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Guide to Radio Advertising



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Section 1: INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this guide is to help you focus on how Marketing and in particular Radio Advertising (on IÚR-fm and Blast 106) can help you to achieve your business objectives.

No matter what stage you are in your business (whether you are just starting up or if you have successfully run a business for many years) it is always useful to take time out to reflect on how you might do things better. The business world is constantly changing and it is very easy to get left behind. The founder of McDonalds Fast Food Restaurants once said that “You cannot continue to do things as they have always been done and expect to get different results”, so if you want to increase your sales or develop your business you should always consider whether there might be a better (more effective or efficient) way of doing things.

There is a great Irish phrase:

“*The wise man is the man who knows he knows nothing*”. Always be open to learning new approaches, to trying new ideas. Fundamentally, this is the purpose of this guide – to help you reflect upon and remind yourself of what you already know and hopefully provide you with some additional knowledge and new ideas for you to try.

The guide begins by explaining what Marketing is and looks at how Marketing should be central to everything you do in your business if you are to fulfil your business potential. It considers Advertising as a function of Marketing and provides some fundamentals which you should bear in mind whatever type of advertising you are undertaking.

The guide goes on to explain and detail why Radio Advertising is probably the most effective marketing medium to get your message across to your target customers.

Having shown you this, it will then give you some key tips and advice on devising your Radio Advertisement to best effect.



Section 2: WHAT IS MARKETING?

The first thing that you must do when considering marketing in your business is to understand exactly what marketing is. The difficulty with this is that if you were to ask 100 top marketing professionals to define marketing, you would most probably get 100 different answers. Equally most business managers and owners believe that marketing is about advertising when in fact advertising is just one element of promotion which is in turn just one aspect of marketing. This confusion arises primarily because most people see marketing as just one of their business tasks like production or accounting. However, this is most definitely not the case. Marketing is a process not a procedure. It is not about what we do in business but rather about the way we do it. In many ways marketing is a state of mind or attitude which should prevail in everything that you do in your business.

Accordingly the most accurate and complete definition is that:

MARKETING IS – GENERATING SATISFIED CUSTOMERS

This 3 word definition may sound simple but it is the true key to business success and ignorance of it is the largest single reason for business failure today.

Marketing places the emphasis on the customer. You must always remember that the customer provides you with sales and sales is the very life-blood of your business. Therefore it is true to say:

“THE CUSTOMER REALLY IS KING.”

- **GENERATING CUSTOMERS**

Undoubtedly, Generating Customers is no easy task. Very few people wake up in the morning determined to become a customer of yours that day. You need to entice them into becoming one. It may be that you fulfil a daily need or perhaps you provide something that makes life better or more enjoyable for that person. In either case, you must make them aware that you exist and that you can provide a better Product/Service for them than your competitors.

This we do in a number of different ways. It may be that you Advertise or hold a Sale. You may provide a Reward or Loyalty Programme. Perhaps you employ Sales Executives or use Direct Mail.

Regardless of the method used, we all know that Generating Customers can be an expensive process but by better targeting and more effective use of your promotion budget you can greatly increase the return on your expenditure. This is where Radio Advertising can help.

Marketing is primarily about Selling. To be effective you must always put yourself in the place of your Customer – how would you like to have your Product/Service sold to you. (It always amazes me how many so-called Marketing Gurus ignore this simplest of approaches).

It is only by understanding, not only what the customer wants to buy, but also how they want to buy it that you can become truly successful in your marketing activities.

Henry Ford once said that half of all the money he spent on advertising was wasted – he just didn't know which half. It is important that you do not find yourself in the same trap.

Remember that every £1 you can save on unsuccessful advertising provides you with a £1 to be spent on marketing activity that will provide you with a return. So always take care to analyse the success or failure of a campaign no matter how big or how small.

Never be afraid to experiment in your marketing activities and constantly refine what you do. The result will be that you will save money, generate more customers for every £1 spent and you will also have the pleasure of knowing that you have succeeded where others have failed.



