

How to deliver BRILLIANT Live Reads

First and foremost, by far the most important ingredient to a BRILLIANT live read is investment from both the sales rep and the announcer/s. The sales rep needs to give you (the talent) the tools you need and in a format that works. The announcer/s then needs to honour that by delivering GOLD for the rep and the client. (I have listed at the end of this article a checklist to help communication)

Now, once you have good communication and the information that you need you can fire away making radio GOLD.

Don't ever just read a script

I don't care if it is what you are given by the sales rep. Don't EVER just read the script that was printed. What's the point? Your job is to make this spot zing, stand out, and be more effective than a produced spot. If you are on-air your job is to be creative so BE CREATIVE.

Match your personality

If your on-air persona is crazy, goofy, funny then in most cases so should be your live reads. Of course if the live read is for Morbids Funeral Homes then goofy voices and jokes may not be appropriate. One might suggest that Morbids Funeral Home should not be allowed to buy live reads. (Hint for sales reps)

Make every read different

Sometimes you will get two or three reads for a client but other times a client will invest in three months, every day, on the same show. I have done live reads in the hundreds for a single client. Every single one of them was different, was unique, and was entertaining. That client (and others like them) kept coming back because it worked for them.

Make your listeners hang out for your reads

It sounds weird but in a breakfast show, with a larger than life personality, my goal is to have people turn the radio up for the live reads because they are as entertaining as any other creative break I do. It is possible if you throw the old script away and plan a whole new creative angle.

Don't ever just read a script

I know I have already said this but it's really important.

Respect the client's brand

Make sure you respect the client's brand each and every time you represent it. If they want to be family, or classy, or adventure...creatively match their brand every single time.

Respect the sponsorship or advertising guidelines and or the station rules that may apply

Make sure you respect the sponsorship guidelines and keep to time. If you station has any other rules and boundaries then honour them as well. The worst thing you can do is upset anybody. You can make a happy client, a happy rep, happy listeners, and you should be proud of that achievement, meaning a happy you.

Don't ever just read a script

OK, so I think you get the point.

Balance content and entertainment

If a produced spot is a funny jingle it is potentially all entertainment and all content. However this is impossible to deliver over and over in a live read scenario. I typically target about twenty seconds of pure data leaving me time for creativity. If your sales rep has given you more than twenty seconds worth of data to fit in it will simply result in you reading a script.

Don't ever just read a script

If your rep is giving you a script, sit them down and tell them how upset I get. Explain to them that you can make their client froth at the mouth with excitement as long as you get a little more room to move.

Email the audio to the clients

One of the greatest joys of any client is hearing their spot on air. Even greater is the joy if they hear an amazing live read done about their business or product. If they don't listen when it happens to go to air, they will be froth free. We don't like a froth free zone. If you pour your heart and creative soul into something make sure they hear it. Get it off the logger, email it to the rep, and the rep gets to be the hero to deliver it. Everybody wins...except the person who has to clean around the frothed up mouth of the client.

What is needed from a sales rep:

- NOTICE: Give as much lead time as possible to give a chance for an announcer/s to have ideas bouncing around their head and perhaps to even ask questions about the business that they don't understand. If the client is Bill's Plumbing you can assume what the business is about. However, if the business is Bill's Exotic Plumbing the announcer/s may have some questions.
- Length or read: 30 seconds? 60 seconds? Etc
- What is the ultimate and primary goal of the live read? Is it about brand awareness? Is it about a sale item? Of course the answer will inevitably be 'yes' to all of them. If website traffic is the most important thing then the announcer/s need to know that.
- Phone number? Website? Facebook? It is generally useless trying to fit it all in because it won't get remembered. Also, if the goal is to include ALL contact details there is no room left for creativity. Too much content stifles creative time. Best practice is to send listeners to the clients website.
- Ideally get the content in bullet points and printed in a studio folder ahead of the time it is to go to air.

What components from copy brief can or should be included... these might include

- *What is the BIG IDEA? (Seasonal special price or exciting new product or service?)*
- *What should our EMOTIONAL HEADLINE be at start of the commercial (The attention grabber?)*
- *What is your IDENTIFIABLE DIFFERENCE (What is your Unique Selling Position?)*
- *Describe the BENEFITS and RESULTS consumers will experience (Without clichés)*
- *Are there any TIME and COSTING details to be included in the commercial (As part of your compelling offer)?*
- *What will our CRYSTAL CLEAR CALL-TO-ACTION be (How will consumers find you to purchase)?*
- *What do your customers say about you (The clients business)?*

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