



Rich Media Lifts Campaign Effectiveness: Awareness, Conversions, Engagement

As spending on Rich Media grows (by up to 40% in Asia last year, according to one media vendor), advertisers are looking to more accurately measure their return on investment.

Advertisers' requests for more quantifiable metrics against Rich Media campaigns has resulted in a number of particularly insightful studies. Cookie based tracking research has been used to evaluate the impact of Rich Media on ad recall, conversion path tracking has helped shed light on the impact of Rich Media along the "purchase funnel", and by tracking eye movements, researchers have found evidence to show how much audiences pay attention to ads.

The findings indicate that Rich Media can 1) significantly increase awareness, 2) contribute to conversions, and 3) boost time spent engaged with an ad.

Microsoft Advertising Japan Study Shows Rich Media Raises Awareness

A study by Microsoft Advertising Japan and Dentsu Corp.¹ of the Super Billboard position on the MSN Japan homepage illustrates how Rich Media is able to create high awareness in a short time. Recall for the expanded banner was a stunning 210% higher than that for the standard banner.

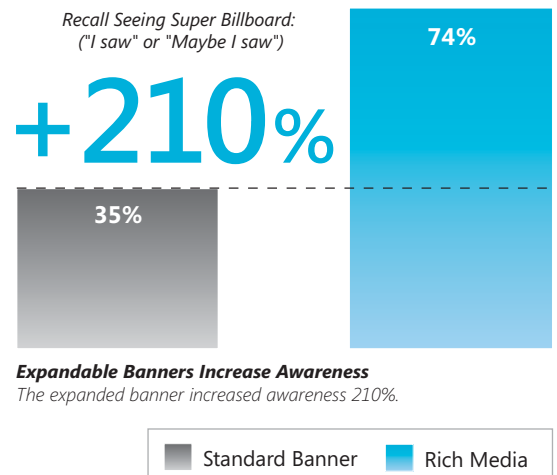


Standard Banner



Expandable Banner

The same study also reveals that the interactivity provided by Rich Media can lead to awareness as high as nearly **85% after only three exposures**. Even minimal interaction – a single mouseover – can heighten awareness up to 70%. These findings totally defy the myth that immediate awareness cannot be gained through online advertising. Highly interactive creatives on major media platforms can achieve effectiveness matching that of TV commercials.



Maximizing the Engagement Effect

Viewers tended to follow the animations, which resulted in increased time spent focused on the ad. However this “window of opportunity” was short. The study found that if the animation did not start within four seconds, viewers had already moved on and did not return to the ad.

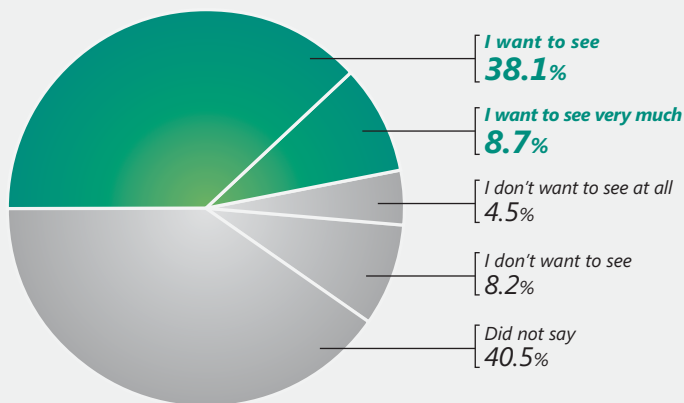
Other key findings from the eye tracking study showed that 70% of respondents recalled the ad. And while 100% of respondents noticed the ads, 65% took the desired action to click on it. This finding adds another piece of evidence on how **click-through as a metric often undervalues the effectiveness of Rich Media advertising.**

Creativity was important too, with respondents mentioning that the vibrant green visual of the skinned border caught their attention. Respondents do not find the ad intrusive, with nearly half saying they did not mind seeing the ad again. The results further confirm

that creative and well-executed Rich Media campaigns can effectively drive advertisers’ messages while also entertaining the target audience, an overall effect that surely contributes to positive brand affinity.

Viewing intention among users exposed to Rich Media ad

46.8%
I want to see again



Almost half of respondents desired to see the rich media ad again

Rich Media Increases the Effectiveness of Online Campaigns

Given all the evidence of how Rich Media contributes to awareness, conversions, and engagement, it certainly belongs in every campaign budget. While developing a Rich Media ad often requires more effort, lead time and investment, they can generate returns for the overall campaign that go far beyond simply measuring click-throughs.

Maximizing the impact of Rich Media requires the right media partner – one who can innovate with you, share best practices and understands your pursuit to improve the ROI of your advertising investment.

Your local Microsoft Advertising sales representative is ready to share more of our latest Rich Media ad formats and case studies with you. For more information, please visit the Rich Media section on <http://advertising.microsoft.com/asia>

¹ 2006-2007 MSN Home Super BB MOF Ad Effectiveness Survey with Dentsu Corp. (Japan)

² A study of one major advertiser by Eyeblaster, 25 campaigns and 340 million impressions.

³ Note: The converse is not necessarily true.

⁴ 2008 Wallpaper AD Effectiveness Study, Microsoft Advertising Japan

Eye Tracking Study Shows Online Ads CAN Capture Eyeballs

Results from an eye tracking study conducted on behalf of Microsoft Advertising Japan⁴ provides strong evidence of how well Rich Media ad formats can engage viewers' attention – up to 10 times longer or more than static banners (see ① and ② below).

