



Engaging Emotions Through Effective Radio Ads

More About How Radio Works

Radio Ad Lab, June 2008

*Part Two of a Study of How Radio Affects Consumer Emotions,
Conducted by Gallup & Robinson*

*From the Ongoing Series
"Radio and the Consumer's Mind: How Radio Works"*

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Executive Summary

This report is a follow-up to the Radio Ad Lab's report, *Engagement, Emotions, and the Power of Radio*. After our original evaluation of 16 different real ad campaigns within actual programming, we previously concluded that:

- **On average, radio ads have emotional impact on consumers that is equal to that of television ads.**

This new analysis allowed us to dig more deeply into the individual ad results, and we explored why some radio ads seemed to have more impact than others. This wasn't a controlled test of all possible creative variables, but we did observe some distinctions between the more engaging ads and those that were less effective:

- **Strong beginnings make a difference.** Every second in an ad is precious—and perhaps none more so than those at the beginning. An involving point of entry seems to distinguish some of the most successful radio ads in our study.
- **Words matter in radio ads.** In particular, words that are *sensory-laden, emotional, or empowering* have a demonstrable impact on the emotional reactions of consumers.
- **Words can be more powerful than pictures.** The spoken word is powerful, and at least in some circumstances, saying something the right way can be even more emotionally potent than simply showing it on a TV screen.
- **Radio ads need effective advertiser branding.** Brand mentions alone aren't enough, of course. But the best radio ads do remember to mention the advertiser's brand multiple times, and preferably in emotionally engaging ways.
- **Time is valuable. Use it all well.** The most impactful ads we examined not only started well, they sustained interest throughout. We do understand that not all commercial content is under creative control (e.g., legal boilerplate). But make the most of every possible second.
- **Ads that do all these things are truly powerful.** The strongest ads in our study—the most emotionally engaging and the best recalled—did all of these things together.

This is not a “creative cookbook,” but with the advanced techniques available to us in this study, we could actually observe moment-by-moment what happens when various approaches to radio creative are played for a good cross-section of consumers.

We hope this exercise will serve as a useful reminder. **The quality of radio ad creative matters.** It pays to invest time creating good radio ad content to begin with, and whenever possible, it can pay to test the content in advance to make sure that consumers really are reacting as intended.

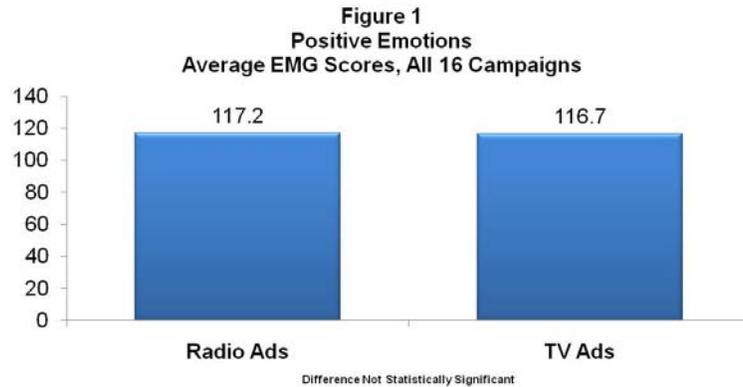
This study also suggests that it can be useful to fine-tune radio ad creative so that it works in tandem with one of radio's greatest strengths—touching listeners at an emotional level.

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Introduction

In the Radio Ad Lab's 2007 study called *Engagement, Emotions, and the Power of Radio*, we concluded that radio ads can deliver significant emotional impact. Using Gallup & Robinson's proprietary techniques, 16 radio ads were found to deliver positive emotional lift that was at least equivalent to their corresponding television ads. Here's one of the key charts from that paper:¹



Why is that important? Because emotional engagement is known to be major contributor to overall advertising effectiveness, as we said in that earlier paper:

“An emotional reaction needs to be established before further cognitive processing of an advertising stimulus takes place. Emotions can be considered as the gatekeeper for further advertisement processing.”²

That's why we thought it worthwhile to establish in an objective way that radio ads can reach consumers so effectively at that critical early stage. Before logical or thoughtful consumer decisions occur, it's often necessary to reach consumers at a more basic, emotional level—and radio is clearly a medium that has that power.

That's consistent with earlier Radio Ad Lab research, especially our two *Personal Relevance* studies.³ In that research, we learned how radio and its advertising are distinguished by the emotional and personal connections made with listeners and consumers when compared with most other media. While some media excel at conveying information or reinforcing social connections, radio is the most personal of ad-supported media, and its advertising is perceived as sharing that one-on-one relevance. Therefore, we weren't surprised when the Gallup & Robinson research in 2007 confirmed how well radio ads can connect emotionally.

¹ This chart shows the average positive emotional scores for 16 radio ads, compared to the positive emotional scores for 16 television ads for the same campaigns. Please see the 2007 paper for more details.

² Poels, Karolien and Siegfried Dewitte, “How to Capture the Heart? Reviewing 20 Years of Emotion Measurement in Advertising,” *Journal of Advertising Research*, vol. 46, no. 1 (March 2006).

³ Radio Ad Lab, “Personal Relevance, Personal Connections: How Radio Ads Affect Consumers,” 2004; and “Personal Relevance Two: Radio's Receptive Ad Environment,” 2006. Available at <http://RadioAdLab.org>.

But we also wanted to see if we could learn more from this exercise. The Radio Ad Lab's "How Radio Works" series is about more than just exploring radio's overall effectiveness; we also want to examine *how* it works, in search of ways to make radio advertising even better. That's the purpose of the present paper.

The "Engagement, Emotions" database is a rich one, having examined consumer reactions to 16 pairs of commercials on a moment-by-moment basis with a set of innovative measurement methods. We decided to dig deeper into those results in search of more learnings in two key areas:

- Characteristics of the better-performing radio commercials.
- Affirmation that the advertiser truly benefits from this emotional engagement.

In later analyses, we'll also examine other aspects of this experiment, including the relationship between engagement with the program and engagement with the adjacent advertising.

Before reviewing these new results, let's quickly review the nature of the original field-work.

Gallup & Robinson's Continuous Emotional Response Analysis

By their very nature, many advertising measurement techniques, including those that look at emotion using survey research methods, focus on the cognitive component of message processing. Without minimizing the importance of these "self-report" metrics, though, recent work in neurophysiology has suggested that much information processing takes place largely outside of conscious awareness.

For this study, we chose to investigate emotional reactions to radio (and television) ads at this deeper, pre-cognitive level.

To do that, we used a new testing system to better assess the emotional connection that advertising messaging makes with its audience. Called **CERA (Continuous Emotional Response Analysis)**, this system uses leading edge measures of emotional response, supplemented with traditional validated metrics of advertising effectiveness.

Emotional activation is gathered in part through the technique of **facial electromyography (EMG)**, and then more traditional cognitive responses about advertising effectiveness were collected through conventional face-to-face interviews.

What exactly is this facial EMG measurement? Briefly, the technique measures (in a highly sensitive way) small muscle stimulations in two areas of the face. Electrical signals are detected near the zygomatic muscle along the cheek, which is sometimes thought of as the "smile muscle." In addition, the technique measures contractions of the corrugator muscle on the brow, near the bridge of the nose; that muscle is linked to frowning.

Positive *and* negative emotional activations are measured separately because they're indicative of separate evaluative processes, which are independent motivators of consumer behavior. (In this particular paper, we're focused primarily on the positive measures; the prior paper covers the negative EMG data in more detail.)

For newcomers to this technique, we acknowledge that it may sound a bit exotic. But this combined measurement technique is well supported (as described in our prior paper) and is being used as part of the ARF/AAAA joint study of Emotions in Advertising where it has demonstrated strong viability and received substantial encouragement.

Our purpose is not to advocate for a specific method, but we do think the case is strong for physiological measurement of emotional reactions to advertising. Consumers often aren't aware of, or can't articulate, the effects we're trying to assess here.

Study Principles and Methods Highlights

There were several key principles specified by the Radio Ad Lab [Research Committee](#) as it worked with Gallup & Robinson on this project.

- The matching radio and television ads used for testing needed to be pre-tested in advance with *standard* methods so that all ads (both radio and television) could be said to be average or better by normal copytesting standards. More specifically, we wanted some assurance that when we compared radio and television ads to each other, they were reasonably comparable by conventional methods of copytesting.
- In the new study, both the radio and the television ads should be tested “in context”—i.e., the environment should be one in which respondents were exposed to both programming and advertising. Radio Ad Lab research has shown that a listener's bond with radio programming is a significant component of attitudes toward radio ads.⁴
- That meant providing respondents with a *choice* of programming, so that there would be a reasonable “fit” between respondent and program content.

