Advertising Revenue Playbook

MAY 2021

TABLE OF CONTENTS

The goal of this playbook is to support small and mid-sized news organizations in their efforts to successfully monetize web content and grow their digital advertising revenue. This playbook is designed to guide you through your advertising revenue journey, especially if you are in the early stages of that journey.

Section 1 is where you should begin if you do not yet have a digital advertising business or would like to better understand the basics of programmatic advertising. In this section we address questions like:

- What are the basics of digital advertising and how do you begin?
- What tools do you need to run a successful digital advertising business?

Start with Section 2 if you already have a digital advertising business and are looking for ways to improve your strategies or gain new insights to improve revenue. In this section we address questions such as:

- How can you use audience data to optimize your digital advertising business?
- How do you build an organization and team culture to drive greater digital advertising success?
- What advertising solutions are best for your market, and how do you prioritize and package them?
- What does successful campaign management look like?

Executive Summary . . . 3

SECTION 1

Chapter 1

Getting Started with Digital Advertising . . . 5

SECTION 2

Chapter 2

Leveraging Your Audience to Accelerate Ad Revenue . . . 20

Chapter 3

Developing Your Sales Solutions . . . 30

Chapter 4

Building an Advertising Team . . . 38

Chapter 5

Managing Your Campaigns for Success . . . 45

Chapter 6

Tools and Resources . . . 50

Executive Summary

OVERVIEW

WELCOME TO THE GOOGLE NEWS INITIATIVE DIGITAL ADVERTISING PLAYBOOK.

Our experience working with global news organizations has uncovered that success in digital advertising not only requires an organization equipped to deliver digital advertising solutions but also one that understands its unique market position and its audiences. As a result, there isn't a one-size-fits-all approach. This playbook is designed to provide a structured approach to think through the decisions, trade-offs and investments involved in building and strengthening a digital advertising business. We hope it provides your news organization with the resources to set goals, develop a roadmap and find success on your own unique digital advertising journey.

Partners

Google News Initiative
local media consortium
Fergal Carr Consulting Inc.
Thatcher+Co.

Other Contributors

LION Publishers
12up
MIGHTYHIVE
ANYMIND GROUP
CCI
readwhere
PROPS
Institute for Nonprofit News
Blue Engine Collaborative
Magid

CHAPTER 1

Getting Started with Digital Advertising

CHAPTER 1

GETTING STARTED WITH DIGITAL ADVERTISING

While reader revenue has been a recent focus for publishers, digital advertising continues to remain a significant revenue stream and an important strategic priority for news publishers. Direct sold, programmatic and video ads comprise a large source of this revenue and remain a high priority for most publishers (Source: Digiday). By 2025, digital advertising is expected to represent 70% of total advertising dollars globally (Source: Statista 2021). If you want to harness the revenue-generating potential of digital advertising, you need an understanding of the digital advertising landscape, including the selling strategies and digital tools that best suit your organizational needs.

The purpose of this chapter is to help you learn the basics of digital advertising, determine how to sell your digital advertising and to demystify the technologies that are essential to starting and growing a digital advertising business.

The first chapter in this playbook will address these questions:

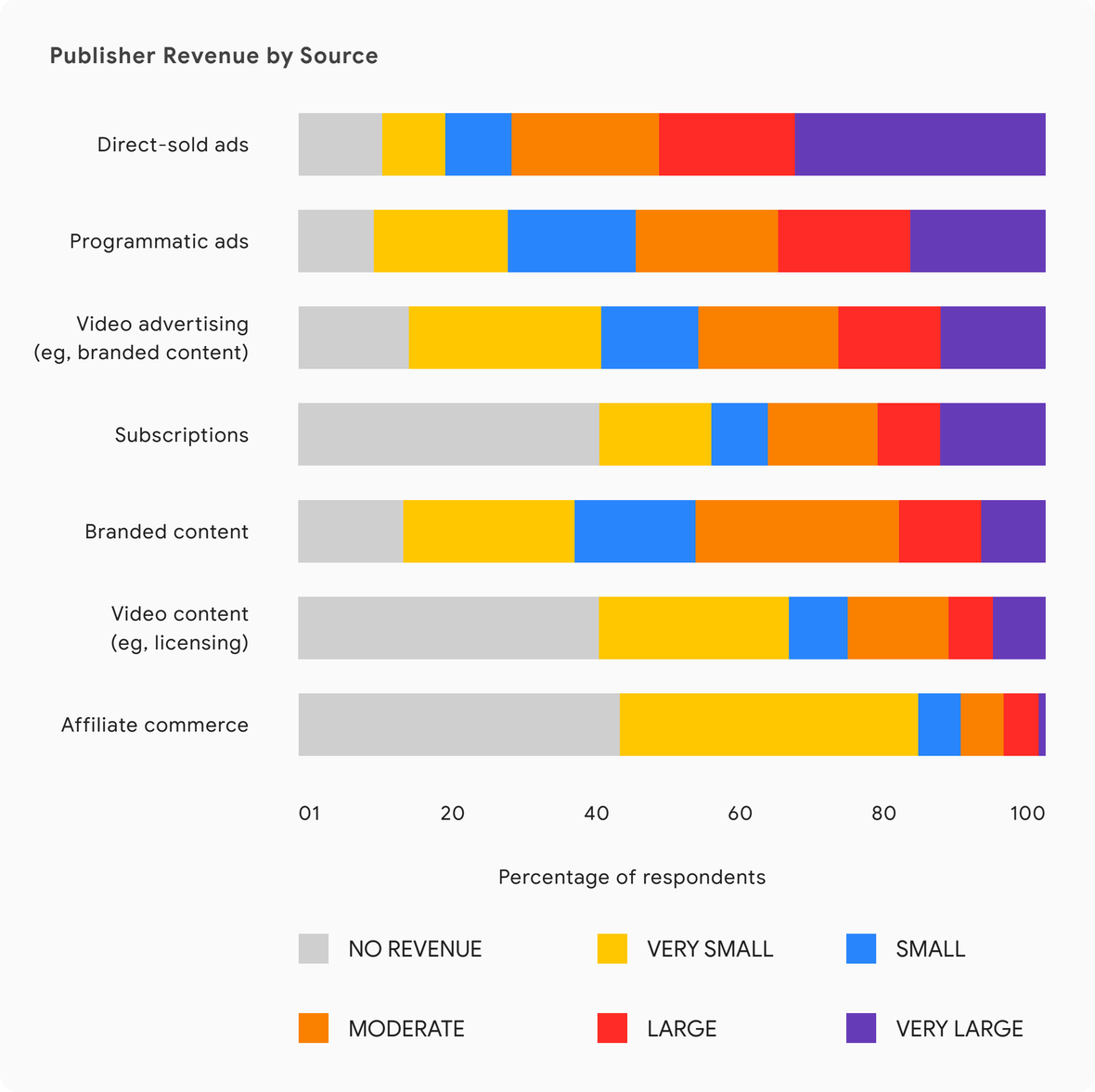
1.1 What are the basics of digital advertising?

1.2 What digital advertising sales approach is best for you?

1.3 What ad products should you consider?

1.4 What technology do you need?

1.5 How do you balance advertising and user experience?



Source: 135 publisher executives surveyed by Digiday, September 2019

1.1

WHAT ARE THE BASICS OF DIGITAL ADVERTISING?

Basic terminology

Digital **ad units** are the discrete spaces on your website that contain ads. You can define an ad unit on your site with a name, description, and dimensions. An ad unit may sometimes be referred to as "inventory unit."

Ad units can be added to the front-end of your site or designed into your website through your Content Management System (CMS).

Each **ad unit** must have an **ad tag** that identifies its location on your site — what page and position it will hold.

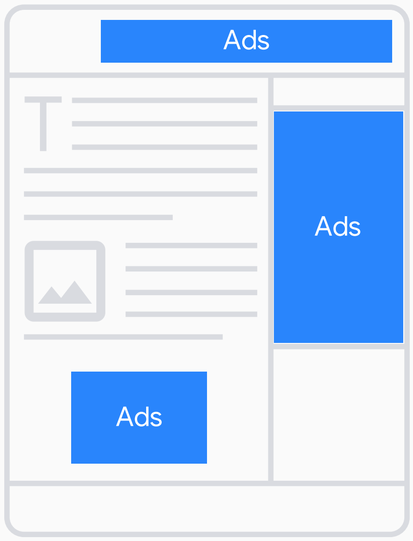
Advertising is delivered or trafficked into each ad unit through its **ad tag** by an **ad solution**, a technology that serves or places your clients' ads onto your site.

Placements are multiple **ad units** you group together.

Example: You sell all of one type of **ad unit** across your site or in a section

When trying to increase your digital advertising revenue, you should try to maximize both your prices (i.e. **CPMs**, or cost per thousand impressions) as well as your volume (i.e. your **fill rate**, the number of ads served divided by the total number of ads requested). We will visit a more comprehensive list of key metrics affecting your ad revenue in Chapter 2.1.

Sample Advertising Unit Layout



Selling basics

Ad inventory is the collective number of **ad units** and **impressions** you're able to sell to advertisers

Ad impressions represent the total number of times each **ad unit** on your site has been displayed. Increasing pageviews can be a way to increase total ad impressions.

Ad inventory is sold in two primary ways: directly and programmatically. Many news organizations use a hybrid approach that includes both.

Direct sales

By employing a sales team you can create custom ad packages and sell your inventory directly to advertisers or agencies at premium rates. These packaged deals are typically sold as:

- **Sponsorships:** flat fee for a fixed placement or section of your site or other product such as newsletter or event. Example: Advertiser X sponsors the sports section for $1,000/month.
- **Share of voice (SOV):** fee based on a percent of advertising inventory purchased either for a section or across your site. Example: The impressions for your sports section are valued at approximately $2,000/month. Advertiser X buys 50% SOV ($1,000), Advertiser Y buys 25% SOV ($500) and Advertiser Z buys 25% SOV ($500). Rates will fluctuate based on the actual delivered impressions every month.
- **CPM (Cost Per Mille):** rates calculated by cost-per-thousand impressions.

Programmatic sales

By working with an ad technology like a **Supply Side Platform (SSP)** or **Ad Exchange**, you can sell your ad inventory in an advertising auction in an automated way.

1.2

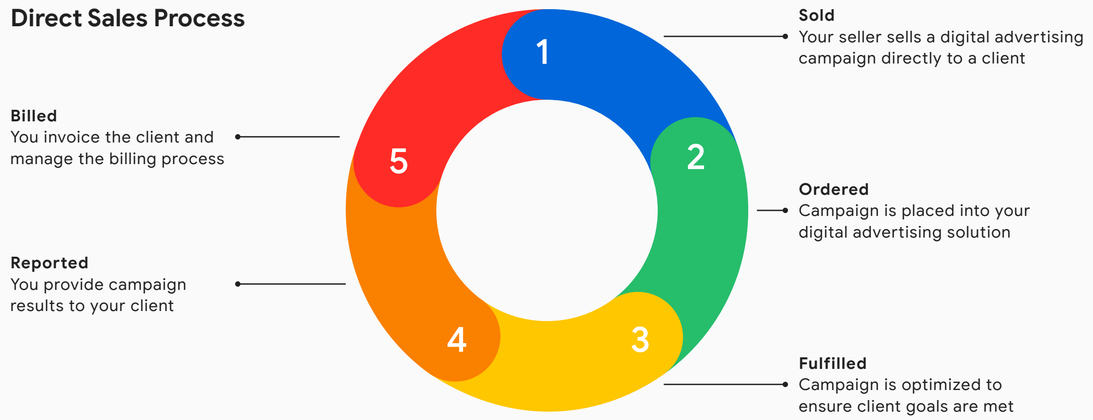
WHAT DIGITAL ADVERTISING SALES APPROACH IS BEST FOR YOU?

You must first decide how you'll sell your digital advertising to determine the resources and technology you'll need.

Direct Sales

You manage the entire end-to-end digital campaign sales and fulfillment process, working directly with advertisers. This approach has the following advantages:

- Direct control of the ads displayed on your site
- Closer relationship with advertisers
- Higher prices you can charge for your ad inventory



Source: Local Media Consortium

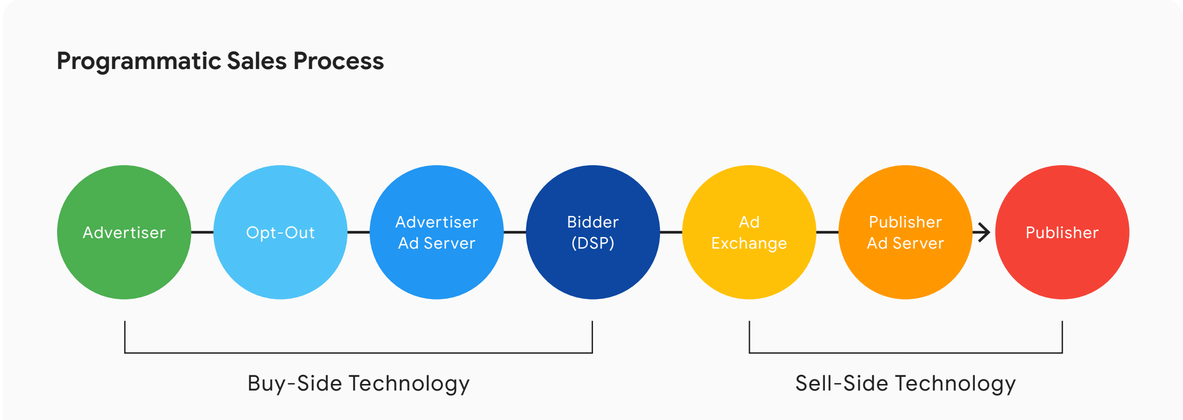
Programmatic

You sell your advertising inventory through technology that automates the ad management, buying and measurement process. Programmatic has the following advantages:

Data-driven software enables you to sell your ad inventory based on demographics, content, reader behavior, etc.

It allows you to display the most relevant ads to your readers, which can increase user engagement and CTR (click-through-rate).

It makes your ad inventory available to thousands of advertisers in real-time advertising auctions or, in some cases, on multiple platforms at the same time to find the highest paying advertising offer.



Hybrid

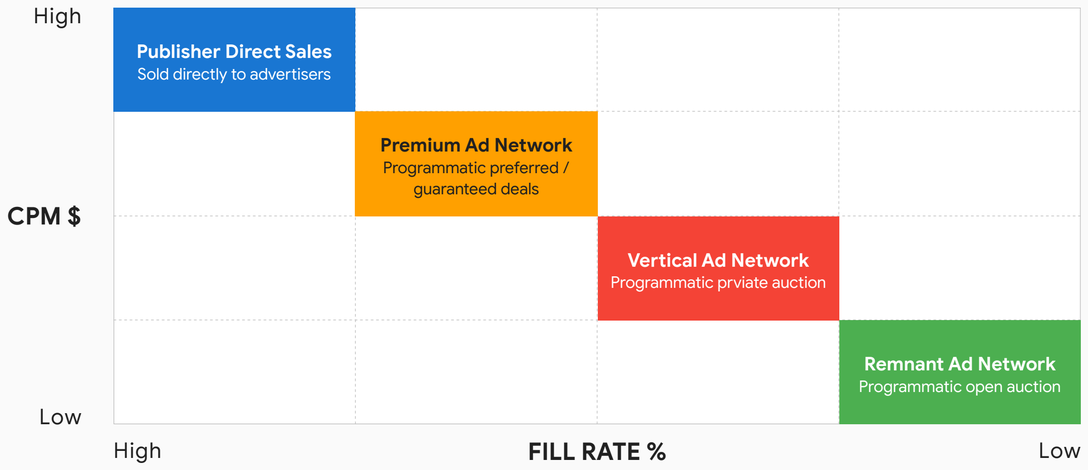
You utilize both direct sales and programmatic.
Hybrid has the following advantages:

• It allows you to package and sell high-value ad inventory directly to advertisers and agencies you know while selling additional inventory through programmatic auctions.

