

GREAT LOCAL REPS AND THE RADIO-EYE

By Franklin Raff

After advertising legend David Ogilvy got the Rolls-Royce account, he emerged from three weeks of research and ideation with a few simple facts. One of these facts became his famous headline: "At 60 miles an hour, the loudest noise in the cabin of this new Rolls-Royce comes from the electric clock." That insight, retained from the wealth of knowledge he collected from journals, factory employees - and personal experience - is a principal reason why we still venerate the brand, forty years later. Ogilvy once wrote: "When I advertised Rolls-Royce, I gave the *facts* - no hot air, no adjectives. [...] In every case sales went up dramatically - on peppercorn budgets." Though Ogilvy was an agency man, his fact-finding, documentary abilities were akin to those that distinguish a few extraordinary radio reps. For the sake of analysis, these exceptional qualities deserve an equally unique if somewhat obscure - name: *Radio-Eye*.

Not long after the Russian revolution of 1917, leaders of the burgeoning soviet filmmaking industry began plotting revolutions of their own. Among them was Dziga Vertov, the founder of the *Kino-Eye*, or "Cinema-Eye" movement in filmmaking. Adherents of *Kino-Eye*, or *Kinoks*, rejected fictional and narrative films, which, they felt, were slaves in both form and content to theater and literature. In their place, Vertov crafted a purely documentary cinema whose purpose was to monitor and record in minute detail the facts of everyday life. According to Vertov and the *Kinoks*, it was only through the use of the movie-camera's *unique attribute*, its ability to document life in motion, that cinema would emancipate itself from the tradition of dramatic and literary fiction. Vertov glorified the movie camera itself, the *Kino-Eye*, which he described as an intrepid and omniscient agent. From vast banks of documentary footage, Vertov's *Kinoks* retained

the most remarkable and fascinating images for their films.

We, and our best sales reps, seek for our own careers and for radio in general what Vertov sought for cinema: independence, originality, and trustworthiness. In our case, we seek independence from the commercial reign of other advertising media. We seek original ways to turn listeners into customers. We want to use radio's power in an honest and accountable manner. We need consistent sales increases, and frankly, we need to find meaning in our work. Local reps - our most valuable warriors - may come closer to achieving these objectives by employing *Radio-Eye*. *Radio-Eye* can be thought of as an objective agent - an imaginary movie camera if you will - which emanates from the mind of the radio sales rep. It arises from his desire to sell *for* his clients, and its contribution to his career can be almost revolutionary.

Good local reps take pleasure in using both sides of their brains. They like to think creatively, and they like to do the numbers. Yet, because they have such singularly extensive personal contact with our clients' businesses, they have another distinctive ability. Radio reps have the unique potential to lift dusty layers of standard business and advertising practice to uncover and document striking and extraordinary *facts*. The power of a great rep is the power of applied knowledge. If a local rep believes that his clients' commercials constitute the

most important sales calls he makes, he is a credit to our industry and again, *we* call him - a Radiok. As a salesman he has overcome the overwhelming tendency to be self-centered. He understands that the fundamental aim of our business is not to sell *to* our clients, but to sell *for* them. He spearheads creative be-



Dziga Vertov

cause he knows his clients - and *their* clients - best. You may call him an ear-leaser inasmuch as you may call Ernest Hemmingway a typist. Radioks understand that Radio is only a medium, that it is useless and possibly detrimental as an advertising tool without compelling commercial content.

Claude C. Hopkins, one of the founding fathers of modern advertising, believed "every ad should tell a story." Radio's intimacy ensures its power in this regard. But our local reps must know enough to tell the story. Radioks *know* why their listeners should buy from their clients. Like Vertov's movie-camera, they have documented the facts. They do not crawl from door to door sniffing for the 'broken bones' that will



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justify their next solution-oriented proposal. Rather, the Radiok engages his prospects and clients not as a hungry closer would, but objectively, and in a documentary fashion. Persistence comes naturally: it is necessary, and usually welcomed. The Radiok seeks to know the character of a business. He

asks about wholesalers, suppliers, distributors, and company history. He asks: *Why would I buy from you, and not your competitor?* He notes potential marketing bridges such as a peculiar location. He studies trade magazines, but also asks about a least-favorite vendor. In his trust-building study, the Radiok has the gentle inquisitiveness of a new employee.

Though the Radiok may not be primarily driven to sell radio, you may find he ultimately sells more radio, with less difficulty, than those who measure their success in time-orders. Radiok thinking is profoundly service-oriented. Every local business has a compelling and persuasive story. The Radiok finds it. And with the Radio listener, as with our own prospects, a compelling story, told creatively, commands more attention and sells more effectively than any clichéd pitch, transparent call-to-action, or canned close.

Perhaps influenced by a popular song in the fledgling days of his now renowned agency, Leo Burnett likened the creative process to "trying to get hold of - for a moment - one of those hot, unreachable stars." For the Radiok, it is reaching for the stars while mining for facts, and holding a business conversation: a feat that leaves little room for minor closes. That, perhaps, is why Radioks seem to be a little more trustworthy, why they seem to work a little harder, why if nurtured - they ultimately earn higher billings, sign bigger clients (and agencies), and keep them.

