

HOW TV COMMERCIAL AWARENESS AND ATTRIBUTE RATINGS VARY BY PRODUCT CLASS

Most research companies that measure the impact of TV commercials or ad campaigns aggregate their data in various ways to provide clients with normative data. One of the most common of these is product category norms, which are often very revealing. A case in point is provided by the Bruzzone Research Company's (BRC) ongoing mall-intercept studies of TV commercial awareness and the subsequent evaluations provided by each respondent who claims to have seen an ad, describing his reactions to it. Typically these reactions are determined by lists of attributes that are given to viewers to rate the commercials.

Although many factors are involved in commercial awareness—including the level of media weight behind the campaign, as well as the ad's communicative effectiveness and attention-getting prowess—distinctions by product class are noteworthy. The first table indicates the percent of respondents who recognize (have seen) the average TV commercial when a replica is presented to them in a storyboard (plus script) form. As indicated in the first column of the top row, on average only 30% of BRC's mall-intercept respondents claimed awareness of the typical commercial studied. The second column indicates the percent of all respondents who both recalled seeing the ad and were able to name the advertised brand (brand names are not revealed on the storyboard or in the script). Finally, the third column shows the percent of respondents who recognized the ad, correctly named the brand and also indicated that they liked the commercial. As can be seen, only 46% of those who claim awareness of the average commercial also qualify on the correct brand ID *and* liking criterion (see last column).

The breakdowns reveal that certain classes of advertisers are far more successful in registering their claims than others. For example, food commercials rated at the top of the list in commercial awareness, brand ID and likability. Moreover, a far higher proportion of people who could recognize an average food commercial also named the brand and rated the message as likable compared to the norm for all product classes (65% vs. 46%). In contrast, the performance of apparel, household durables and automobile commercials fell well below par (see first table).

When respondents who are aware of commercials are asked to rate them on a variety of positive and negative attributes, the BRC results suggest that entertainment values are a key determinant of commercial liking, which, in turn, has been shown to be predictive of ad impact and/or motivating power. But not always. In the second table, we see that beer/wine (we assume mostly beer) commercials rate well above average on the amusing, clever and imaginative scales but, at the same time, they are poor performers in terms of believability or convincing power. Interestingly, the car ads that BRC measures display rather flat results across most of the positive and negative indicators, while household non-durables (soaps, detergents, etc.) that are very big on making solid efficacy or efficiency claims fare well on the believable/convincing yardsticks.

Obviously BRC, like other advertising awareness/impact researchers, provides more specific product class norms within the broader categories shown in our tables. A diet soft drink

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*How TV Commercial Awareness And Attribute Ratings Vary By Product Class Continued***AVERAGE TV COMMERCIAL RECOGNITION AND
BRAND ID AND LIKING SCORES BY PRODUCT CLASS¹**

	RECOGNIZED COMM'L.	ID THE BRAND	ID BRAND & LIKED COMM'L.	RECOGNIZERS WHO ID BRAND & LIKED COMM'L.
All Comm'l. Avg.	30.3%	21.0%	13.9%	46%
Product Category				
Food	35.3	27.9	22.8	65
Soft Drinks/Beverages	31.9	24.6	21.2	65
Movies	20.6	15.6	13.3	65
Beer/Wine	31.0	23.4	19.7	64
Apparel	27.6	15.7	11.7	43
Household Durables	25.0	16.2	10.7	43
Household Non-Durables	33.8	23.0	11.6	34
Automobiles	25.4	15.5	9.7	38
All Others	23.6	13.1	8.0	34

¹Norms based on Bruzzone data for the past nine years.

☐ Source: Bruzzone Research Company.

marketer may compare her commercial's performance with those for other diet colas or soft drinks, while a detergent marketer's results will probably be compared to those for other detergent brands, etc. Regardless of how narrowly these comparisons are focused, most ad campaigns succeed or fail within the context of an overall product class halo effect, governed by prior consumer experiences with the product, exposure to old ad campaigns and the resulting cynicism or receptivity that builds up. Let's face it, some products or services are more interesting and personally relevant than others. Moreover, prior ad campaigns for some products are considered to be notoriously phony or misleading, while those for other categories are seen as helpful or informative by most consumers. Even if a detergent, car or beer commercial garners awareness and registers its claim, this may not result in significant numbers of consumers changing their minds about buying the brand.

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How TV Commercial Awareness And Attribute Ratings Vary By Product Class Continued

RELATIVE INDICES OF TV COMMERCIAL RATINGS BY SELECTED ATTRIBUTES BY PRODUCT CLASS¹

	POSITIVE EVALUATIONS						SUM OF NEGATIVE EVALUATIONS ²
	AMUSING	BELIEVABLE	CLEVER	CONVINCING	IMAGINATIVE	WELL DONE	
Food	122	87	101	97	99	101	94
Soft Drinks/Beverages	156	63	141	73	153	124	99
Movies	99	57	75	71	107	97	104
Beer/Wine	181	62	162	71	170	128	116
Apparel	132	70	124	72	136	108	125
Household Durables	87	133	112	126	107	115	83
H.H Non-Durables	52	135	56	129	51	73	102
Automobiles	74	88	96	82	95	98	101
All Others	106	137	125	102	121	118	84

Note: This table reads as follows: people who claim to have seen the average TV food commercial were 13% less likely to rate it as "believable" than the norm for all product classes (87 index).

¹*Norms based on Bruzzone data for the past nine years.*

²*Sum of the following evaluations: confusing, easy to forget, dull, irritating, phony, pointless, silly and worn out.*

☐ *Source: Bruzzone Research Company.*

