

Non-Conventional Advertising on Full-Service Television

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1. Introduction

The advertising industry is currently undergoing a period of rapid and profound changes that are determining its future definitively. We would say it was a time of crisis, were it not for the fact that in many aspects the advertising industry, like the other communication industries, has been installed in a permanent crisis for a long time.

All crises involve a series of threats and opportunities, are motivated by particular causes and sketch a subsequent uncertain outlook, which may be negative or positive but which is necessarily different from the initial state.

In the case of advertising, the main trends motivating the crisis are the incorporation of new technologies; the evolution and maturing of consumers; and growing business competition, both among corporate advertisers and advertising agencies and media buying agencies, which perversely has led to viewer saturation and fragmentation. All of these features are especially relevant to television advertising.

Television advertising, and in particular the evolution of television formats, is a privileged position from which to observe the trends and perspectives of the advertising business in general. Furthermore, for some years now television advertising has been undergoing an interesting revolution in itself. It is anachronistic to consider it in terms of advertisements, programme breaks, ad blocks and the separation between programming and advertising because,

even though this is the way the law still thinks, it is no longer precise or useful to understanding the phenomenon of commercial communication on the small screen.

Fruit of the confirmation of this fact, the article we herein present explores the different and diverse types (sometimes new and sometimes not so new) of television advertising, how they work and their possible implications for advertisers, television stations, advertising companies and viewers/consumers. However, in analysing television advertising formats, we have contributed ideas and diagnoses that refer to other fields of research of a great prospective scope in terms of:

- The insertion of new technological logics in conventional media
- The uncertain situation of both public and private full-service stations within the new reality being configured
- The competitive coexistence between free-to-air and pay TV and between full-service and thematic ones (e.g., the European law on new advertising techniques emphasises interactive advertising when in reality it has yet to achieve a significant presence in most countries, at least among full-service stations)
- The approach towards new communication models both on television and in the rest of the communication ecosystem and areas being formed (level of interactivity of the new media, fragmentation of new audiences, new forms of consumption, etc.)
- The leading role of advertising as a source of funding the broadcasting system and the expectations of all the agents involved with regard to developing a new advertising business model

It is important to also remember the consequences of the analysis of new TV advertising formats carried out by the legislative authorities. The only mention of commercial

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communication other than spots in the EU's 1989 Television Without Frontiers directive concerned programme sponsorship and teleshopping. 15 years later, the Interpretive Communication of April 2004 (Official Journal of the European Union, 2004) mentioned not just sponsorship and teleshopping but also min-ads, product placement, telepromotion, shared screens, virtual advertising and interactive advertising, something that reflects the assumption of an emerging and unavoidable reality, even though this attempt by the legislator to supply an answer and understand it still falls short, in our opinion.

Furthermore, the European law and its State applications generate a series of notes, criteria and communications to clarify and specify, in a process that appears to be speeding up by the minute and which indirectly creates a feeling of confusion and fleetingness, as well as mistrust about the law's ability to adapt to a business environment in permanent change. In November 2002, the European Group of Television Advertising (EGTA) recommended the creation at the European level of an inventory of TV advertising formats. This was one of the main goals of our research work (work that is pioneering in our country). We believe it is an insufficient but necessary step in examining a phenomenon as dynamic, multifaceted and of such a widespread repercussion as television advertising.

1.1. Conceptual Delimitation

Firstly, it is important to establish the plural fashion by which the reality studied is called. We can find different references that describe the same phenomenon as "other advertising formats", "non-conventional advertising", "new advertising formats" and "non-ad advertising". Other expressions are used more specifically to define partial aspects, according to the different agents' point of view: "new advertising techniques" (referring to virtual advertising, shared screens and interactive advertising, as the European Commission defined in the April 2004 Interpretive Communication on the Television Without Frontiers directive), or "special actions" or "special solutions" (sales departments of large media agencies and television operators responsible for marketing these new business formats).

Given the variety of terms, we opted for the expression we considered the least confusing and the broadest in order to

diagnose the study object. We rejected the word 'new' because the formats include some that have been used for some time (e.g., sponsorship, static advertising and product placement). We also felt it was not appropriate to use the expression 'alternative' to refer fundamentally to actions which, in every case and from the point of view of the advertising business, are merely complementary. The passage of time will show us exactly which ones are alternative and the extent to which they are present, as well as in which television types and formats.

We therefore chose to adopt the term 'non-conventional advertising' to refer to all commercial communication not presented in the form of an ad. To a large extent, many of these formats either are not strictly affected by quantitative limits on advertising transmissions or receive differential treatment and so become exceptions to the norm of advertising in-between programmes. With this in mind, we considered it was quite important to make a detailed and rigorous analysis of advertising on free-to-air stations.

Secondly, it was important to look at what we understand by television advertising. The criterion of quantitative restrictions marked by the law simply distinguishes between 'ads' (spots) and 'other advertising formats'. The former are defined as audiovisual publicity messages of a brief duration (usually 15 to 30 seconds), independent of programmes and able to be rebroadcast. By contrast, we could say that 'other advertising formats' are all types of commercial communication not presented in the form of an ad. For the purposes of counting advertising time, 'other formats' receive more favourable and flexible treatment. For example, station promos, public-service ads and particular types of sponsorship are not subject to time limits.

The proliferation of non-conventional advertising in a technological environment that opens the door to constant innovation has established a debate around how it can be included in television programming, while respecting the spirit of the law.

These discussions on new advertising techniques are related to the way in which to incorporate onscreen message displays or transparencies, interactive advertising and shared screens. Even though experimentation with these techniques is being done mainly at the digital pay-TV stations, the free-to-air stations have also tried to include them gradually. Their main advantages are the fact they are

considered exceptions to the rules on advertising breaks and that they aim to attract an interactive response on the part of consumers.

