

Commercial Lengths

Which commercial length is most effective? This is a difficult question to answer, as spot length must be dictated by the goal of the message. Allowing an ad budget to dictate the length of the ad is the most common mistake made by advertisers. Never try to get by with :15s and mentions when :30s or :60s are called for to adequately convey your message.

If your budget is limited, reduce Reach instead of cutting the length of your ad, or buy a less expensive time of day or advertise on a smaller station. Ad messages must always be exactly as long as they need to be or nothing else will matter.

Following are some parameters to keep in mind when determining what length spot you need to create. Additionally, keep in mind that for some ad categories, commercial length may be pre-determined based on boilerplate disclaimers required by law.

- :60s
 - For complex messages to avoid leaving doubts and questions
 - To include specific details to help persuade – more believable than generalities
 - For a business category that's new and not easily understood – to create realization of need before selling your solution
 - For highly entertaining ads geared to inspire consumers to “like you better” – effective for generic businesses and commodities
- :30s
 - To make an easy-to-understand offer for a product or service that is clearly understood
 - To make a single point in an ad
- :15s
 - To convey an incredibly powerful, simple message
 - To reinforce simple name recognition to make customers think of your name when you are the sole advertiser in your business category
- Mentions (:10 or less)
 - Use frequently to generate top-of-mind awareness when selling a commodity in a crowded market arena
 - To add additional frequency to a schedule that is delivering barely sufficient frequency of your :60 or :30 message

Source: “Radio Ads: How Long Should They Be?” by Roy Williams, founder and president of The Wizard of Ads – entrepreneur.com, 09/13/02

Relative Impact of :30s vs. :60s

Radio Recall Research studies have determined that a :30 spot may generate as much as 80% recall of a :60 spot

Source: Radio Dimensions 2009, Media Dynamics, Inc., 2009
www.MediaDynamicsInc.com