

# Listener Call-In Data Is Critical For Sales

As the saying goes, “Money talks.” In the changing climate of “less is more” radio advertising, content-driven weekend “how-to” shows are talking louder than ever as one of the most profitable radio dayparts, short of morning drive.

If you are not programming these and other specialty call-in shows, you may be leaving money on the table. Are you fully exploiting these rich advertiser categories, or simply selling concept? The more you know about the audience that these shows can pull, the better off your bottom line will be.

Like any talk show, we at *The Money Pit* answer the phone when we’re on the air each weekend. But we go a giant step further, because that same call-in number is answered live, 24/7. We do this because many affiliates time-shift our show. By offering 24/7 call screening, non-live affiliates can have their listeners participate in the program.

Whenever listeners are hearing us, they can call in and pose a question. Also, callers are a rich source of sales ammo. Our call-center staff interviews each caller. By analyzing data from calls and e-mail, we’ve learned a lot about the shoppers your station’s advertisers want to meet. With a few simple procedural changes to your call-screening procedures, you can do the same.

We know who calls, what problems they want to talk about, and what projects they

want to do. We know how they vary by gender and by geography, and we even know how they prefer to get that information. For example, we learned that the 10 most common home-improvement projects our audience wants to know about are:

## 10 most common home-improvement projects

1. Floor coverings
2. Plumbing
3. Windows & siding
4. Kitchen & bath
5. Walls & ceilings
6. HVAC
7. Roofing
8. Bugs, pests & rodents
9. Indoor air quality/mold
10. Basements & crawlspaces

Match this list against your local home-improvement marketplace and you’ll know exactly which business to pitch for sponsorships. For our affiliates, it means they’ll be calling plumbing services, such as Roto Rooter; roofing, window and siding contractors; kitchen and bath contractors; heating and air conditioning service companies; the local utility companies; pest control services; gutter companies to keep the water away and the basements dry; and maid services to keep

the air clean and the mold away. Taking it to the next level, an audience this active is bound to need insurance and banking services, landscapers to keep the property maintained, and much more.

Crunching the numbers by gender, we find that stations may be talking to only half the potential home-improvement shoppers. As industry sales figures demonstrate, how-to is not just a guy thing. In our industry, for instance, women spend more than half of all home-improvement dollars.

Comparing caller inquiries and e-mail inquiries also points to an opportunity. One reason home improvement shows are unduly typecast as guy stuff may be that more men than women call in (8.5 percent more to be exact). But more than twice as many women (16 percent) than men (7.5 percent) e-mail us. There are lots of women among the 50,000+ opt-in subscribers to our weekly e-newsletter, and there are probably lots in your station’s database, too. Telling them that your station has answers to questions you know to be of interest can provoke tune-in. Put a client coupon in that e-mail, and you have web NTR.

**Bottom line:** Taking time to mine the data of callers to your show can help you build a blueprint for more sales. By connecting these dots for your local advertisers, you might just find that weekend how-to shows can deliver revenue second only to morning-drive. With all your station’s programming, the better you know your audience, the better you’ll do just that. 📧

Tom Kraeutler and Debby Robinson host *The Money Pit*, a nationally syndicated home-improvement radio program heard on more than 110 stations. For more information, go to [www.888moneypit.com/backdoor](http://www.888moneypit.com/backdoor).