

11

Testing for Advertising Effectiveness

“Advertising that does not sell is a waste”.

This chapter gives an insight into the advertising effectiveness and the methods used to evaluate them.

Testing for Advertising Effectiveness

To measure the advertising effectiveness we must be able to evaluate all the aspects of the communication elements. These are the Source, Message, Media and Budget.

■ 11.1 Source

It has to be seen whether the source is effective and how the target market will respond to it. Some sources, like Kapil Dev, Sharukh Khan, Sachin Tendulkar, Amitabh Bachhan, Pretty Zinta, Kareena Kapoor, are very effective. They are attractive, genuine sports persons or actors and have the credibility. Sometimes, the source loses its credibility or becomes old and has to be changed.

■ 11.2 Message

How the message is communicated to the audience and what type of message it is, also affects the advertisement. The message should be memorable and should be able to deliver the advertising objectives. The delivery of the message and its setting or situation also matters a lot. The message must have proper headlines, illustrations, text and layout. The ads must be ethical, the message should be credible and too much use of unnecessary sex should also be avoided. There are certain consumable products like soaps, contraceptives, hair oils, creams and toiletries. These products sometimes have to use and take the help of the other sex for stimulating demand.

■ 11.3 Media Strategies

It is very important to decide the proper Media Mix. *i.e.* (Print Media, Broadcast Media) Newspaper or Magazines, Radio, T.V. that could generate the most effective results. Media vehicle has also to be decided, that is, which newspaper or magazines, which channel or T.V. which programme on radio is to be used. This is decided by keeping the target audience in mind. The location of the Ad in a particular medium is also important. In a media we can choose the front page or the back page or the inside page or any ordinary page placed strategically. In T.V. some programmes are more effective and popular. Some audience prefer old programmes and some, like to new ones.

Another factor is the scheduling of the advertisement whether a continuous approach, a pulsating approach or a flighting approach be adopted (see Advertising in the chapter on media). This is an important decision and requires experience by decision makers.

■ 11.4 Budget

For evaluating of the advertisement, the money spent on the budget is also an important factor. It is sometimes believed that the increase in the advertising expenditure will lead to greater sales. However this may not be true as optimal expenditure is required keeping in mind the role of other promotional mixes.

Testing of Advertisement

Testing of advertisement is basically done by two methods—Pretesting and Posttesting.

Pretesting (also known as evaluation research) is done before the advertisement is released. Pretesting is essential to see how effective the advertisement will be. Since a lot of money is spent on making the advertisement copy etc., it is essential to gauge what impact will it have on the audience. Pretesting may be done at a number of points. Right from idea generation till its implementation. Pretest should be used as a guide. In pretesting of advertisement respondents are asked a *number of questions in different settings*. These setting can be in laboratory, field etc. Questions asked can be framed to elicit information from the respondents to make out and differentiate strong ads from the weak ones.

Questions Asked

- Which of the Ads interest you most.
- Which Ad is more convincing about the quality and superiority of the product.
- Which Ads would you like to read in a magazine.
- Which Ad on T.V. would you like to see again and again.
- Which headlines is best in your opinion.
- Which layout persuades you most to buy the product.

Methods of Pretesting of the Advertisement

- **Direct questioning:** From the respondents/consumers about the Ad in question.
- **Focus group:** A group of about 140 people who freely discuss about the Ad and give their opinion.
- **Portfolio test:** It consists of 2 groups of respondents one is exposed to a portfolio of test Ads interspersed among other Ads. The other group sees the protfolio without the test Ads.
- **Paired comparison test:** In this the respondent compare each Ad in a group.
- **Order of merit test:** Two or more Ads of the same product are put in order of preference or rank.
- **Direct mail test:** Two or more Ads are mailed to different potential customers to see which Ad attracts more orders.

Central Location Test

Respondents are shown test commercial in a public place or a shopping centre in big malls.

Clutter Test

The ad to be tested are shown along with other non-competing Ads to study the response to the Ad.

Trailer Test

Trailers are shown as commercials at shopping centres and the prospects are given discount coupons for the advertised products.

Live Telecast Test

Commercials are shown at electronic T.V. or cable and subsequently respondents are interviewed on the phone.

Sales Experiment: Alternative T.V. or Radio commercials are run in two or more markets and then compared.

