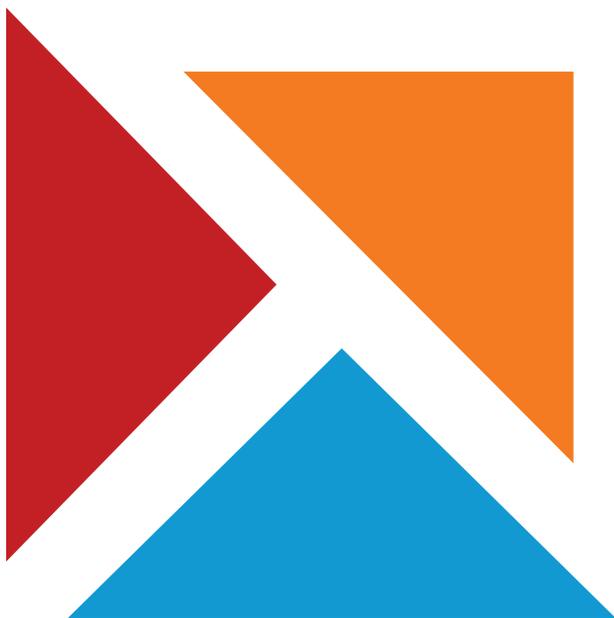


# BEST PRACTICES

For *Succeeding* with Viewable Impression  
& Audience Guarantees



A GUIDE FOR MEDIA BUYERS & SELLERS

**Few industries have seen the level of disruption and high velocity of change that the digital ad industry has experienced in recent years. From the high demand for audience targeting to the shift toward in-target and viewable impression measurement, this industry has been turned upside down in what seems like an instant.**

**Knowing which way is up – let alone which way is forward – presents both challenges and unique advantages.**

***This guide is designed specifically for you...***

**To help you navigate the change, prepare for the future and come out on top.**

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1

## **WHAT'S NORMAL?** / PAGE 04

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**IN-VIEW BENCHMARKS**

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**RFP CHECKLIST**

**PROPOSAL CHECKLIST**

# WHAT'S NORMAL?

1

As digital is the most measurable and targetable medium, there's a prevailing belief that every ad impression should be able to hit its **TARGET AUDIENCE** with precision and that every ad should be **VIEWABLE TO THE TARGET CONSUMER**. In reality, this isn't the case and there are some simple – although not necessarily obvious – reasons why.

## *In-Target: 100% isn't Realistic*

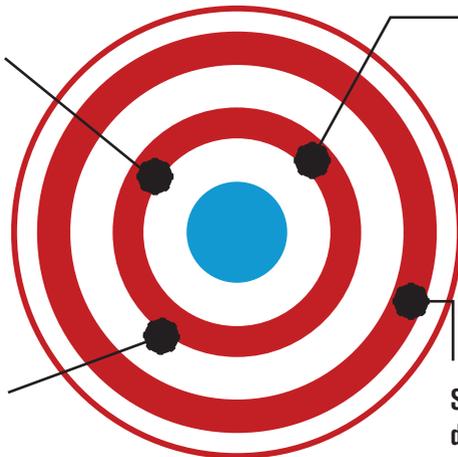
### HERE'S WHY

Demographic data becomes outdated

More than 60% of computers are shared, so cookies can show ads to the wrong person

