

2022 Study of Media Planning and Buying by Jim Elliott

President's Note

The past few months have been a whirlwind of activity. We have been enjoying an upsurge in inquiries and assignments in both of our businesses despite — or maybe because of — uncertainty about the direction of the business cycle. Whether we are being asked to furnish and manage a sales force or help our clients to do the job themselves, everybody we talk to wants more business.



The James G. Elliott Co. is very pleased to welcome our newest advertising sales client, Family Motor Coach Association (FMCA.com). The media brand, Family RVing, is an invaluable resource for FMCA members, who learn about the many benefits of association membership as well as content and advertising that enhance the RV experience.

Our consulting company, Ads&IDEAS, is providing strategic assistance and marketing services for the Chicago Sun-Times (suntimes.com). Ads&IDEAS is also helping AndX (andishere.com) to create advertising opportunities as part of digital and video design and experience services.

To sell media planners and buyers the way they want to be sold, we need to know their preferences and the challenges they face. To that end, the Elliott Co. has conducted four studies in conjunction with SRDS since 2013. In 2022, we were joined by Readex Research, an outstanding media research company who

handled the work of mailing questionnaires and compiling results.

So, here are the results:

Workload

Sixty-three percent (63%) of the respondents work on 5 or more accounts, and the same percentage work on 5 or more brands. Over the past 12 months, respondents spent 76.7% of their time on Consumer campaigns and just 23.3 of their time on Business-to-Business. The mean total value of advertising the respondents recommended or helped purchase was \$9 million, and 20% recommended or helped purchase a whopping \$20 million+.

Since that first study, we have seen a steady increase in the amount of pressure respondents report. For example, the concept of an annual planning period was already crumbling in 2013, when only 51% planned annually. Now it's down to 23%. Currently, most planning is done quarterly (38%) or sporadically (21%).

With so little downtime, when are media people able to sharpen their tools, learn new skills, and evaluate the new media opportunities that keep cropping up so frequently?

What They Are Planning & Buying

The newest study reveals that respondents now are researching, recommending, and buying Social Media (38%), Podcasts (32%), Newsletters (23%) and Influencers (18%) in addition to the more traditional Spot/Local TV

(59%), Digital (58%), Radio (50%), Consumer Magazines, (42%), Newspapers (42%) and B2B Publications (39%). Most of those media — and most of the traditional ones — are being promoted by salespeople who attempt to catch the attention of the planners and buyers by every conceivable means.

Meetings

Salespeople generally agree that in-person meetings are the most effective communication channel, but it is obvious that media planners and buyers simply cannot meet with everyone who wants to see them. Respondents anticipate that they will devote an average of 29.2% of their time post-pandemic to outside vendors. That's roughly 12 hours (of a 40-hour work week) to communicate with the hundreds of sellers who wish to communicate with them.

To deal with the onslaught of salespeople trying to squeeze onto their calendars, study respondents prioritize techniques that improve their efficiency. Regarding the most important communication channels for media they recommend/consider, 95% of respondents named Email first. Email can be read very quickly, and the subject line can indicate whether email is even worth opening. Virtual Meetings are important too, at 91%. Before the pandemic, most media people had rarely, if ever, used virtual meetings. Now, they rank ahead of Telephone (84%) and far ahead of In-Person Meetings at just 63%. Even Text is sometimes used, at 45%.

Return to Office

The logistics of in-person sales calls will be trickier after the pandemic, and the temptation to use email or virtual meetings will be increased by challenges of physical distance and location. Post-COVID, 36% of the respondents expect to be working Full-Time Remote, while 58% think they will be in a Hybrid schedule. Where will in-person meetings take place when they are scheduled during a remote workday: in Starbucks? Only 7% of respondents anticipate

a return to Full-Time Office work.

Interestingly, those responses all came from people working in smaller organizations. Of those whose companies have 100+ employees, precisely ZERO percent anticipate returning full-time.

How They Plan

RFPs are considered to be important in the planning process by 91% of the respondents, and 97% of those working in ad agencies. Even though RFPs are important, media sellers are not given much time to gather all the information needed to complete them; 58% of ad agency people said they allow only 1-5 days. Another 35% say they allow 6-10 workdays. Media sellers whose proposals are excluded or denied are given a chance to change their proposals at least sometimes 82% of the time.

When considering media, 93% of the respondents use SRDS at least sometimes. In organizations with 1-99 employees, that figure is 98%, higher even than input from the client.

For the first time in 2022, the Study asked, "How often do you choose fewer but larger media vendors for integrated packages." There was a noticeable split depending on the number of employees in the organization. Only 13% with 1-99 employees answered "Always/Often," while 39% with 100+ employees said "Always/Often."

Most Important Criteria

What were the most important criteria to the final buying decision? There was a three-way tie among all respondents at 97% between Total Cost/Price, CPM Delivery, and Added Value. Interestingly, smaller organizations (1-99 employees) evaluated Rate Card Discount even higher, at 98%, compared to just 93% at larger organizations (over 100 employees).

Download the full study or a 3-page summary of study highlights at

<https://www.adsandideas.com/research>