

understanding advertising terms

by Julie Olthoff, President, VIA Marketing, Inc.

In the last issue of SSM, my column introduced several terms common to the advertising industry. In this column, I would like to explore in more depth two of these, reach and frequency, and suggest ways of using these statistics effectively.

Reach and frequency occur at the same time, and together determine the gross ratings points (GNP). For example, if 7,500 of a possible 10,000 people saw your commercial during the month that it ran, the reach would be 75 percent. If that commercial runs on the same station four times in a given period, the frequency is four, and the GNP would be 300 (reach x frequency = GNP).

But reach and frequency alone don't paint an accurate picture. The goals for the ad need to be considered. Is the brand name already well known? Does the advertiser want the consumer to switch brands? Does the advertiser want to widen its target audience?

Marketers who pay attention to the variables will look beyond statistics and take many additional aspects into account to assist their clients in getting the best return for their ad dollars. For example, the marketer might use a survey to measure audience recall of the previous ad campaign. They might run print ads with a special offer in two different magazines (perhaps Better Homes and Gardens and Vogue) to gauge the interests of those audiences.

As you know, determining where and how often an ad should run is not an exact science. But by working with seasoned professionals, a business can better target its ads to those who will respond.

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