

Target Advertising Effects on Campaign Success
Utilizing Market Segmentation to Maximize Return on Investment

Anna Gaudio

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Stuart Schwartz, Ph.D.
Thesis Chair

Randall Pruitt, Ph.D.
Committee Member

Colleen McLaughlin, Ph.D.
Committee Member

Brenda Ayres, Ph.D.
Honors Director

Date

Abstract

Nearly every company and organization advertises to increase awareness, reach sales goals, and build brand loyalty. However, due to the pervasive nature of advertising, reaching an audience has become more difficult and less successful. An increasing number of marketers are relying on detailed, targeted advertising to reach the most likely consumer of a particular brand, service or idea.

First, past research and marketing information is analyzed and explained. Next, a study was conducted to determine how marketers utilize targeting methods and practices. Ten advertising professionals were asked open-ended questions regarding budget, direct marketing, technology and social media. The results showed that, while each account will use different methods to varying extents, targeted and direct advertising is vital to a successful campaign. As technology continues to develop and new targeting practices are made available, future research will determine the full extent of using specific strategies and tactics to reach the most promising consumer.

Target Advertising Effects on Campaign Success

The world of advertising has experienced radial growth in the last ten years. What used to be a simple spread in a portion of a national newspaper or magazine has transformed into a personalized, graphic and unique art. New knowledge and technology now allow companies and advertising agencies to direct messages to specific audiences. This process, known as target advertising, is crucial in order to achieve the highest return on investment and properly position a product in the minds of the intended audience. Target marketing is defined as a general strategy used to identify customers sharing similar characteristics, and reach them through those characteristics (Johnson & Grier, 2011).

Market segmentation has been identified as one of the most important and influential marketing concepts (Hollerbach, 2009). Without target advertising, the majority of advertising expenditures would be wasted on reaching a market that does not have the highest potential to become active consumers (Iyer, Soberman & Villas-Boas, 2005). Past research and current advertising executives offer valuable insight into the impact of target advertising.

External Factors Affecting Target Advertising

Budget Effects

Budget is one of the first considerations at the start of account planning. Advertisers must stretch the budget to achieve the highest reach, the term used to identify the number of members in a target audience who are exposed to a particular ad in a given amount of time; and frequency, the number of times target members are exposed to an ad. Cost effectiveness is generally calculated using a measurement called cost per thousand

(CPM), the dollar cost of reaching 1,000 members in a medium's audience (Clow & Baack, 2011). Advertisers are constantly seeking new and cost effective methods to reach their audience in order to maximize a campaign's budget.

The idea that a budget must be large to achieve success is a common misconception. An investigation of electronic marketplaces revealed that technological developments promise falling costs of telecommunication and computer usage (Bakos, 1997). These channels are up-and-coming, and important for reaching many target audiences. Most importantly, many technological channels are free or extremely inexpensive, making strategic spending easier for marketers. Wise planning can result in high return on investment no matter the budget.

One situation in which a campaign demands a larger budget is if two competing firms are entering the market simultaneously. Simon and Ben-Ur (1982) determined that initial expenditure levels of advertisement campaigns have a strong effect on later levels of return due to the volume, and therefore frequency, of advertising needed. In an interview of Alec Hughes, Vice President and Marketing Manager of the Los Angeles Coastal Division of Wells Fargo Bank (Waldrop, 1994), he explained that the more multifaceted the approach, the more a company will spend using numerous media forms. Most advertising avenues will not reach the entire targeted audience. A company must view spent advertising dollars as an investment.

Buyer Behaviors

A consumer goes through a three-step process prior to making a purchase decision (Clow & Baack, 2011). He or she must first identify a problem or need, then search for information, and finally evaluate alternatives. A need occurs when a person recognizes a

gap between his or her current state and desired state. A need can be physical, social or psychological. Oftentimes marketing communications will trigger a sense of need in an individual, and then offer a solution.

After the identification of a need, the consumer begins searching for information. An internal search involves considering brands with which the individual has experience. Brands with which the individual has little knowledge or negative experience are eliminated. As the consumer begins evaluating alternatives, an external search is conducted. The person seeks information from various sources to gain further knowledge before making a purchase decision. The amount of time consumers spend on searching externally for information depends on their ability to search, motivation level, and cost versus benefits (Clow & Baack, 2011).

