

Why creative should embrace programmatic, and vice versa

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Date : September 12, 2015



Why the Marriage of Data and Creativity Is Critical for Improving Brands' Bottom Lines

In the constantly shifting and often convoluted world of **media**, two major industry movements are currently under way that will shape how content is produced and business gets done: the rise of [programmatic ad buying](#)—you might have heard something about that over the last 18 months or so—and a growing openness on the part of sellers to work more closely and collaboratively with **creative**.

Firstly, and in a nutshell, the vaunted rise of the [programmatic age](#) has resulted in data being used to reach niche audience/consumer targets across multiple channels and driving efficiency and results. Though one can get data-driven insight without programmatic buying, it has certainly made it easier to activate the data to target an audience. From digital to more recently television, the sale of **media** inventory is becoming increasingly standardized and automated through exchanges. This booming sector that is reliant on advanced **technology** also comes with its own set of issues and headaches. Viewability, fraud and a lack of transparency are some of the biggest criticisms leveled at programmatic media buying practices.

More importantly to me, however, is the way it's activated. Currently, programmatic leaves little room for **creativity** in **media** planning and this at a time when brands must do more with less and expect greater measurable impact. Falling short of that equals a fail.

The second shift signals an increased appetite for bringing creative ideation to media discussions much sooner and, more broadly, media's openness to work with brands in ways they have never done before. Increasingly buyers and sellers are both involved in content creation and equally responsible for delivering **innovative** ways of driving and lifting impact, engagement and conversion.

And this is a good thing as the link between creative and **media** strengthens. **Marketers** and agencies alike are rushing to become experts in areas where traditionally they were not—oftentimes far from it. Whether in a desire to capture a greater footprint of a client's

business or provide more creative solutions across a portfolio of disciplines, the confluence of creative and media throughout the industry is torrential. But, interestingly, most of these discussions are devoid of data-driven insights which makes it difficult for brands to create activations that truly work and are measurable.

These two movements are growing with equal vigor but are also seemingly at odds with one another—one eliminates **creativity** in planning while the other calls for more content solutions, but eliminates data. One focuses on science and the other on art. A continuation of this bifurcated approach will result in two versions of a media plan—one for programmatic and the other for creative content that are separate and likely incongruent. Both will hold goals so disparate that they may not be able to join forces.

This is especially concerning because everything we know from years of reading results tells us that **advertising** works best when it has the right balance of being rational and emotional. When you can get to the right audience at the right place, but in a way that surprises and delights them, you can drive an exponentially larger and deeper impact.

The solution for bringing these two approaches together? Data-driven insights activated at the right time and around the right points. Bringing data-driven audience insights into view far earlier in the process, so it equally directs both media and creative briefs and bridges the gap between science and art, copy and code, and insight intelligence and emotion intelligence.

If **marketers** are able to effectively use the same data insight as a guide to reaching the right audiences, but also to inspire and spur and shape the **creation** of the right **creative** elements, we will be more effective at bridging the gap between programmatic and **creativity**. For example, understanding that seven out of 10 new entrants to the cruising category are driven by current cruisers can drive both the targeting and creative strategy for cruise lines.

Of course this is obviously not the only answer to fixing this unproductive bifurcation, but it will be a tremendous help in leading to better solutions that utilize the best of both indispensable **marketing** mindsets.

It is critical in today's world that these two elements come together, now more than ever. Doing so will change the way that brands go to market and, ultimately, result in improved bottom lines. Programmatic, meet creative. **Creative**, this is programmatic. I'll let you two take it from here.

Image Credit : It's time for data and creativity to meet. GETTY IMAGES/CHUWY