

Make ads “stick” in readers’ minds by holding their attention longer

Marketing
Insights
from 5MetaCom

You’ve put in the hours developing your print ads. Your message is clear, your targets defined. But in order for that message to reach your audience, they have to read the ad. And before they can read the ad, they have to *notice* the ad.

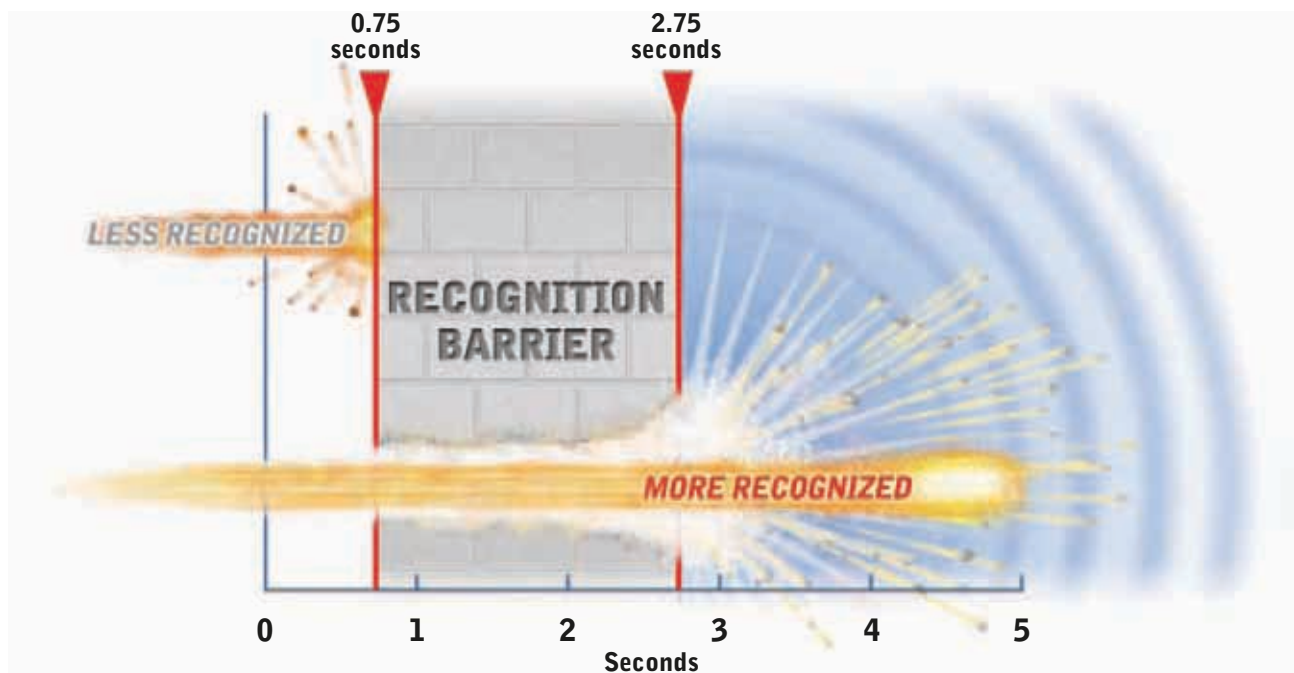
Researchers explain how readers “notice” ads by differentiating between recognition and recall. **Recognition** is defined as a reader’s ability to remember an ad when presented with it again. **Recalling** an ad is that same reader’s ability to remember it strictly from memory, without a prompt. So while recognition is good, recall is even better.

And there’s good news in that department. The results of one study tracking eye movement found readers make eye contact with nearly 90% of all print ads three-quarters of a page or larger.¹

The trouble is that studies also show not all eye contact leads to recognizing or recalling the ad. In fact, researchers in the Netherlands discovered readers reported seeing only about 55% of the ads they actually viewed.¹

In his book *The Advertised Mind*, Erik du Plessis attributes the difference between what readers “see” and what they recognize or recall to how long people spend looking at an ad. According to du Plessis, observation times of less than 0.75 seconds resulted in ads being less recognized. On the other hand, he says that longer observation times—greater than 2.75 seconds—resulted in more ads being reported as seen.²

Breaking the recognition barrier



Observation times play a crucial role in ad recognition and recall. Ads viewed less than 0.75 seconds were not as likely to break the recognition barrier, and therefore were less recognized. Ads viewed 2.75 seconds or longer broke through, resulting in higher recognition than those with shorter viewing times.²

So if the goal is to keep readers’ attention long enough to break through the recognition barrier, what determines an ad’s grasp on the audience? A 2005 Medialogue study cites four techniques that can help capture attention and, subsequently, improve recognition (see back).

