Move Into High Gear With Arbitron Training Just for PDs

If you don’t know what to look for, you may be missing all that your Arbitron data can tell you about your audience and your competition.

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To find a course schedule and to register, visit: arbitrontraining.com and click on the “Programming” link.

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You’ll want to check out the following Arbitron Training videos that will help you use and understand your Arbitron software and data.

• PD Advantage® Web in 10 Minutes
• PD Advantage® Diary in 10 Minutes
• Pulling Scarborough Data for Programmers

In addition, the following videos will give you new insights into the audiences that tune into the following formats:
• Country
• Spanish Language
• Classic Rock
• Black Radio
• News Talk

You’ll find convenient links to all of these and other helpful training videos at arbitrontraining.com.

Minding Your Tweets and Posts

By Jon Miller

Recently, Arbitron sent an email to all our subscribers detailing how it’s possible to run into problems with rating bias and distortion when you market your station using social media.

While you may understand the concepts of rating bias and distortion, Dave Willinski, Senior Principal Policy Analyst at Arbitron, says many broadcasters don’t understand the potential damage they can do to their station’s ratings by violating our guidelines.

You see, here’s the rub: if panelists or diary keepers decide to identify themselves publicly, their entire household will be de-installed from the panel or their diaries will not be counted. So if you engage in some sort of prohibited behavior that causes a big fan of your station to talk about being a participant in the ratings process, you could very easily cause their data, which powers your ratings, to be deleted.

Fighting for ratings is tough enough without making it any harder.

With that in mind, you might want to consider revisiting Working With Arbitron’s Copyrighted Estimates with your air staff, and I mean your entire air staff. Willinski notes that many times, problems can stem from part-time talent who just aren’t informed about our policies, looking to maximize their limited on-air exposure.

So, when you do review these concepts with your staff, here are three main messages he suggests you focus on with regards to social media:

1. If you can’t say it on the air, you can’t say it on social media. It’s that simple and yes, we are watching.

2. Personal websites and social media profiles are not personal if they are open to the public. Even if they are not affiliated with the station specifically, but run by a personality, the same rules apply when it comes to rating bias or distortion.

3. There is no such thing as joking about the ratings process. Think of it like those signs near airport security that say they take jokes about security seriously. Don’t say something and then try to claim you were only kidding.

If you need another copy of the Social Media Dos and Don’ts that we sent out and a refresher on the subject of rating bias and distortion, go to www.arbitron.com/guidelines.

Jon Miller is the Director of Programming Services at Arbitron. Reach him at jon.miller@arbitron.com.

DM: With a career that spans 40 years from programming to top management, what are your broad-stroke thoughts on radio today? Where this game is going is that everybody wants exclusive content and no one produces more local exclusive content than a radio station.

CA: With a career that spans 40 years from programming to top management, what are your broad-stroke thoughts on radio today? Radio is a medium that still reaches 92 percent of the population on a weekly basis. There are lots of stories to tell, and they’re not just about the top 10 markets and not just about New York City or Nashville – it’s about this entire country. People use radio in many different ways and to fill a variety of needs. But radio is so much more than music, news, weather and sports – it’s a companion, it’s a friend. And that’s something that none of the music services of the world can ever be.

What’s radio doing right – and what does it need to do to better compete with all the other devices and distractions in people’s lives? There have been distractions, as you put it, to radio usage ever since 8-tracks came out. Then it was cassettes, then CDs, then satellite radio and iPods and now it’s smart phones. Every technology has been part of the radio dashboard, radio hasn’t owned dashboard exclusivity for almost 40 years. Listeners spent time with 8-tracks and cassettes, but they didn’t stop listening to the radio. Even Detroit’s auto manufacturers understand that. They’re on the record saying that AM and FM radio is still going to be part of the automobile. So, radio plays a big part.

As for what we’re doing right, there are so many great broadcasters that I admire, in both big and small markets, who still believe in local content. They still believe in looking for a lost dog. They still believe in putting terrific music on the air and having disc jockeys be part of the music presentation. There’s still a lot of great radio out there.

But in the days of 8-tracks, cassettes, CDs etc., radio was extremely focused on content and services. Whether it’s for PPM or other reasons, music stations in particular seem to be more about playing the music and less about other content. I can understand how you would say that, because there are certainly formats delivered by satellite and technology that allows morning shows and other programs to be syndicated, but it’s not like that everywhere. Here again, just because we see a sector of the industry doing something, it doesn’t mean the entire industry lives by that. And, for every syndicated show, I can find one that is doing great local radio.

