RESEARCH INSIGHTS

To account planners, client service directors, CCOs, creative directors, digital production contacts, frequent research users, interactive development directors, interactive management directors, interactive media placement directors, media research directors, research directors and SFNAs.

Research Insights | What Makes for Successful Mobile Creative?"

U.S. spending on mobile advertising is expected to exceed $1.1 billion in 2011, according to projections from both BIA/Kelsey and eMarketer. Three-quarters of companies responding to a recent ANA-MMA Mobile Marketing Survey intend to increase their mobile marketing spending this year. Furthermore, eMarketer reports that consumers spend an average of 50 minutes a day on their mobile devices, and time spent with mobile devices is rising faster than all other media.

Chances are if you're not already involved in mobile marketing, you will be soon. Here's what you need to know to help you craft mobile creative.

The following research brief was drafted exclusively for the 4A's by Dynamic Logic, a leading research firm. Special thanks to Paul Edwards, Research Executive, Dynamic Logic for this important piece that provides actionable advice for developing successful mobile advertising creative.

Key Insights:
- *Advertisers and agencies should NOT simply adopt the same creative approach they use for their online campaigns to their mobile campaigns*
- *On average, mobile campaigns greatly outperform online campaigns against five standard branding metrics*
- *The location of a brand name or logo within a mobile ad can have a strong impact on advertising recall*
- *Clear and persistent branding is important for brand awareness*
- *Encouraging interactivity and engagement are advantageous for mobile campaigns.*

Marge Morris
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What Makes for Successful Mobile Creative?

Important Creative Elements to Optimize Mobile Ad Performance
By Paul Edwards, Research Executive at Dynamic Logic

What makes for successful mobile creative? Should advertisers and agencies seeking to advertise on mobile devices simply adopt the same creative approach they use for their online campaigns?

Dynamic Logic has repeatedly demonstrated that creative quality is an important factor in the success of an online advertising campaign.[i] But while many of the best practices for online creative hold true for mobile creative, the most successful mobile campaigns include additional important creative elements. Based on data from MarketNorms®, the world's leading digital ad effectiveness database made up of 6,000+ online and 110+ mobile campaigns, the research included in this report identifies several creative elements that advertisers and agencies can adopt to maximize the creative impact of their mobile campaigns.
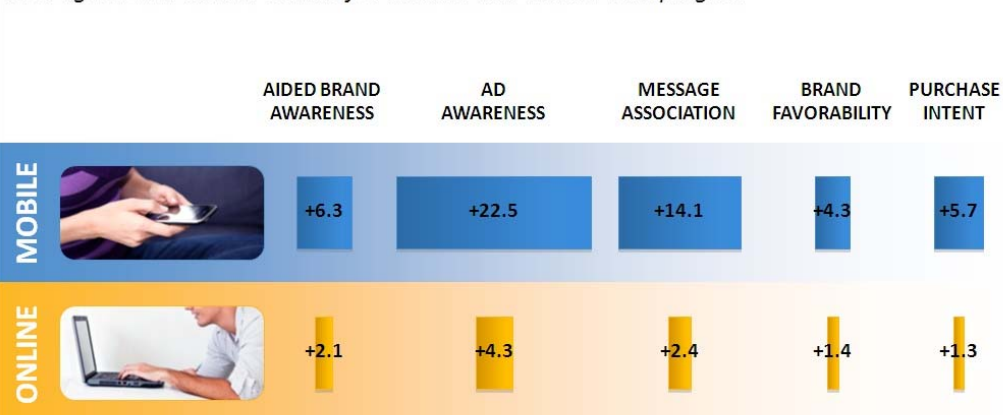
These elements are not intended to be a foolproof recipe for success – other factors such as targeting, technical execution, flight size and length, etc., also need to be in place to generate high performance. But we have found that the following creative elements and their underlying principles are associated with high performance in important branding measures such as ad awareness and purchase intent across campaigns from multiple industries.

The Added Impact of Mobile Ads

While mobile advertising is still in its infancy when compared to online campaigns, it has proven to be a very successful method for impacting the viewer. Dynamic Logic's mobile norms show that on average, mobile campaigns greatly outperform online campaigns across our five standard branding metrics. [ii]

Mobile Outpaces Online Ads
Average Brand Metric Deltas for Mobile and Online Campaigns:

	AIDED BRAND AWARENESS	AD AWARENESS	MESSAGE ASSOCIATION	BRAND FAVORABILITY	PURCHASE INTENT
MOBILE	+6.3	+22.5	+14.1	+4.3	+5.7
ONLINE	+2.1	+4.3	+2.4	+1.4	+1.3

Source: Dynamic Logic MarketNorms® for Online, last 3 years through Q3/2010, N=2,461 campaigns, n=3,713,053 respondents; AdIndex® for Mobile Norms through Q3/2010, N=110 campaigns, n=92,547 respondents
Delta (Δ)=Exposed-Control

There are a number of factors that may contribute to the relative advantage of mobile ads, including:

- The novelty of mobile advertising
- The relatively larger proportion of the mobile screen devoted to the advertisement
- More focused ad copy and content due to size or technology constraints
- Consumer acceptance of mobile advertising.

