

Radio Advertising's Greatest Weakness Is Our Greatest Strength

By Pat Bryson - July 31, 2023



(By Pat Bryson) *"I can't measure radio advertising."* Ever heard that? Radio results can be hard to trace because we reach consumers even when they don't know they are being reached. So, they can't attribute why they come to a certain shop to having heard it on the air. Now, we have factual data that proves that our greatest weakness is really our greatest strength.

Several years ago, Mindshare, Neurensics, and a Dutch radio station released the results of a study on how radio advertising works on the brains of consumers. They found that commercial messages

absorbed subconsciously while listening non-consciously are capable of creating brand associations that last long after the advertising itself is forgotten. **98% of what enters the human ear is absorbed non-consciously.**

25 test subjects aged 20-49 had their brain activity scanned while they were being exposed to radio ads. The subjects were told they were participating in a language study and were instructed to do several tasks. Some were simple, but others were more difficult. These difficult tasks required concentration and relegated the radio listening to more of a background activity and thus created non-conscious listening.

The study concluded that the way in which a radio commercial message enters the brain determines how it is processed. While listening consciously, the listener is more likely to listen critically. When listening non-consciously while the brain is distracted, the message is more likely to "soak in" uncontested. The commercial message **does** register.

Background listening is effective in reinforcing and strengthening existing brand associations and can influence brand selection. Call-to-action messaging will be more impactful when consumers are consciously listening.

We reach consumers even when they don't know they are being reached!

It's time to educate our clients that measuring the results of radio advertising by how many customers walk in their door and shout our call letters is NOT an appropriate way to know if radio advertising works. Used properly (enough weekly frequency) over a period of time (at least 52 weeks) and with a relevant message, radio advertising WILL produce traffic.



We predispose prospective customers to shop at a particular store, to use a certain product, BEFORE they personally have the need for the product. As Roy Williams would say, "Win the hearts and minds and the body will follow." That's not a direct quote, but you get the point. People learn through the ear, and radio provides a direct path to learning. Our greatest weakness IS our greatest strength!

Happy selling!

Pat Bryson is the CEO of *Bryson Broadcasting International*, a consulting firm that works with sales managers and salespeople to raise revenue. She is the author of two books, "A Road Map to Success in High-Dollar Broadcast Sales" and "Successful Broadcast Sales: Thriving in Change" available on *her website*. Read Pat's Radio Ink archives *here*.

