

Online marketing: Going beyond the click with programmatic buying

By [Andre Steenekamp](#)

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The chances are if you're in marketing, you've heard of programmatic media buying, the latest digital advertising buzzword. What is less likely however, is that your agency has explained why exactly this tool works so well when used properly, and what exactly "using it properly" means.

Because of its ability to hone your target audience, pivot and adapt, all while increasing your digital conversion dramatically, programmatic media buying is fast gaining traction with South African media agencies. But how do you ensure that a move to this space remains cost effective and high performing?

Here are four reasons why programmatic buying allows you to go beyond the click-driving clichés and why it may be time to investigate this results-focused platform to drive your next digital marketing campaign:

The technology and tools are already here

Reporting, campaign management and the ability to adapt are just some of the appealing features of programmatic buying, as well as the fact that the technology and tools around the platform continue to advance. Follow the digital journey and success of your campaign through tools such as Google Tag Manager, which allows you to go "beyond-the-click" and gain valuable insights into your digital spend. Programmatic buying allows users to collect important data along this path, which can then be used to adjust and target your online campaign more effectively as you move forward.



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Programmatic buying is highly results driven

Quality deliverables are highly sought after, and understandably so as marketing budgets come under increasing pressure. If you want to see the bang for your buck, then programmatic buying is absolutely for you; provided of course that your agency has the right tools set up and a dedicated campaign manager on your account.

Programmatic buying is a living, breathing, highly adaptable system

Optimise, optimise, optimise. There is nothing worse than a stagnant campaign with no room to pivot against unexpected results or challenges. With programmatic buying you can delve deeply into the results and data from your campaign, allowing your brand to adapt, improve and respond to customer needs or trends.

With programmatic buying you can start right

Programmatic buying allows for a proactive and insightful start to your online marketing campaign through unique audience building tools and network data. By drilling down to your targeted audience you can save time and money and ensure you achieve your campaign objectives from the get go.

Programmatic buying necessitates a commitment and slight appetite for risk but the results are well worth it! But before you set out on this journey, make sure you are supported by the right agency.

Here are some key questions you should ask first:

What ad exchanges form part of your programmatic network?

Not all programmatic networks are created equal. Just because there is a lot of inventory doesn't mean it's good – check with your agency that the programmatic network they use has quality local and highly trafficked global ad exchanges.

What filters are they applying?

Just because you are getting a lot of clicks doesn't mean you are getting good clicks. Make sure your agency is applying the correct filters to ensure you get quality traffic rather than high volumes only. At the most basic ensuring your geographic filters are done correctly is already a good start. For example, If you are running a national campaign for a local product targeting buyers in Gauteng, you don't want the empty views and clicks of South Africans living in Wimbledon.

Will they have a dedicated campaign manager to consistently assess outcomes and adapt campaign accordingly?

Programmatic campaigns work best when there is a dedicated, knowledgeable resource optimising daily, if not throughout the day. Just because the software is excellent doesn't mean it doesn't need someone who knows what they're doing to ensure you are getting the best performance out of your media. This is not a case of switching it on and leaving it to run. Constant insight and optimisation is required.

Make sure you know the costs involved – all of them

There is nothing worse than being slapped with a media bill that exceeds your budget. This often happens with programmatic buying as agencies aren't upfront with clients with many of the costs related to outsourcing. Ask your agency to give you a rundown of costs and if they have their own seat on the network or are they working through a partner?

Are they reporting beyond the click?

This is incredibly important. Clients (and hopefully agencies!) are starting to realise that clicks are not the only metric that you should be measuring campaigns by. In-depth reporting requires the set-up of clear goals and conversions, and results can only be measured by correctly tagging your campaign. In addition, full tagging integration across multiple platforms, from emailers to social media, is highly recommended for optimal campaign success and holistic insights. Only then will you be able to see how people interact with your campaigns, and whether you are getting conversions. Insights are more valuable than just clicks!

What time frames are you being promised?

Programmatic buying is not a quick win – clients need to commit to the long term. It takes at least two to three weeks before the system can start optimising, and three months plus to build out remarketing lists. If you want to ensure a good campaign run that delivers stellar results – all possible when programmatic campaigns are allowed to mature and develop in correct timeframes.

With the right agency, just the slightest appetite for risk and a desire to see beyond the clicks, programmatic media buying will revolutionise your online marketing campaigns, with the results to prove it.

ABOUT ANDRE STEENEKAMP

As CEO of 25AM, Andre Steenekamp leads the company's expansion in South Africa's fast-growing digital marketing and advertising space. His 25-year career has seen him work in a range of sales, marketing and management positions for leading traditional and digital publishers and agencies. Steenekamp was appointed to his current role following the acquisition of a 50%-stake in Acceleration Media by Times Media Limited.

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