



Fall 06 Rock Ratings Summary

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No doubt you've already read the news from Arbitron's release of the format share data from the Fall 06 ratings. Overall the shares for all the rock formats look fairly bleak as we wrap up 2006. (*Information source: www.arbitron.com*).

12+	Format	SP01	FA01	SP02	FA02	SP03	FA03	SP04	FA04	SP05	FA05	SP06	FA06	AVG
Alt		4.8	5	5.3	5	4.9	4.7	4.9	4.4	3.9	3.7	3.4	3.4	4.5
	AAA	0.8	0.8	0.9	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.9	0.9	0.8	0.8	0.9	0.8
	ALTERN	4	4.2	4.4	4.2	4.1	3.9	4	3.6	3	2.9	2.6	2.6	3.6
Rock		9.4	8.9	9.5	8.7	8.5	8.2	8.3	7.8	8.7	8.2	7.7	7.3	8.4
	ACTROCK	1.6	1.7	1.9	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.9	1.8	2.3	2.3	1.8	1.8	1.9
	AOR	3	2.8	2.7	2.4	2.2	2	2	1.7	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.7	2.2
	CL ROCK	4.7	4.5	4.9	4.5	4.4	4.3	4.4	4.3	4.5	4.1	4.1	3.8	4.4

From the averages over the last 6 years the total shares for all Rock formats have fallen from the 12.9 share average to a 10.7 share in the Fall 06 reports from the top 100 continuously measured markets. When you look over the share trends throughout the whole 6-year span the decline really begins to show up. The peak was back in the Spring 02 with a 14.8 and declines nearly every book after that. I took just the most important books here from each year and avoid Winter and Summer numbers.

:Let's see if there are any clues as we look at 18-34s and 25-54s:

18-34	Format	SP01	FA01	SP02	FA02	SP03	FA03	SP04	FA04	SP05	FA05	SP06	FA06	AVG
Alt		8.8	9.2	9.4	8.6	8.5	8.3	8.5	7.3	6.7	6.3	5.8	5.7	7.8
	AAA	1	0.9	1	0.9	0.9	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.8
	ALTERN	7.9	8.2	8.5	7.6	7.6	7.5	7.7	6.5	5.8	5.5	5.1	5	6.9
Rock		13.1	12.5	12.3	11	10.6	10.4	10.2	9.7	10.5	9.9	9.3	8.7	10.7
	ACTROCK	3.4	3.4	3.7	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	4.1	4	3.3	3.3	3.6
	AOR	4.9	4.4	4	3.3	3.1	2.9	2.8	2.3	2.4	2.4	2.3	2.1	3.1
	CL ROCK	4.9	4.6	4.7	4.2	4	4	3.9	3.9	4	3.5	3.6	3.2	4.0
25-54	Format	SP01	FA01	SP02	FA02	SP03	FA03	SP04	FA04	SP05	FA05	SP06	FA06	AVG
	Alt	5	5.1	5.4	5.2	5.1	5	5.3	4.9	4.4	4.1	3.8	3.9	4.8
	AAA	1.2	1.1	1.3	1.2	1.2	1.1	1.2	1.2	1.3	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.2
	ALTERN	3.8	4	4.2	4	4	3.8	4.1	3.7	3.1	3	2.7	2.7	3.6
	Rock	12.3	11.7	12.6	11.5	11.3	10.7	10.8	10.3	11.4	10.6	10	9.4	11.1
	ACTROCK	1.7	1.8	2.1	2	2	2	2.1	2	2.7	2.6	2	2	2.1
AOR	3.8	3.6	3.5	3.1	3	2.7	2.6	2.3	2.4	2.3	2.4	2.4	2.8	
CL ROCK	6.8	6.3	7	6.4	6.3	6.1	6.1	5.9	6.3	5.7	5.6	5.1	6.1	



Alternative has lost a lot of impact with 18-34s, but seems to be in better shape with the older audience. Classic Rock is sagging in both younger and older demos, while active rock is at least holding steady with shares closer to the averages.

Looking over the numbers in the top 100 markets we see 29 markets where the Rock share improved within the last year and 71 markets where it either stayed the same or fell off. When you look at the top 40 markets only 7 have up shares – Boston, San Diego, Seattle, San Antonio, Salt Lake, Milwaukee and Providence. As you move away from the top 100 markets you also see an improving picture for Rock.

As for the stations in the McVay Media rock circle nearly all had up or steady Fall reports – including our U.S. and Canadian stations.