Oftentimes the consumers' research will depend on the weight of the purchase. For experience goods, those that are frequently purchased and used, customers rely on familiarity and do not perform extensive research. If a person is buying a new product or something durable, he or she will search for sources of information, including advertising. Costly items and high-risk purchases require extensive research, with little reliance on advertising. For lower-priced purchases, marketers must realize that advertising does not translate into instantaneous sales. The cumulative effect of a campaign is not fully realized until three to nine months after its first appearance (Assmus, Farley & Lehmann, 1984).

Other factors contributing to buyer behaviors include consumer attitudes and consumer values. Consumer attitudes refer to the mental position a person takes toward a topic, person or event. Attitudes influence behavior. Consumer values are the strongly

held beliefs about different topics or concepts. A brand's adherence to a consumer's values increases the likelihood of the consumer purchasing that brand (Clow & Baack, 2011).

As consumers go through the purchasing process and consider each benefit that a company offers, marketers must create messages to capture the consumer's attention and influence the purchase decision. While some consumers will respond to logical reasoning and purchase products due to functional appeal, others will make purchase decisions based on how an advertisement, product or company made them feel. Target marketing allows an advertiser to determine what message appeal will generate the highest response, and capitalize on the opportunity by meeting the audience's needs and desires. With quantifying techniques like Google, DoubleClick, LinkShare and CentrPort, marketers can analyze their target's activity online. These programs help marketers determine how their target members shop and what messages they find most appealing (Tedeschi, 2003).

Dividing an Audience

Methods Used to Divide an Audience

Audiences can be segmented by demographics, psychographics, generation, geographic area, geodemographics, benefits or usage. Demographics are population characteristics over which an individual has little control. They include education, gender, income, age, and ethnicity. Patterns of responses that indicate a person's activities, interests, and opinions are known as psychographics. Lifestyles determine a person's segmentation. Generational segmentation is used for products dependent on age, such as certain medication or technology. If a region is targeted, geographic segmentation

is used. Geodemographics combine demographic, geographic, and psychographic information to target a more specific group of people. Benefit segmentation focuses on the advantages of a product and what consumers would respond to stated benefits. Usage segmentation identifies groups who already use the product or service and advertise specifically to those consumers (Clow & Baack, 2011).

A new method of market segmentation is behavioral targeting, in which online advertising is adapted to each user's Web behavior. Information is tracked online, including terms searched, clickstream data and historical visit patterns. A 2006 American Advertising Federation survey found that 52.4 percent of respondents find behavioral targeting most effective. Nearly 33 percent utilize demographic targeting (De Bock & Van den Poel, 2010). In a 2009 study of twelve major advertising networks, behaviorally-targeted advertising was found to produce 2.68 times as much revenue per ad as a non-targeted ad. Behavioral targeting accounts for 18 percent of advertising revenue (Beales, 2010).

Arnold Brown, chairman of Weiner, Edrich, Brown, Inc., noted, "These days, niches are being created at an incredible rate. One of the things advertisers have to do is to find out where and when those niches are being created" (Waldrop, 1994, p. 5). Brown warned that today, people are identifying themselves in smaller units than ever before, making target groups smaller with blurred group distinction. This poses a problem for marketers who must find media channels that will reach a specific market without excluding those in other niche groups.

Aaker (2000) determined that an advertisement's effectiveness is driven by its ability to create similarity between the message and consumer. Other studies (De Bok &

Van den Poel, 2010) supported the finding that demographics aid in both choosing a communication channel and creating congruence between the audience and portrayed message. Demographics offer a promising starting point for marketers.

Optional Media

Due to advances in technology and marketers’ creativity, advertising happens in a myriad of locations. Until recently, the most common forms of advertising communication were television, outdoor, radio, newspapers, and magazines (Murray & Jenkins, 1992). In recent years, television advertising has received criticism for high production costs and only reaching an increasingly fragmented audience. Additionally, as 15 or 30 second commercials replace 60 second spots, clutter presents an issue for marketers (Murray & Jenkins, 1992).

