Rich media best practices: Tips to boost engagement

First impressions count – and a high-impact rich media unit chock full of compelling content provides just the right way to engage your core audience and increase brand favorability. Research shows that if you deliver premium content, your customer will engage: The interaction rate of an expandable rich media banner is more than **45 times higher** than the standard banner click-through rate.

As a pioneer with more than 15 years of rich media experience, Sizmek offers these best practice recommendations to help you get the most out of your rich media campaigns.

**Campaign strategy and optimization: Get the most out of your ad spend**

- **Start the conversation with rich media.** A high-impact rich media ad delivers great brand exposure and reach, which you can then extend by using additional formats. Prioritize your campaign objectives and choose a wide variety of rich media, mobile, and instream formats to reach your target audience and ROI goals.

- **Keep the conversation going.** Using creative sequencing in your ads will allow you to tell a story over time and reduce attention burnout.

- **Extend campaigns across mediums the right way.** When online creative concepts are integrated into offline ones, their power is amplified — audiences who see both experience the effects more profoundly. It’s important not to just copy offline concepts onto online, but to adapt content for the specific channel, i.e., making sure your TV commercial’s length and messaging works online.

- **Say the right thing to your audience.** Dynamic creative optimization increases relevancy and personalization across your products or markets. By optimizing the consumer’s ad experience, you connect with them at a new level of authenticity while developing trust.

- **Use dynamic content to increase the cost effectiveness of your campaign.** You can take advantage of automated optimization within Sizmek MDX to test different messaging strategies and gain valuable insight from your target audience.

- **Delivering exclusive content** that is only available in your rich media ad can create a powerful connection with your target customer, helping to forge a special, more intimate relationship with them.

- **Reach more platforms and users.** Though rich media ads built in Flash are compelling, they can’t run everywhere, which limits their viewing potential. You can help ensure your rich media ads get seen by creating HTML5 units that play on all devices.

- **Use the right terms for the platform.** When ad units are designed specifically for mobile devices, ensure that “tappable” elements are large enough, and that non-mobile-compatible language such as “click” or “rollover” is avoided in favor of language such as “touch” and “tap.”
Formats and features: Stand out from the crowd

- **Use high-impact formats**, such as Billboard, Portrait, and Sidekick (see more at www.iab.net/risingstars). These provide a much larger canvas on which to showcase your content and can increase overall time spent on your ad. Homepage takeovers also offer a way to cut through the clutter and grab your target user’s attention.

- **Increase the utility of your ad** with Sizmek Blocks (prebuilt interactive code snippets), which can help you by pulling in relevant information, such as weather, store locations, and much more, while reducing production time and costs.

Ad interaction: Increase customer engagement

- **Rich media containing interactive video** is 37% more effective than rich media without it*, and can be one of the most effective tactics to drive brand engagement.

- **Rollover-to-expand can lower the barrier to engagement** versus click-to-expand ads. Users are also more likely to engage while staying on the page they’re already viewing. Helpful hint: Ensure that the “hot area” for the rollover activation is large enough and placed near the center of the ad to decrease accidental roll-offs.

- **Multiple ad panels help give you the greatest creative flexibility.** Each panel can contain different types of content (videos in one, photos in another) so that the user stays focused and the ad is streamlined. Plus you can track the amount of time a user spends on each panel and gain insight into what works best for the customer.

- **Include social sharing options on the end frame** to allow users to share quickly and effortlessly. By using word of mouth to influence friends and followers, you can extend your paid media dollars to a whole new set of consumers who may have been missed in the original media buy.

- **Make the content available three times as long as your actual goal for consumption** to get the results you want. For example, if the goal is 30 seconds of engagement, make sure you have 90 seconds of content for the user to view.

*Based on data from the Sizmek H1 2014 Worldwide Benchmarks Report
Messaging: Key to building your brand

- **Don’t miss out on easy ways to reinforce branding.** Keep the brand name or product prominently displayed on all panels of the ad.

- **Ads don’t have to be complicated to be effective.** Keep the messaging copy simple, with clear directions on how to take the desired action and fonts that are large enough to be read quickly.

- **Allow users to see your content again.** When you offer a replay button, you provide users with another chance to see messaging they may have missed in the initial animation cycle.

Call to action: Motivate your customers to take action

- **Highlight the value exchange for your users.** Let them know what they will get in return for their action (click or touch). For example, your users can receive a coupon, watch the full trailer, download a whitepaper, or get something else of significance to the audience.

- **Include a call to action (CTA).** Adding a CTA in the right places can make all the difference in generating leads. Ensure that a strong CTA is clearly visible, consistent, and precise throughout your ad – generic CTAs such as “learn more” are usually too vague to entice users to take action.

HAVE QUESTIONS?

Contact your Sizmek account representative to find out how you can hone your rich media campaigns to get the best results.