THE ROLE OF RADIO IN INTEGRATED MARKETING COMMUNICATION

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ABSTRACT

Radio, the oldest broadcasting medium, is still a hugely popular medium reaching more than eighty five per cent of the South African population. Radio's output is intimate, friendly and approachable rather than glamorous. Compared to television, radio is inexpensive to produce. It has been around so long and is so well trusted that it is in the happy but difficult position of being taken for granted. It has been said that the explosion in media choice leaves consumers with less time to spend with "old" media. Marketers are slowly but surely beginning to appreciate the qualities that make radio an excellent choice in any integrated marketing communication program.

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INTRODUCTION

Some might argue that radio has enormous potential if used in integrated marketing communication (IMC) while others would counter that the two are difficult to reconcile. Others still would regard the medium as moderately interesting, but nonetheless as lacking the required depth. These are views that may indeed be articulated on the relationship between IMC and radio as medium. None of these claims are necessarily incorrect because these aspects have the capacity to enter into combinations that express unique symbiotic relationships, which may, in controlled fashion, undergo a metamorphosis. Various authors typify the nature of radio as the "Cinderella medium" of the media.

Thus, this article deals with two components from a broad perspective, namely, IMC and radio as medium. However, much greater emphasis is on the nature and functions of radio, and how radio impacts on IMC.

The most notable characteristic of radio is its pervasiveness. De Villiers (1995:201) defines radio as intimate, private and interpersonal. Prior to the 1950s, radio listening was known as a family activity, while today it has developed into a multi-faceted, portable, yet personal medium. Agee, Ault and Emery (1988:218) agree that radio is all pervasive as a medium: inside vehicles, on the beach, and in the streets.

It would seem appropriate to mention that the innovation known as the satellite - which has dominated the broadcasting world and the airwaves in recent decades - has opened numerous new doors for radio. This has been possible because satellites feed radio stations with current and newsworthy information, which again invariably leads to a change in programming. Radio is also moving confidently into the digital age and offers marketers a myriad of new opportunities, particularly in the use of the Internet.

Wigston (1996:328) holds the view that it may indeed be claimed that a radio has become an important component in the daily lives of multitudes of people. From personal experience, it is also clear that we assign certain functions to the radio. To each of these functions, we assign a value that has to satisfy some or other need. For example, some people need a radio to wake them in the morning, while others may require to be informed with regard to the newsworthy events of the day, or perhaps the expected weather for the day. There are various

such functions. For this reason, we may go so far as to say that radio has the most significant penetration of audiences in comparison with any of the other mass media.

The most significant influence on the existence of radio was, however, the arrival of television. Initially, enormous losses were incurred because the established position of radio was threatened by the newness of sound and image. However, Whetmore (1995:122) holds the view that in today's modern society it is still possible for radio to "sing new, innovative tunes" in the midst of these changes.

Radio holds a world of possibilities for the marketing manager.In the sections that follow, we discuss the nature of radio so that possible relationships may be pointed out with the marketing industry, and to highlight certain points that the marketing manager has to attend to. That a highly significant relationship may develop between the marketing industry and radio is beyond doubt. However, the question is whether radio is the most suitable medium among the host of media options for the activities in IMC and whether radio has the capacity to play a decisive role in the functions and goals of the marketing manager. We also pay attention to the relationship between radio and IMC. Finally, an attempt is also made to outline some hints to the marketing manager in establishing contact with radio as medium.

RADIO: AN HISTORICAL OVERVIEW
Like so many other elements of life, the concept of "radio" is better understood when it is placed in the context of its historical development. It may even be that tendencies in the world of radio can be predicted better when the history of radio is considered.

De Beer (1991:46) contends that the "crystal-clear sound of FM" has only been in our midst for approximately 40 years. However, it has to be mentioned that the first, albeit unwitting, radio broadcast was heard as early as 1787 when one Luigi Galvani experimented with a kind of electrifier and an antenna. It was only a century later that goal-directed experimental research with broadcasts over the ether was successful. In 1888, Hertz succeeded to transfer electromagnetic signals by means of two reflectors over a short distance. However, his theory and equipment were consistently refined and improved by several scientists. According to Hunt and Ruben (1993) the first noteworthy signals were transferred by Marconi in 1901. These signals were broadcast successfully across the Atlantic Ocean. Shortly

afterwards, another scientist, namely Lee de Forest, intervened with an item of equipment known as the vacuum-electron tube which served as an amplifier, and this specific development made it possible for the signal to carry a voice. In 1910, the first voice was transmitted officially; the voice belonged to the great Italian tenor, Enrico Caruso, and the broadcast was made from the Metropolitan Opera House in New York.

