

# MARKETING EXCELLENCE 2

## Thinkbox

Reviving the fortunes of TV  
as an advertising medium



MARKETING  
SOCIETY

AWARDS FOR  
**EXCELLENCE**

in association with  
**Marketing**

# About The Marketing Society



## **INSPIRING BOLDER MARKETING LEADERSHIP**

The Marketing Society is a not-for-profit organisation owned by its members, with over 2500 senior marketers. Over the past 50 years it has emerged as one of the most influential drivers of marketing in the UK business community.

The Society challenges its members to think differently and to be bolder marketing leaders by supporting the development of leading-edge thinking, and promoting the evidence of effective marketing. The Society does this through the Marketing Society Awards for Excellence; its publications Market Leader, Our Week and rich online Knowledge Zone; a national programme of world-class events; innovative professional development, such as the annual Marketing Leaders Programme; and extensive on-and-offline networking opportunities.

[www.marketing-society.org.uk](http://www.marketing-society.org.uk)

# Foreword

By Roisin Donnelly,  
President of The Marketing Society

## What is marketing excellence?



Roisin Donnelly  
President of  
The Marketing Society  
Corporate Marketing  
Director and Head of  
Marketing at Procter &  
Gamble UK and Ireland

Marketing excellence can drive breakthrough business results for the short and long term. Marketing excellence requires great strategic thinking, great creative thinking and perfect execution.

But how do we assess *marketing* excellence? First we choose brilliant industry judges who are all experienced and successful practitioners of excellence and we ask them to pick out the cases which they see as remarkable. We ask them to look for two key qualities from our winners: creativity and effectiveness.

But marketing continuously changes and evolves, as consumers become more sophisticated and demanding and the media for communicating with them ever more diverse. So the standards for marketing excellence change and in turn become more demanding.

We believe that The Marketing Society Awards for Excellence in association with *Marketing* set the standard of marketing excellence in the UK. They have established this reputation over a period of

more than 25 years, and they have always been based on the principle of searching out the best examples of different marketing techniques in action, that showcase great strategic thinking, great creativity and perfect execution.

In order to be a winner of one of the Society's Awards, marketers have to demonstrate that what they have done is outstanding in comparison with marketing in all industries not just their own particular sector.

If a marketing story has been good enough to impress our judges, then all marketers can learn from it – however senior they have become. The collection of case histories brought together in this book is the best of the best from the past four years of our Awards, and I am confident that it truly demonstrates *marketing excellence*. I have been truly inspired by these case studies and I hope you will be too.

# Thinkbox

## Reviving the fortunes of TV as an advertising medium

### Snapshot

Thinkbox changed perceptions of the TV advertising medium by persuading a particularly cynical industry audience about its value.

### Key insights

- Thinkbox, with the support of the TV companies, revitalised 'brand TV' and increased its share of an extremely challenging advertising market.
- A three-year campaign saw TV well on the road back to its rightful position in the hierarchy of display media.
- Success came from repositioning the medium by vigorously addressing the misperceptions surrounding it, proving it works and generally championing it.

### Summary

Thinkbox is the marketing body for commercial TV in the UK in all its forms. Its shareholders are Channel 4, Five, GMTV, ITV, Sky Media and Turner Media Innovations. They together represent over 90% of commercial TV advertising revenue through their owned and partner TV channels.

When it was launched in February 2005, it had three main objectives:

- To produce a fundamental re-evaluation of television as a commercial medium.
- To achieve recognition that TV advertising is vital and has a strong future.
- To protect TV revenue.

By the end of 2006 aggressive targeting of the TV budget by 'rival' media in combination with no unified voice for TV had led to progressive decline in its share of display advertising to an all time low of 39.7% (22% of total advertising). Stories of 'the death of TV' were rife and a piece of quantitative tracking research revealed that it was held in low esteem by large sections of the industry.

During a three-year programme of communications and research focused around the four broad strategic pillars of: Effectiveness, Leadership, Education and Inspiration, Thinkbox, in partnership with the TV companies, not only transformed industry perceptions of TV as a medium but grew TV's share of revenue.

