

# Holland Cooke Newsletter • November 2022

*E-X-P-A-N-D-E-D issue, including my notes from NAB Show New York*

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## Plan NOW for The Big Story

Putin said he's not bluffing about tactical nukes – and with “What NEXT?” anxiety generally -- take time to re-familiarize yourself with your network's continuing coverage routine. When-the-fit-hits-the-shan they'll shine, and News/Talk stations need to be conspicuous.

- Know now how you will be alerted when the net' goes wall-to-wall or offers in-and-out updates during the hour.
- WHO will do WHAT to break-into syndicated shows? In many clusters, a single person manages multiple stations' largely-automated programming. Which staffer can pivot?
- Use cluster-mate stations to remind their listeners that your News/Talk stick is all-over-this.
- When The Big Story blocks-out the sun, anyone at home will be glued to TV; so say “Stick with us when you're in the car...”

This isn't just Ukraine-watch. Gun nuts like that Buffalo supermarket shooter walk among us. And we're recently reminded that so-called “100 year” storms come lots more often lately.

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## Yes, you need more cume.

“Cumulative Audience” is radio's version of what newspapers called “Circulation,” back when there were newspapers. It's the number of people who tune-into your station during the week. Listeners, not listening. How many, not how many “Average Quarter Hours” (AQH) consumed.

**We can't get someone who doesn't listen at all to listen more.**

But first-things-first. *Three ways to make the most of the ears you already have.* Then we'll talk about new ears.

*Continued on page 4...*

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## “Rigged election” chickens come home to roost.

*RTDNA research: Half don't trust local news. Red flag: social media.*

- 1** Trust in local news sources is good, but not excellent and it's extremely fragile. 50% of people who say they trust a local news source also say they have questioned whether they should. 1 in 5 say local TV or local radio are sources with “fake news”.
- 2** A question about the trustworthiness of a single journalist puts the integrity of the entire organization in jeopardy. 60% of respondents share this “one rotten apple” sentiment.
- 3** Action, not promotion, is the key to cultivating trust with the audience. There are 28 things local news sources and journalists should work on to earn and build trust.
- 4** Success will not come from the targeting of a specific demographic. The findings are very consistent across all demos. It is not a generational challenge. Nor is it a challenge primarily rooted in political orientation.
- 5** Social media is a significant challenge. It is easily the least trusted local news platform. It is also the second most used local platform daily. Journalists who post personal opinions on social media are hurting their trust relationship with the audience.

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*Grab the arm rest! Here, now -- at blistering velocity – come...*

## 7 IDEAS IN 6 MINUTES

### 1. Sales lead, still: There are WAY more open jobs than job-seekers.

Note: Help Wanted advertising tends not to come from "Advertising" budgets. These are HR dollars.

### 2. Sales reps: On that first call ask, "What's the biggest mistake people make..."

...regarding what consumers do about what-the-product-sells.

Example, pitching a remodeler: "What's the biggest mistake people make planning kitchen remodeling?"  
What you hear next is commercial copy GOLD.

- Ask also: "What's the biggest misconception about...?"
- Record their answer on your smartphone, "for my notes." You may get sound bites that enable the advertiser to tell his/her own story on-air...and who better? And people start telling them "I heard you on the radio." Even if you don't incorporate the voice, you will capture key copy points.
- Then, on the second call, tee-up the spec spots you bring by saying "Based on what you told me..." and hit play.
- Note: "spec spots," plural. Bring two different approaches, so you're asking "This? Or that?" rather than yes-or-no. Your prospect joins the creative process. And you demonstrate commitment to the prospect's success.

### 3. Commercial copy point: "Ask how, right now."

It's the call-to-action line at the end of a spot for a local service business, followed by a super-easy-to-remember phone number (i.e., XXX-7777, or your number spells-something) or domain name.

- "Save on home heating, even as energy costs soar. Ask how, right now."
- "Yes you CAN stop snoring, without CPAP! Ask how, right now."
- "Get a quick cash settlement for your injury. Ask how, right now."