- **SATISFYING CUSTOMERS**

Every business relies on customers. Whether you are selling a product or providing a service it is your customer who will pay you for it. Therefore it is amazing how many businesses seem to forget this key fact when planning their activities. Many companies adopt a Production Approach which is defined by the concept “we produce what we can make and then sell it to the customer”. The Marketing Approach takes the opposing stance which is “we find out what the customer would like to buy and then we make that”.

But satisfying customers is so much more than just producing a product or providing a service. It is about the whole buying experience. From the first contact with your business to the degree and quality of After-Sales Service/Customer Care, your entire focus must be on Satisfying the Customer.

This concentration is a profitable one. After all statistics prove that it is 10 times less expensive to retain a customer than to win a new one. And what about getting referrals or being recommended. Only a Satisfied Customer will help you in this respect.

Consider the following:

1. How can your business improve the product/service that you provide to better meet the customers needs?
2. How can you make the whole purchasing experience more rewarding or enjoyable for the customer?
3. How often do you ask your existing customers about their experience in dealing with your business?
4. What do you actively do to set your customers expectations of your product/service and what steps do you take to ensure that these expectations are either met or surpassed on every occasion?
5. Have you ever considered what it would be like to be your own customer?
6. What do your competitors do better/worse than you in meeting the needs and desires of their customers?



MARKETING DO's & DON'T's

DO's:

1. Plan your marketing activities. Remember that those who fail to plan, plan to fail. (It is still a true phrase today).
2. Take pride in your Product/Service and make sure that your marketing activities always reflect them in the best light. Identify what is special about them and stress what makes them different from your competitors.
3. Present a professional image. Customers need to trust your business and have confidence in your Product/Service. Also, always remember that Customer Care is not a cost to your business, it is the most undervalued asset.
4. Know your market. Researching customers and competitors is not just something you should do before starting up in business – it should be an ongoing activity, central to your business operations. Ask your customers what they think of both your Product/Service and your company. Ask how you might enhance their buying experience. Asking costs nothing.
5. Experiment in your marketing activity. In the case of Radio Advertising, vary the message by using different wording and approaches (humour/shock/comforting) - you'll never know whether something works or not until you try it.

DON'T's:

1. Never simply copy the type of marketing carried out by your competitors. Nobody likes copy-cats, especially consumers and you will always look a poor second – be original and make your product/service unique.
2. Never overcomplicate your message. Keep it simple – don't say in 100 words what you can say just as well in 50. At the same time be careful not to oversimplify and insult your customers by treating them like idiots.
3. Never over-exaggerate your Product/Service. It is important that you set your customers expectations and then also meet them, if your customer is to feel satisfied.
4. Never talk about what your Product/Service can do – talk about what it can do for the customer. How can it make life better for them? People buy benefits not features.
5. Never think that a good marketing strategy can sell a poor Product/Service. If what you are selling is rubbish then all the marketing in the world won't save it. You really can't make a silk purse out of a pig's ear.



Section 3: WHAT IS ADVERTISING?

Advertising is basically getting your message out to your target market.

In simple terms, there are primarily two types of advertising – Direct Response Advertising and Brand Advertising.

Brand Advertising is used to build and increase awareness of a brand (eg. Guinness or Coca-Cola). Its purpose is not to create an immediate response by getting you to go out and buy a Pint or a Coke straight away but rather to build the brand by creating name awareness so that when you do decide to have a drink that you will choose their product over a competitors.

In the case of most small and medium sized enterprises, it is not normally cost effective to spend your promotion budget on brand advertising as it fails to produce an immediate response. However, if it is affordable, brand advertising can have a major influence and impact when the customer does choose to buy a product which you sell.

Direct Response Advertising is designed to produce a clear and generally immediate response.

The type of response will vary depending on the type of business you are in and your overall marketing strategy. You may want the response to be an immediate purchase by advertising a Sale or alternatively you may want the response to be for someone to contact you to ask for a brochure.

The great thing about direct response advertising is that you can instantly tell whether it is working. It either produces a response or it doesn't.

The key thing to understand is that your advertising should know what it is – Brand or Direct Response. One of the reasons that lot of small business advertising does not work is that it's a combination of half hearted direct response and highly ineffective brand advertising. Generally speaking it should be one thing or the other, or if it is to serve both purposes then it should be carefully and creatively designed. Simply taking a 'half & half' approach will be a waste of your advertising budget.

