

# Holland Cooke Newsletter • September '17

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*“You get out of radio what you put into it.”*

Hubbard Radio SVP/Programming Greg Strassell, speaking at The Conclave

In this month's issue: My notes from the recent -- and real worthwhile -- Conclave 42.

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## They're throwing darts at you.

Only we-inside-the-box hear our work in its entirety, unlike the mentally-busy in-car listener — or, worse, the podcast consumer whose attention span is near-zero.

Picture listeners “throwing darts.” At any moment, they tune-into you. Is your work instantly understandable and compelling? Bulls-eye! Otherwise, they'll channel-surf away, throwing another dart somewhere else.

- This month, as listeners' post-vacation lives settle back into routine -- and with holiday shopping yonder -- it's real important to be unambiguous and relevant. That's what makes your work habit-forming.
- And boil it down, so when they toss that dart, they instantly “get it.” Deliver at-the-speed-of-life.
- For Talk Radio, there's NO shortage of material. There's an-angle-a-day (see Trump-Watch on page 7).
- Clients who know me as a call count hawk can finish the following sentence: Dialogue makes you sound popular (which advertisers notice); monologue can make you sound lonely.
- “YOU” and “YOUR” are magic words.

In my experience, THE – repeat, THE – most-productive aircheck review technique is “addition by subtraction.”

- Save what-aired as “Before.”
- Save again as “After” and cut-out everything that slowed-down what-you're-delivering-the-listener.
- Save all those cuts as “Styrofoam.” What you'll hear is what makes listeners wander.

Doing this, you're scripting-after-the-fact; using the talent's own work to demonstrate how-it-can-sound-better.

Obviously, this:

- a) is LOTS easier now than when I did it with grease pencil and razor blade; and
- b) is NOT a do-it-yourself project. Talent won't cut-out enough Styrofoam.

PDs who bother to coach: This process WILL be worth your time. Tip: Use an aircheck 2 weeks old, so talent hears their work with fresh ears. Talent with PDs who don't bother: I can help.

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## If you are a Rush Limbaugh affiliate...

...there's probably NOTHING you can do that will grow Share faster than recycling his listeners to morning drive.

**THERE IS STILL TIME** to spike the Fall book.

**SUBSCRIBER EXCLUSIVE:** Type this Internet address – which is unpublished elsewhere – into your browser. You will see and hear me detail a proven tactic: <http://bit.ly/2wPVeUB>

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## 9 IDEAS IN 8 MINUTES

### 1. **Sales lead: Local businesses from which listeners can order via smart speakers.**

"Alexa, buy me..." whatever any local retailer can fulfill in this fashion. This game-changing phenomenon is young-enough that there might not any businesses in your area that qualify. But if you do find any, they sure DON'T want to keep this a secret.

- Got Amazon Echo, Tap, or Dot? Prospect by poking-around. Don't have one? Get one yesterday, for reasons you will read on page 4.
- Do a spec spot featuring Alexa's voice.

### 2. **Best time to publish on Social Media?**

Hit Entrepreneur.com and Search "There Is a Best Time to Publish on Social Media and You Can Determine When It Is" by Lesya Liu. The article also includes these links:

- 7 Ways to Set Your Twitter Feed on Fire
- 18 Tips to Create Your Perfect LinkedIn Profile
- Pinterest Marketing Tips: What You Can Learn From 20 Big Brands
- 5 Ways Your Company Can Utilize Google+
- 7 Marketing Tips to Help Grow Your Brand on Instagram

### 3. **Don't say "irregardless."**

It's the mutant love child of "irrespective" and "regardless." As I'm typing this, Microsoft Word Spellcheck flagged it. Say "regardless."

### 4. **Cliché alert: "shuttered."**

If something closed, say "closed." Listeners don't say "shuttered" in conversation...which is where we want to end up.

### 5. **Don't verb nouns.**

JUST kidding. Just one of a dozen ex-English teacher jokes I've...squirreled-away...

