



Engaging Emotions Through Effective Radio Ads

A Study of How Radio Affects Consumer Emotions Conducted by Gallup & Robinson (Part Two)

Part of the ongoing series, "Radio and the Consumer's Mind: How Radio Works," August 2008

Introduction

Engaging Emotions Through Effective Radio Ads is the second part of a Radio Ad Lab project originally conducted by Gallup & Robinson (G&R) in 2007 and designed to assess how well Radio ads generate emotional responses and engage with consumers, compared to television ads.

Study Highlights

- **Strong beginnings make a difference.** An involving point of entry distinguishes some of the most successful Radio ads in our study.
- **Word selection matters.** Words that are sensory-laden, emotional, or empowering have a demonstrable impact on the emotional reactions of consumers.
- **Audio can be powerful.** Audio can generate stronger emotions than visuals, especially when the tonality in the ad is used effectively.
- **Brand mentions have an impact.** The best Radio ads mention the advertiser's brand multiple times, strategically placed to correlate with moments of high consumer engagement.

The highest scoring and best performing ad in the study exhibited all of the above, a strong indication that Radio commercials are highly engaging to consumers when the creative process follows these patterns.

Background

In the original 2007 Engagement, Emotions, and the Power of Radio study, G&R used Continuous Emotional Response Analysis (CERA) to measure emotional activation at a deep, pre-cognitive level with Facial Electromyography (EMG) for 16 real campaigns. The study found that on average, Radio ads have emotional impact on consumers that is equal to that of television ads.

For the second phase of the study, Engaging Emotions Through Effective Radio Ads, the Radio Ad Lab examined moment-by-moment reactions to the same Radio ads. While not a comprehensive survey of all possible creative techniques, we were able to distinguish which creative elements delivered the best performing commercials, based on positive EMG scores*.

Study Findings

Pattern #1: Strong Beginnings Make a Difference

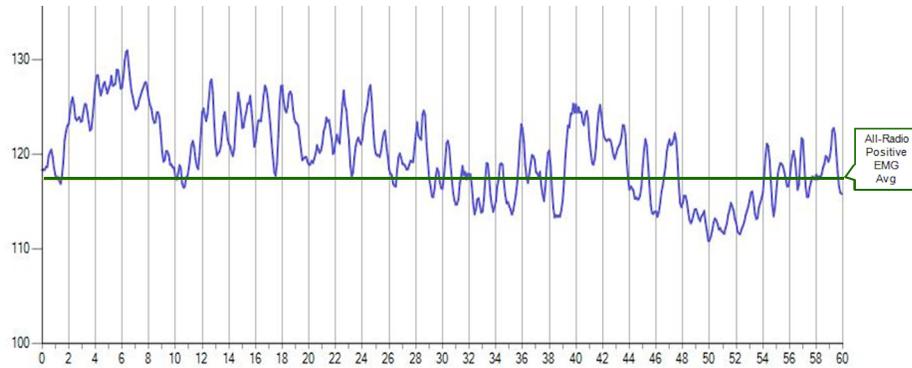
Several of the higher-rated ads included an involving point of entry, often beginning strongly with something that hooked listeners emotionally from the first seconds of the ad.

A 60-second Allstate ad promoting their "accident forgiveness" program was one of the three highest-scoring
*Positive EMG scores — readings taken from the "smile" (zygomatic) muscles as indicators of positive emotional responses. The charts here are based on a sample of about 40 respondents. (A total of 80 Radio test respondents were each exposed to half of the 16 commercials).

Radio ads based on G&R’s positive EMG measure (120.2). It was also one of the Radio ads that showed a statistically significant difference from its television counterpart.

The ad engaged listeners from the outset with a very personal and important question: “If you have an accident, did you know your insurance rates could go up by 40%?”

MOMENT-BY-MOMENT EMG SCORE - ALLSTATE AD

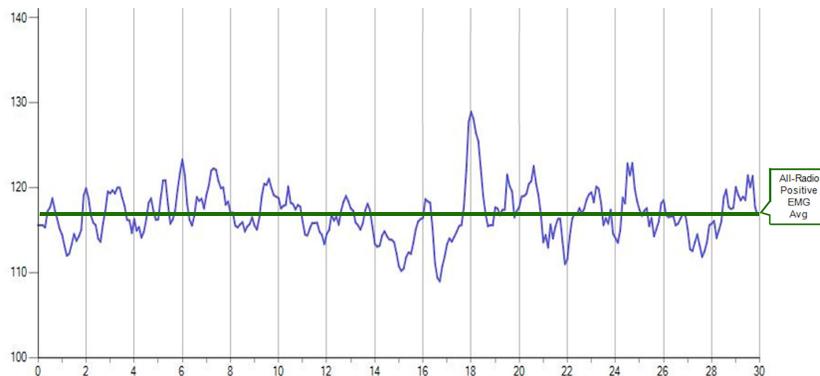


Pattern #2: Spoken Words Are Powerful

The specific words used in ads can make a real difference. And in Radio, the power of the spoken word can be impressive when those words are sensory-laden, emotional, or empowering.

