



Not All Impressions Are Created

Equal

Last month in our monthly sales meeting, our CEO, Charles Allen, talked about a man dressed in a gorilla outfit waving a sign that said “car wash”. We have all seen that sign. I am sure even now you can picture that gorilla. The Madison Avenue advertising agencies call such an encounter an impression. Impressions are taken very seriously by agencies and clients alike. Impressions have historically the central tenet that drives pricing in the advertising world. In short, the more impressions the higher the price that can be commanded for the advertisement. The extraordinarily high rates for a Super Bowl commercial are merely a function of the number of people that watch the game.

Impressions By The Numbers

There is a whole science devoted to impressions. The number of impressions are measured in units called cost per thousand impressions (CPM's). The CPM model refers to advertising bought on the basis of impressions. This is in contrast to the various types of pay-for-performance advertising, whereby payment is only triggered by a mutually agreed upon activity (i.e. response, registration, sale).

The total price paid in a CPM transaction is calculated by multiplying the CPM rate by the number of CPM units. For example, fifty thousand impressions at \$200 CPM equals a \$10,000 total price.

$$50,000 / 1,000 = 50 \text{ units}$$
$$50 \text{ units} \times \$200 \text{ CPM} = \$10,000 \text{ total price}$$

The amount paid per impression is calculated by dividing the CPM by 1000. For example, a \$200 CPM equals \$.20 per impression.

$$\$200 \text{ CPM} / 1000 \text{ impressions} = \$.20 \text{ per impression}$$

If you sell sponsorships for your meeting or trade show, you should definitely consider impressions. Your prospective sponsors certainly will. The larger the company, the more sophisticated you'll find them in their refinement of this calculation. When selling sponsorships in the events and trade show industry, impressions have been the metric used. These ‘impression metrics’ continue to largely drive pricing and sponsorship decisions.

Tip # 1 Location

Location or exposures are a critical factor in sponsorships. Why? The better the location and the more the exposure, the higher the numbers of impressions which are created. The higher the number of impressions, the more you can command for the respective sponsorship. The sponsorship recognition banner in the back hall won't garner as many impressions as the one in the main lobby at the top of the escalator that everyone has to frequent.



Tip # 2 Time Is Money

Up to now little attention has been given to how long the observer saw an item or how involved they became. Duration metrics are measured in fractions of a second. But the world has changed. (Thinking about that gorilla for a second, maybe we have regressed). What if there was a way to improve the duration of the impression? In effect... get the observer more involved.

This means adding duration to the formula. Fifty thousand impressions at \$200 CPM seen for an average of .5 second is \$.40 impressions per second. But fifty thousand impressions at \$200 CPM seen for an average of

2 seconds equals \$.10 impression per second.

$\$200 \text{ CPM} / 1000 \text{ impressions} / .5 \text{ second} =$
 $\$.40 \text{ per impression/second}$

$\$200 \text{ CPM} / 1000 \text{ impressions} / 2 \text{ seconds} =$
 $\$.10 \text{ per impression/second}$

This explains largely why static banners lack the “price elasticity” found in interactive or kinetic marketing opportunities.

Using this example, adding the time component to the formula means that you could charge 4 times more or \$ 40,000 for a sponsorship vehicle that increases the duration by four times.

Beyond the Banner

The hanging banner has been a sponsorship standard for years. In fact, the hanging banner actually dates back to the time of the Romans. The banner in a great location may produce many impressions, but not ones that are long lasting or meaningful to sponsors. Today’s sponsors are increasingly demanding longer lasting and memorable impressions, and even ... experiences!

The classic approach to sponsorships has been to hang a banner and charge a sponsor. Unfortunately, most hanging banners just like most billboard advertising, are static and become lost in the “promotional overload” clutter. Thus, they lack the power to engage the consumer. With higher quality and longer impressions, sponsors are willing to pay more for the sponsorship because they create more impact and thus, generate much greater response rates.

Remember the obvious way the gorilla stood out from the plethora of billboard signage which litter virtually every few feet of the highway.

Today we are seeing many of ways to create better, longer lasting impressions: Kinetic marketing opportunities and interactive / experiential marketing environments.

Tip # 3 Displays Get Attendees Involved

If motion attracts attention, the next step is getting the attendees involved with the signage (or brand market message) by making the opportunity interactive. We are seeing all sorts of interactive display environments where the attendee is spending minutes, not fractions of a second involved with the display. What an enjoyable and memorable impression that makes! How great would it be for the sponsor to hear their sponsorship attraction was the “hit of the show”? The level of creativity in experiential interactive sponsorships knows no limit. Every year, an entire new collection of experiential marketing technologies are introduced to our marketplace. If you are interested to ‘experience’ just a couple of these new innovations, feel free to drop me an email, and I’ll send you links to a collection of items you may wish to consider.



Be careful about your selection of sponsorships. It’s important to make sure that your “bellweather” sponsorship opportunities provide at least an equal component of interaction ...to that of mere recognition. If you would like a free checklist of do’s and don’t in selecting sponsorship vehicles, send me an email ad and put free checklist in the subject line.

Enhance Your Show Image

Now, for a moment, imagine what an interactive experiential “zone” of sorts (name of your show “Innovation Zone™) at the front entrance would do for your event’s image and brand enhancement not to mention dramatically increase “experience value” of all attendees. Think about the reaction and the excitement of the attendees, from the time they first arrive to the last thing they experience when leaving. Remember: Always leave your audience wanting more (number one rule of show business!). What would one of your premier sponsors pay to have all of your attendees interact with and experience their brand, product and message in such an enjoyable and memorable fashion (as might be afforded by such a “zone”)? Naturally, this is clearly a matter of perception that only the free market can bare out. One thing is for

certain, the savviest event marketers are moving beyond the “metrics paradigm” when making purchasing decisions. What they are all taking into account is not only the value of impressions made but also, just what is the lack of value of an impression that fails to impress?

So the next time you see a gorilla waving at you, remember what it was that captured your attention. It really is what your prospective sponsors are looking (and willing to pay) for as they consider investing in sponsorships to gain a competitive advantage at your next meeting.

Incidentally, our CEO is now paying an additional premium for his “deluxe car wash packages”... as he perceives his little girl to truly enjoy talking to that gorilla!

