

Today's Lesson: Radio Works for Education

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There have never been more options for students to search for the right school or program for higher education. Conversely, the space has never been more crowded, making the right approach to reaching and converting those students more important than ever to drive enrollment.

One of the first things to consider is the different audiences open to messaging in this category. Different messages will influence prospective students at the end of high school, their parents and adults looking for higher/continuing education or a change in careers. It is important to consider and test messaging across all of these potential responders. In addition to what they will respond to, it is critical to also know when they are most likely to respond.

An AnalyticOwl Industry Insights report for the education category, based on response measured from over 275,000 aired commercials, reveals a number of opportunities that advertisers can use to better understand the impact of radio on website traffic, and allows us to better understand where and how to optimize campaigns to drive response.

One key finding was that, during this date range, 75% of website visits occurring immediately after commercials aired came from search engines (Google, Bing, Yahoo, etc.), while only 23% of website visits came from users who entered a specific website address. This is important because in Google Analytics, the “referring source” metric identifies the last website a visitor was on and/or their path to a website. Due to the inability for Google to track offline behavior, this can give a false impression that all of that traffic should be attributed to search engines – focusing only on ‘last-touch attribution’ – when in reality, many visits are from people who heard a commercial and then searched what they remembered from the ad. Understanding that people will overwhelmingly behave this way, regardless of the call to action, is key to understanding the full impact of radio. Hard-to-remember website or landing page addresses, dedicated phone numbers and response codes all attempt to change behaviors so that they can be tracked, instead of simply tracking the way that people behave.

Focusing on measured response from over a quarter million commercials, an advertiser can use collected data to pre-optimize a campaign. Tuesdays through Fridays have shown the highest response, 15% – 50% higher than Saturdays, Sundays and Mondays. In this case, the best strategy is a consistent presence throughout the week, but with more emphasis on those five days. The best daypart overall was midday, 3 p.m. to 7 p.m., but afternoon was close behind (12%). Morning drive airings help drive this “halo effect” later in the day, and evenings and overnights often prove to deliver good value given lower rates. And :30 was the best performing ad duration, driving, by far, the most response. This is an important

consideration for those using :15s and/or :60s. Those durations should be used to supplement a main thrust of :30 ads, which can deliver more of the message without losing the audience's interest.

Radio visitors also drove quality visits. Session durations averaged four minutes, 20 seconds with an average of 2.4 pages viewed, indicating significant engagement with site content. Bounce rates were very low (28%), indicating that fewer people leave immediately without engaging. And 50% of site visitors used a mobile device, a great reminder that radio audiences can easily respond anywhere and everywhere. Radio reaches consumers on-the-go.

Radio has proven to be an excellent medium to not only keep listeners thinking about education, but also drive action. According to Scarborough data, radio reaches 83% of adults who plan to attend continuing education classes and 79% who plan to go back to school for certification.

Radio works, and it is proven. Not only does radio have high reach, but it also has the ability to drive consumers to visit and engage education websites and their content. Regardless of what segment of the audience you are trying to reach, advertisers in this category who use radio and follow these insights will graduate to improved response and more applicants.