



Welcome to Research Directions, a quarterly report for the radio industry from The Ratings Experts at Research Director, Inc.

This quarterly quick-read outlines trends, gives advice on how to best use ratings for your station, forecasts industry changes, and delivers hard-hitting information on programming and ratings issues. It's always up-to-date and will always deliver insight about the best ways to stay ahead of your competition.

In this issue we discuss the benefit of qualitative research on your programming and sales.

Should you choose not to receive Research Directions at any time, you can simply unsubscribe. Instructions to do so are included in every quarterly issue. As the Ratings Experts™, we love to share our knowledge with those in the industry. Please feel free to pass along this information to your colleagues.

Enjoy this issue!



Charlie Sisen

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## Programmers: Get Beyond Ratings into Qualitative

Programmers should get beyond ratings into qualitative. Few programmers anticipate the delivery of qualitative research like they do the Arbitron, and why not. Arbitron is the report card, sometimes the bonus system, and always *the* number for which a programmer is accountable, but qualitative data can be of great assistance in better understanding the audience so as to better select or prepare programming elements.

The two leading suppliers of qualitative data to the radio industry are [Scarborough.com](http://Scarborough.com) and [TheMediaAudit.com](http://TheMediaAudit.com). In these databases a programmer can study the socioeconomic characteristics of the station, direct competitors in radio as well as other media consumption, and market level data.

## Know How Your Listeners Live

Know the socioeconomic characteristics of the listeners such as:

- Income
- Education
- Work Status
- Home ownership status

Understanding the social position of your listeners can help your on-air personalities talk about appropriate topics every time they open the mike. It will also assist in building appropriate promotions.

## Know the Lifestyles of Your Listeners

Qualitative data reveals lifestyle preferences that can be quite helpful in deciding promotional prizes, types of promotions, event sponsorship, and even public service announcements.

Lifestyle review can be divided into two groups, which are family status and leisure activities.

Some examples of family status include:

- Marriage status
- Presence of children
- Presence of pets

Some examples of leisure activities are:

- Vacation activities
- Interests in sports
- Propensity to attend museums and concerts
- Movie attendance

Building a complete profile of your listeners can help programmers better relate to your listeners.

## Know Where Your Listeners Live and Work

Geographic segmentation is a marketing tool that lets the programmer hone in on his station's target audience. Advertising and promotion budgets for radio stations always seem to be tight, so focusing dollars where there is the greater ratings increase potential makes sense. Zip code analysis is available through Arbitron and through the qualitative services. Cross tabbing the Arbitron and qualitative data can generally allow the station to focus on the 20% of the zips that account for most of the listening to the station.

This same exercise can be done for work zips. By understanding where your listeners live and work, on-air personalities can focus on those regions. Finding the commuting patterns of the audience helps focus traffic reports.

## Know Your Listeners' Media Preferences

Understanding your listeners' media preferences can help get more out of every marketing dollar. Several qualitative services offer media quintile analysis. Quintile media analysis will document how your listeners consume various media. Quintile one means that they are heavy users of that medium, while quintile five means that they are very light users.

By exploring media categories, the programmer can decide where marketing dollars for television, newspaper, or outdoor should be focused.

Some qualitative services will also show what type of TV programs and sections of the newspaper that are most effective at reaching a station's listeners. You can examine various cable channels to target consumers both geographically and by lifestyle. Qualitative research can easily help you focus your marketing dollars to get more bang for every buck.

## Conclusion

Marketing and promotional dollars are usually scarce, so the use of qualitative research can help marketing and promotions maximize every available dollar. Getting a more in-depth view of the audience can help focus programming elements, which should improve ratings. To learn more about qualitative research, use this link: [Understanding qualitative estimates](#).

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## Is Your Sales Team Getting the Most from Qualitative?

There's a lot more information about radio listeners than age, sex, ethnicity, zip code, and the stations to which they listen and when. For lack of a better term, this information reported by Arbitron is considered *quantitative* data. Much of the rest of the information about radio listeners is provided by Scarborough or The Media Audit, the two leading suppliers of *qualitative* data to the radio industry. ([Scarborough.com](http://Scarborough.com) and [TheMediaAudit.com](http://TheMediaAudit.com)).