Television Prime-Time Commercial Price*

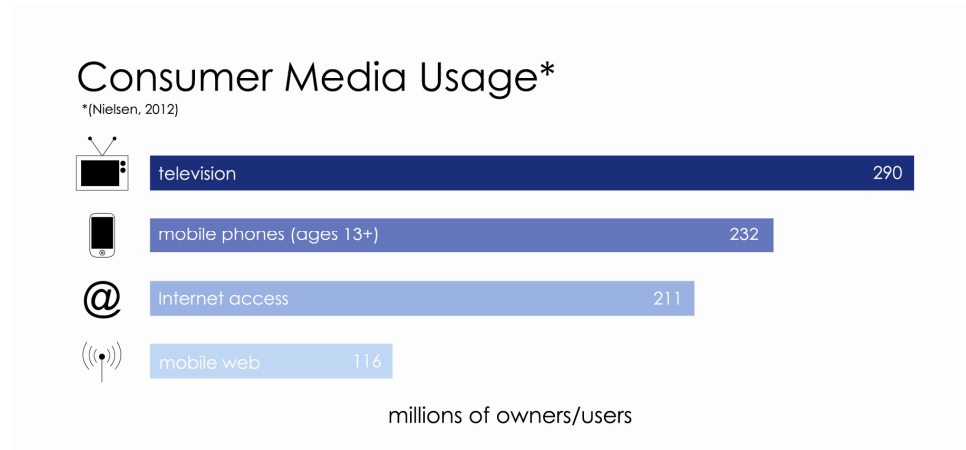
*(Crupi, 2011)

30-Second Spot



Online advertising such as banner ads, classified ads, and search engine optimization are quickly becoming a preferred channel (Clow & Baack, 2011). As Kate Maddox (1997) observes, marketers seeking quick, inexpensive research and advertising channels are increasingly turning to the Web. Social media, e-mail, and viral marketing venues are new on the scene and offer a new and enticing advertisement strategy. While traditional snail mail generates a 30-to-1 response rate in comparison to email, email beats snail mail's return on investment 30-to-1 (Goldman, 2012). This fact further emphasizes the need for marketers to analyze their target audience and determine which channel will facilitate reaching the campaign's goals.

Most consumers are always connected to the Internet in some fashion (Nielsen, 2012). While the Internet results in only 4.3 percent of U.S. advertising revenue, it accounts for 14 percent of Americans' media time. While the reasoning for the disparity remains unknown, many companies are moving significant ad budget portions to online spending. Joanne Bradford, MSN's chief media revenue officer, predicted online advertising would account for 8 to 12 percent of advertising expenditures by the end of the decade (Baker, 2004). True to Bradford's prediction, Ford gives 10 percent of its ad budget to online initiatives.



Although David Steward, a professor of marketing at the University of Southern California, argued, “Getting people to pay attention to advertising is not really a problem if the advertising is personally relevant,” most advertisers find the biggest problem in reaching through the clutter (as cited in Waldrop, 1994, p. 4). No precise maneuver exists to break through the media clutter. The variability theory suggests that as a consumer sees an advertisement in a different environment, various forms of encoding occur. The more varied the encoding, the better the chance of cognitive duration and brand or product memory. Additionally, varying the forms of media used has proven to increase recall (Clow & Baack, 2011).

One way to measure a medium is quantifying effective reach. Murray and Jenkins (1992) define effective reach as, “a minimum of three confirmed vehicle exposures to an individual member of a target group over an agreed-upon time period” (p. 37). Outdoor advertising requires twelve or more exposures per month for effective reach; radio, television, and newspapers require three or more per month; and magazines require three or more per quarter (Murray & Jenkins, 1992).

Marketers must consider effective reach when planning a campaign; if a budget will not allow for the optimal number of appearances, the media campaign will have little effect on sales and brand recognition. However, one important consequence of utilizing target advertising is the ability to allocate more budget dollars to more risky media platforms that have potential to have a high return on investment. A higher initial investment on a media channel that will reach a more direct market is worth every penny (Iyer, Soberman & Villas-Boas, 2005). Just as budget is dependent on the scope of a campaign, so are media channels dependent on the budget.

Effective Ways to Target an Audience

Planning Process

A study at the Campbell Soup Company (Eastlack & Rao, 1989) provided four suggestions to improving an advertising campaign. An advertiser should place greater emphasis on strategic development and evaluation of copy. In fact, consumers do not respond to being told the same thing more often. This leads to the second finding that marketers should continually change their message. This involves paying greater attention to buyer behaviors and the target audience. Thirdly, a campaign should utilize numerous media in order to reach more people and create a greater impact. The Campbell Soup Company research suggested implementing greater differences in advertising weight in budget level throughout a campaign. This all depends on the nature of the product, but all financial decisions must be considered thoughtfully. Lastly, an advertiser must utilize all areas of technology to gain more knowledge of the advertising world.


