



Chapter 27

Media planning and behaviour: delivering the message

Media planning is essentially a selection and scheduling exercise. The selection concerns the choice of media vehicles to carry the message on behalf of the advertiser. With media fragmentation, audiences are switching between media with greater regularity, which impacts on media scheduling. Decisions regarding the number of occasions, timing and duration that a message is exposed, in the selected vehicles, to the target audience have become increasingly critical.

Aims and learning objectives

The aims of this chapter are to introduce the fundamental elements of media planning and to set out some of the issues facing media planners.

The learning objectives of this chapter are to:

1. explain the role of the media planner and highlight the impact of media and audience fragmentation;
2. consider various theories concerning the content of different media and related media switching behaviours;
3. examine the key concepts used in media selection: reach and cover, frequency, duplication, rating points and CPT;
4. appreciate the concept of repetition and the debate concerning effective frequency and recency planning;
5. understand the concepts of effectiveness and efficiency when applied to media selection decisions;
6. introduce media source effects as an important factor in the selection and timing of advertising in magazines and television programmes;
7. explore the different ways in which advertisements can be scheduled.

For an applied interpretation see Yasmin Sekhon's MiniCase entitled *Targeting the 'brown pound' – an untapped market* at the end of this chapter.

Introduction

Once a message has been created and agreed, a media plan should be determined. The aim of the media plan is to devise an optimum route for the delivery of a message to the target audience. This function is normally undertaken by specialists, either as part of a full-service advertising agency or as a media independent whose primary function is to buy air time or space from media owners (e.g. television contractors or magazine publishers) on behalf of their clients, the advertisers. This traditional role has changed since the mid 1990s, and many media independents now provide consultancy services, particularly at the strategic level, plus planning and media research and auditing services.

The aim of the media plan is to devise an optimum route for the delivery of a message.

Media departments are responsible for two main functions. These are to 'plan' and to 'buy' time and space in appropriate media vehicles. There is a third task – to monitor a media schedule once it has been bought – but this is a function of buying. Planners define the target audience and choose the type of medium. Buyers choose programmes, frequencies, spots and distribution and assemble a multichannel schedule (Armstrong, 1993). In the past the media planner has been pre-eminent, but the role of the buyer is changing. Some feel the role of the buyer is in the ascendancy, but there are others who feel that the role is capable of increased automation and that many software packages already fulfil many functions of the media buyer. Such a move has implications for the type of person recruited. In the United States, for example, many semi-skilled people have been recruited on a part-time basis to do many parts of the traditional media planner's job.

As mentioned earlier, media planning is essentially a selection and scheduling exercise. The selection refers to the choice of media vehicles to carry the message on behalf of the advertiser. Scheduling refers to the number of occasions, timing and duration that a message is exposed, in the selected vehicles, to the target audience. However, there are several factors that complicate these seemingly straightforward tasks. First, the variety of available media is huge and increasing rapidly. This is referred to as media fragmentation. Second, the characteristics of the target audience are changing equally quickly. This is referred to as audience fragmentation. Both these fragmentation issues are discussed later in this chapter. The job of the media planner is complicated by one further element: money. Clients have restricted financial resources and require the media planner to create a schedule that delivers their messages not only effectively but also efficiently, which means within the parameters of the available budget.

Scheduling refers to the number of occasions, timing and duration that a message is exposed.

The task of the media planner, therefore, is to deliver advertising messages through a selection of media that match the viewing, reading or search habits of the target audience at the lowest possible cost. In order for these tasks to be accomplished, three sets of decisions need to be made about the choice of media, vehicles and schedules.

Decisions about the choice of media are complex. While choosing a single one is reasonably straightforward, choosing media in combination and attempting to generate synergistic effects is far from easy. Advances in technology have made media planning a much faster, more accurate process, one that is now more flexible and capable of adjusting to fast-changing market conditions.

One of the key tasks of the media planner is to decide which combination of vehicles should be selected to carry the message to the target audience. In addition, McLuhan (1966) said that the medium is the message, that is, the choice of medium (or vehicle) says something about the brand and the message itself. He went on to say that the medium is the *massage*, as each medium massages the recipient in different ways and so contributes to learning in different ways. For example, Krugman (1965) hypothesised that television advertising washes over individuals. He said that viewers, rather than participate actively with

The medium is the *massage*.

television advertisements, allow learning to occur passively. In contrast, magazine advertising requires active participation if learning is to occur. Today, online and interactive advertising actively promotes involvement and participation.

The various media depicted in Table 27.1 have wide-ranging characteristics. These, and the characteristics of the target audience, should be considered when deciding on the optimal media mix. It should be clear that simply deciding on which media to use is fraught with difficulties, let alone deciding on the optimal combination – how much of each media should be used – before even considering the cost implications.

Table 27.1 A summary of media characteristics

Type of media	Strengths	Weaknesses
Print		
<i>Newspapers</i>	Wide reach High coverage Low costs Very flexible Short lead times Speed of consumption controlled by reader	Short lifespan Advertisements get little exposure Relatively poor reproduction, gives poor impact Low attention-getting properties
<i>Magazines</i>	High-quality reproduction that allows high impact Specific and specialised target audiences High readership levels Longevity High levels of information can be delivered	Long lead times Visual dimension only Slow build-up of impact Moderate costs
Television	Flexible format, uses sight, movement and sound High prestige High reach Mass coverage Low relative cost, so very efficient	High level of repetition necessary Short message life High absolute costs Clutter Increasing level of fragmentation (potentially)
Radio	Selective audience, e.g. local Low costs (absolute, relative and production) Flexible Can involve listeners	Lacks impact Audio dimension only Difficult to get audience attention Low prestige
Outdoor	High reach High frequency Low relative costs Good coverage as a support medium Location-oriented	Poor image (but improving) Long production time Difficult to measure
Digital media	High level of interaction Immediate response possible Tight targeting Low absolute and relative costs Flexible and easy to update Measurable	Segment-specific Slow development of infrastructure High user set-up costs Transaction security issues
Transport	High length of exposure Low costs Local orientation	Poor coverage Segment specific (travellers) Clutter
In-store POP	High attention-getting properties Persuasive Low costs Flexible	Segment-specific (shoppers) Prone to damage and confusion Clutter

Media switching behaviour

The range of media has grown dramatically in the past 30 years and is continuing to grow as technology, in particular, advances. However, even before digital media started to change the media landscape, researchers had recognised that different media have different capabilities and that media were not completely interchangeable. In other words, different tasks can be accomplished more effectively using particular media. This implies that there is a spectrum of media depending on the content they carry.

Daft and Lengel (1984) were the first to propose that this content issue concerned the richness of the information conveyed through each medium. As a result, the tasks facing managers should be considered according to the degree of fit with the most appropriate media based on the richness of the information. Communication media help resolve ambiguity and facilitate understanding in different ways and to different degrees. They established that there were four main criteria that determined what level of richness a medium possessed:

- the availability of instant feedback;
- the capacity to transmit multiple cues;
- the use of natural language;
- the degree of personal focus.

Media richness theory (MRT) holds that there is a hierarchy or spectrum of media ranging from personal or face-to-face encounters as the richest media through to single sheets of text-based information as lean media at the other end. Rich media facilitate feedback, dialogue iteration and an expression of personal cues such as tone of voice, body language and eye contact that in turn help establish a personal connection. In descending order of richness the other media are telephone, email, letter, note, memo, special report, fliers and bulletins. At this end of the richness scale numeric and formal written communication is slow, often visually limited and impersonal.

MRT suggests that rich media reduce ambiguity more effectively than others, but are more resource-intensive than lean media. If rich media allow for more complex and difficult communications, then lean media are more cost-effective for simple or routine communications. McGrath and Hollingshead (1993) developed a matrix showing the levels of richness required to perform certain tasks successfully and efficiently. Their media richness grid identifies the level of fit between the information richness requirements of the tasks and the information richness capacity of the media (see Table 27.2).

Social influence theory (SIT) was developed by Fulk *et al.* (1990). This is intended to complement MRT as it also assumes that the relatively objective features of media do influence how individuals perceive and use media. However, these researchers argue that SIT has a strong social orientation because different media properties (such as ability to transmit richness) are subjective and are influenced by attitudes, statements and the behaviour of others. This approach recognises that members of groups influence other people in terms of their perceptions of different media. The main difference between MRT and SIT is that MRT identifies rich media as inefficient for simple or routine communication whereas SIT suggests rich media can be just as appropriate for simple messages as it is for ambiguous communication.

