

Radio Creative

CBS Interactive CTO Peter Yared contributed to this report.

August 22, 2012

With 38 ads on average airing per minute across national TV*, breaking through the clutter is essential. According to a recent analysis from Nielsen, there are five common characteristics of TV ads that resonate with consumers.

The top-five characteristics for ads that scored highly on “breakthrough,” an ad’s memorability, per consumers, are:

- Audience-Appropriate Humor – Tickling America’s funny bone is a proven winning tactic for making an ad memorable.
- Relatable Characters & Situations – Audiences will connect with personalities and scenarios with whom they can identify.
- Simple & Upbeat Storyline – Ads should do more than convey information– they should tell a story.
- Character Dialogue to Tell a Story – Changing a message from simple prose to a conversation will give the story life.
- Build an Emotional Connection – The brain identifies an emotional experience as important enough to remember, which in turn resonates with the audience.

“The ability to create a true winning commercial is an undeniable art form, but there’s science behind it too,” said Joe Stagaman, EVP, Advertising Effectiveness Analytics for Nielsen.

“Recent Nielsen research has found that nothing helps consumers feel connected to an ad like a good laugh, tugging at the heart strings or connecting with them on a personal level.”

Methodology

As the leading provider of in-depth analysis and advertising effectiveness insights, Nielsen provides comprehensive insight into a commercial’s ability to achieve breakthrough and attitudinal metrics. Breakthrough reflects how memorable an ad was, and is available through Nielsen TV Brand Effect, which measures the impact of commercials by surveying viewers exposed to the ad on TV.

**Ad units calculated based on Monitor-Plus’ universe of national television distributors (Broadcast,*

And, Nielsen conducted an in-depth custom research study of advertising effectiveness of ads before, during and after the “Great Recession” to find out how advertisers reach and resonate with an increasingly diverse, demanding and connected audience.

The findings of the study to determine to what extent, if any, has the tumultuous economic climate and subsequent attitude shifts impacted consumer responsiveness to various creative tactics are summarized in the report as:

- Humorous ads have consistently resonated best with viewers, regardless of the economy or year
- During the recession, there was a notable lift in effectiveness of sentimental and value-oriented ads
- Ads focused on product features and promotion/price do not resonate with viewers even during tough economic times
- The performance of narrative and sentimental ads has improved since 2006

Resonating Ad Genres

Ad Type	Appeal Index (100=Average)		
	PreRecession	DuringRecession	AfterRecession
Funny	147	133	133
Sentimental	88	107	107
Price/promotional	71	73	60

Source: Nielsen, June 2012; (e.g. Funny ads were 47% more appealing to consumers than the average pre-recession ad, and 33% more appealing during the following recession)

The report concludes that economic cycles can now help predict ad effectiveness and consumer responsiveness to various creative strategies. The author recommends that marketers “...look for the rise of the global middle class, urbanization, the new female economy and a notable shift in advertising spending to all be engines for change and the future growth of consumer spending...”

To read more from the Nielsen blogs, please visit [here](#) and [here](#)

Radio creative-To embrace the new pace:

1. Talk faster, say more.---WE DISAGREE. DOESN'T TAKE INTO CONSIDERATION THE MANNER IN WHICH PEOPLE LISTEN TO COMMERCIALS
2. Use big ideas, presented tightly.
3. Introduce a new mental image every 3 to 5 seconds.
4. Use fewer adjectives.
5. Embrace unpredictable timing and intonation.
6. Say things plainly. Bluntly, even.
7. Emotion is good. Even negative emotion.
8. Allow distinctly different voices to finish each other's sentences.
9. Prepare for lots of complaints. *Listeners want to be able to ignore radio ads. When*

they can't ignore your ads, they complain. A lot.
10. Prepare to make more money.

The 'I Think' Syndrome Destroys Many a Campaign

It Doesn't Matter If You Like an Idea, Will the Target Audience Like It?

