

# Stupid Human Tricks

## *Continuing Education For The Dedicated Radio Programmer*

Building Names & Audiences  
with

### **Cunning Stunts 'n' Stuff**

For years, "personality" jocks have used stunts, gimmicks, and other neat twists to provide a non-quantifiable "chemical reaction" that can kick-start their name-recall and propel them to instant "household word" status.

**Programmer's Digest** Contributing Editor **Ron Jacobs** and I were comparing notes the other day about some of the more effective promotional mechanisms that have been used over the years. It might surprise you to know that some of the most exciting ones go clear back to the 50's for their roots.

One of the classic marathons is the *Wake-A-Thon*, featuring a jock's non-stop battle against sleeplessness. The first one may have been in 1959 at

K-POI in Honolulu, when Tom "TR" Rounds (now President of Radio Express) stayed awake in a department store window for 8½ days (the Guinness certified record at the time, before anyone knew what a Guinness was), getting front-page coverage.

(Continued... See *Cunning Stunts* on Page 2)

## **Compelling Newscast Tune-In**

### **How To Get Listeners To GO OUT OF THEIR WAY To Listen To Your News**

Many radio stations (especially music-based stations) view their news commitment as a necessary evil – something listeners expect in the Morning (and maybe PM Drive, in some formats) so they reason "we may as

(Continued... See *Compelling News* on Page 6)

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**Programmer's Digest** Publisher/Editor **Todd Wallace** is a 30-year programming veteran — as a #1 jock, PD, GM, and station owner. Over the past 24 years, he has provided programming consultation services to over 100 radio stations. Internationally recognized as the "founding father" of the "callout" research concept, over 200 stations have used his systems of "in-house" music, tracking, and perceptual research.

# Cunning Stunts'n'Stuff

(continued from page 1)

(When I was PD of KRUX/Phoenix, voice-over and production artist **John Driscoll**, then a young-pup jock, stayed awake for 250 hours to break and set the new record.)

KPOI lived up to its "Circus Radio" signature with an array of other interesting marathon stunts . . . from *Kiss-A-Thons* to *Pool-A-Thons*.

And two of the more unusual "thons" you'll ever hear of . . .

An "*Insult-A-Thon*", where TR and **Dave Donnelly** (now a columnist with the Honolulu Star-Bulletin) took turns trading insults. Days before the event, the station took calls from listeners suggesting insults.

(Could Stern and Imus be far behind?)

And a "*Talk-A-Thon*" face-off between Donnelly and **Bob "The Beard" Lowrie**. A stage was set-up at competing car-dealership locations. Listeners were encouraged to visit the venues and suggest topics for each jock to talk about. They lasted 52 hours straight (with only 5-minute potty-breaks allowed each hour).

KMEN continued the carry in the 60's, with the *San Bernardino-to-Riverside Walk-Back-And-Forth*, where jocks walked til they dropped. And the KMEN "*Build-A-Thing*" ("welders are standing by, 24 hours a day"). Both great charity fund-raisers.

During the "Great Top 40 War Of '63-64" in Fresno, KMAK featured **Tom Maule** doing a non-stop *Bowl-A-Thon* and **Frank Terry's** 80-hour *Drum-A-Thon* (which drew 3,000 people for the finish).

**Pogo Pogue** made a legendary name for himself in Denver in the early 60's by doing a series of stunts. Perhaps the most notable: broadcasting live for an extended period inside a snake pit full of live rattlers! People talked (and listened).

Years later in Denver, **Steve Kelly** (now with KOA) hamassed the power of "Bronco-mania" to raise funds for charities, once sitting in every seat of Denver's 74,000-seat Mile-High Stadium. He also endured a *Handshake-A-Thon*, shaking thousands of listeners hands for charity.

**Tony Raven** (now Jim Pruett of the popular **Stevens and Pruett** morning show at KLOL) once spent a complete week suspended in a car by a crane, clearly visible over a busy Houston freeway exchange. His live broadcasts gave listeners a *reason to go out of their way* to listen to KNUZ to see how he was coping. The listener who guessed when he descended won the car.

