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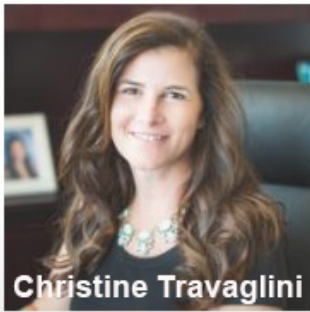
FEATURED

How Advertisers In Hard Hit Categories Used Radio To Confront Pandemic Challenges.

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Of all the industries rocked by the pandemic in the past two years, health, travel/tourism and government entities were among the hardest hit. With markets now recovering and rebounding, marketers from these sectors took stock of how they retrenched, pivoted and rethought how they used radio and other media during a live presentation Thursday from the Radio Advertising Bureau.



What was originally planned as the advertiser roundtable for the Radio Show was reimagined as a virtual session by the RAB for its "Radio Works for Advertisers" online series, with Katz Radio Group President Christine Travaglini as moderator.

Imani Greene, founder and President of GreeneGroup/Fors Marsh Group, the ad agency that works with the U.S. Department Of Health and Human Services on its COVID 19 campaign, said her first challenge was trying to figure out how media consumption had changed. Yet in the early weeks and months of COVID last spring, there was insufficient research to

get a clear picture of that. That had Greene and her team asking questions like, "How do we know that we're actually spending our clients' dollars wisely?" she recalled. "And how do we tell a brand, this is where you should put your money if we don't have any way to prove it?"



Faced with the same dilemma, Fleur Voruz, Senior Director of Programs, Media at Children's Miracle Network Hospitals, said they spent time every day looking daily at where donations were coming from to draw a correlation between media investments and campaign outcomes. "We also looked at the shift in listening habits, but also drawing a correlation to the fact that audio is still a powerhouse for us," Voruz said. "It drives emotion and ultimately drives response. So we get that connection, that authenticity through the talent on radio."

Shifts In Targeting

With consumers fundamentally changing their behaviors, marketers were forced to "embrace new ways to leverage media to get the new messages out that we wanted to have with the right tone," Travaglini said. That required shifts in how advertisers and agencies targeted and reached audiences. This was magnified for Greene's agency which faced the daunting task of disseminating safety information for the government's COVID-19 campaign to a target audience of 300 million people – with a message that was constantly changing. Adopting what she called a "surround sound campaign" that aimed to reach Americans from all angles, Greene said radio was instrumental, in part because of its speed to market. "We were able to get prerecorded live-read scripts that could get approved by the client and get on in the market within days, as we needed to change the narrative," Green explained. "We were able to utilize the incredible nimbleness and flexibility of radio to get messages out quickly." Another advantage, Green said, was the familiarity listeners have with radio personalities. Instead of messages coming "from some glass tower on Capitol Hill," radio hosts brought "a level of comfort, a level of familiarity that we hope is beneficial to the campaign."

While radiothons are the cornerstone of the partnership between Children's Miracle Network Hospitals and radio broadcasters, Voruz said these hospitals have an important message that needs to be conveyed year round. She employs air talent to push out messages to their followers on social media throughout the year. "They really become our champions in those local markets," Voruz said.

One of the last industries to bounce back was travel and tourism. Tourism is the top economic driver for Southern Nevada, supporting close to 40% of jobs directly or indirectly. Trying to fill 150,000 hotel rooms each night is no small feat for the Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority, which has shifted its target younger, to 21-54 year-olds "They are maybe a little bit more willing to travel compared to our more mature demographics, which may be a little bit more wary right now," Yoshida reasoned.

Radio A 'No-Brainer'

When live entertainment finally returned to Las Vegas in June 2021, Yoshida needed to spread the word about a series of residency concerts happening on the Vegas strip. Radio was a "no-brainer" for the Live In Vegas campaign," she said. "The value for us when we use radio is to integrate seamlessly into programming versus



just being a spot advertiser.” Among the tactics used were radio remotes, giveaways, produced spots aligned with specific music formats and live endorsement ads where some DJs shared their own “Vegas story.”

As sports options in the city grew, the tourism agency launched its “Greatest Arena On Earth” campaign to attract more sports fans to the city. In addition to NFL and NHL franchises, Las Vegas will be home to the 2022 Pro Bowl and the NFL draft. The omnichannel campaign includes radio promotions where fans in NFL cities can win a trip and tickets to see their hometown team play the Raiders in Las Vegas. “We really aligned with stations that were home to specific NFL teams,” Yoshida said. “For us, there's definitely a place for traditional radio and digital radio in our media plans.”