

Holland Cooke Newsletter • July 2020

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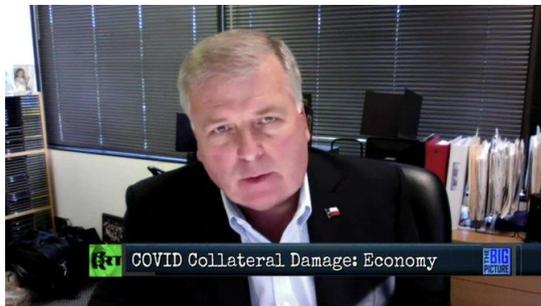
BIA: 2020 Local Radio Advertising down 10.7%

At the beginning of the year, BIA Advisory Services projected USA AM/FM + digital + streaming sales at \$14.3 billion. Then the pandemic. New projection: \$12.8 billion. \$11.4 billion of that from over-the-air sales and \$1.4 billion digital.

BIA's Chief Economist forecasts that, after radio's digital revenue held steady 2019-2020, "by 2021, radio online revenue will start to climb back up again. On the over-the-air side, we see a bigger COVID hit, with a steep drop in 2020 and some recovery back by 2021."

Profiting from the Pandemic

NOT profiteering. Profiting. There's a special place in hell for retailers who suddenly jacked-up prices on in-demand commodities when the shutdown began, and state attorneys general have taken action. That's different than radio ad rate card grids, which simply, deftly, respond to demand. Long-time-no-grid, eh?



Everywhere we look these days, we see canny entrepreneurs turning lemons into lemonade. Are you?

On my TV show, I debriefed independent Texas owner Paul Gleiser, my longest-suffering client, who weathered the Coronavirus pandemic better than absentee-owned competitors because his Sales strategy is so grassroots, and focused on the service retailers deemed "Essential" during the shutdown.

Click here for the video: <https://t.co/GCAFU45f4L>

Also: 6 opportunities to brainstorm in your next Sales meeting, page 4...

"Mainstream Media," Redefined

For several decades, the term has been weaponized, first by scrappy fringe voices railing against legacy networks and newspapers; more recently by Fox News Channel and Rush Limbaugh...ironic, since ratings qualify them as "mainstream." But never has the obsolescence of the term been more obvious than lately, especially during the George Floyd episode.

How are We The People NOT "Mainstream Media" now?

- There are an estimated 260 million smartphones in the USA.
- Each can broadcast, instantly, worldwide, because...
- Facebook has 223.3 million members here.
- 48.35 million Americans post on Twitter each month.

The New York Times pronounces former "Fear Factor" host and MMA commentator Joe Rogan "The New Mainstream Media," as Spotify is paying him a reported hundred million dollars to distribute his podcast.



When Rush Limbaugh led the vaunted Talk Radio Revolution at the dawn of the nineties, he prolonged the life of AM radio, which is now technically challenged and largely unused by people younger than Baby Boomers. Has "Talk Radio" transcended...radio?

Admittedly, these questions challenge us as broadcasters. Talkers publisher Michael Harrison and I discussed all-of-the-above, and more, on that same show. Click the picture, or: <https://youtu.be/HWa6Fh87JQc>

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4 IDEAS IN 3 MINUTES

1. NEW OPPORTUNITY: Tweet audio.

We've always been able to add photos/videos/hyperlinks. Now we can attach up to 140 seconds of audio.

- Most obvious opportunity: Tweet what movies call "a trailer," a preview of audio assets – either station OR advertiser content -- available on-air/online.
- Brainstorm other opportunities!
- It only works posting via iOS (Apple devices), but every Twitter user can click-to-hear the attachment.
- Click the wavelength icon next to the camera icon.

2. Proven News/Talk imaging line: "Stay close to the news..."

WHAT NEXT? now happens almost hourly, so invite on-hour tune-in "throughout your busy day."

3. Script your dang show open, willya?

Succinctly tell the listener what this hour is about, why they want-in-on what follows that on-hour newscast.

"Attention span" is now an oxymoron. Admittedly this is something I have nagged-about frequently...er, "consistently reinforced." And if I haven't convinced you yet, Mark Steyn will.

- He's that yappy chap with the Australian accent, who's first-off-the-bench on increasingly-frequent Rush Limbaugh sick days. 'Often seems darn amused by what-he-hasn't-quite-finished-saying yet. 'Good of him to come here to tell us what's wrong with the USA, but could he just come-to-the-point quicker?
- YOU be the judge: Just listen to the first 10 minutes of each hour, especially hour #1. Limbaugh's lines probably ring all-day/all-night, so we know better. But it sounds like the lines are dead, and he's vamping, meandering about everything-and-nothing until the stopset.

DON'T take my word for it. Listen.

Then just TRY this – in this order -- and see if you like the results.

- Make the-very-first-thing you say a question that includes "YOU" and/or "YOUR." Both if possible. If you cannot distill how it will benefit the listener to keep-listening, you haven't yet distilled your proposition.
- Then, give out the call-in number...slowly enough for the prized first-time-caller to remember it. Think winning lottery number.
- THEN say hello.
- THEN offer your take; the purpose of which is to make the phone ring. So solicit overtly, i.e., "AM I wrong?" or (magic words) "How do YOU feel?"
- Repeat call-in number.
- THEN...if you must...THEN play the long, over-produced, self-amused show open...during which your screener might already be busy if you followed these dance steps.

Goal: 2 callers before the break in the second Quarter Hour. DON'T BELIEVE ME...try it.

4. Never – repeat, NEVER – tell a woman: "You're over-reacting."

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New Normal HR? NOT Normal.

