# A guide to Digital Display Advertising for small businesses

## Introduction to Digital Display Advertising

Display advertising is a form of online advertising that combines text, image and website URLs to engage with online users and help them find out more about a specific product. Display advertising can be a single image, video, animation or text, all of which fall into a variety of different formats with the help of creative assets. Some display ads are primarily used to educate consumers, while others prioritise engagement value through techniques such as puzzles, games and interactive animation.

The most recent full year IAB UK and PwC Digital Adspend Study (pre COVID-19) shows that UK advertisers spent 15.4% more (£15.69 billion) on digital advertising in 2019 than the previous year, while an eMarketer report from the US suggests that digital ads could make up more than half of the country's total ad spend by 2021.

There are many reasons for this growth - including ROI, costs, reach, targeting and attribution - but mainly brands are now able to utilise the platforms or DSPs (Demand Side Platforms) effectively themselves on a self-serve basis. This gives them full control over their spend and ability to effectively manage the campaigns to the benefit of the company, rather than via a third-party. For the first time, brands and marketers are now taking greater ownership of their display buying.

For SMEs, the main strengths of display advertising include being able to make a clear and easily distinguishable representation of your brand or product - clearly conveying key messaging - as well as the ease of creation. There is little need for complex integrations with publisher sites and advertisers can reach consumers at each stage of the marketing funnel.

In the age of personalisation, many display ads are now used to target consumers based on their online interests. Personalised ads incorporate general user behaviour and preferences to help brands reach their intended audience. According to a study by Accenture Interactive, 91% of consumers prefer to buy from brands that remember their interests and tailor offers to suit their needs.

## What marketing challenges is it best suited to?

With increasing emphasis on improving the quality of digital display ads (such as via the Coalition for Better Ads) you have a number of ways to reach your audience effectively using display advertising, without intruding on the end user.

Display advertising can be very effective in helping businesses with long-term brand building objectives. However, it's important to pick the right horse for the right course.

Rich media formats, such as skins that incorporate video and animation, have the ability to drive several times the engagement of standard ad formats. They can be highly effective in driving brand awareness and building equity for businesses of any size.

And, like most digital advertising, these ads can be targeted by geography, by website, by context or other factors, making sure you can reach the audience you want.

## How to reach your audience

Targeting your advertising offers multiple advantages. It means your investment is well spent, as you are only reaching those who are likely to purchase your products. It also means that you can tailor your message specifically to the people you are trying to reach, thereby making it more effective. Platforms give the buyer a plethora or targeting capabilities in order to achieve their campaign goals. These include:

- Geography: Targeting based on a user IP
- Context: Often the most important aspect to ensure that you target content that resonates with the ad i.e. targeting travel against travel, auto against auto. Performance rates can be improved by 10x if managed effectively.
- Audiences: Targeting audiences or segments is a common practice and can include age, demographics, socio-economic groups, interest and intent layers
- Devices: Targeting mobiles, tablets, desktops, gaming devices all taken from IP address
- Time: such as time of the day or day of week
- Retargeting segments: Reaching those who have visited a specific page on a website before (using pixel integrations)
- Formats: Large, small, rich, video format types
- Frequency capping: How many times you want a single user to see one of your ads in a chosen time period
- Inclusion lists: Chose a specific set of domains for your chosen campaign
- Viewability: Above / below the fold of the page

## Creative considerations

Creative is fundamentally the most important part of the process when it comes to display ads. What the end user views needs to be able to draw an instant reaction. Most display ads are in view for less than two seconds, so using formats and creatives that get instant attention are vital. This can be done by using video, interactive formats, enticing call to actions, product placements, personalisation and creating a sense of emotive connection. Other increasingly popular initiatives include dynamic creative optimisation (DCO), which include pushing a specific creative based on user behaviour.

## Media budget considerations

Budgets are dictated by the campaign objectives and the audience size. Too little spend will result in your ad becoming a mere drop in the ocean. Too large and the campaign could risk delivering too high a frequency of ads to a single user.

Most display campaigns have a minimum spend threshold of between £5k and £10k per month, but some publishers, networks and ad tech providers will have solutions for even the most limited budgets. When it comes to display, campaigns can easily be booked over a quarter or even yearly basis as spend is constantly optimised to chase new audiences and deliver the main campaign goals.

What strategy and formats to choose is often the most difficult decision to make. It really depends on what you're trying to achieve with your campaign. Larger, more complex formats are good for raising awareness, exciting and engaging users. Targeted or retargeted standard units are a cost-effective way of driving traffic to your site and turning this consideration into purchase intent.

## Technical considerations

Having a decent understanding of Excel is useful, but by no means a necessity. Display platforms come with highly intuitive workflows, custom and visual reporting making the decision processes needed at the human level extremely easy to grasp.

An understanding of advertising formats such as video can improve your approach to design-based thinking. The ability to approach issues from the perspective of the user is a fundamental skill that gives you a greater understanding of user experience. From empathising with and defining consumer intentions to creating ad prototypes, to testing your ads, the design-based approach can be effectively applied to consolidate your entire ad strategy.

You should also be data savvy, with a strong understanding of Google Analytics. Most display advertising campaigns rely on Google Analytics as a central hub for monitoring and reporting on ad performance. The trick is to convert the information gathered from GA into a resource for greater consumer behaviour understanding.

## Real-life campaign examples

Usually campaigns will have an 'always-on' approach to performance metrics that centre around data led activation with hyper-targeting, combined with larger branding bursts that contain a specific offer, tie to seasonal period and utilise the creative assets as a led mechanism for success. Some examples include:

https://insk.in/52bc15          https://insk.in/2l680s          https://insk.in/b6lf7b

https://insk.in/k492h2          https://insk.in/m74z43

# With thanks to the businesses who authored this guide:

Scoota's platform (DSP) is a self-serve tool designed to give marketers access to a range of media buying tactics to encourage highly engaging ad campaigns. Programmatic or real-time buying (RTB) is often dubbed as complicated, but it isn't. The platform allows you to build exciting creative, run it against your chosen targeting criteria and potentially deliver on a number of metrics. The platform has been built to tackle the three biggest challenges to the space in terms of transparency, brand safety and creative execution.

Inskin specialises in multi-screen, rich-media display advertising, partners with 190 publishers, works with over 1,000 blue-chip brand clients and delivers campaigns to more than 1,000 premium websites, globally.

It believes that well-designed, rich-media ad formats, with outstanding creative value, delivered in premium online environments encourages user attention more than any other form of brand advertising.