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Radio Contests Are Finding New Appeal To Some Americans In The COVID Age.

Feb 24, 2021



Maybe it is the leaner times that many Americans are living through. Or perhaps it is just having more time on their hands. Either way, new data from NuVoodoo Media finds listener susceptibility to contesting has shifted during the past year.

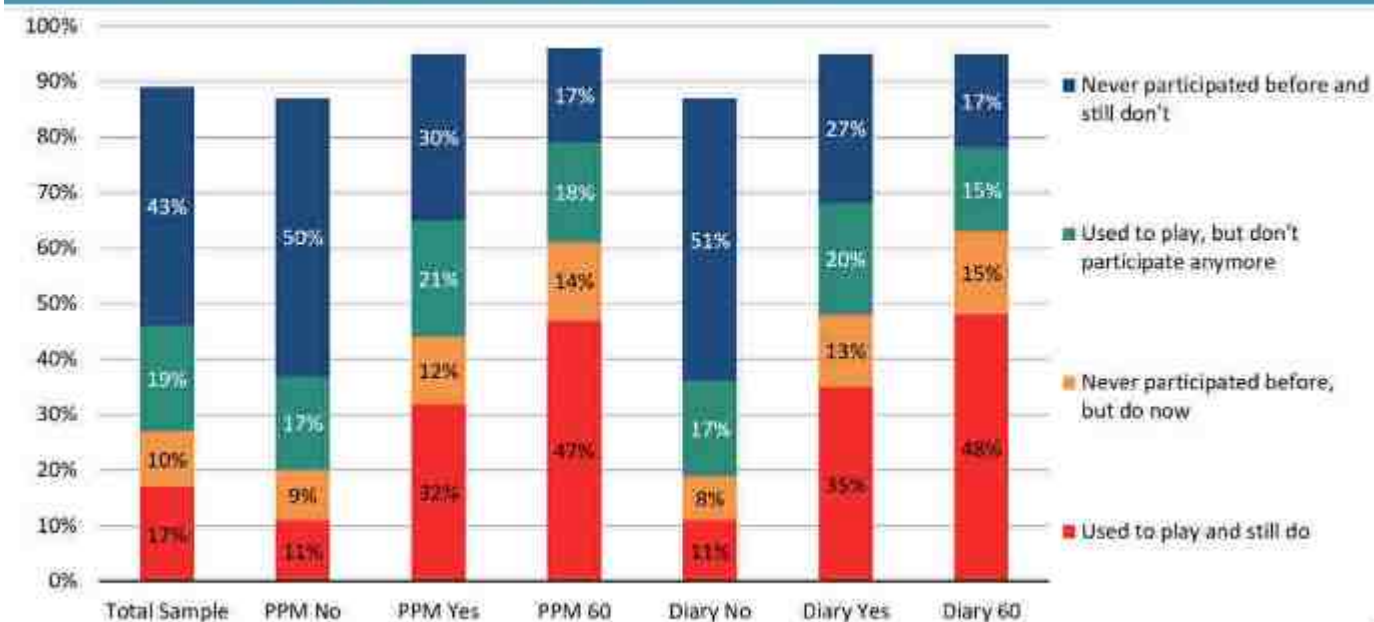
Its survey finds one in ten listeners who never used to participate in radio contests say they do now. And 17% say they have played in the past and still do, a level that is double among people most likely to carry a Nielsen PPM device or fill-out a diary. "Maybe they are interested in winning something to compensate for losses in 2020," said Leigh Jacobs, Executive VP of Research Analysis at NuVoodoo.

The data shows 19% of those surveyed used to participate in station contests, but no longer do. During a webinar this week, Jacobs said that could be tied to changes in listening related to a newly adopted work-from-home lifestyle. Still, he said among heavy listeners and those most likely to be part of Nielsen's ratings samples, more than three in five are contest active.

The idea of winning cash is now the biggest lure for listeners, according to the NuVoodoo survey. "The closer it is to cash, the better," said Jacobs. He noted their data showed a \$500 gift card prize had the best results among survey-takers, with money to help pay a mortgage or buy groceries doing well too. Less appealing now are prizes like a spa day package or the opportunity to win a Zoom call with a music artist they really like.

Participants also said they were most likely to tune into a radio station if it advertised a chance to win \$25,000 if their birthday matched the date picked at random. Nearly half (47%) said they would listen-in compared to 43% that said they would listen to hear a weather storm warning or play in a \$1,000 text-to-win national contest.

CONTEST PARTICIPANTS SHUFFLED DURING THE PANDEMIC STILL LARGE AMONG RATINGS LIKELIES



Thinking about radio station cash contests, which best describes you since the pandemic?

nuvoodoo

The strategy for most broadcasters is to determine what prize has the biggest motivational ROI among listeners. NuVoodoo asked survey participants what the smallest cash prize would be to get them to play a radio station's contest. Among people who typically play, it found two-thirds (68%) said a prize of \$500 was their trigger. Just a quarter (26%) said a \$100 prize would do the trick, a slightly smaller number than pre-pandemic.

