thenetworkone: media

a collection of essays from independent media agencies the**network**one: media

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thenetworkone: media

Media is the most recent discipline added to the offering of thenetworkone – and it is also the fastest growing and one of the most requested services.

Clients are now, more than ever before, asking for innovation from their media agencies. They want accountability, flexibility and feedback. They want to reach the right consumer, at the right moment in the right medium and they know that a smart media agency can make that happen.

So many clients are looking to connect with agile, entrepreneurial and transparent independent media agencies who can be their trusted partner as the sector develops even further. And we are here to help them find the right partner.

This publication is a collection of essays from selected media agencies which comprise our media network, spanning a variety of capabilities and expertise within the media space.

Each agency was asked to select a topic which they feel is relevant to their specific market (be that geographic, audience or technology) and share their local perspective.

The agencies have explored these topics in depth, some of which include the digitalization of media, performance media, transparency, procurement, new technology, market segmentation and the evolution of an independent agency.

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Foreword:
Independents' Day is Approaching

Marketers want to take more control of their media investments. Tom Denford asks "Could smaller, bespoke, independent media agencies be their best allies in achieving competitive advantage?"

The big media agency networks tend to dominate everything. From the buying of media impressions on an industrial scale to the award stages through to the trade press coverage of what happens in our global industry.

But it's worth remembering that these same network agency giants are all built from the many local acquisitions of independent agencies. And just as smaller independents managed to thrive in the pre-digital days, so today they still have a big opportunity.

Right now its easy to feel that media is growing increasingly complicated, from the new jargon that programmatic has introduced to the complexity in tracking and influencing consumer behaviour that technology has created.

Many marketing and procurement leaders are struggling with how to navigate this, but they know that getting media right is essential to deliver growth and connect their brands efficiently and effectively with their target customers.

Marketers want to take more control of their media spend, they want to be sure that media investment is really driving business growth and the smart independents (as well as the smarter agency networks) should be positioning themselves as the perfect partners to help them achieve that.

Many of the marketers we speak to share some common frustrations. They are frustrated that digital, which should have provided the holy grail of performance marketing, has turned out to be rather murky, hard to trust, riddled with fraud and conflicts of interest.

They are frustrated that the large network media agencies are increasingly controlling the media inventory, its pricing and the distribution of added value, making it harder than ever for them to achieve their key business goals in a transparent and accountable way.

We work closely with senior marketers around the world and they're concerned at the current state of play and interested in a better solution. From their media agency partners they are looking for better talent and they want to work with smart people who are better aligned with their business success.

Media planning and buying should, in theory, be a simple undertaking. Sadly that's rarely how it turns out. Too many bits of the industry appear to be profiting from increasing the complexity rather than helping simplify and solve it.

We anticipate an increasing demand by marketers for better media "craft" as an output from their agency partners. They want media planning and buying that gets back to the basics of defining a great insight, a differentiating strategy, objective media planning and diligent, selective and data-optimised media buying.

This is the central opportunity for a great number of smaller, independent media agencies around the world. They have the opportunity to navigate between the large agency media deals and provide a more flexible and tailored service to ambitious advertisers.

Although the big networks like to boast about their buying scale, this provides limited competitive advantage as the spread of media pricing has narrowed in recent years. There is no reason that smaller agencies shouldn't be able to compete on pricing, because scale of media billings will become less important in a media marketplace that is eventually democratized by technology.

Smaller, more agile agencies have always been able to see the gaps in these bulk buys and secure smart deals with media owners, who are keen to attract added revenue from outside the major agency networks. That's as true for digital as it is for TV and outdoor.

And with more and more brands looking to develop content-based campaigns, scale has become secondary to the ability to co-ordinate and manage bespoke deals with key media owners.

What actually provides competitive advantage is the ability to secure the smartest agency talent, the people who are able to identify the differentiating idea that will enable a product or service to truly stand apart from its competitors.

This commitment to the craft of good media planning and buying fosters trust. If the CMO can trust her media agency then she is more likely to invite the agency deeper into the business, making it more likely that the agency can act like a true strategic partner and develop the best ideas.

The future for a productive agency/client relationship is neutral, bespoke, trusted, committed and invested.

For many brands, I think the future will increasingly involve an independent agency perspective and talent.

ID COMMS

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Building the bridge in the digitalizing media world

For most advertisers the use of media and the way they look at return on investment of their media spend, has transformed massively in recent years. Digitalization of media opportunities is the main factor that has boosted this transformation.

From display to native, from social to mobile, all digital media components offer a richer palette for all communication activities and are king in data collection. But this last strength creates a huge gap between non-digital media campaign elements and the elements that are already completely digital.

Measurement of both these campaign drivers in a holistic way will boost campaign effects and creates great optimization opportunities. The advertisers and brands that focus on building this bridge – and selected their agencies on that basis – will have a huge competitive advantage. Luckily return on investment can now be measured through an increasingly sophisticated way of data collection and analytics.

Avoiding the traps in effect measurement of TV-ads on online sales

One of the most attractive KPI's of a campaign is – of course – the effect on direct sales. These performance related KPI's for offline media activities, were always the next big step to take. Smart strategic media agencies are now able to tie the knot between visibility on the still primary screen (TV) and direct - but not always instant - online sales. And in that last part lies the most important element that creates the bridge. There are two traps that are usually unavoidable in looking at return on investment of offline media:

trap 1 – the instant trap: some advertisers and agencies focus only on instant satisfaction: meaning that campaign effects of offline media activities are only measured on an instant basis.

They say: "If I don't see a result directly after being visible, in general there will be no effect."

trap 2 – the long term trap: mostly sparked by agencies that don't dare to tie offline media to direct results, this trap for advertisers results in only relating offline media activities to general (very) long term effects like increased brand awareness or slightly increased footfall over a period of a year.

