

# effective online advertising

A Summary of Best Practices, Creative Examples and Resources

## Overview

- Strength of Digital Media
- Overview of Best Practices
- 6 Areas of Effective Online Advertising
- Top Performing Creative

# Value of Digital Paid Media

In recent years, digital has become a critical and often central part of paid media planning and management due to a range of unique strengths and capabilities it offers:

Strength	Details
Niche Targeting Capabilities	Geography, demographics, psychographics, interests, behavior
Cost Effectiveness	Low CPM compared to most other mediums
Creative Flexibility	Can rotate multiple messages simultaneously, adjust in real time
Tracking	Results, visitation can be tied directly to various digital media in market, optimized towards best performers
Consumer Consumption	Fish where the fish are, consumers are consuming content digitally more so than via any other medium

# Overview of Best Practices

In online advertising, the advertising essentials remain the same: advertising needs to engage with potential travelers and move them from awareness to action. Known as A.I.D.A., the process moves through four steps to create advertising that captures [Attention](#), generates [Interest](#), creates [Desire](#) and drives [Action](#).

Specifically in the travel industry, Google has drilled down and further defined micro-moments that are giving travel advertisers more insight into the travel customer journey, resulting in ads that are more tailored to where the traveler is in the travel lifecycle. These moments are defined as:

- » I-want-to-get-away moments: Beginning/early stages of travel “dreaming,” when people are considering destinations and looking for travel inspiration.
- » Time-to-make-a-plan moments: A destination has been chosen and the traveler is considering plan logistics – including dates, flights, accommodations and activities.
- » Let's-book-it-moments: Research has been done, decisions have been made and the traveler is ready to book!
- » Can't-wait-to-explore moments: Moments that are experienced/captured/shared during the trip.

It's important for advertisers to understand these moments so they can deliver the right message based on where the travelers fall within the defined moments. It's also important for advertisers to be with consumers throughout every step of the journey as travelers are constantly engaging with destination content throughout each moment.

Creating an end-to-end travel experience through the travel lifecycle is crucial in staying competitive in this category, providing customers with focused and relevant messaging throughout all phases.

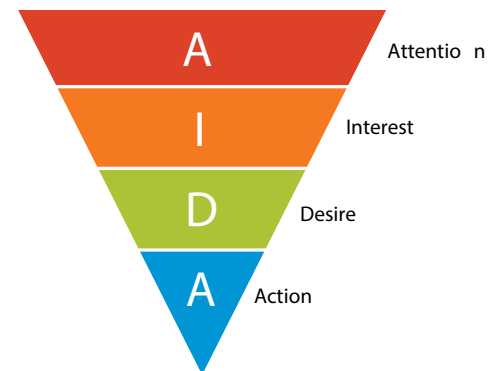


Figure 1: A.I.D.A. The original advertising best practice model, first developed in the late 19th century, has been expanded and refined in the 21st century.



Figure 2: Travel life cycle. It's important for advertisers to target customers at each point in that buying process.

# Top Performing Landing Pages

Effective digital advertising needs to work from awareness to action, not only generating a response but driving users to a place on your website that converts interest to specific “Signal of Intent to Travel”. This is ideally a booking, but also includes other important actions such as prompting a phone call, checking out deals, seeking directional information or requesting more information.

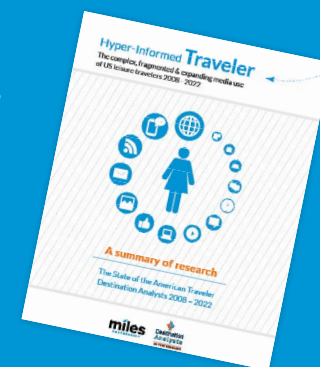
Having relevant, contextual landing pages specific to your advertising is critical to “closing the deal” in digital advertising. Ensure you set aside budget and resource to create and manage campaign landing pages that offer the specific information the user is looking for from the advertising.

As a rule of thumb, between 5% and 20% of a campaign’s budget should be spent on content and landing page optimization related to the campaign. Invest this budget throughout the campaign period and determine the size of the investment based on the relative budget, reach and length of the campaign.

## The Hyper-Informed Traveler

Complementing digital media, traditional media channels continue to have a significant reach and relevance, creating a media landscape that has become far more complex and fragmented. Described by Miles as the “Hyper-Informed Traveler”. In addition to the latest digital media skills and tools, the age old essentials of good advertising planning and management are even more important in this complex landscape.

