

# Hello you

Thu, Oct 16, 2008 | Posted by [Philip Buxton](#)



It's a subject that's come up a few times in recent days so here's a view on what seems to me to be the fundamental shift that successful digital channels force upon marketing strategy.

It's borne from the difference between the way a traditional media planner-buyer would work compared with what happens in pay-for-performance platforms like search.

In broadcast channels like TV, radio and press, the media agency first seeks to work out who a brand's audience is. One beer brief I saw recently gave their target a name. He was called Dan.

Based on this work, the agency calls all the media owners it thinks have Dan in their audience. The ones that best argue that, a, they talk to Dan all the time, b, he really listens to them, and, c, they can deliver him at a very reasonable price, win the business.

Pay-for-performance digital channels like search turn that whole model on its head. They allow an advertiser to plan against the view that their target audience is everyone and anyone who might buy their product.

Consider a search ad. It doesn't target Dan. The truth is that Dan is indeed the most likely to type in the right search term, click through to the advertiser site and buy something, but that doesn't matter. Bob, who will type that search term, click through and buy one time in a gazillion ? and whose money wasn't worth chasing under the old model ? gets hit too.

So we're talking about two marketing models: one that starts with a target customer and works back to sales and one that starts with sales and works back to real people. It's a massive opportunity.

For, once we know who our customers really are we can start worrying much less about who we should be talking to and much more about what it is we have to say.

Of course, digital also enables another shift, which is enabling all those real people to talk back. And

that's where the problems really start.

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