



The Performance Marketer's Guide to Navigating Native





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Introduction:

Why should I read The Performance Marketer's Guide to Navigating Native?

Because you're a juggler who wears many hats within the marketing mix, but you understand digital advertising isn't a one-trick pony.

At Outbrain, we're your partner on this storytelling journey — providing *exceptional* performance marketers like you with data-driven tactics to accelerate your conversion optimization.

The accompanying pages break down everything you need to content-conquer, from successfully launching your first campaign to *exclusive* native industry insights.





Why Native?

Content is king, and it's not going to be dethroned anytime soon.

In recent years, brands have uncovered how to utilize content to better serve the needs of their target audiences, igniting the future of native advertising.

Native fights ad fatigue by exposing brands within editorial content, engaging the audience with relevant and refreshed discoveries. In fact, consumers trust content on publisher sites **24.4% more**¹ than content they see on social platforms, and look at native ads **53% more**² than display ads.

With Outbrain, it's easy to cultivate a personalized reader experience with infinite access to top publishers, and continuous, conversion-driven product enhancements.

¹ [Digital Content Next](#), 2018

² [Outbrain](#), 2018



Campaign Creation

We're kicking this content-filled guide off with our secret weapon — the go-to breakdown for creating and optimizing the most successful campaigns.

Keep your eyes peeled for some handy tips 'n' tricks inside, too!

Campaign Creation | Strategy + Set-Up

First things first...

Before jumping into your first campaign, set your strategy to ensure a strong foundation.

Perhaps you're looking to mimic a Facebook campaign, *or* scale uncharted territory with something completely new and original to your brand?

Regardless of your overall objectives, creating a successful campaign starts with a secret ingredient: the **Outbrain Pixel***— the key to unlocking our advanced targeting and optimization tools.

- Install the Outbrain Pixel**
 Our lightweight, robust pixel can track multiple conversion points *and* build audience pools for retargeting efforts.
- Pixel Perks**
 Syncs seamlessly with Google Tag Manager and Shopify, and unlocks access to advanced features such as Lookalikes Audiences.

Next...

UTM tracking is imperative, as it allows you to review your performance and optimize** accordingly. Don't fret! It can be changed at any time before or after campaign creation.

You can begin building your UTM string [here](#).

Finally...

Become a content creator! Be original and captivating, creating a variety of content shapes and sizes, from the ad basics to blog posts or landing pages.



*The **Outbrain Pixel** helps to ensure site clicks are heading toward conversions. Retarget users who've shown interest and reach new, ready-to-convert audiences straight from the Conversions section of the dashboard.

Ensure your campaigns are maximized for cost-savings and clicks with the **Bid Strategy workflow solution.

Campaign Creation | **Headline Best Practices**

Ads have **8 seconds**³ to capture the attention of the typical reader. Make that time count!



Chemicals That Might Be in Your Food

✗

Include your target audience in the headline.



Coffee Cup's Summer Drinks Are Finally Here. Which One Will You Order to Make

✗

Keep to 70 characters or less to reduce the risk of being cut off.



Keep Your Hair Smooth and Fresh This Summer

✗

Learn to love lists! Odd numbers perform better than even.



The Best Home Remedies For Your Living Room Furniture

✗

Negative keywords perform better than positive ones.



5 Ways to Keep Your Dog Active

✗

Questions entice the reader to want an answer.



Pregnant Mothers: 9 Chemicals That May Be in Your Food

✓



Coffee Cup's Summer Drinks Are Here. Order Them Today.

✓



9 Ways to Keep Your Hair Smooth and Fresh This Summer

✓



9 Things You Should Never Do to Your Furniture at Home

✓



Is Your Dog Getting Enough Exercise? 5 Ways to Keep Your Dog Active

✓

³ American Marketing Association, 2017

Campaign Creation | Image Best Practices



The recommended size is 1200 x 800 pixels.



Photographs work better than image text overlay.*



Use an image of your target audience that matches the content.



Be relatable! Pertinent lifestyle pictures work better than ClipArt.

