

# THE AUDIENCE ATTENTION DILEMMA

By Joshua Lowcock

Marketing budgets are finite. To get the best results, advertisers have two priorities.



**1 AUDIENCE**

Advertisers want to reach the largest, most relevant audience.



**2 ATTENTION**

Advertisers want to be sure their ad gets your attention.



**BUT**

But large Audiences and high Attention do not always equal an advertising opportunity.

This is the

**AUDIENCE-ATTENTION DILEMMA**

Let's do a

**HYPOTHETICAL**



In 2020, there were **5.2 million** police-reported car accidents in the US, **35,000** of which were fatal. That averages out to **14,200** accidents a day.

Source: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA)



No one likes car accidents. They have a negative impact on society, costing lives, time, and money. When an accident happens, traffic slows down and other motorists become a captive audience to the unfortunate event.



The audience and attention that results from a car accident doesn't make advertising on the side of ambulances a good idea. It's a bad idea.



Even if there is an audience and attention this is not the place for any responsible advertiser.

The same is true for house fires and placing ads on the side of fire engines. There may be audience and attention, but this is not a good advertising opportunity.



If a company or person tried to convince you that advertising on the side of ambulances or fire engines was a good idea.

**100% Accident Guarantee!**



Or, if a company or person went around causing car accidents by driving recklessly, dumping oil on highways, or was an arsonist.



This is why Journalists have a code of conduct where they report, don't make the news.

Or, that company or person actively campaigned against Road Safety Standards.



You would not buy their ads. You would show them the door.



Please, Leave!

He's dangerous

Yes, and reckless!

Hello, I need to report someone who is a risk to us all.

You would also warn others, and probably even report them to the authorities.


This is how civilized society protects itself from harms (and people who are jerks).

The lesson of the


**AUDIENCE – ATTENTION DILEMMA**

- Large audiences and high attention do not always equal an advertising opportunity.
- Not every advertising opportunity deserves advertisers' limited budgets.
- Where advertisers place their ad matters – there is such a thing as good audience attention.

**WRONG AUDIENCE BAD ATTENTION**



**RIGHT AUDIENCE GOOD ATTENTION**



When a marketer makes a choice not to advertise somewhere, it is not discrimination or a violation of rights\*. It is the audience attention dilemma sending you a message that you may be unable to hear over your misplaced belief in your bad idea and the car accidents you are too busy taking delight in causing and watching.

Please support legitimate journalism and news publishers.

\* The 1st Amendment means the Government cannot impede your speech, it doesn't guarantee you a right to advertising or freedom from consequences. XKCD explains it perfectly. <https://xkcd.com/1357/>