



Media Charter (OMG)

The Research Charter of 2002 sets out fundamental criteria and framework conditions which, in the view of the German media agencies, should be recognised and implemented to guarantee a professional standard of research in consensual work between the market partners – media agencies, advertisers and advertising-related communication media.

The independent, neutral and objective assessment and consultancy functions carried out by the media agencies come at the very centre of their range of services:

- ▶ Media analysis and media research
- ▶ Media consultancy and media budgeting
- ▶ Monitoring and assessing media use

The professional investment in media research made by the media agencies and their many decades of experience mean they have a decisive claim to a joint role in fixing the standards by which research into the German advertising media should operate.

Given the competition prevailing between the media, advertising-media analyses play a major and continually increasing role in promoting economically efficient and impact-oriented budgeting in the advertising business.

The media agencies are therefore committed to ensuring that German media research is objective, up-to-date and representative – standards which are enshrined in the objectives of the Central Association of the German Advertising Industry (Zentralverband der Deutschen Werbewirtschaft – ZAW), which call for truth and clarity in advertising.

Aims

The media agencies will require every medium, following its market entry, to provide transparent evidence of its performance, using figures to show its reach and potential consumption in clearly defined overall basic units (personal/institutional). These include a description of the media consumers and an extended demonstration of media-consumption quality.



The costs for this basic media research will be born by the media themselves.

The criteria for an objective survey of the relevant media-performance data must correspond to the research standard previously attained under the essential control of the media agencies, while reflecting such developments as point to the future.

Within the media competition enjoyed by the market partners, it is intended, as far as possible, to carry out all market-media studies in principle as joint ventures under the purview of joint committees – consisting of agencies, advertisers and media.

These joint committees will develop, on a consensual basis, the requirements needed – regarding method, survey, assessment and publication of basic media analyses and their application in media budgeting. The organisational structure of the joint-venture studies and the design of the joint committees will be based on parity of representation among the market partners: clients versus providers, with the agencies giving the casting vote in case of a tie.

For these basic media studies the media providers taking part will provide the agencies with functional databases for the results, with the appropriate software for in-house assessments. This means that the media agencies' duty of confidentiality with regard to client briefings will be preserved, along with the neutrality of their evaluations.

The media agencies will actively promote current and future research projects to determine objective performance data for all communications media connected with advertising.

Working in a consensual market partnership, they will use their professionalism to make a decisive contribution to the design of the "Media Research Seal of Quality", whose standards they will largely set.

In future the transparency of performance provided by each medium – recorded in individual or joint studies – should do more than provide just quantitative performance figures for advertising-medium contact and should include figures for advertising-material contact.

The media agencies will encourage and develop media research, increasingly through their own research and assessment projects, using such criteria as impact of communication and contribution to advertising success, in order to measure media-selection processes



not just mainly by their commercial aspects.

Special media studies, extending beyond general "obligatory research" and carried out by a particular medium for "advertising purposes", should be oriented to the existing consensual research conventions and guidelines – for this see ZAW, AG.MA, AGF, IVW etc.

Of course the media agencies will use their best efforts to ensure that media-reach studies are increasingly extended to include regular market-descriptive base data with a uniform list of questions.

There will be a permanent requirement to incorporate broader, target-group-descriptive features into studies involving general-circulation media – e.g. to incorporate consumption-oriented and behavioural criteria, milieu clusters, lifestyles, and psychography of individuals.

All media providers must have unrestricted leeway in working with the institutes to clarify and settle this in-house assessment of extended target-group characteristics.

Working in a business partnership with the media providers, the media agencies will assume that the research data used nationally and internationally by the media vis-à-vis agencies and advertisers in sales canvassing come from a uniform, generally accessible, up-to-date and clearly defined source.

In this process the data from joint-venture projects will have priority, under the purview of the joint committees and with participation by agencies.

When using results from individual research projects by individual media, the "internal source" must be named and the methodological specifications be shown on request.

Requirements

The media agencies will expect the following when working with the media providers on media research or when publishing "own studies":

- ▶ National media-advertising standards must be maintained
- ▶ The media-specific survey methodology must be maintained
- ▶ Studies must be representative and objective, surveys of relevant



competitors being included as a guarantee

- ▶ They must be as up-to-the-minute as possible
- ▶ They must be neutral as between clients and institutes
- ▶ They must transfer knowledge of methodology in a professional way when surveying new media

When designing, running and evaluating market-media studies, it will be necessary to follow standards already developed in the following fields, both for individual / joint studies and for intramedia or intermedia studies:

- ▶ Sampling, exploiting and weighting
- ▶ Question design and filtering
- ▶ Single-source surveys versus data-adjustment or data diffusion
- ▶ Market-available data-assessment and data-application software

The media agencies will be entitled to a comprehensive insight into the methods used in all media studies published in the market.

Intramedia advertising-medium / advertising-material contacts or contact opportunities and potential-exposure figures must be surveyed using uniform, comparable criteria and question lists; this applies to all media groups, but most especially to general-circulation media.

When making intermedia comparisons, the "currency conventions" must be followed, which have been set by agreement among the market partners as benchmarks within the "limits of viability."

Users / clients: agencies and customers, as a group, have a leading role to play in using their assessment principles to determine the "measuring units".

Regular consultation will take place with the advertisers regarding the technical contents of the aims enshrined in the media agencies' Research Charter, in which process they will be honed to ensure they are maintained, market-viable and implemented.

Users and clients will be represented equally on the joint committees, where they will discuss their common aims and vote on them.

The media agencies will have an obligation towards the advertisers to use the available media-research data in a professional and up-to-date way as the basis of their recommendations. The sources on



which they are based will be clearly documented.

Media agencies and media auditors will refer to the same media-research data in the interests of uniform principles of assessment in client consultancy.

Co-operation with the advertising media

The media agencies will have an obligation towards the media to undertake a co-operative partnership and to provide support to ensure a high standard of media research based on objectivity and fairness.

In the course of their market activities they will respect the laws of media competition while representing in their research a thorough standpoint of neutrality and professional quality vis-à-vis all market partners to ensure a completely real transparency of performance.

The media agencies expect the media to continue their many years of fair co-operation and targeted, purposeful, consensual maintenance of a high quality of media research and to respect the independent, governing quality-guaranteeing role of the agencies.

The media, working in partnership with the agencies and the advertisers, are prepared to adapt their media-specific research methods to new knowledge, and to neutralise influences, manifest or latent, affecting results, providing an objective quality of research.

The media agencies expect that the media will not use jointly agreed changes / developments in survey methods for basic media studies in a one-sided way to make increases in advertising prices if there have been changes in the result level, since they are methodologically conditioned. In this respect the media agencies will also guarantee a fair assessment of such effects.

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