



RadioWorks when **you multiply what you say** by the number of times you say it

“What you say ‘X’ how many times you say it”

Dave Gifford, a sales trainer and radio guru from the American company Dave Gifford International, has been quoted as saying...

*“What you say, times how many times you say it,
is the only thing that works in advertising today”*

... and the radio experts here at RadioWorks agree with him.

This brief paper looks in to effective radio advertising frequencies while always holding on to the creative view point.

Summary

Radio when ‘done well’ is a very effective medium, unfortunately Radio isn’t always done as well as it could be. The key to planning an effective radio campaign is to ensure that the type and style of the creative message is known. The planners can then use their skills and tools to place this message in the most effective positions.

As a ‘rule of thumb’ planning guides can be developed (see Planning Notes) and optimum frequencies can be recommended, however, each campaign should be considered on its own merit. For those times when there is ‘no further information available’ the Planning Notes (page 6) along with the following frequency guide may help.

- 4 OTH** (p/week) – Light weight / drip campaign
- 6 OTH** (p/week) – Medium weight campaign
- 8 OTH** (p/week) – Heavy weight / launch campaign

The best way to plan an effective radio campaign is to know the message.



What you say

What the advert says has a massive effect on the frequency of a campaign. When Ikea ran a series of commercials which advertised amazing offers for a store opening – it resulted in such a strong turn out that people got crushed trying to get in. The campaign ran at a medium weight frequency but the message was so strong the results were staggering.

Knowing what the commercial is going to say before a campaign is planned can help the planner to effectively plan. This is not only important in terms of offers but also in regards to achieving a good station fit. Radio consumers listen to stations ‘like them’, people into dance music listen to a dance station and those into alternative rock music listen to an alternative rock station. While both stations may broadly target the same audience (15-30s) they have very different listeners. It is unlikely a commercial for a rock festival will go down particular well on a dance station, even though the demographic is a good fit.

“Imagine the response to a campaign that offers a free Ferrari for the first person to text in. Clearly there would be an immediate and phenomenal response. Now let’s compare this to a campaign that offers a DAB radio for the first person to text in. As DAB radios can be easily and cheaply purchased it makes sense that this campaign will need a higher frequency than the ‘free Ferrari’ campaign to convey its message”

Jez Simms, Senior Group Researcher, GMG Radio

How you say it is also important to a radio campaign. The nature of radio means that commercials can evoke emotional feelings and develop pictures in listener’s minds. The music, voice and tone are just a couple of the things that can affect a commercials performance. Paul Golliker, Head of Production at Maple Street Studios, has provided us with this helpful example.

Radio commercials don’t have to shout to get a listeners attention. The old adage that you wouldn’t shout at someone face to face so why do it in a radio commercial is still true today. Radio is about involving the listener and if you have a creative which is annoying and repetitive you run the risk of creating negative perceptions about your brand. Honda have created a campaign which conveys their brand identity perfectly and they’ve invested in a voiceover who gives them stand out on the radio. The finished article is a beautifully crafted commercial which listeners empathise with and don’t tire of listening too.

Paul Golliker, Head of Production, Maple Street Studios

The relatively cheap cost of producing a radio commercial also provides the opportunity to use multiple executions. This could lead to the same message being said in different ways to appeal to different target audiences or to ensure that a campaign that is on at a high frequency or over a long period of time does not burn out.



How many times you say it

"The effectiveness of any radio campaign relies on a plethora of contributing factors including the creative, media mix, schedule laydown and frequency. The optimum frequency depends heavily on the campaign objectives, however, we would always advise at least 3.5 - 4 OTH".

Dan Durling, Account Director, Global Radio

What is said has a direct relationship to the amount of times you say it. However, we thought it would be useful to provide a quick guide for those that have 'standard commercials'. Just to note: Radio frequencies are measured in terms of OTH, Opportunities To Hear, and, are measured against the target audience.

The below frequencies are quick guides for the three main campaign 'types'.

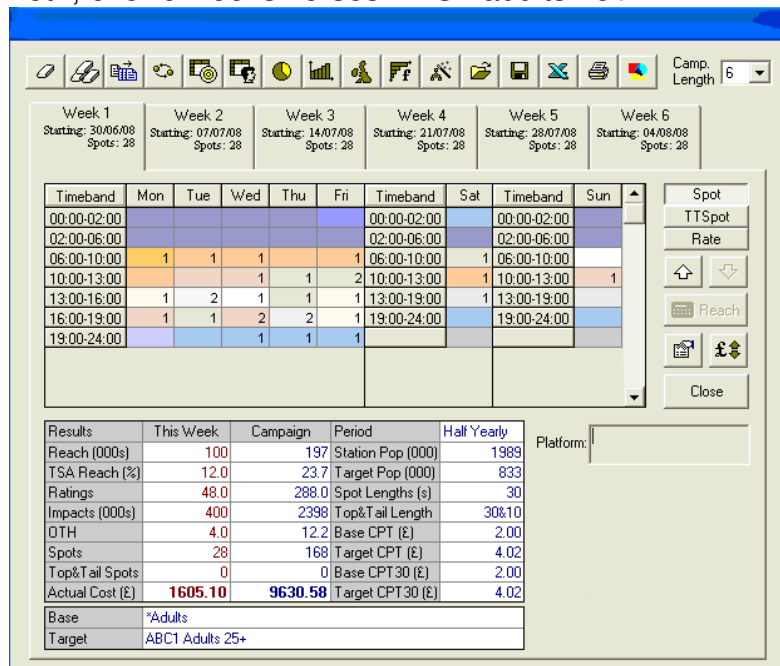
- 4 OTH** (p/week) – Light weight / drip campaign
- 6 OTH** (p/week) – Medium weight campaign
- 8 OTH** (p/week) – Heavy weight / launch campaign

