

2024 CULTURAL COMPASS

Digital Marketing Benchmarks to Guide Arts and Cultural Institutions

June 2024



Over the past 15+ years, we've had the honor and privilege of serving the arts and cultural sector through consulting partnerships that often last for many years and involve building marketing strategies across many digital platforms. Because of our unique position in the industry, we have long been sitting on a treasure trove of digital data—and we've dreamed of analyzing it and sharing it with our constituency. In 2023, we prioritized making that dream a reality.

Artificial intelligence, machine learning, and dynamic content (to name just a few) have transformed the digital marketing landscape over the past couple of years in particular. Newer players like TikTok and Spotify are no longer experimental, let's-wait-and-see platforms—their impact and longevity are unmistakable, and it's clear that they're here to stay. The pandemic is no longer the dominant driver of behavior, nor are we existing in the immediate aftermath—our audiences have settled into their evolved attendance habits. It's a true watershed moment and the perfect time to take stock and see what insights we can glean about how things have been going—and where they're heading next.

Enter Cultural Compass.

This study looks at the 2023 digital advertising data from 150+ arts organizations across the United States and Canada. You'll find digital benchmarks, as well as explorations into questions we're often asked by our constituency—and by our own teammates. We focused on the metrics we are asked about the most, and sought to provide insights along the way on why they each matter. One thing to keep in mind throughout: metrics of success can and should be different for different audiences—especially depending on their level of familiarity with your organization. The benchmark on one marketing channel may also be very different from the benchmark on a different marketing channel.

We intend for this study to be one data point of many as you make decisions about how and where to focus your marketing time, energy, and dollars. While we always endeavor to be forward thinking, there is also much to learn from past successes and failures to help guide future plans. This is a crucial time for our industry as we strive to warmly welcome loyal patrons to make return visits while also offering a sense of belonging to the next generations of our audiences. Now is the time to distill our tried-and-true strategies, while also cultivating an open and testing mindset to engage new tactics that are showing promise.

How to Use This Study

Our intention in sharing benchmarks is to give you a big-picture sense of where your work fits into the greater landscape—not to create pressure to measure up.

For example: maybe your organization typically has a much lower page view rate than the benchmark—and that's not a concern because your website has far fewer pages to explore than your peers. As always, we urge you to benchmark against yourself: in this case, you might ask yourself if your page view rates are increasing from campaign to campaign. How is the programming affecting your campaign performance? Context is everything...and so is informed decision making.



Ultimately, there are a lot of factors that underlie an average. We've broken down the data by a number of attributes in this study to better clarify the trends, but it's important to remember correlation is not causation, and variance is not always statistically significant. We've added relevant takeaways and hypotheses where possible.

As you dive in, you'll quickly notice that the vast majority of our benchmarks focus on Meta and Google platforms. That's because we wanted to focus on data where we could draw real conclusions from statistically significant pools, and our clients' media spends are heavily concentrated on those platforms. That has a lot to do with our influence—we've historically recommended that our clients invest on Meta and Google first and foremost, as we believe that any organization with limited resources should be where the user eyeballs are. The Google Display network alone reaches over 90% of internet users worldwide [per Comscore](#). When it comes to monthly active users, Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram [still top the charts](#) (and 71% of US internet users are [YouTube viewers](#)). As the way audiences spend their time on social media evolves, so too will our marketing strategy, as it always has. We expect to see this spend shift and diversify in future years of the study.

We hope this becomes a valuable tool to inform your marketing plans, and we're excited to see how you use it to push your organizations to experiment, learn, innovate, and grow.



A Quick Guide: Meta vs. Google

Throughout this study you'll find Meta and/or Google logos on the right-hand side (either on the top or bottom) of each page to indicate whether the metrics highlighted refer to data from Meta or Google channels.



Capacity Interactive

CI is the premier digital marketing consulting firm for culture and the arts. Founded in 2008, Capacity Interactive partners with leading arts and cultural organizations to help them build audiences, engage community, and market smarter. Service areas include digital advertising, website analytics and optimization, search engine optimization, email strategy, content strategy and creation, and privacy.



CI has a focus on education for our clients and the arts and cultural sector as a whole. CI hosts [Boot Camp](#), an annual conference held both virtually and in-person in New York City, as well as livestreams and webinars where arts marketers can hear from industry leaders and strengthen their digital skills.

We also produce free resources like the Social Content Calendar for Arts Marketers, CTA Generator, Cultural Compass: Digital Marketing Benchmarks to Guide Arts and Cultural Institutions, and Performing Arts Ticket Buyer Media Usage Study.

Follow us on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [YouTube](#), [LinkedIn](#), or [TikTok](#) for more tools and resources for arts administrators.

Check out our podcast, [CI to Eye](#), on Apple Podcasts and Spotify.

capacityinteractive.com

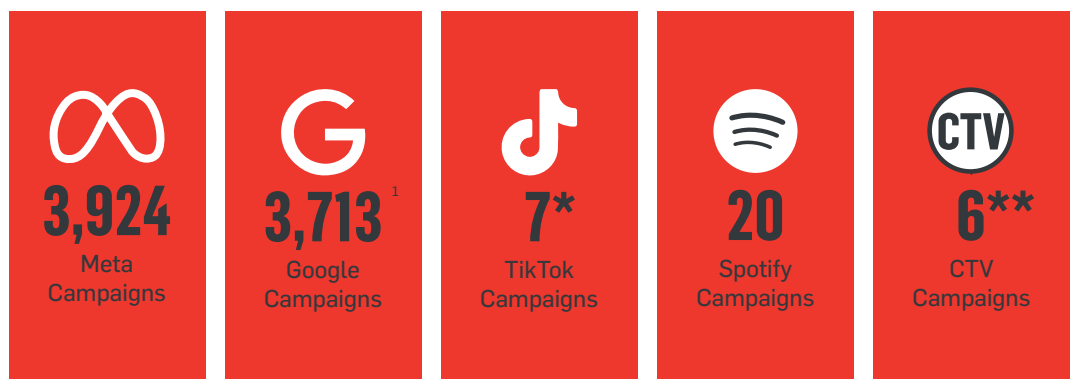
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What campaigns were evaluated?

All data included in this study comes from campaign activity between January 1, 2023 and December 31, 2023.

Campaigns



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*US adults ages 18 to 54 spend more time on TikTok than any other popular social platforms, [according to eMarketer's forecast](#)—and they will spend 55 minutes more per day with digital video than with traditional TV.

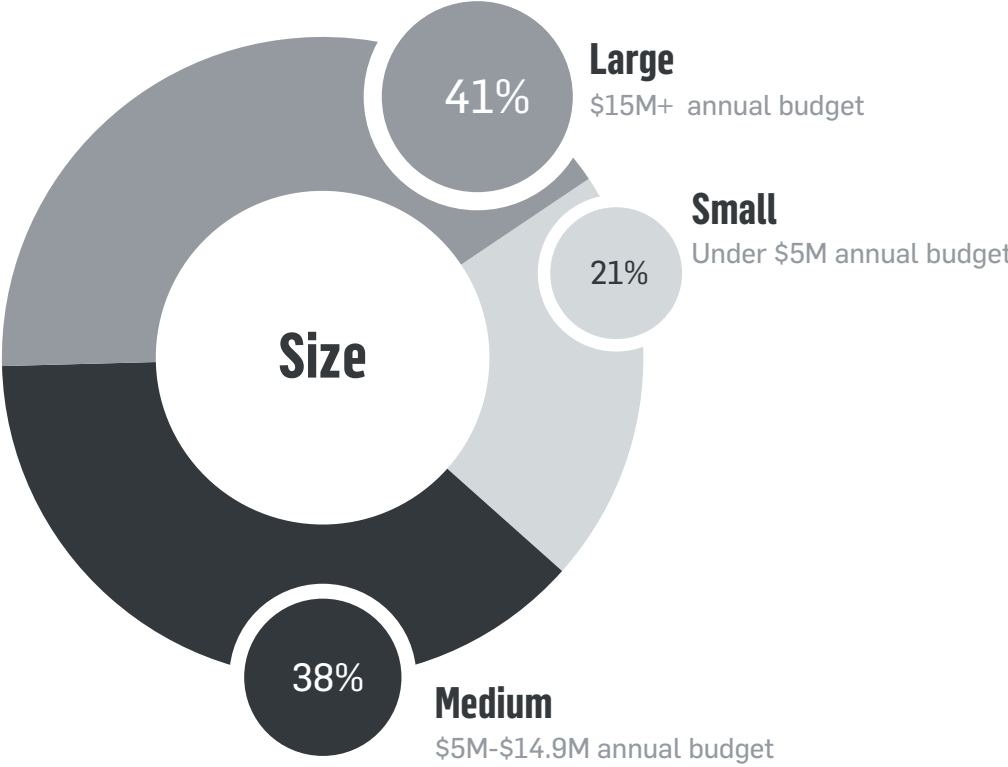
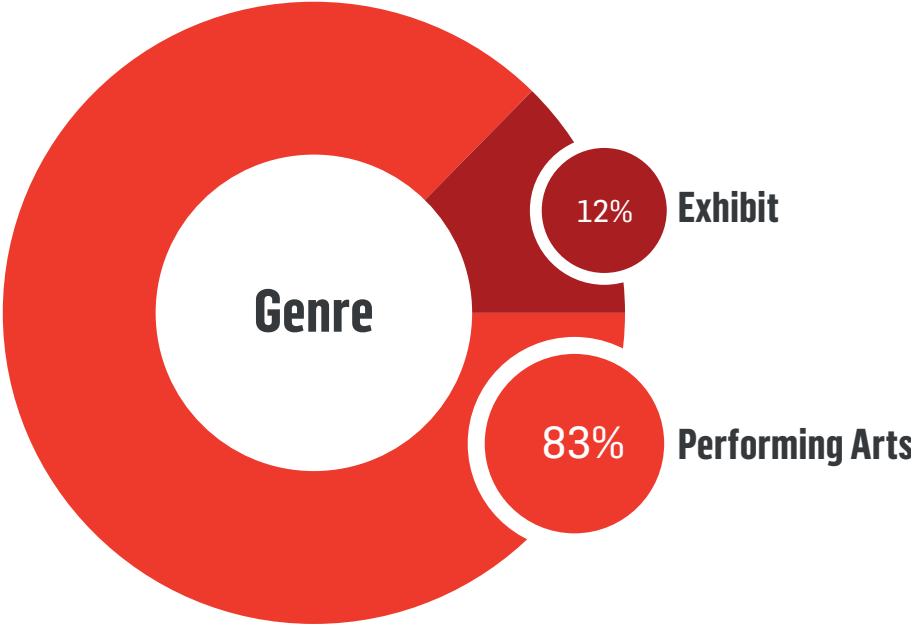
**As such, we felt it was critical to include our limited CTV and TikTok data in this study despite its relatively small volume (we expect to see our data grow enormously in these areas over the coming 1-2 years!).

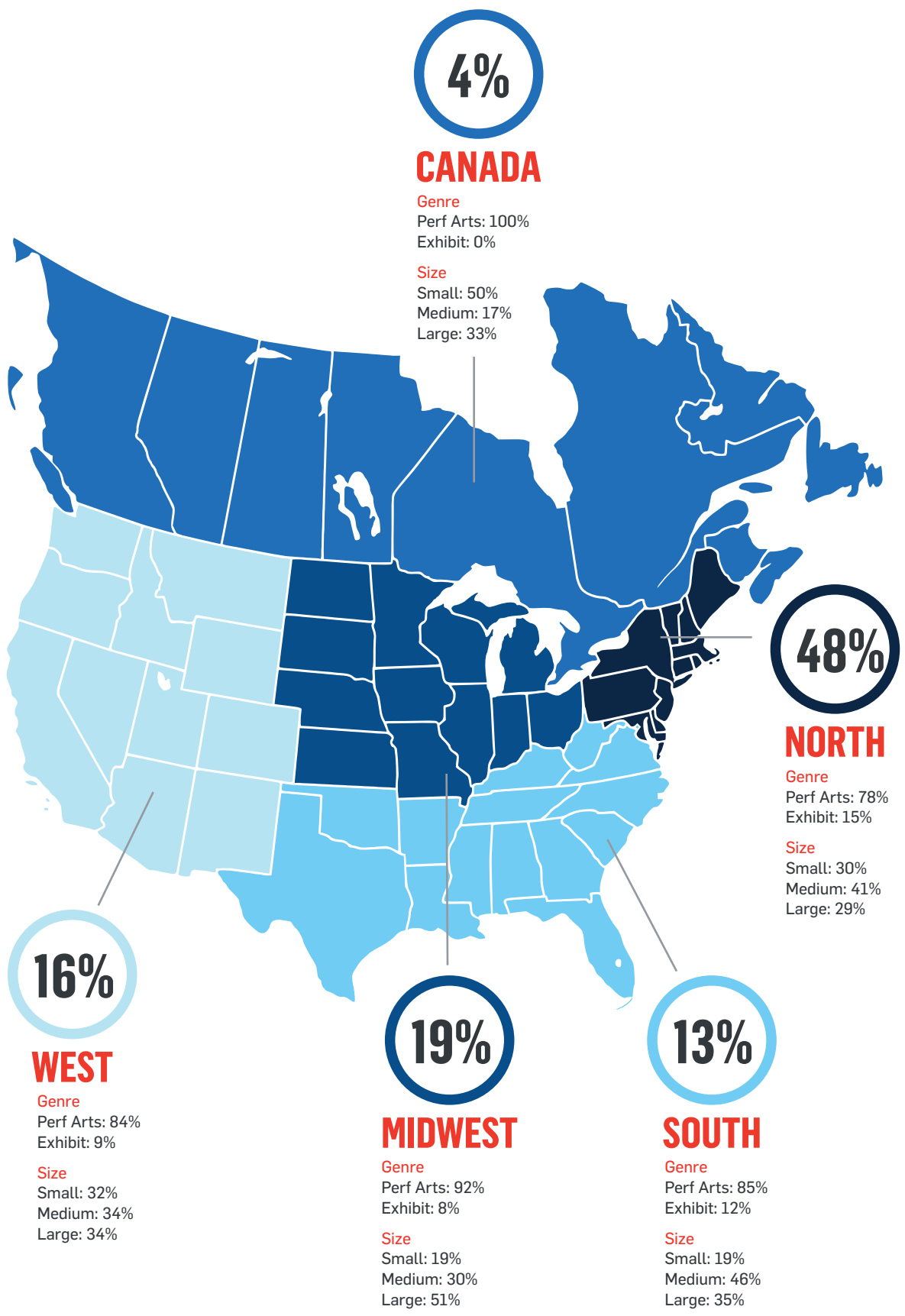
Breakdown Definitions

¹ On Google, one campaign = one targeting segment. On Meta, one campaign often includes many targeting segments. As such, it should be noted that the actual volume of Meta vs. Google campaigns is not apples to apples.

What kinds of organizations provided data?

There were 152 participating organizations from across the United States and Canada.





A few important notes on terminology and metrics definitions:

“Google” includes all campaign types that fall under the Google umbrella (paid search, display, Demand Gen/Discovery, YouTube, Performance Max aka PMax). It does not include search campaigns run within a [Google Grant](#) account, as these are subject to an entirely different set of rules and KPIs (Key Performance Indicators).

When we are looking at “purchases” and “page views,” we are referring to all conversions within those categories across an entire organization—unless otherwise noted. For example, in many cases, a campaign for a particular performance may influence many purchases for other performances (or a fundraising campaign may influence ticket purchases).

“Average” refers to the mean.

We used a [28/28 attribution window](#)¹ when evaluating all results across platforms with the exception of metrics related to content performance on Meta, where a 7/1 window was used.²

We define “bottom of funnel” audiences as audiences who have already taken an action that expresses their interest in your organization. Perhaps they have searched for you on Google, are on an email or website retargeting list, or have previously engaged with your social content. These audiences may also be referred to as “more qualified” audiences.

Breakdown Definitions

¹ An attribution window is a finite period of time during which conversions can be credited to a particular ad. The default attribution window on Meta is 7 days for click-through actions (a person clicked your ad and took an action) and 1 day for view-through actions (a person saw your ad, didn't click it, but took action within the attribution window). The default on Google is 30 days click-through and 1 day view-through.

² We feel a 7/1 window is too narrow to properly evaluate campaign performance because of what we know about user behavior—most users are influenced by ads they see, not just ads they choose to click, and only tracking those users actions within one day of viewing the ad doesn't paint a full picture of the impact and influence of advertising, especially given the lengthier consideration time we observe in the arts. However, when evaluating which content actually drove action, we prefer a more narrow window to best “assign credit” to the ad viewed or clicked closest to when an individual took that action.

An “acquisition” audience or acquisition targeting refers to tactics aimed at getting prospective new patrons to consider your organization’s offerings. They are most often people who have never visited before, but are instead being defined by their interests or digital similarities to existing patrons.

Sections that show overall results without further breakdowns (or some missing breakdowns) are indicative of a smaller data pool. We included as many breakdowns as possible, but in some cases, there wasn’t significant data to cut it down further.

Spend Outliers



We removed data from accounts with less than \$2,400 in overall spend or more than \$300K in overall spend per platform (Meta, Google) in 2023.

Exploring Industry Curiosities

Capacity Interactive has been partnering with arts and cultural organizations since 2008. Most recently, these are some questions we have been frequently asked by our clients, and our key findings address how the larger data pool answers them. These questions are also foundational to how we prioritized our data analysis.

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How can I strengthen my content?

If you have the option to use a CTA button, use one. Meta posts with a CTA button average a 13% higher page view rate and a 33% lower cost per acquisition (CPA)¹ than those without.

There is no “best” post type² (see breakdown on page 109)—use a variety of assets, copy, and formats to ensure that your content can illustrate your story in different ways that appeal to different audiences. Remember that the user journey may not be a super quick one—it doesn’t make sense to judge content served to acquisition-focused audiences on purchase conversion rate!



Lean into dynamic and responsive content.

Dig into Google and Meta’s powerful, in-platform AI solutions for audience targeting, content optimization, and conversion attribution. [Learn more!](#)

How can I prioritize within the Google landscape?

Invest in video on Google, whether that be through dedicated YouTube campaigns or by leveraging machine learning capabilities in Performance Max and Demand Gen campaigns. Paid search dominates (with an average CPA under \$4 compared to an overall Google average of \$10)⁴ and should be the foundation of your Google strategy—and is required to run Performance Max. After paid search, Performance Max campaigns saw the next strongest performance by far, with an average CPA less than half that of Display.⁵



Assess which Google channels are right for your KPIs.

Dig into the latest shifts in the Google landscape and determine which channels are right for you now, and which you can save for later. [Insights ahead!](#)

¹ See page 107

² See page 110

^{3,4} See page 52

How does organization size affect campaign performance?

Unsurprisingly, larger organizations have larger media budgets (across Meta¹ and Google,² spend is about 4.3X the average across small/medium orgs), which translates to many advantages in experimentation, brand recognition, and ability to invest more resources in highly-produced content. Surprisingly, though, large organizations do NOT have higher video view rates,³ despite higher production value, and small organizations outperformed medium-sized organizations in holiday campaigns and others—spend isn't everything!

How are campaign results different between performing arts and exhibit-based organizations?

Exhibit-based organizations are inherently able to visually represent the attendee experience more accurately, so they have higher engagement rates. However, performing arts organizations saw stronger video view and hold rates. Regardless of genre, all organizations need to focus on making dynamic content that gives a sense of the visitor experience.

Does it matter when I run my campaigns?

The months of Q3 (July - September) currently have untapped potential. This quarter often sees the smallest budget investment (23% lower than other quarters' averages),⁴ yet also has some of the strongest results and lowest CPMs⁵ of the year. This is especially important because CPMs are typically highest on more highly-targeted, bottom-of-funnel audiences—which are often the folks that arts organizations are trying to reach over the summer during campaigns focused on subscriptions, memberships, and season on-sales.

¹ See page 45

² See page 48

³ See page 110

^{4,5} See page 64

How does my intended audience affect my campaign results?

Our goal needs to be to find qualified audiences and then create targeted content for those audiences. Think of it as finding your *maximum* viable audience. Broad targeting with a tight budget risks the message fading into the background, but digital channels give us tools to find the best prospects. Newer and less qualified audiences convert at lower rates, but that acquisition work is still critical and needs to be done strategically—not, for example, by asking for subscriptions or donations.



Discover how we helped the Dallas Symphony Orchestra increase ROIs with tiered campaigns.

We developed a tiered advertising strategy for the DSO's Meta campaigns that minimizes audience redundancies, decreases the likelihood of ad fatigue, and keeps costs low. [Read on!](#)

What other digital channels should I be using?





TikTok usership is both massive and highly active—now is the time to start experimenting at the very least. Spotify is not to be ignored—around 60% of users say they pay more attention to ads on Spotify than traditional radio. This is an area where our industry may be starting to lag behind the larger digital marketing world—we hope to see (a lot) more data from our clients on these channels in the next iteration of this study.



Embrace experimentation!

Digital media usage has shifted in recent years, and fundamental changes to how and where we reach target audiences are coming fast. Learn when and how you should diversify channels. [Read on!](#)

Platform Comparison at a Glance

				CTV	
PAGE VIEW RATE	3.1%	4.7%	0.2%	-	-
COST/PAGE VIEW	\$0.28	\$0.10	\$2.20	-	-
PURCHASE RATE	0.06%	0.05%	0.0005%	0.07%	-
CPA	\$15	\$10	\$735	\$46	-
CTR	2.4%	1.6%	0.9%	0.1%	0.5%
CPC	-	\$0.28	\$0.50	\$64.10	\$2.21
VIDEO VIEW RATE	9.7%	0.9%	-	-	-
ANNUAL SPEND (Avg)	\$78K	\$45K	\$2K	\$34K	\$3.4K
ANNUAL SPEND (Median)	\$42K	\$19K	\$1.2K	\$17K	\$2.7K
CPM	\$9	\$5	\$4	\$30	\$10

What to Expect in this Section

The following section highlights the top digital marketing metrics in Meta and Google to help you understand industry performance and how you can improve your results. Remember, it's always best to benchmark against yourself.

Metrics in this section:

[Engagement Rate](#)

[Page View Rate](#)

[Purchase Conversion Rate](#)

[Click-Through Rate \(CTR\)](#)

[Cost Per Click \(CPC\)](#)

[Cost Per Mille \(CPM\)](#)

[Video View Rate](#)

[Video Hold Rate](#)

[Spend](#)

[Cost Per Acquisition \(CPA\)](#)

[Cost Per Page View](#)

[Return on Investment \(ROI\)](#)

[Impression Device](#)

[Google Grant](#)

[Seasonality](#)

[Breakdown by Age](#)

[Google Analytics 4](#)

[Back to Key Findings >](#)

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What is this metric?

Engagement here is defined as reactions, shares, and comments, so engagement rate is the sum of those actions divided by the number of impressions. It's important to consider when and why this metric might matter to your organization (and when it might not). Is your goal with a given campaign to delight patrons and generate social media chatter and conversation? If so, engagement rate is a great metric to monitor. Is your goal to drive more visitors to your website? If so, a lower engagement rate may not be of much concern. It's also important to remember the engagement rate benchmark for paid promotions will differ from your page's typical organic engagement rate.

0.34% Average across all clients	
GENRE	
PERF. ARTS	0.33%
EXHIBIT	0.40%
SIZE	
SMALL	0.27%
MEDIUM	0.32%
LARGE	0.34%
REGION	
NORTH	0.34%
SOUTH	0.34%
WEST	0.30%
MIDWEST	0.32%
CANADA	0.26%

Understanding the Data

What stands out?

A key finding here is the difference between performing arts and exhibit-based organizations. This discrepancy perhaps stems from exhibit-based organizations inherently representing the attendee experience more accurately.

Improve Your Results

Improve your engagement by creating “thumb-stopping” content—the kind that catches a user’s eye while they’re scrolling and compels them to react.



Fresh Inspiration is Just a Click Away

In a creative rut? Try the [Social Content Calendar for Arts Marketers](#) to help you create content that’s thumb-stopping, relevant, and thoughtful to connect with audiences and even drive revenue—90% of consumers buy from brands they follow on social!



What is this metric?

Multiple page views can be attributed to one user, as this metric is looking at views across an organization’s full website. This means that the “page view” metric gives us deeper insight into how would-be patrons are engaging with the full campaign experience, including their journey on your website. As a point of contrast, click-through rate may indicate strong initial interest but result in a quick bounce from the landing page.

3.1% Average across all clients	
GENRE	
PERF. ARTS	3.21%
EXHIBIT	2.77%
SIZE	
SMALL	3.15%
MEDIUM	2.84%
LARGE	3.93%
REGION	
NORTH	2.87%
SOUTH	2.96%
WEST	3.08%
MIDWEST	3.46%
CANADA	4.55%
CAMPAIGN OBJECTIVE	
DEVO/FUNDRAISING	4.13%
SUBS/MEMBERSHIPS	3.97%
TICKET SALES	3.61%
EDUCATION	1.13%

Understanding the Data

Data Insight

Development/fundraising campaigns drove a higher page view rate than the other campaign types, while education campaigns saw the lowest rates. This follows the progression of how we typically target, from most narrow audience (for a development/fundraising campaign) to most broad audience (for an education campaign). A more in-the-know audience, like those targeted in a fundraising campaign, is more likely to visit the website after seeing an ad.

