3 Keys to Integrating Print + Digital: How Geography Unlocks the Secret to Synergy

Marketers have long counted on geography to target, reach and engage consumers. Certainly leveraging distance from the store and drive times are still very relevant, but just another piece to a complex media puzzle. In today’s changing media landscape, rise of digital, and intricate consumer path to purchase – does geography matter? Now more than ever. Geography is the unifying factor across media touch points. Mastering it is critical to achieving the promise of integrated media planning.

Looking at a day-in-the-life of consumers reveals the multitude of devices and media touch points – print and digital – that influence their decisions.¹

But here’s the dilemma:

How do you develop integrated media plans and achieve balance and synergy?

Following are 3 key requirements. Rethinking geography is paramount.

Source: ¹Prosper MediaPlanIQ, Jan. 2015
1: Target Consumer Trade Areas

Understanding that today’s consumer is not tethered to any single location and receives media in many formats throughout the day, has led to an evolution in targeting.

Introducing Consumer Trade Areas (CTAs), which redefine geography around a true day-in-the-life of the consumer – in both the consumption of media and the purchasing behavior. This fresh, new concept puts the consumer front and center resulting in better engagement and return-on-marketing objectives.

The traditional definition of Retail Trade Area (RTA) was based upon the consumer’s proximity to the retail store location. RTA has been the targeting strategy for decades and is still a very important strategy today.

However, the Consumer Trade Area recognizes where consumers “live” throughout the day, which can be more important than being in a specific retail trade area. Routines matter. Moreover, geography matters – as you follow consumers through their path to purchase, leveraging additional data sets such as commuting distance, loyalty card data, location (mobile), e-commerce and purchase behavior.

The ability to deliver media throughout the day takes the day-part discussion beyond broadcast media.

While you can target consumers on a one-to-one basis, the challenge is to find the consumer in aggregate to scale the message for optimization and efficiencies – matching the consumers with marketing objectives such as retention and acquisition.

It is the difference between targeting “act-alikes” versus “look-alikes.”
2: Leverage offline data & insights, online

Get a more holistic view of your best consumers and how to activate them on their path to purchase. Translate big data into big, relevant insights. But don’t stop with online data. Offline data, such as understanding “high value” geography, can enhance the online media buy, simply by sending your message to that relevant geography.

Why does geography matter online?

If you only see a consumer’s online behavior, it is not representative of what they buy. For instance, at a mall, which diapers they buy, where they go out to eat on Friday nights or how price sensitive they may be. It’s a partial view of the consumer – only what is known from online activities. Online data basically shows the websites a consumer visits and in some cases, what they buy from online stores. In fact, ecommerce makes up just 6.5% of the overall retail spend in the U.S.2

Using available online information paired with what is also known about consumers offline (geography) provides a holistic view.

Keep in mind, where consumers live tells you a lot about who they are (demographics), what they like (psychographics) and what they buy (behavior).

Source: 2U.S. Census Bureau, Feb. 2015
3: View media as complementary, not competitive

Our experience shows that integrated media plans deliver better performance than stand-alone media. Consumers need relevant, multiple media touchpoints to accelerate their path to purchase. Linking them with geography produces media efficiencies as well as uniformity in messaging.

Result: 1+1 = 3. *It is synergy.*
Geography and integrated media planning

Mastering geography allows you to precisely target across devices – enhancing reach, scale and efficiency. Media usage has become divergent. Marketers who are looking to drive sales and consumer engagement inside stores as well as online, can’t ignore any media touch points. And they must look at each touch point in connection with all other media included in the campaign.

Could this divergent media world make planning more inefficient, expensive and cause consumers to be missed or overexposed?

Yes – if a uniform approach isn’t taken to consumer marketing. Geography matters here. It is the one unifying mechanism across traditional media and digital. It forms the basis of how you can understand and target consumers and leverage the various capabilities across different media touch points.

Use the three keys discussed here to integrate print and digital campaigns and drive your greatest success. Valassis will lead the way as your partner and as a leader in intelligent media delivery.