



Arbitron, Games, And You

Playing To Win With The Younger Demos

I have a friend who attended Radio Ink's Forecast 2007 event at the Harvard Club in New York. He loved the event, but chuckled at one presenter who talked about how radio creates great content. My friend, the owner of a group of stations, said, "What does radio create? Aren't we just a delivery service for the creations of others? We don't write the songs, sing the songs, play the instruments, or produce the music. We just choose from what's offered to us."

This has to change if radio wants to remain a primary medium. We must unleash the creative hounds.

Evidently, the head of Arbitron agrees. "You will be the people who teach radio to push off the bank and paddle ahead," Steve Morris said recently to a group of programmers. "I can't think of a more important role in radio than the one you have."

Did you notice how gracefully Morris put a positive spin on the statement that radio is stuck in the mud? He said in effect: This ship has run aground, boys. She be stuck in the clay. Now you lads put your backs into it, and push this grand ship back where she belongs.

I like Steve Morris. He's perceptive and articulate. "There are few bold and innovative ideas for the young audience," he said. "Behind the scene, I hope you're doing some work on reaching the 12-17 age group."

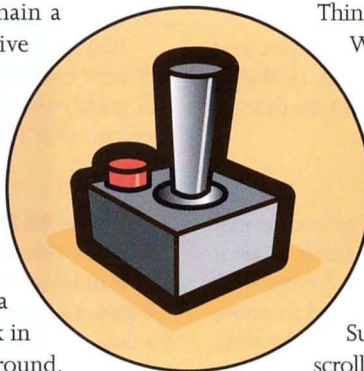
Again, the positive spin. Morris talks about what he hopes is happening "behind the scene," which is an elegant way of saying, "There's no visible evidence that any of you are doing anything to reach tomorrow's core audience."

If radio wants to learn how to create great content, I say get Steve Morris to teach a class on it. There's a man who can tell you to go to hell and make you look forward to the trip.

But Morris can also speak plainly. "Radio is moving too slowly," he cautions, "and the difference between us and other media is widening, not narrowing."

As I said, Morris is perceptive and articulate. And bold. Radio needs more people like him.

Let's take a closer look at those last two statements made by the CEO of Arbitron, a man with vast research at his fingertips:



1. There are few bold and innovative ideas for the young audience.

2. Radio is moving too slowly.

Did you know that the values, tastes, and preferences you'll carry throughout your life essentially were formed between your 12th and 15th birthdays? These are the golden years of identity formation, the years when we decide who we'll be.

Things loved during those years will be loved forever. Wounds gained during those years will forever be scars, pushing us to prove ourselves or robbing us of confidence. And anything judged as irrelevant during those years will remain irrelevant for life.

As Nintendo was gaining popularity in the late 1980s, anyone who predicted those kids would still be playing videos games 20 years later would have been laughed out of the room.

Nintendo went deep and wide in 1991 with Super Nintendo featuring stereo sound, multiple scrolling backgrounds, and twice the internal memory.

Find someone who was 12 in 1991 (they'll be 27 today,) and ask them if they're familiar with the massive multiplayer online role-playing game *Worlds of Warcraft*. Be ready to get an earful. That one game currently has 7.5 million players worldwide, each one paying a monthly subscription fee for the privilege of logging on.

In his academic research article "The Psychology of Massive Multi-User Online Role-Playing Games," Nicholas Yee* found that the average MMORPG player spends almost 23 hours a week playing the game, **and the average age is 27 years old.** Women comprise 43 percent of the market.

What will be radio's Super Nintendo?

Study the radio TSL trends of younger demos since 1991; step back and take a longer view of radio than just 90 days. *Lose America's 12- to 15-year-olds and radio will quietly disappear over the horizon as today's 30+ population withers and dies.*

Is radio losing the next generation? Steve Morris seems to think so, and I agree. But he and I are merely outside commentators, standing on the shore, looking at a ship stuck in the mud.

You are the crew on the ship. What do you plan to do?

Roy H. Williams, president of Wizard of Ads Inc., may be reached at Roy@WizardofAds.com.

QUICKREAD™

- Is radio losing the next generation?
- We must unleash the creative hounds in order to appeal to radio's future listeners.
- What will be radio's Super Nintendo?

* Nicholas Yee, "The Psychology of Massive Multi-User Online Role-Playing Games: Motivations, Emotional Investment, Relationships and Problematic Usage," R. Schroder & A. Axelsson (Eds.), *Avatars at Work and Play: Collaboration and Interaction in Shared Virtual Environments* (London: Springer Verlag, 2006): p. 9.



A Diagnostic Tool For Marketing

Permission Granted To Print And Hand Out To Your Advertisers

Is your business growing slower than you think it should? Do you suspect its slow pace might have something to do with ineffective marketing? Average business owners feel their business should be growing faster, but few know how to isolate the problem. Today we're going to fix that.

The elements that affect the growth of your business will fit into one of four distinct categories. Understand these categories, and you'll have a framework for self-examination.

1. Share of Voice: What is your percentage of the total exposure for all the businesses in your category? How much of the total signage is yours? TV advertising? Radio advertising? Newspaper? Direct mail? Web traffic? If there are news stories related to your category, do they mention your brand or someone else's? What percentage of the word-of-mouth advertising is yours? Each of these contributes to your total share of voice.

Share of voice can be purchased. But be careful; most advertisers try to reach too many people. To avoid that, buy more repetition from fewer vendors. Be an important advertiser to one or two audiences instead of an invisible advertiser to three or four.

A message of true importance needs to be delivered only once to be remembered. But is your message really that important to your customer? Is it safe to assume that your message will be remembered after being heard only once or twice?

Question: "What about targeting? You haven't said anything about reaching the right people."

Answer: I've never seen a business fail because it was reaching the wrong people. But I've seen hundreds fail because it was (1) reaching too many people with too little repetition, or (2) delivering a message that no one cared about. You'll be surprised how many people suddenly become the right people when you begin delivering a more impressive message.

2. Impact Quotient: How impressive is your offer when compared to the offers of your competitors? To be impressive, your idea must first be believable, so close the loopholes in your message.

Loophole Open: Advertisers often cry, "Everything Must Go!" But the listener is thinking, "Or what? What happens if you don't sell it? You'll just come up with some new angle next week, right?"

Loophole Closed: "Everything must go! Any jewelry not sold by the end of the day will be melted down and sold as scrap. This means that until 9 o'clock tonight you can buy finished jewelry for slightly more than the value of the raw materials."

3. Personal Experience Factor: Do you exceeding your customers' expectations, or fall short of them? Do you have the

brands they prefer, or are you pushing a weak alternative? Are your prices higher or lower than expected? A strong ad will only temporarily prop up a business that delivers a weak personal experience factor. Unimpressive reputations nullify impressive ads. Have you been trying to solve an internal problem with external advertising?

4. Market Potential: What will be the total dollar volume sold in your product or service category this year? What percentage of that financial pie is yours? If you don't have access to this information, there are two easy ways to get it. (1) Carefully list every competitor you face along with your best estimate of their sales volume in your trade area. This can usually be done with a reasonable degree of accuracy. How many employees do they have? How much inventory? Square footage? Estimate objectively, and don't leave anyone out. (2) Contact a trade organization or Google to find a figure for total, nationwide sales volume in your category. Divide that number by the population of the United States to get a per-capita sales volume. Multiply that number times the population of your trade area. You'll be surprised how close the two numbers are.

It's easier to grow small businesses than large ones. Show me a business selling only 5 percent of the market potential in their category, and I'll show you a business with huge growth potential. Show me a competitor eight times as large that's currently selling 40 percent of their market potential, and I'll show you a business that will have to work very hard to hang onto what they've got.

Uncommitted customers are the easiest to steal. Consequently, early growth comes with less effort than later growth, when the low-hanging fruit has all been picked. The business selling 40 percent of their market potential must now fight to win those customers who have some degree of loyalty to a competitor. Rarely does a business achieve more than 40 percent of the total, potential volume in their product or service category.

Examine your business through the four lenses of share of voice, impact quotient, personal experience factor, and market potential, and you'll quickly identify what's been holding you back.

Advertising can't change your personal experience factor or your market potential. But a focused media plan will dramatically improve your share of voice, and better ad writing will dramatically increase your impact quotient.

Go, grow your business. Live the American dream. 

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Peter Pan And Superman

Writer, Are You Ready To Fly?

You've been told that radio is theater of the mind. But how does a writer build props in the mind? Are they already there? How does one set the stage, direct the actors, control the action?

The answer to all these questions is *context*.

Glance at the headline above and you instantly think "Imaginary characters." Add angels to that list, and the category will blur to "Characters who do good" if you believe in angels, but will remain unchanged if you consider them to be imaginary. Change it to read "Peter Pan, Superman, Angels, and Airplanes," and a new category will emerge, "Things that can fly."

Pattern recognition is an important function of the right hemisphere of the brain. *Grouping* is a form of pattern recognition.

The Atomists of the late 1800s believed the nature of things to be absolute and not dependent on context. Gestalt theorists disagreed. They believed that the human mind instinctively creates wholes out of incomplete elements, and that the nature of a thing is greatly altered by its *context*.

You've likely never heard of the Atomists. This is because they were wrong. The Gestalt theorists, however, were right. They said humanity's instinctive **grouping of characteristics** causes us to interpret things in predictable ways. The laws of organization that determine grouping are:

1. **proximity** — items will be grouped according to their nearness
2. **similarity** — items similar in some respect will be grouped together
3. **closure** — items will be grouped to complete a larger entity
4. **simplicity** — items will be organized into simple figures according to symmetry, regularity, and smoothness

Understand these laws of organization and you will (a) enlarge your power to transfer perception, communicate, write more effective radio ads, and (b) accelerate your ability to solve problems.

Can you fly? Can you?

Now let me ask differently: In your mind, can you?

You probably weren't sure how to answer the first question — Can you fly? — because you didn't know if I was being literal or figurative. When I asked the follow-up — Can you? — it created a context of doubt, and caused you to suspect that

I was asking if you could fly literally.

