

DAILY BUZZ

February 19, 2020, Issue 1

Powered by Country Aircheck



Putting The Fun In Fundamentals

We back.

Country Radio Seminar is underway for the 51st time, in no small part because of its commitment to balance: Art and commerce. Sessions and shows. Serious and silly. Occupying the poles of intellectual stimulation and pointless absurdity on planet CRS this year are the annual CRS research presentation and, well, a ping pong tournament. More on that – and the actual bracket – later.

As for the research – always an event cornerstone – CRS approached things differently. “We took RFP responses from nine companies,” says Big Machine’s **Clay Hunnicutt**, who heads the CRS Research Committee. “We had lots of interest from multiple companies, then compared and contrasted the bids and ideas. It was a great process.”



Clay Hunnicutt

What that process yielded will be presented 10am Thursday by Mark Ramsey Media’s namesake with the premise, “Do you know your listeners as well as you think you do?”

“For the first time in CRS history that I know of, we researched both listeners and PDs,” Hunnicutt says. “It should be an incredible opportunity for everyone to see how they align with where listeners are today.”

The study isn’t just for radio programmers, however. In fact, what does “radio” even mean? “One of the key findings is people consider radio to be anywhere they can hear music,” Hunnicutt says. “That’s an important distinction as everyone dissects this



This Too Shall Staff: CRS staffers take a collective deep breath before the plunge. Pictured (l-r) are Brooke Sanders, Lisa Tobia, Heather Martin, Lisa Hendin, Ashley Bourque, RJ Curtis, Chasity Crouch, Kelly Yeatts, Darcie Van Eiten, Alex Ciasnocha and Sheree Latham.

data. There are multiple points here about usage of DSPs and platforms listeners are adopting.”

Other key findings:

- Smartphones are becoming the device of choice for audio.
- More ways to get “radio” means more time with it, even if it means less time with FM stations.

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YOUR CRS NEW FACES OF COUNTRY MUSIC 2020





*You & me...
Ain't it good to be alive?
Ain't no better place
Ain't no better time*

**KENNY
CHESNEY**
**HERE AND
NOW**

*Everybody's waiting,
but
they're waiting on what?
Better get to living
cause it's all we got*

*In a world gone wild...
All We Have Is Here And Now*

Arriving Feb 21
IMPACTING IMMEDIATELY

★ ★ WELCOME TO CRS 2020! ★ ★



LIVE AT THE RYMAN
11TH ANNIVERSARY

THURS, FEB 20TH 12:00 PM

DOORS OPEN AT 11:30AM

FEATURING:
 BROTHERS OSBORNE
 LUKE BRYAN
 TRAVIS DENNING
 ADAM HAMBRICK
 CAYLEE HAMMACK
 SAM HUNT
 BRANDON LAY
 PARKER M'COLLUM
 KIP MOORE
 KYLIE MORGAN
 JON PARDI
 CHRIS STAPLETON
 CARRIE UNDERWOOD
 KEITH URBAN

- "Lost" FM listeners spend more time with streaming video, streaming music, TV and video games. Competition is not solely from audio alternatives.
- Listeners choose radio over DSPs because it's free and a habit. Not because of service elements like personality, localism or contests.
- Listeners choose DSPs over radio because it's more convenient and easy, and for specific songs and playlists.
- PDs overestimate: The need for companionship, local info and morning shows.
- Listeners value: Male/female balance, favorite songs, skipping songs, less talk, new music, pop sounding country and collaborations.

With the groundwork laid for one of the seminar's most important sessions, an understanding of its (arguably) least important is germane. "As board members, we had been discussing how to create more fun memories for attendees," says Triple 8/Triple Tiger's **George Couri**. "So I figured bloodsport, deathmatch ping pong would accomplish that. My cohort on this, Entercom's Tim Roberts, has hosted pong tournaments for years in his office. We also often play one another. It turns out more people than you think play."

