

Building stronger digital teams

Training tips from the Digital Classroom **Building stronger digital advertising sales teams** Digital Media Sales Academy

We set up the Digital Media Sales Academy courses in 2004 and since then they've been taught to teams in 20 countries. Trainers have been supporting media sales managers and their teams through online tuition. Here we've taken a selection of comments from the conversations in the Digital Classroom to provide teams with additional insights. Any Academy participant can post questions and tutors guarantee to reply. These clips from the classroom highlight just a few of the issues raised, and how working more smartly can help boost the productivity of your team.

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The knowledge transfer business

www.DigitalTrainingAcademy.com



Academy director:
Danny Meadows-Klue

Danny has been a researcher and commentator in the digital networked industries since 1995. He managed the UK's first online newspaper and has helped run web businesses ranging from mass market portals and consumer magazines, to online stores, search and email services. He is the co-founder of the UK and European IABs, was their president for four years and has been lecturing on digital marketing for more than a decade.

“Selling online advertising requires a strong understanding of how digital media work, and broad knowledge of digital marketing. Get the offer right and the web will deliver powerful impacts to clients’ brands; but getting it right takes skill and experience.

These tutor’s tips from the Digital Media Sales Academy reflect a few of the more frequent questions we’re asked. With agencies and clients still developing their approach, there’s great scope for a media owner’s sales team to deliver thought leadership.”

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Digital Insight Reports

www.DigitalStrategyConsulting.com/insight

In times of huge economic and technical change, knowledge becomes a critical success factor. We created the Digital Insight Reports to bring you insights from a particular part of this fast changing industry. They are independent perspectives on key issues around business or marketing in the digital networked economy.

Introduction

The product is key

Online media sales: it's all about the product

"Double your internet revenues every year for the next three years. 100%: that's the number." The chief executive of a magazine group is addressing his troops with a war cry that has been echoed around the publishing world since 2006.

But the more I hear it, the more I'm struggling with it. Struggling, not because it's bold - that's great and publishers need to be showing leadership right now - but because most magazine groups are looking for the answers in the wrong places. Since I began teaching the digital media sales teams two years ago I must have seen these aspirations in a hundred media firms: the web's rising, our website is rising, so revenues must just rise faster. Sales teams are being given their orders and are marching into battle.

On the surface the logic is sound, but scratch deeper and you'll uncover a disconnect. The problem is the product: most magazines and newspapers use their websites as an echo and archive of their print titles. Sure, they add a little value by hyperlinking within their stories, offer expanded job boards, and have some simple spaces for discussion. But this is a web publishing model created in the early nineties. It's logical, simple and safe, but Google, Wikipedia, MSN, Pandora, Flickr and Second Life it is not. The reason web traffic to media sites is exploding is because of the new communication models that have been uncovered in the last few years. The first generation model of web publishing just won't cut it, and without the audiences those sales teams will never succeed.

In the digital networked economy consumers have new expectations. Technology has suddenly created the tools to hold conversations and capture knowledge, reshaping the way we communicate and share information. The publishing models of the 'Web 2.0' era leap massively beyond those of print, placing the viewer at the heart of the media experience, and inviting them to participate in content creation. It's this content that builds that essential traffic, and with that comes the advertising revenues media owners are chasing. Some go further still, delivering toolkits and services that weave themselves so deeply into the fabric of people's daily lives that their visits become essential.

As the knowledge we need and the services we use migrate from our desktops to the network, a new role for media groups can open up, but only to those prepared for rapid and radical product development. The sales force cannot sell what is not there, and that's why doing little more than duplicating the magazine on the web fails to harness any of its real potential.

