

What is Cross-Media Marketing?

Waleed Ashoo

Cross-media marketing or communications establishes an interaction between the different media elements, unlike multimedia, where the content (of a marketing message for example) is just reiterated in different forms.

The interaction or exchange created in cross-media marketing is an important distinction. Opening a line of communications or dialog with an existing or potential customer/prospect produces results that are measurable. According to a recent article on www.crossmedia.typepad.com, “Marketers have been issuing the same message on multiple channels since the inception of mass marketing. Coordinated TV, radio, and print ads are nothing new. What makes a campaign become cross media or cross channel is how the responses are funneled into a single data collection point, either systematically or manually, to generate a dialogue with the prospect. The dialogue is the key feature. Marketers need to gather information from their clients and use that information to generate the follow on communications – regardless of channel. Any channel or medium can be employed. Anything else is just advertising.”

Elements of cross-media marketing include, but are not limited to, variable data print, personalized URLs (PURL), video web (podcasts/webinars), email blasts, and social media. For example, variable data print can include direct mail, posters, brochures, and giveaways – basically, anything that can be printed on with the customer’s name, company, or a content-specific message. PURLs enable you to finally capture prospects that had up to now remained anonymous. With a personalized web address, you have a method to know that you have peeked their interest and the technology to record and measure the level of interest. Analytics can report the visits to a “landing” page or pages – even if the prospect does not make a purchase, fill out a form or respond in any way to the offer. With advanced reporting systems, you can track hits and receive alerts indicating which customer, from which campaign (if you are running multiple campaigns at the same time) and receive their contact information all in real-time.

Cross-media communications are structured to move the audience or prospect across the different media using strong “calls-to-action.” Each touch point builds on the experience and the “narrative bridge” teases you to investigate and move to the next platform. Examples include, “a TV show that ends suddenly and gives you a URL to explore more. It may be an social media message that teases and points you towards a live concert in a city square which then leads you to a TV show, then to a podcast then to subscription emails. The trigger or bridge is the critical component in motivating the cross-media action. A very strong example of this is the 30-second Mitsubishi Super Bowl XXXVIII TV ad which showed objects being thrown out of a truck in front of two trailing race cars, an accident avoidance test. It paused on a cliff-hanging moment (as two cars were thrown out) and invited the audience to go to SeeWhatHappens.com.”¹

PURLs not only get you in the door, but the vanity associated with the PURL motivates the receiver to easily offer up information about their specific needs and interests – information that the prospect would not normally divulge. And according to Joseph Merritt, of Joseph Merritt & Company, a cross-media marketing company, “...the true value of using personalized URLs and cross-media systems is the data and the actionable intelligence you gather.”

The level and depth of the message is more personal and more relevant in effective cross-media communications, resulting in a personalized and targeted the marketing campaign. When you combine variable data print with the PURL, email and then social media, such as Facebook and Twitter, the result is a comprehensive communications package that enables you to maintain an on-going relationship with the prospect. Companies that are successfully using cross-media or multi-touch marketing understand the importance of this relationship and report a higher the response rate and a corresponding increase in return on investment (ROI).

In addition to the increase in ROI, the advantages of a target marketing effort include: a cost savings for the same or better overall customer/prospect communications and the establishment of an open line of communications with existing clients and prospects – all of which contribute to a more efficient use of resources.

With the economic downturn in the past year, many companies are cutting staff and budgets; however, according to the crossmedia.typepad.com article, “Even though overall marketing budgets may have decreased dramatically, the cash earmarked for cross media applications has stayed constant or grown as an absolute figure. As executives loosen the purse strings these programs have received a disproportionately large share of the available funds.”

¹ Resource, unknown.

Resources:

<http://blog.questionpro.com/2009/10/23/707/>

<http://www.dmnews.com>

<http://gll.com/capabilities>