



Creative Best Practices Guide



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Overview

There are many display ad types that run across our Google Partner Inventory. [Google Display Ads](#) appear on over three million websites, over 650,000 apps, and across Google properties such as Gmail and YouTube. This guide will help you create assets for display ads — with a focus on responsive display ads.

Guidance on other ad formats can be found in the [appendix](#). For a basic overview visit the [Google Ads Help Center](#).

Google Display Ads

3M+ websites

650k apps

Across Google Properties

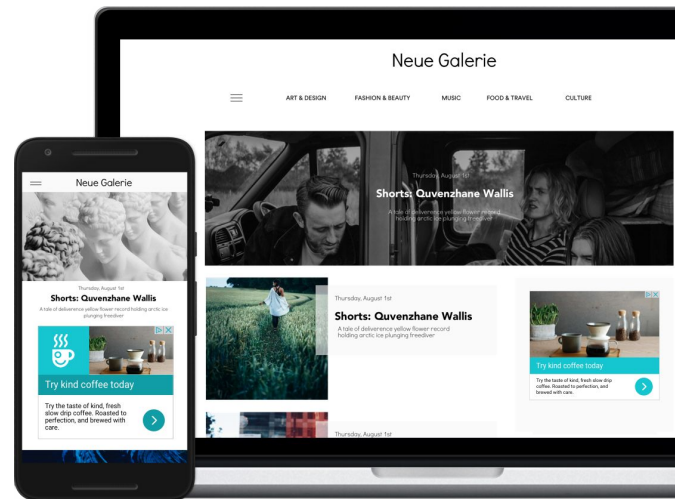
Responsive display ads

Responsive display ads are Google's marquee display ad format. Of the different ad formats, responsive display ads drive the most performance, reach, and scale. They represent the future of asset-based digital advertising.

Asset-Based Ads


Responsive display ads are a form of asset-based ads. An asset is simply a part of an ad, such as a headline, description, image, or logo. When creating asset-based ads, you provide headlines, descriptions, images, and logos. Google uses machine learning algorithms to combine these assets in countless permutations across the web, continuously optimizing for performance.

Because assets are combined without human assistance, special care is required up front. This guide can help you ensure your assets work together in a potentially very large number of configurations.



Why Choose Responsive Display Ads?

Responsive display ads allow for scale and performance while letting you customize all assets to match your brand look and feel. They are tuned to drive strong ROI and scale on Google and Google Partner Inventory.

 **50%** more conversions when running image + responsive display ads¹

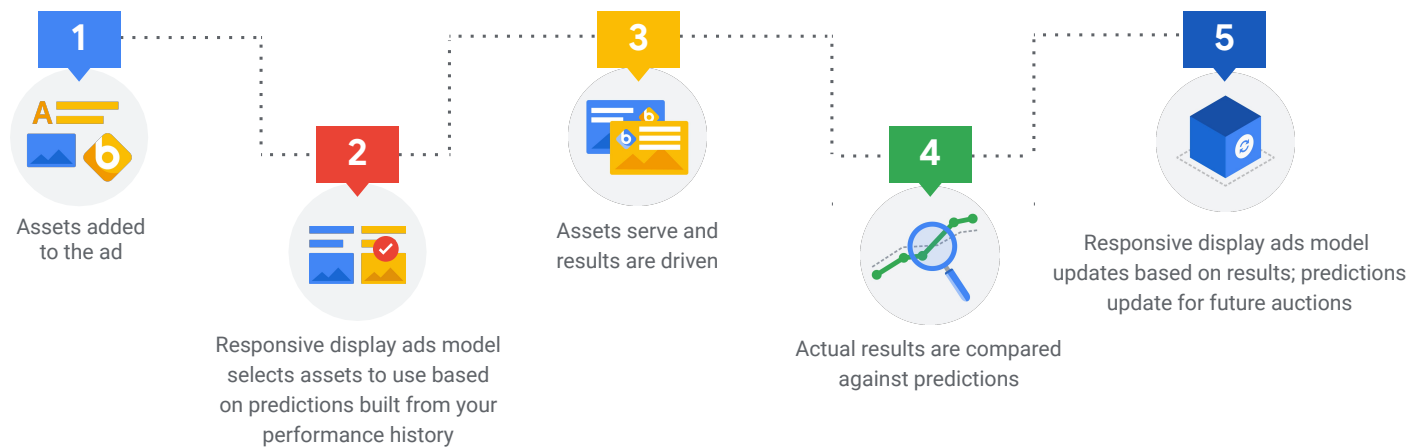
 **10%** more conversions with responsive display ads having multiple headlines, descriptions, and images²

[See detailed specifications for responsive display ad assets »](#)

¹Google internal data, 2016 ²Google internal data, 2017

How Do Responsive Display Ads Drive Performance?