Context matters. Claude Monet knew the color of an object would change according to the reflections of objects near it. His understanding of *context* allowed him to unleash the visual phenomenon known as French Impressionism.

Every great writer knows the same thing. John Steinbeck, in a note to his friend Pascal Covici, said, "It is as though the words spread out like dye in water and color everything around them. A strange and mystic business, writing."

Choose your words according to the baggage they carry. Then pair those words with others that carry similar bags, and watch for the reflected color.

Superman + Peter Pan = Imaginary Characters

Superman + Airplanes = Things That Can Fly

As you read, so will you write. Writer, are you ready to fly? Stretch your wings, and let your face feel the glow from the words of the masters:

"World-class cereal-eating is a dance of fine compromises. The giant heap-of sodden cereal, awash in milk, is the mark of the novice. Ideally one wants the bone-dry cereal nuggets and the cryogenic milk to enter the mouth with minimal contact and for the entire reaction between them to take place in the mouth. The best thing is to work in small increments, putting only a small amount of Cap'n Crunch in your bowl at a time and eating it all up before it becomes a pit of loathsome slime, which, in the case of Cap'n Crunch, takes about thirty seconds... He pours the milk with one hand while jamming the spoon in with the other, not wanting to waste a single moment of the magical, golden time when cold milk and Cap'n Crunch are together but have not yet begun to pollute each other's essential natures." — Neal Stephenson, from *Cryptonomicon*

Examine Stephenson's passage more closely, and you'll see how he creates context with his first four words "World-class cereal-eating," and then immediately introduces a metaphor, "is a dance..." He then controls the action with images built from combinations of words that carry delightfully unexpected context: bone-dry cereal nuggets...cryogenic milk...small increments...loathsome slime...jamming the spoon...magical, golden time.

Get the taste of great literature in your mouth, and then watch the colors that will flow from your pen. Avoid action books like *The DaVinci Code*, whose appeal is mostly in its pace and plot. Seek those masters who can write about eating a bowl of cereal and make the scene glow like a Monet in a spotlight. John Steinbeck, Tom Robbins, and Neal Stephenson are masters of creative context.

You know your way to the bookstore, right? Happy flying. 

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QUICKREAD™

- How does a writer build props in the mind? How does one set the stage, direct the actors, control the action?
- Gestalt theorists believed that the nature of a thing is greatly altered by its context.
- Examine the masters of creative context — and watch your writing soar.



CPY — A New Calculation For Efficiency

OLD SCHOOL: Reach x Frequency = Gross Impressions.

The underlying assumption of Gross Impressions is that all impressions are equal. But useful information requires less repetition to be remembered.

At the risk of sounding like a flake, I believe it's bad practice to calculate Cost Per Point. Yes, my office buys tens of millions of dollars in radio each year, and we buy it one station at a time. No, we've never calculated Gross Impressions or Cost Per Point. Yes, our radio clients tend to be much more successful than most.

To weigh and relate the salient factors in a manner that more accurately reflects the process of persuading a listener, you need only calculate Cost Per Person Per Year.

NEW SCHOOL: Radio is auditory mass media, and its highest and best use is brand building. Here's how we evaluate branding schedules submitted by radio stations:

1. Look at the net, weekly cume audience (Adults 18+) in the typical ONE-WEEK schedule of a 52-week buy.
2. Check to be sure the frequency achieved in this one-week schedule is at least 3x.
3. Be sure the schedule includes no broad rotators to distort the numbers.
4. Look at the total cost of the 52-week schedule.
5. Divide this amount by the net, weekly cume.
6. The yielded sum is Cost/Person/Year, or CPY.

Although this may look like a loose way of calculating CPP, here's the difference: The calculation of points requires that reach and frequency be multiplied to Gross Impressions. Then, Gross Impressions divided by Population = Gross Rating Points.

It is important to avoid blurring the line between reach and frequency. Contrary to the assumption made in the calculation of Gross Rating Points, reach and frequency are not interchangeable. Would you rather reach 100 percent of the people one time, or 10 percent of the people 10 times? Either way, it's 100 GRPs. See the foolishness?

Cost/person/year gives us a more accurate assessment of the efficiency of a schedule.

Yes, our major decisions are made using only Adults 18+. Demographic breakouts are used secondarily, but not with the weight one might assume.

Q: Let's assume the client is selling engagement rings. Aren't you concerned that while a station may have a large A18+ audience, this audience may be heavily skewed to older women or men who are less likely to be in the market for an engagement ring than a younger male/female?

A: Sigh. The question reflects a prejudice that can only have its root in philosophical theory, because in reality, few radio stations are "heavily skewed" male or female, old or young.

But for the sake of the question, let's assume that some

radio stations are, in fact, heavily skewed, and that we're trying to sell engagement rings:

1. KABC is a popular station and 60 percent of their audience is 25-54.
2. WXYZ is a huge station, but 60 percent of their audience is older than 54.
3. The spot rates for OldPeople-WXYZ are 20 percent higher than for EngagementTarget-KABC.

Which station should we buy?

Most buyers would say buy EngagementTarget-KABC. Why would we pay 20 percent higher spot rates for WXYZ when 60 percent of their audience isn't even our target? This kind of logic keeps them from considering stations like WXYZ.

Now let's look deeper. **The key is to quit looking at percentages and start looking at persons.**

The 25-54 audience of KABC is 100,000 persons. This means they have 66,667 more listeners, whether we want them or not, who are either older than 54 or younger than 25. Their total audience is 166,667 persons.

The 54+ audience of WXYZ is 150,000 persons. This means the remaining 40 percent is composed of **100,000 persons under the age of 54**. In other words, OldPeople-WXYZ reaches as many people under 54 as does EngagementTarget-KABC.

So for a 20 percent higher spot rate, we get 250,000 total listeners on WXYZ instead of 166,667 total listeners on KABC.

Now let's normalize the rate:

KABC's 166,667 persons plus 20 percent (remember, WXYZ costs 20 percent more) = 200,000 persons

WXYZ beats that number by 50,000 persons. You get these people for free.


Buy OldPeople-WXYZ and you'll reach just as many under-54 listeners as KABC, plus a boatload of influencers.

I can already hear it, "Yes, but if 60 percent of WXYZ is older than 54, it stands to reason that the other 40 percent will skew older than 45 instead of younger than 45."

Sorry, populations don't work that way. It's just not mathematically possible for that many people to fit into that small a cell.

WXYZ is a better buy for engagement rings. Put your money there. Get over it.

If you feel this outlook is grievously flawed, send a letter to editor@radioink.com and tell him I'm stupid. But if you see a flicker of new wisdom and would like to go deeper down the rabbit hole, you might be surprised at what we find on the other side.

The editor will be checking his e-mail in a few minutes. Will you invest a moment to cast your vote? 

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30 Seconds = \$2.6 Million

The Wisdom Of Super Bowl Ads — Or Not

Super Bowl ads have, for years, been little more than a beauty contest for advertising agencies. An iconic, cultural phenomenon that makes very little sense, they are the advertising equivalent of bathing suit girls with big eyes and high heels talking about their dream of world peace.

Thirty seconds for 2.6 million dollars.

The price of one Super Bowl ad could make an advertiser's name a household word to **50 percent** of the population of Southern California, where it would buy enough radio repetition for the average listener to hear the ad **4 times a week, 52 weeks a year** throughout Los Angeles, San Diego, Orange County, and the Inland Empire (Riverside and San Bernadino). Altogether, **several thousand ads** would air, reaching nearly **10 million people**.

But what about the actual ads? Americans look forward to Super Bowl ads almost as much as they look forward to the game. Do the people's favorite ads get the best results? And how might we apply this knowledge to radio?

The Dumbest Super Bowl Ad of 2007: Fed-X Ground. Although it was one of the more clever and entertaining ads this season, it will prove to be counterproductive.

Remember the ad? A bunch of people are sitting in a conference room:

MANAGER: Fed-X saved us with their overnight service so we've added Fed-X Ground for everyday shipping.

JOEL: Ground? That doesn't sound fast.

RELAXED GUY LEISURELY HOLDING COFFEE: Actually Joel, Fed-X Ground is faster than you think.

MANAGER: We can't judge things by their name. Don't you agree Harry?

EXTREMELY HAIRY GUY: Absolutely.

MANAGER: Eileen?

GIRL LEANING HARD ON HARRY: Of course.

MANAGER: Joy?

JOY: (gives an effervescent giggle with a beaming smile)

MANAGER: Bob?

BOB: (bobs his head up and down in an extreme fashion)

GUY WITH HUGE DOUBLE-CHIN: You see, Joel, we all agree that Fed-X Ground is fast, despite the name "Ground."

MANAGER: Well said, Mr. Turkeyneck.

The ad ends with the Fed-X logo revolving quickly to reveal four variations — Fed-X Ground, Fed-X Express, Fed-X Kinko's, Fed-X Freight — while an off-camera announcer says: Fed-X Ground. Fast. Reliable. And for less than you think.



Here are the four major problems with the ad:

1. The ad clearly illustrates that Joel was right; you **can** judge things by their name.
2. The people arguing that Fed-X Ground is fast "despite the name" appear bizarre and ridiculous. Joel is the only normal person in the room. We identify with Joel, not with the others. And Joel thinks Fed-X Ground will be slow.
3. "For less than you think" is ambiguous ad-speak. Specifics are always more powerful than generalities. "For as little as 2 dollars a package" is specific. And far more impressive.
4. The ending of the ad is soft and unfocused. We're not yet convinced that Fed-X Ground is a worthy alternative to UPS, and it seems that Fed-X isn't completely convinced either. In the end, they want to be sure we realize there are at least three other Fed-X options: Fed-X Express, Fed-X Kinkos, and Fed-X Freight.

The Smartest Super Bowl Ad of 2007: Two Lions for Taco Bell

Remember the ad? Two lions are looking at a group of campers who are eating lunch while on safari. The lions smell the new Steak Taquito from Taco Bell. The rest of the ad is one lion trying to teach the other how to pronounce *carne asada*, the type of steak used in the Taquito.

