



THE CAREER COUCH

Has TV passed its use-by date?

Q I'm a marketing director for an electronics brand and have traditionally spent a hefty chunk of my media budget on TV. But these days, all the talk is that people are sick-to-death of the sheer number of ads per hour on free-to-air and that a brand can't get cut-through in this cluttered environment. Is TV really dying as an advertising vehicle and should I be spending more of my budget elsewhere?

A Rebecca Martin, general manager (marketing), Ford
Let's face it, marketing budgets rarely grow despite the fragmentation of audiences and the increase in channels of communication. So you really need to work out what you want to achieve. What are your business objectives and what are your communication objectives? How will you measure success? Are you going for exposure or engagement?

Tailor your communication strategy accordingly. Understand the consumers you want to communicate with and go where your audience is.

TV is still a vital medium to get a message across to a wide audience quickly and effectively (depending on creative). It can have a strong role to play, but needs to be complemented by other touch-points to reinforce your brand and message, particularly with increased use of PVRs and the increasing length of ad breaks.

Reinforcement of your message via other mediums is essential though - multi channel, multi media integration is key here. Again, understand what consumers are doing, what media they are consuming and tailor the message via these channels.

If engagement is key, TV can play a huge role in driving consumers to where you want to engage with them - internet, in-store, outdoor, etc.

The bottom line is that you need to carefully consider what you are trying to achieve and work on a communication plan that will deliver on what you want to achieve.

Carrick Robinson, general manager, Marketforce Communications

If you are in WA, your choice to spend a hefty chunk your media budget on TV is a wise one. It is still the medium that big brands use the most to engage their audience in a meaningful dialogue and build equity. You are in excellent company on TV in the west, with all the major electronic, telco, automotive, insurance, retail, financial services, airlines, travel, fashion, beauty,

pharmaceutical, ISP, alcohol and FMCG brands very active, and consistently so. And for very good reason.

TV is the entertainment medium in WA. It keeps people actively engaged and enthralled for longer than any

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other. I have not seen any compelling evidence that TV is losing vast quantities of its audience. Sure, pay TV is signing on West Aussies in droves but that's more about broadening entertainment choice among those who can afford it (and hey, in WA there's lots of those) than any backlash against free to air.

The so-called clutter that worries you is not about the amount of ads per hour per se, it is actually about the amount of bad ads per hour. Here's the thing. Like everywhere else in our great nation, West Aussies love a good ad. They laugh at the *Flashdance* guy, fall about at the Ikea customer yelling for her hubby to start the car, recoil in horror at body parts in anti-smoking ads and get a bit teary at the Huggies Mum and baby. But unfortunately, for every great one they see they also see hundreds of bad ones. Crap strategy, appalling execution and zero brand values.

The clutter buster in Perth is still great ads that treat their viewers with respect and intelligence.

Don't spend more of your money elsewhere, just do better ads.

Rhonda Brown, marketing director, Free TV Australia

The challenge for all marketers is determining the right elements of the marketing mix. But there are some very good reasons why television continues to be an important component for advertisers: TV is in virtually every Australian home; it continues to dominate time spent with media; watching TV remains Australia's favourite pastime (yes, even with the ads); and viewers in their millions choose to watch free-to-air TV programs every night - despite the proliferation of other entertainment options.

TV is a great environment for your message because viewers, enjoying their favourite programs, are in a receptive frame of mind. No viewer will tell you they want ads, but research has shown they understand the trade-off for receiving quality programming, for free. The research also shows that ads on TV enjoy significantly higher advertising recall. In short, TV ensures you will engage your audience and you'll be remembered for it.

None of this is to say TV is the 'be all and end all' but TV is an essential component of the marketing mix - that's why it is at the heart of the most effective advertising campaigns.

By using TV you will find that your message has greater resonance in other media environments.

To quote one of Australia's leading businessmen, Gerry Harvey, on his approach to advertising: "Without television the other media just don't work as well."

Forthcoming dilemma

- As a general manager, I am starting to find holding on to 20-something employees an issue in my agency. Is this just the fickle nature of generation Y, or do things need to change in my agency? How can I encourage young talent to stay?
- Late last year, I left a large company to start up my own creative agency. We have recently grown from our three good foundation clients to more potential work from other clients. I don't think these clients are in keeping with our culture and offering, but at this early stage, I don't feel we are in a position to turn down business. Should I take them on?