

The year ahead will see the withering away of the network-independent controversy, as the concept of a unified medium makes headway among advertisers and agencies.

RADIO—

THE EVOLVING MEDIUM

By MATTHEW J. CULLIGAN, executive v.p., NBC Radio Network

Several major events have occurred recently which should go far toward demolishing some archaic notions about network and local radio, whether held by advertisers, agencies or the medium itself.

One such event is the step taken by the Todd Storz Broadcasting Company to affiliate with a network in an important market. Storz, who has been one of the industry's outstanding "young Turks," a leader in independent station operation, made a business decision based on an objective study of the total radio situation. He refused to wear the straight-jacket of a rigid national policy in a business where each market is quite different.

As soon as the shock of this unexpected move wore off, many station operators were forced to conclude, as had Todd Storz, that there is no incompatibility between network affiliation and outstanding local station operation.

Crucial hours are programmed by station

As most advertisers using radio know, a station must lead in its market between the hours of 6:00 a.m. and 10:00 a.m. and between 4:30 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. in order to be regarded as first or second in the area. This time, it should be noted, is programmed by the station itself, whether it be a network affiliate or an independent.

Studies of rating patterns over a five-year period in major markets show that network ratings follow local ratings very

closely. If, for example, the station that leads the market does well in the key morning and afternoon segments, the network programmed portions of the schedule will tend to do as well.

Radio programming for every taste

Over and above the question of station versus network is the concept which American advertisers hold of the radio medium in general. That it is the prime communications instrument in the country few would argue; it alone offers the only certain way to reach the entire population simultaneously, regardless of time, place or human activity. In a sense, the airways are like a typical large newsstand. There is programming for almost every taste. The music available in most markets ranges from rock 'n roll through popular music, standard and show tunes, to light classical and on through heavy classical on both AM and FM. News coverage ranges from the very lightest touch on headline events to reports in depth from around the world. Radio is, of course, indispensable to man's progress into outer space. And certainly, it will be the first human communications medium in space.

In the past decade, radio has been shaped more by external than internal forces, with television having wrought the most profound changes. However, the very nature of TV, its basic need for mass audiences in the evening hours because of

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