

ziba

Reinventing the Radio Experience

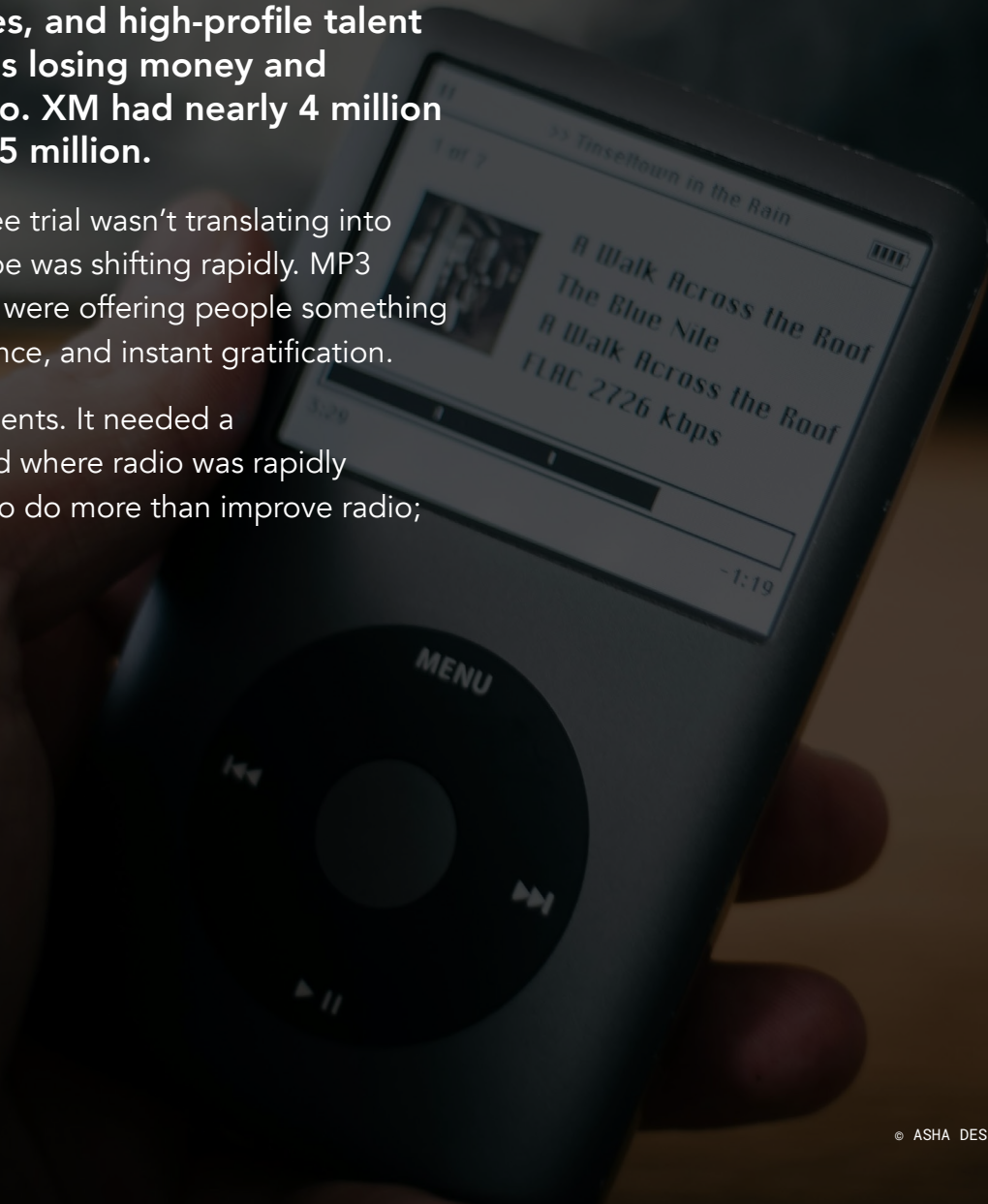
How Ziba helped Sirius redefine a category



In 2005, Sirius Satellite Radio faced a crossroads. Despite billions invested in content, satellites, and high-profile talent like Howard Stern, the company was losing money and trailing far behind its rival, XM Radio. XM had nearly 4 million subscribers, while Sirius had only 1.5 million.