Here's what makes the ad work:

1. A lion is King of the Jungle, their opinion is respected.
2. Lions are meat-eaters, carnivores.
3. Viewers learn how to pronounce *carne asada*, thereby increasing their comfort level when ordering at Taco Bell.
4. The ad ends with a mouth-watering close-up of a freshly grilled *carne asada* steak as it's being sliced. You definitely want to taste it.
5. The ad is focused on one thing: the *carne asada* Steak Taquito. Taco Bell's agency had the wisdom not to include any images or descriptions of other Taco Bell products.

Radio writers make a lot of the same mistakes as TV writers.

Are your ads entertaining but counterproductive, like the Fed-X ad? Or are they focused and convincing, like the Taco Bell ad.

Follow the lead of Fed-X Ground if your goal is to entertain America. But if you want to sell product, I suggest you study the script of Taco Bell. 🍽️

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How To Sell Ads On Tiny Stations

Even At A Market's Smallest Station, Huge Sales Success Is Possible

The question, "How big is your audience?" has two distinct answers. If a person wants to know how many listeners will hear a commercial that plays only once on your station, give them your AQH numbers.

But how many advertisers play a commercial only once? And where did we get the idea that average quarter hour is an important number? **Cume** and **frequency** and **relationship** are what radio is all about.

So if they want to know the total number of people your station will reach, give them your cume numbers, as in cumulative. Sell your cume. Sell frequency. Sell radio's relationship to its listeners: Americans are addicted to their talk shows and their music. Radio is the mirror we look into to see ourselves.

I cut my teeth selling radio for the number 23 station in a city with 23 stations, Tulsa, OK. I stayed at that station for several years. And I made a lot of money.

Tulsa has a metro population of 732,000. My station's AQH was usually 500 to 800 persons. A really big hour for us would reach maybe 1,500 listeners. But we had a 12-plus weekly cume of 19,000 listeners. That's all I needed to know. That's all anyone needed to know.

My format was the 19,000 People format. "Could 19,000 people make a difference to your business?"

My dial position was the 19,000 People dial position. "I can deliver only 19,000 people, but give me time and I'll make your name a household word to all 19,000 of them."

"My radio station is a mirror with 19,000 people looking into it to see a reflection of themselves. And from now on when they look into it, I want them to see you in there with them."



No, I didn't sell agencies. Are you kidding? Tulsa had maybe 12 advertising agencies, and exactly 22 stations a lot bigger than mine were all hot to trot for those dollars. But the city had a few thousand owner-operated businesses that weren't represented by an agency, and very few of them could afford frequency and consistency on any station bigger than mine. I had thousands of prospects.

I learned early that it wasn't any harder to sell 52-week schedules than it was to sell flights and packages. You just had to ask for 52 weeks up front and not back down. "Our goal is for your name to be the one people think of immediately when they, or any of their friends, need what you sell. Your first 90 days on the air is essentially an investment in the future. The chickening-out period is between week 8 and week 13. If you don't have the financial and emotional staying power to hang

tough until we begin to gain some momentum together in months 4 and 5, then you probably just ought to keep doing whatever you're currently doing."

Did I sell everyone I encountered? Of course not. Did I keep my station sold out with 52-week schedules that renewed year after year? You bet I did.

Selling the ads was the easy part. Making them work was hard. But the better I got at making ads work, the easier they were to sell. I figured out how to plant word-flags in my ads so that my advertisers would be able to see they were getting results. But I never produced spec spots. That takes too long. I just made up ads in the moment. Owners would smile and say, "Yeah, that needs to be on the air." I would get their business because no other radio station was calling on them.

I worked at the number 23 station in a city of 23 stations. I felt sorry for the reps at the bigger ones. Only a tiny number of advertisers could afford frequency and consistency on those stations. But everyone could afford to become a household name on mine.

And 19,000 people is a lot of people. ☎

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QUICKREAD™

- Working at a small station doesn't mean you can't compete with the big guys.
- Many small advertisers aren't hearing from the big stations; they're yours for the taking!
- Be firm; insist on long-term deals so the customer's advertising has time to catch on.

Magic Words

Spice Up Your Writing With Unexpected Verbs

Yes, there are magic words. Do you know them?

Penetrate the shield of listener indifference by shooting verbs from your word-gun. Leap the wall of inattention by putting verb-springs under your feet. Hold the gaze of a wide-eyed audience by smearing verb-honey on your lips.

Verbs are magic words. Rollicking, laughing, lollygagging verbs. Snuggling, cuddling, canoodling verbs. Prancing, strutting, swaggering verbs. Sizzle and wiggle and leap and thrust, drizzle and tickle and beep and bust, projected into the mind they must trigger a mental action.

Verbs kick open the door to Broca's area of the brain — that portal to conscious awareness. And meter doesn't hurt, either.

We're going for Broca.

Broca's area of the brain is that part of us that anticipates, and hates, the predictable. If you want to bore a person, just do what they expect you to do, and say what they expect you to say. Works every time.

Broca is intrigued by the unexpected. And Broca's area is required to interpret verbs. This is why the most electric word is an unexpected verb.

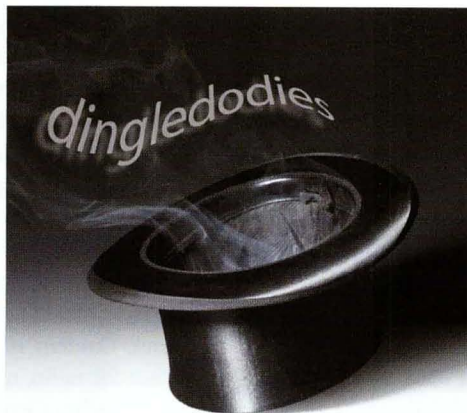
TAKE THE MAGIC UP A NOTCH BY SEUSSING

Ever watch *The Simpsons*? When Lisa's schoolteacher hears the town motto, "A noble spirit embiggens the smallest man," she mentions she'd never heard the word *embiggens* before moving to Springfield. Another teacher replies, "I don't know why; it's a perfectly cromulent word." Later in the episode, while talking about Homer's audition for the role of town crier, Principal Skinner states, "He's embiggened that role with his cromulent performance."

Suessing — making up your own words — gains our attention with a slap of wit. Think of it as Tabasco sauce for the brain.

Check out the Seussed-up verbs of Jack Kerouac, an early word-magician:

They danced down the streets like dingedodgies, and I sham-bled after as I've been doing all my life after people who



interest me, because the only people for me are the mad ones, the ones who are mad to live, mad to talk, mad to be saved, desirous of everything at the same time, the ones who never yawn or say a commonplace thing, but burn, burn, burn like fabulous yellow roman candles exploding like spiders across the stars and in the middle you see the blue centerlight pop and everybody goes 'Awww!'

— from *On the Road*

Now here's a radio :60 written in the Kerouac style by Chicago's great Steve McKenzie:

[grumpy, half-asleep monotone] There it is, Again. The Buzz-b Buzz, Agch-Agch alarm that crow-bars my eyes, Loudly. Is this dream or real? What day is it? Am I still employed? Where is that button of Snooze? To do, to do, So much do-do. It's sweat and Day-timers, soap-on-a-rope, aftershave, moose with no grunts in my hair. I gotta go-go, I'm driving, I'm driven to the machine that I love, Muchly. And there you are, all ground up, waiting to waterfall in my cup. It's you and your big red eye, It's me and my five-gallon travel mug. It's a marriage made in a paper filter. Sip-sip yum-yum I'm zooming, Awake with visions of flying pigs and everything's Possible. You did it. The roasting, the grinding, Magical. Who? What? How? Hey! Stewart's Coffee. Red-eye. I'm in love.

Not ready to go there yet? Here are some Broca-surprising half-steps to help move your feet toward the sound of Suessing:

Use a noun as a verb: Just Harley-Davidson your way to the head of the line.

Use a verb as a noun: If you can't deliver dazzle, I'll settle for twinkle.

Use a modifier as a verb: He's planning to slippery his way through the press conference.

Use a verb as a modifier: It's a kicking shade of pink.

Use a modifier as a noun: I'm on the road to lethargic.

Use a noun as a modifier: Now don't get all Brokeback Mountain on me.

That's enough play for now. We'd better get back to work before our managers doubt our cromulence and disemploy us. ☎

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QUICKREAD™

- Verbs require the Broca area of the brain to step up and take notice.
- Seussing — making up your own words — grabs listeners' attention.
- Unexpected words are electric!



The Only Four Customers You'll Ever Sell

Radio Buyers Have Distinct Profiles; Which One Is Your Specialty?

Learn to recognize the four archetypal radio buyers and you'll know when to prepare a good joke, when to organize a brainstorming session, when to do your homework in advance, and when to shut up and listen.

Without knowing it, the average AE specializes in selling just one of the four archetypal profiles, is competent in selling a second profile, has a marginal close rate with a third profile, and consistently fails with the fourth.

See if you can figure out 1. which of the following radio buyers is your specialty; and 2. how you might better sell the profiles that have traditionally been your weakest.

1. The Friend buys relationally from the sales rep who shows the greatest interest in him. Include the Friend in your station promotions, take him to lunch, bring him thoughtful gifts of appreciation, ask your announcers to say his name on the air once in awhile, and he'll happily give you his ad budget. The only task that remains is to help him create the logic that tells him why doing exactly what you say makes sense. He'll remember the logic, feel good about it, and soon come to claim it as his own. The Friend is the lifeblood client of every station with a small audience.

2. The Moron is the buyer without an idea, without a plan, and without a clue. He needs an advertising pro to tell him how to calculate and spend his ad budget, what to say in his ads, and to take the blame when things aren't going well. The Moron isn't looking for an AE to service his account; he's looking for a cheap CEO to run his company. If you're really sharp and have all the answers, the Moron will soon become a high-maintenance account that no one can steal from you. Mostly because they won't want to. Helping the Moron succeed makes you feel loyal and important as you lay awake at night worrying about his business.

Both of these buyers trust the MAAMF ratings service — Me And All My Friends. Rumor, gossip, and innuendo are the fuels that keep their fires burning.



