
How To Succeed In An On Demand Media World

America has become the land of on demand. It all started with digital video recorders that allowed us freedom from watching our favorite television shows only when the networks scheduled them. Apple opened up a whole new world of audio and video options with it's iTunes store, offering not only music, but podcasts of hot radio and other audio programming available for us to listen to on our own time schedule. Apple TV, Netflix, Amazon Video on Demand and many others offer feature length movies on the very day they are released to be downloaded played back whenever we care to watch them. We can even get on demand audio and video content on our cellular telephones. And this is only the beginning of what will become an inevitable evolution, with more and more available on demand sources of at-home and portable entertainment.

Terrestrial radio is being threatened by an increasing perception that, perhaps, these new technologies are poised to lure away radio listeners, particularly in the younger demos. Advertisers have always been attracted to anything shiny and new. Now these new on demand sources of media are competing for that always limited pool of advertising dollars. The only way for radio to counter this perception is to demonstrate the strength of your radio station where it counts: in the ratings.

We are all in a high-stakes game of survival of the fittest. Unfortunately, to state the obvious, America is in the worst economic shape since the 1930's. As a result, radio stations have slashed their marketing and promotional budgets at arguably one of the worst times to be silent from a new media competition standpoint. Conventional wisdom would say that radio probably should be aggressively marketing and supporting it's products in the face of this tidal wave of on demand competition. However, most radio stations are sitting back and hoping for the best until the economy improves, whenever that happens.

Ideally we would all love to support our radio stations with lots of marketing money, but realistically that is not likely to happen. In tough times it is good to remember to focus only on what you do control and in this case it's your product. Are you doing everything you can on your radio station to protect yourself from on demand attrition?

One of the byproducts of the on demand revolution is an increasingly impatient and self-involved media consumer. More and more people are becoming accustomed to getting the entertainment they want precisely when they want it without having to wait for it. If you don't have what electronic media consumers want, they are

well aware of the many other sources and choices they have available to them.

What does this mean in terms of radio? Get to the point and get to it fast. Radio listeners will no longer sit through meaningless chatter before the meat of a talk set. Even the biggest air personalities in America are subject to audience tune out if they don't immediately deliver on their audience's expectation for their shows and bring their "A" games at the top of their breaks.

Coleman Insights did a study of the PPM results for one of the most successful radio personalities in the country, Rush Limbaugh, which amplified this point. In their report titled "*The PPM DNA of Rush Limbaugh*" Coleman found the following. "The first implication would have to be that the audience wants 'the beef.'" We make this comment based upon the initial tune out from the Limbaugh show at seven minutes past each hour. Listeners often tell us that when personalities do not give them something right away, they tune out. Upon listening to 30 hours of show openings, we can say subjectively that Rush has a tendency to spend several minutes reflecting on his life, various things in the news and to talk about the show that day, without really delivering his show. If Limbaugh could maintain the audience share he has when the show opens

throughout the hour, his show could have a share performance that is roughly a half-point higher.”

It is as important for air personalities to put as high a value on every second of their talk time as the audience does it's time. We can commit no greater sin in today's society than to waste someone's time, and we measure that time in seconds, not minutes. According to neuroscientists, human beings have gut reactions to things in three seconds or less. Our emotions process sensory input in 1/5 the time our conscious, cognitive brain takes to assimilate a point. In other words, whether or not we continue to pay attention to something depends upon what our gut tells us and our gut speaks to us in the first three seconds! So the first three seconds of what an air personality has to say had better contain “the beef.”

Another hedge against radio audience loss to on demand media is content placement. The old radio tactic of trying to make the audience wait until after commercial sets in order to hear the meat of an air personality's talk set now seems counter intuitive in this new world order of on demand media competition. On demand media doesn't make them wait, why should they wait for the most compelling radio programming?

In the Colman Insights PPM Series: *Mapping the DNA of PPM. What Happens When Features Come On?* Coleman Insights found that features on a music station that immediately follow commercial breaks start worse than those that do not follow breaks. “In their first

minutes, features that air immediately following commercial breaks achieve only 81% of their station's audience levels during the content that preceded the commercial break. Features that do not follow commercial breaks start with audience levels that are 89% of the station's in-content audience levels.” If features do not do as well placed after commercial breaks, it stands to reason your air personalities' “A” material will do better if it is placed before commercials as well.

Radio does have on demand elements of its own. Radio is there for the audience 24 hours a day/365 days a year. When radio plays a song by request, that is on demand. When a listener's question is answered on the phone, that is on demand. If your website has a “now playing” function that is information on demand. Doing some strategic thinking about incorporating the words “on demand” into positioning of some of these elements could be powerful if done judiciously and creatively.

New technologies will always be a threat to older ones and radio is no exception. The good news is that the locality that only radio can provide, combined with the strong emotional bond that good air personalities can form with their audiences is something none of the on demand technologies can duplicate. But we must make certain that we do not challenge the patience and attention span of the radio audience through self indulgence and a lack of focus on the audience's needs. If we don't, we only have ourselves to blame for audience attrition to on demand media.



Radio Air Personality
Development and Consultation

NOW AVAILABLE!

**WEB BASED
AIR PERSONALITY
AND PROGRAM DIRECTOR
TRAINING SEMINARS**

ELIMINATE TRAVEL COSTS!

**ALL YOU NEED IS A
COMPUTER
AND A SPEAKERPHONE**

**CONTACT
LORNA OZMON
AT (480) 342-8655
TO FIND OUT MORE**

OZMON MEDIA OFFERS:

**Morning show
coaching and development
sessions**

**Group creativity
seminars and training
sessions for programming
personnel**

**Training and coaching
for Program Directors in
new techniques for
morning show coaching
and development**

To Learn More About
**LORNA OZMON
and OZMON MEDIA**

Call:
(480) 342-8655

E-Mail:
ozmonmedia@aol.com

Visit:
www.ozmonmedia.com