

*A Good work*

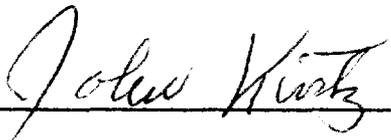
Client Perception Study Of Radio Advertisers

An Honors Thesis

by

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## INTRODUCTION

The following manuscript reports the key findings from a February 1986 study done for WMEE/WQHK by Robert R. Webb. The project attempted to determine advertisers' reasons for selecting a radio station to advertise with and their criteria for judging a salesperson. Data was also collected to determine which radio station(s) had the best salesforce. In addition, respondents were asked to name the outstanding individual radio salespeople in Fort Wayne. Finally, respondents were given an open-ended question that allowed them to list what else they would like radio salespeople to do that would make their advertising decisions easier. Hopefully, the findings of this study will enhance WMEE/WQHK's already strong training program.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

To gain a representative sample of those who deal with radio salespeople, responses were obtained from advertising agency executives and from business people who handle their company's advertising decisions. The data collected from this combined group provides insight into their perceptions of radio salespeople. However, when data from these two groups is separated, it shows that agency people and advertisers sometimes have contrasting opinions about radio stations and their salespeople. When significant, these contrasting opinions will be pointed out.

The study clearly showed that the most important reason for choosing a radio station to advertise with is the station's ratings. Also important was the cost of advertising. The merging of these two criteria, or cost per thousand, was the overwhelming factor named by agencies. 60% of the advertisers thought ratings and cost were the key criteria, but the rest used other criteria to determine which radio station to advertise with. Advertisers look at more than just CPM.

The key findings in judging a radio salesperson center on the salesperson's knowledge of his/her station, knowledge about the client's business, and problem solving ability. Agencies want salespeople to come to them armed with complete information about the station's numbers, and then to relate those numbers into benefits for the agencies' clients. Advertisers want this service from salespeople, but they also pay much more attention to

personality, personal appearance, polished presentation, and relaxed manner when judging a radio salesperson. The study indicates that radio salespeople must be concerned with selling themselves to advertisers; whereas, agencies will tolerate less than ideal personal features as long as the salesperson is backed by numbers and can provide a solution to a problem.

Among those agencies and advertisers represented in this study, WMEE/WQHK was overwhelmingly rated as having the most professional radio salesforce in Fort Wayne. Their combined salesforce was judged superior by 70% of those responding, far outdistancing their closest competitor, WOWO/WIOE who were named by only 15%. Roger Diehm of WMEE/WQHK received incredible support for being named the outstanding individual radio salesperson in Fort Wayne. Almost half the people responding listed Mr. Diehm.

Finally, the open-ended question asking what else radio salespeople could do to make advertising decisions easier, produced a wide variety of answers. The most-suggested replies were predictable based on data collected from earlier questions. Agencies and advertisers want salespeople to be more attuned to their needs, have better knowledge of their station, and clearly show how benefits can provide solutions to problems. More unique suggestions will be listed later in this report.

## SURVEY METHODS

This report details the key findings of a study completed over a two week period in February 1986. 30 advertising agency executives and 20 advertisers provided answers for the 50 completed questionnaires. All surveys were conducted by telephone, and the average survey was answered in 5-8 minutes.

When determining the criteria for selecting a radio station to advertise with and for judging a radio salesperson, respondents were asked to rank each criteria on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 was not at all important and 5 was very important.

- 1 = Not at all important
- 2 = Little importance
- 3 = Some importance
- 4 = Important
- 5 = Very important

When determining perceptions of which radio station(s) had the most professional salesforce, a scale of 1 to 5 was used where 1 stood for not at all professional and 5 stood for very professional.

- 1 = Not at all professional
- 2 = Not very professional
- 3 = Somewhat professional
- 4 = Professional
- 5 = Very professional

Mean scores will be used as a measurement in this report. A mean score is the average rating given a specific criteria by a response group - agencies, advertisers, or total respondents.

## CRITERIA FOR SELECTING RADIO STATION

Respondents were asked to rank 7 criteria on a scale of 1 to 5 to determine how they select a radio station to advertise with. The most important criteria was the station's ratings. 60% of the respondents felt ratings were the most important criteria. Advertisers didn't give as much importance to the ratings. 50% of them said ratings were most important, compared to 67% of the agencies. Cost was considered important by both groups, especially the agencies. Mean scores by advertisers were 3.9/5 and by agencies 4.3/5.

The role of salespeople in determining which station to advertise with was disagreed upon significantly. 50% of the advertisers ranked them important to very important, compared to only 17% by the agencies. The same trend is evident with a station's on-air personalities. Here the difference is 55% to 27% by the agencies.

Advertisers also give much more importance to personal contact with station management. The difference in mean scores is 2.9 to 2.1.

Special promotions are just about equally important to both groups, receiving a total mean score of 3.4.

A recommendation from an agency doesn't mean much to an advertiser who makes his own decisions. Most advertisers surveyed did not deal with agencies, so they ranked their recommendation as having little or no importance. Agency people were more attentive to their client's recommendations. 57% said their client's

recommendation was a somewhat to very important criteria in selecting a radio station to advertise with.

