

"LOSERS VISUALISE THE PENALTIES OF FAILURE. WINNERS VISUALISE THE REWARDS OF SUCCESS"

...ROB GILBERT



BROADCAST PROGRAMMING & RESEARCH

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## SNAPSHOTS

In his new book; "Extreme Future" James Canton writes about forthcoming trends and their impact on society. The 5 key factors that will define the extreme future in his view will be:

- **SPEED:** The rate of change will be blinding, comprehensive and touch everyone.
- **COMPLEXITY:** A quantum leap in the number of seemingly unrelated forces that will have direct bearing on every aspect of life.
- **RISK:** New and higher risks from terror to economic change.
- **CHANGE:** Drastic adjustments in work, community and relationships forces us to adapt quickly.
- **SURPRISE:** Surprise will become a feature of daily life, challenging sensibility and logic.

What is going to drive these factors? According to Canton it will be the need to replace fossil fuels plus Innovations driven by Nanotechnology, Biotechnology, Neurotechnology and Information Technology.

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Newsletter The  
A-Z of Music  
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## Defining The Listener

By Bill Clemens

In radio research terminology the term "P1's" has come to mean core listeners – those who respond with the name of your station when asked "what radio station did you listen to most over the past week". "P2's" are those who name your station as another station they also tuned over the past week, naming a competitor as their favourite. Radio listeners are loosely defined as being either core listeners (P1's) or secondary users (P2's).

The reality is much more complicated. There is, in

fact, a whole range of listener groups not fitting the convenient core or user theory. We might describe them as:

**"Exclusives"** – those listeners who are, indeed, "locked" on a particular station with no station consciously in the listening mix.

**"P1's"** fitting the accepted model spend most of their time with one station and a typical 20% with others (great for cume, not so good for listening hours). Typically a station will have around 50% of their

cume as P1 listeners, CHR stations (and news talk stations) typically less.

**The "Uncertains"**, those listeners who are not sure what station they listen to most. They switch regularly between two or three stations depending on mood or specific need (and often can't recall which one). This group is actually quite large as you will discover in callback studies or in music callout. This individual regularly changes their core station.

### "The reality is much more complicated"

The **"unconscious cume"** – radio listeners who listen to your station but don't actively recall that station in surveys (your own research and the official ratings).

**"Occasional"** radio listeners who really don't make radio an active part of their day. They listen, unsure of the station, "now and again" but in no fixed pattern.

The strategy doesn't change too much being aware of these differing

groups of listening types. Essentially a radio station wants to retain their core (P1's) and convert their cume (other listeners).

Unfortunately meaningful conversion of cume often requires a significant change of format – your station is included in their listening as somewhere they go "for a change", a specific show ("late Night Talk"), at work (the group vote) or for a mood change. So, without a complete makeover, how might we view the dy-

namic of the P2's as it will affect ratings?

A closer examination of your tracking will reveal one of the most effective answers. If you look at those times of day when you retain your P1's you will likely see a pattern best at breakfast and declining across the day. Breakfast listening is the great definer of P1 listening (win breakfast and you win the day is still one of the great radio truisms).

Cont:

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

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

## “Generally speaking, you should be concerned if you don’t retain at least 70% of your P1’s at work ”

The issue is what percentage of the core you retain during the work day, recycling in afternoon drive and bedside radio as the audience leaves television and heads for bed. Weekends are also a time when we might lose our P1’s. Generally speaking, you should be concerned if you don’t retain at least 70% of your P1’s at work and ideally 80%. If it drops below that figure the station is probably losing listeners at work, typically not meeting the music needs of the younger members of the work group (or, in many instances, the person who controls the radio).

The most significant group is your P2’s. You need to look at two things in the tracking:

- 1. What day parts do most of your P2’s come in to the station?**
- 2. Over time do you notice periods when the level of P2 listening is higher, typically during the workday?** You are likely to see some significant variations! Previ-

ously these were believed to be sampling variation but closer examination usually reveals peaks associated with contest or promotional activity.

Accepting that you see a similar pattern (lows of 5% P2 listening at work and highs of 30% are not uncommon) it all boils down to “the sizzle”. When the station has compelling content P2 listening is higher and you’re almost certainly going to have them as P1’s for the period. This should mean an associated impact on listening hours in diary based surveys.

We believe it is unlikely “the sizzle” will change lifestyle related listening patterns other than in very high profile activity. Listeners will listen when they usually listen – the trick is to have them on your station and for them to be aware of it. Tip the workplace vote in your favour, recycle the breakfast activity into the workday, recycle the audience as much as possible with for-

ward momentum (reasons to listen beyond the format).

Radio stations are positioned on their product, usually the music product. This, of itself, is the reason to come to the station (the definer for P1 listeners) but it will not add the premium listening hours of a great stunt (talk of the town) or the impact of a force-listen contest. Better still, have compelling people on the air so that the “sizzle” is always there. This can be very difficult to achieve but it should be the goal of every PD.

Keep a time line of activity against rises and falls in P2 listening levels. And for goodness sake, if there’s no sizzle on-air then do something about it!..Oh, and don’t forget to mention the call letters.

*Bill Clemens is the founder of BP&R and a specialist in AC Radio, particularly in Europe where he has been working for 20 years.*



*“Better still, have compelling people on the air so the SIZZLE is always there”*



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