



TV'S 2021-22 PRIMETIME UPFRONT: CPMs UP BIG TIME; NOT SO AD DOLLARS

Media Dynamics, Inc. releases preliminary estimates in advance
of its annual upfront and CPM-CPP reports

Nutley, NJ, July 15, 2021 - The 2021-22 primetime upfront is almost complete. While the sellers scored significant increases in CPMs, with the broadcast networks up 19% and cable up 10%, the total amount of ad revenues garnered did not keep pace with the CPM hikes. As shown in Table 1, the broadcast TV networks took in \$9.3 billion, which was a 7% gain over the previous upfront, and cable scored \$9.7 billion, a slight dip compared to the 2020-21 upfront. The total upfront dollar commitment was well below that of two years ago as originally bought, although about \$3 billion of this was cancelled, mainly in the first half of 2020, due to the pandemic.

Table 2 reveals that the sellers were able to obtain sizable CPM increases compared to the previous two upfronts, although this was much more the case for the broadcast networks than for cable.

Several factors affected these outcomes. First, while some sellers tried to press the buyers to allocate up to 30% of their upfront buys to the sellers' AVOD services or "sponsor" sales made on their websites—and both scored increases in upfront volume—much of this was already budgeted and not necessarily part of the planned "linear TV" spending. Second, as Media Dynamics, Inc.'s president, Ed Papazian, noted, "Some sellers offered fewer GRPs for sale in the latest upfront in order to capitalize on the very high scatter CPMs that are expected for the upcoming fourth quarter."

Finally, it should be remembered that the upfront extends well beyond primetime. Other dayparts and genres are involved, like sports which uses timetables keyed to each sports season. When all of linear TV's national upfront deals are tallied together, the total will exceed \$30 billion.

TABLE 1

**PRIMETIME NATIONAL TV UPFRONT AD SALES
2019-20 TO 2021-22 SEASONS
(In \$ Millions)**

	2019- 2020	2020- 2021	2021- 2022
Broadcast TV Nets.	10,180	8,710	9,310
Cable	11,690	9,920	9,725
Total	21,870	18,630	19,035
% Change			
Broadcast TV Nets.	--	-14.4	+ 6.9
Cable	--	-15.1	- 2.0
Total	--	-14.8	+2.2

Source: Media Dynamics, Inc.

TABLE 2

**PRIMETIME ADULT 18+ CPMs
2019-2020 To 2021-22 SEASONS**

	2019- 2020	2020- 2021	2021- 2022
Broadcast TV Nets.	\$36.19	\$37.71	\$45.03
Cable	19.45	\$19.90	\$21.83
% Change			
Broadcast TV Nets.	----	+ 4.2	+19.4
Cable	----	+2.3	+ 9.7

Source: Media Dynamics, Inc.

[TV Dimensions 2021](#) and [MDI Direct](#) subscribers will receive a more detailed report on the 2020-21 upfront, including three-decade trends and breakdowns for each of the broadcast TV networks in the August 17th issue of [TV Dimensions Alert](#). MDI's proprietary upfront CPM-CPP estimates will be released September 15th in the annual [ACES](#) report, followed by [CPMTrack](#) on September 30th. Customers who pre-order either report can save \$50 off the cover price. Enter code UPFRONT50 at checkout.

About Media Dynamics, Inc.

[Media Dynamics Inc.](#) is a publishing & consulting company founded in 1982 by Ed Papazian, the former Media Research Director and Media Director of BBDO (1960-75) and co-creator/publisher of **Ad Forum** and **The Media Cost Guide**. MDI's **Dimensions** series has served as *the* reference source for data trending and insights on radio, magazines, TV and intermedia. Media Dynamics' library includes several research annuals and numerous special reports and white papers that focus on targeted areas of the media, e.g. spot TV, cable, ad receptivity, CPMs and upfront cost estimates. Media Dynamics, Inc. has also spent more than 30 years consulting on various media issues, including agency/client interactions on the media function, the hiring of independent media buying services and the evaluation of agency/media buying performance. Past clients include a cross section of TV networks, cable services, magazines, TV & radio reps, advertisers, ad agencies, research companies and new media.