

ROLE OF PRINT MEDIA IN ADVERTISING : A MULTI INDUSTRY PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract:

In retail, look at the number of advertisements that are in the newspaper, that you get in your mailbox on a weekly basis or the direct mail pieces you receive. For many retailers, the weekly print ad is a staple necessity. Many people depend on print to plan their weekly shopping needs.

Retailers consider print to be the primary vehicle in which they talk to their customers and keep themselves top of mind. Newspapers target different readerships with a mix of content, often including sports, entertainment, business, fashion and politics in addition to local, national or world news. Advertisers can buy different sizes of advertising space, from small classified ads with text only, to display ads featuring text, photographs, illustrations and graphics in sizes up to a full page or even a double-page spread.

This article is not about reselling the sensitivity, patience and consumer friendliness of newspaper ads to today's youth. Print media is here to stay and will continue to be a credible tool for tactical advertisers, publishers and readers. The younger media buyers today should at least recognize the challenge of standing out amid the tremendous ad clutter that exists today. Can they - or will they - wait for the consumer to opt in?

Keywords: Print Media, Readers, Buyers, Marketing Mix

Introduction

Advertising is primarily a strategic weapon, which is heavy, long-range artillery. Its total effects must be evaluated in the context of years, not weeks or months. Advertising cannot compete with sales-promotion and direct- marketing activities in generat-

ing short- term sales effects. But in the long term, the cumulative force of strategically sound media advertising can achieve results that cannot be equaled by sales promotion or other marketing activities.

Media choice is a daunting task in the present world of heavy business competition for companies to make from the following types of media available.

1. Print Media

Print advertising tends to work more slowly than television or radio.

Therefore, an especially long period of time (or an especially heavy media schedule) is required to fully evaluate the total effects of print advertising. Print is an important arrow in the media quiver; however, because a share of the population tends to be heavy readers, one won't reach them with television, radio commercials, YouTube, or sponsorships of tractor races.

2. Radio

Radio commercials can be as effective as television commercials, based on ROI on every rupee spent on media. However, radio commercials seldom achieve their true potential because they tend to be inferior to television commercials in content and production quality. Typically, radio budgets are much less than television and radio commercials are rarely tested among consumers. If one may plan to use radio, pretest the commercials to

make sure they work.

3. Outdoor Advertising

Outdoor advertising is very much effective as an advertising media, provided it used properly. It is necessary and important to give thrust upon "strategy" and also the message should be apt / suitable to the subject matter.

Outdoor advertising is great at extending or reinforcing the key theme of a television or radio campaign. If some of the visual elements and the key theme of a television or radio campaign can be condensed and shown via outdoor advertising, the awareness-build of television can be accelerated. Outdoor advertising can add a visual element to a radio campaign (e.g., show the retail package), and it can help boost the awareness-build of a print-advertising campaign.

4. Social Media

Social media continues to grow in importance and reach. Its ultimate value as an advertising media remains to be seen. Ads and commercials intended for online delivery or social media distribution operate by the same rules as all other advertising. Television-testing techniques, for example, can be applied to commercials that look like television commercials, regardless of where those commercials are aired. Static banner ads are similar to print ads and can be evaluated by those metrics. Many social media and online ads and com-

mercials fall in between these extremes, and require some adjustments in measuring techniques. What's important is that these ads go through the same research processes as other commercials do.

5. Television

Not only does the term "television advertising" refer to a commercial with color, motion, and sound like those we see on television, it also refers to those same types of commercials one might see on the web, in social media, on YouTube, or on Facebook. Thusly defined, television advertising is still the gold standard and the most effective of all media for consumer products. Television commercials have the greatest impact and tend to move awareness numbers up swiftly-with sufficient media weight. Generally, the equivalent of 100 GRPs (Gross Rating Points) per week is the lower limit of spending level if one hopes to see measurable increase in advertising awareness. Also, television commercials (like all advertising) would be more effective if a higher share were tested among consumers before airing.

Factors affecting Selection of Media

- 1) Customer's purchasing power and class in society.
- 2) Language - Level of education e.g. to communicate the message local language is required. Similarly for few products like computers Literacy is a must.

3) Editorial style, quality and its contents, shows the taste, culture, education of customers that affect selection of media.

4) Circulation for newspapers, time slot in broadcasting and TRP of television channels.

There are very few popular serials or news channels where viewership is more. Importance of television channels can be judged by market surveys of popular serials.

5) Reach of Media - Audited circulation, National reader's surveys and critical approach towards popularity of the serials.

6) Rates - Newspapers negotiate the rates, for few particular types of programs or activities. Similarly rates for advertisement Radio or Television vary depending on time slots.

Other promotional activities like concessions, rate difference, and market mix of media also help advertisers to decide

Fast forward to working for a paper company and print is equally important. It's the primary vehicle for how we speak to our customers and how we communicate our brand out into the marketplace. It's challenging enough to create a compelling marketing piece without having to be concerned with what it will look like when it's printed but, when paper is your core business, the end result is even more critical. Think about it, we're promoting the products we're communicating with-I can't think of too many other industries that get to

do that. Our promotional pieces have to inspire, spark creativity, demonstrate capability, look beautiful and speak to a broad audience (merchants, printers and designers). There are a lot of considerations that go into the strategy and design of a piece: from the format, to color and image choices and finally finishing. No detail is too small and there are countless hours that go into the conceptualizing and design. But it doesn't stop there; press checks are a critical step to ensure we get the final outcome we desire and our customers expect.

Even though it's up to each company to choose the mediums in their communication mix, print remains a vital, trusted component for many businesses and markets.

