

**AN ADVERTISER'S
GUIDE TO
BETTER RADIO
ADVERTISING**

**Tune in to the power of the
brand conversation
medium**

**Andrew Ingram
and
Mark Barber**



John Wiley & Sons, Ltd

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Guide To
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West Sussex PO19 8SQ, England

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John Wiley & Sons Inc., 111 River Street, Hoboken, NJ 07030, USA

Jossey-Bass, 989 Market Street, San Francisco, CA 94103-1741, USA

Wiley-VCH Verlag GmbH, Boschstr. 12, D-69469 Weinheim, Germany

John Wiley & Sons Australia Ltd, 33 Park Road, Milton, Queensland 4064, Australia

John Wiley & Sons (Asia) Pte Ltd, 2 Clementi Loop #02-01, Jin Xing Distripark, Singapore 129809

John Wiley & Sons Canada Ltd, 22 Worcester Road, Etobicoke, Ontario, Canada M9W 1L1

Wiley also publishes its books in a variety of electronic formats. Some content that appears in print may not be available in electronic books.

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN 13 978-0-470-01292-5 (HB)

ISBN 10 0-470-01292-7 (HB)

Typeset in 10.5/16 pt Trump Medieval by SNP Best-set Typesetter Ltd., Hong Kong
Printed and bound in Great Britain by TJ International Ltd, Padstow, Cornwall, UK
This book is printed on acid-free paper responsibly manufactured from sustainable forestry in which at least two trees are planted for each one used for paper production.

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Foreword

Radio is an extraordinary medium. It has a unique power to enter your consciousness quite unexpectedly with news, drama, advice, poetry, humour . . . listeners often refer to the medium as a friend that lifts their mood. It is also very significant now as a channel for advertisers, with two-thirds of the population listening to commercial radio each week.

And yet, how often do you hear radio advertisements which harness the true power of the medium? Not often enough. This must be, in part at least, because radio is so flexible as an advertising medium – you can book it late, the ads can be made quickly and at relatively low cost and this inevitably leads to average advertising, or worse.

So what can you as an advertiser do to ensure your standards of creativity are as high as possible?

I would have two recommendations. First, take radio more seriously – if you do, your teams will come with you. Second, have a look at this book – it's full of practical advice to help you manage the process, and the people involved, more effectively. And ultimately, it's this that can make all the difference.

Jo Kenrick
Director of marketing communications, Camelot

How to use this book

If you are an advertiser who is absolutely happy with the quality of their radio advertising, you probably don't need this book.

We designed it for advertisers who may be using radio at the moment but feel their on-air messages could be improved – made more memorable, more persuasive, more believable, leaving a better impression with the listener.

You can read this book as a dip-in (someone told us they'd keep it in the office toilet), or from start to finish. The first section explains what radio is like as a medium, the second looks at techniques for harnessing its power; then in section three we consider a new way of looking at radio (as "new media"). Finally in section four we offer the "Seven-Step Guide to Better Radio Advertising" – if you're going to put the bookmark anywhere, put it here.

Importantly, this is about audio, and many of the points are easy to understand once you hear the commercials we discuss. To hear them, simply go to www.better-radio-advertising.co.uk.

By the way, if you really are an advertiser who is absolutely happy with their radio advertising, we'd really like to hear from you. You must be doing something right that others can learn from.

Acknowledgements

We are grateful to the following companies for permission to reproduce material throughout this book:

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Advertising Association – Figure 1.9

BARB/RAJAR Ltd – Figure 2.6

BNRC/MED Medial Lab – Figure 7.6

CRCA/OFCOM – Figure 1.13

Future Foundation – Figure 7.2

John Grant and the Radio Advertising Bureau – Figure 7.4

The Henley Centre Ltd – Figures 7.1, 7.7

Martin Sims – Figures 5.2, 5.3

Megalab – Figure 2.13

Millward Brown – Figure 4.3

Newslink – Figure 2.4

Nielsen Media Research (UK) Ltd – Figure 1.8

OFCOM – Figure 1.2

Radio Advertising Bureau – Figures 1.1, 1.7, 1.10, 1.11, 1.12, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.5, 2.8, 2.9, 2.10, 2.11, 2.12, 2.14, 2.15, 2.16, 2.17, 2.18, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 4.1, 4.5, 5.1, 5.4, 6.1, 6.2, 7.5, 8.1, 8.2, 8.3, 8.4, 8.5, 8.6, 8.7, 8.8, 8.9, 8.10

Radio Marketing Service GmbH – Figure 4.4

RAJAR Ltd – Figures 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6, 1.14

About the Authors

Mark Barber

After graduating from the University of Life, Mark spent 18 years as a media planner in a variety of media agencies before joining the Radio Advertising Bureau in 2001. He has been using radio as an advertising medium since 1983, during which time his perspective has moved from audience cost-per-thousands to the communication benefits of the medium.

