

Holland Cooke Newsletter • January 2022

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Happy NEWS Year?

Or is “happy” now unproductive? If Brett Baier hasn’t also fled Fox News by the time you read this, he must be feeling lonely there. He and Chris Wallace reportedly protested to management over Tucker Carlson’s “false flag” take on the deadly January 6 insurrection that many fear was dress rehearsal. Shep’ Smith was already long-gone – to anchor the hip, handsomely-produced 7PM CNBC news hour – after being so-at-odds for-so-long with what Fox News entertainment shows were shoveling.

“America of 2021 is a nation unrecognizable to those who came before us and fought to protect it, which is what you must do now. They’ve decided to burn it all down with us inside.”

Brian Williams, signing-off his long stint with NBC

Emerging 2022 Strategy: Amplify The Crazy.

- If I ran Fox, I’d go even-harder-right. They need to play defense, to out-MAGA upstarts Newsmax and OAN, the beneficiaries of ire Fox suffered for reporting 2020 election results. Tell Judge Jeanine: Louder! Laura Ingraham: Snarl even more! Young Carlson: Keep doing that frat boy laugh. When Trump calls, pick it up on the first ring.
- Same strategy for Talk radio stations plugged-into the daily doom-N-gloom line-up. Aircheck Sean Hannity and lift the most pessimistic sound bites for imaging that defines the station as a safe space for the grouching 70-year-old white males who are AM’s last habitual users. The number of I’m-the-next-Rush Limbaugh shows will soon surpass the surviving audience, but you’re still on the My Pillow buy.
- There’s no room for nuance. “Fair & Balanced” is toast. As Natalie Merchant sang, “Give ‘em what they want.” Misery loves company. Complaining is much easier than reckoning solutions. Admittedly not a long-term solution...

THEN what?

Figure that those AMs are now the tail and their FM translators are the dog. So there’s still an opportunity for sampling new spoken word programming. But what will it be?

- I’ll bet you a Palm Martini that Brian Williams is less likely to resurface on someone’s digital platform than he is to become Huntley to Norah O’Donnell’s Brinkley in a re-packed CBS Evening News; or some other top-shelf legacy media slot. But Chris Wallace’s new gig may suggest Talk radio’s next opportunity.
- He follows former NBC/MSNBC rising star Kasie Hunt to CNN’s stream. His new weekday show will feature interviews with newsmakers “across politics, business, sports and culture;” rather than the same day-after-day-after-day dirge that is eroding radio ratings.

“I want to try something new, to go beyond politics to all the things I’m interested in. I’m ready for a new adventure. And I hope you’ll check it out.”

Hear those last three words?

Talk Radio’s next format: “Check It Out.”

Thought leaders including Talkers publisher Michael Harrison and take-no-prisoners blogger Jerry Del Colliano have described something I’ve been talking about to anyone willing to listen: The radio station becomes an inviting robo-playlist of what the movie industry calls “trailers:” previews, each several minutes long, culled from podcasts available on the station’s web site (and, of course, “wherever you get your podcasts”). Think audio salad bar, paced so that each vignette is long-enough to tempt those interested, but short-enough not to tune-out those who aren’t, and who understand that another audio hors oeuvre is coming up. Included: advertisers’ stories, a more-palatable pay-for-play than the poorly-staged shows that clutter weekends on many News/Talk stations.

Think of the transmitter as that guy in the mall food court, handing out samples on toothpicks? YES. Use **real-time broadcast** to invite those-intrigued to consume **narrowcast on-demand**.

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4 IDEAS IN 3 MINUTES

1. Sales: Writing recruitment business?

The Help Wanted sign is everywhere.
Client stations tell me that copy touting bonuses and benefits gets results.

2. Call-in topic: "New Year's resolutions for...?"

"...President Biden?"
"...Donald Trump?"
"...Senator ___?"
"...Governor ___?"
"...Mayor ___?"
"...Elon Musk and Jeff Bezos?"
"...your spouse? Feel free to disguise your voice." 😊

3. Instead of "most," would it be more accurate to say "many?"

Overstatement distorts, distortion erodes trust.

4. For better selfie videos...

Script bullet points on a Post-It Note which covers the screen (reminding you to look in the camera).
(From Abby & David @crushingitoncamera)

5. Research: Tweets about you get re-Tweeted less than Tweets that link to third party content.

Wharton professor Jonah Berger: "Pass along useful information, news others can use."

