

WHY DIGITAL VIDEO TESTS DON'T PREDICT BRICK + MORTAR SUCCESS

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Why TV & Radio Win When You Need Store Traffic, Shelf Velocity, and Long-Term Brand Lift

Digital video is a great direct-to-consumer (DTC) response tool. It lives one tap from an online shopping cart. That's its superpower—and its limitation. Brick-and-mortar retail success requires something different: memory that lasts from the ad to the aisle, brand salience strong enough to survive distractions, and reach across light buyers who don't already follow you online. That's where television and radio outperform: they encode brand memories more deeply, build fame, and move broad audiences at scale—conditions that correlate with store traffic and retail sales, not just clicks.

1) The medium is the message—and the shopping cart

Digital Video: This is inherently DTC-activation media: thumb-stopping hook, immediate CTA, and a device in hand to buy in one or two clicks. It excels at short-term response but is less reliable for long-term brand effects. Binet & Field's landmark work shows activation (typically digital) drives sales now, while brand building (typically mass reach like TV/radio) drives future demand and price elasticity. The optimal split skews more to brand when you need sustained, profitable growth.



TV/Radio: These mediums sit in the lean-back, full-screen/ear-only environment, not the scroll. That context changes cognition: it's easier to establish fame, trust, and mental availability, which you need when the purchase happens hours or days later in a physical store. Independent meta-reviews (Ebiquity/Radiocentre) consistently rank TV and radio as the strongest brand-building channels versus online video and paid social.

2) Memory beats clicks for store sales

You don't carry a browser into Kroger; you carry your memory. Neuro-Insight/Thinkbox work ties long-term memory encoding (LTME) to future behavior. TV creative, when designed correctly, produces stronger LTME - exactly what brick-and-mortar depends on. There's no comparison to digital short-form, skippable environments. The fact is, if an ad doesn't encode, it's just entertainment.



Creativity matters more than knobs on the media plan. Nielsen finds creative quality drives ~50% of incremental sales. So while reach, targeting, and recency are important as well, TV/radio gives you the best creative room to breathe (sight/sound/motion or theater-of-the-mind) and repeat at meaningful effective frequency, so buyers recall the brand at the shelf.

3) Proof that broadcast drives real-world commerce

Multiple independent sources tie broadcast to retail outcomes:

- **Radio & Foot Traffic**

Nielsen and RAB studies show radio campaigns lift in-store visits double-digits on average and rank top-tier on ROI.

- **TV & Sales Lift**

Nielsen Catalina Solutions and cross-screen studies are built to measure incremental in-store sales from TV/CTV exposures—exactly the KPI brick-and-mortar cares about.

