Digital Media Planning:
some evidence based guidelines
When planning your media campaign it is important to understand the strengths of each format, how audiences respond to them and how they can work together.

Millward Brown has analysed the evidence from several key studies to create some simple guidelines for marketers who want to make the most effective use of all forms of digital media - from websites to online video, social media and mobile - as part of an integrated campaign.
01 The role of digital media in multi-media campaigns
In general, digital media reach the same people as TV (as most campaigns also use TV). The majority of campaigns use digital to increase frequency, although some campaigns also use it to increase reach.

The role of digital media depends on the size of the TV part of the campaign. Digital is not an independent element.

For TV-dominated campaigns, digital media should be planned as though everybody has already seen the TV.

Increasing investment in digital media does not guarantee better performance.

Recommendation: If investment is a measure of weight, then this suggests that the effect of digital is not driven by unique reach, but by the quality of creative and degree of integration with the other elements in the plan.

Scalability and synergy need to be taken into account when planning.
TV is better at driving salience than communicating key messages or driving engagement or recruitment. When people are exposed to TV they are less likely to absorb key messages. Don’t take for granted that TV will do anything more than drive salience. Other media should compensate for lack of attention paid to TV.

Static display is better at communicating key messages, or driving engagement or recruitment, than driving salience. When people are exposed to static display they are more likely to absorb key messages, converting to recruitment.

Non-TV video and display media can either reinforce TV or compensate for its inability to deliver against non-saliency objectives. Roles of non-TV media are often not explicit. Most often the roles of these media are cited as delivering reach and/or frequency against light TV viewers. We would expect all media in a campaign to deliver against the same communications objectives. However non-TV media can deliver against different objectives and are probably being consumed by the audience with greater attention.

This is evidence of the lean forward versus lean back consumption.

All media are capable of delivering against all kinds of communications objectives, though video is better at driving salience and static display marginally better at driving recruitment.

Media roles are flexible. Variations in performance are driven by quality of creative, levels of attention and reach.

Quality of creative should be considered when assigning roles. Always enlist display to complement video; if video defaults to driving saliency then display should compensate.

Think beyond efficiency when planning non-TV media.

We would expect all media in a campaign to deliver against the same communications objectives. However non-TV media can deliver against different objectives and are probably being consumed by the audience with greater attention.

This is evidence of the lean forward versus lean back consumption.
02

Make the most of social media fan pages
01 using digital as part of a multi-media campaign
More frequent posts tend to result in a more effective Fanpage.

The more effort you put in, the greater the return.

Post regularly. In the Facebook environment we recommend at least 15 posts per month to keep the page lively. The optimal frequency will depend on the objectives for the page and the content available. But don’t overdo it. Over-posting can have a negative effect at very high frequencies, or if you are posting for the sake of it.

The benefits of fan pages can be categorised into those which are considered basic or ‘expected’ by visitors, and those which are differentiators. ‘Expected’ attributes include: regular posts; trustworthy brand news; new product info; contests/giveaways; offers. Differentiator benefits include: variety, innovation, fun, interaction, community.

These categories are likely to remain fixed for a while, but the type of content that best delivers these benefits may evolve over time.

Stay on top of the latest Facebook page trends and check out what other fan pages are doing to differentiate themselves.

Having fewer fans doesn’t necessarily mean that the fan page isn’t working well. Think of your overall fan page effectiveness as a multiplier: the impact per fan x the number of fans.
How to make websites more effective
Make the most of social media fan pages
Ease of use is the single most important driver of success. Unlike Facebook fan pages which all share a common layout, custom-designed websites can fail the ‘ease of use’ test simply because they are complex to navigate. Microsites in particular need to be intuitive and inviting for first time users.

Integrate some kind of immersion destination into campaigns. Even when you are using Facebook fan pages, websites and campaign microsites may still be needed to deliver customised engagement activities.

