



Name The Number. Say It.

The single biggest mistake made in face-to-face selling is the seller's reluctance to name the price. (I've chosen to give you non-radio examples, lest you be tempted to memorize a canned response.)

When your customer asks, "How much?" the next syllable to leave your lips should be the first digit of a number.

"But you don't understand. That's just not possible in my business. We have to gather some information before we can name a price."

Piffle and pooh. This is not true.

"OK then, smarty-pants, 'How much is a one-carat diamond?'"

Twenty thousand dollars is the most I've ever heard of anyone paying for a flawless, colorless, ideal-cut, one-carat diamond, and I can also get you a highly flawed one-carat diamond for about \$1,000, but I doubt you're looking for either of those. A truly beautiful one-carat diamond usually costs between \$2,900 and \$3,900 dollars, depending on the combination of color, clarity, and cut you choose. Some shoppers fixate on color, others on clarity, others on cut; some try to balance all three. Have you made any decisions about color, clarity, and cut, or are you open to a couple of suggestions?

See how easy that was?

If you want to:

1. reduce your customer's anxiety and
 2. increase your customer's confidence in you and
 3. elevate their attention and
 4. make them feel comfortable and in control,
- just train yourself to listen for the price question and then, when you hear it,
1. be sure no sound leaves your lips before you
 2. take a breath and
 3. spit out the price.

The reason you take a breath is because you aren't going to pause before you explain all the cool stuff that's included at no extra charge. Once a price is on the table, customer anxiety is eliminated, and the longer the list of things included in that price, the cheaper the price becomes in their mind.

"What do you mean, 'customer anxiety is eliminated'?"

Customers feel a bit anxious when they ask the price because that's usually the salesperson's cue to launch into attack-and-destroy mode. "Here, step into my office and fill out this customer information sheet. Tell us a little about yourself so we can serve you better. And be sure to include your e-mail address and cellphone number."

"We don't do anything like that. We just want to list all the features and benefits before we name the price."

So I'm assuming your customer asks, "How much is the mobile home next to the road?" and you say, "What a good

eye you have! That's an authentic Northfield mobile home with 6-inch stud walls, wood-burning fireplace, vaulted ceilings, color-coordinated draperies, built-in appliances, and wall-to-wall carpeting. That mobile home is fully air-conditioned, has an R-40 insulation value, comes with a 5-year limited warranty and..." Something like that?

"Yeah, sort of."

When you leave the price question dangling in the air like that — twisting in the wind like a man hanged for stealing chickens — the customer won't hear anything you say until you finally cut that hanged man down by naming a price. The longer you talk before you finally name a number, the more your customer thinks, "These clowns have a horrible price and they know it or they would answer my question."

"Well, OK, but how about those times when the customer knows exactly which make and model he wants and prices are easily compared, but your company adds a bunch of intangibles and you need to make sure the customer recognizes the value of those intangibles? If you name the price right away, they'll just say, 'Thank you,' and walk away and you'll never have the chance to explain why your price is higher than the price of that cutthroat, lying, cheating, thieving, drug-dealing whore of a competitor down the street."

Give me an example. Ask me the question that scares you most.

"What's your best price on the new Northfield Tierra del Sol mobile home? And before you answer, we want you to know that we've already checked the price at seven other authorized Northfield dealers."

Forty-two thousand six hundred and twelve dollars, which includes at no extra charge: delivery, tie-down, set-up, floor leveling and reinforcement in 28 key points so your floor never sags or squeaks — and we supply all the labor and materials, by the way — and we connect your new Tierra del Sol home to your water meter and septic system so you don't have to call a plumber, and then our carpenters construct a 6 x 12-foot redwood front porch for you at no extra charge and build a 20 x 20-foot redwood back deck at no charge and, finally, a beautiful two-car carport — your choice of whether it's attached to the home or freestanding. Oh, and I almost forgot: We also deliver and set up a Weber gas barbecue grill and put 20 pounds of USDA Choice rib-eye steak in your freezer as a little housewarming gift.

See what I mean when I say, "The longer the list of things included in the price, the cheaper the price becomes?"

Just take a breath and name a number. That breath lets you talk without pausing, giving you all the time you need to qualify the number you've just named.

Now go sell. **INK**

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Wrangle Powerful Copy From Your Client. Here's How

The success of a radio schedule depends primarily on the offer made by the advertiser. You need an offer that compels your listeners to respond — an offer unique to your station, so you get credit for everyone who responds, regardless of whether they say, “I heard your ad on blah-blah radio.”

You want response, and you want credit. So get face-to-face with your client and ask:

QUESTION 1: What percentage of your sales volume comes from repeat or referral customers? Give it your best guess.

QUESTION 2: What percentage of your sales volume is triggered by your location, its signage and visibility? Again, give it your best guess.

Add these two percentages. Most retailers will estimate about 80 percent of their traffic count to be repeat, referral, or location-driven. Deduct the combined percentages from 100.

“The remaining percentage, 20 percent, is your ‘advertising-driven’ traffic, new customers who came to you solely because of your ads. I’m betting that percentage is a lot lower than you would have guessed. Am I right?”

QUESTION 3: How many unique customers have you served in the past 12 months? You may need to consult your records.

You continue, “Now apply your ‘ad-driven traffic’ percentage to the number of unique customers you’ve sold in the past 12 months. That will tell you how many new customers came to you solely because of your advertising. If you sold 10,000 unique customers during the past 12 months and you estimate 20 percent of those to be ad-driven, your ad-driven customer count is 2,000.

“Divide that number into your annual ad budget. The result of that division, the quotient, is your **cost of customer acquisition**. It’s how much you’re spending on advertising to bring one new customer through your doors.

“Write your cost of customer acquisition **LARGE** on a sheet of paper. Stare at it for a moment.

“The point I’m trying to make is this: Your cost of customer acquisition is a reflection of the public’s interest in your message. The more powerful your message, the lower your cost of customer acquisition.

“The primary goal of advertising is new customer acquisition. Your future repeat and referral business depend on it. Good customers move to other towns, or die, and you never see them again. It happens to every business, and it happens every year.

“About 20 percent of the population in the average American community didn’t live there a year ago. How are you reaching out to these newbies?

“We can drive your cost of customer acquisition way,

way down, I guarantee it. All we need is a powerful message, an offer so irresistible that a large number of people will respond to it. What’s hot? What is everyone is hoping to find?”

Show your client how offering the hot item at an extraordinary price, even at a loss, is far less expensive than paying for ads that don’t work.

Let’s assume a jeweler spent \$500,000 in advertising last year and sold 10,000 unique customers. He estimates about 20 percent of his 10,000 customers, 2,000 people, were advertising-driven. \$500,000 divided by 2,000 customers indicates a cost of customer acquisition of \$250 per customer.

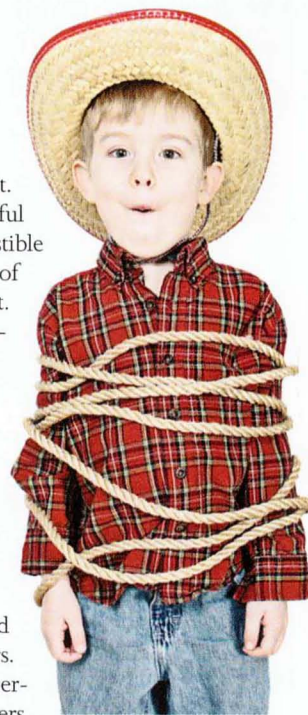
Now you convince the jeweler to promote a highly desirable item that usually sells for \$100. (His cost on the item is \$50. Competitors sometimes discount it to \$75 or \$80.) Purely to drive traffic, you advertise this item heavily for two weeks before Valentine’s Day for just \$40. The jeweler is losing \$10 on every sale.

A thousand customers buy the item for \$40. Half of them were “old” customers, half were new. The jeweler feels like he “lost” \$10,000 but admits he brought 500 new customers into his store for the first time.

The same ad budget that brought in 2,000 new customers last year is bringing in 2,500 new customers. The cost of customer acquisition has already dropped from \$250 per customer to just \$200. And you’ve only made one powerful offer, for two weeks. Can you imagine what will happen when you do this four or five times a year? Traffic will explode as everyone begins saying, “That store has great prices.”

Some advertisers will want to argue about the wisdom of this strategy. Smile at them, walk out the door, and drive directly to their biggest competitor. When you’ve driven the fool into bankruptcy and made his competitor fabulously wealthy, drive past the fool’s store occasionally and spit on his grave.

But never quit smiling. **INK**



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Does God Like You?

If you're reading this sentence, it's because the headline:

- A. Startled you by its intrusive, personal nature.
- B. Irritated you with its assumption that God exists.
- C. Intrigued you because you never really thought about it.
- D. Touched within you a pre-existing suspicion or belief.

Opening lines — including the subject lines of e-mails and the opening sentences of speeches, sermons, and radio ads — are vitally important. The headline that pulled you into this story is interesting because it:

- 1. Is taboo, introducing the subject of a deity.
- 2. Is a question for which there is no obvious answer.

You realize I just taught you two techniques for creating good opening lines, right? Touch a taboo, and/or ask a question that has no obvious answer.

Here's another good headline:

Four Out of Five People Think the Fifth Is an Idiot

That one is interesting because it:

- 3. Is funny.
- 4. Says far more than it says (multilayered).
- 5. Reminds you of things you already know about foolish statistics, public opinion polls, and prejudices disguised as research. "Me and all my friends..."

Fifteen years ago, when I first began writing for *Radio Ink*, Eric Rhoads said, "Make your readers want to cheer your name or make them want to tear you limb from limb, but never let them be bored."

- 6. That's another useful tidbit: People would rather be angry than bored. So don't be afraid to touch a nerve.

Think of an advertiser whose business you know fairly well. Now create six different radio ads for that advertiser, each one opening with a line that proves you can use each of the six techniques we've named. I'll go first. The advertiser is a jeweler that wants to sell engagement rings.