For more on the traveler’s complex and fragmented media and communication behavior, see our related white papers at [www.milespartnership.com/how-we-think](http://www.milespartnership.com/how-we-think)





# Effective Online Advertising Typically Addresses These Six Areas:

1. **Integrate:** Online advertising is just one option amongst a range of media and marketing channels. Ensure your online advertising plan is thoroughly integrated into your overall advertising and marketing plan, and is working in a coordinated way with any traditional advertising (e.g. print) or other promotional efforts (e.g. PR).
2. **Plan:** Have a clear plan for your online advertising. A simple online advertising brief, a 1- or 2-page summary of your target audience with objectives for the advertising, is an effective way of ensuring you have covered all the bases.
3. **Define Objectives:** Outline what you want the advertising to achieve. Is it focused on generating awareness or inspiring consumers who may not be familiar with you, or is it tactical, driving response and bookings?
4. **Effective Creative:** Make sure you or your agency partner develop advertising that works. It needs to attract attention, tell a story and have a clear and specific call to action. Some of the specific elements should include:
  - » **Design:** Use strong graphics and photography with colors and contrast to attract attention
  - » **Clear and Concise Copy:** Using seven words is often suggested as a rule of thumb for online
  - » **CTA:** Have a clear, compelling and actionable message to drive the click-through, phone call or visit
  - » **Limited File Size:** Load times are critical to maximizing response
  - » **Consistent Branding:** Make sure your logo, colors, font, etc. all integrate with your overall marketing.

- 5. **Measurement:** Make sure you have an analytics solution set up and configured on your site. Your analytics should include not just measurement of bookings, but a range of other critical online goals that indicate active interest. Use a third-party ad server, such as Google's Campaign Manager 360, which allows advertisers to understand how media placements are performing regardless of whether exposed to clicks on the ads. This is critical to understanding overall performance. Additionally, specialized third-party attribution partners can help tie digital ad exposure to real-world activities, such as in-market arrivals and spending.

**Tip:** Adding campaign tracking codes to links to your website help measure goal completion rates from your advertising. These trackable links can be created at <https://ga-dev-tools.appspot.com/campaign-url-builder>.

- 6. **Test and Refine:** The power of online advertising lies in its ability to change, adapt and refine your creative message, ad units, placement and online channels on a continual basis. There are varying degrees of optimization that should happen with digital advertising campaigns, some elements can be optimized on a daily/weekly and monthly basis, while others require a longer look-back period. This ongoing and interactive cycle should never be a "set and forget." Rather, make sure you review results and make changes as often as needed, and have a budget for ongoing testing and changes to your online advertising.

Miles offers a library of step by step guides and white papers on best practices in measuring online advertising performance at [www.milespartnership.com](http://www.milespartnership.com).



# Native Ads & Top Performing Creative

The power behind native advertising lies in its ability to blend into the design and platform behavior so much so that the user feels the ad belongs there. This in-content placement and ability to adapt captures more user attention and works to provide value rather than a perceived advertisement. Ultimately, users end up viewing the creative as long as the content, and end up more likely to click on the ads themselves. The below examples of native advertising demonstrate clear and actionable content that is generating strong results for advertisers both on DMO websites and through third-party channels.

## Best Practices

- » The headline is the most important element, uncover the most interesting "nugget" of content.
- » Bring the emotion, the brain filters for information that fits previous emotional experiences.
- » Traffic at least 3 headlines per creative to allow optimization for the best performing message.
- » Remember the brand and make sure the headline includes a brand mention



PAID CONTENT BY TRAVEL KENTUCKY

### Choose Your Adventure

Find plenty of fun in an outdoor wonderland. This is Kentucky. Come see for yourself!

SEE MORE >



PAID CONTENT BY VISIT GALVESTON

### It's Island Time

Time to put everything behind you. Time to exhale. Time to reconnect. Time to discover new passions. Time to satisfy your seafood tooth.

SEE MORE >

**Ready. Set. Georgia.**

Explore Georgia's scenic cities to remind the family just how big the world can be.

AD BY EXPLORE GEORGIA

SEE MORE

**Discover all of Maine**

Found where serenity meets adventure.

AD BY MAINE OFFICE OF TOURISM

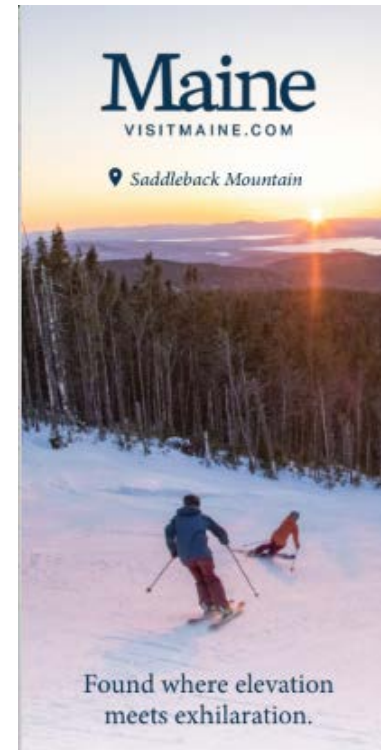
SEE MORE

# Display Ads & Top Performing Creative

Display advertising can significantly improve and strengthen your brand awareness with custom designs and consistent application. Brands have the ability to create eye-catching visual formats and rich media that can become instantly recognizable. This brand recognition can serve as a great lead nurturer and new audience engagement, with the ability to track and analyze each performance, future campaigns can be refined for greater success every time.

