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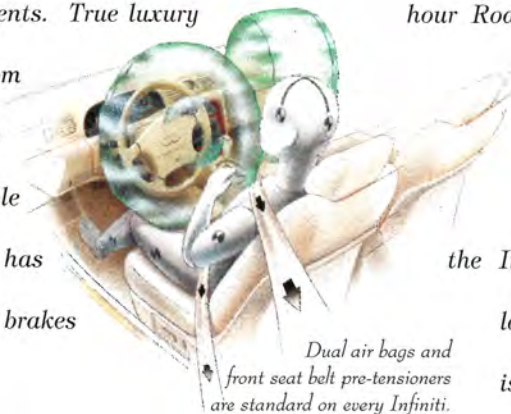


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WPTF Celebrates 70 Years

Calvin Coolidge was President of the United States. A fledgling company named International Business Machines opened its doors. A breakfast cereal called Wheaties was introduced. And the first full-length talking motion picture, "The Jazz Singer", was still three years away from movie theaters.

On the third floor of a brick building in downtown Raleigh the area's first radio station, WFBO, with 50 watts of power beamed its initial transmission to a small listening audience fortunate enough to own primitive receivers called radios. The date was October 25, 1924.

In 1927 the station was purchased by Durham Life Insurance Company and its call letters changed to WPTF (We Protect the Family). A year later, the station was assigned its present frequency of 680 kilocycles (now called kilohertz). In 1929, WPTF began a long-term relationship with the National Broadcasting Company, becoming NBC's only affiliate in the Carolinas at that time. In 1941, about six months before Pearl Harbor, its power was increased to 50,000 watts, clear channel.

Since those early days, WPTF has seen many changes both in the broadcast industry and the area it serves. The Triangle radio market has grown from a single station 70 years ago to about 30 AM



Don Curtis, president of Curtis Media Group, the company which purchased WPTF from Durham Life in 1991, relaxes amidst the radio memorabilia in his office.

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and FM outlets today. And the market is segmented into a dozen or more formats, including adult contemporary, country, the oldies, talk, rock, religious and classical.

"Through the years, WPTF has always been a dominant player in the Raleigh-Durham market," observes Don Curtis, president of Curtis Media Group, which purchased WPTF from Durham Life in 1991. "We started out with a full-service menu of programming in the early years and have maintained that approach."

Curtis says the station's format has been modified from time to time to meet the changing tastes of the listener. "Some people say that WPTF hasn't really changed much. But, in the past 10 years I think the station has changed more than any other in the market."

"In the thirties," he recounts, "we had all the country music shows. In the forties, we had the soap operas and a variety of entertainment programs. With the advent of television in the fifties, radio began to change its format, and we featured more music and specials. In the eighties we started to program more talk shows. Today, we have evolved into a full news/talk format. Through all this, we have maintained our emphasis on news and sports. But as radio has changed, so have we."

Each era has had its personalities, Curtis observes. "Chet Atkins and Sonny James used

"We're able to give the listener all the information he or she needs to start the day and have some fun doing it."

to work on the station. During the fifties, sixties and seventies we had Jim Reid, Charlie Gaddy, Bill Jackson and Wally Ausley and Jimmy Capps. Today, it's Bart Ritner, Maury O'Dell, Garry Dornberg and Donna Mason.

Jim Rutherford, a long-time WPTF listener, recalls a popular program on which he appeared in the fifties.