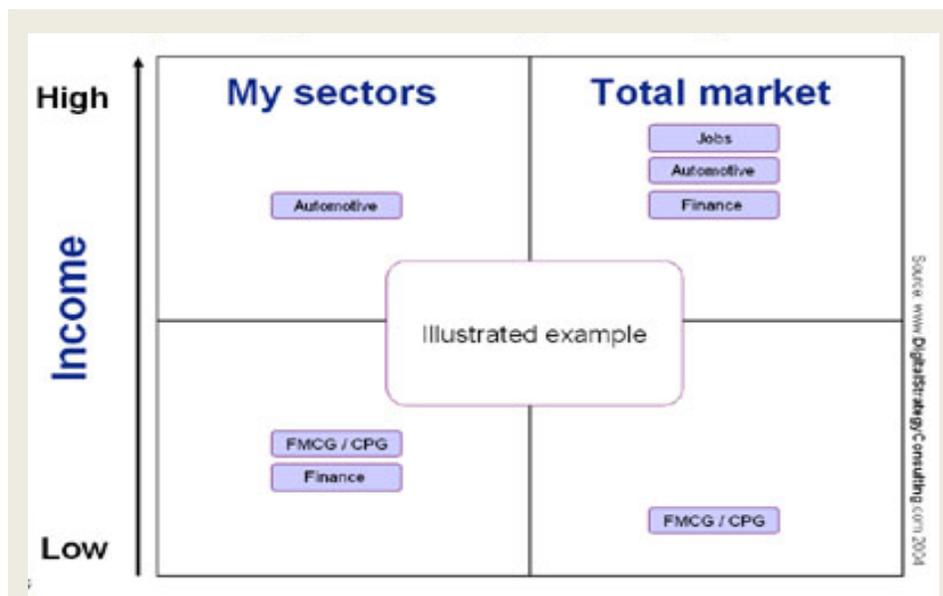
Digital sales strategy exercise

Digital strategy

Product development strategy exercise

Dotcom pureplays have known this for many years, but the 'product' of most magazine group websites remains fundamentally flawed. It maybe heresy to say, painful to think, embarrassing to admit, but if you don't believe me then try this simple test:

1. Think about the needs of the markets you serve - list the complete needs of both your audiences and advertisers
2. Forget your current website or your offline products
3. Take a white sheet of paper and list what would satisfy those needs
4. Then overlay what your website is actually delivering



Advertising revenue segmentation map

Publishing strategy tools from Digital Strategy Consulting

Source: www.DigitalStrategyConsulting.com

It can be an uncomfortable exercise, but rethinking your product offering from the bottom up lets you think the unthinkable. Yes, it's a horridly crude form of gap-analysis, but when you actually do it, it makes a bold point. Relying on a print model to power your web business just doesn't stack up.

Reflections

Great editorial is only the starting point for a publisher's website. The blogs, the community, the social networks, the directories, the toolkits and the practical services; they all need to be there too. Traffic may be growing on magazine sites, but it's not exploding, and that's why even a great media sales team cannot win the revenues if they don't have the audiences to sell. What worked for those of us publishing online media sites back in 1995 is certainly not good enough ten years later, yet those are the models of many magazine sites. It's time to get serious or get out. That means not only making the investment, but getting the thinking right for the product itself. Magazines can have great futures online, but the jury is still out on which titles will make this transition. The stars of the internet are the businesses that built those products - and what's more they continue incredible investment in product development. Media groups need to act in the same way if they're to realise the ambitious goals they set themselves.

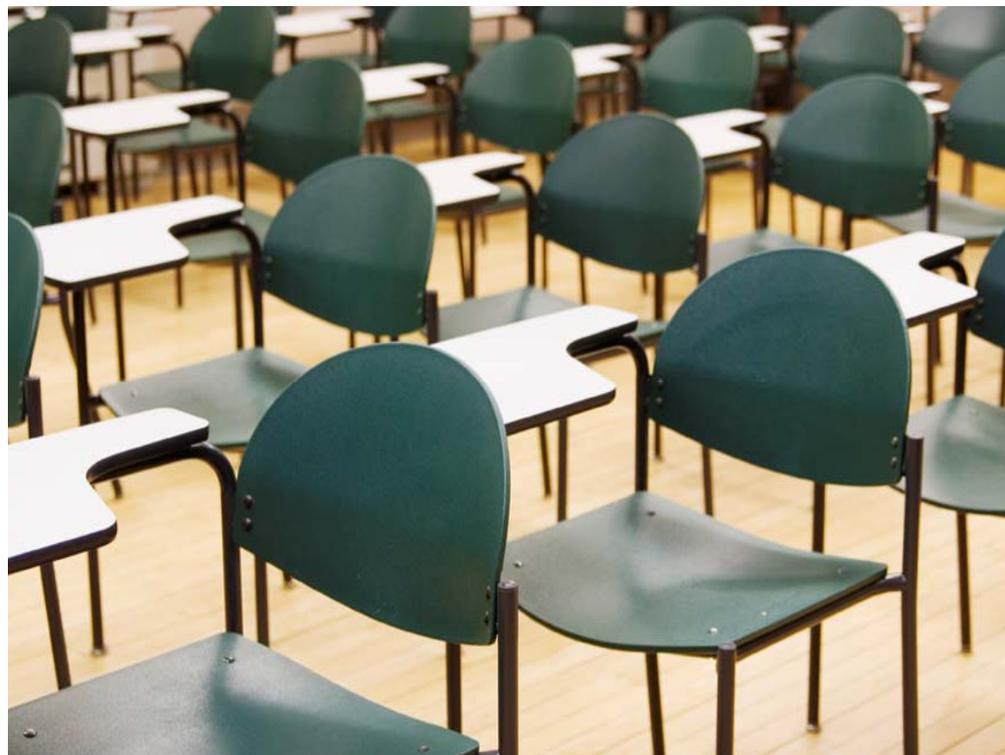
Traffic may be growing on magazine sites, but it's not exploding, and that's why even a great media sales team cannot win the revenues if they don't have the audiences to sell.