Examples of Most Effective Campaigns

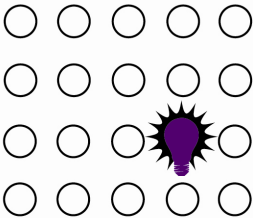
The most effective campaigns in 2010 included Axe, Nike, Google, Old Spice, and Domino's (Wiedemann, 2011). The strategies of each varied, but the similar thread is the focus on targeting a specific group of people and remaining consistent. Top advertisements are not always the campaigns with the biggest budget or most prestigious advertising agency, but the campaigns that consider the audience and create a coherent message that offers the greatest results.


For example, consider advertising agency Wieden and Kennedy's new campaign for Old Spice. The brand had a problem; young potential customers associated Old Spice


Lessons from the Campbell Soup Company*
 *(Eastlack & Rao, 1989)

- Consumers did not respond to being told the same thing more often.


- New, improved and differing advertising messages are critically important.


- Place great emphasis on strategic development and evaluation of advertising copy.


- Constantly evaluate media tools, including unconventional forms, using new technology.



with elderly men. With their loyal elderly male customers literally dying off, Old Spice needed to reach a new market. This included changing the Old Spice stereotype and creating a new reputation among the young generation. Wieden and Kennedy created

“The Man Your Man Could Smell Like” to reach new, young, hip audiences. However, their target was not male.

Wieden and Kennedy realized that women make 80 percent of the household spending decisions and the vast majority of grocery or drugstore purchases. While men use the product, women purchase it (Dougherty, 2012).

Vast research and a specific marketing plan resulted in a highly successful launch, with the television commercial reaching 6.7 million views in 24 hours. Dougherty (2012) says, “Looking at market research, buying behavior and new media allowed Old Spice to explode onto the radars of an entirely new demographic. All it took was figuring out who they were, and giving them something that they enjoyed” (p. 3). Success begins with target identification.

Method

Participants

Ten advertising executives from ten different agencies were selected based on their location, job duties and success of past campaigns. Surveyed agencies are based out of Atlanta, Minneapolis, Chicago, New York City, Cleveland, Richmond, Harrisburg, and Pittsburgh. Each has worked on numerous campaigns across various industries, some creating business-to-consumer campaigns, and others primarily working with business-to-business operations.

Instruments

A list of six questions was sent to each participant, inquiring as to what methods of segmentation and targeting of an audience are most reliable and successful. Questions focused on how each advertiser creates a targeted marketing plan including budget,

channel, and creativity. The questions were primarily open-ended to ensure a full explanation and reasoning for each answer given.

Procedure

The questions were asked in a one-on-one interview by phone or e-mail. The answers were compared and contrasted to determine their correspondence with previous research. While each agency differed, they all contributed knowledge based on experience and varying levels of expertise across different industries.

Results

Budget

The first series of questions focused on budget and the role it plays in planning and executing a campaign. Leah Barrett of Element 79, which is now a part of DDB Chicago, explains that the budget helps determine the scope and scale of communication efforts. She says, “Budget provides a reality check in most campaigns since it forces marketers to prioritize marketing tactics and goals” (L. Barrett, personal communication, August 8, 2012). However, rather than settling on poor tactics when operating on a small budget, marketing teams are forced to be creative while discovering new solutions. Oftentimes, these innovative solutions open new doors to success. Necessity is the mother of invention.

Cassandra Allen of the New York City agency Razorfish agrees that an understanding of the budget leads to a more specified target. She explains, “A smaller budget will encourage the advertising selection to be geographically targeted and more measurable. A larger budget can afford a broader reach and brand-building options” (C. Allen, personal communication, August 8, 2012). Stacey Janicki of Minneapolis-based

Carmichael Lynch uses parameters like budget, markets, and timing to build objectives and strategies. “We look to build an aggressive, yet realistic plan that fits within parameters while working to achieve our objectives. You can be successful on a scrappy budget, but you need to be focused and clients need to be realistic about outcomes relative to budget” (S. Janicki, personal communication, January 1, 2013). Just as a campaign’s tactics depend on the budget, the budget is determined by the campaign’s goals. The two are interdependent.