## Facing the facts

Although it might seem counter-intuitive to regard commercial TV advertising as a brand, it certainly has all the characteristics of one since it occupies an emotional space in people’s minds and has a very specific set of brand associations. That’s why Thinkbox was launched in February 2005 as a joint marketing initiative for commercial TV (Figure 1). By this time, other media trade bodies had already been going for some years: the Newspaper Society since 1923, the Radio Advertising Bureau since 1992 and even the Internet Advertising Bureau (IAB) — representing the ‘new’ medium of the internet — since 1997.

Given TV’s historical status (though not revenue dominance; print was and still is the biggest advertising sector), it was widely regarded as the medium from which share could and should be stolen. Aggressive targeting of the TV budget by ‘rival’ media in combination with no unified voice for TV led to a progressive decline in its share of display advertising to an all-time low of 39.7% (22% of total advertising) in 2006.

That same year Thinkbox commissioned some quantitative tracking research to look at industry attitudes to TV. This made for grim reading. Perceptions of TV were low, scoring particularly poorly for targeting, innovation, interactivity and value for money. Media agency staff gave the most negative responses of all (Figure 2).

One cause of the negativity was due to what the organisation came to term the ‘internet fundamentalists’. These were an extremely vocal and very influential minority among the online community who wished TV dead and who appeared to be controlling the journalistic narrative. Almost

every week there would be a story about the death of TV. The only two areas of comfort for the TV industry were advertisers and viewers.

Advertisers, while being excited by what the web offered their businesses, still appreciated TV advertising as a very significant business driver. Viewers, far from abandoning TV, made it clear that it was alive and well by watching more and more commercial TV as every month went past.



Figure 1

	Total n=280	Advertiser n=93	Advertising Agency n=93	Media Agency n=94
Is engaging to audiences	61	67	58	59
Is the home of great brand advertising	61	61	77	46
As a medium is relevant to today's advertising market	60	65	74	41
Offers effective sponsorship options	50	53	67	31
Is an accountable medium	40	45	49	25
Offers a variety of uses	37	38	31	41
Currently has good quality programming	29	45	33	9
Offers innovative ways of marketing a brand or product	27	20	22	27
Is particularly good as an interactive medium for advertising	25	35	28	11
Is great for reaching niche targets	23	20	22	27
Is an ideal medium for tactical ad campaigns	23	24	22	24
TV campaigns offer good value for money	19	21	31	7

Q6: 5 point scale of agreement on statements about TV as advertising medium  
Base: All respondents (n=280)

○ = significantly different @ 95% to total

Figure 2. TV industry perceptions. TV as advertising medium agreement (strongly agree/tend to agree)

## Understanding the challenges

There were a number of specific challenges identified:

- Without expensive econometric modelling, many advertisers found it very difficult to isolate TV's exact effect. There was a lack of credible, industry research to prove categorically TV's effectiveness to company chief executives and finance directors.
- There were surprising levels of ignorance on basic TV facts: viewing, consumer behaviour and the impact of new technologies, even among people whose job it was to know them.
- Excitement about the transforming power of technology had been appropriated by the online industry. Technology was largely regarded as a threat to TV.
- Planners in media agencies had fallen out of love with TV since they felt that it wasn't an area where they could publicly demonstrate their insight and innovation and win an award. All the exciting planning opportunities seemed to be in other media.
- Other than a flurry of excitement around the major TV award ceremonies, the received wisdom was that TV ads weren't as good as they used to be. Clients were rarely celebrated and credited with the important role they played in developing breakthrough creativity.

## Defining the audiences

With limited resources it was vital for Thinkbox to prioritise its diverse audiences. The selected groupings were:

- Advertisers (because they ultimately decide how much the overall marketing budget is) jointly with media planners in media agencies (because they recommend how that budget should be allocated by broad channel).
- Those people who were the major influencers on the primary two audiences (journalists, creative agencies, analysts, bloggers, etc).
- The rest of the media and communications industry.

## Setting the strategy

Thinkbox developed four key strategic pillars to help inform the programme of activity.

