

Video surveys: The next big thing

 By [Leigh Andrews](#)

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Much has been said about the need to conduct consumer research on different devices, but what about completely switching up the format by choosing video over static ads? Here's why it works.

Many consumers are inherently hostile, or at least ambivalent, to advertising, especially as we're bombarded with this type of messaging everywhere we look. That's why unearthing an ad experience that's more pleasing and less jarring to people will ultimately help brands deliver a story that will better find traction.

Microsoft recently partnered with Exponential in a research study that proved it's a more pleasant emotional experience when viewing video-based or interactive ad formats as opposed to standard still or static ads, with the added benefit of increased brand perception for consumers.

The video embedded below shows this form of research in action:

Tyler Greer, head of strategy APAC at Exponential, talks us through the findings...

Why compare interactive vs static ads?

Greer explains that Exponential partnered with Microsoft Australia to conduct this qualitative ethnographic study on a 2015 advertising campaign. The 30 participants were exposed to a 2015 Microsoft advertising campaign and were asked to describe their thoughts and emotions when exposed to and interacting with a standard pre-roll ad versus interactive pre-roll ad. The objective was to determine if an interactive video ad served as a better canvas for telling brand stories when compared to a standard pre-roll ad, as well as whether interactivity improves brand perception, providing a deeper connection. Trying to understand the user experience was also a high priority.

The following questions were asked:

- Which advertising format did you prefer? Why?
- Which advertising format are you more likely to remember? Why?
- Which advertising format improved your perception of the Microsoft (advertised) brand? Why?
- Which type of ad are you more likely to interact with again?

The video survey benefit

The study was conducted by research organisation [Mindswarms](#) with participants exposed to both standard pre-roll ads as well as Exponential's VDX interactive pre-roll ad format. They were given sufficient time to explore the video ads and at the end of the exercise were asked to document their emotions and thoughts when engaging with the two video ad formats by talking into their webcam.

Interactivity = better recall

Greer says, "The key to the success of interactive ads is the interactivity itself – it is the difference between passively being served a message and actively choosing to spend time with a campaign exploring its message." That's especially true where the user has control over his or her brand experience as it's then part of the journey and ties in with their interests.

Little wonder then that the interactive pre-roll ad format was the better received, as it let consumers explore the advertiser's content in their own time, which put them at ease and led to improved perception of the brands running the advertisements.

The engagement metric

In addition, Greer says the study proved that marketers need to consider engagement as a metric that matters, as advertising that's tied to human action and intervention is a great way to address concerns around viewability and fraud. If you measure success against users actively engaging with and exploring units, and a complementary buying model, these concerns are removed.

That's never been more important than now as we're in an era of overwhelming media clutter and channel growth, which makes it harder than ever for brands to pin down and speak to the right audience.

Greer says brands can unearth the audience most interested in their message by simply allowing users the choice of whether or not to opt-in to an ad unit.



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“It’s easy to forget what makes the internet such a unique media channel, and that’s interactivity – the ability for users to take control of their own journey and consume what they want when they want. It is critical that media campaigns seek to replicate this, not just for the user, but because the benefits are clear to brands also,” he clarifies.

That improved brand perception boils down to understanding the connection that an interactive advertising experience fosters between brand and consumer, as the emotional mind plays a primary role in purchase decisions. Delivering an engaging experience should therefore be of huge importance to brands, especially as this survey proved the deeper the involvement in the brand message, the more favourable the feelings towards that brand.

Greer calls this “a big step on the road to conversion”, with consumer insights ranging from the fact that it felt more sophisticated and intelligent to appreciating that they can access it “when it suits me rather than having it shoved down my throat”.

Isn’t that what we’d all like to offer consumers? [Click here](#) to go through ‘The power of video-driven experiences,’ a downloadable white paper that’s part of Exponential’s EyeSee Research, and [click here](#) to view the Mindswarms case study PDF.

ABOUT LEIGH ANDREWS

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