



Understanding
**Creative
Management
Platforms**



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Mastering
your digital campaigns

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Mastering your digital campaigns

Is it possible for brands to take full control of their digital campaigns? And fulfil the promise of optimisable, hyper-relevant adverts? With a premium creative management platform (CMP), the answer is a clear yes.

In Part 1 of our e-book series we explored how creative management platforms remove the pain of digital marketing. In our latest instalment we explain how using a CMP helps in-house teams to master display advertising campaigns.

Moving from simplifying workflows, to pursuing performance marketing strategies previously thought unworkable. The following four chapters explain how the features of a premium CMP can take brands to the next level.

From the designer frustrated with standardised creative, to the marketing manager wasted on short-sighted campaigns – this e-book demonstrates how premium CMPs are an enabler of in-house advertising.

Introduction

The features and tools of creative management platforms are the result of fixing and improving banner production. From ad creation and smart scaling, to translation management, and real-time publishing.

Yet, for Bannerflow co-founders, Daniel Jacobsson and Daniel Fahlén there was a problem. It wasn't enough to simply solve the pains of digital marketing, they wanted users to excel at it.

And it wasn't just playing on their minds...

Day-in-day-out they were challenged by brands who wanted to do more. Whether that was incorporating live data feeds into ads, building effective landing pages, or planning publishing in advance. Not to mention the holy grail of display advertising: true real-time ad optimisation via analytics.

All were either impossible, or ineffective. The technology brands needed simply didn't exist.

They had to create the next version of the Bannerflow CMP. Together with the Bannerflow team, they set about designing features to enable exceptional banner campaigns. Tools that made in-house teams agile, and data-driven ads a reality.

The result was the next generation of Bannerflow: the premium CMP.

Taking digital advertising to the next level

Today, marketers need to create exciting and relevant banners that capture the attention of viewers. Standard banners don't connect. Plus, they are rarely – if at all – optimised during their publication. If a display ad has a poor click-through rate, it is unlikely to improve without refinement.

A/B testing and the use of precise analytics, combined with easy optimisation and real-time publishing avoids this. It provides brands with increased conversion opportunities and critically a better return on investment (ROI).

This is why you need an enterprise-level platform that can do it all. From innovative data driven designs across formats, to scheduling and optimising – all in real-time.

Chapter 1:

Dynamic creative (feeds)

Hyper-relevant and engaging banners that convert

Dynamic creative changes your perception of digital marketing. It's presenting the right message, to the right person, at the right time – without the fiction. It's digital advertising delivering on the promises brands' have heard so many times over the years.

Combined with developments in production and targeting, dynamic creative campaigns are growing in popularity. Indeed, building dynamic banner campaigns should be painless. Yet, applying data feeds, using analytics, and scaling are still not within the capabilities of some in-house teams.

Using data feeds in your banners without a CMP

Before the advent of the premium CMP adding a feed to a banner set was difficult. Tech departments struggled to provide scalable options. Meaning creating banners that presented viewers with live data, such as sports odds, or product feeds, were generally avoided.

Managing the data was not a simple task either. An advertiser wanting to use live data feeds would need high performance architecture to serve their feeds.

For every impression pulled from the data feed, you needed the tech architecture to cope with one billion feed requests per month. Advertisers could certainly use a feed data but their servers couldn't hope to supply the demand.

What's more, there were issues in how the data was presented in the banners too. For example, typefaces sometimes didn't work because they were too large in file-size.

Creating dynamic banners that contained rich media was also unthinkable. Interactivity or unique functionality added another layer of complexity that just couldn't be feasibly scaled manually. Or if you attempted it, it would require far more development time than was satisfactory.

There had to be a better way.

The promise of even the smallest amount of live data was tantalising. Moreover, the prospect of banners that once built, could – in theory – take care of themselves was music to the ears of CMOs everywhere!

Why did Bannerflow enable easy dynamic creative?

For Bannerflow co-founder Daniel Jacobsson, setting up a data feed the “old way” was too much work. Each Banner had to extract data from a protected API, and needed to be manually coded. Agile working it was not.

Instead the Bannerflow team created a facilitator for the data feed, making it a hell of a lot easier for brands to use data feeds and produce dynamic creatives.

The Bannerflow team made the impossible, possible.



Bannerflow fact:

Using Bannerflow you really do have unlimited options for what you want to display – there really is no limit! However, be warned: with great power comes great responsibility!