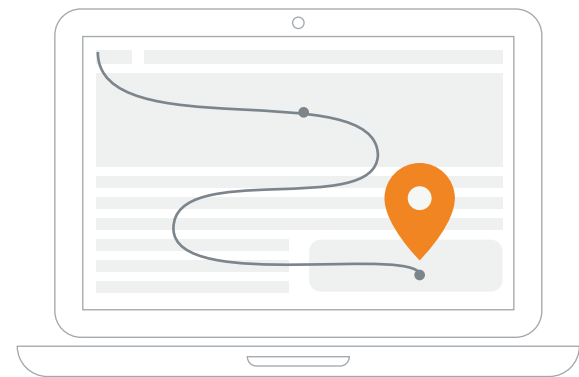


Close-up photographs work better than action shots.



***Is the same image or keyword converting the most?**
Capitalize on creatives with high CTRs by adding more of the same (and getting more of these great results!).

Campaign Creation | **Content Best Practices**



Provide a clear CTA on the landing page that is easy to navigate.



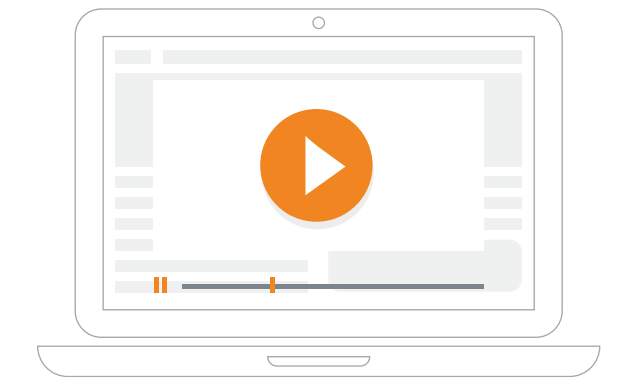
Don't direct straight to product pages – build a narrative!



Address the reader as “you” to add a personal touch.



Short 'n' sweet! Big fonts and short paragraphs perform well.



Innovate! Videos and quizzes are new ways to ignite interest.

Campaign Creation | Executing Your First Campaign

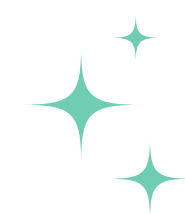
First, start with one URL per campaign and at least six creatives.

Next, break your campaigns out by device and use a combo of two images and three headlines.

Then, focus on these three key areas to create powerhouse campaigns:

- 

Who?
The Outbrain Pixel is just what you need to unlock access to advanced, conversion-friendly features. With this tracking tool, you can create cookie pools that track everything from site visits to product purchases. Simply head to the Conversions tab to take part in the action.
- 

Where?
Create both a wide and a more targeted audience to see how well each scenario performs, and determine the sweet spot that isn't too broad or too niche. Target your campaign based on country, state/region, U.S. DMA, or postal code, or the system will default to all locations globally. Our algorithms will help you determine the actual targets' locations.
- 

How Much?
The smaller your audience, the more you'll pay for exposure. To help gauge the size of your reach, be sure to check the Reach Estimator*.



Budget Bingo

If you know *exactly* how long you'd like to run your campaign, as well as the amount you'd like to spend during that period**, choose a **campaign** budget.

Conversely, if you have a *fluid* budget that you plan to increase or decrease in a timely manner, a **daily** budget is for you. Daily budgets represent the amount you wish to spend per day, whereas campaign budgets work to retroactively fill from the day prior.

Recommended Non-Targeting CPCs

- Desktop Campaigns': \$0.85
- Tablet Campaigns': \$0.75
- Mobile Campaigns': \$0.65

These CPCs have historically shown to boost a campaigns CTR and conversion rate within the *first three days* of launch.

Starting strong gives you more flexibility to optimize later on and scale down as you go.



*The **Reach Estimator** is useful when determining whether to broaden or limit your target audience — easily accessible on the right sidebar of your Add or Edit campaign pages.

Improve the contextual relevance of your campaign by selecting specific times and days of the week your message is shown with **Campaign Scheduling.

Campaign Creation | Post-Launch-Optimization

The Outbrain dashboard is dynamic and constantly updating to maximize overall performance. Therefore, in order to create gold star campaigns, you must log in often and test *constantly*.

Take the time to...

