The Performance Marketer’s Guide to Navigating Native
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Introduction ................................................................................................................... 3
Why Native? .................................................................................................................... 4
Campaign Creation ..................................................................................................... 5
Strategy + Set-Up .......................................................................................................... 6
  Headline Best Practices ............................................................................................... 7
  Image Best Practices ................................................................................................... 8
  Content Best Practices ................................................................................................. 9
Executing Your First Campaign .................................................................................... 10
Post-Launch Optimization ........................................................................................... 11
Industry Insights .......................................................................................................... 12
  Imagery .......................................................................................................................... 13
  Keywords ....................................................................................................................... 14
  Length of Time ............................................................................................................. 15
  Performance Metrics ................................................................................................... 16
  Engagement by Content Category ............................................................................. 17
Case Studies ................................................................................................................ 18
Thank You! .................................................................................................................... 19
Index | Outbrain Toolkit .................................................................................................. 20
  Insight Solutions ......................................................................................................... 21
  Targeting Solutions ..................................................................................................... 22
  Workflow Solutions .................................................................................................... 23
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.
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 than content they see on social platforms, and look at native ads 53% more 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.
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** to capture the attention of the typical reader. Make that time count!

- Include your target audience in the headline.
- Keep to 70 characters or less to reduce the risk of being cut off.
- Learn to love lists! Odd numbers perform better than even.
- Negative keywords perform better than positive ones.
- Questions entice the reader to want an answer.

1. American Marketing Association, 2017
The Performance Marketer’s Guide to Navigating Native

Campaign Creation | **Image Best Practices**

- 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*.

*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.

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.
Campaign Creation | Post-Launch-Optimization

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.
- **Electronics/Tech and Internet**: Close-up imagery of people, products, rooms, and food in earth tones.
- **Entertainment**: Bright and colorful imagery focusing on human movement.
- **Health**: Imagery encompassing the color white, and product hero shots.
- **Home and Lifestyle**: Grey, blue, and pink color pallets, and POV shots.
- **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
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.
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!

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ad Vertical</th>
<th>CPC</th>
<th>CTR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beauty</td>
<td>$1.49</td>
<td>0.163%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPG</td>
<td>$0.77</td>
<td>0.104%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>$0.42</td>
<td>0.065%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entertainment</td>
<td>$1.04</td>
<td>0.062%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance</td>
<td>$0.91</td>
<td>0.074%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>$0.83</td>
<td>0.064%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home</td>
<td>$0.80</td>
<td>0.060%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail/Fashion Apparel</td>
<td>$0.77</td>
<td>0.069%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology</td>
<td>$0.49</td>
<td>0.103%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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*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 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.
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.

**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.

**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.
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.

**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.

**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.