

PAID MEDIA: THE INTELLIGENT USE OF COMMERCIAL SPEND



INTEGRATED COMMUNICATIONS: A BRIEF OVERVIEW

The way in which companies traditionally referred to PR as “media relations” has become outdated. In today’s multichannel marketing environment, it is no longer sufficient to rely solely on long-term relationships with editors and freelancers, nor to focus exclusively on the generation, distribution and targeted placement of news stories and contributed editorial. Since the proliferation of digital and social media, the marketing arena has evolved into a more complex and sophisticated place, one where content is sought, consumed, shared and measured with relative ease.

For this reason, agencies and specialists now talk in terms of integrating communications activity across four distinct categories of media: Paid, Earned, Shared and Owned (PESO).

This multi-channel integrated PESO approach to communications has always been the essence of our strategic approach for clients. To optimise their Return on Marketing Investment (ROMI), we work closely with clients to develop powerful and engaging content and, just as importantly, map the use of that content across all relevant communications channels.

Here, in the first of a series of four guides, we focus on the opportunities and advantages offered by paid media.

PAID MEDIA

BRAND OPPORTUNITIES

The intelligent and creative use of commercial spend is key in building a better brand, along with defining target audiences, developing effective communications and measuring results.

Leading publications in any sector are an important route to market for companies wanting to communicate with key decision makers who have the authority to specify and invest in their products and services. These publications command significant respect among their readership and, as a consequence, media brands represent a highly attractive platform for companies looking to advertise their products and services to their target audience. If used strategically, whether online or in print, a media title can function as a highly effective promotional vehicle for your brand.

WORKING WITH THE MEDIA MORE EFFECTIVELY

PAY FOR RESULTS

Regardless of format, business-to-business publications offer clients a range of highly effective branding and promotional opportunities. Planned hand-in-hand with traditional and social media relations activity within an integrated marketing campaign, these can produce excellent and measurable results.

INTELLIGENCE

Advertising and editorial teams engage actively with a broad spectrum of players in their specialist market, picking up unique intelligence and insights which shape their content. These insights can, in turn, help agencies and their clients to define their own go-to-market strategies and messages and shouldn't be underestimated.

READER DATA

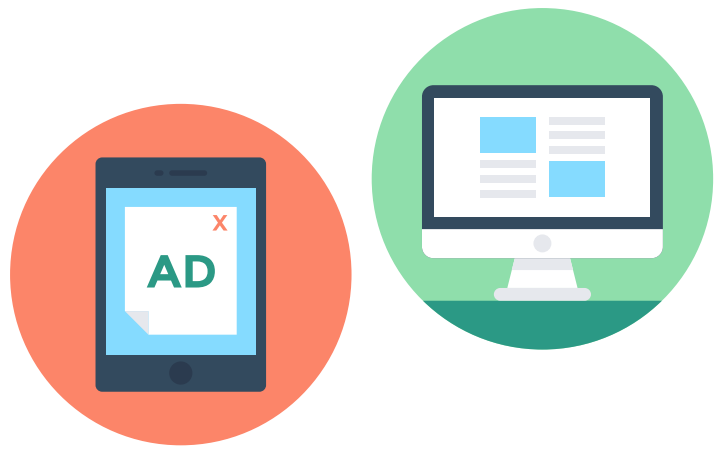
Publishers' controlled circulation data captures valuable information about each reader, from their role and purchasing responsibilities to areas of product interest. Subject to national data protection legislation, this data may be available to rent, via a third party direct marketing service provider, for use in direct or telemarketing. Loose inserts can also be targeted at selected segments of the readership, for clients looking to target a regional audience, for example.

INNOVATIVE ADVERTISING FORMATS

In addition to conventional run-of-paper advertising, brands looking to create impact for their campaigns have a range of exciting options such as cover wraps, belly bands, bound-in fold-outs or special loose inserts, all of which have the capacity to command instant attention from the reader and can be used to drive traffic to online media using promotional codes.

E-MARKETING

Many publishers are willing to send a limited number of controlled direct marketing items to their circulation data and to segment this geographically, by sector or by job title to suit the client's objectives. This can be a cost-effective way for clients to reach a highly targeted and relevant database, and publishers can offer sophisticated analysis of open rates and click-throughs. By integrating calls to action and driving recipients to relevant branded online content, this type of direct marketing can support clients' own data acquisition strategy over time.



