

from the editors of
The M Street Journal

THE

1994 EDITION

**STREET
RADIO
DIRECTORY**

**COMPREHENSIVE MARKET DATA:
U.S. and Canadian AM & FM Stations
Program Formats
Arbitron and Willhight Ratings
The M Street Radio Markets
LMA and Duopoly Listings**

THE M STREET RADIO DIRECTORY

1994 EDITION

**Edited by Robert Unmacht
Pat McCrummen
Sean Ross**

M Street Corporation

New York, NY

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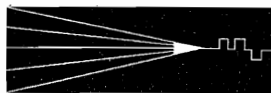
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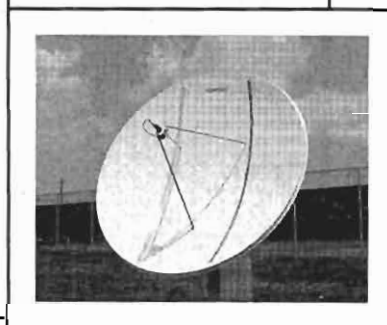
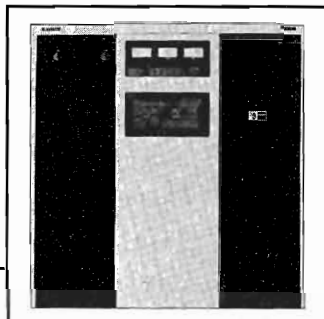
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Table of Contents:

Foreword	7
Guide to Use	8
Format Codes	10
Format Statistics	13
About Ratings	14
Understanding Radio Ratings, by Steve Apel	15
1993 FCC Overview, by Gregg P. Skall	23
Buying Your First Station, by Ray Rosenblum	29
Promotion--It's Not Just a Job, by Phyllis Stark	31
1993: It Sucks Less...So Far: A Programming Analysis, by Sean Ross	33
Stations by State and City of License	35
Stations by Call Letters	479
Former Call Letters	513
Stations by Frequency	521
The M Street Radio Markets	570
M Street Market Ranking	651
Canadian Stations by Province and City of License	657
Canadian Stations by Call Letters	684
Canadian Stations by Frequency	687
Canadian Stations by Market	694
Networks	697
FCC Procedures, by Gregg P. Skall	707
U.S. Shortwave Stations	714
M Street Station Fax Directory	717

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BBC	WLW/CINCINNATI
WHUR/WASHINGTON	WHTZ/NEW YORK
AMERICAN TOP 40-SHADOE STEVENS	WHAS/LOUISVILLE
WTIC/HARTFORD	CAPITOL RADIO/LONDON
WOOD/GRAND RAPID	WPRO/PROVIDENCE
WGN/CHICAGO	KING/SEATTLE
WBZ/BOSTON	KFI/LOS ANGELES
WLMG/NEW ORL.	WIOD/MIAMI
KMOX/ST. LOUIS	KRLD/DALLAS
WMMR/PHILADE.	TAR-SUPER GOLD
WOKI/KNOXVILLE	RGO/SAN FRANCISCO
KSAQ/SAN ANTONIO	FLORIDA RADIO NETWORK
ABC	WBT/CHARLOTTE
KNIX/PHOENIX	WNDE/INDIANAPOLIS
KIIS/LOS ANGELES	NBC
WPHR/CLEVELAND	MUTUAL BROADCAST SYSTEM
BUSINESS RADIO NETWORK-DON McDONALD	CBS
TALKNET-BRUCE WILLIAMS	WSB/ATLANTA
KDKA/PITTSBURGH	CRUISIN' AMERICA-COUSIN BRUCIE
WFBC/GREENVILLE	3WS/PITTSBURGH
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Radio changes constantly; stations, personnel, formats, addresses, facilities and just about everything else about radio changes hourly. Our job, mission, and curse is to try to keep up with these changes. We update our database daily, report on those changes weekly in **The M Street Journal**, and summarize them yearly in this directory.

We believe our directory is more accurate than others available today thanks to a nationwide network of people interested in radio. It is these people who anticipate, locate, and report the changes in radio that make this directory possible.

As with any set of information this large and volatile, some errors are inevitable. We invite everyone to call, fax, or write with new or corrected information for this directory. Whether you run the largest station in the country or simply think radio is something special, we would like to hear from you. We can't be everywhere ourselves, but with your help, we can come closer than anyone else providing broadcast data.

The data found in this directory, compiled over the last nine years, is part of a much larger database that contains dozens of pieces of information on each station. We have selected the most frequently requested items for inclusion in this book. However, if you're looking for other information about a station or group of stations, chances are we can provide it. We do hundreds of custom lists, station and ownership reports, and data requests each year, as well as hundreds of thousands of mailing labels. Call (212) 473-4668; fax (212) 473-4626; or write us at 304 Park Avenue S., floor 7, New York, NY 10010 for details and rates.

GUIDE TO USE

Richland

KOL
1300 5000/5000w DA-N [CH] 5s 1s 7c 2t 8p
+Smith Broadcasting Corp. 509-555-9494
815 N Columbia Blvd, Kennewick 99336 [KOL-FM]
cp 10000/3000 DA-N app 10000/7500 ND
Richland/Kennewick/Pasco Arbitron 2.2
Willight 5.1 2nd market Walla Walla

Richland

KOL
1300 5000/5000w DA-N [CH] 5s 1s 7c 2t 8p
+Smith Broadcasting Corp. 509-555-9494
815 N Columbia Blvd, Kennewick 99336 [KOL-FM]
cp 10000/5000 DA-N app 10000/7500 ND
Richland/Kennewick/Pasco Arbitron 2.2
Willight 5.1 2nd market Walla Walla

Richland

KOL
1300 5000/5000w DA-N [CH] 5s 1s 7c 2t 8p
+Smith Broadcasting Corp. 509-555-9494
815 N Columbia Blvd, Kennewick 99336 [KOL-FM]
cp 10000/5000 DA-N app 10000/7500 ND
Richland/Kennewick/Pasco Arbitron 2.2
Willight 5.1 2nd market Walla Walla

Richland

KOL-FM
94.1 10000w 298ft [EZ] 8n
+Smith Broadcasting Corp. 509-555-9494
815 N Columbia Blvd, Kennewick 99336 [KOL]
cp 10000,1200 app add directional antenna
Richland/Kennewick/Pasco Arbitron 2.2
Willight 5.9 2nd market Walla Walla

Richland

KOL
1300 5000/5000w DA-N [CH] 5s 1s 7c 2t 8p
+Smith Broadcasting Corp. 509-555-9494
815 N Columbia Blvd, Kennewick 99336 [KOL-FM]
cp 10000/5000 DA-N app 10000/7500 ND
Richland/Kennewick/Pasco Arbitron 2.2
Willight 5.1 2nd market Walla Walla

Richland

KOL
1300 5000/5000w DA-N [CH] 5s 1s 7c 2t 8p
+Smith Broadcasting Corp. 509-555-9494
815 N Columbia Blvd, Kennewick 99336 [KOL-FM]
cp 10000/5000 DA-N app 10000/7500 ND
Richland/Kennewick/Pasco Arbitron 2.2
Willight 5.1 2nd market Walla Walla

Stations are listed under their city of license in frequency order. AM stations first, then FM.

Call letters as issued by the FCC are listed above the frequency in the left margin.

Current power and facilities as well as any changes applied for, or construction permits granted are shown.

