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**RADIO  
PRODUCTION  
TECHNIQUES**

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# **RADIO PRODUCTION TECHNIQUES**

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**by Jay Hoffer**

**TAB BOOKS**  

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## *Preface*

What the listener hears from his radio set either induces him to action or contributes to a lethargic state of mind—or encourages him to tune to another station! In the past, a listener had two “types” of stations to choose from. Today, AM and FM are no longer considered separate and distinct media, but one medium—radio. All of us broadcasters are in the “sound” business, and the total sound of a station must be as professional as any phase of operations if a station is to be successful.

When an advertiser is paying dollars to a radio station, he expects action. This action is realized only when the time that the client has purchased is meaningful and enticing. What good is it to construct the greatest platform for an audience when what is presented on that platform lacks the dynamism that is so necessary to move goods and services?

At the national marketing level material is usually supplied by advertising agencies that utilize top-flight talent in key radio production centers like New York, Los Angeles, or Chicago. But what about the regional advertiser and the local advertiser whose talent budget is small, if existent at all? Is he not entitled to action from his commercial? Is he to be deprived of creativity and subsequent success? The advertising message and how it is showcased is the difference between action and lethargy.

In radio, we talk about our cost per thousand, the right demographics, target audience, saturation buys, adjacencies, audience turnover, merchandising, rate packages, product separation, makegood policy, billing practices, etc. But where is the attention and concern about the message and everything that surrounds it?

We know that most broadcast operations have a limited technical staff, and the demands on it are prodigious. But compromising the “sound” is foolhardy. Even though an engineering-oriented individual cannot physically be present at every step of the way during the production of a commercial or program element, the preliminary layout and mix should be

thoroughly checked out and presumed professional from an engineering standpoint.

Creativity is what separates the men from the boys and garners rating points. Rating points reflect listener acceptance and this, in turn, attracts advertiser acceptance. That is why a creative engineer is worth his weight in gold!

This book is an attempt to carefully examine all the myriad elements that go into the production aspects of a good sounding radio station. The emphasis is on the "sound" and how to produce it at its various stages of development. No weak link can be tolerated at a well produced radio station.

Jay Hoffer  
KRAK Radio  
Sacramento

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## *Part A - Programing Content*



## *Chapter I The Air Personality*

The "personality" or announcer is the responsible steward of the radio station every moment he is on the air. He is carrying the station and is responsible for its sound during his air shift. No matter how little or how much he is permitted to say, his time on the air is important.

Some argue that the music is the guts of the air sound and that the air personality is secondary. Others contend that the air personality makes the station come alive. And still others take a stand somewhere between those two positions.

Depending upon the degree of professionalism and experience, every air personality strives to make the time that he spends on the air the most beneficial to him and his station. Ego is not in short supply when it comes to talent and everyone wants to make a mark for himself in the field in as short a time as possible. Few make the "big time," but there are always those who set their sights on it. That's good. Nobody really wants an unambitious person on the staff. The harder a person tries as they sharpen their tools, the more the station benefits from the whole endeavor.

Even though the Drake format has probably castrated more potential talent in our business than anything else, according to Charlie Tuna, a leading air personality in the Los Angeles-San Diego area, the current generation wants truth and involvement, not "time and temp." That "truth" may be in the form of a \$300,000 a year salary for WOR's John Gambling in the New York area. His stock in trade is informality, friendliness, and wit, and he wants the world to know that radio is fun and that he enjoys being in it. "The day a man in my business can sit back and say he's found his niche and doesn't need to change," Gambling asserts, "is the day he's out of business."

### **PRODUCTION EXPERTISE**

During his air shift, it is up to the man on the board to integrate all the elements that the listener hears. This includes

the commercials, music playlist, station promos, PSAs, jingles, time and weather announcements, school closure announcements (or whatever else the station does in that direction), newscasts (and in some instances preparing and airing them himself), sportscasts (and again in some instances preparing and airing them himself), bringing in a remote broadcast, and handling contests on the air. In addition to this (although not heard by the listener), there are the program log entries to keep up to the minute and possibly transmitter meters to read and enter the results on the operating log. This makes for one very busy man!

Hal Fisher, in his book, **How to Become A Radio Disc Jockey** (TAB Books) succinctly puts it this way: "Consistency in quality broadcast production, from sign-on to sign-off, day after day, may well be likened to what is known as quality control as practiced, for example, in the food and drug industries. Laxity in broadcast production, as well as in the manufacture of tangible goods, cannot help but result in mediocre, second-rate products." The importance of consistency is reinforced by John Scheuer, Jr., director of radio programming for the Triangle Stations, as evidenced by his writings in **Ted Randal Enterprises Tip Sheet** (6/2/72): "Your production and format must be consistent 24 hours or however long you're on the air each day. Production must be perfect."

While he is on the air, the personality should not be involved with the telephone unless a phone-in contest is in operation or a local news emergency arises. This distraction interferes with preplanning upcoming events and should be discouraged completely. Also, the control room itself should be kept as free of traffic flow as possible. Frequently, there are distracting last-minute copy changes or additions and deletions affecting the log and sometimes last-minute instructions from the program director. These are unavoidable; but when they do occur, the time involved in the control room to take care of them should be held to a minimum. The control room is not a visitation area and, apart from a planned tour by a local group, should be kept free for that professional air performance. All kinds of distractions tend to throw an air personality's timing and pacing off completely. This is somehow reflected on the air and, in the long run, the station suffers if the situation is not remedied.

The sum total of every element that we discuss in this book will completely lose its potency if the air personality does a poor job in molding everything into a cohesive sound that

attracts, and then holds, that important commodity known as the listener.

How many times do we hear a record "wow"? This happens when a record is not cued properly; consequently, we hear that slow, draggy sound until the record comes up to proper speed. Technically speaking, the startup speed of the turntable is the determinant. If the turntable starts fast, a quarter of a turn from the beginning of the music on a 33 1/3 rpm record allows enough time for the record to achieve operating speed before the music begins. The cue volume level should be up high enough to hear unusually quiet intros. For 45 rpm records, a half turn cue is needed.

Ever hear the rattling of papers on the air? The announcer may be flipping the pages of the program log to locate his place while the mike is open. He may be looking for a live commercial tag in a looseleaf book close to the microphone. Of course, the sound of the flipping pages is picked up. He may be gathering news copy for an upcoming newscast and is organizing the papers while doing something else.

Or the noise of tape cartridges banging around while the mike is open? A cartridge may not be functioning properly, so the microphone picks up the noise when another cartridge is put into another machine. Poor anticipation of the next event on the program log can create last-minute confusion, because the disc jockey must stall for time—usually with the mike open—while he locates a "cart" or a piece of copy.

Or a low voice level when a live announcer is doing a commercial over a jingle bed? The announcer has not sufficiently brought down the jingle to the correct background level; the resultant conflict is a garbled commercial. If the announcer is not familiar with a particular commercial and is apprehensive as to how it will sound on the air, he should play the entire event on the cue system and get the feel of what he has to say over the musical bed. Once he hears it, he can take note of how far he has to turn the pot down in order to accomplish a clean "talkover." He can also pace himself so that he does not either have to rush through the message or drag it out to take it up to time when the recorded part of the commercial picks up again. Some air personalities prefer the use of a headset when it comes to a "talkover" so that they can hear both elements concurrently and adjust the volume level accordingly.

Or the dj who starts to talk before a commercial has ended? If the last words to a produced spot are not clearly indicated on the cart label or are not carefully anticipated by the announcer, he is liable to start speaking right over the tail part of a commercial. Sometimes there is much stress involved in

CONTINUITY  
 T TAPE  
 LV LIVE  
 ET ELECTRICAL TRANSCRIPTION  
 CONTINUITY TYPE  
 CC COMMERCIAL CONTINUITY  
 CA COMMERCIAL ANNOUNCEMENT  
 PSA PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT  
 MRA MECHANICAL REPRODUCTION ANNOUNCEMENT  
 SS SUSTAINING  
 \* ANNOUNCED AS LOGGED  
 PROGRAM SOURCE  
 L LOCAL  
 REC RECORDED

**PROGRAM LOG**  
**HERCULES BROADCASTING COMPANY**  
**RADIO STATION KRAK**  
 SACRAMENTO, CALIF.

PROGRAM TYPE  
 A - AMUSEMENT  
 E - ENTERTAINMENT  
 N - NEWS  
 PA - PUBLIC AFFAIRS  
 R - RELIGIOUS  
 I - INSTRUCTIONAL  
 S - SPORTS  
 ED - EDITORIAL  
 POL - POLITICAL  
 ED - EDUCATIONAL

PAGE 11  
 DATE 02 01 73

TIME 100000AM  
 DAY THURSDAY  
 TIME ON TIME OFF

ANNOUNCER OR OPERATOR

TIME	PROGRAM TITLE / SPONSOR	CONTINUITY	CONT TYPE	PROGRAM SOURCE	PROGRAM TYPE	LENGTH		PROGRAM		STATION ID	P
						MIN	SEC	TIME ON	TIME OFF		
0000	WALT SHAW	T	SS	REC	E			0000	5959		*
0500	KRAK TAG ARDEN FURNITURE VETERANS ADMIN.	T	CA			60					*
1000	SAFEWAY KRAK TAG LIPTON TEA SERVICE 114 *KRAKERBARREL D*CON	T	CA			30					*
1500	DETOUR IN KRAK TAG JIMMY DEAN MEAT COMPANY	T	SS			60					*
		T	CA			30					*

2000	THE FASHIONABLE FLEA KRAK TAG DROPP IN 'WEATHER'	T T LV	CA SS SS		30				*
2900	STATION BREAK AND IDENT SOCIAL WELFARE	LV T	PSA		20		3000	5959	*
3000	WALT SHAW KRAK CORRAL			REC E REC E					*
3500	KRAK TAG	T	SS						*
4000	CREDMULSTON KRAK TAG A.C. PRODUCTIONS SERVICE 114 'KRAK COLUMN' NUCORA 'BEST FOODS'	T T T T T	CA SS CA CA CA		60 30 60				*
4500	FEDERAL PROJECTS INC. 'GREENF AIR' HOSTESS CAKES	T T	CA CA		30 10				*
5000	KRAK TAG KRAFT 'CASINO CHEESE' DROPP IN 'NEWS TEASE'	T T LV	SS CA SS		60				*
5430	KRAK NEWS NEWSCASTER			L N L N			5430 5430	5930 5930	*

Typical program log showing the many elements that an air personality must integrate into a program.

# BMI

## INSTRUCTIONS

Completed daily logs should show all programs, sign-on to sign-off.  
 Typed logs are preferred but legibly printed logs will be accepted.

**MUSICAL SELECTIONS:** List title of every selection played (live or recorded) together with name(s) of writer-composer; if recorded music give name(s) of writer-composer as shown on label in parentheses under each title.

**Albums:** List every selection played, do not give name or side of album, or number of cut.

**Themes:** for song titles, used as themes, give in addition in "theme" column; whether used to open or close, or both.

**NETWORK PROGRAMS:** List program name and indicate in "net" column A (for ABC) C (for CBS) M (for MBS) N (for NBC)

**PACKAGE & TRANSCRIBED PROGRAMS:** Give name of program, number of show

DO NOT LIST: Jingles, commercials, spot announcements.

CALL LETTERS: .....  
 DATE: .....  
 Time: .....

Time	Program Name	Net	Song Title	THEME		Name(s) of Writer-Composer
				Open	Close	

One of the many duties of the air personality is the periodic BMI logging of all the music he plays.

running a "tight board." Some formats do not allow even a fragment of dead air. We must appreciate the fact that there are some agency-produced commercials that are not that tight, that real dramatic pauses are used for effect. Coming in on them destroys the whole impact of the message. Stepping on somebody else's lines is really not excusable. Preparation and anticipation have to be the watchwords here. Again, auditioning the commercial on the cue system if it is a new element can avert problems. The air personality should be familiar with the wares that he has to offer his listening audience.

Or the playing of a wrong cart to intro the news? During the rush of all the things going on in the control room, the announcer may reach for the wrong cart or punch the wrong button to a cart machine.

Or the announcer who talks to someone in the control room who is off mike? Only one part of the conversation is heard over the air as a result. It is usually done in so impromptu a fashion that there is hardly time for microphone balance. The listener stretches to hear, but only a mumble comes through as part of the "bit."

Or the out-of-breath announcer who just got back from the restroom or the coffee machine? An explanation that there is considerable distance to go to take care of bodily needs and appetites is hardly of any concern or interest to the general public. It has all the earmarks of "inside material" that has limited appeal.

Or the announcer doing a seemingly endless ad lib commercial from a fact sheet? Obviously, the announcer has not sufficiently prepared himself as to the tack he will take in approaching the commercial. As a result, he backs himself into a corner. He can also become so involved in the delivery and effect that he becomes totally oblivious to the clock on the wall and rambles on beyond the designated time for that commercial.

Or the berating of the engineering department right on the air when there is technical difficulty? An immature announcer is apt to blame his tools for anything that interferes with the smooth flow of his show. The listener hasn't the faintest idea what he is talking about, but senses that something is wrong. Rather than simply apologizing that things mechanical are subject to breaking down, the malfunction gets blown up way out of proportion and disharmony among units at the station is immediately draped in front of the public.

Or the inane remarks that border on hackney to intro or extro musical selections? Loyal listeners tend to forgive many shortcomings of a station, but somehow get lulled into

lethargy when the air personality uses the same kinds of crutches each time he makes remarks about musical selections. Again, advance preparation tends to eliminate the trite and unimaginative.

Some announcers have a pontifical attitude that leads them to believe that they must comment on any and everything. Some air people feel that they have the right, and that their listeners expect it of them, to contribute their own personal thinking on almost anything occurring in their own community and in the world in general. They fail to admit their shortcomings on competence in so many diverse areas or fail to understand that, even if management permits them this privilege on the air, they don't have to talk all the time and prove themselves. The most annoying part of this ego trip is the supercilious attitude that sometimes becomes too evident.

Other disc jockeys seem to delight in telling "inside stories" that only a handful of people can understand and appreciate. They fail to realize that, no matter the field, an inside story is of import only to those who possess the background to understand and appreciate the story. Behind-the-scene stuff rightfully belongs behind the scene. Taking that valuable time on the air to mention an inside story is a pure waste and a bore—and a dial twister!

Another bad habit is the tendency to work too close to the mike or off mike. Some announcers feel that by running the mike gain real high, no matter what direction they may be facing in the control room, the world will hear them. Bad microphone technique allows all sorts of things, from popping certain letters to hollow soundings, to be picked up. Constant airchecks will verify any engineering complaint on this score.

Sometimes we hear the clicking of the mike key preceding a live voice. Some announcers have a tendency to get heavy-handed every once in a while and sloppiness takes over. The clicks become very annoying to the listener and convey poor quality image immediately.

Just plain dead air signifies a lack of anticipation of the next event. Most radio today is proud of its tight production, which establishes a flow that contributes to excitement and enthusiasm. Anything that breaks that chain throws everything off. All announcers should pay careful attention to this credo of today's broadcasting.

It is the responsibility of the program director to hover over his air staff and see to it that the aforementioned examples of poor on-air production techniques are corrected. If the conditions persist to any serious degree, then personnel replacements must be considered. The use of frequent air-

checks, listened to privately or in the company of the program director, assist in pointing out errors of commission. No one ever reaches that degree of proficiency that he cannot learn from an aircheck.

The basic mechanics must be mastered before any on-air creativity can be smoothly injected. Unless the station is completely automated, the air personality packages all the "goodies" that the station has to offer the listener during a specific period of time.

Also very important is the self-discipline that develops good work habits, in addition to the good work attitude. The air personality should arrive in sufficient time before the beginning of his show to prepare himself and whatever elements he will physically need to perform. In some cases, he may be responsible for his own music ...pulling it in advance and returning it to the files upon the completion of his shift. There are last-minute details to check, such as memos in his mailbox from the program director or other relevant parties. There may be fan mail that he would like to have one of the secretaries answer for him. Every day should be a new challenge and he should allow adequate time for preparation to meet this challenge.

#### **MOTIVATION AND DEVELOPMENT**

Everything that the air personality does on the air is important. People do not necessarily hear everything, but they do listen. It's a one-to-one relationship, and it takes years for an air personality to develop.

Through preparation and a keen observation of what is transpiring in a particular locale, the air personality becomes a knowledgeable individual and a concerned individual. Personalities should know the community better than the mayor. This awareness is developed by reading the local newspapers, observing the billboards, attending various local functions, watching local television, listening to competitive radio stations, and simply talking to average people. Finding out what concerns people, what "bugs" them and what motivates them, is very rich food for thought for the air personality.

In a cogent interview between Claude Hall, Radio-TV editor of **Billboard**, and programmer Bill Stewart, **Billboard** (2/3/73), it was brought out that one of the greatest attributes a disc jockey has is being aware of what's happening in the world. "The most important thing that makes or breaks a disc jockey is his ability to be topical. You have to be able to finger in your mind, what people are talking about...talking about that very day. If there was a 12-car collision on the

freeway and that's what people are going to be talking about on the way to the office or on the way to the factory, or later, then that's what the air personality should be talking about. You should be aiming your show at the people who're waiting at the bus stop."

An awareness of the characteristics of the audience that the station is trying to reach, as well as the time of day in which the air personality works, is extremely helpful in suggesting how a personality should present and showcase his shift. The program director can be of inestimable value where an air personality does not sufficiently understand what Sales calls its "target audience." If, for example, a station has constructed its format to appeal largely to adults in the 18 to 49 age bracket, this fact must be firmly impressed on the air personalities. Rating services break down demographics and the program director should show his air staff how the station is performing within the framework of the target audience sought for the station. Previous rating books should be studied in an effort to establish any form of a trend or pattern. Due to the lack of any other professionally acceptable means of conveyance, these rating services should motivate every air personality to zero in on the desired audience.

Within whatever guidelines are laid down, of course, the air personality should not be afraid to try things that have



Here, the air personality is using good microphone technique. The distance between mike and mouth should be no more than a few inches, with no head turning while "on mike."

never been done before. He should get on top of fads. He must always have his own antenna up to acquire a good "reading" of the current scene as it pertains to his listening audience. A current fad suitable for a disc jockey's participation is the walkathon. An air personality can commit himself to a particular cause and ask his audience to sponsor him at so much per mile. It can be a promotional device, but also a method of raising funds for a worthwhile cause that might otherwise have been generally overlooked. The air personality promotes his intention on the air and solicits money pledges from his listeners. The excitement builds as people call in and write, pledging their contributions. Then, the walkathon takes place and on-the-spot checkers call the station and report the whereabouts of the air personality as he progresses through the walkathon. After the hike, the personality returns to his air perch and describes the walkathon, and encourages those who made pledges to come forward and make good their commitment. It's all in good fun and so beneficial as a fund-raising device.

Even where the format is so tight that just a few seconds are available to say something, there are unlimited variations of musical intros and extros and localisms. Ingenuity is the key, and it offers tremendous rewards for those capable of becoming involved to this stage. An announcer's excitement and enthusiasm can be very contagious no matter how little palaver is allowed. The overriding influence of that ephemeral thing that we call "personality" is all-pervasive and makes itself felt in any radio format going today—or tomorrow. If the air personality is not living with it, then he does not know where he is going.

An interesting aside comes from Ric Libby, operations manager of KENR, Houston, Texas. He contends that a program director should not be on the air. Regardless of the size of the operation, money must be found to afford a program director who does not pull an air shift. His contention is that the program director does not have sufficient time to be both a PD and an air personality. When he is on the air, the PD can't "hear" the station. Actually, he works out to be the weakest link and the jocks just try to be a little better than he. The PD should be working on developing his air staff, as well as the other elements that go into building a good, professional sounding radio station. The PD should also be free to go out hopscotching around the country to acquire new talent. Hearing a man on the spot is so much better than receiving a prepared and carefully edited audition tape when the search is on for personnel.

Motivation and professional development at times does hit a plateau and boredom can readily set in. **The Wall Street Journal** (8/21/72) reports that "companies are turning to job enrichment partly to combat the growing dissatisfaction with boring and unrewarding jobs at all levels. There have always been boring jobs; but, in the past, people tended to accept the mind-numbing work as just an unhappy fact of life. But now the worry about security gives way to the drive for meaningful work, especially among the young. And just because a guy has the title of vice president doesn't mean he has an interesting job or that he is being fully utilized."

Both the PD and the air personality have to ward off that negativism which can readily translate itself into boredom and even apathy. Doing things by rote and settling down into a niche is detrimental to a business that obtains succor through its creative juices. And, according to **Psychology Today** (7/72), "Creative individuals retain qualities of freshness, spontaneity, and joy, as well as a certain lack of cautious reality-testing. They are in that sense childlike. But this is not regression; it is progression with courage. They bring their childhood along instead of leaving it behind."

When the PD lets up on the reins insofar as the format is concerned, he does it with great trepidation since there are many variables. For example, the morning man may be permitted (and even encouraged) to be "funny." The result could be disastrous since management can't order a man to be funny. Mechanical contrivances or shticks (bits of material) that fall short on the air are detrimental. Some air personalities have a way of delivering humor, while others do not. And this is no way a condemnation of the latter group's capacity to function as professional broadcasters ...comedy is not their "bag." If done at all, Tom Adams of WIOD, Miami, Florida, recommends that "the air personality be the butt of as much humor as possible." In the last analysis, motivation and development is a very personal thing, yet something to be worked on with the PD to insure the best on-air production job possible.

## *Chapter II Music*

No matter what sound a commercial radio station is playing, if it is playing music at all, the station either receives its records free of charge, purchases at a special price from the manufacturer or a commercial record source, or buys the product at a local retail record outlet. If the station is purchasing, it can afford to be selective in its needs; if it is the recipient of gratis service, there is a deluge of records to sort through. Regardless of the position in which the station finds itself, it takes time to select those records which eventually find their way to what the station constitutes as a playlist.

The music director is sensitive to what is happening in his market through contacts with local record outlets, mail, and telephone requests. He is also alert to the weekly charts in the trade publications as well as the record newsletters. Above all, the music director is always hearing the sound. He listens to ascertain whether or not the selection will fit into his station's variant of programming. Each musical selection is critical to the format. A good programmer knows that any irritant will drive the listener away and that it takes considerable time to regain his attention.

Although the program director would be the final arbiter where a decision must be made on whether or not to incorporate a particular selection on a station's playlist, the music director understands the philosophy of the station as to what it wants to accomplish. He must be cautious not to be caught in a phony "hype" by an ingenuous record promoter and weigh the merits of each piece for his station. In this day and age of "crossover," it sometimes compounds the selective process problems of the music director. He is aware, for example, that Country records have been picked up by MOR, Top 40, and even Good Music stations. He has to know to what degree he can proceed with such product selection without diverting the musical image for which the station is known. He is responsible for the musical sound of the station and has to appreciate what is happening in the musical field at large. Some, by nature, are conservative, while others are totally

experimental. Some are followers and some are leaders. Some have a fetish for being the first in a general area to "break" a tune, while others are content to first see how that tune is faring at other operations.

Frequent communication between the program director and the music director should help in establishing almost week-to-week guidelines in a very fluid situation. Singers, musicians, arrangers, and producers are always seeking a different means of musical expression. This volatility necessitates constant evaluation and attention to the station sound. Every station programing music can almost soften or harden its particular fare at will. And since this can be accomplished so effortlessly, a constant liaison must be established between the music director and the program director.

### SCREENING RECORDS

Apart from the physical content, which includes the song, the arrangement, and the delivery, the astute music director is also listening for quality.

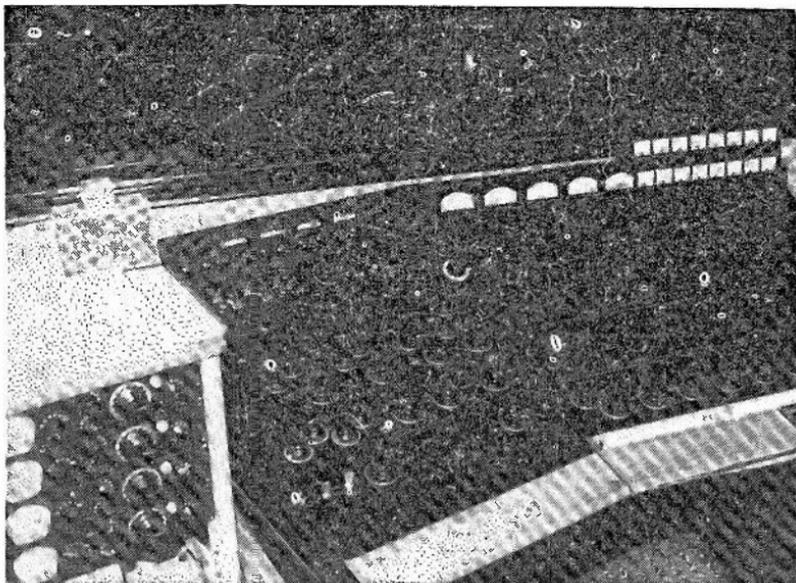
Was the record cut "hot"?

Is there an inbalance between voice and music?

Are there any discernible surface noises or scratches?

We assume, of course, that the music director has first-class playback gear with which to do his screening. How can he pick up the various nuances in each new record if his speaker is popping or if his cartridge needle is not clean or is bent out of shape or if the pickup arm is not properly adjusted? Any fault noticeable at this point is greatly magnified on the air. Then, it is not only too late, but costly in many tangible and intangible ways. The photos on the next two pages illustrate the type and quality of equipment used by recording studios.

In whatever physical area the music director listens to records, it should be planned and laid out with the assistance of a good sound engineer. That area should be kept private and away from all distracting sounds, be it an in-station air monitor or other paraphernalia. Leaks and rebounds from any source defeat the purpose of proficient screening. And, of course, there should be a professional playback system complete with the best components that the station can afford. Since it is a listening room, the music director is in charge of it and he must make sure that others do not indiscriminately use it. This will insure that the gear will not be abused and subjected to inordinate usage. In fact, it is not extreme to install a



Today, broadcasters are learning two important points from the recording studios: the importance of top quality sound and the relevance of state-of-the-art audio consoles. Shown is the control console in Studio A at Columbia Records, San Francisco.

lock on the door to maintain privacy and protection of the equipment and the records. With the solid-state equipment available today, forgetting to shut off the system will not cause it undue harm. A periodic engineering check will insure the optimum playback quality with a minimum of major servicing.

If the music director is convinced that a particular record should be included on the station's playlist but is not impressed with the particular cutting that he has received, there should not be any compromise with the disc. Another copy of it should be obtained immediately. True, it is tempting to go on a record if there is a time element that gives the station an edge, but secondary quality on the air will sublimate any time advantage that a station may accrue by being first to "break" a record.

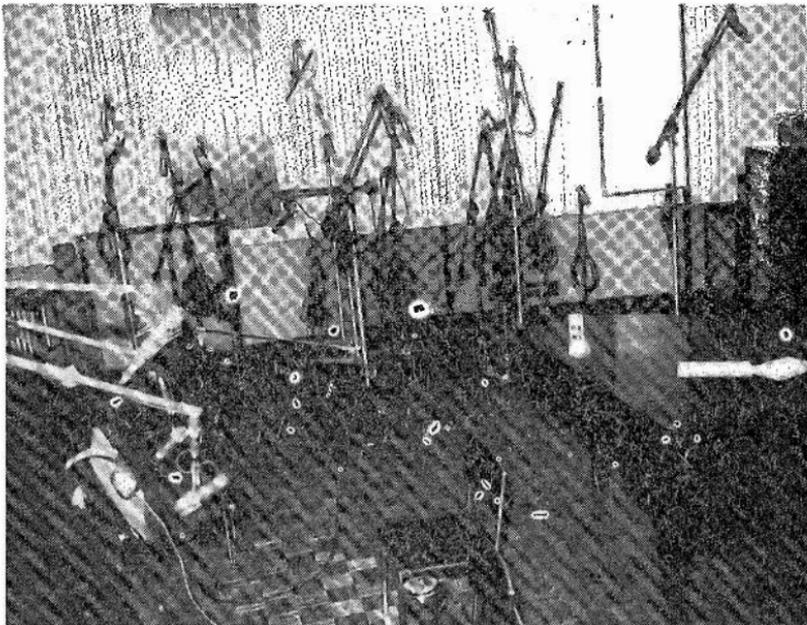
It is also important to monitor the quality of music reproduction on the air, especially where the actual discs are used. Many stations transfer a major portion of the records on their playlist to cartridges. But there are many who still use the discs or play some portion of their musical fare from discs. In this phase of quality control, the music director must depend on the ears of others. The disc jockey on the air must be made aware of the quality control that the music director is

earnestly seeking to establish and maintain. The music director cannot listen for all the hours that the station is on the air; therefore, he desperately needs the assistance of the air personalities. This imperative need should be emphasized at program meetings. It should be made clear that if a jock has any qualms about playing a particular disc because of dubious quality, that record should be mustered out and replaced. Many times, the problem is caused by record cueing. The first evidence of its diminishing quality is the surface noise at the beginning of the disc. Some jocks are heavy-handed at cueing, while others seem to have a little more respect for the disc. Either way, replacement copies are urgently needed.

Good liaison with record promoters will establish the fact that the station is quality conscious and that the music director will not be satisfied with a shoddy product. A reputation of this sort in the industry is one to be sought and tenaciously coveted.

### **TRANSFERRING RECORDS TO CARTRIDGES**

If the station transfers all or a portion of its music to cartridges, after the screening process is completed, a mechanical chore must be considered. Though it is mechanical and presumed routine, the care and diligence



Studio A at Columbia Records, San Francisco. Notice the variety of microphones ready for another recording session.

exercised in auditioning many records is lost if the quality that was originally heard in the listening or auditioning room is not faithfully transferred to tape.

This task of transfer is usually performed in the production room. Here, too, the music director should have the assurance of a good sound engineer that all of the equipment in the production room to be utilized in the transfer is in alignment with the equipment in master control. Basically, this entails checking out the cartridge machines and the turntables to be employed. Being recorded at one speed and then being played at a slightly faster or slower speed does not help the quality standard that a station should always be seeking.

What about the stylus on the turntable? Will it chew into the record and pick up sounds that were not heard before? All styli in the production area should be checked periodically.

What about the cartridges? Have they been properly erased so that no previously recorded sounds will come through? It is a recommended safeguard to separate those cartridges reserved for music from those that are used for general production: commercials, promotions, PSAs, etc. The lifetime of the music cartridges will be longer since they will not be subject to as much turnover as those delegated for commercial and other uses. A good quality bulk eraser is needed to provide a clean blank cartridge.

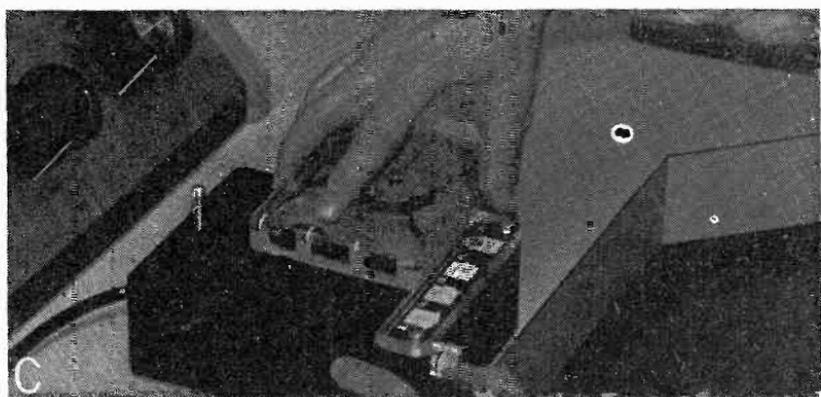
Whoever is performing the physical transfer should make sure that the records are wiped clean with a soft cloth before the actual project begins.

Once everything is in readiness, a few seconds play from each record will establish the level in each case; then, the actual transfer process can take place. Tight cues will insure tight production on the board when the disc jockeys play the music carts in master control. After the cartridge has been recorded, it should be played back to make sure that the transfer has been properly accomplished.

Next comes the labeling, which should include title, artist, total time, and, if a vocal, how much intro time before voice. Some stations may use other markings on the label according to program format, and this may include a pick hit for one of the jocks, an extra on the playlist, or a number on the playlist. Whatever information is needed to stay in the format should be added at this point. Some stations put jingles right on to the beginning of the cartridge in order to prevent any memory lapses on the part of the air personality for call letter reminders.

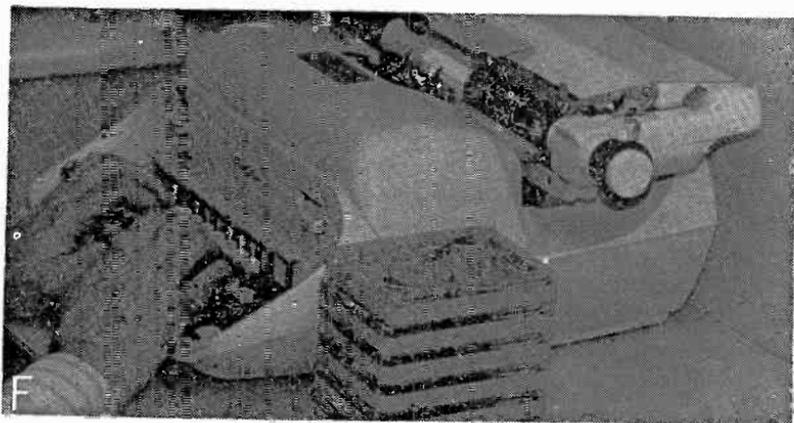
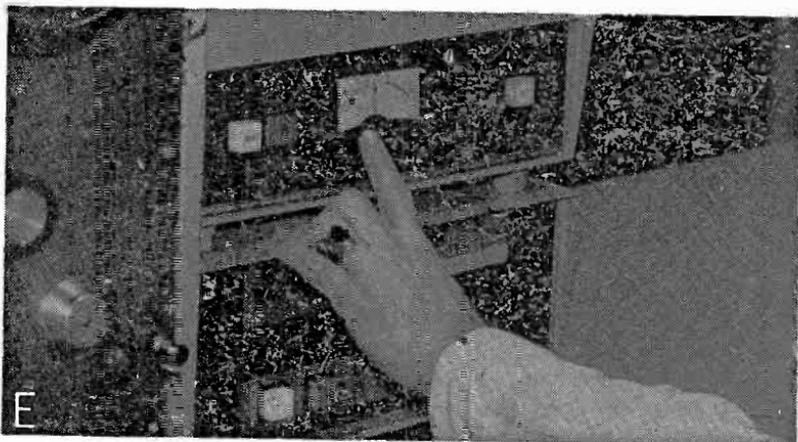
To review, the transfer steps are (see photos):

1. Clean the records with a soft cloth before starting.





- A. Clean the record with a soft cloth before transferring to a cartridge.
- B. Inspect the cart to be used.
- C. Erase the cart.
- D. Press the start and stop buttons to take up the slack.
- E. Set the recording level.
- F. Type the label.



2. Check the stylus on the turntable. Use any shape but elliptical, since on a back-cue it chews up the record and a loud hissing noise results.

3. Physically inspect the cart to be used. See that it is mechanically suitable. Check for tape wear, the condition of the pressure pad, and the position of the corner post.

4. Erase the cart with a professional bulk eraser.

5. Place the cart in the cartridge record unit. Press the start and stop buttons several times to take up the slack in the tape. Press the set button.

6. Set the recording level. Let the record play for a little bit. Never permit the needle to peak past red (100 percent recording level). Otherwise, distortion will occur and the music can leak through to the cue track, which will trigger the cue stop mechanism and cause false stops. In automation, extraneous sound on the cue track can get into the automatic logging track and result in erroneous readouts.

7. Press the start button and start the turntable. Make sure you have a tight cue on the music after having set the recording level.

8. After the complete transfer has been accomplished, listen to the completed unit.

9. Type out the composite labeling according to the standard procedure of the station.

10. Release for airplay.

Once the music cartridges are ready to hit the air, it is up to the disc jockey to catch any defective carts. Sometimes, the tape gets wrapped around the post and the playback machine proceeds to chew up the tape. Sometimes, the pad in the cart gets pushed out of line and the tape jams. Whatever the problem, if a cart is unplayable, it must be removed immediately and set aside. That musical selection, of course, must be rerecorded.

Cartridges should be constantly checked to make sure that they are not on the verge of petering out. If the tape looks like it is getting unduly worn, it is best to have it set aside and have it rewound. Carts also take a beating in the hands of air personnel. They get tossed about and sometimes loosen and even break. This is a reality that has to be reckoned with, inasmuch as no two people have the same exact tolerance and appreciation of equipment and gear. Unintentionally, things happen and have to be set right again.

