

Esso
NEWS
REPORTER

WBZA

WGAN WLBZ

WGY WSYR WHAM WBEN KDKA WBLK WPAR

WCHS WDBJ WJHL WWNC WLAC WDOD WREC

KLRA KWKH WJBO WWL WNOX WFBC WIS WBZ

WRC WBAL WHP WDEL KYW WJZ WDRC WPRO

WCSC WSPA WBT WSJS WPTF WRVA WTAR

Four 5-minute daily news sessions reach nine out of ten listeners for Standard Oil of N. J.

Seven out of eight homes in the 18-state Esso marketing area hear the *Esso Reporter* during any eight-week period. Five million homes hear the Esso sales story daily. (In the territory in which Esso products are marketed that's equal to combined circulation of the *Post*, *Life*, *Collier's*, and *American Magazine* and they aren't published daily.)

And since audiences are only part of any advertising story it's important to underline the fact that Esso's the first gasoline in sales in its territory. There isn't a single network show that equals the pull of the *Esso Reporter* on the 40 stations which broadcast this news spot four times a day. Like Bulova, the Standard Oil Company of New Jersey

has proven the efficacy of national spot broadcasting—in sales.

There are no star names used on the program. The news is simply Esso's and the announcer is simply the Esso Reporter. Although the *Esso Reporter* is on the air four times daily, it uses only 20 minutes (four times five) and its annual expenditure is less than a year-round network show with top names, like Benny Goodman and Victor Borge (Socony-Vacuum), H. V. Kaltenborn (Pure Oil), Eddie Bracken (Texaco), and Lowell Thomas (Sun Oil).

At one time these *Esso Reporter* five-minute airings were exclusively Esso's. Today they're exactly the same as the five-minute shows which are packaged for

all the 700 stations served by the United Press radio bureau. However regional bureaus of UP and each Esso local station adds regional and local items to the national news package put on the wire by UP. It's the consistency of the four-times-a-day, six-times-a-week impact that has played the biggest part in making the *Esso Reporter* an outstanding selling success. However the news show alone wouldn't have done the job—the commercial handling backed by the promotion and advertising which each of the 12 Esso divisions and the 40 stations have focused upon the show, has to be given a great deal of the credit. The 18 states in which Esso products are marketed run from Maine to Louisiana, with a different problem in almost every

state. No over-all copy approach can hope to cover all the 18 states, for while winter lubrication is a seasonal need in Maine that appeal just won't go in the South. In some areas the service stations really turn out to tie into the broadcasting campaign. In others fewer than one out of 10 dealers do anything about Esso air advertising. And what goes for the dealers goes also for the Esso divisions, with some divisional heads giving most Esso air campaigns the quick brush. Typical of the campaigns which Esso air has pushed was the "Clean Restroom" campaign, an ideal point-of-sale promotion. Esso offered a free local mention to the service stations which cooperated with the air campaign. The promotion got considerable newspaper publicity, dealers were circularized, and there was plenty of sales hoop-la. Did the free air mention and the rah rah get action? No! Only a few responded. The few, however, collected plenty. One dealer (John Clarke of Pottsville, Pa.) who liked the idea received air mention—landed newspaper space about his restroom—and his gallonage jumped 75 per cent the day following the broadcast on which his name was mentioned.

By and large the broadcast has to carry the burden alone. No matter how

Esso doesn't expect its dealers to believe without proof that air advertising sells gas and oil. They give the facts on public acceptance

the divisional salesmen stress the fine selling job the four-daily newscasts are doing, most dealers just aren't able to check what actually brings in the business and quite possibly feel that its their personal followings, locations, and/or just the need for gasoline that sells for them.

Even point-of-sale give-aways, which should certainly be proof of impact, fail to convince the general run of dealers. When the Standard Oil of New Jersey house organ *Esso Oilways* featured a story on Tennessee, the local division decided to reprint the folder (see page 16) and offer it free for the asking. Five thousand folders were distributed to stations in the Knoxville area on the basis of their gas sales. Then a single 100-word announcement was used on a single broadcast over the *Esso Reporter* on WNOX in Knoxville. Although the dealers had to be "sold" on the idea and many failed to cooperate, within a week after the broadcast all 5,000 folders had been called for at the point-of-sale; there were also 65 mail requests from outside the Knoxville area. How many stations ran out of copies before the demand dropped off nobody knows, but what is certain is that one announcement over one station in one *Esso Reporter* broadcast made more than 5,000 car owners drive into Esso service stations and ask for a free booklet. This was a local give-away, handled on a local station with a minimum of fuss.

