

Holland Cooke Newsletter • April 2021

© 2021 Holland Cooke, all rights reserved. But PLEASE DO duplicate and share!

“And Rush Limbaugh’s replacement is...”

I’ve published this newsletter since 1993, and subscribers have come to expect a zany “April Fool!” headline each year. E.I.B. Network affiliates: This year, the joke is on you.

“How much longer are you guys gonna run Rush’s funeral?”

Top 10 advertiser on a client station

“Listener emails asking the same thing hit our website contact page.”

The GM

“The people running the show have to affirmatively break with the current maudlin tone and declare Rush’s wake over — none of us will love him any less. The owners are frittering away the fruits of all his work.”

American Thinker’s Leann Horrocks, who began her column: “I loved the Rush Limbaugh show.”

Long Weekend At Bernie’s

Premiere says we will continue to hear guest hosts – “guides,” in E.I.B. tap dance parlance – cue-up Limbaugh aircheck clips, and vent about what-he-meant-to-them.

“What we know is listeners don’t want another host right now.

They want the comfort of Rush’s voice.”

Premiere Networks President Julie Talbot, at virtual Talk Show Boot Camp March 19

One client station that couldn’t stand it anymore gave Premiere notice, and is stunting all this month, airing weeklong “auditions” of other syndicated righties – “talk radio’s rising stars” -- inviting listener comments (and getting an earful).

Syndicators Stampede

Big domino tumbles: Limbaugh affiliate station owners and GMs filled-up my voicemail when WSB/Atlanta moved their Erick Erickson – a previous Rush guest host -- to noon-3 and offered him in syndication.

Chutzpah Award: Promotional material from Westwood One announces that podcaster/Fox News talking head Dan Bongino “will be taking over the Limbaugh timeslot” in May. His social media cred is impressive, and he was pitch-perfect at CPAC. But several minutes on-stage shoveling red meat to a crowd that would applaud him reading the phone book asks less than 15 hours of live radio each week.

Other conservatives doing jumping jacks to clear non-iHeart-owned Limbaugh affiliates seem to fall into two categories:

- “The Lighthearted:” Because Rush was first-and-foremost an entertainer, Fox News Radio’s Jimmy Failla and Compass Media Networks’ trio Markley, Van Camp & Robbins take a less-acrid tone than Sean Hannity or Mark Levin.
- “The Livid:” Radio America gunslinger Dana Loesch and self-syndicated ex-Fox News-er Todd Starnes ooze MAGA.

“We would go-local in-a-minute, if we could only find talent.”

This is a rude awakening for an industry that fell asleep at the wheel. Rush Limbaugh’s once-in-a-lifetime talent gave stations false permission to plug-N-play other longform programs parroting the national political narrative. Most shows are straight barter, darn convenient as consolidation crippled programming budgets. At many once-proud stations whose Wonder Years were local-local-local, there’s still a morning show, then the studio is – literally – lights-out.

After several decades of declining on-air employment opportunity clobbered radio’s farm team, talent – from ex-presidents and movie and TV stars to entry level personalities – are podcasting. And consumers’ migration from real-time/analog to on-demand/digital continues. Owners and GMs are hiring me to “teach radio” to community luminaries.

Holland Cooke Monthly Newsletter

© 2021 Holland Cooke, PO Box 1323, Block Island RI 02807 USA
www.HollandCooke.com • Twitter @HollandCooke • 401-330-6868 • talkradio@hollandcooke.com

4 IDEAS IN 3 MINUTES

1. **Baseball stations: Don't squander your on-hour ID.**

Common mistake: The play-by-play team pauses "10 seconds for station identification on [however the damn flagship brands the network with its own call letters]," and the affiliate ID announces that it's...the affiliate.

- Saying that you're "your Tigers Baseball station" in-the-middle-of a Tigers game is like printing the word "banana" on the peel.
- Instead tell me something I don't know. If you haven't sold the ID to a sponsor, advertise yourself, i.e., "AccuWeather, first thing tomorrow morning, and throughout-the-hour throughout-your-day. [frequency, call letters, city]."
- Or a diligent morning host could deliver daily topical copy.

