

When traditional marketing models miss the mark

 By [Grant Shippey](#)

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When you are putting together a media plan for your new campaign, do you use a 'spray and pray' approach, or do you spend time making educated and informed decisions? Your company may not have a big marketing budget, so you will need to be as skilled in your decisions as possible.

A spray and pray approach produces advertising that aims to cover as wide an audience as possible and hopes that the actual target audience will be reached within the wider coverage.

When you have a large-scale target audience, it is easy to justify spending large amounts of money on TV, radio and outdoor advertising. Media planners and buyers can help you with a broad target market. Using AMPS data and other research tools, you will be able to identify what these people watch and listen to and where they live and work.

When it works... and when it doesn't

This method of approach works when you have a big announcement, such as a "Remember to Vote" campaign, where your target market is people 18 years and older. But even then, there is wastage as many people who are not 18 also see and hear the message, diluting the value you gain from your advertising spend.

So, when media planning for more specific, niche audiences reverts to a spray and pray approach, then you are even more likely to run an expensive campaign with lots of wastage and little gain in value.

So how can marketers improve their planning and processes? The power of digital enables us to tailor the message and the audience. So instead of generic messages going to all segments of the population, messages can be targeted to different, more accurate audiences.

Segment, and then segment again

In a digital campaign, users can be segmented by age, gender, location, device, LSM, interests and retail behaviour, to name a few. Then, by using different messages, landing pages and creative content, the messages themselves can be appropriately tailored to appeal to the specific audiences.

Some marketers may argue that this will then ultimately increase production costs and time, however, if you can increase the responses from a specific desired audience, the increased spend is well justified.

In addition, one of the most under-utilised strengths of a focused approach is the opportunity it provides to experiment with innovative ideas. In traditional advertising models, excuses are often levied against experimenting, including late briefs, short turnaround times and advertisers believing they know the extent of their audience's interest.

Innovate

However, the lower cost-to-entry of digital allows you try experiments. As Eric Ries comments in his book, [The Lean Startup](#), it is valuable to create an environment of validated learning to test hypotheses. Because the environment of digital allows the marketer to test many experiments simultaneously, they can validate which experiment works best for their strategy. The next steps would be to then measure and learn from the results.

Digital processes and opportunities could reduce the wastage of marketing campaigns and deliver data back quickly to inform optimisations and required changes. This will all help deliver planned results at a cost effective budget and within the desired timelines.

One of the most exciting and challenging aspects of marketing is finding innovative ways to reach audiences with your message. Digital platforms and processes have transformed the way in which this can be done, paving the way for enhanced creativity in the industry.

ABOUT GRANT SHIPPEY

Grant Shippey is the CEO and Founder of Amorphous New Media in Johannesburg. Grant has incubated and launched a number of digital initiatives. Some of these projects include We Sell Web Ads, a digital media sales house, Times Media Apps, an application development and distribution unit and now Hudlr, an audience profiling application for the South African Market.

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