By: *Darryl Ohrt* Published: *October 31, 2012*

How many times in a brainstorming meeting have we heard statements that begin "I think that ...," followed by a personal experience related to the idea at hand. Or one of the team will say something like, "I would never watch that," in reference to a proposed concept.

When conceiving ideas, we all want to relate to our audience target, and identify with the market. But the reality is, **our targets are far different than most of us as individuals**. Comments like these have killed great concepts, and can lead ridiculous concepts to execution and launch.

We demand comprehensive creative briefs prior to digging into a project. So why are we so apt to throw them aside in favor of a personal opinion? Because we're bad scientists.

In **psychology, personal construct theory professes that people act as scientists, channeling their thoughts and actions based on what they predict and anticipate**. A 35-year-old single, male marketer might expect that a 45-year-old mom with three kids will act in a particular manner, based on his personal experiences. But does he have the life experience to properly identify with a busy mom?

As creative people, we're opinionated. We want great ideas to see the light. We like our own ideas and project their success on our intended targets. And this is mostly wrong.

How can you avoid bad science? As a practice, I've done my best to remove "I think..." from rationalization of concepts. It's a simple trick, but it forces you to focus on the core rationale for what you're presenting -- not why you think it's important or destined for success. A response of "the target has shown a propensity toward this type of entertainment" is more impressive than "I think this will be huge. I know that I would totally use it." Whenever possible, prove it out with research, strategy, evidence or experience.

Sounds like common sense, right? It should be, but once you begin listening for it, you'll be surprised at how many clients, accounts and creative people suffer from the "I think..." syndrome. **In some circles, it's an epidemic. I've heard the phrase uttered by junior creatives, senior creatives and people who should really know better.**

Where I don't see anyone fighting, however, is in trying to understand the persuasive content of advertising. If I reach 80% of the country, but only 1% are persuaded, that has a cost. **If I create a better ad that only persuades 2% of the people who view it, I have halved my media costs.**

Mark Gross SVP, Group Creative Director DDB- however the more radio judging I do, the more I realize that great radio creative is really intangible and undefineable. There's a little something special that propels memorable work to greatness. When audio is all you have, people want to be entertained, not preached to. That is what great radio is supposed to do, stir emotions and engage the listener. I speak

for all of us when I say **we left Cannes feeling inspired and motivated to preserve the future of radio. Long live the power of great radio..**

The message absolutely changes. **Targeting is not just for selecting media vehicles.** It's for the messaging; for choosing promotional partners; for all marketing. If you don't change the message on a by-consumer basis, then your message plays to the lowest common denominator, which defeats the purpose of being targeted with your media vehicles

Researchers found that creative work must rate "high right out of the blocks," said Carl Marci, CEO and co-founder of Innerscope.

Mr. Marci pointed to a Burger King ad developed by Miami's Crispin Porter & Bogusky that showed declining viewer engagement the longer it went on. In the commercial, a woodsman comes across the burger chain's popular and inanimate King character, and then is handed the restaurant's enormous omelet sandwich. Because the product being pitched was introduced relatively late in the ad, viewers began to tune out, Mr. Marci told an assemblage at a conference held by the Advertising Research Foundation today.

A recent Hyundai Motor ad that appeared in this year's Super Bowl fared much better. In the commercial, created by Omnicom Group's Goodby Silverstein & Partners, a number of executives read reports about Hyundai winning an industry award and begin screaming the company's name. Later, an announcer dryly notes that it's funny how everyone says a company's name right after it wins an important honor. More viewers stayed to watch the whole ad, Mr. Marci said, because it quickly told a story and hewed closely to it.

Orienting effect: Creative- paying attention to the radio, television, or computer screen is a result of both personal intention (i.e., "I'm interested in this program.") and automatic processes that individuals cannot consciously control (Schnieder, Dumais, and Shiffrin, 1984). These automatic processes are conceptualized as being activated by structural attributes of the message itself (Lang, 2000). For example, human beings automatically allocate cognitive resources to encoding television messages immediately following a cut—a change from one visual scene to another (Lang, Geiger, Strickwerda, and Sumner, 1993).