While large organizations unsurprisingly have the highest page view rates, small organizations surprisingly rank above medium organizations! Since we're considering all page views across a website, larger organizations will naturally have higher rates since they have more pages to explore.

Improve Your Results

One of the best ways to get users to your website in the first place (and increase your page view rate!) is to create compelling content tailored to the specific audience—and that's something anyone can achieve, regardless of organization size. In fact, smaller organizations often have an edge here, as they tend to be more nimble when getting content created and approved.



What is this metric?

Multiple page views can be attributed to one user, as this metric is looking at views across an organization’s full website. This means that the “page view” metric gives us deeper insight into how would-be patrons are engaging with the full campaign experience, including their journey on your website. As a point of contrast, click-through rate may indicate strong initial interest but result in a quick bounce from the landing page.

4.72% Average across all clients	
GOOGLE CAMPAIGN TYPE	
DISPLAY	1.45%
DISCOVERY/DEMAND GEN	1.86%
YOUTUBE	2.06%
PAID SEARCH	102.89%
PMAX	2.29%
GENRE	
PERF. ARTS	4.62%
EXHIBIT	6.51%
SIZE	
SMALL	2.26%
MEDIUM	3.21%
LARGE	5.51%
REGION	
NORTH	4.27%
SOUTH	4.18%
WEST	7.04%
MIDWEST	4.99%
CANADA	3.12%

Understanding the Data

Data Insight

Page view rates on Google were higher than on Meta, despite the fact that the average purchase rate on Google is below that of Meta. People searching relevant terms are more likely to browse and view multiple pages, resulting in extremely high rates of page views attributed to search campaigns.

While performing arts organizations saw higher page view rates than exhibit-based organizations on Meta, the results are flipped here, with exhibit-based organizations driving a significantly higher average page view rate.

Note that multiple page views can be attributed to one user, as this metric is looking at views across an organization's full website.



What is this metric?

Purchase conversion rate looks at the number of purchases attributed to ads relative to the number of impressions served, making it a somewhat more democratic benchmark than cost per acquisition or ROI.

0.06%	
Average across all clients	
GENRE	
PERF. ARTS	0.06%
EXHIBIT	0.05%
SIZE	
SMALL	0.03%
MEDIUM	0.04%
LARGE	0.07%
REGION	
NORTH	0.06%
SOUTH	0.05%
WEST	0.06%
MIDWEST	0.05%
CANADA	0.05%
CAMPAIGN OBJECTIVE	
DEVO/FUNDRAISING	0.06%
SUBS/MEMBERSHIPS	0.08%
TICKET SALES	0.07%
EDUCATION	0.01%

Understanding the Data

Data Insight

We're not surprised to see performing arts organizations drive higher purchase conversion rates than exhibit-based organizations, where people tend to purchase in person rather than online.

What stands out?

While subscription/membership campaigns have the highest average rate—it's definitely worthwhile to invest in this campaign objective as an additional touchpoint to drive sales—note that we would expect a more qualified audience like subscriber prospects to drive a stronger purchase rate.

Remember that campaign-level purchase conversion rates can fluctuate significantly relative to how much you are spending on acquisition vs. those more bottom-of-funnel audiences!

Improve Your Results

Segmented messaging matched to a targeted audience can improve purchase rates.



What is this metric?

Purchase conversion rate looks at the number of purchases attributed to ads relative to the number of impressions served, making it a somewhat more democratic benchmark than cost per acquisition or ROI.

0.05% Average across all clients	
GOOGLE CAMPAIGN TYPE	
DISPLAY	0.006%
DISCOVERY/DEMAND GEN	0.005%
YOUTUBE	0.010%
PAID SEARCH	1.860%
PMAX	0.020%
GENRE	
PERF. ARTS	0.04%
EXHIBIT	0.05%
SIZE	
SMALL	0.02%
MEDIUM	0.03%
LARGE	0.08%
REGION	
NORTH	0.07%
SOUTH	0.04%
WEST	0.07%
MIDWEST	0.05%
CANADA	0.03%

Understanding the Data

What stands out?

Purchase conversion rates on Google were lower than those on Meta for small and medium-sized organizations. However, large organizations did not reflect the same trend—the average purchase rate on Google for large organizations was above that on Meta (0.08% vs. 0.07%).

Data Insight

Just as with page view rate, purchase rate also saw a reversal of the results for performing arts versus exhibit-based organizations, with exhibit-based organizations driving higher purchase rates on Google. Perhaps exhibit-based organizations are only allocating budget to Google for bigger exhibitions and events (that are more likely to be ticketed). With some exceptions, Google placements are less dependent on storytelling and dynamic visuals than Meta, putting exhibit-based organizations at less of a disadvantage here.

Improve Your Results

Avoid comparing the conversion rates on your Meta and Google campaigns. With responsive and dynamic content meant to increase impressions across Google campaign types, Google itself has been encouraging advertisers to put less stock in conversion rate as a metric—if your reach is larger and your conversions are up, does it matter if the rate is down?

ALL CAMPAIGNS

2.39%

Average across all clients

GENRE	
PERF. ARTS	2.36%
EXHIBIT	2.41%
SIZE	
SMALL	2.45%
MEDIUM	2.15%
LARGE	2.31%
REGION	
NORTH	2.44%
SOUTH	2.24%
WEST	2.15%
MIDWEST	2.55%
CANADA	2.10%
CAMPAIGN OBJECTIVE	
DEVO/FUNDRAISING	2.40%
SUBS/MEMBERSHIPS	1.88%
TICKET SALES	2.50%
EDUCATION	0.88%



Understanding the Data

Data Insight

Context is key in interpreting any results, and this is a perfect illustration of that. Subscription/membership campaigns have a lower CTR compared to other campaign objectives, yet their page view rate is among the highest of the campaign types. Looking at CTR alone, a subscription/membership campaign might not seem especially effective—but it is! For those who land on an organization’s website after seeing a subscription/membership ad, they’re going to do a lot of exploring to discover the programming and the benefits if they join, driving up the page view rate. This campaign objective also drove the strongest average purchase conversion rate.

Improve Your Results

Improve CTR by adding a call-to-action button.



To button or not to button—that is the question so many organizations ask.

Discover the benefits of including [call-to-action buttons](#) in your Meta ads with real-world examples from fellow arts organizations.

ALL CAMPAIGNS

1.64%

Average across all clients

GOOGLE CAMPAIGN TYPE

DISPLAY	0.92%
DISCOVERY/DEMAND GEN	1.73%
YOUTUBE	1.16%
PAID SEARCH	18.77%
PMAX	1.45%

GENRE

PERF. ARTS	1.61%
EXHIBIT	2.11%

SIZE

SMALL	0.97%
MEDIUM	1.47%
LARGE	1.75%

REGION

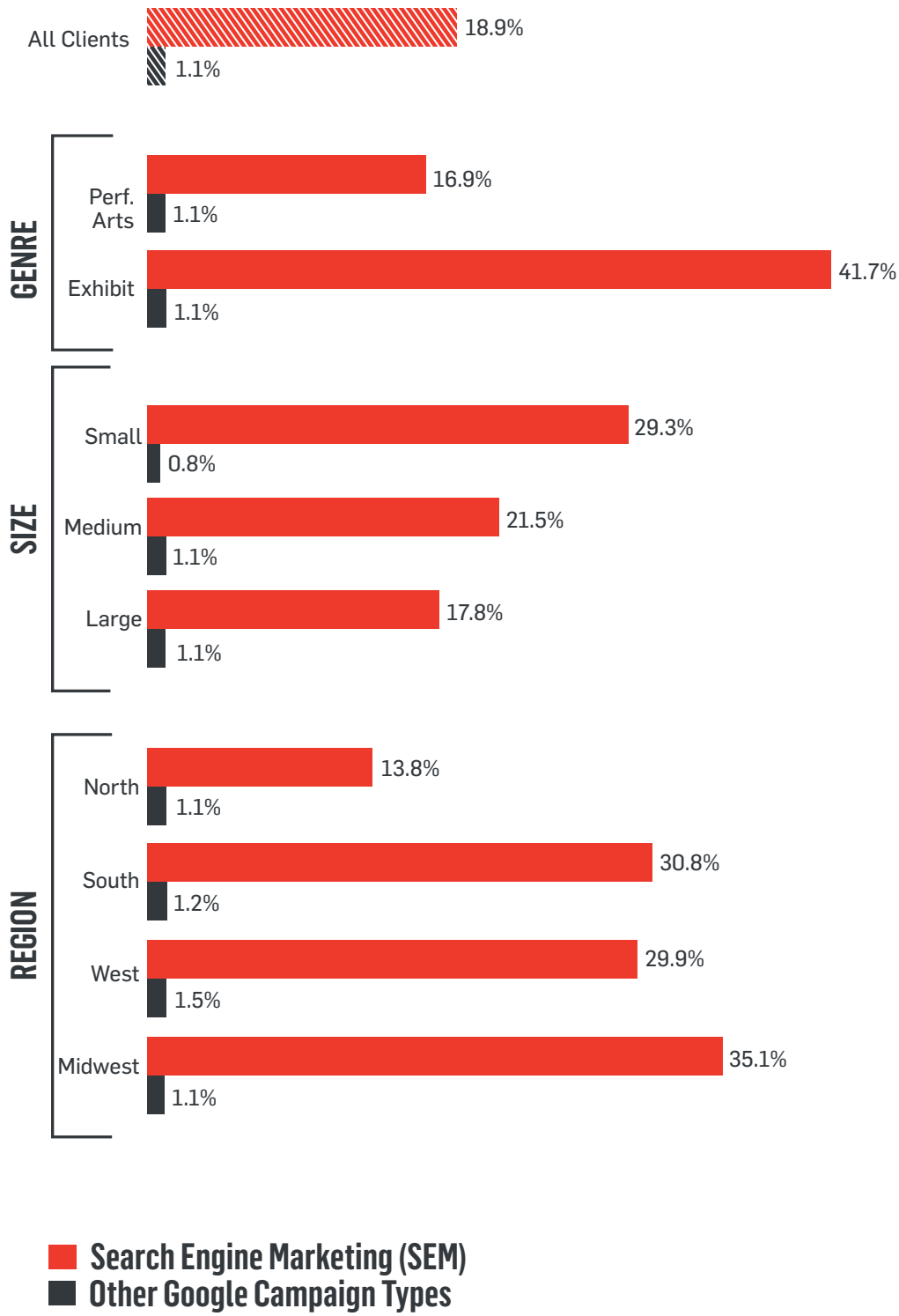
NORTH	1.64%
SOUTH	1.66%
WEST	2.03%
MIDWEST	1.65%



CLICK-THROUGH RATE



SEM VS. OTHER GOOGLE CAMPAIGN TYPES



Understanding the Data

Data Insights

We broke CTR down by paid search and then the rest of the Google campaign types, since paid search is inherently click-based. Average CTR is higher on Meta than on Google, but when you look at just paid search, the results far surpass those on Meta because search is driven by user intent.

On Meta, small organizations had the highest average CTR, and that holds true here when looking at CTR for paid search. Perhaps small organizations are focusing on more bottom-of-funnel targets for maximum efficiency because of their smaller budgets. Larger organizations might be aiming for more upper-funnel traffic, which would inherently drive down their CTR—but help them achieve acquisition goals. This is why it's crucial to interpret these benchmark results in their full context and also within the context of your own organization's goals.

What stands out?

Exhibit-based organizations saw an incredibly high CTR on paid search—much higher than performing arts organizations! Our theory is that exhibit-based organizations are running more bottom-of-funnel campaigns and seeing less competition.

Improve Your Results

Solely aiming for a high CTR might hinder your goals if you're aiming for acquisition, especially on Google platforms—make sure your expectations are aligned with what you're hoping to achieve in a campaign.



What is this metric?

Cost per Click (CPC) is typically how we are bidding on Google platforms (as opposed to cost per impression models used on Meta and other social platforms).

\$0.28
Average across all clients

GOOGLE CAMPAIGN TYPE	
DISPLAY	\$0.22
DISCOVERY/DEMAND GEN	\$0.15
YOUTUBE	\$0.31
PAID SEARCH	\$0.38
PMAX	\$0.15
GENRE	
PERF. ARTS	\$0.29
EXHIBIT	\$0.24
SIZE	
SMALL	\$0.30
MEDIUM	\$0.30
LARGE	\$0.27

REGION	
NORTH	\$0.27
SOUTH	\$0.31
WEST	\$0.31
MIDWEST	\$0.26
CANADA	\$0.26
TIMEFRAME	
Q1	\$0.27
Q2	\$0.29
Q3	\$0.28
Q4	\$0.27

Understanding the Data

Data Insight

There isn't much variation here across any of the breakdowns, except where Google campaign type is concerned—PMax and Discovery/Demand Gen campaigns are far more cost-effective than other campaign types. Also notable is the difference between performing arts organizations and exhibit-based organizations, with the CPC lower for exhibit-based by five cents.



What is this metric?

CPM stands for cost per mille, or cost per thousand impressions—it's the main way the cost of advertising is calculated on social platforms, Meta included. The broader the audience, the less expensive CPM tends to be, so acquisition audiences are naturally going to be less expensive than highly qualified users when it comes to impressions. That's why education and ticket sales campaigns have lower CPMs than subscription/membership and development/fundraising campaigns, which tend to target more bottom-of-funnel audiences.

\$8.75 Average across all clients	
GENRE	
PERF. ARTS	\$9.38
EXHIBIT	\$7.31
SIZE	
SMALL	\$10.75
MEDIUM	\$9.15
LARGE	\$8.67
REGION	
NORTH	\$8.39
SOUTH	\$10.11
WEST	\$9.04
MIDWEST	\$8.63
CANADA	\$8.41

TIMEFRAME	
Q1	\$8.84
Q2	\$9.19
Q3	\$8.50
Q4	\$8.53
CAMPAIGN OBJECTIVE	
DEVO/FUNDRAISING	\$11.01
SUBS/MEMBERSHIPS	\$12.56
TICKET SALES	\$9.45
EDUCATION	\$4.07

Understanding the Data

What stands out?

It's surprising that Q4 saw the second-lowest CPM, when that time of year is typically known for more expensive advertising. The most expensive time to advertise across all campaigns was actually Q2.

Improve Your Results

We're seeing an opportunity in Q3 to invest even more strongly, perhaps timed around on-sale dates and season openers.

Remember: High CPM is worth it when the audiences being reached are generating revenue!



COST PER MILLE

What is this metric?

CPM stands for cost per mille, or cost per thousand impressions—it's the main way the cost of advertising is calculated on social platforms, but is more of a reference metric for Google, which charges on a cost per click model.

\$4.53
Average across all clients

GOOGLE CAMPAIGN TYPE

DISPLAY	\$2.04
DISCOVERY/DEMAND GEN	\$2.58
YOUTUBE	\$3.55
PAID SEARCH	\$71.88
PMAX	\$2.20

GENRE

PERF. ARTS	\$4.59
EXHIBIT	\$4.80

SIZE

SMALL	\$2.92
MEDIUM	\$4.44
LARGE	\$4.74

REGION

NORTH	\$4.47
SOUTH	\$5.23
WEST	\$6.34
MIDWEST	\$4.26
CANADA	\$2.50

TIMEFRAME

Q1	\$3.87
Q2	\$4.80
Q3	\$4.89
Q4	\$4.56

Understanding the Data

What stands out?

The average CPM on Google is far lower than the average CPM on Meta, except where paid search is concerned (this is also by far the most bottom-of-funnel, highly intent-driven type of audience). This perhaps speaks to Google placements being somewhat less qualified (Google has a known issue with “made for advertising” sites’ [fraudulent traffic](#)).

Unlike on Meta, where Q3 had the lowest CPM, on Google the lowest CPM was in Q1—and Q3 was actually highest. As a reminder, CPM is more of a reference metric for Google, which charges on a cost per click model.



What is this metric?

Note that a video view on Meta is 3 seconds, and video view rate is video views divided by impressions.

9.75% Average across all clients	
GENRE	
PERF. ARTS	9.16%
EXHIBIT	5.85%
SIZE	
SMALL	9.21%
MEDIUM	12.20%
LARGE	8.56%
REGION	
NORTH	10.40%
SOUTH	9.75%
WEST	9.14%
MIDWEST	7.55%
CANADA	10.52%
CAMPAIGN OBJECTIVE	
DEVO/FUNDRAISING	11.70%
SUBS/MEMBERSHIPS	8.49%
TICKET SALES	8.78%
EDUCATION	6.20%

Understanding the Data

Data Insight

Video is an excellent way to tell a story about the impact of your organization with a fundraising message, so we recommend leaning into this format for development/fundraising campaigns. Keep in mind the trend of more qualified audiences driving better results, which helps explain the very high rate for development/fundraising campaigns.

What stands out?

Performing arts organizations saw significantly higher video view rates than exhibit-based organizations. Performing arts content is often more dynamic when it comes to video, given the nature of the programming.

It's notable that large organizations, who likely have larger budgets to produce videos, don't have higher video view rates.

Improve Your Results

The key is to create content that's engaging and grabs attention (especially given that almost half the [value of a video campaign](#) is delivered in the first three seconds!), which doesn't necessarily require a large spend.



What is this metric?

A video view on Google is a bit less straightforward than on Meta. For skippable in-stream ads, a video view is at least 30 seconds of an ad that's more than 30 seconds long or until the end of the ad if it's less than 30 seconds. For in-feed video ads, a view is counted when someone clicks the ad and the video starts to play.

0.88% Average across all clients	
GENRE	
PERF. ARTS	0.88%
EXHIBIT	0.71%
SIZE	
SMALL	0.61%
MEDIUM	0.91%
LARGE	0.87%
REGION	
NORTH	0.88%
SOUTH	0.60%
WEST	1.08%
MIDWEST	0.91%

Understanding the Data

Data Insight

As on Meta, performing arts organizations saw higher video view rates than exhibit-based organizations. Performing arts videos are often more dynamic, given the nature of the programming.

Also aligned with Meta results: medium-sized organizations saw the strongest video view rates. It's again notable that large organizations, who likely have larger budgets to produce videos, don't have higher video view rates.



What is this metric?

Video hold rate is ThruPlay divided by impressions. The ThruPlay metric shows videos viewed to completion or at least 15 seconds. Hold rates contribute to understanding the overall engagement and interest levels of users. A high hold rate indicates that users are genuinely interested in the content and are willing to watch a significant portion of the video. In contrast, a low hold rate may suggest that the video fails to maintain user attention after the initial hook.

2.31% Average across all clients	
GENRE	
PERF. ARTS	2.25%
EXHIBIT	1.65%
SIZE	
SMALL	2.46%
MEDIUM	2.60%
LARGE	2.15%
REGION	
NORTH	2.39%
SOUTH	2.21%
WEST	2.70%
MIDWEST	1.71%
CANADA	2.80%
CAMPAIGN OBJECTIVE	
DEVO/FUNDRAISING	2.86%
SUBS/MEMBERSHIPS	2.24%
TICKET SALES	2.11%
EDUCATION	1.51%

Understanding the Data

Data Insight

We saw very similar trends comparing video view rate and video hold rate. Most striking are that performing arts videos still see higher rates and large organizations continue to have the lowest rate.

<h1 style="margin: 0;">\$78,685</h1> <p style="margin: 0;">Annual average across all clients</p>	
GENRE	
PERF. ARTS	\$82K
EXHIBIT	\$64K
SIZE	
SMALL	\$22K
MEDIUM	\$33K
LARGE	\$134K
REGION	
NORTH	\$83K
SOUTH	\$83K
WEST	\$60K
MIDWEST	\$84K
CANADA	\$99K
TIMEFRAME	
Q1	\$4K
Q2	\$23K
Q3	\$19K
Q4	\$28K
CAMPAIGN OBJECTIVE	
DEVO/FUNDRAISING	\$4K
SUBS/MEMBERSHIPS	\$8K
TICKET SALES	\$23K
EDUCATION	\$18K

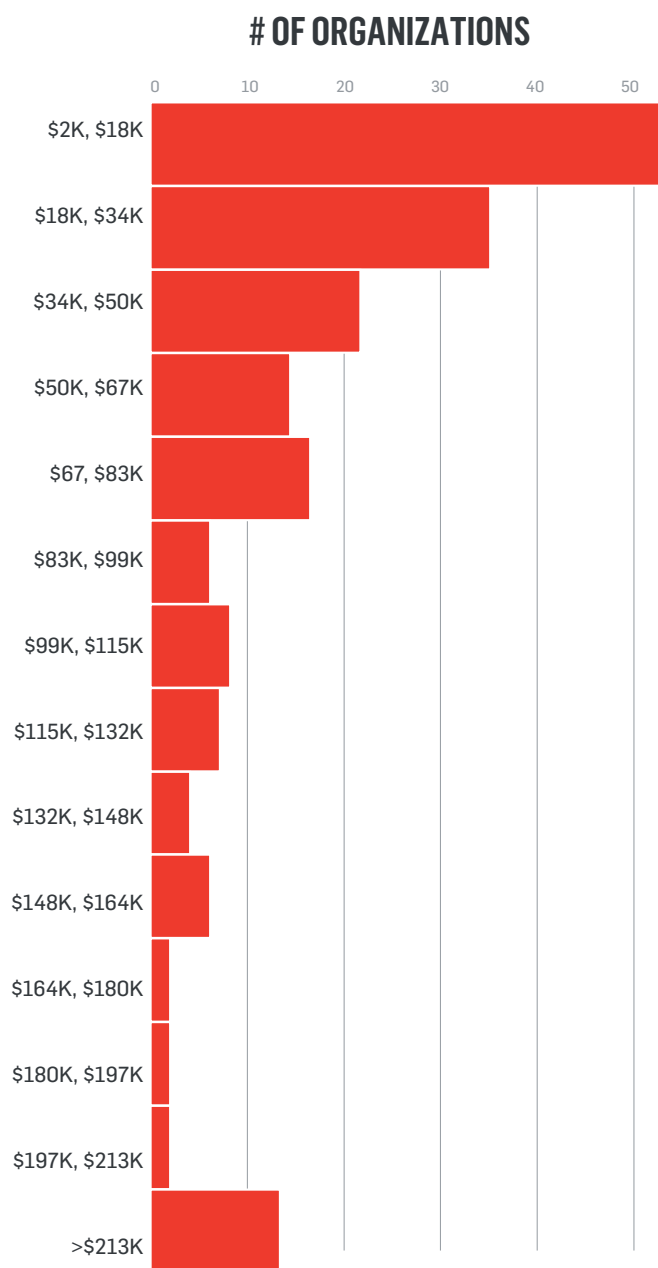


What is this metric?

Organizational budget size and digital investment vary across CI clients. The average can't fully capture this variability. The chart below represents the distribution of annual Meta investment.

Annual Meta Spend Distribution

Median Annual Spend = \$41K



Understanding the Data

Data Insight

These numbers represent total spend across all campaigns per organization in 2023. Performing arts organizations are investing in Meta on average far more than exhibit-based organizations.

Medium-sized organizations are investing proportionally less than small and large organizations—there's a small difference in media spend between small and medium, but a very large one between medium and large organizations.

Organizations are also investing far less during Q3—many are dark in the summer months, but this is also a key time for on-sales and new season kickoffs.

These are all opportunities for greater media investment.

Improve Your Results

Consider where you fall in these categories and if your digital spend could use a deeper investment. Note, however, that these are benchmarks to see how your organization compares and not necessarily our recommendations for what you should be spending—these spends don't inherently indicate campaign success.

