

# The Ultimate Clock

*Continuing Education For The Dedicated Radio Programmer*

## Hot-Clock Games

Part 6

Some of the best ideas in music strategy are first drawn-up on cocktail napkins or sketched-out on scrap paper.

In fact, some PDs say they prefer that kind of "unstructured" approach, feeling that the very *abstractness* of such hot-clock "doodling" seems to somehow *enhance* the *creative* side of the process, which often leads to the truly *breakthrough* concepts.

### Out Of Chaos Comes Order!

Never me to inhibit your "style", but there does come a time when it's useful to collect all of your doodles (music clocks, presentation clocks, and commercial placements) and combine

them into a composite overview that represents "the big picture". (Especially when presenting "state of the station" reports to management, you want to look totally "organized".)

If you ever wish you'd taken the time to construct "the ultimate hot-clock shell",

(Continued — See Ultimate Clock on page 2)

## Squeezing *more* out of Research

Can "gut-feel" radio still win in the new millennium? The quick answer is . . . yes, some of the best radio today is gut-feel! But, as I always tell my clients, the *key* is: **keeping your gut well-educated.**

You do that with audience research.

(Continued — See Squeezing More on Page 2)

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**Programmer's Digest** Publisher/Editor **Todd Wallace** is a 30-year programming veteran — as a #1 jock, PD, GM, and station owner. Over the past 24 years, he has provided programming consultation services to over 100 radio stations. Internationally recognized as the "founding father" of the "callout" research concept, over 200 stations have used his systems of "in-house" music, tracking, and perceptual research.



