

Contemporary Hit Radio



JOEL DENVER

FILLING A MARKET VOID

WLOL-FM Explodes 4.2-10.0

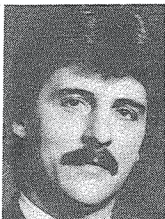
Minneapolis has been a market of perennial giants. WCCO-AM has long been dominant with huge shares, and in recent years KS95 (KSTP-FM) has also shown substantial strength with double-digit shares. Enter the dark horse, WLOL-FM, which skyrocketed in the spring Arbitron from a 12+ share of 4.2 to 10.0, grabbing third place in the market behind the two previously mentioned stations.

Imagine the surprise of Operations Manager Bob Berglund and VP/GM Doyle Rose upon hearing the news about this meteoric rise in ratings. Also, imagine the consternation of the rest of Minneapolis at the 12+ results from a station that had been tied for seventh place in the previous book.

A Demographic Delight

"Everyone should have the experience of opening up a book like we've just had at least once in their career," exclaimed Doyle. "I've been here at WLOL-FM for three and a half years and have watched this station go from infancy to a major force in the market.

"Bob Berglund and his staff have done an incredible job in positioning the station. Our consultant Paul Christy was invaluable in giving outside direction and objectivity. He was also very much responsible for backing up our assumptions about how to program the station and offering day to day comments and suggestions for fine-tuning the sound."



VP/GM Doyle Rose



Consultant Paul Christy

WLOL-FM is another in a growing list of CHR stations that have basically rediscovered the principles of radio basics . . . playing what the people want to hear, not what they think the market should sound like. "Too many people go through these preconceived opinions about what will work in a market," noted Christy.

He continued, "After you go through all of the research and focus groups you care to do, they still can't tell you exactly how to go about things. This is where you've got to gather your guts together and do it. Doyle is responsible for having the guts to take the shot, and Bob is responsible for executing and keeping things on target."

"Formatically, we just charged right down the middle," Berglund explained. "We knew that there were lots of unhappy people listening to KS95 and the AOR stations who had nowhere else to go. All we did was offer the market what it had been missing, despite people's remarks within the industry that what we were doing wasn't right for Minneapolis. We just found our niche in the market and filled it."

How about the meat and potatoes of that 12+ share? Doyle proclaimed, "Not only are we strong overall, but our demos are outstanding. We are the number two 18-34

adult station, number four 25-54 adults, and number one in teens. With these kinds of numbers we're in great shape and should have no problem selling this book. This format is very salable. I'm just so surprised it has been in front of us for so long and we haven't seen the hole."

Bucking Market Traditions

Bob Berglund not only handles station operations, but is part of the morning team of Hines & Berglund. John Hines is a long-time market veteran, having done mornings for years at KSTP (AM), and also having once done his own local TV show. "I play the straight part of the show, and Hines gets crazy with the audience. It seems to be a real listenable balance," remarked Berglund.

The station's belief in the morning show was so extensive that it became the focal point of alternative media marketing efforts. Bob explained, "We spent well into six figures for additional TV spots, billboards, and some newspaper. It all featured the morning show, and within weeks we had our faces all over town.

"We only bought TV spots on one station, the NBC affiliate. It was really funny how everyone perceived that we were on the other stations too. Combine the outside media visibility with our personal appearances, and overnight we've really established ourselves. Everywhere we went, we were met by lots of people anxious to say hi and tell us how much they like the music we were playing."

For years you may have heard that black records don't work in Minneapolis. WLOL-FM proved that wrong. "While we haven't gone overboard playing them, we have experimented and found that the market will easily accept Kool & the Gang, Ray Parker Jr., Patrice Rushen, and Earth, Wind & Fire songs," said MD and 9am-noon personality Phil Huston.

"We do research such as callouts, sales reports, and request tallies, but we also use our ears to help us make selections. I talk with Paul Christy each week about what we are thinking about, and he gives us his impressions of our selections. We don't overdo this research thing; we just use each part of it as you would fit pieces of a puzzle together."

Phil continued, "The songs we look for are those that the AOR's won't play that we know to be hits, and those records that the A/C's can't touch because they are too hard. We play mostly current records, with only a couple of oldies per hour. Oldies are so burned out in this market, as I suspect they might be in many other markets too. Another aspect of programming that I think makes a difference for me as a jock is the use of jingles. They break up the sameness of nothing but segues, which everyone else

WLOL 99.1 FM



Operations Manager/morning team Bob Berglund & John Hines



MD Phil Huston, 9am-noon



Tac Hamner, noon-3pm



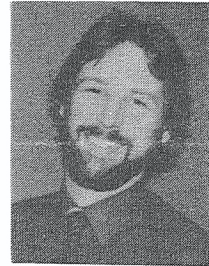
Pete Thompson, 3-7pm



Karen Wong, 7-10pm



Brian Acker, 10pm-2am



Jay Philpott, Promotion Director/weekends



Gregg Swedberg, Research Director/weekends



Dave Heltzman, Chief Engineer/weekends

in the market is doing. They make us stand out."

Personality Plus Maximum Music

By now, you've no doubt gained the impression that WLOL-FM is an exciting radio station. Bob Berglund described the sound of WLOL-FM: "Formatically the morning show is very personality-oriented, and the rest of the day is kept warm and friendly with the emphasis shifting towards music.

"Each hour after 9am we play no less than 10 records in a row," he noted. With records as long as they are today, and WLOL-FM carrying an eight-minute/ten-minute spot load, where does the station stop down? "We stop for spot sets at :33, :43, and :53 each hour outside of morning drive. We never say commercial-free; we let the records speak for themselves. One thing for sure, the audience knows that once an hour they are going to hear 10 of their favorites in a row, and they rely on that fact.

"We keep the music uptempo, with very few slow or down records. They have got to be the biggest ballads to get airtime, since the rest of the market, with the exception of the AOR's, plays lots of them. I'm not sure, but I think this is not unique only to our market.

"Paul Christy has been especially helpful to work with," commented Berglund. "He has a lot of experience behind him, and he brings that experience to us with every phone conversation and every personal visit. He's been such a big supporter of all our programming needs. Besides Paul, we used John Hayhow of Broadcast Concepts, based in Kansas City to do our outdoor advertising and TV campaigns. This whole effort was one which involved everyone, but

the one who should get the most credit is Doyle Rose. He doesn't like being a follower."

Motion

KEYN-FM/Wichita MD Terrie Springs is stepping down as MD to devote more time to her air-shift. She will be replaced by Dan Pearman . . . Scott Fisher joins K96/Provo to do AM drive as PD Scott Gentry comes off the air . . . "The Janitor," formerly with WKWB/Bufalo, is now doing weekends at WDOQ/Daytona Beach . . . Greg King, MD at KKQV/Wichita Falls, has resigned to return to his hometown of Denver. He is a good radio man and will be looking for a job in the "Mile High City." No replacement named for him yet.

KOZE/Lewiston is erecting new towers, and is switching frequency from 1300 kHz to 950 kHz in about two months. The station is making the exchange with sister station KLER/Orofino, ID . . . Al Meredith is appointed News Director at WCBS-FM/New York . . . WTIC-FM/Hartford PD Steve Goldstein cops a CLIO award for writing and production of seven promotional announcements while he was Assistant PD at WABC/New York . . . And congratulations to WFOX/Gainesville PD Alan DuPriest, who came in first at a local watermelon seed-spitting contest. Alan got off the winning shot at 36 feet five inches.

The Music Section

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