

## The Advertising Challenge: Catch Me if You Can!

An Ipsos Minute with John Hallward, President, Global Product Development, Ipsos ASI

*Q: One of the greatest challenges for advertisers is getting an ad viewed by the desired target segment. Do you have any insight into just how many consumers dodge advertising?*

**John Hallward:** Media audiences are generally not very attentive, and more importantly, their attention levels differ by time of day, day of week, type of content/show, and so on. Recently, Ipsos ASI conducted a study to look at TV viewers' levels of attention and of their ad recall from commercial breaks just minutes prior to interviewing. We used telephone interviewing coincidental with TV viewing. The interviewing was conducted all day long, seven days a week, for ten weeks in a row. We interviewed people while they were watching TV and asked them about their current attention to the program, assessed their other activities, and evaluated their ad recall from the last commercial break just minutes ago. From this, we observed that attention and recall levels differ by the time of day, day of week, type of show, re-runs versus live TV, location of the TV, and so on. Thus, although all TV viewers would normally be counted in the audience as measured by Nielsen, we observed a relatively low level of attention to commercial breaks, which varied noticeably by recognizable characteristics.

By knowing which characteristics lead to more attentive viewing, advertisers can identify the higher quality ad breaks and plan their media placement to achieve above-average viewer attention. The data revealed that many TV viewers did some other activity while watching TV (72%) and/or left the room in which the TV was located (63%). I do not mean to degrade the value of television as a medium since I suspect that attention to most paid media suffers similar challenges, and perhaps even more so for

passive media such as radio advertising, and outdoor billboards. That said, the same study indicates that when one media form, such as television, is combined with other touch points such as radio or print, ad recall can exponentially go up.

Another interesting tidbit which caught my attention is the fact that channel surfers had better ad recall than those who did not channel surf. I often hear the assumption that channel surfing is supposed to be damaging to ad recall. But the opposite is true! Channel surfing (as measured by people-meters) is good for ad recall. I believe this is true because channel surfing requires focused attention on the TV, which is better than ignoring the TV altogether.

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*Q: Recently you presented some of these findings at the ARF Audience Measurement Conference (June 2008). Can you summarize the learnings you shared at that conference?*

**John Hallward:** At the outset, I want to say that this ARF conference was one of the better ones I have attended owing to the many presentations related to the emerging digital media. As we've all heard many a time, technology is rapidly evolving. This applies as much to new marketing approaches, as it does to the market research which measures it. Both marketing and advertising research has to keep up with, and in front of, the consumers who are consuming the emerging media. My presentation, "Make Measurable What is Not," discussed new approaches to evaluating consumers in the evolving world of emerging media because we see that many researchers are not measuring what matters. Many rely on standard metrics such as the readership of a magazine, but how does that really tell advertisers



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that their ad was actually noticed? The same applies to product placement in a movie, or when a consumer mentions a brand in a chat room. The real question is, which groups of consumers are being touched by these efforts, and to what effect? The answer lies in consumer mix modeling: understanding how and in which way the many different media touch points are driving brand equity, brand familiarity, volume of use, etc. This is much more than audience measurement of the media vehicles.

**Q: Can you explain why understanding consumer mix modeling is so important?**

**John Hallward:** The industry status quo is not sufficient because principal media measures (exposure, reach, frequency) do not relate to cost-effective marketing decisions. Advertisers are looking at the wrong measures to help guide efficient, effective marketing plans. Instead of counting noses, they really need 'consumer mix modeling' to better understand recall or touch point experiences, and their related contribution to the brand objectives (by sub-targets). This is about holistic evaluation, with synergistic assessments, and with identification of individual elements which are contributing to smarter marketing decisions.

**Q: Perhaps you can tell us a bit more about how to go about and measuring what matters?**

**John Hallward:** At Ipsos ASI, we developed a fresh approach – *Brand\*Graph 360°* – which is based on consumer mix modeling. This new tool models many different brand metrics at the individual consumer level, across all of the brand touch points. I imagine that all readers understand that touch points are all of the various individual points of contact between the brand and the consumer which impart an impression about the brand. This naturally includes all the paid media and promotional activities, but also the unpaid elements such as word-of-mouth, consumer generated content, news coverage, website visits, product usage, the brand artwork/look, the price, the channels of distribution, and so on. The goal is to assess the exposure of each consumer (respondent)

to each touch point, and then discover the impact of the touch points on key brand measures of interest. This allows us to explore the drivers of key brand metrics beyond just sales to include important goals such as brand equity, brand familiarity, future purchase intent, trial, and purchase behavior (loyalty).

*Brand\*Graph 360°* is a consumer survey which assesses the recall (reach) of each touch point and which separately models the derived impact on all key brand measures. Since it is done at the individual consumer level, we can model strategic segments (e.g. brand users versus non-users) to see the effect of different touch points among different targets/segments. By modeling, we can derive the effects of the touch points. This allows us to avoid having to ask respondents direct questions about how, if, or in what manner each touch point works on them, which would be too cognitive, biased, and misleading. Most advertising is consumed peripherally and is not so consciously processed. This is why deriving the impact of the touch points is the right approach.

**Q: Finally, do you touch on some of these learnings in your book, Gimme! The Human Nature of Marketing?**

**John Hallward:** Actually, in addition to covering this in my book, 18 excerpts from the book have been posted to the Ipsos ASI website for downloading. Each 2-page excerpt summarizes key learnings from the book and one of them specifically (#14) focuses on this subject matter.

To access the excerpts, simply go to:  
[www.ipsosasi.com/gimme](http://www.ipsosasi.com/gimme).

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