

## Take The Pain Out Of Media Planning

On the face of it media planning is a dry and boring exercise. Well, it might not be the most stimulating bit of work you could hope to do but it's absolutely critical to the success of your marketing strategy. Here are a couple of pointers about how to go about your media planning methodically and painlessly.

Your media planning efforts should include research to establish to assess the recall, readership and viewership of a targeted brand in a specific campaign. In fact your media campaign will be won in the planning. There is more to it than booking space and having advertisements made up.

Having said that, a proper media plan need not take a long time to prepare and implement. After you have conducted some research there are just four aspects you need to work through to draw up your plan. First of all consider your budget. Be realistic about how much you have to spend. Secondly decide which media are most suited to reaching your target market. Thirdly have a clear idea of the main focus and purpose of the campaign. Finally you should decide the type of message you want to convey.

Once you have these points clear in your mind you will be able to put down a blueprint of what requires to be done and how to achieve your aims. These basic areas are critical to any media plan and if your research is on par, the correct results should be forthcoming. Now let's take each of the four areas in turn.

Generally speaking, your budget will proscribe your media. Thus if your budget is small you will be confined to online advertising, print ads and perhaps some outdoor advertising. Large budgets may allow other prime media such as TV and radio to be included in the mix, although the last two media mentioned need not cost a fortune if you are careful.

The size of the budget will pretty much determine the media you use, but another important consideration when deciding on your mix is to establish which media are suited to your target market. Consumers are best reached through media at the low end of the cost continuum. This might include online and pay-per-click advertising and possibly some print ads. You will have much wider reach with TV and radio but these are expensive media. Other options such as outdoor advertising should be carefully considered as there is a whole array of variations on the outdoor ad theme including ambient, transport and billboards.

Do take some time to fix on the main purpose of your campaign. This might be increasing the number of clicks to your website in which case online advertising and pay-per-click would be the obvious media. If you are building brand awareness then print advertising and outdoor ads might be the answer.

Finally take a great deal of care identifying the message you want to convey. You don't want cleverness to overwhelm your message. Does your campaign include a clear call to action if your immediate goal is increased revenue? If it's brand awareness you are after this can be built over time but along the way the consumer can be called to immediate action as well. If you are uncertain how to proceed then consider engaging the services of an advertising or marketing agency. Many such agencies supply marketing plan development services, media planning and booking, event marketing, public relations and even creative services. Finding the right people for the job might simplify your task in creating a targeted and automated campaign.

## About the Author

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