

Boosting Campaign Performance With Ad Networks

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ADOTAS – Navigating the ins and outs of the ad network world can be a large and daunting task. We all wish we could simply launch a campaign and then sit back and watch it triumph effortlessly.

Unfortunately, we all know that it's just not that easy, and that there are many variables that play important roles in determining success or failure. Having overseen hundreds of ad campaigns, we've observed several key advertiser behaviors that seem to correlate with the winners.

Although some of this may seem rudimentary, basic or obvious, from where I sit — these points are overlooked more often than you would expect. Here are five key ways advertisers can get more from working with ad networks.

1. Find someone on the inside that can, and is willing, or motivated to help you. Account manager, account executive, ad ops, etc... These are the people that will help make your campaign a success.

A good network representative can be just as valuable as your in-house colleagues — if you let them. Once you have found that person, work with them, not against them. Each ad network is slightly different and each will have a different set of standard rules for how success is best achieved based on your campaign goals.

2. Be honest about your campaign goals. This might sound crazy and maybe even seem obvious, but the more information that you can share with your ad network point of contact, the better your possibility of a good campaign outcome.

If your goal is a \$20 CPA, the worst thing you can do is tell your contact that your goal is \$10. It may seem like a great way to produce a better performing campaign, but if the real number is \$20 and \$10 is all but impossible to hit, the ad network will think they are not able to produce a successful campaign for you. Then nobody wins.

Remember it's in the ad network's best interest to produce the highest ROI possible. So, if your stated goal is \$20 and they are actually coming in at \$10, everyone will be happy.

3. Be realistic in your expectations. Unless you are paying someone on a CPA/CPL basis, campaign performance will always vary — hour-to-hour, day-to-day. As I like to say, "It's not a vending machine." Every time you put a quarter in, you are not going to get a snickers bar. Be prepared to ride the waves and evaluate performance on many different levels.

Cheap clicks or impressions do not always mean a bargain. Consider where the media is running as well as back-end ROI metrics. If you are buying cheap traffic with cheap clicks, but all of your leads are gibberish, you really haven't achieved much. Sometimes you really do get

what you pay for. Also, if it makes sense for your business, consider the lifetime value of a customer, not just the immediate action or reaction of a click to convert.

4. Don't be afraid to ask for special considerations, especially if you are the key person buying media for a major brand. For example, maybe there is something that worked well at another network that could easily be repeated. The ad network may have some non-standard targeting capabilities or ad units that you could benefit from. You can even ask for something that wasn't mentioned in an initial call.

Ad networks love to put together special deals for desirable clients. You may not always get a "yes," but it never hurts to ask.

5. Constant communication is crucial, especially in the early stages of your ad network campaign. It may take some heavy lifting to get things up and running smoothly. However, once you reach cruising speed and performance stabilizes – you can scale down to more infrequent communication.

Working with ad networks can be a powerful and profitable strategy. However one size does not fit all and you may need to focus some initial extra energy to discover how best to partner with each Ad Network that you work with.