

# Importance of audience research media essay



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Market Research has become one of the most lucrative career option and is among the highest growing fields in today's scenario. The high growth of the sector is a testimonial to the growing demand of research across all industries, then be it FMCG, Automobiles, Finance or Media. With the new breed of young MBA's coming through, the focus now is on Segmentation, Targeting and Positioning. Thus most businesses want to reach only their Target Audiences and filter out the excesses as they consider it as a wastage of resources, both in terms of money and time.

This is particularly true for the media industry, where we have a variety of products like IMRB'S TAM, IRS, . This is because a major chunk of media revenues come from advertisements which again depend on audience measurement in reaching to their decision as to which channel to give their ads on. Thus a high TRP in a TAM would ensure that you land up with the best of the sponsors and command highest of the prices.

The need of Audience research can be traced in the Psychology studies done by Kellner in 2007. " Different people purchase the same items but for a variety of reasons referred to as necessity, social pressures , family pressures , convenience , inadvertence and economic reasons . The field of Psychology has provided ample explanations through theories made from researches and studies to make the understanding of consumer behavior , and its applications in a variety of ways , what it is today" (Kellner , 2007) .

Media research is done primarily to observe study and analyze the pre-behaviours of the viewing population as well as the specific human behaviours that are evident as a result of the influence of media post the

media exposure. The study may be carried out by researchers which may include organizations and individuals who may benefit out of the study either through government mandated projects or private agencies or companies whose interests may have their greater impact by how their businesses Ideas or products may have their impact on certain populations targeted or reached by media.

## **Reasons/Advantages of Audience Research**

There are several advantage for doing audience research. Depending on which reason applies in a particular situation, a different type of research should be chosen.

### **To help in making a decision**

The research may involve a few very specific questions or a main area covered, through a small survey, or a set of 3 or 4 focus groups.

### **To understand the audience**

Research may involve either a set of focus groups, or a detailed survey. In general, a survey will provide precise results, but will be less informative. Also, a survey will cost a lot more, and take more time.

### **To demonstrate facts to outsiders**

Commercial media owners want to attract advertisers to advertise on their medium. Thus it helps to have data showing the size, demographics, and interests of their audience. A related purpose is a special-interest organization, seeking support from a funding body, and providing survey data to show the extent of public support for that organization. This type of

information should come from a research, conducted by an impartial third party.

### **To provide material for programs**

The research data about the audiences can be used by media organizations, to generate content for the programming. For this purpose, all research methods are suitable, including surveys, consensus groups, and informal interviews.

### **To design your communication**

You need to know your listeners, if you wish to persuade them, as it helps to shape your message in a way that may be acceptable to them. You may also need to know about their specific interests or the relationship among the audience members. This is particularly important when the communication goal is to persuade, and not just to create awareness. Also you need to identify the issues that may trigger strong emotions in your audience.

### **Media Strategy: Media Planning, Media Buying and Media Selling**

Thus audience research and analysis is essential in determining how you will build your strategy so as to reflect their specific interests and concerns. And the more likely is the strategy to succeed.

### **Components of Audience Research**

#### **What you should know**

A major component involves the social situation of your present and potential audience. These can include their experience, education, job or professional background, age, gender, ethnic background, cultural

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differences, and more. Here are some of the key questions that are to be covered as a part of the research.

What is the coverage area of your media vehicle?

What other media, and activities are competing for your audience's time?

How are these people distributed across the coverage area?

What proportion of the area population use your media?

How often do they use it? At what times, on what days?

What is your station's share of their available time?

What types of people use your media most?

In what circumstances do people use your media?

Do your listeners share common interests?

What's their relationship to one another?

What recent experiences, if any, have they had that could affect their readiness to accept your argument?

What will your listeners expect from you? Are you prepared in any case to address those expectations?

What do they already know?

Acknowledge audience attitudes and concerns.

If the audience hold a positive view about your topic and your messages, the focus of the research will be on reinforcing the views and the benefits your audience may get. If they hold negative views, you'll have to anticipate their objection in preparation of your research. You may have to limit what you ask of your audience.

Determining what can trigger strong emotions in your listeners-whether positive or negative-is an essential step, you need to take those concerns into account and through that, thus showing your own awareness and sensitivity.

#### How much to spend on audience research

Audience research can cost a little or a lot. The cost is largely proportional to the sample size and the amount of labour involved: there are few economics of scale with audience research.

Some research programs – specially permanent panels with TV meters – can cost millions of dollars. As a guide, many large broadcasters spend around 1% to 2% of their total revenue on audience research each year. For an individual project, which needs more detailed research than usual, it's common to spend around 5% to 10% of the project's cost on research.

