

8 Reasons Why Having the Right Audit Matters.



A white paper from ABC, the gold standard in media audits.





Introduction

If you're a marketer today, you face an ever-tightening circle of demands with an even tighter budget:

- Making buying decisions from a highly fragmented array of media channels.
- Ensuring that you have the most credible data to make the right decisions.
- Producing measurable, reliable results for every dollar invested.

Since newspaper readers play such a major role in creating return on your marketing investment, being able to back up your media decisions with an independent, third-party audit is essential. Read the following “8 Reasons” and when you're through, you'll know not only why an independent third-party audit is important, but why having the right audit really does matter.

1

Reputation and experience are essential.

The reputation of the auditor and the quality of its verification process play an essential role in the print media buying and selling process.

As the world's first circulation auditing organization, ABC was created to encourage more effective partnerships between print buyers and sellers. It is a tripartite, member-driven organization whose standards, policies and report formats are enacted by its board of directors—17 publishers and 19 advertiser/advertising agency directors. In 2009, the ABC Canada Board committee was established to increase Canadian autonomy and control over rules and reporting, and meet the unique needs of the Canadian market. More than 200 industry leaders also serve on ABC advisory committees. These committees research industry trends and concerns and provide recommendations directly to the board of directors. ABC staff executes the decisions voted on by the board and communicates to the membership.

Leadership is a critical element of success in any industry. ABC has served as the trusted industry leader and the gold standard in media auditing since the turn of the 20th century. Today, ABC continues to serve as the industry leader, setting standards and creating new reports and services that are successfully navigating the evolving media landscape.

2

Only an independent third-party audit delivers a roadmap to accountability.

As an independent examination of a publisher's records and record-keeping systems, an audit is essential to verify the accuracy of circulation, readership and online audience claims. Audits are conducted annually or every other year and results are released for each publisher member. These results either confirm that the claims match the auditor's findings or explain any adjustments made to the claims as a result of those findings.

Ultimately, an audit provides advertisers, advertising agencies and publishers with comparable, credible, verified information to make informed media decisions. And we all know, there's no substitute for credibility—especially in today's marketplace.

ABC's reports are designed to achieve the highest level of precision through a variety of audit methods, including in-field testing, direct subscriber or distribution agent interviews, and analysis at various geographic levels. ABC also employs nearly 100 auditors—almost a third who have more than five years of tenure. ABC's expertise in media auditing is unmatched.



3

The right data is crucial when you are making media-buying decisions worth millions of dollars.

Independent verification of data is vital and having access to the right data to justify and compare your expenditures is just as important.

Here are some of the key data elements that ABC includes in its newspaper reports:

Paid Circulation: ABC verifies the number of paid copies sold to individuals, including home-delivery and newsstand sales.

Day-of-Week Reporting: All newspapers with circulation of more than 50,000 report an individual circulation number for each day of the week as well as a Monday through Friday average. This reporting format provides the necessary transparency to make critical advertising decisions.

Audience-FAX: This initiative is another step in multilevel measurement that fully reflects a newspaper's full reach and audience. The combination of print readership and online audience data reflects a more complete picture of a newspaper's total audience. In addition, Audience-FAX data is reported in FAS-FAX—a bi-annual report providing top-line circulation data.

Geographic Reporting: Newspapers also provide a detailed analysis of their circulation by various geographic areas, including county, city and town, and ZIP code where more than 25 copies are distributed. This is target marketing at its best.

Multimedia Reporting: Newspapers have the option to provide a comprehensive overview of their brand's entire reach across multiple products, channels and platforms, such as Web site traffic, niche publications, e-mail newsletters and digital products.

4

Build trust with your publishing partners.

Whether you think about it often or not, you place a certain amount of trust in the validity and reliability of audience numbers each time you use them to make a media-buying decision.

Your trust and confidence in these numbers are a direct reflection of the amount of trust you place in your publishing partners and in turn, the media auditor that validates those claims.

You can trust numbers that are audited by ABC. After all, reliable data that enables comparability is the cornerstone of confidence and is the foundation of all markets. ABC can help build, maintain and preserve that trust.



5

As the media marketplace evolves, so must media audits.

Newspapers are continually expanding their product offerings to their customers and creating new advertising opportunities for you. How do you determine if these new channels are reliable enough to invest your valuable dollars?

As a media auditor, ABC provides verification for more than just circulation claims. ABC also audits freestanding inserts, Web site traffic, interactive ad delivery, readership research studies and coupon distribution practices.

In fact, ABC's Consolidated Media Reports allows newspapers to provide an overview of their entire reach across multiple media platforms—all in a single ABC report. All the data is audited by ABC, so you know it's reliable.

6

Utilize powerful analysis tools.

Not only does ABC provide you with credible, comparable data, ABC takes that data and populates it throughout a variety of easy-to-use tools and reports that are designed to provide buyers with precise and efficient analysis. Here are a few ABC products and analysis tools that help you make the most informed media-buying decisions:

eCirc is a free, concise online source for ABC top-line circulation information that lets you sort and search summarized data by publication, title, state/province, U.S. SRDS or Canadian CARD classifications.

eStatements is a vital online resource. You gain access to thousands of ABC reports in digital format, both current and historical. This database offers the most up-to-date reports, posted as soon as they are released.

FAS-FAX provides top-line circulation summaries and allows you to conduct timely market comparisons and trend historical data. Issued twice per year with supplement reports released two weeks later.

eNewspaper Analysis Tools offer a myriad of ABC-verified information, including up to 10 years of historical newspaper data for easy trending. This tool is updated every 24 hours.

GEO/CIRC provides commonly used circulation data from Audit Reports provided in spreadsheet format. Released twice per year on CD-ROM, various modules are available, including county circulation detail aligned to common market areas and ZIP code breakouts.

Preprint Projection Center allows you to better project your print insert production requirements months in advance, including preprint quantities, zones and dates. This confidential online product is comprised of three sections—preprint projections, bonus days/intermittent circulation and frequency upgrades/forced conversions.

IVS Analysis Tool offers a quick and efficient way for preprint media buyers to review and compare top-line results of a newspaper's Insert Verification Service audit.

Audit Status Lising is an interactive tool that identifies critical information for all open audits. You can find the release date or audit progress status and any reason for delays.

Custom Reports can be designed with the elements you select for a concise, targeted report to fit your needs.



7

Make your voice heard and your opinions count.

As a member-driven organization, ABC encourages participation from all of its member constituencies. You'll find ABC respects and values the primacy of advertisers' point of view and welcomes your opinion at its many forums. That's why North America's leading advertisers and their advertising agencies continue to depend on ABC as a valuable forum for collaboration on current market issues and the standards and policies that govern them.

8

ABC can help you achieve confidence in media decision-making.

ABC strives to constantly educate its members on the latest trends and issues in the media marketplace. Take advantage of their knowledge and learn more about current market issues discussed amongst its members. ABC offers you educational opportunities across multiple platforms, including customized on-site workshops, webinars that can be viewed from the comfort of your own office and on-demand training that is available whenever you need it with just a click of a button.

Summary

Recognizing and upholding the need for accountability and credibility by insisting on the gold standard of media audits is one of the most important contributions you can make to the long-term health of your company and the advertising and publishing industries as a whole. The next time you need vital media data you can count on, ask to see the ABC audit.

With nearly 4,000 members in North America, ABC is a forum of the world's leading magazine and newspaper publishers, advertisers and advertising agencies. The organization provides credible, verified information essential to the media buying and selling process. ABC maintains the world's foremost online database of audited-circulation information and a growing array of readership, audience and Web site usage data. To learn more, visit www.accessabc.com.

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