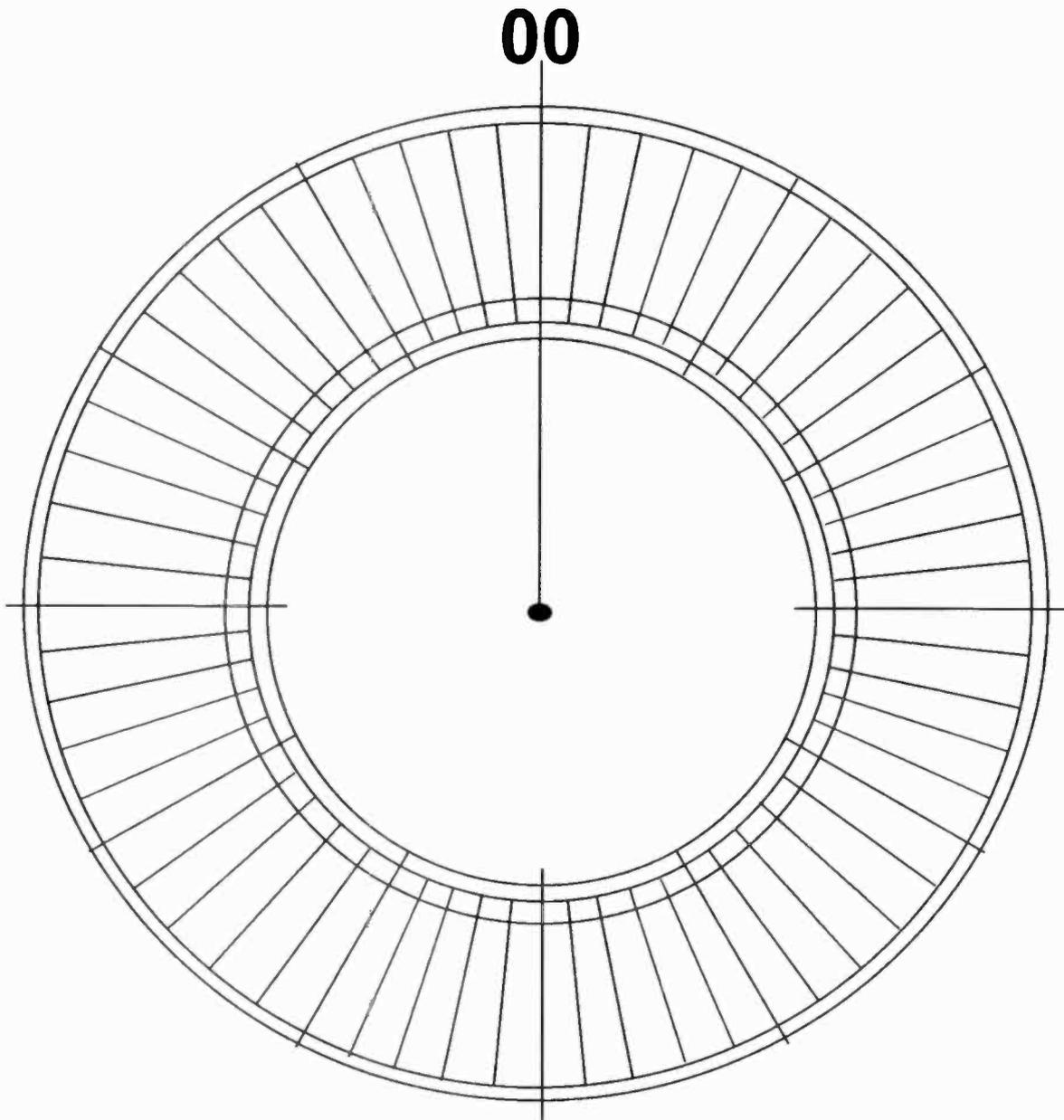
# The Ultimate Clock

# Stealable Template

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Clock # \_\_\_\_\_ Title \_\_\_\_\_ Hour(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Spots \_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_ Stopsets \_\_\_\_ Sweeps \_\_\_\_ Songs \_\_\_\_ Features \_\_\_\_\_



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TW Tip # 2120, #7132, #9128, and #12004

# Dr. Snap!

“And now, ladies and gentlemen . . .” Arguably the most imitated programmer in the history of “format radio” was the tall Southern gentleman from Georgia, **Bill Drake** — who started the “Boss Radio” ball rolling at KHJ in Los Angeles and went on to become the most famous “radio programming doctor” (consultant) of his day.

Some of today’s greatest programmers (like **Steve Rivers** and **Scott Shannon**) echo my own sentiments that Drake was the single biggest influence on their programming style and philosophical roots.

His listener-driven, logical formatic structure revolutionized the presentation sequence of radio stations all around the world. After successes at KGB/San Diego, KYNO/Fresno, and KHJ, Drake was given the programming responsibility for other RKO stations like KFRC/San Francisco, WOR-FM/New York City, WRKO/Boston, CKLW/Windsor-Detroit, and WHBQ/Memphis.

What Drake did best went far beyond just improving programming, however. He managed to put the programming department *in the driver’s seat* of the radio stations he consulted. He crystallized the very best business procedures behind-the-scenes with a consistency of purpose to match the on-air efficiency of what became affectionately known as “the Drake format”.

Some Drake firsts that were part of that format included . . .

- ✓ The short a capella jingle (sung to perfection by the Johnny Mann Singers), utilizing what most people consider the most memorable musical logo in Radio (“*nnNine-ty-Three K H Jayyyy*”) — a recognizable sig, known in every jingle-house as “the Drake logo” (and still used today in nearly every market)
- ✓ Using subliminal effects to reinforce memorability and recall — like slotting jingles last in commercial stopsets, next to music, and promos last so the “message” was always associated with music and “lingered” over the intro of the song that followed
- ✓ Establishing an hourly “limit” on the number of spots, so the station could truly live up to a “plays more music” promise
- ✓ Embellishing the “more music” image with the concept of long music *sweeps* (playing many songs back-to-back while quantifying how many songs were being played in each sweep, “the 2nd of 10 in a row”)
- ✓ Streamlining commercial stop-set procedure to make pods fly by faster (no talking between spots, talking-up spot “intro-times”, color-coding spots by type, etc.)
- ✓ Limiting DJ chatter — keeping the pace fast, the pitch *up*, and the content always *positive*
- ✓ Re-naming jocks with easy to remember aliases (usually 3-syllables, avoiding “gimmick” names)
- ✓ In a world filled with 40 and 50-record playlists, Drake

- was one of the first programmers to tighten his playlist to a “Boss 30” (enabling his station to not only play the most music, but the best music, concentrating on the true hits)
- ✓ The development of landmark promotions like “The Christmas Wish” and “The Big Kahuna” (in collaboration with Ron Jacobs)
- ✓ Production and syndication of long-form special “rockumentaries” like “The History Of Rock & Roll” and “The Top 100 Of The 60’s”

