

Media trend match: An introduction

Clive Corder

Market Research Africa

Abstract

The author argues that there is an increasing need for qualitative criteria for media selection in advertising. A number of guidelines for qualitative media selection are proposed and illustrated by an explanation of Media Trend Match, a media selection system which has been developed in South Africa.

A large number of factors are taken into account in media selection for advertising. Most of these factors can be expressed in quantitative terms, for example circulation figures, incidence of radio and TV sets, coverage, cumulative reach and frequency over a stated time period, and audience composition in terms of demographics and user group categories. Other quantitative factors, such as page readership, Starch and DART scores, and thoroughness of reading and viewing, may be considered. Much less attention is, however, paid to qualitative factors, and these are usually evaluated subjectively.

The qualitative aspects involved in determinants of media selection should not be underestimated. While most advertisers and media users seem to recognise that the medium can have a considerable influence over the ways in which a message is interpreted, limited interest is nevertheless paid to the psychological characteristics of media audiences. In a recently published paper, Caffyn (1980) noted that the use of statistically reliable measures of social attributes to describe people, is a useful and perhaps even a necessary way of distinguishing between various media exposure groups. But even when this is recognised as important, very little qualitative data, on which media selection decisions could logically be based, is presently available.

Media Trend Match, a system which has been developed in South Africa, can provide guidelines for qualitative media selection. The present paper is a brief description of *Media Trend Match*.

Sociomonitor

Sociomonitor, an on-going research project conducted every two years, was first conducted in 1976 amongst urban Whites and literate Blacks in South Africa. The aim of *Sociomonitor* is to record changes occurring in a wide range of social trends which are relevant for marketing and media. A social trend can be defined as an area of human concern about

which people hold specific beliefs and attitudes. The study highlights the size and nature of changes taking place in South Africa, and predicts their direction and pace.

A feature of *Sociomonitor* has been the inclusion of a large range of product usage and ownership questions, as well as basic questions on the consumption of the main media, viz. press, radio, TV, cinema and drive-in theatres. From the results of the survey it is possible to examine the profile of the users of a product, service or brand, and the profile of users of a medium in terms of the trends being monitored. The following is a list of the trends being measured:

- Adding beauty to surroundings
- Anti-bigness
- Away from organized religion
- Black Consciousness
- Blurring of the sexes
- Consumerism
- Convenience
- Desire for racial harmony
- Economically-mindedness
- Familism
- Liberal sex attitudes
- Living for today
- Materialism
- Meaningful work
- National identity
- Novelty and change
- Orientation to the past
- Outdoor living
- Personalisation
- Personal creativity
- Physical health
- Rejection of authority
- Reliance on technology
- Return to nature
- Secure future
- Self-enhancement
- Self-improvement
- Sensuousness
- Status
- Use of stimulants
- Violence and aggression

If the profiles of users of a certain product and users of a particular medium are similar, they can be thought of as being compatible or close together. Conversely, if the profiles are very different, they can be regarded as incompatible or far apart.

A computer program, known as *Media Trend Match*, has been developed to measure the cumulative distance between profiles. By means of this program comparisons can be made between the profile of a user or target group and a comprehensive range of media profiles in terms of all or a number of pre-specified trends. The program output, which is expressed in the form of distances from zero, can be adapted as input to computer schedules which incorporate a qualitative weight.

In France, where a similar study, the *35C*, has been running for many years, these comparisons are done by eye, and the results are used in qualitative media selection.

Implications for Media Selection

If the media selected for the advertising of a certain product have audiences with profiles compatible with the profile of the product, the advertisements placed in those media are likely to be more effective.

Table 1

Compatibility between white male heavy and medium wool users and various media

Distance from target									
Heavy users						Medium users			
3,0-3,5	3,5-4,0	4,0-4,5	4,5-5,0	5,0-5,5	5,5-6,0	6,0-6,5	6,5-7,0	7,0-7,5	7,5-8,0
Car	Foto-Rapport	Garden & Home	Family Radio & TV	Sunday Times	Living & Loving	Fair Lady	Trans-valer	Landbou Weekblad	To The Point
Reader's Digest	Rapport	SABC TV	Radio Highveld	Huisgenoot	Farmer's Weekly	TV Dagboek	Time	Rooi Rose	Vaderland
			Scope	Drive-in	Beeld	Radio 5	Brandwag	By	
			Your Family	Star	Springbok	Rand Daily Mail	Keur	Sunday Tribune	
			Cinema & TV			Radio Good Hope	Sunday Express	Financial Mail	
								Sarie Marais	
								Cinema	

Because such media audiences would be more in tune with the product, they would likely be more sympathetic to its qualities. In certain cases it may be more meaningful to analyse the claims made in advertising in terms of the trends and to compare profiles on these trends only.

Table 1 was taken from an analysis done for the South African Woolboard and shows the compatibility between White male heavy and medium users of wool and various media (White Sociomonitor, 1976). The lesser the distance, the more compatible the medium.

Tables 2 and 3 show how the *Media Trend Match* program can be used to identify media which are compatible with both user and non-user target groups. These results come from an analysis carried out for The Standard Bank of S.A. Limited (White Sociomonitor, 1978).