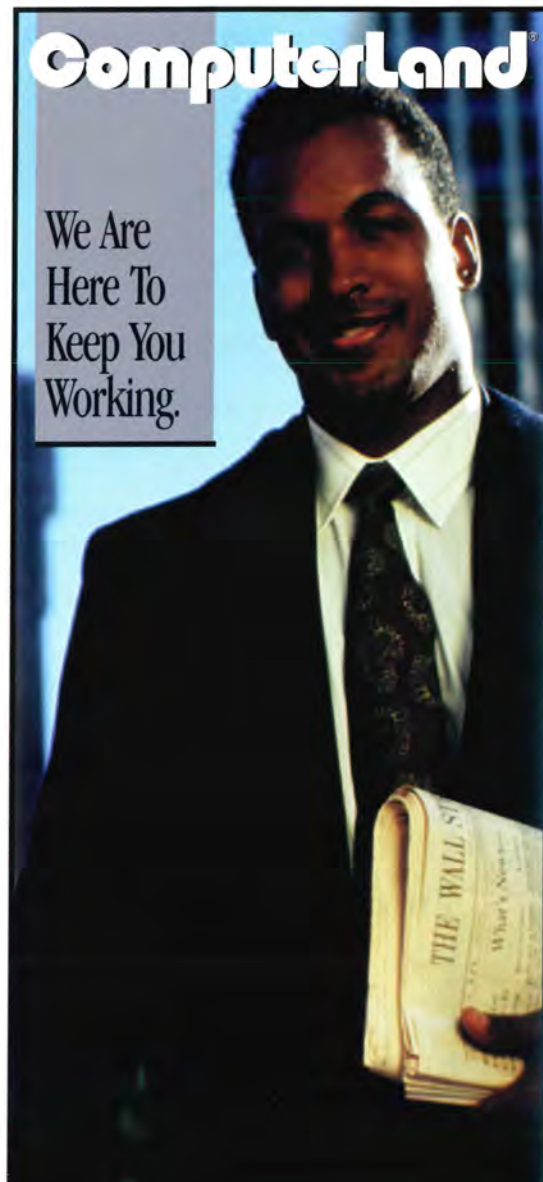
"I was a panelist on a game/quiz show called 'Time Out' emceed by Sam Beard, later a personality on WRAL-TV. The panel members were made up of two teams selected from the area's civic clubs. The winning team got \$25, which went to the club it represented. As I recall, we also got a free package of Jesse Jones sausage."

During the forties, Phil Ellis broadcast the play-by-play of Carolina football games and conducted a daily Man on the Street interview program. In the fifties, Jimmy Capps hosted a late-night music request program called "Our Best to You." In the sixties, Bill Jackson and Jim Reid anchored a morning radio show called "Gab Fest." Reid was later succeeded by Wally Ausley, long-time voice of Wolfpack Sports, as was Jackson before him.

The demographics of WPTF's listeners have remained fairly constant even though the programming has changed. "We've always

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Bart Ritner hosts WPTF's 'Open Line' weeknights from 9 until 11pm



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changed to keep pace with what's happening at a particular time," says Joe Bell, the station's general manager. "But our target market is still the 35 to 64 age group."

According to the four-book Arbitron rating for the Raleigh-Durham metro area ending in spring of 1994, WPTF ranked first among 27 stations surveyed in the 35-and-up age group. In morning drive time (12 plus), it also ranked first in the market.

According to Curtis, WPTF's programming has not changed substantially since he bought the station four years ago. "I guess the most dramatic change came about ten years ago when we switched from mostly music to mostly talk."

Curtis, a 35-year veteran in broadcasting, is the sole owner and shareholder of North Carolina's largest radio group, made up of 11 stations that include four full-power FM stations. He is a former president of the North Carolina Association of Broadcasters and currently serves as a trustee of the UNC Center for Public Television.

Curtis says it's interesting to see the interplay among the various advertising media. "If a person is getting a message across, you

will often see one medium support another," he observes. "For example, to promote our station, we use both television and outdoor. We really don't know why a listener listens to

For a talk show to work, it has to be top of the mind.

WPTF, whether it's because of a TV ad or an outdoor billboard. And it's the same thing with most of our advertisers. An advertiser may not know for certain why a customer came in. But if the media are working in concert, the concentrated effect is positive. That's why the multimedia approach has become so effective."

Scott Farkas, the station's general sales manager, points out that many times radio is the last influence before a person buys. "If you are out there among all the retail competition and are ready to buy, that's probably going to have an effect on your buying decision."

One of WPTF's most popular personalities, Donna Mason has become a fixture on the region's morning talk circuit.



"We can get information out faster than newspaper, faster than TV," he observes. "As a result, it makes us a good medium for advertisers. In essence, they become part of the information. Our advertiser renewal rate is impressive, largely because people who use radio get credible results."

The longest running show in the Triangle market is WPTF's "Morning Show" with Maury O'Dell. It is consistently in the top three in the ratings. Curtis feels that the program's continuity and scope have a lot to do with its success. "People want some habit to their life to start the day," he observes. "They want to feel comfortable with someone who is familiar to them. In the music-driven marketplace, we are the only station that gives a considerable amount of time to news in morning drive time. So the audience looking for news and information looks to Maury O'Dell because that's what his show is all about."

