



## **21<sup>st</sup> Century “Swap Shop”**

*By Holland Cooke • Reprinted from Talkers magazine*

You can tell a lot about a News/Talk station from its weekend programming...or lack thereof.

If you're affiliated with a couple of the biggest syndicated shows, you've already relinquished 6 hours of beach-front real estate to crammed-down re-runs that radio is naïve enough to call “Best of...”

Arbitron diary comments I read and focus group comments I wince-through affirm that “Best of” fools nobody; and sends the dangerous message that nobody's home. But you may have no choice. So at least make-the-most-of weekend hours you CAN control.

### **On smart News/Talk stations, weekend programming is appointment listening, and VERY Sales-opportune.**

But “smart,” as so-defined, as nothing to do with market size. On stations in shockingly big markets, lots of weekend programming is downright embarrassing. Yet plucky indie owners in small markets are cleaning-up, and creating what the lab-coat people at Arbitron call “occasions of listening” by doing weekends right.

*Download my special report “Solid Gold Weekend” in the right-hand column at [www.HollandCooke.com](http://www.HollandCooke.com)*

And here's one thing you can do, right now, to mitigate tune-out, sound LOTS less like your father's Oldsmobile, and help Sales attain the Digital revenue that's radio's #1 growth opportunity:

### **Drag “Swap Shop,” kicking-and-screaming, into the 21st Century.**

In 2012, it makes zero sense to do a weekend hour of live classified ads by phone.

- It's an inefficient marketplace. Only those listening in real-time can participate.
- It's awful programming which otherwise-prestigious stations continue to tolerate, often crowing "it's one of our most popular weekend shows!" When you hear what else passes for weekend-programming, you'll hear why.
- It's leaving digital money-on-the-table.

21st Century Swap Shop? Make it an eBay-type section of the station web site -- or a non-station-branded stand-alone site, promoted on all your cluster's stations -- using off-the-shelf software.

Advantages:

- Doing this rides the horse in the direction he's facing. People use the Internet for consignment shopping.
- It will produce better results, because, rather than using one-time/real-time/off-peak-time longform, you produce :60 shortform spots, featuring callers' item-and-price pitches, culled from a Voicemail number announced in the spot and in promos and online. Those spots run ROS, so offers are exposed to the station(s)' entire cume(s), not just those listening in real-time.
- You never have an unsold avail.
- You sound lots less antique.
- And I saved the best for last: You derive more revenue from that hour by brokering it smartly. Your station has more 60-second avails than 60-minute avails.

Oh, one more aspect that's particularly tantalizing: Your FREE classifieds are a-dagger-through the newspaper's heart. ;) )

*Read more at [www.HollandCooke.com](http://www.HollandCooke.com), and follow me on Twitter @HollandCooke*