Before planning begins, the budget must be fully considered. Barry Wilson of Planet Central in Richmond, Virginia, explains the “budget is critical for driving tactical planning and goal expectations” (B. Wilson, personal communication, October 28, 2012). While each campaign’s goals are different, each one seeks a return on investment (ROI). Even if a campaign goal focuses on increasing awareness, the awareness will indirectly increase sales. Every company expects a return on their advertising expenditures, regardless of the size of the budget.

The subsequent question inquired whether the budget greatly impacts the success of a campaign. To this, there was some disagreement. Melanie Querry of Pittsburgh’s Beyond Spots and Dots feels that budget has little impact on the success of a campaign. She believes the campaign’s planning and tactics generate success, not the dollars spent (M. Querry, personal communication, October 5, 2012). Aylie Fifer of Cleveland’s Point to Point agency agrees with Querry. While Fifer recognizes the significant number of variables, she believes a budget works in support of a campaign dependent on the media used. Fifer explains that a television campaign requires a large budget, while a more directed campaign could be achieved with search engine optimization (SEO) or paid

search, which cost much less than a television commercial time slot (A. Fifer, personal communication, September 4, 2012).

On the other hand, Harrisburg-based agency JPL Creative's Jessica Melhorn explains that the budget impacts a campaign's success by limiting research funding and concept testing prior to implementation. Melhorn says, "Smaller budgets force you to rely on past experience and instincts more than direct fact-finding related to the project at hand – sometimes that works, sometimes it doesn't" (J. Melhorn, personal communication, August 8, 2012). Amanda Forgione of Atlanta's Morrison Agency agrees that budget plays a crucial role in campaign success in regard to media spending. She summarizes, "A great idea is worthless if no one sees it" (A. Forgione, personal communication, January 4, 2013). Each campaign will operate on a different budget. It is up to the advertising team to use the budget wisely in a way that will generate the most ROI and goal-reaching results.

How to Target

Next, each participant was asked his or her opinion on the best method to target an audience. Each participant agreed that no universal answer exists. New York City agency Razorfish dedicates an account planning team to segment and refine a target audience. The team uses demographics, psychographics and online behavior tracking to determine the best method of audience segmentation (C. Allen, personal communication, August 8, 2012).

Barry Wilson of Planet Central also utilizes buying behaviors and habits to determine an audience. In general, he has found psychographics to most accurately match a campaign product with its target (B. Wilson, personal communication, October 28,

2012). JPL Creative develops audience personas. Jessica Melhorn says, “The main objective is to define a profile of the target that describes their habits, their motivators and where they live... as it relates to the client’s product or services” (J. Melhorn, personal communication, August 8, 2012). Leah Barrett of Element 79 compares demographic segmentation to a power drill that quickly limits an audience, and psychographics to a chisel that further defines audience insights (L. Barrett, personal communication, August 8, 2012). Often both methods are used to increase the chance of identifying the proper market segment.

The Morrison Agency’s Amanda Forgione says one of the best ways to define a target is through use of consumer profiles. After determining gender age, affluence, technology affinities, hobbies, general interests, profession, and geographical location, her team will create a specific description of a member of their target audience. She provides the example: the target is a middle-aged husband and father who works 9 a.m.-5 p.m. He watches Fox News and spends his weekends with his family or playing golf with his friends. Putting a face to the target helps Forgione’s team understand the audience. A clear understanding of the consumer’s day-to-day life is the best way to build communication channels and a consumer relationship (A. Forgione, personal communication, January 4, 2013).

Stacey Janicki from Carmichael Lynch uses her experience with a Subaru campaign to illustrate the extent of research required to develop a target. Her team labeled the target audience “Experience Seekers,” who are defined as having a strong sense of self and curiosity and are looking for new experiences in life. She says, “They are attentive to the greater good, like being different from the masses, and embody a

sense of optimism and joy in life” (S. Janicki, personal communication, January 1, 2013).

While this information is difficult to determine simply by examining demographic characteristics, Janicki’s team utilizes measurement tools like Mediamark Research and Intelligence (MRI) and Simmons to create a profile picture of the audience. This information is then used to create a full persona including the targets’ thoughts, drives and ambitions.

