

Published: April 16, 2007
Bridge the Advertiser vs. Publisher Gap



By [Choon Choi](#)
[More by this Author](#)
[Contact Author](#)



Jumpstart Automotive Media's strategy director examines why some in-market opportunities are being overlooked.

So it's April 2007, and we're all watching a steady increase of auto advertising dollars flow into the interactive space. This new money has created an imbalance, as auto advertisers increase budgets but continue spending primarily on the top five portals and sites. As a result, rates are up and inventory is tight (if not already sold out for the year).

Yet, this creates an opportunity for advertisers to be served -- and served well -- by the next tier of automotive publishers. Which begs the question, how can the auto industry work with these publishers and get the same, or better, benefits from their ad exposure as they would on the top-tier sites? Let's look at the challenges each side faces, and how they can be overcome.

Challenge for automotive publishers

For many auto publishers, the first challenge is providing the reach that advertisers are looking for. Growing traffic organically is a challenge, and buying it through search and other marketing efforts is expensive. Through persistence, publishers may receive a buy here or there, but they may find it extremely challenging to be a persistent presence on the OEM radar.

Another concern is that selling inventory can be really expensive. Having the resources to develop and manage a sales team to call on the brands, an account management team to handle each relationship and an ad ops team to traffic / optimize all of the campaigns is a heavy burden for any publisher without very deep pockets.

Additionally, it takes a tremendous amount of industry expertise and experience to effectively sell to and manage these relationships. From a sales standpoint, it takes deep, well-established partnerships and an understanding of each advertiser's needs to be successful. There are relationships to cultivate at every level (media directors, account supervisors, buyers, planners, creative directors, et cetera). Not to mention developing relationships at the client level. And all this expectation management can take the focus away from the essential functions of business on both sides of the fence.

The challenge for advertisers

The marketplace is fragmented. Given the sheer number of sites to choose from and the amount of work agencies are all facing today, it makes sense that they prefer to spend more budget with the top 5 to 10 sites versus the top 25.

Finding a site with the right balance of offerings for an advertiser can be a challenge. While some other automotive sites have captured valuable in-market audiences, they are not ready for advertising due to poor site design, inadequate content, missing proper ad flow or quite simply, advertisers do not know who they are. This makes it difficult for advertisers to place ad budget with any confidence - they are missing this element of trust.

Additionally, there are concerns about performance. Since online advertising is so much more measurable than traditional media, interactive teams in each agency are under increased scrutiny and have higher expectations to perform. Because of this, advertisers are hesitant to allocate budget without a high level of confidence that campaigns will actually run, meet performance goals, and deliver ROI.

How to bridge the gap

The right media partner can help publishers mitigate lack of reach by aggregating this valuable audience with other desirable sites to present to advertisers. This helps command higher CPMs for publishers than they would normally be able to attain as a stand alone site. This strategy also gives advertisers the option of managing only one media relationship (as opposed to multiple sites), which also offers increased transparency into the sites' performance.

On the publisher side, the right media partner provides the expertise needed to optimize their sites for ad placements, guiding necessary changes to site design, content and ad flow to help make their site a must buy. With this model, publishers also do not have to risk allocating resources to build out teams to manage sales, account management and ad operations. This is great for advertisers, as they are able to work with a trusted partner that understands their needs and has the experience to execute. As a result, advertisers know they are reaching a quality in-market audience that will perform.

Choon Choi is director of strategy & business development at [Jumpstart Automotive Media](#). [Read full bio](#).