

Happy B Day - that's happy Banner Day!

Issued by [Incubeta](#)

28 Oct 2011

The banner turns 17 this week! Is it leaving behind its turbulent teenager years and ready to be accepted by the majority of the online society, or is there still a major tantrum left in this, our old-school pioneer of new media marketing?

We've come a long way since the dawning of the digital marketing era, when the innocent 468 x 60 GIF banner first led us into the playground of the online marketers. We waited for ads to download, and how we waited. Then eagerly clicking on them, giving astonishing click through rates of 78% but where was the conversion and who was doing the tracking?

Where are we 17 years on?

We've developed increasingly engaging ad formats and bigger, better ad slots. We're working on targeting our messages and timing them so they reach the right people at the time when they are ready to take action. Turning the once playful, then ubiquitous online advert into a meaningful, respected informational tool is the key to developing display marketing into a well rounded, sociable, respected member of online society.

With effortless, dashboard reporting comes the reality that not all adverts hit the spot, and with failure comes the need and desire to improve and out perform. Transparency is weeding out the less open agencies and companies, everyone is a 'new media expert' and no longer does the ability to talk eCPM, SEO and ROI mean anything without the ability to walk the walk.

Mobile technology, social media and new-fangled formats are challenging the role of what has now become 'traditional' online advertising and forcing all of us to think in newer, more creative and increasingly diverse ways. So what are we doing about it? We're combining rich media ads with location based marketing to get messages to highly targeted, converting audiences. Video ads are attention-grabbing, and social media advertising can connect friends through their mutual 'liking' of products and reinforce a brands credibility with groups, networks and affiliations. We're done with push advertising and we're working on pulling once again.

We applaud you, the humble banner, and marvel at your staying power and potential to become a mere \$50 billion industry by your 21st birthday (so says Google).

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