Bruce Goldman, creative director of Bright Orange Advertising in Richmond, Va., believes the best way to effectively identify and reach a target audience is through behavioral segmentation. When Bright Orange began working with a West Virginia solar panel installation company, he and his team knew to target home owners of higher income within a certain ZIP code. They knew that levels of education correlated with mindsets that are receptive to eco-friendly products and services. By examining behavioral tendencies of people within this target segment, the Bright Orange team discovered that likely clients partook in bird watching and registered in the Democratic party. While the message itself was not related to either of these identifiers, these facts helped to narrow the audience. Their intense research resulted in a ten percent response rate to the direct mailer, compared to an historical average of 1.3 percent, and a 40 percent increase in website traffic (B. Goldman, personal communication, October 4, 2012).

The proliferation of media provides marketers with an inside look into the minds of their target. Gordon Wyner (2005) explains, “Media is now more central to understanding consumers, because of the increase in media stimuli, the degree of interactivity and digitization, consumer self-selection, and the extent to which new media

permeate more sectors of everyday life” (p. 6). The segments’ media usage can be used to target both behaviorally and psychologically. Marketers can leverage this information to reach the target throughout their daily lives and create meaningful touch points.

Importance of Targeting

No matter the industry, product or service, every campaign now relies on targeting to achieve results. Here is what the experts said when asked, “How much weight to do you place on target advertising and direct marketing?”

Cassandra Allen of Razorfish says: “We use targeting technology for all campaigns” (C. Allen, personal communication, August 8, 2012). Razorfish has created Fluent™, a cloud-based software program that allows marketers to target, distribute, and manage campaigns with multiple channels using one application.

Leah Barrett of Element 79 explains: “There is almost always a place for direct marketing or direct response tactics in a marketing plan. The weight given to these tactics is determined by the marketing goals and the strategies upfront, and then fine-tuned via the media used for these lower funnel tactics” (L. Barrett, personal communication, August 8, 2012).

The Morrison Agency’s Amanda Forgione states: “Target marketing is essential in the business-to-business world. We place significant weight on this form of advertising when we are targeting a very finite audience” (A. Forgione, personal communication, January 4, 2013).

Aylie Fifer of Point to Point, a business-to-business agency, explains: “There is a great need for targeted advertising. The industry is very heavily into this right now due to

the technological shifts that have happened over the past five to ten years” (A. Fifer, personal communication, September 4, 2012).

TDH Creative’s Don Brashears says: “Thirty years of experience, everyone targets. Targeting is the most strategic method” (D. Brashears, personal communication, October 15, 2012). The extent of target research necessary will always vary depending on the campaign and advertising budget, but a campaign without direct marketing is like driving through crowded streets while blindfolded; the chances of reaching the desired destination are extremely limited.

Technology and Social Media

The field of communications is in constant flux with new forms of reaching an audience and evolving technology. As the majority of purchasing power shifts toward Millennials, marketers must adapt to the online, social-media lifestyle that Millennials have developed. Leah Barrett understands that digital media can be expertly leveraged in the proper campaign. Commenting on the new channel of social media, Barrett says, “Social media is where most marketing companies are still working to determine best practices for their particular clients or brand” (L. Barrett, personal communication, August 8, 2012).

JPL Creative’s Jessica Melhorn views the advances as an improvement for marketers when used correctly. Melhorn says, “Consumers have a wealth of information at their fingertips, allowing them to be highly educated about a product or service before a brand has the ability to advertise to them” (J. Melhorn, personal communication, August 8, 2012). Marketers must keep constant track of a brand’s online reputation in

order to monitor public opinion and influence the public's brand image. The speed of word-of-mouth can be both a blessing and a curse for marketers.

Amanda Forgione agrees that, as technological advances increase, so does the opportunity to influence the target throughout the purchasing decision. Forgione appreciates the speed at which digital media can be changed and its cost efficiency. She says, "It allows advertisers to test a variety of messages and to constantly adjust and react to market conditions" (A. Forgione, personal communication, January 4, 2013). Melanie Query agrees and says, "Social media absolutely compliments traditional advertising campaigns when executed correctly" (M. Query, personal communication, October 5, 2012). Technology makes information more readily available and helps marketers make sense of consumer behavior.

Most consumer goods websites are already leveraging the amount of detailed consumer information technology offers. For example, Tesco, a home shopping supermarket website in the UK, directs consumers to specific offers based on past buying patterns. Amazon followed their lead and directs shoppers to items related to past transactions. Operating on the idea that past purchase behavior predicts future purchase behavior, these methods can further segment a target audience into the most probable customers (Adams, 2004).