A third approach, the technology acceptance model (TAM) relates to the utility and convenience a medium offers. The perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use are regarded as the main issues that are considered when selecting media (King and Xia, 1997). Perceived usefulness refers to the user's subjective assessment

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Table 27.2 Media richness grid

	Computer text systems	Audio systems	Video systems	Face-to-face communication
Generating ideas and plans	Good fit	Marginal fit: medium too resource-intensive	Poor fit: medium too resource-intensive	Poor fit: medium too resource-intensive
Choosing correct answer: intellectual tasks	Marginal fit: medium too constrained	Good fit	Good fit	Poor fit: medium too resource-intensive
Choosing preferred answer: judgement tasks	Poor fit: medium too constrained	Good fit	Good fit	Marginal fit: medium too resource-intensive
Negotiating conflicts of interest	Poor fit: medium too constrained	Poor fit: medium too constrained	Marginal fit: medium too constrained	Good fit

Source: Adapted from McGrath and Hollingshead (1993).

Table 27.3 Factors influencing the choice of technology

Factor	Explanation
Experience and familiarity	With virtual operations the amount of experience using a particular interactive medium
Permanence	The degree to which users need an historical record of team interactions or decisions
Symbolic meaning	The subjective meanings attached to the use of a particular medium
Time constraints	The amount of time available to the user to use a medium in order to execute their tasks
Access to technology and/or support	The number of and access to available media influences media choice

that using a specific computer application will improve their job performance. Perceived ease of use addresses the degree to which a user expects the identified application to be free of effort.

Influential factors for media selection

In addition to these richness, social and utility issues of media selection, other factors are also important. Duarte and Snyder (2001) propose a list of factors influencing technology selection (see Table 27.3).

Switching behaviour

It is clear that different media have different properties and that people switch between media according to their tasks, social environment, familiarity and access to different media. What is important, therefore, is to understand switching behaviour and the decision-making process that people use. Decisions are made through *rational* and *systematic* processes or alternatively there are unaccountable factors that 'bound' decision-making. The classic, eight-stage rational-linear decision-making model (situation analysis, objectives setting, through to choosing and

Table 27.4 Reasons for moving to richer or leaner media

Movement	Reasons
Towards a richer medium	Message complexity Increased comfort Time pressure Timely discussion required Need to rest from computer-based medium
Towards a leaner medium	Desire for written record Reducing cost Convenience (of being asynchronous or distant) Share individual written work (attachment) External pressure or requirement

evaluating alternatives, making the decisions, evaluation and consequences) is well known and its criticisms well documented. Simon (1972, 1987) showed that people make decisions within ‘bounded rationality’, performing limited searches and accepting the first acceptable alternative, what is regarded as ‘satisficing behaviour’.

Srinivasan (1996) developed a satisfaction–loyalty curve whereby an individual’s level of satisfaction is the biggest determinant of their switching behaviour. As their satisfaction increases, so does loyalty, and the reverse is equally true. For each person there is a point at which decreasing satisfaction intersects with the decreasing loyalty levels. This is the point at which switching occurs and the current brand is abandoned in favour of another.

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Keaveney (1995) distinguishes between involuntary, simple and complex switching behaviours. Involuntary switching may be due to factors beyond an individual consumer’s control (e.g. business liquidated), whereas simple switching is characterised by individual events where consumers can identify a single incident or factor causing the switch, for example a price change. Complex switching behaviour occurs when a customer’s loyalty has decreased due to a variety of factors, which might include core product failure, price changes and poor service. It should be noted that switching is very often a routine behaviour influenced by the expectations of the context in which the media decision is made. For example, when sending text-based documents to team members, most people would select email and use file attachments.

As a final comment on media switching behaviour it is useful to return to MRT and to consider the reasons why individuals move towards rich or lean media. These are set out in Table 27.4. Therefore, movement between media is based on a range of criteria and will vary according to the context and individual skills and preferences.

Vehicle selection

The discussion so far has explored unpaid media, and increasingly the Internet and the use of email communications fit this range. However, organisations need to use media that are owned by others in order to convey their messages. These paid-for media have particular characteristics and ability to deliver rich or lean content. The discussion now moves on to consider different paid-for media and the ways in which organisations develop a media mix to meet their communications needs.

Increasingly, organisations are required to prove how advertising adds value to the bottom line. While this is not a new question, it is one that is being asked more often and in such a way that answers are required. As advertisers attempt to demonstrate effectiveness, contribution and return on investment, senior managers are increasingly haunted by questions concerning the choice of media, how much should be spent on message delivery and how financial resources are to be allocated in a multichannel environment.

ViewPoint 27.1

Media vehicles for 'You & Us'

When UBS launched their 'You & Us' global campaign, advertising played an important role in communicating what UBS stands for to its clients. The aim was to help support their efforts to build stronger client relationships, and help them to make more confident financial decisions, hence the phrase 'You & Us'. With television and print their aim was to increase relevance in specific markets. Regional variations are also being created.

The television spot, titled 'Everywhere', emphasises the global/personal dimension and follows meetings between two people that occur in interesting, unusual locations around the world. This speaks of the benefits that accrue from being able to access the resources of a global financial firm through a strong, personal relationship.

The advertising focuses on two key themes: globality and understanding. Both strands of communication support the core message of proactively finding solutions to our customers' needs, but each does so in a slightly different way that makes the overall message accessible.

The print advertising reflects the visual tones and style used in the television work, and places an increased graphic emphasis on 'You & Us'. Importantly, the new press ads were designed to enable the reader to project themselves into the situation depicted, thus fostering empathy.

In order to deliver these messages a media plan was established. This set out the specific types of media the campaign was to use and where possible certain types of media and specific vehicles. One of the first



Exhibit 27.1

Although this is not an actual shot used by UBS, this picture represents the essence of the core message that the 'You & Us' campaign sought to deliver. See the UBS web site for actual pictures used in their campaign

© Michael Prince/Corbis.

decisions was whether television, a class of media, had a role to play. Once the answer was yes, particular television channels in the target countries, such as the USA, UK, Germany, France, Italy and in Asia were selected. This was then followed by the selection of print and outdoor media and particular vehicles were then determined.

Question

Why do you believe UBS used television in order to reach high net worth individuals and businesses?

Task

Visit the site www.ubs.com and follow the links through 'About Us' and then 'You & Us'. View the campaign detail and see the television and print ads. Make notes on what impresses you and what you might have done differently.

Management's attention towards media decision-making has increased as the media have become more visible and significantly more important. For example, Brech (1999) reports that companies need to make choices about the split between the Internet, mass media, digital TV, outdoor and print media. Companies such as BT, IKEA and ScottishPower need to use media strategically in order that they reach the right audience, in the right context, at the right time and at an acceptable cost. To help organisations achieve these goals a variety of approaches have been adopted. For example, New PHD is an agency retained by BT to advise about strategic (media) planning and budget allocation. However, ZenithOptimedia implements decisions for press and radio and the Allmond Partnership manages television and cinema, while Outdoor Connections handles poster-buying. This division provides objectivity, reduces partisan approaches and can deliver more effective media plans. Cost per response is certainly one way of measuring effectiveness, but the communication impact, or share of mind, is also important. There has also been a move away from volume of media to one where media decisions are made by looking at media in the context of the brand's total communications.

Cost per response is certainly one way of measuring effectiveness.

A further problem facing clients and media concern the integrated media experience. For a long time, some organisations have used above-the-line media to reach audiences of 20 million people. With fragmented media it is difficult to generate consistent levels and types of impact. Increasingly, media management is being outsourced so there are fewer in-house areas of expertise. All this means that, to forge appropriate solutions, advertisers and media agencies need to work closely together so that the relationship becomes so close that it acts more as an extension to the marketing department. Decisions regarding which vehicles are to carry an advertiser's message depend on an understanding of a number of concepts: reach and coverage, frequency, gross rating points, effective frequency, efficiency and media source effects.

Media planning concepts

There are several fundamental concepts that underpin the way in which traditional media should be selected and included in the media plan. These are reach, frequency, gross rating points, duplication and effective frequency.

