

Nielsen TV Content Evaluation

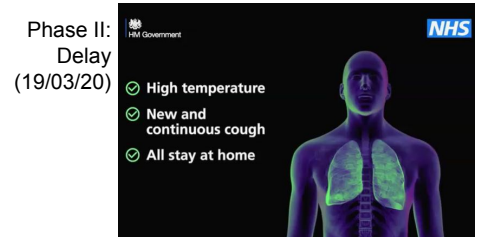
CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER IS KEY TO ENGAGING VIEWERS WITH NHS MESSAGES

TV advertising plays an important role in the government's public communication strategy to navigate this COVID-19 pandemic. Now, more than ever, the ability to effectively use and optimise TV advertising to impact mass social behaviour changes is critical.

In March, the NHS launched a national TV campaign designed to educate the public on the measures individual's must take control the virus. Nielsen has undertaken a study to investigate the effectiveness of the advertising campaign.

The campaign featured three creatives: "Phase II-Delay", "Phase III-Lockdown" - both of which featured the Chief Medical Officer, Prof. Chris Witty - and "Stay at home".

Working with Dynata, the first-party data and insight platform, in a forced exposure environment, Nielsen tested the three adverts by interviewing British residents (n=1000) across all regions of the U.K. (Nat Rep, 16+ sample).



THE CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER IS MEMORABLE AND CREDIBLE

Memorable advertising is the key to campaign performance. Innovative content that stands out is linked to memory retention, which helps to drive advertising effectiveness.

Our Nielsen TV Content Evaluation study found that the creatives for "Phase II-Delay" and "Phase III-Lockdown" were the most memorable and this was due to the fact the videos heavily featured Prof. Chris Witty. As a newly established household name, the Chief Medical Officer acts as an effective spokesman, talking directly to the audience and immediately engaging them. His well-known position as the central health care expert during this pandemic - also reinforced in the on-screen text - gives him instant authority, which helps to build trust with the audience. Nine in 10 respondents considered him to be an informative and a credible source of information, further driving engagement.

The third creative, "Stay at Home," which does not feature the Chief Medical Officer, was launched with a new creative style that focused on vivid imagery of the frontline battle of NHS staff against COVID-19. Interestingly, however, as a result of the wide and continuous news coverage of NHS staff and the challenges faced in hospitals, the memorability of this creative is not particularly strong, as viewers liken the video to reports from mainstream news channels. To maximise the effectiveness of NHS COVID-19 advertising content, it must be overtly and visually differentiated from daily news reports.

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ALIGN AUDIO AND VISUAL CUES FOR MAXIMUM IMPACT

Awareness of the COVID-19 threat is at universal levels in the UK, nearly all of those interviewed by Nielsen said they are aware of the common COVID-19 symptoms. While close to half of those who viewed the NHS adverts confirmed they plan to take the coronavirus outbreak more seriously, creative improvements can still be made.

The “Phase II-Delay” advert marked the launch of the NHS campaign and, through the use of graphics, encouraged those with symptoms of COVID-19 to visit NHS.U.K. The use of infographics, can be very effective if aligned with audio cues as it helps to improve the fluency of the creative and the overall ability to deliver key messages. However, this approach needs to be consistently deployed across all messaging, as the creative also featured verbal cues without the infographic support. This instruction was not particularly memorable, indicating that without infographic support, clear messaging is difficult to communicate.

The “Phase III-Lockdown” creative provided audio and infographic alignment on the instruction not to visit those outside your household, and as a result, the creative was particularly strong for driving home this message with the viewer. For all creatives, audio and infographic alignment is critical to ensure those in the audience engage with all key messages.

Phase II: Delay



Phase III: Lockdown



REINFORCE THE MESSAGE THAT VIRUS DOES NOT DISCRIMINATE ON AGE OR LOCATION

After viewing the NHS creatives, the younger generation (A16-34) do not react as strongly to government messaging on the need to protect each other by changing social behaviours. As anyone can contract or spread coronavirus, the NHS needs to reinforce the message that the virus is a danger to all members of society, to help encourage the younger generation to take the appropriate lockdown action.

The effectiveness of the NHS content varied based on where each respondent was located. Nielsen recorded that those who live in areas less affected by coronavirus are more relaxed on the severity of the virus, in comparison to those who live in hotspots such as London or the Midlands. Reinforcing the message that the coronavirus is a nationwide threat should be focused on for future communications.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Differentiate NHS communications by leveraging Prof. Chris Witty as the spokesman
- Use infographics to support all important audio messaging
- Reinforce messaging that the virus impacts all age groups and all regions of the country

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