

Holland Cooke Newsletter • February 2021

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“Some said at the time that I bought the network just to get the ‘Larry King Show’ and I never corrected them.”

Westwood One founder Norm Pattiz, who bought the Mutual Broadcasting System in 1985

If not for his disarming manner, it would have been intimidating to interview THE interviewer. One-year-to-the-week before Larry passed, [he was my guest](#), on the very first show we produced at the new RT America Los Angeles TV studio.

His curiosity was a gift: “I’m all about ‘why.’” He was master of the short question. I remember him asking Bob Hope “Who do YOU think is funny?” And asking David Duke “Don’t you ever get tired of hating?” And asking 1980s real estate mogul Donald Trump “Does it have to be buildings?” In a promo for his RT show, he said “It’s important to LISTEN. I never learned anything when I was talking.”

“Hear me out as we move forward.”

President Joe Biden, speaking “to those who did not support me,” in his Inaugural Address

Calling this “our historic moment of crisis and challenge,” the president pledged that “unity will move us forward.”

Moments later, Rush Limbaugh was hollering that “Biden is not serious about unity.”

Hosts: Hear your callers, to gauge the mindset of heavy Talk Radio users who voted for Trump. Curiosity affords every new president a honeymoon. Those dug-in will remain soreheads; but listen for nuance, optimism, so you’re not doing a 2020 show in 2021.

Stations: Own The Vaccine.

Hopefully, COVID-19 is the story of our lifetime. Meaning let’s hope nothing worse happens.

- Coronavirus has already killed more Americans than World War II. It claims a life – or two -- every minute.
- Ill-advised Christmas travel spiked infections as-predictably as ill-advised Thanksgiving travel did, and as that super-contagious UK mutant strain makes its way across the USA, Dr. Fauci is saying that a South African variant is worse.
- It’s been several weeks since LA County ambulance crews were told not to transport Coronavirus sufferers with little chance of survival. There’s just no room at hospitals.

“Vaccine distribution, prioritization and safety will be an important topic in Q1 and Q2 and the political sphere will give us plenty of fodder with a new administration,”

Jeff Sottolano, Executive Vice President of Programming at Entercom (Inside Radio).

This pandemic tests the relevance of radio. The virus is a scourge, and – because there’s a second injection – this can be a gift that gives TWICE. Read my specific guidance on page 4, because – as radio cuts back – digital competitors are stepping-up:

We are committed to helping revive local journalism – and invite local readers to help us best serve their community.
(Email us at news@axios.com.)

From the “Bill of Rights” for Axios Local, up-and-running in several markets.

CES2021: Listeners’ Mindset, Marketing Gold

Survey data presented at CES offers useful insight for Programming content, and specific tactics for Sales. See page 5...

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6 IDEAS IN 5 MINUTES

1. **Suggestion, for your own dwindling sanity and as a courtesy to others during in work-at-home-mode. SCHEDULE Zoom-type meetings.**

Remember -- back when you went-into an office-- how interruptive it was to be...interrupted?

- Well-intentioned co-workers would stick-their-head-in? Or call or text spontaneously, for something not-time-sensitive? Keep that up and, by the end of the day, you have open folders. Years ago, when we still went to conventions, I recall a GM on a panel about Time Management getting a big laugh when he said "Take the chairs out of your office."
- Thus hard-learned lessons I've offered here from time-to-time, and summarized in one of my most-clicked Talkers Magazine columns: <http://www.talkers.com/2013/02/11/managers-forget-time-management-dont-even-try/#more-16125>
- Back to the future: Working remotely, we find instant access both convenient and torturous. Click the link above to learn how truly useful voicemail can be. And about "swapping folders with your boss."
- In a useful CES2021 session, Deloitte Consulting research pointed to what's being called "Zoom Fatigue, ceaseless video calls." Many surveyed feel a blurring of the line between work and life, lack-of-focus, and isolation.
- Don't get sucked in. [Schedule for Quality Time.](#)

2. **Sales: Rip-off this Email Subject line: "New ways to get new customers in 2021."**

From Email I got from Staples, suggesting how "Eye-catching print materials are a great way to get noticed."

3. **Delete this phrase from commercial copy you craft for local advertisers: "In these uncertain times..."**

By the end of this month, uncertainty will be a year old.

They get it. Rubbing-their-nose-in-it just piles-on...and risks blending-into copy cliché blah-blah-blah.