Google uses a machine-learning-driven model to determine the optimal combination of assets for each ad slot. Google chooses specific assets for a given user, device, ad slot, and publisher based on predictions built from your performance history. Here is how it's done:



Asset Guidelines

Use the following guidelines to create responsive display ads that reach users and drive performance for your business. While these guidelines are considered best practice, and therefore not mandatory, all ads and assets must comply with [Google's Google Ads Policy](#).

Looking for guidance and inspiration to help you choose quality images?

[Check out the companion deck »](#)

Marketing Images

Images are the most crucial element of responsive display ads. The guidance below will help you tactically understand what makes a good vs. bad image for responsive display ads and avoid common mistakes and pitfalls that can hurt performance. You can upload your own images or choose from Google's library.

Responsive display ads let you upload up to 15 images in two aspect ratios. The minimum is three images with at least two images in the 1.91:1 aspect ratio.

Aspect Ratio	Minimum/Maximum	Recommended
1.91:1 (e.g., 1200 x 628 px)	1 min / 14 max	5–10 images per aspect ratio
1:1 (e.g., 600 x 600 px)	1 min / 14 max	5–10 images per aspect ratio

Images uploaded may appear in different sizes depending on layout. Images will resize in order to fit particular ad sizes.

Use high quality images

Images help users understand your business, products, and brand. They are critical to ads that perform well.

For best results, avoid images that are blurry, skewed, upside-down, unclear, have a border, are color-inverted, or excessively filtered.

DO use the natural lines of an image.



DON'T use visually skewed images.



DO use images that are in focus.



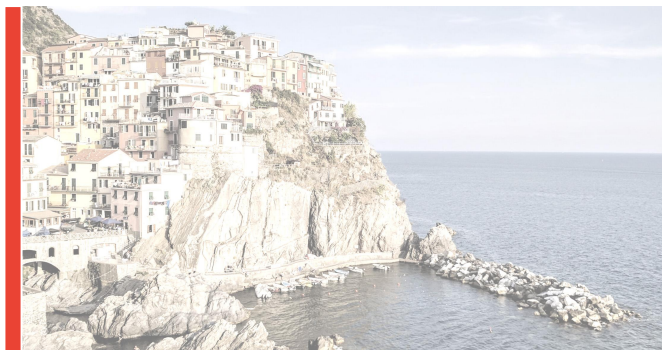
DON'T use blurry images.



DO use images that are easy to see and full color.



DON'T use images that are hard to see or appear washed out.



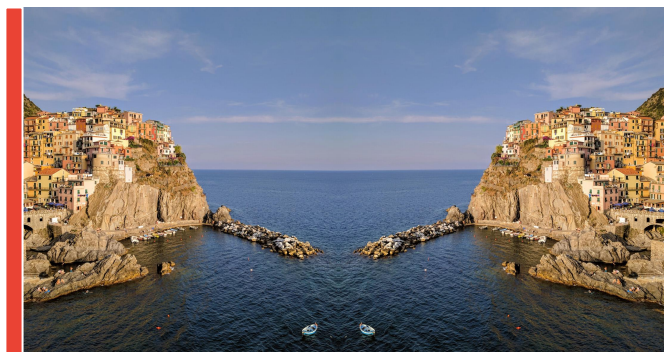
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Use high quality images *(continued)*

DO use images that include a single, non-duplicated composition of the subject.



DON'T use images that include a mirror image.



DO keep edges square and borders transparent to allow images bleed to the full aspect.



DON'T round edges or use borders.



DO use the raw, natural composition of photos.



DON'T use inverted color or excessive filters.



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No overlaid logos

Don't overlay a logo on top of an image. Images where the logo is integrated in the photograph are OK.

DO preserve the original image, ensuring it's the focus.

DON'T overlay logos/other graphics on images.



Avoid overlaid text

Avoid inserting text on top of an image. Overlaid text can be unreadable in smaller ad sizes. Images where the text is naturally embedded/integrated are OK.

DO preserve the original image, ensuring it's the focus.

DON'T overlay logos/other graphics on images.



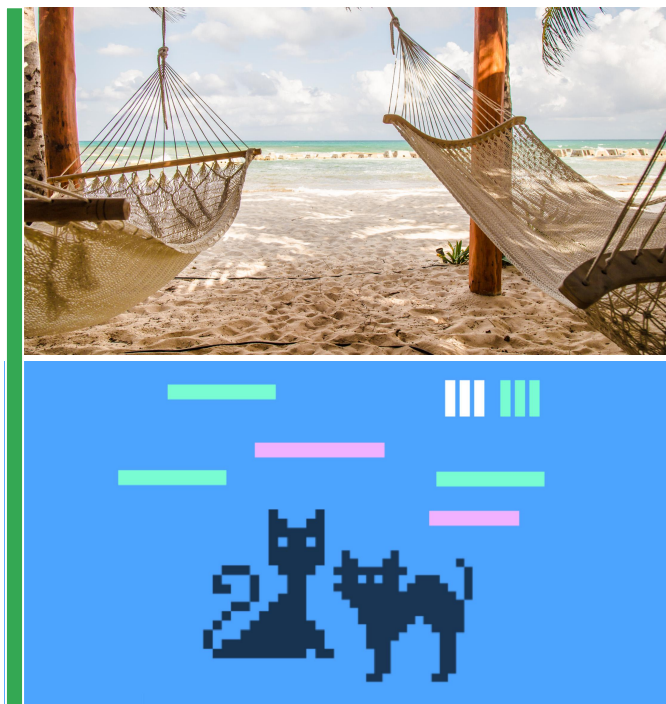
Avoid overlay text (continued)