Mobile display advertising has the unique ability to show a more focused amount of content given screen size constraints. Mobile phone users are also generally receptive of mobile advertising, especially when there is free content in exchange for having advertising present. "Mobile consumers are progressively more accepting of advertising on their devices, but they also expect something tangible in return for their attention."[iii]

As a result of these factors, mobile advertising has the ability to break through more than online, which may particularly explain the large average deltas (delta = percentage change between control and exposed) seen in the measures of mobile ad awareness. Three characteristics in particular are associated with high impact in this focused medium – left-side brand placement, a strong call-to-action and clear branding throughout the creative. Furthermore, these creative elements are associated with high performance in different brand metrics, opening up the possibility that advertisers and agencies can optimize their creative to best meet the specific branding goals of the campaign.

Left-Side Brand Placement Builds Mobile Ad Awareness

The location of a brand name or logo placed within a mobile ad can have a strong impact on respondents' recall of the brand's advertising on a mobile phone. In the MarketNorms mobile database, more than one-half of the top-performing campaigns display the brand name or logo on the left side of the creative. Mobile ads are generally displayed above the content in a leaderboard format, which takes advantage of how viewers tend to look at the top left of the screen initially. The left-side placement is likely a reason why respondents who only briefly glimpse at the creative can still recall seeing an ad for the specific brand. Nearly two-thirds of the bottom-performing mobile campaigns do not adhere to this design.

Persistent Branding is Important for Brand Awareness

While mobile may out-perform other advertising mediums, there are lessons to be learned if we compare the top and bottom 20% of mobile campaigns. Many of the trends we observe in the bottom 20% of mobile campaigns are the same ones that lead their online counterparts to falter. Both mobile and online campaigns with a weak brand presence can be hampered in their attempts to build brand awareness.

In fact, the absence of clear branding on each frame within a creative sequence is a common problem among mobile campaigns that perform poorly on brand awareness and mobile ad awareness metrics. Mobile ads only have a brief window of time to make an impact on a viewer. Respondents are quick to scroll or swipe through the content on a mobile phone; creative that does not have clear branding on the first frames will likely be missed.

A Strong Call-to-Action Builds Persuasion

Campaigns with the strongest performance on measures of purchase/behavior intent often tend to include a call-to-action, with many offering an incentive. Implementing options for interactivity by directing the viewer to perform a specific action encourages a viewer to spend more time with the ad. Holding a viewer's attention slightly longer is beneficial when there is a small window of time to convey the limited creative messaging. Offering something "tangible," such as a free app or incentive (e.g., sweepstake, coupon), is advantageous for mobile campaigns.

Who Are Mobile Campaigns Reaching?

Audience demographics also play a role in the success of a mobile campaign, although the impact for most variables is not as pronounced as one might expect. The largest impact for mobile campaigns is typically seen among the youngest audience (18–34 years old). Persuasion metrics tend to be the most difficult to impact among the 50+ age group, as seen in the lower non-significant deltas. Nevertheless, the differences between the youngest and the oldest age groups are not substantial, particularly in awareness metrics, indicating that all age groups are able to be influenced. When it comes to gender, mobile campaigns on average are generally more effective among females, slightly outperforming males in both awareness and persuasion metrics. Consumers from all income brackets are being impacted by mobile campaigns with comparable awareness metric deltas. However, those in the highest income bracket show the strongest average delta in Purchase Intent.

Heavy mobile Internet users (1+ times/day), a possible measure of frequency, tend to be more persuaded by mobile campaigns. Mobile creative that is well-branded may be able to impact brand and ad awareness after only one exposure. However, persuading a viewer of the benefits of the brand or any calls-to-action may require extra views, especially on creatives with multiple frames that aren't seen on first glance.

Industry Differences

Mobile advertising campaigns are particularly successful among consumer packaged goods (CPG) brands, with strong deltas seen in both awareness and persuasion metrics. CPG campaigns may be able to utilize the smaller ad size more efficiently by showing only a brand logo, product shot and simple messaging. Females are greatly outperforming males within the CPG category with larger deltas seen predominately in Mobile Ad Awareness and Purchase Intent. Other industries, such as Financial Services, may need more space and text to fully describe their offerings. This is not to say that higher involvement mobile campaigns are not effective, as deltas among these campaigns still outperform the average online campaign; they may simply require more attention to the design of the creative execution.

Conclusion

In conclusion, by incorporating these mobile creative elements, brands can achieve better-performing mobile campaigns. Successful mobile creative should be designed with brand logo placement, a strong call-to-action and clear branding throughout the creative in mind.

Determining what makes mobile ad campaigns successful, and with what audience, requires more on-going research. However, Dynamic Logic's MarketNorms shows that the success or failure of a mobile campaign is strongly influenced by the design of the creative.

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[i] "Online Creative Best Practices," Dynamic Logic, 2010.
[ii] See definitions of key branding metrics, Dynamic Logic
[iii] "Mobile Consumers See Value in Advertising." eMarketer.com, 10/11/2010