

COLUMNS

In mobile, marketers must put experience and expertise ahead of hard evidence

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By **Chris Chang**

Digital marketers have gotten spoiled on measurement. Online conversion and paid media tracking is so accurate that we now expect precise data on all marketing to be at our fingertips.

That is not so in mobile.

To win in the mobile-first world, marketers need to make leaps of logic that put experience and expertise ahead of hard evidence. The reason: We cannot yet track a linear relationship between action and result in mobile.

Taking measure

At best, cross-device measurement appears at least three years away. In fact, only 40 percent of marketers surveyed recently by eMarketer think we will have cross-device clarity by 2019.

Complicating matters is the lack of an industry standard. The advertising business keeps debating deterministic versus probabilistic measurement of cross-device engagement, each of which has drawbacks.

Whereas we expect accurate measurement of source and path to conversion in desktop, we are still dealing with vagary in mobile.

There is no substitute for a sharp marketing mind, especially when it comes to setting realistic goal measurement.

Unlike desktop where someone can search, shop and buy immediately and accountably mobile gets used for research as much as immediate action.

From an engagement standpoint, marketers need to adapt messaging, bidding and measurement to realistic usage scenarios.

Although their desktop strategy takes a blanket approach, companies such as Red Roof Inn have opted to bid on mobile keywords in geographies where flights are canceling. Because when the announcement comes over the PA, most travelers pull out their phones immediately.

Adds up

From a measurement perspective, marketers need to adopt a testing and estimating mentality.

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If a certain type of customer typically visits a store highlighted in mobile search, and buys a given amount of product, she needs to be assigned that value.

Say a consumer searches for shoes and clicks on Bloomingdale's Google Shopping ad highlighting a local retailer store's inventory and product listing. While we will not know exactly if that individual converted in the store, we should be open to making assumptions.

For example, if research shows a 40 percent likelihood that search-to-store ad click results in an in-store visit with an average order value of \$200, apply that to your campaign goals and success metrics.

Similarly, marketers can use bid multipliers as estimates of cross-device effect.

If 46 percent of people start on mobile and convert on desktop, then factor this into the mobile success equation.

Advertisers have yet to make these leaps. They need to now.

WAITING FOR CROSS-CHANNEL attribution to be perfected means missing out on the explosive growth in mobile usage and ultimately being late to the game.

Look around wherever you go, and even if you ignore the Pokmon Go fanatics glued to their devices, you will notice that more consumers are on their phones, more intently, performing more of the tasks that determine their daily lives.

No significant advertiser can afford to miss out on those widening connection opportunities.

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