



## **NAVIGATOR BLUE**

The Baths, 18 Ormeau Avenue, Belfast BT2 8HS

### **OFMDFM – Government Advertising Review October 2005 Comments and Responses from Navigator Blue**

#### **3.15 Issues to be addressed**

We are in broad agreement with the conclusions on “Issues to be addressed” in chapter 3. Fortunately all of these issues can be dealt with and rectified. However the role and function of “Public Notices” is underestimated. Interested parties in the various messages communicated, generally will know where to look for the subjects and information they are interested in and of course word of mouth is stimulated by this type of advertising. Additionally it should be remembered that on-line availability and usage is no where near matching what daily press currently delivers.

#### **3.11 Media Audit**

It was very disappointing to see the review turn to “outside” non-local sources for the media audit.

Some of the “issues to be addressed” (see 3.15) hold the solution to media buying performance. Even the simple provision of a system of gathering information centrally would have provided the necessary comparative data both now and on an ongoing basis in future. There is also an indication that the “London” model familiar to Billetts may be revisited later. That is disappointing and a real threat to the local media infrastructure.

A review of six campaigns only, and in particular the actual six selected is by no means sufficient for a proper analysis of this subject. As such the conclusions drawn are in danger of being misleading.

The audit will NOT have given “a better understanding of how this compares to the market in general” because it was not extensive enough and is not in touch with the current marketplace which has moved on considerably since those campaigns. It will have dealt with how prices vary but only for those six campaigns. To be truly comparative and to assess a fair and accurate view of television airtime pricing it is necessary to review ALL government activity.

#### **3.12**

The Billett's pool price is in practical terms irrelevant to the local market. It operates on different timescales, different weightings, and negotiated on an entirely different basis to Northern Ireland only campaigns. It is not even negotiated or agreed with the same people as our local campaigns. It is also a major problem that we know nothing regarding the make up of the pool. The simple assertion by the supplier that it is suitable and adequate is not sufficient to establish the credibility of the comparison. It should also be noted that both UTV and Channel 4 refute the accuracy or usefulness of this comparison. We would share and endorse their concerns. However it is possible to improve the pricing of all government TV activity by taking some simple measures.

The route to improving value and pricing on local campaigns is easily delivered. It requires collation of anticipated expenditure and timings for the year ahead, centralized discussion on a local basis with the broadcasters and then careful monitoring throughout the process. This will guarantee an improvement in pricing for all TV campaigns and on an ongoing and improving basis. This could be implemented locally via IPA agencies directly with UTV and Channel 4. This would deliver much better results than now and much better than the Billett's pool route.

### **3.13**

We believe the same process can deliver further benefits also on press buying, especially for campaign advertising. Just because the Billett's review could not match local press buying does not mean that this should not be pursued. As we have asserted already we believe the relevance of Billett's pool information is doubtful and unproven.

### **3.14**

Campaign weights in Northern Ireland have traditionally always been higher than in the UK. This is probably a function of the historical price comparison, but is also what consumers have become used to. We would caution against simply arbitrarily applying London weightings in the local market.

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