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A successful planning effort can get the creative strategy integrated into the current advertising campaign

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Abstract

Every large advertising medium conducts studies, which delineates its audience by demographic and often socio-psychological characteristics, and it is recognized that the presence of such characteristics may be vital to the purchase or non-purchase of certain products. Further, it brings out the data regarding product use, users and exposure to a specific medium etc. and helps to take decisions. Therefore, many advertising media generate data, in these days, on the subject. Moreover, the media associations, research organizations in the field of newspapers, magazines, radio, television, outdoor and transportation advertising make similar studies. Admittedly these studies stress the value of the media type rather than individual publication, broadcast stations, or other media firms. Both sources of media information spew forth unbelievably large quantities of material, which must be evaluated by media planners for possible bias.

Keywords: Research organization, media choice, media planning, media management, media association

Introduction

During the last decade, there have been many changes in advertising media environment. The increasing number of advertising outlets such as specialized magazines, cable channels, television and radio networks, and out of home media make the task of media planners difficult and confusing. An explosion of data for media and markets has accompanied this greater diversity of the media. These advanced data may elevate some problem faced by the media planners, but the availability of this information may enhance the need for tools to meaningfully interpret and analysis of the raw data. At present, more media planners fight their way out with a number crunching exercises. They calculate reach, frequency (OTS) and efficiency based on syndicated research data and media models which are developed on the basis of the data. Generally media choice is essentially governed by the quality of media data and quality of analysis of data supplied and made by research agencies and the media planners respectively. In India, there are a number of research studies and models available to the media planners for the effective media planning. Most of the largest ad- agencies' planners are forced to follow some complex methodology for projecting ratings from the available cities to non-represented markets. They are formed to mix estimates from diary and peplemeter panels, and to mix ratings from viewership panel with universe estimates from the National Readership Survey (NRS) and Indian Readership Survey (IRS).

“The entry of foreign research agencies in India is marking a shift in research standards with the country from simply data collection to industry specific specialization.”^[1] The fast increasing media options will necessitate changes in media research efforts. There is also likely to be an increase in demand for relevant market data rather than diagnostic studies. So, one of the important requisites of a media planner is familiarity with media choice and various sources of media information available. The following are the sources of media data available within the media as well as external sources.

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¹Bharti Rana: Research Gets International, Brand Equity, The Economic Times, 20-26 Sep. 1995, p.5.

Table 1: Sources of Media Information

Sources	Type of Data Available
Population Census	Total Profile of Indian people (size, strata, age, sex, ratio, literacy level, family size and forms etc.)
Annual Economic Survey	SEC (Socio - Economic Classification) income, occupation, etc.,
India Year Book (Publication division of Ministry of Information & Broadcasting)	Holistic view of data on various aspects of governance, demographic progress etc.,
INFA (Indian News and Feature Alliance Year Book - New Delhi)	Details information on various newspapers, magazines
Audit Bureau of Circulation (ABC) (It is bring out in support of newspaper publishers, magazine publishers, advertisers, ad-agencies)	Each medium reflected its circulation figures
Indian News Paper Society Hand Book (INS)	It brings out location / headquarters / registered office of publications, no. of editions, cover price, issue day, circulation key personnel etc.,
Syndicated Research of IMRB, MARG, NCAER, NRS, IRS and Other agencies	Syndicated research is often based on a given sample or panel survey, of which the entire or part is supplied to various users.
NRS conducted 1971, 1978, 1983, 1990, 1994, 1995, 1988, 2000	It covers estimates for various selected publications, viewership of TV, Video, Cinema, Listenership ration, duplication between publication and inter media duplications
IRS (Indian Readership Survey) by Media Research Users Council(MRUC) IRS-95 by ORG	Study on Urban / Rural markets, Channel penetration
Data Base for Electronic Media	Doordarshan and All India Radio given data on TV, viewership, etc., - It is frequently used by the media planners.
TV India: (Ministry of Information & Broadcasting)	Provides information on Estimated television sets, transmission centers, code for advertising etc.
Radio Hand Book	Station / tariff / rules/audience size/ code for commercial advertising AIR address etc.
People meter system of IMRB, ORG- MARG, INTAM-TAM	Gives GRP Ratings - Reach / Frequency (OTS) etc.
FM	Data on broad casting, young listenership, etc.
ORG - Sales Audit	Data on retail outlets and audit the movements of different products from the shops itself.
NCAER: (National Council of Applied Economic Research)	Mapping the markets and consumer perceptions.
Data on Competitors' media expenditure	Publishers by Newspapers, magazines, trade publications, etc.,
Government and Industry sources	Information provided by FICCI, CII, ASCHOM, SCOPE

