How Much Is The "Right" Amount of DJ Talk?

he thing about "conventional wisdom" is that it's often wrong. Specifically, I'm thinking about the conventional wisdom that in our PPM-controlled universe, radio DJs should, "just shut up and play the music." The truth is that we've heard that refrain from some listeners for at least the last forty years! Further, if local DJs aren't allowed to have "personality" than what's to differentiate radio from the many other ways listeners can obtain and listen to music?

"It's interesting how conventional wisdom can become best practices—and that shouldn't happen," agrees consultant Fred Jacobs, owner of Jacobs Media. "A few years ago, Arbitron came out with its ranker for the most successful PPM stations in the 25 to 54 and 18 to 34 demographics, and the winners were two Rock stations that have plenty of personality and talk: WDVE and KRXQ." In fact, some of the most successful stations in PPM markets fly in the face of the

"no talk" conventional wisdom.

Fred believes that it's *compelling content* that is the key to success when it comes to "jock talk." It must entertain, inform, and connect listeners to their favorite music and communities to work



Gene Sandbloom

well with PPM. "The challenge is striking that balance between allowing for more talk on the one hand, and whether the personality in question has the ability, presence, and gravitas to pull it off on the other. Not everyone can play at that level," Fred asserts.

Warren Kurtzman, President and COO at Coleman Insights notes that the general rule in PPM for music stations is that their audience levels are higher when they are playing songs versus virtually anything else they do—whether it be talk, information, or commercials. "Unfortunately, this caused some non-strategic

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thinkers to conclude that the audience doesn't want talk, although I think that many have awoken to the mistakes in this initial thinking," he states.

Kurtzman affirms that jocks who can deliver world class and/ or hyper local content will help their stations develop the right personality imagery. He concludes, "Those jocks who can do this succinctly will be even more successful."



It seems to me that in many ways local DJs are your secret weapon to help distinguish your station from other stations, and from the countless other sources of music. Plus, if we continually tell DJs to just shut up, how can they possibly get in their "personality"?

"They can't, so it becomes a self-fulfilling philosophy," answers Fred Jacobs. "If talk is limited to a point where personality cannot come through, you're on the road to becoming a jukebox. In a short game, that might win you some PPM months. In the longer haul—that hopefully stations are planning for—it's a formula for making your station obsolescent...especially among an audience that is spending lots of time with media that isn't broadcast. What's going to make your brand different, unique, compelling? Chances are, personalities should

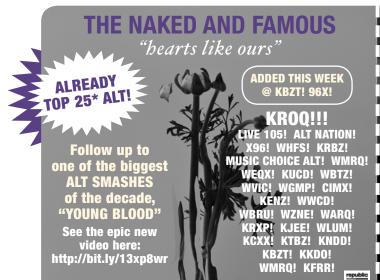
play a role in successfully answering that question."

One station that successfully navigates the fine line between DJ personality and "more music" is KROQ. Operations Manager Gene Sandbloom tells me, "There are so many great new bands right now, and radio is once again the pre-eminent source for discovering them. Our jocks do a great job putting a face on these bands. To just play all this new music without referencing it would be a lost opportunity."

Having said that, at KROQ they use what I think of as more of a Top 40 approach to put a face on the bands. "Ninety-nine percent of our breaks are over the intro ramps of songs, so we never stop the music," Sandbloom says, before quickly stating, "Through an economy of words, KROQ jocks deliver an amazing amount of information in these short blocks."

And it can be done. When I was doing "Hot Hits" back in the day, we also only talked over intros and outros of songs. Get this: there was a *seven second* maximum!

Sandbloom continues, "Our jocks are true personalities. They live and breathe the lifestyle of our listeners, and are completely relatable. Just go to one of our





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The Right Amount of DJ Talk (Con't)

events and you'll see people lining up to pose with them in photos. If you're the first person to pass along important info to your listeners, you'll always win. If you're talking just to fill space or stroke your ego, it's painfully obvious."