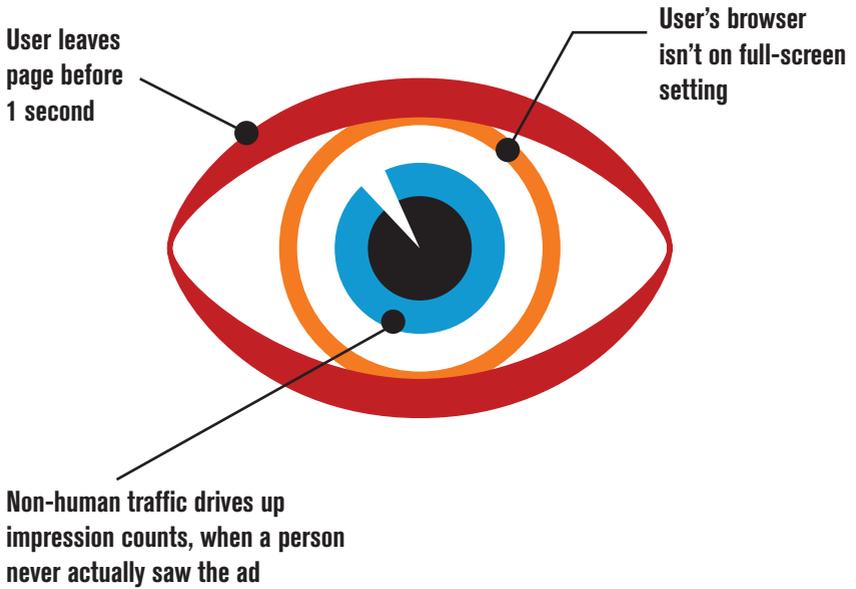
Not all registration data is accurate

Some targeting infers demography based on content consumption



# *In-View: 100% isn't Realistic*

## **HERE'S WHY**

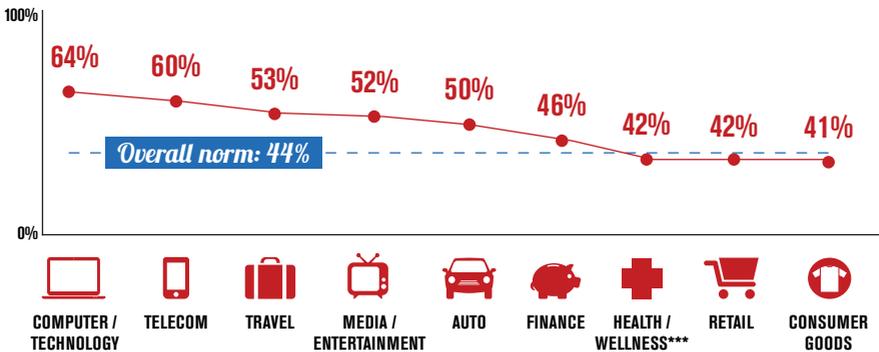


# COMSCORE vCE BENCHMARKS / Audience

These benchmarks from comScore include a multitude of U.S. campaigns run in comScore validated Campaign Essentials™ (vCE®). The analysis consists of both display and video campaigns for a diverse set of advertisers with either brand-building or direct-response objectives. Because every campaign is different, and thus in-target rates are different, it is important to set proper expectations and to understand that impressions that land outside of the target may also have value.

## % In-Target: Overall\* and by Select Advertiser / Product Category\*\*

Source: comScore vCE Benchmarks, Q1 2014, U.S.



## vCE Targeting Efficiency Index

comScore vCE can help you set expectations by comparing in-target impression delivery to the prevalence of that target on a site, based on data from comScore Media Metrix®. This index provides relative context to better evaluate in-target delivery performance.

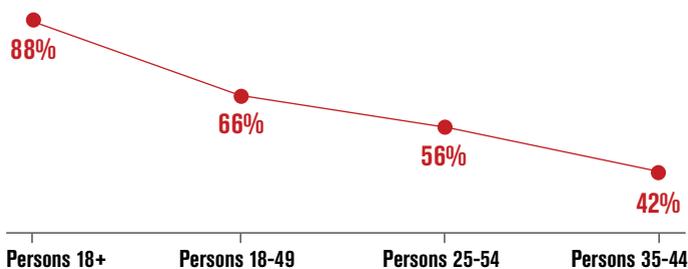
*\*The Overall Norm comprises data from more than 200 billion impressions over the course of a 12-month rolling period. This includes campaigns that go beyond the select Advertiser / Product categories listed above to also include additional Advertiser / Product categories as well as studies run directly by publishers and ad networks. \*\*Target audience is categorized based on the primary target selection in vCE, which is self-designated during campaign set-up. \*\*\*The Health / Wellness category includes campaigns for brands, products and/or services in the following sectors: health associations, health insurance, hospitals, over-the-counter, pharmaceutical, public health and wellness.*

## IN-TARGET DELIVERY VARIES

The most important cause of variation with in-target delivery is the composition of the target itself. The more targeted the demo, the harder it is to reach that target. This is why understanding the size of the demographic target and the likelihood of hitting that target relative to other, broader targets is a critical component of campaign analysis.