Rooting for (or against) competitors including iHeart's Rod Philips, Cox's Johnny Chiang, Lady A's Charles Kelley, pong ringer Brett Young and epic trash-talker Scotty McCreery (see bracket page 5) is only part of the fun. "We have two bars that won't be crowded like Barlines," Couri says. "We also get to see some good trash talking, we get to cheer our favorites ... and we have two bars that won't be crowded like Barlines." Artists, attendees, bars, balls and paddles. What could go wrong?
 -Chuck Aly

Q&A: Fram Leads Equal Play

Here's the second half of **Country Aircheck's** interview with **CMT SVP/Music Strategy & Talent Leslie Fram** as the network spearheads a new *Equal Play* initiative. Read the first half [here](#).

The Coleman Insights study showed 84% of respondents wanted equal play for female artists and 88% of listeners believe women play a large part in the history of country music. How did you translate that data and utilize it to formulate your programming strategy?



We have an insights team at CMT's New York office [that] provides a lot of audience research ... including favorite artists of viewers, and women are always at the top of that list. A lot of that may have to do with the fact that we lean female, as we obviously have Reba on the channel and [other] programming that leans female or features female characters. But, for our viewers, Reba McEntire, Faith Hill and others are always at the top. Obviously, a lot of male superstars like Kenny Chesney and Luke Bryan also appear, but we've always known that our viewers love female artists, [and] that women relate to women on an emotional level.

What we did with tweaking video hours on CMT and CMT Music was look at all of these great videos we have, whether its gold from Reba or Carrie [Underwood] or any of the number of women that were huge in the '90s, and then to also look at recurrents from the past five years to see what we could bring back. Some of those maybe didn't hit No. 1, but did well in sales or streams. We brought back a lot of videos so that every hour we were able to show the breadth of country music.

Are you balancing the gold female titles with new titles? What's being swapped out?

The first philosophy was to just get female voices back on.

What we've seen with radio and streaming services is just a lack of female voices, and you'll see in this research that we've been training fans not to hear female voices. So, yes, right now there are more gold female videos – a direct swap with the male gold so that the hours are balanced. The idea was to get female voices back on but also keep a balance so we can break new artists. In the hour-by-hour, if you look at them, you will see a new Lady Antebellum, new Ingrid Andress, a gold from Trisha Yearwood, a recurrent from Brandy Clark and [new songs from] Carrie Underwood and Carly Pearce with Lee Brice.

As a longtime radio personality and programmer, what would you say to PDs and talent who may be feeling overwhelmed by the talk of equal airplay or aren't in a position to make a move like you're making at CMT?

There's no way you can blame a program director. They're overseeing multiple stations and have so many more commitments now that we ever did previously. And, honestly, some of them don't have control over their playlist. But, I do believe that if we can go to the format captains and higher-level corporate programmers and ask if they can help us get female voices back on the radio that would be a great place to start.

Have you had these types of conversations with anyone at iHeart, Cumulus, Entercom or any of the other corporate radio groups?

I have not had those conversations yet. But I would ask them to look at what Cody is doing. Cody, besides being a great personality, is a programmer and has been for years. He's bringing back female voices by not only spinning the new Ashley McBryde song, but by bringing back some of those female voices in recurrences and golds each hour, maintaining a balance like we are on our video channels, but pushing the female voices into those existing gold slots within the hour.

The Next Women of Country platform has championed recently signed as well as unsigned artists. Do you see a movement like that at radio, as Cody pushes forward with equal play?

That'll be separate. Cody does champion [and mentor] a lot of new artists. I think he will do it in that way.

Are you encouraging other radio shows and stations to move to equal airplay?

[We're not asking] people to go 50/50 but to just move the needle a little bit. We are hoping terrestrial radio and streaming

will put female voices back in the regular mix and not just apply the band-aid of launching a separate show. Even if it's just 10% or 15% by bringing back some gold and recurrences, and maybe when looking at currents, playing them a bit more and in better dayparts instead of just in overnights. We are asking people to play females in dayparts that matter and draw ratings like morning and afternoon drive.

Coleman data show 44% of all listeners would be very interested in a radio station that spotlights women, 28% would listen to Country radio more if more female artists were featured and only 11% would listen less. Was that data surprising?

I was not surprised ... They like good songs, and we're all about letting the best songs win. What we're saying is women should have an equal playing field in that decision-making. So if listeners aren't hearing X, Y and Z, they're never going to know if they like it or not ... We would love to lock arms with radio.

