



INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF CREATIVE RESEARCH THOUGHTS (IJCRT)

An International Open Access, Peer-reviewed, Refereed Journal

Radio – An underrated and powerful promotional tool.

Author: Aaron Abhilash Yegudala, Assistant Professor, NMIMS University, Hyderabad.

Abstract: Radio is an age-old medium of entertainment and advertising. The first radio advertisement was done by the American Telecommunications expert AT&T in 1922. Though Radio lacks the visual aspects of an advertisement, it is still a strong contender for advertising and promotional purposes. It is a perfect medium for regional advertising. The local saloons, real estate firms, bakeries, and even smaller establishments whose scope of customer coverage does not go beyond the city or town find radio as an excellent platform to advertise their brand, products, or services. The cost efficiency coupled with the pinpointed approach for their target audience is what makes the radio a go-to platform for local marketers. As radio comes as a basic product offering in automobiles and phones, the exposure to radio is more among the people who use cars for transit. Now the audio-only function in radio is certainly a challenge for marketers to impress the audience. As clutter is a common phenomenon associated with radio advertising, it becomes more challenging for advertisers to ensure attention, absorption, interpretation, and memorization of the brand name among the listeners. Hence, marketers have found newer ways of appealing to listeners. The advancement of technology and creativity has paved the way for new strategies to attract the audience, carry the message, and influence them in their consumer behavior.

Keywords: Advertising, Promotional strategies, consumer behavior, target market

Introduction:

Radio is one of the most time-tested advertising channels available, but many modern marketers overlook audio in their media mix in search of newer and more measurable alternatives. In reality, radio is far from antiquated. In fact, we are witnessing the resurgence of a golden age of audio: According to AZ Research Partners Private Limited, COVID increased radio time spent by 23% in India, with many consumers turning to their favourite channels to help them stay informed and up to date on news and regulations. Radio advertising has three distinct advantages: flexibility, value for money, and, surprisingly, targeting capacity. For starters, audio production is much simpler than television, and creatives and messaging can be changed quickly. No other offline medium allows brands to book radio inventory so quickly: in some cases, they can book radio inventory as little as two days before it airs. This means that brands can tailor their messaging to external factors such as weather or special events taking place in their target region. And, because radio commercials are relatively inexpensive to produce, they are also good value for money. In general, you will need to budget for a studio setup, a voice actor, and post-production costs, as well as any translation and localized voiceovers. Finally, many marketers may be put off by radio advertising because it is more difficult to target than other forms of advertising. Radio, on the other hand, provides an excellent ROI for regional campaigns. According to the Wikipedia page on FM broadcasting in India, with over 369 operational private radio stations in over 101 cities and towns across India, any product, business model, or campaign with a regional component can benefit from radio's local targeting capabilities.”

“While many people consider radio to be a less popular medium than the Internet or television, the truth is that radio continues to penetrate areas of our daily lives that other media cannot. Customers can listen to the radio in their cars, waiting rooms, many restaurants, and several grocery stores. Radio advertising targets that captive audience with a series of 30-second or 60-second spots that memorably promote products or services. Radio advertising is based on the idea of creating an audio-only environment and immersing the listener within it. A typical radio commercial features a professional voice-over artist reading descriptive copy over a

suitable background music track. Important information, such as contact phone numbers, addresses, website URLs, or geographical references, may be repeated several times throughout the advertisement. When one radio commercial concludes, another begins, and so on until the program is resumed.”

