

Average Ratings for Commercial Ads to Help Interpret Standard Pretesting Questions¹

Variable/Descriptor	Females 18–65 % Who Completely Agree ²		Males 18–65 % Who Completely Agree ²	
	:30 Rough Com'l Norm	:30 Finished Com'l Norm	:30 Rough Com'l Norm	:30 Finished Com'l Norm
Effective main idea (% of respondents who agree on a single main idea)	40	40	40	40
Appropriate	49	53	48	54
Attention-getting	35	47	34	44
Believable	38	40	37	40
Confusing	4	5	5	6
Convincing	31	33	28	31
Effective	36	43	---	---
Informative	36	36	37	37
Interesting	23	30	23	35
Meaningful	23	28	---	---
Relevant	28	29	25	29
Something you could relate to	36	37	37	34
Told you something important	23	25	28	28
Told you something new	30	28	26	27
Worth remembering	22	33	19	---

¹This table, based on the Ipsos-ASI, Inc., Market Research Database of Diagnostic Norms, includes national averages for standard copy test questions used in testing commercial ads. Please note that these norms are derived from national telephone interviews (rather than mall intercepts or theater testing) and include findings from stand-alone viewing.

²Responses are on a 3-point scale: completely agree, somewhat agree, do not agree at all.

This table can be helpful in comparing your ad pretest to previous pretest results. This comparison should *not* be the sole basis of your analysis. Rather, the ranges should serve as guidelines. They are designed to help you extract meaning from the percentages you compute for your test ad. Before drawing any conclusions or making recommendations, you should analyze the results for every question.

This book cannot provide ranges or guidelines for the questions that relate specifically to your test ad. Therefore, you will have to interpret the percentages on your own. Ask yourself how critical it is for the majority of participants to respond in a certain manner to each question. For example, if the test ad communicates the main idea through music, it is essential that a large majority report being able to understand the words to the music. On the other hand, if the music in the ad serves only as background sound, then it is not as critical for the lyrics to be understood.

It is important to examine how many responses to open-ended questions fall into each category (correct, partially correct, or incorrect; favorable or unfavorable). Ideally, the majority of responses will fall into the correct category. This pattern tends to confirm that the test ad is meeting its objectives. On the other hand, if the majority of responses are categorized as partially correct or incorrect, the ad may not be meeting your communication objectives.

Statistical Techniques

You can use statistical techniques to analyze subgroup information (e.g., males vs. females, or younger participants vs. older ones) only if you boost the sample size to at least 50 participants in each subgroup. If you recruit only 50 participants in total, the sample will be too small to be reviewed by subgroup. Comparing findings between subgroups that are too small can be misleading and may result in faulty conclusions.

Do not try to make generalizations from the results of this pretest to ad messages in general. Each ad pretest you conduct will provide direction for making changes that might be necessary before final production and for improving the potential effectiveness of each particular message. The sample size and the methodology used do not allow for formulating definitive conclusions about what your message's impact will be after it is distributed.