

**Digital advertising**

# Optimisation techniques

The key principles in  
optimising high performing  
B2B digital ad campaigns



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Optimise,  
optimise,  
optimise...

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## About this guide

One of the key differentiators with B2B digital advertising is time – the time it takes to understand if the conversion you generated delivered business. Where with B2C you have immediacy or shorter time frames, with B2B time frames for analysis can be up to 18 months or even two years. Given this, the optimisation techniques are critical to get the best ROI from the digital advertising campaigns you run.

**This guide will cover the following:**

- » Hitting the numbers
- » Order and process
- » Micro-testing
- » Making sense of test results

This guide has been written by Nicola Ray, CEO and Founder of Modern, and Dax Patel, Head of Digital at Modern.

This guide is a sub-section of **Master technology. Define advertising: Breaking boundaries in B2B digital advertising**, which explores the subject in more detail. Other guides in the series include:

- » **Key principles in managing high performing B2B digital advertising campaigns**
- » **B2B ad technologies that deliver**

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# Getting started

With B2B digital advertising, you can't just base optimisation techniques on the metrics and performance shown in the ad platform. You've got to look deeper.

## Why duration is important

There's several hurdles to get through when you're delivering digital advertising leads. The first is the conversion on the ad itself, whether this happens natively or on your website. Then there's the lead qualification team who deem the lead accepted and then there are any other stages within the sales funnel where quality from source is reviewed.

Simply optimising at the front end on the conversions and performance shown in the ad platform isn't enough. You've got look further down the funnel to determine quality – that's why in B2B, the duration of the sales cycle is the biggest challenge to address.

## Quality and quantity

When you take into account lead quality and the time it takes to get that feedback so you can adjust the settings of the campaign, it's often too late and money has been wasted. So, this is our number one bug bear: how can you optimise effectively when you're not only reliant on quantity but quality too?

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**Day-to-day pull the levers in the platform, then regularly check-in with the CRM data.**

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## Hitting the numbers

In many of the accounts we run, we're usually targeted on cost per lead (CPL) with our objective being a CPL target that we use as a baseline. The first question we always ask is how that number came about, and in most cases it's arbitrary – and it's the same number that's used across all platforms.

The first job is to establish an accurate CPL target that is specific to a given platform. For example, the CPL for Facebook would be different to a programmatic channel or Google Search. Determine the benchmarks for your programme and document the benchmarks by platform, tactic and geography. We guarantee they'll all be different.

The 'number' or 'target' in terms of lead volume is often arbitrary too. It's either a slight upweight on last year in line with the budget or it's a finger in the air.

That aside, we still have a number and we have either the target CPL or benchmark CPL. For any direct or digital marketer there should be a constant drive to better the benchmark and constantly improve.

We love the look on the team's face when they've tried a new tactic, it's been successful, and they've improved the performance. It's a picture. But you've got to know the KPI metric first.

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**Think about the principles of testing.**

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## Optimisation techniques you can apply

There are obvious points here such as bids and budgets, audiences, creative and timing. What we'll cover here is more about principles for programme optimisation rather than techniques per platform.

**Order and process**



**Micro-testing for speed**



**Statistically reliable thresholds**



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Every account should run a testing programme, no matter how small.

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## Order and process

### Go small and granular

You don't need to test too much to make a massive impact. Testing new techniques only requires a small budget to determine if you're going to make a difference to a campaign.

We're talking here about investing hundreds of dollars, not thousands – which means every account, no matter how much you're investing, should run a testing programme.

A granular approach is beneficial when trying out new settings or features within platforms when you don't want to risk impacting the overall lead target, target CPL or benchmark for high performing campaigns.

Small and granular also means you can run a series of tests and create a simple, controlled testing programme outside of the main high performers to see if a setting change or new feature is a viable option to add to the programme.