QUICKREAD™

- Advertisers fall into four basic categories: The Friend, The Moron, The Targeting Analytical, and The Commodity Buyer.
- Which type of radio buyer is your specialty?
- How can you improve your selling techniques to the others?

The Moron isn't looking for an AE to service his account; he's looking for a cheap CEO to run his company.

3. The Targeting Analytical believes the secret of success is to reach the right people at exactly the right time. If your station passes his or her qualitative test, your proposal will be evaluated according to a system that is not typically subject to negotiation. The Targeting Analytical has a method for buying that's far more important to him than your method for selling. In

his mind your audience may be worth more than another audience of the same size, but how much more depends on the depth of his commitment to the qualitative profile of your audience. Do you know which of your clients are Targeting Analyticals? Do you know the hierarchy of their priorities? Are you willing to talk to these buyers in their own language, or do you insist on trying to convince them to look at things as you do?

4. The Commodity Buyer sees radio as mass media and wants to reach the masses with it. Reach, frequency, gross impressions, and GRPs are all he really wants to know. If he needed a friend, he'd buy a dog. Make no mistake about it, The Commodity Buyer is looking for efficiency, and efficiency is tied to price. The way to sell him is to look for bargains in your low-demand inventory. "We have just as many listeners on Mondays and Tuesdays, but fewer advertisers. Here's what we can do if you'll let us schedule you this way..." Show him pockets of audience that are undervalued and you've got a shot at selling him his way. The odds of selling him your way are pretty much zero.

If your Commodity Buyer is lazy or stupid, show him a schedule loaded with broad rotators and say, "You'll get drive time when we're not sold out, and look at those rates!" **The reach and frequency numbers will look awesome because the computer will average your strongest daypart numbers into the numbers for those times when his schedule will actually air.** Broad rotators are a way to get your ratings computer to lie for you. The danger with this approach is that if your Commodity Buyer is neither lazy nor stupid, he'll see through your ploy and know that you're either dishonest or incompetent.

But hey, if he was looking for a friend, he would've bought a dog, right? 🐕

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Is Low Traffic Holding Back Your Business?

If I were to ask you what's limiting your growth, you'd likely tell me, "Traffic. If we had more traffic, we'd make more sales. What we need is more traffic."

But low traffic is never really the problem. It's merely the byproduct of another problem you haven't been able to see.

FOUR INVISIBLE PROBLEMS LIMIT YOUR SELLING OPPORTUNITIES

Problem 1: Your ads aren't convincing.

SOLUTION: Write better ads.

Do your ads speak to what the customer *actually* cares about, or only to what the customer *ought* to care about? You're an expert in your business category. You can't think the way your customer thinks because frankly, you know too much.

Have you given your ad writer explicit permission to push you beyond your comfort zone? A good ad writer will often ask you questions that you feel are irrelevant. "You don't understand," you'll say, "That's not what matters. **THIS** is what matters." And thus you'll convince your ad writer to write irrelevant ads.

When it comes to ad writing, naiveté is a virtue. The best ad writer doesn't know any more than your customer knows.

Open the *Yellow Pages* and look for a plumber, a heat and air conditioning contractor, or an electrician. The ads will tell you how many years the company has been in business, how the technicians are "highly qualified," or how the company is committed to "fair and friendly service." But these are the answers to questions no one was asking. Today's in-home-service customer has one major concern: "Will they be here when they're supposed to be, or will I have to sit around all day waiting?"

The fastest-growing service company today was built on a single selling proposition: "Always on time, or you don't pay a dime. If we're not there within one hour of the time we promised, whatever you need is free. Sorry we were late... Really sorry."

Do your ads speak to the **felt need** of your customer?

Problem 2: Your ads aren't reaching your prospects with sufficient repetition.

SOLUTION: Focus your ad budget.

Most business owners sprinkle their ad budgets across a wide variety of opportunities because they "don't want to leave anyone out." The result of this strategy is that their ads reach too many people with too little repetition.

The longer your product purchase cycle, the more repetition your ads will need to drive traffic. How often does the public buy what you sell? An ad for groceries will generate traffic more quickly than an ad for refrigerators *because we buy groceries more often than we buy refrigerators*. Do you sell jewelry, appliances, dentistry, home service? Focus on the same small group of people each week for 52 weeks, and become the provider that pops into their head when they finally need what you sell.



Problem 3: You're selling everyone who likes to buy what you sell — the way you like to sell it.

SOLUTION: Expand your business model to appeal to a new category of customers, or begin selling your current customer base an additional product or service.

It's often the most successful businesses that complain the loudest about low traffic *because they're not growing like they used to grow*. Focus is a two-edged sword. Has the same focus that created your initial success now got you bumping your head against a glass ceiling? You know there are more customers in your product category; you just can't seem to get them in your door.

Expand the definition of "your customer." There's not an infinite supply of the customer profile you've been targeting. It's highly likely that you're going to have to sell products — or customer profiles — you would have preferred not to sell.


Don't blame the radio station that sold you access to their audience. They can only do what you'll let them do.

4. Your reputation has slipped, or your product is no longer viable.

SOLUTION: Reinvent yourself. Become relevant again.

Would better advertising have saved 8-track tapes, or was it simply a technology whose time had come and gone? The marriage rate is declining in America. So why are jewelers surprised that engagement ring sales have declined? The problem isn't with their ads, their schedules, or their self-limiting styles of selling. The problem is with the marketplace.

Is your marketplace changing beneath your feet? Move with it, or you risk falling down.

Would more traffic increase your sales volume? I guarantee you'll generate a lot of it when you find solutions to the four invisible problems. 

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The Media Is Not The Message

A Gentle Warning For Freshman Account Executives

Freshman sellers of radio often get their noses bloodied when they expect radio's intrusiveness to compensate for an ad's lack of relevance. Relevance is what determines whether an ad works or not. Radio fails when it delivers a message *no one cares about*.

These are the scenarios in which radio fails most miserably:

1. Your listeners understood the message perfectly. They just didn't care. SOLUTION: Drop the irrelevant subject matter. Discover what your listeners care about and talk about that instead.

2. The ad's content was relevant, but unclear. SOLUTION: Remind your creative team that their job is to create ads that sell the product, not just entertain the audience. Over-the-top creativity often obscures clarity. When we charge money to create and deliver messages that lack relevance and clarity, we've essentially robbed our clients.

3. The listener failed to be engaged because the ad was written from a cultural perspective other than the listener's own. This is why Anglo-conceived Hispanic campaigns usually fail. Translating language is easy. Transferring cultural perspective is virtually impossible.

Bottom Line: Ads that fail in radio would have failed in any other media. The media is not the message. The message is the message. And the message is what matters most. So make your client give you a message you believe your audience would find compelling.

Imagine the result if your ads were as interesting as the rest of your programming. The song writers work hard at writing the songs, the musicians work hard at performing them, the talk-show hosts work hard at engaging their audiences, and the announcers work hard at keeping all that energy moving forward. That's why we, as sellers, usually focus on the product these people bring to the table: intrusiveness and relationship.

What would happen if we worked as hard on the ads as they work on the rest of it?

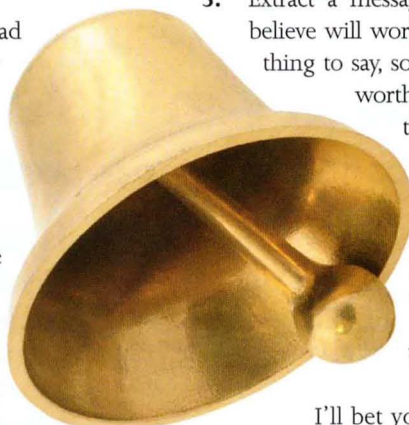


QUICKREAD™

- Radio fails when it delivers a message no one cares about. Make your client give you a message you believe your audience would find compelling.
- Imagine the result if your ads were as interesting as the rest of your programming.

Freshman sellers:

1. Be careful not to describe radio as though it were a mind-controlling drug. Your client knows better.
2. Be careful not to describe your "loyal audience" as though they're a group of zombies who mindlessly do whatever you tell them. Again, your client knows better.
3. Be careful not to disparage other media, because the odds are high that your client has used that other media successfully. Disparage it and you'll lose all credibility. Listen instead to the stories of your prospect's successes in other media, and you'll learn exactly how your efforts will be evaluated.
4. Ask to see copies of the ads that produced the greatest success. Look for the salient, relevant messages in those ads. Remember, it was the ad that succeeded; the media simply delivered it. Radio is a superior media, but like all media, it works best when it delivers a message that truly matters.
5. Extract a message from your advertiser that you honestly believe will work. Writing ads is easy when you have something to say, so make sure your client gives you something worth saying. The strongest statements are the ones that require the client's approval, so stay with the client until you've uncovered a message that rings like a bell. This is the moment when campaigns fail or succeed. A weak message can't be "fixed" in production. A heavy schedule won't fix it, either. Success is born the moment you convince your client to give you a message that matters.



I'll bet you already know the moment when failure is born: The prospect on whom you've been calling has finally decided to "test the waters." They give you a schedule but no real message to deliver. *Don't go cheerfully into that dark night.*

"I don't think it will work" are the words that could have saved you, but you lacked the courage to say them. Instead, you went ahead and wrote up the order to deliver a bad idea. Years from now, radio reps will call on that client and be told, "I tried radio and it didn't work." And a new, freshman seller of radio will likely respond, "You must have reached the wrong audience."

- Delivering a pointless message *powerfully* is the definition of hype.
- Delivering a powerful message *pointlessly* is the result of weak creative.
- Delivering a powerful message *powerfully* is the first step in making a fortune.

For your client and yourself, as well. 📺

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Catching Customers In The Web

Make Sure Your Clients Know Their Websites Matter

The old assumption among retailers was that the customer didn't know, and wouldn't know unless you told them.

This is no longer a valid assumption. Today's customer enjoys access to information far beyond what any of us saw coming.

Your client's website is an invisible half-step between the ads on your station and the client's front door. More and more of your listeners are taking this half-step each day. Do your clients have informative websites?

