

10 reasons why the time has arrived to adopt programmatic media buying

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17 Nov 2015

Programmatic media buying is enjoying exponential growth in North America and Europe, but the concept is still relatively new in South Africa. We're seeing some confusion among brands about what programmatic buying is, and many brands don't know where to begin with introducing it to their digital marketing strategies (read [this article](#) for a primer).



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However, we believe it is the next big wave in the digital marketing landscape, and will rapidly follow trends such as social media and video into the mainstream of advertising practice. Marketers that start experimenting and understanding the benefits now can get a lead on those that don't.

Here are 10 reasons why programmatic media buying is an opportunity that your company should seize right now.

1. The technology and tools have matured

The rest of the points in this article answer the question of 'Why introduce programmatic advertising into your strategy?' The first one answers the question: 'Why now?' For us, the reason is that technology platforms have reached a level of maturity that makes programmatic buying accessible, effective, and in our opinion, essential.

{{Image}}

Our platform of choice, Google's DoubleClick Bid Manager, offers ad serving and platform reporting on one platform. Suddenly, you can see data from your programmatic campaign and how it impacts and influences paid and organic search, and vice versa, on a single report.

The promise of efficiently and effectively running highly relevant, creative, responsive and measurable brand campaigns, at scale, is now within reach and accessible through a single interface. Marketers have long wished for the ability to engage with customers one-to-one, and the technology is finally here to support it.

2. It's a way for marketers to demonstrate performance

Most marketing budgets are under pressure, and senior business leaders want to see return on investment on the Rand's spent by their marketing and advertising teams. As an efficient, measurable and transparent form of marketing, programmatic buying helps marketers to demonstrate their accountability and the value they produce.

3. Centralising media purchases to improve efficiencies

With programmatic buying, you can access inventory across multiple websites and publishers effectively and efficiently on a single trading platform. This saves you time and money, while allowing you to take advantage of a diverse selection of low-cost and premium advertising inventory from a range of publishers.

Co-ordinating a large campaign across multiple channels and media outlets used to be time-consuming and difficult. A programmatic buying strategy streamlines the whole process, helping you to improve reach and scalability across display, video, social and mobile.

4. Continuous improvement and optimisation

Once you start investing in programmatic buying, you are able to keep optimising your performance. With each successive campaign, you access richer reporting data and deeper customer insights. You can use this data to keep improving your creative and your placements so that you get better and better results all the time.

Programmatic also allows brands to experiment with placements with low risk and cost. You could buy cheap inventory for a short period of time, and based on performance metrics, it could see which platforms are delivering the best results. Best of all, the data you are using to make these decisions in real-time, allowing you to respond rapidly to real-world performance.

5. Access to data to support advanced targeting strategies

With programmatic buys, you can layer behavioural, contextual and audience data from multiple media buys within the same platform so that you can better understand your targeted customers. Thus, you have access to the data you need for better customer engagement.

The net result is that you can target messages with a higher level of relevance to consumers, depending on who they are, their behaviour and where they are in the purchase funnel. This reduces wastage and improves the customer experience.

6. Relief from high cancellation costs

In both traditional and digital media, budget wasted as a result of cancellation clauses is a major source of frustration for marketers. Since programmatic buys are real-time and flexible, they don't attract penalties as a result of cancelling an ad, provided the minimum campaign spends are met.

7. Cross-device targeting and optimisation

We all know how important mobile devices are in South Africa's digital advertising landscape. Programmatic buys cater both for cross-channel users who move between desktops, tablets and phones as well as consumers who only access the Web via a mobile device.

They can target users by device, which can be handy for time-of-day strategies and addressing micro-moments. For example, if your restaurant chain wants to target smartphone users at dinner time with a message, it can. These micro-moments can capture valuable consumers with a message at the precise moment they need it.

8. Audience building tools

With programmatic buying, you have access to publisher and network data that helps you to reach the right audience from the start. For example, many have detailed data about demographics, such as age and gender, as well as insight into audience behaviour at different times of day or across different devices. Thus, you start out each fresh campaign empowered with information that will help you achieve your objectives.

9. You're in full control of your spending

Programmatic buying platforms give you full control over your spending. You can cap the budget you will allocate as well as the number of people you want to reach. You can set frequency and reach parameters at the optimal levels for your budget.

10. The risks are low, the potential rewards immense

Programmatic is likely to be an important part of the digital marketing landscape in the near future, with some industry leaders predicting usage as high as 80% of display media budget by 2018. The risks and barriers to entry are low and the potential gains are so attractive that brands really have nothing to lose by starting to experiment with it right now.

ABOUT ANDRE STEENEKAMP

As CEO of 25AM, Andre Steenekamp leads the company's expansion in South Africa's fast-growing digital marketing and advertising space. His 25-year career has seen him work in a range of sales, marketing and management positions for leading traditional and digital publishers and agencies. Steenekamp was appointed to his current role following the acquisition of a 50%-stake in Acceleration Media by Times Media Limited.

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