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Listen Up!

If you're not advertising on internet radio, you could be missing out.

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By Catherine Seda

According to a 2004 study by media research firms Arbitron Inc. and Edison Media Research, internet radio has an estimated weekly audience of nearly 19 million Americans and growing. Not only are people listening in online, they're also buying online.

Monthly internet broadcast (radio and video) users might represent only 26 percent of the online audience, but they accounted for an estimated 42 percent of online spending. Advertisers can reach an audience that's in listening and shopping mode.

Thinking of advertising on internet radio? Here are a few tips based on audience demographics and behaviors:

- Test a new offer.** About 28 percent of internet broadcast users are likely to try a new product or service vs. 17 percent of nonbroadcast users. So launching a new product through internet radio could give your initial sales a boost. You'll also likely receive immediate customer feedback or testimonials to help you further refine your product or service and marketing pitch.
- Appeal to a "hip" audience.** Although the age range of broadcast users is 12 to 54 years old, the highest concentration of users falls into the 12- to 34-year-old group. They are a technologically savvy group in tune with DVDs, cell phones, messaging, video games and other media products. Communication gadgets will sell well to this crowd. Yet, even if you aren't promoting these types of devices, tailor your advertisement's message to address the concerns, needs and wants of a sophisticated young audience.
- Use a URL in your ad.** Forty-two percent of the internet radio audience has listened in while shopping or researching a product or service online, so invite them to your website. To sweeten the offer and track your radio advertising results, promote a particular page on your site, such as

advertisement



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www.company.com/radio— just don't make it too long, or people can't remember it. You can use web analytics to track page traffic and also embed code in the links on this page to track leads and sales from it as well.

Wondering where to start with internet radio? According to AccuStream iMedia Research, the top five internet radio sites in May 2004 were: Shoutcast, Net Radio Sales Network, AOL Radio Network, LaunchCast powered by Yahoo! and Chaincast/Stream Audio.

AccuStream iMedia Research, which provides data and analysis on streaming media and on-demand broadcasting, noted that while AOL users already pay a monthly subscription fee and can therefore access the network's radio programs, a majority of internet radio stations are free. This was a major factor in the solid growth of the listening audience across the major players from March to May 2004, and a growing consumer audience is a compelling reason for advertisers to investigate their opportunities.

Before you launch an internet radio ad campaign, however, tune in and experience it. You'll get acquainted with the new broadcast world of your future customers.

Speaker and freelance writer [Catherine Seda](#) owns an internet marketing agency and is author of [Search Engine Advertising](#).

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