Other details of the methodology are presented in the original paper, *Engagement, Emotions, and the Power of Radio*, available at <http://RadioAdLab.org>, so we won't duplicate them all here. As a refresher, though, here are some highlights:

- Sixteen pairs of radio and TV ads were obtained from a monitoring service, and the ads were determined to have similar themes for identical products. Those ads were for a wide range of product categories (listed in the original paper).
- Respondents aged 18-54 were pre-recruited by telephone from a national field service list, and after being told the nature of the measurement and the purpose of the study—the evaluation of *either* TV or radio programming, depending on the pre-assigned group—they were invited to a central facility in one of two large cities (Baltimore and Chicago) for a 30-minute interview in a living-room-like setting. Eighty respondents were tested with radio ads, and another eighty for television.
- Respondents were tested one at a time, and were hooked up to the measurement equipment and asked to listen to or watch a fifteen minute sequence of programming material and commercials. Respondents were able to select programming material of interest to him or her. As the material was listened to or viewed, continuous EMG and other activation measures were taken (after a brief period of “settling in” to establish a baseline level).

⁴ Radio Ad Lab Inc., “Personal Relevance Two: Radio's Receptive Ad Environment,” 2006, available for free download at <http://RadioAdLab.org>.

- Two pods of four commercials each were embedded in the programming material. Thus, a total of 16 pairs of radio and TV commercials were tested, with each respondent having been exposed to eight of those commercials for one medium. The order of commercials was rotated such that each commercial had an opportunity to occupy various pod positions.
- After the programming exposure, all respondents were asked a series of standard unaided brand recall questions.

The Measures in This Paper

In the sections that follow, we present a few measures that require some definition.

EMG Scores: For the facial electromyography (EMG) measurement, respondents were given a few minutes at the start of each session to settle in and settle down before the program material began. That allowed for the generation of baseline measures to be taken on all physiological data. In all EMG charts which follow, that baseline is set to equal a score of 100.

In this paper, we're focusing primarily on the Positive EMG scores—the readings taken from the “smile muscles,” or more properly, the zygomatic muscles. These are indications of positive emotional responses. Thus, a “positive EMG score” of 117 for the advertising represents an EMG reading that was 17% greater than the pre-exposure reading of 100.

Unaided Recall: In this paper, we'll also discuss some relationships between the EMG scores and the recall scores. After the entire program-exposure experience, all respondents were asked traditional questions of unaided ad recall, and our measures are simple percentages—what percent of a given group could remember an advertised brand without further aiding. We also do some simple tabulations based on those who could recall and those who could not recall a particular advertised brand.

New Results: Triggering Engagement and Emotions

In the original paper, we presented limited results for the individual pairs of ads, including a finding that individual radio ads could outscore the matching television ad. Specifically, four of the radio campaigns showed positive EMG scores that were significantly higher than the TV campaigns (at $p \leq 0.05$), while only one television ad was significantly higher than its radio counterpart.

Now we'll dig deeper into the specific radio ads to see what they can teach us about what works (and what doesn't).

We know that 16 campaigns can only teach us a certain amount; similarly, measurement of emotions and recall does not include all possible communications objectives. “Good creative” will include many more attributes than we can hope to cover here.

But after close examination of consumer emotional reactions to these ads—those that did well, and those that weren't as strong—we did observe some patterns that we think are worth sharing. Some of these creative techniques may seem like common sense, but the fact is, they're not always practiced (as we saw in some lower-scoring ads). We think it's useful to see just how impactful some of these approaches can be when their effects are measured objectively.

Pattern #1: Strong Beginnings Make a Difference

After examining the detailed, moment-by-moment Positive EMG results for the sixteen radio ads in our study, several of the stronger (higher-rated) ads seemed to have one thing in common—*an involving point of entry*.

Those radio ads which scored stronger with Positive EMG scores overall often *began strongly*, with something that hooked listeners emotionally from the first seconds of the ad.

To illustrate this point, we'll share with you an ad from Allstate that promotes their "accident forgiveness" program. This 60-second ad was one of the three highest-scoring radio ads based on G&R's Positive EMG measure (120.2), and it was one of the radio ads that showed a statistically significant difference from its television counterpart.

One of the reasons it did well in our testing, we and G&R believe, is that *it scored well from the very beginning*. Let's take a look at the actual moment-by-moment test results.

The chart that follows features Gallup & Robinson's "panogram" display of the second-by-second Positive EMG scores for this ad. The [blue line](#) represents the average Positive EMG score for the radio respondents overall as the ad progresses. Also note the [grey vertical bars](#); those denote actual mentions of the brand name, a point we'll come back to later.

Remember that the average score for all the radio ads was 117; that's denoted on the chart with the flat [orange line](#) just as a point of reference.

One other note on reading these charts: The script text that's shown in **red font** is the text that corresponds with the arrows on the chart; this is to help you see exactly which parts of the script correspond with which parts of the graph.

You'll see that the Allstate ad starts quickly around a score of 120, and then jumps within seconds to approach a score of 130—a relatively high EMG score, as you'll see by the end of this paper.

(To hear the ad, and to view the panogram played real-time along with the ad, click on the following link. This will take you to a special website that has a Flash-based presentation of this chart along with the ad:⁵)

<http://www.rabinsite.org/ral/panograms/allState/player.html>

Username = ral

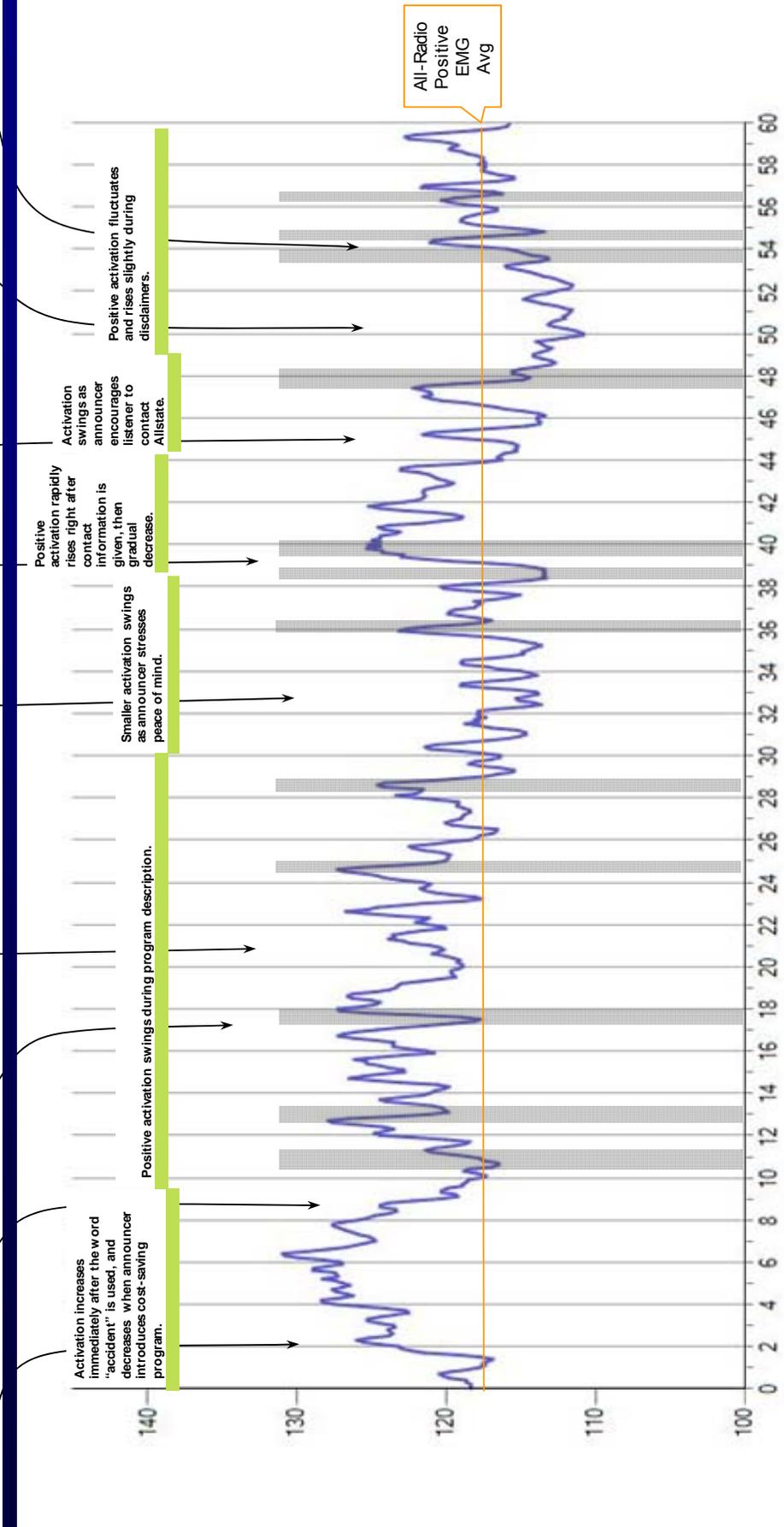
Password = ralengage

⁵ Note that most of our ads were acquired via a monitoring service, so the audio quality is not perfect.

