

# Imagery Transfer

Bill Ludwig/Chairman & CEO of Campbell Ewald “Radio can be used to position and target. It can be used to demonstrate. It can even be used to display.”

Imagery transfer is the processing of an audio stimulus visually in the mind. In 1993, Statistical Research Inc. conducted a study on this topic that built on research done by NBC in the 1960’s. In the SRI study, 75% of respondents were able to recall audio/visual elements of TV commercials when hearing only the audio portion over the telephone.

Several years after the SRI study, the fMRI scanner provided solid scientific evidence regarding the existence of imagery transfer. Operational in the late 1990’s, the fMRI scan, confirmed that exposure to certain sounds activated the flow of blood to Brodmann’s area 18 & 19, the so-called visual portion of the brain, otherwise known as our “mind’s eye.” *Think about that for a second an area of the brain with an eye. Everyone knows the brain doesn’t see or does it.....it visualizes without the benefit of the visual.* It also confirmed that doing mental imagery tasks activated the flow of blood to the visual cortex.

Katz has found further evidence of imagery transfer during a 2011 study with a large national advertiser. The study was designed to provide diagnostics on the radio commercial’s emotional and cognitive impact. Immediately after exposure to a commercial, respondents were asked to provide gut reactions regarding what they liked or disliked about what they had just heard. Without prompting of any kind, here are a few examples of what some wrote:

It reminds me of the TV ads that I consider very effective
The sound of crashing gets your attention   Recognize the mans familiar voice from the TV ads
I like the mayhem TV commercials and the reference to Top Gun

I actually picture the TV advertisement with the same script. These are entertaining and effective advertisements.
I liked the voice actor used he is the same as the TV ads - I liked the open and friendly approach
I remember these ads from TV
I like the narrator - TV ads are great so its easy to connect with
I like that guy have seen him on TV and is entertaining
It is somewhat funny and keeps with a theme they started on TV
A few things – First, it was a little funny – Second, I recognize the actor as the one I’ve seen on TV which makes me like it more having remembered what his roles are on the commercials
I like the TV commercials from this
I have seen adds with same actor on TV and recognize the voice
Hearing the radio version of the TV commercial
Spokesman voice clear and decisive - it was nice to have a mental connection with the voice - he is a TV actor
Best commercials on television - Humorous while still making their point  "Emotionally compromised" is my favorite new phrase
I think it was funny and like watching the commercials on television
I was a little confused at first about who was talking but I remembered the television ad and got it after that
It reminded me of their TV ads  which I think are obnoxious
Same thing as on TV

Source: Katz Marketing Solutions case study, 2011, OTX.

Imagery transfer requires three things:

- 1) A sufficient budget
- 2) Concept continuity
- 3) A memorable ad premise

When all three are present, radio can provide visual impact at audio pricing.