In the study, a camera recorded participants' eye movements as they viewed a web page with a Rich Media ad. The placement featured dynamic animations between a rectangular banner and a "skinned" border (see ② below) that drew the eye across the page from left to right and then revealed a clear call to action for users to write a story and send as a gift to a friend.

Dispelling the Myth that Viewers Ignore Ads

A time lapse tracking map (see ④ below) shows that participants' eyes followed the animated actions across the page, indicating that they clearly noticed the ad.



① Standard Banner

10
times
longer
gazing



② Rich Media



③ Key Elements

Viewers noticed key areas where the brand, product, and click button appeared on the Rich Media ad.



④ Tracking Map

The path of viewer's eye movements across the page shows attention was focused on core elements of the ad such as product, brand and click button.



⑤ Heat Map

The duration of viewer's gaze shows they stayed on the ad elements longest, as indicated by the red and orange patches.

Average gazing time was 10 times or more for the Rich Media ad versus a standard banner. The heat map (see ⑤ above) also indicates that viewers not only spent more time on the advertising area, they also noticed important elements including the brand, product, and click button (see ③ above).

Eyeblander Study Reveals Rich Media Increases Conversions



A recent study by Eyeblander² narrows in on what matters most: return on investment.

The study found that consistent investment in Rich Media was highly effective in driving conversions – that is, turning views into purchases or other desired calls for action.

Advantages of Rich Media

The Eyeblander study analyzed the online campaigns of a well-known global advertiser. A total of 25 major campaigns were examined, comprising 340 million impressions across 17 online publishers, with a split of 74% Rich Media versus 26% standard banners. The results were significant:

Format	Conversion
Standard Banner	0.70%
Rich Media	1.08%
- Expandable Banner	1.60%
- Polite Banner	0.87%

Rich Media Turns Viewers into Buyers

Compared to standard banners, expandable banners more than double conversion rates.

Note: Case study data should not be viewed as predictive of future results.

Disadvantages of Standard Banners

In fact, standard banners clearly appear to have dragged down campaigns that included more of them in the mix:

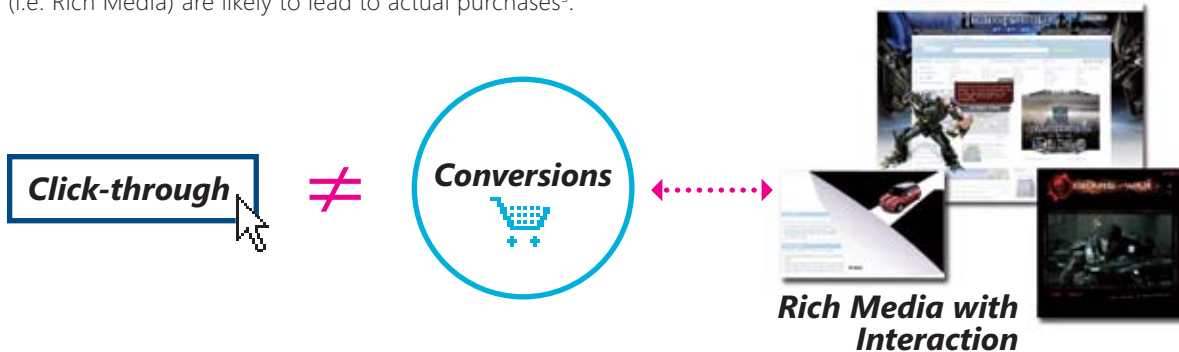


Standard Banners Drag Campaigns Down

Standard banners were more prevalent in campaigns that performed worst.

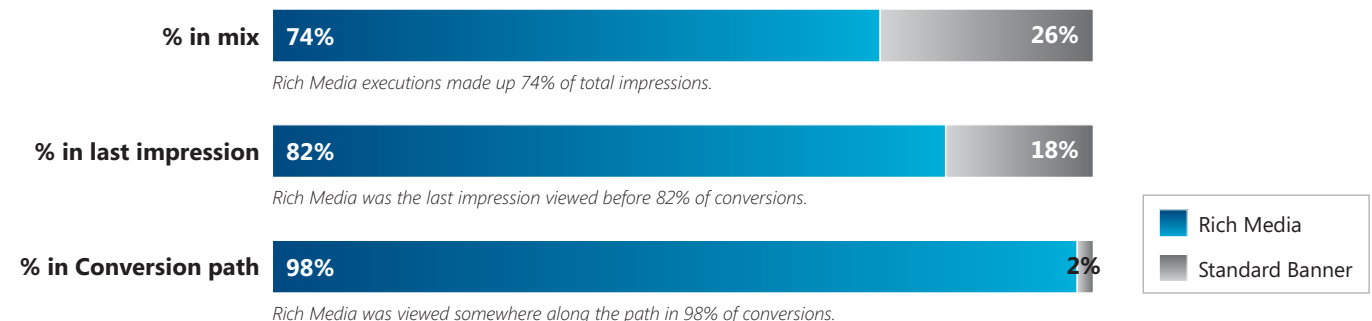
Interaction More Important than Click-Throughs

Another key finding: While simply counting click-throughs provides no significant correlation to conversions, high interaction rates (i.e. Rich Media) are likely to lead to actual purchases³.



Rich Media on the Path of 98% of Conversions

Rich Media also shows its superiority when tracking consumers to see which banners they were exposed to before making a purchase. Rich Media banners were present somewhere along the conversion path in 98% of cases. Also, 82% of the last impressions viewed before the conversion were Rich Media.



Rich Media executions made up 74% of total impressions.

Rich Media was the last impression viewed before 82% of conversions.

Rich Media was viewed somewhere along the path in 98% of conversions.