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## **The Changing World of Media: Spending Media Money The New-Fashioned Way**

By David Becker, President  
Blue Plate Media Services

The days of spending ad money the old fashioned way, by pushing cookie cutter plans through the proverbial pipeline, are over. At least, they should be. Media spending patterns are changing – as we speak. While television (broadcast & cable) continues to occupy most consumer time, the numbers are beginning to slip. Last year alone, according to the Cable Television Advertising Bureau (CAB), time spent on the Internet, video games and interactive gaming increased by 1,598 hours - or 31 hours per week.

We'll continue to spend money on television, since the medium drives the industry. But how we select to spend our media dollars overall - and integrate our buy - is key. No longer are the days – “let's throw money at our product and watch the product sell”. Money alone won't push your product through the distribution cycle and into the shopping cart. We need to execute smart, measurable, accountable plans. While traditional marketing techniques may appear industry-safe on the outside, it is costly and largely inefficient to continue to throw money at the product the old-fashioned way.

It is time to better understand your full media options. Entrepreneurial companies, for example, with smaller budgets and less margin for error, are more apt to exploit new techniques, explore alternative media channels and ride the wave of shifting eyeballs.

So whether you're a big time manufacturer, a mid-tier player or an emerging brand, it is time to take control of your spending, make your media money count, and shift targeted eyeballs to your brand.

Companies today are turning to direct marketing tactics for inspiration and guidance. Why? Measurability and accountability.

In developing a smart media strategy, it is important to look within your own distribution. Are you mass or specialty? What's your budget? Who's your

core audience? Where did you advertise last year? Did you see spikes directly correlated to your spend?

Looking at TV for a moment - If you're selling direct to consumer or specialty is your game and you can identify concentration of sales or clusters of retail distribution (via zip code analysis), you may opt to select three geographically dispersed markets for a TV test. Test those markets via spot cable, closely monitoring your spikes in sales. Once you see lift, expand your buy, heavy up on what is working and pull back from what is not. Manage your buy.

If sales are spotty throughout the country and you need a read on your spend, you can select markets as a testing ground. Establish reach and frequency levels, run your spots and measure spikes. Test, read and roll. If you hit your levels, expand your buy into additional markets or roll out nationally.

You can support your buy with additional targeted media, including magazines, online and/or interactive. But why stop there? Your media planner should be tailoring your plan to reflect the plethora of new media opportunities impacting our youth. Keep your eyes open to opportunistic media, often a great way to test a new pub or network without spending the dollars normally associated with that spend. Again, test, read and roll. Do what you can to measure advertising effectiveness before sinking good money after bad. Good money after good money is a smarter way to go.

If you're selling product nationally, with few geo pockets, explore network or national cable, preferably in the scatter, providing you have the appropriate budget to work with. But if budgets are tight and you must maximize spending, explore Connect The Spots™, a proprietary Blue Plate Media Services program whereby you can reach 70% +/- of the country at 50% +/- off open rates. This strategy buys national-like reach by accumulating local spots throughout the country. This strategy has advantages as well as drawbacks. You need to understand the difference.

Know your options, explore your strategies and exploit opportunities that deliver on your objectives and budget.

You should support your television spend with other targeted, measurable media. A good plan should be rounded out, especially in view of shifting buying patterns. Targeted print, coupled with highly valuable merchandising incentives, can round out your plan. Print delivers secondary impressions, extended messaging and a powerful drive to web component to your integrated media mix. Online dollars, inclusive of Search Engine Marketing (SEM) and Search Engine Optimization (SEO) will also add measurability to your media spend while driving traffic to your website and building your brand.

If the advice you've been getting is the same old, same old, then the results you're getting are the same old, same old, and that's not good enough today.

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*For more information on how you, as an SGMA member, can buy and plan your media the new-fashioned way, contact Blue Plate Media Services at 908-918-0202 or visit [blueplatemediacorp.com/SGMA](http://blueplatemediacorp.com/SGMA).*

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