



Role and The Future of Media Planning

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Media, Audience, Strategy, Planning, Advertising

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MEDIA PLANNING

Media Planning is a very important component of the Marketing Strategy of an organization. Media Planning is defined as "Process of designing a scheduling plan that shows how advertising time and space in selected media and vehicles contribute to the achievement of marketing objectives in an advertising campaign".

Media planning, in general terms, is a tool that allows the advertiser to select the most appropriate media to communicate the message in sufficient frequency towards the maximum number of potential customers at the lowest cost.

The two most basic words in Media Planning are:

1. Medium:

A medium is a carrier and deliverer of Advertisements. It is a broad general category of carriers such as Newspapers, Television, Radio, Internet, Outdoor, Direct Mail, etc.

2. Vehicle:

It is a specific carrier within a Media category. So a Zee TV would be the vehicle in the category of TV. Many a time a specific programs or sections within a medium may be termed as a vehicle. For example, a "Kyunki saas bhi..." on Star Plus would be the vehicle in the Television category.

TYPES OF MEDIA USED IN ADVERTISING

The types of media used in Advertising can be broadly classified into:

1. Traditional or Mass Media:

TV, Radio. Idea to reach large audience.

2. Niche Media:

Cable TV, Direct mail, etc. Reach the target audience with specific demographics, narrowly defined target audience.

3. Non-Conventional Media:

Internet.

MEDIA PLANNING PROCEDURE

As mentioned earlier, Media planning is a component of the Marketing strategy of the organization. Therefore, marketing considerations must precede Media Planning. Media planning on the whole answers a lot of questions like "How many prospects do I need to Reach?". "In which medium should I place the Ads?", etc.

In the media strategy the target audience must be defined more clearly and thoroughly.

1. Target audience and advertisement must fit each other.

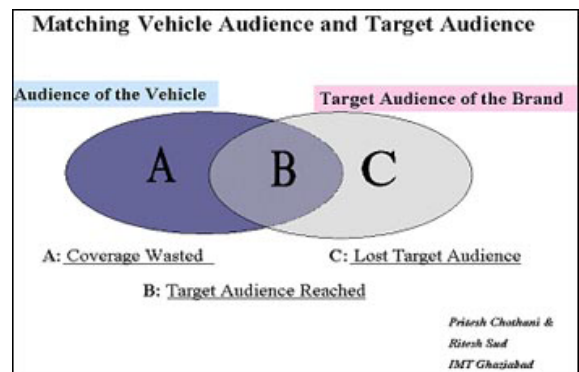
- Kind of argumentation, esthetics, used language etc.
- Appropriate prominent endorsers (e.g., Shah Rukh Khan for Pepsi)

2. Advertising might communicate to different target audiences with different objectives, e.g., Increase product sales in group 14-29, Increase brand awareness and image

in group 30+

3. Reaching target audiences by mass media advertising means: matching...

- Target audience of advertisement and
- (Factual) audience of vehicle



To increase the value derived by the advertiser, the intersection 'B' should be increased by identifying the target audience of the brand and the audience reached by the brand.

SOME ESSENTIAL TERMS IN MEDIA PLANNING

The main objectives of Advertising are:

Inform, Persuade and Remind.

Media Planning is the subset of the Advertising Strategy, which in turn is the subset of the overall Marketing Strategy.

In the field of Media Planning one encounters the following terms quite often:

1. Reach:

The proportion of the audience should be reached with the advertising message during a specified period. It is the number of different recipients exposed to at least one advertisement during the specified period of a campaign (usually four weeks)

2. Frequency:

How frequently are the recipients being exposed to message? In other words it is the average number of times an advertisement reaches each recipient in a given period.

3. Weight:

The amount of total advertising is needed to accomplish advertising objectives.

4. Continuity:

The amount of advertising budget being allocated over the period. There are basic types of ways in which the advertising budget is allocated: Continuous Scheduling, Pulsing and Flighting.

USE OF TRADITIONAL MEDIA IN THE ONLINE SPACE

First there were hyperlinks. Next there were buttons. Then we had tiles. Following that there were banners. Now we have pay-per-click search. These have served as the tools used in advertising in the online space.

Over the years, a lot of other ad formats have come online. We've got large display ads that take prominent positions on a web page or are served in the transition of clicking from one page to another. There is streaming audio that is served either as part of a banner; or it is served either before or after an audio contents stream. And there is video.

As the demand for these formats grows by the day, it is quite interesting to note that these formats have originated in the traditional offline format. The online arena now offers advertisers to use in one medium many of the tools and strategies used in the traditional arena.

The web has more or less become an environment of convergence. Broadband has brought to online the ability to generate and serve an increasingly complex array of advertising formats.

Lets us study a few traditional media and see how they now play an important role in the online arena.

Television/Video

Streaming video content is now a given online. Though there are still the occasional buffering issues, most online video content now serves as smooth as an early Spring run-off.

Many players in the television industry are now offering their content online in the video format and charging the users for the same. Mainly the news channels like NDTV, Aaj Tak, etc use this platform to deliver the content and it is a very sound business model for them. At the same time some select portion of a particular event or program is available online free. For example, select clippings of 'Performances' in the Filmfare Awards were available free on their website.

Video is going to become the preeminent online ad format in the months and years to come. But questions about how it is to be evaluated alongside the rest of the online media communications package remains to be determined definitively.

Print

Large display ads and banners have existed in the online space for quite some time now. And now with more data transfer ability these can be put to better use than just as an online banner or display. They have to be treated differently. Not all online ad vehicles can be treated like print.

A lot of prints content in the online format have a shelf life more than the traditional medium. With more and more people using the search engines, the data that may be old yet relevant to the user could be ideal for advertisements. Therefore, an article on, say "Different types of meditation techniques" would have a longer life, so would the advertisement on that web page.

However, for a property that behaves a lot like print (e.g financial news and newspaper sites, et cetera), online inventory should be sold much like print inventory: a fixed position that exists on a page for the life of the issue.

Radio

Streaming audio content is now online. Though there are still the occasional buffering issues, most online audio content are now easy to access. There are a lot of people who now stream audio content on a regular basis. According to one of the leading research agencies in US, there are over 34 million people who have listened to the radio online or have streamed audio content in the course of a month; nearly 12 million of them do so every day.

However in India the popularity of Radio on the Internet is relatively low. However, a large scope does exist in the field on online Radio and audio formats.

WHAT KEEPS THE ADVERTISERS AWAY FROM THE ONLINE WORLD?

During the dot com boom, online media planners were convinced that the online medium had earned its place at the brand marketing table, alongside other media. Post-dot com bust, media planners came to realize that purchase habits of the consumers did not change so did the well-established business models overnight.

Just as abruptly as it started, the dot com land grab ended in late 2000. Most brand marketers fled from the online media space upon realizing that web surfers weren't so overwhelmed with glee upon the sight of one of their ad banners that they would stop whatever they were doing, click, and buy their product immediately.

The pendulum swung the other way - big time. Many online media execs went back to traditional planning. Agencies rolled back their online media capabilities until they were almost nonexistent.

However, online media has the ability to brand and that the changing media landscape would in the future force most brand marketers to reconsider online media as a viable channel.