This was a watershed after which the concept of "radio" took off. Hunt and Ruben (1993) go further, contending that governments in the early 1900s realised the importance of radio in communication, and therefore proceeded to pass laws that ships were required to use radios at sea. Ironically, it was indeed such signals - intended to warn the Titanic against the threat of icebergs - that were ignored, and which led to the sinking of the giant ship. The radio operator was too busy sending personal messages per radio to take heed of the warning signals - a horrendous catastrophe that the public relations practitioner (who manages one of the IMC components) was then required to handle at the time!

From the 1900s onwards, and with the intervention of governments, the radio industry exhibited significant growth. Various authors (cf. Merrill, Lee & Friedlander 1990, and Hunt & Ruben 1993) contend that the public realised the positives of having radios in their homes; moreover, they also realised that radio could bring music into their homes. De Beer (1991) writes that FM radio and FM networks were only erected after the Second World War, and almost disturbance-free communication became possible only at that point. Merrill,Lee and Friedlander (1990:176) hold the view that radio developments in the industrialised world occurred more or less at the same time. For example, in 1919 a Dutch station began broadcasting, and a year later, radio stations in the USA and Canada commenced with broadcasting. From Australia, radio stations broadcast voices in Melbourne in 1921 and in Sidney in 1922. France and the Soviet Union began to broadcast in 1922, followed by Germany, Belgium and Spain in the next year.

Thus, we may indeed pose the question what South Africa's position was in this quest to transmit radio signals. De Beer (1991:47) provides the answer when he writes that radio in South Africa commenced on 18 December 1923 when the then South African Railways made the first radio broadcast. The first fully-fledged English-medium radio

service was launched in April 1927. The SABC only started in 1937 with broadcasts in both the official languages. Broadcasts in the black languages commenced in the 1940s.

Even at that early stage, the various uses of radio were evident - no matter whether the intentions of the sender were pure or not. Marx (1992:148) writes that since 1933 radio served as one of the most influential instruments of propaganda by the nationalist-socialist regime in Germany. This particular use of radio was fostered by the outbreak of the war because broadcasts assumed greater importance as a means of promoting foreign-directed propaganda. To the unethical marketing manager, this particular state of affairs was indeed an interesting twist because it implied that the listeners were subject to indoctrination. Imagine that in our contemporary society we were able to indoctrinate the audience to support a fund-raising event! Although this is not possible, there are better means available today to elicit support from listeners.

According to Whetmore (1995:124) the idea of mixing in records, personality, radio chats and advertisements was what radio required in the early 1950s. This tendency paved the way for the disc jockey format. It was also in the fifties that the sizes of radios were reduced, and this development meant that radios were far more portable than before. Needless to say, this led to more significant growth in the radio, especially in the USA.

However, the moonlight-and-roses road of radio was unprepared for the onslaught of TV in the 1950s. Merrill, Lee and Friedlander (1990) write that the arrival of television compromised the future of radio because popular programmes were shifted from radio to television. The advertisers too made the same move so that they no longer supported radio advertisements. In short, it may be said that television borrowed radio programming and stole radio audiences. Hunt and Ruben (1993) also support this statement by contending that radio lost its listeners and programme formats to television. Nonetheless, radio did not disappear. By the sixties, radio did what it was required to do for the sake of survival: the radio industry made adjustments. New formats were established; disc jockey chats and segmented audiences were common. In the seventies, talk-show radio and news radio came into being in the large markets, and in the eighties, FM was the dominant force in radio when short-wave broadcasts in stereo commenced.

At the moment, radio is undergoing interesting new developments, especially at technological level. As in the past, South Africa is not really on the forefront of these technological innovations; nonetheless Leahy (1996:34) writes that radio in South Africa experienced a revival in 1996. The new radio-station format, community radio, commenced with new broadcasts from 82 radio stations that were allocated broadcasting licenses - albeit that not all these stations remained on air. The process of the sale and purchase of six SABC regional radio stations started in August 1996, and the ten remaining SABC radio stations were reopened in September 1996, with new trademarks and names.