The strategy of bundling receivers with a free trial wasn't translating into loyal customers. Worse, the media landscape was shifting rapidly. MP3 players, iPods, and early streaming services were offering people something traditional radio couldn't: control, convenience, and instant gratification.

Sirius needed more than product improvements. It needed a breakthrough—a reason to matter in a world where radio was rapidly becoming irrelevant. To survive, Sirius had to do more than improve radio; it had to reimagine the entire experience.

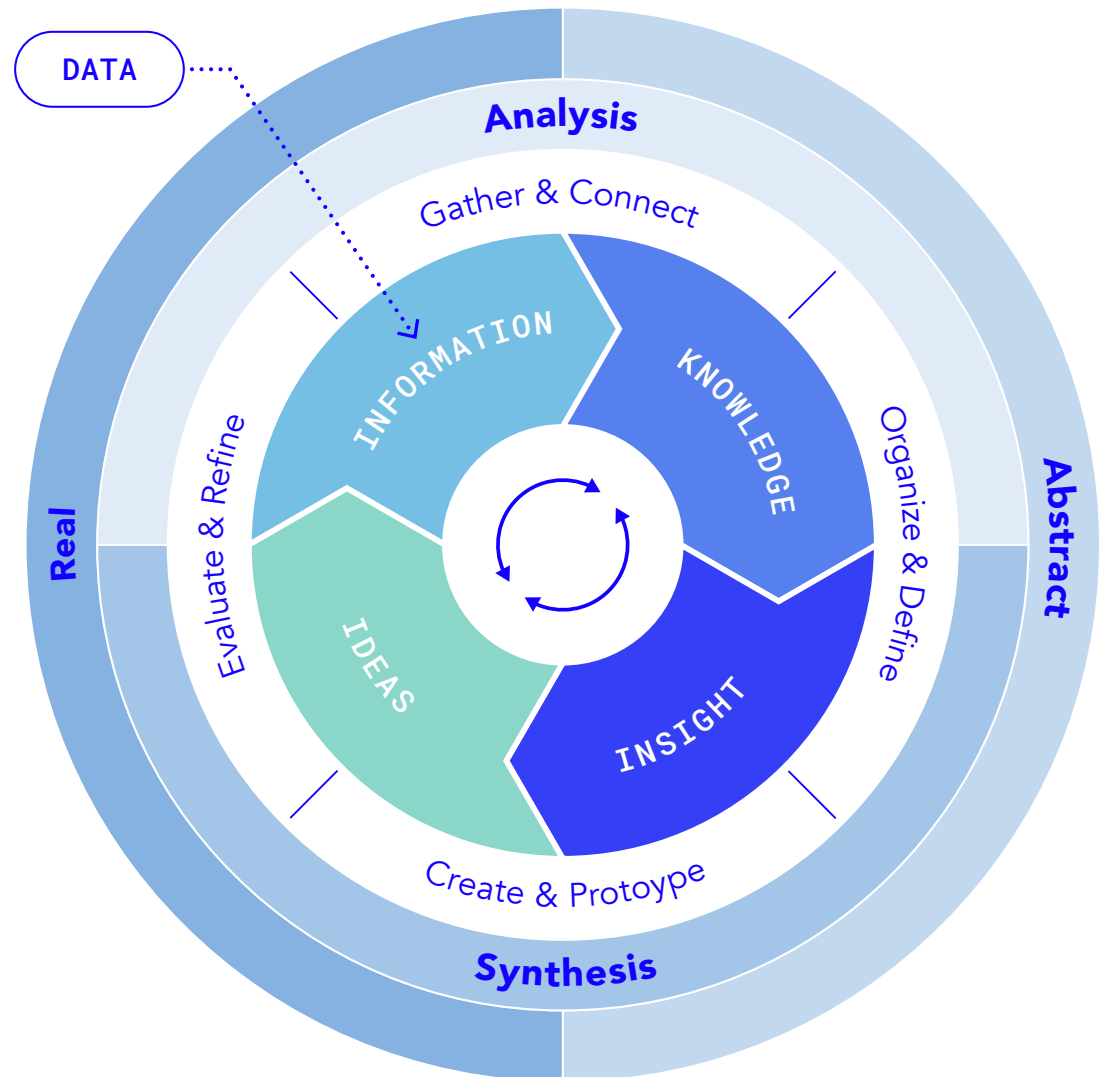


That's when Sirius turned to Ziba for a bold reinvention.

