

Discount-based media buying #mustfall

By Jacques du Bruyn

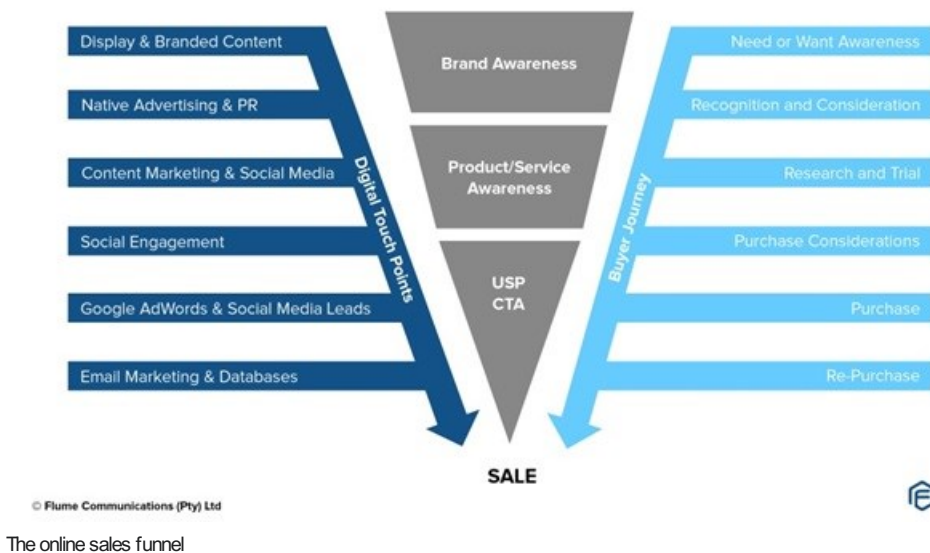
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Media buying (online in particular) is evolving. Believe it or not, your target audience is smart. It's no longer about placing an advert during the 8pm news or a banner ad on a news website.

Media buyers need to understand their audiences' communication and consumption patterns - or die.

I've seen it time and time again; a media buying agency or firm will pre-buy large media blocks to secure discounts for their clients. I call this "the discount-first media buying approach." It's like putting the cart before the horse, or before you even have the horse. Next thing the horse comes along and can't pull your cart because it's simply the wrong cart for the horse. But at least we secured your discount, right? At least you paid less for the cart.

We need to move from discount thinking to insight thinking. All media buyers will sell you on insight-driven buying, but we seldom see the fruit thereof. That's because true insight takes time. You actually need to sit down and think about it. It takes effort, planning, re-working, testing and testing again.



The online environment is the perfect playground to buy media based on insight. Programmatic media buying has changed the landscape in a way that has taken insight-based media buying to a level where we can understand buying funnels like never before. Yet still, we see media buyers winning accounts because they managed to sell the client on the idea of the "discount" they secured with Media24. Stop doing that!

I sat in a client-agency status a while back with one of our bigger corporate clients. I remember seeing the frustration on my client's face when the media buying agency insisted on the package deal they secured with a TV company. The client had been asking for out-of-the-box thinking and an innovative approach which they said "needs to be TV free." Even I wanted to pull out my hair.

Where does performance come into the equation? Where do corporates and clients start waking up and pushing for the leads and the ROI, and not the discount? I believe that the online space is going to do just that. I'm a firm believer that impressions means nothing. And funnily enough, impressions is where the discount is sitting (makes winking smiley face).

What we're really after is action online. We want users to do something, not just see something. We have the power to target so specifically and track users through a sales funnel into performing an action; asking for a quote, signing up, buying something. That's got nothing to do with discount, that's got everything to do with insight. Insight-based media buying is what drives down the cost per lead and delivers ROI, which is what ironically ends up not only saving you money, but making you money.

In closed bidding systems like Google Adwords and social media buying, one cannot rely simply on mass purchasing. Facebook has a habit of not spending all the budget you've placed down because they're not going to force users to click on your ad, or serve them an ad too many times. It's about smart creative, insightful targeting and a deeper understanding of how online advertising really works.

Please can we kill the discount media buying approach? Please!

ABOUT JACQUES DU BRUYN

Jacques Du Bruyn is the Managing Director of Flume, a full-service Digital & PR Marketing Agency based in Johannesburg and Cape Town. He is a UJ and Vega School graduate with an honours degree in Brand Strategy.

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