

TV Jargon Buster

AB deadline – Advanced Booking deadline for TV airtime campaigns, which is two months prior to the month of broadcast (e.g. early October for December campaign); bookings made after AB will be more expensive and are typically made by bigger brands looking for last-minute spots and willing to pay a premium to pre-empt existing advertisers.

BARB – Broadcasters' Audience Research Board, an independent body which measures TV audiences via a representative sample panel of 5,100 homes and monitors viewing every minute of the day, 365 days a year, thus providing the data for television ratings.

Centre break – the central commercial break in a half hour programme, although there are two or more centre breaks in shows lasting an hour or more; viewers tend to be more attentive, so there is less tendency for channel hopping, although mid-programme positioning can be less conducive to direct response.

Clearcast – body responsible for pre-transmission examination and clearance of television advertisements, which vets scripts and finished commercials against publisher standards.

Clock number – exclusive digit/number code attached to every single commercial, enabling TV transmission suites to schedule the correct adverts into the right spots; every copy change requires a new clock number and advertisers use this facility to evaluate response rates to different commercial treatments.

Coverage – the proportion of the target audience that actually saw a campaign at least once, also known as 'reach'; the industry standard for campaign evaluation is 4+ coverage, which refers to the percentage of people who see it 4 or more times, although some retail campaigns simply target reach or 1+ coverage.

CPT – cost per thousand refers to the cost of achieving 1,000 impacts in the target demographic group; cpt's are higher for more elusive viewing groups (e.g. Men 16-34) and costs fluctuate throughout the year, rising in high demand periods like Bank Holidays and pre-Christmas, since there is a fixed amount of commercial airtime and the rules of supply & demand apply.

Dayparts – division of time periods within transmission schedule, such as breakfast time, daytime and peak, which reflect normal viewing patterns and audiences; interestingly, the TV industry works to a notional 30 hour clock, with nighttime programming (midnight-6.00) identified as 24.00 to 30.00, since programming appears in that day's TV listings.

End break – last commercial break in the programme, going into the following programme; the quality and ratings of an end break will depend on the nature of the subsequent programming and those scheduled on other channels.



Impacts – an impact is one viewing of a commercial by a person within a qualifying demographic group, although viewers fall into various demographics according to age, sex and socio-economic status; total impacts equal the number of people viewing an advertisement, multiplied by how many times the commercial was seen.

Last-in-break – final spot in a commercial break, which is prized since the end frame is often held longer, to allow coordination with the programming feed, and which on digital TV channels is often assigned to interactive 'red button' advertising.

Macro – Macro is a combination of terrestrial TV regions constituting a larger geographical transmission area (e.g. The North = GTV, YTV, TTTV and Border); this ensures consistency of spot times across a number of regions, without the expense of a national campaign, and enables economies on regional overlaps.

Micro – Micro regions are smaller areas within a specific ITV1 region (e.g. Central West, Anglia North), which enable local advertisers and those with a limited catchment/distribution to appear alongside major brands, at reduced cost.

Multichannel home – household equipped to receive channels other than analogue terrestrial, via digital satellite, cable or terrestrial equipment.

Peak – time of day when TV viewing is naturally at its highest, currently 17.15 – 23.00 on ITV1 and accounting for around 73% of all impacts per day; peak airtime is the most expensive, largely because it overdelivers on incremental brand sales, although more attentive viewing can be detrimental to direct response and daytime is often preferred for DRTV (direct response television).

PVR – personal video recorder, such as Sky+, that uses a hard drive to record and store digital TV content.

Spot – refers to one screening of a commercial and will have a specific broadcast time attached; spot lengths are typically 10 seconds, 20 seconds, 30 seconds or multiples thereof and campaigns are made up of a number of spots, the total of which depends on budget, dayparts, length and channel pricing.

TVR – Television Rating, which indicates the percentage of the target audience viewing the programme or commercial break; thus 20 Adult TVRs means 20% of the Adult population actually watched the show or advertising spot.

