

ABA Conference: Radio is more influential than Television: Discuss

I could tell you about television's greater influence than radio. However, fortunately for TV we've got something better than words alone. The facts are on our side and we've got the pictures, too.

For example, take advertising. Recent research has shown that when people are asked to recall an ad - over 85% recalled a commercial they saw on television – not radio, not in the newspapers

Why? Because the most important trigger in terms of memory is emotional connection. There are two modalities of memory – one is auditory and one is visual. The visual modality provokes emotional responses far over and above auditory processing.

We can all remember what we were doing on September 11, whereas most of us would not remember what we were doing the day before.

We remember September 11 because of the lasting emotional impact of seeing the vision of the planes crashing into the two World Trade towers.

If we had only heard about it on radio, it would not have had the same impact.

Does anyone remember what any radio personality said about September 11? I don't, but I remember seeing that vision on television.

Being influential is having an impact or effect on peoples' behaviour or thoughts. Television has far more impact on the way we think, behave and view our world than radio.

Yes radio has talkback, yes radio provides elevator background noise, yes it provides hold music on the phone and, yes, you do occasionally hear it in a taxi.

But you can't argue the numbers.

The undisputable facts are that television reaches more people more of the time and uses a combination of vision as well as sound to get messages across.

Television has the capacity to influence more people than radio because it reaches more people more effectively.

- The three commercial TV Networks reach 75% of Australians every day – it takes all 250 radio stations to achieve the same result.

Of the radio audience, talkback is even a smaller component – Alan Jones, currently the highest rating radio talk back host, commands a weekly cumulative audience of less than 500,000 - one single edition of *Meet The Press* or the *Sunday* program, on a Sunday morning, rates higher.

Television can reach a national audience whereas commercial radio is local. Television can be local too, but if you are trying to influence as many people as possible, you use television.

- Australians spend more time watching television than listening to radio even if you count the instances where radio is just on in the background.
- Television is the focus of entertainment in the home.

Have you ever seen a living room designed around a radio?

- Seeing something on television is also more believable and credible than if we heard it on radio.

Seeing is believing – television enables you to see things with your own eyes rather than hearing about something from somebody else. It is more personal and involving – it takes you there; you are not merely relying on someone else telling you about it.

We all remember the footage of the Iraqi Information Minister saying the Imperial Guard was in control while American soldiers could be seen in the background rounding up the Iraqi troops.

- More people get their news and current affairs from television than radio.

Free to air television remains the most turned to source for news and current affairs. (Our early evening news services are watched by over 7 million viewers in the metropolitan markets alone.) It was only at this conference a couple of years ago that the ABA released research confirming that more people believe the news on television than radio.

Politicians design what they say to get coverage on the early evening news bulletins.

Why are all the great political debates televised if radio were more influential?

- Television is where advertisers spend their money.

If you can afford TV you use TV. If radio were so influential, why does it only command 9% of the money marketers spend trying to influence consumer behaviour? Television has proven its success in influencing audiences - hence 4 times as much is spent on television than radio. Last year advertisers chose to allocate \$2.7 billion to television in comparison to just over \$700 million to radio.

- Television has much more capacity to influence people's views as to how they see themselves, and what they value.

Television helps to define and express Australian culture with programs such as *The Secret Life of Us*, *McLeods Daughters*, *Kath & Kim* and *The Panel*.

Whether people love or hate the phenomenon of *Big Brother*, last year the *Australian Financial Review* held it to be one of the top 10 factors impacting on Australian culture. It generated Australia-wide debate regarding the values that

are important for Australians. And, over 3.3 million people acted to have their say as to who should win.

Language in television programs becomes part of the vernacular. The *Simpsons* has brought new meaning to the word 'doh', and expressions like "not happy Jan" are now widely used in this country.

- Of course television is more influential than radio
 - It plays a bigger part in our lives
 - It's more entertaining as well as informative
 - And it's more impactful and memorable than what we hear on radio.

Television is more influential than radio because of

- its reach;
- the amount of time we like to sit down in front of television;
- the very nature of the medium: it appeals to more of our senses;
and;
- the social glue it provides in all our lives.

But enough from me – they say a picture tells a 1000 words – consequently, I will let television itself do the convincing.

Roll tape