

# dab's the way to do it

**Daniel Todaro** is managing director of field marketing agency Gekko and gives us his observations on the DAB radio market in the UK

**W**ith recent Rajar figures showing that 21.7 per cent of adults now live in a household with DAB radio, it seems plausible that radio may go the way of TV and eventually become a digital-only offering.

In order to accommodate the eventual migration of all radio content on to a digital platform, the manufacture of DAB radio sets is on the rise and retailers are gearing up for a major sales push in this area.

But how much do consumers, and indeed the retailers themselves, know about the benefits and differences offered by DAB sets?

Digital TV is slowly seeping into the consciousness of the consumer. With Digital UK's recent multi-million pound advertising push and major retailers doing their bit to educate people about how to make the switch, the imminent migration to digital TV is fast becoming a reality.

Things are looking rosy on TV's side of the fence. But what about radio? Although digital radio sets have been around for a number of years, it is only now that manufacturers and programmers are looking towards an eventual goal of switching all radio content to a digital platform. In fact, recent reports suggest that digital radio is four years behind TV in terms of progress; currently only 21.7 per cent of people have digital radios, compared with 85 per cent with digital TV.

So, with some catching up to do, and change on the horizon, it's essential that electrical retailers are prepared for a surge in interest about, and sales of, DAB radio sets.

## CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

The main priority for retailers should always be to guarantee customer satisfaction, both with the service they receive and the products they purchase. If neither is satisfactory – something which appears to happen on a regular basis – then the retailer will face a backlash not just from consumers, but also suppliers.

If a supplier is trusting retailers to sell their products and increase customer loyalty to their brand, then they must be confident of an informed, enthusiastic dialogue between the store and the customer.

This is particularly relevant in the case of DAB radio. Despite its age, DAB is still considered by most to be a relatively new concept, so older customers or those unfamiliar with digital technology may have lots of questions about the products on sale.

For example, many may be confused about what DAB actually means. Why is it superior to regular sets? Is the extra cost worth it? What extra functions and services are available?

As well as these initial questions, it's possible that some people may be intimidated by the inevitable move to all things digital, having been used to their old analogue sets and therefore reluctant to switch to a new model.

It's surprising how resistant to change people still are, even in this whirlwind age of new products and consumer choice.

This is where in-store marketing activity really comes into play. If field marketing agencies work closely with retailers, they can make sure that staff are equipped with knowledge and information to help them answer such questions.

For example, facts about improved sound quality or tips on the ease of digital tuning can be invaluable in conversations with customers and may eventually lead to a sale.

It's also important for retail staff to understand a customer's motivation for buying a set.

■ ■ It is essential that electrical retailers are prepared for a surge in interest about and sales of DAB radio sets ■ ■





Daniel Todaro  
of Gekko



Radio as a concept means different things to different people. For some, it is simply a music centre, to be used when cooking, cleaning or performing other tasks that restrict us from giving visual attention as needed with a TV.

For others it is much more – a prized possession providing a diverse range of entertainment and factual information. How many of us have a relative who is a keen radio enthusiast, or even those who infinitely prefer listening to the talk content of Radio 4 to watching an endless list of reality shows on TV?

Once staff know which category of radio listener the customer falls into, they will be better prepared to sell the different benefits of digital radio technology.

For those who are prone to music

channel hopping, for example, easy-tune sets will be the most appealing. For those Radio 4 listeners, however, the main priority will probably be the sound quality, especially if a show features several speakers.

There will be challenges for retailers.

For music lovers, today's temptation will always be to opt for an iPod docking station or a multi-purpose music centre, and most digital TV providers now also offer a large range of radio channels to be listened to through the TV.

However, there will always be a place

for radio sets for the true radio lover. Some 21.7 per cent of us currently live a household with DAB digital radio, and with digital technology becoming such a normal and expected part of our daily media consumption, it's inevitable that this figure will continue to rise. ■