Impact of auditory elements in radio advertising:

The asset of radio advertising lies in its audio component. It has the flexibility of music and other audio elements to be appealing to the audiences. Burner in his research has commented that People respond to music with emotions, and music has emotional implications for them. Additionally, music has the power to influence both the feelings and behaviors of consumers when it is used in marketing contexts.¹ Hyun-Woo Lee, a sports management researcher and an academician at Texas A&M University, and his team conducted an experiment on the impact of background music on consumer decision-making. He conducted the experiments by choosing 2 groups: experimental and control. The experimental group which was exposed to the advertisements with background music showed positive reception towards the commercial and an inclination towards the purchase. Lee observed that the frontal lobe of brain which corresponds to the emotional aspects has witnessed a heightened EEG activity due to the background music.² The impact of music can be noticed in the fact that the group that watched the advertising with background music experienced greater frontal brain activation is evidence in favor of the theory that music elicits emotional arousal. In the group who watched the advertisement with music playing in the background, purchase intent was higher. In the seven-point scale questionnaire, the group that heard background music scored an average of 4.36, compared to 3.64 for the group that did not.³ As audio is the main and the only proponent in radio advertising, the background music plays an important role in intruding on the mind of the listener which further impacts the interpretation, understanding, and retention of the message. Hence radio marketers exhibit utmost care in the choice of the music and voice over artists.

Another example that denotes the effect of music and other auditory elements in advertising is the American car maker Chevrolet’s campaign in the early 90s. The ad agency for Chevrolet Campbell-Ewald roped in the renowned musician Bob Segar and utilized his own musical “Like a Rock” for the ad campaign. That campaign was an instant hit and it is evident from the increased truck sales of Chevrolet which put in the words of Bob Segar “I am really glad I did it now because it sold a lot of trucks to save a lot of jobs, and, you know, this is my home state. So, it is a good thing. And people keep hearing it, so that is great.”⁴ Though it was a television advertisement, the major impact on the audience was from the music and lyrics of the ad campaign. This substantiates that radio advertisements with auditory elements in the form of music, lyrics, jingles, and voice-overs exert an appealing effect on the audience and influence them positively toward brand awareness, brand recall, and purchasing decisions.

Jingle marketing:

Jingle marketing is another important aspect of radio advertising that aims at memorability, brand recall, and brand association among the audience. Jingles have a long history of usage in the world of advertising. They were reportedly first used in a marketing campaign called “Have you tried Wheaties” by the cereal brand Wheaties in 1926. Radio jingles bring uniqueness to the brand and this makes out to stand out from the competitors. Since there is a lot of advertising clutter in the radio media, uniqueness is the key feature to be recognizable among the competitors. Since radio advertisement lacks a visual component, memorability is an important parameter. Creative jingles trigger the audience’s emotions and make them associate with the brand which eventually helps in achieving the marketing objectives. Marketers must work harder in an age of information overload to capture the interest of potential customers. Jingles are the best way to grab the attention of the listener. This substitutes the absence of flashy colors and graphics in radio advertising.

The power of storytelling:

Storytelling utilizes both fact and narrative to convey a message to the audience. This is a very powerful way of connecting with the audience because it brings more meaning to the message being conveyed and invokes the emotions of the audience. The lack of engagement with the promotional content due to the absence of visual components can be overcome by utilizing effective and creative stories through radio advertising. Marketers may establish a stronger connection with their audience through storytelling. Maggi when faced

¹ Bruner, G. C. (1990). Music, mood, and marketing. *Journal of Marketing*, 54(4), 94–104.

² Uhm, J., Lee, H., Jin-Wook, H., & Kim, D. (2021). Effect of background music and hierarchy-of-effects in watching women’s running shoes advertisements. *International Journal of Sports Marketing & Sponsorship*, 23(1), 41–58. <https://doi.org/10.1108/ijmsms-09-2020-0159>

³ Clark, C. (2021, August 17). *How Background Music In Ads Affects Consumers - Texas A&M Today*. Texas a&M Today.

⁴ Crawford, S., & Crawford, S. (2022b). Like a rock, this Chevy truck ad campaign is still solid - Aldan American. *Aldan American - PROFESSIONAL GRADE SUSPENSION*. <https://aldanamerican.com/blog/like-a-rock-this-chevy-truck-ad-campaign-is-still-solid/>

with the ban in India due to the reported excessive lead content⁵ has utilized the concept of storytelling in their advertisements. These commercials involved the customers making short videos of how much they miss Maggi and the role played by Maggi in their lives. Each customer has his own story about their association with Maggi. This campaign worked as a charm for Maggi as they not only stayed in contention in the minds of the public even during the ban but also affected the emotional aspect of the audience and dissipated the negative public image out of their minds.

