

## ***MEDIA AUDITING***

*The cost of media advertising is usually the largest single investment a marketer makes in its advertising program. But often it is the most ignored and least understood of all the advertising processes. Recently Media Auditing has made a grand entrance on the U.S. advertising scene, playing “catch up” with counterparts in foreign countries. Following are some key factors for an advertiser to consider when evaluating the performance of its advertising media plans. We hope this will aid you in assessing the integrity of your company’s and brand’s media plans.*

### **GENERAL**

Are you getting the best media values for dollars expended now and in the future?

Are you receiving full value within the parameters of your approved media plan?

Media plans should be evaluated as a trade off between quality & price.

Not simply about discounts and auditing.

Auditing is a continuing process over time.

Are your media programs monitored with accountability through objectivity?

Are your media programs being measured against competitive audience deliveries and not simply their budgets?

Financing and purchasing people now look at media the same way as they do capital expenditures utilizing the same processes, systems, feedback groups and validations.

Great way to organize performance – relate to payments for value received.

No matter how good you think you are, there is always someone doing it differently – or perhaps even better.

### **ALL MEDIA**

*The following auditing criteria are common to all media types discussed here.*

*Individual criteria common only to each medium are detailed separately.*

Was the target audience delivered as promised?

For broadcast audience measurements should reflect exact programs / formats by month, day and time of week in which your commercials aired.

Were the cost-per-thousand (CPM) and cost-per-point (CPP) goals achieved?

Did these efficiencies compare favorably with prevailing marketplace prices (as measured by SQAD, NETCOSTS, CMR or NIELSEN MONITOR-PLUS)?

For broadcast did you receive the planned distribution of audience delivery by daypart?

Was delivery achieved on a planned weekly basis or did it occur on an uneven basis throughout the schedule?

If audience deliveries have underperformed have you been offered makegoods within the original campaign period(s)?

If so how soon after the fact was audience underdelivery made up?

How did your media value compare to the competition?

For network and syndicated buys how did your local market audience deliveries index against the national averages?

For broadcast how would you judge the quality of the programs in which your commercials aired?

For broadcast did your commercials appear on any prohibitive programs or networks?

Was the commercial trafficking done accurately and timely?

Do you feel that your plan was negotiated with the media as firmly and fairly as possible?

Did you receive a satisfactory amount of value added advertising?

For broadcast to what degree of magnitude (high or low ratings) were individual program ratings achieved?

Did you achieve the desired levels of reach and frequency?

Could a redesigned plan have generated better reach and frequency results at the same budget?

For broadcast was there excessive commercial clutter?

For network and syndicated buys were there any local market programming pre-emptions in which your commercials aired?

If so, how extensive were the pre-emptions (depth of market list).

Were media payments made in an accurate and timely basis?

Was the amount of invoice matching complete and thorough?

Were there any commercial competitive or self-separation problems?

### **NETWORK TELEVISION**

Was A.C. Nielsen NABSS (Nielsen Agency, Broadcaster & Syndication Service) used for post-analysis?

Were integration charges as expected?

### **SPOT TELEVISION**

Was A.C. Nielsen NSI (Nielsen Station Index) used for post-analysis?

Audience measurements should reflect individual station market delivery, exact programs, month, day and time of week in which commercials aired.

What was the approximate percentage of audience delivery appearing on network affiliated vs. independent stations?

What was the approximate percentage of spots which aired in-program vs. station breaks?

Was local tagging provided as promised?

If your spots were to be aired in local market network programming were any of these programs locally pre-empted?

If so, how extensive were these pre-emptions?

### **NETWORK CABLE**

Was A.C. Nielsen NHI (Nielsen Homevideo Index) used for post-analysis?

Were there any local system commercial pre-emptions?

If so, how extensive were the pre-emptions (depth of market list).

### **SPOT CABLE**

Was A.C. Nielsen NSI (Nielsen Station Index) used for post-analysis?

Audience measurements should reflect individual market delivery by network, exact programs, month, day and time of week in which commercials aired.

What kind of zip code coverage did you receive (if relevant)?

Did your commercials air in the proper networks and on the correct cable systems?

Was local tagging provided as promised?

### **SYNDICATED TV**

Was A.C. Nielsen NABSS (Nielsen Agency, Broadcaster & Syndication Service) used for post-analysis?

Aggregate and individual market audience measurements should reflect exact syndicated programs, month, day and time of week by market in which commercials aired.

Did your commercials clear in all markets offered by the syndicator?

Did the market clearance list, days of the week and/or times of the day change after you contracted with the syndicator?

How did your local market audience deliveries index against the national averages?

### **NETWORK & SYNDICATED RADIO**

Was RADAR used for post-analysis?

*RADAR (Radio's All Dimension Audience Research) is a radio ratings service that measures national radio audiences and the audience size of network radio commercials and commercials within programs aired on 37 radio networks.*

For syndication did the market clearance list, days of the week and/or times of the day change after you contracted with the syndicator?

