



commentary

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Publishers: Are You Giving Buyers What They Need to Transact With You?

The Answer: Maybe Not

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When the craziness caused by the global COVID-19 pandemic subsides and the media industry starts to get back to a sense of normalcy, agencies and marketers are going to continue evaluating, planning and buying as they always have. However, if you are not providing them with all of the information and tools – in a timely manner – you may be missing out on significant ad revenue.

For any media buyer, information gathering in real time is very important, but some publishers are making it harder for their marketing partners. In today's media ecosystem, buyers expect to find everything they need online because they are planning and evaluating almost in real time. A buyer in the middle of writing a campaign analysis, making a consideration set list or developing a flow chart does not want – or have the time – to stop and wait a day, perhaps even three days, for the information needed to fill in the blanks with that one missing publication or website.

“One of my biggest frustrations is not having all of the information I need to create a proper media plan in one place,” explains Kevin Arsham, Partner, B2B Specialist at MediaCom. “Publishers have to be more aware of the time constraints that agencies and marketers are under and be responsive to that.”

“Remember, buyers aren't newspaper reporters chasing down a lead for a story, searching and digging for information. It's not an editorial column or a story that can wait until all the sources have come forward. Plans are time sensitive and if the necessary information isn't readily available, your brand may not be considered,” Arsham continues.

When it comes to B2B publishers' websites, here's what is most often lacking (and by the way, there are those that present the information really well, and those that are just bad at it or less transparent):

- **Circulation:** Print is still important. Provide the total qualified circulation of the brand. If you can, break out the circulation data by title and business. This lets a buyer quickly decide if your brand has the audience they are looking for.

- Unique monthly users to the website: Like print circulation, your online audience data tells a good story. Give as much detailed online data as you can.
- Contact names: Let the buyers know who to contact directly with sales questions. An email that starts with “info@...” is not what buyers are looking for since this will likely cause a delay in response time.
- Editorial contacts: Make access to your editors available. Buyers may want to contact editorial staff to determine their calendar or to discuss sponsored content.
- Rates: While you may not typically trade on the standard rates posted in your media kit, posting them helps buyers establish a baseline for their negotiations.

“To me, some of the most important items would be access to circulation, web traffic and sales contact details,” Arsham adds. “The other points are necessary but can also be gathered via RFP.”

One of the biggest pet peeves among buyers is when they find that a brand’s media kit is only available by filling out a form. Buyers often avoid these qualification forms in order to access a media kit. Buyers are not in the business of being a lead, they are in the business of *generating* a lead.

“A publication can easily be passed over if marketers don’t have easy access to the media kit. And the risk is even greater if it is not an audited publication,” Arsham says.

Speaking of which, where’s the audit? Today more than ever, it’s imperative to be transparent with your marketing partner. “Providing third-party, audited data – including your print, online and face-to-face audiences – is one of the best ways you can ensure buyers that your circulation, web traffic and attendee claims are authentic,” Arsham points out. The fact is that the cost of an audit is far less than the ad revenue that you might be losing out on. Is it worth that risk?

“Typically, I will consider audited media first and foremost - unless there is some mitigating factor to do otherwise,” Arsham continues. “We ask expect full transparency from our publishing partners and an independent audit is great step toward that goal.”

Along those same lines, be sure you are adhering to MRC Standards for viewability. It’s important for ads to be served on your sites, but it’s even more important that they’re seen. Following MRC guidelines will help you and your marketing partners avoid fraudulent players and deliver ads to only quality audiences.

Finally, be sure that whoever answers the phone for a publication or website knows everything that is in the media kit. They should be engaged with your audience development department, learn from them – including who is reading your publication or who is the administrator for your website.

On the positive side, publishers, reporters and editors are working 24/7 to report on the industries they cover, whether it be energy, oil and gas, industrial manufacturing, or healthcare, just to name a few. When it comes to industry expertise and targeting an industry with a full-funnel approach, the industry publishers will offer extensive insight into industry customer pain points, product needs, trends, and much more. Everything an advertiser needs to get in front of the story, own the story and deliver on customer solutions.

When we are all back in the office, we will begin to see the marketplace return to the one that we have become accustomed to. But if you’re guilty of any of the above points, don’t make it business as usual. Use this time to improve how agencies and marketers access the vital information they need to transact with your brand. Your bottom line will thank you.

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BPA's services have expanded with the launch of the BPA iCompli brand to assist in the creation of standards and external assurance thereof. We do so for government and industry bodies. BPA [iCompli Technology Assurance](#) provides verification that companies are compliant with industry standards in the digital advertising ecosystem.

BPA [iCompli Sustainability](#) provides gap analysis, competitor benchmarking and external assurance for companies interested in following GRI, SASB, ASTM and ISO sustainability and corporate social responsibility guidelines and standards.

The latest innovation to move the industry forward is the [BPA Media Exchange](#), an online private marketplace which offers automated media solutions for buyers and sellers of digital advertising.