

COLUMNS

7 best-practice tips for mobile video advertising

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The Interactive Advertising Bureau last year reported that 68 percent of advertisers plan to increase their media spends in video, especially mobile video. This makes sense, since consumers increasingly rely on their mobile handsets for just about everything, from getting directions to taking pictures to buying groceries.

But it is all for nothing if mobile video ads do not work with the specific challenges of mobile devices.

With Mobile World Congress just behind us, mobile marketing strategies have been top of mind, so let us take a closer look at seven best practices that will ensure that marketers can capture users' attention with their mobile video advertising.

Provide an action or incentive to engage

To get the most out of digital ads spends in mobile, it is probably wise to include some kind of direct-response component, because it is not intuitive for a mobile user to click on a video.

Marketers should include overt calls to action, such as an invitation to click or an incentive to delve deeper for more information about a particular offering. If the metric is click-through rates (CTR), for mobile it is important to include a clickable button rather than the traditional underlined text.

Adapt to users' bandwidth

Almost nothing destroys an advertising experience like a choppy video. Because bandwidth varies on mobile devices, technologies such as HTTP Live Stream (HLS) an adaptive streaming communications protocol developed by Apple and MPEG-DASH an adaptive bitrate streaming technique that enables high-quality streaming of content on conventional HTTP Web servers are a must.

By serving video in small bits, these tools enable a user's device to automatically adjust the consumption rate for smoother delivery and an overall quality ad experience.

Think about screen size and interactivity

Real estate on mobile devices has increased as screen size has gone up, allowing mobile interactive video to mature from simple social-share buttons to more overt invitations to engage and expand the video within MRAID environments.

To get the most out of mobile video creative options, use HTML5 VPAID, which lets you run interactive pre-roll/mid-roll/post-roll video, regardless of device or screen or whether it is on tablets and in-application environments.

Ensure that the ad can run on a device's native player

Ensure that ads can run on a device's native player.

A number of devices and environments force video to playback on its native player, which can be restrictive many ignore the interactive layer of a video, even with HTML5 VPAID.

Be flexible and still serve HTML5 VPAID where you can, but downgrade to VAST when the ad is served on devices that require native players, so you save on costs.

Consider orientation

Shooting for a different aspect ratio is often prohibitive and uneconomical, so many advertisers opt for locking the orientation, which forces users to switch orientation to view the video properly.

A better way, assuming that nothing can be done with the video itself, is to leverage HTML5 VPAID to maximize the device's real estate.

Use desktop best practices for ad duration

Like with desktop advertisements, short 15-second spots are more appropriate for short-form content and 30-second spots are better for long-form content, even in mobile.

The emerging world of out-stream mobile video shakes up this supposition a little bit though.

For example, a video showing on an interstitial between games is interruptive. It should be used for short-form and include a skip button.

Be considerate of the user's environment

Native mobile-video formats, whether played in-feed or embedded in content, are usually set to autoplay only when viewable, and they should be silent.

A sudden burst of unexpected sound is likely to be an unwelcome user experience, especially if someone is at work. It is helpful to provide visual cues to capture users' attention and offer the option to use closed captioning.

WITH VIDEO ADVERTISING on the rise, and users more obsessive than ever with their mobile devices, it is now pure table stakes: marketers have to make sure they use the most up-to-date and sophisticated approaches on their mobile campaigns to make sure their ads get seen and are effective.

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