



**Marketing Analysis Consulting**  
*Mathematics at the Service of Marketing*

Subject No. 4 – November 2007

## **FREQUENCY, REGENCY... AND EFFICIENCY**

*Communication goals: attract Attention, maintain Interest, create Desire and induce to Action (AIDA)*



*Each individual, within his own particular character, will conform closely to one of the typical response patterns.*



(1) Krugman, Herbert E. 'Why Three Exposures May Be Enough'. *Journal of Advertising Research* 12, 6 (1972): 11-14.

### **Who, How Much and When**

The main objective of effective advertising communication involves:

- Delivering the right message
- To the target audience
- The right number of times
- In the most favorable environment
- At the right time
- At the best possible cost

This has led to a whole series of investigations aimed at the determination of the parameters affecting advertising in order for it to fulfill its role of communicating effectively.

---

---

### **Frequency vs. Recency**

This argument has given rise to much literature on the subject, which at first focused on the two fundamental concepts of Frequency and Coverage, and then on Effective Frequency and Coverage, and recently on the Frequency Approach and on the Recency Approach (proximity).

Starting with the first of the two most current approaches, Effective Frequency deals with the number of times an individual has to be exposed to an advertisement for it to be effective. The term Frequency is based on the need for a minimum number of repeated exposures, or what is the same thing, the number of repeated exposures necessary to exceed a given threshold for an advertisement to be effective. Some studies suggest that a part of the strength of the message is necessary to overcome the "advertising noise". If the level of exposure drops below a critical level, consumers will not perceive the message. (Krugman<sup>(1)</sup>), for example, suggests that three exposures were necessary for successful message retention: the first one triggers the consumers attention; the second one involves personal relevance or importance; and the third one serves as a reminder, strengthening the effect of the message in a positive way or in a negative one. According to this approach, the effect of the following exposures was limited to reinforcing the third one, unless a long period of time had elapsed, in which case we would have to go back to the first step).



*Following one or another strategy will depend on what we want to communicate*

However, the existence of a threshold level, or minimum frequency, in order for an advertisement to be effective, should not be considered as a universal principle. Because, as proposed by Leckenby, Cannon and Abertnethy<sup>(2)</sup>, quoting Ostrow, there are a number of factors which influence the need for a higher or lower frequency level:

**FACTORS INFLUENCING THE NEED FOR A HIGHER OR LOWER FREQUENCY LEVEL**

	<b>Marketing Factors</b>	<b>Copy Factors</b>	<b>Media Factors</b>
<b>NEEDING LOWER FREQUENCY</b>	Established brands High market share Dominant brand in market High brand loyalty Long purchase cycle	Unique Copy High copy wear out	Demand more attention Few media used Repeated ad exposure
<b>NEEDING HIGHER FREQUENCY</b>	Product used daily Heavy spending category Special targets New brands or Products	Complex copy New copy With many kinds of messages Small ad units	High clutter Compatible environment Seasonal

On the other hand, according to the Recency Theory (proximity), the primary goal is to ensure that our message reaches the consumer, who is ready to buy a product, immediately prior to the purchase decision. The advantages are the following:

- Avoid the wear-out of advertising effectiveness or Advertising Response Decay.
- Avoid, as far as possible, the competitors' actions at the crucial moment of purchase.

According to this theory, the strategy to reach that potential customer is to ensure that our message gets to as many consumers as possible, when and where it is most helpful.

In addition, under both approaches, we will try to achieve maximum coverage of our Target Audience.



(2) Hugh M. Cannon; John D. Leckenby; Avery Abertnethy: "Beyond Effective Frequency: Evaluating Media Schedules Using Frequency Value Planning". Journal of Advertising Research. (November-December 2002): 33-47

*Each communication project should be dealt with separately.*



Carlos Lamas, in his paper on the “Effectiveness of Media Plans” (Bilbao 1999), reviewed the literature on the subject and summarized, in the following table, the differences which exist between the “effective frequency” approach, as set out by Colin McDonald, and the theory of “recency” (proximity), introduced by Edwin Ephron.

	"Effective Frequency"	"Recency" (Proximity)
<b>Philosophy</b>	Learning	Recall
<b>Number of Contacts</b>	Repetition. Threshold value 3	Presence. One exposure is enough
<b>Critical component</b>	How many exposures	When
<b>Maximize</b>	Frequency	Coverage
<b>Media Plan</b>	In waves	Continue scheduling
<b>Monitoring</b>	Cost-per-thousand (CPM)	Cost per point of weekly coverage

### Multiple-Entry Models

In the classical models of the effectiveness measurement of a communication campaign, the main goal was Effective Frequency. This measurement was used, some years ago, as a reference baseline to evaluate the effectiveness of a media plan.

But not all advertising plans pursue the same goals. Thus, an advertising campaign to launch a product is not the same thing as another for promoting or changing a brand’s image; neither is the same to focus advertising on brand-loyal buyers than on occasional buyers or non-buyers.

Thus, in our view, the effectiveness of a campaign can not be measured **exclusively** in terms of the achievements of the project objectives, such as getting the message to be seen, by the desired target group, a minimum number of times.