**Addendum:** A clever twist that many Radio New Zealand stations have added to this suspended-car promotion was a series of pre-promos the day-before stating that, "Due to occurrences on this morning's show, effective tomorrow morning, (Jock Name) will be suspended indefinitely". The next day, of course, listeners tune in to hear him/her doing the

## The Guiding Force Of Top 40 Radio ...

### "Shut up and play the hits!"

— **Steve Rivers, Mike Joseph, Bill Stewart, Don Keyes, Bill Drake, Ken Dowe, Ron Jacobs, Paul Drew, John Rook, Ted Atkins, Bill Hennes, Todd Wallace, etc., etc. etc.**

(Apologies to the hundreds of other PD's left out, due to space constraints)

TW Tip # 7065 and #9083

"suspended" broadcast. (Meanwhile, everyone tells a friend about the jock who's been "suspended").

**Gordon McLendon** capitalized on the natural braggin' rights rivalry between Houston and Dallas, when **Jimmy Rabbit** (representing KLIF) and **Russ "The Weird Beard" Knight** (representing KILT) raced river-rafts down the Trinity River.

**W. Steven Martin** arranged a similar city-rivalry grudge-match when he organized the *Race Against Cancer, Ride Against Time* bike-race from Phoenix to Tucson (pitting KNIX jocks against KCUB personalities). W. is famous for his impromptu fund-raisers. Like *The Midnight Motorcycle Ride*, where he charged fellow riders \$10 to ride with him up to the city of Prescott, AZ at Midnight. 500 riders presented the \$5,000 to a young boy's family, who couldn't afford to buy him a much-needed motorized wheelchair.

Another attention-getter that captured listeners' imaginations was *The Race 'Round The World*, originated in the mid-70's on KVIL/Dallas and WIBC/Indianapolis. Two jocks take off in opposite directions (one flying eastward, one westward), racing around the world on commercial airlines. Hourly status-checks updated their whereabouts, painting theater-of-the-mind vistas about the city they've just visited or are flying over. This promotion is usually good for a 2-4 day actual run (plus a 3-4 day tease).

**Involving The Listener:** Guess which jock wins and closest to the total-elapsed-time to win \$10,000. Designate an official "finish line" at a conspicuous point in the airport; then try to book the incoming final flights to arrive simultaneously at different gates (hopefully on opposite ends of the airport, or in different terminals). This way, the grand finale culminates in a literal *foot-race to the finish line* (like we did at 2UW/Sydney, for **Ric Melbourne** and **Pete Rudder**). Great photo-opp (that listeners talk about at the water cooler for months).

**Wallace Wisdom:** I believe one of the linchpins to putting a stunt or marathon "over the top" (to the point where it captures an entire market's imagination) is to have a public service tie-in. "I vow to live on top of the Astrodome until we can raise \$50,000 for the United Way" (See "PD" Issue #1, page 8 for details about my Dorne-Sitting Marathon in 1969). As RJ puts it, "All Circus promos were *always* for charity".

TW Tip # 3098, #4047, #6045, and #9087

**Next Week**

**Signature Gimmicks  
& Radio With Pictures**

Two weeks ago, we covered daily and weekly time management strategies ("PD" Issue #10, pages 1 & 2). This week we'll zero-in on the importance of delegation, how to avoid procrastination, and ways to improve your level of communication.

#### Delegate, Delegate, Dance To The Music

In the multipoly world of the new millennium, dividing up your duties and delegating them to staff members you can trust can mean the difference between being "in control" of your time (a confident feeling) and always "running to catch up" (a stressful one).

Every delegated task needs a point-person who'll be responsible for following its progress.

Try to get yourself out of the trap of thinking "it'll take me 5 hours to teach someone to do this, and only 5 minutes for me to do it myself". This ignores the hundreds of hours that may be saved *in the future* from the 5 hours teaching the right person the right way to handle a recurring task.

Give an employee "room" to do it his/her way (as long as you've clearly communicated what the outcome must be).

Don't insist that it be done "your way", in your style. In this way, the employee will feel that you've delegated the *responsibility* for the task or project to them (which they'll be more eager to tackle), not just the dirty work.

Some PD's use an interesting technique that fosters a genuine "team" feeling - letting subordinates take turns "running" their staff meetings. This demonstrates respect to you staff, while helping you spot upwardly mobile management talent. It also gives each staff member a chance to develop their leadership skills (and builds a confidence they can't get in any other way but by "doing").

Establish regular monitor-points for each project or task you delegate, preferably where employees are proactively

reporting progress to you (rather than you having to chase it down). In the file-folder for each delegated task/project, remember to include the names (and, when applicable, the phone or fax-number or e-mail address, of the persons taking responsibility for it. (It's useful to write it *on the front of the folder* (saves digging through the folder's contents).