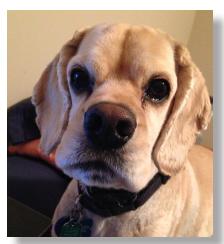
Well, that's in radio's most important market. What about DJ talk in a smaller, non PPM, market? Guy Dark from WWWX informs me that, "No one is doing character voices or wacky drops here, but we do have 'freedom breaks.' The purpose of these breaks is to give jocks latitude to inject some personality—so they aren't just voices reading liner cards."

Dark adds, "Bitching about road construction is a favorite Wisconsin pastime. Although Appleton-Oshkosh is a small market, this area has a TON of events every weekend, plus there's the Packer season, deer hunting, and snowmobiling...beer is also quite popular here. All fodder for talk breaks!"

Nice. I can just picture the scene there. Consultant Jacobs confirms it's that localization which is the key to successful DJ "patter." He says, "If not localized, talk should be relevant in some way to what a listener in your town is thinking, living, and experiencing...just giving the weather forecast for a different city or town every hour isn't being local. It's putting yourself in the shoes of your listeners and reflecting that ethos in your breaks."



Alt Doggie Corner



Brian Davis, PD at WBNQ in Bloomington sent me this pic of Chuck. He's a 6 year old Cocker Spaniel and was named after the station that Brian worked at in Green Bay! Turn offs: Leashes and Miley Cyrus.

Rush your pet pix to pic@thesandsreport.com

Our Mailing Address: The Sands Report • 38 Miller Avenue, #469 • Mill Valley, CA 94941



Added/New in the Top 50

WRDA-Atlanta Bastille, Lorde

KROX-Austin Foals

WHFS-Baltimore MS MR, J. Roddy Walston and The Business

WBOS-Boston No adds

WEND-Charlotte Filter, Tame Impala

WKQX-Chicago AFI, NONONO

CD102.5-Columbus No adds

87.7-Cleveland Cage The Elephant

KDGE-Dallas Cage The Elephant

KTCL-Denver Cage The Elephant

89X-Detroit No adds

WMRQ-Hartford MS MR, Vampire Weekend, 30 Seconds To Mars

KTBZ-Houston AFI, Alt-J, Fall Out Boy

WRZX-Indianapolis Avicii

WXXJ-Jacksonville No adds

KRBZ-Kansas City Arctic Monkeys

KXTE-Las Vegas Avicii

KROQ-L.A. Vampire Weekend

KYSR-L.A. Cage The Elephant

WLUM-Milwaukee Chvrches

KCMP-Minneapolis ALT-J,

AlunaGeorge, Cage The Elephant, Lissie, Polica, Run The Jewels

Music Choice Cage The Elephant, Cold War Kids

WRKN-NO Cage The Elephant, Muse

WBUZ-Nashvile Korn, Twenty One Pilots

WROX-Norfolk Avicii, Cage The Elephant, Chvrches, Naked and Famous

WJRR-Orlando No adds

WRFF-Philadelphia Twenty One Pilots

WXDX-Pittsburgh No adds

KNRK-Portland No adds

WBRU-Providence No adds

KKDO-Sacramento NONONO

X96-Salt Lake City NONONO

KBZT-San Diego American Authors, Naked and Famous, Panic! At The Disco

91X-San Diego No adds



Live 105-San Francisco No adds

The End-Seattle No adds

KPNT-St. Louis AFI, Alt-J

Sirius/XM Alt Nation Colourist, Fitz & The Tantrums, Two Door Cinema Club

97X-Tampa No adds

DC-101-DC No adds

Adds in selected other markets:

WZNE-Rochester Alt-J, Langhorne Slim & The Law, Queens of the Stone Age, Vampire Weekend

Send your station's playlist to: adds@thesandsreport.com

CHVRCH = S "the mother we share"

NEW THIS WEEK AT: WLUM, WROX, KRXP, KXNA ALREADY SPINNING AT: ALT NATION, KRBZ, KRZQ, WEQX





"We were scouring the office here at KRBZ looking for a cool song with big hooks that people will react to. We

found it but we can't spell it. Churvches? Chvrches? Who cares. It's a hit." —Lazlo-PD/KRBZ (37x TW, 478x TD,

Over 1400 tracks sold)
New album, THE BONES OF WHAT

YOU BELIEVE, out 9/24
WATCH THE VIDEO:

http://youtu.be/_mTRvJ9fugM 29,000 tracks sold in 9 weeks!