Mark's previous contributions to radio literature include *Understanding Radio*, *the Brand Conversation Medium* and *Radio Advertising Effectiveness for Dummies*. In his spare time, he supports Charlton Athletic, is teaching himself to speak Turkish, and entertains his children with bad jokes and poorly executed magic tricks.

Andrew Ingram

Andrew has a broad-based experience in advertising and media. After graduating from Cambridge in 1979, he started commercial life in the advertisement department of the *Daily Mail*, going on through quantitative research, and qualitative research, and eventually moving into account planning before joining the RAB in 1992.

Andrew's previous books include *Wireless Wisdom* and *Understanding Radio*. He is a regular speaker at media and advertis-

ing conferences across the globe. In his spare time, he indulges in daughters and classic cars, and an art project involving old plastic bags in trees.

The authors work together at the Radio Advertising Bureau on a daily basis, helping advertisers and agencies overcome the barriers that are preventing them from using radio advertising more effectively. It is this experience that has informed the development of this book.

SECTION 1

THE CASE FOR CHANGE

'I think for a lot of people in advertising, commercial radio is like bus travel. We know it exists but it's not part of our lifestyle. It's a culture we don't know a lot about.'

Advertiser delegate at RAB training

In this section we review the scale of commercial radio in the UK and the benefits it offers advertisers. We consider the medium from the listener's perspective and how advertising works within this context. We then demonstrate how existing practices are limiting advertising effectiveness and why they need to change.

Chapter 1 The Scale of the Medium

- The development of commercial radio in the UK
- Measurement and growth of the commercial radio audience
- Who listens to commercial radio?
- Radio's status as an advertising medium
- What does the future hold for commercial radio?
- Summary

Chapter 2 The 'True' Radio Context

- Why and how people listen
- Radio's media attributes
- How radio communicates
- Effectiveness of the medium
- Summary

Chapter 3 The Need for a Different Approach

- Why the need for a different approach?
 - Why does radio advertising have to be creative?
 - Why aren't we better at using radio?
 - The challenges and opportunities of the medium
 - Summary
-

1

The Scale of the Medium

- 1.1 The development of commercial radio in the UK
 - 1.2 Measurement and growth of the commercial radio audience
 - 1.3 Who listens to commercial radio?
 - 1.4 Radio's status as an advertising medium
 - 1.5 What does the future hold for commercial radio?
 - 1.6 Summary
-

Commercial radio has had to fight hard for its place in UK media because of the historical dominance of BBC radio services, but it is now a genuine mass medium. This chapter takes a closer look at the nature of that growth.

There are more stations and more listeners – over 30 million people listen each week – and increased advertising revenue has followed them. At the same time, station segmentation means that it is possible to reach finely targeted subgroups.

This chapter also looks at the way radio listening is likely to develop in the digital age.

1.1 The development of commercial radio in the UK

Commercial radio is the youngest member of the UK's 'traditional' commercial media canon, having only started broadcasting in October 1973.

The first ILR (Independent Local Radio) station on air was LBC, followed a week later by Capital Radio, both in London. The first ILR station to start broadcasting outside London was Radio Clyde in Glasgow on New Year's Eve 1973.

Across the next two years, sixteen new stations were launched before the development of ILR was halted in 1976 by a new Labour government, cautious about commercial organisations running radio stations.

With the return of a Conservative government in 1979, the ILR network was given permission to expand again, and throughout the early 1980s many new stations were launched, gradually filling in gaps in coverage across the UK. This led to a steady growth in the number of ILR stations across the early 1980s, building loyal audiences through an eclectic programme mix.

The next step change came in 1989 with the government's desire to make better use of the radio spectrum. This led to ILR stations being required to run different services on their FM and AM transmitters, which gave rise to the 'Gold' format stations playing oldies and classic hits.

In 1990, the first *incremental* radio stations went on air. In essence, these were additional radio services introduced into

areas already served by an ILR station. The new incremental stations had to offer output not already available on ILR, such as specialist music or unique programmes for a specific section of the community.

In the Broadcasting Act of 1990, the government deregulated broadcasting and created the Radio Authority to oversee further development of independent radio. The 'lighter touch' of the Radio Authority removed many of the technical, programming and local ownership requirements from ILR, and mergers and takeovers began to gather pace, leading to the development of many of today's major radio groups.

The Radio Authority introduced many new local radio licences during the 1990s, filling any remaining gaps in coverage, as well as creating new *regional* licences. However, the biggest change came with the introduction of three *national* licences, leading to the launch of Classic FM in September 1992, Virgin Radio in April 1993 and Talk Radio UK in February 1995.

By the late 1990s, the number of AM or FM frequencies remaining for further large-scale expansion of the radio market was limited. To allow for continued development to take place, a new broadcasting band and a new technology – Digital Audio Broadcasting (DAB) – was introduced.

Instead of having a different frequency for each radio station, DAB combined several services together into 'multiplexes'. Each multiplex was subdivided into further separate channels, allowing up to ten radio stations to be transmitted within the same amount of radio spectrum previously required by one single analogue FM station.