### 4. Talk hosts: What can listeners DO as a result of hearing your next show?

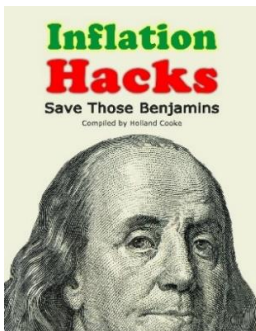
### 5. News writers: Avoid third-person plural.

- Heard on Providence TV, which talks to 3 states: "Good news for Connecticut residents." (third-person plural)
- Instead: "Good news if you live in Connecticut." (second-person singular, which is how people hear)

### 6. Lingo alert: Don't call it "a remote."

To listeners, that's the channel clicker. If you'll be "broadcasting live from..." say that.

### 7. I'm selling this E-book online for \$3, but your review copy is FREE.



JUST UPDATED, as listeners continue submitting moneysaving ideas to my blog [AndYouCanQuoteMe.com](http://AndYouCanQuoteMe.com). So I occasionally revise the book, and I send the updated version to everyone who ordered a previous edition.

For your copy, simply click on Ben's nose – or hit [HollandCooke.com](http://HollandCooke.com) -- to download.

Also there, also FREE: 35 60-second audio features. Help yourself. NO national spot. If you sell a local sponsorship, keep the money. And RSVP if I can read a custom intro that mentions your sponsor. Because these fit into a spot avail in any format, you can bundle the whole cluster.

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If you can see only ONE Bogart flick, it is, of course, “Casablanca.”  
ONE Hitchcock film? “North By Northwest.”  
ONE Elvis movie? No contest, “Viva Las Vegas.”  
ONE Tom Hanks movie...?



If you **MUST** talk about politics **AGAIN** today, at least toss-in a “**Bonus Question.**” This one popped when I posted on Facebook and Twitter. Also fodder for your online poll.

*Are you new here? If someone else sent you this issue, thank them for me. And welcome to our group! To sign-up for your own subscription, FREE, simply Email [newsletter@hollandcooke.com](mailto:newsletter@hollandcooke.com)*

## Are you struggling to build your podcast audience?



### Goal: **More Shares.**

We are now SO bombarded with advertising pitches that we lean-away. So before you spend a dime on Facebook or Twitter ads – or otherwise “buy clicks” – think how much more special a friend’s recommendation would be.

**Listenability is leverage.** Because most podcasts are free, many are downloaded. But how many actually get heard? And how many get heard in their entirety?

**Best Practices have emerged.** Although podcast consumption is fundamentally different than broadcast listening, radio broadcasters enter the arena with advantages...and liabilities. [Click here to download my E-book](#) or hit [HollandCooke.com](http://HollandCooke.com) [PDF \$9].

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## Yes, you need more cume.

On-air promos accomplish three things:

1. Define the station. Imaging needs to clearly label your button in the listener's mind. You do...what?
2. Ask for more AQH, what the ratings people call "Occasions of Listening." Sounds like double-talk, but heaps of data affirm that the quickest way to grow Share is to get people who listen to your station most (so-called "First Preference" or "P1" listeners), to listen even more (times per day/week). Pro-tip, from Commercial Copy 101: Sell benefits, not features. "Because ONE traffic jam can jam-up your WHOLE day..."
3. Listeners REMEMBER having-listened. Not just opportune in diary markets, where we want 'em to round-up when they cast that ballot. In PPM markets, awareness drives use. And this matters even if you don't subscribe to the ratings, because advertisers need prospects to hear their spots multiple times.

Do all that well, and, still, the only people who hear you are already listening.

### Cume is a never-ending problem.

Every day:

- People die.
- Others move-into – and out of – your area.
- People age-into – and out of – your target demographic.
- They have children, take/lose/change jobs, and change daily routines for other reasons.
- And the pandemic changed EVERYTHING.

Meanwhile – though radio's Reach remains substantial – broadcasters are losing AQH to new-tech competitors. Music listeners stream, and podcasting is Talk radio that's not stuck on one subject. So "give us a try" is table stakes, at best.

### Social Media promotion is the frosting, not the cake.

Yes, DO use Facebook and Twitter et al.

