

How well does your media partner protect your advertising investment?

Whether you're spending hundreds, thousands or millions of dollars on campaigns to engage and activate buyers, integrity and trust matter. Especially today, when consumers use multiple touch points, be sure your partner delivers quality assurance and accountability across media channels.

Here is a valuable checklist to help in your evaluation:

TOP 10 *Partner of integrity checklist*

- Expertise: Reputation as a Leader
- Data Mastery
- Quality Assurance in Print
- Quality Assurance in Digital
- Quality Assurance in Coupon Promotions
- Value/Campaign Optimization
- Viewability
- Fraud Protection
- Transparency
- Third Party Credentials



#1: Expertise: Reputation as a leader

Why compromise or settle? You have too much at stake. Where you lack expertise, you need a promotional media partner who excels and will bring valuable insights and assets to the party, consistently. Look for proven performance. The media and consumer landscape are constantly changing. Make sure your “trustworthy,” established counterpart is always evolving and innovating to improve your relevancy and ROI.

1

How does Valassis perform?



Expertise: Reputation as a leader

- A leader in intelligent media delivery
- 58,000+ national and local clients
- Trust us to place close to 1 billion print ads per week plus 500 million online ads per month
- Over 40 years of effective consumer activation

*Valassis Intelligent Media Delivery Network
ensures quality across media channels so your money is well spent.*

#2: Data Mastery

“2016: The Year of Mobile Mastery”¹ is a news headline that may have made your heart skip a beat. Mobile data combined with all the other data you’re trying to grasp and apply can be mind blowing. You definitely need to talk to your media partner about their data capabilities. As the article stated, “The smartphone literally is a location-based data center and it is slowly but surely giving marketers the ability to address people, not devices.” To engage today’s value-seeking consumers, your partners should be able to help you leverage shopper, geographic and retail information coming in from online and offline sources. Consider their data analytics prowess, too, to maximize the results of your promotional investment.

2

How does Valassis perform?



Data Mastery

- Able to select and synthesize data that matters for activation including offline and online, mobile-first data
- Leverage client data + Valassis proprietary data + syndicated data
- Predict performance with 90% confidence level (newspaper and shared mail) based on over 35,000 marketing events analyzed²

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Source: ¹Programmaticmind.com, Issue 10, March 2016; ²Valassis Client Results Database, 2016

#3: Quality Assurance in Print

If awareness and activation are your primary goals, print circulation numbers don't tell the whole story. What is the track record for the media that your partner is proposing; i.e. readership and response? How broad or specific is the targeting, whether newspaper or direct mail? You want to ensure that your ads appear where likely buyers are actually looking, and minimize wasted coverage. Also, as consumer demand for relevancy grows, local versioning gets more important and complicated, so accuracy is crucial. Don't assume, rather, ask about executional excellence.



3 How does Valassis perform?



Quality Assurance in Print

- Shared Mail: 80% of households read our shared mail; 42% made a purchase as a result³
- Authentic Reach:
 - FSI: Market list provides the assurance of more audited publications and less duplication
 - Mail: The only residential mailing of all USPS[®] addresses updated and mailed weekly

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Sources: ³TNS Custom Studies, 2015

#4: Quality Assurance in Digital

“To no one’s surprise, ad blocking, fraud, viewability and transparency issues took center stage” at this year’s Advertising Age Digital Conference.⁴

Heavy topics, but getting rid of the unknowns will provide peace of mind.

Ask your digital media partner direct questions. What are their viewability rankings with Integral Ad Science or DoubleVerify?

What’s the quality of their ad inventory? How reliable is their email database? Get solid answers and commitments.



4 How does Valassis perform?



Quality Assurance in Digital

- Inaugural member of Integral Ad Science’s (IAS) Certified Viewability Partner Program
- Viewability ranks higher than the industry average for three quarters and counting;⁵ more mileage for the ad
- Email database is 100% opted in and rigorously maintained to high data-hygiene standards

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Sources: ⁴Mediapost.com, April 8, 2016; ⁵IAS 2015

#5: Quality Assurance in Coupon Promotions

Did you know that 90% of consumers report that they use coupons?⁶

While there are 116.3 million print coupon users, the digital coupon user base has grown 27% since 2012 to 68.4 million users.⁶ Needless to say, you need to partner with an expert in offline and online coupon promotions to ensure that each part of the process – from distribution, to audit and settlement, to final analysis – is all in capable hands. Appropriate controls and transparency are a must.



