

HOW RADIO CAN BE UTILIZED TO REDIRECT AN ADVERTISER'S MEDIA WEIGHT TO LIGHT TV VIEWING SEGMENTS

Most all-TV media plans overdeliver heavy viewers relative to light ones by a huge margin, because virtually all forms of television derive the bulk of their audience from the tube's so-called couch potatoes. Typically an all-daypart TV buy (including on-air networks, syndication and cable) will place about 45% of its weight against TV's heaviest viewing quintile (the 20% of the target group that watches the most TV), whereas only 5% will go to the lightest viewing 20%. The former thus gets nine times more media weight than is directed at the latter, and no matter how advertisers try to juggle their TV daypart/program genre/network type mixes, it is difficult, if not impossible to rectify this situation with any semblance of cost efficiency. Even if low CPM cable is employed to a far greater extent than most marketers are accustomed to, the GRP delivery spread between TV's heaviest and lightest viewers remains fairly constant. Putting more dollars in cable will increase light viewer weight, but at the same time it will add greatly to already redundant heavy viewer exposures, which is something many advertisers would like to avoid.

As most media planners realize, the solution to this dilemma lies in altering the core media mix by reducing TV's share of the budget and adding one or more alternative media. Although magazines, newspapers and radio each have their own heavy-light user metrics, as a rule, their audience patterns complement television's. Magazines and newspapers generally target light TV viewers to a greater extent than is the norm and, taking all station formats in aggregate, radio hits most TV viewer groups about equally.

To demonstrate this point, we have created a hypothetical all-TV advertiser's national television buy. Using a variety of dayparts and network types, this advertiser is striving for maximum four-week target group reach and hopes to attain this with a four-week schedule delivering 1,000 GRPs. Overall, the media planners estimate that such a buy will attain an 80% reach with an average frequency of 12-13. However, when the advertiser's target group is divided into heavy, moderate and light viewer segments, a familiar but disturbing pattern emerges. As shown in Table I, the heaviest viewer group (Quintile I) gets 2,290 GRPs, not the nationwide average of 1,000. This in turn provides the advertiser with a 98.5% reach and an average frequency of 23 among TV's heaviest viewers. In contrast, the lightest viewer group (Quintile V) gets only 200 GRPs, yielding a meager 48.5% reach and a 4.1 frequency (see Table I).

If this marketer is one of the few who really seeks alternatives rather than just talking about them, the logical step is to consider how this all-TV plan would compare to one utilizing print or radio. In this case we have focused on the radio/TV interface and made the following assumptions:

- 1) One-third of the TV budget will be allocated to radio.
- 2) The TV cutback will be across the board within all dayparts and network types.

Continued >

- 3) Radio's CPMs are judged to be about half of TV's all-daypart average if maximum cost efficiency buys are made on radio.
- 4) As a result of assumption C, the trade-off by switching TV dollars to radio is roughly one TV GRP yields two radio GRPs.
- 5) A one-third reduction in the TV budget will produce a loss of 335 total target group GRPs per month attained via television advertising, but the same dollars invested in radio will add 660 GRPs, a net gain of 325 over the all-TV plan's delivery.

Overall, the radio portion of the TV and radio alternative plan delivers a 65% reach and a 10.2 average frequency. As shown in Table II, the radio buy is relatively flat in audience delivery across the TV viewing segments, skewing just slightly more towards the lighter than the heavier end of the scale (see Table II).

Furthermore, Plan B (Table III) provides a major boost in GRP weight and reach overall, particularly among TV's lightest viewers. This is evident in Table IV, which contrasts the two plans. In the last column, Plan B yields a 12% overall gain in reach, but this occurs in exactly those sectors of the consumer market that need more ad exposure. Among TV's heaviest viewers however, Plan B nets a mere 1% reach gain, yet among TV's lightest viewers, Plan B's edge over Plan A is 52%!