Another example of a brand that has successfully used storytelling as a part of its radio advertising is McDonald's.⁶ McDonald's developed a radio ad strategy that heavily relies on narrative. The campaign uses a variety of commercials to spread the idea that even those who are strapped for cash may rely on the "Happy Price Menu." The adverts successfully depict ordinary teenage events, thereby reaching the target demographic of young people. Thus, McDonald's can connect with an average middle-class teenager who would possess little currency in his wallet practically and realistically. This has made the audience see themselves in the brand and associate with McDonald's. This has reaped multiple benefits for McDonald's as they can see an increase in brand engagement, brand awareness, and subsequently an increase in sales. Thus, their cost-effective marketing strategy aimed toward the budget-oriented audience is executed perfectly through storytelling.

Storytelling with creative and emotional aspects has worked wonders in the world of radio advertising and radio gives an ample platform for the utilization of this magnificent method of marketing.

A powerful regional advertising tool:

Radio advertising when compared with TV and social media advertising may lose out on visual imagery and aesthetics but it makes up with its unique selling proposition i.e., local advertising. Since the radio frequencies cater on a regional basis serving different cities, languages, and cultures, radio acts as a perfect platform for regional advertising. Despite often having the same reach, radio advertising is less expensive than cable television advertising. Radio advertising relies on repetition, so you may run more ads for less money and get greater results.⁷ Thus, this gives a great opportunity for small businesses in the city to advertise themselves and increase brand awareness. There is a huge contrast in terms of advertising rates between radio and TV. The radio ads will cost as low as INR 60 per second which is way cheaper when compared to TV ads.⁸

Though newspaper also offers regional advertising, radio has an edge in terms of repetition and frequency of advertisement when compared to newspaper. Repetition is the key to advertising. Before responding to your call to action, your target customer may need to hear your commercial three or four times.⁹ If the frequency of the ad is increased, the customers' ability to recognize, recall, and act also increases. Radio gauge is a tool for analyzing radio advertising that is handled by the Radio Centre and supported by the commercial radio sector. It has surveyed on the effectiveness of radio advertising. Radio Gauge data was the subject of a "meta-analysis" that looked at 267,200 consumer interviews, 1,002 advertising campaigns, 463 companies, and more than 100 media and creative firms over 14 years, between 2008 and 2021.¹⁰

On-the-go medium:

With the advent of the internet, the digital medium has gained a superior advantage over traditional mediums because of its wide range of accessibility. As the internet availability has risen with the decreased affordability and the increased time spent on social media, marketers are using the digital medium to a good effect in reaching out to audiences.

But radio is an age-old device that has provided this accessibility as an advantage for marketers. As it can be heard in transit in the car or from a handheld mobile device. As per the survey conducted by Toluna India,

⁵ Mitra, S. (2017, February 16). The Maggi ban: How India's favourite two-minute noodles lost 80% market share | Mint. *Mint*. <https://www.livemint.com/Companies/1JKHsutTXLWtTcVwdIDg0H/The-Maggi-ban-How-Indias-favourite-twominute-noodles-lost.html>

⁶ Surti, S. (2013, April 12). *McDonald's radio initiative: Effective storytelling but deviation in message*. Indian Advertising Media & Marketing News – Exchange4media. <https://www.exchange4media.com/media-radio-news/mcdonalds-radio-initiativeeffective-storytelling-but-deviation-in-message-50544.html>

⁷ Lesonsky, R. (2017, March 2). *Should you advertise on local radio?* U.S. Small Business Administration. <https://www.sba.gov/blog/should-you-advertise-local-radio>

⁸ Best Radio Advertising Agency in India | Radio Advertising Rates. (n.d.). Bookmyad. <https://www.bookmyad.com/services/radio>

⁹ Hetherington, S. (2020, July 26). 10 Golden benefits of *Radio Advertising*. Radio Results. <https://www.radioresults.com.au/blog/posts/2020/jul/benefits-of-radio-advertising>

¹⁰ Sagar, E., & Sagar, E. (2021, November 24). Radio advertising 'drives ad awareness by up to 50%' - The Media Leader. *The Media Leader - 100% Media: News Analysis, Opinion, Trends, Data & Jobs*. <https://the-media-leader.com/radio-advertising-drives-ad-awareness-by-up-to-50/>

there has been an increase in radio listenership.¹¹ This is another indicator which states the effectiveness of radio as a medium in advertising.

