Jacobs media strategies

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3 Amazing Radio Stories

November 10, 2017 · **Fred Jacobs**

Week after week, there's always a lot of tech news in the air. It could be speculation about Alexa sales over the holidays, is iPhone X worth it, and when will autonomous cars hit critical mass – or other cars.

But this past week, radio took center stage. There's been all kinds of fascinating news about radio – and I'm not talking about this quarter's earning reports, Ed Christian's Russia connection, or radio's two biggest companies debating the meaning of the word "reach."

Nope, these stories are relatively harmless, but still provocative – guaranteed to give you something interesting to talk about at the cider mill, tailgate party, or gym this weekend.

Here's our troika of amazing radio stories:

1. Christmas music may be bad for you

How's that for a headline? Actually, there's a bit more to it than that. A clinical psychologist in the UK, Linda Blair (no, not *that* Linda Blair) says Christmas music that airs well before the actual holiday generates anxiety because it's a reminder of how far we're behind and how much we have to get done over the coming weeks.

She goes on to note the most stress falls on retail workers in stores that *play* Christmas music. It could be the volume or the repetition of holiday tune from Burl Ives or Brenda Lee. It turns out that many try to tune it out. This is likely the came in stores went wall-t0-wall Christmas music last month – even before most radio stations flipped.

And I thought it was just me. My own non-statistical research indicates programmers of stations featuring rock, country, adult contemporary, and other music formats seem especially likely to show signs of anxiety, often boiling over into rage, especially in January when the Holiday Book is released.

2. Hillary Clinton may have lost the election because she didn't buy enough radio ads

That's the theory espoused by ex-DNC chairwoman, **Donna Brazile**, now making the talk show rounds, hawking her controversial new book. Earlier this week, she made a surprise appearance on Fox News' "Tucker Carlson Tonight" show.

As you know, there's been much debate about the role that Russian hacking, "fake news" posts on Facebook and Twitter, as well as voter irregularities in many states played in the outcome of the presidential election. But it turns out the biggest culprit – according to Brazile – may have been the Dems paying too much attention to algorithms and stats, and not enough on traditional, old school campaign tactics.

Brazile told Carlson that she's a traditional campaigner, whereas Clinton's campaign manager, Robby Mook, is much more of a big data strategist. To win votes in the heartland, Brazile says she argued for *radio spots*.

You can watch it here – it runs for about 1 minute – radio is specifically mentioned at 8:10.

NEW FULL: Donna Brazile's BOMBSHELL Interview with T…

So, it makes you wonder – had the Clinton campaign invested heavily in radio ads in states like Wisconsin, Michigan, Ohio, and Pennsylvania, could it have turned the tide?

3. F-bombs on Canadian radio?

If you want to go on the air and utter those famous 7 dirty words, you'd better go to work for SiriusXM, produce a podcast…

…or move to Canada.

The Telegraph reports the Canadian Broadcasting Standards Council has now OK'd the F-bomb for French speaking stations only. That's because the word in question is apparently "part of the common French spoken language," thus making it less vulgar.

The impetus for this rule change came about because of complaints from French-speaking CKOI-FM listeners who heard the F-bomb aired in sound bites of Madonna using it in reference to President Trump at a rally, and Green Day's Billie Joe Armstrong invoking it at a concert. But according to the CBSC, when used sparingly and on "francophone" stations, the F-bomb is apparently Kosher

And for this week, that's the last word.

Thanks to Dave & Chuck the Freak, John Hager, and Alan Cross for turning me on to these great radio stories.

About

Fred Jacobs
President & Founder at Jacobs Media

Fred Jacobs founded Jacobs Media in 1983, and quickly became known for the creation of the Classic Rock radio format.

Jacobs Media has consistently walked the walk in the digital space, providing insights and guidance through its well-read national Techsurveys.

In 2008, jacapps was launched - a mobile apps company that has designed and built more than 1,000 apps for both the Apple and Android platforms. In 2013, the DASH Conference was created - a mashup of radio and automotive, designed to foster better understanding of the "connected car" and its impact.

Along with providing the creative and intellectual direction for the company, Fred consults many of Jacobs Media's commercial and public radio clients, in addition to media brands looking to thrive in the rapidly changing tech environment.

Comments

Dwight C Douglas says
November 10, 2017 at 10:33 AM

Not sure if the new Book by Donna B really has the facts to back up the lack of radio spots. https://www.allaccess.com/net-news/archive/story/159003/media-monitors-hillary-clinton-dominates-radio-ad- Even the week before the election, Hillary's campaign and SUPER PAC were running lots of radio spots. I would suggest that the number of social media "ads" and the creative language was not as powerful as what the NRA was

running. And if we believe Brazile's logic, why would have Trump won with fewer radio spots. RADIO WORKS WHEN IT IS USED PROPERLY. Ask The Home Depot, ask GEICO, ask O'REILLY AUTO PARTS, ask Walgreens. Those people know what they are doing. When you get into politics, as I know after reporting on the subject for more than ten years for Media Monitors, it's not a product, it's a religion.