Cast a Wide Net

Hyper-targeted campaigns can suffer from smaller audience pools. Boost traffic flow at any time with a one-two punch of new creative additions and higher CPCs.

Additionally, try your hand at customizing CPC by Section adjustments to maximize exposure and allow greater control over your campaigns.

A/B Test

Duplicate campaigns and make one *small* tweak. Trim or expand locations, try a different device, or pop in a new audience segment. The world is your oyster, and the rewards are endless!

Spend Your Cash Wisely

If a campaign is underperforming, pause it and allocate the budget* to the best in the bunch. You can even duplicate it to give it another chance.

Re-Engage Your Audience

Statistics show it takes seven times for customers to convert.** So the more you strut your stuff, the closer you can get to a conversion.

Use Custom Audiences to build retargeting campaigns and re-engage interested consumers.

... you'll be glad you did!



*Your daily budget should be set at a minimum of \$100 to stay competitive and avoid delays in collecting meaningful campaign insights.

**With Audience Retargeting, you have the ability to create a pool of consumers who meet a certain pattern, helping to secure conversions.



Industry Insights

The proof is in the pudding data.

We're walking on air because we get to share some compelling customer patterns that were shaped throughout 2018.

Be sure to keep these knowledge nuggets top of mind when building out your own campaigns!

The content on the following pages is from a 2018 Outbrain network data analysis.

Industry Insights | Imagery

They say a picture is worth 1,000 words, so we've identified the top performing images for you, based on CTR.

Business and Finance		Close-up images of faces and products, such as electronics and credit cards.
Health		Imagery encompassing the color white, and product hero shots.
Electronics/Tech and Internet		Close-up imagery of people, products, rooms, and food in earth tones.
Home and Lifestyle		Grey, blue, and pink color pallets, and POV shots.
Entertainment		Bright and colorful imagery focusing on human movement.
Recreation		Close-up and uncluttered imagery.

Industry Insights | Keywords

Here at Outbrain, we believe words create *worlds*. Here's a snapshot of what campaign keywords perform best:



Bonkers For Buzzwords

Words that incite excitement and astonishment such as “...unbelievable...” and “...the secret to...”



One, Two, Three, **Go!**

Numbered lists see a lot of viewer traction.



The Power of Punctuation

Question marks and sentence fragments tend to peak reader interest.



I've Got a **Feeling**

Performance is strong for words that express a feeling or emotion such as: **genius | obsessed | breathtaking**

Industry Insights | Length of Time

Good things take time, and that's *especially* true in the world of commendable campaigns.

In fact, we put our noggins together and discovered campaigns running longer than six months have an average CPC **36.4%** lower than campaigns running six months or less.

What's the moral of this timely story?

Always-on campaigns drive more bang for your campaign buck, and greater lifetime value.

Length of Time		Average of CPC
6 Months or Less		\$0.83
6+ Months		\$0.52

Industry Insights | Performance Metrics

Need some inspiration in determining that *coveted* CPC sweet spot?
Check out the below **CPC** and **CTR** averages by ad category and vertical!

Ad Category	CPC	CTR
Auto	\$0.54	0.097%
Business and Finance	\$0.87	0.072%
Electronics / Tech and Internet	\$0.68	0.057%
Entertainment	\$0.64	0.063%
Health	\$0.76	0.083%
Home and Lifestyle	\$0.76	0.071%
Recreation	\$0.54	0.117%
Sports	\$0.55	0.066%
Travel	\$1.08	0.075%

Ad Vertical	CPC	CTR
Beauty	\$1.49	0.163%
CPG	\$0.77	0.104%
Education	\$0.42	0.065%
Entertainment	\$1.04	0.062%
Finance	\$0.91	0.074%
Health	\$0.83	0.064%
Home	\$0.80	0.060%
Retail/Fashion Apparel	\$0.77	0.069%
Technology	\$0.49	0.103%



*Achieve greater access and control over your campaigns and maximize your exposure on publisher sites by utilizing **CPC by Section**.