### **SELECTION OF JINGLES**

A number of production firms produce jingles for stations. Prices vary in direct proportion to quality delivered,

SERIES 43 - "TEXTURE"

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1. <u>HORN AND HARD ART</u><br>(Talk over pad) - WABC - New York        | 15. <u>WEATHER #2</u><br>New York - Weather                |
| 2. <u>TRANS-MIDDLE</u><br>WABC - 77                                     | 16. <u>PLINKY</u><br>WABC - Super Weekend                  |
| 3. <u>VELVET SAND</u><br>77 WABC  | 17. <u>SPACED</u><br>Instrumental Moog Sig -<br>Dan Ingram |
| 4. <u>PASTEL</u><br>WABC - New York                                     | 18. <u>TISSUE</u><br>WABC                                  |
| 5. <u>FLINGS</u><br>WABC - WABC<br>(Double Logo - Hard to Soft)         | 19. <u>IMPULSE</u><br>77 - WABC                            |
| 6. <u>LADIES DELIGHT</u><br>WABC - WABC<br>(Double Logo - Soft to Hard) | 20. <u>SANDY</u><br>WABC                                   |
| 7. <u>PLAIDS</u><br>WABC - Super Gold                                   | 21. <u>GLASSY</u><br>WABC                                  |
| 8. <u>KARAT</u><br>WABC - Super Gold                                    | 22. <u>CUT 22</u><br>WABC                                  |
| 9. <u>MOONSCAPE</u><br>WABC - Most Music                                | 23. <u>OFF SPRING</u><br>WABC                              |
| 10. <u>GRAVEL</u><br>WABC - Most Music                                  | 24. <u>TWEEDBACK</u><br>WABC                               |
| 11. <u>IVORY</u><br>WABC - Most Music                                   | 25. <u>SOFT TOUCH</u><br>77 WABC                           |
| 12. <u>GALICO</u><br>WABC - Most Music                                  | 26. <u>MADRAS</u><br>WABC                                  |
| 13. <u>WHAT ELSE</u><br>Instrumental Moog Radio                         | 27. <u>SPECTRUM</u><br>Most Music WABC                     |
| 14. <u>WEATHER #1</u><br>New York - Weather                             | 28. <u>BURLAP</u><br>WABC Rocks On                         |
|   | 29. <u>BLACK SHEEP</u><br>WABC Most Music                  |

List of cuts for the Series 43-"Texture" jingles used by WABC, New York.  
(Courtesy PAMS, Inc.)

musically as well as technically. In arriving at the cost of a package, the following are the governing factors:

1. Amount of product to be purchased. How many cuts are to be done? Are lyrics to be superimposed on existing musical beds?

2. Is it a custom package?

3. Is a group station buy involved?

4. The station's market size.

5. Frequency of past purchases.

6. Method of payment.

An exhibit of Series 43 "Texture" jingles (see list) would have an average cost between \$3500 to \$5000, depending on the market size (other than a Chicago or a Los Angeles or a

TITLE SERIES 43 #5 "FLINGS"

ARRANGER PIPEA 3|1|1|72

TRAP

Handwritten musical score for a band. The score is written on ten staves, each with a different instrument label on the left. The notation includes notes, rests, and various performance markings.

- TRAP:** The first staff, featuring a complex rhythmic pattern with notes and rests. A bracket labeled "TRAP" is placed above the staff.
- STUNGS:** The second staff, containing rhythmic notation with notes and rests.
- GIUTAN:** The third staff, featuring rhythmic notation with notes and rests.
- BASS:** The fourth staff, containing rhythmic notation with notes and rests.
- DILIMS:** The fifth staff, featuring rhythmic notation with notes and rests.
- TAMB(OR):** The sixth staff, containing rhythmic notation with notes and rests.
- ALTO SAKUL (2):** The seventh staff, featuring rhythmic notation with notes and rests.

Additional markings include "ARRANGER PIPEA 3|1|1|72" at the top right, "TRAP" above the first staff, and "FURTHER" above the fourth staff. The score concludes with a final measure on the seventh staff marked "A.T. AD. U.S.".



New York). In the particular package illustrated, WABC, New York, was used as the pilot station for a rock sound. It normally takes about 60 days to concoct a package. Once the pilot is completed, the beds are retained for lyrics to be superimposed by each subsequent station buyer. (See sheet-music spread.)

Another method of negotiation is the flat-rate technique approximating \$150 per cut for a medium-sized market, or still another way is a four-hour session costing \$2000 with a minimum guarantee of 15 cuts. This involves a vocal group of seven voices provided the jingle packager.

For those who have expansive budgets and seek a super-custom job, there is the very competent Hugh Heller organization. Few broadcasters can afford this luxury, though.

The principal function of jingles is station identification. Be they subdued, background reminders, or blaring foreground insistors, the function is to get across call letters and frequency at every opportunity.

Bill Meeks, president of PAMS, Dallas, Texas, says: "Let's audiolize just as the television people visualize. We must think identification. Why not create a specific sound for a specific station?" And Jim Long, general manager, TM Productions, Dallas, adds: "According to Richard Roslow of PULSE, the number of people who don't know what station they're listening to is between 30 and 40 percent and this is after the roster has been shown to them. Radio stations suffer from an identification crisis."

Usually, the selection of a jingle package is the decision of the program director. He is the one who has budgeted for the item and he is the one who knows how and where to integrate the finished package into the station's sound. He is also the one to analyze what is currently being heard throughout the station's market area.

Whether the package be a *capella* or music and voice, or a combination of the two, the program director, in the audition stage, should "hear" how it will sound within the total blend of what the station is programming. He is the one to decide which jingle package, within the budget that he can afford, will be most compatible for his station.

Once a production firm is decided upon, it will be up to the program director to prepare a lead sheet of lyrics that he wants to go over the prepared music beds or, in the case of a *cappellas*, the lyrics for the written melody lines. The lyrics should contribute to the "feel" of the station. In its brevity, each jingle has to tell a special story. The entire package

should be laid out to account for as many cuts as are necessary to accomplish a specific mission.

The typical concern of most stations is identification with the following:

1. Legal station identification, which means the call letters immediately followed by the community of license designation. It is not legally acceptable to separate—in any way—the call letters from its designated market. It has to be WABC, New York, and not WABC, covering all of New York.

2. Number one on the playlist.

3. Number two on the playlist.

4. Fast riser on the playlist.

5. Disc jockey pick hits. In some instances, the names of the disc jockeys are incorporated directly into the lyrics. This, of course, could be potentially expensive, inasmuch as our business is known for its constant change. Consequently, new cuts have to be ordered as air personalities move up.

6. Weather logo.

7. News logo.

8. Sports logo.

9. Community calendar identification.

10. Station slogans or advertising themes.

11. Frequency identification in addition to call letters.

If the lyrics are to be superimposed on an existing music bed, then the proper sound has to be matched—a rock station with a rock package, and MOR station with an MOR package, etc. If the lyrics are to be performed a capella, then some indication as to what the program director envisions should be provided for the arranger at the jingle package shop. If Country, for example, is it to be traditional or modern or somewhere in between? The more instructions in this vein, the better.

An interesting innovation has been advanced by PAMS' Bill Meeks. He feels that you do not have to have a group singing call letters all the time. There could be sounds of Chinese bells, or of a railroad, or of the seashore, and then a live announcer can come in on top of the sounds with whatever body copy the station cares to use for identification purposes. TM Productions' Jim Long comes right along with the fact that all radio stations can't have call letters like K-NUZ or KLIF. Some letter combinations are awkward. His firm is, therefore, bringing out long melodic jingles.

After the contract has been signed and a date set for the recording session, if at all possible, it is a good investment to have the program director physically present at that session wherever it may be held. In that way, any last-minute changes or decisions can be made without any additional expense once

the package has been produced. The program director can decide that he wants a little more bass and so instruct the recording engineer in charge of the session. Or he can hear a lyric not coming out clearly and can change the wording right there and then. The final mixing of the package can be done to suit him to any degree. He is there, he is on the scene. He is the semi-producer of the session and he has the privilege of guiding it to his liking.

The thought always goes through the program director's mind that he is the one who has to live with the package for a time. Some stations change jingle packages every year, others not so frequently. Some incorporate the strong features of one package within the framework of the newer one they purchase. Whatever the setup and whatever the length of time it is used, the package must be one that all can live with. The test comes when the package hits the air and knits itself into the fabric of the station sound. Is it obtrusive? Is it complementary? Is it a reinforcing agent for identification?

The frequency of play will also determine the ultimate efficacy of jingles. They cannot be arbitrarily thrown in. The use of each jingle has to be carefully planned and scheduled and revised if necessary. No jingle should hang up the flow of the sound of the station. There should be a set pattern of how many times per hour the jingles are aired, as well as which jingles and at what time. Some stations are more flexible than others in allowing the air personality to determine the precise placement within the bounds of a set number per hour. Other stations have them logged as spot breakers. Then, there are those stations where the jingles are appended to the musical selection when the music is placed on carts. In this manner, nothing is left to chance and a guaranteed number of plays occurs as the music is being programed.

For protection purposes, a slave of the master should be run off and set aside against the possibility of almost anything happening to that master. In the subsequent transfer to cartridge, proper levels and tight cueing must be observed.

Once physically ready and the schedule of exactly how the package is to be incorporated has been worked out, it is advisable to have a meeting between the program director and the air personalities to review the jingles and the scheduling. A jingle package has to be ingested into the sound in the manner in which it was conceived.

## Chapter III News

Charles F. Harrison, president-elect of the Radio and Television News Directors Association, said about broadcast journalism in an article in *Television/Radio Age* (10/30/72), "Newsmen are maturing. We are weighing more than ever the effect of our published reports and we are asking more frequently the valid question: Does the public need to know? We are no longer simply following the easy course. That was good enough in the beginning. It was acceptable as we learned more about our complicated craft. This isn't good enough in 1973. Maturity in selection. Call it what you will, but it is a healthy sign. Broadcasters who care have long since learned that most newscasts approach objectivity and careful preparation more than any element of their broadcasting schedule. We in broadcast journalism score very high compared to the writers of fiction and entertainment who provide other portions of the radio and television spectrum."

All the way from the extremes of a minimal news operation to the all-news radio format, and every shading of degree within those bounds, it is indeed refreshing to witness the maturation of broadcast journalism. All those who labor in this area fight the problem of access and the accusation of slanted news presentation. There is that constant battle; yet, when the microphone is opened for a newscast to be aired, each station wants its best foot put forward.

Producing a professional newscast requires many elements and much dedication. The listener is unaware of the amount of preparatory work, but he somehow can discern a well produced newscast as contrasted to one haphazardly thrown together. His level of sophistication has been sharpened by exposure to many diverse sources. Today's American lives in a more vibrant society, a society with an insatiable hunger for awareness—an awareness that goes off in unending directions. No matter how stupid or deliberately oblivious one pretends to be, media and human contact at many levels force involvement for all of us.

## NEWS DELIVERY

We take it for granted that the authoritativeness of a newscaster is directly related to the degree of his comprehension of the news. In other words a newscaster should understand it first before he can relay it to his listeners. We hear such words as "timing" and "inflection." What it amounts to, really, is the newscaster's ability to use his voice. Those who think in terms of stentorian tones miss the essence of "using the voice." Good timbre of voice is fine, but how it is used is far more important.

Dr. Tom Turicchi of Texas Women's University in Denton has been doing behavioral psychographic studies in which physiological response has been measured. According to his findings, "The content of the news is not as important as the way that it is delivered." Actually, this is the showmanship—what the broadcasting business is all about. Two stations in the same market—given the same caliber and size staff, the same news sources, the same physical equipment with which to perform, the same amount of air time—will not be the same when it comes to the product that the listener hears. The difference: showmanship!

It is incumbent upon the news director or the program director (if the station does not have a news director) to impress the importance of showmanship upon himself and his staff to a degree that it becomes second nature. It is the element that permits a newscast to sparkle. We can talk about producing all the necessary ingredients to incorporate within a newscast, but if that filament of life is not injected, the whole effort proportionately suffers.

Though there may not be adequate time for a rewrite of a wire-service story or the full development of a staff-acquired story, correct pronunciation and phrasing of action words, as marked on the copy either physically or in one's mind, are prerequisite to dramatic delivery. Drama is an inherent part of day-to-day living and radio is no exception. "Woodshedding" or rehearsing a newscast insures a familiarity with the content. And by paying attention to delivery, the mechanical elements seem to receive more recognition because of the responsible role they play in the total newscast.

There is no finite measure of the ability to deliver a newscast. It takes years of cultivation before one can think of what he has to offer as a "style." Constant work, review, and study, plus the acceptance of critiques and comments, are required to develop a distinctive style. Listening to tapes of your newscasts from time to time helps in professional growth and development—provided you do so objectively.

There are those who always argue that their "bag" is not news and that they look forward to the day when their current air shift will not include news. Pity this attitude, for so much is to be learned, not only from being instantly aware of what is happening in the world, but also from a standpoint of community awareness. This is so enriching and valuable to anyone who functions behind a microphone in any capacity. Unfortunately, this negative attitude injects a degree of apathy into every newscast. The attention-getting shadings and nuances in the voice are absent. Part of the reason for listening to newscast airchecks is to evaluate this entire approach to delivery. Everyone, both those intensely interested as well as those who do it as a matter of necessity, can detect a lack of lustre, the indifference, prejudice, and partiality.

All of us, as human beings, have certain vents and emotions in our politics, philosophy, and way of life. Intonations and accentuations come through, and if we are to deliver an unbiased, impartial newscast (without any written commentary or analysis), it is imperative that we be aware of what comes through. Listeners have a way of picking up these inflections; if the bias is not to their pleasing, they become overly irritated. Some listeners call in or write to complain, while others merely turn the dial to another station and not come back again. This tune-out factor is detrimental, since no one at the station knows about it and, therefore, can do nothing about it if some correction should be made. The person delivering the news must always be aware of this possibility and be ready to correct any tendency to display partiality.

In addition to listening to your own tapes from time to time, listen to others at your own station, other stations in the market, and television stations. Much can be learned by analyzing what is right and what is wrong in the delivery of other newscasters. Still other avenues of learning are available in virtually every community, including lectures and speeches presented by visiting personalities making appearances at universities or clubs or forums. The point is that learning ways to be effective in delivery should be an ongoing affair. If you want to sharpen your tools and be effective at all times, a certain amount of energy must be expended. When you see and hear a concert pianist, you witness a "finished product." But if we were to interview that pianist, we would learn about the many grueling hours of elaborate exercises that preceded the concert as well as the continuing attention that the pianist pays to his craft.

Delivery in front of a microphone is different from delivery before an audience. With the audience physically present, the reaction is rather immediate. With a microphone, the reaction comes in a different form. Either comment from

the audience through the mail or the telephone (which is rare) and the subsequent effect on ratings or comment from the business community—client or advertising agency.

Delivery involves a number of elements. We learn very early that each story is individual and to treat it as such. In going from one story to another, we must pay attention to integrating and pacing. With a serious story, we should slow down the pace. A brighter story is compatible with a faster pace. Stories containing facts and figures have to be handled more slowly. We also hear about “throw away” sections used with some sentences. These are the less important parts of a sentence where a drop in the voice signifies their subsidiary value. Then, there are the dramatic pauses that have been stylized by people like Paul Harvey—a sort of a cliff-hanging device. There is the build and then the deliberate pause before the point of the story is reached.

Every newscaster has idiosyncracies. There are those who must mark up every piece of news copy, whether it's wire copy or locally originated or a composite rewrite, and there are those who read it over and make mental notes as to where inflection should be used. There are no set rules. Whatever is comfortable and functional is best. As long as you are aware of the importance of emphasizing main concepts and thoughts and thoroughly appreciate the role of inflection and pacing, you are bound to deliver a newscast that commands attention.

A question that always arises is the newsman's involvement with commercials. Should a newscaster be permitted to deliver a live commercial within the body of his newscast? Some feel that the newsman's credibility is destroyed when he goes along with heavy world news and then reads a commercial, which obviously must be considered as a partial endorsement at least. Others feel that if the newsman has a following, the commercial will have added effect if the newscaster reads it. Each station must decide which way to go.

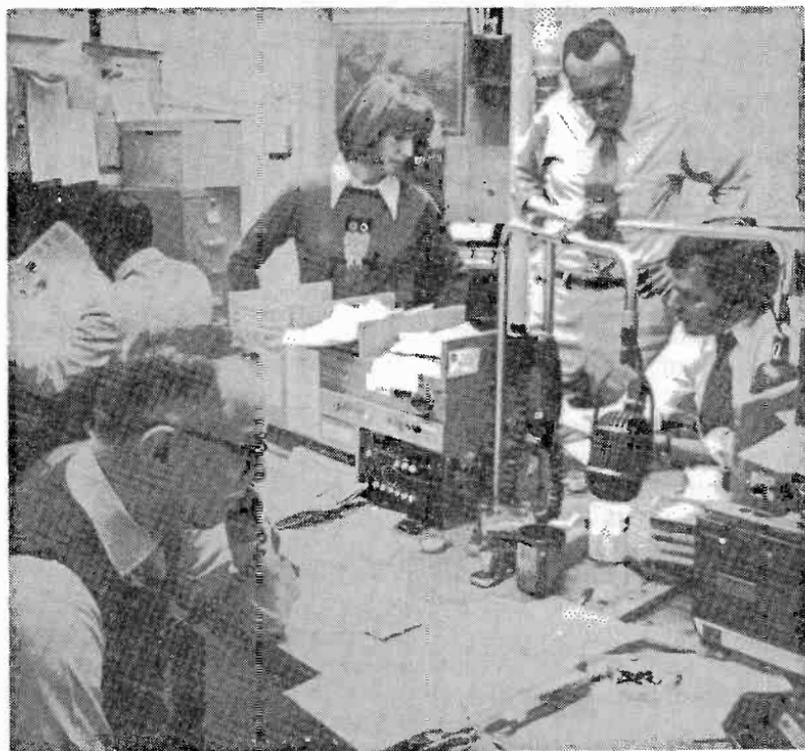
There is a similar situation when a disc jockey interrupts his own music program and proceeds to read the news. This occurs in operations where budget does not permit a separate news department or during weekends where the news staff is smaller than normal. Arguments arise here as to how an air personality can be an entertainer one moment and an authoritative newscaster the next. Ideally, this should be averted when possible.

## NEWS WRITING

Wrapped up intimately with the art of news delivery is news writing. If the person who is to broadcast the news

prepares his own copy, he uses the words and expressions that are comfortable for him. He knows what lead-ins to use for audio inserts; he knows what transition words to use to preserve a line of continuity; he knows how to go from the bombastic to the point of levity and back again. He can use vernacular terms to breathe meaning into a story if he is comfortable doing it. In short, he has a decided advantage over the "rip and read" operator on the one hand and the newscaster who has everything prepared for him on the other hand. There are those who claim that news writers come to learn the so-called style of the person for whom they are writing and can tailor it in a manner superior to the way that the man can do it himself. That perhaps is a moot point.

Among news writers, there are several hybrid variations. We mentioned the newsman who both writes and delivers his own newscast. Then, the one who just writes. What about the reporter who goes out and gets a story and comes back to prepare it either for himself or for others? Also, add in those



Chet Casselman (second from right), news and public affairs director of KSFO, San Francisco, is shown supervising the preparation of an upcoming newscast.

reporters who have regular beats or assignments to cover and who fall into either category.

News writing is a very demanding form of writing. It has to be written for the ear. A news writer must be capable of comprehending a story and translating it into "radio words" for the listener to absorb. Since most newscasts are in the five-minute category, the competent writer realizes what the word "brevity" means and respects it at every turn. The larger radio newsrooms usually have stylebooks that outline how the news director wants newscasts written and prepared. This serves as a guide for the writer.

The clock on the wall is always there to subconsciously harrass the news writer. He is writing against time and has a deadline to be met. He is constantly updating his next newscast so that the newscaster will have the very latest developments on a moving story or the very latest wrapup on a completed story. He is alert to the changing values of stories. What started out as a lead story may be downgraded for something more important that is beginning to unravel. Some stations utilize the concept of the news tease; five or ten minutes until news time, they air a short capsule to telegraph the lead story. The news writer is responsible for this cryptic form of writing. It serves as a cliff-hanger and builds interest for the upcoming newscast.

A well written newscast always has that flow about it that holds the listener's attention. He learns facts that he may not have formerly possessed; he comes away with a comprehension of those facts; and he is that much more informed. Details are carefully and simply laid out and are easy to follow. Someone has already taken the pains to seek out the story, study it, dissect it, and transmit its substance without losing any of the essence.

There are some news personnel who feel that if the wire story is not completely rewritten, they have not performed their function. They have a certain "thing" about rewrite. There is actually nothing that criminal in utilizing a news source that has been designed for broadcast usage. Perhaps the order of the stories demands editing for reasons of local or regional importance, but the waste of time of rewriting for the sake of rewriting is inane. The whole premise of subscribing to a news wire service is to have broadcastable material. Amplification and elaboration to meet local interests may justify a rewrite, but transposing words for the chore itself is not the professional way of handling those precious minutes that a station devotes to its news broadcasts.

Like any other form of creative writing, good writers are always good observers. They absorb information and styles

from myriad sources. They read news-formatted magazines, daily newspapers, and journalistic type books. They appreciate the differences between writing for the eye and writing for the ear. Learning is never over for them. When there are new techniques to be pioneered in presenting news to a radio audience, these individuals are in the forefront—and deservedly so. They are the pacesetters!

### **AUDIO INSERTS**

According to the Radio Roundup 1972 issue of *Television/Radio Age* (12/11/72), "there's a continuing tendency to make news sound more "entertaining" by means of more actualities, sound effects, and less formal anchormen." There are several sources of news insert and actualities which become a part of the newscast. Some stations use all available sources, while others participate in varying degrees.

Inserts can be purchased on a subscription basis from the national wire services, who provide about a hundred "cuts" in several daily feeds. These are typically simple but complete, as shown in the featured UPI Audio Roundup "billboard." There are also regional audio news services, who offer a varying number of feeds. Inserts can also come from bureaus that the station maintains in specific locations within the coverage area, newsmen on specific assignments covering news conferences, speeches, interviews, etc. For those who are affiliated with networks, there is an additional source from closed-circuit feeds.

It is up to the person who is putting the newscast together to ascertain how to mold the various inserts into a cohesive whole. Probably the biggest drawback in making the determination is the risk of being subservient to the insert. If, for example, it takes so much explaining to introduce the insert, why use it? Also, why incorporate it if it does not have good quality? In both cases, we are worshipping the mechanical device and ignoring the actual value the insert contributes to the newscast.

At some operations, it is mandatory that an insert of some kind be included with every newscast. This is a rather arbitrary position because it does not allow for news judgment or discretion. It is pure slavery to a contrivance. The reason usually advanced is that it makes the station sound "big." A certain vanity is derived, apparently, when a newscaster refers to "our" correspondent in Saigon, then an hour later from "our" correspondent in Paris, then later from "our" correspondent in Tel Aviv. Occasionally, these reports from

129UPR

FIFTH AUDIO ROUNDUP

- 56 :35 A CAPE KENNEDY (NASA PIO) APOLLO UPDATE (LAUNCH CONTROL)  
57 :45 V-A CAPE (MAURY TRUMBLE W-NASA PIO) LAUNCH VIEWERS IN FOR A SPECTACULAR SHOW  
58 :41 V CAPE (TRUMBLE) ASTROS WILL HAVE SOME STRANGE COMPANIONS ON BOARD  
59 :43 V CAMP DAVID (FULSON) NIXON KEEPS PROMISE TO SOUTH AMERICAN SCHOOL GIRLS...TO GET A COLLEGE EDUCATION  
60 :47 V PHOENIX (JIM WILKERSON) WRAP ON GOP GOVS CONVENTION  
61 :48 A CAPE (NASA SPKSMN) ASTRO'S FAMILIES WATCH AS ASTRO'S TAKE VAN TO LAUNCH PAD (TO THE MOON)  
62 :30 A CAPE (NASA SPKSMN) CLOSE OUT ACTIVITY AT THE LAUNCH PAD (TO ENTER)  
63 :XX A KANSAS CITY (RESEARCH HOSP SPKSMN) LATEST (7 P-M, EST) MEDICAL BULLETIN ON HST

-0-

AUDIO REMINDER...APOLLO-17 LIVE PROGRAMMING. LAUNCH 9:50 P-M-10:10 P-M, EST. CUTAWAYS AT APPROX 9:56, 10 AND 10:05 P-M, EST. THE 10:10 FEED WILL BE DELAYED UNTIL 10:15 P-M. THE 10 P-M NEWSCAST WILL BE PRE-EMPTED BY APOLLO LAUNCH. ART THOMPSON TO OPEN P.M.

U-P-I AUDIO-NEW YORK

UPI 12-06 07:14 PES

The UPI Audio Roundup billboard helps news personnel utilize news inserts.

the national services encounter such transmission problems that they are of poor quality. These reports can be used as a source of raw material for the story, but should not be used over the air.

There is also the feeling that if a service is being paid for, it should be used. No one is debunking this, but there is a sensible balance in saying that some items are usable and others are not. Sometimes, one complete audio feed is devoted almost entirely to a moving story. In such instances, after a certain deadline passes, those cuts become obsolete. Each cut has to be monitored and if necessary, discarded. Overall, the audio news service will pay for itself in quantity and quality, so why quibble over small details.

The audio inserts from the wire services are mechanically ready for broadcast. The running time of each cut is given; the

story is identified; the point of origin is given, along with the name of the correspondent or the person featured in the actuality, and, finally, the outcue. Rarely do these inserts exceed 60 seconds in length. This does not necessarily mean that an insert cannot be edited down from the length provided, or broken into two or more segments, which allows the local newscaster to carry on a question-and-answer development of the story with the correspondent or the personality in the actuality. For example:

**Newscaster:** At his press conference this morning, Governor Reagan commented on President Nixon's sweep of California...

**Actuality:** (15 seconds)...another term" (outcue)

**Newscaster:** When asked about a possible cabinet position, the Governor answered...

**Actuality:** (21 seconds)...not yet" (outcue)

**Newscaster:** Assemblyman Robert Monagan, a fellow Republican, is concerned about strengthening the party within the state. When this was put to the governor, he shrugged his shoulders and said...

**Actuality:** (9 seconds)...along with Bob" (outcue)

The above sample illustrates how an actuality can be edited so that the dynamic byplay created between the newscaster and the voice in the actuality creates a feeling of immediacy and intimacy and subconsciously involves the listener in a more personal way. However, if the technique is used on a continuing basis, its usefulness and impact will be diminished. Again, staging and showmanship provide the flair.

Other inserts (apart from the wire service audio feeds) that come into the newsroom are not so accurately timed and the indication of content is rather vague. Sometimes the counter on the mobile tape machine is closely watched on location and the key portions timed accordingly. In other instances, the news writer must listen to the entire tape and lift out the portions he wants to use.

In transferring from a portable tape machine (as well as the stationary machines carrying wire service audio or network closed-circuit feeds) to cartridge (see photos), it is imperative that levels be carefully watched. Out in the field, so much off-mike pickup is possible because personalities have a tendency to turn their heads as they are responding to a question in an interview or at a press conference or at a presentation or speaking to a group. If the room in which the actuality was taped had a hollow sound or there is reverberation, it might be necessary to utilize an equalizer to provide a fuller range.



Here, audio inserts are being transferred from cassette to cartridge in the news production room of KSFO, San Francisco.

Also, in transferring, you must consider the time required for a cassette tape recorder to reach operating speed. It cannot be tightly cued. The tape has to have a running start or the recording has to be transferred to a standard tape machine before a clean transfer to cartridge can be made. Otherwise, a slight "wow" will occur, something that should not be tolerated.

Aside from the portable conference telephone (which is covered in the Engineering Watchdog section under Installation of Remote Setups), a field reporter can achieve greater fidelity by recording his report on a portable tape machine, then clamping it on the mouthpiece of the telephone. Most of the sibilance and extraneous matter can be removed by using this technique.

### **REMOTE PICKUPS**

There are specific occasions when remote pickups are incorporated into the fabric of the programing. These can be used on a continuing basis or sporadically. If the news value warrants, the method for handling them has to be worked out to insure the maximum impact.

In a number of large and medium markets, helicopter traffic reports are broadcast during the commuting hours.

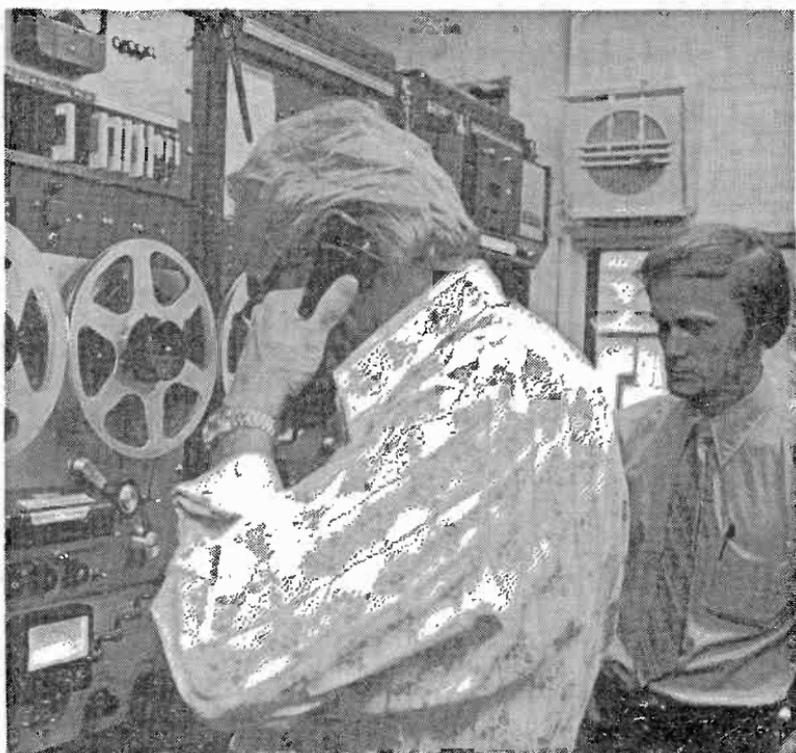
Engineering has to work out two-way radio contact with the chopper. Invariably, the pilot begins his report on a direct cue. Traffic reports should, briefly and simply, inform motorists of the locations of bottlenecks and accidents. Consistency in the time of programing insures a specific following. The voice timber of the pilot is secondary to the accuracy of the information provided. Some jocks try to build a "character" out of the pilot. Many times such attempts sound juvenile, especially when the pilot is too busy to respond.

In these troubled times, supplemental support can be afforded by an airwatch unit. Reports on demonstrations and riots from the air provide a different perspective than that observed from the ground. There are also occasions of widespread calamities when surface traffic cannot reach the troubled areas—the collapse of a dam or a forest fire, for example. In addition to furnishing news reports, the airwatch unit is in a position to help the authorities in any feasible way to assist in aid operations. On a less somber note, a happy occasion like a parade can be colorfully described from the air.

Of course, an airborne unit lends itself to promotion and advertising. Call letters prominently displayed on the unit is a moving station reminder. However, if the caliber of the report and the quality provided on the receiver do not come up to standards, the promotional value alone certainly does not make it worthwhile as a programing aid.



Studio announcer is shown waiting for a cue from the newscaster in the news booth to run an audio insert.



This newsman is talking to a reporter from a remote pickup point.

Direct coverage (or even delayed but still in its entirety) of important city council proceedings is a practice usually restricted to smaller markets where the concept of "farm journalism" is more acceptable. Some governing bodies hesitate to allow broadcast coverage of their proceedings and clearance has to be obtained for each specific time that broadcast is desired. The engineering part of the preparation must insure sufficient microphone pickup so that all speaking parties have equal access to the facilities. The gain of each mike must be adjusted to insure proper balance. Ideally, an announcer should be on duty at the location of the meeting to take up the slack when there are delays and pauses. The listening audience for this kind of coverage appreciates the fill-in provided and it helps them to understand the proceedings. If there is someone functioning as a sort of narrator, he must have time in advance to go over the agenda and understand what the issues are. He can then perform a better and unbiased narrative of the events and make significant contributions when those lulls in action occur.

If the station is involved in the coverage of such proceedings, it is a good idea to have a tape rolling at the studio at slow speed to record the program for immediate news purposes and so germane excerpts can be saved for something like a Year End Review.

Another remote pickup specialty is election coverage. The degree of involvement and the size of the news staff (plus those enlisted for service on a one-time basis), determine the extent of such activities. With so much election ballot tabulation being handled by computers today, there is no longer a need to physically man key election polling places. This makes it tactically possible to concentrate on a few central places where the actual official results are being compiled.

To help a news department to prepare for coverage of the 1972 elections, UPI prepared an extensive fact sheet (see the excerpt). It contained candidates biographical data and a wealth of other information.

On-the-air coverage can range from a block of broadcast time devoted to continuous coverage until all the returns are reported to minimal coverage that utilizes "break in" reports as they become available. The latter approach, of course, does not seriously interrupt the regular program format.

If there is to be continuous coverage, advance plans must include a pickup at each key location where the returns are being compiled. Newsmen manning those posts have access to computer printouts as they become available. Reports from each location are fed by direct lines to the station. Even if something else is in progress at the studios, the reports can be taped and held for the next opportune broadcast time.

Thorough and complete coverage would include interviews of the various candidates as the returns are being counted. To do this the personnel planning the coverage must know where to locate each candidate at the time. In the case of federal contests, community spokesmen for the respective political parties should also be contacted for their comments. Additional sources or commentary and analysis could be provided by a local university professor specializing in political affairs or a local newspaper political pundit. This latter source might offer an opportunity for multimedia cooperation. Radio stations in the past have jointly covered returns with newspapers or television stations. The effect is to utilize most effectively all the various resources that the media can jointly muster. The joint effort readily lends itself to a tremendous promotion campaign in all media.

The success of election coverage depends largely on the anchorman's ability to keep it moving and stimulating.

Incidentally, this particular feature is an interesting audience-building device and something that is looked upon with favor by the FCC. It is also useful in the "ascertainment of community needs." Another spinoff of this feature is the contest concept involving news as the "hooker." People in the news and stories in the news form the basis of questions that are posed to the audience, and either the station places the

FACT SHEET FOR THE 1972 ELECTION

From United Press International

For President

- RICHARD M. NIXON, 59, President of the United States, Republican.
- GEORGE S. McGOVERN, 50, Senator from South Dakota, Democrat.

For Vice President

- SPIRO T. AGNEW, 54, Vice President of the United States, Republican.
- R. SARGENT SHRIVER, 56 former Peace Corps and antipoverty director, Democrat.

The Congress

- 435 Representatives will be elected in 50 states.
- 33 Senators will be elected in 33 states.
  - \* 67 Senators will return to complete incumbent terms.

The States

- 18 of the 50 states will elect Governors.

The Calendar

- November 7, 1972: The General Elections.
- December 18, 1972: Electoral College voting in states.
- January 3, 1973: The 93rd Congress convenes.
- January 6, 1973: Congress counts electoral votes.
- January 20, 1973: Inauguration Day.

Excerpts from UPI's 1972 election fact sheet.

calls, or listeners call in within a certain period of time. News personnel become responsible for furnishing the material. Prizes are awarded as is done with other station contests. It's a forced tune-in type contest, since it presumes that the listener has to be tuned in for some time to find out the names of people and places in the news in order to be able to participate in the news contest.

POLL CLOSING TIMES -- November 7, 1972

(All times Eastern Standard)

Alabama - 6p - 8p	Montana - 10p
Alaska - 11p - 2a	Nebraska - 9p and 10p
Arizona - 9p	Nevada - 9p and 10p
Arkansas - 8:30p	New Hampshire - 6p, 7p and 8p
California - 11p	New Jersey - 8p
Colorado - 9p	New Mexico - 9p
Connecticut - 8p	New York - 9p
Delaware - 8p	North Carolina - 7:30p and 8:30p
District of Columbia - 8p	North Dakota - 8p and 9p
Florida - 7p and 8p	Ohio - 6:30p
Georgia - 7p	Oklahoma - 8p
Hawaii - 11p	Oregon - 10p and 11p
Idaho - 10p and 11p	Pennsylvania - 8p
Illinois - 7p	Rhode Island - 9p
Indiana - 6p and 7p	South Carolina - 7p and 8p
Iowa - 9p	South Dakota - 8p and 9p
Kansas - 8p and 9p	Tennessee - 4p - 9p
Kentucky - 6p and 7p	Texas - 8p and 9p
Louisiana - 9p	Utah - 10p
Maine - 8p and 9p	Vermont - 7p
Maryland - 8p	Virginia - 7p
Massachusetts - 8p	Washington - 11p
Michigan - 8p	West Virginia - 7:30p
Minnesota - 9p	Wisconsin - 9p
Mississippi - 7p	Wyoming - 9p
Missouri - 8p	

Someone has to knit together whatever it is that the station is doing in the way of election coverage. Someone has to provide that continuity for it all in the mind of the listener. The anchorman's duty is similar to that of a guide telling people what is going to happen, from what point of origin it will be happening, and the significance of what is happening. He has to be well coordinated in bringing together the various elements of the total coverage.

Highlights of the election coverage should be retained for news exposure the very next day and updated with additional comments, analysis, and observation by leading citizens and politicians. Excerpted material can be edited at leisure for incorporation into a Year End Review program.

Once the extent of the station's involvement with election news coverage is determined, plans must be made accordingly. The listening audience should be informed by way of station promos several weeks before the event and publicity to the newspapers should give times and other specifics.

If telephone lines have to be ordered for remote pickups from several designated locations, the earlier the orders are placed the better. As plans are being formalized, it must be decided who is to cover what from where? As assignments are laid out, each person should be briefed on his specific portion of the total coverage. This includes the number of feeds expected from that individual, a rough timetable for them, and the nature of such feeds, including the length. Cues also have to be worked out so that all parties connected with the election coverage can anticipate the next event.

There also has to be a way of communication among the participating parties once coverage gets under way. Last-minute changes are always possible and everyone should be prepared to cope with them. A list of important telephone numbers should be distributed to all concerned. Of course, there will be talking up and down the line on the audition cue and whoever is handling master control should be in a position to quickly answer any questions and keep each person informed.

