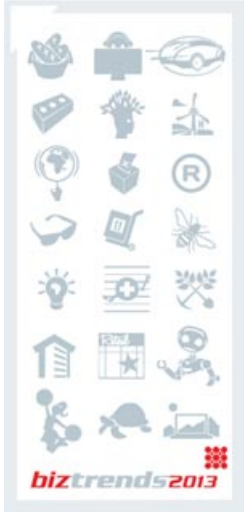


Radio raises the volume

 By [Matona Sakupwanya](#)

21 Jan 2013

Radio has always baffled media futurologists, effortlessly bouncing back from perceived 'threats' such as recession right through to technological revolution - something consistently touted by 'radio assassins' as the next to bring about the demise of the medium.



Bucking the trend, year-on-year growth as an industry remains at a steady increase and this demonstrates the medium's enduring relevance.

One of the most outstanding radio campaigns we saw within the South African radio sector in 2012 was undoubtedly the popular [FNB 'Steve' campaign](#) - not just for the radio-centricity of the campaign but for the use of up to 1 minute-long spots in selected formats. In a traditionally conservative business sector, it's fair to say that the tangible results of this approach demonstrate that the medium can be used very effectively as a primary medium for major campaigns.

However, it was not just this campaign that saw vigorous reliance on radio to deliver returns. The motor trade and retail, too, were significant contributors. Also risky, but highly effective were the campaigns to launch [Frank.net](#) and [wonga.com](#), proving that the right station with the right message, at the right frequency, will yield good returns.

With that, here's a look at what made these campaigns work, and some of the trends that will shape radio advertising in the coming year...

1. There are two distinct trends with regard to the duration of campaigns

On the one hand, we are seeing a shift in the understanding and appreciation of value for large-scale sponsorships and endorsements. This is predominantly in the national advertiser space, where brands realise the value of long-term associations with radio station(s) of choice via activations and/or celebrities who can assist in building their brand.

In the same vein, advertisers are also looking for short-term opportunities that won't lock them down to long-term holdings. This is why we'll see more premium-sponsorship products and smaller features being booked for a week at a time and not for the traditional three-month minimum period, allowing advertisers to sample a whole range of radio products, before committing to any one property long-term.

2. The renaissance of the jingle

A case in point was wonga.com's use of the catchy 'Mr Sandman' tune. Kevin Hurwitz, CEO of wonga.com SA says, "The use of the 'Mr Sandman' jingle was entirely deliberate. Consumers are inundated with adverts these days, across all media, and we thought this song resonates with almost all people across a broad demographic. We have learnt a great deal from jingle-based campaigns - such as the fact that people really like to sing along to a feel-good, memorable tune (we suspected as much, but now we know for sure!). It has certainly increased the level of interaction and engagement we have enjoyed with our customers and this is something we find incredibly important."

At a recent Audio Branding Congress held in the UK, research presented from the '[Implicit and Explicit Effects of Music on Brand Perception in TV Ads](#)' study suggests that feel-good music leads consumers to like products more and be more persuaded by superficial elements of an ad, enabling radio in this context is able to operate at a much deeper emotional level.

It's these kinds of appealing messages and audio features that can transfer well - even onto TV campaigns - and enable radio to perform both the role of driving people into store while also building brand loyalty, well into 2013.

3. Focus on the power of the message... 'No one listens to radio for the ads'

This is precisely why in 2013 well-written scripts, that demonstrate an insight into the consumer's mind, will get results. Every good campaign needs reach and frequency on the radio station, but good, creative execution and innovation is what will help advertisers stand out this year.

4. Realism

Another trend that is slowly taking root in South Africa, says award-winning voiceover artist Adam Behr (the voice behind campaigns such as Frank.net) is the ability to be 'conversational': "Also known as 'realism', what this really means is proper voice acting. Voice artists have to know how to act convincingly, using only their voice. After all, it is the context of these everyday conversations that are so important for an advertiser."

5. Retailers are also taking advantage of the developments in digital radio

Which means broadcasters will continue to offer closer links to retailer's websites to drive traffic and sales. "A lot of brands are now seeing how booking cross-platform campaigns can play a role in brand-building, as opposed to just price-led advertising on air," says RAB UK MD Simon Redican.

Similarly, in the UK, supermarket media spend has come under the spotlight with the sector's substantial decrease in press spend and a potential change in media strategy. One of the beneficiaries so far has been radio, with spend up 58% year-on-year during the last six months of 2011. One of the reasons that retailers are once again waking up to the full potential of the medium may be that, tactically, radio plays a vital role in targeting shoppers and catching them at the right time.

6. Listeners take their stand

With the evolution of radio has also come the realisation that listeners are far more than groupings or numbers who can be bought using a series of runs and spreadsheets. They're part of today's popular and social networking cultures, and will subscribe to media that understand their needs and interests best, allowing them to express their

views and opinions.

Many South African radio stations are already making the most of this trend, ensuring they offer listeners a total, interactive experience.

7. Radio and digital - best of bedfellows

Looking to 2013, radio's greatest achievement will continue to be its ability to gel with mobile and digital interfaces. The medium is unmatched when it comes to integrating flawlessly with internet and mobile technology.

Radio is not just about the audience who tune in to the station - it's now about following that audience to a place where they further interact with the talent. Whether it's social media or live events, radio plays a vital part of that consumer journey, ensuring that the pattern of increased investment and a revival in interest in radio is one that will continue throughout 2013.

That said, we need to move away from number crunching and provide the industry with tangible, credible examples of how radio has worked for advertisers and brands, to build confidence even further. It used to be about reach and frequency, but now it's about engagement and relevance. Advertisers need to see metrics and measurement techniques that are focused on ROI.

This must be radio's challenge for the next three years - how to make our measurement of campaigns and audiences even more robust. And we'll only do this by getting the industry excited about what radio is ultimately best at - results!

For more:



- Bizcommunity Download: [2013 Biz Trends Report](#) (pdf: 3MB)
- Bizcommunity Special Section: [Biz Trends 2013](#)
- Bizcommunity Search: [2013 trends](#)
- Bizcommunity: [Biz Trends 2013 twitterfall](#)
- Twitter Search: [#biztrends2013](#)

ABOUT MATONA SAKUPWANYA

Matona Sakupwanya is GM of the Radio Advertising Bureau of South Africa (RABSA; www.rab.co.za; @RABSouthAfrica). She is passionate about championing the medium of radio and helping marketers, media and creative agencies to better understand and harness the power of the medium for their brands. Contact Matona on tel +27 (0)11 325 4935, email matona@rab.co.za and connect on Facebook.

■ [2014 trends] The rise of radio - 31 Jan 2014

■ [2013 trends] Radio raises the volume - 21 Jan 2013

[View my profile and articles...](#)

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>