



# Mobile marketer best practices:

## Taking advantage of in-app ad formats

Advertising in mobile apps presents a huge opportunity for reaching today's consumers at scale — but in order to maximize success, mobile marketers should invest time to fully understand, test, and optimize their ad formats. In this piece, we'll explore best practices for marketers looking to get smarter about formats and take their in-app ad campaigns to the next level.

# Step 1: Understand your ad format options

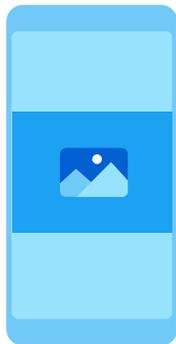


One of the key differentiators for marketers advertising in-app is the large variety of ad sizes and formats available to use, test, and build upon. Not only are there different display sizes to test but also different in-app ad formats that can help marketers stand out or blend into the app content. Each ad type offers the opportunity to experiment and take control of KPIs important to the marketer's specific business goals.

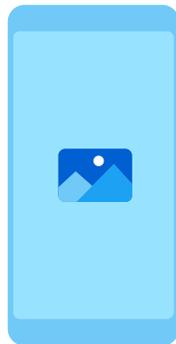
## DISPLAY



Banner



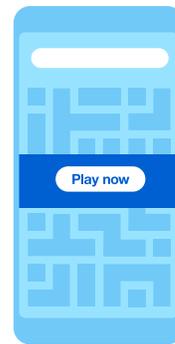
Medium rectangle



Fullscreen



Static interstitial



Playable



Video

## NATIVE



Native

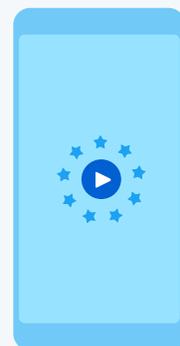


Native video

## REWARDED



Rewarded video



Rewarded playable

# In-app ad formats:



## HTML/MRAID display ads

Including fullscreen or interstitial ad units, medium rectangle (sometimes called mREC - 300x250), and banners (320x50), these ads help buyers scale on mobile with images or rich media.



## Video

Video ads are one of the most powerful ways to engage with consumers. On mobile, video provides an unmatched experience: the fullscreen format captivates the user and brings the advertiser's message to life. On mobile, video also offers scale; according to [eMarketer](#), "Mobile video has been the top growth category in US digital ad spending since 2018, and will remain that way through 2024."

For continued presence after a video ends, consider adding an end card. An end card is a still image that will display after the video that can direct the user with a strong call-to-action. For example, if the video showcases a new game, the end card might have some compelling images with the words "Download Today!"



## Rewarded video

Rewarded or opt-in video gives users the choice to engage with video ads in return for in-app rewards. For example, this could be "View this ad to receive 100 gold coins." The opt-in drives strong completion rates and provides advertisers with more engaged audiences. [Spend on rewarded video continues to grow](#), and at MoPub we've also seen an increase in the number of app publishers adopting this format and providing scale.



## Native display

Native ads are high quality, content-driven experiences that engage consumers by matching the look and feel of an app's user interface. Because the ads complement the in-app experience, consumers are more likely to engage. To see how your ads could look in real apps, try MoPub's [Native Preview Tool](#).



## Native video

Native video ads pair the non-intrusive user experience of native advertising with the interactivity of video to deliver a compelling ad experience in a high-quality setting.



