

# WHAT TIME LENGTHS SHOULD I USE FOR MY TV CAMPAIGN?

In most respects, there is little difference in the performance of different ad lengths. Both long and short ads are equally efficient at generating brand-linked memorability and delivering primary messages. Short ads may offer some cost efficiencies in terms of persuasion, since the same money will generate more exposures. However, short ads are also likely to be less effective against complex advertising objectives. Your campaign objectives ultimately determine which ad lengths are best.

## MOST MEASURES DON'T VARY ACROSS LENGTHS

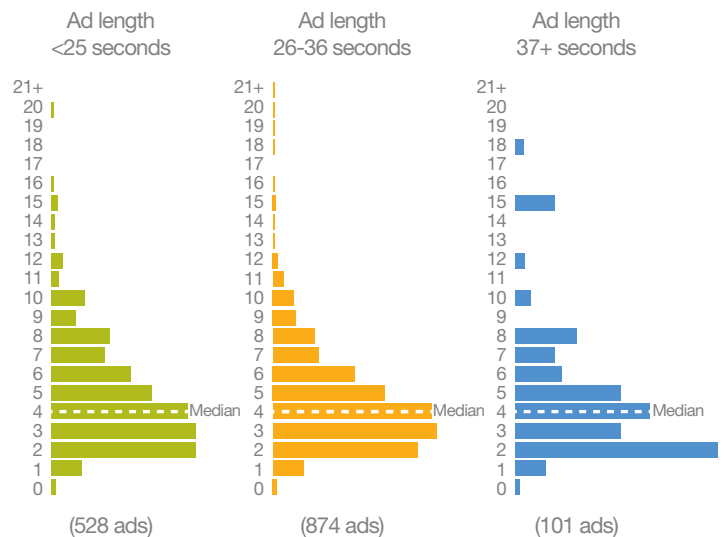
Most of the ad performance measures we gather show little difference across ad lengths. Impact and persuasion are accomplished equally well by long and short ads. Enjoyment and emotional response are consistent across most ad lengths. The details are summarized below.

### Impact

Millward Brown measures an ad's impact—also known as branded memorability—using the Awareness Index. We observe a wide range of Awareness Indices for all different ad lengths, so if your key objective is to generate impact, there is no reason to choose a particular ad length to achieve this.

On average, longer ads tend to have greater impact than shorter ads, but they also cost more to air. Working with 30-second equivalent GRPs enables an approximate dollar-for-dollar comparison, and on this basis there is no real difference in the impact of ads across different ad lengths.

## GLOBAL AIs BY AD LENGTH - CAWI (COMPUTER-AIDED WEB INTERVIEWING)



**Persuasion**

As with impact, all time lengths are comparable in terms of their persuasive power per exposure. But this means that if a 15-second ad communicates as persuasively as a longer ad, it is likely to be more effective in market because it will get a higher number of exposures and achieve greater reach in the same amount of air-time. So, it may be advantageous to use shorter ads if the objective is persuasion.

**Enjoyment**

All ad lengths have a wide range of enjoyment scores for all ad lengths. The average is similar across all lengths except among the very shortest ads, which get slightly lower enjoyment.

**Emotional response**

There is very little difference in overall positive or negative emotion with regard to ad length, although, as with the other measures, there is a wide range of responses within ad length.

**WHERE LONG ADS MAY HAVE ADVANTAGES**

There are two areas where short ads may be at a disadvantage in relation to long ads, and these are message communication and involvement.

**Message Communication**

**Primary** message communication is as strong among short ads as longer ones. Variation on this measure is due to the ad’s creative power, not its length. So for putting across a single message a short ad may work well. However, a 15-second ad can’t support the same number of additional messages as a 30-second ad, so a short ad is not as well-suited as a longer one when the communication objectives are complex.

**Involvement**

Involvement is harder to achieve in shorter ads. On average, 15-second ads are slightly less involving than longer ads, reflecting the fact that

the ad holds the viewer’s attention for less time, and has less time in which to engage the viewer’s interest or sympathy. Longer ads are more likely to be described as interesting, involving, unique, or distinctive. However, there is a wide range of involvement scores for all ad lengths, so it is possible for a shorter ad to get a good score.

**CUTDOWNS: THE BEST OF BOTH WORLDS**

Cutdowns can be a cost effective part of a media plan. An analysis of examples where both full-length and cut-down versions of an ad have been aired shows that cut-down ads receive similar endorsements to their full-length versions, despite costing less to air. See the Knowledge Point “Using cut-downs to stretch your budget further.”

Matched ads from Tracking	Cut-down ad	Full-length ad	No. of ads
Enjoyed watching it	68%	71%	(152)
Branding mean score (5pt)	3.96	4.01	(136)
Involvement mean score (10pt)	4.28	4.49	(150)
Key message A (most strongly)	23%	25%	(116)

## THE PERFECT MIX

These findings suggest that your TV campaign may well benefit from a mix of ad lengths, each used to achieve a slightly different objective.

### *When to use 15-second ads*

Short ads are ideal for communicating basic advertising ideas and for reminding consumers of something they've heard before. A 15-second ad may be appropriate:

- When a brand needs a continuity advertising plan. The lower cost of 15-second spots may be an efficient way to stretch advertising spend, provided that a short ad can deliver communication and branding.
- As a cutdown of a longer ad. A 15-second version can be a good reminder of a longer ad if and when the longer ad has been fully established.
- When communication needs are simple. A 15-second ad may be able to stand on its own and deliver good payback when the offer being communicated is straightforward and compelling.

### *When to use 30-second ads*

Generally, 30-second ads are better than shorter spots at communicating complex messages. This can be particularly helpful:

- When launching a new product or campaign.
- When introducing a new campaign or after a long advertising hiatus.
- When a brand has complex or multiple messages.
- When introducing or supporting a line extension. Line extensions need to capitalize on the parent brand equity, while at the same time establishing their own point of difference. In such cases, the greater flexibility of 30-second ads will almost certainly be of value.

### *When to use 60-second ads (or longer)*

Though relatively rare, 60-second ads can be useful in specific circumstances such as:

- For developing a story.
- When a high level of involvement is desired.
- To generate buzz and word of mouth for a brand. We've seen ads as long as two or three minutes that easily justify their cost by virtue of their status as "events."

### *When to use cutdowns*

Cutdowns can be highly cost-effective when used after a successful full-length ad has been established in the minds of viewers.

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"Using cut-downs to stretch your budget further"