

YOUNG PROFESSIONAL'S COLUMN



JT Koser

Koser Radio Group

Getting Local

As an account executive, one of my greatest pleasures is working with business owners on developing their Unique Selling Propositions—the one thing that sets their business apart from all other competitors in their market.

Lately I've been taking that approach with our own industry: what is it that sets traditional media apart from our competitors, especially the "new media"?

I'm sure my fellow AE's of decades past enjoyed reciting their lines of what sets radio/tv apart from yellow pages, mailers, or the great and powerful newspapers, just as we today need to broaden our knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of web banners, mobile, Facebook, Google, YouTube, Pandora, streaming services, and so on. Who knows what may be next in the coming five to ten years that will replace the aforementioned online

mediums (and if you don't think any of these are replaceable, just ask MySpace, Napster or AIM how they're doing today), which I'm sure we'll have to research so we can position ourselves differently just as we always have done.

What I find encouraging, is how we have a greater control on how our customers view us, more so than any other medium. Our leaders (GM's, Owners, PD's, etc.) are not in some far off office directing orders online to satellite sales reps across the country (why I'll never work for Google). We're in the same communities as our local advertisers. We go to the same restaurants, attend the same churches, drive the same roads, you get my drift. That's why I think it's easier for us to make a much more personal connection to our customers than anyone from the online sector.

Last year, many of the community organizations in my hometown of Rice Lake came together to hold the largest celebrity golf-tournament fundraiser our community has seen. These groups all had their own fundraisers in the past. Unfortunately there's only so many times you can ask people to attend banquets and golf tournaments throughout the year, so joining them together in one big event seemed to make sense. It was an enormous undertaking for our small community that required manpower from many leaders, including my father who initially proposed the idea. After many months of planning, endless phone calls and an incredible amount of support, we raised over \$100K for local charities, which ended up being more than what the individual organizations would raise on their own.

What was most interesting to me, is that there was not one Google rep, Pandora GM, and especially not a Youtube Manager that was part of this effort. However there were several people from the radio stations, along with many local business owners and GM's all working together to make fundraiser a reality. Local Leadership.

This is absolutely one aspect of our Unique Selling Proposition as broadcasters. I truly believe that every brand new account executive, TV reporter, on-air personality should get involved with local community groups RIGHT AWAY!

Think about who's in your local Rotary Club, Kiwanis, Lions Club. Most of the time it's the leaders of your community, which tend to include many decision makers for local businesses. When your customers see people from their local radio and TV stations getting involved in their community, how do you think they perceive your stations compared to Facebook? It certainly doesn't hurt your reputation!

We're capable of such incredible local impact in our industry, and I know that's what's going to keep us going for many more years to come. So if you have new people in your stations that aren't involved, encourage them to do so! Organizations seem to be starving for young blood these days, and need new ideas to keep the community going.

How great it would be if it's local radio and TV that lead the charge!