Within the section on 'other advertising formats', the Administration says that sponsored ads shall not be considered under the restrictions on conventional advertising if they last no more than 10 seconds, are aired immediately before or after a programme and are clearly differentiated from conventional advertisements. Similarly, advertising microspaces have been allowed, which must last more than 60 seconds. A special situation is that of static advertising (very often dynamic in sports broadcasts). The law says this format is not considered television advertising so long as an intentional deviation is not produced from highlighting the sales purpose. However, the rules change if it is digitalised, when it takes on the consideration of a transparency.

The appearance of hybrid forms have called administrative regulations into question, so it is important to prevent the limits imposed by the law from being distorted by the inclusion of elements subject to a more flexible system. New formats have begun to appear in television advertising that are prepared and treated as an important element of the programme being broadcast. Some varieties of this type are known as 'ongoing advertising programmes' in which the commercial communication is integrated in an informational programme about products that have some feature in common. This information or service can form part of an infotainment programme or documentary where the product description fits the context of the programme.

In Germany, these formulae are called 'infomercials' when the informational aspects dominate over the sales ones, and 'telepromotions' when the sales aspects are prioritised. Hybridisation between advertising and entertainment in more general terms is known as 'advertainment'. This format lets us talk about a whole other way of understanding commercial communication.

In our research work, in order to examine the most global panorama possible, we decided to focus on observing everything that could be considered communication with a commercial interest – whether or not it was advertising under regulatory terms *per se* – including both non-conventional advertising formats like sponsorship, teleshopping, programmes or programme sections that

promote trademarks (explicitly or implicitly) and station promos, show promos and the promotion of directly related products.

1.2. Research Goals

This research work looks at the emerging phenomenon of non-conventional advertising formats on full-service television. The main purpose was to explore a field open to experimentation and permanent transformation in all its fields of development. The approach we decided on was marked by the following goals:

- Specific analysis of the agents involved (television operators, producers, advertising and media buying agencies, advertisers and consumers/viewers)
- Discussion about the legal regulations to which television advertising is subject; specific regulations on ads and teleshopping; and 'other advertising formats' (both from the viewpoint of the legal framework of the European Union and Spanish regulations)
- Identification and classification of new practices in the presentation and insertion of non-conventional advertising formats and new formats other than ads
- Evaluation of the presence of these formats on public and private free-to-air, full-service stations
- Evaluation in the shape of conclusions and final reflections in order to determine the problem from the different perspectives of the agents, the current and future legality and the main questions surrounding the identified formats.

1.3. Methodological Design and Fieldwork

Given the exploratory nature, the necessarily fleeting status (because of the dynamism inherent in the study object) and the comprehensive and prospective goals of the work, the research was organised around three main phases:

- The first (exploratory) phase focused mainly on in-depth interviews, looking at the views of the different institutional agents involved in the TV advertising phenomenon, such as public and private stations, free-to-air and digital stations, audiovisual producers, advertising agencies, media buying agencies and advertisers
- In the second (analytical) phase, we went on to study the advertising formats present on full-service stations. The chosen technique was content analysis, where the register

units had to correspond to a combination of quantification and qualification

- In the third (test) phase, we held discussion groups to look at how to frame the discourses of the television public with regard to advertising

The first phase thus consisted of holding 18 in-depth interviews with experts and professionals on non-conventional TV advertising, from directors of advertising agencies to sales managers at TV stations and executives with media buying agencies and the people responsible for media relations within major advertiser firms. The fundamental goal of the interviews was to find out their different perspectives and diverse interests with regard to this sector under transformation.

In the second phase we prepared a database on the basis of a sample of television programming by four big free-to-air full-service stations, the first two Spanish (TVE-1 And Tele-5) and the other two Catalan (TV3 and K3/33). The sample was made up of four full days at each station (17 and 20 December 2003 and 17 and 20 January 2004), with a total of 384 hours of television programming.

The analysis grid, composed of a total of 2,407 recordings, described the presence and form of appearance of commercial communication formats on TV other than traditional ads, using the following analysis categories:

- Coding of the advertising format on the basis of the systematisation of all the variables identified in the specialised scientific literature, regulatory standards and information taken from the interviews with the different professional sectors
- The location of the format on the TV station: day/hour/minute/second
- Time slot when it appeared and length in seconds of the broadcast
- Level of integration within the programme
- Type of programme in which it was integrated

The third phase had to explore the reception sphere through discussion groups with representatives of different types of public. In the end, we only held two discussion groups, one with university students and another with housewives. This was not so much because of time or budgetary restraints but because we realised the technique was inadequate for our purposes (the exceptional nature of

the situation made it hard for some participants to verbalise their feelings, and participant involvement was not great enough to prevent the use of simple stereotypes that could prevent the situation from being worked on in a collective and uninhibited fashion). However, at least the information we obtained provided a contrast, from the perspective of viewers/consumers, to the outlook provided by the study of the institutional agents and the programming sample.

2. Results

The studies that Infoadex carries out each year on advertising investment in Spain, and which are admitted by agreement (although with reservations) by the profession, distinguish between two major sections: investment in conventional media and investment in non-conventional media.

Conventional, or 'above the line', media include newspapers, radio, film, television and internet. Non-conventional, or 'below the line', media include such varied techniques and formats as mailing lists, telephone marketing, gifts, point-of-sale advertising, trade fairs and exhibitions, sponsorship and patronage, directories, catalogues, etc.

It is worth pointing out that the general trend in recent years has been for investment in non-conventional media to grow at the expense of investment in conventional media. Although growth slowed down slightly in 2003, investment in non-conventional media still made up 53.63% of the total.

The growth in investment in non-conventional media has usually been put down to advertisers having done the research and discovering the advantages of putting money into more personalised, direct and (in terms of efficacy) controllable forms of communication than mass messages. In this regard, and as we will try to demonstrate, some of the advertising formats studied in this work could also respond to that intention.

