

Glossy+: Why fashion brands are advertising on TV

As the cost of online advertising soars, brands are finding alternative ways to acquire customers and drive traffic to their e-commerce sites.

Untuckit, the 8-year-old fashion brand best known for its men's button-downs, has found luck with television commercials: An hour after TV spots air, the website's bounce rate (shoppers who leave the site after one page) declines 45 percent and it sees a noticeable uplift in transactions. In short, the ads are successfully attracting consumers who choose to click around and shop.

"As a marketing channel, TV is too big to ignore," said Aaron Sanandres, Untuckit's cofounder and CEO. "It gives you the ability to get in front of a lot of people in a short period of time."

What commercials work

Untuckit's customer base is broad — mostly males, age 30 to 65. Therefore, Sanandres said, marketing is easy in the sense that it doesn't need to be niche, but delivering a message that transcends age can be tricky.

The brand struck the right balance with its first two commercials, he said. The first — featuring brand co-founder Chris Riccobono walking down the streets of Soho while narrating the Untuckit's backstory — was centered on creating brand awareness, including calling out what product the brand is behind and what problem it's looking to solve. The second, running now, is focused on inclusivity and the 50 sizes the brand offers.

“The messaging has to change at some point, when you’re advertising on the same channels,” Sanandres said. “We can’t keep running the same ads over and over; we’ve got to make [viewers] are learning and exploring.”

As an added bonus, the 30-second commercials, as well as behind-the-scenes footage of each shoot, are repurposed for the brand’s other marketing channels.

Where TV fits in the marketing mix

Unlike many digitally native brands, Untuckit started with offline ads before exploring the more “expected” online channels and strategies, like Facebook, Google display and retargeting.

Before TV came radio — because it was affordable — which has remained a strong piece of Untuckit’s marketing pie. Since, the brand has expanded its assortment to include what Sanandres calls its “big five”: TV/radio/podcasts, digital, email, retargeting and print (which includes direct mailers and billboards).

“Our approach to marketing has always been holistic, rather than channel-centered,” he said, speaking of marketing channels.

However, choosing channels does come into play, when it comes to advertising on TV. Sanandres said doing so is much like choosing demos for Facebook ads, as different channels have different audiences. (“You have an older target, you advertise during evening news,” he said.) From there, you can determine which ads work and seek out lookalike audiences by asking, “What other channels do the converters watch?” and placing ads accordingly.

What defines a successful TV campaign

Untuckit monitors the success of its TV ads in much the same way it manages paid search and Facebook platforms: It constantly measures, tests and tweaks the strategy.

“Essentially, every month, you start over,” Sanandres said, noting smaller updates are made on a weekly basis. (A percentage of the company’s TV budget is set, thanks to a large-spend agreement it’s had with the NFL since its inception.)

However, the larger Untuckit gets, the more it must spend to see any impact on web traffic through TV ads. For example, the company used to be able to test \$5,000 ad spots against \$500 spots, comparing the impact of each on site traffic and sales. When the site became more popular, it would run \$5,000 spots and see zero movement. Add to that the fact that that it also had a dozen different campaigns across channels, running at the same time.

Ten months ago, Untuckit hired TV attribution platform TVSquared to track the success of its TV spend and help steer its strategy.

“We treat TV like we treat digital,” Sanandres said. “You want to get as much data out of it as you can, you want to link the online and the offline as much as you can, and you want to test as much as you can. Then you’ve got to use the data, or what’s the point?”

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What other brands are saying about TV ads

Amanda Tolleson, chief customer officer at Birchbox:

“We have utilized TV on and off since 2014, and it’s been successful for us because it’s an easy way to share our value proposition at scale. It allows us to evoke emotion about the ‘surprise and delight’ we deliver in the mail each month, and it drives awareness, traffic and conversion for both subscription and our shop.

However, with the changing marketplace, where the closest device is often the best device, we are currently off air with (traditional) TV and testing mass-reach video on Facebook and YouTube, to deliver the same (if not more) impact in a more relevant and personal way. It’s early days, but we’re telling our story more efficiently and generating lifts in awareness, interest and conversions with this current in-market activity.”

Daniel Pahl, senior director of media and acquisition, and Isamar Batista, vp of marketing and CRM, of ShoeDazzle:

“TV advertising represents approximately 20 percent of ShoeDazzle’s marketing mix. Aside from raising brand awareness, TV advertising maximizes reach, allowing us to find new members by getting them to fall in love with our product and aesthetic in less

than 30 seconds. We have been early movers on TV-to-web advertising, with a strong in-house studio team to drive efficient and effective creative. We have also successfully transferred the learnings from TV to online video, such as Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, YouTube and streaming video.”

Jake Kassan, co-founder and CEO of MVMT:

“We spent the first four years of the business focused on digital growth and understanding our core audience. We decided to take what we learned and apply it toward traditional avenues like TV. This new touchpoint has added depth to our 360-degree marketing efforts and has helped MVMT reach new audiences that aren’t glued to their smartphones.

We saw great results with our first series of commercials that aired during the 2017 holiday season. Three variations were initially tested, and we soon discovered our “Founder” narrative resonates best with viewers. To date, MVMT has aired on 124 different television networks and continues to show on TV.

Television represents a small, but growing segment of our overall spend. We expect TV to account for 20 percent of our marketing budget this year.”

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“A lot of times, people jump the gun and say, “This is a great idea; let’s take this to

television,' only to find out halfway through that it's not the most robust concept in the world, and it's too thin to stretch into a format that's 44 minutes long."

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