In addition to consumers having the ability to learn about products and services, Melhorn encourages marketers to use the extensive consumer data available via social media. These insights allow marketers to understand the audience by examining their time spent and actions performed on social networks. It is imperative for brand managers

to utilize social media to maximize its potential while reach a growing audience (J. Melhorn, personal communication, August 8, 2012).

Stacey Janicki utilizes digital and social media to specifically target an audience and constantly measure results. She says, “We employ many proprietary tools to listen in on social conversations and measure all digital analytics.” This involves the extent of interaction levels, as well as whether the discussion is positive or negative. Marketers and brands can constantly interact with consumers. Janicki values digital media’s ability to quickly measure, test and change messages if one is not successful. Digital and social media are extremely flexible to fit any campaign and any audience (S. Janicki, personal communication, January 1, 2013).

Barry Wilson of Planet Central warns that using digital and social media for the

sake of being trendy can often be a waste of time, effort and resources. He says that, like any other tactic, digital media must prove its worth. Only when digital media brings a return on investment will it be considered a useful and legitimate communication phenomenon (B. Wilson, personal communication, October 28, 2012). Aylie Fifer agrees that new technology must be taken at face value. Fifer explains, “What is essential is to stay a step ahead of it [technology] and

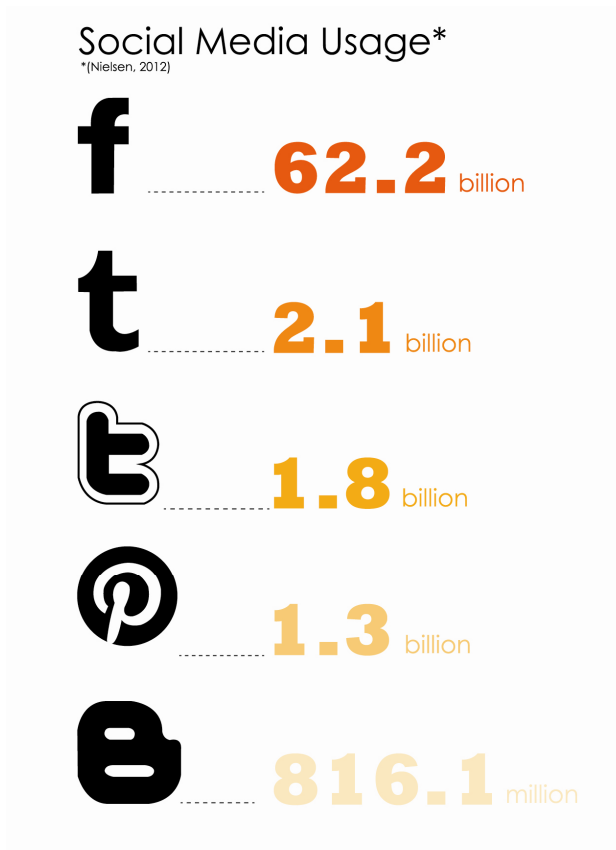


figure out the next trend that will be soon affecting your target audience” (A. Fifer, personal communication, September 4, 2012). Different projects require different tools, and it is the marketers’ duty to master each tool to effectively reach an audience. As far as ROI is concerned, Bruce Goldman warns, “Clicks and likes don’t equal sales” (B. Goldman, personal communication, October 4, 2012). Digital and social media usage must be relevant with a specific purpose to drive sales and increase brand recognition.

Overcoming Clutter

Unfortunately, with advances in technology and constant competition among brands, advertising professionals are facing the challenge of overcoming clutter. With consumers being bombarded with conflicting messages of what brand is superior, marketers must create messages that both grab attention and persuade an audience. Professionals shared their team’s plan to overcome the clutter and create meaningful, successful campaigns.

Cassandra Allen says Razorfish will “target, be relevant, keep it fresh” (C. Allen, personal communication, August 8, 2012). Jessica Melhorn’s team at JPL also plans to create meaningful and relevant messages. Melhorn says, “Firms must be very selective in what tactics are chosen and what content will be communicated for the greatest impact and return on investment” (J. Melhorn, personal communication, August 8, 2012). Barry Wilson agrees that the right message in the right place at the right time is the most effective way to stay relevant to the consumer (B. Wilson, personal communication, October 28, 2012).