SPONSORED CONTENT

Depending on the publication, some features are suitable for sponsorship. This creates an opportunity for branding in connection with a particular area of specialism/interest on the editorial agenda and can be extremely effective if the connection between the corporate or product brand is visibly relevant to the content. It may also be possible to propose contributed content to be published under the company brand, such as a technical advice column or FAQ (frequently asked questions).

RESEARCH

A number of publishers undertake their own research among their readership around key business and technology issues, both for the purposes of acquiring market intelligence and to support their editorial content. Such research may take the form of electronic or telephone surveys, focus groups or in-depth round table discussions. It is often possible for these research initiatives to be sponsored, which may take the form of visible branding on a survey, the inclusion of questions relevant to the client, or branded coverage of a round table on a topic pertinent to a client's own campaign objectives.

WEB ADVERTISING

Many industry publishers offer content-rich websites that attract significant and measurable visitor traffic. Strategically planned online advertising in the form of banners and pop-ups can be highly effective in driving measurable traffic to client websites and microsites.

VIDEO CONTENT

The presence of video content – whether in the form of executive interviews, customer stories or technical tutorials – is becoming more noticeable on a growing number of B2B websites. More importantly, studies have shown that video content is increasingly popular with online users, resulting in increasingly larger traffic volumes. Many publishers offer opportunities to buy prominent placement of contributed video content, to pay for video 'advertorial' or to secure branded sponsorship of the publisher's own video footage.

WEBINARS AND ONLINE DISCUSSIONS

Through the use of webinars, publishers' websites are increasingly being employed as an interactive platform for discussion and education, while publisher-owned Twitter feeds can often be seen hosting sponsored Twitter discussion threads on topics of interest to particular brand owners. Many publishers are willing to work with clients to promote and deliver hosted webinars moderated by an editor. These can subsequently be edited for delivery via the client's website.

LIVE EVENTS

Publishers often host their own educational and networking events around topical issues and offer opportunities for brands to participate as sponsors or to provide expert speakers, branded content or relevant collateral for inclusion in delegate packs. In the context of a broad promotional package, sponsorship of a relevant media-owned industry award will provide a high profile platform to build brand awareness with a specific target audience. Likewise, publishers can be effective partners in helping brands to create their own content-led customer and prospect events, offering expert guidance regarding the programme, providing recognised editors or commentators as event moderators and marketing the event to a known universe of prospects, with the added credibility that comes from a recognised business media brand.

PAID SOCIAL

A paid social strategy is key to a successful social media marketing plan (in which advertisers pay for ad placement), as paid social ads prove to be particularly effective for determining ROI in a digital campaign. Paid social media campaigns comprise a wide variety of content from multiple platforms, such as Facebook ads, LinkedIn ads, promoted tweets, or sponsored videos on YouTube. The advertiser identifies its target audience, what content they want them to see and the desired action. The advertiser only needs to pay when the viewer responds and takes an action, whether it is clicking a link to watch a video or visit a website, or perhaps to download a guide.

REMARKETING

Remarketing is the process whereby, when a user has just visited a website but has not purchased anything from it, the user is then 'followed' to the next visited website and is targeted with ads containing content viewed on the previous site. It is about serving relevant, personal and timely content to remind the user of previous intentions and prompt them to make that all important purchase.

HOW AD COMMUNICATIONS CAN HELP

We handle many of our clients' commercial media interests, leveraging our media relationships to deliver any requirement - from negotiating and fulfilling a fully integrated promotional campaign, to working with in-house or third party advertising teams to offer strategic advice on how to leverage media investment.

This means that our relationships with the most influential media are conducted at publisher level, giving us intelligence and insight that goes beyond the news and feature pages of the magazine or web site. Since the late 90s, we have partnered with respected publishers in our sectors to harness this broad spectrum of paid opportunities, using the full scope of the publisher's products, contacts and intellectual property.

Based on your objectives and available budget, we will be happy to work with you and the relevant publishers and social platforms to research a range of initiatives to suit your promotional needs. From there, we can develop and fulfil a tailored commercial programme that takes advantage of today's rich media mix to help you achieve your goals.

For more information about how to work creatively and achieve tangible results, please contact Helen Tolino:

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