

THE RADIO WAVE
"Keeping Radio People in Touch"

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THE RADIO WAVE

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G'DAY!

Firstly thanks to everyone who helped swell our subscription
base by sending copies of last month's issue to others who
may be interested in subscribing to The Radio Wave.

In fact, many were and I'd like to welcome those newcomers
to our ranks. Be aware that you're welcome to submit any
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WE HAVE MAIL

Firstly for Aussie readers and those interested...

Dear Macca

My new Website is now available by clicking www.waynemacs.com

The Site has been designed to stir up interest in my forthcoming book 'DON'T TOUCH THAT DIAL: Hits 'n' Memories of Australian Radio'.

Please visit the Site when you can and bookmark it for quick reference.

Thank you and I look forward to your feedback on the Site.

Regards,

Wayne

COMMENT: Wayne has been working on this book forever...and if some of the preview photos on his site are anything to go by...it will be well worth the wait.

Following comments last month about the lack of creative radio commercials caused by bad copywriting DAVID HAGUE sent me a copy of an article he wrote in the DIGITAL PRODUCER MAGAZINE.COM forum. Here's what he said:

Where Has All the Imagination Gone
Creativity Goes Begging In Favour of Laziness
By David Hague

I have been involved in and out of radio for many years. From motor sports commentary, technology shows and even a DJ for a short time, I love radio - its immediacy and intimacy. Much friendlier than television in many ways.

But now, with digital radio on our doorstep, is it not time to take a step sideways and have a look at one aspect of radio that to me at least, is almost an embarrassment?

Advertising. Or more correctly, the quality of advertising.

As creative professionals, I am sure (at least I hope) that we all cringe when we listen to the current clichéd bunch of excuses for adverts that seem to be the current trend.

Ads like the one for the rent a car company (that is mimicked by heavens knows how many others) where the voice over guy starts the "read", gets to the part about the "5th day is free" then asks the sound booth operator if it is true.

Switch to tinny voice of sound booth operator confirming and telling him to get on with it. Nauseating and been done a hundred times.

Or the fictitious "testimonial" a la Mathemagic Computer Tutor where the (assumedly) mother and father try and convince us their young 'un has gone from 170 something in the group to 40 something in 3 terms of maths tutoring. At one point

this ad seemed to be running about three to the hour on one station for 8 hours a day for a week.

And who could forget your best :

Person 1: "Did you see that xyz are selling abc for 123?
Hey where are you going"
Person 2: "To xyz to get an abc for 123 of course"
Person 1: "Wait for me!"

These style ads were running in the 1960's for goodness sake. And don't give me the nonsense they are still with us because they work.

If that were true we also would be copping more of the same with TV (yes I know we DO get a portion of repetitive style ads that also have been around for yonks, but there is also a lot of innovation as technology has matured). These radio ads are still with us because copywriters have got lazier and lazier.

Let's hope with the digital format giving more scope that some imagination and creativity can be brought to play.

(David Hague's past experiences include writing and directing the suite of training videotapes for Microsoft for Office and Windows, training tapes for Filemaker Pro and Autocad Lite and numerous TV commercials, documentaries and corporate videos.

He is also the Managing Editor of Australian Video Camera Publications which produces the monthly Australian VideoCamera magazine and associate editor of the quarterly Australian Home Entertainment Buyers Guide. He also has a bent for motor sport and an unashamed Aussie who makes a killer Home Brew.)

COMMENT: David tells me he's had a heap of uncomplimentary emails since that article appeared. Obviously from peeved copywriters. Personally I think he's spot on.

THE SIMPLE FACTS

In previous Off the Dial reports I've often touched on the increasingly competitive state of the radio industry. Biting at the tail of the established terrestrial broadcasters are internet radio, wireless internet radio (which will let you listen away from your computer such as in the car) and satellite radio.

However I keep noticing a lot of inaccurate and hysterical information written about these challenges and it's mostly come from the sort of people who are always first to adopt and promote any new technology that comes along. (You know them!)

So I was pleased to see that, in the U.S., Bridge Ratings have done some very interesting research to get to the truth about the alternatives facing traditional radio.

Here's their projections...

Satellite radio is likely to have 35 million subscribers by 2010. Internet radio however will surpass that easily moving from 50 million today to 187 million users in five years. The figures show that internet radio is already preferred over satellite radio.

The president of Bridge, Dave Van Dyke, said: "According to this data, wireless internet radio represents the biggest challenge - not satellite radio."

"The internet radio solution will be aggregated in a portable device, much like an iPod or MP3 player with docking ports in your car and in every room in your home so it can be heard through car and home entertainment audio components."

Van Dyke went on: "Don't get me wrong. There is, indeed, something going on at more than the grassroots level of "radio" listening fuelled by all of this new technology. It just appears that the 'wolf' isn't banging on our door yet; he's still a few miles away."

"But for traditional radio, the point of fact is that it needs to remain focused on what it does and has always done. Be local and live and relate to its community and let the facts of the coming impact of technology remain clear."

RADIO HAS SHOT ITSELF IN THE FOOT

Meantime another story out of the U.S. was not so positive for terrestrial radio.

As networks such as Clear Channel cut right back on the number of commercials played every hour in an attempt to lure disenchanted listeners back to FM radio the VP of Radio Programming at MTV Networks Digital Music Service said that they may have left their run too late.

Quincy McCoy said he believes: "It's never been the commercials and it's never really been the music. It really comes down to the talent. It's always been what's between the records that counts."