Source: Secondary Data.

Crucial media planning factors

The media decision is critical in the success of the advertising campaign. It determines the characteristics of the individual exposed to the advertising, and it controls the place and the circumstances as form timing, and frequency of advertisement exposure. Beyond the exposure, the media decision influences the planner to consider the various factors for making effective media plan.

Media planning effort must essentially be integrated with the rest of the advertising plan. It is a part of the total marketing mix and has a supportive relationship with its various components like market, objective (corporate, advertising and media), media-budget, product, creativity, sales and historical background of the product etc., So the media planner need to coordinate media aspects with other parts of the programme. This factor/situation analysis in media planning should lead to the establishment of marketing objectives and strategies. The media planners are often involved in the marketing situation analysis, particularly examination of the following factors:

Market Objectives Budget Product/Brand Consumer Behaviour Communication Planning and Strategy Creative Sales Historical

The above important media planning factors are identified and analysed one by one with the help of responses made by the media planners.

Framing objectives (corporate, advertising, and media objectives)

Setting media objectives without understanding or knowing the marketing and communication objectives can be disastrous. This happens when the media planners try to understand other objectives while preparing the media plan. Marketing strategies lay out the steps for meeting these objectives by blending the four elements of the marketing

mix viz., product, price, distribution and communication. Thus, advertising is just one of the objectives. To achieve these advertising objectives, clients devise advertising strategies that would employ the elements of the creative mix like product concept, target audience, advertising message and communication media.

Just as the marketing mix and creative mix lead to marketing and advertising objectives, the media situation analysis also should lead to determination of specific media objectives. The designed media objectives lead to the attainment of communication and marketing objectives.

At the root of a media objective is the principle; media deliver messages. How, where, when and to whom the messages get delivered form the basis for setting media objectives. Typically, the media planners set media objectives in terms of reach, frequency, GRP's and similar concepts.

The table 2 shows that the objectives (corporate, advertising and media) related information consider in the planning by the planners.

Table 2: Objective Factors (Marketing, Advertising and Media)

Objectives Factors	Media / Res	Planners ponse
	Nos.	Percentage
Brand/Product Marketing Objectives	17	68
Brand/Product Communication Objectives	20	80
Brand/Product Media Objectives	25	100

Source: Primary Data

A 100% of the media planner/directors are considered media objectives. Because, it helps to achieve the other goals (market & advertising) and the media objectives have two classifications as audience objectives and message distribution objectives. Understanding of these two

objectives helps the planner in decision making, measurement and evaluation.

80% of the planners/directors give preference in media planning to consider advertisement objectives. Because, it indicates the purpose of advertising determines what the role of advertising is. It is intended to build awareness etc. They feel that the purpose of ad is identified and it is easy to support through media to achieve both objectives.

68% of the planner/directors give weightage for marketing objectives in planning. This is because of the media implications of the marketing objectives are two-fold. First, they can indicate what the purpose of advertising may be; second the marketing objectives intend to bring in new users for the brand or encourage current users to use the product or service more often.

If all the above three objectives are considered in media planning, it helps those, who are involved (ad-agency, client executive, creative team) in provide a communication platform, and helps to coordinate the efforts of copywriters, media planner, and media buyer. With the help of these objectives, many problems relating to media planning may be eradicated.

