigger noises is like a pup chasing its own tail—in a circle. Strong enough ballyhoo will draw a curious crowd to anything new; but it melts away just as fast. Back to still newer new things. And so, in the long run, back to the old things. Glance through the random lists in Chapter Six. The public is amazingly tenacious, sticking to old favorites year after year. Barnum knew that. So did Ziegfeld. George White knew it! with a couple of old joke books he pumped new life into his first failing *Scandals*. The “Million-Dollar Flop” that all radio remembers was an excellently done original musical comedy with no fault but newness. Equally tragic was the novel *Jumbo* with no virtue but bigness. The answer, I suspect, lies rather largely in the opposite direction. Ballyhoo attracts crowds as warm weather attracts tramps. Attraction is the easiest part of getting attention; freedom from distraction is often more important, particularly to the advertiser who needs attention centered on his selling rather than on his show. As some philosopher has already pointed out along these lines, Barnum imported *Jumbo*—and created a furor! When everybody got elephants, more and more elephants, Barnum’s showmanship found the answer in Tom Thumb.

A broadcaster who is willing to relinquish bigness,

noisiness, and novelty, and still wishes to improve the responsiveness of any radio program, has still two excellent alternatives:

- 1) *To buy new audiences:* There are four ways to add additional new audiences:
  1. Buy more—or better—stations
  2. Buy a better hour
  3. Buy a bigger "star" with a greater following. This is far easier said than done even when money is a minor consideration. Said Mr. Benton:<sup>67</sup>

A chart on the old Chase & Sanborn hour shows that every time Eddie Cantor went on the hour he took the biggest audience in radio. When he was off, the sponsors tried Jessel, Richman, Durante and a variety of talent—and the audience fell off 30%, 40%, 50%. . . . Then we know the experience of the Gulf Headliners show. All the peaks have been with Will Rogers on the program. In between you find Fred Stone, George Cohan, Irving Berlin, Stoopnagle and Budd. Only when Will Rogers hit the program did it boil towards the top. The same is true of the Texaco audience with Ed Wynn.

Other figures, necessarily rough but reasonably accurate in their comparisons, which I assembled from several sources indicated that: One toothpowder program which, apparently paid only about \$1.30 per thousand listening sets ranked ninth with Crossley, fourth with Clark-Hooper and ran second in *Radio Guide's* Popularity Contest. The next to lowest price, apparently, was around \$4.90 per thousand listening sets. Crossley ranked it fifth, Clark-Hooper second, and the *Radio Guide* voters thirteenth. Jack Benny, only a few cents higher, was top in *Radio*

*Guide* and Clark-Hooper, third with Crossley. Skipping the middle twenty-nine programs, which apparently were paying from \$6.00 to \$28.00 per thousand, take the last two, both happening to be high-hat cigarette broadcasts, which by the same method of comparison seemed to pay \$34.00 and \$57.00, respectively, per thousand for their listening sets. They rated along the bottom of Crossley, Clark-Hooper, and, of course, in the Popularity Contest. Or to sum up in cheerier fashion, the top on the then current Crossley rating paid, apparently around \$7.00 per thousand listening sets, the top on Clark-Hooper about \$5.90; the top on the *Radio Guide* contest about \$6.00—against an \$18 average cost for the 34 programs.

4. Advertise program in newspapers and otherwise merchandise it. Unless, however, this "merchandising" be done with extraordinary intelligence, it may easily turn out the most inefficient and most expensive of all ways to spend radio money. Sensitive advertising men may shudder when they read in *Advertising Age*, *Printers' Ink*, and *Sales Management* some of the routine "merchandising" practices expensively applied, apparently as a matter of course, to pressing supposedly the success of a good program or bolstering up a poor one.

