

An Introduction to Television Programming

27.410D: The Canadian TV Market in the New Millennium

Mass Communications, Carleton University

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What have we done so far?

- **We looked at the key influencers of the Canadian television industry:**
 - **Advertisers**
 - **Audiences**
 - **Broadcasting policy**

What are we going to do now?

- **Learn about programming strategy:**
 - **Broadcasters**
 - **Specialty Services / Cable Networks**
 - **Distributors (Cable and satellite)**

What is programming?

- **From a broadcasters perspective, it is the process of selecting, scheduling, promoting and evaluating programs.**
- **From a cable and satellite perspective, it is the process of selecting, promoting and evaluating programming services and their packaging.**

Programming is the core activity in the television businesses.

What is the goal of programming?

- **To maximize the size of an audience targeted by advertisers.**
 - **Mass appeal channels (e.g. CTV) programmers want as many viewers as possible.**
 - **Niche networks (e.g. TSN, Discovery) programmers want to maximize the number of viewers within their target audience.**
- **In the case of cable and satellite companies, the goal of programming is to maximize the number of subscribers and subscriptions to programming packages.**
 - **Cable must do this with a hybrid analog/digital environment**
 - **Satellite must do this in a completely digital environment**

Structural considerations

- **Conventional broadcasters deliver their signal to consumers ‘free’ with large over-the-air transmitters.**
- **Conventional broadcasters may be:**
 - **Independent and local only (e.g. CFMT, NTV)**
 - **A group of stations (e.g. NewNets)**
 - **A national network delivering programming via satellite to owned and operated or affiliate stations which transmit the signal locally (e.g. CTV, Global, CBC).**
- **Specialty services are delivered to cable and satellite distributors via satellite and are for subscribers only.**
- **Cable and satellite distributors redistribute conventional broadcasts, but are primarily in the business of selling subscription channels.**

Types of programs (from a programmers perspective)

- **Network programs**
 - Usually first-run original programming produced by US studios or independent production firms for broadcast or cable networks (e.g. ER, This Hour has 22 Minutes, Trading Spaces)
- **Syndicated programs**
 - Off-network series – network programming where the broadcasters copyright agreement has expired (e.g. Seinfeld or the Simpsons at 7PM; Star Trek on TNN)
 - Feature Films – movies made for the theatre in the TV window
 - First-run syndicated – series and specials produced and sold directly to broadcast stations (e.g. Entertainment Tonight, Dr. Phil, Andromeda)
- **In-house programs** – produced by the broadcast or cable network, (e.g. 6PM News; Dateline).

Five elements of programming

- **Compatibility**
 - Programmers strive to make their programming compatible with what most people do during the day (known as ‘dayparting’)
 - Broadcasters and specialty channels daypart based on the typical routine of their target audience
- **Habit Formation**
 - Audience members form viewing habits that must be respected (e.g. “24” at 9PM Tuesday on FOX; “The Simpsons” at 5PM on CBC)

