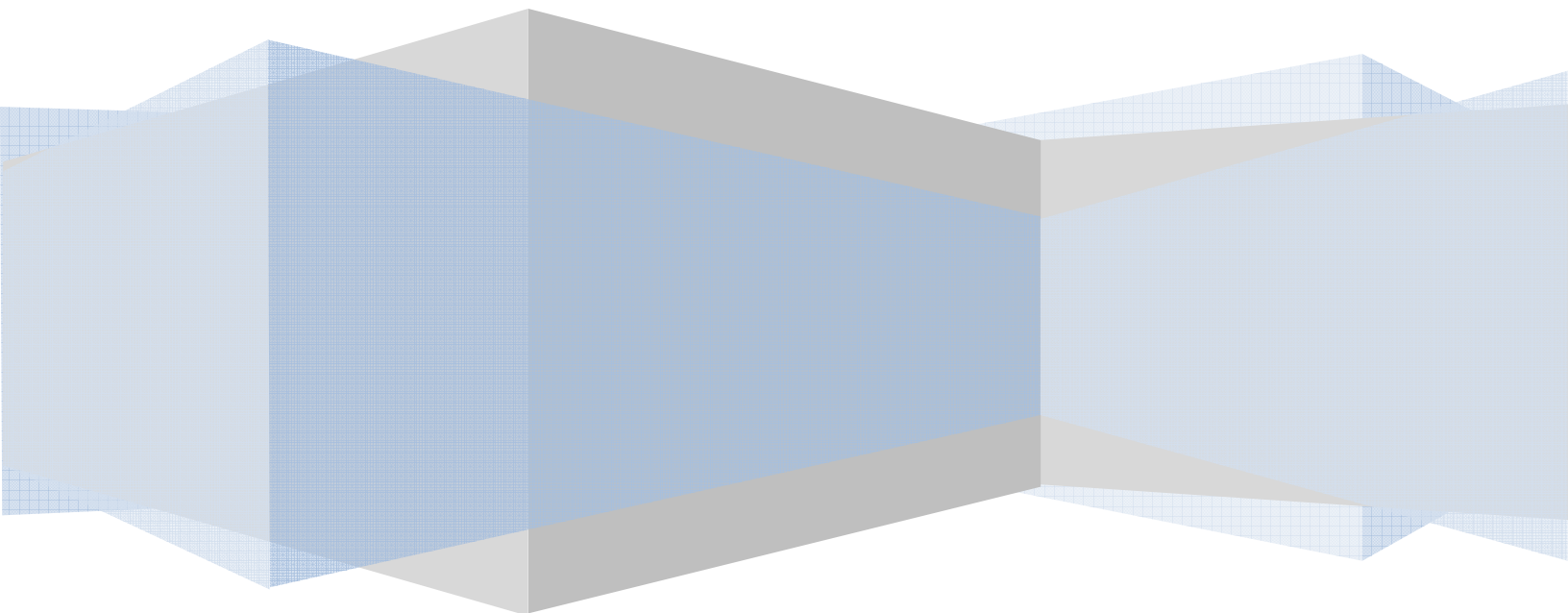


Tips for Sustaining Direct Response Campaigns

By Dick Wechsler



TIPS FOR SUSTAINING DIRECT RESPONSE CAMPAIGNS

Every day, direct marketers face a common challenge: how to sustain and grow their business in the face of diminishing efficiencies to come. It's inevitable. Every great DR campaign will come to an end. The well will run dry. Yet, the challenge remains. How do we sustain the unsustainable?

While no campaign will last forever, the following are five strategies that will help you increase the scale, extend the life and improve the efficiencies of your DR campaigns.

CONSERVE YOUR MEDIA

Only use the media that is really working for a campaign. No matter how robust a campaign is, there are pockets of underperforming media that should be weeded out. Review your DRTV campaign daily, every daypart of every media, and get rid of everything that is underperforming—even if your bottom line is better than allowable. Why accept a \$15, \$18 or \$20 CPO on any media when the majority of your campaign is performing better? Get rid of your laggards every day and your campaign will run longer and more profitably.

TEST

But don't do it only when the campaign is weakening. Test from the start, when it is strongest. Test offers, testimonials, the typeface and color of your titles, the music bed, the opening sequence—anything you can think of! Any elements you can identify that improve the performance of a campaign will make a huge difference in your ability to sustain it over time. And don't ever stop testing creative or new media.

EXPAND INTO DIFFERENT CHANNELS

Don't just rely on television. Radio, print, Internet, direct mail and alternative media are all viable acquisition channels available to be explored. You have a much better chance to scale and sustain a campaign when you have a variety of acquisition channels to choose from.

DON'T PUSH TOO HARD

The quickest way to bring a campaign to its end is to push it too hard. Identify a campaign's limits. Establish CPM thresholds for every campaign and abide by them. Track response rates daily; use them as an indicator of a campaign's strength. Weakening campaigns cannot absorb an increased media spend. By staying within a campaign's limits, you will maximize its profitability and extend its life, making it possible to take advantage of opportunities that may present themselves. Manage your media today so you are around to buy more tomorrow.

We once managed a huge campaign for the Contour Leg Pillow. There were weeks when we cleared over \$400,000 in media. Other weeks we cleared less than \$10,000. The important thing was that the media always performed within allowable. The awareness and brand equity from that sustained campaign established the pillow as a stellar retail product. Eight years later, it continues to be a strong retail performer.

LOOK BEYOND MEDIA

This is my final point, but it mustn't be overlooked. Develop and nurture other sales that can be sustained. The Forearm Forklift has been a steady performer on QVC for nine years. Buoyed by a DRTV campaign, it has established a national retail network as well. While the DRTV campaign is certainly not sustainable, the entire campaign may well be.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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