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Does Your Targeting Tactic Ignore the User?



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Engagement seems to be getting lost in the targeting strategy shuffle. Jumpstart Automotive Media's VP of product development explains how to capture this vital element for greater reach and ROI.

Did someone say something about an inventory shortage in the digital automotive space?

Whoever did must not be aware of the numerous benefits to using behavioral targeting to reach auto shoppers.

Is this proverbial shortage of auto shopper inventory causing you to spend money on less efficient targeting mechanisms? Sure you can spend your digital media dollars on targeting men, 25-40 with a \$75k annual HHI on a number of lifestyle sites and portals. You can even target adventure seekers or kayakers with your latest rugged SUV launch, but maybe only 2 percent of those people are actually in-market for a car at the time that your message reaches them.

There are three words to describe auto shoppers: finite, impressionable and brief; finite as in the number of U.S. consumers in market for a car at any given time; impressionable in reference to the fact that when they are in market, auto shoppers using the internet for research have typically not yet decided on a model and brief alluding to the limited amount of time that you have to influence shoppers before they make their purchase.

So when thinking about your media allocation, why not make every impression count in your favor? Why not ensure that you will *never* miss on an ad message that you deliver via digital media, especially when considering such a finite, impressionable and brief audience?

Maybe media buyers and planners don't think about BT in this way. It's possible that they get hung up with the various technologies that are regularly talked and written about, or the various types of behavioral targeting that are peddled or that every publisher out there seems to sell some form of BT but isn't exactly clear about the source of the audience origination.

But in its most basic, pedestrian form, targeting by behavior -- instead of by demographics or psychographics -- is simply all about the user and not about the page the consumer is on when they see your ad or the age or gender of the user. Every time your ad appears -- regardless of where it appears -- it's communicated to a user who has demonstrated through online behavioral that they are predisposed to a pertinent message about your product.

In the world of automotive, when someone is explicitly shopping for a car on a third-party auto site -- pricing out sedans, viewing vehicle photos, comparing features, et cetera --and that behavior becomes targetable, you (the advertiser) are provided with the most direct path to your target audience... considerably more direct than psychographic or demographic targeting.

When an auto shopper visits an automotive-related site, he typically sees what he wants to see: a configurator, a price, et cetera. Some engagement can be lost in the process. This is because the content on auto sites tends to consume the user's experience, and the ads presented during that experience have quite a bit of competition for attention. The presence there is necessary and an important strategy, but the opportunity to also speak to those users in a less competitive environment presents an exceptional ancillary messaging mechanism.

So if you're thinking that your summer sales events or big fourth-quarter launches may not have enough presence on auto sites due to a lack of inventory, consider BT as an alternative. While it makes sense to maintain a brand presence among those consumers who are within your demographic or psychographic strike zone, it's imperative that you find ways to reach the finite, yet discoverable auto shopper, even though there might be a shortage of inventory on auto sites.

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