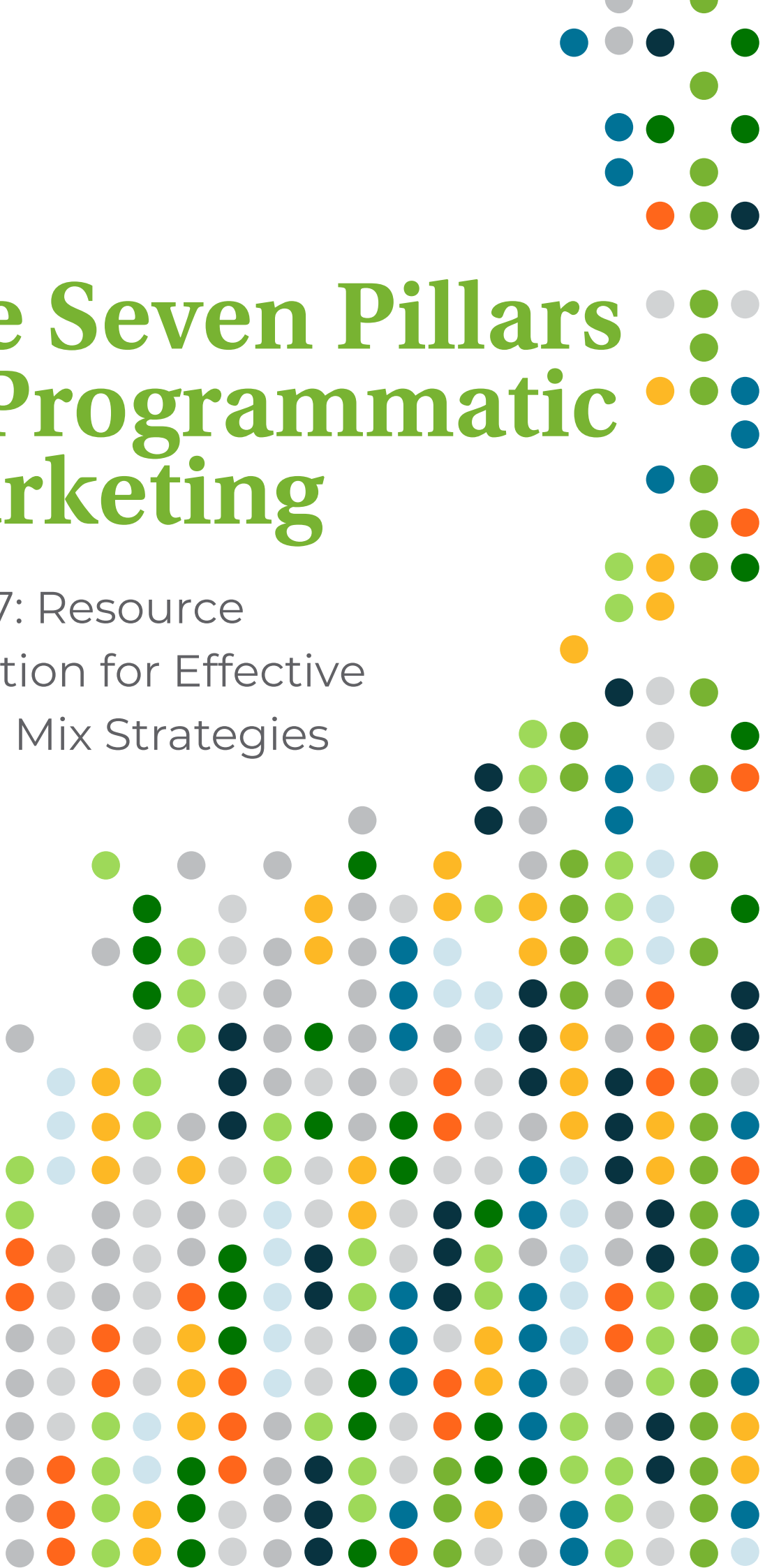# The Seven Pillars of Programmatic Marketing

Pillar 7: Resource Allocation for Effective Media Mix Strategies

Resource allocation is the process of evaluating existing resources and distributing them across marketing campaigns to achieve business goals. Sound easy? It's not. Effectively allocating resources is one of the hardest parts of digital marketing. But it is vitally important to the successful deployment of a full-funnel marketing strategy (*see Pillar 1*). It takes money, people, and time to plan, create, and execute compelling programmatic advertising campaigns for each phase of the customer journey.

Of course, you can't predict everything that can happen in marketing. Sometimes, you might not be able to utilize all resources at 100%, no matter how hard you try. On the other hand, when you are managing multiple campaigns, you may find that every single team member is somehow allocated more than 100% of their time. Improper resource allocation can lead to resentments in the workplace, as well as missed opportunities that should have turned into great client results and tangible profits. In this, the seventh and last chapter of our series on programmatic success, we explore best practices for more effective resource allocation across programmatic advertising channels.

