



WALT LOVE

URBAN CONTEMPORARY

OJAI, CA AND OCEAN CITY, MD

Small Market Winners With Major Market Strategies

Though located on opposite coasts, KMYX (K-Mix 106)/Ojai, CA and WOCQ (OC-104)/Ocean City, MD are alike in several ways. The UC-formatted outlets hold the number one crown in their respective markets, using sophisticated programming strategies to win.

Looking at the West Coast first, the Oxnard-Ventura TSA 12+ population is estimated at 662,500; MSA is 320,500. Arbitron Ethnic Control Procedures are not applied for black persons 12+, and the total is under 3%. The estimated 12+ Hispanic population is 92,300 — 28.8% of the total. K-Mix, CHR KCAQ (Q105), and Spanish KOXR all tied for #1 with a 6.7. K-Mix is third in the market 18-34, beating Q105.

K-Mix: Crossovers Key

Howard "HT" Thomas programs KMYX and doubles as the 3-7pm personality. He says so-called experts are wrong about a Black station needing a black audience to succeed. "We knew that most people like music performed by black artists. Most people look at it as Motown, because of that company's popularity in the '60s and early '70s.

"Clubs are our billboards and TV ads."

— Howard Thomas, K-Mix

"Most of us also like to dance. The best dance music happens to come from black artists, or white artists influenced by black musicians. No one in this area was offering this music, so we proved there was a market for it." (K-Mix debuted January 24, 1984.)

What does Thomas do differently from traditional UC stations? "Our oldies library is vastly unlike those I've seen in other cities. We wouldn't play an oldie by Luther Vandross like 'A House Is Not A Home' or 'Bad Boy'; but we would play 'Never Too Much' because it crossed over to CHR.

"We wouldn't play Rick James' 'Seventeen' or 'Cold Blooded', but we would play his 'You And I' and 'Super Freak' ... once again, crossover songs. So no matter what kind of radio local residents grew up with, CHR or UC, these songs will be familiar. In our current music we also try to air black artists who are crossing over; this way we make points with everybody. Since CHR stations are playing what they say is the best of the black artists, we're doing the same



in reverse. We're playing the best of white artists who don't have offensive, heavy guitar lines."

What CHR artists does KMYX play? "Bruce Hornsby & The Range and Duran Duran. Some UC stations won't touch these artists; they don't know if they fit. As long as music is in the mix, we'll air it. Dance music is our thing — we stick to our Urban base."

Promoting Without Big Bucks

Thomas said, "We haven't spent any money on our product yet, but I think we'll get some direct competition in the future. (So) our station is getting more involved in local concert promotion and advertising. We've been able to keep a big-market sound by bringing in well-known artists. Now we've got the rep for being the concert-connection station.

"Clubs are our billboards and TV ads. Five of my jocks are employed locally at clubs once or twice a week; some of them even do mobile disco dances. We've been promoting events at restaurants and nightclubs with clientele outside the urban listener stereotype; it reinforces our mass ap-

peal music approach. Working with hotels (i.e., dances at the Holiday Inn and Sheraton), restaurants, and historical landmarks, we've been able to improve our image. It's been a real positive for us."

Thomas said K-Mix covers other bases, too. "Most FM signals are afraid to get involved with sports on the air. We carry events like the NBA championship; we also carry local high school football and basketball. This is just another way of filling the void."

WOCQ: 'Inevitably Number One'

Salisbury-Ocean City's TSA population is estimated at 357,800 12+; the MSA is 197,800 persons 12+. The black population numbers 42,400 or 21.4%. That's not overwhelming, but it can make a difference. WOCQ moved up 12.0-12.4 and also grabbed the top slot in its 18-34 target. WJDY, the only other UC outlet, dropped 4.4-2.4 in the last book.

OC-104 MD/Asst. PD Scott Jantzen has been with the station since 1982. He credits three years in Washington, DC, working under (now Z100/New York PD) Scott Shannon, for his knowledge about defining music categories and what qualities a song should possess to fit those categories.

Outside of these CHR formats and the use of some research, Jantzen was reluctant to give away any other programming secrets. He would only admit that "PD Mike Filippelli and I look for a sound that we think will please the most amount of people who want to



The OC-104 staff: (l-r) Al Switzer/mornings, Al Thomas/middays, Mike Filippelli/PD & afternoon talent, Mari Lou/overnights, Scott Jantzen/Asst. PD/MD/evenings, The Wookie Man/weekends, and News Director Kelli Steele. Not pictured: weekenders Kenny Luck, Steve Geneveese, and Kim Hudson.

"dance & romance." (Note: Dave Allen, currently OM at WMYK/Virginia Beach, VA, was the person who kicked off the OC-104 format, originating the "Dance & Romance" slogan.)



"The end result," continued Jantzen, "is an air product that obtains our target audience and holds them. Our cume goes up; our quarter-hours skyrocket. So combining what Shannon taught me with our urban music, we're inevitably #1."

Wider Demo Appeal

Filippelli grew up in Baltimore, listening to WWIN-AM, WSID, WEBB, and WCAO, which was Top 40 then but played a lot of soul. He attributes OC-104's success to the expansion of its demographics. "We had a lot of teen numbers and our job was to widen our appeal. Since Allen already had us in a crossover position, all we've tried to do is make our sound more palatable for our fringe listeners.

"We needed to swing a few more adults our way by expanding our

recurrents (90 per day) for familiarity and cutting back on oldies. We still have oldies, but they're established hits from groups like the Dramatics, Intruders, Spinners, Main Ingredient, Staple Singers, Stylistics, Tower Of Power, Rufus, and Bloodstone. By bringing some of these things back and defining our sound, it's paid off."

WOCQ's Saturday programming is different from most UC outlets, which usually run mix shows. "Saturday nights are dedicated to syn-

"We're not an 'in-your-face' kind of station."

— Mike Filippelli, OC-104

dedicated programming," Filippelli explained. "We're #1 across the board on Saturday nights, so we plan to leave everything alone."

Low Talent Turnover

Filippelli said personality is another key ingredient to OC-104's continued success. "Our air talent turnover has been minimal — management has really made an effort to keep our staff together. And we use 'thought-starters,' not one-liner cards. We stay on our people to do show prep each day before going on the air. We want them to prepare their raps so they get the results they're looking for when they say something in front of the entire world. They're not just representing themselves, they're representing us all.

"We're not an 'in-your-face' kind of station. You'll never hear loud promos: our thing isn't pumping out loud songs, commercials, one-liners, or any of that stuff. We work at uniformity, and never say black or white on the station. The niche for us is being human and caring about what we do and what goes out over our airwaves. Our thing is people."



K-Mix PD Howard Thomas congratulates a "Big Spin" winner; in photo #2, morning personality Johnny Chambers, Thomas, and Motown's Ron Daniels enjoy the Motown Madness party.