

Announcing
For Radio

By

BILL KILMER



*A*NNOUNCING *For Radio*

By
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Published by
SARCONE PUBLISHING COMPANY
DES MOINES, IOWA

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UNIVERSITY RADIO PUBLICATIONS
Box 1136 - University Place Station
Des Moines, Iowa

TECHNICAL DATA EDITED BY ROBERT W. TURNER

TO MY WIFE
BETTY

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FOREWORD

It has been said that people in the United States spend more time listening to radio than doing anything else except working and sleeping. Studies of radio listening indicate that the average set is turned on for more than four hours daily. The public has several billion dollars invested in more than fifty million receivers. As FM, Television and Facsimile service is made available to all areas, the public's investment in equipment and listening and viewing time will be tremendously increased.

The broadcasting industry has an unequalled responsibility to all of us. This responsibility includes a constant effort to improve programming, to meet our needs and desires in news, drama, music, comedy and public service.

The announcer occupies a most important position in the daily schedule of programs. He may be a staff worker with a small local station, or a highly paid specialist on a top network show. In either case his responsibility is the same. He must communicate the meaning of his script clearly, accurately, forcefully and understandably. He must be broadly informed. He must know his medium. He must recognize his responsibility to the listening public. He must embrace enthusiastically the idea of "constant improvability", whether he be student or seasoned broadcaster.

In this little book, Mr. Kilmer seeks to point out the factors in effective radio speaking, and

to indicate the ways in which improvement may be achieved. His own experience as an announcer, at present with Radio Station WHO, and his evident serious study of this problem, combine to make this book interesting and important to anyone who sees in the speech areas of radio a challenge and a future.

EDWIN G. BARRETT
*Director Department of Radio
Drake University*

INTRODUCTION

For many years the writer of this handbook has felt that one of the primary needs of the broadcasting industry has been a brief guide for radio announcers who earnestly desire to strive for perfection.

Numerous volumes have been written about and for radio personalities and the radio industry itself. In presenting this handbook, the author hopes to fill the needs of all "would-be" announcers. It is written simply for better understanding and covers all phases of an announcer's duties.

For twenty-five years, in fact since the birth of active commercial broadcasting, radio announcers have had to learn their work by experience. Unlike other professions, the radio announcer can learn little from books. He utilizes his natural talents to his best ability and in this process many announcers fall by the wayside only because they are unable to visualize the art of announcing as a science.

As the writer intends to point out in the following pages of this handbook, there are definite "do's and don'ts" to radio announcing. It is not a fly-by-night profession as many laymen have been led to believe, but is an occupation that requires a high degree of skill, originality, unlimited knowledge and boundless patience. To become a success in announcing, one should follow a recognized formula. This formula, derived from

the overall experience of successful announcers, is contained in this manual.

It should be understood that the writer, in setting forth these so-called basic rules for radio announcing, does not attempt to place himself in the unique position of being the perfect announcer. Faultless announcers are few and far between. The author wishes only to make it easier for the beginner to orient himself in his work and to help those persons who have attained only limited success because they fail to comprehend the basic rules of good radio announcing. Let this book be your guide.

It is hoped that this manual will help many announcers on their way to a greater enjoyment of their work and a more lucrative future in the radio industry.

It should be added here that suggestions made in the following chapters also apply generally to anyone who is actively engaged in radio speaking. Any person who is required to do considerable broadcasting should find the contents herein helpful in many ways.

THE AUTHOR

CHAPTER ONE

Basic Requisites For Good Announcing

One thing must be remembered to begin with when we discuss basic requisites for announcing. The announcer must keep in mind that he is the station's representative when on the air. In the case of networks, the same applies. A listener at his radio does not think of the radio station owner or of the sponsor, but of the announcer who is delivering the message.

If an announcer becomes insulting on an "ad lib" broadcast, or says anything not in good taste, he not only receives the full blame, as well he should, but the listener feels personally insulted by the radio station management. An announcer's actions on personal appearances and what he says on the air is, to the listener, a direct reflection on the station and its owners. Because he is the "go-between" between the station and the listener, the announcer's responsibility is a great one.

The listener judges the caliber and character of the station by its announcing staff. There are thousands of cases where listeners refuse to listen to a certain station simply because they were at one time or another irritated by something said by its announcer or announcers.

Before the recent war a radio announcer was not only poorly paid but he usually was listed as last in importance on the staff of the average station. There were exceptions, however. A few

owners have always been conscious of the announcer's importance to the successful operation of the station. Those owners also paid the announcer a wage that reflected both his ability and importance.

Now, there is a new world for the radio announcer. We are not speaking of famous "name" announcers on big-time network shows. Their wages and working conditions have not changed much in the past few years. We are speaking primarily about the majority of announcers who work for the individual radio station. The growing list of radio stations authorized to operate by the Federal Communications Commission naturally creates many new jobs for the apprentice announcer. Also the large number of Frequency Modulation stations licensed and soon to go on the air will add thousands of new positions for announcers, producers and writers.

This natural expansion, due to opening of new frequencies and channels, is a boon to the announcing profession. It will mean additional jobs for many men who wish to gain entrance to the profession.

What sort of background should these men have? Should they have special schooling in radio? Should they have dramatic training? Both furnish excellent background but are not a requisite.

Radio schools are especially good training centers for the aspiring announcer. If a complete course is taken, the student should receive a well-

rounded education in speech, copy writing, dramatics and production. However, no student should enter a radio school of any kind believing that at the completion of the course a job will be waiting for him. Schooling in the basic principles of radio broadcasting does not in any way substitute for experience in the industry. Books and lectures offer the student the fundamentals of radio. Correct application of these fundamentals learned in school will help the beginner considerably in the professional world. While radio is a changeable thing, the basic principles change only in their application. Each station has its own individuality and takes certain latitude in the recognized practices.

Dramatic training, we repeat, is helpful but not essential. Actually, radio announcing is in a sense, acting. The announcer must be convincing at all times and to be convincing, he must act. If he feels in a bad mood, he must sound like he is on top of the world. If he has problems that worry him, he must not let his reading on the air reflect his feelings. Day in and day out, the announcer must sound fresh, cheerful and amiable. A good job of acting will permit an announcer to do an outstanding piece of work on the air, even though he might be ill or feeling depressed.

Dramatic training under the guidance of a radio instructor teaches one to be natural and unrestrained. Before a microphone one must avoid being "tight inside" and avoid the stiffness that accompanies nervousness. Acting is a sure way

of overcoming both. A considerable high percentage of radio announcers either made their start in radio as actors or later took up acting as a sideline to their announcing.

More important than either schooling or dramatics for the beginner is a good education with an all-round knowledge of music, sports, current events and books. Along with this he should have the ability to learn the actual mechanics of radio announcing.

What then does the announcer need to guarantee himself at least a half-way good start in the industry? In answer to that question, we submit the following:

Ability to read selling copy. The announcer is essentially a salesman and must be able to sell the listener on the products he advertises. That is what he is being paid for. And because all sorts of products are advertised, he must read all types of copy. He is talking to many different types of people, so must be able to "talk their language." Selling hog feed to farmers demands an entirely different approach . . . a different mood than selling baby food to mothers.

Good voice. This is essential, because although the listener hears your message, he is obviously listening to your voice. If your voice is harsh and irritating, the listener, who is a potential buyer of the products you advertise, will not assimilate your message.

Low voices have always been the accepted thing in radio broadcasting. A man with a low voice always seems to make a better announcer than

one with a high voice. A deep resonant voice carries better on the air. People like to listen to a low voice for the same reason that the majority of listeners like to keep their radio sets tuned to "bass". The human ear is more receptive to the low frequencies of sound than the high frequencies.

Ability to get along with people. This requirement, of course, applies to all businesses. An employee who can acclimate himself to those working with him just naturally gets along better with his work. A radio station, being a close-knit organization demanding constant cooperation between all workers and all departments, makes this requisite very important. The nervous tension always present in the studio and control room challenges the tempers of all concerned. It is to your benefit to analyze the character, moods and mannerisms of those with whom you work so that you will better understand them and avoid embarrassing situations arising out of misunderstandings.

Good personal appearance. A neat personal appearance is highly desirable at all times when working. Radio broadcasts have always held a certain amount of thrill and interest for the outsider. Many loyal listeners visit the studios and eventually meet the staff and talent.

Since the listener expects the announcer he listens to every day to be a man of high character and good tastes, you the announcer must live up

to those expectations. Dress neatly at all times while at work and make a good impression.

Many radio stations require their announcing staff to wear not only ties, but suit coats, even in the heat of summer. Nothing looks worse than a sloppy, disheveled announcer, slumped over the announce desk like a tramp waiting for a handout.

Clear thinking. Snap decisions and quick action are the usual thing in radio broadcasting, and this calls for calmness and the ability to think clearly under duress. Out of necessity, radio programs must be timed to the split second to enable each advertiser to get the amount of time he has contracted for. When this planning goes wrong, as it often does, it is up to the announcer to decide just what should be done.

You must make up your mind if the copy can be cut and if so, just what portion should be omitted in order to avoid running into the next sponsor's time. Keep in mind, this all must be thought out as you read the copy. The solution to the problem must be one that, if possible, will not break the continuity of the program.

If a network program is in progress when a line break occurs, the announcer must know what to say and when to say it. If an entertainer fails to continue his song and you are the only one in the studio, you must decide what should be done. Should you "ad lib" until the entertainer recovers from his coughing fit, or whatever happens to be his trouble, or should you continue the program

with a transcription. These are just minor examples of what could happen and DOES.

Intelligence. A good radio announcer is usually an intelligent person. What he might lack in education is made up for in general knowledge. Of all the requisites, this one is by far the most important. There is no substitute for intelligence and generally it can be said that your future in radio will be in direct proportion to your intelligence . . . to your ability in making the best of each new opportunity and situation.

News Announcing

In most larger stations in the country the news staff is entirely separate from the commercial announcing staff. Financial reasons force smaller stations to utilize the same men for both jobs. The latter situation is a case where the announcers simply read the news that comes over the press wires.

Many announcers, after having been in radio for a considerable time, make the switch from commercial announcing to news. It is seldom that beginners start out as newsmen alone. The listening public is much more critical of news reporters on the air, than they are of commercial announcers. The reason is obvious. They tune in the news because they WANT to listen. They listen to a commercial announcer only because they have to take his voice and what he says along with the entertainment they want.

We hear people say of the local station, "I like to hear Blank-Blank read the news. Why, I tune

in every night for his 10:15 newscast.” Do we ever hear the same remark made in reference to a commercial announcer? No, not often.

For a newsman to do his job right, he should be experienced in the writing of news. In fact, the larger stations hire newsmen on the basis, “first a news writer and second, a good voice.” He should be able to rewrite wire reports to fit the needs of his broadcast and have the “nose for news” that will enable him to obtain and report news about local happenings.

Some commercial announcers, over a period of years, gain the ability to write the news without having any special training in school. Those who can are able to shift into newscasting exclusively.