1. Taboo: Two different women have both had sex 100 times. The first one had sex with 100 different men, one time each. The second one had sex with one man, 100 times. Do you see a difference? Diamonds are like that, too.

2. Question: Who was the first guy to pick up a diamond, polish it, and give it to a woman? What did that guy see that no one else saw? And how did the woman react?

3. Funny: "To be or not to be..." That's not really a question. [3-sec. pause.] "Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune..." [2-sec. pause.] I'm not sure what Bill Shakespeare was talking about with those slings and arrows, but I could definitely use an outrageous fortune right now. I'm about to get engaged and it's time to buy a diamond engagement ring. Yeah, some outrageous fortune sounds pretty good to me.



4. Multilayered: A diamond is NOT forever. Diamonds can be shattered with a hammer, burned up in a fire, and ground into powder. But the relationship symbolized by a diamond IS forever. Your girlfriend has an important question, and it's this: Are you a forever kind of guy? [3-sec. pause.] She really needs to know.

5. Tell them what they already know: A diamond is a rock ... just a rock. Someone dug it out of the dirt. But when worn on a girl's left hand, that special, one-of-a-kind rock sparkles a message of commitment to everyone it encounters. That rock shouts to the world that this woman is in a committed relationship. And a shouting rock, *mi amigo*, is a very, very good thing.

6. Touch a nerve: Is Glenn Beck the new Joseph McCarthy? Some people say yes, some say no. Diamonds are like that, too. Some people say the clarity of a diamond is its most important characteristic. Others say clarity is a diamond's least important characteristic. Here at _____ Jewelers, we believe the clarity of a diamond is _____. But we're gonna leave that whole Glenn Beck thing up to you.

One last thing about opening lines and headlines:

7. Never promise something in an opening line or headline that you don't deliver in the story. Readers aren't quick to forgive a bait-and-switch.

So in the spirit of delivering what I promised in the headline, I'll share with you the following thoughts: It is easy to believe God loves us. It is somewhat harder to believe that He likes us.

You have certain people in your life you love because they are "family." But do you really like them? Even you-know-who? Would you have chosen that person to be your friend if they hadn't been thrust upon you by the genetic lottery? (Wow. There's number one again. Taboo.)

Love requires a commitment that runs deeper than your feelings. This irrational, wonderful, life-giving commitment makes it possible for us to love people we don't really like, people we would never have chosen for rational reasons.

Love isn't a feeling, it's something you do. Love is action. Love goes where it's messy and always has its sleeves rolled up. This is why we can love people we don't like. But just for the record, God likes you. He actually likes you.

I asked him if he was sure. He said, "Yeah, I'm sure."

Go figure. **INK**

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ROY WILLIAMS
THE WIZARD OF ADS

How Does Your Client Like To Buy?

Not everyone buys radio according to the same criteria, so why do we always try to sell it in the same basic way?

The first thing you need to know is how your client will make his or her decision. Regardless of what you may have been told, advertisers never make a decision based on price alone. Their criteria may be as simple as price divided by audience size, but it's never spot rate alone, so please don't hide behind that myth.

The second thing you need to know is that virtually everyone in radio has a blind spot. (Don't be embarrassed. If you knew it was there, they wouldn't call it a blind spot.) Radio's blind spot is its relentless preconception that every advertiser should have a target demographic: "Who is your customer?"

There are three main groups of radio buyers:

1. Advertisers with no firm criteria for decision-making regarding ad schedules. They need you to be the expert.

2. Advertisers who just want the best deal they can get on one or more of the "right" stations. They have specific demographic and/or psychographic targets.

3. Advertisers who think of radio as "mass media" and believe radio audiences to be largely interchangeable. They're buying 12+ or 18+ reach and frequency at the best prices they can find. You don't like to hear that, but there it is. You can't corner these buyers into a "target demographic," but on the other hand, they're willing to pay you for every listener you've got, regardless of age, sex, income, or other qualitative criteria.

These three main categories of ad buyers can be separated into distinct groups at two precise forks in the road:

FIRST FORK: "Do you have a preferred method for evaluating radio schedules, or would you like me to give you some recommendations?"

Basically, what you're asking is, "Who's going to be the expert

here? Me or you?" If your prospect has no specific criteria for making decisions, you're dealing with a babe-in-the-woods, a neophyte. You're the expert. You're in charge. Be very careful to craft something that will deliver obvious, identifiable results because this client is counting on you. Not on your station, on you. Deliver consistent results and you'll be in control of this account forever.

On the other hand, if your client does have specific criteria for making decisions, you need to quickly get in step with it: Be for what is. Don't try to get the prospect to see things your way. Don't politely argue with them. Don't present them with new information in the hope of getting them to make a new decision. And for the love of all that's bright and good, **DON'T** have a standard presentation that you impose on every buyer.

Asking a buyer to reconsider their buying criteria is like asking them to change their religion. If your prospect wants to be their own expert, let them, because they're going to do it anyway, even without your permission.

Let's assume your prospect answered the first question by stating that they do, in fact, have a preferred method for making decisions.

SECOND FORK: "Some advertisers have specific demographic or psychographic targets while others use mass media as a way to reach the masses. I'd consider it a huge favor if you'd let me know how I can best get in step with you. Tell me what you'd like to see in my presentation and I'll do my best to show it to you."

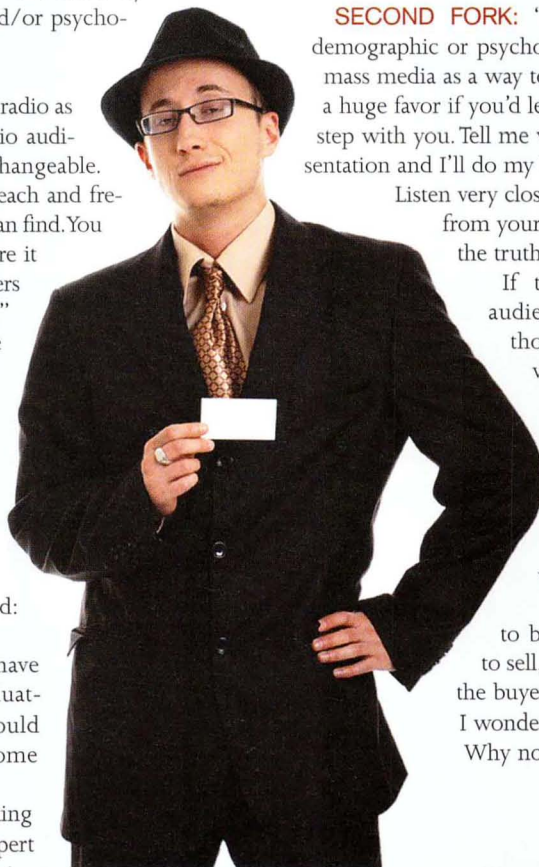
Listen very closely to the answer. The next words from your prospect's mouth are likely to be the truth, even if they don't realize it.

If the prospect talks only about audience size and rates, give them those and nothing else. If they want a ranker, give them that. If they want qualitative, give them that. If they want specific dayparts or sponsorships or "added value" in the form of participation in station promotions, give exactly what they name.

You can try to convince buyers to buy according to how you prefer to sell, or you can sell according to how the buyer prefers to buy.

I wonder which of these works better?

Why not try both and see? **INK**



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Why Advertising Is Rarely Scalable

Most people believe advertising is scalable. These people are right.

And they are wrong.

SCALABLE: When a large-scale problem can be solved by the straight-line expansion of a small-scale solution, that solution is scalable. Example: You want to put a box of loose snapshots into photo albums. One album holds exactly 50 snapshots. This problem is scalable. Count the snapshots, divide by 50, then buy that many photo albums.

Direct response ads — those high-impact ads crafted to hit a target with maximum impact and trigger a purchase with a single exposure — are scalable. Reach 10 times as many targets, and you'll make 10 times as many sales.

But most ads are not scalable, due to the vagaries of **relevance**, **sleep**, and **time**. Non-scalable ads must be repeated until you reach a threshold called "breakthrough."

BREAKTHROUGH: The best way to understand breakthrough and how it differs from scalability is to consider the following statistic: There will be exactly 20 traffic fatalities for each 100 cars that try to navigate a particular corner at 100 mph. We have the data. It is conclusive. Numbers don't lie. Apply scalability to this data, and you'll wrongly predict that there will be two fatalities for each 100 cars that try to navigate the corner at 10 mph. Breakthrough is best understood as the speed threshold at which a car becomes dangerously unstable at the corner. Breakthrough is that moment when the rules of the equation change dramatically.

Q: So how long will it be before my advertising reaches breakthrough? How many repetitions will be required before the customer finally takes action?

A: Your moment of breakthrough will be determined by two variables. The first of these is relevance.

RELEVANCE: Does the target need the product, or can a desire be created for it? Direct response ads perform poorly for categories that have "moments of need" that are well defined. It's hard to sell an engagement ring to a person who has no interest in getting engaged. Likewise, how do you convince a person to buy new tires when the car simply doesn't need them, or a new water heater when the old one is working fine? When your product or service category doesn't have the requisites for direct response marketing, your best option is to become the solution

provider the customer remembers immediately when their moment of need arises.

Q: Sounds great. But how much time is that going to take?

A: We can answer that question only after we've answered this one:

How memorable was your message?

We're back to that issue of relevance again. Involuntary, automatic recall is known as "procedural memory" among cognitive neuroscientists, and the rules of its creation are simple: **Relevance x repetition = procedural memory**. In other words, the amount of repetition your message will need will be determined by its relevance, and by one last thing...

SLEEP: the second variable.

Sleep erases advertising. That is why 12 repetitions spread over 12 months don't have the same effect as 12 repetitions in one month. Becoming a household word in the minds of the public is like climbing a muddy mountain. Three steps forward, and you slide two steps back during the night. Three steps forward, two steps back.

