

## 38. TV+MAGAZINES COMMUNICATE BETTER THAN TV-ONLY

Because television and magazines work in such different but complementary ways, the communication delivered by a TV-only campaign can be substantially enhanced by adding magazines.

The two classic pieces of research which demonstrated the improved communications delivered by TV-plus-print were 'Multiplying the Media Effect' [113] and 'The Media Multiplier' [114]. Between them, they provide 19 detailed case histories showing how print advertisements can add to and enrich what is perceived in television commercials, especially if the creative treatments in the two media are designed to be complementary.

### 'MULTIPLYING THE MEDIA EFFECT'

This survey, carried out in 1985 and published during 1986 and 1987, studied seven mixed-media campaigns [113]. It was commissioned by a group of consumer magazine publishers working together under the name of The Magazine Marketplace Group, under the auspices of PPA, and the fieldwork was conducted by Communication Research Ltd.

The approach was to show informants magazine advertisements and television commercials from the same campaigns and examine what was communicated. This was done through hall tests, in which each person saw two or three campaigns. All informants were users of the product types in question, as well as falling within demographic quotas. The order of showing TV and magazine advertisements was carefully rotated, with advertisements being shown a second time under a controlled sequence. After each ad was seen, a standard set of open-ended questions was asked, the key question being "Please tell me everything that passed through your mind while you were looking at the advertisement, whether or not it was actually connected with it".

Illustrations from three of the campaigns give a flavour of the results.

#### *Birds Eye Country Club*

One of the campaigns was for the Birds Eye Country Club range of frozen vegetables. First, the magazine advertisement (when seen before TV) provoked a greater range of thoughts than the TV commercial. In particular there was more emphasis on the vegetables themselves, especially how attractive they looked, and the variety (though the TV commercial showed just as great a variety). A word-count of the number of mentions of each vegetable shows this clearly. Second, and very significantly, informants who were shown the

sequence TV-magazine-TV noticed individual vegetables in the television commercial much more the second time they saw the commercial. The magazine ad had evidently made them more aware of the range of vegetables and this affected the way they experienced the subsequent television commercial. Thus the magazine ad on its own not only communicated certain things better than the commercial, but also enhanced the response to the commercial.

#### *Milk*

Something similar happened with the advertising for milk. Not only did the magazine advertisement communicate more thoughts about the different types of milk available from the milkman - skimmed, semi-skimmed and standard - but also informants became far more aware of the skimmed and semi-skimmed milk that appeared in the television commercial when they saw it after the magazine advertisement, compared with when they saw TV before the magazine ad. A different stimulus in a different medium had affected the way the subsequent TV advertising was understood.

#### *Danish Bacon*

Another campaign was for Danish Bacon, in which both the magazine ad and the commercial portrayed bacon sizzling in a frying pan. As a control, part of the sample had seen the bacon commercial, then a magazine ad for a **different** product, then the bacon commercial again. The test sample had seen the bacon commercial, then the magazine ad for **bacon**, then the Bacon commercial again. A word-count was made of the number of mentions of words like 'appetising', 'hungry' etc after each showing. Expressing the word-count in index form, among those who saw a magazine ad for a **different** product between the two showings of the bacon commercial, there was an index of 100 mentions of 'appetising', 'hungry' etc after the first TV showing and an index of 31 after the second TV showing. Among the matched sample of those who saw the magazine ad for **bacon** between the two showings of the bacon commercial, there was an index of 115 mentions of 'appetising', 'hungry' etc after the first commercial, an index of 162 after seeing the magazine ad, and 92 after the second TV showing.

The point here is not only that the magazine exposure produced more 'appetising'-type thoughts than any of the television showings, but that after seeing the bacon magazine advertisement the informants experienced far more 'appetising'-type thoughts **while watching the TV commercial** than did the informants in the control sample.

It appears that the stimulus provided by the magazine advertisement had created new perspectives, which remained in informants' minds while they watched the subsequent television commercial, and these affected their responses to that commercial.

### Conclusions

The overall conclusions of 'Multiplying the Media Effect' were that:

- not only can one medium communicate ideas additional to those derived from seeing another
- one medium can also affect and enrich what is understood from a subsequent exposure to another medium
- greater strength can be added to a mixed-media campaign by encouraging this process through creative links

The page and the screen nourish each other.

### 'THE MEDIA MULTIPLIER'

'Multiplying the Media Effect' aroused such interest around the world that the UK's Press Research Council, representing magazines and newspapers, extended the investigation by commissioning twelve more case studies. They were published in 1990 in a report titled 'The Media Multiplier' [114].

