

The Edge You Can Sell: Why the Right Audit Matters

Advertisers say they need accountability. "How can I make decisions if I'm not 100% sure about the circulation numbers?"
They don't want someone to throw them a curve or make them go around in circles trying to find information. Please, you want to say, "Yes, let me show you the facts."



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





Introduction

Since print media play such a major role in creating a return on investment for marketers, being able to back up your claims with an audit is essential. Read on and when you're through, you'll know not only why an independent third-party audit is important, but why getting 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, a Canadian board 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 decision 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.

An audit verifies the accuracy of your circulation claims through an in-depth examination of your records and record-keeping systems. Most audits are conducted annually and results are released for each publisher member. These results either confirm that your claims match the auditor's findings or explain any adjustments made to the claims as a result of the auditor's findings.

Ultimately, an audit provides you and your advertisers with comparable, credible, verified information to make informed media decisions.

3

The right data is crucial to media buyers making decisions worth millions of dollars.

Independent verification of data is just one element advertisers need to justify their media-buying decisions. They also need access to the right data.

ABC's reports and data analysis tools ensure your advertisers have access to the data they need—from day-of-week newspaper circulation data and ZIP code breakouts to verified circulation and county-level data, your membership in ABC ensures that your data is in front of advertisers when they're making their media plans.



4

**Build trust
with your
advertising
partners.**

As you know, advertisers place a certain amount of trust in the validity and reliability of circulation numbers each time they use them to make a media-buying decisions.

How much is an advertisers' trust worth? While it may be difficult to put a precise value on that, reliable data that enables marketability and comparability is the cornerstone of confidence that is the foundation of all markets. ABC can help build, maintain and preserve that valuable trust.

5

**As the media
marketplace
evolves, so must
media audits.**

As media evolves, you are expanding your product offerings across a wide variety of media formats. How do you convince advertisers that these new channels are worthy of their valuable ad dollars?

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

In fact, ABC recently launched new reporting initiatives that enable you to integrate multiple media channels on one single document. Publishers of newspapers and magazines can now feature a variety of print and online products in one report. These optional reports give you the opportunity to present advertisers with a comprehensive overview of your brand's entire reach across multiple products, channels and platforms.

ABC audits all of the data on these reports, so your advertisers know it is reliable.

6

**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 opinions of its publisher members and welcomes your thoughts at its many forums. That's why North America's leading advertisers, advertising agencies and publishers continue to depend on ABC as a valuable forum for collaboration on current market issues and the standards and policies that govern them.

7

**ABC membership
helps your gain
the confidence
of advertisers.**

Showing off your ABC audit to advertisers is a great way to help them feel comfortable and confident about their media-buying decisions.

In addition to credibility, ABC also provides you with access to logos and ads that help publicize your ABC membership to current and potential advertisers. Just go to www.accessabc.com/membership/publicize.htm.



8

Get your publication in front of the leading advertisers and their agencies.

More than 1,100 advertisers and advertising agencies are members of ABC. They represent billions of advertising dollars and spend their money in publications large and small. They joined ABC because they demand accountability and transparency for their ad dollars. Since ABC audits the majority of North American daily newspapers and consumer magazines with paid circulation—and many of their Web sites, too—these media buyers know that ABC serves as a one-stop shop for all their circulation data needs. Make sure they find your publication the next time they're combing ABC's circulation database.

Summary

Recognizing and upholding the need for accountability by providing your advertisers with 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 publishing and advertising industries as a whole. The next time an advertiser asks you to back up your claims, just show them your 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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