Commercial development exercise

What is your online advertising market really worth? Where should your sales teams focus their effort? Planning your online sales means knowing how to read the advertising industry data about online adspend, web advertising, and where the growth in internet marketing spend is coming from. Increasing internet advertising revenues demands a good understanding of where the market is, and with the research data weak in many countries, many formats, or for many sectors, commercial directors can easily misread the landscape. Get it right and revenues accelerate; get it wrong and the whole sales engine is running to stand still. This digital management strategy coaching exercise will have you question what your data is telling you. Your team can then apply Digital's Advertising Revenue Segmentation Map for publishers to run a gap analysis on where your ad sales efforts should concentrate. In-company deployments of this programme are customised to the specific sector and revenue strategy challenges you face. Digital's consultants can transfer the ideas from our workshops into sales planning tools for internet publishers.

Inside the Digital Classroom

Hints and tips from the Digital Media Sales Academy & Digital Publishing Strategy Academy



These are extracts from conversations with digital publishers and commercial managers taking part in our Digital Management Strategy Coaching programmes in the UK and EMEA. They are just a few of the points raised by executives on the Digital Media Sales Academy and the Digital Publishing Strategy Academy. The Digital Classrooms are places participants can discuss issues with the tutor and other Academy participants.

Questions from the participant, and followed by answers from an Academy tutor.

Advertising formats

How do we lift people out of traditional media and get them ready to buy online?

Posted by Academy participant | April 19, 2007 10:21 AM

Helping clients get ready for online

It's odd that in 2007 the majority of British firms still don't advertise online, but when you factor in the vast number of micro businesses out there, it's clearly the case. Look into the behaviours of some of the larger brands and there too you may find an odd mismatch:

Ask if they are on the web and listen out for: "Sure we are. We have a great website."

Ask if they advertise online to boost brand metrics and drive sales the way they do through other channels and you may hear a rather uncomfortable silence.

In five years' time the media mix will be clearer and firms won't be playing catch up quite so badly. These differences will have started to narrow because the web will routinely be at the heart of all marketing. The problem is that many firms still don't have the framework for doing this today.

To help marketing teams discover they're missing out, try asking a few of Digital's favourite questions:

- How do your customers find you?
- What's the role of the web in helping customers research purchases? (A killer question for every big ticket brand these days)
- Which of your competitors advertise online most heavily?
- Would it be useful to reach your customers during the working day?
- Do any of the media vehicles you use offline have an online mirror to their brand? (Always a good place to start)

If the marketing team are still struggling to fit the web into their media mix then remember we run one day immersion courses for client-side marketing groups.

What about selling online advertising?

Posted by Academy participant | November 8, 2007 16:20 PM

Tips for selling online advertising

In the Digital Publishing Strategy Academy we're looking at the theory of online publishing, internet media and what makes for a successful business. Effective online advertising sales is part of that, and to help firms build up their internet ad sales skills, several newspapers and magazine groups asked Digital's team to create a training course for online advertising sales teams.

If you're completing the internet publishing management training we're running here (those courses all relate to this classroom) then you can benefit from seeing some of the bigger picture stuff about how to build your revenues and change the way your sites behave.

If you have specific questions about internet advertising sales, then take a look at the Digital Media Sales Academy pages in their online classroom. That Academy has ten days worth of lessons and exercises that we'll select from depending on how advanced the internet sales teams are, and the sort of challenges they are facing. The key thing for us is to learn about what's holding your advertising sales growth back, and then bridge the gap.

Take a look here and find out what some of the sales managers have been saying to us on recent Digital Media Sales Academies... <http://www.digitaltrainingacademy.com/digitalmediasalesacademy/>

Tips on selling cross media packages?

Posted by Academy participant | April 19, 2007 10:13 AM

Combining print and online media

First up learn about how the audiences of the two properties complement each other. Find out if it's the same individuals, the same type of people, or a completely different profile (each of the three is common). This will help you understand the value proposition for the brand. For example your value proposition might be:

- Reach more of the familiar target audiences by extending your campaign onto your website; boost your coverage by another 50,000 people
- Reach a different audience segment by advertising through the website: maybe it's the same demographic and lifestyle profile, but one that's overseas
- Reinforce the impact of your magazine advertising by reinforcing the proposition online; that second wave of messaging to the audience can build on the existing marketing, taking them further in the purchase journey

Add to this the brand-halo effect of visibility within your environment and the sales case strengthens. Also remember the 2+2=5 effect: seeing messages from the same brand through several channels can multiply the effectiveness of a campaign.

How to focus on selling just an online property?

Posted by Academy participant | April 19, 2007 10:24 AM

Selling pureplay online sites

Looking at audience time and engagement is the most powerful way to highlight the differences between where a firm's customers are and where the firm focuses their budgets.

