

Do digital brands need a new metric for planning TV?

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When digital brands hit a plateau with their online marketing campaigns, they usually turn to TV to reach a broader audience. It's a wise decision, since TV remains the most heavily consumed media platform amongst adults of all ages.



Image supplied.

However, these TV campaigns are usually planned according to the reach and frequency that could be achieved against a specific target market. Is this traditional way of TV planning still valid for digital brands in a time when marketers are under increasing pressure to prove their value to a company and to show ROI on all marketing campaigns, including offline?

A different approach is needed

The fact that your TV ad reaches the right people frequently enough, still does not mean that those people will engage with your website or download your app. And since brands don't have unlimited marketing budgets to throw good money after unmeasurable TV campaigns, **a different approach to TV planning is needed for it to be a performance medium.**

What does it mean to apply a performance approach to TV planning?

When a TV campaign is planned with reach and frequency as the only metrics, you are working with an exposure metric –

your plan is based solely on the propensity for people to see your advert and the only way to measure the performance of the campaign is based on media efficiency – the best reach and frequency at the lowest cost.

However, when a performance approach is applied to TV planning, performance is based not on how many people see your ad, but the action they take after seeing your ad. This is measured by making use of attribution software. With free software options available, this does not have to be a costly exercise for your brand, but it is recommended that you use a consultancy to interpret the results of your campaign and make recommendations for your next TV campaign based on the data.

The type of information that can be gathered from TV attribution software includes, but is not limited to: How many people visited your website after seeing your ad? What was the cost per visit? Which channels, time of day, day of the week and creative execution brought the most traffic to your website or led to the most conversions? Strategically, all of this data then allows you to drive efficiency and scale using the metrics that matter most.

Key performance indicators

Deciding on your brand's specific key performance indicators (KPIs) is a very important part of the process. What do you want to achieve through your TV campaign? This really depends on the stage of your business and your specific business challenges:

- If you are a new entrant into the market with low awareness, you may want to drive as much traffic to your website as possible. This gives you the opportunity to establish a broad base that you can convert.
- If you have a low conversion rate, you may need to adjust your KPIs to focus on finding consumers with a higher propensity to convert.
- If you are an established player who has been tracking visits and conversions for some time, and you are starting to see a decline in performance, it may be time to start looking at channels that offer the opportunity to scale.

Performance TV planning uses these KPIs as the basis for selecting channels, days, dayparts, etc.

But let's be realistic, most TV campaigns are bought via packages, as it is the most cost-effective option. How can a brand apply a performance approach to TV planning if they are not cherry-picking channels? Packages can still be tested to gauge the efficiency of campaigns by testing the packages against each other according to your specific KPIs. This will also highlight if there are specific high-performing channels that can be cherry-picked, albeit it at a higher price, in your next campaign.

Customer journey and user experience must align with your goals

Based on what you've read this far, it is fair to assume that using a performance approach to TV planning requires you to have data to compare the performance of previous campaigns. Not necessarily. An experienced tracking consultancy will have the advantage of key learnings from previous successful campaigns by similar brands or in similar industries. Although specific client information remains confidential, this insight and experience help inform campaigns to give them the best chance of success.

It goes without saying that the performance approach to TV advertising cannot stop at the planning and buying process. Your creative (finished spot) remains the deciding factor in whether your target group will respond. A number of things can make a difference in how captivating and activating your spot is – but that is a separate discussion altogether.

Not to even mention the importance of ensuring that your website's customer journey and user experience is aligned to your goals, which may have an even bigger impact on performance than your TV spot. DCMN's whitepaper '[Scale your business with performance TV campaigns](#)' gives a detailed explanation on these and other topics.

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