Adds Joe Bell: "We're able to give the listener all the information he needs to start the day and have some fun doing it."

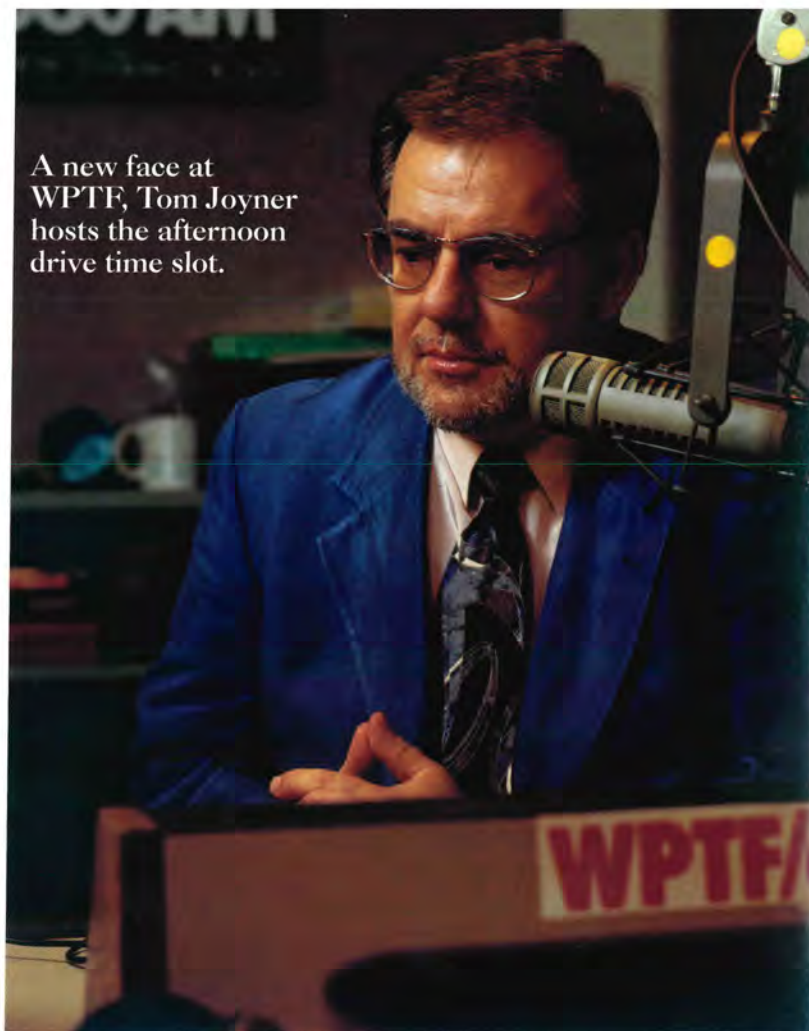
The star in WPTF's crown is the daily three-hour Rush Limbaugh program. "Limbaugh has twice the audience during the 12 to 3 p.m. weekday time slot than the second place station in the market," says Curtis. "And his appeal crosses demographic lines. Limbaugh is a phenomenon. Anytime a radio station doubles the listenership of the number two station it's very unusual."

The controversial commentator elicits the emotion of people, says Bell. "We get a ton of response. It's the most listened to radio program in the Triangle. People hit hot buttons when he's on. Most agree with him, but you'd be surprised at the people who listen all the

Donna Mason, who hosts a morning talk show from 9 to 11:30 weekdays. Surprisingly, her audience is predominantly male. "This is an interesting phenomenon," observes Farkas. "The advertisers use the show to target women, although the ratings indicate that it has more of a male audience. Nonetheless, advertisers get good results from using her show. She's a very believable person."

For a talk show to work, it has to be top of the mind, explains Curtis. "Whatever's on the front page, whatever's big news, whether

A new face at WPTF, Tom Joyner hosts the afternoon drive time slot.



"We position ourselves as an electronic newspaper, a television station without pictures."

time who disagree with him. He's a showman and a great entertainer, and I think a lot of people just enjoy what he has to say regardless of what their politics are."

One of WPTF's popular personalities is



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its local, state or national, will be the topic of the talk shows that particular day."

Night programming on the station features "Sports Line" from 6 to 9 with Garry Dornberg as the host. Even though WPTF is the flagship station for N.C. State sports, the station carries the ACC Hotline with Woody Durham as well as syndicated programs featuring the State, Duke and Carolina coaches.

