

The Listener is Always Right

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It's surely happened to you.

You're driving through a market, which holds a *'legendary'* station with historic boxcar numbers and wonder *'What'?*

Never underestimate the power of incumbency.

The market leader has a true advantage on anyone who prepares for a head-on battle.

You muse, "This CAN'T be a number one station -can it?"

The mechanics are sloppy, the air talent messy, talking about bake sales, lost dogs and high school football.

Instantly, you think of 'better' ways to deliver a product and think that YOUR station, sounding 'better' could certainly beat this station - in ONE week.

The leader has the one thing that trumps everything else - relationship.

Over the years, GREAT stations have engaged and solidified a powerful bond with their community - the Listener.

In fact, it's been proven that when a new competitor takes on the incumbent, much of the perceptions from the new kid in town are 'printed' on the market leader.

This phenomenon isn't isolated to radio brands.

In the famous 'Coke Vs. Pepsi' test, Coke drinkers not only perceived they were drinking Coke (when sipping Pepsi) but the onslaught of ensuing advertising of Pepsi's victory 'printed' better - in Coke's advantage.

In his book, "Blink," Malcolm Gladwell observed that 'it's our BRAINS that love Coke, not our taste buds'.

No matter what you think about your product, the Listener will engage the brain to make the final decision.

If you're the market leader or the new kid, continuously search for avenues to galvanize your Listener relationship.

Beyond snappy tactics, far beyond 'caller #10'.

When it comes to choosing a favorite, the Listener is always right.

Adjustment

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July 16, 1969 - Apollo 11 rocketed toward the moon on its historic mission. Hundreds of manual course corrections were made by Houston engineers before *The Eagle* separated from the command module *Columbia* - one small step after another led to one giant leap.

Course corrections, however large or small, are required in every field.

Smith-Corona was once the world's mightiest typewriter manufacturer who responded in the mid-1980's to the shiny, new PC word processor with - an electronic typewriter. Bankruptcy was filed in 1995.

McDonald's, rapidly losing morning market share, adjusted their breakfast focus to - their superior-tasting *coffee* (FREE on Monday)! Result? Starbucks closes over 100 stores and stunts 2009 forecasted growth.

With radio in deep-cut turmoil, groups are making their adjustments - as a colleague called it, now 'cutting red meat.'

Is this radio's Lunar Landing, Smith-Corona's 'adjustment' or a McDonald's like shift in the periscope?

You have the answer.

YOUR brand, on all sides of the radio facility, now require major and minor course corrections.

We cannot continue the same broadcast acumen we employed as late as five years ago.

Talent (*often confused with 'content'*) have bloated The Brand Depth Pyramid, making music LESS relevant and quality localism king.

Selling requires emphasizing fewer numbers, more relationships and greater accountability.

It is not so much that the adjustment is recommended - it is paramount to our survival.

What are YOUR course-corrections - *this week?*