A Light Weight Campaign

A light weight or drip campaign is a campaign that runs at a low frequency across an extended period of time. A frequency at 4oth is likely to be sufficient for this type of campaign, especially when supported by other media. This type of campaign may be used to build substantial brand awareness or maintain brand awareness over a period of time.

Over a one or two week period 4oth would be considered the absolute minimum frequency on radio with a few exceptions, such as those with incredibly powerful offers and music releases.

Fig 1. A brief example of what a drip campaign may look like on station 'A'...
4oth, over 6 weeks verses ABC1 adults 25+

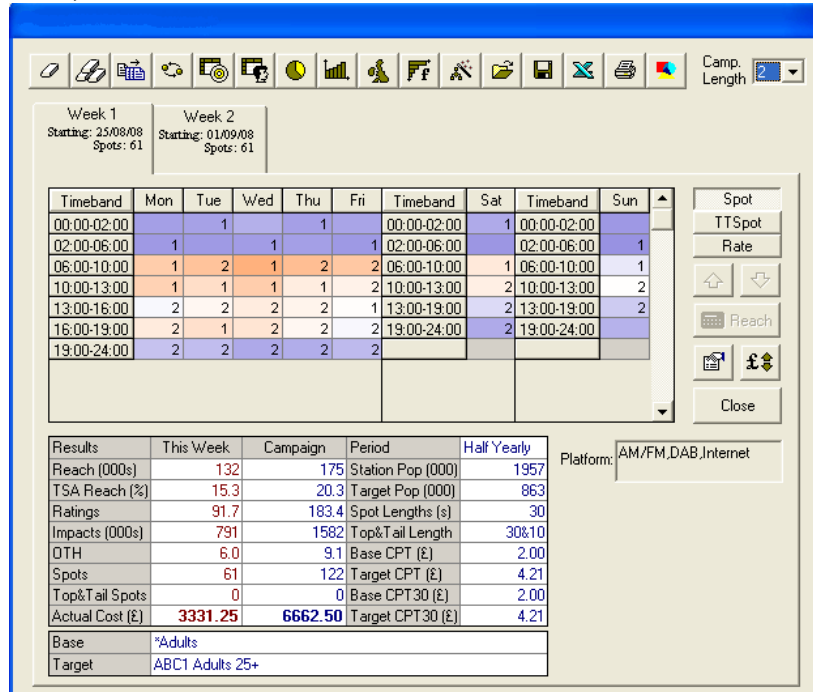




A Medium Weight Campaign

A campaign of 60th is considered to be a medium weight frequency. This type of campaign is often used for two week campaigns in support of other media when clients are looking to see a quicker response to a specific call to action.

Fig 2. An example of what a medium weight campaign may look like on station 'B'... 60th, over 2 weeks verses ABC1 adults 25+



A Heavy Weight Campaign

A campaign that aims to achieve high levels of awareness or response should be a minimum of 80th. Heavy campaigns are often used for store launches or when a client is looking to break into a market place with high impact.

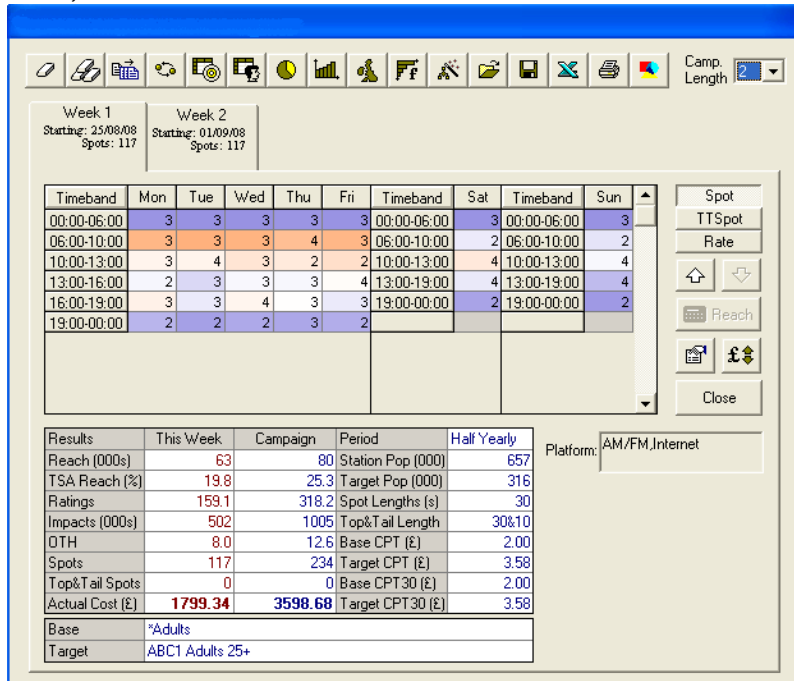
A heavy weight campaign can help a client to stand out by simply being on air more than their competitors. A great example of this are the AutoGlass commercials, by early 2008 most commercial radio listeners would be able to quote their sonic brand trigger *“AutoGlass repair, AutoGlass replace”*

