FY20 Fall Travel Office of Marketing and Brand Management

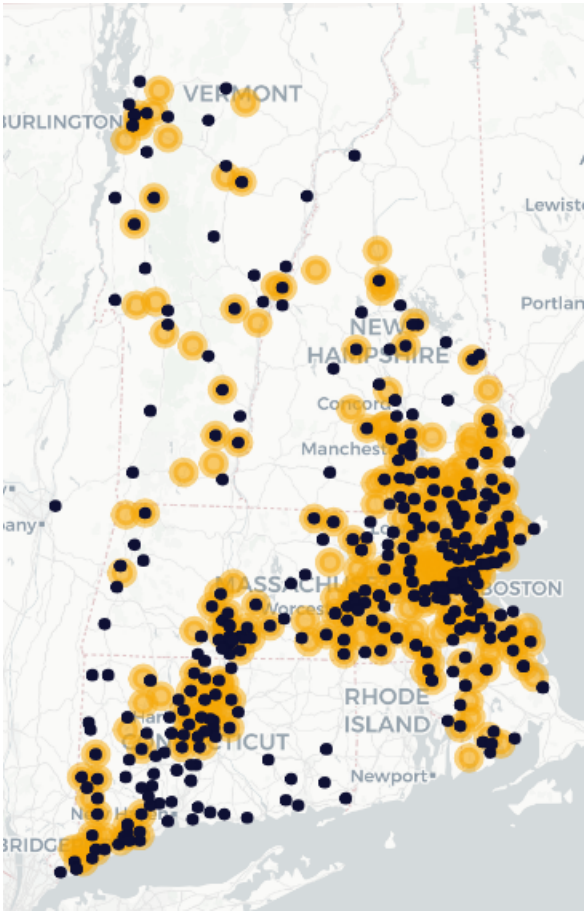
2020-01-22

Travel Ad Campaign

From 9/1/19-11/30/19, USM Office of Marketing and Branding ran digital advertisements to support out-of-state Admissions college fairs and High School visits. Using the Office of Admissions calendar of events, we targeted the geographic areas where these events were booked. All of our ads drove traffic to the New England Regional Student Program. We paid particular attention to where Admissions wanted to increase student applications in hopes to increase Inquiry activity by advertising the events themselves and increasing brand awareness.

Reading this map

- The dark blue dots represent the specific areas of admission's events where we geo-targeted digitl ads. The yellow areas represent the web traffic driven by the ads.
- This map provides an interactive feature that alculates distance between any 2 points you select in order to get an idea of how far students have to travel to get to fairs



Performance:

USM's geo-targeting largely worked well. Most areas targeted drew web traffic. The areas where we would like to see improvement are New Haven, New London, and Litchfield, CT. We saw considerable drop in unique pageviews to the campaign landing pages from these three areas from last fall, as detailed below.

TargetArea	Fall_18	Fall_19
Litchfield	100	49
New Haven	665	209
New London	127	41
Total	892	299

Note: I have reached out to the agency to ask if perhaps these areas were not targeted so heavily with impressions.

Ad Performance and Web Traffic

Fall Travel Ads 2018

Code_Vendor	Code_Medium	Impressions	ClickRatePct	UPV	BounceRatePct	Av_TOP	Cost
DBM	DISP	1,782,286	0.13%	1,274	92.82%	00:02:20	$9999.88
FB	DISP	999,395	0.6%	3,190	92.8%	00:02:15	$1912.19
FB	VID	69,766	0.91%	395	90.36%	00:03:25	$387.81
IG	DISP	325,305	0.2%	150	89.21%	00:00:30	$1351.7
IG	VID	360,751	0.2%	155	95.95%	00:00:20	$1348.11
SC	VID	725,817	1.27%	1,779	97.61%	00:00:55	$1197.27