#### Your Procrastination Station

Avoid the temptation to put things off. Try to establish a completion deadline for each project or task on your "to do" list. (If you know how long it will take, you can "work backward" mentally to know when you must start). Try to only begin a task or project that can be finished today (or stopped at an obvious "break" point). Caveat from my News/Talk practical experience: many major tasks at N/T stations are *multi-day* chores that don't always have a "clean" break point; don't be afraid to stop at a specific point and come back to it "fresh" tomorrow (I guarantee it won't go anywhere - it *will* be waiting there for you tomorrow!)

#### Phone Jobs & E-Mail

Recognize up-front that nearly every call is an interruption to your clockwork schedule. So don't be afraid to let the receptionist know when to hold your calls or put them directly to voicemail. Phone-tag is just part of business life. You can minimize it by leaving as detailed a message on the taggee's vm as possible. Granted, it's a little more impersonal than a live call, but you gain the benefit of time-efficiency.

E-Mail is a great way to quickly keep in touch. The key is keeping your e-messages short. By limiting your e-mail messages to just two or three quick bullet-points (or preferably one), you increase the likelihood that your e-mail will be read and that a succinct reply will occur. TW Tip #7066

#### Coming In "PD" Issue #14:

Snail Mail, Meeting Management, & People Skills

## Signs Of Things To Come

"640k ought to be enough for anybody".

— Microsoft Chairman **Bill Gates** (circa 1981)

Some computer industry experts now estimate that **1 Terabyte** hard-drives will become commonplace by the year 2003 (assuming we all make it past Y2K)

TW Tip # 7067 and #16030

# Making Sense Of "Flukes"

We've all seen situations where a station suddenly loses a substantial portion of its core-target demo in one book – only to see the same audience miraculously reappear (and then some!) in the very next book. Aside from seasonal cycles, sometimes these fluctuations absolutely defy logic or explanation. (We should probably add a new *TW Tips* category for "things that drive PD's to drink"!)

## Survey "Wobbles"

The ratings services, of course, all take great pains to point out (with paragraph upon gobble-de-gook paragraph of fine-print in the back of the book) that audience estimates are just that. *Estimates!* And they, therefore, are subject to what's been lovingly called "survey wobbles". Abnormalities. Spikes and troughs. Sometimes you get kicked, sometimes you get kissed.

The larger the sample, the less the variance and volatility . . . but . . . the mathematical laws of probability, and what's called "standard error", still apply.

**What's important for you to know is:**

## They apply on *two* levels . . .

- ✓ Even with a decent sample size, the result will still be roughly within plus or minus 5% of the actual truth. So if you have a 10-share, it could be a 9.5% or a 10.5. That's the case 80% of the time.
- ✓ Less publicized is the other part of the standard

error equation that says that *one out of five times, the results could vary as much as plus or minus 20%*. In other words, your 10-share could be an 8 . . . or a 12!

## How To Use Arbitron Data To Know If You Were Slimed

It'll take you a few hours of work at the computer (hopefully something you can delegate), but the feeling of getting to the bottom of a fluke is usually worth it.

### Here's How You Do It . . .

- ☑ Using Arbitron's Maximi\$er program, look at hour-by-hour by narrow demos (25-34, 34-44, 45-54, etc.). Some programmers like to do it 21-30, 31-40, 41-50, and/or 51-60. (Choose the method that best reflects your target).
- ☑ Then go back and do it again . . . month-by-month (weeks 1-4 vs. 5-8 vs. 9-12).
- ☑ At the monthly level, you'll usually see huge fluctuations. But when you see a demo that's particularly out of whack in a single-month, you can go back and isolate it *week-by-week*. You can also do a Max-run on what that hour (or that daypart) would look like *leaving out* the abnormal week.
- ☑ When you find the silly week(s), you can even isolate by individual day(s). And you can do a Max-run reconstruction of what that hour (or daypart) would look like without the oddball day(s) in the deviant week.

**Wallace Wisdom:** The above exercise seems to work well for zeroing-in on a quarter-hour loss due to a massive (and sudden) decrease in TSL (time-spent-listening). Go through the above motions and you'll usually have an "aha!" or two to reward your suspicions (and set your mind at ease).

But massive *cume-induced* fluke-drops can also occur (usually isolated to a "diary drop" that is unfavorable to a certain format type over the course of a month or series of weeks). This happens less frequently, but it *does* happen!

Unfortunately, the only options for waiting out a cume-fluke are

- trusting your "alternative" ratings-tracking source or
- trusting your gut (staying the course while "sweating it out" until the trend "rights itself" three months later).

