Multiscreen Video: Get the size and the audience right

THE MULTI-GENERATIONAL VIDEO LANDSCAPE

It’s vital for marketers and publishers to understand each generation’s differing levels of receptivity toward advertising on different devices to ensure the brand is having a positive impact.

When it comes to multiscreen video, younger audiences are very sensitive to ad clutter. They’re more likely to be receptive to shorter ads and they demand engaging, relevant content from the brands appearing on their various devices, according to new research from Millward Brown.

Advertisers that don’t align their marketing, media and creative strategies to this trend will lose out.

Older consumers tend to be more accepting of ad clutter and longer video ads.

Millennials – and increasingly GenZ (those born after 1996) – can be incredibly sensitive to advertising on their mobile devices.

For this group, short 10-second ads have the most impact. By contrast 35-54 year olds are receptive to longer 30 second videos, more akin to the television spots that they grew up with. These longer video ads can work for younger audiences too, but they’re hypersensitive to context so getting the platform and the content right is essential to get noticed.

Media allocation and targeting are very important. Breaking down how creative and accompanying media influence attention and receptivity differently by cohort is an essential first step in deploying a marketing strategy. Nonetheless, marketers must ensure that a video performs well across all key digital screens if the targeting chosen by marketers does not distinguish between smartphones, tablets and PCs.

VIDEO BEST PRACTICES ACROSS GENERATIONS

Sixteen to 24 year olds watch about 49 minutes of video per day on their smartphones and 21 minutes on their tablets, so it’s crucial that marketers have a very nuanced and precise strategy for brand communications, via video, on these screens.

The Interactive Advertising Bureau (IAB) partnered with Millward Brown Digital, and marketing organization Tremor Video to produce the ‘Multiscreen Video Best Practices report. The group tested ads from automotive, consumer packaged goods and fast food restaurant brands.

The results reveal just how important it is for advertisers to have clear campaign objectives and a thorough understanding of their target audiences before beginning to create video content.

Once the objectives are clear, creative and media agencies must work closely with their clients to get the branding, the content, and the length of any video right for all devices.

Engaging content will persuade audiences to watch a video, but advertisers need to be sure from the start that their brands will be visible on smaller screens to get maximum return from their investment.

Logos, brand cues and closer product shots should be prominent but not intrusive, whether someone is watching on a smartphone or on a tablet.

We know that aided brand awareness still tests
slightly higher on a desktop computer because larger screen sizes can make watching content easier, and the same is true for smartphones.

It's no use avoiding the fact that many people want to skip an ad as soon as they can. This is the key reason why additional branding such as a static logo appearing throughout a video is important when considering mobile consumption habits.

Also, the TV technique of waiting until the end of a commercial to reveal the product doesn't work on mobile devices because audiences become bored quickly and may never see the end.

**DEVICE AFFECTS ENGAGEMENT**

There is no doubt that the device someone is using has a major impact on how engaged they become with a video and whether they are likely to share it or click through to a brand's website.

Ten-second videos on smartphones maximize results among millennials, and Tablets are likely to drive actions more than smartphones, with tablet video being engaging among non-millennials.

Nevertheless, even younger audiences will respond to a longer video when a brand is trying to communicate new or complex information.

**KEEPING IT SIMPLE**

One mistake brands and their agencies can make is to cram too much material into a short video ad.

Trying to communicate an excessive amount of information in the first few seconds can confuse viewers and brand messages are not conveyed effectively. That doesn't mean advertisers must lower their expectations. If compelling content is parsed into a series of shorter form ads, audiences will follow the narrative and, when the content is superb, even seek them out (see Foot Locker’s content like *Horse with Harden* and *Week of Greatness*).

Video is certainly becoming more important to advertisers but it's not enough to simply move a TV commercial on to mobile platforms and expect engagement when screen sizes and attention spans differ so widely.

It is fine, however, to re-edit a TV ad and the information it conveys for different mobile devices, especially as it tends to be premium content, which is so often lacking on mobile. An advertiser must consider how effective an ad will be once shortened. This means designing ads that can be effectively used across devices at the start.

If an advertiser gets its multiscreen video strategy right, the returns can be strong. The brand profile builds over time because consumers become used to strong content which they can access on different devices.

We all know that any ad must earn the right for attention on someone’s personal device. This is why effective targeting combined with relevant content which appeals to different generations, who may prefer different sized devices, is so critical.

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**Key Takeaways**

- Ensure creative and media agencies work together with the brand to produce effective video for multiscreen lengths and formats.
- Keep branding across screen sizes in mind early in the creative development process and develop ads that can be shortened for use across devices.
- Smartphones provide the best chance of engaging with younger consumers who prefer shorter videos.