

The **OUTCOME METHOD**

A Storytelling Framework
for More Effective
Local Advertising

*"Dinner
tonight."*



*"My daughter's
first car."*



*"Retiring
without
worrying."*



*Finally
fixing that
bathroom."*



*New
shoes for
game day."*



*"The lawn
that makes
the neighbors
jealous."*



HOLLAND COOKE

About those commercials (which pay for you).

When a prospective client says “We tried radio. It didn’t work,” I ask to hear the commercial. Within seconds I can tell why.

It opens with the business name. It lists products. It rattles off prices. It stuffs in an address, a website, a phone number, and a slogan. Then it ends. Nothing happened. Nothing memorable. Nothing emotional. Nothing that gave a listener a reason to care. Yet radio gets blamed. Like blaming a fishing rod because you cast with no bait.

The commercial has one job: Make someone care enough to take the next step.

Call, click, or come in the door. That's it. Not explain everything. Not impress everyone with how many years you've been in business.

Its purpose is to create curiosity...confidence...desire...trust...urgency...hope. Any one of those emotions can motivate action. A list of merchandise almost never does.

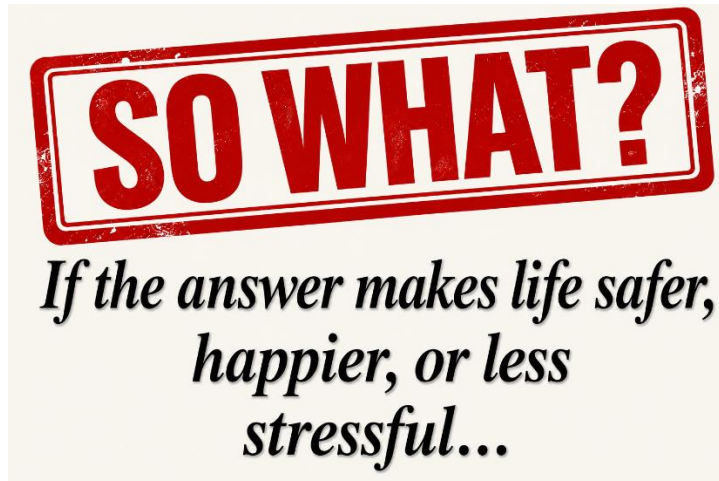
The listener doesn't wake up hoping to buy a water heater, or hire a lawyer, or replace a roof. People act when something in their lives creates a need. Good advertising connects with that moment.

A mattress store isn't selling mattresses. It's selling better mornings. A financial planner isn't selling investments. She's selling confidence. A heating contractor isn't selling furnaces. He's selling warmth on the coldest night of the year.

Translate features into benefits.

Every advertiser has a product. Every customer has a problem. Say it with me:
“Successful spots connect the dots.”

Here's a simple exercise...



Every time they mention a feature, ask “So what?”

- “We stock thousands of [item].” So what? “So you won't spend your weekend driving from store to store.”
- “We've been serving this community since [year].” So what? “So we've helped generations of local families buy homes, build businesses, and send kids to college.”
- “We offer custom designs.” So what? So the ring she'll wear forever will be unlike anyone else's.”

If the answer explains how the listener's life becomes:

- easier
- safer
- faster
- healthier
- happier
- less stressful
- more convenient
- more secure
- more enjoyable

...you've found the benefit, and you get paid.

Stop sounding like commercials.

There's a peculiar voice heard only in radio commercials. You've heard it.

- “For all your _____ needs...”
- “Conveniently located at...”
- “Serving the community for over ____ years...”
- “Your one-stop shop for...”

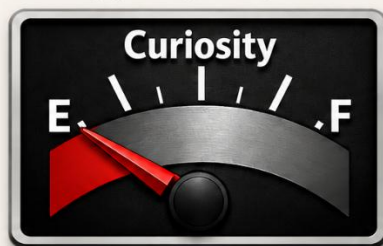
Nobody talks that way.

- You don't tell a friend: “For all your casual dining needs, conveniently located on Route 6...”
- You say: “We found this cool place last weekend. Ya gotta try the ribs.”

Yet turn on the radio and people are speaking fluent Commercial. Ugh. Listeners have heard the language so many thousands of times that they recognize it before they process it. Oh...commercial.

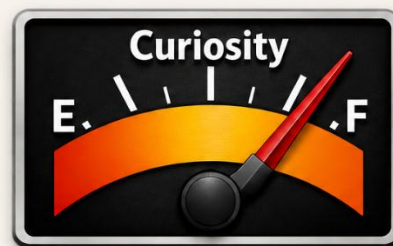
Don't announce. Intrigue.

*“At Wilson Veterinary Clinic,
we know your pets
are important members
of your family.”*



Low Curiosity.
Sounds like a commercial.

*“Buddy stopped eating
yesterday.”*



High Curiosity.
Sounds like a story.

**Curiosity is the hook.
Start where something happens.**

Compare: “Miller Appliance has proudly served the area for 37 years and carries all major brands of refrigerators...” with: “I wasn't planning to buy a refrigerator that day.”

The second sentence creates a question: So what happened? That's all we need. We've earned another few seconds.

Or compare: “Johnson Roofing offers quality workmanship at affordable prices...” with: “I noticed the stain on the ceiling Sunday morning.”

One sounds like advertising. The other sounds like a story. Which would you keep listening to?

Delete the First Sentence

It's worth trying with almost any commercial. Maybe delete the second sentence too. You may discover that the commercial doesn't actually begin until sentence three. Start where something happens.