Brief mention should also be made in this section on the subject of man-in-the-street interview. We say brief because the feature itself is more or less a part of broadcasting history. What has probably taken its place is a reaction type feature, whereby people in the community are called at random and asked their comments about a particular topic. These comments are then tightly edited to eliminate pauses and gaps plus the preliminary identification to establish the telephone interview.

## **TELEPHONE REPORTS**

Depending upon the degree of news involvement, the station may have a full-time news bureau at the state capital and at key points within its primary signal area. It may also have a group of stringers located throughout the area who are capable of furnishing significant stories. To handle transmissions from such sources, proper preparations must be made to prevent delays and technical problems. The telephone line that leads into a station recorder has to be available on a "hot line" basis.

For each bureau, engineering must set up a small permanent remote unit if the quality of reports and actualities as is to be acceptable. Usually, stringers use the telephone. Line quality might not be consistently good, but in all cases it is not necessary that the stringer's voice be heard. He may be calling in with a lead that is to be written at the station or a tip that requires additional action before the story can be used.

The person manning a bureau is a part of the station's news department and is invariably hired as a news broadcaster. This stringency on broadcast quality, however, does not apply to the stringer, since he or she is a part-timer who is paid only when a story is filed. A stringer could be a reporter for a weekly newspaper, a teacher, a college student, a businessman, or anyone for that matter who understands what is expected of him. Murders, robberies, jail breaks, major fires, and the ilk—as opposed to minor accidents, mundane legal proceedings, and community calendar items—form the substance of what is expected from a stringer.

## **NETWORK AFFILIATION**

Sam Cook Digges, president of the CBS Radio Division, told the 19th annual affiliates meeting that network business is news and that it is the network's job to supply its affiliates with news programing that surpasses in quality that of any other network.

Those stations that choose to affiliate with one of the national or regional networks feel that the caliber of service provided, the prestige afforded, and possibly the manpower saved justifies that affiliation. Whatever the reason or the rationale for such affiliation, once the decision is made, the network news offering has to be worked into the overall programing scheme.

Some stations follow network news with local news in an attempt to create the illusion that the total package is of their own doing. Even when there is no adjacency to network news, the local station tries to simulate the format of the network newscast in order to obtain some degree of continuity.

Whatever is offered in the way of closed-circuit material, usually stories the network has not been able to incorporate into its own newscasts, should be carefully screened for adaptation into a local newscast, possibly when the network is out of service, or for use as feature material. These additional cuts can be used to further develop stories, especially where there is a regional or a local aspect.

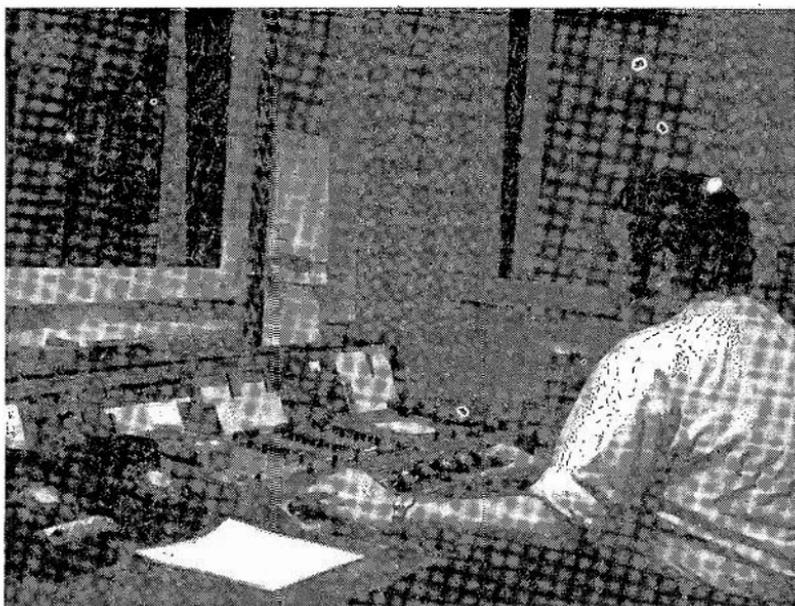
In order to further develop the prestige angle, a local station should request tailor-made promotional announcements featuring the voices of network newscasters. These spots can be incorporated into the format to build the total impact of network affiliation. Network personality voice cuts can be used by themselves or can be built into a montage of network-station news promos. A clever tactic that offers much off-air promotion and publicity is the "traveling troupe" idea promulgated by ABC Radio News. Teams of newsmen travel around the nation and address groups of interested citizens in auditorium appearances. This strengthens the ties between network and station personnel and the local audience.

#### **SOUND EFFECTS AND NEWS**

The advent of the Top 40 format introduced tight production and uptempo pacing with a minimum of talk. Along



Overall view of the ABC Radio Newsroom in New York. Merrill Mueller (on phone) in foreground.



The engineer at this McCurdy Console at ABC Radio News, New York, is processing cartridges with news insert material.

with this format, mechanical devices were applied to the delivery of news to add an additional element of drama. Top 40 promoters felt that traditional presentation techniques slowed down the momentum of the overall sound. Sound effects and jingles served to intro and extro news. Some stations added the news ticker sound under the entire newscast; some went to short staccato blasts between stories. All went to a break-neck speed of delivery. Of all the networks, ABC Radio, when it conceived the idea of a four-network concept, adopted the dynamic, fast-paced newscasting technique for its Contemporary Network.

No matter what sounds or devices are used to begin, sustain, or end a newscast, it is a matter of good broadcasting production technique to avoid the temptation of overwhelming the listener with gimmickry. It is not a matter of diminishing the credibility of the news or cheapening the newscast; instead, it is a question of overdoing a good thing. Everything that is "up" and has no peaks or valleys melts into nothingness. The entire program becomes subliminal because the gimmickry takes over content. Newscasts should be exciting and interesting and should most assuredly capitalize on every element that can contribute to making it as listenable as possible. The news director or program director must evaluate the sounds that are used in view of the overall

programming objectives. Simplicity quite often has a greater impact amid a mass of gimmickry.

Jingle mills usually provide a "logo" or identifiable sound to lead into or out of news in their packages. Appropriate intros and extros can be made from sounds found in a good sound effects library or from various musical bridges lifted from music albums. A good engineer can construct a very individualistic sound from his bag of tricks. He can take a rather simple sound, run it through the reverb or equalizer or otherwise mix it with itself, and come up with something rather unusual and still attention-getting. Whatever the sound may be, it should be given a great deal of thought inasmuch as it will be heard quite frequently. It must be thought of as an item that will gain exposure many times per day and over a considerable period of time. Some elements that sound favorable several times could wear and grate if heard over a long haul.



ABC Radio News correspondent Bill Larson receives three inserts from an engineer for his newscast. Pushbutton panel at the top of the Ampex reel-to-reel recorder (slightly out of focus in the foreground) preselects as many as 50 outside feeds for recording.

## **WEATHER**

Although brief bits of weather are peppered into the programing diet, the more comprehensive coverage is deemed a part of a total news package. The U.S. Weather Service should be checked for hourly temperature readings and any updates in the forecasts that move on the news wire services. Depending on the geographical area the station serves, the presentation of the weather varies. Stations that serve a vast area usually include readings for a number of communities. Stations that serve agricultural areas also include such items as frost warnings, while stations that are close to recreational areas include tide information and the water temperature for water sports or snow pack conditions for skiers. Stations in storm belt areas, of course, keep listeners advised of possible or imminent storm conditions.

Some stations sell weathercasts and make them fairly comprehensive five-minute programs. Some stations tape the voice of the weatherman and broadcast it in a preset time slot. If a weathercast is a laborious reading and recitation of terms and conditions unfamiliar to the general public, it is self-defeating. The impact of weather is directly related to what the public can understand and digest. Television can illustrate the location of low pressure areas, wind movement, etc., but radio has to be more basic and to the point. Any unusual occurrences, such as an inordinate amount of rainfall for a particular time period or an excessive amount of water runoff become interesting stories and warrant complete follow-through with the local weather service.

Weather should never be considered as a throwaway item. There is always someone in the audience who is seeking weather information. In certain instances, it could be the only vital way of reaching specific groups. Some stations sell time to construction companies whose activities are affected by the weather. Each foreman alerts his workers to listen at a certain time to a certain radio station to find out if they will work during bad weather conditions. Such announcements eliminate a host of telephone calls and possible confusion for the construction companies.

## *Chapter IV On-Air Promotion*

Every station must continuously remind its listeners of its call letters, dial position, features, and any other program offerings. It is a poor testimonial when a broadcaster does not utilize his own advertising medium (the best in the world as far as he's concerned) as the vehicle for promoting the station.

It is no small task to build the "best" programing; therefore, the broadcaster who does not follow through to acquire the most listeners possible is cheating himself. Broadcasters are promoters and must constantly promote the product they have developed. Listeners must be told that they will be hearing quality programing, and will continue to hear quality programing by remaining at a certain dial position. On-air promotion is a constant, dynamic reminder of what the station is and what it has to offer. Some call it self-adulation and akin to narcissism when it gets ludicrous; but handled in a tasteful way, promotion emerges as probably the most valuable ally that a broadcaster has. It should be used to the fullest.

### **PROMOTIONAL OBJECTIVES**

The object of any broadcast message is to attract attention and then obtain a reaction. Obviously, the objective of any radio station is to sell people on that station so that they remain excited about it. If they are well pleased and induce others to listen to the station, so much the better—the beginning of a chain reaction.

Station promotionals require careful planning for optimum effect. What is to be said, how it is to be said, how well can it be performed and become a part of the total produced sound of the station—these are the elements. How many times have we heard station promotions that had the essence of a formidable idea but had been diluted by inadequate production?

The ideas usually come from the creative side—the program department or promotion department. An idea is conceived and the wheels are set in motion for the next step,

which is the writing part of it. Then, the script is produced for air play.

### **WHAT SHOULD BE PROMOTED?**

What is within the realm of on-air promotion? You name it; as long as it is aired on the station, it is worthy of telling the public about it: an upcoming contest, a new air personality, a shift change between two or more personalities, a public affairs program, a new programming feature, a personal appearance by a station personality, a station-sponsored show, an open house, additional news services, a station anniversary celebration, etc.

The potential for promoting programming elements is literally boundless. Imagination and creativity are such hackneyed terms in the field of radio production, yet what other medium uses these capabilities so effectively? We constantly paint images and mental pictures with sound and all its allied devices. The illusions and appeals provide an extra dimension for us.

Jim Harmon rightfully points out, in **The Great Radio Comedians** (Doubleday & Company): "The art of radio comedy lies almost forgotten, like its sister art, radio drama. Radio had its limitations—it was shortest on subtlety. It had its assets—the use of imagination and the power of suggestion. The continuing appearance of record albums of audio-only comedy by Bill Cosby, Stan Freberg, Bob Newhart, and others proves that sound alone still has its appeal."

### **PROMOTION DEVELOPMENT**

As with sales message development, the entire array of facilities that the station possesses, or to which it can gain access, should be used to the fullest in the creation of on-air promotional messages. If it is worth the time to air, it is worth the time it takes to create something which the station can be proud to identify with.

The germ of an idea may come from a staff member, a listener, or maybe from a client. Anywhere. Then, the idea should be studied and shaped by someone capable of writing and producing it. To illustrate, let's take an idea and follow it through the course of its lifetime. Recently, at KRAK someone came up with the idea to repeat a contest that had been successful in the past, a takeoff on the horoscope craze.

The first step in launching the campaign is to look at it from the listener's viewpoint.

How does he participate?

What can he win?

When does it start?

How long is it to be in operation?

Is it a game of chance or a game of skill?

Once these points have been considered, the next step is to shape the on-air campaign needed to entice listeners to be on the lookout for the contest. Of all the points cited above, it may not be absolutely necessary to indicate from the outset how long it will run. As long as there is no need for a specific cutoff date, as is the case with a mail-in contest, the continuing response to the contest might dictate a change of the anticipated end date. If it is doing exceedingly well, it might be retained several days beyond what was originally planned. If participation has been less than expected, it could be dumped days before a planned cutoff date. But once into the promotion stage, it is imperative to explain the contest as simply as possible and in a manner that arouses interest. William Peck, in his **Radio Promotion Handbook** (TAB Books), insists: "Contests should be understandable by the youngest or least sophisticated member of your audience. So, simplify."

In writing the on-air promo for the contest, all of the essential points should be covered. What approach after that? What clever device can be used to induce the listener to look forward to the starting date of that contest? Will one announcement suffice? Will a series of ideas around one theme conjure up the desired effect? How much advance promotion will be necessary? Is the contest big enough and important enough to be promoted in other media? If so, how can the contest be cross-plugged so that there is a thread of continuity among all the media used?

The station call letters should always be incorporated into the contest idea itself. So, instead of being the KRAK horoscope, it became KRAKoscope, a fortunate combination of call letters and contest idea. Another factor that merited consideration was the coverage of the station's signal. Being a 50,000-watt clear-channel operation, KRAK is received in many areas. Mail has come to the station (licensed to Sacramento, Calif.) from such places as the Pitcairn Islands, Alaska, Mexico, West Germany, and the Union of South Africa. This fact has been publicized in the local press as well as the trade press.

With this kind of background, a series of announcements was created. The approach was a two-voice job with a dialectician to emphasize home-station reception in distant places without overtly saying it, while relaying all the vital information. The announcements were started ten days prior to the starting date of the contest, and they triggered such a

fun response that even the station's air personalities began "playing" with them; that, of course, heightened interest in the contest. In fact, some listeners commented that they would have rather heard a continuation of the promotional announcements than the actual contest itself. The mood was set in precisely the manner that the station intended. The station did not want to appear as if it categorically espoused the cause of horoscope observance and yet it did not want to insult those who put stock in it.

Many approaches could have been utilized for the on-air promotion of the contest, but this particular one seemed to be the best for KRAK. However, had the talent not been available at the station to do dialects, had it been impossible to receive the station in remote parts of the world, or had the name of the contest been uncombinable with the call letters of the station, other alternatives would have had to be worked out. The elements fit and they only did fit because someone took the time and trouble to explore the existing creative possibilities. It was indeed worth the effort! All of the objectives, and then some, were attained and the contest got off to a fine start.

Obviously, there are limitations in promoting some available elements. Serious programs and "think" pieces cannot be promoted in a jocular vein. It's a process of designing appropriate promotional material and a constant challenge to seek new ways of saying things. But the effort is so worthwhile and rewarding when a station applies its manpower to the task of constantly showing its listeners that its wares are appealing. Whoever is in charge of selling these wares to the public must have an astute background in all phases of the production art. He must understand the problem and have the capacity to see all attendant ramifications. He must be totally familiar with available mechanical production aids; he must know the capabilities of every air personality; he must discern good writing talent. In short, such a person must literally bubble with creative resourcefulness.

Not everyone is a Stan Freberg, a Mel Blanc, a Dick Orkin, or a Chuck Blore; but talent does exist at every radio station in the United States. It is up to the promotion department to bring out that talent, as latent as it may be, and make that station a better vehicle by its on-air promotion.

Think, execute, analyze—these are the keys to the mobilizations of every morsel of talent that the station has to offer.

**Think.**

**Execute.**

**Analyze.**

Words worth repeating, because none of us is so proficient that we can ever say that the process is a part of us; that constant cognizance and surveillance are unnecessary. It is not enough to say that we have succeeded in an assigned task; we must understand **why** we have succeeded and to what degree it can help in future projects!

## **INTEGRATION AND LENGTH OF RUN**

Is there any formula for an on-air promo, or how long it should run? The criteria are established by the objectives of the campaign.

What is the nature of the element being promoted?

Is there a commercial commitment attached to it?

If of considerable importance, is there sufficient material for a change during its flight?

Is it tied in with dates that are to correspond with promotion in other media?

How many other program elements are being promoted at the same time?

One of the pitfalls that must be avoided in on-air promotions is overproduction. Too much of anything is rich for a listening diet. It becomes indigestible.

Besides the temptation to show all one's wares at one time, there is the added problem of what may be termed the "overkill" in production. If everything that the station wants to promote (and it should exercise judgment as to how much at one time) is concocted in an aura of heavy fanfare, sounds and sirens, etc., that station is bound to exhaust the listener and invite a tune-out. And even before the tune-out point is reached, the effectiveness of every element that is being promoted is completely dissipated. Everything is so forefront that the total effect has to be lost. It conflicts with the experience of the average citizen for whom life is not all black or all white. There are peaks and valleys—we all have our ups and downs. We accept these premises as one of the basic tenets of being alive. So we must not lose sight of this fact when we prepare a promotional schedule.

Again, responsible management has to be sensitive as to what is being promoted at any particular time and how it is being promoted. Balance, balance, balance. Or maybe radio people would be more at home with the term **pacing**. By the very nature of the promotion elements that we have previously enumerated, it is apparent that there is sufficient variety to seek different avenues. But someone must hold the reins constantly; someone must decide what is to be promoted, what creative approaches are to be taken, what production expertise is to be applied, and what frequency and

then, finally, how often the announcements should run and for what period of time.

It then becomes a matter of logistics. Too many contests or too many features, or too much of anything, is not good for the station, not only from an on-air promotion point of view, but also from a basic programing point of view. Thus, the promotion schedule provides a double-check of sorts. The on-air promotion malaise can expose something bigger—faults within the overall programing structure.

There are also many shadings to the pacing that must be an integral part of this whole pattern. A good production man knows that an announcement that is constructed with humor or comic relief wears thin faster than a more serious approach. Therefore, a humorous campaign requires a sufficient amount of material to keep it alive.

Even after a promotional series is concocted for a particular programing element, the announcements may not fit into the framework of the station sound. The approach may be too sophisticated or too cute or whatever—too conspicuous. When such a problem is recognized, an abrupt change is needed. The campaign must fit and not in any way limit the impact of the total programing. If announcements are scheduled too frequently, the whole thing could become obnoxious. If it sounds as if it has been implanted and forgotten, the campaign's value must be appraised. Announcements that run only one day a week to promote a specific weekly program can somehow lose their spark when they are left alone week after week after week. Sometimes, a well written live announcement can alleviate the tedium when a station is skewed in the direction of "heavy production." A live announcement may provide just the relief that is so vital.

## *Chapter V Public Service Messages*

Since all radio stations are licensed to operate in the public interest, there is an obligation to broadcast public service announcements (PSAs). As a result of this requirement, the attitude of some broadcasters, and the subsequent contagion resulting from this attitude, puts the PSA in the realm of a necessary evil. For today's license renewal application, as well as a new facility license application, merely asks how many announcements have been run, or will be run, without any regard to length, the worthiness of the cause, or the duration of a campaign. Framed in this background, the PSA is a target for potential abuse. Every radio station is the recipient of requests for free time; some can be legitimately classified as pure public service, other causes are more questionable or at least very limited in nature. Some material is fairly creative, others devoid of any creativity. Some are well produced, others amateurishly done.

### **SCREENING PROCESS**

It is up to the program director (or to whomever he assigns the responsibility) to evaluate and then decide which announcements are to be scheduled for broadcast. Without engaging in any philosophical discussion, it must be realized that human bias enters into the very first screening process, the process whereby the mere mention of the name of the sponsoring organization either turns on the PD or draws a complete blank.

Some broadcasters, for instance, have rather deep feelings about the recruitment efforts of the military services. Prior to 1971, all of the services spent nothing in the broadcast media, but did have a budget for advertising in newspapers, magazines etc. In 1971, the N. W. Ayer Advertising Agency in Philadelphia purchased air time for the U. S. Army. Broadcasters felt that their efforts throughout the years to gain an appropriation were not in vain. But then, Congress got into the act and did not see fit to appropriate additional funds (even though the paid advertising campaign in the broadcast media

was successful). Some congressmen felt that exposure in the broadcast media could be obtained as free public service. This thinking left a bad impression on many broadcasters. So, that first screening process can be very decisive regardless of the quality of the announcement. And when there is an abundance of causes from which to choose, it becomes obvious that subjective decisions are difficult to question.

It is also a problem for the PD to ascertain the legitimacy of requests from organizations far from his own market. In a number of cases, a public relations firm handling an account on a commercial basis prepares and releases material through a "front" organization that lends its name to a project on a sort of cosponsored effort. And sometimes the temptation to run a produced PSA because it is outstanding overrides the consideration of its commercial status.

However, when a decision is made to run a particular PSA, some consideration must be given to how well it will blend in with the existing programing. It must complement whatever else the station is doing. If the station is to sound professional, no element, regardless how it is viewed by the management or staff, should be allowed to detract from that goal.

This admonition is particularly applicable where PSAs are performed live. Some air personnel have a tendency to treat the whole public service area in a negative fashion. If performed live, the message must be "sold," or it should not be used. Whether it is to raise funds, solicit volunteer help, induce a mail or telephone response for some free literature, or merely inform, the message has to be treated as one seeking action. It cannot be handled in a passive, sarcastic, or negative manner. If present, these attitudes will do nothing to enhance the station image. In fact, just the reverse is liable to happen. If an air personality even slightly demeans a PSA, he starts to break down the station's credibility in all areas where the goal is listener response. There is no way the station or its personnel can distinguish the important, the mediocre, and the unimportant for the listener. He is the one to form opinions as to what he thinks are the important, mediocre, and unimportant elements of the total fare offered by the station. He has every right to resent anyone doing his thinking for him!

## **PRODUCTION**

Even though the station receives written PSA copy, there is no hard and fast rule that says every one must be read live. The ingenuity of the production department can do wonders with a PSA. Dick Orkin, president of Dick Orkin Creative

Services, Chicago, says: "The whole basis of showmanship is to take the conventional approach and surprise people. We should make our PSAs entertaining, not read them in the same conventional, dull way. Put some of the fun back into radio. Get everybody at the radio station involved—secretaries, salesmen, anyone capable of doing an acceptable job—make them feel a part of it." We all recognize the fact that, at smaller stations, the program director, the production manager, writer, and promotion manager are usually wrapped up in one person and he does the bulk of the creative production. Yet, following Orkin's advice, there is no reason why others on the staff cannot participate.

Too many of us in the broadcasting field suffer from the disease known as "dulcet toneitis," which makes us hesitate to use voices other than those professionally trained. Listeners are people and they like to hear other people talk. A produced spot using average voices could be just the tonic. Think about those people we see in television commercials and magazine ads; they are average looking, not all Hollywood beauty types. So, the very talent needed to give a mundane PSA the creative spark that entertains is probably at the radio station working in some capacity. We are not adopting a total high school theatrics approach to it all, yet we are utilizing talent somewhere in the wings at the radio station.

When something arrives in a produced form, ready to be aired, it has to be listened to with regard to quality and content. Some public service agencies put a lot of stock in an endorsement by a luminary in the sports or entertainment field. Perhaps this is a throwback to the commercials that feature "stars." At any rate, such productions are sometimes very pap—unimaginative, unbelievable, or just poorly produced. It is an unfortunate waste of time, effort, and money when an agency sends out a poor quality transcription or a poor quality tape. Incidentally, some agencies are apparently recognizing the advantages of the cassette. During the summer of 1972, the California Anti-Litter League sent out environmental beauty messages on cassettes. As you can appreciate, there is little possibility of breakage, as is the case with a transcription, and the light weight holds down the mailing cost. Of course, radio station production studios must have the facilities to accommodate this new member of the team—the cassette tape machine.

The person responsible for transferring public service messages from disc to cartridge or tape to cartridge, or now cassette to cartridge, should double-check the quality of the recording that will be broadcast. Muddy, scratchy, or

otherwise poorly reproduced material should not be given the dignity of air exposure. When a poor quality recording is received, the agency that sent it should be advised accordingly. Some agencies provide postcards that ask how much exposure the station will provide, the length of announcements desired in the future, and whether live or produced copy is preferred. Many of these cards, like the Salvation Army form shown below, include a space on the card for comment. When a poor quality recording is received, station personnel should not hesitate to candidly advise the agency that the material was unusable. Any concerned agency will appreciate the advice. For what good is the public service effort if stations can't run the material because of a quality problem?

As to length of run, a number of public service agencies concentrate a specific appeal to one month out of the year. All interest is whipped up in that particular time segment, both nationally and locally. It is difficult to generalize and say that the announcements should be run for a full month or, in some cases, longer on a precampaign buildup. Individual decisions must be based on the demand from other agencies for time on the air during the same interval and the quality and uniqueness from a listening standpoint. Some announcements get stale awfully fast, while others are suitable for a longer run. Some campaigns offer a variety of announcements so that staleness is delayed as much as possible. Different lengths and different approaches also minimize repetition. And by rotating the times each spot runs, one specific announcement won't be heard at the same time every day.

YES, WE WILL BROADCAST THE SALVATION ARMY PUBLIC SERVICE SPOTS.

YES, WE HAVE BROADCAST THE SALVATION ARMY PUBLIC SERVICE SPOTS.

NO, WE DID NOT BROADCAST THIS MATERIAL.

COMMENTS:

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Station Call Letters \_\_\_\_\_

City and State \_\_\_\_\_

Public service agency reply card.

A good way to emphasize the value of air time granted to public service agencies is to treat the schedule as if it were of a commercial nature. Write a traffic order showing the start and end dates, the number of announcements in each time classification, and the length of the announcement. When the schedule is completed, the agency is sent a statement, stamped paid, that shows the dollar value of the time donated. Some agencies ask for this information anyway. Any letters of commendation, certificates, or awards of appreciation make welcome additions to the station's files and wall space.

A reputation for competent public service always spreads and, consequently, others want to avail themselves of the station's facilities. The increased demand places a greater burden on those who must screen applicants and those who must handle the production. But, regardless of the demand, a station cannot afford to relax its standards.

### LOCAL ANGLE

Since requests for time come from many public service agencies outside the community, face-to-face contact with persons involved for development of the campaign must be ruled out. But a local drive or effort can be handled differently, from both quality and quantity standpoints.

Let's say that a local campaign has behind it the driving force of many community leaders. Their personal endorsement, via pretaped messages, can add the impetus needed to get the campaign over the top. The greatest problem lies in recording messages by a number of people. In some cases, it is necessary to coach the participants in the arts of microphone technique and delivery so they sound reasonably convincing. Of course, we cannot apply professional standards, but each person should sound real and alive.

The use of the voices of community leaders serves a twofold purpose. First, most of the names are known in the area, and a familiar voice perks up listening ears that normally might tend to ignore the message if done live by the announcer or produced by another source. And secondly, chances are that the people selected by the public service agency to participate in a campaign of this nature would be well acquainted with the problems and needs of the agency and, therefore, more convincing.

The material for the message can be prepared by the agency or those involved in the drive. Sometimes, a scripted message will not match every person, which means last-minute revisions would have to be made anyway at the station.

To more ambitiously involve community leaders, a special stunt can be quite effective. Several can serve as guest

disc jockeys for a day or more and work directly with the station's air personalities to solicit funds or support for the cause. Station personnel, of course, still operate all the equipment, but the guests handle most of the air work. It can be an interesting and very promotable item for the station. From the production standpoint, attention must be given to voice balance. And some preshow planning is needed to sustain interest in the stunt. If the guest accepts phone calls from listeners, another production technique has to be considered.

During such an undertaking, the public will forgive any shortcomings in the air performance of a community leader; instead, they will hold the regular station staff responsible for any failures. Therefore, it is up to the staff to adequately preplan the event and anticipate any problems that could arise. What the listener hears is a measure of the station's capability to handle the endeavor. If it comes off right, the station can chalk up a successful stunt that has some meaning in the area of public service.

It is also in the station's interest to maintain good relations with various local agencies. This liaison not only helps meet the FCC's ascertainment of community needs requirement, but it keeps the station in better contact with the whole community. Sometimes the very nature of the requests for public service tell quite a story about the community. The station's response to those needs helps build the station's stature in the eyes of the community. When professionally done, with assistance provided by the station's production resources, anybody who formerly viewed the PSA as the "necessary evil" can rise above the myopia and welcome this phase of operations as something that contributes to the station's place in the market.

## *Chapter VI Contests*

Some people call the use of contests self-adulation, some call it insurance; no matter what the label, contests are designed to excite and entice. The object is to gain listeners for the station.

Everyone understands that no amount of gimmickry or the awarding of sums of money or goods can hold an audience for any length of time if the product (the programing) cannot stand on its own feet. All that can be hoped for is to get people to sample the station sound. To constantly "buy" an audience is a shallow way to operate and one guaranteed to cut deeply into any potential profits. The name of the game is broadcasting and not anything else; substituting something in its place, be it a contest or another device, is a sham and it is soon exposed for its worthlessness. Even for the one who is naive enough to think that an audience must be purchased, there is always another operator who can outbid him in the game. New facilities, new ownership, new philosophy, or new capital can create the spawning ground for "buying" an audience.

There are those in our business who have some reservations about the use of contests. The feeling exists that some contests cheapen a station and that others do not fit in with the station's sound. To some so-called Good Music stations and Classical Music stations, for example, the identification of a musical selection or a performer would be considered the limit of a contest. We can appreciate the fact that certain contests, like the collecting of bottle caps, a talent search, a bicycle marathon, etc., fit particular formats better than others. The key, of course, is to understand the audience being served by the station. Does a contest fit? Is it too sophisticated? Is it too prosaic?

Trial and error soon weed out the contests that do not mesh with the sound. The degree of involvement and the results obtained are quickly discernible. The results should be thoroughly analyzed and studied. Contests have their place in the broadcasting spectrum, but they must be viewed in a proper perspective. When the tool becomes the master, everyone is in trouble.

There are many types of contests and many ways in which stations promote the contests and actually play them. This is where good production can shine and contribute greatly. A contest can provide a certain amount of allure that romanticizes the station's image.

## CONTEST PRODUCTION

The creation and execution of a contest is a challenge for any production-minded broadcaster. The entire arena of direct involvement with the audience is an awesome spectacle. The choices are myriad. A station can force listenership or run contests that do not require a specific tune-in; prizes can range tremendously in value; participation qualifications can go from the sublime to the ridiculous.

Jack Macdonald, in *The Handbook of Radio Publicity and Promotion* (TAB Books), tells us: "There's only a limited number of basic approaches to promotion. The idea is to take these and twist them, turn them, and adapt them so that they continually appear fresh, bright, and new."

All the strategy and planning involved in setting up a contest must be governed by how it is going to come off on the air. How will it sound—totally? From the advance promotion for the contest to the actual playing of the game, how will it sound? Every step must be anticipated to insure a smooth flow on the air. The more planning, the less aggravation once the game is in operation.

Some contests involve elaborate preparation, while others can more or less take care of themselves once launched. Let's look at one where production was a big factor. This contest invited listeners to guess the capitals of the world on the basis of musical and verbal clues. A different capital was asked for every day for two weeks. A prize was awarded to the person who came closest to guessing the 14 capitals. It was a tune-in contest, since it involved listening to the station for a specific period of time.

Such contests have to be explained on the air before the actual two-week period of clues is to start. It has to be simple and yet interesting enough to attract attention. Whoever writes the copy has to sell the audience on playing the game or if a listener does not care to actively participate, he should still find the whole thing interesting. In other words, nothing connected with the contest should drive away those who cannot be the benefactors since they will not be participating.

A list of capitals has to be prepared, but it must be kept in mind that music must be available for each capital and enough

Songs like "I Left My Heart in San Francisco," "St. Louis Blues," and "Chicago" illustrate how music relates to the contest and the comparative ease of obtaining the music material for the daily clues. Each day's material must be scripted and produced. Someone must be responsible for writing the clues, perhaps with a person in mind who can speak with a telling accent to further identify the capital. General explanatory material must always be included, preferably at the beginning of the contest announcement so that the listener is always reminded how he is expected to participate. Some people come to realize that, if they have not been with the contest from the outset, they have no way of winning the prize involved. Yet, everyone wants to be reminded how the thing works. It is the repetitive principle at work. It also relates to the kind of person who participates mentally—the person who goes through the play part of the game, but does not actively enter. This person obtains satisfaction by learning that he would have won had he entered the contest in the formal way required.

Let's take a look at another contest where on-air production and extensive behind-the-scenes activity were united for a minor radio spectacular. As a means of bringing the sentimentality attached to the perennial June bride to radio, KRAK concocted the idea of having a couple actually exchange wedding vows on the air. The only stipulation was a planned June wedding and the willingness of the couple to participate. To enter, a couple had to write a short dissertation (in 25 words or less) on "Why I would like to be married over the air?"

The contest promotional utilized the traditional wedding march and included a list of the wedding gifts from the station, which included a honeymoon in Carmel, \$1000 worth of furniture, the minister's fee, wedding photographs, and a complete tape recording of the wedding ceremony.

When the day arrived, the station's studios came alive with the hustle and bustle of families and guests jamming in for the ceremony and the broadcast portion of the exchange of vows. Everything was performed in good taste and the station established a precedent for the market.

Bob Hamilton tersely brings out in his **Operating Manual for Starship: Radio '73**, "A good many programers in the United States don't understand the structural qualities of a contest or promotion and many times will take a contest that was successful on one station and run it on their own station without understanding the ingredients." It is essential to construct excitement and dynamism into a contest and provide that gift of production that elicits the interest sought.

Those entrusted with the preparation and follow-through required for a contest have to possess an intimate working knowledge of what is available at the station, not only talent-wise, but also in the area of sound effects and music. It is not too rare when ideas suggest effects and gimmicks that might not be physically available at the station. Or the effect might be so intricate that the time involved in producing the effect cannot be sandwiched in with other present production demands.

Not only it is a case of thoroughly understanding the actual facilities at hand, but one of tactics. Here again, the program director has planned the flow of material that is to go on the air and the means of putting all the elements together to accomplish the desired end result. Therefore, the pragmatic point of view must be considered. If a certain air personality is needed for contest production work, it may run into overtime because commercial work takes precedence. This, of course, affects the budget. Another matter is the question of whether or not the studios are available for production work for the contest when an air personality is finished with his air shift.

In a number of cases, contests take to the air with inadequate preparation because the very factors just mentioned were not considered during the planning stage. It is frustrating for creative people to be forced to compromise with budget and production studio facilities. How many times have we seen talent go over and over a particular desired effect or patiently balance sound, voice, and music from many



A June bride and her husband-to-be exchanged vows in a broadcast ceremony. The lucky couple was the winner of a contest.

inputs into the board when other demands and pressures are not imposing upon them? This is where quality begins. Yet, the program director has to be realistic enough to anticipate other demands upon his staff and studios. He is the pivot point and he is the one who can keep everyone "up" as he coordinates the flow of work that ultimately finds its way to the airwaves.

The program director has to be attuned to a salesman who comes running in at the last minute with an announcement that has to go on the air the following day, but must be prepared so the client can hear it before approval is given. He must be prepared to take care of last-minute changes in copy that have to go on the air immediately (if not sooner). He must cope with emergency public service needs. He must be in a position to make personnel changes when illness intervenes. In short, the program director must deal with the following factors:

- Production schedule of each air personality
- Availability of production studios
- Normal flow of commercial preparation time
- Planned promotional campaigns
- Production aids available
- Budget allocations for his department (including a reserve for contingencies)

Although throughout the book we emphasize the attention needed to translate preparation into quality work, we must accept the many compromises that must be made in order for the whole situation to be a viable one.

The program director is involved in many meetings to beef up the quality of the air product to aid the sales effort of the station. Contests, to some, are just a means of buying rating points. The philosophy in that case is to keep the big ones in operation during the rating periods and supplement other times of the year with smaller, ongoing games.

In examining the written material that has been scripted for a particular contest, the program director has to "hear" it in his mind before he can assign it and delegate responsibility for its execution to a member or members of the air staff. He must come up with answers to a number of questions. Where there may be an indication for a musical bridge, what kind of a bridge should be used? Should it be sustained throughout? How is the air personality to read his part over the bridge? Does the meter of a bridge match the pacing of the script? Does the station music library contain a clean cut of the bridge in mind? Can other musical bits be substituted if need be? And

what about the sound effects that might be called for? Again, are these elements available and in acceptable condition? Or is this the time to purchase a set of additional production aids? Is the quality starting to wear thin? Is the library composed of "now" sounds?

In addition to those sounds available through normal channels, what about supplementing this material with sounds that can be picked up around the station? The sound of the spinning of a wheel can be constructed from some engineering test pressings. Music selections played at different speeds from which they were recorded can produce eerie and odd sounds. Don't overlook inexpensive items like a toy horn or other playthings that make sounds. With a bit of imagination it is not difficult to come up with a distinctive sound suited for any contest.

After the program director feels that he knows what's needed, he can assign it. When the production is completed, he should listen to it with a critical ear and only release it when he is convinced that it is an asset to the station. If, in the course of play on the air, he starts to have some reservations about its sound or impact, he should set to work and revise it. Sometimes, contests in their actual air execution sound more cumbersome than originally intended and the effect is depreciated. Before that point is reached, revision is imperative. No one should ever be so vain as to think improvement over the initial deed cannot be made!

## **STUDIO TELEPHONE**

There are many contests designed for immediate listener participation. These are the contests that are played while the air personality is on the air and involve the telephone. To function properly and avert interference with the station's business lines, it is necessary to have one or more contest lines in the master control room where the air personality is conducting his show.

If the program director feels that it is vital to the excitement or play of the contest that the respondent's voice be heard on the air as he is participating in the game, then it is strongly recommended that a seven-second delay unit be installed in the telephone input for the sake of protection against any unwanted comment from any caller. This line must be carefully monitored at the station end so that sufficient time is allowed to bleep out undesirable utterances.

If it is not deemed absolutely necessary for the tape delay, the spontaneity of the game should not suffer. The air personality can repeat the caller's comments and, in a sense, get off the phone faster than if the tape delay were in operation.

