

Three rules to simplify media

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Media is getting more and more complicated, says Sue Unerman, MediaCom UK's Chief Transformation Officer.

Media is complicated.

More and more complicated.

The more complicated things are the greater the need for simplification.

Here are simple rules to help deal with the complications.

There are more and more lines on a block plan. The media channels used don't have easily comparable metrics.

Even the media that have been around since the middle of the last century don't, for instance audiences for newspaper readership and radio listenership. Those that might seem similar don't of course either. A view of an ad on the TV in your sitting room is not measured comparably with a view of perhaps the same ad on your mobile. Add in experiential or the headline sponsorship of a sporting event and you are completely in the territory of chalk versus cheese.

Every plan should be judged by how it delivers growth for the client's ambitions. Yet judging by outcomes can be complicated too. First, if you only judge by short-term results you are in danger of ruling out media that contribute in a medium to long-term way. Without this you are liable to end up with a brand without a medium to long-term future.

Secondly there is once again the chalk and cheese problem. Experiential won't deliver the scale of broadcast advertising. But a great experience is hard to forget (as is a poor one of course). The impact that a good personal experience can deliver is difficult to isolate and to calibrate against other marketing.

So things are complicated.

How can we simplify?

There are only two good forms of communications. Comms that help to convert to a sale (or recruit to a new behaviour or cause). Comms that help to drive desire for the brand (or behaviour or cause).

Every line of the plan needs to clearly deliver against one or both of these criteria with a clear key performance metric.

If it's about conversion it is essential to have a brilliant discipline of test, learn and reapply. The best possible machine learning for execution and tactic. Avoid the trap of too many metrics that Jim Kelly, VP R+D at Quantcast, talked about at MediaCom UK's transformation session at Adweek Europe. It's important to prioritise the metrics to deliver

the best outcomes for the business, and not to prioritise the metrics against which your current processes perform most powerfully. This is essential because optimising against a metric that you can influence most successfully today is not necessarily as important as experimenting with what will leverage your business outcomes across the next 12 months.

If the comms are about building brand saliency and warmth then it is crucial to remember the two-second rule. Much is made of the supposed “fact” that our attention spans are shrinking. The truth is that there is so much more content trying to attract consumer attention that any commercial message needs to be brilliant at capturing and retaining that attention over and above the chaos

The point is not that average attention spans have shrunk from 12 to eight seconds. The point is that you’ve really only got a couple of seconds to interest anyone. Thanks to mobiles to which we are joined at the fist there is nearly always something else to look at or listen to instead.

Make yourself useful, interesting, funny, entertaining, emotive or personal in a couple of seconds or don’t expect to keep any consumer’s focus.

Simple then (but not easy): Be accountable, innovate, cut through.

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