Instead, simply delete the sentence.

The next sentence probably includes The Magic Words: "YOU" and/or "YOUR."

And if it doesn't, change that too.

MORE: On YouTube, search "Holland Cooke Make Money With Endorsement Spots."

Or if you're reading this online, click here: https://youtu.be/M_Prsr8K8g0

4. **Research: Tweets about yourself get re-Tweeted less than Tweets that link to third-party Internet content.**

Wharton professor Jonah Berger: "People like to pass along practical useful information. News others can use."

5. **Reps: Ask existing advertisers for referrals.**

Seems obvious, but too few do.

- Sellers who actively seek and exploit referrals earn four-to-five times more than those who don't.
- 91% of customers will offer them, but only 11% of sellers ask.

6. **Do you...get it?**

This newsletter? Every month?

If a bud' passed-this-along to you, shoot an Email to newsletter@hollandcooke.com and I'll put you on the list.

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Information staples matter more than ever.

On snowy mornings, The Flintstones would gather 'round the AM radio, awaiting a fatherly voice to announce a list of school closings. Today, that's a text message tree.

- Smartphones have co-opted a half-dozen essentials – including audio – that once were radio franchises. Even before new-tech dashboards crowd-sourced real-time traffic information, it seemed like an ask to wait for “the 8s” for a report that was aging hearsay.
- But people driving – who will continue to be AM/FM’s best TSL prospects – are busy. Even those not-driving are mentally busy. One of the trends already in motion that’s accelerated during the pandemic is voice replacing touch. And just as the listeners whose attention we want find it convenient to ASK devices for things, we can also train them to expect to hear WITHOUT asking.

Know what listeners need, and cause them to expect it from you, “throughout your busy day,” and they’ll keep coming back. And that’s the ballgame.

Think occasions, not duration-per.

There’s little we can do to keep someone sitting in a parked car with the key on Accessories.

Piles of ratings data demonstrate that the quickest way to grow Share is to get people-who-listen-to-us-most to listen even more. ‘Sounds like double-talk, but it’s not. Specific goal: Get so-called “First Preference” or “P1” listeners to come back more times per-day and per-week.

Steal this line.

It’s the on-hour ID we use at client stations: “You can get FAKE news anywhere. You get FOX News here! [call letters, dial position, timecheck]” then hit the network like a ton-O-bricks. High-five it. Despite the president damning Fox for reporting election results, it’s still where Sean lives, and it’s the sturdiest on-hour network radio newscast Conservatives will tolerate.

“The beauty of podcasting is the direct connection to our listeners. There’s no ‘middleman’ like there is in radio. There’s no ivory-tower filter.”

Dave Ramsey, [interviewed by Podcast Magazine](#)

Technique is key. Read specific guidance in my E-book. Download your copy at HollandCooke.com:



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Own The Vaccine: Radio's TWICE-in-a-Lifetime Opportunity

Ill-advised Christmas travel spiked infections as-predictably as ill-advised Thanksgiving travel did, and that super-contagious UK mutant strain is now making its way across the USA.

- Remember when hysterical voices warned of "death panels?" LA County ambulance crews have been told not to transport Coronavirus sufferers with little chance for survival. There's just no room at hospitals, where parking lots have become makeshift Intensive Care Units.
- Healthcare workers' exhaustion has bid-up the price of nurses willing to travel to \$10K per week.

Can we broadcasters be as great as The Greatest Generation?

This pandemic tests the selflessness of our society, and tests the relevance of radio.

Science – and the snail's-pace inoculation launch – foretell a crisis as long as the 3+ years my dad was overseas during The War. So get used to the mask.

As the Biden Inauguration approached, a host I coach bemoaned – straight-faced – that "President Trump will never get the credit he deserves for rolling-out this vaccine in record time!" As though The Donald personally whipped-it-up in chemistry set test tubes right there in his golf cart. As though we hadn't heard him tell Bob Woodward that the virus had gone-airborne AS he was telling the American people "One day – it's like a miracle – it will disappear." By April, he assured us. Remember April? Dr. Fauci warns that coming weeks could be even more dire.

Yes, Talk Radio has become The Argument Channel, seemingly for keeps, so soreheads won't be dissuaded. But many will get sick, and die, needlessly...unless radio rises to the occasion.

Earn the reputation for knowing where the shots are.

