COLUMNS

How location became the tail wagging the future of mobile ad creative

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Mobile is unique to other advertising channels. Its connection to real-world behavior makes an ad's context, content and creative critical to its success.

According to eMarketer, time spent on mobile devices has grown by an impressive 529 percent since 2010, surpassing all forms of traditional media including television. It should come as no surprise that mobile ad spend is expected to surpass desktop for the first time this year.

We know that location-informed mobile campaigns yield powerful results. Campaigns that leverage location-based targeting outperform those that do not.

In fact, mobile campaigns generate three times the amount of foot traffic and produce a 27 percent increase in sales on average, according to our data.

Looking at the most successful location-informed mobile campaigns over the past 18 months, it is clear there are several creative techniques that drive more traffic to the aisles, showrooms and tables of advertisers.

Here is a snapshot of what works best for advertisers on mobile.

Tease out the offer before the initial click
Getting a user to tap on a banner is often the greatest challenge. Today, a user must tap a small mobile banner, usually 320x50 pixels, to expand to full screen.

However, what if you are able to get that user to tap by showing teaser messaging, giving the consumer a taste of what is to come?

Using auto-expand technology, the ad grows to 200 pixels in height, subsequently fading back to its original 320x50 pixels size. A three-second teaser grabs the user's attention before the first view, ultimately enticing them to tap and learn more.

Enhance ads using dynamic multi-pane creative
Ad creative is subjective, but static ads that require a constant refresh do not leverage the possibilities that location-informed mobile technology affords.

Retailers we work with report that expandable creative that leverages dynamic distance and tap-to-map functionality is driving a whopping 2,700 times more foot traffic to their target locations than ads that do not. It is even more powerful when paired with the ability to pinpoint a user's precise location to deliver dynamic, multi-pane rich media ads that could, for example, feature the logos of stores nearby that stock the product being advertised.

Additionally, integrated videos and dynamic product galleries ensure that users can continue to engage with the ad beyond the initial tap, while accessing the most relevant product information in real-time.

Integrate local data to drive engagement
When embedded within the banner itself, the distance between a user's position and a store's most relevant locations can drive a significant increase in foot traffic.

We have seen that creative leveraging dynamic data feeds – proximity, local and social – produces initial engagement rates that are 74 percent above the industry average.

Furthermore, when exposed to feed-integrated ads, up to 6 percent of users continue to engage after the initial tap.

What does this mean for the future of mobile ads?

Using street view technology and a user's location data connected to a map-based API means you can pull in a store's actual street view imagery to the background of the ad as the user expands the ad.

Make the data more tangible
Let us take this one step further.

Accounting for more than just the distance or mileage, between a user's mobile device and a retail location can break new ground in next generation ads.

Providing a retailer's street address, neighborhood map, hours of operation, or even location-specific in-store deals, for example, and converting the mileage into something that is easily digestible and tangible – such as travel time by car or on foot – will not just push sales. It will drive actual results.

Use subtle animation and imagery
Smooth fades and minimal transitions generate real engagement, as do embedded video, interactive games and photo galleries.

To that end, we have seen animated banners drive 57 percent higher click-through rates (CTRs), and the average consumer spends an additional 9 seconds with an ad when it features a game.

In the future, ads that tap into local image libraries, such as Flickr or Google, relative to the user's physical location, will enhance the creative, making the ad stand out and eliminating the need for multiple versions of a single creative execution.

Short and simple messaging drives performance
Strong, succinct and to the point calls-to-action (CTAs) such as "Add to Calendar", "Find Store", or "Save Coupon", yield real results.

According to research from NCH Marketing Services, on average, consumers redeem 8.9 percent of downloaded mobile coupons, and creative featuring deal-based messaging generates higher rates of initial and post-click engagement – up to 34 percent and 4.24 percent, respectively.

Furthermore, when optimizing beacon technology, a mobile campaign has the ability deliver location-specific offers and deals directly to the user during in-site visits.

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