Copywriting for Broadcast Advertising:

R A D I O
Welcome to the
‘THEATER OF THE MIND’
Radio

• A secondary medium accompanying its listeners while they are engaged in primary activities. Infiltrates their view of the world which is powerful as they are half-conscious.

• Stretches the imagination far more effectively (than TV) as it is portable, intrusive, & accessible.
Radio was very influential

- **Case: War of The World Broadcast 1938**
- **New York, NY:** Thousands of radio listeners throughout the U. S. are frightened into mass hysteria by a dramatization of H. G. Wells' old thriller, 'The War of the Worlds,' as staged by Orson Wells, young actor-manager.
What is radio commercial?

- A form of advertising in which goods, services, organizations, or ideas are promoted via the medium of radio.
- a.k.a radio spot.
- Usually 30 or 60 seconds long.
Guidelines for writing copy - radio

• Use common, familiar language.
• Use short words & sentences.
• Stimulate the imagination
  – Conjure up concrete & stimulating images in listener’s mind can have powerful impact on recall.
• Repeat name of product/brand (as radio ad is fleeting/fading quickly).
Guidelines for writing copy

• Stress main selling point/s
  – Repeat to be remembered.

• Use sound & music with care
  – Should not overwhelm copy & compromise persuasive impact of ad.

• Tailor copy to time, place, & target audience.
  – Geographic region/colloquialism
  – Time-of-day/audience age

• End with a call-to-action / tagline
Writing tips

• Do not write or present interesting sounds for listeners but PAINT *evocative visual images.
  • *stimulating memories of the past
Creative weaponry / Tools

• **Voice** – young, old, male, female, rich, poor, indifferent, professional, serious, happy, sad, etc. (convey image, shape perception suited to brand/product/services).

• Most important element heard in jingles, spoken dialogue, & announcements.

• As central voice or at the closing to wrap up product identification.

• Copywriters specify the voices to help listeners “see” characters in commercial.
Creative weaponry / Tools

• **Sound effects (SFX)** – a good one adds humour & drama. SHOW essential details that builds tension & delivers credence to your commercial (attention-getting & memorable).

• Create mental images to cue the setting - sound of seagulls, automobile horns honking, people chatting in a crowded café.

• Original or from sound-effect libraries (CD/online).
Creative weaponry / Tools

• **Music** – copywriters have a sense of the imagery of music & its role in creating dramatic effects.

• Used behind dialogue to create mood & establish setting.

• Composed especially for the ad or borrow from previously recorded song.
• Usual acronyms being used:
  – SFX, MVO, FVO, ANNCR
The limited advantage...

• Radio (& tv) offers a fleeting exposure.
• Sound effects can distract listeners from advertisement copy.
• Radio is restricted to an audio-only presentation.
• Spots are often perceived as interrupting music.
Is radio an audio medium? Can it be visual?

- Radio is VISUAL.
- Copywriter must create moods & images in the listener’s mind that transcend those created in any other medium.
- The creative potential of radio rests in its ability to stimulate theatre of the mind.
  - In a narrative format, the story is visualised in the listener’s imagination.
Drawbacks of the medium

• Few radio listeners ever actively listen to radio programming, much less the commercial interruptions.

• Generally perceived as audio wallpaper – radio is used as filler or unobtrusive accompaniment to reading, driving, household chores, or homework.
Therefore...

• Recognize characteristics of radio & exploit opportunities it offers:

  – 1. Radio **adds a dimension** of sound to the copywriting task. Sound (other than voices) can become the primary in creating copy;

  – 2. Radio **can conjure images in listener’s mind** - extending beyond the starkness of brand ‘information’ actually being provided.
Radio Advertising Formats

• 4 basic formats:
  – 1. Music / Music & copy
  – 2. Dialogue / Dramatic situation
  – 3. Straight announcement
  – 4. Celebrity announcer
Radio Advert Format: Music Format

• **Usage 1: Writing a song or jingle** in an attempt to communicate in an attention-getting & memorable fashion, & to enhance recall.

• Songs & jingles generally written specifically to accommodate unique brand copy.

• An existing tune can be used & copy is fit to its meter & rhythm.
• Tunes popular with certain target segments can be licensed for use by advertisers.

• Singing can create mood & image with which product is associated.
  – Rock & jazz tunes create 2 different moods.
• Jingles have survived for over 100 years in advertising.
• When copywriters are not musically inclined, expert songwriters are engaged.
• Ensuring that copy information dominates musical accompaniment takes great skill.
  – Musical impact can easily overwhelm persuasion & selling purposes of an ad.
• **Sample** – McDonalds “I’m lovin’ it”
Tips on how to create good jingles

• Refer Video by CAD Music.
• **Usage 2: Music & copy**
  – Music and copy combination gives your words a new dimension.
  
  – Easiest ways to mix music and words:
    • Start with music and lead into the pitch
    • Start with the pitch and lead into the music
    • Switch back and forth between the music and the pitch
    • have music playing in the background while the copy is being read.

• **Role of music** – to attract attention.
The ongoing debate...

• If a radio ad is scheduled for airing on music-format stations, should the music in the ad be the same type of music the station is noted for playing, or should it be different?
Opposing views...

• If the station format is rock, the ad should use rock music to appeal to listener’s taste.

• Using the same type of music simply buries the ad in regular programming & reduces its impact.
  
  – There is yet good evidence to suggest that the former is superior than the latter & vice versa.
Radio Advert Format: Dialogue/Dramatic situation Format

- A technique commonly used in radio.
- A challenge to make narrative copy work in short periods of time (typically 15-60 seconds) due to the threat of boredom.
- Dialogue results in a dull drone of 2 or more people having a conversation.
- To reduce threat of boredom, write with humour (although some believe it is overused in radio).
- **Sample** Burger King #2 (salma)
Radio Advert Format: Straight announcement

• Radio copy delivered by an announcer.
• Similar to narrative copy in print advertising.
• Announcer reads important product information prepared by copywriter.
• Announcement can be read by a talent, or read ‘live’ by disc jockeys or news presenters.
• If recorded, sound effects or music may be added.
Radio Advert Format: Celebrity Announcer Format

• A famous person/s to increase attention paid to a radio ad.

• Not a testimonial i.e. celebrity not expressing his/her satisfaction with the product. Merely acting as an announcer.

• Celebrities with distinctive voice qualities or, are expert at emphatic delivery of copy + listener recognition of the celebrity = increased attention to the ad.

• Sample: KIIS FM for Ford Fiesta
Different radio commercial format may produce different outcome. So, choose the most appropriate format for your product.