\$45,271

Annual average across all clients

GENRE	
PERF. ARTS	\$50K
EXHIBIT	\$39K
SIZE	
SMALL	\$10K
MEDIUM	\$32K
LARGE	\$77K
REGION	
NORTH	\$56K
SOUTH	\$35K
WEST	\$36K
MIDWEST	\$42K
CANADA	\$29K
TIMEFRAME	
Q1	\$12K
Q2	\$14k
Q3	\$13K
Q4	\$18K

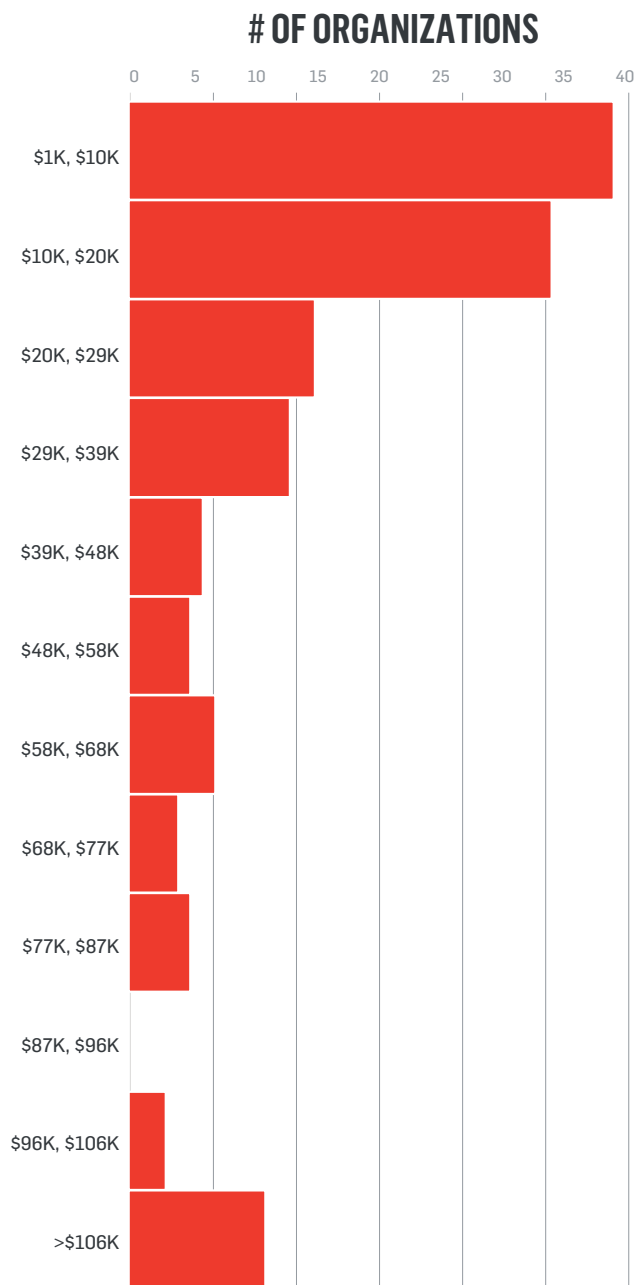


What is this metric?

Organizational budget size and digital investment vary across CI clients. The average can't fully capture this variability. The chart below represents the distribution of annual Meta investment.

Annual Google Spend Distribution

Median Annual Spend = \$19K



Understanding the Data

Data Insight

These numbers represent total spend across all campaigns per organization in 2023. The average and median spends on Google are much lower than on Meta. While Meta has historically seen stronger results, Google has some more recent offerings using machine learning that are proving incredibly successful, so organizations might want to consider investing more in Google.

Note that organizations have historically been able to rely on their Grants to offset some or all of their search spends, though there is considerable added value in true paid search. Many organizations still rely on Google Grant accounts to cover most upper- and mid-funnel search targeting that might otherwise be a considerable added cost.

While performing arts organizations are spending more than exhibit-based organizations, there's a smaller gap between the two here than on Meta, where the difference between the two average spends is close to \$20k.

Just as on Meta, there's a substantial gap between small/medium and large organizations. Here, small organizations are investing even less than they are on Meta.

Improve Your Results

Even if you don't have the ability to add media dollars to Google, consider shifting which campaign types you focus your budget on.

What is this metric?

Here we're looking at any transaction that can be made on an organization's website within any campaign objective. Keep in mind that CPA is very dependent on the goal of the campaign—we would expect to have to spend more to acquire a fixed 7-show package subscription or summer camp registration than a single ticket purchase—so these benchmarks should be viewed with that context in mind.

\$14.97 Average across all clients	
GENRE	
PERF. ARTS	\$16.66
EXHIBIT	\$16.08
SIZE	
SMALL	\$31.29
MEDIUM	\$22.28
LARGE	\$12.44
REGION	
NORTH	\$12.93
SOUTH	\$19.90
WEST	\$16.03
MIDWEST	\$16.69
CANADA	\$15.83

Understanding the Data

Data Insight

The larger an organization, typically the more brand awareness it has, which leads to a lower CPA. A larger organization will also have more events/options on sale at any given time, which also contributes to a lower CPA. Note that performing arts and exhibit-based organizations also have roughly the same average CPA, despite the fact that exhibit-based organizations tend to do less selling online. This illustrates the difference between CPA and something like ROI (return on investment), where exhibit-based organizations see much lower results.

For this metric, the significantly higher efficiency from large organizations brings down the overall average quite a bit. If you are using these numbers to benchmark, we strongly recommend doing so with your org size in mind.

ALL CAMPAIGNS

What is this metric?

Here we're looking at any transaction that can be made on an organization's website within any campaign objective. Keep in mind that CPA is very dependent on the goal of the campaign—we would expect to have to spend more to acquire a fixed 7-show package subscription or summer camp registration than a single ticket purchase—so these benchmarks should be viewed with that context in mind.

\$10.01 Average across all clients	
GOOGLE CAMPAIGN TYPE	
DISPLAY	\$34.37
DISCOVERY/DEMAND GEN	\$48.01
YOUTUBE	\$37.13
PAID SEARCH	\$3.86
PMAX	\$14.71
GENRE	
PERF. ARTS	\$10.05
EXHIBIT	\$8.81
SIZE	
SMALL	\$19.96
MEDIUM	\$17.68
LARGE	\$5.62
REGION	
NORTH	\$6.26
SOUTH	\$15.11
WEST	\$9.06
MIDWEST	\$8.39
CANADA	\$8.16



COST PER ACQUISITION

Understanding the Data

Data Insight

Exhibit-based organizations continue to see strong performance on Google, with their average CPA lower than that of performing arts organizations. Large organizations also continue to drive especially excellent results on Google—the gap between small/medium and large organizations is significant.

The lower CPAs on Google indicate paid search's efficiency when it comes to driving purchases, as search is driven by user intent. The particularly low CPAs on Google for large organizations may also indicate Google's machine-learning strengths in maximizing overall conversions (even when performance-specific, in-depth storytelling may be more challenging on this platform than on Meta).

TICKET SALES CAMPAIGNS

\$13.38

Average across all clients

GENRE	
PERF. ARTS	\$15.36
EXHIBIT	\$15.18
SIZE	
SMALL	\$29.93
MEDIUM	\$19.44
LARGE	\$11.10
REGION	
NORTH	\$10.74
SOUTH	\$19.30
WEST	\$14.51
MIDWEST	\$16.07



COST PER ACQUISITION

Understanding the Data

Data Insight

Unlike the other CPA results, which look across all campaigns, these results are specifically looking at campaigns designed to drive ticket sales. This explains why exhibit-based organizations actually saw a lower CPA than performing arts organizations even though they tend not to sell their entry tickets online—here, we're only looking at campaigns where the entry tickets were on sale via the website.

SUBSCRIPTION/MEMBERSHIP CAMPAIGNS

\$16.80

Average across all clients

GENRE	
PERF. ARTS	\$18.41
EXHIBIT	\$9.41
SIZE	
SMALL	\$63.21
MEDIUM	\$21.58
LARGE	\$13.80
REGION	
NORTH	\$14.49
SOUTH	\$26.57
WEST	\$13.61
MIDWEST	\$20.50



COST PER ACQUISITION

Understanding the Data

Data Insight

This CPA breakdown is only looking at campaigns designed to drive subscriptions and memberships (although results reflect all purchases across an organization's website, not just subscription/membership purchases). These results for the genre breakdown are effectively scaled to the cost of the purchase itself, given that subscriptions for performing arts organizations tend to be more expensive, while museum memberships are generally lower cost.

Improve Your Results

Target highly qualified audiences for a lower CPA. For example, for a subscription/membership campaign, multi-ticket buyers make a great prospect pool.



What is this metric?

This metric is looking at all page views across an organization's website, and these views are not unique—one visitor can be represented by many page views. What's especially notable about this metric is how little variation there is no matter how you cut the data. One significant difference is by organization size: small- and medium-sized organizations share the same cost per page view, while large organizations have a lower cost on average.

\$0.28 Average across all clients	
GENRE	
PERF. ARTS	\$0.29
EXHIBIT	\$0.27
SIZE	
SMALL	\$0.39
MEDIUM	\$0.39
LARGE	\$0.25
REGION	
NORTH	\$0.28
SOUTH	\$0.37
WEST	\$0.32
MIDWEST	\$0.27



What is this metric?

This metric is looking at all page views across an organization's website, and these views are not unique—one visitor can be represented by many page views. There isn't much variation here—while exhibit-based organizations and large organizations still see top metrics as compared to their counterparts within their respective breakdowns, the difference is just a few cents.

\$0.10 Average across all clients	
GOOGLE CAMPAIGN TYPE	
DISPLAY	\$0.014
DISCOVERY/DEMAND GEN	\$0.14
YOUTUBE	\$0.17
PAID SEARCH	\$0.07
PMAX	\$0.10
GENRE	
PERF. ARTS	\$0.10
EXHIBIT	\$0.07
SIZE	
SMALL	\$0.13
MEDIUM	\$0.14
LARGE	\$0.09
REGION	
NORTH	\$0.10
SOUTH	\$0.13
WEST	\$0.09
MIDWEST	\$0.09
CANADA	\$0.08

Return on Investment (ROI)

What is this metric?

ROI is a tricky metric to benchmark because it's so dependent on average order value (AOV)—the average amount a customer spends making an order on your website—and therefore revenue, which can greatly vary depending on variables like programming price and number of items purchased. Like CPA or purchase conversion rate, overall ROI is also significantly impacted by how much is being spent towards acquisition targeting vs. more bottom-of-funnel targeting in any given campaign.

For Example:

Campaigns for the same play could drive the same number of orders at two different theatres—and therefore perform in an equally efficient manner—and yet one could drive a far higher ROI than the other if ticket prices are significantly higher.

Or maybe patrons at that theatre tend to prefer going in groups of three or four rather than pairs, driving up the average order value.

Or perhaps that theatre offers an add-on option for snacks and merchandise.

Something like a subscription or summer camp registration is inherently going to have a higher order value than a single ticket.

Methodology Note

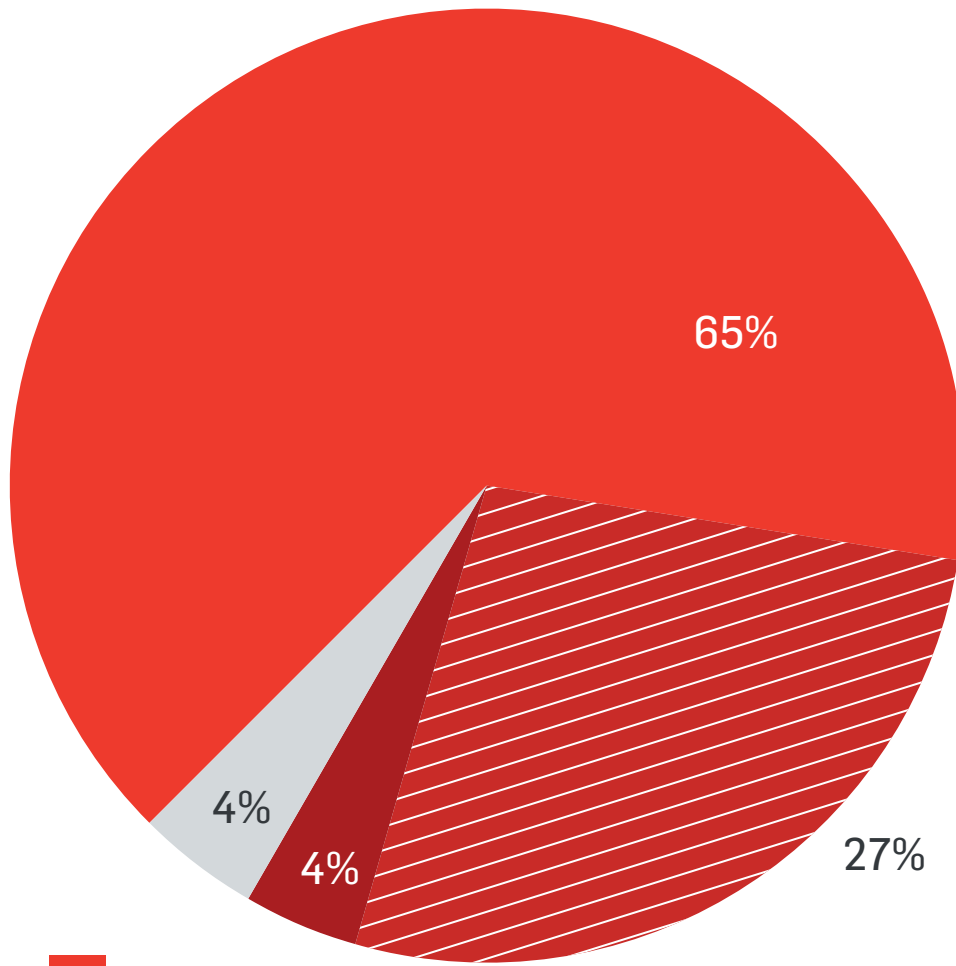
You can see how ROI doesn't necessarily paint a full picture of campaign performance!





For all of the reasons above, our ROI results were so varied and all over the map that we have opted against including channel-level aggregate ROI data in the Benchmarks section. You can see ROI averages by Audience, Campaign Type, Campaign Objective, and Content in subsequent sections and in the Appendix.

Improve Your ROI Results

A sky-high ROI on Meta doesn't necessarily mean great success—in fact, it often indicates under-investment in the campaign. Take an especially high ROI as a sign that perhaps a campaign could use added budget.

Aggregate Google ROIs are generally higher than Meta ROIs because of the efficiency of paid search when it comes to driving purchases, since it's driven by user intent. Since search is often a user's final touchpoint before purchasing, it's critical to ensure that your organization is at the top of the SERP (Search Engine Results Page) at this time— not a ticket reseller.



-  iPhone
-  Android Smartphone
-  Desktop
-  iPad



IMPRESSION DEVICE

Understanding the Data

Data Insight

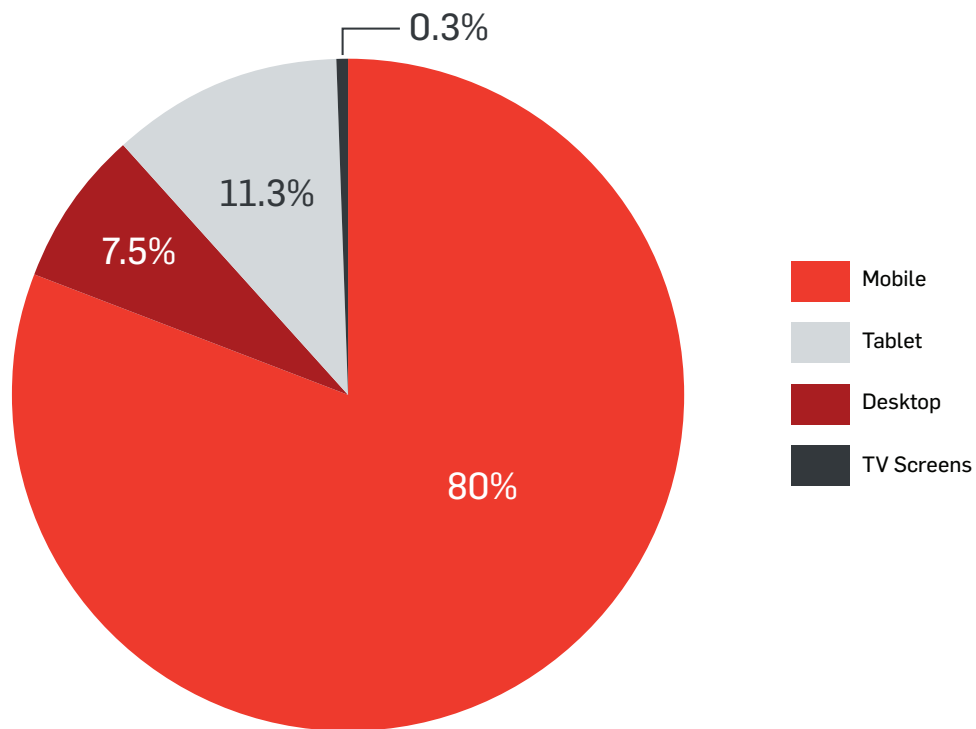
As expected, mobile makes up the largest percentage of impressions across Meta platforms (Facebook and Instagram), with iPhone coming in far ahead of Android Smartphone.

Improve Your Results

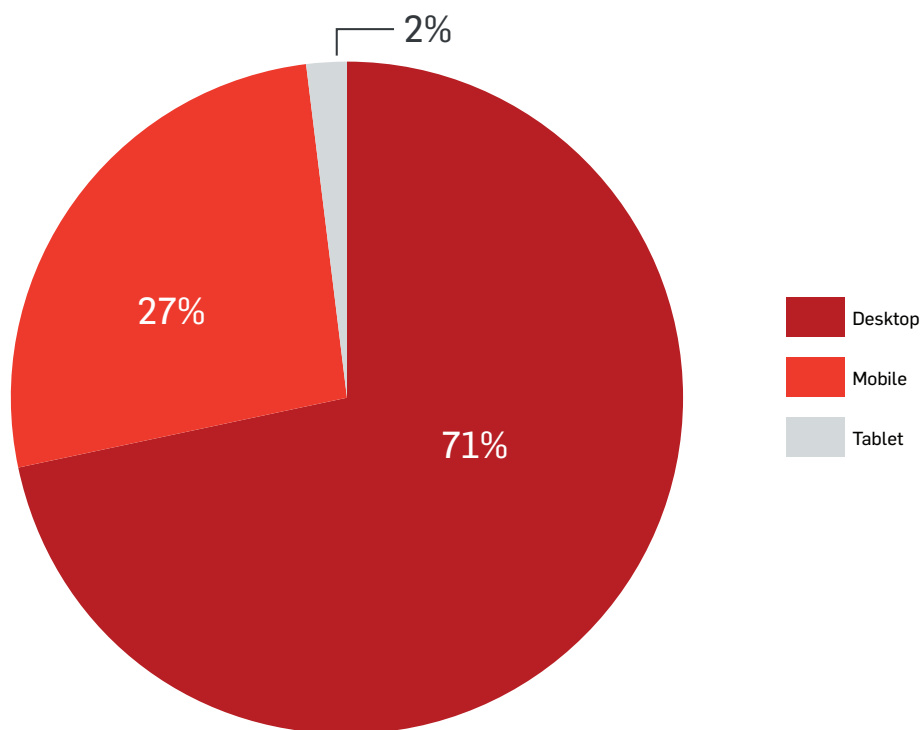
As always, we recommend designing content and websites to be mobile first, even if audiences ultimately decide to purchase on desktop—they are overwhelmingly viewing your content and visiting your website on mobile devices.



Paid Search



Google Grant



Understanding the Data

Data Insight

As expected, mobile makes up the largest percentage of impressions by far on paid. Note that Google Grant accounts are far more weighted toward desktop computers—their ability to serve on mobile is limited. This is another good reason to invest in paid search to supplement any Google Grant search efforts you may already be running.

What is this Google campaign type?

The Google Grant program gives up to \$10,000 per month for search ads to non-profits. The search ads then appear the same as any other search ads, with the stipulation that Grants have more restrictions than a regular paid search campaign would. For example, Grants must maintain certain quality standards and primarily serve on desktop, so the focus is on driving the best traffic rather than just spending through the money. This is evident in the average monthly spend across all of the Google Grants that we manage—it's well under the allotted \$10,000 per month, but since spend isn't a crucial KPI for the Grant, this isn't of concern.

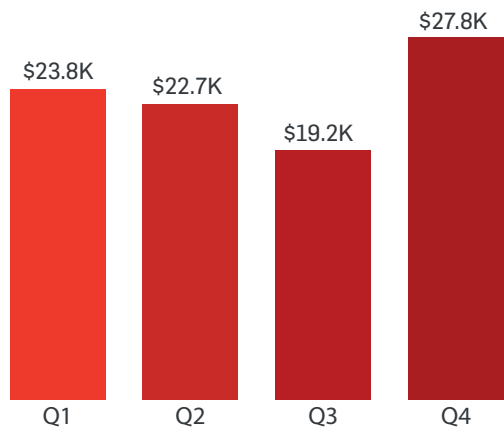
17.94%
CTR

\$5,043
Monthly Spend

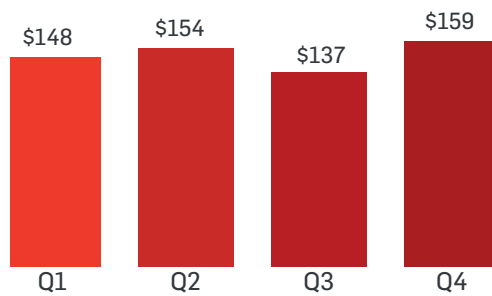


SEASONALITY

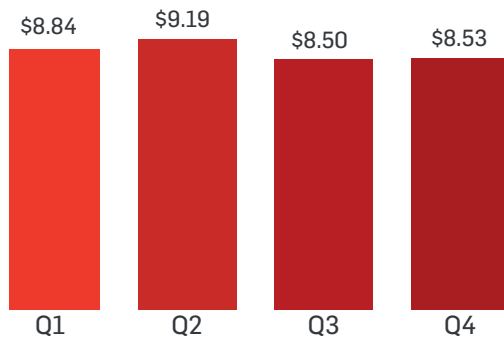
Spend



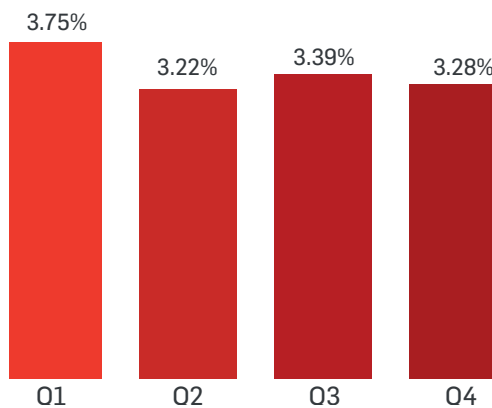
Avg Order Value



CPM

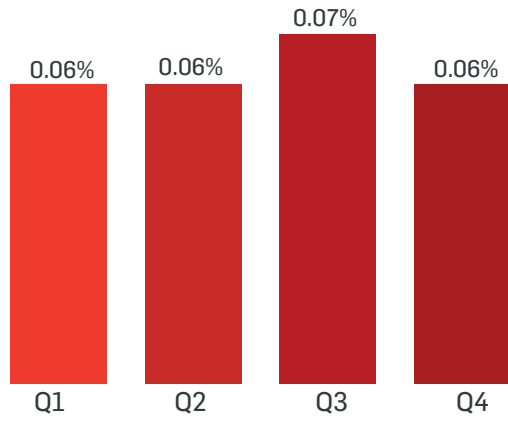


Page View Rate

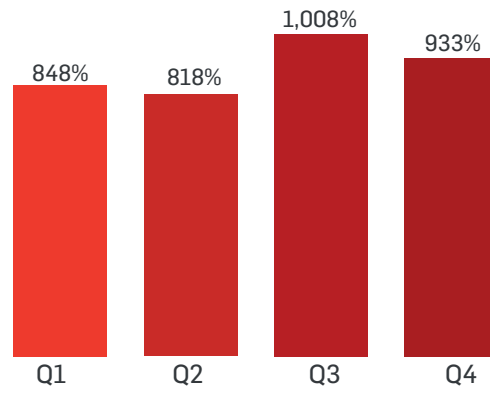




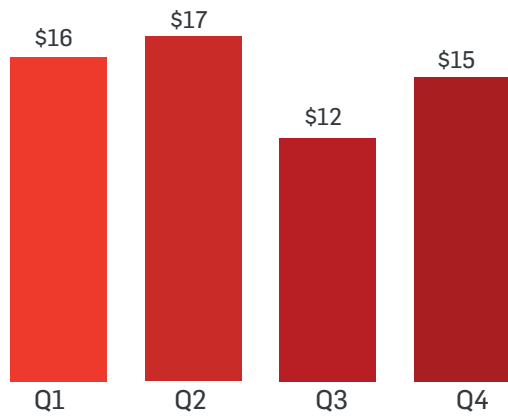
Purchase Rate



ROI



CPA



Understanding the Data

What stands out?

The big takeaway when looking at results across each quarter is that Q3 (July - September) is being underutilized. Many of the major metrics, such as purchase rate, ROI, and CPA, saw the strongest results during Q3, and yet those months also saw the lowest average media spend. The average CPM was also lowest during Q3, so it's an efficient time to be spending.

Improve Your Results

If it's relevant to your season and schedule, consider investing more in advertising during this quarter, perhaps focusing on ticket on-sale or beginning-of-season campaigns.



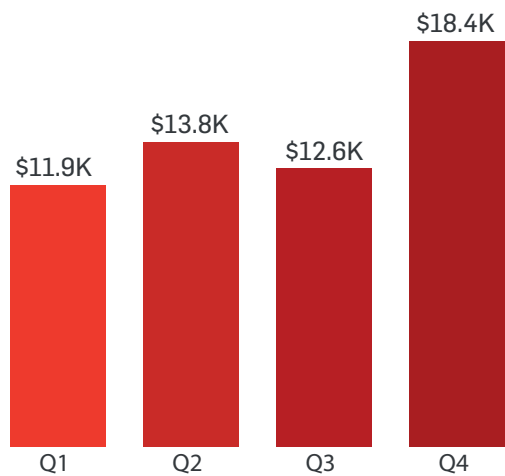
Crafting the Perfect Digital Holiday Campaign

If you run winter holiday programming, perhaps [try a "Christmas in July" campaign](#) if your tickets will be on sale then.