They say: "Offline media only has a longtime offline effect. Don't try to measure that in a daily digital way."

mediaxplain*

Success of a holistic way of measurement that crosses the bridge between offline and online media can only be expected when both traps are covered.

This means both looking at instant effects and effects over time. For that Mediaxplain developed a method in which:

1. Direct results after TV-visibility are digitally measured on site of the advertisers. Visitors (above base line) on the website in a two minute window directly after broadcasting the commercial receive a specific tag. This group we then call the TV-viewers.

2. By tagging this group it is possible to see who converts into an actual online buyer directly after seeing the TV-ad. This covers the first trap as described above.

3. But most important, it also offers the possibility of following the members of this group over a longer period of time. If one of them returns to the website, they still are identified as a TV-viewer. If they then convert into a buyer, this sale can still be related to the TV-campaign even though a TV-ad was not shown in the period directly before this sale. This covers the second trap.

The measurement model as a case for one of Mediaxplain's advertisers:

By doing this, advertisers know exactly what the effect of their TV-ads are on online sales on their site. It can also be related to the effect of other (E.g. digital) media activities and creates ultimate guidance for advertisers and agencies in developing sales focused strategies with both digital and non-digital components. And, as the case above points out, the visitors on site that were tagged as being a TV-viewer, showed a significant higher conversion rate both on instant conversions and conversions over time compared to the group that was not directly related to seeing a TV-ad.

This can even be developed further, in not only tagging the TV-viewers as one group, but also differentiate them in different groups based on time slots, TV-programs and traffic related to ads shown on different TV-channels. By that, TV-planning has a more performance based layer to it than it had in the years before.

Looking at instant effects without ignoring effects that can occur in a longer period will benefit all media strategies. Measuring those effects in a way that gives clear and comparable results about non-digital and digital media activities opens doors to advertisers in being the smartest in class. Pick the right engineer to build your bridge.

Sander Bots is Business Unit Director and Christiaan Van Betuw is Strategy & Activation Director at Mediaxplain in Amsterdam, the Netherlands.

Why wouldn't all media agencies be performance agencies?

Historically the largest and smartest clients have typically employed two media agencies. Their brand agencies have been guardians of the budgets that pre-dispose consumers to consider a purchase. Their direct response agencies have been charged with the investments that drive the final purchases themselves.

These two disciplines have traditionally been divided by both capabilities and culture, and traditionally ne'er the twain did meet.

Brand media investments were made with beautifully crafted qualitative insights into audiences and their needs of the brand in question. Schedules were selected with focus on metrics such as reach, frequency, dwell time, and engagement with the media event in question. Frequency tended to be favoured over reach in order to ensure brand or advertising awareness was built. Success was evaluated as intermediate output measures including media cost per thousand vs industry pools and awareness or brand attribution scores.

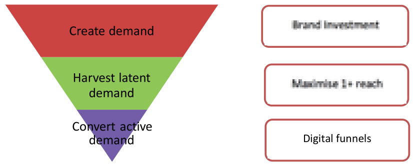
Direct response practitioners mostly scorned these media metrics, and focussed instead on business outcomes. Who needs cost per thousand when we have costs per new customer recruited? Schedules were created based on previously observed response and conversion rates. If reach and frequency were considered at all then reach was favoured over frequency, as the investment objective was to harvest those consumers ready to buy NOW, and not to worry about predisposing longer term sales.

These were two houses divided by data. The direct response specialists embraced the discipline, revelling in being able to count sales. The brand media agencies scorned it, recognising (quite correctly) that data existed only for those consumers who chose to buy both immediately and via direct to consumer sales channels. And so a culture and capability divide grew up. The direct response agencies capable of managing and manipulating immediate sales data, but lacking cultural interest in the pre-disposition journey of brand engagement and discovery. The brand agencies deeply interested in consumer engagement, but lacking the interest in, and the ability to deliver, the final mile to profitable sales.

And so it may have remained "two houses both alike in dignity…" were it not for the proliferation of data. A decade ago we had almost zero insight into who was beginning their journey towards buying a product or service. Consumers only appeared from the mists of anonymity when they actively contacted a client and enquired about a specific purchase. A decade ago, we had no smartphones; no Facebook; no adsmart; no DMP's or DSP's.

As I write this on the first day of 2016 we can create seamless and highly curated journeys for our prospective audience, from first exposure to what was once a "brand" message, to the final piece of "CRM" that ensures they stay with us as a long term, loyal, and profitable customers.

Media investments can be measured both as "DR" investments, with immediate sales coming from telephone, mobile or desktop digital media, and as "Brand" investments, with individuals tracked from first search through discovery, engagement and then final purchase. Digital is the catalyst for fusing the discipline of "Brand" and "Direct Response" through the glue of personal data to create optimal short and long term accountable value for all media investments. And so the modern performance media agency was born.



The most immediate value is created by converting demand from consumers who actively want to buy NOW. Media investments here tend to support a digital or telephone funnel, with paid and natural search and call centre optimisation taking precedence.

The middle of the demand funnel is the traditional area of "DRTV" or broadcast direct response investments. These investments are designed to harvest the latent consumer demand in the marketplace. They typically maximise one plus reach of any audience, and enable those ready to buy to do so. These tend to favour either low cost per contact, low data and high reach media such as television, or high cost per contact, high data media such as mail.

The top of the demand funnel is the traditional domain of brand investments. Here frequency and high attention to and engagement with messages are required to predispose a consumer to first engage with a product or service. Here we will not create simple, one step to purchase journeys, but complex, multi-step, and often looped journeys of exploration, reference and discovery.

