

data axle



Kickstarting Data-Driven Creative

Bringing your
campaigns to life with
high quality data

Data-driven creative gets your campaigns to the right people at the right time, and allows your messaging to be personalized, specific and unique to a variety of audiences. Data provides the foundation and support your team needs to make decisions about how to approach different audiences, how to build an audience-first campaign, and how to see a better ROI for your efforts.

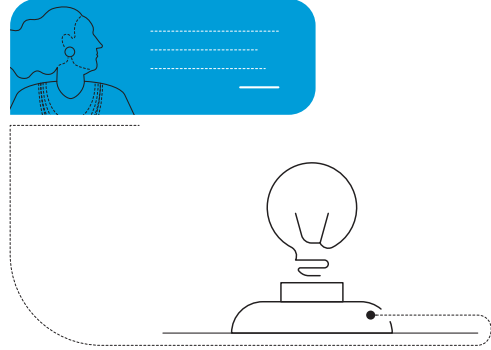
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Three ways data powers your campaign:

It tells you what your prospects value and care about.

Data helps you understand what your prospect's interests are, what stage of life they're in, what income bracket they occupy, and parts of their life might motivate them. When you know your prospect is married, has kids, drives an electric car and has two rescue dogs, you can more accurately send messages that apply to their life and interests.



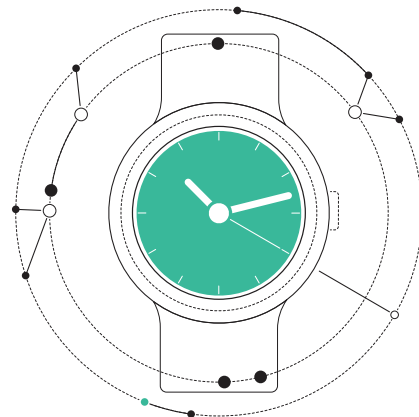
It tells you where your prospects are and what they're doing.

Data helps you pinpoint whether your donors prefer to be contacted via email or social media, for instance, and what websites they frequent where they might see or click on an ad. We can also tell what they're doing—what other brands they purchase from and follow on social channels, what ads they clicked through on what websites, and what emails they've opened.



It tells you how prospects are responding to your campaign in real-time.

Data tells you which of your ads resonated more with specific audiences so you can focus your messaging and make your future and current campaigns more successful.





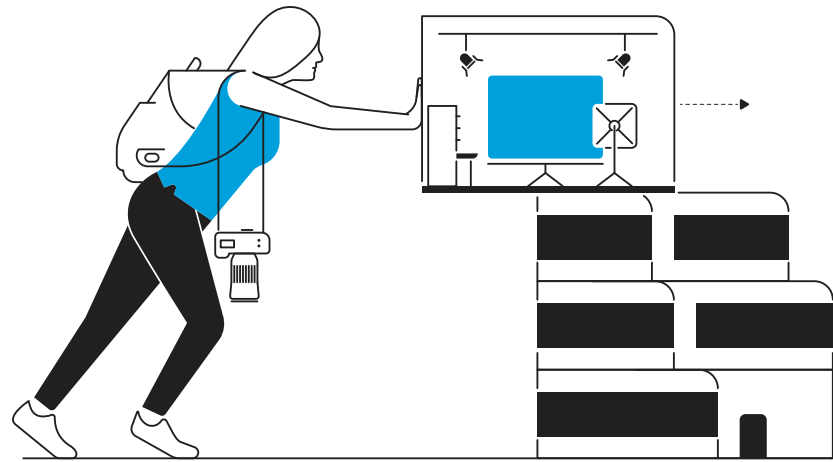
Balance is key

Eye-catching, relevant creative is imperative for success. A recent study of German TV ads found that ads that had high 'creativity' scores performed better. Advertisers with creative ads saw double the sales of advertisers who ran more standard advertisements. We also know that personalized creative, which is powered by data, performs better. In fact, 71% of consumers prefer personalized ads. Good creative relies on best practices for each channel (informed by where your customer is), relevancy to the moment (informed by what your customer cares about), lessons learned from iterations and explorations you've done (informed by testing), and insights from customers (that you can gather before, during or after the campaign).