## Playables

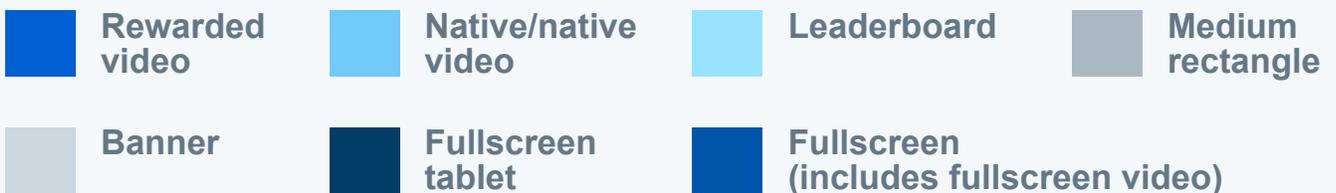
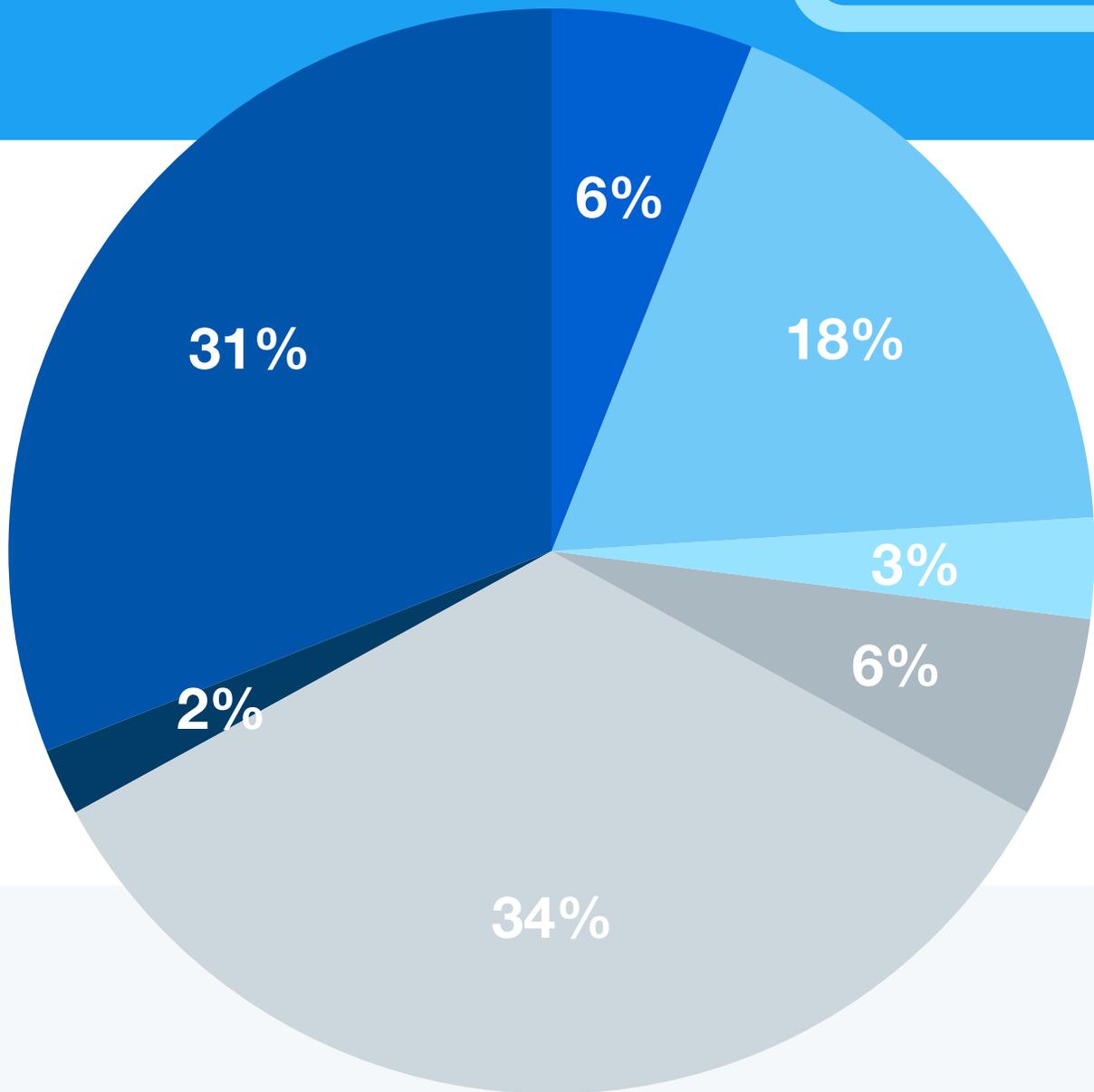
Playable ads offer a fun and interactive way for consumers to engage with advertisers, typically in the form of a game that can be played within the ad unit itself. The user can play the game directly within a skippable, interstitial ad unit and then either engage with the advertiser's call-to-action or return seamlessly to the mobile app experience.



More information about each format, including creative and technical specs, is available in MoPub's [documentation](#).