Reply

Dave Mason says
November 10, 2017 at 11:54 AM

Someone somewhere has a formula for media purchases that reach what those experts consider to be a percent of the population to be effective Hillary had more problems than a lack of awareness, and they say that nothing kills a bad product more quickly than good media exposure. Fact of the matter is many political types revert to bashing their opponent when the voters would rather hear what they're going to do!! I'll make up my mind as to which candidate is an a-hole…but if you want my vote, tell me what you're going to do for me.

Reply

Fred Jacobs says
November 11, 2017 at 4:00 PM

Or, it's not the medium, it's the message. Thanks, Dwight, and to subsequent comments.

Reply

Dave Mason says
November 10, 2017 at 12:06 PM

Oh – and the "F" bomb story? Radio needs to be relevant to attract millennials-and yes, speaking their language is pretty important to them. I have 2 in my family and they're turned off when they hear the "radio edits" of songs where the words are blanked out. They don't know it's a gov't ruling that prevents the unedited songs. . . they blame the medium. It's not about allowing the "f" bomb on radio..it's about relevance. Some very smart person will come up with the digital answer (HD1 is edited, HD2 is uncensored)-and then get the gov't to allow this to happen. It's no different than the dude with the 25,000 watt MP3 player in his car at the stoplight.

Reply

Fred Jacobs says
November 11, 2017 at 4:03 PM

It's interesting how the edited versions of songs – designed NOT to offend – offend anyway because they obscure the original tone the artist was trying to create. I know stations whose companies prohibit playing the original versions of these songs who have dropped them altogether because they don't want to play the version with the "funky KICKS goin' down in the city." Thanks, KM.

Reply

Dwight C Douglas says
November 10, 2017 at 1:06 PM

and not to beat a dead horse, or even one still galloping through our media coverages today, but this is the final report we did for Media Monitors on the 2016 election.

http://www.mediamonitors.com/company/news/radios-finish-line

as you can see, lots of radio was used by Hillary Clinton.

Reply

Realist says
November 10, 2017 at 4:18 PM

Geico, Home Depot and HRC couldn't buy enough radio spots to overcome the amount of free media the Reality Show Con Artist was given.

We know on the radio a strong position – no matter how idiotic – beats a wishy washy opinion and there goes your proof. Radio lesson is a "performance artist" like his buddy Alex Jones got elected President. Or as I would call them both – "Frauds".

Reply

K.M. Richards says
November 10, 2017 at 5:22 PM

Regarding wall-to-wall Christmas music, I long for the days when I first became a programmer in the late 1970s. Even though my first station was AC, not Rock, the same principles applied:

Starting the Monday after Thanksgiving weekend, I added one Christmas song every other hour. On the 14th (or the Friday preceding, if that fell on a weekend), every hour got a Christmas song on its clock. A week later, I went to two songs per hour, then on the 24th four songs per hour until 7pm, when I went wall-to-wall for 24 hours.

Up to the 24th, the only songs rotated were the big hits that fit the format ("Blue Christmas" by Elvis, "Little Saint Nick" by the Beach Boys, etc.), but on the 24th I added more traditional songs ("Sleigh Ride" by Leroy Anderson, "12 Days of Christmas" by Ray Conniff, etc.) and for the wall-to-wall hours one religious-themed song per quarter-hour.

Never heard anyone complain that we played "too much" Christmas music back then …

Reply

Fred Jacobs says
November 11, 2017 at 4:05 PM

Those were the days. It wasn't until wall-to-wall purveyors of XMas music learned just how powerful this "stunt" can be. Like heroin, the more you do, the more you do – whether it's good for you or not. I'm sure this will be another strong holiday season for the stations that go this route, even though fans continue to protest the timing and the quality. Appreciate it, KM.

Reply

Bill Kerner says
November 12, 2017 at 1:19 PM

Fred….I believe you were teaching as a graduate assistant in the TV & Radio department at Michigan State back in the '64-'68 time frame. I was a student at the time, and I'm curious as to whether I'm correct about this.

Reply

Fred Jacobs says
November 13, 2017 at 8:44 AM

You're right…and you're wrong. I was teaching as a grad student in the 1973-76 range. If you were at MSU in the '60s, we missed each other, Bill.

Reply

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