For AM stations, the day power is listed first and then the night power if any, followed by the antenna configuration:

- ND non-directional, full time
- ND-D non-directional, daytime only
- DA-D directional, daytime only
- DA-1 same directional pattern day and night
- DA-2 different directional patterns day and night
- DA-3 different directional patterns day, night, and critical hours

FM stations list their effective radiated power (ERP) followed by the antenna height above average terrain (HAAT). FM stations whose ERP or HAAT is different for horizontal and vertical polarizations list the figures as (h) and (v). "DA" indicates a directional antenna is used.

Both AM and FM stations show a "=" to indicate a station that shares time with another station on the same frequency.

Program format codes follow the power/facility in square brackets. Please see the section **FORMAT CODES** for a complete explanation of our format classifications and their codes.

M Street keeps track of station changes. A code follows the last digit of the year of the change:

- c call letter change
- f frequency change
- l city of license change
- n new station
- s station sold
- t format change
- p facilities change

For example 7c means that the station changed its call letters in 1987.

Richland
 KOL 5000/5000w DA-N [CH] 5s 1s 7c 2t 8p
 1300 +Smith Broadcasting Corp. 509-555-9494
 815 N Columbia Blvd, Kennewick 99336 [KOL-FM]
 cp 10000/5000 DA-N app 10000/7500 ND
 Richland/Kennewick/Pasco Arbitron 2.2
 Willight 5.1 2nd market Walla Walla

Richland
 KOL 5000/5000w DA-N [CH] 5s 1s 7c 2t 8p
 1300 +Smith Broadcasting Corp. 509-555-9494
 815 N Columbia Blvd, Kennewick 99336 [KOL-FM]
 cp 10000/5000 DA-N app 10000/7500 ND
 Richland/Kennewick/Pasco Arbitron 2.2
 Willight 5.1 2nd market Walla Walla

Richland
 KOL 5000/5000w DA-N [CH] 5s 1s 7c 2t 8p
 1300 +Smith Broadcasting Corp. 509-555-9494
 815 N Columbia Blvd, Kennewick 99336 [KOL-FM]
 cp 10000/5000 DA-N app 10000/7500 ND
 Richland/Kennewick/Pasco Arbitron 2.2
 Willight 5.1 2nd market Walla Walla

Richland
 KOL 5000/5000w DA-N [CH] 5s 1s 7c 2t 8p
 1300 +Smith Broadcasting Corp. 509-555-9494
 815 N Columbia Blvd, Kennewick 99336 [KOL-FM]
 cp 10000/5000 DA-N app 10000/7500 ND
 Richland/Kennewick/Pasco Arbitron 2.2
 Willight 5.1 2nd market Walla Walla

Richland
 KOL 5000/5000w DA-N [CH] 5s 1s 7c 2t 8p
 1300 +Smith Broadcasting Corp. 509-555-9494
 815 N Columbia Blvd, Kennewick 99336 [KOL-FM]
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Richland
 KOL 5000/5000w DA-N [CH] 5s 1s 7c 2t 8p
 1300 +Smith Broadcasting Corp. 509-555-9494
 815 N Columbia Blvd, Kennewick 99336 [KOL-FM]
 cp 10000/5000 DA-N app 10000/7500 ND
 Richland/Kennewick/Pasco Arbitron 2.2
 Willight 5.1 2nd market Walla Walla

The owner of the station.

A "+" preceding the owner indicates the company (not necessarily under the same name) has an ownership interest in stations in other markets.

The phone number given is for the station's business office. If we do not have a phone number, the area code is given.

Up to two addresses are shown. The city and state are assumed to be the city and state of license unless otherwise listed.

An AM or FM affiliate, or sister station, in the same market is shown in square brackets following the station addresses. This may include a station operated under a local marketing agreement (LMA).

This is an example of a granted construction permit for 10,000 watts day, 5,000 watts night, directional antenna night. See the power and facilities section on the facing page for a complete list of codes used for power and antennas.

Applications filed with the FCC which have not yet been granted or dismissed.

The primary market area served is followed by any ratings (see **ABOUT RATINGS**) for the primary market. If a station has a significant presence in a second market that market is also shown. Ratings for 2nd markets are shown only in the **M Street RADIO MARKETS** section.

FORMAT CODES

As the broadcast industry itself evolves, so do radio station formats. Classifications and definitions are amended from time to time to reflect current trends. Here is the current set of format classifications in use:

AC Adult Contemporary

An adult-oriented pop/rock station, with no hard rock, possibly some non-rock music, and often a greater emphasis on non-current music. AC-OL would be an oldies based AC.

AP Album -Progressive/Modern/Alternative Eclectic rock, often with wide variations in musical style.

AR Album - Rock

Mainstream rock & roll. Can include more guitar-oriented "heavy metal."

AS Adult Standards

Standards and older, non-rock popular music (1940-1980), appeals to older adults. Often includes softer current popular music.

BG Black Gospel

CH Contemporary Hit Radio (Top 40)

Current popular music, often encompassing a variety of rock styles. CH-RB would be Dance/CHR, CH-AR would be rock-based CHR.

CR Classic Rock

Rock-oriented oldies, often mixed with hit oldies of the '60's, '70's and '80's. Sometimes called "Classic Hits."

CW Country

Country music, including contemporary and traditional styles. CW-OL would be country oldies.

DR Drama

Radio dramas, often pre-1950.

ET Ethnic

Programs in languages other than English, French or Spanish. Often brokered and/or block-programmed.

EZ Easy Listening

Gentle, background music, often cover versions of popular songs. More uptempo varieties of this format include soft rock originals.

FA Fine Arts - Classical

Fine arts ("classical") music, often including opera, theatre, and/or culture-oriented news and talk.

FF French

French-language programming.

FX Farm News

JZ Jazz

Jazz music.

MT Financial Talk

All financial or "Money-Talk."

NA New Age

Mostly instrumental, often mixed with soft jazz and/or soft AC. Often called "New AC."

NX News

All-news, either local or network in origin. Also in format description if a significant block of time is devoted to news.

OL Oldies

Formerly popular music, usually rock oldies, with 80% or greater non-current music. CW-OL indicates country oldies; RB-OL, black oldies.

PT Pre-teen

Music, drama or readings intended primarily for a pre-teen audience.

RB Black/soul - Urban

Black-oriented music and programming; can cover a wide range of musical styles, often called "Urban Contemporary."

RC Religious - Contemporary

Modern and rock-based religious music.

FORMAT CODES

RG Religious - Gospel

Traditional religious music; can be black-oriented (BG) or country-oriented "southern gospel" (SG).

RL Religious

Local or syndicated religious programming, sometimes mixed with music.

SA Soft Adult Contemporary

A cross between Adult Contemporary and Easy Listening. Almost wholly non-current, soft rock originals; can also be mixed with adult standards.

SB Soft Urban Contemporary

A mix of soft Urban, Adult Contemporary and Jazz, often heavy in oldies.

SG Southern Gospel

Country-flavored gospel music.

SS Spanish

Spanish-language programming. Spanish-language equivalents of English formats include SS-CW (ranchero music), SS-AC ("modern" music), SS-SA (salsa, tropical) or SS-VA (variety), and formats such as SS-EZ or SS-NX-TK, which match English language formats.

SX Sports

Listed only if all or a substantial block of a broadcast day is devoted to play-by-play, sports news, interviews or telephone talk.

TK Talk

Talk, either local or network in origin; can be telephone-talk, interviews, information, or a mix.

VA Variety

Incorporating three or more distinct formats, either block-programmed or simultaneously.

