

THE BLIND SPOTS SERIES



Overcoming Audience Blind Spots

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Introduction

For most commerce brands we work with, the ultimate goal is growth: Growth in sales and, even more crucially, growth in profits.

The route to maximizing sales and profits is complex, but the most significant drivers are summarized on page 3. It starts with finding a brand's high-value audiences (HVAs) and driving these audiences to the correct destination – a Direct to Consumer (DTC) site, Marketplace, or eRetailer. Once the HVA has arrived in the desired location, brands must do everything they can to convert their audience and maximize average order value (AOV) by increasing the basket size.

We call this frictionless commerce. Brands that get all elements right will likely reach or exceed sales and profit targets.

This article focuses on the first driver of sales – traffic.



Traffic

Conversions

AOV

=

Sales - Profit



The process starts with identifying growth audiences.

These are people that are highly likely to be interested in a brand's products as they have a relevant need state. It will often be the case that they're not even actively looking for a product, but by creating serendipitous moments where these users are connected with products they love, they can be moved along a seamless purchase journey.

This journey ends with a new customer checking out and being delighted by the experience.

However, many brands do not have processes in place to ensure they are correctly identifying and targeting these audiences. Instead, ingrained ways of working lead them to focus on more simplistic methods of audience targeting, aimed at users who are already much further along in their purchase journey. This could include retargeting users who have already visited the brand's site or are already taking part in an active search journey.



5-Step Approach

Brands, therefore, need to take steps to ensure they are better equipped to understand their blind spots and in turn acquire new customers.

At KINESSO Commerce, we've identified a 5-step approach for overcoming these blind spots and in turn unlocking the door to revenue growth.

01

Perform Need
State Research

02

Facilitate
Knowledge
Transfers

03

Target Creatively

04

Use Fluid Budgets

05

Accelerate Growth!

Step 01

Perform Need State Research

The best audience research will provide rich and textured insights. It's important to avoid broad, reductive profiles based on sweeping similarities. Whilst this may have its advantages in broadcast media, it can limit a brand's ability to target accurately when it comes to precision media and stunt its ability to provide personalized content and experiences.

Instead, brands must delve deep into why, how, and where their customers shop, exploring motivators, detractors, life moments, media consumption, the types of products they purchase, search behaviors, and average spend. This task should sit within specialist Research and Insights teams, drawing on tools such as market research databases, social listening platforms, search analytics tools, and more.

A useful tip is to work backward from the point of sale to uncover the missions that products are a part of.

What was the action or influence that happened right before they decided to buy a product?

