

March Guest Writer

Current Trends in Legal Marketing: Out with Reach & Frequency, In with Response Driven Marketing

By Steve Nober

A few years ago, I received a call from an attorney and her marketing team asking me to consult with them on marketing strategies for the upcoming year. They told me that for the

to have a stronger impact and presence. I knew they had the budget to do this, but also knew they were stymied as to the critical question of how to do it. After listening to their concerns and getting a thorough review of how they were spending their advertising dollars, it was my

turn to address the reasons why their marketing approach was not meeting their objectives.

I explained to them the basics of Response Driven Marketing (RDM) and that they needed to have a paradigm shift in their marketing approach or they were simply flushing away their money. Simply put, a campaign like what they were using, without tracking, analyzing and optimizing performance outcomes was highly inefficient. Like many, they were wary and not interested in investing their entire budget in RDM, at least, not right away. My suggestion was to take

a small percentage of their budget and track it using RDM analytics.

I implored, "If you're skeptical, just try a little to start to see what happens. Nothing ventured, nothing gained."

Fast-forward three months...we have reconvened and discussed the outcomes over their last quarter and the RDM tracked portion of the budget, which showed a response rate

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past few quarters they had softer than hoped for marketing results from their advertising program and needed help. She and her colleagues were eager to get solutions and try a new marketing approach. They explained that their objective was to increase the firms' ROI quickly while continuing to grow their brand. They conveyed they were already a recognized name in the legal industry, but needed to push further into the other geographic markets and demographics

increase of over 200% (how many calls to the spend). Clearly, we were onto something!

This story depicts a typical outcome for a medium sized firm, and it works for small and large firms as well.

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First: What Response Driven Marketing Is Not

The first question my clients ask when we start a marketing campaign is almost always the same: How often will my ad run? They might have prior experience with media and were told by an advertising representative that their ad would run with great frequency. The two marketing methods that media representatives love to sell are called reach & frequency and Gross Rating Points (they both work the same way).

First, reach & frequency. In its simplest form, reach is the number of people who are exposed to your advertisement, and frequency is the number of times your ad reaches people.

Next, Gross Rating Points. (GRP). Media planners use gross rating points as a method of designing a media schedule, in an attempt, to deliver a maximum number of GRPs at minimum cost. GRPs are calculated by multiplying the total reach (the unduplicated audience) of the schedule by the frequency (average amount of exposures) of a proposed schedule.

The basic idea for both of these, is that the more people you reach and the more often they're exposed to your product or service, the more likely they'll use it. This model is great if your sole aim is branding and works very well for companies such as Target, Coca Cola, etc. Here's the difference between this model and one that is data-driven: When you need your advertising to provide information about your responses, then reach & frequency and GRP stop working.

The idea of reach & frequency and GRP sound great in theory, but the level of inefficiency in these models are so great that it creates a massive gap in your marketing approach. I call this the “Shotgun Approach,” meaning you're hitting a lot of people, but not necessarily the right people. If your cost of response matters, then it makes sense to use a different strategy.

Why would a media representative push reach & frequency and GRP on you, or at the very least, not talk you out of it? Because, as with most everything, it comes down to money, and reach & frequency are in their best interest. Your ad will run more often and for a longer period, resulting in the most dollars to them. No station benefits from giving you response data, because you will cancel your account or renegotiate with them when you see what's not working.

To recap: There is nothing wrong with having your ad out there often and reaching a lot of people, but the difference between the RDM model and the shotgun approach of the antiquated model is how you get there. RDM allows you to stay in control of your marketing campaign all the time.

10 vs. 1,000

Let's say you run your ad 1,000 times but it doesn't generate one response the entire time it runs. Do you think that's money well spent? Obviously not. What if you run your ad 10 times and receive four responses, and you could predict that kind of response? Worth it, right? That's what RDM does for you—it focuses on the response and the cost of those responses, not the frequency with which your ad runs. It doesn't matter how many times your ad airs; you will still

derive the benefit of exposure over time, as your ad will run; it'll just run when it works best for you based on cost per response...and that is how you build a sustainable campaign.

So Then, What Is Response Driven Marketing?

Response Driven Marketing is a comprehensive marketing strategy dictated by measurable response, which involves media, creative, tracking, analysis and optimization. This can be any type of response, whether a phone call, email, Internet based click, walk-in business, or an actual sale. An RDM campaign involves tracking these responses, so there is no guesswork as to how many responses you receive and from what media outlet you receive them. Once you have solid information about responses and what you spend, this data is analyzed so you can quickly decide where to

continue advertising...and where not to. This can happen in a matter of one to three weeks; you don't have to spend months waiting to find out what's working and what's not. After tracking and analyzing your data, you will optimize or build on what your data has revealed and either rebuy, renegotiate, cancel or test new media. By seeing what worked and what didn't, you will make educated, numbers driven decisions. Key point here: Timing of the tracking. Canceling what's not working is very important and needs to be done regularly.

Response Driven Marketing isn't a crazy calculus problem with a hard to find and unexpected answer. It's so simple it's almost ridiculous, really: Track and measure your performance in real-time and get concrete results so your campaign can be a huge success. **P**

Management "Big Idea" Checkup Time!

Mikki Love

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smaller firms what I have often learned is you, as an owner, expect that everyone will take intakes and do

"Some of you may be thinking my firm is too small to worry about intake...but I would challenge you to think, How BIG could your firm be if you were checking up on intake?!"

a good job on them because "they know what you want". In reality your team wants to do a really good job for you, but they don't like or they don't want

their workday to be constantly interrupted to have to focus on the intake processes – which usually leads to another case for them to have to work. This leads to lost leads due to poor follow through or due to a team member who is overworked and isn't ready for another new case.

Lastly, let's talk about yearlong management of your intake system. Do you know your want ratio? How about your conversion ratio? Lead lag time? Which method of sign up converts most often? Why cases didn't convert? These are all very important measurements you should know. If you are curious about intake and how to improve your process be sure to sign up to receive regular e-mail tips from our personal injury firm consultants at www.VISTAct.com. We only do personal injury firms and we can help you and your team lock down all the necessary skills to ensure you aren't missing any cases. **P**