4 Tips for your LinkedIn Ad Creative

For FinServ Marketers

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→ What makes a consumer stop their thumb when scrolling LinkedIn?

→ What causes them to resist hitting the "Skip Ads" button when watching a YouTube video?

→ What's the difference between an ad that attracts eyeballs and one that makes your eyes glaze over?

Questions like these — questions of just what, exactly, makes for compelling ad creative — have plagued marketers since the inception of advertising.

And they're especially pertinent now in the crowded, hypercompetitive world of financial services marketing. With the multitudes of credit cards, banks, insurance providers, payment apps and investing platforms, each of them promising the best rates, the lowest fees and the most attentive service… well, it can be hard to understand how to make your advertising stand out from the crowd. You know better than anyone else, you've got to "show them the money."

For decades, advertisers had no choice but to rest on their best educated guess. Creatives would try to cater to the fickle tendencies of consumers, media executives would try to measure its effect on sales and the resultant analysis was a crude approximation.

But it's a brave new world. Technology now enables us to gauge the effectiveness of ad creative with unprecedented depth and more accurately identify what makes an ad resonant with consumers.

Here at VidMob we get excited by the opportunity to measure what matters. Based on recent client discussions and user feedback, we became curious to investigate what makes financial services ads successful on LinkedIn.

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The key, it turns out, is in the details.

The difference between a successful ad campaign and a flop can be as particular as whether the ad is set indoors or outside, where a model directs her gaze, or if the video features text in its first 2 seconds.

In a new study of video ads on LinkedIn, VidMob examined more than 26,000 ads generating a combined 51 million impressions. Our technology allowed us to analyze the specific visual elements of each ad — from the colors used to the facial expressions on the models. We then compared these results with the performance metrics for each campaign to determine which techniques had the greatest effect on consumers.

Our study identified several creative strategies that have a clear and profound effect on consumer engagement. That is, we know the creative strategies that produce more engagement, a higher conversion rate and a greater return on advertising spend.

Whether it's a credit card offering a 50,000 point sign-up bonus or an investment app with no commission trading, our technology was able to identify the best marketing practices — both in general, and for each specific brand.

Collectively, these results show that it pays to sweat the small stuff — and that the characteristics of an influential digital ad are often counterintuitive.

Methodology

18,884 video campaigns
26,000 video ads
51 million impressions

We analyzed 18,884 video campaigns on LinkedIn from different financial services brands — everything from credit card companies to stock trading apps — for a total of 26,000 video ads and more than 51 million impressions.

The ads appeared on LinkedIn over a period of more than three years, from January 1, 2018 to May 31, 2021.

Agile Creative Studio — our proprietary, AI-powered, visual image processing software — evaluated every visual

component of these ads, frame by frame, to determine what creative strategies were deployed. The software tracks everything from the color scheme of the ad, to the eye gaze of the models used in the ad to the text prompts used in call-to-action buttons.

Our visual analysis was then compared to the engagement and conversion rates for each campaign to determine which creative decisions have the most impact on consumers.

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Here's what works:

Wear your heart on your sleeve

One of the more obvious results of our analysis is that consumers respond to emotion. The view rate, defined as viewing a video for at least 2 seconds, was **2.5 times higher for ads in which models had particularly animated, emotive facial expressions (compared to models who had muted, neutral affects). When models conveyed happy or neutral emotions, the conversion rate was 76% higher compared to negative emotion.**

Advertising, at its core, is about eliciting an emotional response in consumers, persuading them to desire the product or service being advertised. So it only makes sense consumers would be more swayed by models displaying intense emotional reactions.

Be direct

Less obvious, however, is the effect eye gaze has on consumer engagement. Consumers seem to prefer ads that address them directly. **When the talent pointed their gaze squarely at the consumer, view rate was 6% higher than the industry average and conversion rate was 11.5% higher.**

It's important to note these were digital video ads, which can be a more engaged, intimate advertising medium. Scrolling through your phone or sitting hunched over a laptop is a more active consumption experience than, say, kicking back on your couch and passively consuming TV commercials. This difference in intimacy helps explain why direct gaze is so important for digital video ads.
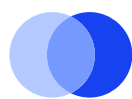
Optimize Color

Color is one of the visual elements advertisers tend to obsess about, spending countless hours trying to find just the right mix of pantones for their brand and campaigns. Our analysis shows that the fixation is warranted; **color is an enormous factor in campaign performance**.

Ads with warmer colors — such as red, orange and yellow — saw a 15% increase in view rate, for instance.

It's not just the specific colors you use that makes a difference, but how they complement the background imagery. **Videos with high color contrast against background visuals had a 69% percent higher view rate and a 31% higher conversion rate than ads with low contrast.**

Show them the goods

Similar to eye gaze, there's no use to being coy when it comes to advertising your brand. Consumers respond well to compelling visuals — whether they be text, people or physical devices — especially when those images are presented early in the advertisement.

Ads that have text in their first 2 seconds of video have a conversion rate 26.5% higher than the industry average, for instance.

It also helps to have that text stand out from the background imagery. **Messages with high levels of contrast against the other key visuals had conversion rates 31% higher than messages with low text contrast.**

Showcasing your brand is more impactful than featuring well-coiffed models in your ad. **Videos that led with the brand's logo had a 69% higher view rate than videos that led with talent.**

Don't bother trying to build up to some grand reveal. The data shows that the best approach is to serve up your most compelling imagery early and often.

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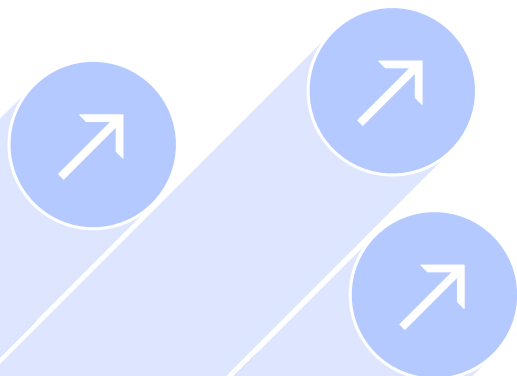
Find Your Currency

An important caveat to this study is that no one strategy works for every brand.

Each brand has its own distinct voice and unique public perception. So while there may be some common characteristics across successful ad campaigns, it's better to understand the strategies that work best for your specific brand. Discovering the most effective creative elements for your brand will make your campaigns more engaging and your ad spend more efficient.

The difference between success and failure in advertising is slim, and in an era of ever-shortening attention spans, the margin of error is even narrower. The difference could be as subtle as having the model avert their gaze two degrees to the left.

It pays to sweat the small stuff in video advertising — and with VidMob, you can analyze your video advertising more precisely than ever before.

→ See how your ad performance stacks up to date: **request a demo**

Why VidMob?

The world's leading platform for Intelligent Creative, VidMob offers an end-to-end solution to help brands improve their marketing results by unifying creative and data. As the only company in the world to receive a Certified Creative Marketing Partner badge from every major social and digital platform, our access to creative data is unparalleled.

A portion of every dollar VidMob receives is used to fund pro bono creative services for nonprofits through its 501(c)(3) VidMob Gives. Learn more about VidMob at **vidmob.com** and VidMob Gives at **vidmob.gives**.

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