



A Perspective on How Buyers Can Prototype Audience Estimates for Unmeasured Out of Home Media

Independent and reliable audience estimates are critical to the successful evaluation and use of any media. TAB Out of Home Ratings are the gold standard for assessing Out of Home media. They provide standardized, reliable and accurate measures of audience delivery, and are endorsed and used throughout the industry. TAB Out of Home Ratings are also refined measures of commercial audience based on people who see advertising.

Although TAB measures hundreds of thousands of units of Out of Home inventory, not all inventory and Out of Home formats are currently measured by TAB. Out of Home buyers have asked how they might evaluate the audience delivery of *unmeasured* Out of Home formats.

This need is not unique to Out of Home; virtually all media are faced with assessing exposure to unmeasured vehicles. Cost and survey respondent burden, among other factors, limit the ability of other media to measure every vehicle. In these cases, prototyping the audience delivery of *unmeasured* media is normally done by each advertising agency under guidelines endorsed by its research department, guidelines which typically conform to a set of industry-wide best practices.

Prototyped estimates are the product of research standards and the insight and expertise of the media specialists, and reflect the best judgment of the planner/buyer. They do not offer the same degree of confidence earned by syndicated measurement.

That said, for an unmeasured medium, the ultimate goal is to be incorporated in the measurement system. Until that is possible, prototyping is an alternative that allows a buyer's best judgments to be a driving factor when considering all appropriate media for possible inclusion in a media plan.

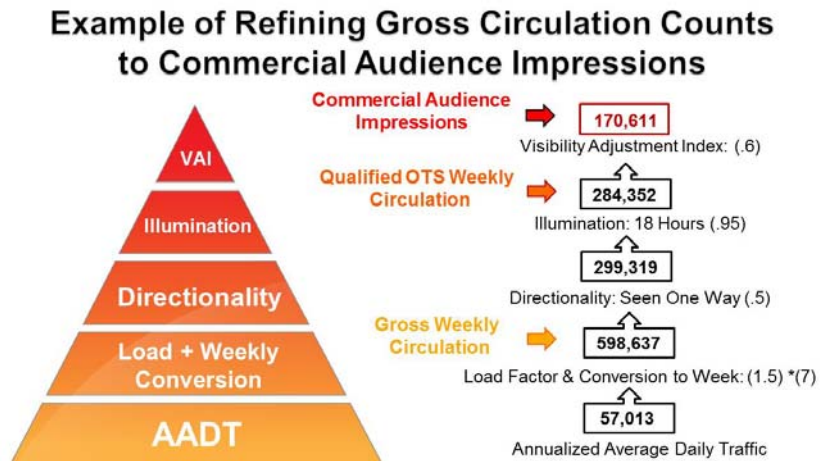
IMPORTANT: Prototyping applies to unmeasured media only. You should not prototype any OOH media types where TAB already has measures established. Non-TAB members should be encouraged to join in order to provide you with actual measures.

The TAB measurement model outlines the steps involved in prototyping Out of Home Media.

By following the same steps used by TAB to calculate Out of Home ratings, your prototypes may approximate the necessary refinement to make the prototyped audience estimates more comparable to both measured OOH media and the ratings of other media alternatives.

Step 1: Obtain Measure of Gross Circulation

Most often, a seller of unmeasured media will provide the buyer with their estimate of circulation. Beware: they may call it any number of things (e.g. circulation, impressions, ratings), but the number may represent a larger group of people who are in the vicinity of the OOH media unit, but can't see it. They also are not audited, and lack the associated credibility.



You should ask specific questions about how the number was gathered and what it represents. Ask yourself, can it or has it been verified by a third party? How much qualitative estimating is being done? What time frame does the measure represent? Don't hesitate to raise questions about the methodology. Kick the tires; the more you know, the better prepared you will be going forward.

Step 2: Refine Gross Circulation to Opportunity to See Circulation

TAB ratings only count people who have an opportunity to see the ad on an Out of Home display.¹ If you feel comfortable the circulation count being provided has been properly qualified, it can be used. If you believe it is a gross count of circulation, adjust it downward to an appropriate Opportunity to See (OTS) measure. Adjustments for mall, airport or other OOH venues will require some thought, but if you do not believe the vendor has provided adequate information, use your professional judgment to decide what sort of adjustment is fair.