Are radio operators making a mistake by not being local? That’s a business decision, and it’s not appropriate for me to comment on another company’s business plan because I don’t live in their shoes. But there’s no doubt that as the advertising pot of money gets challenged, each company has to deal with the ramifications in a way it sees fit. Advertising has become fragmented, too, so one business plan doesn’t fit all anymore.

What is CBS Radio’s mission statement? We want to be live and local. We care about our community and want to be involved in those communities. It’s about love of the product, and CBS Radio is a very product-driven company. When you have people at the top who came from programming, it makes it easy to do that. Not one day goes by that I don’t listen to at least five of our stations. This morning I listened to a Boston sports station. I came to work and listened to a Houston morning show. And I was just listening to Jim Rome on the CBS Sports Network.

Does rising from the programming ranks to upper management affect the way you approach your job? Is it any different that rising through the sales side? I’ve had to walk the line a little bit, and I can’t be as inflexible on certain sales things that I may have been in my younger days – I threw many of my sales people out of my office back then. But I’ve learned it’s about balance. There’s a place for great leaders from sales in our company and there’s a place for great programmers in our company. But I’ve certainly got one foot in each camp – it’s a balancing act to try to make it all work.

When push comes to shove, will you still side with your programmers? That’s pretty funny, and I suppose it depends on what group I’m in front of. But given our mission statement, I’ll answer that, yes, absolutely.
manager is heavily involved with their PDs in directing the format in their market. Does that mean they pick records? Absolutely not. But, they’re involved in the planning of research and in overseeing – sorting, not doing – the implementation of formats within the station. And, they’re really a great sounding board for us. We spend a lot of time with the PDs and they help us determine what they see fit to run a business.

We’re found our most successful clusters are those where the market manager is heavily involved with their PDs in directing the format in their market. Does that mean they pick records? Absolutely not. But, they’re involved in the planning of research and in overseeing – sorting, not doing – the implementation of formats within the station. And, they’re really a great sounding board for us. We spend a lot of time with the PDs and they help us determine what they see fit to run a business.

CBS’ announcement that it would spin-off of its billboard division has rekindled rumors about the radio division being sold. Where does that stand right now? I don’t believe there’s any change. Les [CBS President/CEO Leslie Moonves] has been very supportive of our division. He’s talked about how much of an integral part radio is to the overall company. It’s got a terrific ability to generate cash flow and it’s getting the credit it always should have gotten from peers and nationally for being a powerful marketing machine. The general advertising community and the overall company has always been very supportive of our division. He’s talked about how much of an integral part radio is to the overall company.

When Mr. Moonves was asked about performance royalties at the NAB last September, he said, “The idea we need to pay them to put music on our radio stations is absurd.” I assume that CBS Radio’s stance on that subject hasn’t changed since then?

No. We continue to follow the NAB [position]. We believe that we provide a lot of promotion for our artists and help artists, whether it’s Country. Rock or any other format of music. We believe that there should be performance royalties, because we believe we deserve a portion.

What is CBS Radio’s position on FM chips in smart phones?

It’s hard to say for sure what a smart phone will be as an interaction point for radio. A chip makes it a lot easier to pick up a radio station even from a cell phone. I would say it’s only as good as the strength of the station and the need the consumer has to use a radio at that time. We all have a terrible, free app called “CBS Your Day.”

How do you view satellite radio, Pandora, Spotify and their counterparts?

Pandora is a personalized music service; it’s not radio. It’s just another technology in the car. You would never think of an iPod, cassette, or CD player as a radio. Pandora is another music service that augments your car or home, or wherever. Radio stations are companions, they’re friends. There’s an old saying, which I repeated at the ACM, that radio in the family car is like a first date – it opens up a whole new set of demands. But that’s good for radio, because it helps us put a greater product on the air. But you go out and see radio stations again on these things.

With the diary, you can pretty much program a radio station based on people’s perceptions, because programming in a diary world is all about perception versus programming in a PPM world, which is all about reality. There’s a whole other element, too, that has come as a bit of a surprise to me. With PPM, there’s a set of different back roads behind the main highway, so to speak. The main highway is your ability to put on formats and hope that people listen. But with PPM you get a whole set of back roads about the nuances of demographic sales in the market, they’re measured, what people are doing on the PPM.