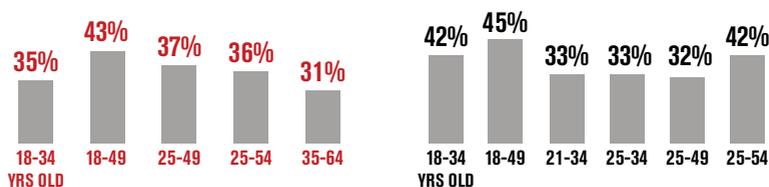
### % In-Target by Age\*

Source: comScore vCE Benchmarks, Q1 2014, U.S.



### % In-Target by Age/Gender\*

Source: comScore vCE Benchmarks, Q1 2014, U.S.



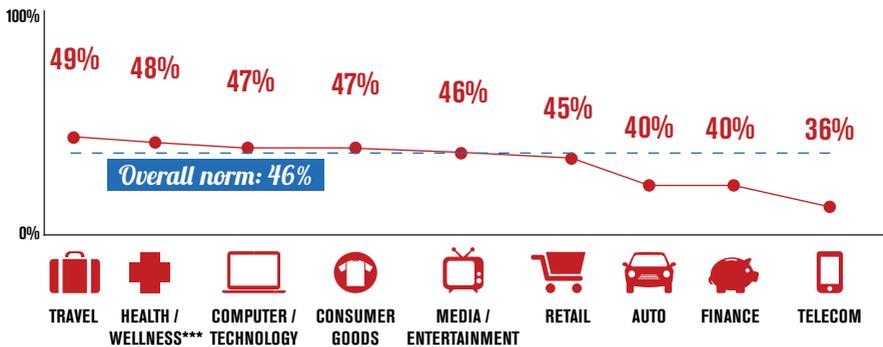
\*Target audience is categorized based on the primary target selection in vCE, which is self-designated during campaign set-up.

# COMSCORE vCE BENCHMARKS / Viewability

Just like with audience delivery, **THERE'S NO SUCH THING AS NORMAL** when it comes to viewability. Because every campaign is different, normal can vary based on campaign objective, size of target, placements and verticals.

## % In-View: Overall\* and by Select Advertiser / Product Category\*\*

Source: comScore vCE Benchmarks, Q1 2014, U.S.



\*The Overall Norm comprises data from more than 200 billion impressions over the course of a 12-month rolling period. This includes campaigns that go beyond the select Advertiser / Product categories listed above to also include additional Advertiser / Product categories as well as studies run directly by publishers and ad networks. \*\*Viewability benchmarks include display campaigns only; viewability is defined as 50% of the ad's pixels in-view for at least one second. \*\*\*The Health / Wellness category includes campaigns for brands, products and/or services in the following sectors: health associations, health insurance, hospitals, over-the-counter, pharmaceutical, public health and wellness.



### *Non-Human Traffic (NHT)*

According to the IAB-proposed guidelines for viewable impressions, NHT should not be counted as a viewable impression. This is why vCE filters out NHT as part of its viewability reporting.

**In vCE, cases of extremely low viewability are often a result of extremely high levels of NHT, even if the placement appears to be well-positioned on the page.**

# THE PROCESS: RFPS & PROPOSALS

# 2.1

Campaign success (or failure) is often determined before the first impression ever runs. Proper communication is critical to achieving optimal outcomes and fostering ongoing relationships between media buyers and sellers.

