INFLUENCE AND DESIGN OF SWEEPSTAKES AND CONTESTS IN RADIO MARKETING AS SEEN BY AUSTRIAN RADIO MANAGERS

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ABSTRACT

Sweepstakes and contests are widespread occurrences. Not least, radio stations use them as a means of binding listeners, gaining new audiences or serving their advertising clients. The positive influence of sweepstakes and contests in media marketing is seldom questioned by programme directors. Yet research has so far paid little attention to the influence of sweepstakes and contests in radio marketing or to the mechanisms behind particular dimensions like the prizes, task/challenge, media and brand recognition. The following article presents the findings of one of the few scientific studies into the aspects which influence the effect(s) of sweepstakes and contests in radio marketing. For the purposes of this study, existing English and German literature was studied to establish the main research questions and a set of initial assumptions. Empirical data was collected through ten semi-structured guided expert interviews with radio programme directors, programme advisors and radio presenters responsible for sweepstakes and contests in Austria. The results showed that sweepstakes and contests are more relevant for binding and activating existing listeners than for gaining new listeners, non-participants in sweepstakes and contests should not be disturbed or annoyed by sweepstakes and contests, and the frequency with which the sweepstake or contest should be repeated on air would seem to depend on the actual station format. The Internet seems to be of particular interest in a cross-promotion context. Cash prizes are generally judged to be the best prizes. Entertaining and creative designs are widely welcomed by the experts.

KEY WORDS
media studies – media marketing – radio marketing – sweepstakes – contests – cross-media – sales promotion – advertising

Sweepstakes and contests form part of media marketing in all types of mass media. Newspapers, magazines and TV stations all apply this marketing tool, but radio stations make particular use of such competitions to bind their listeners, broaden their audience and serve their advertising clients.

In general, radio stations face a very specific challenge: their listeners expect news that is applicable to their daily lives (e.g. weather forecasts, traffic news), yet they also want to hear music that touches their emotions (Ingram – Barber 2005: 29). Radio is mainly viewed as a medium that people listen to while doing something else (e.g. driving, eating or working). According to Oehmichen (2001: 136), 87 % of radio listeners maintain that they don't listen deliberately to radio programmes. Consequently, radio stations face

a virulent struggle to maintain audience attention – a factor that is especially relevant from an advertising perspective, with marketers permanently seeking new ways to address their target audience.

Sweepstakes and competitions are a particularly popular way of introducing new products and services. They also offer a good means of raising public awareness and knowledge of something or can have a conative influence if they receive a high response (Feinman – Blashek – McCabe 1986: 40). Schultz, Robinson and Petrison (1998: 127) stress that sweepstakes and competitions can be an interesting way of attracting new clients because they do not involve an obligation to buy, but do help to overcome the inhibitions people associate with making an initial contact with an institution or products. Ultimately, it is the actual task or challenge set for a contest which determines whether participants look for more information about the organiser or promoted service. In this respect, they can be designed in a way that requires participants to research or look at data on a particular product or service (e.g. media).

Alongside their role in client acquisition, sweepstakes and contests can also be interesting in a customer relationship management context (Bruhn – Homburg 2005: 3). Similarly, they can be deployed in reaction to competitors who might also be using such competitions in their marketing endeavours (Peatie – Peatie – Emafo 1997: 780).

Even if sweepstakes and contests are frequent on the radio, only a few listeners actually take part in them. Yet their advertising impact extends to participants and non-participants (Gedenk – Teichmann 2006: 509). Accordingly, since it will be heard by all listeners, the design of a sweepstake or contest is a crucial element.

Based on these initial findings, this paper seeks to answer the following first questions:

Question 1 (Q1): How are sweepstakes and contests judged with respect to
the acquisition of new listeners and binding of new listeners?
Question 2 (Q2): How are sweepstakes and contests judged with respect
to their influence on brand recognition and image?
Question 3 (Q3): How are sweepstakes and contests judged with respect
to their effect on participants and non-participants?

In doing so, it seeks to determine whether sweepstakes and competitions are an adequate means of gaining new and binding existing listeners (Q1), identify their contribution to image building and brand recognition (Q2) and uncover their level of influence on listeners as a whole and on non-participants in particular (Q3). All these questions and assumptions together lead to the overall research interest: What influence do sweepstakes and contests have on radio marketing in general and what particular role is played here by their design?

1. Design of sweepstakes and contests
Stottmeister (1988: 7) defines sweepstakes as instruments which use a conditional and uncertain grant (profit) to directly address consumers without asking for any financial effort on their part. Their profit has to be seen to be related to the fulfilment of specific demands, and they are also considered to be a means of advertising and sales promotion (ibid.).

As far as the general dimensions which influence the effectiveness of a message are concerned, Fiske and Hartley's (2003: 58) research in the television sector suggests that

the influence of communication is best when the message is delivered in a way that fits the recipient's opinions, beliefs and character. Radio station listeners expect a station to play specific music and provide specific information. It therefore follows that a sweepstake or contest will have to address their specific desires to encourage them to take part. At the same time, it should not annoy or offend listeners who are not interested in games and contests of any kind.

