

## STUDY FINDS RADIO CAN BOLSTER BRAND AWARENESS, PURCHASE INTENT

October 29, 2012 | Chris Powell | [Comments](#)

Radio has the ability to “super-charge” other advertising tactics like TV and online according to a study released by **Canadian Broadcast Sales** (CBS).

The Toronto-based radio sales company – co-owned by **Corus Entertainment** and **Rogers Communications** – partnered with the U.K. research firm RadioGauge to conduct a series of online studies aimed at determining the efficacy of radio advertising.

Since 2007, RadioGauge has conducted 600 radio studies in the U.K, South Africa and Ireland for clients including McDonald’s, Coca-Cola, Ford and Volkswagen. The first wave of the Canadian study involved advertisers in the petroleum, banking, full-service restaurant, appliance, furniture and gaming sectors with three additional advertisers going into field next month.

CBS president **Patrick Grierson** told *Marketing* that the study arose from discussions with key media buyers who expressed their clients’ concerns about the effectiveness of radio advertising.

Radio has long fought for recognition in a crowded ad landscape, said Grierson. Even when it has been a dominant medium, radio suffered from consumer confusion – listeners would hear a campaign, but when remembering it, would think they’d seen the campaign on TV, said Grierson.

The RadioGauge study involved a total of 800 demographically and geographically balanced respondents in key advertiser demos who were divided into test and control groups based on their radio usage. The control group was exposed to all media except radio stations carrying the campaigns, while the test group also listened to the radio stations.

The study found that general ad awareness for clients among the test group was 31% higher than non-radio listeners, while first-mention brand response among the test group indexed 20% higher than the control group.

The study also found that when respondents were asked, unprompted, to list the first three brands that came to mind in a given category, clients in the radio test group scored 20% higher than those not in the control group. And when prompted, 10% more of the test group were aware of a product or service compared to the non-radio control group.

While Grierson said such findings are partly a function of a given client’s market share, he noted that companies putting advertising into radio tended to perform “remarkably well” in terms of awareness and purchase intent.

When participants were asked if they agreed or disagreed that a given brand “is for people like me,” the Canadian radio test average was 24% higher than the control average.

And when asked “if you were considering buying (product category), how likely would you be to consider (brand x)?” the radio test respondents indicated a 22% higher preference for the product. “We were very pleasantly surprised by how strongly that reflected the impact of radio,” said Grierson. “That’s hitting a home run.”

The study also tested participants’ reaction to creative by asking them to indicate positive or negative feelings during the course of a commercial. Participants tended to react positively to recognizable voices and in those instances where there was a visual transfer from television. The use of jingles also drew favourable responses.

Participants also reacted negatively to creative that seemed to be trying too hard to be clever or talked down to them.

Canadian advertisers spent \$1.6 billion on radio last year according to data from the Television Bureau of Canada, meaning that it accounted for an estimated 14.5% of the total Canadian major media ad spend of \$10.8 billion.

Sectors such as automotive, retail and telecommunications continue to use the medium “quite broadly” as part of their tactical marketing requirements, said Grierson, contributing to what he characterized as “quite nice” first quarter growth. Grierson predicted radio would close the year with “ever-so-slight” growth in its share of Canadian ad spending.