

Dynamics of a Digital Advertising Campaign

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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses the process and challenges of developing and executing a digital advertising campaign. It delves upon the intricacies and relevance of email campaign, blogging, social media campaign, content marketing, search advertising, banner displays and search engine optimization (SEO) in the overall digital advertising campaign. The discussion elaborates the justification for shifting from traditional advertising media to digital advertising, the imperatives of convincing the top management for digital campaign, the rationale for allocating a portion of advertising budget to digital media, the pros and cons of in-house and outsourced digital advertising campaign, the crucial importance of content for digital campaigns, the dynamics of back-end support through an efficient call-centre, and the measures of success of a digital advertising campaign. The practical suggestions and insights shared in the paper are likely to help the marketers in conceptualizing, designing and implementing an effective digital advertising campaign for their firms.

Introduction

Advertising is also keeping pace with the way of life undergoing sea change all over the world. As humans are going digital in most of their communication and interactions, advertising is also shifting to the digital space. The traditional skills of managing to advertise are not sufficient. Organizations and marketers need to update themselves to learn and create effective digital advertising campaigns. There are only a few studies (e.g. Leppäniemi *et. al.*, 2010; Wertime & Fenwick, 2011; Chaffey & Smith, 2013; Ryan, 2016) available to guide through the intricacies of digital advertising. This paper, based on in-depth interviews with key informants involved in the planning and execution of digital advertising campaigns provides practical guidelines and insights into the dynamics of digital advertising.

Process of Developing a Digital Advertising Campaign

A company can effectively develop the digital advertising campaign by following the steps mentioned below.

Convincing the Decision Makers

Usually, the decision of the promotional budget is taken at the top management level in most of the organizations. Top managers of the conventional companies have a bias towards advertising on traditional broadcast media due to their affinity and past experience. Traditional marketers initially have a lot of apprehensions regarding the performance of digital advertising. It may be difficult to convince the senior management for allocating a portion of the promotional budget towards digital media. Young executives can convince the top management by discussing the advantages of digital media such as targeted reach, measurability, flexibility and controllability. Senior management of the company can be exposed to the presentations and interactions with professional advertising agencies. Data supporting the media consumption habits of the target audience in favor of digital media can convince the management. There are a lot of reports depicting the increasing use of digital media. One of the major challenges with all other media advertising is the measurement of results. It is possible to measure the results of digital advertising. Digital advertiser has full control and can exercise the flexibility while taking the key advertising decisions like the timing, location, type of person to whom the advertisement will be shown, frequency of the advertisement, experimenting the different versions of the advertisement, changing the budget of the advertisement. Discussions, deliberations, data and the case studies may help in removing doubts in the minds of the senior management.

Defining the Objectives and Budget for Digital Advertising

Majority of the companies advertising for the first time on digital media define only the sales-oriented objectives. Professional digital marketing agencies can facilitate the companies in defining the communication-oriented objectives such as awareness to be created in terms of impressions (number of times the advertisement will be shown), interest shown in terms of clicks (number of times the advertisement is clicked), desire exhibited in terms of leads (number of visitors sharing their contact details) and finally the action in terms of conversions (number of people actually buying the product or service).

Most of the first-time digital advertisers define the budget arbitrarily based on affordability. Conventional companies usually allocate a certain percentage of the promotional budget to digital advertising. Professional digital advertisers prefer the objective and task method for defining the promotional budget. This method identifies the tasks to be accomplished for achieving the defined objectives. Further, advertisers can calculate the costs of accomplishing the tasks. Most of the digital media platforms help in calculating the cost. Depending on the tasks, the budget for digital advertising can further be allocated to content marketing, banner display, search engine advertising, social media advertising, blogging, email marketing and search engine optimization.