There is no doubt about it, newsmen have a more faithful audience simply because they are presenting something the radio listener wants to hear. Their position is often envied by other broadcasters.

Style, that flexible word meaning the manner of presentation, changes with each newsman. Each has his own style. Some report the news seriously, others report it with the attitude of, “Here is the news. You can either take it or leave it!” Both styles of newscasting have their critics.

Commentators

The basic requisite for a good commentator should be many years spent in the field of observing, reporting about and understanding people. No announcer, regardless of how good a voice he

may have, should ever think of turning into a commentator, unless he can attain the background of education, knowledge, experience and travel that is so necessary.

Commentators are not made over a period of a year or two, but are what they are because of the knowledge they have stored up in their heads and of their ability to calmly see through the superficial news of the day.

Most commentators are well traveled persons who have for years been familiar with the workings of government and the men who head the various departments of government. We listen to a commentator to hear what is behind the news. We want to get the opinions of those men who know more about national and world events than we do.

The commentator has a big bill to fill. No straight announcer can fill it.

Sports

The sportscaster is the most criticized announcer in radio. He must spend much of his time answering critics who think him wrong. To lessen the amount of criticism, the sports man should have as a background, complete familiarity with all sports. He should not only know the mechanics of games he is to report, but he must know the rules governing those games.

He cannot fool his listener as can a newsman or commercial announcer. The reason? He is talking about a subject that the man in front

of the radio knows just as much about as he does. If he uses the wrong terminology, the listener knows it. If he uses the wrong pronunciation of proper names, the listener knows that too.

And of most importance, the sports announcer must have the ability to "ad lib" for hours on end. He must be able to not only give a rapid and accurate play-by-play account of the game in progress, but to also fill in the dead spots with interesting description that will hold the listener's interest. He must be observing and have the ability to accurately express those observations.

Good sports men in radio are few and far between, and because of that, are generally well paid. Sports reporting is definitely specialized announcing.

Most sportcasters rise from the ranks of announcers. Any announcer can enter the sports field if he has a natural interest in sports and knows all sports backwards and forwards. And of course, as we mentioned, he must have the ability to report the game accurately to the satisfaction of the avid sports listener.

It is a good field to try for, but only a comparative few make the grade successfully.

Farm News Reporting

Radio stations in general are turning to more service for the farmer. Most regional and nearly all high-powered stations are equipped and staffed to give the farmer the news he wants to hear. This is a "must" in all stations which serve a rural area.

The background necessary for a farm newsman varies with the degree of coverage desired. If a station intends to only give the farmer his market reports and "canned" news from the press wire, then the reporter need have no special farming background. But, as is the case in many stations which present programs of information for the farmer beyond the "markets" point, then it is necessary for the farm editor and his assistants to be fully informed on the problems, needs, desires and working conditions of the farm family.

He must visit with farmers and be familiar with what they do. He should go to their conventions and take active part in their discussions. And most important, he should present the kind of program the farmer wants most to hear. This he can learn through his association with them.'

The farm editor must remember that the farmer is not the "hillbilly hick" of a decade ago. The farmer today is a smart business man who has a tremendous buying power and who is very critical of his radio listening. This thought must be kept foremost in the mind of every farm editor.

And so now you have an insight on the many phases of radio announcing. Our suggestion would be to begin as a station announcer, taking on the routine tasks that fall to his lot, and then later on branch out into another department when you feel your experience will merit the change. The old saying, "start at the bottom and work up" surely applies in the radio industry.

CHAPTER TWO

Microphone Types and Production Directions

We assume that after carefully reading over the contents of the first chapter, you feel yourself fitted as an announcer and have decided on radio announcing as a career. It is only logical that the next step should be a study of microphone types and technique, and production methods. This knowledge is essential before going on into the more complicated explanation of radio broadcasting for the announcer to follow.

According to Webster's dictionary, a microphone is an instrument that changes sound waves into variations of an electric current. No explanation we could offer could be any simpler. It is a comparatively simple instrument and is made on several basic principles. We will discuss the different types later on in this chapter.

For being such a small instrument and relatively tiny compared to the overall equipment used in a radio station, the microphone, or "mike" as it is more commonly called, is able to cause intense fear in the most experienced public speaker or the most famous movie star. This "mike fright" does not single out any particular persons, but seems to affect all those who come before it without sufficient experience to combat its "mysterious ways".

The answer quite naturally lies in the fact that when one talks into a microphone, he suddenly

realizes that literally thousands of persons are listening to his voice. And the more a person dwells on those thoughts, the more conscious he becomes of what he is saying and how he is saying it. The result is faulty speech, a jittery voice and breathing that sounds like the speaker has just finished a 100-yard dash.

In the past, speakers on the radio have become so numb with this fright that their copy rattled like the local freight passing through town. Some persons have been forced to a complete stop in their talk by nervousness. It is unfortunate that such a situation exists as it ruins an otherwise fine broadcast.

One can overcome "mike fright" only by constant broadcasting. Even a few days before the microphone will calm down a beginning announcer to the point where he forgets about his audience and concentrates on his copy. But enough of this discussion of "mike fright". There is nothing more we can say to help you out in that regard.

A microphone is a very sensitive instrument. It picks up every noise made in a studio. Should you stand too close when speaking, the result can well be a reproduction of saliva and tongue noises, clicks of the teeth and sudden blasts of air on the "mike". Standing too near the instrument will usually produce a distorted tone in your voice also. Radio speakers with false teeth should beware of standing too close. The microphone will betray their secret sooner than their best friends.

Handling the microphone is a definite “don’t” in the industry. Although publicity pictures of radio stars usually show them clinging lovingly to the instrument as if they were caressing it, actually radio engineers would never allow such a thing to happen during a broadcast. The microphone would pick up the noise of the hands, the touch of rings against the metal stand, etc.

So, we would suggest that the person with an average voice stand about ten inches away under ordinary conditions, being sure that the feet do not touch the microphone stand base. Should this happen, the resulting sound could be compared to the noise made by your neighbor in the apartment upstairs hitting the radiator with an iron pipe.

Be sure to stand IN FRONT of the microphone, unless you specifically know it is of the type that picks up sound in all directions. We say “stand up” because for the beginner that is the easiest position. Sitting down tends to cramp the stomach, restricting the diaphragm in its normal functions.

Forcing yourself to be relaxed will be a great help. The minute you feel yourself getting tense, shift your weight on the other foot and think to yourself, “calm down . . . calm down”. Believe it or not, this will help immensely.

Now, about your tone of voice.. If you have ever spoken from a stage before a large group of people, or for that matter, watched someone speak before a large audience, you have noticed no doubt that the tendency is to project the voice over the

audience. This is necessary sometimes to enable listeners in the back of the theatre or building to hear what is being said. Projecting the voice soon becomes a habit with public speakers out of necessity, but it is not good microphone technique.

You should speak into the instrument as if you were talking to ONE person, because actually you are only speaking to one person at a time . . . each before his individual radio. Let your tone of voice be conversational and speak no louder than you would in normal conversation with a friend.

The experienced announcer will talk with authority and conviction without raising his voice. Watching him, you will often notice that he uses his free hand or his body gestures to aid him in emphasizing the important points in his script. This also tends to give him self-assurance and establishment of a relaxed mood.

A last word of warning! Don't be bothered by "mike fright". It happens to the best announcers. You will recover in due time. **DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT.**

Microphone Types

Before dealing with specific types of microphones it might be well to consider the general conditions which they must fulfill. Basically, a microphone or "mike" is a device which changes acoustical energy, consisting of variations in air pressure at audio frequencies, into corresponding electrical variations in an electrical circuit. If

the changes in the electrical circuit follow the sound impulses exactly, the microphone is said to have perfect fidelity.

In most types of microphones, the sound pressure acts upon a thin plate or diaphragm, setting it into vibration, and this mechanical motion is then utilized to produce electrical effects. The chief types are described on the following several pages.

Carbon Microphone. The carbon "mike" was one of the first types of microphones used in the radio industry. It depends for its action on the fact that the electrical resistance between carbon granules in contact with each other, varies with the contact pressure.

Crystal Microphone. This type is widely used in public address systems, but seldom found in broadcasting stations. It depends for its action on the piezo-electric effect possessed by certain crystals. In this case, crystals of Rochelle salt. The term "piezo-electric" refers to the fact that when pressure is applied on the crystal in the proper direction, electrical potentials are produced between opposite faces of the crystal. The "sound cell" type of microphone contains an assemblage of small crystals of this type, so connected that their piezo-electric potentials are in series.

The sound falls on the crystals and vibrates them. This type of microphone has excellent frequency range and uniformity of response.

In another type of crystal microphone, a metal diaphragm is mechanically coupled to a crystal

of Rochelle salt in such a way that a vibration of the diaphragm causes a twisting of the crystal and thereby generating a voltage at the terminals.

Condenser Microphone. In this particular type, the diaphragm acts as one plate of a condenser. By its movement, which results from sound pressure, it alters the electrical charge and in so doing, produces a voltage drop across a suitable resistor.

While the fidelity of this type of microphone is good, its disadvantages are lack of portability and ruggedness, the necessity for close proximity of its amplifier, heavy weight, large size and constant maintenance and care, especially in damp locations.

At one time the condenser microphone was widely used in broadcasting, but has since been replaced to a considerable extent by other types.

Dynamic Microphone. Several types of microphones depend for their action upon the induction of voltage in a conductor moving in a magnetic field. In the "moving coil" type of "mike", a coil of many turns of aluminum wire is rigidly attached to the diaphragm and is free to move with it. This coil is arranged to pass between the poles of a powerful magnet. As the coil moves with the diaphragm, its passing through the magnetic field causes a voltage to develop in the coil, which is a faithful replica of the diaphragm movement.

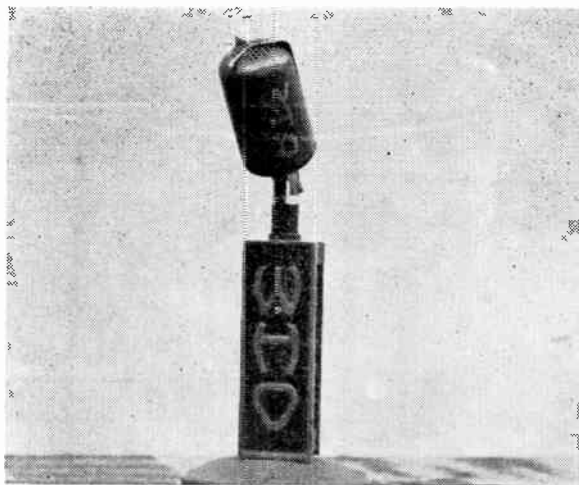
The great advantage of the dynamic microphone over both the carbon and condenser microphone is its dependability, excellent frequency response, light weight, small size and freedom from effects of atmospheric changes. The well known and much used "salt shaker" "mike" is one type of dynamic.

The dynamic microphone has one defect worthy of note. That defect is the rapid falling off of frequencies above 1000 cycles (second "C" above middle "C") as the sound source moves to either side of the exact front and center of the microphone.

