

Radio: The Weaknesses

Listener Fragmentation

With the number of radio stations in the United States increasing each year, several markets are flooded by dozens of local stations. Since each station promotes its ability to deliver to its own loyal audience, the market becomes broken down into tiny demographic segments. For businesses trying to reach a wider audience of different people, choosing radio can be a difficult and expensive media buy. Audience surveys are also limited in scope and don't provide advertisers with important socioeconomic data.

Cluttered Commercial Breaks

Some radio stations air up to 18-20 minutes per hour of commercials, which is driving many consumers to alternative music sources such as XM satellite radio, iPods, MP3 players, and CD's.

Influence

While radio provides the impact of sound, it can't attract people to a product or service visually – the strongest human sense. Because of that limitation, ads don't receive the full attention of the listeners.

Background Medium

Listeners are able to multi-task when the radio is on and often the sounds become simply background noise. When a medium doesn't compel people to give it their full attention, the advertising message gets lost as well.

Incomplete Market Coverage

Most radio stations have a limited coverage range, even though they may reach a large portion of a marketing area. Television, however, covers a large geographic area and reaches a much larger share of any given market.

Control

Since the largest radio audiences are tuned in during drive-time, usually in the morning, advertisers are only reaching these listeners during a limited time frame. Reach and frequency are the most important keys to an effective advertising campaign and advertisers simply don't achieve that through radio.

Expensive Reach

The only way to reach a larger audience is for advertisers to purchase time on several radio stations, making the medium an expensive buy for reaching a variety of people.