

New Australian Research Highlights Close Relationship Between Online Search And Offline Behaviour

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Marketers who ignore the role of online research in the various stages of consumer purchase behaviour do so at their own peril, with new Australian research showing 80% of consumers use online research to inform their purchase decision.

The research, which covers 40 categories and was commissioned by Outrider (<http://www.outrider.com.au/>), a GroupM search marketing company, highlights the necessity for online and offline marketing campaigns to be aligned in order to achieve maximum benefit for their investment.

"Without an integrated approach to online and offline media, advertisers can significantly reduce the effectiveness of their marketing. It's vital to understand that consumers are taking their online experience and incorporating it into offline purchase behaviour," said Head of GroupM Search Marcelo Silva.

The study, conducted by Research International, showed that a third of consumers start their online research at a search engine.

In addition, the majority of those using a search engine first conducted a generic (or unbranded) keyword search.

"Without a search marketing (<http://www.outrider.com.au/services/>) campaign that caters for this - and for the keyword terms used across offline marketing for a product or service - marketers will be behind the eight ball," said Silva.

Of those looking to buy a laptop, for example, 64% used a search engine and 40% of them began with a generic keyword search - only 23% start with a branded keyword search.

Additionally, search engines are used throughout the consumer research process: 27% conduct keyword searches midway through, and 9% search just prior to purchase.

"It is all about how consumers behave and marketers must embrace the new purchase decision cycle from the earliest stages of their media planning. What is fascinating is the lack of barriers between online and offline now - one does not exist in a vacuum from the other and consumers are more and more adept at operating in both worlds," said Research International Strategy Director Jonathan Sinton.

The study also highlighted the increase in consumers going online to research Fast Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG), traditionally a category not heavily associated with online research.

The research showed there is a great deal of variation between categories ranging from 24% to 79% for people researching online before their purchase.

Recent Purchasers Who Researched Online:

Travel: 79%
Electronics: 47%
Auto: 46%
Insurance: 45%
Telecommunications: 44%
Finance: 44%
FMCG: 30%
Furniture/White goods: 24%

About Outrider:

Outrider (formerly known as 24/7 Real Media Search) is a global search marketing agency (<http://www.outrider.com.au/>) and a division of GroupM, WPP's media buying and planning arm with 30 offices serving more than 40 countries. Outrider has pioneered holistic, advanced search marketing strategies and integrated cross-media planning for global, national and local category-leading clients. Services include paid search (<http://www.outrider.com.au/services/sem>), search engine optimisation (<http://www.outrider.com.au/services/seo>), and advanced search strategy (social search, mobile search, local search, video search and more).

About Research International:

Research International was one of the first research agencies in Australia, conducting research since the 1930s. Today the company provides custom research solutions for its clients around innovation, market strategy, brand experience and service measurement issues. The firm operates in over 50 countries, with offices across Asia Pacific. It has more than 2,500 staff and works with blue-chip clients around the world.

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