According to Gedenk and Teichmann (2006: 505), organisers have to consider the following dimensions when using sweepstakes or contests as marketing tools: prize (1), task/challenge (2) and media (3). They also have to consider how recognizable their own brand might be (4). The figure below illustrates the design dimensions of sweepstakes and contests:

Figure 1: Design dimensions of sweepstake and contests
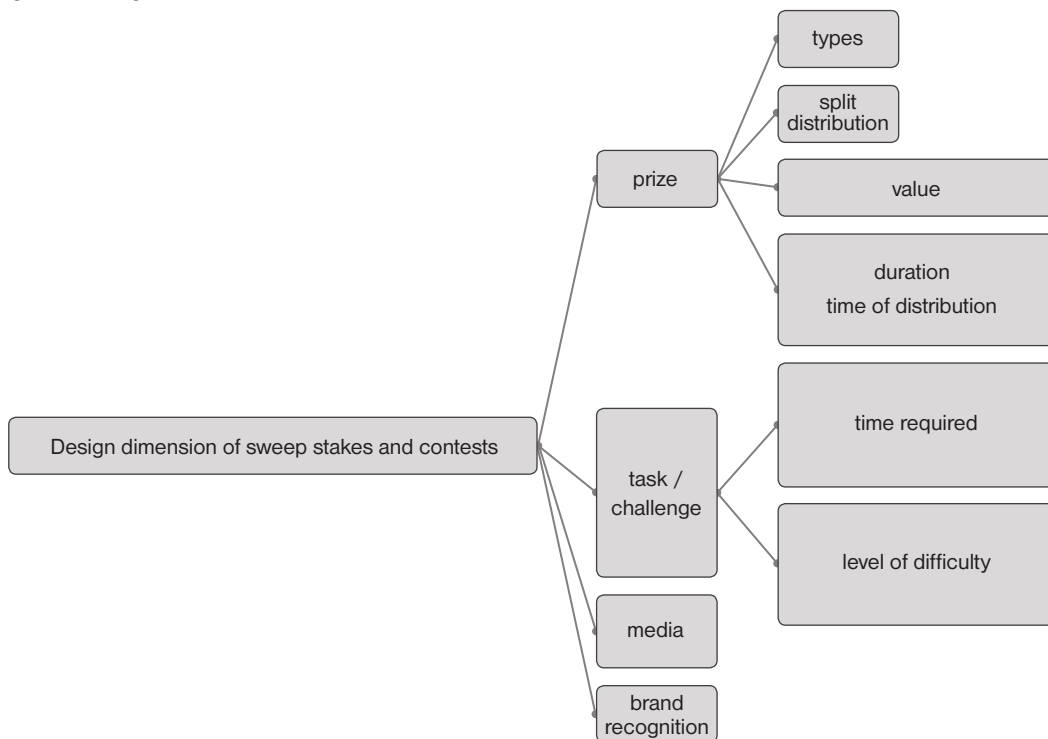
Source: own design, with reference to Gedenk – Teichmann (2006: 505).

1.1. Prizes

As far as different types of prizes are concerned, we can distinguish first and foremost between cash prizes and non-cash material prizes (e.g. cinema tickets or cars). Another type of prize is the provision of services (e.g. 'six months training with a personal fitness coach'). A further special category of prizes are unique services which cannot be (easily) purchased for money (e.g. a backstage meeting with a film star) or are not usually accessible to the public (e.g. a flight in a military helicopter) (Mitchell – Lister – O´Shea 2009: 122).

In most cases, the prize dimension also has to consider the split and value of the prizes. How many prizes should the sweepstake or contest offer? How do the prizes differ in value? (see Liu – Geng – Whinston 2007: 141). In some sweepstakes or contests there are many prizes to be won, but the actual value of these prizes is secondary (e.g. one of hundreds of cookbooks). Others only have one high-value prize (e.g. an exclusive holiday). Another possibility is to combine the two, i.e. have one exclusive top prize and several lesser value prizes. In short, the different prize options used can be split into:

- Cash prizes, non-cash material prizes or (unique) service prizes
- Many prizes, a few prizes or one single prize
- High-value or low-value prizes.

Frequency and duration are further aspects that need to be considered in the time dimension: a sweepstake can take place once or periodically; a competition can be brief or last for a longer period of time. How experts handle the repetition of adverts and the duration of sweepstakes and contests is also a further interesting aspect (**Question 4 – Q4**). Some empirical research findings are already available (see below) with regard to the prize dimension and can therefore be used to build initial assumptions.

1.2. Task/Challenge

On the task or challenge level, we have to differentiate between sweepstakes where winning is essentially a matter of good luck (e.g. having a banknote with a specific serial number or being the tenth caller) and contests in which participants have to resolve given tasks or tests (e.g. general knowledge tests, identification of a specific noise/sound, etc.). In contests, participants also compete against each other. It is interesting to note that the German language doesn't differentiate greatly between the two, although the commonly used term "Gewinnspiel" reflects more the idea of the sweepstake than the contest.

The definition of the target group is essential when planning a sweepstake or contest. Here, Mitchell, Lister and O'Shea (2009: 121f) recommend the KISS formula ("Keep It Simple and Stupid"). The task/challenge dimension is crucial in this respect: if the sweepstake or contest is too difficult, it may prove too taxing for the target group; if it is too simple, the audience will find it boring.

Like the prize dimension, some researchers have also looked at the task/challenge dimension (see below "Decision to participate" for a description of relevant empirical data).

1.3. Media

With regard to the third dimension (i.e. the type of media chosen for sweepstakes and contests), this paper focuses exclusively on radio stations. Accordingly, what is relevant in this context is not the media selected for the actual sweepstakes or contests, but the other types of media used to promote them. When designing such competitions, organisers have to decide which media will only be used for promotion purposes and which channels can be used for participation. While postcards and the telephone played an important role as secondary media prior to the emergence of the Internet, the latter has now essentially taken over their part (Gedenk – Teichmann 2006: 507).

