

Finding More Time for Creative Services

A CASE STUDY IN MEDIA BUYING EFFICIENCY FOR SMALL AD AGENCIES



AD MONKEYS™

MARKETING & GRAPHIC DESIGN

CUSTOMER PROFILE

Ad Monkeys is an award-winning full-service ad agency located in Grand Forks, ND.

AGENCY SIZE

5 Employees

CLIENTS

Healthcare, banking, small business, and nonprofits

MEDIA BOUGHT

Broadcast Television, Radio, Newspaper, Magazines, Online, OOH, Cable Television

GEOGRAPHIC FOCUS

Local and Regional

ANNUAL MEDIA BILLINGS

\$500,000

Full-service advertising agency Ad Monkeys is a small shop with a reputation for creative excellence and a personalized approach to their services.

The agency buys primarily radio and television in regional markets that cover Minnesota, North Dakota, and South Dakota. One of the primary challenges the agency faced with their media buying services was finding the time to get it done—time that takes away from otherwise billable hours.

Key pain points were coordinating and managing media schedules, and keeping track of conversations with media outlets and other information related to their media buys.

To help eliminate cumbersome manual tasks and gain efficiencies in the process, Ad Monkeys started using Avenue Right to plan their clients' media buys.

Since then the agency has been able to streamline its internal workflow for media buying, increase client satisfaction through better visibility into media plans, and increase revenue as a result of the time saved by putting that time and energy back into creative development and other billable services.

“Avenue Right provides additional depth for us as a media buying agency.

It’s an excellent set of tools for the work we’re doing for the client.”

– Scott Telle, Ad Monkeys Owner

BUSINESS SITUATION

Ad Monkeys, based in Grand Forks, ND, went into business in 1993 to provide high-quality, original creative. Services range from television and radio production to print advertising, annual report layout and design, logo development, media buying, and more. To date, the agency has won 40 awards for creative.

As an agency focused on developing creative, Ad Monkeys and its five employees (two of them added in the past 18 months) recognized an increase in the amount of media buying and the time-consuming steps associated with it, including managing information related to media planning, scheduling, and confirmation of orders.

The main challenge the agency faced was time spent in the media planning and buying process, coordinating schedules, and managing information related to a buy.

And time spent with manual processes is time that could otherwise be billable hours for creative work.

Co-owner Scott Telle heads up Ad Monkeys media planning team and says the agency has also added to its staff over the past year to support its growing media buying services. “We were getting to a point where one person couldn’t manage it all,” says Telle.

MEDIA BUYING PROCESS AT AD MONKEYS

This agency takes a personal approach to the media planning process, from client interactions to relationships with media sales reps, emphasizing the right medium for the client’s campaign within the constraints of target audience and budget.

“It’s our job to help the client find ways to sell their message to an audience that may not be thinking about that particular product at the time,” says owner Scott Telle.

When planning media for a client’s campaign, Ad Monkeys starts by determining two things:

- How big an area the client wants to cover, and
- What size budget they have to make it happen.

Knowing what a client has to spend and where the people are that need to be reached with the message sets the course of the agency’s media planning.

In familiar markets, the agency typically goes into a media buy knowing the media outlets to engage, and an idea of the schedules they’d like to place.

“You live here long enough, you know the media inside and out,” says Telle. “You have your finger on the pulse of what people are watching or listening to or reading.”

Ad Monkeys has expanded media buying services outside its core market in recent years.

Now the agency needs to know the players in those new markets along with the audience information in order to deliver the same quality of service. “At that point you have to rely on statistics and responses from those media reps, and what you can trust from what your experience tells you,” Telle says.

EVALUATING THE MARKETPLACE

Many advertising agencies are faced with the challenge of determining exactly how much time to spend in the pre-analysis stage of a proposal, collecting additional information from media outlets on audience ratings on top of all the avails and proposals to be reviewed.

After all, time is money.

For Ad Monkeys and other agencies that buy the same markets over and over, there’s no need to consult complicated statistics for every buy. Personal experience and gut feeling are more reliable, real-time sources of advertising information for a given marketplace.

“Rates always influence planning to some degree, but I know if we need to reach this particular type of customer, this is where they are,” explains Scott Telle.

Managing the planning process, coordinating media schedules for multiple clients, and keeping track of confirmations and other information related to media buying are cumbersome and manual tasks, taking time away from the other services an agency could provide.

“The internal challenge then is to put other things on hold to put a media schedule together.”

THE TIME IT TAKES

Ad Monkeys production manager Marnie Schuscke says the full-service agency's biggest challenge in planning and buying media is allotting the time to get it done without affecting the office's full list of other responsibilities.

For Ad Monkeys that list includes public relations, graphic arts, media buying, billboard design, researching, copywriting, photography and more. "You become a jack of all trades in an agency this size. The internal challenge then is to put other things on hold to put a media schedule together, when we could be focusing on developing the creative, shooting photographs, coming up with the right catch phrase, those kinds of things," Telle says.