Some fans may only come you for the game. Since they've already found you, no need to tell 'em they did. Tell 'em another reason to come back.

2. **Conservative talkers: Repeat after me...**

- "Joe Biden and the radical left want open borders."
- "The election was stolen." The My Pillow guy has Absolute Proof.
- Dr. Fauci is wrong.
- Joining Buddha, Jesus, Cher, Cochise, Madonna and Beyonce, "Tucker" is now enshrined in the pantheon of one-word names.
- It's "the China Virus;" and he who branded it that is in no way responsible for appalling insults and assaults Asian-Americans now suffer.

3. **Sales: To make local service retailers pre-eminent...**

...craft on-demand audio and/or YouTube videos in which the client explains things; and promote it in their on-air commercials.

- Example: a bike shop owner's video demonstrates how to change a flat tire. The one I saw made me want to toss my bike in the trunk and let HIM do it. 😊 Or a veterinarian's podcast – perhaps culled from an on-air interview -- explaining "Why your cat does that, and how to get him to stop." Show-N-tell stuff, Q+A format.
- Often-productive question: "What's the biggest/costliest mistake people make when ____?"
- This digital content resides on the station's and/or the advertiser's web site. And Tweet links. With digital now the shiny object, offer clients more than "radio."

4. **Podcasters: Start in the middle?**

Done right, it's a cool storytelling technique. Why and how, on Page 14 of in my E-book. Download your copy at HollandCooke.com:



Holland Cooke Monthly Newsletter

© 2021 Holland Cooke, PO Box 1323, Block Island RI 02807 USA
 www.HollandCooke.com • Twitter @HollandCooke • 401-330-6868 • talkradio@hollandcooke.com

“You’ve got to admit, it’s getting better, a little better all the time.”

Paul McCartney

“It can’t get much worse.”

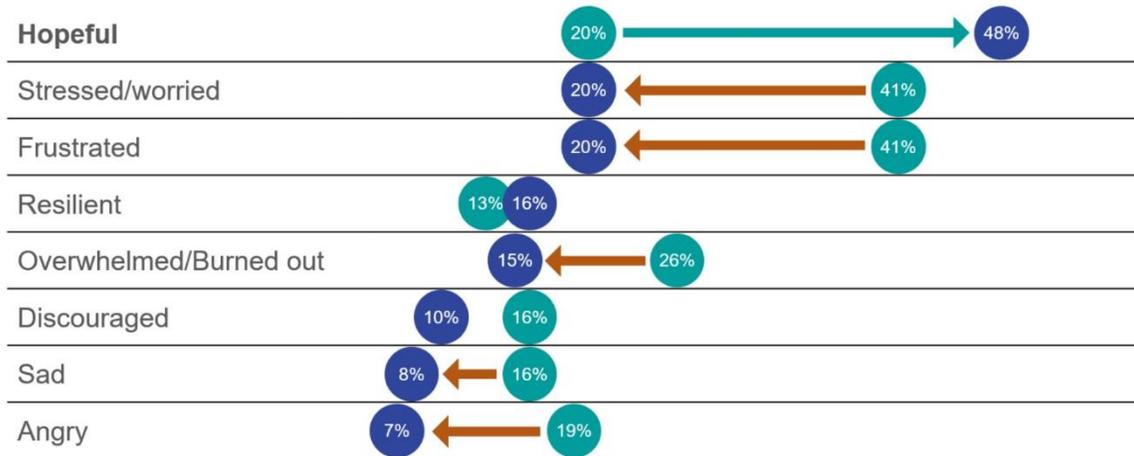
John Lennon

Memo to radio/cable news talkers and podcasters whose work recites durable catch-phrases such as those listed in Idea #2 on page 2:

