



# SUSAN WHITING

Vice Chair and Chief Diversity Officer, The Nielsen Company

## **What's really happening in the media landscape**

Perusing the latest techie blogs, today's marketer might come to the conclusion that TV is in fact dead. Individuals over the age of 65 are nowhere to be found online; millennials have abandoned traditional media and the future of marketing can be found in the latest app or social networking trend.

Susan Whiting, however, revealed during her presentation at Brandworks University 2011 that most of these notions are in fact just myths. To clearly understand the marketplace, we need to understand the true change in demand and consumer growth. And as the world's leader in tracking consumer behavior, Nielsen reveals how paying attention to this data can transform marketers' long held notions, campaigns and ultimately success.

Naturally, a growing population will drive demand in the future. However, in 2030 it is estimated of the 1 billion new births only 3 percent will occur in the developed world. The implication? Diversity will remain a key challenge moving forward. Therefore, marketers will need to understand the changing media landscape as well as the changing demographics.

## **Breaking down the changes**

It is often proposed that Americans don't watch TV anymore; that they are canceling cable subscriptions, avoiding commercials with DVRs and using online channels instead. However, Whiting says that the data reveals that Americans (still) love TV.

Specifically, Americans continue to increase the amount of TV watched, because additional types of technology have allowed consumers to watch it on their timeframe. The use of DVRs continues to grow and Americans are not necessarily favoring one medium over the other. Many are actually adding media platforms that they utilize, as a Nielsen study revealed nearly 60 percent of Americans use the Internet and watch TV in concert.

Connected devices, like tablets, continue to change and redefine the media landscape, and while they are increasingly

replacing game consoles, PCs and laptops, they are also providing more and more opportunities to engage with consumers who are using multiple media platforms.

## **A closer look at two important demographics**

Taking a closer look at the Hispanic and baby boomer markets also reveals the importance of taking a more holistic and deeper view of consumers. A review of Hispanic consumers' TV behavior reveals a fallacy of many marketers looking to target this demographic. Although, Whiting said Nielsen data reveals Hispanics do prefer to watch Spanish language TV, marketers have and continue to use broad campaigns to reach this segment and disregard focusing on targeted channels like Spanish language TV.

The same can be said for marketers' approaches to targeting, or lack thereof, of the baby boomer demographic. Digging into data on baby boomers reveals that while only 5 percent of advertising spend goes toward this demographic, they account for nearly 39 percent of all consumer packaged goods spending—not to mention they spend more time watching TV and surfing the web than any other demographic.

At the end of the day, many long held notions about consumers are beginning to be disqualified with the emergence of good data. As a result, Whiting explained that marketers must take a holistic look at consumers by digging into data, observing trends among consumers and marrying it all together in order to clearly understand consumer behavior, media usage and preferences.



*Susan joined Nielsen in 1978, becoming president and COO in 2001. In 2007, she was appointed Chair of Nielsen Media Research and EVP of the Nielsen Company. Susan also serves as a member of The Nielsen Company Executive Council, and sits on the Board of Directors of the Ad Council.*