While it's true that newspapers and magazines face some challenges in communication with the younger people, traditional print media still has its charm as way as plan of action advertising thinks about. It permits for a targeted geographic reach, with a lot of and more newspapers providing city splits wherever their distribution is restricted to pick geographies among a city. This means a unique advantage for retailers.

First, a bit background: India's emergent retail business is quick catching up with the advertising expenditures of its comparatively mature western counterparts. Typically, within the western markets, the retailers' advertising expenditures are 2-2.5 per cent of their turnover. In India, retail firms

have already crossed this bar, with the typical spend hovering around five per cent as retailers still build scale of operations.

With the expansion of modern retail gathering pace, one will clearly see the distinction within the selling techniques of multi-brand retailers in operation specifically in massive formats like supermarkets and hypermarkets, in comparison to those of their western counterparts. Most business consultants attribute this to the increasing aggressiveness, besides the growing attractiveness and adoption of contemporary retail formats by shoppers and therefore the peculiarities of the Indian retail business.

In India, there is little or no advertising that is aimed at building the brand, except those pursued by a few lifestyle brands and fashion retailers, as most of the efforts are directed towards communicating the value being offered. Increasingly, retailers believe that 'price' is the only differentiator and therefore, we see advertising promoting a 'price challenge' of sorts.

In India, there is a rush to attain pan-India scale and retail chains are going beyond the metros by penetrating into Tier II and Tier III towns and cities. A combination of the 'race' for scale and reach, coupled with offer-driven communication, results in Indian retailers resorting to tactical advertising campaigns. This is further accentuated because the retail trade is

largely unorganized and the modern retailers have to fight with traditional players to get footfalls. Remember, at the end of the day, retail is a 'local' business.

If one takes the example of hypermarkets and supermarkets (including regional/one-city chains), all of them are visible in national/regional newspapers, sometimes carrying full page advertisements. Added to that is the double standard of the Indian consumer, who seeks up gradation in some categories (such as mobile phones, housing, automobiles and durables) and value in the others (grocery). They can be indulgent when shopping for the finest in specialty foods - and in the next minute, be extremely prudent and judicious when buying staples or vegetables, with a keen eye on prevailing market prices. The key issue for any retailer, therefore, is to identify the 'upgrades' and 'value-focused' product categories, rationalize the product mix while maintaining healthy margins and chart out an advertising media mix accordingly.

With tactical advertising clearly scoring over brand advertising in the retail industry, the next logical step comes in determining the advertising media - electronic (including the power of mobile penetration through SMS) or print.

Newspapers can reach consumers without bothering, distracting or irritating them as pop-up Internet ads and loud, tasteless television and radio

commercials often do. The other advantage of print is its credibility and readability of the 'fine print', especially since retailers have a plethora of offers and consumers tend to cherry pick between offers of competing retailers. As print can target very sharply, it can bring down spill over and the retailer has the ability to offer two different sets of offers across two different clusters within the same city.

Further, this medium is beginning to offer innovation in terms of placement, mastheads on the front page and other very creative solutions that almost suggest that the newspaper has been 'sponsored' for the day by the said advertiser. Granted that Internet advertising has an edge in cost per lead terms, it is print media that seems to deliver ads which are a destination, and not a distraction.

Print media and some advantages it has over its digital counterparts. Tangibility - A print piece is a physical thing. Magazines and newspapers can stay in houses or offices for months or years, while Internet ads can disappear into cyber space instantaneously.

Credibility - There is something about print that gives a sense of legitimacy. The saturation of popup and banner ads on the web can be overwhelming and the fear of spam and viruses is enough make people weary of clicking. There is no imminent danger in a print ad

Branding - Print ads are excellent for

solidifying your brand identity. Your ads should have a consistent aesthetic in terms of fonts, colors and types of images to establish brand recognition. Target Marketing - Placing ads in publications such as specialty magazines can effectively reach niche audiences that may be more difficult to target online.

More Engaging - Consumers are more engaged when reading printed material, unlike websites, which are often skimmed in as little as a 15 second visit. A study shows that people read digital screen text 20% - 30% slower than printed paper. (Alshaali & Varshney, 2005)

Less Print Ads - With more and more businesses relying solely on the Internet for their advertising needs, the decline of print publication can actually be used as a marketing advantage. The publications are less crowded, allowing more room for your ad to shine, and possibly even cheaper prices for that ad space.

QR Codes - Placing QR codes on printed pieces is an excellent way to bridge the gap between print and web. When scanned with a smartphone, the QR code will take you to a homepage or a special offer page that lives on the web.

The best way to market your business is to utilize as many channels as possible to reach every corner of your target demographic; this should not exclude print. Although it is likely that most emphasis, in terms of advertising, will be executed online, there

still exist those who revel in the glory of the printed page and it's important to reach them. Finding the right balance between various media will ensure a steady revenue flow, an increase in sales and new customers.

Finally, at a time when every marketing and advertising initiative needs to be justified from a business perspective, print media offers more credible and robust opportunities for evaluating its return on investment. One can monitor the publications that actually work for the brand and it becomes easier to determine which part of the advertising budget was a better investment, at what time and at what cost.

Conclusion

The present market is doubtless a "buyers market" having variety of alternatives available before them to pick. based on this truth, firms everywhere need to take prudent call in creating appropriate choice of kind of media with an objective to succeed in targeted customers. In fact, rather than relying solely on one or 2 kinds of media they must guarantee to have proper blending of media for propagating their products/services. It's recommended for them to review various promotional factors, client expectations and their perception towards specific media, risk factors for formulating their media alternative mix. Print media has also been a culture and will remain a culture. That is

probably one of the strongest characteristic that print media has that makes it a very effective means of communication and platform for marketing and advertising. Once something is attached to culture or considered one, it acquires an intrinsic value of being strongly supported by those who are subject to it. Our ethnocentric nature proves us that.

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