*TW Tip 20010 and #19025*

This is one of the reasons I've always been so keen on maintaining some form of audience tracking – either in-house (as part of a comprehensive music-research program, where tracking calls are made for the ultimate purpose of snorkeling for music research respondents) or from syndicated tracking services (like *Accuratings*, *Willhight*, or *Radio Index*).

If *Arbitron* shows a sudden drop that is *not* confirmed with your weekly or monthly tracking, it's probably *not really* happening.

And the steadfast PD will avoid any premature knee-jerk reactions).

So is there a way of using the actual Arbitron data to know when you've been slimed by a mathematical gremlin? In a word, yes. See the box above.

*TW Tip # 20009 and #19024*



## The "PD" Bookshelf

## Lead The Field by Earl Nightingale

Our Down Under mate **Ian Grace** reminded me of a great book for the "PD" bookshelf. There are lots of "hip and cool", new wrinkle "pop-psych" books at any bookstore.

But, while this one was written long ago, it manages to retain a timeless quality that's as valid for the new millennium as it was decades ago.

It's actually offered as a tape series (with an accompanying notebook which contains the entire script).

Available from Nightingale-Conant (1-800-323-5553 or 1-708-647-0300; \$59.95).

As Gracie points out, "Every single manager, PD, or leader of any type . . . if they only ever read one book, *this* should be it". I couldn't have put it better myself. Following are a few of the reasons why.

First, some background . . .

The late Earl Nightingale was a Hall Of Fame broadcaster and lecturer, often called "The Dean Of Development". He lived his life around his personal philosophy,

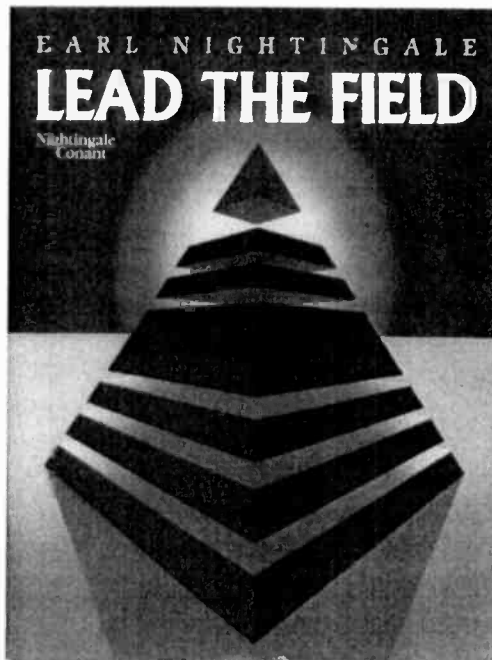
**"Never let a day go by that you don't learn something new – and pass it on to others".**

Some of the outstanding points offered by Nightingale in *Lead The Field*:

■ The magic word in life is *attitude*. People with great attitudes stack the percentages that they'll succeed. That's why a *positive mental attitude* is so important.

■ "Constructive discontent" is a good thing. It keeps you reaching and growing.

(Continued . . . See *Lead The Field* on page 7)



## How You Can WIN

## A \$7,000 Think-Tank Weekend In The Pines

Just help us spread the word about "PD" and you could WIN YOUR CHOICE of the following prizes worth roughly \$7,000

- A 7-Day Personal Vacation For 2 (including round-trip airfare) at *Observation Lodge* in Forest Lakes, Arizona
- A Think-Tank Weekend For 2, conducted by programming consultant **Todd Wallace** at *Observation Lodge* (including round-trip airfare)
- A "Buddy System" Think-Tank For 2-4 Stations (we pay for 2)
- A Think-Tank Weekend For Your Entire Programming Staff  
— OR —
- A 3-Day Think-Tank At Your Station's Venue

See "PD" Issue #10, page 10 for complete details (also page 9 for the fine print and restrictions)

### How You Win –

- ① Just Tell 3 of your PD friends about "PD"
- ② Fax your name, address, phone, and fax-number (on your company letterhead) along with the names, addresses, phone, and fax-numbers of the people you've told about **Programmer's Digest** to (602) 948-7800.
- ③ We'll put every entrant's name in a hat and randomly draw one name on August 10, 1998. Winner will be notified on that date and the winner's name will be published in the August 10<sup>th</sup> issue of "PD". Good luck!