In view of all this, the best prospects for radio advertising are businesses that:

- Sell things most people will need sooner or later
- Make a large profit on each sale
- Have no way of knowing when their customer will need them
- Need to win the heart of a future customer before that customer's need arises

The Yellow Pages are deadlier than a bag of hammers. Call on business owners in categories that have previously spent heavily on the Yellow Pages. Some of these business owners will be too frightened to abandon the phone book, but others will sign healthy 52-week agreements. But only if 52 weeks is what you pitch.

Sell a plumber, a roofing company, an attorney, a tire store, a jeweler, a home improvement company (siding, window replacement, etc.), an insurance agent, an auto mechanic, a church, and a CPA.

Someone in each of these 10 categories is going to buy 21 ads per week from you, 6 a.m.-7 p.m., 52 weeks a year. That's 1,092 ads per year, per client.

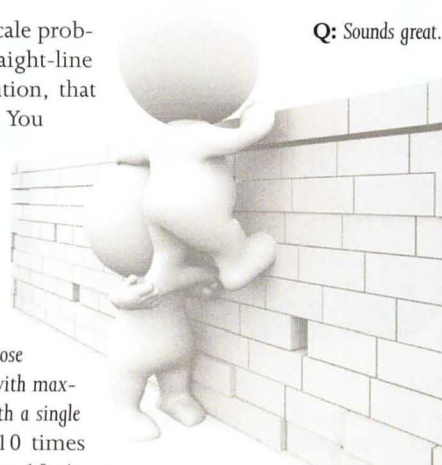
Calculate your commission on 1,092 ads.

Now multiply that commission times 10 clients.

Why are you still reading? Go! **INK**

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Japanese Summer

You Can't Quit Knowing What You Know

"My name is Natsu, and I'll be serving you today." Pennie said, "Natsu — what a pretty name!" "Thank you. I was named after my grandmother. It means summer in Japanese."

Thirty seconds earlier, Natsu looked like every other waitress. But now that we knew her grandmother was Japanese, we couldn't help but see the obvious signs of Japanese heritage in her face.

"Obvious" knowledge is the reason business owners are uniquely unqualified to write their own ads: They're unable to put themselves in the shoes of their uninformed customers because they can't quit knowing what they know.

This is a 30-second radio ad written for one of the clients of the Wizard of Ads office in Australia:

MALE: Sometimes, bigger is better.

FEMALE: Sometimes, bigger is *definitely* better.

MALE: Electricity bills are an exception.

FEMALE: No one needs big electricity bills.

MALE: Sunshine is free.

FEMALE: Sunshine is happy.

MALE: Sunshine is natural.

FEMALE: Country Solar turns sunshine into free electricity.

MALE: Talk to Country Solar. No pressure, no commitment.

FEMALE: Just free electricity.

MALE: Free electricity.

FEMALE: Get your free electricity at Country Solar dot com dot au.

Only 3 percent of all males will hear sexual innuendo in that ad. Only a few women per 1,000 will consciously hear the ad as "sexual."

DID YOU NOTICE? (Spoken by a female voice) "Sometimes, bigger is *definitely* better...." Free ... happy ... natural ... no pressure ... no commitment. By the time we say "electricity" for the sixth time, men are no longer thinking about electricity. But they feel very good about the offer and want to follow up on it, though they can't really explain why.

Now that it's been pointed out to you, the sexuality suddenly seems "obvious" and in bad taste, right? This is why you should never reveal to your clients the subtle sexual suggestions you bury in your ad copy. Once your client has seen the sexual suggestion, they can't believe other people won't see it immediately. You'll be sent back to the station to start all over. Your wonderful ad will never ride the air.

Ads are like people. They can be funny or sad or brazen or disarmingly honest. Ads can be tender and poignant, sappy and sweet, sharply satirical or bitterly edged. Ads can be straightforward. Ads can be deceptive. But seductive ads work best. You are unconsciously attracted, pulled, drawn



into the ad as it whispers your name, nibbles your ear, and tugs at your collar. "That's right. I'm talking to you. How 'bout we get together?" You have a hard time looking away.

FEMALE: People will say, "Your engagement ring looks like it's completely made of diamonds!"

MALE: The band is 18-karat white gold, the strongest and whitest gold on earth.

FEMALE: And inlaid in it are eight diamonds, sparkling like the stars above.

MALE: I've never seen an engagement ring get this much attention. And it's just seventeen hundred and ninety-nine dollars.

FEMALE: In the center is a fabulous half-carat diamond that looks flawless to the naked eye. Nine diamonds in 18-karat white gold.

MALE: The Stars Above....

FEMALE: A full three quarters of a carat total weight.

MALE: Come to Ramsey's and ask to see the Stars Above.

FEMALE: It's an overnight sensation.

MALE: An excellent price would be three thousand dollars. But seventeen ninety-nine is a miraculous price, a Ramsey's price.

FEMALE: Star light, star bright, first star I see tonight, (slower) I wish I may... (pause, then soft), I wish I might...

MALE: ...see the Stars Above. Exclusively at Ramsey's Diamond Jewelers.

FEMALE: Engagement rings are what we do.

DID YOU NOTICE? Strongest, naked, overnight, sensation, (female voice whispering softly) "Tonight, I wish I may, I wish I might...."

Ads that tease openly are porn. But ads that tease below the level of consciousness are soft on the ears, astoundingly effective, and hard to beat. **INK**

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Facebook & Twitter

For traditional retail and service businesses

I feel like the boy in the Hans Christian Andersen tale "The Emperor's New Clothes." You remember the story, don't you? Two weavers promise an emperor a new suit that will be invisible to those who are unfit for their positions, stupid, or incompetent. When the emperor parades before his subjects in his new clothes, the boy cries out, "But he isn't wearing anything at all!"

The Internet is the parade, and Facebook is its emperor, but I hesitate to shout that this emperor looks naked because it would be tantamount to a confession of professional incompetence. Let's face it — those weavers have spun a pretty loud buzz with Facebook, as well as Twitter.

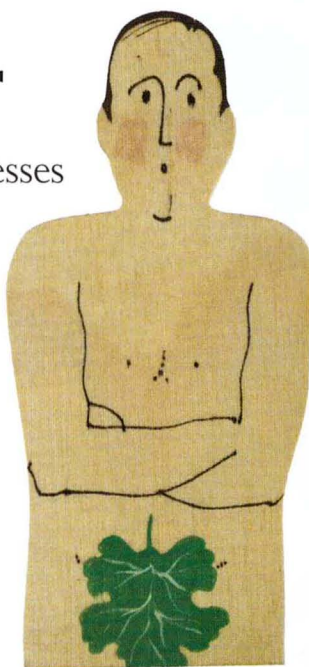
The first Internet buzzword was "eyeballs." Any site that could generate a high number of unique visitors and page views was said to be overflowing with eyeballs, and its creator was considered a genius. But eyeballs didn't translate into dollars unless you delivered to the brain behind those eyeballs a highly relevant and sufficiently credible message.

Next it was about "going viral." My office was deluged back then with advertisers saying, "We want to go viral. Do you know the secret to going viral?" I told them, "Going viral is what happens when traditional word-of-mouth is empowered by digital technology. Do you have a relevant, credible message that contains at least one of the essential three word-of-mouth triggers?"

"Eyeballs" and "going viral" faded away due to a lack of success stories. Now it's "Facebook and Twitter." But as Lee Iacocca says in *Where Have All the Leaders Gone*, "Talk is cheap. Where I come from, in the auto industry, you were held brutally accountable for your programs and products. The response to any idea was, 'Show me where it's working.'"

Lee is right. Talk is cheap. Show me where it's working. Google "Facebook success stories." I did. Prepare to be underwhelmed.

Facebook promises hyper-targeting, but this has been the promise of all media since the invention of advertising. Newspapers have been divided into sections for nearly a century. ("Do you want to target men in the Sports section, women in the Lifestyle section, or businesspeople in the Business section?") Magazines were invented to target micro-groups that shared a common interest. TV and radio stations promise psychographic targeting through specific programming. Billboards promise tightly controlled geographic targeting. But each of these media is hampered by the same inescapable truth that hampers social media like



Facebook and Twitter: Response to your message will be dictated by its relevance and credibility, not by the vehicle of its delivery.

Bill Keller, executive editor of the *New York Times*, concurs: "I'm not even sure these new instruments are genuinely 'social.' There is something decidedly faux about the camaraderie of Facebook, something illusory about the connectedness of Twitter. Eavesdrop on a conversation as it surges through the digital crowd, and more often than not it is reductive and redundant. Following an argument among the Twits is like lis-

tening to preschoolers quarreling: 'You did!' 'Did not!' 'Did too!' 'Did not!'"

This all reminds me of a conversation I had with a client 14 years ago in Milwaukee. We'd grown his business tenfold — 1,000 percent — in just five years, using radio and radio alone. He was swimming in cash because he was tenacious and hard-working, he had excellent judgment, and his employees loved him. All I'd done was help him focus his message and his ad budget.

When he arrived in Austin for his annual marketing retreat, he said, "This year I want to spend \$20,000 of the ad budget for a country club membership. I really believe I can sell some product on the golf course."

Knowing my client loved to golf, I said, "Sounds like a great idea. How often do you plan to golf?"

"Every Tuesday," he answered.

"I'm OK with this plan as long as we agree that you're going to be the one responsible for selling on the golf course, not me," I said.

He was OK with that. He bought the country club membership, began playing golf every Tuesday, sold a little product on the golf course, and is still a client today. His business is now more than 50 times the size it was when we first began working together, but he doesn't pretend that golf is what built his business. It was radio. He knows it, and I know it.

Connecting on Facebook and Twitter is like having a country club membership. If a client's thing is connecting on Facebook, tell them to go for it. But let's not pretend it's the best use of their time and money.