## **Exposure: The basic measurement of the Media Audiences**

### Ways that Media Audiences can be measured

Technically exposure means “ open eyes” or listening ears facing the medium. Practically it is the measurement of people who say they are sure

they have looked into or read a vehicle within a given period of time.

Exposure measurements are different for different mediums.

## **Media Measurement**

### **What it measures**

### **What it means**

Vehicle Exposure

Exposure to TV or print media

Open eyes facing a vehicle(or opportunities to see ads)

Print Media circulation

No. of copies distributed

People or families receiving newspaper vehicles(no exposure counted)

Advertising exposure

Number of ads exposed per issue or per TV program.

A gross counting of the total number of ads exposed in a vehicle.

Advertising Perception

Number of ads that consumer remembered having seen in a vehicle

The smallest amount of communication remembered of ads in a vehicle.

Advertising Communication

The total amount of recalled material from ads in a vehicle

Feedback from ad messages in a vehicle.

Response function: media effectiveness

The number of responses to specific advertising in a vehicle

The effect of advertising on consumers (responses such as sales, brand awareness, attitude change, and recall of messages)

\* The Relationship among Media, Advertising, and Consumers, Principles of Media Planning, Basant Rathore.

Three methods of measurement

Diaries: The diary was one of the first methods of recording information. However, this is prone to mistakes and forgetfulness, as well as subjectivity. Data is also collected down to the level of listener opinion of individual songs, cross referenced against their age, race, and economic status in listening sessions sponsored by oldies and mix formatted stations.

Electronic: More recently, technology has been used to track listening and viewing habits. Arbitron's Portable People Meter uses a microphone to pick up and record subaudible tones embedded in broadcasts by an encoder at each station or network. It has even been used to track in-store radio.

Software: There are certain software applications being developed to monitor cable TV operators with full passive and permissive viewer measurement functionality to monitor television channel ratings. The system



tracks every time the channel is changed and records it accordingly. It allows what was being viewed at the time and which channel the viewer changed to. This information allows operators, broadcasters and advertising media to monitor audience TV usage habits.

Media Planners use Cost per thousand as a comparative tool, to compare one medium or media vehicle with another to find those that are most efficient. It can be used for intermedia or intramedia comparisons.

For print media (when audience data are not available):

$$\text{CPM} = (\text{Cost of 1 page} * 1000) / \text{Circulation}$$

For print media (when audience data are available):

$$\text{CPM} = (\text{Cost of 1 page} * 1000) / \text{No. of prospects readers reached}$$

For broadcast media (based on homes or audiences reached by a given program or time):

$$\text{CPM} = (\text{Cost of 1 page} * 1000) / \text{No. of homes or persons reached by a given program or time}$$

For newspapers:

$$\text{CPM} = (\text{Cost of ad} * 1,000) / \text{Circulation}$$

## **Advance Measurements and Calculations in Audience Research**

Reach- is a measurement of audience accumulation. It tells planners how many different prospects or households will see the ad once over any period

of time the planner finds relevant. It differs from GRP's in the sense that each person is counted once, thus it is an unduplicated number.

Frequency- It tells the planner the average number of times or the extent that audience members were exposed to same vehicle or a group of vehicles. It is a measure of repetition.

Effective frequency- can be defined as the amount of frequency, the planner judges to be necessary for advertisements to be effective for communication.

## **Sources of Market Data**

Size and share of market for a brand and its competitors, and other information contained in a situation analysis, can be obtained by a number of syndicated research services. Other data can be obtained from periodicals, association reports, govt, and media. The most widely used syndicated research services are those of A. C. Nielsen, Information Resources Inc. , Audits and Surveys Inc., Mediamark Research Inc., Simmons Market Research Bureau., IMRB, TAM, TNS etc.

Some of the audience measurement tools are as follows: aMap, aDex, TAM, RAM, WAM, IRS etc.

