

O'DWYER'S PRREPORT

By Michael Ferranti & Chris Rosica

Traditional marketing is being challenged by the ongoing dilution of the media mix. Choices include a dizzying array of broadcast and print options and an internet that continues to expand, offering more content and ways of experiencing it.

The efficacy of the Internet provides good reason for marketers and companies, regardless of size or business type, to reevaluate their advertising and integrate their online and offline activities. Linking the two undoubtedly leads to better measurement, greater visibility and stronger results.

It has been our experience in implementing integrated programs for clients in a variety of industries that the fusion of traditional and Internet communications is propitious and more importantly, executable.

Take, for example, the advertiser's desire to convey the experience of driving a luxury automobile. BMW's television advertisements are beautifully experiential. No website, no matter how good, is going to relay that nearly as well. Emotionally charged, the potential purchaser is primed to visit the company's website where he or she will "drill down" for more specific information. There they can also be prompted to share e-mail addresses or other personal data that will effectively continue the sales cycle.

Consumers "opt in" by going from TV to web. Consider for a moment what happens when a brand is advertised on national television. Google Trends will clearly show the spike in search traffic; the direct correlation is astonishing. One model that didn't exist for television advertisers even five years ago is "TV to search." While consumers go from TV media directly to an advertiser's website, they also go in numbers to search engines with the snippet they recalled from the ad.

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Get results from merging online/offline marketing

"Office Linebacker," the now famed Super Bowl ad: search engines saw a material spike in traffic on that specific term, thanks to television media consumption.

Well aware of this, advertisers have been promoting URLs in hopes of developing loyal customers, but there are ancillary benefits as well, such as media mentions. Take for instance the importance that Google and other search engines bestow upon editorial placements in traditional media outlets as highly credible and these placements can bolster your online ranking and presence.

In the realm of PR, the Internet can be used to gauge the impact of a particular campaign or, even more granularly, each media placement. In doing so, companies

are able to better understand which publications Internet news sources or broadcast media outlets generate the best results, which in turn can help their marketing strategy.

Public relations firms can create dedicated URLs with landing pages to streamline inquiries and capture as many leads as possible with ease. They can also measure the number of people searching online for a company or brand name. This search data can demonstrate fluctuations in brand awareness. By learning how many customer are searching directly for a product or company name, a marketer can quickly learn how successful his or her marketing efforts are.

Additionally, conventional news releases can be used in a non-conventional way to bolster online

awareness and search engine optimization (SEO) through utilizing such sites as PRweb.com or PR.com.

One can clearly see the impact that a high profile news story has directly on the investor relations pages of a client's website. One can also see the difference between companies that were well prepared for this eventuality and those that were not. While it's difficult to say that a handsome website can directly improve stock price - at the least, it has the value of an annual report that public companies spend hundreds of thousands of dollars to create. In many case, clients have been able to fold those traffic spikes from PR hits into wildly profitable sales days. Therefore, website hits to the company's primary URL is a clear indicator or a traditional

marketing effort's success.

There is also sizeable value from the kind of third-party endorsements editorial coverage can bring. An article on a particular company or product in the New York Times and NYTimes.com will be found by search engine "spiders" and increase the visibility and "importance" of a website.

It's a new dawn for marketers with a host of new technologies to consider and merge with proven entities. Those that will survive and thrive, both companies and agencies alike, will have to look at ways to merge the two.

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