Reach and coverage

Reach refers to the percentage of the target audience exposed to a message at least once during the relevant time period. Where 80 per cent of the target audience has been exposed to a message, the figure is expressed as an '80 reach'.

Coverage, a term often used for reach, should not be confused or used in place of reach. Coverage refers to the size of a potential audience that might be exposed to a particular media vehicle. For media planners, therefore, coverage (the size of the target audience) is very important. Reach will always be lower than coverage, as it is impossible to reach 100 per cent of a target population (the universe).

Building reach within a target audience is relatively easy, as the planner needs to select a range of different media vehicles. This will enable different people in the target audience to have an opportunity to see the media vehicle. However, there will come a point when it becomes more difficult to reach people who have not been exposed. As more vehicles are added, so repetition levels (the number of people who have seen the advertisement more than once) also increase.

Frequency

Frequency refers to the number of times a member of the target audience is exposed to a media vehicle.

Frequency refers to the number of times a member of the target audience is exposed to a media vehicle (not the advertisement) during the relevant time period. It has been stated that targets must be exposed to the media vehicle, but to say that a target has seen an advertisement simply because they have been exposed to the vehicle is incorrect. For example, certain viewers hop around the channels as a commercial

break starts. This has been referred to as 'channel grazing' by Lloyd and Clancy (1991). Individuals have different capacities to learn and to forget, and how much of a magazine does a reader have to consume to be counted as having read an advertisement? These questions are still largely unanswered, so media planners have adopted an easier and more consistent measure – opportunities to see (OTS).

This is an important point. The stated frequency level in any media plan will always be greater than the advertisement exposure rate. The term OTS is used to express the reach of a media vehicle rather than the actual exposure of an advertisement. However, a high OTS could be generated by one of two different events. First, a large number of the target audience are exposed once (high reach) or second, a small number are exposed several times (high frequency).

This then raises the first major issue. As all campaigns are restricted by time and budget limitations, advertisers have to trade off reach against frequency. It is impossible to maximise both elements within a fixed budget and set period of time.

ViewPoint 27.2

Haier than the weather

Haier, the major Chinese global manufacturer of consumer durables, uses television in China to reach its main audiences. In a country where it is estimated that over 250 million Chinese families watch CCTV programmes, Haier sponsors the weather forecast, which is the highest-rated programme in China. Guaranteeing large audiences on a repeat basis ensures Haier achieves high OTS based on a large frequency.

Source: Adapted from unpublished student coursework and www.zaobao.com/.

Question

As there is little natural fit between Haier and the weather forecast is this a good use of marketing communications?

Task

Pick a leading brand in a country of your choice and find out if it is involved in any sponsorship arrangements. If they are, what do think the goal might be, reach or frequency, or indeed something else?

To launch a new product, it has been established that a wide number of people within the target audience need to become aware of the product's existence and its salient attributes or benefits. This means that reach is important but, as an increasing number of people become aware, so more of them become exposed a second, third or fourth time, perhaps to different vehicles. At the outset, frequency is low and reach high, but as a campaign progresses so reach slows and frequency develops. Reach and frequency are inversely related within any period of time, and media planners must know the objective of a campaign: is it to build reach or develop frequency?

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Gross rating point

To decide whether reach or frequency is the focus of the campaign objective, a more precise understanding of the levels of reach and frequency is required. The term gross rating point is used to express the relationship between these two concepts. GRPs are a measure of the total number of exposures (OTS) generated within a particular period of time. The calculation itself is simply reach \times frequency:

$$\text{reach} \times \text{frequency} = \text{gross rating point}$$

Media plans are often determined on the number of GRPs generated during a certain time period. For example, the objective for a media plan could be to achieve 450 GRPs in a burst (usually four or five weeks). However, as suggested earlier, caution is required when interpreting a GRP, because 450 GRPs may be the result of 18 message exposures to just 25 per cent of the target market. It could also be an average of nine exposures to 50 per cent of the target market.

Rating points are used by all media as a measurement tool, although they were originally devised for use with broadcast audiences. GRPs are based on the total target audience (e.g. all women aged 18–34, or all adults) that might be reached, but a media planner needs to know, quite rightly, how many GRPs are required to achieve a particular level of effective reach and what levels of frequency are really required to develop effective learning or awareness in the target audience. In other words, how can the effectiveness of a media plan be improved?

Effective frequency

There are a number of reasons why considering the effectiveness of a media plan has become more important in recent years. First, there is the combination of media and audience fragmentation plus increasing media costs. Second, there is short-termism, increased managerial accountability and intensifying competition. This last point about competition refers to the media planning industry itself and the restructuring and concentration of media buying points (centralisation) in response to clients' globalisation strategies and their need for more cost-effective ways of buying media.

Frequency refers to the number of times members of the target audience are exposed to the vehicle. It says nothing about the quality of the exposures and whether any impact was made. Effective frequency refers to the number of times an individual needs to be exposed to an advertisement before the communication is effective. Being exposed once or possibly twice is unlikely to affect the disposition of the receiver. But the big question facing media planners is, how many times should a message be repeated for effective learning to occur? The level of effective frequency is generally unknown, but there has been some general agreement following work by Krugman (1972) that, for an advertisement to be effective (to make an impact), a target should have at least three OTS, the three-hit theory. The first exposure provokes a 'What is this?' reaction, the second reaction is 'What does this mean to me?' The reaction to the third is 'Oh, I remember'

The big question facing media planners is, how many times should a message be repeated for effective learning to occur?

(du Plessis, 1998). The three-exposure theory is based on messages that first provide understanding, second, provide recognition and third, actually stimulate action. More than 10 exposures is regarded as an ineffective plan and hence a waste of resources.

Determining the average frequency partially solves the problem. This is the number of times a target reached by the schedule is exposed to the vehicle over a particular period of time. For example, a schedule may generate the following:

10 per cent of the audience is reached ten times ($10 \times 10 = 100$)
 25 per cent of the audience is reached seven times ($25 \times 7 = 175$)
 65 per cent of the audience is reached once ($65 \times 1 = 65$)
 Total = 340 exposures

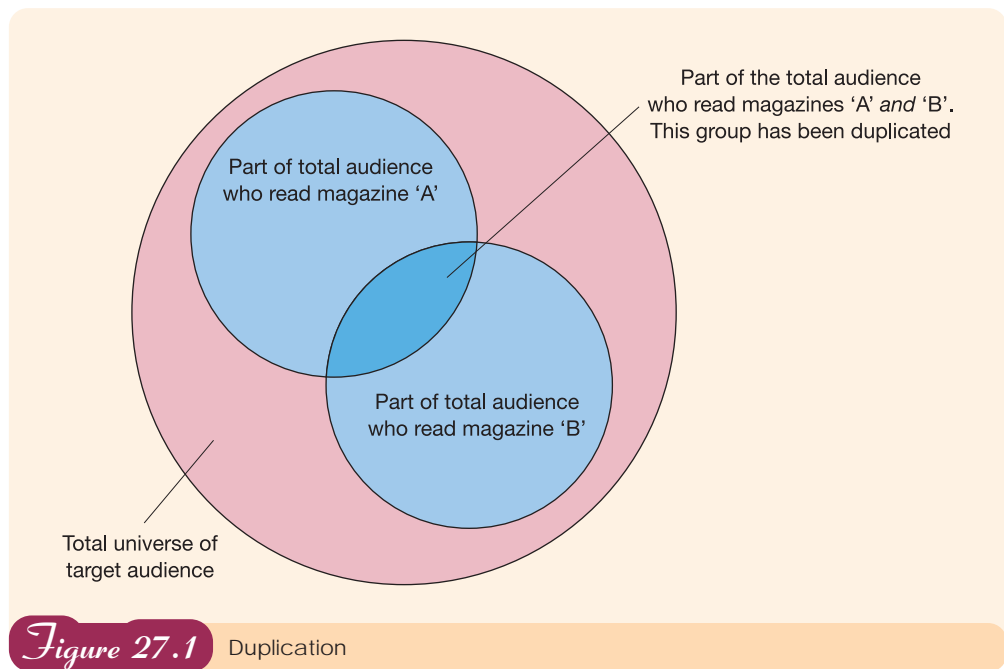
Average frequency = $340/100 = 3.4$

This figure of average frequency is misleading because different groups of people have been reached with varying levels of frequency. In the example above, an average frequency of 3.4 is achieved but 65 per cent of the audience is reached only once. This means that the average frequency, in this example, may lead to an audience being underexposed.

