

# Proliferation of Options Requires B-to-B Media Channel Planning

As with so many other areas of marketing, media planning has been revolutionized by the influx of new media spawned by the Internet.

Where we once looked at print magazine advertising and some direct mail – we now have a full spectrum of choices available to B-to-B marketers. These choices are richer and fuller, presenting many new communications capabilities:

- Online options, like search and Internet advertising, that allow you to make awareness-building activities more measurable.
- Webinars that allow you to present an online tutorial on your technology.
- Podcasts that allow short messages to be distributed for mobile use.
- Social media like blogs, wikis, and discussion boards that thrive on two-way interaction and dialog.

And more are on the way constantly.

We call this phenomenon **media fragmentation** – the proliferation of new media options that could potentially cause fragmentation of marketing programs, identities and even brand positioning.

Everything we knew in the past about selecting media for B-to-B marketing has gone out the window. What's called for is a **media lobotomy**.

## Introducing Media Channel Planning

It's not just the number of new choices that raise the bar for the planning of B-to-B marketing media. It is the subtleties of use and approach that transform tactical media buying into strategic **Media Channel Planning**.

What are those subtleties? The list goes well beyond our ability to define here. But some media, like paid search, are used when people are actively searching for a product or technology. Other media, like e-mail and RSS feeds, can help you cultivate prospects.

In short, different media excel at different parts of the buying cycle. So the choice of B-to-B marketing media, then, no longer revolves around rates and reach, but is a more integral part of marketing strategy.

Media Channel Planning is the process of selecting the proper media channels to achieve the desired marketing outcomes and answer the major questions:

- **What are you trying to do?** Not just whether you're hoping to get leads, site visits, phone calls, or action in your distribution channel, but whether you're looking to increase brand awareness, position yourself as a leader, or penetrate a new market.

- **Who is your audience?** Who are the people who make the critical decisions? And who are the people who influence that choice, as part of the buying team? What are their motivations? And do they differ?
- **How do we reach them?** What media do they use for information at various parts of their buying process? For example, print magazines for general knowledge, search to locate a specific technology, the Internet for in-depth vendor selection, webinars for more information on intriguing new technologies.
- **What do they want and need?** How does your product or service correspond to their technical and business challenges? What do they want from a vendor? Simply the lowest price? Or do they need some type of applications assistance?

## Media Channel Planning: A Critical Part of Your Strategic Program

Media Channel Planning is Godfrey's approach to addressing this need for a fuller, richer approach to B-to-B marketing in a 2.0 world. Some important aspects of this new approach:

1. It's media agnostic. The new realities require that planners scan across the media landscape and fashion a program specifically targeted to the needs of your

audience and the nature of your technology, product or service. From one project to another, and even from one program to another, the recommendations will vary markedly.

2. It's customer-focused. Media channel planning requires a focus on the specific needs of the buyer or buying team. And a program of different media designed to address different buyers and influences and their relative role in the buying process.

3. It's integrated. It has always been important to integrate advertising, direct response, public relations and web activity. And media fragmentation makes an integrated

approach even more crucial. For instance, search keywords (those used by your audience, not just by you) need to be used in print ads, PR releases, and web pages. Online ads must lead to good web content which must have solid calls to action. E-mail offers must be paid off on the web, and results need to be measured.

4. It's targeted. Never before have media professionals and marketing communicators been able to target customers and prospects so precisely, so far along the selling spectrum. And that means that talking to the right people about the right things will result in greater efficiencies and a more effective program.

5. It's accountable. The new media enable a level of measurement unprecedented in B-to-B marketing media. That means not only better information but faster feedback, so the message and the media can go through a cycle of continuous improvement that allows them to be more targeted and more effective than they were just days before.

Godfrey believes Media Channel Planning is a critical part of any marketer's strategic program, and should be an important part of annual planning as well as continuous improvement efforts throughout the program year.

### *The Four Key Questions of Media Channel Planning*

1. What are you trying to do? Do you want to increase brand awareness, interest, desire, or action?
2. Who is your audience? Who are the decision makers, and who is the buying team?
3. How do we reach them? Where do they go for information at various parts of the buying process?
4. What do they want? What is the audience looking for and how does your product address their needs?



For more information, contact Lance Baird at 717.393.3831, email [info@godfrey.com](mailto:info@godfrey.com) or visit [www.godfrey.com](http://www.godfrey.com)

Godfrey provides full-service, integrated business-to-business branding and marketing communications services. The agency offers research, brand management, advertising, public relations, digital marketing, search (SEO and SEM), media, direct marketing and analytics services.