ADDITIONAL CODES:

Z	Station is currently off the air
r	Relays another station's programming
s	Simulcasts another station
*	Non-commercial format
&	Satellite programmed
X-Y	Formats combine
X/Y	Formats alternate (dayparted)
m	Morning
a	Afternoon
e	Evening
n	Night
l	Late night
-	Format is about to change or the format is not available
cp-new	Construction permit for a new station



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The music format the 35 - 64 demo wants to hear — The Verdery Environment. An easy listening format that all but guarantees you a loyal, upscale audience. The Verdery Environment features the artists people want to listen to at the office and at home.

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The hits from the golden age of rock-n-roll certainly haven't left the hearts of radio audiences. Bonneville Gold is the format that will get your market rocking. It features the best-testing songs from the late 50's, core 60's and early 70's performed by the artists who helped put gold on the map.

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An outstanding series of Adult Contemporary formats that have proven their mettle in three of the nation's most competitive markets: New York, Los Angeles and San Francisco. Hot A/C. Mainstream A/C. Soft A/C. Ratings grabbers that feature the artists adult audiences want to hear.

Each format can be programmed live, live-assist or fully automated.

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FORMAT STATISTICS

M Street format data produces the following format counts.

Counts as of July, 1993

Primary Format	Total	Commercial	Non-Com.	% AM	% FM	Simulcast
1 Country	2,601	2,595	6	44%	56%	409 16%
2 Adult Contemporary	1,598	1,578	20	33%	67%	133 8%
3 News, Talk, Sports, Business	986	802	184	80%	20%	81 8%
4 Religion (Teaching, Variety)	766	434	332	47%	53%	104 14%
5 Oldies	737	736	1	45%	55%	59 8%
6 Top-40 (CHR)	529	462	67	7%	93%	32 6%
7 Variety	450	68	382	11%	89%	6 1%
8 Adult Standards	416	414	2	91%	9%	18 4%
9 Spanish	387	357	30	67%	33%	24 6%
10 Alternative Rock	376	104	272	4%	96%	16 4%
11 Soft Adult Contemporary	344	342	2	36%	64%	34 10%
12 Rock	325	316	9	8%	92%	28 9%
13 Classical, Fine Arts	318	47	271	4%	96%	93 29%
14 Urban, R&B	247	213	34	37%	63%	16 6%
15 Classic Rock	211	209	2	5%	95%	18 9%
16 Contemporary Christian	210	137	73	31%	69%	22 10%
17 Southern Gospel	183	174	9	80%	20%	10 5%
18 Easy Listening	128	118	10	29%	71%	13 10%
19 Jazz & New Age	117	41	76	8%	92%	8 7%
20 Black Gospel	112	109	3	89%	11%	2 2%
21 Urban AC, R&B oldies	105	104	1	53%	47%	10 10%
22 Ethnic	66	57	9	67%	33%	4 6%
23 Gospel	59	52	7	81%	19%	3 5%
24 Pre-Teen	11	11	0	91%	9%	2 18%
not available or changing	23	12	11	9%	91%	0 0%
Total operating stations	11,305	9,492	1,813	41%	59%	1145 10%
Stations off the air	394	(273 AM and 121 FM)		69%	31%	simulcast AM/AM FM/FM AM/FM
Construction permits	970	(104 AM and 866 FM)		11%	89%	
Total stations and CP's	12,669			40%	60%	

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ABOUT RATINGS

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The M Street Radio Directory contains estimates of audience shares from surveys taken by the above ratings companies. The figures we show are taken from the latest survey published before our deadlines. The particular survey used in each market is shown in **The M Street RADIO MARKETS** section, but not in the individual station listings. Ratings are not shown for stations that did not meet minimum reporting requirements.

The majority of these estimates were compiled through surveys conducted by The Arbitron Company which reports its estimates on a quarterly basis. A number of radio markets are surveyed by Willhight Radio Research. Willhight's surveys do not always coincide with the Arbitron survey periods. The dates of the Willhight surveys are given in the **MARKETS** section.

The term "ratings" is used to describe the audience estimates published in The M Street Radio Directory, but "audience share" is a more accurate description. The published numbers represent the percentage of all radio listeners twelve years old or older (12+) who tune to a particular radio station in a theoretical "average quarter hour" on any day from Monday to Sunday between the hours of 6:00 a.m. and 12:00 midnight. This figure highlights some relative strengths and weaknesses of the stations competing in a market, however it tells only a small portion of the story of competition in a market.

Taken alone, the audience share reveals nothing about the actual size of a station's audience. An estimate of the number of people tuned to all radio stations in an average quarter hour is needed to derive the audience size from the share. These more specific figures are not included because of their volume, and because the ratings companies would have little to sell if we published them. Our inclusion of audience shares from the ratings companies is based partially on their hopes that persons needing fully detailed information will subscribe to their services.

UNDERSTANDING RADIO RATINGS

Why They Measure Only Approximate Audience

by Steve Apel

Steve Apel is the President of Media Perspectives Research Corporation. Media Perspectives provides marketing and audience research along with strategic counseling for broadcasters seeking to maximize ratings and revenues. Prior to founding Media Perspectives, Steve Apel was a Research Project Director at the Arbitron Company and was involved in research and programming at a number of radio stations. He may be reached at Media Perspectives, 606 Cooper Landing Road, Building A, Suite 4B, Cherry Hill, New Jersey 08002, telephone 609-482-7979.

Ratings Govern Advertising Rates for Many Stations

Commercial radio broadcasters sell listeners.

Although advertisers routinely purchase commercial time in 30 or 60 second increments, it is not the time they are actually buying. What they really acquire from a radio station is access to that station's listeners.

The price that a radio station charges for this access depends upon a number of factors. The laws of supply and demand play a role in determining the price of access - stations tend to place limits on the amount of commercial time they will sell. The advertising environment - how the broadcaster schedules commercials within the programming - also affects price. However, the single biggest determinant of price often is the size of the audience the station reaches.

Since there is no way of knowing precisely how many people are listening to a given station at a given time, broadcasters and advertisers rely on market research surveys to provide an approximation of this figure.

The audience ratings produced through these market research studies are an approximation because of uncontrollable variations in the kind of people who elect to take part in a ratings survey and in their ability to accurately report their radio listening.

We'll explore this in greater detail shortly. Before we do, there's a need to take a look at how radio audience ratings are produced.

A Number of Sources and Methods of Radio Audience Ratings

Nearly all of the estimates of audience for radio stations in the U.S. are provided by the Arbitron Company. Arbitron collects information about radio listening through a diary. This is a booklet in which respondents are asked to write down details of their radio listening over a seven day period. The BBM Bureau of Measurement in Canada also uses a diary. Strategic Radio Research's "AccuRatings" and Willhight Radio Research, which each provide audience ratings in selected U.S. markets, have market research interviewers place telephone calls to people in order to gather information on their radio listening.

The "Telephone Recall" Method

In the telephone calls that are placed by Strategic and Willhight, the interviewers inquire about the radio stations that a person listened to in the past twenty-four hours. The accuracy of the information captured through this twenty-four hour recall method is limited. This is because people are being asked to recall specific details of their radio listening which is an activity they are likely to have given little thought to.

The Seven Day Diary Method

Given this flaw in the twenty-four hour recall method, a radio listening diary, into which people are asked to enter the names of the stations they listen to when they're listening, would seem to be a much more accurate method of gathering listening information. By having listeners complete their diary while listening, details of radio listening would not be lost to poor memory as is possible in the recall method.

The names of all stations listened to and the exact time spent listening to each radio station would be reported. Or so the theory goes. In practice, the radio listening diary has flaws.

Keeping a diary for seven days and making a note of every radio station listened to is a rather demanding task.

This is a reason why many listeners decline an invitation to participate in a ratings survey. Either they refuse to accept a diary from Arbitron or BBM, or they accept a diary but fail to complete it and return the diary to the ratings firm.

