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ARTICLE NUMBER 24

Integrating DRTV and DR Radio: Clearer Understanding for Greater Profit

By Jeff Small, CEO, and Brett Astor, Vice President of Strategic Media, Inc. Together they have over twenty years of experience in direct response advertising. Learn more about profitable direct response radio strategies at www.strategicmediainc.com or by calling (207)871-9958 x201.

More and more frequently, businesses are testing direct response radio after experiencing success with DRTV campaigns. One client we work with came to us after establishing a successful DRTV spot campaign to fill their educational seminars. They wanted to test DR radio to determine whether it could be an additional, profitable source of new seminar attendees. They didn't expect radio to do as well as their TV campaign.

After the initial testing with radio, the results were just about where the client expected, with a higher CPR (cost per registrant) than their DRTV spot campaign. However, after a few weeks of refining the radio campaign, DR radio began outperforming DRTV. The client was surprised that DR radio could produce results on par with DRTV. "How is this possible?" they wondered.

It's possible because of the way DRTV and DR Radio work together. Or rather, how they don't.

Marketers, it seems, tend to subscribe to the classical "integrated marketing" theory, which suggests that there will be a "synergy" between the advertising mediums. This view is that radio might be a profitable customer acquisition channel because of the media exposure established through DRTV—radio will convert all those who've seen the TV campaign and have yet to buy.

However, in our experience this synergy-based theory doesn't at all describe the interaction of direct response radio and DRTV. You don't need TV exposure to be successful in radio, nor does significant TV exposure itself guarantee DR radio success. Consistently we see that regardless of the amount of TV exposure, DR radio campaigns work because of their own strengths, not as a result of wide TV exposure.

Why is this so? Because DR Radio delivers your message to an audience that is distinct from a DRTV audience – not one that significantly overlaps. This makes sense when you think about how much media people would have to take in to see your infomercial a few times as well as hear your radio ad at least once. For successful campaigns, that would require a lot of both TV watching and radio listening by a lot of people.

So, if radio and TV don't work in the "synergistic" way originally thought, what accounts for the success of campaigns that begin with DRTV and add DR radio

advertising to the advertising mix?

In a word: New. When you expose a new audience to a new, well-crafted message about a product for which there is proven demand, you have the ingredients for a very successful campaign.

That means that even while a DRTV campaign may be maturing, and CPO's edging up, there's still a profitable customer acquisition channel that will give you access to a new audience who'll hear your message as fresh and respond to it with corresponding eagerness.

There is another implication of the "separate audience" insight. It also means that you can't assume you'll capture the untapped radio demand for your product just because you have a successful DRTV campaign. It'll require creating a radio-specific ad and going through the process of testing and refinement. But it's very much worth the effort because leaving radio advertising out of your mix provides competitors with an attractive avenue to establish a profitable foothold in your category. Since it is often costly to displace an established radio campaign, it makes sense not to wait too long to establish your radio presence when you've built a successful campaign with DRTV.



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