If you know what your prospect cares about, how they behave and what opportunities each platform offers, you can dive deeper, take more risks, and be more innovative than before.

Data Axle's creative team is highly skilled at helping companies utilize the data we provide to inform their creative decisions. Take a look at this hypothetical brand that illustrates how we would use and cultivate data from conception to launch, and beyond.

[Download 10 Creative Best Practices](#)



10 Creative Best Practices

The 6-Second Rule

Stay Mobile Ready, So You Don't Have to Get Mobile Ready

Value Added Content

Personalize Messaging

Turn Hybrid Readable Images Off

Utilize Dynamic Light

Highlight the Call to Action

Don't Neglect the Headers, Navigation & Footers in Your Emails

Highlight Social in Your Email Messaging

Make it Accessible



Meet Axleotl

Axleotl is a vibrant fitness company. Their main product is a fitness tracker that allows users to keep track of how long they exercise, how often they exercise, how many calories they burn, heartrate, sleep quality, etc. They also sell accessories – such as bands, protective covers and chargers – to accompany the tracker. While established enough to no longer be a ‘start-up,’ the company is primarily focused on growth and competing with big players in the space such as Fitbit and Apple watch.

Goals:

New Customer Acquisition

Target New Audiences and Increase Reach

Raise Brand Awareness in a Saturated Market

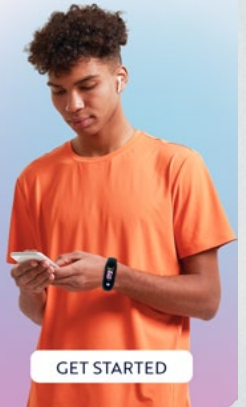
We'll be using this fictional company as a way to illustrate the core concepts over the next few pages.



AXLEOTL



3 Steps to Get Started



AXLEOTL

We are here to help you live a healthier future



Before the Campaign: Let's Start Planning

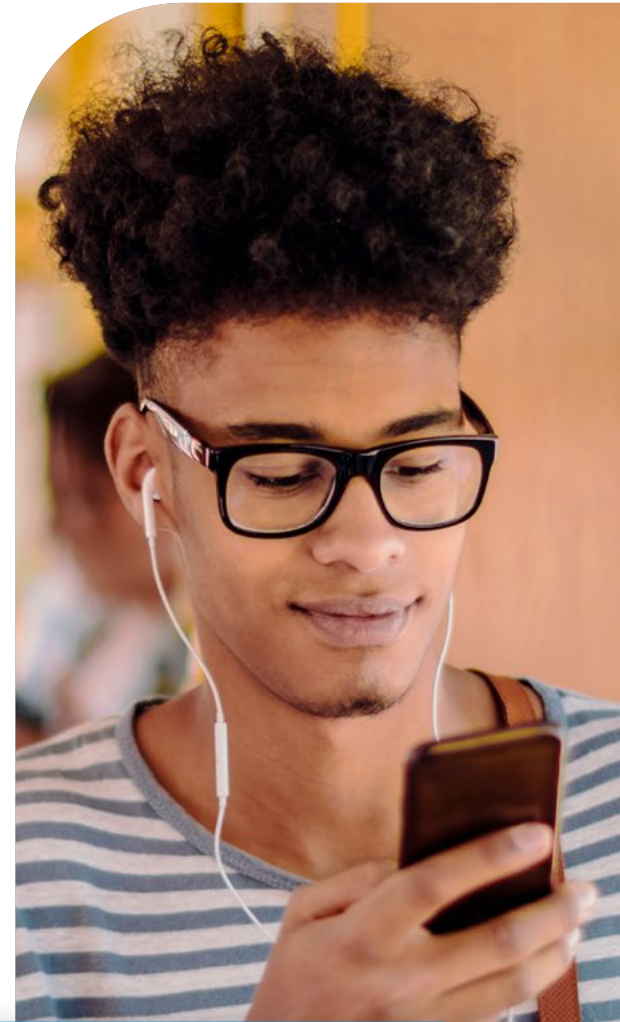
Leveraging Data to Find Your Ideal Audience

