



A view from Paul Burke

Keep calm and stay tuned

If the ad industry were a football club, radio is now its caretaker manager, steadying the ship while the club is in crisis.



Paul Burke

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2-3 minutes

I know the country is in lockdown and nobody is allowed to go anywhere, but I have a confession to make: over the past few days, I've been making commercials with some very talented people.

For the first one, we were transported to the sun-kissed Caribbean. The second required a full symphony orchestra and the third featured a couple kissing in a crowded West End bar.

I know, I know – all this is strictly forbidden. But before you call the police – relax. I didn't leave my house to make these ads. Neither did any of the other people involved, because – you're ahead of me, aren't you – these were *radio* commercials.

Oh, the joy of working in a medium on which the current crisis and its concomitant constraints have absolutely no effect. Radio will never lock you down. Instead, it will always allow you to do what you like, where you like, when you like.

Now, I know what you're thinking: "Well, he would say that, wouldn't he?" And you've got a point. Radio has always been my favourite medium and even my email address, paulburkeradio@gmail.com, reflects this. But just because "I would say that, wouldn't I?" doesn't make it any less true.

In a world where products still have to be sold, services offered and important messages conveyed, there is no faster or flexible medium than radio.

While people are housebound, they have more time for things such as cooking, gardening and DIY. And which medium do you think is keeping them company? TV? Unlikely. They need both eyes to ensure that the weeds don't win, the pie doesn't burn and their thumb doesn't get hit by a hammer. 48-sheet posters? Hardly. What's the point of out-of-home when the whole world is in at home?

Nope, you can practically guarantee that radios everywhere will be switched on as never before. During any crisis, from the Second World War onwards, people trust radio more than any other medium to provide them with not just the latest news, but also the music and programmes so vital to lifting their spirits.

And despite predictions that it would be seen off by cinema, then television, then video, then the internet, radio is more popular than ever. Far from killing it, the coronavirus crisis has now given it a new lease of life. People all over the UK have opted to stay in, stay safe and stay tuned.

So, in light of all those cancelled shoots, isn't now the perfect time to transfer a fraction – and you'll only need a fraction – of that TV budget to radio?

If the advertising industry were a football club, radio is now its caretaker manager, steadying the ship while the club is in crisis. But this crisis won't last forever and, as every client knows, those who advertise when times are bad will reap the dividends when times are good.

I'll leave you to have a little think about that, because tomorrow morning, through the wonders of wireless, I'm off to Marrakesh.

Picture: Getty Images

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