



How To Select The “Right” Digital Advertising Vendor

If you are considering digital advertisement (e-Recruitment) in your clinical trial patient recruitment efforts, making sure you select the right digital partner can have an significant impact on your valuable digital media dollars.

If you are considering utilizing digital advertising (e-Recruitment) in your clinical trial patient recruitment efforts, it may be tempting to listen to your existing CRO or Patient Recruitment firm when they say „we can do that“. The reality is that digital advertising is a rapidly evolving and ever-changing field, and having a specialist (someone who lives and breathes digital advertising in healthcare) can often produce 2-4X the results with your valuable media dollars. Here are five factors you should consider when deciding whom will run your digital media spend:

1. Experience (both marketing & clinical)

While clinical trial experience is certainly a base requisite, you should also consider broader experience as an asset. The general healthcare marketing (or „commercial“) world is light years ahead of the clinical trial space when it comes to digital advertising and the challenges are not dissimilar; find a patient with a given condition, educate them on an available resource (clinical trial, doctor, clinic, procedure) and convince them to contact that resource for potential treatment.

2. Full (Digital) Media Capability

Digital advertising is more than just search and social. Patients interact with the internet in a multitude of ways, and there are viable, productive online advertising opportunities available through multiple outlets: search engines (Google, Yahoo, MSN/Bing), social sites (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn), hundreds of contextually-related websites & networks of websites, display advertising inventory, retargeting, video (YouTube) advertising, and much more. Beyond that, you may need capabilities in website & landing page creation, CRM integration and more. You need to find a vendor that has experience in all of these and can work with your existing budget to point you in the right direction.

3. Localization & Customization

Too often a vendor will create one generic campaign to be used across all of your investigator sites. Online marketing is highly flexible and customizable and ignoring this benefit is wasteful. Localizing a campaign to only display to patients within a defined geographic area, to make clear that there is an investigator site close to them, and to potentially highlight the specific investigator site (if OK), creates clear performance improvements. A comprehensive campaign may include 5 media campaigns X 20 investigator sites (100 different campaigns). Don't accept a vendor who simply creates 1-2 „national“ campaigns (that is the easy way out).

4. Comprehensive Downstream Tracking

To make good decisions about how well your marketing is working and to make educated decisions on where to allocate your media spend, you need solid tracking of media performance. While this includes online, it should also include the ability to track your offline media (e.g. print, TV, radio) efforts easily. Good tracking involves tracking of all phone calls and „form“ inquiries and is able to track them through to qualified (screened) referral, consented patient, and ultimately **to enrolled patient**. You should be able to view the data by investigator site, media source or both, quickly and in a format that allows for good media decisions.

5. Proven Ability To Drive Media Costs Down

Too often sponsors focus too much on a vendor’s fees. Agency fees and structures differ, but many utilize a % of media spend structure (often 10-20%). A *good* vendor can often reduce your media expenses by 40-60%, far outweighing their fees (or certainly any % differential to the next, lower quality agency). You get what you pay for. Ask prospective vendors to produce case studies showing cost savings produced.

While there are certainly other factors to consider, the above provides a good starting point.

MD Connect would be happy to show you how we address all these areas and can jump start your digital marketing campaigns.