Other radio listeners lose interest in keeping their diary over time. They fill out their diary with great detail when they first receive it, but become less detailed in their reports as the week progresses.

Many people appear to complete their radio listening diaries sometime after they actually listen to radio. These people wait until the evening or until the end of the seven day period the diary covers to complete their diary. The resulting entries may be more a measure of awareness of radio station names than details of actual listening.

The choices people make in whether or not to participate in the ratings survey, whether or not to return a completed diary and the degree of care they take in recording information in their diaries are all sources of error. These errors are why ratings provide only an approximation of audience.

Reasons Why Ratings Are Just An Approximation

Reason #1 - Surveys Are Not Always Representative

If all people were alike, gaining a representative sample would be rather simple. However, demographic distinctions such as an individual's age, sex and ethnic background are key factors in determining listening behavior and are important to broadcasters.

A ratings survey must represent each different demographic group in proportion to its occurrence in the overall population in order to provide an accurate account of listening. If men are 50% of the population, half of the surveys conducted should be with men. Such perfection is rare in ratings surveys. Most demographic groups are not represented in proportion to their occurrence in the population.

When a demographic group is surveyed out of proportion to its membership in the overall population, the ratings produced can be distorted. In general, audience shares for stations which attract listeners in an over-represented demographic will be inflated while those for stations which tend to attract listeners in an under-represented demographic group will be depressed. For example, a ratings survey with too many men will tend to produce artificially high audience shares for radio stations which have a particular appeal to men.

In an attempt to solve this problem, ratings firms use mathematical formulas to vary the emphasis they place on responses for each demographic group contained in the survey. By multiplying or dividing by a number which adjusts for the degree to which a demographic group is either over or under represented in the survey - a process known as "weighting" - ratings firms theoretically equalize each group's representation.

Although weighting can compensate for some of the error a non-representative group introduces into ratings, it can't solve all problems. One thing weighting can't do is replace missing information. When a demographic group is under-represented in a survey it is impossible to capture as full a range of their radio listening as it is for a demographic group that's either proportionately represented or over-represented.

Radio stations listened to by only a minority of people within an under-represented demographic group may not be reported in the ratings because not enough members of the demographic group were surveyed. For example, if radio station WXXX is listened to by only one in eleven members of a demographic group and only ten members of that group are surveyed, there is a chance that no one will report listening to WXXX. As a result, estimates of the size of the WXXX audience will be depressed.

Ratings firms are not necessarily at fault for producing non-representative samples that require weighting. Ratings firms rely on the cooperation of the public. People in different demographic groups respond to a ratings survey in different ways. Most surveys begin with a plan to obtain a representative sample, but some individuals in this sample will fail to take part in the survey.

Differences between the people who take part in a ratings survey and those who decline to participate are another reason why the ratings offer only an approximate measure of the radio audience.

In most audience ratings surveys just half of all people who are asked to take part actually participate. While we learn about their radio listening habits, the behavior of the other 50% remains unknown.

It is possible that people who fill out and return a listening diary use radio differently than those who don't. The difference that may exist between the behavior of those who participate in the ratings survey and those who don't is known as "non-response" bias. The high degree of non-response in ratings surveys means that the estimates produced may not accurately represent the radio listening behavior of the population at large.

Even without the sampling and cooperation problems that lead to weighting and non-response bias there still exists the possibility that the answers provided in a radio ratings survey may not be an accurate account of listening.

Reason #2 - Ratings Surveys May Measure Awareness Rather Than Listening

Some ratings estimates may have more to do with listener awareness of a particular radio station than with use of the station.

Although the people who agree to keep a radio listening diary are asked to make entries in the diary as they listen to radio, nothing guarantees that they will. There is some evidence that suggests that many people make entries in their radio listening diary some time after they actually listen to radio.

A radio listening diary which is completed some time after listening has occurred reports on what people remember listening to rather than what they've actually heard on the radio. Since memory is not perfect, especially in the case of an everyday activity such as listening to radio, people may report listening to the radio stations they are most aware of and fail to mention stations which have a lower profile.

Reason #3 - Ratings Diary Entries May Not Be Accurate

Even if ratings survey participants make entries in their diaries while listening to radio the ratings produced may not be entirely accurate. This is because ratings surveys depend upon a person's ability to volunteer information on the stations they listen to. People do not always possess the information they are being asked to volunteer.

People don't need to know a radio station's name in order to listen to it. But they do need this knowledge in order to report listening.

Lack of knowledge or confusion over which station is which or a lack of care in completing the diary may cause a listener to supply erroneous information. In ratings diaries people have been known to transpose call letters (calling WXYZ WYXZ, for example), invent call sign and frequency combinations that don't exist (a person who listens to both KAAA-FM 99 and KBBB-FM 88 may enter KAAA-FM 88 in the diary), and confuse AM and FM stations with the same call sign (entering WXXX-AM when they in fact listen to WXXX-FM).

Ratings Trends Are Likely To Be More Accurate Than Single Ratings Surveys

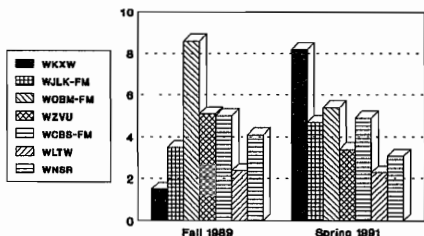
The many sources of possible error in ratings surveys have to be taken into account when evaluating a station's ratings performance. This is why it is wise to look at the trends in a station's ratings over time rather than concentrating on the results of a single ratings survey. Over time, with repeated surveys, the effects of any of the problems we've talked about tend to moderate. In other words, an error that provides a station with an advantage in one ratings survey is often offset in other surveys.

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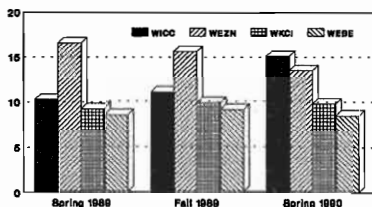
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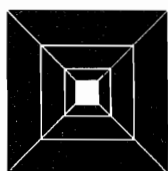
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1993 FCC OVERVIEW

by Gregg Skall

Gregg Skall is a communications lawyer with the firm of Pepper & Corazzini in Washington, DC. He frequently represents parties before the Commission and the Congress to obtain desired policy objectives. In 1984, the National Journal recognized him as one of the leading radio spectrum lobbyists in Washington. He writes and speaks on topics of Federal Communications Commission administrative process, electronic mass media, and telecommunications. He may be reached at (202) 296-0600.

If the 1991-92 broadcasting year saw major changes to the pillars of broadcasting regulation, the 1992-93 year saw them firmly imbedded into a new order of broadcasting and clarification of a number of issues left uncertain last year.

Ownership Rules

National Ownership Rules

In September, 1992, the Commission adopted a reconsideration of its initial order of six months earlier by which it had expanded the number for common ownership of radio stations nationwide and in the local markets. The new limit for the number of stations in which a single entity may have an attributable interest is 18 AM and 18 FM stations. In September, 1994, the limit will increase to 20 AM and 20 FM stations.

The new rules also permit an owner to hold a non-controlling, attributable interest in an additional three stations per service if those stations are controlled by minorities or small businesses. The Commission has defined minority control as more than 50% ownership by one or more members of a minority group (minority groups include Blacks, Hispanics, American Indians, Alaskan Natives, Asians and Pacific Islanders.) The Commission has defined a "small business" as an individual or business entity which, at the time of application to the Commission, had annual revenues of less than \$500,000 and total assets of less than \$1,000,000.