The major notion that surfaces from these questions is that agencies are mainly concerned with ratings and cost, or CPM. However, advertisers have more factors figuring prominently in the decision making process. They appear to be more people-oriented and less number-oriented. The management, salespeople, and on-air personalities of a station are all important criteria used by advertisers to determine which radio station to advertise with.

## CRITERIA FOR JUDGING SALESPERSON

Respondents were asked to rank 9 criteria on a scale of 1 to 5 to determine how they judge a radio salesperson. Overall, the most important criteria was that a radio salesperson know his station. 90% of each group thought station knowledge was important to very important.

Next was knowledge about their client's business. Advertisers stressed this point more than agencies, though. When asked to name the most important criteria in judging a radio salesperson, advertisers said it was equal between knowing the station and knowing their business. Agency people also expect knowledge about their business, but they don't stress it as much.

Advertisers and agencies give mean scores of around 4.3 for the importance of problem solving ability and sincerity. These are traits they don't see enough of in radio salespeople, but they look for them ideally.

The importance of promptness is agreed upon by both groups. No one listed it as the most important criteria, but it did receive a total mean score of 4.0. It's considered important and there is no reason it can't be attained.

There is a significant difference of opinion about the next four criteria. Agencies consider all these to be on a range of somewhat important to very important, but advertisers emphasize each of these more. They are personality, personal appearance or dress, polished presentation, and relaxed manner. 75% of the advertisers ranked personality as being important to very

important in judging a salesperson. On the other hand, only 33% of the agencies saw it as being that important. The other 3 individual traits were each ranked about 25% higher by advertisers in terms of being important to very important.

The findings of this study lead me to surmise that although a radio salesperson's individual traits were ranked somewhat important to important by all respondents, advertisers are more watchful of everything about a salesperson and not just the information he/she has to give. Ideally, the individual traits mentioned should be cultivated and used to the salesperson's best advantage when dealing with all clients. The use of this information lies in its implications for salespeople who have a notion that all they have to do is recite their station's ratings and take the order. It's true that some sales are strictly a numbers buy; however, it seems foolish to risk losing a sale because of traits which could be improved upon.

## WHAT TO DO BETTER OR DIFFERENTLY

This section reports the findings from the open-ended question, "What else would you like radio salespeople to do that would make your advertising decisions easier." Most responses centered on something that salespeople are doing to some extent, but could be doing better. Earlier questions brought out what advertisers and agencies look for in stations and salespeople. Results from this question showed that they aren't always getting what they hoped for. Comments made by both groups are listed under **Total Respondents**. Unique suggestions made by **Advertisers** or **Agencies** are listed under their headings. All are listed in order of frequency mentioned.

### **Total Respondents**

- Be attuned to clients needs, work to satisfy those needs
- Better problem solving abilities, not just order taking
- Better knowledge of station
- Concise presentation, short and to the point
- Listen to client
- Variety in price of packages

### **Agencies**

- More complete written information
- Have purpose when making a call
- Better service
- Wider knowledge of all media
- Make better deals when inventory is available

### **Advertisers**

- More flexible negotiations
- Personalized presentations, suited to clients needs
- More time to consider proposal, not so close to deadline
- Advance notification of when commercials will run, so they can listen and monitor

## RADIO SALESFORCE RANKINGS

WMEE/WQHK is clearly considered the have the most professional salesforce in Fort Wayne. Other stations, received high marks from respondents, but when they were asked to name the best, WMEE/WQHK's people were preferred 70% of the time. The answer to this success also answers the previous question about what radio salespeople could be doing better. WMEE/WQHK's people are so successful because they are doing more of the things that people expect from professional radio salespeople, and doing them better than other stations. Listed below are the station rankings based on mean scores, or average rankings out of a possible 5 points.

1.	<b>WMEE/WQHK</b>	<b>4.32</b>
2.	WAJI	3.86
3.	WOWO/WIOE	3.55
4.	WEZR/WEZU	3.43
5.	WBTU	2.90
6.	WXKE	2.63
7.	WGL	2.23

## OUTSTANDING SALESPERSON

When asked to name the outstanding individual radio salesperson in Fort Wayne, the respondents answered decisively - Roger Diehm. Mr. Diehm collected 20 votes from the 42 people who responded to this question. Some of those surveyed named more than one salesperson, therefore a total of 54 votes were cast.

<u>Salesperson</u>	<u>Votes Received</u>
Roger Diehm	20
Mary Davisson	5
Doug Clark	4
Curt Mischa	4
Michael Franke	2
Bob Hendry	2
Jack Underwood	2
Lynn Alexander	1
Ed Allegin	1
Richard Ash	1
Tom Cheithe	1
Rob Emrick	1
Mary Hilligaff	1
Chuck King	1
Bill Latz	1
Dave Riethmiller	1
Darrell Senior	1
Charlie Slovik	1
Walt Steffen	1
Kim Stradley	1
Mary Lou Strickland	1
Rose Tholen	1