In practice, all types of media available to a radio station are (or can be) used to promote sweepstakes and contests. In many cases, the station can also make use

of the cross-promotion opportunities that arise, for example, from the ownership of other media (e.g. magazines, newspapers). Since little attention has so far been paid to the use of cross-promotion in field research, it will be interesting to determine how cross-media promotion is used to raise awareness of sweepstakes and contests (**Question 5 – Q 5**).

1.4. Brand recognition

According to Gedenk and Teichmann (2006: 508), recognition of the organiser's brand is a further important dimension. They contend that participants are more wary of providing their contact details to unfamiliar companies or institutions for fear of spam or misuse of their data. Many participants are aware that some sweepstakes and contests are designed solely for the purpose of gaining market research data. Accordingly, organisers of sweepstakes and contests have to assess whether the level of recognition of their own brand will be good enough for the intended purpose. There is already some empirical data available with relation to brand recognition, which has been used to formulate some assumptions regarding this point (see assumption 2 below).

The design dimensions of sweepstakes and contests described above provide key inputs and structure for the guidelines (scripts) used during our interviews with the selected radio experts. Of particular interest in our context is the way these design dimensions are handled by the respective radio stations. Accordingly, and to add further substance to these interview guidelines, we will now take a closer look at the existing empirical data and theoretical reflections relating to this aspect.

2. Decision to participate

Only very limited empirical data is available on the decision-making process behind participation in a contest or sweepstake. While Teichmann, Gedenk and Knaf (2005) carried out some analysis of the preferences of participants in online or offline games, and Brockhoff and Andresen (1986) had test subjects sort their preferences according to the above design dimensions, their studies were carried out 21 years apart. Nonetheless, both studies show that the prize and task/challenge involved are very important elements in the decision to take part in a contest, with priority given to cash prizes. However, they could not really determine whether the availability of several main prizes or one main prize and several smaller prizes affected this decision. Organiser brand recognition was not found to be very important in these studies. These findings lead us to the following assumptions:

> **Assumption 1 (A1):** Participants in sweepstakes and contests prefer cash prizes.
> **Assumption 2 (A2):** The design dimension 'organiser brand recognition' is not very important for participation in sweepstakes and contests.

Based on the Teichmann, Gedenk and Knaf (2005: 5f) study, we can identify three types of participants in classic offline sweepstakes or contests: those who want a creative challenge, i.e. want to do more than simply send off their contact details (36 %); those who want a high value prize and for whom the main prize should only be divided into a limited number of parts (33 %); those who simply want to be able to provide their contact details quickly and easily and then have nothing else to do (31 %). In the case of online sweepstakes and contests, this final group is the largest (at 28 %). The target groups

for sweepstakes and contests have to take account of socio-economic (e.g. age, level of education) as well as psychological characteristics (e.g. risk-taking propensity). Participation also depends to a great extent on a person's general attitude towards sweepstakes and contests and is usually linked to openness towards other sales promotion activities and a risk-taking attitude. Organisers of sweepstakes and contests can adjust the design to fit the target group.

Brockhoff and Andresen (1986: 780) show that younger people, women and people with an average level of education are more likely to participate in sweepstakes and contests. People with a higher level of education tend to favour contests, while sweepstakes attract those with a lower level of education. In their comparison of the online and offline sectors, Teichmann, Gedenk and Knaf (2005: 4) found that women are less active in online contests. People with a higher level of education tend to prefer offline games with high value prizes and short runtimes.

However the expert interview method chosen for the research for this paper does not allow any specific assumptions to be made regarding the sociological and psychological make-up of participants in sweepstakes and contests.

Another important aspect in the decision to take part in sweepstakes and contests is the entertainment and enjoyment people obtain from resolving a challenge (Stottmeister 1988: 119). Stottmeister therefore assumes that the level of difficulty and the time required to resolve the challenge are crucial aspects. This leads us to the following assumption:

> **Assumption 3 (A3):** The easier the task/challenge and the less time required to resolve it, the greater the number of people who will participate in a sweepstake or contest.

Since it can also be presumed that creativity may be an important factor in the design of sweepstakes and contests, we also assume that:

> **Assumption 4 (A4):** The greater the entertainment and creativity aspect in sweepstakes and contests, the higher the motivation to participate.

3. Methodology

The research described in this article was conducted in the form of a comparative, qualitative study designed to consider a broad range of specific expert perspectives and knowledge (Flick 2010: 179). The semi-structured expert interviews used here constitute a special form of guided interview in which the researchers' interest focuses not on the actual person being interviewed, but on his/her capacity as an expert on the subject of "sweepstakes and contests on the radio".

The qualitative approach allows us to obtain detailed statements from a limited number of people with in-depth backgrounds and expertise in the field of research. In our case, the interviewees were selected based on their specific professional functions and subject knowledge. The ten experts from the radio sector have extensive, lengthy expertise and can be grouped into three clusters: programme and marketing directors, programme consultants and operators of sweepstakes and contests. The actual participating experts are listed in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Overview of participating experts

Name/Expert Category	Position	Company	Location	Interview date
Category 1: Programme Directors				
Stephan Halfpap	Programme Director	Radio 88.6	Vienna	25.3.2011
Thomas Hammerl	Advertising Director	Radio NÖ	Vienna	10.3.2011
Rüdiger Landgraf	Programme Director	Kronehit	Vienna	08.3.2011
Ralph Waldhauser	Programme Director	Radio Arabella	Vienna	03.3.2011
Christoph Wellner	Programme Director	Radio Stephansdom	Vienna	10.3.2011
Category 2: Consultants				
Peter Bartsch	Programme Consultant	Works for example for: Antenne Steiermark, Life Radio, Radio Arabella	Vienna	25.3.2011
Christian Brunner	Programme Consultant, Producer	Tonstudio, MacJingle	Vienna	25.3.2011
Ilse Brunner	Programme Consultant	Work for example for: Bayrisches Lokalradio (BLR), Unser Radio Passau	Vienna	25.3.2011
Category 3: Operators of Sweepstakes and Contests				
Leila Mahdavian	Radio Presenter	Radio Arabella	Vienna	30.3.2011
Ursula Wares	Service, Moderator	Radio Arabella	Vienna	30.3.2011

*Source: GfK Austria, Radiotest, 1. HJ (Jänner – Juni) 2011.