**"Ambition is a poor excuse for not having enough sense to be lazy."**

**— Steven Wright**

# News & Surveillance Ingredients

## News

### Compelling News Tune-In (Even On A Music Station)

#### How To Get Listeners To GO OUT OF THEIR WAY To Listen To Your Newscasts

(Continued ... from Page 1) well give it to 'em, get it out of the way, and move on".

Very few stations view news programming as an "opportunity" to attract listeners they might not otherwise be able to get. But it *can be*. When you give listeners something *worth* making a listening appointment for, *they usually will!*

#### Hard Hitting Commentary

Day after day, week after week, year after year, the audience appeal of ABC's #1-rated *Paul Harvey News & Comment* proves that listeners *will* go out of their way to hear news they think they can't get anywhere else.

**Why it works:** *Paul Harvey delivers! Without fail!* Paul Harvey's winning combination is:

- his concise writing style, which results in a high story-count (normally touching on 12-15 stories in a 4½ -minute newscast)
- punctuated by his unique vocal style, which covers an incredible inflectional range
- his disarming, unexpected manner of conveying a story, often finding angles no one else can, and
- his well-reasoned commentary that *always makes you think* (whether you agree with him or not).

Yes, there is only *one* Paul Harvey. But there have been some good examples of *localized* personality news over the years.

- In the 70's and 80's, Logan Stewart (now retired) did a "Paul Harvey" style of *local* newscast (right down to the biting commentary and live testimonial commercials) on Top 40 stations KRUX/Phoenix and KTSA/San Antonio. It was a *serious, credible* newscast on a CHR station. But it was so original, not to mention *entertaining*, that, not only were existing CHR P1's satisfied, but Logie's presence served as a *cume-magnet*, drawing listeners from other formats (in a way that few other programming elements would or could).
- When I was OMPD of News/Talk KTAR/Phoenix, we hired former Editor/Publisher of the *Arizona Republic*, Pat Murphy, to deliver four totally different one-minute commentary pieces daily. Murphy is the most dedicated journalist I've ever heard of, much less known. (He'll wake up every 2 or 3 hours in the middle of the night to check out CNN, just to make sure he hasn't missed anything!) This dedication, coupled with his intelligence and comprehensive knowledge of local issues, made his *Murphy At Large* commentaries a "must-listen" for many Phoenicians.

#### Style & Substance

Often a hip, unusual, or uniquely personable "style" within a newscast can serve the purpose of putting the right strokes in diaries.

- Great contemporary news journalists like Brad Messer, J. Paul Huddleston, Jo Interrante, and J. Paul Emerson all had "followings" on their respective CHR stations.
- Consider an unusual "signature style". Like H. G. Listiac, the Morning Traffic Reporter on KMLE/Phoenix, who uses alliterative phrasing and creative analogies that would make Dan Rather jealous in his reports ("We've got the roads livin' it up faster than a new credit card, as our bad-to-the-bone babes bubbas, and banditos bail on the big-bucks bouncin' their bodacious bottoms and burnin' butts back to the barn, and here's what we've got, Northbound I-17, a 5-mile backup."). Many folks *need* their daily HG-fix.

Sometimes a *non-journalist* personality's unique "take" on the news makes him/her into a regular daily "habit" that can't be missed. One of the all-time best examples was the late J. Akuhead Pupule (better known as "Aku"), who was *the* force that built KSSK's Honolulu dominance. Aku did his own news (that's what his listeners preferred), which included his own running reactive commentary about many of the stories.

TW Tip# 10022 and #9086

## On Page 8 Part 2: Something Every TV Station Does That YOU Should Be Doing

### Cyber Survival For The New Millennium

From time to time, we'll try to pass along useful efficiency tips to help you flourish in our computerized race toward 2000.

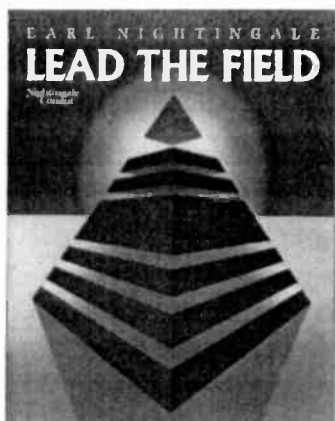
#### How To Quote Original Text In E-Mail Or A Post

If you check out any of the Radio-related message boards or chat rooms, you may have noticed posts that attempted to quote original text but were "empty". Or you may have simply wondered how to do it correctly (so you don't make the same mistake).

**TT** to the rescue ... TW Tip# 16031 and #15030

The problem with the "empty" message or post usually stems from mixing up the use of the >> and the << symbols.