Radio

Allstate – “Accident Forgiveness”

M/ANNCR: If you have an accident, did you know your insurance rates could go up by 40%?	If you have an accident, Allstate won't raise your rates just because of it. F/ANNCR: Call 1-866-Allstate now, and find out how you can help keep your rates...	Now they don't have to. Introducing accident forgiveness from Allstate.	from skyrocketing just because of an accident. Call today. Switch today. Allstate makes it easy. M/ANNCR: Now, with new accident forgiveness from Allstate...	you won't have to worry about your rates going up just because of an accident. So, you'll worry less about filing a claim.	F/ANNCR: Call Allstate direct at 1-866-Allstate, and find out how Allstate's new accident forgiveness can help keep your rates from going up just because of an accident.	Call today. Switch today. 1-866-Allstate. M/ANNCR: Are you in good hands?	Feature is optional, is subject to terms, conditions and availability.	Allstate Insurance Company, Allstate Fire & Casualty Insurance Company, and Allstate Property and Casualty Insurance Company, Northbrook, Illinois.
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Radio Positive Avg = 120.2 TV Avg = 112.1

Pangram

CERA

■ = Audio Branding

— "Positive" Activation

All-Radio Positive EMG Avg



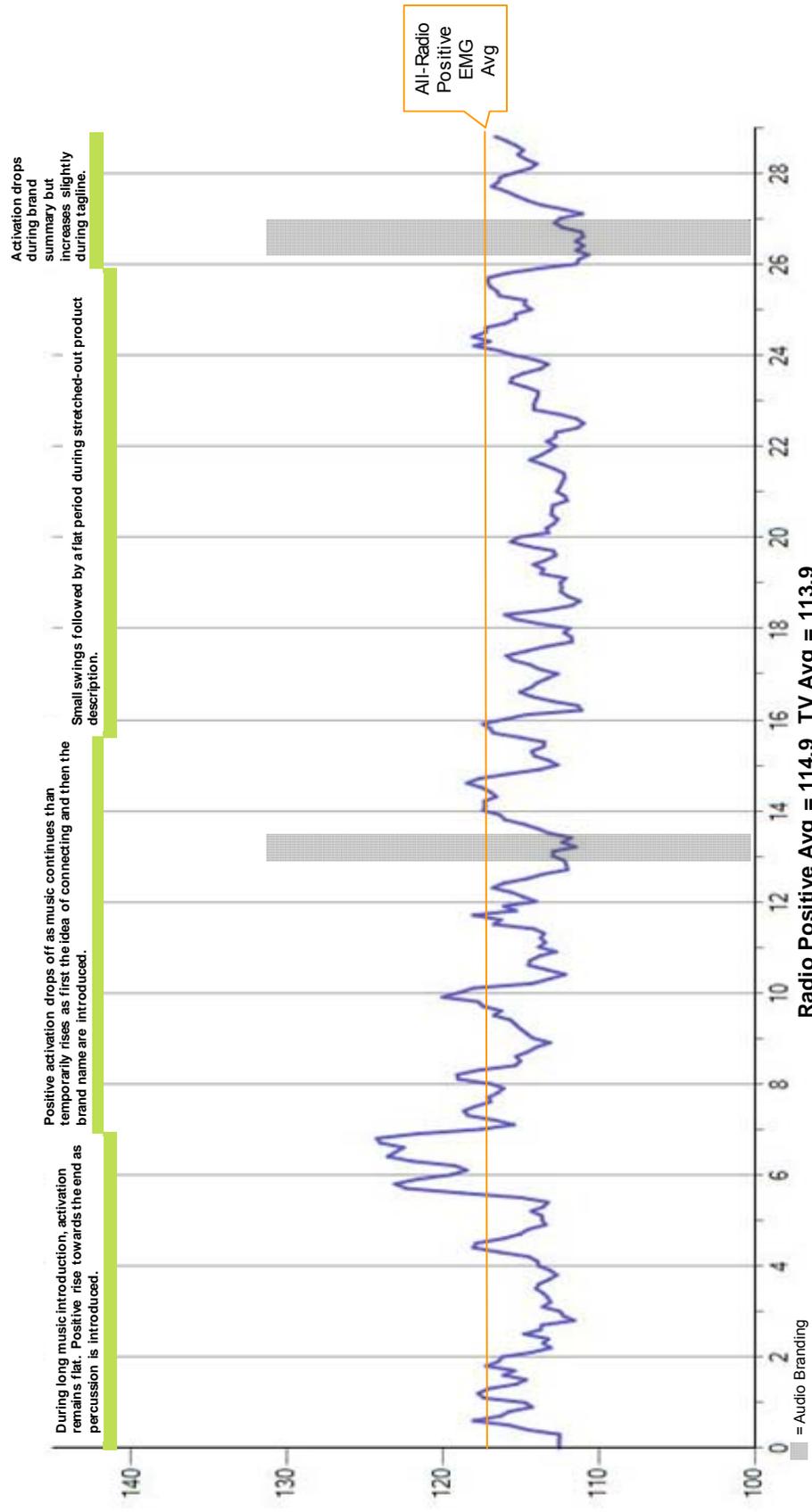
Clearly, the ad *involved listeners from the outset* with a very personal and important question, stated simply: “If you have an accident, did you know your insurance rates could go up by 40%?”

Partly as a result, emotional activation levels remain relatively high and above average throughout this discussion of the accident forgiveness program. In fact, the only real fall-off occurs during some of the presumably-necessary boilerplate (“subject to terms, conditions and availability”).

For some contrast, let’s see what happens when an ad *doesn’t* engage people fairly quickly. The example we’re featuring here was for a telecommunications product, and was one of the lower-scoring radio ads in the study (average Positive EMG = 114.9). In this case, the ad—apparently lifted straight from a corresponding TV ad—begins with about seven seconds of music alone with no message, no branding, and no story-telling.⁶

⁶ For a variety of reasons, we chose to mask the brand identities of the lower-scoring ads, and the ads themselves will not be available through the Radio Ad Lab. Remember that we acquired the ads through a monitoring service without consultation with the advertisers, so it didn’t seem reasonable to ask for their support in publishing less-than-positive results.

Product X: Telecommunications



As you can see, the ad begins at a below-average level, and rarely moves above that point for the duration of the ad. (Also note that it only managed two brand mentions during the ad; see our later discussion of branding.)

These two ads are only illustrations, but they serve as examples of two observations from our examination of these ads and their second-by-second performances:

- First, of course, is that every second in an ad is precious—and perhaps none more so than at the beginning. An ***involving point of entry*** seems to distinguish some of the most successful ads in our study.
- Second: A strong beginning can be one of the things lost when television audio is simply “lifted” to make a radio spot. The original TV ad might have had useful video to accompany the music-bed audio, for example. But if the audio bed *alone* isn’t engaging on its own merits, it won’t work as a radio ad.

Pattern #2: (Some) Spoken Words Are Powerful

Those who teach copywriting and creative advertising know this, of course, but we had a chance to see it in action: The specific words used in ads can make a real difference. And in radio, the **power of the spoken word** can be impressive, at least when those words are sensory-laden, emotional, or empowering.

Two examples may help drive this point home.

First, we’d like to present an ad that shows how a few choice words really do make a difference in how consumers react. Although this radio ad was not one of the top three overall—its average score was 117.0—it did score just as well as its TV counterpart. One of the reasons, we think, is its use of ***colorful, sensory language***.