Screw it. I'm going to say it out loud: "The emperor is naked!" **INK**

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An Open Letter To Advertisers

You open your mailbox and grab a handful of paper. How long does it take you to sort that mail? Do you open each envelope and consider its message, or do some of them get tossed into the trash can unopened?

More than \$71 billion was spent on direct mail marketing last year, according to the U.S. Postal Service. And each of these dollars was spent in the hope that:

1. Your attention would be gained by the advertiser's message, and
2. You would spend time — at least a moment — considering it.

Less than one quarter of the amount spent on direct mail — \$17.3 billion, to be exact — was spent on radio advertising in 2010, according to the RAB. And each of these dollars was spent in the hope that:

1. Your attention would be gained by the advertiser's message, and
2. You would spend time — at least a moment — considering it.

More than \$131 billion was spent on television advertising in 2010 — not quite twice the amount spent on direct mail, but nearly eight times as much as was spent on radio. And each of these dollars was spent in the hope that:

1. Your attention would be gained by the advertiser's message, and
2. You would spend time — at least a moment — considering it.

Business owners are excited about Facebook and Twitter because these social media outlets offer them potential access to — wait for it — your time and attention.

Are you beginning to see a pattern here?

Time and attention are currency.

Shoppers today are confronted with an unprecedented number of possibilities. Welcome to the 21st century, where shoppers carry the world in their pockets, giving them instant access to everything they want to know. Now, what were you saying?

A 1978 consumer behavior study by Yankelovich indicated that the average American of that

time was confronted by more than 2,000 selling messages per day. These “selling messages” included the signage in front of strip centers, posters in windows, point-of-purchase displays in convenience stores, product packaging on shelves, stickers on gas pumps, and all the major media, of course. Yankelovich revisited that

study in 2008. Today's shopper is confronted by more than 5,000 selling messages per day.

Shoppers don't buy things until they know about them, and they have far too little time to consider all their options. This is why the value of time and attention has risen to unprecedented heights.

And it's also why **clarity is the new creativity.**

If today's advertisers want to ring the bell, win the prize, and cash the check, they must:

1. Gain attention
2. Speak with impact, and
3. Prove what they say
4. In the fewest possible words.

A few final thoughts:

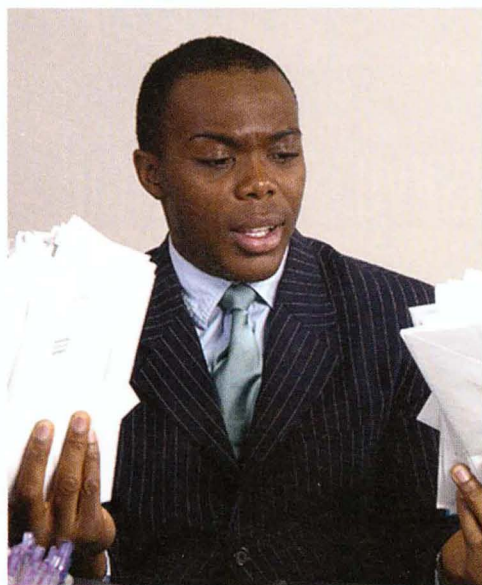
1. Radio has weathered the techno-storm better than any other media.
2. Following a brief flirtation with the iPod, Americans returned en masse to broadcast radio for exposure to new music and breaking news.
3. You can close your eyes, but you cannot close your ears.
4. How many hours a week do you spend driving?
5. World-class radio ads are cheap to produce.
6. It costs big bucks to look good on TV.
7. A modest budget for a national advertiser to produce a 30-second TV ad is \$350,000. Your TV ads, by comparison, will always look “homemade.”
8. But national advertisers have no advantage over local advertisers on radio.
9. Advertising agencies can't pay the bills by producing radio ads. Their profitability — indeed their very existence — depends on their ability to steer advertisers into high-production-cost ventures: television and direct mail.
10. The smart place for local advertising is usually on the radio.

I've spent 30 years and hundreds of millions of dollars to learn what does and doesn't work. My income is based not on the number of hours I work, but on the difference I make in my clients' businesses in 38 states. If business increases by 31 percent over last year, I get a 31 percent raise to my monthly salary the following year from that business. But if the business declines for any reason whatsoever, my pay is cut the following year by the percentage business declined.

I never listen to the radio. Never. It annoys me. I find I can't focus my thoughts while it's playing.

Trust me, if I could find a better way to grow my clients' businesses, I'd jump on it. **INK**

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Why Ads Fail

I've never met a business owner whose advertising failed because they were reaching the wrong people. Let me say that again. I've never met a business owner whose advertising failed because they were reaching the wrong people.

Advertising fails when the public has:

1. **No knowledge** of the offer. The ad is easily ignored.
2. **No interest** in the offer. The offer is a) irrelevant or b) misunderstood.
3. **No trust** in the offer. The claims made in the ad are not credible.

These problems can be solved by:

1. **Getting** the attention of the public with words and phrases that are new, surprising, and different.
2. **Offering** the people what they want to buy (instead of trying to convince them to buy what you'd like to sell).
3. **Supporting** your claims with examples that agree with the experiences of your prospective customers.

"But wait a minute, Mr. so-called Wizard of Ads. You said ads sometimes fail because the people who were reached had 'no interest in the offer.' Because I am an honorable advertising salesperson, I always begin by asking the advertiser, 'Who is your customer?' Now if I can offer this advertiser a higher concentration of those people, isn't that a better value?"

Your argument assumes an advertiser will be able to articulate their customer profile as a demographic cell. That sounds reasonable, but it's almost never true.

Let's put that to the test. I will ask the questions. You will answer them honestly:

1. Do your friends tend to be male or female?
2. Do your friends tend to be under 30, 30 to 44, 45 to 59, or over 60?
3. Do your friends tend to be married or single?
4. Do your friends tend to be Republicans, Democrats, or Independents?

These questions are perfectly reasonable, but you know in your heart that you have lots of male and female friends of all ages, married and single, and with political affiliations that span the spectrum. But all of them bought the same product: you.

I believe right customers exist. I do not believe they can be targeted according to income or demographic profile. If you target a demographic cell, it's because you believe in your heart that persons of the same age, sex, and marital status all think alike.

The right customer is targeted through ad copy.

When the ad copy is right, the format of the radio station almost doesn't matter. But when the ad copy is wrong, the format of the radio station absolutely doesn't matter.

Let's do one last test: I've listened to your old school pitch about "targeting the right customer," and I've decided "my customer" is a female from 25 to 34 years old. I sell



engagement rings. That's all. Nothing else. Just engagement rings. Now I want you to tell me what percentage of your weekly cume is women 25 to 34.

Oh, your station is number one in the market with women 25 to 34? A whopping 19 percent of your weekly cume is "my customer"? Wow, that's impressive. According to your theory of "targeting the right customer," I'm wasting only 81 percent of my ad budget if I buy your station.

Hey, I've got an idea! Why don't I just buy some truly targeted ads from Facebook! They can give me women 25 to 34 in my area who are in relationships. Thanks for the lesson about targeting.

Listen to me, AE. Radio is called "mass media" for a reason: *It reaches the masses.*

By the way, the two most successful sellers of engagement rings in the U.S. and Canada are both clients of my silly little ad firm. They became the kings they are today because I made them quit targeting "their customer" and began spending 100 percent of their yearly ad budgets on radio, nothing but radio, 52 weeks a year. We buy the most efficient adult 18+ schedules we can find that offer us the highest weekly reach with a 3+ frequency.

It would rock your world to know how many people buy engagement rings who are not 25 to 34, or even 25 to 49.

Say to the advertiser, "Is there anyone you don't want to impress? Is there anyone out there whose opinion doesn't matter? Think about it; everyone who is deeply impressed with your ad becomes an evangelist for you. Radio is the world's most efficient mass media. Let's win the masses with it."

The most successful local-direct AEs don't sell radio. They sell advertising. And they say to the advertiser, "Target through your ad copy, and you will be amazed at the wide variety of people who suddenly become 'your customer.'"

This idea resonates in the heart of the business owner because, deep down, he or she knows it to be true.

And so do you. **INK**

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AEs: Learn The Lyrics To This New Song

Newbie AEs often fail because they learn to sing only one song: “Buy radio. Radio is what you need. Nothing else works. Radio is the answer to all your problems. And not just radio, but my station in particular.” To become truly successful, local-direct AEs need to build credibility with their prospects by giving them advice on how to use additional advertising vehicles.

Here’s a nugget of wisdom I’ve used to increase a prospect’s confidence in me: “You have something to sell, and you want to tell the world. Here are my first questions:

Are people already looking for it? Can you deliver your message in eight words or less? If the answer is yes to both, put up a big, intrusive sign. Nothing will give you a bigger return on investment than maximizing your exterior signage. The world may be a little uglier for it, but you’ll sell a lot of stuff. For the record, eight is the number of words drivers can read before they feel compelled to look back at the road. More than eight, and you’ll be advertising to the passenger seat.”

They need to do it only once. When it works as promised, you become a trusted source about marketing.

Another nugget I’ve often used: “A high-visibility location for your business is usually the cheapest advertising you can buy. But don’t be fooled — high traffic doesn’t mean high visibility. These are the pivotal questions: How many people drive past each day? Are they mostly the same people driving to and from work, or is this a twice-a-month artery for a much larger population? Could a person drive past here and not notice this business? If they would definitely notice it, acquire the location. It’s a landmark that will serve you faithfully for years to come.”

The client probably won’t change locations, but the advice makes sense. Most important, there’s nothing in it for you. It will be obvious you’re trying to help grow their business and are not just trying to make a sale.