# Spend is diverse.

Ad spend by format, from top 100 advertisers spending on MoPub



## Step 2: Experiment to drive results



While it's easy to choose low cost inventory, the overall value of the conversion is truly most important.

For example, if video ad CPMs for your campaign are twice as expensive as display, but drive 5X the lifetime value (LTV) of users (not to mention incremental scale), it may be advantageous to optimize towards that inventory.

The freedom provided by this wealth of ad options can be a driver for performance, as long as marketers are willing to experiment. Whether a marketer is just starting in-app advertising or has been buying in-app ads for years, it's important to utilize the full range of ad options and continually test to see what formats perform best for specific KPIs.

“For a major client in a publishing business, we see 610% more conversions resulting from video ads than from static image ads, suggesting you can afford to pay much more for video ads and still be more profitable. Video generally does outpace standard ads in conversion rate, but you have to do testing to find precisely how it performs in your vertical, for your brand, and with your offers.”

—**John Koetsier**  
VP Insights, [Singular](#)



Experimentation may not always seem efficient, but in fact, programmatic buying allows you to consolidate your ad operations by plugging into a single demand-side platform (DSP) and testing all ad formats across tens of thousands of in-app publishers within a single partner.

This is a huge advantage for time-constrained marketers, who might otherwise need to manage buys and optimize across multiple ad networks that focus in specific formats, such as video alone.

“Being able to use testing to uncover creative findings/data helps improve downstream metrics that are vital for the campaign's overall success. Key metrics we look at to know whether an ad creative has done its job are clickthrough rate (CTR), conversion rate (CR), and install rate (IR). We scale our campaigns by leveraging different ad formats which enable us to touch most inventories to get the right audience.”

—**Kass Yboa**  
Associate Creative Director, [Aarki](#)



# Creative considerations

“Creative testing is imperative to the overall success of our mobile programmatic campaigns. Consistent testing on all available formats gives us a leg up on connecting with our audience — sometimes what we've found resonates best with audiences when it comes to creative is not what we initially expected.”

—**Darya Chumakova**  
Programmatic Advertising,  
[N3TWORK](#)



- Testing bandwidth:** Does your team have the resources, either internal and/or external, to create multiple high definition creative assets?
- Creative control:** How much control do you want to have over creative decisions?
  - Leverage DSPs that can do creative testing — some insist on it, in order to help drive performance for you.
  - Consider working with creative agencies.
  - Decide on your general guidelines and if each ad needs to be approved.
    - If each ad needs to be approved, how streamlined can you make the approval process?
- Refresh cadence:** How often should you refresh your creative assets?
  - If you're working with DSPs who are managing your creatives, look to them for guidance.
  - If you're working with a non-managed DSP, we recommend:
    - Big asset changes once per quarter.
    - Minor changes/testing every two weeks.

# Getting started: The path to success

“Sometimes simpler and less flashy or complex animations and designs work better. In one instance we saw video creatives with simple animation beat complex ones in terms of CR and IR. CR was almost 3X better while IR was 2X better.”

—Kass Yboa

Associate Creative Director at Aarki



1

**Determine your KPIs, looking downstream.**

What is the downstream metric(s) that is most important to you?

Are there middle-ground events that can help in early evaluation, such as registration, level achieved, 7-day retention, etc.?

2

**Launch all ad types, using a mix of display, native, and video ads where applicable and feasible.**

Talk to your DSP partners to see how they can assist.

3

**Evaluation at the ad level.**

What's performing best? Challenge assumptions with testing and proof points.

Can you find the scale you need?

4

**Rinse, wash, repeat.**

Ad format testing and optimization needs to be a continual effort. We recommend making and testing minor A/B changes every two weeks.

Constantly iterating and changing creatives is crucial for success.

5

**Consider your next steps and new initiatives.**

Are there new initiatives coming up that will require different creatives and/or have a different user flow? For example, a ride-hailing app might have different marketing initiatives around riders, drivers or seasonality campaigns.

Always plan ahead to make sure you're ready to go with a mix of ad formats and creatives to test when it comes time for the next campaign to launch.



**Interested in learning more  
about mobile programmatic  
best practices?**

**MoPub's Marketer Program is  
here to help.**

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