When companies draw up their business plan, they have an idea of who they want their ideal audience to be. However, it's not always the case that their best customers match this ideal. Companies need to use data on their customers to truly understand who their ideal audience is, so they can properly market to them. A famous example of this is the McDonald's Milkshake.

The fast-food giant assumed the main audience for their milkshakes were children. However, after analyzing when the milkshakes were being sold and to whom, they realized that long-haul truckers and commuters were their actual audience. By tailoring their product to the wants of an adult male, rather than a child, McDonald's increased milkshake sales.

In other words, it's important to use your data to learn who your actual audience is. Data partners like Data Axle can layer insights from third-party data on top of your first-party data to create a 360-degree view of your customer and shine a light on who you should be targeting. The resulting 360-degree profiles include everything from basic contact information, to demographic data, past and present purchase data, interactions with customer service, and social media behavior.

Once you know who your audience is, you can begin to tailor your product and your marketing strategy to their needs and behaviors.



Pro tip:

When you are investing in data, start by making a list of things you want to learn about your customers. Identify everything you want to know and pose it in a question or hypothesis format. Consider the following questions as your jumping-off point:

- ✓ What have you always wanted to know about your customers?
- ✓ What information is currently missing?
- ✓ What assumptions would you like to confirm?



The Importance of Custom Audiences

Data science isn't just for Netflix and Amazon; Many companies are now creating custom acquisition audiences based on their existing customer data in conjunction with third-party data. Collaborating with a data partner to apply advanced modeling techniques is a smart way to find new prospects to target and identify which segments will be the best use of your marketing dollars.

For example, Data Axle uses cost-effective modeling techniques to find an organization's ideal customers. These custom segments can be utilized to acquire donors through email, direct mail, paid media buys, and more. Because these audiences can be "clones" of your high LTV customers or best performing audience segments, response rates tend to be much higher.



Lets Build Our Personas

First, let's talk about why you need personas in the first place. Personas are characters created to represent the different user types that might use a brand, site or product in a similar way. Essentially, what they can help you do as an organization is understand your customer base in a way that is rich and meaningful as well as drive customer relevance.

Personas help you to:



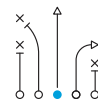
Drive customer experience design.

You want to make sure you are talking to people in the way they want to be spoken to; so they are paying attention to what you are saying.



Make the right channel investment.

Personas help you to understand what channels you should be communicating your messages through.



Build a relevant messaging architecture.

Personas make it easier for you to tailor your communications effectively.



Data: The Missing Piece of the Persona Puzzle

The key component for marketers is to understand their goals, and what it is they want to achieve from their marketing strategy. Any brand can build personas as long as they have a customer data file. Overlaying that customer data with third party data is an added benefit to getting into the mindset and understanding of your customer personas. Additionally, the use of consumer research or additional third-party data can enhance customer insights that allow you to better understand purchase and brand motivation. Essentially it takes approximately 6-8 weeks to build personas and the strategy that goes along with them. It is contingent around getting the right data in place.

Let's look at how our fitness brand, Axleotl, has structured their personas.