### 6. **Squirrel-away callers.**

This is a best practice for weekend ask-the-expert shows I work with. Keep a library of FAQ calls to re-use, so you always sound busy and in-demand. Remember: Callers call when they hear callers.

### 7. **Collect Email addresses from great callers...**

...so you can invite them back.

- Subject line: "How do you feel about...?"
- Note: "Feel," rather than "What do you think about..."

### 8. **Email tip: "Mirror the way someone begins their Email to you."**

Example: "If they say 'Dear Flo,' you say back to them, 'Dear David.' If they say 'Hi Flo,' say 'Hi David.'"

Alan Alda, in his book "If I Understood You, Would I Have This Look on My Face?"

### 9. **Podcasters doing interviews: The shorter your question, the more interesting the answer will be.**

This is something smart broadcasters do. Larry King is THE best at this.

Listen to less-skilled interviewers and the questions run (at least) as long as the answers; and bored interviewees recite canned response.

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## *“The economy is still all about – who else? – Boomers”*

ICYMI in USA Today recently, here's the short version.

Boomers were the biggest generation in history, until Millennials outnumbered 'em. Although the younger generation's spend is forecast to soon top its elders, it hasn't happened yet. 55+ are still the biggest spenders, per data from Federal Reserve Board, Bureau of Economic Analysis, U.S. Census Bureau, Moody's Analytics:

- 55+: 42% of USA consumer spending
- 45-54: 23.7%
- 35-44: 21.6%
- 34 and younger: 12.7%

## *“The 50-plus and 60-plus population is clearly playing a large role in consumer spending and older consumers are going to become more significant as these trends intensify.”*

Wayne Best, Chief Economist, Visa

Why Baby Boomers (such as your consultant) are economic oldies-but-goodies:

- **We're still here!** As “The Greatest Generation” passes on, Boomers are a bigger percentage of the USA population. 90.7 million 55+ers = 28% of the 2016 population. In 2000, the 59.3 million of us comprised 21%.
- **We're working longer.** Healthier and living longer, we're working into our 60s and 70s. Contributing to the trend: “the decline of physically demanding occupations in fields such as manufacturing and construction, and the spread of white-collar jobs requiring college degrees,” says Mark Zandi, Moody's Analytics Chief Economist. And some have returned to the workforce after their nest eggs got whacked by stock market and housing crashes late last decade.
- **We got lucky.** Many Boomers entered the workforce during the robust economic expansions in the 1970s and 1980s, landing good first jobs. And they rode the long bull market of the 1980s and 1990s and the post-Recession recovery. “Many Millennials, by contrast, struggled to get jobs out of high school and college or took positions for which they were overqualified during and after the economic downturn, setting back their career tracks and earnings.”
- **We're defying age precepts.** “The Boomer consumer is not one to sit there and say, ‘I'm getting old and I'm going to slow down,’” NPD Group Chief Industry Analyst Marshall Cohen reckons. “When people turn 65 they're just starting to live life and they have a higher level of disposable spending power.”

*Video: If you haven't seen it yet, hit YouTube and search “Holland Cooke Grey is Gold.” It's a fact-filled 12-minute Sales meeting starter that'll have reps scribbling down local business prospects.*

### **What this means to radio:**

- Cohen says it's a mistake for advertisers “put all their eggs in one basket” demographically by focusing campaigns almost exclusively on Millennials. Instead consider tailoring separate campaigns to different age groups.
- When prospecting local businesses think **services**, not just retail **products** (HC Sales meeting lore that'll be familiar to reps at client stations).
- Boomers are buying fewer cars and TVs and less apparel (one retiree interviewed: “I don't need to spend money on business clothes”). They spend more on healthcare and entertainment, and travel (consumers 50+ account for 57% of credit spending at hotels last year, according to Visa). And they spend on their grandchildren, as you'll see in my video.
- And say what you will about the federal government, those monthly Social Security payments land in recipients' direct deposit accounts like clockwork.

