

## When Measurement Makes Better Execution

*By Michael Radigan*

Sometimes measurement can kill you. Remember being a kid and coming in last in a race? Made you want to give up, didn't it? Nothing saps the spirit like coming in last.

But sometimes measurement can inspire you. I know a guy who is a competitive runner, but he hates races. He competes with himself. If he runs a segment in 9:03 one day, the next day he'll go all out to run it in 9:02 or better.

I believe marketing agencies have to become more like my runner friend and a lot less like those little kids we used to be (or still are — don't make me call you out).

Because we can measure and interpret all kinds of results beyond the classic results of calls, clicks and sales using sophisticated statistical models, we're able to see such things as the relationship between the timing and message of, say, the placement of an offer in an eNewsletter and its changing response over time. The more we're able to reliably measure in a variety of ways, the more we're able to figure out how to execute better — which leads to continuously improving results at lower cost for our clients.

I see some skeptical faces out there. So let me regale you with a real-life example.

### ***eNewsletter: Analysis is the heart of the data***

One of our longest-running projects is a monthly eNewsletter that has the mission to entertain, inform and sell. Now, it's a tough proposition to keep an audience interested and engaged over the course of years. It's an even tougher proposition to increase the interaction with that audience from month to month, but that's what we've managed to do. That's also why we've managed to keep this account.

There's no magic here. There's just the careful analysis of as much data as we can get. Sure we have the usual calls clicks, and sales (and never discount the value of the usual suspects). But what else do we have? We have, among many other things, time data — the delay between people receiving the eNewsletter and actually opening it and then clicking through. There are always hints and relationships in this kind of data. Certain subject lines result in shorter lag times to open the communication. The placement of various pieces of information on the page affects the time between open and click-through.

Further, we've instituted quick mini-surveys and respond to them using dynamic content so that recipients get what they want. But that's not enough either. We compare what people say in their surveys vs. their actual clicking behavior. They may say they want X, but their history proves they choose Y more often.



What have we found? Nothing works all the time. You can't just build a template of the perfect way to do something and repeat it forever. You've got to constantly evolve, based on what you learn from that latest data.

The tiny improvements you make every month add up over the long term into significant aggregate results. Our overall results, measured by the classic calls, clicks and sales, are roughly double industry average. There was no "Aha!" moment that got us there. It was the simple hard work of taking the measurement every single month and using it to incrementally improve our execution for the next month.

### ***From micro to macro***

That eNewsletter example is the microscopic picture, the daily grunt work it takes to generate genuine and lasting improvement. But now let's get a little dizzy and pull back to a big view.

What if we had data and analysis that would let us apply the same kind of grunt work mentality to not just a single project, but to the entire marketing investment of a complex corporation? What if we were able to know that people who received our eNewsletter and who had viewed our DRTV spot within the last 18 hours and who had seen a mention of us on Twitter within the last two hours were, say, six times more likely to buy our product? How might that change your execution?

You see where I'm going. We've gotten way beyond the old-school ways of direct marketing and graduated into the new-school ways of what we call enterprise spectrum marketing. It's precisely the same mentality and process we use for managing that eNewsletter project, but we apply it to everything the corporation is doing to market its goods and services.

Working this way makes me feel like my runner friend. Every day, we do everything we can to beat the results we got from the day before. Pretty soon you look around and realize all those other kids are way behind you.

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