I started researching this in 1994 when digital media first began to emerge as a potential business marketing channel and a challenger to magazines and newspapers. Ever since I've been amazed at the disconnect in media planning thinking within so many firms. On the one hand audiences may be spending more than half their time with all media just online, but it's rare that there's anything close to this in the client's ad budgets.

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Time is the key currency in media that everyone is chasing; all the tougher because as consumers rethink their media budgets and where they spend their focus, it's challenging to pin them down. Twenty years ago the soap operas provided unrivalled reach and guaranteed audience attention, then came the era of channel-zapping, then multi channel TV, and then the melting pot of digital. If you can prove that the audience is online – and with your property – then the logic is unchallengeable.

Why are marketers reluctant to integrate social media and other digital channels?

Posted by Academy participant | October 29, 2007 6:29 PM

The integration challenge

Integrating digital marketing into communications plans means changing the way a firm behaves. Change is difficult, and for many it can be uncomfortable. Even if there are huge opportunities out there for getting the new models right, people are naturally risk averse and it's easier to repeat the same behaviour today as last year (the same media plans, marketing models, use of marketing channels etc).

The integration challenge is as much about the cultural framework of an organisation as it is about the rational arguments. If the management culture places a heavy burden of evidence on all new ideas before resources are released, then it follows that innovation within the firm will be stifled. That repression of innovation could take many forms, but often it can be as simple as a sceptical marketing or finance director, asking for incredible ROI metrics before rocking the marketing boat. The irony is that when the prevailing winds are hurling the same boat towards the rocks, common sense should have the whole team hoisting the sail and steering to safety. The larger the firm and the taller the management hierarchy, in general, the more stifled the innovation.

Successful online services tend to have a common history: rapid prototyping, constant refinement, live testing, and an adaptive path that encourages continued evolution. The difficult reality is that it's only once the web services are up and running that the real testing can begin. However you try to model customer behaviour in the lab, the live experience almost without exception throws up surprises, and these are the triggers that lead to discovering how online services can be more useful. From the order of stories on the front page of a news site, to the steps in the conversion to sale in an online store, to the product information pages of a corporate site, follow the simple steps of launch, listen and learn.

How do you get advertisers to think about video for the web?

Posted by Academy participant - Commercial Director | November 8, 2007 8:13 PM

Selling contextual advertising and contextual TV sub-sites: how do we get agencies to be more proactive in producing proper online video ads?

Posted by Academy participant | April 19, 2007 10:16 AM

Getting video advertising to work

Although video advertising has been around online since 1999, it's only in the last eighteen months that it's suddenly broken into the mainstream. The fusion with television is a landmark for the internet as a media channel and all of the arguments that drive television advertising (the emotive experience of TV, mass reach of audiences, daypart targeting) can all be echoed online.

But there's a challenge. Many brands are not set up to produce great online television advertising. They may be adept TV advertisers, but taking a TV commercial and simply transposing it to the web is only a starting point in unlocking the creative impact of online.

This first step will satisfy a group of marcoms objectives, such as:

- Extending campaign reach
- Extending campaign duration (chances are that the websites can stay on the schedule much longer than primetime TV)
- Boosting the frequency of the campaign
- Unlocking more value from the major investment in producing the TV creative initially

But it's still only a start. Savvy marketers will cut their own TV commercials just for online, they'll answer these questions to unlock greater value:

- Should the image composition be simpler for viewing on a smaller screen?
- Should the initial play be shorter than a 30 second with the encouragement to take the user on a deeper journey with a range of options?
- Should the viewing be tracked to see at what point audiences tune out?

In five years' time we really ought to have cracked this, but for now at least it's up to everyone on the campaign team to look for ways to boost the effectiveness of online TV advertising.

How long should pre-roll videos be?

Posted by Academy participant - Ad Director | November 8, 2007 8:45 PM

Getting started in running pre roll video advertising

Keep them short. When I interviewed the head of AOL, he was bold enough to say 'the pre-roll is dead'... and go on to suggest that we all need to be looking for the new format.

Digital Media Sales Academy

Boosting revenues and transforming your sales team.



A range of leading courses to boost conversions for teams selling web, or blended print / broadcast / web advertising. We examine the role of web advertising, help design smarter proposals, build the team's understanding of formats, technologies and web metrics. Advanced editions work for teams with over 5 years digital expertise, while conversion courses get newcomers up to speed in days. It's the guaranteed way to trigger a leap in your advertising sales revenues.

Find out more from:
 Danny@DigitalStrategyConsulting.com or call
 + 44 (0) 20 7244 9661

If you're running video advertising content before video programming on the web, then appreciate that there is a balance between the acceptable length of the pre-roll and the length of the video content that follows. Don't even think about putting a 30 second pre-roll before a 30 second news clip! Instead try to weave together your video assets to create different programming options. Let the viewer know the length of the programming so that you manage their expectation for the video advertising. And like all areas of web publishing, try some split-run tests, with different lengths of video switched on and off to see what will work and what causes the drop-off.