We may conclude with the claim that radio in South Africa has definitely embarked upon an exciting road. However, issues such as misappropriation of funds by the Independent Broadcasting Authority (IBA), and the forced closure of offices and branches of the IBA have made the process of regulating the airwaves very difficult.

THE NATURE AND FUNCTIONS OF RADIO

To identify the typicality of radio and to present a succinct definition are almost impossible tasks. Radio is difficult to define; only its characteristics can be described in an attempt to clarify the phenomenon to the reader. It is a medium that one should experience because too numerous and too diverse facets are involved which have to be experienced to gain a sense of the radio world's uniqueness.

It was stated earlier that radio is pervasive and accompanies us wherever we go. The question arises why it is so easy for radio as a medium to exhibit this characteristic in particular. Agee, Ault and Emery (1988) suggest that due to its diversity of programming, radio has something for all. This "something for all" principle is valid to radio in a broad sense. Somewhere on the tuning dial of your radio, you will find a station that will meet your needs. In particular, with the rise of community radio stations, there is definitely "something for all" due to the fact that the audiences are now segmented far better than before to provide specific sounds to meet the needs of a specific group of listeners. Audience segmentation is a very important development that contributed significantly towards the emergence of IMC.

Given the latter, it is important to make the following two assumptions about the mass media, namely, that one has to accept that there is no

mutual understanding or communication via the "traditional" radio, except if the listener displays an active measure of interpretation, and secondly, that it is a misperception that the simultaneous transmission of messages to many people by way of the radio is synonymous with mass communication (Wigston 1996:328).

These two assumptions are explained on the basis of the differences that radio exhibit in relation to other forms of mass media. First, radio does not have a tangible image or text. Thus, radio is a blind medium. The receivers of the message are listeners or collectively referred to as your audience. The communicator is the broadcaster. The codes that are used are entirely focused on the auditory, and consist of speech, sound effects, music and silence. These codes are largely referential because the sounds are a mirror image of reality. Radio codes can also be expressive in cases where the repeated presentation of reality can be used for other goals, such as, for example, to use screeching tyres or a howling wind as sound effects in advertisements to create the required atmosphere. Various sounds over the radio may also be distinctive because the listeners recognise a specific radio station on the basis of the characteristics of a specific announcer. In other forms of the mass media, such as the visual media, the messages exist in space; in the case of radio, the message consists exclusively in time (Wigston 1996).

The Internet also offers radio the opportunity to overcome some of the common advertiser objections to this medium, for instance lack of visuals and product details and the inability to coupon. Online listeners may have the possibility to see the products and services of the radio advertisers, print advertiser coupons, buy products electronically and find extra information such as local shopping details. These activities could form a core part of an IMC campaign. According to Mostaza (2001:59) music represents a top category of e-commerce today and it is what listeners are most interested to buy from a radio station web site. As most radio stations play music, marketing music via the web is a huge opportunity.

Wigston (1996:327) states furthermore that there are three primary functions of radio, namely,

- to educate (consisting of formal, non-formal and informal education)

- to be informative, and

- to entertain.

More specifically:

- The educational function is defined as the transfer of educational material in a formal (classroom), non-formal (planned education which does not form part of a specific syllabus), and informal (a continuous process of ordinary programming that may be of an educational nature) educational context.

- The informative function is defined as the presentation of facts, devoid of the intention to persuade, and without presenting a subjective account of the facts, filtered through personal influences or interpretations on the part of the communicator.

- Finally, entertainment is defined simply as communication aimed at relieving stress and tension and offering a measure of escape by means of fun and amusement offered by the programmes of the radio station.

Agee, Ault and Emery (1988:218) confirm this view stating that the largest percentage of radio listeners use the radio to be entertained, and that these listeners have a wide, diverse spectrum of tastes as to what they want to hear. Nonetheless, various other secondary functions of radio are also mentioned; for example to address the nation immediately in a moment of emergency, as well as the impact that music has on the culture of the nation's youth in particular. Other secondary functions of radio include advertising, socialising, propaganda, religion, politics and the so-called "watchdog" role in society. Within an IMC context, marketing managers see radio as the answer to their need for rapid communication via a medium that is close to listeners, which listeners treat as a friend and which they trust (Mostaza 2001:58). Trust is of paramount importance in building a relationship, something that an IMC campaign sets out to do.

