

# Radio Sales

## The 4 Keys to Radio Sales

There are four vital points to successful radio sales, according to consultant Sandy Johnston:

**1. Know your competitors.** While our primary focus as Marketing Consultants is to help the client build his or her business, we have to understand that we're not the only ones out there who want to do that. Who else is out there selling against you? What do you know about them? Make it your business—and this can certainly be a group effort of the entire sales team—to get hold of rate information from other stations, the newspaper, cable, etc. These can often be obtained from a trusted client/friend.

Also from your client/friend, get a copy of the paper's annual calendar of events and "special tabs." Use this to stay about six weeks ahead of schedule with your clients. Make use of your local library as well: pull out last year's papers and local at what the advertisers were doing six weeks from now last year (e.g., in early March we should **be** planning mid-May). From the ads in the paper, make a list of clients, ad sizes, coop brands, specials and special events, and ad copy.

**2. Quote the experts.** To make an intangible medium more tangible, use the words of outside experts, along with a little bit of logic, to boost radio's credibility.

Jack Trout, author of *The New Positioning*, analyzed hundreds of effective positioning programs and discovered that they were all *verbal*.

*If you just look at a picture in a magazine or paper you learn very little, but if you just read the words, you get the message clearly.*

Dr. Elizabeth Loftus of the University of Washington, psychologist and author of eight books and more than 100 articles on the human mind, wrote, "When you present a list of words to people, either auditorially or visually, people remember more words if they hear them than if they see them."

*Hearing is instantaneous, while reading requires translation to "hearing" within the brain.*

A study from Northwestern University shows that if you try to convince people about a product (like shampoo) and you do it with just a verbal message, people are much more persuaded about your product. The verbal message alone seems to create in people's minds more of a positive feeling for the product.

**3. Make radio work. Don't let the client set the rules of our business! He or she sells, screwdrivers: we are the advertising experts.** The keys to making radio work:

Match the advertiser and the demo.

Sell frequency. If the client doesn't have enough money to do the job right, don't sell him or her. Instead, tell him/her to put the money into a "radio account" and use it when the account is sufficient. On the other hand, don't underestimate the client's ability to spend money with you!

Make radio tangible. (See also Key 2, "Quote the Experts.")

Use the Starch information to prove that downsizing print ads and adding radio does not lessen the impact of print—and the radio greatly extends the life of the print ad.

**4. Service! Service! Service!** Service isn't just the sale—it's the whole product. Here's how to provide superior service to your client:

*Do your homework.* Learn all you can about the client's business. Read his/her trade magazines to pick up the language and the trends in that business. Monitor other media to make sure you know what your client and his/her competitors are doing.

*Ask what you can do.* "What else can I do to make this work?" is a question you should be asking yourself all the time, and your client often.

*Be a part of the team.* Care about your client's success and his/her challenges.

*Know key employees by name.*

*Inform employees of details of ads, sales, specials, etc. for reinforcement.* Offer to brief your client's staff in advance of a special campaign, remote, sales, etc. Have the staff post radio ad copy so they'll all know what's being emphasized. Explain how registration boxes work for that contest. Leave nothing to chance!

*Follow up.* Find out how things are going. Make sure that radio *doesn't* take

the blame for poor performance—put the client's attention on *all* the factors that influence results. And, as Dave Gifford says, "When the client is saying yes, he's saying *YES*." Once you've sold him/her the Christmas plan, go ahead and sell the *January* plan as well!

Source: Sandy Johnston, Achieve Marketing & Sales Training  
Originally appeared in *Small Market Radio Newsletter* on March 6, 1997