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# Lonely media planner, we hear you

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New technologies are creating more opportunities for media planners but things are far from simple.

The pace of change seems breath taking. The pace of change is going to continue to get faster still.

The industry is full of questions. Ad fraud and viewability. Fake news is tarnishing reputations. The calculation of audience views is not standardised across platforms or across the globe.

The task of the media planner has got more complicated

Take TV. A dozen years ago a media planner thinking of placing video assets at scale was largely faced with the challenge of deciding between planning into space on the TV in the

corner of the living room or going with some cinema.

They might worry that some households had a second or third TV in the bedroom and kitchen, and that this might fragment family viewing. They might consider investing in cinema – that decision was at the time largely made on the basis of whether the video asset was cinematic enough, because there was no comparative way of measuring audience across TV and cinema.

Now of course there's much more to consider. TV versus VoD. Lovely big TV sets, with friends or family gathered round, versus solitary viewing on smartphone screens or tablets in bedrooms, kitchens, bathrooms, and on the bus. "As TV", which is what Group M's Rob Norman, CDO, calls web destination TV like YouTube Preferred, in-app video, feed based video, and of course, if your asset is cinematic enough for the big screen, cinema – because there is still no standardised comparative audience measurement here, let alone between all the other choices.

What does this all add up to? More complications. More opportunities.

The task of the media planner has also become simpler

There's much more evidence of outcomes now than ever in the data streams media agencies are analysing.

The media planner has more data to consider and more informed judgements to make. Judgements about media planning from scratch, with zero based budgeting assumptions. Judgements based on evidence based arguments for planning assumptions. Judgements about sorting the real facts from the multiple factoids that circulate.

This is how the empirical or evidence-based media planner might get lonely.

The media planner may find they need to hint to the creative agency that their lovely 40-second ad might need significant amending before it is fit for purpose for social feeds.

They might find they need to challenge media owner research. They will have to balance the different joint industry body definitions of audience to deliver one cohesive view across a multi-media plan.

Don't mistake this for unfriendliness or lack of desire to collaborate, by the way. Without a shadow of a doubt, as my CEO Josh Krichefski recently stated, most of the award-winning work in this industry comes from collaboration with media owner and agency partners. Great fruitful collaborations that help brands to thrive.

And yet it can be lonely to be an evidence-based planner. It is their job to ask difficult questions, to speak truth to power and to jostle the apple cart. It isn't their job to spend the most money in the most fashionable medium. It isn't their job to preserve the status quo. It's their job, and it is needed now more than ever, to love numbers, to embrace disruption and to love real consumer insight, to look for the substantiated facts, try the new, to be ambitious for their clients and to remain media neutral.

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