Understand that time and resources are necessary

The skyrocketing growth of digital programmatic advertising has created a rapid expansion of what marketers are expected to be proficient in. From tag management to data management to reporting results, the list can go on and on. It is a challenging spot to be in, not only for individuals entering the programmatic advertising landscape for the first time but for agency leaders looking to hire and train new talent. *In Pillar 5 we explained that programmatic campaigns need time to demonstrate results.* After all, a robust media mix strategy includes many moving parts. Patience is often the key to successful campaign planning, execution, and reporting. The same principle holds true for resource allocation. It's important to periodically review your resource allocation plans to minimize over- and under-allocation issues. When a large team is working on multiple projects, the small issues that arise (and they ALWAYS do) can push the timeline back and lead to delays. In most cases, they are so insignificant that a good team player might not voice them; they will simply proceed with fixing the problem. But as more time goes by, the number of these "mini-issues" can increase. Although they get solved along the way, team members unconsciously work longer on a project than they are supposed to, which automatically leaves less time for other projects. Here are a few tips for maintaining proper resource allocation for your programmatic advertising campaigns:

(continued)

What is a resource map?

A resource map lays out all of the resources you'll need and what they are needed for. It's a great tool for creating a holistic understanding of the various costs associated with the development and deployment of campaigns. The goal is to avoid wasting team time and effort. When you plan ahead with a resource map, you will save a lot of staff and budget resources later.

1. Assign more resources to priority projects

High-priority projects should be assigned more resources to keep their campaign milestones on time and on budget. Clearly, you don't want to cause delays or budget shortfalls for other campaigns (or other clients). Sometimes short-term campaigns are the best candidates for a "high-priority" status so the extra resources can move on to other projects quickly. Another thing to keep in mind is the individual skills and differences of your team. There are people who typically work faster or multi-task better than others—those are the people to put on the high-priority projects.

2. Encourage team communication

When your resource allocation goes wrong—a deadline is missed or budget fails to achieve a campaign goal—you'll want team members to feel supported enough to communicate any unexpected problems or issues they faced or solved during the process. The more information you can gather, the more effectively you will be able to distribute tasks between team members, taking into consideration their time, individual skills, and the number of people needed for the project. This will give your team a lot more freedom in their daily activities, but also make sure that emergencies and unexpected issues will be dealt with more efficiently.

3. Use different people for different tasks

Whether it is one person who delegates all responsibilities or a team that fills individual responsibilities, there are a few key team roles that need to be allocated across programmatic advertising campaigns to make sure campaigns run smoothly:

Creative Director: Responsible for developing creative elements for campaigns; building ads and landing pages; modifying creative based on campaign performance; assisting with placing tracking and conversion tags.

Campaign Manager: Develops campaign strategies and target audiences; sets up and optimizes campaigns; traffics creative elements and conversion tags; makes changes based on campaign performance.

Billing Lead: Responsible for accounts receivable (A/R); accounts payable (A/P); creating invoices for client ad campaigns.

Data Analyst: Examines campaign performance reports; recognizes campaign performance opportunities; compiles campaign reporting into client-facing materials.

Bring programmatic tech in-house for more control over resources

Most marketers appreciate having control over their work because it allows us to exert more control over outcomes. When you can directly influence the ROI of your next programmatic ad campaign you take back the control that has traditionally been held by managed service vendors. That also means taking charge of customizing campaigns, reducing busy work, and having more time to focus on your overall mixed media strategy.

If having more control over your media mix strategy (and the resources needed for planning and deployment) appeals to you, it might be time to think about bringing those capabilities in-house through a self-service programmatic platform. This investment can generate tangible business returns and strategically position your agency as a leader in the digital media ecosystem. Once you've made the decision, you'll want to build support among your agency's leaders, as well as identify who within the agency will operate the platform. An effective transition from a managed-service provider to a self-service platform requires thoughtful planning and application of internal resources.

Here's why it's important to include leadership in planning discussions and status check-ins: The platform operator down in the weeds may not be the same person identifying and pitching new business opportunities. Your agency leadership can help "fan the flames" among clients and prospects about your in-house programmatic advertising capabilities. In addition, the retention rate for young marketers is low compared to that of leadership. Having that level of business investment will help real-time bidding (RTB) take root in the organization.

Looking at a self-serve programmatic platform? Make sure to ask these questions during the demo:

- How flexible is your pricing? Are there media spend minimums, added CPMs, or margins?

- How many different targeting tactics can we run within a single campaign? It's crucial to have access to all targeting tactics and capabilities within any one single campaign.

- How much support do you provide? Will we have a dedicated account manager or customer support rep?

- What kinds of resources are available to educate my team about programmatic advertising? Eventually, you will need to train new team members on media buying, so comprehensive new employee onboarding and ongoing education will be essential to your long-term success.

Your media and digital teams are good places to start looking for platform operators. Find employees with digital or systems experience in tools such as Facebook or Google AdWords, which can easily translate to RTB operations. Remember, this is a new area of expertise for young marketers and a point of job differentiation and upward mobility. Have the chosen operator(s) practice documentation and task redundancy with team members when possible. Turnover happens, after all, and it's smart to be prepared if that person leaves and someone else needs to step in.

Establishing the types of campaigns you will run and the resources assigned respectively will help set realistic expectations internally and externally, as well as focus operators on profitable practices. It's common for operators to spend too much time and make campaigns too complex based on the budget level. To help combat this outcome, you can productize your RTB offering by creating different "tiers" for different budget ranges. There are many levels of optimization but the simplest, most accessible options usually make the biggest impact in comparison to the more advanced tools. For example, reallocating budget to higher performing ad groups is a no-brainer that most people overlook. Diversifying your campaign from the start across multiple tactics will make for more agile optimization instead of starting over with new targeting should your tried-and-true tactics fall through.

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