

The JICMAIL Attention Manifesto

An industry roundtable discussion
of the planning implications of
The Time We Spend With Mail.

NOVEMBER 2023

**JIC
MAIL**

Mail Media Metrics

The JICMAIL Attention Manifesto

Following the release of JICMAIL's The Time We Spend With Mail attention study in Spring 2023, a roundtable of industry experts was convened in September in conjunction with the DMA UK to discuss the implications of the report. The discussion focused on the impact of attention based planning not only on the mail channel specifically, but also on the increasingly multi-disciplinary tasks of media planning and measurement more broadly.

The roundtable featured attendees from Boots, Virgin Media O2, Havas, Join The Dots, MBASstack, Marketreach, Oliver, PHD Media, VCCP, VMLY&R and BJ&A. The resulting conversation revealed a handful of vital considerations for attention based planning, namely:

Download the full The Time We Spend with Mail report



www.jicmail.org.uk/data/attention-the-time-we-spend-with-mail/

1. Attracting consumer attention is not an end in itself. However, for attention to be established as a marketing metric of value, it needs to be proven that it is **linked to effective outcomes**.
2. We are at the **early stages of understanding how attention works**, but the issue brings into focus some fundamental principles related to consumer-centric planning for effective outcomes.
3. When planning across the entire full-effect customer journey, factor attention thinking into your planning as well as your **evaluation frameworks**.
4. Marketers must consider what type of attention they are planning for: active, passive, solus, contextual, emotional, in-home, out-of-home... attention planning covers a broad spectrum, and marketers must at least **ensure that their organisation has a shared and unified understanding of what attention means** to their business and how it links to business outcomes.
5. Establishing the causal relationship between attention and business outcomes should be established through a program of test and learn. Attention based hypotheses must sit at the heart of **attention based planning and testing**.

The subsequent discussion focused on five key questions that sought to explore how attention impacted marketing models and objectives. These questions are important for all planners and marketers, but mail practitioners in particular should consider how they can harness these considerations to amplify the effectiveness of Direct Mail and Door Drops:

1. What is the right context in the home to deliver your message?
2. Where in the customer journey can you exploit the attention rub effects of high attention channels?
3. How can you fully leverage the power of solus attention?
4. Where does attention fit in your full effect measurement framework?
5. What are the key test and learn hypotheses for attention based planning?

1	Roundtable Theme	Key Implications	Roundtable Comments
	<p>What is the right context in the home to deliver your message?</p>	<p>1. Contextual targeting most commonly works by placing ads in relevant environments (e.g. food ads in the kitchen) but consider that non-endemic brands can also stand out by appearing in more incongruous environments. While for habitual purchases it might be good to be where your audience expects you to be, for high consideration purchases you might be able to cut through by doing the opposite.</p>	<p>Stefan Schoombee, Havas</p> <p>“Targeting can’t be algorithmically driven across all channels. That’s where context as a targeting mechanism is so useful.”</p>
<p>2. Consider where attention is likely to be passive and where it will be active. “Lean forward” scenarios like the kitchen table or desk in the home office, might prompt more active attention and therefore be more useful for driving an immediate response. “Lean back” scenarios like the living room may result in more passive attention. For mail however, where the ad and the medium are one and the same, active attention is likely to be high.</p>		<p>James Devon, MBASStack</p> <p>“Mail has the advantage of being able to consume all of a consumer’s finite attention at once.”</p>	
<p>3. Mood is an important contextual consideration and can vary by location in the home. In most instances, you probably don’t want your audience to be feeling stressed or over-whelmed when consuming your ad content. Many brands arguably have more contextual insight than ever via their first party data, and it should be harnessed to maximise context based planning.</p>		<p>Ellie Gauci, VCCP</p> <p>“Brands are getting less able to read the room – it’s all about sending more emails and more messages. They need to step back and assess the context that their customers are in.”</p>	

2	Roundtable Theme	Key Implications	Roundtable Comments
	<p>Where in the customer journey can you exploit the attention rub effect of high attention channels?</p>	<p>1. Attention to a print message like mail, can create attributable attention to owned assets like physical stores. The usage of QR codes to drive in store appointments and foot fall is one such example.</p>	<p>Imogen Wood, Boots</p> <p>“QR codes have made a real resurgence. We find that they’ve had lot of traction with our customers, particularly at driving people in store.”</p>
<p>2. Paid and owned channels do not operate independently. There is a synergistic effect that works across all channels and which drive impact throughout the customer lifecycle (such as the 5.5 minutes of website attention driven by mail on average for example). It is crucial to understand the role different channels play in acquiring new customers and engaging existing ones.</p>		<p>Nathalie Mason, Oliver</p> <p>“If we’re trying to take advantage of the attention rub effects, let’s give our mail a really clear set of goals and objectives related to where it sits in the customer journey”</p>	
<p>3. A fully joined up approach to measurement is required across all channels to capture these synergistic effects across the customer lifecycle, and to paint the full picture of effectiveness (and full credit) for different pieces of the media jigsaw. Planning your measurement approach up front and ensuring the right building blocks and right data points are in place, is essential for capturing all of these effects.</p>		<p>Sevil Crespo, VMLY&R</p> <p>“All of your attribution models have an impact on your marketing plans, but for you to understand the value of attention you need the right measurement in place up front to understand its impact.”</p>	

3

Roundtable Theme

Key Implications

Roundtable Comments

How can you fully leverage the power of solus attention?

