MDR's Web Advertising Best Practices

10 Simple & Effective Digital Advertising Strategies

"A good advertisement is one which sells the product without drawing attention to itself." – David Ogilvy

1. Create Banner Ads That Clearly Support Your Marketing Goal

Whether it's to promote brand awareness or customer loyalty or drive user engagement or conversions, the goal of the campaign is the foundation to the banner development process. Campaigns with a defined goal executed through a clear consumer-facing message or call to action garner higher click-through and conversion rates. If you don't identify the desired goal of your banner campaign, your audience will most definitely shift their attention elsewhere on the page.

2. Know Your Target Audience

With MDR's Targeted Web Advertising solution, your ad is **only** served to your desired targeted audience. You'll have the benefit of precision reach—if you're targeting math teachers, it's as though you've placed a billboard on a highway opened exclusively to the math teacher population! With your target audience defined, remember who you're talking to and why you're reaching out. Step outside of the digital product and marketing expertise box, and use the words and design that will grab the attention of your specific audience.

3. Support Your Click-Through URL

Banner ads are only effective if they are supported by a solid click-through experience. Make sure the click-through destination builds on the goal of the banner with a clear and engaging experience for your target audience. Neglecting the landing page or click-through destination can prompt the user to leave your page immediately after they click through, devastating the results of your campaign. To make your landing page more effective, consider incorporating some of the graphical elements of the banner to tie the user experience together and track conversions.

4. Keep It Simple

Remember your audience has only a few seconds to react, review, and engage with your ad. Include a single, strong message and clear image or design that resonates with your brand and target audience. Avoid speedy color shifting and over-messaging your goal, which can distract your audience from the action you want them to take.

5. Make Your Call to Action Stand Out

Use your goal to create a specific call to action for your target audience. Use strong directives, such as "free trial," "free shipping," "click here now," "limited time only," or "bonus gift" to help generate a higher CTR (click-through rate) and/or conversion result. Support the call to action by placing it on a button or set a clear designated click area. If your ad is an animated banner, keep your call to action locked on every frame.

6. Use Animation

Animated banner ads stimulate the eyes and typically generate a higher click-through rate than static banner ads. Following the Interactive Advertising Bureau (IAB) standards, avoid filling your banner ad with excessive animation: jumping, flashing, blurring, text going in and out, etc. IAB recommends that a banner's animation length should be a maximum of 15 seconds including multiple loops, making it easier for the consumer to read and digest messaging. Always provide a backup GIF that is consistent with the end frame of your banner ad, as some browsers do not have the capability to display flash.

7. Don't Forget the ALT Text

Always include a text alternative with your banner ad. This ensures a text description of your banner advertisement will be displayed should the browser not support images. Many browsers also display the ALT text when the consumer rests their mouse over the advertisement. While it may make sense to reiterate the content within the advertisement, that's not the purpose of the ALT tag. It should describe the overall context of the banner advertisement in a comprehensive and succinct way, for example:

- Math Teacher brochure = Good

- Algebra Math Teacher brochure = Better

- Inviting all Algebra Math Teachers to download our free algebra brochure highlighting some of the latest teaching trends in Grade 10 and above! = Too much

8. Manage Your File Size

Most websites have file size restrictions. MDR's Targeted Web Advertising currently supports all standard ad formats as defined by the IAB Universal Ad Package definition. We leverage their best practice approach of building against a lowest common denominator file size (40KB). By keeping the file size of the banner to this lowest common denominator, you instantly increase site reach as websites will be able to load banner ads faster, improving the overall user experience.

9. Consider Your Banner Ad Page Position

Supported by various forms of web-based eye tracking data, research reveals when banner ads are placed above the fold, they are more likely to generate a click than creative running below the fold. However, we are seeing some trend changes in consumer behavior based on their familiarity with user-interfaces that scroll (for example, mobile, Facebook, etc.). It's clear the "above the fold" mentality is slowly dissipating as habits change and consumers continue to scroll down the page. MDR automatically places your targeted banner ads above the fold, but we do recommend keeping the "below the fold" option open as a potential mid-campaign optimization to promote maximum exposure and results.

10. Optimize, Optimize, Optimize!

The benefit of online advertising is that it generates immediate and measurable results. Refine your campaign while it's still ongoing with MDR's tracking and reporting. Our Web Advertising experts are evaluating your data throughout the campaign life cycle and optimizing accordingly to help achieve maximum results. Some helpful tips to start the optimization process out of the gate:

- Implement a conversion tracking pixel on your landing page before you launch your campaign.

- Consider using a targeted landing page for every promotion. The more you customize a landing page to meet the campaign requirements and expectations of your audience, the better the conversion rate. You can track all your landing pages to gauge which are getting the best responses!

- Utilize a web analytic tool, such as Google Analytics, to append a unique and trackable tag to the designated click-through URL for each of your banners. This added step can help measure the effectiveness of your individual banner creative and provide you with invaluable campaign insight.

- Test various banner ad creatives. MDR provides this optimization feature at no cost. Unless otherwise specified, we will initially weight and serve each banner creative equally (within each format specification). As clicks and conversions start to come in, your campaign will automatically optimize and begin to serve a greater percentage to the better-performing creative.