“Radio is a frequency medium where advertising works because people hear a message a number of times. The number of times it is necessary to hear a message is dependant on a number of things including clarity of message, its relevance to listeners and the longevity of the campaign itself. What makes a radio campaign stand out is a strong creative message that is relevant and entertaining to listeners. For longer or more heavyweight campaigns, variations on this creative message ensure that the listeners’ interest is maintained.”

Colette Lister, Commercial Operations Director, Bauer Advertising



Fig 3. A brief example of what a heavy weight campaign may look like on station ‘C’... 80th, over 2 weeks versus ABC1 adults 25+



When planning a heavy weight radio campaign it is important to consider the number of spots that are being placed within each timeband and the stations available airtime (space). Radio stations vary in their availability, some selling out three weeks in advance while others may have next day availability. The recommendation, therefore, is to plan your radio campaign as far in advance as possible, especially if it is a heavy weight campaign with a high number of spots. Paul Mitchard, former Head of Commercial Scheduling at GCAP Radio, also has these words of warning...

“Many of the larger radio stations will charge a premium for campaigns that are not planned with a ‘natural delivery’. The stations will also look to preserve the sound of the station by aiming not to have the same commercials on all the time. To achieve this they may limit campaigns to two commercials per hour, or less during peak times.”

Paul Mitchard, former Head of Commercial Scheduling, GCAP Radio

NB: Radio Frequencies are measured against the target audience, however, it is also important to check how the campaign performs against All Adults 15+ (often the secondary target audience).



Summary

Radio when 'done well' is a very effective medium, unfortunately Radio isn't always done as well as it could be. The key to planning an effective radio campaign is to ensure that the type and style of the creative message is known. The planners can then use their skills and tools to place this message in the most effective positions.

As a 'rule of thumb' planning guides can be developed (see Planning Notes) and optimum frequencies can be recommended, however, each campaign should be considered on its own merit. For those times when there is 'no further information available' the Planning Notes (page 6) along with the following frequency guide may help.

4 OTH (p/week) – Light weight / drip campaign

6 OTH (p/week) – Medium weight campaign

8 OTH (p/week) – Heavy weight / launch campaign

The best way to plan an effective radio campaign is to know the message.



Further Notes

About Radio – the frequency medium

Radio is often described as "the frequency medium" but there is often some confusion as to the real meaning of this phrase (it's about Opportunities To Hear, OTH).

Frequency is important because it helps the listener to remember the campaign. Listeners will know the next line to this Beatles song "She loves you..." because they have heard it time and time again and because it is creatively good (it's "yeah, yeah, yeah" in case you were wondering).

The origins of the phrase partly lie in the fact that TV planning practices were applied to radio in the early days of the medium, notably the use of ratings as a currency.

Ratings (GRPs) are simply coverage multiplied by frequency, i.e. what percentage of target consumers are exposed to the campaign how many times - for example 25% of the audience x 4 exposures = 100 GRPs. It was discovered that for each 100 ratings, while TV campaigns were characterised by higher levels of coverage, radio campaigns were characterised by higher frequency.

It is a convention that has stuck, probably through continuous assessment of what works, even though the radio audience has grown dramatically over the intervening years.

It is a fact of life that, because frequency levels are so high, repetition can begin to cause consumer irritation. When consumers are asked about the kind of radio ads they dislike, they typically say "the ones that keep repeating". This has implications for multiple copy rotation. Since radio listeners are exposed to campaigns more often than TV viewers, it makes sense that copy should be changed more often. Radio ads are not expensive to make and can extend the length and effectiveness of a campaign (contact Maple Street Studios for a quote)

SOURCE:

Dave Gifford quote: <http://www.smartradio.com/index6396.html?id=42>

RAJAR Q1 2008 / IMS

RAB: Effective Radio Weights: <http://www.rab.co.uk/rab2006/showContent.aspx?id=279>

My Head: Simon Pearce

Dave Gifford Info: <http://www.cmw.net/2002/conference/bios/davegifford.html>