- **TV's Memory Advantage**

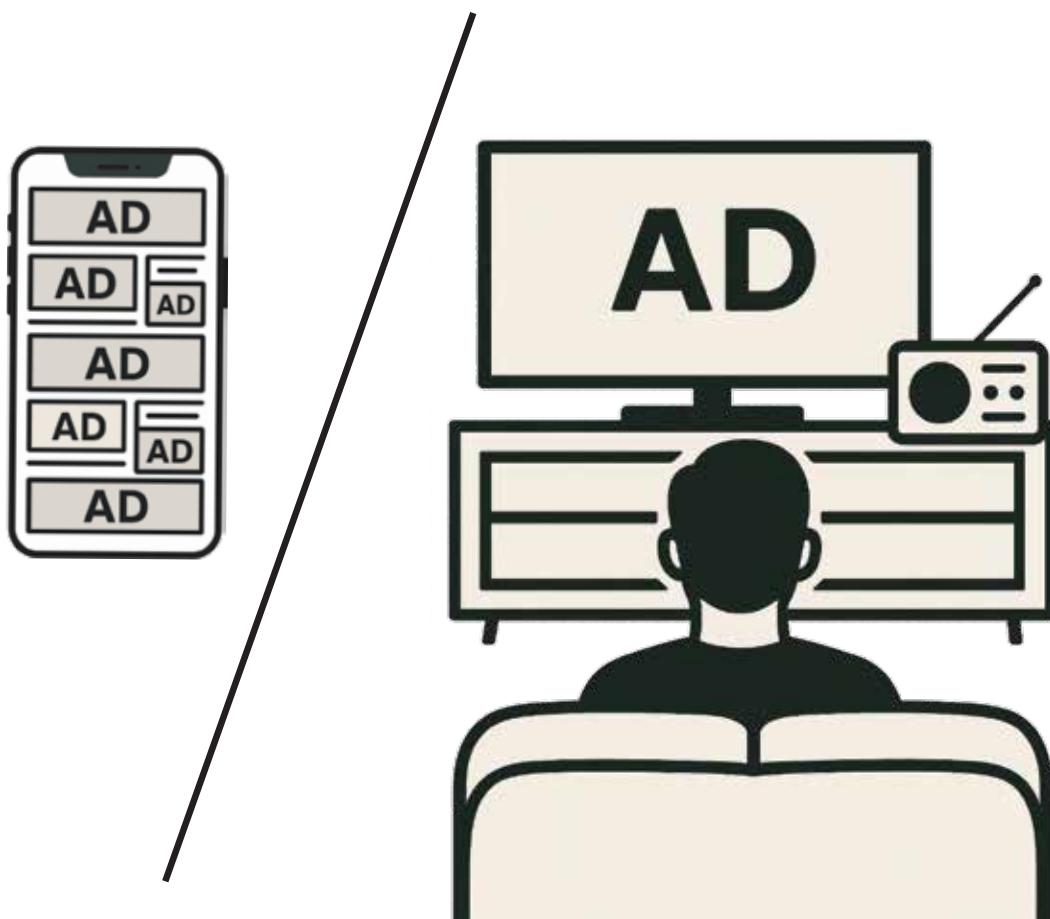
Large Thinkbox/Neuro-Insight datasets (150+ ads) connect TV creative factors to LTME, which predicts future purchase—not just immediate clicks.

Bottom line: broadcast changes what people remember and later do, not just what they click now.

4) Why “it worked in digital” is a false positive for TV/retail

Testing a video in social or pre-roll selects for scroll-native tricks (hyper-fast cuts, meme humor, text-heavy frames, sound-off comprehension). Those can spike CTR/ROAS in-feed but don’t translate to a 10-foot screen or a radio break that must carry a brand, a feeling, and a name. Ebiquity’s cross-media analysis highlights the persistent gap between perceived and actual effectiveness—many teams overrate online video for brand tasks and undervalue TV/radio.

If your goal is store traffic and velocity, you need reach \times memory \times consistency—not just a hook and a swipe. TV/radio is the way to meet that goal.



5) Planning implications for brick-and-mortar brands

- **Set the right objective**



Split your plan into brand (demand creation) and activation (capture). For retail, bias toward brand-heavy creative on TV/radio to build salience across light buyers, then let digital harvest secondarily.

- **Design for LTME (not just scroll)**



Use distinctive brand assets, clear sonic/mnemonic cues, and human storytelling. Thirty-second TV remains the highest LTME format; radio thrives on consistent brand cues and offers.

- **Measure the thing that matters**



For TV/CTV, use sales-based attribution; don't judge TV/radio just on click-through.

- **Sequence media to match the real journey**



Lead with broadcast to make the brand mentally available; use search/retail media to capitalize when the trip is imminent. This is the long-and-short model at work.

- **Keep creative the #1 lever**



Your biggest sales driver is still the idea on the screen or in the speaker. Build to emotion and memory, not just digital thumb-stops.

Conclusion

Digital drives digital; broadcast builds brands. If your P&L depends on brick-and-mortar velocity, stop treating and waiting for a social-feed win to be your green-light for TV. Build memory first with TV and radio; let digital close the loop. That's how you move from clicks to carts on wheels.

Sources:

- Thinkbox / Neuro-Insight on long-term memory encoding in TV and its link to future behavior.
- IPA (Binet & Field), The Long and the Short of It—brand vs activation roles & optimal balance.
- Ebiquity & Radiocentre, Re-evaluating Media—TV and radio as strongest brand-building channels; perception vs reality.
- Nielsen / RAB on radio ROI and store-traffic lift; Nielsen on creative driving ~half of incremental sales.
- NCS (Nielsen Catalina Solutions) on measuring in-store

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