How does ConvergeDirect help marketers solve their business challenges?

**Dov Calderon:** ConvergeDirect is a full-service independent marketing agency that combines the disciplines of direct and brand marketing to deliver accountable media solutions—a “brand response” approach. This hybrid approach can include leveraging platforms traditionally used for brand building, like video, to elicit a direct response from the consumer. However, our primary focus is on generating direct responses for our brands.

The agency leverages market research for testing, segmenting of audiences and creative strategy. We help clients maintain and grow successful businesses and attain their strategic marketing goals while delivering a desirable ROI. We do this by growing their customer acquisition base and improving both their cost efficiencies and the lifetime value of their customers.

Are you also involved in media buying and planning?

**Calderon:** ConvergeDirect is full-service in terms of buying and planning through development of digital-focused plans, negotiating buys, fully executing the campaigns from tracking to launch, and ongoing optimization based on performance goals.

What challenges are your clients facing?

**Calderon:** They all have similar reasons for working with us—they want to grow their customer base and improve their cost efficiencies along with the lifetime value of their customers. We do work with brands to increase their reach and help generate brand awareness, but since we are very focused on direct response, a lot of the work we do is on improving their cost efficiency and ROI. We know it’s important to use digital tactics to help improve ROI.

Display advertising is a great way to hone in on targets through all the hypertargeting that’s inherent to this channel. It’s important to leverage consumer behavior,
and for a recent initiative, we used our client’s branded YouTube channel to make sure consumers were seeing and engaging with its video so they were more aware of the brand. We put video-specific buys into place to capitalize on consumer viewing behaviors.

When have you used eMarketer intelligence on behalf of your clients?

Calderon: While it may be challenging to leverage emerging platforms from a direct-response perspective, eMarketer has helped us understand consumers’ video consumption behaviors and the growth of their video usage. That in turn enabled us to guide our clients’ strategy from a budget perspective.

The information propelled us to test video for a direct-response brand, which we likely wouldn’t have done if the information wasn’t there, to help rationalize our decisions for more advanced testing. This ongoing test is working from a portfolio perspective, so without that insight or rationalization to test, it may not have been enacted in the manner it was.

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So eMarketer data on video within emerging platforms helped convince you to test a particular video platform for a client?

Calderon: Yes, for a particular video-based initiative—but more so, the opportunity to test video for a direct-response brand while optimizing performance to back into this client’s very aggressive cost-per-inquiry goals. Testing showed the audience is there, its consumption is there and the habits of people online are there, and it led us to recommend carving out budgets we may not have for pure direct-response initiatives.

One of the things ConvergeDirect felt was important for our home improvement client was to use the videos it already had out in the market on its YouTube channel and elsewhere. We wanted to leverage them within the brand’s display advertising by driving consumers to watch its videos while also propelling them to inquire about the products.

We worked with YouTube and its TrueView platform—built as a pay-per-view model—to ensure we’re only paying when consumers watch a good portion of the video. We further leveraged the platform by adding external annotation links where consumers can engage with the brand and video even more. While testing is ongoing, the campaign’s preliminary performance showed it was a viable opportunity for other brands we may not have considered prior to the testing.

Where in the eMarketer database did you find the proof points for this test?

Calderon: We like that there is a lot of information organized into easy, digestible PowerPoints and PDFs that really hone in on consumer behaviors. We pull information by the target demographic or the vertical we’re looking for and find reports, interviews and data that speak to our brands. Then, we try to be very specific about what we’re executing. Obviously, not every video platform is going to work for every brand, and not every video opportunity should be leveraged or used the same way. We’re also able to understand what key performance indicators we should consider for video vs. other online media. A lot of eMarketer information was helpful in level-setting expectations so the clients and our agency were informed about specific platform nuances.

So you’ve used eMarketer data to set expectations?

Calderon: Exactly. A lot of eMarketer information was broken down by target demographics along with psychographic information, which was helpful in understanding our brand’s consumption habits. This specific test has only been active for about two months.

How do you use eMarketer for new business pitches?

Calderon: From a new business perspective, it’s very important to analyze and digest as much information as we can about the brand and target prior to the meetings. We can then incorporate a lot of that information into our researching, planning and targeting strategies. Definitely, when we’re going to meet with a potential client or even a new vertical, we’ll use eMarketer and other sources to find out as much about the target as we can. This helps keep us informed about the behaviors and habits that consumers in that vertical exhibit. We pull charts and graphs for our presentations to help us tell our story.
Are there any other examples of where using eMarketer has been valuable?

Calderon: It’s a good way to make sure we’re going in the right direction. So, for example, eMarketer has been at the forefront of pushing information out there that real-time bidding (RTB) was going to be a huge opportunity. A lot goes on in the digital space, and while we were already testing RTB platforms, eMarketer data showed the tactic would continue to grow within the digital landscape, so further testing was warranted.

We still have to do our due diligence and understand fully what RTB’s capabilities are, how it can best help address our clients’ needs and how we can work with the platforms. eMarketer was definitely helpful in terms of identifying that we need to continue examining the opportunity.

Do you use eMarketer alerts or apps?

Calderon: I do, and I’m connected to the LinkedIn group, the Facebook profile and other forms of social media. I’ve used the app on my iPad and iPhone and pulled up reports when I’ve needed to. I primarily access eMarketer from my desktop, but I also access it from my mobile devices and social spaces.

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Why did you decide to invest in eMarketer?

Calderon: It’s important to have within our portfolio of tools. It includes such an expansive array of data and information. It’s formatted in a very presentable manner. It has insights and quotes, charts and graphs that are relevant to us. So while we’re able to “Google” information, eMarketer offers great resources all in one place, along with good search tools that enable us to find the information in an easy, digestible manner.

What would you say is eMarketer’s key differentiator?

Calderon: The PowerPoints and the ability to find the information we are looking for and get a presentation that has a beginning, a middle and an end. The reports have executive summaries, offer recaps of key points, etc. We also subscribe to comScore, which has its own dashboard in terms of particular sites or psychographic habits of consumers, but it doesn’t have the visual aesthetic, look or feel in combining everything. So the differentiator is the ability to find the information easily and the great PowerPoint presentations that are ready to go. Those PowerPoint presentations include digestible information, but—equally important—they provide context.

When did ConvergeDirect start using eMarketer?

Calderon: We started when I joined ConvergeDirect in March 2008. I came here with prior eMarketer experience, and I knew it was an asset and resource we needed.

We’re not in the database every day, though we do receive the daily newsletter. I would definitely say a few of us are in there at least once a week. Sometimes a client asks about an opportunity it recently heard about like mobile geofencing. While we’re familiar with the tactic, we’ll go to eMarketer, do some searches and see what additional information we can find on the topic.

Why is eMarketer a necessary tool for smaller companies?

Calderon: eMarketer is a great way for smaller companies to get quick, digestible and relevant information. It helps bring them up to speed—it helps bring us up to speed. If you are a small agency and don’t have a lot of resources, having eMarketer is a helpful way to get up to speed in the digital space.

To learn how eMarketer can help your business, please contact us at:

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