

Informationsreihe der LINK-Gruppe
zur Markt- und Sozialforschung

**SPOT CHECK:
A HYBRID APPROACH FOR INTEGRATED
MEASUREMENT OF EFFICACY AND QUALITY OF RADIO
COMMERCIALS THROUGH MULTIMEDIA
CATI**

**SPOT CHECK:
EIN HYBRIDER ANSATZ ZUR INTEGRIERTEN
ÜBERPRÜFUNG DER EFFIZIENZ UND QUALITÄT VON
RADIO SPOTS MITTELS MULTIMEDIA CATI**

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ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Wie kann die Effizienz eines Radio Spots zuverlässig beurteilt werden? Welchen Beitrag zur Verbesserung der kreativen Qualität von Radiospots können empirische Untersuchungen leisten? Das Projekt "Spot-Check" vereint beide Aspekte - quantitative Evaluation und qualitative Diagnose - in einem kosteneffizienten Forschungsansatz. Die für Radiowerbung typische Einschränkung des Forschungs-Budgets wird beim Spot-Check durch den hybriden Ansatz berücksichtigt: In einer einzigen Studie werden sowohl Elemente einer Effizienzmessung im Sinne eines Post-Tests, wie auch Elemente eines diagnostischen Pre-Tests integriert. Der Einsatz der neuesten Multimedia CATI Technologie ermöglicht eine zuverlässige, kontrollierte und effiziente Realisierung der Studien. Der vorliegende LINK Focus präsentiert Ergebnisse einer Pilotstudie in der Schweiz. Eine Spot-Check Untersuchung umfasst zwei Teile: Fragen, die für einen Post-Test typisch sind, und klassische Pre-Test Fragen. Die Pre-Test Elemente unterstützen die Optimierung der kreativen Qualität von Radiospots. Anmutungsqualität, Verstärkung des Interesses am Produkt, und Attraktivität des Spots dienen als Indikatoren.

Der Schlüsselwert im Rahmen des Post-Tests ist die Recognition (Wiedererkennung). Dazu werden die zu testenden Radiospots während des telefonischen Interviews durch den Befragungscomputer über die Telefonleitung in zufälliger Reihenfolge abgespielt. Die Effizienz eines Radiospots kann als Index ausgedrückt werden, basierend auf dem Wiedererkennungswert geteilt durch die GRPs der Kampagne. Dieser Index - "Wiedererkennung in % pro 100 GRPs" - differenziert zwischen effizienteren und

weniger effizienten Kampagnen. Eine Datenbank der "Effizienz-Indices" befindet sich im Aufbau, und wird die Evaluation von Kampagnen im Vergleich zu kategorienspezifischen Benchmarks unterstützen. Die systematische Sammlung und Auswertung der "Spot-Check" - Daten wird auch Beziehungen zwischen "Pre-Test" - Ergebnissen und der Effizienz gemäss "Post-Test" Werten aufzeigen.

RESUME

Comment apprécier fiablement l'efficacité d'un spot radio ? Dans quelle mesure la recherche empirique peut-elle contribuer à améliorer la qualité créative de spots radio ? Le projet "Spot-Check" réunit deux aspects - évaluation quantitative et diagnostic qualitatif - dans une même méthodologie, financièrement avantageuse. Les limites budgétaires, typiques de la publicité radio, sont ainsi prises en compte par l'approche hybride de Spot-Check. Une seule et même étude intègre des éléments mesurant l'efficacité dans le sens tantôt d'un Post-test, tantôt d'un Pré-test diagnostique. Le recours aux technologies multimédia CATI assure une administration fiable, contrôlée et efficiente de l'étude. Le LINK Focus ci-joint présente les résultats d'une telle recherche réalisée en Suisse.

Une étude Spot-Check comprend deux parties: des questions typiques de Post-test, et des questions classiques de Pré-test. Les éléments Pré-test sous-tendent l'optimisation de la qualité créative de spots radio. Associations, renforcement de l'intérêt envers le produit et attractivité du spot en constituent les indicateurs.

Dans le cadre d'un Post-test, la "Reconnaissance" (reconnaissance) constitue une valeur-clé. Dans ce but, les spots radio à tester par interviews téléphoniques, sont joués selon une séquence aléatoire par l'ordinateur d'enquête et transmis par ligne téléphonique. L'efficacité d'un spot radio peut être exprimée par un index, fondée sur une valeur de reconnaissance divisée par le GRP de la campagne. Cet index - "Reconnaissance en % par 100 GRP" - permet de différencier les campagnes selon leur degré d'efficacité. Une banque de données des "In-

dicés d'efficacité" est en voie de mise sur pied, et permettra l'évaluation de campagnes comparativement à des "Benchmarks" référencés par catégorie de prestation/produit. La collecte systématique et l'exploitation de données "Spot-Check" permettra également de mettre en évidence les relations entre résultats de "Pré-test" et l'efficacité selon la partie "Post-test".

