



Arbitron/Joint Communications

What Women Want: From CHR 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 CHR 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 CHR 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 CHR listeners only.

Top 10 Things to Know About Female CHR Radio Listeners

- 1. Music Drives the Format.** CHR has got to be music intensive to be successful with female diarykeepers. CHR women have much-higher-than-average interest in music. Ninety-two percent “strongly agree” that they listen for “music I like,” and 85% said “lots” of music is very important. Although they are very attracted to new songs, female CHR listeners also want “favorite older songs.”
- 2. Overwhelmed by Commercials.** Like other formats, over 75% say the main reason for tuning out of radio is “too many commercials.” When asked what they hate most about radio, 40% of CHR women said “too many ads.” This was the highest number for any format in the study.
- 3. DJs Should Be Funny.** CHR radio listeners want their DJs to be funny and “make me laugh.” They index higher than almost every other format for something that “makes me laugh” or “funny DJs.” However, they don’t want too much talk (32% “strongly agree” that DJs “talk too much”), and they are quick to tune out rude or cheesy announcers. (Over 50% said they “strongly agree” that they will tune them out.)
- 4. ID Songs.** Over half (56%) of all CHR radio women “strongly agree” that radio should identify songs and artists more than they do now. Pay special attention to new songs since CHR women are the most likely to think that Top 10 or Top 20 songs are an important reason for tuning in to radio.
- 5. Don’t Count On the Internet.** A lot (42%) of CHR female listeners don’t use the Internet. This may come as a surprise to CHR programmers who believe that all women (especially younger ones) use the Internet. So, you’re leaving a huge portion of audience out if you don’t connect with them by something other than the Internet. And, when CHR users log on, they have below-average Web usage compared to other women listening to other formats.
- 6. They Like to Win Things and They Like to Shop.** Women who listen to CHR radio are just as likely as others to agree, “I like to win things,” with over 80% saying “agree” (strongly or slightly). And they like to shop (86% agree). But, very few of them (13%) have listened to the radio specifically to win something. And when they did, they were usually trying to win tickets to concerts or events.
- 7. They Worry a Lot.** Women who listen to CHR radio are more likely than average to worry. They worry about their future, their safety and their health. And if they have kids, they worry a lot about their kids’ safety. They are also more likely than the average diarykeeper to agree with the statement “I get angry more often than I used to.” This worry and anger are driving forces when they listen to CHR. Surprisingly, 72% listen to CHR radio to relax (much higher than average diarykeepers), and 53% listen to reduce stress (much higher than average diarykeepers). Make them feel good. Don’t add to their stress.
- 8. Kid Sensitive.** CHR radio women are like other radio women. They don’t want radio that is inappropriate for kids. Over 55% “strongly agree” they’ll tune out if the kids can’t (or shouldn’t) listen.

Among women 18-54 who listen to CHR radio, nearly 50% are under the age of 29. And two-thirds are under the age of 34. Most (55%) have no kids.

- 9. Many of Them Control Their Own Money.** CHR women are much more likely to agree that “I make all the money decisions in the household” than female listeners to other formats. Over a third “strongly agree” with this statement. In other words, if you advertise directly to them, they can do something about it without checking with anybody else.
- 10. Contests Are Polarizing.** On the whole, female CHR diarykeepers are only slightly more likely than the average diarykeeper to agree with this statement: “I like to listen to contests with a chance to win prizes.” And 25% “strongly agree” that contests are “fun to listen to even if I don’t play.” There is less intense dislike of contests among CHR diarykeepers than among other format listeners. However, the majority of “positives” are only lukewarm.

Contests: Positives and Negatives. There are divisions among CHR radio listeners about contests. On the whole, CHR listeners are less negative about contests than the average female diarykeeper. However, most of them are not really “strongly” positive about them either.

Even though about half of CHR diarykeepers like to win things, not many have actually listened in an attempt to win. This suggests that contests should be carefully focused and should never get in the way of music quantity. CHR listeners are slightly less ambivalent about contests than other women 18-54. That means if they are lukewarm about contests, they are more likely to be lukewarm in a positive direction than a negative direction.

