

MOBILE

Marketers getting more adept at mobile targeting, but challenges loom

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Targeting brings rewards and challenges.

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While recent mobile campaigns show a more sophisticated grasp of custom audience creation methods, marketers need to overcome challenges related to efficiently collecting, storing and accessing data at scale to gain a complete picture of a consumer and the likelihood he or she will engage with a particular advertisement.

As ad providers align their offerings to create the most value for agencies and brands, overcoming obstacles to effective hyper-targeting has become one of the most critical issues of the mobile advertising industry. The challenges point to the need for marketers to develop in-house educational programs that can lead to sharper mobile targeting strategies.

“The biggest challenge for brands is finding technology enablers with the direct access to significant reach across a variety of publisher and application verticals,” said Larry Moores, vice president of consumer analytics and reporting for [Opera Mediaworks](#). “Lots of companies will talk about their reach but often this is gained via their position in a long daisy chain of networks closer to the user than they are.”

“The result is the actual impressions available to the brand can be either far less than anticipated or made available far later in the user experience,” he said. “That is, they can't capitalize on early-session impressions.”

Targeting parameters

An Opera Mediaworks report on custom audience creation methods recommends that brands integrate data through four core activities: unleashing contextual information with segmentation, refining audiences with behavioral insights, accelerating into real time with machine learning and measurement strategies and being transparent about privacy.

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Marketers are leveraging highly specific targeting parameters.

In some of Opera Mediaworks' markets, more than 85 percent of campaigns are run using highly-specific targeting parameters, pointing to the increase in relevant advertising delivery being driven by machine-learning and associated practices.

The growth is due to a combination of factors. For one, increased mobile penetration and usage means there is more data available for profiling/look-a-liking. Secondly, increased spend and interest in mobile means there is money available to fund investment in audience creation at scale as well as more demand for the specific audiences that come from that investment.

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“Many networks have heavily-skewed audience profiles that emphasize one type of audience over another,” Mr. Moores said. “For example, some providers may have most of their users coming to them via a news or sports application thereby missing the contextual insights from a broader base of users.”

Marketers' gradual dropping of the time-worn spray-and-pray brand awareness strategy to embrace more sophisticated leveraging of data, is necessary, not just to reach specific audiences, but to furnish proof of campaign performance.

The legacy of the post recession adoption of programmatic buying methods to decrease costs and increase scale and efficiency, especially among hard-hit consumer packaged goods brands, is a new focus on hyper-targeting a product to obtain more valuable measurements of results.

The reward is a guide in determining – and proving – what works, before setting budgets.

Web cookies

Strictly defined, mobile audiences are consumers who access content and see advertising on their personal mobile device, generally using identifiers that are different

than cookies.

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Pinterest offers advanced ad targeting.

The mobile audience experience is generally categorized as a one-to-one ad experience – the holy grail for advertisers – versus the many-to-one experience of desktop or TV viewing.

From an advertiser's perspective, mobile audiences are made up of individual consumers that can be reached on the go, wherever they travel, and therefore targeted at the point of sale.

Reflecting the public's embrace of mobile, The Marketing Arm is exploring programmatic creative, where it creates assets per audience segment and dynamically generates personalized native advertisement to in-store partnerships with vendors such as EyeQ, which provide facial recognition technology that can serve personalized content.

A case in point is EA's Madden 15 campaign. It partnered closely with Facebook and created 32 separate instances of creative based on NFL fan affinity and delivered personalized creative to further connect with fans.

"The key is to identify and segment the target audience, create viable look-a-like clusters and test, test, test to see what truly resonates and continually optimize," said Tom Edwards with [The Marketing Arm](#), Dallas. "It is also important to understand the distribution channels.

"There is a difference between highly targeted platforms such as Facebook and opt-in platforms such as BuzzFeed and SnapChat and how you structure your programs," he said.

One of the biggest thing to keep in mind is that the majority of mobile activity and user attention occurs in-app, where cookies (a key component to desktop targeting) do not work.

"Several challenges remain related to data quality and integrity," said Josh Stivers, vice president of business development for RhythmOne, which offers a unified platform to deliver brand-safe, cross-screen advertising at scale. "Foremost is knowing how the mobile data targeting provider is validating that their targeting data is accurate."

Confusing location

Another challenge marketers must address is confusing location and audience.

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Facebook's Place Tips service.

"We see vendors convincing brands that where you are tells you who you are, and that's just misguided," said Chuck Moxley, chief marketing officer for [4INFO](#). "So target first on audience, and then use location for context and relevance to change the creative or ad

unit type.

“For example, if a person is at home on their iPad, they might be very interested in viewing a video and doing competitive comparison research on a new product purchase,” he said.

“But when they are near a store, that’s a complete disconnect to try to get them view a video or compare competitors.

“Better is to deliver a location ad or promotion,” he said.

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