



.....**BULLET POINTS**.....

Week of 1-20-03

Five Ways to Make Your Show More Relatable and Increase Ratings in '03

- 1. Commit to a weekly planning/brainstorming meeting.** Everyone connected to the show from screener to PD should attend this meeting. Use 100% of the available creative brainpower at your station.

At the meeting everyone is responsible for at least one idea from the following categories (here are some suggested starter categories):

- Phone topics
- Personal experience stories
- Feature/game audience interactive
- Guests/interviews
- Production piece (song parody, etc.)
- Promotion/stunt idea
- Continuing story line

Also, get out of the station once a quarter for a half-day brainstorming session to plan for the upcoming book.

- 2. Make imaging the show a major morning priority.** This speeds up the process of getting the audience familiar with the show. It also exposes the morning show to many more potential listeners -- many people CUME the radio station but may not listen to the morning show.

Remember the value of buying a schedule on your own station: if you run a morning show imaging promo ten times per day (including during the show), that's over 3,000 promos a year. If a typical 30 second commercial sells for about \$100.00, which means you're getting advertising that would cost Kmart \$3 million to get. Make the promos sound exceptionally good (as if Kmart had hired the best writers and production people to come up with them—if they had they might not be closing down $\frac{3}{4}$ ths of their stores!).

3. Encouraging is better than telling. A lot of Program Directors, and supervisors in general, take the wrong approach when coaching or managing others. Because they have been given the mandate to be in charge, they go overboard and try to control others by telling them what to do.

Telling or dictating gives actually only gives you the *feeling* of being in control. The dictator upsets and demoralizes his/her staff. Talent will be subservient in your presence but behave differently behind your back with resentment and poor performance.

Recall is also better for those who are not just told, but are shown and then able to experience.

If you are told something, then recall after 3 months is about 10%.

If you are told and shown...recall is about 32%

If you are told, shown and experience something then it increases to about 65%.

Begin questions broadly and increasingly focus on detail. Use what, when, who, how much, and how many... One question that seldom fails to contribute value is "What action have you taken on this so far?" followed by "What were the effects of that action?"

A good coach plays the, "What if Game..." For example:

- What if you had a large enough budget?
- What if you had a producer...two producers?
- What if you had a delay or a better phone system?

Buy asking what ifs frequently solutions to problems can be found with alternatives. For instance if the show says with two producers we would make a new imaging piece each day a solution could be found with a template that was modified daily by an intern.

Another good way to explore options is to continually ask "what else"? Give the brains in the room time to process and think deep. Call on individual players of the show to answer while the other players continue thinking.

Of course occasionally some self-disciplined shows and frequently other not so self-disciplined shows need to be TOLD something, but if you habitually find yourself telling as opposed to encouraging actions where everyone involved buys into and feels a part of the solution or action, you might do well to reconsider your approach.

4. Create more anticipation for content. There are two types of teasing:

- ✓ **Vertical teasing** is teasing up and down the hour within the same show.
- ✓ **Horizontal teasing** is going across from one day to another with a cliffhanger.

Vertical teasing is done for smaller bits that are happening in the next 30 minutes. Horizontal teases are for bigger things that you're doing at the **same time** on future days. You can be very confident that most of the people listening at 7:45 am on Tuesday can listen at 7:45 am on Friday. You can't be as sure that people listening at 7:45 am Tuesday can listen at 9:15 on Friday.

Horizontal recycling is more difficult to do, but the benefits of doing it are potentially bigger than stretching time spent listening an extra 15 minutes in the same day with a vertical tease, so it merits the time to make it happen. Add a column to the show's content schedule that includes a "coming up in the next couple of days".

Horizontal sells should be longer and more exaggerated than vertical sells. It is not too much to spend 3 minutes selling something that is going to happen at the same hour later in the week/next day. Stage it with "I can't believe we got this", "I'm more excited about this...coming up than anything else in my radio career..." The shows that execute horizontal TSL teases do bits about upcoming bits where an entire show segment is spent talking about an upcoming show segment.

Try to leave the audience with "cliffhangers" or other serial content that will be resolved on the following day's show at the same time. An example of a cliffhanger would be if the female show player thought she was pregnant. The cliffhanger would be "She's going for the test today, we'll have the results tomorrow at this same time, I promise."

Use the 80/20 Rule: Always leave the listener wanting to know more. Give them 80% of the story and leave out the resolution to drive them crazy so they have to keep listening for what you tease. They get the story, but you leave out the juicy 20% that keeps them listening. You need to be specific in order to get them invested in what you're talking about. Don't just say, "coming up, the Entertainment Report". Instead say: "Madonna is pregnant again. Who's the father? Find out, next with Lindsey's Entertainment Report on The Bert Show."

- 5. Suggest the talent take an improv class.** Why? Most morning shoes are *doing improv*. What talent should practice is the ability to take something small and expand and build on it, which is the essence of improv.

Taking an improv class will

1. Teach talent how to build and expand the content and conversations.
2. Sharpen listening skills.
3. Build confidence.
4. Get the creative juices flowing.
5. Improve team rapport and bantering skills, teaching talent to contribute unselfishly for the team.

Quote of the Week:

“He who asks a question is a fool for five minutes; he who does not ask a question remains a fool forever.”

--- Chinese Proverb



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