



## First Time, Every Time

Three dimensions that are reshaping the way marketers optimise effectiveness.

### The Key Take-Out

Marketers can optimise their communications effectiveness by tuning their media and creative strategies together, rather than executing them as independent strategies. This harmonisation can have a substantial pay off – but it requires a rethink of the 'one size fits all' media investment model. Changes in media consumption and the evolution of scientific methods of measurement have paved the way for a sharper focus on the message and media interaction.

### The 'First Time, Every Time' Approach

This rethink precipitates the idea of a creative and media strategy that is more tightly knitted together to deliver a 'first time, every time' outcome...rather than simply relying on the notion that building frequency, builds impact.

Three independent but compounding forces are driving this innovation around marketing ROI:

1. **Fragmentation:** The ever growing number of media channels and variety of choice within channels is changing reach and frequency paradigms and simultaneously opening up more targeted touch points.
2. **Creative Frequency Effects:** Consumers process messages differently each time they're exposed to a message. Knowing what and where these changes occur within a TV commercial can drive refinements in reach and frequency – essentially tuning R&F into the creative attributes.
3. **Creative Order Effects:** A fascinating new frontier into cross-media execution – different media touchpoints have different priming effects on each other. Timing can be everything in this respect.

The 'first time, every time' paradigm aims to optimise the impact of the first exposure. Importantly, it also seeks to leverage subsequent exposures within AND across mediums. This is achieved by a deeper, more precise understanding of how a consumer processes a creative message over 1, 2 and 3 exposures...as well as the interaction across different media channels.

### Fragmentation

Arguably, the single biggest prevailing influence of change in media is simply the number and variety of channels to the consumer. This translates into great targeting opportunities for marketers to connect and interact with more defined consumer segments when needed. But it also requires a sobering review of the cost models around mass-media reach and frequency. Over the past decade, the cost of reaching 75% of People 25-54 (1+ reach) on television has more than doubled.

***“A rethink of reach and frequency targets will be necessary with more fragmented media consumption”***

The cost per reach models developed in a much less fragmented era will come under increasing pressure as media fragmentation continues. Clearly, a rethink of reach and frequency targets will be necessary with more fragmented media consumption. Reaching the right consumer will always be important. The number of times required to expose the same consumer to the same message is, now more than ever, the big question. This is where fragmentation and the cost of buying frequency can be explored in the context of the following point – Frequency Effects.

## Creative Frequency Effects

Imagine hearing a great joke twice. The first time it was clever and funny...the second, it just falls flat. At best, you might take out different details from the set-up the second time you hear it. The same can be true for some advertising executions. Just like a great joke, your first exposure is a truly unique moment in time.

Having worked with a range of marketers, we've routinely set out to understand the effectiveness of creative as a function of exposure. Across a 30 second commercial, it's critical to know that nothing is processed equally. Of equal (if not greater) importance is knowing exactly how this pattern of processing changes over subsequent exposures. Some commercials perform better (particularly at the points where it must perform well) on second exposure.



**“Multiple exposures certainly build frequency, but they don’t necessarily build impact”**

Some commercials perform very poorly on subsequent exposures – losing up to 45% of their original effectiveness. Knowing how these exposure-based patterns change can help re-calibrate the media reach and frequency targets. For example, a decision can be made to build a high reach, low frequency schedule for a particular commercial...which directly reflects its creative signature. Multiple exposures certainly build frequency, but they don't necessarily build impact. This is of enormous importance to an advertiser, because every incremental reach point in an R&F curve becomes more expensive.

This topic will tend to raise many of the long-held questions...and this is a good thing. Are the right elements being committed to memory during the first exposure? Do subsequent exposures build on the first? Do different elements get committed to memory in subsequent exposures? Is message and branding benefiting from multiple exposures? The one universal answer to these questions is – That there is no universal answer...because every creative is unique. Perhaps, the more relevant questions are: Does my creative *require* multiple exposures? If so, how many? Can my creative *sustain* multiple exposures? Should I consider variations of the same commercial?

## Creative Order Effects

Building on the issue of fragmentation and our insights into frequency effects, is the added dimension of timing. The order in which exposures occur from one media channel to another can have a significant effect on how a commercial is committed to memory. For example, it's not uncommon to see a pre-roll commercial online being positively primed (become more effective) by a prior exposure to the same commercial on Television. ([Thinkbox – Neuroscience: creativity, media placement and the brain forum June 2010](#)). The fascinating point is that this doesn't necessarily work in reverse ie. Online first, TV second. The order of cross-media exposure throughout a campaign is critically important. An advertiser, armed with this knowledge can start to create a campaign strategy based on the timed roll-out of cross media exposure...as well as the number of exposures.



**“The order of cross-media exposure throughout a campaign is critically important”**

## In Summary

The 'first time, every time' model espouses a communications approach that directly links the media schedule to the virtues of the creative. Most would argue this makes sense...it always has. However, the evolution of fresh (neuro) insights into creative impact, frequency of exposure and cross-media priming has opened up many new avenues and ways to rethink how message and media should work together. But...it's not a 'one size fits all' approach.

Fortunately, the returns make the effort well worth pursuing – particularly when media dollars can account for 80% of the campaign budget. The foundations of the 'first time, every time' model are anchored in our multiple-exposure database that demonstrates how consumers encode messages & brands to memory. Memory encoding is the proven link to consumer behavior<sup>1</sup>.

Advertisers can make the most of the first impression. Importantly, they can also make the most of the second and third... This is enabled with the knowledge of how multiple exposures can both prime and change the way consumers process messages. It's an approach that heightens the importance of the creative / media interaction and reinforces the fact that not all exposures were created equal. It certainly takes the pressure of buying to reach and frequency objectives for the sake of it.

## **About Neuro Insight**

Neuro-Insight Pty Ltd is a company that specialises in the application of neuroscience in the field of marketing communications. With the world's largest neuro marketing database of media and advertising norms, Neuro-Insight has pioneered the link between brain activity and consumer behaviour<sup>1</sup>.

Neuro-Insight works with a range of the world's leading marketers and media organisations throughout Europe, UK, USA and Asia/Pacific to better understand consumer engagement and optimise marketing effectiveness. Neuro Insight uses a scientifically validated technology to measure pre-conscious brain activity, reporting on a range of neuro metrics including engagement, emotional intensity, attention, like/dislike and memory. More information at: <http://www.neuro-insight.com/>

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<sup>1</sup> International Journal of Advertising - Special Issue: Advertising and the Brain. 2008. 27(3)

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