



## Meet Sun Life

Sun Life Financial is a leading financial services company that helps their Clients achieve lifetime financial security and live healthier lives. At Sun Life, they have always built their business on ethics and integrity. They set strict guidelines and rules about how they do business. And they follow them, wherever they do business, consistently winning awards for their sustainability and corporate citizenship efforts.

## The Challenge

When it comes to their advertising, especially digital advertising, Sun Life has historically had few tools to control the content they support. Using programmatic display advertising is one of the most cost effective ways for them to connect with their prospective clients, but the programmatic display advertising ecosystem is opaque and filled with risks. Sun Life's dedication to sustainability includes efforts to make this ecosystem more transparent, resilient, and inclusive. They simply lacked the tools to be a truly ethical advertiser, as the market did not have an adequate solution to accomplish it at scale.

*“As a leader in the financial market, we have a responsibility and opportunity to broaden our sustainability agenda to create a more resilient, sustainable and inclusive economy. This includes investing responsibly and contributing to the health of Canadian media.”*

— Marie-Isabelle Pepin, Director of Canadian Advertising and Media Strategy

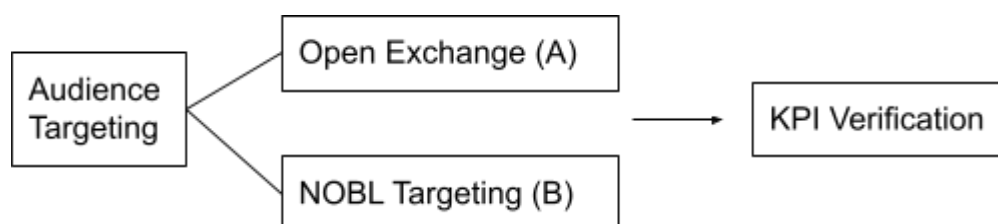
Sun Life worked with their Media Agency, Cossette Media, to identify ways they could further this sustainability agenda, and Cossette recommended NOBL Media as a solution. NOBL provides credibility targeting for programmatic campaigns, providing a brand new, more holistic ethical and transparent approach to how ads are placed online. Sun Life was excited about the possibility of ensuring their ad spend was done

responsibly. “Sun Life is one of the Global 100 Most Sustainable Corporations in the World (for 11 consecutive years now). To be part of projects/initiatives/innovations bringing us closer to a sustainable future is a priority for us”, said Pepin.

However, they also wanted to ensure their campaign effectiveness was not impaired, since spending money on legitimate journalism that didn’t bring them customers was not helpful, and certainly not sustainable. To verify the effectiveness of NOBL based campaigns, an A/B test compared the open exchange environment to NOBL.

## The Experiment

To demonstrate the effectiveness of NOBL credibility targeting, we ran a field experiment by randomly assigning consumers to two conditions. The first is a control condition, where we use the default Google Ad Network for placement decisions. The second is a treatment condition, where we add an additional NOBL filter to only bid for ads on high credibility pages. For the purposes of this experiment, we considered a high quality page to be one that received a NOBL score of 5 or greater or that resided on a domain that received a score of 5 or greater based on the average score of 10 or more pages on that domain.



The Sun Life display advertising campaign ran from April 18 to June 20, 2021. For each domain, we tracked the number of impressions, clicks, and amount spent. We also monitored the webpage activity of these consumers on Sun Life's domain and collected the total number of webpage visits arriving from each domain. We then compared these KPI's for users in the treatment condition with the baseline condition.

## The Results

The results suggest that the trustworthiness of the website plays an important role in the success of online advertising. Specifically, consumers in the treatment condition

(receiving ads on higher quality pages) exhibited a 110% higher click-through rate and a 39% lower cost per click. In other words, targeting the same consumers on trustworthy sites increased subsequent ad response at a more cost-effective rate.

In addition, an important side effect of targeting more trustworthy pages is a reduction in illegitimate clicks. Consumers in the treatment condition resulted in a 56% reduction in invalid clicks (e.g., fraudulent or unintentional clicks) and a 37% reduction in invalid impressions.

Summary of KPIs:



**110% higher CTR**



**39% lower CPC**



**56% lower  
Invalid Click rate**



**37% lower  
invalid  
impression rate**

Conversions, which is defined as the number of page views on Sun Life’s site by consumers who encountered a Sun Life advertisement, were also monitored. Consumers can arrive by a click and then browse the website. Alternatively, consumers can come to the website at a later time.

In our data, conversions following direct clicks generated only 1.2% of the page views. The remaining 98.8% were view-through conversions, defined as consumers viewing pages on the website without clicking through from the original ad. Furthermore, the results suggest that post view conversions increased by 39% when using NOBL. This means that when paired with a trustworthy site, the display ad delivered a superior conversion rate than a strategy that does not use credibility targeting.

**The Conclusion**

Overall, this finding suggests that consumers associate the trustworthiness of the content with the ad, leading to more subsequent page view activity. Note that in both conditions, the only difference is the trustworthiness of the site. This implies that

consumers who view the ad on a more trustworthy site tend to browse more pages and become more engaged with the firm.

These findings convinced Sun Life their ad dollars were not only being spent responsibly, but they were actually more effective and, in the end, generated more customers at a lower overall cost.

*“Sun Life is committed to investing in high quality journalism and local media in Canada. .... We are proud that, through our partnership with Cossette Media, Magnet and NOBL, we were able to delivery better media performance while increasing investment in high quality journalism and local media.”*

— Marie-Isabelle Pepin, Director of Canadian Advertising and Media Strategy