



Hybrid Marketing: The Big Buzz in Direct Response

By Nancy Lazkani

As the media landscape becomes increasingly diversified and competitive, managing every ad dollar is critical. Companies that typically market the "old fashioned way" are starting to pay attention to consumer response and understanding the relationship between the advertising message that sells vs. one that just looks pretty. Can a company deliver a brand message with a direct sell approach and maintain a good image? The answer is yes, and many companies now want the best of both worlds! This is what we now call hybrid marketing.

Major corporations are moving towards a more accountable approach in the allocation of their marketing budgets. Smart marketers do not snub their nose at direct response anymore, and the big ad agencies don't have the in-house expertise to do it right.

How did products like OxiClean® enjoy unprecedented success in direct response, and at the same time, become a household brand and number one in its category over its competitors? The key is fast moving innovation with a good product and smart marketing. Hybrid marketing is "relationship marketing." It's the ability to understand consumer response and the ability to track the performance of advertising expenditures with measurable results (ROI). New product innovation, product efficacy, customer loyalty and smart marketing are key components to the growth of any brand.

CHALLENGES OF HYBRID MARKETING

Hybrid marketing campaigns can be complicated. Hybrid campaigns are complicated to manage because they inevitably raise questions of conflict as different methods compete for customers. Marketers should acknowledge conflict and create guidelines that clearly focus on the customers served through each method. Tracking multiple objectives and the ability to react swiftly is key to achieving success.

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Managing strategies. To make sense of the hybrid campaign, marketing strategy goals are essential. The hybrid campaign considers various methods that optimize coverage at a low cost. The offer is compelling enough to make the phone ring, but also contains branding elements.

Measuring hybrid results. How can you use direct response logistics and accountability in your hybrid campaign? Some marketers use direct response but fail to do a complete

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analysis; they stop at analyzing DR results and miss the branding side effect. When campaigns are in place, what happens to retail? What are the correlations with web sales? Are you taking action with the relationship of the customer? Customers are very fickle and have more choices, and they hate to be ignored. But if you listen and understand the relationship, they are yours forever. Know where your customer is most responsive, and you can do this by media analysis and consumer research.

Direct response advertising is a very powerful, cost-effective method in its ability to track response. Beneath the traditional call to action, there are proven hybrid methods to build a brand and still keep the reins on accountability. What was once the equivalent of the "one-hit wonder" is now a powerful and cost-effective tool for launching new innovations, building customer loyalty and capturing market share from the "big boys!"

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