Two research companies conducted the survey in 1988 and 1989: Communication Research Ltd and The Research Business. There was a robust sample of 1,400. Consumers were asked to describe their response to the TV commercial both before and after being shown a print advertisement for the same product. Their separate responses to each medium were recorded, and control groups were shown only the TV commercial or only the print ad. This meant it was possible to identify the effects of TV alone, of print alone, and of both media together.

The results demonstrated that advertising in magazines or newspapers in addition to television, rather than using television on its own, bring a number of very important communication benefits. In summary:

- Print can lead people to perceive the TV commercial in new ways.
- Print can also convey new information that is not in the TV commercial.
- The result of adding print to a TV campaign is a richer, more complete communication.

Print not only makes its own unique contribution, it also makes the television commercials work harder. The

effect of adding print to television is not merely additive, it is multiplicative. Using the two media produces an invaluable interaction.

Such effects can be heightened by deliberately building creative links between the TV and print advertisements.

With as many as twelve campaigns to analyse, the survey was able to document some of the ways in which print can help television to work better. Every item on the following list emerged from at least two case histories.

Print can:

1. Lead people to see the TV commercial in new ways, and look for details
2. Encourage more response to the commercial
3. Add extra information or messages
4. Re-inforce the TV message
5. Expand the TV message
6. Help understanding of the TV message
7. Strengthen brand identification
8. Make the product more accessible
9. Focus more on product-oriented messages
10. Create a more positive feeling towards the product

There are two other important considerations:

11. The beneficial effects can be heightened by building creative links
12. The benefit is a two-way affair

While no mixed-media campaign will work in all of these ways simultaneously, all TV-plus-print campaigns will benefit from some of the factors on this list.

The key findings from four of the campaigns are summarised here, to illustrate the print-television relationship:

### *Cheeses of England and Wales*

The television and magazine advertisements were very different in style but complemented one another well. Responses to the print ad were particularly product-oriented, and there was much evidence of interaction between the two media. The print treatment tended to direct attention to details within the TV commercial, focusing on the product rather than the execution. It led respondents to look harder at the recipe information featured very briefly in the commercial and encouraged thoughts concerning the variety and versatility of the cheeses. The magazine ad also helped informants to appreciate the health and fitness story within the commercial - including comments about cheese being

full of protein, vitamins and calcium, copy points made explicit in the magazine ad. In addition print strengthened the branding of the product - cheeses from England and Wales rather than just "cheese". Exposure to the magazine advertisement modified informants' reactions to the TV commercial when seen subsequently, and in directions which could be attributed to the magazine ad.

*Access credit card*

The television commercial conveyed the idea of flexibility very successfully. The print advertisement added considerably to this. It led informants to become more involved in the detail of the television commercial. They also took the messages they had absorbed from the print advertisement and applied these to the TV, thinking through the implications of flexibility instead of simply replaying flexibility as the sole message. Print had made respondents dwell on the varied practical attributes of an Access card as well as the general quality of flexibility. Print had added flesh to the TV bones.

*Sarsons Pickling Vinegar*

Both TV and print communicated the idea of quick and easy pickling, and the correct brand name. The magazine advertisement, however, more clearly communicated the existence of two types of vinegar, and the different purposes for which they can be used. Exposure to the magazine ad had an effect on some informants when they saw the commercial for a second time, for they appeared to look out for details and were more aware of the two varieties of vinegar that were shown in the commercial, and the versatility of use which this implied.

*Volkswagen Passat*

Exposure to the print advertisement was able to increase significantly the number of new thoughts generated while seeing the TV commercial for the second time. Readers were able to pick up detailed copy points mentioned in the magazine ad, such as the large interior space and the plush upholstery, and were helped to perceive such points in the commercial when it was shown again. Print was successful in reinforcing the messages conveyed by the commercial, sometimes leading certain informants to understand these messages when they had not been fully absorbed from television alone. The close creative links between the treatments in the two media facilitated the transfer of ideas from one medium to the other.

