MEDIA IMPACT REPORT

Proving Success in Women's Sports

Also in this issue:

Google Marketing Live Recap: The AI Future Is Upon Us

The Impact of AI on the Agency World: Transforming Digital Media Campaigns

Proving Success in Women's Sports–A Case Study

By *Stephanie Junge-Filipek,* Group Director, Media Planning

Women's sports is not only picking up more airtime and garnering more attention, but placements in NCAA Women's basketball and WNBA Draft programming are fueling performance across Rain the Growth Agency's clients' campaigns. Beyond the increase in viewership in such programming year-on-year, these viewers are taking meaningful action after ad exposure. An overwhelming 80% of dollars spent against this inventory in 2024 contributed to better conversion volume and efficiency than like media during the same time period. This is a strong proof point as the women's sports wave gains momentum and sustains it.

Another intriguing finding was that this inventory yielded even lower cost per metrics in the second airing of a brand's ad within the same program. Our hypothesis is that incremental viewers attained through such airings were more likely to take action when exposed to the brand's ad a second time as it could have been the first and second exposure for that viewer within the entire ad campaign. Regardless of the reason, the case can convincingly be made for surrounding women's sports inventory with more than one ad exposure.

Rain the Growth Agency, together with its client partners, are proving that everyone can win when advertisers lean into women's sports.

Better cost per conversion than like media 🟢

Better conversions per thousand impressions than like media 🟡

On par or sub-par conversions per thousand impressions than like media ⚪

Game/Program Details	Network	Performance
Big Ten Women CBB Champ Iowa vs Nebraska	CBS	🟡
NCAA March Madness Special Iowa vs South Carolina	abc	🟢
NCAA March Madness Special Iowa vs South Carolina	abc	🟢
WNBA Draft	ESPN	🟢
First Round Game Green Bay vs. Tennessee	ESPN	⚪
First Round Game | Alabama vs Florida (2 spots)	ESPN 2	🟢
Second Round Game | Middle Tennessee//LSU (2 spots)	ESPN on abc	🟢
NCAA Women's March Madness | 52 spots throughout Tournament	DIRECTV	🟡
Second Round Games | NC State vs Tennessee, UConn vs Syracuse, Iowa vs West Virginia	ESPN	🟢
Sweet 16 | Iowa vs Colorado	abc	🟡
WNBA Draft	ESPN	🟢

Google Marketing Live Recap: The AI Future Is Upon Us

*By [David Gelt,](#) **Director, Paid Search & YouTube***

At the end of Google's annual Google Marketing Live (GML) event on May 21, there was one very clear takeaway: AI-powered advertising tools are here, and they're here to stay.

After demonstrating the power of Google's AI infrastructure with a glimpse into Project Astra, Google's vision for an AI assistant, Google SVP & Chief Business Officer Philipp Schindler went on to describe Google's rollout of this technology across both the user experience and the advertising tools.

AI Overviews

One of the key ways Google is implementing AI is through overviews as a feature of the Search Engine Results Pages (SERP). Touting the statistic that Google searches of five or more words grew 1.5x faster than shorter searches, Schindler described AI Overviews as an opportunity for Google to provide tailored answers to its users, leading to better information for the user with the users who continue to click through to other sites being higher quality users and spending more time on the site.

While it is still unclear how advertising will factor into these AI overviews, for the moment it may not matter. Despite this feature being rolled out more broadly across the U.S. starting in mid-May, Google has already begun rolling back this feature due to a significant number of incorrect responses being generated.

Even with the hiccups, this is still a feature to track closely. As the tool improves and is rolled back out to users, there will likely be substantial changes to how search advertisers capture traffic. With more users finding the answers they need via the SERP, click-throughs will drop and cost per click will likely increase, emphasizing the focus on driving the highest quality traffic and ensuring a smooth on-site experience to maximize performance.

Google's "Power Pair"

Next up on the list are two of Google's products already live and being leveraged by many advertisers globally: Broad Match and Performance Max.

It's easy to think of Broad Match and get a shiver down your spine with memories of poor performance and irrelevant traffic, but AI-powered Broad Match has improved substantially. Leveraging signals based not only on keywords, but also on the landing page, time of day, user location and more, Broad Match has become a tactic worth testing again. While no test should be run blindly, for brands who are maximizing their current search campaigns, Broad Match can be a significant growth driver, capturing incremental conversions as well as providing learnings to expand keyword lists for Exact and Phrase Match. At Rain, we've tested Broad Match since the rollout of AI and have seen it perform significantly better than in years past, and it will be something we continue to leverage where it makes sense for our clients.

Performance Max has been a hot topic for multiple years now as well, with advertisers asking questions centered around visibility and control of these campaigns. To start to quell these concerns, Google has announced a series of reporting enhancements. This began with more granular placement reporting over the last few months, and at GML Google announced that this improved visibility is now

coming through asset-level reporting as well. This asset-level reporting will be instrumental to advertisers to help understand which assets are performing best, improving the ability to cater messaging to each brand's unique audience. This tool will become increasingly useful as well with the rollout of...