Therefore we can say that for the most natural pickup, the dynamic microphone should always directly face the sound source.



Dynamic Microphone



A "Salt Shaker"

Velocity or Ribbon Microphone. In this type the moving element is a very thin and flexible aluminum ribbon, upon which the sound waves act directly. (No diaphragm being used.) It vibrates between the poles of a powerful magnet, cutting the magnetic field and thereby generating an electric current which is an exact reproduction of the ribbon's vibrations.

The frequency response or fidelity of a ribbon or velocity microphone can be excellent, provided that the sound source is at a greater distance than two feet from the "mike". If the source is nearer, distortion will take place, causing over-accentuation of the lower frequencies. The ribbon type picks up sounds equally well from either front or back. As the sound source departs from true



Ribbon Microphone

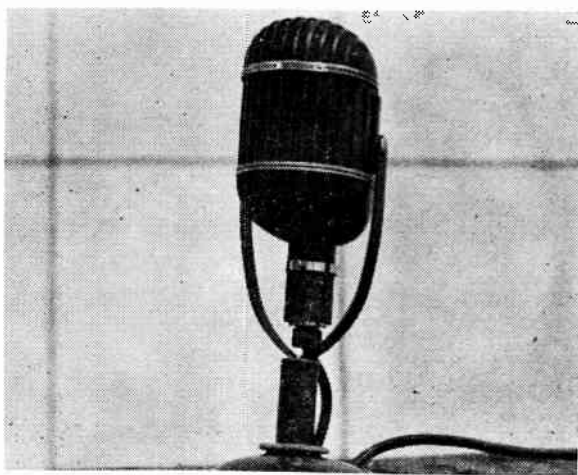
front or back, and approaches from the side, the total response (not frequencies only, as in the case of the dynamic microphone) falls, cutting off sharply when the sound source is at the side of the microphone. This directional characteristic is often a help in correcting poor studio acoustics.

The ribbon is nearly as rugged as the dynamic, and matches it in portability, ease of maintenance and lack of background noise.

Before we leave the subject of microphones, we will mention one of the more popular microphones of the present day. It is known as the "Cardioid"—the name indicating the pickup pattern resembling the cardioid. It gives excellent pickup from the front and tapers off to practically no pickup from the rear. This makes a valuable

microphone for use where pickup of sound from one direction only is required. We will not go into the principle of operation of this type, except to say that different manufacturers accomplish the result by different methods, although in each case, electrical or acoustical filters in the "mike" case are used to change the pickup pattern from cardioid to bi-directional or non-directional. A small button or switch, conveniently located on the case, can be turned to make the desired change. This feature makes the Cardioid valuable because of its flexibility.

IMPORTANT! HANDS OFF microphones! They are delicate instruments and their reproducing ability is easily upset. Let an engineer move them around, unless you have received special instructions.



Western Electric Cardioid Microphone

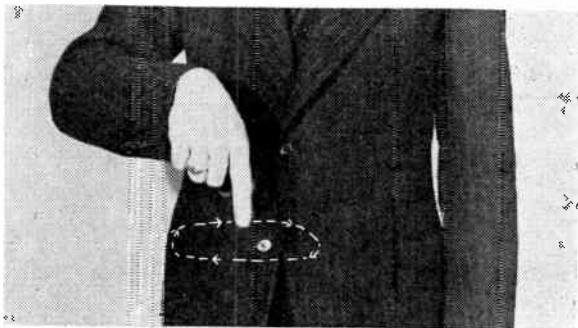
Production Directions

We include this topic in our second chapter because before you can feel at home in a studio, you should know the various signs used in radio broadcasting to substitute for the spoken word. Obviously one can not give verbal directions during a broadcast. So, from the beginning the industry set up a group of signs to be used by the announcer, engineer, production staff and talent.

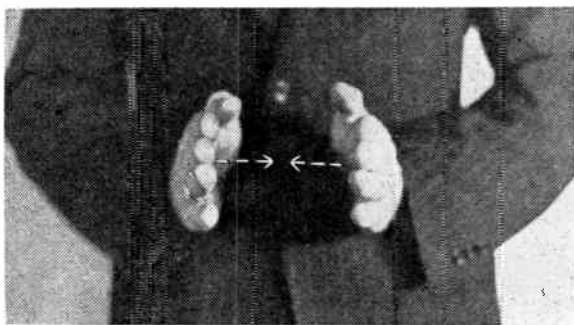
As can be seen by examining the illustrations to follow, the sign language is simple and self explanatory. Study them, learn them and USE THEM.



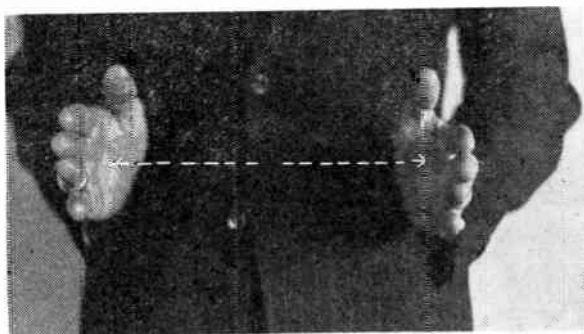
“Everything is fine”, “just right” or “O.K.” is indicated by forming an “O” with the second finger curved to touch the end of the thumb. This “O.K.” can refer to any question pertaining to the show.



“Transcription Next” can be indicated by pointing to the ground with the index finger, rotating it in a horizontal plane. Used to signify you want “ET” played next.



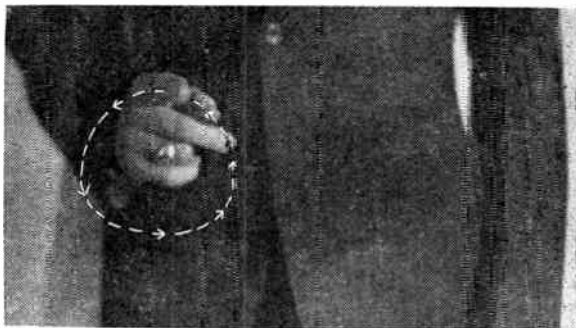
“Move Closer to Mike” is indicated by extending both arms before the body with palms of hands facing each other and spaced a foot apart. Palms are then brought slowly together.



“Step Back from Mike” is indicated by holding arms in same position as above, only with the palms together. Slowly widen the space between palms.



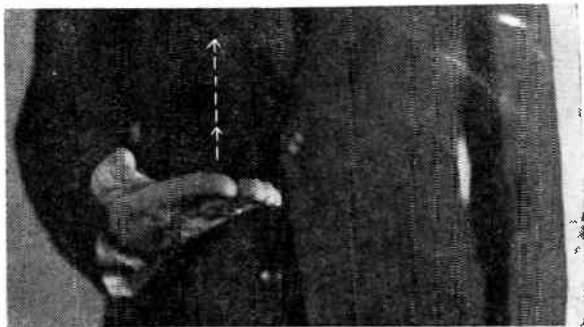
“Segue” (pronounced Seg-way) is indicated by placing the fingers of one hand between those of the other hand. Used when desiring one musical number to be faded into the next one.



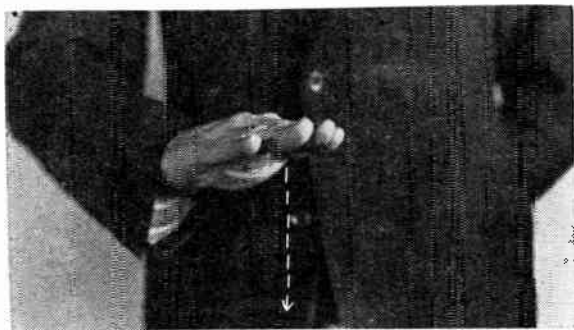
“Hurry Up” is indicated by rotating the extended second finger in a plane vertical to the floor. This sign is used to indicate to the speaker or talent that the speed or pace must be picked up.



“On the Nose” is indicated by holding index finger to the tip of the nose. This often means same as “O. K.”



“Louder” is indicated by holding arm out with palm up, then raising arm in lifting motion. Sometimes done with two hands.



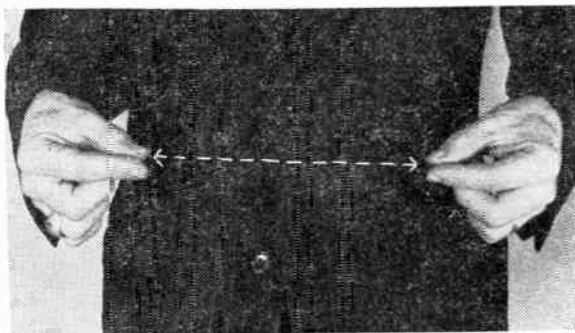
“Softer” is indicated the same as above only the palm is turned down and the motion is downward.



"Theme Next" is indicated by forming the letter "T" with the index finger of one hand placed across the index finger of the other. Indicates to engineer you wish the "ET" theme played, or if music is live, this sign is given to orchestra leader.



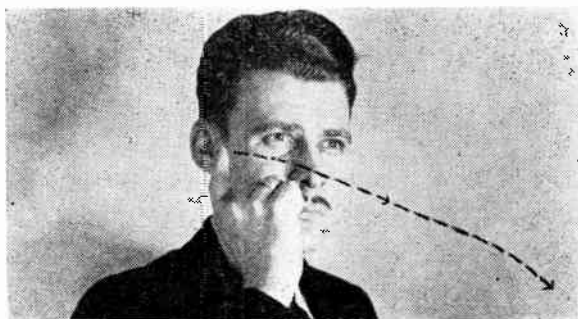
"Cut the Program" or **"Cut the Mike"** is indicated by drawing the index finger of the hand across the throat.



“Slow Down” is indicated by placing the thumb and index finger of each hand together and pulling hands apart as if pulling taffy. If the program is running real short, the motion would be very fast. If the show was only a little fast, then motion would be slow.



“Stand By” is indicated by holding up the palm of the hand in the obvious “stop” manner. This indicates the program is about to go on the air.



“Go Ahead” is indicated by pointing at the person or persons involved. Usually this is done in a dramatic sweeping motion beginning at the shoulder. Such exaggerated movements are sure to be seen by those concerned in the studio. Also called “Cueing”.

These are the most used production directions. They may vary somewhat with each station, but in general they are universally used.

A full explanation of production technique and production problems can be found in the following chapter.

CHAPTER THREE

More About Production

You, as an announcer, must also be a producer in the majority of stations in which you will work. Only the larger stations can afford separate staffs to handle their production needs, so all timing and production must be the responsibility of the announcer.

Networks, of course, have their production men and women to produce radio shows. Actually the sequence should be reversed. As it is now, a beginning announcer must not only announce, but produce, write copy, engineer his own "board", read news and take special events. And as he progresses to larger stations these duties are lessened one by one until he reaches the larger stations or networks where he has only to announce.

Unfortunately this pattern cannot be changed, as networks and large stations will not employ an announcer who is inexperienced, so his only choice is to work for his experience at small stations that cannot afford to maintain separate control room engineering staffs, a copy-writing department, etc. He must therefore learn many things at a time when he should be concentrating on improving his announcing.

