

E-LESSON #7: How We Really See and Hear Commercials

GENERAL AGENDA



HOW WE REALLY SEE AND HEAR COMMERCIALS

By Paul Weyland

How We Really See and Hear Advertising and Why We Don't Have to Reach Everybody

Selling is the modification of the behavior of another person, in order to arrive at a mutually beneficial conclusion. I don't believe in hard sell. I believe in deep sell. Educated clients buy more than uneducated clients, that's a fact. So by educating clients in language they understand, we guide their behavior toward a mutually beneficial conclusion: why it's logical that they buy a long-term schedule from us.

The information in this E-Lesson on how we really see and hear advertising, combined with the concepts from the last E-Lesson on branding, are very important to convey to local direct clients for the following three reasons:

1. To convince the client that his spot *can* be seen or heard, despite increased marketing clutter.
2. To begin the process of managing the client's expectations about results on your station.
3. To give the client more reasons for buying a long-term contract, regardless of whether you're number one or number 20.

Why Managing Client Expectations about Results is So Important

This E-Lesson™ when combined with the previous lesson on branding will help you tell a compelling story your clients about why they need to maintain a constant presence on your station. But there is another reason for teaching your clients how people really see and hear advertising, to start the process of managing the client's expectations about results on your station.

Nothing is worse for a broadcast account executive than getting a cancellation because the client thinks that his campaign on your station "isn't working". Many new broadcast clients naively perceive that a campaign on a station is worthless unless it results in huge crowds of people at their doorstep. In E-Lessons™ 15-18 we will cover the problem of managing client expectations about results in detail. For right now, we begin that process of managing our client's expectations about results by explaining in a logical way why we don't have to reach EVERYBODY in order to have a good campaign.

Explaining the Concept of Selectivity

Understanding that we're all inundated with a minimum of 2,500 commercial impressions per day, it's easy to see how we must filter out a majority of the crap we're not interested in and only allow those things we're ON for to filter in. This explains why we see and hear advertising SELECTIVELY.

For example, let's look at how we really listen to the radio. In the United States, most people listen to the radio in their cars. Radio people will hate me for saying this, but it's true. We use the radio for environment and company. The radio may be on, but we're not really listening. Instead, we're concentrating on other things. Maybe we're thinking about the hot night we had last night. Or, we're worrying about the horrible day we're going to have today. Or, we're checking out the good-looking person in the car next to us. Or, we're looking at the not-so-good-looking person in the good-looking car next to us. Or, we're talking on a cell phone. Or, we're putting on make-up in the car. Or, we're having a conversation with a friend or relative in the car.

But even if we're having a conversation with a friend or relative in the car, what happens when YOUR FAVORITE SONG comes on the radio? What do you do? That's right, you turn it up. So, we listen to the radio SELECTIVELY. Every single time I illustrate this to a client, they always make the motion of turning up a radio, or they say, "You turn it up." This clearly indicates that they are on the same page you're on.

Broken Engines and Light Switches

People aren't really that difficult to figure out. We're like light switches. Either we are ON or we're OFF, for various products and services. We clearly see those products and services that we're interested in and we filter out most of the rest of the clutter.

For example, I started noticing engine problems on my vehicle. The car was no longer under warranty. I took it in for repairs. Three weeks later I had a different problem. Again, I took it in to the shop. This problem was unrelated to the first. The two repairs cost well over \$1,500. Within two months I had a third problem with the vehicle. Although I no longer had car payments I began focusing on how much I was spending in repairs and I began to hate my car and started to "rationalize" the logic of replacing it.

One day I noticed a new sports SUV on display at a shopping mall. It looked very cool. I wondered what it would be like to test drive that car. The same day I noticed someone driving the same make and model. Clearly I was now ON for that vehicle. Then on an international flight a week later I saw a positive review of that vehicle in a British newspaper. Once I arrived in the U.K. I "noted" a couple of versions of the same model and began pointing them out to my wife and friend. ON? You bettcha.

Returning to the States, armed with the positive review in the British paper I could hardly wait to test drive the vehicle. Was I ON? I focused on radio and television commercials featuring that model. Soon I “happened by” the dealership. I test drove the car and the salesperson suggested I “keep the car overnight.” Friends and relatives actually CONGRATULATED me on my new purchase. At first I told them that it wasn’t mine, I was just trying it out. But soon I realized that I was actually telling people the vehicle was mine. I was now not only ON but SOLD.

For the first couple of weeks I owned the new car I saw my make and model everywhere. I still heard and saw advertisements about my car. But at this point I hardly ever notice them anymore. Now, I’m OFF. All of those ads and spots have mysteriously disappeared.

On and Off

Can you think of a particular product or service that you are ON for right now? If you have a broken plumbing line, you’re really ON for a plumbing service. If you have a certain medical condition, you’re ON for any news or advertisement regarding that particular illness. If you are ON for a new television, you’ll pay more attention to any advertising you see or hear regarding a new set.