Choose a sounder. Something akin to what you'll hear 5 seconds after you say "Alexa, set the timer for 5 seconds." Not an air raid sounder, nothing melodramatic, and for God's sake not the caricature "Star Wars" whizzer that haunts radio imaging 40+ years later. Pick a sober signal that can be heard at low volume.

Here's what I'm recommending to client stations:

- If you do your own newscast on-hour, incorporate the sounder in your on-hour ID, and revise newscast intro language to tease WHO can get a shot TODAY, and WHEN (need an appointment?), and WHERE. Then deliver within the newscast. When circumstances warrant, lead with it.
- If you take a network on-hour, revise your Legal ID to incorporate that sounder and tease vaccine information in the local newscast which follows.

If you think I've inflated the appeal of this information, I hope you're right. But one painful lesson learned during this crisis is better-safe-than-sorry. And because News/Talk listeners skew older-than-younger, this information is in the format wheelhouse.

Music stations: You too.

This local information is something listeners won't get from SiriusXM, or Pandora, or robotic FM competitors ravaged by corporate cost cuts.

PS: It's a two-fer. Own this more than any other station, and listeners will – pardon the expression -- stick with you. The vaccine requires a second shot later on.

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CES2021: Listeners' Mindset, Marketing Gold

Like many others, this year's event was virtual. If it wasn't, this session alone would have been worth the trip to Las Vegas (twist my arm).

Data from a recent Harris Poll/MasterCard joint study about the pandemic shutdown's impact on commerce spots four trends that on-air content should address and our advertisers' messages should exploit:

1. "The Touchless Revolution:" The no-contact lifestyle has become increasingly prevalent; and consumers are willing to switch to brands that offer safer experiences.

- 73% of North Americans believe that COVID will change the way we shop forever.
- People are spending in an average of 5 more categories online, behavior that cuts across all generations.
- 64% surveyed: "COVID has shown me how easy it is to shop online."
- 43% are making fewer trips to the store, many are stocking-up each time.
- 74% of them plan to continue this behavior post-pandemic.
- 8-in-10 say they never want to sign for charge purchases again.
- "Cash is the biggest loser. People don't want to touch it anymore." ATM use is down.
- Retail opportunity: Touchless transaction AND the human touch in service.

2. "The Betterment Boom" has provoked "a national conversation about mental health and wellness."

- 67% have experienced shutdown-related stress this past year.
- 82% of teens: It's important that we have a conversation about mental health and wellness, "breaking the taboos around therapy and counseling."
- 22% who have been housebound are taking-on home renovation projects.
- And "personal renovation" is underway: 42% plan to be more physically active and 31% have changed career paths or are contemplating.
- Online classes are exploding. Fender's free guitar lessons are up 500%.
- Health & Wellness was already a \$4 trillion category before COVID, expect growth.

3. "The Rise of Revenge Spending:" Think ice cream, pizza, chocolate, booze.

- 51% have been saving during the shutdown. Expect "a rise in peoples' intent-to-purchase...a savings dam about to burst."
- 55% want to go to sporting events again.
- 52% want to go to movies on opening weekend again.
- 46% miss air travel. #1 splurge purchase desired by North Americans is travel.
- Sellers: "Signal that these purchases are safe."
- Marketers: "People are excited to pre-plan this spend," so pitch NOW.

4: "The Un-Calendar Year," as sports seasons and other perennial benchmarks were scotched.:

- 32% say they'll postpone seasonal celebrations. Think "weddings in February, graduation parties in the Fall."
- 34% say they "don't know when this will end."
- 70% are considering a "work-cation" somewhere else, since they work remotely anyway. AirBNB 20+ day rentals are up.
- "Don't think in conventional timelines. Marketers have to be agile."

Radio: Still thinking "morning drive?"

Business-as-usual is no longer a business. Want listeners for your program? Get with theirs.

- What you offer needs to speak to the mindset this data fleshes-out.
- What our advertisers offer will sell if they hear the assurances and solutions described.

This month at HollandCooke.com: "Make Money With Endorsement Spots"

For the video, click "For Sales" at the top of the page. No password, no login, no spam, no foolin.'

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Story you can easily localize.



A report by non-partisan American Transparency cites a U.S. government database of items transferred from the military:

After the George Floyd killing and other painful 2020 events, police are learning to de-escalate. Do these armaments frustrate that effort?