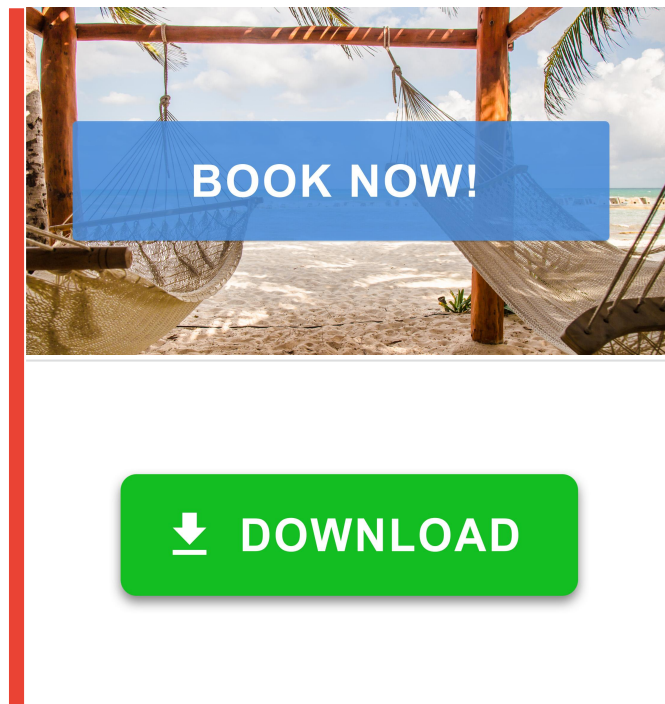
Do not overlay buttons

Buttons (which promise non-existent functionality like “play”, “download” or “close”) violate Google’s Google Ads policy.

DO use the original image without button graphics that mislead functionality.



DON'T add buttons to your image as they aren't a clickable element.



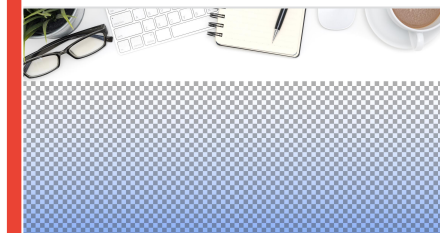
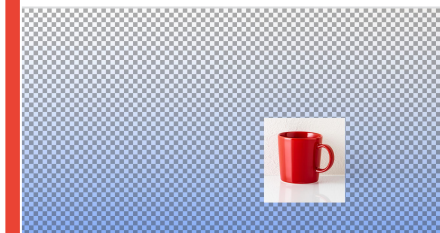
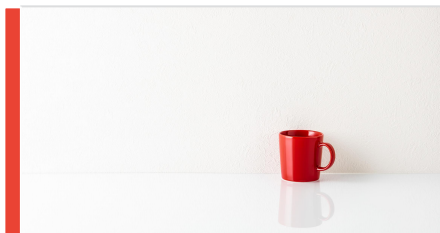
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Do not overlay buttons *(continued)*



Make your product or service the focus of the image

Blank space should not take up more than 80% of the image. Your product or service should be the focus.



Avoid collage images

Use single images. Collages are not recommended.



Avoid digital composite backgrounds

Avoid displaying products over digital composite backgrounds, including an all-white background. Instead use quality photographs that have physical settings with organic shadows and lighting.



Video

Video assets are engaging for users. The guidance below will help you understand what makes a strong video and avoid pitfalls that can hurt performance.

Responsive display ads let you attach up to 5 videos.
Videos in responsive display ads are optional.