Similarly, the occurrence of a change from one announcer to another in a radio message automatically calls cognitive resources to the task of encoding information in that message (Potter)

A Creative director once said there is no greater ROI for advertising than improving the creative work

Humor In Ads: Laughs Fall Along Gender Lines

Just watch the Super Bowl ads each year and it's pretty clear that marketers feel laughter is a calling card. But with broadly targeted products, creative development takes time to discover the interplanetary middle ground to reach both Mars and Venus.

Nielsen research indicates that males and females embrace ads with different types of humor. Using a study of millennials ages 13 to 34, Nielsen found that males like "slapstick, edgy, sarcastic" comedy, while females appreciate an "off-beat, but not mean-spirited" approach.

Of course, humor isn't the only area where males and females react differently to 30-second spots. With characters in advertising, males like "normal guys" and "exaggerated situations." Females go for "happy situations" and an "I could be her" tack.

Which might explain why females like themes that highlight "strong female celebrities" and "having fun." Males go for "competition" and/or "extreme imagery."

With tonality, females like liveliness and "hip music," while males go for a "whimsically humorous" approach.

According to new Nielsen data, females in the 18-to-49 demo watch about 11 hours more of TV a month than males. In a 2-to-17 segment, TV viewing is about the same between the genders.

Males 18 to 49 do consume video on the Internet and mobile phones slightly more than females.

Image by Shutterstock

TARGETING TIPS

How to market to the boomer brain vs. the millennial brain

BOOMER BRAIN

COLOR WITHIN THE LINES:

Boomers can have trouble processing visual presentations that are too complex, and fail to see anything in the borders of advertising.

TRY SOUND:

Boomers are more likely to struggle retrieving words on the “tip of the tongue,” so brands should use mnemonic devices to aid memory.

BEWARE THE GENDER GAP:

Boomer women do read, particularly competitive comparison ads, while men don't respond to text-heavy ads but do respond to imagery.

DON'T THREATEN:

Boomers are more likely to pay attention to positive emotion in ads, so scare tactics are less likely to work.

MILLENNIAL BRAIN

ROLL OUT THE BELLS AND WHISTLES:

Millennial brains have a much easier time responding to complex, moving and cluttered images and screens.

GRAB ATTENTION QUICKLY:

The millennial brain is still outgrowing the teen tendency to act first, think later, as the prefrontal cortex is still maturing (a process that isn't complete until about 25). There may not be time for a complex, nuanced message.

SIMPLIFY THE MESSAGE:

While the delivery of the message can be more complex than with boomers, the message itself shouldn't be. Millennials have more trouble than older folks processing complex messages.

SOURCE: NIELSEN NEUROFOCUS

KMS - Radio Creative Best Practices

Speak “to” them not “at” them:

Keep listener profile in mind. Mirror your targets values

Avoid unnecessary words.

Be clear, concise and focused. In TV they review a commercial frame-by-frame.

Need same discipline with Radio.

Know what to leave out.

Tell Stories.

Stories arouse emotions.

Keeps the listener intrigued/ attentive.

Listener fills in the blanks, personalizing the message

Stories generate imagery, impacting the most powerful of all screens- the listeners mind

Recognize gender difference

Men think and are more rational, Women feel and tend to relate to emotional messaging

Err on the side of emotional.

Avoid voices made for radio.

They are easier to ignore.

Unpolished, amateur voices command attention.

Avoid smooth and worn out phrases.

Vary pace and Tone.

Pauses are the opportunity for the brain to process the preceding information

Write the way we talk.

Effective ads often feature broken sentences. Half sentences. Non-sequiturs. This is how we speak. Awkward wording and weird phrases capture attention.

