

MOBILE

Did Neiman Marcus miss the mark with its mobile banner ads?

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By RACHEL LAMB

Department store chain Neiman Marcus may have missed the mark when incorporating banner ads into its mobile marketing strategy by not linking content to an optimized site.



The brand's placement in the fashion section on The New York Times mobile site advertised shoes on the Neiman Marcus Web site, but connected to a non-optimized version of the page. Although this mishap could be frustrating for consumers, they should not completely write off Neiman Marcus.

"It's a mixed bag," said Jason Goldberg, vice president of strategy and customer experience for CrossView, Portland, OR. "An important role that display advertising plays is in creating passive awareness.

"But for shoppers who are engaged enough to click on the call to action, it's critical that the landing page behind that banner ad be highly relevant to the shopper," he said.

"Sending a mobile shopper to a landing page that isn't optimized for their mobile device is the easiest way to ensure that the shopper won't find your page relevant."

Mr. Goldberg is not affiliated with Neiman Marcus, but agreed to comment as an industry expert.

Neiman Marcus was not able to comment before press deadline.

Different fashion

The New York Times mobile site is full of banner ads, including those from Google and Fontainebleau.

However, Neiman Marcus took up real estate on the fashion and style section of the site, likely looking to engage fashion-forward mobile users.

The brand's ad was found right under the masthead and above the search bar.

The yellow ad had the Neiman Marcus logo on the left, three pairs of shoes in the middle and "pumps" on the right.

Consumers who clicked on the ad were brought to the 10 Crosby Derek Lam page on the Neiman Marcus page. Unfortunately, it was non optimized and consumers had to pinch-and-zoom to see the content.

This could easily frustrate consumers who were not able to enjoy their shopping experience because of the non-optimized content.

"This audience is not only often on the go, but they are engaging with the ad on a limited-form factor device," said Scott Forshay, mobile and emerging technologies strategist for Acquity Group, Austin, TX.

"To direct the tap on a mobile display ad to a site that is not mobile-optimized, where consumers are forced to pinch and stretch the screen to view it, is a terrible user experience," he said. "While non-optimized sites can be adequately viewed on tablet devices, brands cannot simply assume that its target audience is viewing the ad on that form factor."

Hard landing

Neiman Marcus is not the only brand to have executed in this fashion.

For instance, Tiffany & Co. had the right idea when marketing on the highly-visited New York Times iPhone application, but the jeweler could have missed the mark by not optimizing the landing pages and therefore possibly missing an opportunity for sales and consumer engagement (see story <https://www.luxurydaily.com/does-the-tiffany-ad-campaign-on-the-new-york-times-app-need-polishing/>).

Additionally, Italian handbag and footwear designer Salvatore Ferragamo could have missed out on possible mobile commerce sales by not linking advertisements to an optimized site following its banner ads in the New York Times app (see story <https://www.luxurydaily.com/does-the-tiffany-ad-campaign-on-the-new-york-times-app-need-polishing/>).

Nonetheless, brands can still benefit from banner ads, even if the execution is not perfect.

"Many shoppers will see a brand promise or a promotional message in a banner ad,

never click on the ad, but will be influenced by the message of that ad,” CrossView’s Mr. Goldberg said.

“Those impressions still occur when the banner ad isn't linked to a mobile-optimized landing page,” he said. “So in that sense, the ads aren't useless.”

Final Take

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