

Search Engines Drive Sales

Since the boom of Web 2.0, advertisers have been questioning the effectiveness of – and even the correlation between – traditional forms of media (i.e., television, radio, print, etc.) used in conjunction with online advertising. There’s been a great deal of skepticism about whether the two can work in harmony, or if they are simply disparate mediums. Shedding light on the controversy, a recent study conducted by *Jupiter Research* has made some interesting findings that will surely please multimedia advertisers.

The study, which was initially conducted to determine the use and frequency of search engines, yielded far more compelling data about the catalysts that lead to online searches. In fact, the study concluded that 67% of all online searches were directly correlated to “offline” messages. That is, participants heard or saw conventional advertisements such as television commercials, magazine ads, or billboards, and were compelled to search the Internet more information.

Further questioning of the participants revealed that 39% reported that online searching resulted in online purchasing.

Other key data from the study included:

- The most frequent catalyst for online search is television advertisements (totaling 37% of all “offline-driven searches”).
- Participants who reportedly searched the Internet daily were more likely to be influenced by television (totaling 44% of all “offline-driven searches”).
- Of those searches that ultimately led to online purchases, the most influential medium was print (totaling 30% of all searchers).

To a company with a presence in the world of e-commerce, this study has profound implications; not only on the importance of a Web presence, but on the integration of traditional versus non-traditional media.

First of all, it is *bone fide* proof that the Internet is a “catch all” for prospects. People default to the Internet for research and information once their curiosity is piqued from other forms of advertising. This further proves two additional points: your website should be an integral part of your marketing vision and all site traffic should be treated as valuable prospects.

Secondly, including your website’s URL in your advertisements is simply not enough to drive traffic to your site. According to this study, nearly half of the participants are *not* entering the target destination’s URL into the address bar. This makes a search engine optimization program mandatory. Your prospects must be able to find you by using only relevant words and phrases (such as the company name, slogan, product name, or key phrases used in your advertisements).

Lastly, this conversion rate proves that website traffic that has been previously exposed to at least one other offline message is far more valuable. Offline messages, such as television and print, prepare searchers to become purchasers – to the tune of a 39% conversion.

1. http://www.iprospect.com/about/researchstudy_2007_offlinechannelinfluence.htm