



The HealthCentral Network

Adding Value With Segmentation & Targeting

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Technology has given rise to new segmentation and targeting opportunities that exist online and which are critically important for marketers to consider as they determine budget allocations and message development for online campaigns.

In the online world of pharmaceutical advertising, many advertisers have a basic yet limited view about how targeting and segmentation technologies can extend and add value to their marketing campaigns.

Some of this lack of understanding is most likely due to the break-neck pace in which the online arena has evolved over the years, and busy pharma marketers with tightening budgets, fierce competition and a strict regulatory environment may have other things on their mind than online marketing's advancements within the targeting and segmentation arena. However, by ignoring these very relevant developments and distinctions, brand managers may be making unintentionally un-informed decisions about their media mix and how to spend dollars most wisely. And in this economy, every market dollar needs to work harder than ever.

Ask many a senior executive at any pharma company about their Web presence, and bets are on that just a couple of sites come readily to mind: WebMD and Google, among a few other standouts. And while these sites are leaders in their respective categories, there are a lot of other sites that deserve marketers' attention especially when examining how sites in the health arena are becoming increasingly sophisticated about reaching the right person at the right time.

And for pharma advertisers, that is increasingly important as segmentation questions such as the following have a huge impact on whether a client reaches their goals:

- Am I reaching a caregiver?
- Am I reaching a newly diagnosed patient?
- Am I reaching a person with an Rx in hand?
- Am I reaching a person who is knowledgeable about their disease and has been living with it for many years?

If you knew the answers when reaching your above segments, wouldn't you think differently about the messaging and images you show to them? Of course you would! That is why the segmentation and targeting opportunities that exist online are vitally important for marketers to think about not only when determining how much to invest online, but what messages and how many need to be developed.

Demographic targeting

So let's start with the basics – how is online targeting different from offline media (such as print or TV)?

When media buyers and planners select which TV station/program or magazine title for a specific advertising campaign, they rely on syndicated research that provides composition and coverage numbers against the client's desired audience (let's say an audience of women ages 50 to 59) against the title/program. However, the reach and composition numbers are based on panel data that is extrapolated out to the broader population, and doesn't necessarily accurately reflect how many people of your target actually are in the room when a commercial spot airs or sees an ad when they pick up a magazine.

Sites such as Yahoo!, EverydayHealth, The HealthCentral Network and MSN are able to segment their audience differ-

ently. Since most of their users have created accurate profiles of themselves when they register with a site (including birth year, number of children in household, zip code, and ailments in the household), these sites can create packages for advertisers comprised *only* of people who fit the desired audience profile.

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This ability to segment the audience is based on users registering for the site (users typically do this to access customized stock quotes, e-mail accounts and diet tips, among other features) which is vastly different from other media where registration is not required or even asked for. Have you ever registered anywhere to watch an episode of “*Lost*” or pick up your favorite magazine at the newsstand? The Web sites that gather registration data are in a unique position to better help advertisers reach only the customers who are appropriate for their brand messaging.

Let’s continue to use our target category of women ages 50 to 59 as an example. For comparison’s sake, how many women in this age group can be reached through Yahoo! versus a leading magazine publication in the “shelter” category (for purposes of this example, we will not identify the actual name of the magazine)?

Yahoo! reaches 68.2 percent of the target, according to comScore data. And the shelter magazine reaches 35.7 percent of the target audience, according to MRI.

However, a sophisticated marketer would negotiate with Yahoo! to purchase ad inventory *only* against registered users who match up with the target patient population. When buying units in the consumer magazine, the advertiser would see that 82.4 percent of the readers of the magazine fall outside of the target (women 50 to 59 comprise 17.6 percent of the shelter magazine’s readers). So in essence, an advertiser buying a unit in this specific shelter magazine would see that more than 80 percent of their dollars in that magazine are not reaching the desired target. Buying targeted demographic buys online essentially cuts out the waste.

One could argue that the content in this particular magazine is relevant to the target audience. Therefore, smart advertisers may consider overlaying their demo-targeted online buys with content buys on Yahoo! or other similar Web sites that synch up with the age group’s interests (gardening and/or health, for example).

Sequential messaging

Another exciting opportunity that has not been fully realized by pharma companies is the use of sequential creative messaging to segment your audience based on ads they have

interacted with or have seen. This allows marketers to develop a story arc through creative messaging and imagery that can be sequenced by an ad server to be only shown to consumers in a specific order (for example, storyboarding). Furthermore, once a user has seen the ad sequence, advertisers can cap further ads from being seen, therefore minimizing wear out and media waste.

Behavioral targeting

Another interesting technology for healthcare marketers to employ is behavioral targeting. Behavioral targeting allows for advertisers to serve ads to users who have exhibited a desired behavior that pre-qualifies them as being valuable. An example of this is a relatively recent partnership between WebMD and Yahoo! called WebMD 360. This partnership allows WebMD to serve ads on the Yahoo! Network (which has tremendous reach with 117.8 million users in the U.S. market) after a given user has explored specific health content on WebMD.

Here’s an example: Let’s say a user is researching rheumatoid arthritis on WebMD. Perhaps the user is reading an article about Top 8 Myths of RA. The user clearly is interested in the topic, and depending on the type of article, one can infer that the user is a caregiver, newly diagnosed, or living with RA. The user has the opportunity to see relevant RA ads in this section, as provided by WebMD’s advertisers. However, later in the day/week, when the same user visits Yahoo! to read news or check e-mail, they can see a relevant RA ad. The ad can be a continuation of the story that was beginning to be told on WebMD, or it can be a totally different message.

Adding value to online efforts

Pharma marketers can drastically improve their communication and marketing efforts by allowing targeting, segmentation and sequential messaging to play a larger part in their media strategy and media mix. While many pharma clients understand the value of purchasing inventory around desired health content, there are efficient and high-reach ways to add further value to existing online efforts through technology. As print, radio and TV struggle to offer marketers metrics that are measurable, I urge clients to take a fresh look at their online media buys and make sure that the technologies available to them are being strategically deployed. Even in tough economic times, people still need relevant, educational healthcare information and pharma companies can help deliver this information along with promotional messages in a safe, well-lit and targeted environment thanks to some of the behind-the-scenes offerings on the web today. **DTC**

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