Community radio and digital radio assign a new dimension to the concept of radio. A community radio station functions entirely differently from the conventional public broadcaster. The community radio station differs entirely in the sequence in which events of the day are prioritised. A much stronger emphasis falls on what is advantageous to the community, or what may be of interest to the community. The marketing manager may therefore grasp the

opportunity offered by this format of radio with both hands, taking into account the focus and target audience of the radio station when the said station is intended to be used for advertising or publicity.

Lloyd (1992:35) defines community radio as non-profit, participative radio broadcasting for a specific community. That community may again be defined geographically or by means of interest. However, participative emphasis is the key phrase in this definition. The community participates in the management of the station, as well as the programming and the production of programmes for the station. In essence, it is the community broadcasting for itself. Thus, if the marketing manager is able to exploit this characteristic, linking the message and the needs of the community that the station serves, the practitioner will go a long way with the station. Lloyd (*ibid.*) also mentions another function of community radio, and this is that this community radio does not only have the potential to educate the people in the community, but that these people, through their involvement, are able to educate themselves as they pursue the opportunities offered by the station.

Arnaldo (1997:32) writes that the origins of community radio are related to two factors, namely:

- limited transmitter strength to cut costs, and

- the use of the radio station to unify members of the community constructively to work for social and economic upliftment.

Henning (1996) supports this view when the claim is made that the founding and establishment of a community radio station in the Bushbuck Ridge area in South Africa derived from the main communication goal of facilitating development in the area.

Digital radio offers huge potential. Digital Audio Broadcasting (DAB) gives radio the opportunity to participate in the digital revolution that is already fundamentally reshaping other broadcasting and electronic media. Digital technology will allow the radio industry to offer many more services, including interactive multimedia services (Mostaza 2001:59). Currently there are not enough receivers and they are too expensive, but this is slowly changing. So while DAB may appear financially unattractive to some broadcasters in the short term, the move to digital transmission is inevitable and essential for the long-term health of the industry. In 10 to 20 years time, consumers will expect their broadcasting and communication services to offer the

highest quality, robust coverage and a wide range of interactive multimedia services. According to Mostaza (2001:58) only terrestrial DAB can deliver this.

RADIO AND SYSTEMS THEORY

As in the case of IMC, radio cannot be seen as an isolated entity in either society or the business milieu. The mere fact that radio - as stated earlier - is regarded as an all-pervasive medium, implies that the medium stands in specific relationships to other components in society. Viewed more locally, radio may be regarded as part of the larger social system that has emerged from the multicultural environment in South Africa.

According to Wigston (1996), radio itself is seen as a structured whole that consists of inter-related parts. Three basic parts that may be subdivided into further sub-parts, can be identified: the broadcaster itself; radio as the medium; and lastly the listeners. The importance of each part is not only determined on the basis of its inherent sub-components, but from its relationship with the other parts in the structured whole. It is indeed these inter-relationships that give the system its unique characteristics.

If an own interpretation of the above-mentioned relationships should be allowed, it would appear that the three stated parts couldn't exist independently within the system. The proof for this claim has its origin in the three primary functions of the broadcaster, namely to educate, to inform, and to entertain. These primary functions again lead to specific secondary functions such as providing an account of socio-cultural information, propaganda, religious issues, censorship, the role as watchdog, as well as the dissemination of political, organisational, relaxation and business information. Both the primary and the secondary functions are manifested in the codes that use the medium, such as, for example, speech, sound effects, silence, and in most radio stations, the largest component, music. Nonetheless, all these parts of the radio system would be worthless without a listener who appreciated the outputs of these components. These components are offered to the listener in the form of programmes that are carried over the ether and which are initiated by the personnel of the radio station (or in the case of community radio, the community itself). The entire system therefore functions cyclically by means of conscious inputs in the form of feedback that serves as a catalyst in processing these inputs.

Consistent with systems theory discussed by Cutlip, Center and Broom (1994:206), radio may also serve as a system embedded in a supra-system. It has already been stated what influence other forms of mass media - especially television - have exerted on radio. Within the supra-system of mass media, radio is therefore one of many systems within a broader context.

A system that functions properly will be in equilibrium, or put differently, in a state of balance. This equilibrium is not static, but rather dynamic in nature. Similarly, radio can be regarded as dynamic because the medium is continuously in the process of adjusting to circumstances in which it finds itself to reach this condition of equilibrium. There is nonetheless a limitation on the extent that these changes can be made. If changes have to be made to the system, it is generally wise to introduce these changes subtly over a long period because the third part of radio as system, namely the listeners, has to be retained and should not be frightened off by the sudden change. The system is inclined to disintegrate under extreme conditions such as dramatic change.