Bart Ritner with "Open Line" airs from 9 until 11 followed by Dean Edell, a nationally syndicated medical show. Overnight, there's a repeat of Limbaugh. Long-time personality Johnny Hood leads into the "Morning Show" at 5 a.m.

In October, Tom Joyner replaced Andy Thomas as host of the 3 to 6 afternoon drive time slot. Joyner is a former owner of WTRG-FM in Raleigh and an experienced talk show host. WPTF plans to syndicate the program.

"We position WPTF differently than most radio stations," explains Farkas. "We try to get people to relate to us on common terms. We position ourselves as an electronic news-

**Today, people want to be
informed and are trying
to fit information into
little bits and pieces of
time. They want their in-
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That's where radio fits
in.**

paper, a television station without pictures. We're basically an information service.

"To maintain our competitive edge," he continues, "we continually ask ourselves if the Russians launched missiles this morning and aimed them at the United States, what radio station would people tune to? We want that station to be WPTF. This feeling relates to everything we do, from political races to traffic in the morning. If you need to know what's going on, we want WPTF to be your first choice."

According to Curtis, a strength of radio is its variety. "The average person will listen to four different radio stations over time. So we're competing for a share of their time. If there weren't so many formats and so much variety out there, we would be down. It's because of the strength of the industry that there is so much to choose from. Here in the Triangle, about 12 stations have a significant audience.

"I think it's also interesting that people will regularly listen to three or four very different radio stations," Curtis continues. "For example, it is not uncommon for our sister station WQDR, which features a country format, to share listeners with WUNC, which plays

There is little doubt that talk is the hottest format of the 90s, and WPTF underscores that fact.

basically classical music. Surveys show that listeners tune in about 70 percent of the time to the P1, or first preference station, and divide the remaining listening among two or three other stations."

"We have a large number of listeners that list our station as the first choice," explains Bell. "There are also people who have a favorite music format, but they tune in to us for news, weather or sports. So it works well for everyone."

Curtis feels that three primary elements make radio attractive: "First, it's the only electronic medium that's not connected to a wire. Secondly, you can do something else when your listening to radio. And thirdly, its mobile. It can be used in the car traveling down the highway, and it can be carried from room to room in the house or taken outdoors.

"The average family has six or seven radios," relates Curtis. "There will be one in almost every bedroom, one in the kitchen, usually a big stereo in the den, one in each car. And a lot of people have one at work. So there's a lot of persuasiveness with this medium."

WPTF's news coverage is a major factor in the station's dominance in the market. "There are three large radio news organizations in the state: WBT in Charlotte, the North Carolina News Network and us," Curtis explains. "We have about seven or eight people involved in the news operation. Mike Edwards heads up our news operation. Mike Blackman is a veteran newsman on staff and Bart Ritner anchors the Six o'Clock News. We feel we have significantly strengthened our news organization within the last two years."

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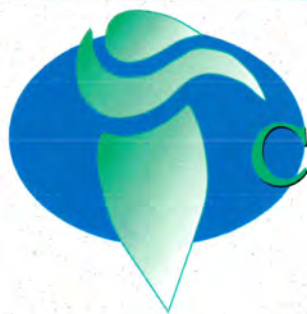
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Maury O'dell and Gary Dornberg prepare for an on-air discussion.

A big reason people feel comfortable with WPTF is that many of the on-air personalities are long-time employees of the station. "Bart Ritner, Johnny Hood, Garry Dornberg and Maury O'Dell have been around a while, and people feel that they know them," observes Bell. "Off-mike, Don Fowler in sales is a 35-year veteran, and engineer Bob Royal has 53 years with the station."

Looking down the road, Curtis feels that flexibility is the key to future success. "I don't know that we can have a long-term strategy. No one knows what will happen down the road. Consequently, we must continue to roll with

the punches," he says. "Six months before Rush Limbaugh came on the scene, I suspect that if anyone had said you're going to have a national talk show on from 12 to 3 in the afternoon, we'd all say you're crazy. It wouldn't work. So, not knowing what's going to be out there, it's very difficult to have a long-range plan."

