

SEASON 2, EPISODE 5

The Increasing Importance of Location in Cross-Channel Advertising

The demise of the third-party cookie and challenges with identifiers present marketers with an opportunity to re-think how they approach targeting consumers with a greater focus on location and context rather than being laser-focused on user-level data. In this episode of Life in pDOOH, Kelly Merritt, Director: Omnichannel Product Growth Team at EssenceMediacom, talks to Dom Kozak, Head of Programmatic, JCDecaux UK, about the role of location in the planning and buying of cross-channel media.



Kelly Merritt,
Director: Cross-Channel Product Growth Team, EssenceMediacom

How has location-based targeting evolved over the last couple of years? What has made location more prominent in media planning?

“In the past, location-based targeting was really regional targeting, like regional newspapers, or physical proximity. Today, it’s a lot more sophisticated because we understand the commonalities and cohesive threads that bring people together based on where they live beyond cities and towns.

“Also, we live in a world where people’s time is more fragmented compared to when we were limited to regional targeting which makes it harder to control cross-channel frequency. But if you

are activating your media and then analysing the activation using location you can better control frequency to a specific audience.

“Another benefit of having a location-based strategy is that it’s privacy-first, so you don’t need to use cookies and follow people around online. You can profile areas, use census data, and other privacy-first data sets to better understand people and that’s a really effective way to target groups of people.”

How important is location as a targeting option and does this vary throughout the marketing funnel?

“Location can mean different things to different people or different campaigns. Location could be where you spend most of your time which for many people is at home, or it could be where you work, or it could be where you shop. So, when you think about location you need to think about what outcomes you’re trying to drive.

“At EssenceMediacom, most of our KPIs are brand-based because brand is the best way of measuring multiple channels together. In those cases, we’re more likely to target people based on where they live. But, it’s also important to understand where those people go, where do they shop, what do they spend their time doing, how do they commute between the places they go to.

“Understanding those patterns and how they relate to where people live help you to have a full holistic cross-channel solution. It also makes sure that pDOOH plays to its strengths because there are not many screens where people live so you need beyond people’s homes.”

Are some channels better suited to location-based targeting than others? In what ways do some channels struggle to compete in a location-first strategy?

“One of the reasons why location-based strategies work so well is because it is the variable that ties all channels together. There’s no other way of analysing the delivery or the activation of media across all the different channels but it’s how you think of all those different channels and their roles within the system that is key.

“From a measurement perspective, it’s also important to look at other industry insights that tell us how brand-led channels affect performance of more direct-response channels. Whether that’s TV, pDOOH, DOOH, radio - they all drive short-term as well as

long-term outcomes. How you measure that, becomes tricky but again, using location you can be very granular while also looking cross-channel and you can understand the role that time plays on performance.

“From there, if you overlay a client’s first-party data using the same location segmentation you can see the uplift in certain areas versus other and analyse the channel mix and start attributing, seeing trends over time, and putting channel-specific KPIs in based on that analysis.

How can media planners overcome the challenges associated with planning and buying both fixed-point campaigns, and on-the go campaigns?

“Always bring it back to what are you trying to deliver, always have that as your North Star and work back from there. Understand we live in a world where cross-channel activation is becoming even more crucial than ever because people’s behaviours are very complicated.

“Then you need to start assessing how all these channels you have available to you work together? What roles do they play? What’s the impact they have on one another? Using awareness as an example,

you want people to see your ad and to like it. Then you need to think about what motives and impacts each channel drives? If you have a business science team, get them involved!”

“From there, make sure that you are blending channels in a way that isn’t causing duplication, that you’re hitting people the right number of times, and balance that in real-time. Which is something we do using our new geo-cross-channel solution [NAME]. It enables

us to monitor people’s real time media consumption habits i.e. how many times have they been exposed to our media plan.

“That means we can balance the plan so that people aren’t seeing ads too many times, whether they’re at home, or commuting, or whatever. With all those things considered, we can make sure we’re not wasting ad spend or annoying people and be confident that we’re effective with our targeting based on the outcomes we’re trying to drive.”

What advice would you give to someone who’s looking to get into cross-channel media planning or location-based targeting?

“Make sure you have a genuine interest in people’s behaviours, turning insight into analysis, and understanding how your messaging can work for them, no matter the format or the device or the platform. Having that passion, then developing yourself and learning on the job is what works.

“Speak to your agency or speak to the company you work for and say you know this is a new space, but you want to learn more and be proactive. The more people who are thinking about this, the better.”