

Media path to persuasion: budget, reach alone no longer enough!

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The 'supreme law', requiring media planners to make their decisions solely on budget and reach alone, may no longer be valid in today's complex business environment. "One of the key skills of media planning is the assessment of a multitude of factors that influence the intra-media and inter-media decision," Freshly Ground Insights (FGI) MD Brad Aigner said late last week in Sandton, Johannesburg.

"This is the 'art and science' of media planning," he added.

Knowledge

Aigner was presenting the findings of a study, conducted by his organisation and commissioned by Ads24, which revealed that ultimately it is knowledge of different media types and media brands that enable media planners to make rationale and sound decisions of which media to choose.

The FGI study found that consumers typically rely on media channels and media brands to deliver against six primary information needs:

- Introduce
- Entertain
- Educate
- Inform
- Compare
- Persuade

"Media planners know that the intrinsics and extrinsics of different media types lend themselves to the effective delivery of different types of information to consumers," he said.

Key 'information delivery roles'

The FGI study, which identified and quantified key 'information delivery roles' played by different media types, also unearthed deep insights into how different media types work together.

"There is a direct correlation between the generic information delivery roles and the specific advertising information roles

that different media channels play in the lives of consumers," Aigner revealed.

"In the media-path-to-persuasion model, every media channel and media brand delivers against the six primary information needs of consumers to some extent," he said. "However, different media channels and media brands are relatively more or less effective in delivering against the six information types.

Use media mixes

"Ultimately the goal of advertisers should be to utilise media mixes, where each channel in the mix plays a clear and positively differentiated role in the media path to persuasion."

An example of a weak media mix would be when two or more media types combined perform the same or similar roles in the media path to persuasion, the study found.

An example of a strong media mix (combination of TV and newspaper advertising in the retail category) would be where two or more media types combined perform different but complimentary roles in the media path to persuasion.

Strong and effective role

The research indicated that, when combined with TV, newspapers play a particularly strong and effective role in lifting the 'Inform', 'Compare' and 'Persuade' phases. "Newspapers deliver incremental value at the end of the path to persuasion, when combined with TV," he said.

In an environment where measurability and accountability have become the buzz words, Aigner told the audience gathered at the Da Vinci Hotel that buyers of advertising space are expecting accountability from media owners as trading conditions toughen.

"Many media owners have not been accountable in the past because everyone was making money and laughing, so there was no need to be accountable," he admitted.

Measuring ROI not so easy

However, despite the advertisers' U-turn demanding accountability and measurability from media owners, he warned that measuring return on investment (ROI) might not be as easy as it sounds.

"It's like a holy grail," Aigner, who has worked in the media industry for over 20 years, noted. Nevertheless, he said measurability is critical to media owners wanting to retain their shares in the market.

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Issa Sikiti da Silva is a winner of the 2010 SADC Media Awards (print category). He freelances for various media outlets, local and foreign, and has travelled extensively across Africa. His work has been published both in French and English. He used to contribute to Bizcommunity.com as a senior news writer.

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