

Lifebuoy Lightens Up In Fight Against “B.O.”

“Are you safe from ‘B.O.’ in all 13 areas of the skin?”

-- Dwight Weist

Lincoln, Me. (DG)—

During the 1930’s and 1940’s, the use of intimidation and classic sound effects in its radio advertising helped *Lifebuoy Health Soap* become the country’s top selling bath soap. During this time, the radio commercials were specially designed that a daily bath or shower with *Lifebuoy* had a huge impact on a person’s popularity in business and social life. With the overwhelming success of the soap’s advertising, there wasn’t any need to change anything with the way *Lifebuoy* was presented on the radio. In other words, “if it ain’t broke, don’t fix it.” In this case, however, the advertising was far from broken, but it did have some tweaking done to it.

In 1949, the listeners who tuned in NBC’s *BIG TOWN* noticed a change in the *Lifebuoy* radio commercials. Noticeably missing were the foghorn and “BEEEEEE-OHHHHH” sound effects. These 2 sinister sound effects were replaced by, of all things, a cheery jingle sung by some happy singers. ■



The number “13” also played an important role. Announcer Dwight Weist* pointed out the usually unlucky number was associated with the 13 areas of the skin where “B.O.” did its dirty work. A bath or shower with *Lifebuoy* eliminated the infamous stink in all 13 areas before “B.O.” even had a chance to begin.

Weist also talked about *Lifebuoy*’s “Purifying Ingredient” and how it cleaned the skin better than any other soap. Doctors proved this bold statement by conducting 820 scientific tests with *Lifebuoy* and the other leading bath soaps. The competition removed dirt and perspiration from the human body, but they didn’t remove the “invisible dirt” that formed a foothold on “B.O.”

Lifebuoy’s Purifying Ingredient eliminated the invisible dirt along with the other unpleasant stuff.

Even with the happy jingle, Purifying Ingredient, and the number 13, the overall message was still serious in nature, and “B.O.” was still being taken as a serious threat to popularity and success.

In the past, the *Lifebuoy* commercials stopped at that point. It eliminated “B.O.,” and every man, woman, and child should use it in their daily bath or shower. Nothing more was necessary. However, this series of commercials marked the beginning of a new era. Instead of intimidation, these commercials

focused on the kinder, gentler, and milder *Lifebuoy Health Soap*. Kinder, gentler, and milder for the people who used it; not for “B.O.”

Lifebuoy’s Purifying Ingredient eliminated all traces of “B.O.” with soap so mild, it could also be used

for complexion care instead of beauty soap. To go along with the mild soap, ***Lifebuoy*** had a rich coconut oil lather that made the bath or shower refreshing for its users. It had a knack of perking up sleepy people first thing in the morning. It didn't exactly replace coffee, but a refreshing ***Lifebuoy*** bath or shower got its users off to a good start.

As for revealing the kinder, gentler side of ***Lifebuoy*** on the air, its popularity was the same as before. In reality, the ***Lifebuoy*** users already knew of its mildness and refreshing ability in the tub or shower---even if it wasn't mentioned in the commercials.

The changes made in ***Lifebuoy's*** radio advertising may not necessarily compare with the commercials with the 2 sinister sound effects of the past, but over 40 million considerate Americans still use it for their daily bath or shower. That's a lot of popular and successful people who were worry free of "B.O."

Editor's note: On various *Lifebuoy* commercials in 1949, actor Matt Crowley was also the commercial spokesman.