6. Memo to hosts who do Talk radio as monologue — rather than lively caller-rich dialogue:



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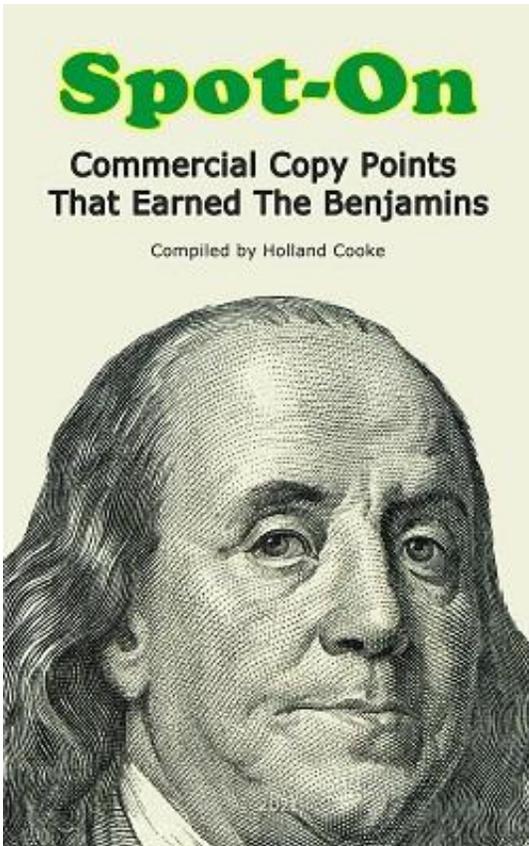
"Years" blur. Think "era." And don't blink...

Each year, Talkers magazine publisher Michael Harrison debuts his countdown of the year's top Talk topics on my TV show. Click-the-pic [or here](#) for the video.



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7 Do you have access to the Internet?

Yes

No

8 Do you have a cellphone?

Yes

No

9 Do you have a landline phone in your home?

Yes

No → **Skip to 11**

10 If "Yes" to question 9: When at home, how frequently does anyone answer the landline phone in your home? (Mark one.)

Always

Often

Sometimes

Rarely

Never

11 Do you or does anyone in your household work for a radio, TV or cable company?

Yes

No

To make sure our research represents everyone in your community, the next questions are about you and your household.

12 Is anyone in your household of Spanish, Hispanic or Latino origin?
(For example: Mexican, Mexican-American, Chicano, Puerto Rican, Cuban or another Spanish, Hispanic or Latino group.)

Yes

No → **Skip to 14**

13 If "Yes" to question 12: Which language is spoken most often in your home?

Only Spanish

Mostly Spanish, but some English

Mostly English, but some Spanish

Only English

14 Is anyone in your household? (Mark all that apply.)

White

Black or African American

Asian

Other Race

15 Including yourself, how many people living in your home are?

Ages	Number of People
0-11	<input type="checkbox"/>
12 or older	<input type="checkbox"/>

16 Including yourself, please indicate the total number of people currently living in your household that fall into each category below:

Ages	Number of Males	Number of Females
12-17	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
18-24	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
25-34	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
35-44	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
45-54	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
55+	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please return this survey in the enclosed envelope before December 16, 2021. Postage has already been paid. Your \$5 will be sent within three weeks of Nielsen's receipt of your completed survey. Thank you!

Please provide all the information below, and we'll send you your \$5 in cash!

Name QD234HMLP

Address Apt. #

City State Zip Code

Phone () -

Nielsen is a research company. We will NOT use your personal identifying information to advertise, promote or sell goods or services directly to you and we do not allow our clients to sell directly to you. Returning this survey does not obligate you to participate in any future research. By providing your phone number, you agree that our research associates may contact you to discuss further research opportunities. For efficiency and accuracy, we may dial your phone number using an automatic telephone dialing system and we may leave pre-recorded reminder messages.

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SOUND BITES

"Because local radio is just better."

Promo on WTIC/Hartford, a former Rush Limbaugh affiliate, where they're now live-N-local weekdays 5A-6P.

"The similarity between Top 40 and commercial Talk radio has been profound. Certain topics get the phones to ring. Certain topics are boring but important, so they stay away from them."

Michael Harrison, interviewed by The New Yorker

"In this audio-first model we view our talent, and that includes our current DJs, as multidimensional audio content creators who think expansively about the type and amount of content they can and should generate...Our talent has far more opportunities beyond radio, ranging from podcasting to digital audio to live events to deepen their engagement."

Mary Berner, CEO, Cumulus Media

"With hundreds of shows across all categories and genres, many of us are doing the work of multiple employees, and the huge volume of content we are responsible for is not met with equitable compensation."

Writers Guild of America, East "Why We're Organizing" letter to iHeartMedia management

"With Salem, nobody gets to sell MyPillow products going forward. You are done selling MyPillow products!"

Mike Lindell, because Salem hosts "haven't had me on for a long, long time."

"Once you lose, people like you."

Longtime U.S. Senator and former Vice Presidential and Presidential candidate Bob Dole, among those we remember in the In Memoriam tribute I do each year on [my TV show](#).