- Think "engagement," not "promotion." Tee-up content that enables you to listen to your followers.
- And use these digital media to drive digital consumption. Users are already online. So rather than saying turn-this-off-and-turn-on-radio-right-now, use Twitter to deep-link to specific items on your web site. Point to topical snack-size audio clips (not whole-hour or whole-show airchecks), and text of local news stories.
- Walking-the-walk this way will habituate use of your digital assets -- and expose sponsors there -- LOTS more than talking-the-talk about "Check our So, web site" from the AOL 14.4K modem screech era.
- Ditto Facebook, also useful for radio's version of DVR Alert, i.e., "Abbott and O'Rourke debate tonight at 7. If you'll be in the car..."

But tactics like these – and other consultant lore – tend to move the number AFTER the decimal point. Sure, going from 6.1 to 6.8 is progress. But to move the number BEFORE the decimal point, you need to invite sampling AND convert to users THEN earn more-frequent use.

### "Not yet."

My job is easier than station owners' job. I sign checks on the back, clients sign 'em on the front. So my nagging about...er, "recommending" billboards is a pitch. And here's the free prize inside: Advertisers view YOUR advertising as supporting THEM advertising on your air. Or, they also notice: We sell advertising, but we ourselves don't?

As hard-won as those promotion dollars are, I am mindful that (say it with me): "You never get a second chance to make a first impression." So be darn sure that what new ears hear when they wander in lives up to the invitation. Execute the playbook.

And as newspapers found out, tick-tock.

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## #NABShowNY

Lots of long-time-no-see hugs among 9500 of us at the Javits Center as the National Association of Broadcasters resumed its October event – like much of life, interrupted by COVID – and increasingly pertinent to radio. Though long-timers long for the days when the exhibit hall was populated by jingle gypsies, Hiney Wine, and bumpersticker and T-shirt vendors, we now find the teleprompters and studio lighting and cloud software that are becoming tools of the trade for radio broadcasters who leverage their transmitter brand to take content (and advertisers) everywhere consumers consume us.

### **Radio mojo aplenty at the first in-person [Marconi Awards](#) post-pandemic.**

Second biggest applause during this well-produced event was for 2022 NAB Distinguished Service Award recipient Ryan Seacrest, whose philanthropic foundation has some 70 employees staffing broadcast centers he's funding in children's hospitals, where ailing kiddos interview stars Seacrest lines-up.

Biggest hand of the night was for College Station of the Year WRHU-FM, Hofstra University. Standing-O for a new generation of radio broadcasters. Award categories also now include Best Radio Podcast of the Year (KSL-FM, Salt Lake City). Congrats too to National Radio Award winners Fred and Paul Jacobs, Jacobs Media.

### **Mostly, we're back.**

Many sent-home during the shutdown ended-up working there for keeps, but not as many as some advertisers seem to think. Per Cumulus/Westwood One Chief Insights Officer [Pierre Bouvard](#):

- 14% of USA pre-COVID commuters are now working at home. Here's the disconnect: More than twice as many (37%) of marketers and agency people work remotely.
- Nielsen: Radio still has 98% of its 2019 Reach. September numbers: Morning AQH is up 10% from July. "People are complaining about traffic again!"
- AM/FM radio has 89% Share of ad-supported audio in-car. Though listeners do stream there, many pay for the ad-free tier. "You need an electron microscope to see" audience for ad-supported streamers.

And recalling the birth of FM radio, at-which many then scoffed, Pierre teed-up another session, saying "Every local American radio station needs to have a podcast."

### **"What's your local podcast strategy?"**

"It's happening in a meaningful, measurable way," Amplifi Media's Steve Goldstein pronounced, ticking-off consumption numbers.

- Calling AM radio "a struggle" Hubbard Radio VP Strategy Jeremy Sinon and fellow panelists described how on-demand audio bolsters and extends transmitter content.
- CityCast CEO David Plotz runs "a national network of local focused podcasts and newspapers around the country" and says their secret sauce is "daily morning podcasts, 6AM drop, one big story, and a news roundup" and a daily newsletter. And in his experience, "It's much easier to grow a newsletter than to grow a podcast."

