



Ipsos Connect

DIGITAL ADVERTISING

MEASURE THE METRICS
THAT MATTER

Thought Piece
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NAVIGATING THE JOURNEY

When you're making important decisions, you need to be sure you're focusing on the right things.

There's a famous tale about the commander of a warship and a coast guard that goes like this:

Commander: "Please divert your course 15 degrees north to avoid a collision."

Coast Guard: "Recommend you divert YOUR course 15 degrees south to avoid collision."

Commander: "This is the captain of a US Navy ship. I say again, divert YOUR course."

Coast Guard: "No, I say again, you divert YOUR course."

Commander: "THIS IS THE AIRCRAFT CARRIER USS ABRAHAM LINCOLN, THE SECOND LARGEST SHIP IN THE UNITED STATES' ATLANTIC FLEET. WE ARE ACCOMPANIED BY THREE DESTROYERS, THREE CRUISERS AND NUMEROUS SUPPORT VESSELS. I DEMAND THAT YOU CHANGE YOUR COURSE 15 DEGREES NORTH. THAT'S ONE-FIVE DEGREES NORTH, OR COUNTER MEASURES WILL BE UNDERTAKEN TO ENSURE THE SAFETY OF THIS SHIP."

Coast Guard: "This is a lighthouse. Your call."



Technology has brought an explosion of content, devices, formats and opportunities to reach people but with it has come an almost infinite supply of data and bewildering array of metrics to try and make sense of it. Consequently, marketers can sometimes feel caught in a storm with a constantly changing environment and many potential strategies to navigate it.

At Ipsos, we believe the key to success is to be clear about where you're trying to get to and to measure success by focusing on the metrics that matter.

While short-term behavioural metrics, such as click through rate, view through rate, likes and comments can provide useful information, they tell us little about how your communications have affected brand perceptions, equity or any other measure of long-term brand health.

Many studies¹ have shown that there is no link between sales and click through rate, yet according to eMarketer, the top 5 ways in which advertisers and publishers evaluate native mobile ad campaigns are: click through rate [CTR], engagement rate, conversion rate, cost per conversion, and number of interactions.

All of which are short-term behaviours that don't measure how the advertising affected the brand. This isn't only true of mobile, we see this across many digital campaigns.

METRICS MATTER



“The minute we choose to measure something, we are essentially choosing to aspire to it.”

[Youngme Moon, Harvard Business School²]

The metrics we set to judge success are important because they determine our approach to achieving it. Whether it be EU emissions targets influencing the development of “cheat devices” in the auto industry, or the British Raj offering rewards to encourage the eradication of snakes in Delhi only to find people breeding them in order to make more claims, selecting the wrong metrics can lead to the opposite outcome of what was intended. A concept known as a ‘perverse incentive’.

The potential for this in digital marketing is clear, given marketers have 197 digital metrics with which to measure performance (according to the ARF’s ‘Digital Metrics Field Guide’) and where the IAB cites 30 different metrics that can be used to measure engagement³. But as Einstein is reputed to have said:

“**Not everything that counts can be counted; and not everything that can be counted counts.**”

[Albert Einstein]

We need to make an important distinction between diagnostics and outcomes. Most short-term behavioural metrics are diagnostics that tell us how much people engaged with an ad as a piece of entertainment. Outcomes tell us how exposure to the ad affected the brand. An over-reliance on behavioural measures risks optimising to the wrong metrics.

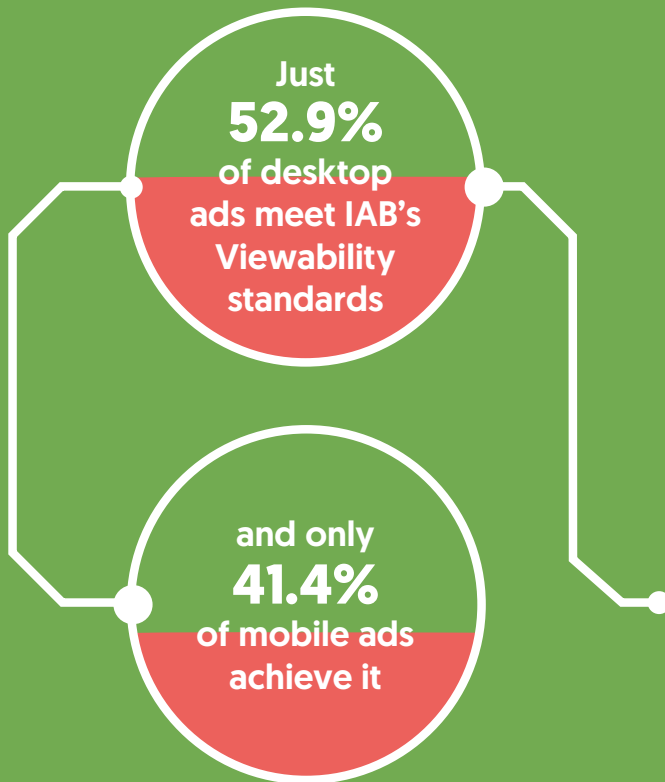
Our Connect:Live service evaluates the impact of Facebook video ads in users’ newsfeeds and measures both the behavioural and attitudinal impact to give advertisers the full picture. For example, we recently evaluated two ads for a client where ad A achieved a significantly longer average view time, yet ad B delivered a 150% greater increase in brand consideration among all those reached.

