

Wendy's Keeps Business Cooking With Local Radio

Objective: Build brand sales and profitability.

Media Strategy: Be as efficient and targeted as possible.

Radio Plan: When buying local Radio, use promotions to maximize the investment.

Results: When they buy Radio, they drive transactions.

A company that makes square burgers in a round burger world should be expected to do things a little differently. So it's no surprise that Wendy's looks at Radio in its very own way.

"All of our Radio dollars are exclusively local," explains Marilyn Dennis, manager, local media for Wendy's.

"From a cost per point perspective," she says, "local Radio can be very efficient. Local Radio also allows us to customize the offer or message to specific market objectives."

One of the reasons we like Radio so much is the targetability, both demographically and geographically. With Arbitron's county coverage information, we can identify Radio stations that are highly rated in counties where we have stores."

She also likes the creative flexibility of local Radio. Marilyn says, "Our Field Marketing Managers can select which unit length they want. They can choose :30s or :60s, or married :30s with two messages that are compatible. In some situations we have also created :45 spots and given the Field Marketing Managers the option of how they want to tag those spots."

The tags create a local flavor in the market place, a benefit Dennis believes is particularly important in the food business.

All of which brings us to the importance of local promotions for Wendy's.

"One of the company's primary objectives in using local Radio is to maximize our Radio dollars," Dennis says. "And one of the things that adds to its efficiency is that for every dollar spent on Radio we can leverage that power through promotional extensions."

Again, flexibility is the key. If Wendy's has launched a national campaign promoting its Spicy Chicken Sandwich or its late-night hours, the promotions can be tailored to those campaigns. Likewise, the company can run a strictly local effort in support of its High School Heisman program or the adoption initiative founded by Wendy's leader and frequent spokesperson, Dave Thomas. The goal in either case is to stretch their media dollars beyond the straight buy.

So does it work? Emphatically yes, says Dennis, "Whenever there are promotional extensions, we can really see that transactions are increasing in stores where we made the Radio buys."

"Radio stations are typically very willing to support our marketing initiatives, whether it's for a new product launch or to promote any number of our community related efforts. We look at these stations as media partners." ●