When a broadcaster has a "natural" either in

- (a) universal human appeal like Lucky Strike's "one-two-three" pick-the-popular song hits;
- (b) indubitably popular personality like Dick Powell;
- (c) local interest like Major Bowes incessant playing and replaying back and forth of home-town talent and home-town telegrams, one of the most magnificent handlings in any kind of advertising;
- (d) an identical medium, such as placing posters for

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a piano program in a piano showroom, or announcing a motion picture star through the films themselves—

when the broadcast has one or more of these “naturals,” in addition to a happy human *idea* peculiarly appropriate to the advertiser's product as well as to his broadcast, there's a good chance that extraneous advertising of one's radio show may pay.

On the contrary, where the “merchandising” is scarcely more than a printed notice, however widely circulated, or worse yet, additional lettering on the advertiser's other printed matter, there's an excellent chance it may, by distraction, do as much harm as good. Spend your radio money in radio. Mixing advertising media is like mixing drinks.

2) *To make himself a better audience, and through it get a bigger:* To increase future potentiality through present audience, there are, again, two ways:

1. Improve program so intelligently that it gets *keener* interest from present audience, thereby increasing both the quality and the quantity of current listening
2. Sharpen the human hooks, so continually as to insure not only better current listening but to assure bigger future listening:

- (a) by making more “regulars” more certainly tune in next time.
- (b) by converting accidental tuners-in into regular listeners. Probably ten times as many people continually tune in and out of our programs as are ever listening at any one time.
- (c) by making people talk to each other of your program and thus gain valuable mouth-to-ear recommendation, the most valuable of all advertising.

Shrewd advertisers working thus with their nat-

ural audience may safely content themselves with pleasant variety to sustain interest. Intemperate advertisers, working for a forced audience, will continue to compete unprofitably with themselves.

Someday may come along some great advertiser who gets more fun out of selling goods than putting on a swell radio show. He will, no doubt, demonstrate to his own satisfaction that an excellent orchestra playing, quite simply, quiet, well-loved music makes, all things considered, the ideal background for any commercial announcement itself important enough to justify being on the air at all. Then that simple sales genius will concentrate his entire soul on getting a really great commercial announcement!



## WHAT ABOUT ADVERTISING?

**E**AGER advertisers have to learn all over again in radio the lesson that cost them hundreds of millions of dollars in other media. Advertising is avowedly a form of competition. In any form of competition, success comes only to the winners. To win at advertising, therefore, every dollar spent must do at least a dollar's worth of work. The answer is obvious: What counts in any practical business isn't . . . how well an advertisement is done, but . . . how well an advertisement *does!*

In this *doing* by an advertisement, artistic excellence in presentation counts but little compared with the intrinsic effectiveness of the stated proposition. Once more to quote a brief paragraph in the New York *Evening Post* a year or so ago:

Sixty cooperating psychologists working under the general direction of Dr. Henry C. Link in fourteen cities with over 14,000 consumers, report that

size, color, repetition, frequency, position, use of color, or black and white, while important, are relatively unimportant compared to creating a slogan, central idea or theme which ties the product up with some desire, need or habit of the consumer.

A *single* advertisement in black and white was found to have registered better than a year's campaign for a rival product that used beautifully colored pages and a wide range of magazines.

That point has been proved. Again and again. After fifty years' devotion to the older ideals of advertising "art" and advertising "literature," everyone now begins to suspect the costly joker. After fifty years of plain and fancy boasting, advertisers suddenly take the trouble to discover that advertising doesn't change human nature even in the advertiser. Keenly concerned with his own copy, his schedules, his shows, the advertiser seldom realizes how little other people—even his bought "circulation"—are interested in him. Like himself, they are interested in *themselves*. Given a fountain pen, five hundred women college students were asked to write: 460 of them—more than nine out of ten—wrote their own names. Shown a map of the United States, 447 men in 500 looked first for the location of their own home town.

In radio this, of course, is equally true. Self-expressive reaction—not the comparative merit of his program—makes or breaks the commercial broadcaster. As a quick practical example, take, more or less at random, an item reported by Ohrbach's New York store:

When we had the movie stars on the air we used to offer their photographs free. Each week we would receive 100 or 1,000 requests for pictures, depending upon the relative popularity of the star.

