

What does cinema advertising add to a campaign?

The cinema offers a good opportunity to reach a younger audience across the globe. The “cinema experience”, with its shared nature, tends to lead to greater attention being paid to advertising, making it more memorable, so cinema ads can boost the impact of a TV campaign. However, not all advertising works well in the cinema, and the best ads tend to reflect the cinema-goer’s desire for escapism, fantasy and entertainment.

An opportunity to reach consumers

Globally, the cinema represents a good opportunity to reach consumers. According to TGI, the United States is home to the largest proportion of movie-goers, with around a third of people (32 percent) having been to the movies at least once in the last month. Elsewhere in the world, India, Sweden and Mexico also boast high numbers of movie-goers, with at least a quarter of people in each market having been to see a film in the last month.

The lowest levels of movie attendance are in the Eastern European markets. Just 4 percent of respondents in Romania and 5 percent in Poland had been to the movies in the last month.

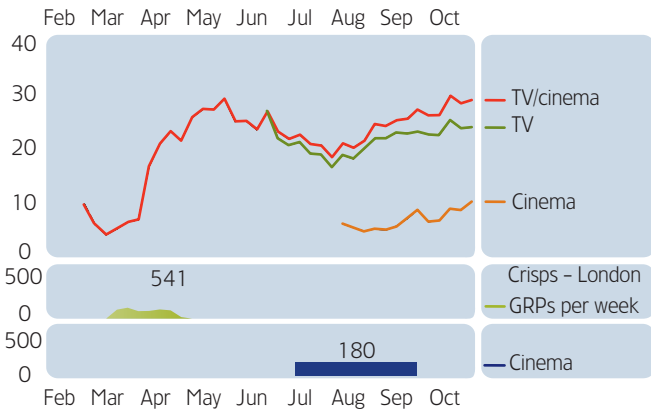
Despite the variations, some coherent global trends emerge. Movies are particularly important to teens and young adults, who go in larger numbers and more often than older age groups. This is most pronounced in the Asia-Pacific region. In Singapore 52 percent of people aged 18–24 have been to the movies in the last month compared with 3 percent of people aged over 55. In Hong Kong the figure is 40 percent for the younger age group compared with just 1 percent of people over 55.

Research conducted in Australia showed that more than half of movie-goers always arrived in time to see the pre-show program, and agreed that the pre-show program was a good or acceptable part of the movie experience. Additionally, 57 percent felt that they took more notice of the ads shown at the cinema than those seen on television or in a magazine, or heard on the radio, finding these ads captivating, engaging, unique and having an appealing “movie” quality about them. 80 percent felt that cinema ads were more entertaining. “Everything seems a little more special in a cinema, it’s dark and it’s on the big screen. Everyone seems to get into the ads more, laughing more than they would at home.”

What can cinema advertising deliver?

This heightened level of attention can deliver greater memorability. A brand of crisps was advertised in London only in the cinema. The cinema spend would have bought around 180 London GRPs. This advertising produced the same peak in ad awareness as an earlier TV burst of the same ad using over 640 GRPs, making it over three times more efficient at generating ad awareness. It is of interest that many respondents recalled the cinema ad as a TV ad – a common occurrence.

Cinema spend boosts TV ad awareness
London: aged 16–34



This finding is reinforced by work by Millward Brown in South Africa. It compared in-market recall of ads flighted on television only (6,459 ads) with those that launched simultaneously on television and in the cinema (72 ads). The recall of ads that appeared in both media was significantly higher than ads that appeared on television only. For example, for ads launched with 201–300 TV GRPs, the TV-only recall was 22 percent, compared with 28 percent for ads with TV and cinema, an improvement of 23 percent. It was estimated that to achieve that level of recall using television only would have needed an additional 220 TV GRPs — substantially more than the typical cinema spend.

What stands out for all cinema advertising is its heightened ability to deliver brand appeal. In Australia, Millward Brown researched a range of ads that were representative of all cinema ads. We found that on average, 52 percent of respondents reported that cinema ads increased the appeal of the brand — significantly higher than the average of all the TV ads in our database (44 percent).

Appreciation of humor was stronger when the ad was aired in cinema

Prompted attitudes

Which of these phrases best describes your feelings about this advertisement?
Which others?



The same ad can be experienced differently in the cinema than on television. In the UK, one humorous ad was aired in two different regions. In one, it aired only on television. In the other, it aired only in the cinema. The ad was the same, but it was enjoyed more in the cinema.

Advertising in the cinema can also affect consumers' perceptions of who the brand is targeting. In one example, two samples were recruited: one of respondents who had seen the ad in the cinema, and a separate matched sample who had seen the ad on television. Those who had seen the ad in the cinema were more likely to feel the brand was trying to increase its appeal among a younger audience (82 percent) than those who had seen it on television (66 percent).

What type of advertising works best in the cinema?

Qualitative research shows that cinema-goers visit the cinema for escapism, entertainment and an evening out. Ads that focus on escapism or immersive fantasy are likely to be appreciated. The cinema is valued leisure time which has

been paid for, so viewers expect the advertising to be entertaining. Advertising that is considered very enjoyable tends to be rated highly as being “suitable for the cinema”.

One word of caution, though: Given that cinema-goers arrive at the cinema with the expectation of being entertained, advertising that falls below their expectations is unlikely to be well received. Unwelcome advertising may make the brand seem insensitive and out of touch. One ad that emphasized news for a brand conveyed the news effectively, but respondents felt the ad was not suitable for the cinema. Additionally, the shared environment can enhance negative responses as well as positive ones; it has been known for audiences to boo advertising in the cinema.

Knowledge Points are drawn from the Millward Brown Knowledge Bank, consisting of our databases of 80,000 brand reports and 40,000 ads, as well as 1,200 case studies, 900 conference papers and magazine articles, and 350 Learnings documents.

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