

How SEM Supergroups help delve deeper and deliver granular information

The Living Standards Measures (LSMs) have been used to plan advertising spend since 1989 and something needed to be done to better reflect South Africa's incredibly complex society, a population that ranges from those living on social grants to the very wealthy and everything in between.

When the Publisher and Broadcast Research Council of South Africa first launched the Socio-Economic Measure (SEM) to replace Living Standard Measure (LSM) it comprised 10 groupings. This was a familiar number, as the LSMs had ranged from one to 10.

To make the SEM'S more understandable, two Supergroup formations were developed, one of five and another of three segments, which make the SEMs more user-friendly, and give life to the SEM continuum. At the same time, the initial grouping of 10 remains in place but is supplemented by the SEM Supergroups, which makes understanding the measures easier.

Groupings were developed to encompass a low, medium and high classification, and provide the option of breaking the upper and lower groups into two, i.e. three broad groups could break into five. The idea was to give the industry a common starting point to feel comfortable using the SEMs.

"Essentially, the SEM Supergroups are based on where changes in lifestyle are found in the segment profiles, and deliver the granularity required by agencies and publishers," says CEO of the PRC, Josephine Buys.

For example, within the category 'Read any newspaper or magazine', where Supergroup 1 is the mass market and Supergroup 5 is the top end, 77% of Supergroup 5, 64% of Supergroup 4, 51% of Supergroup 3, 40% of Supergroup 2 and 36% of Supergroup 1 read newspapers or magazines.

If one looks at the income of the groupings, Supergroup 1 earns an average of R4,417 a month, while Supergroup 2's salary is around R5,988. Supergroup 3 moves to R8,913 per month, while Supergroup 4 earns around R19,593. At the top, Supergroup 5 makes an average of R43,308.



CEO of the PRC, Josephine Buys. Image supplied.

Advertisers don't tend to define their target markets with a single metric.

The LSMs, after all, mostly talked about and commonly used groups such as 8-10 or 7-10, or 5-6/5-7. Underlying these groupings were inflexions in terms of access and habits.

So, the SEM Supergroups, as shown above, delve deeper into the groupings, giving planners and publishers granular information on consumers. How often they read and how much they earn are intrinsically tied together.

"Standardised buying targets make it easier for both the sell and buy-side of trade. Publishers give these profiles and demographics on rate cards and presentations," says Buys, adding that it was essential for the media sector to adopt SEMs as historic measurements such as LSMs are misrepresentative of the population.

PRC Supergroups at a glance

Average income

Supergroup 1 – R4 417
Supergroup 2 – R5 988
Supergroup 3 – R8913
Supergroup 4 – R19 593
Supergroup 5 – R43 308

Employment

Supergroup 1 – 40%
Supergroup 2 – 47%
Supergroup 3 – 53%
Supergroup 4 – 63%
Supergroup 5 – 68%

Average age

Supergroup 1 – 33
Supergroup 2 – 33
Supergroup 3 – 35
Supergroup 4 – 39
Supergroup 5 – 43

Education

Supergroup 1 – Primary or less 14%, some high school 51%, matric 32%, university/post matric 2%
Supergroup 2 – Primary or less 9%, some high school 42%, matric 44%, university/post matric 5%
Supergroup 3 – Primary or less 5%, some high school 36%, matric 49%, university/post matric 10%
Supergroup 4 – Primary or less 2%, some high school 46%, matric 46%, university/post matric 32%
Supergroup 5 – Some high school 11%, matric 42%, university/post matric 47%

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