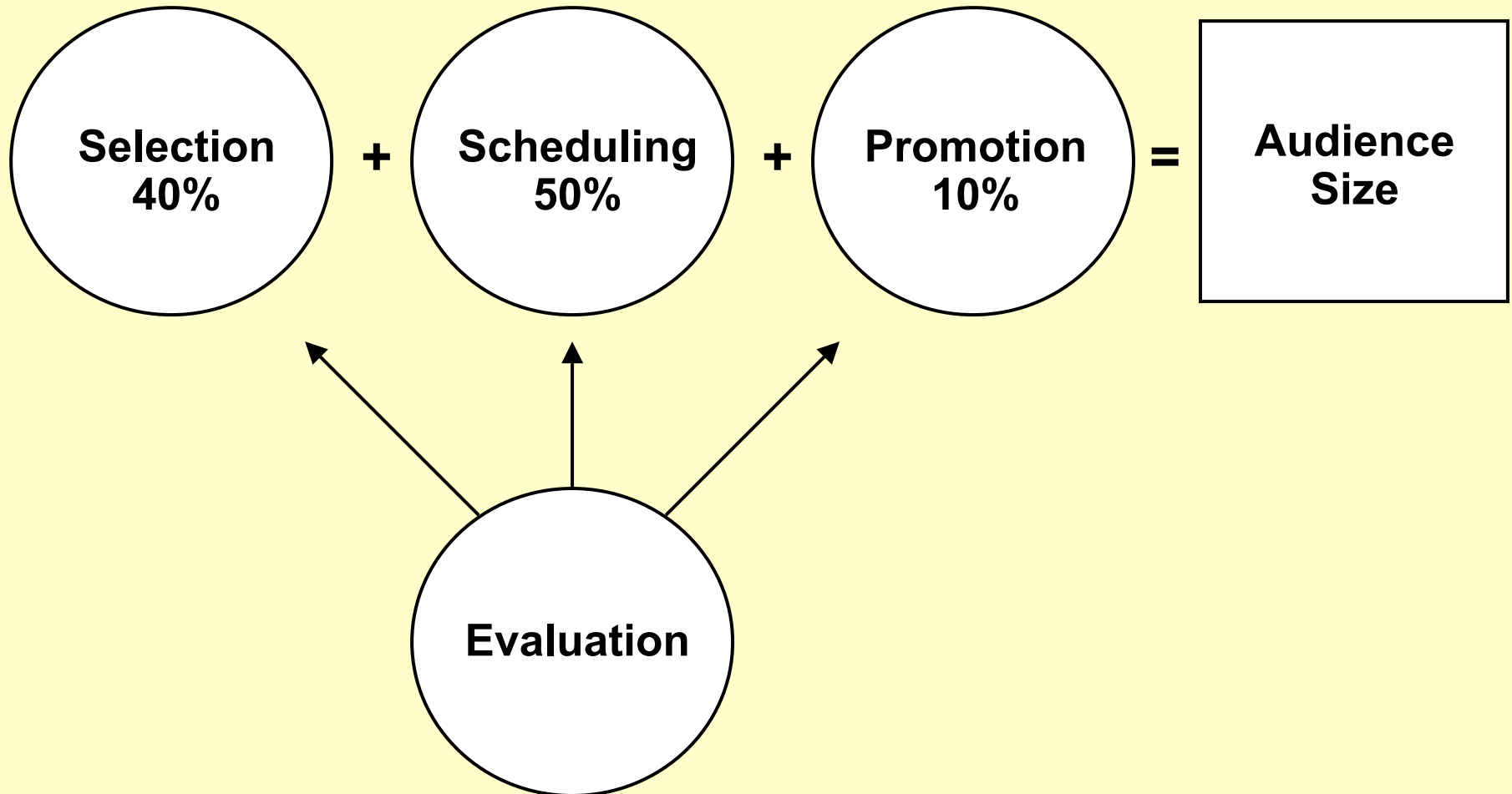
Five elements of programming (continued)

- **Control of Audience Flow**
 - Programmers try to program shows so that more viewers ‘flow to’ the next program or ‘flow in’ from rival networks, than ‘flow away’ to other channels.
 - Examples of this concept are ‘blocking’ similar programs together and ‘counterprogramming’ against rival networks.
- **Conservation of Program Resources**
 - Broadcasters must program nearly 24/7, yet audiences grow bored easily.
 - Programmers must devise ingenious ways to get the maximum mileage out of each program purchase.