Production and timing go together as one process. A certain amount of production is

necessary even on a spot announcement. You, the announcer, must learn to "pace" that announcement so that it will be read in the allotted time required.

On non-network stations the element of time is not so important, as a few seconds either way on spots and programs is frequently tolerated. The usual run of sponsors do not stand by a radio with a stopwatch to see if they are getting their full time, down to the last second. But in network-affiliated stations where network programs begin at a specified time, the local station must clear its commercials in time to "hit the network" before the start of the program. Missing the first few words of a commercial means in most cases that the network will pay the station only a percentage of the established commercial rate for the program in which that opening commercial was deleted. If enough of the commercial is missed, no payment is made at all.

The announcer uses as his guide while on shift a schedule of programs, a sample of which follows. From this schedule he can ascertain what hours he will work for the day, and also what programs and spots are to be aired. This schedule also gives him information as to the point of origination of all programs. All stations have different variations of the daily schedule or work-sheet as outlined on the next page. But they all include the same information, regardless of how different they are in physical appearance.

PGM. TIME	SPOT TIME	PROGRAM	TYPE	SPON.	SOURCE	ANNCR.
7:00		Morning Melodies	ET	Sus.	Local	Jones
	7:29:30	Goldstiens Jewelry		Com.		"
7:30		News—Hamer Hdwe.		Com.	Local	"
	7:44:30	Fletcher's Gum	ET	Com.		"
7:45		Uncle Ed's Stories		Sus.	Net	"
	7:59:30	Western Bread Co.		Com.		"
8:00		Weather Report		Sus.	Remote	Smith
	8:04:30	Gibson's Jewelry		Com.		Jones
8:05		Tune Parade—F.C.	ET	Com.	Local	"
	8:29:30	Red Cross		Plug		"
8:30		The Bluebirds—S.C.		Com.	Net	"

This schedule tells the complete story. Usually the spot announcements are in red ink to further

segregate them from the programs. Even the most experienced announcer will misread the schedule and repeat spots already aired, or omit a spot where one should have been read. The best method of avoiding mistakes is to pencil in a check mark in the "program" column after the program has begun, or the spot read.

As you can see, the program work sheet or schedule tells the announcer when to start the program and who the sponsor is, if any. Next, the "type" column indicates whether the program is "live" or by transcription. If "ET" is found opposite the program, the announcer knows it is transcribed. If there is no listing there, he can presume the show is "live".

The sponsor column tells whether the show or spot is commercial or sustaining. The "source" column gives the point of origination. Many times when space does not permit the typing of the sponsor's full name, initials must be used.

Along with the daily schedule is included the programs and spots to be read for that particular day. There are varied systems used for this. Many stations use a looseleaf notebook in which the spots and programs are either alphabetically or chronologically placed. The latter is preferred as it is much more convenient for the announcer to simply turn a page as he finishes reading a spot. If the spots and programs are listed alphabetically, he must do a certain amount of searching before he can find what he wants.

Another method used by many stations is to place script for each announcement and program

in individual folders. The folders, marked on the outside with identifying words, are placed in correct chronological order according to the schedule, in a larger folder or container. The announcer then simply takes out each folder as he has use for it, and after reading the copy, places the folder at the bottom of the container.

At the conclusion of each program the identification of the station, or "station break" must be given. This identification includes the call letters of the station and its location. An example would be, "XYZ Chicago". Many stations have extensive variations of this, such as, "You are listening to XYZ Chicago," or "You are tuned to XYZ Chicago," or perhaps, "Your station is XYZ Chicago."

We believe that only a simple, "XYZ Chicago" should be given. "You are listening to . . ." and "Your station is . . ." are superfluous and only take up precious time. After all, it is assumed that the radio owner is listening to that station or he wouldn't be tuned to it. If he were not listening, he wouldn't hear the station break at all.

So it is best to give only the call letters and location, unless the station has a promotional "plug" which it likes to emphasize. "The Voice of Industry, XYZ Chicago" is representative of the promotional break and it is entirely satisfactory when time is available. Since competition is keen among radio stations, each makes an effort to advertize its good points.

When a city has several stations grouped closely together on the dial, each station attempts

to instill in the listener that its frequency is such-and-such, so that he will dial the station and not the program. "XYZ Chicago, 890 on your dial" is an example of the general practice.

Station breaks should be given with authority and clearness. The length of the break depends upon the length of the spot to follow. If you are allowed a total time of thirty seconds to give the break and spot, and the spot announcement is twenty-five seconds long, then the shortest break possible would be the better choice, such as "XYZ Chicago".

Should you have a short spot and end up with seconds to spare, time can be filled by giving the time of day and perhaps the local temperature. Above all things you should time your spot announcement by **READING ALOUD** before reading it on the air. One always reads faster when reading with lips closed. Reading aloud will avoid false timing and will give you the needed practice and familiarity with the copy.

You will notice again the column entitled "ET". If you are "working the board" in addition to your announcing, you will find it necessary, when coming on your shift, to scan the column and obtain the necessary transcriptions before your work begins. By getting them in the proper order, the chances for mistakes are lessened considerably.

Under the present Federal Communications Commission regulations, stations are not now required to identify a transcribed spot if it is of one minute or less duration. If the program is

five minutes or less in duration, the program should be identified immediately preceding and if it is longer than that period, the program should be identified before and after the transcription. An example: "The following program (was) (is) transcribed." There are other rules of identifying transcribed programs which we will not mention here. Therefore, we suggest that you read the section of the Federal Communications Act governing transcribed programs and memorize all rules pertaining to your work. There are not too many to learn.

Program production demands of the announcer a certain amount of musical knowledge and general radio know-how . . . which can be gained only by experience. A good production man should be in a position to criticize both talent and announcer on the show. He must work with the group on the program until he attains the smoothness in rehearsal that he desires on the actual broadcast. Timing is actually the smallest part of the production man's duties.

However, since this book is slanted toward the beginning announcer, we shall not elaborate further on such a specialized subject, other than how it affects the announcer during his regular working day.

Let us presume that you have a fifteen minute show coming up which, according to the script, contains music and "patter". With the talent on hand you should first read through the show to be sure that the lines are read correctly and the orchestra understands all of the word

cues denoting the time for the starting of each number. It is best that you listen to the rehearsal of musical numbers in the control room so that you can better judge the balance of the instruments. If you have corrections to make, this is the time to make them. Should another run-thru be necessary, then repeat the rehearsal.

Finally, if you feel the show is well balanced, time it out. This last rehearsal is comparable to "full dress" in the theatre. The program must be auditioned as near as possible the way it will be presented on the air. With a stop watch, time from the first chord of music or the first word, whichever is first. From then on, make note in the script's margin of the time the stop watch indicates as you enter and end each musical number. If as much as a page of script goes by without a musical number, it is advisable to also note the time at the end of that page. By doing this you will be able to accurately check your time when the show is aired. For instance, if you see by the clock that five minutes have gone by and your notes on the script tell you that five minutes and thirty seconds should have passed, then you know the show is running slow and should be hurried up.

If, when completed, the program rehearsal runs over the fourteen minute-thirty second mark, a conference should be held with the talent to determine what should be cut out to narrow the show down to the correct total time. When this is done, be sure to revise your marginal time notes to coincide with the changes made.

Following is a portion of sample script which shows the correct form of the show as well as the time notations.

* MUSIC: THEME CORD.

ANNCR: Here it is . . . the Cliff and Helen Program!

MUSIC: INSTRUMENTAL, "KEEP YOUR SUNNY SIDE UP".

2:05

ANNCR: Welcome to Cliff Carl's General Store in Sunset Corners! The Buckaroos opened our show with "Sunny Side Up", and here's your host to carry on . . . Cliff Carl. Well, I see your ladies' ready-to-wear department is all slicked up. Nice going, Miss Helen.

HELEN: Gee, thanks, Bill.

CLIFF: Uh huh. Thanks, Bill . . . I mean Helen . . . I mean . . . ah, Nuts! Good mornin', neighbors. Welcome to my store.

ANNCR: How's your ankle, Miss Helen? Better, I trust?

HELEN: No, Bill. This weather makes it feel like it was broken again.

CLIFF: I'm a-gonna bust somebody's ankle in a minute.

RED: Whose Uncle got busted?

CLIFF: (SHOUT) Nobody's, Red. We was a-talkin' 'bout ANKLES!

*Excerpt from "Cliff and Helen Show", written by Uncle Stan Whidney, WHO, Des Moines.

RED: Oh—thought you said Uncle. My brother got busted when he was in Sizzily.

HELEN: You mean he was wounded there, Red?

RED: Oh no—I mean he got busted from corporal back to private.

HELEN: Ohhh—well, that’s too bad. What happened?

CLIFF: Now Helen, don’t get him started.

RED: Well—it seems like they got a lotta grape “vinneards” over in Sizzily.

CLIFF: Yeah?

RED: They pick them grapes, then they tromp ’em awhile an’ get the juice out—an’ then

CLIFF: We heard enough, Red. We unnerstand.

RED: I bet you think my brother drunk too much “for-mented” grape juice, don’t cha?

CLIFF: Well

RED: Well, he got to one of them “vinneards” one night after dark, an’ without knowin’ it, he went to sleep on a pile of them smashed grapes which had started “for-mentin’ ”

CLIFF: Well

RED: Next mornin’ two colonels come along an’ woke him up. So he

jumps up an' salutes both of 'em.
Then he got busted.

CLIFF: What's wrong with salutin' two colonels?

RED: They was only one colonel there.
(HORSE LAUGH)

CLIFF: Oh, fer cryin' out loud. Red, grab your fiddle and join the boys and Mary Lee. They sing, "I'll Have to Live and Learn".

3:40

MUSIC: INSTRUMENTAL AND VOCAL,
"I'LL HAVE TO LIVE AND LEARN".

5:55

ANNCR: PLUG FOR RED CROSS. (SEE ATTACHED COPY)

7:02

MUSIC: INSTRUMENTAL, "BUSY DOIN' NOTHIN'".

8:58

HELEN: That was the orchestra playing "Busy Doin' Nothin' " . . .

* * *

For experience, you should by all means also produce shows having transcribed music. The only production technique this entails is timing, but it gives you good experience and adds a finished touch to the program.

Let us imagine that a 15-minute program of dance music is scheduled as transcribed. If a script has been prepared, you should first read

and time the announcer's introductions. Next, add the total time of the music, including the theme, at both ends of the show. If you are fortunate and the total time of both adds up to 14:30, then your job is finished. But in most cases, the timing will be off considerably.

Naturally it would be a smoother show if you didn't have to fade out of a musical number or theme to close it out. If the show is a little long, cut the length of your copy, or if it is quite long, you may be able to cut a complete musical number.

If the theme is not over 1:30, use it in its entirety, but if it runs longer than that time, the theme will occupy too much of your fifteen minute period. Practice, over a long period of time, will make the job of timing easier.

