A Big CHR Battle In Seattle

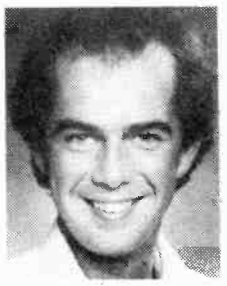
Continued from Page 38

we keep our promise of being a music-intensive radio station. We are now coming into our own, so I feel we'll stay on top no matter what goes down."

KNBQ

KNBQ's Sean Lynch

When **Gary Bryan** left KNBQ for KISW six months ago, Sean Lynch was promoted to fill the PD vacancy at KNBQ. Sean, a six-year market veteran himself (including a stint at KYYX under then-PD, now-GM **Pat O'Day**), talked about KNBQ's success despite its Tacoma location. "Tacoma is about 30 miles from Seattle, and we're making a bigger dent on the overall market than any other Tacoma station has been able to do. The only drawback is our signal. While it's improved dramatically over the past year, we're still looking to correct a couple of weak spots in Seattle. Other PDs have commented that they're glad our coverage has a few holes in it, which I consider a lefthanded compliment.



Sean Lynch

"We're now sitting with the highest shares we've ever had, and that's because KNBQ has become even more aggressive than when Gary was here. We're the 'rebel' in the market, but not in the sense of an AOR station. KNBQ is a fun, young, hungry group. We've got the underdog attitude, and people have taken us to heart because of it. We tell 'em we're going for it, so come on along and help us. Thankfully they do."

Hit Radio Confusion

Sean is aware that despite his gains, KNBQ must beat KUBE, not to mention a couple of hungry stations on his own tail. "Listeners perceive KUBE as complacent and a bit smug. Musically, they're very late. In fact," he quipped, "**K-Tel** puts a song on an album before they add it.

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KPLZ hasn't been a factor yet, and according to our research, they aren't kicking in. They've positioned themselves after us with the 'Hit Radio' slogan we've been using for over a year. It confuses their listeners and is a compliment to us. Personally, I'd like to see KPLZ do better, so we can have some more one-to-one competition.

"KYYX moving back to CHR should make the battle even more interesting. They don't have a ton of money, but they have an awesome signal. I really respect their PD **Van Johnson** because of his professionalism and creativity."

Promotionally speaking, Sean observed that KNBQ hasn't spent much in pursuit of higher ratings. "We ran the 'Name Game' and spent about $4000. But KUBE spent a lot of money, and so did KPLZ, with minimal impact. We didn't want to get into a spending war. KPLZ and KUBE were trying to outhype each other, and somewhere the listeners got lost in it."

A Human Approach

"Our promotions tend to be more personal. We recently put together a fight song for the Seattle Seahawks using **Peter Schilling**'s 'Major Tom,' which garnered us a lot of TV coverage. We're currently giving away diamond rings in conjunction with **A&M** and the **Police** hit 'Wrapped Around Your Finger.' We're also going to do a Valentine's Day party.

"In this market we take an overall, longterm look at promotions because we're now getting three books a year. My Promotion Director **Chris Grim** handles all of the details. Thankfully, (GM) **Jack Bankson**, and (Operations Manager) **Don Hoffman** are excellent radio men who understand the value of promotion. They've both helped me to learn a lot about the business side of radio as well.

"We're beating KUBE in the **Birch**, and we're looking for it to start translating into Arbitron. Sure, we all talk of winning, but there is a sense of cameraderie among the PDs in this market; we even socialize together from time to time. Believe me, KNBQ is out to win, but we can do it with a smile and a good word for everyone. KNBQ is building a CHR legacy, and we're here for the long haul."

Seattle's Hit Radio K·PLUS FM 101.5

KPLZ's Jeff King

KPLZ PD Jeff King explained that his station returned to CHR from A/C before the fall sweep because "that's where the most available growth was. **Golden West** Executive VP **Bill Ward** and VP/GM **Shannon Sweatte** were most supportive of this change."

Jeff King

Running fewer than 200 oldies, Jeff revealed, "I'm only hitting one of these an hour, so that rotation turns over every eight days or so. The oldies are selected to be compatible with today's music." He warned, "Anyone playing oldies has to be careful. Don't fall into the trap of playing all your favorites from when you were a jock."

Fitting Into The Market

As a recent format convert, Jeff next addressed his positioning against his competition. "We've held true to our original gameplan: to make the market realize that *we* are where the excitement is. We hit the air calling ourselves 'Seattle's Hit Radio.' While KNBQ also uses the 'Hit Radio' slogan, it's a Tacoma station even with its dual market identity.

"We're not trying to confuse anyone or ride on KNBQ's coattails, as they've done a really good job. We're just stressing the *Seattle* end of the Hit Radio idea. People here are conscious of the difference between the two towns. If anything, what confusion there is will work in our favor."

Promotion Twists

"Among our promotions are customized pocket-sized calendars for every high school in the metro. We printed 95,000 for the fall, and another 95,000 are on the way this spring. It's a multifolded piece with football and basketball schedules, plus a list of phone numbers a teenager might frequently call, including our request line. In addition, we've got about 200 buscards throughout the area. About 20% of them are upside down, which *does* get reaction."

Jeff described interesting twists KPLZ employs on its cash contests. "Every time our 'Hit Song of the Day' is played, it's worth $101.50 (frequency tie-in). We've escalated the contest by playing the song five times a day, then ten times a day, working up to a $500 value, and capping it off at a value of $5000.

