

## E-LESSON #3: Make Broadcast Advertising Easy

### GENERAL AGENDA



#### MAKE BROADCAST ADVERTISING EASY

*By Paul Weyland*

At a recent National Association of Broadcasters meeting for television, managers had the opportunity to visit with a panel of automobile dealers. One of the television managers asked the panel what broadcasters could do to make dealer's lives easier. One of the dealers responded with, "Well, I guess I need to learn more about Cost Per Point. That really confuses me...heck, I guess I just need to hire an advertising agency." "Oh no," I thought.

Another manager asked the same dealer, "What are we doing right?" The dealer quickly said, "I love Dave Smith's TV station. They seem to know what they're doing. I come there every week to cut spots and Dave always makes me feel welcome and at home."

So, what is the dealer really saying? He'd rather hire an agency than deal with complicated broadcast numbers. And, what he's really looking for is a relationship with someone he trusts and makes him feel at home.

Our industry has made what we do for a living seem much more complicated than it really is. As a result, most local direct clients think that buying radio or television schedules is difficult, confusing and expensive. Whose fault is it that clients feel this way about our product? It's our fault as an industry. Let's look at how local businesses perceive our industry and how we can begin to change that perception.

*It's hard to win a game when you don't know the rules.* That's why it is in our best interest to educate clients about the benefits of broadcast advertising, but in language the client understands, not in our ratings-oriented mumbo-jumbo.

If more of our salespeople simply realized that it's hard for clients to buy something they don't understand, and that educated clients buy more than uneducated clients, logically our total share of local direct revenues would be much, much higher.

Rate resistance, losing clients to agencies and reluctance to sign long-term contracts are usually symptoms of client ignorance. Remember, it's hard to buy into something when you don't perceive its value.

By focusing your attention on educating the client in language that he or she would understand, you can do several wonderful things.

1. Eliminate rate resistance
2. Eliminate “added value”
3. Make the sale whether you’re number one or number 20
4. Double or triple what your client believes he should risk on your station
5. Get a long-term contract

In order to do these things, we must change the way we talk to our clients. It’s time to make things easier not harder. We need to back away from the complicated ratings-oriented talk we’ve been inflicting on clients for the past thirty some-odd years and go back to what made us successful with local direct clients in the first place. Simple logic and easier explanations about how and why businesses should use broadcast advertising.

### ***What Business Owners Know About Advertising***

Let’s begin with the premise that most business owners know very little about marketing, advertising or how to use broadcast effectively. It’s not that they are stupid...it’s just that, generally, people are ignorant about these subjects. Consequently, people are naturally skeptical about buying something they’re not familiar with.

For example, all of us have had a client who said, “I tried radio (or TV) and it didn’t work”. That is a statement of ignorance. All forms of media “work.” All media are good. Television is good. Radio is good. Newspaper and the Yellow Pages are all good. But they must be used properly in order to achieve a measurable result.

### ***Don’t Be a Chiquita***

It’s not just the clients who have the ignorance problem. There is a second reason that we have a problem selling and retaining local direct business, and that problem is we in the broadcast business. Just how difficult are YOU making it for local direct clients to do business with you and your station?

I went to Mexico City a few months ago to do a seminar on broadcast selling. The event was in Chapultepec, a very rich part of Mexico City. And for those of you who have been to Mexico City you know that if you’re rich in Mexico, YOU’RE RICH. But even in that very wealthy part of the city there were signs of abject poverty everywhere.

On virtually every street corner there were little girls with grubby faces called “Chiquitas”. They hold out their hands and beg every passer-by for money but they have nothing to offer in return. “Por favor, señor...just a little

something,” they ask. You respond, “No Chiquita...not today. This is very dangerous. Don’t do this.” But the Chiquitas are very persistent. “Por favor...just a little something for me...POR FAVOR.”

The Chiquitas make me very sad. But they also remind me of practically every broadcast salesperson I’ve ever met. “Por favor, Mr. Client. Just a little something for my station, por favor.” And the client says, “No Chiquita, not today. But if you send me some information on your station, I’ll get right back with you.” And the Chiquita salesperson says enthusiastically, “Okay...I’ll get you some information right back to you.”

Then the Chiquita runs back to the station, cards the account and then gets on the computer and cranks out a computerized proposal filled with horrible stuff that everybody likes to read or can understand, like AQH and CPP and Frequency of 3. You get all of that stuff to your client...and then of course, the client never calls you back.

If I were a local direct client who already had the perception that broadcast advertising was complicated, confusing and expensive, I believe I’d rather chew on a mouthful of wasps than try to read one more computer-generated report or package from a radio or television station.

See, here’s the problem, and opportunity. The average radio or television station has fewer than fifty local direct accounts on the air in any given month. Meanwhile, another medium out there has practically every single account, thousands of them, locked up with annual contracts. That medium is the Yellow Pages, the GREAT MONEY-SUCKING HOLE.

See, it’s not that all of those local advertisers aren’t advertising...they’re just not advertising with YOU. Why? Because of the way we sell. We’re an industry of Chiquitas...giving local direct clients’ facts and figures that even WE don’t fully understand. So, how should we expect anybody else to understand them?

Here’s a great test. Explain GRPs, AQH and frequency to YOUR MOM...in language that SHE would understand...that would get her excited and ready to buy from you BEFORE her eyes turn yellow and cross. It’s not an easy thing to do. So, why keep going there with clients?