Table 2

Compatibility between Standard Bank users and heavy users of various media

Distance from target					
4,0-4,5	4,5-5,0	5,0-5,5	5,5-6,0	6,0-6,5	6,5-7,0
The Motorist	Sunday Times	The Citizen	Scope	Springbok Radio	Weekend Argus
Reader's Digest		SABC TV	Living & Loving	Sunday Express	Garden & Home
Family Radio & TV			Fair Lady	The Star	
				Radio Highveld	
				Your Family	

Implications for Media Selling

If a media owner can demonstrate to a potential advertiser that the profile of the medium is compatible with the profile of the product, service or brand, then he is more likely to sell advertising space or time. Advertisers are interested in qualitative aspects of media, especially when quantitative data are non-discriminatory. In addition, advertisers appreciate that positive rub-off is likely to occur from the medium to the message (MRA, 1975).

Table 3

Compatibility between bank non-users (R300 + income group) and heavy users of various media

Distance from target					
2,4-3,0	3,0-4,0	4,0-5,0	5,0-6,0	6,0-6,5	6,5-7,0
Springbok Radio	SABC TV	Family Radio & TV	Radio Highveld	Radio Good Hope	Reader's Digest
			Living & Loving	Your Family	Radio & TV Dagboek
			Rapport	Weekend Post	E.P. Herald
			The Motorist	Trans-valer	Rooi Rose
				Beeld	Die Vaderland
				Huisgenoot	

The profiles of female readers of the Afrikaans magazine *Rooi Rose* and the English magazine *Fair Lady*, both fortnightly publications, are contrasted in Table 4. These profiles are extracts from an analysis done for *Nasionale Tydskrifte Beperk* (White Sociomonitor, 1976).

Table 4

Profile of female readers of *Rooi Rose* and *Fair Lady* in terms of incidence of trend leaders

Trend	Incidence of trend	
	Rooi Rose	Fair Lady
Adding beauty to surroundings	20 - 25%	30 - 35%
Blurring of the sexes	15 - 20%	Over 35%
Economically-mindedness	25 - 30%	-
Liberal sex attitudes	Under 15%	30 - 35%
National identity	Over 35%	Under 15%
Novelty and change	25 - 30%	25 - 30%
Outdoor Living	15 - 20%	25 - 30%
Personalisation	20 - 25%	15 - 20%
Personal creativity	Over 35%	15 - 20%
Physical health	20 - 25%	25 - 30%
Self-enhancement	Over 35%	Over 35%
Sensuousness	25 - 30%	Over 35%

The compatibility of different cosmetic products with female readers of *Rooi Rose* and *Fair Lady* is shown in Table 5. There is no difference in the profile distance between the users of lipstick and perfume and the readers of the two publications, but there are marked differences for most other cosmetics.

Table 5

Compatibility of different cosmetics with readers of *Rooi Rose* and *Fair Lady*

Cosmetic	Distance from target	
	Rooi Rose	Fair Lady
Lipstick	2,0 - 2,9	2,0 - 2,9
Nail Polish	2,0 - 2,9	3,0 - 3,9
Hair Conditioner	2,0 - 2,9	3,0 - 3,9
Perfume	2,0 - 2,9	2,0 - 2,9
Hand and Body Lotion	3,0 - 3,9	2,0 - 2,9
Eye Make-up	4,0 - 4,9	2,0 - 2,9
Face Powder	3,0 - 3,9	6,0 - 6,9
Hair Colorant	6,0 - 6,9	4,0 - 4,9
Setting Lotion	6,0 - 6,9	5,0 - 5,9

Further Implications

The concept of compatibility between trend profiles can be extended to many other areas. For example, the profile of the South African wine drinker is characterised by someone who is liberally-minded and sensuous, concerned about health and keen on variety. The wine drinker is an individualist rather than a family person, is not particularly economy-minded, lives in the present rather than the past, and is low on national identity (MRA, 1978).

Table 6 shows the extent to which profiles of certain sports supporters are compatible with that of the wine drinker (MRA, 1978). Sports sponsorships which take qualitative aspects into account are more likely to reach an audience which is in tune with the product, and thus become an integrated part of the total promotion.

Table 7 shows how people who enjoy casual and informal leisure activities are more in sympathy with the characteristics of the wine drinker than those who are more formal (MRA, 1978).

Table 6**Wine drinkers compatibility with sports of high interest**

Distance from Target	Type of sports		
3,0 - 3,9	Rugby	Swimming	Walking
4,0 - 4,9	Gymnastics	Table tennis	Tennis
5,0 - 5,9	Cricket	Ice skating	Billiards
6,0 - 6,9	Soccer	Fishing	Golf
7,0 - 7,9	Boxing		

Table 7**Wine drinkers compatibility with different leisure activities very much enjoyed**

Distance from target	Leisure activity		
1,0 - 1,9	Casual party at friend's home	Braai	Party at home
2,0 - 2,9	Drink with friends in private home	Watching live entertainment	
3,0 - 3,9	Casual meal at restaurant	Going to a play	Going to a dance
4,0 - 4,9	Dinner at smart restaurant		
5,0 - 5,9	Going to a night club	Going to a formal party	

Conclusion

It has become clear that media selection decisions can no longer be based on the quantitative characteristics and descriptions of media audiences alone. Qualitative factors of potential target groups play a decisive role in determining their media usage and product preferences, and cognisance should be taken of such factors. The concept of matching target group profiles with media profiles has been illustrated

in the preceding paragraphs and results. This approach can be extended to include, for example, demographic factors, and a *Media Demographic Match* program, using similar principles as those of *Media Trend Match*, is currently being developed.

All the above developments can be seen as the manifestations of a necessary and long overdue recognition that media selection decisions are complex, and that such decisions should be based on a wider concept of media-target group interaction.

References

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