

Digital Ad Creative Best Practices

How to Make Your Message Count

Ad messaging is everywhere. On the streets, in our homes, on our screens—how will you make sure your ad yields results?

Scroll for More

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Keep the Headline Brief!

Stick to one idea—and say it right away.

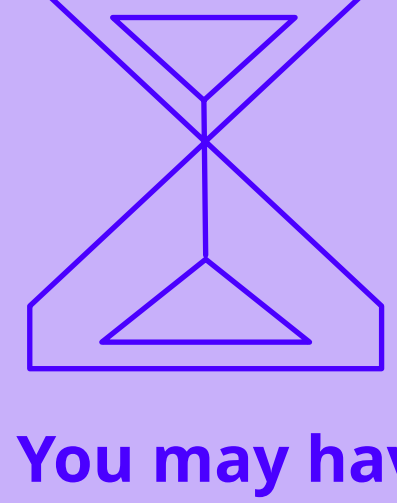
Call to Action

Use a button that stands out from other elements.

Ads at 728x90 size receive top-of-page positioning on desktop, snagging attention before the scroll.

Attention Spans are Short

Whatever you have to say, say it—quickly. Don't bury the big idea in unnecessary detail. Use the fewest, plainest words needed to convey your message.



You may have as little as 1.3 seconds to engage a consumer.

Source: OMD Worldwide, "OMG and Yahoo: When Consumers Pay Attention To Ads, When They Don't," 2022.

2

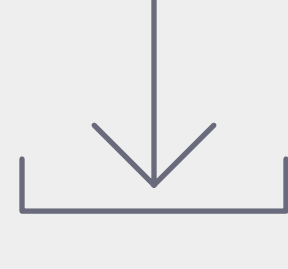
Tell the Audience What to Do

Provide a clear, simple CTA so audiences know what action to take. The catchiest ads in the world mean nothing if the audience can't follow through. Make your CTAs meet WCAG standards so they're accessible to everyone.*

Your KPI Should Help Determine the CTA



CTR?
"Click Here"
"Visit Us"



Downloads?
"Get the App"
"Download Today"



Purchases?
"Shop Now"
"See Our Products"



Form Fills?
"Contact Us"
"Reach Out Today"

*Web Content Accessibility Guidelines

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Create Urgency

Nothing drives action like FOMO. Whether that's an event deadline, a promotional offer, or a chance to save money, the consumer needs to know that sooner is better—even when the goal is awareness.

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Pull in Eyes and Clicks

Movement—animation—performs better than static. If your ad is the only thing moving on a still page, eyes automatically go there. But movements need to lead the viewers toward your message and CTA.

- Visual hierarchy tells audiences what's most important.
- Be mindful of color schemes—clashing colors compete for attention instead of directing flow.
- Be tasteful. Excessive movement like flashing can be nauseating or worse for audiences.
- Direct movement inward towards the important part of the ad.

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Speak to Personas

Your ad is targeted. It's reaching a specific group—tailor your copy, message, and design accordingly. Let your audience know you're speaking to them in particular.

Thought Starters

- Directly address your audience—i.e. "hey Moms!"
- Mention a pain point you can solve.
- If it's a location-based target, name the city/place.
- Exclude attributes that don't apply to most of your audience.

Do You Need A New Ride?

We have the biggest new & pre-owned car inventory in Dallas!

See What's on the Lot

505 Fake Dealership Rd. Dallas, TX 00000



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Plan for Devices & Platforms

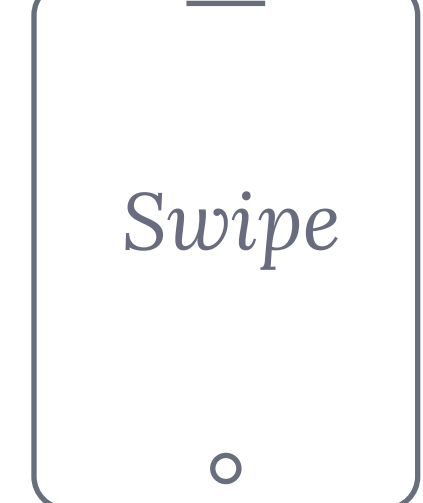
Odds are you're running an ad in multiple places. Make the design dynamic to those placements.



Computer
Cursors click buttons; add mouseover effects to get attention.



Mobile
Tapping isn't precise. Use larger buttons. Orient videos vertically.



Tablet
Gestural navigation cues (swipes, zooms, etc.)

Colors differ across devices. Preview on multiple screens!

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Stick the Landing

Wherever the ad links to, make it visually match. If the ad features a product or image, show it again in the landing page. Your brand elements like logos and colors need to stay consistent. Don't bait-and-switch when it comes to the design, or the audience will think they're in the wrong place.

A 468x60 banner has very little space. It relies on the landing page to extend the message. Having the same icon, same colors, same fonts, and same subject matter helps prevent bounces.

Bonus Tip: Set your links as UTM codes to enable traffic attribution to specific creatives.

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Analyze Data Before and After

Any information from past ads is useful—if they worked, look at why they worked. If they didn't, consider why and learn from it. Test before launch, too—put yourself in the shoes of the audience or conduct pre-testing when budget allows.

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It's All in the Name

Keep naming conventions for your ad files. In reports, creatives will be described by the file name. If you're using the campaign, variant, and specs are in the name it makes data easy to understand.

"SoupAd_Red_300x600.jpg" drove more clicks than "SoupAd_Blue_728x90.jpg" is more useful information than "untitled-9.jpg" outperformed "untitled-6.jpg"

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Optimize, Optimize, Optimize

To reiterate: you have seconds to catch attention. Files that load quickly have more to be noticed and drive action. A clunky, slow-loading ad is easy to scroll past.

Save your files at the smallest size that doesn't sacrifice quality.



Performance today.
Eyes on tomorrow.