Producing dynamic creative campaigns with a CMP

When it comes to connecting a data feed to your banners, rejoice! The days of designers hitting their collective heads on their shiny white desks are well and truly over.

Stay fresh and personalised all the time and update in real-time. Serve dynamic sale prices, the latest currencies; display whatever data you want – there’s no limit!

Better yet, thanks to the unique capabilities of CMPs, in-house teams can automate responsiveness. How? By being able to turn off and on, the data being fed, controlling and selecting what is shown when, across banner sets.

For example, an e-commerce brand could connect their ads to a product feed, which during key shopping dates retarget consumers. Showing specific viewers, the stock-status of products they've shown an interest in and their latest prices.

What's more, combine data feeds with a CMP's real-time editing, publishing, and live analytics functionality and you remain agile to external changes. From one master creative, produce all the ads variations you need to run dynamic banner campaigns.

Premium CMPs offer more tantalising options too. For example, you could integrate your data management platform (DMP) into your dynamic creatives. Or create personalised ads at scale that use customer journeys, demographics, or contextual prospecting.

And the cherry on top? The application of dynamic creative optimisation (DCO). Bannerflow offers integration with DoubleClick Studio which allows for the automatic selecting of the best creative for your audience.

Presenting the right message, to the right person, at the right time is now non-fiction.

Chapter 2:

Landing pages

Tailoring every aspect of your ad campaign

Producing an effective landing page isn't rocket science. Yet, producing a bespoke landing page that works in harmony with your digital ad campaign is often overlooked. You may well have got a viewer to click-through via your dynamic banner but if they fail to convert then what's the point?

Mass-producing landing pages – as easily as you do display advertising – must be a priority for digital advertisers. What's more, being able to optimise and update your landing pages is now essential. In the world of digital advertising, the days of a less-than-perfect landing page are over.

Creating landing pages without a builder tool

In the recent past, it wasn't easy to build the amount of landing pages needed for a campaign.

To start with you needed to craft each landing page individually. In practice this meant the number of landing pages built for a campaign was restricted by the time it took to build each page. With designers manually coding, and copy and pasting between documents, and programmes.

With no easy way of mass-producing pages, marketers had to narrow their conversion opportunities. The exact opposite of what they should have doing!

Indeed, research showed that the more landing pages you had the more likely you were to convert. (Still true!)

Without tailoring each individual landing page there was only a generic narrative for the customer to follow. The results was poor correlation between the digital ad clicked-on, and the standardised landing page the consumer found themselves on.

The worst aspect of this way of building landing pages was the

absolute lack of optimisation and testing. Campaigns were linking to landing pages that remained static and did not change. Why? Because it took too long to update them.

Even if you were testing your display advertising, not testing your corresponding landing pages meant you could still be churning out poorly performing campaigns.

Added to this was the fact that not all landing pages built were responsive. Which isn't ideal when you consider visitors from mobile devices leave after three seconds if a page fails to load or displayed incorrectly!

Creating awesome landing pages for display campaigns just wasn't happening. It was a missing piece of the puzzle that for some digital marketers was continually forgotten.

Why was creating a landing page builder essential?

Building landing pages – just like building banners the “old way” – was a painful experience for designers. Often overlooked, not easily scaled, and tedious to reproduce, it was a pet hate of founders Daniel and Daniel.

It was no surprise then, upon expanding the range of tools available in the Bannerflow platform, a landing page builder was high on the agenda.



Bannerflow fact:

Moment marketing with your landing pages? Needing to work agilely? Why the hell not! One travel brand produced all the landing pages they needed – for every ad variation they produced! Even including a live product feed on each page.

Mass producing your landing pages with a CMP

Landing page builders are another key feature of premium creative management platforms. With them digital marketers can build pages as easily as banners.

The landing page builders in some CMPs offer similar functionality to their banner builder cousins. In particular, they provide the same powerful smart scaling and versioning capabilities. Making the mass-production of landing page variations easy.

Not only that but the same cloud-based collaborative tools are available too. Colleagues anywhere in the world can sign-off and edit pages, while easy translation management is an added boon for brands working across multiple markets.

Building your landing pages via a CMP also opens the doors to improved campaign performance and agile working. By being able to update in real-time and mass-version, digital marketers can use CMPs to A/B test and optimise – increasing conversions and sales.

In addition, landing pages built via a premium CMP are compatible with tracking platforms.

Oh, and one more thing: just like your banners, landing pages produced via a CMP are responsive by default. Meaning every device is an opportunity. After all beautiful landing pages are worthless if no one can see them!

