



**ANA COMMERCIAL RATINGS SUMMIT**  
**Held January 22, 2013**  
**@ Reed Smith, NYC**

**Purpose**

The purpose of the Commercial Ratings Summit was to discuss solutions that could help facilitate the availability of brand-specific commercial ratings for television.

The meeting was attended by ninety-two (92) individuals representing client-side marketers, agencies, media (network, cable, syndication), solution providers, industry trade associations, and other interested parties.

**ANA Member Historical Interest in Commercial Ratings**

ANA member interest in commercial ratings has remained consistently high over the years, per results from surveys done in 2004, 2006, and 2011.

- 2004: How interested would you be in having TV commercial ratings readily and easily available?
  - Very Interested – 75%; Somewhat Interested – 21% (remainder either Ambivalent, Somewhat Disinterested or Very Disinterested)
- 2006: How interested would you be in having TV commercial ratings readily and easily available?
  - Very Interested – 83%; Somewhat Interested – 13% (remainder either Ambivalent, Somewhat Disinterested or Very Disinterested)
- 2011: Currently, ratings for individual commercials are not reported by Nielsen. Rather, Nielsen provides ratings for the average of all the commercials in a program (this is the metric called C3). How interested would you be in having ratings available for each individual commercial?
  - Interested – 82% (remainder either Neutral or Not Interested)

**Industry White Papers Supporting Commercial Ratings**

ANA has published two white papers in recent years advocating for commercial ratings:

- March 2007: “Achieving Accountability: The Case for Brand-Specific Commercial Ratings.”
- February 2010: “The Path to Brand-Specific Commercial Ratings.” In fact, this white paper was a joint collaboration with Nielsen. [www.ana.net/commercialratings](http://www.ana.net/commercialratings)

Even earlier, 4A’s published:

- July 2001: “Commercial Ratings – Why We Need Them Now”

## The Benefits of Commercial Ratings

ANA members and other industry experts have identified numerous benefits for brand-specific commercial ratings.

### Better Knowledge / Increased Accountability

- Commercial ratings would provide more granular data to better inform the decision making process.
- Marketing mix models could be input with “real” brand-specific commercial metrics rather than “averages” (which may or may not reflect the delivery for that specific brand) to provide increased accountability.

### Better Creative Decisions

Brand-specific commercial ratings would be a resource to help make better creative decisions via:

- In market copy testing tool to identify the stronger and weaker executions within a commercial pool, enabling marketers to pull (or fix) weaker spots and heavy-up on stronger ones, therefore optimizing the creative rotation.
- A real-time barometer of commercial wear-out.
- An indication of a brand’s commercial performance versus competitors, other ads in the program, and other ads in the pod.

As one ANA member said, “It will be helpful to understand if our creative is incurring lower ratings than the average for that program. If our creative is causing channel changing we want to know. If networks want to keep audiences through the commercial break, understanding which creative keeps and which doesn’t keep is valuable for them too. Makes us all want to strive for better experience for the consumer and have the data to understand it.”

### Better Media Decisions

Brand-specific commercial ratings would also help make better media decisions:

- To indicate which networks, dayparts, or programs work best for a brand.
- To optimize the mix of :30s and :15s and help determine the impact of commercial duration.
- To understand the delivery of :15s – because :15s don’t get fair rotations of “A” positions in pods, it’s likely that the delivery of a schedule that is heavy with :15s doesn’t meet the overall C3 delivery.

### Branded Entertainment

- To determine the value and ROI of branded entertainment, including in-game features during sports programming.

As one summit attendee noted, “brand-specific commercial ratings can identify leverage opportunities,” to those who decide to use them.

## **Agenda Overview**

The agenda for the Commercial Ratings Summit began with legal guidelines and introductions. Bob Liodice, ANA president & CEO made opening remarks on the importance of measurement to ANA members and the marketing industry overall. Then, a number of ANA members provided perspective on the significance of brand-specific commercial ratings for them.

The event featured presentations from six industry suppliers who may offer solutions for brand-specific commercial ratings:

- Rentrak (Bruce Goerlich, Chief Research Officer)
- TRA (Bill Harvey, Co-Founder and Chief Research Officer and Pierre Bouvard, SVP, Media)
- Simulmedia (Dave Morgan, CEO)
- Precision Demand (John Mandel, President & CEO)
- Invidi Technologies (Michael Kubin, EVP)
- Nielsen (Terrie Brennan, Nielsen)

In addition, the Commercial Rating Summit provided presentations from:

- SMG with the agency perspective (Sam Armando, Director of Strategic Intelligence at SMGx and Emily Vanides, Vice President, Director of Research at MediaVest)
- The Media Rating Council (George Ivie, Executive Director) addressed quality considerations for commercial ratings.

PowerPoint presentations for all these sessions are available at <http://www.ana.net/conference/show/id/CRSUMMIT12>.

## **Key Discussion Points**

### Currency

This was not a discussion is about currency. It's ANA's perspective that currency discussions are strictly between buyers and sellers. Some buyers/sellers may choose to negotiate deals on brand-specific commercial ratings while others may not. ANA advocates brand-specific commercial ratings strictly for the insights that such data would provide.

### How would commercial ratings benefit the sellers?

Overall, there was consensus that television remains the most power medium ever created. And there was discussion that commercial ratings could help marketers improve the ROI of their television investments which could fuel more spending into TV. Further, there was the perspective that the increased ROI from commercial ratings could help make television more affordable for smaller brands.

It was noted in the supplier presentations that some media companies are already using commercial ratings for their own internal insights.

- TRA has twenty-two (22) media clients.
- Simulmedia has media clients, all of whom are using commercial ratings to help optimize their own programming promos.

### Importance of MRC Auditing and Accreditation

The mission of the Media Rating Council is to promote the use of valid, reliable, and effective research. Three of the suppliers at the summit are working with the MRC or are in discussions with them:

- Nielsen (national)
  - ACM (average commercial minute) Tools – Audited/Accredited
  - N-Power – Audited/Accredited (this is Nielsen’s electronic reporting tool for producing customized data estimates for television)
- Rentrak (national)
  - Recently initiated audit of certain reports from TV Essentials; not commercial minute reports
- TRA
  - Stated intentions, but no activity yet

ANA encourages MRC auditing and accreditation of all potential solution providers in the brand-specific commercial ratings space.

### Concerns

There were also some concerns expressed about brand-specific commercial ratings:

- Sample size for statistical viability
- Agency staffing requirements
- The need to make the data usable
- Flexibility for cross-platform analysis

It is ANA’s perspective that, while these concerns should be recognized, they should not dissuade the industry from aggressively pursuing brand specific commercial ratings.

## **Next Steps**

ANA members have unequivocally spoken, demanding brand-specific commercial ratings, and ANA heard nothing during the day that deters us from aggressively pursuing this. Specific next steps are:

1. As noted above, ANA encourages MRC auditing and accreditation of all potential solution providers in the brand-specific commercial ratings space.
2. Nielsen has followed up since the summit to confirm that they will be meeting with their clients over the next month to continue the discussion around brand-specific commercial ratings and garner feedback. They intend to reconnect in March to review what they learn and discuss a plan of action.
3. We also want to understand the analysis between brand-specific ratings and average commercial ratings from Nielsen, and the amount of volatility there. Nielsen suggested that they could do this and update previous findings. This will provide some construct regarding the range of error that we should generally expect.
4. Two additional companies – comScore and Kantar Media – have expressed interest in sharing their work in the area of brand-specific commercial ratings. ANA will likely schedule a webinar for this.
5. ANA will continue to advocate on this issue and to keep our members and the overall industry informed of progress as well as roadblocks.