Market analysis

The media plans of the clients influence advertising plans, which are affected by what the firm hopes to achieve in the market place through the use of advertising. Understanding the market helps the planner to know about the brand, geographic sales distribution, market size, market shares, seasonal effects and price effects. Brilliant creative strategy can fail because marketing conditions are not properly predicted.

“Most successful brand will be those which are the most responsive factors to the market environment. Such responsiveness requires a deep and thorough understanding of the market (the consumer, the trade, the competitive offerings, the trends and the media) and of design capabilities and technologists to deliver the right product [2]. The media planner needs to know about the seasonality and regionally of sale of brand. The seasonality and regionally are also applicable to media markets they help to understand the dominance of certain media, seasonal and regional.

According to P.V. Narayanamoorthy, an expert in Media Management, says; “It has often been said that the media function is the closest to marketing. There is some merit in this observation. The marketing and sales functions distribute the brands in the market place and implement strategies for the brand to succeed by whatever parameters that have been identified on its part. Media carries the message (which is the reason to buy the brand) into the market place.” [3]

The following are the market factors considered in media planning by the planners.

Table 3: Market Factors

Factors	Media Planners Response	
	Nos.	Percentage
Size of the market for the product/brand	24	96
Market share for the product/brand	23	92
Market potentiality for the product/brand	21	84

Source: Primary Data

²Xerxes Desai: Brand Value is a new world order, Brand Equity, The Economic Times, 4th Jan. 1995, p.3.

³Narayanamoorthy .PV. (Media Director, Initiative Media): Fortniers in Media Benchmarking A & M, 30th June 1998, p.29.

The table 3: shows that 96% of the media planners give importance to the size of the market for the product/brand. Because, it helps to know about the media markets for the geographic area (it may be metro, rural or both) and consumption pattern of the brand in various geographic locations. Besides, the above the planner concentrates on brand development index, sales volume, local market problems, and opportunities. 92% of the respondents favour the market share for the product, so that they can understand the brand history, share, loyalty, brand purchase cycles, competitive share of voice etc. It helps to make effective media plan. 84% of the respondents consider market potentiality of the brand/product. Because by predicting the opportunity and problem, the planners can use the media to reach the targeted market effectively.

Media budget analysis

Clients are concerned about rapidly raising media costs, there is increasing emphasis on accountability in advertising, sales promotion seem to be more successful in inducing trial and a good number of product have matured. On the one hand, media planners often have tough decision to make because of budget limitation, on the other hand, they want to effectively reach their targets, but due to a limited budget may not be able to build sufficient frequency into their plan. So that nowadays the media planners are very careful about budget spending and urging the clients to allocate reasonable amount. The scientific media planning is also mainly aimed to introduce to get greatest impact by expending media budget.

“For the past four to six months, clients have become extremely vigilant about how the agency spends their money on media. No surprise there, with as much as 80% to 85% of a brand ad-budget account by spending on media and the rest is spread across the cost of creative, research etc.,” [4] That puts the pressure on media planners, whose role within the agency is changing. Eventhough the relationship of marketing objectives to media objectives is clear, a number of constraints often temper the media planner’s decision. Many times, the marketing budget is set before any media planning takes place. In such a situation, the media objectives will have to be written with the budget in mind. The following are the budget related factors taken into consideration by the planners in their planning work.

Table 4: Media Budget Factors

Factors	Media Planners Response	
	Nos.	Percentage
Previous year ad-budget	18	72
Current budget constrain of the ad-campaign	25	100
Previous year media budget and media plan	24	96

Source: Primary Data

The table 4 shows that 100% of the respondents favour in considering the current budget constraint of the campaign. The size of a budget recommended by a media planner might be reduced by the client after examining marketing/media objectives and strategy. In addition to these, constraints may arise due to the following reasons: the objectives to be achieved, media coverage expectation, product class to be advertised, stages of product life cycle,

⁴ Samarkant Kukreja; Cutting through the Clutter, Business Today, 19 Aug.2001, p.49

funds available with clients, competitors’ promotional efforts, new approach to advertising, size of the client etc. 96% of the media planners give importance to previous year media budget allocation and the media plan. Because, these previous year media budgets and plan comparisons shows the picture to work out the same for the current year too. Most of the planners handle ad- budget of the clients continuously, so it gives guidance for the current year. Only 72% of the media planners give weightage for previous year ad-budget when preparing media plan. Because the agencies which spend huge volume of fund for advertisement, interested in monitor previous year ad spending with this year plan from that, they can understand and make effective media plan. And also the planners can identify the area in which the difficulties arise.

