Can Dynamic Content Optimization Save Brand Storytelling as We Know It?

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Brands and agencies are working overtime to establish a cost-effective model that maximizes the impact of both paid media and creative in a highly disrupted marketplace. This is evidenced by a recent increase in agency reviews, in-housing and hiring transformation experts.

While the explosion of inventory that is available to be purchased programmatically has been a virtual godsend for media buyers seeking control and efficiency, it has certainly posed some creative challenges. And that is putting it lightly.

Good storytelling in the age of programmatic media is really difficult.

Unlike the golden age of fixed position placements that featured exquisitely shot brand films, high gloss photography, pithy copywriting and other outputs from our industry’s top creatives, addressable media has not always been the ideal vehicle for delivering advertising brilliance.

This is particularly problematic for creatives because programmatic media spend will only increase year-over-year, according to eMarketer.

Necessity is the mother of invention, and fortunately, dynamic content optimization (DCO) platforms and partners have continued to innovate and grow their offerings in ways that

will better support great brand stories.

DCO got a bit of a bad rap as a tool used primarily to drive lower funnel metrics by swapping out different offers or messages exclusively on digital banner ads. When in actuality, DCO simply uses data signals to trigger the most relevant content for an audience and can be used at any stage in the funnel. As DCO matured, the top players in the space now offer dynamic capabilities for social media, YouTube, OOH, TV and native. They have enabled some of the top platforms for telling great stories. It’s become a creative catalyst rather than a hindrance.

Brands and marketers of all business models and industries are now well-positioned to take full advantage of the more robust and compelling brand building capabilities of DCO.
We can look to DTC brands like Away and Glossier as best in class examples of building powerful brands by telling compelling and aspirational stories using DCO and programmatic media. Away has built a devout community of travel enthusiasts who feel a part of the brand’s mission and marketing because their travel photos are often included in that brand’s paid media content. Glossier has done an amazing job iterating multiple variations of beauty tutorials using behavioral data and fostering a close connection with its entrepreneurial founder and CEO who captures and posts a great deal of content herself.

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While this is awesome news, it’s only half the battle. To fully actualize the potential of DCO as a storytelling engine requires media and creative to closely align their planning. We need to bring together two disciplines that have historically operated somewhat in silos planning on different timelines, with a different set of insights and held to

different KPIs.

Since the capabilities of DCO have evolved most rapidly in the last nine to 12 months, the collaborative kinks have yet to be worked out. Here are a few points of integration we can start with:

Audience

If you are going to plan your media against audiences, your brand's content should be as well. Replace the big brand idea with a brand narrative crafted for each of your target audiences.

Planning should begin with deriving consumer and cultural insights that can help formulate a narrative that will resonate with each of your target audiences. After that narrative is crafted, you can start to map each one against the programmatic decision tree. Identify the key data signals that will be available to you and which aspects of the narrative will be most effective at each stage of the consumer journey. Use the data signals to serve the right elements of your story at the right time while your target is in the right mindset and make sure to optimize against a unified set of KPIs in-market.

Source

Next, pick the best sources of content for each audience in the context of the story you are trying to tell. Brands can get content from virtually anywhere today: their agency partners, in-house agencies, publishers, influencers. But not all sources are right for your specific brand, goals or budget. The selection of content sources requires a close and flexible collaboration between the stewards of the brand creative and those who are planning the media.

Some criteria for selecting the best sources collaboratively are those that are highly persuasive to my target audience,

will produce all the required elements of a dynamic and flexible narrative, are willing to agree to full content rights or those that extend beyond their own fixed distribution and bring the narrative to life in an authentic, compelling and highly creative way. Net-net, the source is additive to the story and not just the delivery vehicle.

Formats

Creative and media need to collaborate on making format decisions to ensure there is a balance between delivering creative excellence and driving media effectiveness. This is going to require a little give and take.

During a time of great change and disruption in our industry, when a lot of us often feel that up is down and left is right, it’s both inspiring and exciting to see DCO providers step up and truly provide a new paradigm for brand storytelling.

https://www.adweek.com/programmatic/can-dynamic-content-optimization-save-brand-storytelling-as-we-know-it/