Create effective responsive display ads

Official guide to responsive display ads and standard image ads.

The three critical elements of a display ad are the image, message, and design. This checklist outlines how to create effective responsive display ads and standard image ads so that you can drive better performance with your Display campaigns.

1. Determine whether you're optimizing for more efficiency or control

- If you want to drive more efficiency with your display ads, use responsive display ads.

Why: Responsive display ads use machine learning to create relevant ads that can fit anywhere across the web.

Get started: Create a responsive display ad.

- If you want full creative control over your display ads, use standard image ads.

Why: You can customize the colors, fonts, and layouts used in your ads.

Get started: Create a standard image ad.

2. Craft a message that is relevant and compelling

- Tailor your display ads to the different stages of the purchase funnel.

Why: Delivering the right message at the right moment can encourage response and help guide customers to purchase.

- Include unique selling points, prices and promotions.

Why: Make it easy for people to differentiate your service or products from competitors. People are also more likely to engage with ads that help them self-select before they click.

Get started: Update your display ads.

3. Make the most of your responsive display ads

- Provide as many distinctive headlines, descriptions and images as possible.

Start with at least 5 images, 5 short headlines and 5 descriptions.

Why: On average, advertisers see 10% more conversions at a similar CPA when using multiple headlines, descriptions, and images with responsive display ads (versus a single set of assets).[1]

Get started: Update the headline on your responsive display ad.

- Write your long headline so it can stand alone, and make full use of the character limit.

Why: Long headlines can be shown without the description. 90-character headlines often perform better when shown in the context of a publisher's site.

- Make your description text different from your longer headline.

Why: Descriptions and headlines aren't guaranteed to show in their entirety, but you still want to avoid duplicating messaging on those placements that allow for more text.

Get started: Update the description on your responsive display ad.

- Upload images with a strong visual focus and minimal text overlay, or choose from our free library of stock images.

Why: Relevant images that support the main point of your ads tend to perform the best.

Get started: Take a look at our rich media ads gallery for creative ideas.

- Include your logo.

Why: Adding a logo will increase the number of placements you'll be eligible for.

Get started: Add a logo to your responsive display ad.

- Add a dynamic feed.

Why: This helps you show more tailored ads to people who previously visited your site or app.

4. Create beautiful, high-performing standard image ads

- Upload your standard image ads in high-definition (HD) sizes.[2]

Why: Ads with clear and crisp images are more likely to stand out.

Get started: Upload double-sized images to get started. For example, a 640 x 100 image for a 320 x 50 ad slot.

- Include the five most popular standard image sizes.

Why: The top five sizes (300 x 250, 728 x 90, 160 x 600, 320 x 50, 300 x 600) can be automatically resized to fit 95% of the available placements across 3M+ apps and websites.

Get started: Upload standard image ads in different sizes.

- Use HTML5 to create interactive or animated image ads.

Why: Interactive or animated elements can help focus attention on your copy and call-to-action.

Get started: Check your ads using the Google Ads HTML5 validator.

- Ensure the message on your landing page matches the message in your ad.

Why: This can have a positive impact on your users, conversion rate and quality score.

5. Test and optimize your display ads

- Test multiple creative messages and images in your high volume ad groups.

Why: Multiple versions let you test and optimize for best-performing elements.

- Don't forget lessons learned from earlier ad optimizations.

Why: You've been optimizing your creative for a long time. Previous insights can also apply just as well to new responsive display ads or standard image ads.

- Consider setting your ad rotations to optimize automatically.

Why: Improving ads is a trial-and-error process. With many ad tests running, it may be difficult to keep track of all of those moments when statistical significance is reached.

Get started: Change the ad rotation setting for your Display campaign.

- Rotate in fresh display ads every few weeks. *If you're using responsive display ads, swap out poor performing creative assets for new ones.*

Why: Even great banners can become less effective over time. Ad rotation prevents people from developing ad fatigue.

- If you want to drive offline sales with your display ads, use location extensions or local catalog ads.

Why: Local formats for Display ads automatically include rich location and product information using your Google My Business account or product feeds. Show your store hours, photos and more to help drive more foot traffic to your store.

To learn more best practices for Google Display ads, check out our guide Making the Most of Display Advertising.

To learn how to create an effective display ad, try the "Create Display Ads That Click with Your Customers" lesson in the Primer app. Launch this lesson in Primer.