You're aware of how quickly and easily you gather information online each day, but has it occurred to you that your listeners expect information about your clients to be found just as quickly and easily?

Think of a client. Now enter their business category and the name of your town into a search engine. Does their website appear on their first page of search results? It should. Does their website provide the answers to the questions their customers might reasonably have?

Don't let this become a debate with your client. Bring up the subject by innocently asking them: What do you assume when minimal information is provided by a company you're researching online?

Listen to their answer without comment. Then ask: What about those times when you're researching a purchase and the seller chooses not to put prices online? How does that make you feel? What do you assume about the seller? Are you likely to call them, e-mail them, or just search for that product from a different provider?

Bottom line: Radio ads drive traffic to the Internet whether you want them to or not. One bad website can undo a lot of good radio advertising.

The first time we designed a promotional plan for a website was in June of 2000. I'll never forget it. We put together a great product, a catchy name, and a schedule that reached 54 percent of Adults 18-34 in Southern California an average of 4.2 times per week for 9 weeks. We knew the ads would drive traffic to the website.



That was where it all fell apart.

The client decided it would be best to "capture all the contact information" before revealing the price of the item. In essence, a customer had to commit to purchase the item before the price was revealed. That website had hundreds of thousands of unique visitors, but made very few sales. That company is now defunct, even though their product was excellent and their prices were great.

The client claimed the ads were driving the wrong kind of traffic. Wow. Who knew there were several hundred thousand "wrong customers" 18-34 in Los Angeles?

Does your client's website answer your listener's questions, or is the client's plan to "make" your listener contact them so they can "get more detailed information"? Your listener is more likely to contact your client *after* they've found the answers to all their basic questions online.

The key to crafting an effective website is to accurately anticipate the unspoken questions of the customer. It's also the secret to writing effective radio ads.

To write effective radio ads that can easily be transitioned into web copy:

1. Harvest the true questions of your client's customers, and then

2. Insert the answers into your ads


Too many ads today are answering questions that no one was asking. Don't let those ads be yours.

Too many radio advertisers believe that no one will visit their website unless they promote it in their ads. Don't let those advertisers be yours.

Inform your advertisers of the truth: *their websites matter*. Then give them suggestions about the kinds of answers their customers might be seeking online.

Would you like Radio Ink to host a step-by-step seminar about how you can help your clients get their web presence and their radio presence aligned? Suggest it in a quick e-mail. I know Eric, and if a dozen people say "Do it," he'll assume they speak for at least a few hundred more readers who didn't take the time to write.

So tell me, does this subject warrant investigating? Or am I the only person in America who sees a disconnect between advertising and the Internet?

E-mail your opinion to Editor@RadioInk.com. 

Roy H. Williams, president of Wizard of Ads Inc., may be reached at Roy@WizardofAds.com.



QUICKREAD™

- Do your clients have informative websites? One bad website can undo a lot of good radio advertising.
- The key to crafting an effective website is to accurately anticipate the unspoken questions of the customer. It's also the secret to writing effective radio ads.

10 Ways Retail Is Changing

The account executive who stays one step ahead of trends in marketing is a valuable resource to his or her clients. Here are a few emerging trends that every seller should know:

1. "Hidden profit centers" are the new markup. Low-cost providers such as Sam's Club and Best Buy are selling "in-store exchange" policies to supplement the manufacturer's warranties they don't honor. In other words, you can't take a faulty purchase back to the retailer if there's a problem — you have to contact the manufacturer directly — unless you buy the seller's "in-store exchange" policy.

2. "Hard-to-find" items are no longer hard to find. Just Google it. Retailers like to pretend the Internet doesn't exist, or that it doesn't affect their business category. So the next time an ad delivers less response than you expected, ask yourself, "Could the Internet have been an invisible factor?" I'm not suggesting that we use the Internet as a boogeyman on which to blame our failures. I'm merely suggesting the Internet has become so integral to our daily lives that it's easy to overlook its influence.

3. A huge in-store selection can be counterproductive. When buying locally, a shopper confronted with too many choices can go into analysis paralysis. Successful stores stock only those items that represent the best value for the money. And they make sure to never run out of those items. The best stores stock only what's hot.

4. Traffic is in decline — because comparison-shopping is in decline. A customer who used to go to three or four stores to gather information is now going to just one or two. When a customer goes to just one store, second place is the loser. Focus on an audience you can reach 52 weeks a year, and become a household name.

5. Intrusive visibility is more important than ever. Intrusively visible locations will become even more important as media fragmentation continues. But don't confuse visibility with mere traffic count. The number of cars that drive past isn't as important as the number of drivers who notice you and remember your location.

Moody's Jewelry occupied a retail space in Country Club Plaza at the southeast corner of 51st and Harvard in Tulsa for more than 20 years. Then they bought the gas station at the northwest corner of that same intersection, and remodeled it into a jewelry store. By



moving across the intersection, Moody's moved into the windshield of every car that drove through 51st and Harvard. In-store shopping traffic skyrocketed. Hundreds of customers said, "Thank you for finally putting a Moody's in our part of town!" Not one of them realized they'd been driving past a Moody's store every day for more than 20 years. **Seeing** a store is altogether different than driving past one. Tell your clients to go for the more visible location, and take

the difference out of the ad budget.

6. Hype doesn't sell anymore. The effectiveness of artificial urgency is in sharp decline. Companies that were built on high-impact ads are finding their numbers dwindling, as new customers won't take them seriously and the traditional customer base now won't respond to anything but high-impact offers.

7. Attention spans are shrinking. Too much to do, too little time. So edit every word that doesn't move the story forward when writing ads or making sales presentations.

8. Clarity is more important than creativity. Web surfing has taught us to quickly appraise whether information is relevant to us. The most effective messages are short and clear. Name the benefit as early as possible, and make it as plain as you can. Don't blur your focus with unnecessary build-up or blunt your point with misguided wit. Just say it.

9. Details matter. Quirky and cute ads were effective in the '90s because they made corporate America warm and approachable. People still like these ads and may even compliment you on them, but they're no longer driving traffic. Buying decisions are increasingly based on logic. Give clients and their customers a no-loopholes warranty and a tight story that rings true, and they'll respond.

10. Speed is essential. Customers don't complain when you waste their time. They just don't come back. Likewise, clients are less likely to agree to meet with you if you waste a lot of time by beating around the bush.

The AEs who make big money are the ones who deliver more than just access to airwaves. Deliver these 10 insights to the right people at the right time, and they'll recognize your worth — when no one else can get through to them. The right people are the ones with the authority to make key decisions. The right time is when they mention a problem that's bigger than radio's ability to solve. This is when you should volunteer the added value of your insightful advice. Prove that you know more than just radio. In the long term, that's worth far more than a good ratings book.

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QUICKREAD™

- The most successful account execs keep up with emerging marketing trends.
- Staying informed about marketplace changes increases your value to clients.
- Knowing more about these trends can increase your business today.



All Alone On Prom Night

You muster up the courage to invite that pretty girl to the prom. She says yes. You begin making plans. Hire a limo. Rent a tux. Order flowers. Tell your friends. You can't believe you almost didn't ask.

A week before the big day you get a message on your answering machine. "I'm sorry, but someone better than you asked me to go to the prom with him. You're going to have to go with someone else. I'm sorry but there's nothing I can do."

Nothing you can do? You can tell the guy you've already got a date!

Radio stations that choose not to honor sales agreements because a higher spot rate came along are no better than the faithless hussy who left this guy in the cold.

Are you offended by that statement? Write a letter to the editor. No, wait. I'll do it for you:

To the Editors of Radio Ink:

Your columnist was way out of line when he compared a station that maximizes revenue to a "faithless hussy." Frankly, I expected better from you. "Faithless hussy" is gutter language inappropriate for a magazine targeted to broadcast executives. If you continue to print pointless and degrading columns such as this, I'll be left with no option but to cancel my subscription.

To the Editors of Radio Ink:

Who does Roy Williams think he is? Advertising agencies cancel schedules every day. To them, broadcast agreements don't mean crap. Never have. What a hypocrite.

To the Editors of Radio Ink:

Evidently, your columnist is unfamiliar with radio billing software. In a sold-out situation, the lowest rates are the ones that get bumped. Rate-grinders like him get exactly what they deserve. You want your ads to run, Grinder? Pay the rate.

Recently, I was privileged to witness a brainstorming session led by Jim Hopes of the Center for Sales Strategy. I'd never heard



him speak before, but I liked him. Standing on the stage of the ballroom at Walt Disney World's Grand Floridian hotel, Jim asked several hundred broadcast executives how radio might be "lifted to the next level." More than a hundred ideas emerged from that session, most of them fairly predictable: "Exceed customers' expectations," "Underpromise and overdeliver," "Give added value," etc. Finally, one lone hand was lifted and a small voice said, "Run the schedules as agreed."

Evidently, I'm not the only advertiser who's been left standing in the cold with his mouth open.

Imagine how it feels when your weekly schedule — purchased in January and faithfully airing every week since then — is suddenly cancelled by a station

in late November. "Remember those ads you scheduled? Well you're not going to get them. We sold them to someone else. We'll be happy to put you back on the air after Christmas, though. Or maybe you'd like to pay a higher rate than the one you got when we signed the agreement?"

If I'd been told in January that the 52-week schedule I was negotiating for my retailer wouldn't be honored during the Christmas season, I would have given the money to a different station. That's why they didn't tell. But now it's too late. I'm screwed and my client is screwed. Standing in the cold with a handful of flowers, we've got nothing but an empty limo and the station's assurances that we're "really important" to them but there's nothing they can do.

Surprisingly, my experience has been that the hussies of radio aren't clustered into one ownership group or another, but into specific cities. I'll restrain myself from naming the dozen-or-so towns where agreements seem to matter less than a fart in the wind, but it's definitely a phenomenon tied to specific cities rather than broadcast groups. I bring this problem to your attention only because I believe it to be corrosive to radio, an acid that's eating the gleam off a brilliant reputation.

