Headspace Launches First TV Ad, Offering a Year of Free Subscription for the Unemployed

|
31 mins ago

As unemployment soars amid the coronavirus pandemic, meditation app Headspace is offering free, year-long subscriptions to those out of work. The offer comes in conjunction with the company's first television campaign, created by agency Gut and Nexus Studio.

The pass will unlock access to all of the meditation app's hundreds of hours of content, including a new collection focused specifically on managing the stress of unemployment, set to launch tomorrow. The company has already been offering healthcare providers and teachers free access to the app as well.

The app's 30-second TV ad features narration by Headspace founder Andy Puddicombe, a former Buddhist monk who also voices the company's popular social videos.

Meditation apps like Headspace have reported spikes in download numbers since coronavirus quarantine measures began to take effect in the United States and Europe this spring. Deborah Hyun, Headspace's global vp of marketing, said in a previous interview that the number of users who completed the app's "Stressed" regimen grew 13-fold between February and March.

In a survey conducted to accompany the new campaign, Headspace found that 59% of Americans say mental health has become more important to them since the Covid-19 outbreak started.

Headspace's latest releases aim to home in on specific types of stress more directly. The new six-track collection"Living Through Unemployment" will include tracks like "Adapting to sudden change," "Sadness and loss," "Recovering confidence" and "Finding purpose."

In addition to efforts aimed at frontline workers, Headspace has also worked with New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo and Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer on expanding access to the app's content and creating state-specific collections.

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https://www.adweek.com/brand-marketing/headspace-launches-first-tv-ad-offering-a-year-of-free-subscription-for-the-unemployed/

Effective mobile advertising strategies for 2020

30-second summary:

- With the entire global COVID-19 pandemic that has brought the world to its feet and forced everyone inside their homes, mobile marketing is going to take a very different turn.
- As per earlier estimates, mobile advertising was going to make up for a whopping 75% of all digital ad spending by 2022.
- Considering the new alterations, the best thing to do would be to understand the fabric of it and work to implement mobile advertising strategies for your own business.
- Know more on how to establish and polish your mobile marketing strategies to effectively target communication, deliver optimum effectiveness, capture your audience, and deliver your business goals.

Mobile advertising has been a game-changer for quite some years now. In 2017, when mobile advertising first surpassed desktop advertising, no one knew the bounds of its potential. It won’t be an exaggeration to mention that 2020 is going to be a major year for mobile advertising in all terms. With the entire global COVID-19 pandemic that has brought the world to its feet and forced everyone inside their homes, mobile marketing is going to take a very different turn.

As per earlier estimates, it was noteworthy to mention that mobile advertising was going to make up for a whopping 75% of all digital ad spending by 2022. Now that figure is going to see an alteration. Keeping in mind these figures, the best thing to do would be to understand the fabric of it and work

to implement mobile advertising strategies for your own business.

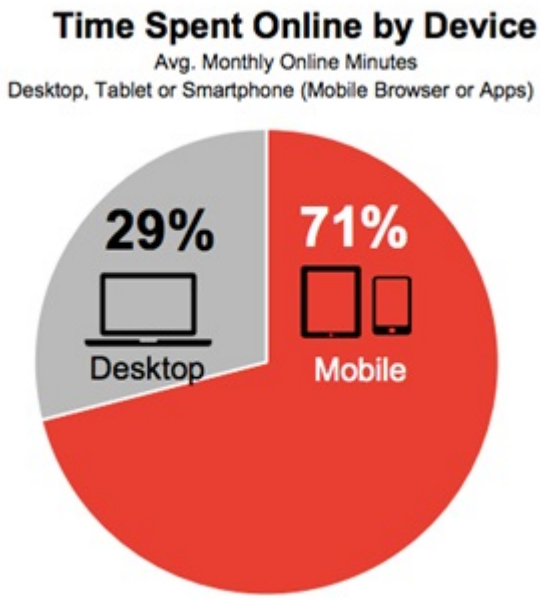
The Wall Street Journal also talked about the Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), in alliance with national and state governments in the US, will be using the data collected by advertisers through social platforms, such as Facebook. This is being done in the wake of tracking the movement of Americans within the areas of “geographical interest”.

Now talking of core mobile advertising, we know that it is more important than ever to any business or brand, it is important to understand the essence of it and have a grasp of its core ideals. It is important because awareness around the subject matter will ensure that your mobile advertising campaign is a success in generating bigger brand awareness or driving sales, whichever your end goal is. With 60% of all social media activity happening on mobile devices, the potential for your audience is still untapped.

