

## Five Ways to Improve the Performance of your Media Campaign with Data and Analytics

By Ted Shergalis

Online marketers have a huge checklist to run through when developing successful online campaigns. Often overlooked is the role that data and analytics play in ensuring a successful campaign and yet today, data is more readily available than ever. The five steps outlined below discuss the process by which online marketers can improve the results of their campaigns by leveraging and incorporating data.

### 1. Determine the goal of the campaign and assign a monetary success metric for that goal.

The time spent clearly defining the goal for a campaign and assigning a monetary measurement can be grueling and often end with more questions than answers. That being said, it is better to have an approximate measure and best-guess financial metric than going into a campaign without any yardstick.

Marketers take heart from the ancient Egyptians. The great pyramids were built long before the British government implemented the Metric Standard. These ancient craftsmen used a far less precise form of measurement, the cubit – the distance from fingertip to elbow of the Master Builder at the time – and clearly, they were able to achieve greatness in their efforts.

Similarly, online marketers can achieve greater success in their campaigns by assigning a goal and success metrics – approximate or actual. For example, if a car rental company's goal is to drive incremental revenue through online reservations, they could measure success using either average profit per rental or actual profit per rental. Even assigning average values is far better than blindly running a campaign with no success value assigned.

### 2. Determine how steps in the purchase funnel should be tracked in addition to the final conversion.

Widening the scope of goal tracking allows for further analysis of the purchase funnel. Implementing additional tracking will allow the marketer to better understand the purchase behavior of their online customers.

To illustrate the importance of this tactic let me tell you about an internet service provider who had initially only implemented their online campaign to track impressions, clicks and sign-ups. After a couple of weeks of the campaign the sign-up rates remained stagnant even though they were seeing good reach and frequency numbers and impressive click throughs. They decided to spend a little more time looking at the various steps in their purchase funnel and they identified a hurdle at the stage where visitors are required to select a user name. Because the company has millions of customers, the most common, desirable usernames are often taken. This step was deterring visitors from completing the sign-up process if their preferred username was not available, resulting in flat conversion rates. By tracking the whole purchase flow and adjusting the process to allow visitors to sign-up prior to selecting a username, they saw a huge increase in conversion rates.

### 3. Before you invest your media dollars, use the data captured on existing customers and site visitors to gain an understanding of your targets.

This is probably the most often overlooked way of improving online campaigns. Most marketers have a wealth of data at their disposal but too often don't begin analyzing it until *after* they get media dollars in the market.

Look before you leap. Develop a clear and comprehensive understanding of who your target market is before you get dollars in market by gathering and analyzing data from sites such as Quantcast.com, Alexa.com, and your site analytics tools.



**4. Determine how this specific campaign fits into the larger marketing plan.**

While online marketers tend to excel at operational, day-to-day execution, they often lose track of how their campaign fits into larger marketing objectives. Understanding how the campaign fits into the larger strategy will ensure consistent alignment with your overall marketing messages, prevent the campaign from seeming disjointed and allow you to maintain and even gain momentum from one campaign to the next.

**5. Understand how to account for duplicate conversions being driven by different media sources. Understand the multiple events that are driving people to convert.**

Almost every online campaign is placed with a number of publishers or networks to ensure optimal reach and frequency delivery; and most online marketers leverage a single ad serving platform to audit impression delivery, crediting conversions to each publisher. However, these systems are often too limited in their ability to dedupe conversions as they give the credit to the last ad seen or clicked on as opposed to taking into account the multiple events that are driving people to convert. Without capturing this multiple ad impression interaction data, advertisers are unable to analyze the impact of each publisher accurately and run the risk of improperly allocating their media dollars. A more comprehensive approach, often called media portfolio analysis, is becoming increasingly popular and showing extremely strong results - especially for advertisers who have branched out in their media buying to include new media sources such as social networking sites, behavioral channels and mobile device delivery.

Thank you for reading and hope these five tips help you on your next campaign.

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