Such a game is not construed by the listening public as a contrived one if they hear the air personality mention the name and address of the party playing the game. Repeating the answer given also strengthens the legitimacy of it all.

When the game is to be played, it is advisable to alert listeners so they are prepared. A tease prior to going into a record gets everyone in the proper frame of mind and whets the appetite for the play. A variation which maintains interest and gives more people a chance to play is the practice of accepting the fourth or fifth (or whatever) call. In this way, no one can really complain about not being able to get through. Another complaint arises where a station has extensive coverage and the people who have to dial long distance are at a distinct disadvantage. A way to circumvent this problem is to announce prior to a certain segment of play that calls will be accepted only from people who live in a specific area or who have a specific telephone prefix.

Every caller should be treated with the utmost courtesy and respect. Politeness is contagious and good telephone etiquette makes for good public relations. Even when the game is over and the phone somehow jingles on, courtesy has to be the byword.

## *Chapter VII Public Affairs*

Public affairs often falls into the same category with public service—a “necessary evil.” In the broad sense public affairs refers to a meaningful dialog with community leaders. Programs are devoted to serving the needs of the community.

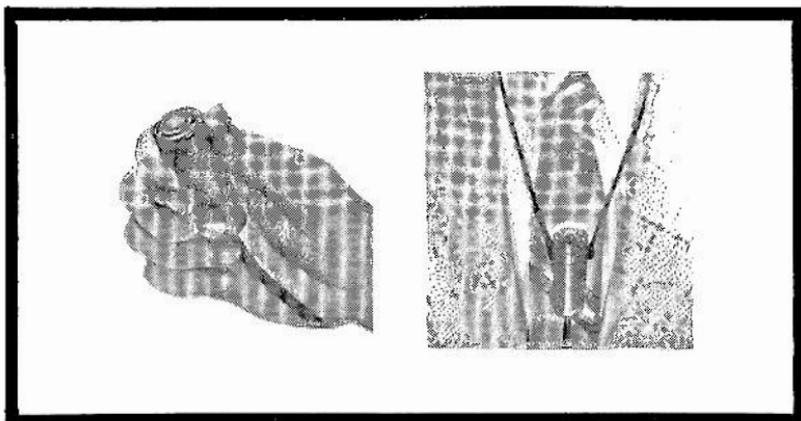
The larger units of time, e.g., the 15-minute, 30-minute, and 60-minute programs, are invariably scheduled at a time when the station feels the least amount of “damage,” from a rating point of view, will be registered. Sunday is the day usually reserved for the “intellectual ghetto” type of programs.

### **FORUM AND PANEL PROGRAMS**

Be it a forum or a panel format, someone has to be in charge of producing the program. Or perhaps it is physically prepared by an outside source, with only assistance from the station, or a station personality.

When we talk about producing either a forum or a panel, we think in terms of designing the program, lining up the guests, and usually pretaping it for later broadcast. A lot of work usually goes into programs of this broad area. The host or moderator is invariably the only person who continues with the program on a weekly basis. If he is a station air personality, so much the better. If he is from the outside, he should have some broadcasting savvy. The amount of preparation that the host or moderator applies is usually reflected in the quality of the program. Someone closely familiar with whatever topic is to be pursued must steer the program on a successful course. Such a person can make the program flow even if some of the other participants somehow lack the capacity to project. Sometimes people are very adept in their subject, but the presence of a microphone in a broadcast studio can stifle their thoughts and make for a dull situation. It is then up to the host or moderator to draw out such people and progress even against their subconscious ambivalence.

A good omnidirectional microphone placed on a table with guests seated around it will provide a professional sound



This RCA miniature dynamic microphone provides excellent balance when the performer is talking off mike.

if the room acoustics are satisfactory. Whoever is in charge of the session should make sure that voice levels are balanced before the program starts and should alert the participants by hand signals if they are straying too far from the balances originally set. In an around-the-table setup, it would be ideal to have a lavalier microphone for each person to provide mobility without constant attention to levels and to prevent off-mike pickup. A good lavalier mike can be purchased for approximately \$100.

The host or moderator, in addition to maintaining the flow of a program through incisive questioning and comments via the notes that he has prepared in advance, has to always think radio. He must constantly remember that the audience can't see the panel and cannot always be expected to differentiate between the voices that are heard. Therefore, he must continually identify those who are speaking. This can be done by directly referring to the person by name immediately before he or she speaks or by using the stage-whisper technique, where the moderator talks over the speaker in an audible, but hushed, voice. Sometimes, a combination of the two techniques can prove most effective.

If the program is of a continuing nature with a theme attached to it, the host or moderator would be wise to make notes about those guests who sound best and respond positively so that they can be invited back for repeat performances. Occasionally, having them listen to a taped program can work the trick and play upon their vanity for a future appearance.

Some disc jockeys seem to have a negative attitude regarding forum and panel programs and occasionally the

attitude is reflected in comments about such forms of programming. We cannot expect air personalities to exude unbounded enthusiasm about a program in this category, but we certainly should expect them not to toy with it and be cute or supercilious. If the listener wants to tune out, he should have the right to do so. However, he should not be encouraged to do so by an infantile attitude on the part of the disc jockey. The effect of this attitude can sometimes be avoided by producing messages to promote the program. Such announcements should be logged several hours ahead of the air time for the program. The air personality should be instructed to be prudent about the way he signs off his show or interrupts his show for the forum or panel program. Again, it's an instance of environment and showcasing the product.

It is a rare forum or panel program that takes questions on the air from listeners. First of all, it is impossible to do so when the program is pretaped. And secondly, unless sufficient promotion has been generated, it is embarrassing to sit there waiting for the phone to ring. Yet, if this method is desired, it is incumbent upon the moderator to field these questions or comments in an adult manner. It is a safeguard to have that good old tape delay standing by for protection against undesirable language. Also, the telephone line should be equalized for good voice levels on the air.

## **EDITORIALS**

Usually, a member of management acts as the spokesman for the station, and it is in the interest of identification and continuity that the same person deliver all editorials. Obviously, that person does not have to have a stentorian speaking manner, but he should have a pleasing voice and a convincing delivery to convey the authority of the station management. Listeners always subconsciously preclude that anyone who is on the air should have had some voice training. In a sense, they are right to expect this expertise. True, they are presumably listening for content rather than anything else; yet, other nuances always seem to enter into consideration. All of a sudden, the man is the station and the station is the man. Therefore, the editorial spokesman must accept the program director's evaluation of his voice quality and delivery. If need be, the program director should air editorials himself if other management personnel decline to do so.

The development of editorials requires thorough research and careful preparation. It is difficult to generalize on the amount of time needed to prepare an editorial, since some subjects are more complicated than others. Editorial research

requires the ability of someone trained to probe an issue and develop a theme from his analysis. The superficial treatment of a subject only defeats the whole purpose of the feature. The station also must be prepared for rebuttal, since it must provide time for replies from anyone who cares to do so. The "hot potato" items will generate much more activity in this direction than those of a more docile nature. The editorial writer must not write above the comprehension of the majority of the listening audience; if he does, little reaction will be generated.

Regarding length, the NAB tells us (**The Elements of Editorializing**, Editorializing Conference, 3/2/62) that "250 words is about the approximate length of the average lead editorial in a newspaper. It is never too long a time to fill on a subject and frequently is not long enough in that a great deal of compression on the subject is required." In air time, an editorial of this length would take about two minutes. Depending upon the nature of the subject, one editorial can be sufficient, or a series of editorials dealing with the same subject can be run over a period of several days. A continuing series, if the subject is meaty enough, can be a good audience builder.

According to Vern Mueller of KPOJ in Portland, Oregon, "The first step in embarking on an editorial plan is to put a policy down on paper, with clear guidelines as to purpose and procedure. There is subject material in your community and it is not hard to discover."

Indeed, there is material in every single community in the United States. Local ramifications of the drug problem are important. Local corruption in politics is pertinent. Evidence of local brutality stimulates concern. Local industrial pollution arouses comment. Local urban redevelopment excites interest. Local nursing homes investigation fans attention. Local, local, local. Since some topics do consume more time in research and preparation, allocations and priorities have to be decided upon by the committee or editorial board.

The board also should be open to suggestions and recommendations for topics by the station's staff, letters and phone calls from listeners, and "influentials" within the community. From time to time, it is a good practice for the board to devote time to exercising a critique of editorial matter and how well particular subjects have been covered, and then determine if community action has been stimulated (where called for or needed) through the device of the editorial.

Regarding the frequency of editorials, the pattern varies anywhere from three to six times per day. The object is to reach the station's total audience and, depending on listening habits, to avoid repetition to the extent where dials will be turned. Certain musical selections are played many times a day during their life as a hit, but editorials do not fall into this select classification. The repeat factor wears very thin.

Insofar as a steady program diet, this is a major decision for management to weigh. Some stations feel that a station should only editorialize sporadically on important issues. Others feel that continuity is important; they contend that significant issues are perennially a part of the current scene. The latter group says that there are always issues worthy of discussion and they seek to evolve the editorial into a regular program feature that has appeal.

Regardless of the philosophy, whenever an editorial is prepared and aired, it must be integrated into the total program flow and take its place among the various ingredients that the station is offering to attract and maintain an audience. In view of the fact that it may become antagonistic to both listener and advertiser, it should be constantly evaluated.

There is now an organization called the National Broadcast Editorial Association with membership open to all persons actively involved in the formulation and presentation of broadcast editorials. It began as an annual conference which served as a forum for new ideas and background information to help individual stations improve their editorializing. It plans to offer its own awards program for excellence in editorializing and a newsletter to keep members informed of new ideas and techniques. Membership is a nominal fee of \$25 per year. Those desirous of information can contact the NAB Washington office.

## *Chapter VIII Remote Broadcasts*

On the subject of remotes, Edd Routt, in **The Business of Radio Broadcasting** (TAB Books), writes: "In the major markets, at least, the day of the remote is about gone. A few still push the idea of having personalities and equipment on the scene; but, for the most part, this device has about lost its appeal. It worked fine when radio station air staffs were made up of god-like personalities and when listeners listened to programs instead of stations. Now, major market listeners are too busy to follow station personalities to remote broadcasts. In the small and medium markets, remotes are still sold and executed with great noise and precision. Hundreds of stations have remote studios, vans, or mobile homes that are completely equipped to feed the program line with good quality sound. The remote broadcast works best for grand openings, shopping center promotions, special sales, and closeouts."

Add to this George Volger's comments in **Radio Programing in Action** (Hastings House): "The opening of a new art gallery or museum, high school graduations, golf tournaments, soapbox derbies, home shows, are a few of the possibilities in making full use of remote units for special salable features." Tack on those high school football games and church services and you've pretty much exhausted the field.

The excitement and hoopla of any remote is only as viable as the contributing forces are inclined to make it. Several forces can work against its success:

**Apathy**—a lack of enthusiasm. If the vehicle is constructed and agreed upon by several parties, then the fullest effort should be expended to make sure that a turnout is generated through sufficient advance promotion, both on the air and otherwise.

**Gimmickry**—overuse of the device. This occurs when a station scraps its basic programing format for anything and everything that comes down the pike. It is difficult to motivate when the built-in showmanship of a remote loses its allure because it occurs so frequently.

Budget—reduction of radio dollars. Some broadcasters contend that too much of the money earmarked for a remote does not go into the station's coffers. Line charges, additional equipment, and talent fees add to the total cost of the remote. The money used to pay these costs could have purchased valuable commercial messages.

### **SPORTS EVENTS**

In the preparation of any remote sports program, the program director has to be aware of the talent needed to do a good job. It is embarrassing to all concerned to see the potential on-air enthusiasm marred by the announcer's inadequate knowledge of the particular sport or a blah attitude toward the event.

First, of course, the PD should look for the talent required right on his own air staff. Most stations don't have a sports director as such who devotes full time to that function, but there may be someone who carries that title for outward purposes because of an interest in that direction or someone who does sports news within the framework of the station's format. If there is no such person on the staff, the PD is compelled to look elsewhere for a personality to do play-by-play or otherwise cover a sports event. That individual may be a coach at a local high school or the sports editor of the local newspaper or a stringer for the station somewhere within the station's coverage area.

If the sports personality is not from the station staff, there is the possibility that the individual may be a complete novice in regard to microphone technique. Even the most professional people sometimes forget good mike technique when the happening of the moment is so exciting that they become completely wrapped up in the tempo of it all. But good mike technique is important to keep the listener continuously interested.

Apart from the commercial content, which may or may not be done live at the remote, the next concern should be with a briefing with the teams or participants involved. Facts and figures should be compiled from records available and prepared in a form so that the information is convenient for the air personality's use. At this point, it may also be wise to think in terms of a "color man" or a spotter who can spell the air personality and otherwise aid him in the delivery of the sports event. Whether it's one or more people concerned with air performance, it is imperative that the names of the participants are pronounced correctly.

Interviews with coaches and ballplayers always contribute to the vitality of a sportscast. But these details have to

be set up in advance. If there is to be an interview in the locker room after game time, the logistics of it all have to be prearranged. The whole event has to be well planned in every aspect so that any last-minute problems are averted.

Now, what about endorsements or sportscaster identification with a sponsor? If the sportscaster has made a name for himself in the community, it would be wise to explore commercial possibilities that can be exploited without disrupting any of the action. Naturally, details must be worked out with the participating clients. **Sports Illustrated** (11/6/72) reports on how this identification is effective even from a negative endorsement. "Humble Howard Cosell gets the award for the world's most Machiavellian radio commercial. 'And now I'd like to tell you about a snack you may not like,' Cosell begins his spiel. 'Slim Jim's Meat Snacks have a spicy, tangy flavor that no one is ever neutral about. You either love them or you don't.' Cosell pauses for full effect, scowls and says, 'Me? I can't stand 'em.' Slim Jim's reasoning is obvious: all the people who can't stand Howard Cosell will run right out and buy a gross."

### **CHURCH PICKUP**

A church remote has a built-in plus from a production aspect. Most of the members of the clergy have been trained in public speaking or have acquired a vent in this direction through years of experience. The quality of voice control, ranging from a monotone to an impediment may be another matter, but as far as familiarity with public speaking, it is there.

Depending upon the nature of the portion of the services to be broadcast, the greatest problem centers around the pauses that usually occur. Imagery can take over to some extent on the part of the listener as to what is happening in the church when there are lapses on the air. Apart from a prepared tape, which some churches use to fill their contracted or donated time, a church remote depends upon the elements of a sermon, choir participation, and congregation response. And there is no way to circumvent pauses as the service moves from one element to another. The program director can only assume that a pause is not a problem and proceed from there. Those who listen to this type of program understand what is transpiring all along the way and readily accept the mechanics involved.

Church pickups are usually presented on a regularly scheduled basis; therefore, engineering can install the equipment and leave it there. It is then the responsibility of

someone at the church to turn on the switch and check with the station preceding the actual broadcast to establish levels and make sure that all is working well for the broadcast. Special occasions arise, like Easter and Christmas services, and they may suggest longer or more elaborate services involving a great deal more musical participation. It then becomes a matter of balancing voice and music according to the physical layout of the originating point.

Overall, church pickups are giving way more and more to pretaped religious programs, where judicious editing can condense the service and thus eliminate long pauses and focus on the sermon.



Some remote broadcasts feature local talent.

## STORE LOCATION

Foot traffic is important to every retailer, and every retailer is constantly seeking ways to increase the number of people who come through his doors, which hopefully translates into cash register receipts. According to the Committee on Definitions of the American Marketing Association, "Merchandising is the planning involved in marketing the right merchandise, at the right place, at the right time, in the right quantities, and at the right price." Further, John Wingate and Elmer Schaller, in *Techniques of Retail Merchandising* (Prentice-Hall), write: "Every merchant must perform the merchandising function adequately in order to survive. This statement is true regardless of the size or location of the store or of the type of merchandise it sells."

If the merchant and station personnel feel that staging a remote at the store can generate the desired foot traffic and expose the outlet to those who normally would not patronize the establishment, then the mechanics have to be worked out. The "experiment" might start out as a one-shot event, but succeed to the extent that continuous or future remotes seem wise.

The remote can be handled by a station air personality or feature local talent. It can be a remote performance of a disc jockey show as the listener would hear it normally from the station, or it can be a talent/variety show. The station personality can interview shoppers at the scene of the remote while somebody else back at the station plays records or other recorded program elements on cue. A remote can be run during one jock's shift or several of them.

To effectively whip up the ardor for a store remote, a great deal of preparation is needed from all participating partners, and everyone who has a stake in the remote is a partner. This means sufficient advance promotion and publicity by both the merchant and the station. Listeners must be told what to expect at the site of the remote. Are they to have a chance to talk with the disc jockey on the air? Will they receive a premium like a free record if they come down? Will it also be an autograph-signing party? If there is a band, will there be space for dancing?

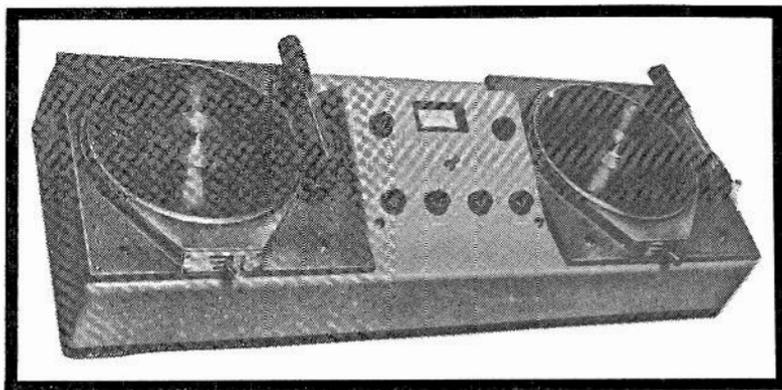
After the plans are formulated, engineering knows how to proceed with the type of installation necessary to carry out the program. Engineering must work with the retailer to ascertain the best place in the store (or even outside the store) to locate the gear. With people milling about, engineering is well aware how easily equipment can be damaged if it is not adequately encased or otherwise protected.

Engineering should also point out that various levels of voice quality must be expected with some remote formats. Background yelling and crowd buzzing naturally become audible every time the microphone is opened. Even with a tight unidirectional microphone, a lot of bounce, echo, and—just plain chatter are picked up. If the remote also includes a musical aggregation of some kind, that must be considered insofar as quality is concerned. Chances are that there will not be a rehearsal; consequently, engineering has to “wing it” to determine correct microphone location and pickup. This is particularly a problem when the musical group uses a great deal of electronic amplification.

A poorly produced store location remote sounds “mickey-mouse” to those who are not present at the site. If it induces a substantial portion of the audience to tune out, the remote can have a boomerang effect—and that is something that every station can do without. If a series of broadcasts is planned, the boomerang effect can be remedied after the first fiasco, but what do you do when that one time at bat is detrimental?

#### REMOTE EQUIPMENT

Any regular involvement with remote broadcasting requires an operation structured for multi-input flexibility. To that end, manufacturers of broadcast equipment produce a number of specialty items to smooth the transition from “local” to “remote.” The following pages show photos and descriptions of a few key items of this nature. While the units shown are by no means the only such products available—and their inclusion should not be construed as an endorsement—the listing will give at least an idea as to the spectrum of specialty gear designed for such use.



This Gates portable turntable-console is ideal for remotes where records are played.



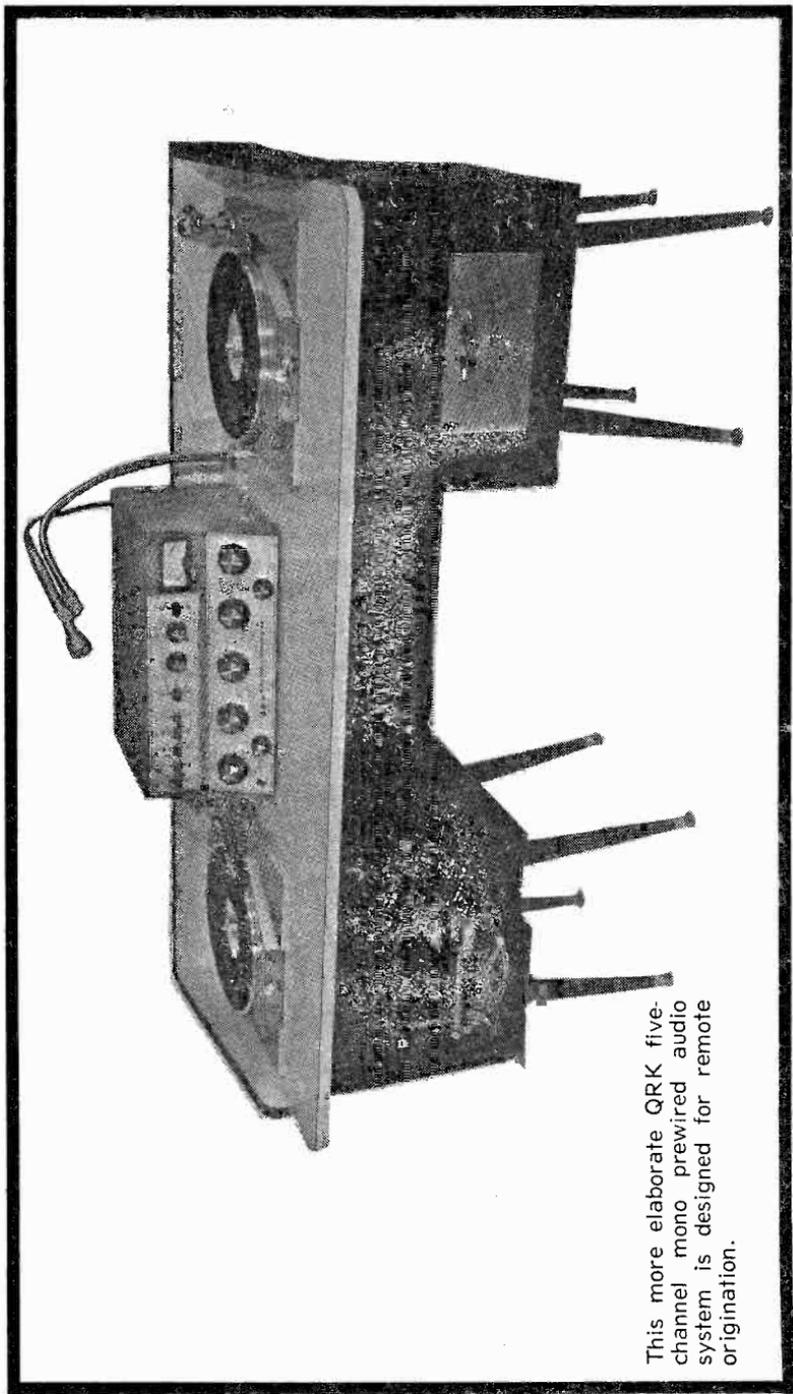
Telex sportscaster headset enables the sportscaster to broadcast live (fixed station or mobile), listen to production cues, and monitor his own transmission all with hands-free convenience.



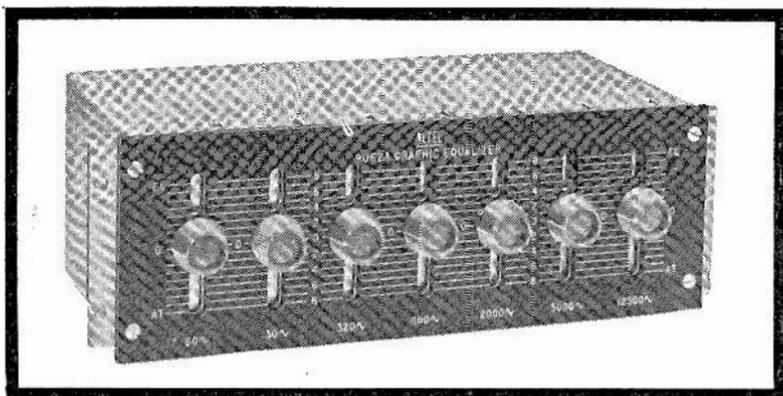
Bell system phone plugs directly into a standard phone jack and uses regular lines for remote pickups. It's ideal for brief broadcasts from a number of separate locations. To operate, the unit is simply plugged in and the station number dialed.



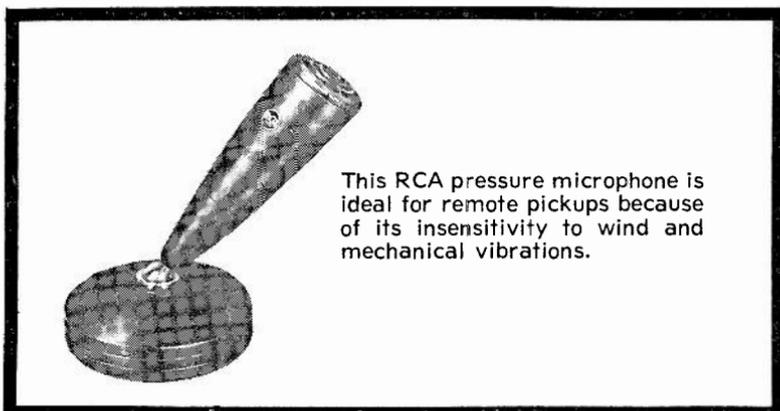
Collins four-channel remote amplifier powered by self-contained batteries with a life of approximately 75 hours. This unit is extremely portable.



This more elaborate QRK five-channel mono prewired audio system is designed for remote origination.



Altec graphic equalizer provides accurate control of remote transmissions.



This RCA pressure microphone is ideal for remote pickups because of its insensitivity to wind and mechanical vibrations.

## *Chapter IX Specialized Programing*

Apart and distinct from what may be termed the music-and-news stations, there are those who have designed their operations to compete in the radio market through the avenue of specialization of another kind. Recent innovations have achieved a remarkable degree of success and, in fact, have been emulated by others. Also, there are those who depart from a previous format completely, and there are those who depart from it in selected segments of their broadcasting hours.

The amalgam of what we shall observe as it relates to production techniques offers interesting examples of broadcast creativity. Today, there are production explorations peculiar to conventional broadcasting developments. They excite and titillate the fancy of those who are inclined to be in the forefront of what was once experimentation but is now reality. It is not within our province to evaluate the merits of each new development (or if not exactly new, at least modernized); rather, it is enough to comment on how such programing is made a viable and competitive force through the effective use of whatever production expertise can be brought to bear.

Even as we examine various applications and methodology, we should keep in mind the premise that we can learn something, though we are not specifically engaged in that type of programing either on a full-time basis or even for a fleeting part of the broadcast schedule. The development of ideas is not that exclusive to any format or phase of a format. The objective of all of us is to seek ways and means of constructing the best radio product that we can offer to our listeners and to our advertisers. A thought that can be translated from one format to another, and perhaps improved upon, is that much more powerful a tool for those who can see its applicability. So, don't arbitrarily dismiss any facet because it may not be directly applicable. Examine, evaluate, and extrapolate.

## TALK SHOWS

Call-in or telephone-talk programs have been going on for some time now in a number of various approaches. Several poignant questions were posed in a survey conducted a few years ago by *Broadcast Management/Engineering* (2/66) and they are still relevant today. Extracting production-type questions, let's reflect on these:

"Are preliminary interviews with guests advantageous?

How do you delay these programs, if you do?

What time limits are imposed and how do you handle habitual callers?

Are there any taboo subjects on these programs?"

To start with, as we ponder the successful execution of a talk show, the pivot point has to deal with the programing philosophy advocated by station management. This has a direct relationship with the kind of person who functions as the host of a talk show and the parameters within which he is permitted to operate. For example, some stations feel that a specific controversial statement by the host can create more interest in the program and stimulate the reaction of the listening public. Some prefer a neutral host and shy away from an opinionated one. Some hosts function with occasional guests who converse among themselves and then throw it out to the public for telephone participation, while others work without any guests whatsoever.

Once the format has been ascertained, guidelines for selecting the personality who can best fulfill the requirements can be established. He may be a present staff member, or he may have to be sought from other sources. Or the problem may be solved by purchasing one of the syndicated programs.

According to a *Media Decisions* (12/72) survey, "Full commitment to open-phone programing is the most demanding and expensive type of radio. It requires a species of mike communicaster not easy to find, much planning and research, eclectic backgrounds, the right kind of voice presence, skill in handling strangers, and an ample bankroll for line charges. The key phrase that practitioners of this style of radio use to describe their work is 'community involvement'."

One basic question arises during consideration of a talk show that encourages guest interviews. Will preliminary interviews be necessary to insure the best utilization of the broadcast time? Perhaps the lining up of guests and the tight schedules that they have to meet would preclude little preliminary research before air time. It is ideal to spend as

much time as possible in advance to foster a certain fluidity during the broadcast. But in many cases "winging it" becomes the pattern. This procedure even points out more emphatically why an astute host is a valuable asset. He should be conversant in many areas and possess that wonderful capacity to control the interview and guide it along once outside participants start to get on the telephone. According to **Radio Management Report** (5 / 1 / 72), "WGN's Wally Phillips in Chicago works with 50 reference books at his fingertips to field the questions that hit him daily."

Even within this realm, there is further segmentation and delineation. According to **Broadcasting** (10 / 30 / 72), "KABC in Los Angeles, among the earliest two-way telephone talk stations in the nation, having been on a news and conversational format since 1960, has undergone a major format shakeup. Key changes involve breaking four-hour blocks, presided over by individual "communicators" as they call them, into mostly two-hour segments. Also, a former basketball star functions in an early evening segment and a controversial high-fashion designer does a daily two hours of commentary and telephone talk. The philosophy is to brighten and lighten the station's continual talk. The direction has been taken to accommodate a feeling that people want to get away from the hard, political talk on a full-day basis. The station is retaining a four-hour and a three-hour segment to continue the kind of worldly talk that has been featured for some time, but the rest of the two-way conversation is geared to a sort of magazine concept of feature material. Even the four-hour morning news block now has cohosts reporting the news in a conversational style, conversing with one another as well as with the audience."

What about the actual facilities needed to properly and efficiently program all-talk? Old studios that worked well for disc jockey operations have been found inadequate for all-talk programming. Telephone-type talk shows require room for seating several guests, additional microphones, and telephones. When WTAQ in LaGrange, Illinois, made the change to the all-talk format, they realized that most studios constructed or designed in the past two decades have incorporated the orange-crate or U-shaped desk with two turntables and a large console. This arrangement, it was found, made it impossible to interview guests and did not lend itself to a comfortable, relaxed operation. Redesign was necessary and WTAQ's conversion was featured in **Broadcast Engineering** (11 / 69). "One fact that should be recognized in connection with a talk studio is that it must be very quiet. This means no echoes, outside noises, loud ticking clocks, and no

humming motors or tape machines. You may ask why an all-talk studio should be so quiet. The reason is that many participants do not talk loudly. Often a guest will wander away from his mike. All this spells trouble for the operator who must ride a high gain level if the room is noisy."

Returning to our second question cited earlier in the survey, what about the problem of delay? "One can't provide direct on-the-air access day after day without worrying about profanity, obscenity, or libelous language," says **Broadcast Management/Engineering** in its lead article (1/72) on all-talk radio in New York City. "Bob Kanner, vice president for engineering of WMCA, which calls itself Dialog Radio 57, has solved the problem with his seven-second program delay system and panic button. If a no-no is uttered, the talk host, the producer, or board engineer has seven seconds in which to press the panic button. This will switch in a tape cartridge message which says, 'I'm sorry, we had to cut that off the air.' At the end of this time interval—another seven seconds—the program will have been picked up again, sans the offending word." Akin to this problem is that of not losing the caller who gets on the air. Kanner has tackled this particular problem by working closely with the telephone company to figure out a foolproof incoming call system. The heart of the system is a multiline call director, which can take and hold eight callers. A program producer screens incoming calls and stacks up all callers that will eventually get on the air.

Amplifying the survey question about time limitations and habitual callers, the discretion of the air personality usually solves the problem. Sometimes, a host imposes a time limit and affords himself an opportunity to bail out if the call is inane or going nowhere. If the caller is interesting, with a good question or declarative statement, there is really no reason to cut him off. Habitual callers do pose a problem, especially in smaller markets. They tend to monopolize valuable air time and, even if they are fascinating, soon prove ponderous and obsequious. Besides, it seems to tell the listener that the program isn't too successful from an audience point of view if only a regular few are heard. They begin to wonder: how many others are listening? The larger market has a built-in advantage in this sphere, since the odds of the habitual caller getting through become that much greater. Another way to possibly handle a problem of this nature is to indicate on the air that a certain time interval must elapse before a person is eligible to place another call to the talk show host.

**Broadcasting** (11/20/72) reports: "An American Research Bureau study of the postmidnight (1 a.m. to 5 a.m.) radio listening habits of adults in the eight largest cities shows

that the most popular format among both men and women is the talk / telephone-participation format. The ARB surveyed the markets of New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, Philadelphia, Detroit, Boston, San Francisco, and Washington and discovered that the talk format has a 24.3-percent share among adult men and 41-percent share among adult women."

Taboos? This is interesting from a sociological point of view. Initially, when talk shows took to the airwaves, several topics were considered taboo—sex, alcoholics, and strictly personal problems. But today, the strictures and barriers appear to have evaporated. In fact, Bill Ballance of KGBS, Los Angeles, pioneered the sex talk show. It even went into syndication, as described on the promotional brochure from Dick Clark Radioshows, Inc. (next page). The syndicators describe the show thusly: "These unusual broadcasts probe the innermost reaches of the female mind and unlock the mysteries of a woman's universe as she phones Bill Ballance and lays it all on the line!" True, these women do lay it on the line—they are ultra-candid. This fare is usually broadcast between the hours of 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. The degree of propriety seems to be limited to obscene or profane language, which is bleeped out, but questions like: "How do you turn your man on? Where is the most unusual place you have had sex? Have you ever made love for pay? Have you ever cheated on your mate? Do you believe in free love?"...all seem to be acceptable. *Variety* (11/1/72) reports about a suburban market hopping on the "bedwagon" with salutary effect on both listeners and sponsors. Program Director Chuck Dougherty of WTMR, Camden, New Jersey, contends that the audience does the show in good taste. You can tell they're trying to be careful about how they say things. They're their own editors." *McCall's* (11/72) says: "Though branded X-rated radio by conservative competitors and topless radio by some wags, the shows seem fairly sanitized. The exception is in California, where almost any topic goes—the more lurid the better." Don Chamberlain of KNEW, Oakland, California, makes it a point in his "California Girls" program to provide some pseudo-anonymity by carefully omitting last names. He will ask, however, for first name, age, and community of residence. Further rapport is established when Chamberlain invites his "California Girls" to a singles night out at some entertainment spot.

Due to the furore precipitated by the Ballance Show and other so-called topless programs, the FCC has received numerous complaints. Some congressmen and senators are taking an opposing view, which has resulted in some

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Promotion piece for syndicated sex talk show.

retrenchment, particularly in those markets with a more conservative populace. As of this writing, no definitive decisions have been reached on the legality on such broadcasts, and a court test may be needed to arrive at a final solution. The FCC has tried to bring about such a test by fining a midwest station for obscenity. But the station paid its fine and revised its format.

The success of any sex talk show resides exclusively with the host and his mature judgment in handling the subject. *Television/Radio Age* (11/13/72) reports: "Agency media chiefs don't seem too worried about the extent of permissiveness. For the most part, they see more risqué one-liners by radio personalities, more graphic talk show content, and avant garde music lyrics as part of the changing times. And there appears to be little client pressure to boycott such programing."

## **FARM SHOW**

The FCC defines agricultural programing as "including market reports, farming, and other information specifically related to the agricultural population." The staff involved and the time devoted to agribusiness determines the station's image in this category. Some stations feel that their programing part of the license application (new and renewal) should show some agricultural fare, while others make a more serious endeavor out of it. The staff in the latter group includes a farm director and a realistic amount of time on the air for agribusiness programing.

A lot of what is important in agriculture has time value. Market prices and summaries as provided on the news wire services and telephone reports from the Department of Agriculture (federal and state) have to be edited and aired as soon as possible to be meaningful for those people who want this type of information.

Although a station might not have a farm director per se, it is a good idea to assign coverage in this specialty to one individual so that he can become conversant with the terminology and sound fairly authentic when he is broadcasting agribusiness news. Credibility is lost when someone stumbles through a market report or a farm news story. If it is worth doing (even from a lip-service point of view), it is worth doing as well as possible.

Aside from the hard news, there are many opportunities for feature material, such as pretaped interviews with guest speakers at 4-H or Future Farmers or Farm-City Chamber of

Commerce functions. They can be in-depth studies of new developments and trends in agribusiness as they affect interested listeners in the station's coverage area. And then there are the queens of this and the princesses of that, and



## FARM BROADCASTERS

# LETTER

Letter No. 1574  
October 27, 1972

Dear Farm Broadcaster:

President announces corn sale to China.....Water Bank program for '73 announced.....Fertilizer study shows savings possible.....Florida free of exotic Newcastle.....Patents issued for protein-enriched bread.....Cotton production up, also exports, and cotton advisory committee to meet on '73 programs.

**NO MORE EXOTIC NEWCASTLE IN FLORIDA.....**USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service reports that exotic Newcastle has been eradicated from Florida. Fed'l veterinarians stated that no cases of the virulent poultry disease have been discovered since June 28. Nonetheless, a surveillance program will continue to ensure that none of the virus remains. Only 4200 square miles of three southern California counties remain under quarantine for exotic Newcastle disease.

