

Consumers Demand Radio Front and Center

Local Radio Stations Must Be Available and Accessible in New Automobiles

New car consumers experience an array of displays, touch screens and other audio features in today's purchase journey, with stark equipment differences even within the same make and model. What hasn't changed: consumers' love of their local radio stations. They demand AM/FM radios in their cars and rely on them for critical news, emergency information, sports and music. Broadcast radio needs to remain front and center in the dashboard to ensure a thriving future for the American auto industry and to preserve the indispensable lifeline that radio provides.

Consumers View Radio in the Car as Vital

A new ENGINE Insights study finds 91% of vehicle owners believe having a radio in the dashboard is important. Millennials were more likely than older demographics to describe an in-car radio as indispensable.¹ This sentiment is reflected in the in-car listening data from Edison Research, where local radio remains the number-one choice for in-car entertainment among all age groups.²

Radio is Popular

Week in and week out, radio attracts the largest audience of all U.S. media. Almost nine in 10 adults age 12 and up tune into radio at least once a week, according to Nielsen.³

Radio is Diverse

Broadcast radio has countless formats that speak to every demographic and ethnicity. There are over 1,000 radio stations playing hip hop, urban, gospel or rhythmic formats, and nearly 1,570 radio stations playing Spanish language content, according to Radio-Locator.com.⁴ Radio's focus on diverse audiences has resulted in strong connections: Black people spend more time each day with radio than the typical person, and more Hispanic people listen to the radio each week than Americans overall, according to Nielsen.⁵

Radio is Local

There are over 15,000 full power AM/FM radio stations and over 10,000 AM/FM low-power, booster and translator signals serving the specific needs of communities across the U.S.⁶ Local radio personalities are the difference-makers for listeners on many radio stations. Nearly nine in 10 radio fans agree or strongly agree that radio's commitment to serving its local community is part of radio's "secret sauce," an increase of over 10 percentage points from 2016, according to Jacobs Media.⁷ Local radio is a lifeline for communities, especially in rural areas that are served poorly (or not at all) by wireless networks.

Radio is There in Times of Crisis

For over the past 70 years, radio has remained the lead medium for emergency messaging by the federal government, serving as both the primary entry point and backbone for the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) communications in times of national crisis.⁸ This resilient platform is also used by state and local authorities to deliver important emergency information, such as weather and AMBER alerts, to specific local areas. Listeners understand this – that is why three quarters of consumers report being likely to use the radio in instances of emergency, according to Morning Consult.⁹

(Continued on reverse)

Local Radio Provides Critical Services to Listeners

Radio is Over the Air

The vast majority of radio listening happens over the air.¹⁰ While most local radio stations provide a streaming audio version of their programming, only a fraction of total listening is done using these streams. And when listening is done on the go, particularly in automobiles, consumers usually must pay for the data consumed by audio streams, providing strong incentive to use broadcasters' free, over-the-air signals. As first informers, broadcasters provide vital emergency updates to Americans, keeping our communities safe, informed and connected. When the power goes out, or when phone service and Internet go down, broadcasters are there and on the air.

Endnotes

1. ENGINE Insights, "In-Vehicle Infotainment in the Covid New Normal: Consumer Survey"
2. Edison Research, Share of Ear ® 2021 Q1
3. Nielsen Total Audience Report March 2021
4. Radio-Locator.com
5. Nielsen Total Audience Report March 2021
6. FCC.gov: Broadcast Station Totals as of March 31, 2021
7. TechSurvey 2021 Jacobs Media © Jacobs Media 2021
8. FEMA Fact Sheet, Primary Entry Point (PEP) Stations, <http://www.fema.gov/ipaws/>
9. Morning Consult polling on behalf of National Association of Broadcasters, December 2018
10. Westwood One analysis of Nielsen total PPM AM/FM Radio AQH, M-Su, 6A-12M, P12+, and Edison Research, Share of Ear ® 2021 Q1