# Research backed media buying key to marketing success

By Walter Wafula

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Often, advertising and marketing managers in developing countries practice shadowboxing when it comes to buying media. Their advertising decisions are informed by hearsay and past marketing success.

In advanced economies like the UK and South Africa, marketing decisions are based on either qualitative or quantitative research because it's widely available. As such, corporate managers make informed decisions hence throwing their punches in the right direction. Experts say, the reverse, is true for actors in markets where reliable research is a luxury.

In Uganda, media buying and selection has been and remains a major challenge for many. To tackle the advertising and marketing problems, Graeme Pitt, the managing director Freshly Ground Insights (FGI), a South African based market research firm, urged Ugandan executives to rely on quality research like the Uganda All Media Products Survey (UAMPS) conducted by Ipsos Synovate.

## Understand consumer behavior

Speaking at a media seminar in Kampala, Pitt said it is important for corporate decision makers to understand consumer behavior and media consumption habits before they spend on media. "You need to understand your target market as much as you can. If you don't have that info, you are making an uninformed decision about your market," Pitt said last week.

He added that Ugandan executives are lucky to have the AMPS just like South Africans because it helps managers to target their advertising messages to the right people. "UAMPS gives you a glimpse into the demographics and geographics. It provides high level insights into consumption patterns and helps you get an understanding of media consumption within your base," he explained.

During the seminar, participants were also tipped on; media selection maximizing advertising budgets and the age-old question of advertising in the context of public relations. For instance, Pitt said, if a company is introducing a new product in the market, research shows that television is very effective in communicating compared to newspapers because it informs and entertains.
"Newspapers are high on information and are good when it comes to comparing (products) and persuasion," he revealed.

## Media buying questions addressed

The media seminar which was organised by Vision Group and FGI, was designed to give decision makers a better understanding of effective media buying, measuring return on advertising investment and value, as well as managing public

relations in relation to advertising.

In an interview last month, Tony Glencross, the chief commercial officer at Vision Group told Bizcommunity that the conference was organised to address endless media buying questions arising from advertisers in Uganda.

"We have realised that most times, the media buying decision is based on the media consumption habits of the buyer. In more developed markets, these decisions are made more scientifically - using research, industry trends, audience statistics. This is a development we would like to see in this market," Glencross said.

At the end of the seminar, Robert Kabushenga, Vision Group's chief executive officer noted that some listeners felt that the examples used by Pitt were not appropriate because they were based on research done in South Africa.

"But it's important to look at superior markets to grow," Kabushenga remarked. He also noted that advertising and marketing managers needed such background to be able to justify investment in marketing by their companies.

## ABOUT WALTER WAFULA

Walter Wafula is a seasoned journalist who has reported for the *Daily Monitor* newspaper in Kampala-Uganda. He is also a contributor on Bizcommunity.com website. Email Walter at wafwalt@yahoo.com and connect on LinkedIn.


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