



Arbitron/Joint Communications

What Women Want: From Urban and Urban AC Radio

A Format-Specific Summary Taken from
*What Women Want: Five Secrets to Better
Ratings*

For the full study, *What Women Want: Five Secrets
to Better Ratings*, go to:

http://www.arbitron.com/radio_stations/studies1.htm

Welcome to the Arbitron/Joint Communications summary of American women Urban/Urban AC radio listeners. This format-specific summary is taken from a groundbreaking study based on interviews with Arbitron diarykeepers that asked the timeless question “What do women want?”

This report focuses specifically on 18- to 54-year-old female diarykeepers who listen to Urban or Urban AC radio.

The Study

In July 2001, Joint Communications conducted telephone interviews with 1,060 female Arbitron diarykeepers aged 18-54 to find out what they want from radio. Diarykeepers of all Arbitron-identified formats were included. These women were asked questions about lifestyle, loves/hates about radio, reasons for tuning in or out, and specific radio behaviors and needs. This special report focuses on Urban and Urban AC listeners only.

Top 10 Things to Know about Female Urban/Urban AC Radio Listeners

- 1. Urban and Urban AC Listeners Truly Use the Radio As a Source of Information.** The numbers here are dramatic as we see Urban/Urban AC women using the radio for a variety of information. Seventy-two percent “strongly agree” that “weather” is important, compared to 52% of the other formats. Sixty-five percent “strongly agree” that “traffic” is a reason they tune in and 54% “strongly agree” that “news and news headlines” are a tune-in factor for them. Sixty-two percent said that “information on community activities” is a reason they tune in. These numbers are some of the highest among all formats.
- 2. These Women Love Contests with a Chance to Win Prizes, Although They Don’t Necessarily Participate.** An amazing 45% of Urban/Urban AC Listeners “strongly agree” that “contests are fun to listen to” even if they don’t play. This is in sharp contrast to the average of 23% for other format listeners. While 21% of all women interviewed said they would tune out for contests, only 12% of Urban/Urban AC women said the same thing. Yet only 17% said that they have listened to the radio for a chance to win. This is the highest number of all formats, but low compared to the 45% that think the contests are fun to hear.
- 3. Worry Is Part of Everyday Life for Urban/Urban AC Female Listeners, but They Are Optimists.** Almost half said they worry about their personal safety, and almost half also said that they worry about the future a lot. One-third worry about their health a lot. And 77% worry about their children’s safety, compared to 60% of the women who listen to other formats. It is interesting, then, to see that even though female listeners to this format seem to worry the most, they also have the most optimistic outlook. Ninety-four percent of them believe that “hard work brings success” and 85% believe they can “be whatever they choose to be.” These are the highest numbers of any format!
- 4. Urban and Urban AC Listeners Want Funny Air Personalities.** Sixty-two percent “strongly agree” that “Funny DJs/Air Personalities” were the reason they tuned in, so humor is very important to these women. They love to laugh, and 43% “strongly agree” that “funny features, comedy and jokes” are a tune-in for them, compared to the total female average of 20%. In looking at what they expect from radio, over half believe that radio “should make me laugh.”
- 5. Urban/Urban AC Women Use the Radio to Change Their Mood, Especially at Work.** Only 56% of the Urban/Urban AC females said they like the people they work with, compared to 71% of the other format listeners. Only 35% “strongly agree” that their jobs give them great satisfaction. Fifty-six percent said that radio reduces their stress at work and almost 80% “strongly agree” that they listen to radio to relax.