ABSTRACTS

This paper describes a system that helps to assess the impact of radio advertising, and to improve the creative quality of the executions. The “Spot-Check” project is an example of cost-effective research using latest CATI technology. The approach takes into account the constraints of the small research budgets that are typical for radio advertising - particularly in smaller countries. This LINK Focus presents data from a pilot test conducted in Switzerland.

Spot-Check embraces two parts: Questions which are typical for Post-Tests and for Pre-Tests. The Pre-Test elements support the optimization of radio commercials in terms of executional quality. Indicators which differentiate between the tested commercials are likability, interest shift, and perceptual dimensions such as “striking”, “entertaining” and informative.

The key Post-Test measurement is recognition. The tested radio commercials are played back to the respondent in randomized order during the interview over the phone, using LINK’s multimedia CATI software. The efficacy of commercials may be expressed as an index, calculated by dividing recognition score by GRPs. This “recognition per 100 GRPs”-index differentiates between more and less efficient commercials. Patterns of relationships, however, between such “post-test” results and findings of the pre-test part are still to be established.

1. BACKGROUND

In order to understand the specific situation of radio advertising in Switzerland and consequently radio advertising research, it is necessary to have a brief look at the history of TV and radio broadcasting in Switzerland.

TV advertising has been launched in parallel with the introduction of TV stations in Switzerland. However, not until recently, Swiss TV advertising was completely in the hands of the Swiss National TV. Radio advertising has been inexistent in Switzerland until the early 80ies.

The National Swiss Broadcasting Organization with its 3 radio programmes never has been running radio advertising. Private commercial radio stations with the right to broadcast a limited amount of advertising were admitted on a local level only. Usually the catchment area of these radio stations is rather small, with a few exceptions in the Zurich conurbation.

The fact that only small scale local radio stations with limited catchment areas were admitted, made radio advertising an inexpensive - and at least at the beginning - not very professional media. Campaigns were often limited to one or two of the more than 30 local radio stations. With the advent of media planning agencies like Radiotele in Zurich, the number of professional national or regional campaigns increased. Nevertheless, radio advertising remains the "Cinderella" of advertising in Switzerland. Typical radio advertising budgets are still quite small, and proportionally, also research budgets.

Radio and TV advertising expenditures - Total Switzerland

Figures in million CHF - Source: Werbestatistik Schweiz

1.1 Audience data

The introduction of radio commercials in Switzerland made data on radio audience crucial. There is a national radio audience study - conducted by the Swiss Broadcasting Corporation. It is based on a time-budget like questionnaire, measuring radio audience in intervals of 15 minutes. These face-to-face surveys are conducted on a continuous basis, providing normative estimates of GRPs for a given campaign only. Factual retrospective GRPs for a given campaign, like those generated from TV meters, are not available.

Given this shortcoming, there is an overt need for data on actual impact and penetration of a given radio campaign amongst relevant segments of the target group. Radiotele decided to provide additional data that could ensure advertisers.

1.2 Quality problems

The low financial threshold of radio advertising in Switzerland has caused some problems with executional quality. Mainly local campaigns were often produced by the advertiser himself, sometimes with the help of radio station staff. Apparently, the often unsatisfactory quality of radio commercials is a concern of those selling radio advertising seconds, as well as for the radio stations, since radio commercials are inevitably a part of a station's programme. Radiotele, one of the key players in the field of radio advertising, considered qualitative pre-testing as a tool to support quality improvements.

2. THE PROJECT

Based on the considerations outlined, Radiotele wanted to offer a research package to its clients, which would...

- allow a “controlling” of the investments of clients in order to ensure clients of the actual impact of their campaign amongst target groups
- support the optimization of the creative quality and public acceptance of the commercials
- be offered at reasonable costs

Mainly for cost reasons, the objectives of the project were to be integrated into one syndicated research system. The “Spot-Check” research system which was finally developed by Radiotele in cooperation with LINK Switzerland, is a combination of classic pre-testing and post-testing elements, this is why we call it a “hybrid approach”.

The system measures...