## **Methods of doing Research**

### **Audience Measurement for each medium**

National TV:

TAM people's meter (w/ 8, 000 homes)

TAM and aMap

Nielsen Media Research/IMRB & TNS

Radio:

Diary in radio markets

RAM(Nielsen Media Research/IMRB)

Magazines

Recent-reading techniques w/ in-person interview and a long questionnaire about their product use

Indian Readership Survey

Newspapers

Yesterday reading (“ Which NP did you read yesterday?” — typically use circulation figures)

Indian Readership Survey

Audits and reports the circulation of various publications

Internet

Use national sample of respondents

Measure the number of visitors, how long people stay in each page, how far they go, how many times they return

Nielsen/NetRatings or IMRB's WAM

Out-of-Home

the number of cars passing each billboard on the average day ("daily circulation")

## Case Studies

Case Study 1: Kheda Communication Project

\*Source: [http://www.indianetzone.com/42/kheda\\_communication\\_project.htm](http://www.indianetzone.com/42/kheda_communication_project.htm)

The Kheda Communications Project or KCP is a field laboratory that aimed at the development and local communication in Kheda district of Gujarat. This project began in 1975 and continued till 1990. The site chosen for the experiment was Kheda district, which is an area near the SAC headquarters in Ahmedabad. Thus Kheda Communication Project could broadcast either local television programmes or national satellite television programmes. Around 650 community television sets were provided to 400 villages and also installed in public places like schools, where village audiences gathered in the evenings to view the broadcasts.

The research team involved Prof. Arbind Sinha and his team from ISRO living in the village for around 18 months, and doing an ethnographic study so and studied their media consumption habits. The stay was important so as to understand the reasons for their media behaviour. The project was a first of its kind experiment by the Indians in the field of audience research.

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Kheda Communications Project is believed to be a milestone in the history of Indian television. The Development and Education Communication Unit managed this project and produced the development and educational programmes that involved the local audience.

### Case Study 2: CNN America

\*Source: [http://www.cbsnews.com/8301-500486\\_162-929913-500486.html](http://www.cbsnews.com/8301-500486_162-929913-500486.html)

In the early days of television, news directors had little use for audience research – it was far more the province of entertainment programming. The network news was only 15 minutes, and with so little time, the focus was almost exclusively on which stories had the most journalistic merit. But by the 1970s and 1980s the news was changing: Local stations were expanding their broadcasts to an hour or longer, and the compelling stories of the day no longer filled the time. Producers needed to know what kinds of stories would keep the audience. And so they embraced research.

Viewers, researchers concluded, wanted “useful information” – stories that were relevant to the way they live their lives – in addition to the traditional news. Suddenly, stories about health, finance, and consumer concerns began popping up on the local news. Soon the network morning shows turned to research as well.

They had plenty of reasons to do so. Like local newscasts, the morning shows had longer running times, and research helped producers figure out which lifestyle-type stories best held an audience. The morning shows also relied on a team of correspondents instead of a lone anchor, and audience

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research allowed producers to see the audiences' response to various on-air personalities, who in some cases played a larger role in the broadcast than the content itself. (Examples of this type of personality abound, though perhaps there is no better than NBC weatherman Al Roker.) And the research helped producers better understand the audience, which, in the morning, is divided into two distinct segments with very different needs: People who are in transit and watch briefly before beginning their day, and people who stay home and are more likely to be there for the whole two hours.

The television advertising industry in India is a complex and dynamic one with media choices increasing everyday. New channels are launched; new genres are established; brands are targeting niche audiences. In this scenario there is a need to find a perfect channel fit for the brand. The financial risks are too high and one needs to take action immediately to make the best of every rupee spent, therefore, the need for an overnight measurement system. The heterogeneity amongst consumers and their diverse spending patterns call for a more robust system for audience measurement on a much larger sample size.

### Case Study 3: All India Radio

\*Source: <http://india.gov.in/knowindia/radio.php?pg=2>

AIR's Audience Research Unit (Largest Feedback and Research Support Network)- In the era of market driven broadcasting, it may not be possible for any media organization to survive without feeling the pulse of their audience and knowing the market. This compelled the media organisation, particularly electronic media, to get the syndicated media research done to <https://assignbuster.com/importance-of-audience-research-media-essay/>

know the viewership/listenership of their programmes & market potential for them. No broadcasting agency can afford to move faster without the viewership/listenership data in hand.

The case of radio broadcasting is not different, the competition is intensifying day by day due to opening of more and more private radio stations but none of the upcoming radio broadcasting agencies across the country, other than All India Radio, has such a large in house audience feedback and research support network. The Audience Research Units of All India Radio provide instant feedback and research support not only to the in house programme planners & producers but also to the sponsors, advertisers & marketers.

With the changing mass communication scenario particularly market oriented broadcasting, Audience Research Unit of AIR has also reoriented itself. Efforts are on to create the ripple of changes & to carve a niche for itself among the sponsors, advertiser & marketers. This is evident from the studies assigned to the Audience Research Units in the recent past by the various agencies.

Besides the sponsored studies, the network of audience research continuously conducts radio listenership survey (RPL) in order to provide updated data to the programmers as well as the advertisers interested in mounting advertisements on AIR.