Television advertising investment in Spain in 2003 came to 2.315 billion euros, according to Infoadex; 6.6% up on the 2002 figure and far above the 2.6% average annual growth of advertising investment in general. This means that, even despite the obvious problems (saturation, loss of effectiveness, audience fragmentation, etc.), Spanish

advertisers continued to have full confidence in this medium of communication as a vehicle for their persuasive messages even though, as we will see further on, they are constantly seeking new formulas within the medium that could turn out to be more profitable and efficient.

We could say that in the Spanish advertising industry, television is the king, in contrast to the situation in other countries. However, the king must confront a series of problems and challenges from the advertising viewpoint that we will attempt to summarise below.

2.1. The Challenges Facing Television Advertising

Before analysing the results of the research work, we should stop to look, if only briefly, at the context in which television advertising is immersed today. We would like to set out, even if in a very summarised fashion, three of the main challenges it faces: saturation, changing viewer habits and audience fragmentation.

Because of its importance and because of the discussion it generates in many contexts (not just professional ones), we will look firstly at saturation. This study does not aim to analyse saturation in depth, but we do want to provide some relevant figures.

Advertising pressure grew considerably in 2003, according to figures from the media buying agency Media Planning (2004). The number of contracted advertising hours on TV was up 17% over 2002, with increases of between 9% and 10% at Spain's full-service stations. Consequently, all the stations' advertising time index rose in 2003. The number of ads rose 15% to more than two million per year. The number of ads seen per person per day was calculated at 87.7 in 2003, up from 84.0 the previous year.

According to Lamas (2004), advertising occupation has risen enormously in recent years. The oldest available figures show that the percentage of advertising occupation at TVE-1 in November 1989 was 5.3%. By May 2003, it had grown to 13.3%, i.e., a rise of 151%. A similar evolution occurred with regards pressure: the minutes of advertising seen per person per day rose from eight in 1990 to 28 in 2003. If we compare Spanish figures with those from the other EU countries, we can see that Spain has the second-highest TV advertising pressure behind Portugal, double that of countries like Belgium, Austria, Denmark, Norway, the UK and Sweden.

We can also provide a minimum illustration of the phenomenon of saturation with an example taken from the analysed programming sample. Within the television broadcasts over four days listed on the database, the longest ad break was recorded at TVE-1 on 20 January 2004, beginning at 4.30 p.m. and consisting of a block that lasted more than 13 minutes and which included exactly 43 advertisements. As you may imagine, even if viewers had enough patience to watch the whole block and were extremely interested and paid it a lot of attention, they would still find it very hard to retain the content of the messages in all these ads.

From the advertisers' viewpoint, there is another negative effect of saturation, and that is the difficulty, or even impossibility, of accessing the most desired time slots, i.e., prime time, even if they are willing to pay the corresponding prices.

Saturation is therefore a source of very significant concern to advertisers, as we saw during the first phase of the research work, and as suggested by some of the statements and initiatives of the Spanish Advertisers' Association. But this is not the only problem facing television advertising. Another challenge is the profound changes taking place with regards viewers' consumption habits.

The audiovisual environment (in the most socially, economically and technologically advanced sectors of the population) is today much more complex than it used to be. To the recent revolutions of remote controls (associated with the appearance of new stations) and the possibility of consuming television off-line thanks to video, we now have to add other supports and diverse systems such as the computer, computer games, PC/TV conjunctions, video consoles, internet, DVDs, mobile phones, pay TV, pay-to-view television, cable TV, DTT, personal video recorders (PVRs), television over ADSL lines, etc.

The effects of all these technological novelties may be considerable for television advertising as we understand it today. A study by independent US consultants The Yankee Group calculated that by 2007 people will simply *skip over* around 11% of ads, thanks to the use of PVRs (Kishore, 2003).

Also, one of the main effects of this technological multiplicity is that the public is getting used to seeing what it wants, when it wants. We do not need to go into depth about

the consequences this will have on the traditional way of understanding television advertising, based on a block of ads interspersed in the middle of a continuous flow of programming.

The evolution and maturing of viewers runs parallel to the evolution and maturing of consumers in general. One of the most interesting conclusions presented by a Delphi research work prepared in 2001 by Carat España on the future of advertising was the following:

“Individuals are developing more and are increasingly capable of taking decisions about their own lives. They are thus becoming, from the point of view of the acquisition of goods, ‘increasingly demanding consumers’. At the same time, this wilfulness generates a requirement that translates into the preparation of particular discrimination criteria with regards the information they receive or a selection of that information based on the definition of their interests and needs. From this point of view, we have to take into account that individual resistance can end up becoming group resistance” (AADD: 2001b, 45-46).

One figure that would confirm this forecast and the future trend is the fall in television consumption among children and young people. According to the figures from Media Planning (2004), the three youngest age groups analysed were the only ones where the average number of daily minutes of television consumption fell. In particular, consumption in the group aged 14 to 24 fell by five percent, from 144 minutes in 2002 down to 137 minutes in 2003.

There could obviously be many different reasons why, but we believe this trend marks the present and speaks to a future where viewers will have a growing range of options allowed by technology and will want to be increasingly decisive about their television consumption and will have less patience with regards unwanted interruptions from commercial advertising.

Conventional ads aired in blocks in-between programmes is being threatened, particularly by the groups of younger viewers with the most purchasing power, i.e., the ones most attractive to trademarks. This makes both advertisers and operators interested in exploring new ways of ensuring the survival of the business (a matter of interest to advertisers) and the main source of funding (a matter of interest to operators).

Finally, there is the problem of audience fragmentation.

Thirty years ago, the television landscape was ideal for advertisers, and for media planners in particular: there were only two television stations (one that was by far and away a minority choice) and one mass audience. Today in Spain there are more than 1,000 television stations (counting local ones) and a multiplicity of supply which, thanks to terrestrial digital television, will no doubt grow exponentially in the future.

If we are to believe the experts, we could in a few years be facing a type of ‘à la carte’ television where getting a million viewers to watch the same audiovisual content at the same time would be very hard, except for events like live broadcasts of sports matches, etc. In line with this, some people say that the term “mass communication” is becoming increasingly oxymoronic (Moore and Chaldecott, 2003).