If you don't have a Radiok, you might wish to grow your own. If you find he doesn't care much for cash prizes, cost-per-points, or the company Christmas party, take it as a good sign. Let him slip for a month or two if he's prospecting high but not meeting goals. You'll notice he's laid out his clients; creative for the whole year: that's *Radio-Eye* at work. He might come in dead last

for the Holiday Greetings telemarketing promotion, but he'll upsell and secure next years' annuals by the end of Q3. Maybe he shies away from carpet-bomb cold-calling, and sometimes he places unfair demands on the production guy. Keep him all the same. Chances are, if you lose him, you'll lose his clients, too. Let him stay late. When his advertisers buy big on competing stations and run your creative, he's probably advised it. You'll get yours, and more of it, and more consistently. Keep a growing Radiok away from blitz marketing packages, fire-sales, free remotes, added value gimmicks, and middle-managers: in this regard the Radiok is a canary in a coal mine. They'll kill him long before they kill us.

We are commonly preoccupied with the question of how Radio can claim a greater share of the wealth bestowed on other media. This can be achieved, on a local level, by emphasizing intimacy, intelligence, independence, and creativity: the basic attributes of the Radiok. Some short-term thinkers are inclined to believe that local creative is relatively unimportant. They can be identified by their enthusiastic apologies: "it's important to get your name out there", "we've got a new promotion for your marketing director, whatever his name is", "we're number one in so-and-so", etc. The Radiok is a different animal. He does not think of his work as a "numbers game", which is why his clients do not feel like numbers. He consistently drives his clients' business, because he consistently finds interesting and truthful reasons for his listeners to buy. He upsells with good reason, and, when appropriate, he guides orders and creative in other media. He is anchored, deeply and irrevocably, in the sales efforts of his clients. They are, after all, his employers. In the end, a Radiok the Rolls-Royce of radio reps - merely uses us, and the medium of radio, as a means to multiply his own sales efforts.

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Radio AdBiz

RBR News Analysis

Should Tristani fine-tune Binghamton?

FCC Commissioner **Gloria Tristani** is opposed to a \$1M deal which would send Binghamton, NY's WINR-AM from Titus Broadcasting to Clear Channel (N:CCU) (*RBR* 9/18/00, p.25). In a market where Clear Channel and Citadel (O:CITC) dominate, she thinks this will be the death-knell of competition in the market, making it more unlikely that there will be a third radio competitor.

Here is the only fact one needs to know. The signal of WINR, as of 1/1/97, was overlapped by 18 other stations. That puts it squarely in the six-station cluster tier according to the law of the land, without any engineering sleight-of-hand. That is the end of it, as far as the FCC should be concerned.

Ms. Tristani should not be worried about this in any case. As the chart below shows, there are ample outlets for advertisers to choose from. Besides, according to the most recent info we have available, WINR accounts for only 2.2% of the market's radio revenue, and with TV and newspaper considered, it accounts for less than 0.5% of market revenue. Hardly a make-or-break station under any circumstances.

What's necessary for Tristani's fantasy of a third major radio operator to become reality? First, the WINR deal must be undone, and then four independent owners must come together somehow and merge into one company. Its total revenues would come in just behind Smith's TV station (which is an LPTV, by the way, the best NBC can do for a Binghamton affiliate).

However, it is ludicrous to deny Titus Broadcasting the opportunity to liquidate its assets via the legal sale of its station, in a market full of competitors, because it is just possible, if all the planets line up and the correct tarot card is drawn, that media ownership in the market will conform to one commissioner's ideal.

The newspaper estimate below is extrapolated from *Duncan's Radio Market Guide*—it is probably far below the Binghamton *Press & Sun-Bulletin's* actual revenue. Other station revenues are from *BIA's Investing in Radio Market Report 2000* and *Investing in Television Market Report 2000*. Radio ratings are from Arbitron, and station lineups are from the *RBR Source Guide & Directory* database.

Estimated media revenues

Owner	Nwsp	AM	FM	TV	Est 99 Rev	Fa99	Fa00
Gannett	1	0	0	0	\$20,000,000	-	-
Gateway	0	0	0	1	\$10,000,000	-	-
Citadel	0	2	3	0	\$6,500,000	40.0	33.1
Northwest	0	0	0	1	\$3,500,000	-	-
Clear Chan	0	1	4	0	\$2,575,000	30.8	37.3
Ackerley	0	0	0	1	\$2,500,000	-	-
Smith	0	0	0	1	\$1,200,000	-	-
WEBO	0	0	1	0	\$450,000	3.3	4.7
WATS	0	1	1	0	\$300,000	0.0	1.3
Titus	0	1	0	0	\$225,000	3.3	4.0
Equinox	0	0	1	0	\$150,000	2.3	1.7

Sources: BIA, Arbitron, Duncan, *RBR Source Guide*