How did your local market audience deliveries index against the national averages?

Were a sufficient number of networks purchased in order to help to increase your reach while also providing frequency?

Were spots distributed sufficiently around all dayparts in order to help to increase your reach while also providing frequency?

### **SPOT RADIO**

Was ARB (Arbitron) used for post-analysis?

Was local tagging and/or local announcer support provided as promised?

Were a sufficient number of stations purchased in order to help to increase your reach while also providing frequency?

Were spots distributed sufficiently around all dayparts in order to help to increase your reach while also providing frequency?

Were the station formats consistent with the listening habits of your demographic target(s)?

### **CONSUMER MAGAZINES**

Were ABC (Audit Bureau of Circulation) statements used for post-analysis comparing actual vs. guaranteed circulation deliveries?

Audience measurements should reflect the exact months in which the ads appeared.

Did you receive good positions within each magazine? Far forward, middle or rear of publication?

Adjacent to compatible editorial?

If circulation guarantees are not met will the publications provide makeup?

If so how soon after the fact?

How well does the magazine's circulation pair up with your sales and distribution patterns?

Will total audience analysis (primary readers plus pass-along) be updated as new MRI (MediaMark Research) or Simmons data becomes available?

How was the reproduction quality?

### **NEWSPAPERS**

Were ABC (Audit Bureau of Circulation) statements used for post-analysis?

*ABC verifies member newspaper's total circulation statements and reports circulation on various demographic bases.*

Did you receive good positions within the section(s) ordered?

Did your ads appear in the correct zoned editions if specified?

If circulation guarantees are not met will the newspapers provide makeup?

If so how soon after the fact?

How well does the newspaper's circulation dovetail with your sales and distribution patterns?

How was the reproduction quality?

## **OUT-OF-HOME**

*Primarily consists of Billboards and Transit advertising.*

**Billboards:** Bulletins, Spectaculars, Wall Murals, 30-sheet posters, 8-sheet posters, Wrapped Posters.

**Transit:** Buses, Subways & Railroad, Airports, Trackside, Taxis.

Were pre-ride evaluations conducted?

Were specific locations provided as ordered?

Was proof of performance provided?

Was Daily Effective Circulation (DEC) delivery authenticated by the Traffic Audit Bureau (TAB)?

*Market averages are very often used for verifying the GRP (Gross Rating Points) delivery.*

Purchased packages should be verified with the actual individual DEC's of the locations purchased.

This provides a more accurate measure of delivery.

What about readability, production quality, position, surroundings, competition, graphics?

How about blockage, flags, correct copy, board conditions?

Was there illumination verification?

Were there any location or board upgrade recommendations?

What about distance to retail distribution locations (e.g. supermarkets)?

Did riders have local market knowledge?

Consider auditing outsourcing (e.g. Carroll Media Services).

## **BUSINESS-TO BUSINESS**

*Today business to business advertising is a three-way meld of print, the internet and trade shows – all of which mutually reinforce a core mission: to provide businesspeople with information and insight that help them do their jobs better and smarter .*

*Business to business media planning takes more work than standard media types. It combines the best reach and connection values of traditional media, direct marketing, alternative media and sales.*

Have you connected with the people who make the money decisions in your industry?

Do the readers represent more than 70% of your target?

What percentage of your publications are paid? Controlled?

If controlled, have the publications been examined for “total qualified circulation” or the total number of people who receive the publication and how these numbers break down?

*Circulation statements from both BPA International (Business of Performing Audits) and ABC (Audit Bureau of Circulation) break down the circulation many ways including the percentage of subscribers who pay to receive the publication, who receive it by name and who has personally agreed to receive it and the most recent circulation figures.*

*Please note that audit statements must be read with a timely understanding of the market served. Quite often the data is two or three years old and do*

*not always reflect the most recent marketplace conditions.*

What kinds of actions do the readers take on the basis of editorial and advertising? Are reader action pages available?

Have you tracked the number of ad inquiries? Cost per inquiry? Comparison to the magazine average?

Have the publications in your media plan gone “deep enough” with regard to coverage within your industry?

Often competing publications are at numbers parity. Have you looked beyond them for editorial quality and connection? Have you actually seen and/or read the magazines?

Have your customers been surveyed as to which publications they receive, whether or not they are read and the degree of connection each represents?

Do the publications make their subscriber lists available for direct mail or other campaigns?

If yours is an industry that is fast-paced have you considered online advertising for quick “real-time” communication?

When setting up trade events have you offered something different, compelling and relevant?

Examples include press conferences tied to speaker presentations and research announcements that break news – coordinated through publication sponsors for impact?

Have the b-to-b media offered to create custom marketing programs for you?

Have the editors been contacted about the market, where it is going and why the publication covers what it does?