Monotonous delivery turns into “white noise” and leads to tune-out.

Silence- can be powerful.

Silence is a stark contrast to constant sound on radio. The deft use of silence compels an audience to listen more closely.

Strive for a certain degree of edginess .

Otherwise can get lost in commercial pod

The old bromide, trying to please everyone, pleases no one applies

Humor

Is not easy. If trying to be humorous makes sure it is really humorous

Humor can create word-of-mouth but your target must find it funny.

Audio consistency

Consistency of voice, music bed or audio logo is key. Want the listener to immediately identify the commercial as yours and associate with your product's attributes even if engaged for only a few seconds

Similar music, theme between Radio and TV.

Start strong.

You have 3 seconds at the beginning of the commercial to grab their attention

End it strong. Strong finishes reinforce your messaging

Mention your name throughout

Listener's attention to commercials ebb and flows.

Avoid reveal ads. They are very tough to pull off and if not properly done will result in no advertiser awareness

Consider multiple voices.

Testing conducted by Sensory Logic shows that 75% of national radio commercials include a single voice. And that only 10% of single-voice spots are engaging. "By adding a second voice you dramatically improve the engagement of a commercial"

Consider rotating more than one commercial.

Not putting all of your eggs in one basket in case the commercial doesn't resonate IAG Radio testing showed it is better to limit # of commercials in rotation unless you are a huge advertiser similar to GEICO

U.K. RAB

Questions to ask when judging creative radio proposals

We know that creative treatment can make an enormous difference to the effectiveness of a campaign – that’s true in all media, but even truer with radio, we believe, because people are doing something else while listening. But how can you judge a creative proposal?

Here is a framework for judging creative ideas. Like all frameworks, it’s not perfect or exhaustive, but it’s worked for a lot of the marketers who attend RAB Training.

The 5 I's are...	
Involvement...	... notice, engage and be drawn in? Will the ad involve the target audience?
Identity...	... recognise and remember who the ad is from?
Impression...	... take away an appropriate impression of the brand (including after multiple hearings)?
Information...	... understand and remember the message being communicated?
Integration...	... consciously or otherwise hear the ad as part of a wider campaign (other radio ads or other media), so achieving a multiplier effect?

The RAB uses the Five I’s Framework to quantify creative effectiveness within its ongoing radio campaign measurement tool, RadioGAUGE. With over 500 commercials having been measured using this method to date, the RAB has extracted some headline radio techniques for optimising a commercial’s impact against each ‘I’ (detailed below). Whilst it is acknowledged that this doesn’t cover every creative eventuality, it should provide advertisers with a helpful checklist when evaluating radio advertising concepts/scripts/demos for their brand.

INVOLVEMENT

– Nine out of ten people are doing something else when listening to radio, so it’s important that your ad is able to engage them in what you have to say. Higher scoring ads involve the listener either through building a sense of curiosity or intrigue, or through recognisable and valued audio constructs, such as voices and/or music.

IDENTITY

– How can you ensure that the listener is instantly aware of who is speaking to them, especially when most advertisers have visual brand guidelines but very few have audio brand guidelines. The most effective ads clearly differentiate the brand through sound, using recognisable voices, music, strap lines and catchphrases. Collectively, these may add up to create an instantly recognisable scenario in the listener’s mind.

IMPRESSION

– How your ad leaves people feeling about your brand depends upon both the message and execution. As the message is derived from the brief, the key question when evaluating radio scripts/demos is whether it is being executed in a manner that will make the listener feel more positive about the brand. Better performing ads tend to be more respectful of the

listener – both straightforward and conversational in tone – or use music to set a suitable mood. To score positively on this measure, try to avoid shouting at the listener, or using jarring sound effects.

INFORMATION

– Many advertisers use radio to get important short-term tactical messages across that aren't practical to execute in other media, so it's vital to ensure that your ads are working optimally in this respect. The highest scoring ads present a single-minded message (multiple messages require multiple executions), often dramatising it through relevant sound or dialogue.