Mobile advertising explained

To simply put into words, mobile advertising is advertising meant for mobile devices. But in the present context, we are talking about wireless mobile devices such as smartphones and tablets. For the power of personalization delivered by these devices, mobile advertising has reached high bars of success. It has provided brands, agencies, and marketers a unique way to connect with consumers beyond traditional means.

Mobile advertising is so powerful because of the nature of the targeted user device. It is very easy to choose the target audience and make sure that your message is being delivered to their devices which is unique to them, making way for precisely targeted communication. In this manner, mobile advertising delivers optimum effectiveness wherein probabilities of the response levels can be easily spiked.



To elaborate, let’s take an example of interactive Ads. They are very effective when it comes to mobile advertising strategies because the user gets to truly interact with them. They can choose to call the business, check out directions, visit their Facebook page, or simply go to their website. The direction of conversion is multifaceted but one thing always leads to another, right?

Samsung really went to extra lengths for the promotion of its Galaxy S6 smartphone. They created a highly-personalized interactive Ad in collaboration with InMobi. They helped people experience the deliverable by displaying a “personalized real-time battery identification mobile ad unit,” on their smartphones.

They wanted to emphasize the fast-charging battery feature of their smartphone and here’s how they did it.

The result: 1.6% of the users ended up tapping on the “Tap to find more” button, while 1.1% of users clicked on the “Experience” CTA and an average of 20 seconds were spent on the interstitial ad.

In yet another successful mobile interactive advertising move,

Pond’s went on to create the world’s first face detection augmented reality rich media mobile ad for the promotion of their new Acne 10-in-1 Solution. Through this Ad, the beauty and health brand provided a unique experience to the target audience. All they had to do was use their front camera to track the various features of their face and automatically detect the acne-prone areas of their skin. This implementation of augmented reality experience brought about 29 seconds of average engagement from over 39,000 users.

Types of mobile advertising

- **Pinterest:** Awareness campaigns, engagement campaigns, traffic campaigns
- **Facebook & Instagram:** Images, videos, carousel ads, interstitial ads
- **LinkedIn:** Display ads, Sponsored in-mail, sponsored content, text ads, dynamic ads
- **Twitter:** Promoted accounts, trends, and tweets
- **Snapchat:** Snap ads, sponsored and on-demand geo-filters, sponsored lenses

Effective mobile advertising strategies

If the above information somehow was not very convincing for you, let us tell you that the mobile advertising market is expected to exceed $200 billion globally. All substantial brands and businesses that want to reduce their cost of advertising but also ensure that their advertising reaps maximum leads and conversions are relying on effective mobile advertising strategies. However, the audience isn’t very willing to view ads on their mobile devices and they use a plethora of ad-blocking services on their smartphones. Checking out ExpressVPN, CyberGhost, NordVPN review and other reviews for other reliable services to ensure that they are

not beings served with ads. Hence, it is important to draw them in with relevant ads that can successfully engage them. Hence. here are some of the most effective mobile Ad strategies:

- **Customization of ads for the target audience:** One of the most basic yet the most effective strategies for mobile advertising is the customization of ads for the target audience. We are talking of highly-customized ads for devices because each user is unique to their smartphones. To ensure an increase in mobile conversions, targeted ad customization is crucial. Dynamic Creative Optimization (DCO) lets you do just that. With DCO, one can easily create multiple versions of an Ad, specifically targeting them for the targeted audience. Based on variables such as gender, age, socioeconomic status, Geo-location, type of the device being used, etc., DCO will help you get the task done.
- **Mobile-preferred ads:** In 2020, people are spending all of their time indoors and even working from home. Hence, by the expectation, people are spending more time online actively engaging with news and video content. So, marketers at the moment have reduced the number of brand-heavy advertising campaigns. Hence, the trend. If you really want to tap your audience for ensured conversion, mobile-preferred Ads are your way out. These Ads are aimed at users searching from their mobile phones. So, you can try sending users to your mobile landing page and telling them in advance that the URL is mobile-friendly. Mobile-preferred Ads are about giving away offers that are accessible via a mobile device and not otherwise.
- **Ecommerce mobile ads:** Mobile advertising is highly effective for eCommerce brands and similar brands. People want to be seamless and quick in their online shopping. Even Google shopping campaigns prioritize shopping Ads and display them on the top of the mobile

results page. So, use this to your advantage and create great eCommerce mobile Ads that allow users to absorb maximum information and arrive on a purchase decision.