• It allows you to **prioritize your inventory** based on how you are selling it or who you are selling it to.

- Note that even after prioritizing, you can allow programmatic to compete with directly sold ads leveraging dynamic allocation, which optimizes for the highest-paying ad while still meeting your needs for the direct deal over the course of the month (learn more here).

Sales Approach by CPM and Fill Rate



Source: Local Media Consortium

Determining the right sales approach

	Direct Sales Selling your digital advertising directly to clients	Programmatic Selling your digital advertising through an automated platform	Hybrid Combination of direct sold and programmatic
How many direct advertiser relationships do you have?	**High** North Am: 100+ LATAM: 50+	**Low** North Am: <20 LATAM: <10	**Medium** North Am: 20–100 LATAM: 10–50
How are your ad rates (CPMs)?	**High** North Am: $10–$20 CPM LATAM: $2–$8 CPM	**Low** North Am: <$5 CPM LATAM: <%0.50 CPM	**Medium** North Am: $6–$10 CPM LATAM: $.0.50–$2 CPM
What percent of your ad inventory gets sold?	**Medium** North Am: 60–80% LATAM: 30–60%	**High** North Am: 100% LATAM: 90%	**High** North Am: 100% LATAM: 90–100%
What resources do you need?	• Sales team • Campaign fulfillment staff member, managing setup through delivery, billing, and reporting	• Resource to manage ad network partner (eg AdSense)	• Sales team and campaign • Resource to manage campaign fulfillment and ad network partners
Technology needed	Ad solution	Ad exchange, supply side platform or ad network partner	Ad solution and Ad exchange, supply side platform, ad network partner

Source: Local Media Consortium and Mighty Hive

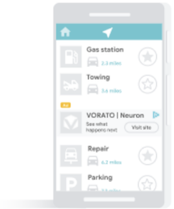
Note: Benchmarks are directional based on averages observed in each region amongst news organizations that the Local Media Consortium and Mighty Hive have worked with.

1.3

WHAT AD PRODUCTS SHOULD YOU CONSIDER?

Ad inventory formats

Before you begin selling, you'll need to determine which digital ad inventory formats you want to offer advertisers. The formats shown here align with the Better Ad Standards and will need to be set up and supported in your ad solution.



Inventory support				Creative support	
Mobile web	Mobile app	Desktop	Connected TVs	Display	Video
✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓

Native ads

- Content sponsored by an advertiser that is formatted to match the look and feel of your site.

Inventory support				Creative support	
Mobile web	Mobile app	Desktop	Connected TVs	Display	Video
beta	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓

Interstitial ads

- Ads that cover a user's full screen between content articles, pages or sections.

Inventory support				Creative support	
Mobile web	Mobile app	Desktop	Connected TVs	Display	Video
✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓

Banner / Display ads

- Graphic display units that can contain text, images, flash, video or audio. Helpful banner definitions and visuals are here.

Other types of ads

- There are other types of ads that can appear in delivery channels such as apps or newsletters. We do not cover those in this playbook but they are worth exploring further along in your advertising journey.

Inventory support				Creative support	
Mobile web	Mobile app	Desktop	Connected TVs	Display	Video
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

In-stream ads

- Video ads, streamed through a player that begin before (pre-roll), during (mid-roll) or after (post-roll) original content loads.

Ad unit sizes for desktop and mobile

You'll also need to determine what ad unit sizes you want to sell. According to the Interactive Advertising Bureau (IAB), 97% of all ad impressions are made up of these popular sizes.

How to ensure your ads perform well for advertisers:

The following recommendations are most likely to ensure your ads perform well for advertisers:

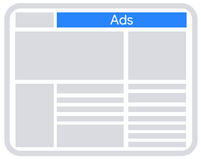
- ☑ Place ads in line with the main content or in content-rich areas of the site.
- ☑ Avoid placing ads in areas with little or no unique content or overloading certain areas of the site with too many ads.
- ☑ To increase viewability % of ads where **over 50%** of the ad is in view for over one second in display and over two seconds for a video, implement lazy loading, and/or use vertical or taller ads. (Learn more about viewability in Chapter 2.3)
- ☑ Place horizontally oriented ad units mid-page / scroll placement.

Most Popular Ad Sizes

Desktop

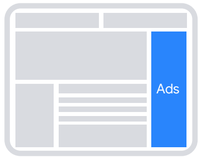
300 × 250
Medium Rectangle

(40%)
Often embedded in content, perceived as less intrusive



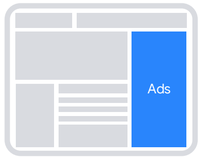
728 × 90
Leaderboard

(25%)
Usually positioned at the top of a page, seen immediately by users visiting a website



160 × 600
Wide Skyscraper

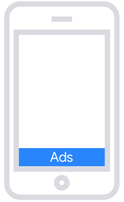
(12%)
Vertical length increases above-the-fold visibility



300 × 600
Halfpage

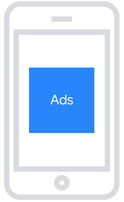
(5%)
Commands high CPMs due to its high impact and performance

Mobile



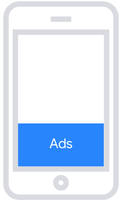
320 × 50
Mobile Leaderboard

(12%)
Visible to users when they open a page or app



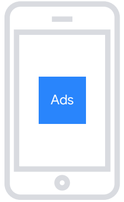
320 × 320
Mobile Full Page Flex

(1%)
Integrated into content, often acts as a page-break



320 × 100
Mobile Large Banner

(1%)
Higher impact and more visible



250 × 250
Square

(1%)
Integrated into the user experience as they scroll

1.4

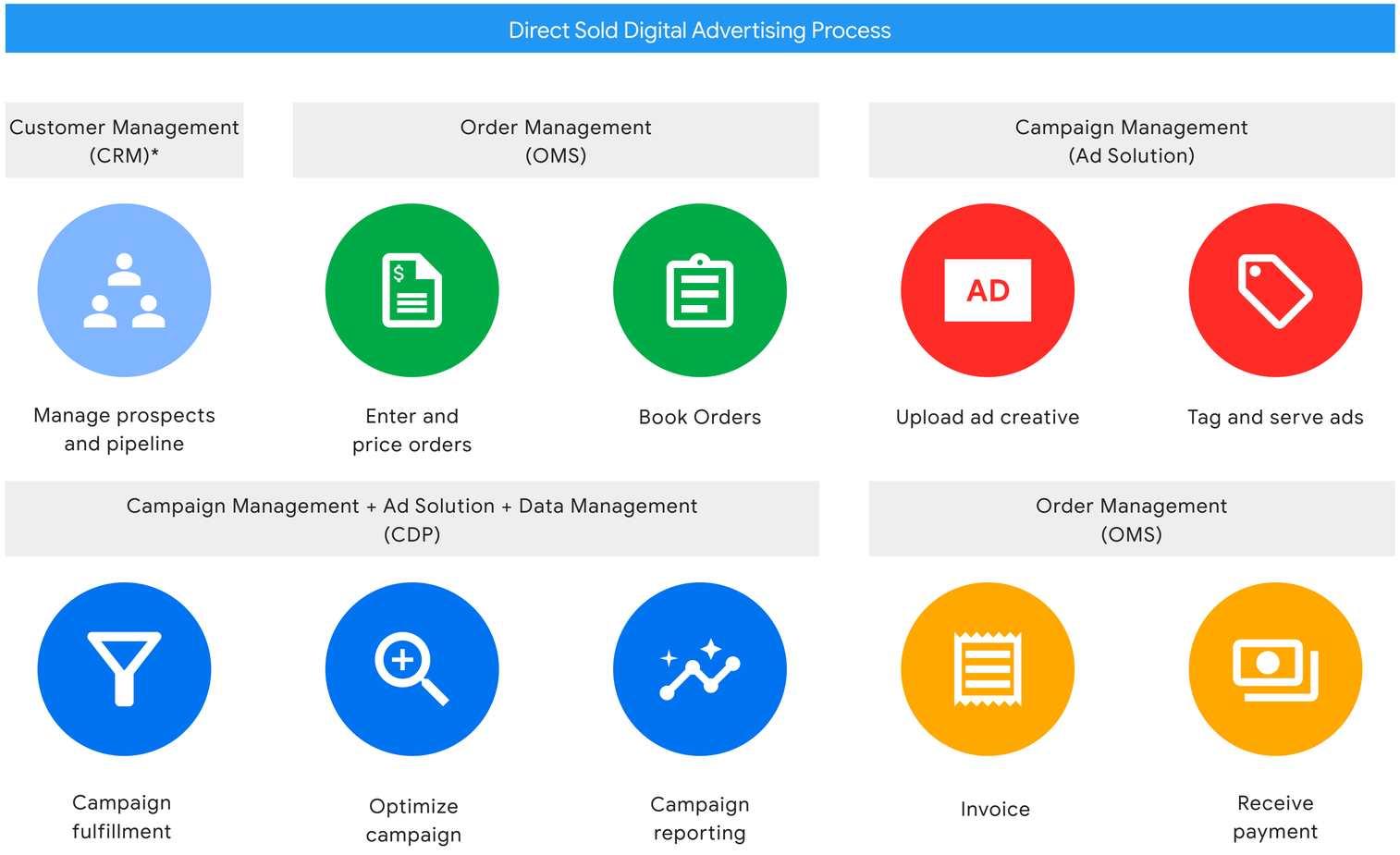
WHAT TECHNOLOGY DO YOU NEED?

Technology that supports digital advertising is typically referred to as your **Ad Tech Stack**. This is the technology you'll need for the end-to-end digital sales process.

The capabilities you'll need depend on your sales approach.

- **Direct Sold** requires dedicated internal staffing to manage the entire process, including sales.
- **Programmatic** can be 100% outsourced or managed by one person or a small team as it requires fewer manual operations.
- **Hybrid** is a strategic combination of both direct and programmatic that will also require internal staffing.

Direct Sold



Source: Local Media Consortium
* If you have a large volume of advertiser relationships that you cannot track manually.

WHAT AD TECHNOLOGY DO YOU NEED?

Name	What does it do?	How do you know if you need it?	Solution examples	
Customer Relationship Managment (CRM)	Manages client contact information, tracks sales activity (appointments, meetings) and manages pipeline (leads, revenue sold)	☑ You have so many prospects you can't keep up with leads ☑ Disparate and disconnected access to customer data — in spreadsheets, emails, etc. ☑ Decreased visibility into sales team activity, appointments, meetings, etc. ☑ Difficulty forecasting pipeline and sold revenue ☑ Reliance on manual sales reporting	Small publishers: • Brainworks • Affinity X • Sugar • Monday	Medium+ publishers • SalesForce • Oracle NetSuite
Order Management System (OMS)	Centralized system for sales products/pricing, ordering, fulfilling and billing digital sales orders	☑ You have so many products and prices it's difficult to manage ☑ Inefficient tracking and management of customer orders ☑ Inability to track and manage revenue sold ☑ Difficult client billing process ☑ Cumbersome manual revenue reporting	Small publishers: • Brainworks • AffinityX • QuickBooks • Monday	Medium+ publishers • Naviga (newspaper/digital) • WideOrbit (broadcast/digital) • Operative (digital) • Fattail (digital)
Ad Solution	Single place to create, manage, and display digital ads across different platforms — web, apps, mobile, etc.	☑ You have so many ad units and sources of ad demand it's difficult to manage ☑ Difficulty tracking availability and yield due to high number of ad impressions served ☑ Inability to target ads based on different audience segments ☑ Inability to track how each campaign is performing against goal ☑ Difficulty pulling campaign reporting for clients	Small publishers: • AdSense • Google Ad Manager • Broadstreet	Medium+ publishers • Google Ad Manager 360
Rich Media Tools	Facilitate serving ads with advanced features like video, native/branded content, audio, etc.	☑ Selling a high volume of rich media advertising inventory ☑ So many impressions it's hard to track availability and yield	Medium+ publishers • Video: JW Player • Native: Nativo	• Google Native
Consumer Data Management Platform (CDP)	Collects, manages and segments audience data to optimize advertising targeting and increase value of impressions	☑ Large first-party data housed in disparate places ☑ Client demand for sophisticated audience targeting ☑ So many impressions it's hard to track availability and yield	Small publishers: • Hubspot • SmartHub • SecondStreet	Medium+ publishers • BlueConic • BlueVenn • BlueLena
Consent Management Platform (CMP)	Legally documents and manages a user's consent choices prior to collecting, sharing, or selling user data from online sources such as websites or apps	☑ Your site visitors are from regions with consumer privacy regulations like GDPR in Europe or CCPA in California. ☑ Third parties can access your first-party consumer data for advertising targeting purposes in regulated regions.	Medium+ publishers • OneTrust • Sourcepoint • Osano	• Didomi • Quantcast • Funding Choices

Source: Local Media Consortium

1.4

WHAT AD TECHNOLOGY DO YOU NEED?

Programmatic

Programmatic is the buying and selling of digital ads through an automated process. In this process, ad networks automatically connect you with demand from advertisers to fill your ad inventory.

When setting up your programmatic approach, there are several selling strategies to consider.

Further Resources on Programmatic Advertising:

- You can find more details about the different types of programmatic deals here.
- This beginners programmatic guide provides an overview of the basic setup and terminology of programmatic advertising.
- Depending on your traffic volume and which ad solution you are able to use, you can take advantage of automated tools offered by your ad network on the number of ads you can serve and where you can place them on your site. For example, Google Adsense's Auto Ads provides automated ad placement recommendations. Find out more about Auto Ads features here.
- Best practices for ad placement
- When considering programmatic, it is important to understand how and when direct and programmatic work together. It is not uncommon to have both managed by the same team to ensure seamless management of both types of inventory.

	Open Auction	Private Auctions	Preferred Deals	Guaranteed Deals
Definition	Your ad inventory is available to all participating programmatic advertisers in a real-time bidding (RTB) online auction where the highest bidder wins the impressions. Publishers can set a minimum CPM or "floor" price for their inventory.	You invite an exclusive group of advertisers to bid on your inventory first through a RTB auction. Usually garners a higher price than open auctions but may not "fill" or sell 100% of your inventory.	You negotiate a fixed CPM price with select advertiser(s) for specific audiences but impressions are not guaranteed. A buyer gets a "first look" at your inventory and can then decide to buy it or not.	You and a buyer negotiate a fixed CPM price for a guaranteed number of impressions.
Publisher Fit	Small/Medium	Large	Large	Large
Buyers	Hundreds of buyers	Invitation only; auction for selected buyers	One buyer	One buyer
Price	Based on bidding	Negotiated minimum CPM	Negotiated fixed price	Negotiated fixed price
Impressions	Non-guaranteed	Non-guaranteed	Non-guaranteed	Guaranteed

Source: AdPushup and Local Media Consortium

WHAT AD TECHNOLOGY DO YOU NEED?

Hybrid

The hybrid approach requires technology that supports both direct and programmatic sales. To optimize the highest value advertising you'll need to set up a prioritization in your ad solution, which allows you to sell as much of your inventory as possible at higher rates through direct selling while selling as much additional inventory as possible through programmatic.

