

Would you target AGBMs in the ... **MUMBAI MIRROR?**

Written by Warwick Hills, Director Mouths of Mums

With the explosion of huge social media followings and ever-increasing site traffic now available to target Australian Grocery Buying Mums, brands and those placing campaigns should rightly be asking “Does Size Matter?” ... Right? Size is certainly a leading indicator, however we believe there are metrics within size that are far more critical to the return on your investment.

We’re challenging the ‘size only’ debate and calling into question the relevance of the audience you’re reaching. Call it quality, call it relevance, call it what you like; just make sure you *take publishers, mummy bloggers and challenger brands like us to task on delivering the right audience* rather than just a big audience.

So size is an indicator but it’s not as telling as it should be. We’re certainly not the biggest parenting site in Australia so you’d expect to hear that from us, wouldn’t you? Fair assumption when it’s us generating this piece. There is a point. Let’s continue.

We regard “quality of audience” as the proportion of a site’s traffic that is relevant to a specific advertiser. At its simplest level, a massive unique audience (still the most commonly requested information from our prospective clients) is impressive. However it is a misleading metric and one that delivers no promise for your campaign if a huge portion of said traffic is coming from overseas. This seems very logical yet no one has ever asked me or anyone else from our team about the proportion of our network that is RELEVANT to their brand, campaign or product.

In a recent market snapshot we took of 21 leading Australian parenting and mum-focussed sites¹ (including market leading publishers, challengers and mum blogs), we were staggered to discover that the average percentage of Australian-based traffic across the group was only 52%. And more disturbingly, some individual sites who were quite clearly charged with advertising to Australian mums for iconic Australian brands had as little as 10% Australian traffic. The tip of the iceberg is sound; a tiny percentage of sites in our test group have consistent traffic that is 80% Australian origin, but you’d be surprised how many don’t (and who they are).

In the interests of transparency, 80% of Mouths of Mums' website traffic consistently comes from Australian browsers with the remaining 20% coming from the US (understandable given we were christened 'MoM' by a member 3 years back and it stuck), UK and then the rest of the world.

I'm not claiming any great conspiracy here – it is natural that great Aussie content will attract readers from abroad; digital content is now truly global. And indeed some sites will be specifically targeting overseas markets (perhaps even expats). BUT, if you are a brand targeting AGBMs then it should factor into your ROI calculations.

So how do you know if you're being sold an Aussie audience?

The only truly reliable measure for each site is their own internal analytics packages. And as you can imagine we publishers won't be readily sharing that information publicly for our competitors to study so they're not openly available to you either. The thing is though, transparency should never be an issue if the metrics are true and the vital signs for their site or community are strong.

We use a number of external sources including Nielsen, Alexa and SimilarWeb to measure and benchmark our site performance against our competitive set. We know there are more but these work for us. We also know that each of these has its own methodology and process, and each has its weaknesses. However, all are widely recognised and accessible data sources; a sound source of insight for benchmarking and comparisons.

Another transparency moment - although basic trends for MoM traffic are consistent between Nielsen, Alexa and SimilarWeb, specific measures differ between these three sources. They are always "within the ballpark" of our internal analytics measures, so while certainly not an exact match they remain strongly indicative.

It is relatively easy to increase traffic and databases – in most cases it is simply a factor of budget. And we also know that some overseas markets are significantly cheaper (per lead, like, share or click) than Australia. So we can appreciate that for some bloggers and publishers who need to show clients and investors impressive growth figures, it could be tempting to look abroad for quick wins.

Conversely, it is not easy to grow a highly engaged online community. We also know this from experience. But the value to advertisers and sponsors justifies the effort for some business models – Mouths of Mums included. *(Yes, I do have a vested interest in penning this piece).*

Next time you're briefing prospective advertisers don't forget to ask a few extra questions and dig a little deeper. The exercise may be worth it.

And when someone suggests you advertise your new SKU of breakfast cereal for Aussie Kids in the Mumbai Mirror, take them to task.

For further information on this article or to find out more, please contact:

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¹*Survey of 21 leading Australian parenting and mum-focussed sites (including market leading publishers, challengers and mom blogs) was conducted on 24 June 2014 using Alexa and SimilarWeb data sources. The comparison of both data sources produced consistent trends and the figures quoted are the "best case" from both sources.*

Who is Mouths of Mums@: *We're proud to be a 100% privately owned Australian company. We celebrate the importance of all members of the 'MoM' community; over 60,000 registered members (with over 120,000 children from birth to early 20s) and over 157,000 facebook fans. Over 80% of our site traffic and over 70% of our facebook traffic is spread representatively across Australia. These percentages remain consistent as we grow organically every week.*