Executive Summary

- An eye movement tracking study shows readers make eye contact with nearly 90% of all print ads three-quarters of a page or larger.¹
- Research indicates readers report seeing only about 55% of the ads they actually viewed.¹
- Observation times play a crucial role in ad recognition and recall.
- Recognition and recall can be improved by using various techniques to increase the time readers spend looking at ads (see back for details).

Four steps to improving recognition

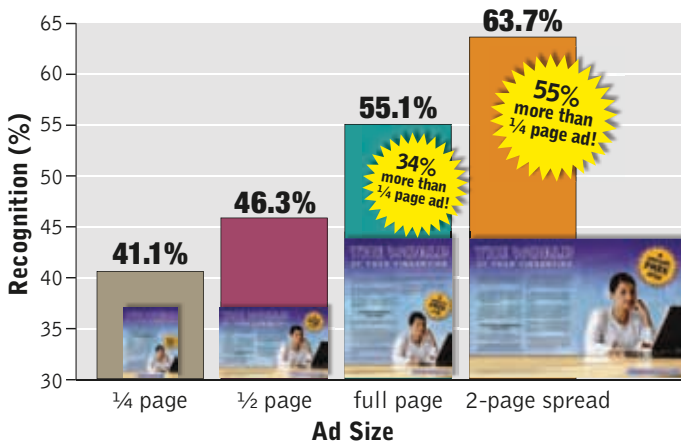


What attributes affect an ad's ability to get and keep attention? In 2005, Medialogue published the results of nearly 10 years of magazine advertising impact measurements. From 1996-2004, they accumulated a database of 2,879 advertisements, containing 288,000 individual observations.³ The results shed light on ways to improve the recognition and recall of an ad.

1 Bigger is better

Logic has always followed that the bigger the ad, the greater the impact. But a 2005 study quantified just how much of a difference size makes.³

Ad size influences recognition

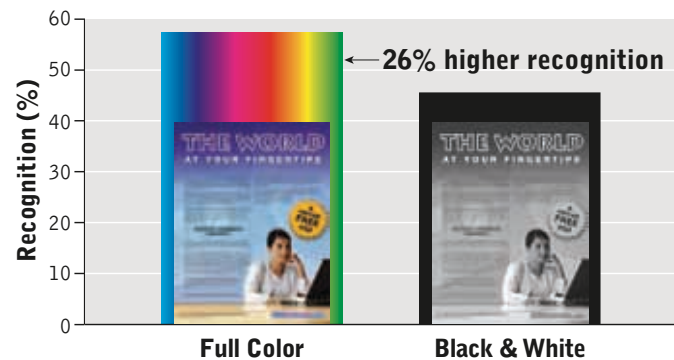


A 2005 study showed readers recognize full-page ads 34% more often than quarter-page ads—and this percentage rises dramatically, to 55%, for double-page spreads.³

2 Just add color

Most experts agree that, while some black-and-white ads can leave a lasting impression, they generally aren't as recognizable as their color counterparts. The use of full color can significantly increase the impact of ads, making them more easily recognized by audiences.³

Full color increases recognition



A 2005 study showed readers recognize full-color ads 26% more often than black-and-white ads.³

3 People like people

Four main qualitative parameters were shown to influence ad effectiveness. They were:

- **Likeability** – how much did readers enjoy the ad?
- **Originality** – how creative or groundbreaking was the ad?
- **Informative** – how much knowledge did the reader get from the ad?
- **Suitability** – how did the product/ad fit within the environment of the publication?



Featuring a visual or image of a person can increase the likeability of an ad.

Of these factors, 80% of the variation in recognition could be attributed to likeability.³ The study also indicated that including a visual of a person can significantly enhance the likeability of an ad.

4 Make sure you're covered

While size, color, and including visuals of people can all enhance an ad's ability to hold a reader's attention, the study shows that the ad's



Ads positioned on a cover can increase recognition.

position in the publication can also have a significant impact on recognition. Specifically, the data showed covers were more effective than inside pages:

- Inside front cover (cover 2) increased recognition 24%
- Inside back cover (cover 3) increased recognition 7%
- Back cover (cover 4) increased recognition 33%.³

¹ Franzen, G. Advertising effectiveness: findings from empirical research. Oxfordshire, United Kingdom: NTC Publications Ltd.; 1994:118.

² du Plessis, E. Advertising, learning and memory. In: du Plessis, E., ed. The Advertised Mind. London, UK and Philadelphia, PA: Millward Brown; 2005:123-135.

³ Hermie, P., Lanckriet, T., Lansloot, K. and Peeters, S. Stop/watch: everything on the impact of advertisements in magazines. Medialogue; 2005.