The ten interviewees all come from or work with Vienna-based radio stations and all agreed immediately to participate in the study. Only one initially confirmed participant (from the private radio station "Antenne Wien") subsequently had to withdraw from the survey for personal reasons. Particular focus was placed on private radio stations.

Each interview was scheduled to last approximately one hour and took the form of a semi-structured guideline interview with open questions conducted face-to-face at the expert's workplace. Since all the interviewees selected had a high level of knowledge of "sweepstakes and contests on the radio", they were also in a position to provide spontaneous answers to such open questions. The interviewees answered the questions without being prompted and provided answers which they considered relevant to the question and topic. The interviews were all recorded digitally and transcribed literally, thus providing a complete text version of the verbally obtained material (see also Brosius – Koschel – Haas 2008: 94f). To provide consistency in the readability of the empirical material, the use of dialect is adjusted, sentence construction errors are corrected and a consistent style applied. Since the primary interest lay in the subject matter and content of these expert interviews, all the transcripts were 'translated' into standard written German.

The subject matter had already been structured and clustered prior to the interviews in line with the available scientific publications on this subject. The questions formulated from this literature analysis served as a form of guideline for the subsequent interviews. The material obtained from the interviews thus always corresponds to the questions in this

guideline, facilitating both the comparison and the analysis of the interview material. For the purposes of this analysis, the individual interviews were evaluated in line with the content analysis approach recommended by Mayring (2002: 89). The research methodology can be described as combination of hypothesis generating and hypothesis testing expert interviews. The data was analysed to identify individual striking elements and/or recurring themes, which were described in more precise detail (typifying structure) (Flick 2010: 415).

4. Results

The following section presents the results of the survey and provides a summary and interpretation of the interviews with the ten Austrian radio experts. We begin here with questions regarding the general usage of sweepstakes and contests. The section concludes with a discussion of the four assumptions, which relate in particular to the design dimensions "prize" and "task/challenge". The results are organised and described in relation to each of our five questions and four assumptions. For each question and assumption, we begin with the statements made by the station directors and then go on to the responses from the consultants and operators.

> **Question 1:** How are sweepstakes and contests judged with respect to the acquisition of new listeners and binding of new listeners?

Programme directors: Expert 5, programme director and spokesman for the classical music station Radio Stephansdom, views sweepstakes and contests unequivocally as a means of binding listeners. E2, who works for a regional public radio station (Radio NÖ), sees them partly as a listener retention measure, but only in a limited, non-permanent capacity. He can also envisage their use as a short-term means of attracting new listeners, but if the overall package doesn't work, the new listeners will quickly be lost again. E4 and E5 – both experts from private youth format stations – insist that additional advertising on other media is required to support the new listener effect achieved through sweepstakes and contests. Furthermore, they both maintain that such measures also contribute to listener retention.

Consultants and operators: The consultants and operative experts concur with the programme directors and are convinced that new listeners will only be attracted if external media channels are used and the overall concept is right: if a sweepstake or contest is worth talking about and awakens curiosity, then it might well achieve the desired result.

Conclusions

Sweepstakes and contests in radio marketing are only relevant for gaining new listeners if additional advertising tools and cross-promotion options are used. Their effects on binding and activating existing listeners are more valid. In general, they inspire only limited enthusiasm on both dimensions (binding existing and attracting new listeners).

> **Question 2:** How are sweepstakes and contests judged with respect to their influence on brand recognition and image?

Programme directors: E2 (Radio NÖ) does not feel that sweepstakes and contests particularly influence brand recognition, but concedes that they do serve to attract attention

in the short term, even if they don't ultimately strengthen the brand in a lasting way. Since this attention has an influence on image, it is essential to only stage sweepstakes and contests that totally fit the radio station.

Likewise, E1 (Radio 88,6) does not believe that sweepstakes and competitions raise brand recognition levels, but instead feels they can be damaging to a radio station if the prizes are not fitting and appropriate. E3 (Kronehit) concurs and maintains that contests and sweepstakes copied from other stations can often trigger an undesired effect on a station's own product. E3 (Kronehit) and E4 (Radio Arabella) focus in this context on the actual objective of the sweepstake or contest, whereby E4 assumes that a sweepstake or contest designed to increase brand recognition would require a great deal of effort. E5, the programme director at the classical low reach radio station Radio Stephansdom, feels that the question of whether sweepstakes and competitions influence brand recognition and image can only be answered with a "yes, but among other things".

Consultants: The radio consultants C1 and C2 maintain that sweepstakes and contests only serve to boost brand recognition if the intensity of the accompanying measures outside the actual radio station is increased and the sweepstake or contest is designed as a major promotion campaign for the station. They both also agree with E1 (see above) that sweepstakes and contests can be problematic on an image level. Such competitions can become a problem if a station then unwittingly develops a reputation as "no-frills station that continually runs competitions" (C1). Consultant C3 does not feel that a radio station's image can be shaped by sweepstakes and contests, but does concede that they have a certain influence – an element that is reflected in the fact that a sweepstake or contest has to suit and fit with a radio station.