Should the marketing manager decide to enter into the system (which is radio in this case), he will find his place in the cycle in the third part of the system, in this case, better labelled as the community. The marketing manager has a specific message that he wants to convey by means of the medium. It is likely that the message will arrive at its target audience in its original form - as the marketing manager had formulated it in his/her cognitions. The reason for this is that the message must move through the entire system before it arrives with the listener. Thus, the marketing manager will have to consider the first two parts of the system. In practical terms, this would mean that the marketing manager must consider the type of radio station (public broadcaster, commercial broadcaster or community radio), and should ensure whether the format of the station (chat, news or music format) is suited to the message (or *vice versa*).

That the marketing manager has a role to play in the system is certain. The marketing manager's role can be so important that it may be stated that he/she has a regulating function in the system, especially in the system where community radio is relevant. As a result of the programming of community radio, a marketing manager will be a medium interfacing with another medium: in other words, the marketing manager will be the carrier of messages from the

community and enterprises in the community to the radio station, who will, in turn, convert the message in an output directed at the community. There is also a responsibility associated with this process in the sense that the marketing manager must be cautious not to abuse the radio for cheap or free advertising, which will mislead the public.

THE IMC MIX AND RADIO

Marketing communication is the process of effectively communicating product information or ideas to target audiences. One of the most important communication trends of late is a shift to IMC, which is the practice of unifying all marketing communication tools – from advertising to packaging – to send target audiences a consistent, persuasive message that promotes company goals (Burnett & Moriarty 1998:14). According to Schultz, Tannenhaum and Lauterborn (1993:5) IMC is "a new way of looking at the whole, where once we saw only parts such as advertising, public relations, sales promotion, purchasing, employee communications, and so forth". These marketing experts suggest that IMC realigns marketing communication "to look at it the way the consumer sees it – as a flow of information from indistinguishable sources."

The core components of IMC are advertising, promotions, public relations, direct marketing, and personal selling. Koekemoer (1989:4) defines advertising as any paid form of non-personal presentation of ideas, goods and services by an identified sponsor to a targeted audience and delivered primarily through the mass media, including radio. Sales promotion is a marketing communication tool that uses a variety of incentive techniques for consumers, trade and the sales force to generate a specific, measurable action or response. It is designed to offer an extra incentive to consumers or resellers, something that gives the product or service additional value, and stimulates immediate action (Burnett and Moriarty 1998:312). Here again radio can be used with great effectiveness. Public relations is a communication activity that tries to change the attitudes and beliefs of stakeholder audiences. It helps build goodwill and strengthen relationships with all stakeholders and develops and maintains a positive company image. Radio plays a major part in most public relations campaigns. Direct marketing in IMC is used as an interactive tool that relies on a database and uses one or more advertising medium (of which radio is one) to effect a measurable response and/or transaction at any location. Personal selling is the face-to-face

presentation of a product to a potential customer by a company representative. Integration, in which every aspect of the communications mix is brought together under a master strategy, is imperative for effective IMC.

It is generally accepted that a synergistic relationship should be created among the different components of the marketing communication mix. According to Burnett and Moriarty (1998:14) companies that use IMC coordinate all the tools to create synergy, which means each tool has more impact working jointly to promote a product than it would working on its own. That is, the whole is greater than the sum of the parts. It is the marketing managers' responsibility to create and manage this relationship. When the marketing manager wants to incorporate radio in these specific types of actions, various possibilities are opened up due to the unique nature of radio as a medium for the marketing message.

Hunt and Ruben (1993:239) hold the view that radio consumers were passive listeners initially. It was the entry of comedians and a wide variety of entertainment artists that prompted the public to enter into interaction with the radio. For this reason, this interaction developed in changes to the design and presentation of programmes based on listener participation. This, in turn, led to a situation where amateurs were able to market their services as entertainment artists and that via competitions, listeners engaged in interaction with the radio to win prizes. Today, these tendencies are manifested in phone-in competitions in the so-called "drive-time" programmes on radio. The Internet offers several opportunities for radio to grow revenue and audience. As penetration in the workplace increases, so can at-work listening. Internet makes radio listening an interactive activity – true two-way communication that is at the heart of any IMC program to establish favourable relations with the target audience. It was also found that compared to web-based advertising, radio is more successful to direct people to a website (Mostaza 2001:59). Radio stations have a very large reach of all people in the market, thus providing a huge marketing opportunity in this area.

