

Holland Cooke Newsletter • April '07

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MEL CANCELS MERGER

SIRIUS, XM REMAIN SEPARATE. NOW, KARMAZIN PLOTS TERRESTRIAL BLOCKBUSTER. NEW SCHEME: MERGE CBS, CUMULUS, ENTERCOM; TO COMPETE WITH CLEAR CHANNEL AND ABC/CITADEL. EXPECTS QUICK FCC APPROVAL.

New super-group will be named Consolidated Radio Alliance Partnership (CRAP). "This deal pays for itself," Karmazin crowed on a Wall Street conference call, citing deep staff cuts planned and other economies of scale. Says T-Rex-size is now necessary to compete with other mega-owners and keep up with new media. "I am eager to turn the rest of radio into CRAP."

April Fool! But the pace of change is NO joke. This month, we begin the most important ratings survey of the year...the numbers you'll use to sell Christmas '07, and from-which early 2008 buys will be planned.

Also this month, the NAB2007 convention in April. If you'll be there, and you missed the Radio Advertising Bureau convention in Dallas in February, don't miss my session "**Revenue...Right Under Your Nose**," Tuesday 4/17, 1030AM, LVCC N239/241.

- And get there early. At RAB2007, this session was standing room only. You will take home 100+ pages of handouts, 5 killer spec spots, and at least a dozen proven, money-making ideas your Sales reps can put on the street pronto.
- If you can't be there, the entire spiel is available as an audio-and-video CD, a meeting-in-a-box you can share with everyone at your station. Included: the handouts and spec spots. Hit www.HollandCooke.com.

I do this because I realize that – while I attend every convention – you don't. Which is why I'm there, to give you the bullet points, the 411. This month, my notes from last month's Radio & Records' 2007 Talk Radio Seminar...

"Media snacking is a way of life. In the morning, we check news and tap out emails on our laptops. At work, we graze all day on videos and blogs. Back home, the giant HDTV is for 10-course feasting -- say, an entire season of 24. In between are the morsels that fill those 'whenever' minutes, as your mobile carrier calls them: a 30-second game on your Nintendo DS, a 60-second webisode on your cell, a 3-minute podcast on your MP3 player."

Wired magazine Senior Editor Nancy Miller, interviewed by Greenstone Media host Lisa Birnbach, at R&R's TRS

Listeners "have an appetite more-than-ever for everything," Miller suggested; urging that "people want to know what's next and what's cool and it's up to you as purveyors to help them find that." Does your programming fit-into listeners' lives? Or are you expecting THEM to accommodate YOU?

Describing the crowded shelf on which AM/FM radio sits, she implied two fundamentals:

1. **Ubiquity** is now imperative. Don't just program a transmitter. Distribute your work, and expose your brand and advertisers, as many places and ways as possible. Follow busy 40-somethings everywhere they go, and tell 'em you do.
2. **Relevance** has never been more important. If you read this newsletter every month -- or if you saw my presentation "12 Seconds of Greatness: How The-Very-FIRST-Thing-You-Say Can MULTIPLY Your Ratings" at the 2006 Talkers magazine New Media Seminar – you know my rant:
 - a) **Cut to the chase.** It is dangerous to over-estimate listeners' attention span. Your programming cannot be slower than the frenzied pace of their blurry day; and
 - b) **Avoid being typecast** as just-more-of-the-same conservative political blah blah blah...

***"They want you to 'make sense of things for me; give me a context.'
And they want you to stop shouting people down."***

Joint Communications' John Parikh, in the opening session at R&R's TRS

My R&R TRS notes continue on page 4...

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6 IDEAS IN 5 MINUTES

Sales lead: Hug a lawyer!

Smart News/Talk stations make a pile of money with weekend how-to shows. REALLY-smart music stations can use their web sites to do the-next-best-thing: sell retailers podcasts, and ROS spot schedules to promote 'em.

Local attorneys are particularly opportune for both strategies, since legal advice doesn't syndicate well.

- Why? Laws vary from state to state. So – as syndicated programming content – law tends to be less available and useful than Home Improvement and other how-to categories. So law is a natural for brokered weekend segments on News/Talk AMs – or podcasts on music stations' web sites...
- ...PROVIDED THAT (note capital letters) the attorney “can talk.” Turning-Latin-into-English isn't just good programming. It's effective practice marketing. Comforting bedside manner on-air can produce lots of referrals for the law firm.
- I outlined this opportunity -- right down to the Sales package you should offer -- to a standing-room-only crowd at the RAB convention, in my session “Revenue...Right Under Your Nose!”