The ad is for Campbell’s Chunky soup, and it’s part of the well-known Mama McNabb campaign. We present it here because we want to flag how people reacted during certain portions of the ad—especially during sensory-laden phrases like “Chunky Fajita Steak Soup. Loaded with big chunks of steak.” Combined with the announcer’s delivery, those simple, powerful words clearly break through:

(To hear the ad, and to view the panogram played real-time along with the ad, click on the following link. This will take you to a special website that has a Flash-based presentation of this chart along with the ad:)

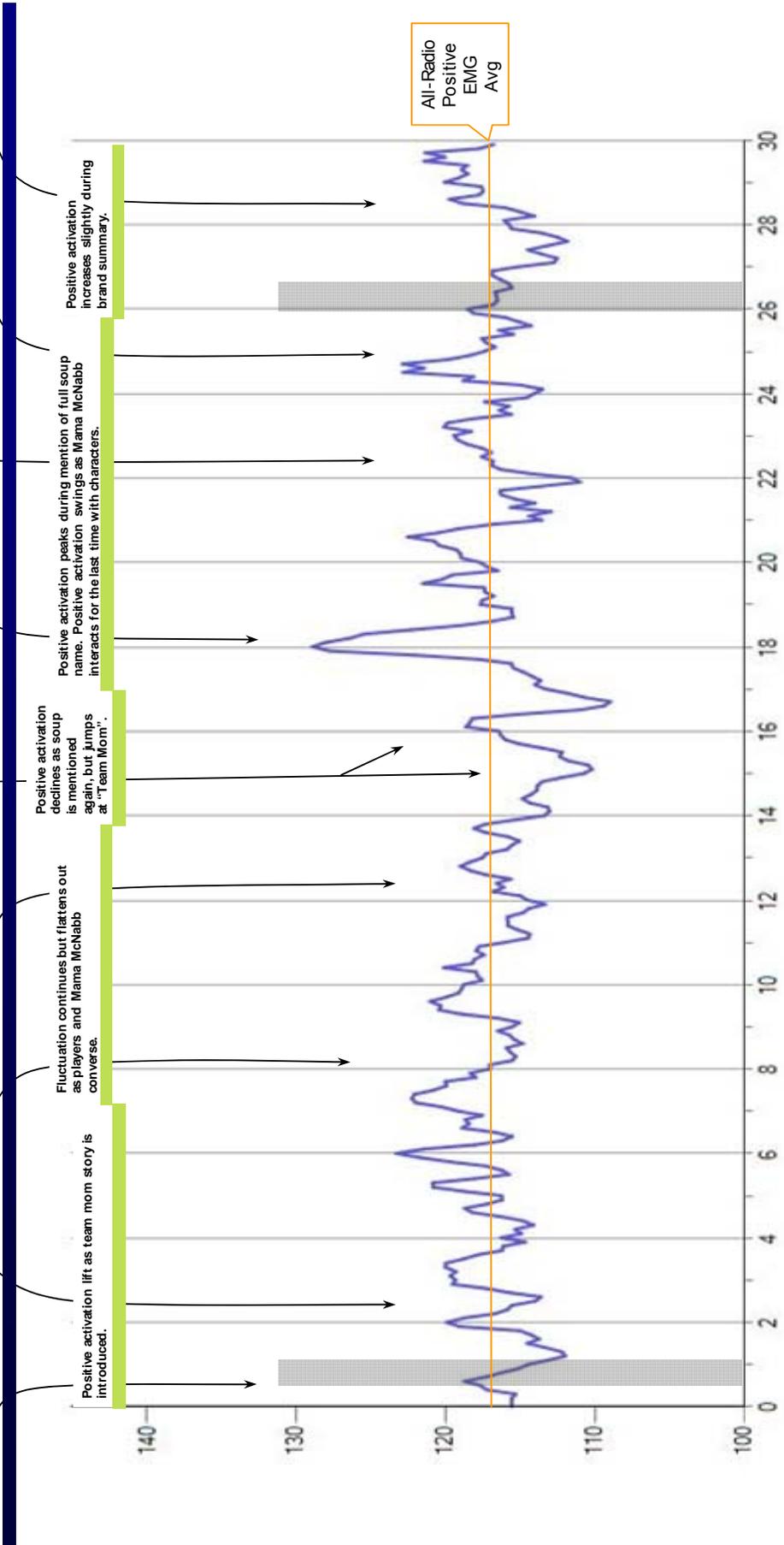
<http://www.rabinsite.org/ral/panograms/Campbells/player.html>

Username = ral

Password = ralengage

Campbell's – "Mama McNabb"

Campbell's Chunky Soup presents...	the adventures of Mama McNabb, Team Mom of the Philadelphia Eagles.	M/ANNCR: Campbell's Chunky, it fills you up right .
PLAYER1: Thanks for cleaning out our lockers, Mrs. McNabb. PLAYER2: Mine smells like a pine forest.	Mrs. McNabb: You're welcome boys...	PLAYER4: There goes my stash of junk food.
Now who's up for some new Chunky soup? M/ANNCR: Team Mom produces...	Mrs. McNabb: Bye bye boys . PLAYER3: There goes a fine woman.	
	new Chunky Fajita Steak Soup . Loaded with big chunks of steak.	



Radio Positive Avg = 117.0 TV Avg = 119.6

Pargan

CERA



— "Positive" Activation

A simple message, simply delivered, with powerful, sensory-laden words.

Also remember that the radio ad scored just as well as the TV ad for this food product, *without pictures*. Radio does have sensory impact—when the words are right. And as it happens, these words were also key for the advertiser; they were tightly linked to the product being advertised.

Note the consistent levels of emotional engagement *throughout* this ad. The importance of that continuing involvement throughout an ad is a point we'll return to later and is a good example of how the "story telling" mode of advertising can keep people interested.

Now here's another example of how the *spoken* word can be a powerful thing.

In this campaign for Tylenol pain reliever, the advertiser chose to focus on the phrase, "Stop. Think." as a key closing component for both the TV and radio ads. Tylenol is a "different" kind of pain reliever, and consumers are urged to think about how pain relievers really do differ from each other.

Notice how the emotional activation peaks when the announcer mentions that Tylenol works differently, and then pay particular attention to the emotional elevation toward the end of this radio ad around the time the announcer says the phrase, "Stop. Think. Tylenol.com":

(To hear the ad, and to view the panogram played real-time along with the ad, click on the following link. This will take you to a special website that has a Flash-based presentation of this chart along with the ad:)

<http://www.rabinsite.org/ral/panograms/Tylenol/player.html>

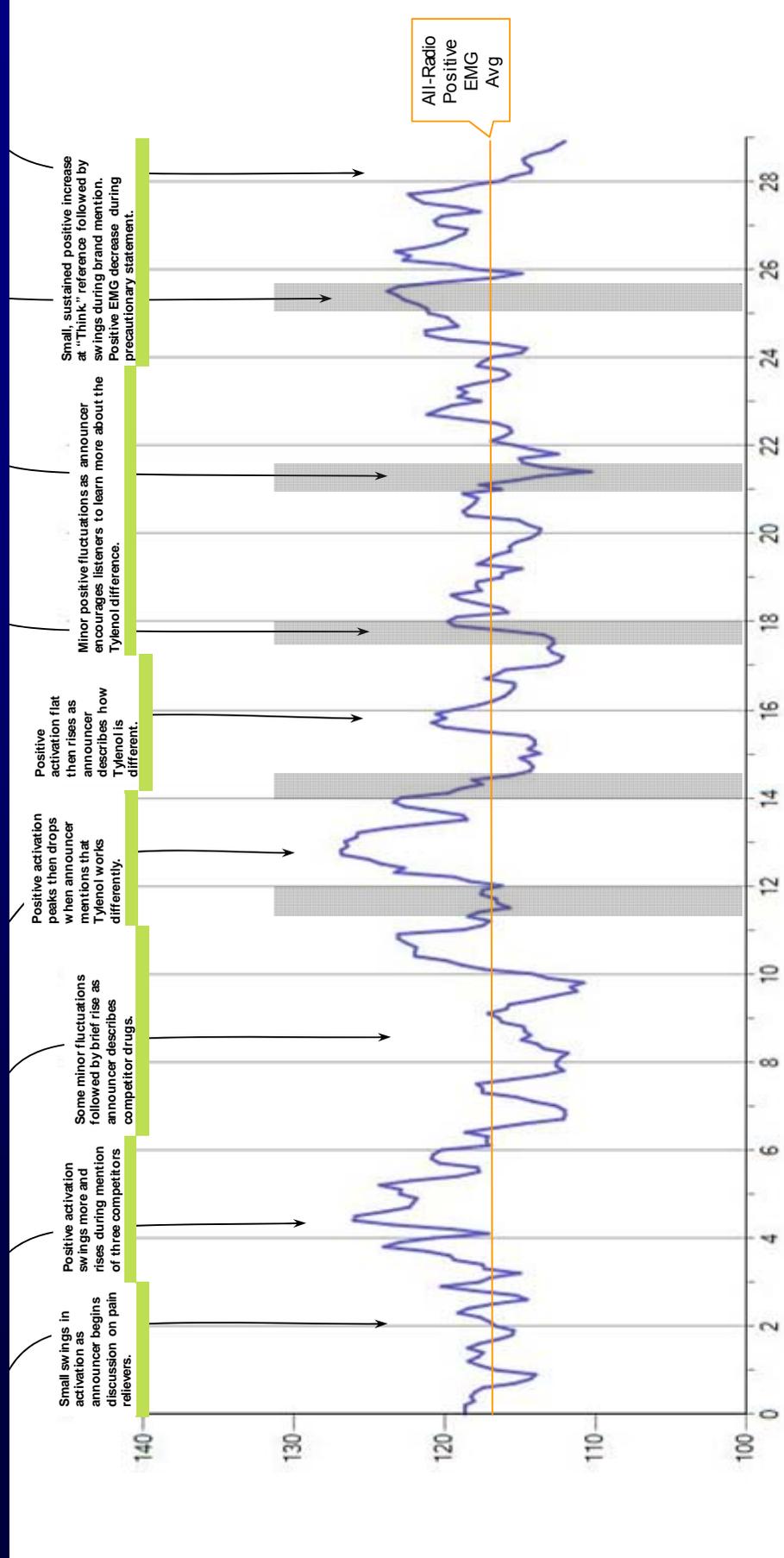
Username = ral

Password = ralengage

Radio

Tylenol – “Different”

