

## OPINION: You need your head read

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“You need your head read.” Could this be the catch cry of tomorrow’s television planner and buyer? Without doubt, we have entered a new dimension of broadcast media where a multi-channel environment throws up a challenge to the traditional television currency of ‘big ratings’. In the future, ratings won’t matter. Well, not solely. Instead, we will want to get inside the mind of the viewer to understand the effect of advertising.

All this seems plausible, except the future is here...

Neuroscience is fast becoming the new frontier of consumer insight for television networks and advertisers. The advantage is that neuroscience measures actual emotional responses of consumers, using wired headgear, rather than relying on claimed responses, which are notoriously unreliable.

Neuroscience as a measurement of advertising effectiveness is based on the fact that emotions drive behaviour. The emotions that link to memory include ‘engagement’ and ‘emotional intensity’. Once the domain of subjective guesswork, emotions can now be scientifically quantified via neuroscience technology, linked to advertising effectiveness, and even used to assess the investment of marketing and media dollars.

There is already international groundswell happening around neuromarketing. The fact that two new industry collaborations have recently launched in Europe and the US specifically to develop the field of neuromarketing is great evidence of this. And of course, let’s not underplay neuroscience featuring on the *Gruen Transfer* with Todd Sampson projecting huge potential for it.



While we should expect to see greater take-up of neuroscience from the marketing community in the future, broadcasters have been the early adopters. It's a no brainer (pardon the pun). As competition intensifies, television networks need to demonstrate their impact to advertisers. Recently, SBS worked with Neuro-Insight on what the researcher says is an Australian-first project to measure cross platform advertising effectiveness.

At SBS, we rely on 'value-centric' arguments to support our sales efforts. Previously, we have used neuroscience to prove the value of the low clutter environment SBS provides for advertisers. Now, we are interested in the connection our audience has with SBS content – across all screens – and the transfer to advertisers. We've always known that SBS delivers a mentally engaged audience because our content is geared to the more cerebral forms of television, like documentaries. What neuroscience gives us is the proof of our effectiveness.

Our most recent findings showed advertisers that bought space across SBS Food TV and SBS Food online increased their brand impact by 50 per cent versus using TV alone. For the first time in Australia how TV and online work together has been discovered. In the SBS environment, online primes the returning SBS Food TV viewer to be more receptive to details in TV ads.

Neuroscience opens up a whole new world of informing communication and media. What was once reminiscent of a sci-fi thriller is now a legitimate technology for insight. Will it overtake traditional TV ratings as currency for buying? Maybe not, but it certainly will be a bigger part of the conversation.

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