The new value for clients is that investments can be optimised at each and every stage of this funnel using one single, powerful metric, namely five year net revenues created. After a few simple searches and clicks we are capable of predicting who is likely to become that long term loyal customer that all clients seek.

This methodology is transformational for the effectiveness of media investments.

Instead of focussing measurement on intermediate outputs such as price of media or brand awareness, clients can instead judge ALL their media investments using the same metrics they themselves are judged on.

Outcomes, measured either as return on capital employed; true ROI; or net five year free cash flows enable marketers to trade with CEO's and finance directors on equal terms.

The proliferation of personal, digital data has created new visibility of consumer intent and potential value at all stages of their relationships with brands. It has also enabled the birth of a new breed of media agency: the modern performance media agency. And finally it creates a challenge to all charged with making media investments "Why wouldn't all media agencies be performance media agencies".

After all who doesn't want performance?

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RPA

For better media insights- and outcomes- look toward hybridization

Categorization, labeling and partitioning are essential, life-critical skills that have been finely tuned into human evolution for at least 10,000 years, since the Agricultural Revolution. Marketers, much like non-marketer humans, tend to compartmentalize: a certain media channel is mostly good to address Objective A, a certain type of research is good to solve Business Challenge X, etc. We have thus invested greatly within each of our respective areas of focus. Most agency leaders have mastered our corresponding core skills, even per the Malcolm Gladwell-prescribed 10,000-hour rule.

Yet we are in the midst of rapidly changing media consumption trends, which have been accompanied by access to new and expanded data with regard to media response and audience segmentation. How do you ensure our organizations continue to grow beyond the knowledge and skills of agency leaders during such a disruptive period? How do you balance the essential skills within our organizations and processes with emerging sources of insights?

The answer could be hybridization: merging two or more research or optimization methods to serve your brand-building or business-driving objectives.

Several years ago the agency which I represent had two approaches to generating media insights. The first, you may call "top-down" – it relied heavily on syndicated research and tools (MRI, Comscore). The second approach might be referred to as "bottom-up" – it relied on identifying key attributes of top-performing audience segments via data-driven digital ad buys (via CRM data, data from partners such as Facebook or third parties such as Bluekai). The top-down approach is particularly useful because it scales, and it's well-integrated across media channels. The bottom-up approach brings significant value through validation of key audience groups, and discovery of new targets and enabling the tuning of messages to the motivations of various audience segments.

Some organizations have neatly categorized these functions into media planning versus media buying. This type of partitioning short-sells the potential of "bottom-up" insights, which can be valuable beyond just ROI-focused media optimization. Many of these insights have proven to inform greater strategies for high-level audience segmentation, customer journey mapping and content-development and sponsorship selection. Merging these two approaches has also coincided with connecting the people in our organization focused on brand-building with those focused on business-driving.

rpa

Here are a few ways to introduce (or expand) hybridization in your organization:

Remove organizational partitions of audience insights. Initially, our Digital Analytics team was developed to serve very specific needs: website analytics and optimization, multivariate ad testing and social-media listening. We merged that group with a Consumer Science team that held expertise in regression modeling, survey design and media mix modeling. Once combined, these teams learned from each other quickly, began to better organize various data inputs (perceptual, survey, behavioral, sales) and became more empowered to support our media planning teams.

Invest in data analysis tools that can support merging of discrete data sources. Many marketers focus their use of data-management platforms (DMPs) on ad buying. These toolsets can also be valuable assets for combining client data with third-party data for audience segmentation and media-planning purposes as well. Additionally, the tools for fusing multiple data sources are getting more powerful and less costly every year, thanks to companies like Bayesia and GoodData.

Hire outside of your standard talent pool. Marketers have increasingly learned that their first-party data (CRM and owned digital properties) is among their most useful. Yet most agencies still focus on data from syndicated sources or media partners. Hiring talent with a background in CRM and website analysis can infuse new thinking in your media planning and analyst teams.

Accept certain messiness inherent to merging different data sources. As media planners and analysts begin to work with new data sources and within new processes, they'll discover some data to be confusing, misleading and even flawed. They'll need to account for certain levels of error and biases, so the goal should be triangulation around insights, not hoping to find absolute truths. The common saying among statisticians, "All models are wrong, but some are useful," can be applied here as well.

Benefits of hybridization to your organization:

- Audience segmentation and persona development
- Success measurement, particularly in tying perceptual (brand) metrics to business metrics
- Customizing creative ideas to fit differing customer needs
- Fostering a climate that values continuous learning, discovery and adaptation
- Shifting beyond "integration" of digital media and into truly "holistic" marketing planning

Hybridization may help your organization better apply insights across departments, creating a virtuous cycle of insights and inputs between media and planning groups, strategic planners, researchers and analysts. It can foster greater understanding, collaboration, curiosity and passion to solve the biggest marketing challenges during a transformational period in our industry. We could all use that.

Mike Margolin is SVP and Director of Audience Strategy at RPA in Santa Monica, CA, USA.

"hybridization: merging two or more research or optimization methods to serve your brand-building or business-driving objectives."

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Crossmedia

International media procurement: Three reasons it beats the global network solution

The Challenge for Global Clients
Until recently, global advertisers had practically no choice when it came to choosing their media solution: they would have to pick an agency from the six global media network behemoths, who jointly serve 90% of the global media market, essentially offering 17 different shades of vanilla.

They all have one compelling argument going for them, though: they are globally present. Other than that, they rarely get anybody excited.