- **Use ad extensions:** Using ad extensions is not just a great way to get an edge on the competition but are also very helpful in increasing an ad's CTR. They also contribute to the quality score and help increase ad rank and click-through rate. They let you have more space on the search results page if your ad qualifies. So, make sure that you use the relevant ones such as Location extensions, Sitelink extensions, Call and message extensions, App extensions, Price extensions, Seller rating extensions, etc.
- **Enable calling = Cheap conversions:** A lot of marketers do not realize the relevance and importance of calling when it comes to seeking affordable and cheap conversions. By enabling calling, you are able to minimize the barriers for your potential customers to call your business. Hence, by including your business phone number on the ad, you make it easy for your target audience to call you instantly and eventually cut down on the cost of conversion.
- **Mobile ad gamification:** Ever came across game ads that let you actually play the game for a span of 15-20 seconds to help you experience the true game? Well, they are really engaging and are capable of driving solid conversions. So, you can implement ad gamification to enrich your ads and make them more effective.
- **Incentivize your ads:** For the love of incentives, how about you implement the incentivization of your Ads? We are talking about anything which falls in the range of discount, free shipping, or a voucher. For example, you can simply offer an X% discount for signing up for your newsletter. However, just make sure that your users are able to claim the incentive seamlessly and not navigate to many pages and make many clicks in order to redeem the incentive.

How to rightfully implement mobile advertising strategies in 2020?

Here are a few things you need to ensure if you want to rightfully reap the benefits of mobile advertising strategies:

1. It is important to identify the right target audience that would be interested in mobile ads. Make sure that your Ads are relevant to the device users that they are being shown to
2. It is important to ensure that your ad is just not for the promotion of your offering but it should genuinely aim to solve the target audience’s problems.
3. Keep your ads lightweight so that they can easily load on the mobile devices of your users.
4. Employ video content in your ads because they have a higher engagement percentage.
5. Capturing the emotions of your audience with your ads is a great strategy if rightly implemented.

Conclusion

Advertisers and marketers have definitely come a long way in terms of how they exploit the prowess of advertising strategies to their advantage. This is a period of radical change, consumer behaviour is experiencing a huge shift. With the mammoth increase in online traffic and people looking to consume digital news and engross in gaming and streaming content, you have to come up with a strategy.

In this approach, shifting the focus from desktop to mobile advertising is a primary step because the present and the future is mobile. So, make sure that you follow suit and ensure that you are tapping the potential of this move and driving maximum conversions for your business.

The post Effective mobile advertising strategies for 2020

appeared first on Search Engine Watch.

https://www.searchenginewatch.com/2020/04/22/effective-mobile-advertising-strategies-for-2020/

Gain visibility with Google’s unified mobile search

30-second summary:

- Consumers visit an average of 14 different channels before they decide whether to make a purchase. To make this more complicated, mobile ecommerce sales are expected to account for 54% of all ecommerce sales by 2021.
- Shoppers searching on mobile will be served both the Google Search results and products relevant to that search, organically. These aren’t ads, just a single unified search of both Google and available products.
- To determine which products are relevant for a given query, Google will scan retailers’ websites and product feeds and select the products that seem the most appropriate. Product relevance will also depend on how robust your Google Shopping feed is.
- Without high-quality product data, listings can easily fall to the bottom of the search engine results page. Fortunately, there are several tactics and best practices that will help improve product visibility.
- Automating product data feed management reduces the risk of errors, increases overall performance and empowers marketers to dedicate more time to optimizing campaigns

and testing new channels.

Consumer expectations are higher than ever. Today’s buyers expect to find their desired products on the ecommerce search engine of their choosing, and they expect accurate, consistent information at every touchpoint.

In fact, about 56% of customer interactions today take place in a multi-channel, multi-event journey. That means most customer experiences include an array of interactions, moments and channels.

Consumers visit an average of 14 different channels before they decide whether to make a purchase. To make this more complicated, mobile ecommerce sales are expected to account for 54% of all ecommerce sales by 2021.

This means that retailers need to create ecommerce strategies that are built around a mobile, multi-channel shopping experience.

One key step to success here will be driving visibility, which ensures you appear at the top of search results on desktop and mobile. And Google has just given you one more way to do just that.

Google unifies mobile search and products – and that’s good news for you

Google has the unique benefit of being the de facto search engine when it comes to general search – and that includes for products. Now, Google has unified their search on mobile by making products even more important.

Shoppers searching on mobile will be served both the Google Search results and products relevant to that search, organically. These aren’t ads, just a single unified search of

both Google and available products.