**NAT'L COTTON ADVISORY MEETING NOV. 2.....**The Nat'l Cotton Advisory Committee will convene here Nov. 2. Discussion will center on the major provisions to be determined for the '73 cotton program including the nat'l production goal, the nat'l base acreage allotment, the set-aside percentage and the unrestricted use sales policy of upland cotton. Chairing the 41-member committee will be Ass't Sec'y Carroll G. Brunthaver.

**WHEAT EXPORTED WITHOUT SUBSIDY.....**The Export Marketing Service of the USDA, responding to inquiries, said today that 926,976 bushels of wheat have been exported at the zero export payment rate in effect since Sept. 22. This brings the total amount of wheat exported or under contract to be exported commercially since the beginning of the 1972-73 marketing year to 958,617,340 bushels.

**CORN TO CHINA.....**President Nixon announced on Friday the sale of 300 thousand tons of American corn to the People's Republic of China (Mainland China) by a private exporting firm. No gov't subsidies or export payments are involved. The USDA learned of the sale when called upon to make inspections.

**MORE COTTON.....**Larger prospective supplies highlight the 1972-73 U.S. cotton outlook. Sharply larger cotton production will boost the supply almost 24 million bales (480 lbs. net) despite the nearly one million bale decline in the carryover from last year.



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE - OFFICE OF INFORMATION

RADIO AND TELEVISION SERVICE • CODE 202 447-5161 • WASHINGTON D.C. 20250

Broadcast material furnished by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

these pretty girls usually are taken around for interviews at the various stations. The feminine voice is a refreshing deviation from the standard male approach in this field.

Other feature material is available from many sources: a university agriculture department, a specialty agriculture trade association, the county agent, federal and state bureaus, to mention several. (See the sample release.) Accessibility is only as far away as the station cares to become involved. In fact, some stations have taken the initiative to become a feeding point for others within a certain geographic area. Such stations garner and collate the material and send it out via telephone for a subscription fee ranging from a few dollars a month to as much as \$50 per week.

### **FOREIGN LANGUAGE**

According to the FCC, "License responsibility requires that internal procedures be established and maintained to insure sufficient familiarity with the foreign languages to know what is being broadcast and whether it conforms to the station's policies and to requirements of the Commission's rules. Failure of licensees to establish and maintain such control over foreign language programing will raise serious questions as to whether the station's operation serves the public interest, convenience, and necessity."

There it is, in black and white. So many stations who indulge in this type of programing brokerage out a block of time and superficially make themselves aware of what is occurring over their facilities. It is not enough to have English translations of the foreign language commercial announcements in advance of broadcast time. Nor is it enough to rely solely upon the broker to exercise his judgment and integrity in producing foreign language programs. Not only for the sake of maintaining the license, but also for an awareness of what is broadcast, it becomes mandatory to adequately monitor and otherwise become familiar with each program.

The program director should be responsible for insuring that station quality does not suffer when foreign language announcers and foreign language music is broadcast. He should review all the basic professional techniques that should be applicable at those hours as well as at any time. Chances are that station personnel will be handling the board or microphone for the foreign language announcer and, as a result, some of the basics can be kept intact. But the point on mike technique is something that must be impressed upon this individual who is the voice of the station when he is on the air.

This latter situation is applicable in all cases where you find stations programing German or Italian or Polish, etc. But

there are stations that engage in full-time Spanish language programming, particularly in areas where Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, and Cubans have settled in this country. These stations are generally located in California, Arizona, Texas, New Mexico, Florida, and New York.



*Part B - Sales Message*



## *Chapter X Planning The Sales Message*

In the words of Alex Groner in *The History of American Business & Industry* (American Heritage Publishing Co.), "Radio was not much of an advertising medium at the start and the stations themselves either forbade or discouraged the use of ads. One of the first to take advertising was New York City's WEAJ, and the first advertiser was the Queensboro Corporation, a Long Island City real estate developer. Others followed with their discreet announcements, but they were not permitted to offer merchandise or describe their products. These inhibitions did not last very long. Radio advertising soon became persistent, strident, and repetitive, and product names and slogans were endlessly spoken, shouted, and sung."

During the span of 50 years from then to now, radio has incisively cut its mark, and as an advertising medium radio has reached the billion-plus dollar category. Radio advertising is purchased at varying media levels. Filling these precious availabilities with messages that motivate and constantly induce action is the challenging task of the "creative types" within the ranks of the broadcasting and advertising fraternities.

Those responsible for planning advertising campaigns must be aware of what is available and the restrictions within which they must operate. It is imperative for the broadcaster to know and understand where he can be a viable force and contribute to that chain of marketing acumen. David Luck, Hugh Wales, and Donald Taylor, in their book, *Marketing Research* (Prentice-Hall), emphatically stress the point: "Everyone involved in the planning and production of advertising stands to profit from its success—the advertising agencies, the media carrying the advertising, and the advertiser who sponsors and pays for it."

Planning sounds like such a simple concept; yet, the intricacies involved sometimes elude us and at times delude us. There has to be a definitive goal. Theodore Levitt, in *Innovation in Marketing* (McGraw-Hill) warns: "Without a

clear setting, business tends to go off in all kinds of ambient directions, considering a large variety of individual suggestions without regard to their relationships to each other." We certainly cannot afford to wander aimlessly. We must harness the forces at hand to work for us. Thinking out the steps, anticipating many eventualities, and finally welding together that critical advertising message upon which so much rests is the responsibility of the initiating parties.

Necessarily accompanying this responsibility is a sensitivity to developments that influence every phase of planning. Witness, for example, a trend toward the cutback in the number of radio commercials broadcast in a given length of time with the resultant additional responsibility to make those commercials that are aired even stronger and more effective within the framework of more programming content. **Media Decisions** (11/72) reports that AM radio stations are reducing their commercial time in order to compete with the FMs. "The FM claim of less commercialization has apparently had impact not only on the younger level of listeners to contemporary FM stations but among listeners to beautiful-music FM stations serviced by Jim Schulke's Stereo Radio Productions. By contrast, SRP stations are limited to six commercial units per hour." The trade publication's observations further state, "In analyzing the pros and cons of reducing the commercial load, the AM station has to ponder the economic disadvantages. The costs are higher for AM than for FM stations. The built-in overhead is far greater. It requires more engineers and general personnel and the news department is normally more costly."

The significance of ongoing developments within the broadcasting industry have to be of concern to anyone connected with planning the sales message. Relevant concepts may have to be altered and the direction somewhat changed. But the important thing is to keep your eye on the ball at all times. That's where the action is and that's where paydirt is to be found. And after all, isn't that what it's all about?

## IDEATING

Daniel Aron, executive vice president and sales manager of the production firm No Soap Radio, New York, appeared before the 1972 Dayton Advertising Club all-day workshop and seminar and **Television/Radio Age** (5/29/72) reported on his comments. "The trouble with radio spots in most cases is that they're really not carefully thought out. Too many advertisers and agencies are merely running the sound track from television commercials. Creativity in radio commercials

still has a long way to go. Agencies should concentrate more of their creative effort in individual production for radio spots."

The first step is the vital beginning in any journey. In order to think in terms of ideating, we must first decide what station personnel are to be concerned with the task of translating a sales contract in to a finished commercial. Whose responsibility is it to knit this project together? Does the station have a full-time copywriter? Are the announcers expected to write copy based upon information furnished by the salesmen? Is the salesman expected to prepare copy based upon his immediate contact with the account? Does the local advertising agency have someone on their staff who is familiar with the preparation of radio commercials?

Too many stations in the United States suffer from a malady that could best be described as "indifference to the role of the sales message." But in spite of the mediocrity in the presentation of commercials, radio's vitality has enabled it to persist. Imagine how much greater the medium would be if keener attention were paid to the dollar generator of it all! It logically follows that, if mediocrity can generate a specific amount of revenue, then a notch above mediocrity should produce a notch above the original revenue.

By ideating, we do not mean just the creation of a single commercial in an isolation booth. Ideation refers to the overall thought process that sells the client on the efficacy of an advertising campaign on a radio station, considers what items are to be promoted and what approach is to be taken, follows through as to how the campaign is going, and solicits a continuing relationship with the client.

We must understand what image the client has within the community or what image that client is attempting to create. We must understand what position radio has in the scheme of things as they relate to whatever other media the client is utilizing for his commercial messages. We must know something about the client's business and he must know something about ours. We must build an interrelationship that is beneficial to all concerned.

Time consuming? Yes.

Rewarding? Yes, yes.

But a solid relationship compensates for many possible pitfalls and frustrations all along the way. Not every advertising campaign is as promising as everyone would like it to be; not every piece of merchandise for sale is as acceptable to the buying public as everyone would like. But the "uptight" part of the problem can be considerably alleviated when there is a basis of understanding. Rather than trying to assign

blame, all parties should seek to intelligently analyze the situation and learn from the experience. Thus, ideating involves themes and creativity at the level that recognizes radio advertising as a marketing tool and further establishes the setting for the proper dialog between broadcaster and client.

## **BUDGET**

As the procedure of producing selling commercials begins to take form, the need for a production budget enters the picture. Many accounts fail to understand that it is sometimes necessary to allocate funds over and beyond the actual dollars earmarked for radio time itself. When a local client hears a well produced announcement created for a national or regional advertiser, he somehow feels that his commercial will receive the same kind of treatment. Probably, the realistic way to reach him is to draw an analogy in a language to which he can relate. Ask him if he just orders in stock and lets the merchandise lay there after it has been delivered. Point out to him that his merchandise has to be set up, organized, showcased, and then sold by a retail clerk. Merely buying the merchandise (or merely buying the time on a station) is only the first step. What he does with the merchandise (and what he does with the time he has purchased on a station) is another matter. It must be thought out so that the investment in both cases pays off.

In many instances, the production services of the station are offered as part of the media buy. But where a talent fee has to be paid, or a commercial jingle created, or copies made for other stations the client should know, up front, what to expect. There should never be any charges after the fact or anything hidden within the billing. Everything should be explained to the client in advance so that he can understand the reason for a production charge.

## **ADVERTISING AGENCIES**

Some local advertising agencies function as a buffer between the media and their client. First, the agency serves as a means for keeping media salesmen from making direct sales presentations to an account. When a salesman calls, the advertiser tells him that the services of an agency have been retained and that all media buys are made upon the recommendation of the agency. This method serves to eliminate for the client the time normally expended in listening to many sales presentations. Secondly, there exists among some agencies the fear that direct contact with the clients, whom they are presumably representing, will weaken the account-

agency relationship. This latter group feels that their media recommendations would be seriously challenged if media salesmen had direct access to the client. This, to the agency, would create a court of appeals situation where media salesmen could go directly to the client if the agency doesn't buy the media presentation.

There are also those agencies that involve the media with their clients. They operate on the premise that a freer transfer of information and knowledge makes everyone a better advertiser. The client becomes conversant with the media and vice versa. The agency guides the relationship and takes care of the details involved in placing and executing media buys.

Another aspect which has a bearing on advertising agency activity is the background of the agency personnel. Many of these people have roots deeply embedded in the print media and are not clearly identified with broadcast. In short, many advertising agency people do not understand the broadcast medium and how to utilize it effectively.

And still another aspect is the direct application to production. An article in **Broadcast Management/Engineering** (10/69) by Carl Roliff of KSRN-FM, Reno, Nevada, puts it this way: "Let's consider what happens to a spot commercial in a medium-to-small market. A small, one-man advertising agency has a few local clients; he makes his own spot on a home machine and overdrives and distorts the original. Now he makes copies for distribution to four or five stations and the copies are overdriven and distorted even more. The station gets one of the copies and then makes a transfer to a cartridge. By now, the sound is totally unfit for broadcast, but the station needs the revenue, so the spot is run anyhow. This very same equipment, properly maintained and operated, would have produced an acceptable spot. Why should so much conversation be necessary when the solution is merely one of a little maintenance and setting the controls at proper levels? Why? Because most broadcasters simply don't care."

This is a rather searing indictment, and not without some justification. The importance, however, of the critique is the haphazard production and the lack of quality control on the part of the broadcaster. The element of pride in craftsmanship is absent in both cases. Not every agency can approximate the staff it feels that it needs to accomplish the job. This is the beginning of the breakdown. Then, the radio station has the choice of either running a substandard product or chancing the possibility of losing the schedule by refusing to air that particular submission.

No broadcast standards established by the program or production staff can stand up to an attitude that condones accepting the business at all costs. Everything that we are attempting to express in this book is a sham if management cannot clearly see that the station that does not pay particular attention to its product runs the possibility of eventually not having a product at all to sell.

So, it is not only the one-man advertising agency or the shoddy agency or the gutless agency that is completely at fault. Unconcerned broadcasters contribute, too. The agency sees that quality is not essential and continues to practice its business at a low ebb insofar as production is concerned. The broadcaster never rejects anything or sounds a warning signal for improvement and the cycle is continuous.

How is this situation to be dealt with? And it must be dealt with! Picture a situation where an increase in the rate card is being introduced. Many agencies will balk and insist that a certain amount of business will be lost. That's probably true. A station should be prepared to lose some accounts who cannot afford a higher rate. By the same token, a station should be prepared to lose some accounts who cannot conform to good production standards. And even these accounts need not necessarily be lost, since convincing arguments can be presented to show why the advertiser's benefit is paramount to the station. The station which takes pride in itself is the one to be respected in the business community. The drive to build and maintain quality is eventually recognized.

Cultivating advertising agencies and working with them pays long-lasting dividends. The radio salesman who recognizes apprehension on the part of an agency in recommending radio as part of the media mix should work to educate that agency. True, it can be a long and tedious process, but if the budget to be acquired is worthwhile, that carrot in front of the salesman appears more and more appetizing. The radio salesman simply must chalk up the time involved to the cause known as new business development, cold canvass, or prospecting. Cooperation is also needed from creative station people. They have to assist in providing their know-how to the overall cultivation of a hesitant agency. Consultations, talks, and demonstrations can work wonders in this overall process. Such effort inevitably builds trust, and when the previously skeptical agency is prepared to embark upon radio as a media recommendation, the station which has endeared itself to the agency will more than likely get the lion's share of any radio budget. In essence, the station personnel are functioning as the broadcast division of that advertising agency. This form of liaison is quite intimate and has

long-lasting benefits. If and when the agency cares to expand and develop one or more people on its own staff into a broadcasting division, which would probably include television as well, the radio station that took the time and trouble to foster its growth will be in an enviable position.

Whether or not the client is informed of this cultivating activity might not be too important. What is important is that the agency was weaned away from other media and the radio budget was largely assigned to the participating radio station.

Indirectly, it is very flattering to an agency when its clients are aware of the agency's good relationship with the media. It is an indication of professionalism all the way up and down the line, and the client must show his approval of this closeness. The approval can also result in a recommendation by an active client, in his talking with other businessmen of his acquaintance, who speaks highly of his agency. Word travels fast, and this very rudimentary incident means growth for the advertising agency.

The importance of good working relations between all parties cannot be overemphasized. Everyone can benefit if the end is in sight and the goal is worth striving for. The bond of trust and dedication must be built between the station and the agency and, to a degree, with the client. Everyone is concerned about increased billings, and all of the ingredients that go into the effort to accomplish this mission must jell.

Later, we shall look into the interaction between radio time salesman and an account without the intermediary services of an advertising agency, but right now we should understand the position of the agency in bringing billing to the station and helping itself in the process in the eyes of its community of interests. Sometimes, a demanding decision must be made on the part of the radio salesman as to whether or not he should recommend the services of an advertising agency to the client with whom he is dealing. From a business standpoint, he is reducing revenue generated by the account with the added commission to be paid out by the station. But, on the plus side, he is building his position with the agency and perhaps reducing the amount of time that he has been spending with the account. The construction of the commercial might be better—if the agency is broadcast aware. It's a calculated risk on the part of the radio salesman, yet it could provide a healthy situation benefiting all parties. Everyone at the station should understand all the manifestations of such a relationship.

Although we are concerned primarily with the planning of the sales message now, we cannot obtain a pragmatic picture

unless we probe the many facets of the relationship between a radio station and a local advertising agency. One of the pitfalls to be recognized in an intimate relationship is the moving of personnel. Some stations have seen their creative people succeed so well in the arrangement that the agencies have approached them to join them on a staff basis. That good production know-how serves to entice agencies into this "raiding." It's all a part of the business and the risk must be taken. Throughout the broadcasting business, the small- and medium-market stations serve as stepping stones to bigger and better things for on-air and production personnel. Perhaps, in a sense, it's complimentary to the station to generate an image that attracts creative people who are willing to serve their apprenticeship at that station as an important part of their professional career. It's also beneficial for a station to have proselytes. Those who advance (and have a favorable impression of the station) talk well of their past experience and can indirectly influence business for the station. So, all is not completely lost!

## WRITING

Ron Levin, an extremely successful radio copywriter, furnished this interesting commentary in *Broadcasting* (10/30/72): "Radio scares me. I guess because it's the easiest medium for a writer to fail in—meaning failure to sell, of course. You can get a lot of "yuks" and have people all over town humming your copy and get fancy awards, but if the product doesn't move and the client hates you, that's bad. If you goof up in television or print, at least you have a visual crutch to save you from disaster."

Any form of writing imposes its own set of strictures. The dos and the don'ts are voluminous. The person doing the writing soon understands this. Explaining the reasoning to others takes much more time and patience. Grinding out copy is the job of the hack and there is a place for such an individual in our current society. There is also a place for the one who tries to rise above this level and inject that semblance of brilliance which is possible in the radio medium.

The Radio Advertising Bureau Creative Newsletter Number 17 points out: "Radio commercials offer their creators a freedom and flexibility not so easily obtained in other media. They afford the opportunity to create new images, fresh characterizations, and they offer the chance to play around with the limitless potential of the imagination. Indeed, radio is the only creative advertising medium to rely completely on the sense of sound. It cannot be read or seen or touched or torn up and thrown away. It can only be heard."

The person who writes radio copy should be one who enjoys a creative challenge. Unfortunately, this challenge does not exist at all radio stations. Some have writers who are entrusted with the various productive elements of writing, like on-air promos, news releases, sales presentations, trade and consumer ads, in addition to commercial copy. But at other stations announcers are expected to write copy, or copy is written by salesmen, or girls who spend their time partly on such services as receptionist, secretary, traffic manager, or bookkeeper.

The reason some stations do not have a full-time copywriter is based on the amount of prepared commercials that come into the station. The station might be receiving a great deal of its commercial content from local advertising agencies that have sufficient manpower to furnish finished material and from regional and national advertising agencies. For those stations where copywriting is not a full-time job, the creative output varies from the nebulous to the mediocre to spurts of sheer genius.

One of the finest sources of ideas and inspiration for copy approaches in various commercial categories is to be found in the material supplied to Radio Advertising Bureau members. There are also outfits who sell copy material package services by category and by holidays. If copy is written by announcers, salesmen, or girls doing other chores at the station, these avenues provide excellent relief. There are copy approaches that have been tried in other markets and there are examples that could trigger action in getting started. It is true that the announcers as a group possess an advantage, which emanates from a greater familiarity with the development of a commercial. They know what the sound effects library offers, they are more involved with commercials from listening to them in their air shifts, and as a group they are more in the creative mold.

Yet, it does not necessarily follow that all announcers are good writers, no more so than all announcers are good newscasters, good sportscasters, good interviewers, good music librarians, good technicians, and good production men. It is up to the proficient program director to detect which of his air staff has that gift of writing. If the talent can be nurtured and developed, the station is richer for it. When the creative function of copywriting is reduced to the mundane and is looked upon as a chore, it sounds just that way. Too many of us have been taught to take a newspaper ad or a direct-mail piece and convert it into 60 seconds or 30 seconds of lifeless copy. It has as much luster as the stilted form from which it came.

If an announcer is responsible for providing copy, chances are he does not have the time to go out and visit with the client. Therefore, his source of information is the account salesman. The information that must go into the selling message is being relayed, and something can very easily be lost in the transmission. It is a safeguard for the salesman to play back the completed commercial for the client over the telephone to make sure that nothing has been omitted and that the client is pleased with the finished product. Complaints are easier to handle at this stage, rather than after the fact, and it also strengthens the bond between salesman and client. It serves a subsidiary purpose because the announcer can get the "feel" for the account. If the client is pleased with the way the commercial has been developed and he experiences a modicum of success with the approach, he will be looking forward to the same treatment in the future. It creates some form of a bond between the two. Even telephone visits between the announcer and the client establish a relationship that should help develop more useful commercial approaches.

If the salesman is responsible for providing the copy, chances are he does not have sufficient time to attend to the servicing aspect of an account relationship. His source of income is out in the field and anything that ties him to his desk is subconsciously resented. In spite of the fact that many account execs come from the announcing side of our business, they still do not view with favor the task of creating copy. Something in their psyche tells them the value of good copy, but the pressure of account calling overcomes this part of the job and subverts it to a minor role. The advantage, however, that the salesman who writes copy has over the announcer who writes copy is that he has a better impression of the account's store and the image that the account is attempting to project. He has a more intimate relationship with the advertiser, and that helps when he has to sit down at the typewriter. He also has the benefit of that face-to-face contact which depicts emotions.

If other people are involved (secretary, bookkeeper, etc.), the problem of relaying information is perhaps greater. But there may be an advantage in this area since some holding other positions are anxious to get into the creative part of the broadcasting business and will take secretarial and other jobs to get a foot in the door. Copywriting may be their "bag" and the advantage could be beautifully coincidental.

Whatever the arrangement is at the station (other than a full-time copywriter), aids of all sorts should be sought. In addition to the RAB, as well as other copy services, samples of

award-winning commercials from other markets could provide suggestions.

Seehafer and Laemmar, in their **Successful Television and Radio Advertising** (McGraw-Hill), suggest these guides for creating radio commercials:

“1. Strive for distinction. The writer should make every effort to have his commercial stand out.

2. Be aware of the time of day the commercial will be heard. He can tone the message accordingly—for sleepyheads, those busy with housework, those driving cars, or those about to prepare meals or have dinner.

3. Be aware of the conditions under which the commercial will be heard. Although a radio commercial may sound ideal under audition conditions, the writer must keep in mind that the circumstances of home or car radio listening are much different.

4. Select words, phrases, and effects for their sound. The message may not look right in the typewriter, but if it sounds good when read aloud, it should be used.

5. Use fragmentary sentences where appropriate. People do not always speak in complete sentences. Nor is it necessary to follow the rules of rhetoric in writing radio copy.

6. Work for attention. There is a need to arrest attention, since many members of the radio audience may be doing other things while listening.

7. Weigh the pros and cons of live versus produced commercials. Live copy takes advantage of a local personality and his audience following. On the other hand, produced announcements offer more opportunity for music and special commercial devices and eliminate the possibility of live fluffs.”

The successful copywriter, according to George Hotchkiss in his classic, **Advertising Copy** (Harper & Brothers), “must have an aptitude for writing and sales instinct; he must be a ‘salesman who can write.’ There are at least three inborn qualities he should have. The first is vision or imagination (the faculty of seeing beneath the surface). The second is sincerity (the expression must ring true). Third, the writer must have good common sense (it must be practical). Copy is never a product to be sold; it is a force to help sell a product.”

Ideas come from so many sources. All of us, singly and collectively, are such complex beings. Many forces pound at us from the moment that we awake until the moment that we retire. Depending upon our respective backgrounds, we interpret these forces in many diverse ways. But the fact remains that those who make it a point to be observant about

their environment are attuned to the times. They understand the various colloquialisms and the jargon of the region. They understand the trends and the forces that motivate and communicate. They are genuinely observant.

In order to produce stimulating copy, you must be aware of many developments. You have to read the ads in the newspapers and the magazines. You have to watch the ads on television. You have to listen to the commercials on your own station and to those on the other stations. You have to scan the direct-mail pieces that are put into the mailbox. You have to think in terms of relating all that you've been exposed to for the concoction of commercials you will be creating. A special approach, a special theme, a special selling point—that's what inspires creativeness.

You also have to talk to people. Watch them at work and play. Find out what motivates them to do the things they think they're doing and with what intensity. This is research of the most basic grass-roots level that translates itself into meaningful advertising copy. People are people all over; yet, there are provincialisms about all of us, and recognition of this churns our creative juices.

A little later on, we shall examine the various commercial types most commonly used in the radio medium. It is imperative at this point, though, to fully comprehend how and why provocative copywriting can create the mood and play heavily upon the uniqueness of radio. The expression "theater of the mind" has been bandied about so much by many exponents of radio. But until we unravel the true translation of the term for ourselves we cannot see how it relates to dynamic radio commercials.

What is conjured up in the listener's mind for a local furniture retailer when his commercial is being aired? Are we merely duplicating his newspaper advertisement with some gimmick sounds in the background? Or are we painting visualizations that stimulate wants and desires on the part of the listener? We have to motivate a mind before we can motivate a sale. Advertising of any kind can only impel the prospect to look into something. Salesmanship at the point of contact will close the sale. Yet, the finale cannot be played out unless there is a real beginning to the whole sequence. That is where advertising is called upon.

The copywriter must have adequate basic information before he can plan an advertising campaign. Then, armed with sufficient data, he can utilize all available creative resources as he develops the plan into selling commercials.

This is the real function of planning. For in radio, we seek to obtain continued business from an account. Renewals are our lifeblood. Planning, and a review of our planning, is good business practice. Effective copywriters are effective business people.

### **SALESMAN'S ROLE**

We have touched upon the salesman's role as a copywriter. Let's look upon him now as the client's most important contact with the radio station. The salesman's concern with commercial content stems from a desire to please the client and firmly lock in the radio buy. The way that a salesman handles account servicing is an important ingredient of the total sale.

When the account becomes aware of the importance attached to the content of his sales message, he keeps selling himself on the station even when the salesman is not physically around. He, too, thinks of approaches to his commercial. His commercial. The very combination of words has a ring to it.

Even if an advertising agency is involved, the salesman may sometimes function as an advertising consultant for the account. Not only are various media schedules discussed, but creative approaches as well are frequently brought up. The salesman who can cope with the aspect of creativity has an opportunity to cement the relationship.

Every meeting with the client should provide the salesman with an additional opportunity to learn more about the advertiser's business. Each business has its own idiosyncracies and an appreciation of them helps everyone concerned. The salesman has to be able to understand the jargon and make adequate notes that can be translated into commercial content. The essence of every meeting has to be carefully relayed, otherwise revisions and changes will muddy the waters.

Sometimes, as a salesman becomes more familiar with a client's business, he is tempted to play the role of a specialist and try to be something that he isn't. By that, we mean that he should not be thinking along the lines of writing his own commercials and becoming an inverted consultant in the process. We want interest and concern, but we do not want ego trips.

The client must also be fair with the station salesman and not set up difficult tests for the station. Sometimes, as a "test," clients assign one line or product to newspaper and another line to radio. The selection may not be comparable,

yet he expects comparable results. An astute radio salesman can spot this kind of chicanery, since it becomes apparent that the client is trying to sabotage the radio medium for whatever devious reason might be in his mind. The "see—I told you so" attitude is too easily played out unless the salesman knows what is happening. In such cases, the salesman has to tactfully guide the relationship and avoid the unhappy consequences of a lopsided test.

Another part of a salesman's job is coping with creative station personnel. Sometimes, the whole commercial gets out of hand. It may become arty or gimmicky, or otherwise run away with itself. In such a situation, the salesman has to step in and protest in behalf of his client even before the commercial is played to the client. In this role, the salesman has to be presumptuous enough to feel that he understands what will go and what will not go with his client. If the salesman feels that the time has come to try something new on the client, he can request something different, but to foist it upon the client could be a different matter entirely. It could very easily undo all the effort that went into the sale. This is the sensitive part where the creative people must understand some of the field problems that every salesman faces in the pursuit of his daily bread. Timing is important and only the salesman can sense when the proper timing exists.

There are circumstances where the job of the salesman can be further complicated by the necessity of placating more than one person at the client level. Sometimes a buyer is involved, sometimes a higher echelon of management might spotcheck the image that the client is portraying. Sometimes the wife of a retailer can be the bane of a radio salesman's existence. In these instances, the salesman has to be wily enough to "run the field." He is a servant to several masters and this is superconfusing. He's between a rock and hard pan and he knows it. Everybody is an advertising critic of sorts and everybody seems to have an opinion of how to do things. This is where the defense of commercials comes into play and this is where some strength of character shows.

Just as there is a trust situation when an advertising agency is involved, so there must be one with direct-call accounts. This trust means honesty at all times. The client should be good enough to be candid about various commercial approaches and speak freely as to the results of each campaign (if the salesman is fortunate enough to acquire several). Being secretive about results could be an extremely frustrating experience for the radio time salesman. Not only for his own sanity, but for those who do the creation and

execution of the radio commercials, a status report is of consequence. Call it pride of authorship, but most creative people like to hear good things about the results triggered by their workmanship. This candidness in the relationship can also give a salesman the opportunity to ask the client for a success-story letter, which could serve as a selling tool for the whole station sales staff.

### COMMERCIAL LENGTHS

In the planning stage of any campaign, questions are always raised as to how many spot announcements will be necessary to do the job. Then, the attention is narrowed down to spot length and placement on the schedule. Spot length depends upon a number of variables.

Is the copy a reminder of the date of a store-wide sale and the address or general location?

Is the product or service being promoted in need of a great deal of explanation?

Is the radio buy part of a general tease advertising campaign being conducted by the client?

Is there a countdown of date or hours involved in promoting something?

Is the commercial to be delivered live or produced?

Is a jingle to be superimposed in the commercial?

Is co-op advertising involved in the buy?

What is the policy of the radio station in regard to the maximum number of commercials it will sell to one client per hour?

Over what period of time will the campaign run?

What about availabilities at the station?

Even after answering these questions, a specific campaign could employ all the basic lengths usually found—60, 30, and 10 seconds, and perhaps opening and closing billboards for a newscast or special feature.

There are some accounts who are impressed with the saturation or blitz technique. They have been brought up on the multipage newspaper-ad approach and they try to simulate the same aura of bigness and importance by dominating a station's commercial load for a particular day or days. They buy "tonnage" and feel that the weight of it all is the right prescription to do the job.

More scientific planning determines what the client is trying to accomplish and attempts to match the buy a little better to the need and objective. Depending upon the degree of involvement—the advertising agency, the client, the station time salesman, the creative people at the station—concern arises as length is considered in the planning stage. Sometimes, the client is baffled as he sees the mixing of different lengths for whatever purpose is deemed necessary. It reminds him of a candy store where the customer takes some of these and some of those and some of that other kind. But it is important to predetermine the goals and see what is necessary to accomplish those goals for the client.

Take, as an example, the creation of a jingle for the client. This may be produced in the market or come from an outside source. An ideal package would include various length commercials. But the thematic recognition would be prevalent in all sizes, and it would sound complete in whatever size used. It would not have to be chopped up and so carefully edited. It would not sound incomplete or jagged. It would lend itself to a fully integrated unit no matter what length is decided upon.

Consultation among those involved will determine what length to use at any particular time. The radio time salesman more or less acts as the negotiating agent in all transactions. A member of the creative staff may suggest an idea. That idea may require a full 60 seconds to develop the dramatization conceived. If the client likes it, availabilities are found at the times that could do the client the most good. Voila! A campaign has been created! The elimination of as many problems as possible in the planning stage only aids and abets the next step in the life of the sales message—execution.

## *Chapter XI Executing Commercial Production*

Hopefully, the scene is now properly set for the second stage in the life cycle of the sales message. Tender loving care must be applied during this phase, for this is the fragile part of it all. Heed the clarion call of superprogramer Chuck Blore: "One bad commercial is too many."

Assuming we have the "recipe" in hand, it is incumbent upon us to produce the finished product according to that outline. In front, all of us are aware that the outline represents a commercial scheduled to run within a set time frame reference. But there are many ways we can go about developing the commercial. When a food recipe calls for one cup of brown sugar, that's what is used no matter who the cook is; but when a commercial recipe calls for one announcer, we run the gamut of capability. The element of pride and sense of responsibility also enter the picture. The variations on this theme are many.

### **SELECTING THE RIGHT PERSONNEL**

The job of establishing the routine of commercial production belongs to the program director. He is in charge of the total air product and as such is intimately involved in all the elements that contribute to the station sound.

Let's examine one of the routes possible and follow it through. In our hypothetical case, let's say that the station's salesman is responsible for preparing the copy based upon information provided by the account. After writing the copy, the salesman takes it to the program director for assignment to production. The program director maintains a working log that includes the start date of a commercial schedule and to whom on his air-production staff the job has been assigned. Also included on this working log is the date that the commercial copy was turned in; a further entry is provided for produced material so that dates and disposition thereof can be readily checked in the case of a query from a local, regional, or national advertising agency.

ACCOUNT	SALESMAN	TALENT	START DATE	COPY	TURNED IN
Handy Andy	Conley	Jones	12/15/72		12/13/72
Harrah's	HR—San Fran	T - Shaw	12/18/72		12/15/72

In the above example, the program director made two entries based upon commercial orders that he received from the sales department. The first entry is a local account and the second a regional account. From the sales paperwork, he copied the name of the account, the salesman (and sales representative by office) and the starting date of the schedule. When the commercial copy reached his desk, he entered that date and the name of the person to whom it was assigned, either to create totally or to transfer to a cartridge from a taped commercial provided by an advertising agency. For Harrah's listed above, the T indicates that the agency provided a taped commercial which was transferred to cartridge by Shaw.

After the production task is completed, the talent either returns the produced announcement to the program director for relaying to the salesman so that it can be played for the account before it is aired, or the spot goes directly into the active or suspense cartridge rack in master control, depending upon the instructions from the agency. In the case of a piece of copy produced at the station, the talent responsible for that chore initials the copy and dates it upon completion so that it can go into a bin for filing. In the case of a tape that was furnished, the start date of the campaign and the name of the account should be labeled clearly on the box plus the initials of the person who did the transfer. Then, that tape should be filed away and held for possible further use. A number of regional and national accounts frequently go back to earlier material.

Over and above the mechanical part of the whole procedure, the program director should be sufficiently familiar with the individual capabilities of his staff so that he can match the copy to the talent. What good is it to create some stirring copy if the requirements for its exact execution are not available to the on-air staff? The program director has to serve as the go-between for the person writing the commercial and the person executing that piece of copy. There may be cases where an immediate deadline forces the program director to use talent less suited for the job, in which case he instructs available talent to produce a "cover" spot to meet the deadline. Later, when the desired talent is free, the spot can be done according to original plan and used in place of the cover spot.

The program director is like a guide and monitor, making sure that the commercial flow is never impeded. He schedules

his air staff so that there are certain hours in which they are available for production. He also knows who on his staff can do voices, who is more adept at production, and at what speed each man functions. He also has the feedback from the salesmen as to which men are popular with the client and tries to respect their desires where possible. He also has to think about the proper balance of voices on the air. If there is a predominance of one or two voices on locally produced spots, it sounds as though talent is severely limited. A good thing can very easily be overdone and overexposed. The program director has to consider this factor carefully. In the case of double or triple-spotting (even with a station logo jingle as a buffer in between), the same voice on each spot dilutes the effectiveness of all the commercials no matter how well the copy has been written and the production executed. Traffic has a hard enough time trying to provide account category protection and keeping the hourly commercial content in bounds without having to worry about providing separation between spots done by the same voice.

Some accounts do not like to have the same talent do their spots and their competitor's spots. To some degree, it is worth a few dollars to the client to buy one talent exclusively, in which case the talent fee comes into being. The program director has to be aware of this and work around it when assigning future commercials.

The talent fee situation can be developed a little further when the advertiser uses both radio and TV. He may want the same person to do both for identification purposes. This exclusivity then assumes the dimension of a semitestimonial. This is especially evident when the radio spot cut by the talent is aired during his airshift and then further reinforced when the television spot features the radio talent.

Another problem the program director has to face is the situation where the client insists on doing his own commercials. The client contends that he knows his products best and can promote them better than anyone else because of his intimate concern for his business. Some of these people are passable, but the vast majority are so bad that they hurt themselves and the station as well. It is a difficult task for the salesman to try to dissuade the client—not only difficult, most times absolutely impossible. So stubborn is his ego that the billing would probably move to another station or be converted into television exposure. Rather than see this occur, the program director should try his best to salvage the situation. This means working with the client and trying to at least develop proper microphone technique; some production aids may help to diminish the detrimental impact of his voice.

An interesting sales idea along these lines was offered in the National Association of Broadcasters' publication FYI (12/72). "A New York ad agency has come up with a new wrinkle for commercials that might work well in the local market. The agency called people across the country and recorded their comments about the product over the phone. While all small-market operators have clients who do their own spots, this suggests the possibility of using the consumers themselves as spokesmen for the product in radio commercials." If this idea is used, releases for broadcast clearance have to be obtained from each person used in the commercial.

Oddly enough, some of the culprits who engineer the "client doing his own thing" routine are to be found in the broadcast field. Some radio time salesmen rely upon this technique as a final resort to obtain a signed contract from the client. It's a desperation move and they readily admit it, but they have to be shown that once the dam is opened, it is very difficult to shut. The client's vanity becomes so inflated that it is a virtual impossibility to regress.

In the overall execution, the program director at times has to be the final judge of the effort expended and the net result of that effort. There are occasions where there are hassles about the quality of the spot produced. The salesman may not be happy with the finished product, the program director may not be exactly ecstatic, or the client may feel that his commercial did not come out just right. Not all air-production people are that quality conscious and there are those who do not always listen to what they have produced for proper levels and adequate mix. Some proudly call themselves "one-shotters" and they don't take the pains to do anything over. The program director lives with all kinds and extraordinary behavior merely becomes commonplace to him. He learns not to placate talent. He learns how to pat on the back and belt in the stomach at the same time. He is running a three-ring circus and there is always some form of action going on. It is his job to channel that action into a cohesive whole that makes the station come out as best it can.

