

# Gaul Advertising, Inc.

Consultation in  
marketing communications

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## **Analysis of Competitive Spending**

Overall marketing communications planning would be easy if we could identify the right target market to get our message to, the appropriate message that evokes a desired response, and the timing. But as we work hard to determine the correct decisions, so are other marketing managers in your industry.

Competitive analysis is critical for establishing a point of difference for your brand, product, or service as well as developing a competitive attack plan. It's also very helpful in influencing management to allocate the correct amount of budget dollars to the marketing communications effort. Using this analysis in a strategic manner can lead to a number of informed decisions for media, public relations, tradeshow, direct marketing, and electronic spending.

One option is to pay an outside firm to research competitive spending in trade journals but often this fails because the market may be too small. A more practical and effective option is requesting your publication's sales representatives to help you with this. They have easy access to the prior year (past year's advertising is public information) for print ad sizes, tearsheets (for creative comparison) frequency, and detailed spending and will be happy to share with their clients and prospects. They can also provide you with all electronic elements including banners, skyscrapers, portals, etc. to give you a complete picture. This aids you in strategically planning your marketing and advertising budget to maximize effectiveness and build sales.

You can expect this process to take four to six weeks to produce a thorough report that will show the spending based on the published rate cards. Keep in mind that these rates can then be negotiated.

It also can reveal emerging trends, show where your spending may be light or heavy, re-think key spot market opportunities, change your emphasis, and allow you to adjust your plan accordingly. Remember, these sales reps have a wealth of information (often have "secondary research" on the market as well) that can help you in the decision making process and are always

looking for ways to add value to their customers.

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