- efficacy: awareness in reel, recognition, branding
- acceptance + appeal
- qualitative diagnostic questions
- perceptual profile

... amongst a representative sample of the relevant audience.

2.1 Methodology of choice

The methodology of choice for representative surveys in Switzerland¹ is telephone interviewing (CATI) - for the following reasons: practically 100 % of households are available on electronic telephone directories, telephone penetration is above 97%, the telephone interview is well accepted by the Swiss population - since tele canvassing is less of a problem.

The CATI approach provides significant advantages compared to alternatives such as paper and pencil, or the more recent development of (multi-media -) CAPI.

¹ CATI is also methodology of choice for this type of survey in most West European countries - all with a high penetration of the telephone >90%, and good acceptance amongst respondents.

- The sample is geographically micro-stratified across the region to be covered, for example the catchment area of a radio station.
- Better sample saturation thanks to several contacts - which is important in order to include the young and mobile, an important target group for radio advertising, particularly of the urban Zurich radio stations, into the sample.
- Random rotation etc. for stimuli (i.e. radio commercials) is automatic and controlled.
- Cost efficiency: face-to-face interviews in Switzerland (and Western Europe in general) are significantly more expensive than CATI surveys, mainly due to higher personnel costs for the interviewing.

2.2 The rôle of new technology

The hybrid approach, including measurement of recognition but also qualitative discussion of the commercials, requires the presentation of the tested radio commercials to the respondent as stimulus.

There was a need to play back audio stimuli during a telephone interview. It was the availability of multimedia CATI technology which made such a project technically feasible:

The radio commercials are digitized, and the resulting sound resources become part of the CATI questionnaire.

This paper is to outline the *Spot-Check* project, and to present some data of a pilot survey conducted in summer 1994.

2.3 Estimating actual impact

As a controlling instrument of radio campaigns for advertisers, the Spot-Check project verifies the efficacy of a campaign through key indicators.

It helps to estimate the actual impact of a campaign - as opposed to the theoretical reach, which is calculated by media planning programs on the audience data provided by the Swiss Broadcasting Corporation research services.

Recognition was chosen as the most adequate measurement allowing the best possible estimate of the actual impact of a campaign: "Has the respondent ever heard the commercial - if yes - was this often or seldom?" The latter question may be used in order to run a wear-out analysis.

Recognition is assumed to get data which are closer to actual contact with the commercial than alternative measurements, as for example aided advertising recall².

² For a comprehensive overview on issues of recognition c.f. Wolfgang Schaefer, "Recognition reconsidered", in: marketing and research today, Vol 23, No 2, May 1995

Recognition measurement has the further advantage of a reduced bias through previous campaigns with the same brand or category.

2.4 Optimizing quality

In order to assess the quality of the commercial and to optimize execution, the following aspects are covered in the “Spot-Check” package:

- which message is perceived ?
- which elements are particularly attractive and stimulating ?
- what is the perceptual profile of the commercial ?

2.5 Fieldwork

Fieldwork is conducted from monitored call centers, equipped with multi-media CATI stations. The commercials are digitized and played back through the CATI program into the telephone system.

All interviewers get a specific briefing prior to the start of the interviewing, all fieldwork is under continuous supervision.

3. THE PILOT SURVEY

The region of Zurich - a 1 million inhabitants conurbation - is covered by 4 different local radio stations. Two of them are very successful and are in fierce competition to the National Broadcasting Corporation.

Name of the radio station	General Audience ³	Daily Audience ⁴
Radio 24	36%	16%
Radio Z	31%	14%
Zürisee	8%	3%
Eulach	5%	2%

³ “Generally” listening to the programme of the station

⁴ Based on listening patterns “yesterday” - 15 minutes intervals

In July 1994, a pilot study using the Spot-Check concept was conducted in the Zurich region, with 210 adults aged 15-74 years. Five commercials were examined.

Advertiser	Commercial	normative reach ⁵	normative GRP's ⁵
SBB	Half-Price Card	73%	476
Migros	Soccer	69%	296
Peugeot	Climatisé	72%	313
Media Markt	Beckett	72%	311
AMAG	VW/AUDI	77%	513

Procedure

At the beginning of the interview, the 5 commercials are played back to the respondents - in randomized sequence.

After collecting "recall out of reel", each commercial is individually played back a second time, immediately followed by questions on recognition, branding, acceptance and perception.

