



## **Morning Show Marketing on a Shoe String Stan Main**

Most radio companies aren't shelling out marketing money on anything but the newest and hottest of format introductions.

Here are some ways you can market yourself to increase ratings without spending a bunch of cash.

### **Free Morning Show Marketing**

#### Morning Show Imaging Promos

There are many potential morning show listeners that use your station, but don't use your morning show. Many of these potential listeners have the wrong idea about your show from a past listening experience, have found a new morning radio or TV show, or just don't have enough reasons to try your show.

- One: 30 commercial every hour in many top markets is worth millions. You can be one of your station's biggest advertisers. Is your show getting the most out of all this free advertising?
  - Hire an advertising agency, senior marketing class or work with your production director to write and produce a campaign of ads for your show!
  - McDonalds wouldn't waste \$2,000,000 on your station running creative they wrote, recorded and produced as the last element of their day in less than 15 minutes. Why would you?

Make the Best Morning Show Advertisements, here's how:

- Promos and imaging for the show do not have to be time sensitive. Great audio from last month is better marginal audio from yesterday's show.
- Write ads for your show that target the audience that uses your station, but doesn't use your show.
- Use audio drops from your show that listeners who don't know the show's characters will find entertaining.
- Avoid inside jokes in promos that only fans of the show will understand.
- Differentiate with unique audio in your imaging by using audio from show characters instead of generic movie drop or comedy audio that any competing show can use.
- To get a lot of great audio drops for your show imaging, spend an hour in a production room with some funny character based questions and a live microphone. Some shows go so far as to bring in a bottle of wine/lunch in a production room and get enough audio drops for months of promos.
- Do live promos from your cell phone to other day-parts and promote the headliner coming up on your next show. Have a joke or story to share to make it sound like more than just an ad and grow morning show come from that day-part.

#### Free Web Marketing Tips

- Use the station loyal listener database to market the show with audio clips/links of "Best Segment of the Week" or the "Biggest Interview This Week" that your producer sends to the marketing department regularly
- Make small "podcasts" of the best segments of each day's show that listeners can forward and guerilla market your show on the cheap.
- Produce YouTube and other video backstage type features that can be virally marketed. Most digital cameras can produce web ready video/audio for YouTube.

- Emails that don't look like spam are most effective. Text and audio links are better than fancy over produced HTML marketing people sometimes prefer.
- If you pre-tape interviews or features, use a strong portion of the interview in an emailed audio link that promotes the interview/feature payoff coming up on the show tomorrow. Be sure to include the time of the feature.
- Sign emails with a real person's name, email address and the request line number to contact you. Avoid faceless signatures like "The Morning Show."
- Sign up for your station's Loyal Listener Club and monitor those emails.
- Setup Facebook, MySpace, LinkedIn, etc. pages. Use an intern who knows how best to use these networking sites if possible to monitor them regularly.

#### Free Public Relations Tips

- Make your sales department your biggest fans.
  - Sales people are in contact with movers and shakers in your community daily.
  - Good sales people can be great free PR agents.
  - Make any willing sales people stars for a day, "Sales Person of the Morning" for a sales guy who brings in a new big client.
  - Take the time to know the biggest clients that support your show.
  - If relations with your sales department are strained, work to make them better. Buyers buy people they like and sales people sell day parts they are fans of.
- Make appearances in the market. Shake hands/kiss babies. Just like politicians get more votes walking door to door, you can get more listeners over time meeting new potential groups of listeners.

- Have an act for personal appearances. It's one thing to MC the parade, it's another to MC it with prepared material that cuts through to people watching. Are you "some DJ from a local radio station" or an entertainer from "The Beat Morning Show that made the parade for me and my kids?" Practice your act as an MC at your local comedy club.
- Get a television feature ("What's Happening This Weekend, New Music CD reviews, etc.) with your local TV affiliate. Your pay may be in thousands of marketing dollars for your show.
- Do a Morning Show "Small Town Tour" series of location broadcasts in your next major rating period. Take celebrities to little towns in the Metro that never see big radio stars. Research each town to be in a location that really says, "Genuine Small Town." Use local entertaining guests (like the mayor/local yokel) and get listeners talking about "the day Your Morning Show came to town..."
- Be a High Profile Part of Your Community
  - ❖ Serve on a local charities' Board of Directors.
  - ❖ Help the agency reach its goals which almost always include raising awareness. Radio raises awareness well.
  - ❖ Participate as an entertaining part of board meetings. If board meetings bore the hell out of you, come late and leave early.
  - ❖ Board members support each other. Board members use radio and fill out Arbitron diaries.

Your marketing goal is to build a brand of familiar characters. By using the free marketing you have at your fingertips, you become a brand in your market. Competing radio stations can flip music formats easily overnight, but it's much harder for a competing station to brand new personalities. Use the resources at your fingertips wisely.

Use the power of your station to reach the thousands of listeners who already use your station. In most cases, your station's mid-day and PM drive is an untapped gold mine of potential cume and P1s to your morning show and you have the tools to reach them for free.

The more time you spend making your on-air advertisements strong, the better they will get. The more you work on your public out of the studio act, the better it will get. The more you reach out to your town leaders, the better your profile in the community will get. As you grow, your ratings will grow and your show will become harder to unseat. Sometimes the best things in life are free, just overlooked.

For more good reading on making and keeping fans (P1s) read the book, *Raving Fans*, by Ken Blanchard.