This outlook is presented as a serious challenge to advertising, which will have to adapt to the new situation and seek alternative routes in order to reach viewers in optimum conditions. Many of the innovations introduced by the non-conventional advertising formats studied in this article are moving things along in this direction.

2.2. Spots

In line with what we discovered in the first phase of the research work, the majority of the people who work in the business believe that spots will continue to lead television advertising. The feeling amongst advertisers is that, despite their problems and lack of effectiveness, they are still profitable.

The spot is still capable (depending on the creative success of the agency) of achieving a high level of renown and viewer recall, even if it now has to be shown a lot more often to achieve an effect similar to the one it used to get with fewer rebroadcasts. Furthermore, it allows an exhaustive control of the message associated with the brand, a question that is not as straightforward with other television advertising formats.

In any case, the problems we have mentioned before have led advertisers and agencies to explore new ways to increase the effectiveness of television commercials. These have included spots with a ‘sting’ (conventional spots to which a brief repetition of 5 to 10 seconds is added later and which serves as a reminder), short blocks (brief advertising breaks of various formats that help stop people from

channel surfing), showing the spot on different stations at the same time, showing spots after the opening credits that traditionally announce the end of the advertising space (a use that deviates from the audiovisual punctuation signs and which provokes a feeling of deception amongst viewers) or, without going into the issue exhaustively, the search for a privileged position for the spot when presented as false programme sponsorship.

The spot continues to be key in television advertising, even though in the interviews with the experts we observed a number of indications of change. Various heads of sales departments at the Spanish television stations said that non-conventional formats accounted for more than 10% of advertising income in 2003. We are therefore not talking about a phenomenon that can be underestimated.

In the case of the Spanish stations, non-conventional advertising has become a way of generating funding, given the difficulty in increasing income from showing spots in a context that is close to saturation and limited by the law. In an even more extreme situation are some digital stations, where 'special actions' are the main source of income - although the contracting of conventional campaigns is currently growing spectacularly.

Other experts we interviewed, i.e., the directors of media buying agencies and advertising agencies, calculated that a good many advertisers (particularly the big ones with market knowledge) now devote between 10% and 20% of their TV advertising budgets to non-conventional formats. In fact, one of the people we consulted called on Spain to lead Europe with regards non-conventional television advertising.

2.3. The Introduction of New Formats

Although the spot is still the most important format in terms of onscreen presence, investment and viewer recall, the advertising industry has been experimenting for a number of years with alternative formats that could be used in a complementary fashion and which may make it possible to avoid the problems that threaten television advertising, such as saturation (as previously mentioned), changing viewer habits and audience fragmentation, and others like a lack of criteria and an effective system for measuring efficacy.

This experimentation, which has accelerated noticeably in recent years, began in earnest with the arrival in Spain of

Tele-5. The experience of the station's executives, who came from a much more competitive situation than Spain's, led to new systems of marketing spaces that revolutionised the TV advertising market. It also imposed a more active and aggressive situation that forced the other operators to follow suit.

Studying the reasons behind the experimentation and the creation of new formats, a 2002 report carried out by Carat Belgium for the European Commission indicated the following four determining factors:

- a) Technological development
- b) The evolution of viewer behaviour. In this sense, an aggressive or inappropriate advertising intervention could result in a loss of audience, loss of credibility for the message or negative attitude towards the brand
- c) Legal and self-regulation constraints
- d) The necessary diversification of formats for communicating with consumers, due to the pressure of competition (Liesse, 2002)

What is certain is that the experimentation with new TV advertising formats is continual and that we are talking about a sector that is growing fast. Ideas usually emerge in media buying agencies, stations or advertisers and, to a lesser extent, advertising agencies.

Technological possibilities constitute a stimulus that is taken into account so long as there is a clear idea about how to make a profit. The main limits are marked by acceptance by viewers and by the brand's potential consumers and the legal framework, which is subject to a flexibility test every day. Regardless of where the idea is born, if successful it is quickly copied by the competition, in a dynamic of imitation similar to what happens in programming.

What is clear is that what advertisers aim for when they experiment with formats is to obtain a heightened efficacy for their messages – an efficacy that can no longer be provided so clearly by conventional spots. Extra profitability is often obtained by synergy between formats, i.e., the combination of diverse formats referring to a same brand and with the same commercial message.

With regard to the origin of non-conventional advertising formats, after a reflection based on the information received, we believe it would be helpful to distinguish four possible ways in which they appear:

Formats that appear to be related to old radio techniques, which have a long history and which are today enjoying a second or third wind, with adaptations and different and more or less important changes in order to meet the new television context. Examples include active sponsorship, internal moments and microprogrammes.

New advertising formats imported from other media, such as outdoor advertising (static advertising) and films (product placement), or imported from other distribution channels (teleshopping, which has major points in common with classic catalogue sales).

Experimental formats related to technological development, such as onscreen messages or transparencies (a concept related to virtual advertising), 'shared screens' (a term we prefer to 'split screen') and the animation of the visual symbols of stations or particular programmes.

1. Formats that appear as the result of the experimentation in new ways to reach consumers, e.g., the short block, screenwriting and informational reports (a technique that arises from the field of public relations and which in this case is very closely linked to publicity).
2. As well, we have to take into consideration that the new advertising formats often move in a field of a legality, on the blurry borders of what is and is not allowed by the law, and that in fact the work of the media buying agencies, producers and stations often consists of finding loopholes in the interpretation of the law that make it possible to make the most of television advertising.
3. The extraordinary proliferation of these new formats in recent years has also had a paradoxical effect: some of the formulas have already reached a certain level of saturation. One example is product placement, which in some inhouse series on the Spanish stations has gone from being an occasional resource to the excessive exploitation of possible situations in which to include a product or service brand. It could also be the case, particularly at Tele-5, of the proliferation of microprogrammes, which have ended up losing their original meaning and are threatening to change some time slots into nothing other than spaces for commercial communication.