Cover the top aspect ratios

This will guarantee minimal campaign fluctuations when replacing videos. Try to provide at least one video for each aspect ratio:

5% MORE CONVERSIONS
when adding video asset to responsive display ad

15% MORE IMPRESSIONS
driven by compelling mobile video formats and incremental inventory

Aspect Ratio		Minimum/Maximum	Recommended
	Landscape 16:9 (e.g., 1920 x 1080 px)	1 min / 5 max	2 videos in this aspect ratio
	Portrait 2:3 (e.g., 1280 x 1920 px)	1 min / 5 max	2 videos in this aspect ratio
	Square 1:1 (e.g., 600 x 600 px)	1 min / 5 max	1 video in this aspect ratio

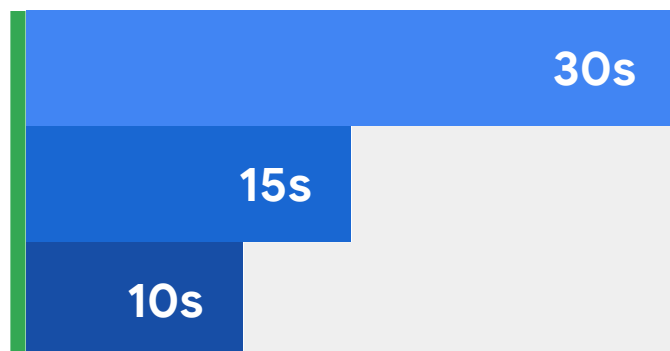
Vertical videos fit the natural intent of the user to watch the video in a vertical mode.

30 seconds or less

Uploading different video lengths can help you to tell different stories. But keep the total individual video length under 30 seconds.

Consider creating 3 lengths from one video. Example: turn a longer video into 10, 15 and 30 seconds assets.

DO vary the length of your videos.



DON'T upload videos greater than 30 seconds.



Grab attention within the first 2 seconds

Online video is an active environment. People will skip past your content if you don't capture their attention quickly. Start high with an immediate hook: get right to your offer, then fill in the details.

DO get to the point quickly.



DON'T spend a lot of time on exposition.



Diversify content

Have a variety of creative themes, especially within the same aspect ratio. Your videos should be different in some substantial way, e.g. different lengths, different themes, different content types. Example: product review vs user testimonial vs TV spot.

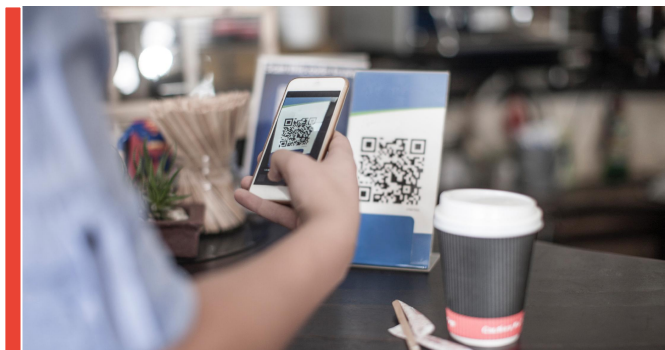
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Diversify content *(continued)*

DO highlight unique features.



DON'T repeat content with minor tweaks.



Communicate visually

Sound is a great way to engage the user, and you can leverage sound to capture the user's attention. However, sound will not be available when devices are muted. Be sure the user can understand your message even without audio.

DO tell your story with motion and image.



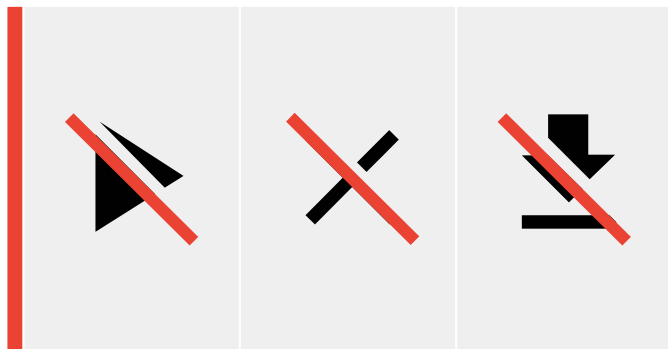
DON'T rely on narration, voiceover or captioning.



Don't overlay text, logos or buttons

Do not tease non-existent functionality like "play", "download" or "close".

DON'T insert graphic overlays.



DON'T attempt to trick users into engaging with content.



Short headlines

Responsive display ads let you add up to 5 short headlines.

- Don't punctuate the end of short headlines
- Don't use the exact same text in a headline and description
- Don't use your business name as a short headline

Headlines longer than 25 characters might be cut off in certain layouts. Ensure all assets are unique for maximum performance.

Short headline examples

Spell out your offer

"Free delivery for 14 days"

Tell users what they can do

"Pay with a smart phone"

Make it unique and compelling

"Bouncy castles for less"

Too short; undifferentiated

"Try it free"

Too salesy; not informative

"Nonstop excitement"

Don't repeat the business name

"AirBNC – Bouncy Castles"

Long headlines

Responsive display ads let you add a single long headline. Spell out your brand or product's value proposition in a way that's interesting and useful to users.

- Don't punctuate the end of your long headline
- Don't use the exact same text in the long headline and your short headlines
- Write your headline so it can stand alone because it might be shown without description text

Long headline examples

Should be useful and can stand alone

"America's #1 luxury bouncy castles. Free delivery within one week"

Can't stand alone without additional detail

"The very best. Free delivery anywhere in the United States"

Short Headlines

1 min | 5 max | **Recommended:** 5

Characters

30 max | **Recommended:** 25*

Long Headlines

1 only

Characters

90 max | **Recommended:** up to 90*

*Each character in double-width languages such as Korean, Japanese, or Chinese counts as two towards the limit instead of one.