### 1. Effectiveness.

- Focus on effectiveness as the fundamental underpinning of the entire programme: why TV works, how well it works, why it will continue to work.

### 2. Lead. Don't follow.

- Behave like a brand leader: position TV as the catalyst for (and therefore ally to) all other media. Stress TV *and*, not TV *or*.
- Lead by example and use TV to promote TV.
- Lead the debate, particularly on topical issues.

### 3. Education, education, education

- Ensure the facts about TV are known and understood.
- Correct misperceptions and challenge myths whenever they appear.

- Influence the influencers who can do the education job for TV.

#### 4. Be inspired and inspiring

- Share and celebrate best practice work in terms of creativity, planning and effectiveness.
- Focus on the exciting possibilities of new technology and demonstrate how it will benefit advertisers.
- By defining television as the content, not the technology, create an exciting narrative for the future of TV.
- Be evangelists for TV.

This was an immensely varied and intense three-year programme. The main highlights which took place within the context of the four strategic pillars included:

#### 1. EffectVness

A series of significant research studies on effectiveness were commissioned, launched to the media, shared at events, put on the website in 'nickable' form and then taken on the presentation trail. Key initiatives included:

- The Payback study. This was a major econometric study done by PricewaterhouseCoopers on the long-term effectiveness of different media which revealed that TV delivers the best return on investment, at £4.5 million for every £1 million investment.
- TV and response. This analysis looked at the impact of television on web and other short-term response channels.
- TV and online. Collaboration with the IAB showed that using TV and online is significantly more effective for advertisers than using either alone.
- MeTV. This research examined the potential effectiveness of emerging opportunities within online TV.

- TV sponsorship. Pioneering research revealed how and why sponsorship works and how its impact can be best measured.
- Headline sponsorship of the IPA Effectiveness Awards. This is independent, rigorous proof of the effectiveness of TV and produces a raft of excellent case studies which can then be filmed and distributed.
- Finally, there was a successful trade advertising campaign highlighting the medium's effectiveness (Figures 3 and 4).



Figure 3. Trade campaign



Figure 4. Trade campaign

## 2. Lead. Don't follow.

- The adoption of brand leader behaviour meant taking a confident approach to its relationship with other media, initiating collaborative research projects (TV and online: better together, with the IAB) and, even when provoked, not denigrate other media. Multi-media campaigns were championed with TV at their heart to drive other media.
- Lead by example. This led to the first TV ad for TV advertising which ran in May and December 2009. It achieved 325 million impacts on TV, 80,000 hits on YouTube and increased traffic to the website more than fourfold. The Sun called it: "The ad everyone's talking about."
- Commitment to televisual communications.
- Lead the debate on topical issues with blogs, Twitter, event topics, regular column in *Media Week*, articles and thought pieces.

## 3. Education, education, education

- There was a zero tolerance approach to myths and inaccuracies in media, with all factual errors immediately responded to and corrected.
- The set-up of a compelling website. The aim was to make it a one-stop shop window for TV information. Initiatives of note include: the hugely popular 'nickables' section, the interactive cost calculator, the technology glossary and the case history library (Figure 5).
- Strive to simplify and clarify complex issues. For example, '7 Killer Facts about TV', FAQs (Frequently Asked Questions) and FUCs (Frequently Uttered Codswallop).
- Presentations. In spite of limited resources, Thinkbox's presentation strike rate over the period was a presentation to an agency or advertiser every other working day. The company spoke at every conference it could.