This third nugget also scores big points for me: “The Internet is electronic print, instantly updatable and deliverable on demand. As such, it has effectively replaced the newspaper, telephone book, encyclopedia, and dictionary and is rapidly replacing the bookstore. Product brochures and catalogs are becoming ‘virtual,’ existing only as backlit images on a screen. Slash your Yellow Pages budget and get serious about your Web presence. Are your business hours and phone number



easy to find on your homepage? Bryan and Jeffrey Eisenberg — the New York Times best-selling authors of four books on how to use the Web for local businesses — recently said that a high percentage of visitors to those businesses’ websites are looking for that information. Don’t frustrate them — put your number and hours on your homepage. I promise it will make a difference.”

Offer these three bits of advice — not all in the same day, of course — and most clients will view you as a valuable source of insight. It won’t seem unusual to them when you say, “To think of the Internet as ‘electronic

media’ like television and radio is a huge mistake. Streaming video was popularized by YouTube, but the experience of it requires continual decision-making and physical participation, much like a video game. Television, on the other hand, is passive; sit and stare. What’s killing the effectiveness of television commercials isn’t the Internet, but the DVR. Gone are the days when television networks could force us to watch a sales pitch.”

Looking back at what we’ve shared so far, what’s left standing? Radio.

Here’s my final nugget. Notice how we gain credibility by opening with what they already know: “Texting while driving is more dangerous than a loaded gun. It’s more dangerous than drugs, tobacco, and alcohol combined. The lack of a built-in, hands-free device for in-car Internet radio listening keeps it from being an immediate threat to broadcast radio. Very few people listened to FM radio before car manufacturers began installing FM receivers as standard equipment in the 1970s. It takes almost seven years for new cars to trickle down to used-car buyers, so we’re at least that many years away from broadcast radio’s effectiveness being seriously eroded by the Internet.”

Share that nugget too soon, and it will sound like one more verse in the “Buy radio” song sung by newbie AEs. But if you share it after prospects have benefited from your earlier insights, they’ll say, “Radio is the safe place to be right now. How can I best use it?”

Do what I’ve told you, and you’ll sell clients like never before. Other AEs won’t figure it out, your manager will wonder what’s gotten into you, and your account list will blossom like a flower. I say it’s time to go floral. What do you say? **INK**

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ROY WILLIAMS
THE WIZARD OF ADS

The State Of The Union As I See It

The radio business has striking similarities to the car business.

Political conservatives are fond of saying that greedy labor unions killed the American auto industry, but I saw the whole thing happen, and I remember it differently.

In the '50s and '60s, American automakers ruled the world. They built great cars. No one wanted anything else. But then General Motors decided it could cut costs and raise profits by eliminating redundancies. "Why design

and manufacture a whole different car for Chevrolet, Pontiac, Buick, and Oldsmobile when we can just hang a different trim package on one basic car and sell it under four different brand names? Think of the money we'll save!" Soon, most of GM's vehicles were built on a few common platforms. Ford and Chrysler followed GM's example. Profits skyrocketed. "How can this be a mistake? Look at the money we're making."

In the radio business, we called it consolidation. "We'll buy five stations in a market, eliminate four GMs, four SMs, four PDs, and most of the announcers. Then we'll bring in syndicated shows with localized drop-ins to make the shows sound local. Think of the money we'll save!"

The problem with eliminating redundancies is that it's a one-trick pony. Cost-cutting isn't sustainable as a

business model unless, like Wal-Mart, you can use the power of your distribution pipeline to bludgeon your suppliers into working for free. But, unlike retail, radio doesn't have high external costs of inventory. Radio's inventory cost is internal salaries. When we bring out the knife, we're not cutting someone else, we're cutting ourselves.

Foreign carmakers delivered better gas mileage at a lower cost. American carmakers responded with additional chrome, more cup holders, and zero percent financing. The carmakers went for glitz and glamour and avoided the real issue. It took a while, but their avoidance of the real issue, gas mileage, caught up with them.

But brand loyalty doesn't go away overnight. The majority of the car-buying public stayed with GM for more than a decade before they finally said, "Enough." GM then watched a steady stream of once-loyal customers begin investing their dollars in foreign brands.

Radio audiences won't go away overnight, either. And I believe that's exactly where we're at right now. Just as American automakers responded wrongly to the challenge

of foreign carmakers, most American broadcasters are responding wrongly to the Internet. It seems to me that most radio stations see the Web as an opportunity for glitz and glamour, cup holders and chrome.

But the "gas mileage" of advertising is "measurable results."

My media buyers talk to radio AEs all day, every day — more than 2,000 stations last year, one at a time. This puts our finger firmly on the pulse of radio. And right now it feels like radio is abandoning its core competency.

A radio station needs an impressive Internet presence or it will be perceived as out of touch. But I strongly believe radio should not look to the Web as a growth center for profits. That would be short-term and counterproductive. I believe a radio station's digital assets should be given away as added value for radio's broadcast advertisers. Create a solid Web-based benefits package for your advertisers, and give it to them for free. But make doubly sure the Web message is a clear reinforcement of the radio message, and be sure this message is trackable. Your station needs to get credit for the difference you make in the advertiser's business.

The American public wanted a car that got better mileage. American carmakers ignored this and paid the price. American business owners want advertising that works. Radio works.

Don't get caught up in the online frenzy. Yes, the Internet is real, and it's here to stay. But you're not in the Internet business.

You have a broadcast license, a tower, a staff of radio professionals, and a huge audience. I believe this adds up to a powerful sales pitch — if you believe in what you're selling.

I say this with great hesitancy because it's definitely in bad taste, but the AE who gets excited about his station's online presence reminds me of a frenzied little dog trying to hump somebody's leg.

Don't be that little dog.

Philadelphia's indomitable Jerry Lee is no one's little dog. Jerry has always been a maverick, and he's always been successful. And Jerry is not looking at online streaming to be radio's miraculous savior. Jerry is pouring his energy into figuring out how to make his station's ads work better than ever. And from what I can tell, he's moving WBEB to a whole new level of success.

Keep your eye on Jerry Lee. In my opinion, he's a very good brand of crazy.

Jerry and I still believe in radio.

Do you? **INK**



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ROY WILLIAMS
THE WIZARD OF ADS

Gross What?

Who was the person who decided we should multiply reach times frequency to calculate gross impressions? Seriously. I need to know. Will you help me find that person?

Here's my plan: We find the rat bastard, drag him outside, and kick him to death. But of course we'll do it in the nicest possible way. We may even adopt a bit of a British accent while we hurl violent curses. It will be classier that way.

The person who decided reach should be multiplied by frequency did radio a horrible disservice. It is because of him that radio schedules often misfire and deliver disappointing results.

Radio ads require repetition. The only exception to this is that magical ad of such extraordinary impact that a single insertion will suffice. But we're not discussing that ad today. We're discussing the ads your clients actually let you put on the air.

Let's take a look at the misbegotten logic of gross impressions and GRPs.

1. Multiply reach times frequency to get gross impressions.

2. Gross impressions over population equals gross rating points.

3. One gross rating point is the mathematical equivalent of reaching 1 percent of the population one time.

If I place a schedule across the radio stations of a city with a population of 1 million people and that schedule yields 1 million gross impressions, I will have purchased 100 gross rating points. In other words, I will have reached 100 percent of the city one time. Or 50 percent of the city twice. Or 33 percent of the city three times. Or 25 percent of the city four times. Or 10 percent of the city 10 times. Or 1 percent of the city 100 times.

Each of these outcomes would represent 100 GRPs. But do you believe the advertiser who reaches 50 percent of the city two times can expect the same result as the advertiser who reaches 20 percent of the city five times? Radio is a frequency medium.

The problem is systemic. When you calculate gross rating points, you're likely to sell a schedule that will reach too many people with too little repetition. I know this because my firm evaluates approximately 6,000 TAPSCANS a year and has done so for more than 20 years. When a buy is crafted according to a GRP target, you're about to craft a schedule that will deliver a lot of reach, but with too little frequency.

Here's a better idea: Hit yourself in the head with a hammer. Have a friend bust your ribs with a baseball bat. Drink a cup of vodka and pickle juice. You'll feel like hell, but at least we won't have another advertiser saying, "I tried radio and it didn't work."

Here's the best idea of all: Achieve frequency first, reach second. Never try to reach more people than you can afford to reach at least three times within seven nights' sleep. A weekly three-frequency is not your goal, it is your threshold minimum. And please don't try to convince me that a PPM 2.0 is equal to a diary 3.0. I'm not buying it. A PPM 2.5 or 2.6 might be acceptable each week, but please don't go for a weekly 2.0.

Most radio schedules achieve too much reach with too little frequency. Want to know why? Broad rotators.

Here's how it happens. You need to increase your reach, so you add some 6 a.m.-midnight rotators at a really cheap rate, secretly knowing that most of them will air 7 p.m.-midnight. But the computer doesn't know this. Consequently, the reach and frequency analysis you generate is going to show the schedule achieving wonderful reach with acceptable frequency. But it's all a lie.

The computer has to assume that one of every 18 ads you scheduled 6 a.m.-to midnight will air 7 a.m. to 8 a.m. It assumes another ad will air 8 a.m. to 9 a.m. And it's calculating afternoon drive, too. The computer believes 13 of those 18 ads are going to air 6 a.m.-7 p.m., but you and I both know most of those 6 a.m.-to-midnight ads are going to air 7 p.m. to midnight.

Don't lie to your client. More importantly, don't lie to yourself and condemn the client's schedule to failure. If the ads are likely to air 7 p.m. to midnight, calculate the reach and frequency as if the ads are going to air 7 p.m. to midnight. Don't fluff the numbers with cheap ads scheduled as broad rotators and say to your client, "When drive-time is available, you're going to get drivetime! I'll keep my eye on it for you and monitor it, I promise!"

It doesn't pay off in the long term. Take it from an old man who's been riding this merry-go-round for a quarter-century.

Reach and frequency are not interchangeable. You cannot multiply them together and learn anything worth knowing. Don't look at gross impressions. They're a pointless illusion. Don't look at GRPs. They seem like they should matter, but they don't.

Reach matters. Frequency matters. If you want your radio schedule to actually work, cut your reach to boost your frequency.