Network Media Agencies are built for the $100million+ crowd of advertisers, they lack the creative and innovative talent that gets ambitious marketers delighted and above all, they are completely unable to silence the accusation of intransparency: Even in the US, media agencies have now come under scrutiny from the ANA and others for their standard business model that appears to benefit the holding groups much more than their clients – especially their non-trophy clients.

In this industry environment, it is no wonder independents and in-house agencies are on a sharp rise. While they often cannot provide the scope of their network rivals, many clients prefer them: they deliver better, cheaper, faster solution because they operate in an entrepreneurial environment and nourish an innovative culture. But it gets even better.

How International Media Procurement Works
With a new approach to international media services – “International Media Procurement” – CROSSMEDIA has introduced a new service and business model ensuring the agency can stay focused on what it does best: providing excellent advice. This procurement approach brings three previously unattainable benefits to clients in need of global media services: full transparency, closing in on the market price and retaining budget power.

But first, let us see how it works:

Separating Strategy from Execution
As the “Media Procurement Team” rather than the media agency, we provide a hub of internationally savvy media strategists and account leaders. With the help of thenetworkone, we also are responsible for assembling, contracting and leading a WorkNet of local media agencies around the world responsible for tactical planning and execution on the local level. They work closely with our central hub to inform strategy and translate a global idea into local benchmarks. This combines the scope of global executional capabilities with the need for strategic excellence and central steering.

Four-Way Relationship
Usually, these local agencies have direct relationships with the local client level, strictly regulated by a standard global client contract: for example while local agencies are paid directly by the local client, the local client is obliged to pay only for media space and time approved through our global media management system (“Fox”). With fiscal responsibilities on the local level, the core of the transparency issue is solved: the planners simply never touch the money.

True Procurement
Finally, we leverage the fact that media inventory can increasingly be purchased not just from the originator of such media inventory, but from a multitude of sources including trading units of agencies, bartering companies and increasingly electronic marketplaces. Instead of the client running a global pitch every couple of years, CROSSMEDIA constantly (market and media type permitting) bids out a client’s execution of campaigns, channels or disciplines among a growing market of suppliers. Essentially, this turns the media agency into a media procurement team firmly planted on the client’s side: specifying the media needs in the first step, then ensuring it gets purchased.

Client Benefits
So yes, an independent WorkNet beats the global network solution offering three surprising and compelling benefits to clients:

Transparency
Media Procurement provides a structural solution for the transparency issue, firstly by splitting planning from buying and secondly by ensuring the neutrality of the advice: because those who specify the plan simply do not handle the fiscal responsibilities.

“Market Price”
The Media Procurement Model systematically closes in on the market price, because it regularly compares the prices of different solution providers. The approach also holds much more flexibility: in the event of an underperforming local agency, it is relatively painless to replace such partner without risking the whole model.

Retaining Budget Power
Finally, because the media agency’s own financial interest in the outcome of the media plan is completely neutralized, they can once again act in the role of trusted business partner: their scope is limited to specifying the client’s need, so that the clients gain not only neutral strategy, but also retain the power of their budgets usually lost in the pitch and award model.

CROSSMEDIA

To summarize, this new model combines the advantages of the independent with the network solutions: the innovative differentiating thinking of a smart agency partner combined with the global scope in execution.

International Media Procurement is an approach designed for clients concerned about the neutrality of their agency’s advice, worried about paying too much and hating the idea that they simply hand over the financial power of their biggest line item to an agency they barely know or understand.

Martin Albrecht is Managing Director and partner of Crossmedia in Dusseldorf, Germany and New York, NY, USA.

Publicitas

The level playing field

It's a truism that the business of media has changed beyond all recognition, even over a short time-frame. Publicitas' own niche business – in a nutshell, in our core international business we help premium advertisers in one country to reach quality media audiences in another – has also been transformed by new business practices, consolidation in the industry and rapidly evolving consumer behaviour.

We've evolved more in the last 5 years than in the previous 120 of our company's history – whether we wanted to or not. From print, to multi-channel and from selling to solutions. Every day we have to live, breathe and accept the fact that there are many competitors doing what we do – joining-up demand for media with media supply.

The driver that has brought the biggest transformation to our business is surely technology. Technology has brought radical impacts to every part of the value chain in our industry – at the front-end, how consumers consume media content, and therefore how media owners must create, package and then deliver that content to them.

In practical terms for us, as intermediaries in this process, it has transformed how we do the "nuts and bolts" work of joining up supply and demand and implementing a media campaign.

Reading the trade press about the media industry – which has also mushroomed, purportedly in order to help you to keep up with all these new disciplines – it's easy to feel overwhelmed with acronyms, abbreviations and new companies. If you actually recognise the names of more than 25% of the companies on any of the famous LUMAscapes, then hats-off to you, but you should probably get out of the office more. In the same way, it's easy to feel that there is a giant technology arms-race going on around you, where media goliaths slug it out to build or buy the fastest, biggest, strongest new magic-media-black-box.

At Publicitas we think that this proliferation of technology and competition is something to celebrate – providing we don't lose sight of our business goals and principles. For us, and many small, independent media players around the world, being able to adopt and experiment with new technologies has been transformative. At the end of the day, we are still fulfilling our main business goal of helping our advertising clients to find the right media inventory. Technology enables us to do it more efficiently – and that includes cost efficiency – than ever before.

Fierce competition amongst programmatic technology companies enables us (even as a modest-sized customer) to licence multiple technologies at cost-effective prices and learn how to use them to maximum advantage. And there are always new technology providers approaching us to sign-up to use their technology, if our existing supplier becomes complacent or too expensive. Publicitas uses Demand Side Platform (DSP) technologies to allow us to access premium media all over the world. We licence and test, licence and test. We can pick and choose the best DSP technology for the job and if it doesn't work out, well… Oh look, here's a new DSP!