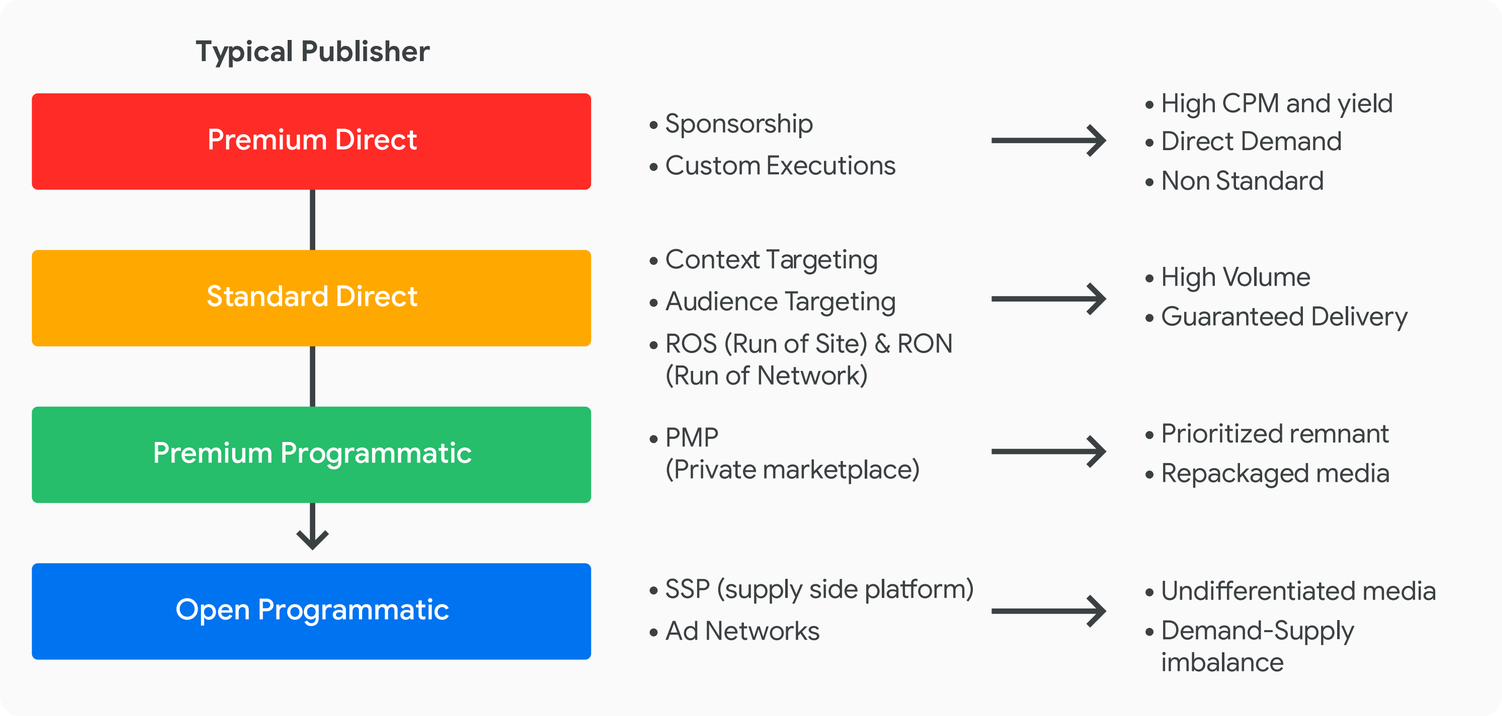
The hybrid approach can work differently from one publisher to another, depending on how each organization decides to balance programmatic and direct sales. The Long Beach Post in California and Wyoming's Oil City News offer examples of different but successful approaches. The Long Beach Post discovered that running programmatic in competition with direct sold best served their needs, while Oil City News used programmatic to fill unused inventory.

In either approach, the results speak for themselves:

- The Long Beach Post was able to generate an average of $2,000 in new/additional monthly revenue, allowing them to hire an additional full-time staff writer.
- Oil City News generated an average of $1,000 in new/additional monthly revenue.

To dive deeper into these publishers' success stories read this case study on programmatic advertising.

Prioritization in the Ad Server



Source: Slideshare

1.4

WHAT AD TECHNOLOGY DO YOU NEED?

Getting Started with your Ad Solution

Whatever the approach, ensuring you have the right ad solution is important. The decision will depend on your sales approach, the complexity of your ad formats and the volume of your impressions.

Here we outline two potential ad solutions, though a multitude of other options are available. You can explore onboarding these options through Google Certified Publishing Partners.

When choosing between AdSense and Ad Manager, you should prioritize AdSense if you do not have significant direct sales-dedicated resources to manage your ads business, or don't need to manage more than one ad network. Ad Manager is a more advanced solution you can use as you grow your direct sales (see Chapter 4) or manage multiple ad networks.

Denník N. Case Study

After using an external ad management partner, Denník N, an independent Slovak daily and online medium, moved their ad monetization back in-house using Google Ad Manager, allowing them to leverage Google's demand on their inventory in the best way possible. After implementing Google Ad Manager, Denník N saw a 2.5x increase in CPMs and a +293% increase in year-over-year revenue (2020 vs. 2019).

These tables will help you with the basic setup of your ad solution.

Ad Solution	What's ideal for you?	Works best if you need:	How do I get started?
Google Ad Sense	• **Programmatic only** • Experience level: just getting started with digital ad sales and don't want to sell to advertisers directly • Best for publishers with a small staff looking for a more automated programmatic ad solution • Easy implementation. Online videos with step-by-step instructions on how to connect your website to AdSense and generate revenue in a couple of days. • No need for a sales team. Has a built-in ad network automatically connecting you with demand from advertisers to fill your ad inventory.	1. A simple platform to monetize your website — blogs, forums, online services 2. A fast way to implement ad delivery 3. To optimize your ad inventory and maximize your revenue automatically 4. Easy, accessible performance reports	• Setting up AdSense • AdSense Alternatives
Google Ad Manager	• **Supports direct and hybrid strategies** • Ideal if you have experience selling and managing digital advertising • Best for publishers who sell ads directly to advertisers and/or want to fill demand through programmatic • Supports direct sales — allows you to sell and manage your own ad inventory • Supports programmatic — connects to multiple third-party ad networks and ad exchanges	1. A central place to monetize multiple ad types (websites, mobile apps, videos, or games) 2. To manage a significant amount of ad revenue from direct deals with advertisers 3. To use third-party programmatic networks to compete for your ad inventory 4. In-depth campaign reports with more granular insights	• Setting up Google Ad Manager — watch this webinar for hands-on tips • Set up the structure and control of your inventory • Generate ad tags • Set up your ad unit hierarchy • Google Certified Publishing Partners • Ad Manager alternatives include Smart, Verizon Media, AdButler

Supports	AdSense	Google Ad Manager
Automated ad network	✓	✓
Direct sold ads		✓
Easy implementation	✓	
Multiple ad types		✓
Complex reporting		✓
Advertiser billing / payments	✓	Programmatic only. Publisher manages direct sold.

Source: Local Media Consortium

1.5

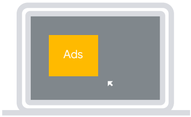
HOW DO YOU BALANCE ADVERTISING AND USER EXPERIENCE?

Now that we've reviewed the most popular ad formats and sizes in chapter 1.3, this section helps you understand how to ensure you're optimizing your users' experience.

Better Ads Standards

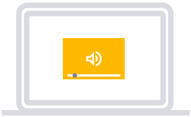
When done effectively, digital advertising is unintrusive and doesn't frustrate your users. Intrusive ads can command higher CPMs but can negatively impact page speed, disrupt the user experience and cause readers to think twice about returning to your site. It's important to strike a good balance between revenue opportunities and user experience, a balance that will also help with minimizing potential conflicts between the newsroom and those selling advertising within the organization. To minimize ad-blockers and improve your site experience, the Coalition for Better Ads has identified 15 different types of ads users find the most disruptive and thus should be avoided/used with caution.

Desktop Web Experience



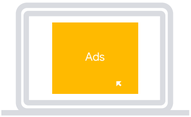
Pop-up Ads

Ads that pop up and block the main content of the page



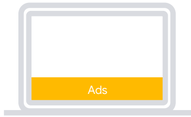
Auto-playing Video Ads with Sound

Ads that play sounds without any user interaction



Prestitial Ads with Countdown

Ads that appear before page content is loaded, forcing the user to wait before they can dismiss the ad, or it closes on its own



Large Sticky Ads

Ads that stick to the bottom edge of a page, regardless of a user's efforts to scroll

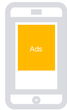
Mobile Web Experience

Pop-up Ads

Ads that pop up and block the main content of the page

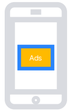
Presistitial Ads

Ads that appear on a mobile page before content loads, blocking the content



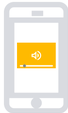
Ad Density Higher Than 30%

Ads that take up more than 30% of the vertical height of a page



Flashing Animated Ads

Ads that animate and "flash" with rapidly changing back-ground, text or colors.



Auto-playing Video Ads with Sound

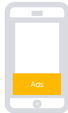
Ads that auto-play video with sound automatically, without any user interaction

Postitial Ads withCountdown

Ads with countdown timers that force users to wait before they can dismiss the ad, or for the ad to close or redirect them

Full-screen Scrollover Ads

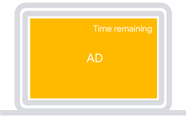
Ads that force a user to scroll through an ad that appears on top of content



Large Sticky Ads

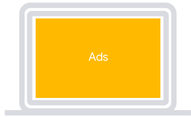
Ads that stick to a side of a mobile page, regardless of a user's efforts to scroll

Short-Form Video Experiences



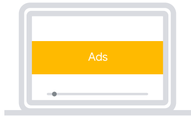
Long Pre-Roll Ads that can't be skipped

Ads that play before video content with a combined length over 31 seconds and don't allow the user to skip past them within the first 6 seconds



Mid-Roll Ads

Ads that play in the middle of video content interrupting the user experience



Large Display Ads

Static or animated ads superimposed over more than 20% of the video player or appear in the middle third of the player

Source: Coalition for Better Ads

1.5

HOW DO YOU BALANCE ADVERTISING AND USER EXPERIENCE?

Core Web Vitals

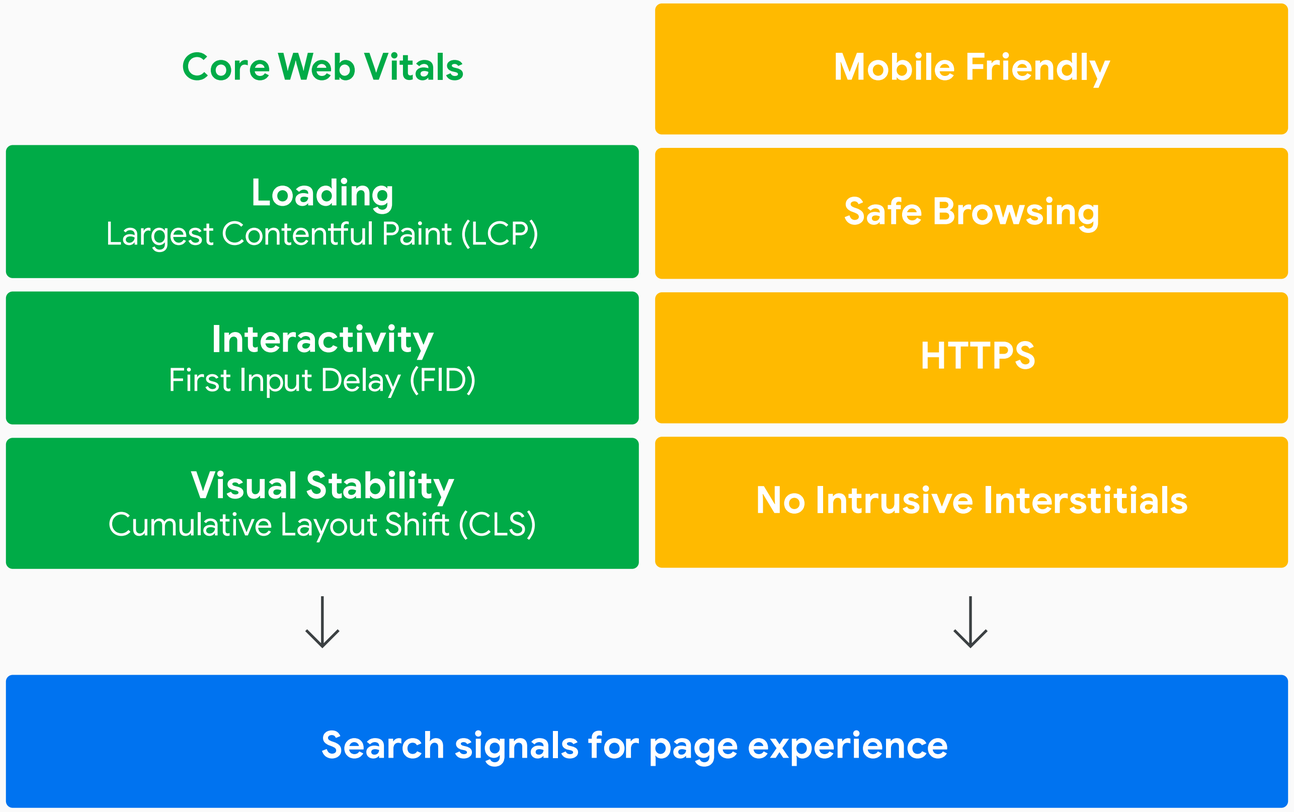
To ensure your visitors get the most enjoyable experience from your site, it's helpful to track your Core Web Vitals. These are a set of metrics related to speed, responsiveness and visual signals. On the right is an overview and here are tools to help measure your performance.

Page Speed Case Studies

By utilizing these tools, Village Media in Ontario, Canada, was able to increase total sessions by 19% and pages visited per session by 4% after reducing their page load time from 6 to 3 seconds (read here).

Across the world, in Japan, four news organizations implemented AMP in order to reduce their page load time, resulting in a 38% reduction in page load time, 203% increase in traffic and 135% increase in annual digital revenue amounting to a $96K impact.

Impact of Core Web Vitals on Searchability



Leveraging Your Audience to Accelerate Ad Revenue

CHAPTER 2

IMPROVING AUDIENCE ENGAGEMENT AND WEBSITE PERFORMANCE TO OPTIMIZE AD REVENUE

In this chapter, we'll focus on how you can more deeply understand your audiences to maximize your digital advertising revenue. Improving visit frequency, visit depth and the performance of your website can have a positive impact on growing your advertising revenue.