Ultimately, Google’s unified mobile search saves online shoppers time by automating the task of searching for a specific item on dozens of individual storefronts.

But it’s more than just a customer-facing convenience. Retailers who can grasp the value of unified mobile search will be able to reach more customers, more efficiently. And those who can’t will lose out on a key touchpoint.

Being absent (or incoherent) in these results leads only to missed opportunities. Given that these could lead to an immediate sale, that’s a big waste.

Success and visibility will come from your product data feed

The Google Shopping feed acts as a spreadsheet that describes and organizes a retailer’s product catalog.

Note that shoppers on Google will be able to filter their product results by style, department and size, or view several images of a product – all of these data points correlate directly to your product feed. And that’s no accident.

The product feed in this scenario functions quite similarly to SEO. It allows you to supply relevant information (keywords and data specifications) in order to rank high when consumers make relevant queries on Google.

However, unlike your usual Shopping ads, businesses have no control over which search queries will trigger their products to appear. That decision is up to Google’s algorithms.

To determine which products are relevant for a given query, Google will scan retailers’ websites and product feeds and select the products that seem the most appropriate. Product

relevance will also depend on how robust your Google Shopping feed is.

If you want to drive visibility and the likelihood that your products will surface, you'll need to provide as much information as possible.

How to increase mobile search rank through product data optimization

Without high-quality product data, listings can easily fall to the bottom of the search engine results page. Fortunately, there are several tactics and best practices that will help improve product visibility.

Focus on the following:

- Product title: Your product title is analogous to a website page title in that it's the first thing Google refers to when looking for relevant results. Avoid keyword stuffing and focus on one target keyword, and move that keyword as close to the beginning of the product title as possible.
- Product image: Attractive, eye-catching images of the product from various angles entice customers to click on your listing. But always omit watermarks, additional text and logos, or Google will likely reject the product.
- Product category: Product category isn't immediately visible to prospective customers. However it is an attribute that Google considers when populating Shopping search results and is crucial to relevancy. The more narrow and targeted you are with your subcategories, the more relevant your product listing will be for customers.
- Product type: Product type is another backend attribute that helps determine relevance. It's important that you

are as descriptive as possible, especially if you sell niche products.
- Product description: Google scans product descriptions for relevant keywords. This means marketers have the opportunity to feature second-tier keywords in their product description that the system may have overlooked in the product title.

How to automate your product data edits

Google's website crawl feature uses crawls of your website to read structured data and sitemap information, then extracts information about relevant products.

However, it's best for retailers to use automated tools to submit their product data, which ensures the data is both up to date and completely accurate and optimized.

Automating product data feed management reduces the risk of errors, increases overall performance and empowers marketers to dedicate more time to optimizing campaigns and testing new channels.

In particular, consider automating these product data edits:

- Product availability: After customers purchase a product on one channel, its availability must be updated on all channels. Doing this manually or without automation increases the likelihood that you will list products that are unavailable or not list those that have become available.
- Change price formats: Manually aligning price formats with channel or country requirements wastes time and resources. Consider automating the process of replacing commas with periods or currency symbols with currency abbreviations like USD, GBP or EUR. Similarly, consider

automating the process of conversions or adding tax values.

Consumers have more buying options than ever before, and the introduction of Google's new Search functionality just reminds us how complex their journey can be.

It's incumbent upon brands and retailers to keep up by broadening their ecommerce strategies (and product feed optimization) to account for new online shopping trends.

The retailers who successfully incorporate a mobile, multi-channel strategy will be the ones who are most visible to online shoppers today and tomorrow.

Chris Dessi is VP, Americas and Australia at Productsup.

The post Gain visibility with Google's unified mobile search appeared first on Search Engine Watch.

https://www.searchenginewatch.com/2020/04/08/gain-visibility-with-googles-unified-mobile-search/

Here's What Allbirds Has Learned About Ecommerce in China So Far

|
10 seconds ago
Earlier this month DTC footwear brand Allbirds debuted in Japan, about nine months after it started selling in China

through Alibaba’s online B2C marketplace Tmall.

As Allbirds mulls where to go next, international president Erick Haskell spoke at the National Retail Federation’s conference in New York this week about how the brand tackled the world’s largest market and what it has learned since.

Haskell said China is the first market Allbirds didn’t enter directly as a DTC player, and brand awareness was “extremely low, to be quite frank.”

Tmall, which caters to more than 700 million Chinese consumers, was appealing not only because of its huge customer base but also because it allowed Allbirds to enter the market while maintaining a presence that looked and felt true to the brand.