Generating a Request for Proposal (RFP) and subsequent Proposal, often the first steps in the process, allow media buyers and sellers to articulate campaign goals, set billing expectations and outline measurement objectives. They also help to ensure all parties have the necessary information to create an Insertion Order (IO).

## **PREPARATION ELIMINATES PAINFUL POST-CAMPAIGN RENEGOTIATIONS.**

In the new world of buying and selling on viewable impressions and audience guarantees, there are additional considerations – above and beyond those included in the IAB Standard Terms & Conditions (T&Cs) – that should be addressed in RFPs and Proposals.

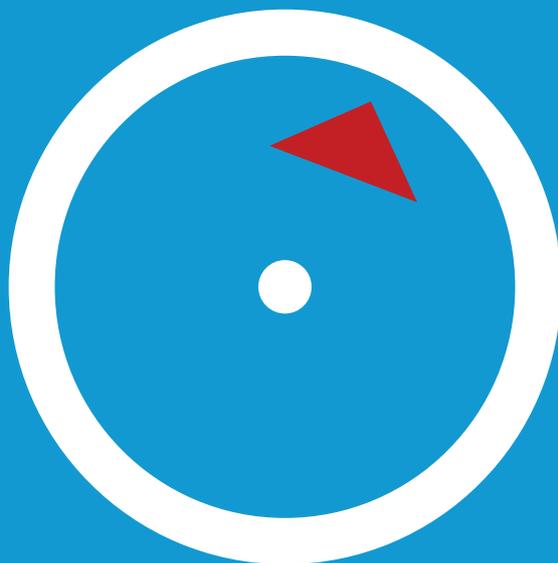
### *Setting Expectations Beyond the T&Cs*

#### **1 Delivery Expectations**

- Audience
- Viewability
- Geography, Brand Safety, NHT & Frequency

#### **2 Data Sharing**

**SET THE CAMPAIGN IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION WITH A COMPREHENSIVE NEGOTIATION BEFORE THE IO IS SIGNED.**



# Delivery Expectations

## AUDIENCE

RFPs and Proposals should clearly articulate audience delivery expectations. What is the target audience? What are the delivery expectations? How will performance be evaluated? What measurement will be used to evaluate and optimize delivery? How will payment occur based on these expectations? How, if at all, will value be assigned to impressions delivered outside of the target?

*There are two common ways to buy and sell audiences:*

### 1 BUY/SELL BASED ON AN ABSOLUTE NUMBER OF IN-TARGET IMPRESSIONS

In this situation, buyers and sellers agree on an in-target threshold with the expectation that the seller will deliver the agreed-upon impressions to that target. In such cases, buyers should expect to pay a significant premium because of the cost that a seller incurs. One way to think about this is in terms of traditional GRP and TRP metrics. In TV, a buyer would expect to pay more for a TRP than a GRP.

### 2 BUY/SELL BASED ON A PERCENT OF IMPRESSIONS IN-TARGET

In this situation, buyers and sellers agree on a percent in-target threshold. To set a reasonable percentage for a given site, it is important to first look at the prevalence of that target on a given site. There are a variety of ways to arrive at this threshold, including using comScore Media Metrix site composition data, vCE normative data and/or the vCE Targeting Efficiency Index. Buyers often use a combination of metrics to arrive at this goal and should expect pricing to increase as targeting increases.

## **PLAN FOR THE (UN)EXPECTED.**

Because no measurement solution can directly measure every impression for audience across all devices, you should expect there to be situations where audience delivery data for a given publisher or placement is not available.

For example, there might not be enough impressions delivered to a given placement to confidently measure the placement's demography, or impressions might have been served on mobile where measurement is not currently feasible, though it is under development by comScore.

## **COMMON WAYS TO APPROACH SUCH SITUATIONS:**

**DOES NOT MEET THRESHOLD:** When audience data cannot be reported because the placement did not reach the minimum reporting threshold, you might agree to pay based on the overall in-target percentage of the site.

