

“The medium is the message.”  
Marshall McLuhan, author



## Making your message seen

How and where you say your message can be just as important as what your message says. An advertisement for a dressmaker placed in a local church gazette might be perceived differently than the one placed in Vogue magazine. Be sure to identify your target market and ensure it matches the target audience of the media you have chosen to use.

### The media channels

So what are media channels and more specifically advertising channels?

Channels are simply roads of communication available to you to reach

your ideal target customer. These roads carry various vehicles which in turn can carry your advertising message and brand promise to your ideal target customer.

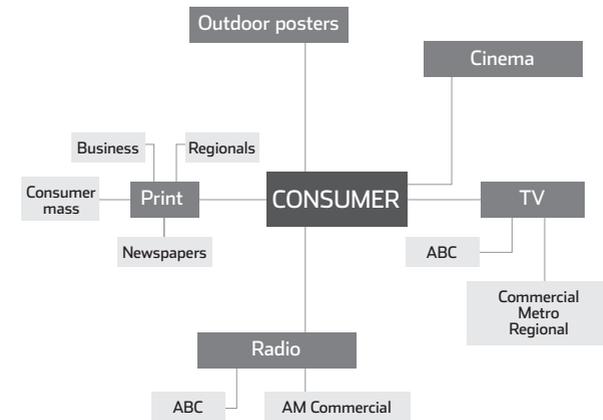
### Examples of channels and vehicles:

Channels	Vehicles
Print	Directories, newspapers, magazines
Broadcast	TV, radio
Electronic	Internet, SMS, wireless/mobile
Display/outdoor	Transit, billboards
Direct	Mail, telemarketing
Publicity/PR	Press releases, articles
Word of Mouth	Paid and unpaid

Thirty years ago the media market was a lot less crowded than it is today. If you had a decent message, a solid product and a reasonable budget, you could create awareness of your brand, business or product successfully.

The following diagram provides a snapshot of the media available in Australia 30 years ago.

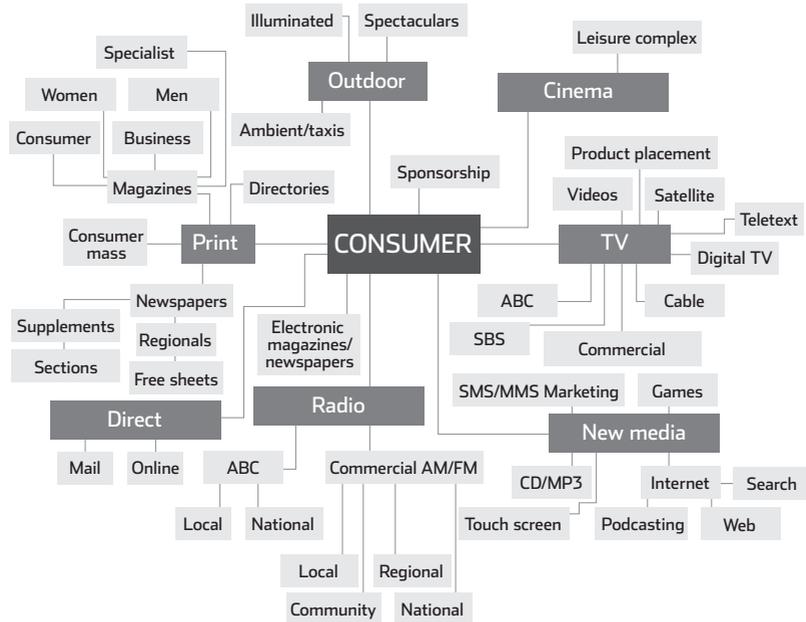
Media channels in 1975



Source: Optimedia, 2005

Now fast-forward to today, and the following diagram illustrates how much the media landscape has changed.

### Media channels today



Source: Business Performance International/Optimedia 2005

The average family home in Australia has three televisions, three mobile phones, two computers, two dvd players and a video-game console. According to research by the Australian Communications and Media Authority, in 2007 99% of family households had a television and almost a third were hooked up to pay-TV.