If you work for a station that does not furnish its announcers with scripts for such programs and instead expects all introductions to be "ad libbed", there is little you can do in the way of production other than timing of musical numbers and attempting to make it sound as smooth as possible.

Another type of production not mentioned so far is the dance remote . . . a favorite with announcers as it allows them a certain amount of leeway in their announcing and acts as a pleasant vacation from commercial copy reading in the studio.

You should, of course, get a music sheet from the program department. This sheet will list the numbers that are to be aired. A conference with the orchestra leader well before program time will give you the timing for each tune. After

ascertaining the total time of music to be used, write open and closing announcements and introductions to the tunes.

Introductions should be as brief as possible. Listeners are not going to tune in to a dance orchestra and listen for long if the announcer takes up a lot of time with flowery introductions and slightly funny jokes and puns. Introductions should include the title of the number, the vocalist and occasionally the composer and the show it was featured in.

For example:

THEME: INSTRUMENTAL, "AT SUNDOWN".
FADE AS B.G. FOR . . .

ANNCR: Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. From the famous Waldin House on Route seventy-seven just twenty miles from New York City, the Continental Network presents music by Sunny Sherman and his orchestra, featuring the voices of Jimmy Lane and Lola Lloyd.

THEME: INSTRUMENTAL. UP FULL TO END.

ANNCR: Here's the number one tune of the evening, called "The Lane Special".

MUSIC: INSTRUMENTAL, "THE LANE SPECIAL".

* * *

Above all things, if you are a beginner, DO NOT TRY TO AD LIB orchestra dance remotes. Only a very few experienced announcers are good enough to ad lib a dance band remote.

Learn as much as you can by experience. No other method will suffice. As you solve new production problems don't forget them. One of these days that same problem might reappear. Watch other production men work and listen to network shows when possible. Don't feel badly about a few mistakes. Remember, it happens to the best radio announcers.

Special Events

The broadcast of a special event is not simply done by an announcer with an unusual "gift of gab". Announcing a special event demands research before the program and a keen sense of observation.

The special events announcer's job is to convey to the listener the word picture of what he sees. Ordinarily this cannot be done by simply taking the microphone to the scene and begin talking. Unfortunately, under certain circumstances such as flash fires, train wrecks, etc., the lack of time eliminates the chance to prepare for the broadcast in any way. Experience over a period of years in broadcasting special events will improve an announcer's ability to handle such a situation when it arises.

Most special events are programmed and scheduled ahead of time. This advance notification should give the announcer sufficient time to make his plans for the broadcast.

A hypothetical situation would be (for the purpose of an example) the proposed broadcast of a college building dedication.

The announcer should first, find out how much time he is to be allowed and next, visit the college and obtain the names of those persons who will take an active part in the dedication. He should memorize those names so he won't "fluff" them when the time arrives.

The proper person can also give him information on the chronological events that will take place. He should take notes for study when he returns to the studio. It is also helpful if the announcer will stress the need for promptness when he talks with the college officials. It is embarrassing indeed to "hit the air" at the scene of the broadcast, with no speakers and no action to describe. If the speakers are late, then the broadcast is off to a bad start.

Next, the announcer must secure as much background as possible. He should find out who is responsible for the financial aid behind the new building and what circumstances surround the ceremony.

With a complete set of notes, he should return to the studio and carefully go over all of his material . . . casting out that information that is irrelevant and enlarging on certain topics of special interest. As many times as possible before the broadcast he should read over his notes so that he will be able to speak with authority when the ceremony is broadcast.

The broadcast itself should begin with a brief explanation of the reason for the broadcast, along with a little local "color", such as the weather and the general spirit of the occasion on the

campus. After that is out of the way, the announcer's job is only to introduce the speakers and describe any action that takes place . . . such as the actual laying of the cornerstone.

The special event broadcast calls for studied planning and a clear head. Again, experience is the best teacher.

CHAPTER FOUR

Terminology of Radio

As is the case in every business, the radio industry is filled with slang expressions that are used constantly. These expressions are simply short cuts that tend to save time and words.

You will find that these expressions listed are more or less universal in the business. Naturally, there are a few you will not find here as space prohibits the publication of all terms used. However, these are the most commonly used in all radio stations and networks. As time goes on, new expressions are added to the list as the industry expands.

ACROSS MIKE—Term applied when sound is directed across the face of the microphone.

AD LIB—Impromptu speaking.

AIR—Used as a verb and a simile for the word “broadcasting”. For an example: “The show will be aired at 5:00 p. m.”

AIR CHECK—A transcription of the actual broadcast as it was being aired.

AUDITION—A program simulating actual broadcast and usually given for prospective sponsors.

AUDITION ROOM—Where sponsor or any interested party can listen to the audition under the same conditions as he would in his home . . . without seeing performers.

- B. G.**—Abbreviation for “Background” . . . music that is played under the announcer’s introduction or narration.
- BALANCE**—The desired ratio of the announcer’s voice level to the musical background, or that of the solo musical parts to their accompaniment.
- BOARD**—The control panel used by the engineer who controls program being broadcast.
- BOOM**—A long metal arm from which a microphone is suspended when it is not set on upright stand.
- BREAK**—Station identification.
- BRIDGE**—Sound effects or music used to link dramatic episodes together.
- CLAMBAKE**—A program that sounded badly.
- COLD**—When an announcer starts talking without benefit of musical theme or verbal introduction. His words are the first sound on the broadcast.
- COLD COPY**—Copy read by the announcer without previous rehearsal.
- CONTROL ROOM**—Where engineer controls the broadcast. Production men also use the control room so that they can give directions to engineer as well as visual signals to announcer and talent.
- CUE**—The last words or final strains of music before an announcer begins reading his lines. Also works in reverse when the last word of the announcer’s copy is the signal to the orchestra to begin its number.

- CUSHION**—Fill in extra time with music or “plug”.
- CUT**—The word used to describe the making of a transcription, but also used as a noun to denote one of several transcribed spots on a disc. Example: “Cut one, disc 3.”
- CUT-OFF**—A button usually found at the announcer’s desk which he may push if he wishes to cut the microphone off to clear his throat or cough.
- DEAD MIKE**—A microphone that is not turned on.
- ET, PLATTER or DISC**—An electrical transcription.
- FADE**—When music, closing line or sound effects gradually decreases or increases in volume. “Fade Out” would indicate a decrease and a “Fade In” would indicate an increase.
- FADER**—The control on the control board where microphone and turntable lines terminate. Each fader controls the volume of individual mikes or transcriptions. •
- FCC**—Federal Communications Commission.
- FEED**—Word indicating a local station is originating a program to a network or a group of stations.
- FILTER**—A device used to cut out the “highs” and “lows” out of sound. To achieve an “over the telephone” effect, a filter on a microphone would be used.
- FLUFF**—A noticeable mistake. “Fluffs” can be made by announcers, orchestra, engineers or sound effects man.

- GROOVE**—The indentations running in endless circles on a record or transcription wherein the sound is cut.
- HIGHS**—The high frequencies of the voice or musical instruments.
- HOT MIKE**—A microphone that is turned on.
- LEVEL**—The volume of the sound of the program as it appears to the engineer on his volume indicator.
- LIVE**—Usually refers to talent on a program. “Live talent” would be the performers in person. If it were not “live” it would be a transcription.
- LOWS**—The low frequencies of the voice or musical instruments.
- MIKE**—A microphone.
- MIXER**—The control board with which the engineer controls the balance between “mikes”.
- NAB**—The initials of the National Association of Broadcasters.
- NET**—Network.
- OFF MIKE**—Direction to talent meaning, “stand away from the microphone”. If an actor is “off mike” he is further away than the normal speaking distance, or is off to one side of the “mike”.
- ON MIKE**—Indicates that the talent is at the correct position with respect to the microphone.
- ON THE NOSE**—Expression meaning “on time as rehearsed”.
- PATTER**—Dialogue or monologue.

PEAK—The extreme highs in volume as seen by the engineer on his volume indicator meter.

PICK-UP—The expression used to describe the manner in which the microphones receive the sound in the studio. Variation in microphone placement will affect the quality of the “pick-up”.

PLUG—Usually identifies a non-commercial announcement.

REMOTE—Meaning the point of origination of the broadcast is elsewhere other than at the studios.

RIDE GAIN—Expression meaning controlling the amount of sound or electrical energy of a program going through the control room.

SCRATCH LEVEL—The volume of noise on a transcription caused by dust or other abrasives in the grooves. Worn out grooves also will produce a high noise level.

SEGUE—Blending or fading one musical number or sound effect into another.

SET-UP—The arrangement of microphones, talent, sound effects, etc. in the studio.

SOUND EFFECT—Any sound used to create a desired noise or mood.

SPIN—Used as a verb meaning “to play” a transcription or record.

SPOT—A short commercial announcement.

SUSTAINER—A program that is not commercial.

- TAG**—A short announcement at the conclusion of a show.
- TALK BACK**—The communication system between the control room and studio.
- TALENT**—The actors or musicians on a broadcast.
- THEME**—Musical number identifying a program. Usually heard at the beginning and end of show.
- TURNTABLE**—The apparatus in the control room that reproduces sound on transcriptions for broadcasting.
- V. I.**—The volume indicator on the engineer's board.
- WORK SHEET**—The daily program schedule including complete details telling what program or spot comes next. It is the announcer's guide which informs him what goes on the air and at what time.

CHAPTER FIVE

Mechanics of Radio Speech

Theoretically, it should not be necessary to explain the mechanics of speech. We usually assume that after a few years of liberal education one has attained an average degree of perfection along that line.

But unfortunately the human being has a tendency to become lax in all things . . . his speech being at the top of the list. All of us become extremely lazy in our pronunciation and enunciation of words. We fail to open our mouths wide to allow words to come out. We let our lips and tongues get "lazy". This results in faulty enunciation.

First, you should correct your breathing. An announcer tries to time his breathing with natural pauses in the copy. He must have complete control of his breathing in order to expel the air in his lungs over as long a period of time as possible. To accomplish this you must utilize every square inch of lung space. Most persons breathe by taking short breaths. This always leaves a certain amount of stale air in the lungs to mix with the new, making it necessary for the individual to take another breath sooner than would ordinarily be necessary.

Breaths should be full, but of course not labored. And the diaphragm should do the work for you, not your chest cavity. Stand before a mirror and breathe normally. Look at your stomach. Is it

moving? Look at your chest. Is it swelling? Naturally, your chest will expand a certain amount as the air fills the lungs, but above all things, breathe with your diaphragm. Practice and consciousness of your breathing will soon guide you into the right habits.

Next, read a passage of print from a book or newspaper and make a note of where you had to take a breath. If you find it necessary to breathe after every few words, you know practice is essential before you have complete control. Learn to expel air from the lungs slowly and evenly as you read. Although this explanation sounds rather mechanical now, you will soon discover that the breathing process becomes natural, if it isn't already a natural habit with you.

Now, back to the item of "lazy lips" we mentioned. Good announcers speak distinctly, forming every vowel and consonant carefully. Bad announcers sound as if they had mush in their mouths. Be a good announcer and avoid slurring your words.