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"Now we're into the 'Phrase Of The Day' contest, using the same idea. Today's phrase might be 'Hit After Hit After Hit on 101.5, KPLUS-FM.' The next day it might be 'Hit Music Is The Plus On 101.5, KPLUS-FM.' Every time we say the phrase between 7:15am and midnight, the 10th caller wins $101.50 in cash. On Fridays, if the caller can repeat all five phrases of the week, we double the dough. Hearing someone repeat five slogans in a row shows me people *are* paying attention.

"Currently we're doing a promotion called 'Lunch Box Rocks,' cosponsoring free concerts at high schools during lunchtime with the band that's already scheduled to perform that weekend at the school. It's like a teaser for the concert itself, which almost insures a sellout. We had 15 of these scheduled before we hit the air with the idea, and now we've got 100 dates signed up between now and June."

Taking a realistic look at his own position, Jeff said, "We're sitting at a 1.7 share, but that was more of a start-up book then anything else. In our research, I've swung our cross-cume patterns to where they should be, so we'll begin to see growth in the following books. We're right near KISW and KZOK on the dial, and it's important that we share with them. KUBE is at the other end and KNBQ is in the middle.

"I'm not sure if the winter book will be a turnaround for KYYX, since they're still playing a lot of modern music. KUBE is as steady as a rock, as it's marketed so well; beating them won't be easy. We're concentrating on the active end of the audience with fundamental basics I know will work. KPLZ wants to force the hand of the competition, and we're going to do it."

KYYX96.5FM

KYYX's Van Johnson

Coming to KYYX from the PD slot at KMGN/Bakersfield, **Van Johnson** took over as PD at KYYX last April. At the time it was a CHR-type "Rock Of The '80s" station under consultant **Rick Carroll**. Shortly thereafter, the music became less mass appeal and KYYX began pursuing an AOR audience. "We soon discovered it was time to return to our roots again, and get back to CHR basics," admitted Van. "We're still featuring some selected modern cuts which helps to distinguish our sound from everyone else's. Musically we're back on track, and we still use Rick's input for the modern edge we're maintaining. We're keying in on the hits, and we're not being timid about adding them, as KYYX has been a music leader for a longtime."

Van Johnson

When asked if he felt the CHR pie was big enough for four CHRs, Van replied, "All four stations are doing something different within CHR. If we all remain true to our identities and stay on track, then there's no reason why we can't do well. CHR is very healthy because of the great music available, and I think it's healthy for the city to have this many varieties of CHR from about Pat and what he means to this radio

KYYX Takes Aim

Everyone has to have a target, and Van looks at KNBQ and KPLZ as his main competitors, "since all three of us are aggressive musically. I also have to put in a plug for my air staff, as our jocks are going to be a deciding difference. All of them are young and energetic performers who are learning the market. Hiring former KISW morning man **John Langon** after his short stay at **KMET/Los Angeles** was a major coup for us. He's an extremely funny man and will give KUBE a real run for it.

"I'm looking to promote our station better; however, my first priority is to take care of the music and the air talent. It makes no sense to promote your product until it's perfect, but we're well on our way. For the future, we are examining some spectacular promotional vehicles to attract some renewed attention to our efforts."

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>
> — Van Johnson

While knowing he's got a long way to go, Van gave other reasons for his confidence. "Our Birch numbers are up again and that's a great sign of things to come. With our new owners **Madison Park Broadcasting** we have funding, and with **Pat O'Day** remaining as our GM, I look for things to turn around. I can't say enough about Pat and what he means to this radio station. This man knows the city like no one else, and in working closely with him, I've come to understand the market much better. He's feeling very good about our direction, and if he believes we're back on track, then I can't help but feel the same way. KYYX will be one of the great comeback stories of 1984."

Motion

KKHR/Los Angeles noon-3pm host **Christopher Lance** has pulled a tough assignment as host of the "Miss L.A. Pageant" on March 29 . . . **"Fast" Jimi Roberts** joins **WPLJ/New York** for a weekend shift from **WMJY/Long Branch, NJ** . . . **KKFM/Colorado Springs** promotes **Dave Ryan** to Assistant PD/MD . . . **Diane Burr** exits **WGAR** to become News Director at **WGCL/Cleveland** . . . **Terri McCormick** joins **WTWR-FM/Monroe, MI** for middays.

WKBW/Buffalo PD **Sandy Beach** returns to the air in afternoons, and moves **Tom Shannon** to middays . . . **David Wayne** joins **KAFM/Dallas** for weekends, while remaining in middays at **KIKM/Sherman, TX** fulltime . . . **Bob Schuman** returns to CHR, moving from **WROR/Boston** to News Director at **Z93/Atlanta** . . . **Kim Allen** segues to News Director at **WFMI/Lexington** from crosstown **WWKY** . . . Former **WMAR/Baltimore** jock **Chris Stevens** returns to **WEBC/Duluth** in middays, replacing **Dave Comstock,** who leaves for **WCVS/Springfield, IL** . . . **WHYT/Detroit** gets its first female rocker in **Karen Cullen** from **WILS/Lansing** . . . **Greg Cook** moves from part-time at **KUBE/Seattle** to crosstown **KJR,** while **Cary Bates** steps from **KPUG/Bellingham, WA** to weekends at KUBE.