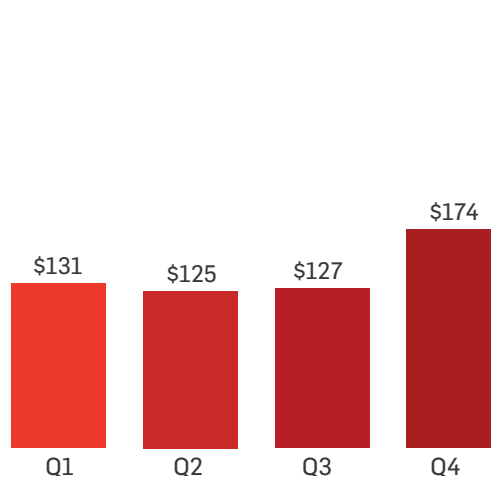


SEASONALITY

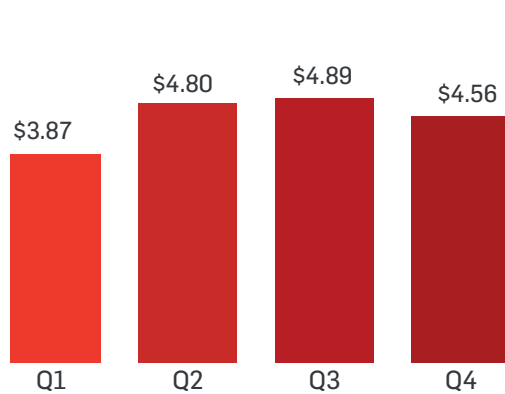
Spend



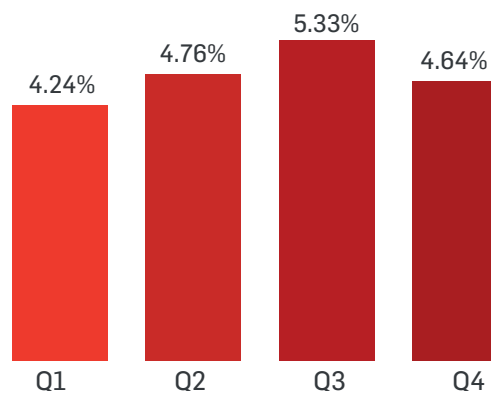
Avg Order Value



CPM

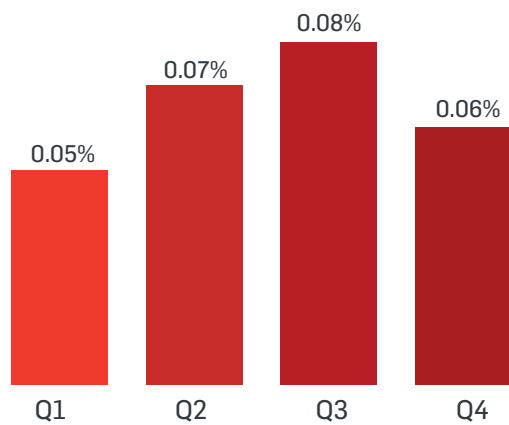


Page View Rate

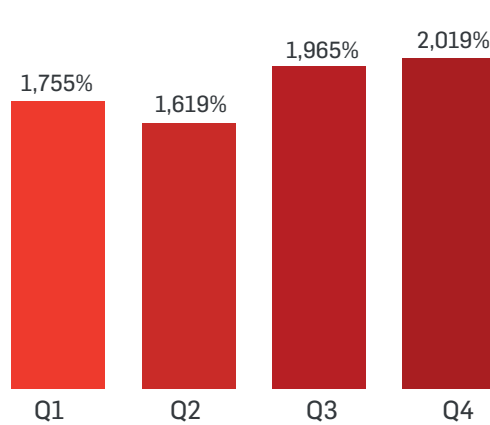




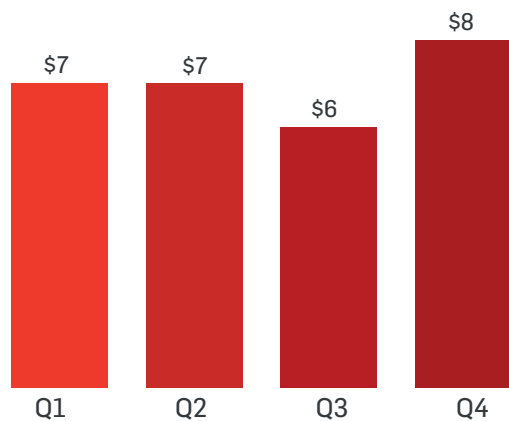
Purchase Rate



ROI



CPA



Understanding the Data

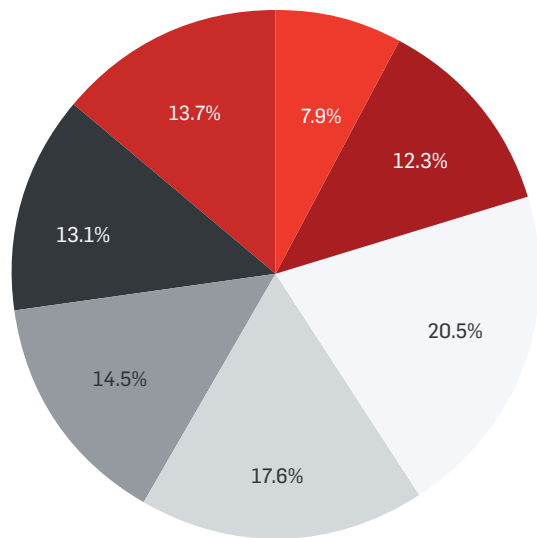
What stands out?

These results reinforce what we saw on Meta, which is that Q3 (July - September) is being underutilized. It has the highest page view and purchase conversion rate of any quarter, as well as the lowest CPA, but Q3 only has the second highest average spend. Another reason to add Q3 campaigns to your strategy if it makes sense for your season!

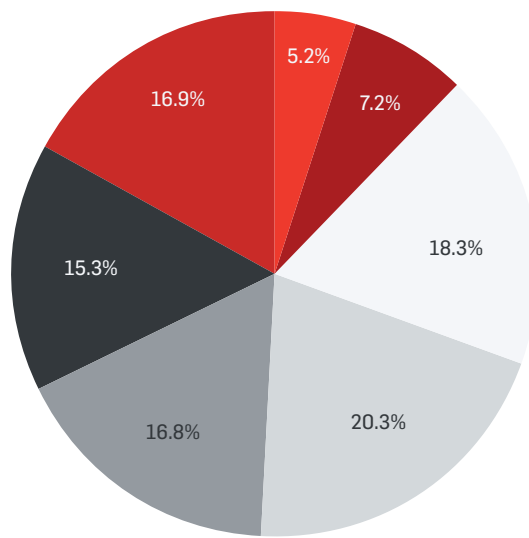


BREAKDOWN BY AGE

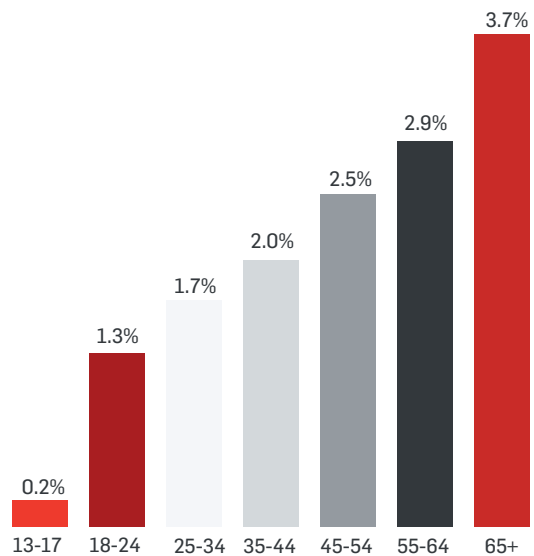
Reach



Impressions



CTR



Understanding the Data

Data Insight

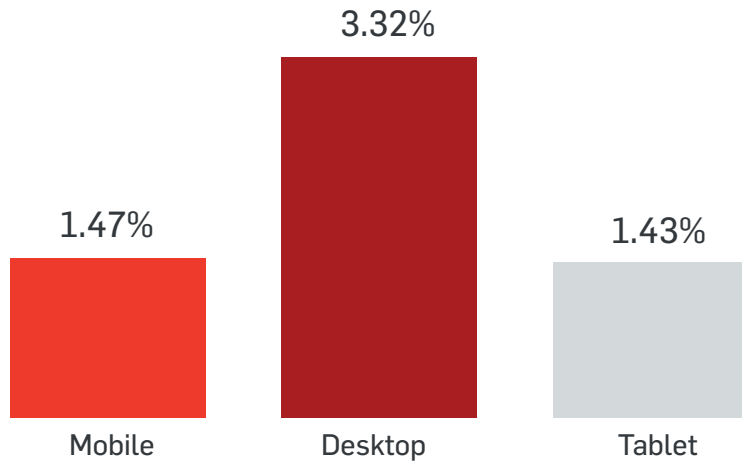
We're often asked if certain demographics are actually on Meta these days, so we looked at who our ads are serving to, broken down by age. Looking at both reach and impressions, there's a fairly even distribution across each age bucket. Those ages 24 and under represent over 20% of the total by reach, and the largest group by reach is ages 25-44. There is truly no underrepresented age group. CTR increases corresponding with age at a steady rate. One hypothesis is that younger users are trained by platforms like TikTok towards on-platform engagement as opposed to clicking out of the platform experience. They may also simply be more savvy internet users who are more inclined to independently search to follow up on what they've seen, rather than clicking an ad.

Improve Your Results

Don't think of Meta as a platform for certain demographics only—all ages are present and active. Remember that Meta encompasses both Facebook and Instagram, and we are most often allowing the algorithm to serve dynamically across the two based on where users are.

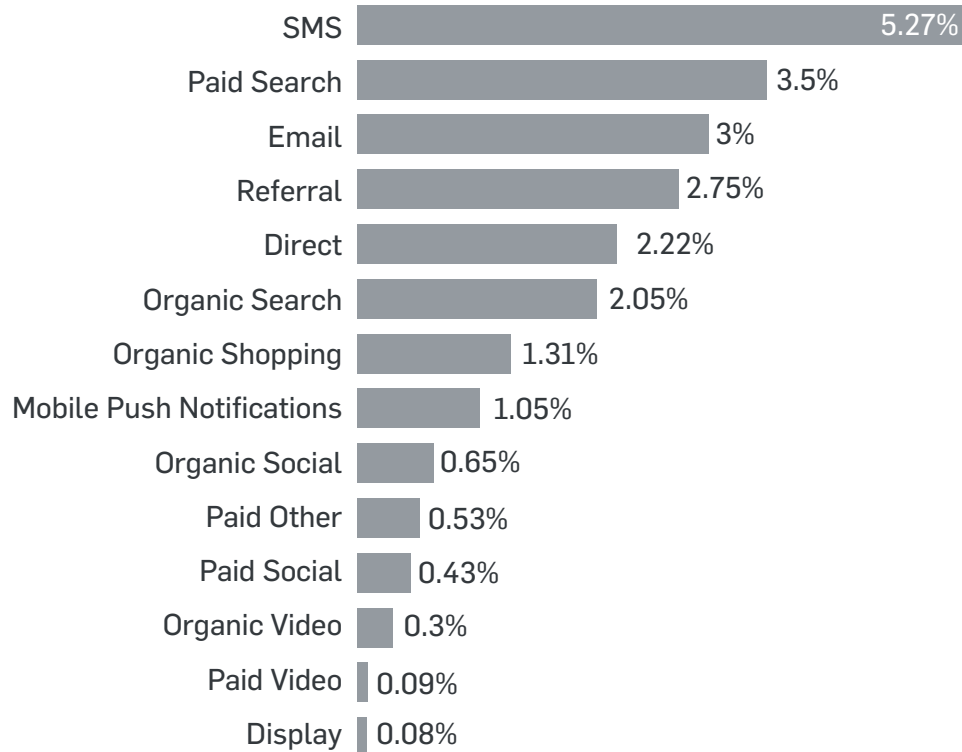


E-Comm Conversion Rate by Device



Average e-comm conversion rate across all devices/channels = 2.11%

E-Comm Conversion Rate Attributed to Each Channel



Understanding the Data

Data Insights

For GA4 benchmarks, we only included data from organizations that were using GA4 (Google Analytics 4) throughout all of 2023. We are providing this data as a benchmark for conversion rate attribution *in* GA4 - it's important to note that the way GA4 attributes conversions to different channels is very different from the way that ad platforms attribute conversions.

The conversion rates below use a last-click non-direct attribution model, meaning the channel that drove the visit in which the user made a purchase receives 100% of the credit for that purchase. Other channels that were part of the user journey receive no credit. Last click attribution will always under value channels used to drive awareness and consideration prior to purchasing (like paid social and display/video) and overstate the value of channels like search. On the other hand, the purchase conversion rates within an ad platform (those we are reporting on from Meta & Google) are calculated based on any purchases with an ad touchpoint, relative to the number of overall impressions served.

What stands out?

We were surprised to see that the e-commerce conversion rate for SMS (Short Message Service) was so high. Less surprising is paid search coming right after with the second highest rate. Paid acquisition channels have lower conversion rates because these channels drive visits and exploration, but the last step of a user's journey before they purchase is so often search, which will get the "credit" for the purchase.

We were unsurprised to see that the desktop conversion rate was much higher than that of mobile or tablet.

Improve Your Results

Arts audiences continue to prefer purchasing on desktop, likely because it's a better experience—but we still need to prioritize mobile, as mobile sites see far more traffic.

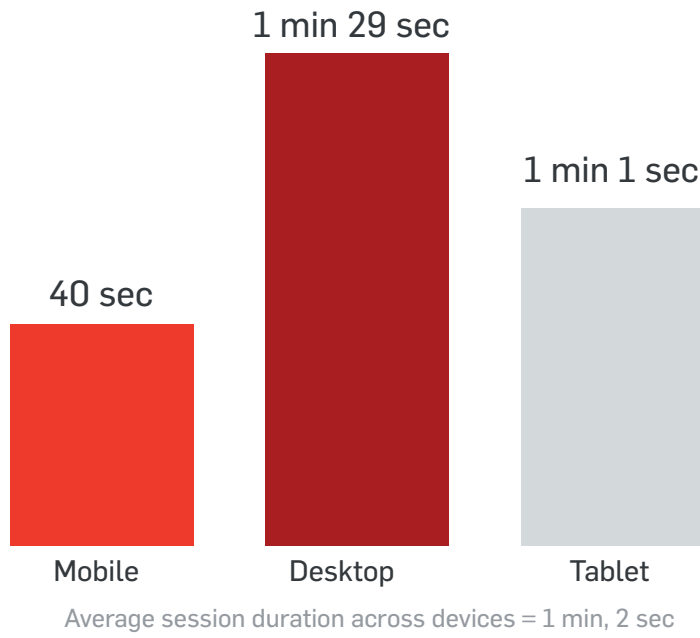
To learn more about how to get the most out of your GA4 data:

[Use Your Data Right](#)

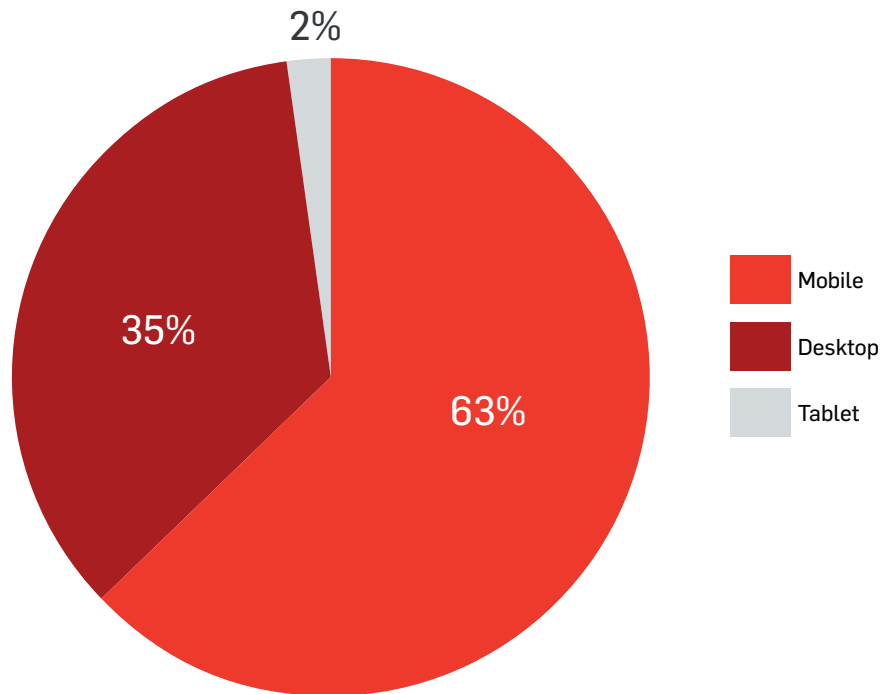
[Improve Your Website](#)

[Get More Comfortable with GA4](#)

Average Session Duration by Device



Traffic by Device



Understanding the Data

Data Insight

Over the last decade, we've seen the share website traffic from mobile devices steadily increase. Today that stands at 63% on average. However, we consistently see lower engagement time and conversion rates on mobile devices. There remains an opportunity to make iterative improvements to the mobile site experience and purchase path that will drive stronger engagement and revenue.

Audience Benchmarks

When evaluating audience performance, it's essential to align the expectations for each audience with its performance. In other words: we wouldn't expect an acquisition audience like lookalikes to drive a purchase conversion rate as high as a bottom-of-funnel audience like retargeting. Our goals shift at each stage of the funnel, so the following results don't surprise us or make us want to invest even more in CRM list and retargeting audiences—we still need those mid- and upper-funnel audiences! Their conversion rates just aren't going to be as strong as our bottom-of-funnel segments, and that's perfectly fine—they're still doing what we need them to do.

Now, let's dig into the data to answer the question: how are different audiences performing?

[Back to Benchmarks Summary >](#)

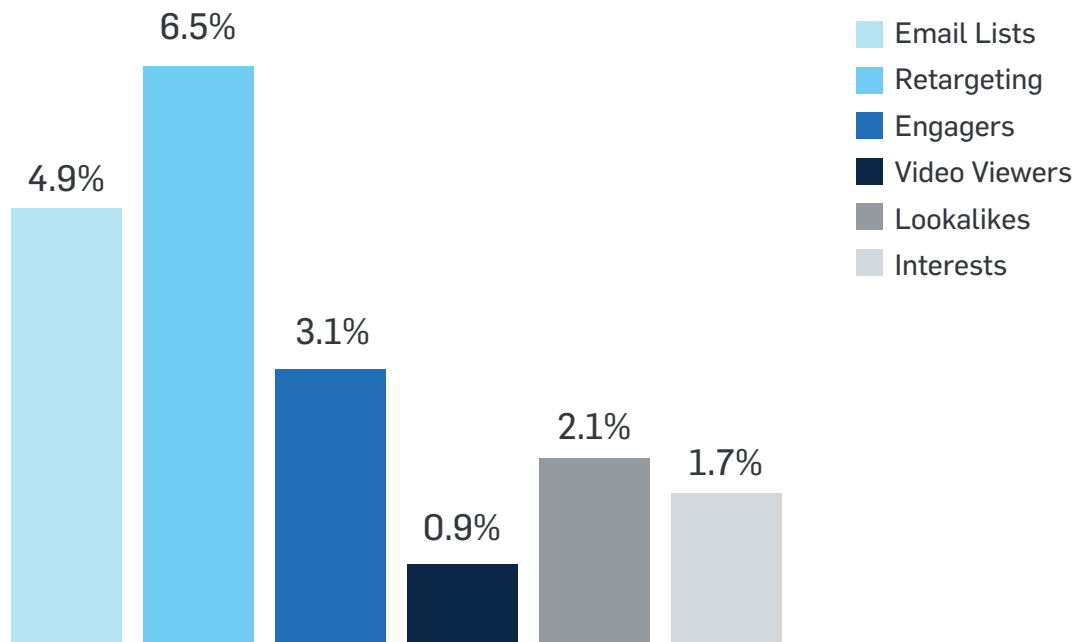
[Skip to Campaign Objective Benchmarks >](#)



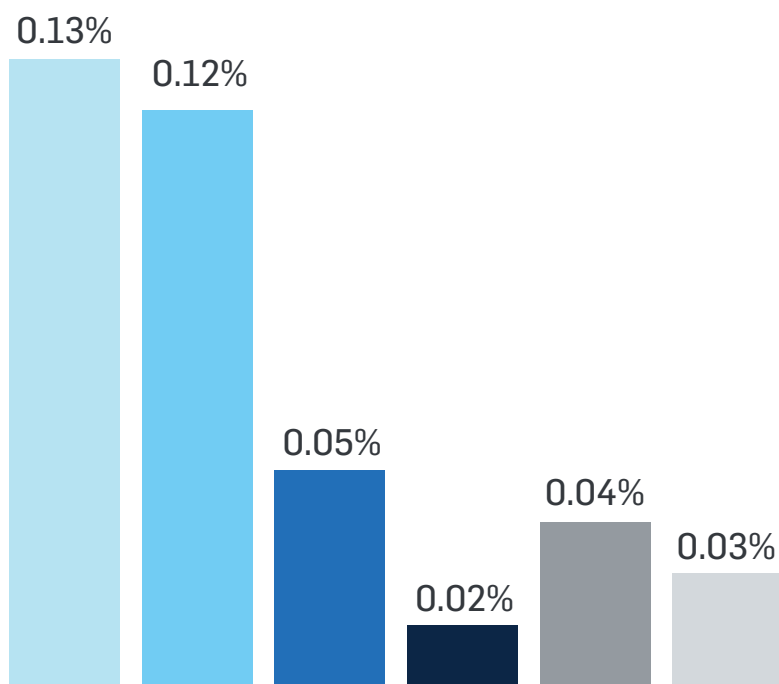


How are different audiences performing?

Page View Rate



Purchase Rate





Performing Arts: Page View Rate

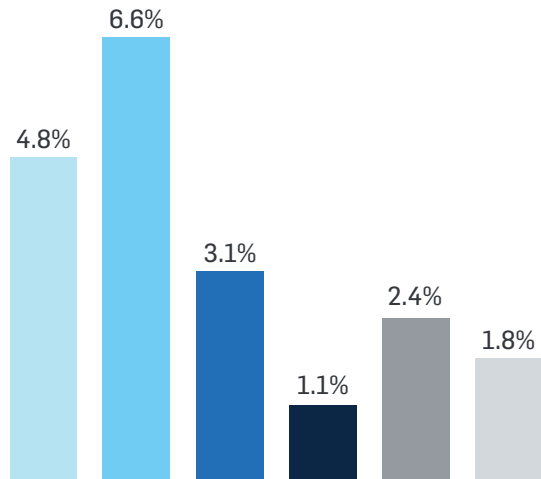
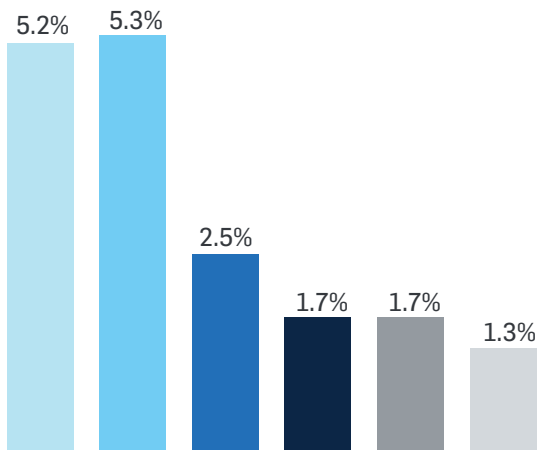


Exhibit: Page View Rate



Performing Arts: Purchase Rate

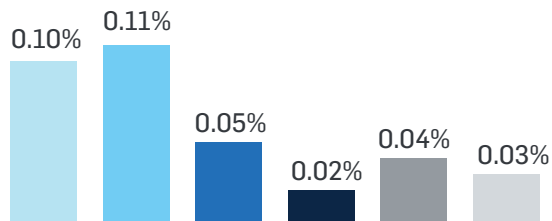
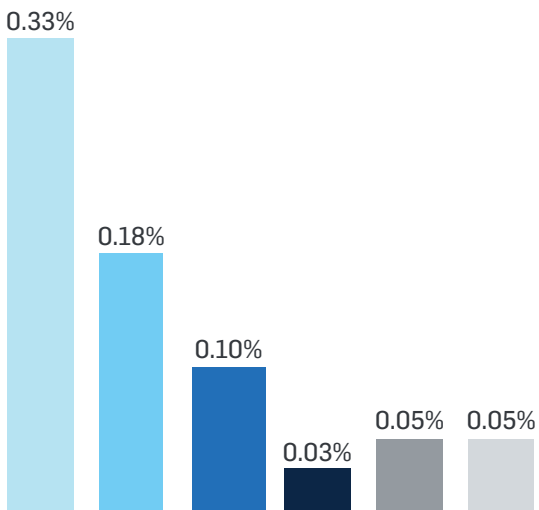


Exhibit: Purchase Rate



- Email Lists
- Retargeting
- Engagers
- Video Viewers
- Lookalikes
- Interests

Understanding the Data

What stands out?