So what is podcast "success?"

- NOT radio-ratings-size numbers, panelists agreed. Sheryl Worsley, VP Podcasting, Bonneville, and Marconi winner KSL Podcasts: "People who are listening are really into-it." So 500 raving-fan subscribers "isn't a failure;" Sinon, agreeing: "There's a lot of podcasters who would KILL for 2000 listeners," peanuts if on-air come.
- Worsley: "You DO have to give it time. Podcasting is a grind. It could take a year, two years. 3 months doesn't tell." But Plotz warned that, unlike on-air programming, "feedback is lacking." Because listeners opt-in, podcasters tend to get positive feedback. "People who host podcasts don't realize their podcast is not a success."

Monetizing station podcasts?

- Jason Barrett, Barrett Sports Media: "Push it strong" on-air. Otherwise, Worsley warns: "You can have a great podcast that nobody knows about."
- And, in her experience: "If you have the right project and tie it to the right client, you can get clients (at launch) who pay on ego." And she cautioned against "thinking that it's radio. Listening is different. The ads should be different."
- Sinon calls station podcasts "local content for local advertisers."

*Continued...*

## "The biggest mistake stations make podcasting?"

At Q+A time, I polled the panel:

- NOT podcasting. Worsley: "If you don't try, it's worse than nothing," because national podcasts will attract local ears and ad dollars. She described KSL's "Project Recovery" podcast, by a local TV personality who came back from rehab and does a podcast about alcohol addiction, a big success there.
- Barrett warned about going too-niche: "Is a great host doing an uninteresting topic? It can't be a podcast just because it's not on the radio."

Bottom-lining the opportunity, Barrett: If we all live in a phone and we all use streaming then you have to live in those spaces and you have to do programming for that." And who better than radio broadcasters, Goldstein reckons, recalling a Dunkin' billboard that pictured a bagel: "Round with a whole in it. We can do that."

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## Will your listeners be ripped-off-today?

*Not if we can help it! See Idea #7 on page 2.*



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## SOUND BITES

### **"Discretionary spend is being pinched."**

Dennis Berman, Lazard Managing Director, asked by CNBC about Netflix, concert tickets, etc.:  
"It's very hard to predict where consumer behavior lands."

### **"The trick is to convince advertisers that downturns are the best time to grow market share, since their competitors may actually cut ad budgets to save money...which, as Henry Ford said, is like stopping your watch to save time."**

Researcher [Gordon Borrell](#):

- "The post-pandemic malaise has local ad buyers inching dangerously toward lockdown again, as they did in the early stages of the pandemic, and as they did during the Great Recession back in 2009-2010."
- He reckons media like radio and outdoor – "the lowest CPMs and relatively easy to buy, produce, and place" – are advantaged over TV and newspaper.

### **"The fundamental thing about Hannity is that he's not an ideas guy. He's a cheerleader. He just wants to have the same guests on all the time talking about the same things."**

[Flux.community](#) Editor & Publisher Matthew Sheffield, a former NewsBusters co-founder and right-wing media figure turned critic ("How 'Loyal Dog' Sean Hannity Went From King of Fox News to Has-Been").

"And the longer Hannity -- now the longest-running cable news host in history -- has traversed a post-Trump world, the further he's tumbled down the ratings mountaintop."

### **"Why do I care what is going on in the conflict between Ukraine and Russia? I'm serious. Why shouldn't I root for Russia? Which, by the way, I am."**

Tucker Carlson

### **"The next thing that happens is societal collapse."**

Comedian Glenn Beck.

Tip for Sales reps at affiliate stations: Don't include this quote in your pitch.

### **"I don't believe we'll ever have a fair election again."**

Donald Trump

### **"I am not going to mince words with you all. Democrats want Republicans dead and they have already started the killings."**

U.S. Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene (R-GA) at a Trump rally.