Hiring Digital Advertising Agency

A company can develop digital advertising on its own or can hire a professional advertising agency. Developing the campaign itself may require the hiring of the competent, experienced and committed personnel. Usually, new digital advertisers prefer to hire digital advertising agency. Finding the appropriate digital advertising

agency requires a lot of homework by the company. Company executives can watch the social media, blogs, and digital media of the competitors. They can shortlist the impressive digital campaigns of competitors and identify their advertising agencies. They may invite these advertising agencies for presentation and discussion with the senior management. A company may give an idea of the objectives and budget to the prospective advertising agencies. Agencies usually present the current digital media status of the company and propose the solutions for achieving the objectives. Senior management should select the digital advertising agency based on the idea, reach, ability to achieve the objectives and the cost involved. Majority of the digital advertising agencies charge the fees in the range of 10 to 20 percent of the total advertising budget for developing and executing the campaign. Terms and conditions regarding the time-schedule of the campaign, payments, confidentiality of information and the expected results must be clearly discussed and mentioned in the agreement.

Preparation for Digital Marketing Campaign

The organization should nominate a marketing professional or committee to coordinate with the digital marketing agency. Establishing a professional website, social media pages and the call center are pre-requisite for developing a digital advertising campaign. The company has to share access to its website, social media pages and other digital media properties with the digital marketing agency.

One of the major tasks involved is setting up the customer care center for responding to the queries generated through digital advertising. The company needs to buy the toll-free number, procure the right equipment and software for setting up the call center. Recruiting, selecting and training the professionals for the call-center is really important for the success of the digital marketing campaign. The customer care center is also responsible for responding to the queries received online through website, email, chat and various forums.

Digital marketing agency will ask for content in the form of data, photographs and videos for developing the advertising campaign. A company may either collect or create the required documents for the campaign. Company or the agency may hire the professional for shooting photos and videos for the campaign.

Executing and Monitoring the Campaign

Digital marketing agency firstly shares the calendar of activities planned for the campaign. Once the calendar is approved, the agency designs the creative content and gets them approved from the company. The company can constitute a committee of marketing professionals for approving the creative content produced by the digital marketing agency. A company may allocate a portion of the budget to various kinds of the options mentioned for advertising and publicity on digital and social media channels, as discussed below:

Content Marketing: Content is the king of digital marketing. Marketing personnel are required to produce relevant, optimized images, videos and posts for all the social media channels. Professional companies engage consumers to produce user-generated content (UGC). UGC is considered more credible compared to the content posted by the company. The marketing team is expected to make a calendar and regularly post the

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relevant interesting content on the various social media channels. There are various online software like Hootsuite that help in scheduling the posts at multiple social media channels.

Search Engine Optimization (SEO): Search engines do not charge for showing the results on the search engine results page (SERP). SEO as compared to the paid online advertising (Sen, 2005) results in a higher ranking on the SERP. Search engines consider various criteria for deciding the sequence of the results shown on SERP. One of the most important criteria is the relevance of keywords matching the search phrases used by the searchers on the search engine. A marketing manager can identify the relevant keywords with the help of various keyword planning tools like Keyword Everywhere chrome extension. Further, the marketing team can build the content around the identified keywords and publish the same on the different digital and social media channels of the company. Keywords can be used in the headers, meta-tags and the images for facilitating the search engine to identify, classify and prioritize the content on the search engine results.

Search Engine Advertising: Paid search engine advertising has become the dominant form of online advertising and increasing at a fast pace (Yang & Ghose, 2010; Yao & Mela, 2011). Search engines like Google show the advertisements on the search engine result page (SERP) that are relevant to the keywords in the search phrase. Advertisers can create a free account on the advertising platform offered by search engines like Google ads. An advertiser can create the creative on the advertising platform. It is very easy to choose the target audience for the advertisement. The advertiser can choose the daily budget and the bid rate (maximum rate advertiser is ready to offer). Priority of showing the advertisement on SERP is dependent on the bid rate and the quality of the advertisement. Advertisers can choose among the various payment options based on the number of impressions, clicks and conversions. Quality of the advertisement is dependent on the relevant keywords used in the advertisement, the landing page (the page that opens up on clicking the advertisement) and the click-through rate (how many of the target audience who were shown the advertisement actually clicked it). Advertisers can identify the relevant keywords with the help of various online tools such as Keyword Planner (Google Ads). Finding the right keywords, using the same in the advertisement and the landing page helps in improving the quality. Advertising platforms provide various statistics like impressions, clicks etc. related to the results.