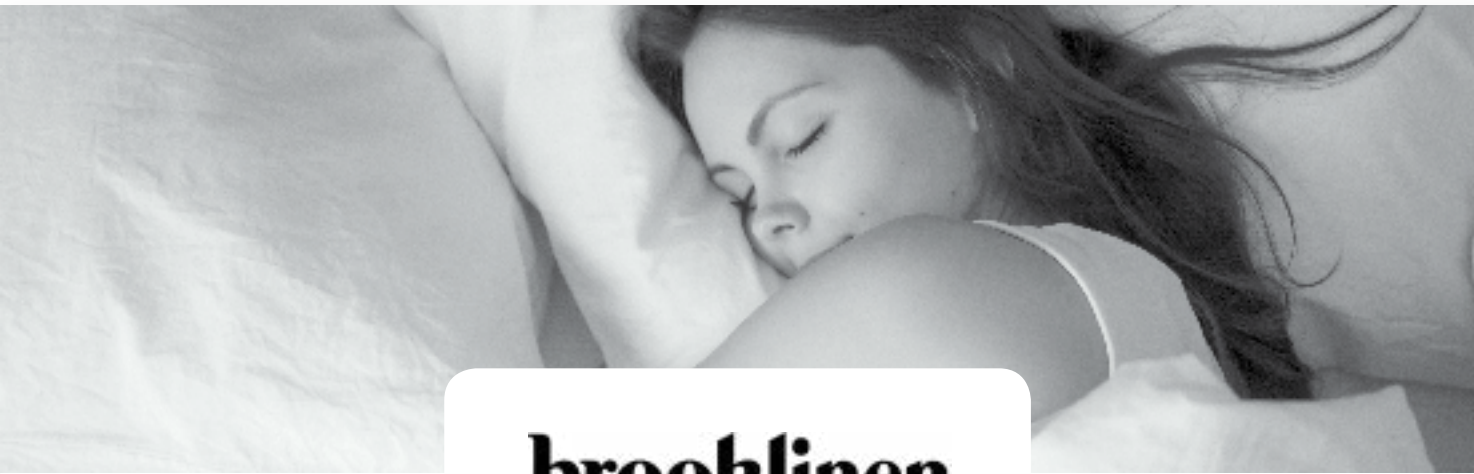
Industry Insights | Engagement by Content Category

Check out the top content categories which over-index for top ad category-related clicks!



Case Studies

Outbrain brought home the *gold* with rave results for dynamic performance marketers.



brooklinen

The home essentials retailer had a goal of increasing awareness and reaching new consumers.

Solution

Utilized Story Sequencing to interact again with users who initially engaged with the brand but ultimately didn't purchase.

Results

15%

more users converted within one day

50%

lower CPA (desktop)

3x

lower CPCs vs. similar social campaigns

[Read more](#)



EVERQUOTE

Driving conversion goals was an essential step for this online insurance matchmaker.

Solution

Adopted Lookalike Audiences to reach new clients modeled after consumption characteristics of its site visitors.

Results

23%

lower CPA (mobile)

52%

higher CVR

19%

lower CPA (desktop)

[Read more](#)



ONE KINGS LANE

The home decor retailer sought to increase its ad spend efficiency while reaching its CPA.

Solution

Exercised Custom Audiences when targeting consumers* who previously expressed interest in the brand, and refreshed promoted content to highlight various product offerings.

Results

50%

decrease in CPA

4x

increase in conversion rate

1.5x

increase in CTR

[Read more](#)



*Interest Targeting allows you to select your target audience segment based on the topics that they're most interested in, giving you a higher level of granularity when choosing where your campaign should appear.



Thank You! Thank You!

As you consider the journey that your customer takes, native advertising should be an integral part of your overall marketing strategy.

As the leading native advertising platform, Outbrain is guiding the digital discoveries of consumers around the globe — serving more than **290 billion**⁴ monthly recommendations.

Take the plunge and [get started](#) on creating your own native narrative today (or take your campaigns a step further if you're already amplifying!).

Questions? [Get in touch](#) — we're here to help every step of the way.

Until then, check out the following pages for our best and brightest dashboard tools.

Happy Amplifying!

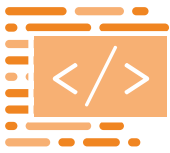


Index | **Outbrain Toolkit**

You can leave the nails and hammer in the shed, because this toolkit utilizes dashboard features designed to help you build *rock solid* campaigns.