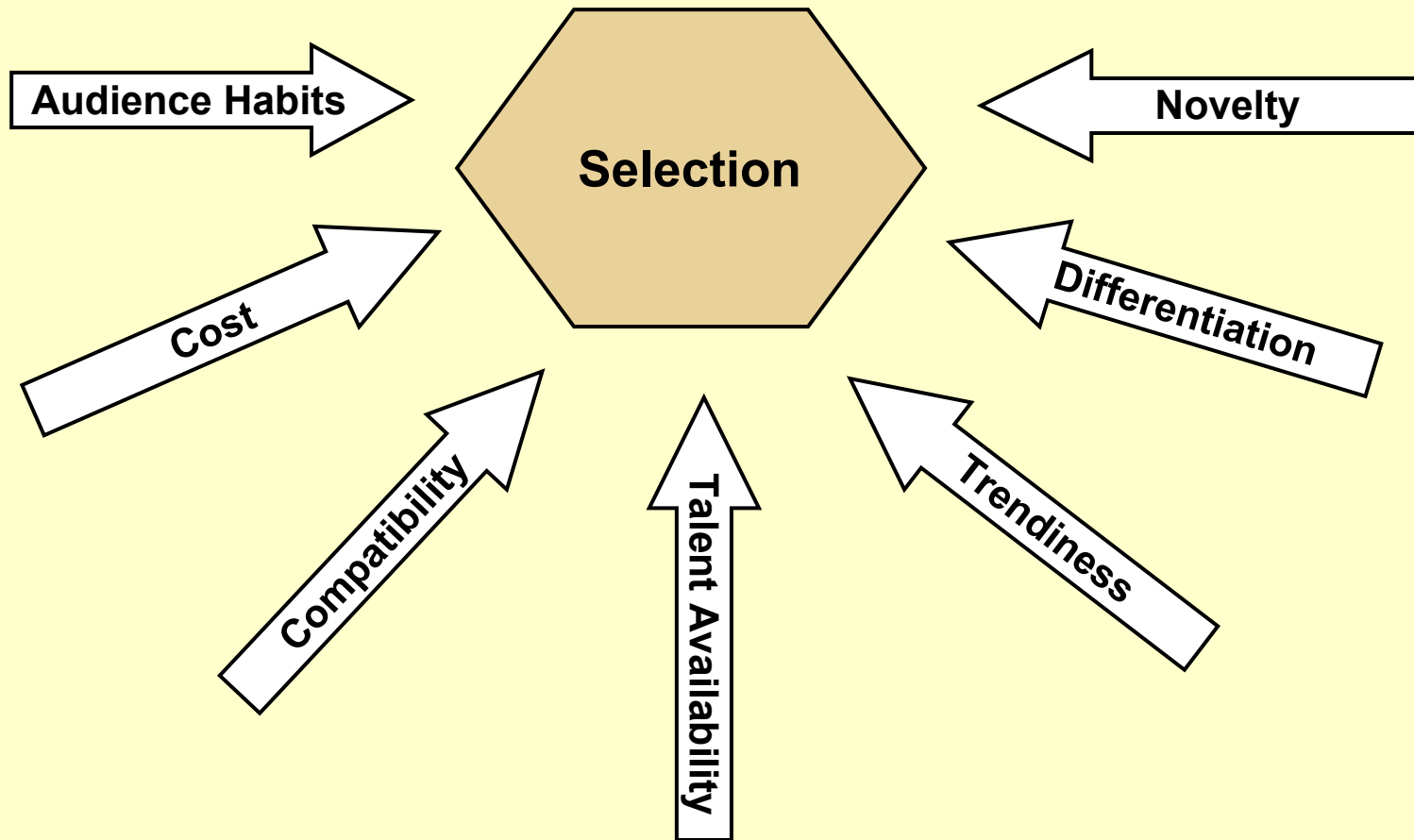
Five elements of programming (continued)

- **Breadth of Appeal**
 - **Programmers must choose between broadcasting and narrowcasting.**
 - **Broadcasting deals with shared feeling and interests among the larger population.**
 - **Narrowcasting deals with highly personalized tastes and needs.**