INTEGRATION

– It is extremely rare for radio to be the sole medium used within a brand campaign, so how can you best ensure that people link your radio commercial to the wider media campaign, to make sure that you benefit from the cross-media multiplier effect – especially when RadioGauge evidence highlights that 'Integration' is the most important 'I' in terms of driving overall creative effectiveness. The best performing ads use consistent audio elements from other media (especially TV) such as recognisable catchphrases or slogans, and/or voices and music. When done well, ads can stimulate a listener to subconsciously recall associated images from the related TV commercial, and effect we call 'Virtual TV', but at a fraction of the price.

Remember: Judging a script on the page can be difficult! Radio is all about atmosphere, tone of voice and mood. Ask for the idea to be brought to life in some way – acted out, a demo recording etc

Leave room for performance. Good actors will always have ideas for changes which can turn a good script into great radio – sign off the idea rather than the exact words

Economy-Proof Ads: Funny Beats Frugal in Advertising

June 21, 2012

By James Russo, Vice President, Global Consumer Insights, Nielsen

In 2011, worldwide ad spending totaled \$488 billion, \$72 billion of which was spent on U.S. television alone. Over the next decade, estimated global consumer spending will exceed \$450 trillion. With so much at stake—and many markets continuing to face tough economic realities, how do advertisers reach and resonate with an increasingly diverse, demanding and connected audience? Nielsen conducted an in-depth custom research study of advertising effectiveness of more than 4,000 ads before, during and after the "Great Recession" to find out.

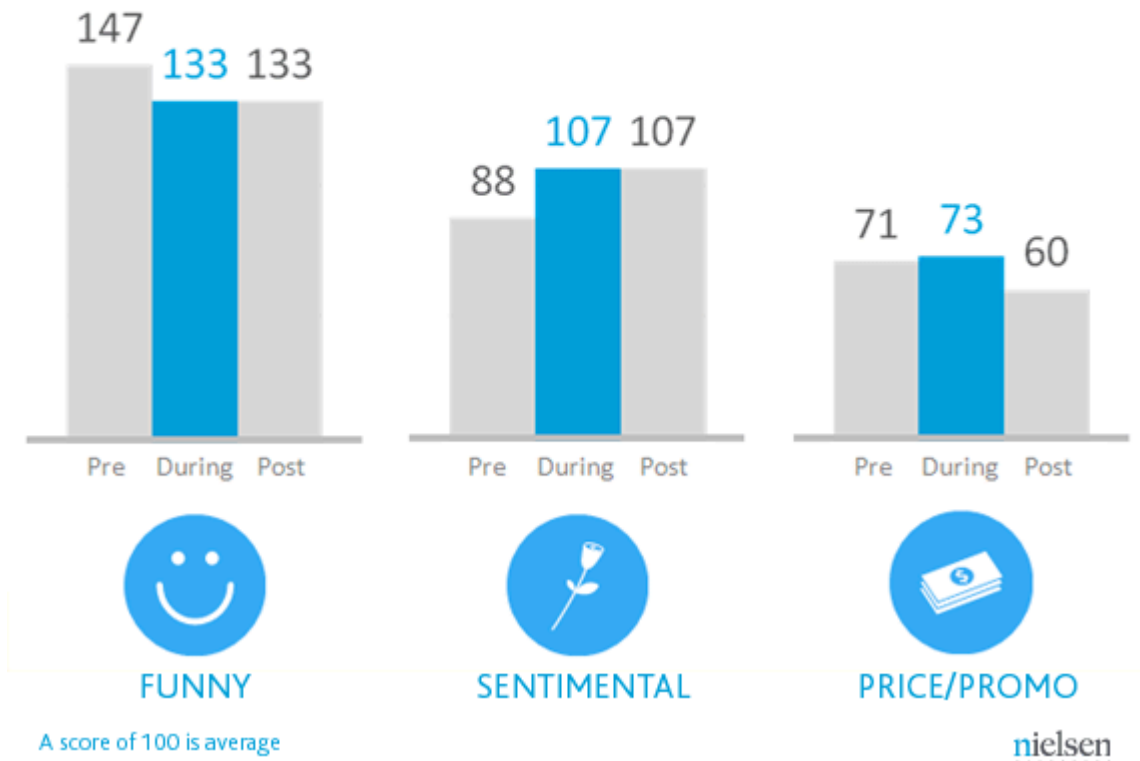
What we wanted to know: to what extent, if any, has the tumultuous economic climate and subsequent attitude shifts impacted consumer responsiveness to various creative tactics?