- 6. “Classic,” “Oldies” and “Favorite Older Songs” Are Important in the Music Mix.** Eighty-two percent of Urban/Urban AC women “strongly agree” that “hearing my favorite older songs” is a reason for them to tune in. They obviously crave a variety of music, since 57% of them also said they tune in to hear the “top songs.” When asked to think of what they “like, even love” about radio, 15% mentioned “classic/oldies” music.
- 7. “Too Many Commercials” Is the #1 Reason for Tuning Out.** This is consistent across most formats, and 73% of Urban/Urban AC women “strongly agree” that too many commercials will cause them to tune out or turn off. In addition to commercials, too much chatter can also make them turn away. Sixty-eight percent said “too much talk” is what causes them to tune out. They want to be informed, though, so what they might need is useful, relevant talk.
- 8. Song Identification Is More Important to This Format Than Any Other.** Seventy percent of women who listen to Urban/Urban AC said they “strongly agree” that radio stations should identify songs more than they do now. Since 87% of Urban/Urban AC listeners regard “music I like” as being very important to them, you might as well give them the information on the artists and song titles. Remember that radio is a tremendous source of information for them.
- 9. They Like Call-In Shows and Advice, Even if They Don’t Agree with the Air Personalities.** Twenty-two percent “strongly agree” that they like phone-in talk shows, which is a number second only to the women who listen to News/Talk. Almost one-third of Urban/Urban AC women “strongly agree” that they tune in to radio for “advice on relationships, including sexual concerns,” compared to only 10% of the other format listeners. They do not shy away from controversial shows, and 22% “strongly agree” that they tune in to hear programs with opinions they don’t agree with, compared to 10% of the other format listeners.
- 10. They Are Still Concerned About Kids Listening to the Content.** Even though they enjoy the talk and call-in shows, they are still concerned about broadcast content being appropriate for children. Sixty-seven percent of Urban/Urban AC women think radio should “broadcast things that are OK to listen to” with kids, and 55% will tune out if they feel the content is not good for kids to listen to. Perhaps they are enjoying the call-in shows when the kids are not listening. Still, programmers may want to consider monitoring content more closely.
- 11. Television Is a Great Way to Reach Urban/Urban AC Women.** Seventy-eight percent of Urban/Urban AC women “strongly agree” that television is a great way for radio to reach them, which is tied with “hearing from a friend.” This means that not only do they value the opinion of their friends, but the traditional medium of TV is also an excellent advertising vehicle. This format has the highest numbers among all the formats for citing television as the best way to reach them.

Key Findings

- 1. Any Information That Is Offered on the Radio Is Very Important to Urban/Urban AC Listeners.** Over half of Urban/Urban AC listeners think that air personalities should give them inside information on things that are important to them. In addition to their thirst for the traffic, news and weather, 37% believe that radio should broadcast information that is helpful in raising children. More than one-third “strongly agree” that “business and financial news” on radio is an important factor in tuning them in.
- 2. Urban/Urban AC Listeners Develop a Relationship with Your Radio Station in General and at Work.** Over half say that radio helps reduce their stress at work. *Twenty-six percent* strongly agree that they like it when people from radio stations visit their workplace, compared to only 15% of the other formats. And 6% of Urban/Urban AC listeners belong to frequent-listener clubs. To help focus on what this group of women may want, stations should check the local market qualitative for lifestyle preferences of their audience.

Also, 18% of Urban/Urban AC women often think of their favorite DJ/host as a friend. It seems, though, that sometimes the air personalities fail to make a connection since 17% of this format’s listeners said that the DJs “don’t seem to know what’s important to me.” This suggests that DJs and air personalities are doing a good job but might improve if the station brainstorms with ALL of the jocks about how to stay relevant.

- 3. Reach Urban/Urban AC Listeners Through Their Friends and Television.** Almost 80% of Urban/Urban AC women “strongly agree” that one of the best ways for radio stations to communicate to them is through television. When you look at the time they spend with the television, it is very high. Eleven percent spend six to 10 hours a week with TV and 22% spend more than five hours with television. They clock in with the highest average number of hours per week among all formats, 3.2. The shows they watch the most? Approximately one-third watch sitcoms and one-quarter watch talk/information shows.

You cannot ignore the fact, though, that almost 80% did say “hearing from a friend” is a great way to communicate with them, so it is important to figure out how to get them to spread the news about your station.

- 4. Being Funny Works.** Although 43% of Urban/Urban AC women think that “DJs talk too much,” 46% “strongly agree” that “DJs should make me laugh.” Over half strongly agree that “radio should make me laugh.” This makes sense when you look at the following point: Women are using humor to lighten their work or their day in general and change their mood. Forty-three percent said that they listen to the radio to “give me more energy,” and it appears that they get part of that energy through humor.

