

# Attacking search holistically:

Bringing paid and organic search together. By Jennifer Borenstein

Jennifer Borenstein is Director of Strategy and Insights for Outrider. She guides the development of the company's analytical and statistical models that enable efficient campaign strategy and rapid sight optimization, and is responsible for assessing the impact of cross-media on campaign performance metrics.

Search integration plays a key role in executing a campaign that delivers relevance for both the advertiser and consumer. Search integration is crucial for providing a clear message to customers and to ensure proper resource allocation.

**Synergy.** The word brings hope and terror to the hearts and minds of advertising people, yet medium synergy and integration are long-standing buzz words for a better world, a more efficient and effective world.

As search marketing has grown over the past few years, the notion of integration of search and offline initiatives has been a topic of discussion and great promise. However, for most marketers who engage in search, there are ducks to line up first—mainly the successful integration of their paid and organic search strategies and efforts. From a process perspective, paid and organic search are two unique beasts. They require a different set of resources and skills. Search integration is crucial for providing a clear message to customers and to ensure proper resource allocation.

A dedicated search marketing team is necessary whether search is being managed in-house or outsourced to an agency. Coordination of campaign timing and messaging strategies across both channels is crucial. Results should be compared to determine effectiveness gaps. Keyword performance should be evaluated across both disciplines. For example, analytics may determine that a certain bucket of keywords is not effective with paid search, so the focus on those particular topic areas may shift to organic search instead. Strategy and budget integration between the two channels is necessary to find the ideal balance of paid and organic search efforts.

Some major companies are beginning to understand the inherent value to this type of approach. Companies

like Dell, Sears and Progressive Insurance have all focused efforts not only on the immediacy of paid search but also the combined value and ROI potential of combined efforts. These companies use shared real estate on a search results page to create increased exposure. Likewise, they are able to use complimentary and divergent messaging tactics to ensure a broad reach and enable the capture of more desired audience segments.

Unfortunately, in many situations this type of blended approach doesn't occur. One cause for a lack of search cohesiveness is that the skills of the people involved with the two search channels tend to differ. Organic search generally relies more on cooperation with web development and IT departments, while paid search tends to involve marketers and creative experts. This issue is compounded when a different agency is used for paid and organic search, or, as in many situations, an agency will specialize in just one of the two areas, thus failing to give proper attention or have adequate knowledge of the other. For reasons that can't be fully explained, marketers seem content to employ multiple companies due to these differences. Therefore, they accept siloed results rather than seeking out and demanding agencies that can be most beneficial to their overall bottom line.

**Regardless of the situation, companies that are employing a holistic search strategy will yield improved returns.**

**Outrider**  
A WPP Company  
111 Westport Plaza  
Suite 350  
St. Louis, MO 63146

T 314.209.1005  
F 314.209.1126  
search.outrider.com