

Brain beats brawn with DARs

With television accounting for 40% of adspend, the imminent arrival of Day After Ratings (DARs) in South Africa will change the entire advertising industry. Technology has redefined the advertising model and the future is incredibly exciting.

 By [Gordon Patterson](#) 24 Aug 2005

It is no longer a case of 'if DARs happen', but rather one of how to restructure resources for maximum benefit. This was made clear at a recent meeting prompted by the AMF and facilitated by the TV broadcasters at which the latest information was shared with all interested industry players.

Advertising in South Africa, particularly from a media point of view, will change dramatically in July next year when DARs are officially launched. Although TV stations will be running dual systems to accommodate those who are not ready or prefer to maintain the current status quo, the vast majority will purchase through the new system and those that don't will be left way behind.

AGB Nielsen Media Research has progressed in leaps and bounds with the test phase of the new people meters nearing completion and replacement installations commencing next month. These new meters will have the ability to monitor PVR viewing and shortly (hopefully) dual viewing within a household.

At the same time 180 rural meters will be installed each with a weighting of two households which will further strengthen the universe and make it more representative. This rural sector represents approx a 30% increase in measured audience and will affect the total number of ARs substantially.

This increase in "viewers" however will not be comparable since the "new" viewers were there before - just not measured. No doubt some broadcasters will attempt to resuscitate a cost per thousand comparison although this deception is likely to produce little more than a smile amongst media professionals. The audience currency for television is and will remain rating points.

DARs are good news for everyone. Broadcasters will enjoy better inventory management and by and large poor delivery will be eliminated. They will have greater opportunities to offer clients added value and television will become more attractive to smaller advertisers.

From an agency perspective, where we have previously had no audience guarantees, we welcome the greater accountability on the part of broadcasters. This obviously comes at a cost - loss of control in terms of specifics. And best of all, from next year, the client's wife will play less of a guiding role in the TV media schedule.

Media agencies will need to evolve rapidly and knowledge will triumph over size. We believe that roles within media agencies will change. Firstly there will be a reduction in the number of current "media planners" whilst the buying role as we know it will change dramatically. We will see the emergence of the international media buyer - a shrewd knowledgeable media professional with solid strategic ability coupled to negotiating ability and have a finger on the pulse of channel options. Media Buying suss will be at the forefront of the media offering to clients.

Many good planners / strategists today will join the ranks of their counterparts overseas as Media Buyers. The process of buying will no longer be admin driven, instead of actioning plans, the new buyers will proactively create communication solutions to agreed channel strategies.

Television trading will be handled electronically, rate cards will disappear over time and to allow comparison at the end of each month a station average CPP will be issued. Advertisers will be expected to commit money by campaign rather than by fiscal and TV stations will guarantee ratings on predefined target market.

The biggest threat is that the new advertising model could increase the distance between the media and creative headspace. These two disciplines must work together. I would be naïve to say the transition will be painless but DARs will be good for the entire industry - particularly where there is more brain than brawn.

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