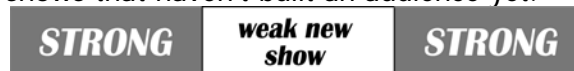


## TV Scheduling: Key Terms and Definitions

How TV schedules try to increase figures:

**Counterprogramming:** "The practice of offering programs to attract an audience from another station airing a major event." For example, during the half-time show a station might program something to draw football viewers away such as a poker tournament. Another example from Wikipedia: "In 1992, FOX counterprogrammed the *Super Bowl XXVI* halftime show with a special episode of *In Living Color*. This episode, which through the "Men On Football" skit, ad-libbed that actor Richard Gere and track and field star Carl Lewis were gay. This was a fairly successful counterprogram; an estimated 20-25 million switched from CBS' Super Bowl broadcast."

**Hammocking:** Putting an unpopular, "weak" program between two "stronger" shows in the hope that viewers will be too lazy to switch over and watch the weaker show instead. This is a popular technique to use with new shows that haven't built an audience yet.



**Interstitial:** This is a short program often used to fill up time between shows. For example, if a movie were to end at 10:45 rather than using the full 15 minutes to air commercials, or start a program at that time, the channel might air an interstitial short-film of 12 minutes to fill.

**Marathon:** The broadcast of several episodes of a television show (usually sequentially), or repeated airing of a film or programs of the same theme. This is often done over the course of several hours or days.

**Pairing:** Putting two similar programs or episodes of the same show on one after the other.

**Stripping:** Having the same programs or genre on the same time everyday. Viewers will get in the habit of watching. These are not daily air programs (such as "Extra") meant to air a new episode every day, but rather programs that originally ran once a week. Done in syndication, episodes would air each day M-F in the same week that were originally aired only once a week over the course of several weeks. An example would be "Friends" airing M-F at 9:30pm on KTVU.

**"Stunt" Scheduling:** One off specials that could involve an "extra" helping of a show (like a soap), particularly if there is a dramatic, much publicized storyline. Sort of like stripping, but just for a week instead of a season.

**Tent pole:** A sort of opposite of hammocking, tent pole strategy puts the strong program in the middle, with weaker programs on either side. The hope is that the strong one will draw in viewers for the entire time period – not just that one show.



**Zoning:** Regular theme nights, so an audience will get hooked on watching that channel on a certain night. For example, NBC airs comedies on Thursday nights.

## Programming notes

Blunting- show a big star to draw people in from the competition

Bridging- hour program bridges over ½ hour starting in middle (ex: 9:10 – 10:10)

Churn- people coming and and going from watching your station

Classics – popular 10-20 years ago

Clock- wheel – Ex. News every # minutes

Cross-programming – elements from one show goes to another (could be a character...)

Cume- total # of people who heard your commercial according to Nielsen

Double pumping- show new program twice in same week

Hammocking – new show scheduled between two established shows

Oldies – popular 30-40 years ago

Pillars – (public TV) shows that have been on forever Ex. Masterpiece theatre

Penetration- % of population subscribed to a cable company

People meter- know who's watching the TV

Rating- % of all people who own TVs and are watching your channel

Recurrents – shows that are not popular now, but were recently

Rerunning – can show a program as often as like monthly balance

Share- % of people who have TVs on and tuned to your channel

Stripping- same show airs daily – usually syndicated

Stunting – Ex. Live "ER" episode

Tent poling- puts new shows behind and before established