### **"Members of Congress in both parties are experiencing a surge in threats and confrontations as a rise in [violent political speech](#) has increasingly crossed over into the realm of in-person intimidation and physical altercation."**

New York Times:

- "Since the Jan. 6, 2021, attack on the Capitol, which brought lawmakers and the vice president within feet of rioters threatening their lives, Republicans and Democrats have faced stalking, armed visits to their homes, vandalism and assaults."
- Senator Susan Collins (R-ME): "I wouldn't be surprised if a senator or House member were killed."

### **"Would you support nationwide gun rationing for all law-abiding citizens – restricting the number of firearms you're allowed to purchase to one gun a month?"**

"National Gun Owner's Action Survey" mailer inviting me to join the NRA, discounted from \$45/year to \$30. Bonus: a free knife.

Dana Loesch: I don't care if Herschel Walker paid "some skank" for an abortion, "I want control of the Senate".



**"We see evidence of these sites adding to the country's growing political polarization in people's choices around where they turn for news and also in what topics to discuss."**

Amy Mitchell, director of journalism for Pew Research, reporting on Truth Social and other fringe platforms.

**"Radio got stuck in political talk but now an entire new audience wants to be entertained and informed in an approach that sounds similar to their digital world."**

Jerry Del Colliano, "Surprise: Young People Prefer Talk Radio," [InsideMusicMedia.com](http://InsideMusicMedia.com)

**"People can tell their stories better than we can write them."**

Legendary TV news consultant Al Primo, who passed away this past month.

Dr. Brian Calfano, Professor, Department of Journalism, University of Cincinnati:

- "Primo created the Eyewitness News format. His storytelling template catapulted ABC's largest affiliates to 1970s ratings dominance. Hundreds of stations adopted Primo's innovations, which are now the industry standard."
- "Family was core to Primo's philosophy. His news teams gave viewers reliable and relatable faces to share life's events."
- As Talk hosts are accustomed to hearing from me: Callers' STORIES beat windy monologues any day.

**"They're different people, but they make the same mistakes; they get into the same kind of jams. And you say, 'Hey, I've seen this before.'"**

Bill Plante, announcing his retirement in 2016 after covering 4 different presidents for 35 years on the White House beat. Over more than half a century with CBS News, he reported on the Civil Rights movement, the Vietnam War, and 13 presidential elections. Plante – father of radio talker Chris Plante – passed last month, 84.

**"We thank you for your loyalty and for trusting KGO to be your source for information."**

Announcement posted online as what-once-was the crown jewel among ABC Radio's O&Os abruptly changed to a sports gambling format last month, even before California voters had their say on legalized sports wagering.

The on-air announcement – "It's the biggest gamble in Bay Area radio history" -- interrupted the mid-morning "Mark Thompson Show," and the feed suddenly switched to a pre-taped announcement about the format change, featuring a loop of songs about money.

The new station – 810, The Spread – features syndicated and paid-for programming.

**"We are not getting rid of either brand. We are not homogenizing. There will always be 1010 WINS and there will always be 880. They're distinct voices in the market."**

Audacy New York Market President Chris Oliviero. Under a new SAG-AFTRA contract, WCBS and co-owned 1010WINS will merge operations; and WINS is simulcasting on Audacy's 92.3, replacing the Alternative format that has languished there.

**"It's time for the hook."**

Baseball Hall of Famer Dennis Eckersley, retiring after 20 years in the broadcast booth and 24 years on the Major League mound.

**"I've enjoyed every minute of our daily nighttime town hall with my guests, callers, and all of America."**

Jim Bohannon, [announcing his retirement](#) after 40 years with then-Mutual Broadcasting System/now-Westwood One, the most recent 30 of which were hosting the weeknight show he inherited from Larry King, and "America in the Morning." Jim introduced his late-night successor Rich Valdes, "a very bright, vibrant young man."

Among many industry tributes "Jimbo" has won: Talkers magazine's Lifetime Achievement Award, which I was honored to present him. It was also a kick to guest-host his radio show several times. He and I are WTOP alumni; and Jim began his broadcasting career in 1960 on his hometown Lebanon, Missouri station KLWT, which he quipped stood for "Keep Listening, We're Trying."

[When I was Jim's on-air guest recently](#) after he returned following a rough round of chemotherapy, every single caller welcomed him back warmly.