Trust me. I have absolutely no reason to lie to you. **INK**

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ROY WILLIAMS
THE WIZARD OF ADS

How Soon Will My Ads Start Working?

Every client wants to know how soon their ads will start working. In the past, you and I were tempted to suggest greater frequency: "If they hear your ad once an hour, it will seem like bigger news and generate quicker results."

That answer isn't entirely wrong, but it's not as accurate as this one: "Relevance has always been an important part of effective communication, but never so much as today. Your customers have three questions that buzz constantly in their brains: 'Why should I? Will it make me happier? Is this really going to make a difference, or is it just a waste of my time?'"

You might go on, "Keep in mind, Advertiser, your ad will be just one of 5,000 sneaky little messages that will try to break into the customer's consciousness today. Most of these messages will be evaluated and dismissed in a fraction of a second. Look around. The air is thick with messages. They bark like little dogs and wave at us like shadows from the corners of our eyes. Frequency makes a big difference. Relevance makes an even bigger difference."

These are the questions you must answer before you can know how soon your ads will start working:

Question One: What percentage of the noise made in your category — all the different media combined — is being made by you? This is your *share of voice*.

Question Two: What percentage of the population will actively be in the market for your product or service this week? This is your *product purchase cycle*.

The shorter the cycle, the quicker your ad campaign will reach maximum ROI. Food has a very short product purchase cycle. Cars have a medium-length product purchase cycle. The average American trades cars every 42 months. Consequently, 0.55 percent of us will buy or lease a car this week. (Does that mean that anyone who advertises cars is wasting 99.45 percent of his investment?)

That's right, 42 months is a *medium-length* product purchase cycle. What do you suppose is the cycle for HVAC system replacement? Engagement rings? Furniture? Products with longer purchase cycles require more time for ad campaigns to ramp up to their full potential. These campaigns usually show poor results during the first 90 to 150 days, then begin to deliver increasingly good results until the growth curve begins to flatten out, about halfway through the purchase cycle. If the cycle is 10 years, the campaign will start slow, then generate increasing results until it levels off in about five years.

If relevant new information is not injected into the campaign at this time, the advertiser will become frustrated and begin to say things like, "Our ads aren't as good

as they used to be," "Your audience has changed," and, "I don't think we're reaching the right people."

Question Three: How many people will ever be in the market for this product or service? A high percentage of the public will sooner or later need a refrigerator, furniture, HVAC system replacement, and an engagement ring. The best strategy for advertisers such as these is to use relevance and repetition to become the provider the customer will think of first and *feel the best about* when they finally need this product or service.

But what about fine formal china, such as Royal Doulton at \$100 per place setting, and the sterling silver tableware that accompanies it? What percentage of today's public will ever be in the market for these? If a seller of these products were to ask you, "How long before my ads start working?" how would you answer?

Question Four: What degree of credible urgency does your ad contain? You can sometimes shorten a product purchase cycle by making a powerful offer that is time-limited or quantity-limited. But this technique, unfortunately, is also addictive. Create a once-in-a-lifetime offer for a product with a long purchase cycle and you'll likely move a number of people into the market who would otherwise have purchased at a later date. If your offer is powerful and credible, you'll see great success. And I promise you that your client will want to make a similar, once-in-a-lifetime offer again the following month.

Soon your ads will lose all credibility and the client will say, "Our ads aren't as good as they used to be," "Your audience has changed," and, "I don't think we're reaching the right people." It just makes you want to hit yourself in the head with a hammer, doesn't it?

Question Five: What is your competitive environment? In other words, how well are your competitors known? How good are they at what you do? Your ads are not the only ads your customer will see and hear. Are your competitors making a more powerful offer? Share of voice can be purchased. Share of mind must be earned.

Share of voice times relevance equals share of mind. Huge frequency will buy you a higher share of voice. But a big share of voice times zero relevance equals zero share of mind. Zero results.

If you allow your clients to make a weak, irrelevant offer, you condemn them to poor results. But they're not going to blame the offer they made. They're going to blame your station. They're going to blame you. Dodge this bullet by guiding each advertiser to make an offer the public will perceive as highly relevant and perfectly credible.

Sell on. **INK**





ROY WILLIAMS
THE WIZARD OF ADS

A Guaranteed Way To Increase Your Billing

If you want to increase your billing, improve your ad results, and inspire your clients to bigger schedules, hire a writer and train him to sell local-direct. Media buyers in ad agencies need a salesperson, but local business owners need a storyteller.

I was a writer long before I began selling radio.

It's easier to turn a writer into a salesperson than it is to turn a salesperson into a writer. I'm not speaking theoretically today; I spent more than \$2 million to learn what I'm about to share.

When I began my little consulting firm, 25 years ago, Roy H. Williams Marketing was a one-man show. I spoke regularly to my clients in 38 states, negotiated all their annual contracts, and wrote all their ads. Within five years I was making mountains of money but had no time left for eating, sleeping, or kissing my wife.

Fortunately, I'd gained a second benefit from the hours I'd spent negotiating media: I knew exactly which AEs to steal. So I hired four of the smoothest AEs the world has ever

known. They were easy to like, elegant, accommodating, and hugely persuasive. They had wit, class, and charm. I paid them a fortune.

My plan was to teach them to write. How hard could it be?

A very frustrating 12 months later, I hired a couple of unemployed college graduates to serve the AEs as their full-time writers and paid them about one fifth as much as I paid the AEs. My classified ad triggered more than 200

inquiries from highly qualified writers — men and women who had already chosen to spend their lives in the pursuit of language, even if it meant working a menial day job to pay the bills. These people were willing to do whatever it took if it meant they could write and their words would be broadcast.

One of the writers I hired was Christopher J. Maddock. Chris carried with him a bachelor's degree in English and a bumper sticker his grandmother had given him when he graduated:

B.S. in Physics: "What makes that happen?"

B.S. in Engineering: "How does that work?"

B.A. in English: "Do you want fries with that?"

Granny obviously had a sense of humor, but Chris had the final laugh. He rose through the ranks and became my

business partner 10 years ago. I daresay Chris earns quite a lot more today than the average physics geek or engineer.

The problem with teaming writers up with account executives is that the AEs usually gather all the wrong information from the business owner, then dump this mountain of dirt on the writer and expect him or her to find a diamond that isn't there.

Frustrated by the AEs' inability to give them what they needed, the writers were soon asking for permission to speak directly to the clients. The clients in turn began calling for the writers rather than their AEs. That left the AEs with nothing to do but negotiate media. This didn't bother the AEs at all. They were very good at buying media. My problem is that they were making five times as much as the writers.

People trained as AEs make excellent media buyers. But people trained as writers make excellent advertising consultants. I've been telling radio station managers for 12 years that AEs should be required to write all their own ads. Managers dismiss that as "impractical." They know the limitations of the people they've hired. But what if you hired someone who's been feverishly perfecting his or her wordcraft since the eighth grade?

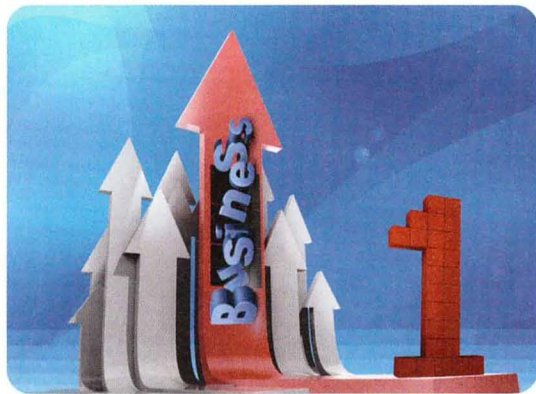
A writer is someone who has spent thousands of hours conceptualizing, writing, editing, and rewriting piles and boxes of unpublished poems, short stories, op-ed pieces, letters to the editor, screenplays, and journals *purely because they love to write*. That experience allows these men and women to listen to a business owner and effortlessly pull the diamond from the dirt that is the business owner's story.

Writers make incredible salespeople. What is writing but the crafting of language to alter the mood and perspective of the reader? A writer desires to change how you think and feel. Aim that energy at a prospect and you've created a powerful sales presentation. Aim it at a radio audience and you've created an incredibly effective ad, the kind that keeps clients coming back for more.

Radio Ink has asked me to share with you the classified ad I use to recruit the writers I train to become the world's best advertising consultants. You can download this proven ad for free at www.mondaymorningmemo.com/page/writer-recruitment. We're going to teach your writers to sell advertising to business owners. We're going to teach writers how to sell products and services to the public. These writers are going to increase your billing and make your station infinitely more listenable.

Go to www.mondaymorningmemo.com/page/writer-recruitment. Take a look. **INK**

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What I Hate About Buying Radio

I sold radio for about six years before becoming a GM. I was good at selling, bad at managing. In fact, I hated managing so deeply that I finally said to my employer, "You can keep the cheese, just please let me out of the trap."

My next step was to become a full-time ad writer and media buyer for business owners who were not, and had never been, clients of my station. Within three years, I was writing and buying for clients in 38 states and spending a few tens of millions of dollars on 52-week agreements with radio stations. Twenty years later, I have a couple of dozen branch offices across the U.S., Canada, and Australia.

This column springs from a comment made to me recently by Ed Ryan, editor of *Radio Ink*. "Roy, I'm amazed at the number of people who say to me, 'If Williams loves radio so much, why is he such a #@%+& rate-grinder?'"