If you couldn't be with us in Dallas, I will present this session again this month at NAB2007 in Las Vegas. If you're there, c'mon over to N239/241 at the Convention Center, Tuesday, April 17 at 1030AM. You'll leave with 100+ pages of handouts and 5 killer spec spots. Can't make it to Vegas either? Hit www.HollandCooke.com to order the session, including handouts, on CD.

FREE online this month: “Hug a Lawyer,” the video. Hit www.YouTube.com, and search “Holland Cooke.”

Talk hosts/co-hosts: Are you “facing the camera?” Or do listeners hear “your profile?”

If there are two in-studio voices on your show, avoid leaving-the-listener-out-of-the-conversation. Winning Talk radio is NOT we-talk-you-listen. When you say “YOU,” be talking to the listener.

As you listen to airchecks, imagine that what-you're-hearing is a TV show. Are the two voices “facing the camera,” talking to the listener? Or do listeners visualize two hosts' profiles, as they talk to each other?

Promotions Department: Play defense with this contest prize: FM tuner iPod accessory.

Give away Griffin iFM (\$50) or Belkin TuneFM's (\$55) or other companion devices that add radio tuner to iPod. Position it as “AN UPGRADE FOR YOUR IPOD.”

From “60 Ideas in 60 Minutes,” at www.McVayMedia.com; compiled by Mike McVay, who brain-picked some of the best, at 2007 Canadian Music Week in Toronto.

GMs/PDs/News Directors: WHEN (not if) the-fit-hits-the-shan:

Do NOT have all staff immediately report for duty at the station.

When “The Next 9/11” happens -- or that Avian Flu Pandemic you're scoffing about comes to pass – or there are several days of severe weather or some other protracted situation looming, DON'T call all-hands-on-deck for non-stop coverage.

Why: You'll need rested staffers for the next shift. Establish a continuing coverage shift plan NOW.

Owners, GMs, netcasters who stream music: MUST reading: “The New Webcast Royalties: What They Are. What Happens Next. What You Should Be Prepared For.”

FREE white paper by streaming pioneer Dave Rahn, of SBR Custom Channels (www.CustomChannels.net).

Click “Recommended Reading” at www.HollandCooke.com

Webmasters: HIGHLY-recommended reading: “Don't Make Me Think,” by Steve Krug

Read chapters 1 and 2, FREE, also on the “Recommended Reading” page at www.HollandCooke.com.

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MOST ENJOYABLE CALL-IN TOPIC I HEARD IN MARCH

Rush Limbaugh wanna-be's and well-intentioned managers who buy-into the conventional wisdom that Talk Radio is only about politics, or "the issues," will hate this. But callers LOVED it. So hosts more-open-minded than radio's sound-alike pundits might want to stash this in the evergreen file, for use on a slow news day.

***“We could have done a week on this.
‘Did 2 hours and we were jammed!!!”***

WTDY/Madison morning host Glen Gardner, who asked callers “WHAT NOT TO DO IN A MONSTER MOVIE.”

Among the B-movie cliché quips that one-caller-after-another offered:

- “DON'T GO TO JAPAN.”
- “DON'T SHUSH YOUR BARKING DOG. HE'S MONSTER RADAR.”
- “IF YOU HEAR A SCREAM IN THE CELLAR, DON'T GO DOWN THERE TO INVESTIGATE!”

Then, the next caller retorted:

- “NO...DON'T GO UPSTAIRS! MONSTERS ARE ALWAYS UPSTAIRS!”
- “DON'T RUN FROM A MONSTER IN HIGH HEELS. YOU'LL TWIST YOUR ANKLE.”
- “NEVER TRY TO FLEE A MONSTER IN YOUR CAR. IT WON'T START.”

Then, the next caller retorted:

- “IF YOUR CAR DOES START, THE MONSTER WILL BE IN THE BACK SEAT.”

Then, the next caller retorted:

- “YOU'LL NEVER GET THAT FAR! YOU'LL BE EATEN AS YOU'RE FUMBLING WITH YOUR CAR KEYS.”

At this point, they're using the station TO TALK TO EACH OTHER.

Y'know...as in “Talk Radio?” What a concept.

Or did you think “Talk Radio” means I-talk-you-listen?