The Commission also issued a further notice of proposed rule making to explore a broadcast ownership "incubator" program designed to ease entry barriers and provide assistance to small businesses or individuals seeking to enter the radio field. The purpose of the program is to encourage broadcast groups to apply their knowledge and financial resources to help overcome entry barriers for others. Under the program, a group owner could acquire a controlling or attributable interest in stations above the national ownership limit upon a prior demonstration that it has in place a "small business investment incentives program."

Local Ownership Rules

The new rule consists of two tiers of market sizes defined strictly by contour overlap.

The first tier consists of markets with fewer than 15 stations. For these markets, the Commission permits a single entity to own up to three stations, no more than two of which may be in the same service, provided that the owners' stations represent less than 50% of the total number of stations in the market.

The other tier involves markets having 15 or more radio stations. In these larger markets, a single entity is permitted to own up to two AM and two FM stations, provided that the combined audience share of those stations will not exceed 25%. The 25% test applies at the time of acquisition, and divestiture will generally not be required should the 25% threshold be exceeded at some point in the future. In addition, the stations generally may be transferred as a group at a later date even if the combined audience share at that time exceeds 25%.

To determine the tier under which an acquisition will be analyzed, the Commission defines a radio market as the area encompassed by the principal community contours of the overlapping stations proposing to have common ownership. The principal community contours are the predicted or measured 5 mV/m daytime contour for AM stations and the predicted 3.56 mV/m contours for FM stations. The number of stations in the market are determined by counting all commercial stations whose principal community contours overlap or intersect the principal community contours of the commonly-owned

stations. Included in the count are all operating **commercial** full-power stations including daytimers and foreign stations, but excluding non-commercial stations, translators, construction permits which are not yet on the air, and stations which have been silent for more than six months.

Two Fine Points: First, where the overlap area of a proposed AM/AM station will also overlap a commonly-owned AM station (or where a proposed AM/AM combination will overlap a commonly-owned FM station), then the number of stations in the market will include all which overlap the contours of the three which will be commonly owned. Second, where there will be a chain of commonly-owned stations, the Commission will consider each overlap separately.

Joint Ventures and Simulcasting

The Commission now considers a time brokerage arrangement for more than 15% of the brokered stations' broadcast hours per week to be an attributable ownership interest. Further, stations in the same service whose overlap area constitutes more than 50% of either station's principal community contour may not simulcast for more than 25% of either stations' broadcast time.

The Commission defines time brokerage as the sale of discreet blocks of time to a party which both supplies the programming to fill that time and sells the commercial spot announcements in it. It has suggested that time brokerage agreements may provide for liquidated damages upon termination, but that excessive liquidated damages or an unreasonably lengthy term could raise questions concerning a licensee's meaningful control over its station. The Commission also refused to alter its main studio rules for brokered stations, requiring the presence of at least one full-time managerial and one staff person at the brokered station's main studio during regular business hours. (See following section on main studio staffing.)

Regarding LMAs, or time brokerage agreements, the Commission ordered that all such agreements or understandings must be reduced to writing and included in the public inspection files of both the brokering and brokered stations for the term of the contract, although confidential or proprietary information may be redacted. Time brokerage agreements which qualify as an attributable interest must both be filed with the Commission within 30 days of execution and be included by the brokering station in its annual ownership report. The filing with the Commission must include a certification that the arrangement complies with the Commission's ownership rules. Finally, should a brokering station purchase the brokered station, the 25% audience share limit will be tested at the time of acquisition, not when the time brokerage agreement began.

Main Studio Staffing

In 1991, the Commission held in *Jones Eastern of the Outer Banks, Inc.* that, where a station located its primary studio outside the 3.16 mV/m contour, it must nevertheless maintain a main studio within that contour staffed by two full-time employees, one of whom must be supervisory (or managerial). This standard led to confusion within the industry as to the nature of employees required to staff the main studio and the types of responsibilities they must fulfill. The FCC has now provided guidance to clarify this requirement.

For example, it stated that the following categories of positions will constitute a "meaningful managerial presence" at the main studio: president or other corporate officer; general manager; station manager; program director; sales manager; chief engineer with managerial duties; news director; personnel manager; facilities manager; operations manager; production manager; promotion manager; research director; controller and chief accountant. The Commission emphasized job duties rather than mere titles, so someone who primarily performs any of these duties should qualify as the supervisory employee even without the title. Merely bestowing the title without the responsibilities will not suffice.

Another point of confusion was how much time the employees must remain at the main studio. Because some of these positions may require the persons occupying them to conduct significant business outside the office, the FCC has said that it will not require them to be "chained to their desks" during all business hours. However, the management person must report to work at the main studio on a daily basis and spend a substantial amount of time there, using the main studio as a "home base."

The Commission will allow non-managerial main studio staff to take on responsibilities for another business outside the studio so long as the main studio is attended by some station employee during all normal business hours. It has been suggested that the other business interests may even be programming the station operating in an LMA, for example, selling time for the LMA company while also working part time for the licensee as a main studio employee. Caution: While this is a possibility, such an arrangement should be reserved for situations where the parties agree to maintain **EXTENSIVE** records regarding the actual time and duties devoted to each employer by the employee.

FCC Misconduct Reports

The Commission recently issued a revised reporting requirement for "relevant non-FCC misconduct." In this report, the Commission clarified a broadcaster's duty to report pending legal matters to the FCC.

Under its new guidelines, pending claims such as pending libel suits or employment discrimination complaints, which have not yet been adjudicated, do not have to be reported. Pending litigation is presumed by the FCC to be irrelevant to a broadcaster's character qualifications. Only adverse adjudications of relevant, non-FCC misconduct must be reported.

The FCC defined "relevant non-FCC misconduct" as including: (a) all felonies; (b) fraudulent representations to governmental units; (c) mass media-related violations of antitrust or other laws dealing with unfair competition; and (d) a pattern of adjudicated non-FCC related employment discrimination. Under this policy, an adverse adjudication of a libel claim would not have to be reported, but the same result in a discrimination case would. The libel suit does not fall into one of the above categories, but the employment discrimination case does. Thus, even a single adverse decision of discrimination must be reported, since it might indicate a possible pattern of conduct warranting FCC examination.

The Commission also interpreted Section 1.65 of its rules to require report of adjudications of relevant non-FCC misconduct on an annual basis. The report should be filed on either the licensee's renewal application or, like ownership reports, on the anniversary of the date that the renewal application is required to be filed.

The FCC's policy on reportable misconduct also extends to non-licensee entities which share an officer, director or shareholder/partner with the broadcast licensee, if a principal of the licensee was in control of the other entity or was directly involved in its misconduct. The reporting policy also applies to non-FCC misconduct of a parent or subsidiary corporation if there are principals common to the licensee and the related company was involved in the misconduct. The policy extends only to misconduct of all persons with attributable interest in the relevant entity. It does not apply to employees.

Political Programming

In recognition of the changing world of television and radio news programming, the Commission ruled that independently produced, *bona fide* news interview programs qualify for the equal opportunities exemption to Section 315 of the Communications Act. This ruling completes an FCC full swing from interpreting the Section 315(a)(2) exemption as requiring that a news interview program be conducted only by the licensee or its network, to now qualifying syndicated and bartered news interview programs provided that their carriage by the licensee is a reflection of "its *bona fide* news judgement and not for the political advantage of the candidate for public office." In its ruling, the Commission acknowledged that its past interpretation had discouraged independent production of news interview programming concerning candidates because independent producers knew that stations were unlikely to clear programs that would create equal time obligations. The Commission concluded that its interpretation has had a chilling effect on independent production of news interview programming. The Commission also reaffirmed its policy, however, that to qualify for the exemption, licensees must independently make a determination to air the programs, not for the political advantage of any candidate for public office, but for the good faith exercise of the news judgement.