Besides efficiency-orienting the programming blueprints for his clients, Drake had a knack for identifying (and hiring) exceptional talent — both programming management and jock-talent. He installed super-achievers like **Ron Jacobs**, **Tom Rounds**, **Les Garland**, **Paul Drew**, **Jim O’Brien**, **Mike Phillips**, **Mark Denis**, and **Ted Atkins** into key PD positions. And it was Drake who was responsible for the hiring of **Robert W. Morgan** and **The Real Don Steele** as book-end drive-time anchors at KHJ.

As a consultant, he was first to control the programming of several stations simultaneously and established the “gold standard” for hands-on involvement with clients and servicing follow-up that most consultants still model today. His staff collaborated with clients regularly. During the hey-day of KHJ, RJ and Drake would talk 3 or 4 times a day, but most other stations dealt with Drake’s National PD, **Bill Watson**. Thus was created a “power mystique” of Hollywood proportions (fueled by the intrigue and mystery surrounding the long-distance “listen-lines” and the instant hotline critiques his PDs would offer).

Drake’s success was so highly regarded that it spawned literally *hundreds* of “fake Drake” imitators in the 60’s and early 70’s. (One way you could tell the real thing: Drake *personally* voiced the jock-IDs on his client stations). His formatic structure was blamed by some for the demise of “personality” in Radio, but one listen to an aircheck of KHJ would prove that *organized* personality was very much alive and well on a bona fide Drake station. (It was, in fact, the fake-Drake stations that didn’t “get it” when it came to how to properly showcase true personality).

With partner **Gene Chenault**, he went on to establish **Drake-Chenault**, which became one of the most successful syndication companies of the 70’s and 80’s.

Today, Drake still consults a select list of clients (most notably Oldies-giant KRTH in LA).

TW Tip # 7133, #9129, #12005

RADIO  
2000  
and beyond

## Programming In The Consolidated New Millennium

The final installment of TW's address to Australian Radio executives:

### The Warning Signs Along With The Good News

Okay — we've talked about the realities of consolidation and the new workplace that it's creating. Now, let me give you some of the *warning signs* that the zeal for profits may be going a little too far, because I needn't tell you, there's incredible pressure to keep building the bottom-line — and outperforming the previous quarter's results.

Anytime there's that kind of profit-pressure, you need to make *extra sure* that your expense-cuts aren't cutting off an important life-support system somewhere. Or a limb!

I know of a lot of stations who've downsized, and divied up all the tasks so that everybody's doing four or five jobs.

Then, when that's not enough, they cut back on research — instead of two auditorium tests a year, they may only do one. Or maybe none. Instead of weekly callout, they're going back to just once a *month*. Or cutting sample-sizes. Or — they're just stopping research altogether.

Still not enough! So they cut back on consultation input — so now they can't see the forest for the trees 'cause they no longer get an objective overview from the outside lookin' in.

After that, about all that's left to cut is promotional funds — so suddenly there's no more contest-marketing, or TV, or direct-mail.

The sad thing is — many of these stations are now seeing their numbers going down the gurgler — and they're wondering "why?".

What's wrong with this picture? Why is this happening?

Reason is simple. What they're doing — is the exact *opposite* of what we tell our advertising clients that they should be doing — and that's to ***invest in your product — and invest in the marketing of your product!***

But it doesn't stop there. At the same time, we're seeing commercial loads *mushrooming*. In many cases way beyond the threshold of noticeability. As recently as just a year ago, most major market competitive stations in the United States would have been running 8 or 9 minutes of commercials hourly. Today, many of them are up to 12 or

13 minutes. And I really fear that it's headed for 14 or 15 minutes before sanity returns — and they realize that they're chasing listeners off in droves . . .

. . . which, I submit, is a step ***backwards***. Backwards maybe 30 years! And, mark my words, it's something that listeners ***will*** notice (and research says *are* noticing)!

Now, you may say — well if we own the competition, it doesn't matter — all the shares have to add up to 100%. Right? No, they don't!