The best part about beating your head against a wall is that it feels so good when you STOP. Stop confusing and boring your clients with crap ratings proposals they don’t understand. Managers, stop confusing salesperson EFFORT with salesperson production. Salespeople, stop being Chiquitas, begging clients for money without offering anything valuable in return.

While I was in college I worked at a small campus men's store. Two out of five people who came into our store were CHIQUITAS who were trying to sell US something.

And all of the Chiquitas who visited us would say the same, cliché things.

- “We’re number ONE.
- We’ve got a 3.2.
- We have the BIGGEST STICK IN TOWN.
- Oh, you’ll LOVE our morning show!
- I just need to make ONE MORE SALE and I get to go to JAMAICA with our station!
- Don’t buy that station over there...the people who listen to THAT station live on THE STREET AND SMOKE CRACK!”

Not one single media salesperson ever came in and spoke to us in language that we understood, about how it would be logical and in OUR BEST INTEREST to do business with them.

We know that educated clients buy more than uneducated clients. We know that our local direct clients have been inundated with Chiquitas from every media and every station.

And, instead of educating clients properly about good marketing, the difference between good and bad advertising and how to calculate return on investment on the advertising they’re doing, all the Chiquita has to offer is a report written in hieroglyphics that nobody can or wants to read. All the Chiquita can do is a little chest-beating dance about how they’re number one with 24-49 year old women who shave one eyebrow and drive Volvos.

The broadcast industry has a marketing problem with local direct advertisers. It’s that pesky perception that what WE do for a living is confusing, complicated and expensive. Instead of perceiving us as resources, we look like pests. Instead of having a knowledgeable marketing and advertising expert to help them grow their businesses, they get to meet their third Chiquita in a year and a half from your station.

It’s a shame, but that’s what local direct clients think about broadcast advertising...that is, if they even bother to think about using us at all. And guess what? We have nobody to blame but ourselves.

### ***Lessons from Other Industries***

Let’s look other industries and try to understand how difficult they made it for people to do business with them. Have you tried to buy a mobile phone lately? How about a digital camera? A lot of people are intimidated by high-

tech gadgetry. There seem to be so many options on features and brands. With phones, look at all of the confusing calling plans.

With computer security problems as bad as they are, what do you really know about different firewalls, operating systems and internet service providers and the options that they do or don't provide? Many of us had certain fears and perceptions about PCs that kept us from buying them when they first appeared on store shelves. The choices now are even worse. And instead of educating us in language that we could easily understand, many of these industries continue to talk down to us. How difficult are these companies making it for us to buy from them, when the choices, benefits and results aren't crystal clear?

Aren't these companies taking huge risks by assuming that the average consumer knows everything they know? Many people PERCEIVE that these new electronic devices are expensive. The fact is though, that many of the new phones and other devices are now so INEXPENSIVE that it probably makes sense to switch them out every year or so. It's too bad that potential consumers are so intimidated that they hang onto the same old workhorse device for years, or until they are completely obsolete.

So whose fault is it that millions of consumers are ignorant about the benefits and results that these new mobile phones, computers, PDAs and other digital gadgets could bring us? It's THEIR fault. If they bothered to EDUCATE us that in language that we could easily understand, we'd probably purchase more of these items in a more timely fashion. In other words, if we were better educated about some of these products, we'd probably be spending more money on them.

### ***Take Responsibility for the Education of Your Clients***

The broadcast business is no different. Always keep in mind that most people outside of the media industry and advertising agency business have no idea how the broadcast advertising process works. Most business owners, for that matter, don't have any knowledge of marketing or advertising process at all...much less how they could get a return on investment from a media campaign.

Why are many clients ignorant about the benefits that broadcast could bring to their businesses? Instead of teaching them how to use our media in language that they understand, we're showing them complicated ratings information that would take a statistician to figure out. Instead of teaching them something about basic marketing, we're too busy bragging about our signal strength and the nuances of our formats.

Instead of teaching them the difference between a good spot and a bad spot, we're telling them that we're number one, with a 6.5 share in Men 25-54. Instead of helping the client to calculate a reasonable return on investment for their advertising dollars, we're showing them complicated rate cards and packages. Instead of teaching them that what we do is easy, we're giving them tedious multi-paged proposals with graphs, numbers and little fractions of numbers.

No wonder that we encounter rate resistance so early in the broadcast selling process. Price may be the one thing that the client feels comfortable discussing. Everything we've presented appears complicated and confusing.

### ***Advertising Is Easy***

In order to educate local direct clients correctly, we must begin with disarming them. We've got to let them know that what we do for a living is not complicated. In fact, it's very simple. Our job is basically this: *to teach our thousands of listeners or viewers WHO the client is, WHAT the client does and HOW to get in touch with the client.* How hard is that?

Help your client to think that what we do is very easy. Tell him that you are simply a broker for a huge group of consumers with eyes and ears and legs and wallets.

Tell the client that you represent a lake containing thousands of fish. At any given moment, many of those fish are coming toward the surface to feed. It makes sense that if these fish are hungry for what the client is selling... if the bait is attractive enough and if we cast the line enough times so that the bait becomes familiar...then it seems like a logical calculated risk that your client will catch fish on your lake.

*There is an on-line companion video provided with this lesson.*

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