“It’s not like being on other third-party platforms where it’s hard to control brand presence and pricing,” Haskell added. “We can run our own retail, have our own ecommerce site [on Tmall].”

Another selling point for Tmall is brands interact directly with consumers, so they have “transparent access to data about consumers in China,” said Christina Fontana, head of fashion and luxury in Tmall’s luxury division.

And that’s important because Chinese consumers are different from shoppers in other parts of the world.

For starters, Fontana noted that Chinese consumers are generally 10 to 15 years younger than consumers for the same brands in the west, so more established brands have to find ways to be younger in China.

“Consumers are very young and demanding,” she added. “They want to know about brands and their craft. It’s important to tell that story.”

One of Allbirds’ brand principles is a simple design

aesthetic, which “doesn’t always jive with Chinese taste,” Haskell said. That’s why the brand focused on explaining its fabric is from “wool that is milled in the same place in Italy where $5,000 Armani suits are made,” he said.

Sustainability is another Allbirds value, but it’s not as important to purchasing decisions in China as it is in other parts of the world.

“It has required a lot of education on our part in connecting with consumers and letting them know the [climate] crisis they face … [to inform] purchase decisions about clothing,” he said.

That being said, he noted consumers in China are “extremely receptive” to the message and “like so many aspects, even if the consumer is slower getting there, they are faster getting to the solution.”

Haskell said one of the most surprising things about Tmall is it’s a largely mobile platform: 95% of the business Allbirds does in China is mobile, versus about 55% in the U.S.

And, according to Fontana, Chinese consumers open the Tmall app an average of seven times a day, looking for content, new products and to see what other consumers are doing on the platform.

She said livestreaming works particularly well as Tmall customers like to talk about their experiences immediately—and Alibaba even allows viewers to buy products directly from those livestreams.

“There are new content formats in China,” she said. “It’s important to adapt and use them to bring your brand story to consumers.”

In addition, Fontana said 80% of shoppers leave feedback on Tmall, and the platform now includes a feature that allows

brands to incorporate this feedback into product development.

Haskell said Allbirds is used to immediate feedback as a DTC brand. It has made 42 changes on its initial product thanks to real-time customer feedback.

“When we launched in China, we got immediate feedback from Tmall consumers about the fit of the shoe, which was something we had … not heard in rest of world, so we made changes to react to the needs in the China market,” Haskell said.

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https://www.adweek.com/retail/heres-what-allbirds-has-learned-about-ecommerce-in-china-so-far/

Fandom Is Serious Business for the Creative Director Behind the KFC Dating Game

|
4 hours ago
When ad agency Wieden + Kennedy first approached Psyop with the idea for a dating simulator based around the KFC franchise—starring the brand’s namesake Colonel as a romance-able character—one of Alexei Bochenek’s first thoughts was that if he didn’t ultimately win this pitch, then he’d have to “resign in shame.”

Bochenek ultimately served as the game director and narrative designer for what would become I Love You, Colonel Sanders! At that point, he had worked his way up to creative director from strategist at the Los Angeles-based production company Psyop over roughly four years. But what got Bochenek the gig with W+K wasn't reams of experience; it was because he is a giant nerd.

"They were really happy to have people who were fans of the [dating simulator] genre, and had experience in that whole realm of anime and video games," he said. "And well, that's me, and that's my larger team here."

As Bochenek put it, that kind of fandom—about Japanese animation, video games or pop culture in general—is the sole driving force behind his career trajectory. Even in college at Boston University, his major in English literature and minor in film studies allowed him to get a degree in "being a fan of stuff": good books and good film.

That degree of stuff led Bochenek to a short-lived stint at a talent agency and a slightly longer tenure writing an email newsletter for Chris Hardwick's Nerdist brand. Eventually, those gigs would lead Bochenek to Disney in 2013, where he climbed the ranks to become editor in chief of Disney Insider—pumping out social-first content for Disney fans, by a Disney fan.

"I was in the sweet spot of the best era of Disney movies when I was a kid: The Little Mermaid, Lion King, Aladdin, all of that," he said. "I was big into Disney cartoons, and that's what ultimately led me into other types of animation, like Japanese animation."

"Think about the conversation you're starting with the story you've chosen to tell."
Alexei Bochenek, Creative Director, Psyop

This kind of nerdiness is what led Bochenek as a teenager to spend hours in internet chat rooms talking about bootlegged

Japanese TV programs, and also what made him spend “way too much money” on comic books and collectibles. Evidently, that intel turned out to be crucial for his role at Psyop, which he snagged after spending two years repping the Disney brand.