An effective media campaign requires, in the first place, establishing marketing and communication strategies, and from there, setting the goals to be achieved; drawing up a media plan, estimating the exposure distribution for the different media, combining properly Frequency vs. Recency and, finally, estimating the contribution of each of these factors to the established objectives.

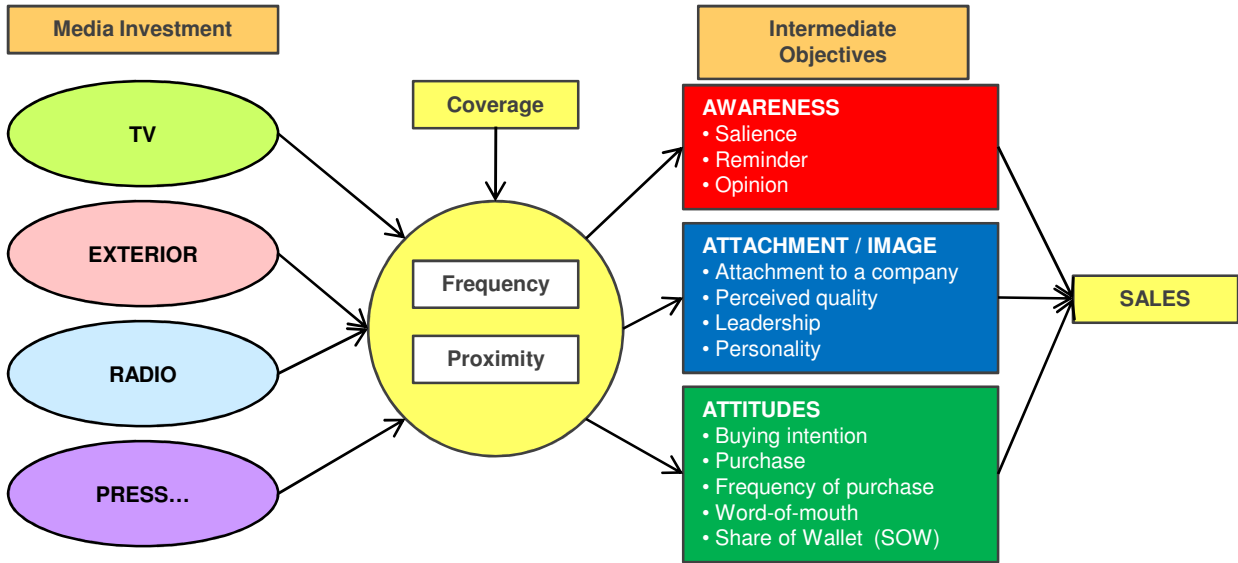


# Marketing Analysis Consulting

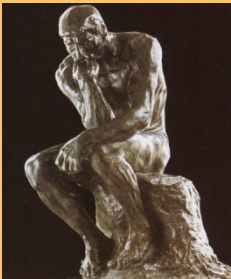
*Mathematics at the Servicio of Marketing*



These objectives must be clearly defined and must be able to be evaluated through consumers' response curves. Responses which will include from Brand Knowledge or Awareness to Actual Buying Behavior. And at the same time, in the long term, maintaining or increasing the Sales level.



*The objectives must be quantifiable so we can evaluate their fulfillment.*



At CONENTO we develop mathematical models which, starting from actual advertising exposure data, will allow estimation of the probability of reaching a specific number of persons through a specific advertising media and then, combining this with the achievement of our established objectives.

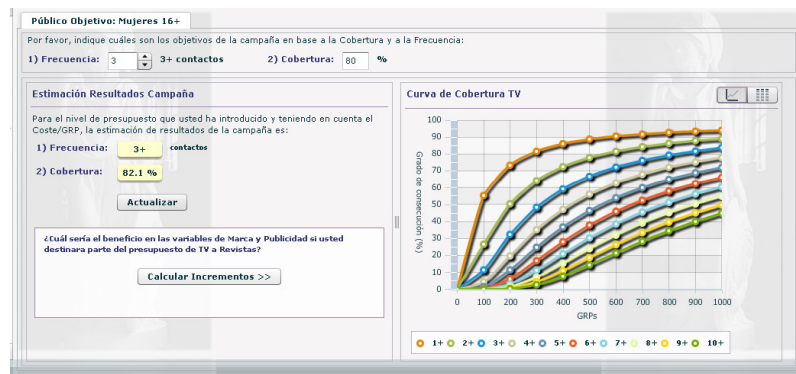
On the other hand, if what we want is to evaluate the contribution of a medium or series of media to any of the proposed objectives, for example, brand salience, our models will allow us to work it out and determine the most effective marketing media mix, the Effective Frequency to be aimed at and the Recency which could complement all of that.



**A couple of examples**

1. ATENEA is a tool currently being introduced in the market for measuring the effectiveness of the Magazine media. The models applied by means of this tool, to establish the best mix between the TV and Magazine media, follow the outline below:

- Determine goals for Effective Frequency and TV Coverage.
- Determine TV investment requirements to achieve these goals.
- Use the Magazine Effectiveness Models to determine the best mix between the two media.



*The Mathematical Models will allow us to achieve our communication goals, optimizing available resources.*

2. In the classical Advertising Tracking paradigm, very simple models are used allowing for the quantification of advertising contribution to each of the measurable variables and cross these data with the Effective Frequency of the different campaigns.