We're fans of radio – we have CMT Radio – and Country radio still has the majority of artist discovery. So we would love to be able to work with iHeart, Cumulus and Entercom.

Do you hope digital service providers will come on board as well?

We really want everyone to work together. That includes streaming services, too, because I think they could also be a crucial part of this. If you have a huge streaming platform with large playlists, but the majority of that playlist is comprised of male artists, the women are set up for failure. We can do a better job there, as well.

Terrestrial radio playlists can be tight, so I think involving DSPs is key, because they have a wider breadth and the ability to shine a light and then build a story for these artists that can be taken to radio. If we could work hand-in-hand, that's exactly what will happen. Radio needs that, as well, because they only have so many slots, and they only have what they're given. If we were able to give radio more success stories and more hit songs, they will play them.

How would you summarize your goal?

We're not pointing fingers. I want people to know that we're not saying play every female that's out there. We're saying let the best songs win, but give female artists an equal playing field.

–Monta Vaden
CAC

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Contact **Larry Pareigis**, President
larry@ninenorthmail.com or 615-332-5511

The Day Ahead

8:30-11:30am: A&O&B Client Seminar
Omni Hotel

8am-5pm
Riser House Entertainment Lounge
Omni, Level 2, Music Row 1

8:30am-4pm
ABC Audio: All Access Pass with Stephen Hubbard
Omni, Level 2, Music Row 6

8:30am-5:30pm
SpinIntel: Airplay Analytics Reimagined
Omni, Level 2, 5th Avenue Pre-Function

9am-5pm
Six-String Soldiers
Omni, Level 2, Music Row 3

9am-5pm
United Stations
Omni, Level 2, 5th Avenue Pre-Function

12-5pm
Big Loud Lounge
Omni, Level 2, Music Row 2

11:45am-12pm
Colin Raye, Jamie O'Neal and Smith & Wesley Performance
Mayne Stage

12-1:50pm
Warner Music Nashville Lunch + Performance
Sponsored by Warner Music Nashville
Kenny Chesney, Gabby Barrett, Chris Janson, Cody Johnson, Michael Ray, Ashley McBryde and Shy Carter
Omni, Level 2, Broadway Ballroom

2-3pm
A Conversation with Miranda Lambert
Miranda Lambert and Cindy Watts
Omni, Level 2, Legends Ballroom D-G

3-4pm
CRS 2019 Opening Ceremonies
Sponsored by Children's Miracle Network Hospitals
Omni, Level 2, Legends Ballroom D-G

3:30pm
Tom Rivers Award Presentation + CRHoF 2019 Announcement
Tom Rivers Award Winner Lon Helton; Class of 2020 CRHoF announcement
Omni, Level 2, Legends Ballroom D-G

4-5pm
Rascal Flatts: 20 Years of Country Radio Success
Sponsored by CMA
Rascal Flatts and Sarah Trahern
Omni, Level 2, Legends Ballroom D-G

4-5pm
Sun Broadcast Group Bar + Lounge
Sponsored by SBG
Omni, Level 2, 5th Avenue Pre-Function Area

5-6pm
CRS Welcome Reception
Sponsored by CMA and Live Nation
Performances by Angie K, Everette and Kylie Morgan
Broadway Pre-Function Area

5-6pm
SSM Nashville Happy Hour
Omni, Level 2, Music Row 1

6pm
Amazon Music Presents: Country Heat at CRS
Sponsored by Amazon Music
Featuring: Kelsea Ballerini, Niko Moon, Gabby Barrett, Jon Langston and The Cadillac Three
Omni, Level 2, Broadway Ballroom

CRS 2020 PING PONG SHOWDOWN
THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 20 • 10:00 PM • OMNI HOTEL

Brett Young

Rod Phillips

Lady Antebellum's Charles Kelley

Chris Huff

Lady Antebellum's Dave Haywood

George Couri

Eli Young Band's Jon Jones

Mike Kennedy

Scotty McCreery

Michael Levine

Lindsay Ell

Gator Harrison

Matt Stell

Tim Roberts

Johnny Chiang

Cassadee Pope