Five years into the Psyop gig, the one thing Bochenek wants to do next is tell “more unexpected stories that lean into the world of popular culture.”

Big mistake

“Joining an agency as an assistant because I was told it’s the way everything worked in Hollywood,” Bochenek said. For young creatives in particular, he said don’t waste time—or that sense of “creative excitement”—punching into a job that your heart isn’t in.

Lesson learned

Instead of “waiting to go out” and grab a career that encompasses the things you’re excited about, Bochenek said he learned to simply take the plunge and grab those jobs, even if it seems like the riskier option at first glance.

How he got the gig

When asked what ultimately won over KFC and W+K, Bochenek credits his genuine, deep-rooted appreciation and respect for all things pop culture. “They said, ‘Hey, this guy gets it; he’s a legitimate fan,’ and it’s in all of our best interests to empower real fans,” he explained. “If this thing wasn’t authentic—and it felt like it wasn’t authentic—then nobody would want to spend two hours [playing] it.”

Pro-tip

Especially when it comes to tackling topics like animation that have such deep-seated audiences, Bochenek said it’s not only important to “think about the conversation you’re

starting with the story you've chosen to tell" but to also consider "how that story will grow as more and more voices are added to the discussion."

https://www.adweek.com/digital/fandom-is-serious-business-for-the-creative-director-behind-kfc-dating-game/

Infographic: Consumers Are Turning to Telehealth and Innovative Mobile Medicine Services

|
4 hours ago
From accessing medical records to speaking to physicians, Americans are turning to mobile medicine as a supplement to healthcare coverage. Users are taking advantage of innovative mobile medicine services for convenience, control and cost—and of course, when they need additional support. An Omnicom Media Group survey found 86% of people have used an online pharmacy at least once in the past year and almost half (41%) have utilized a telehealth app in the same time period.

Online pharmacies and medical apps are bridging the gap—especially for the chronically ill, new parents and people who live in rural areas. According to OMG, telehealth will become a $13 billion industry by 2021.

While there is limited receptivity to ads in these environments, brands can support overall well-being with relevant, resourceful, nonintrusive content. Pam Marsh,

managing director, primary research at OMG, says data analytics should be the first step before advertising on mobile medicine platforms because they “offer the perfect combination of highly engaged audience and most relevant context. However, it is also an environment where there’s a fine line between information and intrusion. The best way to make sure you don’t cross the line from information to intrusion is to understand consumer mindset in specific environments and engagements.”

https://www.adweek.com/digital/infographic-consumers-are-turning-to-telehealth-and-innovative-mobile-medicine-services/

Chipotle Is Redesigning Restaurants for Mobile

Ordering

|
16 hours ago
Chipotle is cooking up a new restaurant design that it hopes will feed its growing mobile business.

The quick-service Mexican restaurant chain‘s digital operation is already a billion-dollar business, according to a company statement released Thursday announcing the changes.

The redesign will not only be deployed at new locations but also be implemented in varying degrees at existing restaurants, CMO Chris Brandt said in the statement. Chipotle has already begun installing mobile pick-up shelves and tech-enabled assembly lines for food preparation, but features such as walk-up windows and better placement of its digital pick-up portals will help restaurants fill orders more efficiently and enable consumers to pick them up more quickly.

In addition, bottled beverages will be more accessible with a cooler built into the serving line. Open views and front row seating will provide direct lines of sight into the kitchen, which will improve transparency.

The design refresh will be tested in four new restaurants, including an urban storefront, a standalone restaurant with a drive-thru window called the Chipotlane, and an endcap unit with a Chipotlane.

Chipotle, which owns and operates all of its locations, had 2,500 restaurants in the U.S., Canada, the United Kingdom, France and Germany as of Sept. 30. Brandt said he believes there is the potential to have 5,000 to 6,000 stores in the U.S.

https://www.adweek.com/brand-marketing/chipotle-is-redesigning-restaurants-for-mobile-ordering/

You Could Win $420 on Live Weed Trivia App Daily Bonfire

|
16 hours ago
Cannabis was the first product ever sold over the internet in 1971 between MIT and Stanford computer science students, according to Daily Bonfire host Ngaio Bealum.

HelloMD has launched its own type of HQ Trivia in an effort to educate folks about weed in an app called Daily Bonfire.