The Radio ad for Campbell’s Chunky Soup, part of the well-known Mama McNabb campaign, scored just as well as its TV counterpart. Sensory-laden phrases like “Chunky Fajita Steak Soup...loaded with big chunks of steak,” combined with the announcer’s delivery, clearly broke through with spikes in emotional reactions after the midpoint of the ad:

MOMENT-BY-MOMENT EMG SCORE - CAMPBELL’S SOUP AD



Pattern #3: Advertiser Branding = Brand Recall

We saw a clear correlation between brand recall and the number of brand mentions in our set of ads. While we’d never advocate “number of brand mentions” as a singular goal for copy writing, brand mentions are important for successful ads.

In Radio, effective branding and emotional effectiveness can go hand in hand. The full paper presents a Radio ad for the Audi A-Series cars that managed to weave nine separate Audi mentions into 60 seconds, and most occurred during high levels of emotional engagement.

Note: Brand mentions can sometimes get lost when audio tracks are simply lifted from television ads for use as Radio commercials. A television ad may have depended on both visual and audio cues for branding, but when the audio track is simply transferred to Radio, all of those visual-only branding opportunities disappear.

Pattern #4: Sustain Interest Throughout

The ads that sustained interest throughout the commercial had the best overall positive EMG scores, as exemplified in the Allstate and Campbell's charts. The Allstate ad, for example, maintained positive EMG scores at or above the average Radio ad score except for the "boilerplate" section toward the end.

Pattern #5: Doing It All Well Is Powerful

Ads that utilize all of these elements can have the greatest impact. An Oscar Mayer Radio ad—part of the well-known "My bologna has a first name" series—was the highest scoring overall, with a Positive EMG score of 121.9, and an unaided recall score of 61%.

The ad contained all of the essential principles outlined above:

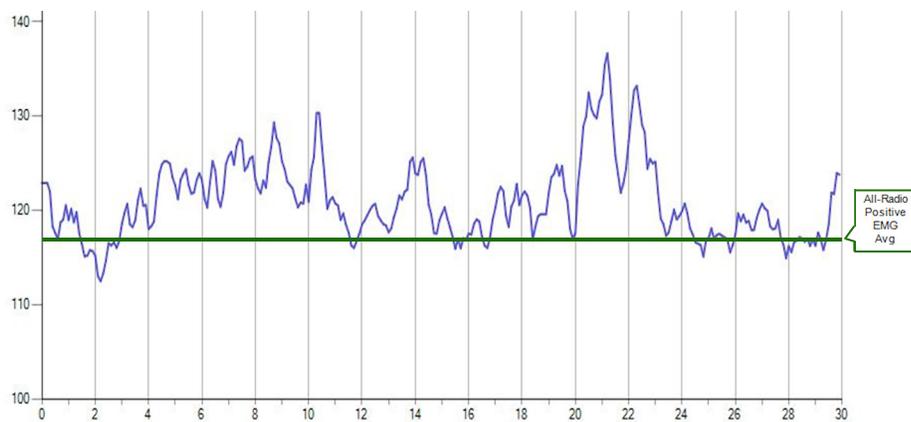
Strong beginning -- the positive emotional reactions are high right from the start.

Colorful, sensory language -- "...a happy lunch...quality meat...no fillers."

Effective branding -- the Oscar Mayer jingle is one big brand reference.

Sustained interest -- a consistent, above-average performance throughout.

MOMENT-BY-MOMENT EMG SCORES - OSCAR MAYER AD



Conclusion

For ad effectiveness, the quality of Radio advertising creative matters.

Implications from The Engaging Emotions Through Effective Radio Ads study indicate that it pays to invest time in good Radio ad creative, and testing the content in advance to ensure the ad evokes the intended emotional connection – one of Radio's greatest strengths.

In study after study, both those done by the Radio Ad Lab and elsewhere, we've confirmed that Radio advertising is very effective and performs even better when attention is paid to the nature of the medium and the creative content. Ads that utilize these elements have proven to be the most engaging with consumers.

The full paper, Engaging Emotions through Effective Radio Ads, is available for free download at www.RadioAdLab.org. You can also download the entire selection of Radio Ad Lab research studies and papers at the site.

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About The Radio Ad Lab

The Radio Ad Lab is an independent organization established in 2001. It is funded by Radio industry companies and works with advertisers, agencies, and Radio broadcasters to further the understanding of how Radio advertising works, to measure Radio's effectiveness and to increase advertiser and agency confidence in Radio.

All Radio Ad Lab research, including White Papers, studies, and summaries, is available in its entirety and for free download at www.RadioAdLab.org. We encourage you to sign up for our email list at the website to make sure that you're notified of new Radio Ad Lab research.