Using our proprietary Visioneering™ framework, we set out to answer a critical question: What makes radio worth listening to in a world of skip buttons, playlists, and endless algorithmic choice?

This wasn't about refining the past. It was about defining what is next. The goal was clear: to ignite desire, enhance engagement, foster loyalty, and convert trial users into lifelong subscribers—quickly.

Visioneering™ Framework





DATA TO INFORMATION

Searching for the Soul of Radio

To reimagine the radio experience, we began by rediscovering its essence. What draws people to satellite radio in the first place? When do they turn it on—and why do they tune out? What role does it play in their daily lives? Is it background noise, a trusted companion, or something else entirely?

We dug deep into the listener journey to understand how people discover satellite radio, what keeps them coming back, and what causes them to drift away. Because to design a breakthrough, we first had to find what makes it matter





DATA TO INFORMATION

Finding the Friction. Fueling the Future.

Ziba's multidisciplinary team of researchers and designers launched an immersive, coast-to-coast investigation into how people engage with audio in their daily lives—at home, at work, and particularly in the car, where Sirius had its strongest presence.

We looked beyond demographics to uncover the emotional and behavioral patterns shaping how people connect with media and what it would take to make satellite radio matter to them. Our mission: to map the entire ecosystem through the lens of the listener.

We explored:



Competition

What other services were people using, and how could Sirius integrate or differentiate?



Perceptions

What did people believe and feel about satellite radio?



Pain Points

What stopped users from renewing after the trial?



Content

What made it easy—or hard—for users to find what they loved?



Rituals

What nostalgic or emotional behaviors could Sirius tap into?

We weren't just collecting data—**we were decoding desire**. Through deep listening and intentional observation, we uncovered moments of friction with the power to spark transformation. Turning Sirius around meant transforming passive users into passionate fans.