Members of the target audience do not buy and read just one magazine or watch a single television programme. Consumer media habits are complex, although distinct patterns can be observed, but it is likely that a certain percentage of the target audience will be exposed to an advertisement if it is placed in two or more media vehicles. Those who are exposed once constitute unduplicated reach. Those who are exposed to two or more are said to have been duplicated. Such overlapping of exposure, shown in Figure 27.1, is referred to as duplicated reach.

Media plans need to specify levels of duplicated and unduplicated reach.

Duplication provides an indication of the levels of frequency likely in a particular media schedule. Duplication also increases costs, so if the objective of the plan is unduplicated reach, duplication brings waste and inefficiency. So media plans need to specify levels of duplicated and unduplicated reach.



ViewPoint 27.3

Optimising media schedules

Multi-media optimisers (MMO) are software programs that plan and schedule the placing of advertising campaigns across more than one medium. MMOs use single-source or fused database information rather than survey-based information, which is prone to inaccuracies.

MMOs take into account duplication rates when deciding which combination of media vehicles to use (not types such as television and magazines). They also facilitate media-neutral planning (see Chapter 9).

However, MMOs work on responses, and this can pose problems in terms of agreeing what form of response is valid, while audiences have to be converted to ad exposures/impacts in order to base evaluation on equivalent measures. Accounting for decay rates and adstock features (ad impact retention) by medium, through time is also problematic.

Sources: Adapted from Jarvis and McElroy (2004) and www.fipp.com/sadmin/1418.

Question

If media planning software works just on responses can this be an effective planning tool?

Task

Find out the training necessary to become a media planner.

Nevertheless, it is generally agreed that a certain level of GRPs is necessary for awareness to be achieved. It is also accepted that increased GRPs are necessary for other communication effects to be achieved. These levels of GRPs are referred to as weights, and the weight of a campaign reflects the objectives of the campaign. For example, a burst designed to achieve 85 per cent coverage with eight OTS would make a 680 rating, which is considered to be heavy. Such high ratings are often associated with car launches and, for example, products that are market leaders in their class, such as Nescafé or Pantene. An average rating would be one set to achieve a 400 rating, through 80 per cent coverage and five OTS over the length of a five-week period.

Our understanding about how learning works can assist the quest for effective frequency levels. The amount of learning in individuals increases up to a certain point, after which further exposure to material adds little to our overall level of knowledge. The same applies to the frequency level and the weightings applied to exposures.

Coverage and reach figures only show the numbers of people who are exposed to the vehicle. Effective reach measures those that are aware of the message. This ties in with the previous discussion on effective frequency levels. Essentially, media planners recognise that effective advertising requires that, in addition to the other aspects of advertising planning, a single transmission (reach) of an advertisement will be unproductive (Krugman, 1975; Naples, 1979). A minimum of two exposures and a reach threshold of 45 per cent of the target audience are required for reach to be regarded as effective (Murray and Jenkins, 1992).

Recency planning

A relatively new perspective to counter the effective frequency model has emerged from the United States. This is known as recency planning, and developed at a time when the weak theory of advertising started to gain greater acknowledgement as the most acceptable general interpretation of how advertising works. There is also a growing general acceptance that advertising is not the all-powerful communication tool it was once thought to be, and that the timing and presentation of advertising messages needs to be reconsidered in the light of the way advertising is currently thought to work.

If it is accepted that consumer decision-making is more heavily influenced by 'running out' of particular products (opening empty fridges and store cupboards), than by exposure to

Table 27.5 The differences between effective frequency and recency planning

Recency planning model	Effective frequency model
Reach goal	Frequency goal
Continuity	Burst
One-week planning cycle	Four-week planning cycle
Lowest cost per reach point	Lowest cost per thousand
Low ratings	High ratings

Source: Adapted from Ephron (1997). Used by permission of WARC.

advertising messages that are repeated remorselessly, then it follows that advertising needs to be directed at those people who are actually in the market and prepared to buy (Ephron, 1997).

As many fast-moving consumer goods products are purchased each week, Jones (1995) argues that a single exposure to an advertising message in the week before a purchase is to be made is more important than adding further messages, thereby increasing frequency. Recency planning considers reach to be more important than frequency.

The strategy requires reaching as many consumers as possible in as many weeks as possible.

The goal of this new approach is to reach those few consumers who are ready to buy (in the market). To do this the strategy requires reaching as many consumers as possible in as many weeks as possible (as far as the budget will extend). This requires a lower weekly weight and an extended number of weeks for a campaign. Advertising budgets are not cut; the fund is simply spread over a greater period of time. According to Ephron, this approach is quite different from effective frequency models and quite revolutionary (see Table 27.5).

This approach has been greeted with a number of objections. It has not been universally accepted, nor has it been widely implemented in the UK market. Gallucci (1997), among others, rejected the notion of recency planning because effectiveness will vary by brand, category and campaign. He claims that reaching 35 per cent of the Indonesian cola market once a week will not bring about the same result as reaching 65 per cent four times a week.

The development of banner advertising on the Internet raises interesting questions concerning effective frequency in new media. Is the frequency rate different and, if so, how many times is exposure required in order to be effective? Research into this area is in its infancy and no single, accepted body of knowledge exists. Broussard (2000) reports that, in a limited study concerning the comparison of a direct-response and a branding-based campaign on the Internet, the lowest cost per lead in the direct-response campaign was achieved with low frequency levels. Results from the branding campaign suggest that up to seven exposures were necessary to improve brand awareness and knowledge of product attributes.

The debate concerning the development of recency planning and effective frequency will continue. What might be instrumental to the outcome of the debate will be a better understanding of how advertising works and the way buyers use advertising messages that are relevant to them.

Media usage and attitudes

A large number of people have a negative attitude towards advertising, and TV ads in particular. Advertising is regarded as both intrusive and pervasive. Beale (1997) developed a four-part typology of personality types based upon respondents' overall attitudes towards advertising

Table 27.6 Advertising attitudes for media determination

Cynics (22 per cent)

This group perceives advertising as a crude sales tool. They are resentful and hostile to advertisements, although they are more likely to respond to advertisements placed in relevant media.

Ambivalents (22 per cent)

While creativity is seen as superfluous and irrelevant, ambivalents are more disposed to information-based messages or those that promise cost savings. The best advertisements are those that use media that reinforce the message.

Enthusiasts (35 per cent)

Enthusiasts like to get involved with advertising and creativity is perceived as an important part of the process. Apart from newspapers, which are regarded as boring, most types of media are acceptable.

Acquiescents (21 per cent)

As the name suggests, this group of people has a reluctant approach to advertising. This means that they see advertising as unavoidable and an inevitable part of their world. Therefore, they are open to influence through a variety of media.

Source: Adapted from Beale (1997). Used with kind permission.

(see Table 27.6). Through an understanding of the different characteristics, it is possible to make better (more informed) decisions about the most appropriate media channels to reach target audiences.

It is common for advertisers and media planners to discuss target markets in the context of heavy, medium, light and non-users of a product. It is only now that consideration is being given to the usage levels of viewers and readers. ZenithOptimedia has determined that television audiences can be categorised as heavy, medium and light users based on the amount of time they spend watching television. One of the implications of this approach is that if light users consume so little television, then perhaps it is not worthwhile trying to communicate with them and resources should be directed to the medium and heavy user groups. The other side of the argument is that light users are very specific in the programmes that they watch, therefore it should be possible to target messages at them and a heavy number of GRPs should be used. However, questions still remain about the number of ratings necessary for effective reach in each of these categories.

Light users are very specific in the programmes that they watch.

A more contemporary study by Schultz *et al.* (2006) sought to discover how media consumption is determined by an individual's need to access media. Using criteria based on the amount of time spent with all forms of media, the amount of simultaneous media usage, the need to provide or receive information and the speed at which a medium delivers the information, four clusters were identified. These were:

- Zeros – this group consists of people who are not active media consumers.
- Traditionals – this group use media sequentially, one form of media at a time.
- Information hounds – this group are heavy media users and information providers.
- Network creators – this group are heavy users but primarily use slow media and use the information largely for their own purposes.