- Instead of: “When it comes to choosing the right insurance coverage, you need an experienced professional.” Try: “That tree missed their bedroom by six feet.”
- Instead of: “For more than three generations, Anderson Jewelers has helped celebrate life's special moments.” Try: “She said yes before he finished asking.”

That's radio. We can introduce the advertiser later. First, make the listener wonder what happens next.

Sell the Outcome, Not the Product

Listen to a stopset of local radio commercials and you'll hear lots of stuff for sale. Cars... mattresses...furnaces...checking accounts...replacement windows...legal services....appliances.

But consumers don't really want any of those things. They want what happens next.

- Nobody wakes up yearning for a new HVAC system. They want the house warm when it's 12 degrees outside.
- Nobody dreams about replacement windows. They want lower heating bills, less street noise, and a living room that isn't drafty.
- Nobody wants a mattress. They want to wake up without a backache.

**THESE ADVERTISERS
CANCELED...**
UNTIL WE CHANGED THE WAY THEIR COMMERCIALS TALKED.

RADIO SCRIPT
30-SECOND SPOT
ANNCR: Are you looking for quality service?
ANNCR: We're locally owned and operated.
ANNCR: We offer the best prices in town.
ANNCR: Quality you can count on.
ANNCR:
VO: Business Name
Phone Number

CANCELED

REWORKED AS A STORY
30-SECOND SPOT
ANNCR: When the Johnsons' basement flooded at 2 AM, they thought they'd be sitting in it for days...
ANNCR: But within an hour, Mike was there—pumps, truck, the whole crew. He treated their home like it was his own.
ANNCR: That's the kind of service you can count on. That's [Business Name].. Call today.
VO: [Business Name]
Phone Number

**REAL PEOPLE.
REAL RESULTS.**

Great salespeople sell outcomes. Great commercials should too.

But too often, advertising gets bogged down explaining what something is. Instead, demonstrate what it does for me.

- Don't tell me your auto shop provides complimentary loaner cars. Assure me that I'll get to work even when my car can't.
- Don't tell me your landscaper offers weekly maintenance. Let me spend Saturday enjoying my yard instead of working in it.
- Don't tell me your restaurant makes everything from scratch. Make me hungry.

Consumers need clues.

Help them picture themselves after doing business with the advertiser. That's especially powerful on radio because our medium doesn't provide the picture...the listener does.

And the picture in someone's imagination can be more persuasive than anything you could put on a screen.

Your Real Product



Business owners may not understand ratings methodology, or Reach + Frequency, or digital attribution. But they understand this:

- “People mentioned hearing my commercial.”
- “They remembered the story.”
- They quoted the tag line.”

And when those things happen often enough, price becomes less important.

What local retailers cope with?

Us! Everyone wants their money. Google is likely taking more in your market than all radio stations combined. Billboard companies and TV stations have an ego advantage – they can make the client a familiar face. And there’s us, trusty ol’ broadcast radio... with...spots.

What if – instead of presenting-the-package – we asked:

- “Describe your customer.”
- “Who’s your longest-running customer, and why do they stick with you?”
- “How have your customers’ concerns and questions changed lately?”
- “Describe the person you want to see pull into the parking lot?”
- “What’s the first thing people say when they walk in?” (Or call)
- “What do they thank you for?”
- “What’s the happiest call you’ve ever gotten from a customer?”
- “What’s the biggest surprise people discover after doing business with you?”
- “What’s the toughest question customers ask?”
- “What do people think you sell — and what do you actually sell?”
- “What is the biggest misconception about what you sell?”
- “How is what you sell different than a couple years ago?”
- “What’s the ONE thing competitors can’t copy?”
- “What do you wish every prospect knew before they called?” (Or came in)
- “What’s the moment you know a customer is sold?”
- “What’s the next milestone you want your business to hit?”

Your Real Product

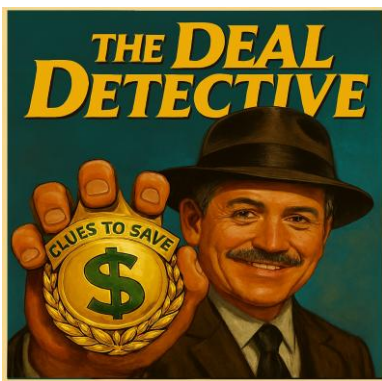
It isn't commercials. It's confidence that somebody understands my business. That somebody cares whether my advertising succeeds.

WHAT OUTCOME ARE YOU LOOKING FOR?



My 2027 Events & Occasions Calendar

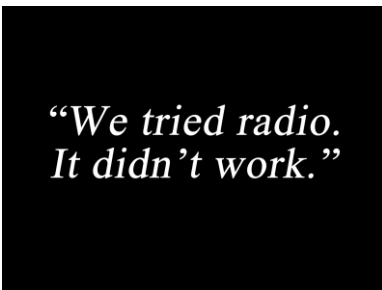
includes opportunities for the Promotion, Public Service, and Programming opportunities that will distinguish you from non-local audio competitors (and other local stations running on autopilot).



Costs are criminal...and you're on the case.

Help yourself to his files, money-saving "Clues," [a stack of 60-second features](#). FREE, no national spot, no paperwork.

Sell a local sponsorship and keep the money.



These advertisers canceled, until...

we reworked their spots using the technique I demonstrate in [this short video all reps should see](#).



Who's Zoomin' who?

Me and you? 15 minutes, no charge, to brainstorm, not a pitch. Choose from available times, right here on [my calendar](#) >>>

