



RADIOWORLD

The News Source for Radio Managers and Engineers

WWW.RADIOWORLD.COM

Schwartz, Upbeat About Radio Sales

Scoffs at Claims that Radio as We Know It Is 'On Its Way Out'

FROM THE EDITOR

BY PAUL MCLANE

Radio Sales Café is celebrating its third anniversary this month. I emailed with Rod Schwartz, its owner and creative director, about the service and issues facing radio salespeople.

Rod, you launched the website radiosalescafe.com three years ago. Assess its success to date.

Radio Sales Café continues to attract new members on a daily basis. To date, more than 2,700 radio advertising sales professionals have become part of this community, exchanging ideas, answering sales questions, sharing their own solutions to challenging sales problems they've faced, and just helping one another to become better at what we do.



upbeat generally. Even when a discussion centers on a problem someone is facing with a particular client, say, the responses from other members are always helpful and encouraging, which in turn gives the person who came looking for help a renewed optimism and energy to move forward. Sales can be a difficult business at times.

The support and encouragement that accompany the practical advice people share with one another tend to foster an *esprit d'corps* that is most enjoyable and satisfying to witness.

people today is what it's always been: having a genuine belief in our product.

Competition has always been there. When I started in radio sales in the 1970s, newspaper was the 800-pound gorilla; broadcast and cable TV, shoppers, Yellow Pages and billboards were also after a share of the advertising pie. Radio stations largely went after one another's clients, trying to cannibalize their meager budgets because it's what we thought we were supposed to do. Jim Williams used to call it the battle of the pygmies, fighting one another to show who was tallest among them.

But as radio people received serious sales training and came to realize that the real money was to be made by going after newspaper-sized budgets and proving to large newspaper advertisers that they could achieve phenomenal results on radio when they spent the same kind of money with us, the game began to change.

Listen to this short bit of Jim Williams' training, for example. It's a good illustration of the "before training" and "after training" mental attitude I'm trying to convey. This six-minute video clip of Roger Utnehmer's presentation at NAB last month, talking about Jim's "15 System," is another great example of how belief in the power of radio changes things. [The clips mentioned here are linked at <http://radioworld.com/May-23-2012>.]

Listen to Roger. Look at his eyes, at the confidence he exudes — it's almost predatory (and I mean that as a compliment)! If I were a newspaper or Yellow Pages salesperson in his market, I think I'd be looking for work elsewhere!

Today "OI' Smudgy" is less of an issue. Ditto the Yellow Pages. Cable TV still sells \$3 spots, but generally speaking, local TV creative is pitiful.

But online advertising has become the new marketers' darling and is emerging as a



What's the general mood among radio sales folks these days?

Well, on the basis of what I observe in the exchanges that take place regularly at RSC, I'd have to say that people seem pretty

What's the biggest challenge facing radio salespeople in 2012, as compared to five or 10 years ago; how have their challenges changed?

The biggest challenge facing radio sales-

serious competitor.

The trades are filled with discussions about Pandora doing this and smartphones doing that, and radio-as-we-know-it is on its way out. Pardon me, but you'd have a hard time convincing my clients of that here in Pullman, Wash. You'd have a hard time convincing Roger's clients in Door County, Wis., of that. Ditto Chris Rolando's stations in Arizona, Jerry Papenfuss' stations in Minnesota, Randy Miller's in Illinois ... and I could go on and on.

Yes, we need to adapt to new realities in the digital age, embrace the new technologies that our listeners are embracing and seize the opportunities these technologies

afford us to engage our listeners throughout the day across additional platforms.

Some see this as a problem, others as an opportunity.

Anything else we should know about the state of the business?

After nearly 40 years in radio advertising sales and management, I am as enthralled with the business as I've ever been.

It's always a genuine pleasure to go to work for a new client, uncover his story, then tell it in a way that causes listeners to seek him out and give his business, product, or service a try. When everything's going well, everyone wins: the advertiser, his customer and the

radio station. What's not to like about that?

The state of the business is what we make of it. And the salespeople and managers that seem to be most active at Radio Sales Café are people who love this business and make it even better by their participation.

Radio Sales Café is running a promotion in May to mark its anniversary; prizes include a subscription to Roy Williams' "Wizard of Ads Live!" monthly video meetings; Norton Warner's "David Can Still Beat Goliath (Radio Advertising Is David's Slingshot)" and the voiceover serves of five veteran voice talents. Find info posted at <http://radioworld.com/May-23-2012>.