

**"IT'S WHAT YOU  
LEARN AFTER  
YOU KNOW IT ALL  
THAT COUNTS"**

**...JOHN WOODEN**

**SNAPSHOTS**

- BP&R welcomes a new radio group in Uganda to the BP&R family. The *New Vision Group* will be developing their format and marketing strategy using BP&R's Xplorer software.
- To meet the strategic demands of their ever expanding portfolio of radio stations in Australia the Macquarie Media Group, has acquired a national license for BP&R's Xplorer and CATI software systems.
- BP&R also welcomes all the team at RS2 Berlin back to the family in 2007.
- Hamburg's Alster Radio 106.8 Rock n Pop joins the growing list of stations changing their online music testing to the mymusictest.com online music testing platform.

**In our next  
Newsletter we  
will hear from  
BP&R's Andy  
Beaubien**

[www.bpr.com.au](http://www.bpr.com.au)

## Is There Still a Mass Music Market?

By Peter Don

In his book – **The Long Tail**, author Chris Anderson suggests that the age of the 'hit' is dead, or at least dying.

There is much support for the "death of the hit" (which is) by definition a mass market phenomenon. The decline of mass market television, and the declining impact of album/CD sales points to the loss of a common music culture. In addition the growth of specialist retail means that the expansion of choice for music listeners is now virtually limitless.

This fact supports the death of the hit concept

because the expansion of choice also results in a greater number of titles being available and these are being bought; not in great numbers but enough to support the view that if the greater choice is available, consumers will use it at some point.



There is however a differ-

ent view to this which suggests is that too much choice creates 'decision stress' and consumers faced with overwhelming choice often can't decide what they want and as a result often buy something that they didn't intend to or don't buy anything at all.

So how do these theories apply to programming music on radio where you want to appeal to the greatest number of listeners?

**"Appealing to a mass audience only works when people can't gratify their special interest"**  
- George Gilder

**" they choose consistency (delivering the positioning/expectation)  
BUT they also crave variety and change"**

The 'specialist' argument is a compelling one, why would you put up with a broad range of music when your favourite type is pop or rock etc. The reality is however that the evidence supports what listeners continue to tell us. They choose consistency (delivering the positioning/expectation) BUT they also crave variety and change.

Technology now allows for listeners to exercise greater control over their own listening environment. The flexibility of iPod programming is improving and the accessibility of combinations via the internet. In addition specialist music providers such as Pandora allow listeners to create their own radio station on the internet, all this in addition

to a seemingly limitless choice of internet radio stations, but radio has always provided more than that. The community created by a successful radio station reflects the general interests of an identifiable group and goes beyond the boundaries of a narrow music focus.

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Do you have some news, a tip, suggestion or question?

Email [wayne.clouten@bprworld.com](mailto:wayne.clouten@bprworld.com)

## “be as narrow as you need to be and as wide as you can be”

In music programming the need for variety and change may be based on a relatively narrow overall music spectrum, but it exists in almost all music formats. The important element is to find the thread of common music interest between the listeners even non mass market stations.

It's now no longer enough to know that “the audience likes” or “what is burned out” The important element is to know which part of the audience likes or dislikes the music. In short the strategy for the station drives the definition of which part or coalition of the mass market you need to focus on.

The simplest way for us to achieve this is to look for listeners with common music tastes, then apply the greatest music (style) variety within this group. In this way we are able to identify both consistency and change: creating music variety without alienating different groups within your music target.

It's possible that listeners who like soft A/C also like rock, however it's unlikely that they will like ALL rock. Isolating the core music taste and then looking for the contrasts creates variety.

Within BPR Xplorer we call this the ‘**format correlation**’<sup>®</sup> which allows us to find the group within the mass who have shared music interest. The end result is to identify a stream of music that has broad or common appeal within the overall strategy but still find the contrasts that keeps the music fresh and interesting. Using this analysis we see some surprising results. Just as we can identify which rock songs appeal to soft A/C listeners, we can also see that rock listeners like some ‘urban’ music. The mistake is to assume that this is a general concept, in most cases it isn't.

**‘ .... there is still a demand for big cultural buckets, but they are no longer the only market. The hits now compete with an infinite number of niche markets,**

**of any size. Consumers are increasingly favouring the one with the most choice. The era of one size fits all is ending and in its place a market of multi-tudes....’ Chris Anderson – The Long Tail**

However, too much consistency of music style creates a common sound which can also mean a lack of variety. This leads to a lack of depth and ultimately listener boredom and fatigue – just too much of a good thing!

The changing face of media and its impact on traditions of media use, especially radio listening may be changing the way we have to approach radio programming.

The concept of a single radio or television source of mass market ‘hits’ has certainly disappeared as media consumption fragments, however the need for both consistency **and** variety is greater than it ever was.

*Peter Don is a shareholder and principal of BP&R*

“look for listeners with common music tastes, then apply the greatest music (style) variety within this group”

### BP&R’s Martin Kopp provides some timely ideas for Online Music Testing using [mymusictest.com](http://mymusictest.com)

In Wayne Clouten's article in the July newsletter he wrote about the importance of “making your radio station accessible” and “mechanisms for listeners to directly engage with your radio station”. From a listener relationship perspective creating the impression that listeners decide on the music is not a bad thing.

Allow those most passionate about your music to have a sense of participation. A great tactic is what we call “special interest tests”. Let your listeners vote on “The Top 100 summer hits” or “One Hit Wonders” or

“best of the 80's” or “The Best of Xmas” etc. By doing this you've got 3 major benefits:

- 1) Great content on your website for your listeners including an opportunity for interaction and therefore a reason to come back or recommend your website to friends.
- 2) A special show that's directly established by your listeners and therefore very interesting to your audience and highly promotable.
- 3) A complete music test if you're

using MyMusicTest.com. We can calculate the results not just as a chart list, but also for your target group/panel criteria and then import it into BP&R Xplorer. You can then compare results from your call out or auditorium test results with what your collected online (*keeping in mind those recruited on your website will be P1's*). Make music testing a fun element of your station website. Your listeners will love it.

To discuss what can be done contact [martin.kopp@bprworld.com](mailto:martin.kopp@bprworld.com)