

How to get the best out of radio advertising

By  Margie Knap

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Let's face it; traditional media is here to stay. TV will always be part of our daily lives. It's the wind down medium in the evening and the escapism of the daily grind. Out of home will always form part of the urban and rural landscape, it's not going anywhere. And radio - the news jingle will always get us to reach for the volume button, our favourite song gets us singing along and we associate and empathise with DJ's.



Image credit: Tanawat Pontchour via [123RF.com](https://www.123RF.com)

Radio has strong and enviable offerings: reach, immediacy, frequency, geographic targeting, daypart targeting, language targeting. Turnaround time is fast and production can be relatively inexpensive.

**"You can't watch TV in the car,
You can't watch TV in the shower,
You can't watch TV in the street, and
You can't watch TV while jogging.
Get the picture? "
(Ad for Capital Radio UK from the mid-80's)**

So how do marketers get the most out of their radio campaign? Making radio work for your company requires strategy, skilled media buying and engaging creative. But what makes a radio ad engaging?

The creative and media strategy process starts with a clear understanding of your brand, your audience and the targeted goals you wish to achieve – whether measured in cost per leads, cost per orders or just a bump in website traffic!

Let's start with that dreaded phrase THE BRIEF – you may roll your eyes, but THE BRIEF is a necessary element for the success of each and every campaign.

Step one: The creative brief

- The clearer the brief, the better the messaging is likely to be.
- Your ad is important to you, the marketer. Remember though - listeners don't tune in to listen to ads. Listeners are busy and they are easily distracted.
- You have limited seconds to get a message across – those first 10" are vital. If you don't grab the attention within those first 10", forget it.

Step two: The messaging idea

- The idea must be clearly understood and stimulate and excite the audio senses to stir the imagination. There is no luxury of beautiful graphics and Instagram worthy pictures. Close your eyes and listen if it works.
- We say that radio is the theatre of the mind, but don't leave too much up to the listener's imagination. People don't want to work too hard to connect the dots.
- The dialogue, the script, needs to be short, punchy and to the point and needs to engage the listener.
- Be careful of direct translations in other languages, key messaging can be lost in translation. Roses are love to some people but mean death to others.
- Cut through that clutter with a single-minded concept that stirs up emotions.
- Where possible and appropriate make your messaging relevant to current and trending news issues, but tread carefully!
- If you are giving away prizes, cash prizes are king.

Step three: Production values and cost

- Your creative agency needs to look for talent, new writers who understand and get radio. Voice talent for best messaging delivery.
- Production is still relatively inexpensive so change the execution as often as required to keep your messaging fresh and keep it out of that all too dangerous "wallpaper" territory.
- Be very wary of using too many voices as it can be a very costly exercise, eg 9 ALS stations with 2 voices per script = 18 voices!

And what are the media strategy guidelines?

Step one: Media penetration

- Radio is the ultimate mobile medium to reach captive commuters stuck in their vehicles, taxis, trains or buses.
- Understand and tap into your target market's listening habits, morning and afternoon commute, school lift time, school sports on Saturdays or gospel music on Sundays.
- Understand the penetration of each radio station, each one has their regional strengths and weaknesses.
- Don't, just don't, flight below required threshold (reach vs frequency) weights. If you do your message will not cut-through. So determine up front what your strategy is and what element is more important: lots of people vs lots of messages.

Step two: Station and target market match

- Choose a DJ to represent your brand based on your target market likes, not on your personal preferences. Stay on top of DJ lineups.
- Establish a definition of success: do you want to raise awareness; want sales or more feet through the door.

Step three: Cost of radio

- Don't just think about cost per thousand or cost of reach. Think about creating a connection with your consumers.

- Listeners love to be engaged, so look beyond the traditional 30" generic message: include competitions, live-reads, call-ins, event association, outside broadcasts and giveaways.

Step four: Radio 360

- Engagement, engagement, engagement.
- Include a listener call to action to increase engagement with your brand.
- Radio continues to evolve within a 360° space. Work with this and leverage all the assets that a station has to offer along with the on-air messaging.
- Lastly, do not allow stations to "back-fit" you into their existing competitions. If they don't work for you, make the stations work with you to deliver an exceptional campaign.

Final word, a great brief and effective media strategy led to the below award-winning campaign:

Dove 'Self-conscious'

Agency: Ogilvy & Mather London

Creatives: Simon Lotze, Miguel Nunes

Producers: Victoria Smith, Sarah Hall

Sound engineer: David Gritzman, Gramercy Park and H&O

Script:

VO: The more someone makes you think about your body, the harder it becomes to ignore.

Your tongue, for example. Usually, you hardly notice it's there. But when I mention it, you can feel your tongue bumping against your lower front teeth. The tip's just resting on them. You notice your tongue feels just a little too long for your mouth. And you notice it never really lies still. You move it about constantly, without thinking about it. Backwards and forwards. And from side to side. Suddenly, it feels strangely wet and heavy in your mouth, doesn't it?

A few seconds ago, you hardly noticed your tongue. But just one message ensured you can't stop thinking about it. Now imagine the hundreds of messages girls are exposed to every day, subtly changing the way they think about their bodies.

See how you can help at selfesteem.dove.co.uk. Dove. Be your beautiful self.

See more examples [here](#).

ABOUT MARGIE KNAP

People fascinate me! Insights into what makes them tick, what they do with their time, where they go, what they do - this intrigues me. I thrive on coupling those consumer insights and a client's business challenges. What I can do to help a client meet those objectives using consumer insights, and delivering a creative solution - this is what I thrive on, this is what intrigues me, this is what kicks my brain into overdrive.

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