Finally, we should not forget that the experimentation with and implementation and application of these new formats depend on a balance of interests between stations, audiovisual producers, advertising companies and advertisers and, on the other side, viewers/consumers who may be passive, receptive, amused or irritated to a greater or lesser extent. They are also monitored from a distance by the institutions with the power to enforce, interpret and redefine the rules of the game.

2.4. Advertising Formats on Full-Service Television

At the start of the research work, when we were establishing a provisional list of non-conventional advertising formats, we ran into major difficulties. Firstly because, as it was a relatively new and unexplored field of study, we did not have the help of previous solid guides, not to mention a valid taxonomy that was closed, recognised and based on empirically confirmed figures.

In fact, as we realised straight away, the idea of making an exhaustive and complete classification of new formats would be made impossible by the fact that we were dealing with an emerging activity sector. Non-conventional television advertising is still in a phase of growth, experimentation and constant innovation. In reality, as we were able to see in the first phase of the research work, there are professionals and entire departments in major companies (media buying agencies, the sales departments of television stations and the sales departments of production companies in particular) that devote a good part of their time and efforts to seeking alternative, innovative and profitable forms of collaboration between trademarks and audiovisual content.

To put it another way, it is impossible to draw up a closed list of formats when new ones are either constantly being invented (every week or at least every month), whether by the stations themselves or by production companies, advertisers or media buying agencies, or small or major modifications are being made to existing formats, such as *active* onscreen messages or *active* sponsorship title sequences.

Then there are other difficulties. Differentiation between formats is often not clear, e.g., between active sponsorship and internal moments, screenwriting and product placements/sponsorship, or microprogrammes and informational reports.

The lack of definition of the terms involved with non-conventional advertising also causes problems - this is all part and parcel of an emerging activity. Also, the names of new formats are not universally shared and differ between the sectors involved: there are different labels for the same concept, or the same label for different concepts, depending on the interlocutor.

For example, some people refer to 'product placement' as 'presence'. 'Onscreen messages' are also called 'transparencies' and partially coincide with the European law's more general term, 'virtual advertising'. 'Short blocks' can also be 'VIP blocks' or 'golden minutes'. The 'internal moment' is also known in the profession as an 'internal minute' or a 'prescription', and often confused with 'active sponsorship'.

It is even relatively easy to find cases of professionals who refer to these formats with definitions and terms they say they established themselves. Finally, formats are continually combining and forming hybrids. Product placement, for example, can combine perfectly with active sponsorship and a dynamic onscreen message that features the animation of visual symbols. Altogether, there were four formats we wanted to analyse separately but which eventually appeared as a unit.

It goes without saying that these classifications, definitions and terms are completely exempt from scientific and systematic criteria, as they are simply the fruit of daily practice and, in most cases, have a purely commercial goal.

In any case, without it being even an illustrative guide, we established a number of more or less specific and understandable classifications to be able to identify and in some manner classify the variety of non-conventional advertising formats we expected to find in the sample. We thus defined the following types at the Table 1.

As we can see, the establishment of the study categories with regards non-conventional advertising formats was made using very diverse criteria: technological ones (e.g., in the case of onscreen messages), production responsibility (microprogrammes), presentation (internal moments and informational reports), length (short block), etc., trying to begin with the terms and definitions that are common to a greater or lesser extent within the profession.

To prepare the research database, we took blocks of spots and station promos separately from the 14 non-conventional advertising formats listed on **Table 1**, to compare them. We

then decided to consider teleshopping separately because of its specific peculiarities, e.g., the existence of special regulations and the absence of this sales technique at particular stations.

The other formats were the ones we finally believed were important to count as non-conventional advertising. Overall, these formats made up 3.15% of transmission time. Altogether, we can establish which of these formats have a greater or lesser presence on-screen.

We can see in **Graph 1** that the non-conventional format most commonly present on the screen was static advertising, with 21,211 seconds' presence in the analysed sample. It was followed in importance, in terms of occupation, by microprogrammes, with 8,488 seconds of the selected sample. The third most-common format was passive sponsorship, with 4,617 seconds and a total of 682 appearances. Then came the 2,645 seconds of reports on trademarks in news and current-affairs programmes, with a total of 28 cases.

The fifth-most important format, according to occupation, was the internal moment, with 35 examples; followed by product placement, with a total of 39 cases and 1,535 seconds; then onscreen messages, active sponsorship, short blocks, telepromotions (only one appearance in the sample) and, finally, the animation of visual symbols, with five examples, all on programmes at Tele-5.

We should say that Tele-5 was the station with the greatest variety of non-conventional advertising formats.

However, it is important to bear in mind that we did not detect any case of the following formats that we decided to take into consideration in the selected sample: screenwriting and shared screens. The case of screenwriting can be explained by the fact that it is a very sophisticated technique that demands close collaboration between content designers (mainly scriptwriters) and the heads of marketing and publicity at companies. Aside from this, we should also recognise that detecting a case of screenwriting in the sample where neither the product nor trademark physically appeared would have been quite difficult. With regard to shared screens, we can give a complementary piece of information: this technique was first implemented by Tele-5 on 7 March 2004, coinciding with the first live broadcasts of the Formula 1 world championship.