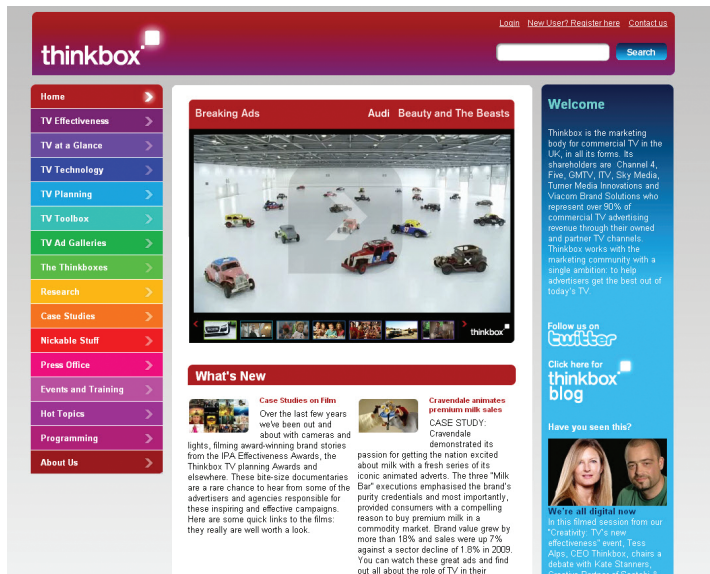


Figure 5. Website



- Publishing information. BARB viewing data and advertising spend data is published on the website once a month. There is also an annual report 'A year in TV' which is an invaluable resource to the industry (Figure 6). In addition, in 2008 a major supplement on the future of TV was published in *The Guardian*.
- Free training. In 2008 a free 'Introduction to TV' training course was established for entrants to the industry and in 2009 an additional 'Introduction to TV technology' course was introduced.

#### 4. Be inspired and inspiring

- The 'Thinkboxes' in association with *Campaign* and *Marketing*. These were the first monthly awards for TV advertising and were launched in 2008 to reinforce the business-transforming power of fantastic TV creativity and celebrate the clients and agencies that created it. Each month the Creative Academy votes to decide the winning ad from a shortlist, showcased in *Campaign*. The winner is announced in *Marketing* with the client featured.
- The Thinkbox TV Planning Awards in association with *Campaign* and *Media Week*. These were launched in 2007 and have become one of the significant events in the media awards calendar.
- Sponsorship and partnership programmes. Partnerships were formed with key industry organisations to provide a platform for inspiration of audiences about TV creativity and effectiveness.
- Major events programme. This ranged from the very large such as the Thinkbox Experience in 2007 and Televisionaries in 2008 to the more modest, such as a regular programme of events at the Soho Hotel and other regional venues, to the extremely modest, such as the 27 in-house events held in 2009. Live web-streaming was introduced in 2008

to broaden the audience, while whole classes of advertising courses at university watched the live stream.

- New language. This included the development of new language and enthusiasm for the way advances in TV technology were discussed: e.g. "3rd Age of TV", "Liberating TV technology". Technological innovation was used as the hook to excite people's interest.
- Web content to inspire. This included a specially-developed interactive emulator, TV ad galleries, ads of the week and a TVIQ competition each Christmas.



Figure 6. Annual report

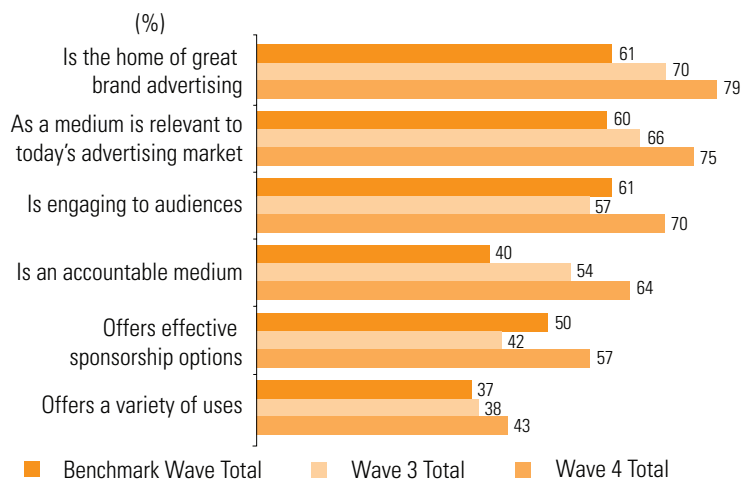


Figure 7. Advertiser and agency perceptions of TV...  
TV as advertising medium agreement (strongly/tend to) over time  
Source: SPA