Here's the trick: Just insert the >> symbol where you want to start your quote from original text, then the << symbol at the end of your quote, and you're home and hosed. (Remember, though, if you reverse the order, it doesn't work!) With many internet providers (like AOL), you can simplify the process even further by simply mouse-clicking (once) at the beginning of your quote, depressing the shift key, and then arrowing down to the end of the part you want to quote (while keeping the shift-key depressed). Try it both ways, and see which way best fits your keyboard pace and style.



(Continued . . . from Page 5)

■ Successful people have a "success habit". Every hour of every day. All the time. They don't know how to do things the wrong way.

■ Acceptance and esteem from your contemporaries is one

of the deepest human cravings. But respect must be earned, not commanded.

- Establish goals. Keep your eye on your goals, and keep working towards them. Every day. Every week. Every month. Every year. 95% of people *never* try to better themselves.
- Keep raising the bar. If you're not growing, you're actually going backward. (Especially true in business – especially *ours!*)
- Become a sponge for information. Systematically study what you are most interested in. Look everywhere for new ways to skin the cat.
- "Getting along with people" should be a subject taught in school. It's what our adult life is *really* all about.
- Readers are leaders. Will to read more. Discipline yourself to make the extra effort to read 15 minutes a day. End result: you'll be able to read 2 books a month, 24 a year, and over 1,000 extra books in a reading lifetime.
- Your mastery of the language controls your success. The average person adds only 5 new words a year to his/her vocabulary. Good news: it's *never* too late to begin.
- Usually the amount of money you make is in direct proportion to the caliber of people with whom you associate. So choose your employer wisely.
- The importance of order: prioritize your day (tackling the most important things you have to do first); be efficient in every job or task

you do; stay with one thing at a time until you see it through.

■ Live one day at a time. Saint Edmund, archbishop of Canterbury was right when he said, "*Work as though you would live forever; but live as though you would die tomorrow*".

■ Nothing can take the place of persistence and determination. Remember that (if at first you don't succeed).

**Most of all, strive in every way to be "the person on the white horse"**. Organizations always reflect the person at the top. Their style of management somehow always manages to "trickle down" and be emulated all the way throughout the chain of command.

Clear Channel's **Lowry Mays**. Jacor's **Randy Michaels**. Mel Karmazin at CBS. Chancellor's **Jimmy DeCastro**. Tom Hicks at Hicks/Muse. Capstar's **Steve Hicks**. ABC's **Robert Callahan**. Cox's **Bob Neal**. Bonneville's **Bruce Reese**. Emmis' **Jeff Smulyan**. Citadel's **Larry Wilson**. Jefferson-Pilot's **Clark Brown**. Saga's **Ed Christian**. Entercom's **Joe Field**. AOL's **Bob Pittman**. CNN's **Ted Turner**. The Celtics' **Rick Pitino**. Sports magnates **Jerry Colangelo** and **George Steinbenner**. Fox/NewsCorp's **Rupert Murdoch**. The (Australian) 9 Network's **Kerry Packer**. Virgin's **Richard Branson**. **Bill Gates**. **Lee Iacocca**. **Donald Trump**.

You can literally "visualize" their style, and the aura of their entire organizations, as you read their name, can't you?

Same applies, on a smaller scale, to the management of an individual radio station (or cluster of stations). **The GM and the PD set the "tone" for how the business of creating entertaining programming is undertaken.**

**Wallace Wisdom:** Do yourself (and your career) a big favor and buy this tape series. Or rent it from an Audio Bookstore, or see if it's available at your public library. *Re-listen* to it at least *annually*. You'll find it to be a wise investment in your future. Worth making the extra effort to track down.

TW Tip # 7069, #21015, and #22012

# News & Surveillance Ingredients

## News

### Compelling Listeners To GO OUT OF THEIR WAY To Listen

#### Part 2 — Something EVERY TV Station Does That YOU Should Be Doing

Every single network-affiliate TV station in America does one thing in particular to attract nomad viewers during "sweeps weeks" which, I submit, Radio should also do . . .

Mini-docs. Enterprise Stories. Sweeps series. Topicals. Special reports. Call 'em whatever you want, they really work! They work so well, in fact, that during sweeps-weeks most radio commercials for TV stations (often up-to-the-minute SAP-feeds) will be built around that night's "special".