Plus, with trusted sub-domains, rerouting, and fall back options managing every aspect of your digital campaign in one platform is now the only way to work.

Chapter 3:

Scheduling tool

Planning your campaigns, 365 days in advance

Scheduling, it may be an unassuming element of digital marketing but it is crucial for successful campaigns. Being able to schedule in advance, and adjust to current events is essential for creating campaigns that connect with viewers.

Integrated scheduling tools are the most effective way of handling your campaign from beginning to end. They are now key components of enterprise-level CMPs.

The old way of scheduling

Scheduling without a CMP was a time consuming process. Without a centralised and effective publishing application, scheduling in advance was impossible.

After the arduous task of designing was completed, the act of scheduling a campaign was just as tedious. A marketing manager could have all his campaigns planned from January to December, but without the means of communicating this outside of long email chains then they might as well not have bothered.

In fact, scheduling of old could hardly be called scheduling. Today, marketers constantly adapt and change campaigns to suit consumers and current events. But without an easily manoeuvrable scheduling application, marketers could only get their head above water long enough to look to the next campaign in front of them.

Email chains would go back and forth between designers and publishers – nevermind all the intermediaries. With so many parties involved it was easy to miscommunicate.

With an inability to easily track where and when your ads were published, it was difficult to provide comparisons. If marketers wanted to compare an event-oriented campaign against standardised banners it was incredibly difficult.

Even the act of A/B testing two variants of copy lost its appeal when the convoluted process made it difficult to track their progress.

Why did Bannerflow create a scheduling tool?

It was a Saturday night and Fahlèn was looking forward to watching the Champions League final with his colleagues. Alas, this was not to be.

Without a scheduling tool Fahlèn had to call publishers at the beginning, the middle, and the end of the match to update the banners with the new creative to match the scores.

Fahlèn wanted to create relevant campaigns that engaged with viewers but the tedium of scheduling his adverts made standardised banners the unfortunate reality. This is why the Bannerflow team created scheduling.

Thus, Saturdays could once again be reserved for beers in front of the big screen.



Bannerflow fact:

Scheduling is a fact of life for most social media marketers. Bannerflow asked the question: why the same couldn't be true for display advertising?

Banners ads are agile. Coordinating campaigns across channels, catering to current events, and reacting to trending conversations – all are possible with an integrated scheduling tool.

Scheduling display advertising with a CMP

A premium CMP will always offer a fully integrated scheduling tool.

Today, marketing focuses relentlessly on being in the moment. The campaigns everybody are talking about are not just innovative, but relevant to consumers and current events.

With a easy drag and drop scheduling tool, your adverts can be scheduled over a year in advance and amended in real-time too.

Scheduling with a CMP gives you the ability to select your banner ads within the same platform and schedule them in one place. Bypassing endless email chains and individual html file attachments.

A/B testing is something that marketers of old could only dream of. With calendar style, drag and drop functionality, you can compare infinite numbers of campaigns against each other and keep track of them all in one place.

With a CMP, scheduling doesn't have to be a separate process that takes hours away from your workday or even your holiday. In fact, using a CMP's placeholder function, you can plan and automate publishing with specific start and end times.

One more thing, scheduling with the click of a button doesn't just save time, but budget. In an age where efficiency is key and marketing is moving increasingly in-house, scheduling in minutes saves time and resources that can be used for improving campaign performance.

Chapter 4:

Analytics and optimisation

Real-time insight and increasing return on investment

How many times have articles, e-books, and research papers urged for greater optimisation? And how often have marketers and designers actually been able to do it? Sometimes what a CMO hears does not match the reality of how their marketing team works!

The reality is that analytics and optimisation is a difficult process, especially without live reliable metrics and the tools to optimise. While too often it involves many different parties, with significant delay between publication and actionable results.

Using ad analytics and optimising without a CMP

Without a CMP, analysing campaigns and optimising was a process that usually involved an agency. Which in itself wasn't a bad thing but where the process fell down was in the time it took. As well the application!

The wait could be days (or even weeks!) between publishing a campaign and getting insightful data. At which point a marketing team would have probably already moved onto their next project.

This meant designers might never see the metrics from their last campaign. It would be up to the marketing manager to learn from the lessons of the campaign and apply them to the next one. Yet without transparency and collaboration, decisions could be hit-or-miss, particularly for the banner designers.

Without data, they were out of the loop and couldn't improve creative thoroughly!