Fall Travel Ads 2019

Code_Vendor	Code_Medium	Impressions	ClickRatePct	UPV	BounceRatePct	Av_TOP	Cost
DBM	DISP	825,448	0.12%	1,770	75.61%	00:00:30	$9999.79
FB	CAR	130,602	0.32%	270	89.47%	00:01:10	$720.14
FB	DISP	337,434	0.38%	732	90.92%	00:02:55	$1458.62
FB	VID	393,275	0.52%	619	94.98%	00:01:40	$2056.43
IG	CAR	194,994	0.25%	266	91.6%	00:02:20	$1106.16
IG	DISP	29,440	0.19%	38	94.44%	00:00:30	$175.37
IG	VID	38,249	0.17%	55	96.23%	00:01:15	$234.13

Performance:

- DBM display ads maintained a CTR from FY19 during the months of August-November. However, it is importannt to note that while the budget allocated did not change, we received nearly 1 million fewer impressions. Despite the fewer impressions, the ads drove 500 more unique pageviews with a much lower bounce rate.
- Facebook display ads saw a drop in budget due to a trend in declining CTR. The CTR dropped from 0.6% in FY19 to 0.38% in FY19. Because Facebook is one of the strongest drivers of web traffic, we saw massive drop in unique pageviews.
- In FY19, carousel was used as a new medium with FB and IG. The carousel ads have slightly lower bounce rates than display and video.

- The budget for Instagram display ads also dropped significantly, however the CTR remained above benchmark.
- Significantly more money was allocated to Facebook video. Because we do not have benchmarks, it is difficult to evaluate the performance. The only standardized metric we have is CTR.
- Facebook offers a video report and I have included the data below. It is remarkable how much Facebook view rates fell from 2018 to 2019, while Instagram's went up. This data should be considered when planning upcoming Travel campaigns.

Campaign	Vendor	Plays	VTR	VR_3_Seconds	VR_25_Percent	VR_50_Percent	VR_75_Percent
Fall_18_Travel	FB	45,186	22.54%	59.53%	49.36%	37.87%	36.28%
Fall_19_Travel	FB	289,768	1.82%	8.60%	6.82%	3.30%	2.29%
Fall_18_Travel	IG	310,092	0.56%	3.74%	2.98%	1.61%	1.13%
Fall_19_Travel	IG	33,271	0.89%	3.93%	3.28%	1.80%	1.24%

Inquiries and Applications in Geo-Targeted Areas

Another way to measure the success of the Travel Ad Campaign is to count how many inquiries and applications we have received from students in the geo-targeted areas who have an initial source date during campaign's run time. This data is below.

Date	Inquiry	Applicant
2017	1756	263
2018	2549	762
2019	2436	642

Performance:

There has been significant growth in inquiries and applications since Fall 2017. Although there has been a slight drop in inquiries (4.4%) from Fall 2018 to Fall 2019, we do not yet know if there will be the same drop in applications as these numbers are not yet final.

The tables below show how each state has performed

CT

State	Date	Inquiry	Applicant
Connecticut	2017	385	50
Connecticut	2018	495	110
Connecticut	2019	403	74

MA

State	Date	Inquiry	Applicant
Massachusetts	2017	955	124
Massachusetts	2018	1328	350
Massachusetts	2019	1282	307

NH

State	Date	Inquiry	Applicant
New Hampshire	2017	286	53
New Hampshire	2018	540	215
New Hampshire	2019	555	197

VT

State	Date	Inquiry	Applicant
Vermont	2017	128	NA
Vermont	2018	185	87
Vermont	2019	195	64

Performance:

We see consistent growth in the areas we targeted in Fall 2019 in NH and VT. We see a drop in MA and CT from last fall, but applications are likely to go up as the application period goes on.

Conclusions:

- The majority of ads are performing at benchmarks.
- The significant drop in CTR for Facebook digital display ads supports the decision for allocate less funding to this vendor and medium.
- I recommend we discuss the best way to evaluate the performance of video ads, particularly Facebook video. According to the report available of the Facebook Campaign Manager, there has been a significant drop in performance metrics.
- Ads are drawing traffic from targeted areas. We would like to see more interest from New Haven, New London, and Litchfield, CT.
- Again, in Fall 2019, we have seen growth in inquiries and applications since Fall 2017. Inquiries from targeted areas remain robust from Fall 2018. When the application cycle for Fall 2020 ends, we can better assess if there has been continued growth in applications.