Every Monday, Wednesday and Friday at 4 p.m. ET, smartphone users have the chance to win $420 per game. HelloMD co-founder Mark Hadfield told Adweek that players can “give back to organizations that are tirelessly working to right the wrongs of prohibition, the ACLU, MAPS and NORML.”

Each Daily Bonfire game begins with a collective vote to donate 5% or half of the winnings to the aforementioned pro-cannabis advocacy groups. Hadfield explained that while there are so many other organizations “doing phenomenal work to advance our industry,” he and his team felt that these three nonprofits have collectively progressed the industry’s aims to where they are today. Including them in the app, Hadfield continued, is one way that players can honor them.

While hosts like Bealum, from Netflix’s Cooking on High, ask

12 questions of the cannabinoid category, contestants of legal age have the opportunity to help fight the war on drugs and support regulated retailers throughout the country, while also earning cash along with a dose of Pineapple Express humor.

“I hella look forward to hosting Daily Bonfire each week,” said Bealum, a longtime cannabis law reform advocate who is also the marijuana advice columnist for the Sacramento News and Review and culture editor at Marijuana Politics.

Once the game winds down to the final winners, the victors can decide to immediately cash out or visit a local partner dispensary where Daily Bonfire dollars unlock exclusive discounts.

Daily Bonfire is the first cannabis live trivia game. Hadfield said the app is designed to incentivize users to play an active role in combating today’s illicit retail marketplace and to further promote the destigmatization of cannabis, both used recreationally and medicinally. He pointed out the stigma disproportionately incarcerating poor people and branding people of color.

“In an effort to ‘normalize’ cannabis, the trend has been to downplay the recreational benefits of cannabis and showcase its medicinal properties. Now that we’ve achieved ‘mainstreamification,’ Daily Bonfire is here to bring cannabis back to its playful roots by celebrating the plant’s monumental contributions to pop culture, science and history,” Hadfield said.

Since most advertising in cannabis is restricted, the app provides brands with an accessible, convenient social channel to reach consumers.

“We have an entire product roadmap developed to further ‘gamify’ the legal purchase of cannabis for brands, retailers and consumers [within this app],” he said.

As Daily Bonfire’s gaming format expands and an Android version is soon to come, HelloMD hopes to recruit more hosts and make it a true daily trivia show. Other hosts include Matt Baetz, featured on the Late Late Show, and Alexis Rutledge, a San Francisco-based comedian.

https://www.adweek.com/digital/you-could-win-420-on-live-weed-trivia-app-daily-bonfire/

The Biggest Black Friday Ever Saw $7.4B in Online Sales

|
21 hours ago
Black Friday Shopping Insights

The 2019 holiday shopping season is finally underway with $7.4 billion in online sales on Black Friday, marking 19.6% growth year-over-year (YOY).

That’s according to figures from data provider Adobe, and puts Black Friday 2019 $500,000 behind Cyber Monday 2018, which holds the record for the biggest day in U.S. ecommerce to date. Adobe forecasts $9.4 billion in sales on Cyber Monday 2019 for an increase of 18.9% YOY.

Figures from software company Salesforce were slightly lower—$7.2 billion for 14% YOY growth—but Salesforce nevertheless agreed 2019 was the biggest Black Friday ever.

Like Thanksgiving shopping, actual sales figures were slightly

lower than anticipated—Adobe predicted Black Friday would hit $7.5 billion and Salesforce expected the day would bring in $7.3 billion.

As of 9 p.m. ET Friday, Adobe said consumers had spent $5.4 billion online, up 22.3% YOY, hitting a rate of $5.3 million per minute in the afternoon. (It's no Singles Day, but, to be fair, it never is.)

In addition, Adobe said consumers were more comfortable buying bigger ticket items online as the average order value on Black Friday hit a record of $168, up 5.9% YOY.

Again, like Thanksgiving shopping, mobile devices were key.

Adobe tallied $2.9 billion in sales from smartphones, making Black Friday 2019 also the biggest day ever for mobile shopping. According to Adobe's figures, 39% of all ecommerce sales were made on smartphones, which is a 21% increase YOY. In addition, Adobe said more than half (61%) of all visits to online retailers came from smartphones on Black Friday, which was 15.8% higher than last year.

Similarly, Salesforce said 65% of all digital orders were made on a mobile device, which means mobile orders grew 35% this year.

Large ecommerce platforms, or those with more than $1 billion in annual revenue, are outperforming those with less than $50 million in revenue when it comes to smartphone sales. Adobe found large platforms have 11% more revenue share and are 87% more efficient at converting consumers on smartphones. These ecommerce giants have also seen a 45.6% boost in sales so far this holiday season, compared to the 17.6% boost among smaller retailers.