"If you go back into the '70s and early '80s, WABC in New York was the Number 1 station for years. Now, WABC played a lot of commercials. But you had great (on air) talents... in between the records, entertaining the audience."

"Guys like Howard Stern -- these are the last guys that came out of the old school of broadcasting. They started small, they worked their way up, they worked their craft and now they're stars," McCoy said. "That's what makes the Stern move so interesting because he's the last remnant of the great radio personalities. Now he's leaving and who's going to take his place? Nobody."

"You take the talent away and it can't be replaced. And broadcasters never assumed that was their job," he said.

That's very true and as a result radio stations now have to look to stand-up comics, television and sporting personalities and anywhere else.

Have you noticed?

BLATANT SELF-SERVING PLUG

I've just launched a new web site.

It's based on the fact that everyone wants to improve their life somehow. Whether it be financially, physically, mentally or romantically.

So the home page is a direct link to thousands of downloadable e-books that can help in whatever field interests you.

You simply type in the type of information you want in the search box and you'll be given a list of the top selling publications in your chosen category.

Further down the page I list products I've personally used or checked out. I think you'll find these interesting.

Have a look.

Weblink: www.maccasmarketplace.com

FAT HEAD

Jeremy Powell, also known as "Fat Kid" from 99X-Atlanta was arrested after approaching a homeowner posing as a church representative looking to buy pornography so he could "clean up the neighbourhood"

Apparently Fat Kid read the lady and her husband a list of vulgar magazine and movie titles within earshot of the couple's three children, ages 15, 13 and 11. She says she asked him to leave several times. When Mr. Fat Kid refused the police were called and he was prevented from departing until the authorities arrived.

Police seized a recording of the conversation made by Fat and he was arrested for criminal trespass but was released later that same day.

The local District Attorney says he plans to prosecute Fat Kid and possible penalties for a conviction are a \$1000 fine and 12 months in jail.

POD GETS THE NOD

It had to happen. But so soon?

Considering that it's been less than a year since the iPod made its first appearance, the popularity of the downloading device is now made evident by the launch of the world's first podcasting radio station.

Which means that the content on KYOURADIO-1550am in San Francisco will be created exclusively by its listeners.

Joel Hollander, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Infinity Broadcasting, said: "We envision KYOURADIO not only as a place to hear a fresh and new perspective created from the outside but an outlet with which to foster the creativity of undiscovered talent from all walks of life."

Podcasting technology allows users to create and upload their own audio programs on the Internet which can be downloaded to multimedia players at a later date. The software also lets users subscribe to their favourite podcasts and have them sent automatically to their players for listening at their convenience.

Users can now upload their podcasts of varying lengths for free at <http://www.kyouradio.com> where it will be eligible to be selected for broadcast. Programming on the station will be determined by listener interests and feedback, and evaluated on a daily basis.

From Monday May 16th. (USA time) you'll be able to hear the results of this brave experiment. They'll be streamed online at that same URL.

Meantime I notice nothing is being said about the fate of the people who WERE on air before the iPod took over. Although I guess that's not too difficult to work out.

MEASURING UP THE AUDIENCE

There's an interesting sideline to the field tests of Arbitron's Portable People Meters being carried out in Houston this year.

Apart from measuring their radio listening, respondents carrying PPM's will have their advertising exposure measured at the movies.

Two multiplex theatres, with a total of 46 screens, will encode pre-movie advertising features that will broadcast unique identification codes to be picked up by the meters.

What information is the theatre chain looking for? Well, for a start whether the audience is actually in their seats looking at the ads. Plus how effective their own campaigns advertising their movies are in bringing people into their movie houses.

To do this they look at the media schedule that ran for

particular movies, check for PPM respondents who were exposed to that campaign on either radio or TV and match the response against the cinema they attended.

A neat bit of research but, while it may show what ads attracted the punters and it may show how many are being exposed to the on-screen ads, I don't see how the PPM's can indicate the number who are actually watching them rather than talking to their friends or passing round the popcorn.

HEAVENS ABOVE!

An evangelical Christian talk show host who questioned the beliefs of the Catholic church and discussed a caller's question about whether the late Pope John Paul II would go to heaven has been fired.

Marty Minto, 39, a senior pastor at the 100-member Turning Point Community Church, was fired after three years as a host on WORD-FM in Pittsburgh. He said he was told that he was alienating listeners.

"As far as I'm concerned, I was doing what I've always done on the radio...look at events around the world from a biblical perspective. I've always been willing to talk about controversial subjects," said Minto, who has had shows in Albany, N.Y., Denver and Phoenix.

In the program he questioned some of the Catholic church's beliefs such as purgatory and fielded a question from a caller who asked whether the pope would go to heaven. Apparently many evangelical Christians believe that someone must be a "born-again" believer to get through the Pearly Gates.

Wonder if they finished the segment with Dylan's "Knocking on Heaven's Door"?

Probably not.

PERFECT FOR THE JOB

The Australian Southern Cross network sent a 2UE-Sydney journalist to cover drug arrests of Aussie tourists and the Schapelle Corby marijuana trial, (Busted for carrying a load of marijuana in her boogie board bag. Claims innocence), in Bali.

Who else but...Justin Hale. (say it!)

If there is anyone you know either in or outside the radio industry who would like to receive THE RADIO WAVE please get them to ask to be subscribed by simply sending a blank e-mail to:

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