Welcome to the era of personalised messages, where we need to be more targeted in our messaging to stand out for our customers in a very crowded market. Every customer is exposed to so much these days the chance of a message getting through using mainstream media seems significantly reduced when compared to thirty years ago. Let's consider just a few of the new communications channels and devices available today:

- **The internet** – provides access to online search engines, websites and email services
- **Short message service (SMS)** – or text messaging. This once youth-oriented product is now a mainstream method of communication
- **Multimedia message service (MMS)** – SMS' big brother – MMS allows you to send video and images to/from mobile phones and other devices
- **Personal Digital Assistant (PDA)** – a mobile diary, phone and email device. Common brands are Palm Pilot and Blackberry
- **Pay TV** – rivalling commercial free-to-air channels and experiencing increasing take-up in Australia
- **In-Car and mobile navigation** – available in many vehicle models today and also in portable devices. Navigation systems can provide a very targeted method for location-based advertising
- **iPods/MP3** – a portable mechanism for accessing audio and sound files. (More on these later.)

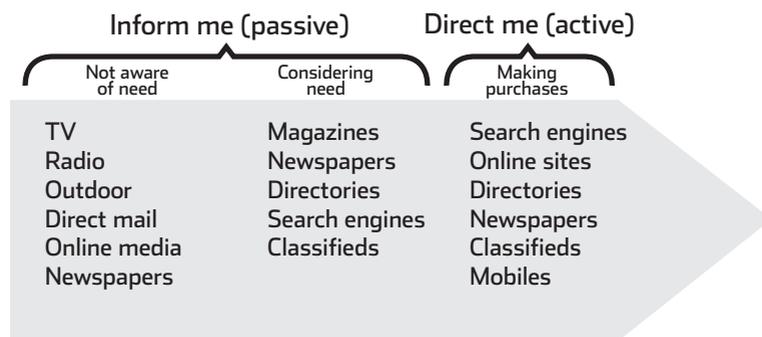
Our options are so varied, most of us spend our days multi-tasking without even knowing it. The way we consume media is just one example. Consider the last time you watched TV. Perhaps some of you were also:

- Sending an SMS on your phone
- Surfing the net on your laptop
- Working on files from work
- Listening to your iPod
- Cooking dinner.

Neilsen's 10th Australian Internet and Technology Report showed in 2007 an increase in cross media consumption with more than half of Australia's internet users (58%) saying they have watched TV while online and 48% have used the internet while listening to the radio.

Consider how difficult it is for advertisers to get your attention when you are not focussed on one thing. This is what you are likely to face as a business owner. We are in the era of personalisation, where customers have very different individual needs and habits. You should ensure your advertising messages reflect this major shift in media consumption, which is why an understanding of your target market, as discussed earlier, is vital.

The following diagram illustrates different mechanisms for reaching your customers according to their state of awareness of their needs. Television, for example, is generally not where consumers look when they are aware of a need. Can you imagine turning on the television in the hope of finding a plumber or supplier when your hot water system breaks down? Most of us would turn to Yellow™, a local newspaper or a search engine. On the other hand, you might be thinking of renovating your home and be prompted into action by an advertisement on television for a kitchen sale. Similarly, think about the reasons we might pick up a newspaper. Sometimes we are interested in the news, sometimes we are looking for a job or a new home, sometimes we are looking to be entertained and other times we might be looking for a tradesman. Now think about why people pick up the Yellow™ directory. It is unlikely they are looking for something to read; more than likely, they are looking to buy. In these cases, the difference between one buyer and another is their state of awareness. Where one is looking consciously to be informed, the other is doing something unrelated, but taking in advertising information at the same time.



### Navigating this complex market

We have already discussed the importance of knowing your target market. Now let's look at what tends to happen when you don't. One of the reasons identified earlier for businesses choosing advertising channels was: 'I wanted to get the sales rep off my back.' This is an example of media choosing you.

By knowing the habits of your target market, you should be in a good position to choose your media for the right reasons. Many small business owners are unable to afford extensive market research, but it does not have to be expensive and complicated. Consider doing it in-house as a way of building a relationship with your customers. Start by asking your customers where they heard about your business and, most importantly, what media do they consume on a regular basis. You may be in for a surprise.

