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## Online Media: Set up for Success

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Optimization is the key to success with any online advertising program. Many times marketers avoid detailed research at the outset, with the expectation of optimizing media performance after launch. This approach can backfire.

Instead, take the time to establish an organized and well-researched program, analyze the data, and then optimize to conversion.

### Set up for success

First things first. Set your goals and success metrics. These will serve as the foundation for the remainder of your program, so make them measurable, attainable, realistic, and, most of all, trackable.

The success metrics acid test: When you regroup to review your results, will you absolutely know whether you have met the goals?

As a credit union, your biggest marketing advantage is localization, even on the World Wide Web. If you're located and offer services in only one geographic area, why pay to have people in the rest of the country see your online ads?

Fortunately, today's technology has created unique opportunities that have a profound impact on how local online media programs are executed. To start:

\* **Target** your audience and select the right publications. Find area publications and outlets serving your local audience, such as the Web sites of news channels, radio stations, and the Chamber of Commerce.

\* **Look** at their publications' BPA statements, read their content, and request detailed research from your media representatives.

\* **Look** to the big names, national publications, ad networks and search engines that offer geographical targeting (or geo-targeting). Geo-targeting allows you to specify a location (by region, state, zip code, etc.) and deliver content only to users within that designated area.

This will allow you to advertise on, for example, the *New York Times* Web site, but appear only to readers in your local area.

Once you've identified your various channels, align your message and offer with campaign objectives and the audience's purchasing cycle.





For campaigns focused on awareness, you may want to trigger your ads with a message about the advantages of credit unions whenever the word “bank” appears in an article or blog. If you’re trying to drive purchase influence to, say, increase home loans, you may want to advertise your loan rates on real estate sites.

### **Optimize to conversion**

Once you’ve done your research and set your campaign live, conduct routine analysis, testing, and optimization for each tactic.

Optimizing online marketing’s return begins with determining the most telling numbers. Many marketers rely heavily on basic Web traffic metrics such as “visitors” and “page views” to measure the success of their online marketing. Unfortunately, such metrics are highly correlated with campaign expenses, so the more you spend the better the numbers will look.

Follow your visitor data beyond traffic-oriented measures and into conversion-driven, bottom-line results. As you review all of your metrics, also consider each campaign, publication, creative treatment, offer, copy, placement type, banner size, etc.

Did you want the audience to complete a specific action, such as request a member application form or use your loan calculator? If they’re not completing your desired outcome, it’s time to dig into the data and make changes.

Look for similarities in your results. Did all radio sites provide poor conversions? Consider eliminating them.

Did a specific message increase conversions? Alter your other messages to encompass the same attributes.

Implement your findings, and always return to the numbers. It’s a cyclical process that ensures the health of your program.

Successful online media campaigns require time from you, the marketer. Those willing to do the initial research, test the concepts, and make ongoing adjustments to their campaigns will earn much needed bottom-line results.

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