Operators: The operative experts (O1 and O2) also share the opinion that a sweepstake or contest might have an influence on brand recognition if it were a major promotion campaign that became a clear talking point among the general public and was supported by campaigns in other types of media. O1 insists that the right concept has to be developed for the right sender and the right target group. If these parameters don't match, a sweepstake or contest can do serious damage to an image. O2 provides examples of focus group reactions which suggest that sweepstakes and contests are popular with listeners and seen as a positive service provided by a radio station.

Conclusions

The experts are sceptical about the role played by sweepstakes and contests in increasing the brand recognition of radio stations. Essentially, they only feel that major promotion activities run over an extended period of time and with high value prizes or (possibly) sweepstakes or contests with interesting formats that get people talking might have the potential to raise brand recognition levels. While sweepstakes and contests are seen to be relevant from an image perspective, our experts also stress the potential damage that can be done by a competition that does not match a radio station's image. They also mention the possibility of losing newly acquired listeners as a result of sweepstakes or contests with inadequate or inappropriate formats, which in turn leads us neatly to question 3.

> **Question 3:** How are sweepstakes and contests judged with respect to their effect on participants and non-participants?

Programme directors: With regard to the effect of sweepstakes and contests on participants, E3 emphasises that a radio station must not lose sight of the 93–97 % of listeners who don't participate in such competitions. Sweepstakes and contests are not designed for the actual winner(s), but to position a radio station in the best possible way. E2 sees a sweepstake or contest as an element of suspense in the programme. Such elements should be integrated in a way that is neither irritating nor boring. E5 insists that well designed sweepstakes or contests should neither bother nor annoy listeners. E1 goes further and feels that both active and non-active participants should be perceived as parts of a whole. Listeners should identify with the winners. E4 assumes active participants will be loyal to the station. His aim is to ensure that non-participants are not annoyed and ideally feel they are being entertained and even motivated to take part.

　　Consultants: "Don't get on people's nerves" (C1) and "make sure you entertain non-participants" (C2) are also the general opinions put forward by the consultants. Active participants should feel a positive incentive to continue listening to the station and tell other people if they win something. But C3 also points out that it is impossible to develop a sweepstake or contest that doesn't annoy someone.

　　Operators: O1 works on the principle that sweepstakes and contests are also always made for the people who don't participate. Both non-participants and active participants should view the competition in a positive light. According to O2, people who have won such competitions in the past frequently try their luck again. But she also appreciates the positive advertising effect of word-of-mouth propaganda, whereby active participants infect non-participants with their enthusiasm and raise the probability of the latter also listening to the radio station out of curiosity. Quiz games designed to be continued throughout the day keep people who would themselves never take part in such quizzes listening to a station.

Conclusions

One of our experts estimates that 93-97 % of listeners to a radio station will not participate in sweepstakes or contests. Accordingly, this group is an important element that has to be considered in the use of such competitions. All our experts concur that such activities should not bother or annoy this group of listeners. They should be able to identify with the winners and ideally feel entertained or motivated to continue listening to hear the outcome of a longer quiz or game.

　　Question 4: How are the repetition of adverts and the duration of sweepstakes
　　　　and contests used to raise awareness?

Programme directors: The public radio station Radio NÖ has best experience with week-long sweepstakes and contests that conclude at a weekend. Special promotions are run over a maximum of two weeks. The classical music station Radio Stephansdom uses such competitions very conservatively, broadcasting a one-off teaser, then carrying out and immediately concluding the sweepstake or contest.

　　The programme directors at the commercial radio stations Kronehit, Radio 88,6 and Radio Arabella split sweepstakes and contests into three phases: preselling, competition proper and backselling. Radio Arabella listeners need one to two weeks to take note of a major promotion and digest the way it will work. Depending on the design and

prize(s), Radio Arabella generally limits the competition proper to a period of one to three weeks and follows it up with a few days of backselling.

The preselling phase at Radio 88,6 is similar to that at Radio Arabella. However, the station will run a major promotion for between three to six weeks, depending on the top prize(s). If only one main prize is awarded at the end of the event, the competition proper is restricted to a maximum of three weeks.

At Kronehit, the programme directors leave the planning of sweepstakes and contests to the media department, who calculate the optimal timing for marketing and broadcasting a major promotion of this kind. E3 has noticed that designing sweepstakes or contests is becoming increasingly like writing a script for a screenplay.

Consultants: C2 also refers to the three-phase preselling/competition proper/back-selling process and recommends a two-week preselling phase, whereby the first week can take the form of a mystery campaign to prompt curiosity among the audience about the pending competition. She calculates that a major promotion should last between two to three weeks and should be followed up by a backselling phase. She also maintains that since people on average listen to a radio station for 15 minutes at a time, a competition can be included in the programme and given airtime on an hourly basis. The only exceptions here are classical music stations. C1 takes a similar view, but can envisage a period of up to four weeks for the competition proper if the prize is interesting enough. He feels it is quite acceptable to include a competition in the programme every two hours, or even more frequently on youth radio stations. According to C2, listeners need a very long time to actually realize that a competition is taking place. He feels that a two-week intensive preselling phase is necessary and should include 10 to 12 trailers a day. He would run the competition proper over a two to three week period and follow it up with a one-week backselling phase.

Operators: The moderator O1 and customer service representative O2 also anticipate a two-week preselling phase, with O1 also declaring herself a fan of mystery campaigns. O2 considers two weeks to be the ideal length of time for the competition proper, while O1 would allow it to run for a maximum of one more week, competitions targeted at young people can be integrated into the programme on an hourly basis, while those designed for an older audience should only be broadcast every two hours.