Me? I'm the dumb bastard who forgives the girl when she says she's sorry. That's what you do when you're in love. Which brings me to the advertisers that manager in Jim Hopes' audience thought of when he suggested radio should "Run the schedules as agreed." Are those advertisers also hopelessly, helplessly in love? Radio can only hope so.

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QUICKREAD™

- Ever get stood up for a date? That's how advertisers feel when stations cancel their schedules.
- Canceling a client's ad schedule when a better rate comes along can ruin your reputation, and radio's, too.
- DON'T sacrifice long-term business for short-term gain!

You Snooze, You Win

A Good Night's Sleep Makes All the Difference

The first day of class at Wizard Academy is always tough because students arrive in a **21st-century-America** frame of mind: news, information, profit and loss, competitive analysis, data, metrics, best practices, quotas, chain of command, quarterly reports, deadlines. It's the same frame of mind that most of your clients are in when you arrive to discuss advertising with them.

The second day of teaching at Wizard Academy is easier, more fun. Students are happier, less doubtful, and demonstrably more engaged. All because of a few hours sleep.

I'd taught at the academy for about five years when it occurred to me: **Incremental** knowledge can be transferred in a single session, but **transformative** knowledge requires a night's sleep between its introduction and conclusion.

Have you ever had a fabulous idea shot down by a person who just couldn't see the genius of how it would work? When we receive surprising information that doesn't fit into our expectation patterns (our schema), a night's sleep will often put the new information into its proper place.

SALES APPLICATION: When possible, present unexpected or revolutionary ideas at least one day prior to asking for a decision. Introduce the subject in a way that lets you drop it without anyone feeling the need to respond. What seems impossible to them one day will often make perfect sense the next.

The functions of the right hemisphere of the brain all seem to be manifestations of pattern recognition. The conscious awareness of your left brain — used primarily for incremental, logical, linear, sequential, deductive reasoning, and objective sensory data gathering — disappears for about eight hours each night, but the right brain never sleeps. Wordless, the right brain cranks on through the darkness, integrating the new information into the old.

The client who was struggling to see the relevance of an idea one day will likely wake up the next morning with perfect understanding.

A recently published article by Dr. John Medina of Seattle Pacific University's Brain Center for Applied Learning Research



says, "There is growing evidence that the reason we need to sleep is not just so that the body can physically recuperate from the day's activity, but so that the brain can learn."

Medina goes on to say our brains are "almost unbelievably active during 'rest,' with legions of neurons crackling electrical commands to each other in constantly shifting patterns, displaying greater rhythmical activity during sleep than when the brain is wide awake."

The Autumn 2006 issue of *Response* magazine reports an experiment in which students were given a series of math problems. "Unbeknownst to these students, there was an easier, 'shortcut' way to solve the problems, which could potentially be discovered while doing the exercise. The students never discovered the easier method during the initial training. When you let 12 hours pass after the initial training and then ask the students to do more problems, approximately 20 percent discover the shortcut. But, if during those 12 hours the students had 8 hours of regular sleep, the number of students discovering the shortcut triples to approximately 60 percent. No matter how many times the experiment is run, the sleep group consistently outperforms the non-sleep group to the tune of approximately three to one."

Want to increase the acceptance of your nontraditional ideas by 300 percent? Outline them briefly in the afternoon, then disappear until the next morning before anyone has a chance to entrench themselves against you.

The person who would have been your strongest adversary will often become your strongest advocate. All it takes is a single night's sleep.

Now go get some sleep — you've got a big sales day tomorrow. ☒

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QUICKREAD™

- To be properly absorbed, transformative knowledge requires a night's sleep between its introduction and conclusion.
- When possible, present unexpected or revolutionary ideas at least one day prior to asking for a decision.
- A night's sleep will often put the new information into its proper place.



Like It Or Not

Ads Don't Have To Be Likeable To Be Effective

I've said many times, "Most ads aren't written to persuade, they're written not to offend."

This goes back to chapter one, "Nine Secret Words," in my first book, *The Wizard of Ads*. Do you remember the nine secret words? **The risk of insult is the price of clarity.**

Clarity. Ah, there we have it. Rare is the ad that makes its point clearly.

The customers who cost your clients money are the ones they never see, the ones who didn't come in *because your ads never got their attention.*

I was writing an ad this week and decided to insert a word flag. I chose a phrase of declarative rebuttal. I stated the position of the competition, then said, "And to that, we say, 'Piffle and pooh.'"

"Piffle and pooh" is just a whimsical way of saying "Poppycock."

My client was worried that people might be offended, so he asked me to change it to something else. I hung up the phone and yelled at the walls. If you're curious what I said, just walk into my office. I'm pretty sure it's still echoing in there.

THE FOUR BIGGEST MISTAKES MADE BY ADVERTISERS AND AD WRITERS

Mistake 1: Demanding Polished and Professional Ads

When you insist that your ads "sound right," you force them to be predictable.

Predictable ads do not surprise Broca's Area of the brain. They do not open the door to conscious awareness. They fail to gain the attention of the prospective customer. This is bad.

Mistake 2: Informing without Persuading

Study journalism and you'll create ads that present information without:

A. substantiating their claims

- "Lowest prices guaranteed!" (Or what?)

B. explaining the benefit to the customer

- "We use the Synchro-static method!" (Which means...?)

- "It's Truck Month at Ramsey Ford!" (Come to the party, bring my truck?)

Mistake 3: Entertaining without Persuading

Study creative writing and you'll draft ads that deliver entertainment without:

A. delivering a clear message

- "Yo Quiero Taco Bell" (Dogs like our food, you will too?)

B. causing the customer to imagine themselves taking action

- "Yo Quiero Taco Bell" (I should buy a taco for my chihuahua?)

The best ads cause customers to imagine themselves taking action. What action do you want the client's customer to see themselves taking?

Problem 4: Decorating without Persuading

Graphic artists will often create a visual style and call it "branding." Likewise, program directors love ads with an auditory style that "fits the station" and "blends with our format." This is fine if the product is fashion, a fragrance, an attitude, or a lifestyle, but God help you if your client sells a service or a product that's meant to perform. To hell with ads the PD likes. I want ads that cause customers to walk in the door and write a check.

TO THE ADVERTISERS WHO WORRY WHEN PEOPLE DON'T LIKE YOUR ADS: 98.9 percent of all the customers who hate your ads will still come to your store and buy from you when they need what you sell. These customers don't cost your client money; they just complain to the cashier as they're handing over their cash.

Do you believe the public has to like an ad for the ad to be effective?

You do?

To that, I can only say, "Piffle and pooh." 🛠️

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QUICKREAD™

- Do people have to like an ad for the ad to be effective?
- Predictable ads don't get the attention of the listener.
- Ads that inform or entertain don't necessarily persuade customers to take action.



But Isn't Jewelry A *Visual* Product?

Create Emotional Appeal Via Audio, Too

Sitting in the grand ballroom of the Mandarin Oriental Hotel in New York, I'm surrounded by hundreds of people in tuxedos and evening gowns. So this is a five-star hotel, huh? \$700 a night. Wow!

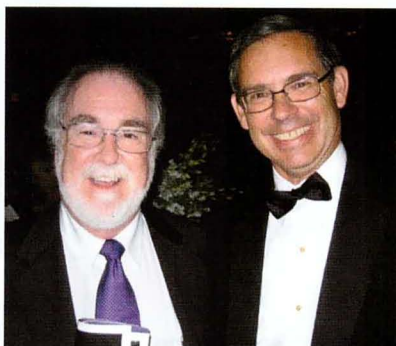
Jewelers from across America have gathered to witness this year's induction of two luminaries into the Jewelers Hall of Fame. The first of the honorees, selected from more than 30,000 jewelers, is Michael J. Kowalski, CEO of Tiffany.

During his acceptance speech, Kowalski mentions that, although his company did more than \$641 million last quarter, "It's really not that difficult to take a 200-year-old legendary brand to the next level. What I've done is nothing, compared to my fellow honoree. Woody Justice is a man who started with nothing and built a jewelry store that's known across America. And he did it in just 25 years."

The walls shake with thunderous applause as Woody Justice steps to the microphone. Everyone in the room knows him, and his success in selling diamonds is the envy of jewelers everywhere.

I am there with my wife, Pennie, because Woody has been our client and friend for 20 years. Last year, his Springfield, Missouri, jewelry store did 35 times the sales volume it did 20 years ago. His current volume is 10 times the national jewelry store average, and it's growing every year.

Ninety percent of his ad budget goes to radio. For many years, it was 100 percent, until he began mailing personal invitations to customers for special events. He also supports the local arts community by purchasing ads in programs and publications. He doesn't buy these print ads because he thinks it's an efficient use of ad dollars. He buys them because he's a good guy, and good guys support the local community.



A tuxedo lost in an airline's bottomless luggage pit couldn't dim this luminary. Woody Justice (l) just turned up the wattage of his smile during induction into the Jewelers Hall of Fame. Fellow honoree Michael J. Kowalski of Tiffany joined him in a five-star celebration.

Woody's rise to the top of his industry began the day he realized that jewelry isn't a visual product; it's an emotional one. It's a product of personal identity. It speaks of relationship and effort and commitment and achievement.

The best jewelry ads speak of precisely these same things. Here's one of Woody's most recent :60s:

Antwerp, Belgium, is no longer the diamond capital of the world. Thirty-four hours on an airplane. One way. Thirty. Four. Hours. That's how long it took me to get to where eighty percent of the world's diamonds are now being cut. After 34 hours, I looked bad. I smelled bad. I wanted to go to sleep. But then I saw the diamonds. Unbelievable. They told me I was the first retailer from North America ever to be in that office. Only the biggest wholesalers are allowed through those doors.


Fortunately, I had one of 'em with me, a lifelong friend who was doing me a favor. Now pay attention, because what I'm about to say is really important: As of this moment, Justice Jewelers has the lowest diamond prices in America, and I'm including all the online diamond sellers in that statement. Now, you and I both know that talk is cheap. So put it to the test. Go online. Find your best deal. Not only will Justice Jewelers give you a better diamond; we'll give you a better price, as well. I'm Woody Justice, and I'm working really, really hard to be your jeweler. Thirty-four hours of hard travel, one way. I think you'll be glad I did it.