The researchers believe this media consumption model should be used to enhance the media planning process by being used in addition to the general demographic-, geographic- and psychographic-based approaches. Further research was based around three key dimensions: media usage, media influence and simultaneous media usage.

Ostrow (1981) was the first to question how many rating points should be purchased. He said that, rather than use average frequency, a decision should be made about the minimum level of frequency necessary to achieve the objectives and then maximise reach at that level. Ostrow (1984) suggested that consideration of the issues set out in Table 27.8 would also assist.

Table 27.7 The SIMM database – media usage dimensions

Media dimension	Explanation
Media usage	Average usage of media, based on minutes, for both weekday and weekend consumption. Includes, newspaper, direct mail, magazines, radio, television and the Internet.
Media influence	The self-reported average for each media category across eight product groups: electronics, apparel, groceries, home improvement, cars, medicines, telecom services and eating out.
Simultaneous media usage	This is an average of all pairs of media that were reported as 'used simultaneously'. If a pair is reported as regularly consumed then it was assumed to be 70 per cent of the time. If reported as occasional, then it was defined as 30 per cent of the time.

Source: Schultz *et al.* (2006).

Table 27.8 Issues to be considered when setting frequency levels

Issues	Low frequency	High frequency
Marketing issues		
Newness of the brand	Established	New
Market share	High	Low
Brand loyalty	Higher	Lower
Purchase and usage cycle times	Long	Short
Message issues		
Complexity	Simple	Complex
Uniqueness	More	Less
Image versus product sell	Product sell	Image
Message variation	Single message	Multiple messages
Media plan issues		
Clutter	Less	More
Editorial atmosphere	Appropriate	Not appropriate
Attentiveness of the media in the plan	Holds	Fails to hold
Number of media in the plan	Less	More

Source: Adapted from Ostrow (1984).

The traditional approach of using television to reach target audiences to build awareness is still strong. For example, Procter & Gamble, Unilever, Nestlé, Kellogg's and BT all spend in excess of 70 per cent of their budgets on television advertising. However, many major advertisers have moved from a dominant above-the-line approach to a more integrated and through-the-line approach as a more effective way of delivering messages to target audiences. Nescafé now uses 48-sheet posters and Unilever, traditionally a heavy user of television, has begun to use radio and posters as support for its television work.

Efficiency

All promotional campaigns are constrained by a budget.

All promotional campaigns are constrained by a budget. Therefore a trade-off is required between the need to reach as many members of the target audience as possible (create awareness) and the need to repeat the message to achieve effective learning in the target audience. The decision

about whether to emphasise reach or frequency is assisted by a consideration of the costs involved in each proposed schedule or media plan.

There are two main types of cost. The first of these is the *absolute cost*. This is the cost of the space or time required for the message to be transmitted. For example, the cost of a full-page, single-insertion, black-and-white advertisement, booked for a firm date in the *Sunday Times*, is £56,150 (November 2004). Cash flow is affected by absolute costs.

The cost of a full-page, single-insertion, black-and-white advertisement, booked for a firm date in the *Sunday Times*, is £56,150 (November 2004).

In order that an effective comparison be made between media plans the *relative costs* of the schedules need to be understood. Relative costs are the costs incurred in making contact with each member of the target audience.

Traditionally, the magazine industry has based its calculations on the cost per thousand people reached (CPT). The original term derived from the print industry is CPM, where the 'M' refers to the Roman symbol for thousand. This term still has limited use but the more common term is CPT: $CPT = \text{space costs (absolute)} \times 1,000/\text{circulation}$. The newspaper industry has used the milline rate, which is the cost per line of space per million circulation.

Broadcast audiences are measured by programme ratings (United States), and television audiences in Britain are measured by television ratings or TVRs. They are essentially the same in that they represent the percentage of television households that are tuned to a specific programme. The TVR is determined as follows:

$$\text{TVR} = \frac{\text{number of target TV households tuned into a programme}}{\text{total number of target TV households}} \times 100$$

A single TVR, therefore, represents 1 per cent of all the television households in a particular area that are tuned into a specific programme.

A further approach to measuring broadcast audiences uses the share of televisions that are tuned into a specific programme. This is compared with the total number of televisions that are actually switched on at that moment. This is expressed as a percentage and should be greater than the TVR. Share, therefore, reveals how well a programme is perceived by the available audience, not the potential audience. The question of how to measure relative costs in the broadcast industry has been answered by the use of the rating point or TVR. Cost per TVR is determined as follows:

$$\text{Cost per TVR} = \frac{\text{time costs (absolute costs)}}{\text{TVR}}$$

Intra-industry comparison of relative costs is made possible by using these formulae. Media plans that only involve broadcast or only use magazine vehicles can be evaluated to determine levels of efficiency. However, members of the target audience do not have discrete viewing habits; they have, as we saw earlier, complex media consumption patterns that involve exposure to a mix of media classes and vehicles. Advertisers respond to this mixture by placing advertisements in a variety of media, but have no way of comparing the relative costs on an inter-industry basis. In other words, the efficiency of using a *News at Ten* television slot cannot be compared with an insertion in *The Economist*. Attempts are being made to provide cross-industry media comparisons, but as yet no one formula has yet been provided that satisfies all demands. The television and newspaper industries, by using CPT in combination with costs per unit of time and space respectively, have attempted to forge a bridge that may be of use to their customers.

Finally, some comment on the concept of CPT is necessary, as there has been speculation about its validity as a comparative tool. There are a number of shortcomings associated with the use of CPT. For example, because each media class possesses particular characteristics, direct comparisons based on CPT alone are dangerous. The levels of wastage incurred in a plan, such as reaching people who are not targets or by measuring OTS for the vehicle and not the advertisement, may lead to an overestimate of the efficiency that a plan offers.

There are a number of shortcomings associated with the use of CPT.

Similarly, the circulation of a magazine is not a true representation of the number of people who read or have an opportunity to see. Therefore, CPT may underestimate the efficiency unless the calculation can be adjusted to account for the extra or pass-along readership that occurs in reality. Having made these points, media buyers in the United Kingdom continue to use CPT and cost per rating point (CPRP) as a means of planning and buying time and space. Target audiences and television programmes are priced according to the ratings they individually generate. The ratings affect the cost of buying a spot. The higher the rating, the higher the price to place advertisements in the magazine or television programme.

Planning, placing and measuring ads online

The decision to place online ads is complicated not just by deciding which of the various formats discussed previously should be used, but also by where and when the ads need to be placed. Table 27.9 sets out the various options available for placing online ads.

Longhurst (2006) argues that much of the online media planning work is based on dividing the expenditure (investment) by the anticipated response (click-throughs) to determine a cost

Table 27.9 Online ad placement opportunities

Location for ad placement	Explanation
Portals	Major portals such as Google, Yahoo and MSN attract the majority of online ads. Smaller portals enable more specific targeting of messages to reach defined target audiences. For example, airlines or ferries on a travel portal.
Community web sites	Social networking sites consist of communities of people who share common pastimes, health geographic or other interests. These represent ideal opportunities to reach specific target audiences.
Search engines	Pay-per-click ads based on users searching on particular key words constitute a major source of revenue for each search engine. See p. 782 for more information.
Shopping comparison sites	Ads placed on sites where a comparison of shopping products has been requested is going to reach a high proportion of a target audience.
Chat rooms	In return for providing software and hosting, companies can place ads on relevant pages.
Online forums	Ads can be targeted to meet the needs and interests of the topics and subjects being discussed.
Blogs	Blog sites are provided for bloggers to write, but in order to sustain the site ads need to be placed, again targeted to the principle subjects under discussion.
Podcasts	Opportunities to place ads around specific podcasts are currently limited but will increase as podcasting becomes more mainstream.
RSS aggregators	These enable subscribers to receive specific information and short news updates from organisations that bring information together (aggregators) and feed it out. Some RSS aggregators are beginning to sell ad space on the various news feeds.
Mobile devices	Opportunities to reach audiences on the move increase as technology improves.
Newsletters	The content or theme of a newsletter will attract appropriate advertisers.
Online magazines	Whether a manufacturer or an association produces these they still provide good opportunities to reach audiences with specific interests.

