



## Behavioral Targeting in Media Buying

Your perfect customers are out there, and modern advertising techniques, such as behavioral targeting, make it more likely than ever before that your campaign will reach them.

Capitol Media Solutions has already written a post that answers the question, "What is behavioral targeting?" Just to recap...

- Behavioral targeting leverages a consumer's previous activity when displaying an ad. Typically, this matchmaking between ads and consumers employs anonymous, non-personally-identifiable information.
- With behavioral targeting in [digital media buying](#), advertisers can focus ads on consumers based on the webpages they visit, searches they conduct, and purchases they make online.
- The [behavioral marketing](#) trend is expanding beyond the desktop. Certain [mobile advertising platforms](#) allow companies to target consumers based on their mobile search behavior and where they are located when they conduct that search.

Behavioral targeting is one of several tactics we may use to support our clients' digital campaigns. Learn below about the process, the options available for selecting audiences, and the advantages and disadvantages targeting offers.

### How Behavioral Targeting Works

Our [media buying agency](#) uses a demand-side software platform that lets us buy display media across advertising exchanges in real time. This means that we can quickly advertise our clients across a host of websites. Behavioral targeting tools in this software let us focus ads on very specific audiences.

These tools show the right user the right advertisement by combining many different pieces of data. [Take Google AdWords](#) as an example. Among other information, it uses:

- Demographic data that consumers provide to its partner websites.
- Data from websites that consumers have visited.
- Assumptions based on the typical audience of websites that a consumer has visited. For instance, if someone visits several websites that skew heavily male, the platform may determine that this person is male.

Typically, platforms avoid using sensitive information for advertising purposes, such as race, religion, sexual orientation, and health. Google also allows users to change their preferences as to whether the ads they see will be targeted.

Behavioral targeting options are only limited to the data that these platforms can collect, and the options continue to grow. Facebook, for example, has a wide variety of information about users and allows advertisers to utilize it in their campaigns. A company can segment the audience based on charitable donation activities ("animal welfare"), purchase behavior ("men's jeans"), and travel habits ("casino vacations"), among other behavioral criteria.

### Advantages of Behavioral Targeting

#### Connect to the Right Audience

Traditional approaches, such as TV media buying and [radio media buying](#), rely on the assumption that the audience seeing your ad is similar enough to your target audience that you'll reach some of the people you want. However, many of the impressions you are paying for are going to people who aren't the right customer for your products or services. [Non-traditional advertising methods](#) like behavioral targeting can connect directly with the consumers you want.

#### Make an Impact

Research supports the value of behavioral targeting. [In a 2013 study](#), web ads were two times more influential when people found them well-targeted (52% vs. 26%).

#### Offer a Better Experience

As the research above suggests, users may prefer an advertisement that speaks to their needs and interests over an ad that doesn't offer any value. Behavioral targeting helps provide this type of experience.

### Disadvantages to Consider

#### Expect Higher Costs

Demand-side platforms often charge higher rates to reach audiences that are segmented more extensively. If your campaign is focused on women in Atlanta, your price may rise if you add behavioral criteria, such as Atlanta women who are purchasing a new car. However, behavioral targeting may earn a better click-through or engagement rate since the audience is more likely to respond. Advertisers need to weigh the extra value they expect against the additional cost of the campaign.

#### Be Aware of Privacy Concerns

Even when consumers share data freely with websites, they may not want that data to be used in marketing to them. People still see a big difference between [elevator advertising](#) that encourages them to shop at Walmart and ads on their computer that always seem to show the personal hygiene products they use.

There is an obvious contradiction here: consumers seem to want relevant ads, but [they don't want to have their privacy violated](#). Advertising platforms have implemented several solutions, such as marking ads as behaviorally targeted or giving consumers the option to opt out. However, showing ads that are too specific to a consumer's needs may turn them off from making a purchase.

### Choosing the Right Advertising Approach

Capitol Media Solutions recognizes the value in behavioral targeting, but it's important that tactics follow strategy. Start by identifying who the right audience is for a media buy; what the campaign should accomplish; and which media and channels are most appropriate. Then, using this framework, decide whether behavioral targeting is a tool that can help you achieve more with your buy.

Learn about emerging advertising tactics and media buying options for your business. [Contact Capitol Media Solutions](#).

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