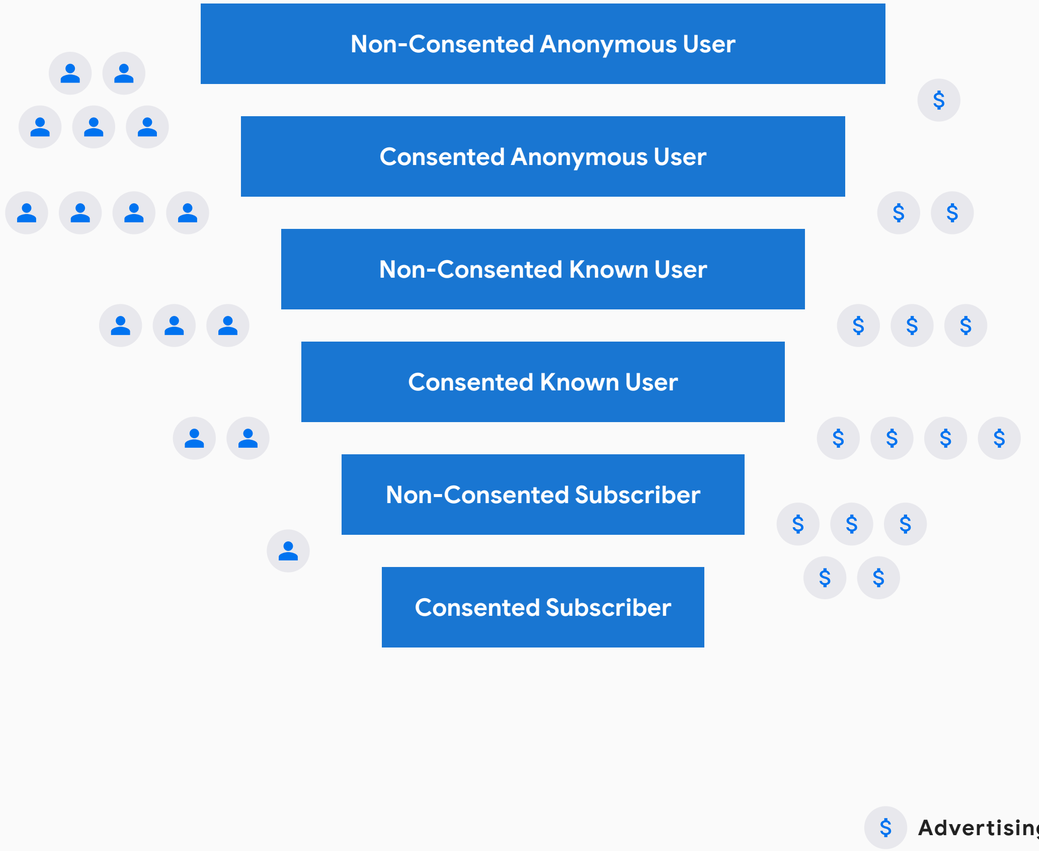
In this chapter, we'll address:

2.1 What are some of the most important metrics to consider?

2.2 How do you segment your audiences and build personas with privacy compliance?

2.3 How can improving site design and performance benefit advertising?

Relationship of audience funnel and CPMs



SOURCE: Local Media Consortium

2.1

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE MOST IMPORTANT METRICS TO CONSIDER?

Understanding your performance against key metrics can help you understand where to focus your efforts as you look to grow advertising revenue. Here are some of the key metrics we recommend tracking.

Metric	Definition
Monthly active user (MAU)	The number of unique users that have visited your site in the past 30 days
Pageviews per visit	The number of pages that are viewed during a single visit
Visits per user	Average number of times that a user visits your site over a period of time, typically over 30 days
Page speed	A measure of how fast a web page takes to load before displaying content
Viewability	A way to describe a user's engagement with an advertisement. An ad is considered viewable if at least 50% of the ad is in view of the reader for over 1 second in display and over 2 seconds for a video
Impression	The number of times an advertiser's ad is served on a digital platform. It is important to note that not all impressions that are served are viewed by users and publishers should focus on increasing the viewed impressions, measured by viewability
Direct avails	Available advertising inventory on your website
CPM (Cost Per Mille)	Rates calculated by cost-per-thousand impressions
Fill rate	The number of ads served divided by the total number of ads requested

Across these metrics, there are two main types of data that you can use to understand your performance.

First-Party Data	Third-Party Data
First-party data is information you collect directly about an individual using yourproducts or services. This data includes behaviors, actions or interests includinginformation such as, but not limited to: • Name, address, phone number • Demographics (e.g., age, income, gender, etc.) • Interests (e.g., sports, technology, etc.) • Visited websites and purchase history	Information collected about your audiences through external data providers; access to data often requires investment

Your website audience will come from one of four traffic sources to reach your site.

Four types of traffic

Direct
From typing your URL or from a bookmark

Search
From a search engine

Social Media
From a social media channel

Referral
From a link on another site

2.2

HOW DO YOU SEGMENT YOUR AUDIENCES AND BUILD PERSONAS WITH PRIVACY COMPLIANCE?

Your audience size, visit frequency and visit depth are three important factors in building and scaling a sustainable revenue model. Readers returning to your site more often and engaging more deeply grow your revenue potential for digital advertising. You can begin to understand engagement through the following questions:

1. **What is the level of your audience engagement and how do you foster greater loyalty?**
2. **How can you use data to enhance your visitors' experience?**
3. **Where are the traffic sources used to capture your visitors?**

Even if you are focused on advertising revenue, long-term success is dependent on strong audience development and strong reader engagement. Focusing on increasing visit frequency and visit depth can help you achieve your advertising revenue goals by boosting pageviews and ad impressions while also providing you more audience targeting capabilities.

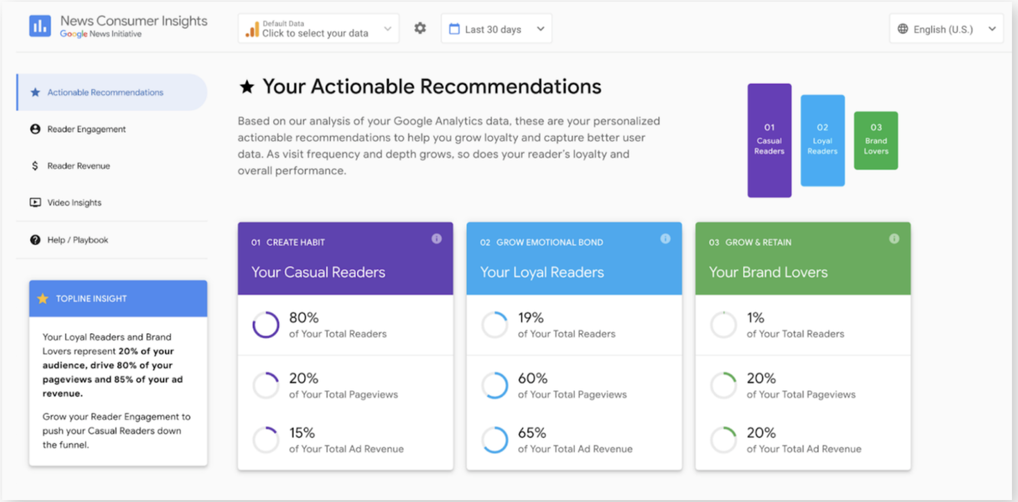
How can you better understand your audience through News Consumer Insights?

News Consumer Insights (NCI) is a tool that works with Google Analytics to help you deepen engagement and grow your revenue. Free to use, it works with either the free or paid version of Google Analytics. Once connected to NCI, a report will populate based on your analytics data.

NCI allows you to segment your audience based on their level of engagement:

- **Casual Readers:** readers who visited your site once over the last 30 days
- **Loyal Readers:** readers who visited your site 2-14 times over the last 30 days
- **Brand Lovers:** readers who visited your site more than 15 times over the last 30 days

News Consumer Insights Homepage



2.2

HOW DO YOU SEGMENT YOUR AUDIENCES AND BUILD PERSONAS WITH PRIVACY COMPLIANCE?

As you think about your advertising revenue goals, you should be focused on growing reader engagement and pushing Casual Readers down the funnel to convert them into Brand Lovers.

Greek publication **Proto Thema** was able to leverage NCI's recommendations to not only increase audience engagement but also positively impact advertising revenue. By implementing key tactics suggested by NCI, **Proto Thema** saw a 13% increase in users month-over month (MoM), 21% increase in visits MoM, and a 24.8% increase in pageviews. This translated into a 13% increase in ad revenue MoM driven by ad impressions growing by 95%.

Similarly, many other news organizations saw positive impact to their ad revenue after implementing recommendations from News Consumer Insights:

- Klix.ba in Bosnia & Herzegovina grew programmatic revenue by 72% and ad requests by 54% after implementing NCI recommendations
- Independent in Ireland saw an increase of 22% in ad revenue and 39% in ad inventory
- Portale Bambini in Italy grew programmatic revenue by: 10x and doubled ad impressions

Following are recommendations from News Consumer Insights on how to drive more and longer visits, both of which will help increase the impressions and ad viewability rates for your website. You can get more detailed instructions on each recommendation on the NCI playbook.

1. DRIVING MORE VISITS

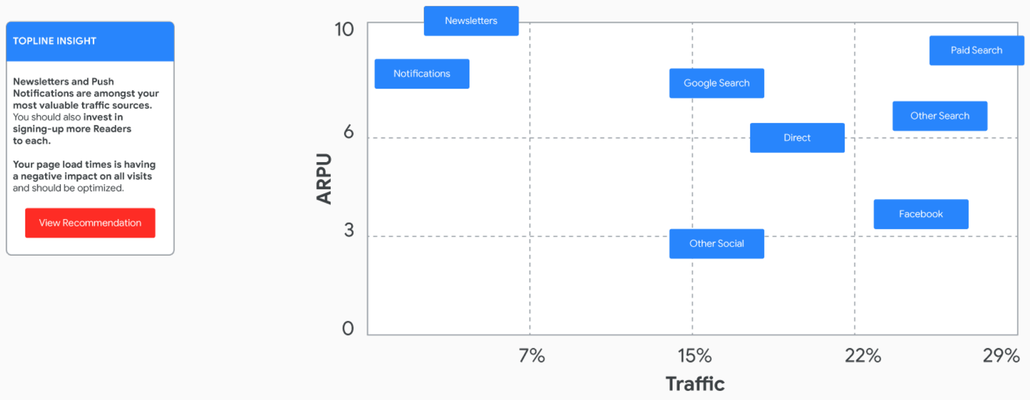
A. Use newsletters as a strong user acquisition strategy through email pushes
B. Get readers to subscribe to web push notifications
C. Optimize news content discoverability with structured data
D. Track the impact of your structured data strategy in Search Console
E. Amplify your social strategy

2. DRIVING LONGER VISITS

A. Develop a recirculation strategy
B. Optimize mobile site speed

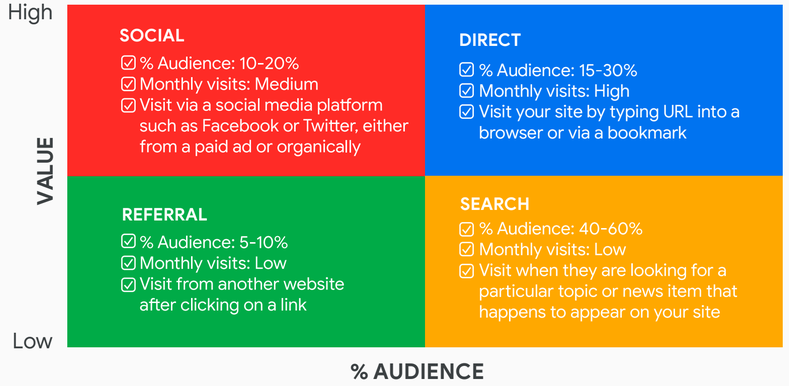
If your organization does not use Google Analytics, you can leverage SimilarWeb to better understand basic information about your audience, such as where they are coming from. You can then map out these traffic sources (e.g. direct, search, referral, social) on a 2x2 matrix to see what percent of our audience is driven by each, and what value they bring to you, in order to prioritize your highest-value audiences, which can inform which external sources and partnerships are most valuable to you.

Average Revenue Per User (ARPU) by Traffic Type



Matrix source: News Consumer Insights

Audience Value by Traffic Type



Matrix source: SimilarWeb and LMC

2.2

HOW DO YOU SEGMENT YOUR AUDIENCES AND BUILD PERSONAS WITH PRIVACY COMPLIANCE?

How can you leverage audience data to improve your advertising capabilities?

More than ever, enable advertisers to reach specific segments of your audience is a viable path to increase ad revenue, especially if you can effectively leverage first-party data. The vast majority of your visitors are likely coming from your community, but a better understanding of your audience location may help you unlock new opportunities. Using the data from your website analytics and ad inventory tools can help provide insights for your advertising strategy.

• Penetration by zip or post code may increase appeal to local advertisers.

• Understanding your draw from neighboring regions may be appealing to regional advertisers.

• Identifying out-of-market visitors can also attract regional or national advertisers.

One tool that can help you achieve an understanding of how your audience is engaging with your content is Realtime Content Insights. The tool can help you identify in real time which articles and videos are the most popular with your readers and what broader topics are trending in your region. All of the data presented revolves around what is currently happening on your site, what's trending on the web, how your content performed today and what content did especially well over the previous 30 days. Understanding this engagement on a deeper level can help you better segment and package your audiences for advertisers.

Building both quantitative and qualitative insights on your audiences to establish the personas reflecting your readers will help you both with prospecting the right advertisers and with driving the price on potential packages, as we'll see throughout this playbook.

Primary and secondary audiences

Your potential audiences for advertisers fall into two main groups: primary and secondary audiences. These are the largest two audience segments available for you to sell, so you'll need to understand their general characteristics. Google Analytics and News Consumer Insights can help you get started with identifying the traits of your highest value audiences. You can gather additional data over time as you build a relationship with your customers. Examples below include more specific types of information your advertisers may also be interested in:

Primary	
Gender	Male
Age	35-54
Location	Atlanta Suburbs
Status	Married + Children
Home	Homeowner
Ethnicity	Black
Education	Bachelor's Degree
HH Income	$100K
Interests	Sports, tech

Secondary	
Gender	Female
Age	25-44
Location	Downtown Atlanta
Status	Married
Home	Condo owner
Ethnicity	White
Education	Bachelor's Degree
HH Income	$75K
Interests	Business, entmt

Additional audience segmentation

If you are just starting out, the following table shows some basic audience segmentation criteria and resources. Additional layers of segmentation allow you to better package the audiences your advertisers would like to reach and increase the effectiveness of their ad campaigns (see Chapter 3).

Demographic	Age range, gender, parental status, or household income
Behavioral	User interaction with content typically measured by pages viewed, time on site, clicks on ads/content, search terms, etc.
Contextual	Matches ads to content keywords or topics
Technology	Operating system (Android, IOS), browser (Chrome, Safari, Firefox, etc), device (desktop, mobile, etc)
Traffic Source	Where your visitors come from — direct, organic, paid campaigns, social media, referral and more.

Instructions for setting up or optimizing targeting on your site are here. You can also define custom targeting through key values in Ad Manager here.

Source: Google

Audience segmentation can also be highly valuable when coupled with a deep understanding of your audience needs. And most often, the simplest way to understand your readers' needs is to ask them directly. Primary audience research, including surveys and focus groups, can help you more confidently segment your audiences and foster stronger engagement. You can learn more here about best practices on audience research capabilities.

2.2

HOW DO YOU SEGMENT YOUR AUDIENCES AND BUILD PERSONAS WITH PRIVACY COMPLIANCE?

A research study sponsored by the Google News Initiative found that out of all tested advertising products and solutions, targeted ads were the solution that garnered the highest interest amongst the 720 surveyed advertisers. This suggests that news organizations that can truly showcase their unique audience segments can gain a competitive advantage to differentiate themselves to potential advertisers.

> "Digital has allowed us to develop more targeted messages against our segmented customer base and increase our brand awareness. Segmentation helps us feel more confident about our digital media buys."
>
> - National Advertiser interviewed in research study

News organizations who have leveraged the power of audience targeting include **Grist**, who secured their largest ever long-term sponsor and grew overall earned revenue by 66% through the first two quarters of 2021 by better defining the specific audiences and audience profiles that they reach. Madison 365 has also worked to clearly frame its audiences (and its editorial mission) to grow their earned revenue to represent over half of their annual revenue (read case study).

