



Local Frequently Asked Questions

This section contains a list of frequently asked questions regarding local cable advertising.

What is Spot Cable?

Cable advertising can be broken down into two categories: network and spot.

- Network cable refers to buying commercial time directly from a cable network to reach their entire national audience.
- Spot Cable refers to buying commercial time through a MVPD(s) to reach a specific market(s) or geographic area(s).

What is a MVPD?

Multichannel Video Program Distributors (MVPDs) is a type of service provider that delivers video programming services to the consumer, often charging a subscription fee.

These operators include cable television systems (e.g. Comcast, Spectrum Reach, Cox, etc), direct-broadcast satellite (DBS) providers (e.g. Dish TV, etc), and other various wireline video providers (e.g. Verizon FiOS, AT&T U-verse).

How do I find what cable system or telco serves my area? How do I contact them?

You can locate via two ways:

- Via VAB's online MVPD Directory, this includes the names and contact information for local cable systems and telcos in every market.
- By contacting NCC Media. For contact information, visit their website www.nccmedia.com

What is a DMA?

DMA stands for Designated Market Area. DMAs are a way of designating particular geographic markets and are often ranked by the size of population. A current listing of DMA rankings is located on the VAB website in the Why Local Cable section.

What is an Interconnect?

An interconnect is simply a large group of cable systems within a DMA that are “connected” together. An interconnect gives advertisers the option to reach all cable households within a given market with one buy and one contact. For a current listing of the top 50 interconnects, visit the Why Local Cable section of thevab.com.

What is a Zone?

A zone is a local area or subset of a DMA.

What is Market Segmentation?

Market Segmentation gives advertisers the ability to deliver customized advertising messages to specific zones within a market.

How can I buy cable for the complete market in a DMA?

Through an interconnect, which links two or more cable systems together to distribute ads across a wider geographic area. VAB’s online MVPD Directory lists interconnects for a given DMA (where applicable).

If I want to buy cable in more than one DMA, do I have to call each cable system in each market, or is there an easier way?

No and yes there is an easier way. Cable rep firms like NCC Media (www.nccmedia.com) specialize in placing ads across different DMA/markets and local systems to help you make your cable ad buys more efficient and cost-effective.

I know I can buy cable nationally, throughout a DMA, or in a part of a DMA. How about regionally?

This depends. While there are regional cable networks that do cover two or more DMAs, the only way to buy ads in cable programming in, say, only the eastern US is to make a multi-market buy. Fortunately, cable rep firms such as NCC Media (www.nccmedia.com) make this process relatively easy.

Do I need to have a commercial already produced if I want to advertise on cable?

Not at all. In fact, most cable sales offices offer production services to advertisers and will gladly produce a high-quality, high impact commercial that will showcase your business or client’s business according to your specific needs. In the few cases where a local system doesn’t do commercial production, they can recommend a third party who can.

Can I put commercials in cable networks that will just reach my immediate area?

Yes you can. Ads can be placed that cover a DMA or a subset of a DMA, usually referred to as a “zone.”

Which cable networks can I put my commercial on?

The cable networks available to advertise on (commonly called insertable networks) vary by MVPD. Your local cable system or telco will be able to provide specific details regarding insertable networks.

I want to reach my audience online, can local cable help?

Absolutely. Almost all MVPD’s offer multi-screen solutions and can create a customized schedule utilizing both television and online.

I have seen commercials where I push a button on my remote for more information or to receive a sample of the product. Can I do that?

Yes, depending on the market. Some MVDP's have interactive advertising capabilities which allow viewers to "interact" with your television spot with just a click of the remote. Contact your local MVDP to discuss their capabilities.

What is effective frequency?

Effective frequency is the number of times a potential consumer views an advertiser's message to be motivated into action. Generally, an effective frequency schedule will have an average frequency of at least three, meaning the potential customer will see the message at least three times.

With the surge of new media options and devices in the last few years, many marketers are increasing their frequency to 5+ to break through the clutter.

How do I best allocate my GRPs (Gross Rating Points) in my ad schedule?

There is no 'one size fits all' solution for creating an advertising schedule. Every advertiser has their own unique set of opportunities and challenges. However, each MVDP has advertising sales specialists that can help marketers create schedules which best meet their objectives and generate business results.