29,000 tracks sold in 9 weeks:

Headline Tour starts September! http://chvrch.es/shows

"TRYING TO BE COOL"

 $P - H \cdot O \sim E \cdot N - I \wedge X$

INCREASES THIS WEEK AT KROQ, KDGE, WLUM, KMYZ, ALT 98.7, PREMIUM CHOICE AND MORE!

"When I hear Phoenix, 'Trying To Be Cool,'
my first thought is that it would have fit
perfectly on the 'Breakfast Club' Soundtrack!
I LOVE THIS TRACK! We hear that music
is cyclical and this is proof! I get a very
'nostalgic' glow when it comes on WEND."
JACK DANIEL-PD/WEND

VIDEO NOW AT OVER 1.4 MILLION VIEWS: http://youtu.be/OePvsCfKHJg

MORE U.S. HEADLINE DATES
STARTING NEXT WEEK!
http://wearephoenix.com/tour/



Thursday Music Meeting & Three Dot Lounge

ind of a slower week in the "adds" department. Cage easily topped the "most added" list once again, much to the delight of Bill Burrs and Jeff Gillis. Next, AFI was #2 most added, pulling in big adds from majors like Q87.7, KTBZ, and KPNT. Sweet! #3 was Vampire Weekend with a huge add at **KROQ**, among many others!...The good news is that slower weeks mean I can concentrate on all of my "essential listening." First up it's the fantasmic **Avicii** which is absolutely blowing up all around the world. WROX added it and PD Nick Chappell tells me, "Wake Me Up' follows right behind 'Get Lucky' as songs that will work on both Top 40 and the Alt format. He mixes an almost Mumford and Sons acoustic guitar part with the EDM beats he's become famous for. It's indeed a recipe for success"...My new fave? Man Man "Head On"—so, so great, and the single sales are blowing up... Lots of buzz building on the L.A. band called **The Filthy Souls**. Paul Palmer has discovered another smash called "Destroy You" and I love it...WLUM adds Chvrches. Michelle Rutkowski says, "I love this record to bits and pieces. Amazing vocals, sweet melody that gets all stuck in the head—yeah this a good one!"... The Naked and Famous gets big love from KBZT, as Dennis Blair and John DiMaio are thrilled with the immediate growth on "Hearts Like Ours"... There's a new NIN. "Everything" is the follow-up to the Top 10 "Came Back Haunted" ... MS MR has landed in the Top 20, with a new add at WHFS. Power rotation at KNDD and KNRK...Phoenix is nearing the Top 10...WZNE adds the new Queens of The Stone Age!...The new **Two Door** track is a ripper—produced by **Madeon**...Hey, I gotta go.... Thanks for stopping by today! — Richard Sands

The Big List

CLICK AND LISTEN:

- AFI "17 Crimes"
- http://bit.ly/16kP0io
- Avicii "Wake Me Up"
- http://bit.ly/1c6ZZSm
- Chvrches "The Mother We Share" http://bit.ly/1b7rfgF



- Facebook Page for breaking news www.facebook.com/thesandsreport
 Follow on Twitter
- 7
 - @thesandsreport
- Man Man "Head On" http://bit.ly/1bl8asn
- MS MR "Hurricane"

http://bit.ly/JscAOQ

- The Naked and Famous "Hearts Like..." http://bit.ly/14DWqA1
- The Neighbourhood "Afraid" http://bit.ly/10IIO5P
- Nine Inch Nails "Everything" http://bit.ly/12jAsQD
- Phoenix "Trying To Be Cool" http://bit.ly/11X4VnE
- Queens of the Stone Age "I Sat By..." http://bit.ly/188W9DC
- Vampire Weekend "Unbelievers" http://bit.ly/18hsNmw

IMPACTING SOON:

Arctic Monkeys "Do I Wanna Know" (Domino) Big B/Dirty Heads "Hangovers" (Suburban) The National "Graceless" (Beggars)

Send dates to richard@thesandsreport.com

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