For more on pre-rolls – such as pricing and duration models - ask your Academy Manager about the Digital Media Sales Academy.

Web analytics

Web analytics just isn't clear to me. There are loads of technologies, but what are the different types of tools in all of this?

Academy participant

Where does Alexa fit in measurement?

Posted by Academy participant | September 10, 2007 2:27 PM

Getting started in web analytics

Broadly there are two routes: using the server data (often called 'server-side' measurement, 'logfile analysis' of publisher's statements) and the audience panels (of which ComScore and Netratings are the best known). In the Media Planning Academy and the Web Analytics Academy, we drill down on these because if you're using them daily then there are insights you need to know to understand what the data doesn't explain as much as what it does. For example, the server-side routes can be audited and in some markets such as Germany and Italy there are industry owned panels.

Alexa is effectively a panel measurement tool. It provides rankings of the sites its members visit and it is able to give trend data about a site's activity over time. The great news for budget holders is that it's free and that's one of the reasons it's proved so popular. From 2005 onwards its use has swelled, and though it doesn't offer demographic weighting to be representative of the whole country, it does offer a large panel and solid audiences.

One of the challenges is that because it only tracks at Domain Level, publishers and planners can't get the information they are really looking for about the sub-sites and sections that might prove most interesting.

If you're looking for audience data that's accurate from markets outside the UK then just be sure to check that the numbers are large enough to be reflective of the country. And remember that there are never 'perfect' numbers that give you 100% accurate data, but all of the tools will give you a good general picture. If you need more then take a look at the Alexa site, or join us on the Web Analytics Academy. If you need more on Web Analytics then try the analytics classroom here: <http://www.digitaltrainingacademy.com/analytics/>

Where do I start in web analytics?

Posted by Academy participant - Editor | November 8, 2007 8:24 PM

Web analytics – getting started with your audience

Without knowing where people are coming from, it's hard to know which elements of your content and online marketing activity are really working.

The good news is that help is at hand, and in the form of a thousand flavours of web analytics tools and techniques that can instantly give you a good understanding of the trends. However, many companies readily bolt in their web analytics, but then forget to invest the time and energy to interpret the outcomes. Get it right, and it will show you, at every step, how customers are progressing through their journey to reach a sale or deep interaction with the online presence of your brand.

Here are some tips:

- * Start with measuring the 5 Ps of website traffic, and figure out your 'passion' metric
- * Once the tools are in place, harness them as part of the weekly or monthly management reports the organisation uses to measure performance
- * Set yourself goals by extracting a few of the key performance indicators from the data
- * Pay particular attention to where traffic comes from, how it discovers you, and which part of the site it arrives at

What's the most under-used tool for online publishers?

Posted by Academy participant - Publisher | November 8, 2007 8:54 PM

Web analytics - the underutilised tool

Video: that's the quick answer because within a couple of years every site will have video exploding from its screens the way we have regular graphics and flash now.

But in terms of what's already available to everyone, then at the moment I'm really excited about web analytics. Analytics is giving the deepest of insights into how customers buy and at what point the buying process fails. Whether it's tracking the open rates on emails or the conversion rates within a website, the data is now there. You can tell exactly how many people did, and didn't respond to the most specific call to action. Apply the same thinking screen by screen across your ecommerce store and you can scientifically analyse exactly how people behave.

Harnessed well, this means your organisation can become a learning organisation, ever improving the way it works, thinks and behaves. Constant improvements in customer conversion rates at each step in the buying process have a transformative effect on the business.

Most firms have web analytics in place. Yet hardly any have the data analysts to make sense of the results.

But right now there's a disconnect.. Worse still is that even fewer have empowered these data analysts to drive website design, to feed their knowledge back into the process of building and rebuilding web pages to deliver better conversion rates. It's another massive missed opportunity, and yet look into the leading digital retail businesses like Amazon, Tesco's, LastMinute and eBay and you'll find a whole management structure that does this. Publishers are particular victims of the disconnect.

Take the guesswork out of publishing development, unlock the potential of your customer data, transform your business.

How do online advertisers track and account for their conversions of searches into actual transactions / sales?

(a) Obviously if the vendor is purely operating an online business it's easy but where customers use the internet to research and go on to buy from a call centre e.g. Motor Insurance or Travel Agents the results would surely be skewed?

(b) Do online advertisers make allowances for transactions / sales that originated via another stimulus such as a directory, TV ad or billboard?

Posted by Academy participant | October 22, 2007 2:48 PM

Tracking online and conversions

When the success of a campaign is being measured in the return on investment the client sees in sales, then getting the measurement and metrics right at the start is key. Many clients need to invest in the right analytics tools to ensure they can relate a click to a sale, and when several entry points and source websites could be linked to just one customer (after all we don't all buy just on one visit to a site), there's an additional challenge for how leads are attributed.

