

Why personification is the only path to growth for brand marketers

The current macroeconomic and geopolitical situation has led many brand marketers to take stock of their plans going forward. While talks of budgets and P&L manoeuvring will dominate the conversation, it is just as important for brands, if not more, to dedicate some time to refining their digital advertising strategy for 2023 and beyond. This has never been more relevant at a time when the industry shifts from the era of personalised advertising to one of personified advertising.

The cookies, these pieces of code that store consumers' personal data on website visits, are undeniably set to disappear – despite Google's continued delay in the matter (now pushed back to 2024). As will the user IDs utilised on mobile and desktop. When planning for 2023, marketers may think that their strategies will require a more specific focus on mitigating economic uncertainty amidst the growing pressures of recession – but what they should really do instead, is reconsider their targeting modalities.

Staying ahead of the demise of third-party cookies and advertising IDs

Indeed, organisations should not rely on further delays in the deprecation of cookies and IDs, or on their ability, proven or not, to make lightning-fast adjustments in how they target consumers. Above all, they must avoid listening to those who believe ‘personalised’ ID-based advertising will continue to dominate. While they may still take up a noteworthy percentage of total market digital ad spend, they are in reality facing alternatives that are only growing in strength and numbers.

The only viable option for organisations is ‘personified’ advertising, which consists in a more sustainable and consumer-friendly approach. If brands break their traditional user identity-targeting methods, they can shift their focus to personas and the range of broad content destinations that are related to them.

For instance, a car brand pushing its new EV line should not simply target a small number of select individuals who are focused on eco-friendly consumption, skewed to a specific geographic location. Instead, the brand would do better by targeting multiple hundreds of thousands of people on the content sites on which they spend the majority of their time when online. This means targeting a variety of sites, rather than just the typical automotive and clean vehicle publications we assume them to be on.

Online personas are dynamic and ever-changing

One of the main advantages of adopting a ‘personified’ advertising model is that it is solidified, in most cases, by a framework of historical and in-depth insights about digital user behaviour. A framework of this nature can help craft millions of personas, which are then intensely refined with the help of surveys and large user panel questionnaires that strive to maintain the continued relevance of these insights. Having this ongoing performance data at hand allows for the creation of a consistent feedback loop that helps keep targeting accurate at all times.

This new generation of tech solutions is cookieless and IDless, making customer privacy a priority while also being more powerful than other methods such as contextual and keyword targeting. Those advances are still not the ideal replacement for cookies or advertising IDs as they don’t truly harness the interests of the target audience.

Brand marketers can also breathe a sigh of relief when it comes to their P&L. The move from “personalised” to “personified” targeting does not call for additional funding or resources and will incur minimal pain points and adjustments on the road to a future without cookies and IDs. A dream scenario – one that involves a prosperous sustainable future for all stakeholders, whether brands, publishers or users – can be found in ‘personified advertising’.

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