



CAROL ARCHER

## Raise Your Station's Potential

Conquering technophobia can put you on the leading edge of success

By Rich McMillan

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In today's ultra-competitive radio culture, winning stations find a way to do more with less. One way they accomplish their goals is by using state-of-the-art technologies. When competitors are stuck in the technological past, their lack of vision can be your advantage.

Technology is the great equalizer. Smaller groups use it to compete with giants who can be slow to acknowledge progressive change. Like huge ships, these large groups turn very slowly. Smaller, leaner companies can move much more quickly ... and that's a definite advantage!

Motivational expert Tony Robbins defines insanity as "doing the same thing over and over again and expecting a different result." If, for example, a station has not had success with older, more traditional forms of marketing, music testing, and imaging — or is realizing a diminishing return on those efforts — it's time to look at newer, more interactive ways of successfully deploying these vital elements.

Back in the mid-'80s, only a handful of groups were using direct mail and telemarketing/faxing. There was only a small pool of companies that were experi-



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enced in these new technologies. By the early '90s, everyone was involved in direct mail and telemarketing/faxing. Now there are hundreds of companies selling the technology, although only a few exist with a true ability to laser-target an audience. Consequently, broadcasters are beginning to experience less than satisfactory results. It has become more and more expensive, competitive, and ineffective.

### Stand Out With E-Mail

How many times have we all heard that a station needs to dominate an advertising medium for its message to be noticed? The advertising world of television, billboards, and telemarketing is often so saturated by radio stations that it can be difficult to remember who's who and what's what. If a listener is bombarded by similar messages from similar stations in similar fashion, how can an individual message really be heard, enjoyed, or even believed? The only way to punch through and stand out in these media is to commit enormous amounts of ongoing mar-

keting dollars. Now more than ever, as we enter the 21st century in a new, ultra-competitive radio culture, it makes good sense to find and develop ways of reaching and interacting with an increasingly time-poor, over-marketed listener. This is particularly true for the NAC/Smooth Jazz audience.

Exciting new technologies are emerging that can reach these people through a multimedia environment. Animated e-mail with streaming audio and video is just one example. It allows station personalities and artists to interact in real time with the listeners of your station. The process is cutting-edge, simple to execute, can be highly targeted ... and it

and — ultimately — increase your ratings.

Just having a website is not enough. E-mail addresses are available from select database management companies and on-line services that allow you to get your station's greeting or message inside a targeted household for next to nothing. A proactive e-mail initiative can create a windfall of new listeners. Link them to your site, send them attachments, and give them prize incentives to listen. Yours will probably be the only station doing it for awhile. Take advantage of that exclusivity.

### New Technology For Music Testing

There have been technological advances in everything from marketing methods to space travel. So why are GMs and PDs afraid of using today's advanced music- and audience-testing technology? Those who infer that it's because the technology has yet to prove itself are wrong. Respected researchers like Bill Moyes have been using IVRU (Interactive Voice Response Unit) technology successfully for over a year now with impressive results. This advanced technology has many advantages over auditorium testing. Here are the two most important:

- IVRU testing is much more lifestyle-friendly and convenient. Listeners are allowed to complete the test at their own pace during their free time and inside friendly, familiar surroundings — the same environment in which they listen to radio!

- IVRU testing allows listeners to hear more than the single six- to eight-second burst of music heard in an auditorium test. Hooks can be longer, and they can be considered more than just once so there is no demand to form an immediate preference opinion.

Stations that have stepped up and embraced this technology are winning. Data can be compiled quickly, less expensively, and more frequently. Survey sizes can easily be doubled, tripled, or quadrupled at a minimum of expense. And the posturing about superior quality control in audi-

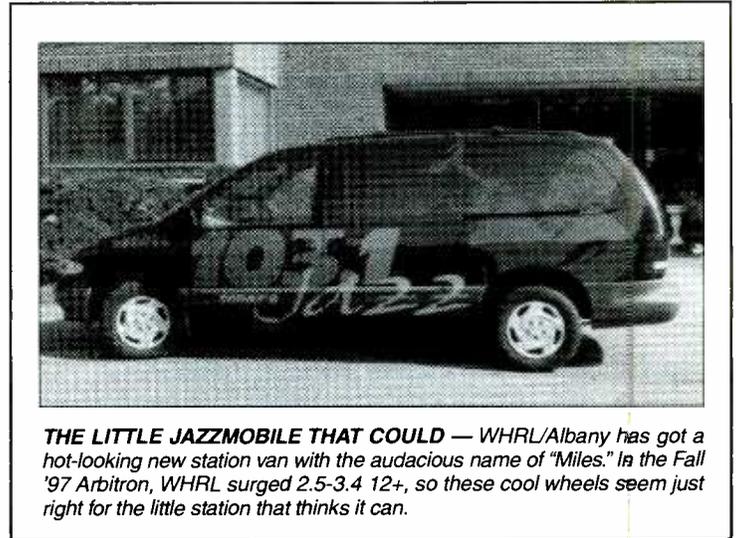
torium testing is just that. The recruiting process is the real issue for any testing methodology.

### Keep Ideas Current

Technology can — and should be — folded back into the actual sound of your station too. Winning stations strive to be more than just background music or a source of relaxation. They reflect the environment of today's adult lifestyle. Words such as "connect," "attach," "streaming," "network," and "download" have become part of everyday life ... and they do not always refer to computers.

You should be cognizant of changes in the jargon of contemporary adults. Work new words and phrases into promos and positioning statements, but guard against becoming too hip for the room. The way you present programming and promotional elements can be as important as the elements themselves. Madison Avenue taught us long ago that image is everything. You never want to be thought of as stodgy, passé, or behind the times.

It's always easier to continue with old ideas than it is to search for new ones. Sometimes it's difficult to even be open to new possibilities. When yours is a station without direct, head-to-head competition, inaction can easily develop. The tendency is to not upset the status quo. At some stations, "Where else can they go?" can almost be used as a slogan. More effective, precise, and cost-efficient methods are being developed every day in our industry. Guard against anyone who preaches "Don't change a thing," because there's always a better way. Take another look at what and who you depend upon to create your product. Is it the best idea available today? Don't let technophobia keep your station from reaching its potential.



**THE LITTLE JAZZMOBILE THAT COULD** — WHRL/Albany has got a hot-looking new station van with the audacious name of "Miles." In the Fall '97 Arbitron, WHRL surged 2.5-3.4 12+, so these cool wheels seem just right for the little station that thinks it can.

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is an unbelievably inexpensive and effective marketing tool. Best of all, you can probably have the medium all to yourself right now! Only the most forward-thinking of radio managers have realized the audience potential and bottom-line savings. These multimedia e-mails can be used to let tens of thousands of new listeners (potential P1s) sample your station, play forced-listening contests, bond with air talent,



**MUCH MORE THAN JINGLES** — KTWV/Los Angeles Production Director Michael Sheehy (second from left) cut more of the station's fabled ID series at West L.A.'s Groove Addicts studio recently with musical assistance from guitarists Jonathan Butler (third from left), Norman Brown (third from right), and keyboardist Bob Mamet (right). Carol Archer (l) was there, too, as well as studio owner Dain Blair (center) and Director/Broadcast Relations Deborah Grobman (second from right).

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