Key Findings

1. **CHR radio women say that “favorite music” is the biggest reason for tuning in, and the need for “lots of music” is strongly associated with “little talk.”** CHR women overwhelmingly said that “Music I Like” is the biggest reason they tune in (95%), followed by “Lots of Music” (92%). The demand for lots of music is highest among CHR radio women than any other format.

For women in general, the demand for “Music I Like” does not change with age, but the demand for “Lots of Music” declines. This emphasizes that picking the correct songs can be key in keeping women tuned in. Sixty-five percent of CHR radio women “strongly agree” that they would tune out because of a song they did not like.

2. **New music is a driving force.** Most CHR listeners (70%) “strongly agree” that they tune-in to hear new songs, and 60% “strongly agree” they tune in to hear the Top 10 or the Top 20. However, newness alone isn’t enough. Among CHR listeners, over half want to hear their “favorite older songs.” This suggests that the most effective CHR station should balance newness with familiarity.
3. **“Too many commercials” is the #1 tune-out.** Seventy-six percent of CHR radio women said that “too many commercials” cause them to tune out. When asked what they “hate” about radio, CHR women volunteered “too many ads” as the #1 reason. This was the highest of any format surveyed.
4. **Funny DJs are important to CHR radio women.** These women want to laugh. When CHR women listen to DJs, they’re usually looking for a laugh. CHR women are looking for something to reduce their stress and help them relax. Laughter does this.

Forty-seven percent of CHR radio women “strongly agreed” with the statement “DJs should make me laugh”—compared with 37% of women listening to all other formats. However, it shouldn’t be taken as a license to talk with nothing to say.

Almost one-third of CHR radio women “strongly” agreed with the statement “DJs talk too much.”

Just under a third of CHR women listen to DJs to get “inside information about things that are important to me.” That’s slightly lower than the average of all formats. It suggests that CHR listeners don’t really want to be any “hipper” than the average woman listening to radio.

Funny DJs are also a strong tune-in reason for CHR radio—63% of CHR women “strongly agree” that they tune in to radio for “funny DJs.”

5. **Women dislike “rude announcers.”** On the whole, CHR women were slightly more tolerant of rude and cheesy announcers than the average female radio listener. However, they were still a big tune-out. Sixty percent of CHR women strongly agreed that “rude announcers” caused them to tune out, and 51% said cheesy/phony announcers caused them to tune out. All women across all ages seem to have a big problem with rude announcers. Even among 18- 24-year-olds, 65% strongly agree that “rude announcers” is a tune-out.

Rudeness, phoniness and meanspiritedness are big no-nos with female diarykeepers regardless of age or format. Remember that female diarykeepers are really concerned about kids and what they hear. Many are tired of rudeness and inappropriateness.

- 6. CHR women are worriers.** CHR radio women worry a lot. And nearly 40% of them agree that they “get angry more often than I used to.” Just over half (52%) “strongly agree” that “I never have enough time to get everything done.” In other words, their stress level is very high. However, in spite of all the worry, CHR women today are still optimists and American Dreamers.
- 7. Women continue to be optimists and American Dreamers.** Even though women are heavily pressured for time and worry a lot, they remain optimists. So don’t play to the negatives.

Eighty-two percent of CHR radio Arbitron diarykeepers “strongly agree” that hard work brings success, and 74% believe they can be whatever they choose to be—statistics that are uniquely American, reflecting a free and upwardly mobile society. Fifty-nine percent of these women also said that they feel happy and content most of the time.

Even though they’re optimists, they worry, and only 38% “strongly agree” with the statement “I find it very easy to wind down.”

So make sure that you help them feel good without pandering to them. Don’t talk *at* them. Don’t talk too much at all. And don’t tell them that you are helping them relax.

Instead, provide an environment where they feel comfortable, where they can wind down, where they are not bombarded with rude announcers, too many commercials and too much talk.

- 8. Women want to hear the song identified, and that’s as important as DJs who make them laugh.** Fifty-six percent of CHR women “strongly” agreed that radio stations should identify songs and artists more than they do now. This is not unique to any age or format. Women of all ages strongly agree that this is important.

This is not surprising in an era where radio stations don’t identify songs and record companies don’t even put the names of songs on their CDs.

