

Gallup & Robinson on Engagement Measurement

Introduction

Although the concept of Engagement as a metric in communications research has been around for years, it is currently receiving considerable attention and support within the marketing and research communities. Several industry-wide initiatives are underway to define and understand the concept, with the Engagement Steering Committee of the AAAA, ANA and ARF having funded several studies to develop measures that better reflect the quality of marketing contacts in terms of their interaction with their target market, including one that is being conducted by G&R.

This renewed focus on Engagement is an attempt to respond to the changing landscape of mass communications media and a rate of change that may actually be accelerating. Gone are the days of limited media choices, monolithic audiences and predictable plans. Today's advertisers face a mind-numbing set of rapidly evolving choices, elusive and savvy audiences, and fluid planning options, while managements demand greater accountability for the investment choices being made for their brands.

As media complexity expands so do message complexity and measurement needs:

- Traditional reach, frequency and GRP measures are problematic for marketers trying to make inter-media allocation and optimization decisions as communications options proliferate in number and complexity.
- Concurrently, marketers are recognizing the growing importance of events, experiential tactics and other non-traditional channels as part of the marketing mix that have less broadly accepted evaluative metrics than do traditional media.
- There is also evidence that existing measures are not enough to measure the full dynamic of communication effectiveness. Recall, Persuasion, Liking and Loyalty get at aspects of the dynamic, but not its whole. Recall is necessary, but not sufficient. Persuasion deals more with near term effects than longer terms benefits. Liking is useful, but not necessary. Accurate loyalty measures remain elusive.

Engagement carries with it the hope that it will unify and standardize next generation measurement needs across both the media and the message. Although the concept of Engagement is not at new in the media world and there are a number of media-centric definitions of the term, within a message-centric context the term presently exists mainly as a concept that has been framed by the ARF as "turning on a prospect to a brand idea enhanced by the surrounding context". Engagement has been further conceived as the product of a brand's identity and the effectiveness with which a medium communicates that identity. Of course, implicit in this is that Engagement correlates positively to sales gains.

Since its founding in 1948, Gallup & Robinson's focus has been on measuring message effectiveness. Much of that focus has been on measuring advertising effectiveness in the

context in which advertising exposure takes place. Whether we are measuring the in-context effectiveness of individual advertisements via copy testing or of in-market multimedia campaigns via tracking, we have always looked at some measure of the attention that is being paid to it and some measure of the Engagement or affect the advertising has had on the respondent/audience. We have also done a considerable amount of Involvement analysis based on open-ended questioning about viewer and reader response. As a result of our work we conceive of Engagement as having cognitive and emotional dimensions that result from the interaction of a prospect, a brand, a medium/marcom channel and a message to produce desired behavior. We believe that Engagement measurement needs to be closely linked to the specific goals of the brand and communication vehicle we are evaluating. Thus, we do not offer a single Engagement measure, per se, but infer the effectiveness of advertising Engagement through a series of measurement tools that reflect different aspects of its contribution to the brand.

Impact Copy Testing

G&R's system for evaluating individual magazine, television, newspaper and radio advertisements is known as the Impact method. The Impact method, which was invented by G&R, begins with an exposure context that presents the stimulus in a program or magazine. We conduct a systematic mapping of widely dispersed U.S. markets to ensure that we reach a representative survey sample. Questions are asked about both the media and the advertising and questions about the advertising are asked on both a delayed (24 hours) and immediate (after re-exposure) basis. The Impact interview includes multiple measures that relate directly to cognitive, behavioral and emotional ad Engagement. It employs a standard battery of emotion-based brand attributes as its primary measure of emotional Engagement. The most direct and traditional indication that an advertisement has achieved cognitive Engagement is its target consumers' ability to describe its message and creative elements a day after exposure. Recall measures are at the core of G&R's Impact copy testing system. They indicate that advertisement perception has crossed over the conscious threshold to be cognitively translated into a verbal expression of brand awareness and ad content. Significant differences in attribute ratings after ad exposure vs. established category norms indicate specific attitudinal areas of emotional Engagement with brand messaging or imagery. It also uses proprietary open-ended free-association questions to additionally probe emotional reactions to the advertisement. This is analyzed for unprompted indications of emotional Engagement, which are often expressed. Additionally, custom questions are frequently added to probe facets of emotional Engagement unique to a particular execution.