But to go back to the differentiated use of non-conventional

Table 1. Non-Conventional Advertising Formats Considered in the Research Work

	Format	Definition
1.	Product placement	Refers to the different presentation strategies within an audiovisual production of commercial products and/or corresponding brands.
2.	Passive sponsorship	Programme sponsorship could have been considered a single phenomenon, but as we established in the first phase of the research work, in the past two or three years there has been a proliferation of an advertising format which actually has little or nothing to do with the traditional concept of programme sponsorship and which consists of using a brief spot, normally 10 seconds long, marked by a title sequence identifying the sponsorship, broadcast immediately before or after a programme.
3.	Active sponsorship	We reserved this term for the formats most closely resembling traditional sponsorship, e.g., competitions or sections within a programme that are financially supported by a trademark which is shown on the set in an integrated fashion, e.g., in the competition prizes, etc.
4.	Internal moment	Spaces where, without any programme break, the presenter begins to discuss a trademark's products or services.
5.	Telepromotions	A format very closely linked to inhouse productions. A type of spot that stars the same actors as the series that begins immediately after the promo or which is filmed on the same set. It can also involve the presentation of a trademark on the part of the programme presenter, so long as it is done <i>outside</i> the programme. Otherwise, we would consider it an 'internal moment'.
6.	Informational report	This is the name we used to separate information with a clearly commercial purpose that appears in the middle of purportedly objective news programmes and is presented as just another news story. It could involve the launch of a new product or service (film, videogame, store, etc.) or the presentation of a report on a trademark based on a particular event (anniversary, celebration, related news story, etc.).
7.	Onscreen message	We included in this category commercial messages that appear in the form of transparencies on top of television images, in the form of temporary superpositions, whether static or with dynamic elements.
8.	Animation of visual symbols	Initially, professionals referred to this format as morphing or logo morphing, because in the early days it involved computer retouching of the station logo, normally at the beginning or end of an advertising block, on the station IDs. The logo would gradually change until it became another image directly related to a product or trademark, hence the morphing concept. However, we wanted to use a broader term that would cover all types of visual gameplaying, made not only with station IDs (initial logos) but also with symbols relating to particular programmes.

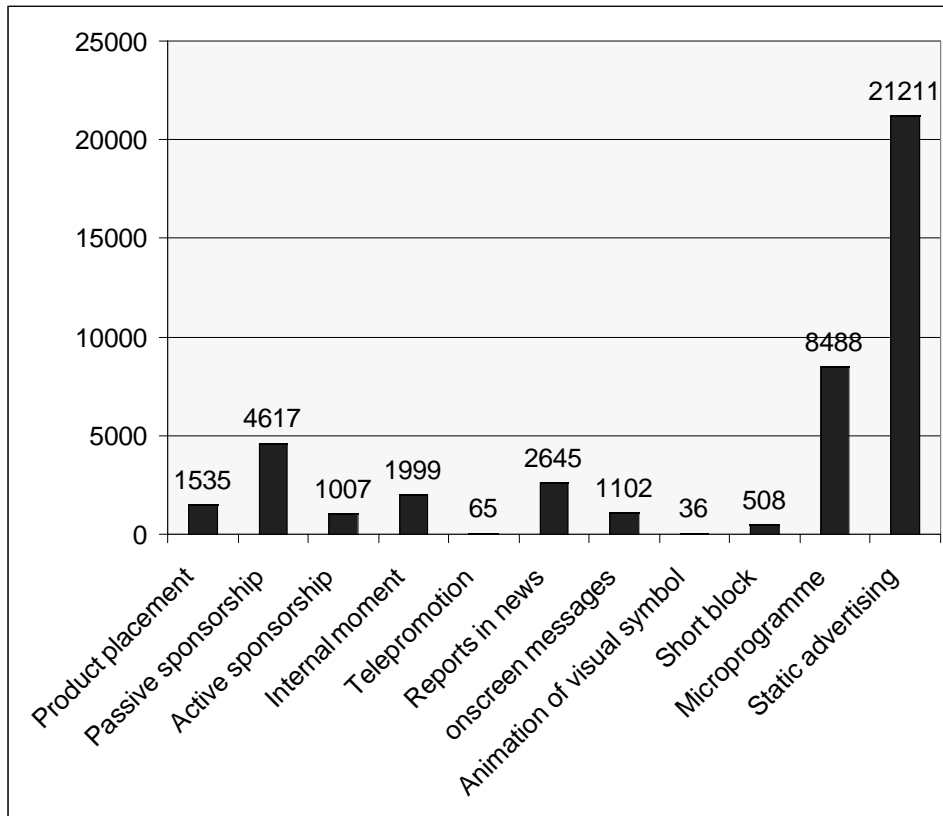
Source: Authors' own work

Table 1. Non-Conventional Advertising Formats Considered in the Research Work (continued)

	Format	Definition
9.	Screenwriting	We used this expression to denote a technique which in the end we did not find in the selected sample, even though it exists and is practiced: it involved the conscious intervention in a programme script (series, infotainment programme, late-night chat show, etc.) to promote the marketing of a brand's products or services without the name being identified directly, in which case it would be a product placement.
10.	Short block	This simply involves broadcasting spots grouped into an ad break of a very short duration. The duration could be emphasised (to prevent people channel surfing) by the previous intervention of the presenter of the interrupted programme or by a particular signalling system, e.g., the digital stopwatch that Tele-5 used to use. In reality, it is not so much a new format as the new use of a conventional format, i.e., the spot.
11.	Microprogramme	It is difficult to mark well-defined limits for this category. In principle, we wanted to use it as a synonym for a practice that has already been studied to some extent, i.e., bartering. However, it was impossible to clearly detect bartering without complementary information on the production processes of the space. In practice, we found that supposed microprogrammes produced by a trademark ended up receiving passive sponsorship from other trademarks or expanding their content until they become diverse containers that at the same time sought complementary funding sources.
12.	Shared screen	With this term we were referring to 'split screen', which already exists in European law. The Interpretive Criteria from the Ministry for Science and Technology define it as a 'new technique where, while an advertisement is being aired, we continue to see the programme being broadcast on a fraction of the screen, even though it is shown without sound'.
13.	Static advertising	We understood static advertising to mean the appearance of trademarks on the sets of sports broadcasts, statements, interviews, programme sets, etc., even though, paradoxically, static advertising, particularly in football games, is increasingly becoming 'dynamic'.
14.	Teleshopping	Teleshopping is a format clearly defined by the law. The abovementioned ministerial criteria define it as "the television broadcasting of offers direct to the public for the acquisition or renting of all types of goods and rights or the contracting of services in exchange for remuneration".

