

Ignore your core audience at your peril

Evening news broadcasts skew older on audience demographics, which is why you will often see medications for cholesterol, ED, and other diseases that affect older people advertised there. Of all three network evening news, I would venture to say that ABC World News with Charles Gibson skews the oldest, simply because Charlie is the oldest anchor. Lately, all evening newscasts have been tending to soft news, with a smattering of hard news. NBC Nightly News has a segment called Making a Difference and ABC does the New Normal. If you want hard news, you'd turn to BBC or the Internet. If you want in-depth news, you'd probably tune into the News Hour with Jim Lehrer on PBS.

Last week, there were at least four celebrity deaths. Per usual, all were covered by all networks. On Friday night, ABC World News covered the Michael Jackson death for the entire broadcast, except for about one minute devoted to other news. The other networks did much the same, except for PBS. In my opinion, this is more reflective of the news editors interests than of the news viewers interests, and it will result in more audience loss for ABC, etc. Don't believe me. Read viewers responses to the ABC news decision to devote its broadcast to Jackson's death [here](#).

World News for sure lost me as a viewer. I watch the evening news broadcasts for the news, as quaint as that may seem. I understand some coverage of the premature death of a pop star, but I don't understand the 24-7 coverage that has been going on, in spite of some pretty major international and domestic news. From now on, I will watch the News Hour. Less hype, more news (maybe too much news, but that is another story). I will be curious to see Nielsen ratings for this week. It seems to me that people interested in the Jackson story do not watch

ABC World News. They watch Access Hollywood or Inside Edition.

I have written of this before, and I will continue to defend this position. You communicate to your core/target audience first. Perhaps ABC was seeking a younger demographic, or trying to appeal to people who normally don't watch Charlie Gibson. However, what they did was ignore their core audience and even alienate said core audience. The core audience, the audience who watches Charlie every evening because they admire his editorial choices, was disgusted as is apparent in the comments made to ABC. And, the "new" audience is not sticking around for Person of the Week next week, unless said person is Michael Jackson.