**MOBILE IMPRESSIONS:** For impressions where audience data can't currently be reported because the impressions were delivered on mobile, you might agree to pay based on the overall in-target percent for impressions delivered and measured via desktop.

## *Buying Ad Inventory Based on Guarantees*

### **CLEARLY OUTLINE:**

- Audience delivery requirements and target audience based on industry data/thresholds
- Expectation of delivery and thresholds, whether absolute number of in-target impressions or percent of impressions in-target
- Measurement solution to be used for in-flight optimization and post-campaign invoicing
- How, if at all, impressions that cannot be measured will be invoiced

# Delivery Expectations

## VIEWABILITY

Just like with audience delivery, it is critical to set proper expectations during the RFP and Proposal process when it comes to viewability. What are the delivery expectations as they relate to viewability? How will performance be evaluated? What measurement will be used to evaluate and optimize delivery? How will payment occur based on these expectations?

There are two routes buyers and sellers often take when it comes to evaluating campaign delivery based on viewable impressions, and each approach has a different execution:

### 1 REQUIRE A MINIMUM PERCENTAGE OF ADS TO BE VIEWABLE

- Agree upon the percentage and clearly denote it in both the RFP and Proposal
- Agree on the viewability measurement solution
- Use industry benchmarks to help set expectations
- Agree on how impressions where measurement is not possible will be invoiced

### 2 ONLY BUY/SELL IMPRESSIONS THAT ARE VIEWABLE

- Understand that media sellers deliver some impressions that are not viewable
- Understand that the invoice may only list viewable impressions, but additional non-viewable impressions may be measured and reported as non-viewable

## **PLAN FOR THE (UN)EXPECTED.**

Because viewability measurement has inherent technical limitations, sometimes viewability cannot be assessed, such as when delivery occurs on certain types of video, mobile and cross-domain iframes. Media buyers and sellers should agree on how they'll handle these situations during the negotiation process.

## **COMMON WAYS TO APPROACH SUCH SITUATIONS:**

### **1 PAY BASED ON AN OVERALL RATE OF VIEWABILITY**

In this situation, a total viewability percentage is typically calculated at the end of each month for a given placement. That percentage is then applied to all impressions where viewability cannot be measured.

### **2 PAY BASED ON A PROJECTED RATE OF VIEWABILITY**

This is a more sophisticated approach than the above as it leverages the comScore panel to quantify the likelihood of viewability in instances where ads cannot be measured. This approach takes different browsers into account and thus provides greater accuracy. Data is pre-calculated and available in vCE, meaning no additional number crunching is required.

### **3 PAY 100% FOR ALL ADS WHERE VIEWABILITY CANNOT BE MEASURED**

In this situation, buyers and sellers simply agree to pay 100% for all ads where viewability is non-measurable. While this approach provides simplicity, it is not ideal because it incentivizes sites to generate non-measurable inventory in order to achieve higher rates of payment.

### **4 PAY 0% FOR ALL ADS WHERE VIEWABILITY CANNOT BE MEASURED**

In this situation, buyers and sellers agree to not pay for ads where viewability is non-measurable. This approach can unfairly penalize media sellers for inventory that is not measurable due to technical limitations outside of their control.

# Delivery Expectations

## GEOGRAPHY, BRAND SAFETY, NHT & FREQUENCY

In addition to audience delivery and viewability, consider the following ad delivery dimensions as part of the upfront negotiation process:

**GEOGRAPHY:** What is the expectation for in-target delivery, and how, if at all, will an ad delivered outside of the geographic region be invoiced?

**BRAND SAFETY:** What are the ad blocking and alerting parameters? How will blocked impressions be invoiced?

**NHT:** How will ads delivered via NHT be invoiced?

**FREQUENCY:** What is the frequency goal? How should excessive frequency be managed and invoiced?

When it comes to controlling geographic delivery and managing frequency, most media sellers can set requirements and caps within the ad server. Additional steps, however, may be needed to ensure delivery to human traffic and brand safe environments.