For example, let's say you sell products to truck drivers. While they might be the typical market who subscribe to trucking publications, perhaps at the end of a long drive, they would rather read about something different in order to 'get away' from their work. And maybe, given some of them do subscribe to trucking magazines, their domestic partners are the ones who read them to keep abreast of their partner's working life. These are the sorts of things you should be thinking about when trying to understand your customer. These are also things you can ask your customers directly. Today there are even companies that focus on knowing the target markets of different media. So whether you are trying to reach teenage boys or stay-at-home mums, these media-buying agencies should be able to identify and negotiate 'spots' to suit your advertising needs.

Why is it important? It is important for return on investment. Simply put, what is the point of paying for an expensive advertisement when the media channel is not one used by your target customer?

This happened to Foster's Brewing Group when they introduced *Empire* beer. In an interview in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, CUB marketing chief Steve Arthurson said: "Empire was built using our old marketing model and it didn't work as well as we had hoped. Consumers said the packaging was OK, the liquid was great, but when you put it on TV, that's not me." Follow-up research suggested their target customer was using the internet more than watching TV, so Foster's had to change their media channels accordingly.

Tracy's Pet Grooming in Burdekin, Queensland, had a lot of repeat business from existing customers, but Tracy felt she didn't know how to acquire new customers. Being a small business owner, Tracy didn't have a large marketing budget nor did she know much about how marketing worked. She engaged a marketing coach to help her understand and implement some low-cost strategies.

"We did simple activities like database marketing, offering incentives and discount vouchers and regular mailings. The result was a 30% increase in revenue over the previous quarter and an increase of 60% compared to the same period last year."

Tracy Tapiolas, business owner, Tracy's Pet Grooming

## Measuring media

There are some key considerations when selecting media channels most appropriate for your business. These are:

- Reach
- Market coverage
- Appeal
- Frequency.

### Reach

Reach is the number of people who can be reached by a particular media channel. This is sometimes referred to as readership, viewing audience, eyeballs and listeners.

A happy customer, who through word of mouth refers three of their friends, effectively has a reach of three. A television program watched by 400,000 viewers has a reach of 400,000. A magazine or newspaper with a circulation of 50,000 will be said to have a reach of 125,000 – the reason being magazine and newspaper readership is based on the theory more than one person reads each magazine or newspaper. The rule of thumb is, on average, 2.5 people read a printed publication.

### Market coverage

Market coverage is simply the percentage of the total target market you could reach using a particular medium. If the magazine has a readership, or reach, of 125,000, but only 12,500 of the audience is from your particular target market, the market coverage for that particular publication is 10%.

This means 90% of the readers of this particular magazine don't fit the criteria of your target market. Think back to the ad for the dressmaker in the church gazette versus the one placed in *Vogue* magazine. The church gazette may have a lot of readers, but if they are not the sort of people who will want to pay a lot of money for a dressmaker, then it is not the publication for your ad.

### Appeal

Does the media channel appeal to your target market? Appeal is important. Not just for the ad, but for the media channel too. The appeal of the media channel is what drives its market coverage. If your target customer does not find the media channel appealing, they are unlikely to see your ad or view your ad positively.

For example, you may have a genuinely fantastic offer for home owners and decide to use telemarketing as your channel because of its large reach. If the telemarketers are calling your prospective customers at 7pm when they are likely to be eating their evening meal, they are unlikely to appeal to your customer. Perhaps in this case a direct marketing piece or an ad in the local newspaper might be more suitable. In his 2004 book *E-Myth Mastery*, Michael Gerber suggests you evaluate appeal according to three criteria:

- **Credibility** – do your customers see this medium as credible? i.e. if it lands in their junk email folder, do they just delete it?
- **Appropriateness** – is this the preferred channel for your customer base? For example, if you are contacting 16–25 year olds about a fashion sale, SMS may be the best channel.
- **Associations** – what thoughts and feelings would people associate with your brand when you use a particular type of media channel?

### Frequency

Does the media channel reach your audience often? Frequency is closely associated with cost and affordability. Frequency is simply the reach of a media outlet multiplied by exposure. Exposure refers to the number of times your ideal target customers are likely to see, hear and come into contact with, or be 'exposed' to, your message within a given time period.

A billboard might be seen by your target market every day on their way to work. A magazine might be kept on a coffee table until the next issue and be read several times. A newsletter might be read once and then thrown in the bin. These are all various frequencies of consumption or exposure. While frequency does not always mean effectiveness, it can be a good way to judge the cost of one media against another.