New technology also drives creativity. eMarketer reminds me in my inbox every day that video and mobile are booming media segments. Publicitas licences a video technology from a start-up company in Europe who produce stunning, engaging and feature packed video advertising units for our clients. We implement these fabulous ad formats across an ever-changing network of premium websites. We have a state-of-the-art dashboard at our fingertips to monitor and optimize those campaigns.

If anything, the competition in the mobile arena is even more intense and not surprisingly, we've gone down the same path. We've entered a flexible licencing deal with an up-and-coming mobile technology company. Our clients love the mixture of big, interactive, creative formats and measurable accountability that we can offer them through our mobile media product. These days no-one is impressed (actually, were they ever impressed?) by a tiny mobile banner that you can't even read…

Publicitas is transforming into a digital first business but technology is empowering us to do better print business too – this year we will roll-out cross-border media planning tools to our business partners and integrated booking tools if we see the right level of demand in selected markets. Of course these tools are lightweight, web-based and customized to our needs, because our technology partner has to compete for our business.

So in this sense, technology levels the playing-field for us all. Large or small media companies can licence great technology at cost-effective prices and do a better job of joining the dots between advertiser and consumer. That's probably the most important part of all – we should look at technology as something that enables us to do the job better, quicker, smarter. Technology isn't a substitute for service. At its best, technology should be something that enables better service, not replaces it.

From this perspective, boutique media and creative shops have a bright future, powered by the latest technology – providing that they don't lose sight of their main objective which should be to keep their customers happy!

Chris Morgan is Director of International Client Development at Publicitas in Zurich, Switzerland.

"At the end of the day, we are still fulfilling our main business goal of helping our advertising clients in to find the right media inventory. Technology enables us to do it more efficiently – and that includes cost efficiency – than ever before."

Tre Kronor Media

Adblockers: An opportunity to learn

Adapt or die. That is the harsh truth about the ever-shifting media landscape.

New technologies help diversify the markets and give opportunities for Davids to threaten Goliaths. One current indicator of this friction between the old and the new is adblock.

"Adapt or die. That is the harsh truth about the ever-shifting media landscape."

While the blocking of ads hardly is new, recent updates to Apple's iOS allowing users to block ads on their mobile platform have sparked a new discussion about the phenomenon.

It could be argued that adblock is but a symptom of a much larger problem. Readers who used the web during the late 1990's remember how annoying pop-up and pop-under advertising were. When it passed a threshold where users basically said 'enough', browser vendors had to step in to stop the pop-ups.

Today, we are seeing a similar development driven by three major factors; increased number of ads, ads 'richer' in content and ads 'smarter' in targeting.

The growing number of ads served, combined with their increased richness, come at the cost of performance and clarity. This is exaggerated on mobile platforms where you pay for performance with your battery life.

The third factor, smarter targeting, comes at the cost of integrity. For publishers to serve 'the right ad, to the right person, at the right time', they have to know their users, and the smarter they want the ads to be, the better they have to know them. This has led users to block both ads and trackers.

It is telling that in many ways the user experience of using an adblocker is superior to not using one. In addition to not being tracked, websites load significantly faster and the content you are viewing is easier to distinguish.

However, all is not doom and gloom for advertisers or those whose livelihood depend on serving ads to users.

While a blocked ad is lost revenue to a publisher, the advertiser does not have to pay for it. Besides, why would they want to show an ad to someone who is willing to go out of their way to avoid it?

Mobile is another saving grace for advertisers and publishers alike. For many young users, what we normally call 'the Internet' is nothing more than an app on their phone. These users spend most of the time on their phone in specialized native apps where ads cannot be blocked.

Ironically, some of today's Goliaths seem to be on a different path all together.

Instead of seeing the widespread use of adblock as an indicator that they need to adapt to stay relevant, or as an opportunity to improve, they are trying to find ways of punishing users for blocking ads. By being protective of their old business models, Goliaths are opening the door to competition from new Davids.

This discussion is likely to continue throughout 2016, and by the end of the year adblock will have shaken quite a few giants and stirred many more.

Success will depend on companies realising that users are potential costumers, whose trust and affection have to be won. Our advice is a larger focus on authentic messages and relevant, high quality content on native mobile platforms.

Albert Säfström is Head of Content at Tre Kronor Media in Stockholm, Sweden.

Can you hear me now? Women, media & the new path to purchase

If marketers have one goal, it's to reach consumers at the moments that most influence their decisions. Historically, those touchpoints were understood through the metaphor of a funnel—but today the path-to-purchase is more complex.

Shifting consumer attitudes and multiple connected devices have changed the traditional linear path to resemble more of a maze. The explosion of digital channels, the always-on media ecosystem, and the emergence of an increasingly discerning female consumer is challenging even the savviest marketers.

WOMEN'S MARKETING

Discovery
As recently as a few years ago, a consumer might sit at her desktop to research her next purchase. Today, smartphones have given consumers the ability to learn about products and services at the moment of interest. Often referred to as "micro-moments," those "I want to know," "I want to go," "I want to do," searches are the first step in the purchase decision journey.

Researchers found that 91% of smartphone users look up information on their smartphones while in the middle of a task—opening the door to marketers at that critical moment of need—and when they do, it's essential that your brand is on the other side of the door.

Trust
Every day consumers form impressions about brands from ads, branded content, and interactions on social media. How do you want your brand to be perceived? The experience consumers have with your products, and increasingly, the experience other consumers have with your brand will impact their perception, and ultimately, their decision to purchase.