New and innovative sites are best for communicating brand messages. Provided it is easy to use, a site that is also innovative will encourage users to pay greater attention. If this innovation is designed skilfully around the brand message, it will be absorbed more readily.

Your most interesting and innovative site features should link directly to your intended brand message. Encourage content creativity within an intuitive environment. Don’t settle for ordinary.

Websites and microsites can impact brand measures very strongly. Although they may not reach as many viewers as display campaigns, website environments give online users a greater chance to immerse themselves in the brand and this improves brand attitudes.

New and innovative sites are best for communicating brand messages. Provided it is easy to use, a site that is also innovative will encourage users to pay greater attention. If this innovation is designed skilfully around the brand message, it will be absorbed more readily.

Your most interesting and innovative site features should link directly to your intended brand message. Encourage content creativity within an intuitive environment. Don’t settle for ordinary.
How to deliver impact through online video
How to make websites more effective
Viral video success on a major scale occurs infrequently but it is possible to predict with copy testing. Distinctiveness of content is the most important factor.

Audio-visual ads have a greater tendency to engage online visitors than banners, and are more memorable as a result.

Identify appropriate opportunities to promote your video online. Test these alongside display banners to ensure you are paying appropriate CPM rates (higher CPMs may be justified for the right opportunity, but there remains a risk of overpaying).

Viral video success is difficult to achieve on a large scale because consumers only have a limited interest in actively engaging with content. Good isn’t good enough; ads really need to stand out from the crowd. Copy testing can help identify the level of distinctiveness of the ad and its “talk worthy” elements which can be highlighted in a viral PR campaign.

Aim for viral success, but don’t bank on it. If an ad pre-tests strongly on the key attributes for a successful viral campaign, you may be able to invest more in viral seeding/promotion and rein back on traditional paid media. For most ads, promotion via owned and paid channels will also be needed.

Online video is more impactful than online display.

In-stream online video (primarily pre-rolls) tend to impact on brand metrics more strongly than autoplay video ads.

The theory that ‘made for TV’ ads are better for message association and favourability while ‘made for online’ ads are better for persuasion is unproven.

There is no simple answer to the question of whether TV ads should simply be posted online. Higher scores for message association and favourability for TV ads used online may just be a result of the halo or synergy effects from TV. Meanwhile persuasion measures may be higher for customised creative because those messages are more tightly targeted at those who see them online.

The act of selecting a video stream means the viewer is more engaged. They are more likely to notice and absorb than the ad while waiting for their content to appear, whereas an autoplay may be ignored.

Provided you can secure sufficient appropriate inventory and are not paying excessive CPM rates, in-stream online video can be a very effective medium for brand messaging.

Although some ads may work well online without modification, all TV content should be reviewed before it is promoted online. On the whole, tailoring for the medium and the audience is likely to improve impact. Very long ads are unlikely to work as pre-rolls but may work as virals. A “back story” (e.g. the making of) can also work well to supplement a TV ad used in this way.
05 Make the best use of mobile
04 How to deliver impact through online video
evidence
Mobile ads are generally more impactful than online display ads, although reach levels are typically still quite low. There is also a wide variation in how individual ads perform - some ads do very well while others do very badly.

guideline
Improve the reach of mobile ads by integrating them into the wider campaign. When traffic is driven to mobile, the impact is strong. There is now sufficient variation in creativity varies to make it worthwhile pre-testing mobile ads.

comment
The mobile advertising space is still relatively uncluttered, so mobile ads tend to be noticed strongly. Impact is also being aided by the emergence of new mobile advertising platforms such as Apple’s iAd which is designed for use within mobile apps on iPhone, iPod Touch, and iPad devices.

Although the infrastructure for mobile advertising is now largely in place, achieving high reach media plans is still difficult. The level of creativity in ads may vary because of differing attitudes to mobile. Sometimes it is considered a core element of the campaign, in other cases it may be an afterthought.
Increasing the impact of online display
Make the best use of mobile
Brand impact is not strongly correlated to click or interaction rates. Comment: Campaign optimisation still tends to employ behavioural data 'because it's there'. This may result in incorrect optimisation decisions.

