

# SMALL Business Times

Reprinted from *Small Business Times*, June 27, 2003

## Radio has many advantages to bolster an advertising campaign

By **Rob Grede**, for *Small Business Times*

If you sell to consumers, radio is one of the most effective media your business can use. Even if you sell business-to-business, consider radio to augment your advertising campaigns.

More affordable than TV, imaginative radio spots transport the listener into another world, create word-pictures that grab the listener's imagination and even have him humming your company slogan days later.

Best of all, radio reaches everybody. Ninety-six percent of all adults listen to the radio — far more than watches television.

There are more than two radios in use for every man, woman and child in the US. Many people carry a radio with them, every automobile comes equipped with one, and nearly every home has several, some to wake you up in the morning, another to listen to while you make dinner or read the newspaper.

That means that your advertising message can be carried into every nook and cranny, every neighborhood, every household in your area.

Radio offers many advantages to the advertiser:

- 1) Widespread penetration of the market area.
- 2) Flexibility to make last-minute changes in the copy.
- 3) Low production cost.

Moreover, radio can be more efficient than daily newspapers in reaching select groups because each station has a corps of loyal listeners. Some stations cater to younger audiences, others to country and western fans, soul music, classical or jazz. And those listeners have distinct demographic and psychographic characteristics. Ratings companies monitor exactly who is listening when.

Radio is especially useful for creating excitement when you hold a sale. A good radio spot can create a sense of urgency, to take advantage of your sale before it's too late.

Here's another advantage, often overlooked: Sometimes, radio stations are willing to barter air time for product. You can often make arrangements to pay for your airtime with a combination of cash and merchandise.

True, radio has its limitations. No pictures. You can't demonstrate your product or show comparisons.

One of radio's most glaring weaknesses is that, while most people hear a radio, they often don't listen. To be successful on the radio, your message has to grab the attention of those who are tuned to the station and turn them into listeners.

Fortunately, radio offers a rich arena for the creative copywriter. It can trick your mind into believing what would cost a fortune to show

visually. Imagine, for instance, the cost of the following if it were a TV spot:

### :60 Retail Radio Spot

**SFX:** (Jackhammer noise)

**Man #1:** (shouting over noise) I am definitely ready!

**Man #2:** (also shouting) Ready for what?

**Man #1:** For the sidewalk sale at XYZ Store in Anytown. I'm going to pick out just the perfect piece of pavement for my patio.

**Man #2:** You're what?

**Man #1:** The sidewalk sale at XYZ Store.

**Man #2:** XYZ Store's sidewalk sale. ... Will you please turn that thing off?

**SXF:** (Jackhammer out)

**Man #2:** (normal voice) ... is not about selling pavement.

**Man #1:** Uh, it's not?

**Man #2:** (excited) No. It's [product #1] as much as 20% off. [Product #2] and [product #3] that are literally flying out the door. [Product], [product] and [product] all at 20% off. Baubles, bangles, ribbons, and bows. All sold on their sidewalk.

**Man #1:** You mean no special prices on curbs?

**Man #2:** Nope.

**Man #1:** No discounts on pavement?

**Man #2:** I'm afraid not.

**Man #1:** Well, they sure fooled me.

**Man #2:** Well, that isn't difficult to do.

**Anncr:** Stop by XYZ Store's sidewalk sale this weekend for plenty of sidewalk savings on [products] of all kinds. Saturday and Sunday from 10 a.m. till 6 p.m. XYZ Store, at 14th and Park Boulevard. Uh, sorry, no pavement will be sold.

Because repetition is so important, it is best to use radio only if you can afford to buy blocks of time. Better still, use more than one station. Frequency and repetition will ensure your message is heard and remembered.

Have fun with radio. Use it to support your print advertising. It's flexible, low-cost, and useful for targeting prospects efficiently. Make it a part of your marketing mix.



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