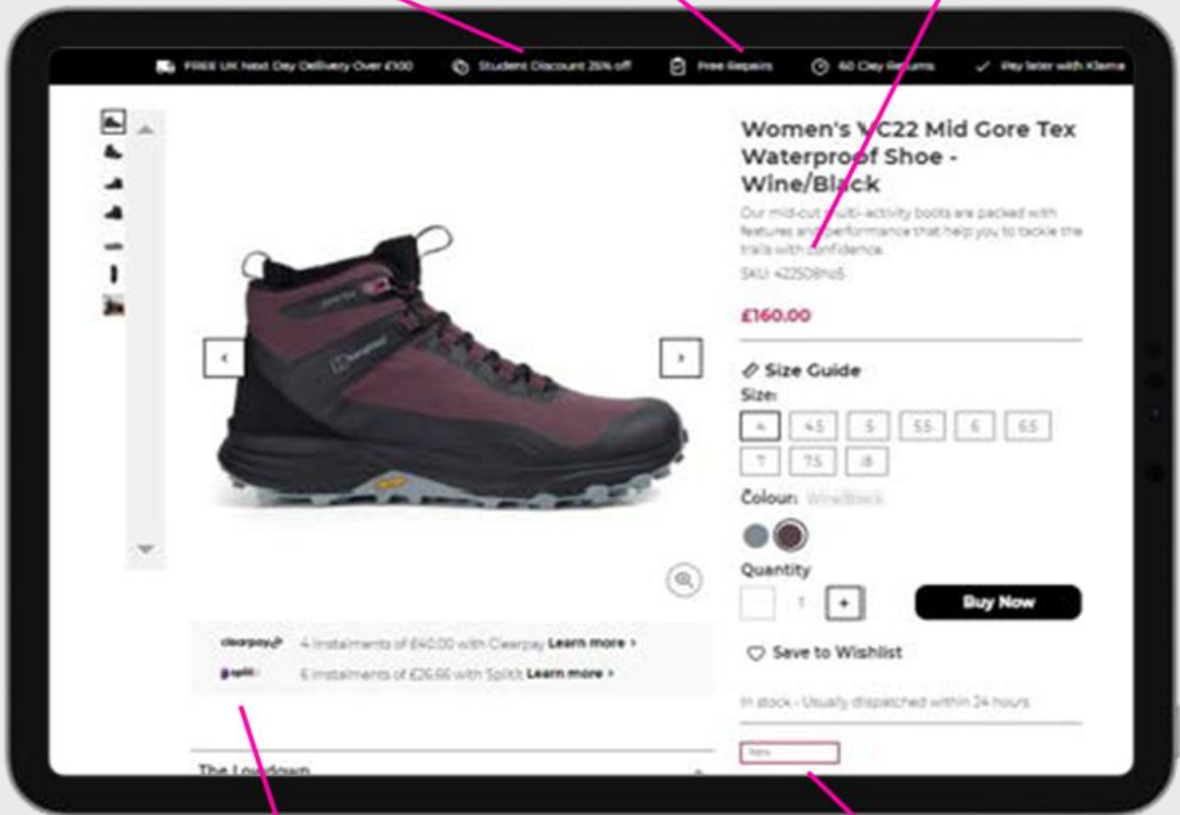
Here, brands should review the information on their Product Detail Pages (PDPs) to get a head start. They're a great source for uncovering why someone purchased a product over a brand's competitors. Perhaps it contains features that align with a customer's values – it's sustainable, vegan, good for fitness and health, or visually appealing.

Perhaps the brand also offers great incentives that would convince someone to buy at that moment, such as free delivery, student discount, payment options, or speedy shipping. By unpacking each of these elements, brands may be able to decipher the need states and motivators that each of their products appeals to.

Student Discounts

Free Repairs

For Trails



Payment Options

Newest Styles

This research could uncover multiple audience segments, each of which defines a different audience demand. To refine and understand which to target first, brands should append an audience size, frequency of purchase, and value of a purchase to get a clear understanding of the value of each segment.

Step 02

Facilitate Knowledge Transfers

Businesses frequently operate in siloes, which restricts the flow of vital information between teams. Sales teams could be in possession of crucial information that could help to accelerate a brand's marketing performance and vice versa.

For example, product development will have invaluable audience research; these teams will already understand purchase motivations for a brand's products and the need states that they were designed to address. They are also sitting on a wealth of sales data. To succeed in 'everywhere commerce', it's not just about being present at the right moment, it's about connecting users with relevant products they'll love. By combining product development insights with audience analysis,

brands can serve the right product, to the right person, at the right time.

Encouraging the free flow of information to frontline activation teams is also key. Brands should give everything they can to craft specialists; those that win pass information quickly and regularly to the activation teams so they can react and adapt their tactics.

The transfer of information also works best when it runs both ways - when activation teams report back on granular insights, it allows strategists to adjust their view of the audience. And when this feeds back to sales teams, it helps to inform future product direction.