AI-Powered Creative Tools

Creative is an immensely important piece of any brand's marketing strategy, but with the wide variety of available placements, not only on Google but across the media landscape, it can be expensive and time consuming for brands to develop enough creative to meet all their needs.

To help ease this pain, Google has begun rolling out AI-powered creative tools, allowing brands to share their brand guidelines, provide examples, and drive the tool to develop large amounts of creative rapidly. Not only can teams develop brand creative, but e-commerce advertisers will be able to take their own products and place them in AI-generated settings to maximize engagement. To take it a step further, not only can these images be used in Performance Max or Demand Generation campaigns

easily, but brands are free to use them in any other marketing efforts as they see fit.

Profit-Margin Based Bidding

Another major tool coming out of GML was the addition of profit-based bid strategies. An enhancement to the AI-powered Smart Bidding solution that Google has already offered, advertisers are now able to enter data around the margins of their products, allowing brands to spend their dollars as wisely as possible. Smart Bidding has been a powerful tool that we at Rain have been leveraging across our search campaigns for years. Adding this capability to the mix allows for additional levers, and provides the ability to seamlessly switch from a focus on revenue to a focus on product, or vice versa, with a click of the mouse.

Google has made it very clear that AI tools are going to be a key tool for advertisers to make the most of their marketing programs. While these tools are not all perfect today, the world of AI is changing fast, and the team at Rain is focused on being on the cutting edge to ensure that our clients are able to reap the full benefits of these tools. All in all, one thing is clear, the AI future is here. Are you ready?
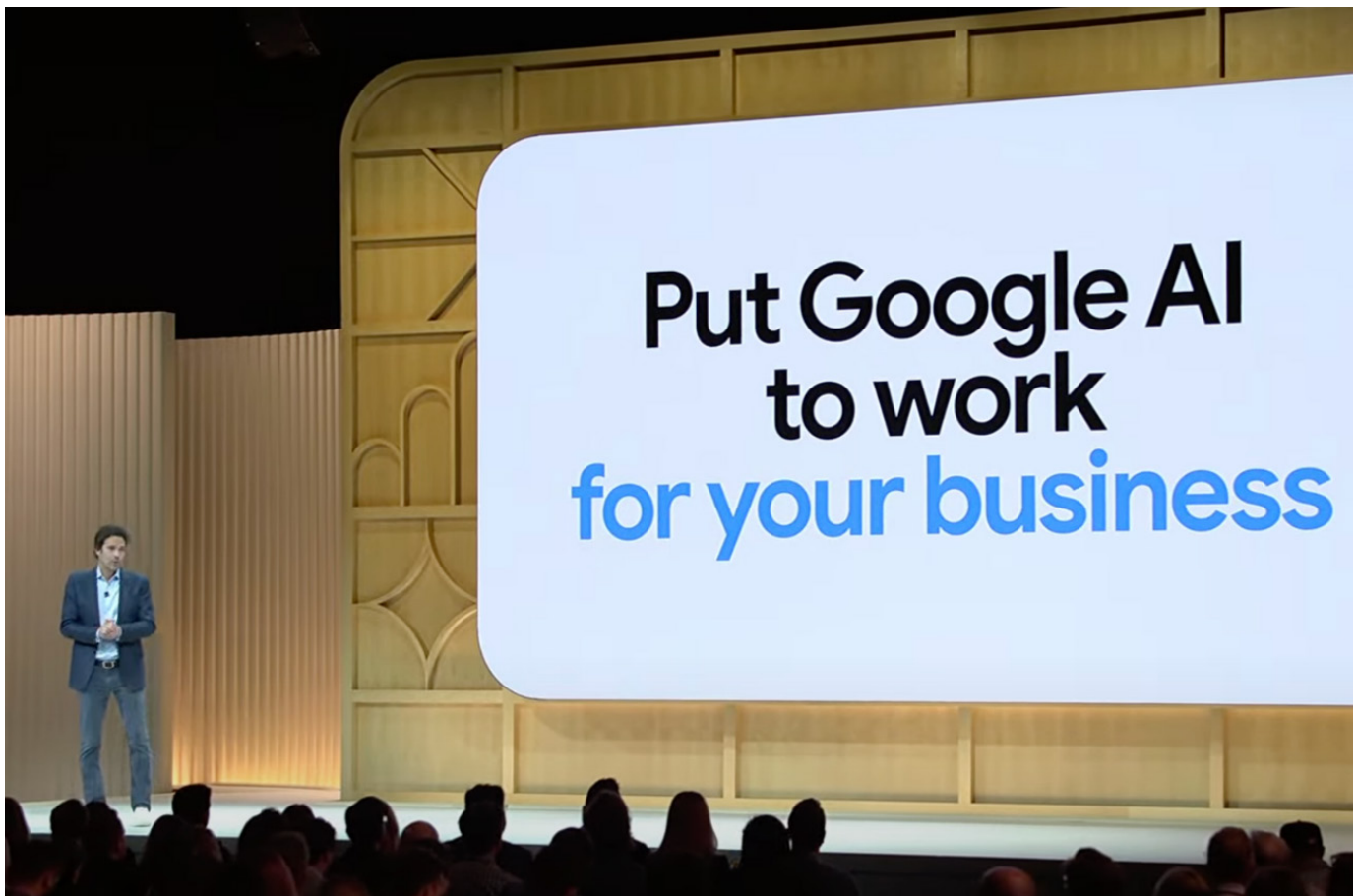
The Impact of AI on the Agency World: Transforming Digital Media Campaigns

By *Andi Parel,* **Associate Director, Digital Media**

Artificial intelligence is not only transforming the digital media landscape. It's reshaping how agencies create, manage, and optimize campaigns for their clients, while allowing for new levels of efficiency, personalization, and insight.