The value of each lead will vary based on their propensity to buy, the site (and brand's) propensity to convert, and the margin the business makes from the sale. Savvy classically trained marketers will also factor in the lifetime value of their customers as the way of making sure they get the numbers spot on.

All of this works well in theory for an online business, but where it gets messy is in the world of blended retailing: our friend shows us the latest iPhone, we review a product online, we go into the store to play with it, and then we order on the web. These types of customer journeys are incredibly hard to track, and many retailers, consumer brands and business services are still doing little more than making educated guesses. The good news is that help is at hand: econometric modelling, smart statistical analysis, and some survey based customer feedback, can all help figure out how the model is working and what is generating the sales. But this remains one of the most complicated elements of online advertising measurement, and for many situations there simply isn't the data in place to be able to confidently say exactly how the sales were generated.

How do you get people up to speed with the metrics? That can be a real challenge...

Academy participant

Explaining metrics

Metrics, counting and numbers: the jargon alone can be enough to put a client off, and if you cut through that is there any guarantee you're all talking about the same thing?

I've been teaching online metrics since the mid nineties, but rather than getting simpler, this is an area that's getting much more complicated. Sure there are some core metrics we all use: impressions (views), unique visitors (people) and visits (viewing occasions), but that is just the start. Part of the challenge is the massive breadth of online's offering. You'll find retail clients needing the online equivalent of footfall and in-store metrics, television stations using techniques familiar from traditional TV, and newspapers focussed on their ABCs. The trick? Learn the client's language and adjust yours to fit their framework. But that's after you've delved into the data to see what's there.

Metrics is a vast topic, so if you want more on how metrics are changing over time and what the implications are of Web 2.0 models in advertising then download some of the materials and watch the video lectures at <http://www.digitaltrainingacademy.com/analytics/>

Audience research

Where can I get more about audiences on the web and how they are developing? – I need this to sell advertising. It seems like there just isn't that much quality data around.

Posted by Academy participant - Commercial Director | November 8, 2007 8:21 PM

Where can I find more research about online ad effectiveness?

Posted by Academy participant | October 24, 2007 2:26 PM

Proving online ad effectiveness

Proving the case in online advertising is much easier when it's supported by solid research.

In the early days of the web, it was pretty much just down to a marketer's intuition, but today you have a rich range of research tools and papers that you can rely on. At Digital, we collated some of the strongest into a whole 'Digital Research Academy', but Academy members can also use the online research library as a way of seeing some of the highlights. Here are a few tips to look out for:

- Online adspend: most countries have strong data about the amount spent in online advertising. If you've been on our Digital Media Sales Academy or Digital Media Planning Academy, then you'll have probably seen them in detail. Look out for the latest insight reports we've published that provide a commentary on the scale and trajectory of that growth www.DigitalStrategyConsulting.com/insight

- XMOS: The US online ad industry provided a series of powerful integrated media research exercises that proved the optimal mix of online media. You'll find a couple of the summaries here www.DigitalTrainingAcademy.com/research

... and you can use them to uncover what the optimal mix of media should have been for specific campaigns. What particularly resonated with me (I ran a roadshow to UK agencies about this in 2003) was the gap between where marketers place their budgets, and where their audiences had moved to. Even for a simple consumer good (like a bar of soap), back in 2001 the research was showing that the web should have been a 15% medium for a campaign rather than a 1% medium.

- Ad effectiveness research: There are over 100,000 online ad campaigns that have been researched and quantified; their impacts explored to show you how the web helped boost brands. You'll find the details of a few in the main Digital Media Sales Academy classroom pages, here at Digital.

Is there any research that proves how the web creates sales on the high street?

Posted by Academy participant – Magazine Adsales Director | November 8, 2007 12:20 PM

Researching online ad effectiveness

The first big studies were run in the UK where the ad budgets justified the research, but a study I've really enjoyed learning about is from the French media industry. It proves both branding and the sales uplift and uses an excellent methodology: exposed and controlled cells in France, with and without the online elements of the campaign...

http://www.digitalstrategyconsulting.com/articles/2006/09/online_ads_drive_offline_sales.html

Online ad spend

Does the high percent of budgets, aforementioned in the report, allocated for advertising in search engines concern exclusively paid forms (sponsored links, AdWords, etc.) or does it also include the costs of positioning services and their optimisation? What is the relation of these forms of promotion?

Posted by Academy participant | October 16, 2007 2:06 PM

Understanding search spend in the UK

The numbers for search engine advertising in the UK are high, but they're also accurate. More than half of all the online advertising monies spent on media go into search engines in the UK, and they're concentrated among just a couple of firms. From 2004-2007, the UK was among only two countries where the market leader (Google) declared their figures, and that's why the numbers here are particularly interesting.

