

New home, new adventures, new perspective

ADVERTISING CONSUMER EDINBURGH

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Almost anyone who knows me will be aware I have recently bought a new home. Moving from a small flat in Edinburgh's cosmopolitan Stockbridge to the countryside of Currie, just outside Edinburgh. Who knew the move would open my eyes to the impact of the immense targeting capabilities that companies have?

The theory behind audience targeting is a key part of my job but the reality for the consumer only really became apparent when I moved. This whole process started on a cold January day when the second house I had seen went to a closing date. Things moved very quickly, I had meetings with my solicitors, financial advisor and mortgage company to sort out the offer on the house and get my flat on the market. This alone sent a multitude of

signals out to companies targeting me with solicitors, loans, mortgages, removal firms and life insurance companies. What shocked me the most was the number of emails and mail drops I received from this. I shouldn't have been surprised, but at a time when I was rushing to get everything done, this was just seen as clutter to me. I've harped on about in-market audiences at work for years now, but as a consumer, it was so annoying!

The next few months were a frenetic time of viewings, paperwork and planning the move. During this time, I received what felt like hundreds of ads. Just one example of this was my phone and broadband. It will probably not surprise anyone to know that one of the first things I did in my new house shortly after building the bed and unpacking the kettle was getting the internet connection set-up. Within 48 hours of having collected the keys, the Virgin Media installer was in the house connecting my superfast broadband. This task alone involved using key sites like money supermarket to find out who supplied the fastest broadband, then going onto price comparison websites to find the cheapest and fastest supplier and booking the engineer. All of this was done before I had signed my missives and the house was even mine, but I was not prepared to wait for 2 weeks without WIFI!

For anyone who has moved to a new house, you will know the life admin involved in updating every bank, utility, phone company, the DVLA and many more is a full-time job. The benefits of being able to do most of this online have been amazing. Long gone are the days where I would have spent every lunch hour calling each of these suppliers, sitting on hold for hours on end and finally getting through to the right person, the price of this convenience is my data.

Now that I am in the house and most of the life admin is taken care of, the homeware's brands are taking over. My house is a 'fixer-upper' and as a result, I spend most of my evenings and weekends doing DIY, decorating or in B&Q. I spend a lot of time researching online and therefore I am being retargeted a lot. Companies really need to make sure they set frequency caps, thinking about the many devices customer now use online. Splitting out retargeting pools for a customer at different stages of their journey will ensure they are not spamming their customers – for me, this is a huge no-no, to the point that I will not use companies that I feel spam me with messaging.

The whole experience has been an exciting and sometimes scary process that has been helped and hindered by online targeting. As a media planner, I've been reminded of the importance that needs to be placed on the consumer's state of mind.

Here are my top tips for effective targeting;

- Put the customer at the heart of your communications.
- Ask yourself what you want the consumer to do.
- Use your online platforms to make life easier for your customers.
- Set retargeting frequency caps.
- Group retargeting pools by engagement and level of interest.
- Cross-device targeting is a must.

I would also like to take this opportunity to say a huge thank you to my lovely friends, family and colleagues who have been amazing over the past few months.

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