**Station Imaging Webinar**

Engaging our audience with words, it’s what we do! It’s what I love most about radio. To paint the canvas every day to share a story whether it’s live content or written, it’s evoked emotions that keep bringing people back to our stations.

Often times, whether you are a production director or its one of your many jobs to do today, birthing fresh imaging regularly can be creative and joyous, however, what do you do when it
does feel like a chore? I feel that it quickly affects the creativity and the overall sound of what I am creating when it takes a lot of effort to write. I know for me personally, some days I’m on fumes by the time I get around to writing or producing new imaging. I’m too much of a stickler not to create new stuff frequently but always to work ahead so the only deadline I have is my own. I have leaned on a few tips that I got from a songwriting mastery course “SongChasers” that helps songwriters stay consistent in their art. I believe Imaging and songwriting are very similar. They both convey emotions, a message and need to be memorable and connect to the audience.

**So how do we write when the well dries up?**

First, lets address **writers block as the reality that its only resistance**. We all have multiple hats or multiple stations that need our “equal” attention and the resistance to balance or to clear the clutter so that we can think on what we need to say and new ways to say it. John Lennon says when it comes to songwriting, “Tell the truth and make it rhyme.” I say “tell the
truth and draw the emotion and add bells and whistles.” SongChasers reminds songwriters that “you are what you eat” so to produce great imaging, you have to listen to great imaging or commercials that speak the truth, convey the emotions that the audience will remember and let it fuel your own production. So don’t chalk it up to writers block as to why your imaging is stale but move the resistance out of the way to make room for it to flow onto the paper.

**Secondly, this ties into writing time.** Just like songwriters have to be consistent in writing sessions with collaborative teams/partners, I’ve found it helps if I write at the same time daily or weekly to hold myself accountable and make time for what’s important. Sometimes for me its early before the show, sometimes its after and sometimes its in the car while I wait for my kids in the carpool. Lightening can strike and its nice to harness a gigawatt from time-to-time but to create your own lightening releases the stress and makes you a better writer.

Lastly, there’s three things I feed off of when I need to create some lightening of my own:

1.**Collaborate!** Writing with a partner or a team always makes it better. Song partnerships over the years have birthed some amazing songs and imaging can bear the same kind of fruit.

2. **Make Pinterest Your Friend**! If you already use it for prep or cooking recipes, Great! You have the app so search a holiday or an emotion and see how quickly it just lights that fuse
into your next writing session. For me, it dominos more ideas then I need but then I can trim the mediocre stuff for the best stuff. There are no participation ribbons when it comes
to imaging. Either its great or no one will remember it.

3. **God’s word is a spark**! As a faith based industry, We use it daily to sharpen our irons of faith; why not let it sharpen the irons of imaging for our station. God’s a creative God and cares about the words we use. I pray that He gives us the words to say and take away the ones that aren’t needed so that each promo and sweeper will be what it needs to be to brand our stations into the community. Especially with various translations, one word can spark the flame.

Side note, we have those friends we’ve made in this format and radio in general, so who is a mentor that can walk along side of you as you enhance your craft so that you not only get
better but you build your confidence and think like those you look up to. They have the experience or way of thinking that you want to channel, so let them help you. Also, keeping our
production libraries fresh is key. Nothing kills great lyrics worse then a cheesy or reused music bed. If you love the words enough to put them on the air, then let it show in the production and see how your station can grow.

No matter what your production deadlines are, you can be proud of what’s birthing on the air and hand out cigars to celebrate. Go be an “ImagingChaser”

As a movie fan, I love it for the same reason. Movies draw the adrenaline of the car chase; the tears we identify in someone’s struggle or the romance of a kiss as someone finds true love. Movies are eye candy for me so I’m there at least once a week with popcorn and Cherry ICEE in hand. For those of us that have an AMC in our community, you may have seen the trailer they began to run as people went back to the movies after everything had opened back up from the lock down starring the one and only Nicole Kidman.

It still runs to this day and it speaks truth to what the movies really can do for us. For those who haven’t seen it, the promo starts with Nicole entering an AMC theater on a rainy day. As she watches clips of movies inside the theater, she speaks to us:

WE COME TO THIS PLACE FOR MAGIC. WE COME TO AMC THEATERS TO LAUGH, TO CRY, TO CARE. BECAUSE WE NEED THAT, ALL OF US. THAT INDESCRIBABLE FEELING WE GET WHEN THE LIGHTS BEGIN TO DIM AND WE GO SOMEWHERE WE’VE NEVER BEEN BEFORE. NOT JUST ENTERTAINED, BUT SOMEHOW REBORN TOGETHER. DAZZLING IMAGES ON A HUGE SILVER SCREEN. SOUND THAT I CAN FEEL. SOMEHOW, HEARTBREAK FEELS GOOD IN A PLACE LIKE THIS.  OUR HEROES FEEL LIKE THE BEST PARTS OF US, AND STORIES FEEL PERFECT AND POWERFUL…BECAUSE HERE… THEY ARE.

If there was an equation formula to the perfect promo, this would be it.

**Inviting + compassion x transparency =Winning Promo**

We hit a wall with all the hats we wear and need inspiration to spark that dried up well. I know after the Super Bowl there is always that 1 or 2 commercials that use this kind of formula to make you stop caring about the game or the buffalo dip and think and feel something real.

I mean in a day and age where you could ask A.I. to write you a promo and it be close to spot on, we can be challenged by this as we look for creative sparks to ignite our next piece of brilliance. We can learn from brands like AMC, that don’t beg us to come see a movie, but invite us into the comfort of where we can escape. Radio is an escape for our audience; especially Christian radio. Someone is escaping their day by listening to your station right now and their heart is being transformed. It’s Beautiful!

The truth for many of our stations is money and vision drive us into the new year. The lack of money or staff, the vision of what we wish we could do or that we should do, don’t always match up. So what’s the hard decision that we need to make that will make our stations better, we wrestle with timing or we second guess the future or an employee’s actions or words. Where is your peace?

The networking we do in the industry and the boards we create to hold us accountable for the future give us a sounding board to get support and prayer warriors around us to help when the heart can stand in the way. We’re taught to trust our gut in radio or in music selections, so what is the gut feeling that tells you what to do, where to go, when to pull back or how to get it done?

**If your imaging is right, then your pledge drives will be right and you’ll hear the difference.**