The data is collated by PricewaterhouseCoopers, under a series of non-disclosure agreements with the media owners, and for that reason the numbers are considered among the most accurate in all media reporting (they represent the actual cash being billed). However, the data doesn't cover any of the spend that goes into the techniques of search engine optimisation – both on-page and off-page. That data remains far more elusive, and while some of it can be pinpointed to a small number of agencies, it's much tougher to accurately count because there are so many elements of every website's design these days that includes SEO.

For more on the intricacies of counting and data, why not join a Digital Analytics & Research Academy?

What's the methodology for calculating online advertising spend? The numbers don't look comparable to other media.

Posted by Academy participant | October 26, 2007 11:50 AM

Calculating UK online adspend – getting the numbers to add up

Lots of people question whether the online adspend figures are accurate in the UK. The details of the methodology are in the full report, but the bottom line is that PWC carry out a survey of media owners. They talk with finance directors under a web of non-disclosure agreements and then get the details of the actual cash spent with the online sites. It's really robust because it understates the market every time. I helped set up the project in 1997 (it was a real slog in the early years) and ran it until the start of 2005, so I'm pretty comfortable taking questions about methodology. It's way more robust than most media in most countries, and because it's based on the cash amounts you can be sure that the industry really is this large.

However, there are some notable exceptions:

- None of the spend on microsites is included
- Search engine optimisation can't be tracked, so that's not in there
- Most affiliate spend is outside (though this can be a little grey)

Monitor your inbound emails tightly; for every one email you get on a topic there could be 100 people who feel the same.

As for the other media, that's the methodology and the data that the Advertising Association publish through the guys at the WARC research centre. If you have more questions then post them here. You can download a copy of some of the latest stats and analysis here...

http://www.digitalstrategyconsulting.com/insight/2007/10/uk_digital_advertising_market.html

For data from other markets email the team at Digital and we'll point you towards people who can help

How do you get to know your audience?

Posted by Academy participant - Feature Writer | November 8, 2007 8:28 PM

Learning about your audience

Here are four simple ways to start:

- Watch your website traffic data
- Run some sample surveys to benchmark audience behaviour
- Create a small reader panel to get feedback
- Monitor your inbound emails tightly; for every one email you get on a topic there could be 100 people who feel the same, so whether it's an 'unsubscribe' to your email service or an opinion about an article, this is some of the most valuable feedback you can get



Online advertising growth since the dotcom boom: now nearly £700m in Q2

Source: PricewaterhouseCoopers / Internet Advertising Bureau / WARC

Online communities

How do you create an online social network?

Posted by Academy participant - Editor | November 8, 2007 7:51 PM

Building online social networks

Before you leap into trying to build your own social network, think about whether you can enjoy marketing through someone else's channels. As a publisher your content might be perfect for pouring into another network. Creating a social network normally takes a great deal of energy and resources: reaching the right people, figuring out the message, creating a place people want to talk through – it's a challenge that's beyond the time and resources many companies have.

Here are some simple tips for the process of selecting the right channel:

- As with all digital marketing, start with the business needs and map them out in detail
- Look for the channels that are available
- Rank the channels in terms of the scale of the opportunity, and the costs of using them – if there are specific risks then include those as well
- If social networks, communities and social media appear likely as an avenue that's worth considering then look at whether you're participating in someone else's or trying to create your own
- If you are creating your own community, then here are some tests to apply to your audience:
 1. Is the audience large enough and the payback high enough to justify the investment?
 2. Is there a genuine single community here? Consider whether the audience has a consistent centre of gravity or whether they are pulling in different directions. For example, in book publishing, the customers might be loyal to a brand or a topic rather than an imprint, so this could mean that the way a book publisher is structured is very different from the way its customers structure themselves.
 3. Look for budget and technology leverage: web publishers should be able to lever their technology when they run across several sectors so think about communities you are involved in and look for ways to extend the publishing platform, analytics engine, voting and chat software etc to run across many sites and areas. This can make running sites for niche audiences viable.
- Create a plan and then implement steadily: If you're experienced in web publishing then the disciplines of project management will be familiar, but those new to the web sometimes see it like a print medium and fail to appreciate that the processes for creating the architecture - content and code for websites are both more complex and less predictable than the materials for many other marketing channels.
- Measurement: From the start, look for ways to measure the effect you're having.

How can you get the most from a reader panel?

Posted by Academy participant - Publishing Manager | November 8, 2007 7:57 PM

Reader panel

The web is an awesome way to learn about your customers, and I've long been an advocate of customer panels and 'friends and family' groups.