First the Good News: The reason you're working remotely is because you're still working. They've fired everyone else, and more cutbacks are on the way; the bigger the company you work for, the more brutal it'll be.

[FCC document # 2017-24982](#) "Elimination of the Main Studio Rule" took effect in January, 2018:

"In this document, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC or Commission) eliminates the rule that requires each AM, FM, and television broadcast station to maintain a main studio located in or near its community of license. The FCC also eliminates existing requirements associated with the rule, including the requirement that the main studio have full-time management and staff present during normal business hours, and that it have program origination capability."

This was a long time coming and quite foreseeable.

Since the Consolidation feeding frenzy triggered by 1996 Telecom deregulation, the gallows humor has been that "they're burning the furniture to keep the lights on." Now, all this remote broadcasting has demonstrated that they can turn the lights off, with FCC permission.

- Why spend \$X per square foot for a local building? For a Sales office? Smart managers have been kicking reps out of the building all along: "Go SELL something!"
- Some of the best weekend Talk shows, including several of my clients, remote from home. As do SiriusXM jocks. Other non-employees -- syndicated talkers and mothership DJs -- already populate your station's on-air family.

So the good news is that YOU are doing something SO local or otherwise unique and Sales-friendly that ownership still wants to hear you. They just don't need to see you. And you'll save a bundle on gas and dry cleaning. Hopefully you'll still have benefits.

This is NOT a radio story.

Recently on my TV show, I spoke with David Lewis, CEO and founder of HR consulting firm OperationsInc. Super-smart guy who built one helluva business as doing-business got so complicated. Here's the video:

<https://www.rt.com/shows/big-picture/490139-pandemic-work-future-business/>

Two bullet points, about how this work-at-home trend impacts the listeners whom advertisers want as customers:

- "We've learned how to do face-to-face business without being in the same room." Lewis says we'll be telling our grandchildren about working in the company space, a mode he reckons will now become the outlier. Listeners who do return to the company space will bond less with fellow workers like Paula and Lynette did in "An Officer and A Gentleman" (final '80s movie reference, I promise). To them, YOUR on-air companionship will mean more than ever. So optimizing your on-air technique and working relevant topics have never been more important.
- Reconfigured business space "is THE story right now," in David's estimation. For all the impatience on the Supply side, "what governors are missing as they try to figure-out how to re-open their states for business is that this isn't necessarily about the guidelines that businesses have to follow, it's about how complete the public perceives those guidelines to be," the Demand side. "Do they make it safe for me to leave my house?"

As Kelly Clarkson sang, "What doesn't kill you makes you stronger."

David Lewis reckons that "this is one of those 'life gives ya lemons, make lemondade' moments, 'survival-of-the-fittest. You're going to see businesses come out of this stronger, and unfortunately you're also going to see a lot of businesses go under."

All kinds of businesses, not just radio. Like your listeners, who are coping-with -- some flourishing-in -- The New Normal, we need to ride the horse in the direction he's facing. Gallop!

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Promoting Pandemic Product?

Retailers have stories to tell...on your air.

Radio has value to both kinds of businesses:

- We tend to think Business-to-Consumer (B-to-C). And – with adequate frequency + killer copy – no other medium is more efficient.
- And we should think Business-to-Business (B-to-B) more. Many idea-hungry retailers are heavy News/Talk listeners, and many have music FM's on in-store.



B-to-B, at FedEx Office, where they sell those big dots we stand on everywhere now.



B-to-C, at the gas station next door.

At client stations, we're brainstorming these opportunities:

- "Get me outta here!" products and services. A TV spot you may have seen really hits the right note: "Feel like getting' back out? Nissan is ready to help." After several months cooped-up at home, which local businesses sell to pent-up demand for what's outside those four walls? And, conversely...
- "Enhance my cocoon." Many listeners got whacked, financially, during the shutdown. Many who weren't remain virus-wary, not eager to fly. Stay-cation will be big this summer. Deck-and-patio guys should be on-air NOW. Ditto pool companies. Who is selling to those who will stick close-to-home?
- "Do It Myself" also appeals to the newly-frugal. Last summer they had someone mow the lawn. This year, sell them a lawnmower.

- **"Buy/Sell."** Shop for that lawnmower at a pawn shop. If you've never been to one, it's not what you're expecting. Great place to buy – or sell – tools, and other stuff that's functional and lots cheaper than new at retail. Jewelers who invite listeners to "bring us that jewelry you haven't worn in years," crow that "Gold prices are at a 6-year high!" Prospect also: consignment stores.
- **"Bring it here."** Lots of ads we hear for no-contact transactions actually say "no-contact," though more-nuanced copy might be easier-on-the-ear. While no-touch remains a plus, convenience – especially if the offer touts "Free Delivery" – is what we've become accustomed to.
- **"Safety" is key.** And who knows that better than the designers now making a bundle selling chic face coverings online. Google it. Major league teams may be sidelined, but their merchandising departments are busy slapping logos on masks loyal fans are strapping-on.

As phased re-openings torture retailers with reduced capacity and other requirements, stalwart advertisers such as restaurants won't be as opportune for a while. Pitch businesses that sell products and services for what's become routine instead.

Copy Copy like this.

While listeners have been disrupted, NOTHING resonates like empathy, succinctly conveyed. These examples are instructive to commercial copy we craft for local retailers, and station imaging:

"Staying in? Sling makes it easy by paying less for the live TV you love."

"Feel like getting' back out? Nissan is ready to help."

And note the subtlety of "the Volvo Summer Safety Savings Event."

"Uncertain Times Call for Trusted Facts."

Wall Street Journal subscription renewal offer

"Bud Light Seltzer, available for delivery."

