Up Your Ratings

Leading Edge Information You Can Use to Increase Ratings, Get a Raise and Have More Fun

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More Insights About Radio Listening from PPM (and how you can use them to win)

The Listeners Have to Remember Us and Want to Come Back!

Last month I began sharing with you some of the new things we're leaning about how people listen to music radio. This information is new because it is based on the new studies now coming out of how people participating in the PPM "Portable People Meter" ratings use radio.

One of the most important lessons discovered and reported by the ratings company Arbitron is that success is based on repeat business. That is, how many times do they listen? This is in con-

trast to the idea of trying to get people to stick around for a long time. That, in truth, is mostly out of our control.

Implications

If success means getting people to come back, what does this tell us?

- *We must be easy to remember.*
- *We must stand for something they value and want from radio, so that when they think of it, they come to us.*
- *We must be in some way unique.*
- *We must provide something 'just for them' every time they listen to us.*
- *There must be a sense that if they don't come back, and soon, they will miss something.*

If we are very much like everybody else in every way, then nothing will stand out about us that will cause people to come back to us many times a day and each week, rather than some other similar station. And if we don't consistently deliver what the listener wants, they will continue to sample competitors. If we don't find a way to surprise them a little each time they listen, how can we convince them to come back more often than they otherwise would?

These are real challenges. Every programmer faces them. Only a few will do an excellent job of meeting them.

PPM Teaches Us That Branding is Critical

"The Brand is Your Promise" - Wrong!

"The Brand is What Your Product Consistently Delivers."

Correct!

What are the tools you use to create your brand? They include:

- Music
- Promotion
- Positioning
- Production
- Interactivity
- On-Air Talent

If these elements are not all in sync, consistent, high quality and

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About Steve Casey Research

Steve Casey Research specializes in helping stations increase ratings. Our contribution is highly effective research and communications between listeners and the station programming team. We help you obtain frequent and accurate feedback from your listeners.

Most consultants show up with opinions. Steve Casey brings you leading edge tools. He makes available to his clients the most advanced music research tools in radio and over 40 years of experience using and perfecting those tools at many of the most successful stations, in more than 100 radio markets around the world.

We've been honored to provide our help to exceptional broadcasters like the Australian Radio Network, TV2 Radio (Denmark), Mango (India), CanWest (New Zealand, Turkey), Cox (USA), CBS (USA), NRJ Group (France), Chrysalis (UK), Start Group (France), Millennium (India), Primedia (South Africa, Israel), SBS (United States, Puerto Rico), Finelco (Italy), GMG (UK), SBS (Sweden, Denmark, Finland, Netherlands, Romania, Greece), RMF (Poland), Sandusky (USA), Juventus (Hungary), Prima (Romania), Clear Channel (USA), Virgin (UK, Thailand, Jordan, France, Turkey and India), AMP (Malaysia), Regenbogen, Big FM, RPR1 (Germany), Communicorp (Ireland), Lagardere (France), MFM (France), Red, Angel, Freedom (Greece) and dozens of other great radio stations around the world.

"We must stand for something they value and want from radio, so that when they think of it, they come to us."

aimed at the right listeners, then what the product will consistently deliver is—disappointment.

Honestly, much of the emphasis today is on marketing. But at the Arbitron conference, Jon Coleman of Coleman Insights presented a compelling case for programming. He described how some programming will support your brand, while other programming may attempt to avoid prompting somebody with a meter to tune-out, In a perfect world, all your programming does both. But of course, many programming elements do a better job with one or the other.

Jon Coleman deserves our thanks for bringing this to light in such a clear way. Review the earlier implications of ratings driven by return visits. We can't hope to create brands that people remember and stations people return to by being bland and featureless.

Can you apply these principles to your music research and programming? Yes. We can view each song in terms of brand building strength—how well does it reinforce the music that your station stands for? And we can view each song in terms of the danger of instant tune-out—how well does it generally appeal to the mix of listeners to your station?

How We Use Music Research To Build Your Brand

Brand / PPM Balance

If you look back at the first page of this newsletter, you'll see a screen shot from MusicVISTA, our leading edge music research analysis system. This is a new report, designed to give you a visual overview of your music test results, from a branding standpoint. Songs are rated in two ways, and placed into one of four quadrants based on brand strength and tune-out danger.

1. The vertical axis shows how well a song supports your brand. The best songs are strongly identified with your format. These work like a Pandora recommendation, except that the decision is based on an ideal target listener, based on your specific station and music. The songs that don't particularly fit are below the line.
2. The horizontal axis shows how generally popular a song it. Songs to the left are more likely to cause a tune-out by somebody with a PPM meter. They are generally weaker songs.

In a perfect world, you'd live in Quadrant 2, where songs build the brand and don't irritate anybody. **Unfortunately, there aren't enough songs that powerful.** You'll need to manage your music category balance and music flow to compensate.

We've also added new information to the main song display in MusicVISTA. There are two new columns that give you a rating for each song from "terrible" to "excellent."

My Passion is to Help You Succeed

I'm very excited by the work we've done to bring this to you. This is like nothing you've ever seen before. We've taken the general concept of balancing the music for brand building in the era of PPM, and made it real and specific. And we can do it for your music tests.

In the screen clip below you'll notice that Queen's *Killer Queen* rates as a **Excellent** song in terms of its level of danger of immediate tune-out. But it rates as **Weak** in terms of its contribution to building the brand of the station. It is a not a core component of why listeners choose this station. Where in the hour do you need to reinforce your brand? For this station, Queen is not a good tool for the job.

"Where in the hour do you need to reinforce your brand?"

ARTIST AND TITLE	YEAR	'BRAND BUILDER' RATING	'NO PPM TUNEOUT' RATING	CENTER FIT RANK	TOTAL SAMPLE POP NDX.
VAN HALEN/I'LL WAIT	1984	AVERAGE	WEAK	340	87
HENDRIX, JIMI/ALL ALONG THE WATCHTOWER	1968	AVERAGE	STRONG	264	98
JOURNEY/WHO'S CRYING NOW	1981	AVERAGE	AVERAGE	344	89
CLAPTON, ERIC/I SHOT THE SHERIFF	1974	WEAK	AVERAGE	415	93
LENNON, JOHN/INSTANT KARMA!	1970	AVERAGE	STRONG	336	98
QUEEN/KILLER QUEEN	1975	WEAK	EXCELLENT	379	101
STEALERS WHEEL/STUCK IN THE MIDDLE WITH YOU	1973	STRONG	STRONG	207	97
WHO/BABA O'RILEY	1971	AVERAGE	EXCELLENT	321	101
PALMER, ROBERT/BAD CASE OF LOVING YOU	1979	TERRIBLE	WEAK	639	86
JOEL, BILLY/MY LIFE	1978	TERRIBLE	AVERAGE	542	92

Every programming element is important. Music research is particularly valuable if the design, execution and implementation supports your efforts to find the right lane for your programming, keep you on course, and balance your minute by minute execution. You'll build a station that people appreciate, trust, remember and—most important of all—return to again and again.