The consumer's voice, whether in reviews on brand websites or social media platforms, is an extremely powerful influence in purchase decisions. In fact, a recent survey found that 67% of consumers say they "always or often" seek recommendations from family and friends when gathering information about a product or brand they are considering and a whopping 90% of respondents who recalled reading online reviews claimed that positive comments influenced their buying decisions, while 86% said they were influenced by negative online reviews!

Engagement
Consumers love attention. They want brands to delight, entertain, and engage. Researchers found that 95% of women want brands to actively court them. Marketers have discovered that social platforms are an ideal way to get women talking about and engaging with their brand. Campaigns that uplift, empower, dispel stereotypes, or include an element of humor have been successful in getting women talking about brands.

In addition to brand recognition, 52% of women said they bought a brand because they liked the way they portrayed women in their ads.

Purchase
She knows, trusts and has interacted with your brand…now she's ready to buy—and in doing so, she expects a seamless experience. Providing the consumer with an integrated omnichannel experience is essential. Strong performance at this point in her decision journey includes developing strategies such as geo-targeting and messaging tools that customize advertising to the consumer and make it easy for her to find your brand.

Along the journey, consumers are using their smartphones to compare prices and further research products—82% of consumers say they consult their phones in the store while deciding which product to buy. This provides an opportunity for brands to influence her at the moment of purchase.

Post-Purchase
When consumers reach a decision at the moment of purchase, the marketer's work is just beginning. The post-purchase experience shapes her opinion for every subsequent step in the in the journey and it becomes an ongoing cycle. Researchers found that more than 60% of skin-care consumers go online to conduct further research after the purchase—a touchpoint unimaginable when the purchase funnel was conceived.

Although some consumers are brand or product loyalists, the rapid pace of new products in the marketplace requires brands to be increasingly competitive to stay in the loyalty loop. Customer driven marketing through social media, positive reviews, and targeted advertising increases the likelihood that she will remain loyal to your brand.

In today's crowded marketplace, brands must invest in vehicles that let marketers interact with consumers as they learn about brands and continue the conversation long after their first purchase. Strong performance will require targeted, consumer-focused media strategies, informative content programs, and active social engagement so brands are there when, and where, consumers are ready to buy.

Andrea Van Dam is CEO of Women's Marketing, Inc., in Westport, CT and New York City, NY, USA.

Multinational myth busting

It was late 2004 when I decided 21 years working for other people was enough… a scary thought, to say the least, in a market dominated by mega media buying outfits. What do I do at this point in my career? Do I play it safe and shelter with yet another multinational MBU to add on my CV or do I start off on my own as an unknown?

Well, as is obvious now, I decided on the not playing it safe option taking on the entrepreneurial challenge of surviving amidst a competitively charged advertising market. Despite the seemingly suicidal outcome of embarking on such a venture in Dubai, I could see a silver lining.

"The future, at least as I see it, will increasingly see independents on an equal footing with the multinationals… have faith."

The challenges were countless. For starters, Dubai is unarguably the self-proclaimed advertising hub of the Middle East with virtually all of the region's multinational agencies based here. I had to compete with these giants in an extremely price-sensitive market where economies of scale play a pivotal role in whether you win or lose business. Unlike creative agencies who generally win business based on their talent, media agencies sadly, are appointed pretty much based on the discounts they can get. In our case procurement, rather than marketing, is more often than not the decision maker.

As a media independent in Dubai, competing with the networks involves not just the price factor, but a host of other challenges as well. You need sophisticated media planning tools, both proprietary and syndicated, to impress during pitch presentations. Fancy research statistics on your target audience's media consumption habits, monitoring reports that track how much the competition is spending and where, etc… vital resources all of which are easily within reach when your financial capabilities are extensive and can stretch all the way to your HQ in London or New York. And for clients seeking media campaigns beyond your borders, you compete with agencies who have easy access to regional and international resources via their own network or partner agencies… and the list of challenges goes on.

So against seemingly insurmountable odds, how can a media independent in Dubai survive?

The answer really isn't that complicated despite what seems to be a mission impossible scenario. You basically need to know where to position yourself within the overall agency standings and, more importantly, know who you can and cannot target for business with the mindset that there naturally is a client for every agency. Define your "niche market" that can place you in a position of strength to compete within the confines of that niche market.

So what constitutes a media independent's niche so to speak? As I have seen, it consists primarily of medium to small size clients whether they are direct or via their creative agencies. Surprisingly, these companies seem to prefer dealing with a media independent rather than a multinational MBU; here are the key reasons why as seen from their perspective

Trust:
"yes, the media rates seem competitive, but why do I still have this uneasy feeling I am being ripped off? Is it because their GM drives a Porsche and I drive a Fiat? ".

Confidentiality:
"the multinational MBU is part of a network that includes a competitor to my small creative agency which subsequently places my clients in danger of poaching".

Service:
"my turnover with the big MBU will be relatively tiny which means my business will never be prioritized. All these guys with fancy titles who made presentations to me during the pitch, I never saw them ever again. The person effectively appointed to handle my account is nothing more than a fresh graduate".

Capitalizing on these client concerns can win a media independent business. I will certainly not pitch against MBU's for large multi-national accounts the likes of Emirates or General Motors or P&G but I will sure as hell pitch against them for the local grocery chain.

Then comes the other big decision-maker: Price. Sure size matters, but again, so do other factors that can work to your advantage. In the Middle East, interpersonal relationships and camaraderie play as important a role in securing competitive discounts as cash turn-over. You will be amazed at how leveraging supplier relationships can reduce the price gap with an MBU. As a worst case scenario, potential clients will consider compromising on paying maybe 5% less on media rates with an MBU in return for working with an independent agency that they can identify more with. Price may be king, but in our industry, it is not everything.

So there you have it; the myth of the invincible multinational is busted.