There have been countless incidents of how that "local touch" produces results. In one case the North Carolina Esso division sent out its salesmen and sold its dealers a give-away, a fishing and hunting guide (see page 16) which was plainly marked "\$.25." Some dealers told the salesmen "to hell with it," but more than half of them bought a supply. Then once a day the *Esso Reporter* did a 100-word job on the guide. The dealers who had told the salesmen to hell with it were the first to yell for copies and the division switchboard was tied up in knots by them and other dealers who wanted more copies every time an announcement went on the air. R. H. Crum, radio advertising head of S. O. of N. J., makes a special point about the distribution of the North Carolina booklets. He states: "The program distributed these books to motorists for a fraction of what it would have cost to mail them. The *Esso Fishing and Hunting Guide* brought thousands of cars into Esso stations instead of Gulf, Shell, or Texaco stations." One of the reasons for the *Esso Reporter* commercial impact,

according to ad-man Crum also, is that "the average listener to these news sessions stays tuned to 91-2/10 per cent of each broadcast, including the commercial."

Listening to the *Esso Reporter* hasn't gone down since the end of the war because, as Phillip Newsom, head of United Press radio news section, stresses, the five-minute shows include national, international, and regional or local news, and all three types of stories were part of the package all through the war.

The report includes from 16 to 20 headline items. Its formula hasn't changed from the day it started. *Esso Reporter* was the first big-time sponsored news show. It opened the door to commercial sponsorship of news at a time when newspapers were still anti-news-casts.

The idea was sold to the Esso advertising agency, Marschalk and Pratt, back in July 1935. Clifford Glick, then a salesman for the National Broadcasting Company, one day ran into Fritz Snyder (see *Mr. Sponsor*, page 8), then radio director of the agency, and Harry C. Marschalk, head of the agency, at Broadway and 43d Street. Glick told Snyder and Marschalk that UP had decided to change its policy and was ready to lease its news service to NBC and maybe Standard Oil would be interested. The proposition was put up to Dr. R. T. Haslam, now a director of the oil company but then the sales manager, and he bought the UP news on WJZ (where it still is) and WEAJ as well as an NBC chain. The company dropped Guy Lombardo for this newcast. After the first 26 weeks the operation began to shift to a spot campaign, covering the territory to which Esso was restricted by the anti-trust decision which had broken up the Standard Oil empire.

The agency endeavors to blanket the Esso sales territory. In the past it based its decisions on NBC "regular listening figures" but now uses Hooper, Nielsen, and more recently the Broadcast Measurement Bureau Index. Also in the past it insisted on coverage based upon a minimum of 50 per cent of the sets in any county. It's understood that since January 1946 a 25 per cent listening figure has been the minimum base. The 25 per cent figure of course is for the outlying counties where Esso service stations and broadcast station coverage are fringe.

But no research figures alone determine the final station selection. Curt Peterson, now radio director of Marschalk and Pratt, and R. H. Crum of the oil



How it changed its mind regarding the standing of the Company as a producer of Hundred Octane

August 1943		JANUARY 1944	
Company	Per cent	Company	Per cent
ESSO	43	ESSO	49
SOCONY	13	SOCONY	11
GULF	9	GULF	10
SUN	6	SUN	8
SHELL	5	SHELL	5
OTHER	2	OTHER	2
DON'T KNOW	22	DON'T KNOW	15
TOTAL	100 %	TOTAL	100 %

(1,300 men, in 15 cities in ESSO territory)
HIGH OCTANE ... Carefully Refined.

FOR THE **Belt** IN RADIO TUNE IN **WDOZ** CBS Station For The Greater Tennessee Valley **1310** ON YOUR DIAL



NEWS
When You Want It
ESSO REPORTER

Local, National and International News
20 TIMES WEEKLY
Monday-Saturday Sunday
7:30 A.M. 10:00 A.M.
12:55 P.M. 6:25 P.M.
6:25 P.M. 10 A.M.

Presented by Your Friendly Esso Dealer
WDEL
1150 K.C.

