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5 tips to ensure the effectiveness of mobile ad campaigns

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With the experience from helping hundreds of marketers set up in-application mobile campaigns, the following tips from the front-lines are proven strategies that marketers can practice to ensure that their mobile ad campaigns are set up for success.

Here are the five tips.

Select the right ad partner

Selecting the right mobile solution partner depends on a number of factors that are specific to your individual needs as a marketer.

Consideration #1: How do you like to work?

Ad networks offer self-service and managed services. If you are not entirely confident setting up and managing your campaigns, then an ad network offering managed services is a good fit.

On the other hand, if you have experience managing mobile ad campaigns and the resources to do so, the self-service set up offers freedom and control.

Consideration #2: Incentivized versus non-incentivized environment

In an incentivized environment, a mobile user is rewarded for interacting with your ad message.

Brand marketers are starting to use incentivized traffic to drive more engagement with content. However, since the consumer has been incentivized to interact, the mobile users who engage with your ad may not be representative of your desired target audience.

A non-incentivized environment does not lure users to an ad by offering them a perk for their participation. Both strategies have their place in mobile advertising.

However, non-incentivized traffic is still the leader in quality simply because users who engage with such ads are genuinely interested in your content. This is the leading type of traffic for both brand marketers and app marketers.

Select the right mix of ad units

Mobile ads have evolved from traditional banner placements. It is vital to understand how specific ad types are served and which are best for your campaigns.

Repurposing creative from your online campaign, for example, may not translate for specific types of mobile ad formats.

There a variety of ad formats to consider, from standard banner display and Interstitials, animated ads, video and rich media ads and app walls when appropriate, to non-traditional units such as audio ads featuring gyroscopic (shake functionality) and highly immersive floating ads.

Native ads for mobile – a hot topic lately – are designed to integrate more seamlessly within the app, and therefore offer a less disruptive experience for users, resulting in impressive ad engagement and conversion.

Talk to your ad partner about which formats are best suited to the type of campaign you are running.

Select the right bidding model

Make sure you are bidding appropriately using the financial model that best aligns with your campaign content and goals.

Identifying the right model will help achieve your desired results as economically and efficiently as possible.

For marketers whose primary objectives include brand awareness and deepening engagement – brands, we are looking at you – CPM (cost-per-thousand-impressions) is a suitable model to consider.

Marketers with highly recognizable and familiar brands often attract user attention and earn high engagement rates, and therefore will benefit by serving ads to as many users as possible.

If brand exposure and casting a wide net are your main campaign goals, CPM and CPC (cost per click) models are very efficient for driving large volumes on RTB (real-time bidding) networks.

If you are a marketer of an app whose primary goal is user acquisition (aka driving downloads of your app,) these types of campaigns are typically suited to a CPI (cost-per-install) model as you will only pay for installs of your app.

CPA/CPE (cost per action/engagement) campaigns are offered by some ad networks and are useful in driving a higher potential for lifetime value of users, (e.g., calculated by tracking specific in-app events such as when a user finishes the first level of a game).

However, RTB networks optimize in real-time and such campaigns have trouble driving large volumes of actions due to the delay in tracking these events.

Target broadly, then refine

Marketers with loads of data about their customers and target audience often make the mistake of targeting too narrowly on mobile, thus eliminating many potential customers.

A broad, fundamental targeting strategy works well on a basic level to get you started.

Tried and true targeting abilities include:

- Device: target the platforms where your app is available
- Carrier: different carriers appeal to various demographics
- Geo-location: consider language, local relevance, special offers and weather-related content
- Demographic: consider age, income and education
- Contextual: consider special interests and app environments

After you discover which basic parameters deliver results, continue to refine your targeting.

There are a range of advanced targeting techniques that can connect you to audiences who may be interested in your product.

Keep in mind that how you target will affect the number of people you will reach. The broader your approach, the more users you are likely to reach, although quantity does not always equate to quality.

On the flip side, more specific targeting has the potential to bring down scale since the more parameters you set, the narrower the potential audience may become.

Test multiple creative sets at regular intervals

Mobile advertising is a delicate balance of art and science.

Split testing to compare two sets of creative will help you identify the campaign attributes (offer, design, messaging) that perform best.

Once a winning campaign is evident, you can test it against a new creative version.

The goal is to continually test, optimize and improve performance over time by rotating in the creative versions that work hardest for you.

Testing different ad versions helps prevent ad-fatigue and banner blindness and will ensure that you are continually putting your best campaign forward.

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