

Maximising customer conversations across today's complex media landscape

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Since their customers today live in a multichannel world, brands need to think carefully about how they will use different touchpoints in combination with each other to maximise opportunities to engage with their audiences.

Brands should no longer treat offline and digital channels as discrete offerings, but rather think about how these channels will intersect in the customer journey.

New conversation opportunities

Over the past decade, the rise of digital channels such as mobile and the Web have created new opportunities for marketers to gather information about consumers and have conversations with them.

The question which every marketer should be thinking about is how he or she can entice customers into the circle of digital engagement through offline advertising. There is an excellent opportunity to spark conversation and get to know customers for those brands that get this right.

Broadcast media - especially radio - has long tapped into the audience's desire to participate by running competitions and allowing listeners or viewers to call in. But in the past, users needed to be both at a radio and a landline to take part.

Push-button gratification

Now, it's a simple matter of sending an SMS or browsing a URL to interact with a radio competition or leave a comment for a radio presenter. Digital technologies are changing the audience's expectations. People expect convenience, instant gratification and choice in how they interact with brands.

What this means for marketers is that they need to understand how and why audiences use the many channels they have access to today - print, radio, TV, the Web, mobile Web, SMS, and more. We need to follow where the journey takes our users and support them with the means to interact with us. Perhaps that will be by phone or SMS when the user is listening to an ad on the radio on the way to work, or nearby a browser when he or she spots a billboard on the commute.

Practical tips

Offline advertising should offer users memorable information about how they can interact with the brand. This could be as simple as including the URL for the company website or a Twitter handle in every print and broadcast advert. It's also important to try and anticipate how the audience will respond to an ad if it captures their interest.

Will the potential customer do a search for the brand or product? If so, what will the keywords be that he or she will use? Will this search be done on a smartphone or on a PC? If you've supplied Facebook or Twitter details in your ad, is your social media team ready for the queries that might come in?

Brands should think about the answers to those questions, and think about tactics to get the best results. Which paid search keywords should you buy?

What message should people see when they land on your website? For example, it might be a good idea to have a paid search ad that links to a landing page for your product if your radio campaign is pushing a new car. And if you're expecting a lot of traffic to come from smartphones, make sure your website is mobile-friendly.

A final corollary: online channels can also be used to drive traffic to offline channels. By using the mass reach and visual impact of rich media ads, you can generate awareness and interest in your product which can then be converted by either a call to action radio ads, digital ads, prints ads or even in-store activations.

ABOUT IAN DRUMMOND

Ian Drummond brings his passion for media and marketing to the task of leading Mediamark's growth beyond its roots in FM radio. While heading up the convergence division at Mediamark he was responsible for the creation and execution of multimedia solutions that drove growth for Mediamark and delivered exceptional business value to the company's clients.

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