

Car Magazine 'drives' home the message the way only radio can!



The lack of excellent radio copy has been whinged about for many a year and yet it's still not where it should be. Bester Burke Slingers Creative Director and the brains behind this month's featured Car Magazine spot, **Stephen Burke** tells us how they're bringing the power of this brand to life...



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Q. What was the big idea and what role did this execution play in the broader marketing of the Car Magazine brand?

A. Every month Car Magazine focuses on one feature within the magazine and dramatises it. The concept for this particular ad was therefore borne out of a road test article in the January issue of the magazine. Using a spoof based on the traffic cop stereotype, we played on a human truth, making the speeding fine /traffic cop concept 'spot on'. Given that the ads are a monthly thing, they have been great at entrenching a loyal brand following. Proof of this is the regular feedback that the client often gets from readers, commending them on the execution of the spots.

Q. Please discuss the mechanics of the campaign/ad i.e. location, duration, crafting, and any other interesting features that really made it work

A. The beauty of this campaign is the fact that because Car Magazine is a monthly publication, we in turn have a monthly challenge to produce a great ad. To achieve this, we employ the services of voice-over artist, Tulley McCullough, who does all the characters and is key to the execution. Given that radio today is far too overproduced and lacking in spontaneity, his input coupled with our ethos of using fewer words with a focus on developing the character, also contributes to the final product. The Car magazine ads are flighted for a week on 5fm, just as the magazine hits the shelves. Thereafter, they are flighted later on in the month as sales dip, giving a boost to its incredibly loyal following.

Q. What are the biggest challenges facing copywriters in terms of scripting radio ads right now?

A. One of the biggest challenges facing copywriters today is an obvious lack of single-minded propositions to work with. Marketers and advertisers often insist on cramming all the info or product benefits into one spot, leaving no room for creative input. Brands have also become quite arrogant and are placing less emphasis on brand building. It's therefore the responsibility of the agency or client service representative to enlighten clients on the principles of creativity and how these can be used to drive brand health and sales. It takes a

brave client to make great radio, and fortunately for us, our client is very much part of our creative process. In short, Car magazine has successfully managed to close this divide, and that's quite simply why it sells.

Q. Why do you believe radio is an effective/powerful media vehicle to market a brand?

A. Radio is live, and by virtue of that, more spontaneous. It's powerful because of its unique ability to engage the audience. By its nature, the listener's frame of mind is so tuned into the audio, it becomes difficult to separate radio content from the ad. This consistent engagement makes ads far easier to absorb on radio, than on TV. This is why the RAB is such a valuable resource. The fact that there's now an industry body with a mandate of enhancing the advertiser/ marketer's understanding of the medium of radio, and highlighting how they can make the best use of it, is finally giving radio advertising a voice.

Q.What is your opinion on the state of our local radio copywriting?

A. Creativity on radio unfortunately leaves much to be desired. There are far too many live reads, too many promos and station-written ads. These are usually very easy to spot as they're made up of a dialogue between two people and the brand name screamed about five times. People don't talk like that, but this has unfortunately become the norm. A good spot undoubtedly struggles to survive in that environment. With advertising having become too visual and production values slipping, new emphasis needs to be placed on fresh casting and the acquisition of new voices.

There is definitely room for initiatives aimed at fostering the growth of creatives/ copywriters. Take more chances. Radio needs to lighten up a bit. Don't be afraid to play into what consumers are experiencing.