Both of these organizations were part of the GNI-INN Sponsorships Lab.

Lastly, the work often continues beyond developing your audience segments. Building an audience-centric organizational culture is critical to operationalizing all of your hard work to understand and segment your audiences. This work includes identifying goals and metrics across your priority audience segments. For advertising revenue, the key metrics to orient around include monthly active users (MAUs), visits per reader and pageviews per visit. Once these goals are established, fostering an organization-wide understanding of these goals can help you grow your audience, and in turn, increase the ad impressions you are able to serve.

How can you approach audience segmentation in a privacy-compliant way?

In digital advertising, consumer data can help you segment your audience and improve your advertisers' ability to reach the right audience.

However, data privacy is the number one concern for online consumers, with 86% of users taking active steps to improve their safety online. As a result, you must ensure you're collecting, storing, and managing consumer personal information in a privacy-compliant manner. To use any consumer data you collect for advertising purposes, you must first obtain the consumer's consent.

Google's Funding Choices is a messaging tool integrated with Ad Manager that can help you communicate with users to gather consent or opt-out requests as required by regulations like the European General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the California Consumer Privacy Act (CCPA), or recover lost revenue from ad blocking users. In addition to giving users control over their data, Funding Choices enables publishers to decide what users can do as an alternative to whitelisting to address ad blocking. For example publishers can deploy Google Contributor, which offers users a choice to pay a publisher a defined fee for each page viewed without ads or publishers can define a custom alternative choice such as subscription, newsletter sign-up, etc.

Alternatively, you can build your own consent solution or use a consent management platform that is certified by IAB, then deploy it on your pages. Learn more about how you can develop sound privacy practices or access tools to help you comply with GDPR or CCPA.

Authenticated-consent ad buys

Ad inventory that has opt-in user consent attached will become increasingly more valuable. In time, advertisers may be willing to pay a higher CPM for consented audiences. According to Sovrn, European publishers' yield increases by 41% or more when consent data is made available to advertisers. More and more buyers are looking for validated consent signals for the audiences they buy which drives up bid prices and improves yield. Programmatic platforms are starting to enable advertisers to set their own unique data privacy parameters and evaluate inventory sources to ensure that their messages appear only in environments that they deemed compliant, brand safe and suitable.

2.3

HOW CAN IMPROVING SITE DESIGN AND PERFORMANCE BENEFIT ADVERTISING?

Site performance plays a significant role in reader engagement and advertising optimization.

High-performing sites have been shown to increase conversion rates and retain users, whereas slow sites can reduce return visits and search rank, ultimately impacting your advertising revenue performance. In short, a site with optimal performance is the foundation to developing long-term relationships with your users, which helps you maximize your advertising opportunities.

Two factors are particularly important for improving your site's performance and attracting more advertisers:

1. Viewability

2. Page Speed

What is viewability and why is it important?

An ad is considered viewable if 50% of the ad is in view of the visitor for over one second in display and over two seconds for a video.

IAB recommends a minimum of 70% viewability to maximize advertising opportunities.

Average viewability across display ads can vary between 49%-54% in the Americas, 44%-58% in Europe and 47-62% in Asia Pacific. You can check viewability rates by country here and compare how you perform versus these averages. Viewability tends to be highest for YouTube ads, then video ads, and relatively lower for display ads.

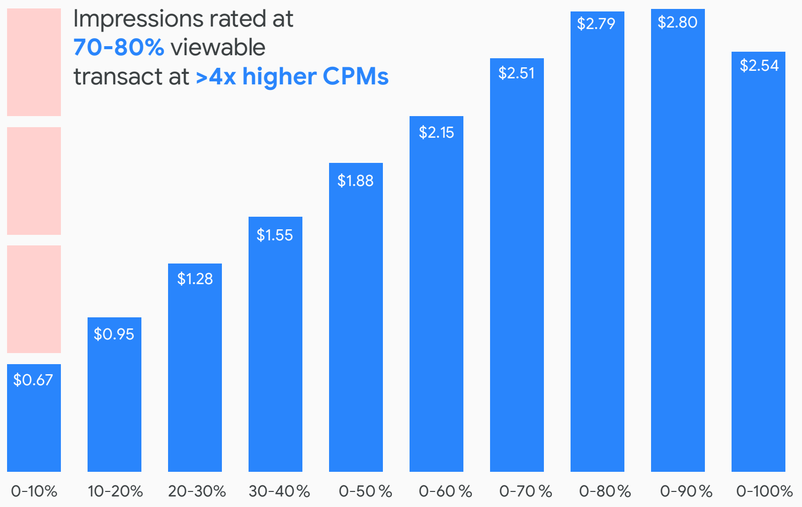
Improving your site's viewability will:

- Create an advantage vs. market competitors
- Unlock revenue as advertisers increasingly require minimum viewability. A Google analysis showed that CPMs can be 26% higher for inventory that has a >50% predicted probability of being viewable.
- Limit negative potential impacts on revenue created by lost and unviewable inventory
- Improve CTR: viewable ads yield a 21X higher CTR than ads in view less than one second.

Trade-offs

↓ Impression Volume	↑ CPMs
↑ Revenue/Page View	↑ Viewability
↓ Bounce Rate	↓ Ad Load
↔ Time on Site	↓ Direct Avails

% Viewability Impact on CPMs



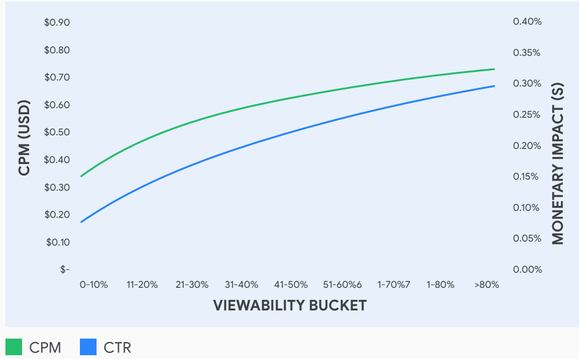
Source: Google

2.3

How advertisers value viewability

More and more advertisers are recognizing that ads with higher viewability produce a better return on investment for their campaigns. More viewable ads generate higher user engagement and click-through-rates which means better performing ad campaigns. That's why advertisers are often willing to pay more for viewable impressions. For every 1% increase in viewability, publishers tend to see an uplift of approximately 2% in their CPMs ultimately increasing ad revenue. In addition, some marketers are even excluding less viewable ads from their buys. The relationship between viewability and ad revenue is apparent, so you should prioritize it to increase the overall value of your inventory.

Viewability Impact on CTR and CPM



Aller Media, a Scandinavian publisher that owns a variety of media outlets, partnered with Google Ad Manager to build fully responsive native ads creating a seamless user experience on both mobile and desktop that increased their overall viewability. The results were 67% higher ad viewability across all devices with an 88% increase on mobile, which helped them attract more brand advertisers.

Optimizing for viewability can be complex and is different for every publisher. You must weigh many key performance indicators (KPIs) across many products and revenue streams, comprehensively testing for all of them.

To increase viewability, you can consider the following tactics:

• **Ad placement:** Pay attention to where you place your ads.
Above the Fold: Consider placing ads near the bottom of the screen (right above the fold). This placement has shown the highest viewability rates. Ads placed just below the top navigation bar have a higher viewability rate than those placed at the very top of the page. At the same time, don't forget about user experience. Too many ads above the fold will make your page appear cluttered and your visitors may leave the page.
Below the Fold: Ads placed on the left or right side have higher viewability rates than those placed in the middle. Additionally, placing ads in a separate column from the content can keep the content column clean and unobstructed, and may increase the chance that the user proceeds down the entire page.

• **Optimize page length**. Short form content yields higher viewability. Set pages to have only one fold. If you must have longer form content, activate infinite scroll.

Source: Google

• **Optimize for speed and responsiveness:** Ads load faster and have better viewability rates on speedy and responsive sites and apps. This can be particularly important in emerging markets with slower connection speeds. Implementing AMP format can be one way to ensure that your website is fast and user-first.

• **Use Google's PageSpeed Insights** to analyze the content of a web page, then generate suggestions to reduce latency and make the page load faster. When pages load faster, ads load faster and viewability rates to go up. Similarly, **use an analytics solution** like App Speed reports to measure how fast app pages are loading and how long different requests take to load in your app.

• The Long Beach Post implemented AMP and AMP Ads to help improve speed and responsiveness, with breaking news pieces receiving nearly 10x more rich results impression and click-through rates that jumped from 3% to nearly 27% on newly implemented mobile AMP breaking news stories.

• **Place ads in line with the main content** or in content-rich areas of the site. When you choose ad placements it's important to consider the user experience. Avoid placing ads in areas with little or no unique content or overloading certain areas of the site with too many ads. In the end, you want to place your ads where users are looking.

• **Explore implementing lazy loading for article pages**, which means waiting to load the video and serve an ad until someone scrolls down further on your page. Lazy loading can increase the speed of your site, reduce load time and latency, and improve viewability of your video ads.

• **Use the right ad sizes**: Taller ads have higher viewability (e.g. 160 x 600, 300 x 600 or 320 x 50).

• **Pay attention to ad types: Sticky or anchor ads** have higher viewability. Additionally, consider using **responsive designs** to ensure a great user experience no matter where someone is consuming your content.

• **Minimize passbacks:** Ads also tend to load more slowly when ad calls are passed from one ad solution to an other through a system called passbacks. The fewer passbacks that happen, the faster ads can load, which can increase viewability rates.

You can read additional tips on viewability, watch this video on viewability best practices or access further viewability best practices for video here.

2.3

How does page speed impact viewability and CPMs?

Page speed is important to increasing engagement, viewability and advertising monetization. You can test the speed of your own site and benchmark against others using the PageSpeed tools here.

Each second you save by improving page speed could help:

- Increase viewability 1-2%
- Increase CPMs 2-4%
- Decrease user bounce rate which increases page views, visits, viewability and CPMs
- Improve search engine optimization and likely to attract more visitors

Fifty-three percent of people
will leave a page if it takes longer than 3 seconds to load

As page load times goes from:
1s to 3s the probability of bounce **increases 32%**
1s to 5s the probability of bounce **increases 90%**
1s to 6s the probability of bounce **increases 106%**
1s to 10s the probability of bounce **increases 123%**

Source: Google

How do you increase your page speed?

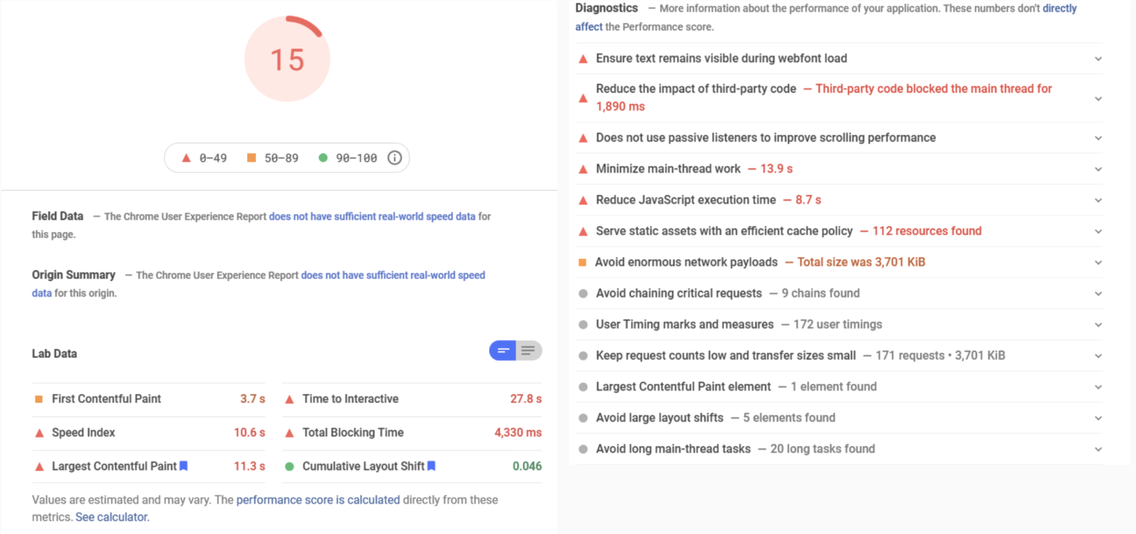
- ☑ Choose a performance-optimized hosting solution
- ☑ Compress and optimize your images
- ☑ Reduce your redirects
- ☑ Cache your web pages
- ☑ Enable browser caching
- ☑ Use asynchronous and defer loading for your CSS and JavaScript files
- ☑ Minify CSS, JavaScript, and HTML
- ☑ Leverage a content delivery network (CDN)
- ☑ Eliminate unnecessary plugins

In 2019, AccuWeather dug into reporting data provided by Google Ad Manager and realized that their low mobile web viewability was likely the result of latency caused by tags on pages. The poor latency was slowing both ad and page load times. They needed a way to make these pages more lightweight without affecting overall revenue performance. Between Q4 2019 and Q1 2020, its teams ran various tests with multiple code clean-up strategies to reduce mobile web page load time, decrease latency, and improve ad viewability. In particular, AccuWeather tested the effectiveness of their premium top banner slots.

Since completing its final testing sprint in April, 2020, AccuWeather has seen a 34% increase in domain-level viewability, 3x faster page load time, and a 50% decrease in time to first ad request. These product successes have translated to increased revenue, as shown by 42% CPM growth, 39% revenue growth, and a 10% increase in render rate across all ad slots. In particular, viewability for top-tier 300x250 ads grew from 50% to 75%

To explore how to better optimize your own site performance, here are some additional resources:

- How to improve your Google PageSpeed Insights score
- How to create mobile-optimized content through Google AMP
- Measure your Core Web Vitals to get more advanced recommendations on how to improve your site performance (note: requires technical resources for implementation)



Recommendations from a Core Web Vitals audit

CHAPTER 3

Developing Your Sales Solutions

CHAPTER 3

DEVELOPING YOUR SALES SOLUTIONS

In chapter 2, we discussed understanding who your audiences are and how they engage with your site. In this chapter, we'll focus on how to sell the opportunity to engage with those audiences to advertisers — in what formats and at what price.

This chapter will help you answer the following questions:

3.1 How can you leverage your audiences?

3.2 What products will you sell?

3.3 How will you price campaigns and products?

3.4 How will you package your offerings?

3.5 How will you position your brand to advertisers?

3.1

HOW WILL YOU LEVERAGE YOUR AUDIENCES?

Leveraging audiences on your site

There are three ways to convert your audiences into ad revenue opportunities on your site: CPMs, sponsorships or share of voice (SOV). To determine the approach that works best for you, you'll need to do some math.

Audience Extension

In addition to reaching visitors on your site, you can also access online audiences on other websites and platforms through audience extension. This approach utilizes technology to help you expand the reach of an advertiser's campaign to relevant audiences that have provided consent for activities related to advertising and analytics.

Example: An advertiser wants to reach people 25–54 interested in sports by purchasing 2 million impressions.

- Impressions on your site 1.5 million
- Add audience extension 0.5 million
- Total impressions 2.0 million

There are several digital audience extension providers you can explore including Google Display & Video 360, Simplifi, Xandr, MediaMath, Centro and theTradeDesk to name a few.