In other words, ten times as many listeners would send for a picture of Miss X as for a picture of Miss Y. Another example: A photograph, historically interesting and artistically attractive, was offered free by nine Pacific Coast radio stations. All nine stations got only 150 requests. Over the same program a few weeks later, the same nine stations offered a free dusting mitt. One station alone then got 1,893 requests. Inquiry cost dropped from \$3.40 apiece on the first offer to less than 10 cents on the second.

Radio inquiry costs, in general, have been calculated to run from 3 cents per inquiry to \$25. Variations like this, in our easy, early days, didn't bother anybody but mail-order men. Where any shrewd professional gambler would, in the same circumstances, scratch the unlucky Miss Y; or, better yet, entirely lay off that "angle" of advertising approach until he had found himself a Miss X of his own, advertisers have thus undertaken in hundreds of campaigns, perhaps thousands, sometimes successfully, to ignore the human fundamentals that subdued ten times as many women to ask for Miss X's photographs as for Miss Y's. By general consent, the magic power of advertising was supposed, in time, to match the ten women who already wanted a free cookbook, either by searching out ten women who did want a free book on reducing, or by *making* ten women want it! Cows became coy as hens and cute as rabbits by sheer copy skill. Advertisers, grimly missionary, shut their eyes.

On our billboards and car cards, anyway, that bull-

headed tradition seems tied and roped at last. Their naked need for stark simplicity forces them ahead of other forms of advertising. Although I am by no means blind to the pulling power of good old sex appeal aesthetically applied through well-filled bathing suits and negligible negligees, I was, nevertheless, surprised to count on one short trip eight full-length, full-color posters of seasonably nudish ladies, advertising alike

Allen's Foot-Ease  
Bromo-Seltzer  
Canada Dry Ginger Ale  
Freezone (corn cure)  
Oh Henry (candy)  
Sardellen (light underwear)  
Sloan's Liniment  
Taystee Bread.

It's not this varied use of sex in its simplest raw flesh appeal. Nothing new there. That's man's one sure-fire commercial hookup with human nature. Old and obvious as Eve herself. But the business fact that both a candy and a headache medicine can use a bathing beauty as a prime advertising approach may illustrate most usefully our point as to the general superiority of intrinsic effectiveness of appeal over any possible manipulation of its extrinsic presentation. In other words, an inconceivably beautiful artist's model, miraculously painted in overcoat and furs, would find it hard to compete on a billboard with a frankly ordinary photograph of a quite commonplace lady wearing no clothes at all. All advertisers

recognize this elementary emotional fundamental so far as it concerns sex. Many advertisers, moreover, are coming further to appreciate that the fact of a money transaction doesn't, in any considerable degree, eliminate the motive of emotional self-indulgence. To realize with Professor Edward Thorndyke that buying goods is one of people's least logical activities:

We pay more to maintain self-respect and the good opinion of others and to avoid scorn, derision and shame, than to keep our bodies fed and free from the distress of hunger.

Or, to bring this vital principle down to an admirably practical everyday application, take Chris W. Browne's Cincinnati speech:

People do not buy things at all. They buy uses. They don't buy soap, they buy the skin you love to touch. They don't buy lipstick, they buy kissable lips. In shoes they buy wearing qualities and style and in washing machines they buy easier and quicker ways of doing work. Here are some emotional motives that we can play on in any form of advertising or selling:

1. Self preservation from harm or danger which includes care of health.
2. Satisfaction of appetite, pleasing taste.
3. Romantic instinct.
4. Care of children and family.
5. Ambition and advancement, economic or social intellectual desire for advancement.
6. Desire for securing comfort, personal comfort or in the home.
7. Desire for entertainment, pleasure, leisure.
8. Cleanliness. This is a deep-seated instinct.

9. Pride—in appearance, in one's home, in one's family, etc.
10. The expression of artistic taste which takes the form sometimes in the selection of gifts.

On the other hand, the rational motives are handiness, efficiency in operation for use, dependability in use, dependability in quality, durability, economy in use, economy in purchase.

You can see that the emotional outweigh and outnumber the rational. We think we live by our rational power, but we live by our emotions.

