

Ilan Lazarus, Director at Page Three Media, Cape Town, provides key radio planning insights

Media expert:	Ilan Lazarus
Company:	Page Three Media, Cape Town
Position:	Director
What would you say are the key ingredients to developing an effective radio media plan?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Ingredient # 1: Understand the brand</u> Firstly, it is important to have a true understanding of the brand and how the brand fits into the life of the consumer. As radio is an immediate medium, advertising can be planned strategically to reach the listener when they are most receptive to the brand message. For example, advertising home loans on Sunday afternoon or Monday mornings and advertising breakfast cereals within morning-drive will reach the market when most receptive. • <u>Ingredient # 2: Understand who the target market is</u> Consumers are creatures of habit and as radio is a habitual medium, it can be used to build awareness through various strategic approaches. The primary responsibility is to fully understand the target market and their average day usage of radio, as the listeners usually follow similar listenership patterns each day. This will allow us to build both reach and frequency more cost-efficiently. • <u>Ingredient #3: Understand the campaign objectives</u> Be clear on client's campaign objectives and translate them into relevant media objectives, which the radio plan will ultimately answer. For example, a teaser campaign will generally require higher reach yet lighter frequency levels, compared to the introduction of a new category, which will require higher frequency levels. The client objectives are of vital importance and will directly influence the strategy. • <u>Ingredient #4: Work closely with the creative team</u> Each radio station offers a different environment in terms of their programming, so this should be analysed in order to ensure the commercial being flighted befits the environment. This is relevant for both the station selection, as well as the time channel in which it flights, as many presenters offer uniquely different formats. Whether listening actively or passively, the listener is ultimately receptive to the mood and sounds of the radio station, so the advertising should fit the environment of the stations in order to enhance engagement. • <u>Ingredient #5: Plan responsibly within the budget</u> There are many campaigns which flight with underweight media pressure, as a consequence of a minimal client budget. The ultimate result is a below threshold frequency level and the campaign will quite simply not perform as well as expected, if at all. If the budget is tight, limit the number of radio stations to rather generate sufficient frequency across fewer stations. If there is insufficient budget to properly plan using one radio station, then make the decision to possibly explore other media options.
What are some of the key	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Select stations which target the audience as effectively as</u>

<p>considerations in terms of station selection?</p>	<p>possible. This does not mean that only radio stations with the largest listenership are used in order to be “effective”. For example, the “talk” radio stations will never be able to compete on listenership numbers, yet they offer a discerning, educated and highly affluent listenership base.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Devise the correct mix of radio stations to maximise both reach and frequency levels with the given budget. With the growth in regional radio stations, ensure you are not overweight or underweight in any specific region, at the expense of the other regions. • Assess the environment of each station, to ensure it is correct for the brand and the creative execution. We underestimate the receptiveness of listeners. • Learn from your competitors by monitoring competitive pressure across the stations. If a competitor has been advertising on a particular station for a number of months, they are most probably generating positive results from the listeners they are targeting.
<p>Reach and Frequency are obviously dependent on the client’s objectives i.e. do you want to reach more people less frequently, or fewer people more often? When is reach required at the expense of frequency and vice versa?</p>	<p>This is entirely dependent on the campaign objectives, as well as the creative content. Although each campaign is different, our agency is generally a believer in building high frequency at the expense of reach, due to the nature of the medium and the way consumers interact with radio. Put figuratively, although some people claim to fall in love at first sight (exposure of one), it usually takes time and frequency of engagement to truly build the relationship. Saying this though, we have noticed a recent “short-term” trend, which is as a result of the worldwide economic recession. With budgets generally being cut across the board and markets shrinking, the focus has shifted to delivering higher reach levels along with a more impactful connection, so less reliance on frequency. More impactful connections include customised competitions, tailored feature sponsorships, etc.</p>
<p>Please can you give some insight into these different strategies and the acceptable levels of reach and frequency in each case?</p>	<p>The reach and frequency requirements differ according to budget and the detailed objectives. However, as a basic guideline, we manipulate frequency levels according to a number of criteria. The youth generally require a lighter frequency level as does a campaign which is executed with limited activity from the competitor set. As a general rule, we base light frequency levels at 3.0 OTH and heavy levels at 7.0 OTH, with different campaigns requiring separate pressure levels. Simple messages, teaser campaigns and brands with long purchasing cycles generally require frequency levels of 3.0 OTH, whereas brand repositioning campaigns, introduction of new categories or short competitive bursts at key seasonal periods require up to 7.0 OTH levels. In terms of reach levels, this depends solely on budget. However, for the lower-end of the market, it is relatively easy to achieve high levels of reach, given the heavy consumption of radio and lighter fragmentation within the medium. For the top-end of the market, where heavy fragmentation exists, it becomes expensive to achieve high reach, so a reach of 60% would be considered high for many budgets.</p>
<p>Other than radio being an optimal reach medium, with the ability to build frequency cost-effectively, what other unique aspects of radio make it a valuable medium from a media</p>	<p>Although a cliché, radio is undoubtedly regarded as a “companionship” medium and in times of recession, this plays a greater role in the media planning function. Listeners truly have a relationship with their radio stations and it is valuable for advertisers to leverage off this relationship, particularly when correctly exploiting live read commercials and power spot formats.</p>

planning perspective?	
Other comments/key insights that could assist media planners and advertisers when planning their next radio campaign?	<p>The planning of radio alone does only consist of on-air advertising. We are in the digital age, which has resulted in broadcasting on-air, on-line (via the internet) and on-mobile (via the cell phone). At this stage, there are approximately 600 000 listeners who frequently use the internet to access their radio stations and this will grow rapidly over the next few years. There is potential to converge online and radio planning, which we have already implemented quite successfully for a few campaigns.</p>
What services does Page Three offer and how can advertisers reach you?	<p>Page Three Media is a strategic media agency with a sole focus on the media planning function. The media planning role has changed over the years and clients are now demanding far greater strategic ability, with stronger interpretation and insight into the market, deeper understanding of the local and international consumer and clearly defined media planning systems and tools. Although we are fully independent, we also believe that ideas drive channels and as such, media should not be totally isolated from the creative process. We have therefore recently launched Page Three Inside, which are satellite offices within a few of our partner creative agencies.</p>