Conclusion:

In the current time with advanced technology and visual aesthetics, radio is still an important medium to convey the right message and impact consumer behavior. The presence of the auditory component alone is the weakness of radio when compared to the other mediums, but it is also the immense strength that marketers can rely on the radio as an advertising medium. The day-to-day interaction with the radio be it while driving or with a purpose also facilitates the marketers to utilize this medium to market their product.

References:

- [1]. Bruner, G. C. (1990). Music, mood, and marketing. *Journal of Marketing*, 54(4), 94–104.
- [2]. Uhm, J., Lee, H., Jin-Wook, H., & Kim, D. (2021). Effect of background music and hierarchy-of-effects in watching women's running shoes advertisements. *International Journal of Sports Marketing & Sponsorship*, 23(1), 41–58. <https://doi.org/10.1108/ij sms-09-2020-0159>
- [3]. Clark, C. (2021, August 17). *How Background Music In Ads Affects Consumers - Texas A&M Today*. Texas a&M Today.
- Crawford, S., & Crawford, S. (2022b). Like a rock, this Chevy truck ad campaign is still solid - Aldan American. *Aldan American - PROFESSIONAL GRADE SUSPENSION*. <https://aldanamerican.com/blog/like-a-rock-this-chevy-truck-ad-campaign-is-still-solid/>
- [4]. Mitra, S. (2017, February 16). The Maggi ban: How India's favourite two-minute noodles lost 80% market share | Mint. *Mint*. <https://www.livemint.com/Companies/1JKHsutTXLWtTcVwdIDgOH/The-Maggi-ban-How-Indias-favourite-twominute-noodles-lost.html>
- [5]. Surti, S. (2013, April 12). *McDonald's radio initiative: Effective storytelling but deviation in message*. Indian Advertising Media & Marketing News – Exchange4media. <https://www.exchange4media.com/media-radio-news/mcdonald's-radio-initiativeeffective-storytelling-but-deviation-in-message-50544.html>
- [6]. Lesonsky, R. (2017, March 2). *Should you advertise on local radio?* U.S. Small Business Administration. <https://www.sba.gov/blog/should-you-advertise-local-radio>
- [7]. Best Radio Advertising Agency in India | Radio Advertising Rates. (n.d.). Bookmyad. <https://www.bookmyad.com/services/radio>
- [8]. Hetherington, S. (2020, July 26). 10 Golden benefits of *Radio Advertising*. Radio Results. <https://www.radioresults.com.au/blog/posts/2020/jul/benefits-of-radio-advertising>
- [9]. Sagar, E., & Sagar, E. (2021, November 24). Radio advertising 'drives ad awareness by up to 50%' - The Media Leader. *The Media Leader - 100% Media: News Analysis, Opinion, Trends, Data & Jobs*. <https://the-media-leader.com/radio-advertising-drives-ad-awareness-by-up-to-50/>
- [10]. Farooqui, J. (2023, January 20). Tier II and III markets tuning in more to FM radio, says new survey. *The Economic Times*. <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/media/entertainment/media/tier-ii-and-iii-markets-tuning-in-more-to-fm-radio-says-new-survey/articleshow/97184189.cms>

¹¹ Farooqui, J. (2023, January 20). Tier II and III markets tuning in more to FM radio, says new survey. *The Economic Times*. <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/media/entertainment/media/tier-ii-and-iii-markets-tuning-in-more-to-fm-radio-says-new-survey/articleshow/97184189.cms>