Descriptions

Responsive display ads allow you to add up to 5 descriptions. Descriptions are shown alongside short headlines (not long headlines). Description copy should be written to complement short headlines.

Description examples

Articulate the value proposition clearly

“Inflates in a matter of minutes. No need for a generator, it lasts all day long.”

No detail and the business value is unclear

“Full of air and full of fun. Your summer isn’t complete without one.”

Descriptions

1 min | 5 max | **Recommended:** 5

Characters

90 max | **Recommended:** up to 90*

Logos

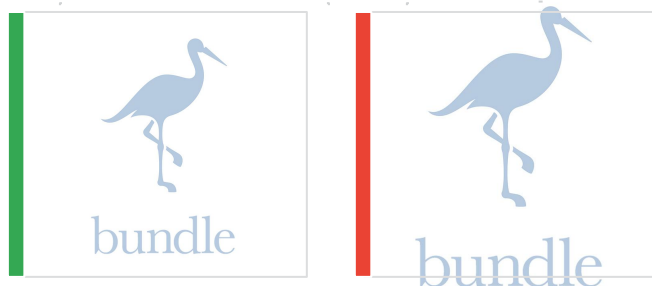
Certain layouts feature your brand logo. If you do not provide a logo, a neutral icon will be used instead, e.g., a globe or the first letter of your brand name.

- 1:1 aspect ratio (e.g., 1200 x 1200 px)
- 4:1 aspect ratio (e.g., 1200 x 300 px)
- Center your logo and crop it carefully
- Avoid using small text or adding extra “flair”
- Transparent backgrounds preferred
- White space or padding should be 1/16th of the logo size
- Copyright symbols in your logo are OK

We recommend uploading both aspect ratios. If you are only able to provide one size, upload a 1:1 aspect ratio logo.

Centering and cropping

In certain layouts, the corners of your logo may be cropped. Please make sure your entire brandmark is centered and not too close to the edge of the image.



*Each character in double-width languages such as Korean, Japanese, or Chinese counts as two towards the limit instead of one.

Logos (continued)

Text or flair

Avoid small text in your logo. Logos without text (brandmark only) are preferred, because text can become illegible on mobile. Don't add additional "flair" to your logo or details that aren't typically a part of it.



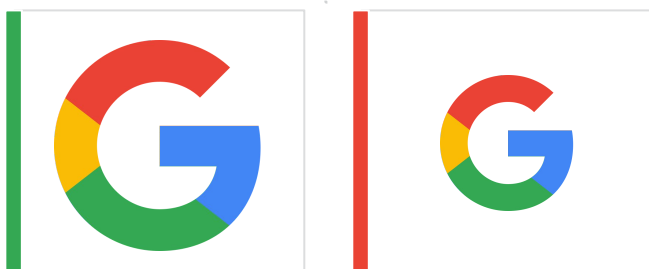
Backgrounds

Transparent backgrounds are preferred, but white backgrounds are also acceptable.



Padding

Any white space or padding should only be 1/16th the size of the logo. For example, in a 400 x 400 px logo, padding should be no more than 25 pixels wide.



Logos (continued)

Symbols

Registered (®) or unregistered (™) trademark symbols are OK.



Feed

Linking your campaign to a feed results in highly relevant and dynamic ads for the user. That said, dynamic ads are only as good as the product information provided. (Consult the help center to learn [how to create a feed for your dynamic ads](#))

Where possible, include all fields in your feed. It equips the creative with more information to show the user. Complete feeds result in better ads.

1. **Double check the feed columns** to verify which information is being requested. For example, don't enter an image URL in the category column.
2. **Create separate feeds with localized information** if you advertise products across multiple languages and currencies. This ensures users see ads that make the most sense to them.
3. **Don't upload placeholder content.** Provide images relevant for each item.



[Learn about Dynamic Remarketing »](#)

Business name

All responsive display ads require a business name*.

Use your conversational brand name or a sub-brand, but not your full legal name.

Brand/Sub-brand

Google

YouTube Australia

Legal

Google LLC

YouTube Australia Inc.

Do not use trademark, registered trademark, or copyright symbols in your business name.

Brand Name

Google

Trademark / Copyright

Google™

Do not include promotional information irrelevant to your brand name.

Brand Name/Sub-brand

Google

YouTube TV

Promotional / Irrelevant

Google Store Blowout Sale

YouTube TV — watch now!

Do not add slogans, emojis, HTML tags, variable names, or hashtags to your brand name.