To a savvy media planner, such results should not be surprising, but it must be remembered that they rest on the assumptions cited above. Suppose, for example, that the advertiser prefers certain types of radio environments and dayparts, and insists on buying leading stations only (for merchandising reasons). This may drive up radio's CPMs relative to TV and reduce Plan B's advantage significantly. Or the advertiser may be reluctant to employ radio as a basic communications or branding vehicle. Were this the case, the fact that most of Plan B's audience advantage among light viewers is generated by radio—not TV—exposures would be an issue. If the ad agency really felt that it could execute effective radio commercials for this client, it might make a real effort to sell this idea, but failing the existence of hard evidence that the advertiser's core message could be communicated via radio, the planners are stymied. Most likely the advertiser would ask to see further alternative plan comparisons involving TV plus print media or, within TV, plans that switched daypart/network type mixes. Ultimately, the decision to make so radical an adjustment as moving a third of the TV budget to radio might be put on hold no matter what the numbers said, if the brand manager didn't feel confident that he could sell this to management, particularly if the product category as a whole rarely utilizes radio. In such a situation, the final judgment might be to avoid "risky" adventures and stick with the status quo, in which case the whole exercise served merely to define the parameters of the problem and possible solutions.

Our basic point is this: Audience data can be manipulated to demonstrate the mathematical effects of various media planning configurations, but this is only the starting point. Unless the agency and advertiser have a track record with the proposed alternative medium or the media planners have successful case histories to validate their "radical" new ideas, the tendency will be to stand pat, or settle for minor refinements rather than taking risks. Despite all of the prattling about return-on-investment and accountability in media planning, we know of no database that actually can tell an advertiser which of the above-described plans would perform better in generating ad awareness and sales *before the fact*.

Continued >

TABLE I

HOW A HYPOTHETICAL TV-ONLY PLAN (PLAN A) DISTRIBUTES ITS AUDIENCE BY HEAVY-LIGHT VIEWING SEGMENTS¹

		% POP.	TARGET GROUP GRPs	% REACH	AVG. FREQ.
TV Quintile					
Heaviest	I	20	2290	98.5	23.3
	II	20	1200	96.0	12.5
	III	20	900	84.0	10.7
	IV	20	410	73.0	5.6
Lightest	V	20	200	48.5	4.1
Total		100	1000	80.0	12.5

Note: Assumes a cross-section of on-air, syndication and cable buys in multiple dayparts.

¹Four-week time frame.

Source: Media Dynamics, Inc.

Continued >

TABLE II

HOW ONE-THIRD OF THE TV-ONLY BUDGET (PLAN A) WOULD PERFORM IF SPENT IN RADIO BY HEAVY-LIGHT VIEWING SEGMENTS¹

TV Quintile		% POP.	TARGET GROUP GRPs	% REACH	AVG. FREQ.
Heaviest	I	20	620	60.0	10.3
	II	20	650	64.0	10.2
	III	20	660	65.0	10.2
	IV	20	675	67.0	10.1
Lightest	V	20	695	69.0	10.1
Total		100	660	65.0	10.2

¹Four-week time frame.

Source: Media Dynamics, Inc.

Continued >

TABLE III

PERFORMANCE OF TV & RADIO PLAN (PLAN B) BY HEAVY-LIGHT VIEWING SEGMENTS¹

		% POP.	REDUCED TV BUY		1/3 TV & RADIO BUY		TOTAL PLAN	
			TARGET GRPs	% REACH	TARGET GRPs	% REACH	TARGET GRPs	% REACH
TV Quintile								
Heaviest	I	20	1535	97.5	620	60.0	2155	99.0
	II	20	805	83.0	650	64.0	1455	97.5
	III	20	605	77.0	660	65.0	1265	91.0
	IV	20	275	65.0	675	67.0	950	86.0
Lightest	V	20	130	37.5	695	69.0	825	73.5
Total		100	665	72.0	660	65.0	1325	89.4

¹Four-week time frame.

Source: Media Dynamics, Inc.

Continued >

TABLE IV

COMPARISON OF ALL-TV VS. TV & RADIO PLANS IN TARGETING HEAVY-LIGHT VIEWING SEGMENTS¹

			PLAN A (ALL TV)			PLAN B ($\frac{1}{3}$ TV \$ IN RADIO)			% CHANGE IN REACH PLAN B VS. PLAN A
			TARGET GROUP GRPs	% REACH	AVG. FREQ.	TARGET GROUP GRPs	% REACH	AVG. FREQ.	
TV Quintile									
Heaviest	I	20	2290	98.5	23.3	2155	99.0	21.8	+1
	II	20	1200	96.0	12.5	1455	97.5	14.9	+2
	III	20	900	84.0	10.7	1265	91.0	13.9	+8
	IV	20	410	73.0	5.6	950	86.0	11.1	+18
Lightest	V	20	200	48.5	4.1	825	73.5	11.2	+52
Total		100	1000	80.0	12.5	1325	89.4	14.8	+12

¹Four-week time frame.

Source: Media Dynamics, Inc.