This is especially important with CHR women because so many of them come to CHR for new songs or the Top 10 or Top 20. It suggests that they don’t hear the names often enough. This could have a negative impact on requests and on buying new music.

- 9. CHR women use radio to change their mood.** Even though most of the “mood” focus in radio is on Soft AC stations, CHR performs a powerful mood function with the stressed, worried, time-pressured CHR listeners. CHR radio women are much more likely to “strongly agree” (72%) that they listen to CHR to relax (53%) or to reduce stress than the average diarykeeper. The two things that reduce stress the most are lots of music they like and humor. On the other hand, too many commercials and too much talk add to their stress.
- 10. Most CHR radio women work (75%), but less than half (44%) of them listen to radio at work.** Although the majority work in an office, a school/college or in healthcare, they are twice as likely to work in retail than those who listen to other formats. If they listen to the radio at work, time spent listening is high—so they are important to your average quarter-hour.

There may be a big opportunity to increase at-work listening (and Arbitron recall) among CHR listeners who work. The #1 reason that CHR listeners tune in the radio is to “relax.” Since this has traditionally been a territory for Soft AC stations, adventurous program directors might find ways to increase TSL and average quarter-hour with more at-work targeting.

- 11. The Internet does not connect with 40% of CHR listeners.** Over 40% of CHR women don’t access the Internet—at work or at home. They haven’t logged on during the past seven days.

If they do access the Internet, they spend 20% less time on the Web than the average diarykeeper.

If you are trying to build a “relationship” with CHR listeners, the Internet is not the only way to do it. It’s only one tool. It’s very convenient for the radio station, because the Internet takes a lot of clutter off the air and doesn’t tie up phone lines. Obviously, it’s not convenient for nearly 40% of your listeners.

- 12. “At-work” visits by personalities can be effective.** Forty-two percent of working women who listen to CHR radio said they do not want a visit from a radio personality at their workplace.

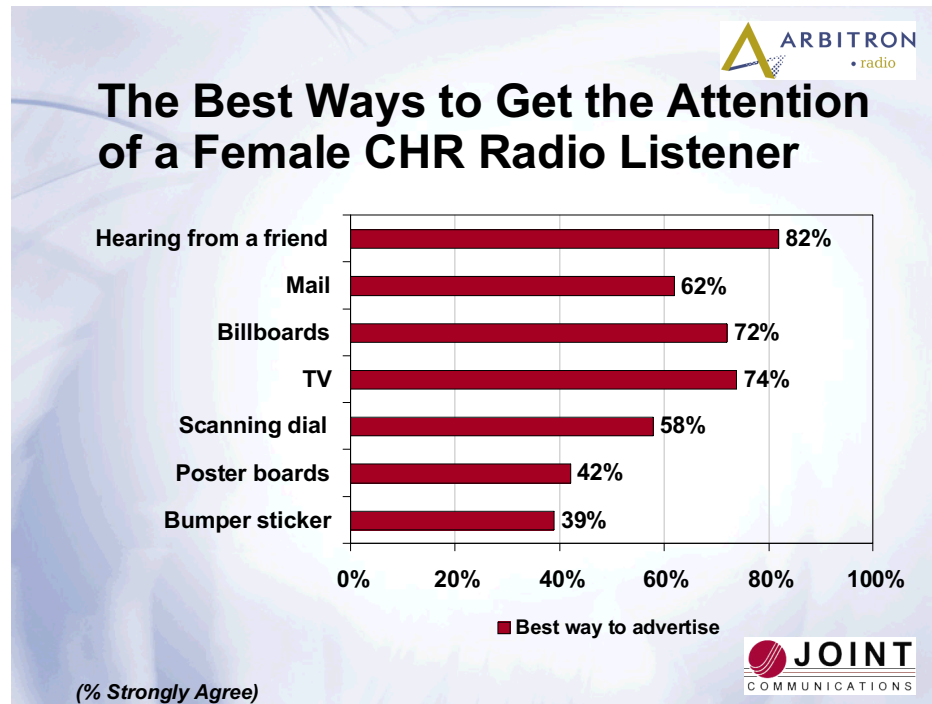
However, the 21% who do want a visit are much more likely to be loyal to you. In other words, over one in five CHR female listeners is “very likely” to want a visit from a personality to the workplace. This is one of the highest numbers among all formats.

