

COLUMNS

## Riposte to Scotty Moore's screed to CMOs to stop all mobile advertising immediately

June 17, 2016



*Tobey Van Santvoord*

By **Tobey Van Santvoord**

Subscribe to **Luxury Daily**  
Plus: Just released  
State of Luxury 2019 **Save \$246 ▶**

In response to Scotty Moore's VentureBeat-published "[Open letter to CMOs: Stop all mobile advertising immediately](#)," yes, our industry does have a problem with mobile advertising. Marketers are wasting money on mobile campaigns that drive errant and fraudulent clicks, and they cannot tell if their ads are actually being viewed.

But the solution is not to "cease all mobile advertising effective today and build a better experience through branded apps." Rather, we as an industry need to collaborate marketers, publishers and tech partners to make mobile advertising better.

We need to establish standards for how we measure mobile, expose the bad actors and improve the consumer experience.

When marketers first realized that consumers watching television can change the channel, and that their ads may not be viewed despite show ratings that suggested otherwise and that it is hard to measure the impact, did they stop all TV advertising?

The task is not trivial, but there some simple things we can do to start.

### Throw out the click

Mobile ads tend to boast high click-through rates. Let us face it, though, are mobile ads that much better that people are clicking on them at a higher rate? Not likely.

Mobile ads get clicked when users are trying to close them and when they are trying to scroll down the page. It is the fat-finger phenomenon not to be confused with one major party candidate's "short-fingered vulgarian" phenomenon.

Marketers and technology providers have long debated the value of using click metrics.

There have been countless studies that have found that clicks have no correlation to purchase.

The design of mobile ads makes it very difficult for consumers to close the ad and reach the content that they are seeking, resulting in accidental clicks. Kudos to companies such as Google who started taking steps to address this issue last year.

Make mobile more native

One of the biggest failings of mobile advertising has been the industry's attempt to force desktop marketing solutions into mobile.

Consumers block or ignore advertising when it interrupts their experience and makes it hard for them to get the information they want.

Most mobile advertising is not engaging or personalized to the publisher environment or consumer experience.

Marketers need to collaborate with publishers to create an advertising experience that accommodates the size of the screen, highlights the brand and respects the consumer experience.

The challenge is doing this at scale and executing mobile campaigns without building individual publisher solutions.

Native companies such as AdsNative, Sharethrough and TripleLift can help power this evolution.

Do not run from fraud tackle it head-on

Fraud is something that has plagued brands in the desktop world for five years, and it is now inflicting mobile.

Where the eyeballs and budgets go, so go the fraudsters.

While it has taken time to wrestle the bot issue, and the job is still not complete, companies such as Integral Ad Science and WhiteOps have established standards and solutions for brand safety and fraud. Those efforts have given us a head start in mobile.

Companies such as Moat are doing great work to help marketers tackle viewability on mobile screens, a metric that fraudsters prey on.

Marketers need to engage with these early efforts to clean up. Do not run from the fraud. Tackle it head on.

Now, granted, branded applications are a great opportunity for marketers. Done properly, they build connection with consumers and integrate brands into an environment where the consumer has given permission to be marketed to.

But the reality is that consumers are not going to spend a material portion of their time in branded apps. They will continue to primarily use non-branded apps and mobile Web for things such as news, maps, weather and social media.

There is tremendous scale and efficiency to advertising in non-branded apps. Not to mention the obvious issue that brands need non-branded inventory to market their branded apps to consumers.

Rather than run away from mobile advertising, we need to work together to make it better for marketers.

SO WHAT IS the takeaway here?

The answer is not to abandon mobile advertising.

Nor is the answer to continue with the status quo.

The solution is to do the hard work to address the critical issues.

We need brands, publishers and tech companies at the table together, creating experiences that are good for consumers and that can be properly measured.

*Tobey Van Santvoord is regional vice president of sales for [Dstillery](#), San Francisco. Reach him at [tobey@dstillery.com](mailto:tobey@dstillery.com).*