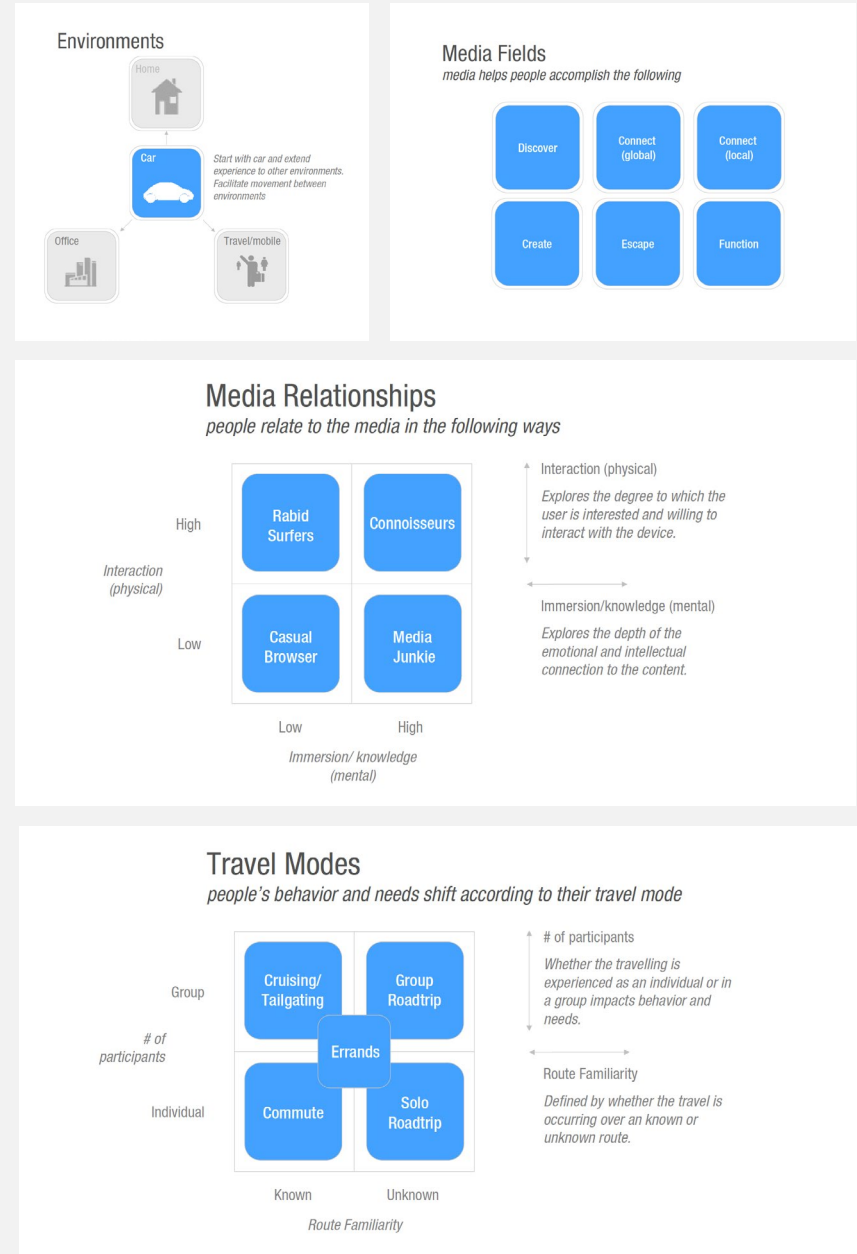
**INFORMATION
TO KNOWLEDGE**

Mapping Minds. Shaping Experiences.

Through a series of perceptual and behavioral models, we transformed raw information and data into actionable knowledge. These strategic tools guided how Sirius could connect with users across moments, mindsets, and environments.

Engagement Models

Using systems thinking, we mapped how users engaged with media, balancing their desire for control with their craving for immersion. We plotted effort against value and discovered a key truth: the more intuitive and curated the experience, the more likely it was to earn attention and loyalty.





INFORMATION TO KNOWLEDGE

Behavioral Frameworks

We examined how people interact with audio media on emotional, functional, and situational levels.

We developed behavioral frameworks around:



Media Relationships

Not just what people listened to, but how and why it mattered in their lives



Travel Modes

How behaviors change during long commutes, quick errands, or road trips.



Media Fields

The personal goals that media supports, such as entertainment, discovery, focus, or escape.



Listening Environments

How Sirius could achieve seamless integration across the car, home, office, and mobile—creating a sense of continuity wherever users travel.



INFORMATION TO KNOWLEDGE

Strategic Target & Profiles

Our research also identified a new core audience for Sirius—our Strategic Target: **the Cultural Creatives**. These are time-starved individuals seeking meaning and inspiration, eager to improve their lives and shape the world around them, but only if it does not require extra effort. They represent a critical bridge: Fast Followers and Early Majority users who could help Sirius scale beyond early adopters and into mass relevance.

To bring this strategy to life, we defined five vivid user profiles—each grounded in a detailed archetype: **The Business Charismatic, The Fan, The Family Chauffeur, The Traveling Salesman, and The Tuner**. Each profile includes a summary of key needs and a 360° behavioral journey—capturing what attracts them, what keeps them engaged, and what inspires continued connection.

Target Consumers



Strategic Target: Cultural Creatives

They want to transform personal environments...without investing a lot of energy
They are time-starved...in search of meaning
And want to change people, organizations and time.



User Profiles



Business Charismatic



Fan



Family Chauffeur



Networker



Tuner

Business Charismatic



- 48 Years old, married with kids
- Commutes from suburbs
- Drives BMW 7-series

Relationship To Media

Connoisseur

Primary Travel Mode(S)

Commute

Primary Media Fields

Discover, work/function

Primary Environments

Car, work, personal/travel

Attitudes, Values And Behaviors

- Former music junkie- prides himself on music knowledge
- Cares about his appearance, his environments
- Travels for business; takes his music addiction with him
- Has separate cars for commuting/personal and a for family trips
- Looking to stay prepared and efficient
- Knows what he likes- no patience for what he's deemed as "bad" music or for certain categories
- Sensitive to sound quality, will take the time and effort to tweak audio settings



INFORMATION TO KNOWLEDGE

Finding Authenticity. Decoding the Brand DNA.