Brand Name/Sub-brand

YouTube

YouTube

YouTube

YouTube

Google Home

Promotional / Irrelevant

The Best of the Web, on YouTube

YouTube

YouTube \$COUNTRY_NAME

YouTube #happywatching

Google Home 🏠

Do not add unnecessary punctuation or capitalization.

Brand Name/Sub-brand

Google

YouTube

Google Australia

Unnecessary Punctuation / Capitalization

Google!

YouTube KIDS

== Google Australia ==

Call to Action

Call to Action text can be chosen from a menu or automated by the responsive display ads algorithm. For best performance, use the automated Call to Action option unless you need to change for legal reasons.

- Google chooses the call to action most likely to drive performance for a particular ad or layout
- The call to action may change based on the publisher, format and device

* Each character in double-width languages such as Korean, Japanese, or Chinese counts as two towards the limit instead of one.

Campaign and ad group setup

When setting up an ad group or campaign that contains responsive display ad, follow these guidelines to ensure best results.

- More assets in fewer responsive display ads is better than many ads with fewer assets (per ad group)
- Create unique responsive display ads for each goal, audience, or messaging strategy
- While you can upgrade a “legacy responsive ad” to a responsive display ad with no changes, it is best to add as many variations of each asset as possible when setting up a responsive display ad
- When adding a new responsive display ad to the same ad group as legacy responsive ads, smart display ads, **or** existing responsive display ads, it is recommended to run all ads in parallel for at least two weeks before pausing the older ads





Looking to track impressions in responsive ads?

[Learn how to include 1x1 tracking pixels »](#)

Reporting

The asset report can help you understand when to replace poorly performing assets with new ones. Assets are measured according to volume of conversions, conversion rate, and cost-per-acquisition (CPA) per impression, per asset. Each asset has performance label showing its current state (see chart).

Note that performance grouping is relative and some assets will fall into all categories.

Label	What it means
 Learning	Not enough data
 Low	This is the worst performing asset of its type within this creative
 Good	Performing well compared to other assets of its type within this creative
 High	Highest performing asset of its type within this creative

Ongoing optimization

Consistently reviewing your asset reports will uncover opportunities to optimize your campaigns. This lets you give your creative department specific feedback and request assets that improve performance. Here are some things to look out for.

Short term

We recommend reviewing the asset report every two weeks or monthly and refreshing as follows:

- Add the maximum amount of new assets to your responsive display ads every month
- Don't add new assets more than once per week

Ongoing optimization *(continued)*

- After adding new assets, change assets labeled Low
- Look to your high-performing assets for ideas on how to replace low performers

Long term

We recommend reviewing the asset report every two weeks or monthly and refreshing as follows:

- Which types of short headlines, long headlines, descriptions are working?
- Consider length, punctuation, calls to action, common terms
- Consider structure, e.g., does it start with a verb? Descriptive vs abstract?
- Which types of images consistently perform better?
- Consider: color, contextual relevance, themes, image quality, style

Implementing changes

Do not delete/change all assets simultaneously. This will likely cause a noticeable drop in performance.


- To minimize disruption, rotate in assets gradually.
- Don't swap all existing assets all at once — performance history is associated with both individual assets and the ad unit itself

Controls

Customize responsive display ads to meet your brand guidelines. We offer two controls:


Custom Colors: This lets you denote a primary and secondary color related to your brand.

- Once you denote primary and secondary colors, we will use them wherever possible.
- You can choose to run ads only in layouts where we can respect your primary and secondary colors. However, if this option is chosen, you may lose up to 75% of conversions and reach on average because of the lack of eligible inventory.

 **UP TO 75%**
loss in conversions
and reach on average

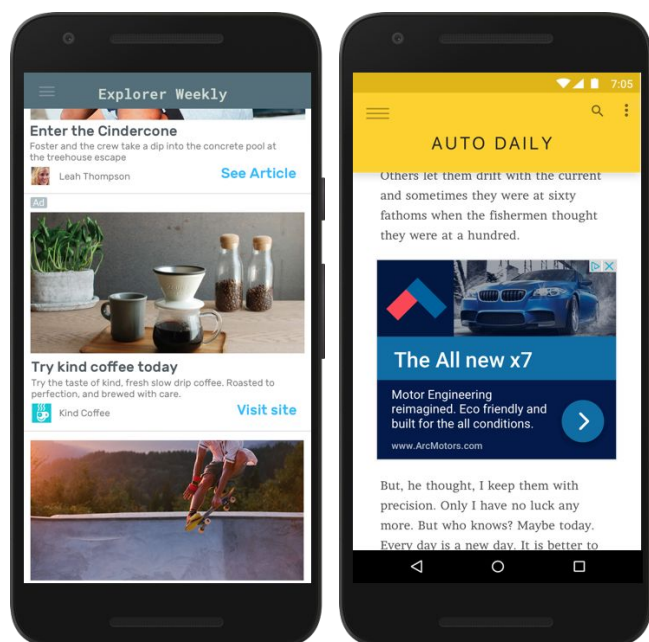
Ad Preferences: This lets you choose which formats you want your ads to run in.