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**Be creative with testing. Build out a plan where you learn fast.**

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## Micro-testing for speed

We don't advocate huge testing programmes – always stay granular and process focussed. This allows you to manage the budgets but also use multiple micro-tests to get results fast. When this is done in a planned and managed way it can reap rewards faster than traditional A/B split tests.

For this to work effectively, testing documentation is critical and, where possible, use third party software or platforms to run the tests.

With any tests, micro or otherwise, keep a pure mindset and test one thing at a time in any given test. That doesn't mean only run one test. It just means one test per group. You can still have several tests running at the same time across different campaigns, just not within the same campaign.

Concurrent tests allow you to learn faster and then you can consider combining tests to further increase performance.

Again, keep them all small and document well.

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**Don't just ignore  
the hard stuff.**

**Get to the bottom  
of issues and  
correct them.**

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## Reaching statistically reliable thresholds

### Volume can be a challenge

Volumes in B2B aren't what they are in B2C, so often it can take a long time to garner results. Whilst there are standard thresholds that allow a statistically reliable result in marketing, for example, you need 1,000 impressions to really judge the performance of an ad – sometimes it can take an age to get there.

As B2B marketers, we have to apply common sense rules. As long as you use practical and consistent guides for thresholds, you can lower the number. Remember, if 9 out of 10 cats prefer Whiskas, then we can use a lower threshold – but only if it makes sense. In the case of a Whiskas ad campaign, they were happy with just a sample of 10 cats!

The point here is we don't want to wait weeks or months for the results, and you don't want to spend too much time or budget getting there either. Be sensible, practical and consistent - and don't let low volumes put you off.

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**Make a step  
change today.**

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## Ready to optimise?

### Start optimising now

With B2B digital advertising, the complexity of the buying journey creates challenges. Taking onboard the techniques outlined here along with the ad management strategies will make a difference your performance.

To help you make a step change, start to map your next few moves.

### Plan your next steps

- » **Review your current performance** for sticking points or under-achieving campaigns
- » **Assess how you think you could optimise them**
- » **Create hypotheses** for testing
- » **Define your testing procedure** and how you're going to measure
- » **Define budgets** and parameters
- » **Run your tests** and roll-out the winners

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# What's next?

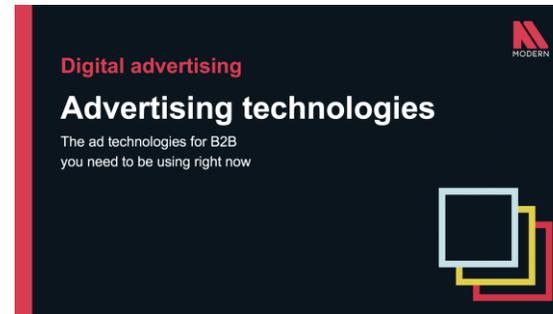
Ready to make that step-change? Let's talk about your next move and where you want to improve.

[Email us](#) or call us today on **+44 (0) 117 332 6700**.

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# About the authors



## Nicola Ray

**Client Partner, Founder**

Over 20 years digital experience, with 10 years working with high growth innovative technology businesses across UK and US markets. At Modern, Nicola provides strategy and insights for markets, buyers and digital techniques, including digital demand.



## Dax Patel

**Head of Digital**

Technical and analytics lead for digital projects, including data analysis, data modelling and visualisation. Before Modern, Dax previously headed up the Vodafone global digital team and managed performance marketing for Omnicom Media Group.





# About Modern

Through our wiser, faster, stronger mantra, we deliver marketing-led business solutions that enable the global leadership teams we work with to achieve their vision for growth.

By collaboration and partnership, from simple, singular campaigns to complex systems integration, our international team of technical, creative and commercial experts provide the perfect hybrid of marketing agency, consultancy and outsourcing partner for the world's most innovative businesses.

Founded in 2011, we work with some of the world's best high-growth innovators to accelerate their growth.

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## Talk to us today

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