Recently, I was ON for a new forty two inch plasma flat-screen television. I watched one at a friend’s house. And from that moment on, I was hooked. Suddenly I saw flat-screened horizontal TVs everywhere. I saw the arrival and departure screens at the airport. I watched every commercial I saw with a flat-screen TV. I paid very careful attention to every ad in the newspaper. If I got a piece of “junk mail” with a big plasma TV on it, that mailing was not junk to me. Now that I’ve had one for a while, I generally don’t see those ads or spots anymore.

Why We Don’t Have to Reach Everybody

When you’re advertising, you don’t have to reach EVERYBODY. In fact, reaching everybody would be physically and theoretically impossible. And, it’s very unrealistic to think that you could reach everybody. To do so, you’d have to run commercials and ads in every single medium, on every station and publication. And, you’d have to run those spots every minute of every hour, every day. Then of course, when people tuned into a station, all they would see or hear is your ad and they’d turn off their set. You’d have to have full-page ads in every single publication. No editorial, just ads. And then of course, nobody would buy the publication. So, you can’t reach everybody and you don’t have to. All you have to reach is a percentage of those people who are ON for your product or service right now. For everybody else, you’re starting the BRANDING PROCESS.

So, go for a percentage of those people who are ON for your product or service RIGHT NOW. And at the same time, begin the process of BRANDING those people who are not on right now, but might be on later.

Keep in mind that somebody lost a pair of glasses yesterday. Somebody else is losing their glasses today, and more people will lose their glasses in coming days, weeks or months. Instead of leaving things totally up to chance, start branding those people now, so that when they do finally come “ON”, instead of just thinking about one or two vendors when it’s time to buy, perhaps they’ll think of your client’s product or service as well.

Visualize your station as a lake filled with fish. I know that some people hate comparing customers to fish, but the example works. In each lake including yours, there are fish that are hungry for what your client is selling right now. If you cast good bait and cast that bait often enough, provided that you don’t have marketing problems (and provided that particular lake is not being OVERFISHED by your client’s competitors), it looks like a pretty good calculated risk that your client could catch fish.

How to explain *SELECTIVE* viewing and listening to local direct clients:

Here again, is the way you would explain this concept to your clients.

Radio

Most people are listening in their cars. Others listen through headphones, at work or at home. Usually they only listen for ten to twenty minutes at a time, but with today's bad traffic, people are listening for longer periods of time.

Okay, let’s admit it to the client. People turn on the radio for environment and companionship. They are *hearing* the radio but they're not really *listening* to every word and every song on that station. Instead, they are concentrating on the task of driving or thinking about their day or talking on a mobile phone or having a conversation.

But even if you are having a conversation with a friend in the car, what happens when your favorite song comes on? That's right...you turn it up. So, we *listen* to the radio **SELECTIVELY**. This means that we only *listen* to the things we’re really interested in. (Every single time I explain this concept to a client and I ask them what happens when their favorite song comes on, they always say or indicate with their fingers, “TURN IT UP”.)

For example, if you’re in the market for a new green Toyota convertible and you’re thinking about buying one in the near future, you would be highly likely to *listen* to a radio commercial that began, “Green Toyota convertibles are the most beautiful cars on the road.” Or if you’re refinancing your house, you’re likely to *listen* to every single mortgage commercial and ad talking

about refinancing. If you've just had a fender-bender, you're much more likely to *listen* to commercials about auto body repair. If you're getting engaged soon, it's very likely that you'll *listen* to commercials about engagement rings and wedding sets. See what I mean? We *listen* to radio commercials **SELECTIVELY**.

Television

It's the same situation as radio. The longer people stay in their homes, the more likely it is that they'll spend more time watching television and *seeing* more television commercials.

But again, let's admit something to the client that he will be able to relate to. People *see* many television commercials but they actually *watch* very few of them. People *watch* commercials about *subjects they are really interested in*.

In other words, if you're in the market for a product or service that you will buy this week from somebody, you will immediately *take careful notice* if a spot targets you with that particular product or service. If you've been injured on the job, you're much more likely to see commercials from personal injury attorneys. If you're in the market for a new bedroom set, you're highly likely to notice commercials from furniture stores. So we also *watch* television commercials **SELECTIVELY**.

Conclusion:

We don't have to reach everybody with an advertising campaign on our station, just a percentage of those people who are ON. For everybody else, we're starting the **BRANDING** process. There are many viewers or listeners out there who are not ON for what the client is selling **RIGHT NOW**. But they might be ON next week, or next month, or in three months. By **BRANDING**, we're increasing the client's chances that these people will consider buying from him, rather than his competitor.

Provided that the client doesn't have marketing problems or that his business is seasonal and provided your station is reaching his proper demographic, then it is logical that there are fish ON for your client's product or service constantly. That's why the client must fish on your lake constantly throughout the year. Every time he's not casting, he's missing hungry fish. And for fish who aren't hungry for his product or service right now, he's getting them used to seeing and hearing his bait.

There is an on-line companion video provided with this lesson.

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