5. **Urban/Urban AC Women Expect a Great Deal from Radio As They Use It to Affect Their Mood.** Over half “strongly agree” that they “use the radio to change my mood.” Twenty-six percent of Urban/Urban AC women “strongly agree” that radio lets them “enjoy things in their imagination that they would never do in real life,” compared to only 12% of the other format listeners, and 65% “strongly agree” that they use radio to keep them company. Almost one-third “strongly agree” that they use radio to “escape their day-to-day life.”
6. **Money Decisions and Concerns Are Their Responsibility.** Forty-three percent said that they “make all the money decisions in the household.” Forty-three percent also “strongly agree” that “money is very important.” And a little over half feel like they “never seem to have enough money.” Radio is a factor in helping them decide where to spend their money, as 17% “strongly agree” that “radio advertising is important to help me make decisions about what to buy.”
7. **Controversy Tends to Be OK.** Twenty-two percent of Urban/Urban AC women “strongly agree” that they tune in to radio to hear programs “that have opinions I don’t agree with.” Forty-one percent “strongly agree” that they like hosts and personalities who “address their opinion forcefully,” compared to 19% of other format listeners. So these women are ready to hear hot topics and issues, even when they disagree with what an air personality has to say, compared to 22% of the other formats.
8. **They Are More Likely to Be Sports Fans Than Women Who Listen to Other Formats.** Thirteen percent “strongly agree” that they tune in to the radio for “sports information.” Although that is not a large number, it is among the highest of any format. Ten percent “strongly agree” that they tune in for “play-by-play” sports broadcasts.
9. **Roughly Half Can Be Reached Through the Internet.** Forty-nine percent of Urban/Urban AC women say that they have logged onto the Internet in the past week, which is lower than the average of listeners to the other formats, 63%. Less than a third have logged on at home, and only 15% have logged on at work. So if you are looking for ways to contest and communicate, the Internet is probably not the best choice.

Of those who have logged on at home, 28% spent more than three hours online during the average weekday, and the women who logged on at work spent less time on the Internet per day, with 62% of them spending an hour online.

10. **They Can Be Reached Through Contests That Are Great for Play-Along Value.** Forty-nine percent of female Urban/Urban AC listeners “strongly agree” that “contests with a chance to win prizes” are an important reason for listening, and 45% said that “contests are fun to listen to even if I don’t play.” Urban/Urban AC women are great targets for contests since 67% said “they like to win things.” Combine the fact that Urban/Urban AC women love to laugh, they have a strong connection with radio and they think of DJs/air personalities as friends, and it is easy to see why they enjoy listening to contests.

Recommendations

1. **Keep Them Informed but Walk the Line Between Ample Information and “Too Much Talk.”** These women are handling money decisions for their households, they are concerned about things around them, and they are relying on your station to keep them “in the know”. The Urban/Urban AC women send a bit of a mixed message since almost 80% feel that radio should keep them informed but 43% feel like air personalities talk too much. So make it succinct and relevant, but make sure they get their daily dose of news, traffic and weather. Let them know what’s going on.
2. **Make the Contests Great for “Listen-Along” Value, Since They Don’t Necessarily Play.** Almost half of Urban/Urban AC women “strongly agree” that “contests with the chance to win prizes” are an important reason for them to tune in.

But only 17% have ever listened to radio for a chance to win. Of those, 12% have contacted the station to win. This means that the part of the contest they are enjoying is the listening, not the participating. So make sure your contests are engaging and interesting for the women who don’t necessarily want to pick up the phone and call or drive over to the remote.

More great news here is that of the women who had tried to contact the radio station to play, 40% had been initially contacted by the station, so it seems as if the outreach from the radio station is working.

3. **Keep the Humor Going.** Urban/Urban AC women want to laugh, believe radio should make them laugh, want DJs to be funny, and tune in to radio for funny features/comedy and jokes. Don’t disappoint them. Giving them the best mix of relevant information, music and humor will keep these women listening to your station.
4. **Tell Them What You Are Playing.** Seventy percent of female Urban/Urban AC listeners believe that radio should identify songs more often than they do now.

This is important. For a format whose women want information about what’s going on around them, you would only expect for them to also want to know the song titles and artists.

