

TOP TEN Tips for Writing Radio Commercials

Writing a radio commercial starts by tossing ideas around -- in your head, out loud, on paper -- until you figure out the **SIMPLEST** and **MOST EFFECTIVE** way to get your **MESSAGE** across.

The only rule is it has to fit **IN 30 SECONDS**.

The following are some tips to help you write a great radio ad:

① **Grab Attention**

You will have about five seconds to hook a listener before they turn you off. So, start your ad with a bang! Use attention-grabbing facts, brilliant quotes, interesting sounds or unexpected words to grab their attention quick.

② **One Idea**

Award-winning commercials convey just one simple idea. You may have a lot to say, but you have only 30 seconds. So, figure out the one most important thing you want to say and keep it simple.

③ **WIIFM (What's In It For Me? (the listener))**

What is the key benefit? Listeners don't give two hoots about your message unless you can tell them how it will benefit them. How will your ad make their life better or easier or safer?

④ **What Do You Want the Listener To Do?**

You've told the listener how to make their life better. Now, what should they do? Send them to a web site for more information.

⑤ **Lead Lines**

It may seem like a good idea to ask a question like, "Do you care about the air we breathe?" BUT, that just opens the door for listeners to say no and turn you off. Remember, you want more punch than that.

⑥ **Write For the Ear**

Radio ads aren't English essays. Dangle your participles or use a run on sentence if it works. Write the way you speak, not the way you read.

⑦ **Using Facts & Stats**

Facts and statistics are powerful tools (try www.raqc.org for more info). However, they can be boring. Use them sparingly and in an interesting way. Which is better:

"A report from the Environmental Protection Agency has determined that 10 percent of vehicles pollute."

OR

"One in 10 cars pollute."

Finally, Never EVER fudge a fact for effect. False facts will get you into trouble.

⑧ **Voices**

You can do anything you want with your own voices in your ad. But be careful. Make sure your "talent" can do a good impression. A bad accent or impression can kill an ad or offend listeners.

⑨ **Sound Effects (SFX)**

The coolest thing about radio ads is being able to use sound effects. You can build your whole ad around a soundscape, or pepper your script with SFX for maximum impact. But remember they take up some of your 30 seconds.

⑩ **Time Out**

When your commercial is complete, time it out loud slowly with a stopwatch or the second hand of a clock. If you have to race to squeeze everything in, it's time to do some more editing.