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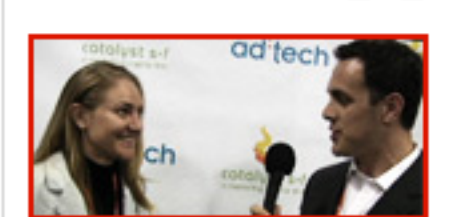
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**What marketing newbies hope to learn at conferences**  
 iMedia and Catalyst:SF teamed up to see what today's marketers hope to get from industry events. Watch what they had to say.

**iMedia Community tweets**

- JeffreyHayzlett** At the Princeton Club waiting for next speech and making phone calls while chillin in the hallway. Mobile office!  
20 minutes ago
- JeffreyHayzlett** Its a beautiful day in NYC-- and a great day too...hope you are having a similar one to mine  
35 minutes ago
- noahelkin** Great conversation yesterday with @sknitter about Cars.com's mobile initiatives. Lots of best practices for upcoming @eMarketer report  
52 minutes ago
- uwehook** CEO's say they can't handle growing business complexity  
<http://is.gd/chvLp>  
about 1 hour ago
- noahelkin** Updated @TweetDeck desktop client after reading @rww story on...

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**INTEGRATED MARKETING**

# 5 tips to hit the marketing message trifecta



By **Scott Severson**  
 May 17, 2010

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**ARTICLE HIGHLIGHTS:**

- The type of online ad that consumers most likely read and act upon is articles that include brand information
- Article-based advertising incorporates client brand information into informative content
- Young and high-income consumers respond better when they can read content, evaluate it, and act if they want more information
- Look for tactics that achieve multiple marketing goals, like articles that also drive SEO, or PPC ads that also build your brand

The boundaries separating advertising, PR, and digital are more than blurred -- they're gone. Today, the most effective approaches take the best, most successful elements from each area of marketing and combine them into something that's far greater than the sum of its results-focused parts. The top tactics are triple threats, blending the control of advertising with the credibility of PR and the measurability of digital.

That philosophy is being reinforced on a number of fronts. Most recently, an Opinion Research Corporation survey sponsored by ARAnet measured consumer response to five different types of online advertising. For the second year, the survey found that the type of online ad that consumers most likely read and act upon is one that has traditionally fallen under the public-relations domain -- articles that include brand information.

Wait -- the most successful online ad type is one that utilizes a PR-centric approach? It's not that much of a surprise: Public relations practitioners have seen the benefit of content-rich messaging for a long time, and have relied on it to engage with consumers on a number of fronts, from traditional newspaper and magazine articles to emails to blog posts. And now it's becoming apparent that consumers seek this same type of information in their ads. Article-based advertising incorporates client brand information into informative content on high-profile news and information sites, and can either follow a PPC or flat-rate model.

In the ORC study, conducted in March, respondents rated their likelihood to read and act upon five types of online advertising: banner ads, pop-up ads, email offers, articles that include brand information, and sponsored search engine links. Respondents said they were "very likely" or "somewhat likely" to read and respond to:

- Articles that include brand information: 53 percent compared to 51 percent a year ago
- Email offers: 51 percent compared to 47 percent last year
- Sponsored search engine links: 40 percent compared to 39 percent last year
- Banner ads: 28 percent compared to 25 percent last year
- Pop-up ads: 19 percent compared to 13 percent last year

There are several important lessons to apply from this data, which encompass the "marketing melting-pot" convergence trend, including:

**Content is king -- especially in digital**

The survey adds a data point to the voices of marketing pros and bloggers who are saying that many online ad methods aren't cutting it anymore. The data tells us that the most sought-after marketing audiences -- the young and high-income consumers -- want more. They want content -- and more context. Compared to banner ads or other options, these consumers respond better when they can read an informative article, evaluate it, and then decide to click through for more information.

**Build brand storytelling into every tactic**

The survey found a correlation between article-based ads and search: 57 percent of adults said they initiate web searches "very frequently" or "somewhat frequently" for products and services they read about in online articles. Younger and high-income people are even more likely than the rest of the population to conduct a search after reading online articles. These long-form articles are an excellent method of not only boosting search, but also of telling your brand story. It's also possible to integrate brand-focused messaging into nearly every tactic, online and off, as consumers engage more deeply with messages that feature rich, impactful content.

**Seek complementary results**

Media exposure in one channel tends to have a positive effect on other channels, and enhances the performance of each. And when a single tactic helps you meet several objectives, all the better. Look for tactics that achieve multiple marketing goals, like articles that also drive SEO, or PPC ads that also build your brand.

**Update your measurement**

These integrated tactics require an integrated measurement system. Counting clicks alone doesn't cut it anymore. In addition to traditional ad and digital metrics, you'll also need to rely on or develop softer methods of measuring impact on your brand, and gauging customer engagement via social media.

**Pay attention to attribution**

It's easy to attribute a sale to Google after someone visits your landing page, but what other media exposure actually inspired the user to search for your product? In order to truly attribute customer action to the right tactic, make sure to keep an eye on the interplay among all of your media, and how each channel supports the others. We often hear from our clients that their other media -- including paid search -- performs better when they're running a branded-article campaign.

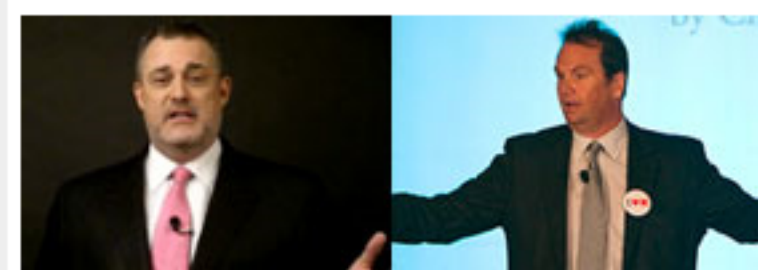
As the lines continue to blur among marketing disciplines, pros can bank on this here-to-stay trend: A combo platter of improved measurability, better ROI, faster action, and a stronger connection to constituents.

*Scott Severson is the president of ARAnet Inc.*

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