Despite the good example of the billboards, most big advertisers even now still believe people live by rational acts. Few, apparently, realize that people buy sensations instead of things. Only after years of professional training does a man learn subconsciously to visualize his advertising copy not as a positive but as a *negative*—to conceive his advertisements simply as concave dies designed to mold the public mind into positive upstanding results. Mason Britten, among the first to learn, says, "art is *expression*; advertising is *impression*." Years of patient demonstration by some of us grubby and unpoetic pioneers have taught the more modern-minded of sales executives, anyway, that in selling, as in sailing, it's better to have a strong dependable trade wind—such as sex or show-off—to run *against* than to sit around trying to whistle up one's own private breezes.

Education has carried on, nevertheless, until even radio advertisers, here and there, are coming with

notable self-sacrifice to disregard what they want to *say*—and themselves hear—in their broadcasts for the sake of what they want their audiences to *do*. As a single quick example (tests of this sort, I regret, are not overfrequent in radio), a reputable commercial money dealer wanted more customers to come in and borrow money. So, with justifiable pride, he broadcast over KDYL, this most restrained bit of self-praise:

The National Loan Company operates under strict supervision of the state, assuring you of a loan service which is dependable.

After this announcement had gone out four times, one applicant came in, I am told. Some young and enterprising advertising man, apparently with a John Caples background on successful headlines, suggested snapping up the opening sentence. So, with no other changes, the National Loan Company thereafter started its broadcast with these words:

Here's how you can end money worries!

From then on, repeating the identical copy, thirty-two applicants were averaged every time the announcement went on the air. That this sort of success rests on a broad human basis not peculiar to radio is pretty well checked by closely parallel results of two Metropolitan Life Insurance magazine pages. With fairly picturesque headlines, "March—the Danger Month" (health care) and "Beware of Spiders" (warning against loan sharks), these two full-page advertisements brought in, respectively, 30

and 2,900 requests for booklets. Changed to the rather dumb, but strictly self-interest headlines "Ship Shape Condition" and "Want to Get Ahead," the same copy in the same circulations, brought, respectively, 6,000 and 90,000 requests.

Despite this almost incredible variation in the value of advertising in even its best-known, most-specific, short-time action, a survey of 180 retail stores regularly using radio showed only 55 stores out of the 180 who admitted that

They looked upon radio as a means to increase store sales in *specific* terms.

What of the other 125 stores? Nonspecific selling, over the radio or otherwise, whether by retail stores or others, is delightfully easy to do. But hard to justify.

In modern competitive conditions at accepted advertising rates, there are, in fact, only two kinds of advertising that can be conducted at a profit:

- 1) CASH-IN
- 2) CARRY-ON.

Cash-in advertising, obviously, is the "Main-Entrance-Here" kind of announcement designed to *move* goods that people are prepared for and waiting to buy. Carry-on advertising, equally obviously, is effective investment-in-public-favor, which, when successful, builds up institutions like Buick, Bromo-Seltzer, Hippodrome, and Waldorf-Astoria. Permanently conceived on a presently practical scale, carry-on advertising constantly increases in value, and, in



certain circumstances, becomes the most valuable business investment in the world. Obviously, the ideal place to invest most carefully most of one's tax-threatened surplus.

For a "natural" like *Reader's Digest*, institutionalized by intrinsic editorial merit to the tune of a \$2,000,000 a year circulation revenue, the newsdealer's "OUT TODAY" sign, no doubt, is the best possible advertisement. This is cash-in advertising at its simplest. Piled on the same newsstands, for a contrasting example, are hundreds of copies, perhaps thousands, of a modern version of that grand advertisement, "OFTEN A BRIDESMAID NEVER A BRIDE," shrewdly reviving advertising of the carry-on type, which by its own power alone created a condition that once made Wall Street pay \$155 a share for the common stock of a mouthwash maker.