(music) F/ANNCR: If you take pain relievers like...	Advil, Aleve, and Celebrex...	you're taking an NSAID And NSAIDs all work in a similar way.	But Tylenol is different... NSAID.	To learn more about how Tylenol is different, talk to your doctor...	Stop. Think. Tylenol.com.	Take only as directed.
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Radio Positive Avg = 117.8 TV Avg = 107.5

Pangram
— "Positive" Activation



We wanted to point out this ending portion of the Tylenol ad because the corresponding TV ad took a very different approach to bringing home this “Stop. Think” message. Where the radio ad *spoke* the message, the television version simply *displayed* the slogan on the screen:

At the time that key message appeared in the TV ad, the Positive EMG levels actually *dropped* (to the 105-107 level), and were almost indistinguishable from the Negative EMG levels. That contrasts with the radio ad’s scores during that same point of about 120-125, as you saw on the chart.

We think this is a good illustration of the *power of the spoken word*. Sometimes images alone just aren’t enough.

As it happens, the radio execution also outscored the TV version overall, with radio’s average Positive EMG = 117.8 and the television average = 107.5, a statistically significant difference ($p < 0.05$).

Across these examples, then, we think we’ve seen some good illustrations of what the best copy writers know:

- **Words matter in radio ads.** In particular, words that are *sensory-laden, emotional, or empowering* have a demonstrable impact on the emotional reactions of consumers.
- **Words can be more powerful than pictures.** The spoken word is powerful, and at least in some circumstances, saying something the right way can be even more emotionally potent than simply showing it.

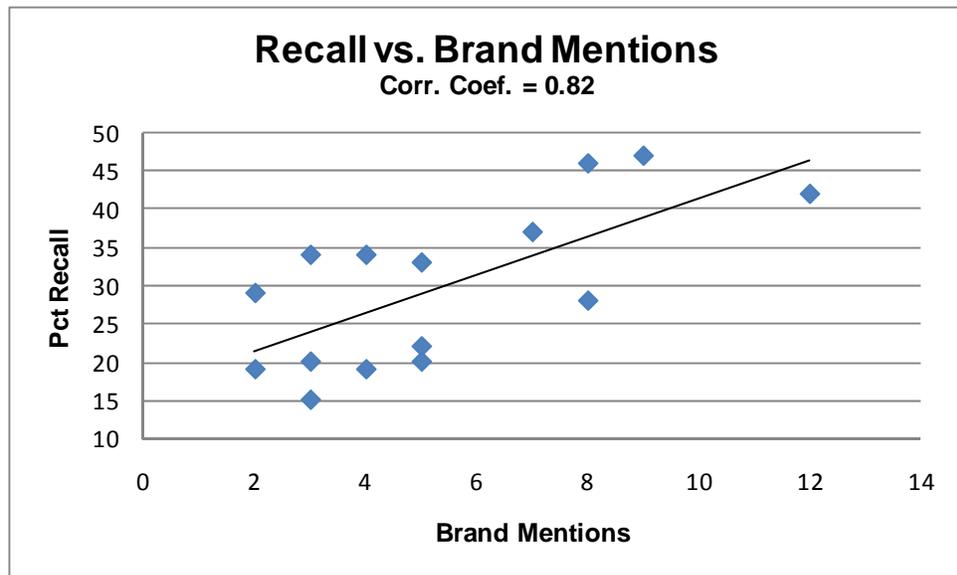
Pattern #3: Don’t Forget the Branding...

There was much more variation than we expected in how often the brand name was actually featured in this collection of 16 radio ads. One 30-second ad only mentioned the brand twice; at the other extreme, one 60-second ad managed to incorporate the brand name 12 times. And one ad was essentially one long brand reference, as you’ll hear later.

Lest we forget, ads are supposed to be about the advertiser and their brands. However much we strive for creativity, likability, emotional impact, and other ways to break through the communications clutter, we still have a marketing job to do. Getting the brand name registered with the consumer is one of those jobs.

At a simple level, the number of brand name mentions in ads does matter. For example, look at this simple relationship between the number of brand mentions in a radio ad and the level of unaided recall among the participants in our study:⁷

⁷ In this chart, we’ve excluded one ad which was essentially one long brand reference. It also had the highest recall score of any radio or television ad (61%), but we weren’t sure how to “count” the number of brand mentions for this chart. We talk more about this ad later in the paper.



We'd never advocate "number of brand mentions" as a singular goal for copy writing, of course; silly outcomes could result. But it's worth remembering that brand mentions are *important* for successful ads.

It's also worth pointing out that brand mentions sometimes get lost when audio tracks are simply lifted from television ads for use as radio commercials.

A television ad may have depended on both visual and audio cues for branding, but when the audio track is simply transferred to radio, all of those visual-only branding opportunities disappear. We think that's how some of these "radio" ads ended up with so few brand mentions; they actually started out as TV ads with visual brand cues that never transferred.

The good news is that effective branding and emotional effectiveness *can* go hand in hand in radio. As an example, we call your attention to a radio ad for the Audi A-Series cars. This ad was one of the top three ads for positive emotion in this study, with a Positive EMG score of 120.4; it was also at least as powerful as the TV companion ad (which scored 116.4, not significantly different at $p < 0.05$).

Just as interesting, we think, is how this ad manages to weave nine separate mentions of the Audi brand name into its 60 seconds, and most of those mentions occur during relatively high levels of emotional engagement. Remember that brand mentions are noted in the panogram with **grey vertical bars**:

(To hear the ad, and to view the panogram played real-time along with the ad, click on the following link. This will take you to a special website that has a Flash-based presentation of this chart along with the ad:)

