

Brain Study Shows Radio Generates Ad Memorability.

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As radio looks to claw back dollars lost to digital media, new research shows AM/FM beats both digital and TV when it comes to the memorability of advertising. Conducted in Canada in April, the study used EEG technology to uncover the way the human brain hears and processes radio commercials.

Commissioned by radio rep firm Canadian Broadcast Sales (CBS), the study was conducted by Toronto-based Brainsights, which provides neuro-marketing measurement to major advertisers. Researchers used EEG technology, which records electrical activity of the brain, to track individual reactions to radio content. Respondents were exposed to 32 commercials across various categories ranging from automotive and finance, to entertainment and personal care. The electrodes measured subconscious engagement across three key variables: awareness, connection and encoding.

Radio performed at comparable levels to TV and digital when it comes to generating awareness and connection in advertising but outshone competing media by 8% in the area of memorability and encoding. Encoding refers to whether the ad is being committed to memory, a component that CBS says is hard to attain on other platforms.

In the finance category, radio performed 16% better than general advertising benchmarks in attention, 21% better in connection and a whopping 30% better in encoding. "Finance has trouble getting encoding and connection when using TV and digital, making radio a go to medium for the sector," according to the study.

Ecommerce had the highest encoding score of any category in the study with a +35% encoding score. Radio delivered a +9% encoding score for consumers packaged goods brands.

"Radio can be used tactically in campaigns to increase memorability, leading to brand salience that is hard to achieve with other media," the report concludes.

According to the CBS report, 90%-95% of what drives human decision making is at the subconscious or unconscious level. "Because decisions are primarily made at the unconscious level it is imperative to build and reinforce strong memory webs that allow your product or service to be recalled in a buying situation," it says.

"The ability to deliver key messages, and elevate memorability is a significant asset," said Dan Iwasa-Madge, head of Product and Analysis at Brainsights. "This places radio as a key component of the marcomm toolbox - it reinforces, reminds and solidifies brand messaging. This is especially relevant for those industries which struggle to create memorability in their communications – CPG, finance and retail, among others."

Owned by Canadian media giants Rogers Media and Corus Entertainment, CBS represent 42 broadcasters and 400 radio stations (including repeaters) in 223 Canadian markets.

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