Model	Definition	Min. site impressions/mo	Calculation	Example
CPM	CPMs (cost per thousand impressions) is the primary way to sell ad units based on impressions (the number of times your ad is served). This is the price advertisers pay for every 1,000 impressions they buy on your site.	5M+	Revenue = (Impressions / 1,000) x CPM Impressions = (Revenue / CPM) x 1,000 CPM = (Revenue / Impressions) x 1,000	An advertiser wants to purchase 100,000 impressions at a $9 CPM: 100,000 / 1,000) x $9 = $900 revenue
Sponsorship	An advertiser can place their ad in a set placement on your site receiving 100% of impressions for that placement for a fixed period of time at a flat fee. Note that sponsorships can also be secured for events or newsletters. Newsletters can generate higher rates because they usually guarantee more clicks per impression.	1M+	# Impressions of your site or section x CPM you'd like to charge for the placement = the minimum flat fee you'll charge for the sponsorship	An advertiser wants to purchase the leaderboard of your sports section, which avgs 20,000 impressions/day for 30 days that you value at a $5 CPM. (20,000 x 30) / 1,000) x $5 = $3,000 sponsorship
Share of Voice (SOV)	An advertiser can be one of several who advertise in a set placement over a set period of time. For example, fouradvertisers may share your homepage banner ad, alternating each one's content over a month. As a result, each advertiser receives 25% SOV.	<5M	Advertiser impressions / total website or section impressions = SOV	If your website has 1 million monthly impressions and an advertiser wants to buy 250,000 impressions. 250,000 / 1,000,000 = 25% SOV

Source: Local Media Consortium

3.2

WHAT PRODUCTS WILL YOU SELL?

While audience-based advertising is preferable to advertisers, you'll also need to determine which digital ad products you'll offer to reach advertisers' desired audiences and how you'll price and package them.

There are several factors to help you determine your sales product strategy:

- Type of products, which generally fall into four broad categories
    - Display/banner
    - Rich media
    - Video
    - Native
- Determining high-value vs. low-value products
    - Type of product
    - Placement on site or page

	Metric	Metric	Metric	Metric
Served through	Standard ad units	Interactive ad units	• Display ad unit • Embeded third-party video player • Hard coded on a page	Native ad unit
Popular types	Text/images/gifs. Most popular are: • 300 x 250 medium rectangle • 728 x 90 leaderboard • 320 x 50 mobile leaderboard • 160 x 600 wide skyscraper Video served via a banner ad instead of a video player	• **Takeovers**: expands to cover content on a page • **Interstitials**: cover user's full screen between content pages/sections • **Sticky ads**: stays visible as user scrolls • **Sliding billboard**: drops down from the top to the center of the page • **Corner peel**: opens from the upper right hand corner to reveal ad content	• **In-stream**: placed in a video or audio stream. Can be placed at the beginning (pre-roll), middle (mid-roll), or end (post-roll) • **Outstream**: video creative that is placed on display inventory and plays when a user scrolls over it	Sponsored content

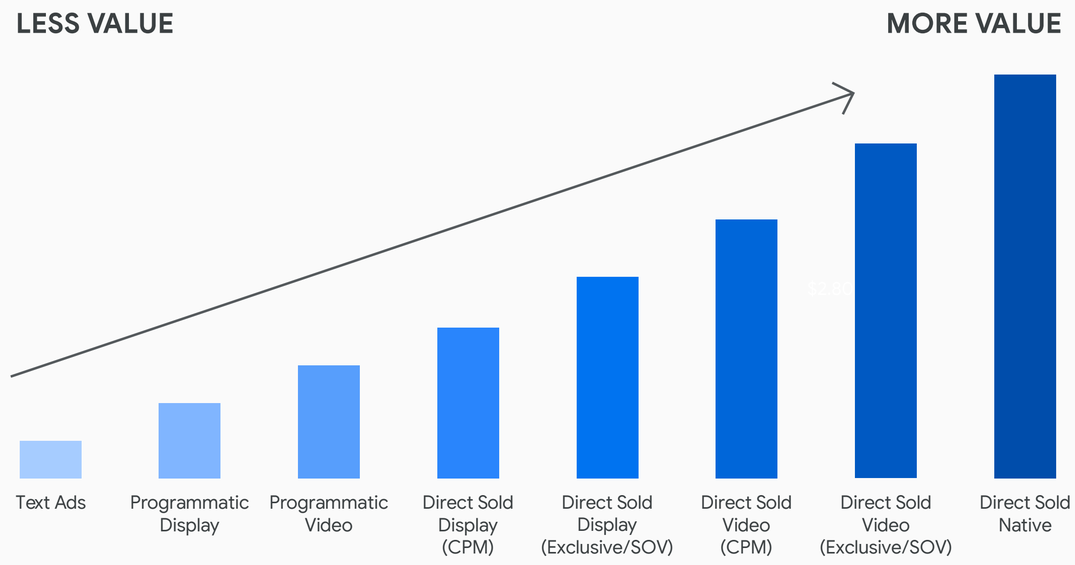
Source: Local Media Consortium

3.2

Determining high-value vs. low-value products

Knowing the relative value of different digital products can provide a basis for determining how to prioritize your product strategy. This digital advertising product pricing continuum below can help guide your decisions on pricing your products and building your rate card.

Value by Ad Product Type



Source: Local Media Consortium

Direct-sold branded-content series are a higher-value product for advertisers that you also may want to explore. New York Amsterdam News was able to leverage existing relationships with advertisers that ran small amounts of advertising with the publisher to secure $100,000 in sponsorship of an Active Aging campaign. The organization strategically courted existing advertisers by sharing branded content early, placing advertiser logos across mock pages to generate excitement, and made the benefits clear to the advertiser. You can learn more, and hear from the New York Amsterdam News team on their work here.

In addition, sponsorships offer a high-value opportunity for advertisers. Among the areas where publishers have had particular success in selling sponsorships are newsletters and events. For example, Madison365 in Madison, Wisconsin generates the bulk of its earned revenue from its annual event, the Wisconsin Leadership Summit. In 2018, the first year of the event, they had about 350 attendees, 15 sponsors, and brought in around $80,000 in revenue from sponsors. Last year, the event had more than 600 attendees, 30 sponsors, and brought in $100,000 in revenue. (See this case study on Madison365 for more). The Texas Tribune makes millions of dollars, and 18% of its overall revenue comes from sponsorships for its events like the annual Texas Tribune Festival, which was converted to virtual in 2020. In addition, the CT Mirror has seen exponential growth to its earned revenue year over year from selling sponsorships to a series of virtual events that they began in 2020, buoyed by recommendations from the GNI-INN Sponsorships Lab. The Mirror also has recently started to sell sponsorships for its email newsletter and has sold out its entire advertising inventory in the newsletter for two months, using strategies learned in the GNI Lab.

3.3

HOW WILL YOU PRICE CAMPAIGNS AND PRODUCTS?

Understanding pricing basics

Once you have established the audiences and products you want to sell, it's time to think about pricing.

• You will want to set your CPMs at a level that generates the highest eCPM or the effective revenue generated per 1000 impressions.

• Here's a handy overview and calculator to help you understand the difference between CPM and eCPM.

• You'll want to consider both metrics as you develop your pricing structure.

Comparison Table Between CPM and eCPM (in Tabular Form)

Parameter of Comparison	CPM	eCPM
Meaning / Definition	CPM is defined as the Cost paid by the advertiser to the publisher per 1000 advertisement impressions.	eCPM is the effective revenue generated through the campaign per 1000 impressions.
Formula for calculation	CPM = (Advertisement Cost / No. of Impressions) × 1000	eCPM = (Total revenue generated / No. of impressions) × 1000
Purpose	CPM is the buying model. It is the charge to pay to the publisher for publishing the advertisement per 1000 Ad impressions.	eCPM is the metric used to calculate the effectiveness of the campaign.
Dependency	CPM entirely depends on publishing costs.	eCPM depends on revenue generated.
Hierarchy	CPM is preceded first in a marketing campaign.	eCPM succeeds CPM and it is always calculated at the end of the campaign.

Source: AskAnyDifference.com

Establishing your base rate

Your first step is to establish a base rate for the inventory you're going to sell. This is the rate you expect advertisers will reasonably pay for each product you'll offer.

The base rate will differ depending on whether you're selling via direct or programmatic.

• The base rate for direct sold inventory is typically two to three times the programmatic rate because direct sold is usually higher value, has more in-demand inventory and placement is guaranteed. (Source: Local Media Consortium)

• When setting your base rate, it is important to consider both your in-market and competitor comparable rates as well as advertisers' willingness to pay (read more here)

• For programmatic, advertisers bid for space that reaches their targeted audience, with the value of each impression determined in a fraction of a second. Unlikedirect sales, placement is not guaranteed and CPMs tend to be lower.

Determining your base rate and premium fees for direct sold

Determining the base rate or price an advertiser will pay to reach audiences on your site requires some upfront research. Asking local publishers and advertisers what the going digital rates or CPMs are in your market will help you ensure your rates are competitive. Once you've established a base rate, additional premium fees can be added for high-value placements, formats and audience targeting. Here's a handy online calculator from ClickZ to help you calculate CPMs for your products.

A pricing hierarchy example is below.

Rate Type	Premium Fee	Calculation	+20% Audience Targeting Premium Fee (demo, behavioral)
Base rate	N/A	$10	10 × 1.20 = $12
Premium placement (home page or section front)	Additional + 25%	10 × 1.25 = $12.50	12.5 × 1.2 = $15
Premium ad format (rich media or video)	Additional + 25%	$12.50 ×1.25 = $15.63	$15.63 × 1.2 = $18.75

Source: Local Media Consortium

3.3

Determining your programmatic rates

Because programmatic requires individual auctions for each impression, the CPMs can be wide ranging.

Setting a **price floor**, also known as a **threshold CPM**, is essential to making sure your CPM doesn't drop to an undesirable level by preventing advertisers from serving campaigns below this amount. Calculating what that amount should be requires a balance between the CPM you can generate for your inventory and the overall volume of your inventory that buyers will purchase. Finding the right balance will require testing and experimentation:

• If you set your floor rate too high, you will see a high CPM but much of your inventory may not get sold, which reduces your overall earnings.

• If your floor price is too low, you may sell all your inventory but you may not maximize your revenue potential.

It's important to strike the right balance between CPM and fill rate to optimize your revenue. Below is a calculator to help you determine the optimal pricing structure for you.

Programmatic Ad Stack Calculator Example

Projected Impressions: 100,000

Partner	CPM	Fill Rate	Filled Impresssions	Revenue
Partner 1	$5.00	5%	5,000	$25.00
Partner 2	$1.25	40%	40,000	$50.00
Partner 3	$1.00	100%	100,000	$100.00

Audience segmentation pricing

Some advertisers will want to target a segment of your audience that has certain characteristics such as their purchasing preferences, where they live, their age or income. Offering this type of targeting is more valuable to advertisers and commands a higher rate. We learned the basics of how to set up audience segments in Chapter 2. Now we'll explore how to sell them.

In general, the larger the audience you have the better your ability to target specific segments and earn higher CPMs. If your overall impressions are low, you'll want to target more broadly at lower CPMs. Here's a guide.

CPM Impact by Targeting Type

Source: Local Media Consortium

Creating a rate card

Once you've established your base rates, you should create an internal rate card for all of your products. A rate card will help:

• Create a framework for organizing and communicating the value of your product offerings

• Quantify the value of all your advertising assets

• Provide a basis for price integrity with your your sales team

Your rate card should lay out the value hierarchy of your products from non-guaranteed placement or Run of Site (ROS) to premium pricing for guaranteed ad placements and targeting.

Pricing Hierarchy Example

Run Of Site (ROS)	Channel Targeted	Section Front	Homepage	Geographical Target	Demographic Target	Behavioral Target
ROS= base rate	ROS + 20%	ROS + 30%	ROS + 40%	ROS + 50%	ROS + (Cost + Margin)	ROS + (Cost + Margin)
$4.00	$4.80	$5.20	$5.60	$6.00		

Source: Local Media Consortium

Here are digital rate card examples:

• Santa Fe New Mexican

• Masthead Maine

• Generic rate card

3.4

HOW WILL YOU PACKAGE YOUR OFFERINGS?

Now that you've developed your internal rate card, you need to create a public-facing media kit. Your media kit should provide an overview of your:

- ☑ Company background
- ☑ Market coverage
- ☑ Audience demographics
- ☑ Audience extension offerings
- ☑ Products and rates
- ☑ Sales team contact information

A link to your media kit should be placed on your website so potential advertisers can learn more about you.

MEDIA KIT EXAMPLES ARE BELOW:

- ☑ Nonprofit news organizations
  - Rivard Report (now San Antonio Report)
  - Grist
  - VTDigger
- ☑ For-profit community newspaper
- ☑ For-profit media kit and video
- ☑ TV media kit
- ☑ Online-only publisher
- ☑ DEI publisher

Before your sales teams speak to potential advertisers, the checklist below can be helpful to make sure they are prepared.

• **Competitive Analysis** - Confirm that your pricing is comparable to competitors in your market by gathering real-time advertiser feedback in your market.

• **Rate Card -** Establish your base rate and additional fees for premium products, placements and audience targeting.

• **Direct Sales Inventory -** Confirm available inventory for local direct sales and ensure sufficient impressions are available.

• **Programmatic Inventory -** Confirm inventory for your programmatic partners and ensure your IAB ad units are clearly defined.

• **Sales Collateral** - Develop a media kit and sales presentation that showcases your brand and value proposition to advertisers.

• **Sales Training -** Conduct training sessions to make sure your sales team understands digital advertising and can articulate why your offerings are unique and differentiated from the competition.

3.5

HOW WILL YOU POSITION YOUR BRAND TO ADVERTISERS?

According to a 2020 Magid survey of advertisers and ad agency decision makers on their perceptions of local media, a publisher's relationship with its audience is a primary consideration when choosing which media brands to buy. The research shows that a trustworthy relationship is as important as ROI to advertisers. A news outlet that is trusted in their local market allows advertisers to embed themselves within that community.

Emphasizing the trusted relationship you have with your local audiences and the high-value products you offer can help you stand out from the competition. Highlight your value proposition in your sales approach and showcase the success of your unique audience and offerings.

Leverage your brand's unique value proposition	Position your sales team as digital experts	Create compelling, relevant case studies for advertisers	Make it easy for an advertiser to do business with you
• Who's your audience? • What makes them valuable? Location, age, income, etc. • How are your products unique? What differentiates your offerings from competitors? • Ensure your sales team can tell your story and knows how to position your brand with advertisers	• Arm your team with digital knowledge and expertise • Convey how your offerings fit into an advertiser's digital advertising strategy • Become a thought leader by hosting digital seminars and training sessions for local advertisers • Educated them on how to build effective digital campaigns	• Showcase campaigns that have worked well for other clients in similar categories • Highlight quantifiable results to demonstrate why advertisers should invest in you • Real-life examples on campaign performace is crucial to landing new business	• Advertisers want an easy, seamless way to buy and execute a digital campaign • Minimize bureaucratic processes, long payment cycles, or inefficient workflows • Improve your end-to-end fulfillment processes including insertion orders, billing and reporting

Source: Magid and the Local Media Consortium

Building an Advertising Team

CHAPTER 4

BUILDING AN ADVERTISING TEAM

If you want to support sustainable growth, you will need to invest in both editorial talent to expand the depth and reach of your content and build a business team to grow your advertising revenue.

In a study of Latin American publishers, Sembra Media demonstrates the dramatic impact of having just one dedicated salesperson. Median revenue for ventures with at least one paid salesperson was $117,000, compared to a median revenue of $3,900 for ventures with no one dedicated to sales.