5 How does Valassis perform?



Quality Assurance in Coupon Promotions

- NCH Marketing Services, Inc. provides integrated coupon audit, settlement and analysis services for paper and paperless coupons
- Comprehensive, annual, independent audits of all coupon facilities cover data collection to payment controls

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Source: ⁶2016 Valassis Coupon Intelligence Report

#6: Value/Campaign Optimization

Ultimately, you want your partner to help you drive a positive return-on-investment, right? The C-Level 2016 Marketing Study conducted by Black Ink ROI revealed marketers' biggest concerns are marketing technology and analytics: 79% of those polled want to advance their customer-centricity; 70% say brand relevancy. They admit this "will require dramatic improvement in their companies' marketing technology infrastructure and omnichannel capabilities."⁷ It's a data story emphasizing the need for real-time intelligence. What has your media partner done lately to solve these major needs?

6 How does Valassis perform?



Value/Campaign Optimization

- Valassis Apio™ is an ingenious capability that connects offline and online, mobile-first data – driving cross-channel campaign optimization
- It delivers precision, relevance and scale

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Source: ⁷Direct Marketing News, March 7, 2016

#7: Fraud protection

As mentioned, fraud is a big concern in the digital world. Global advertisers will lose \$6.3 billion⁸ to bots – non-human traffic capable of consuming digital content including text, video images, audio and more. Ads go unseen and performance data gets skewed. No site/network can be 100% free of fraud, but fraud levels are being monitored by the IAS and others. It's an industry-wide issue. Partner with the best companies to combat it. Fraud is also extremely costly in sweepstakes and instant-win games. Be sure to work with a reputable promotion security services provider to ensure legal compliance and proper execution.

7

How does Valassis perform?



Fraud protection

- Digital: We control fraud better than Networks and Exchanges and are closer to delivering the integrity of a Publisher Direct site,⁹ but at a better value
- Sweepstakes, Contests & Games: Promotion Watch provides global compliance and execution; appropriate protocols for random seeding, required winner reporting, prize delivery validation

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Sources: ⁸Based on research by White Ops and the ANA, Sept. 2014; ⁹IAS 2015

#8: Transparency

Regarding coupon programs, you want to see the full picture of what is being redeemed, where and by what retailer. Ask about an independent auditor's validation report, such as the Statement of Standards for Attestation Engagements No. 16. (SSAE 16), which underscores the security and financial integrity being delivered. With print and digital advertising campaigns that are managed by multiple providers, transparency may be more challenging and time consuming. Ideally, verification of how dollars were spent should be readily available at all times.

8 How does Valassis perform?



Transparency

- Coupon Campaigns: NCH undergoes a comprehensive, annual audit of all coupon facilities and provides SSAE 16 verification
- ROP: Online tear sheets give newspaper advertisers easy proof
- Online billing and payment portal for 24/7 access to Valassis clients

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#9: Customer Service

There are so many definitions of customer service. What are your expectations? In this industry, consider whether your partner takes time to understand your goals and needs. Are they responsive, timely and even anticipatory? Are they teaching you something you didn't know? What resources are at your avail, including self-serve, online services if that's what you desire in this 24/7 age? Remember the saying, "you get what you pay for." Price is certainly a factor when choosing a partner, but choosing the wrong promotional media partner can have negative economic and professional consequences.

9

How does Valassis perform?



Customer Service

- Customer-centric account managers provide dedicated service through the entire sales lifecycle
- Committed to delivering actionable insights and innovative solutions

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#10: Third Party Credentials

Want a clear, unbiased sign that your partner is committed to delivering trust and integrity? Look for partnerships, certifications and professional affiliations. In some cases, they may be costly expenditures for service providers, but it demonstrates their pledge to protecting your promotional program and reinforce your trust.

10 How does Valassis perform?



Third Party Credentials

- Inaugural member of Integral Ad Science's (IAS) Certified Viewability Partner Program
- IAB certified: Valassis Digital's sales, account management and operations teams
- Affiliation with the Direct Marketing Association (Valassis Lists)
- Certified papers for printed promotions: Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI); Forest Stewardship Council (FSC)

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About Us

Valassis is a leader in intelligent media delivery, providing over 58,000 clients with innovative media solutions to influence consumers wherever they plan, shop, buy and share. By integrating online and offline data combined with powerful insights, Valassis precisely targets its clients' most valuable shoppers, offering unparalleled reach and scale. NCH Marketing Services, Inc., Promotion Watch, and Clipper Magazine are Valassis subsidiaries, and RedPlum is its consumer brand. Its signature Have You Seen Me?[®] program delivers hope to missing children and their families. Valassis is a wholly owned subsidiary of Harland Clarke Holdings Corp.