That's the only ad that Woody ever used to talk about having lower prices. Yes, price matters to diamond shoppers, but just making that claim is rarely effective. You have to substantiate your claim by explaining why your store can offer better prices. And your explanation must ring true in the hearts and minds of a jaded public.

The style signature of a Woody Justice radio ad isn't low prices, but blunt, brazen honesty tinged with glimpses of humor, wit, and humility.

You might also have noticed that where he went was left out of the ad. This omission was intentional. It's what I call a *word flag*. Do you have any idea how many people have asked, "Where did you go that it took 34 hours to get there?"

When dozens of customers are asking Justice salespeople this question every day, it's a pretty good indication that the radio ads are working, don't you think?

And a sales volume that's 10 times the national average is a pretty good indicator, too. 

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QUICKREAD™

- Jewelry isn't a visual product; it's an emotional one.
- It speaks of relationship and effort and commitment and achievement.
- The best jewelry ads speak of precisely these same things.
- A *word flag*, or intentional omission, can indicate that the ad is working when customers ask about the missing information.

What's The Problem Here?

A check arrives in my office and a one-day meeting is scheduled. The business owner arrives on the appointed day.

This is going to be tough. It always is.

To earn my money, I must take the client through five steps that are easy to understand but hard to do. This is the process my staff and I use to grow little companies into big ones. But our magic can't happen until we've extracted these answers from our client:



1. Focus. What are we trying to make happen? How will we measure success? See it clearly. Say it plainly.

2. Evaluate. What is the competitive environment? Do we understand the felt needs of our prospective customer? What is holding us back? Name the limiting factors.

3. Prioritize. When two of our goals come into conflict, which one bows the knee? Prioritize your objectives.

4. Strategize. What would be the shortest route to our primary goal? What levers might we use to dislodge impediments? How might we nullify other limiting factors? Are you willing to modify the business model? This is the moment when the future is won or lost.

5. Implement. Are you willing to pull the trigger? Let's quit talking and DO something. Nothing changes until action is taken.

Seventy-five or 80 percent of the time we can tell business owners how to get to the next level, and they're happy with us. But about one out of five business owners will fixate on a symptom, and refuse to see the root disease. Here's what it can look like:

I ask, "What are we trying to make happen?"

"Traffic is flat. We need more traffic."

After evaluating the limiting factors, I say, "Your media plan indicates that you're already reaching more than enough people to

achieve your goal. You'll have more traffic when you have a stronger message. What new message are you willing to give me?"

"Can't we just say more strongly what we've been saying all along?"

"No. The limitation isn't the language; it's the message itself.

"I don't think we need a new message. We just need to use a different media. Which one do you recommend?"

When the client's self-analysis is wrong, they often grow frustrated when I refuse to join them in their delusion.

"But Roy, I don't think you fully understand our essence. We truly love the customer. We treat them far better than any of our competitors do. We greet them at the door with a smile, get them a cup of coffee, and then listen attentively as they tell us about their problem. We provide a far superior experience. If only you could capture this and communicate it with a really great ad or through a more effective media, I just know our company would grow."

In the old days, I would accommodate these people by telling them that they weren't on the right track and in my professional opinion their message plan couldn't be made to work, "but if you insist, we'll go ahead and do the best we can."

I no longer do this because I got tired of hearing: "Roy, we did exactly what you said, and it didn't work."

I'd rather be the jerk who refused to believe in your dream than the jerk whose radio ads didn't work.

There is no benefit in the perfect execution of a bad plan.

Occasionally the client doesn't have a marketing problem that can be solved by radio, but is limited by something else entirely.

Scott Fraser owns Milne Court, a gas station/convenience store near Halifax, Nova Scotia.

I asked him, "What are we trying to make happen?"

"I want to increase the sales volume at Milne Court."

We go to step 2 and evaluate the limiting factors. "How many cars drive past the store each day?"

"34,500"

"How much gas would a successful station sell to that much traffic? Are there any industry statistics available?"

"The oil companies say I can't expect to sell more than 4 million liters per year."

"How much are you selling right now?"

"About 5.5 million liters per year. (That's almost 40 percent above the projected best-case scenario.) But the profit isn't in the gas, it's in the coffee and cookies and stuff they buy while they're there."



QUICKREAD™

- Analyze the client's strategies, then give your clear recommendations — even if they don't jive with the client's own plan.
- There is no benefit in the perfect execution of a bad plan.
- Don't be afraid to tell the client: Some marketing problems can't be solved with radio.

Jolly Giant Green

Personification Generates Great Ads — And Big Money

Have you ever watched a good ventriloquist? Mingle a bit of wood, paint, and cloth, then drench the pile in sparkling imagination and a new person leaps onto the stage.

Few techniques in communication are as powerful — or as often overlooked — as personification: ascribing human characteristics to inanimate objects.

It turns dead corporate brands into living persons. Who are the Keebler Elves, the Jolly Green Giant, Mr. Clean, and Ronald McDonald? They are personifications of the brands they represent.

But this column isn't about clumsy corporate cartoon characters. Personification is much bigger and more elegant than mere mascots and logos. When conceived in words, lively words, personification summons the imagination and triggers the emotions.

Have you ever used personification in a radio ad?

A decade ago I produced a series of radio ads for America's 2,200 Jiffy Lube locations. Those :60s featured a lovable car who said in every ad, "Take me to Jiffy Lube, Dave." Yes, it's an old idea but it always works when done well.

One of the students at our school recently turned in an ad that described — from the perspective of the carpet — how it feels to be "enveloped in a waterfall of 180-degree water cascading over you, around you, stripping away the smelly, sticky, suffocating grime of neglect." By the time that ad finishes describing how your "color, bounce, and smell are made springtime by that magical, cleansing bath," you feel a compulsion to stop what you're doing and dial the number to have your carpet cleaned.

Tom Walters, one of my partners, produced a series of radio ads for a jewelry store in which all the diamonds are rehearsing for a musical production. His little diamond voices, digitally pitched of course, were soon quoted all over town. "Sparkle, baby, sparkle," "You know you got it!" and "You can't touch this," were pitched high and low, implying the weights of the diamonds. Not



only did people remember the lines, they could imitate the precise pitch of each voice.

Everyone swore they'd "seen the TV ad" that never existed. Sound familiar?

Personification. Get the taste of it on your tongue. Listen to how Robert Frost gives life to inanimate objects in his storm poem, *Once by the Pacific*:

*The shattered water made a misty din.
Great waves looked over others coming in,*

*And thought of doing something to the shore
That water never did to land before.
The clouds were low and hairy in the skies,
Like locks blown forward in the gleam of eyes.
You could not tell, and yet it looked as if
The shore was lucky in being backed by cliff,
The cliff in being backed by continent;
It looked as if a night of dark intent
Was coming, and not only a night, an age.
Someone had better be prepared for rage.
There would be more than ocean-water broken
Before God's last 'Put out the Light' was spoken.*

Waves looked over others and thought of doing something to the shore, which was lucky in being backed by cliff?

Personification. Can you do it? Can you speak a person into existence?


Herman Melville did it 156 years ago in the short words, "Call me Ishmael."

I did it 12 years ago in five words for Rolex and Everest, "...the world's most angry mountain."

Apple is doing it in seven words right now. "I'm a Mac." "And I'm a PC."

(Did it ever occur to you that the audio track from these ads would work even better on radio than it does on TV?)

We gaze longer at pictures that have people in them than at pictures that have no people. I believe the same is true of words. We pay more attention to words that tell us of people than to words that don't.

Personification is good radio. Learn to make inanimate objects come alive and watch your monthly billing rise head and shoulders above any other mark on the doorframe. 

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QUICKREAD™

- Personification brings an inanimate object to life in the minds of listeners.
- The Keebler Elves, the Jolly Green Giant, Mr. Clean, and Ronald McDonald are personifications of the brands they represent.

How To Sell Radio Ads With Confidence

The only reason a prospect ever says no is lack of confidence.

Perhaps they lack confidence that radio is the right medium, or that yours is the right station. Maybe they lack confidence that now is the right time, or that you've given them the right price. It might be they lack confidence that you're the right person to buy from, or that your idea will work.

When clients are confident that radio is the right medium, yours is the right station, now is the right time, this is the right price, you are the right person to buy from, and the idea will work, they say yes every time.

Selling is a transfer of confidence. Your job is to transfer your confidence to the client. Do you have it to give to them?

You won't find confidence by focusing on your goals — you'll find only anxiety when you're falling short, and pride when you've surpassed them. You won't find confidence by listening to motivational speakers. They may be able to give you confidence in your potential, but they can't give you confidence in your knowledge of how to make radio work.

- Confidence comes from listening.
- Confidence comes from preparation.
- Confidence comes from understanding what happened in the past, and why.

Radio ads that work are radio ads that transfer confidence.

- Good ads say things plainly.
- Good ads include details.
- Good ads ride the waves of public opinion.

Here's a :60 that does all three:

FEMALE: Feel *better*. Look *younger*.

MALE: It's a machine used in hospitals around the world to promote healing.

FEMALE: *Soothing light* energizes the cells in your face and lips to produce collagen and elastin, restoring a healthy, youthful glow.

MALE: The wavelength of the light is exactly 633 nanometers.

FEMALE: Your skin and lips will look and feel like they did when you were young.

MALE: No drugs. No injections. Nothing dangerous.

FEMALE: Just your own collagen and elastin, **released** to make you look young again.

MALE: Sun spots fade, pore size is reduced, pigmentation is balanced, and the skin is softened.

FEMALE: This is **not** something you can do in your home.

MALE: The machine that delivers this healing wave cost us 30 thousand dollars.



FEMALE: Facial anti-aging using lightwaves. *Welcome to the 21st century.*

MALE: You'll need **12** treatments of 20 minutes each. Total price: five hundred dollars.

FEMALE: You'll **feel** a difference immediately.

MALE: You'll **see** a difference within 3 weeks.

