

Online campaigns: bringing the audience to you

One of the reasons the Internet has become so popular is that it permits people to discover content as opposed to having information spoon-fed to them via the traditional formats of print and broadcast. Internet users are a savvy and vocal audience who can discern what's genuine and what's phony, enthusiastically embracing the former and thoroughly rejecting the latter.

A genuine interactive brand experience is the name of the game. Consumers and Internet gatekeepers want content delivered the way *they* prefer to receive and share it, whether it's video, audio, print, images arriving via social media, in e-mails, or online newsrooms.

Content must be highly visible and searchable as well as interactive and userfriendly. The best content wins online, which means you need the best distribution mode. In turn, that means inviting the consumer and the media — or whoever you want to reach — to come to you.

Quality and quantity

In the same way the Internet has changed the information delivery game, it's also changed the way we judge success. Where once it was all about media "tonnage" as measured in eyeballs and ears, the Internet is a far different model requiring entirely new metrics.

Yet some still try to use the old measuring sticks to gauge Internet campaigns and it doesn't work. I recently reviewed a report stating that a client's content reached an Internet audience of 90 million. When I showed it to KEF Media founder Kevin Foley, he said, "Here we go again," referring to the old days of reporting implausible video news release audience reach numbers.

The Internet is about quality, not just quantity, so success looks considerably different than what you might expect from traditional broadcast media tools like satellite or radio media tours.

Depending on the message, Internet audience impression numbers can be smaller, but that audience really cares about what you have to say. They're engaged in the aforementioned interactive brand experience, and many times they become advocates for your brand.

For example, an outdoor equipment company's new backpack is presented on *Backpacker Magazine's* website and a YouTube video demonstration is shared among a few thousand outdoor enthusiasts. The numbers might look insignificant, but if that backpack is a superior product you've got a bunch of new fans who'll spread the gospel for you and your client.

Of course, everybody wants to know who they reach with their message. From the everyday Twitterer who habitually checks their number of retweets to the PR pro who needs to quantify a publicity campaign, we want to find out who's paying attention and if it's making a difference.

Numbers can be very deceiving so it's our duty to educate our peers and clients on what is realistic and what is not in the Internet world and avoid the temptation to present or accept grossly inflated audience reach figures.

Just because your client's content is someplace in cyberspace doesn't mean 90 million people saw it.

Niche and integration

In many ways, digital is more similar to traditional print media than TV and radio in that there is more opportunity to reach niche audiences. The main difference, of course, is that the web offers immediacy and intimacy with target audiences, whether in the form of comments, links to additional information, audio/video and more.

Digital PR like Internet media tours will not make satellite or radio media tours obsolete any time soon. At the same time, PR pros are finding ways to integrate old and new tools to optimize the reach and impact of their campaigns.

Similarly, the lines between PR and advertising are blurring due to the cross platform nature of the Internet. A spokesperson hosting a satellite media tour can drive viewers to the client's social media page, which in turn, highlights the creative YouTube videos described in the banner ads and the print ads, and on and on.

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