### *Examples of Communicating Key Elements in an RFP*

- **MEASUREMENT VENDOR:** "comScore vCE will be used to measure geography, non-human traffic, brand safety and frequency."
- **MEASUREMENT DATA:** "Media sellers will be granted access to vCE at the onset of the campaign to enable monitoring and optimization. A list of names and email addresses is required in the Proposal to ensure timely access."
- **4TH-PARTY AD SERVING:** "4th-party ad serving will not be employed as it creates latency issues. Only a comScore tag will be used to avoid latency of a 4th-party ad server."

## *Data Sharing*

**Consistent measurement and evaluation is a critical part of the campaign evaluation process. Media buyers and sellers should agree on measurement to be used, access to data and optimization expectations.**



### *Permissioning Access to Media Partners with vCE*

comScore vCE permissioning gives partners access to the delivery performance data associated with their specific site or network of sites – enabling them to optimize in-flight to achieve their goals.

# THE PROCESS: IN-FLIGHT

## 2.2

Once the IO is signed, the campaign can be actively managed. Here are some steps both parties may want to take to ensure proper campaign management:

**1 EVALUATE DELIVERY EARLY IN THE CAMPAIGN TO CONFIRM TAGGING WAS CORRECTLY DEPLOYED**

**2 WATCH FOR SITUATIONS WHERE A HIGH NUMBER OF IMPRESSIONS CANNOT BE MEASURED FOR VIEWABILITY**

In such cases, review the tag implementation and consider modifying delivery by excluding mobile browsers.

**3 WATCH FOR SITUATIONS WHERE AUDIENCE DATA IS NOT REPORTABLE**

In such cases, the placement might not be meeting the minimum reporting threshold for reporting. Consider modifying delivery by excluding mobile browsers and ensuring ads are being delivered to the correct geography.

**4 OPTIMIZE DELIVERY AT THE PLACEMENT-LEVEL TO MEET PERFORMANCE DELIVERY OBJECTIVES**

Sellers can optimize in much the same way one might optimize on impressions or clicks.

### *vCE Targeting Efficiency Index*

comScore vCE can help you set expectations by comparing in-target impression delivery to the prevalence of that target on a site, based on data from comScore Media Metrix. This index provides relative context to better evaluate in-target delivery performance.

*Even among accredited vendors, discrepancies do occur.*



### ***Know the Source of Truth***

Occasionally, there can be discrepancies between data that buyers and sellers have access to from their internal tools, measurement providers, etc. Both parties should agree on the data source that will be used for invoicing during the RFP and Proposal process.

# THE PROCESS: POST-CAMPAIGN 2.3

Once the flight is complete, there are simple steps you can take to create an efficient billing process:

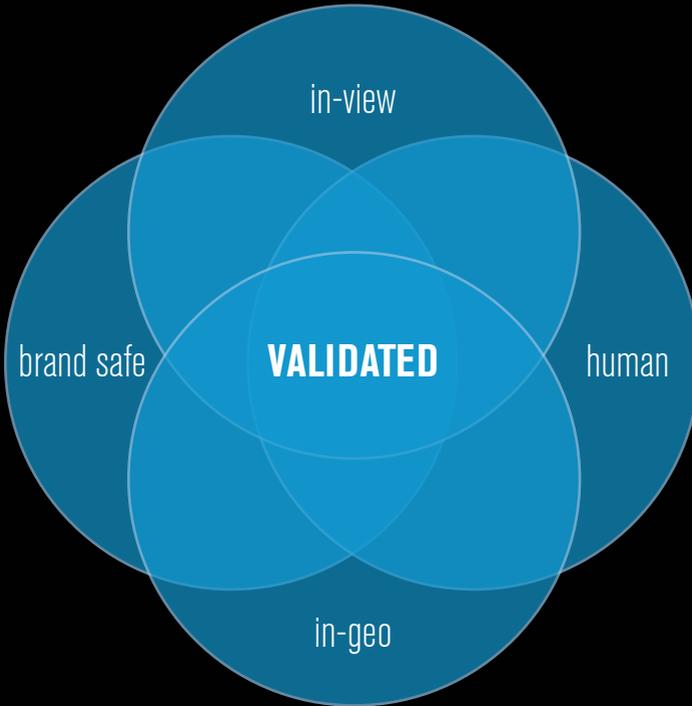
- 1 ENSURE BOTH PARTIES AGREE ON THE METRIC, FINAL NUMBER(S) AND WHERE DATA WILL BE SOURCED**
- 2 WHEN EVALUATING DELIVERY ACROSS A VARIETY OF DIMENSIONS, SUCH AS IN-VIEW, IN-GEO AND IN-TARGET, DO NOT SIMPLY SUM THE DIMENSIONS**