Previously the client had optimised spend to support ads with the greatest view time, assuming that people preferred them and they were more impactful. We showed this wasn’t the case and enabled them to optimise to ad B which brought more benefit to their brand objective.

SETTING A FAIR COURSE

So what should marketers do? The first step should be to clearly set out where you want your brand to get to and the role of your communications in helping you achieve it. Which means determining:

- What attitudes or behaviours do you wish to influence?
- Over what timeframe?
- Which metrics demonstrate their success?



For example, if your goal is to increase brand awareness then behavioural measures such as impressions, views and reach will be important. At the same time, you need to understand how the ads have affected spontaneous or aided brand awareness via brand-linked memories and recognition of the campaign. This is different to if the objective was to drive short-term sales, where the focus would be on conversions, site or store visits and short-term purchase intent.

CHOOSING THE RIGHT TACTICS

The biggest challenge brands face is getting noticed. With a limitless amount of content to consume, how can you maximise the chances that your communications will gain attention?

Three principles can help:

1. **Ensure viewability**
2. **Prioritise brand impact**
3. **Optimise to context**

1. Ensure viewability

If no one sees your ad, it can't have an impact. It sounds obvious but viewability is a major issue. According to MOAT⁴, just 52.9% of desktop ads meet the IAB's viewability standards and only 41.4% of mobile ads achieve it. And this is despite the bar for viewability being set at just half of pixels in view for 1 second for display ads and 2 seconds for video.

So the first step is ensuring your ads run where they can be seen. Research shows that ads gain more attention on less cluttered sites⁵ and viewability tends to be better on premium publisher sites than ad networks and especially exchanges⁶. When choosing where to place your ads, it's also worth bearing in mind that time in view is more important to delivering brand impact than the percent of ad in view (because some ads can be partially viewable for a long time, while some fully viewable ads are creatively weak)⁵.

2. Prioritise brand impact

Digital has long since moved on from being a direct response medium, so when using digital to build brands we need to measure more than short-term responses. Brand impact is key. This means ensuring that people not only pay attention and spend time with your ads but that they also give credit to your brand.

We know from our work with Google⁷ that people are more likely to skip a YouTube Trueview ad if the brand is present within the first 5 seconds. Yet ads with branding present in the first 5 seconds are also the most likely to result in a positive brand impact, such as increased awareness or image associations. Clearly this has important implications for marketers

who evaluate ads based only on view through rates and complete views. The best approach is to make compelling creative with branding inherent and well-integrated to the ad so that viewers will want to stay with it, while giving credit to the brand.

Measurement should therefore be holistic such that both behaviours and attitudes are measured and priority given to metrics that evaluate against the brand objectives.

3. Optimise to context

Different journeys require different tactics. Ads that work well on TV often don't perform well online. Ads that work well on desktop may be less impactful on mobile. Mobile ads that work well on YouTube may not on Facebook. Each environment is unique and can't be treated as one.

To drive the greatest brand impact, ads that feature single products and a clear and simple message perform best online. Skippable online ads and those in feeds are more effective if branding appears early, before most viewers move on. Shorter ads tend to work better on mobile and native video that most people view without sound, such as Facebook or Instagram, can benefit from early motion and onscreen copy to again attention and understanding.

At Ipsos Connect, our research solutions can help you navigate the journey by evaluating ads in context and by integrating both behavioural and attitudinal measurement. Let us help guide you to where you want to go.

SOURCES

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**FOR MORE INFORMATION,
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Ipsos Connect

ABOUT IPSOS CONNECT

Ipsos Connect are experts in brand, media, content and communications research. We help brands and media owners to reach and engage audiences in today's hyper-competitive media environment.

Our services include:

- **Brand & Campaign Performance:** Evaluation and optimisation of in-market activities to drive communications effectiveness and brand growth.
- **Content and Communications Development:** Communications, content and creative development from early stage idea development through to quantitative pre-testing alongside media & touchpoint planning.
- **Media Measurement:** Audience measurement and understanding.

Ipsos Connect are specialists in people-based insight, employing qualitative and quantitative techniques including surveys, neuro, observation, social media and other data sources. Our philosophy and framework centre on building successful businesses through understanding brands, media, content and communications at the point of impact with people.

