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# Commentary: Growing The Audio Pie Means Moving Beyond Fighting For Share.

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Thanks to people spending more time with smartphones and smart speakers, digital audio consumption is on the rise. While advertisers are taking notice, they're too often moving dollars from one type of audio to another instead of investing new dollars in the larger space. Audio companies encourage this behavior when they pit their type of audio against a competing one, Signal Hill Insights founder Jeff Vidler says.

“Despite all these signs of growth, there is a common assumption that changes in audio consumption represent a zero-sum game—that every hour of ad-supported audio is coming from another form of ad-supported audio,” Vidler in a new blog post, “Helping Brands Think Outside the Audio Box: A Manifesto.” “The truth is far more complicated.”

For example, the growth in music streaming services isn’t coming at the expense of AM/FM radio, but rather from consumers shifting from owning their personal music collection to renting it. Vidler backs this up with Edison Research Share of Ear data showing music streaming, with an 18% share, now leads owned music with a 10% share. That’s an about face from 2014 when owned music accounted for 20% of audio consumption and music streaming services held a 12% share.

The industry is selling audio short by feeding marketplace misconceptions that ad dollars moving to one type of audio should naturally come from another type of audio, Vidler contends. “Sometimes, the easiest path to the sale is to fight for your share of the buy by pitting your type of audio against another,” he writes, especially in a consolidating audio industry where companies operate across multiple platforms. “There’s no value in robbing Peter to pay Paul, especially when Peter and Paul live under the same roof.”

Instead of fighting for their slice of the audio pie, Vidler offers three suggestions for audio sellers to grow the audio ad universe:

**Showcase the unique benefits that each type of audio brings to listeners.** Signal Hill recently conducted a need states study that showed the distinct context for ad messages in each type of audio, as **Inside Radio** reported.

**Expand the competitive arena to include other media.** Each type of audio delivers its own strengths that can pull ad dollars from other media. AM/FM radio can add to and improve upon other reach media such as TV and outdoor, while music streaming services and broadcast radio streaming meet other digital media on their own turf with the potential for personalization, and podcasts provide “unparalleled engagement,” Vidler suggests.

**Commit to educating the ad community.** With a fast-changing audio landscape, advertisers and agencies need “the straight goods on how they can navigate the changes to build effective audio campaigns.”

Read Vidler’s complete essay [HERE](#).