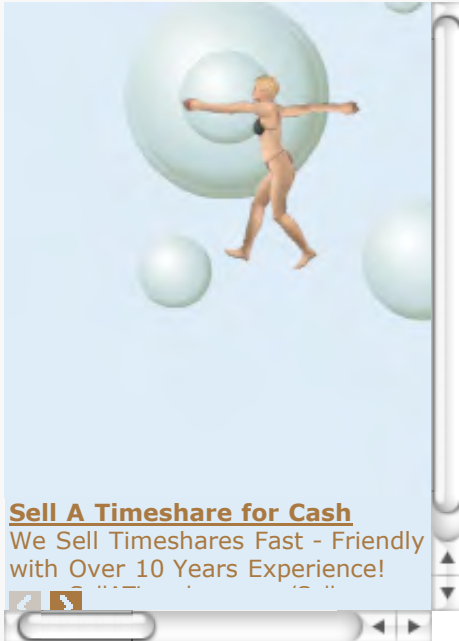


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C-MEEs: cross-media engagement evaluations

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Nearly four decades ago, Neil Postman, professor, media theorist and cultural critic, predicted what he termed media ecology: 'Media ecology looks into the matter of how media of communication affect human perception, understanding, feeling and value.'

This reflects remarkably the concerns modern marketers are facing, especially in regard to how consumer engagement is facilitated by cross-media utilisation.

Almost ten years later, Marshall McLuhan observed that 'media ecology means arranging various media to help each other ... to buttress one medium with another', which sounds even more like the current conundrum regarding measuring cross-media consumption, and its effect on consumer engagement, brand development and sales.

You can argue about the precise date when media ecology finally arrived in its full complexity, or the continuum on which the media environment



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its full complexity, or the continuum on which the media environment migrated. What is incontrovertible is that a real, 21st-century media ecology, where consumers are cocooned by media of one sort or another on a 24/7 basis, has arrived, and that media planning for this environment is more complex than ever.

CROSS-MEDIA MEASUREMENT

The need for a real measure of cross-media consumption has been amplified by the rapidly evolving ways in which consumers use, juggle, adopt and 'gatekeep' old and new media, and by the fact that burgeoning new-media technologies have become more and more accepted - and used - as 'media platforms'. Our research measures 26 individual media touchpoints that marketers might use to engage and persuade consumers to the brand's particular point of view. BIG-research currently reports observations across 45 media, including 12 in-store formats. Planning complexity cannot be denied, so it is critical that marketers can measure their brand's interaction in this ecology.

Some media formats are more practicable than others. Others are more cost-effective. Each touchpoint claims to incorporate a unique set and subset of values, nuances, and capabilities to communicate, inform, and persuade. And - based upon the Brand Keys predictive Brand-to-Media Engagement (B2ME) metrics - some are actually more effective for certain categories and brands than others.

Equally, more and more marketers are using a variety of touchpoints to communicate their existence, differentiation, messages and values to their target audiences, with the ultimate goal of selling products and services.

Embracing more and different media touchpoints theoretically optimises the opportunity the brand has to engage the target consumer, since any one consumer uses different forms of media at different times. So, you might ask whether, if each medium has its strengths, and if a combination of media has greater potency, won't the brand with the most touchpoints win?

The C-MEE assessment answers that by demonstrating the effects cross-media consumption has on brand engagement levels - positive and negative - as well as consumer behaviour in the marketplace.

THE C-MEE MODEL

The C-MEE model is an engagement-based assessment that 'fuses' emotional and rational values that govern brand engagement and loyalty. It combines indirect, psychological inquiry with higher-order statistical analysis. The questionnaire has a test/re-test reliability of 0.93 from national probability samples in the US and UK, and has been used in B2B and B2C brand strategy and media scenarios in 26 countries.

'Engagement' is defined and explained as 'the consequence of a marketing or communication effort that results in an increased level of brand equity for the product or service', and a variety of validity tests and independent, professional reviews have proven the efficacy and in-market legitimacy and utility of this definition.

The output of engagement assessments provides two critical elements necessary to provide cross-media measures that correlate with positive behaviours towards the advertised product or service, specifically, sales.

Identification of category drivers that define how the target audience views the category, compares brand offerings and, ultimately, how consumers will



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behave in the marketplace.

The identification of the percentage-contribution made to engagement, loyalty, and sales by any marketing element or variable included in the assessment. This can include any consumer or category attribute, benefit or value, and is useful in strategic brand planning.

While strategic brand planning and cross-media consumption are not mutually exclusive, the model was created to assess media platforms and combinations. For this paper, 26 individual media touch-point platforms that might conceivably be consumed or experienced, individually and in combination, were also assessed for the category in which the client brand competes: moisturising bar soap.

