



HOW TO DISTRIBUTE YOUR RADIO PSA IN THE DIGITAL AGE

Promotion Takes on a New Role

By Bill Goodwill

It is no surprise to see that digital distribution of all media products will soon become the de facto standard. As this article was being written, we have fully adopted digital distribution of TV PSAs, but have not fully evaluated the efficacy of radio distribution, using digital vs hard copy CDs.

First let's define the terms. Digital distribution (also called content delivery, online distribution, or electronic software distribution), is the delivery of media content over an online delivery medium, such as the Internet, thus bypassing physical distribution methods, such as paper, CDs and DVDs.

There are a several ways to distribute digital content, including real-time streaming, where files are not permanently stored, down loading files to the user's server, posting files to a download site, or posting them to "the cloud." We typically use both of the latter procedures.

Server vs The Cloud

Five years ago we created our own digital download site called PSA Digital and to see how we handle both TV and radio digital files, go to:

<http://www.goodwillcommunications.com/PSADigital.aspx>.



One of the advantages of this procedure is that we are in total control of the content and how it is presented to the media. TV or radio public service directors can view or listen to the PSAs, and they also see brief background information on the campaign, as well as the sponsoring organization. To download the spots they want, they simply click on the spot length and download them to their server.



4-H 2016 PSAs

The goal of the Grow True Leaders campaign is to prepare 10 million True Leaders by 2025. The campaign will include an ongoing national consumer and employee engagement effort with youth rallies comprised of celebrities, influencers, corporate partners, 4-H alumni and the general public. The campaign is focusing on moms with kids ages 6-17 years old. PSAs have been sent to 1,000

local TV broadcast stations, all major national TV networks and 3,500 radio stations.

TV

RADIO

NEED US :15



Downloads

[NEED US :15 \(MP3\) 592 KB](#)

The other digital distribution procedure currently in use is to post PSAs to the cloud and then notify the media where they can be downloaded, using a digital distribution company such as Extreme Reach.

The following graphic shows this process:

DIGITAL DISTRIBUTION SCHEMATIC



In terms of quantities, Extreme Reach has every radio station in the U.S. in its database – about 10,000 local stations - and national networks. However, the effective reach is about 7,500, due to the fact that there are many station groups which own multiple outlets.

Role of Promotion

Due to the fact that we are no longer distributing hard copy PSA packages, which include copy to sell the importance of the campaign to local public service directors, promotion takes on new importance in the digital distribution era.

A hallmark of the campaigns distributed by Goodwill Communications is that we believe in the power of promotion. For radio PSAs, we use several promotional tactics to sell our client messages to radio public service directors:

- Posting client files to our PSA Digital Website, where they can be heard and downloaded
- Posting client PSAs to the National Association of Broadcasters' Spot Center download site to give the messages external credibility

- Using blast emails and postcards such as those shown below to let stations know where they can download PSAs. These are sent to stations and broadcast associations located in every state
- Posting a digital newsletter on the cloud to provide background information on the client campaign

Blast Email



Radio Postcard



Digital Newsletter



Evaluation Procedures

In the digital world – particularly for radio which is not universally monitored - there are evaluation challenges to overcome. Since we are not distributing hard copy packages, we cannot include an evaluation business reply card, (BRC) such as shown here.

There are two ways we are addressing this issue. First, the radio postcard shown above has two parts to it, one which is shown, and the second part includes the evaluation BRC.

The stations check off the spot length they used, the frequency and duration of usage, and then drop the card in the mail. The reverse of the BRC has address, along with a postage-paid indicia.

PSAs

Radio

4-H

GROWS HERE

Dear Public Service Director:
Please take a moment to complete the following information. It will help us determine the kinds of PSAs you want to receive in the future and ensure we will send you the correct format. Thank you for your cooperation and support.

Would you like to download digital files from a site? Yes No

Have digital files emailed to you: Yes No

Email address: _____

File format is Mpeg 3 – If you cannot use Mpeg 3 files, what format do you need? _____

Title:		# Times Per Week Aired					# Weeks Aired				
"Need Us"	:60	1-3	4-6	7-9	10-12	16+	1-3	4-6	7-9	10-12	16+
"Need Us"	:30	1-3	4-6	7-9	10-12	16+	1-3	4-6	7-9	10-12	16+
"Need Us"	:15	1-3	4-6	7-9	10-12	16+	1-3	4-6	7-9	10-12	16+

Name: _____

Call Letters: _____

Telephone: _____ Fax: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

The second way is to use a radio tracking service provided by A.C. Nielsen – the same firm which provides accurate broadcast TV monitoring. The service, called Spot,Trac, offers radio tracking in 140 markets, covering over 2,000 radio stations across the U.S. and Canada, including satellite and national networks.

Preparation of Audio Files

Nielsen's radio tracking uses what it calls "fingerprint technology," because they scan the audio tracks which are captured when the PSAs are broadcast, and match them against the files that were sent to them by the distributor.

However, there are some creative requirements that could greatly affect results, which include:

- Audio must be unique in order to be reported individually. For example, if a 30 second PSA is cut down to 15 seconds, Nielsen cannot identify and report them individually unless there is enough difference between the audio tracks. There must be a different voice or background on each creative. A new or different phone number is not considered unique.
- The entire spot is encoded in 6-second segments. If it is a 30 second spot, which has 5 segments and 3 of the 5 match, while 2 do not, the 3 are generally going to match as a duplicate for the first pattern already in the system. Nielsen also allows us to submit the audio to be monitored, and their system will tell us if there is enough of a difference for unique reporting.

The following are the minimum requirements for audio files to be tracked. If your file does not meet these requirements, the release will be rejected.

- MPEG 1.0 layer 3
- Stereo (mpeg file must be created with one of the following bit values: 00 - stereo, 01 - joint stereo, or 10 - dual channel stereo)
- Minimum 128kbit (may be higher but not necessary) and 44100Hz or 44.1KHz
- Files cannot include headers
- Minimum of 15 seconds for the spot is required
- Clients can use Audacity software to convert the MP3 to stereo, or make minor changes.

Finally, since Nielsen does not provide universal coverage of all radio stations that regularly use PSAs, we still have to send stations a BRC to collect as much usage as we can from stations that are not monitored by Nielsen.

Our reporting software is programmed to avoid redundant reporting between these two sources, and on our client Executive Summary reports they will see separate usage data for these two evaluation procedures.

During the transition to universal digital distribution, there will be some bumps along the road as we all adapt to this new way of doing things. However, just as when we migrated to using computers several decades ago, when we test and evaluate all aspects of digital distribution, we will wonder how we ever did things any other way.

Bill Goodwill is CEO of Goodwill Communications, a firm that specializes in PSA distribution in all media. His firm has distributed over 1,000 national PSA campaigns for leading non-profits and government agencies.