

Planning Magazines for Engagement.

The key challenge facing today’s media planners is to ensure that advertising is given the best possible chance to engage the consumer that it is aimed at. The proliferation of media and increase in consumer control over exposure to advertising represent significant, but surmountable, barriers to this objective.

Now, more than ever, it is essential that media planners and creative teams work together to improve the likelihood of engagement. In combination these two disciplines can ensure that the message is both relevant to the consumer and welcomed by them. Those that fail to do this run the increasing risk that the consumer will find ways of avoiding or ignoring their attempts to communicate.

As mentioned in ‘Changing Communication Needs’, four of the difficulties with this approach are;

Scale - the quality of the communication will have to be balanced with the scale of audience exposed to it.

Psychographic Targeting – It matters what values, attitudes and interests a consumer has because communication should reflect similar values and attitudes in order to be engaging.

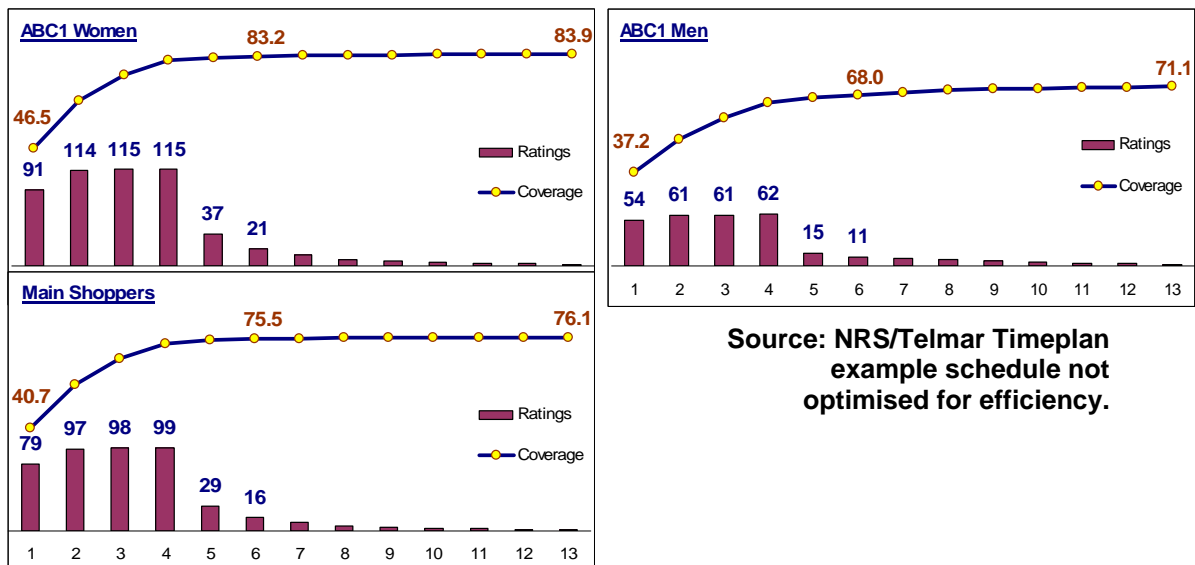
Fitting the brand to the community – The brand must be seen to fit the community(s) that it is targeting.

Integration - Increasing consumer control over exposure to advertising means that campaigns will have to appear in multiple environments to communicate successfully

Scale.

The combination of magazines’ psychographic segmentation, active media consumption and scale delivers advertisers an opportunity to engage with mass audiences.

Planned the correct way (see PPA Planning Uncovered 2005) magazines are capable of delivering mass market reach or niche market reach.



Source: NRS/Telmar Timeplan example schedule not optimised for efficiency.

In addition to this scale of delivery comes the ability to segment audiences into groups that have similar attitudes, interests and values to each other. The process of selection of magazines (reflecting the consumer’s mood or needs) and subsequent payment means that the consumer expects the magazine consumption will deliver something of value to them. ‘Pay as you go’ media like magazines and newspapers enjoy higher attention levels than

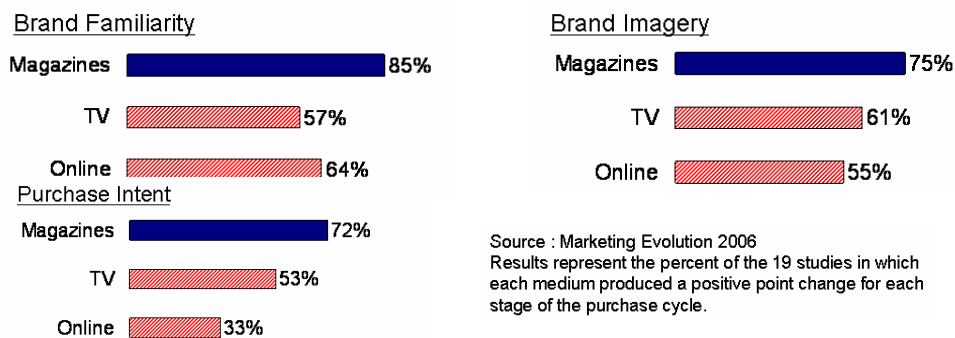
more default media consumption and as a consequence, are much more likely to be the sole focus of consumer attention.

In addition, magazines offer consumers a consumption experience that they have full control over and this leads to a far more positive view of the contribution that advertising makes to the media experience - something that makes the process of engaging audiences with advertising much easier to achieve.

Consumer control of the media consumption has a profound impact on consumer attitudes and expectations of the advertising within the medium in question. In media where the consumer struggles to remain in control, advertising is more often than not seen as an interruption – something that detracts from the experience. In media where the consumer can control the speed of consumption, and so the amount of advertising exposure, advertising is generally seen more as an integral part of the media consumption rather than an interruption to it.

“In a media environment increasingly characterised by interruption, magazines remain an oasis of engagement”. (Starcom US 2005)

As a consequence of this control, advertising in magazines is consumed by readers at a pace that they deem appropriate to the communication. If the message is considered relevant and interesting the consumer is able to spend as long as they like with the advertising. This has an obvious impact on the ability of magazines to generate advertising awareness (better than TV on first exposure) and effect brand imagery, familiarity and purchase intent.



Erwin Ephron summed it up nicely;

“Readers have a more favourable reaction to print ads because print ads do not intrude or attempt to control..... Even though people may avoid commercials, they don’t dislike advertising. They object to intrusive, controlling advertising.”

So, magazines can delivery a scale or niche audience that fully expect the advertising content of the medium to be an enhancement to the media experience and not a detriment to it. In other words, **magazines deliver an audience of scale that is ready to be engaged by your advertising message.**