Every advertising market has the potential to accommodate independent agencies whether creative or media… more so in today's digital communications age where the onus is falling increasingly on an agency's creativity, ingenuity and even techno ability rather than its turnover and size.

The future, at least as I see it, will increasingly see independents on an equal footing with the multinationals… have faith.

Hani Ardati is the Founder of Protos Media in Dubai, UAE.

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بروتوس ميديا

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Media Unlimited

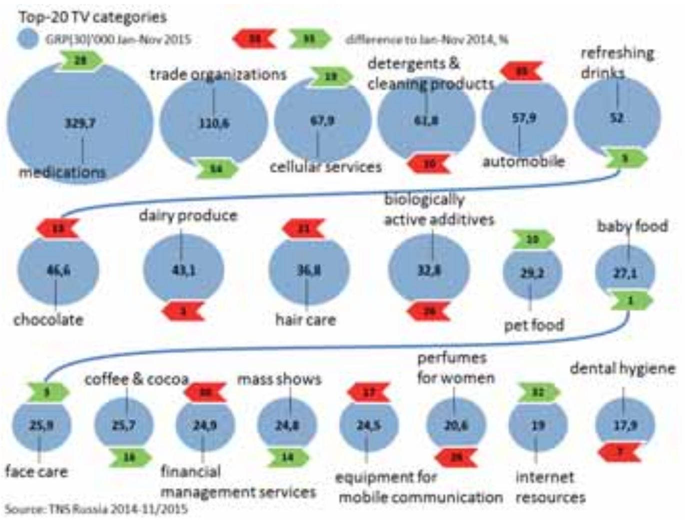
A Russian View: The local advertising market in 2015

In 2015, the Russian media market fell by 14% in local currency compared with the previous period. Yet in US Dollars, the market is down 45%, but the reason is clear: a sharp drop in value of the Ruble due to the fall in the price of oil.

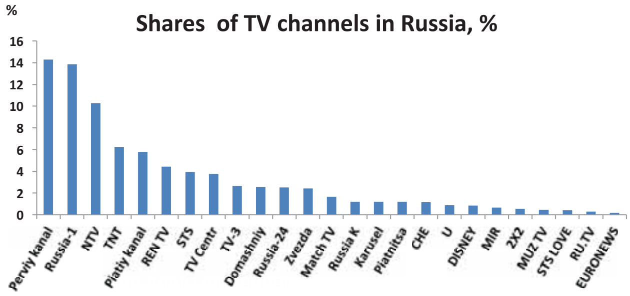
The advertising market in US Dollars looks quite attractive for foreign investments. Though it is quite risky, this is a favourable period for entry into the Russian market. Still, such a considerable drop of the market in Rubles can be considered as positive conclusion to the year: experts believe that these results are the minimum losses, forecasts for the end of 2015 were predicted to be much worse.

MEDIA UNLIMITED AGENCY OF THE INTEGRATED MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS

Considering media by medium:
The main media channel for advertisers remains TV with a share of 44%. In Rubles in 2015 budgets for TV advertising fell only by 19%. The main category of advertisers on TV: the pharmaceutical companies. And their level of placement in GRP grew in 2015 by 28% reaching 329 000 GRP (30).



Shares of main TV channels in Russia in December 2015:



Source: TNS Russia 12/2015

Digital - is the only growing segment of the market (+12%). The main driver of growth is the contextual advertising, which grew by 19%. Internet advertising has the potential to grow still.

Russia Digital Ad Spending, by Format, 2011-2015
billions of RUB, % of total & % of change

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Search	**26,5**	**38,4**	**51,6**	**65,5**	**76,6**
% of total	63%	68%	72%	77%	81%
% change	63%	45%	34%	27%	17%
Display	**15,3**	**17,9**	**20,1**	**19,1**	**17,77**
% of total	37%	32%	28%	23%	19%
% change	45%	17%	12%	-5%	-7%
Total	**41,8**	**56,3**	**71,7**	**84,6**	**94,37**
% change	56%	35%	27%	18%	12%

Source: Akar Russia, 2015 - estimated according datta 1-3 quarter 2014

Russia Digital Ad Spending, by Format, 2011-2015
billions of $, % of total & % of change

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Search	**0,90**	**1,24**	**1,62**	**1,70**	**1,26**
% of total	63%	68%	72%	77%	81%
% change	63%	37%	31%	5%	-26%
Display	**0,52**	**0,58**	**0,63**	**0,50**	**0,29**
% of total	37%	32%	28%	23%	19%
% change	45%	11%	10%	-21%	-41%
Total	**1,42**	**1,81**	**2,25**	**2,20**	**1,55**
% change	56%	27%	24%	-2%	-30%

Note: converted at the exchange rate of US$1(2011)=29,387; US$1(2012)=31,093; US$1(2013)=31,848; US$1(2014)=38,422; US$1(2015)=60,958

Source: Akar Russia, 2015 - estimated according datta 1-3 quarter 2014

The worst performing media markets are outdoor, press and radio. The reason for this poor performance is that they are too expensive compared to the audience and this is obviously a determining factor for advertisers when selecting media.

Over the last few years, the cost of outdoor advertising and other media doesnot correlate with the effectiveness for the advertiser. Thus, TV and digital are the most efficient advertising media channels.

Although in the past year we have seen the decline in media, experts say: it can be taken with "cautious optimism". Forecasts of the market collapse did not come true. This means that the further development of the industry depends on the economic and legal environment of the country.

Alexander Shesterikov is CEO of Media Unlimited Advertising Agency in Moscow, Russia.

A Client Perspective
Chris Carmichael, UK

What do clients want from a media agency these days anyway?