A phenomenon we've been seeing in the States for the past four years is . . . year after year after year, the total market Persons-Using-Radio levels are going steadily *downward*. And this is *not* a Chicken Little thing — the sky really *is* falling. And the reason that's important is *this*: when PUR-levels go down, that means average quarter-hour *total persons* goes down. And *that* has an effect on both Cost Per Thousand and, much more importantly, on **Radio's effectiveness as an advertising medium.**

The *reason* it's happening stems from several factors — Some are things that are largely beyond our control, like new types of competitive interactive media that compete for the overall share of a consumer's media time. The internet, for example (although there are a lot of us who think that we have the potential of turning the internet into an *advantage* for Radio, especially if we can condition web-surfers to automatically *listen-while-they-surf*. (That's something other media, like newspapers and TV, can't really do — it's either one or the other, but with Radio you *can* both surf and listen, very easily).

(Continued — See **Radio 2000** on page 6)

**Some stations are doing the exact opposite of what we tell our advertising clients to do — and that's to invest in your product — and invest in the marketing of your product.**

RADIO  
2000  
and beyond

# Programming In The Consolidated New Millennium

(Continued — from page 5) Yes, some things maybe *are* beyond our complete control. But . . . many of them are things we *can* influence. Like **spot-load levels**.

It's bad enough that commercial-count has increased 50% in each hour at some stations — but the impact of this is *compounded* when stations try to cluster all their spots into just two pods in the hour (partly because some of the younger PD's don't have any experience in the intricacies of how to deploy a larger load). We used to think it was bad when you heard five minutes of continuous commercials. Nowadays, it's not unusual to hear *eight* minutes of spots, back to back.

To which many listeners are now saying — Time out! Punch out! Bail out! And that's what's happening, as listeners are *voting with their diaries*.

We're also seeing less money being spent on marketing and promotion . . . which means there's less *forced listening* than there used to be. Like the old campaign used to remind us — a terrible thing happens when you don't promote. *NOTHING!* Well, that may be, in part, what we're seeing.

Some listeners have gone away because their favorite station has just "disappeared", as a result of consolidation. Maybe now that formerly great-sounding station is being used as a pawn or a spoiler to protect the Queen of a group's cluster.

And still *other* listeners think that format segmentation has simply gone too far. In some markets, things have gotten so "specialized" that there's no longer a mainstream Top 40 station in the market, but there are two rhythmic CHR's and one modern AC and two alternatives. When scenarios like this happen, where clear market-voids are overlooked, listeners say, "Uh, maybe I'll start listening to my tapes or CD's, screw you, Radio!". So be aware: listeners *will* turn their radio off completely if we fail to regularly satisfy their needs!

And, as I mentioned earlier, in many markets there seems to be a trend away from *localness* in presentation, as formats become increasingly homogenized and economized.

Another warning sign . . . and you know I'm a proponent of VR — but let me add this little caveat — if you're doing VR just to save money, it's probably *not* going to work for you. The *best* use of voice-tracking, in my opinion, is to use it sparingly and selectively to *improve the quality you're able to provide in a daypart* (or a group of dayparts).

Let's touch on an *operational* warning signal: because some PDs are spreading themselves so thin, some things that *need* to be done are just plain *not* getting done! Like *this* disturbing trend — a recent survey showed *only* 35% of PD's do regular aircheck critiques with air talent — in fact only 15% were doing it *weekly!* That, in my book, is a *crime*. At least 65% of all PD's should be demoted because they're not doing one of the most important duties of the job. (And some of them aren't doing it because they don't know *how* to!)

**FINAL WARNING SIGN** . . . and this is a big one . . .

A lot of great programmers are working so hard, and having to cover so much territory, that they're getting *burnt-out*. And they're losing their enthusiasm and passion for the business. And as a result, we may end up *losing* some very good people to other industries. And that's Radio's loss! So that's something to always

keep in mind. We need to provide some *decompression* along the way. Frankly, I don't think that will be as much of a problem here in Australia as it's becoming in the States, because I understand most people here get 3 or 4 weeks of vacation every year. But back home, *two* weeks is the norm — and some PDs who are new in their jobs only get *one* week (or maybe only feel they can justify taking one week of their vacation, because they have too much work to do). And *that's* when it gets dangerous. Okay I'll get off my soap-box.

