

NIELSEN MMM & MARKETING PLANNER

THE ECONOMIST PROVES THE POWER OF MARKETING

THE CHALLENGE

In an industry challenged by rapidly declining advertising revenues, leading publishers like The Economist have pivoted to a subscription-first business in order to drive growth. The publisher uses a mix of traditional and digital marketing tactics to capture new subscribers, but had trouble understanding the true impact of its growing marketing spend amid an ever-increasing number of consumer touchpoints.

Simplistic, last-click attribution models were easy to use and understand, but offered limited visibility into the effectiveness of upper-funnel investments like TV and display with branding messaging, or when to time marketing activities to optimize performance. So, when the publisher sought to expand its subscriber base in the US and UK, they turned to Nielsen to better understand which of their tactics were working well, and how to best allocate their growing marketing budget to maximize subscriptions going forward.

THE SOLUTION

Nielsen's integrated Marketing Mix Modeling (MMM) and Marketing Planner solutions delivered actionable insights into The Economist's marketing effectiveness, and the sophisticated capabilities they needed to forecast how changes to their plans would impact subscriptions.

The Nielsen team began with the intensive task of identifying, reconciling and summarizing two-plus years of historical data across multiple media types, systems, internal teams and external partners. The model inputs represented all significant drivers of new subscriptions, including The Economist's offline and online media mix, such as TV, display, search, telemarketing, direct mail and inserts, as well as non-marketing factors such as brand interest, seasonal events, economic activity and news agendas.

Once the model was complete, Nielsen's consulting team compiled and presented a detailed report to The Economist team and other key stakeholders that included all major findings and recommendations. The results were also displayed in Nielsen's Marketing Planner platform, where The Economist could review past performance, and simulate and optimize marketing scenarios to see how changes to their plan would help them drive more subscriptions, most efficiently.

CUSTOMER TESTIMONIAL

"Like most companies, we started out with a last-click measurement approach because it was easy to understand, easy to measure and easy to take action on. But if you want to grow investment, you have to understand the impact of a holistic marketing plan and how various channels support that last click," said Iain Noakes, Chief Customer Journey Officer at The Economist.

"At a time when our marketing budgets and subscription targets are doubling every year, Nielsen gave us the confidence to scale our investments across the full marketing funnel, including channels like TV that are harder to prove in the short-term. We're now able to justify when and where we allocate our budget, while maintaining a level of efficiency required to drive growth."



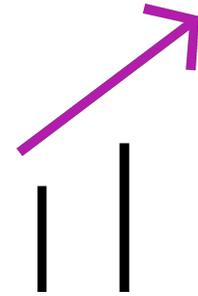
THE RESULTS

The analysis revealed some unexpected insights, including marketing's dominant role in driving subscriptions. This significant incremental impact on performance revealed the importance of continued, year-round investment in new and existing marketing vehicles, even during news-rich cycles.

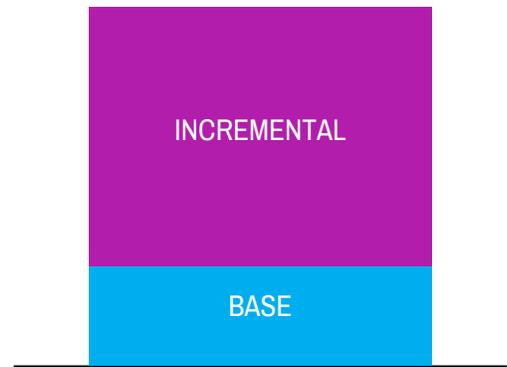
Further analysis found that TV, paid social and organic social were undervalued in a last-click model. TV and paid social were the most efficient channels at driving new subscriptions, with TV playing a significant role in the upper stages of the funnel. The analysis also identified which TV campaigns performed best, in order to inform future actions. As a result of these findings, The Economist has significantly increased its TV spend and paid social investments. Organic social was also discovered to complement paid social efforts as an effective tactic for engaging readers and showcasing editorial content.

With a clear understanding of performance, The Economist then turned these insights into action. Using Marketing Planner, the team identified marketing spend scenarios and timing strategies that would maximize the number of new subscriptions.

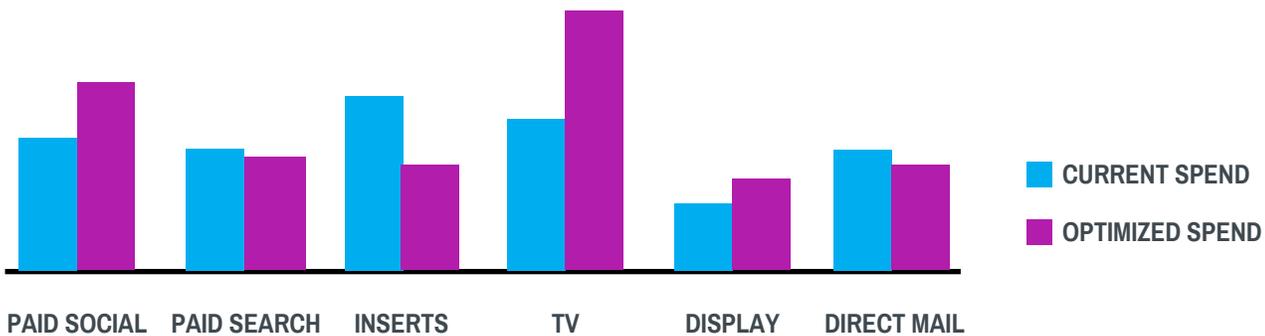
Moreover, the team was able to use Nielsen's MMM and Marketing Planner solutions in tandem with the Nielsen-Visual IQ multi-touch attribution (MTA) solution it already had in place. By applying the optimal, portfolio-level spend and timing recommendations from MMM to MTA, the team is able to make granular, real-time optimizations to campaigns already in-flight.



ANALYSIS SHOWED VERY HIGH MARKETING CONTRIBUTION TO SUBSCRIPTIONS



MMM BUDGET OPTIMIZATION RECOMMENDATIONS



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