

## AD GIST: AD COMMUNICATION IN A GLANZ

Michel Wedel  
Pepsico Professor of Consumer Science  
Robert H. Smith School of Business,  
University of Maryland  
Glanz.tv  
mwedel@rhsmith.umd.edu

Consumers have opportunities to see several thousands of ads a day. These ads appear in magazines, newspapers, catalogs, yellow pages, supermarkets, movies, video games, and on trucks, TV, TIVO, websites and billboards. Most of these ads receive only a brief look at best. Exposures to the majority of ads are not only very short, but the impressions that are obtained from them are often coarse, because exposures occur in the visual periphery or at larger distances, which severely limits the detail that can be seen. A key question is then which meaning, if any, ads can communicate under these adverse exposure conditions common in consumers' daily lives.

Ad-Gist is the essential meaning of an ad in terms of the product category and the brand that it advertises. Consumers who have sufficient time to explore ads, websites, store shelves, and billboards move their eyes across the ad. The eyes first fixate a certain location of the ad for an average of about one quarter of a second, and then quickly jump to the next location, until done. Gist perception is believed to mostly take place during that first eye fixation. It helps consumers to rapidly decide which of the numerous ads in the consumers' environment to ignore, which are interesting and merit more attention, and what specific aspects of the ad to inspect more closely. Gist perception thus provides people with coarse snapshots of ads for rapid decision-making, and these snapshots have been shown to affect downstream measures such as preferences and choices. It is therefore crucial for ads to convey their meaning fast: within about one quarter of a second.

Indeed, research has shown how surprisingly fast and accurate the gist of certain ads can be perceived during very short exposures and from only coarse visual input (Pieters & Wedel 2012). This research reveals that accurate gist perception of those ads generates immediate interest in ads, which is of key importance because in highly competitive environments it allows ads to attract focal attention to gain downstream effects. This research has also shown which creativity templates and which advertising strategies work well under these adverse exposure conditions, and which ones do not. Glanz.tv utilizes this research for the design and placement of its digital advertising.

Advertising space in media is generally sold based on data about reach in the target audience, irrespective of the duration of the ad exposures. Recent research by Yahoo has shown the large impact of exposure duration on memory for on-line display ads. Such results indicate the need for adding exposure duration to the conventional reach and frequency parameters in media planning. In line with this, the Atlas Institute of Digital Marketing ([www.atlatsolutions.com/insights](http://www.atlatsolutions.com/insights)) recently proposed to add "Brand Exposure Duration" (BXD) as a metric in media planning. Media placements should be based on the minimum exposure duration that ads are expected to receive. Against this backdrop, Glanz.tv tailors strategies of ads to digital media to elevate positive consumer evaluation in the most cost-effective way.

### Reference

Pieters, R., & Wedel, M. (2012). Ad Gist: Ad Communication in a Single Eye Fixation. *Marketing Science*, 31(1), 59–73.