The Impact battery has more recently incorporated a metric considered to reflect Engagement very directly, the Net Promoter Score, which measures the likelihood of recommending an advertised product or service to a friend or colleague. Here's an example of how Net Promoter works in copy testing (see Figure 1). Among the total sample, the Net Promoter Score is negative. Among ad recallers, it is more positive and among people who both recall and are persuaded by the ad it is even more so. Brand users have even higher NPS levels. While the cause and effect issues are complex, advertising that breaks through and gets noticed in a persuasive way seems to serve as a bridge for conducting people from strong negative levels to the strong positive levels of brand users (customers).

Case History: Net Promoter Scores in a CPG Category by Ad Response

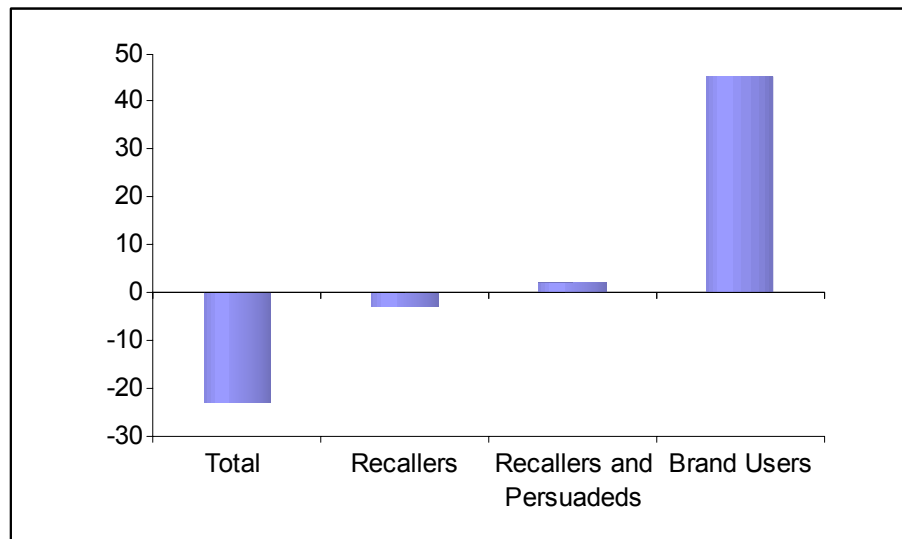
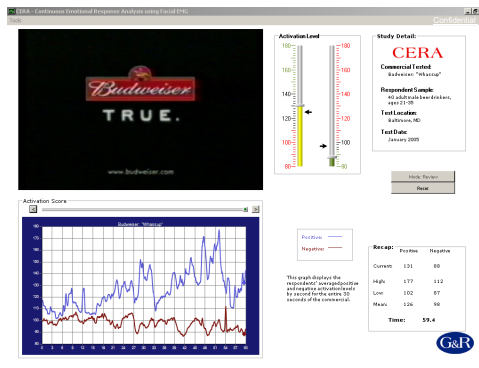