The joker, almost universal, is the expensive assumption that all first-rate advertising inherently qualifies in either one class or the other; or, better say, perhaps, that any advertising not forcible enough to bring immediate public action automatically qualifies, nevertheless, as an investment in future public favor. Through such abuse over a long and irresponsible past, the word "institutionalism" has inspired such loose thinking today that any advertising that doesn't pretend actively to pay its way in immediate selling comes, strangely enough, to be tacitly accepted, *on that account*, as presumably paying its way by creating a sort of nebulous aura of

goodwill which, while somehow not quite so good as immediate cash sales, is somehow still better.

No. Each advertiser must face his dilemma. Either horn, firmly grasped, will bring success. Simple-minded, straightforward, cash-in advertising, sticking strictly to everyday selling, will, in time as a sort of bonus, develop great "institutions" like Ward and Sears-Roebuck just as surely as one strong picture of a hand-lettered Rock of Gibraltar courageously enough repeated will, on its road to institutionalism, itself sell directly countless thousands of Prudential policies.

"Institutional" advertising along the lines of the Metropolitan sale of "health" and the broad general services of a whole industry *can*, of course, be tremendously effective. But generally isn't. Institutions, unlike poets, are made, not born. You can't institute an institution simply by assuming a large-minded attitude in general with a corresponding large-minded irresponsibility toward your advertising expenditure. Quite the contrary. If, to the man on the street and his wife at the radio, the word "institution" means anything at all, it signifies a company that is

- 1) well established
- 2) long established
- 3) favorably and universally known to have done,
- 4) either as a primary act or a by-production, some specific service to the community.

This state of public "acceptance" for an institution, therefore, must come mostly from a lot of long-continued, resultful, specific direct action of some sort.

By somebody.

Somewhere.

Even more from somebody's *advertising* of that specific action.

Therefore, better profits for its stockholders might conceivably come from Metropolitan's putting directly into its primary business of advertising insurance and selling policies all the money it couldn't with the utmost certainty have used to a greater profit selling health. Certainly every dollar spent by a plumber or a laundry in association advertising of "cleanliness" as an *institution* bogs down the industry, instead of improving it, unless that dollar advances the sales of, say, toilets or clean towels to a greater degree than it would have done in direct advertising selling those toilets or clean towels for the tradesmen who contributed that dollar toward an institutional fund.

The radio advertiser has a particularly hard time getting himself profitably straightened out in this matter of intangible institutionalism. This, I am glad to testify, is not because the radio advertiser is less alert, but because radio advertising still visualizes itself as a dramatic show. Where a magazine is content to let the editor and circulation man take full responsibility for getting his audience, your radio advertiser seems, as a rule, rather less concerned about putting across a money-making message than about his responsibility for staging a notable vaudeville entertainment. This, despite the fact that all analogy between radio sales and stage or movie box

office falls sharply apart the moment a radio audience, instead of paying in advance a fixed sum for its definite choice of entertainment, is expected to express a sort of retroactive warmth of appreciation by remembering to go out and buy an assortment of unrelated goods for an equally unrelated series of miscellaneous reasons.

Nevertheless, in contrast to the optimistic advertiser-to-the-eye who hopes somehow to profit by the passing use of swanky type and pleasant pictures, the radio advertiser can, from week to week, actually earn quite a bit of pleasant worth-while esteem by some really notable service like broadcasting a free Metropolitan Opera or tempering his commercial plugs with good taste and good manners. But, even in radio's most favorable conditions, while any ill-judged effort to *force* buying must distressingly lessen goodwill, I've never heard a suggestion worthy of serious consideration that an advertiser's goodwill may be profitably increased by leaving off a tactful well-judged effort to induce buying. Frequent nation-wide tests of program popularity have seemed to prove that people's preference has no relation whatever to the length of the commercial continuity. On that point let me again quote Roy Durstine, a practical radioman, temperamentally and artistically equipped to go the limit with the art-for-art's-sake show. Says Mr. Durstine:<sup>68</sup>

There is nothing in the constant surveys to prove that there is any relation between the popularity of a radio program and

the good taste—or lack of it—in its commercial announcements.