All advertising whether it is Brand or Direct Response (and whether it is Radio, TV, Newspaper, Posters, Leaflets or Direct Mail) needs to be measured. You must measure the response to know if the ad is working.

Ideally, you should try to assess how many people responded, how many of them were converted to a sale and what that sale is worth to you. Then you need to compare that figure to the cost of the ad so you can work out how profitable the ad was.

Many businesses just allocate a certain amount of money to an advertising budget, spend the money every year...and they've only got a vague sense of whether the ads are working or not.

A simple method of analyzing the success of campaigns is to ask people who contact you for the first time where they heard about you. Many larger businesses will set up a separate phone line, postal address or web page that only appears in that particular ad.



However, two points to bear in mind:

1. People are not always as honest or thoughtful as we might like so if you are simply asking people where they heard about your business, they may not necessarily give you the most accurate answer. More often than not they will give you the first answer that comes into their head – the information is not important to them so they don't place any importance on the answer they give to you.
2. A very common mistake occurs when advertisers place an incentive in their advert. For example, you state in your advert that you will give 10% discount if the person tells you that they saw your advert in the paper. The fact that many people who come into your shop saw the advert in the paper but don't tell you this has more to do with the fact that sociologically speaking people in the UK and Ireland are in fact slow to ask for discount (despite the fact that we think we are good hagglers, when compared to other parts of the world, we are not).

In the ad itself the most important element is the headline. The headline is either the heading that goes at the top of the ad if it is print form or the first words of the ad if it is radio as it's the first thing people hear. The headline needs to grab peoples' attention. One change in a headline can produce a 50-100% increase in response. The main purpose of the headline is not to sell your product – it's just to get people to pay attention to your ad.

The headline should be about your targets – not about you. By that I mean it should sell the benefit to the listener or reader rather than simply state the name of your business. For example, "Save 25% on all furniture this week at Joe Bloggs & Co" will always produce a better response than "At Joe Bloggs & Co this week you can save 50% on all furniture". This because words like "Save" are key words, they grab the listeners attention and they pay attention to what follows.

Be adventurous with your headlines. Test different versions to see what works best. There are no hard and fast rules – except what works.

There is however a very useful framework called AIDA which stands for:

- **Attention**
- **Interest**
- **Desire**
- **Action**

Following this formula in every advert will greatly increase your chances of success.

Attention – the first thing your advert needs to do is grab the reader's attention.

Interest – once you've got their attention, you need to create an interest in your product or service.

Desire – There is a big difference between being interested in a product or service and desiring it. You need to convert the reader's interest into a strong desire for what you are offering.

Action - Even if someone desires what you have, it is not enough until they take action. At the end of the ad you need a call to action. Tell people exactly what they need to do to follow through and make it easy for them to do so. This is where many people go wrong. Even if you have a good ad, you still need to tell people precisely what to do - how to take action. "Call today" or "Order now" are simple examples for a call to act.

Always sell the benefits of what you are offering. You don't sell washing machines by telling the customer the intricate technical details of how it works – you sell it by convincing them of how it will make their life better.



USEFUL TIPS

A useful tip when you've written your ad is to imagine stepping into the shoes of your prospective customer. From this perspective does the advert convey what those benefits are? If not go back and fine tune your advert.

Another useful tip, if you are doing newspaper or magazine advertising, when reading a publication, your eyes are drawn to the Right Hand Page as you flick through, so statistically, more people will see your ad if it's on the right hand page. If you look at the big national magazines and newspapers, you will see that most of the large advertisers are on the right hand pages. The few that appear on a left hand page will be paying less because their advertising agencies know that less people will see the ad.

When you book your ad space, tell them you want it on a right hand page. Very few small businesses know or think to ask for this yet it will make a huge difference to your advertising impact and response.

Lastly, always be focused on your USP – your Unique Selling Point. Forget about what makes you the same as your competitors – it's what sets you apart that is important. It might be price, range of products or convenience of access. Alternatively, it may just be that you provide a friendlier service. Whatever it is, it's what makes your business unique, it sets you apart from the crowd and is the reason why your targets should choose to do business with you.

