Mobile programmatic is an investment. As a mobile app marketer, programmatic buying can offer huge benefits — but only if you’re prepared to commit time and resources to your efforts. Though not always immediate, in-app programmatic (and behavioral targeting in general) are long term investments for an organization that, if nurtured, will become a vital part of any marketing stack to drive bottomline revenue growth.
How much time and nurturing does it take to succeed with programmatic? That answer can vary widely depending on the business. Some see success relatively quickly, while other businesses can take months to optimize. One factor at play here is that ad networks generally rely on contextual data for targeting purposes, which can generate quick results. Programmatic, on the other hand, tends to use behavioral data — which takes longer for machine-learning algorithms to master.

For some businesses it might help to think of their marketing stack as a 401(k) or an IRA, and the channels as different investments in those plans. Some of those stocks might pop earlier than others, but that doesn’t mean that you shouldn’t be diversified throughout the market. In addition, some stocks may initially not seem like a great capital investment, but when given time and attention, they can turn into a vehicle that returns exponential results.

“Like all good investments, in-app mobile programmatic might take a bit of time and money to realize its full potential. But once that potential is realized the long term dividends will become an essential driver of any app business.”

—Cyrus Lee, Draft Kings

Let’s dissect a “traditional” marketing stack and the value it provides:

- **Search** - immediate need/want - low hanging fruit (10% reach)
- **Social** - contextual high demand (40% reach)
- **Networks** - high competition, walled garden/black box (20% reach)
- **In-app programmatic** - new audiences, more attention, more transparency (30% reach)

What if in the long term, you could move away from low-hanging, finite, competitive users and towards a high-value, sustainable flow of users? What would that be worth to the longevity of your business?
"There's not always a silver bullet for in-app mobile programmatic. It can take time, creativity, and a spend investment to unlock the true potential. Once that occurs it becomes an invaluable growth channel and vital for any app business."

— Nebojsa Radovic
N3twork, Inc

The available amount of investment and time varies for every growth marketer, and some marketers may not yet be at a stage where they’re ready to fully evaluate in-app programmatic and the value it can bring. But when you do reach that stage, we have a checklist of questions and ideas to keep in mind as you get started.

- Diversification: Not being reliant on one source and what that can do for your business
  - If a high performing channel changes its core offering, would your business be vulnerable?
- Dividends: How is your business looking at success?
  - 3 months from now? 1 year? 10 years?
- How can you set the right expectations internally?
- How does your product team look at success? Multiple iterations or expected perfection on release?
- What tools do you use to evaluate user quality?
- How many resources does marketing have to invest with in-app programmatic? What percentage of marketing budget do you allocate towards programmatic versus other channels?
- Is user acquisition (UA) and/or re-engagement essential to your app’s success? Consider:
  - Managed vs self serve platforms?
  - Assets/creative needed for success might differ from other platforms?
  - How will you approach attribution and lifetime value (LTV) modeling?
- How much time and effort are you focusing on UA strategy versus retargeting?
- How much of a factor is creative content creation when selecting a programmatic partner?
- Where is your market?
  - Are you hitting net new users that provide incremental revenue?
- With which verticals does your business most closely align?
Theodore Roosevelt once said, “Nothing in the world is worth having or worth doing unless it means effort, pain, difficulty…” This might be a bit extreme for the world of app growth — but it’s something to keep in mind for any growth marketer looking to invest in programmatic. Mobile app marketers who expect immediate, easy success are setting themselves up for disappointment and failure. But savvy mobile marketers who are willing to put in the time and effort required to give programmatic a real test are positioned to see long-term results that can drive their business forward.

Interested in learning more about mobile programmatic best practices?

MoPub’s Marketer Program is here to help.

Get in touch with us today.

mopubs-marketer-program@twitter.com
www.mopub.com