■ 11.5 Physiological Tests

Pupil Dilation Test

In this we observe the pupil of the eye. It can widen when it sees something interesting and shrinks if the advertisement depicts violence or unpleasant things. It measures the dilation. The instrument is known as the pupilometer.

The eyes of the respondents are watched to study the interest. If the pupil expands and the respondent open his eyes widely, it shows his interest in the product. If the pupil contracts and the respondent tends to contract the eyes then he is disinterested in the scene shown.

Movement of the Eye: The movements of the eyes is also an indicator of the interest of the respondent.

Galvanic Test

A galvanometer is used to indicate the gland activity, tension or the sweating of hands etc. change in perspiration indicates the change in emotions. One can have different emotions by seeing a sexy object or a fight or a dramatic scene. This change in emotion is reflected on the galvanometer.

Voice Variations

The pitch of the voice changes with emotional responses.

Posttesting Method

After the advertisement has run for a considerable period of time, it is tested to measure its effectiveness.

These tests are: recall test, recognition test, attitude test sales test and enquiry test.

Recall Test

In this test, the respondents are asked to recall the ads they have seen and the brand is concealed and asked whether they had seen the ad through reading, listening or viewing (Aided recall). In unaided recall, no prompting is done and they are asked whether they had read, seen or heard the message. Respondents are lured by some inducements to answer the enquiries. It measures the effect of Media as well as individual advertising. Only factor of the advertisement is examined at a time.

Recall test: This comes under two categories, aided recall and unaided recall.

Aided recall: It measures the memory of the respondent by asking him to recall what he saw on the T.V. It is an objective test. The respondent is contacted on phone to find out the recalls of the commercial he had seen 2 hours earlier. Then the Ad may be provided by asking whether he remembers the Ad on some subjects like energy or an Ad on X brand. The recall test may take place in a day or two or even immediately.

Unaided recall: In this, Ad is provided to the respondent. Respondents are asked whether the advertisement included a particular picture or message. The name of the brand is not given. If they can recall then it may be concluded that the advertisement was effective.

Combined Recall Test

This is a combination of the above two methods of recall. The respondents are asked whether they have read the magazine or newspaper or heard the radio or seen the T.V. Ad.

- The respondents must first be able to recall the editorial features of the Ad.
- They are handed group, of cards in which the names of the advertised brands are printed.
- Then the respondents are questioned in depth to evaluate the accuracy of recall.
- A copy of this is given to the respondents and asked as to how many times they have seen the Ad. Those who had seen the Ad one time are retained, the rest are discarded. The demographic factors like age, sex, occupation effect the recall. It measures the recall of qualified readers. Other information whether the respondents is a prospective buyer or not is also found out.

The limitation of this test is the heavy cost. People have different memories. It can not effectively measure because the success or failure of the advertisement.

Recognition Test

This is conducted to see whether the Ad is recognised or not. This test can be conducted by mail surveys. The Ad can be broken into headlines, layouts, body, copy logo etc. and it is seen how these elements are remembered by the respondents. The recognition test can be conducted in a number of ways. The magazines are placed in the home of the respondents and they are requested to read that magazine on that day. Next day they are asked questions about the ad appearing in that magazines to assess the recall of ads.

Inquiry

It refers to the effectiveness of ad in Print Media. In this the consumers respond by asking for more information. Inquiries may be by phone calls, coupons returned or asking for free samples. The researcher tests the attention getting value, readability and comprehension. In this

method, samples are drawn from urban areas where the magazine is circulated and read. Interviewers determine circulation and readership. Participants are asked to go through the magazine, and looking at the Ads provide specific responses. The results indicate that the respondents not only read the Ad but also took some action which is a relatively stronger indicator than recall or awareness.

It stresses that the mere presence of an ad in a Media or magazine has no meaning unless it is read by the audience. It is also known as Readership Test. They try to find out how many people have read the advertisement. For conducting the test samples of magazines are sent to respondents and then it is found that how many or what percentage of the people read the magazine that was sent to them. It is also found out how many remember the Advertisement or the brand, and the number of readers attracted to the advertisement. It helps to find out the cost incurred on it. It is believed that there is high correlation between the reading of the advertisement and the purchase of the product. This technique was developed by Daniel Starch. The result of advertisement were measured under normal conditions. Competitive achievements can also be measured by this test. It is a simple test. This test has its limitations as well. Readers of the advertisement do not necessarily purchase the product nor do the non-readers shy away from the product. By examining a few ads magazines and having a small number of respondents the test may not be valid. Bias can be a criterion for the respondent and the researcher. It is an uncontrolled test and distorted results are a possibility in it.