**Is there any good news for Radio stemming from consolidation? Actually, yes there is.**

Certainly there's a lot more money floating around so at least stations can afford to pay their bills on time now. There was a time that wasn't always the case.

Like I said earlier, there may be fewer jobs, but they're *better* jobs, and better *paying* jobs. The downside, of course, is more people are *chasing* fewer and fewer jobs, which doesn't do a lot for job security.

One of the overall *best effects* consolidation is bringing to Radio, however, is that many of the people who've been casualties in big markets are being forced to accept jobs and relocate into lower-ranked, smaller markets. So little by little — and trickle by trickle — *better radio* is being filtered *downward*. Radio in a #90 market like Wichita sounds as good *today*, from a professionalism standpoint, as a station in a Top 25 or 30 market sounded 5 years ago.

The caliber of the *sales-team* is also improving. 10 years ago in an unrated market like Flagstaff, Arizona, with a population of 50,000, radio buying was pretty unsophisticated. Now, the local direct advertiser is asking a lot of pointed questions about the cost-efficiency of their advertising dollar on your station — and you'd better have the answers (or you're not on the buy). It's this demand for value and accountability that's behind the development of a lot of NTR, non-traditional-revenue, programs, like telemarketing to produce customer names and phone numbers, monthly magazines and quarterly newsletters, remotes, events, and prize-van sponsorships.

Well, I hope I've been able to give you some thought-starters and a better perspective. If I could leave you with anything, I want to reiterate the importance of *diversifying your skill-set*. If you're a PD, you've got to become a more *well-rounded* broadcaster. And what *that's* going to *do* for you . . . is to help you *better understand* what's going on in the *business* around you and better *prepare you* for the future.

Which means . . . you're going to be less likely to be caught off guard, or surprised by any of the *fallout* from consolidation. And you're going to be better *qualified* for advancement opportunities. Any way you slice it, *that* is a good thing.

TW Tip #7134 and #1065

## Nothin' But 'Net



### The FAX of THE DAY

Jon London Weekdays 9:00am - 12:00pm

**Monday:**

- Funny Want ADS

**Tuesday:**

- What Are Your Sexual Priorities In Life

**Wednesday:**

- Instructions For Life

**Thursday:**

- Things NOT To Say To A Naked Guy

**Friday:**

- A Man's Answers To Every Question A Woman Ever Asks

## W W W E B W W W I S E™

Clever feature done by KDWB/Minneapolis midday personality **Jon London**. London invites listeners to send in funny or creative faxes to win a prize.

In addition to using it on-the-air, he posts the winning Fax Of The Day on the KDWB website ([www.kdwb.com](http://www.kdwb.com)).

The station maintains a two-week archive of the winning faxes, serving a dual purpose:

- listeners can access and download their favorites (resulting in the KDWB letterhead being shared with co-workers) and
- websurfers who normally don't listen to KDWB may be drawn to the station if they like what they see.

*TW Tip #3144, #4074, #5099, #6076, #15041, and #16045*

### Next Week **Easy Ways To Maintain A Web News Presence**

## Squeezing MORE

Continued —  
From Page 2

(because it takes more "snorkeling" calls to reach a "qualified" respondent who'll cooperate). So when several stations participate in a shared-study, you're able to "use" more of the trolling calls (as the various core-targets are combined during the canvassing process). In short, fewer "recruiting" calls are "wasted". And the more stations you include in your single-hit research project, the more this efficiency "strike-rate" improves.

### The Objective Of A Market Cluster

Remember, what you're trying to do is to *maximize* your cluster's total market share. This is usually best achieved by minimizing the duplication between the stations within your own cluster. To do that, you need to know in what areas your stations intersect.

On this basis, the main objectives of a shared-research study should be:

- ☑ To identify any shared audience-groups, using cluster-analysis (in this case, we mean "research clusters" which involve identifying quantifiable segments of listeners with similar music preferences or programming leanings).
- ☑ To pinpoint cume-duplication between your stations and, more importantly, preference-sharing — what percentage of the P1's from your Station A also listen to your Station B and Station C, and vice versa — this is usually a lot more revealing and useful than the much broader (therefore less specific) cume-duplication study.
- ☑ To determine each of your stations' performance (as

perceived by target-demo and target-lifegroup listeners) in key positioning and perceptual attributes that apply to programming. And then . . .