Ed was surprised by my answer and suggested I share it with you. Here is that answer:

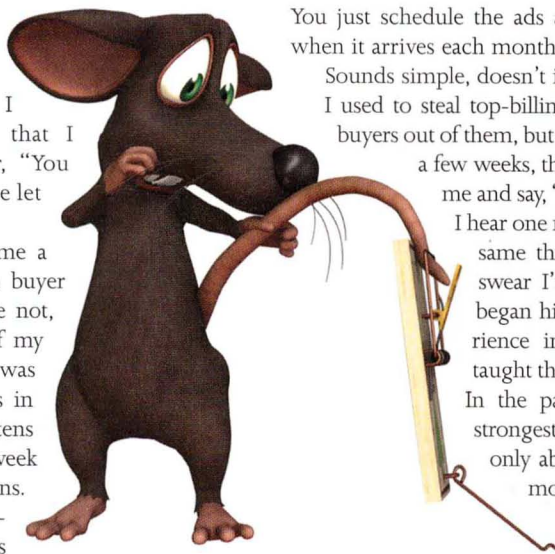
"Radio is a commodity. Qualitative data exists primarily to help radio stations pretend that reach and frequency are not, in fact, a commodity. Radio sales presentations are built on the myth that success is the result of advertisers' 'reaching the right people.' This targeting myth is a seductive lie, but a lie nonetheless. Radio is mass media. They call it 'mass' media for a reason: It reaches the masses, the unwashed and unfiltered masses, rich and poor, educated and not, employed and not, male and female masses.

"I work for my clients. My job is to reach as deeply into those masses as I can as often as I can for the amount of money I've been given by my client. If I don't stretch each dollar as far as it can possibly go, I'm doing a bad job and screwing my client. If people in radio need a friend, tell them to buy a dog."

I get what you hate about media buyers. I really do.

Here's the other side of that story. My media buyers and I listen all day, every day, to disappointed AEs explaining to us why we're idiots for not buying their station.

And then we listen to the nearly 600 AEs whose stations we buy explain to us that we're bad human beings because we ask for better pricing in return for buying early-week inventory 52 weeks a year and facilitating direct-to-the-client billing. Our clients tend to be zero-maintenance. We write the ads and stand by the results.



You just schedule the ads as agreed and cash the check when it arrives each month.

Sounds simple, doesn't it?

I used to steal top-billing radio reps and make media buyers out of them, but I had to quit doing that. Within a few weeks, these ex-radio AEs would look at me and say, "Oh my good God in heaven, if I hear one more person say to me all those same things I used to say each day, I swear I'm going to kill myself." So I began hiring people whose only experience in radio was as listeners and taught them how to evaluate a schedule. In the past 25 years I've learned the strongest of these people can make it only about five years before I have to move them to another position in the company.

Buying radio is unbelievably frustrating.

We've been on your station for two or three years when you get broadsided by a new competitor. Our reach and frequency fall like a rock. But we made a deal with you, and we'll convince our client to stick with it to the end of the agreement. But when renewal time arrives, you demand a rate increase. You insist that we've been paying far too little. You say we owe it to you. We respond that we'd like to remain on your station, but we aren't willing to pay the same price as before when you've lost 30 percent of your audience. This pisses you off and you say, "Inventory is really tight right now. At those rates, the spots wouldn't run."

The first 20 times a media buyer hears this, it's almost believable. But there comes a point when the media buyers say to themselves, "Why is it that radio stations have plenty of inventory when ratings are good, but when they have a bad book, rates go up and inventory gets tight? Based on that logic, stations should work harder at losing listeners faster."

Yes, media buyers have frustrations all their own. My personal favorite is when stations refuse to honor the deal they made. We stick with you until the end of the agreement, even when you have a really bad book. But when you have a great book in the middle of our 52-week deal, you say, "Sorry, but we sold your airtime to someone else."

I could go on and on and so could you, but what would be the use in that? Perhaps the best thing to do is for both of us to look up to heaven and say, "Thank you, God, for dogs." **INK**

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Choosing A Voice For Your Pen

A campaign is a series of ads bound together by a set of distinctive identifiers. The most successful campaigns have a style guide that gives their ads “connectedness.” The longer you use a memorable style guide, the more recognizable your brand becomes.

Brands sell better than non-brands because customers prefer the known to the unknown, the familiar to the unfamiliar. The audio signature is the essential part of the style guide for radio branding, and even though most radio people never think about it, the “voice” of the writer’s pen is far more important than the voice of the announcer who reads the script.

The words chosen by the scriptwriter will shine like a movie projector on the screen of imagination, creating lifelike images in the mind.

QUESTION ONE: Which actors will your words place on the screen?

Will your voice be first person “I,” second person “you,” or third person “they”?

QUESTION TWO: What will be your time perspective? Will your verbs be past tense “was,” present tense “is,” or future tense “will be”?

These are two early but important choices when choosing a literary “voice” for an ad campaign. These two simple choices can yield nine different voices:

1. “I was....” (first person, past tense)

I was walking down 5th Street, my dog with me, when....

2. “I am....” (first person, present tense)

I am walking down 5th Street, my dog with me, when....

3. “I will be....” (first person, future tense)

I will be walking down 5th Street, my dog with me, when....

4. “You were....” (second person, past tense)

You were walking down 5th Street, your dog with you, when....

5. “You are....” (second person, present tense)

You are walking down 5th Street, your dog with you, when....

6. “You will be....” (second person, future tense)

You will be walking down 5th Street, your dog with you, when....

7. “He/she was....” (third person, past tense)

Sally was walking down 5th Street, her dog with her, when....

8. “He/she is....” (third person, present tense)

Sally is walking down 5th Street, her dog with her, when....



9. “He/she will be....” (third person, future tense)

Sally will be walking down 5th Street, her dog with her, when....

QUESTION THREE: How will you structure your sentences?

At one end of the spectrum are long, rambling sentences that bridge from one thought to another in a conversational stream of consciousness reminiscent of how William Faulkner and Jack Kerouac filled page after page with colorful images without ever feeling the need to take a breath or insert a period that might allow the listener to think a thought or see an image other than the ones they so carefully projected onto the screen of imagination.

At the other end: Hemingway. Declarative. Short and tight. Calling upon the imagination to supply what the writer leaves out. Action happening between the lines: “For sale: baby shoes, never worn.”

The announcer’s voice is not the voice of the brand. The jingle, the music bed, the special effects are not the voice of the brand. The voice of a brand flows singularly from the pen of the writer.

Think of the TV ads: “Hello, I’m a Mac.” “And I’m a PC.” I give you those eight words in that order, and you’re instantly in touch with the whole campaign, right? You’re reading this, but you heard their voices as clearly as if they had been standing next to you. More importantly, you instantly recalled the ideas and attitudes and belief systems represented by each of those imaginary characters.

The U.S. Census Bureau reports that America has 5.91 million businesses with fewer than 100 employees. Their highest and best hope is you. Become known for your word skills and you’ll sit solidly in the driver’s seat when it comes to social media. If radio people don’t rise up and shepherd these businesses into the best word choices, story angles, and word flags, who will fill this need?

Let it be you. **INK**

QUICKREAD

▪ Brands sell better than non-brands because customers prefer the known to the unknown, the familiar to the unfamiliar.

▪ A “voice” and a time perspective are key elements to your script.

▪ The voice of the brand comes from the scriptwriter, not the announcer.

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Do You Have The Skills To Craft Great Ads For Your Clients?

QUICKREAD

- What makes a good ad writer? Courage, perceptiveness, honesty.
- Shorter is better.
- Any consultant can tell a client what to do, but only a consultant of true experience can tell a client what *not* to do.

Great ads are made from great ingredients. Would you rather wrestle with your client up front and get great ingredients before the ad airs, or apologize to your client when a bloodless ad falls flat? Good consultants are also made of good things. Are you made of good ad-writer stuff?

Do you have:

1. **Courage to speak the truth?**

The offer made by the advertiser matters more than the schedule, the audience, or the station's format. Do you have the courage to tell your advertiser that their offer is weak? A powerful offer heard just once on a small station will always outperform a pointless offer heard repeatedly on a big one.

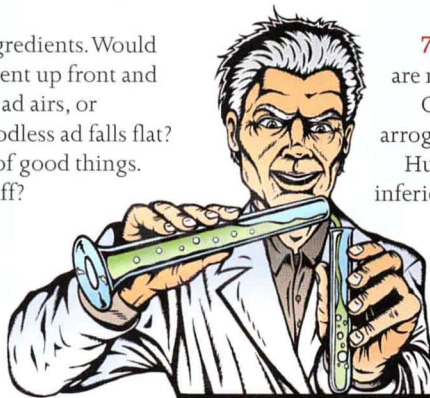
2. Clear eyes? Can you see beyond the wishful thinking and enthusiastic delusions of your clients? Sadly, many radio salespeople are parrots, happily squawking into the microphone whatever their clients would most like to hear said about their businesses. Can you maintain a healthy degree of doubt about your client's message? Can you see your client as the public sees them? Fall under the spell of the client's perspective and you'll find yourself on the inside with the client, looking out — and you'll no longer have the ability to think like your client's customer. The best ad writers empathize with the public, not with the client.

3. Curiosity? You must ask insightful questions to uncover unusual answers. "Of all the things you've ever done in advertising, what has worked best for you?"

4. Piercing perception? You must find an offer, a message to the public, that the public will judge to be interesting. You are looking for a diamond in a dark hole, deep underground. The client keeps offering you dirt clods and telling you they're diamonds. You are surrounded by tons of dirt, and you know there's got to be a diamond in here somewhere. But where? Do you have the patience to find it? Do you have the audacity to speak a diamond into existence when it wasn't there before? Sometimes your client will agree to a powerful offer they never thought about making. Do you have what it takes to suggest it?

5. Brevity? Clever is not a substitute for clear. Clarity is the new creativity. Shorter is always better.

6. A love for literature? Do you read a lot? And I don't mean websites. Great writers read the works of great authors and allow those flavors to coat their tongues. Hemingway, Steinbeck, Tom Robbins, Christopher Hitchens, Robert Frost. As you read, so will you write.



7. Humility? Confidence and humility are not opposites.

Confidence without humility is arrogance.

Humility without confidence is an inferiority complex.