- There are three options: All formats, Non-native only, and Native only
- We recommend the default setting to run across all inventory types. Excluding native inventory, may result in a 40% drop in conversions and reach on average.

 **UP TO 40%**
drop in conversions
and reach on average

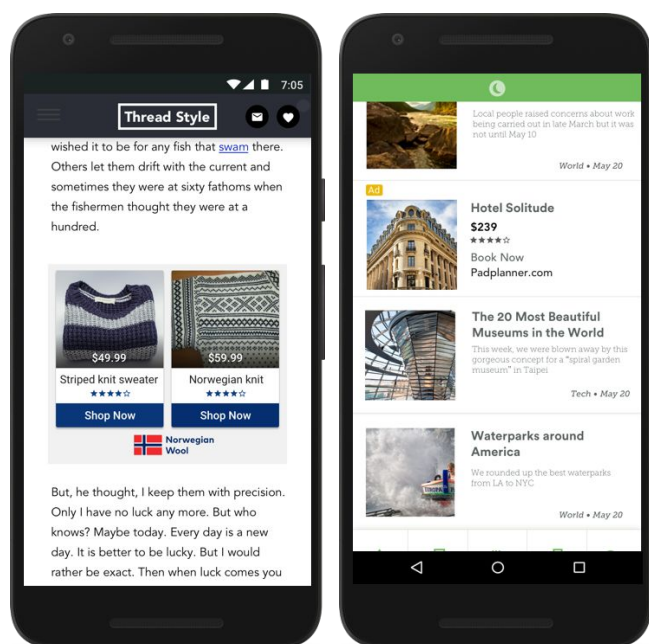
Examples of Great Responsive Display Ads

Responsive display ads are only as good as the assets used to create them. Here are examples of great responsive display ads.



What Makes These Ads Great?

- Strong image that follows all guidance
- Headline is compelling
- Clear differentiators and value prop articulated in the description
- Logo provided



What Makes These Ads Great?

- Strong product images that follow guidance
- All feed inputs provided, so information is complete (reviews, prices, product names)
- Transparent logo provided

FAQs

Responsive Display Ads run across native and non-native inventory. Can I use only one of these inventory sources?

We do offer a way to target or opt out of native inventory. Opting out of native inventory, however, can cause up to a 40% drop in conversions and reach (on average).

Should I create a separate responsive display ad for native and non-native inventory?

No, you won't need to. Google will optimize your assets across each publisher, device, and ad slot, and will account for the differences in native and non-native ads.

Will Google pair my ad with images automatically?

Images are only paired to expanded text ads in display campaigns. Images are not paired to your responsive display ads.

On which websites will my ads appear?

You can find this in the Placements report in Google Ads.

How will ads appear on a website or publisher?

You can preview how an ad might look (within the context of a publisher's page) when creating or editing an ad.

Does the ad preview show all possible formats?

The preview only shows a representative number of layouts. There are many permutations of publishers, devices, ad slots, and sizes — it is not feasible to show every possibility.

Can I set up responsive display ads via the Google Ads API or Google Ads Editor?

Yes, responsive display ads are supported by both Google Ads API and Google Ads Editor.

Which Ad Rotation setting should I choose?

Set your creative rotation settings to Optimize. (In Smart Bidding, the creative rotation setting is automatically set to Optimize and cannot be changed).

How should I test my responsive display ads?

Responsive display ads are ideal for testing creative, because thousands of permutations of assets are iterated across users, sites, apps, and devices. Upload the maximum number of assets and rotate in new assets regularly for best results.

Checklist

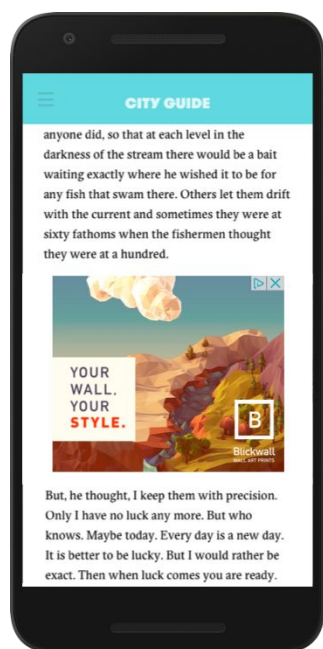
Including Google's recommendations for best ad performance:



- ☐ All images meet basic quality standards
- ☐ Upload logo in both 1:1 and 4:1 aspect ratios
- ☐ Include the recommended number of assets for each asset type:
 - Images (5–10)
 - Short headline (5)
 - Long headline (fill up to the 90 character limit)
 - Description (5)
- ☐ All short headlines, long headlines, and description copy is unique
- ☐ Include more assets per ad rather than creating additional ads
- ☐ Choose automated the Call to Action
- ☐ Do not use color or format controls unless there is a specific business need to do so
- ☐ Use Smart Bidding (ECPC, Target CPA, or Target ROAS) for best performance
- ☐ Swap in new assets and pause down low performing assets every two weeks

Appendix: Guidelines to Other Display Ad Formats

Image Ads



You have the option to upload your own image creatives to run on Google Partner Inventory. Image ads only run in banner-eligible slots, which is a limited scale relative to responsive display ads. Read more about [image ads](#).

