

Loadshedding affecting digital marketing ROI



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20 Sep 2022

Loadshedding continues to pile on more problems for South African businesses and that includes the marketing industry.



Source: www.unsplash.com

We live with unpredictable time management, meeting postponements and late staff arrivals at the office with the now-familiar excuse, 'Sorry I'm late, the traffic lights were out'.

But recent campaign analysis suggests a new challenge to the digital landscape that's posing a new threat to digital marketers. Clients with various digital campaigns across numerous online platforms and with unique marketing objectives such as awareness, reach, engagement, website traffic and lead generation are all being negatively affected by loadshedding, because audiences simply can't access the internet.

No real ROI during blackouts

Stage 6 loadshedding means South Africans are without power for up to 6 hours a day. The ripple effect of this results in less online product and service searches taking place, as cell phones and laptops need to be charged and battery life must be preserved through any means possible.

So, you pay for an advert with a tailored message to a specific audience, on a specific channel, at a specific time, to drive a marketing objective and the required ROI, in the hope of unlocking further marketing budget - only to find out that your audience was unable to see your advert due to loadshedding.



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That's a problem. Marketing campaigns are measured on metrics like campaign performance, advertising spend, return on advertising spend (ROAS) and return on investment (ROI). Their success determines future budget and repeated campaigns.

A dip in impressions

The recently implemented stage 6 loadshedding schedule has had a clear negative impact on digital campaign performance across numerous channels, including Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, Twitter and Google Advertising.

We saw campaigns running over the weekend of 17 September experiencing a substantial dip in impression volumes and click through rates (CTR) across the board. A decreased CTR or engagement rate is one thing, but when the impression rate drops substantially amongst various digital campaigns, without budget tweaks, this is a clear indication that campaigns simply are not being seen.

For marketers, it's more important than ever to consider the timing of online campaign launches and campaign performance to achieve optimal results. It's no longer enough to be within budget or to merely compete online. Now you have to ensure visibility by putting yourself in the customer's shoes.

Not all audiences will have access to Wi-Fi or enough data to load content during increased levels of loadshedding. Marketers need to box smartly and plan accordingly to ensure your audiences are able to access online brand messaging in a time when power isn't guaranteed.

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