- “NEVER GO OUTDOORS IN FOG.”
- “MAKE SURE YOU HAVE PLENTY OF FUSES DURING A THUNDERSTORM.”
- “NEVER SWIM NAKED AT NIGHT.”
- “AVOID SEX WITH SEDUCTIVE BLONDES. TO A MONSTER, THAT'S A TWO-FER.”

As regular readers of this newsletter are, by now, accustomed to the consultant reminding: “Arbitron is a memory test.” Fun, and one-caller-after-another interactivity can be lots more memorable than politics or arcane policy blah blah blah.

Not-to-be-outdone, WTDY's afternoon team is quoted atop page 6.

Save a tree...and save a week. By choosing electronic delivery, you'll get this newsletter the day I send it to the printer. To choose electronic delivery, simply E-mail me at cookeh@aol.com.

CAN'T GET TO FABULOUS LAS VEGAS THIS MONTH?

Not only will you miss a riveting demonstration of your consultant's deft casino blackjack technique...you'll also be missing NAB2007. So don't miss next month's newsletter, which will include my convention notes, and a true accounting of how it went at the tables. If you WILL be there, remember, no matter what the dealer is showing, always, always, always split aces and 8s.

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“Double your web traffic this year.”

TRS speaker and WGST/Atlanta PD Randall Bloomquist, disclosing Clear Channel's mandate. Attainment will influence compensation.

PROGRAMMING YOUR OTHER “TRANSMITTER”

Radio conventions are obsolete. Not just because there are fewer radio folks to round-up post-consolidation; but because over-the-air-radio isn't all we do any more...if we're smart. Conference agendas now acknowledge that we're **content creators**.

- Last month's R&R Talk Radio Seminar picked-up where the Radio Advertising Bureau convention left-off the month before. In Dallas in February, new RAB President Jeff Haley reminded attendees that – while over-the-air TSL may have reached a plateau – radio streaming grew 50% in 2006.
- ALL streaming media use is up...but not all streaming media enjoy radio's ability to drive traffic to online content. A pile of Arbitron/Edison Media Research you can download FREE from either company's web site demonstrates the power of radio's incumbency in this regard. People know us, trust us, and use us where radio goes. We can use the Internet to follow listeners where radio doesn't go, and deliver all kinds of content at-their-convenience.
- Accordingly, R&R's TRS touched on new media wrinkles in every session I attended (and aplenty in the one I moderated). And the Talkers magazine convention coming up in June has been named New Media Seminar since its inception a decade ago. For radio, aggressive use of new media is now at least a parity issue, and our most-conspicuous growth opportunity.

The Internet is “the fastest-growing part of our business,” according to ABC Radio Networks' Senior VP/Programming John McConnell, appearing on R&R's TRS Opening Roundtable. Fellow panelist Mary Beth Garber, President of the Southern California Broadcasters Association urged that we “look at radio as a multi-distribution system. The agency world is trying to contend with that, and our industry is trying to deny it.”

“Give More to Get More” was the session I moderated, and I began by noting that The Dallas Morning News has 28 staff photographers...12-of-whom no longer tote still cameras. THAT'S now much emphasis the newspaper has put on web video. If editors want a still shot, they'll grab a frame from video.

Several radio stations I work with have similarly swapped-out audio recorders for video handi-cams, which can yield audio actuality, stills, or video...all content from a brand born on AM/FM, but present on various devices listeners use “THROUGHOUT YOUR BUSY DAY” (as we say in promo copy).

“Talk radio's always been interactive.”

“We know interactivity better than any other medium.”

KFI/Los Angeles tech talker Leo Laporte, panelist in the TRS session “Attack of Technology”

When he keynoted the first and second annual Portable Media Expo conventions, Laporte was received as the high priest of podcasting. He recommends that “building community is the #1 way to foster loyalty.”

In various sessions I attended, there was lots of interest in podcasting. Wired magazine's Nancy Miller recommended that content be “under-7-minutes that you can hear on-the-go.”

Common station web site faux pas that various TRS speakers cited included difficulty-of-navigation and stations being slow to update content.

“What has the user taught us?”

My question, during Q+A in the session “News/Talk's Internet Radio Future.”

I was asking panelists who manage what may be radio's two busiest web sites:

- Premiere Radio Networks' Brian Glicklich oversees RushLimbaugh.com, and called “The Dittocam the single-most-popular feature of the web site.” It makes sense. Remember the first remote you attended when you were a kid? It was hypnotic.

