



***IF YOU ARE NOT THE BASEBALL STATION
WHY STAY ON THE AIR DURING THE SUMMER?***

OK, so your competitor has “YOUR TEAM” on the air for the entire summer. Major League or Minor League, Flagship or affiliate market ...it makes no difference. This means the entire summer for your station is a waste! So rollup the sidewalks and save a few bucks by turning the transmitter down a few watts and wait for the fall, right?

I can hear the wailing and gnashing of teeth. How can we program? How can we sell against America’s Great Pastime ...peanuts, hot dogs, Cracker Jacks! Oh, GOD HELP US!

Wait. First, lets look at Bill Veeck’s baseball legacy. Veeck, baseballs’ promotional genius, never backed away from the plate, no matter how large or “small” the challenge; remember the politically incorrect midget? One single at bat ...but who will ever forget. OK, ask yourself ...do you have enough “baseballs” to go to the plate against the baseball station for six months of the year? Do you have the GUTS to stand in the “batter’s box” to make a few BUCK\$? Unfortunately, many radio stations assume they are facing three strikes starting April 1st and give up through the end of September. **WHAT A SHAME!**

Do you have any idea how much money the station across town is spending in HARD-ENARED American DOLLAR\$ for the right to air nine innings of crowd noise and the “crack” of the bat? Eight figures as the flagship in a major league city, four to six figures in a league affiliate city. Minor league rights will certainly be lower, but considering billing availability is also reduced, the risk and the return on investment is not that much different.



So, OK, let’s just sign off until October!

Hold on. You should not only stay on the air, but also find an extra watt or two, then dance all the way to the bank! After all, without the huge rights fee, you are saving tons of BUCK\$ right from Opening Day. It is here where the creative “Bill Veeck’s” on your staff should be encouraged to step up with out-of-the-box dollar-generating packages and promotions.

Team City or Affiliate City

- **STEAL** much of the game-day visibility by simply acting as though you have the play-by-play, on and off the air. I know that sounds too easy but think of it this way; a great deal of the play-by-play occurs outside the important dayparts (i.e. evenings and weekends). Therefore, your play-by-play station is spending tons of CASH in secondarily budgeted dayparts resulting in inflated rates throughout the rest day as the station attempts to recover their massive investment. Your advertising rates will be more reasonable ...if you are creative in offering unique opportunities.
- Program and promote your station as though you have the play-by-play. Offer as many sales and promotional opportunities as you can create as if “the team” is on your air; pre-game, post game, weekday sports saturation opportunities, etc. By doing this, you might also create confusion in the mind of the baseball listener. Do not be afraid to gorilla market what the competitor is paying dearly for! Then, do not be intimidated by the “typical” team pressure. Remember, the club wants to sell tickets as much as protect the flagship station, so there is ALWAYS a middle ground, just do not try to “sneak” it past the team. Program pre-game and post-game shows just as though you had the game broadcast. Gear-up your **PROMO MACHINE** so you are the “Fan’s Station.” Be aggressive. If radio is anything, it is a **PROMOTION MONSTER!** Bill Veeck would have gone crazy with a radio station today, but he had to settle for newspapers!

- **CAUTION:** Remember that you cannot use team names, mascots, logos, promotional positioning, or make any representation that your offerings are authorized by the team or Major League Baseball. However, sanctioned team advertisers will often be open to opportunities that enhance their marketing position. Creative thinking will get you safely past this obstacle, yet, when in doubt run your plan past legal council.
- Since you are, "...expressly prohibited from airing the accounts and descriptions of the game without the expressed written permission of the (team) or Major League Baseball," contact the game-day opponent to get their "permission" to air audio from their game broadcast in post game shows and sports programming. Be aware, however, that MLB rules do not allow use of play-by-play audio within promos for any stations other than those affiliated with the team. Major League Baseball rules does permit limited use of this audio within bonafide sports programming 24 hours following the game, if permission is granted as herein defined. Often, teams will provide Internet service with audio clips for use by all radio stations. Contact the team PR department.
- Reaching out to a player for daily or weekly "sponsored" programs is available, and offers the opportunity to create a "direct" connection with the team. In-game advertisers are often be attracted to these opportunities.
- Produce 90-second game specific features in the morning and afternoon drive that include audio clips personally recorded by your staff, either at the ballpark or via telephone; excluding any accounts and descriptions. To keep the features fresh during the week, change the topic each day by rotating different subjects, such as: 1) player/coach interviews, 2) great games from the past, 3) former players and where are they now, 4) profile the next team when opponents change, 5) who is in the minors, and most likely to be called up. *Be creative. Think out of the "batter's box"!*
- Stay in contact with the team PR department constantly to maintain a relationship. Do not be afraid to ask for one-on-one player/coach interviews at least one time each week. Don't always ask for just the front-line players, since the "stars" are the most unavailable. Go for the players everyone else ignores. Also, ask for the bench and position coaches. They actually enjoy the attention. Remember, the team wants to sell tickets. For them, your station offers extended marketing; for you, it is good programming.

NEXT ARTICLE: Not The Baseball Station, Part II ...Marketing & MONEY\$

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Success Comes From...
The Courage to Create
The Confidence to Commit
The Cooperation to Complete
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