Many radio programs which carry the most relentless and insistent advertising are the most successful.

This is a discouraging discovery to the advertising man who feels that taste and restraint should have their own rewards. It is annoying to the listeners who suggest that it would be more successful "if it just mentioned the name of the product once or twice."

In my opinion, the whole history of advertising has never exploited a hypothesis more pathetically naïve than early radio's delightful faith that sheer gratitude to the "sponsor" of a particularly pleasing show would, of itself, bring in sufficient business to pay for the broadcast. A noble principle. It nobly ignores, however, the sloth of ignoble human inertness which, almost regardless of merit or persuasion, remains, as we shall shortly notice, inactive except when particularly touched at some peculiar point of self-interest or self-expression.

And it is the difficulty in discovering just these profitable points of audience self-interest and self-expression—the difficulty of determining exactly the favorable trade winds for any given advertiser—that makes the primrose path of general publicity seem so appealing to anyone with no knowledge of advertising's practical everyday workings and so appalling to the rest of us.

In talks on minor farm economics, as we elsewhere mentioned, information about raising chickens easily outpulls other desires. The manager of a large rabbitry mentioned quite incidentally, in a similar series,

that he could send hearers a bulletin on rabbits. He received ten times as many requests as had come to be expected even for the more popular activities like poultry or dairying. In several other following talks, that same submerged vein of rabbit-interest revealed the same surprising responsiveness to the rabbit-appeal. Radio records are cluttered with this sort of comparisons. Radio tests are ruined pretty regularly by their misinterpretation. Fitzpatrick of WJR once gave this intelligent caution:

If ten announcements offering a cook book will bring 26,000 letters from women listeners, while the same offer of a booklet on reducing will bring only 2,600, it does not signify that for every ten women who *heard* the cook book announcement there was only one who *heard* about the booklet on reducing.

It means, far more likely, that for every woman anxious to reduce there are ten women who don't especially care.

To the reducing-book radio advertiser this, of course, means that, unless he can find some method to make his method of dieting *sound* as alluring as eating, he will have to pay ten times as much for his inquiries; and so, other things equal, pay ten times as much for his sales. Or, looking at it from its more cheerful end, that the cookbook man—through a natural advantage—finds his advertising and selling costs some 900 per cent cheaper.

The valuable *Radio Broadcasting Manual for Retailers* gives at least one striking example of the difficulties that beset the retail broadcaster—even when he tries to be profitably specific. A big store on a series of practically identical \$75 broadcasts, regu-

larly offering each time five different articles, sold with a general sales cost of 12.1 per cent some 240 articles for a total over \$25,000. They sold 1,890 artificial flowers at a dime. And only one pair of the boys' moccasins advertised at \$2.35. Yet, at \$2.95 they sold 646 lapin scarfs. Organdy blouses at \$2.95 had, on one hand, a sales cost of 250 per cent while men's suits at \$14.95 cost only 1 per cent to clear. The same radio offer that brought oversized women into the store to buy \$2,600 worth of dresses found in that same radio audience only one customer mentally undersized enough to pay \$2.35 for a table ivy-stand. All this is amusing. Important, nonetheless, is the fundamental fact that, with precisely the same selling conditions, the same selling methods, and the same sales expense, the variations in these radio sales costs ranged from .06 to 500 per cent. No wonder store broadcasters duck the specific.

Not by any means need all advertising devote itself to immediate cash sales. Nor even to sending out booklets. But the wisest advertising these days does, as we have several times noticed, devote itself rather more actively to moving goods than merely to praising them. Advertising executives, responsible for selling soap, socks, and cigarettes through the *use* of paid advertising, are at last beginning to remember that the genuises who gave them their traditions of goodwill advertising as an institution for the future also sold them immediate space at regular card rates: Thomas Balmer, Ridgeway, Condé Nast, Victor Lawson, Latshaw, Richard Waldo, Brisbane, God-

dard, Kobler, in putting across their products, didn't waste much time on "nonspecific" selling.