These early developments made it possible for marketers to choose among a variety of possibilities to market their products. Radio stations also have a social responsibility to engage in the upliftment of the community. For this reason, non-profit organisations, such as welfare organisations, find it easier to obtain publicity (generated

through PR activities) on radio stations. However, it has to be understood too that it is not easy to obtain publicity from a radio station. It has to be remembered that the three primary functions of radio have nothing to do with publicity given to organisations. Since radio stations earn their revenue from advertisements, advertising will look like a far better option to the management of a radio station.

This is probably one of the reasons that Wigston (1996:352) focuses exclusively on advertising and not on publicity. It is stated that there is very little difference between advertising and propaganda, except that advertising has put in an appearance in the commercial field. The intentions of the advertiser are the same as those of the propagandist, in the sense that the advertiser's intention is to change the opinions and attitudes of listeners towards a specific product or service, as well as to change their life-style so that they may include the product or service in their lives. Nonetheless, advertising also contains important information for the consumer, such as, for example, to purchase the correct butter so that the consumer may reduce the risk of heart disease. Advertisements also have a multitude of other functions that count in the favour of radio stations. In this way, advertisements may contribute to the sound and character of the radio stations.

The most important goal of radio in respect of advertising is, however, that it provides advertisers with an audience. For this function, a radio station is entitled to remuneration, and it is from this remuneration that the radio makes a living. Radio stations have various expenses that have to be covered from income earned from advertisements. Advertisement tariffs vary from one radio station to the next, depending on the time when the advertisement is broadcasted, how long the advertisement is, how high the number of listeners is, and whether the radio station is a commercial or a community radio station. Hunt and Ruben (1993:250) hold the view that local advertisements make up approximately 75% of radio stations' income. It is logical to accept that this percentage will not be the same for public, commercial and community radio stations. Public radio stations generally have a much larger broadcast area, and will therefore carry more national advertisements than, for example, a community radio station with a broadcast radius of 300 kilometres.

In October 1996, Gous (1996:43) compared market segments with respect to radio advertisements in relation to other mass media for a three-year period, namely, an insignificant 9% in 1985, 11% in 1990

and 13% in 1995. Furthermore, it is claimed that if one considers the growth of radio in other countries, radio is well positioned in South Africa. Thus, it is clear that radio exhibited growth in the past decade. This growth has specific implications for the marketing manager because he/she has to remain in touch with the tendencies of the audiences that he/she must reach. It seems that there is a shift from television to radio, and that this shift will also have to be made in the IMC strategy of the marketing manager. With regard to the revival of community radio in South Africa in recent years, it would be wise for marketing managers to grasp this opportunity and to secure, in some way or other, air time with these new radio stations for purposes of conveying a particular or rather an innovative message to all the inquisitive listeners who might listen to the new radio station.

THE ROLE OF RADIO IN IMC

Like any other institution, a radio station is also an organisation that will identify specific tasks as internal goals, as well as external motives that can be achieved by way of marketing communication. Leahy (1996) also refers to the necessity for marketing communication in the world of radio when they state that most of the private radio stations that are now subject to birth pains, will implement aggressive marketing and advertising strategies so that they may ensure a high initial listener count. These initial listeners, it is hoped, will form the core of a future listener count. Of course, this is dependent on the listener's preferences and the format/programming, as well as the quality of the radio station.

However, it is not the purpose to highlight the role of IMC in the world of radio. The relevance of this study is much rather found in the role of radio in IMC.

To the innovative marketing manager, there are various possibilities contained on the creative side of radio work. It would be ignorant to leave out radio as a medium in any integrated IMC programme however small or large the role of radio may be. The advantages cannot be ignored.

Like our keeping sound relationships with the printed media, it is necessary to retain good relations with news journalists and the announcers of the radio stations who broadcast in the communities.

This holds specific implications for the marketing manager. Leahy (1996) states that irrespective of the option that is selected in the

broadcast scenario, it is unavoidable that the media planner (in this context the marketing manager) will come into contact with increasing numbers of radio stations, more sales managers and marketers of radio stations, more radio presentations and possibilities, more sales policy directions and more negotiations. The question arises whether the marketing manager is able to handle all these demands and elements. Leahy (1996) claims that it will not be the case initially. Nonetheless, the marketing manager will be forced to offer the best media alternatives for its product/service. For this reason, it may be emphasised once again that the marketing manager must have a sound knowledge of the medium that he uses to convey his message.