It suggests that it might be very useful to brainstorm ways to have personalities visit the workplace to help increase loyalty and TSL.

- 13. CHR radio women say that *the best way to find out about radio stations is hearing about it from a friend.*** Even more than television? Yes. TV and billboards follow closely behind. Eighty-two percent of women said that the best way to hear about radio stations is from a friend. Women trust their friends to make recommendations. The credibility of a reference cannot be underestimated. Stations must find ways to motivate women to “tell a friend.”

Friends are very important to CHR listeners. However, TV and billboards are also strong ways to reach them. TV and billboards are a close second behind “hearing from a friend,” and these women are more likely to respond to TV and billboards than the average diarykeeper. Their favorite television shows are comedies. They are twice as likely to watch “Friends” as the average diarykeeper, and they are low on interest in news on TV.

Even though CHR listeners are looking for their favorite songs, only 58% believe that the best way to find a station is by “scanning the dial.” In other words, a really well-programmed station that is spread by word-of-mouth (possibly supported by TV and/or billboards) is less likely to simply become a button that listeners punch when they want something else.



14. Twenty-nine percent of CHR women don’t want any contesting. On the whole, CHR listeners are less negative about contests than the average female diarykeeper; however, contests are very polarizing. Twenty-nine percent don’t want any contesting, not even for entertainment value. A quarter (24%) “strongly agree” that they enjoy listening even if they don’t play, and 48% “slightly agree.”

But, only 13% of CHR radio women have listened to the radio “specifically to win” something.

CHR radio listeners are slightly ambivalent in their attitude towards contests. Only 28% of them “strongly agree” they listen to radio for “contests with a chance to win prizes,” and 16% see them as a big tune-out factor. Although this is higher than the average 18- to 54-year-old female diarykeeper, it still means that a significant majority of CHR listeners are lukewarm about contests or don’t want them at all.

When asked about contests that are fun even if you don’t play them, CHR listeners felt the same as most other listeners. Twenty-four percent “strongly agreed” that they were fun to play. However, only 17% “strongly disagreed” that they listen if they don’t play. (The average among all female diarykeepers is 29%). Yet, when it came to contests as a reason for tuning out, almost as many CHR listeners as average diarykeepers said they tuned out because of contests (about one in five).

Yet, 52% “strongly agree” that they “like to win things.” This suggests that on-air contesting is not the most effective way to appeal to a CHR radio listener’s desire to win.

It suggests that CHR radio do some serious brainstorming and rethinking about the whole issue of contests.

Contests are most attractive to 18- to 24-year-olds, who are the most likely of any age group to find them entertaining and want to win something.

In essence, CHR diarykeepers said that they were lukewarm or negative about contests. However, among those who are passionate (about one in four) and who actually try to win something, the majority wanted to win tickets to concerts or events.

Recommendations

1. **Music, music, music. Music is the driving tune-in factor for CHR women.** The most important thing is “songs I like,” and when they get music, they want lots of it. Obviously, music research is crucial if you want to satisfy this music-intensive listener.

Most of the time, they’re tuning in for new music or the Top 10/20 songs. However, half of them want to hear “older” favorites as well. In other words, CHR is driven by new music, but it satisfies by playing a mix of the new and the “older.” Make sure you ID the music. Over half “strongly agree” that they want you to ID songs and audiences more often.

2. **Carefully plan your contesting when targeting female listeners, since it can be a tune-out factor as well a tune-in factor.** Since almost 20% of women want no contests and only 28% “strongly agree” that they listen to CHR radio for a chance to win prizes through contests, make sure you are doing entertaining contests if you are doing them at all.

And consider a position that has no contests as part of an overall “less clutter” position, keeping in mind that the further away a diarykeeper gets from 18, the less interested she is in contesting.

If contests are funny and entertaining—and kept very brief—they have a slightly higher likelihood of working with CHR listeners than most other formats. However, if you did no contests at all, about 25% of your listeners *might* miss them for the entertainment value.

3. **Muzzle the talk.** “Too much talk” is a big negative with CHR women.

When the DJs talk, they should be funny—and when they’re not funny, they should be plugging listeners into important information about what’s going on.