Conclusions

The three-phase preselling/competition proper/backselling model is widely known and used by our experts, although opinions and experience of the ideal lengths for each phase differ. Most of the experts view a two-week preselling phase to be appropriate, while some favour reducing or extending this by one week. The competition proper should also last for two weeks, with a possible duration of up to six weeks in some cases. Backselling is viewed as a shorter phase that should last up to one week. Radio Stephansdom and Radio NÖ do not conform to this three-phase model. As a public station, Radio NÖ finds it achieves the best results with week-long competitions that conclude at a weekend. The competition proper can be extended to a maximum of two weeks. Radio Stephansdom makes only limited use of sweepstakes and contests and conducts any related advertising activities in moderation. All time dimensions indicated are dependent on the importance of the particular sweepstake or contest and the value of the prize(s) on offer.

The frequency with which the sweepstake or contest should be repeated on air would seem to depend on the actual station format. Stations with a young (youth) audience can

repeat such competitions every hour, while those directed at a more mature audience should not repeat them more than once every two hours.

Question 5: How is cross-media promotion used to raise awareness of sweepstakes and contests?

Cross-promotion is a very common element in radio marketing, and when it comes to promoting sweepstakes and contests there are particularly strong links between radio and the Internet.

Programme directors: E2, who works for a public radio station embedded in the ORF's national broadcasting empire, is extremely positive about the use of cross-promotion and feels that Internet users and radio listeners complement each perfectly. E4 (from the private radio station Radio Arabella) shares this view and notes that the online channel can be used to give a visual representation to radio. He also refers to the availability of the feedback channel, which offers quick and easy access to feedback and allows a station to assess listener reactions to a competition in quasi real-time. E2 also expects to win over people who are "not yet listeners" (E2) through online activities. For E1 (Radio 88,6), one advantage of the Internet is that the radio station doesn't have to totally fill its broadcasts with sweepstakes and contests and can use the time freed up on air to promote its actual image. As an expert for the youth radio station Kronehit, E3 sees radio and Internet as converging, mutually beneficial media. He views Kronehit as a brand whose Internet and radio presence go hand in hand. The classical music station Radio Stephansdom (E5) is a particularly interesting case from a cross-promotion perspective: it now runs some promotions entirely online via its Facebook page, where its traditional audience will not even see them. The station argues for this approach by pointing out that its basic focus does not lie on sweepstakes or contests and that it is not considering adding them to its programme in future.

Consultants: C2 feels that transferring sweepstakes and contests to the Internet is an attractive option. However, she does warn against an overestimation of Internet users, who tend to restrict their activities solely to the web. These users will at most listen to Internet radio. C1 thinks that online platforms are a good means of attracting attention, yet is quick to note that older listeners are less likely to go online than younger listeners. But he basically considers the combination of online presence and radio to be mutually beneficial, as long as listeners/surfers remain in the radio stations brand sphere. C3 feels that the Facebook/radio combination is particularly overrated, and believes that radio listeners can be transferred to Facebook, but not vice versa.

Operators: From the operator's perspective, O1 views cross-promotion as a good opportunity to reduce the spoken work on air, where overly lengthy and wordy elements are counterproductive. With an online presence, the key elements can be broadcast on air, and the rest explained online. While O2 only sees a limited overlap between on air and Facebook for radio stations with older target audiences, she still feels that they complement each other very well and offer good opportunities for cross-promotion.

Conclusions
From a radio station perspective, the Internet seems to be of particular interest in a cross-promotion context and is judged positively by all the different groups of experts. The main argument for cross-promotion with the Internet is that it is a meaningful, complementary

medium to radio which offers stations the possibility to obtain feedback and potentially acquire new listeners. From the design perspective, the key issues are the time a radio station can free up by publishing supplementary information on the Internet and the opportunity it offers them to make use of visual elements to explain, for example, the rules of a contest. Our consultants also stress some potentially negative aspects: firstly, that the potential of Internet users should not be overemphasised (they often use only the internet and rarely become new radio listeners) and secondly that the elder generation may not be reached by means of the Internet.

The case of the classical music station Radio Stephansdom is very interesting. Sweepstakes and contests are a minor on air priority at this station, which now sometimes conducts such competitions solely via the Internet. In this way, it avoids annoying listeners who are not interested in sweepstakes and contests.

In the following section, we will now take a closer look at the design dimension of sweepstakes and contests and examine some of the initial assumptions made by empirical studies in light of the information obtained from our expert interviews.

> **Assumption 1:** Participants in sweepstakes and competition prefer cash prizes.

Programme directors: The programme directors all agree that cash prizes are generally favoured over non-cash material prizes. The reason they give for this is that people of all age groups can always spend money.

It is not possible to obtain a clear picture of how prizes are distributed, since this always depends on the objective of the sweepstake or contest. All the programme directors interviewed like to host sweepstakes or contests which offer their listeners a high value prize. Practical expertise of big wins concurs here with theory – the preference is for big cash prizes, cars and holidays. But they also like to make use of the variant with lots of small prizes – particularly if they have a high strategic value. In major promotions lasting over three weeks (and with the main prize drawn at the end of the contest), radio stations consider it important to offer smaller consolation prizes.

Consultants: The consultants are also of the opinion that this point can only be answered with an "it depends", because winning is not everything. Radio stations must always ensure that their listeners can identify with the prize(s). Ultimately, this group of experts also agrees that you can't go wrong with cash prizes. However, they do consider cash prizes that are too high to be problematic, since they can trigger an "I have no chance of winning" feeling and thus lead to listeners not participating because they consider the prize(s) to be out of their reach. The consultants concur with the programme directors that a mix of one high value prize and several low value consolation prizes contributes to the success of a major promotion.

