



National Geographic Channel switches on to interactive display ads for new programme launch

<http://natgeochannel.co.uk>

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Tiffany Monange
Executive at MediaCom



Advertising plays a big role in making the first show of any new series a success. So National Geographic Channel wanted ads for its new programme Situation Critical to strike a chord with TV audiences on the day the show launched in the UK. But when you consider how many promotional messages a person sees on a typical day, this was not going to be easy – success depended on the ads standing out among hundreds of other ads.

National Geographic Channel has always had a largely male audience. But in the case of Situation Critical, which tells the stories of people who have faced some of the most dramatic moments in history, the channel hoped for a much broader audience. “This made the success of the campaign even more important,” says Marc Ollington, Head of UK Marketing at the National Geographic Channel. “We needed it to generate interest among a wide spectrum of people.”

Delivering extra reach

Ollington was keen to make online advertising a key part of the campaign’s media mix. He says: “The web is increasingly important to us so at least 25 per cent of our marketing budget goes on internet marketing. Using the internet, you need to reach consumers in different ways and because this programme was a new investment for the channel, we wanted to go beyond the traditional combination of TV, press and radio advertising.”

Working with planning and buying agency MediaCom, the channel approached Google. Tiffany Monange, Media Executive at MediaCom says: “We wanted to work with Google because it has a significant reach among web audiences and is taking internet advertising in new and interesting directions.”

“The interactive display format gives us something more than the ads that automatically play content when you land on the page. The ads are user initiated so we are reaching people who are genuinely interested in the show.”

Running ads at the right time

The National Geographic Channel ran a campaign of interactive ads on the Google content network between 1 May 2007 and 8 May 2007. To maximise the campaign’s impact, 40 per cent of the budget went on running ads on the day of the programme’s broadcast. Monange says: “We knew a lot of people would be exposed to the ads on the day the show launched because the content network covers such a wide variety of sites – everything from the quality press to blogs.”



Measuring effectiveness

By using Flash-based image ads on the Google Content Network, advertisers can closely monitor how a campaign is performing. In the case of the National Geographic Channel, it meant being able to check important statistics such as the number of impressions and clicks throughout the week via online reports. "With this information, you can make changes to the campaign while it's running to increase its effectiveness."

More for your money

Administration costs for serving the ads are a fact of life with many online formats, but by choosing the interactive display option, the channel avoided this expense. This left the campaign budget to go purely on ads. Ollington says: "As with all business we focus on reducing costs, which puts greater pressure on the marketing team to make advertising budgets work harder. By using interactive display ads from Google, the marketing department can deliver great campaigns and support the company's commitment to efficiency."

Great combination delivers response

On the face of it, the interactive display ads and campaign strategy promised a successful start to the show. However, the results went beyond expectations. "I think the campaign's performance was amazing in terms of reach and cost," says Ollington. "The audience for the first show was 101,000 and more viewers are tuning in as more episodes are screened."

Building on success

For advertisers, campaign results play a crucial role in refining advertising strategy. With the detailed metrics from its Situation Critical campaign, the channel will be able to maximise the effectiveness of subsequent advertising activity. As Ollington says: "We are identifying the campaign's best performing sites so that we focus resources in these places when we use interactive display ads in the future."