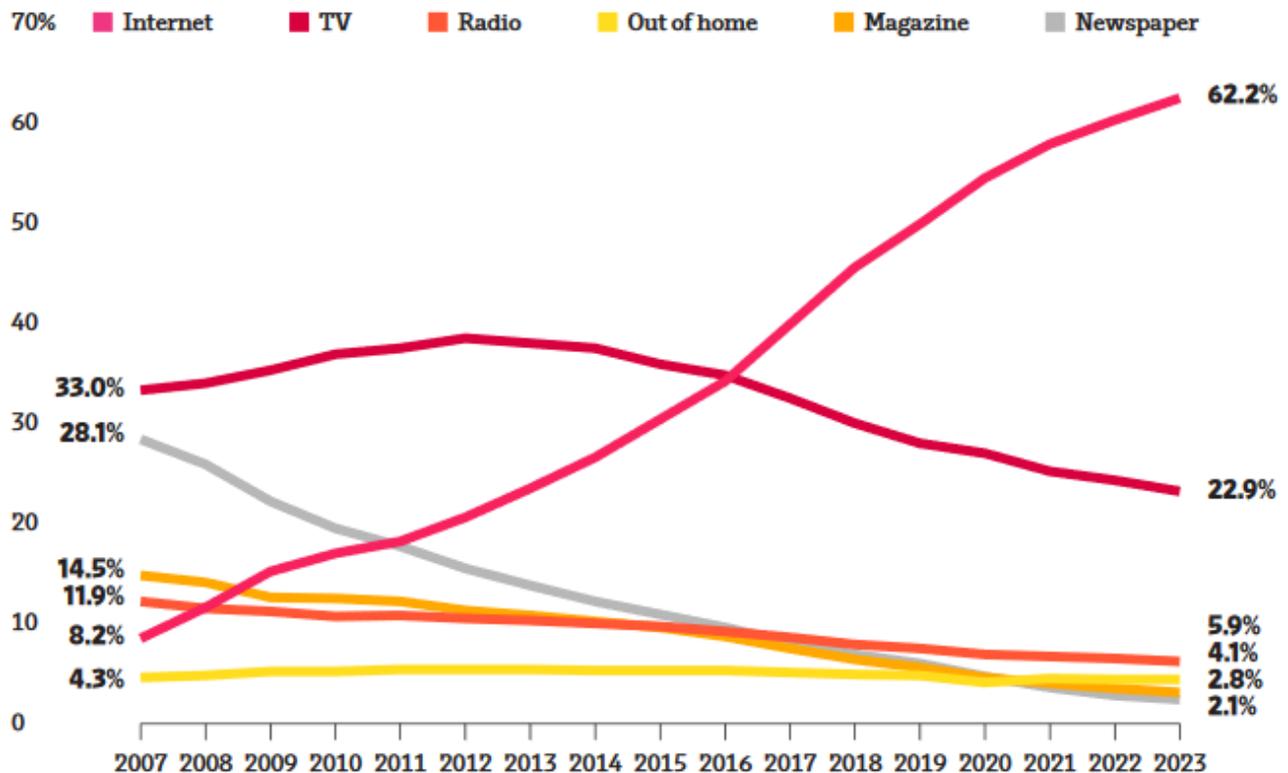
On my TV show, I discussed with veteran DC Metropolitan Police officer, now a university Criminal Justice lecturer, Ronald Hampton. His take may surprise you.

To watch, click the graphic, or here: <https://youtu.be/8tisGbfDcE>

You can search this report by Zip Code, to see if police in your area have been armed with military gear.

Share of U.S. ad spending by medium

From Zenith. Internet advertising reached the halfway point in 2020, accounting for 54% of U.S. ad spending. The internet accounted for less than 17% of ad spending in 2010.



Source: Publicis Groupe's Zenith (Advertising Expenditure Forecasts, December 2020) based on current prices. Numbers rounded. Internet includes all internet advertising (including media owned by pure-play digital firms and digital extensions of traditional media such as a newspaper's website). Out of home includes outdoor and cinema. More info: zenithmedia.com.

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Digital is driving the advertising rebound.

GroupM predicts worldwide ad revenue for Facebook/Google/other pure-plays will surge 14.1% to \$397 billion in 2021, giving digital ventures 61% of global ad spend.

Zenith expects USA internet advertising +9.6% (\$136B), 58% ad spending.

(Ad Age Marketing Fact Pack 2021)

Pandemic Purchasing Habits: NOT just toilet paper hoarding.