Operators: The presenter O1 agrees with the programme directors and consultants and considers a high value cash prize and lots of little consolation prizes to be the best option. Only O2, who works as both a presenter and a customer services representative and is thus the only one of the experts interviewed with direct listener contact, considers one high value prize without consolation prizes to be appropriate. Her argument is that people are generally disappointed if they don't win the top prize, and that winning a consolation prize does not reduce this sense of disappointment.

Conclusions

Cash prizes are generally judged to be the best prizes, because winners can use their winnings to buy whatever they want. In this way, all interests are served. No general hypothesis can be made regarding the optimal distribution of prizes. But it is obvious that programme directors prefer sweepstakes and contests with a high value prize, ideally cash, a holiday or a car. Two individual observations are of particular interest here. The first is the notion that cash prizes can be too high, giving listeners the impression that they are out of their reach and that it is not worth participating. The second is that while consolation prizes are valued by radio directors and consultants, the expert with a direct contact to participants feels the latter are actually disappointed when they win a consolation prize.

> **Assumption 2:** The design dimension "organiser brand recognition" is not
>   very important for participation in sweepstakes and contests.

Programme directors: E4 (Radio Arabella) feels that confidence in the station does have some influence, while E2 (Radio NÖ) and E5 (Radio Stephansdom) raise this influence to strong. E1 (Radio 88,6) also views the link between the station and the product to be important, but concedes that the station loses relevance in really big sweepstakes or contests. As far as E5 (Kronehit) is concerned, confidence in the station plays no role at all, since people are no longer tied exclusively to one particular radio station.

   Consultants and operators: In this context, the consultants and operative experts also raised the issue of permanent winners and gamblers who only play for the sake of playing. C1 assumes that while the station does play a certain role, it is far more important that the sweepstake or competition fits the station's image. C2 and C3 accord the station a subordinate role.

Conclusions

Opinions regarding the relevance of brand recognition for participation in sweepstakes or contests differ. While some programme directors see an important correlation, others judge it as minor. The higher the prize, the less important the prominence of the organising station.

> **Assumption 3:** The easier the task/challenge and the less time requi-
>   red to resolve it, the greater the number of people who will participate
>   in a sweepstake or contest.

Programme directors: The programme directors agree that this statement is basically correct. E3 (Kronehit) notes that there will always be exceptions and that the skill lies in accepting this when designing promotions. E2 (Radio NÖ) contends that you have to decide when designing the concept whether your expectations of such a promotion are too measured in terms of the quality or the quantity of the participants. This seems logical to E4 (Radio Arabella), even if a station might pursue different goals with some competitions, and the key to success always lies in the prize(s).

   Consultants: C1 agrees with this statement, albeit with some restrictions, and points out that the task/challenge has to be simple, but not stupid, sexist, polarising or

xenophobic. C3 also only partly agrees with the assumption that simple tasks and easy rules for participation are decisive elements for successful participation levels, noting that the barriers to access should not be too high. She repeats her assertion that the prize should not be too high, since the phenomenon "so many people will be taking part, why should I win" (C3) is not to be underestimated.

Operators: Our two operative experts agree with assumption 3.

Conclusions

As far as assumption 4 is concerned, there is an interesting difference in assessment between the programme directors and presenters on the one hand, and the consultants on the other. While station managers are convinced that easy tasks and quick entry raises participation levels, the consultants also warn against too simple or unethical contest designs.

> **Assumption 4:** The greater the entertainment and creativity aspect in sweepstakes and contests, the higher the motivation to participate.

Programme directors: From a task design perspective, E4 (Radio Arabella) and E1 (Radio 88,6) consider original sweepstakes with an intelligent format – not the run of the mill "ring up and win" type contests – to be the best competitions. They emphasise here the need for a simple process in which the participant only has to complete one task or solve one clue. E2 (Radio NÖ) reports great successes with the "ring up and win" format, but concludes that a simple task or question is more creative in terms of programme design. C5 (Radio Stephansdom) prefers "ring up and win" competitions, since these involve the fewest interruptions in a programme targeted at an audience looking for culture on his classical radio station. E3 (Kronehit) thinks that listeners should contribute to a sweepstake or contest and that they should enjoy doing so. He refers in this context to the rapid advances in technology, which make this variation on the theme increasingly easier.

Consultants: Our radio consultants demand added value for the station and consider "ring up and win" contests to be boring and lacking in originality, although they do stress that listeners should also under no circumstances be made to feel out of their depth. A sweepstake or contest should touch the listener's emotions and include a certain level of entertainment for those listeners who don't participate. Ultimately, this issue is clearly dependent on the format and target group.

Operators: The operative experts find competitions based on chance to be boring and unfair, although they do partly concede that they have their justified place in the mix. They stress the importance of those listeners who don't participate, but still answer the questions and keep their fingers crossed for those who do. O2 finds the "10th caller wins" format to be totally unfair and refers here to the nine disappointed callers who don't get through. All experts agree that a measurable effort is an accepted way of proceeding.

Conclusions

Entertaining and creative designs are widely welcomed by the experts in all three groups. One exception to this rule is the classical music station Radio Stephansdom, which has a low overall interest in sweepstakes and contests and prefers a simple design which does not interrupt the programme any more than is necessary.

5. Summary

We began by addressing three questions relating to the general use of sweepstakes and contests in a radio context. Our findings show that sweepstakes and contests are more relevant for binding existing listeners to a station than for attracting new listeners (Q1). This bears out the assumption that sweepstakes and contests are more relevant for binding and activating existing listeners than for acquiring new ones. Our findings suggest that new listeners will only be won if the sweepstake or contest is backed up by additional advertising methods or cross-promotion.

