

# Effective Digital Branding Measurement Requires A Mix Of Metrics

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New digital-specific metrics mix with longstanding offline and direct-response measurements to determine campaign success

As companies invest a greater portion of their branding dollars in digital advertising, marketers are facing increased pressure to prove digital's branding effectiveness both as a single channel and in concert with a broader, multichannel campaign.

Many have quickly discovered that measuring a digital campaign's success is no easy task.

"Digital's legacy of direct-response metrics has caused many to fall back on measures that drove the first wave of online advertising—clickthrough rate and pageview," said Lauren Fisher, eMarketer analyst and author of the new report, "Quantifying Digital Brand Ad Effectiveness: Finding the Right Mix of Meaningful Metrics." "But these metrics are both problematic and inaccurate for quantifying digital branding effects, especially when considering internet users click on less than 1% of display ads and are never in view of about a third of all ad impressions served in the US."

Others are attempting to roll digital measurement into the larger branding evaluation picture by importing traditional offline count metrics like the gross rating point (GRP). A December 2011 survey from DIGIDAY and Vizu of North American marketers found this mixture was the most popular method for calculating online marketing ROI.

One of the most basic—and essential—measures of digital branding impact is the traditional brand health survey, used to calculate brand lift. Four in five North American brand marketers considered brand lift to be the most important metric for evaluating the success of their online branding efforts, according to the survey.

But many marketers and industry leaders looking to leave behind the clickthrough measure don't have the option of using panel-based measures, so they are advocating for the adoption of the viewthrough metric, which tries to measure not just whether an ad impression was served but whether it was actually viewed by an internet user. A similar, engagement-oriented metric for online video ads is completion rate.

Publishers like YouTube are already embracing this metric as a way for brands to both measure and pay for ad performance. Its TrueView product allows advertisers to pay only for video ads that consumers have viewed for at least 30 seconds or to completion, depending on the length of the ad. According to video ad network BrightRoll, in Q1 2011 cost per video view was the metric upon which 21.2% of US ad agencies were most likely to base their online video ad spending. A slightly higher percentage preferred to base online video ad spending on the more general metric of cost per engagement (23.9%).

"Learning to effectively measure digital brand advertising takes time and practice," said Fisher. "Marketers must break habits of using single measures of success—be it traditional count metrics such as the GRP or native digital measures such as clickthrough or pageview. Instead, they must look to uncover the right mix of traditional brand health metrics and select digital measures of engagement."

The full report, "Quantifying Digital Brand Ad Effectiveness: Finding the Right Mix of Meaningful Metrics," also answers these key questions:

- What are some common mistakes made in measuring ad effectiveness?  
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- What traditional brand health measures should marketers apply to digital?  
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- Which digital engagement metrics are being used for online video and mobile ads?

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