- ☑ To construct a "station mosaic" based on rank-orders of the composite of the various programming attributes. In this way, you can clearly see which elements of each stations positioning and branding efforts are paying off (and how well).
- ☑ To pinpoint the efficiency at which each of your stations deliver their long-term (1 month) cume into weekly cume, and their weekly cume into P1 preference-partisans (relative to each of your station's vertical format competitors). Often these "conversion" patterns speak volumes about levels of audience satisfaction.
- ☑ To identify the personalities in your market who have the most impact, likeability, and loyalty.
- ☑ To trend the momentum of each of your stations via various camera-angles of "better/worse" and "growth/loss" ratios (charting only one angle can many times be deceiving)
- ☑ To establish a series of benchmark standards by which each station's future growth (or lack thereof) can be efficiently measured and quantified.
- ☑ To shine a light on any burning issues unique to any of the stations in your cluster with more detailed probes and follow-up questions.

*TW Tip # 1066, #7136, and #19046*

**Coming Soon**

**How To Keep Research Going When Budgets Get Crunched**

## Program Note

### Measuring Mornings

*Useful Camera-Angles To Improve Your Perspective* will appear in Issue #23

## Event Radio Find A Parade... And Get In Front Of It (Part 3)

Over the past two weeks, we've examined the art of identifying "natural" events, "ferreting out" interesting angles that can turn "ordinary" news stories into station events, & ways to outdistance your competition at pre-planned market-wide events.

This week, we'll turn the spotlight on ways to "manufacture" an event that is exclusive to *only* your station (or cluster).

### Station-Exclusive Events

Mind you, to gain maximum benefit from an event, it needs to become a full-fledged "on-air" event. And I don't mean just promos that proclaim X-109 "welcomes" Barenaked Ladies. Many music stations make the mistake of thinking that such off-air "associations" gain them brownie-points in listeners' minds. In my experience, arms-length "associations" merely occupy promo-inventory that could be better spent on something more truly *productive*. Reason: concert-goers tend to go to and from a concert listening to the station(s) they normally listen to (regardless of who is "shadow-presenting" a concert).

*Unless*, that is, your involvement **stakes claim** to it and makes it *larger than life*. Add a few simple on-air twists to a concert co-promotion and it suddenly "comes alive" as a true station "event", compelling listeners to go out of their way to *find* you. Like...

- ✓ Show us your X-109 signs inside the arena for a front-row ticket-upgrade or backstage pass
- ✓ Innovative ticket-giveaways (like the "concert countdown", giving away row 5 tickets five days before the event, row 4 six four days before, row 3 three days out, etc.)
- ✓ Interviews with concert-goers before a big concert builds anticipation and underscores your commitment
- ✓ So do interviews with the stars (both in advance & day of)
- ✓ A late-night post-concert "afterglow" special, spotlighting 30-60 minutes of songs that were featured at the concert, is a natural for concert-goers who scan their car-radio dial for such an "encore". Remember, in most markets, 20,000 sudden turn-ons represents a huge infusion into 11pm PUR-levels (so herding them into your stall could result in a major night spike).

Sometimes sales-driven promotions can be turned into events — but this must be done very carefully. Overtly commercial overtones can risk making it appear that your station is nothing more than a shell for its advertisers (which could have future ramifications when you're trying to convince listeners of the purity of your event-focus).

One of the more effective styles of sales-events is the theme "fair", where you bring together a consortium of varied advertisers (many of them "new-to-radio" advertisers). Bridal Fairs, Fan Fests, Kids Fairs, Medical Symposiums, Women's Expos, Success Forums, etc. etc. etc. Interesting on-air angles can usually be found in theme-events, especially station-exclusive events. For this reason, it's important that the PD be involved early on in the planning of such an event, to ensure that programming integrity is maintained and to help contribute sparklers that will make the event as interesting to *listen to* as it is to attend. (Remember, it's what comes out of the *speakers!*)

Holidays often serve as a natural springboard for great radio events. Let me share with you some of the better events from my tenure as OMPD of News/Talk KTAR in Phoenix.