Source: Authors' own work

Graphic 1. Non-Conventional Advertising Formats With Most Onscreen Presence
(counted by seconds' presence in the analysed sample)



Source: Authors' own work

advertising by stations we can see that, as expected, Tele-5 was the most innovative and the station with the widest range of formats. Of the 11 formats considered and detected (i.e. not including screenwriting and shared screens, which were not detected, or teleshopping, which was considered separately), Tele-5 used them all and was the only station to do so.

The second station with most diversity of non-conventional advertising formats was TVE-1, with nine different formats. In the selected sample, it did not use either telepromotions or the animation of visual symbols.

The figures show that TV3 used eight of the formats and did not use the internal moment, telepromotions or the animation of visual symbols. K3/33 only used six: there were no cases of product placements, internal moments, telepromotions, the animation of visual symbols or short blocks.

2.5. Classification Proposal for Non-Conventional Television Advertising Formats

On the basis of the work done, we wanted to go a step further and review some of the classification criteria of non-conventional television advertising, propose new criteria and look at how to use the different formats studied.

One criterion that could be useful is duration. There are formats that by their very definition are designed for a short duration, e.g., product placements (although there are exceptions), and others that necessarily need a relatively long time, such as microprogrammes. Then there are formats that can oscillate between a few seconds and a few minutes, such as informational reports and active sponsorship.

A second criterion that struck us as operative is the relationship that the advertising format establishes with the programme. There are four possible types: *interspersión*,

Table 2. Classification of Non-Conventional Advertising Formats

Format	Duration	Relationship	Control over message	Identification
Product placement	Short	Insertion	Low	Hard
Passive sponsorship	Short	Attachment	High	Easy
Active sponsorship	Variable	Insertion	Medium	Variable
Internal moment	Variable	Insertion	Low	Hard
Telepromotion	Short	Attachment	Medium	Hard
Informational report	Variable	Substitution	Medium	Hard
Onscreen message display	Short	Attachment	Medium	Variable
Animation of visual symbols	Short	Attachment	Medium	Variable
Screenwriting	Variable	Substitution	Medium	Hard
Short block	Short	Interspersion	High	Easy
Microprogramme	Long	Substitution	High	Easy
Shared screen	Long	Attachment	High	Easy
Static advertising	Variable	Attachment	High	Hard
Teleshopping	Variable	Interspersion	High	Easy

Source: Authors' own work

when the format appears in the middle of a programme (such as a short block); *attachment*, when it is presented without any continuity solution immediately next to a programme but without being mixed in with it (such as passive sponsorship and telepromotions); *insertion*, when it appears within a programme (e.g., product placement) and *substitution*, when the advertising purpose guides the content (e.g., informational reports and microprogrammes).

We could establish the third criterion from the advertiser's point of view. It refers to the level of control the advertiser exercises over the final result of the commercial message. If control is low, e.g., in a live mention, there is the advantage of freshness and integration within a programme, but the advertiser runs the risk of unexpected effects that may hurt the brand image. If control is high, e.g., in passive sponsorship, there is not much chance of surprising viewers but at least the advertiser can better anticipate the effect the message will have.

The fourth criterion is subjective and consists of the

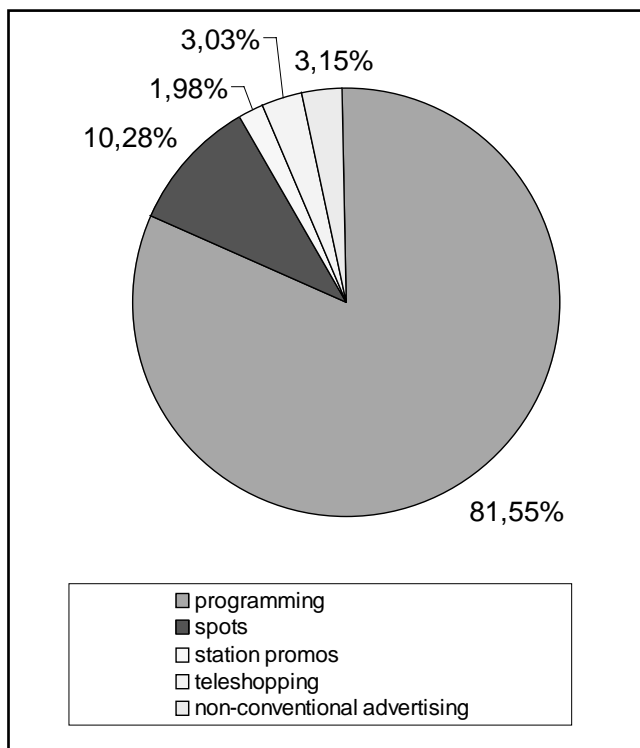
difficulty or ease of identifying the advertising format as a message with a commercial purpose paid for by a brand. The first possibility is an attempt to stop viewers from perceiving that what they are watching is largely advertising; the second opts for explaining the commercial intent and offering some type of compensation in return.

2.6. Commercial Occupation of Television Broadcasts

According to the figures taken from our research work and based on a sample of 384 hours of television programming, blocks of spots occupied on average, according to the four stations studied overall, 10.28% of transmission time; i.e., it did not reach the 15% daily maximum allowed by the law. However, this percentage was distributed very unequally across the four stations analysed.

