

Putting transparency into your digital marketing

Mystery and opacity surrounding digital marketing is being seen as an opportunity for Surrey-based Broadplace to help customers in motor retail.

The agency, which is part of the Logicserve group, has counted Mercedes-Benz Retail Group, Sandown Motors and Parkway Volkswagen among its clients in its 12 years of trading. It believes providing a full breakdown of how a client's budget is being spent – and giving the client ownership of the intellectual property (IP) – are some of the ways it can stand out and win trust.

"Our industry does have a lot of smoke and mirrors, with many agencies using a lack of (client) knowledge as a sales tool," said Ajay Syal, managing director.

"We aim to demystify digital marketing by keeping things clear and simple. Transparency is a major issue in the industry, but it is our biggest strength."

Syal says one dealer client was previously using another agency and, until it sought Broadplace's advice, it had no idea that 50% of its £10,000 monthly budget allocated to the agency was being taken as a management fee. In contrast, he says, Broadplace item-



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AJAY SYAL, BROADPLACE

ises its invoices so clients are clear what management fee is charged and what has actually been invested in Google AdWords and other digital channels.

Clients can even choose to pay their media spend direct to Google.

Many agencies view the work they do as being their own IP, meaning the client loses access to the assets and accounts if they change agency, which makes it a tough decision to jump ship.

Syal says Broadplace will grant clients access to their account, full downloads and

all KPIs and performance statistics – to ensure their campaigns continue to perform well with minimal disruption if they choose to leave – after they have been in business for 12 months. Not that this situation occurs regularly, says Syal, as the agency has very high client retention rates.

"With every auto client we've gained, the previous agency hasn't released its data. It's totally wrong. The good news is that Google algorithms have got much better at allowing you to regain the history and quality scores which in the old days would be very hard to get back."

The automotive sector now represents around 30% of Broadplace's business, and Syal wants that to increase steadily. It also operates in the general retail and travel industries, which means it can take learnings and best practice from those other sectors and apply them for dealer clients.

"Auto has grown naturally and organically for us, we've never really deliberately targeted the sector before. We've discovered auto is something we're good at, and we need to create a bit of noise about it," he says.

The technology Broadplace uses includes its own proprietary platforms, such as Campaign Hub, which it utilises to bring new customers on board, to manage campaigns and integrate call tracking.

Syal says that helps account managers work efficiently to give them more time to spend with customers learning about their business and their strategic objectives. In addition, its team are all Google-qualified and very experienced, he says.

Recently awarded Google's accolade of top performing Premier Partner in the UK, Broadplace has a strong relationship with the search engine giant and is able to facilitate three-way meetings between the client, the agency and Google directly.

In some instances it is involved in Google's Beta testing of developments – one recent example was a free Google campaign filming advertisement videos with a local



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WE LIVE ONLINE.**



Broadplace was awarded Top Performing Google Premier Partner Agency earlier this year



Broadplace wins Best Use of Search award at Digital Agency Awards

feel for YouTube. It was designed to capitalise on local interest and get a strong message across quickly for one dealer client.

Another element in its portfolio is the dynamically-based campaign, which works off dealers' feeds. In this way, because the feed is automatically updated when a car is sold, a PPC campaign on a particular model will automatically stop, so the client's money is not wasted.

"That's a really good example of how ROI can improve quite significantly by committing that technology. It's quite specialist, but our level of experience means we're able to execute that technology. We're really trying to bridge the gap between the digital world and the automotive sector," Syal says.

"Involvement in Betas means we can be among the first to market with lots of things," he adds. "It's very easy to run a business and look very internally, but our partnership with Google has helped us to see more 360-degree and externally."

Broadplace has also implemented a way to measure the offline impact of online activity, such as identifying how many people actually visited a showroom after interacting with an online advert on any of a multitude of channels, including social media. It incorporates tracking mobile use of Google to do so.

"We can now run campaigns specifically

to entice people to come in and touch the car, and can accurately measure the results."

The automotive sector is good at segmenting its customer base, which Syal believes is a strength, as it allows agencies to target particular online audiences at a very granular level. Re-targeting those audiences which have already clicked on an ad is an important opportunity too, he says, although it must be done carefully so not to harm the customer experience by feeding them the same or irrelevant information.

The company has also begun working with Trustpilot to offer reputation management and reviews services for clients, after recognising that star ratings can impact the search performance of customer-facing businesses.

Syal says paid search campaigns on

Google or Youtube are essentially similar to setting up a sales funnel – with display advertising or videos at the top which allow you to reach broad search audience which doesn't yet know which cars to shortlist, then further down the funnel direct search or pay-per-click allows you to target people who've already a strong interest in those models. Both are important, because dealers need to get on a consumer's radar early in their shopping journey while they're open minded in order to catch their custom.

Broadplace can offer clients full service digital support, as they require it. "It's about flexibility. We think we should work with people in the way they want us to work. We don't tell them how they should work in our relationship," he said.

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