The Findings

- Humorous ads have consistently resonated best with viewers, regardless of the economy or year
- During the recession, there was a notable lift in effectiveness of sentimental and value-oriented ads
- Ads focused on product features and promotion/price do not resonate with viewers . . . even during tough economic times

Ad Genres & the Recession: What Resonated Before, During and After

Funny ads were 47 percent more appealing to consumers than the average ad pre-Recession, and 33 percent more appealing during and following the Recession.



The performance of narrative and sentimental ads has improved **Trends to Watch**

Advertising effectiveness has never been more closely tied to consumer confidence. The global recession shook consumer confidence. Economic cycles can now help predict ad effectiveness and consumer responsiveness to various creative strategies.

Look for the rise of the global middle class, urbanization, the new female economy and a notable shift in advertising spending to all be engines for change and the future growth of consumer spending.

Methodology:

- Nielsen looked at more than 4,000 U.S. CPG ads from 2006 to 2011 and categorized the ads by creative approach: humor, narrative, sentimental, product, promotional and value. The study then evaluated the “effectiveness” of each creative approach through different phases – pre (2006-2007) during (2008-2009) and post (2010-2011) – of the most recent recession cycle since 2006

“Pauses” are the opportunity for the brain to process the preceding information

Radio advertisers need to develop a consistent template of advertising creative from campaign to campaign- the messaging will change but the template, i.e. delivery, voice, music should remain the same. This way the advertiser is not starting from scratch with each new campaign. The listener identifies the commercial as that particular advertiser’s and then absorbs the new messaging.

Borrowed from our friends @ the U.K. RAB

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5/12 Thumbs up or down, Jelli to begin offering listener feedback on radio spots to ad buyers. Starting next week it will give listeners the opportunity to label radio commercials a "hit" or "miss." Brands that use the system will get back analytics and insights about how the audience reacted to the ad. "Advertisers can see if one version of the audio creative is more engaging, and Jelli can break that down by demographic, age, gender and region.

Creative should influence the media plan:

Planners should know what the creative is to properly plan reach/frequency goals...

If it is a new campaign without a “creative link” (similar sound, same voice, same theme, same music, same audio signature) to previous messaging/campaigns, it will likely require more media weight (GRPs) to break through. There should be a difference between the media parameters of an ad for an advertiser who has not been a consistent advertiser with consistent commercial messaging and a campaign that is debuting entirely new creative.

If the new campaign has no link via a sonic brand/identify, spokesperson or music, etc. then it will likely require more weight over fewer weeks for the messaging to break through. If there is consistency in messaging, i.e. the same spokesperson and/or music from previous campaigns then it would likely require fewer weekly GRPs for the messaging to take break through. Fewer GRPs could then be aired over a longer period of time taking advantage of “Recency”, a planning strategy resulting in continuing brand presence. The bottom line is that Creative should influence the weekly GRPs and how the campaign is flighted and right now this is not. In most cases the planners have no familiarity with the creative that will be aired.

FACT: The biggest cost of advertising is airing creative that doesn't work and it's well known within the advertising community that it's the ad itself that ultimately determines the size of the audience. In a media environment focused on eliminating ALL inefficiencies within a media plan, improving radio creative becomes more important than ever.

