

Four Things NOT To Do When Creating Radio Spots

By David DeCantillon

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Four Things NOT To Do When Creating Your Radio Spots!

By David DeCantillon, Editor of The Ad Critic E-zine <http://www.powerofmarketing.com>

- 1) Don't hire non-professional, non-experienced radio personalities and account executives to develop or read your radio spots.
- 2) Don't allow anyone with a voice deficiency (i.e., lisp, rasp, slur), unless it for a miracle drug that's helps mutes speak or a Special Olympics event.
- 3) Avoid reading directly from the script...word by word.
- 4) Don't come up with a theme, a situation, that the majority of people never find themselves doing on earth.

- 1) Don't hire non-professional, non-experienced radio personalities and/or account executives to develop and read your radio scripts.

How many times have you heard a disc jockey or sales executive read ad copy that sounded as dry as dirt? Or have you heard two people trying to roll play a script, only to sound like two three year olds learning to make conversation. Why? DJ's don't care about your business and sales representatives care about making the sale. They're handed a script (your ad copy) and run through it a few times to say it within 30 seconds and that's it!

No "real" emotion. No voice modulation or emphasis on special buzz words. No convincing reason for the customer to take action.

We've all heard those ads. You know the ones that they were put together 10 minutes before they were supposed to go on the air?

I heard an ad this week, that was in my opinion...was totally useless . First of all, the person saying the ad was not a DJ or radio personality, but an account executive who sells air time. How do I know? For one she's done radio spots for other local businesses and two, the product didn't fit personality.

Anyway, she sounded like an 11 year old who hasn't reached puberty yet. Excuse the expression, but you don't have someone with a tiny petite voice selling auto parts, power tools or the like. It's like Arnold Schwarzenegger doing a spot for perfume or Oil of Olay. It leaves you scratching your head saying, "What in the world was that all about?".

The problem is radio account executives will practically throw themselves at the prospective buyer, in order to get the account, so they promise to develop the script and record it for the client, making it a hands free service.

That's all fine and good, but most of the time the client is not involved in the creation process because, a) the clients are uneducated on what works on radio ad copy, and b) they believe the radio executives will give the script to a "professional" personality only to be disappointed can make their business sound when hear their expense radio time be read by their sales agent.

2) Don't allow anyone to read your spot over the air with a voice deficiency (i.e., lisp, rasp, slur), unless it for a miracle drug that's allows mutes to speak or if they are promoting Special Olympics event.

You have 30 seconds of air time to build creditability for your business. I don't care if it's the president of a multi-million company (which is why I bring this up), if he has a lisp problem or speech impediment, don't let him speak. This has nothing to do with handicap speech, but people like myself, don't want to spend those 30 seconds to trying to understand the message, while feeling sorry for the person reading the ad.

It is possible that the equipment they use is not professional grade. Sometimes the errors occur when S's are pronounced and they sound like the person has a lisp. Or sometimes words are not fully pronounced and are cut off. So it's important to not only to test the recording equipment, but listen to how it records.

3) Avoid having your script being read directly word by word without emotion. Otherwise, it sounds like second graders reading in front of their class.

Find someone who can read a script and bring it to life! Full of energy, excitement and charisma. Also, find personalities that can sound empathic to peoples' needs.

I can't stand listening to business owners do their own commercials. They start out with, "Hello, (pause)....My...name...is _____ of XYZ business? If you're a business owner and you're not experienced in radio, voice modulation, or speaking your message with passion and emotion, then don't stay away from the microphone. Spend the extra money a hire a professional. Ask for a sample recording before spending the money.

I hear these "do-it-yourself" radio spots from doctors, lawyers, and especially from annoying car dealerships who try to save a dollar and make fools of themselves. Sure their friends and family members aren't going to tell them the spots stink to high heaven, because after all, they're on Radio! But to the keen sophisticated public, like myself, it makes me turn the channel off.

4) Don't come up with a theme or situation that doesn't pertain to the majority of people at least once in their lifetime.

People need to relate to your message. That's the hook! You must grab their attention first. I have found the most successful ads on radio are the ones with facts, situations, and everyday occurrences in life that people can identify with.

For example: The national radio spot about Cupid.com. The lady explains her experiences with the horrible dates she's been on and how difficult it was to find the "right" mate, until she went to Cupid.com. The ad relates to millions of singles out there looking for love, plus it gives the solution to avoid dating jerks. The talent spoke without fumbling through their lines and spoke to the audience as if she was sitting across the table from them.

It's real life, people can identify, and it's funny, a good recipe for a successful ad.

In Summary:

Several radio talk show hosts claim that radio is the most personal and intimate forms of media. You can be real on radio and say whatever's on your mind. It's a private audience, a selective and educated audience. So with this in mind, we as advertisers understand to reach an educated market, we must sound like we know what were doing.

My advice is to listen to the professional advertisements on the radio and pick out the ones you like. Analyze those ads. Find out why you like them. What makes them want to buy the product? How many times do they mention the product? The phone number to call? Do they have a call to action? Etc., etc.

You can build a professional ad just by following those four things not to do on radio and by using your common sense. Again, avoid reading your scripts like a third grade play, because people like myself will turn you off. So, please think before you speak, especially when it comes to planning your radio advertisements.

Question of the week: Why do national radio spots sound ten times better than local radio spots?

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