<http://www.rabinsite.org/ral/panograms/audi/player.html>

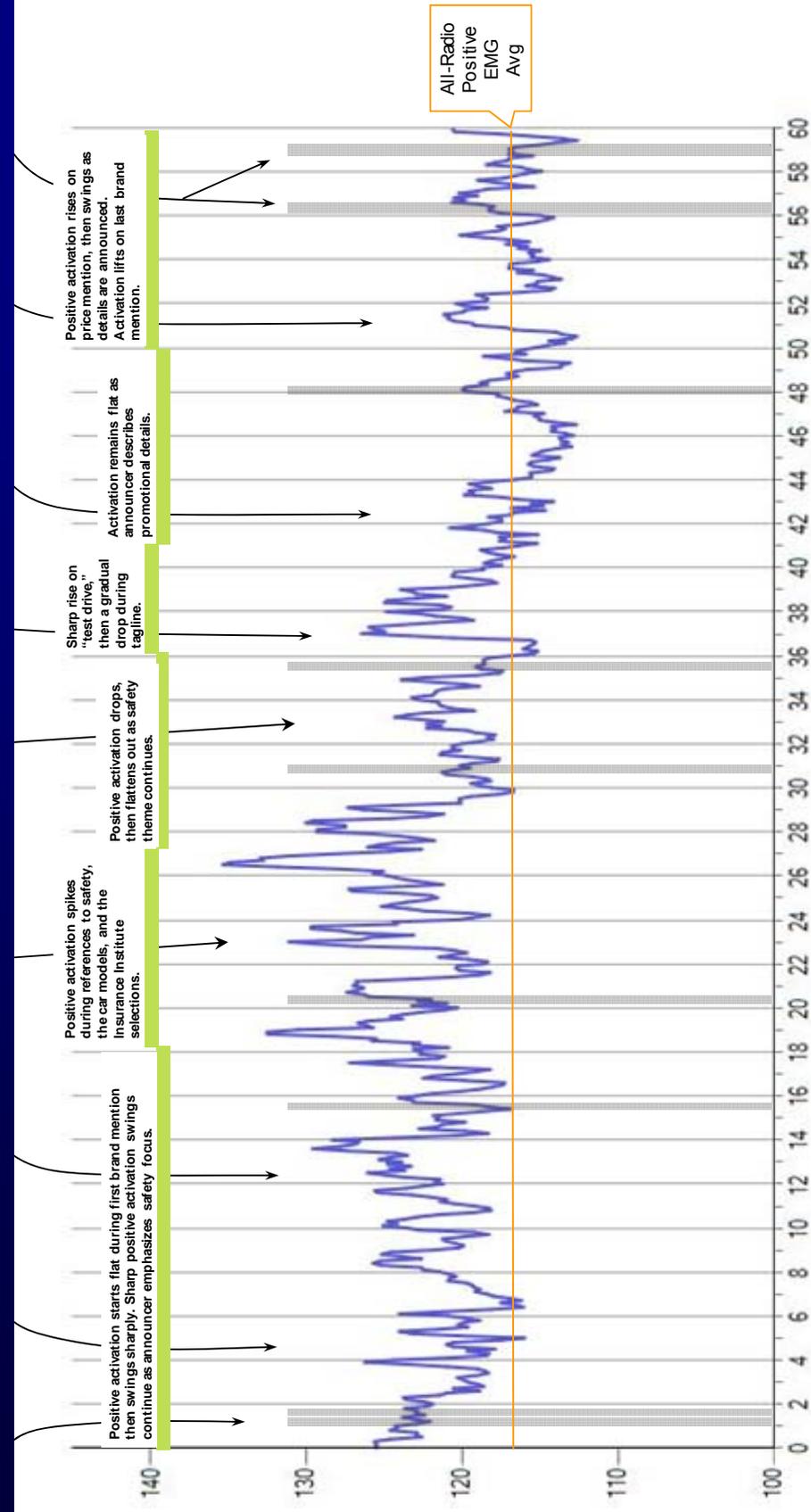
Username = ral

Password = ralengage

Radio

Audi – “Luxury and Safety”

M/ANNCR: What makes an Audi an Audi? Luxury? Of course.	Power? Absolutely. Performance? Certainly. But without safety, these qualities are irrelevant.	Luxury without peace of mind, isn't. That's why this year, three Audi performance luxury models...	from the insurance institute for highway Safety. A first for any car maker, ever. Three Audi models that not only exude luxury, they absorb impact.	Visit your local Audi dealer today and test drive three of the safest cars in the world.	It's greater to lead than follow. For complete crash test details, visit www.iihs.org. M/ANNCR2: Now, through April 3rd, lease a new 2006...	Audi A6 3.2 CVT for \$499/month for 36 months with \$3873 due at signing. Taxes, title, and dealer fees extra.	Visit social.audi.dealers.com for details and the dealer nearest you. Audi.
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Radio Positive Avg = 120.4 TV Avg = 116.1

Pangam
 — “Positive” Activation

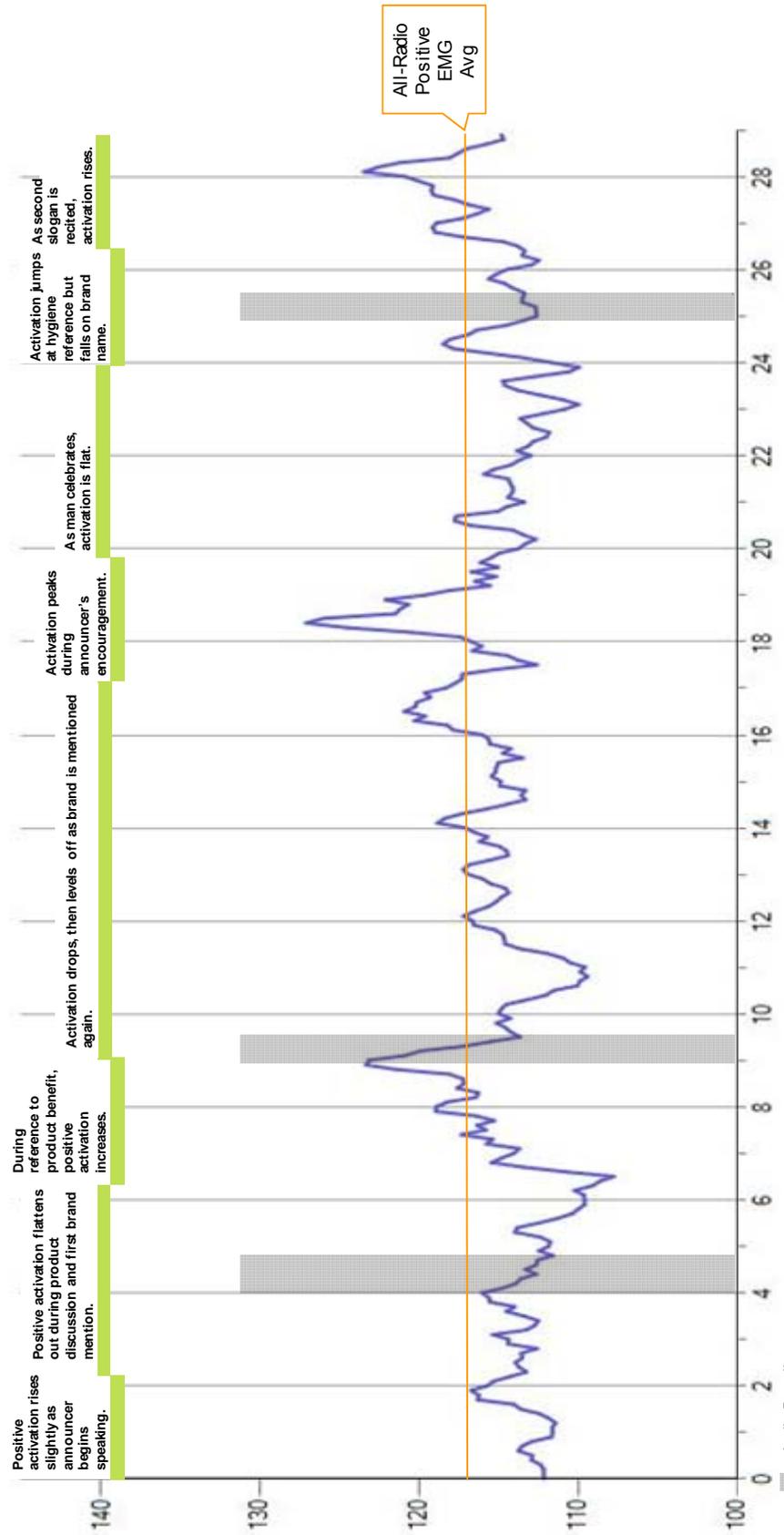


Note that the ad began strongly with well-above-average levels in its first seconds. This ad also managed to sustain its strong levels of emotional engagement through the first 45 seconds or so, until it had to switch from the more involving story of luxury, performance, and safety to the more pedestrian leasing details.

Given how well this ad combined elements of emotional engagement *and* branding, it's probably not surprising that it also achieved one of the highest scores for unaided brand recall in this study (47%, just slightly but not significantly higher than recall for the TV ad at 43%).

Now let's take a brief look at what happens when some of these elements are missing. In the next masked example, for an Over the Counter Healthcare product, we have an ad with relatively few brand mentions (three) and relatively lower levels of emotional engagement, scoring only 115.1 on the Positive EMG scale:

Product Y: OTC Healthcare



Fangam
— "Positive" Activation



Given the low levels of branding and below-average engagement in this ad, it's probably not surprising that it achieved only 20% unaided brand recall with our respondents, even though it was for a relatively well-established brand.

Overall, we think our experiment served to reinforce a few more points about creating effective radio commercials:

- **Radio ads need effective branding.** Brand mentions alone aren't enough, of course. But the best radio ads do remember to mention the brand multiple times, and preferably in emotionally engaging ways.
- **TV audio soundtracks as radio ads can lose branding.** Some of the ads that seemed "under-branded" in our study appear to have been simply lifted from corresponding TV ads. Advertisers (and their producers) should consider whether that creative shortcut is really doing their brand justice.

