

# Ohio TV Spots Get High Media Ratings

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SINCE 1972, the Ohio Cooperative Extension Service has been producing and distributing spots to all commercial and educational television stations throughout the state.

These spots are 10 to 60 seconds in length and are designed to support extension programs. To measure their effectiveness, we surveyed all 27 Ohio commercial stations, six out-of-state stations whose signals reach much of Ohio, all 12 Ohio educational network stations, and four cable stations.

All stations surveyed receive our extension film and videotape service on a regular basis. The survey consisted of a questionnaire relating to spot quality and usage. Station personnel were asked to indicate whether they strongly agreed, agreed, disagreed, or strongly disagreed with certain statements and to list time of showing and their preferences as to length of spot. Following are the questions and responses:

1. The spots serve the purpose of promoting extension programs.  
26.6% strongly agree, 65.1% agree, 8.3% disagree.
2. The spots are excellent for public service requirements.  
8.1% strongly agree, 82.6% agree, 9.3% disagree.
3. The spots are aimed at a general audience.  
30.6% strongly agree, 58% agree, 11.4% disagree.
4. The spots are viewed by urban people more than rural people.  
10.1% strongly agree, 60% agree, 22.8% disagree, 7.1% strongly disagree.
5. How often are the spots aired?  
14.4% daily, 42.8% weekly, 42.8% monthly.
6. When are the spots aired?  
22.2% early AM, 17.6% early PM, 18.6% late PM, 41.6% various times.
7. The spots fit into your program easily.  
11.1% strongly agree, 79.6% agree, 9.3% disagree.
8. What length of spot do you prefer?  
20.2%, 60-sec; 42.9%, 30-sec; 25.3%, 20-sec; 11.6%, 10-sec.
9. The spots with "stars" in them are more effective.  
14.3% strongly agree, 35.7% agree, 50% disagree.
10. The spots are used more because the talent appears on your network.  
7.1% strongly agree, 28.6% agree, 64.3% disagree.
11. You could use more spots if they were available.  
67.2% agree, 27.7% disagree, 5.1% strongly disagree.

## Analysis of the Survey

Most of the respondents agreed that the spots did an excellent job promoting extension programs. The combined responses of strongly agree and agree accounted for 91.7% of the answers.

More than 90% of the respondents said the spots were excellent in filling public service requirements. Educational stations were less enthusiastic about them as public service announcements, since they air no commercials and have an abundance of public service announcements.

Although most stations agreed that the spots were aimed at a general audience, they had mixed feelings when they were asked if urban people viewed the spots more than rural people. A total of 70.1% felt their audiences were predominately urban, while 29.9% felt their audiences were predominately rural.

About 43 percent of the respondents said they aired the spots weekly, and an equal percentage said monthly. The remainder said they aired them daily. Virtually no spots were aired more than once a day.

To get an indication of the type of viewing audience the questionnaire asked stations to list the time of day the spots were aired. Of the total respondents, 41% said the spots were aired at various times of day, 22% said early morning, 17% early afternoon and the remainder said in the evening. It could be assumed that children might see the spots shown in early morning, homemakers those shown in the afternoon and all members of the family in the evening.

The spots were designed to fit into the stations programming easily. Those stations strongly agreeing or agreeing with this statement made up 90.7% of the responses. The remaining 9.3% reflected the opinions of educational television.

Most respondents preferred the 30-second spots; 42.9% said they liked them best. The 20-second spots were next in popularity with 25.3% indicating they liked them best. The 60-second spots were used by 20.2% of the stations and the 10-second spots by 11.6% of the stations. Although the 10-second spots were least used, one station said it could make use of well-designed slides with information so copy could be read over the air with the slides on the TV screen.

Some extension spots have featured such stars as the Captain and Tenille, Mac Davis, Telly Savalas, Roy Rogers, and Pat Boone. It was assumed that these stars would make the spots better accepted and more often used. The stations, however, felt differently. When asked if the spots with "stars" in them were more effective, 50% said they were not.

The stations indicated the spots were used because they filled public service requirements and fit programming easily. To the statement, "The spots are used more because the talent appears on your network," only 35.7% agreed or strongly agreed, while a significant 64.3% disagreed. From this, one could assume the respondents thought the spots were effective regardless of whether they contained stars.

More than half of the stations surveyed agreed they would use more spots if they were made available. However, 42.8% said they would not, indicating they did not want to "saturate" their programs with them. One respondent commented, "We would like to receive spots once every six months instead of more often."

Response to the survey questions appeared to be dictated by the type of station — commercial, cable, or educational. Commercial stations had a very positive feeling about the spots, with 78.4% rating them high. The percentage of disagreement (22%) occurred mainly on the statements concerning the stars as talent. Most large NBC, ABC and CBS affiliates gave a very favorable response to the spots.

Cable TV gave even a better response to the survey. Of the cable stations surveyed, 25% strongly agreed and 75% agreed that the spots were helpful. Having spots featuring prime time stars not only adds prestige to CATV stations but also encourages the audience to tune in on cable programming.

Those stations exhibiting the least response to the spot survey were the educational stations. Only five in the 12-station Ohio network responded to the questionnaire, compared to 21 of the 27 commercial stations. A little more than half of the educational stations disagreed (58.5%) with the statements in the survey, reflecting the fact that the educational stations have more public service announcements at their disposal.

In summary, spots are well received, especially by commercial television stations, and perform an important role in bringing Extension's message to the public by way of television.



**JOHN V. SCHMIDT** is a native Buckeye with all his educational credits within the shadow of The Ohio State University. Currently he is part way to a Ph.D. He has had professional experience on Broadway, and as a member of the male quartet and baritone soloist in the "Men About Town" on the Arthur Godfrey Show on CBS. He joined Ohio's Extension Information staff as assistant extension editor, television, in 1963, after six years as supervisor of special programs for WOSU-TV.

He has been involved in staff training in speech and television in addition to coordinating extension faculty use of television, and producing motion picture films and other special features for use on 27 commercial stations, and 13 educational stations, in Ohio, plus three stations in Indiana and four in West Virginia.