



A Richer Media Experience

A focused approach maximizes the rich media performance for pharmaceutical advertisers

Marketers who want to fully leverage the interactivity of online display ads can now use video, audio, data collection, coupons and many other interactive features that have enhanced the value of a rich media experience.

By Lee Freund

As rich media display advertising has developed over time, the opportunity to incorporate advanced features within a banner has exploded. Marketers now have tools available to incorporate just about any functionality of a Web site in their online display advertising.

The benefits of distributing messaging through interactive features in an opt-in format are highly documented. Interactions rates of 5 percent and higher are common achievements with today's rich media campaigns versus standard banner click-through rates of less than 0.5 percent. Today's rich media formats, including user-

initiated expandable ads such as PointRoll's FatBoy, provide marketers a versatile, opt-in creative palate that maximizes display ad messaging.

It is now possible to fully leverage the interactivity of the online medium through display ads that utilize video, audio, data collection, coupons, downloads, dynamic data, live feeds, viral e-mail, instant calendar reminders, text messaging and virtually any other interactive feature a marketer could ask for. Rich media's exponential growth over the past few years is a testament to the value users, marketers and publishers have all realized.

From as early as 2000, pharmaceutical advertisers pioneered the use of rich media. First, by using the enlarged palate to deliver fair balance content within an ad panel. Subsequently, as technology advanced, video and data collection features were added to improve communication of the message and engage “hand raisers”.... all this without the need for a click through.

On Rich media 2.0

Since 2000, pharmaceutical advertisers have leveraged PointRoll rich media on more than 1,000 campaigns. During this time, we have seen the number interactive features included in an ad grow. While clients have found adding features to a rich media ad can help extend the time users spend with an ad, it does not always achieve the campaign’s objective and at times, can even limit performance. A common theme we have seen in pharmaceutical rich media campaigns is less is more.

How many features should I put in my ad? In order to answer this question, you must know the answer to this question first: “What is the objective of my campaign?”

To be successful, your creative execution must start with the end in mind. Only then can you identify the right approach and features to include. However, this does not mean that you should put every feature in one ad. In fact, PointRoll has found the opposite has yielded the best results. Rather than putting all features in one ad, pharmaceutical advertisers who use several ads, each with a single focused feature, tend to have the strongest results.

Let’s say you are building creative for a new allergy medication campaign. It may make sense to include interactive regional pollen-season maps, a viral “tell a friend” instant e-mail, a data collection discount offer, and a 60-second television commercial. In the early days of rich media, most likely you would have created one ad with four panels. Each panel would contain one of these four features. One ad would be scoped, built, submitted to legal review and, once approved, set live across multiple sites and placements on the media plan. When reviewing campaign performance, you would see which features resulted in the most user activity and then determine whether the activities achieved the campaign goals.

This approach limits campaign performance in a several ways. For reasons varying from available time to effectiveness of design, users do not always navigate to the panel with the activity of most interest to them. It is impossible to design an ad that prioritizes all features at once.

One ad also minimizes the options for optimization beyond shifting impressions from one publisher to another. This is typically not an option without steep financial penalties for targeted high demand health content. Another drawback to having one ad with multiple features is that ad approval is frequently delayed due to rejection of one of the panels. When each panel is its own ad, it is possible to earn approval

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of individual ads and place in market without delay due to other panels still pending approval or revisions.

Using multiple ads with a single focused feature will drive the user to take the intended actions. Rather than have the pollen map or the data collection buried within one of four panels, upon interaction, a single panel ad drives the user directly to the pollen map or data collection offer. You may find users on one site on your plan are more inclined to utilize the map and on another site they are more inclined to sign up for the offer. When these features are each contained in their own ad, it is very easy to optimize the creative accordingly without affecting the media plan. This essentially allows you to maximize pollen map activity and data collection with minimal effort. A single ad with both features does not give you the levers necessary to make this simple adjustment.

Multiple ads also help reduce “banner burnout” by rotating creative over time. The ads can be sequenced in any order you wish to help tell a story and improve messaging. In addition to frequency, ads can be sequence based on interaction or a specific activity. Once a user signs up for the offer, the pollen map ad can be served next.

At times, it may make sense to use a “mother ship” ad that contains all feature panels. This can help extend time spent with the brand and provide additional learnings. This should be in addition to individual single feature “satellite” ads that enable more flexible optimization. Of course, with pharmaceutical marketing, there may be specific panel content that will be required in all ad versions. That’s OK, as long as the priority panel feature is showcased in the primary panel.

Single panel ads with focused features streamline messaging, drive user action, speed legal approval, reduce “banner burnout” and, most importantly, facilitate flexible optimization that maximizes performance. ■

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