

Effective targeting through programmatic ad buying

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The surge in user-generated content through social media, podcasts, videos and blogs means that advertisers actually have "too much information" at their fingertips, which can become useless.

Today, the sheer volume of data available means that advertisers are not able to sift through all of this content efficiently, resulting in consumers spending a considerable amount of time dismissing, filtering and blocking so called "influencers" from their news feeds.

As people continue to evolve the way that they consume content, brands will face an uphill battle to correctly target audiences. So, in my opinion, the programmatic media buying model needs to be relooked at in order to remain relevant.

Just like consumers have become publishers of content, brands too have also become publishers and are therefore looking to enhance their expertise in content-driven marketing. For brands to succeed in the programmatic/content marketing era, they must realise that customers don't care about products or services; they care about what they want and need. So by creating interesting stories your customers are passionate about, they actually pay attention to you.

How content marketing fits into programmatic ad buying

In the digital advertising world, brands are faced with an overwhelming level of audience fragmentation. This means that technology that can simplify the process of making adverts more contextual and relevant - based on individual preference and permission - will become a welcomed sense of relief.

This is where programmatic buying fits in, as it brings order to this fragmentation.



@gajus via [123RF](#)

Marketers can combine customer interactions across multiple channels into a single dashboard, and then use that dashboard to plan how to start a relevant conversation with the audience. Through the efficient dissecting and analysis of data, marketers can now designate 'worth' to every impression. Another plus point is that the consumer will actually receive messages that are relevant.

The programmatic food chain

When it comes to implementing programmatic advertising, brands can approach an Agency Trading Desk (ATD) who buys and re-sells ad space, and functions as an independent working unit. A Demand-Side Platform (DSP) is technology used to

manage and optimise ad campaigns - this means that ATDs work in combination with DSPs.

One of the most popular forms of programmatic buying is Real-Time Bidding (RTB), where advertisers bid on available inventory in an auction-based environment.

Following the economic rules of supply and demand, this should be a more efficient process and allows for spending across multiple publishers. It also offers more control over optimisation, and more advanced audience-targeting so you can look for a similar audience or "look alike" audience to the one you already have - enhancing the success rate of your campaign.

For some though, it may seem like the food chain has become too fat. This is why we are seeing brands with large media budgets tending not to rely on ATDs but rather on establishing their own dashboards, so they have more control over their spend and results.

The choice is really yours to make, but it is important to keep in mind that an agency with a track record in programmatic buying will have rich audience data to draw on and will understand what technology and data solutions its clients need to achieve the best possible ROI.

Sifting through the clutter

However, be careful as there are a number of fraudulent sites across exchanges that generate so-called traffic by bots. For a marketer whose KPIs include reach and clicks, choosing quality sites may then decrease these KPIs for them.

The biggest issue with fraud is that there is no significant economic reason for anyone to do something about it. Everyone in the media ecosystem is still getting paid, even if that means impressions being served on fraudulent sites. But, to my mind, this also presents an opportunity for auditing firms or industry bodies (such as IAB or MMA) to play an active role in ensuring fair practice and transparency.

Another big issue is the fact that focus sometimes is too skewed on reach rather than engagement.

Important questions that need to be considered are: "How much time are visitors spending on these sites? Are they clicking away from the page before an ad even loads? Are they simply scrolling and leaving?" Engagement and dwell time are an important component in creating the customer experience and choosing sites that show their visitors spend a significant amount of time consuming trustworthy and credible content are critical success factors.

The future

A [report](#) by Magna Global forecasts that the global programmatic ad market will grow from \$12bn in 2013 to more than \$32bn in 2017.

So looking ahead, we have an opportunity to learn from the mistakes in other markets and create a unique online media environment. This will mean using technology to its full advantage - as this is how we will create stronger customer engagement and promote local content - all while ensuring advertising is contextual, provides full transparency and makes sure that programmatic buying is used for its purpose.

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