These listeners don’t think talk is that important. They are much less interested in news than listeners to other formats, and they’re much more interested in listening to music and having it identified.

4. **Rethink spot loads. How do you handle commercials at your station?** They are an enormous tune-out factor for CHR women. CHR listeners were the most likely of all formats to say they tune out because of commercials and the most likely to say the thing they hated most about radio was “too many ads.” Also, over half of them said they tuned out specifically because of irritating commercials. Remember the value of good creative. And remember that low-commercial and commercial-free satellite radio is coming.

Don’t shrug off this finding. Many programmers and managers tend to fall back on an “it is what it is” abdication of responsibility to their listeners. They know they have to run commercials so they just say, “We’ll have to take what we get.”

CHR radio female diarykeepers told us that you should redouble your brainstorming efforts to figure out new ways to make commercials better and reduce the number. Companies that put time, energy and effort into this area will reap big rewards.

5. **Don’t rely too heavily on the Internet.** Even though the Internet can be a useful tool for your listeners, over 40% of CHR radio diarykeepers don’t access the Internet. Among those who do, the majority do so from home rather than work.

So, if you're using the Internet as an "at-work" contest hook, you are leaving a lot of your audience out. Reconsider some of the old technologies such as fax and postcards as well as direct-mail pieces if you want to make sure everyone has a chance to connect with your station. Direct mail should probably be some form of postcard in this anthrax-tense age.

- 6. Work on the laughs.** CHR women really want to laugh. They are stressed for time and worried about the future, their health, their kids and their safety—more worried than the average woman who listens to radio.

Laughs help them release their tension. In fact, their primary reason to listen to radio is "to relax."

Work closely with your announcers on their humor. Brainstorm ways to make morning shows (along with other dayparts) funny, but don't force it. Rude or cheesy announcers are a big tune-out with this group, who will sniff a phony in a minute.

- 7. Think about how to make your station more kid friendly.** This is a tough one, since less than half of all female CHR listeners have kids, but more than half feel strongly that radio should be okay for kids to listen to.

In many cases, the younger CHR listeners have brothers and sisters who ride in the car with them. It's well worth brainstorming this at your station.

Just keep in mind that if she is listening at a time of day when she might be with kids, she will turn the dial if she hears something offensive.

These diarykeepers might be a "canary in the coal mine"—warning radio to rethink community responsibilities.

- 8. Make sure the station is not "too hyper."** Most CHR listeners said the primary reason they listen to the format is "to relax"; over half of them said they listen "to reduce stress." This flies in the face of the common wisdom that has generated a coast-to-coast batch of CHR stations with loud, noisy production and hyperexcited disc jockeys.

It's worth thinking about this carefully. It suggests that CHR stations might be able to do even better at work and in the evenings than they do right now.

- 9. "Know" their friends.** This merits a serious brainstorm. CHR diarykeepers told us that the best way to reach them was by getting a recommendation from a friend.

Years ago, many radio stations took the easy way by creating "tell a friend" contests and then the fad petered out. It's clear that this is worth thinking about again.

However, when you try to motivate their friends, remember that they are pressured for time, have very mixed feelings about contests and like to keep things simple. Your brainstorming may even turn up a way to motivate friends without turning it into a contest.

Get to know the bonds of friendship that connect your female listeners. Keep in mind that, in this study, they told us that one of their favorite things is to shop. And their favorite TV show is "Friends." Study the dynamics of friendship, apply a healthy dose of creativity and turn it into stronger radio.

10. Don't Worry. Be Happy. CHR listeners are among the most worried women of any format. They have high levels of anxiety about themselves and about the future.

In promotions, when your DJs talk or when you present yourself, don't add to their anxiety. Instead, help them reduce their stress. Remember that you can't "order" them to feel better. And you can't talk at them—suggesting that they just stopped worrying.

Instead, create a radio station that takes their mind off their worries, that lets them relax and have fun listening.

11. Sell advertisers on your listeners' decision-making ability. Over a third of CHR women make "all the financial decisions in the household." In other words, when you reach them, you reach their wallet. This number is higher than most other formats. It suggests that directly targeted advertising that speaks to the needs and emotions of these music-loving, stressed women will have even more impact than advertising in other formats.

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."

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