

Can Marketers Optimize Branding Campaigns In Real Time?

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Brands aim to be more nimble with digital ad optimization

Marketers buying print or TV ads are often stuck with the same creative for the entire campaign lifecycle, even if periodic brand-health metrics show low favorability toward the campaign or poor ad recall.

But online, marketers increasingly look to swap out creative based on performance—and may even run hundreds of creative iterations that can be tailored to unique audiences through dynamic creative optimization.

“Brand marketers now want to move beyond post-campaign measurement and instead take advantage of real-time metrics on brand campaign performance,” said Jeff Smith, CMO of digital brand ad measurement provider Vizu in a February 2012 interview with eMarketer. “[They] traditionally lacked that capability, but with this move toward standardization around metrics such as brand lift, you can optimize campaigns in real time online.”

Q4 2011 data from publishing solutions provider Maxifier showed US ad agencies optimized their branding campaigns with a frequency similar to that of their direct-response campaigns. The data also suggested that UK marketers may be slightly behind their US counterparts in this trend.

For now, however, real-time optimization appears achievable for only a small group of marketers. Additional November 2011 findings from Acxiom and DIGIDAY showed only a small percentage of US digital marketers were able to recognize consumer-brand interactions in real time.

One way digital marketers are looking for faster feedback on their online brand advertising effectiveness is through the creation of market-owned research communities. Jackie Lorch, vice president of global knowledge management at online survey provider SSI said this is an increasingly frequent request from clients.

In a February 2012 interview with eMarketer, Lorch said that in addition to survey panels, many brands now want the ability to develop their own customer panels that they can use to frequently conduct market research studies or quickly gauge responses to a particular campaign or ad.

“Instead of doing one huge survey once or twice a year with a market research firm, brands want to have an ongoing dialogue,” she said. “Everything is getting quicker all the time, and we’re finding brands want instant results.”

Digital branding measurement firm Dynamic Logic is also witnessing this trend. “We’ve seen a group of clients that want simpler, faster data set so they can optimize the campaign while they’re in-market,” said Michelle Eule, vice president of digital ad solutions in a February 2012 interview with eMarketer. “They’re still trying to figure out exactly how they want to optimize, but they know they want to do it and that faster data will help them.”

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