Why is rock looking like it's falling apart? In past ratings review reports we have seen 5 reasons that keep standing out:

1. **Sample** – It keeps going down for returns in 25-34 and 34-44 Male demos and 18-24s are not improving so they are also a factor.
2. **Sports** – In the Fall it takes a toll
3. **Howard** – Yes when he left and a number of stations left rock formats for talk (CBS mostly) it made a dent in the numbers especially in the big markets.
4. **The Diary** – Writing it down from recall isn't very accurate and the audience doesn't want to waste their time. (Trying to get younger demos to write it down isn't working).
5. **Hispanic Growth** – Taking up lots of shares in many markets.

While these are all real reasons the numbers are declining, there's clearly something more happening here. Traveling around, listening to stations online, and looking at research (perceptual studies, music testing, demo studies, and breaking down the ratings) are a few things that seem to stand out that may help explain why Rock is fading:

- We've become BORING: Look at the following areas when you punch up your station or the rock station in many markets:
 - Long Sets of back-to-back music – all safe and well researched.
 - Tight playlists – many P1s know every song on the list in just 3 weeks of normal listening. Imagine an iPod and you only have 2 bucks a week to download new music on it and no file sharing?
 - Imaging that's all chest pounding with tired movie/TV clips and an endless 'wasted' attitude. All we end up saying is 'we rock so hard....'



- Some good morning shows, but most are syndicated and may or may not fit the format and are rarely local. Hearing Carly Simon visit Bob and Tom on an active rock station for example.
 - Promotions that are mostly concert related with the same old promos.
 - Web sites that are boring and may get 1 or 2 updates a month.
 - Air staffers doing shifts – instead of personalities doing real radio shows.
 - Endless Positioning – We can't go more than 4 minutes without pounding the audience with more hype.
- In the Back seat of the cluster: We often find ourselves at the bottom of the food chain in many clusters. The resources in promotion, marketing, staffing and research usually end up on one of the stations that have 25-54 female potential. Some of this might be related to the 'bad boy' or 'black T Shirt' image we seem to project.
 - Too many rules and too many computers. You can't make great radio from a computer screen. It takes creativity, imagination, drama, and entertainment. While Computers may help you organize it they can't create it. As programmers we spend too much time tweaking the mix in Selector instead of brainstorming and creating with the staff. We also have way too many rules and keep repeating the same tactics over and over.
 - Obsession with 25-54s. We've ignored nearly 2 whole generations (and soon a 3rd will pop up) in our obsession with this demo. Yes, this is what the media buyers want, but the other generations are consumers also and spend tons. We are seeing new media run rampant with new dollars – often without even a sales person in sight. In the end we may have sealed our fate and we will struggle as the baby boomers become seniors and have less marketing value.

I hate to come off with this rather negative view, but these numbers are not improving and looking bleaker with every report. Rock should be a great format. In the 70s and 80s this format ruled the airwaves and set the music standard for both decades. In the 90s it re-vamped itself with Alternative and Active rock branches and again made a huge impact on the decade. Most of the 25-54 audience grew up with great rock stations and are looking for an entertaining and well-run product. Look at DVE, KQRS, EBN, FBQ, RIF, and many other rock outlets that are still legends in their markets. They built a solid product and didn't become boring or lazy. These brands are not at the back of the bus in their clusters – they lead them.



We need to build a plan that goes beyond re-tooling the music scheduling and pounding away more at the positioning. Much like the team that's behind 2 touchdowns at halftime this is no time for a group hug in the locker room before the 2nd half. We need to get in each other's faces, fix the mistakes and head back to the field knowing we can put some points on the board.

The 'excuses' we've covered in many past reports are mostly areas we cannot affect much. Hopefully Arbitron will have better Male samples, but we've been hoping for a long time. Sports are not going away for Men. Hispanic population growth is a reality that will become stronger. Even though PPM is on the way we will still have diaries in many markets for a long time. The areas we can control and improve need our attention and creativity. As spring thaws we need to come out of hibernation revived.

Dave Lange is VP/Rock for McVay Media. He is recognized across the country as a leading expert in all forms of radio programming. While Dave's worked successfully with all formats from News Talk to Active Rock he specializes in the Rock formats including Classic Rock, Classic Hits, Active Rock, Mainstream Rock and Alternative.

Dave has an extensive programming, consulting and senior management background, spanning nearly 30 years. He most recently served as Senior VP of Programming for Clear Channel preceded by Programming VP assignments with Capstar and AMFM.

His "hands-on" programming background includes Chicago (WCKG), Pittsburgh (WDVE), Miami (WSHE), Grand Rapids (WLAV) and Lansing Michigan.

He's also been a consultant and owned his own broadcast company. His travels have covered well over 350 radio stations in over 50 markets. While Dave's worked successfully with all formats from News Talk to Active Rock he specializes in the Rock formats including Classic Rock, Classic Hits, Active Rock, Mainstream Rock and Alternative.

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