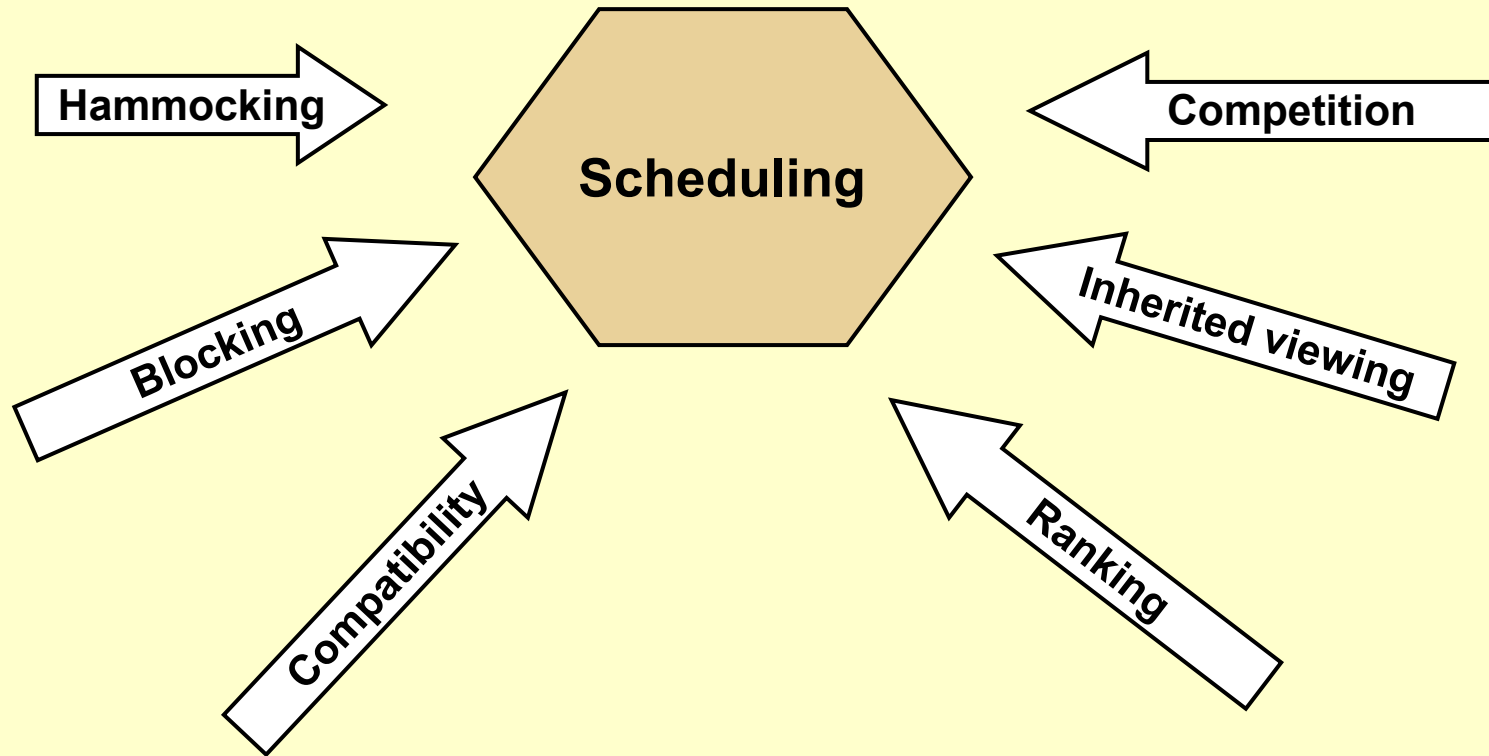
A Four-Part Programming Model



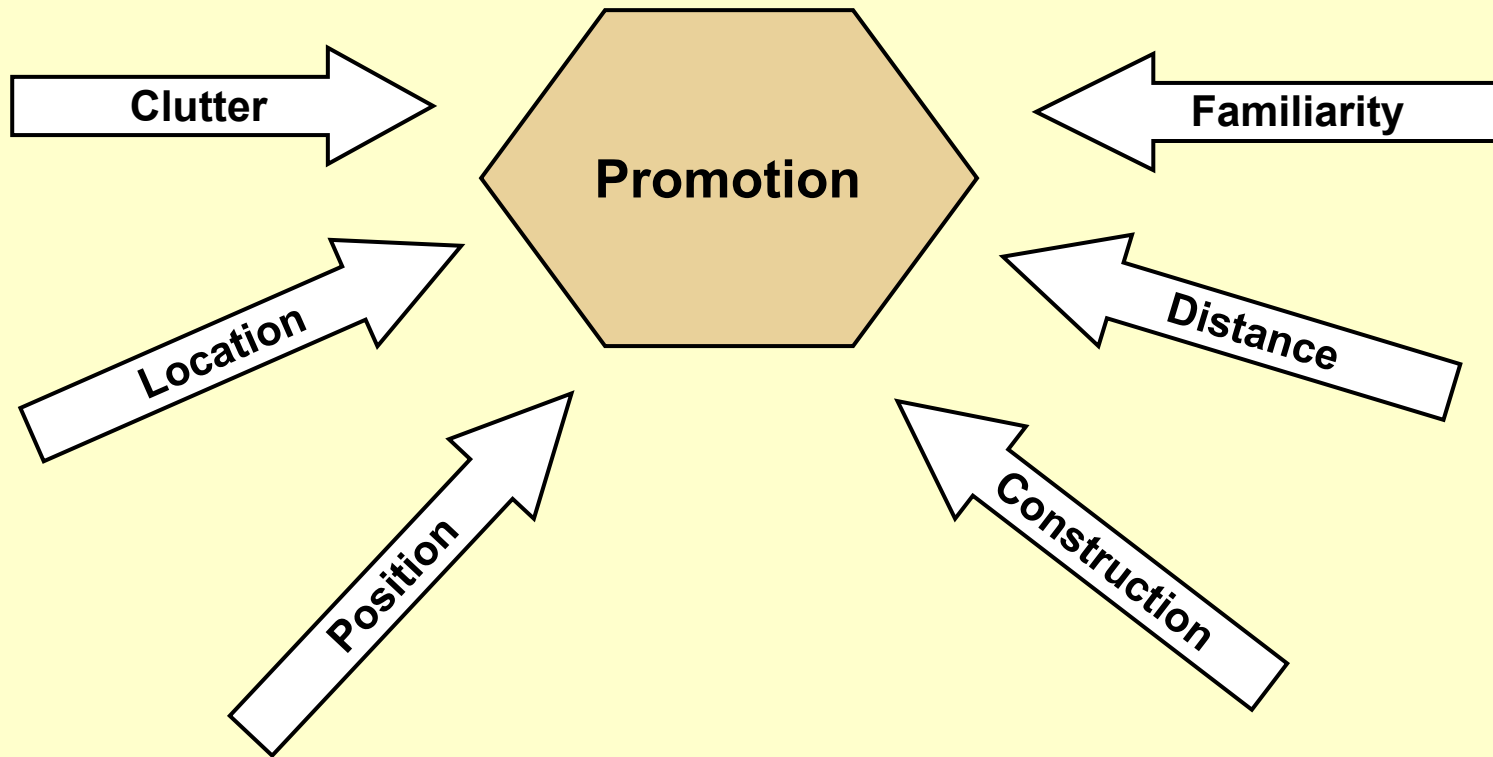
Selection Factors