FEMALE: Facial *anti-aging*. At the Solarius Spa in the Caracol Plaza at the southwest corner of Montgomery and Tramway.

This second ad for the same company rides the wave of public opinion.

Note: It isn't important whether or not tanning beds are dangerous. The only thing that matters is whether or not the public is convinced they are dangerous:

FEMALE: Few things are *sexier* than a healthy tan.

MALE: And few things are as *dangerous* as the average tanning bed.

FEMALE: A well-maintained tan is your best protection against the sun.

MALE: But when it comes to tanning beds, you might as well crawl into a microwave and have your friend hit the button.

FEMALE: We don't recommend the average tanning bed.

MALE: The *average* tanning bed costs only about 10 thousand dollars.

FEMALE: But the tanning bed at Solarius Spa cost us **40** thousand dollars.

MALE: It's an amazing piece of technology.

FEMALE: You'll tan faster on our bed because it has much higher levels of UVA.

MALE: But skin-damaging UVB rays have been reduced to less than *one half of one percent*.

FEMALE: It's healthier than natural sunlight.

MALE: By lowering the UVB, we reduce the risk of burning and increase the number of days you keep your tan.

FEMALE: Tan on a Solarius bed and you'll keep your tan longer because your skin stays healthier.

MALE: Don't crawl into a microwave. Get a longer lasting tan on a more expensive machine.

FEMALE: You'll look better. You'll feel better.

MALE: Stay healthy. Use the 40-thousand-dollar bed at Solarius Tanning Spa in the Pavilions on San Mateo at I-40, and in the Caracol Plaza at the southwest corner of Montgomery and Tramway.

DO YOU WANT TO HAVE CONFIDENCE?

Listen to your clients. Figure out how they might do a better job of transferring their own confidence through their ads.

Be specific; avoid generalities when you speak or write.

Prepare your presentations carefully. You'll feel more confident when you do.

Ride the wave of public opinion. 🌊

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Bill, Ronald, David, And You

Hooray For Radio's Management Cheerleaders

I thought Bill Clinton was a good president for the same reason I thought Ronald Reagan was good — both were excellent head cheerleaders.

Their politics, personalities, and characters were different, but each had a similar ability to keep things from spinning out of control. With a little training, they may have even been able to run a radio station.

Sure, Reagan ended the cold war and brought down the Berlin Wall. But could he have ended the feud between sales and programming? Clinton gave us a white-hot economy and a massive budget surplus, but could he have increased billing after a bad book?

General managers of radio stations have to do these things and more. GMs have to keep talented hotheads, sycophantic suck-ups, whining excuse-makers, moon-eyed lunatics, and plodding paranoids all headed in the same general direction. They have to make people feel like everything is going to be all right, and satisfy a variety of groups:

- The listener has to feel like the station is for them, their needs, their preferences, and their happiness.
- The staff has to feel like the station is for them, their careers, their families, and their futures.
- The home office has to feel like the station is for them, their sales projections, their stockholder value, and their bottom line.

Are there really people who can do this job?

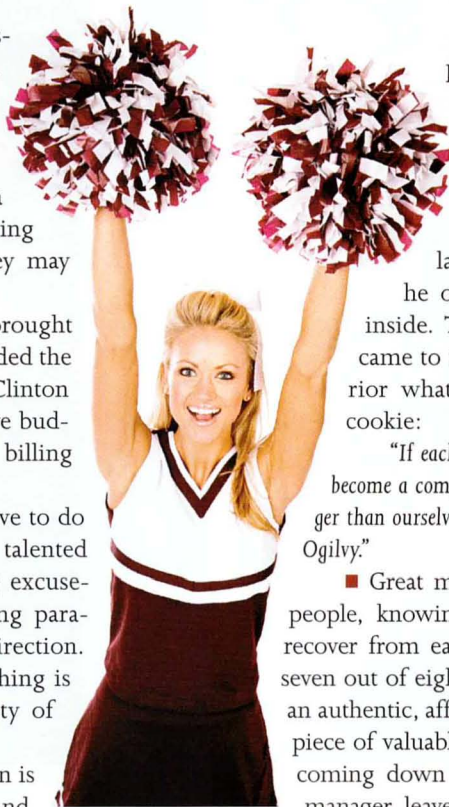
I was possibly the worst general manager ever to assume the position. But since I've had a chance to observe the great ones, I've noticed an unusual but recurrent characteristic: **Great managers are rarely excellent at any of the things they manage.**

- Great coaches are great, not because they were superstars, but because they know how to awaken the star that sleeps in each of the players around them.



QUICKREAD™

- Positivity is contagious!
- Look for reasons to compliment your staff — the newfound confidence will increase productivity.
- Do your employees cower when you walk down the hall?



■ Great managers are never afraid to hire people better than themselves. Each of the 217 times David Ogilvy opened a new office for Ogilvy & Mather he'd leave a set of Russian nesting dolls on the desk of the incoming manager. When the manager removed the top half from the largest of these bowling pin-shaped dolls, he or she would find a slightly smaller doll inside. This would continue until the manager came to the tiniest doll and retrieved from its interior what looked to be the note from a fortune cookie:

"If each of us hires people smaller than ourselves, we shall become a company of midgets. But if each of us hires people bigger than ourselves, we shall become a company of giants. — David Ogilvy."


■ Great managers look for things to praise in their people, knowing that it takes seven positive strokes to recover from each negative reprimand. Think about it: If seven out of eight times we encounter our boss we receive an authentic, affirming comment, a bit of happy news, or a piece of valuable insight, we will love to see our manager coming down the hall. But if our encounters with the manager leave us deflated, discouraged, or scared, our hearts sink when we see them coming.

Do your people love to see you coming? If not, begin looking for things to praise. Keep your ratio of positive comments seven times higher than your negative ones, and they'll soon begin to smile when you walk into the office. This newfound attitude and confidence will begin to show up as a higher number of cold calls, a higher close rate, and higher billing. All because you believed they could do it — and made them believe it, too.

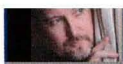
■ Great managers don't show you photos from their own vacation, they ask to see the photos from yours. And it makes them happy to see you had a wonderful time.

Walk down the hall and find a potential superstar disguised as a plodding paranoid. For each of the next 21 days, compliment that person every time you see him or her take a positive step toward success.

Then prepare to meet a whole new employee on the 22nd day. Don't be surprised if they have the same name as the plodding paranoid who used to stink up the place.

Go. The hallway awaits you. 

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Will Radio Recover Its Wit?

As I look at the shimmering horizon of radio's future, what exactly do I see?

I see a move away from shock radio, lowbrow jokes, and locker-room humor. I see intelligent and insightful morning teams who rely on preparation instead of banter. I see imagination that flies higher than we've flown in the past.

Here's an example of what I mean. A young man applying to NYU encountered the following question on his admissions application: *Are there any significant experiences you have had, or accomplishments you have realized, that have helped to define you as a person?*

I am a dynamic figure, often seen scaling walls and crushing ice. I have been known to remodel train stations on my lunch breaks, making them more efficient in the area of heat retention. I translate ethnic slurs for Cuban refugees, I write award-winning operas, I manage time efficiently.

Occasionally, I tread water for three days in a row.

I woo women with my sensuous and godlike trombone playing, I can pilot bicycles up severe inclines with unflagging speed, and I cook Thirty-Minute Brownies in twenty minutes. I am an expert in stucco, a veteran in love, and an outlaw in Peru.

Using only a hoe and a large glass of water, I once single-handedly defended a small village in the Amazon Basin from a horde of ferocious army ants. I play bluegrass cello, I was scouted by the Mets, I am the subject of numerous documentaries. When I'm bored, I build large suspension bridges in my yard. I enjoy urban hang-gliding. On Wednesdays, after school, I repair electrical appliances free of charge.

I am an abstract artist, a concrete analyst, and a ruthless bookie. Critics worldwide swoon over my original line of corduroy eveningwear. I don't perspire. I am a private citizen, yet I receive fan mail. I have been caller number nine and have won weekend passes. Last summer I toured New Jersey with a traveling centrifugal-force demonstration. I bat 400.

My deft floral arrangements have earned me fame in international botany circles. Children trust me.

I can hurl tennis rackets at small moving objects with deadly accuracy. I once read *Paradise Lost*, *Moby Dick*, and *David Copperfield* in one day and still had time to refurbish an entire dining room that evening. I know the exact location of every food item in the supermarket. I have performed several covert operations



with the CIA. I sleep once a week: When I do sleep, I sleep in a chair. While on vacation in Canada, I successfully negotiated with a group of terrorists who had seized a small bakery. The laws of physics do not apply to me.

I balance, I weave, I dodge, I frolic, and my bills are all paid. On weekends, to let off steam, I participate in full-contact origami. Years ago I discovered the meaning of life but forgot to write it down. I have made extraordinary four-course meals using only a mouli and a toaster oven.

I breed prizewinning clams. I have won bullfights in San Juan, cliff-diving competitions in Sri Lanka, and spelling bees at the Kremlin.

I have played Hamlet, I have performed open-heart surgery, and I have spoken with Elvis.

But I have not yet gone to college.

The writer of that letter was accepted to NYU.

Because radio lacks the ability to show pictures to the eye, we must become the world's best at showing pictures to the mind. Are we the best? Are we even any good?

Somewhere out there are the Stan Frebergs and Dick Orkins of this generation. Will radio seek them out, develop them, and present their magic to a nation grown weary of clichés?

Perhaps my vision of radio's return to imagination is merely a manifestation of my own prejudices and preferences. But wouldn't you love to see that college freshman choose radio as his career?

A radio station is more than its license, its tower height, and its trade area. A radio station is the people who speak into its microphone. Have we paid too much attention to the license and too little to the talent?

When I listen to the future I hear smarter people on the air. I hear elegant wit and insightful commentary. I hear something more amazing than a goon show.

Please don't tell me I'm wrong. 📻

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QUICKREAD™

- Have we paid too much attention to the business of radio and not enough to talent?
- The future of radio must rely on a thing of the past: *imagination*.
- When I listen to radio's future I hear elegant wit and insightful commentary.