Images

- Upload your image ads in [high-definition \(HD\) sizes](#). Clear images are more likely to stand out.
- Include the top 5 image sizes. They are automatically resized to fit 95% of available placements.

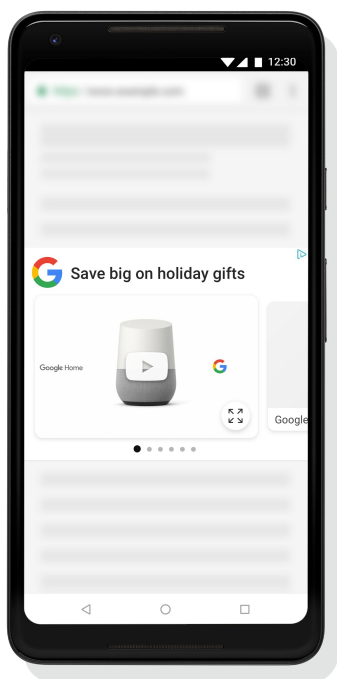
160 x 600 px	320 x 50 px	300 x 250 px	300 x 600 px	728 x 90 px
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- Use [AMPHTML](#) or HTML5 to create your interactive or animated image ads
- Follow Google Ads [specifications](#). Check HTML5 ads with Google Ads [HTML5 Validator](#).

Content

- Match the message on your landing page to the message in your ad.
- This benefits users and can improve conversions.

Lightbox & Carousel Ads



Lightbox & Carousel ads enable brands to drive consideration by only paying when customers choose to engage with their experience. They feature cards that let you showcase products, images, videos, and maps.

Logos

- Use a bright brand logo on a transparent background
- Remove padding to make your logo appear larger
- JPG, PNG, or GIF only; 50 x 50 px recommended

Content

- 35 characters or less per line for best visibility
- At least 2 lines; make each line unique
- Make sure to preview the text on different placement sizes

Lightbox & Carousel Ads *(continued)*

Image card

- Use a 1.9:1 aspect ratio images for optimal appearance
- Captions show alongside your images; keep to less than 35 characters
- Caption title should be concise. You can use the product name
- Caption descriptions are for extra information and are visible in the expanded state
- Customize your final URLs direct to users the most relevant pages on your website

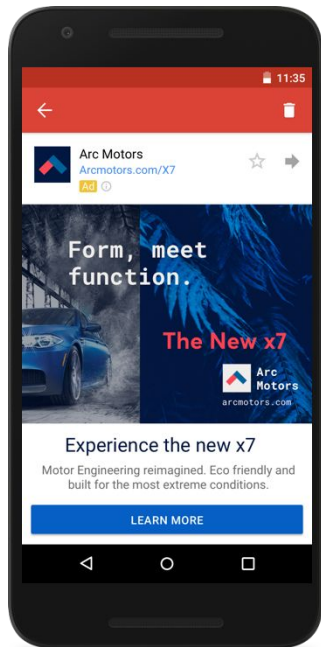
Cover images (video thumbnail)

- Provide cover images in a 16:9 ratio
- Do not include text in the cover image
- Position important content at the focal point of the image and include ample padding

Carousel

- Call to action: Be concise and encourage action
- Cards: Use 2–10 cards
 - Choose branded colors via hex code
 - Use 100% opacity

Gmail Ads



Gmail ads are interactive ads that show at the top of your inbox tabs. Some of these ads are expandable. When you click one of these ads, it may expand just like an email.

Read more about [Gmail ads](#).

Images

- Choose clear images and a logo that best represent your business
- Upload multiple images
- Our asset-based creatives will find best performing combination

Content

- Choose a message message that resonates with the audience you're targeting
- Make your call to action prominent and direct
- Highlight special offers, promotions, or deals in your teaser text

Experience

- Direct users to a relevant landing page
- Review ad preview layouts for both desktop and mobile
- Test out several combinations of text and images to see what performs

Expanded Text Ads

[Expanded Text Ads](#) are search ads that are copied into a Display campaign to run across our Google Partner Inventory. The text you provide will be paired with images to run across our inventory of more than three million publisher sites and apps. We recommend responsive display ads instead of expanded text ads.

Google Ads is a digital advertising solution for businesses of all sizes. Whether you're a small business owner or enterprise marketer, Google Ads delivers reach, relevance and trusted results to help you grow your business. Learn more at ads.google.com/home

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