With respect to their influence on brand recognition and image (Q2), sweepstakes and contests are viewed more as a means of image building than of raising brand recognition. As in the case of the acquisition of new listeners, brand recognition is linked to supporting aspects, e.g. a very high value prize or special design. In conjunction with this image building influence, our experts also stress the potential damage of sweepstakes and contests which do not match a station's image.

This leads automatically to the question of how sweepstakes and contests are judged with respect to their effect on participants and non-participants (Q3). Here, estimations and experience show that non-participants form 93 to 97 % of a station's listeners. Our experts concur that a sweepstake or contest should essentially not irritate this group of listeners, and that they should ideally identify with the winners and feel entertained by or even motivated to follow the course of a longer promotion or game.

In short, our findings relating to the effects expected by organisers of sweepstakes and contests indicate that experts do not attach high expectations to such competitions as a programme design element. They do not definitively or enthusiastically emphasise their relevance for listener acquisition or retention, image building or brand recognition. But they did mention the possible threats of using 'wrong' sweepstake designs without any prompting by the interviewer. This leads to the conclusion that sweepstakes and contests are seen to have a hybrid listener acquisition/retention and image building effect. It is also interesting to note that such a widely used programme asset is accorded such a weak effect.

The second set of research questions examined the promotion of sweepstakes and contests in the media, where the issues of timing and duration (Q4) and the additional use of cross promotion (Q5) emerged. The three-phase promotion model (preselling/competition proper/backselling) is both popular and widely used by radio stations. As far as the individual phases are concerned, two weeks are usually planned in for preselling, the competition proper lasts between two to a maximum of six weeks, while the backselling phase is shorter (up to one week). We can also assume that the more valuable the prize or spectacular the task/challenge, the longer the overall period allocated to the competition. However, as far as the promotion of sweepstakes and contests is concerned, the frequency of repetition of the message would appear to depend on the format of the actual radio station. Our experts consider hourly repetition to be acceptable for youth formats, while a two-hour frequency is appropriate for stations with mature audiences.

The Internet is of particular interest for radio stations when it comes to the importance and use of cross-media promotion (Q5). The main arguments for such cross-promotion activities are: meaningful, complementary addition, the possibility for feedback and the potential acquisition of new listeners via the Internet. The on air time saved by publishing supplementary information on the Internet was also viewed as a further asset.

Given the extent of the timing and cross-promotion complex, it is interesting that no other means of cross-promotion, e.g. through cross-owned media (like newspapers),

were mentioned. This may be due to the fact that cross-ownership in the private radio sector usually takes the form of an ownership percentage, preventing a simple mixing of media content. Similarly, there are legal constraints to cross-ownership applicable to the public station Radio NÖ. Nonetheless, the issue of cross-promotion through cross ownership should be treated as an important question that merits further research.

Finally, the findings confirm our initial assumptions regarding the design dimensions "prize", "task/challenge" and "organiser brand recognition". Our first assumption, which was derived from earlier empirical studies, was that sweepstake and contest participants prefer cash prizes (A1). This was confirmed by the experts interviewed. Cash prizes were generally judged to be the best prizes, because winners can use their winnings to purchase whatever they want. Two particular observations/assumptions, each of which was mentioned by one expert, also merit a specific mention. The first such observation is that cash prizes can also be too high, thus giving listeners the impression that they are out of reach and preventing them from participating. The other is that while consolation prizes are viewed positively by radio directors and consultants, the only expert with direct contact to listeners (participants) found that the winners of consolation prizes experienced a sense of disappointment. Accordingly, it could be questioned whether consolation prizes actually do give satisfaction/comfort to the people who win them.

In the earlier study of Brockhoff – Andresen (1986), the design dimension "organiser brand recognition" had not emerged as very important for the decision to participate in a sweepstake or contest (A2). In our survey, the Äexperts differ in their assessment of the relevance of radio station brand recognition for such participation. While some programme directors see an important correlation, others judge the link to be minor. However, we can conclude here that the higher the prize, the less important the prominence of the organizer.

Our final two assumptions concern the task/challenge involved in a sweepstake or contest. The first of these was that sweepstakes and contests would attract more participants if participation were easy and not time-consuming (A3). This proved to be connected to the assumption that the higher the entertainment and creativity aspect of a sweepstake or contest, the greater the motivation for participation (A4). There was broad consensus among the interviewed experts for A3, although the consultants did express some scepticism as to whether simplicity and timesaving were always the ingredients of success. Our experts also validated the assumption that participants generally welcome entertaining and creative designs. The positive reception of the entertaining and creative design dimension would however seem to be limited by the need for simplicity in the task/challenge and mode of participation mode described above. In general, it appears to remain a question of the objective of the actual sweepstake or contest. Creative and entertaining designs would seem to better serve the aim of providing listeners with a diverse programme of entertainment, while simple and timesaving designs are more appropriate for reaching a broader group of participants and thus perhaps better serve the objectives of raising brand recognition and gaining new listeners.

Finally we should again point out that our survey only shows the points of view of radio managers, consulters and presenters. We cannot provide any listener-based data, since obtaining this would have demanded a different research design. The strengths of the insider view presented in this paper lie in their compact knowledge of strategic considerations (programme directors and consultants) and operative experience (operators). While the operator's knowledge proved to be very interesting even in singular observations,

the radio station directors did not seem to have reflected at any great length on the general usefulness of sweepstakes and contests. They are seen more as an integral component of programme design that has always been used than a strategically deployed means of radio marketing. Further research into strategic considerations would therefore be recommended as a result of the research on the influence and design of sweepstakes and contests in radio marketing from the station manager perspective.

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