### **PRODUCTION AIDS**

To quote again from radio copywriter Ron Levin, "You don't have to spend a lot of money to sound like you spent a lot of money. The Capitol library and other stock music and effects sources are sensational money-savers, if you're willing to spend the time digging. They literally could mean the difference between spending \$50 or \$5,000."

The key words here are: sources, money-savers, and digging. No amount of aids can do the job unless a human being provides the mix. The thinking and the probing can only come from a person who has an idea in his head and an interpretation that must be fulfilled. The truly creative person has a penchant for utilizing any aid conceived by man to enlarge upon that theater of the mind. The writer as the creator and the production man as the interpreter have that common goal and there is a unity of spirit that cannot rest until the original goal is achieved.

There have been those in the writing and production fields who have been accused of losing the essence of a radio commercial. They become anesthetized by the tool itself; they write and create inwardly rather than in the other direction. Colloquially, this could be called "gimmick happy." Caution must be exerted at all times to ward off this temptation. Some stations are fortunate enough to possess many tools and the novice and relative newcomer seem to get carried away with the material at hand. Another "tool problem" is a dependence upon certain elements to such a degree that monotony sets in and a pattern emerges that is quite prosaic and, after a bit, most unimaginative. Seeking new horizons is a challenge when the time is available, but we face the realism of meeting a deadline and sometimes compromise must be effected.

Experimentation has its place and patience can be most rewarding when an idea is carefully thought out. At times, it is not necessary to wait until the commercial actually demands creating. If there is time to work on an idea independently, then the client can be pleasantly surprised by a spark that could ignite a whole campaign for him.

The only way that either approach can bear fruit is for the people responsible for the creative task to be thoroughly familiar with the production aids the station has. They should also know what is lacking and press for its acquisition as soon as the budget permits. Aids and tools can pay themselves off in short order if they generate ideas that can be translated into sales contracts or increase the size of an existing sales contract.

The Radio Advertising Bureau has come out with a publication entitled, **Directory of Radio Commercial Producers and Allied Services**. The descriptive flyer states: "RAB Member Services frequently gets requests from stations in markets of all sizes for a list of commercial producers. Even in relatively small markets, banks, utilities, large department stores, etc., have the money to invest in expert, professional radio commercials, which in turn may

increase the size and depth of their radio schedules. The Directory is the result of an extensive RAB survey. Virtually every known sound service was contacted." The services listed range from complete sound effects libraries to individual custom-made jobs. A number of us older broadcasters were weaned on the old Langworth and RCA Thesaurus services and would have given our eyeteeth for something approximating today's diversity.

The lessons we learned in the past are just as applicable today. No matter what service or services or hybrid arrangements are concocted by a radio station, each element should be properly cataloged so that the material can be located without undue delay. The production aids should be grouped in one particular section of the production area. When used, the material should be returned to the jacket or bin where it was found. Nothing is more frustrating than having to track down something that has been misfiled or misplaced.

Keeping production aids in good condition is a paramount consideration. A clean cloth to wipe off surface dust should be kept handy. When discs start getting worn, it is time for replacement. When the jackets containing the discs start to break, they should be taped so that the discs can't fall out and get broken or scratched. If there are discs that seem to rate special favor and get a lot of action, it is a safeguard to transfer them to tape and hold that tape against the day that the disc starts to fail in reproduction quality.

Sometimes, a personal or ad lib touch to a production aids library can save on time and nerves. Very useful is a subcode describing the content and timing on a particular cut or musical selection. For example, a musical cut may be identified as *Mysterioso* :26. The more detailed description might show: *Mildly scary; builds to a crescendo and then stings out.* This tactic saves a lot of digging and relistening when a particular effect is needed. It is true that the person identifying the cut could derive a different interpretation and feeling than would another person on the staff, but at least this subcoding is a little more definitive in its approach.

Some albums from the station's music library are useful in production. The length of these cuts, in contrast to those found in the regular production services aids, is long for standard length commercials. But suitable selections can be edited, cut, or faded to the desired length. To avoid the incompleteness of a fade, the last few bars can be recorded on a separate tape to use at the end of the commercial. The original recording is used under the commercial and the ending on the separate tape is brought in at the appropriate point. It is necessary to backtime the cart containing the last few bars so

that the music playing in the background can be faded and the cart brought in on cue. The voice on the commercial in essence covers the bridging of musical elements in the background. The end result makes it seem as if the musical selection has been specifically scored for the spot.

A problem with the use of albums from the station's record library is the familiarity of a selection. Music that is recognized by the listener, when used to background a commercial, will cause him to subconsciously hum or sing along with the tune instead of listening to the content of the commercial. The more nondescript the music, the more attention it focuses where it belongs—on the commercial. This naturally requires careful selection of background material.

Sometimes, production aids are provided by local musical talent. You can have a total musical thing locally without a big band; in fact, there is nothing wrong with just piano. The way that it is used is the innovation. Piano, flute, guitar—all are excellent for use as a musical signature for a commercial, and they certainly can be worked in without exorbitant expense. The basic simplicity of the instrument can attract a great deal of attention if it is handled properly. Larger musical groups, as well as vocal groups, are also useful. Don't overlook the possibility of a speaking choir where the cadence and meter are naturally attuned to the radio medium.

Prior to national exposure, the Jefferson Airplane, a local group at the time, made a commercial for Levi Strauss. The idea, conceived by a San Francisco agency (and reported in Radio Advertising Bureau Creative Newsletter Number 14), was to reach youngsters with their own kind of music. Sue Carr, the copywriter for Levi's jeans and slacks, had the foresight to realize the potential. Nobody is expecting a station to find talent of such stature, but there is talent in every market and its availability should be considered as one route for the construction of a creative commercial.

Most radio stations do not have the facilities to record musical groups and have to rely upon a studio or a makeshift arrangement to get the balance needed. Arrangements also have to be made for payment. It is best to pay on an individual contract basis, with the rights purchased per job and no residuals. In this manner, there can be frequent changes without the client getting hit with heavy talent fees.

Another source of production aids is the engineering department of the station. Today is so much the age of the different sound. We do not necessarily have to subscribe to the melodic in all instances. Musicians today have all kinds of electronic aids for their instruments. The Moog synthesizer

has come into its own as a device. So why not rely on a creative engineer to come up with varied electronic sounds? Basic melodies, fed through the console with a little bit of reverb and various forms of equalization applied, can provide a fantastic assortment of effects. In addition to melodies, voices can be fed in the same way to concoct more effects. The voices need not necessarily say words, but just hum or otherwise sustain a sound. You can also create logos for clients by applying electronic techniques to spoken words. Basic items like a metronome or a kazoo or a whistle or a toy vibraphone can be used to produce extremely original sounds with the help of electronics. Experimentation along this line can be quite valuable and inexpensive. A production man working with an engineer who has a feel for such things can do wonders in providing an extremely economical adjunct to the production aids library. Such effects can be continuously updated without having to purchase anything.

### **STUDIO TIME**

It is up to the program director to direct the flow of creative effort. He is familiar with the total commercial output from national, regional, and local sources. He knows what changes are being made in copy after the schedule has started. He knows where the problem areas are and the various sources of dissatisfaction. He knows the schedules of the various talent available for production. He knows what the equipment is capable of producing. In short, he handles the total commercial input and output.

In addition to the creative flow, the program director is the recipient of the daily program discrepancy report. He is responsible for tracking down misplaced or misfiled carts or copy. He is responsible for alerting traffic to schedule makegoods when a spot did not run for some reason.

Over and above all the duties mentioned, the program director has to anticipate last-minute changes and work them into his scheduling. He is also concerned with the efficient operation of the production area and is in frequent contact with engineering to keep that area operative at all times.

Assignment schedules have to be based upon availability, vacation time, and some possible alteration in the event of illness or other last-minute adjustment. In his mind's eye, he has to match the work to the talent when it is available and not have idle manpower. Idleness paves the way for boredom and leads to other problems. One of the "other problems" is the airman who is idle, roaming about the station and engaging other people in his idleness. Just because he is not occupied, he presumes that other people have time to socialize with him.

Thus, the disease spreads; not only is he not doing anything, but others are doing nothing with him. It would be better if he were to sit off some place and just read a magazine or a newspaper. This way, only one person would be idle as opposed to the possibility of two or more. Some idle people have a way of finding things to do to improve themselves, but most have a tendency to simply "goof off." Management does not expect a human being to be an automaton and get plugged in from the moment that person sets foot in the station, but a semisocializing atmosphere is not conducive to responsible operation.

Some program directors create "busy work" when they see problems arise. This is not the most ideal solution to the situation, since busy work is recognized for what it is and becomes bitterly resented. Perhaps the only sensible way to handle the situation is to explain to the air staff that it is not appreciated when they socialize for long periods with the rest of the troops; that there are trade publications for them to peruse if they don't feel like being productive on their own. Of course, they could use the time to think out on-air contests or try different approaches to a commercial or help out a fellow worker in tracking down a news story or assisting in filing copy or whatever. The man who just waits for his shift to end so that he can go home or do what he does at the end of his shift is not exactly what we can consider the most ambitious thing alive. But this breed exists in all kinds of businesses.

## COMMERCIAL TYPES

According to Max Wylie, in his comprehensive **Radio and Television Writing** (Rinehart & Company), there are twelve kinds of radio commercials classified by the method of presentation:

1. **Straight commercial.** One voice delivers a sales message without any support from other elements.
2. **Dialog commercial.** The selling message is delivered by two or more voices, as if in conversation with each other.
3. **Multivoice commercial.** Two or more voices, but not in continuous conversation and sometimes all speaking directly to the audience.
4. **Dramatized commercial.** A little scene in which characters act out and discuss the advantage of the product or the need for it.
5. **Device commercial.** A commercial in which some imaginary situation or unusual piece of radio technique is used to get added attention for a sales message.
6. **Gag commercial.** A device commercial in which the device involves not only humor but the buildup and payoff of a gag.

7. **Integrated commercial.** A fully integrated commercial becomes part of the story line and entertainment of a program.

8. **Integrated lead-in.** A commercial that introduces the product with full integration.

9. **Musical commercial.** This type may involve a musical illustration of a sales point—a song or jingle—or it may be entirely in song or spoken to the cadence of background music.

10. **Pop-in commercial.** This has an undignified name, but it is a very effective type of commercial. The message is short and simple and usually makes one good point about the product.

11. **Service commercial.** It may be possible to sell a product by giving people helpful information about how to use it. "Ingredient" products often use this kind of commercial exclusively.

12. **Testimonial commercial.** A personality may urge people to try a product because of his belief in it. He may not actually say he uses it himself.

Combinations of different types are quite common and often more effective than one type alone. But a commercial that tries to do too many things at once always falls between. These are some common combinations (the numbers refer to the list above):

1-9; 2-5; 2-11; 5-6; 5-9;  
2-7; 2-10; 2-12; 6-7; 5-10

Commercials must be noticed, or radio as we have it in America today couldn't exist.

Before we discuss and analyze the various selections available for an effective commercial approach, we should add a few more to the list above.

a. **Problem solving.** A common problem is shown and ways and means to solve it are offered.

b. **Product comparison.** An out-and-out head-on mention of prices and features of manufacturer against manufacturer.

c. **Slice of life.** A "telling it right on" approach in the jargon prevalent today.

d. **Satire.** A commentary on the foibles of today's society.

With such a vast array of commercial creative armament, is it any wonder that we can safely say that radio, as a theater of the mind, can conjure up limitless impressions? The name of the commercial game is salesmanship through showmanship.

Those who are responsible for preparing copy have to be intimately aware of available production aids, personnel, and

facilities. We are now talking about local advertising agencies with writers on their staff and those who are responsible for writing copy at the station. National and regional advertising agencies invariably do not rely upon local talent to produce copy as we understand it from the categories just cited. If live copy is furnished, it is designed to be read live or, if a fact sheet, designed to encourage an ad lib presentation that has been preplanned for maximum effect.

A local station faces a problem when its personnel are expected to play a role in a commercial. The voice of an air personality who is familiar to many listeners could lose credibility when that voice is recognized as an actor in a dramatized commercial or as a gag man in another presentation or as a problem solver in still another. Obviously, one who is adroit at doing voices is a valuable adjunct, but there aren't too many of them around. That is why the program director has to evenly distribute production assignments and ward off the sameness and possible dilution of effect through too much exposure.

Another problem is overcommercialization, where the abundance of commercials chases listeners to those operations where there are fewer commercials per hour. The fewer commercial interruptions permit the program content to be more foreground, and the fewer commercial interruptions that have the sameness of voice, the less competitiveness there is between commercials. Every client is basically entitled to all the effectiveness that the station can muster to highlight his commercial.

One of the most common approaches is the straight commercial in which one voice delivers the sales message without any assistance. This, of course, opens up the question: why produce it in the first place? Leave it in the copy book and let every air personality read it live. The opponents of this approach point out that the selection of the right voice to match the copy means production; if a mistake is made in taping a spot, it is redone until it is correct for airplay; only one approval of the spot is necessary by the client since it will be aired exactly that way time and time again without any deviation as it is punched up on the cart machine.

In producing a straight commercial, the air personality assigned to record it should ask questions of the program director or the writer or the radio time salesman (if he is not also the writer) about any portions of the commercial that are not clear to him. If there are unfamiliar names, if there are prices cited that do not sound plausible, if there are word combinations that read well but do not voice well—these points should be checked out so that a recut won't be necessary. After



CLIENT MONTGOMERY WARD & COMPANY

STATION

PRODUCT IN-STORE WAREHOUSE SALE

LENGTH 30 SECONDS

FOR USE ON Friday, October 27

Last week the A's won the World Series! This week you win....with a repeat of Wards Giant In-Store Warehouse Sale!

Appliances...Furniture...TV....Carpeting....Garden and Building Supplies...

Sporting Goods...Hardware...Clothing...all Super Bargains!

Fantastic savings throughout Wards store! Save up to fifty percent!

There's something here you need--and you can save fifty percent!

But hurry, Saturday only, hours 9:30 to 5:30, Montgomery Wards Sacramento

Florin store!

Straight commercial copy supplied by an advertising agency.

this preliminary step, the talent should read over the commercial to get the feel of the pacing and timing required. Some announcers prefer to mark up the copy in their own way with symbols that connote emphasis and inflection; others actually do it mentally without necessarily making notations. To help the announcer develop the correct pacing and timing, he should know whether to use a hard-sell, medium-sell, or soft-sell approach.

Pacing, emphasis, and inflection can be stipulated to some degree. Usually, the ad agency supplying the on-air copy will prepare the text so that the announcer will have no difficulty voicing it as the agency wishes. Note the use of underscores for emphasis and ellipses for pauses in the ad copy shown above.

Once the commercial is produced, the talent should listen to it before releasing it for commercial play. Is the voice level adequate? Is the copy interpreted the way the writer intended? Does it come out to time? The cart should be labeled with the name of the account, the exact length, and the very last few words legibly indicated (preferably type). If there is

an end date that must be observed, then the date of the "kill" should also be indicated. The labeling procedure, of course, applies to all types of commercials.

If approval is necessary, the proper channels have to be utilized. Talent naturally is sensitive to the fact that the person or persons who have to render approval (and in this sense judge the commercial) do not possess the announcer's background in the field and rely upon a gut feeling. Yet, every announcer has to understand that his workmanship is not subject to peer judgment and he should be ready to do a spot over if approval is not given to the original spot. If the situation gets out of hand and the criticism is unreasonable, the program director should step in and defend his talent. Arbitrary and capricious behavior on the part of the client or an advertising agency or even the station salesman should not be condoned. All things being equal, if the talent has performed to the best of his ability according to instructions received at the outset of the creation of the commercial, he should not be intimidated by anybody. On the positive side, if the client, agency, and salesman are pleased with the spot and it is cleared for air usage, the program director can use the same person again for that particular account.

In producing a dialog commercial, the selection of the talent is determined by the requirements. For example, the script may call for two male voices, one male and one female, or two females. In the case of female voice requirements, the program director has to test the female voices available at the station without resorting in desperation to outside talent and paying a talent fee. Sometimes, the very lack of experience and expertise on the part of females employed by the station may be what is required in the commercial. It may be acceptable insofar as realism is concerned while the real selling portion of the message is delivered by a professional. At any rate, the program director should know where to turn to get a female voice or voices for a dialog commercial.

In executing a commercial of this kind, the two parties have to "woodshed" it to get the feel intended. It should sound conversational, just the way people talk to each other; they hesitate, dwell on words, and even use bad grammar. A stilted dialog commercial merely becomes a straight commercial that is chopped up into two, more or less, equal parts. One of the two announcers is probably running the board so he has to watch the levels of both parties. Two separate microphones make the job easier. The correct level can be set for each person, and there is space for the copy and sufficient elbow room. To avoid distraction, each announcer should wear a

headset. If sounds are also incorporated into the spot, the announcer functioning as the engineer should plan the integration of each element in advance so it can be put together without any popping noises or microphone switching. Some production people like to add sound effects after the voice parts are completed so that they can pay complete attention to the mood of the commercial. Either way, the commercial must sound fulfilled and real, because a dialog commercial is a simulation of everyday people in everyday situations.

In producing a multivoice commercial, the timing and pacing can become a little more complicated. Sometimes the pacing is self-regulating, as in the RAB commercial shown on the following page. This copy is structured in such a way that it would be difficult to upset the natural timing and pace. But compare this with the Dannenfels, Runyon, & Craig copy on the succeeding page. Here, the text includes a gag line that must be very precisely timed and voiced to preserve the humor without compromising the message about Brandwein's weekend sale. From beginning to end, the client's air message must draw attention to the product or service being advertised rather than to itself. It must flow to sustain interest and achieve the desired effect. Manpower availabilities might require that some voices be taped separately, then put together by someone in a production studio. This mixing part shows off the production capability of the man entrusted with the job.

In producing the dramatized commercial, we must deal with the theatrical approach where each participant assumes a particular role. A change of voice, a dialect, a specific action—these are the things required in a dramatization. Is that kind of talent available at the station? Again, the program director has to know what each staff member is capable of. If the talent required for a commercial is not available on the staff, he may have to resort to outsiders. That involves availability and additional cost. Some air personalities who do an excellent selling job in a straight or dialog commercial may not be capable of performing in a dramatized commercial.

Consider the Wade ad shown on page 138. Imagine how this dialog might fizzle if read without enthusiasm. The copy is terse and hard-hitting—and it requires some real voice talent to put it across effectively. Voiced properly, the copy comes to life—it is dynamic and convincing. Spoken listlessly, though—without zeal the message could do the client a disservice.

Dramatizations are usually enhanced by sounds. In the old days of radio, sound and dialog were often redundant. For example, a voice may have said, "He knocks on the door," and then you'd hear the sound effect. Today, there is value in

# **RAB COPY SERVICE**

Juice: TREESWEET

ANNOUNCER: You say your family was fussy when it came to fruit juice?

MOTHER: Yes. My little boy wouldn't drink frozen orange juice. He used to say...

BOY: Bleh!

ANNOUNCER: Bleh!

MOTHER: Bleh!

ANNOUNCER: Hmm...and then one day you discovered...

MOTHER: Treesweet Frozen Orange Juice.

ANNOUNCER: Oh, yes. Treesweet Frozen Orange Juice. Squeezed only from oranges grown in the Indian River country of Florida, home of the most delicious naturally sweet oranges.

MOTHER: I said, "Stephen dear, try the Treesweet Frozen Orange Juice, try it just for Mommy..."

ANNOUNCER: The what did he say?

MOTHER: He said...

BOY: Bleh!

ANNOUNCER: Bleh!

MOTHER: Bleh!

ANNOUNCER: Oh, you did have a fussy family didn't you?

MOTHER: Yes, I did. I even told him that Winnie The Pooh and the Three Bears all drink Treesweet Frozen Orange Juice from the Indian River country.

ANNOUNCER: So what did he say to that?

BOY: Bleh!

ANNOUNCER: Bleh!

MOTHER: Bleh!

ANNOUNCER: Then how did you finally get Stephen to try Treesweet Frozen Orange Juice?

MOTHER: Well, I just twisted his little arm behind his back until he hollered...Treesweet!

Dialog commercial copy supplied by the RAB.

# 6492

*Copy*

*Dannenfels, Remyon, Craig, Inc.*

1715 EMBARCADERO • SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA • 95814  
TELEPHONE 446-7741

Date May 24, 1972

Advertiser Brandwein

Date to Run May 26, 1972

Media KFBK, KGMS, KRAK, KHIQ

Additional Instructions

ON TAPE

WOMAN # 1 What is Jack Brandwein doing on top of that 65th street exit sign, Harry?

MAN # 1 You should know Charlotte...he's telling everyone that the 65th street exit is the turnoff to take to get from the Brandwein Freeway Highway 50 to the big Holiday Weekend Sale.

WOMAN # 1 But, how is he going to get down off that sign?

MAN # 1 Why don't you ask Marilyn?

WOMAN # 2 You don't get down off a sign dummy...you get DOWN off a DUCK!

ANNOUNCER: Before you go away for the weekend, come shop the big Holiday Sale at Brandwein! Brandwein is clearing out the warehouse and show room of odds and ends, floor samples, buyer's mistakes, and one and two of a kind items that have been specially priced to sell fast! Look for the Brandwein ads in today's Bee and Union. Use it as your guide to the best values while you shop! Hurry shop today while selection is best at the big Holiday Weekend Sale at Brandwein-McMahan, just minutes from anywhere in Northern California on the Brandwein Freeway, Highway 50 at 65th Street!

Dialog commercial prepared by an advertising agency. Notice the gag aspect.

**WADE**  
ADVERTISING AGENCY  
2707 K STREET, SUITE 3  
SACRAMENTO, CA. 95816  
TELEPHONE 916/442-4601

## RADIO-TV COPY

CLIENT: PEPSI-COLA

CONTENT: Six Pack/Quarts

CODE: PEP 7201R-30

LENGTH: :30

DATE: June 2, 1972

**VIDEO** ( **AUDIO**

1	
2	
3	
4	
5	VOICE 1: NEW! MONEY-BACK QUARTS FROM PEPSI-
6	COLA. NOW IN HANDY SIX-PACKS.
7	
8	VOICE 2: WHAT A BUY! A SIX-PACK OF PEPSI-
9	COLA MONEY-BACK QUARTS, WITH MORE
10	THAN SIX FIVE-OUNCE SERVINGS IN
11	EVERY BOTTLE.
12	
13	VOICE 1: AND EACH QUART IS TOPPED WITH A
14	RESEAL CAP...PLUS YOUR MONEY BACK,
15	BECAUSE THE REFUND MEANS YOU PAY
16	ONLY FOR THE PEPSI, NOT THE BOTTLE.
17	
18	VOICE 2: EASY TO BUY. EASY TO STORE. EASY
19	TO RESEAL. WHAT A VALUE.
20	
21	VOICE 1: NEW! MONEY-BACK QUARTS FROM PEPSI-
22	COLA.
23	
24	VOICE 2: NOW IN HANDY SIX PACKS.
25	
26	

Multivoice commercial copy written for two voices.

leaving things unsaid and letting the listener fill in the rest according to his own imagination. In the example just given, the sound of the knocking on the door would be sufficient without stating it in the dialog. A competent production man "feels" the commercial and senses just where and when to proceed with the different elements to give life to the commercial. The voicing, the balancing, and the mixing are all important to make this form of commercial come off successfully. It takes time and patience to put it together, but the effort is certainly worthwhile when the end result is a proud finished product.

Examine the Montgomery Ward ad by Lufrano (page 140). The squeal of tires on pavement and a barking dog add a very effective degree of realism to a commercial. Here, sound-effect devices are used judiciously to attract the listener's attention and interest him in the subject of the commercial: chain-link fencing fabric.

In a device commercial, we are concerned with attention-getters, and that enters into the area of the production aids "freaks." The commercial might not specifically identify a device, but leave it up to the imagination (and available sound effects). The device can be used as an opener or it may be kept in the background throughout the entire commercial. The device should in a sense match the nature of the product being advertised. Too obtuse a connection makes the listener stretch his imagination too far in associating the device with the actual commercial message. There should be a relationship to insure a flow of conscious thought.

We must constantly guard against overdoing the attention-getter to the detriment of the commercial content. The device must never be so much in the foreground that the message is lost in the process. Mixing and staging are important and the production man must be aware of this. Sometimes, production people are tempted to show off radio's fertile imagination, but restraint must be practiced. The use of fire sirens and news-bulletin sounds should be avoided lest we unduly alarm and antagonize the listener, rather than impel him to commercial action.

The gag commercial is not easy to pull off. Comedy is probably the most difficult thing to write and equally difficult to perform. And comedy is of such a brittle quality. This intrinsic part of it behooves the writer to create several gag commercials at one sitting. For once the listener hears a gag commercial, he is familiar with it; a repeat is like hearing the same joke again. The listener then goes on to seek out the next joke. That is why a series of gag commercials should be

LUFANO  
ASSOCIATES  
ADVERTISING

1730 - 10th AVE. OAKLAND, CALIF. 94609  
phone 536-6277 area code 415

RADIO

CLIENT	MONTGOMERY WARD & COMPANY	STATION	24 ZONE II RADIO STATIONS
PRODUCT	Chain Link Fence Fabric	LENGTH	60 Seconds
DATE		FOR USE ON	March 15-18, 1972

A LOT OF PEOPLE THINK FENCING IS UNNECESSARY.

(woman's frightened voice) BOBBY! GET OUT OF THE STREET! (squeal of car's brakes)

THEY THINK IT'S A WASTE OF MONEY.

(woman's voice) HELLO. I'M CALLING TO REPORT A THEFT FROM OUR BACKYARD.  
...YES, MY SON'S BIKE WAS STOLEN (voice fades)

OR THEY THINK THEIR NEIGHBORS WILL RESENT IT...

(woman's exasperated voice) HARRY, THE DOG IS OUT OF THE HOUSE AGAIN,  
RUNNING ALL OVER THE NEIGHBORHOOD! (sound of barking dog in background)  
BUT THEY'RE WRONG, AREN'T THEY! CORRAL YOUR BELONGINGS AND PROTECT YOUR  
CHILDREN AND PETS FROM THE OUTSIDE WORLD WITH SALE-PRICED FENCING FROM  
MONTGOMERY WARD. THIS WEEK YOU GET 50% OFF CHAIN LINK FENCE FABRIC WHEN  
INSTALLED BY WARDS EXPERTS.

DURABLE STEEL WIRE FABRIC COMES IN GALVANIZED FINISH OR GREEN VINYL COATED,  
BOTH HANDSOME AND BOTH AT A 50% SAVING THIS WEEK! HERE'S LASTING SECURITY  
AND A CHANCE TO IMPROVE THE VALUE OF YOUR REAL ESTATE, TOO.

SO WHY NOT CALL WARDS FOR A FREE FENCING ESTIMATE AT NO OBLIGATION TO YOU.  
REMEMBER, WARDS CHAIN LINK FENCING FABRIC 50% OFF THIS WEEK AT ALL  
MONTGOMERY WARD STORES!

Script for a dramatized commercial.

created for any one commercial schedule. Three or more would qualify as a series and the exposure to each would not be frequent enough to defeat the whole purpose of the commercial itself. The vehicle should never produce a tune-out factor; it should be scrubbed if it does and another approach developed.

Obviously, the production portion of this type of commercial is as critical as the writing. We all know of people who can tell gags and those who cannot. To read a gag without giving it the necessary punch leaves it lifeless even if canned laughter is brought in at the appropriate moment. To tell it right is to sell it right. The gag commercial could be coupled with a device commercial or with a dialog commercial or with both. The pacing and the timing and the mixing with production aids requires considerable production skill. Remember that radio gags cannot rely upon any facial grimaces or other bodily motions to help "milk" the gag. Delivery is paramount and the program director as the casting director in this instance may also have to act as the coach to obtain the desired result.

The time spent in conjuring up a gag commercial also has subsidiary value. If it's done well, it reinforces the program content and serves as entertainment rather than a blatant commercial that interrupts programing. People will accept it as entertainment, but only if it is carried off well. Radio stations with a number of novices on the staff should not attempt this technique until some experience is acquired.

An integrated commercial is prepared in the framework of a specific vehicle. A newscaster may have complete identity in the market and the commercial is to be done in his style and mannerism. Or it might be a sportscaster, or a talk host, or a disc jockey if the format permits him to have an identity and an individual personality. The writer must be familiar with the individual so that the phraseology is relevant and complementary with the content of the show. It can be delivered live or produced. If the spot is produced, the tape can be used if the personality is off on vacation or ill, thus maintaining the identity. An integrated commercial is invariably a straight commercial in the style of the personality and not dependent upon any production aids.

A musical commercial is usually produced at a recording studio and not at the local radio station. There may be a place for a voice-over or a bed somewhere in the middle and the station production talent might be called upon to put together a completed unit.

Where music is not an integral part of the commercial message but rather a manner of copy lead-in and close, local

Dannenfeser, Runyon, Craig, Inc.  
1115 EMBARCADERO • SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA • 95814

BROADCAST COPY

SPONSOR: SAFEWAY STORES

DATE

Wed. 6/14

THIS COMPLETE SPOT TIMES 30 SECONDS

USE BEGINNING 6/14/72 UNTIL 6/16/72

INSTRUCTIONS:

1-FRENCHS MIX:

SAFEWAY MUSIC UP AND UNDER ANNOUNCER: -----

Serving delicious meals on a budget is easy...when you shop your friendly Safeway Discount store! While you shop Safeway Discount today, remember to look for famous Frenchs Mixes....Chicken Gravy, or Hollandaise Sauce! Taste-tempting Chicken Gravy and Hollandaise Sauce are easy...when you depend on Frenchs! Take home Frenchs Chicken Gravy Mix and Hollandaise Sauce Mix in the 1½-ounce size... when you shop and save at your nearby, friendly Safeway....not the only discount store....just the best!!

MUSIC UP AND OUT: -----

Copy for a musical commercial.

station talent can often do a very effective job on it. In the Safeway commercial shown above, for example, there is no critical tie-in between music and text. If the station has a good voice announcer, the commercial can be taped with voice and music simultaneously at the station.

In the production of a testimonial commercial, a well known personality is needed, or several typical identified consumers can be used to endorse a product or service. In such cases, the production people are responsible for the authenticity of the delivery. The client should be aware of the necessary releases for air exposure. The Federal Trade Commission has issued a set of proposed guidelines for en-

dorsement and testimonial advertising that applies to all media. The guidelines state:

—If an endorser is represented as superior to others in judging a product, he must actually possess the experience or training implied.

—An expert's endorsement must be based on some actual experience.

—If there is a connection between the endorser and the advertiser and the connection is not obvious, the relationship must be spelled out.

—Ads using a typical consumer endorsement should reflect an ordinary consumer's experience with a product.

—Endorsements by groups or organizations may have to meet a more stringent standard of truthfulness than those by individuals if the broader judgment of a group of people is offered.

—Endorsements in ads aimed at children are of special concern and practices not ordinarily questioned in ads intended for adults might be questioned when used in ads directed to children.

Satire and gag commercials are similar, but the sharp barb in satire is even harder to write and harder to perform. Satire performed by personalities like Stan Freberg and Mel Blanc represents the epitome of this form. Such talent is usually not found at the local level. Anyone even attempting it should closely study the giants in the field for some time to comprehend the tactic and its intricacy.

## **SPEC TAPES**

According to the Radio Advertising Bureau Report No. 14 to Station Management, **Selling with Spec Commercials on Tape**, "The use of audio presentations gives the prospect a vivid idea of how his commercial would sound on radio. It also shows him what a station can do. It's pretty hard to get the mental picture of a spot across, so we produce the spot and play it for him." The raw material which is furnished to the person who is to do the writing can be a newspaper advertisement, a direct-mail piece, a brochure, or just notes based upon a salesman's call upon a prospect.

The copywriter should not consider spec copy as "busy work" or anything substandard. The effort is well worth the investment of time and talent. Long-term clients have been cultivated by this technique.

A spec tape need not be a finished product. In most cases, there will be copy changes or suggestions for a different approach.

The program director must also play a part in spec tape production, since he is responsible for the flow of work in the production area. Of course, spec tape production should never interfere with the flow of existing contractual commitments.

In the preparation of the spec tape, production people can provide a subtle innovation that is a sales tool in itself. The same commercial is dubbed on a tape or a cassette several times in a row. In this way, there is no need to rewind and the value of repetition adds to the presentation. The prospect hears it several times running and the effect starts to become cumulative.

Sometimes, in dealing with spec tapes, the imagination of both the copywriter and the production talent seem to be lifted, inasmuch as there are no restrictions to speak of at this point. They can truly experiment and give vent to a creativity that otherwise might be stifled by mentioning the client's name and address so many times or belaboring the prices of a sale or extolling the benefits to be found in certain merchandise. The judgment decision is in the making and as yet not fully consummated, so the barriers are down. Challenge becomes innovative. Dipping into the maze of commercial types previously mentioned turns on the creative juices.

## *Chapter XII Evaluating Results*

In order to appraise results, we need methods to measure how well a commercial has achieved the original objective or goal. Throughout this section, we have concentrated on planning and executing the most formidable sales message possible for the client or advertising agency.

In an individual company's business, the effectiveness of its operation is traditionally measured by its financial status. Operating costs, net profits, operating ratios, and a comparison with similarly situated firms are the criteria. Since a radio station cannot pry into the financial statements of its clients and attempt to draw a correlation between what it did before and after advertising, since it is difficult to draw a specific conclusion unless the station was the exclusive advertising medium used by the client, and since the total media mix would have to be analyzed—we must assume that increased billing and regular contract renewals are indicative of the creative contribution to financial success.

On an efficiency-per-client ratio, cost accounting would have to break down the various costs of producing the commercial: amount of time spent, the per-hour breakdown of the talent's compensation, the amortization of any production aids used, the equipment and power used in the production area, and the time expended by the program director and salesman in processing the commercial order.

### **CRITIQUE**

Many concerned parties are involved in determining the success of a specific radio advertising campaign. Broadly divided into two camps, we find the forces of creativity and salesmanship. They both share the common objective of moving goods and services, but their evaluation of the means to that end are different.

Under the aegis of the program director, it is constructive to have formal and informal "rap" sessions about the quality of commercials that are being produced at the radio station. These sessions can be introduced as an integral part of a

regular programing department meeting or handled in smaller groups.

Through his direct dealings with the sales department, the program director has the benefit of feedback from the client or advertising agency. Comments from this commercial quarter are usually looked upon as inane unless they are dripping with saccharine.

Playing a commercial by itself and then playing it as an aircheck so that it can be heard as the listener is exposed to it sets the stage for comment by those participants at an evaluation session. Perhaps the writer and production talent are present; but if they are not, the same interest should be expressed.

It must clearly be understood by all that a critique is not necessarily a destructive mechanism wherein everyone is expected to sit around and throw darts at a particular commercial. To genuinely critique something is to examine it from the full spectrum of all of its positiveness to all of its negativeness. If the parties directly concerned with the creation and production of a commercial are present, they can review their initial personal goals regarding the commercial, then comment as to whether or not they felt that they had succeeded in their objective. Too many creative persons are so involved with the task of grinding out work that they fail to achieve the proper perspective for themselves. And by getting lost in it all they lose that sense of growth and stimulation that is the soul in all of us.

Yes, we all want pats on the back, since each of us has some kind of an ego trip going. But even that ego can be strengthened if it is clear that even bigger and better commercials will result in bigger and better applause. Whatever the psychological inference (and there is plenty), the purpose of the critique should be plain, without any sham or pretense. There is no need to dissect all of the commercials locally created. Not only would it be an impossibility, but a needless chore.

The program director should prepare for each of these sessions by selecting several commercials for evaluation. He could establish the setting by explaining to all gathered how each commercial was started, who received the assignment, what the specifics were in relation to that assignment, and then actually play the finished product, both as an entity unto itself and then as an integrated commercial within the programing content. The commercial could be from an advertising campaign in progress or one that has just terminated.

Participants are encouraged to offer comment. Their comments initially are in the form of questions that came to mind as they were listening to the commercial.

What commercial type was used to develop the message?  
Was it written well?

Did the talent fully develop the commercial copy?

Was the right talent used for that particular spot?

Were there too many production aids or not enough?

How long did it take to conceive and eventually produce?

What about the physical production of it—well balanced, mixed right?

Did the client really like it?

Did it generate any sales activity? Why or why not?

How long did it run?

Does it sound differently by itself, out of context with the station sound?

Can the approach be used again in a subsequent advertising campaign for the same account?

If I were handed the assignment, how would I have treated it?

What is there to be learned from the development of this commercial?

How would it stand up by comparison to a commercial conceived and produced by a national or regional advertising agency?

Answers to these questions range from a flitting positive or negative comment to an in-depth development. Therefore, it is up to the program director to guide the direction of the session so that philosophical implications are not dwelled upon at the expense of more concrete considerations. Personalities and individuals should not be berated and there should be a genuine understanding by all as to the different levels of experience and expertise that the total creative staff has. The goal is simply improvement—individually and collectively.

### **IMPLEMENTING THE RESULTS OF THE CRITIQUE**

After such a group discussion, it may be useful for the program director to discuss each person's contribution to the project. The program director could review the various stages of development with each person. This one-to-one relationship is somewhat like coaching.

The program director has to be tactful in weighing what to say and how to say it so that encouragement is offered and a positive setting is established. Each person has to be motivated to want to improve his copy or the ability to produce a commercial.