Qualitative data lets you know more about the ultimate consumer of a product, service, or retail business. You can also learn more about the market, your station's listeners, and the consumption patterns of other media.

### Know Your Customer

Too many sales people walk into a potential advertiser and start their sales pitch by talking about the benefits of their station. Even though they may have conducted a CNA (client needs analysis) their focus may be closing the sale rather than listening to the prospect. Successful sales calls are built on understanding who the prospect's customers are. Most software programs that process qualitative data have the ability to create profile reports, for example, look at:

- The Industry (Plan to Purchase Electronics in the Next Year)
- Your Potential Client (Best Buy)
- The Potential Client's Competitor (Circuit City)

Several categories are useful for finding potent sales stories in these profiles:

- General Demographic
  - Gender, age, ethnic
- Socioeconomic
  - Income, Education, Home Value
- Geographic
  - County/Zip of residence
- Lifestyle
  - Marital status, entertainment options
- Media Consumption
  - Radio, TV, Internet, Newspaper

If the sales rep understands who his prospect's customers are, then he can build an advertising plan that is tailored to that client's needs. This tactic demonstrates to the advertiser that you are focused on their business.

### Know Your Market

Just because the sales rep lives in the market, does not mean that he or she knows the details of what would be in the market profile. Understanding a market means that a person understands the unique characteristics that will help them position their station to effectively compete with the other mediums in their marketplace, not just radio.

While important not to ignore the gender, age, and racial characteristics of your market, it's important to dig deeper. By understanding the income levels and type of residents in the market, a sales rep can better communicate with the advertiser.

### Know Your Listener

This might sound trite, especially to the veteran sales rep, but there is a wealth of listener information in qualitative research. While people regularly look at the socioeconomic profile of their listener, few go beyond that.

By looking at the lifestyle of the listener, a sales rep can better understand the psyche of their listeners and paint a picture of living, breathing consumers, not rating points. Lifestyle data can also assist in building effective promotions and sometimes this data will help target NTR (Non-Traditional Revenue) prospects.

## Know Your Competition

Compare your station versus head-to-head competition to determine your qualitative advantages over your competition as well as the advantages your competition might hold over you.

When considering the competition, do not focus solely on radio. Make sure that you look at other advertising media such as:

- Broadcast Television
- Cable
- Yellow Pages
- Billboard
- Direct mail

## Use Qualitative Estimates Effectively

Qualitative research can be positioned using two different estimates, cume and composition. Qualitative cume details how many listeners you have that fall into a specific category. Conversely, qualitative composition is the percentage of a station's audience that falls into a specific category. Often an individual station will look good in one, but not the other.

It is important to understand the advantages of both and which is best to use to position your station. If you need more information or help, use this link: [Understanding Qualitative Estimates](#).

## Conclusion

Rating point margins in audience rank have continually been getting compressed to the point that the difference between number one and the tenth-ranked station is often just a couple of tenths of a rating point. By using qualitative research to its full effect, a sales rep can differentiate themselves from the competition. Sales reps can also be a valuable resource to the potential advertiser with background from qualitative data, thereby, converting themselves from a vendor to a partner.

Don't miss our next issue:

**"How to Program and Sell in a PPM World."**



Research Director, Inc. is a recognized leader in ratings analysis for radio stations around the nation and is now one of the largest radio research consulting firms in the country. Research Director, Inc. helps the sales and programming teams at radio stations use ratings research more effectively to expand advertising sales.

Not yet a client? Call or email Charlie Sisen at [csisen@ResearchDirectorInc.com](mailto:csisen@ResearchDirectorInc.com) today to see how we can help you better use your Arbitron book to increase your market share. You'll be amazed at what we'll uncover for your sales team.

Already a client? Have you called us recently to allow us to help you prepare for that big client you've been trying to land? Don't go into that one-shot meeting without all the tools at your disposal. Call or email Charlie and let him help you land that client.

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