1. Solus attention is vital in a world where media overload is high. Advertising has reached saturation point across most mainstream channels, and audiences are increasingly adept at tuning out of them. To find a platform that offers direct undivided attention is a vital consideration for planners.

Mark Cross, JICMAIL

“The industry all too often ignores considerations of effective frequency levels. Attention based planning potentially raises the importance of this vital consideration in the planning agenda again.”

2. Solus attention provides an opportunity to tell an advertiser’s story in a more engaging, compelling and in-depth way. Undivided attention actually creates a moment of positive friction between the target audience and the ad messaging, rather than passive or unconsciously consumed media.

James Devon, MBASStack

“With solus attention you have the opportunity to tell your entire pitch story. If a consumer is going to act on it, it’s likely they are pretty committed to whatever action they’re going to take”

3. Planners must consider the high effort vs reward dynamics when planning for solus attention. If you’re asking a consumer for their undivided attention then the reward must be worth it for them. Consider the value exchange in terms of consumer benefit, utility and emotional connection to your brand and ad messaging.

Sevil Crespo, VMLY&R

“The most important thing is the value exchange. What are we giving the customer in exchange for their time?”

4	Roundtable Theme	Key Implications	Roundtable Comments
	<p>Where does attention fit in your full effect measurement framework?</p>	<p>1. While attention can be traded on, particularly in the digital world, planners should be wary of attention scores being hard baked into planning conversations. Anything hard baked simply becomes a hygiene factor that everyone then forgets about. Attention metrics need to be made available at the planning stage, and from there marketers can decide how important they are depending on campaign objectives.</p>	<p>Brian Jacobs:</p> <p>“Attention shouldn’t be hard baked into trading conversations because then you are just going to forget about it. But it is a key planning issue that needs to be discussed.”</p>
<p>2. Many planners are still too focused on acquiring clicks and impressions, while ignoring the metrics that really matter for good planning, and also ignoring the metrics that are going to communicate the value of marketing in the boardroom. Lifetime value is a key metric in this regard, and proving the link between attention and customer lifetime value will elevate the importance of attention planning accordingly.</p>		<p>Ben Briggs, Join The Dots</p> <p>“Lifetime Value is making a comeback. It’s much more than measuring what happens at the first click. For charities for example, it’s about what donors do after the first donation, second donation etc.”</p>	
<p>3. Consider where attention fits into your measurement frameworks and be clear if, why and how it matters for your business. Planners must decide whether they need to dynamically prove the link between attention and outcomes for every campaign, or simply prove the relationship on an annual / ad-hoc basis, and whether this process holds weight in the boardroom when communicating the value of marketing.</p>		<p>Nathalie Mason, Oliver</p> <p>“Measurement frameworks are great, but not if they’re not being used for planning. If we know attention is important for this piece of activity, it creates accountability.”</p>	

5

Roundtable Theme	Key Implications	Roundtable Comments
<p>What are the key test and learn hypotheses for attention based planning?</p>	<p>1. Attention levels the playing field between different media channels and enables planners to talk in a common language when making comparisons in their potential media plans. However, the journey doesn't end with attention, but rather it is the full-effect journey from campaign inputs to campaign outcomes that are more important. Test and learn to unpick how attention fits into this full-effect journey.</p>	<p>Alistair Duvoisin, PHD "Attention is one metric that is agnostic of everything, whether that be audience or creative."</p>
	<p>2. Do you want to grab consumer attention all in one hit, or do you want to build it cumulatively over time? Increased calls to action result in higher interaction rates with mail for example, and each of those interaction opportunities builds attention. Understanding what the causal link is between attention and effectiveness will be essential for deciding which route you want to go down.</p>	<p>Sophie Grender, Marketreach "Get people to spend more time with your mail and see what the outcomes are. And in particular, see what the brand outcomes are."</p>
	<p>3. There are some industry sectors with longer lead times (higher consideration purchases like cars for example) that necessitate consumers placing pre-orders, but that still require ongoing customer engagement efforts until the order is fulfilled. Where high attention channels like mail are crucial for filling in the customer experience gaps while consumers wait for their orders to appear, testing and learning what messages resonate in these types of situation is vital.</p>	<p>Sevil Crespo, VMLY&R "For pre-orders, it's a long time to keep consumers engaged without a sensory experience. Attention-high platforms can help create emotional engagement in these instances."</p>

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5 considerations for attention based planning

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5 questions for all marketers and mail practitioners

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