The video viewers segment is a good example of audiences doing what they need to do. This segment has the lowest average page view and purchase rates of any audience. These users tend to engage and watch the video at excellent rates—video is an incredible tool for building awareness—but as an audience, they don't necessarily buy right away.

We're often asked about the best acquisition targeting, and these results make it clear that lookalikes outperform interest targeting.

Remember, it's important to only compare purchase or page view rates at comparable stages of the funnel. For example: you can reasonably compare the purchase rates of Email Lists vs. Retargeting, but it doesn't make sense to compare the purchase rate of a lower-funnel audience like Retargeting to that of an upper-funnel audience like Lookalikes.

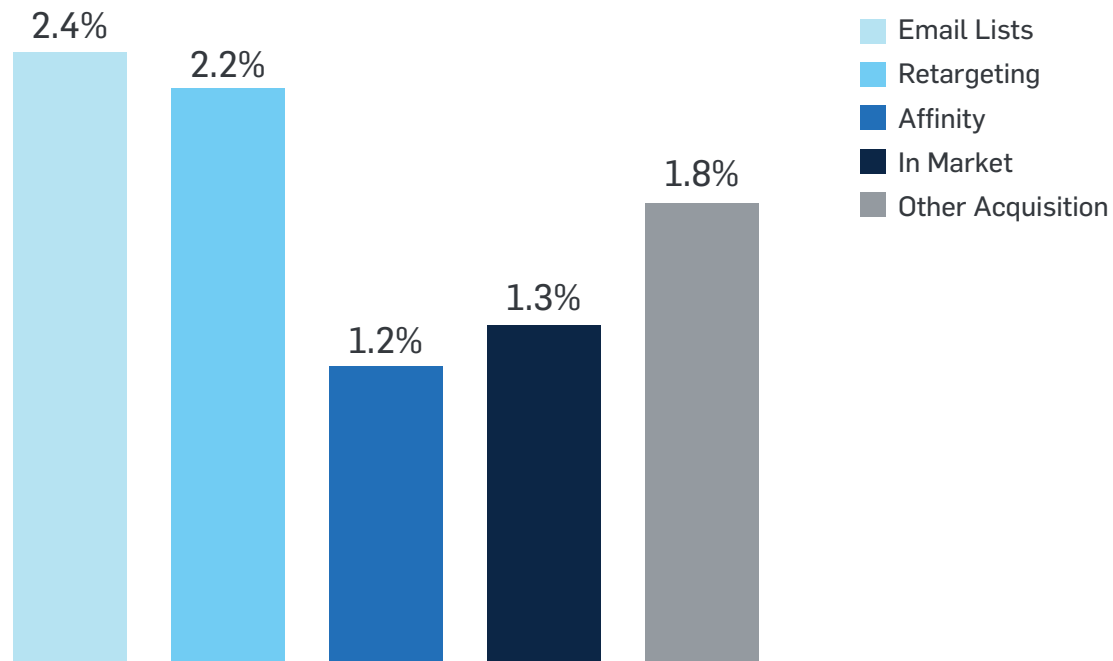
Improve Your Results

You need to be strategic about what list(s) you use for lookalikes to be based off of, but if you can only invest in one acquisition segment, lookalikes is generally the way to go.

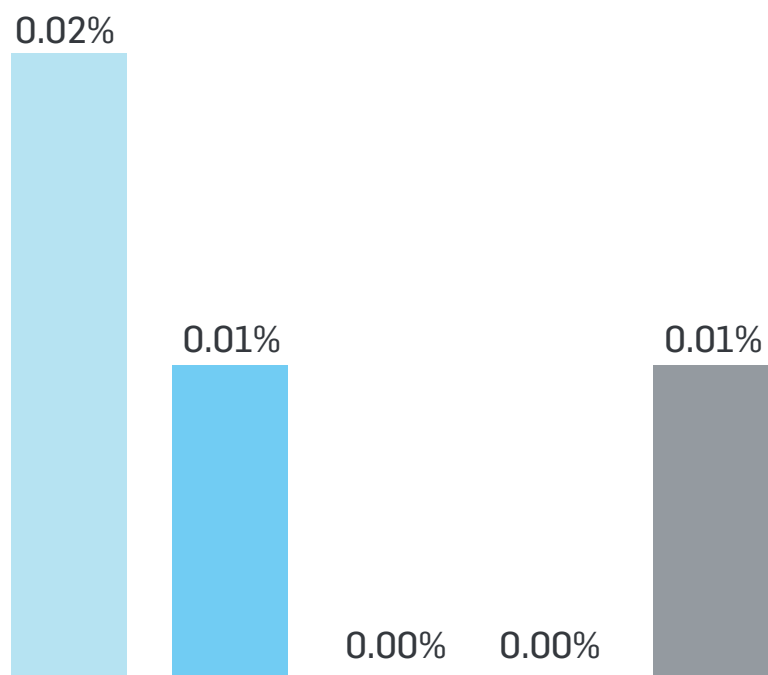


How are different audiences performing?

Page View Rate



Purchase Rate



Understanding the Data

Data Insight

This data represents all paid Google channels with the exception of search, since within that campaign type, ads are typically served based on user action (searching) rather than based on targeting parameters.

What stands out?

While we wouldn't expect an acquisition audience to drive especially high conversion rates, there is one audience here that's coming close: the "other acquisition" category. This category is largely comprised of single audience segments that combined multiple acquisition categories (in other words, one audience might contain both affinity segments and in market segments, rather than separating them). Adding these targets together seems to have a powerful effect, as the combined audience has a page view rate above the single-category acquisition audiences, in addition to a higher purchase conversion rate.



Strike the Right Chords with Strategic Flights

Experiment with combining several acquisition audiences and running them together—like we did for [Goodman Theatre](#).

Campaign Objective Benchmarks

[Back to Audience Benchmarks >](#)

[Skip to Content Benchmarks >](#)

CAMPAIGN OBJECTIVES

How are fundraising campaigns performing?

The average spend on a single fundraising campaign on Meta is \$1,515 with a CPM of \$11.05 and a cost per page view of \$0.27.

Methodology Note

Because “purchaseDonation” is a standard naming convention across our fundraising campaigns, this is one of the few examples of product-specific conversion results vs. overall conversion results that we are able to examine in aggregate. However, in any campaign, we are likely to see a significant amount of attributed revenue that is not associated with the actual goal/subject of the campaign (for example, many Nutcracker purchases associated with a mixed-rep campaign running in November).

AVERAGE PURCHASE METRICS FOR OVERALL REVENUE VS. DONATION REVENUE ATTRIBUTED		
	ALL PURCHASES	DONATIONS
ROI	1,217%	36%
PURCHASE RATE	0.06%	0.01%
CPA	\$18	\$162
AVG ORDER VALUE	\$235	\$226

Understanding the Data

What stands out?

The ROI across all fundraising campaigns looking at all purchases was 1,217%. When looking at those same campaigns and using a donation purchase instead, the ROI drops to 36%. This illustrates the central caveat around digital fundraising campaigns: the results can only paint a partial picture. It's hard to assess the success of these campaigns since people often donate offline and also typically need longer consideration windows before donating. It's still appropriate to consider all purchases across an organization when evaluating digital fundraising, though—in addition to driving donations, fundraising campaigns build organizational and mission awareness.

Improve Your Results

Although there's a strong need in the industry to diversify and grow new audiences, we're not suggesting organizations should go out targeting their entire DMA (designated market area)—budgets tend to be more limited in our industry—but we want to focus on finding as many of the right audience members as possible. And then, you should be serving content to those audiences that's appropriate to who they are and where they are in their relationship with your organization.

For example, content asking for donations shouldn't be served to acquisition audiences—they're still getting to know you. However, if that acquisition audience is fans of a particular musical artist for an upcoming concert, make sure the content centers that artist.


Intentional fundraising drives results—and there are innovative ways to do it. Bookmark the links below to learn:

[How we helped Jazz at Lincoln Center raise more money with a holistic approach to email](#)

[CI's tips on maximizing end of year campaigns](#)

[How to weave fundraising into every season](#)

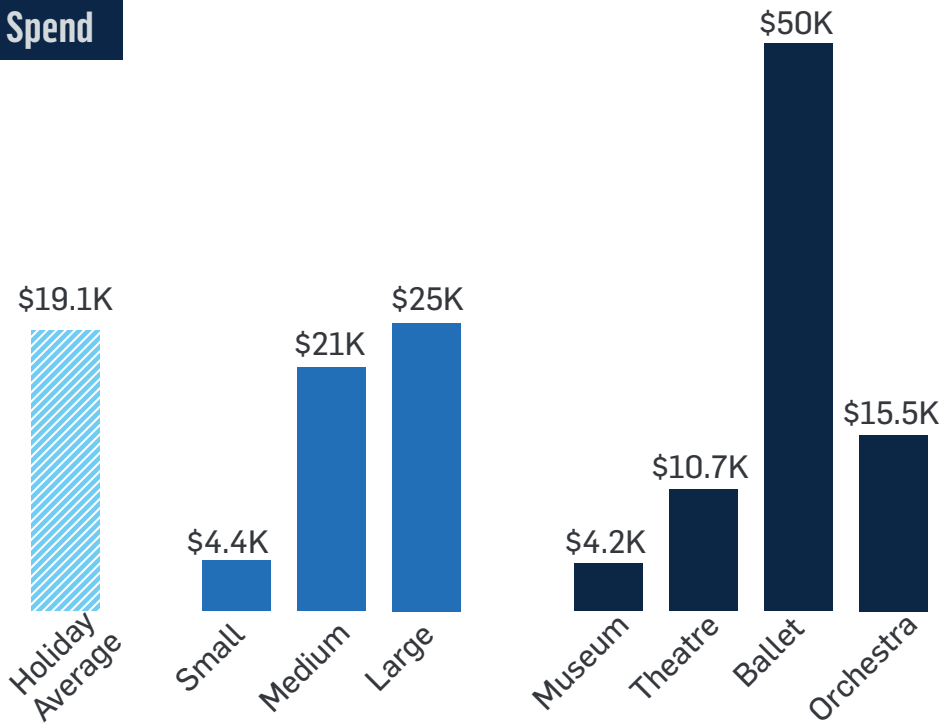
ALL HOLIDAY CAMPAIGNS VS. OVERALL		
	ALL HOLIDAY CAMPAIGNS	META ANNUAL AVERAGE
ROI	1,224%	926%
PURCHASE RATE	0.06%	0.06%
PAGE VIEW RATE	3.6%	3.1%
CPA	\$17	\$15
COST/PAGE VIEW	\$0.29	\$0.28
AVERAGE SPEND	\$19.1K	\$78.7K
CPM	\$10.29	\$8.75



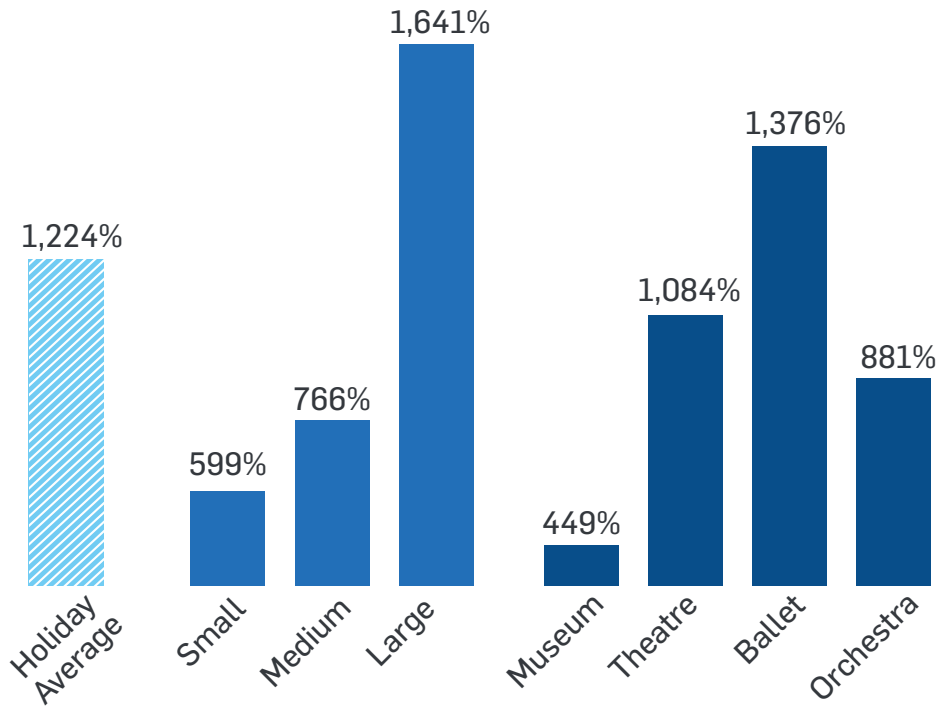
 See Appendix for more insights on:

- [Ballet](#)
- [Museum](#)
- [Theatre](#)
- [Symphony/Orchestra](#)
- [Organization Size](#)

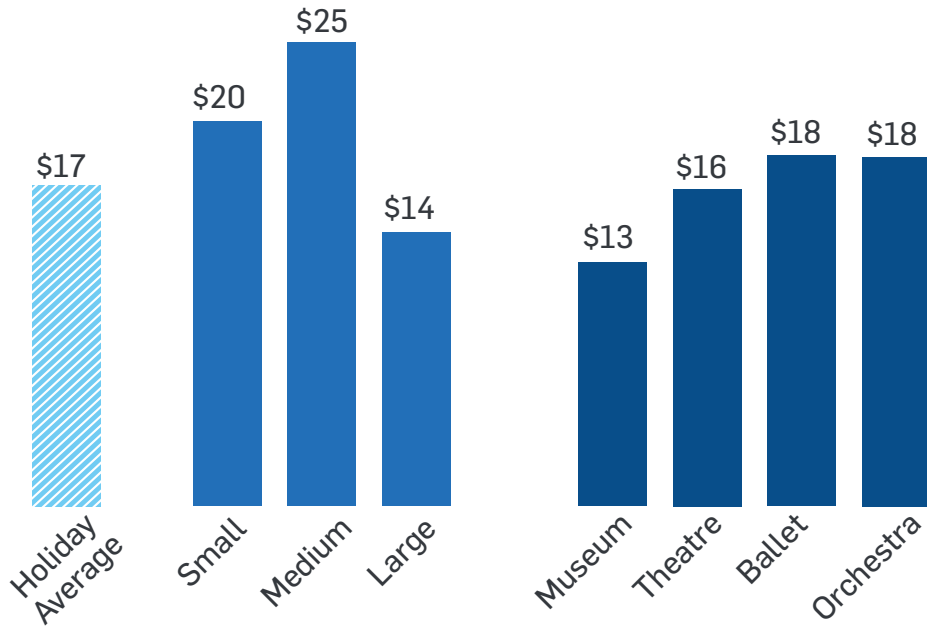
Spend



ROI



CPA



Understanding the Data

Data Insight

For the purposes of this analysis, we incorporated all campaigns for winter holiday programming, including initiatives like “Christmas in July.”

Ballets invested the most in their holiday programming by far—no surprise there. While ballets saw the strongest page view metrics, museums and theatres outperformed them in terms of purchase rate and CPA. This is perhaps because ballet companies invest heavily in acquisition for broadly popular programming like *The Nutcracker*. Those are also the two genres that invested the least in media dollars—so you can still see stellar holiday results even if you don't quite have a *Nutcracker*-level media investment. For the curious: museum holiday campaigns consisted of holiday store and holiday gift initiatives, as well as one immersive Christmas village.

What stands out?

Looking at the breakdown by organization size, it's notable that while the overall investment amounts revealed a large gap in spend between medium and large organizations, here that gap is smaller. Medium-sized organizations are investing proportionally more heavily in their holiday programming as compared to the rest of the season. And here again we see that small organizations can hold their own despite smaller budgets, as the purchase conversion rate, page view rate, and cost per page view metrics for small organizations were stronger than those for medium-sized organizations.

Improve Your Results

Begin your holiday campaigns early. Many organizations with especially successful campaigns started in the early fall.

ALL HOLIDAY CAMPAIGNS VS. GOOGLE AVERAGE

	ALL HOLIDAY CAMPAIGNS	GOOGLE ANNUAL AVERAGE
ROI	2,098%	1,858%
PURCHASE RATE	0.04%	0.05%
PAGE VIEW RATE	4.36%	4.72%
CPA	\$13	\$10
COST/PAGE VIEW	\$0.13	\$0.10
AVERAGE SPEND	\$24.8K	\$45.3K



See Appendix for more insights on:

- [Ballet](#)
- [Theatre](#)
- [Symphony/Orchestra](#)
- [Organization Size](#)

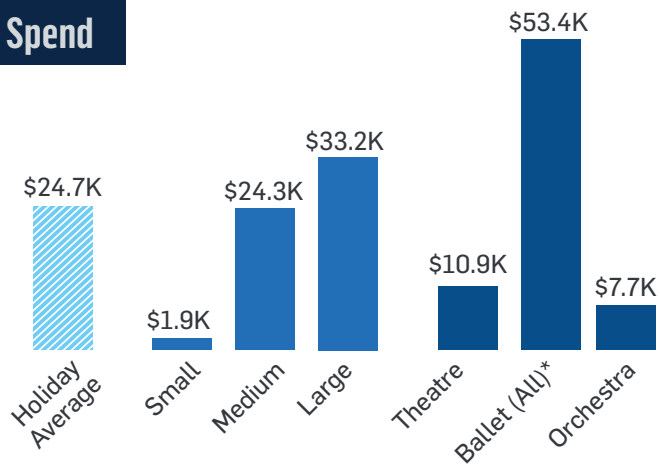


HOLIDAY PROGRAMMING

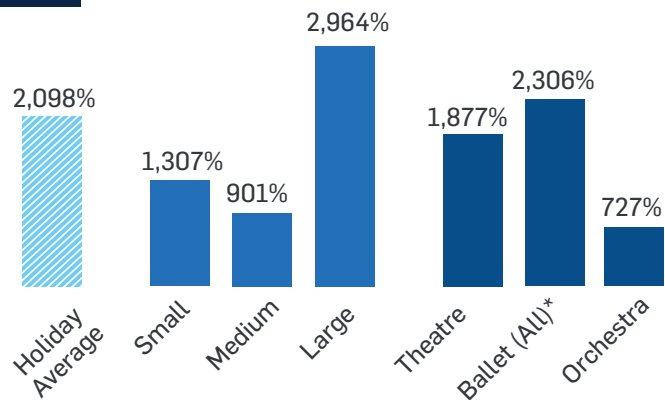


HOLIDAY PROGRAMMING

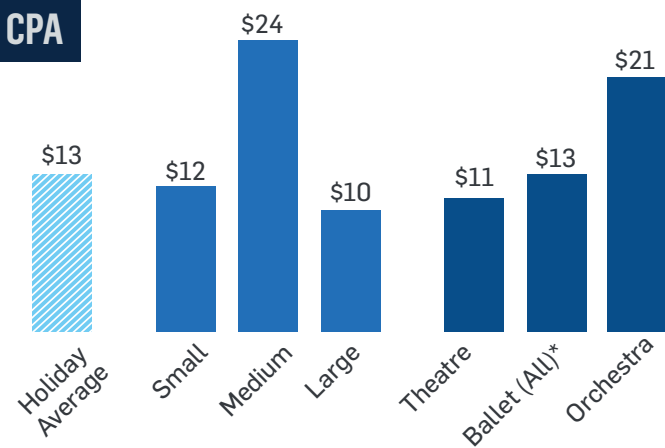
Spend



ROI



CPA



*Spend outliers have been removed from this category

Understanding the Data

Data Insight

For the purposes of this analysis, we incorporated all campaigns for winter holiday programming, including initiatives like “Christmas in July.”

While the Meta holiday campaigns had a stronger purchase conversion rate, holiday campaigns across the Google placements drove a higher ROI and lower CPA than on Meta. Note that this difference can potentially be attributed to Google's focus on responsive/dynamic ad and campaign types—they drive far more impressions than they used to!

What stands out?

This is also the rare area where organizations spent more on Google than they did on Meta—the average media spend across all Google holiday campaigns was about \$5,600 higher than the average spend across all Meta holiday campaigns, likely because of the increase in search volume and competition from ticket resellers around this type of programming, which leads to increased paid search investment.

As on Meta, ballets invested heavily in Google for their holiday campaigns. This investment paid off, as ballets saw the strongest results of any genre across all key metrics.

Data Insight

While there's a large gap between medium-sized and large organizations when it comes to overall Google spend, medium-sized organizations are investing more heavily in their holiday programming as compared to the rest of the season; their holiday spends are closer to those of large organizations. On the other end of the spectrum, small organizations are investing very little in holiday campaigns on Google—but still seeing excellent results. When possible, we recommend that smaller organizations invest more in Google for their holiday programming.

Improve Your Results

Holiday programming is a key moment to think beyond your Google Grant for search campaigns and invest in true paid search.

Learn to level up your holiday campaigns on the CI blog:

[How Do I Optimize Holiday Gift Campaigns?](#)

[Crafting the Perfect Digital Holiday Campaign](#)

[How We Helped The Washington Ballet Surpass Its Nutcracker Revenue Goals](#)

NO BREAKDOWN VS. OVERALL

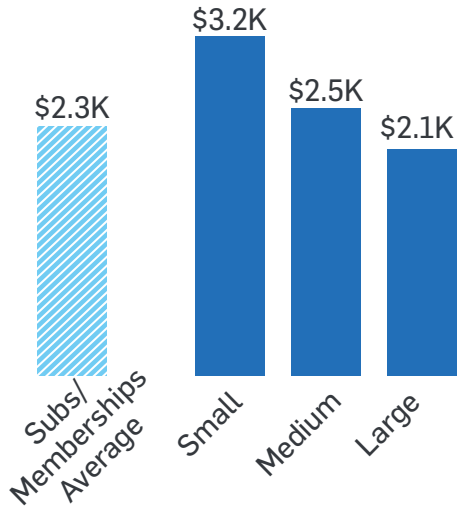
	ALL SUBS/ MEMBERSHIP CAMPAIGNS	META ANNUAL AVERAGE
ROI	1,313%	926%
PURCHASE RATE	0.07%	0.06%
PAGE VIEW RATE	4.04%	3.1%
CPA	\$18	\$15
COST/PAGE VIEW	\$0.31	\$0.28
AVERAGE SPEND	\$2.3K	\$78.7K



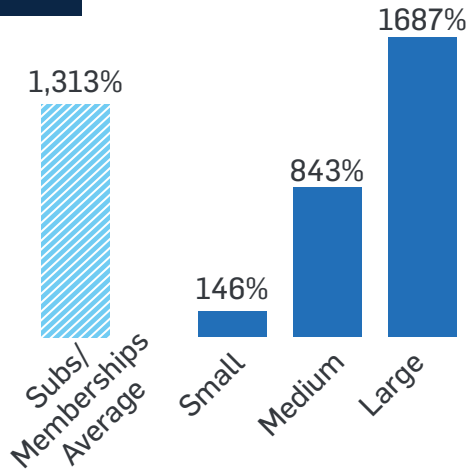
See Appendix for
more insights on:

[Organization Size](#)

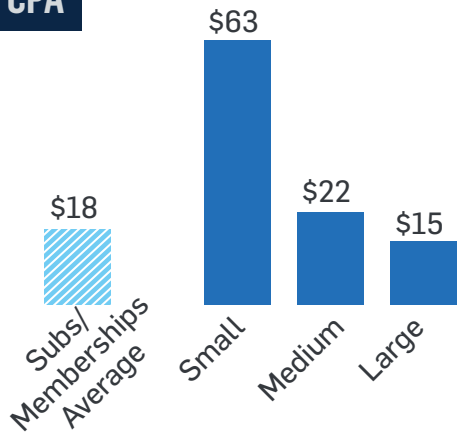
Spend



ROI



CPA



Understanding the Data

What stands out?

In a reversal from other campaign types, small organizations dedicate the most media dollars on average to subscription/membership campaigns. We have a few theories as to why. Perhaps smaller organizations have smaller budgets overall and therefore run fewer programming-specific campaigns in favor of more “broad-scope” campaigns to use their money most efficiently. Smaller organizations also might feel like they need to devote more money to their subscription/membership efforts, while larger organizations feel confident that their packages will be more likely to sell themselves, so they only need to focus on either renewals or acquisition.

Improve Your Results

Follow up your season announcement with a subscription/membership campaign to capitalize on excitement for the new programming.