Fitness Enthusiast

Keep your fitness journey on track

Key product features: Daily activity, heart rate

Data: gym membership (confirmed), diet products, organic foods, specialty organic foods, heavy vitamin and dietary supplements, pilates/yoga, lifestyle – health fitness



Tech Head

Stay smart about your health

Key product features: provides data in app, connects to other devices

Data: high-end purchases (confirmed – splurge purchase model), works in tech, higher education, avid smart phone users, hybrid cars, lifestyle – electronics, lifestyle – high tech, lifestyle - science



Medically Conscious

Let's monitor your health together

Key product features: Heart rate, heart rhythm, pedometer

Data: subscriptions to WW (don't have this specifically), Noom (don't have this specifically), safety and security conscious, health insurance, lifestyle – health, lifestyle – health diet



Concerned Parent

Keep in touch with your littles

Key product features: limited voice calling, daily activity

Data: presence of young children (ages 6-12), heavy family restaurant visitors, baby products, lifestyle – family, household members

Build an Omnichannel Strategy: Your Data is the Best Tool in your Toolbox

What do we mean when we say “Omnichannel?”

With omnichannel marketing, brands take a consumer-centric approach to achieve consistent messaging across channels for a more-personal, cohesive experience. This is the destination toward which many of today’s marketing organizations are striving, but it can seem like a daunting journey—that is, unless you have a map.

That’s precisely what good data provides—a map to surrounding consumers with a relevant story about your brand.

Data – the biggest piece of the omnichannel puzzle

With the right data strategy, you can connect the dots among audiences on various channels and craft messaging that speaks directly to individuals based on their interests and needs at any given moment. Data enables marketers to create unique, personalized, consumer-focused experiences that enable people to interact with their brands when and where they prefer. It also enables you to observe and learn from your audiences, which allows you to update messaging, campaigns and creative in real time.

Performance Data: Data You Can Collect

Before embarking on a data-collection journey, it’s important to have a reason for putting in the work.

There are two primary goals for data collection:

1

To inform performance. What’s most/least effective from a tactical standpoint (e.g., particular creative, design, wording, etc.)?

Collecting performance data is often a subtle approach where users don’t even realize they’re providing you with helpful and useful data.

2

To gather information to tailor a user’s experience based on their preferences.

Collecting preference data generally requires a user’s consent to participate and provide the information you’re seeking.

Performance data is particularly effective to let you know when you need to change tactics or where you should up your investment. That’s why it’s so important to keep as many elements of your design as trackable as possible, especially when you start getting into testing to see what’s performing well and what isn’t.

Let’s start with email as an example. Our fitness brand, Axlelotl, wants to know how they can switch up their email templates to be more effective at driving consumers along the buying journey.



Goal:

Learn how email recipients are engaging with email messages.

Data collection strategy:

Embed source codes into links for buttons, text links, and images to examine where recipients click, and which calls-to-action drive more donations. This is where knowing the abilities and limitations of your platforms matters. To set up this form of data collection, be sure to know where this information will be stored in your platforms and how to report on it.



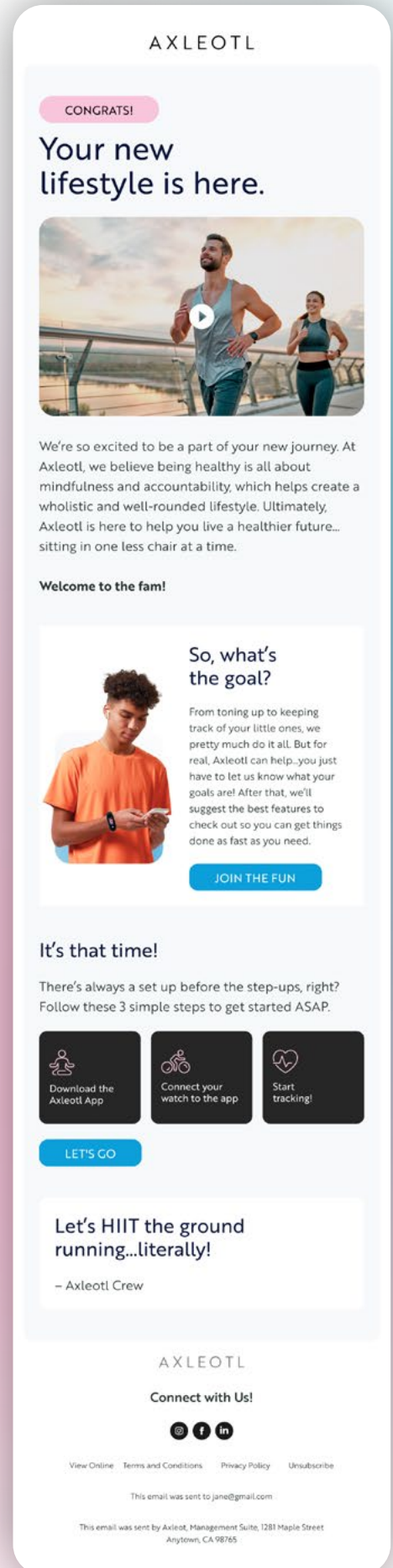
Pro tip:

Deliverability metrics are also crucial. You can send all the emails you want, but if they aren't hitting the inbox, you aren't getting the ROI you need. Metrics to look at: Inbox placement, opens, clicks, unsubscribes, bounces, etc.

What is your competition doing?

Knowledge is power and knowing what your competitors are doing is crucial to becoming (or remaining) a top player in your industry. Performing a regular (we recommend a quarterly or biannual) competitive analysis will help keep you informed of the latest industry moves. Keeping track of metrics such as SEO rankings and industry benchmarks will help you in your quest to stay at the top.

For example, our hypothetical brand Axleotl has been following Fitbit's social media channels and noticed that they have many active followers on Facebook, but their Twitter feed is pretty quiet. Axleotl might choose to invest a little more in Facebook to try to sway their followers over to themselves. Or they could take the opposite route and try to court followers on Twitter, since there's an opportunity to try to engage an audience that doesn't have brand loyalty to Fitbit. Both strategies could result in gains, but the best course of action ultimately needs to be decided by the data. Axleotl needs to make a decision based on the channel data we discussed earlier. They know their Tech Head personas are more active on Twitter and their Concerned Parents are more active on Facebook. They need to make a decision that takes into account their goals for that quarter and the performance of the current campaigns they have in market.



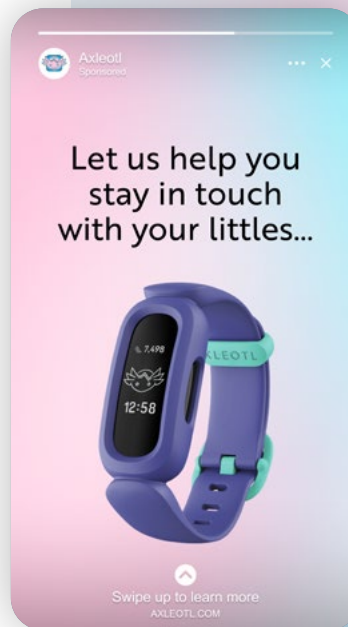
The Role of Data in Design

Personalization: Data You Can Append

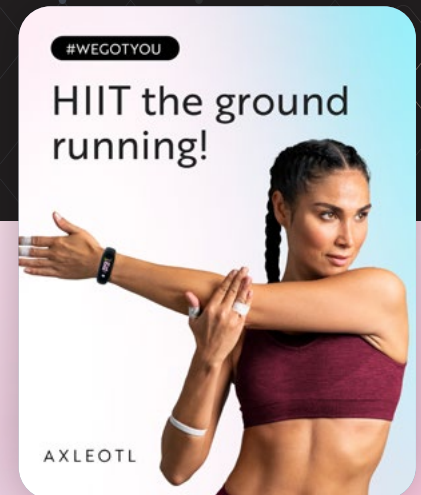
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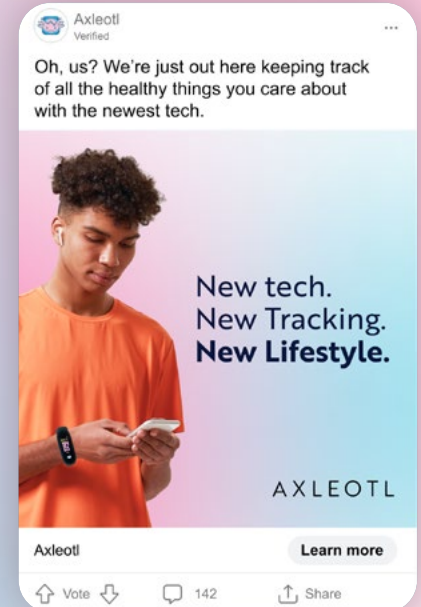
Let's go back to Axleotl, they want to personalize their creative based on their personas.



