

Adzooma and Cambridge University research how to maximise online ad spend

Latest research finds that Facebook is the most cost-effective channel on average for SMBs, Microsoft is the most responsive channel for increasing ad spend, whilst Google maintains their place as the industry leader with their high reach and low-cost offering...

International online advertising platform Adzooma has teamed up with Cambridge University for a new piece of research that reveals how businesses can maximise their online ad spend.



The project, which was undertaken by MBA students who had previously worked with the likes of Amazon and Barclays, focused on how to select the best marketing channel, getting content strategy right and how to optimise landing pages to succeed in 2021.

Robert Wass, director and co-founder of Adzooma said: “At a time when online advertising is more important than ever, we jumped at the opportunity to work on a project that promised to offer SMBs insights into how to get the most from their ad spend. Having already enabled free access to our Adzooma platform for all businesses last year, we thought that this was a great way to help further by collaborating with one of the world’s top educational institutions.

“Adzooma is well placed to gain a more holistic view across all ad platforms given that we have access to thousands of accounts and work with the largest global industry companies including; Facebook, Google and Microsoft. Very few companies in the marketplace has the ability to compare such data, or the skill set to undertake a study, which makes this entirely unique.”



The three-pronged approach used by the students allowed them to look at customer behaviour along with key parts of the decision-making process. This included delving into how the imagery and language used in ads impacted click-through rates, as well as measuring whether the quality of the landing page was an important consideration when it came to conversions.

In addition, they looked at whether the choice of platform (e.g. Google, Facebook or Microsoft) would affect the conversion rate – with often surprising results.

The study found that very few of Adzooma’s SMB customers took advantage of multiple marketing channels with Google being the most popular advertising network. However, the data revealed that Facebook was the most cost-effective channel on average, given that increasing spend will actually have the biggest impact on impressions, while Microsoft proved most responsive for increasing ad spend.

It was concluded that when choosing between Google and Facebook to advertise your business, on average Facebook would be the best bet. For those SMBs debating between Google and Microsoft, in this scenario Google was suggested due to its high reach and low cost. But employing Google, Facebook and Microsoft into your strategy is advised to best leverage each network’s unique advantage.

Additionally, Bing was more attractive to the over 45 age group, with a third of them having a household income of \$100,000, whilst Microsoft Advertising was the best medium for targeting a more professional and affluent audience.

When comparing all the data in relation to how website conversions were impacted by quality of images, use of HTTPS, page speed, etc. there was vast room for improvement for 95% of the businesses sampled, given that only 5% of websites achieved a perfect score.

Interestingly, users of different advertising platforms responded differently to the sentiment within advertising copy. This meant that on Google Ads negative sentiment proved most popular with a 6.5% click-through rate (CTR), compared to 5.7% for neutral and positive copy, while on Microsoft Ads, negative sentiment’s 3.3% CTR lagged behind both positive (4.2%) and neutral (3.6%).

The Cambridge University team reported back that the breadth of industries and countries that Adzooma's customer base operates within enabled them to create findings and analysis that were relatable for businesses anywhere in the world, not just a single country. They also found that SMBs with Google and Microsoft ad accounts connected to the Adzooma platform saw a much higher CTR than the industry average – 6% v 1.91% and 3.7% v 2.83% respectively.

Srishti Warman, one of the University of Cambridge team who took part in the study, added: "We were thrilled to team up with Adzooma for this piece of research and we hope these findings will help to inform the decisions that all marketers make in 2021.

"In short, we are providing the mantras for the businesses to improve their conversion rate. This research will empower those who are technically capable to make such changes to their marketing campaigns like avoiding deprecated APIs, not logging browser errors to console, displaying images with correct aspect ratios, background and foreground colours to have a sufficient contrast ratio, amongst other things."

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