

"THE MAN WITH A
NEW IDEA IS A
CRANK UNTIL THE
IDEA SUCCEEDS"

MARK TWAIN



BROADCAST PROGRAMMING & RESEARCH

SNAPSHOTS

9 ways to add 30 years to your life (almost)

5 years: Don't smoke

It's not cool to smoke. It also gives you lung cancer.

5 years: Eat power foods

It's all about the antioxidants. Every day you should eat a handful of dark chocolate and almonds, as well as fruits, vegetables, garlic and even a glass of wine.

4 years: Skip the fast food

Drive past the McDonald's and Wendy's without stopping and you'll live a lot longer.

3 years: Get moving

Run for 30 minutes, five days a week and you can live up to four years longer. If you walk, you'll add three years.

3 years: Get married

Numerous studies have shown that married people are happier and healthier. Why? They take care of each other.

3 years: Eat salmon twice a week

Eating fatty fish that contains omega 3 fatty acids, such as wild salmon, herring, mackerel and sardines, not only appears to lower your risk of Alzheimer's disease, but also helps control triglyceride levels and inflammation.

3 years: Lose the fat

You'll not only look and feel better, but you'll be healthier if you lose weight. Being overweight increases your risk of death by 20 to 40 percent.

3 years: Have sex

Having sex two to three times a week helps you live longer by cutting in half your risk for heart disease and stroke. How? Sexual

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Contests and Promotions - A Strategic Perspective

By Wayne Clouten

Radio stations are always looking for the next big promotional or contest idea and it will come as no surprise that they are becoming harder to find. One of the challenges is that when it comes to contests on radio, there are very few truly new ideas, mostly variations on familiar themes. The internet, interactive telephone systems and sms have given added dimension to what a radio

station can do but essentially there are very few new concepts. Some of the oldest ideas remain the best like Secret Sound, one of the all time great contest ideas on radio due to its simplicity and suitability to the medium. Believe it or not, Secret Sound is now more than 40 years old; however in some markets around the World Secret Sound is a relatively new contest idea. All too

often stations use contests as entertainment "crutches". In other words; the station is pretty boring to listen to if it doesn't have a contest. I was once at lunch with a DJ, who in response to my question about what he thought about contests; said "I love contests because they give me something interesting to talk to listeners about".

*"Does your station rapidly lose cume after contests?
hmmm....why might that be?"*

This honest response put a cold shiver up my spine. My immediate thought was...so what does this guy do that's interesting when he doesn't have a contest to talk about? As it turns out this DJ was particularly good at interacting with listeners and we encouraged the radio station to provide some benchmark platforms to allow him to do what he was good at, 52 weeks of the year – not just during contests. This

is a very important point – maintaining a consistent level of entertainment on your radio station 52 weeks of the year. The strategic danger in using contests as entertainment "crutches" is that you may fall into the trap of highlighting how non-entertaining your station is out of contest periods. Does your station rapidly lose cume after contests? hmmm....why might that be?

Very successful contests are usually defined by four things.

- A. An idea which is simple for listeners to understand.
- B. Easy to participate in.
- C. Entertaining for the non-participant.
- D. People talk about the contest or promotion to their friends.

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

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In achieving these four attributes, on-air execution is everything. A simple idea superbly executed on-air is usually more effective than a highly creative idea poorly executed on air. There are many examples of great ideas being let down by un-inspired execution.

Contests are a big investment, you should always have the goal of achieving a specific strategic purpose in mind such as introducing new listeners (cume) to a repolished/refreshed format, strategically enhancing time spent listening within the station cume or providing marketing focus on a brand/positioning attribute. Added to this you must have a mechanism by which you can measure that which you are trying to achieve with the contest.

An often neglected area of focus is how a contest may contribute to; or detract from the brand or positioning of your radio station. Ideally radio stations should be brand consistent in their contest and promotional concepts.

As an example a soft AC station might giveaway a aromatherapy treatment while a Hot AC might give away a parachute jump. This is not to say a station cannot employ variety in concepts and prizes, however a station that delivers concepts and prizes consistent with what you would expect from the brand of the station will do better than one that does not.

So what should we be fundamentally achieving with the on-air presentation of a contest? It should be about providing a platform for the on-air presenter to tease out a “wow” factor, a story or some soap opera from the listener call. The essence of a great contest is the listener engagement it drives not the prize. When writing up the presentation sheet for the DJ’s be conscious of this. Contest execution should be work-shopped with the DJ’s. Discuss the angles and cues to be employed to stimulate entertaining interaction with callers and listener engagement. Avoid at all costs the on-air listener call being just a “you’re right/no your wrong” activity.

Another trap to be conscious of is externally promoting contests at the expense of content/brand/position. If the only external message you ever communicate to the market is a contest and/or giving something away there is a risk of grooming the market to that expectation – which in the absence of – they don’t listen.

The final point to be made in this article is thinking beyond the end of the contest. Is there a natural/logical next step? As a result of the contest or promotion is there something new your station can now stand for? How will you carry the cume/TSL/brand momentum forward? What will make listeners want to stay with you beyond the finish of the contest or promotion?

Contests are the easy part...it’s what happens next that really counts!

8 Key Elements In Promotion or Contest Planning:

1. SET UP

The best promotions are those that involve the audience in their creation. Consider ways to involve or create the perception that listeners had an influence in the promotions idea, prizes or rules or even final judging.

2. TEASE

Don’t reveal everything at once. Have a plan to progressively release more detail and new ideas in the lead up to the promotions launch.

3. UNVEIL

Spare no effort in making a big noise and gaining as much exposure as possible for the launch of a promotion. Even an on-air contest like cash-call can have an event supporting its launch such as a publicity shoot of a bank manager and guards escorting the money to the radio station in “the cash call chest”

4. EXPLAIN

Sometimes complex production techniques can confuse listeners. What a listener can’t understand quickly becomes a turn off. A good tip is to produce your promotional announcements then play them to some staff unconnected to the promotion to see if they understand.

5. SPIKE

Introduce an unexpected twist half-way through a promotion to spike awareness. This will renew interest in the promotion and freshen the sound of it on-air.

6. IMPACT

The culmination of a promotion should be designed for maximum impact. Too many promotions run by radio stations “fizzle” instead of “sizzle” at their conclusion. To ensure this does not happen plan a

spectacular finale. Think about holding a staff meeting the night before the promotion finale to wind up staff energy and enthusiasm

7. OWNERSHIP.

A promotion worth doing should be a promotion worth owning. Make the name and every element of the promotion as proprietary to the station as possible. Things to consider include registering the promotion’s name and any trademarks.

8. EXTENSION.

Having gone to all the effort and commitment involved in setting up and running a major promotion, consider what opportunities exist to keep the awareness momentum going in the form of a spin-off promotion, position claim or new feature.