

Search Marketing: From Emergence to Mainstream

Featuring:

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DAN: My name is Dan Brough and I'm the Search Marketing Director here at Draftfcb New York. I'm here today to discuss search marketing in general and hopefully enlighten you on things you may not have known about the world of Search. We're also going to mix up the format a little bit from previous podcasts. So instead of listening to me rant to myself about Search, I will also be joined by Kyle Lee, Search Media Director, to have an insightful discussion.

KYLE: Thanks Dan, happy to be here.

DAN: More than ever, people are using search engines to find what they're looking for and are having success. Advertisers spending every vertical from pharmaceuticals to finance to CPG have also found that search is an invaluable marketing tool and are finally finding what they're looking for. Whether that be in the form of sales, lead generation or brand awareness.

In 2009, Search will account for roughly \$12 billion in media spend comprising 40% of all online media dollars. This is roughly a 15% increase from 2008. So what makes Search so powerful? Kyle your thoughts.

KYLE: Looking back in my six years working in Search, I sold everything from used cars to underwear to drugs. What gives Search such a wide appeal and what makes it such an affective marketing tool is the fact that it's the only medium that will basically serve ads when someone asks for it.

Imagine you want to buy a used truck. You ask for it and a dozen dealers within a five miles radius appear in front of you. All these dealers are instantly served the perfect target audience. And how do they know? Because you asked for them. That's the power of Paid Search.

As Paid Search continues to prove itself campaign after campaign, advertisers increase their investment in Search annually even during this period of extreme uncertainty in the marketplace.

DAN: You know you bring up a good point. We're in some of the worst economic times in decades. And as I opened this podcast, I spoke about the continued growth of Search. A January e-marketers study referenced that Search was not recession proof. I've said it many times, I don't think that there's anything on the planet that is truly recession proof. However, Search Marketing remains pretty recession resistant. Kyle why do you think that's the case?

KYLE: I think it's two main things: targeting and accountability. It's about hitting the right person at the right time and the right place and knowing it. Cost-efficient spending is not just a goal anymore but a necessity. Search has the flexibility to affectively target when users search from a certain time of day or week to where they search from as narrow as street address or as wide as a continent. Along with ads that only cost the advertiser when a user clicks on them you've got yourself one of the most cost-efficient marketing tools available. At a time where every media dollar is being scrutinized, Search allows for a complete accountability by providing full transparency of every impression, click and cost. Within hours you'll know how many conversions every dollar in your campaign has generated.

DAN: Let's talk for a minute about the different ways advertisers might use Search. While I've certainly seen more traditional advertisers adopt Search, I continue to see many of them miss out

and how Search can work for them. One example is when negative press arises around a product or brand. More than ever, when bad news surfaces, these results are now reflected and links to videos, images and user-generated content. The bottom line is brands continue to get trashed.

KYLE: A common misconception with some advertisers is to withdraw from all advertising venues when bad news gets publicized about their product. This is actually the worst thing you can do. Users who hear of negative press begin using search engines to gather information and that's a bad time to be hiding. Not only are you not giving your brand-conscious users a sense of support behind your product or brand name, but you're letting others such as lawyers who thrive on bad press take advantage of the attention your brand will draw.

This makes it crucial to be there in the frontlines with an ad defending your product or position. Recently, I've seen some farmer advertisers counter bad press by creating specific ads that drive users to official information from the FDA. When it comes to negative press, remember it's all about perception and interception. The perception your consumers get when they see your ad and your ability to intercept your competition.

DAN: So let's shift gears a bit. Let's talk about Search working in tandem with traditional marketing. With the Super Bowl, it's a good time to discuss the importance of aligning Search messaging with offline advertising. It's painful to continually see advertisers spend millions of dollars offline without the support of Paid Search backing it up. Think about it.

Next time you see a TV commercial, search for that product or brand on your favorite search engine. The results might surprise you. That advertiser who just paid \$3 million for a 30-second spot isn't there to capture brand recall for literally a few cents a click.

KYLE: And we all know that building awareness is just the beginning of the consumer cycle. A good advertiser will hold their customer's hand through the entire process up to the conversion. Igniting that spark in your brand, with a catchy jingle, image or ad is just the beginning. Without being present when that consumer is ready to convert when they're searching for your brand or product, well that's just a lost opportunity.

DAN: So to wrap up the conversation if you had to pick one thing that marketers should be doing differently in 2009 what would it be?

KYLE: Marketers should probably consider how Search fits within their overall media plan. Where print and TV are usually the individual pieces of the media plan, Search is really what makes it all come together. It's the last line to be said in a consumer conversation. And by measuring every impression, every click and every conversion, you've got yourself the proof in a tool that can prove its value immediately.

DAN: Thanks for joining us Kyle. Well, I'd like to leave everyone with a quote I read last week. "Search maybe one of the most affective means on reaching qualified consumers when and where they are most receptive to learning about our brands. Ultimately, this drives offline sales."

That was from Randy Peterson, Search Innovation Manager from Proctor & Gamble. I wanted to include this quote simply because Search Marketing should no longer be considered emerging. And most major brands have adopted Search as a viable tool to drive both sales and brand messaging.

I hope this was informative. And if you have feedback or questions, please leave comments. We hope to hear from you all soon. Thanks for listening. Keep searching.