Consider the television commercial seen by 400,000 people three times throughout a program. Assume 100,000 of these are your target market, so your frequency is 300,000. Compare the cost with an ad in the daily newspaper for a week. Let's assume the paper is read once daily by 500,000 people, 100,000 of whom are your target market. That's a frequency of 700,000 for one week. So work out the cost of the television commercial versus the cost of the print ad. Also consider how much information you are able to share with your target market in each channel. Think about how your target audience use the channel. Is it a TV program they are likely to focus on? Or one they might watch while cooking dinner and feeding the cats. Is there anything on another channel which may appeal to the same audience and therefore encourage them to change channels during the ad break? When they read the paper, how are they reading it? Where will they be when they read it? Having a quick flick through on their lunch break, or sitting on the train and reading cover to cover on their way home? Where is the ad? Is it in the highly-read sports section, or in the less popular public notice section?

Frequency can be important when you are competing in a crowded market. If the audience is not focussed on the media channel, they may need to see it a few times before it sinks in. We usually need multiple exposures to get our message through and to get people to take action.

### Media planning

Media planning involves working out what media you are going to use and when. There are a number of expert organisations and freelance media planners who can provide independent advice on what media you should use.

Media planning template		
Ideal target customer description/details:		
Campaign objective/s:		
Budget \$:		
Campaign dates:		
Media channel	Details	Cost
Broadcast/Electronic Advertising		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Television	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Radio	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Internet	
<input type="checkbox"/>	SMS/MMS	
Print Advertising		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Newspapers	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Magazines	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Newsletters	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Trade directories	
<input type="checkbox"/>	White Pages®/Yellow™ directories	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Catalogues, brochures, flyers	
Outdoor Advertising		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Signage on buildings	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Billboards	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Posters	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Bumper stickers	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Vehicle signage	
Direct Response		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Direct mail	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Telemarketing	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Email	

<b>Events and promotions</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Conventions, trade shows <input type="checkbox"/> Contests <input type="checkbox"/> Giveaways/novelties (calendars, pens, fridge magnets etc) <b>Word-of-mouth</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Referral programs <input type="checkbox"/> Testimonials <b>Public Relations</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Press releases <input type="checkbox"/> Advertorial <input type="checkbox"/> Speeches <input type="checkbox"/> Seminars <input type="checkbox"/> Community/charitable partnerships <input type="checkbox"/> Sponsorships, endorsements <input type="checkbox"/> Alliances with other businesses		
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Many small business owners will most probably choose their own media in order to keep costs down. Above is a media planning template which can be used to analyse and select the most appropriate media for the task at hand whether you are hoping to generate awareness, launch a new product, drive short term sales, or clear stock.

To use the template, determine your ideal customer description, your campaign objectives, budget available and the period you anticipate the campaign to run. Then select which media you believe appropriate for these criteria.

### Prioritising media channels

Once you have selected the media you deem most appropriate, write some notes as to why you believe this media will meet your needs.

This will help identify if you are doubling up on media unnecessarily and therefore areas you may be able to reduce your costs. Then list your selected media in order of preference and work out which channels are affordable according to the budget you have set yourself. Check against the criteria we discussed earlier: reach, market coverage, frequency and appeal, to ensure you are using value-for-money options. This document can be a helpful record where you can measure results against expectations and determine the effectiveness of different channels for future campaigns.

### Be consistent

One of the most important things a business owner can do is ensure a consistent message in all public materials. Many businesses ignore this inexpensive rule. Quite often a brand is developed, and brochures and marketing materials are printed, but the sales rep is not trained to deliver the message in a consistent way. Try to avoid this at all costs.

Make sure you have:

- One logo
- An agreed set of colours
- A standard template for faxes, presentation slides and emails
- A single UBR, or slogan
- One set of images
- Your website address on all materials
- Your 1300/1800 numbers on all materials
- Your sales team trained to deliver the company messages.

If you use a designer, ask them to supply a style guide. This can just be a simple outline of your business' chosen fonts, colours and brand layout so when you use a printer or change printers you achieve the same results each time. These design and style guidelines should be used in training all staff to ensure consistency. In the following chapters, we will discuss the various media channels available to you and when you should use them.