

Piloting Your Business' Success with Instrument-Rated Advertising

By Jeff Adelson-Yan

There are two types of pilots: sight-based, those that fly by line of sight and instrument-rated, those that fly based on the proper reading of instruments.

The history of advertising has dictated that the measurement of media be based on reach and frequency and this process has largely led advertisers to pilot campaigns by line of sight and not based upon exact or hard data. In short, this measurement has been and continues to be judged or rated, by systems that at this point should be questioned or quite frankly be considered, antiquated.

Old media measurement states that the television viewing habits of over 300 million Americans be based upon little boxes attached to the television sets found in only 9,000 homes. The data collected is then applied to nearly 300 million others. When it comes to magazines, the readership or "circulation" is based on a measurement method that states multiple people will read a single copy of a magazine. These numbers, while accepted by the industry, are estimated to be inflated by as much as 3 to 4 time's actual readership. Old media measurement methods need to change and will change. The sight-based media mentality of, "I see it, therefore it is" will crumble and give way to what we call, instrument-rated media.

The emergence of the Internet as a key marketing and business tool, allows advertisers the opportunity to measure virtually everything, extending well beyond the basic old school mentality of just "reach" and "frequency". I co-founded Levelwing Media with this in mind and as an interactive advertising agency, our job is to assist clients in mapping successful campaigns, measuring everything imaginable, and making changes to campaigns in real-time, based upon those measurements, to improve results.

Advertising agencies have long subscribed to the past methods of media ratings and much of their business is built on that foundation, albeit a crumbling one. You see the large statuesque agencies trying to adjust everyday, but to rebuild a foundation from the top down is very difficult, if not impossible. The new agency mentality must be one of continual advancement in a world that is full of sudden changes and emerging technologies. The Internet is the form of media that most lends itself to instrument-rated governance.

Detailed tracking, reporting, analysis, as well as real-time optimization, give Internet media an advantage over other forms when it comes to quantifying ROI. Yes, the Internet has begun to transform the way companies do business, and specifically the way companies advertise and manage their media initiatives.

Today, a small business can compete with a much larger one. A strong brand presence can be eroded by a more adapt and flexible competitor. Signs of media change are all around us. These changes will force old media habits to change as well. W. Edward Deming said, “It is not necessary to change, survival is not mandatory.” It’s fitting that Deming was by trade a statistician and widely credited with improving production in the United States during World War II. His teachings taught the management of corporations how to improve design, quality, sales, and so forth.

As media flies forward, so to will the technologies that create, deliver and track those processes. Your staff and advertising agency should understand this and be prepared to take advantage of all of the opportunities this brings. And let’s face it, in changing times or in bad weather, when the visibility is clouded and can approach zero, you need an instrument-rated pilot.