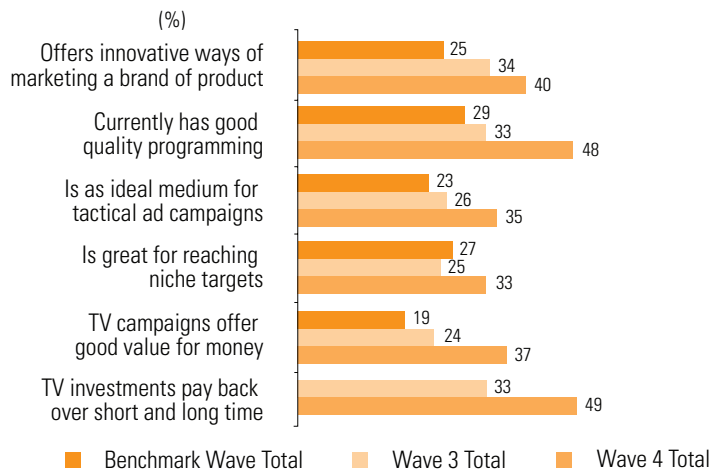


Figure 8. ...have improved during Thinkbox's brief life  
TV as advertising medium agreement (strongly/tend to) over time  
Source: SPA

## TV transformed

All these efforts paid off handsomely.

### 1. Perceptions of TV

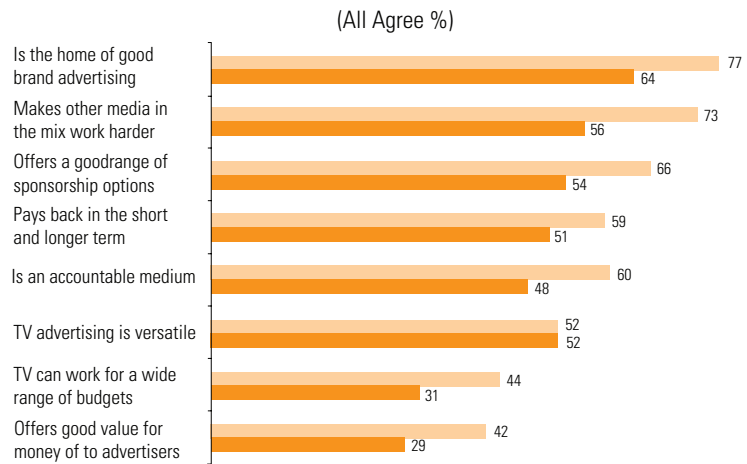
- This improved with each wave of tracker research (Figures 7 and 8).
- December 2009's tracker revealed the marked difference in attitudes to TV of those who were aware of Thinkbox compared to those who weren't. (Figure 9 overleaf)
- 2010 began with a report from Deloitte predicting that, despite the increasing popularity of on-demand TV, linear broadcast TV is "likely to remain dominant not just in 2010 but for many years to come".
- In its last-ever edition, *Media Week* in 2009 reviewed the performance of all the trade bodies, awarding Thinkbox the only 'A grade' for the job it had done in transforming perceptions of its medium.
- In 2008 Thinkbox gained enough public relations coverage to fill three complete editions of *Media Week* and in 2009, enough for six editions.
- Accolades continued to come from the industry, such as this one from the head of media investment at a top three advertiser: "My perception is that Thinkbox is doing an excellent job and I think you'll find that that is the opinion of most of the market. "

## 2. TV revenue

The ultimate proof of whether ‘Brand TV’ was on its way to full recovery could be expressed in the advertising revenue that TV earned. Two important issues must be born in mind to see the commercial results in context:

- The cataclysmic global recession which started to impact on the media landscape in 2008.
- The rapid growth of internet media. Headlines appeared mid-2009 declaring that online revenues, including classified, search and email marketing, had overtaken TV revenues. Whether this was true or not — or whether it was even a fair comparison — is a matter of debate. However, internet revenue growth was not at the expense of TV. Indeed, one could argue that TV’s recovery was all the more remarkable alongside such a buoyant sector as all online media.

TV’s performance relative to other display media is the most meaningful indicator of success. TV’s share of advertising grew from its low of 39.68% in 2006 to 42.23% in 2008, the last year for which there are official figures. However, cautious estimates for 2009 suggested that TV had yet again improved its relative performance in this most cataclysmic year, when brand advertising investment had been so severely squeezed. According to Thinkbox’s shareholders, TV’s net spot and sponsorship revenue declined by less than 10% within a market that had declined by 13% overall.