Have the confidence to suggest an experiment. Have the humility to admit what you learned when an assumption proves to be wrong.

8. A conscience? Focus on helping the client, not on making the sale. Know that you can make a

difference. Ask questions. Develop ideas. Do experiments. Report results honestly. Become a sustaining resource. Make sure that access to airtime isn't the only thing you have to offer. Real confidence comes from actual experience.

But keep in mind that clients are never pleased to hear that you'd like to try something that's never been done. So if there is a word to remember, that word is "experiment."

If you and your client decide to perform an "experiment," it's a guaranteed-win situation because experiments always deliver valuable information you did not previously know. The cost, the time limit, the process, and the information you seek are all agreed upon in advance. "What did we learn?" is the sacred question that must be answered at the conclusion of every experiment, even when the only honest answer is, "Well, we certainly learned never to do that again."

The truth of good consulting is this: Any fool can tell a client what to do, but only a consultant of true experience can tell a client what *not* to do.

You're going to make mistakes. Own them. Don't try to bluff your way out of them. And always get buy-in from the client when you're not 100 percent certain of what the outcome is going to be. It's not just your experiment and it's not just theirs; it's both of you, together. Agree upon what you're going to do, what you hope will happen as a result, why you believe this experiment makes sense, and then, together, make peace with the possibility of the worst-case scenario.

As much as we try to make advertising a science, it cannot become one as long as language and human choice are involved.

"Experiment." That's the word.

And welcome to the big leagues. **INK**

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ROY WILLIAMS
THE WIZARD OF ADS

Radio Apathy

QUICKREAD

- Something that's not moving is probably dead. Is radio moving?
- Failure is temporary. Predictability is death.
- Save radio: Break format, and do something radical!

Something that isn't moving is probably dead. Motion is an indicator of life. So where is radio's motion right now? Where's its excitement? Where are we headed?

Few people support radio more strongly than me, and, frankly, I'm worried about it. The only real excitement I can detect in radio is that it has fallen in love with the Internet. I'm OK with that, but I'd like to point out that the online world doesn't require towers, transmitters, or licenses from the FCC.

Let's look at two characteristics the innovative leaders of the digital world all seem to have in common:

1. They tend to be college dropouts. Steve Jobs of Apple, Bill Gates and Paul Allen of Microsoft; Jack Dorsey, Evan Williams, and Biz Stone of Twitter; Mark Zuckerberg, Dustin Moskovitz, and Sean Parker of Facebook. Dropouts all. The list goes on and on.

2. They have no fear of failure. Online leaders experiment constantly because they see each failure as a necessary step toward success. These leaders know the truth about failure: It's an extremely temporary condition, a fleeting moment, nothing to be feared. Failure is motion, and motion is life.

In the October 22 edition of the *New York Times*, researcher Michael Ellsberg wrote, "Entrepreneurs must embrace failure. I spent the last two years interviewing college dropouts who went on to become millionaires and billionaires. All spoke passionately about the importance of their business failures in leading them to success. Our education system encourages students to play it safe and retreat at the first sign of failure ... Certainly, if you want to become a doctor, lawyer, or engineer, then you must go to college. But, beyond regulated fields like these, the focus on higher education ... is profoundly misguided."

The alumni list of Wizard Academy includes a number of university professors who have attended as students. Answering their questions and grading their homework has given me a feel for how they think. Generally speaking, professors are academics, guardians of the status quo, protectors of the style guide, champions of conformity and compliance. They always get excited when they see how many fun ways we've found to achieve better, faster results by breaking yesterday's rules, but they shake their heads sadly when we ask if our methods might ever be accepted into the mainstream of higher education.

Guardians guard the status quo, even when it is no longer viable. Radio's leaders make me feel like I'm talking to university professors.



Sigh.

I'm honestly worried about radio. I mean it.

When it's alive and in motion, radio triggers delight. But there can be no delight without an element of surprise. Tell me, when was the last time your station did something new, surprising, or different?

Radio recoils from anything untested, unproven, or disruptive. If there is a recipe for boring, we've found it.

Predictability is death.

Who will be the Martin Luther who nails 95 theses to the door of radio's Wittenberg Castle Church? Are there any rebels, renegades, mavericks, experimenters, or lunatics left in radio? Is anyone willing to play with matches, run with scissors, or talk back to the teacher?

Predictability is death.

I have a challenge for you, if you're up to it: Do something radical and let *Radio Ink* know the result. Call it an experiment. Call it research. Call it a contest. Call it whatever you want, but for the love of God, *break format!* Do something that makes your listeners wonder what's going on.

Predictability is death.

Clubs have open-mic night. Why not bring it to radio? Crossword puzzles and TV mysteries fascinate people. Have you thought about serializing a radio riddle, with a new clue delivered each day until someone cracks the code and wins the prize? A new riddle would begin the next day. Formats that claim "We play anything" could live up to that slogan by turning the control room over to a different listener for an hour each day. Please don't tell me that "based on your experience" it wouldn't work, when we both know that your opinion isn't based on "experience" at all.

Predictability is death.

Will you do something surprising and different and a little bit nuts? E-mail the results of your experiment to edryan@radioink.com, even if it turns out badly.

Predictability.....

Radio, please don't die. **INK**

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ROY WILLIAMS
THE WIZARD OF ADS

Good News For Radio! Storytelling Is Back

QUICKREAD

- The art of storytelling is gaining popular momentum.
- A story makes a fundamental human connection.
- Empathy means a storyteller can cause a listener to see and feel what he is seeing and feeling, transferring both ideas and emotions.

Storytelling is gaining momentum. Open-mic nights are the hot ticket in Los Angeles, Chicago, Detroit, and New York, with people lining up two hours before showtime to hear storytellers tell stories.

Let's look at the reasons:

"Storytelling is human connection at its most primal form," says Catherine Burns, artistic director for storytelling broadcast *The Moth*, winner of the 2010 Peabody Award for excellence in electronic media. "In the midst of this technological revolution, it's not surprising to me that people are looking to return to their roots. We want more than a status update about a breakfast cereal or someone's child's potty-training escapades. We crave more than a 'like' on Facebook or a retweeted Tweet. Storytelling is to entertainment as the slow-food movement is to dining — it's fresh and it's local."

The biological mechanism that enables vicarious experience was only recently discovered. Groups of specialized neurons called "mirror neurons" exist opposite each other in the left and right hemispheres of the brain, allowing us to vicariously participate in what someone else is experiencing.

These neurons enable human empathy, allowing us to tune in to each others' feelings. In effect, mirror neurons allow you to live inside the minds of others. This is why hearing stories of adventure is almost as exciting as having the adventure yourself.

Salespeople, evangelists, speechwriters, and radio professionals have long known that a good story can cause the listener to see and feel what the storyteller is seeing and feeling, thereby empowering the storyteller to transfer ideas and emotions intact.

SEAN: This is Sean Jones of Spence Diamonds, and I'm going to tell you a true story.

SARAH: Does it start with "Once upon a time"?

SEAN: No. It starts with a young woman named Melissa.

SARAH: What did she do?

SEAN: Melissa got into her boyfriend's car and said, "I need you to take me somewhere."

SARAH: What did he say?

SEAN: He said OK.

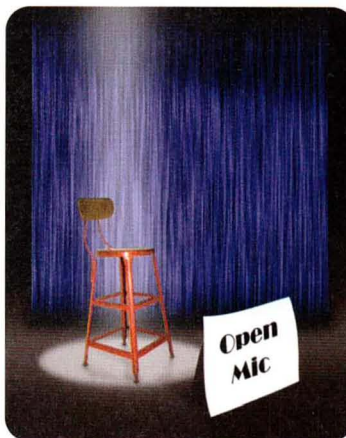
SARAH: So far, this story isn't very interesting, Sean.

SEAN: Be patient. We're getting to the good part.

SARAH: So what happened next?

SEAN: She said, "Turn left here. Take the next exit. Go straight ahead. Now turn right. This is the place. Do you want to come in with me, or do you want to wait in the car?"

SARAH: Where were they?



SEAN: I'll give you one guess.

SARAH: [Pause. Then big squeal of happy surprise.] You don't mean it!

SEAN: I do mean it.

SARAH: She really did it?

SEAN: She really did it.

SARAH: Melissa is my new hero.

SEAN: Just get in the car and say, "I need you to take me somewhere." Those are the magic words.

Here's another :60, as delivered by the late great Woody Justice of Springfield, MO. Woody maintained a 5.4 frequency each week for more than 1,000 weeks in a row, with about 52 percent reach 18-plus. Woody was such a radio legend that he didn't have to tell people who he was or the name of his company.

This is a classic Woody Justice "story" ad:

Tom Heflin was a railroad conductor. His wife had a sister. That sister had two little boys. One day she took those boys on a train to Winslow, Arizona, to spend a few days with them. Tom took those boys out into the desert to collect rocks. One of the little boys grew up to be a pediatrician. The other just kept pickin' up rocks.

I've never been able to explain what got into me that day ... but it's never left me. It has something to do with how the beauty of nature is made permanent, and becomes transferable, only in natural gemstones. Blood-red rubies. Piercing blue sapphires. Emeralds greener than the greenest grass. And diamonds — rocks that are perfectly colorless, clear, and pure. Rocks! Call me crazy. Call me naive. But I don't think gemstones are here by accident. I think God put them here. And he made them beautiful, and he made them rare. And he made them hard to find, so that you and I might give them as symbolic gifts to those rare and hard-to-find people who are beautiful in our own lives. You know who I am. And that's all I've got to say today.

I'm going to level with you: If you didn't find at least four new things in this column to sharpen your sales pitch and help you write better ads, I fear you have no future in radio.

But I know you better than that. You're going to put down this magazine, walk out that door, get in your car, and go share this stuff with a prospect and make a big sale. You're going to dig until you find a good story to tell, and it's going to generate fabulous results for your client.

Now put down the magazine and get out your car keys. Go. **INK**

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