Sounds are made with certain formations of the lips, together with the correct placing of the tongue. Stand before a mirror and check yourself on the proper mouth position for the following exercise. **PRACTICE ALOUD!**

Sound	As in	Mouth Position
ah	father	open
ay	mate	half open
aw	gall	open—lips round
a	rat	half open
ee	fee	almost closed
e	bet	slightly open
eye	kite	open
y	sit	slightly open
o	hot	open
oh	mold	open—lips round
oo	lute	almost closed—lips round
uh	cut	half open
aw-y	boil	open
ah-oo	south	open, then closed—lips round

Do not swallow your words. Instead, form each word in your mouth, and not in the throat. Guttural words have no place in the English language. Since the tongue has such a prominent position in the formation of words, practice first an exercise that will put the tongue to work.

By reading the following exercise horizontally and then vertically, skipping around from column to column you will soon develop a high degree of accuracy. Pronounce each word distinctly.

a	e	i	o	u
tape	teepee	tight	token	truth
lame	leap	light	load	looped
date	deep	die	dope	duped
name	neat	night	note	new
rate	reaped	right	roped	root

Attack each word clearly and for purposes of practice, over-articulate. Pronounce the word "token" again. This word can be carelessly fluffed off without even moving the lips. Try it and see. No matter how well you attack the word with the tongue, the word is lost in the throat if you do not round your lips for a good round "O". If necessary, overdo the lip and tongue movement until you have mastered the technique. Use every muscle in your face at first. Later confine your muscles to normal movement.

While practicing these exercises, keep in mind that the jaw should at all times be relaxed.

The next exercise emphasizes the use of the jaw in speaking. It is a good idea to practice before a mirror to make you more conscious of the mechanics involved for different sounds and words. Spend at least five minutes at a stretch, or until your jaw becomes tired. Rest, then begin the exercise again . . . ALOUD!

a	e	i	o	u
acorn	ego	irate	open	under
abcess	escape	idiom	oblige	unarm
aspirin	errand	imbibe	obtrude	uphold
appoint	erode	Iowa	offend	upward
annul	emerge	item	omit	utter
affirm	effort	ivory	opera	ultra

Pronunciation of all vowel sounds demands considerable movement of the jaw. A relaxed jaw is more free to move than is a stiff one. Strive for uninhibited movement.

The last exercise will give you practice on the use of lips in speech. Before the microphone it is important not to make final "p's" too prominent. The result on the air is a definite "pop" caused by a sudden blast of air against the "mike". Therefore, simply pronounce "p's" with no special emphasis. Work for a clarity between the pronunciation of "b" and "p". Let there be a definite difference between the words "bat" and "pat", for instance.

There is the same confusing familiarity between the "v" and "f" when used in certain words. As you form a "v" you should note an actual sound emitting from the throat. When forming an "f" there should be no sound, save the rushing of air escaping between the upper teeth and lower lip.

bulk bake boil bat bruise bum beg
fume fat flap form forty fuze famine
mat morgue mutt mope move mop mice
wind warp work wave wobble woof wax
pump pub poof pang pure poop prove
void vamp view vane venom volt vim

There is no substitution for practice **ALoud**. Therefore, we suggest you practice as often as possible. Read over and over again, paying particular attention to how you are pronouncing each separate word. Newspaper items are very help-

ful along this line. Better yet if you can obtain sample copy from the local radio stations, your practicing will be more realistic. However, before you begin reading actual copy, master the following sentences which stress the use of the lips and tongue. To make it especially difficult, you will note that each sentence contains many words sounding the same and beginning with the same letter. These "tongue twisters" will serve as excellent practice exercises.

1. The trader who tried to tie the top of the table, took a terrible chance of toppling.
2. Tommy tried to trim Tim, but instead, Tim trimmed Tom.
3. Tomorrow it will be time to take another try at towing the tub if the temperature is tepid.
4. The lame lamb limped toward the lamplight.
5. Lowell Love liked to loop the loop, but later learned to also leap.
6. Lora lifted the lute and laughed as she leaned low over the lagoon.
7. Digging deeper into the depths, Donald dove darily to discover the diamonds.
8. Has the driver driven to Denver for dope on those drums you developed?
9. The damaged door in the dining room drooped dangerously.

10. Mr. Newton noted the new name on the note and nodded to Norman.
11. He never knew which night he lost the negative.
12. Rover nabbed Nobbie by the nap of the neck.
13. The right radio research will reap its reward in riches.
14. The Republicans reprinted the reprisals and restored their respect.
15. Rudolph was rude to rock the rowboat so roughly.
16. Betty barely baked the cake before the boat blew up.
17. The big brown bat brushed against the bottom of the bed.
18. It is better to be betrothed than betrayed.
19. Fanny fumed and fussed but finally faced the family.
20. The fairy in fairyland found a fat falcon.
21. The farmer's farmyard was filled with fertilizer for the fields.
22. The maiden mastered the art of magic in her mama's mansion.
23. A mantel of marble marked the memory of the man.

24. The mercenary merchant matched the magic of Midas.
25. The wail of the wind over the waves whined like an unwinding windlass.
26. Winter weather warped the wood in the windows.
27. The wise witch wished she were a werewolf.
28. The Pekingese peeped from behind the primed pump.
29. The pastor and the postmaster posted a pastel piece of pasteboard on the pole.
30. "Past and present" are the passwords of the Post.
31. The vagabond vanished in the vestibule with the valet.
32. A variety of vegetables grew in the various vaults.
33. The vibration of the velocipede's valves bothered the violinist in the Virginia village.

Care should be taken to avoid talking too fast at first. These final exercises should be practiced slow and deliberately. As you become familiar with the sentences, gradually increase your speed to normal. The normal rate of conversation is 378 words per minute, but for radio work, you should go considerably slower. Your speed should vary from 155 to 170 words per minute, depending

upon the type of copy you are reading. Take time to pause and emphasize wherever possible as you read newsprint or radio copy. Be natural, and above all things, do not attempt to imitate the style of announcers you hear on the air. This leads to your own confusion. Listen to them impartially, pick out their good points, but do not imitate.

Again we say, when you practice, **READ ALOUD.**

CHAPTER SIX

Announcing Style

As mentioned in Chapter One, an announcer's style is his manner of presentation . . . or how he speaks. Style is identified with the individual announcer, and no two radio men have the same style, although their presentation might possibly be similar.

Your style is made up of a multitude of things. It includes the quality of your voice, your personality, enunciation, and even what you say. Many announcers have good voices, but lack personality. Others have a fine likable personality, a good voice, but enunciate so poorly that the listener has a difficult time understanding them.

On the stage, actors have the assistance of props, scenery, clothes, and their own facial expressions, to convey character and personality to the audience. Actors, too, use numerous gestures, along with their voices, to convince the audience that they are playing a certain type of character.

A public speaker on a platform can have a dull voice, but still make a success of his speech with the help of facial expressions and gestures with the hands. In fact, these "helps" are a must to successful public speaking.

But the radio announcer has none of these "helps". His voice is his only messenger . . . his only tie-in between himself and the unseen audience. Unlike the actor on the stage and the

speaker on the platform, or for that matter, as you hold a conversation with your friend on a street corner, the announcer must project his personality into the microphone through his voice alone.

Most announcers naturally like to have the listener think the best of him. He wants the listener to think, "I do so like to hear Bill Jones announce. He sounds like a fine guy". To gain that admiration, you must avoid speaking in a monotone and instead personalize your voice.

Be natural and avoid affectation. Remember, your voice is YOU. You cannot be unnatural and expect your voice to reflect your true personality. Naturalness is the "most to be desired" quality an announcer can strive for, and strangely enough, only too few can achieve that quality. If you speak in a natural voice the listener will feel he is being "talked to" and not "talked down to". The announcer who constantly "talks down" to his radio audience lasts but a short while in the business.

Since the announcer is the sales representative of the product being advertised at that particular time, he must follow the basic rule of salesmanship. **DON'T SELL THE PRODUCT! MAKE THE PROSPECT FEEL THAT HE IS BUYING FROM YOU BECAUSE HE HAS A NEED FOR THE PRODUCT.** You cannot follow that rule by "talking down" to the listener. Nor can you do it by shouting your message to him. It can only be done by being natural and unaffected.

Have you ever listened to an announcer . . . a good one . . . and remarked how well you liked his announcing? Nine times out of ten you have liked his work because he had a smile in his voice. His style had a certain sparkle perhaps that unconsciously forced you to listen to his message because you wanted to listen to his voice. A smile or sparkle in your voice is the easiest of all wanted qualities to attain.

Simply smile the least bit as you read and that smile will be projected into your voice. Don't overdo it and laugh, as the listener will be irritated because he won't know at what you are laughing. Listen to some of the announcers on the "soap operas" on networks in the daytime. These men are tops in the profession and are selected because they "smile" their voices and give sparkle to the sponsor's message.

Obviously it would not be in good taste to "smile your voice" on a mortuary program. Let good common sense guide you in this matter.

Another quality that lends much to improving your style, is your own knowledge of the product advertised. It is a definite help to know the product about which you are speaking. That is why ambitious announcers try to purchase the products they advertise in order to know something about those products. A full understanding of the product helps the announcer considerably in his presentation of the sponsor's message.

A free-lance announcer who is hired to do certain commercial shows often insists that he be taken through the sponsor's plant and be

shown the complete details of manufacture. He doesn't go to this trouble just because he feels that he will ever have to explain the process on an "ad lib" broadcast, but because when the copy, for instance, mentions "the secret blending process that makes these cigarettes so different", he will know in his own mind that the blending process DOES exist and that it DOES make the Blank-Blank cigarette different from others on the market.

Naturally, a staff announcer on a local station who advertises dozens of products during the time of his shift, cannot possibly visit the plants of the various manufacturers. But he can buy those products for his home and personal use . . . since in most cases he would be buying an identical item anyway. Through this personal association, the staff announcer can acquaint himself with the products he advertises.

You should not expect the listener to be interested in what you have to say if you yourself are not interested. And YOU cannot be interested unless you have had personal contact with either the sponsor or his product.

To improve your style:

Be Pleasant! Don't be so bored with your work that the listener notices it on the air. Don't sound like you had just had an argument with your family . . . even if you have.

Be Friendly! Read your commercials as if you were speaking to a good friend. Forget that

perhaps thousands are listening to your voice and visualize that you are speaking to an acquaintance sitting across the microphone from you. If you can make the listener feel that you are talking to HIM, you have achieved the object for which you were hired . . . being the go-between, between the sponsor and the buyer.

Be Cheerful! “Smile” your voice. People would much rather listen to a cheerful voice than a dull one. A smile doesn’t cost you anything, and it will gain you friends. Why is Don Wilson popular? Because he smiles when he reads a commercial.

Be Interested! How is it possible to get the listener to buy the product after hearing you advertise it unless you sound “sold” on the product yourself. If you don’t like the product personally, as is the case many times, then do such a good job of acting that you convince the listener you are “sold” on the product or service.