Section 4: BENEFITS OF RADIO ADVERTS

Radio advertising continues to be one of the most popular forms of advertising available. And for good reason – it is also one of the most effective with the vast majority of adults in the UK tuning in to radio each week. This coupled with station loyalty amongst listeners means that it outstrips virtually all other media including newspaper, magazine and television.

When you think about it, it makes sense. How many adverts did you actually notice the last time you picked up a newspaper. Generally there are so many that you cannot see the wood for the trees. With radio advertising, the ad breaks are normally quite brief, distinct and have a relatively small number of adverts in each ad break which increases the impact of each of them and enhances the response rate for the advertiser. Radio is also free, unlike most newspapers and 60% of the typical free newspaper is adverts. This leads to a cluttering effect and confusion of your business with another's, especially if that business is advertising for similar reasons.

Newspaper advertising is limited in how many people notice it and how many people pay attention to it. 50% of people who read a newspaper do not get past the first section (Media Audit, March 2001) and 58% of people who see a full page advert don't bother to read it (Radio Marketing Guide & Fact Book for Advertisers, 2001-2002).

Equally with television. Once the Holy Grail of advertising and still generally more expensive than radio advertising. However, the remote control killed television advertising from the perspective of the advertiser.

We all tend to flick through the channels when the commercial break comes on. Not so with radio advertising – rarely do people change channels when an ad break comes on. Indeed, people change channels much less often with radio anyway – Radio Loyalty is high with most people tending to listen to the same channel all the time.

Saatchi and Saatchi said that **Radio advertising has the highest impact in the short term of all forms of advertising**, and they knew a bit about advertising.



Radio is somewhat unique in that it can be either passive or active unlike watching TV or reading a newspaper which must be done actively. Nine out of 10 people listen to the radio when they are doing something else. This allows advertisers to reach them when they are engaged in another activity whether that is washing the dishes, working on the computer or driving the car.

Furthermore, radio listening is greater than TV viewing until mid-afternoon, thus providing an opportunity to reach people first thing in the morning; on their way to work; before going out shopping; when thinking about taking a break etc. This puts radio in a strong position to influence the shopping decision-making process at relevant times.

Radio is a highly portable medium that invades lots of different environments. It is possible to reach people in-home, in-car, on public transport (via personal stereos and mobile phones), at work, or elsewhere all using the same medium. No other medium offers this breadth of different consumer locations.

Radio can provide opportunities for targeting specific audiences not only by geographical area, but also by type of audience or demographic group. Different stations or programmes attract different types of listener so adverts can be targeted to relevant audiences with minimum wastage.

Consumers spend a third of their media day with radio. Additionally radio naturally builds higher levels of frequency than other media. This provides advertisers with opportunities to be on-air across a large part of the day, hence building high levels of presence in the mind of the consumer. If an advert is missed in the newspaper it is missed – if it is missed on the radio – it will be played again later increasing the chance of the target customer hearing it.

Also, a business which has traditionally been advertised in print media can be brought to life on radio by giving it a voice and tone, thus communicating with consumers in a much more multi-dimensional and richer way.

Active Ad Avoidance is less prevalent in radio. Unless the listener turns off or changes station (both of which rarely happen as a result of hearing radio ads), he or she will be exposed to your advertising message so even people who aren't currently in the market for your product or service today are still getting some exposure to your brand message for when they move into the market at some stage in the future.

Radio is an intimate medium, listened to generally by people on their own, often in personal spaces allowing the advertisers to speak directly to the customer almost on a one-to-one basis. As such it operates on a much more human level than media such as TV or posters, and listeners develop a strong trusting relationship with their preferred stations.

People feel that the station they listen to is aimed at people like them, hence they are more likely to consider that brands advertised on their station are for people like them.

In Summary Radio Advertising:

- Targets customers efficiently
- Reaches customers at relevant times and in relevant places
- Increases awareness of your business
- Gets the advertisers message closer to the customer
- Brings the advertising message to life
- Reaches beyond current customers to increase your sales base



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Section 5: CREATING A RADIO ADVERT

KEEP IT SIMPLE

Advertising in any medium is always more effective when it focuses on a simple message. But with radio this is not optional, it is essential, as it's not possible to include extra information in the background or in small print.