The model acknowledges that relying on cross-media consumption on a 'time spent' interaction basis would produce limited insights into cross-media-generated consequences. This is equally true of any assessment mechanism based on identifying touchpoints that consumers 'love', 'trust', find 'educational' or think 'inspiring'.

Further, inferences based on the per cent of media budget allocated to various touchpoints may be acceptable for allocation exercises, but not for understanding consumption effects.

Our model 'equalises' media platforms on those bases, and the combined output - via an engagement-based value equation - allows marketers better to understand media consumption (as opposed to allocation). Through the diagnostics, marketers can identify the impact media have on the success of a brand when used together, and how the media combinations work from a strategic brand management perspective. Media can then be allocated on a more synergistic and efficient basis, which, in a complex marketplace, is increasingly critical to brand success.

THREE-PHASE SURVEY

Our survey was conducted in three phases, to:

identify a brand engagement benchmark for the Dove brand
identify cross-media consumer segments and quantify the engagement effects engendered by exposure to the brand's advertising
determine the percentage-contribution made by each of the 26 media options (and their summed value for cross-media consumption groupings); meaning, for example, that the contribution identified for TV-only was added to the contribution identified for ISP, and so on.

Phase 3 also included calculation of the correlation of cross-media consumption engagement effects with the identified percentage-contribution to engagement and loyalty for the category 'ideal', and the correlation of the per cent of the cross-media consumption summed values (for each media-consumption segment) with self-reported past 60-day purchases of Dove bar soap.

PHASE 1: BENCHMARKING

Two hundred interviews were conducted with exclusive Dove and Ivory moisturising soap users, who had purchased their brand in the past 60 days.

All respondents assessed their 'ideal' moisturising bar soap, 20 category attributes, benefits and values, and 26 media touchpoints. Respondents assessed only one brand, Dove or Ivory - the one they used exclusively.

Thus, the 'ideal' describes the ultimate moisturising bar soap for the total

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audience, while the brand assessments measure how brand-exclusive users see their preferred brand in relation to their ideal.

On the basis of respondent assessments (and factor, regression and causal path analyses), 20 attributes, benefits and values have been identified as components of the category drivers.

Pro forma brand-engagement assessments provide the percentage-contribution that each individual attribute, benefit and value makes to engagement and loyalty. This includes any marketing or communication element, including the 26 media touchpoints. The results of that analysis will be discussed and used in Phase 3.

A weighted average of the brand-specific assessments is calculated and provides an overall brand equity index score. In this case, Dove was calculated as 113, which, for research purposes, represents the brand engagement benchmark.

PHASE 2: MEDIA EXPOSURE AND EFFECTS

Phase 2 was conducted among a separate sample of exclusive Dove users who had purchased the brand in the past 60 days.

Respondents were asked to report in which of the 26 touchpoints they had 'seen Dove advertising in the past 60 days'.

They were also asked to appraise - using the engagement assessments used in Phase 1 - 'the Dove brand they had seen advertised', and indicate how many bars of soap they had purchased in the time period. It should be no surprise that, given current media ecology and the myriad ways in which consumers (and advertisers) use media, segments large enough to provide generalisable samples of 'one-off' touchpoints were rare. In fact, only one emerged, for magazines.

'Television' has been included as a one-off segment both because it is an essential and huge medium and because it also generally dominates major brands' budgets. However, the few consumer segments reporting only one medium as where they had seen Dove advertising in the past 60 days required us to combine broadcast and cable.

Nonetheless, 11 consumption segments with large enough user segments (150+) were revealed.

On the basis of standard engagement appraisals - or, here, cross-media consumption - media can be classified as having produced an increased level of brand equity for the brand, which classifies the media effort as a high-engagement brand enhancer. Based on previous work in this area, the effort should correlate with high(er) degrees of positive attitudes and behaviours towards the advertised brand.

Media consumption (or marketing efforts, or individual media) can be classified in two other ways: as producing 'neutral' levels of engagement, not significantly reinforcing brand values to a degree that consumers felt the brand better met their category ideals; or 'negative' engagement, where brand values have actually deteriorated.

It is interesting that the two media that normally account for the most time spent and/or larger percentage(s) of the media budget - TV and magazines - did not produce significant brand engagement on their own.

However, nine of the cross-media consumption segments did produce

significantly higher engagement for Dove. On a cross-media-consumption basis, seven segments included TV and five magazines. Only three included both TV and magazines.

CALCULATING C-MEES

C-MEES equal the per cent of 'lift' to the brand's engagement benchmark caused by exposure to various media combinations.

These were calculated using the range between the benchmark score for Dove from Phase 1 (113) and the highest single assessment achieved as a result of reported consumer consumption of a particular combination of media. In this instance, this was the segment 'TV + word of mouth + ISP+ article'. Exposure to advertising via this combination resulted in the highest brand engagement of the nine identified segments: 137.

