

Will it be a holly jolly Christmas for your brand?

 By [Irina Herf](#)

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It's that time of the year: When marketers are scrambling to get their Christmas season media plans finalised when big budgets are being spent on television advertising and everyone (CMOs in particular) just hopes it will bring in the sales. When so much time and effort is being spent on choosing the product mix and tweaking the TV spots in the hope that it will bring in the desired results. When John Lewis is apparently paying Elton John £5m to appear in their Christmas ad while Marks & Spencer hires boy band Take That for theirs....



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But is anyone looking at the results of last year's Christmas advertising before spending a fortune again this year? How much sales did last year's TV ads generate? Which channels worked and which didn't? What time of the day delivered the best results? The answer is most likely 'no' - because brands in South Africa are not using attribution software to track and optimise their TV advertising yet.



Top festive season ads 2017

Sheila McGillivray 27 Dec 2017



The statistics are somewhat sillier than the silly season itself. Over the last four years, South African brands spent on average 33% more on TV advertising during November and December than in the beginning of the year – without being able to accurately attribute sales generated by these increased budgets.

Tracking technology

Brands should employ tracking technology to track and optimise the performance of their campaigns to make sure they know exactly which creative, which channels, and which days and day parts are performing the best for them and delivering the required results.

By tracking and attributing their television advertising, brands will be able to plan an even better campaign next year and motivate for the required budget based on actual results. Or, if they start advertising early this year, they can even adapt their media plans month by month until December.

However, brands should not confuse exactly what performance they should be tracking.

In South Africa, brands are used to tracking the performance of their campaigns through general post-campaign analysis based on reach, frequency, GRP, etc. This means they track the performance of the media used. At DCMN, we refer to the client's performance when we track and optimise campaigns, not the media's performance. So we track how many website visits, bookings, sales, registrations or downloads the brand received as a direct result of their offline (TV and radio) advertising. Media performance is still crucial to ensure broad brand awareness but the tracking that we do through our TV attribution software is what shows the real impact of the ads on the client's business.

Establishing brand effectiveness and brand loyalty

Locally and internationally there is usually a lot of focus on creating truly memorable ads around Christmas. And although a well-thought-out ad that really touches the audience will go a long way in establishing brand awareness and even brand loyalty, an ad cannot be judged only on its 'feel good factor' – it needs to perform. And it's important for brands to be able to measure that performance.

Brands should apply the same reasoning to their Black Friday advertising and not miss the opportunity to see exactly what percentage of their sales can be attributed to offline advertising.



SA brands start the countdown to Black Friday 2018

Kali Mbahloli, GfK – An NIQ Company 24 Oct 2018



ABOUT IRINA HERF

Irina Herf is the General Manager of DCMN South Africa. When the office opened in 2017, she brought 15 years' experience in media agencies (independent and performance driven) as well as in a fashion start-up. She particularly enjoys working with e-commerce clients and brings marketing knowledge from across Europe as well as other markets to South Africa.

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