The setting need not be triggered by mediocre or bad reports from the sales department, but should be an ongoing thing instigated by the program director. He wants to use everyone available to him and should not have to rely upon a few because there are complaints emanating through the sales department regarding certain talent. We all know that air talent varies in its potential for eventual specialization, but staffs are so limited that everyone should try to pull his oar in production demands.

Clarification is appropriate here regarding the off-microphone role of the program director. To some, he may be viewed as a superexecutive who flits about the station issuing orders and holding conferences. Yet, all of us know how much of a workhorse this person really is. In a number of station operations, he is also an air personality pulling a shift. He may be doing news or sports; he may be writing a great deal of the commercials that are aired; he may be pulling the music; he may be producing a considerable amount of local commercials; he is involved with organizing programs and projects that fulfill the station's involvement in community responsibilities. These are direct programing responsibilities. In addition, he must hire and fire personnel, create station promotions, coordinate with general administration, sales, and engineering, and otherwise keep the station on the air the number of hours committed in the license.

So, when we talk about rap sessions and individual coaching, we cannot set down rigid requirements for regularity or length. At some stations, it may be possible to hold weekly sessions between program director and staff members. At others, there may be less frequent meetings. The point is that they should occur regardless of the pressures that could interfere with a regularity that everyone would prefer. Time must be made for contact and critique of creative offerings. The program director is sympathetic to the process for he was "on the other side of the fence" at one time. He knows how a helping hand at the right stage of development can work wonders and forestall needless maundering. If he has earned the respect of his staff, he can mold them into a unit that is an effective tool for the planning and execution of sales messages. Selfishly, he wants to protect his own security and wants his station to perform as best it can with the talent available to it. He wants everyone and everything to relate to a professional performance. And he also knows that his own learning process is still going on; that it is an unending line of challenge of new ways, new concepts, and new techniques. Whenever he learns of something new, he is bubbling over

with the enthusiasm of a missionary attempting to administer a message with a particular zeal and ardor. He is the one who encourages all forms of production expansion. He is also the one who listens to all kinds of complaints from various sources and he vigorously defends what he feels is an honest approach to commercial broadcasting

## **SALESMAN AND CLIENT**

There are many success stories based upon a confluence of talent and salesmanship that go into a sales presentation. Success begets success when it is known how to merchandise advertising results achieved on a radio station. Yet, there are those who attack radio categorically on its efficiency and methods of handling commercials. Witness this indictment by Edwin Lewis, president of Edwin Lewis Advertising, Inc., a New York shop with mostly regional and retail accounts, as reported in **Television—Radio Age** (8/21/72).

The degree to which radio works for a client depends entirely on the interaction of a number of factors, such as the selling message itself, the method of presentation (production), and the stations selected, including their personalities and specific times. Here is a list of grievances which some radio stations seem unable, or unwilling, to correct:

1. Taped commercials sent to stations have been tampered with. Parts of a tape have been snipped, changing the complete selling story or context of a commercial. When this happens and it's brought to the attention of the station, it's usually excused with the comment that the spots were "too long." Even if they were, the station should not take it upon itself to snip the beginning or the ending; the agency should be notified so that corrections can be made.

2. Live copy has been changed at the station without authorization from the agency. And this isn't superfluous words like "and," "is" or "the." Meaningful words—even prices—have been changed and deleted.

3. Tapes requested for rotation are not rotated. Often one cart is made and used continuously.

4. Live copy is not rotated as requested. This means, in a series of spots featuring two or more products, that only one product is continuously aired.

5. Wrong copy is used, either picked up from a previous week or from some totally unknown source.

6. Live copy is taped in advance by the station, thereby losing the immediacy and personality of the deejay or live announcer.

7. And finally, would you believe—live copy is rewritten at the station without consultation with the agency, client, or even the station salesman."

If there are complaints of any nature as to the performance and execution of a sales message, regardless of the source, it should be immediately investigated. No complaint should be lightly set aside. When a client is spending dollars

with a radio station either on a direct basis or through his representative, i.e., advertising agency, he is entitled to receive what he has contracted for—and more so. No excuses are to be tolerated as to why a commercial message did not run as instructions required.

The whole purpose of a programming discrepancy report is to help alleviate this horrendous problem. If the log calls for a 60-second and only a 30-second is in the active cart rack, it should be hunted down as soon as possible. If the log indicates live copy, tape copy should not appear. All of the gentleman's complaints above are not wild myths constructed to harass radio stations. He wants to use radio, but he becomes frustrated in a climate that does not treat him properly as a customer.

Everyone knows that errors can arise along any one of the paths through which commercials have to travel from inception to execution. But not paying attention to these errors and not trying to correct them is basically being dishonest. It is taking the customer's money under false pretenses. The customer has agreed to pay for such-and-such, but is not being given such-and-such. Instead, he is not even given the chance to see if he will accept some substitute. This is intolerable.

How can a salesman show his face to a client when this condition exists? The station must get its house in order before its reputation is marred to the degree that its credibility is completely doubted. All those connected with the handling of a commercial must present a united front to ward off a crisis situation. Indifference, and still further, contempt, does nothing to foster a healthy salesman-client relationship.

Proper servicing of an account is so important to a radio time salesman and he likes to trade upon the success of campaigns, not elements that contribute to their downfall. A recommendation from one client to another goes very far in establishing the bond between advertiser and station. Meticulous care of the sales message is an intrinsic part of this bond.



*Part C - Engineering Watchdog*

## *Chapter XIII Selection Of Proper Equipment*

How many times have we heard the expression: a craftsman is no better than the tools he has to work with? This is particularly true in the broadcast sphere since we are dealing with that ephemeral, yet specific, called imagination. The imagination of a human being is rightfully considered one of the marvels of the world. It can conjure up almost what it wants, and thus transport the individual to anywhere he would like to be. Who can predict the boundaries of such meandering?

Broadcasters understand this wonderful capacity that every human being possesses and use everything at their command to involve, excite, motivate, and entertain listeners. Limitations of this capacity are determined by the individual craftsman and the tools at his disposal.

The craftsman in broadcasting has to be intimately aware of what he can and cannot do from a tactical point of view. It is futile to think in terms of creativity that can't possibly be executed when the tools available to him are limited. But there must be sufficient justification to acquire specific tools found lacking at the station. Priorities must be placed on relative values. Broadcasting is a business and the economic life of every tool that contributes to the business must be considered before there is justification for its acquisition.

One of the six fundamental concepts which are basic to all of managerial economics is that of incrementalism. William Haynes, in his classic tome, **Managerial Economics: Analysis and Cases** (Business Publications, Inc.), writes: "Some businessmen take the view that to make an overall profit they must make a profit on every job. The result is that they refuse orders that do not cover full cost (labor, materials, and overhead), plus a provision for profit. Incremental reasoning indicates that this rule may be inconsistent with profit maximization in the short run. A refusal to accept business below full cost may mean rejection of a possibility of adding more to revenue than to cost. The relevant cost is not the full cost but rather the incremental cost." What does all of this

mean to the broadcaster, especially to those on the creative front who are perhaps confused by the mere word "economics" and who are completely overwhelmed by the term "managerial economics"?

Basically, it means that there has to be justification to management for the craftsman's tools. Everyone can understand the word "budget" and everyone can appreciate the fact that there must be the planning for funds with which to operate the station. All right. Now, what is needed for the craftsman? How much usage will that tool (gear of all kinds) receive? What is the life expectancy of that tool, under normal working conditions; under accelerated working conditions? Will that tool be equally available to all craftsmen? Are all craftsmen qualified to operate that tool? How much servicing will that tool require? Will that tool be used for the purpose for which it was designed? This whole sequence of steps is so necessary if we are to think in terms of profit—and that is the name of the game! For the incremental principle says that a decision is sound if it increases revenue more than costs, or reduces costs more than revenue.

Both programing and engineering must appreciate all of the foregoing in order to have a functioning station whose product can be sold to advertisers. Too many creative people condemn "the front office" for not capriciously disbursing funds for whatever they feel that they need and want. It is the old story of trying to understand and empathize with someone else's viewpoint. There is no intention to belabor creative people with the woes of business administration and its economics, but a consideration of the basic principles is certainly within the province of this book. Management is trying to acquire the maximum amount of profits for ownership's investment and every single member of the staff has to own up to the fact that he individually can better himself only if the station can better itself. That is why the considerations of cost, need, and utilization are so vital. Although programing and engineering construct the product that is marketed, management has to view the two areas as outgoing expense factors.

### **ASCERTAINING EQUIPMENT NEEDS**

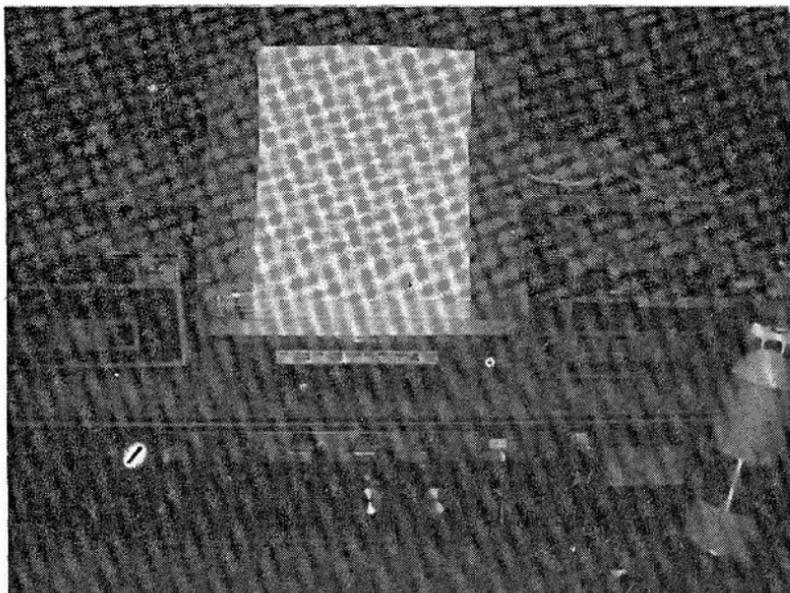
One of the first questions to be asked in the contemplation of acquiring a piece of gear is: what do we want it to accomplish? If the answer to this question is not thought out properly, that acquisition can cost more in the long run. If there is a weak link or two in the chain, like a mediocre pickup arm on an expensive turntable and an expensive preamp, then

it is apparent that a subsequent change will have to be made to strengthen the overall chain.

Only in joint consultation between programing and engineering can a proper solution be reached. Budgetary considerations naturally enter into the overall picture and determine to some extent the outcome. The initial step is made by programing and the solution takes an engineering evaluation to provide alternatives. Engineering can only come up with solutions when the entire picture is laid out. That involves a candidness as to what programing wants to do, for what length of time, and with what frequency.

Those units that receive constant use demand quality. Turntables, tape machines, and cartridge machines usually receive yeoman work. We can't afford to have these workhorses conk out, either in production studios or in master control, and engineering is keenly aware of what occurs when mediocre equipment is purchased to function in constant usage. In other arrangements, like a temporary production setup, it may be possible to get by with good quality used gear. Such thoughts are entertained by engineering when it comprehends all facets of the problem on a time and a need basis.

There are other pieces of gear which may not be called for by programing but which contribute to the product. In this



Versatile production setup. The console mixer is located beneath the copy stand. It accommodates three cartridge machines, three tape machines, and an incoming "hot line" telephone.

category is the automatic gain controller. This piece of equipment maintains an overall constant average level to make listening more balanced for everyone. Also, in this category, is the frequency equalizer device. This piece alters frequency response to compensate for poor origination and special effects. It can take out highs and lows and is also a dialog equalizer where there may be colorations in the voice unsuitable for microphone pickup.

### **LIAISON WITH TECHNICAL VENDORS**

It is up to the chief engineer to keep abreast of the state of the art. Apart from the voluminous reading available in trade publications in the engineering field, an education is acquired through constant contact with the technical vendors. All forms of wares are displayed and a myriad of catalogs are available. New models are brought out, old ones are retired.

Technical vendors are also sources of information as to which stations are doing what in the engineering area. Performance experienced can be gained by calling fellow broadcasters or, when within geographic reason, actually visiting such installations. Ideas are freely traded and abetted by the vendors since a sale is the name of their game, too.

As contact is made with these people, the chief engineer considers his needs and how these vendors can satisfy them. He is always thinking of a particular problem that was outlined by programing; he is always on the lookout for ways and means to make his station the best quality product around. By constant attention as to who sells what, he can capsule his needs within various price ranges and within certain quality standards. When there is a specific need, he can put it out to bid and entertain proposals by different companies. He can then evaluate what he is proposing for his station and at what price tag.

Time and service also enter into his thinking on a proposal. Companies acquire reputations for setting and meeting delivery dates and servicing. These could be strong factors in addition to quality and price. It is up to the chief to be aware of a company's reputation along these lines, too. Promises on the part of a vendor as to delivery date and installation may be one thing, but a reputation among broadcasters for vapid promises soon loses business for that vendor.

### **PHYSICAL SCHEMATIC OF PROGRAM AND PRODUCTION AREAS**

If a station is in the process of building a new facility, an excellent opportunity is afforded programing and engineering

to launch a collective effort to design and equip the facility. However, most of us are in the category of going through alterations if we are not satisfied with our existing facilities. This dissatisfaction can emanate from cramped quarters caused by growth or from obsolescence that prevents efficient operation. Either way, the brand new or the altering stage, much planning and thinking is required.

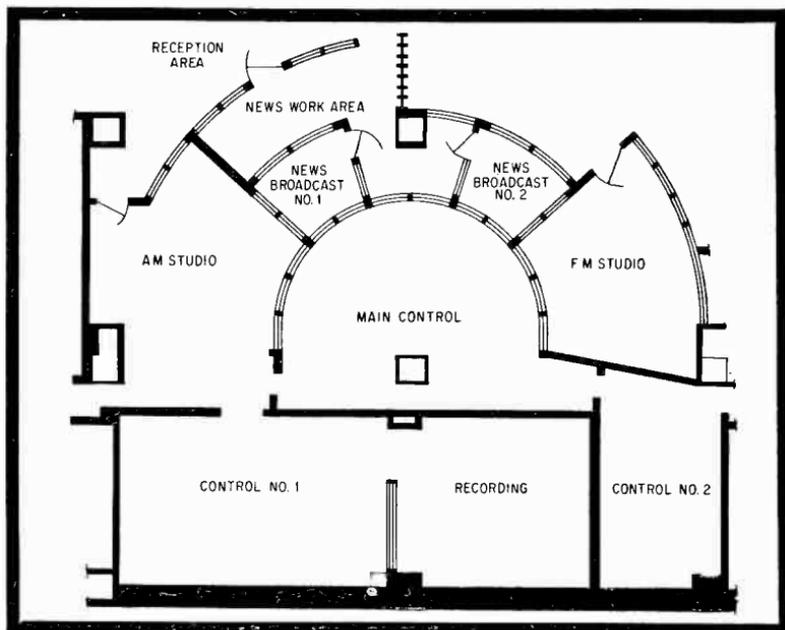
What are the needs?

What is the load?

What is the budgetary consideration?

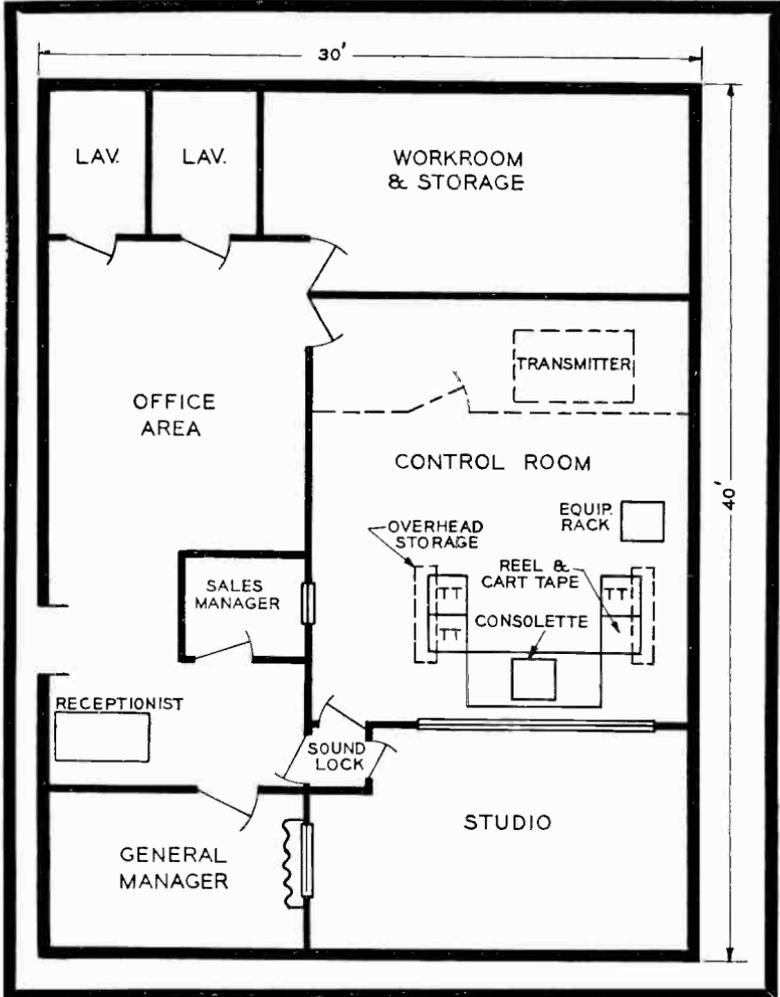
Preliminary sketches and layouts of the total programming area have to be pondered and manipulated to acquire exactly what will fit the needs of the station. To accomplish this goal, professional broadcast designers can be enlisted, layouts of existing facilities can be studied, or innovation can be relied upon. The biggest pitfall at this stage is too much concern about appearances and too little about the on air product.

The representative floor plans and studio layouts shown on these pages are all highly functional for the individual stations using them. Despite their obvious differences from one another, they have both utility and convenience in common.

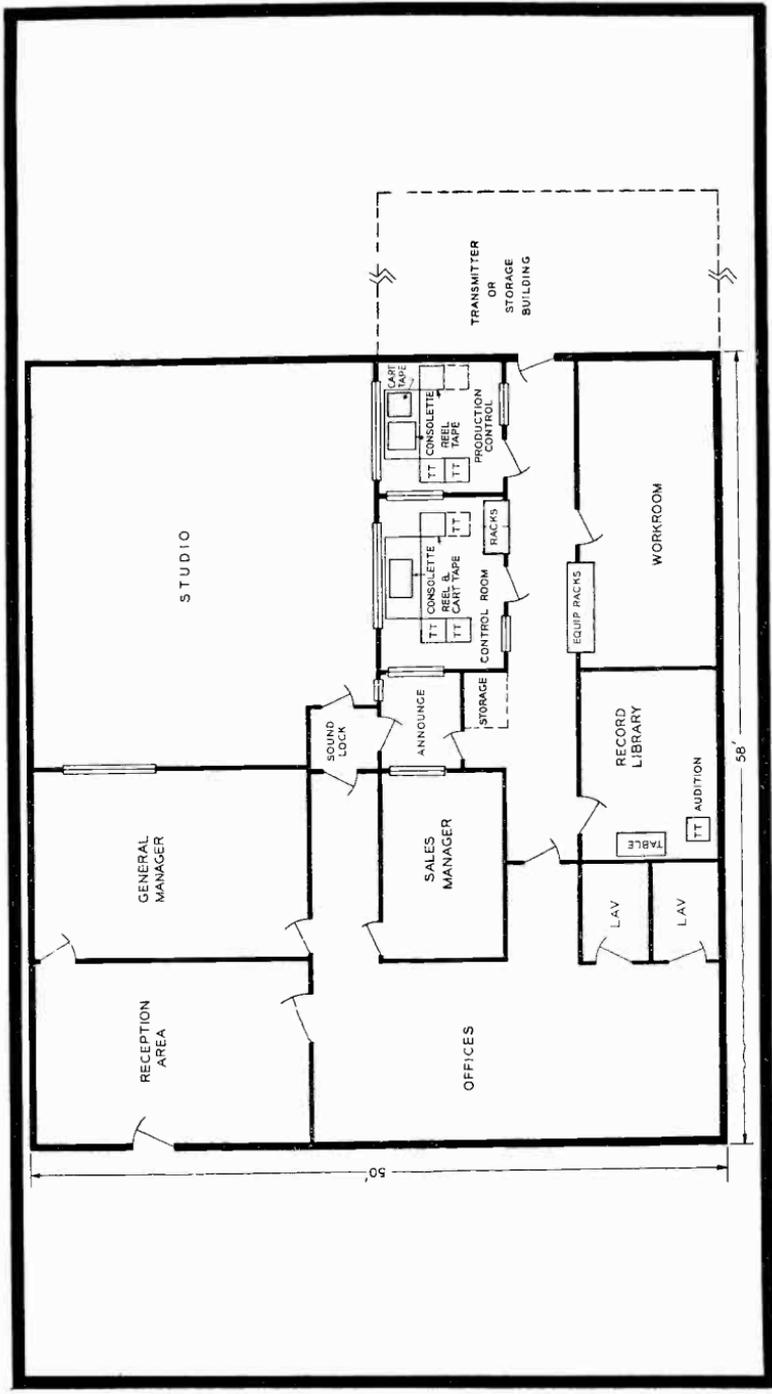


Unusual D-shaped studio layout at WDRC, Hartford, Connecticut. The main control for the combined AM/FM facility is at the hub of operations.

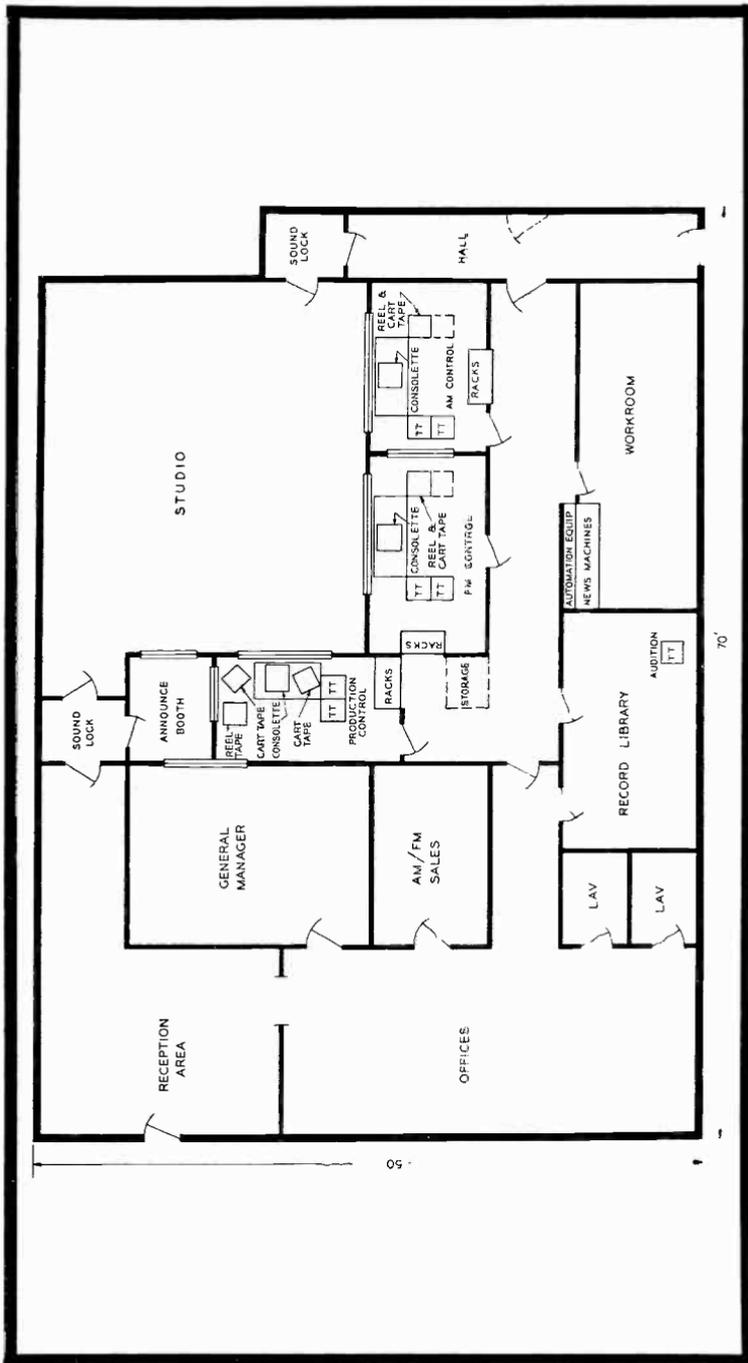
Into the sketches for expansion or alteration should also go the thinking of the men who will be using the facilities on a day-to-day basis. Both programing and engineering heads should consult with them and take their recommendations into consideration. Each person's contribution will be colored by his own idiosyncracies, of course, but that's all right since every thought morsel should be analyzed before it is arbitrarily eliminated. Just one thought that everyone else had overlooked is worth all the effort of involving the programing and production staff. This consultation has subsidiary value as well; it provides that involvement of people that is so im-



Basic floor plan designed by RCA for a minimum investment facility.



Floor plan designed by RCA for a medium-size community station.



Floor plan for combined AM/FM facilities, designed by RCA.

portant at every station. Even if nothing is learned from such interviews, the creative people feel that they have had a part in the total plan. Showing them preliminary sketches and even final sketches can be very uplifting. It's a probing technique and a good morale builder.

As part of the joint thinking on equipment inputs and outputs and the various sources found in any programing or production area, careful attention must be paid to the patch bay. Basically, the patch bay should expand your capability. It should enable anyone to quickly patch out faulty equipment and substitute standby equipment until the problem can be resolved. In this way, valuable production time won't be lost.

A versatile engineer can visualize all the possibilities and help save a lot of heartache later on. Here is just another illustration of the value of thoughtful preplanning and thinking out anticipated problems all along the way.

Something new on the horizon is the use of automated consoles with built-in program logic. Many companies are developing automated and semiautomated consoles. This new generation of program logic consoles includes such features as multiple-event instant memory, fully random source selection, automatic program timers on cartridge sources, direct reading advance display of upcoming events, automatic gain control, and numerous other automated and semiautomated features. This human-automation approach utilizes the best features of both live board and automated programing.

## *Chapter XIV Quality Control*

In a very real sense, a broadcast engineer is an "electronic detective." He is not only brought in on the case when there is a known problem, but he is constantly on the scene sleuthing about to keep the number of problem areas down to a minimum.

He is constantly listening to the station, and probably listens as much as the program director. Yet, the engineer is listening for something entirely different. The engineer is keenly aware of that air product from a technical point of view. He is hardly concerned with content. The program director could tell you the artist, title, label, and playlist number of a particular selection, while the broadcast engineer could tell you about the "highs" and "lows," the balancing of voice and music, and the quality of the audio mix.

By no means are the previous statements meant to be an oversimplification of the value of a broadcast engineer. There are many engineers who, by background or inclination, have absorbed so many of the characteristics of the broadcasting business that they, too, are aware of why a program director is seeking to accomplish certain things in order to construct a well produced radio station. That accomplishment is a difficult task and a constant challenge. No one can ever sit on his laurels and feel that the well constructed foundation will take care of itself indefinitely.

Such does not happen in the broadcasting field. It is too dynamic, competitive, and volatile. That is why the word "anticipation" bears so much relevance. Just as we have seen the importance of programing people anticipating events and content of all forms, so we must expect our electronic detectives to anticipate. The area of anticipation in engineering is true concern about every element that contributes to the production of programing content and the maintenance of uncompromising levels of attainment. Apologies and post mortems are poor substitutes for inadequate preparation.

## **PREVENTIVE MAINTENANCE**

The chief engineer must get together periodically with the program director to determine how much use each piece of equipment gets during a given period of time. This ascertainment, coupled with his knowledge of the quality of the equipment, will help him to work out a preventive maintenance schedule.

He can then allocate his working time and establish priorities for equipment needs and servicing. Of course, there are always exceptions to the rule. Emergency repairs and attention will disturb the routine, but fortunately they do not occur with that kind of regularity that would interfere with the overall planning for preventive maintenance.

Instrumental in this initial planning is the establishment of a studio maintenance log, which must be diligently kept by the engineering department. This log is a perpetual record of everything that has been done to the gear in a specified period of time. The log not only serves to show the attention given to equipment, but also helps develop a dollar-and-cents approach to an engineering budget. If the assigned lifetime of a piece of equipment is being reached, then the projected engineering budget can accommodate replacement of that particular piece of gear. The frequency of emergency repairs would also be reflected and, if the service needed for a piece of equipment is consuming an inordinate amount of time and money, consideration should be given, perhaps, to an earlier than anticipated replacement of that item.

The basic function of the maintenance log from the engineering point of view is the history it provides. Any broadcast engineer can take a look and see precisely what has been done and what pattern of servicing has evolved. This prevents a needless waste of energy and allows talent to be applied where and when needed. Even with absences due to illness or vacations, the preventive maintenance routine is uninterrupted. The main objective is to uphold the overall quality of each piece of gear, which should also include a periodic check against specifications. Such checks reveal, for example, increasing amounts of wow and flutter and a deterioration of frequency response. Worn parts are noticed, too, and replacements can be ordered before complete breakdown occurs.

## **DISCREPANCY SHEET**

Akin to the studio maintenance log is the engineering discrepancy sheet that the air personalities should keep. If the disc jockey notices that a particular piece of gear constantly

creates a problem and an engineer is not available as of that moment, a notation about the nature of the problem should be made on the engineering discrepancy sheet so that the engineer's attention is given to the equipment as soon as possible. The notation informs the engineer when the problem was originally noted, the immediate symptoms of the problem and further development, as noted, perhaps, by disc jockeys on succeeding shifts. Even the slightest deviations should be described on the sheet for good preventive maintenance. Sometimes, for example, a particular cart machine will not pull a cartridge of a certain length. This does not mean that, because the disc jockey can compensate for the machine by playing that particular cart in another machine, the condition should not be noted on the discrepancy sheet. Small problems have a way of soon growing into big problems and the station's flow is affected.

By writing out everything, the engineering department has a better appreciation of any latent problems. Along with the studio maintenance log, the discrepancy sheet provides a perpetual progress report of what is happening and what should be happening. It is this joint cooperation between programing and engineering that keeps the station technically sound.

### **CONSULTATION WITH PROGRAMING**

Apart from the maintenance of logs and discrepancy sheets, cooperation between programing and engineering goes much deeper. Each has to be fully cognizant and appreciative of the other's place in the scheme of things. Each has to be involved in a team effort, not engrossed with individual roles. This means that constant checking of produced material by engineering should not be resented by programing. It also means that programing should look to engineering for assistance and guidance insofar as what is physically possible and what is not, from a production standpoint. Parameters can only be set in the creative role when it is known what the parameters are in the total picture. What good is creating something on paper and having no way to execute it with the limited inputs that the station may own? Consultation between the two disciplines also signifies that budgets can be mended and altered for needs that originally were not anticipated.

When spot checks are made, either before initial airplay or after the product hits the airwaves, technical critiques are of value for station improvement and individual improvement. Engineering can quickly discern when all contributing elements in a piece of produced material are not matched. Engineering likewise knows that, if dirt on the head

on the master recorder comes from tape that has just run through, then the next cart that is recorded will lose high frequencies or sound muddy.

Engineering can point out the cause of many problems. For example, when an announcer records, he should hit the record button on the master recorder and then talk or whatever—he should not start talking at the same time he pushes the button. This contributes to an “upcut” and it is not clean enough for air use. Some air personalities will argue that the technique contributes to a “tight” sound. They are so wrong, since the resultant is not what is really desired.

It takes a great deal of tact for engineering to explain to those engaged in production just what is technically feasible. To a broadcast engineer, it is a simple matter to clean a cart preparatory to transferring all the ingredients onto it for the completed production piece. Yet, there have been countless occasions when the produced material has not come out as sharp and crisp as desired merely because the cart was not completely clean before recording. It is then incumbent upon engineering to review the basics with programming, and this is in no way meant to insult those who have been in the business for many years. Bad habits should be undone when quality production is being sought. Review and critique, critique and review—these are important, and only when good production habits are mastered by everyone concerned can the job be considered on its way. If anything, production people should be appreciative of the efforts being made to constantly help them make a better finished product. Short tempers and impatience are childish and should find their outlets elsewhere.

Another important checkpoint is listening to each completed production spot to check quality. This applies to those production pieces that are conceived locally and also those that are dubbed from an outside-produced tape or disc. One of the problems sometimes stems from the fact that a commercial is produced for a local account at one station and dubs are pulled from that master for other stations. Sometimes, rivalry among stations does not exactly allow for quality, which is indicated by inconsistent levels in the dubbing process or poor quality tape on a reel. Ideally, such instances should be reported back to the source, either the account or the advertising agency, and the party at fault should be made to pull a more satisfactory dub. Obviously, quality control may not be uniformly stringent within a particular market and cases will arise where slovenly produced pieces come to a station. The only sane approach is to insist on certain stan-

dards and not to compromise with them. An advertiser or advertising agency should respect that station which has respect for itself and insists upon quality product to function properly as an advertising medium for the advertiser or advertising agency.

Hardly a station anywhere has been immune from the situation where so many slave copies have been made from a master (usually of a jingle), that every subsequent generation loses more and more fidelity. The possessor of the master is so jealous of it, after having had experience with masters getting lost or somehow erased, that dubs are pulled and the quality begins to suffer. Dealing with this situation involves the same premise as any other situation: the radio station that sticks to its guns on production quality will earn the respect of those who deal with that station. Even when lame excuses, such as not enough time to check a produced piece because of immediate placement on the log, come about, it is difficult to be compromising and still insistent on the standards that have been established by the station.

## *Chapter XV Equipping The Newsroom*

In "thinking out" a news operation, the program director, news director, and the chief engineer should have a precise idea of how news fits into the total station sound and what it contributes in the way of percentage of time and caliber of reporting. Earlier, there was reference to the craftsman and his tools. To equip the news craftsman with his particular set of tools, we must first establish the particular role of news within the station's program format.

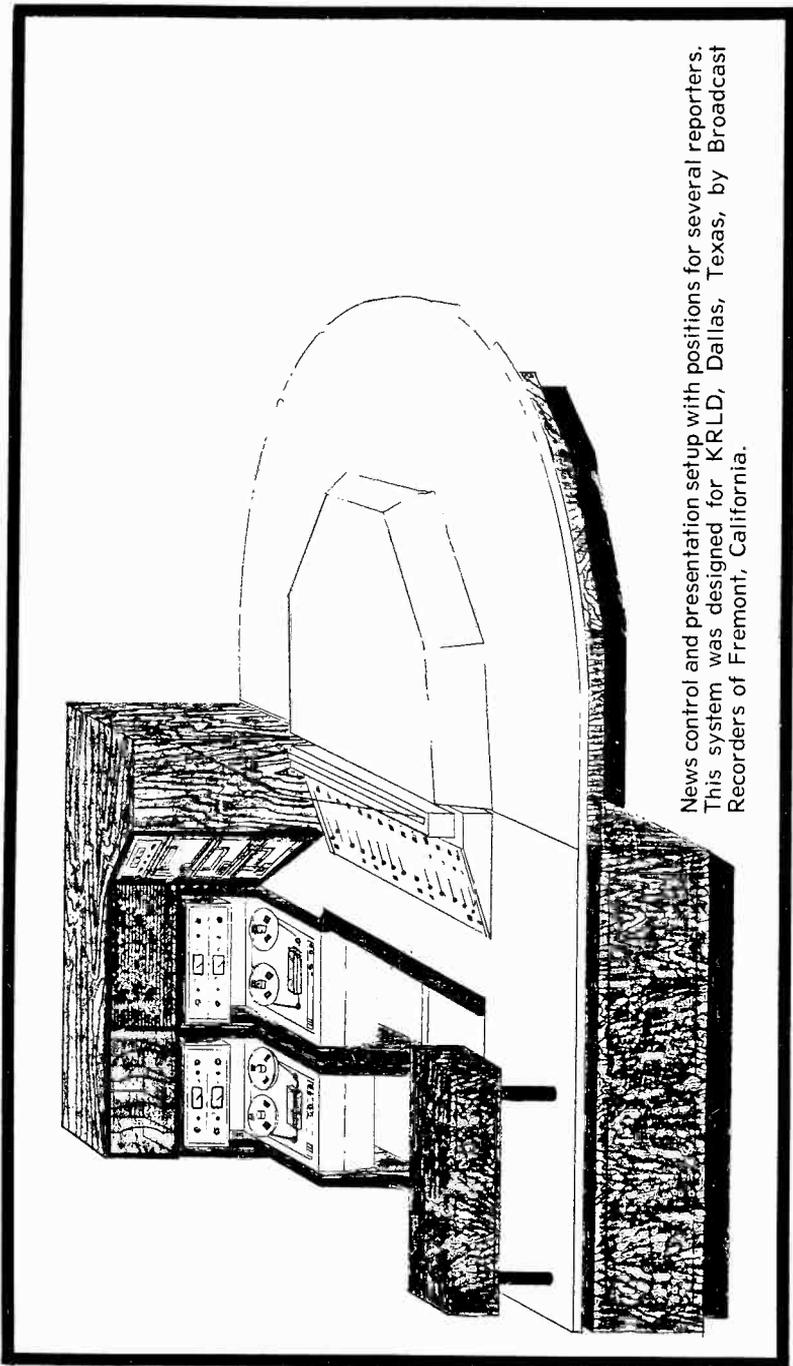
If news is minimal and constructed to fulfill only a license obligation, then one approach should be sought. On the other hand, if news is of paramount importance as a listener-getter, then another approach is to be desired. If it is something in between, then still another set of circumstances should be considered.

