

Introduction

SAWA recently conducted a survey to gain an understanding of the cinema advertising audio specifications currently in operation around the world. This was commissioned in response to various sound and volume issues being reported by a number of screen advertising companies, which SAWA's Digital Sub Committee (DSC) was tasked with resolving. This document sets out the key objectives and suggested delivery approach for screen advertising companies looking to integrate SAWA's new audio recommendations into their markets.

Aim/Vision/Outcomes

- Implementation of the new SAWA audio recommendations to optimise the quality of the entire pre-show; bearing in mind the need for accessibility to the medium whilst also ensuring high budget, high quality cinema ads are not penalised.
- Maintain the key quality differentiator of cinema over other media, and the ability for advertisers to exploit the best that cinema sound can offer.
- Avoid audiences becoming disenchanted—or even upset—by their cinema experience.

Resources

- SAWA White Paper: *Loudness Issues*
- SAWA One Pager: *Digital Cinema Sound Recommendations*
- SAWA Digital Sub Committee
- *This Implementation Guide*

Stakeholders

Below is a suggested list of the key stakeholders who will need to be consulted prior to the implementation of SAWA's new audio recommendations. Requirements may differ slightly territory to territory but this should be helpful as a starting point when forming a project plan.

Senior teams at screen advertising companies

- It is important that the senior teams at your company are briefed on the new recommendations.
- Please refer to the separate SAWA One Pager document provided which condenses the White Paper down to top line key points, assuming as far as possible a non-technical audience.

Sound studios

- The sound studios where cinema audio is mixed will need to be briefed that you are adopting SAWA's new audio recommendations, as they are the ones who will need to implement the three volume thresholds based on the source materials supplied to them. *
- It is advisable to give the studios plenty of notice so that they in turn have time to communicate the changes to their client base and put new workflows in place.

- If your territory has previously accepted audio outside of proper cinema spec studios you may wish to consider partnering with one or two such studios to offer a discounted rate to local / smaller budget advertisers, on the basis that such mixes are usually less complex than those of bigger budget clients. This will help to ensure that obtaining a proper cinema mix does not prohibit these clients from using the cinema medium.

Gatekeepers / QC teams

- Any existing "gatekeepers" or audio QC teams/processes will need to be informed and/or updated with the new recommendations.
- If you do not already have a gatekeeper or QC process in place to check supplied audio materials against the recommended specifications prior to DCP creation it is advisable that this is implemented also, as it will further ward against non-compliant audio slipping through the net. * **Remember: Option 1: ≤82; Option 2: ≤80; & Option 3: ≤78 dBLeq(m).**

Exhibitors

- A communication plan to announce and explain the new recommendations to exhibitors will need to be constructed, ultimately with a view to obtaining agreement from cinemas to play the pre-show back at the correct fader level: **Fader 6 – 7.**
- The SAWA One Pager can be used as a resource for this purpose; however a consultative approach is advised.

Creative agencies

- Creative agencies will need to be advised of your move to the new recommendations, as the quality of the audio source materials which they supply to sound studios will now affect the volume threshold they are authorised to reach.
- It is a good opportunity to remind creatives of best practice in cinema audio production. Workshops/presentations within the cinema space and with representatives from top sound studios are recommended for this.

Media agencies & direct clients

- Although media agencies and clients may not always play a direct role in the production process, the move to the new recommendations is a good opportunity to explain the benefits for advertisers.

Competitor screen advertising companies

- If there are other competitor screen advertiser companies within your territory it would be preferable if possible for all companies to adopt the new audio recommendations and along the same timeframe.
- A unified approach will mean the transition is made clear and consistent for all stakeholders involved in the process.