

Marketers and their micro engagements

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Fleeting micro engagements rise as mobile further crunches time

Marketers continue to shrink their mobile engagements in an attempt to capture the attention of users who may be only glancing at their devices, but is five seconds enough to make a lasting impression?

First there was short-form content, then snackable content and now mobile marketers are increasingly talking about micro engagements lasting less than 10 seconds. With such a brief amount of time to make an impression, the pressure is on to find the right moment and content that will be effective for a **brand**.

“If you are going to do [micro engagements], you need to think like a sniper,” said **Warren Zenna**, executive vice president and managing director at [Mobext](#). “You have to sit on a perch, have the consumer in your sights, know what is the potential state of mind of the consumer and what is the content that is relevant in that moment and fits their needs in that moment.

“Then, you have to figure how to formulate that message in five seconds,” he said. “We are playing around with this.

“It makes it much more difficult. There is a lot more science required to make five seconds matter.”

Micro moments

Google is making micro moments on mobile a big part of its message to marketers these days. By matching **marketing** messages with the signals of intent and context that mobile provides, marketers have an opportunity to provide significant value to consumers, per the company.

Recent research from YuMe and IPG Media Lab found that short video ads of five, 10 and 15 seconds in length performed better on smartphones across a number of metrics compared to tablets and personal computers.

Additionally, so-called micro ads perform better when consumers are on the go versus when

they are at home. Shorter ads also have a bigger impact on millennials compared to non-millennials.

“The modern mobile consumer expects different contextual user experiences and rewards **brands** that pay attention to this context,” said Jeremy Sigel, head of mobile for North America at [Essence Digital](#). “Capitalizing on micro-moments is less about short engagements and more about intersecting moments that matter, by finding the right consumer at the right location and time with the right creative message.”

Battling views

There is a battle going on in the **marketing** world between those who believe that longer, more traditional content is the best way to create something meaningful that tells a story and those who are convinced that no one is going to stick around for longer **brand** messages, per Mobext’s Mr. **Zenna**.

So far, **brands** are not clamoring for five-second ads. Instead, most advertisers are still trying to figure out how to get their 30-second TV spots to work on mobile.

Not only are marketers comfortable with longer content, but many of the bigger success stories in mobile **marketing** so far are focused on longer content rather than super-short snippets. For example, both Dove and Geico are seeing significant engagement levels for video content.

However, the problem with longer content is that if mobile users are pulling up YouTube to watch a 15-second video while they have a few minutes of down time, they are not really going to want to watch a 30-second pre-roll ad. Usage patterns suggest that consuming short, snackable content is exactly what mobile users are increasingly doing.

Mobext works with its clients to edit these spots down to 15 or 10 seconds. Anything shorter than this is a challenge. Marketers are still trying to figure out how to develop micro videos that can tell a story and have lasting impact.

Established **brands** Per the YuMe study, more established **brands** that consumers are already familiar with are better positioned to be able to take advantage of micro ads and have an impact.

Another challenge marketers face with micro engagements on mobile is narrowing in on a very specific moment when a consumer has a need and the **brand** can quickly provide some value.

“A short engagement may be ideal for a consumer glancing down at their phone while in line at Starbucks, while a longer engagement might be more appropriate for the same consumer in the comfort of their bed at home,” Mr. Sigel said.

“A 15-second video placed in a found-time game with an average user session length of only 7 seconds is likely to be annoying, but that same video might be perfect when placed in game with different mechanics.

In the end, marketers should focus on matching the length of their **advertising** message to the type of content the user is engaged with.

“Time, space, and highly variable media experiences make mobile more complex than other channels,” Mr. Sigel said. “To be successful, marketers need to be mindful of ‘how’ consumers will experience their **brand** on mobile.”

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