From Stop & Shop, the supermarket goliath here in New England:

- As shoppers in #StayHome mode spend more time in the kitchen, they're buying MORE frozen foods, fresh meat and seafood, and plant-based proteins; and FEWER read-to-eat sandwiches and salads.
- Surprise snack trend: hummus.
- Unsurprisingly, alcoholic beverage sales are up.
- As we're wearing-masks/washing-hands/avoiding-contact, cold and flu relief products aren't selling. Also unsurprising. Doctors I've interviewed on my TV show tell me that while ducking the Coronavirus, we're also dodging the flu, which is way down this season.
- Masks – and all the time we spend alone -- might also contribute to slumping sales of gum and breath mints.
- And to keep cheery, we're bringing home flowers and balloons.



At Olive Garden, **"We're all family here."** Our traditions, like unlimited soup, salad, and breadsticks, have been enjoyed by many guests from all over the country and throughout the entire political spectrum.

It has come to our attention that a few of our guests had taken part in a **viscous** attack on our nation's Capitol. We have worked with the **FBI** and the **Holiday Inn** in **Washington D.C.** to identify several guests who both frequented our restaurants and participated in the violent uprising against our government this week.

In response, Olive Garden has invalidated our **Never Ending Pasta Pass** for several guests and revoked a **Lifetime Pasta Pass** from Sean Hannity.

Olive Garden is dedicated to creating a safe and delightful environment for our guests with what we call **Hospitaliano**. This year has been difficult for many of us, and we cannot wait to see your family smiling in our restaurants once again. Until that time, your favorite dishes from Olive Garden are available to order online for both **pick up** and **delivery**.

Spelling error aside, there's a message here. This "cancel culture" that radio/TV soreheads crab-about is self-inflicted.

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SOUND BITES

"Every day is a day closer to the end of the pandemic."

John Harper, host, "Morning Air" on Relevant Radio, the Catholic church-sponsored network of 186 stations, cuming 950,000 listeners per week. His own show's AQH is 45-60K, and I've gotta think glass-half-full vibes like this help.

- Like telecommuting and E-commerce, faith has helped many cope during the shutdown; and not-being-able-to-go-to-church has discomforted many.
- "YOU have a chance to stay healthy," John tells listeners. "Use the gifts God has given you," Social Distancing and other protocols.
- And -- unlike the Walmart shouting matches we see on Facebook and Twitter -- John tells of listeners offering masks to the unmasked, "with charity and clarity."

"Local stations with live personalities, a physical presence in the market and face to face relationship selling will be the ones that post position growth. Consolidators will struggle to break even as they cut expenses and look for the exit."

Jerry Del Colliano, InsideMusicMedia.com

"Especially during the pandemic, one of the things that I have come to appreciate even more -- and I'm sure many millions of Americans share this sentiment -- is that local content matters. You want to find out what is going on in your community, especially when you are stuck at home for days or weeks."

Former FCC Chairman Ajit Pai, interviewed by Inside Radio just before his January 20 resignation.

Also that week, in a CNBC interview, he ducked questions about social media platforms' Section 230 protections:

"Congress should put on paper the basic principles of an open Internet."

Notwithstanding policies Facebook and Twitter have stated, Pai said "There isn't any transparency into how they make these decisions and who's making these decisions" about what's acceptable and what's not.

"Unfortunately many of the points being argued under the banner of Free Speech have nothing to do with the words written in the Bill of Rights but are rather distortions thereof twisted to fit the hypocrisy-driven goals of those in government."

Talkers magazine publisher Michael Harrison, on his (highly-recommended) weekend show "[The Michael Harrison Wrap](#)"

"We're just beginning to realize the value of audio."

New York Times Company CEO Meredith Kopit Levien in the UBS Global TMT Virtual Conference.

Podtrac measured The Times' "The Daily" as the most listened-to among podcasts it tracks for 25 consecutive months, averaging 4 million + downloads per day.

"This certainly was not a situation where we were dissatisfied with K-Fox. They've been a great partner to us. But the reality is even the strongest signals have their limitations."

NHL San Jose Sharks VP of Communications Scott Emmert, interviewed by the San Jose Mercury News, regarding the team's decision to move games from radio to their own digital stream.

"We will be back in some form."

Donald Trump, departing on Inauguration Day, as The Village People's "YMCA" played.