Figure 1

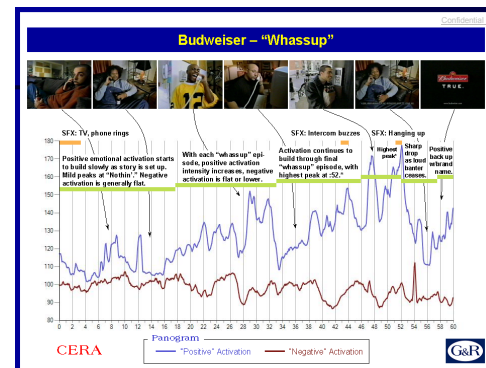
CERA Emotional Response Testing

Despite their well-documented validation, self-report systems have methodological limitations when the primary purpose of the research is to measure Engagement in terms of the emotional connection that the stimulus imprints. This limitation is not overcome by the use of less verbal devices like icons or knob turning because they are not natural markers of emotional response and, like language, only enable us to see emotional response through the lenses of cognitive filters. For that reason we have developed a new proprietary system for measuring emotional Engagement. Called CERA, for Continuous Emotional Response Assessment, the system is based on the continuous measure of facial electromyographic (EMG) reaction to kinetic advertising stimuli. It is obtained by sensors attached to the facial muscles of target consumers as they are presented with various message stimuli. CERA is physiological and operates at the pre-conscious level, unlike self-report systems which require some form of cognitive processing and filtering before emotional response can be revealed. G&R is participating in the ARF-AAAA Emotion in Advertising project with the use of CERA and has demonstrated the system at the ARF's annual convention.

The following Budweiser commercial, “Whassup,” has proven in-market performance. It was tested in CERA as part of the joint ARF-AAAA Emotional Response to Advertising Project. CERA showed the commercial to be the most emotionally activating of several beer commercials tested among a target audience. CERA showed high levels of positive activation that build throughout the commercial and, although reduced, remain strong during the final branding moments.



The kinetic visual display that CERA uses to show results with the parts of the commercial that contributed to them.



The static visual display that CERA uses to show results with the key parts of the commercial that contributed them.

Figure 2

Campaign Tracking

For campaign tracking, our studies are primarily cognitive-based, using self-report methods that incorporate our learning about such measures and emotional response. A pre-exposure survey is first conducted to establish benchmark levels of multiple Engagement-related metrics. This enables the measurement of attitudinal lift during subsequent campaign tracking waves as an indication of the campaign’s success in engaging the viewer and, thereby, modifying emotion-based perceptions. At the cognitive level, tracking studies measure the lift in Brand and Campaign Awareness and Message Communication.

An enhancement to traditional tracking methods is provided by G&R’s Marcom 360 service. Using relatively large online samples, this system re-exposes respondents to multiple channel elements and measures Reach via recognition of one or more of these elements. It then models the contribution of both the overall campaign and its individual elements to desired behavior-related outcomes, such as Purchase Intent Lift. Marcom 360 can be regarded as a multi-channel Engagement measure as it assesses conscious consumer interaction with each channel of a campaign.

G&R tracking studies are explicitly focused on behavioral Engagement measures. Among the Engagement lift metrics they track are Word of Mouth, Purchase Consideration, Purchase Intent and Net Promoter Score. In Marcom 360 surveys, post-exposure samples are recontacted after a suitable period to confirm actual brand purchases as a final validation of behavioral Engagement. Marcom 360 analysis models lift and sales as a function of exposure to all communication channels employed in a campaign to assess relative consumer Engagement with each. This analysis enables the calculation of program and individual channel ROI, perhaps the most meaningful single measure of Engagement impact available.

Recap

The dynamics of cognition and emotion, and the relationship between the two in producing Engagement are still imperfectly understood. Gallup & Robinson's copy testing and tracking services employ a range of multi-dimensional metrics that cover the key aspects of the complex response phenomena of marcom Engagement. Cognitive-based measures of Engagement's contribution to brand value include Brand Awareness Lift, Recall, Persuasion, Brand Attribute Lift, Word of Mouth Lift, Purchase Consideration Lift, Purchase Intent Lift and Net Promoter Score Lift. Emotion-based measures of Engagement include Imagery Shift, User-brand Self-image Convergence Analysis and Physiological Measurement of the markers that accompany emotional activation. By providing a variety of well-considered and empirically-validated Engagement-related metrics, along with the flexibility of adding others that relate to a specific execution, we are able to focus on those measures that are most closely linked to the cognitive and emotional objectives on which an advertisement or campaign is based.