KEEPING UP WITH MEDIA CONTACTS

There was a time when just a handful of local broadcast stations and print publications existed in any given market, but that number continues to grow significantly across most mediums in most markets.

Over the years ownership of those media outlets along with their media sales contacts continues to change. For media buyers, it adds to the already cumbersome task of updating and managing contact information for media sales representatives involved in a client's media campaign.

"If we were going to run a schedule through a radio group 15 years ago, it was maybe two or three stations," Telle explains. "But today they're part of a conglomerate that has a lot of outlets around the country. You have ten or twelve years working with a radio station, and suddenly you're assigned a new rep because of shuffling within their organization."

More media outlets, more contacts, and more turnover means more complexity in tracking contacts, managing communications, and getting ads placed.

Ad Monkeys needed a better way to keep track of media contacts, manage media planning and scheduling, and ramp up quickly in new markets. A peer agency recommended Avenue Right's media buying solution.

AD MONKEYS' MEDIA BUYING SOLUTION

Ad Monkeys turned on Avenue Right's media buying automation software in December of 2008. As a SaaS (Software as a Service) product, Avenue Right's technology and services are delivered over the internet, making "implementation" as easy as logging on.

Avenue Right's media buying automation software is designed for small agencies like Ad Monkeys looking to save time and increase efficiency in media planning and buying.

“When you have a product like Avenue Right, you know on a daily basis what the last communication was between us and the media outlet.”

HOW AD MONKEYS USES AVENUE RIGHT

Ad Monkeys uses Avenue Right’s software and services to keep track of campaign information and media schedules, giving clients increased visibility into media buying activities and serving as a source of historical campaign information.

The agency typically knows the media outlets they’ll engage for a new campaign, using Avenue Right to manage campaign consideration sets and make the most efficient use of the client advertising budgets.

Streamlined Communications

For Ad Monkeys’ internal workflow, Avenue Right is a tool that manages rather than replaces personal communication with media outlet sales reps.

Ad Monkeys continues to communicate with media reps face to face or over the phone, managing the details of those conversations through Avenue Right.

The agency also uses the Campaign Dashboard and Response Tools to get an as-it’s-happening view of activities related to their clients’ campaigns, such as requests pending or media outlet responses received.

“When you have a product like Avenue Right, you know on a daily basis what the last communication was between us and the media outlet,” says Telle.

Increased Efficiency

One of the tools Ad Monkeys uses most is the template feature. The templates allow the agency to create radio schedules more quickly, especially when buying all the stations under a radio group with similar schedules under each station.

“We don’t have a trafficking department that keeps order of every media schedule,” says Telle, “so Avenue Right has definitely streamlined the media buying process for us.”

Information Management

Whether an advertising schedule is negotiated online or offline via phone calls and faxes, there

is a lot of information to compile and manage for easy reference during the campaign planning process.

“To be able to document this in Avenue Right makes it a whole lot easier than trying to dig through a bunch of hand-written notes and that sort of thing,” Telle says. “There’s no need to pester a rep with questions like ‘What did we agree to a month ago?’ It’s all documented here and we’re good to go.”

The agency has easy access to information about the media schedules that have run, will run, or are running to give clients immediate insight into their campaigns.

“If a client calls and says they didn’t hear their spot run, we can call up on screen the schedule we booked,” Schuschke says. “We can pull up their account through Avenue Right and show them all the schedules that were placed and the confirmations.”

Clients also benefit from the ability to get a real-time update of their media campaigns or any portion of them in an easy-to-understand report.

THE IMPACT OF AVENUE RIGHT


Since becoming a customer in the winter of 2008, Ad Moneys has applied the software and services available through Avenue Right to their agency’s media planning and buying process.

As a result, Ad Monkeys has saved time in media scheduling, increased efficiency, and leveraged the tools they need to manage the agency’s media buying services. “If only this service had been in place years ago!” says Scott Telle.

Not only does Avenue Right help the agency coordinate media scheduling and client reporting, but it also puts them in a better position to present their media buying services.

“Avenue Right provides additional depth for us as a media buying agency,” Telle says. “It’s an excellent set of tools for the work we’re doing for the client. Whether it’s to simply show them that the schedule has been placed, or what stations or media groups are included in their schedule. Those very practical situations do come up.”

The time savings has impacted the agency’s bottom line by freeing up potentially billable hours.

For Ad Monkeys, using Avenue Right means more efficient use of billable time. “We are definitely a more productive company having added Avenue Right to the equation,” Telle says. 



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The leader in media buying automation, Avenue Right provides a web service that enables advertising agencies to plan and buy local media more efficiently for their clients—any medium, any market.

Avenue Right streamlines the media buying process for small to mid-size ad agencies looking to do away with manual processes, get access to market information, provide better visibility for clients, and increase efficiencies in their day-to-day jobs.

We help agencies meet the needs of their clients by getting the best return on their advertising dollars through workflow tools and real-time data delivery. Avenue Right provides the tools agencies need to gather and analyze information related to a client's media buy, helping media buyers save time through automation.

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