Pattern #4: The Need for Maintaining Interest Throughout

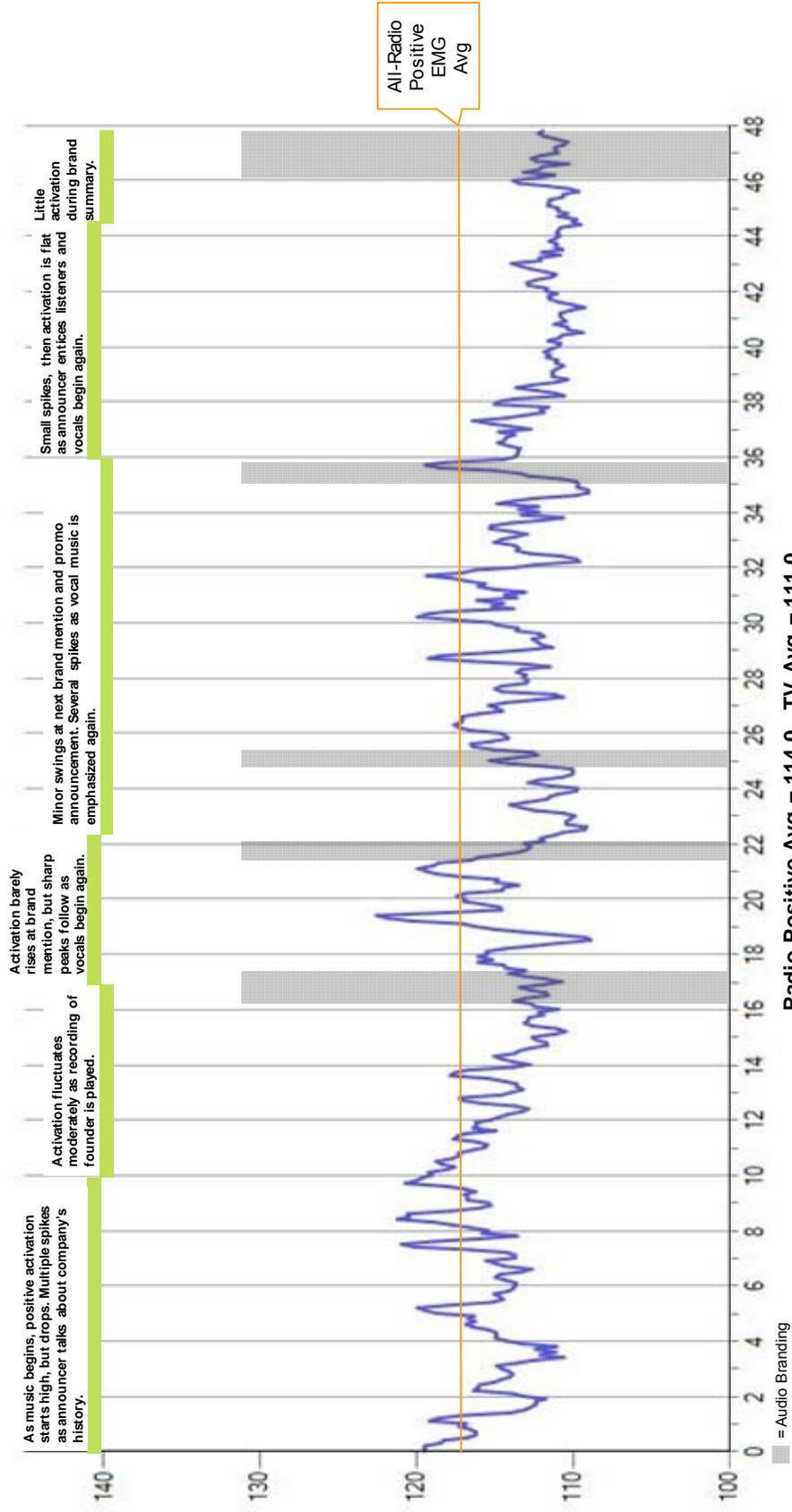
Earlier, we cited the need for a strong beginning with a radio ad. After that would logically come the desirability of *sustaining* interest throughout the duration of ad.

However logical that seems, it was not something achieved by a majority of the ads in our test group, but the ads with the *best* overall EMG scores tended to be relatively consistent. See, for example, the panograms we showed earlier for:

- Allstate. Though this ad scored somewhat higher in its first 30 seconds than it did later, it managed to maintain EMG scores at or above the average radio ad score throughout its entire duration.
- Campbell's. This is more of a "story-telling" ad that continues to engage people throughout its 30-second duration by continuing to add to its storyline right to the end.

However, we also observed some clear examples of ads that simply fizzled. In the next masked example, from the Travel and Leisure sector, there was little to engage listeners during its 48 seconds (without tag) and though it had a peak or two, there was little else to sustain interest. Overall, this ad had only an average Positive EMG score of 114.0 (the lowest radio ad) and a relatively middling recall score of 33% for this otherwise very well-known brand:

Product Z: Travel and Leisure



Pangan
— "Positive" Activation



While it may seem like common sense, it's not all that common in practice:

- **Time is valuable. Use it all well.** The most impactful ads we examined not only started well, they sustained interest throughout. We do understand that some content isn't under a copy writer's control (e.g., legal mandates). But still, try to make the most of every second that you can.

Pattern #5: Doing It All Well Is Powerful

We'd like to share one last example—an illustration of what can happen when all these "lessons" come together at once.

This next ad was the highest scoring radio ad overall. Its Positive EMG score was 121.9, and it also achieved an unaided recall score of 61%.

As we noted at the beginning, there's more to "good creative" than we can hope to cover in this study. Certainly, this particular ad has a number of elements in its favor beyond the things we're covering in this paper, including the use of happy children, a long-running campaign theme, and probably other factors that expert creative talents could point out.

For now, though, let us simply point out that the following ad for Oscar Mayer—part of the well known "My bologna has a first name..." series—does also follow most of the principles we outlined above:

- Strong beginning. The positive emotional reactions are high right from the very beginning.
- Colorful, sensory language. "A happy lunch." "Quality meat, no fillers."
- Effective branding. The song is basically one big reference to the brand.
- Sustained interest. You'll see that in the panogram.

Here's how the Oscar Mayer ad performed with our radio test participants.

(To hear the ad, and to view the panogram played real-time along with the ad, click on the following link. This will take you to a special website that has a Flash-based presentation of this chart along with the ad:)

<http://www.rabinsite.org/ral/panograms/OscarMayer/player.html>

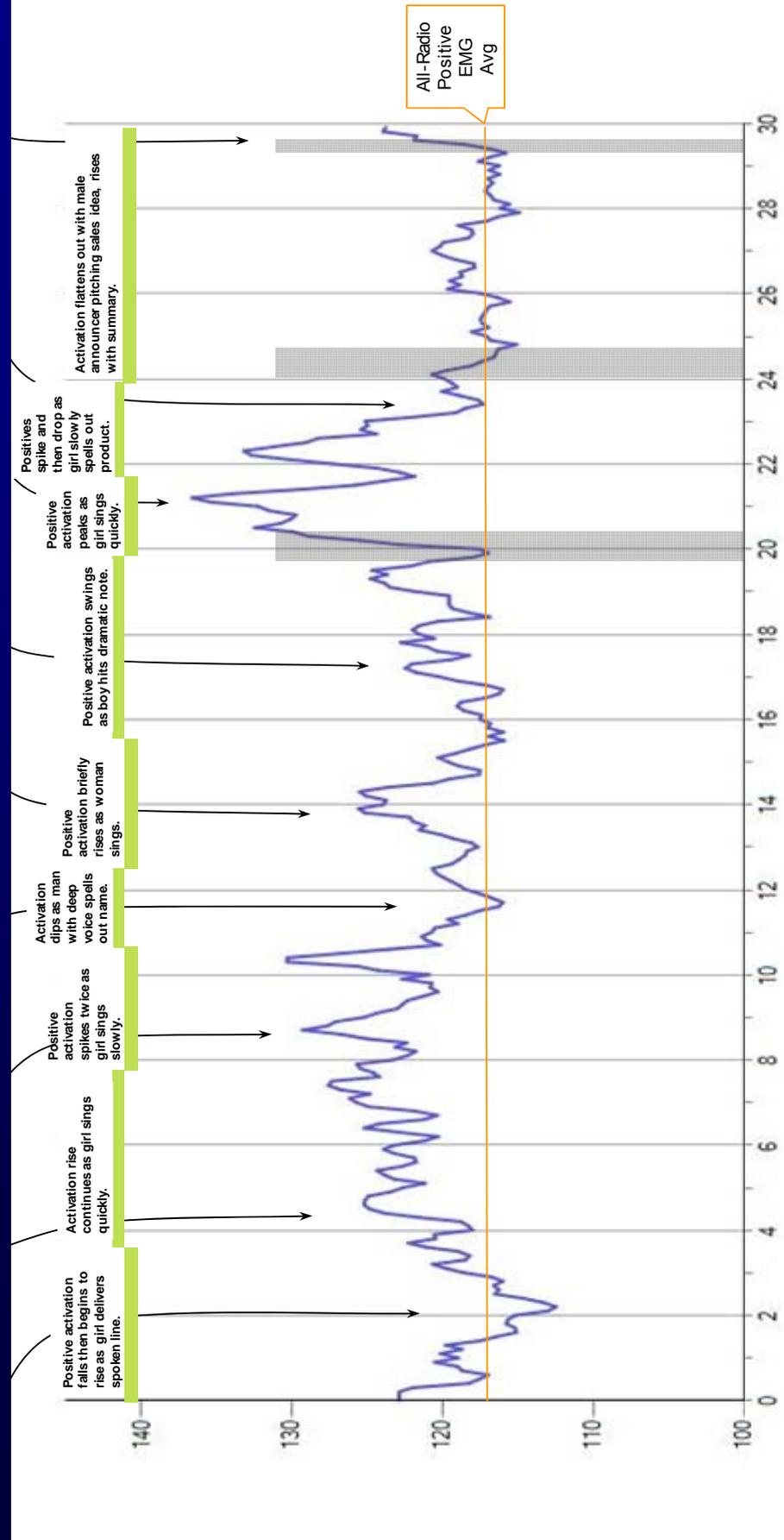
Username = ral

Password = ralengage

Radio

Oscar Mayer – “Bologna Song”

