

COLUMNS

Mobile measurement and what to do about it

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By **Mike Ricci**

A recent Advertising Age piece titled “What to Know About the Promise and Perils of Mobile Metrics” joined a chorus of media that has recently been focused on the subject of mobile measurement. Or, more accurately, the continuing perception of the complexity of mobile measurement.

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The **Ad Age** piece by **Primary Impact** chief of insights **Kathryn Koegel** was, of course, preceded by some important research undertaken by entities such as Forrester Research, eMarketer, Interactive Advertising Bureau and Aberdeen Research. The research all focused on the nascent state of mobile program measurement and the challenges this presents to marketers who are tasked to drive strategy and demonstrate program ROI from this critically important medium.

All these pieces share a few common threads and they are:

Measuring mobile effectively is hard work: It involves breaking down many of the distinct mobile data silos that exist – SMS, mobile Web, applications and QR codes – and finding a solution capable of measuring all those key channels effectively.

Mobile marketers are flying blind: Mobile largely is not currently being measured by most brands. And where it is, brands and agency partners are struggling to effectively demonstrate ROI because they lack the data to do so.

Mobile is an experiment: Brands continue to treat mobile as experimental despite the fact that it has become a far more critical part of most programs today and will be even more so going forward.

What mobile strategy?: Mobile data is not being used to drive strategy and prioritize spend – though it absolutely should be.

More mobile, more problems: The mobile measurement problem will only grow larger as smartphones and tablets continue their explosive growth and new generations of mobile enterprise applications spur even greater mobile data consumption.

Interestingly enough, the Ad Age piece highlighted the fact that mobile is arguably the most measureable of all mediums, and yet marketers have not begun to embrace it in that fashion.

Most marketers remain fearful of the complexity that exists with regard to mobile metrics, or are failing to treat it with the same level of rigor and sophistication they apply to all other digital programs such as search, display, site, email and social.

Fortunately, there are strong indications that these attitudes are beginning to change.

Posting progress

The first and most obvious signs are the efforts underway at the IAB and Mobile Marketing Association to advance the issue of measurement.

The MMA recently launched a mobile analytics committee that includes executives from mobile brands and thought leaders such as Coca-Cola, Microsoft, AOL, Research In Motion, Expedia, Jumptap, comScore, Merkle, Wunderman, Zumobi and Groundtruth.

Each company committed itself to advancing the cause of effective measurement because they recognize that trustworthy, meaningful measurement is crucially important to the future of this industry.

The second indication was Mediapost's recent Mobile Insiders Summit.

At the event earlier this month, mobile measurement – or, lack thereof – became the subject du-jour.

Brands such as Century 21, OfficeMax, Travelocity, Kayak, Chipotle and countless others revealed that solving mobile measurement was their single greatest frustration and

opportunity rolled into one.

If visibility, consensus and support to elevate the importance of a given issue are leading indicators, I think we can all expect brands, agencies and technology partners to really begin addressing this subject in a meaningful manner going forward.

That means nothing but good things for anyone that lives within the mobile ecosystem because, as everyone recognizes, there are massive opportunities that reside in understanding the insights that flow from this key data source.

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