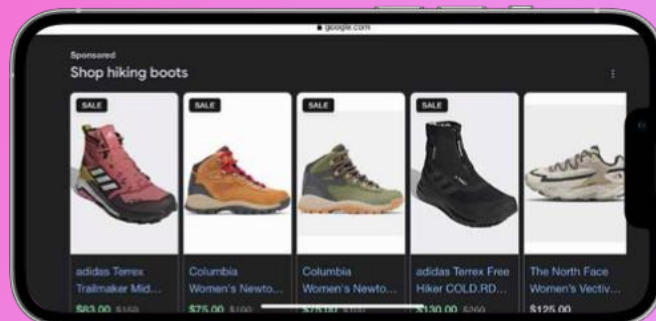
Step 03

Target Creatively

Activation teams are now armed with more insights than ever before. Historically, many brands have fallen into the trap of briefing activation teams too soon – before sufficient research and insights had taken place. Instructed to simply increase the revenue from product sales year-on-year, specialists only have enough information to go down obvious, directly relevant routes.

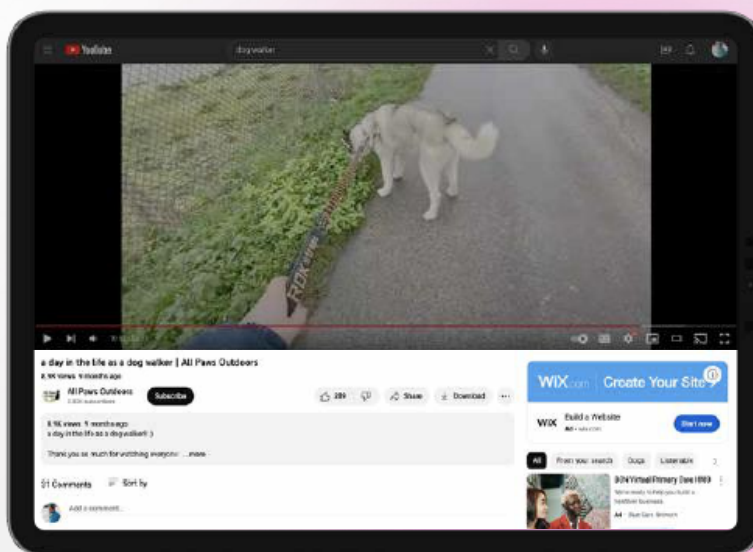
For example, take a paid social team looking to sell hiking boots. Without

any detailed insights into their audience's motivations and need states and no campaign previous data, the targeting selected is more likely to focus on those already in the market for or interested in hiking boots. This weights the budget in favor of those customers already researching and evaluating boots. It may also encourage brands to bid in a competitive space with other retailers using a similar targeting approach, aimed at a limited audience.



However, armed with additional insights about the types of content our audience consumes and the reasons why they might buy hiking boots, it's possible to be more creative with targeting. Discovering that a high proportion of an audience buys hiking boots for dog walks, and the audience is prone to

watching entertaining content on social media featuring dogs, the team may choose to amplify influencer content from a well-known 'pet and owner' account in which they promote and talk about their new pair of hiking boots – with the product seamlessly linked below.



In this second example, a moment of connection between the audience and product is created – before the customer even knew they needed it. Had they simply maintained their simplistic targeting approach, this sale would have occurred within their blind spot, with the risk of it being lost to a competitor.

The pace of commerce and marketing evolution allows brands to experiment with new types of targeting; from Retail Media to AR try-on to live-stream commerce events, data and insights pave the way for brands to be more forward-thinking with their approach.

Step 04

Fluid Budgets

A consequence of the above approach is investing budget in a broader range of places, such as new channels, variations of personalized content, and different types of media. Crucially, brands should expect customers' need states to change continuously. A notable recent example was the impact of COVID on shopping behaviors, and we should expect to see need states change with most economic fluctuations.

By ensuring budget can move between search, social, display,

video, and all places in between, brands set themselves up to be agile and reactive. The brands that win are those that can quickly move budget toward the best-performing areas, finding sweet spots in blind spots before the competition. To do this well, brands should consider having a commerce planner as part of the team, with oversight of holistic performance, who is poised to instruct changes as soon as trends begin to emerge.