Increasing optimism

Americans reflect on emotions felt within the past year versus today

● Felt over the past year ● Feeling today



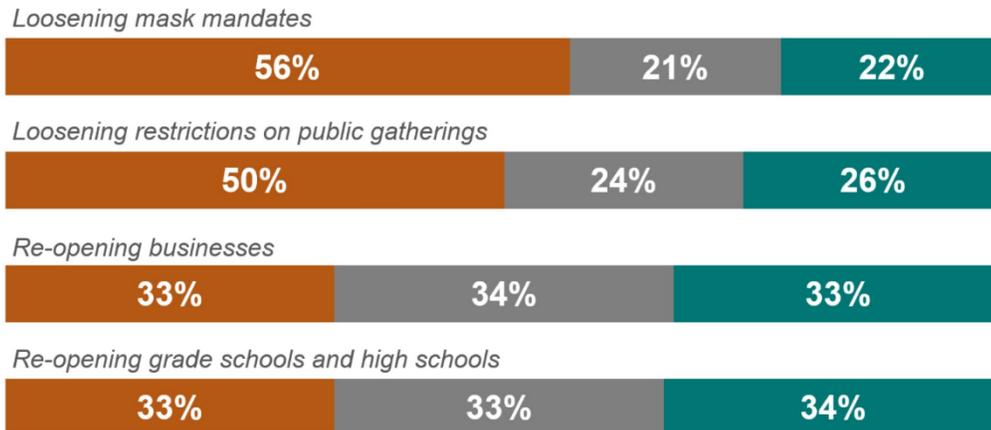
Axios/Ipsos Coronavirus Index

And from the same Ipsos polling data:

But Americans are not quite yet ready to reopen

Do you think each of the following is happening too quickly, too slowly, or at about the right pace?

■ Too quickly ■ At about the right pace ■ Too slowly



ABC News/Ipsos 3/5-3/6, 2021

Holland Cooke Monthly Newsletter

© 2021 Holland Cooke, PO Box 1323, Block Island RI 02807 USA
www.HollandCooke.com • Twitter @HollandCooke • 401-330-6868 • talkradio@hollandcooke.com

The Infinite Dial 2021

Applause to Edison Research for the "Infinite Dial" series, "the longest-running survey of digital media consumer behavior in America...tracking mobile behaviors, internet audio, podcasting, social media, smart speakers, and more." Yes, "and more" now includes radio.

Here's the whole thing: <http://www.edisonresearch.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/The-Infinite-Dial-2021.pdf>

This national telephone survey of 1507 Persons 12+ is a useful snapshot of what's changing, and what isn't-much.

Radio, Still

Though we've spent less time in-car for the last year, AM/FM remains the top audio platform there, by 75% of 18+ surveyed who listened "in last month" (down from 81% in 2020 and 2019).

Rankings of the next 5 in-car audio sources remain unchanged, and changes-to-each are unsurprising:

2. Owned digital music (45% 2019 – 48% 2020 – 48% 2021)
3. CD player (43% - 41% - 35%)
4. Online audio (28% - 33% - 33%)
5. Podcasts (26% - 28% - 30%)
6. SiriusXM (22% - 24% - 21%)

Other Use Plateaus:

- Smartphone Ownership: 88% have one (85% last year).
- Tablet Ownership: 51% (from 53%)
- Internet-connected Watch Ownership: 18% (17%)
- Audiobook Listening: 46% (45%)
- Social Media Usage: 82% (80%)

Social Media

Brand Usage: Facebook is still #1, then:

2. Instagram
3. Pinterest
4. Snapchat
5. Twitter

The report breaks-down who-uses-which platform and-how-often.

On-Demand and Online

Podcasting: Steady growth continues, and the report slices-N-dices age, ethnicity, gender, and other usage data.

Wide-angle shot, P12 listening:

- Monthly: 41% (37% a year ago)
- Weekly: 28% (24%)

Online Audio Listening (P12+):

- Monthly 68% (flat from 2020)
- Weekly 62%, an all-time high (60%)
- Weekly TSL 16 hours 14 minutes (15:12)

Pandora is still #1.

2. Spotify
3. iHeartRadio
4. Apple Music
5. Amazon Music, which you-know-who plays...

Take THIS to the bank.

