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Some thoughts on the state of marketing and advertising in S A:

I would not like to be the person responsible for marketing and advertising in an organization these days. Getting value for your adspend in these times is quite a challenge, as compared to 25 years ago.

It is largely true that the days when you could simply find a highly popular show like Dallas or Ego! and just place your TV advertising there, have gone. Why? Because TV has fragmented into public broadcast, "Pay TV" (Mnet, Multichoice, etc.), Internet TV and services like Apple TV, Box Office, Catch Up, Netflix and Showmax. These latter services are on demand and, as such are very popular. They also contain no significant advertising, if any at all! You might find a slot at, say, 7:30 pm on Monday where there is a great program to advertise during. But, how much of its audience will watch on Catch Up or Showmax?

Even the print industry readership has fragmented. News can be read on the Internet without buying newspapers or magazines. Magazines have themselves fragmented into a multitude of specialist publications, which is probably better for advertising specialist products.

Radio has seen a bit of fragmentation but the old favourites are still there. Outdoor? My perception is, that this has expanded and is still a good medium to use for brand building.

So, if you are in the FMCG sector and are faced with this challenge, where do you do your advertising and marketing to maintain your return on your spend? Answer: At point of purchase. Shoppers have always made their purchase decisions at point of purchase and they are still doing it.

It is internationally accepted that coupons are the most effective point of purchase incentive. They get the attention of the shopper at the point of selecting the brand to buy. Coupons also have the advantage that they do not destroy the brand image by cheapening it, unlike what discounting a brand does (See the enclosed article by D Dickens entitled "Coupons, a Vital Link in Building Brand Equity").

Remember, shoppers for FMCG products love the shopping experience in stores. Get their attention at the point that they are selecting the brand to buy. Offer a coupon at point of purchase – in the form of an on-pack or neck tag coupon.

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Mike Aitken is the founder of Markanal, a company that has been processing marketing and market research data for 40 years. It also services the advertising industry. Mike was an active member of ASOM in the 1980's and 1990's.