At the end of this step, you should feel confident that you have a refined OTS circulation count (usually based on Persons 18+) who might see the ad, but you still do not have a count of audience. If you are not interested in a demographic target, you can skip to **Step 4**.

Step 3: Factor in Demographics

If you are required to prototype a specific demographic target, the simplest way is to assume that the share of the target audience is equivalent to its percentage in the general market.² For example, if Men 25-54 represent 35% of the overall adult market population, multiply the 18+ OTS circulation count

¹ For example, for a bulletin on an interstate, TAB's OTS circulation count is based: (a) on a section of road near the display, (2) counting people who are traveling in the direction in which the ad can be seen, and (c) eliminating circulation counts of people when the unit is not illuminated.

² More refined ratings do not make this assumption. For example, TAB demographics are based on the characteristics of the people who are actually traveling by each unit it measures (not the market profile).

derived in Step 2 by .35 to obtain the OTS circulation count for Men 25-54. Tables with the universe estimates required to execute this type of demographic conversion are available on the TAB website.

On occasion, a buyer or seller might believe the demographic profile of an OOH venue differs from the general market population. In these cases, the seller's assumptions should be confirmed by primary research.

You now have a refined OTS circulation count for a demographic target, but this is not yet an estimate of the commercial audience being delivered.

Step 4: Estimating Audience Impressions and Ratings

The next step is to refine the OTS circulation count into an estimate of the number of people in that group who actually see the advertising. This step uses a *visibility adjustment* to yield an estimate of actual commercial audience impressions.³ Audience impressions are the total number of times people passing the display are likely to notice the ad.

Visibility factors to consider are the size of the unit, how far away it is from the viewer, the angle of approach, and the time spent (dwell time) in the area of the sign. Visibility adjustments can vary greatly. A typically-sized ad generating little dwell time can garner as little as 7% of the circulation exposed to the sign, or as much as 75% or more. The average for all measured OOH media is around 50%. A large bulletin that is close to the road is at the high end of the range, while a small unit that is parallel to most passers-by would be at the lower end of the scale. The buyer should use their professional judgment as they evaluate the unit's ability to be seen against the visibility factors they deem most important.

Multiplying the visibility percentage by the demo OTS circulation yields commercial audience impressions. To calculate ratings, the impressions are divided by the population of the market (demo impressions/demo population). DMA and CBSA market definitions and populations are the most commonly used across media.

Step 5: Calculating Reach & Frequency

Out of Home reach & frequency is sensitive to the geographic dispersion of the units in a plan. This means that the location of each unit relative to the location of other units in the plan affects the R&F outcome. For this reason, buyers should not use the panel-by-panel R&F tool when evaluating the unmeasured media being prototyped. Instead, buyers should use the general or market-based planning tool, available through Telmar or Nielsen IMS, to provide an "average" or "general" R&F. In these versions of R&F, the user simply types in the weight (total GRPs) they want to buy in the market (including the GRPs calculated for unmeasured media), and the system will generate a combined R&F for measured and unmeasured media. This R&F solution is based on average schedules for the market

³ The visibility adjustments used by TAB were obtained through a high-quality research program, using the latest in eye-tracking techniques. The study was designed specifically for the OOH formats and street and city environments in which those formats are dispersed throughout the country. Your professional judgment will not be as precise as the adjustments used by TAB, but they will refine your prototyped estimates closer to an estimate of commercial audience.

in question. Check with your research department to see if they agree with the assumptions of the R&F model for the particular OOH medium being prototyped. You might find, for example, that the medium is very limited in coverage and therefore does not provide the type of general market reach suggested in the general planning systems.

Conclusion: The prototyping process outlined by TAB employs best practice guidelines that may not be easy to apply in every situation. We believe they will help you better understand the limitations of the information provided by unmeasured media, so that you and your clients feel comfortable with your decisions and recommendations. Ultimately, prototyping of unmeasured OOH media is your responsibility.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact TAB. We also suggest reaching out to the media research professional in your organization, as well as organizations such as the 4As.