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## *“influencer”*

My favorite buzzword from The Conclave. Think “endorsement spot.”

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*Here's a follow-up to what you read on pages 1 and 5 in last month's newsletter.  
If you missed that issue, see back page.*

## *“Alexa is The New Radio in Homes”*

Title of a well-attended Conclave42 session

So-called smart speakers like Amazon's Echo, Tap, and Dot (“Alexa”) and Google's Home – and Apple's forthcoming digital concierge – could cure a big problem: No AM/FM receivers in my homes.

- 35.6 million Americans have a smart speaker, and use it at least monthly (eMarketer)
- Forecast: By 2018, 60% of homes will have one or more (Radioplayer research)
- By 2020: 75% of homes (Gartner Research)

What's more, Cumulus/San Francisco VP/Digital Justin Hach reminded Conclave-goers, “the geographic insulation you have with radio is gone with digital.” So don't just think “transmitter” as you execute. “Have a road map of everywhere listeners are going to touch your brand, understand how the user is going to come into contact,” and message accordingly.

To that point, here's something Alexa taught me: She might not call your station the same thing you do.

- Hach played a YouTube video explaining that listeners need to ask for “K-F-O-G,” because Alexa doesn't know “K-fog.” I've learned to ask for client WXDE as “Delaware One Hundred Five Point Nine,” because she doesn't think of us as “Delaware One Oh Five Nine.” But kudos to the station for good meta data. When I say “Play The Susan Monday Show,” during Susan's show, Alexa finds the WXDE stream on TuneIn.
- TuneIn Chief Content Office Kevin Straley – a former radio PD – says “We're working with Amazon on a weekly basis, sending them reams of data, i.e., ‘You're getting these station names wrong;’” and explaining to Alexa how “Point” in FM stations' spoken dial position = “dot” in meta data she's fed.
- Like domain names, whoever gets there first wins. Alexa only knows one “Z100,” and it's not the one in New York.

Admittedly, much of this session was too complicated for attendees to fully digest. This technology is that new.

- Takeaway #1 seemed to be: Learn how to do “Flash Briefings,” which Straley described as “a short piece of content that a listener self-selects” (what we think of as a short “newscast”). Listeners might already subscribe to BBC's version, but we have local news, so we need to get up to speed on this.
- Because smart speaker innards are outside of broadcasters' skill set, various vendors want to sell you what they call “skills” (how to help smart speakers find you). But panelists concurred with what I've learned from Alexa: She can probably find you via TuneIn and/or iHeart. When I ask “play WPRO on TuneIn,” she tells me it isn't there and she's “searching iHeart,” where she quickly finds it. So you owe it to yourself to get one of these devices and get a feel for it.

Straley figures it sure is worth the effort, calling this “an incredibly exciting time to be in audio programming,” and that smart speaker owners who might not otherwise use AM/FM in-home are “a new audience.”

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## **Tips for podcasters, from The Conclave:**

- “Pacing is much slower” than typical broadcast delivery.
- “The listening experience is headphones,” so change mic technique accordingly. “It's a real one-on-one feel.”
- Great conversations click.
- “We're seeing lots of growth around story-telling.”
- “Music is mostly a no-no in podcasting,” unless it's your own music, or you have specific permission.
- Don't over-estimate listeners' attention. Get-right-to-the-point.

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## SOUND BITES FROM THE SUITS

*Quotes from The Conclave's Opening Session "Ask Me (Almost) Anything"*

**Greg Strassell**, SVP/Programming, Hubbard Radio

- "There's nothing better than being the Program Director of a radio station. I think that's the best job ever."
- "The smaller the market, the more we in bigger markets can learn."
- "There's a sea of choices for music. The radio audience wants to be entertained."
- "Audio on-demand is always going to be there. It'll get bigger and bigger and bigger."