Be Sincere! Although last on the list, it is first in importance. Sincerity in your reading is a definite requisite. Sincerity and the conviction that sincerity carries, and utter belief in what you are saying while saying it, is of primary importance.

The worst voice on the air would be one that was expressionless, mechanical, indifferent, impatient, inattentive and repelling. Avoid a style that includes any of these qualities and you are well on your way to becoming a good announcer.

Voice Animation

You are familiar of course with the construction of your larynx or voice box. Wind from your lungs passes through flexible cords or strings in the larynx and the result is a noise. Now, the quality of that noise is governed by muscles which relax or stretch the cords in the voice box. Like a piano or any string instrument, the human voice can make sounds high or low in pitch. The more variation a piano number has, the more interesting it sounds. Visualize what a piano composition would sound like that had only one note in it, repeated over and over again. Or, for that matter, how uninteresting it would sound if one chord was repeated constantly from beginning to end.

Compare that piano composition with your own voice. If you speak in a monotone, with no variation, your voice will sound dull and monotonous. But, if when you speak, you utilize all the highs and lows in your voice, you will add spirit and exhilaration to your message. Talking sincerely and with emphasis will help you animate your voice . . . will give natural life and sparkle to your tone and give added spirit to the message you are reading. Those "ups and downs" are there. **USE THEM!** Give your voice flexibility.

Words vs. Thoughts

One of the most common mistakes the beginning announcer makes, and one experienced announcers are most apt to slip into, is the habit

of reading words instead of thoughts. Words mean nothing to the listener, but thoughts mean the difference between complete understanding and misunderstanding. Your style is sure to be dull indeed if you read only words and ignore the thoughts in the copy.

A good test as to which you are doing is to ask yourself these questions after reading a piece of copy, "Who is the advertiser and what is he advertising? Where is his place of business? What is his phone number? What is the cost of the product? What claims did he make for the product?" If you can answer these questions about every piece of copy you read, then you can feel sure you were not just reading useless words, but instead were reading thoughts.

As you audition the copy, don't attempt to remember single words, but the thoughts that groups of words suggest. Be familiar with commercial copy through careful rehearsing. We do not mean for you to be able to remember it word for word, but so that as you read the copy on the air, you will know what thought comes next. And as you read it, follow the meaning rather than the punctuation.

For your own help, we suggest that you pencil in any signs or remarks that will aid you in

following the meaning of the words, rather than the words alone.

As we have said before, your style is YOU and should constantly be improved. No announcer is too good to stop practicing reading aloud. No announcer is too good to rest on his good work in the past. He should, with the airing of every piece of copy, strive to improve his style of reading.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Interpretation of Copy

Advertisers who use radio as a medium to advertise their product usually like to reach a certain type of audience. A maker of expensive cars would be wasting his time presenting programs to women listeners in mid-afternoon. Likewise so would a soap manufacturer be throwing away his advertising budget if he advertised laundry soap on a men's sport show.

As a rule, the sponsor seeks to sell to a certain group of listeners. And since each group is receptive to a different advertising approach, you, the announcer, must fit your voice into the mood or spirit of the program. You must decide, along with the copywriter, which approach is best suited to the group of listeners who will be hearing you.

Generally, there are four separate interpretations of copy. They are: Conversational, Institutional, Intimate or "Homey", and Direct Selling, or "Punch" copy. The best way to describe each category is to present an example of each, along with a brief explanatory note.

Conversational

The conversational type of approach adds a personal touch to the announcement and tends to make the listener feel that you are speaking directly to him, and to him only. By projecting your personality into the message in a friendly

manner, you make the listener feel relaxed and in a receptive mood to listen to what you have to say.

A "trick of the trade" in conversational copy is using words in the script having sounds suggesting their meanings. The following sentence is an example.

"Goody Bar is always a favorite because it's covered all over with smooth and creamy chocolate."

With the proper "sound suggestion" you can make the same sentence read like this:

"Goody Bar is al-l-l-l-ways a favorite because it's covered al-l-l-l-l over with smoo-o-o-o-th and cre-e-e-amy chocolate."

Another example: "Remember to ask for a tall, crispy, ice-cold glass of Frost-Cola when you are in need of refreshment."

The descriptive words are "tall", "crispy" and "cold". When accented correctly, these words in themselves add conviction and strength to their meanings.

"Remember to ask for a tal-l-l-l, cr-r-rispy, ice-co-o-old glass of Frost Cola when you are in need of refreshment."

No copy is as full of natural pauses as is conversational copy. A pause in the correct place will say much more than a word would. It gives your listener a chance to assimilate what you have said and adds effectiveness to your message. A pause will force the listener to "lean forward" in anticipation of what you will say next. The natural reaction to a pause after a

direct question is best explained in the following example:

“Say there, lady, do you know the answer to that “rough hands” question? (PAUSE) You don’t? Well then, if you can’t answer it, maybe I can. It’s the famous product called (PAUSE) Glamour-Creme.”

The announcer is asking a question, so he naturally should wait for an imaginary answer before continuing. His effectiveness would be lost if he barged right in with, “You don’t? Well then . . .” before the listener had time to ask herself the question just asked. Remember, pauses in the proper places can do much more than mere words can do to put over your commercial.

Immediately following is a complete conversational-type commercial. Read it over and over again **ALoud** until you feel you have caught the spirit of the announcement.

“Hey there, lady, are you pretty busy these days? (CHUCKLE) Yes, I guess that IS a foolish question. I really shouldn’t have asked it, because even we **MEN** know that springtime means house-cleaning time for all housewives. What’s that you say? Why don’t we work too? Well now, wouldn’t you be surprised to know how many of us **DO** work around the house during the spring! (CHUCKLE) Of course

we are always looking for the easy way to do things . . . who isn't? And we're not the ONLY ones looking for that "easy way" either. No sir! Practim and Flosit (they're the folks who make that famous "Glamour-more" soap, you know) have taken the housewife's work to heart by introducing a new type of window cleaner. And lady, this cleaner REALLY takes the elbow-work out of window cleaning . . . yes sir-ee! No more back-breaking days scrubbing those windows. No more nights of soothing sore hands. What's that you say? What miracle IS this? (CHUCKLE) Lady, this is no miracle. This is CLIME . . . C-L-I-M-E . . . CLIME, the easy, simple way of washing off that old winter dirt from windows. NO OTHER SOAP ON THE MARKET can do the job as well as CLIME. Just you take my word for it and ask your grocer for a package today. Simple to prepare? Well, I should say so! Put only three teaspoonsful of CLIME into a half-gallon of water and you are on your way toward easier spring house-cleaning. (CHUCKLE) Why, CLIME is so simple to prepare and so dog-goned easy to use I wouldn't be a bit surprised if hubby didn't pitch right in and help. No kiddin'! So, get a package of CLIME today, along with your other grocery items. Remember that name. It's CLIME . . . C-L-I-M-E . . . another famous Practim and Flosit product."

Institutional

Institutional copy advertises the manufacturer instead of the product. Institutional copy should be read in a natural, straightforward manner. There should be no attempt made to "sell" or "punch". Neither should you become too conversational in your approach. Talk as though you were telling a story. You should sound interested and natural with animation in your voice to emphasize that naturalness. A narrative style is desirable. As you read the following, keep these points in mind.

"Tonight we should like to tell you about Mr. John Doe, the third, a line superintendent at the great FLYER automobile factory. John Doe, the third, is one-half of another great father-and-son team. His father, John Doe, the second, has been making cars at the FLYER factory for forty years, and even before that, John Doe, the first, assembled wagon tongues at the FLYER factory when automobiles were unheard of. These three, a father, son and grandson are only a small part of the large FLYER family . . . a family which, over a period of many years, has grown to include seventy thousand employees. FLYER is proud of these workers and believes that the workers are proud of their association through the years with FLYER. And there is a just reason for this mutual friendship. The

FLYERS board of directors has always worked on the premise that "the more we can do for the workers, the more they will do for us", and that has proved to be a valid bit of reasoning. Take the case of John Doe, the third, for instance. Unfortunately, John has had considerable illness in his family the past year. His four children and his wife, all had more than their share of illness. For the ordinary man, this would have been a financial blow that would have taken several years for recovery, but not for John Doe. All members of the FLYER family receive not only the best medical care from company doctors, but for bed-ridden cases, a large 150-room hospital, having the most modern medical equipment is available at a minute's notice. All of this comes to a FLYER worker at no charge whatsoever. And there are other services too, such as a company-owned loan bureau which loans money to responsible employees at no interest rate, and an insurance program which enables FLYER employees to participate at a fraction of the normal cost. These and many other services help tie the FLYER family together. This is one reason why the FLYER SPECIAL is such a fine automobile. It is made by the finest, most satisfied workers in the automotive industry."

Intimate or "Homey"

This type of copy is often associated with commercials having a message for farmers, because most farm folks are homey and "down to earth" in their expressions. This is a case of speaking to the listener in his own language. However, most of us have the habit of slurring words together and making contractions of our own. Therefore the presentation of "homey" copy isn't exclusively for farmers. Many listeners enjoy hearing an announcer speak on the air as he would in informal conversation.

Ordinarily when we ask this question in conversation, we sound like this: "Wad-ja-do las' night after I left-cha?" The announcer saying the same thing on the air would ordinarily pronounce each word distinctly like this: "What did you do last night after I left you?"

The use of contractions and slurs adds intimacy to your style, but this approach should be used only when called for. It definitely is not the proper way to speak. Experienced announcers dread copy of this type because it actually is more difficult to read than straight copy and makes the average announcer sound affected. Read this example over and see if you agree.

Ya know, friends, it's mighty important ta-ya these days ta buy a hibred seed corn that'll make ya a profit when harvest time comes 'round. The ol' dollar jus' doesn't

go as far as it used ta, so the wise planter'll plant the hibred seed that'll go the furthest. Now when we say, "go the furthest" we mean a corn seed that'll give ya more bushels per acre than any other seed corn on the market. An' friend, that seed corn is INDIAN. Yes Sir-ee, that famous INDIAN bran' has proved its adaptability fer all sorts of soil an' climatic conditions over a period o' thirty years. Thousands upon thousands of farmers, like yourself, have planted INDIAN hibred seed corn on their farm an' have found that it's paid off with more money in the bank. Did-ja know that you can order INDIAN varieties that'll be best suited to your own growin' conditons? Yep, that's right! There are dozens of individual types of INDIAN seed corn from which ta choose. Your county agent'll be glad ta analyze the soil on your farm for ya so that you'll know exactly which variety of INDIAN seed corn you'll need. But neighbor, don't wait any longer, as orders are pillin' up fast, an' we have just a limited amount of INDIAN hibred seed corn left. Order now for spring plantin', friends, an' be sure of gettin' the seed corn used by more American farmers than any other seed corn on the market . . . INDIAN, produced by the INDIAN Hibred Seed Company, INDIAN, Illinois.