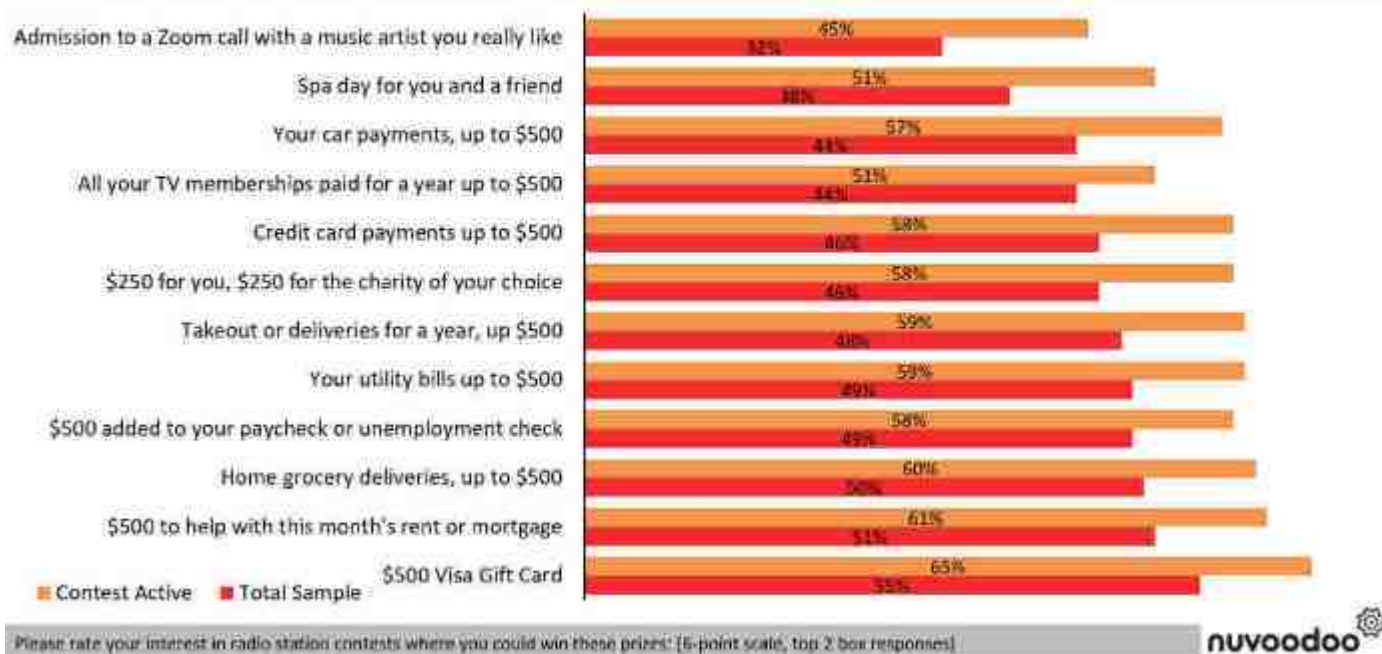
On the other end of the scale, more than eight in ten listeners – including those that don't usually play along – said they would participate if a \$1,000 prize was offered.

"A thousand dollars is the hot ticket," said Jacobs. "Maybe it's the relentless marketing of the \$1,000 prizes among the group-owned stations, or maybe it's the stress in the economy – but contest prizes are getting a little more expensive."

Jacobs said he also detected an upturn in the number of people who are skeptical that radio stations ever give away the prizes they advertise. More than half of people surveyed said they had doubts. "Overcoming this perception then is a matter of ensuring we announce winners regularly," he suggested.

NuVoodoo also asked about group contests, a strategy often maligned by stations whose company does not use the maneuver or just can't offer them. Jacobs said among listeners that are familiar with contests, over half think group contests are good. "They figure that's bigger prizes and more chances to win," he said.

CONTEST ACTIVES: HELP GET THROUGH THE MONTH NOT LIVE LIKE A ROCK STAR



It is not just contesting where cash makes the difference. NuVoodoo found that that six in ten potential diary keepers and PPM panelists said getting paid would motivate them to say yes to Nielsen. And nearly half said being offered gift cards for things like gas or groceries would tip them.

Less motivating is the idea they would have an influence over media companies, a factor cited by just 8% of diary participants. Jacobs noted that people who accept PPMs and diaries tend to live in larger households, where bigger rewards would be paid for their participation.

NuVoodoo's findings are based on an online survey of 3,329 persons aged 14 to 54 conducted January 3-5. Get details of the entire survey – including information about social media usage – in a replay of the company's presentation [HERE](#).