Brand / product analysis

It is important for the media planner to understand thoroughly the brand/product in the market. An analysis of history of the product, and how it is developed is included in the product factor analysis. When and why product changes are made and the effects of such changes on each competitive brand could be important. Consumer perception about the values of various brands is also important for the media planner to consider in planning. This helps to identify the strength and weakness of the brand and also helps to achieve the target by way of effective use of media. The brand value is derived from many things including reputation, quality, brand awareness but the key element is the association that is evoked in the consumer by the brand name, symbol, package, etc.

“It is indeed, true that in today’s competitive world, brand must be able to differentiate themselves from other products in the market, in a meaningful and sustainable manner. However, the differentiation can be in several ways and not just in product delivery”. [5] Nowadays, the media planner acting as a brand differentiator role has to have a long term orientation, and the ad-campaign towards awareness of creating differentiation should take into consideration the long run implications. The following table 5 reveals the planners brand/product factor consideration.

Table 5: Brand / Product Factors

Factors	Media Planners Response	
	Nos.	Percentage
Current problem facing the brand/product category	25	100
Brand / Product life cycle	21	84
The package design of the Brand / Product	19	76

Source: Primary Data

100% of the planners/directors consider the current problem facing the brand/product category, because from that they can overcome constraints from media suitability to product competitive brands, market share, market expansion activity, life cycle stages of the product and strength and weakness of the product/brand. So all the respondents favour it more.

84% of the respondents favour the stages of product life cycle (new, mature, stagnating or near extinct) determines the high or low- level frequency. Suppose it is a new product, it requires high-level interest. It also helps to

determine the scheduling pattern of the media.

On the least important side, they give package design of the product/brand consideration. It may be because of the advent of supermarkets and departmental stores, which give greater emphasis on packaging (76%).

Consumer behaviour analysis

Understanding the consumer in terms of what influences purchase decision is one of the first steps in planning and ad-strategy. It affects various parts of an advertising campaign, including setting of objectives, defining target markets, developing the creative strategy and planning media selections. For the media planning is concerned in understanding what factors motivate the buyer to buy the product? Their perception about the media, the media influence them to buy the product, it helps the planners to select media that minimise the waste of media budget. The following are the factors to be considered by the media planners about consumer behaviour in media planning.

Table 6: Consumer Behaviour Factors

Factors	Media Planners	
	Nos.	Percentage
Consumption and usage pattern of the product / brand	19	76
Consumption or usage pattern of the product category	13	52
Consumer buying behaviour of the product category	14	56
The expected reaction to the advertising message	16	64

Source: Primary data

The table 6 reveals that consumer consumption and usage pattern of the product / brand given 76% weightage. Because, a consumer profile of those who buy specific brand versus those buy competitive product is important. Buying habits should also be analysed in these terms when products are purchased, and which side, models, and colours are purchased more often. How and when the consumer use these products should also be known.

64% of the respondents are in favour with the expected reaction to the ad-message. It helps planner to choose meaningful target audience, write effective advertisement and commercials, and to select the media.

On the least important side, buying behaviour of the product category (56%) and consumption or usage pattern of the product category (52%) are given by the media planner.

Communication planning and strategy analysis

Media are the means of delivering the creative message to the target audience, thereby they achieve the communication objectives of the campaign. Because “communication is essential for marketing, it is not enough to merely have a good product. People must also know that you have perfectly a good product; if you don’t communicate your product, goods will not be known to them. And if it is not known, it won’t even be considered, when someone is looking at products in your category” [6].