## Best Practices

- » Provide all standard mobile & desktop sizes to maximize inventory.
- » Larger format sizes (970x250, 300x600) tend to perform better, but inventory is limited and more expensive.
- » Consider how animation (GIF or HTML5) can make the ad more eye-catching and deliver a longer message.
- » Always include a clear Call-to-Action (CTA) and make sure the landing page is relevant.
- » Avoid cluttered and small text and use vibrant imagery whenever possible.





# Video Ads & Top Performing Creative

Video advertising has opened up a whole new world to creating a user experience through sound and movement, catching viewer's attention all while educating them on your brand and a call to action. The use of social media and short-form videos to plan trips continues to climb (33.4% of Millennials use YouTube and 27.8% of Gen Z use TikTok to plan trips). Video ads are highly engaging, shareable and relatable. Additionally, research shows that moving images are much easier to recall than static images or text.

## Best Practices

- » File format: .mov or .mp4
- » Max file size: 10MB
- » Many user watch digital video on mute - consider how your brand messaging comes across even without sound.
- » Use big, bold text throughout the video to grab attention and/or add captions.
- » Mention your brand at the beginning of every video to maximize brand lift.



# Additional Online Advertising Research and Resources

Think with Google - research and insights library

- » [www.thinkwithgoogle.com](http://www.thinkwithgoogle.com)

How Micro-moments are Reshaping the Travel Customer Journey

- » [www.thinkwithgoogle.com/marketing-resources/micro-moments/micro-moments-travel-customer-journey/](http://www.thinkwithgoogle.com/marketing-resources/micro-moments/micro-moments-travel-customer-journey/)

Display Benchmark Tools

- » [www.thinkwithgoogle.com/tools/display-benchmarks/](http://www.thinkwithgoogle.com/tools/display-benchmarks/)
- » [www.inc.com/scott-gerber/effective-online-advertising-tips.html](http://www.inc.com/scott-gerber/effective-online-advertising-tips.html)

The Webby Awards

- » [www.webbyawards.com/](http://www.webbyawards.com/)

Web Marketing Association - Internet Advertising Competition (IAC)

- » [www.iacaward.org/iac/winners.asp](http://www.iacaward.org/iac/winners.asp)

Miles Partnership Resources:

- » Campaign Tracking Codes Step by Step Guide
- » Measure What Matters – Introduction to Tracking and Reporting your Online Advertising
- » Google Analytics - 12 Essential Reports
- » 11 Essential & Free Online Marketing tools

*For more white papers & research, check out our online library of resources:  
[www.milespartnership.com/how-we-think](http://www.milespartnership.com/how-we-think)*

# stay in touch with us



## ↗ Website

[MilesPartnership.com](https://MilesPartnership.com)

This is the place to meet our team, learn more about the services we offer, peruse our in-depth research library and check out our latest blog post.



## ↗ Blog

[MilesPartnership.com/blog](https://MilesPartnership.com/blog)

More than two dozen Miles employees post regularly about new trends, industry insights and best practices in online, mobile, print and integrated content marketing.



## ↗ Research

[MilesPartnership.com/library](https://MilesPartnership.com/library)

We stay at the forefront of tourism trends, conducting independent studies on leisure travel and publishing our semiannual findings in a variety of outlets.



## ↗ Email

We believe that proactive communication is a key to continuous engagement, so we send out bimonthly emails to keep our clients and industry partners in the loop.

## CONTACTS

New Business Development:  
Elena Prostova; Tel: 941-342-2324;  
[Elena.Prostova@MilesPartnership.com](mailto:Elena.Prostova@MilesPartnership.com)

Research:  
Chris Adams; Tel: 941-342-2323;  
Email: [Chris.Adams@MilesPartnership.com](mailto:Chris.Adams@MilesPartnership.com)

[MilesPartnership.com](https://MilesPartnership.com)

800-683-0010



[@meetmiles](https://twitter.com/meetmiles)



[meetmiles](https://www.facebook.com/meetmiles)



[meetmiles](https://www.instagram.com/meetmiles)

[meet.miles](https://www.meetmiles.com)

**miles**  
PARTNERSHIP