Satellite Digital Audio Broadcasting

The Commission issued a rulemaking proceeding looking toward the establishment of satellite DAB in the "S" band. In that same notice, the Commission asked for an update on the technical development of other DAB systems, such as in-band, on-channel systems. On a parallel track, the Commission has accepted six applications proposing satellite DAB service, with those applications proposing everything from all subscription radio to a full commercial service using 28 separate satellite spot beams to major metropolitan areas with each spot beam carrying 16 channels of service, in addition to 16 channels of service covering the entire continental United States. The proceeding remains open.

In the meanwhile, the National Radio Systems Committee, a joint effort of the National Association of Broadcasters and the Electronic Industries Association, has convened a committee for exploring various options for in-band, on-channel systems. The committee is continuing to meet regularly in an effort to develop a standard satisfactory to all parties.

FCC Crackdown On Contests That Violate Lottery Rules

In a series of actions, the Commission has been enforcing rules on broadcasting of lottery information and imposing increased forfeitures upon stations found to have done so. A determination that a lottery exists requires a finding that the elements of prize, consideration and chance all exist. Further, the Commission has been fining stations for lotteries that were provided to it in the context of syndicated programs that are carried on a barter or cash basis.

The question of whether there is "consideration" is tricky, and what a licensee and the contest promoter may perceive as a free, alternate means of entry could be viewed by the Commission as onerous enough to constitute "consideration," thus making the contest an illegal lottery. It is also important to bear in mind that recent revisions to the laws on lottery permit the broadcast of information about contests that have the element of a lottery so long as the lottery is either authorized or otherwise not prohibited by state law and conducted as a promotional activity by a commercial organization that is clearly "occasional and ancillary" to the main business of the sponsoring organization.

If the contest has the elements of a lottery, you must then check with the appropriate official in your state to determine whether it is permissible under state law. If the state law prohibits the lottery, it is a violation of the Commission's rules to broadcast information about it.

In one case, the Commission noted that the licensee's laxity in reviewing programming provided by a satellite contributed to the violation. Licensees are responsible for all programming that goes out over the air and the fact that programming was received from the syndicator, if only for a short time before broadcast, will not excuse the licensee from liability. To provide protection against liability, a licensee should have in place procedures for systematic review of every program, and indemnification provisions in its syndication contracts.

Broadcast Hoaxes

The Commission has adopted a new rule prohibiting broadcast hoaxes. The Commission limited the new prohibition to false information concerning a crime or catastrophe. It defined a "crime" as any act or omission subject to criminal punishment and a "catastrophe" as a disaster involving violent or sudden events affecting the public. Thus, the rule does not cover a broadcast that might upset some listeners but does not pose a substantial threat to public health or safety.

A violation of the new rule requires a finding of the following three elements:

Licensee knowledge of falsity - the licensee must have known that the broadcast concerning the crime or catastrophe was false. A licensee will be held accountable for the actions of its employees and, therefore, must monitor their actions.

Foreseeability of substantial public harm - the Commission will deem public harm to have been foreseeable if the licensee could expect with a reasonable degree of certainty that substantial harm would occur.

Direct causation of substantial public harm - the Commission defines public harm as damage to the health or safety of the general public, diversion of law enforcement or other public health or safety authorities from their duties and damage to property. The public harm must begin immediately after the broadcast and result in actual damage, rather than a mere threat of harm.

Radio Broadcast Data Systems

The National Radio Systems Committee, the joint venture of the National Association of Broadcasters and the Electronic Industries Association, has adopted a Standard for Radio Broadcast Data Systems (known as RBDS). The system incorporates the Radio Data Systems (RDS) Standard employed by the European Broadcasting Union and additional U.S. enhancements, such as the In-Receiver Database System (IRDS)*, and MBS/MMBS, the system used by CUE Nationwide Network for FM subcarrier paging and other users of subcarrier data capability. The IRDS system is an in-receiver ROM database that is updated by a subcarrier data stream. It will be used primarily to make some RBDS benefits available to AM broadcasters.

RBDS will provide radio broadcasters with the opportunity to have a display on the face of the receiver which provides the information identifying the station, its location and the format in which it is broadcasting at the time. The codes are broadcaster controlled and can be displayed on character screens located in the new RBDS radios. They are especially useful to allow the receiver to scan by format. In addition, RBDS will be helpful in providing some of the following services: alternate frequencies to have a receiver retune itself to a broadcaster-designated alternate frequency when the one to which it is tuned becomes weak; emergency broadcasts which may replace the existing EBS system; paging services; navigational services for utilization in automobiles and other mobile vehicles and transparent data channels which can be used for any purpose.

New Proposed RF Radiation Standard

The Commission has released a notice of proposed rulemaking seeking to implement more restrictive guidelines for the exposure of workers and the public to radio frequency (RF) radiation. This would conform the Commission's rules to the November, 1992, American National Standard Institute (ANSI) standards which more severely restrict the amount of environmental RF exposure permitted, cover a broader range of frequencies, set different limits for workers and the general public, and narrow the range of accepted devices. Where there is any question of possible exposure of the general public (including non-technical employees) to RF radiation, the Commission proposes to apply a more conservative guideline.

*Publisher's note: the IRDS system is used by PRS Corporation in conjunction with M Street Corporation for user selected format searches.

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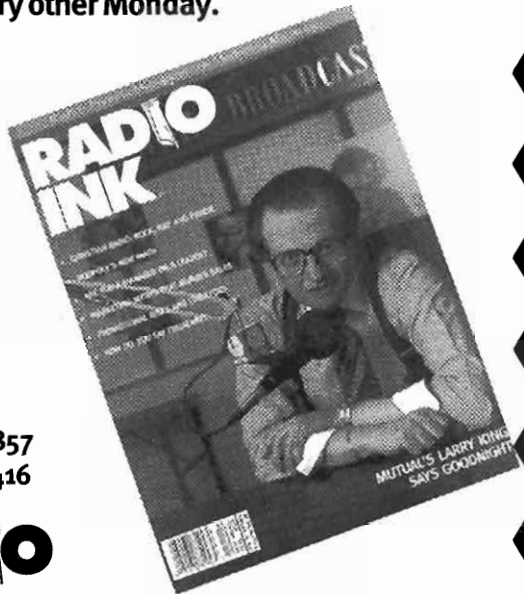
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BUYING YOUR FIRST STATION

by Ray Rosenblum

Ray is a Pittsburgh-based media broker, consultant, and appraiser with a 35-year background in radio station ownership, management, and brokering. He can be reached at P.O. Box 38296, Pittsburgh, PA 15238. His phone number is 412-362-6311.

It seems as though almost everyone who has ever visited or worked in a radio station has come under the spell of show business glamor. Many people want greater involvement. It's almost an announcer's axiom that every disc jockey vows he can run the place better than the program director or the general manager. Every sales person thinks she could surely do better than that do-nothing sales manager. "Just wait until I run my own station, then you'll see how a place like this should really operate." Isn't that what people say?

As you might imagine, it takes much more than just desire and a little know-how to get to own and operate your own radio station. It takes a lot of time, dedication, energy, and most importantly, knowledge and money.

The first step in buying a radio station is to commit to dedicate a lot of your own money, time and energy to a process that could take you several years. (We're talking about buying a radio station that is already in business, as opposed to one that is off the air yet still licensed, or one that is to be built from scratch.)

Once you have made the commitment of money, time, and energy, you have to consider what size market and station your money will permit you to acquire. An important point to remember is that you are not merely buying a station; you are buying a market.

