



WHEN MARKET RESEARCH DOES NOT GO FAR ENOUGH

Graham Davies, Davies Strategic Solutions Inc.

Recently I was asked to quote on ad testing services, specifically “ad recognition, product recall and reaction to creative.” While useful parameters, ad recognition and product recall alone are not sufficient to understand whether an ad campaign and other support promotion is benefiting the brand’s performance.

Our colleagues at ACNielsen HCI, leaders in US pharmaceutical promotional research for over 20 years, have shown that ad performance accounts for between 10% and 30% of changes in new prescriptions. Retention of the marketer’s intended message explains at least 50% of this variation. Marshall Paul of ACNielsen HCI said: “The rationale for wanting to achieve high campaign awareness is to provide the hook that keeps the message in place. The higher the awareness the greater the efficiency is in communicating the message.” He is speaking about leveraging. Our Canadian research shows that only one in 10 brands is effective in using support promotion to magnify the impact of their sales force and achieve superior levels of message retention.

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Leveraging is revealed only by an integrated analysis of both ad and message performance together. Most brands do some sort of message tracking separate from their evaluation of ad performance and therefore, do not see whether support promotion is making their sales force’s efforts more efficient. In Canada, we have found that support promotion increases message retention amongst the brand’s users by more than one-third over detailing alone (Figure 1). That is remarkable when you consider that the very low cost of support promotion compared to a managed sales call.

“So what?” you ask. It means that if you decide to continue using or to discontinue an ad based only on its ad and product recall, then the market research has not gone far enough. Only an integrated approach using a validated methodology will reveal how efficiently your promotional mix is delivering the brand’s intended message. That is why I declined this client’s request to measure only ad performance.

CPM

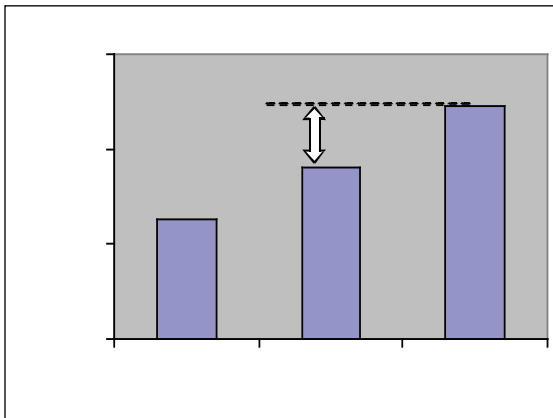


Figure 1. Support promotion increases efficiency.

For more information about how to plan, to optimize and to monitor your promotional mix, contact Graham Davies at (416) 467-7005 or g@davies-strategic.com.