If you have a brand objective, don’t evaluate or optimise your campaign based on clicks. Brand and behavioural impact are different.

It is now easier than ever before to optimise based on brand effectiveness (either using pre-testing or real-time in-market optimisation techniques).

Guideline: Show the brand prominently on all frames of the ad; each frame of the ad should be able to stand on its own. Don’t make people work for the message… they won’t! Keep the messaging very simple, and be mindful of audience drop-off when using ‘reveal’ ads.

There is a wide variation in the impact of individual online ads, but some patterns can be discerned. Comment: People rarely watch online creatives from beginning to end, and the execution can therefore have a significant impact on results.

Impact varies by audience and location. Comment: Impact will vary based on the audience targeted, the relevance of the content, and the audience’s receptivity to the brand in different environments. Web portals (whether ‘horizontal’ such as AOL or MSN or ‘vertical’ with a focus on specific sectors or interests) may work well because relatively tight demographic targeting is possible. Also, portals can project popularity.

Guideline: Placing ads appropriately can make a big difference to their performance. Pre-launch, you should consult normative data for audience and brand-specific learning about historical campaign performance. Once in market, consider using real-time in-market research to optimise the ads across sites and creative units.

There are important differences in the way that viewers respond to TV and to online content. Comment: TV is a passive medium. Commercial content is therefore designed to be disruptive in order to grab viewers’ attention while relaxing on the sofa. Unsurprisingly there no correlation between engagement and motivation - viewers are happy to be entertained by a car ad while having no intention of purchasing it. In contrast, the online environment is an active medium in which the viewer exerts more control. Consumers are drawn to content which is engaging but also seek out brands and categories that they are predisposed towards. This means there is a much stronger positive relationship between engagement and motivation.

While it is important to make online content engaging, it may not be sufficient to grab attention by itself. There usually has to be an additional motivation for consumers to seek it out and interact with it.

Guideline: There is a wide variation in the impact of individual online ads, but some patterns can be discerned. Comment: People rarely watch online creatives from beginning to end, and the execution can therefore have a significant impact on results.

Guideline: If you have a brand objective, don’t evaluate or optimise your campaign based on clicks. Brand and behavioural impact are different. It is now easier than ever before to optimise based on brand effectiveness (either using pre-testing or real-time in-market optimisation techniques).

Guideline: Placing ads appropriately can make a big difference to their performance. Pre-launch, you should consult normative data for audience and brand-specific learning about historical campaign performance. Once in market, consider using real-time in-market research to optimise the ads across sites and creative units.

Guideline: While it is important to make online content engaging, it may not be sufficient to grab attention by itself. There usually has to be an additional motivation for consumers to seek it out and interact with it.

Guideline: There are important differences in the way that viewers respond to TV and to online content. Comment: TV is a passive medium. Commercial content is therefore designed to be disruptive in order to grab viewers’ attention while relaxing on the sofa. Unsurprisingly there no correlation between engagement and motivation - viewers are happy to be entertained by a car ad while having no intention of purchasing it. In contrast, the online environment is an active medium in which the viewer exerts more control. Consumers are drawn to content which is engaging but also seek out brands and categories that they are predisposed towards. This means there is a much stronger positive relationship between engagement and motivation.

Guideline: While it is important to make online content engaging, it may not be sufficient to grab attention by itself. There usually has to be an additional motivation for consumers to seek it out and interact with it.
This paper is based on an analysis of the evidence provided by the following Millward Brown research studies:

- European CrossMedia
- MarketNorms (AdIndex)
- FanIndex
- Website evaluations
- Dynamic Logic Creative Best Practices
For further information, please contact

**John Svendsen**, SVP Global Brand Director - Media
e: John.Svendsen@millwardbrown.com  |  t: +44 (0) 207 126 5061