5. **Don’t Forget the Spot Load.** Seventy-three percent of female Urban/Urban AC listeners said that “too many commercials” was the number one reason they tuned out. Think about this one. With budget pressures it is difficult to keep spot loads in check sometimes, but too many commercials can alienate Urban/Urban AC women. Find a way to tailor the spots to best speak to them. Are they informative? Are they humorous? Are they optimistic? We know what Urban/Urban AC women want now, so shouldn’t the copy in the spots reflect those values?

- 6. Stay Active in the Community.** Urban/Urban AC women look to radio to keep them up to date, and 62% said that “information on community activities and events” is very important to them. Fifty-six percent believe that “radio should do more for the community,” compared to 35% of other format listeners. Keeping your radio station visible in the community is a great way to help your listeners stay in touch and further develop their connection with your station.
- 7. Reach Them Through Television and Their Friends.** Urban/Urban AC women, like women who listen to other formats, value the opinions of their friends and will listen to their friends. They think that a great way to find out about radio is by “hearing from a friend.” Brainstorm ways and incentives for your listeners to get their friends involved and make your radio station the talk of their town.

And they watch TV. Lots of TV. You can reach them through talk/information programs, court programs and sitcoms.

- 8. Remember That They Are on Your Side.** These women, more than women who listen to any other format, are saying great things about radio. When asked to think about what they disliked about radio, 15% couldn't think of one thing. They are using you for information, they listen to your contests, they perceive your air personalities to be friends, and they are more likely than other women to welcome a visit from your air personalities at their workplace. You are ahead from the start, so find ways to foster these relationships.

About Arbitron

Arbitron Inc. (NYSE: ARB) is an international media and marketing research firm serving radio broadcasters, cable companies, advertisers, advertising agencies and outdoor advertising companies in the United States, Mexico and Europe. Arbitron's core businesses are measuring network and local market radio audiences across the United States; surveying the retail, media and product patterns of local market consumers; and providing application software used for analyzing media audience and marketing information data. Arbitron Webcast Services measures the audiences of audio and video content on the Internet, commonly known as webcasts. The Company is developing the Portable People Meter, a new technology for radio, TV and cable ratings.

Arbitron's marketing and business units are supported by a world-renowned research and technology organization located in Columbia, Maryland. Arbitron has approximately 750 full-time employees; its executive offices are located in New York City.

Through its Scarborough Research joint venture with VNU Media Measurement & Information, Arbitron also provides media and marketing research services to the broadcast television, magazine, newspaper and online industries.

About Joint Communications

Joint Communications Corp. is considered a global leader in media strategy, marketing and consumer trends. For 25 years, it has helped a distinguished roster of clients to achieve remarkable success. They have included VH1, *Rolling Stone* Magazine, MTV, Wendy's, S.C. Johnson, Molson, CBS, NBC, ABC, Bryan Adams, major record companies and hundreds of radio stations in the United States, Canada, Australia, Europe and South America.

Joint Communications specializes in identifying, capturing and keeping audiences. They do it through sophisticated market research, formatting, marketing and promotion.

CEO John Parikhal co-created a successful show for NBC television as well as creating national radio hits for *Rolling Stone* and NBC Radio. Most recently, he put his talents to work in helping to engineer the rebirth and extraordinary success of VH1.

Parikhal is author of *The Baby Boom: Making Sense of Our Generation at 40*, based on the most extensive study ever done of boomers as they turned 40. He earned his master's degree with media guru Marshall McLuhan and studied for a Ph.D. in language and perception.

Parikhal has been interviewed extensively on radio, television and in magazines for his opinions on what people want and why they want it. He shares his insights in his popular *Radio & Records* column, "The Competitive Edge."

Widely recognized as a futurist who helps his clients become even more successful, Parikhal says, "There is a New Entertainment Economy emerging. It's all about control, connection and convenience—a daring tug of war between consumers and creators, between the distributors and the dissatisfied."

02-RSS-538 5/02

For More Information, Contact

Laura Ivey

Manager, National Radio Sales
Arbitron Inc.
9705 Patuxent Woods Drive
Columbia, MD 21046
(443) 259-7598
laura.ivey@arbitron.com

John Parikhal

CEO
Joint Communications
40 Heights Road, Suite 203
Darien, CT 06820
(203) 656-4680
parikhal@aol.com