Amanda Forgione says, “Knowing your targets’ consumption habits can help cut through. Attacking the problem from an unexpected angle will also help the work stand

out. Being outrageous is not often prudent, but bringing a unique perspective is often a recipe for success” (A. Forgione, personal communication, January 4, 2013). Aylie Fifer suggests marketers constantly search for new, distinctive ways to reach their target while still relying on simple messages to break through clutter and stay memorable (A. Fifer, personal communication, September 4, 2012). Don Brashears knows amusing and emotional messages will reach the target. He says, “People will forget what you say, but not how you make them feel” (D. Brashears, personal communication, October 15, 2012).

Melanie Query relies on significant planning and targeting to reach her audience. She says, “You have to develop marketing campaigns that are extremely strategic to break through the clutter” (M. Query, personal communication, October 5, 2012). A strategic marketing plan is the key to success, while the campaign’s message must be simple, creative and memorable.

Discussion

Each executive agrees that target advertising belongs in every campaign in some capacity. Budget does not dictate the success of a campaign, but it influences the planning process and creativity needed to reach the largest audience. Advertisers must constantly search for new ways to break through the clutter, whether through new channels or new methods of audience segmentation.

In addition to target and direct marketing insights, the marketers were asked to share their greatest advice. Bruce Goldman emphasizes the need of an ad to offer the target something valuable in exchange for their time. Whether amusement or entertainment, news or a solution to a problem, the offer must respect the audience’s

intelligence by making a persuasive argument for why they should take action after viewing an ad (B. Goldman, personal communication, October 4, 2012). Barry Wilson agrees and suggests marketers provide a simple message that gets right to the point. Give the audience credit that they will understand the message, void of overwhelming language and clever clutter (B. Wilson, personal communication, October 28, 2012). Amanda Forgione echoes by telling advertisers to boil the communication down to the most significant, single compelling argument (A. Forgione, personal communication, January 4, 2013).

Jessica Melhorn believes a, “budget spent on understanding and listening to your target audience is never wasted” (J. Melhorn, personal communication, August 8, 2012). Stacey Janicki tells account planners to act as if the client’s money is their money. Make wise decisions, create detailed plans and measure results (S. Janicki, personal communication, January 1, 2013). A campaign that uses a variety of media and capitalizes on those outlets that are most relevant to the target market is more likely to succeed. Wise media usage investments are a core component contributing to the monetary success of a campaign (Pergelova, Prior, & Rialp, 2010).

Human beings’ behavior can be predicted. Leah Barrett encourages marketers to be open to new ideas, but also use past experience to guide campaigns. She says, “Make sure your campaigns are grounded in solid insights and stay true to that core” (L. Barrett, personal communication, August 8, 2012). On the same topic, Stacey Janicki warns that, while lessons can be learned, the advertising landscape is always changing. A marketer must always be searching for new solutions for future success. She says looking at past

success to form future programs is “like fighting a cyberwar by looking at field tactics deployed in World War I.” (S. Janicki, personal communication, January 1, 2013).

Melanie Querry notes that, no matter the media channel used, the creative message is just as important as the location of the ad. She says, “Building a strategic plan on both ends will allow for a successful campaign” (M. Querry, personal communication, October 5, 2012). And how is success measured? Amanda Forgione demands marketers establish clear, obtainable objectives for the campaign. These objectives serve as standards throughout the campaign to measure success (A. Forgione, personal communication, January 4, 2013).

Conclusion

The current market trends demand target and direct marketing in order to break through clutter and reach the proper audience. While each campaign may have a different message and use different channels and create different goals, success requires targeting. Targeting requires research, analytics, extensive planning and constant evaluation. Smart marketers will understand their product, identify how it meets the needs of a particular consumer, and reach that consumer with specific messages. Despite ever-evolving technology and consumer behavior, targeted advertising and direct marketing promises a return on any investment.

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Appendix

Interview Questions

1. In your experience as an advertising professional, what role does budget have when planning an advertising campaign? Do you feel that the budget has a great impact on the success of a campaign? If so, how much?
2. What characteristics do you use to segment an audience (examples: demographics, psychographics, etc.)? In general, which characteristics have you found to be most predictive in matching a customer to a product?
3. How much weight do you place on target advertising/direct marketing?
4. Do you view the advances in technology and social media as an improvement to advertising campaigns or a hindrance to reaching your audience?
5. As advertising becomes more and more prevalent, how do you plan on overcoming the clutter to reach your audience?
6. Based on your most successful campaigns, what is the most valuable advice you could offer? Feel free to be as general or specific as you wish.