**A GERMAN MEDIA MULTIPLIER STUDY: FORD COUGAR**

A German media multiplier study published in 2000 is particularly interesting because of its reinforcement of

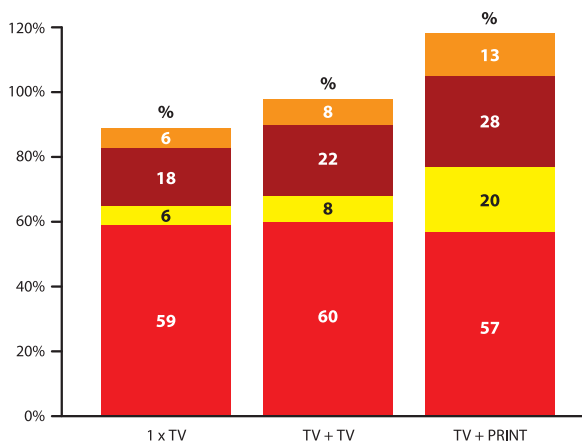
the idea (hinted at in the early UK studies) that magazines are particularly adept at communicating the more subtle messages that television may not so easily get across. "The Multiplier Effect: TV + Print Improves Communication" [115] researched 12 campaigns in carefully controlled exposure conditions. 11 of the 12 campaigns showed media multiplier effects. As an example, one of the campaigns was for the sporty Ford Cougar car.

The TV commercial showed the drivers of the Cougar and a motorcycle meeting at a petrol station. They smile and leave, with the motorcyclist following the car. In an empty wide mountain landscape they draw level, laugh at each other, the motorcycle passes, then the Cougar accelerates and passes the motorcycle. The voice-over says "The new Ford Cougar. The return to freedom." The magazine advertisement was closely linked creatively, reflecting the scene.

There were four key messages to be communicated, and spontaneous comprehension of them was tested. Adding together the awareness percentages of all four messages, there was a total score of 89% among people who saw the TV commercial only once. People who saw the TV commercial twice had a total score of 98%, an increase of 9 percentage points. But those who saw the TV commercial once, followed by the print ad once, had a total score of 118% - an increase of 29 percentage points. That is, when the second ad was in print it had three times the effect of when the second ad was another TV commercial.

Of added interest is the effect on the four individual messages which the advertising was intended to communicate – summarised in the chart.

Spontaneous Comprehension Of Messages



The first column is the comprehension among people seeing the TV commercial once. The second is those seeing two TV commercials. The third is those seeing a TV commercial followed by a print ad.

Reading across the columns shows the effect on individual messages. The message at the top of the columns was 'If, as a younger, reckless type you used to like motorcycling, then this Cougar provides you with an alternative'. Only 6% of those seeing the TV commercial one time understood this message spontaneously; this rose to 8% among those seeing the commercial twice. But comprehension was highest at 13% among those for whom the second ad was in print. The second message was 'A young model for older men, an Easy Rider feeling, a recall of my youth'. Again, comprehension was greatest, at 28%, among those seeing TV + print. The third message was 'A car that feels like a motorcycle, the same lifestyle and fun in the Cougar as on the Harley'. By an even greater margin than before, a second exposure increased comprehension if it was in print: 20%, compared with 8% if it was on TV.

The fourth message was 'Free, freedom, gives a feeling of freedom and adventure, freedom and light-heartedness'. This was such an obvious message from the advertising – including the TV voice-over saying "The return to freedom " - that around 60% of respondents understood it straight away, and seeing another ad didn't increase comprehension whether it was on TV or in print. This is an instructive point. Most people have learned how to decode advertising messages to some extent, so they get the obvious message easily enough, but for the more subtle, detailed messages print is more powerful than additional TV.

Based on the evidence of all twelve researched campaigns, the study concluded that:

- Mixed-media contacts improve the learning effect, lead to a more intensive perception of the

advertising message, and consequently recall of the advertising content becomes richer.

- Consumers remember details of the TV commercial that they would not have noticed without seeing the print ad.
- Print promotes more product-related reactions to the TV spot, and offers supplementary information which television with its transitory images cannot accomplish. The complete claim can be communicated.
- Mixed-media contacts create a transfer of credibility. Information-centred, factual print ads may balance more emotional TV advertising and thus support the product claims and/or minimise any doubt about the commercial's claims.
- In addition faulty understanding of the TV messages can be corrected by receiving the messages through the additional medium of print.
- Action is promoted. The intensified processing of potential arguments, which is an effect of mixed-media exposure, causes consumers to internalise reasons why they should do something and to whom they can turn.
- Creative links strengthen the mix effect, but this doesn't mean the print ad should be a still from the commercial. Best results are achieved when a varied design is used to express the same basic messages, to reinforce the memorising and processing of the advertising content.

#### THE SYNERGY IS WORLD-WIDE

Since the publication in 1986 of the pioneering 'Multiplying the Media Effect' many other surveys along similar lines have been conducted in countries around the world [116]. All have found the same results: the combination of print and television has a multiplying effect on communication effectiveness, compared with television on its own. Without doubt this is not a phenomenon peculiar to the UK but is a result of the contrasting but complementary characteristics of the two media.