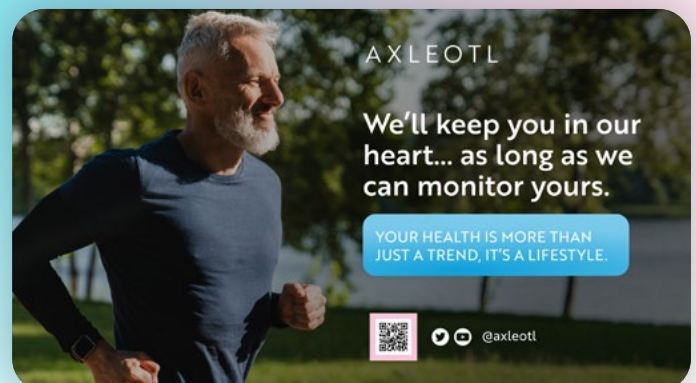
Concerned Parent
Facebook Stories



Fitness Enthusiast
Instagram Explore Feed



Tech Head
Reddit Promoted Post



Medically Conscious
CTV

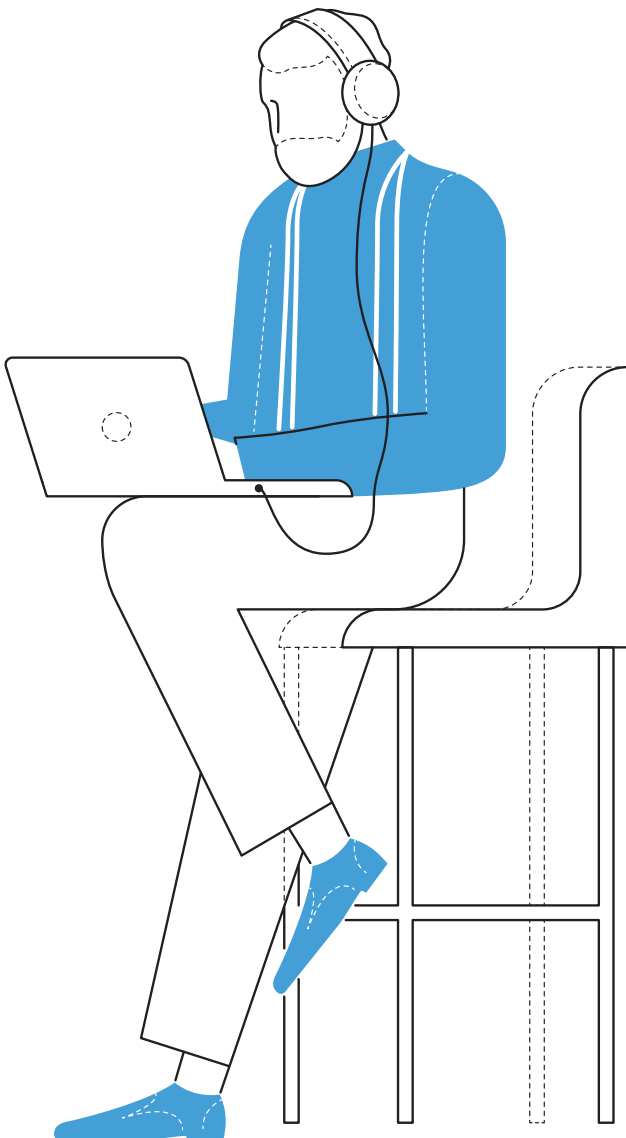


Pro tip:

There are plenty of content tools (some are even free) that can help boost personalization at your disposal if you know where to look. Look out for Subject Line Checkers such as CoSchedule, sendcheckit and Omnisend. You can also use tools such as Readability, Web FX and SEMRush to check the reading level of your messaging and maximize SEO where applicable.

Testing design elements is crucial

While we have plenty of conversations around testing, not enough marketers take a holistic approach to the idea of learning through testing. Too often we get caught up in a cycle of testing for testing's-sake and lose sight of the big picture. It's important to approach test planning from the perspective of learning and evolving and that's where data comes in.



What should you be testing?

It's easy to get overwhelmed by the sheer number of options to test. For example, you can test copy length, copy content, images (i.e. product images vs. aspirational lifestyle images), CTAs (both copy and buttons), subject lines (if we are looking at emails), banner placement, offers and deals, time of day, cadence, etc. The best way to avoid overwhelming yourself is to approach testing strategically. When you begin your testing journey, start by identifying the best tests to answer key questions or confirm major assumptions. Reference your marketing calendar to prioritize your tests. Try to find the right content or campaign opportunity that fits the test criteria, not the other way around. This should keep the need for incremental new creative designs to a minimum.

[Download 10 Tests to Try](#)

Let's say Axlelotl has a campaign goal of increasing traffic to their website homepage. These are the questions they would want to consider:

- Would a 'new post' alert drive more clicks?
- Would a larger CTA button drive more clicks?
- Could teaser copy from the blog post drive more incremental clicks?

Then, match the corresponding tests that will best answer the questions:

- Test a 'new post' alert with X% of the audience
- A/B test for CTA button size
- A/B test for copy



How do you know when to pivot your strategy?

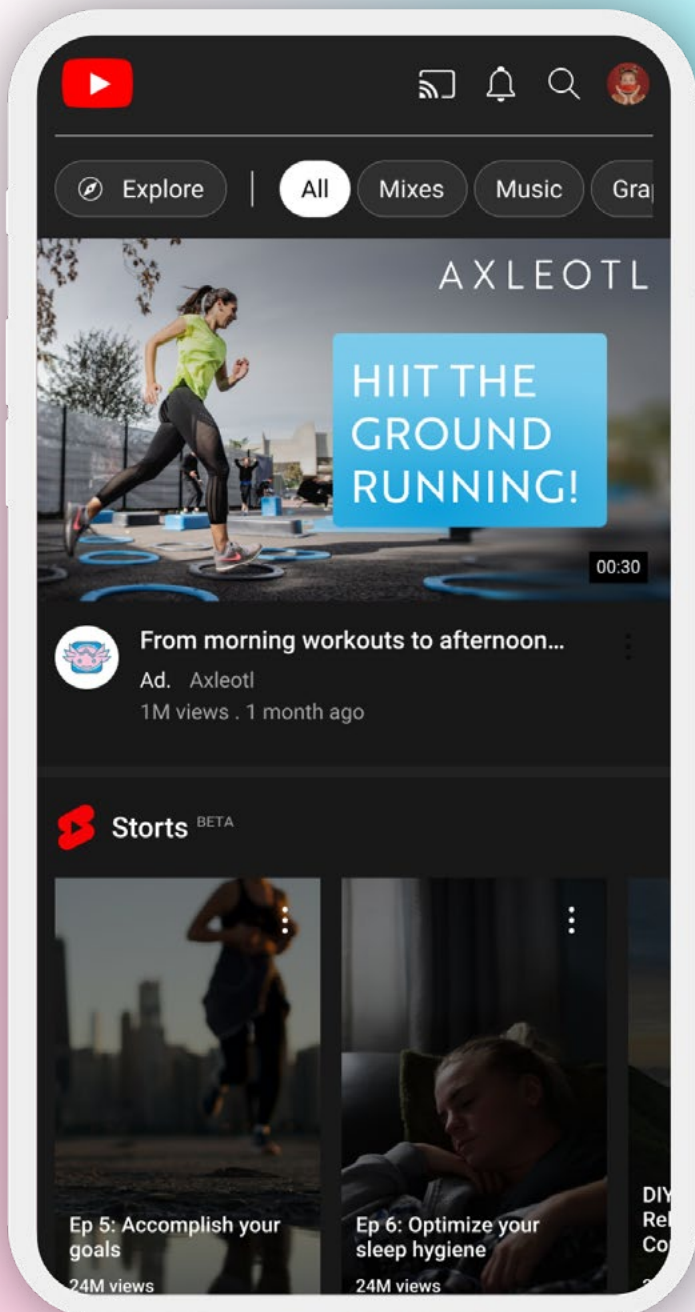
When should you change up your strategy? Your data will tell you. Ultimately, the longer the campaign runs, the more data you can collect and the better you will be able to plan future campaigns. However, time is a luxury not everyone can afford. For best results, we recommend letting campaigns run, while testing, for a month or 2-3 weeks to get a meaningful amount of impressions (500,000 to 1 million) before you make any meaningful changes to your media planning.