Where most conventional confectioners of the old school, still under the nonspecific sales spell, are buying full-color pages to glorify themselves, the more modern makers of "Mounds" found that some 4,000,000 newspaper comic supplement coupons entitling each bearer to one free "Dream" with each regularly bought "Mound," not only introduced the new candy, but increased by 40 per cent the sale of the old. By offering a gift—prize—bribe, if you will, of \$20 for a suggested name (with a chance at a further \$450) the Mohawk Rug Company got nearly 50,000 people to search out their dealers' stores. When Frigidaire wanted lots of people to look at *its* new refrigerator, it paid Seth Parker to offer a free photograph of *his* ship. And, in thirteen weeks, more than a million people called upon the Frigidaire dealers.

Radio advertisers may have been at once too timid and too bold. They have tried to stun with grandeur while bribing with trinkets. Alexander Pope, I believe, once wrote:

A decent boldness ever meets with friends.

In radio advertising, anyway, *decent* asking brings in the orders. Sometimes when nothing else will. And gains rather than loses "institutionalism," because people voluntarily are identifying themselves . . . the most important of all institutional manifestations . . . with your advertising and your goods.

Probably truer than most people realize in all



forms of advertising, the response to almost any direct request is conspicuously true in radio. One large department store, feeling its orchestra program wasn't getting much of an audience, announced a gift of \$10 being held for some lucky listener. In one hour 907 calls were received, with 1,800 more incomplete, on the telephone company meter. A symphony program having only two or three letters a week, in much the same spirit of experiment, asked listeners to say whether they liked the program. Eight thousand letters came in. By adding the gift of a gum-rubber ball, a classical music program over WOR, WLW, and WMAQ, getting perhaps nineteen to twenty letters a week, raised to 40,000 the response to its invitation. Hamilton Watch Company's train cutouts jumped its regular mail of 100 letters or less a week to a total of 55,000 written requests. While Myrt and Marge's regular mail was running about 5,000 letters a week, a free score pad for bridge players jumped it to 86,000. To say how many are listening to a given program, without showing any signs of life, is, of course, hard; but a broadcaster is fairly safe in assuming that for every person who writes in without solicitation there are 1,000, 2,000, possibly 3,000 others who would write in with sufficient encouragement. Moreover, there's no reason to suppose that a surprisingly large number would not show corresponding responsiveness to a simple, straightforward request to buy a broadcaster's goods.

Practical men who don't go in for Pope's poetry

will work sometimes. And somewhere. A good many pages back we observed that a chapter about radio music would have to be a volume. By the same token, a book on selling by radio, to be of any practical value, would have to be a sort of encyclopedia. Had I the temerity to say that anything could not be done, a dozen demonstrations that it had been done—most successfully—would come by the next mail. On the other hand, should I advise most strongly certain definite procedure, a score of correspondents would telegraph the publisher the wheres, whys, and hows this plan had resulted in egregious failure. Or worse.

So, gladly escaping any claim to encyclopedian scope, I earnestly advise paying a good consultation fee to the nearest and smartest advertising man you know who subscribes basically to the broader principles herein printed. There are three kinds of advertisers over the radio who have nothing to worry about in any event:

- 1) Those advertisers whose propositions are known to appeal to everybody and whose low price and general distribution encourage immediate response without effort.
- 2) Those advertisers making regularly some special offer, known to be profitable, which is self-checking, either through mail or store sales or by some way of rewarding as received proof of purchase by actual customers.
- 3) Those advertisers with considerably more expensive articles, but with some particularly worthwhile reasons, terms of service for superiority and

expensiveness, *AND*, further, with a soundly founded program designed and tested out to collect over a reasonable period a "class" audience of prospects selected from out the general radio audience particularly by their interest in the possibility of buying.

Those broadcasters who don't work themselves definitely into one of these three classes will, no doubt, find plenty of things to worry over. Not however the things that radio advertisers generally worry about; but about the broader implications of their lack of ability to use these fundamental radio sales essentials.