WWL
870 on your dial

FOR THE HEADLINE NEWS...
DAY AND NIGHT...
LISTEN TO YOUR **ESSO NEWS REPORTER**

Time and Station

	Weekdays				Saturday	Sunday			
	Morn- ing	Afternoon	Even- ing	Night	After- noon	Morn- ing	Afternoon	Even- ing	Night
WSJS	7:30	12:00(N)	6:00	11:00	12:00(N)		12:00(N)		11:00
WPTF	7:55	12:15	6:25	11:00	13:15		12:25	6:45	
WBT	7:55	12:30	5:30	11:00	12:30	9:45	1:00		
WWNC	7:45	1:00	6:00	11:00	12:55		12:55	2:55	

save that car!
Esso care saves wear

LISTEN TO YOUR
Esso REPORTER
AT A NEW TIME
MON THRU SAT 5:30 PM

Stations do not spare promotion when they have the ESSO Reporter to sell. They use dash cards, blotters, car cards, news papers, and billboards

company, visit each station at least once a year. The talk usually produces information that's never found on a rating report or a rate card. It also produces a closer liaison between the local Esso division, the dealers, and the stations. This liaison results in 24-sheet billboards, car cards, newspaper advertising on the program, and all forms of station promotion. The program, being a clean-cut newscast with a local and regional slant, is public service and many stations promote it as though it were their own sustaining program (see above).

Esso Reporter is the toughest kind of a program, commercially, to be handled by an agency. It requires 8 commercials per day. It requires copy geared to the region in which it is broadcast. Since the advertising expense is allocated to the division in which each station broad-

casts, it means keeping each division satisfied—not just the home office. These divisions are consistently coming up with ideas (they are urged to do this by Crum and his superior, R. M. Gray, advertising manager). In one division dealers wanted Butel (synthetic) tubes plugged, since they only had to be pumped up every six months, and that division was given special air copy for Butel. Another division found that Ethyl Cleaner, a product of the Ethyl Specialties Corporation, subsidiary of Standard Oil of New Jersey, had been sold to a great many dealers but was not moving off their shelves. They asked for *Esso Reporter* help and North Carolina was exposed once a day for two weeks to a 100-word hard-hitting commercial. Ethyl Cleaner began to move off the shelves. A special bow, in a sales meeting, was

made to WWNC in Asheville whose merchandising department sold a number of retail stores on tying in with the promotion.

Of course the individual problems of the 2200 Esso stations can't be handled directly, but the 12 divisions manage to make sure that their general aches are taken care of.

When it comes Fair time in the country, most stations operate their news bureaus from a booth at their County Fairs... and the *Esso Reporter* is found to be a real drawing card. Four times a day the crowd mobs the booth to see news in action.

How stations feel about their *Esso Reporter* is evidenced by the many anniversary celebrations (see WHP, Harrisburg, folder, page 16) and special broadsides published. The most recent broadside

Your ESSO Reporter has broadcast many great tales. ...Ask your ESSO dealer for a copy of the Esso stories of the year....It's free.

Where do you wet a line? Ask your dealer for a copy of the ESSO Fishing and Hunting Guide to the state of North Carolina. It's yours.

Ask your nearby ESSO dealer for this pamphlet on the great state of Tennessee. It's free at any ESSO station... and no obligation.



WHP
ESSO
REPORTER'S
BIGGEST
NEWS STORIES
Selected by
UNITED PRESS

Esso FISHING and HUNTING
GUIDE to North Carolina **25¢**

The cover of the 'Esso Fishing and Hunting Guide to North Carolina' features a black and white photograph of two people fishing from a boat on a river. The scene is peaceful, with trees and foliage in the background. The title and price are prominently displayed at the top.

HAPPY FISHING & HAPPY HUNTING & HAPPY MOTORING

TENNESSEE'S
Tale of Industrial Triumph

reprinted from Esso Oilways

A small, square inset image showing a person sitting on a boat, engaged in fishing. The image is partially obscured by the text and other elements of the advertisement.

was that of WPTF, Raleigh, N. C., which stressed the fact that it thought Standard Oil backed up its program with sound selling more than any other sponsor.

During the war the *Reporter* "sold" 3,500,000 war maps which were given away free at Esso service stations. Came VJ day and there was a considerable number of maps still available. Crum and the agency put their heads together, came up with an honest plug for the ex-war map, and then had to pull the commercials off in a hurry. Although Crum thought that nothing was as dead as a war map in peacetime, he had figured without the pull of his program.