Ambitious marketing managers wanting to A/B test banner ads variants, couldn't. A tedious design process and the inability to apply analytical data in real-time, meant that A/B testing wasted time and resources. Plus, you wouldn't know the real ad performance until weeks afterward!

Before premium CMPs, the type of data you would receive would be limited. Click-through rate, impressions, and clicks are all good measurements of success. Yet without live actionable data, digital marketers are unable to act with insight.

In today's marketing landscape, data is everything. You also want instant access to all available metrics to create effective campaigns that perform.

The old way of working was a shot in the dark at best and offered digital marketers no way of improving their ad campaigns.

Why did Bannerflow focus on live analytics and optimisation?

We wish we could tell you a story about the pains of optimisation in the pre-Bannerflow days. Unfortunately, we don't have one. The difficulties with designing, scaling, scheduling, and publishing made ad optimisation an afterthought.

Data simply took too long to acquire and analyse – let alone implement improvements to live ads!

Fahlén wanted to A/B test, Jacobsson wanted exciting designs that wouldn't take weeks. Neither were possible. It was a sorry state of affairs. So it became a priority of the Bannerflow team.

Now users have instant access to live ad analytics and can optimise through countless features. How times change, eh?



Bannerflow fact:

A happy result of the analytics module is the ability to identify bot traffic engaging with live banners. Bots cost the advertising industry big time!

With the heatmap feature found in the Bannerflow CMP, it's easy for marketers to identify patterns and discount false clicks. Having access to your data is a major step in combating ad fraud (as well as designing better ads)!

Using analytics to optimise ads with a premium CMP

Using a premium CMP to analyse and optimise your campaigns is a revelation.

Marketers now have access to all campaign data in one place. Live metrics such as click-through rate, clicks, impressions, and even custom events such as video starts; all displayable through a single platform.

Plus, with the production features of a premium CMP applying these insights and testing, again and again, is possible.

Additionally, due to the fact all CMP created ads are hosted in the cloud, keeping track of variations is simple. There's no forgetting individual files. Plus iterations can be catalogued for future use and analysis.

Comparing different campaigns, versions, formats, domains, devices and languages can also be performed by selecting from a dropdown within a CMP.

A/B testing is hassle free and doable in-house too. Any object within a banner is editable, and multiple versions can be quickly produced in the sizes required thanks to smart scaling. While, with real-time publishing, updates can go live across published ads instantly.

The days of pulling down a campaign and relaunching it every time you wanted to make an edit or optimise an aspect of your advert are over. Think a different CTA will improve your CTR? Give it a try. Then and observe its impact in real-time.

What's more marketers can keep track of all published ads through the scheduling application, and assess them with the analytics tools. Comparing one, two, or more variations of your campaign's display ads.

Plus, with a premium CMP heatmaps and conversion tracking allow you to identify problem areas in your adverts, as well as accelerate the success of performing campaigns. Particularly, useful for when standard figures aren't enough for effective optimisation.

Designers can use these insights to improve ad design and target specific viewers.

Utilise demographic data from your partners and integrate it into your campaigns too. Use it to profile your audience and make even more relevant banners.

Ultimately, creative management platforms make your in-house marketing strategies come to life.

Conclusion

Complete and total control of digital campaigns

Premium creative management platforms are enabling marketing teams to challenge agencies and produce ever more remarkable campaigns. Dynamic rich media banners can now easily be built by brands, in-house – minus any coding skills!

Finally, the total control of a campaign is possible thanks to easy scheduling and the mass production of landing pages.

While, built-in analytics is providing marketing teams with transparent data. Giving designers the insight – and metrics – they need to effectively test and optimise.

Display advertising isn't static anymore, it's now offering digital marketers the performance they've craved for years. It's the ability to finally, put the right ad, in front of the right viewer, at the right time!

Part two of our e-book series has described what we believe is the current best practice for display advertising with a CMP. For some in-house teams this is reality but for others the shift from basic practice is ongoing.

Part 3: Embracing the future of digital advertising

From mastery of your digital campaigns, to embracing the rapid emergence of new and tantalising opportunities. In Part 3 we explore the future of premium CMPs and how digital advertising is set to go to the next level.

We will discover how CMPs are now hosting DOOH campaigns, enabling in-house video production, and opening the door to social platforms like never before. Plus, we will explain how media buying is set to become another key feature of creative management platforms, and the new metrics set to revolutionise the work of digital marketers.





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