This will create duplication issues, and you will likely find the sum of these is larger than the total number of gross impressions.

- 3 CONVERSELY, DO NOT DISCOUNT THE GROSS IMPRESSIONS BY SIMPLY SUBTRACTING ALL ADS THAT WERE NOT DELIVERED IN-VIEW, IN-GEO AND IN-TARGET**

This will likely generate a negative number of impressions.

*Understand the importance of deduplicated reporting.*



### ***Validated Impressions***

Because comScore vCE leverages a single tag to capture all delivery data, it reports validated impressions. Validated impressions provide an unduplicated accounting of impressions delivered across a variety of dimensions, such as ads delivered in-view, in the right geography, in a brand safe environment and absent of non-human traffic. vCE also evaluates the degree to which validated impressions reached the campaign target audience to produce a validated GRP and TRP metric.

# PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

# 3

## GET *involved* IN THE PROCESS

All standards have not been set. There are some great guidelines in place today, but your involvement can help shape the future.

## KNOW THE *technology* AND ITS LIMITS

Understanding the benefits and limitations of various providers is critical to your success. When you hear “We can measure 100% of impressions!” that should raise a red flag for you.

## USE *industry-accredited* SOLUTIONS AND FOLLOW INDUSTRY GUIDELINES

Working with industry-accredited solutions gives you added confidence. This means that neutral parties have vetted the measurement approach and technology.

## DON'T *expect* 100% IN-TARGET OR 100% IN-VIEW

This isn't a realistic goal, and there are many reasons why.

## AGREE ON WHAT'S *reasonable* FOR A GIVEN RATE

Using overall, industry and site benchmarks will help you arrive at a rate that is realistic and fair.

## Choosing Measurement

Whether you are a buyer or seller, a critical first step is getting the measurement right. No measurement solution is perfect, but some options are better than others.

### AUDIENCE DELIVERY

- What is the source of the demographic data? Is it truly representative?
- What demographics are available beyond age and gender?
- If a panel is used for audience calibration, how big is the panel?
- Does the solution have a built-in Targeting Efficiency Index for benchmarking success?

### VIEWABILITY & NON-HUMAN TRAFFIC (NHT)

- Is the viewability measurement MRC accredited?
- Can the solution measure viewability for ads delivered in cross-domain iframes?
- Does the vendor provide a complete viewability number for billing that includes a statistical projection for non-measurable impressions?
- Is NHT filtered out of the viewability reporting in accordance with the IAB-proposed guidelines for viewable impression measurement?
- Is the NHT measurement accredited by the MRC?

### BRAND SAFETY & GEOGRAPHY

- Is the brand safety measurement accredited by the MRC?
- Does blocking require a 4th-party ad server, causing latency-driven discrepancies?
- How granular is the blocking capability? At the domain level? URL level?
- Is the geographic measurement MRC accredited? At what level?

### ENGAGEMENT

- Is engagement part of the measurement?
- How is engagement reported?
- Is the engagement measurement accredited by the MRC?