Dive deeper on the CI blog:

[Ask CI: How Do I Drive Subscription Renewals with Season Announcements?](#)

[How We Helped San Francisco Opera Boost Subscription Sales with First Party Data](#)

[How We Helped Denver Art Museum Seal the Deal with Lapsed Members](#)



Methodology Note

There wasn't enough data to provide further breakdowns here. It's noteworthy that, for organizations that do run campaigns focused on education or class offerings, they're dedicating a robust amount of media dollars to them—the average media spend per campaign was comparable to what a medium-sized organization typically spends on a subscription/membership campaign. This type of campaign also tends to be targeted to a broader audience, which explains the low CPM.

NO BREAKDOWN VS. OVERALL		
	ALL EDU CAMPAIGNS	META ANNUAL AVERAGE
ROI	1,250%	926%
PURCHASE RATE	0.01%	0.06%
PAGE VIEW RATE	1.1%	3.1%
CPA	\$30	\$15
COST/PAGE VIEW	\$0.37	\$0.28
AVERAGE SPEND	\$2.7K	\$78.7K
CPM	\$4.07	\$8.75

Understanding the Data

Improve Your Results

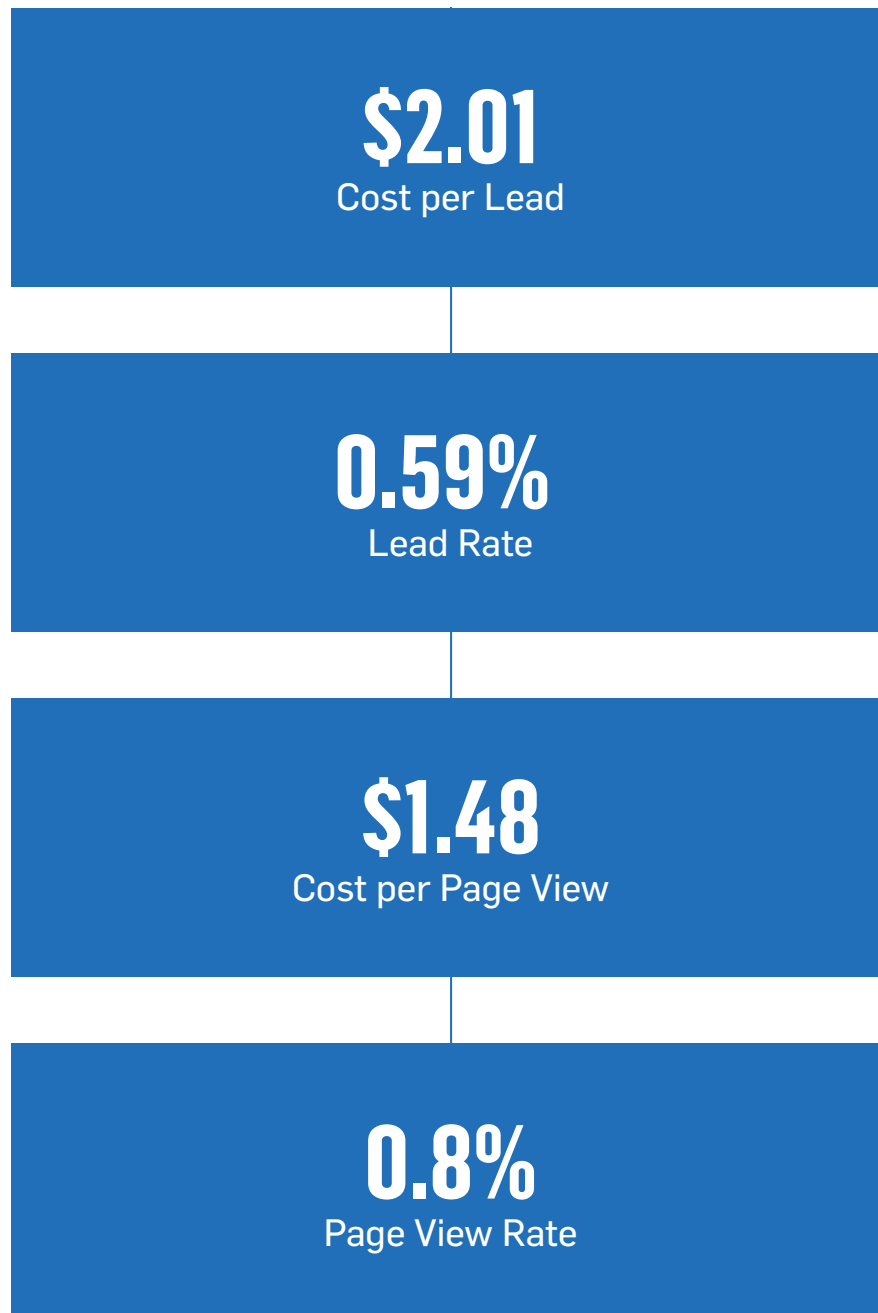
Think of education and classes campaigns as key elements of your institutional narrative. Reminding your audiences about the breadth of your initiatives builds admiration and affinity for your organization—and helps provide a compelling reason to donate when it comes time for fundraising.

Dive Deeper

[How to Make the Most of Summer Camp Campaigns](#)

What is this metric?

Lead generation (lead gen) campaigns use ads that direct users to a form within Meta when they click, rather than to the organization's website. This form sends information like a user's name or contact details to the organization when submitted. Think of both quality and quantity when you consider your goals for lead gen campaigns.



Understanding the Data

Data Insight

The success of a lead gen campaign is entirely dependent on the specific goal of that campaign. For example, if the goal is to collect emails for users to sign up for early access to tickets to a blockbuster show, we would expect the cost per lead to be quite low. If the goal is to collect emails from educators looking for more information about bringing students to the organization, that cost per lead is likely going to be much higher—that's a significantly bigger ask and a more specific target audience.

Improve Your Result

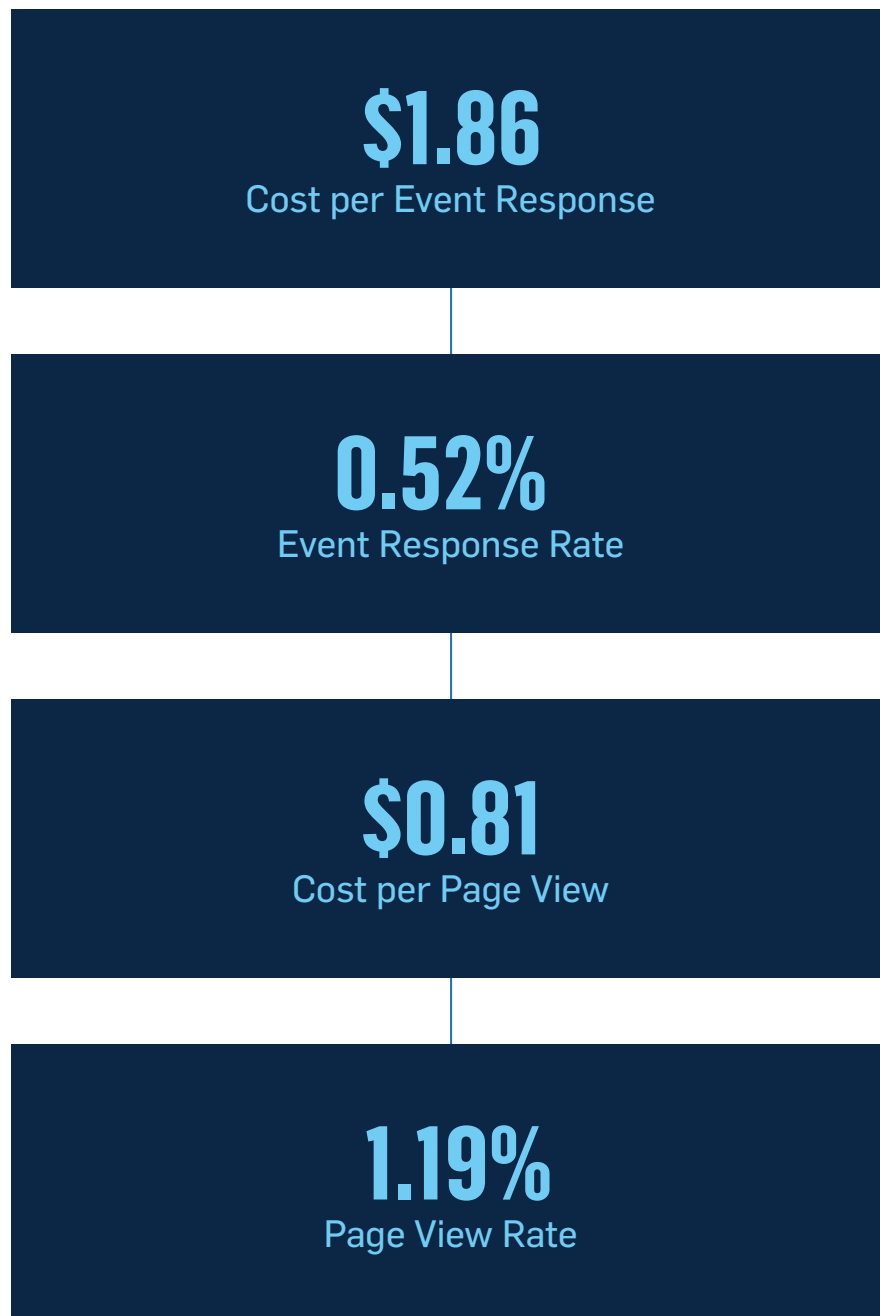
Use this benchmark loosely, and instead ask yourself what you're willing to “pay” for each lead given the goal of your campaign.



What is this metric?

Event response campaigns seek out users to respond that they are interested in attending or planning to attend an event. While events, and event response campaigns, are less commonly used today than in years past, we do still see a solid response, as evidenced by the low cost per event response.

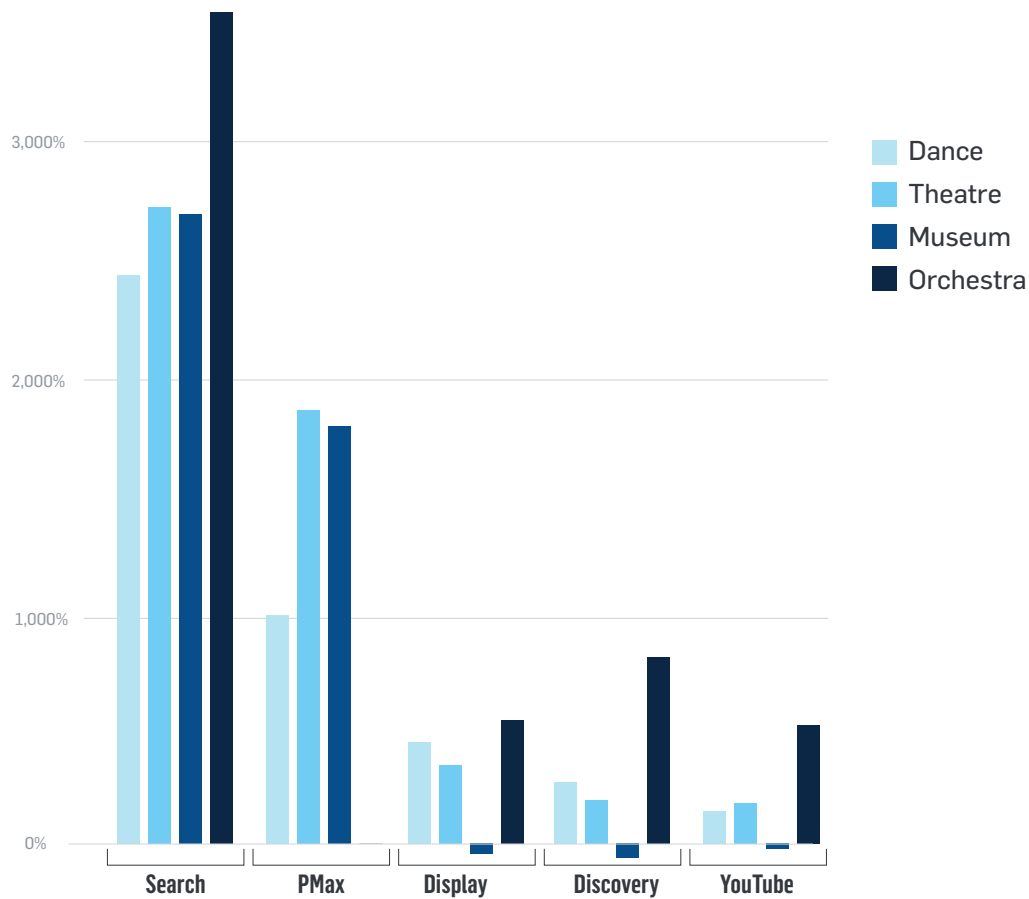
We typically recommend running this type of campaign for free, non-ticketed events.





Do certain Google campaign types resonate better with certain genres?

ROI: By Google Campaign Type + Genre



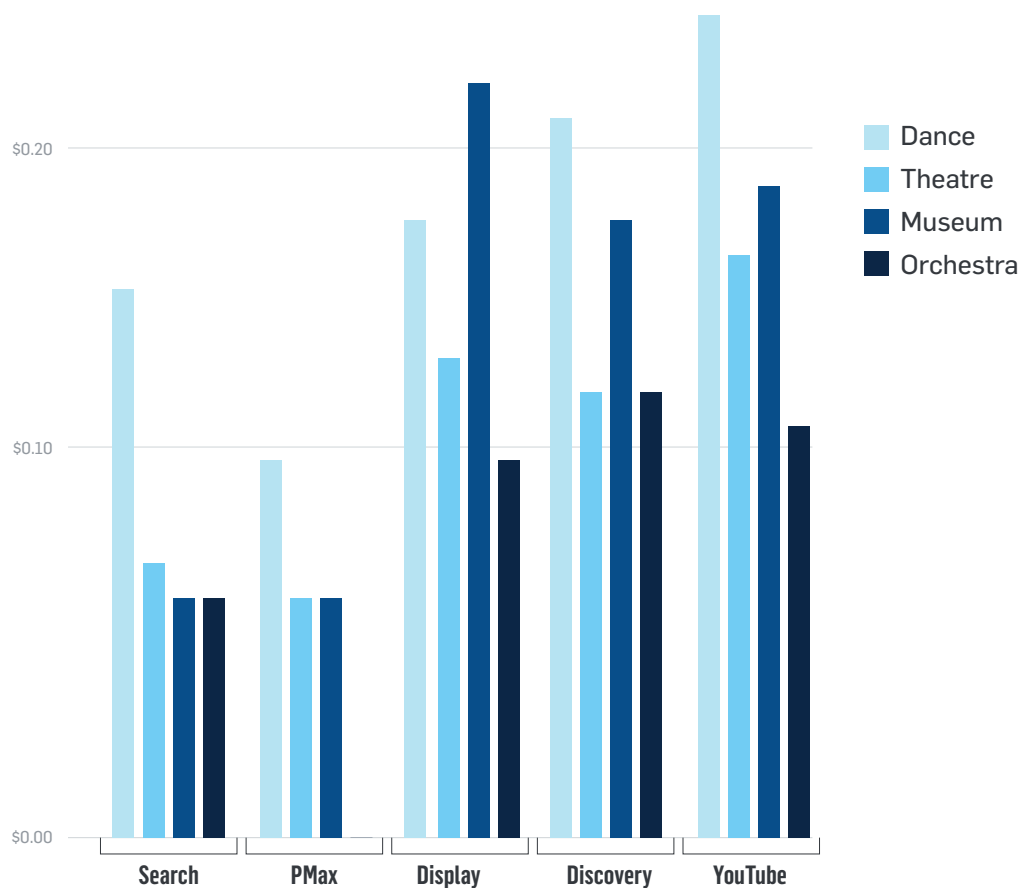
See Appendix for more insights on:

- [Dance](#)
- [Theatre](#)
- [Symphony/Orchestra](#)
- [Museum](#)

CAMPAIGN TYPE / GENRE



Cost Per Page View: By Google Campaign Type + Genre



Understanding the Data

Data Insight

While Meta's placements are all relatively similar—a Facebook feed ad doesn't look drastically different from a Facebook stories ad—Google's ad placements across the various channels can look quite different. A YouTube ad has an entirely different effect than a static display banner. We wanted to see if, within each genre, there was a difference in performance—and there isn't really.

Instead, what we discovered is how consistently strong paid search and Performance Max are. In all genres, paid search topped the list across major metrics, followed by Performance Max (which includes search placements). Note that there wasn't enough data to include Performance Max for the symphony/orchestra category. If you want the best bang for your buck on Google, and your budget and search volume allow for it, invest in paid search and Performance Max, no matter what genre your organization is. Keep in mind that Performance Max requires a paid search campaign be running concurrently.

As far as what comes next: there's no clear winner. Display was the next best performer for dance and theatre, but it also came in last for symphony/orchestra and museum/exhibition organizations—and for dance and theatre, it was only slightly ahead of Discovery/Demand Gen, which was third highest for symphony/orchestra organizations. Given how much Google is investing in their channels that use machine learning (which includes Demand Gen), Demand Gen would be our next recommendation. Keep in mind, though, that Performance Max encompasses all Google placements, including the places that Demand Gen reaches!

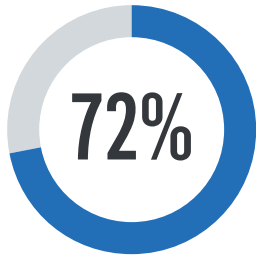
Improve Your Data

Prioritize investing in paid search and Performance Max, no matter what genre your organization is.

Dive deeper on the CI blog:

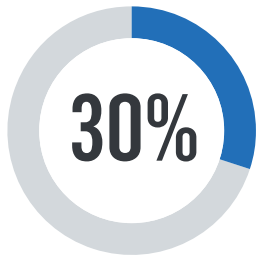
[How We Helped San Francisco Opera Reach New Audiences](#)

[Ask CI: Which Google Channel is Right for Me?](#)



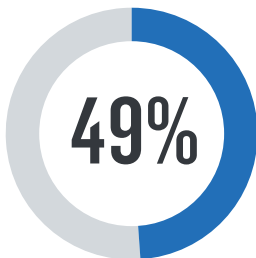
Display

Display continued to have one of the highest adoption rates in 2023 despite the fact that performance metrics continue to fall.



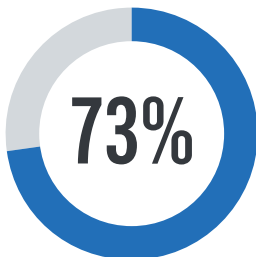
Discovery/Demand Gen

Discovery/Demand Gen has the highest CPA and lowest ROI of any Google campaign type, so it likely doesn't have to be prioritized.



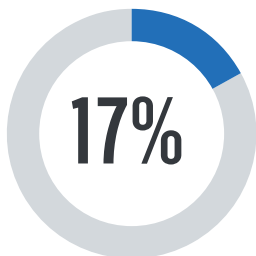
YouTube

YouTube outperforms Display in terms of CTR and Page View Rate, and has a comparable ROI & CPA. Plus, video generates more lasting awareness.



Paid Search

As the most intent-driven, bottom-of-funnel Google campaign type, it makes sense that Paid Search has high adoption (and an average ROI over 3,000%).



Performance Max (PMax)

The percentage of orgs using PMax is very low considering this campaign type's average ROI over 1,000% and CPA of \$15 (second only to paid search in efficiency).

Understanding the Data

Data Insight

Especially given how successful Performance Max was in 2023, it has quite a low adoption rate among our clients: only 17% of organizations ran Performance Max campaigns last year. The most popular Google platforms among our clients were paid search and display. We recommend moving away from display—especially static banners—given Google's investment in the other channels and their own machine learning. If you haven't tried Performance Max campaigns yet, now is the time—it's easily the strongest platform outside of paid search (keep in mind it does include search placements), and it's especially efficient considering that its ads serve across all Google placements.

Note that, while paid search drove stellar results, that doesn't mean we recommend shifting all of your media dollars to SEM—we still recommend a mix of platforms. Paid search is uniquely primed to see sky-high ROIs and conversion rates because it's a platform largely based on high intent and users who are already seeking you out. Additionally, the paid search campaigns reflected in this data are largely bottom-of-funnel (focused on branded keywords like “boston ballet nutcracker”), and the ROI reflects that—many organizations are leaving mid- and upper-funnel for their Grants (keywords like “things to do in boston” or “live events boston”). So there's also room to diversify targeting even within search, with the expectation that ROIs wouldn't be as high as you move up the funnel. Search can only be effective if people know to look, after all!

Paid search is essential, and we're thrilled to see that roughly half of the spends on Google were dedicated to this channel, but we wouldn't recommend that any organization solely invest in search if diversifying is an option.

Improve Your Results

Shift away from display, and instead focus on running Performance Max and paid search campaigns.

Dive deeper on the CI blog:

[How We Helped Park Avenue Armory Reach New Audiences with a Holisite Digital Strategy](#)

[Ask CI: Which Google Channel is Right for Me?](#)

Content Benchmarks

[Back to Campaign Objective Benchmarks >](#)

[Skip to Diversifying Channels >](#)



What's the impact of Meta's CTA Button?

CTA BUTTON			
	BUTTON	NO BUTTON	% DIFFERENCE
PAGE VIEW RATE	2.17%	1.92%	13%
PURCHASE RATE	0.03%	0.02%	50%
COST/PAGE VIEW	\$0.40	\$0.46	-13%
CPA	\$28	\$41	-33%

Understanding the Data

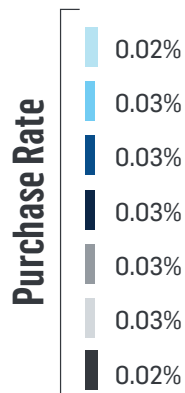
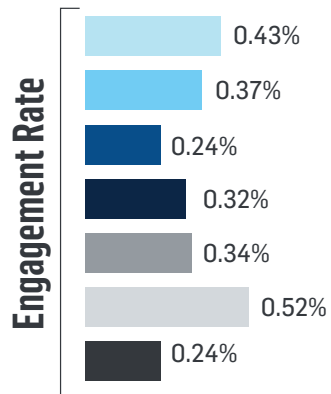
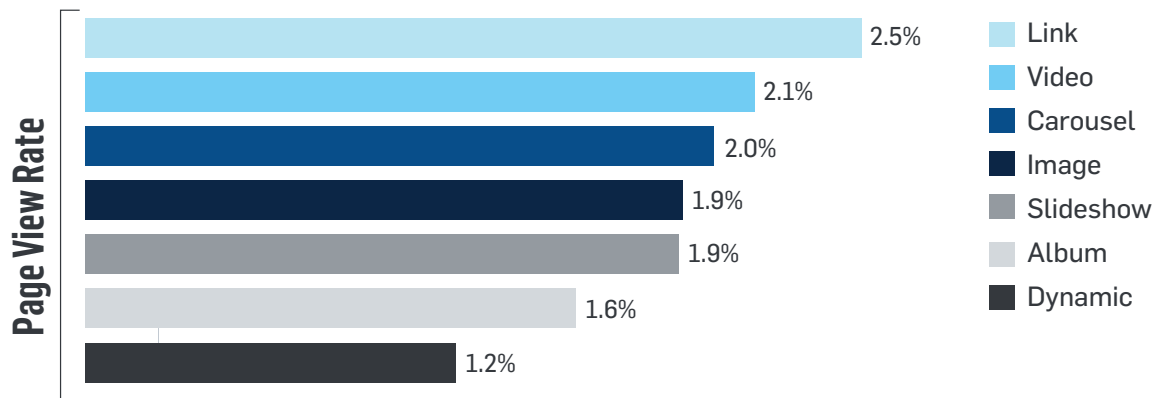
Improve Your Results

Use call-to-action (CTA) buttons. No caveats or nuance or other things to consider—this one is crystal clear. [If you have the option to use a CTA button on your ad, do it.](#)



How does each post type on Meta perform across metrics?

Post Types on Meta



See Appendix for more insights on:

[Overall Breakdown](#)

[Performing Arts](#)

[Exhibit Based](#)

Regions:

[West](#)

[Midwest](#)

[North](#)

[South](#)

[Canada](#)

Understanding the Data

Data Insight

The conclusion here is that there is no definitive conclusion—our recommendation is to introduce variety in your ad formats.

Content performance is challenging to evaluate for two reasons:

- 1. Determining Credit:** How can we properly attribute “credit” to the post that drove the conversion/desired action? Perhaps someone sees three posts and then purchases after viewing the third post—did the first two posts not contribute to that sale? Assuming that they did, how can we quantify how much? (Google has a machine-learning solution to this, called data-driven attribution, which does not exist on Meta.)
- 2. Consideration Windows:** There tends to be a lengthy consideration window in the arts, as it likely takes time between when you first learn about programming and when you actually figure out who you’re going with, when you want to go, at what price point, and so on. On Meta, a post attributed with a user’s purchase isn’t necessarily the post that truly inspired that purchase—more likely, it’s the last one that user saw or clicked before purchasing. For this reason, we tend to lean more on page view metrics (like page view rate and cost per page view) when evaluating Meta content performance, since it’s more likely that a user will visit a landing page to learn more directly after seeing or clicking an ad.