The lips moved, and the sound came out. So THAT'S what he looks like! Now-that-we're-all-grown-up – and radio is a job – WE might find peeking-into the studio less fascinating. But to “real people,” it's still a curiosity.

Got a **studio webcam** on your site? Is it sponsored?

Applause to my client station KTBB/Tyler TX, whose afternoon show is simulcast on a cable channel. Last time I visited, the host took delivery of a case of large styrofoam Coca-Cola cups. Just as Paula Abdul does on American Idol, our guy keeps that Coke logo aimed at the camera. ;)

- ABC Radio Senior VP, Affiliate Relations and Digital Media John Rosso, who is involved with Sean Hannity's site, cited busy **message boards**. He told us that Hannity's site gets 18 million page views per month, and that “the vast majority of that is to the forums.” When asked about users grossing-out, Rosso noted that – beyond any dirty words filters which may be in place – “users police themselves. The community will marginalize” bothersome participants.

50: IT'S THE NEW 30.

Every day in the USA, two things happen:

- 10,000 people turn 50;
- Sally Timebuyer continues to squint at dots-and-spots on a computer screen, and buy 25-54 radio and 18-49 television.

“My biggest concern is the aging demographic of AM radio.”

Citadel VP/News/Talk Programming Brian Jennings, on the TRS Opening Roundtable

Is this radio's problem? Or agencies? I, personally:

- a) have left the demographic; and
- b) am moving-around more money, faster, than when I was 25-54.

One thing I'm hearing in my travels on particularly well-sold stations: local direct retail advertisers whose products/services cater to listeners-of-ALL-ages, but whose HEAVY users skew 50-something. One of my client stations advertises a 24/7 veterinary urgent care service. The station manager tells me he personally went on the Sales call after they saved his dog's life.

“‘Older people’ are absolutely NOT set-in-their-ways as consumers. Baby Boomers are lifelong experimenters.”

Joint Communications' John Parikhal

NATIONAL PUBLIC RADIO: HOT, AND WE HELPED

Noting that “commercial News/Talk radio has dropped 7% over the past three years,” NPR recently boasted that their 26.5 million cume is up 4% from Spring, and 2% from last Fall.

NPR also has radio's #1 morning show, Morning Edition, which seems to have survived Bob Edwards' exit to satellite radio just fine, with 13.2 million listeners per week in the Fall book, up 1% from Fall05, up 3% from Spring06, and greater than the audience Howard Stern attracted when he was on AM/FM radio. I hear Morning Edition in lots of cabs.

“It's been the biggest success story in talk radio for the last number of years.”

ABC Radio Senior Vice President/Programming John McConnell, referring to National Public Radio, at TRS

In the same session, Joint Communications' John Parikhal added “NPR is using sound better than anyone else. They are the National Geographic of radio. They paint with sound.”

Meantime, post-consolidation, commercial News/Talk radio has:

- homogenized much of its programming into national political monologues, delivered by right-leaning blowhards;
- logged too many spots, too-many-of-which are annoying;
- reduced local news content quantity and quality;
- automated stations, often sounding robotic at best; frequently treating listeners to dead air/double audio/other gremlins.

With so many stations faking-it-and-THINKING-THAT-they're-making-it, every extra effort you invest will be conspicuous.

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SOUND BITES

“Which would the world be better-off without? Junk food? Or royal families?”

The Wisconsin Guys, our afternoon duo on client Madison 1670 The Pulse, reacting to Price Charles criticizing McDonalds. Callers were hilarious.

“Thanks for a well thought-out article on a sad event.”

Gracious, unsolicited Email from Glen Clark, designer of the TEXAR Audio Prism, and former WLS-FM Chief Engineer. He was reacting to my plainspoken column on HD Radio in the March RadioWorld. If you missed that issue, you can read the piece at www.HollandCooke.com

Sharing my unvarnished candor -- if not my optimism that diligent programming CAN make a difference -- Glen writes:

“Radio is over. HD Radio will not save it. ‘Localism,’ if applied 36 months ago, would have significantly prolonged the life of the patient but not saved it. But the situation now is so dire that even a late application of localism will not save it.”

“Buy tires, get tunes!”

Coupon at the Ford dealer where I bought my car. It's a Goodyear promotion:

“Buy any 4 Goodyear tires and get a \$50 iTunes Gift Card. Buy any 4 premium Goodyear tires and get a \$100 iTunes Gift Card or an iPod Nano.”

THAT'S why Talk radio will save FM.

“Listeners of tomorrow are online today.”