This allows us to calculate the relative 'lift' over the benchmark (113 to 137). We did this to take into account the fact that brand engagement scores are not linear or open-ended, unlike temperature measured by a thermometer.

Therefore, for the 11 cross-media consumption segments examined, relative effects on brand engagement were calculated.

PHASE 3: ANALYSIS

Earlier, we noted that on a pro forma basis brand-engagement assessment output provides the percentage-contribution each variable in the assessment makes to engagement and loyalty. In this study that included the 26 possible media touch-points that Dove might use.

Bear in mind that these assessments describe how target audiences consume media, and will vary from category to category.

The analysis also included the calculation of correlations of cross-media consumption with engagement effects on the brand and reported purchases.

The correlation of per cent of lift to brand equity based on cross-media consumption with the C-MEE summative calculations of per cent contribution made by the cross-media groupings was 0.769.

Next we calculated the correlation of C-MEE summative calculations of percentage-contribution made by the cross-media groupings with the average, past-60-day purchases of Dove moisturising bar soap. The correlation between these two measures was 0.779.

We find these high correlations heartening because, although the values were calculated on the basis of the ideal moisturising soap, it is clear that fine-tuning can be used to create a Dove-specific engagement-based value equation. Also, we believe it is fair to say that the calculations prove the efficacy of engagement-based cross-media consumption measures.

In practice, correlation between the summative calculations of percentage-contribution made by the cross-media groupings from the engagement assessment and how Unilever actually allocated its budget was less impressive - a correlation of 0.298. This was not a total surprise, given that allocation and consumption are different activities and that the cost of purchasing TV time is far higher than, say, website or PR/word-of-mouth activities.

AN ENGAGEMENT EXTRA

The C-MEE assessment not only provides high correlations that identify how well cross-media consumption reinforces a brand's values, but its diagnostics identify which of the top four category drivers of engagement and loyalty are being most influenced by the insertion of the brand into one cross-media option versus another.

These measures show the difference between the brand benchmark and 'Dove brand seen advertised' for each segment.

In the TV-only segment, positive effects show up as primarily influencing only one category driver - How I look/how I feel - while among the TV + word-of-mouth + ISP segment, significant positive effects show up in all four category drivers that influence engagement, loyalty and product purchase.

Additionally, reflecting the correlation of the C-MEE summative percentage-contribution made by the cross-media groupings with their past-60-day purchases of Dove, while there are only directional differences in the number of bars purchased in the past 60 days, the correlation supports the validity and utility of the assessments.

With information like this for each segment, it is possible to select media for a campaign on the basis of which set of options best reinforces the brand, on the basis of specific copy and engagement objectives. This assessment can, of course, be conducted on a specific-media-vehicle basis as well - Desperate Housewives versus The View - which will allow for more efficient and effective planning.

HIGH EXPECTATIONS FOR ENGAGEMENT

The reality of media ecology and the fact that media planning has become more and more complex is no surprise to marketers and media planners. Huge media proliferation, new (and, every day, newer) technologies, and the more sophisticated ways in which today's 'bionic' consumers use, juggle, adopt, and 'gatekeep' old and new media are forcing advertisers to re-think traditional models of audience measurement.

At no time in post-modern marketing (we estimate, 1985 onwards) has the need to possess a consumer-centric measure of cross-media consumption been so great. We believe that our approach successfully addresses this need.

The model equalises media platforms normally measured on a time-spent basis. It allows marketers to truly understand media consumption, and not become mired in questions of allocation.

The model explains how media combinations work, and does so from both a behavioural (product purchase) and attitudinal (brand engagement) basis. The diagnostics make it possible to select media on the basis of sets of options that best reinforce the brand - based on category imperatives, specific copy objectives, or engagement goals.

Because of the high correlation between attitudinal and behavioural measures, and the summed calculation of percentage-contribution made by the individual media consumed by different segments, the model makes it possible for marketers to construct engagement-based value equations that can identify the impact media will have on the success of a brand when consumed in various combinations.

The ability to do that corroborates two marketing paradigm shifts. First,

advertising today has become less about the character and nature of the products consumed and more about the character of the consumers of the products and, more particularly, the combinations of media they consume. Second, anyone who has been watching the changes in the media landscape knows that the advent of new technologies involves some sort of trade-off. Change in the media landscape does not necessarily result in equilibrium and, depending on the category, some become greater contributors than others, and marketers need to know that.

Using the C-MEE approach means that 'character' and 'contribution' can be identified, and media can then be allocated on a more synergistic, efficient and consumer-centric basis. Given current trends, that ability will become more and more critical to the success - and profitability - of a brand.

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