

COLUMNS

## Reinventing mobile video ads for millennials

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The time has come to reinvent display advertising.

Advertising technology platforms, the rising dominance of mobile use and new patterns of content consumption have breathed fresh life into the once-staid and easily ignored banner ad.

Programmatic buying and hyperlocal targeting have made it possible to put digital ads in front of the right eyeballs at the right time, and in a meaningful context. Now the task is to fine-tune the art of getting those eyeballs to linger.

Once an ad of potential interest has been presented to the targeted user, what can be done in such a small amount of space and time to engage the viewer enough to remember the ad or brand?

The ultimate goal is a click-through and conversion to buy or subscribe, but any level of authentic engagement is an important step on the path to purchase.

A large-scale field experiment published by Columbia Business School in 2014 found that mobile display ads were most persuasive in more complex, utilitarian purchases because they reminded consumers to think about their impending purchase, triggering a recall of previously learned information and feelings about the brand and product.

### Millennials love mobile

Millennials and their mobile use is a popular topic for advertisers right now.

Marketers are trying to find the secret sauce for engaging this demographic the 18-34-year-old cohort is the most populous, racially diverse, and highly educated in the United States, and the first generation of digital natives.

Indeed, they account for more than 40 percent of the aggregate time U.S. consumers spend with smartphones, and spend more time with digital media than traditional formats.

In consuming digital media and services, 43 percent of them use their phone more often than their computer to access the Internet.

According to comScore, 21 percent of these users are mobile-only.

While this savvy generation is most certainly a promising target for advertisers, other age groups are catching up. Mobile use is becoming more primary and mainstream for all U.S. consumers.

A comprehensive understanding of millennial mobile use and brand engagement should guide strategies for staying ahead of the curve in all demographics.

## Closing the gap

To close the gap and capitalize on the potential of mobile advertising, brands must make innovative use of display advertising and find ways to authentically engage various audiences, especially the millennial demographic.

Among the many mobile ad types, native, video and social media and content-based advertising have shown the most promise for significant brand lift.

Mobile display advertisers should draw lessons from these formats to inform and enrich an innovative approach to display ads, which are still the most widespread and accessible.

Advertisers have to tell compelling stories in small spaces, making use of short videos and snackable content as a way to draw users into more immersive and interactive online experiences with brands.

Emotional ads are the most impactful in terms of brand recall and longer-lasting business effects. Indeed, millennials care most about meaning.

Of course, what is meaningful to any given user is influenced by many factors, running the gamut from cultural background to time of day.

Mobile users have come to expect personalized advertising that is context-aware. They have little patience for clumsy, non-responsive formatting that has not been optimized for the device they are using.

Trying to engage savvy users with basic banner formats at the page margins fails to take advantage of the intimate nature of mobile devices and our personal, always-on relationship with them. Interactivity and creativity are the main drivers for success.

THE TECHNOLOGY is in place and quickly becoming more accessible.

Consumer-driven data works in both directions, helping target potential customers with the right message at the right time and place, while at the same time, providing us with rich feedback about what works and why.

As we have learned many times before, the mobile phenomenon is about much more than technology it is about the expansion of human potential.

With the millennial generation leading the way, brands can tap mobile's boundless potential for transforming advertising and commerce in creative and inventive ways.

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