Reporting: data you need to measure success

There are many metrics to measure the effectiveness of your campaign. Much like testing, it can get overwhelming pretty quickly. These are some of the metrics we recommend taking into consideration:

- Website visits
- Website visits by traffic source
- Click-through rate (CTR)
- Conversion rate
- Post-campaign analysis
- Heatmaps
- Test results
- Cost per lead (CPL)
- Cost per acquisition (CPA)
- Return on investment (ROI)
- Return on ad spend (ROAS)

Once again, let's turn to Axlelotl. Our fitness brand looked at their post-campaign analysis and realized that their Fitness Enthusiasts were not clicking on their Instagram ads nearly as often as they expected. After reviewing their data and their competitive analysis, they decided to change tactics and deploy more ads for this persona on YouTube. Axlelotl thought Instagram was the best channel for Fitness Enthusiasts because they could look at aspirational images and messages from fitness influencers. However, YouTube can also provide words of wisdom from their favorite influencers alongside detailed insights into the best new workouts and routines for gains.





Pro tip:

Check in with your tech stack to see what they've learned for future optimizations. Data needs to flow easily through your martech stack's layers – from your email deployment tool through your CRM, analytics, lead generation, and ABM platforms, to your landing pages, mobile marketing tool, marketing automation software, and graphics solutions. Check in after every campaign. Perhaps you used a new tool or a new strategy that proved extremely helpful, or maybe things went awry, and you need to honestly discuss what happened in a non-judgmental setting. This is an opportunity for your team to learn and create actionable takeaways to improve further projects. Once you have gathered your lessons, document them and refer back to them when planning your next campaign.

In Conclusion

Data is crucial to creating messaging that will resonate with consumers. There are so many ways to collect the data you need to effectively target, plan, design and execute your campaigns. While it's necessary for you to collect first-party data on your customers and prospects, partnering with a solutions provider is the best way to enhance the data you have, so you can maximize your ROI. We've created a complimentary vendor assessment worksheet, so you can learn what you should look for in a partner and keep track of the vendors you're approaching. Want to know more? We can help. Contact us and start bringing your data to life.

DOWNLOADABLE RESOURCES

1 [10 Creative Best Practices](#)

2 [10 Tests to Try](#)

3 [Vendor Assessment Worksheet](#)

Contact Us

Email sales@data-axle.com • Website www.data-axle.com