**Why they work:** It's basic human nature — especially when you see/hear a promo that hits an emotional hot-button (like "How To Tell If Your Spouse Is Cheating On You", or "The Newest Way To Look 10 Years Younger In Just 10 Days"), you naturally make a point of going out of your way to satisfy your curiosity. There are even old standbys that always seem to drive ratings, year after year — like any angle (new or old) on UFO's. That's why you'll often see the Channel 5's mini-doc in February re-treaded as Channel 10's "topical" in May (or vice versa). (Radio isn't the only industry with a lemming effect and unabashed piracy!)

So why don't RADIO stations do "sweeps-series" type of specials? Usually, it's the old excuse, "it's too hard". Or other lame alibis, like "we don't have the staff". Even well-staffed News/Talk stations will claim they can't justify pulling a reporter off the street to do an enterprise story or that they don't have the right "kind" of staff to do it.

To which I say . . . horsefeathers! If you have the commitment, you can do it. Here's how . . .

- ✓ First, take notes on what the TV stations are all doing for their sweeps series. And not just in your market. Use Yahoo to find TV station websites from other markets (especially "the bigs") where you can borrow an idea and adapt it to your local marketplace and situation.
- ✓ Keep files on sweeps series and don't be afraid to recycle them (just like the TV stations do to each other). A report on "How To Tell If Your Teen Is Doing Drugs" hits a viewer/listener between the eyes/ears just as well today as it did 10 years ago (maybe even more so!)
- ✓ See what the "hot" contemporary newspapers in America's Top 100 markets are targeting for enterprise stories. Especially *USA Today*, which only has 2% penetration in most markets (thus 98% of your listeners will not have seen it this morning). Do your own local research to augment their basic findings and re-work it as "your" story.
- ✓ Use magazines that have mastered the art of "hot-button-hitting" (*Redbook*, *Vogue*, *Cosmo*, etc.) and pith (like *Boardroom*). Really, these days nearly any top magazine will feature headlines or articles that can serve as either thought-starters or even finished-products. If you credit the magazine, you can practically "steal" the story (just make sure you give proper attribution).
- ✓ Use participative management principles — and brainstorm "sweeps topics" with your staff. What are some stories that you'd go out of your way to watch for on TV? Those same stories might make an excellent come-attractant for your radio station.
- ✓ Word to the wise: here's a deployment-technique most TV stations have discovered over the years: As a general rule, avoid extended multi-part series (even on hot topics). The prevailing wisdom (based on extensive research) is that if a viewer/listener thinks they've missed any of the first 3 or 4 parts, they're less likely to tune-in "mid-stream". Makes sense.
- ✓ Think you can't do it because you're a music station? KFRC used to, in their hey-day as an RKO station. And I'll give you a more recent example which proves that one person can do it. When I was OMPD of KKLT/Phoenix, I inspired Morning Co-Host & News Anchor **Monica Nelson** to write weekly enterprise stories (using the above reference materials), which we stripped hourly over Wednesday and Thursday's morning newscasts (thus influencing two weeks of diarykeepers). We called them "*Nelson's Lifestyle File*", usually written in four 45-60 second parts (two on each day, providing vertical "tune-in next hour" recycling and horizontal "tune-in tomorrow at this time" incentives.) Turns out she was/is a prolific writer with a solid journalism background and was able to crank out these interesting audience-magnets pretty much "on cue". Like these 25-54 Female targeted topicals: "Secrets The Hollywood Stars Use To Look Beautiful & Lose Weight Quickly", "The New Street-Smart Guide To Staying Safe In Your Neighborhood", "How To Raise A Non-Racist Child", "More Secrets Of The Stars — How To Grab Some Style And Dress Thinner", and "The Ultimate Fashion No-No's, Which Ones Don't You Know About?", etc. She now provides them on a freelance basis to radio stations of various formats around the world (either in complete script form, for you to "claim" as your own, or custom pre-voiced, to perceivably "increase" your news-staff) (You may reach *Monica Nelson Media* at 1-888-873-6217 toll-free or e-mail [mnelson05@sprynet.com](mailto:mnelson05@sprynet.com))

**Wallace Wisdom:** I strongly encourage you, even if you're a music station, to look for new, contemporary ways to make your newscasts so compelling that they bring listeners out of the woodwork.

- Search for a special talent that can deliver meaningful, interesting commentary.
- Or maybe someone whose style makes you stand out so much that listeners simply have to tune-in
- Or take my challenge to do regular, weekly enterprise topicals.
- Or better yet . . . do what I would do . . . do them all. (Who says you can't?)

