

8 THINGS YOUR
MEDIA BUYER
SHOULD BE
THINKING ABOUT
IN 2023

Media Buyers. Growth Marketers. Digital Strategists.

Call them whatever you want, but their skills have become essential to every organization looking to establish a foothold in the market and keep more than just a few toes in the game.

If you were to paint a picture of the media buying landscape, it would likely resemble something sort of similar to the surface of the dark side of the moon. It's been pounded with unprecedented change, and the last three years (circa the start of the COVID pandemic) have really tested the ability of growth marketers to pivot while rapidly adopting new technologies, techniques, and strategies to stay ahead of sweeping privacy regulations, the end of a long-running first-party cookie era, and aggressively shifting consumer behaviors towards ecommerce.

It's been a long road, and it's not getting easier. Whether you're high-fiving an in-house media buyer or outsourcing to an agency (like +WeCreate Media), we've compiled a list of EIGHT things that your media buyer (or team) are thinking about in 2023.



THE SNAPSHOT

- 1 Storytelling**
Your competition isn't stealing your customers — you're losing touch with them.
- 2 Attribution. Always, Always Attribution**
We got spoiled by amazingly precise data, but now we don't have it. How can we still best understand our customer and how to best reach them?
- 3 Spending Smarter, Not Harder**
Marketing budgets are declining and efficiency and profitability are the new goal.
- 4 Customer Retention Strategy**
Getting a customer is so expensive, so how do we keep them? SMS?
- 5 Customer Experience**
You don't need customers to buy, you need them to buy in.
- 6 Preparation is Key**
The first 10 months of the year are preparation for Black Friday Cyber Monday (BFCM).
- 7 Sunsetting Third Party Cookies**
First-party data is the way to go, and halfway through this next year, you may not have a choice.
- 8 Creative Testing**
More creative is needed to make sure your brand is winning in 2023.

ONE

Storytelling

Your competition isn't stealing your customers - you're losing touch with them.

The days of throwing old-school Facebook Ads out onto feeds without a solid brand to back it up have essentially come to a close. Brands are now required to make something authentic and easy to communicate before their ads even hit the market. Additionally, in the 2022 Ecommerce Trends Report, it was discovered that **“successful [ecommerce] stores were 6x more likely to cite “Branding and Storytelling” as their competitive advantage.”**

This creates a lot of questions:

“Is my brand telling the right story?”

“Is my brand telling the best story?”

“Are my competitors stealing my audience, or am I just boring them?”

Too Long; Didn't Read (TL;DR)

You may not have a ROAS problem, you may have a boring content problem. Dig deeper into your content, produce more meaningful stuff, or partner with someone who can!



“
ARE MY
COMPETITORS
STEALING MY
AUDIENCE,
OR AM I JUST
BORING THEM?”



TWO

Attribution. Always, *Always* Attribution

We got spoiled by amazingly precise data, but now we don't have it. How can we still best understand our customer and how to best reach them?

On April 26th, 2021 Apple dropped a very heavy update in the form of iOS 14.5. With this update came a slew of new privacy questions in the form of, "Do you wish this app to track you?"

Most natural human behavior met that question with a resounding, "No Way!", and thus a new era of privacy was born, while the era of perfect attribution ended. Ad buyers now

have to wait longer periods of time for incomplete or "modeled" data, and traditional interest-based audiences are far less precise than they used to be.

Up until this point, it was easy to indulge in ultra precise data, specifically when it came to smoothing out the funnel experience and fixing pain points in prospecting or remarketing strategies.

SO WHAT DOES THE MODERN AD BUYER DO IN 2023?

They approach the funnel with a different tool set, including more customer research up front, more creative testing, and the best attribution tools you can find. We're big fans of apps such as Triple Whale and Northbeam, and have invested heavily into tech partners that allow us to approach situations with as much data as possible to more effectively and efficiently reach ideal customer bases.

TL;DR

Without the next generation of great tech at your disposal, it's kind of like riding a bicycle at night while trying to solve a Rubik's Cube with your feet.

THREE

Spending Smarter, Not Harder

Marketing budgets are declining and efficiency and profitability are the new goal.

Thanks (partly) to point number two up above, large brands are already reducing or considering reducing top-of-the-funnel marketing spend in lieu of more creative, personalized approaches. As it turns out, it's surprisingly not fun to throw more money into a fire with fewer promises of return on the other side.

2023's ad buyer meets this challenge with excitement, using the first-party data they're able to aggregate along with different techniques (UGC, new influencers, customer surveys, email marketing, SMS) to find new, smarter, more personalized ways to make an impact on their customer base and spend more time building a brand that educates, rather than a brand that sells.

TL;DR

Your brand isn't what you tell people, it's what they tell one another.

This year will be more about getting involved in that conversation.

“
YOUR BRAND
ISN'T WHAT YOU
TELL PEOPLE,
IT'S WHAT
THEY TELL ONE
ANOTHER.”



FOUR

Customer Retention Strategy

Getting a customer is so expensive, so how do we keep them? SMS?

