

Equity Sessions Recap: April 2021

By Brian Hughes

Below are highlights from our April Equity Sessions event, which focused on Black-owned and Black-targeted audio partners.

Say it Loud Podcast Network

Primary Target: BIPOC Adults

Platforms and Properties: Podcasts available on Apple Podcasts and Spotify

Recent/Upcoming Content Launches:

- ***Conversations with Dr. Ian Smith*** – Physician and host of syndicated series *The Doctors* Dr. Ian Smith takes on important topics that range well beyond the medical field.
- ***The Black Arm of the Law*** – Actor, director, and producer Carl Payne takes a hard look at the ongoing problem of systemic racism in law enforcement.
- ***Corner Table Talk with Brad Johnson*** - Restaurateur Brad Johnson explores the restaurant and food service industries from the perspective of People of Color.

Opportunities for Brands:

- **Foundation Partnership** - this level of sponsorship grants advertisers access to all the best inventory across the network and the ability to do brand takeovers, among other opportunities.
- **Dynamic ad insertion in podcast episodes**
- **Talent reads and endorsements**
- **Custom executions** - the team at Say it Loud welcomes RFP submissions and will create a custom program to fit a brand's needs.

Spotset/Ode Audio/NABOB

The National Association of Black Owned Broadcasters is the only trade organization representing the interests of African-American owners of radio and television stations across the country. Spotset and Ode Audio are divisions of Memphis-based Trust Marketing, and work with the member stations of NABOB to facilitate advertising opportunities.

Primary Target: African American Adults 25-64

Platforms and Properties:

- ***The Essential NABOB Network*** – Encapsulates all 59 member radio stations, including coverage in eight of the top 10 markets and 17 of the top 20.
- ***Spotset Unwired Networks*** - Spotset brings together custom sets of stations depending on advertiser needs.

- **Ode Audio** – A new app, launching in the next two weeks, that serves as a digital bridge for AM stations within NABOB to expand their listenership. It will include streams for 20 stations at the outset, with more to join later. A partnership with iHeart Radio will enable Ode to also include the Black Information Network (news) and podcasts targeted to Black listeners.

Opportunities for Brands:

- **Strong Reach Among Black Listeners** - whether it's via the NABOB network or an unwired option through Spotset, brands have the opportunity to reach a large Black audience for whom radio remains an essential touch point.
- **Early Opportunity for Ode** - With the Ode Audio app seeking to become an "one-stop-shop" for Black-owned and targeted audio, it could be a great chance for brands to connect with the audience early and in a variety of ways.

Howard University Network

Primary Target: Ranges from younger student listeners to older alumni, with a "sweet spot" of 25-64

Platforms and Properties:

- **WHUR-FM 96.3** - an Urban Contemporary radio station owned and operated by Howard University. It is the only stand-alone radio station in Washington D.C. and one of the few in the country solely operated by a university. From a broadcast perspective, it reaches north of Baltimore, Maryland to the outskirts of Richmond, Virginia. WHUR has several ancillary programming streams that are carried on its HD signal or on Sirius XM, which include:
 - WHUR-HD2 is "The Quiet Storm Station," a 24-hour music stream modeled after WHUR's longtime evening program.
 - WHUR-HD3, branded as "WHBC 96.3," is a student-run mainstream urban format focused on hit-driven hip hop, soul, and R&B titles.
 - WHUR-HD4 is "DC Radio," a city-run community station with local music and community affairs.
 - "HUR Voices" is an urban talk channel hosted on SiriusXM.
 - "HBCU RadioNet" is a second SiriusXM channel hosting talk and music programming produced by Howard and other historically Black colleges and universities
- **Live Events/Experiences** - these are opportunities to connect with students, alumni, and the local community. They include:
 - *Homecoming concert* - a celebration of and fundraiser for the university
 - *The Yardfest* - another homecoming event featuring performances and appearances by famous alumni
 - *Howard Fwd* - an HBCU tour designed to focus on tech, urban change, and gamechangers
 - *Pay it Forward* - sponsors work with the university to create give-back opportunities in the community

Opportunities for Brands:

- **Connect Early with Future Tastemakers** - establish a brand relationship with smart and savvy young adults attending the university.
- **Reach Influential Alumni**
- **Give Back** - support community efforts and programming that tackles important issues facing Black America.

Studio Resonate (a division of Pandora)

Studio Resonate has launched a program called "Stand for Sonic Diversity" that is aimed at diversifying voice talent in the audio industry and breaking down the systems that have created a sonic color line. It's initial focus is on Black voices, and ensuring that they are not pigeon-holed into certain roles and jobs. Importantly, initial research conducted through the program demonstrated that advertising voice-overs performed by Black talent were viewed favorably by Black listeners while having absolutely no impact on effectiveness among white listeners.

Studio Resonate challenged brands to take on five key initiatives in their creative efforts in order to move this effort forward:

- Diversify your voice talent roster so that it is comprised of at least 50 percent BIPOC actors
- Increase your Black voice casting by 30 percent
- Do not cast white actors in Black roles
- Make systemic changes to your processes in order to combat stereotypes
- Retrain your listening ears to help eliminate biases

Opportunities for Brands:

- **Work with the studio to connect with BIPOC talent**

Perry Broadcasting

Primary Target: Black Adults

Platforms and Properties:

- **10 radio stations** in Oklahoma City, OK, Tulsa, OK, Augusta, GA, and Fayetteville, AR. Formats include Urban, Smooth Jazz, Gospel, and Sports.
- **The Black Chronicle Newspaper** - aimed at Black readers, it is the largest weekly paid paper in the state of Oklahoma, with a circulation of approximately 35,000.
- **Live Events/Experiences** - these include the Women of Color Expo, Mayfest, Juneteenth Music and Arts Festival, Summer Jam, and The Minority Owned Business Expo (new this fourth quarter).
- **Stream by PPBC app** - allows anyone to listen to Perry-owned stations or podcasts hosted by PPBC personalities.

Opportunities for Brands:

- **Live & Local** - for brands that may have interests in these markets, Perry properties would be ideal for connecting with Black consumers in the area, or could be a component in a larger effort to reach Black audiences across the country.
- **Customization** - Perry offers a wide range of options to advertisers, including custom audio vignettes, in-program billboards, event marketing, and social media, all of which can be tailored to a brand's goals.