
RADICAL TRANSPARENCY: THE MEDIA KITCHEN APPROACH

(Updated 6/26/17)

We ensure our clients' sites only carry active, meaningful tracking in place

True agency transparency is not just a matter of economics, but rather an expression of an agency's fundamental alignment with the interests of its clients. This kind of radical transparency extends across various media agency functions, the components of which we discuss below.

ECONOMIC TRANSPARENCY

For an agency, economic transparency includes all aspects of the media buying and billing process, including its relationships with vendors and publishers, as well as the agency's fee structure. In order to ensure that we are economically transparent and fundamentally aligned with the interests of our brand clients, we adhere to three core principles:

I We do not mark up the cost of media

Some agencies mark up the cost of media to a client in order to achieve larger margins, either by funneling all programmatic buys through its trading desk at a fixed CPM, or by additional costs to platform license fees. We do neither. We buy all of our programmatic media directly with our own team using self-service platforms (such as The Trade Desk, Unified, and Marin), the cost of which we pass on to our clients as a non-working media expense with zero markup. We also give our clients audit rights to all billing and invoice info related to their campaigns.

II We do not accept rebates from publishers

In May 2016, the ANA published an independent study that found rebates and other non-transparent practices to be pervasive at many U.S. media agencies. These include cash rebates from media companies to agencies that are never passed on to the advertiser, as well as dual rate cards and non-cash rebates. The Media Kitchen welcomed this report for exposing a pervasive practice that inherently conflicts with an agency's obligation to act in its clients' best interests. The Media Kitchen has never accepted rebates in the past, nor will it in the future.

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We base our fees on team retainers, not media commissions

When a media agency's compensation is based on media commissions—a percent of the total working media spend—that agency can't help but be biased toward those media channels with the highest commissions. We believe the fees we charge should fundamentally align with the scope of work we perform, which is why we work on a retainer, and not a commission, basis.

CAMPAIGN TRANSPARENCY

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Viewable and non-viewable inventory

For obvious reasons, we want every media impression we buy to be viewable. That is why we include viewability requirements in every insertion order and we strictly enforce them. Long before it became fashionable, we partnered with industry leaders MOAT and Integral Ad Science to provide independent third-party measurement of viewability across our campaigns, which in turn significantly enhances campaign performance optimization. For these reasons, viewability measurement has become a core part of our tech stack, as has fraud prevention, discussed below.



Avoiding fraudulent inventory

Digital ad fraud can take many forms, including pixel and iframe stuffing, ad placement stacking and—most significantly—bot traffic. The last thing we want is for any client to waste money on media that no human ever sees or interacts with. For this reason, we partner with White Ops to identify, and keep traffic away from, suspicious domains. We also use Integral Ad Science's ad suppression technology to proactively block the serving of digital ads on suspicious domains. We include "verified human traffic" requirements in every IO, and we strictly enforce them.