Because of these challenges, it’s unlikely that any study will be able to determine the absolute “best” post type. So the question then becomes: do some types tend to perform better than others?

That isn’t the case. The data showed no consensus on some post formats being better than others, especially since the “best” type is going to depend on your type of campaign, goal, available content, targeting, and more. The results indicate that the ideal is a mix of formats—and especially given the rise of dynamic content, where we cede control of how content gets served out, we recommend moving away from a mindset of even trying to find the “best” content solution and instead focusing on variety.

What works best to engage one user won’t be compelling for the next user—and that’s the power of dynamic content, to tailor content to each user. It’s also a strong argument for using a variety of assets, copy, and formats, to ensure that your content can illustrate your story in different ways that appeal to different audiences.

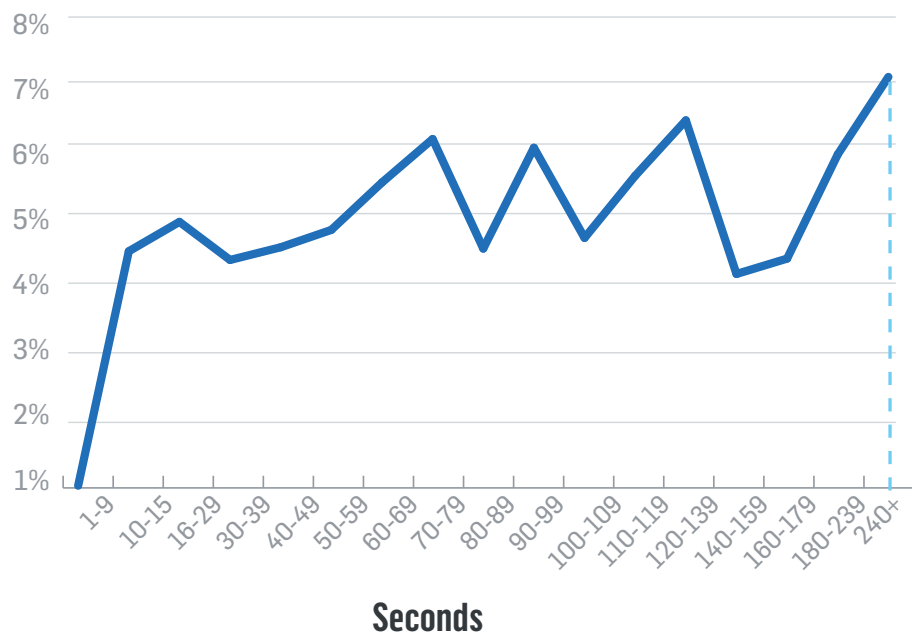
Improve Your Results

Introduce variety in your ad formats [as much as possible](#).

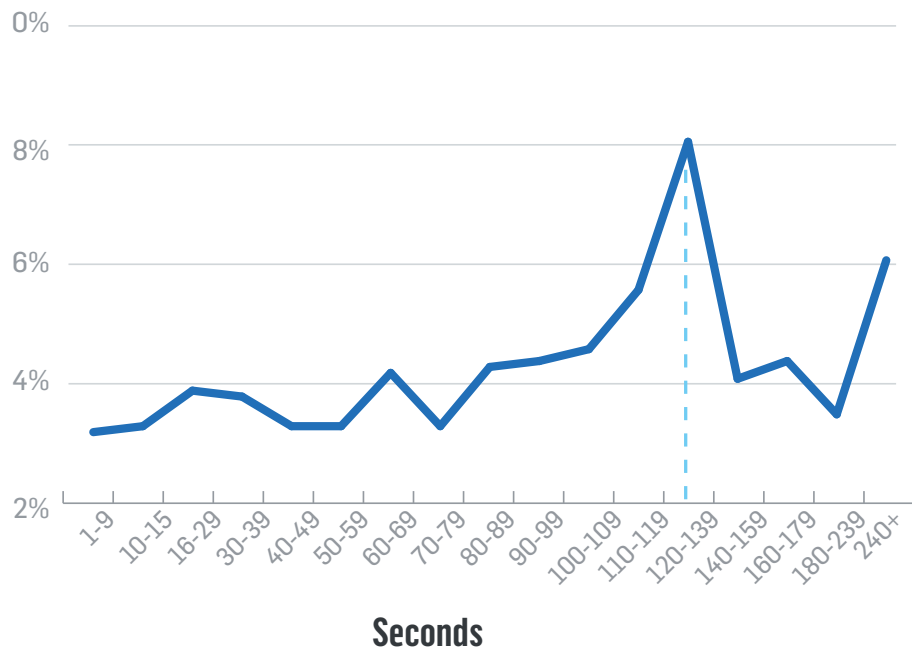


VIDEO LENGTH

Video Hold Rate

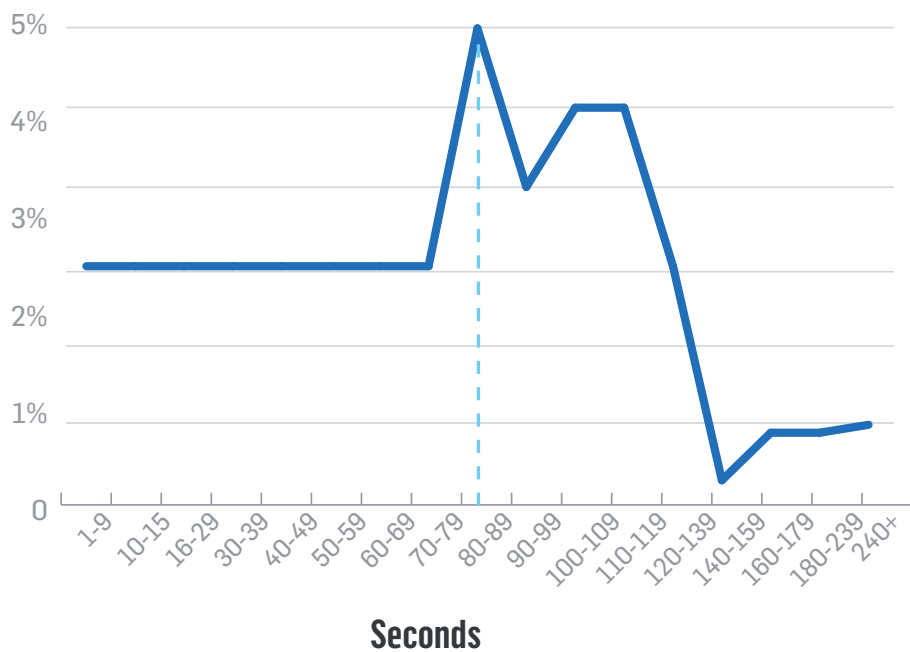


Engagement Rate

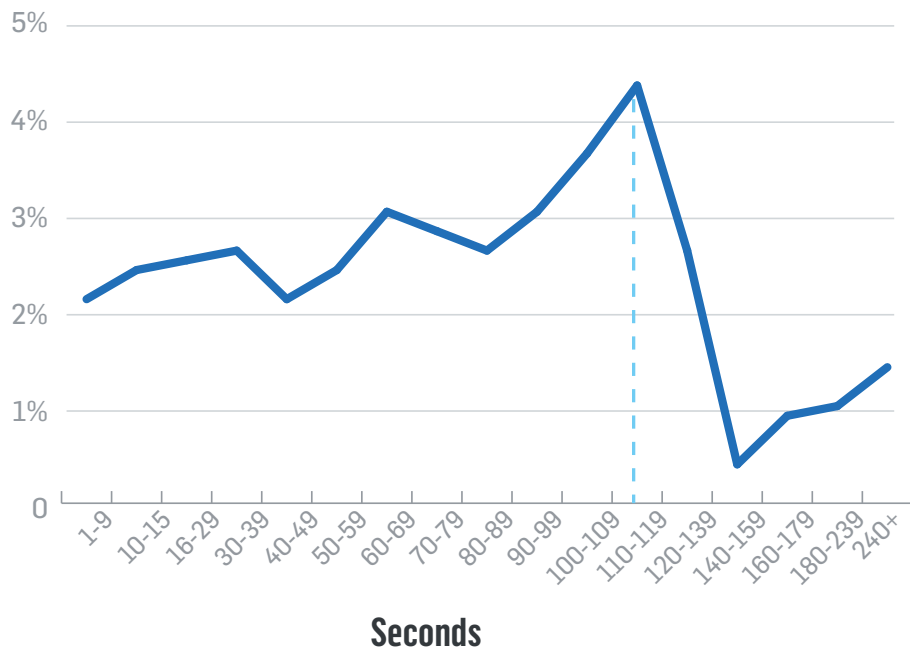




Purchase Rate



Page View Rate



Understanding the Data

What stands out?

While the [traditional advice](#) has always been that shorter videos are better on social media, our findings suggest otherwise—or that, at least, that isn't the whole picture. The shortest video bucket (1-9 seconds) had the lowest video hold rate, so there does seem to be such a thing as “too short.” We're seeing spikes in the results across page view rate, engagement rate, and video hold rate around one minute and two minutes, and the sweet spot seems to be somewhere around or between the two. Note that, although we included the results here, we put less weight on purchase rate for the reasons described in the breakdown by post type section.

You also don't want your video to be too long; we did see a significant drop-off in page view rate after two minutes. The budget you need to deliver [brand lift](#) from longer ad lengths has been found to be 2x - 5x more.

Ultimately, though, the length matters far less than how compelling your video is—especially the first three seconds, when you need to quickly grab and maintain viewers' attention. 47% of the [value of a video campaign](#) is delivered within the first three seconds.

Note that 67% of all video impressions were 1-9 second videos.

Improve Your Results

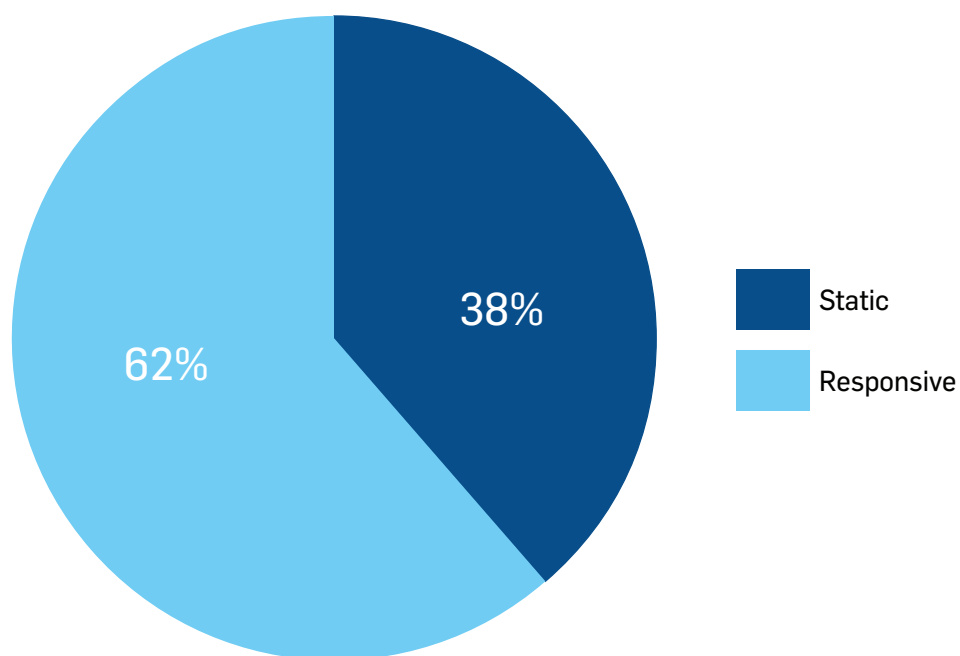
Focus on making your video content compelling, but if you want to optimize video length, the sweet spot seems to be somewhere around or between one minute and two minutes.



How do responsive banners compare to static banners?

STATIC VS. RESPONSIVE		
	STATIC	RESPONSIVE
PAGE VIEW RATE	1.37%	1.79%
PURCHASE RATE	0.007%	0.010%
ROI	797%	540%
COST/PAGE VIEW	\$0.13	\$0.13
CPA	\$25	\$29
CPC	\$0.27	\$0.18
CTR	0.66%	1.27%

Impressions



Understanding the Data

Data Insight

As the industry shifts to responsive ad formats, we were curious what percentage of the banner ads we serve out were static versus responsive. In 2023, 38% of impressions served were for static banners and 62% were for dynamic ads.

Dynamic ads also had a stronger performance. While static banners had a higher average ROI, dynamic ads drove a higher average page view rate, purchase rate, and CTR.

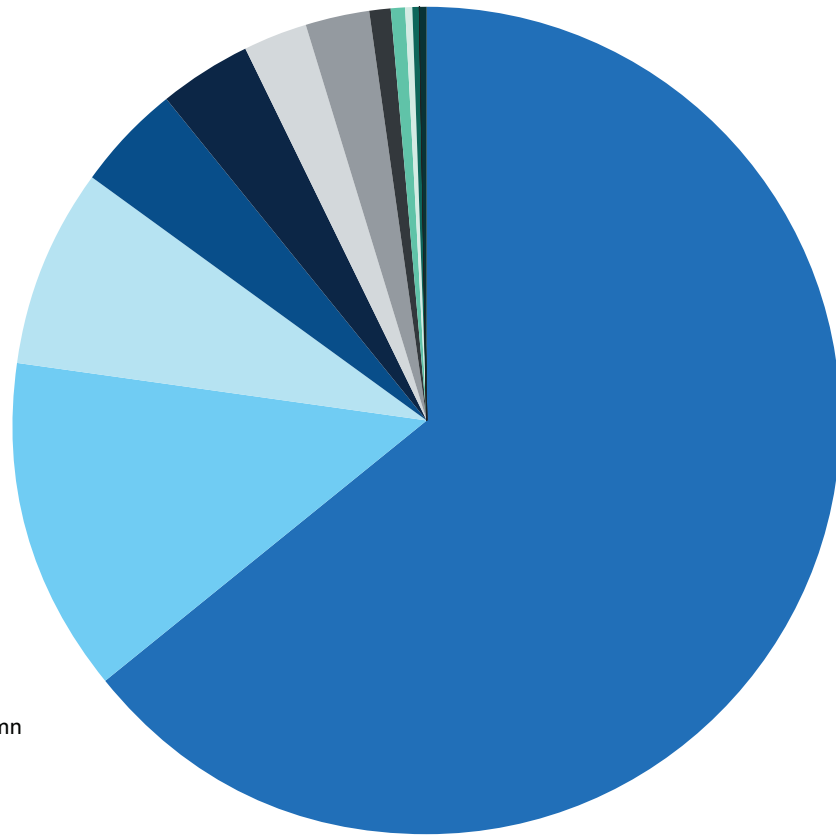
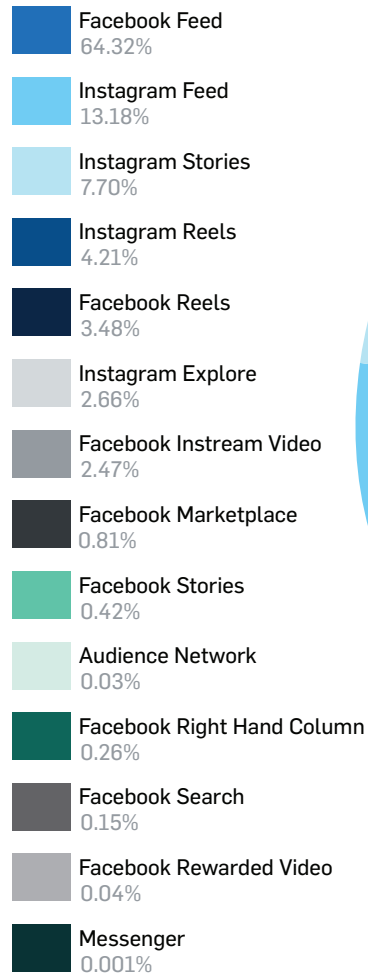
Improve Your Results

Our recommendation is to lean into Google's machine learning tools and move away from static banners when possible.

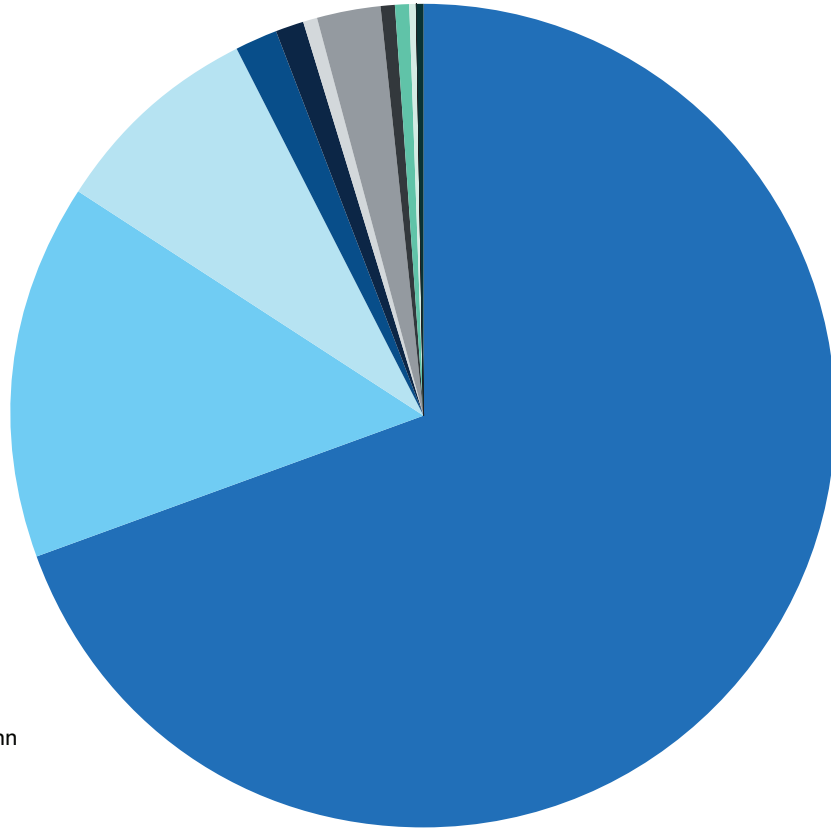
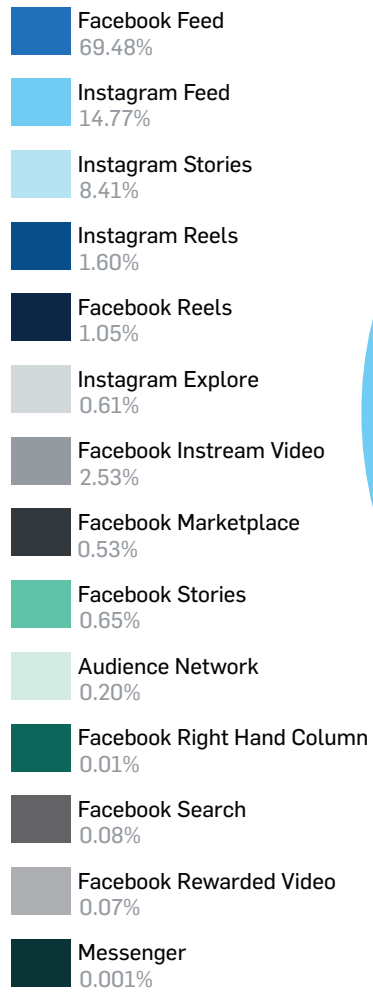
Learn more on the CI blog:

[Deciding When to Go Dynamic](#)

Impressions



Media Spend



Understanding the Data

Data Insight

While organizations would ideally customize their content to every Meta ad placement, in reality that's unfeasible—and perhaps unnecessary, given the Impressions and Spend by Placement section. So which placements are most effective? Facebook desktop feed, Instagram stories, Facebook mobile feed, and Facebook stories came out on top in terms of page view rate. Instagram feed also had a strong showing, and then there's a sharp drop-off in results.

Keep in mind that this data is skewed by the fact that arts audiences often prefer to purchase on a desktop computer, so the final ad viewed before visiting the website to purchase has an increased likelihood of being on desktop (which explains why Facebook desktop feed came out on top for both page view rate and purchase conversion rate).

Looking at just impressions and media spend to determine which placements to focus on when customizing content, the top performers are Facebook feed, Instagram feed, and Instagram stories, with the next highest placement (Instagram Reels) coming in with roughly half as many impressions.

Improve Your Results

Given effectiveness of each placement and how many impressions it drives, we recommend focusing your content customization efforts on Facebook feed, Instagram feed, Instagram stories, and Facebook stories. If you have more time, add Instagram and Facebook Reels to that list.



What is this metric?

On Meta, posts fall into one of two categories: timeline and dark. Timeline posts are publicly visible and appear on your Page, while dark posts never appear publicly on your Page; they're seen only by the specific users you target. You might, for example, run a dark post with renewal messaging as an ad that you serve only to last season's subscribers.

TIMELINE VS. DARK POSTS		
	TIMELINE	DARK
PAGE VIEW RATE	2.06%	2.20%
PURCHASE RATE	0.03%	0.03%
ROI	312%	471%
COST/PAGE VIEW	\$0.46	\$0.39
CPA	\$35	\$26
ENGAGEMENT RATE	0.39%	0.33%

TIMELINE CTA BUTTON VS. NO CTA BUTTON		
	CTA BUTTON	NO CTA BUTTON
PAGE VIEW RATE	2.07%	2.01%
PURCHASE RATE	0.03%	0.03%
COST/PAGE VIEW	\$0.48	\$0.46
CPA	\$35	\$37

Understanding the Data

Data Insight

With the exception of engagement rate, dark posts drove stronger results across the board. Our theory was that this difference comes down in part to CTA buttons, so we also broke down the timeline posts' data into those with and without CTA buttons. Dark posts always have CTA buttons, while timeline posts often do, but not universally. As we saw elsewhere in this study, posts with CTA buttons consistently outperform those without, and that held true here: the timeline posts with CTA buttons outperformed timeline posts without CTA buttons in every metric we looked at. However, dark posts still outperformed timeline posts with CTA buttons, so the difference between the two posts types comes down to more than just CTA buttons.

Promoted timeline posts likely have stronger engagement rates because they have a bit of an added “bump” from organic traffic—so if your goal is strictly engagement, you might want to consider posting to your timeline. But if you can, try to add a CTA button before running in paid!

Improve Your Results

For paid campaigns, use dark posts (which also allow you to be more strategic about serving different messaging to different audience segments). However, if your main KPI is engagement, you might want to use timeline posts—ideally with CTA buttons.

What to Expect in this Section

While Google and Meta are still the powerhouses of arts marketing, media usage has been shifting in recent years, from the rise of TikTok to the proliferation of ad-supported streaming services. That means evaluating your channels strategically is critical for meeting your marketing goals. This section highlights the three platforms we recommend thinking about now and for the future:

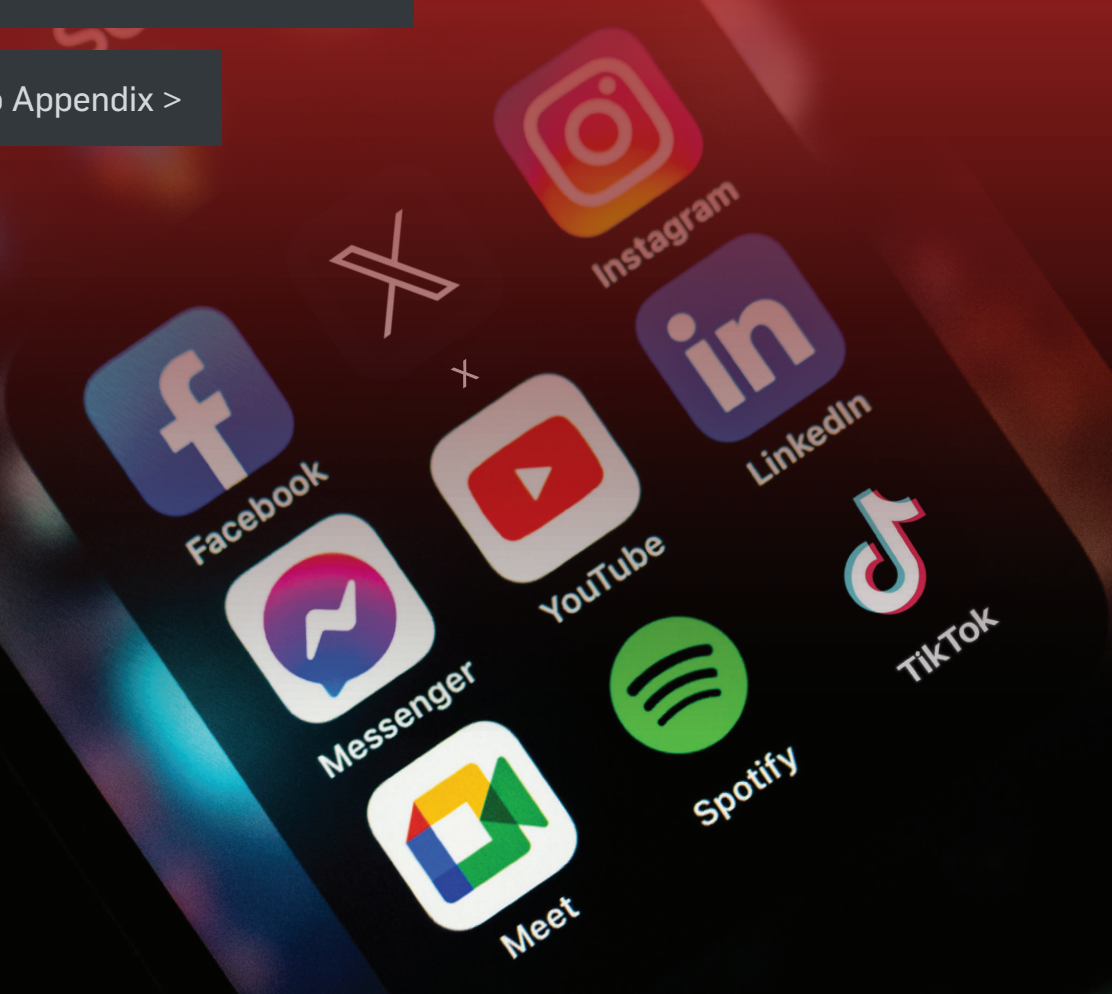
[TikTok](#)

[Spotify](#)

[CTV](#)

[Back to Content Benchmarks >](#)

[Skip to Appendix >](#)



\$2K

Average spend
across clients

\$1.2K

Median spend
across clients

0.18%

Page View Rate

\$2.17

Cost per Page View

\$4.00

CPM

0.88%

CTR

\$0.46

CPC



TIKTOK

Understanding the Data

Data Insight

Note that TikTok results are based on a 7/1 attribution window.

