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Looking For Engaged Consumers?

Gallup, MMR Surveys Have Found Them

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NEW YORK (AdAge.com) -- If you're looking for viewers who are engaged with what they're watching, then Rich Goldfarb, senior VP-media sales at National Geographic Channel, should be on your list of people to call. Mr. Goldfarb's 5-year-old cable channel leads the pack of specialized cable, print and online media that scored high in a pair of studies on consumer engagement released yesterday.



Two studies say National Geographic Channel has scores high in 'engagement' metrics, a feat likely due to its clearly defined content.

New categories for MMR

In a commissioned study of the cable industry with the Gallup Organization, National Geographic Channel had the largest portion of engaged viewers, 45%, when compared to 16 competitors such as A&E, Discovery Channel and TLC. The National Geographic brand also scored high in nearly all the major engagement categories in Monroe Mendelsohn Research's third annual PReSS Survey, which added websites and cable networks to its list for the first time this year.

"This is another validation of many sources of information that place our channel toward the very top of the heap in terms of all the qualitative attributes that viewers and consumers attach to their usage and viewership of our channel and digital extensions," Mr. Goldfarb said.

Niche communities such as National Geographic's target audience of upscale 25- to 54-year-olds speak the loudest to the topic of consumer engagement in today's multiplatform

world. Engagement, of course, has been *the* buzzword to throw around this year if you want to prove you are ready to move past just racking up eyeballs and truly target your customers when they are ready to buy.

Determining engagement

The PReSS 2006 study asked 19,288 adults, 18 years and older, to describe their relationships with the media brands included in the survey. Respondents were asked how often they read, view or visit the magazine, cable network or website; whether they look forward to the time they spend with it; if they find it entertaining, trustworthy, informative, authoritative and enjoyable; and if they notice the ads and find them useful.

On the print side of MMR's PReSS survey, magazines such as *The Economist* and *Smithsonian* held top spots in the informative and overall categories, respectively, while general-interest mainstays *Time* and *People* were further down the ladder. The highly competitive women's-interest market was particularly divided across the board, with only *More*, *Jet* and *Ebony* scoring in the top percentile.

"The more you contrive a broad base of 20 million women, you're going to have to appeal to a more heterogeneous group of people rather than homogenous," said Bob Shullman, senior VP, MMR. "If you do one execution, you're obviously not going to keep everybody in that 20 million, so when you have a very targeted group topic or book, you're going to succeed."

Internet's go-to status

Conversely, MMR's most engaging websites represent the internet's status as a go-to research device, with *Gourmet* and *Parenting* scoring high among readers turning to the web when they would have clipped and saved the same content less than a generation ago.



Brad Adgate, senior VP-research at Horizon Media

Brad Adgate, senior VP-research at Horizon Media, attributes the striking results to the "breaking down of silos" seen across engagement metrics in the age of multiplatform brand marketing.

"Content continues to migrate from traditional media, not only just on the buying side but from the selling side," he said. "Content providers and buyers of advertising are going to have to at some point come to grips with these linear, cross-platform-type of negotiations that could happen to be imminent. The next thing will probably be measuring content on

handheld devices."

Who wants 'The Economist'?

National Geographic notwithstanding, the transition to cross-platform engagement is still a slow one for many publications and cable networks alike. *The Economist*, which publisher Paul Rossi considers to be an "armchair read" for his dedicated audience, had nearly opposite scores for its print and web formats, as Economist.com is a subscription-based site with limited daily content. Results from surveys such as MMR help him to determine his publication's "wantedness" in the grand scheme of print news as it continues to expand its digital efforts.

"It's actually also a reinforcement that we're reaching the right readers with our marketing growing at a 12% to 15% rate for the last three years," Mr. Rossi said. "We're vested in developing the product in the U.S., and it helps me to know I'm not diluting this product."