For our innovation strategy—and the products and services emerging from it—to be credible to their target audience and impactful, we had to dive deep into the heart of Sirius itself. What did it stand for? What did people think it stood for? What could it become? We needed to decode its DNA: its core values, attributes, and the unique position it could own in the media landscape.

Our research revealed that Sirius wasn't just radio—it was transformative media. It had the power to turn cars, boats, and planes into immersive spaces that people wanted to inhabit. Sirius shaped moods, created energy, and transported listeners, not only physically but also emotionally and spiritually. Sirius was an experience.

Sirius was inherently adaptive, anticipating personal preferences and curating content that felt deeply relevant, and inspiring. Designed for mobility, it delivered the highest-quality digital media to anything that moved. It united listeners nationwide with a shared broadcast footprint and a global mindset.

Sirius prioritized quality over volume—curating stations that matched each listener's tastes, personality, and lifestyle, rather than overwhelming them with endless choices.

Sirius was inherently progressive. Tuned into the present and moving confidently ahead of it. It anticipated emerging trends, elevated influential DJs, and aligned with cultural moments that mattered. Rather than keeping pace, Sirius set it—redefining what listening could be.



INFORMATION TO KNOWLEDGE

To capture this essence, we coined a brand frame: **Media Flow**—your media, hassle-free. Always in tune. Transformative. Adaptive. Ubiquitous. Live.

We also defined Sirius's brand character as “an intelligent and somewhat rebellious magician”—a brand that constantly surprised, consistently stayed ahead, and continuously elevated the media experience.

SIRIUS

ESSENCE

My media flow

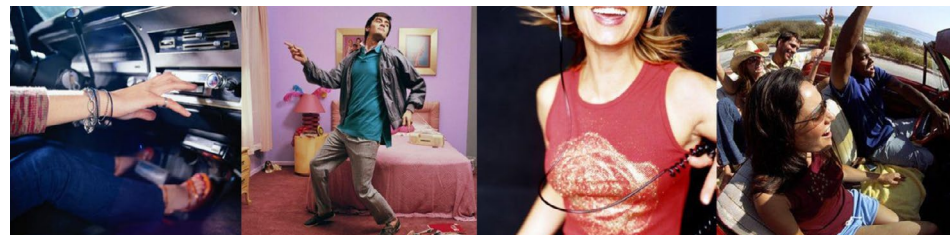
Discover your passion, where you want it, how you want it.

VALUES

Transformative | Adaptive | National | Mobile | Personalized | Progressive

CHARACTER

An intelligent and somewhat rebellious magician





KNOWLEDGE
TO INSIGHTS

Innovations that People Crave

Sirius wasn't just improving commercial radio—it was reinventing it. Where traditional radio meant passive listening, Sirius offered something transformative: active discovery, seamless portability, and a personal connection to content that moved with you.

One insight became crystal clear: Sirius wasn't about access—it was about freedom.

The freedom to explore.

The freedom to shift effortlessly between car, home, and mobile.

The freedom to enjoy media that adapts to your life, not the other way around.

With a clear understanding of what listeners truly craved, we developed a strong generative and evaluative framework—a strategic compass that guided everything from product line strategy and development priorities to rollout timing and roadmap design.



INSIGHT TO VALUE-BASED IDEAS

From Insight to Experience to Impact.

In ideation, our mission wasn't to add more but to reduce complexity. It was to make things simpler, smarter, and more intuitive. Every decision flowed through one core filter:

Does this enhance emotional value without increasing cognitive load?

This lens shaped everything—from product interfaces to physical form factors, from packaging to recyclability. We weren't just designing for interaction; we were designing for the entire lifecycle.

To bring it all together, we developed a cohesive design language that unified every touchpoint—from hardware to UI/UX to interaction design. The result is a seamless, brand-authentic experience that feels as thoughtful as it is powerful.