The role of planning is a very important step in developing a powerful and effective communication. “Advertising is a commercial communication, and its main objective is to develop brand franchise by providing the brand with requisite reputation within a product category. It involves an extreme rate, for advertising to be information and

⁵Shunu Sen: So, What's the difference? Catalyst, The Hindu Business Line, 9*Sep.1999,p.4

⁶Jagadeep Kapur: 24 Brand Mandras, Mandras to work Brand Magic, TheHindu Business Line, 26"" April 2001, p.2.

persuasion for choosing a brand in preference to another” [7]. In defining the communication strategy, the media planner must raise different questions about the communication, like what will happen if we don’t communicate? What beliefs would continue? What attitude will continue to prevail? What habits and behaviours might be more entrenched? How will that affect our brand / product /service? Therefore, what should communication do? These questions need to be answered. If the planners get the answers for the above questions, then communication is memorable, and they would become immortal as they appeal simultaneously to the minds and hearts of the audience.

The following are the communication planning and strategy factors considered by the media planners, and the preferences given are shown in the table 7.

Table 7: Communication Planning and Strategy Factors

Factors	Media Planners Response	
	Nos.	Percentage
Sales Promotion Plan and strategy of the brand / product	23	92
Direct marketing plan and strategy of the brand / product	17	68
Public relation and publicity plan and strategy of the brand / product	11	44.

Source: Primary Data

92% of the media planners give higher preference in media planning considering the sales promotion plan and strategy of the brand/product. Because an understanding of the different strategy used by the clients, its strength and weakness, and the role of media to support the strategy helps the planner to make effective media plan.

68% of respondents favour direct marketing plan and strategy. From the analysis, planners can get answer for the questions. In what way it helps for the brand / product? If they don’t adopt direct marketing strategy what will be the reaction in market? In what way a media can support it? In what way the brand can benefit? etc. So those agencies with corporate clients consider the same aspects mostly.

On the least important side, only 44% of the planners are in favour considering public relation and publicity plan strategy of the brand / product, because an understanding the above helps the media planners to support the Public Relation (PR) and Publicity Plan (PP) through media.

Creative aspects analysis

The creative strategy and creative execution are the blood veins of an advertising campaign, whether one is planning a national campaign or a local campaign for a retail store. The reasons should be obviously copies and art, which are the ingredients of communication that derives advertising. The copy (words, pictures, sound, colour, white space) are motivating forces for the advertisement. Because of the creative importance, planners should not proceed until they know what the creative factor is and which media the creative people think would best suit the message. In fact, creative personnel should discuss their strategies beforehand with media personnel. If they don’t, then it is upto the media planners to look for a creative factor and learn which media are preferred to. In fact, media planner can have worthwhile suggestions for the creatives.

The creative strategy affects the choice of media classes and

individual media. It also affects the degree of creative media planning. It is inconceivable that a planner would ignore the creative plan. “Creativity is a force, an energy that permeates through authentic creative professionals. But the energy needs a harness to translate itself into the ultimate creative product to the advertisement, the direct mail or the TV commercial” [8].

The creative and media decision are, therefore, usually taken simultaneously, but the dominant aspects may be either media or the creative. However, the media and the creative personnel must work closely together at each stage of advertising development. The media planner keeps in mind the respondents’ creativity factors while preparing the media plan shown in table 8.

Table 8: Shown The media planner keeps in mind the respondents’ creativity factors while preparing the media plan

Factors	Media Planners Response	
	Nos.	Percentage
Present ad-campaign creative strategy	24	96
Past ad-themes of the brand/product	21	84
The complexity of the ad-Message	25	100

Source: Primary Data

A 100% of the planners favour the complexity in the ad-message, because it influences the media mix as to how well a medium works (message suitability to medium) with the style or mood of a particular message. Ad-messages differ in many ways ranging from simple message to psychological, emotional or gender appeals to people needs and wants.