Source: Based on Gay *et al.* (2007).

per response. This figure is then used to compare with other media combinations. The problem is that this approach is not market-oriented and the investment sum is all too often simply determined by taking a preset percentage of the main budget.

The media planning concepts referred to previously in this chapter (reach, frequency, etc.) evolved to help manage traditional media. The interruption model has been the main way traditional media has been used. This is predicated on the idea that the media manages audiences, influences what they see, when they see it and shapes the pattern of their media behaviour. Advertisers therefore, interrupted an audience's viewing or reading to deliver product messages, for which, according to the advertiser's segmentation analysis, they were suitable recipients.

However, technological advances have brought about huge changes in the types of available media and the way in which people now use media. As Moore (2007) rightly points out, people use traditional media for information and entertainment. Now they can be active participants as opportunities to be interactive enables user-generated-content (Chapter 2) through search, downloading, sharing, publication and involvement in virtual communities. Advertisers should not try to interrupt participants but facilitate interaction. Moore (2007), media manager for the drinks-based group, Diageo in the United Kingdom, suggests that, in addition to the need for information and entertainment, media now need to satisfy four new consumer motivations: to discover, participate, share and express (themselves). What he does not say is that these do not apply to all consumers in the same way. Most people consume a mixture of traditional and new media, with particular audiences skewed more to one rather than the other. The argument that mass media advertising is in permanent decline is a fallacy, proved by the continuing investment by a range of brands in television advertising. There has certainly been a readjustment of media budgets to reflect contemporary media usage, but the new is not going to wipe out the old.

Most people consume a mixture of traditional and new media.

The early years of digital and online media saw attempts to use the established methods of measurement and evaluation. However, it became clear that these methods were not entirely suitable, simply because digital media are used differently. Instead of measuring how often a message is delivered or the share of audience reached with a message, it becomes more important to measure a consumer's expectations of a brand and their interaction with brands. Put another way these might be considered as dwell time (the amount of time consumers spend with a brand), dwell quality (a consumer's perceived richness resulting from brand interaction) and dwell insight (what motivates a consumer to spend time with a brand).

Media source effects

CPT is a quantitative measure, and one of its major shortcomings is that it fails to account for the qualitative aspects associated with media vehicles. Before vehicles are selected, their qualitative aspects need to be considered on the basis that a vehicle's environment may affect the way in which a message is perceived and decoded.

An advertisement placed in one vehicle, such as *Cosmopolitan*, may have a different impact on an identical audience to that obtained if the same advertisement were placed in *Options*. This differential level of 'power of impact' is caused by a number of source factors, of which the following are regarded as the most influential:

- *vehicle atmosphere* – editorial tone, vehicle expertise, vehicle prestige;
- *technical and reproduction characteristics* – technical factors, exposure opportunities, perception opportunities;
- *audience and product characteristics* – audience/vehicle fit, nature of the product.

Vehicle atmosphere

Editorial tone

This refers to the editorial views presented by the vehicle and the overall tone of the material contained. Understandably, some clients do not want to be associated with particular television shows or certain specialist magazines that are characterised by sex or violence.

Vehicle expertise

Magazines and journals can reflect a level of expertise and represent source credibility. Readers who regard particular magazines, especially some of the consumer SIMs (e.g. *Golf Monthly*), business-to-business magazines (e.g. *Fire & Rescue*) and academic journals (e.g. *Harvard Business Review*), as important sources of credible information are more relaxed and open to persuasion.

Vehicle prestige

The message strategy adopted for each advertisement should be appreciated, as this can have a strong effect upon the scheduling. The prestige of a vehicle is important to some products, especially when targeted at audiences where vehicle status is important, for example *Country Life*. Transformational advertisements have been shown to be more effective in prestige-based vehicles than in expertise-based vehicles (and vice versa for information-based advertisements).

Transformational advertisements have been shown to be more effective in prestige-based vehicles.

Technical and reproduction characteristics of a vehicle

Technical factors

The technical characteristics of the vehicle, such as its visual capability, may influence the impact of the message. The use of colour, movement and sound may be necessary for the full effectiveness of a message to be realised. Other messages may need only a more limited range of characteristics, such as sound. For example, the promotion of inclusive tour holidays benefits from the communication of an impression (photograph/drawing) of the destination resort. This is important, as each destination needs to be differentiated, in the minds of the target audience, from competing destinations.

Exposure opportunities

The possibility that an advertisement will be successfully exposed to the target increases as more consideration is given to the likelihood of successful communication. Each vehicle has a number of time slots or spaces that provide opportunities for increased exposure. The back pages of magazines or facing matter often command premium advertising rates, just as prime-time spots or film premieres on television always generate extra revenue for the television contractors.

Perception opportunities

Being exposed to the message does not mean that the message is perceived. A reader may not perceive an advertisement when searching for the next page of an article. Similarly, a car driver may not 'hear' a radio message because their attention may be on a passing car or a strange engine noise. The solution is to use strong attention-grabbing materials, such as loud or distinctive music or controversial headlines. In addition, new, imaginative ways of attracting attention are being developed. Car dealers have used incentives to attract audiences to test drive a car and receive vouchers for a free video film or have free subscriptions to particular magazines.

*ViewPoint 27.4***Digital perception at Terminal 5**

When Heathrow airport opened Terminal 5 in March 2008, a raft of new advertising technology was released. Over 200 digital screens have been built into the infrastructure of the airport, all with strategic placement. Here the advertising panels have been sited alongside the path that passengers take from check-in to their flight. Some giant displays are referred to as 'global gateways' some dominating the security area. Some digital ads are incorporated into the flight-information screens.

The digital screens enable ad continuity so that a passenger may see a seemingly endless line of the same ads. This opportunity to reach a mass of people in this way is a first for this part of the advertising industry. Now the industry has the opportunity to use digital technology to deliver moving, interactive, responsive and time-specific advertising. This means that interactive ads can be changed for morning, noon and afternoon customers, unlike the traditional outdoor poster sites that need two weeks, several rolls of paper and a bucket of paste. Visa have taken four giant lightboxes that measure 29m × 36m and should be seen by all passengers as they move through to the departure areas.

Digital and interactive screens have been installed at other airports following the T5 launch, in the London Underground, in and around various new shopping centres and maybe even a bus shelter near you.

Sources: Bainbridge (2008); Bokaie (2008).

Question

To what extent are these digital screens and their location likely to aid the exposure and perception opportunities (to reach travellers with effective messaging)?

Task

Next time you visit an air or rail terminal look out for digital screens and make a note of which brands are using them.

*Exhibit 27.2*

T5 Visa's digital screens
Courtesy of JCDecaux Airport.

Audience/product characteristics

Audience/vehicle fit

The media plan should provide the best match between the target market and the audience reached by the vehicles in the media schedule. The more complex the target market description or consumer profile, the greater the difficulty of matching it with appropriate vehicles.

ViewPoint 27.5 Monday is Horlicks night

Horlicks is a rich milky drink made with malt that contains high levels of calcium and other vitamins. Traditionally, it is associated with older people and helps relaxation and inducing sleep. MediaCom was given the task of finding a new target audience and repositioning the brand. Planning and research identified women aged 35+ who were stressed trying to manage both their careers and their family. MediaCom also identified Mondays as the night when they were most likely to have a poor night's sleep.

This information enabled MediaCom to target the Monday night schedule, and the end of evening section, or the 'wind-down ritual' in particular. With a 13-week concentration Horlicks was able to target its customers at a time when they would be most receptive and as a result a new market was won. It was reported that sales climbed 28 per cent in the first four weeks of the campaign.

Source: Adapted from Grimshaw (2004).

Question

Although sales rose during the first four weeks, does this measure provide sufficient long-term optimism for the brand? If not, why not?

Task

Think of a product that you use, consider when you use it and try to identify communications that reflect your usage.



Exhibit 27.3

Horlicks
Horlicks, part of GSK Nutritional Healthcare U.K.

Weilbacher (1984) argues that media evaluation based on product usage may be better than using demographics and psychographics. These may be inappropriate and inefficient when matching markets with audiences. As advertising is directed at influencing consumer behaviour, product usage is a more logical measure of media evaluation. This view is supported by media planners targeting heavy, medium and light users.