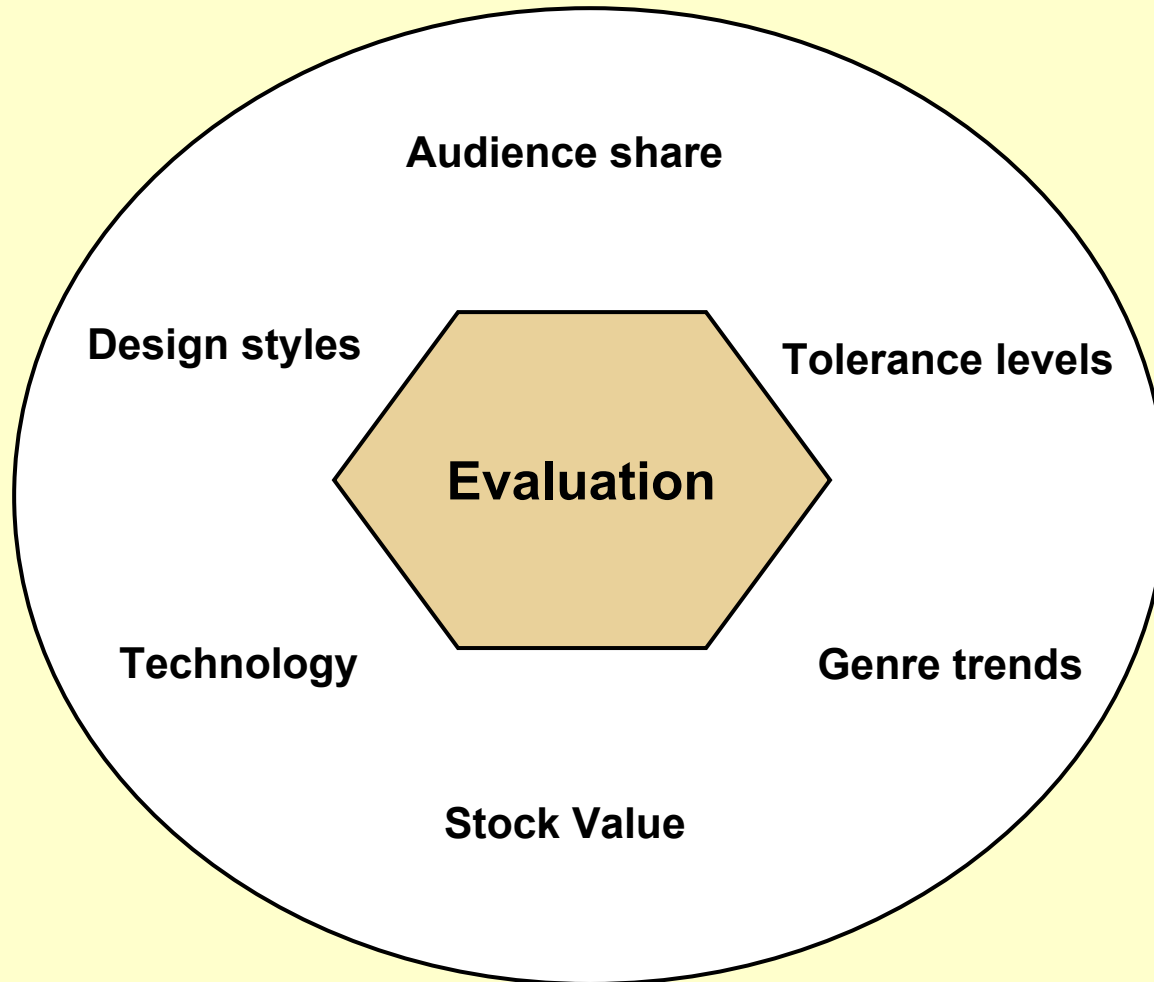
Scheduling Factors



Promotion Factors



Evaluation Factors



Discussion

- **What else must we consider in Canada?**