

COLUMNS

Demand more from your mobile ad spend: Measure what matters

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An open question to mobile marketers: Why are we not talking more about measuring mobile advertising ROI based on sales lift? And not just for mobile application downloads and other mobile transactions – I am talking offline and online sales. Not just CPA campaigns, but traditional brand advertising as well.

To justify ad spend, any marketer must show the effectiveness of a set campaign by proving ROI.

Gauge lift

When you see exactly how measureable mobile advertising is, you unlock its potential and open a greater potential for ad spend.

To know they have created successful, effective campaigns that enhance the bottom line, brands must use mobile advertising that is measureable. This is not negotiable. Yet marketers still have difficulty finding the Holy Grail: the ability to measure actual sales lift resulting from mobile advertising.

Across the industry, companies often compete to invent the latest and greatest, sexiest mobile ad measurement metric.

While I appreciate creativity as much as the next guy, these metrics are often of questionable value. Why provide a slew of metrics that do nothing to aid in decision-making? Are these metrics completely useless? Absolutely not.

But it is vital to distinguish their real value, which lies in their ability to provide insight along the path to purchase. Their value also lies in tweaking the campaign to improve results. However, they do not justify the original allocation of ad spend.

The only thing capable of that justification is an increase in sales lift.

To brands, I offer advice: be wary of companies claiming to make mobile measurable until they clearly define what they are measuring and how it demonstrates real ROI.

Measure for measure

During Advertising Week this fall in New York, I was pleasantly surprised to see “Measurement for Mobile” as the subject of numerous panels and presentations. I was enthusiastic that the industry was on point with what I have been thinking. The demand for mobile measurement is here.

For months, I have felt like the lone voice in the mobile wilderness shouting about the need for marketers to be able to measure true ROI for mobile advertising spending to finally catch up to the fast growth of consumer adoption.

When I say fast growth, I mean it. In fact, 54 percent of U.S. consumers say the first thing they do upon waking up is check their mobile phone, and 84 percent of all shoppers are using their mobile devices to help them shop while inside the store.

It seems just a few months ago the industry focused all attention on how to solve the mobile ad targeting challenges resulting from the lack of cookies. How far we have come.

Still, the numerous panels throughout Advertising Week that originally excited me all resulted in the same disappointing conclusions: advertisers are still putting focus on taps, click-throughs and app downloads, regardless of the fact that for most products and brands these aspects do not tell the whole story.

The fallacy remains that while measurement is important, the mobile industry remains unable to accurately measure ROI through actual sales lift. Why is this so important?

Because it shows mobile advertising works and drives business results.

When we measure what matters, we show how mobile works, we can reach its true potential for advertising – one that is so far beyond what most marketers are doing.

The only thing that will truly unlock mobile advertising spending is the ability to measure actual sales lift – online and offline – resulting from people being exposed to targeted mobile ads.

Anything short of this will fail to give marketers the confidence they need to make mobile advertising an integral part of their comprehensive advertising plan.

If you are an advertiser who is nodding in agreement, then I applaud you and encourage

you to demand nothing less than measuring actual sales lift to justify your ad spend.

Unfortunately, despite the rising din of noise about mobile measurement, only a handful of companies are able to actually deliver meaningful measurement.

Ring of truth

As I said earlier, be wary of companies claiming to make mobile measurable.

Be sure to peek under the covers to make certain that they not only measure sales lift at the cash register, but that they measure precisely. This is key to measuring your success.

Some vendors can tell you how many people visited a store after seeing an ad, but if visits increase while sales fall, is this ad worth your investment? Of course not.

Measure what matters: actual sales lift, online and offline and know what you are getting in return for your ad spend.

As interests are piqued, prepare to hear from more vendors claiming to offer mobile measurement.

One vendor who announced a new measurement suite at Advertising Week said in the Huffington Post, “With the right type of tracking in place, it's possible to show the impact that a mobile advertisement had on a consumer's online behavior, and eventually, we will be able to tie everything together and provide a holistic view on the impact a single mobile ad made on the entire purchasing process.”

MARKETERS: ARE YOU content waiting for “eventuality,” considering the technology already exists?

If you are not leveraging mobile advertising now, you are missing out on a huge piece of the pie. The technology exists to gauge how it is driving sales.

Make sure you thoroughly investigate all of your options before putting your mobile plan in place, so that you gain the ability to measure what really matters: results.

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