Social Media Publicity and Advertising: Social networks play an important role in the distribution of information and word-of-mouth and allow users to network, communicate (in the form of messaging or otherwise) and interact (Constadines, 2014). The power of online communities in building brand reputations and customer relationships is increasing (Harris & Rae, 2009). Social media marketing helps in increasing customer traffic and reducing marketing expenses. Advertisers can choose the social media channel based on the availability and accessibility of the target audience. The company can create the business page on the desired social media channel. The marketing team can invite the existing and prospective customers for liking the business page. Regularly posting the relevant and interesting content on the social media pages helps the company in increasing the organic reach among the target audience.

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A company can advertise on its social media channels and reach its target audience quickly. The advertiser needs to first decide the objective of advertising and then design the creative. The advertiser can define the target audience in terms of demographics, geography and behavioral characteristics. The advertiser can decide the daily budget, the bid rate and the period of the advertisement. Social media advertising shows the advertising insights to the advertisers, which helps in improving the effectiveness of social media campaigns.

Online Video Publicity and Advertising: Companies create their online video channels on the leading platforms like Youtube and publish relevant and interesting content them. A company can produce the product launch and demonstration videos, create videos related to the problems of the consumers. Companies can showcase the videos on their social media channels.

Companies create the video and the banner advertisements. The video advertisements are run before and during the content video relevant to the target audience. The banner advertisements are displayed during the video.

Email Marketing: Companies usually motivate the consumers to share their email Ids on their website, social media pages and seek permission to send the mail for the updates. Chittenden and Rettie (2003) highlight the importance of obtaining recipients' permission. Thus, a company creates a list of interested readers. The company regularly sends emails to their subscribers as it is an economical way of reaching the prospects and customers on regular basis (Raulas,2004). Professional companies usually seek the services of email service providers such as Mailchimp for segmenting the list and sending the relevant emails based on the action by the receiver. Email marketing is one of the quickest and personalized way to reach a large number of prospective consumers.

Mobile Marketing: Companies can reach prospective consumers either by sending SMS (Short Messaging Service), MMS (Multimedia Message Service) or through the relevant mobile application (App). Initially, mobile advertising has become one of the most popular applications in mobile commerce, particularly in the form of text advertising through SMS (Drossos *et.al.*,2007). Companies can take the help of bulk SMS service providers for analyzing the behavior of recipients. Smartphones gave the opportunity to the advertiser for showing the advertisement as banner advertisements, GIF or videos in the App.

Bloggng: Marketing personnel can write articles related to problems of the consumers on the blog of the company. The company can create a separate blog or publish it on the website of the company. The company can identify the relevant topics with the help of keyword planner tools. The marketing team needs to schedule and post the relevant articles regularly on the blog. The company can motivate its target audience to subscribe to the blog. The comments posted by the readers give insights and feedback to the marketing team. Marketing professionals must check the quality of leads generated through the campaign. Marketing personnel should closely coordinate with the agency and their call center employees. Marketing professionals should randomly listen to the calls received by customer care professionals to take care of the quality of response. Close monitoring and supervision of the process help in getting insights for improving the quality of customer engagement.

Measuring the Results

Advertisers are interested in understanding whether the campaign has been successful in delivering the results. The beauty of digital media, unlike traditional media, is that most of the parameters are measurable. Some of the commonly used parameters used by the professional companies are:

- a) Impressions – Number of times the advertisement was shown to the target audience
- b) Clicks – Number of times the advertisement was clicked by the target audience
- c) Leads – Number of target audience sharing their contact details with the advertiser
- d) Walk-ins/ Trials – Number of target audience walking in or trying your product
- e) Conversions – Number of people actually purchasing the product

The company should benchmark the results with the objectives of the campaign.

Conclusion

It is imperative for marketers to integrate social media and digital advertising into the marketing mix. The marketers have a crucial role in the effective planning and execution of a digital advertising campaign. Therefore, all marketers should reorient themselves to the new ways of advertising in the digitalized world. The practical suggestions and insights shared in the paper are likely to help the marketers in conceptualizing, designing and implementing an effective digital advertising campaign for their firms. The tips and suggestions provided in this paper may prove to be weapons for the destruction of challenges faced during digital advertising campaigns.

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