"The KTAR Players". As part of the festive prelude to the Christmas season, KTAR presents a live theater production of Dickens' "A Christmas Carol" featuring "The KTAR Players", an always changing ensemble of local media, political, and sports celebrities (including, of course, all of the station's on-air personalities). Recent regulars in key guest roles have included such image-stretchers, for a N/T station, as Stevie Nicks and Alice Cooper (both of whom gave excellent performances, I might add).. At least one news anchor from each local TV station is cast in a key role, thus guaranteeing full coverage on the nightly news. The event is videotaped and shown (several times) on the local City Of Phoenix cable-access channel (with KTAR mike-flags very prominent). It's like watching an old-time radio drama, complete with the sound-effects-person on stage. A standing-room-only crowd is admitted free for a donation of a can of food for a local food bank's holiday pantry. (Another warm fuzzy).

One of the most original "from scratch" events I've ever been associated with was orchestrated three years ago...

War Of The Worlds '95. To commemorate the classic Orson Welles Mercury Theatre broadcast of Halloween 1938, KTAR presented an *updated* version, written and produced by Duffy McMahon\*. Every creative angle was masterfully *localized*, and produced to sound apparently live (complete with true-to-life sound effects). All of the KTAR news reporters and talkhosts were included in the drama, reporting in exactly the way they would if they were covering a modern-day alien-invasion as a breaking news story. The station's usual format-identifiers were included in the script (making it sound even more realistic). Best of all — it was a sponsorable event (tastefully understated)).

\* If you would like to purchase the script for adaptation to your market, write to:  
Duffy McMahon in care of The Idea Factory, 7128 N. 23<sup>rd</sup> Way, Phoenix, AZ 85020

Which brings me to another important ingredient in the creative process of Event Radio — **Promotion**

**First, remember to attach your call-letters to it.** Claim the credit! **Always look for ancillary reinforcement of an event.** In the case of both "Christmas Carol" and "War Of The Worlds", these programming events were **heavily pre-promoted**.

**And post-promoted.** Instead of letting a station-exclusive event play only once and then vanish into the ether, **bring it back "by popular demand"!**

**Look for other unique ways to sell the sizzle and essence.**

Example: After "Christmas Carol", a live, backstage "cast party" featured KTAR talkhost Pat McMahon (who also starred as Scrooge) interviewing all the celebrities about the fun they had prepping for their roles and participating in the production). The station then *replayed* the event several times as part of its Christmas Eve & Christmas Day programming, resulting in many more listening-appointments by entire families.

(Continued — See Event Radio on Page 9)

## About "TW Tips"

At the end of each quarter, we'll issue a free "PD Index", to cross-reference every TW Tip into the following programming categories —

- 1000 series - The Audience
- 2000 series - Music
- 3000 series - Promotion/Marketing
- 4000 series - Contests
- 5000 series - Mornings
- 6000 series - Talent
- 7000 series - Leadership
- 8000 series - Morale
- 9000 series - Presentation
- 10000 series - News/Info
- 11000 series - Public Service
- 12000 series - Operations
- 13000 series - Talk
- 14000 series - Technical
- 15000 series - Internet
- 16000 series - Computers
- 17000 series - Sales
- 18000 series - Production
- 19000 series - Research
- 20000 series - Ratings
- 21000 series - Life
- 22000 series - Bookshelf

## Ocean Toons®

Check out Bobby Ocean's creative website ([www.bobbyocean.com](http://www.bobbyocean.com)). Full of interesting ideas, links, quotes, production and voiceover demos. E-Mail Osh at [oceanvox@pacbell.net](mailto:oceanvox@pacbell.net)  
Jeff Young's Radio 411 ([www.radio411.com](http://www.radio411.com)) is the cyber-home of Ocean Toons and the Bobby Ocean Cartoon Gallery.