[SINGING] Kids: Oh I wish...
 [SPEAKING] Little Girl1: I wish you a happy lunch.
 Little Girl2: [SINGING] My bologna has a first name, it's O-s-c-a-r.
 Little Girl3: [SINGING] My bologna has a second name.
 Man1: [SINGING] My bologna has a first name, it's M-a-y-e-r.
 Woman1: [SINGING] Oh, I love to eat it everyday, saaaaaay.
 Little Boy2: [SINGING] and if you ask me why I'll sing it to you.
 Little Girl1: [SINGING] 'cause Oscar Mayer has a way with...
 Little Girl4: [SINGING] B-o-l-o-g-i-n-a.
 M/WANNCR: Oscar Mayer original bologna has quality meat, no fillers. For bologna you feel good about, you can count on Oscar.



Radio Positive Avg = 121.9 TV Avg = 133.4

Legend:
 Grey shaded area = Explicit Audio Branding
 Blue line = "Positive" Activation

There may be additional reasons why this was the most emotionally engaging and best recalled radio (and TV) ad in the study. But we do think it succeeds in part by effectively implementing the principles that we observed during our experiment: Beginning well, sustaining that interest, using sensory-laden language, and remembering to stress the brand.

Confirming Value to the Advertiser

In our original report from this experiment, we asked whether the emotional engagement levels we measured—the Positive EMG scores—could be shown to have real value to the advertiser. At the time, we had only limited evidence; we concluded that since radio and TV ads had comparable unaided recall scores, then the comparable Positive EMG scores were probably meaningful.

In this paper, we'd like to dig a little deeper into that relationship between emotional engagement and recall. Specifically, we examined the actual respondent-level correlations between emotional engagement and recall.

We looked at this a number of different ways, but the two that we think are most useful are these. First, we computed a correlation score between the respondents' Positive EMG score for an ad overall and their ability to recall the brand for the ad. That helps determine whether positive emotional reactions to the ad *overall* tend to be related to higher recall scores.

Second, we also looked at the Positive EMG scores during the *actual branding moments* during the ads. As you saw in the panograms earlier, we could measure how respondents were reacting emotionally right when the brands were being mentioned; we then took the average Positive EMG score during those branding moments for each respondent, and correlated *those* scores with their ability to recall the brand.

Here's how those correlation scores turned out:

Correlation of Positive EMG and Recall Scores		
	Radio	TV
Overall-Ad Positive EMG & Recall	0.687	0.460
Brand Moments Positive EMG & Overall Recall	0.562	0.140

With one exception, the correlation scores are substantially larger than zero and positive, which means there's a reasonably strong correlation between emotional engagement and recall; the pattern is consistent for radio, less so for TV. (We're not sure why the link in TV is weaker between brand-moment engagement and recall than it is for radio.)

In plain English, we can now say with more confidence that people who were registering positive emotions to an ad were also more likely to recall the brands within it. We find that reassuring, in that it more clearly establishes a link between emotional engagement and benefit to the advertiser (with "benefit" being defined here as an ability to recall the brand name).

This is not proof that emotional engagement *causes* recall. For example, we didn't try to control for a respondent's prior awareness of these brands. But in this simple relationship between emotional engagement and recall, we do see a greater likelihood that an emotionally effective ad will also be beneficial to the advertiser.

Conclusions

This “Engagement, Emotions” project was originally designed to assess how well radio ads can generate emotional responses and engage with consumers, compared to television ads. And it did so using advanced methods that measure emotional activation in ways that don’t require verbal responses.

After our original evaluation of 16 different real ad campaigns within actual programming, we concluded that:

On average, radio ads have emotional impact on consumers that is equal to that of television ads.

While digging more deeply into the individual ad results, we explored why some radio ads seemed to have more impact than others. This wasn’t a controlled test of all possible creative variables, but we did observe some distinctions between the more engaging ads and those that were less effective:

- **Strong beginnings make a difference.** Every second in an ad is precious—and perhaps none more so than those at the beginning. An involving point of entry seems to distinguish some of the most successful radio ads in our study.
 - Meanwhile, simply lifting the audio from a TV ad to use for radio can result in losing that strong beginning—for example, if that TV audio is nothing but music at the beginning.
- **Words matter in radio ads.** In particular, words that are *sensory-laden, emotional, or empowering* have a demonstrable impact on the emotional reactions of consumers.
- **Words can be more powerful than pictures.** The spoken word is powerful, and at least in some circumstances, saying something the right way can be even more emotionally potent than simply showing it.
- **Radio ads need effective advertiser branding.** Brand mentions alone aren’t enough, of course. But the best radio ads do remember to mention the advertiser’s brand multiple times, and preferably in emotionally engaging ways.
 - But TV audio soundtracks as radio ads can lose branding. Some of the ads that seemed “under-branded” in our study appear to have been simply lifted from corresponding TV ads. Advertisers and producers should consider whether that creative shortcut is really doing their brand justice.
- **Time is valuable. Use it all well.** The most impactful ads we examined not only started well, they sustained interest throughout. We do understand that not all commercial content is under creative control (e.g., legal boilerplate). But make the most of every possible second.
- **Ads that do all these things are truly powerful.** The strongest ads in our study—the most emotionally engaging and the best recalled—did all of these things together.

As we acknowledged at the beginning, this is not a “creative cookbook.” There’s more to making a good radio commercial than just these things.

Nevertheless, we think it’s useful to share with the industry how consumers actually react when these basic principles are—and are not—followed. With the advanced techniques available to us in this study, we could actually observe moment-by-moment what hap-

pens when various approaches to radio creative are played for a good cross-section of consumers.

In study after study, both those done by the Radio Ad Lab and elsewhere, we've seen that radio advertising is very effective *on average*, especially when ROI is considered. But we have also argued that radio advertising *can do better* when attention is paid to the nature of the medium and the quality and content of its advertising creative.

We hope this exercise will serve as a useful reminder. **The quality of radio ad creative matters.**

It pays to invest time creating good radio ad content to begin with, and whenever possible, it can pay to test the content in advance to make sure that consumers really are reacting as intended.

This study also suggests that it may be especially useful to fine-tune the nature of radio ad creative so that it works in tandem with one of radio's greatest strengths—touching listeners at an emotional level.

Appreciation

The Radio Ad Lab would like to acknowledge the innovative work of Gallup & Robinson on this project. In particular, we'd like to recognize the following:

- Scott Purvis is President of [Gallup & Robinson, Inc.](#) With twenty years experience in advertising research, he works directly with leading companies in packaged goods, technology, pharmaceuticals, automotive, and financial services. He is the principal researcher on many published and proprietary studies about advertising effectiveness and attitudes towards advertising. He is also is the author of *Which Ad Pulled Best?*, now in its ninth edition, and a patent-pending holder on CERA, a physiological technique for measuring emotions-based response to advertising.
- Richard L. Hazlett, Ph.D., is Senior Scientist at Gallup & Robinson. Dr. Hazlett is also an Assistant Professor at Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine where he conducts research on the development of advanced techniques for measuring emotion and is extensively published in the field. He also maintains a private consulting practice and has applied his emotion measures to help companies understand how the consumer is affected by their products and advertising. Dr. Hazlett received his Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology from Illinois Institute of Technology in Chicago, and completed a two-year fellowship in psychophysiological and emotion research at Johns Hopkins.

As always, we're grateful to the members of the Radio Ad Lab Research Committee for their volunteered time and expertise for this and all of our projects. The outstanding advertiser, agency, and broadcast researchers who were members at the time of this paper are listed on the following page, and current members are always posted at our website at <http://radioadlab.org/committeeAdv.cfm>.

The funders and Board of the Radio Ad Lab should receive special acknowledgement for all of our research. Continuation of this research program represents a major investment and a very public commitment to quality research about this medium, and we're grateful for their ongoing support. The Funding Partner companies are listed in the following section, and the current Board is listed at <http://radioadlab.org/boardAdv.cfm>.

Finally, the Radio Ad Lab would like to acknowledge the contributions of research consultant Jim Peacock of Peacock Research, Inc. His direction, insight and guidance have been a critical asset to this project. Among other things, Mr. Peacock is the primary author of this report. More information about Mr. Peacock and his work are available at <http://PeacockResearch.com>.

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