

# Worlds Collide:

## Seeking harmony between online and traditional marketing

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The Direct Marketing industry has come a long way in the last three or four years in melding online and offline media to form cohesive campaigns.

But let's not fool ourselves.

The silos still exist and in many cases they are becoming stronger, as if they are fortifying themselves for some great battle.

In late 2009, there were a number of pieces in Advertising Age and other well-known publications, probing whether digital firms were ready to take the lead in marketing strategy and direction.

These articles led to furious online debates – and it doesn't take a genius to figure out who was on either side of the debate.

What surprised me was that no one was willing to compromise and say that maybe it was just time to give digital firms an equal seat at the table. Each side believed that they were right and the other was wrong, period. Have we learned nothing from our elected officials?

The truth is that we are at a crossroads in the history of advertising and marketing.

Digital cannot achieve maximum success without traditional offline support, and vice versa. The most current example of this is social media.

Social media is not the magic bullet that will solve all of your marketing problems at little to no cost. It is an extremely powerful tool that connects companies directly with their consumers.

It is also a new form of database marketing – where a sizeable house file of followers is crucial, but building it requires more than the "viral" effect alone. Companies that have built enormous followings have done so by promoting their social media via traditional offline marketing campaigns. And they include opportunities to follow them in every vehicle – from email signatures to Super Bowl commercials.

Now is not the time for digital to lead, nor is it the time for traditional agencies to fool themselves into thinking they are



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qualified to direct the digital firms. Now is the time for both to accept that each has its strengths and roles. And each side must respect one another's abilities – and listen.

Admittedly, digital firms are generally younger; their management and staff have fewer years of experience. But they have also adapted to more change in the past two years than most traditional firms dealt with in the preceding twenty.

Likewise, the traditional firms may not seem to "get it," but they have decades of proven tactics that work. And digital firms can learn from them.

If we set our collective egos aside, the silos will fall and everybody's profits will rise.



Steve Tassler is vice president of Interactive Marketing at Aerios, overseeing multi-disciplinary campaigns whose tactics commonly include search-engine optimization, paid search, repeat-traffic systems, behavioral targeting, social media, direct mail, Email, and cross-channel marketing. He frequently speaks on campaign analytics and the successful integration of online and offline marketing techniques.