If I had to make a prediction, I’d say it’s a good, solid two share. And, if it’s a two share – of overall listening, it ought to be a minimum of a two share of the revenue that might have done?

I don’t think so. Some might believe that, and who knows, there might be a place for Top 40 with no Country experience, as long as you have people on the music side in the radio station who understand the product, which we do in every one of our stations.

You and a number of top CBS market managers and programmers came to Nash- ville a couple months ago. Did you get to interact with any of the Country music superstars?

Yes, I missed a lot of opportunities to do business with Nashville. Who knows what we might have done? Professionally, I was really excited because I knew we had so much to offer. This was the first time that we could gather up our country assets, put them in a big basket and offer them up as a platform. Not necessarily that we were going to do the old ‘shake and a的比例 of mind thing – that we would come out with a 40 PD with no Country experience, as long as you have people on the music side in the radio station who understand the product, which we do in every one of our stations.

What are the elements of the programs you’ve launched in the last couple of months? The overall program is Amplify, and it includes Impact, Launch and Artist Hook-Ups. When one of the biggest names in music records a new project, CBS Radio listeners hear about it through our Impact program. Extensive on-air promotion starts in the days leading up to the song or album debut, and a dedicated section on station websites will highlight the artist and the new project.

Launch targets rising stars chosen by CBS Radio’s programming team. On-air programming highlights clips from their latest release. We also develop an extensive online companion with artist-specific pages, multi-media content and links to purchase music.

The Artist Hook-Ups aren’t ordinary radio station events. These are once in a lifetime, money-can’t buy experiences. Things like front row access, intimate settings, and unannounced sound checks. So, we’re very satisfied listeners ride a car with Brad Paisley and go to ACM rehearsals with Blake Shelton.

In a very short time we’ve also partnered with labels for projects with The Band Perry, Kenny Chesney, Lady Antebellum, George Strait and Thompson Square, with another four or five times that number coming. That can make an impact when put in front of 40 million listeners. That can make some music, and help us all to work together, which I think we do much better than any other network. When all those things work in sync, it’s a powerful marketing machine.

While CBS has strengthened its ties with the ACM, the relationship between CBS and CMA has been strained, to say the least, the last couple of years. Will we see any thawing of that relationship in the near or distant future?

We’ve had a conscious decision to align our company with the ACM.

Top 40 programmers with little or no Country experience as Country PDs?

They’ve been involved in a number of formats during your career, but you’ve always had a little soft spot for Country. I’ve heard you tell the story about personally becoming on WUSN in the late ‘70s.

I did. I pushed the button to play the first country song on WUSN. I’ll never forget that moment. WUSN was Beautiful Music back then. I let a Barbra Streisand song run out completely, and a couple of years later Nikki Courtney and I were in this battle of the gods that dead air – and then I pressed the green button on the cart machine to play Don William’s “Lord, I Hope This Day is Good.” And WUSN was born. That was early 1982, and it’s a story I’ve always had to tell.

With your experience and knowledge of New York, what do you think the ratings and revenue potential is for a NYC Country station?

I’m always looking for opportunities to expand the Country format within CBS stations are companions, they’re friends. There’s an old saying, which I repeated at the school again on these things.

Top 40 programmers with little or no Country experience as Country PDs?

I think that’s not to say they are better at it than PDs from other formats. But I do have an appreciation for Top 40 PDs and how they mechanically deliver a product. They do a good job partly because the competition in that format over the years has been so intense, it’s like they’re always battle-tested. So, I believe you certainly be successful as a 40 PD with no Country experience, as long as you have people on the music side in the radio station who understand the product, which we do in every one of our stations. Is radio’s future similar to the evolution of TV? Will there be thousands of audio channels with original programming, or will it descend into a local exclusive content? I don’t think so. Some might believe that, and who knows, there might be a place in the universe for that type of business model. But it’s nothing that interests me. So, are you bullish on the future of radio?

I’m bullish on radio content. We don’t know exactly which road traffic will take us down, but there will always be a place for good local content that is built on serving the communities and for companionship with listeners. Where this game is going is that everybody wants exclusive content and no one produces more local exclusive content than a radio station.
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