

USE AND EFFECTIVENESS OF PULL-THROUGH ADVERTISEMENTS EMBEDDED INTO TELEVISED SPORTING PROGRAMMES

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Context

Advances in technology in programme production for television have made it possible to move words horizontally across the television screen during regular programming, typically used to provide TV viewers with information such as news flashes, stock market share prices and programme information. Advertisers and marketers have seized this technological advancement as yet another advertising tool that they typically term 'pull-through' advertisements, a form that has become especially popular in sports broadcasts. At face value, this new form of advertising appears to provide marketers benefits including avoiding advertisement clutter, "forced" viewer exposure to advertisements, and reduced advertising costs. But these benefits, and the general effectiveness of 'pull through' are yet to be verified, and that is the purpose of this paper

Method

Four studies investigating use and effectiveness in communicating advertisement information of pull-through advertisements embedded in TV sports programmes were conducted after a content analysis provided ecological validity for three follow-up experimental studies using 51 pull-through advertisements inserted into a videotape of the same World Rugby Seven's telecast game: the first investigated the effects of the speed the advertisement moved across the TV screen; the second the sporting imagery surrounding the advertisement (context); and the third the effect of repeated use of the advertisements. The pull-through advertisements were inserted at different points, and at different frequencies, depending on the treatment under investigation. Subjects were randomly chosen members of community groups, local service and sport organisations. After viewing, they responded to a questionnaire containing demographic, brand recall, brand recognition, message comprehension, brand familiarity, attitude to the advertisement, attitude toward the brand, and purchase intent measures. Subjects were not made aware of the purpose of the study. A total of 477 subjects (238 men and 239 women) ranging from 16 to 86 years took part.

Results

From the initial content analytical validity study, inconsistencies in the use of pull-through advertisements were identified in terms of message speed (from 83 to 227 words a minute), contextual imagery and information, and frequency of exposure within the telecast programme (some also being linked to advertisements in upcoming commercial breaks). Pull-through advertisements were found executed as a single exposure before or after a commercial break, or as a double exposure before and after a commercial break. Hence, when pull-throughs were used in combination with advertisements in commercial breaks promoting the same brand, three brand exposures occurred in a short time.

Experiment 1 - speed

This first experiment found statistically significant (by logistic regression) results for: familiar brand recall at 163.9 wpm; familiar and unfamiliar brand recognition at 149.6 wpm and 162.6 wpm respectively; and familiar and unfamiliar brand product attribute comprehension at 153.5 wpm.

Experiment 2 - context

A 3x2 MANCOVA analysis examined the effects of context on attitudes to pull-through advertisements, information processing by memory, and attitudes to the brand. Significant results were found for: exciting context on attitude toward the ad, and attitude to the brand but not on information processing; recall of words on information processing. No significant results were found for recalling words on either attitude to the ad or to the brand.

Experiment 3 - repetition

A 2x2x2 MANOVA design on attitude toward brand and purchase intent was used (pull-through prior

x same brand ad in commercial break x pull-through after commercial break). Two significant two-way interactions were found: (1) for pull-throughs before and after a commercial break [two brand exposures], and (2) for pull-throughs prior to a commercial break and with a same-brand ad in the break [two brand exposures]. Simple effects analysis revealed that a second pull-through ad significantly reduced attitude to the brand, while using a pull-through ad with a same brand advertisement in an upcoming commercial break made no significant difference to attitude to the brand or purchase intent.

Discussion/Implications

While the preliminary study found inconsistencies in the speed of pull-throughs, Experiment 1 indicated a message speed around 150wpm produced best brand recall, recognition, and message comprehension.

Experiment 2 showed that stimuli surrounding a pull-through can be 'paired' (similarly to Pavlovian effects) and processed simultaneously, with a pull-through ad affecting attitude to the brand. In addition, findings revealed this paired processing can occur without conscious awareness. It is suggested marketers carefully control the points of pull-through ads to ensure they achieve maximum effectiveness.

Experiment 3 demonstrated that a single exposure of an ad was capable of achieving favourable attitude to the brand and purchase intent. Once traditional marketing methods have achieved desired levels of attitude to the brand and purchase intent, it is suggested that pull-throughs could be used to maintain these levels and possibly reduce subsequent advertising costs.

Overall, pull-through advertisements appear successful in breaking through clutter to gain processing attention and serve as an effective marketing tool in communicating brand information to consumers, but their effectiveness is determined by speed of the message; their programme context, and the frequency of their exposure.

References

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