

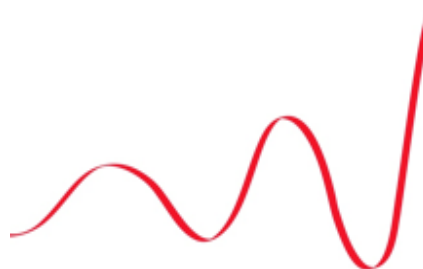
Rethinking success in a new-media world.

AUDIENCE BEHAVIOR

Since we treat people like an audience, not just a consumer, it changes the way we think about how to create ideas for our brands. But at the same time it must also change the way we think about measuring these ideas — particularly with the growing significance of social media. Audiences are not just exposed to marketing messages. They react, reject, discuss, share, contribute, create — a ripple effect of responses that conventional models for measuring advertising effectiveness tend to ignore. To truly measure the impact of our ideas, we need to shift from campaign metrics to customer motivations, or what we like to call “audience currencies.” When an idea is passed along, it means people cared enough to pay attention. When an idea is spoofed on YouTube, it means audiences were compelled enough to act. When an idea is blogged about, it means audiences recognize a point of view. So start measuring what matters.

BRAND BEHAVIOR

The inherent measurability of “the click” has established the Web as the most quantifiable medium, which is why online initiatives tend to be more about driving response than about branding. But with the rapid growth of social media comes the challenge of measuring the new ways audiences are sharing advertisers’ messages and content, which cannot be done using traditional online metrics, like measuring ad exposures and click-through rates. Marketers need to realize that it’s a different game and that success looks different in the social-media space.



LONG-TERM STRATEGY

Immediate gratification has become an obsession for marketers, preventing brands from implementing healthy long-term strategies because of compulsion to show short-term tactical dollar returns. The transaction comes first, the relationship is an afterthought. Concentrating on the immediate return of the transaction doesn’t allow time to develop relationships, but social media is not a short-term play. Its true power lies in the ability to forge long-term relationships with your audience. And a well-executed social-media strategy increases its worth as time elapses and communities grow.



RETURN ON OBJECTIVES

In these tough times marketers feel increased pressure for accountability. Advertising is an investment that should deliver a return. But calculating financial returns (ROI) on specifics can be a murky science at best, and a burden at worst. Success should be measured by the set objectives for a particular initiative, with each initiative in the mix contributing to the results in its own way. They should take into consideration what the idea was designed to accomplish and answer the basic question, “Were my marketing/advertising goals achieved?”



NEW SUCCESS METRICS

Many question the effectiveness of their social-media initiatives — at least when using traditional online metrics. Instead of shoehorning social media into “old media” metrics, marketers need to loosen the criteria. Yes, count up clicks, visits, pass-alongs and other data, but leave room for more qualitative performance standards. These new success metrics should start with the audience — not the media vehicles — and look at what people do with your message in their world. These metrics might not exist and may not fit neatly into a spreadsheet, but they matter more than ever.