**Bill Hendrich**, EVP/Radio, Cox Media Group

- "We have the ability to make our communities act. Newspapers cannot move a community."
- When the rep brings a digital person on a sales call, "the prospect will turn toward the digital person."
- "The language will change. We'll be selling 'audience' [not 'radio']."
- "You become very hard to let go" if you do Social Media well, and voicetrack-to-other-markets well.

**Peter Bowen**, VP/Market Manager, Cumulus/Chicago

- "Make sure the team has what it needs to win. "Are they fulfilled? Do they like being here? Are they challenged? What are they doing? What are they thinking? Are we talking enough?"
- "2 things make a great day in my world: empty Email box; and visiting our markets," where he says he "blocks out other problems" and "commits to being present."
- And he quipped that "Radio has been 'going out of business' since they put 8-tracks in woody station wagons."

**Kevin Leggett**, President/Southwest Region, iHeart Media

- "People consume more audio now than ever. The #1 consumer electronics purchase is headphones."
- "Listeners are fueled by personalities. It's the people, the people, the people." He says he gets jazzed just walking into the building in Los Angeles, where "350 people milling around every day."
- When evaluating talent: "What is their Social following? This is really, really important;" and factors -into casting decisions: "Do we continue investing in that person or don't we?"
- Apropos radio's big story, the Entercom/CBS merger: "The passion that [Entercom CEO] David [Field] has for radio is going to help us all."

During Q+A, an attendee who does station imaging asked what stations are looking for. Consensus: **authenticity**.

## AND HEARD ELSEWHERE...

**"I was there for four hours getting pepper-sprayed by BOTH sides!"**

Joe Thomas, PD/morning host at client station WCHV/Charlottesville, who covered the conflict there

**"The tomato sauce will flow again!"**

GREAT local news copy lead by Gene Valicenti, who hosts mornings on WPRO/Providence and anchors New England's top-rated 6PM TV newscast on crosstown NBC10.

He was reporting the impending re-opening of iconic West Valley Inn, the kind of place where we've all wolfed-down spaghetti and meatballs at a function.

**"What has you asking yourself: 'Are...you...kidding...me?'"**

GREAT call-in topic by Scott Hennen, midday host at client AM1100 The Flag/Fargo, and occasional Sean Hannity guest host.

**“He doesn’t just understand his audience with studied distance and a glance at some horizontal Excel document. He is the audience, has been one of them since he was a kid, grasps what’s needed not just in his head but in his bones. It’s downright visceral. So the show – any show, every damn show – better be memorable.”**

Jim Rome, profiled by Cigar Aficionado magazine

**“Watch a Russian Teenager take the most dangerous selfie in the world.”**

WOR/New York host Mark Simone, describing a YouTube video on his web page. Clicks galore.

**“Stop listening to the bombastic loudmouths on the radio and television and the Internet. To hell with them. They don’t want anything done for the public good. Our incapacity is their livelihood. Let’s trust each other.”**

U.S. Senator John McCain (R-AZ) – visibly scarred from brain surgery which found cancer – in impassioned remarks on the Senate floor that are sure to be prominent in news-stories-of-the-year montages.

**“Take radio out of the car.”**

OOPS! What message do people get if they take this NextRadio billboard literally?

**“What makes it the most exciting time in my history in radio is because we have so many different ways to attack the needs of a client...The challenges are there and we have to reinvent ourselves and alter our thinking to adapt to the changing market conditions... That’s fostering a sense of creativity and accountability and a real focus on positive outcomes for the client that maybe we didn’t have before. It’s causing us to raise our game.”**

My client Phil Zachary, VP/Market Manager, Entercom Boston, interviewed by InsideRadio

***“My message is evolve or die.”***

Ford Motor Company Global Lead of Business Development & Partner Management (now THAT’S a title) Scott Burnell, interviewed by Inside Radio. Scott’s work is that new-tech dashboard where radio competitors are multiplying like rabbits.