Direct Selling or Punch Copy

Punch copy is used primarily to get two things over to the listener . . . the product and the price. A store or a manufacturer has an item for sale that is priced at a "bargain". (At least the sponsor wants the listener to think it's a bargain.) He isn't interested in anything but selling the article advertised, and he feels that if the name and price is literally "forced" into the listener's mind, he will sell more of that item than if he used a conversational approach. Punch copy will get the attention of the listener, and by repetition, will hold his attention. Of course, the listener might be irritated by such an approach, but the sponsor doesn't care as long as he sells his product. What the sponsor believes, is that he is "giving away" such a bargain that the listener will buy whether he is irritated or not.

The grand openings of stores, where up to the time of the announcement the public was still uninformed as to its location, generally calls for "punch" copy on the premise that constant repetition will do more than anything else to instill the store's address in the listener's memory.

As you read the following "direct selling" copy, use a strong, firm voice with plenty of emphasis.

"Attention, ladies, attention! Here is by far the greatest flower seed offer ever made over the air by the SACK SEED COMPANY. This is a strictly "get ac-

quainted" offer made by SACK to acquaint new customers with SACK SEEDS. Listen carefully! Here is the offer! For only a dime, that's ten cents, the SACK SEED COMPANY of Two-Junctions, Ohio, will send you the All-Color collection of flower seeds which includes such famous garden flowers as Giant-Fringed Petunias, Velvet Snapdragons, African Marigolds, and Super Giant Zenias. Yes, that's right! You get this beautiful collection of seeds, enough to make your garden glow with color this summer, for only one dime. But a word of warning! Because of the thousands of persons who will accept this "get acquainted offer", the limited supply will go in a hurry. So send for your packet of seeds NOW. I'll repeat this amazing offer. For only a dime you will receive a generous assortment of Giant-Fringed Petunias, Velvet Snapdragons, African Marigolds and Super Giant Zenias. The usual price of this assortment is one dollar, but you can obtain it now for only ten cents by writing to the SACK SEED COMPANY, Two-Junctions, Ohio. I'll repeat that address. (SLOWLY) SACK . . . S-A-C-K . . . SACK SEED COMPANY, Two-Junctions, Ohio. Remember to enclose your dime. Do it NOW . . . TODAY, while there is still a supply of this assortment available. Have a garden you'll be proud of this summer. Buy your seeds from SACK.

You will find many variations of the above types of copy and many combinations of types. It is up to YOU, the announcer, to interpret the copy as you see fit. Keep in mind the audience you are speaking to and the product you are advertising.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Choosing Your Station

You are now finally ready to seek employment in a radio station. There are several ways of obtaining a position, all of which you will undoubtedly try before succeeding. If you wish, try all methods at the same time.

Most announcers apply for a job with no thought in mind about just how much the station they work for will help them. Instead they take the first job they can get and feel mighty fortunate. They must remember that the degree of experience gained over a period of years is governed by the stations for which they work. Therefore, it is suggested that if possible, select stations that are aggressive . . . stations that will broaden instead of shrink your knowledge of radio.

The radio industry differs in different parts of the country. You will find that radio in the South, for example, is different than in the West or North. The differences are in programming and public service. Since a radio station attempts to offer programs its listeners most desire, it is logical to assume that the listener's wants vary with the locale.

In the East where the population consists of many nationalities, radio stations will air shows in several languages. In the deep South, where the Negro population is large, radio stations present many programs for them exclusively, since

the Negro represents a sizable percentage of the spending public.

The Middlewest and West Coast radio stations are more indicative of the general run of stations. Here too, there are good and bad stations. If a beginning announcer could get a job on a large, well established station, that would be fine, but the chances are small. Most large stations, especially in metropolitan areas, demand three to five years experience before they will even offer you an audition.

Look into the job possibilities in smaller stations . . . those having a power of 1000 watts or less. These are the stations which are most likely to be operating on a small budget and are unable to afford the cost of an experienced announcing staff.

At this time we feel we should mention an important part in the professional life of a radio man . . . the trade magazine entitled "Broadcasting". This highly informative journal not only presents weekly the latest news events in radio and allied arts, but presents editorials and feature stories which contain a world of knowledge for even the oldest men in the industry. The new announcer should read "Broadcasting" from cover to cover each week and consider it his "bible" of the industry as long as he is a part of it. Much can be learned from its many pages. By reading it you can keep up with the industry the world over although you might be employed for a small station stuck away in a farming area of Indiana.

Each year "Broadcasting" publishes a yearbook which includes among many things, a list of current broadcasting stations and their key personnel. Pay a visit to your local station and ask to see a copy. From that list of stations, select a few "probables". A personal talk with an experienced radio man will give you the information you seek concerning these stations. He can tell you whether they are aggressive, and whether or not they have a good reputation. If he doesn't know, he can find out this information for you.

Let's assume then that you have selected ten stations, located in the portion of the country you wish to settle in, and all having low power.

From the "Broadcasting" yearbook, obtain the name of the station manager and write him a letter. In correspondence with larger stations, you should write to the program manager or as he is also called, the program director. In larger stations he is charged with hiring the announcers.

When writing a letter of application, do not attempt to brag or boast. No one likes to read a business letter full of boastful statements. Simply tell your story in a brief, business-like manner. You should by all means give the following information: Education, general background in music, dramatics and speech, marital status, experience in the business field, and finally, why you think you are fitted to the job as announcer.

If you are a beginner, state that fact in your letter. It's much better that you state the facts as they are, so your future employer will not expect your work to reflect experience.

If at all possible, suggest a personal interview and audition. Although many announcers send transcriptions of their announcing to prospective employers, obviously a personal interview is better.

While you are awaiting replies from your letters of application, go to the nearest recording studios in your vicinity and make several audition records. These auditions should contain several different types of commercial announcing, a little sports, and considerable news announcing. Begin the transcription by simply saying, "Good day. This is (your name) speaking and submitting for your approval an audition transcription. I offer this in lieu of a personal interview as an example of my announcing."

Between each announcement, pause three to five seconds to set off each separate style and mood. At the conclusion of the audition transcription, say something to this effect: "I thank you for your indulgence and hope that I may be considered as an applicant for an announcing position with your station."

Incidentally, these transcriptions will cost you around three to five dollars each, but it is a good investment. Let us repeat, do not send a transcription unless a personal interview is impossible.

If the replies to your applications are negative, select another list and try again. Eventually, and after not too long a time, you'll "hit".

Another method of obtaining an announcing job is also done through the aid of "Broadcasting." Each week the magazine offers a classified

section wherein classified ads are inserted by stations the country over who are interested in selecting additional or replacement personnel. Also a section is devoted to personnel seeking to locate with a different station. An excellent idea would be to send a classified ad to "Broadcasting" for publication in one or more issues. State in the ad your requisities, age and what position you are seeking.

While that ad is running, answer the classified ads asking for announcers. The one disadvantage to this method is that in most cases you will be answering the ads "blind". Very few stations give their name and location. Most ads ask you to refer to a box number. This means that you must wait until your first letter is answered before you know to whom you are applying and then you might find you do not wish to work in that particular location. In each case, answer the letter, saying you are sorry, but not interested.

If you receive an inquiry from a station you would like to work for, and it is too far to travel for a personal interview, then send a transcription of your work and a letter.

As a beginner, do not mention salary in your correspondence until the subject is opened by your correspondent. As a newcomer to the business, you are in no position to set the wages. Let him set the pay and if it is not suitable to you, then suggest that it is too low. If he will not raise it, you can either accept the job or decline.

If a personal interview is possible, arrange the time and place by letter and plan to be at that place well before hand. If the town is considerably distant and entails traveling, plan your itinerary so that you will get sufficient rest from the trip. No announcer should attempt to audition unless he is in top physical and mental shape.

It goes without saying that you should dress neatly, but conservatively. Gone are the days when announcers were "flashes" who wore bright colored ties and clothes. The announcing profession has settled down to a business like anything else. Therefore, you should appear to your interviewer in business-like dress.

Be prompt for your appointment. If the station manager is late, that's all right. But you be on time. During the interview, let your interviewer be the one to be aggressive. Let him ask the questions and you answer them to the best of your ability in a friendly manner.

However, when he is through inquiring into your background, you should find out facts about the station. Ask any questions of him that you wish to in order to ascertain whether you would want to work there. Remember, applying for a job isn't all one-sided. The station should offer YOU something too. Determine whether or not you will gain the experience you need so much, by working there.

The same advice concerning salary applies in this case too. Let your future employer advance the question of salary. Unless he specifically

asks you to name your own wage, and most of them won't, let him bring up the subject.

The worst thing about the audition you will have is the microphone fright that is bound to accompany it. Be as relaxed as you can and try to forget that your job depends on the audition. It isn't bad manners to ask your listener if you could have a stand "mike" for the audition instead of a table "mike". This you should do. Standing erect tends to relax your muscles and also gives your diaphragm more room in which to expand. Sitting down, in a cramped position, added to the natural nervousness you will have, forces one to breathe harder and in much shorter breaths. Stand up when possible.

If you make a good impression and your audition is successful, you have your first job in radio. If you are not the announcer the station manager wants, try again and keep trying until you get what you want.

What is your future in the radio industry?

Actually, you won't even know what you want out of the industry until several years have passed. In the first place, nine times out of ten you won't find that future in the first station. The experience it can offer you has its limitations. If you are sure you are in a "rut" and have absorbed all you possibly can in that one location, try another. Only this time, try to get a job in a larger station . . . one that might be considered a step up the ladder of experience for you. When you have stayed there for a reasonable length of time, move on to another.

Actually, an announcer's future is unlimited. He has many choices to make. Some announcers believe the "ultimate" for them is in the field of free-lance announcing on the networks. This is not only very difficult to achieve because of the tremendous competition, but is a difficult job to maintain over any length of time because there are always so many new voices entering the industry each year. Most of those voices are good and their owners have a strong background of experience equal to yours.

You can count on the fingers of both hands, the "big name" announcers who are on the top now and who have furthermore been on the top for the last ten years. The average free-lance announcer's job is short-lived.

Most announcers eventually guide themselves into the program department as program directors or production heads and thence on to the executive department as sales manager or station manager. Many announcers are not content with the "white collar" salary paid in the profession by most stations, so work into the other departments of a station where the pay and the responsibility is considerably increased.

However, in isolated cases, announcers attain the top rung of the ladder in the large clear-channel stations in the country — of which there are only a few. For the most part, these stations pay the announcer well and want their staffs to be stable and permanent. There are many announcers who have been employed by the same radio station for over twenty years. This should be proof

that there IS a future for the announcer in the independent station.

Our final paragraph is a repetition of what has been said before, but it is so important, it bears repeating. **NO ANNOUNCER IS TOO GOOD TO DISCONTINUE STRIVING FOR PERFECTION.** Learn as much as you can and improve yourself constantly. **READ ALOUD and REHEARSE YOUR COPY.** When an announcer feels he is so good he need not rehearse his material, he is headed for the down-grade. You are the station's representative to a vast listening audience. **REMEMBER YOUR RESPONSIBILITY.**

Good luck!