TikTok active usership in the US is huge and growing: currently around 150M people (compared to 270M on Facebook and YouTube, the largest social media platforms). What's especially impressive, though, is time spent on the platform. In the US, the average per day is 54 minutes. The next highest platform, YouTube, clocks in at 49 minutes. Google and Meta are still an essential investment, but media usership among other channels is shifting.

These results are based on seven campaigns that ran in 2023. Across industries in the US, TikTok now accounts for ~12% of social media ad spending.

Improve Your Results

We recommend that organizations with budgets that allow for it should allocate towards advertising on TikTok.

\$3.4K

Average spend
across clients

\$2.7K

Median spend
across clients

0.47%
CTR

\$2.21
CPC

\$10.36
CPM



SPOTIFY

Understanding the Data

Data Insight

This data is based on 20 Spotify campaigns. While the average media spend was \$3,402.82, about a quarter of the campaigns analyzed had budgets less than \$1,000. These campaigns with lower budgets saw a lower click-through rate (0.34%) than campaigns that spent more than \$1,000 (0.48%). Note that conversion tracking was not available for Spotify in 2023, which is why only in-platform metrics can be reported.

Spotify boasts almost 94 million users, half of whom listen with ads. These listeners are also on the younger side; around 29% of Spotify users are aged 25 to 34. Around [60% of users](#) say they pay more attention to ads on Spotify than traditional radio. Spotify is a very effective platform to reach potential audiences where we know they're listening.

Improve Your Results

If there's a natural music or podcast fit with your programming, and you have the budget available, then a Spotify campaign can provide an additional way to [reach new audiences](#).

\$35K

Average spend
across clients

\$17K

Median spend
across clients

0.05%
CTR

0.07%
Purchase Conversion Rate

248%
ROI

\$64.11
CPC

\$46
CPA

\$30.04
CPM

CTV

Understanding the Data

Data Insight

This data is based on just 6 campaigns, but CTV offers a huge opportunity for growth in channel diversification for arts and culture organizations. While it is definitely more expensive from a CPM/CPC standpoint, the purchase conversion rate is actually higher than that of Meta or Google, and the average ROI is quite solid.

What to Expect in this Section

In the following section, dive in deeper for more highlights on the top digital marketing metrics in Meta and Google to help you understand industry performance and how you can further improve your results.

Metrics in this section:

Campaign Objective Benchmarks with Genre/Org Size Breakdowns

[Holiday Programming](#)

[Subscriptions/Memberships](#)

[Campaign Type/Genre](#)

[Performance Metrics by Google Campaign Type](#)

Content Benchmarks with Genre/Region Breakdowns

[Post Type](#)

[Back to Diversifying Channels >](#)

[Jump to End >](#)

BALLET VS. OVERALL		
	BALLET	HOLIDAY OVERALL
ROI	1,376%	1,224%
PURCHASE RATE	0.05%	0.06%
PAGE VIEW RATE	3.73%	3.6%
CPA	\$19	\$17
COST/PAGE VIEW	\$0.27	\$0.29
AVERAGE SPEND	\$50K	\$19.1K
CPM	\$10.02	\$10.29

THEATRE VS. OVERALL		
	THEATRE	HOLIDAY OVERALL
ROI	1,084%	1,224%
PURCHASE RATE	0.07%	0.06%
PAGE VIEW RATE	3.03%	3.6%
CPA	\$17	\$17
COST/PAGE VIEW	\$0.38	\$0.29
AVERAGE SPEND	\$10.7K	\$19.1K
CPM	\$11.37	\$10.29

MUSEUM VS. OVERALL		
	MUSEUM	HOLIDAY OVERALL
ROI	449%	1,224%
PURCHASE RATE	0.08%	0.06%
PAGE VIEW RATE	3.51%	3.6%
CPA	\$13	\$17
COST/PAGE VIEW	\$0.28	\$0.29
AVERAGE SPEND	\$4.2K	\$19.1K
CPM	\$9.77	\$10.29

SYMPHONY/ORCHESTRA VS. OVERALL		
	SYMPHONY/ ORCHESTRA	HOLIDAY OVERALL
ROI	881%	1,224%
PURCHASE RATE	0.06%	0.06%
PAGE VIEW RATE	3.48%	3.6%
CPA	\$18	\$17
COST/PAGE VIEW	\$0.30	\$0.29
AVERAGE SPEND	\$15.5K	\$19.1K
CPM	\$10.27	\$10.29

ORGANIZATION SIZE			
	SMALL	MEDIUM	LARGE
ROI	599%	766%	1,641%
PURCHASE RATE	0.05%	0.04%	0.07%
PAGE VIEW RATE	3.51%	2.08%	4.52%
CPA	\$20	\$24	\$14
COST/PAGE VIEW	\$0.31	\$0.51	\$0.22
AVERAGE SPEND	\$4.4K	\$21.5K	\$25.3K
CPM	\$10.82	\$10.64	\$10.00



BALLET (ALL) VS. OVERALL

	BALLET (ALL)	HOLIDAY OVERALL
ROI	2,306%	2,098%
PURCHASE RATE	0.05%	0.04%
PAGE VIEW RATE	4.96%	4.36%
CPA	\$13	\$13
COST/PAGE VIEW	\$0.13	\$0.13
AVERAGE SPEND	\$53.4K	\$24.7K

BALLET (NO OUTLIERS) VS. OVERALL

	BALLET (NO OUTLIERS)	HOLIDAY OVERALL
ROI	3,418%	1,224%
PURCHASE RATE	0.06%	0.06%
PAGE VIEW RATE	6.19%	3.6%
CPA	\$8	\$17
COST/PAGE VIEW	\$0.08	\$0.29
AVERAGE SPEND	\$28.7K	\$19K



THEATRE VS. OVERALL		
	THEATRE	HOLIDAY OVERALL
ROI	1,877%	2,098%
PURCHASE RATE	0.04%	0.04%
PAGE VIEW RATE	3.75%	4.36%
CPA	\$11	\$13
COST/PAGE VIEW	\$0.13	\$0.13
AVERAGE SPEND	\$10.9K	\$24.7K

SYMPHONY/ORCHESTRA VS. OVERALL		
	SYMPHONY/ ORCHESTRA	HOLIDAY OVERALL
ROI	727%	1,224%
PURCHASE RATE	0.02%	0.06%
PAGE VIEW RATE	3.2%	3.6%
CPA	\$21	\$17
COST/PAGE VIEW	\$0.12	\$0.29
AVERAGE SPEND	\$7.7K	\$19.1K



ORGANIZATION SIZE			
	SMALL	MEDIUM	LARGE
ROI	1,307%	901%	2,964%
PURCHASE RATE	0.02%	0.02%	0.07%
PAGE VIEW RATE	2.3%	2.64%	6.06%
CPA	\$12	\$24	\$10
COST/PAGE VIEW	\$0.10	\$0.19	\$0.11
AVERAGE SPEND	\$1.9K	\$24.3K	\$33.2K

ORGANIZATION SIZE			
	SMALL	MEDIUM	LARGE
ROI	146%	843%	1,687%
PURCHASE RATE	0.02%	0.05%	0.09%
PAGE VIEW RATE	2.79%	2.91%	4.33%
CPA	\$63	\$22	\$15
COST/PAGE VIEW	\$0.44	\$0.37	\$0.31
AVERAGE SPEND	\$3.1K	\$2.5K	\$2.1K
CPM	\$12.39	\$10.66	\$13.61

DANCE



DISPLAY	
PURCHASE RATE	0.005%
PAGE VIEW RATE	1.28%
ROI	447%
COST PER PAGE VIEW	\$0.18
CPA	\$45

DISCOVERY/DEMAND GEN	
PURCHASE RATE	0.004%
PAGE VIEW RATE	1.48%
ROI	269%
COST PER PAGE VIEW	\$0.21
CPA	\$78

PAID SEARCH	
PURCHASE RATE	1.17%
PAGE VIEW RATE	80.69%
ROI	2,494%
COST PER PAGE VIEW	\$0.16
CPA	\$11

YOUTUBE	
PURCHASE RATE	0.003%
PAGE VIEW RATE	1.36%
ROI	143%
COST PER PAGE VIEW	\$0.24
CPA	\$117

PERFORMANCE MAX	
PURCHASE RATE	0.008%
PAGE VIEW RATE	1.94%
ROI	1,004%
COST PER PAGE VIEW	\$0.11
CPA	\$25



CAMPAIGN TYPE / GENRE

THEATRE



DISPLAY

PURCHASE RATE	0.006%
PAGE VIEW RATE	1.49%
ROI	346%
COST PER PAGE VIEW	\$0.14
CPA	\$36

DISCOVERY/DEMAND GEN

PURCHASE RATE	0.005%
PAGE VIEW RATE	1.86%
ROI	190%
COST PER PAGE VIEW	\$0.13
CPA	\$46

PAID SEARCH

PURCHASE RATE	2.2%
PAGE VIEW RATE	199.9%
ROI	2,794%
COST PER PAGE VIEW	\$0.08
CPA	\$7

YOUTUBE

PAGE VIEW RATE	0.004%
PURCHASE RATE	1.4%
ROI	177%
COST PER PAGE VIEW	\$0.17
CPA	\$59

PERFORMANCE MAX

PURCHASE RATE	0.03%
PAGE VIEW RATE	4.93%
ROI	1,901%
COST PER PAGE VIEW	\$0.07
CPA	\$10

SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA



DISPLAY	
PURCHASE RATE	0.006%
PAGE VIEW RATE	1.54%
ROI	540%
COST PER PAGE VIEW	\$0.11
CPA	\$31

DISCOVERY/DEMAND GEN	
PURCHASE RATE	0.04%
PAGE VIEW RATE	3.92%
ROI	818%
COST PER PAGE VIEW	\$0.13
CPA	\$12

PAID SEARCH	
PURCHASE RATE	0.57%
PAGE VIEW RATE	41.63%
ROI	3,651%
COST PER PAGE VIEW	\$0.07
CPA	\$5

YOUTUBE	
PURCHASE RATE	0.01%
PAGE VIEW RATE	2.22%
ROI	518%
COST PER PAGE VIEW	\$0.12
CPA	\$28



CAMPAIGN TYPE / GENRE

MUSEUM EXHIBITION



DISPLAY	
PURCHASE RATE	0.001%
PAGE VIEW RATE	0.69%
ROI	-44%
COST PER PAGE VIEW	\$0.22
CPA	\$105

DISCOVERY/DEMAND GEN	
PURCHASE RATE	0.003%
PAGE VIEW RATE	2.03%
ROI	-63%
COST PER PAGE VIEW	\$0.18
CPA	\$118

PAID SEARCH	
PURCHASE RATE	2.69%
PAGE VIEW RATE	140.8%
ROI	2,764%
COST PER PAGE VIEW	\$0.04
CPA	\$2

YOUTUBE	
PURCHASE RATE	0.01
PAGE VIEW RATE	1.93%
ROI	-22%
COST PER PAGE VIEW	\$0.19
CPA	\$27

PERFORMANCE MAX	
PURCHASE RATE	0.39%
PAGE VIEW RATE	24.02%
ROI	1,831%
COST PER PAGE VIEW	\$0.07
CPA	\$5

PAID SEARCH	
% OF ORGS USING	73%
% OF OVERALL SPEND	47.86%
PURCHASE CONV. RATE	1.86%
PAGE VIEW RATE	102.89%
ROI	3,392%
COST PER PAGE VIEW	\$0.07
CPA	\$4
CPC	\$0.38
CTR	18.77%
CPM	\$71.88

PMAx	
% OF ORGS USING	17%
% OF OVERALL SPEND	6.04%
PURCHASE CONV. RATE	0.02%
PAGE VIEW RATE	2.29%
ROI	1,077%
COST PER PAGE VIEW	\$0.10
CPA	\$15
CPC	\$0.15
CTR	1.45%
CPM	\$2.20

PERFORMANCE METRICS BY GOOGLE CAMPAIGN TYPE



DISPLAY	
% OF ORGS USING	72%
% OF OVERALL SPEND	24.76%
PURCHASE CONV. RATE	0.006%
PAGE VIEW RATE	1.45%
ROI	476%
COST PER PAGE VIEW	\$0.14
CPA	\$34
CPC	\$0.22
CTR	0.92%
CPM	\$2.04

DISCOVERY/DEMAND GEN	
% OF ORGS USING	30%
% OF OVERALL SPEND	5.81%
PURCHASE CONV. RATE	0.005%
PAGE VIEW RATE	1.86%
ROI	322%
COST PER PAGE VIEW	\$0.14
CPA	\$48
CPC	\$0.15
CTR	1.73%
CPM	\$2.58

YOUTUBE	
% OF ORGS USING	49%
% OF OVERALL SPEND	14.88%
PURCHASE CONV. RATE	0.01%
PAGE VIEW RATE	2.06%
ROI	391%
COST PER PAGE VIEW	\$0.17
CPA	\$37
CPC	\$0.31
CTR	1.16%
CPM	\$3.55

PERFORMANCE METRICS BY GOOGLE CAMPAIGN TYPE



NO BREAKDOWN

PAGE VIEW RATE	
LINK	2.5%
VIDEO	2.1%
IMAGE CAROUSEL	2%
IMAGE	1.9%
SLIDESHOW	1.9%
ALBUM	1.6%
DYNAMIC	1.2%

COST/PAGE VIEW	
LINK	\$0.40
VIDEO	\$0.43
IMAGE CAROUSEL	\$0.44
IMAGE	\$0.44
SLIDESHOW	\$0.52
ALBUM	\$0.57
DYNAMIC	\$0.36

PURCHASE RATE	
LINK	0.04%
VIDEO	0.03%
IMAGE CAROUSEL	0.03%
IMAGE	0.03%
SLIDESHOW	0.03%
ALBUM	0.03%
DYNAMIC	0.009%

CPA	
LINK	\$26
VIDEO	\$32
IMAGE CAROUSEL	\$26
IMAGE	\$24
SLIDESHOW	\$31
ALBUM	\$32
DYNAMIC	\$49

ENGAGEMENT RATE	
LINK	0.43%
VIDEO	0.37%
IMAGE CAROUSEL	0.24%
IMAGE	0.32%
SLIDESHOW	0.34%
ALBUM	0.52%
DYNAMIC	0.24%



POST TYPE



PERFORMING ARTS

PAGE VIEW RATE	
LINK	2.9%
VIDEO	3.7%
IMAGE CAROUSEL	3.6%
IMAGE	3.4%
SLIDESHOW	3.3%
ALBUM	3.8%
DYNAMIC	3.2%

COST/PAGE VIEW	
LINK	\$0.53
VIDEO	\$0.40
IMAGE CAROUSEL	\$0.40
IMAGE	\$0.41
SLIDESHOW	\$0.50
ALBUM	\$0.41
DYNAMIC	\$0.46

PURCHASE RATE	
LINK	0.02%
VIDEO	0.03%
IMAGE CAROUSEL	0.03%
IMAGE	0.03%
SLIDESHOW	0.03%
ALBUM	0.03%
DYNAMIC	0.02%

CPA	
LINK	\$38
VIDEO	\$33
IMAGE CAROUSEL	\$31
IMAGE	\$27
SLIDESHOW	\$33
ALBUM	\$28
DYNAMIC	\$44

ENGAGEMENT RATE	
LINK	0.41%
VIDEO	0.35%
IMAGE CAROUSEL	0.21%
IMAGE	0.31%
SLIDESHOW	0.25%
ALBUM	0.48%
DYNAMIC	0.36%



EXHIBIT BASED

PAGE VIEW RATE	
LINK	3.3%
VIDEO	3.7%
IMAGE CAROUSEL	3.8%
IMAGE	3%
SLIDESHOW	4.3%
ALBUM	2.0%
DYNAMIC	2.9%

COST/PAGE VIEW	
LINK	\$0.43
VIDEO	\$0.36
IMAGE CAROUSEL	\$0.32
IMAGE	\$0.40
SLIDESHOW	\$0.40
ALBUM	\$0.69
DYNAMIC	\$0.26

PURCHASE RATE	
LINK	0.02%
VIDEO	0.02%
IMAGE CAROUSEL	0.03%
IMAGE	0.02%
SLIDESHOW	0.04%
ALBUM	0.01%
DYNAMIC	0.05%

CPA	
LINK	\$41
VIDEO	\$36
IMAGE CAROUSEL	\$31
IMAGE	\$36
SLIDESHOW	\$20
ALBUM	\$62
DYNAMIC	\$11

ENGAGEMENT RATE	
LINK	0.44%
VIDEO	0.36%
IMAGE CAROUSEL	0.32%
IMAGE	0.41%
SLIDESHOW	0.37%
ALBUM	0.63%
DYNAMIC	1.02%



REGION: WEST

PAGE VIEW RATE	
LINK	1.6%
VIDEO	2.1%
IMAGE CAROUSEL	1.7%
IMAGE	1.8%
SLIDESHOW	1.7%
ALBUM	1.2%
DYNAMIC	1.9%

COST/PAGE VIEW	
LINK	\$0.93
VIDEO	\$0.48
IMAGE CAROUSEL	\$0.48
IMAGE	\$0.43
SLIDESHOW	\$0.47
ALBUM	\$0.78
DYNAMIC	\$0.55

PURCHASE RATE	
LINK	0.06%
VIDEO	0.03%
IMAGE CAROUSEL	0.03%
IMAGE	0.03%
SLIDESHOW	0.04%
ALBUM	0.03%
DYNAMIC	0.02%

CPA	
LINK	\$24
VIDEO	\$31
IMAGE CAROUSEL	\$32
IMAGE	\$25
SLIDESHOW	\$20
ALBUM	\$36
DYNAMIC	\$43

ENGAGEMENT RATE	
LINK	0.39%
VIDEO	0.36%
IMAGE CAROUSEL	0.18%
IMAGE	0.28%
SLIDESHOW	0.33%
ALBUM	0.37%
DYNAMIC	0.38%



REGION: MIDWEST

PAGE VIEW RATE	
LINK	1.6%
VIDEO	2.3%
IMAGE CAROUSEL	1.9%
IMAGE	1.8%
SLIDESHOW	1.1%
ALBUM	1.9%
DYNAMIC	2.4%

COST/PAGE VIEW	
LINK	\$0.57
VIDEO	\$0.42
IMAGE CAROUSEL	\$0.38
IMAGE	\$0.43
SLIDESHOW	\$0.83
ALBUM	\$0.41
DYNAMIC	\$0.40

PURCHASE RATE	
LINK	0.02%
VIDEO	0.03%
IMAGE CAROUSEL	0.02%
IMAGE	0.03%
SLIDESHOW	0.02%
ALBUM	0.04%
DYNAMIC	0.02%

CPA	
LINK	\$40
VIDEO	\$32
IMAGE CAROUSEL	\$31
IMAGE	\$29
SLIDESHOW	\$52
ALBUM	\$21
DYNAMIC	\$60

ENGAGEMENT RATE	
LINK	0.03%
VIDEO	0.33%
IMAGE CAROUSEL	0.22%
IMAGE	0.33%
SLIDESHOW	0.31%
ALBUM	0.46%
DYNAMIC	0.24%



REGION: NORTH

PAGE VIEW RATE	
LINK	1.5%
VIDEO	1.9%
IMAGE CAROUSEL	1.0%
IMAGE	2%
SLIDESHOW	2.2%
ALBUM	1.3%
DYNAMIC	1%

COST/PAGE VIEW	
LINK	\$0.61
VIDEO	\$0.45
IMAGE CAROUSEL	\$0.53
IMAGE	\$0.43
SLIDESHOW	\$0.51
ALBUM	\$0.78
DYNAMIC	\$0.27

PURCHASE RATE	
LINK	0.07%
VIDEO	0.03%
IMAGE CAROUSEL	0.05%
IMAGE	0.04%
SLIDESHOW	0.03%
ALBUM	0.02%
DYNAMIC	0.005%

CPA	
LINK	\$12
VIDEO	\$31
IMAGE CAROUSEL	\$21
IMAGE	\$21
SLIDESHOW	\$38
ALBUM	\$50
DYNAMIC	\$54

ENGAGEMENT RATE	
LINK	0.75%
VIDEO	0.40%
IMAGE CAROUSEL	0.27%
IMAGE	0.34%
SLIDESHOW	0.42%
ALBUM	0.59%
DYNAMIC	0.20%



REGION: SOUTH

PAGE VIEW RATE	
LINK	1.2%
VIDEO	2.1%
IMAGE CAROUSEL	1.7%
IMAGE	1.7%
SLIDESHOW	1.2%
ALBUM	2.1%
DYNAMIC	-

COST/PAGE VIEW	
LINK	\$0.85
VIDEO	\$0.52
IMAGE CAROUSEL	\$0.58
IMAGE	\$0.43
SLIDESHOW	\$0.95
ALBUM	\$0.60
DYNAMIC	-

PURCHASE RATE	
LINK	0.02%
VIDEO	0.03%
IMAGE CAROUSEL	0.03%
IMAGE	0.03%
SLIDESHOW	0.03%
ALBUM	0.03%
DYNAMIC	-

CPA	
LINK	\$50
VIDEO	\$36
IMAGE CAROUSEL	\$30
IMAGE	\$35
SLIDESHOW	\$37
ALBUM	\$46
DYNAMIC	-

ENGAGEMENT RATE	
LINK	0.28%
VIDEO	0.37%
IMAGE CAROUSEL	0.3%
IMAGE	0.33%
SLIDESHOW	0.19%
ALBUM	0.48%
DYNAMIC	-



REGION: CANADA

PAGE VIEW RATE	
LINK	3.4%
VIDEO	3.3%
IMAGE CAROUSEL	3.4%
IMAGE	2.5%
SLIDESHOW	3.1%
ALBUM	-
DYNAMIC	-

COST/PAGE VIEW	
LINK	\$0.37
VIDEO	\$0.28
IMAGE CAROUSEL	\$0.25
IMAGE	\$0.29
SLIDESHOW	\$0.28
ALBUM	-
DYNAMIC	-

PURCHASE RATE	
LINK	0.04%
VIDEO	0.03%
IMAGE CAROUSEL	0.04%
IMAGE	0.03%
SLIDESHOW	0.02%
ALBUM	-
DYNAMIC	-

CPA	
LINK	\$29
VIDEO	\$32
IMAGE CAROUSEL	\$23
IMAGE	\$24
SLIDESHOW	\$35
ALBUM	-
DYNAMIC	-

ENGAGEMENT RATE	
LINK	0.21%
VIDEO	0.29%
IMAGE CAROUSEL	0.22%
IMAGE	0.24%
SLIDESHOW	0.41%
ALBUM	-
DYNAMIC	-

Thank you for reading the **2024 Cultural Compass: Digital Marketing Benchmarks to Guide Arts and Cultural Institutions!**

There's simply no other industry like the arts, and we take pride and responsibility in bringing valuable insights to our colleagues across the field. We thrive on the collaborative nature of this work.

We nurture and practice what we love. The arts live on because we all collectively give it life. Artists, marketers, and leaders work hand-in-hand to keep stages alive, seats filled, and audiences engaged. We hope that the Cultural Compass can contribute to this ongoing conversation and collaboration, and we are so grateful to the 150+ partners who happily gave us permission to include their aggregate, anonymized data in this study (and for the long partnerships we have had with so many of them).

Thank you, again, for being part of this journey with us! We look forward to continuing to serve the arts industry with upcoming studies.

Let's keep moving forward, together.

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