

Satisfaction, Loyalty and Commitment

Background

Advertising is the lifeblood of the newspaper industry. In recent years, as competition for ad dollars has toughened and readership has declined, the importance of maintaining advertiser loyalty and satisfaction has become increasingly clear to publishers and owners.

One of the largest newspapers in the world partnered with CSR to help senior management drive greater satisfaction among advertisers. Research topics included:

- Importance of and satisfaction with advertising in the newspaper
- Awareness of additional product and service offerings
- Suggestions for new offerings
- Perceptions of competitive publications

The Approach

IDIs were the best interviewing approach for this study because each advertiser was “high value”: the vast majority of those who would be recruited for the study each commandeered or influenced annual advertising budgets in the millions of dollars. Using executive-level interviewers, we could ensure that each interaction was a positive, brand-building experience for our client’s customers.

We used a highly structured discussion guide, containing both quantitative and qualitative questions. This allowed us to cover a wide range of topics but maintain maximum flexibility, letting advertisers talk about what was most important to them. CSR conducted over 200 half-hour in-depth telephone interviews with advertisers across 36 industry categories. At the close of interviewing, we assessed progress and were credited with having included representatives from advertisers comprising nearly 80% of current year ad revenue (approximately 7 of every 10 decision-makers in our client’s contact database).

After the interviews were completed, CSR used its proprietary content coding and analysis techniques to create a database from the 100+ hours of transcribed interviews. This enabled us to create data tables and conduct regression and factor analyses on what was originally primarily qualitative content.

Results

The research was used by two very different client audiences and we provided each group with very different types of deliverables:

Senior-Level Executives: This group wanted to understand the performance of the advertising department as a whole. In this case, CSR provided a roll-up of the data and findings across all categories. We were also able to show drivers for satisfaction across all the 36 categories included in the study, and in the process, to uncover common themes about why some advertisers were satisfied and some were not.

In the process, CSR was able to show the client how its pricing approaches could be better tailored to meet the specific needs of each advertising category. As a result, the executive team adapted a revised pricing strategy, and this model was credited with generating significant incremental revenue for several years following the conclusion of the study.

Individual Market Segment Teams: Each of the 36 teams was primarily interested in its own performance as a work group. To support this objective, CSR, in a series of team meetings scheduled over several days, shared each individual team's results with members of the team, as well as interview transcripts (with permission of those interviewed). The transcripts and the team-specific focus of these small group meetings brought the voice of the advertiser to life, were particularly interesting to the sales and service reps managing each client, and were also useful for training and development purposes. Each team also received "report cards" with team results benchmarked against overall results.