Eye Camera

The eye camera is used to measure the behaviour of the respondent. The audience is asked to view a series of pictures. His eye movements are measured by the camera. The eye can be fixed on the object which may be interpreted as interesting. He can move his eyes from one corner to the other. It can be discovered which part of the advertisement looks interesting to him.

Attitude Test

The attitude of potential customers can be measured on the attitude scale. The scale measures the customer's attitude on a continuum from very favourable at one end to very and unfavourable at the other. These scales can be a five point Likert scale or a seven-point scale as shown with a neutral point between.



Attitude change: has already been discussed earlier in brief. It consists of semantic differentiated scale, the likest scale and the ranking techniques.

- **Semantic differential scale:**

It measures the attitude by Bipolar adjective statements about the subject.

Useful useless
 Realistic unrealistic
 Tasty not tasty
 White black
 Persuasive not persuasive
 Known unknown
 and so on

- The likest scale has been discussed earlier.
- **Ranking techniques:** Products and brands are ranked in order of preference by the consumers.
- **Projective techniques:** Like the sentence completeness test and; the one word association and the TAT test etc.

Sales Tests: Advertising and sales function are correlated.

- Measurement of past sales over the years.
- **Field experiments.** Experiments are conducted in the market under natural conditions.
- **Matched samples.** In a similar area or a similar age group experiments are conducted on 2 sets of groups own who have seen the Ad and the others that have not seen the advertisement. Their difference in sales is studied to measure the effectiveness of the advertisement.

Other scales for measuring the attitude is the Semantic differential scale. If the advertisement can change the attitude of the customer towards the advertiser's product. It is considered effective.

Depth Interview

This is done by asking suitable questions from the respondent who unhesitatingly answers the questions. It brings out his uncons reactions. It is a kind of non-structured questionnaire. This technique is used for Exploratory Research. Pro-active questions are asked in a congenial atmosphere. The test includes sentence completion test, the Thematic Apperception Test (TAT) and other expressive techniques to pretest the advertisements.

Day After Recall (DAR) Test

The measure of effectiveness of the Ad is that how many people can recall the Ad. In simple words magazines or Ads in any form is shown to the respondents and after one day (24 hrs.), the respondents are asked to recall the Ad. The effectiveness of the Ad is measured by the percentage of recall. It is most popular method of posttesting of the Ads. The drawback of this programme is that some people have better memories than others. Rational messages are easier to recall than emotional messages. Since the recall is to be made verbal the expression of the respondent must be considered as well.

How to Improve Advertising Effectiveness

Ad. effectiveness is the joint responsibility of the advertiser and the advertising agency. The advertising should be judged on its merit like attention value, comprehensibility, credibility, technical execution, overall impact, originality etc.

Conclusion

Jerome Mccarthy had said about 4 decades back that "Evaluating advertising effectiveness is not easy". This holds true even today. The controversy raised by DAGMAR (Defining advertising goals for measuring advertising results) sales/communication being the objectives of advertising. If sales is the objective it can be quantitatively measured but sales can also be because of many

extraneous factors. Even when communication is the goal it is difficult to measure its effectiveness. It can be however be measured with audiences ability to recall and recognise the message. The effectiveness of the Ads can also be measured by comparing the present sales with the past sales. Therefore, it becomes obvious that the exact measurement of effectiveness can be measured in a number of ways but it cannot be very accurate as many factors are to be considered and evaluated. These could be:

- (i) The cost per thousand target buyers incurred on media category and media vehicle.
- (ii) Percentage of audience who read saw and noted the Ad.
- (iii) Consumer opinion on the ad contents and effectiveness.
- (iv) Change in attitude after seeing the Ad.
- (v) No of enquiries received for the Ad.

Advertising efficiency can be improved by better message better positioning better use of media, clear objectives, pretesting of the Ad etc.

Questions

1. Discuss the pretesting and posttesting of advertisements.
2. What is advertising effectiveness?