One of the objectives of the Esso marketing plans is to keep the program in the public interest. There's real time devoted to Red Cross, March of Dimes, USO, and all other drives. The public service doesn't stop there. In the Delaware-Maryland-D.C. division two Esso service stations handled tickets for the Navy home football games and asked for a lift. The Navy-Notre Dame game in Baltimore was a sell-out so it was not to be mentioned, but the local Esso reporters banged away a couple of times a week on the smaller home games. More than once the division had to stop the plugs because of an unexpected sell-out. That hadn't happened before.

Other objectives of the program, aside from the public service, are to:

help dealers build their service business; set the pace for the petroleum industry; keep the Esso brand name the leader (it is now); back up Esso dealers; stress "Quality and Service"; increase public understanding of petroleum.

Esso feels it's done that and more.

Twelve of its stations have been carrying the show 10 years or more. Thirty-eight have been with Esso for more than five years. The agency and sponsor feeling is that sticking with a

station gives the dealers a confidence that wouldn't be present if the show shifted from station to station. Besides, most of the stations are doing a top-drawer job of promoting the program. Consistency of station also inspires dealers to do some promotion. Recently a dealer suggested to the Esso division head in the area in which he was located that it'd be a good idea if they supplied dealers with a tag on which was printed the wave length of the station and the four time periods in which the program was aired. Esso did just that, and since it was a dealer suggestion many of the dealers cooperated by having their men wear them. The idea is that customers will ask what the numbers are all about and the men will tell them about the *Esso Reporter*. It works.

The Esso newcast formula is being extended to the *Esso Television Reporter*. The news is all on film and thus can be sent to any station in the Esso area, when such stations are perking. At present NBC is filming the program working with John Allen of the agency. Commercials are more detailed than the broadcast copy for they are trying to show the laboratory tests they can only talk about briefly in radio copy. Service can be demonstrated and trade name impact visually is said to be much higher than straight wordage. Paul Alley (NBC film head) has landed a number of picture scoops for Esso and their surveys have proved that for them, at least, TV is selling. Towards the end of 1946 they made a survey to compare with one they had made in May 1946. In May they found that 30 per cent of the viewers (6,000) used Esso Extra. (Crum's comment on this is that it's a very high usage figure.) In the second research job the figures stood at 40 per cent. This doesn't mean that a great deal of

gas was sold but it does mean that Esso is developing a sight-and-sound selling version of its *Esso Reporter* to await TV day. The visual program is now on WNBT (NBC, New York) and WPTZ (Philco, Philadelphia).

Competition is heavy in the 18-state area in which Esso products are sold and Standard Oil of New Jersey gives broadcasting a great deal of the credit for keeping it first. It's out to reach everyone in its selling territory and feels that it does, to all intents and purposes. It still would like more dealer cooperation. At a merchandising managers' meeting in January a typical Esso Reporter talked to the men this way:

"I keep telling people, 'Go to your nearby Esso station' . . . and who gives me a hand? Nobody! Who ever plugs your Esso Reporter to Esso customers? Nobody! Who ever says 'This product was featured by your Esso Reporter?' Nobody! I get so damned discouraged! What have I got to do to get some cooperation? Anybody'd think I was advertising a competitive gasoline. Look guys, I'm YOUR Esso Reporter. That's Esso, E-S-S-O. I'm plugging for you . . ."

Esso is selling—but their dealer selling job is never done. It's been one thing to sell the product and still another to shake the average retailer into cooperation.

There is another factor—one that's a constant problem for advertising managers of all great corporations using spot broadcasting. The *Esso Reporter* is not a program to which stockholders and organization executives can point and say, "Our company sponsors that great broadcast."

Like most other spot programs, *Esso Reporter* is a sales tool. Standard Oil's president can't take the visiting fireman to see an Esso reporter at work for there's little drama and plenty of glamorous sweat to the job. While that may not at first glance seem important, programs are constantly being bought because of the business social standing that they give a sponsor. And many shows have been cancelled because of the lack of this social standing. The now famous story of Heinz's cancellation of the network version of Joe Palooka because Mrs. H. felt that it wasn't "fit to come to her drawing room" has been repeated time and time again. Often it isn't just personal feeling but business prestige that prompts a sponsor to buy big names and coast-to-coast when a regional or national spot campaign would do a better job.

Esso and Marschalk and Pratt have been able to withstand pressure (of course they deny there has been any). They have been able to prove that the *Esso Reporter* is tailored to their exacting needs for a flexible direct selling multiple impact daily advertising campaign. Standard sponsors *Esso Reporter* on 40 stations because it sells.



Localized commercials with give-aways bring car owners right into the gas stations to get the free booklets—and they buy gasoline too