

...BULLET POINTS...

Get on the Bandwagon

This promises to be a close election, and seldom has the voting population been more polarized. That is the essence of entertainment -- anytime there is natural division, conflict and contrast it's a good springboard for memorable content.

This election has crossed over from the political arena into the pop culture mainstream. Not only are celebrities more involved in the political process than ever by urging women to vote, expressing their views, etc., the candidates are appearing on entertainment shows like Leno, Dr. Phil and Jon Stewart. Not to mention that the stories and pictures are all over the entertainment TV shows and magazines.

Part of a broadcaster's responsibility is to help simplify and clarify what's being talked about. Where do the candidates stand, not just on the war, but also social security, the environment, creating jobs, taxes, stem cell research, gay marriage and other social issues of interest to your audience. Work to get at the issues more from the emotional angle rather than just the opinion angle.

This is not Rock the Vote...this concept is much more selfish. We're not trying to get you to help the country -- this will help your show. This is relevant and entertaining stuff.

**So, how do music stations relate to it and not sound like a politically based talk show?
Here's how to get your show on the bandwagon:**

It can be as small as playing clips back of Jon Stewart, David Letterman, Conan and Jay making comments about the race in their monologues. News and information segments are the perfect place to discuss the debates, the polls, etc. by playing back sound bites followed by discussion from players on the show. It also works on many shows to include listener phone calls during those discussions as well. Like the late night entertainment shows it can be kept from sounding like a talk show by injecting humor.

Get on the phone, get in the malls, get in the street, get in the workplace -- talk to people. Get people on the air who can passionately articulate extreme positions for both sides. Interact with comedy and seriousness. Go to the emotional heart of issues with people who are affected by no or poor insurance coverage, parents who have lost their son or daughter in Iraq, Canadian prescription drugs, stem cell research, etc.

Try features like:

Middle School Debate Analysis

Find two precocious middle schoolers, one a democrat, one a republican to evaluate the debates, the political platforms, statements they make in the news, etc. and interact with them.

Unfair Edit Idea

Use the concept of editing excerpts together to make politicians say things they don't mean. After the convention speech on Tony and Kris at US 95-7 San Diego, for example, it was possible to edit George Bush into saying "Every morning the first thing I think about is...Arnold Schwarzenegger."

Presidential Panel of Listeners

Rotate groups of 3 real people who are different – democrat, green party, mother, student, worker, suburbanite, urbanite, blue collar, 3 different religions, etc. to come on and give their opinions.

Simplify an Issue a Day

Find an entertaining Political Pundit who could simplify the platforms for each candidate.

Presidential Impressions

Doing impressions of the candidates can still be funny with some creative writing and an over the top delivery.

Stalk an Independent

Find a few independents (people who you recruit on air or off) and check in with them every day to see if the latest debate, news or scandal has impacted their vote.



What if the Presidential Candidates were Radio Stations?



How much listening would each candidate running for president get if they were competing radio stations -- KGWB vs. WJFK? Which one is being imaged the best? Which candidate is converting the most come to AQH? Who's going to win the Fall Arbitron?

Until the first debate, George Bush had a clear slam dunk lead on his challenger John Kerry for imaging. Whether you like the music on KGWB or not, you know what it is and you know when you were hearing it. The President clearly had the "Classic Rock", "Soft Rock", "Top 40" type of clear, easy to understand imaging on just about any topic a voter could think of. John Kerry struggled with more of a "Most Variety Better Mix" type of position that was big on promise, but not easy for listeners to remember let alone identify with.

The debates gave WJFK a chance to reposition itself and the competition. Kerry did a good job delivering short easy to digest positioning on his new campaign themes and he was also effective in repositioning the President as an ineffective leader. You can call it negative

campaigning, but it works. It's just like radio imaging campaigns that point out a competitor's excessive commercials, or reinforces an undesirable characteristic of a competitor like "WQQQ is the station for kids."

Prior to the debate, much of Kerry's support was based on listeners who were unhappy with the competition more than they were thrilled with Kerry. WJFK still had them coming, but more and more they were moving from P2s-P4s for Kerry to P1s for Bush.

The debates are like a very effective listener television or direct mail campaign, or major station promotion that has the whole town talking. The first debate has closed the gap for Kerry. WJFK P1s are energized and he's getting more sampling from a ton of new cume. Now he'll have to keep delivering a consistent message and hope the listeners don't tire of it before the sweeps are over.

Both WJFK and KGWB are likely spending a lot of time re-examining the results of their fall research effort to look for vulnerabilities in their competitors positioning statements. In addition, both are likely looking for ways to reinforce their connection with the each station's target listeners, WJFK continuing to shore up its female target and KGWB trying to make sure it doesn't lose any of its dominant lead with men.

Who will wind up with the most cume? In reality, it doesn't matter. Like with radio, it's not about cume. In politics, the candidate who gets the most votes can still lose, just ask Al Gore.



Developing Character

Occasionally pick one player on the morning show to focus on. For example, on Bob Rivers' show in Seattle they made a list of all the character traits for each player and then picked one player to focus on. Each of the six members of the show were given a copy of the traits to have in front of them as they worked to integrate information about this player into the show.

The Mikey Show in San Diego has a feature called Hot Seat where they pick one player on the show to answer rapid-fire questions from the others (e.g. "If the building were on fire which of us would you save first and why?").

Using a Hidden Microphone

How many times have you been at promotions and events and had listeners make priceless comments about the station or show only to have them stiffen up and sound totally contrived the minute you pull out a microphone and stick in their



face to make the same comments?

The “hidden mike” or “pen mike” is a must have device for any radio station. They’re simply microphones disguised as an ink pen. They’re very useful in getting natural sounding listener comments on the radio station or morning show.

The hidden microphone is also great for doing street stunts to get more natural reactions. Here’s an example of one recorded with a pen mike from Rich Shertenlieb on the Kidd Kraddick Show:
<http://www.randylaneco.com/audio/Dallas/9-2004/RichPlaysTrumpet.mp3>

There are numerous places to buy them on the internet priced from about \$59.99. You can also buy them from 99X in Atlanta for \$99. (We know for sure that the mike quality is up to on-air standards if you get one from 99X – ask for Todd the Butler). Some stations simply have their engineering department make them.

Potential Interview

Self-help guru Eddie Conner has a new book out called The Big But Syndrome.

He’s an entertaining and humorous speaker and writer who’s been on lots of radio and TV shows. The book focuses on how we negate our potential by using the word ‘but’.

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