

"THEY ALWAYS SAY  
TIME CHANGES  
THINGS, BUT YOU  
ACTUALLY HAVE TO  
CHANGE THEM  
YOURSELF" ...  
ANDY WARHOL



BROADCAST PROGRAMMING & RESEARCH

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## SNAPSHOTS

The results of a recent poll on what are the common causes of daily stress for people proved interesting:

- Rising prices: 74 %
- Too many things to do: 56 %
- Trouble sleeping: 53%
- Concerns about money for emergencies: 53%
- Concerns about health in general: 43%
- Illness of a family member: 36%
- Not enough money for basic necessities: 36%
- Too much information to process at one time: 33%
- Being lonely: 29%
- Problems with your work, boss or fellow workers: 24 %
- Problems with aging parents: 21%
- Frequent or excessive noise: 20%
- Problems with my children: 19%
- Abuse of your personal privacy: 13%

Opportunities for radio? Ask how can your radio station relieve stress?

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## Is Radio Dead Yet?

By Peter Don

As Mark Twain once said:  
*"The reports of my death  
are greatly exaggerated"*

Over the past few years there has been growing speculation on whether 'old media' will survive the introduction of a wide range of new media. The UK radio industry has experienced a slowing ad-spend over the past two years, largely attributed to the exploding rate of growth of internet based advertising, but is this a fad or a trend and is a change in listener behaviour behind it?

The obvious question is whether radio is losing its connection with current listeners – especially

younger listeners - there is a body of evidence showing that this is the case in a number of countries.

We see traditional radio models having less impact on the 'mass market' and a fast growing take up of new variants of radio listening – such as 'listen again' via the web, MP3 downloads, and digital radio (DAB in the UK) further examples of listening changes are usually based on available technology options such as satellite, internet and other 'blue-sky' options like delivery to mobiles.

So with this technology explosion, what happens next, do we really under-

stand the likely impact of new technology platforms on radio listening, and what can radio operators do about it? Recent RAJAR research in the UK covered radio listening in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of 2006 and it reported a healthy picture for radio:

\* 90% of the UK adult population listens to radio every week and all digital indicators reflecting and predicting long term growth.

\* Commercial Radio attracts 62% of all digital only hours.

## "The obvious question is whether radio is losing its connection with current listeners"

Among European countries, the UK is well advanced in the availability and take up of digital radio platforms. In addition to DAB radio listening, there have been trials of digital radio listening delivered to phones – products like *BT Movio* and *Virgin Lobster* represent new distribution

platforms for the most tradition of all electronic media.

There are ways that digital development and the digital environment may be limited such as cost and availability of radio sets, restriction of digital licences and government

regulation controlling the award and distribution of these licences, however the world is increasingly adopting digital based technologies and these can happen around the traditional structure of limited and regulated licensing.

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

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

## “ Broadcast radio is no longer a one-dimensional model”

While broadcasters and regulators argue about which form of digital standard to adopt, consumers are already moving ahead with other options – the key decision for radio is whether to be in a position to control the future or to have to catch up later.

Against a background of new platforms being launched, the UK government continues to hedge on when (not if) analogue Television and radio signals will be switched off entirely. This puts additional pressure on broadcasters to extend their digital offerings quickly and to secure

their place in a future media landscape. So how can radio adapt to a changing media environment?:

1. Broadcast radio is no longer a one-dimensional model. Radio is not just about listening to a station on analogue radio sets even if that is still the way the majority of people will perceive it, change when it happens will happen quickly. Plan changes before they are needed
2. Protect and slow attrition in core businesses. While the future requires bold and aggressive planning, the current business can't be

ignored. Attrition will speed up if the core product is neglected – decline can be short term or long term in many cases this is determined by the attitude of the owners and the operators.

3. Provide more choice – specialise. The future is about specialisation – but listeners are adaptable, they can use a broad based option and a specialised one as part of the same listening menu. Cross promotion within your ‘family’ of stations – from the general to the specialist may enhance your listener base rather than cause it to deteriorate.

4. Build brands. More choice doesn't necessarily mean that listeners will use hundreds of radio stations, you can benefit from strong brand recognition across a range of media.

5. Develop personal relationships with listeners As the number of choices increases, traditional advertising- consumer models may not be sufficient to communicate effectively with your listeners. Develop databases, provide meaningful ways to communicate with your listeners and they will respond.

6. Develop platform based revenue models. Radio has traditionally been

poor at selling non-core assets, either undervaluing or neglecting associated businesses. Specialist choices can be sold on individual merits – competitive strategy supports the view that the best benefit will come from individual business units competing for revenue.

7. Sell multi platform advertising In apparent contradiction to the point above, cross platform selling makes it easier for buyers to buy and therefore benefits the company overall. Cross platform selling does not mean devaluing one medium for another.

**“Develop personal relationships with listeners As the number of choices increases, traditional advertising- consumer models may not be sufficient to communicate effectively with your listeners”**

## “listening is no longer dictated exclusively by the broadcaster”

8. Understand key assets Different businesses have different drivers – whatever the key asset for each business, these should be protected against predators and (worse) complacency

9. Focus on listener behaviour and expect change. Listeners' expectations and behaviour patterns change – one of the fast growing music segments for 25-34 females is EMO – emotive rock music.

10. Be willing to compete with yourself. You can't predict all eventualities or all of your competitors moves – maybe setting up your own opposi-

tion (web radio/magazine etc) is a better way to protect your future than waiting for competition to happen.

As with all change, it's critical to understand what is going on and convert it into an opportunity. Is it fundamental threat or simply a symptom of changing consumer lifestyle?

Just as radio went from the living rooms to the bedroom in the 40's and 50's – from the house to the beaches in the 60's and into the exploding car-driving population beyond that, radio is now in a situation where listening is no longer dictated

exclusively by the broadcaster.

The listener is increasingly in control of their listening environment. To ignore or fight against that is foolish. To adapt and change is necessary for survival.

We'd like to hear about some of the things you're doing on your stations to adapt to the new radio reality. You can contact Wayne Clouten at [wayne\\_clouten@compuserve.com](mailto:wayne_clouten@compuserve.com) or visit our website [www.bpr.com.au](http://www.bpr.com.au)