Inside Radio founder, now blogger, Jerry Del Colliano.

- Of the generation now growing up without a radio habit, he writes: “They have their cell phones on during all their waking hours, on their person or nearby. Even the ubiquitous radio does not enjoy that kind of access to their audiences.”
- His challenge: “Will a major broadcaster please stand up and get into the Internet radio business in a major way now and not too late as radio has a habit of doing?”

“Radio is uniquely qualified to ride the Internet radio wave because they have massive terrestrial radio platforms from which to launch more channels -- not in the Siberia called HD radio but the utopia that will someday be known as universal WiFi.”

“Just saw your little viral video from TRS -- way cool -- I loved it.”

Al Peterson, R&R News/Talk/Sports Radio Editor, regarding the Talk Radio Seminar YouTube video I posted at www.HollandCooke.com

Congratulations to YOU, Al, for another great conference...especially from those of us in chilly-at-the-time New England, who always enjoy a trip to sunny Marina del Rey in March.

“Technology is a lot like sex. Before the first time, you are afraid of it. Once you do it, you think, ‘I’m not very good at it.’ Then you start doing it and you don’t know how you ever lived without it.”

Wired magazine Senior Editor Nancy Miller, at R&R's TRS

“Stop talking about yourself. Stop boasting, stop boasting loudly, and think about the needs and concerns of the people who listen.”

Gifted, talented Nick Michaels (www.NickMichaels.com), who has created some of the best radio promos I've ever heard.

“Read the first 5 seconds of your commercial out loud to yourself or to members of your intended audience. Then stop and ask: ‘Would you continue to listen to this commercial?’”

Hedquist Productions President, accomplished commercial voice talent and writer, and perennial RAB convention presenter Jeffrey Hedquist (www.Hedquist.com), who recommends:

“If your commercial is already produced, then play the first 5 seconds of the spot, put it on pause and ask the same question.

If the answer is ‘No,’ go back and re-write your opening ‘audio headline’ so that it catches the attention of and intrigues listeners to stay, because if you don’t get them in the first few seconds, you won’t keep them for the rest of the commercial. If the answer is ‘Yes,’ then go on to tell the rest of the story with an interesting middle and a strong ending.

That critical 5 second opening could be words, interesting voices, sound effects, music or any combination of those elements. It might be funny, poignant, shocking, intriguing, dramatic, or newsworthy, but make sure it’s relevant to the audience you want to reach as well as to the rest of the spot. An attention getting opening that isn’t part of a story that develops in the following 25 or 55 seconds will only confuse or irritate your listener. A relevant story that doesn’t have a strong opening won’t have any audience.

Remember, if you don’t capture them in the first 5 seconds, often the rest of the commercial is wasted time.”

“Hard work is the big sister of good luck.”

KDWN/Las Vegas Program Director Charlotte Burke, in AWRT’s Making Waves magazine.

“irrelevant”

California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger, characterizing criticism from Rush Limbaugh, on NBC’s Today Show.

Limbaugh had called Schwarzenegger “a closet liberal” for forging bipartisan solutions to his state’s challenges. But all was forgiven when The Governor appeared on star struck Limbaugh’s show days later and offered to smoke a cigar with him.

Unburdened by a chief executive’s accountability, El Rushbo wondered, with a straight face: “Why are you selling out instead of being the true conservative you are?”

Schwarzenegger: “I’m not selling out. It’s just doing work for the people. I can understand where you’re coming from ideologically, but when I became governor, I became the people’s governor.”

“There are times that I have fallen short of my own standards. There’s certainly times when I’ve fallen short of God’s standards.”

Former Speaker of the House, now presidential aspirant, Newt Gingrich, admitting to “Focus on the Family” host James Dobson that he was cheating on his wife while leading the impeachment charge against President Clinton over, principally, his affair with Monica Lewinsky.

Now, Newt’s party accuses the Democrats of playing politics for subpoenaing Carl Rove and others whom the president would prefer not testify under oath about matters of substance.

“Politics suck, and it’s our job to make them suck less.”

Clear Channel VP, News/Talk/Sports Programming Gabe Hobbs, speaking at R&R’s TRS.

He offered that “the magic of great hosts is being able to take difficult subjects and make them simple and apply them to listeners’ lives.”

“Radio reaches 232 million listeners per week.”

Arbitron’s preliminary headline from the RADAR 92 ratings that were about to be released as I sent this issue to the printer. This figure is constant from prior year.

