



Radio Stations Latch On To Classified Newcomer

By [Dominique Paul Noth](#)

Special to The Digital Edge
Article posted April 2001

dig·its *n., pl.*
The digital form of *pundit*,
applied to those informed
or crazy enough to pontificate
on publishing in cyberspace.

Starting with a single Web outlet for New York's [Hudson Valley, RegionalHelpWanted](#) has formed a national network by emphasizing the geographic, not global, precision of the Internet. But it is the global connectivity of modern media that allows it to compete quickly, slickly and inexpensively.

While each market thinks its site is unique, RegionalHelpWanted merely changes city names from template to template. The database for [JacksonvilleHelpWanted.com](#) may be 1,000 miles away in Poughkeepsie, N.Y., but it arrives on the monitors there just as quickly, and looks just as home-based, as the Florida Times-Union's [Jacksonville.com](#).

No wonder radio people understand the idea — their formats also can seem special in each market while actually being cloned city to city by media consultants.

Those radio ads are wry and effective, with excellent voice talent. No wonder again — they stem from pioneer radio humorist Dick Orkin and his veteran staff at Los Angeles-based [Radio Ranch](#), a commercial expert at creating storytelling and advocacy ads. Some ads deride the abbreviations of newspaper classifieds (🔊) and are scripted to allow simple voice inserts of a different town or RegionalHelpWanted name. So RegionalHelpWanted can look and sound local, and provide local recruitment services, without staff on the ground.



The choice of radio stations is also shrewd, since many are only now grasping their potential on the Internet. Hundreds have begun sharing their broadcasts on a great number of Internet portals, thousands have at the least created promotional sites to play sound bites or music. More and more, though, these radio station sites are attempting to offer fuller services, mainly through barter and linking deals. They feature companies like [BuySellBid](#), Vancouver, Wash. They pop links to health

portals. They basically are in the market not to add Web technology to their skills but to add partners that will provide the technology.

Enter RegionalHelpWanted. Its turnkey approach and cloned promotions appeal to radio budgets and targets. Its reputation with radio stations may be enhanced by its one non-geographical partner, a site for jobs in the radio business called [RadioInkHelpWanted.com](#). This is a partnership with a highly regarded, glossy subscription magazine aimed at radio executives and managers. [Radio Ink magazine](#), incidentally, was founded by a veteran believer in Internet-radio convergence, Eric Rhoads, the CEO of [Streamline Media](#).

Each site allows any local employer with a credit card to sign up and post jobs within five

minutes. It lets any job seeker browse, customize interests, receive e-mail reminders and post resumes for free, and the resumes are accessible to any local employer who has signed aboard.

What do the radio stations give up to participate? Not much. They pledge to run RegionalHelpWanted's commercials 24 times Sunday to Wednesday (which are slower ad days in the radio business).

What they hope to get is revenue. RegionalHelpWanted promises 65 percent of the money from employers placing job ads to its radio ally. The payment rises to 70 percent if the radio station agrees to partner with other broadcasters in the region. Most do. The rates will seem low to employers who have only dealt with newspapers — \$48 for 100 words online for 30 days — but from the radio perspective this is new money, a classifieds game they have never been able to play before. They give up some airtime and don't lift a finger.

Radio Ranch's humorous ads make sites like [Monster.com](#) as much a target of mirth (🔊) as newspapers. For good reason. Each of RegionalHelpWanted's local sites is catering to the stay-putters and the low-tech job hunters far more than UNIX programmers or Visual Basic mavens.

RegionalHelpWanted creates the appearance of significant ad depth at launch by including a sprinkling of jobs from [Manpower Inc.](#) and other available temp agencies. But from then on the focus is on bank tellers, security guards, car salesmen, beauticians and similar jobs. The radio ads emphasize (🔊) this approach. They pitch a better paying or more interesting job for those who like it here, wherever "here" is. This is not the moving-van clientele that HotJobs seeks out. But it is a clientele newspapers cater to — and demographics show these folks are now also online.

Radio Ranch's humorous ads make sites like [Monster.Com](#) as much a target of mirth (🔊) as

RegionalHelpWanted also attempts to turn potential negatives into positives. Take the choice of domain name as one example. They're all variants of the same concept: [PeoriaHelpWanted.Com](#), [SyracuseHelpWanted.Com](#), even [AntelopeValleyHelpWanted.Com](#).

In some communities, domain squatters have anticipated them. No problem for RegionalHelpWanted. In cities such as Milwaukee — where [MilwaukeeHelpWanted](#) lies dormant but has been registered by Las Vegas' Advanced Internet Marketing, which operates [localemployment.com](#), currently covering cities in Arizona and Nevada — RegionalHelpWanted simply flips the name, and the radio ads, into [HelpWantedMilwaukee.Com](#).

Of course, this naming game can produce some clunky results. Consider [WesternWashingtonHelpWanted.Com](#) or Georgia's [ChattahoocheeHelpWanted](#). RegionalHelpWanted coined a tag line for all its sites and all its radio ads that acknowledge the lengthy URLs: "Long Name, Amazing Results."

The "results" boast is, to put it mildly, premature. No matter how you count the ads and divide the money (among as many as six broadcast partners in some markets), we're talking a dribble that hopes to be a stream. Still, newspapers would be wise "to stop this from gaining any traction," says Joe McGuire, online manager at the [Peoria \(Ill.\) Journal](#)

“We are not worried or panicked about this,” McGuire says. “We have been attacked on several other fronts over the past couple of years and they are gone. We are taking a couple of measured steps to make sure our customers and readers are aware of the facts.”

As McGuire and others pointed out, virtually everywhere that RegionalHelpWanted has set up shop, the newspaper online contains many more ads and delivers thousands more page views.

At [Syracuse Online](#), General Manager Michele Sardinia adds that “the credibility of newspaper classifieds is essential,” a continuing attraction to the online visitor.

Tempering all that, though, is that many radio stations also have credibility with their listeners — not just music but also news and personalities. In addition, RegionalHelpWanted’s sites are focused on doing one thing only — local jobs — while the newspaper sites require more maneuvering.

“We have been attacked on several other fronts over the past couple of years and [the competitors] are gone.”

***— Joe McGuire,
Peoria (Ill.) Journal
Star***