## Event Radio Find A Parade ... And Get In Front Of It (Part 3)

(Continued — from Page 8)

Another example: Immediately after the 30-minute broadcast of "War '95," KTAR presented a special 2-hour call-in show, "The Making Of". Behind-the-scenes techniques like the impact of appropriate sound-effect use was demonstrated. Listeners could actually hear the program "being built", ask questions, and, of course, gush openly. The entire program, including "making of", was then given another complete airing that weekend in a loss-leader timeslot ("by popular demand", of course).

April Fool's Day is a great time for a News/Talk station to plan a "made for radio" event that leaves a smile on everyone's face. The best I've ever been involved with was "Suns Pay-Per-Listen". That year, the Phoenix Suns starting placing several of their NBA games on pay-per-view cable TV and many viewers were very upset about it. So, since KTAR was the radio voice of the Suns, many people *believed it* when we said we'd come up with a "new technology" that would enable us to provide "pay-per-listen" broadcasts. A series of promos explained that listeners would get the entire game for \$6.20 (our frequency) or pay 25 cents to hear the last five minutes. Newscasts even contained a soundbite from Suns owner Jerry Colangelo, who

played along with the prank saying, "Well, it's another way for us to bleed another dollar out of the market". Pay-per-listen would require that all listeners buy new "pay-radios" with a slot where you could deposit your money to hear the games. A special "pay-per-listen hotline" was set-up for listeners to "find out more" (callers were greeted with "April Fool!", and then encouraged to tell a friend and suck them in, too). All of the local TV stations covered the event. **Note:** In late February, **Programmer's Digest** will feature a run-down of some more of the world's greatest April Fool's radio pranks. If you'd like us to salute any of your favorites, please e-mail them to [tw3tw3@aol.com](mailto:tw3tw3@aol.com) or fax to (602) 948-7800.

**Don't forget the "magic".** Look for inventive ways to add the "pizzazz" to your coverage of an event. Even little things like creative use of rejoinder music, for example, can enhance the theme of an event and make it more appealing and accessible. (Use the Green Book to find song snippets that "fit"). Multiple reporters on-the-scene at multiple locations (even at the same venue) tend to make an event *come alive* (if it's important enough for you to cover from two or more audio "camera angles", the listener perceives that it must be BIG, therefore something they should find out more about, and thus can get "caught up" in).

TW Tip# 3143, #4073, #7135, #9130, #10042, #11011, #18013

## Programmer's Digest

### Disagree With Me — It's A Good Thing

Got a call from an enthusiastic "PD" subscriber the other day who said he found himself in agreement with my programming philosophies about 95% of the time.

But what he *really* liked was the challenge of the other 5% of the time when he disagreed (or maybe wasn't in *total* agreement) — because it forced him to *think* (deeply) about what he *really* believed in (and why).

### Putting You In Touch With Your Radio Brain

That's what our mission at **Programmer's Digest** is all about — presenting theories and concepts you may not have thought about top-of-mind for awhile and encouraging you to "take a position" (even if only in your own mind) so you have a better knowledge of *exactly where you stand* on all programming issues.

That's the cool thing about radio programming — there's not just *one* "right" way to do things. And what works well in one market may not work at all in another market (even a so-called "similar" market just 90 miles up the road).

So — If you disagree with one of my philosophies, chances are *you* are the one who's *right* (you will especially know what's "most right" for *your* market)!

As a consultant, I've always prided myself on helping my clients become more self-reliant than consultation

## Food For Thought

dependent. So, as you might guess, my Top 5 pet-peeve responses from a PD justifying a flawed theory are:

- "I don't know" (although I actually admire the honesty of this answer compared to the following lame reasons)
- "It just feels right"
- "We've always done it that way"
- "They were doing it that way before I got here"
- "Because Z-100 (or KIIS-FM, etc.) is doing it" (not necessarily in that order)

### The TW Challenge: *Think It Through*

The important thing is: make sure you *examine all angles* and *think through* any philosophies you challenge — *all the way through* (don't overlook the importance of thinking several "chess-moves" ahead). Most of all, remember to pinpoint a good reason *why* you believe the way you do.

Whatever you do, don't just accept what I'm saying as "gospel" (without considering how and why it applies to your market and competitive situation). Remember, I'm just trying to lob grenades (which will hopefully explode into "productive thought" in your mind, maybe even lead to a breakthrough or two).

All The Best,

TW

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