TW Tip # 7068, #9085, and #10031



## About "TW Tips"

At the end of each quarter, we'll issue a free "PD Index", to cross-reference every TW Tip into the following programming categories —

- 1000 series - The Audience
- 2000 series - Music
- 3000 series - Promotion/Marketing
- 4000 series - Contests
- 5000 series - Mornings
- 6000 series - Talent
- 7000 series - Leadership
- 8000 series - Morale
- 9000 series - Presentation
- 10000 series - News/Info
- 11000 series - Public Service
- 12000 series - Operations
- 13000 series - Talk
- 14000 series - Technical
- 15000 series - Internet
- 16000 series - Computers
- 17000 series - Sales
- 18000 series - Production
- 19000 series - Research
- 20000 series - Ratings
- 21000 series - Life
- 22000 series - Bookshelf

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 Jeff Young's Radio 411 ([www.radio411.com](http://www.radio411.com)) is the cyber-home of Ocean Toons and the Bobby Ocean Cartoon Gallery.



IT MUST BE CONTAGEOUS. YOU READ ABOUT MERGERS AND AQUISITIONS SO MUCH THAT, THE NEXT THING YOU KNOW, YOU'RE COMMITTING ONE.

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### Programming Note:

Music Science 101

Originally scheduled for this week will appear in "PD" Issue #14 (July 27th)

## Coming Next Week

In The World's

**Fastest Growing**

Programming Newsletter

The First Quarterly "PD" Index Of

# TW Tips

Categorized For Easy Reference

And . . .

**More! Morning Basics**  
 Prep  
 Pacing  
 Spontaneity  
 Pre-Flight & In-Flight Checklists

Also . . .

**Smart Human Tricks**

Using Signature Gimmicks & Radio With Pictures To Build A Name

## I Owe Mariah Carey An Apology

And so do hundreds, maybe thousands, of other people both in and out of the media who, unknowingly, helped to spread a story that the singer supposedly uttered a dumb statement about starving children in an interview. (For deep background, the quote being attributed to her was, "Whenever I watch TV and see those poor starving kids all over the world, I can't help but cry; I mean, I'd love to be skinny like that, but not with all those flies and death and stuff".)

Come to find out . . .  
. . . *she never said it.*

And it's a good lesson for all of us, myself included, straight out of Journalism 101 about *why* it's so important to check – and *double-check* – facts, figures, and sources. (Just ask *CNN*, *Time*, or the *Cincinnati Enquirer!*)

The phony Mariah-quote momentum was apparently set in motion by an innocuous spoof interview on Cupcake ([www.cupcake.com](http://www.cupcake.com)). Then it was plastered on several internet websites. It really took on a life of its own when some British tabloids printed it as gospel, without fact-checking, and even BBC's Radio One was sucked in, quoting the tabloid story, again without verifying the source. (That's where I first heard about it).

Look, Mariah Carey doesn't even know I'm alive . . . but I still feel very bad about this, because the guiding doctrines of my business and management style have

always been based on *fairness* and *treating others right*. (even if you don't know them personally) In this case, in my haste to add a small tidbit of what appeared to be observational humor (straight from a "newsmaker's" mouth), I made her appear to be stupid. That's not fair. And that's not right.

So . . . to Mariah Carey, I say *I'm sorry*. I truly am. And by extension, I would also like to apologize to any Sony/Columbia employees, who've had the uncomfortable task of having to deal with this situation (Who needs the headache of having to defend someone for something she didn't actually say?) And, by the way, just so you know . . . my apologies are based purely on principle; no one is coercing or encouraging me to do it.

Just as importantly, I feel I also owe an apology to "PD" readers. As you may remember, our mission at **Programmer's Digest** is *to provide useful, continuing education for dedicated, "thinking" Radio programmers worldwide*. I would never knowingly mislead you or want you to feel you cannot trust any of the material in the pages of "PD" to be based in accuracy. Please know that I will redouble my efforts to making sure that this is indeed always the case in the future.

All The Best,



## Always An Upside

Let's all use this incident as a positive force for improving electronic journalism . . . as a new reminder to us all that we must *always* double-check our references on a story. And, no matter how imposing your deadline is or fierce the competitive pressures to be "first" are, if you can't attribute a quote or a fact to a specific, *legitimate* source, don't just "run with it" (on the mistaken thought that it's no big deal and it's easy to retract).

Take the higher road.  
Be *right*. And be *fair*.

TW Tip # 7064 and #10030

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