KEEP IT RELEVANT

In a Radio Advert you have a limited time to maximise your message so keep to the point and only include information that is important and relevant. For example, in the case of most shops there is little point in including the phone number as potential customers will visit the shop to see what is being sold – by including the phone number you are wasting airtime which could be better used enticing the listener to visit your shop.

Radio advertising is about priorities – phone numbers are generally a lower priority than getting listeners interested in the product or service you are offering. Besides, unless you have a really memorable phone number, what are the chances of the listener remembering it or being able to note it down at that moment.

SPEAK THE LISTENERS LANGUAGE

Do not confuse the listener with technical language or detail. Think about how your potential customers would like to be addressed and speak to them in that way.

SPEAK TO THE LISTENER

Radio is a very personal medium. Most of the time people listen to radio on their own. This is a distinct advantage that Radio Advertising offers you. The best Radio Presenters make the listener feel that they are talking to them directly – not broadcasting to the multitudes. The best Radio Adverts do the same.

ENGAGE THE LISTENER

Remember that you are selling your message to the listener. You must engage with them, entertain them, win them over. Remember the golden AIDA rule of all adverts – ATTENTION, INTEREST, DESIRE & ACTION.

BENEFITS NOT FEATURES

As with any advertising or sales pitch, you must always present the benefits for the customer not the features of your product. Don't tell the customer what your product can do – tell them what your product can do for them.

JUDGE WHAT YOU HEAR – NOT WHAT YOU READ

Once you have composed your advert, get someone to read it back to you so you can hear how it will sound on-air. This is very important as the spoken word is structured very differently to the written verse.

BE YOUR CUSTOMER

When composing and listening to your advert, put yourself in the shoes of your customer. How would they like your advert to sound? How do they want your product or service to be sold to them?

BE DIFFERENT

Why follow the crowd. Don't just copy your competitors' adverts or style. Analyse their advertisements, identify the weaknesses in them and correct them before producing your own ad. Always aim for your advert to sound unique, that sets it apart from the crowd – that makes it MEMORABLE.

TAKE IT SERIOUSLY

Radio Advertising is a serious business. It presents your business with an opportunity to increase your sales. Done well, it will improve your businesses profitability – done badly and it is a waste of your time and money and could actually damage your image in the mind of your customers. Take it seriously and get it right. Afford it the same time and priority as you would any other aspect or task of your business. An advert composed in minutes will sound like an advert which has been cobbled together in a few minutes.



KEY QUESTIONS TO BEAR IN MIND:

- 1. What are you specifically trying to achieve in marketing terms?**
(e.g. gain market share through increased trial, reinforce customer loyalty etc)
- 2. What do you want or expect the advertising to do within this?**
(ie. the contribution which this advert can realistically be expected to make to your overall marketing aims)
- 3. Who are you talking to?**
(Age/Gender/Class etc. Are they current customers or customers of your competitors? What do they know about your business already? What do they currently think / feel about your?)
- 4. What do you want them to think/feel/do as a result of this advertising campaign?**
(be realistic about your ambitions, radio advertising is magical but it is not magic)
- 5. What exactly do you want to say to them?**
(single-mindedness is essential here – be focused)
- 6. What exactly do you want them to do?**
(think about the desired response – what action do you want the listener to take. Start planning your advert by focusing on how you want the listeners to react having heard the campaign. Develop your advertising message specifically with this in mind)
- 7. What style of advert should I use?**

The following table shows the impact of various different styles of radio advertisement. It details listeners' recollection of advertisements. "Overall Recall" records the percentage of people who could recall an advert in general terms while "Message Recall" records the percentage who could remember the actual message of the advert. The table shows that the most successful style of advert in both cases is the Straight Pitch which involves a simple voiceover without characters or humour.

Type	Description	Overall recall %	Message recall %
STRAIGHT PITCH	voiceover, no humour	55	41
HUMOROUS PITCH	voiceover, with humour	46	24
STRAIGHT DRAMA	characters, no humour	39	30
HUMOROUS SKETCH	characters, with humour	40	24
PASTICHE	characters, with media pastiche	22	15