According to the hybrid character of the project, the findings will be presented in two sections:

- pre-test results
- post-test results

3.1 Pre-Test Results

Recall out of reel + branding

As in traditional pre-test designs, a reel of radio commercials is presented to the respondent. Due to the use of computer aided multi-media technology, the sequence of the commercials is random rotated.

Only one commercial - the one for SBB (Federal Railways) - gets above average recall out of reel. After a second single exposure to the commercial, branding is measured - obviously all tested commercials don't have a particular problem with branding.

⁵ Based on 1 year ,3 hours windows, "listened yesterday" - data

Advertiser	Commercial	Recall out of reel	Correct branding
SBB	Half-Price Card	63%	98%
Migros	Football-Menu	54%	94%
Peugeot	Climatisé	52%	90%
Media Markt	Beckett	53%	93%
AMAG	VW/AUDI	52%	97%

Indicator questions

Some indicator-questions provide insight into how persuasive the commercial is, and how likable it is in the eyes of consumers.

Apparently the “SBB” commercial gets highest ratings - on both increase of interest in the product or service and in terms of likability.

Advertiser	Commercial	Increased interest ⁶	Likability ⁷
SBB	Half-Price Card	34%	65%
Migros	Soccer	25%	49%
Peugeot	Climatisé	13%	49%
Media Markt	Beckett	27%	39%
AMAG	VW/AUDI	19%	46%

The perceptual profile can provide some insight into why the “Federal Railways” commercial gets better results in

some dimensions. It is seen as entertaining and striking clearly above average.

Dimension	Radio adverts average	SBB	Migros
entertaining	39 %	61 %	31 %
informative	55 %	47 %	61 %
persuasive	26 %	38 %	38 %
striking	66 %	66 %	45 %

⁶ % yes, increased interest in buying product/ service

⁷ like ad very + somehow

Wear out effect ?

An optional further in-depth analysis is to verify whether any wear-out effect can be detected. Apparently, in the case of

the “SBB” commercial, there are even better ratings amongst those who have noticed the commercial more “often” than amongst others.

SBB - profile dimensions:	Respondent has heard commercial ...		
	often	seldom	never
entertaining	81 %	70 %	48 %
informative	64 %	41 %	40 %
persuasive	54 %	35 %	30 %
striking	73 %	76 %	58 %
nice	81 %	65 %	45 %

Further diagnostic questions cover detailed recall and dislikes.

3.2 Post-Test results

Recognition is used to estimate the efficacy of the campaign. In the pilot study, the recognition score of the “SBB” commercial is 48%, of the AMAG commercial 42%, the others get a score of about 30%. Comparing the recognition level with the theoretical reach of a given camping, it is possible to calculate a “saturation score”: recognition divided by theoretical reach. Amongst the 5 commercials covered by the pilot survey, the “SBB” commercial achieves by far the best saturation score, i.e. the actual recognition is high compared to the theoretical reach (73%).

Comparing the recognition levels to the amount of GRPs spent, however, shows a different pattern: 4 campaigns achieve an index of 10 percent points recognition per 100 GRP, only one commercial is lower with an index of 8. Whether qualitative shortcomings of the AMAG commercial are the underlying reasons for the lower efficacy of the campaign, can not be determined by this particular survey.

Advertiser	normative reach	normative GRPs	recognition (%)	saturation score	recognition % per 100 GRP
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(3)/(1)	(3)/(2)
SBB	73%	476	48%	66%	10.1
Migros	69%	296	30%	44%	10.1
Peugeot	72%	313	31%	43%	10.0
Media Markt	72%	311	32%	44%	10.3
AMAG	77%	513	42%	54%	08.2

The above findings support the hypothesis, that the tested commercials show similar efficacy - at least in terms of turning expenses into recognition.

Other test - series, however, indicate that recognition scores can differentiate be-

tween more and less effective advertising. The following table shows data on 4 radio commercials included in the most recent "Spot Check" test conducted in Switzerland:

Category ⁸	normative reach	normative GRPs	recognition (%)	saturation score	recognition % per 100 GRP
	(1)	(3)	(2)	(1)/(2)	(2)/(3)
Soft Drink	71%	290	22%	31%	7.6
Cosmetics	72%	387	11%	15%	2.8
Automotive	75%	539	31%	41%	5.8
Dairy	70%	639	22%	31%	3.4

Radiotele and LINK are in the process of setting up a database of tested radio commercials, which will allow to identify patterns of relationship between pre-

test results and recognition, but also to set "benchmarks" for efficacy of radio commercials within product category.

⁸ proprietary data, therefore names of advertisers can not be disclosed

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