

## **Research Director, Inc. Study**

### **How Is My Station Really Doing? The New PPM Benchmarks You Need to Know**

#### **Overview**

Every program director strives to grow their audience. There are only two ways to achieve this: get new listeners to come to the radio station (increase cume) or get the station's existing listeners to listen longer (increase TSL). Assuming average weekly TSL of 2:54 (the average station's TSL), getting your existing listeners to tune in just one extra quarter-hour per week will result in a 9% increase in your AQH audience.

The first step towards gaining those extra quarter-hours is to determine the current situation of the station, and then build a strategy based on that situation. The Ratings Experts at Research Director, Inc. have compiled benchmarks for most major formats and standard demographic/ethnic groups. This will allow programmers to judge how they measure up against similarly formatted stations, and help devise the best plan to increase occasions. These added occasions will have a significant positive impact on the station's AQH audience.

Research Director, Inc. examined over 1,700 stations in the 45 non-embedded PPM markets, using a 13-book average spanning from October 2010 to September 2011. The study analyzed 19 different format groups and 11 different demographic/ethnic groups.

## **Overall Format Performance**

While every market is different, a programmer's first step should be to see how their station stacks up compared to national norms. The chart below displays the average station's Persons 6+ performance by format group.

	AQH Share	Weekly Cume Rating	Daily Cume Rating	Weekly TSL	Daily TSL
Adult Contemporary	3.9	19.0	5.7	2:08	1:02
Adult Rock	2.8	12.5	4.0	2:20	1:05
Adult Urban	4.3	12.3	4.9	3:34	1:20
All News	3.6	12.5	5.3	2:51	1:02
All Sports	1.4	5.6	2.0	2:29	1:00
CHR	4.1	20.8	7.5	1:59	0:50
Classical	1.4	4.6	1.6	3:12	1:19
Country	3.6	12.9	4.7	2:50	1:09
Hits	3.4	16.0	4.8	2:18	1:06
Inspirational	1.2	2.9	1.2	3:52	1:23
Mexican Regional	1.6	5.5	2.1	2:55	1:08
News/Talk	2.2	6.3	2.7	3:24	1:12
Oldies	2.1	9.1	2.9	2:18	1:03
Religious	1.0	3.5	1.3	2:41	1:03
Smooth/Jazz	0.6	2.7	0.8	2:08	1:05
Spanish Music	1.6	6.9	2.3	2:39	1:06
Spanish Talk	0.7	2.1	0.8	2:43	1:02
Urban Contemporary	4.0	17.6	6.6	2:16	0:53
Young Rock/Alternative	2.6	11.5	3.8	2:08	0:57
<b>Market Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>94.1</b>	<b>69.0</b>	<b>11:25</b>	<b>2:13</b>

While AQH Share is the most important benchmark for judging a station's performance, Research Director, Inc. asserts that comparisons of weekly and daily TSL are vital to assist in growing a station's audience.

## **Listening by Day of the Week**

Since the roll-out of PPM, it has been apparent that radio listening is amazingly consistent throughout the week. Both AQH and cume grow as the week progresses, Monday through Friday. While there is a dip in listening on the weekends, it is much less than historically believed. However, this trend is not consistent across all demographic groups or formats.

Some formats perform better on Saturday or Sunday than they do on weekdays. The younger-skewing format groups of CHR and Urban Contemporary have a higher daily cume on Saturday than they do on most weekdays. The All News format, which many consider to be fueled by AM drive, actually has slightly higher daily TSL on Saturday than on any of the weekdays.

Program directors need to remember that both radio and their format need to win across all seven days of the week. Examine which days your station performs best and worst. What can you do to drive your listeners to tune in just one more day? One more day of listening will help drive your TSL.

### **Listening by Daypart**

Like days of the week, pushing your listeners across dayparts can have incredible benefits to the amount of time a listener spends with your station. First, a programmer needs to set realistic goals. It is obviously impossible to have 100% of your cume visit your station in all five major dayparts (AM drive, midday, PM drive, nights, and weekends). So how do you determine what is realistic?

Of the 19 format groups examined, 16 had a higher cume reach Sat-Sun 6A-12Mid than they did in AM drive. A couple format groups even had a higher Mon-Fri 7P-12Mid reach than in AM drive. Time periods that are often considered “throw-ins” have incredible value when it comes to growing your audience.

By setting appointments for the under-performing time periods and by properly promoting them in the over-performing time periods, a station can realize strong audience gains.

### **Daypart Recycling**

Every station wants its listeners to tune into multiple dayparts. If a listener visits your station in midday, are they also visiting in PM drive? Once again, the goal is to increase the percentage of your audience that tunes into multiple dayparts. The audiences of music-intensive formats like Adult Contemporary and Hits are driven by midday listening. However, less than 40% of these two format groups’ midday audience also tune into AM drive. Conversely, All News does particularly well in getting its AM drive listeners to visit in both midday and PM drive. Of its Persons 6+ AM drive cume, 50% listen in midday and 54% listen in PM drive.

It’s critical to understand your format’s typical recycling patterns in order to determine where you should focus your efforts.

### **Daily Recycling**

Equally important to daypart recycling is the measurement of daily recycling. For this study, Research Director, Inc. examined the percentage of a station’s weekday listeners that also tune in on the weekend, and vice versa. Of all Persons 6+ radio listening, 82% of those that listen during the week also listen on the weekend. Narrowing down to individual formats, for example, 42% of the average Adult Urban-formatted station’s weekday listeners also tune in on the weekend. And of their weekend listeners, 70% also tune in during the weekdays.

### **Average Days Listened**

In an average week, how many different days do your listeners come to your station? While the average 6+ radio listener tunes to radio over 5.1 days per week, the average station gets a listener to tune in between 1.9 days (Smooth/Jazz) and 2.8 days (News/Talk). Typically, stations that have higher average days listened will also have higher TSL.

Getting your average listener to come in just one more day can have a remarkable impact on your AQH share.

## **Beyond Programming**

While this study focused on setting benchmarks for program directors, there is a vast amount of information that can help those promoting radio as an advertising vehicle. The study proves that radio stations have tremendous reach and delivery in all time periods.

On an average day, 69% of all Persons 6+ tune to the radio for an average of 2 hours and 13 minutes. Key demographic groups for advertisers, such as Adults 25-54, are even heavier radio listeners. Three-quarters of Adults 25-54 tune to the radio on an average day, with daily TSL of 2:22. The numbers grow when looking at Mon-Sun 6A-12Mid as opposed to a single day. On a total week basis, 96% of all Adults 25-54 tune to the radio, spending on average 12:55 with the medium.

This tremendous reach is seen across all dayparts.

	M-F 6A-10A	M-F 10A-3P	M-F 3P-7P	M-F 7P-12Mid	Sa-Su 6A-12Mid
Persons 6+	67.7%	74.7%	79.0%	59.7%	77.2%
Adults 25-54	75.3%	79.6%	84.1%	65.6%	80.7%

More Persons 6+ tune to the radio on the weekend than listen in either AM drive or midday. Two-thirds of all Adults 25-54 tune to the radio on weeknights (Mon-Fri 7P-12Mid). Both Persons 6+ and Adults 25-54 spend longer with radio on the weekends than they do in AM drive.

## **About Research Director, Inc.**

Research Director, Inc., based in Annapolis, Maryland, helps radio stations' programming and sales departments maximize the value of their research. Often called "The Ratings Experts," they have been involved with Arbitron's PPM methodology since its inception. For more information on Research Director, Inc., call 410-295-6619 or e-mail [info@ResearchDirectorInc.com](mailto:info@ResearchDirectorInc.com).