It is very important to talk philosophy first. Otherwise, the plans for the physical area and equipment needs (apart from personnel) cannot be accurately drawn up. If construction of a new facility or the revamping of existing floor space is involved, the concept must be spelled out for the concerned department heads to review. This does not preclude the idea that change somewhere along the line cannot be accommodated. It would be foolhardy to flatly predict that a station's news concept must remain rigid because there is no provision for change.

In much the same vein as we recommended the joint consultation of programing and engineering for space and equipment needs, we must assign values to the contribution that news is to make to the station operation. Planning helps everyone and prevents the haphazard growth that accompanies a lack of planning. That engineering watchdog cannot function properly when it is not apprised of the proper specifications for the job.

### **PHYSICAL LAYOUT**

Engineering can construct the suggested layout for the news setup when it is aware of the precise ambitions of the



News control and presentation setup with positions for several reporters. This system was designed for KRLD, Dallas, Texas, by Broadcast Recorders of Fremont, California.

news department. In order to do so, the following questions must be answered:

**How many men are to be housed?** How many newsmen are to be on duty at the station at any one time? How does the shift schedule change to take care of traffic time as opposed to other hours of the day? Are all the newsmen voicers or is there a separation between news writers and news airmen?

**From what studios will on-air news originate?** Will the news booth be close to master control? Are production background sounds needed to accompany news delivery? Can existing station production rooms be shared with news as the news schedule dictates?

**Should other production studios be made suitable for news operations if additional needs so arise?** Is there sufficient flexibility for immediate conversion to a news demand if additional inputs are needed, as may be the case with enlarged election coverage or a community-wide emergency situation?

**Will the newsmen handle their own inserts on the air?** For tight cues and to prevent news carts from being played out of sequence, will the news airmen handle their own cart machines? How is this to be linked with master control?

**What capability for outside liaison?** Will there be field reporters and will they be filing stories from an outside source? Where is the "hot line" telephone to be connected and patched in?

**Is a separate editing/production room desired?** Is there sufficient space for careful news editing without interference with any other part of the news operation? Are there enough adapters to connect gear like cassettes into other equipment? Will separate space be necessary for the news wire services' audio feeds due their specific feed time demands?

**How many Teletype machines?** How extensive a news operation is anticipated and what news wire services are being subscribed to? Will a Teletype cover be needed to reduce teleprinter noise? Where are the teleprinters to be housed? What provisions are being made for the space requirements for storing boxes of Teletype paper and ribbons? Sometimes all such potential problems (noise, storage space, etc.) can be solved at the same time. Broadcast Recorders, for example, manufactures an attractive cabinet that at once houses the printer, muffles noise, and provides substantial space for storage of supplies (see photo). For access, the side and rear panels are removable.

Where are the police and fire monitoring units to be housed? How are these reports to be handled and assigned? Will the main news area be the logical placement?

What provisions are there for morgue and other file space? Does the news operation retain locally prepared newscasts for any length of time? Will there be any cross-filing that will also include wire copy and news handouts?

The information supplied by the answers to these questions is incorporated into the design of a news setup within an existing framework or into a new facility. Many mockups



Noise-reducing Teletype cover designed by Broadcast Recorders of Fremont, California. Front and rear panels are removable.

linking the news unit into the overall program/production areas of the station should be considered. Speed and expediency are important words in the newsman's lexicon and the two should be catered to with every possible dispatch. Professional news production is an important element in any station sound and there should be no compromise with the physical layout to enable that to occur.

### **SPECIFIC EQUIPMENT NEEDS**

Along with the thinking that goes into the design of a feasible physical layout is the total amount of gear necessary to make it all operative and meaningful. Among the elements to be acquired, the following are within the realm of radio newsroom needs:

**Police and fire monitoring units.** Receivers to monitor various police department (city, county, and highway patrol) and fire department transmissions have to be set up and tuned to the proper band allocations for each.

**Wire service teletype.** This is a relatively self-sufficient piece of equipment from the station's engineering point of view. It is not purchased as other equipment and it is not serviced as other equipment. The UPI and AP have their own service staffs and when problems arise that are not in the transmission lines, service and repair people are available from the news services.

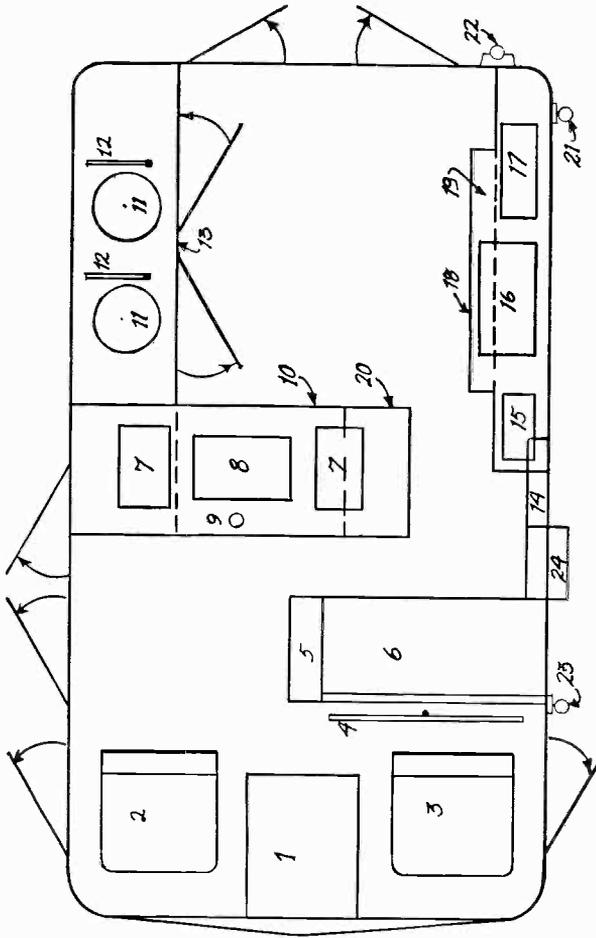
**Tape recorders, nonportable.** Permanently installed tape recorders have to be available to record from several inputs. These inputs include telephone lines, news wire service audio feeds, an affiliated radio network, a two-way radio system, and a microphone directly connected with it.

**Tape recorders, portable.** These are now in the cassette category for mobility and ease in handling. The system used by ABC is fairly typical; WCBS and WINS (both New York City) use the same system. The field newsman can carry in an actuality tape or can feed it through an induction coil into a standard telephone receiver. In either case, the raw cassette is dubbed to a standard studio reel-to-reel machine for editing. Once the cut is finished, it's dubbed to a broadcast cartridge. In an effort to avoid the reel-to-reel stage, NBC dubs directly to cartridge whenever possible.

**Cartridge machines.** Several workhorse units have to be capable of recording and playing back whatever inputs are needed.

**Mixer.** Facilities are needed to accept feeds from various news sources. This equipment should be designed for easy access to the tape recorders.

1. Engine cover
2. Passenger's seat
3. Driver's seat
4. Yagi antenna storage
5. Communications transceiver
6. Guest bench and battery storage
7. Cartridge machines
8. Sparta control board
9. Microphone gooseneck
10. Console
11. Turntables
12. Tone arms
13. Turntable and storage cabinet
14. Spare tire
15. Clock radio
16. Marti transmitter
17. Public address amplifier
18. Cart rack
19. Equipment shelf
20. Record storage and speaker
21. Ring antenna mount
22. Yagi antenna mount
23. Communications antenna mount
24. Air conditioner



Layout of a mobile van used by WGNV, Yonkers, New York.

**Tape splicer.** A unit capable of aiding in editing and repairing audio tape has to be within arm's reach at all times.

**Telephones.** These units, listed and unlisted, should be tied in through the mixer to record various news sources.

**Supplies.** Good quality tapes for the nonportable tape recorders and cassettes for the portable tape recorders should always be plentiful and ready to go into action. A sturdy bulk eraser should be on hand for the various length cartridges earmarked for newsroom usage.

Obviously, there are other functional tools for the newsroom, but those already cited are the concern of the engineering department. It is up to that department to examine the various brands in the acceptable price ranges in order to produce the best news sound available.

### **MAINTENANCE OF MOBILE EQUIPMENT**

David Dary, in his **Radio News Handbook** (TAB Books), points out that "a mobile news unit can be installed in almost anything on wheels, but the most common is the car or station wagon equipped with a two-way radio. The vehicle gives the newsman mobility while the two-way radio provides instant communication between newsman and his newsroom and the facility for broadcasting on-air news reports."

Actually, what we're talking about is a field studio capable of operating from almost anywhere outside the home base. A typical mobile studio layout is pictured in the van floor plan shown on the preceding page. Complete with air conditioner, antennas, and a fully equipped console, this mobile studio van, used by a Yonkers station, is always at the ready.

We can utilize a helicopter or an airplane for overhead reports, or an amphibious unit for marine reports. Two-way radios today make almost anyone and anything a field studio from which to broadcast. However the station's news department elects to make its contact with the outside news sources, that is the route with which the engineering department has to make arrangements to service.

Being up on surplus government equipment can help engineering provide the elements of a two-way radio system at an economical cost in addition to exploring the usual channels of the major electronic manufacturers.

## *Chapter XVI - Installation Of Remote Setups*

Regardless of the location of the originating point and the nature of a remote pickup, every engineer worth his salt will talk in terms of "lead time." It is not up to engineering to evaluate the importance of a remote—that is in the province of programing and sales—but once decided upon, it is then an engineering project that insures the success of the whole effort. Any remote, be it a live or a delayed program, should be planned as far in advance as possible. Cutting that lead time too fine only compounds problems.

When a remote is being considered, it is up to programing to be aware of the considerable engineering preparation needed in order to make it successful. Telecommunications consultant David Talley summarily explains: "Remote radio pickups are usually comprised of the following elements. Microphones and associated amplifiers at the program pickup point or remote location; the program transmission facility (normally a leased telephone line) and the necessary interface equipment at the broadcast studio for properly receiving the remote audio program and its subsequent transmission. The type of transmission facility employed between the remote pickup point and the studio is the controlling link in this broadcasting chain. Wireline facilities are primarily utilized for remote radio pickups. They are usually leased from the telephone company for the duration of the remote broadcast program."

Depending upon the nature of the remote, the following program lines are available from the telephone company:

1. For speech, Schedule D: 3 kHz
2. For speech and music, Schedule B: 5 kHz
3. For speech and music, Schedule BB: 8 kHz
4. For music, Schedule BBB: 15 kHz

From the basic 3 kHz to the 15 kHz lines (which need only be considered for use with FM broadcasting stations), cost factors progressively rise.

Engineering will make the decision as to which to order once the needs of the remote are outlined. If there is a limited budget for the event, an unequalized voice line would be adequate for speech alone. This is in the realm of the 3 kHz program facility (Schedule D). Most broadcast remotes do not usually involve great distances between the two points being hooked up so that delay distortion is not a problem to be worried about. This latter situation would give an unnatural character to speech by giving it a boomy or a bassy sound.

Not too far back, there were specific forms that were employed by the telephone company to initiate the ordering of a remote line. Now, the procedure merely requires a call to the broadcast division with specific instructions as to the quality line needed and the exact location of the remote. As for the cost factor (which should have been estimated earlier and incorporated into the budget for the entire project), distance is naturally the key.

### **PERMANENT VS TEMPORARY SETUPS**

The nature of the remote will indicate to engineering the amount of effort and study involved in setting things up. If the installation is to be used over a period of time on a permanent or semipermanent basis, engineering has to think in terms of solidifying the installation. Perhaps additional gear might have to be ordered and allocated to that remote. Perhaps arrangements will have to be made as to where to store the gear when it is not in operation. Line charges will have to be budgeted for on this basis and a monthly fee, beyond the initial installing charge, will have to be included.

Although the temporary or one-time shot requires checking levels with the studio ahead of broadcast time to allow for adjustments at either end of the remote, the permanent or semipermanent setup can be critiqued during and after the actual broadcast. If the quality was deficient in any way, there is time to make any compensations for the succeeding broadcast. Both for programing and engineering, it would be a good idea to tape an aircheck of permanent or semipermanent remotes for a later check. Problems ranging from a need for better cushioning of the broadcast booth for the operator at the remote to a different design for the equalizer at the studio end could be readily identified and taken care of in time for the next remote broadcast utilizing the same setup.

The design of an equalizer, like other filters, can be very involved. The basic purpose of an equalizer is to "adjust" the frequency response in order to compensate for the charac-

teristics of the telephone line. Several types of equalizers are commercially available to equalize nonloaded cable pairs for program transmissions.

## **LIAISON WITH TELEPHONE COMPANY**

From the beginning days of a remote, on a one-time shot or otherwise, engineering is in direct contact with the telephone company. There are many aspects of concern, from the availability of adequate facilities to the actual installation and checkout of line quality. Naturally, the more complex the programming aspect of the remote, the greater the number of elements with which to be concerned.

Engineering must watch over the project at practically every stage. When a decision is made to go ahead with the remote, the proper line must be ordered from the telephone company. An estimate of the line installation date should be established in order to facilitate subsequent planning. When the telephone man does show up at the station to tie in the remote line, engineering is concerned with the correct connection on the station's telephone board. Engineering is likewise concerned about testing that line once a tone is put on the line.

If any problems ensue anywhere in the whole chain of events, it is up to engineering to know whom to reach if trouble exists in the line or telephone company facilities. The names and numbers of those responsible should be obtained for emergency use. The operator at the station and the personality at the remote should also have access to the names and numbers of people at the telephone company. Not that any other personnel should supplant engineering, but emergencies do arise and it would be additional insurance for backup assistance. Good rapport with test toll at the telephone company helps in cementing good relations for the future.

Something relatively new on the horizon is a device created by the Bell System called the portable conference telephone. It plugs directly into a standard telephone jack installed at the broadcast site and is equipped with two broadcast-quality microphones. No amplifier is needed and no preamp is needed. In fact, none of the station's equipment is needed at the site, and that means no technicians need be sent to operate it.

According to AT&T, "Your reporter simply carries the 19-pound set with him, plugs it into the jack and an ac outlet, dials your studio, and is ready to go on the air. By using regular telephone lines, you avoid the expense of special audio channels. Between remotes, this phone won't loaf on the shelf. For staff meetings, its built-in speaker allows as many as 30

people to listen to a telephone conversation, and the microphones allow them to join in. On an executive's desk, it can permit hands-free talking and listening."

Communications News (3/72) wrote up the use of this innovative device by WOBFM-FM, Toms River, New Jersey. "When a reporter is given his assignment, he merely puts the portable telephone in the back of WOBFM's station wagon and drives to the scene. He plugs in, then calls the station's news number and is immediately connected to the control room, where the conversation is automatically taped or aired live. The unit is used to cover local political conferences. On candidate nights, the telephone is placed right in front of the guest speakers and then a mike is put in the audience so that they can question the speakers at the podium. The portable telephone is an almost perfect piece of equipment for sports. The station's sports director likes the ability to hear commercials as they're being aired."

Not only can money be saved on remote broadcasts through this very versatile instrument, but tempers and preparation can be spared through its universal adoption.

## *Chapter XVII - Automation*

Program Director Al Rogers of WFRE, Frederick, Maryland, says about automation, "Ideally, automation will enable you to program what you want, when you want it, the way you want it, without having to worry about a hung-over morning man, a hypochondriac not showing for the night shift, or where to find a part-timer for the 6 a.m. Sunday trick."

Supporting this thesis is Lee Facto, International Good Music vice president, station relations, "Every broadcaster knows today that automation can save money. It's much more than just the payroll dollars; automation can boost profits in a number of other ways, too.

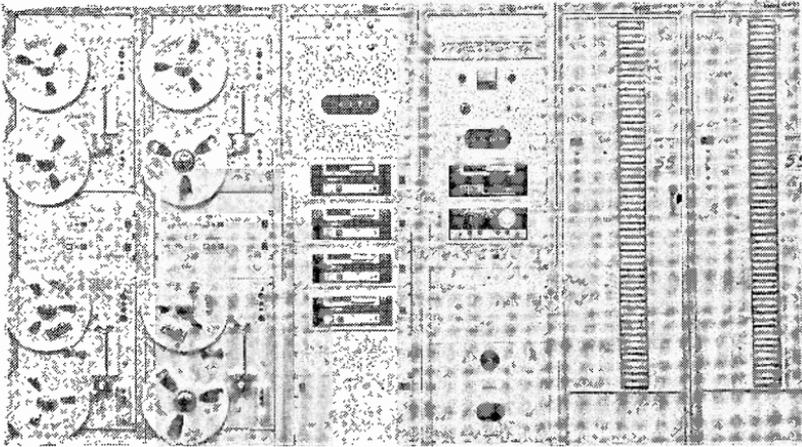
Automation can eliminate, substantially or wholly, the operator errors that cost money in lost revenue and makegoods.

It can take over the mechanical, button-pushing jobs so that people are free to do the creative things that only people can do. That translates into dollars and cents through, for example, more effort and imagination in selling.

It can drastically reduce recruiting and training costs. Most broadcasters are eternally looking for, and training, new people. Automation will let you operate with fewer, better, and better-paid people who are more efficient and more stable on the job.

Automation can give you for the first time, or at the very least greatly improve, continuous managerial control of the whole program format and of each element in it."

To determine the degree of saturation and future growth of automation, **Broadcast Engineering** conducted a comprehensive survey of the broadcast spectrum. Its results show that, 33 percent of the AM stations in the top 100 markets have gone into automation, and of the remaining 67 percent in this classification, 55 percent reported that they will be in the market for automation. In the AM stations in markets below the top 100, 80 percent have not gone into automation. Out of this percentage, 60 percent say they have no intention of automating during the early 70s. On the FM side, 57 percent of



Gates automation system. A variety of programing formats can be handled through the combination of reel-to-reel transports, Criterion 80 cartridge decks, and the Criterion 55 multiple-cartridge reproducers.

the stations in the top 100 markets are automated, and 56 percent of the remaining group indicated that they will be automating. In the FM stations in markets below the top 100, 60 percent have gone into automation, and of the remaining 40 percent, 52 percent reported that they will be in the market for automation.

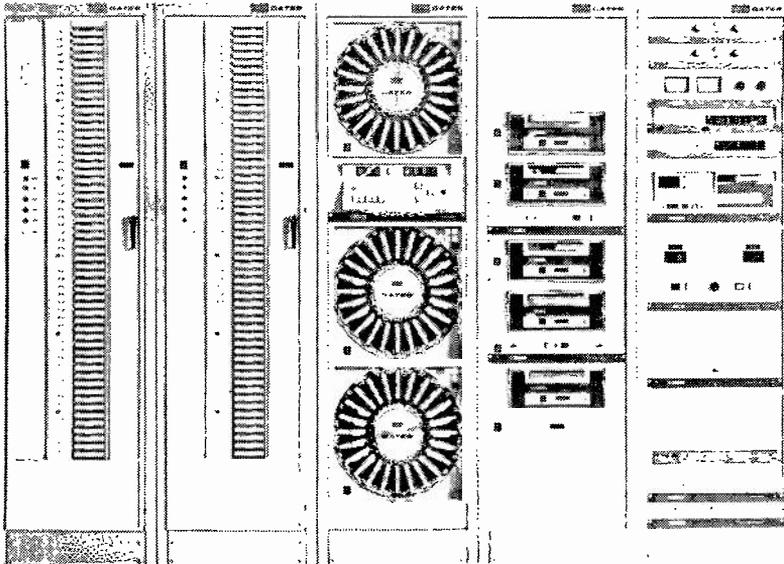
Some broadcasters are under the impression that only an MOR sound is compatible with automation. Jim Huffman, program director of a medium-market top 40 station in central Utah (KOVO, Provo) counters this stereotype with: "Automation will be commonplace in the future and will give the medium- and small-market stations a more professional sound and make them competitive with their bigger brothers. Problems with personnel will come up, but fortunately most can be solved. Increased training time is needed. Assuming the operator has had no previous experience with automation, the average time planned for a man to break into this job has increased from about a week to a month. Jocks who already preplan to achieve an overall entertainment picture for the listeners (as opposed to winging it with spur-of-the-moment spontaneity), will not have much trouble in getting used to this preplanning idea."

### **PLANNING AND INSTALLING A SYSTEM**

The chief engineer is a key person in coordinating efforts between management, programing, and sales regarding that initial step called "contemplating automation." The first planning step brings up several questions on the programing

level. What is the format and how is it to be accommodated? Is it to be prepared at the station or is it to be purchased from an outside source? (Outstanding success stories have been reported, for example, by stations utilizing the services of a programing source called Stereo Radio Productions. In this instance, the station signs a contract with the programmer that covers the number of commercials per hour, the amount of news in the format, delivery of commercials, and amount of time devoted to public affairs and public service messages).

As cited by Bob Hamilton in his **Operating Manual for Starship: Radio '73**, "For SRP's service, stations pay according to market and according to longevity of contract. The highest price is \$4500 a month with a four-year contract. The lowest is \$700. The format allows for no more than four interruptions per hour and six commercials. The contractual minimum library consists of 120 tapes. The actual library in play "floats" between 130 and 220 tapes, depending in part on the season of the year and whether single vocals are recommended related to the competition in a given market. New tapes are not delivered on a monthly basis, but on a judgment of the needs of the library in play by season and in relation to public tastes."



Gates digital program automation system, in which individual audio sources are integrated for all preselection, switching, fading, and mixing operations. Musical selections, introductions, commercials, news, and network programs are controlled smoothly and automatically without an operator.

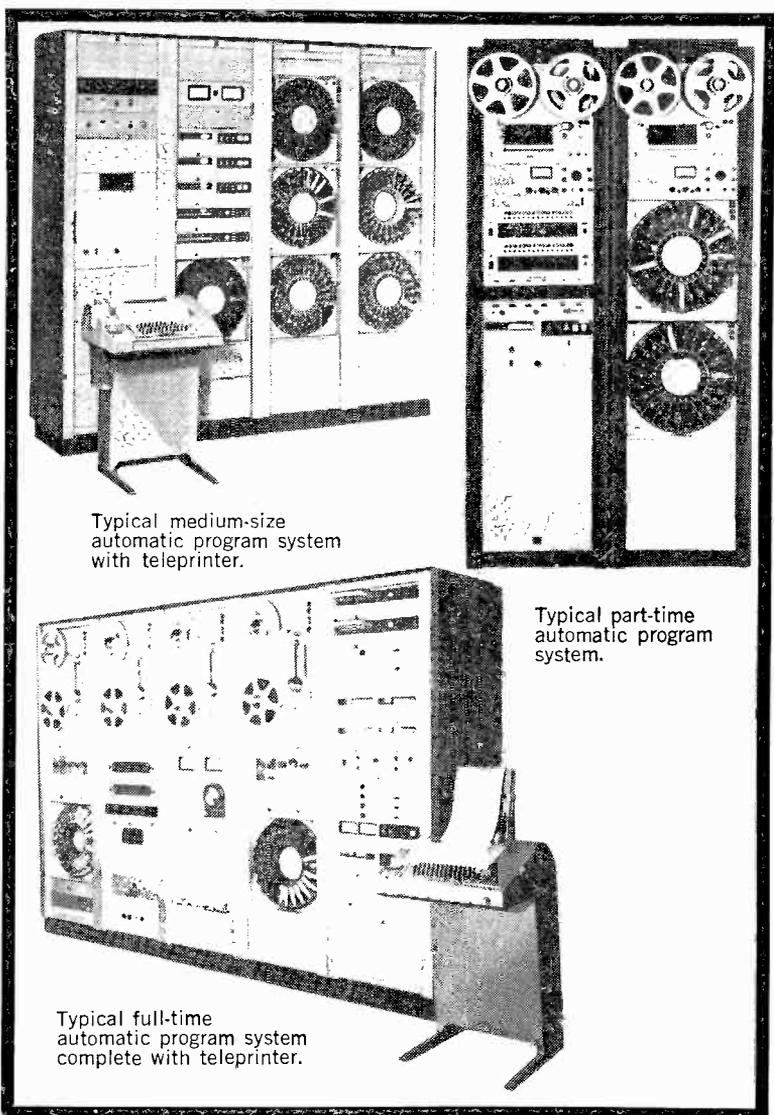
The engineer understands that all automation systems are basically sequential switching systems wherein one event follows another in a predetermined sequence. A manufacturer can only furnish realistic estimates when he fully understands what a station is trying to accomplish with its programing. Suggestions, of course, can be offered by that manufacturer, based on the collective experience that he possesses. Prior installations of varying kinds and elaborations always furnish that backdrop for future proposals and suggestions.

Basic and elemental to any automation system are two motivators: the programmer and the sources. The programmer is the decision-maker and the sequence of play will be only as good as the information fed into it. The sources include components like tape decks, carousels, cartridge decks, and a time deck.

Continuing through on the analysis of a format, it is paramount to establishing a source switching requirement. Morris Courtright, ex-chief of computer operations at the Air Force Satellite Test Center and now a consulting engineer and the automation editor of **Broadcast Engineering**, poses the following: "Do you have a net to join at specific times? Is there an established sequence of music play? Must a particular spot be played at a precise time? Does your format repeat itself over a period of time? Do you fade selections to meet specific time events or do you dead roll to time out the event? The real trauma occurs in this step of format definition. This is where the decisions are made that you must live with when an automation system is finally installed. Failure to truly define your sound is a sure step to dissatisfaction with automation."

In trying to determine the proper system for station needs, another important consideration is maintenance. Of course, the system must be kept operational, but what problems are inherent in each proposal on the maintenance/operational front? According to Schafer Electronics' Jack Krebs and Earl Bullock, "Any playback device can be removed from service for maintenance simply by telling the computer to ignore it in the scheduled programing. A simple command restores it to operation. Provision for manual control of all playbacks is also included. Thus, maintenance of the computer system is no more of a load factor than the usual station maintenance."

After adding in the number of carousels needed, the digital clock, and the program logger, the dollar figure for the total system looms at management. Bids from the various manufacturers based upon what the station desires to accomplish with its automation should be carefully analyzed before an award to one of them is made.



Typical medium-size automatic program system with teleprinter.

Typical part-time automatic program system.

Typical full-time automatic program system complete with teleprinter.

RCA automation systems offer various stages of application. The teleprinter makes hard copy of the program sequence.

The accompanying table lists some representative automation systems, their capabilities in brief, and the manufacturers who produce them. The **comments** column shows what you can expect to pay for various levels of automation. The photos in this chapter show some of these systems in actual-use situations.

Company	Principal Product/Model	Comments
Aitken Communications Inc. 701 South Tenth Street Taft, Calif. 93268	Switching control	Customized flexible controllers for budget-minded operations.
Broadcast Products Inc. 660 Lofstrand Land Rockville, Md. 20850	Plug-in modular approach: cross-bar switching or pushbutton. input with MOS memory	Units start at under \$6000
CCA Electronics 716 Jersey Avenue Gloucester City, N.J. 08030	Mini-automation	Single rack for mono automation starts at \$5300
Dyma Engineering Box 51 Taos, New Mexico 87571	Consoles. Concept 70	Audio console with built-in pre-event switcher
Gates Div. of Harris-Intertype 123 Hampshire Street Quincy, Illinois 62301	Full line of equipment including logging	Latest equipment incorporates digital MOS memory for touch-control programming
IGM P.O. Box 943 Bellingham, Wash. 98225	Full line including accessories. also tape service	Model 400 starts at \$10,600. Model 500 schedules material on real-time basis. Model 710, latest unit, provides 1000 event RAM for 30 audio sources. Model 730 is minicomputer controlled
RCA Broadcast Systems Camden, N.J. 08102	Customized radio automation systems. all accessories available	Basic systems start at \$10,000
Schafer Electronics Corp. 75 Castilian Drive Goleta, Calif. 93017	Full line of equipment and accessories including model 8000 which uses minicomputer.	Company's latest equipment is 900 series which includes a switch memory unit 900 and MOS memory 903.
Sparta Electronics Corp. 5851 Florin-Perkins Rd. Sacramento, Calif. 95828	Program system is built around automatic program controller Full line of add-ons available	Automatic controller uses pegs on front panel to establish format
Systems Marketing Corp. 1014 West Washington St. Bloomington, Ill. 61701	Home of the Carousel systems. includes Model DP-1 which incorporates memory and keyboard, and Model 600 digit-card system which is programmed by plastic cards.	Digital programming takes 2048 instruction and handles 24 channels
Tape-Athon Corp. 502 S. Isis Avenue Inglewood, Calif. 90301	Modest automation system including slow-speed loggers.	Company also specializes in automatic music systems for CATV.

A listing of the various automation systems and what they have to offer.

## PREPARATION AND MAKEUP

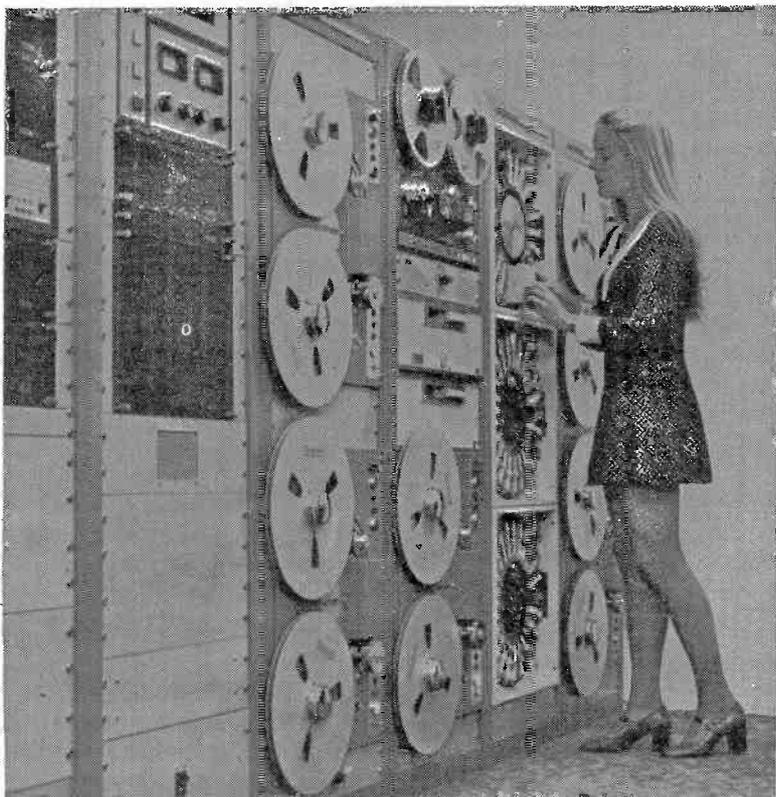
Mel Elza of KGRC, Quincy, Illinois, states that the station's disc jockeys take 15 to 20 minutes to do their three-hour show and the other seven hours and 40 minutes are spent creating effective commercials and station images. "Automation has increased their efficiency—we feel that each man is equivalent to three in a live operation. A deejay's concentration span during those 15 minutes of recording produces a better product than when he is on the air three hours at a time. Result: A professional sound 24 hours a day. Those announcers who said it would never work now tell us that you couldn't get them behind a live turntable again."

Once the automation system has been installed at the station, it is up to engineering to make sure that all operators are familiar with the various steps involved in making the system function as designed. This is the stage where "mothering" the operation pays off in future dividends. Ac-

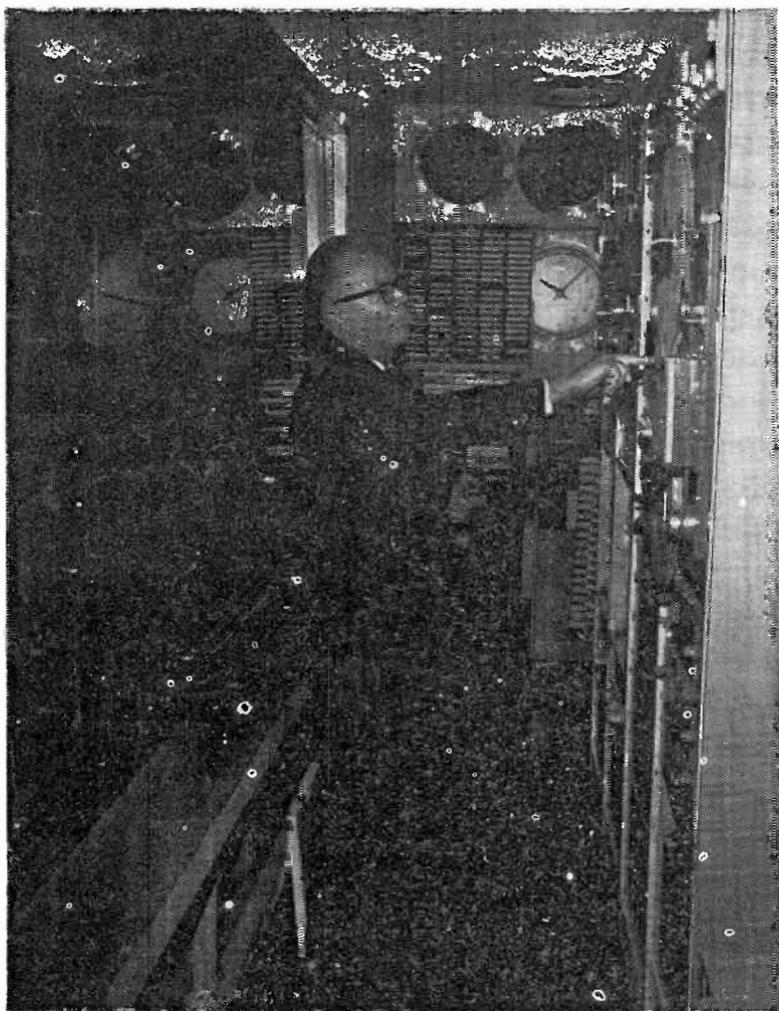
tually, an interim cry-run period before converting to the system on the air is wise. Any existing mechanical or man-made problems can be rectified during this shakedown period. It is a crucial time, since many previous habits have to be undone and new ones learned.

In the conversion of the total commercial load to an automation system, it is an opportune time to review the quality of the cartridges that will be placed into the carousels. Any carts in question should be set aside and new ones introduced into the system.

It is obvious that those commercials previously read live (upon instructions from a client or an advertising agency) will have to be converted to produced spots to enter the system. The sales department must alert clients and agencies as to this necessity and proceed accordingly. Where there were live tag instructions to a produced spot, this transfer will also have to be made. Traffic will have to coordinate the rotation of live



A traffic girl loading a cartridge into a carousel in the Schafer Model 8000 broadcast automation system.



At WJR-FM, Detroit, Michigan, Ned Nolan, chief engineer, inspects the Gates automated programming system. The complete system is on casters to allow it to be rolled forward for improved access to the equipment.

tags with programming to make sure the advertiser's instructions are carried out.

We constantly stress that broadcast has a quality of immediacy unmatched by the print media. A nonautomated station can insert a live commercial at the drop of a hat. But its automated sister has to produce its commercials and then program into the system. This is by no means a calamity, but advertisers must understand this prerequisite step.

Actually, there is nothing that an automated station can't do when compared with the nonautomated one. Even a news bulletin can be handled with the immediacy that it deserves. It is recorded on a cartridge and inserted into the system; then, the operator hits the automatic fader switch to take out the music and make way for the news bulletin.

Let's take a look at the steps that are used in one system on a workaday basis once the format has been programmed:

1. The programmer has to have a completed program log. Traffic must know that you cannot double spot commercials from the same carousel.

2. The programmer knows that his particular system is set up on an hourly basis:

- a. On the  $\frac{1}{4}$  and  $\frac{3}{4}$  hour breaks, there are four events
  - 1) Buffer (station promotion under 5 seconds)
  - 2) Commercial or PSA
  - 3) Commercial or PSA
  - 4) Image (station promotion longer than 5 seconds)
- b. On the hour and  $\frac{1}{2}$  hour, there are three events
  - 1) Buffer (station promotion under 5 seconds)
  - 2) Commercial or PSA
  - 3) News or weather including station identification

In each cluster, two events are a part of the format insofar as the memory system is concerned and do not change; e.g., station breaks, news, weather. The remaining changeable events are commercials or PSAs (which can be deleted if management so desires).

3. The programmer goes to the memory system that is set up for (in this case for 1000 events), and manually enters commercials or PSAs, except if a commercial or PSA is to remain in the same identical slot. This is accomplished by a Touch-tone system and is performed on a daily basis. In this system, 336 events are employed, which enables the programmer to go a Monday, Wednesday, Friday pattern and, then, using the second set of 336 events, a Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday pattern, and still have a sufficient number left over for Sunday programming, which is slightly different because of public affairs and religious programming. This allows the programmer to program 48 hours ahead.

4. The programmer clears out of the carousels expired commercials or PSAs and coordinates all new commercials or PSAs.

5. The operator has the log at all times as a double-check to make sure that the proper commercials or PSAs are run. The operator also checks the automatic logger for a correct readout.

Maintaining liaison with the manufacturer's representative is an important function of engineering during the early months after a station goes into automation. Should any questions arise or should there be any irregularity, it is best to attend to them early. No one at the station should lose his enthusiasm for the system because of poor communications between those who are still learning and those who can provide the answers.

The very same requirements that are discussed in the chapter on Quality Control apply to an automation system. A well produced radio station requires this sort of professional attention!

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