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Let the Music (Consumer) Do the Talking

Radio is more closely associated in the minds of consumers with words like “Popular”, “Trusted”, “Hits” and “Current” than all other music platforms including Sirius XM, Pandora, YouTube and Facebook according to the Music 360 study, an annual in-depth look at consumer interaction with music in the US fielded by Nielsen.

And last year when presenting highlights of the study at the recent Nielsen Audio Client Conference/Jacobs Media Summit, Julianne Schiffer, SVP for Insights and Analytics at Nielsen Entertainment, shared the good news that radio continues to be a dominant source of music listening and discovery in the consumer’s minds.

But this column isn’t just about patting our medium on the back. The data also revealed some interesting insights about consumers that relate to on-air content, promotions and marketing.

For instance, if you’ve ever wondered why a song you’ve been playing forever is still unfamiliar or how listeners aren’t aware of your big station promotion here’s the answer: of the more than 2,500 people surveyed, 90% of people who said they listen to music say it’s often on in the background while they are doing something else. This is an excellent reminder of how difficult it is for your messages, music or anything else, to cut through in a listener’s mind.

It also means your content has to really stand out and be attention-getting to be memorable. And it reinforces the necessity of frequently repeating messages, be they positioners, promotions or even advertisements, if you want the listener to hear and remember them.

Respondents also reaffirmed the value of sharing information about the music you play. The study indicates that about a third of listeners would like to know more about their favorite musicians and the same number would also like more information about the creative process for the musicians/bands they prefer. This highlights the importance of making sure your hosts, especially in music-focused dayparts, include artist and song-related content as a part of their shows. It may not be the only content listeners want but it has a high likelihood of resonating with the audience.

There is also value in music-related prizes. According to Schiffer's presentation, giving away free music does a great deal to increase consumer's favorable opinion toward a brand. She also noted that a quarter of respondents said it is "important for them to own something physical" from their favorite artists such as a CD, record or t-shirt. Imagine how much more interest there is likely to be in autographed merchandise or other collector's items that stations have the ability to give away.

And, finally, the data included a great reminder of the value of being a local radio station. More than 55% of radio listeners said their local station "helps me stay connected to my community and aware of what's going on." They rated this attribute higher than the value of their personal connection to the station, concert promotion or information elements.