My client stations – in all market sizes -- are making money selling sponsors' pre-rolls on Alexa.

So – while we've spent so-much-less time in-car, and so-much-more time in-home, where AM/FM receivers are less-common now – I was real interested to learn:

- 33% surveyed – representing some 94 million in the USA – own a smart speaker.
- Of those working from home: 49%
- Number of smart speakers in household: 2.3 (up from 2.2 in 2020 - 2.0 in 2019 - 1.7 in 2018).

Consultant surmise: Like e-commerce and telecommuting, smart speaker use is a trend already-in-motion accelerated by the pandemic. It has never been more important that listeners know you're there.

Holland Cooke Monthly Newsletter

© 2021 Holland Cooke, PO Box 1323, Block Island RI 02807 USA
www.HollandCooke.com • Twitter @HollandCooke • 401-330-6868 • talkradio@hollandcooke.com

Talk Radio, Without Radio

Content variety has been the victim of corporate cutbacks and play-it-safe programming.

- Turn on FM, and it's "Don't Stop Believin'" over and over, too many commercials, and too many poor commercials. When an Amazon Prime member asks Alexa for a song, she plays it. What nobody's ever asked her is, "Alexa, play 6 commercials in a row?"
- Turn on AM and Rush Limbaugh is in reruns a month+ after his death. Little wonder there's such steady consumption of podcasts, by a growing galaxy of stars, and do-it-yourselfers becoming stars there.

Now, there's Clubhouse, "a new type of social network based on voice—where people around the world come together to talk, listen and learn from each other in real-time."

WIRED The Buzzy, Chatty, Out-of-Control Rise of Clubhouse

Clubhouse arrived at a perfect moment. It delivered spontaneous conversations and chance meetings to people stuck at home. For those weary of tidying and curating backgrounds for Zoom, its audio-only format is a virtue. Even being iPhone-only and invitation-only hasn't held back its popularity. New users often become obsessed with it, spending 20, 30, even 40 hours a week on the app. Discussions are popping up in German, Greek, and Burmese. In early February, the app even earned the badge of respect accorded to free speech-ish platforms such as Google, Facebook, and Twitter: It's been banned in China.

What's a Talk station to do?

- Obsess on relevance. Example: Be known as the station that knows the very latest about the vaccine; and is conspicuously helpful with the other day-to-day content Mike McVay calls "survival information."
- And, uh...LOCAL?

This month at Holland.com:

- Podcast: The Oscars will be awarded on April 25. If you're nominated, show-prep with "9 Tips for Your Academy Awards Acceptance Speech."
- Video: Great formula for story-tellers, from one of the greats, Bob Dotson/NBC News.

Click "ICYMI" at the top of the page at HollandCooke.com. No charge, no login, no spam, no kidding.

Holland Cooke Monthly Newsletter

© 2021 Holland Cooke, PO Box 1323, Block Island RI 02807 USA
www.HollandCooke.com • Twitter @HollandCooke • 401-330-6868 • talkradio@hollandcooke.com

Copy Worth Copying

Make copy you craft for local retailers THIS crisp, and you and they will make money.

"Used cars never felt so new."

Tag line from Shift.com TV commercial.

"Find local dentists who take your insurance."

ZocDoc.com

"Today's the day."

TV spot for MasterClass.com, where famous experts explain things.

Do that for your advertisers, per Idea #3 on page 2.

"Ready to explore again?"

Subject line in Email from Amtrak.

"Sometimes the greatest destinations aren't far away."

UTTERLY pandemic-pertinent tag line in TV spot with happy people enjoying Wayfair.com's array of home/patio goods.

"Making your outdoor space your favorite place."

Radio copy for The Patio Center at East Texas Brick.

"Get your business back with Valpak."

Insert in that envelope stuffed fulla retailers' coupons, which boasts that "53% of Americans have tried a new business because of direct mail." And there's a QR code the recipient can scan to redeem for "FREE MAILING!"

"And finally..."

Every consultant wishes the client would take his or her advice literally.

So we learn to choose our words carefully.