Step 05

Accelerate Growth!

For some brands, the shift to a more fluid model can feel quite daunting. This is a break away from their tried and tested approach where they hold channels to a strict ROI target. Instead, addressing blind spots with new activations requires brands to be bold. It requires them to trust in their data and to experiment with new audiences, platforms, and content to uncover what works best. This gives brands the best possible chance of finding the blind spots

their competitors are yet to discover.

Those brands that stick with more obvious end-of-funnel tactics will quickly saturate their known audience pools and fail to tap into growth audiences that will ultimately drive incremental revenue.

Now we understand the steps to uncovering audience blind spots, let's look at how we could bring this to life in two examples – one for DTC and one for Amazon.

Blind Spot Detection in Action: Direct-to-Consumer (DTC)

- Consider the example of an outdoor footwear brand looking to sell hiking boots via its direct website. In a bid to drive revenue through the hiking boots products, the activation teams have historically focused on targeting customer segments who are either in the market for hiking boots or searching on relevant hiking boots terms.
- However, the insights teams have explored the motivators, need states, and shopping behaviors of key audiences. They now understand that the boots are not simply purchased following a drawn-out research journey into hiking boots. Instead, key customer segments include those who are purchasing as part of a student backpacking trip, as part of a family campaign trip, and even as gifts for parents around Mother's and Father's Day.

This information allows activation teams to reach new customers in new and innovative ways:



For the **student** going on the backpacking trip, the brand engages with a content-based affiliate to have links to their products as part of a backpacking checklist. This ensures the student considers hiking boots to be a fundamental part of their trip, rather than simply wearing their sneakers.



For the **parent** going on the camping trip, the brand works with an influencer who promotes the product as part of a campaign video on YouTube. Given their recent integration with Shopify, they're able to link the product in the video itself, moving the user from content consumption through to conversion.



For the **daughter** buying her father hiking boots, they run a live commerce campaign on social media in the run-up to Father's Day. This sparks the idea that hiking boots are a great idea for a gift, and the link quickly moves them along to checkout.



In each of these instances, the brand has helped its audiences to find the perfect product, even though the need was latent. With shoppable tactics we created seamless experiences that are vital in acquiring new customers.

Blind Spot Detection in Action: Amazon and Marketplaces

- In this example, an outdoor footwear brand is looking to sell hiking boots. This time, they want to boost sales of the product via Amazon. Traditionally, brands have used simplistic targeting that focuses only on hiking boots terms for search, whilst leveraging audience segments via programmatic display that are also closely aligned to those already in the market for boots.
- Now, however, they are armed with the same detailed insights about their audiences' need states. This is coupled with the knowledge that on Amazon, customers are shopping with a mission in mind, not just to purchase a single brand or product.



For the student going on a backpacking trip, the brand knows they're looking for sturdy backpacks. Using ASIN (Amazon's unique product codes) targeting, they can ensure products are displayed on adjacent product PDPs, encouraging users to add in hiking boots as part of their overall mission.



For the parent going on a camping trip, the brand knows they might be looking at camping equipment like tents or portable cooking equipment. Using a similar approach to the student, the brand can ensure they show sponsored display ads on adjacent product pages.



For the daughter looking for hiking boots, she's incentivized by speedy delivery times for the last-minute gift. In this instance, the brand may want to customize its display creative to focus on free and rapid shipping options.



In each of these instances, the goal is to get a product in front of key users while they're already browsing, ensuring they add products and "plus up" their basket.

How can KINESSO Commerce help your brand?

At KINESSO Commerce, we focus on generating profitable revenue growth for brands.

Everything we do is focused on improving customer flow through to sale, and it's underpinned by our expert knowledge of retail operations.

If you're interested in optimizing your media to drive incremental revenue growth, KINESSO Commerce offers robust audience and data strategy, full-funnel media planning, and activation across search, social and programmatic.

Please get in touch to find out more.



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Thank You