

PRWEEK JOURNALIST Q&A: NEWS Tom Kraeutler

Published on March 07 2005

Tom Kraeutler and Leslie Segrete's home improvement radio show *The Money Pit* reaches millions of listeners each week through syndication on more than 120 stations. Its hosts - radio's only male-female home-improvement team - also share their advice through e-newsletters, columns, and TV. Kraeutler is a regular contributor to news shows like CNN's *Open House*, and Segrete is the on-air talent for TLC's *While You Were Out*.

PRWeek: *How would you describe your audience?*

Tom Kraeutler: It runs the gamut. We have people who really wouldn't know which end of the hammer to hold to serious [do-it-yourself-ers] to professional contractors.

PRWeek: *How has the growth of home-improvement shows changed your audience?*

Kraeutler: There's more information out there. And with TV shows, radio shows, and the growth of the internet, this information is more accessible than ever before. I think that's had an empowering effect on the population. People are not as afraid as they used to be to take on a project that's more complicated than picking up a paintbrush. I think these shows are inspiring consumers across the country to do more, take on more, and challenge themselves to improve their spaces.

PRWeek: *How much of your content is driven by call-ins and how much is determined by what the producers decide?*

Kraeutler: It's almost totally driven by call-ins, although we do have guests every hour with whom we conduct four- or five-minute interviews. What's interesting about the way we run our show is that we actually track the topic of every single contact to the show. We know what they want to talk about. We know how that splits between male and female. We know their age range. We know how frequently they buy home-improvement products. I think we know more about our audience than virtually any other show our size.

PRWeek: *What percentage of your audience is women? Do you do anything special to include both genders?*

Kraeutler: We are 46% female, 54% male. *The Money Pit* has always been hosted by a male-female team. I've always felt that was an important component. We certainly try to empower our audience to not be afraid to ask a question. One thing that's interesting is that although we know our audience is 46% women, we know that only 37% of women contact the show. What that says to me is that women are just a little bit shier than men about contacting [us].

PRWeek: *How do you decide which products to feature on your show?*

Kraeutler: It depends. When we are being pitched by PR pros, we're looking for a good editorial story. Not that you have a new widget, but that you have a new solution to a problem. We don't expect an interview to be a five-minute commercial for a product. If you manufacture lawn mowers, I don't just want to hear about the new lawn mower, I want to hear about lawn maintenance tips for the spring. When we get a good [story], it gets on the radio show, it gets on the newsletter, and it gets tucked in our back pocket for the next time a TV producer calls and says, "Quick, do a segment on fill-in-the-blank." As a journalist, if I get an assignment, I will definitely go to the people with whom I'm comfortable and for whom I have respect before I go directly to a company.

Name: Tom Kraeutler

Outlet: Nationally syndicated radio show *The Money Pit*

Title: Host

E-mail: tom@moneypit.com

Website: www.moneypit.com