Broadcast companies, quite properly, represent all radio advertising as good. Good for everybody. Any day. Almost any hour. If this were literally true, then radio advertising, running ten or twelve hours a day steadily for ten or twelve years, could hardly have failed to pile up a veritable Pike's Peak of proofs of successful selling. With this proof in hand, any argument would be preposterous. Its value thus conclusively established, advertisers would buy radio as a matter of course. But when NBC's enterprising and excellent copy writer in a strikingly handsome promotion piece to advertising agencies, *Straight Across the Boards*, begins to argue:

. . . the only opinions expressed will be those of 1,196 advertisers and their agencies, as reflected *and measured* by the dollars they spent in 1929 and 1934.

. . . These 1,196 advertisers represent so large a share of all national advertising that any conclusions drawn from their expenditures will rest on a sound basis . . .

one is tempted to hope that the basis may be sounder than the reasoning. Against that kind of *a priori* argument this kind of *a priori* argument might fairly state the case:

- 1) These 1,196 advertisers through their radio expenditures from 1929 to 1934 supposedly bought definite dollar-and-cents improvements in selling.
- 2) Either
  - (a) they got these improvements;
  - or*
  - (b) they didn't.
- 3) If these 1,196 advertisers got definite dollar-and-cents increases (or some definitely compensating sales equivalent), their advertising and sales records were, supposedly, well enough organized to indicate this benefit with a fair degree of accuracy.
- 4) Either
  - (a) they did so record these increases;
  - or*
  - (b) they didn't.
- 5) If they did, during this period, get a series of such dollar-and-cents increases (or some definitely compensating sales equivalent) owing to radio; and did so indicate this benefit in their books, the testimony of these 1,196 advertisers would be incredibly valuable.
- 6) If they did not, the fact that *this particular, 1,196 advertisers continued to use radio*, however effective it might be with advertising agencies, scarcely constitutes a type of proof calculated to stampede a convention of certified accountants.

If any considerable number of advertisers got sales results that indicate radio, or any other new advertising method plainly superior to newspapers and

magazines—the two long-established media by which so many great and permanent advertising successes have indubitably been built—those radio results are justly historical. They should become public property. They should be plainly recorded for the benefit of present and coming advertisers who seek exactly such guidance as they would give.

The most searching surveys of radio ever made—a veritable survey of surveys—is Lumley's book *Measurement in Radio*. It is, up through 1934, a practically complete assembly of all the results, big or little, published anywhere. Not only are key magazines like *Broadcasting*, *Broadcast Advertising* and *National Broadcast Reporter*, covered in Lumley's index, every research was researched! Its list of specific references to books and articles run as high as 732. As to *advertising* results, Mr. Lumley is quite as painstakingly researchful, as scientifically curious and academically impartial as he is to any other form of radio phenomenon. He lists some forty-five or fifty records of satisfactory sales; some eighty cases of satisfactory or surprising inquiries. Arnold lists five and two. Hettinger twelve and seven. About 120 cases of satisfactory selling and 70, say, cases of gratifying commercially satisfactory inquiry combined in the three books, including all duplication.

Now just as a too-optimistic advertiser might conclude from reading only the NBC promotion that at least 1,196 radio advertisers were indubitably benefited by radio broadcasting (which this small book will not undertake to question) so, on the other hand,

a pessimistic advertiser might, perhaps, from a study of these three leading books on radio be led to the opposite conclusion that during twenty years only 190 broadcasters got any advertising successes worth mentioning. This, everybody knows, falls very very far short of facts

Most of us can recall that many radio successes.

But how many more can anybody recount?

The truth as usual lies not too uncomfortably between. For reasons we have noticed in these pages there is no royal road to broadcasting success. Those advertisers able to utilize to their profit its "natural" circulation, find radio the quickest, cheapest, surest of all advertising media. Beyond that radio rapidly becomes the trickiest and most expensive.

So to repeat: Advertising by radio is like sailing the Atlantic Ocean. There's room for everything. Reefs and breakers for even the mightiest craft that disdain the charted channels. Plenty of profits for even the smallest that can contrive to catch the favoring tides and currents.

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