This perspective contrasts with the view of Rothschild (1987). He regards demographic and psychographic factors as relatively stable and enduring factors, and thus suitable influences on the media selection decision. By contrast, the dynamic factors (those that vary within an individual with respect to brand choice, purchase behaviour and time of adoption between products) are seen as being more suitable for influencing media strategy.

Nature of the product

In addition to this, consideration needs to be given to the nature of the product itself. Audiences have particular viewing patterns, therefore it does not make sense to advertise when it is known that the target audience is not watching (for example, promoting children's sweets late at night or photocopiers in consumer-interest magazines).

Prime television spots such as *Coronation Street* or major sporting occasions such as the Olympic Games attract many major competitive brands. It may be wise to avoid competing for time and look for other suitable programmes.

Vehicle mood effects

The mood that a vehicle creates can also be an important factor. Aaker *et al.* (1992) report on the work of a number of studies in this area. These suggest that food advertisements using transformational appeals are more effective when placed in situation comedies than in thrillers and mystery programmes. Advertisements for analgesics work better in both adult westerns and situation comedies (Crane, 1964).

These qualitative, vehicle-related source effects need to be considered as support for the quantitative work undertaken initially. They should not be used as the sole reason for the selection of particular media vehicles, if only because they are largely subjective.

Scheduling

This seeks to establish when the messages are transmitted in order that the media objectives be achieved at the lowest possible cost. The first considerations are the objectives themselves. If the advertising objectives are basically short term, then the placements should be concentrated over a short period of time. Conversely, if awareness is to be built over a longer term, perhaps building a new brand, then the frequency of the placements need not be so intensive and can be spread over a period so that learning can occur incrementally.

The second consideration is the purchasing cycle. It has been noted before that the optimum number of exposures is thought to be between three and ten, and this should occur within each purchasing cycle. Obviously, this is only really applicable to packaged goods, and is not as applicable to white or brown goods or, indeed, the business-to-business sector. However, the longer the cycle, the less frequency is required.

The optimum number of exposures is thought to be between three and ten.

The third consideration is the level of involvement. If the objective of the plan is to create awareness, then when there is high involvement few repetitions will be required compared with low-involvement decisions. This is because people who are highly involved actively seek information and need little assistance to digest relevant information. Likewise, where there is low involvement, attitudes develop from use of the product, so frequency is important to maintain awareness and to prompt trial.

Finally, the placement of an advertisement is influenced by the characteristics of the target audience and their preferred programmes. Selecting compatible 'spots' is likely to improve message delivery considerably.

Timing of advertisement placements

The timing of placements is dependent on a number of factors. One of the overriding constraints is the size of the media budget and the impact that certain placement patterns can bring to an organisation's cash flow. Putting cost to one side, many researchers have identified and labelled different scheduling patterns. Govoni *et al.* (1986), Sissors and Bumba (1989), Burnett (1993) and Kotler (1997) all suggest different approaches to scheduling. Figure 27.2 and the following are presented as a synthesis of the more common scheduling options.

Continuity patterns

Continuous patterns involve regular and uniform presentation of the message to the target audience. Over the long term, a continuous pattern is more appropriate for products and services where demand is crisis led, e.g. plumbing, or where there is a long purchase cycle. These

A rising pattern is used when activity centres around a particular event.

continuous patterns are often used for mature products, where reminder advertising is appropriate. A rising pattern is used when activity centres around a particular event, such as the FA Cup Final, the Olympic Games or a general election. A fading pattern may follow an initial burst to launch a new product or to inform of a product modification.

Flighting patterns

Flighting allows advertisers the opportunity to spread their resources across a longer period of time.

Flighting allows advertisers the opportunity to spread their resources across a longer period of time. This may improve the effectiveness of their messages. A flying pattern may be appropriate in situations where messages need to reflect varying demand, such as that experienced by the retail sector throughout the year. Flying is also adopted as a competitive response to varying advertising weights applied by rivals. These schedules are used for specific events, such as support for major sales promotions and responses to adverse publicity or one-off market opportunities.

Flighting patterns can also be used in short and often heavy periods of investment activity. Because of the seasonality of the product (e.g. for inclusive tour operators), advertising at other times is inappropriate and a waste of resources. This approach can also be used to respond quickly to a competitor's potentially damaging actions, to launch new products or to provide unique information, such as the announcement of a new organisation as a result of merger activity, or to promote information about a particular event such as an impending share offer.

Pulsing patterns

Pulsing seeks to combine the advantages of both the previous patterns. As a result, it is the safest of all the options, but potentially the most expensive. It allows advertisers to increase levels of message activity at certain times of the year, which is important for times when sales traditionally increase, as with fragrance sales in December and ice-cream in June.

Whereas flying presents an opportunity for individuals to forget messages during periods of no advertising, pulsing helps to prevent the onset of forgetting, to build high levels of awareness and to provide a barrier that holds back competitor attack.

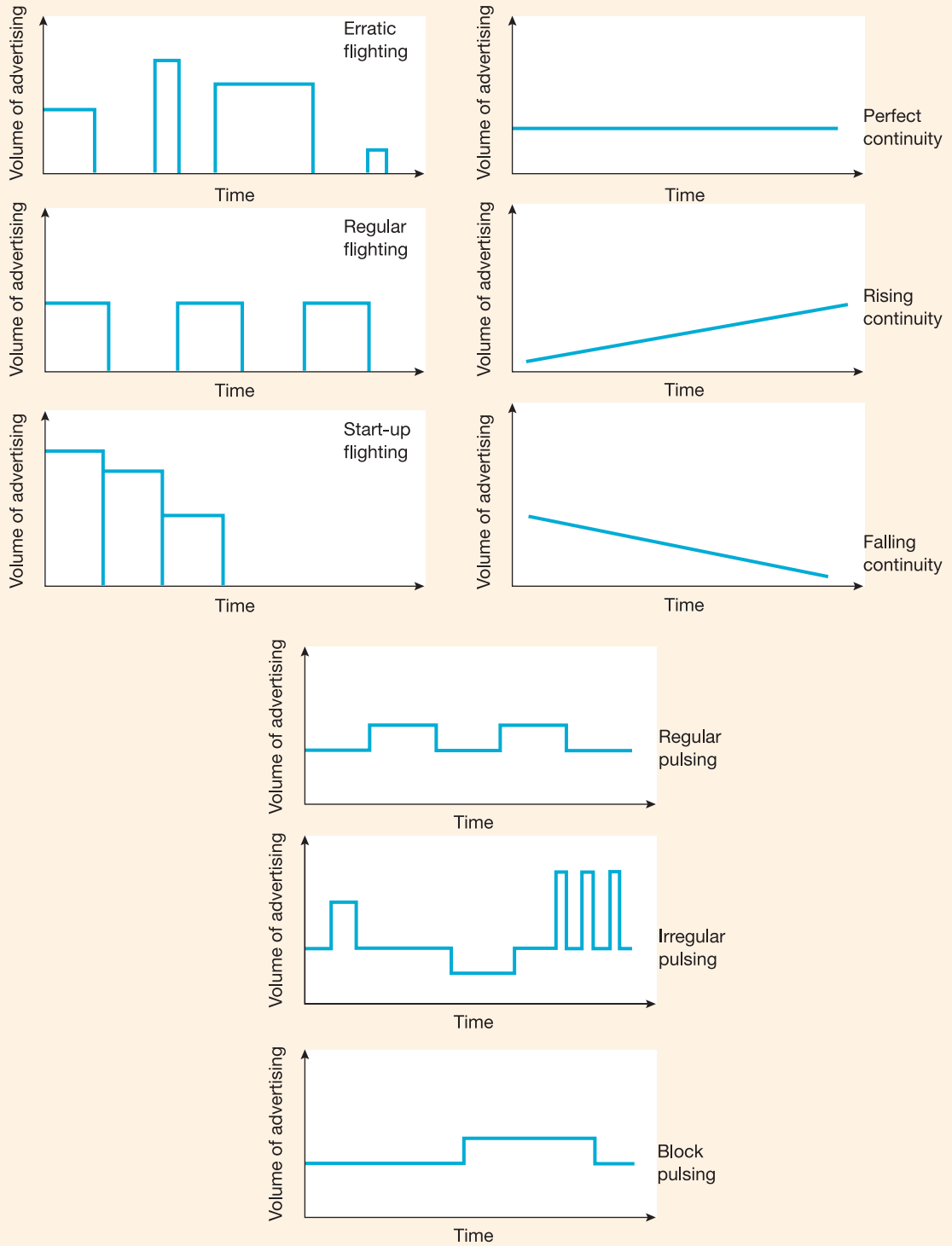


Figure 27.2 Media scheduling patterns

Summary

In order to help consolidate your understanding of media planning, here are the key points summarised against each of the learning objectives:

1. Explain the role of the media planner and highlight the impact of media and audience fragmentation.

Media planning is concerned with the selection and scheduling of media vehicles designed to carry an advertiser's message. The variety of media is rapidly increasing and is referred to as media fragmentation. This makes the media planner's task increasingly complicated because the size of audience available to each media reduces, making the number of media required to reach a target market increasingly large.