When you are ready to invest more in your advertising teams — or have already done so and want to grow your direct ad revenue — this chapter will deepen your understanding of how to build a successful sales team and help you decide what approach is best for you.

It will help you answer the following questions:

4.1 **Will you use in-house or outsourced sales and ad operations?**

4.2 **What are viable team structures, roles and responsibilities?**

4.3 **How will you compensate and incentivize your sales team?**

4.4 **Why is diversity-equity-inclusion (DEI) important to your business?**

4.5 **How can you recruit and mentor?**

4.6 **How will you train your sales team?**

4.1

EXAMPLE OF DIGITAL TEAM HIERARCHY FOR A SMALL PUBLISHER

If you are considering directly selling your digital advertising services, your first decision will be whether to build an in-house team or outsource your sales and ad operations.

In general, you should only consider hiring staff if you expect those resources to generate enough revenue to offset their expense and deliver a positive return. Even if you are a one-person operation, you will be allocating some percentage of your time to the effort and need to justify the expense.

Advertising staffing needs can vary between minimal (e.g., just running AdSense) and having your own internal staff. There is also an intermediary option: outsourcing the digital ad sales, support and technology services needed to grow your digital ad revenue to a third-party management resource. This collaborative approach can help you reap some of the benefits of direct sales if you're not quite ready to hire an internal staff. It also allows you to diversify your demand sources, serve more sophisticated ad formats and usually results in higher CPM rates. If you want to explore this option, Google Certified Publisher Partners can be a helpful resource.

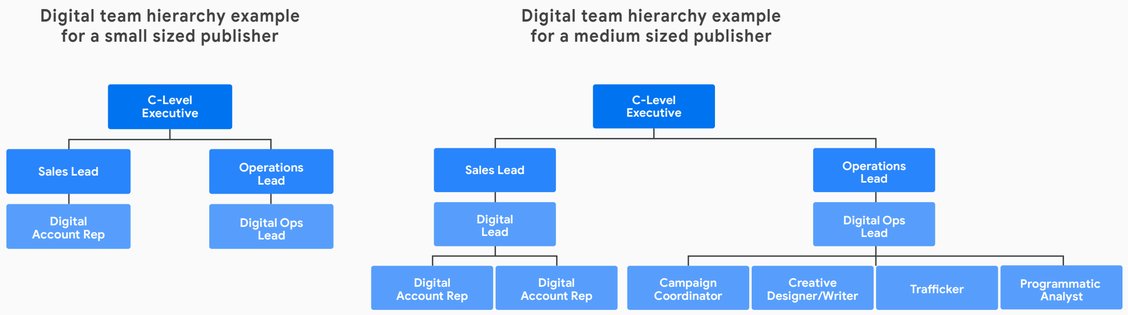
Necole Kane's online destination, xoNecole.com, is one of those publishers that successfully partnered with an outside expert to drive eCPM growth and grow the brand across multiple channels. Necole's website provides an open platform to support, educate, and inspire young women of color through sharing personal stories, discussing culture, lifestyle and politics. By leveraging SHE Media, a Google Certified Publishing Partner with a focus on female content, and their cross-departmental resources, xoNecole.com was able to increase CPM by 88% and saw overall performance across video, native, content, and direct sales skyrocket.

4.2

WHAT ARE VIABLE TEAM STRUCTURES, ROLES, AND RESPONSIBILITIES?

While there isn't a one-size-fits-all solution to advertising team structures, the below description of advertising roles and responsibilities are aimed at helping you decide whether your organization would benefit from these stakeholders.

Sample Sales Organization Structures based on Publisher Size



4.2

WHAT ARE VIABLE TEAM STRUCTURES, ROLES, AND RESPONSIBILITIES?

It is important to consider the roles, responsibilities, and reporting structure of the most critical roles for a strong sales organization.

Role	What they do	Reports to		Avg volume they can handle
		Small org	Med org	
Digital sales lead*	Responsible for all digital sales revenue, forecasting, sales strategy	N/A	C-Suite	Up to 5-7 reps
Sales account rep*	Manages prospects and pipeline, closes sales, delivers client campaign reports	C-Suite	Digital Sales Lead	20-40 accounts
Digital Operations Lead	Responsible for all digital revenue technology, order entry, campaign creative, trafficking, optimization, fulfillment, billing and reporting	C-Suite	C-Suite	Team of up to 8-10
Campaign Coordinator	Campaign tracking, monitoring delivery against goals, performance optimiza-tion, client reporting	N/A - handled by Digital Ops Lead	Digital Ops Lead	5-10 new campaigns/ day
Creative Designer/Writer*	Designs and/or writes digital ad creative	N/A - handled by Marketing	Digital Ops Lead	15-20 new campaigns/ day
Trafficker*	Ad order entry, uploads campaign creative, tags ads, sets up and launches campaign in ad solution	N/A - handled by Digital Ops Lead	Digital Ops Lead	20-30 new campaigns/day
Programmatic Analyst	Responsible for all programmatic tech-nology and demand partners, manages pricing and fill rate to optimize yield and revenue	N/A - handled by Digital Ops Lead	Digital Ops Lead	20-30 live campaigns/day

*Roles only applicable in Direct and Hybrid sales models

Source: Local Media Consortium

4.3

HOW SHOULD YOU COMPENSATE AND INCENTIVIZE YOUR SALES TEAM?

There are several approaches to sales compensation structures you may want to explore.

Type	Description	Compensation	Typically used by
Salary plus commission	Most common compensation structure because it provides some stable monthly income plus an incentive for sellers to sell	Base salary relatively low; commission typically 20-25% of monthly earned revenue but varies based on sales goals and account type	For-profit news organizations
Commission only	May be the most viable option for small publishers or startups that need a more variable cost structure	Commission typically higher 40%-50% since there is no base salary	Startups or small news organizations
Salary only	Fairly prevalent in the nonprofit sector based on some funder requirements	Base salary tends to be higher since there is no variable incentive	Nonprofit news organizations

Source: Local Media Consortium

4.4

WHY IS DIVERSITY-EQUITY-INCLUSION (DEI) IMPORTANT TO YOUR BUSINESS?

Diversity-Equity-Inclusion (DEI) initiatives are essential to building a well-rounded workforce, particularly if your publication is located or does business in a diverse community. Ideally, your salesperson or sales team should reflect the demographics of your community. Not only does this expand the range of perspectives and opinions in your organization, but it may also facilitate making connections and building relationships with business owners in your area. If your community is ethnically diverse, embracing inclusion in your hiring practices provides an opportunity to better connect with the local population.

Research suggests that making diversity and inclusion a part of your hiring practices is also good for your bottom line. According to a study by Unrealized Impact, "diverse teams are more innovative and make better decisions, and diverse companies have better shareholder returns."

Small businesses are also embracing DEI to foster more meaningful customer relationships and attract higher performing talent. According to Clear Company, 57% of employees believe their businesses need to be more diverse.

To include diversity in your recruitment efforts, look to friends, acquaintances and business contacts who are part of underrepresented communities in your country. In North America, you can reach out to Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs), as well as industry associations such as the American Advertising Federation, the National Association of Black Journalists, the National Association of Hispanic Publications, Inc., the National Newspaper Publishers Association, the Association of Alternative Newsmedia, and the Asian American Journalists Association.

Most importantly, make DEI a part of your organization and your department's DNA. Help employees understand the benefits of a diverse workforce and show your ongoing commitment to building a diverse team. Asking your employees for their help in your recruitment efforts will get them more involved and dedicated to this effort.

Many other studies have shown the benefits of diversity in the workplace:

According to Glassdoor:

67%	of job seekers consider a diverse workforce an important consideration when evaluating companies and job offers.
57%	of current employees want to see their companies do more to increase diversity.

Research by HR industry analyst Josh Bersin shows that more inclusive companies have:

2.3×	higher cash flow per employee over a 3-year period of more inclusive companies.
1.8×	more likely to be change-ready.
1.7×	more likely to be innovation leaders in their market.

McKinsey's research shows that companies are:

15%	more likely to have financial returns above respective national industry medians if they're gender-diverse.
35%	more likely to have financial returns above respective national industry medians if they're ethnically diverse.

Deloitte Australia research shows that inclusive teams:

80%	Percent inclusive teams outperform their peers in team-based assessments.

This Think with Google piece illustrates the positive impact of finding and nurturing diverse talent to enhance your digital advertising efforts. Advertisers and publishers alike are finding consumers don't just want content that is relevant to their interests and needs; they want to see ideas that speak to who they are and where they come from. While diversity can mean different things around the globe, an inclusive workforce can help inform the advertisements themselves as consumers increasingly demand that marketing efforts listen to their voices and represent their truths.

The Texas Tribune made diversity and Spanish-language skills a greater priority in hiring to better reflect the communities they serve, publishing these goals as part of their long-term strategic plan.

You can also read here about how The Journal News reinvented its coverage of Yonkers, N.Y., to connect with a more diverse readership, rebuild trust in the community and grow subscriptions.

4.5

HOW CAN YOU RECRUIT AND MENTOR?

Hiring your ad sales team may require thinking outside the box. While finding candidates with experience in media may be ideal, the talent pool could be limited, especially if you are a small publisher.

Where should you begin to recruit and nurture the talent you need?

You can start with word-of-mouth referrals from your existing employees and their networks. According to Career Builder, 88% of employers rated employee referrals above all other sources for generating quality new hires and that employee referral programs can save as much as $3,000 per hire in the U.S.

Consider hiring local candidates by reaching out to civic organizations, area colleges and chambers of commerce. Hiring locally shows you are truly invested in the growth and well-being of the local economy and it may give your sales team a leg up when calling on potential customers. If hiring locally is not possible, consider relocation incentives for suitable candidates. (See insights, resources and tools below).

When creating your job posting, expand your definition of the ideal candidate (see recommendations on this in the Hiring and staffing section that follows). Too narrow a focus on a set mix of skills, education and experience may close the door to other candidates who can bring new talents and perspectives to your organization. Shifting your focus to allow for training and mentorship could also boost employee satisfaction and retention.

Hiring and staffing

There isn't a standard approach to staffing your internal advertising team, but you will want someone who is dedicated to the work and is able to speak and listen to potential advertisers. A recent paper by the Google News Initiative and the Institute for Nonprofit News recommends that you consider the following tasks and responsibilities, and ask yourself which of them could be fulfilled by a current member of your team, and which will need a new person to handle them effectively. You will need a resource to:

- Consistently reach out to new leads
- Manage client relationships
- Create proposals and get the sale finalized
- Execute fulfillment for the sale, for example, order entry, upload ads to your website, billing
- Track and manage creative assets on your website or other platforms
- Track campaign performance and put together analytics reports for clients

The chart to the right shows the qualities to look for when hiring a salesperson and an interview guide that can be helpful while recruiting:

General Characteristics to Look for in Sales Talent

Aligns with Company Mission	Confident & Competitive	Good Listener & Communicator	Multitasker & Gets Things Done
Supports your company objectives and reflects your community	Driven to succeed and achieve goals	Cares about customers and builds strong relationships	Good at juggling lots of balls without dropping one

Passionate & Engaging	Curious & Creative	Persistent & Resilient	Honest
Enthusiastically committed to client success	Full of ideas and uses imagination to create new opportunities	Perfect balance of tenacity and patience	Unwavering integrity and transparency

Source: Local Media Consortium

4.5

Insights, resources and tools

The Institute for Nonprofit News (INN) put together a list of hiring and recruiting resources that can help with your hiring efforts.

- Revenue Roles in Local News: Case Studies from Exemplary Civic News Organizations (American Journalism Project)
- Interview guide and questions for hiring a salesperson (from the GNI Sponsorships Lab)
- The Best Ways to Hire Salespeople (HBR)
- Sales Staff Hiring: A Trailblazing Approach to Hire Top Talent (Salesforce)
- Achieving Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion: a Curated Guide to Help Nonprofits (The Chronicle of Philanthropy)
- Hiring tips and recommendations for news organization (Source/Open News)

Mentorship and career paths

Once you've hired your sales team, it's important to set them up for success. Establishing career goals and providing mentorship to help them grow will result in stronger performance from the individual and more significant contributions to your company. A well-rounded mentoring program should include:

Overview of Sales Mentorship Pathways

4.6

Ongoing sales training and incentives are key to meeting your sales goals. Ensuring your team has a basic understanding of digital sales is essential for them to effectively communicate your value proposition to potential customers.

Here are several ways to access no-cost or low-cost sales training resources.

The results of working to upskill your sales team and equip them with digital advertising tools and skills can be outsized.

Example:

A cohort of Indonesian publishers focused on upgrading their advertising revenue technology as well as upskilling their workforce, resulting in a 95% uplift in digital revenue. Rahim Asyik, Chief Content Officer at AYO Media Network, notes that through this upskilling, "We've had more visitors to our site and that's led to incremental revenue. Not only that, our employees have gained digital skills that we can continue to apply."

Training Sources for Sales Team Members

Type	How it can benefit your sales team	Resource examples
Online training courses	Provides your team with the flexibility to learn at a time and pace that's most convenient for them. Most courses include both an instructor-led and hands-on skills component.	Google Digital Garage, IAB, 360 Ad Sales Training, Grow with Google, Publishers on Air (webinars on AdSense and Ad Manager bestpractices), AdMob on Air, Skillshop's self-guided trainings on Googleproducts including Ad Manager, AdSense and AdMob
Online communities	Excellent way to keep your team updated on the latest trends, ideas and strategies for digital ad sales. Great way to get insights and practical advice from your peers.	Digital Marketing Community, The Community for Media Sales Slack workspace
Ad sales blogs and videos	Great way to learn from industry leaders and digital sales experts.	Moz, Sales Hacker, HubSpot, 360 Ad Sales Blog, The Center for Sales Strategy
Social media influencers	Get practical tips and stay abreast of the latest sales trends via social media.	Influencers differ by geography and language
Industry organizations	Research the most relevant industry organizations and trade groups. They typically post research, whitepapers and best practices as well as host webinars and events.	International News Media Association (INMA), IAB, WAN-IFRA
Digital sales training consultant	Can provide a more customized way to train your team based on your specific needs.	Connect with other publishers to find consultants they recommend.

Source: Local Media Consortium

Managing Your Campaigns for Success

CHAPTER 5

MANAGING YOUR CAMPAIGNS FOR SUCCESS

Once you've developed your sales solutions and sold a campaign, you need to optimize the campaign's performance and deliver results for your client. Inventory management, fulfillment, reporting and billing are also important for client satisfaction and retention.

