



The Media Planning Guide for Non-Profit Attractions

The 4 rules to follow when planning
your non-profit attraction's next
marketing campaign.

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created for:

zoos
aquariums
gardens
museums

Over the last 10 years of helping non-profit attractions, we've seen that our most effective media plans have followed 4 simple rules.

the 4 rules to create a disciplined media mix for non-profit attractions

- #1 The Bucket Rule
- #2 The 60-40 Rule
- #3 The 5% Rule
- #4 The Social Rule

#1 The Bucket Rule

Media is either Impactful or Opportunistic.

All media channels - from broadcast television to influencer marketing - will be placed in one of two buckets: Impactful or Opportunistic.

Opportunistic media channels are high-*quantity* ad placements.

Impactful media channels are high-*quality* ad placements.

	Opportunistic Media Channels	Impactful Media Channels
Targeting	Audience-first	Placement-first
Ad Environment	Small screens okay; typically one-to-one experience	Large; audio and/or visual only; typically a shared experience
Objective	High frequency	High reach
Why we invest	Reasonable chance the target can act on a purchasing decision	Elevates the brand, creates excitement about the attraction

#1 The Bucket Rule

Media channels by type

Opportunistic Channels	Impactful Channels
Paid Social Meta, TikTok, Pinterest, Snapchat	TV Broadcast, cable, connected TV
Paid Search	Radio Terrestrial, streaming
Digital Display	Outdoor
Digital Video YouTube, video on desktop and mobile	Influencer
Direct Mail	Print

Here we see the most popular media channels divided into either Opportunistic or Impactful.

This exercise is similar to the classic marketing funnel that details the consumer journey through awareness, interest, intent, etc.

Our approach is simpler. We look at media channels as either a brand elevator or a sales driver.

The key is to strike the right balance between the two.

#2 The 60-40 Rule

Allocate 60% of the budget to Impactful and 40% to Opportunistic.

Each attraction is unique. Your target audience, ad budget, market, and organizational goals will lead you to select the mix of media channels that's right for your attraction.

We've created The 60-40 Rule to ensure you don't rely too much on one *media type*.

We need the brand-building power of Impactful media channels like TV and radio.

At the same time, we need to sell tickets, promote our events, and increase annual memberships.

Opportunistic channels like ads on Facebook and Google Search are designed to this.

Through our experience, we've found that best balance between these two factors is 60-40 between brand and promotion.

By allocating 60% of your annual ad spend towards Impactful Channels you can ensure that your Opportunistic channels can be effective when running highly targeted campaigns.

#2 The 60-40 Rule

When to break The 60-40 Rule

Apply The 60-40 Rule to your annual ad spend. One-off campaigns and event promotions can rely heavier on Opportunistic channels to drive ticket sales.

Blockbuster Holiday Event Campaign

Let's say your attraction holds the area's "can't-miss" event of the year. This event is used to introduce the attraction to new audiences.

Allocate 80% of the campaign's budget to Impactful media to drive excitement and demand.

This means more Opportunistic channels should be used throughout the year to drive general admission tickets.

Wedding and Private Event Campaign

An 80% to 100% allocation of Opportunistic channels should be used if your attraction wants to sell private event packages.

Adhering to the 60-40 Rule for your annual budget means your attraction has built excitement throughout the year to make this Opportunistic-focused campaign more effective.

#3 The 5% Rule

Only invest in a media channel if you can allocate a minimum of 5% of the total budget to the channel.

Don't spread your budget too thin.

The most common mistake we see non-profit attraction marketers make is not placing enough weight into a media channel.

The 5% Rule applies to channels and not tactics.

Correcting a plan that breaks the 5% Rule.

Note how this plan is spending less than 5% of its budget in several different channels.

We can instantly increase the effectiveness of the media mix by consolidating the number of channels.

Channel	% of Budget
TV	45%
Radio	21%
Outdoor	8%
Influencer	4%
Print	1%
Display	15%
Digital Video	2%
Paid Social	2%
Paid Search	2%

#4 The Social Rule

Invest a minimum of 10% of the budget in paid social.

Our experience tells us that paid social media campaigns are the most effective form of advertising for non-profit attractions.

Putting it all together

An example plan that follows the 4 rules

Here is an optimal media mix for a non-profit attraction's annual budget.

Note how the budget is split 60-40 between Opportunistic and Impactful channels.

And, no channel is allocated less than 5% of the budget.

	Channel	% of Budget
Impactful	TV	20%
	Outdoor	20%
	Radio	15%
	Influencer	5%
Opportunistic	Digital Video	15%
	Paid Social	15%
	Display	5%
	Paid Search	5%

a word from the author

Thanks for reading our Media Planning Guide. Over the years, I've seen advertisers and agencies try to show off how sophisticated their media plans were by throwing the kitchen sink into the mix. Unfortunately, the client ends up doing more work to execute a diluted plan that can't effectively impact their target.

I'm passionate about helping non-profit attractions spend their investment effectively. Your community contributes to the marketing funds via tax dollars, admission, and donations. Spending these dollars wisely is a responsibility.

Although the media universe has become extremely complex, we don't have to overcomplicate everything.

I hope these rules can help bring discipline to how you craft your next media plan.

Jenny



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