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Advertising Research Made New  
01/06/2022

# Advertising Effectiveness Measurement Meets Consumer Behavior

## How new in-context methods are revolutionizing digital advertising research



**In the past, advertising effectiveness measurement was limited to proxy indicators of actual perception and subsequent surveys. Today, research has shifted to where the music plays: to realistic customer behavior in the social commerce process, measured and analyzed by in-context methods.**

## **Advertising Research made new**

How well and how does advertising work, is the central question of the advertising industry and the media that finance themselves through advertising. The answers are not, to say the least, the basis for investments in advertising and the pricing of advertising space. With [advertising spending of around 38 billion euros in Germany for 2021](#) (18 billion of which is for TV), these are not entirely unimportant issues.

In analog times, advertising effectiveness was a product of the reach of an advertising medium and the resources used for creation and placement. The right advertising space therefore played a virtually dominant role. In the absence of alternatives for consumers and advertisers, this provided clear, if somewhat superficial, guidance, because reach is of course only one prerequisite for perception. In the digital era, this simple formula has increasingly broken down. "Everything" now has potentially more reach, but with the fragmentation of channels and the multiplication of receiving devices, the specific reach of a single medium is no longer the sole main factor for success. The end of the "Nielsen Age" - i.e., audience share as the advertising industry's lead currency - in the U.S. in 2021 is a clear signal of this.

## **Advertising impact in social commerce: process analysis with a "purchase" focus**

In view of this new diversity, research on advertising impact has become differentiated and professionalized. Here, the industry benefits from the fact that while digitization brings more complexity through diversification and fragmentation on the one hand, advertising impact from initial contact to the purchase decision can be measured and analyzed more accurately and easily than ever before. No matter how good technical indicators of visibility and perception, how sophisticated image surveys are - there is no better indicator of effective advertising than measurable sales success.

In the heyday of analog media, advertising was focused on persuading consumers to visit a store later. The development of e-commerce significantly reduced the time gap between advertising and purchase. The customer journey has become even shorter with the establishment of social commerce - the combination of social media and e-commerce. One click, on "go to store" and the advertised favorite product is within reach.

A survey of U.S. marketing experts by Sprout Analysis from early 2021 shows that the way companies approach sales and marketing in social commerce has changed significantly: About 85% of large and mid-sized companies and 57% of small businesses sell on ["social commerce" platforms](#).

According to eMarketer, more than 101 million people will use [social commerce](#) in the U.S. alone by 2023.

With social commerce, companies can take their customers from the moment of inspiration to the completion of a purchase on a single device. Whereas earlier advertising campaigns aimed to increase brand awareness or initiate a longer sales cycle, today marketers must deal with impulse and immediate response. This means more speed and complexity - but on the flip side, streamlining the process and more data.

## **New measurement methods include sensory perception (System0)**

Today's smart TVs and mobile devices are connected to provide both entertainment and commerce on a single platform. For this shorter customer journey, marketers must also rethink how they measure advertising effectiveness. Instead of focusing only on consumers' thoughts (System 2 - explicit) and emotions (System 1 - implicit), they must be able to measure viewers' instinctive reactions as well and expect stimulus overload as early as sensory perception (System 0 - perceptual). These three systems are connected to one another. System 0, however, is the eye of the needle through which stimuli must pass in the first place, to trigger feelings and thoughts.

## "In-context" methods allow advertising impact to be captured through consumer behavior

One of the most direct and effective methods for measuring advertising performance in this new environment is in-context methods: the realistic simulation of campaigns in the live context of social and eCommerce platforms. Advertisements are played there, unannounced into simulated profiles of users. Subsequently, a "purchase order" (for example, "Buy sneakers!") for a product is tracked from the search result on a retailer page, through the product detail page, to the shopping cart or checkout. First, users see the product in the context of a search result list and either pay attention to it or not. In addition, all products can also be viewed in the product detail view. Finally, users then decide on one of the products by adding it to the shopping cart. This is followed by a survey on advertising recall and cognitive values.

Special attention is paid to the multidimensional analysis of buyer behavior in the individual steps of the shopping funnel: viewing a product, getting information, and buying. At all these steps in the buying process, an interested shopper can be motivated or lost, it is entirely up to the brand's eCommerce presence. This approach, which encompasses the entire shopper journey, delivers granular, realistic behavioral data on three important levels of product selection.



### **Metrik 1: Sehen (Sichtbarkeitsdauer)**

z.B.: Nutzer betrachteten das Produkt im SRP für 5,2 Sekunden



### **Metrik 2: Informieren (Besuch der Product Detail Page)**

z.B.: 34% der Nutzer sahen sich die Product Detail Page an



### **Metrik 3: Kaufen (Produkt in den Einkaufswagen)**

z.B.: 23% der Nutzer haben das Produkt in ihren Warenkorb gelegt

With the help of such comprehensive methods, advertisers and marketers can clearly and unambiguously evaluate the effectiveness of an ad from advertising contact to transaction. They provide insight into the advertising impact on the behavior specifically targeted by the ad, the purchase, and the steps along the way. This approach makes it possible to compare different

creations and channels and better understand their impact. From this, conclusions can be drawn about the quality of the creation and the value of advertising space.

## Conclusion and outlook

Marketing, sales, commerce, and measurement continue to grow and evolve as customers interact with more services, devices, and screens seemingly every day. Still, in a "world without quota," marketers need not wander blindly. On the contrary. With a comprehensive in-context approach to measurement, you can conduct a full audit of your campaigns and ensure you have robust tools, and therefore data, to evaluate the performance of each channel.

With "in-context" methods, there is a novel approach to using behavioral data for real-world advertising effectiveness measurement of advertising contacts. By simulating a product purchase, the effect of the advertising contact on actual purchase behavior can be studied. The recorded actual behavioral path allows a detailed analysis of the effect on sales. Methods from analogous times with the premise "was switched on" have been far surpassed by this method development.

Customers get a much more improved prediction of actual campaign success through such pre-tests. Comparative evaluation of creative and advertising venues/channels becomes possible. The good news is that studies show that advertising can still have an impact on brand recognition and choice, even with very short dwell times. And the insights gained from pre-tests can be so meaningful, thanks to the data generated during a digital shopper journey, that no one will miss the audience rating.

**Dr. Matthias Rothensee**  
Chief Scientific Officer & Partner  
eye square



**IMAGE** | Matthias Krupna, Createcreate

Dr. Matthias Rothensee is responsible for eye square's method and innovation development. His research focuses on the implicit impact of marketing, emotions, and visual perception. He is an expert in digital marketing, advertising impact research, implicit methods and multivariate statistics and develops eye square's media benchmarks