Some would-be buyers tell me that they are willing to go anywhere in the country to acquire a "good radio station" in their price range. I recommend that for your first radio station you focus not only on a particular size and type of market (e.g. major city, college town, resort area, isolated community), but also on a specific region of the country (more precise than just East or West).

If you have the time and the patience, you might even try working in a desirable market (for you) as someone else's general manager or sales manager (or if you lack the experience for management, then as a programmer or sales person). That way you can try out a market and station type and get paid for the exploration in the process, with no risk of your own capital.

Incidentally, I believe that the strongest road to management and ownership lies through sales. In my experience, sales people make excellent general managers and ultimately owners. Once you have spent at least two years learning how to sell radio advertising in a market like the one where you ultimately hope to operate your own station, then you should spend at least a couple more years as a general manager so that you learn how to meet a payroll and understand how you have to bring in the operating funds on a reliably regular basis to pay for all the talent, music, news, and sports you hope to manage.

You might contend that engineers and program directors also make good station managers and owners. However, based on decades of watching and learning in the broadcasting business, I still feel that sales training helps make the best general managers and ultimately the most successful owners for one simple reason: they know how to bring in the money to keep the place running and profitable. If you are a dedicated air talent, consider investing a year working in sales so that you know how to hire and direct such people.

Thus, once you have the experience of several years in operations and management, you are probably qualified enough to impress your friends, relatives, investors, and bankers to place their money with you to buy your first radio station.

With a commitment of at least \$150,000 (or better yet \$300,000) you might be ready to start shopping not simply for a station, but most vitally for a good market. You should keep in mind that in choosing your first market and buying your first radio station you can't always expect to realize your ideal situation. You will probably have to compromise and settle somewhat in a hard, real world.

Nevertheless, look for a market small to medium in size centered around a strong town or city, usually a county seat, always a significant trading and shopping center. Your first station should not be

in too large a market where the acquisition prices for stations are in the millions and where a shift in the economy or the ratings can send a station into a nose-dive. I suggest you look for a city of 25,000 to 75,000 in a county or market with a least 150,000 people.

A college town or a tourist area has charm and also some built-in economic support if the community also has diversified industries or strong service businesses. Obviously, you don't want a town where one industry or company is dominant. It should, of course, be a community where you and your spouse would like to live.

Next comes the choice of a radio station. I think just about everyone interested in buying stations has heard the notion of staying away from stand-alone AM stations. Don't be fooled. You can discover some great opportunities, even bargains, among stand-alone AM stations in small to medium-sized markets. Yes, you'll even find such AM stations that are making money.

I have had the unique experience of selling a dying AM station to an energetic, experienced couple who turned it around in less than two years. It's now making a lot of money with good ratings and community acceptance in a city of 100,000 people with lots of competition. The station still doesn't have an FM partner, and it's doing just fine. The husband is an experienced station manager and sales person. His wife is a graduate accountant with a good radio voice. (Details available on request.) It can be done.

Thus, having chosen a market, you must focus on a station: Does it have the signal strength to cover its market properly? Does it have cash flow? Or, could it be turned around to profitability within two years? Do you or your consultants feel good about the station and its potential for growth in a market that should display growth opportunities? Is the price you negotiate reasonable and comparable to similar situations in the same region? Will the owner carry a note for a good part of the purchase price? Will the seller subordinate his or her note to that of the band from which you are borrowing?

At some point you will probably need to prepare a business plan for your potential investors and lenders. This plan should be realistic, articulate, and thorough, with realistic budget estimates for revenues and expenses of the acquired station, projected for at least three years. Remember to include provisions for acquisition costs (attorneys, accountants, consultants) and working capital during the first year (when you want to add equipment and when revenues may not always match operating expenses).

After you have prepared your business plan you want to get written commitments from your investors (in compliance with state and federal security laws) and from your lenders (if any). I recommend taking these steps to sound financial backing BEFORE you try negotiating the final price and terms with the likely station you hope to acquire. You can always alter the business plan to fit another station if you have to do so.

Once you have the financing commitments in place, focus on the particular radio station in the market you like. Frankly, it helps you to have a dedicated media broker who has been through the process before. Such a broker can help you find and negotiate a fair deal for the acquisition of the station you have targeted.

The right broker, even though she or he is sometimes paid by the seller, can advise you on how to evaluate the radio station, and what kind of price and financing terms to offer the seller.

The broker is a good mediator who can say things tactfully to the buyer or the seller that neither party can say directly such as: "Your asking price is too high," or "Your offer is too low," or "To save the deal you ought to give up so-and-so."

Most importantly, a good broker is a facilitator who pushes the parties, including the lawyers and accountants, to get the deal done fairly and quickly and on its way to the Federal Communications Commission for approval of the transaction and the transfer of the broadcast license from the seller to the buyer. A good broker does more than just introduce the buyer to the seller. A dedicated broker will act as a bird-dog, keeping an eye on the closing and the follow-through beyond the FCC action.

Even after Commission approval of the deal, the broker should monitor the parties and their lawyers to get deeds, liens, and other documents promptly checked and transferred so that the deal closes on time without needless delays. And once the sale of the station actually closes, the buyer might find that a good broker-consultant can play a useful role in advising the new owner how to find, hire, train, motivate, and keep key management and staff personnel.

In summary, to buy your first radio station you should first line up your financing, then choose an attractive market with a desirable radio station, utilize a knowledgeable broker or consultant to negotiate a fair deal, and get it promptly approved by the FCC. Good luck to you!

PROMOTION--IT'S NOT JUST A JOB

by Phyllis Stark

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Perhaps more than any other department and any other job in radio, the roles of the promotion department and the promotion director have changed the most in the last few years.

As recently as ten years ago, the promotion director was often the general manager's or program director's secretary whose primary responsibilities, in addition to her "real" job, were fulfilling T-shirt requests and ordering the shrimp rolls for the station Christmas party.

Today, the promotion director-often now called the marketing director-and the promotion department, have taken on a more vital role in a station's success and, ultimately, in its bottom line.

For starters, the marketing director title is indicative of radio's increased reliance on marketing, which was made necessary by fragmentation and heightened competition in the marketplace.

Buying television time, print ads, billboards, and other outdoor advertising is now a routine part of the job as are handling enormous direct mail campaigns, and even telemarketing efforts at many stations. Some radio promoters are also responsible for marketing station merchandise and morning show albums. Most also orchestrate dozens of weekly jock appearances.

A promotion director who doesn't understand GRP's, can't target "hot zips," and doesn't know the difference between painted and vinyl billboards will have a tough time handling the tasks that have become a routine part of marketing a successful station today.

As the role of radio promotions has become more important, it has also become more complex. Most contests, no matter how small, now require official rules, waivers, and consent forms. Events require permits, liability insurance, and security guards. In the midst of all this, promotion directors are expected to be flexible, creative, and extremely well organized.

SALES PROMOTIONS: THE DREADED "ADDED VALUE"

By far the biggest way radio promotions have changed in recent years is the increased reliance on sales promotions. Most advertisers have come to expect a promotion as part of a time buy, and, whether they really want one or not, are demanding the "added value" of a promotion in order to get the most out of the buy. The end result is promotion departments scrambling to fulfill dozens of sales promotion requests each week, dealing with daily visits from sales managers and account execs, desperately searching for ways to "piggyback" promotions or tie them in with existing station features and events, and generally pulling their hair out.

This particular issue is such a constant source of frustration that it is a perennial topic at the annual PROMAX International promotion and marketing conference and at just about any gathering of three or more promotion directors, no matter how informal.