In the old days (I know, I was there) it was simple. If you were a company, and you wanted to advertise your product in order to make more people aware of it, and by so doing hopefully increase sales, you employed the services of a media agency to help you. And they did this in two main ways: Firstly, they would give you independent advice about the best way to spend whatever budget you had in order to drive the best return. And second, they would negotiate on your behalf with media vendors in order to deliver a media plan at the best price.

Fast forward to present day. Some clients seem to be embracing their media agency more than ever whilst others keep them very much at arms length and if they think about what they do at all (and many don't) then they think of it as a commoditised market. Unilever for example are starting to brief their media agency first, advertising agency second. Other clients (Coke for example) are appointing non-media specialists to do their media thinking.

Clearly then, there is a broad spectrum of client requirements when it comes to media. This fact, coupled with the pace of change in our industry and the technological developments of the last few years, plus the race-to-the-bottom in commission structures and fee remuneration, means that being a media agency has never been harder. Not to mention the required 'seamless collaboration' with other agencies when the truth is you'd rather stab each others eyes out than collaborate meaningfully.

And yet, most of the large media networks and many of the independent media agencies are reporting healthy financial results, with enviable margins. They seem to do okay in attracting any number of bright young talented people into their ranks, and some of them are even quite nice places to work apparently.

So, is the large media agency model doomed, or is it only just beginning to take its rightful place at the top table ?

Lets consider the arguments–

Argument 1. The large media agency business model is broken, and the agencies are doomed.

This line-of-argument is based on two main hypotheses.

Firstly, independence. How can any advertiser believe they are getting truly objective advice from their agency when most of them have become buyers and sellers of media inventory?

And secondly, buying scale. In a world where Google's single biggest adwords customer spends their money direct, what is the point of media agencies when a client can simply have a direct relationship with a media vendor, more ownership of data and save themselves the fees? Programmatic and the associated technologies are facilitating this trend and clients don't need much incentivising to cut out an agency and the associated costs. And media vendors, who need even less incentivising to bypass the agencies, are waiting eagerly in the wings, whispering things about guaranteed pricing and quietly encouraging the direct flow of budgets.

The world doesn't need media agencies. The future is clients bringing more and more in-house as data, audience insight and buying become fused and having a direct relationship with their key media vendors.

Argument 2. Media agencies are best placed to offer clients credible advice about their brand and communications needs and are starting to assume their rightful place at the top table.

This is a call to arms. Media agencies should stop apologising for who they are and what they do. They should be proud of their work. And unafraid to say so. Advise clients objectively. Negotiate fairly. Package and sell what they do better. Focus on business outcomes not meaningless media metrics. This is their moment. They have a window of opportunity to become a clients principal trusted advisor at a time when clients need it most.

Agency Awareness
Something that prevents some agencies fulfilling their potential is a lack of self-awareness. Often there is a disconnect between how they perceive themselves, and how most advertisers see them. They see themselves as a trusted advisor, able to counsel clients at the highest level about their business, able to influence not just CMO's but CEO's. But the reality is most CMO's don't give them any meaningful time and instead leave it to underlings.

So what do clients want?
In my experience, clients fall into two camps: Those that know about, and care about their media deployment, and those that don't. Those in the first camp are concerned about the state of their agencies, and are crying out for genuinely impartial, bespoke advice and help navigating the complex world in which we exist. And there are fewer and fewer clients who fall into the second camp.

All of which means that opportunity abounds for the plethora of agile independent companies, consultancies, and one-man-bands that have sprung up all too eager to fill the void.

Chris Carmichael is a seasoned client-side media specialist and has held senior positions including Global head of Media at HSBC and Director of Media & Digital Marketing at Hewlett-Packard.

thenetworkone Digital Trading: An opportunity for independents

Clients may value the strategy and service of independent agencies but when it comes to buying power, can independent agencies really compete?

One of the most challenging areas for independents to compete successfully against multinational network agencies and their holding companies is in media planning and buying. Because here scale and negotiating power really do matter.

This is particularly important in digital media buying, which is the fastest growing media sector and untapped revenue opportunity in the agency world today.

Digital Display media buying: how the networks do it – and how could independents compete?

The major media agency networks all run trading desks to pool resources. This means they gain margin, scale and control of their media buying.

But what if independents could also produce the same level of margin, scale and control?

The networks do not have a monopoly on resources or knowledge in this sector, in fact many independent businesses have greater expertise in the digital buying market. And by joining that high level of expertise with their own bespoke trading desk facility, either as a fully managed service or through software with service, they have the potential to enjoy greater benefits than the networks themselves.

We know independents can compete– and here is how:

thenetworkone has developed a partnership with IGDT (Independent Global Digital Trading).

IGDT utilize RAMP360 (Real-time Audience Management Platform), a global platform featuring its own proprietary digital advertising technology, using local know how, data and media inventory. IGDT is a UK registered company, headquartered in London and already provides services to many international agencies through 12 global offices.

IGDT provides unique benefits for independent agencies by pooling their business and in doing so achieving competitive rates for programmatic digital display media - a service offer which independent agencies might not normally obtain on their own.

Both clients and the independent agencies themselves can therefore benefit.

And because IGDT is run by former agency owners, they know the value of excellent account management and the very best processes-- a winning combination for independent agencies.

IGDT can work with an outline brief to demonstrate all the key benefits of their service before any commitment is made. If the campaign planning, strategies, implementation plan and financials work for you – you can try the service for yourself.

IGDT. Advantage Independent.

Ian Winton is CEO at IGDT, who provide a programmatic trading service for independent agencies, based in London, UK.

If you would like to know more about thenetworkone's programmatic media offer, please contact Julian Boulding at julian.boulding@thenetworkone.com the**network**one: media

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