Adobe said Buy Online Pick up In Store (BOPIS) orders were also up 43.2% YOY, and added it indicates even customers who don't want to shop in stores "nonetheless flocked there to

pick up goods.” Adobe also said it’s a sign “retailers are successfully bridging online and offline retail operations.”

In terms of social mentions on Black Friday, Salesforce said the five most-talked-about brands worldwide were: PlayStation, Nintendo, Apple, Xbox and Google. The five most-talked about retailers included: Amazon, Walmart, Target, GameStop and Best Buy.

Adobe said the top products on Black Friday came from Frozen 2, Nerf and Paw Patrol. Top electronics included Air Fryers, AirPods and Samsung TVs.

In a similar vein, Adobe said shoppers saw the heaviest discounts on televisions with an average discount of 18.6%, as well as 17.5% on computers and 14.4% on toys.

Meanwhile, merchants on ecommerce company Shopify’s platform made more than $900 million on Black Friday from more than 9.3 million consumers who spent an average of $84.49. In line with shopping behaviors outlined above, Shopify said 69% of Black Friday transactions were on mobile devices.

As Black Friday was drawing to a close, Adobe reaffirmed its holiday season forecast of $143.7 billion online as shoppers spent $57.2 billion online between Nov. 1 and 28.

https://www.adweek.com/digital/the-biggest-black-friday-ever-saw-7-4b-in-online-sales/

Thanksgiving Sales Surpass

$4B, Showing Nothing is Sacred Anymore

In 2015, outdoor retailer REI launched its #OptOutside campaign, in which it closed all stores on Black Friday so employees could spend the day outdoors.

Four years ago, closing on Black Friday was a bold concept. By 2019, however, not even Thanksgiving Day is exempt from end-of-year retail madness as U.S. consumers spent a record-setting $4 billion on a day traditionally reserved for turkey, loved ones and gratitude.

According to data provider Adobe Analytics, U.S. consumers spent $4.2 billion on Thanksgiving Day 2019, marking a year-over-year (YOY) increase of 14.5% in revenue. (That's still slightly less than the $4.4 billion Adobe predicted, but nearly double what consumers spent on Thanksgiving 2015.)

Software firm Salesforce had similar figures, noting U.S.-based digital sales on Thanksgiving grew 17% to $4.1 billion, which it said signifies "early confidence in the market despite economic pressures."

In other countries where Thanksgiving may not be celebrated at the table but is nevertheless an excuse to shop, Salesforce found digital revenue grew 24% to $20 billion.

For its part, ecommerce site Shopify said 5.3 million consumers made a purchase from one of its merchants on Thanksgiving—with an average cart price of $81.12.

A spokesperson said Salesforce has seen Thanksgiving become more of a major digital shopping event in the last few years for one simple reason: mobile phones. The platform has seen

the highest rate of mobile orders on Thanksgiving Day in each of the last three years.

Data from Adobe also shows growth in recent years: Online sales on Thanksgiving surpassed $2 billion in 2015 and have grown ever since. Indeed, Adobe found nearly half (44.9%) of Thanksgiving revenue came from smartphones, which is up 24.4% from 2018. Salesforce, on the other hand, said 60% of digital orders on Thanksgiving came from mobile phones.

As digital traffic topped 70% overall, Salesforce said shoppers are demonstrating they are "ready to transition toward a mobile-only reality."

"Thanksgiving is definitely benefiting the most from the mobile 'revolution,' since it's the most mobile-heavy day of the Thanksgiving weekend," said Taylor Schreiner, principal analyst and head of Adobe Digital Insights. "Just as Cyber Monday became a big shopping day because people had access to the Internet at work, Thanksgiving has gathered momentum as mobile has made it even easier for people to shop while Thanksgiving is going on."

Adobe said it was a particularly good Thanksgiving for large ecommerce players, or those with more than $1 billion in annual revenue, as they got a 244% sales boost on Thanksgiving, which Adobe said indicates they are offering "great mobile shopping experiences." Meanwhile, smaller retailers, or those with less than $50 million, were up 61%.

According to Adobe, the most popular toys on Thanksgiving came from Frozen 2, L.O.L. Surprise Dolls and Nerf, while the most popular electronics included Fire TV as well as Apple and HP laptops.

In 2018, Adobe's figures showed shoppers spent $3.7 billion online. That same year Salesforce found Thanksgiving Day prices were as low as Black Friday for the first time, driving 28% growth YOY.

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