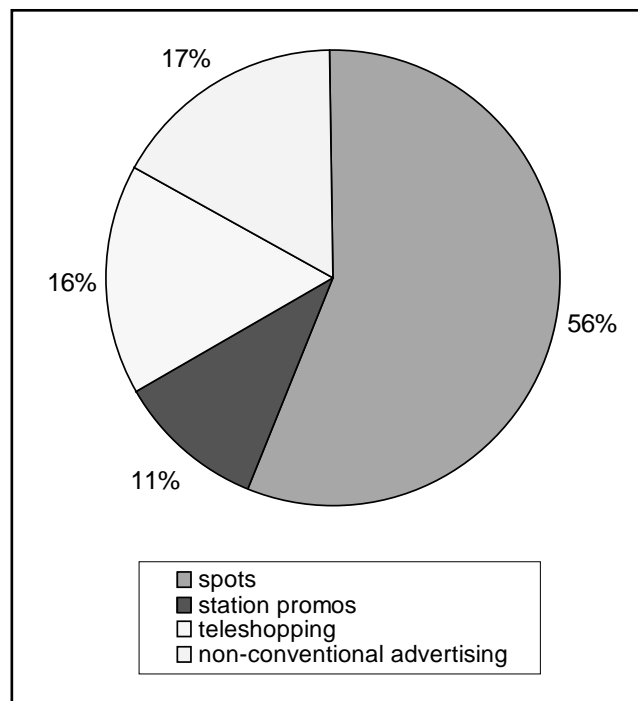
As **Graph 2** shows, station promos took up nearly 2% of the total time and teleshopping just over 3% - even though this percentage pertained almost exclusively to Tele-5. With regard to the formats we considered as non-conventional

Graph 2. Commercial Occupation of Television Broadcasts for the Four Stations Analysed Overall (Tele-5, TVE1, TV3 i K3/33)



Source: authors' own work

Graph 3. Distribution of Total Time Devoted to Commercial Communication: Spots, Station Promos, Teleshopping and Non-Conventional Advertising



Source: authors' own work

advertising (except for teleshopping, which we considered separately because of its nature and specific regulatory treatment), altogether they took up 3.15% of transmission time.

From these figures we would like to extract two ideas:

Communication with a *directly* commercial purpose made up nearly 20% of transmission time

In the past few years, non-conventional advertising has become an important content of the medium, both qualitatively and quantitatively, which should not be underestimated when it comes to analysing the nature, evolution and effects of television advertising

If we look at commercial communication as a homogenous whole, we can see that non-conventional advertising made up 17% of total occupation with a commercial purpose.

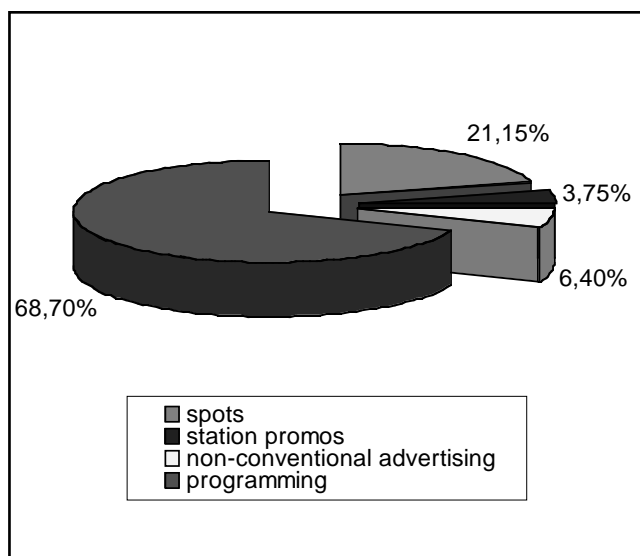
Of course, we have to bear in mind that non-conventional television advertising can have a higher presence at

particular stations and certain time slots. One example in the analysed sample, is that we calculated that in Tele-5's programming for 17 December 2003, in the time slot from 6 p.m. to 1 a.m. the next day, non-conventional advertising accounted for a total of 26 minutes and 53 seconds, i.e., 6.4% of transmission time¹.

In fact, in the natural hour from 7 p.m. to 8 p.m. and during the transmission of the infotainment show *A tu lado*, we found 25 advertising interventions with seven different formats: a conventional block of spots, a station promo, passive sponsorship, an internal moment, an onscreen message, a short block and static advertising. During this natural hour, commercial communication took up 1,164 seconds, i.e., 19 minutes and 24 seconds.

If we look at the abovementioned period from 6 p.m. to 1 a.m. the following day, we can see there were 32 advertising breaks with a duration of 5,330 seconds, i.e., 88 minutes

Graph 4. Transmission Time Tele-5 Devoted to Commercial Communication from 6 p.m. 17 December 2003 to 1 a.m. 18 December 2003



Source: authors' own work

and 50 seconds. There were 37 telepromotions taking up 15 minutes and 44 seconds. These figures mean that 68.70% of transmission time was programming, while the remaining 31.30%, i.e., almost a third, was communication with a directly commercial purpose. We can see this represented on the following graph:

Conclusions

Non-conventional television advertising is a study object that has not been explored very much to date, although it will no doubt generate increased attention from the scientific community over the next few years. This made it impossible for us to compare our results with previous research work and also to have figures on some of the particular aspects tackled.

This lack of references forced us to establish a very flexible research work based on obtaining empirical data, fruit of the exploratory nature of the work. It allowed us to outline a field of study that turned out to be strategic: the importance of the

data opens the door to new paths of future research.

We would like to emphasise that we are dealing with a strategic study object, the analysis of which shines light on a whole series of directly related phenomena. Non-conventional advertising on full-service television is a valuable indicator of a wide range of different aspects:

- The evolution and future perspectives of the advertising profession in general
- The level of application and possibilities that technology is opening up within television
- The transformation of the production sector of television content
- The mutual influence between full-service and thematic stations
- The evolution of television consumption habits and consumption habits in general
- The growing integration of sales dynamics in the media
- The growing technological convergence between the different media, which demands they be studied as a whole

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Notes

- ¹ In these seven hours of programming at Tele-5, as well as pertinent spots and telepromotions, we found one case of product placement, 35 cases of passive sponsorship, one case of active sponsorship combined with an onscreen message, five internal moments, three informational reports, five onscreen messages, four examples of the animation of visual symbols, two short blocks, nine microprogrammes and one case of static advertising.