

MARKETING

Unified cross-platform strategy, consumer control enhances ad recall

October 20, 2017



Understanding consumer behavior at the neural level will create better ads. Image credit: Farfetch

By JEN KING

NEW YORK Successfully breaking through the noise with impactful digital advertising is an ongoing challenge for brands, but considering consumers' neural behavior can help ensure a unit is effective.

Subscribe to **Luxury Daily**
Plus: Just released
State of Luxury 2019 **Save \$246 ▶**

Consumers are exposed to a massive amount of digital advertising each day, which has caused marketers to continuously develop top-notch creative to get noticed. During Luxury Interactive 2017's "Neural Pathways of Great Creative Across Platforms and Mobile" on Oct. 16, an executive from the Advertising Research Foundation (ARF) explained how to create impactful campaigns based on how the brain responds to advertisements.

"[Marketers] really need to find the right balance, the right content and stay away from bad content," said Horst Stipp, executive vice president of global & ad effectiveness at the [Advertising Research Foundation](#).

"Measure your various strategies," he said. "A lot of companies have not really optimized their spending. Using neural science methods really explains what's going on [in today's advertising]."

"We feel very sure about these research findings, you know how it is, there are science skeptics all around us. A little degree of skepticism is always appropriate, but in this instance we have a lot of confirmation."

Kicker effect

Founded in 1936, the ARF's mission is to further, through research, the scientific practice of advertising. A recent prompt set out to determine how advertising works in today's cross-platform world.

By understanding how consumers digest the content they come across, marketers will be able to improve output and have better returns for their clients.

In answering how advertising works, ARF found that cross-platform campaigns outperform those present on a single platform. In a nutshell, a unified campaign repurposed and customized for multiple social networks and television, for instance, is better received by consumers.

Understandably, if a consumer comes across a unit on two platforms, it will be more effective than if the campaign

was only seen once.

Mr. Stipp explained that this is not only about adding reach, but a "kicker effect."

A kicker effect is what happens in the mind of the consumer when an advertisement is present on different platforms. If the message is muddled, the consumer can get confused, but when ads are well coordinated and throughout, recall and memory is enhanced.

When a digital ad is accompanied by a television unit, for example, the likelihood of both being remembered by a consumer is heightened. But, since digital ad spend is now higher than television budgets, the kicker effect has seen a decline because there are less campaigns being designed for TV.



Despite its effectiveness, TV budgets have declined. Image credit: Printemps

Per ARF's research in 2016, 44 percent of campaigns did not customize ad creative to specific platforms, and only 38 percent unified creative to a given platform.

The concept of campaign customization can also be applied to video ads. The ARF has found that custom mobile video ads are far more effective than those repurposed from television.

When video is customized, it results in better viewability as well as higher user experience and engagement metrics than if content is simply repurposed.

Mr. Stipp emphasized the importance of this finding, championing customized execution for each platform, especially as mobile budgets and time spent on devices is increasing.

Consumer control

Despite the importance of understanding how ads are best recalled by platform placement and customization, challenges still remain.

These challenges include avoiding ad blockers, getting noticed and mastering creative. Ad blockers, especially in Asia, are a growing threat, but creative, and getting that creative noticed, are the most important drivers.

To get noticed, Mr. Stipp suggests mobile ads that leverage early branding through an emotional arc and early call to action using brand involvement as a hook.

But, this is not enough to have a campaign be noticed and for the consumer experience to be positive. Delivery is essential, and format and the impact of audio must be taken into consideration during planning.

Marketers have the choice of pre-roll, in-stream, pop-up and incentivized payoff placements, but the ARF has found, based on metrics such as click, eye gaze, heart rate and facial movements, any ad deemed as disruptive is quickly avoided.

According to the ARF, pop-up and in-stream ad units are avoided much faster, resulting in lower brand recall, than pre-roll and payoff ads. The latter format sees the greatest increase in positive emotions, primarily because consumers enjoy perks and rewards.

Also, the desire to ad block is lower when the consumer is in control.

Audio control also has an impact on recall and reception. When examining the three audio options, muted auto play, auto play with audio and click-to-play, ARF found that consumers prefer click-to-play because they remain in control of the experience.

An unexpected audio unit equals lower ad recall because when a consumer is annoyed that they have been disrupted, the neural response is to stop listening.

To summarize how best to advertise across platforms and mobile based on neural behavior, Mr. Stipp suggests, "When you're in a mobile environment, and you're more and more likely to be in a mobile environment; brand early, do not disrupt, or try to disrupt as little as possible.

"If you think your product and creative are the best that's ever happened to consumers in their lives, maybe you can disrupt a little bit," he said.

"Try to leverage incentives, but the most important thing is, give users control. Give them the feeling that they are in control, that they are in command. Let them control the audio, please don't force it on them."

© 2020 Napean LLC. All rights reserved.

Luxury Daily is published each business day. Thank you for reading us. Your **feedback** is welcome.