### COMPLETE SOLUTION

- Can the solution deduplicate ads delivered in-view and in-target with the use of a single tag?
- Does the solution provide a truly cross-platform comparable validated GRP?
- Is the solution 3rd-party neutral?
- Are publishers given access to data to help manage success?

# RFP CHECKLIST: *For Media Buyers*

## MEASUREMENT VENDOR REQUIREMENTS

- Campaign goal and associated effectiveness metric(s)
- Measurement vendor to be used
- If/when access to campaign delivery data will be granted to media seller
- How impressions delivered on mobile will be measured and invoiced (e.g. bill based on overall in-target percentage for desktop impressions)

## AUDIENCE REQUIREMENTS

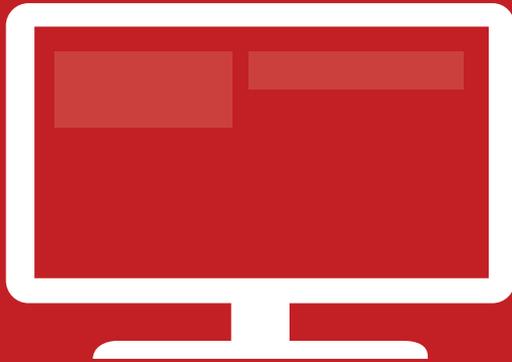
- If the invoice will be based on in-target impressions or minimum % in-target
- The minimum impressions required per placement to ensure reporting
- How cases where placements do not meet the minimum impression threshold will be billed (e.g. bill based on site's overall in-target percentage)
- Frequency capping plans (e.g. maximum frequency per time period)

## VIEWABILITY REQUIREMENTS

- If the invoice will be based on viewable impressions or a minimum % in-view
- How impressions where viewability cannot be measured will be invoiced (e.g. invoice in full, a percentage or based on statistically-projected data)

## OTHER REQUIREMENTS

- How out-of-geo impressions will be invoiced
- Whether or not ad blocking will be used
- How blocked impressions will be invoiced
- Whether or not 4th-party ad servers will be allowed
- How non-human traffic impressions will be invoiced



# PROPOSAL CHECKLIST: *For Media Sellers*

## MEASUREMENT VENDOR REQUIREMENTS

- Measurement vendor being used
- If/when access to campaign delivery data will be granted
- How impressions delivered on mobile will be measured and billed (e.g. bill based on overall in-target percentage for desktop impressions)

## AUDIENCE REQUIREMENTS

- If billing will be based on in-target impressions or minimum % in-target
- The minimum impressions required per placement to ensure reporting
- How cases where placements do not meet the minimum impression threshold will be billed (e.g. bill based on site's overall in-target percentage)
- Frequency capping plans (e.g. maximum frequency per time period)

## VIEWABILITY REQUIREMENTS

- If billing will be based on viewable impressions or a minimum % in-view
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## OTHER REQUIREMENTS

- How out-of-geo impressions will be billed
- Whether or not ad blocking will be used
- How blocked impressions will be billed
- Whether or not 4th-party ad servers will be allowed
- How non-human traffic impressions will be billed



# COMSCORE SOLUTIONS FOR MEDIA BUYERS & SELLERS



comScore validated Campaign Essentials™ (VCE®) is a holistic ad and audience delivery validation solution that provides deep campaign insights, in-flight reporting and daily alerting.

- Used by media buyers and sellers
- Enables in-flight campaign management and optimization
- Evaluates audience delivery, viewability, brand safety, geographic delivery, engagement and non-human traffic
- Reports data by publisher, placement and creative
- Enables increased campaign effectiveness and decreased waste



comScore validated Media Essentials™ (VME™) is a comprehensive measurement solution that evaluates ad inventory across a site or network of sites for strategic pricing and packaging.

- Used exclusively by media sellers
- Measures ad inventory across a site or network of sites
- Evaluates audience, viewability, engagement, geographic delivery and non-human traffic
- Reports data by ad slot, site section and creative size
- Enables increased revenue by maximizing high-value inventory