*See my May newsletter for his remarks at April’s NAB Show. If you missed that issue, see back page.*

- When Inside Radio quoted him radio’s 93% weekly tune-in statistic, Burnell replied, “For how long?”
- And: “Millennials don’t want to be broadcast to. They want to communicate.”
- “How many people have a radio in their home or listen to radio in the office? That number has been diving, so what has been picking up the slack? It’s been mobile.”

**“There’s a generation of people, many of whom are the so-called cord-nevers or cord-cutters — we want to bring NBC news to those people as much as we’ve been bringing [it] to television audiences for decades.”**

Nick Ascheim, NBC News’ digital chief, as he hired 30 staffers for a daily Snapchat news show

**“We have to get out before it’s too late. We want to exist. We want to keep providing that new music discovery for our listeners. The only thing we’re trying to do is change platforms that they’re reaching us on.”**

WBRU/Providence GM Kishanee Haththotuwegama, explaining the decision to sell the full-power commercial FM station operated by Brown University students. In the 1960s – when AM reigned and before FM found traction -- the university turned WBRU over to a non-profit educational student workshop, which has decided they’d be better off investing sale proceeds in digital.

**“We have no music industry. There’s 90% piracy everywhere in the world. They take everything. You can’t get an album out because nobody buys an album anymore.”**

27 Grammy winner Quincy Jones

# TRUMP-WATCH: TRACKING TALK RADIO'S BONANZA

**"I thought what took place was a horrible moment for our country, a horrible moment. But there are two sides to the country."**

President Trump, three days after Charlottesville

**"Thank you President Trump for your honesty & courage to tell the truth about #Charlottesville & condemn the leftist terrorists in BLM/Antifa"**

Tweet by David Duke, same day

**"With the exception of the late, great Abraham Lincoln I can be more presidential than any president that's ever held this office."**

President Donald Trump

**"I want to extend my sincere apologies to those in our Scouting family who were offended by the political rhetoric that was inserted into the jamboree."**

Michael Surbaugh, Chief Scout Executive, Boy Scouts of America, in a statement following the President's remarks at the National Jamboree

**"Yes, it's called a 'Trump rally,' but that doesn't make it so."**

Ken Fisher, author, and #184 on the current Forbes 400 list of the richest Americans, and a familiar face from TV commercials for Fisher Investments. Writing in USA Today:

"Was it a 'Trump Rally' 15 months ago when few thought he could be nominated? What about in August [2016] when he was envisioned losing? When he won the presidency, most expected plummeting prices. Then stocks wiggled upward as they did in most prior months."

**"Trump Is Woody Allen Without the Humor. Half his tweets show utter weakness. They are plaintive, shrill little cries, usually just after dawn."**

Ronald Reagan's speech writer Peggy Noonan, in The Wall Street Journal:

"The president's primary problem as a leader is not that he is impetuous, brash or naive. It's not that he is inexperienced, crude, an outsider. It is that he is weak and sniveling. It is that he undermines himself almost daily by ignoring traditional norms and forms of American masculinity."

**"He's just crazy, and I don't say that lightly."**

U.S. Senator Jack Reed (D-RI) on an open microphone, talking with Sen. Susan Collins (R-ME), who replied "I'm worried."

**"I figure I'm doing my job well if people are mad at me and also very happy with me.."**

Actress Laura Benanti, regarding the dead-on Melania Trump impression she's done on "The Late Show with Stephen Colbert." Smart radio talkers operate the same way. Ideally half the callers agree with the host's take, half disagree, and they use the show to talk to each other.

***"Almost half of Trump's Twitter followers appear to be fake."***

Newsweek

**"These are dangerous times. Never have so many people had so much access to so much knowledge and yet have been so resistant to learning anything."**

"America's Cult of Ignorance," in The Daily Beast

**"Why is it lie after lie after lie?"**

Fox News Channel anchor Shepard Smith, referring to The President

**"I'm going to let Obamacare fail."**

The President

**"He shall take Care that the Laws be faithfully executed."**

The United States Constitution