Gone are the days when working with the sales department was beneath the promotion director. Today, we're seeing promotion directors going on sales calls with the account execs and generating sales promotion ideas to help lure a reluctant client. The trend has even given rise to a brand new job in radio that marries both departments-sales promotion director. A growing number of stations, including WPLJ New York and WLUP-AM-FM Chicago, now have such a position.

ONE STAFF, TWO STATIONS

Still yet another major change in the way promotions are handled has resulted from the advent of local marketing agreements and the FCC's approval of duopolies. In LMA and duopoly situations, it is often the promotion departments that are the first to be combined at the newly-partnered stations. That frequently results in about half as many people doing twice as much work, often for a format they are unfamiliar with.

Despite the added burdens of sales promotions and duopolies, radio promotion remains a creative business. Where else but in the fertile minds of radio promoters could ideas with names like the "menu of madness," the "butt bowl," the "B.O. Sphere" or the "breeders cup" be born? Who else but radio promoters would think to dress their morning men up in six foot high Doritos costumes (one regular, one nacho cheese) and have them dive down a sliding board into a pool filled with gallons of salsa, as WBBM-FM (B96) Chicago did? Who else would think to have its morning team test out advertising claims from products ranging from adult diapers to Super Glue, as WNCI Columbus, Ohio, did?

One aspect of radio promotions that has remained consistent over the years is the emphasis on charity tie-ins. Radiothons to raise money for various causes are commonplace as are blood drives, relief efforts for disaster victims, and holiday collections of clothes, toys, and food for the needy. Even in today's bottom-line oriented environment, it is refreshing to note that radio hasn't lost its human touch.

1993: IT SUCKS LESS...SO FAR: A PROGRAMMING ANALYSIS

by Sean Ross

Sean Ross is an A&R manager for Profile Records, and the Associate Editor of the *M Street Journal*.

Gee, doesn't the sky seem exceptionally blue today? Aren't the birds singing exceptionally sweetly? Isn't it great to hear the crackle of the RF in the air as little children play dangerously close to the transmitter?

Alright, so it's not like me to turn entirely Pollyanna-ish all of a sudden, but at the beginning of July, it suddenly seemed like an okay time to be young and alive and writing about radio again. In an industry that had been bent on providing Murphy's Law with a few zillion new corollaries, it looks like things are calming down just a tad.

There's been a new nominee for FCC chairman for a week and people actually like him, for now. Ad revenue has been up steadily since the beginning of the year, according to those RAB figures that roll off the fax machine every month. There's a new regime at Arbitron that acts determined to give broadcasters what they want, instead of just brazening it out.

Of course, one might argue that ad revenue eventually had nowhere to go but up. Or that the FCC's new duopoly rules are, thus far, a placebo--something that eliminated the competition but didn't double the revenue for most operators. Or that DAB, while less publicized, isn't any less a threat when cable TV is full of ads for that box that identifies the song titles for you.

But broadcasters have been down so long that it looks like up to them. A few years of adversity have made them a little more grateful for what they have. Even by last year, GMs were starting to talk about how nice the guys from Greyhound Financial were compared to the previous, unreasonable owners who had expected to make some of their \$55 million back.

The same goes for programming. I'm not sure how 1993 radio will sound in five years, but it doesn't sound bad to me now, coming off these doldrums. New York radio is interesting again, which, historically, means that the rest of the country can only get better. And a lot of the developments I've been hoping for for years have finally taken place in recent months.

In 1989, hot country was just something programmers batted around at conventions. Now it's such a *fait accompli* that we notice when we DON'T hear tempo on a country station, or when we hear something older than "Forever And Ever, Amen." Right now, even country radio's stiffs sound pretty good. That, not coincidentally, is something you could have said for top 40 in 1984 or dance radio in 1986, but not since.

Until recently, modern rock was confined to a ghetto of 1-2 share radio stations, low-budgets, and bad signals. Part of the problem was that it was hard to come up with a modern rock station that the core and casual listener could agree on. The format isn't MUCH more populist these days, but it is more populous and it does attract better operators.

Even CHR is sounding better to me these days, although it took an existential crisis (the format's, not mine) for it to happen. As recently as March, you could hear most top 40 stations sounding more like hot ACs, even at night. Now one station after the other is coming to the realization that CHR has to serve the listeners it still has, instead of chasing them away in favor of people who might not come back.

Six months ago, CHR was seeing three defections a week and the stations that remained in the format weren't picking up much of the slack. For a while, it looked like being exiled to a market's dreggiest signals would only convince broadcasters that CHR wasn't worth doing--as had been the case with easy listening. Now there are outlets like KXXR Kansas City or WSTR Atlanta doing better than the stations they replaced, and the latter seems to be proving that adults will listen to something besides an adults-only CHR.

There's also better CHR music than there was six months ago, although there's a catch. A lot of the music I like now is coming from the same artists who helped revive the format in 1983. Having new music from OMD, Duran Duran, and Tears for Fears in 1993 is a little like if the last CHR boom had depended on comeback hits from Pilot, Paper Lace, and BTO. It didn't, and there was a reason for that.

That said, at least CHR has a pulse again. We may even see CHR on FM in Canada; by the end of the year. Only one CRTC rule--the one requiring FM to play 51% non-hit music--still stands in CHR's way. The others have fallen rapidly over the last six years although broadcasters--not having the overcrowding problem they have here--seem slow to take advantage of them for the same financial reasons that trouble CHR here. But watching the rules change in Canada is like watching the Berlin Wall fall; it may be a mess in a few years, but for now it's exciting.

We have better national radio now. The likes of Tom Joyner and Ron Parker are working for the satellite networks now for the first time and, as my colleague Robert Unmacht points out, the once-hypothetical exercise of building your dream staff from a nation of superstars now seems possible as one morning team after another follows Howard Stern into national syndication.

And as Luther Vandross says, little miracles still happen every day. Or at least every now and then. The spectacular rise of KLAX Los Angeles wasn't so surprising if you'd noticed that the regional Mexican format was already getting a four share on AM. That it caught so many people off-guard says only that radio people need to look around themselves a little more, instead of only at the formats they personally care about. KLAX was a jolt that the industry needed, and one can only hope there will be more of that sort.

So here's what still scares me.

1. The national revenue picture--which explains so many of radio's travails in recent years--isn't SO much better yet. The Clinton honeymoon is long over, even stillborn perhaps, and radio, which once thrived on depressions, is likely to plateau again soon without a national economic recovery.

2. Even if broadcasters aren't using on-air slogans like "Don't Be A Dick" and "We Suck Less," there is still ugliness in the industry, much of it going unpunished. As I write, there have been three incidents of seemingly unthinkable public racism in recent weeks. St. Louis' now infamous team of Steve & D.C. is now working again in Denver. Of course, the last person who said something awful like that is now nationally syndicated. And the Greaseman didn't even try to subvert the constitution like his co-worker, G. Gordon Liddy.

All of this seems to prove that nice guys finish last. The heroes of the '80s were the bullies and the Boeskys. Their radio counterparts are often the ones on the business end of the LMAs or the duopolies. Even the way in which duopoly was wrested from the FCC by broadcasters who decided to LMA first and ask questions later was an act of bullying of sorts.

In 1980, KFRC San Francisco's idea of a great promotion was paying the tolls on the Golden Gate Bridge. In 1993, a great promotion now consists of tying up traffic on the Bay Bridge as crosstown KSOL did. All of which proves that you can have some of the excitement back, but any natural grace the medium may have had as recently as 10 years ago still seems lost forever. Still, there have been more than a few baby steps recently, and baby steps are never graceful.