Creating effective radio ads is hard work and an acquired skill. Each medium has its inherent strengths and interacts with its consumers differently.

Harnessing “emotion” is critical in turning viewers, readers and listeners into consumers. **Sound is the most effective sense to generate emotion.** Many researchers believe emotions are the gatekeepers for further advertising processing. People tend to buy emotionally and then justify with logic. If the commercial is not compelling enough to touch them

emotionally all of the logical reasons to purchase will probably not make a difference.

FACT: Good creative can make 100 GRPS of a mediocre commercial perform like 150 or 200 GRPS. Poor creative can take 100 GRPs and generate the impact of 50 GRPs.

Over the past year, Katz Marketing Solutions on behalf of the radio industry has been working with advertisers by providing diagnostics regarding their creative.

Few radio commercials are ever tested prior to airing. Thus far KMS has tested 43 different radio commercials over the past 18 months. The following shows the large difference between effective commercials and poor ones. The top performing radio commercials are more than twice as impactful as the lowest performing commercials.

The Top Quintile on average generates over two and one half times the impact versus the bottom Quintile

	Likeable	Emotive	Moody	Laid Back	Soft Sell	Factual	Informative
Top Quintile	53%	39%	36%	49%	47%	62%	63%
Bottom Quintile	29%	16%	13%	14%	18%	28%	22%
% Difference	+81%	+143%	+184%	+243%	+157%	+121%	+180%

	Motivating	Differentiating	Newsy	Funny	Entertaining	Buy	Believable
Top Quintile	32%	41%	39%	59%	73%	71%	79%
Bottom Quintile	15%	16%	11%	13%	38%	27%	54%
% Difference	+117%	+152%	+262%	+368%	+94%	+159%	+46%

	Talking to Me	Share	Search	Unique	Confusing
Top Quintile	65%	56%	63%	72%	23%
Bottom Quintile	42%	26%	36%	42%	6%
% Difference	+56%	+117%	+72%	+70%	+286%

Katz/OTX has tested 43 different creative executions to date.
 To be read: The Top Quintile on average was ranked as likeable by 53% of the respondents vs the Bottom Quintile averaging 29%

On average, if the top Quintile of creative “delivered” 100 GRPS, then the bottom quintile would have delivered the equivalent of 39 GRPs across the 19 creative diagnostics.

Radio's ability to impact and engage consumer's is comparable to any medium. The listener becomes the co-author of the commercial, which engages the mind similar to the way a good book engages us. Great radio creative requires us to paint our own pictures. It can only take us in our minds to places we have personally been which is why in many ways, radio is the first fully addressable medium. When a person hears a radio commercial they are recalling emotional triggers from their past and when a person views a TV commercial they are seeing what the producer of the TV spot wants you to see. Radio let's you think and engage the mind with "thinking" leading to engagement and when you are engaged, you remember.

Below are some findings that we've culled from the OTX studies that we've determined contributes to strong radio creative:

Key Creative Findings

- "Talk to" rather than "talk at"
- Mirroring TV can result in powerful Imagery Transfer
- Same voices, same music—Consistency between TV and Radio commercials
- Mention the advertiser's name throughout the ad- not only in the beginning or the end
- "Reveal ads" are tricky. Get to the point quickly
- "Likeability" is the key to aided and unaided recall
- Commercial Tags- Don't rush. Best to slow them down
- Consistency of voice, music, messaging from campaign to campaign
- Commercial needs to have some "bite". Don't want too bland- Some polarization is ok

[SOLUTIONS]

The U.K. RAB findings via their RadioGauge research regarding effective radio creative are similar to our OTX findings:

They evaluated 400 different radio commercials. Reviewed the top 25% of performing ads. For the most part each had 5 similar characteristics:

- Established creative

- Music consistency with TV

- Presence of a sonic ID

- Consistent voice with TV