Welcome To '83!

After a short publishing hiatus, now here we go back on your desk again. Hope you were able, as I was, to spend the holidays with your family and friends and are now back in your refreshed and invigorated looking for making 1983 the best year country music has ever known. We'll certainly be working towards that goal from our end.

During the two-week break a good deal of correspondence and industry information found its way to my desk, so before moving on to the thoughts and concerns of Country radio in 1983, let's catch up on what's been happening while we've been mulling over such major concerns as where to slot those Christmas records or whether to have that red plaid sweater as a companion piece for your family's Christmas dinner. Preparations for the Country Radio Seminar are in full swing, and the Organizational Committee (OCR) is requesting your help. If your station would like to be included on the annual cassette tape labeled with call letters, city, state, and name of campaign to David Gerard, c/o WKSW-FM, One Playhouse Square, Cleveland, OH 44113. Finally, Frank Matta is requesting samples of station promotional materials (T-shirts, belt buckles, caps, bumperstickers, etc.) for display at the CRS in February. Send to Frank at Multi-hit Promotions, 50 Music Square West, Suite 604, Nashville, TN 37203. Deadline for the airchecks and video cassettes is January 7, so don't delay if you want your station included in these presentations.

As reported last year, Bob Neil named PD at WFIL/Philadelphia from neighboring WIP, filling the slot vacated by Kris Chandler, who remains as a consultant at his Rob Ryan-owned station. WFIL/Philadelphia is just one of several stations that Bob Neil, who's been in the industry for years, is consulting at. Readers who want to get the inside story on the consulting business or want to keep up on the latest in the consulting business should subscribe to The Consultant Report, published by CRSP-A (phone: 215-753-8550, fax: 215-753-8551). The Consultant Report is a monthly newsletter dedicated to the consulting business, which is rapidly expanding into a major industry.

Station Profile

KOMA/ Oklahoma City

P.O. Box 1520
Oklahoma City, OK 73101
(405) 794-1573

Owner: Storz Broadcasting Co.
Rep: Blair Radio

GM: Woody Woodard
PD: Gregg Lindahl
MD: John Pratt

KOMA, with 50,000 watts, covers not only the Oklahoma City market but also an extended area reaching “22 states and two foreign countries,” says station PD Gregg Lindahl. “In fact, once when we did a contest offering a trip to Oklahoma City and ran it on the night shift, we got responses from 25 states.”

The station, which changed from a rocker on September 12, 1980, is heavily involved in music research. “We’re doing market research and market calls on a weekly basis,” Greg explains. “So we take those calls and structure a sample out of those by calling about 100 people a week and asking them to give us their opinions on songs by playing them the hook. Then we tabulate the information and weight it out according to the way we want the demographics to be. Since you can’t really research these types of records, it’s incredibly important that we do research on the radio station. It’s pretty much a Top 40 type of format only playing country records. We’re very active promotionally, don’t play three in a row or anything like that. I definitely think we’re the most exciting radio station in this market. We’re also a full-service station with news, farm reports, etc. without saying we had much time to talk about music, which had to be the start.

As far as my programming philosophy goes, it’s win... at all costs! Seriously, you have to deal with everything that comes along on a case-by-case basis, always looking to stay fresh. The challenge for us is since we’re working radio stations it’s to maintain every day, that is the air, and we want to keep things interesting since we’re essentially playing the same things over and over again. I think that’s a programming challenge, but you could also call it the programming philosophy which we operate under.

Who Kicked The Habit First?

The October 8 article on WILQ/Williamsport and its “first in the nation” radio smoking clinic naturally brought letters from other stations which ran similar programs at earlier dates, such as the following:

Dear R&R:

Nice article on “WILQ Quits.” However, it’s not the first. Check with WRLQ in Marion, Ohio. Steve Cannon bought this in ’75 or ’76 when the 5-day plan first came out.

Rob Baxter, WMAY/Springfield, IL

However, by far the most informative letter comes from WCTC/New Brunswick, NJ. OM Jay H. Meyers, who notes that it’s not important who was first, but rather radio’s involvement in offering this public service to its listeners. Jay’s A/C-formatted station is tied in with the American Cancer Society for its presentation, and here he shares the structure of this program and the good results to come as well as some very encouraging follow-up results.

Dear R&R:

I am writing in response to Carolyn Parker’s column on the issue of radio’s involvement in offering the first radio smoking clinic in the nation.

In April 1981, WCTC and the American Cancer Society put together what we suspected was the first true radio quit-smoking clinic in the nation.

Our presentation was a three-week series consisting of a 15-minute program Monday through Friday evenings at 7:15pm. Participating in the show was Nelson Lair, a quit-smoking facilitator used by the American Cancer Society, and Brent Flesher, WCTC’s morning news anchor. Brent, then age 29, had been a two-to-three pack-a-day smoker since age 16.

We decided on one to one approach and the three-week period for the following reasons:

1) Participants in the program (the listeners) could relate their own feelings and difficulties through a real-life role model (Brent).

2) The Cancer Society advised us that quitting smoking is a long painful withdrawal process and that we should approach it in small tasks every day, that is doing a bit more or smoking a bit less, would prove more successful in the long run.

The Cancer Society backed us up offering free quit-smoking packets to anyone who wanted one. These packets were offered through WCTC promotional announcements, in the three weeks prior to the start of the series, and in newspaper ads.

The program was indeed true-to-life and real because of the great one-on-one friendship that Brent and Nelson built on the air. (They had only met once before the program began.) Additional listeners called in with their progress and the support and encouragement was tremendous. The results were so successful that the Cancer Society asked us to continue the program and we have done so ever since.

We have been asked on many occasions by other stations how we could provide the quit-smoking program. The best advice we can give them is to contact the local Cancer Society and ask them if they would support the program and, if so, how they can help.

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