This chapter will address the following questions:

5.1 What is the campaign fulfillment process?

5.2 Why is inventory management and order entry important?

5.3 How can you optimize your ad campaigns?

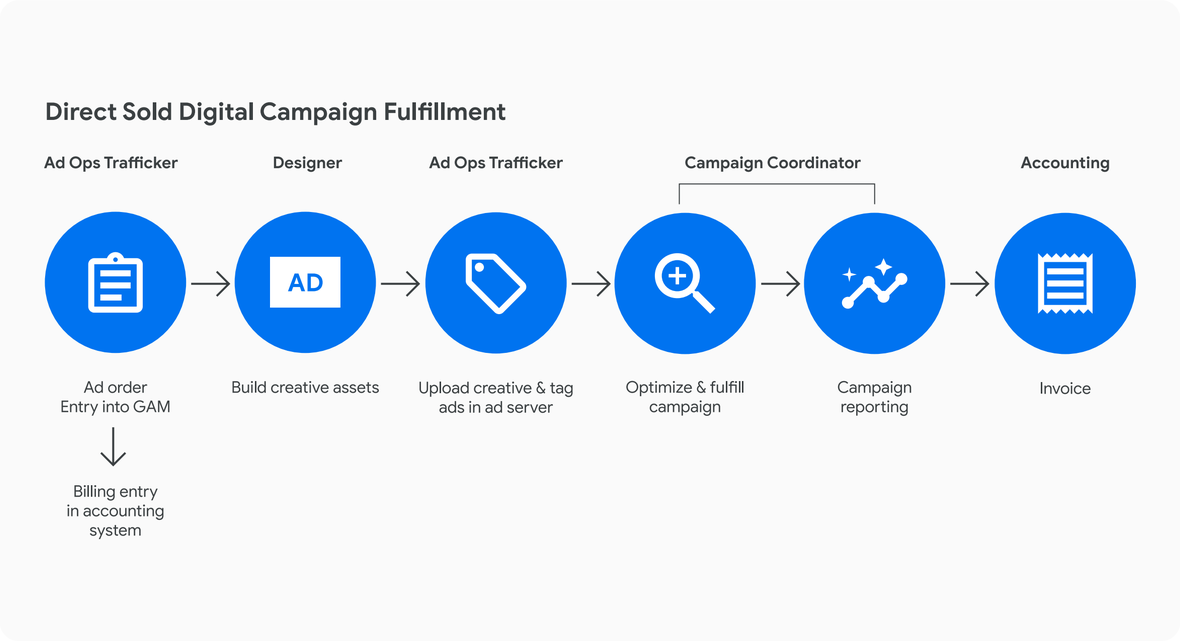
5.4 How will you handle billing and reporting?

5.1

WHAT IS THE CAMPAIGN FULFILLMENT PROCESS?

Direct sold fulfillment process

Once you've established your selling approach and which technology will best support your digital advertising program (see Chapter 1), you'll need to develop a process to effectively manage campaigns. An example of the steps in the direct sold fulfillment process and who typically manages each step is below.



Source: Local Media Consortium

5.2

WHY IS INVENTORY MANAGEMENT AND ORDER ENTRY IMPORTANT?

Ad inventory management

Overall ad inventory management within your ad solution is important in helping you maximize your revenue opportunities and deliver optimal results for your clients. It provides a way for you to:

- Perform inventory forecasting, which estimates the number of impressions you have to sell each month. Although inventory forecasting is never 100% accurate, it provides directional guidance to your sales team so they don't oversell or under deliver against campaign goals.
- Forecast your sell-through rate or the percentage of your total inventory you've sold each month. For direct sold ad inventory, you should strive for a sell-through rate of 75% or above.
- Forecast impressions delivered and the likelihood of delivering the impressions you've sold
- Manage all the digital products and pricing you offer
- Manage and update audience targeting parameters
- Make any product or pricing updates in a centralized place
- For each individual campaign it allows your sales and operations team to:
  - Check impressions availability prior to selling or launching a campaign to ensure you have sufficient inventory
  - Manage client expectations on the anticipated CTR
  - Optimize and adjust the campaign once it's launched to ensure campaign goals are met

Order entry

Once you've sold a digital package, you'll need to create an efficient, well-organized system to keep track of each campaign's journey from order entry to final reporting. A common first step in campaign fulfillment is to create an insertion order (IO), which details the agreement between you and your advertiser to run their ads. The IO contains all of the information related to an advertising campaign, including:

- Client name and billing information
- Flight dates (the start and end dates of the campaign)
- Ad unit dimensions and placements
- Target audience
- Number of impressions to be served
- Pricing structure
- Cost of the campaign
- Terms and conditions (T&Cs), including your privacy policy
- You can access a blank, template IO example here.

5.2

WHY IS INVENTORY MANAGEMENT AND ORDER ENTRY IMPORTANT?

Creating an insertion order (signed by both parties) not only helps with order fulfillment but ensures that your advertiser understands what they are buying and that you are clear on delivery expectations. You may also want to include flexibility to adjust the campaign creative formats and placements to optimize performance as needed.

Order entry is the manual process of entering the information contained in the IO into the ad solution along with the creative assets ad tags and landing page links provided by the advertiser. Once uploaded to the ad solution, the automation begins. Before running each campaign you'll want to preview each ad and test the tags to make sure there are no code conflicts with your site architecture that would prevent the ads from displaying properly.

Managing campaign creative assets

Part of the order entry process includes securing and uploading the creative assets into the ad solution for all the digital ad formats you've sold for the campaign. Creative assets can be provided by the client or you may be responsible for building them yourself. Here are tips for developing creatives for each ad format. You'll want to ensure you either have internal or freelance resources that can build each type of creative (static banner, video, etc) you sell. You can access the Google Creative Best Practices Guide here.

5.3

HOW CAN YOU OPTIMIZE YOUR AD CAMPAIGN?

Once a campaign is launched, you want to make sure it delivers against your advertiser goals and generates the most revenue possible for you. This is where optimization comes into play.

Optimization is the ongoing process of improving the performance of a campaign through continuous monitoring, data collection, testing and adjusting. Your sales operations team should be familiar with optimization techniques and be armed with ideas to make sure campaigns are performing their best. Your goal is to deliver, in full, all of the impressions you've sold for a particular campaign and have the best possible CTR.

Your ad ops team may need to make changes to the campaign if these goals are not being met. If your campaign is underperforming, consider these tactics to optimize based on the issue:

Tactics to improve ad campaign performance

Optimize	Tactic
Impressions	• Run placements across more sections or pages • Broaden your targeting parameters • Review and adjust ad solution delivery settings (e.g front loaded/evenly) • Ensure you don't have too many high priority line items targeting the same inventory
CTR	• Increase placements in high traffic areas like section fronts or home page • Narrow your targeting parameters • Test which creative performs best by comparing CTRs in controlled experiments
Viewability	• Increase placements above the fold or close to the fold • Follow the viewability best practices highlighted in chapter 2
Creative	• Run multiple creatives for each ad unit and optimize highest performing unit • Ensure the image is compelling and text is readable • Strengthen call to action (CTA)

Source: Local Media Consortium

5.4

HOW WILL YOU HANDLE BILLING AND REPORTING?

Billing

Part of the campaign fulfillment process includes determining how advertiser billing will be handled based on your sales approach.

Outsourced ad sales/programmatic:
Your partner should handle the advertiser billing and provide you with a revenue share based on your agreement.

Direct sales:
You'll need to establish an internal process to ensure digital campaigns are properly documented and invoiced to your advertising clients. This will require that final campaign information is sent from your ad solution to your billing system.

Most clients require the following information on their invoice:

- Line item or product level information including start/end date
- Impressions delivered
- Rate and total fee

Sample Invoice

SAMPLE INVOICE

Local Publisher Logo
500 Somewhere St
Somewhere, GA 00000
Phone: 123-456-7891

Page 1 of 1

Invoice #	Invoice Date	Invoice Month	Invoice Period
Best 1-1	9/30/21	September	9/1/21-9/30-21

Advertiser	Product	Flight Dates	Order #
Best Customer	Labor Day Sal	09/01-09/01/21	1234

Client Billing Address
Best Customer
100 Any Street
Any City, GA 99999
Phone: 123-567-8910

Line	Property	Start/End Date	Line Item	Size	Impressions	Rate	Cost
1	Local News	09/01-09/01/21	9.1.21-9.31.21_HP_SBB	Sliding Billboard 970x90	1,000,000.00	$10.00	$10,000.00

Gross Total	$10,000.00
Agency Commission	
Net Amount Due	$10,000.00

Payment Terms 30 Days

Source: Local Media Consortium

Reporting

Reporting is a critical part of the campaign fulfillment process, demonstrating the results you've delivered against your client's goals. Reports should recap overall campaign performance as well as results for each line item and typically include impressions, clicks and CTR.

Sample Advertiser Campaign Report

Campaign Summary				
Overview	**Products**	**Impressions**	**Clicks**	**CTR**
Campaign Name: Labor Day Sale.IO#564 Flight Dates: 09/01-09/01/21	Sliding Billboard, Corner Peel	142,825	552	0.37%
Top Performing Ad Units (those generating the highest impressions and highest CTR)				
Line Item	**Size**	**Impressions**	**Clicks**	**CTR**
9.1.21-9.31.21_HP_SBB	Sliding Billboard 970x90	92,823	123	0.13%
9.1.21-9.31.21_HP_CP	Corner Peel 1x1	50,002	429	0.86%
Top Performing Creatives				
970x90_Atl_LbrDay_Sep4.zip	Sliding Billboard 970x90	41,739	114	0.27%

Tools and Resources

CHAPTER 6

TOOLS AND RESOURCES

This chapter provides links to specific Google resources and workshops, other industry resources and organizations, and a glossary of useful terms. It is a go-to resource to stay up to date on the latest digital news, trends, guidelines and other useful information.

Google Tools and Resources

Tools	Description
News Consumer Insights	Measure the performance of your audience using our benchmarks and get actionable recommendations.
News Tagging Guide	Identify what reader behaviors you should be measuring in Google Analytics and easily generate tags for your site to collect better data and unlock new insights.
Realtime Content Insights	Identify in real time which articles and videos are the most popular with your readers and what broader topics are trending in your region.
Chrome User Experience	Provides user experience metrics for how real-world Chrome users experience destinations on the web.
Page Speed Insights	PageSpeed Insights analyzes the content of a web page, then generates suggestions to make it faster.
Core web vitals	The Core Web Vitals report shows how your pages perform, based on real world usage data.
Skillshop	Serf-service trainings on Ad Manager, starting with the basics
Pubslishers on air	Live and on-demand videos highlighting best practices on Ad Manager and Adsense
Video: How search works (in 5 minutes)	A short video about how Google Search works, including how Google's software indexes the web, ranks sites, flags spam, and serves up results.

Resources and Workshops from the Digital Growth Program

Resources	Description
Reader Revenue Playbook	Our playbook, exercises and workshops are informed by insights from more than 50 publishers around the world and represent the collective expertise of our trusted partners and the Google News Initiative.
Startups Playbook	The goal of this playbook is to demystify the process of launching a digital news startup, and to help you build a business that's both financially viable and journalistically impactful.
Data Resources	We designed these resources to help you benchmark your business against other news organizations and prioritize how you can collect, analyze and activate data to advance your overall business goals.
Audience Development	We designed these resources to help you attract more readers and deepen their engagement, developing the materials with the help of industry experts and news organizations around the globe.
The Nonprofit News Guide to Earned Revenue	Guide from the INN-GNI Sponsorships Lab on how you can build advertising, sponsored content, event sponsorship dollars and more into major and sustainable sources of revenue.
Digital Growth Program Workshop Series on Demand	Workshops are designed to help small-to-midsize news organizations globally achieve digital success. Topics include Audience Development, Advertising Revenue, Reader Revenue, and are continuously expanding to help business stakeholders in the news space with practical and strategic recommendations.

Other Industry Resources

Tools	Description
WebPage Test	A tool to test speed performance and web vitals analysis.
Similar Web	A tool for providing insights on website traffic, referring sites, social media traffic, and also, top keywords.
GeoEdge	GeoEdge toolbar is the fastest and easiest way to view, monitor and analyze geo-targeted content and ads in over 210 geo-locations in real time.
Snagit	Snagit is a screenshot program that captures video display and audio output. Originally for the Microsoft Windows operating systems, recent versions have also been available for macOS, but with fewer features.

Industry Research and Publications

Research	Description
E-Marketer	A market research company that provides insights and trends in digital marketing, media and commerce
Thomson Reuters	Enables you to make business decisions backed by authoritative intelligence and incisive analysis.
Pew Research	Pew Research Center conducts public opinion polling, demographic research, media content analysis.
AdAge	Advertising & marketing industry news.
AdWeek	Breaking news in advertising, media and technology. Complimentary interactive courses and live educational experiences to help cultivate the skills to advance in a disruptive marketplace.
SmartBrief	Read the latest news in the marketing and advertising industries.
MediaPost	An online publishing resource for all advertising media professionals.

Industry Standards

Industry Standard	Description
Better Ad Standards	The Coalition for Better Ads' Better Ads Standards identify the ad experiences that fall beneath a threshold of consumer acceptability and are most likely to drive consumers to install ad blockers.
Interactive Advertising Bureau	The Interactive Advertising Bureau is an advertising business organization that develops industry standards, conducts research, and provides legal support for the online advertising industry.
IAB Tech Lab	The IAB Technology Laboratory (Tech Lab) is a nonprofit consortium that engages a member community globally to develop foundational technology and standards that enable growth and trust in the digital media ecosystem.
Media Rating Council	The Media Rating Council is a United States-based nonprofit organization that manages accreditation for media research and rating purposes
Trustworthy Accountability Group	Trustworthy Accountability Group (TAG) is the leading global initiative fighting to stop criminal activity and increase trust and transparency in digital advertising. TAG advances its mission by connecting industry leaders, analyzing threats and sharing best practices worldwide.

Advertising Glossary

Term	Definition
Ad serving	The process by which Ad Manager chooses the best ads to serve to an ad request, and then returns the corresponding creative code.
Ad slot	An ad slot is the HTML markup (usually between tags) the defines where an ad appears. Ad slots can reference either unique ad units or, if on a single page, ad slots can also reference the same ad unit.
Ad solution	The combination of technologies used to upload ad creative, tag, and serve ads.
Ad source	The network or entity from which advertising content is consumed by a given ad unit. Multiple sources may compete for display in a single unit (for example, AdSense or AdX as backfill challengers).
Ad tag	HTML tags or JavaScript code generated and then included in the webpage or app source where the ads should be displayed.
ARPU	Average revenue generated by a user.
Core Web Vitals	Web Vitals is an initiative by Google to provide unified guidance for quality signals that are essential to delivering a great user experience on the web.
CPMs	Cost Per Mille or cost paid by the advertiser per thousand ad impressions.
CRM	Customer Relationship Management is a process in which an organization administers its interactions with customers to study large amounts of information.

Term	Definition
eCPM	Effective revenue generated by a thousand ad impressions. It is used to calculate the effectiveness of a campaign.
Guaranteed deals	You and the buyer negotiate a price and terms for inventory that is reserved (guaranteed) for that buyer. Inventory is designated for only that buyer at that price.
In-stream ads	Video ads that appear before, during, and after video content streams.
Interstitial ads	Full-screen mobile app ads that display before or after an event (app launch, video pre-roll) or user action (game level load).
Lazy loading	Mechanism to serve ads only when it's necessary. This includes serving an ad towards the bottom of the page only when a user scrolls to the ad's section.
Native ads	A type of ad that mirrors the visual design of the user experience it lives within, and looks, feels, and behaves like natural content on the publisher property in which it's displayed.
Open Auction	A Transaction type or "Deal type" where inventory which is available to all buyers is auctioned.
Order management system	Computer software system used for order entry and processing.
Placements	A collection of one or more ad units that can be targeted as a group. You can add ad units to a placement to simplify the targeting of ads.

Term	Definition
Preferred deals	You can have specific advertisers show ads on your sites or apps. Preferred Deals can give specific buyers priority tier inventory, or even be used as a way to sell unique inventory.
Private auctions	Private Auctions allow you to invite a set of buyers to bid on a portion of your inventory via an auction. You specify a minimum CPM floor price on a per-buyer basis, and that buyer must exceed that floor price in order to be eligible for the auction.
Supply side platform (SSP) / Ad exchange	Technology platform that enables web publishers to manage their advertising inventory, fill it with ads and receive revenue

To explore more definitions of advertising concepts, please head over to this glossary.