Index | Outbrain Toolkit | Insight Solutions

Take a peek at the insights needed to get closer to conversions.



Outbrain Pixel

What?

Track multiple conversion points *and* build audience pools for retargeting efforts.

Why?

Understand the actions your customers take after landing on your site, and serve perfectly tailored content.

How?

Select **Pixels** on the dashboard and click through to the **Conversions** page. Next, simply click **View Outbrain Pixel** to view your tracking code, and begin implementing on your site.

[Learn more](#)



Audience Insights

What?

Leverage Outbrain's unique data assets to gain a deeper understanding of your customers and prospects, as well as their true interests.

Why?

You'll be pleasantly surprised to find new audiences you didn't realize were interested in your brand. After you determine audience interests, uncover which metrics are delivering the best performance and sharpen your strategy.

How?

Log in to your account and select the **Audience Insights** button on the left side of your dashboard. This screen will show you the data collected across all of your campaigns.

[Learn more](#)



Reach Estimator

What?

Understand the estimated audience your new or existing campaigns could reach.

Why?

Determine if you should broaden or limit your target audience, and understand just how much money to budget.

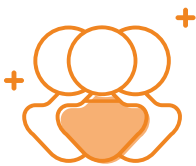
How?

Your estimated reach changes based on the targeting criteria you select. View this gadget in the right sidebar of your **Add** or **Edit** campaign pages.

[Learn more](#)

Index | Outbrain Toolkit | Targeting Solutions

Bullseye! Capturing the attention of your audience has never been easier.



Lookalike Audiences

What?

Reach new potential customers who share common attributes with your current customers.

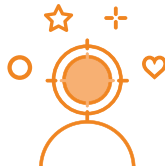
Why?

These potential customers *look like* customers who already converted, so the chances of conversion are much higher.

How?

Simply start by clicking **Pixels**, then **Audiences**, followed by **Create Lookalike**. Once built, be sure to target in your **Add** or **Edit** campaign pages.

[Learn more](#)



Interest Targeting

What?

Select your target consumers based on key topics that captivate their attention.

Why?

You have the *unparalleled* ability to increase conversion rates, lower CPAs, and heighten retention.

How?

While editing an existing or creating a new campaign, click **Include** under **Advanced Audience Targeting**, and be sure to select the interests most relevant to your target.

[Learn more](#)



Audience Retargeting

What?

Interact *again* with consumers who've already shown interest in your brand.

Why?

Highlighting brand awareness and conversions, retargeting is great for reigniting interest in and returns of both visitors and previous customers. You can also exclude previous customers to spearhead new business.

How?

Visit the **Audiences** section of the dashboard through the **Pixels** tab, and click **Add Segment** and **Audience Retargeting** under **Collection Type**.

[Learn more](#)

Index | Outbrain Toolkit | Workflow Solutions

Low on time and looking to streamline the dashboard experience? Look no further!



Bid Strategy

What?

Maximize your campaigns for clicks and conversions within your budget.

Why?

Ensure your campaigns are *superbly* cost-efficient and have the power to adjust your CPCs based on your campaigns' current performance.

How?

In the right sidebar of your **Add** or **Edit** campaign pages, select either **Conversions** or **Clicks** as your bid strategy. Then, you can select your base **CPC** and the conversions or clicks you would like to optimize toward.

[Learn more](#)



CPC by Section

What?

Maximize your exposure on specific publisher sections with custom CPC adjustments.

Why?

Reach engaged customers with increased CPCs and a laser-focused campaign budget.

How?

Head to the **By Section** tab under **By Publisher**, then in the **CPC** column, you have the option to either set a specific CPC or a percentage range with the option to make bulk adjustments.

[Learn more](#)



Campaign Scheduling

What?

Improve the *relevance* of your campaign by selecting specific times and days of the week your message is shown.

Why?

A useful tactic during holidays, campaign launches, or optimizations once you notice a specific time your content tends to convert.

How?

It's best to test! In the right sidebar of your **Add** or **Edit** campaign pages, click **Set Schedule**. Then, test your audience and content topics to find the ideal target.

[Learn more](#)