Agencies can now produce content faster and more efficiently. With tools like Copy.ai and Jasper, they can quickly generate large volumes of copy, for ads, social media posts and even blogs. Other platforms such as Canva and Adobe Spark provide templates and suggestions to help even those with minimal design skills create professional looking content. These tools also analyze the design trends to ensure the content is appealing and up to date.

With analytics at the forefront of direction for digital media campaigns, AI is helping agencies make more strategic decisions, using its forecasts on performance and trends to adjust strategies and stay ahead of competition. Google Analytics and HubSpot delve deep into user behavior and engagement metrics, helping agencies better understand their audiences.

Of course, media buying is being greatly impacted by AI, because it can automate the buying and selling of ad inventory in real-time, instantly optimizing bids and placements. The Trade Desk, for example, can utilize AI for effective programmatic buying while additional tools can continuously analyze campaign performance across different channels and adjust budget allocations to ensure optimal spending and impact.

As you can see, there are various ways AI is changing the way the digital economy operates. Several companies outside of agencies are getting ahead of this and have implemented tools to enhance their products, services, and operations.

- Google utilizes AI across its suite of products including Google Search, Google Ads, and Google Assistant.
- Amazon uses AI in its e-commerce platform to provide personalized product recommendations.
- Facebook uses AI for content moderation, image recognition and targeted advertising including Instagram and WhatsApp.
- Tesla utilizes AI in its autonomous driving technology, which powers full-self driving and autopilot.
- Salesforce incorporates AI into its CRM platform that provides insights and predicts consumer behavior.

AI's Impact on Digital Media

| Digital Component	Impact	
Targeting	AI will refine audience targeting based on user data and behavior	Efficiency
Ad Placement & Bidding	It will optimize where and when ads are displayed to maximize ROI	
Content Creation	AI can generate and personalize ad content for different audiences	
Ad Optimization	It will test and optimize ad creatives for better performance	
Campaign Management	AI will automate and optimize campaign management tasks	
Analytics	It will predict trends and outcomes to guide strategic decisions	Effectiveness
Fraud Detection	AI will detect and prevent ad fraud more effectively	
Audience Insights	It will provide deeper insights into audience behavior and preferences. AI will improve understanding of how different marketing channels contribute to conversions	
Attribution Modeling	AI will improve understanding of how different marketing channels contribute to conversions	
Performance Marketing	It will provide real-time performance monitoring and optimization	Personalization

To stay relevant in this fast-paced and ever-evolving world, companies must first understand AI's potential. This entails investing in education and training programs to equip employees with the knowledge and skills to effectively leverage AI technologies. By fostering a culture of continuous learning and innovation, companies can empower their workforce to explore AI's capabilities and identify opportunities for its application across various business functions. Additionally, staying informed about the latest trends and advancements through industry research and networking can help companies stay ahead of the curve and remain competitive in this increasingly AI-driven landscape. Ultimately, embracing AI's potential and integrating it strategically into business operations will be key to staying relevant and thriving in the digital age.
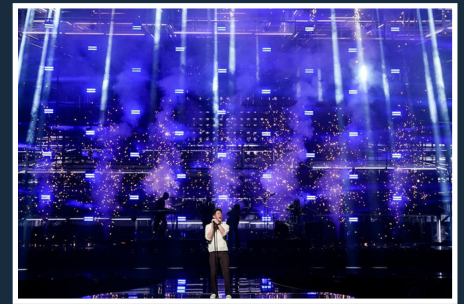
/QUICK HITS
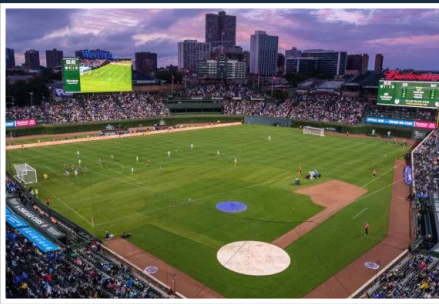
Chicago Red Stars Set NWSL Attendance Record At Wrigley Field
[CBS Sports]

Netflix Goes Big At Cannes With Help From Bridgerton And Squid Game
[AdWeek]

Why TV's Annual Upfront Sales Might Seem Like Groundhog Day
[The Wall Street Journal]

Need More Guidance?

Steve Miller
Client Development Director
steve.miller@rainforgrowth.com

Robin Cohen
EVP, Integrated Media Investment & Planning
robin.cohen@rainforgrowth.com

For more news and insights visit: *https://www.rainforgrowth.com/insights-updates/*