

7 Elements of Highly Effective Online Ads

4 MIN READ



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Online advertising can be a mystery. Sometimes ads unexpectedly perform abysmally, while others flourish for no rhyme or reason. There are, however, ways to make your ads stand out to get that elusive click through.

So, what makes a great ad? It's not always the flashiest or biggest ads that get the attention, but rather a myriad of factors that make your ad successful.

As a publisher that offers online advertising opportunities, we're in a unique position to share the elements that must be attended to when developing a great online ad:

(1) Aesthetics

This may be the most obvious element to consider, but having a well-designed ad is essential. Avoid cramming too many words or images on the ad and focus on the most important information.

Is the name of the event going to draw attention? If so, feature that prominently. Is there a stirring or recognizable production photo that will speak for itself? If yes, showcase it.

Most importantly, no matter if it's an image, text, or both, make sure it is readable and legible in all sizes.

(2) Clear calls to action

Customers like to know where they are being taken, and to take the path of least resistance. If you include a "Buy Tickets" graphic on your ad that brings them to an information page and they must click again to get to the part where they buy tickets, you'll lose plenty of them.

Make sure the call to action you use on your ads matches the action. If you're giving them more information, send them to an informational landing page. If they're being called to buy tickets, send them directly to the purchase page.

Bonus points if there's an exclusive deal associated with the ad because most consumers love discounts and click more if there is a special offer waiting for them.

(3) Less is more/quality over quantity

There is a balance here that is difficult to achieve. You want your ads to appear relatively often to remind people to think “Oh! I need to get tickets to that!” but you don’t want to over-serve your ad to the point that people get tired of them or desensitized to your message.

Billboard ad on TheaterMania.com promoting Come From Away

(4) Don’t be afraid of higher CPMs

Many [TheaterMania](#) clients choose [run of site](#) (ROS) for the lower CMP* and broader coverage. It’s a good option for people who want more eyeballs on the ad, but if you want actual clicks, placement does matter.

Bigger ads like billboards and half page ads run a higher CPM because they yield markedly better results. In addition to providing more room for design / information, they perform well because they are featured quite prominently on a site and the eye is drawn to it.

Persistent ads (like half page ads) that scroll with the user are also much more likely to be clicked than the static, stay-in-one-spot images. Billboards that are on the top of the screen tend to get better results because they’re the first thing viewed by site visitors.

In the same vein, welcome mats and other high impact items see substantially better click-through rates because they can call attention to the product immediately.

(5) Mobile friendly

That’s not to say that small ads don’t perform. More and more consumers are ditching their desktops and have become massive [mobile media consumers](#). There are still many options for great mobile units, but design is even more critical in such a small space.

Don’t cram too much information into a mobile banner because you risk muddling the message. Spring for a mobile billboard if you want more space, or just keep it simple for small ads.

(6) Timing

There is no golden rule for timing your ads, but there are some new considerations for when you should start running your ad. The pandemic has changed the way people shop for live events, with far more customers buying closer to show dates than before COVID.

So, while you want to start getting excitement and interest drummed up, it’s less important to do it months out than it was pre-pandemic, and more important to remind people that your show is coming up soon. Until COVID is truly under control, we expect consumers will continue to wait a bit before grabbing their tickets.

(7) Testing

Not sure which direction to go with your creative? Create two versions of your ad and use A/B testing (also known as split testing) to compare them by measuring the difference in performance.

After running both ad versions for a set period of time, you’ll be able to see which one performs better and can shift your focus to what works well in that ad. Digital media is incredibly flexible and swapping creative

isn't as arduous a task as it used to be, so taking the time to have more than one ad (which may become white noise if seen too often) can make your campaign a success.

We're here to help!

Many factors – design, proper CTAs, placement, [ad size](#), frequency and more – can influence the effectiveness of your ad campaign. Consider these elements and then test your creative to see what best resonates with your desired audience.

If you have additional questions about online ads, we're happy to help you. Please reach out to our team at advertising@theatermania.com.

*Cost per thousand (CPM), also called cost per mille, is a marketing term used to denote the price of 1,000 advertisement impressions on one web page