He continues: "We're in the business of entertaining and informing. Whatever form that takes is what we'll do. One thing we'll probably work hard on is our weekends, since our audience drops off on Sundays. We'll probably be looking for things of a little more entertainment value, since people tend to tire of

talk on the weekend. Of course, we're always interested in bettering our news and sports coverage.

Ours is an information society. Today, people want to be informed and are trying to fit information into little bits and pieces of time. They want their information and they want it in small doses. That's where radio fits in with most people. We offer a solution by presenting information with a broad stroke in short time bites."

"The days of 'The Lone Ranger' and 'The Shadow' may be relegated to radio's distant past, but the medium still holds an importance in our daily lives."

There is little doubt that talk is the hottest format of the 90s, and WPTF's promotional slogan, "We're Talk Radio", underscores that fact. "That's our specialty," declares Curtis. "The other 11 players in the market have niched out their own spot, and I believe it works out very well for the advertiser and for the listener."

The days of "The Lone Ranger", "Stella Dallas" and "The Shadow" may be relegated to radio's distant past, but the medium still holds an important place in our daily lives. ♦

Donald L. Anderson is an experienced free lance writer.

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It is said that the "most brilliant advertising message ever created might just as well stay in the creative department if the right people don't hear or see it." How you reach your audience, when you reach it and how much it costs are critical ingredients in a successful campaign.

The most essential elements in achieving a successful advertising campaign are research and planning. "People or businesses who are advertising and who ignore research are as dangerous as generals who ignore decades of enemy signals," said David Ogilvy of Ogilvy Mather, New York.

Research can measure the reputation of your company among consumers, can get customer reactions to new products or services while still in the planning stage, or once on the market can tell you how consumers rate it compared with competitive products or services. Research helps you decide the optimum positioning for your products and helps you define your target audience. Target marketing in the information age has grown to become one of the most powerful marketing tools a company can utilize.

Research can tell you how many people will see or hear your advertisements in the different media available to you. Today, audiences can be broken down into specific segments, thus allowing for marketing efficiency. All of this information is critical in creating a marketing and media plan that will help ensure your business a more successful campaign.

A Successful Media Plan

The primary elements to a good media plan are a situation analysis, history, competitive environment, goals and objectives, target audience, seasonality, positioning and strategy. These elements will help to determine how and when you should reach your target customer.

Timing is extremely important for most products and services. Develop a time frame based on seasonality and need for your particular product or service. Consider such things as seasons, weather, holidays and special events which may impact your business so that you don't waste your advertising dollars in a less-than-desirable market climate.

Some variables that will help to determine which media will be most effective in advertising your product or service include a) the goals you've already established, b) timing, c) budget, and d) which creative genre will best communicate your message. Each medium has its own strengths and weaknesses. We are going to address broadcast media in detail and how it works in your media plan.

Print Media

The term 'Printed Media' encompasses a broad spectrum of advertising possibilities from pamphlets and newsletters to newspaper and magazine advertising. Each accomplishes a desired goal in the marketplace, but all share at least one commonality: They reach specifically targeted groups of people (they are more narrowcast as opposed to broadcast). All are highly focused, and some are more cost effective than others. The criteria are quality, circulation, frequency, timeliness and potential impact. Kathryn Stewart of Market Match characterizes print media as serious, viable entities that create visibility for a company.

Some print Media is kept for reference, others are valuable for their timeliness and are not kept. A key benefit to periodical print media advertising is association with the editorial strength of the publication. Again, a company's decision should be based on their needs. For example, what a magazine lacks in timeliness, it makes up for in quality and clout. A daily newspaper can better fulfill time-related campaigns. However, "The disadvantages of advertising in periodical printed media are that one cannot measure directly the value of visibility, and this form of advertising usually does not generate as much response as a targeted direct mailing," maintains Stewart.

Television

Television is a powerful medium with tremendous reach and can be extremely influential. It is also more expensive, making it less attractive to businesses with limited budgets. Another drawback can be the cost of production and access; however, most television stations and cable networks have production facilities available.

Television is bought by specific program, depending on who and how many are viewing a particular show. This data is provided by the Nielsen Research firm who sends surveys to a sample segment of the market to ask what was watched or which station. This information is tabulated and provided to advertisers (at a cost) to make them aware of who they can reach in any particular quarter hour of the day. In buying a schedule on television, you need to evaluate what audience is viewing what program in order to reach your target customer.

Radio

Radio is a very effective medium, especially for frequency type campaigns such as pro-