It is claimed that radio is the next breeding-ground for the development of direct marketing strategies (Anon. 1991:61). This claim is becoming true, because of the digital revolution. The claim was made in the light of the unique nature of radio as a direct-response medium. It reaches consumers in ways no other medium can, and is indeed the first and fastest source of news that elicits a wide range of emotions. This is like music in any marketing managers' ears who practise IMC.

UNARTICULATED TRUTHS ABOUT RADIO

There are various unarticulated truths about radio that are regarded as essential knowledge to the marketing manager. Throughout, we have emphasised the fact that the marketing manager must know the do's and don'ts with respect to the world of radio and the professionals involved in the medium. Some of these truths that are presented below are positive, and must be pursued, while others must again be avoided, or should at least be considered when one has contact with the world of radio.

One of the most important truths to remember is that the target audience of the radio station must be considered when a decision is taken to broadcast a specific message on the radio. The demographic characteristics of the target audience or, put differently, listeners who tune into the radio station, will not be the only decisive factor determining the structure and nature of the message, but will also allow one to establish whether the message is indeed aimed at that specific target audience. The tendency that underlies the difference between listeners of short wave and FM radio is that an increasing number of teenagers are inclined to listen to FM radio because these

radio stations are more inclined to programme music (cf. Dominick 1983:394). As a person grows older, he/she develops a preference that changes from a specific type of station format into another. Dominick (*ibid.*) claims that a person who has outgrown his teenage years will shift from a Top-40 radio station to radio stations that broadcast a more progressive, album "rock" sound. From this format, the person will alternate between "easy listening" and "country" formats, and then move on from there to chat radio. However, these stages are subject to change due to the fact that tastes differ, and these are likely to vary within the various age groups.

Radio stations also attempt to reach specific age groups for various reasons. The marketing manager must then bear in mind that the times at which specific age groups listen to the radio will also vary. For example, it will not happen easily that the aged will listen to the radio between 23:00 and 24:00; rather, one may expect younger age groups to follow suit. Whetmore (1995:141) claims that the characteristics of various age groups hold implications for advertisers, especially when the product that is advertised is relatively expensive. Kruger (1995:17) again points out a South African perspective with respect to listeners' characteristics in referring to radio as the largest source of information for South Africans. It is articulating the obvious that disadvantaged communities in particular are dependent on radio.

Another important truth is the selection of a specific time slot in which the message can be conveyed. According to Dominick (1983:394), the average person in the USA - irrespective of demographic characteristics such as gender, age or educational background - listens to approximately 3 hours of radio broadcasting daily. However, the art is situated in the fact that the marketing manager is required to identify the peak listening times when most listeners are tuned into the radio station that will carry the message. Dominick (*ibid.*) contends that most people listen to the radio in the early hours of the morning while they prepare for, or are on their way to work, and in the late afternoon when they are on their way from work to their homes.

A rough estimate of these times could be between 06:00 and 10:00 and between 16:00 and 19:00. According to Whetmore (1995), the best announcers at radio stations will be placed in these time slots to attract listeners through their colourful, eccentric and challenging presentation styles.

CONCLUSION

De Beer (1991:46) articulates his displeasure at people's lack of interest in the radio when he writes that, notwithstanding the many hours that we spend in front of the television, the radio remains our partner at any time of day in any task that we may find ourselves involved in. Even a car radio has become an indispensable item. That the radio is therefore an inextricable part of our communicative existence is indeed true. Leahy (1996:46) also ignores the apparent danger of television when he writes that the transformation of radio in South Africa is the most exciting media development since the launching of television in 1976.

In this article a number of comparisons were drawn between IMC and radio as a medium, as well as aspects of radio that the marketing manager has to attend to. It may certainly be accepted that radio must as far as possible form part of all IMC activities that the marketing manager undertakes.

What potential does radio hold for IMC? Elnadi and Rifaat (1997:11) contend that radio will continue to provide listeners with the freedom to make their own choices from a steadily growing range of possibilities. The one so-called disadvantage of radio is also in a certain sense its advantage. Since "traditional" radio does not project images, the listener's imagination is left uninhibited and free within his/her capacity to sit back and reflect. It is within this cognitive process that the marketing manager must grasp his/her opportunity to convey the correct message at the right time, in the right place and in the right way.

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