1. Create a value proposition: if you're asking potential customers to give you their time, then what do they get in exchange? News ahead of the rest of the market? Materials? Access to some events? Price discounts? Exclusive promotions?
2. Find ways to invite them to participate: alongside the usual invitations on the website try mentions in your email, invitations in the template of letters, or promotions on physical products you are shipping.
3. Invite your customer panels to comment: give them simple mechanics such as single click surveys, text boxes in emails to them, comment boxes on pages you're inviting them to look at, simple email responses. The easier it gets, the better your response.
4. Remember that your panel are also customers: after a while it's easy to forget that as well as being a sounding board they're also frontline customers. When you're creating promotions, inviting people to events, spreading news about the business, be sure to include them. If you have time, go even further and give them special versions of the same offer mailings.
5. Member get member: there's bound to be some attrition in your panel, so why not incentivise your panel members to find you more panel members? It's a simple way to ask your community to help itself grow.
6. Can you make stars of your panel members? Depending on the nature of the group you might be able to profile panel members, flag up their involvement in different projects, or boost the content of your news services by referencing them.

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How do you boost your content with comments and participation?

Posted by Academy participant - Editorial Manager | November 8, 2007 8:04 PM

Harnessing comment and participation

This is a really big topic, but here are three things to get you started...

- Invite comment on every article, building up an engaged audience and one that can gain more from reading each other's points
- Set your spam filters from the start
- Decide on your moderation policy and model early on

When people talk about writing for the web, what are the key things to keep in mind?

Posted by Academy participant - Online journalist | November 8, 2007 8:06 PM

Writing for the web

Think keywords and key phrases when you write your headlines (H1/H2 tags) and the main editorial

- Learn about search and create a styleguide for your team
- Try the Digital Search Academy for publishers; this is a one day intensive course just about getting search right

Why should I blog?

Posted by Academy participant - Writer | November 8, 2007 8:48 PM

Evaluating whether to launch a blog

There are loads of ways blogs can help boost the content and revenues of consumer and business-facing magazines. We wrote up a few of the ideas here as an article www.digitalstrategyconsulting.com/articles/2007/10/a_blog_is_for_life_and_not_jus.html and you can find out more in the Blogging Academy Classroom we run: <http://www.digitaltrainingacademy.com/blogginglearning/>

There are lots of hurdles to creating successful blogs, and ironically many firms leap straight to the technology and the production process. On the Digital Blogging Academy, we've found that taking a step back to gather your thoughts helps you evaluate what you're doing and decide where and how you use your effort. To help you, we've uncovered a series of simple questions that are worth reflecting on before launching yourself and your team into the blogosphere. For the seasoned marketer they may all be obvious, but they're worth some discussion with your colleagues before making that commitment.

1. Do you have something to say?
2. Is what you say interesting to your community?
3. Can you articulate what you want to say effectively?
4. Can you produce and sustain your voice and your space?

Online teams**How do you structure an online team?**

Posted by Academy participant - Publisher | November 8, 2007 7:59 PM

Structuring online teams

This is really tricky: do you separate out from the print team or do you completely integrate? In the ideal world you'd integrate from the start, but most companies lack the skillset among their print teams, so having a separate digital group that can become experts in the web is key if the general level of digital knowledge in the parent company is weak. Only a digital team will be able to make the fast and intuitive decisions needed to work well at growing a business online. Resources can be horridly tight, and if the digital group is always looking over its shoulder at what happens to print revenues and audiences, then it can be counter productive. Ask external facilitators like Digital's tutors if you need help with managing this process; if the firm doesn't get it right then there will be a real cap on what can be delivered.

What about the staffing for online communities?

Posted by Academy participant | November 8, 2007 8:10 PM

Staffing online communities

This is so often overlooked and really needs a heap of attention early on. Communities sometimes just ignite themselves, but more often than not they'll need some real hard work from you and your team.

First up: don't fall into the trap of thinking it's about the technology - getting the technology built or buying it in is the START and not the finish of your work. There's a big need in encouraging involvement, keeping discussions on topic and dealing with the stuff that goes astray. This is about individual people: unpredictable, creative, messy and fantastic - all rolled into one. Community participants might do what you expect, or they might do something so completely different you'd never even have expected it. Just remember to protect yourself and your community by having a good anti-spam strategy in place from the start and deciding how to deal with posts that have html and links in them.

Don't fall into the trap of thinking it's about the technology. There's a big need in encouraging involvement, keeping discussions on topic and dealing with the stuff that goes astray

I find it handy to think of a community as a bit like a successful dinner party: people know why they're coming, the host gets the conversation going and then steps back, providing some good food, dealing with any unruly guests and generally making sure that everything goes well. After a few dinner parties with the same people they'll not need much help because a bunch of social conventions will kick in and they'll start to look after themselves much of the time. The challenge for you as the community's manager is to make sure you have the resource you need to do this properly. It's toughest at the start because you really have to work hard to get that momentum; finding the guests for dinner, persuading them you're a great chef, finding times for them to come over... I'm sure you get the idea. While there are a few companies emerging in this space, my hunch is that you'll want to take quite tight managerial control of the first steps your community takes. It's classic product development work and by listening closely to your audience you'll gain some fantastic insights into the business.

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If you have any questions about our approach to training, or the detailed content of the course then please email or call the team.



Making sense of a digital world

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