INSIGHT TO VALUE-BASED IDEAS

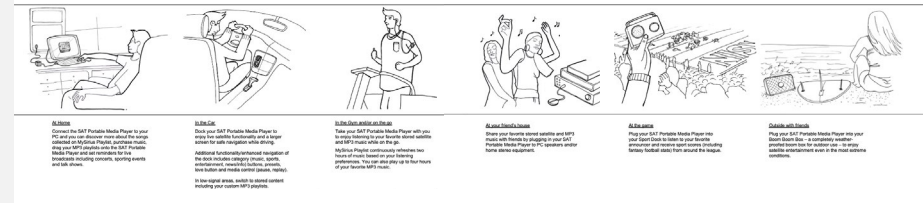
Designed for Freedom, Built for Flow

Plug N Play 2.0 was a breakthrough platform that reimagined how satellite radio could enhance modern life. Purpose-built to meet the needs of three of our key listener profiles—the **Fanatic**, the **Networker**, and the **Tuner**—it offered a deeply personal experience that flowed effortlessly with users throughout their day.

At its core was a bold, human-centered idea: a portable media player with environment-specific docks, enabling effortless transitions from car to home and from office to on-the-go, without ever losing connection or context.

Instead of layering on features, we focused on reducing friction. The design emphasized simplicity, relatability, and emotional resonance. To bridge the gap between cutting-edge technology and user comfort, we drew inspiration from the familiar form of the transistor radio. The inclusion of a physical dial wasn't just nostalgic—it created a tactile, intuitive interface that demystified the tech and made it feel instantly approachable.

That same intentionality shaped every detail—from interaction design and materials to packaging and the product's end-of-life. We designed not only for utility, but for continuity, delight, and sustainability.



Plug N Play 2.0 Product Family



Plug N Play 2.0 Car Dock



Redefining an Industry. Rocketing Growth.

Ziba's innovation strategy delivered far more than a better product—it transformed Sirius and brought its brand promise to life. It redefined the industry and sparked a shift in the entire category. By turning cold, complex technology into a profoundly human experience, we helped make Sirius something people embraced—and fell in love with.



Breakthrough #1: The Sirius S50

- **Market Debut:** Instant hit—featured in Best Buy's Top Ten Holiday List.
- **Demand Surge:** Sold out in six minutes via Yahoo! promotion; generated \$3M+ in earned media.
- **Media Buzz:** Covered by The New York Times, Forbes, Business Week, Rolling Stone, People, Popular Science, Men's Health and more.
- **Cultural Moment:** Endorsed by Howard Stern—Sirius's most visible advocate.
- **Critical Praise:** Forbes declared, "Give the iPod away and get Sirius's slick new S50."





Breakthrough #2: The Stiletto

- **Holiday Blockbuster:** 68,000+ units sold in just three months—performance redefined.
- **Revenue Growth:** \$20M in retail sales plus \$10M+ in recurring annual subscriptions.
- **Category Disruptor:** Outsold XM's devices by a factor of 4 to 1 during the season.
- **Critics' Favorite:** CNET gave it an "Excellent" 8.0—describing it as "thoughtfully designed to maximize user enjoyment."




Transformational Business Results


Subscription Growth Increased by
 **97%**
year-over-year

Revenue Surge Increased by
 **250%**
year-over-year

Market Cap Increase
 **2.36B**
added in market cap

Profitability Milestone
 Positive free cash flow achieved in Q4 2006

Market Share Shift

Market Momentum
Shares surged from
 **24% to 44%**
share in under 2 years

Subscriber Domination Captured
 **60%**
of all new subscribers by early 2007

ziba

Ziba is a global design and innovation agency, blending human insights, futures thinking, and physical, digital and service design to create iconic brand experiences for companies like Sony, Target, Starbucks, P&G, KitchenAid, FedEx, United Healthcare, REI, and Jaguar. For over 40 years, Ziba has driven market growth, customer loyalty and industry disruption across various sectors, focusing on impactful customer experiences. We're headquartered in Portland, Oregon, with an office in Tokyo, Japan.