96% of the planners consider present ad-campaign creative strategy, mainly because of the reason that the critical evaluation of creative strategy helps the planner to change the proposition on functional or emotional benefit, credibility of claims, and memorability in real life impact on sales etc.,

84% of the respondents are in favour considering past ad-themes of the brand / products, because the suitability / unsuitability to media, creative message making memorability from the previous ad- theme are taken into consideration.

Sales analysis

Generally, advertising is assigned as a communication task that must be accomplished before a product can be sold effectively. The product may adopt different strategy, but it need to announce the strategy before the consumers. So, sales promotion too has a special significance to media planners. Many promotions call for inserts in magazines, or newspapers, such as coupons, booklets, or samples of fabrics. All of these inserts require planning, especially in estimating their cost and timing.

After sales volume information about a brand and its competitors are gathered, it is possible to start making decision about where to advertise, through what media to advertise. Here, the following are the sales factors taken into consideration by the media planners in their planning.

⁷Sheunu Sen: Advertising need not be Trigger for smoker, Catalyst, The HinduBusiness Line 22nd* Feb.2000, p.iv

⁸Monidipa Mukherjee: Inspiration Director, Brand Equity, The Economic Times, 25-31 Dec. 1996, p.4.

Table 9: Sales factors

Factors	Media Planners Response	
	Nos.	Percentage
Monthly / Seasonal sales pattern of the brand or product	25	100
Customer sales analysis of the brand or product	18	72
Geographical sales pattern of the brand / product	25	100
Monthly / seasonal sales pattern of the product category	08	32
Brand / product sales and distribution strategy	19	76
The unique selling proposition of the brand / product	16	64
Sales forecast of the brand / product	13	52
Sales history of the brand / product	16	64

Source: Primary Data

The monthly / seasonal sales pattern, geographical sales pattern of the product / brands given 100% favour in considering media plan by the planner, because the timing of the advertising schedules is a vital strategy in planning. Most of the sales of consumer products fluctuate. Media timing (when to start and stop a campaign) should reflect the sales calendar or seasonality for each advertiser. To do this accurately, planners should carefully follow the consumer demand trends apparent from the monthly sales report.

On the least important side, there are the factors like customer sales analysis (72%), selling proposition (64%), sales history (64%), sales forecast (52%) and monthly / seasonal sales pattern of the product category (32%).

Historical information analysis

An understanding of the traditional value and the historical background of the product / brand helps the media planner to choose a right media through their planning work. It explores the information regarding sales distribution, market side, market share, seasonal effects, competitor’s brands etc. Here, the planners / directors are in favour with the following tabulated factors in their media planning.

Table 10: Historical factors

Factors	Media Planners Response	
	Nos.	Percentage
Past history of responsiveness of the Ad-for the product	24	96
Historical development of the characteristics of the brand/product	21	84
Historical development of the characteristics of the product category	17	68

Source: Primary Data

The table 10 shows that 96% of the planners take into consideration the past history of the responsiveness to advertising brand / product. Because these information may reveal message strategy, success or failure, media suitability, impact, etc. It may help the planner to alter the strategy or follow the same strategy.

84% of the respondents favour the historical developments of the characteristics of the product / brand. That uniqueness, brand popularity may help a lot this planner in the present campaign.

On the least important side 68% of the planners consider historical development of the characteristics of the product / brand. Because a well-established brand may support another slogan, etc.

Those planners handling product categories of the same company generally consider the above factors.

Conclusion

Without the consideration of the different factors like, objectives, market, brand, creativity, sales, historical information in media planning, the media planning may be ineffective in different ways. It may lead to personal bias in media planning, and it makes media planning more expensive, unsuitable, less effective in media selection etc., Hence, almost all the media planners must give due importance to the above factors. Geographical / sales pattern is concerned with the company that sells its products through the market place. The sales activity and sales rank are different in each area. Hence consideration of these factors helps the media planner to make geographic allocation of money.

76% of the media planners / directors favour in considering brand / product distribution strategy, because marketers with poor distribution may not be able to explicit the market potential. These factors may be considered by the media planners to adjust their spending suitably.

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