

Cable: The Weaknesses

Fragmentation

Although the Milwaukee market has over 905,000 Households, the largest cable system (Time Warner) only reaches about 400,000. That means that if you advertise on cable, your ads will never be seen in 56% of the area homes. This is due to many households now watching TV through direct broadcast satellite (DirecTV, Dish Network, etc), digital cable alternatives (AT&T U-Verse) and other new technology options (watching TV on your cell phone or computer).

There are also numerous smaller cable systems that homes subscribe to in our market. The only way to reach into all households in the market is to advertise on broadcast television.

Unreliable Universe

While most broadcast TV stations can provide viewership numbers in the thousands for their programs, most cable channels prefer not to report any viewer data because their viewership is so small – usually in the hundreds of homes or less. Advertisers need to make sure not to be misled when comparing cable and broadcast performance, as cable-rating performance can be falsely inflated.

Market Coverage

In the Milwaukee market, 20% of the homes subscribe to a satellite service while nearly 60% subscribe to a cable service. That leaves an additional 20% that watch free over-the-air television. Any commercial on Time Warner cable will miss most of your potential customers, while advertising on Broadcast Television can reach them all. It is also important to note that in the homes that subscribe to cable or satellite, MOST of the viewing (nearly 80%) is of the local stations.