We know that it's harder to prove that we made a new friend on the internet (read: customer), which means that it's definitely more expensive. So, how does the 2023 Ad Buyer keep their new friend and increase that lifetime value?

Easy – they dig deeper into their current customer base, get to know them on a 1:1 level, and use the information they get to keep those customers happy. That means learning how they preferred to be communicated with (SMS, Email) and

finding out what their sticking points are (lack of new products, products not fully solving pain points).

A study conducted by Forrester Research found that human communication increases brand loyalty for 57% of consumers, and 58% of consumers said human communication would increase their likelihood of spending money with a given brand.

So, like, get out there and speak all human and stuff.



TL;DR

Ad buyers at their core are problem solvers, and that sometimes means making sure that the problem has been solved.

FIVE

Experience Your Customer Experience

You don't need customers to buy, you need them to buy in.

If we keep making the assumption that traffic is harder to come by and more expensive to obtain, then we also have to make the assumption that letting that hard won traffic float into the breeze because our experience sucks makes the whole thing worthless.



TL;DR

Fall out of love with your business before you work on it. We don't recommend applying that framework to other relationships, btw.

2023's Ad Buyer is spending more time on customer experience and answering some super important questions:

- Does my landing page load?
- How is my SEO on my product pages?
- Do these images accurately represent my product/service?
 - Is my copy readable? Is it too long or short? Is it understandable at a 5th grade level?
- Does this entire thing actually describe the product, or what I want people to think about the product?
 - How is the purchase experience?
 - How is the post-purchase experience?
- Is my rewards program unnecessarily complicated?

Remember the whole "getting to know your customers" line above? This is a great time to get in touch with them and ask for feedback. Otherwise, blind feedback is great! Show your product page to your favorite grandma and ask her to accurately describe your product. If she can't, neither can a chunk of your customer base.

SIX

Preparation is Key

The first 10 months of the year are preparation for BFCM.

There's an old saying that the first 10 months of the year are just preparation for Black Friday + Cyber Monday, and in Ecommerce, that's still true. Lead generation gets to enjoy the opposite, fortunately.

New customer acquisition strategies are incredibly important early in the year, and 2023's Ad Buyer is spending more time focusing on growing their email and SMS lists before the BFCM rush hits 11/1 (or earlier). They're looking at modules for the site (intent popups) that encourage an opt-in for an email list, and they're testing what those offers look like. Tripwires can include PDF's, white papers (you're reading this, aren't you?), or discount codes.

TL;DR

Nurture your email lists.



“
Since we're here, let's be clear on this:
**STOP PLANNING
YOUR BFCM
STRATS IN MID-
NOVEMBER. YOUR
COMPETITION
IS STARTING TO
PLAN IN AUGUST.**



SEVEN

Third-Party Cookies Are Heading for the Horizon. What's Next?

First-party data is the way to go, and halfway through this next year, you may not have a choice. Customer Data Platform -Twilio Segment, Blueconic, etc.

Google may have pushed their phasing out of third-party cookies until 2024, but that doesn't mean that advertisers get to kick back and relax for another year. 2023 will be a time to test platforms, develop partnerships, and understand how and when to leverage first-party data. 2023's Ad Buyer has either already begun investigating platforms such as Blueconic or Twilio Segment for the best possible ways to understand how to use the psychology of their

ideal customer to their benefit, or is already using them.

Those platforms can be super pricey, so it helps to work with an agency that has access to the tools to get that data. Ad buyers can also patch together a rough sketch of the data by using attribution tools that they already have – Northbeam/Triple Whale, Google Analytics, Meta on-platform data – to start making decisions.



TL;DR

Lazy marketers will likely become unemployed marketers in 2023. The data is still there, but it's harder and more expensive to get it, and if you're not, your competition is.

EIGHT

More Creative Testing. Then Even More. Yep, Then More.

More creative is needed to make sure your brand is winning in 2023.

The name of the game in 2023 is, “How Much Creative Can I Test Out?” 2023’s Ad Buyer is getting smart now about how to source creative, when to launch those tests, and how to judge success of the creative.

Fun fact: measuring success of your creative based on short-term conversion reporting may not be the best way forward for choosing a winning creative that carries the brand longer term.

Brands can support their Ad Buyer by taking this part of the business very seriously. Set a goal for 1-3 new pieces of creative per week and don’t let yourself take your foot off the gas, regardless of budget, busy seasons, or outside factors.

TL;DR

No TL;DR here. Go read that and reread it again and again until you’re excited about producing 50-150 pieces of creative in the next year.

BONUS

Vacation

Ad buying is a stressful business, and the list of responsibilities that fall under “Growth Marketer” or “Paid Marketing Specialist” or whatever the title is keeps getting larger and more comprehensive. We’ve never seen a time where this job is hit from all sides with a wombo combo of privacy concerns, delayed attribution, modeled reporting, and the removal of third-party cookies (once considered the king of the marketing world).

Give your ad buyer a break. Let them know you love them.



Do you have a plan for 2023?

Drop us a **line**.