2. Consider various theories concerning the content of different media and related media switching behaviours.

Consideration was given to media richness theory (MRT), which holds that there is a hierarchy of media ranging from the richest media such as personal or face-to-face encounters through to lean media typified by single sheets of text-based information.

Social influence theory (SIT) complements MRT as it also assumes that the relatively objective features of media do influence how individuals perceive and use them. The technology acceptance model (TAM) relates to the perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use as the main issues that are considered when selecting media.

3. Examine the key concepts used in media selection: reach and cover, frequency, duplication, rating points and CPT.

There are several fundamental concepts that underpin the way in which media should be selected and included in the media plan. These concepts refer to the percentage of the target audience reached, the number of times they receive a message, the number of media they are exposed to and various measures associated with the efficiency with which media deliver messages.

4. Appreciate the concept of repetition and the debate concerning effective frequency and recency planning.

The greater the number of exposures the more likely an individual is to learn about the message content. The question is how many times should a message be repeated for effective learning to occur, i.e. what is the effective frequency?

Recency planning is a reach-based model and argues that a single exposure to an advertising message in the week before a purchase is more important than adding further messages, thus increasing frequency. Recency planning considers reach to be more important than frequency.

5. Understand the concepts of effectiveness and efficiency when applied to media selection decisions.

The efficiency of a schedule refers to the costs involved in delivering messages. There are two main types of cost. The first of these is the *absolute cost*, which is the cost of the space or time required for the message to be transmitted. The second concerns the costs incurred in making contact with each member of the target audience. These are referred to as the *relative costs* and are used to compare different media schedules.

The magazine industry uses calculations based on the cost per thousand people reached (CPT). Broadcast audiences are measured by television ratings or TVRs. These represent the percentage of television households that are tuned to a specific programme.

6. Introduce media source effects as an important factor in the selection and timing of advertising in magazines and television programmes.

Different media impact on audiences in different ways because of three main factors. These are the *vehicle atmosphere* – editorial tone, vehicle expertise, vehicle prestige; their *technical and reproduction characteristics* – technical factors, exposure opportunities, perception opportunities; and finally their *audience and product characteristics* – audience/vehicle fit, nature of the product.

7. Explore the different ways in which advertisements can be scheduled.

The scheduling of a media plan seeks to establish when the messages are transmitted in order that the media objectives be achieved at the lowest possible cost. Various factors affect the schedule: the campaign objectives; the purchasing cycle; the level of involvement; and the characteristics of the target audience and their preferred programmes. The selection of compatible ‘spots’ is likely to improve message delivery considerably.

Review questions

1. Compare media richness theory, social influence theory and the technology adoption model.
2. What are the main tasks facing media planners?
3. If the rate at which information decays within individuals is known, then the task of the media planner is simply to place messages at suitable intervals in the path of decay. Discuss.
4. Why is it important that a media planner knows whether reach or frequency is the main objective of a media plan?
5. Why are frequency levels so important? Explain the concept of effective frequency.
6. How does recency planning differ from effective frequency?
7. What is a TVR and how does it relate to GRPs?
8. How does planning for digital media differ from that for traditional media?
9. Write a brief report outlining the principal characteristics of media source effects.
10. What are the main ways in which media plans can be scheduled?

MiniCase

Targeting the 'brown pound' – an untapped market

Yasmin Sekhon: Bournemouth University

The fundamental aim of media planning is to formulate a strategy that will allow marketing communication messages to reach the target audience. This involves 'buying' time and space and utilising the appropriate media vehicles. However, for a media plan to work it has to be effective and efficient, having the relevant impact and getting the message across.

One key issue, as yet not properly resolved, concerns ways in which marketers can make the right decisions when targeting the 'brown pound'. That is, how to use the right media to reach ethnic markets, especially when these markets are generally under-researched and remain untouched.

Background

The combined disposable income of ethnic minorities in the United Kingdom is in the region of £32bn, according to the Institute of Practitioners in Advertising (IPA). However, businesses are generally guilty of not effectively promoting to these audiences and paying little or no attention to them. Often labelled as the 'hard-to-reach groups' it seems to be a self-fulfilling prophecy, it is hard to reach them so why bother?

The 'brown pound', and the ethnic communities that constitute it, have some key characteristics that must be understood and targeted accordingly. In planning to target these audiences once the appropriate message has been devised, the relevant media vehicle has to be chosen. This will involve choosing the right media and scheduling them according to the target market needs.

Characteristics

Based on the last census, South Asians represented 3 per cent of the UK population, which is approximately 1.6 million people. This segment consists of not only actual immigrants, but also second- and third-generation Asians born in this country. In the main, these group are highly educated, professional and some are business-owning individuals. The audience profile of this segment varies from male to female and young to old, with varying amounts of disposable income.

Distinguishing between the different generations is important. The first generation may have a greater affiliation with their home country – their cultural roots – and so consumption decisions are made according

to their own level of acculturation in Britain. While the second generation, born and bred in the United Kingdom, will live a more bi-cultural lifestyle, mixing both Eastern and Western value systems.

So what is the optimal solution for reaching this diverse but potentially rich group? Many of the campaigns aimed at this audience are neither planned nor do they demonstrate consideration of the media and channels, which means that the right media space is not being bought, so it remains an untapped market.

The role of media

The choice of media has to meet the target audience's needs. Essentially, those targeting ethnic audiences have a plethora of media to choose from, encompassing radio or television stations, newspapers, magazines and also web sites.

However, when making decisions about which media to choose it may be more favourable to use a combination that will result in synergistic results. There are a number of media vehicles that can be selected to carry a company's promotional message. However, choices have to take account of the generation, the age, level of disposable income and levels of affiliation with the home and host countries.

Reaching and communicating to this audience, ethnic minority media often uses community-based methods of distribution, but organisations are really not tapping into these communities' related opportunities. Punjab Radio for instance, targets Britain's Punjabi community. Also, particular television programmes such as Zee TV and specialist magazines, for example, *Asiana*, *Asian Women* and *Asian Bride* are media where potential messages can reach ethnic audiences in a concentrated manner.

However, when selecting and scheduling media, organisations also need to think beyond the sole use of concentrated media. What about the more traditional and mainstream media? The integration of both would have a greater impact and allow a number of different touch points for the potential customer.

Companies that wish to tap into the 'brown pound' have a number of choices to make when planning their marketing communications campaigns. First, the objectives of the campaign have to be understood – what do

you want to say to the consumers and what tools will be most effective for the message? In addition, issues concerning reach and frequency are important.

However, to tap into the 'brown pound' it may be a case of not only understanding the differences, but also recognising the similarities between consumers of an ethnic background compared to the indigenous population. Also, the message has to be relevant to the segment and how you can influence ethnic consumers: directly, indirectly, through reference groups or opinion leaders? Finally, the timing and scheduling of campaigns, in order to develop a consistent message and deliver it at times relevant to the target audience, is all-important in targeting what marketers have labelled as 'select audiences'.

The 'brown pound' still remains a fairly untapped market, it is worth millions, so planning the right

message, and delivering it through the right media, at the right time, could bring lucrative returns for many companies.

MiniCase questions

1. Using a company or brand of your choice, plan an outline marketing communications campaign aimed at one specific ethnic group. Pay particular attention to media choice and the campaign schedule.
2. Which particular factors might need to be taken into account when planning campaigns to reach ethnic groups?
3. When planning a media mix to reach ethnic audiences, what do you believe might be the critical factors?

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