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Spotlight on...TV

Since its inception in the late 1940s, television has grown from an interesting novelty into an integral part of our daily lives. Today, TV is part of the very fabric of our culture. People turn to it for entertainment, information and news. It can cart us around the world in an instant. Teach us how to fish, cook, golf, or improve our homes. Children can recite certain commercial jingles before they learn their ABCs. And Ronald McDonald has become more recognizable than Santa Claus.

How powerful is television?

Consider these facts:

- 98.2% of American households have television
- 75% have multiple sets
- Over two-thirds subscribe to cable — more than half of these have access to 54 or more channels
- 86.2% have VCRs
- The average person spends approximately 7.5 hours a day watching TV
- There are more than 1,250 commercial television stations



Despite its ubiquity, television is a medium very much in transition, however. It is changing dramatically with digital cable, direct broadcast satellites, high definition television (HDTV), digital versatile disk (DVD), personal video recorders (PVR), interactivity and convergence (TV and PC working together), with more to come.

Television as an advertising medium

Advantages

Impact. Television has been called the sum of the alternatives, featuring the sound of radio, the color of magazines and the sight of newspaper. It can present an ad message in a most spectacular way, combining sight, sound, motion and emotion. Television is excellent for product demonstrations.

Mass coverage. Almost everyone watches television multiple hours a day.

Cost efficiency. With tremendous audience penetration, TV remains the most effective way to deliver a commercial message to a broad mass audience.

Fast acting. Television provides the opportunity for hourly/daily repetition.

Flexible. A wide variety of message formats and program content is possible. Messages can be scheduled at specific

times and within specific programs.

Selective. Greater selection of channels with specific types of programming means a greater ability to target specific audience segments with less waste.

Data. Audience research data available by program.

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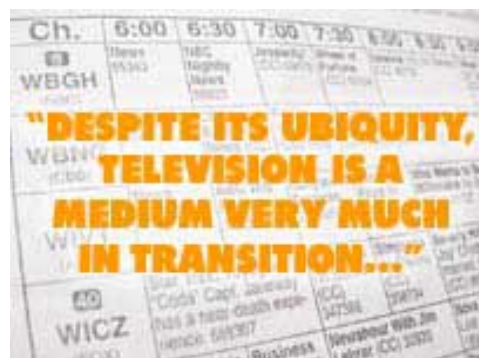
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Limitations

Cost. Television is expensive. It is expensive to purchase time because of audience size (not necessarily true of cable), and it's costly to produce good quality commercials.

Fragmentation. With the increasing popularity of cable and its hundreds of stations from which to choose, the viewing audience is becoming more and more fragmented. In addition, paid premium channels such as HBO, Cinemax, Showtime, etc., are commercial free. As a result, it's becoming increasingly more difficult and more expensive to reach that large mass audience.

Fleeting. The life span of a television commercial is the time it takes to air. Because of this intangibility, viewers must be exposed to a message several times before it begins to sink in. This helps explain the high rate of brand misidentification within this medium.



Clutter. The more commercials are jammed on top of one another, the less attention each receives. To escape commercial messages, viewers "zap" their way around the dial during programming breaks. While others tape their favorite shows, editing

out commercials or "zipping" through them.

Focus. In most cases, television lacks narrow geographic focus within a metro or local area. As a result, some local advertisers must pay for audience delivery that is of little or no value.

Because of its broad coverage and maximum creative possibilities, television remains the number one medium for national advertisers.

Editor's Note: For a discussion of the advantages and limitations of the other major media including radio, newspaper, direct mail, outdoor, etc., visit www.riger.com, click on "Media" and select the appropriate topic.

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