Q7. Using a 5 point scale where 1 means ‘strongly disagree’ and 5 means ‘strongly agree’ please tell me to what extent you agree or disagree with each phrase as a description of TV. Base: Thinkbox NOT aware n=254, Thinkboxaware n=160

■ Thinkbox NOT aware      ■ Thinkbox aware

Figure 9. Attitudes towards TV  
Source: Holden Pearmain

# Sponsors

## Aviva - 300 Years of Insight

We're the world's sixth-largest insurance group and the biggest in the UK, with 46,000 employees that everyday serve 53 million customers worldwide.

We are committed to delivering one distinctive experience for our customers. Wherever they are, we want them each to feel that "no one recognises me like Aviva". Our global consumer research reveals that most of our competitors are particularly bad at recognising people's individual significance. This research also tells us that small human touches can make a huge difference to a customer's experience. Our aim is to make recognition the familiar quality that distinguishes Aviva from our competitors - just as Apple means user-friendliness and FedEx means reliability.

BT operates in over 170 countries and is one of the world's leading communications services companies. BT is a major supplier of networked IT services to government departments and multinational companies. It's the UK's largest communications service provider to consumer and business markets and is made up primarily of four customer-facing lines of business: BT Retail, BT Global Services, Openreach, and BT Wholesale.

BT operates in a thriving, multi-trillion pound industry that spans the whole world. In recent years the global communications market has been focused on convergence, whereby the boundaries between telcos, IT companies, software businesses, hardware manufacturers and broadcasters have become intertwined to create a new communications industry.

BT has evolved from being a supplier of telephony services to become a



"We know insurance isn't just about policies' and pensions; it's about people. That's why we're making our customers the big picture, putting a spotlight on them and our people. Putting customers at the heart of everything not only makes sense for them, it makes good commercial sense too." (Amanda Mackenzie, Aviva's chief marketing and communications officer)

We are working hard every day to build the company around what our customers want from us. That's why Aviva now ranks among the UK's top ten most valuable brands, according to the 2010 Brand Finance Global 500 survey and that success is something we are looking to replicate across the world.



leading provider of innovative communications products, services, solutions and entertainment products. BT's business customers range from multinational, multi-site corporations to SMEs and start-ups.

More than 80 per cent of the FTSE 100 and 40 per cent of Fortune 500 companies rely on BT for networking, applications and system integration. The National Health Service, Procter & Gamble, PepsiCo, BMW, Emirates, Fiat, Microsoft, Philips, and Unilever are just some of the organisations working with BT.

BT has been a driving force behind the success of 'Broadband Britain'. Thanks to the company's investment, nearly every home in Britain now has access to broadband and in September 2009, BT announced plans to more than double the availability of its fastest fibre broadband service.

# MARKETING EXCELLENCE 2

“A treasure trove of examples covering the whole waterfront, from launching new brands to revitalising, sustaining and extending established ones, and from insights to advertising and sustainability. Whatever your business, it should make you proud to be a marketer, shake up your thinking and inspire you to go the extra mile.”

Professor Patrick Barwise, London Business School, Chairman of Which?

“This exciting book demonstrates how great marketing can solve the most difficult problems, through analysis, teamwork and creativity.

It contains 34 fascinating case studies, selected from hundreds of high quality entries to The Marketing Society Awards for Excellence. Those involved had the determination to win, and the courage to think differently. An inspiring read.”

Professor Hugh Davidson, Co-Founder, Oxford Strategic Marketing

“This is the textbook, the toolkit and the manual for marketing excellence.”

Cilla Snowball, Chairman, AMV BBDO

“These cases are a great source to stimulate your thinking. Some will stimulate new thoughts, some will unlock ideas from the back of your memory. All of them however are great fuel for growth.”

Keith Weed, Chief Marketing and Communication Officer, Unilever

Featuring 34 award-winning case studies from some of the world’s leading brands:

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