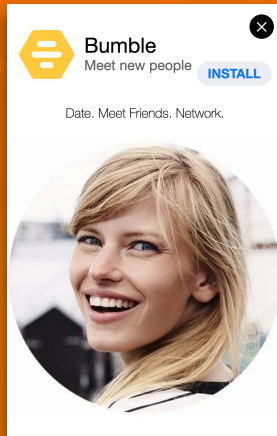


# Mobile Ad Creative Index

2020 Performance Trends & Benchmarks



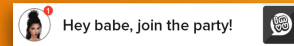
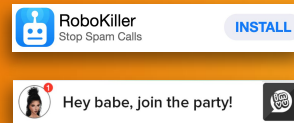
INTERSTITIAL



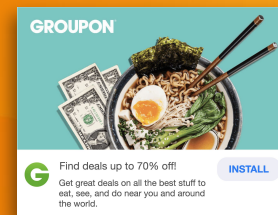
VIDEO



NATIVE



BANNER



NATIVE



INTERACTIVE

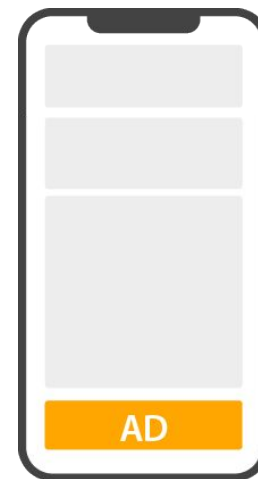
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# Introduction

The advance of adtech and the evolution of creative ad formats provide the catalyst for a new phase of in-app advertising innovation and growth. In 2019 alone, app store intelligence provider App Annie predicted the number of apps using in-app advertising to reach new users would grow by 60%. It's an exciting dynamic that will drive the total value of in-app advertising to an [all-time high of \\$201 billion by 2021](#).

- 75% of marketers buy programmatic in-app ads because they offer better customer engagement and better audience targeting. ([Forrester, The Move Toward In-App Advertising](#))
- North America leads with largest in-app advertising market (forecast to reach \$65.6 billion by 2025) but APAC will see the highest growth rate over the forecast period. ([Grand View Research](#))
- In-app advertising recall is impressive. Overall, 90% of smartphone users recall seeing mobile ads within the first few days the ad was originally shown. ([IAB](#))



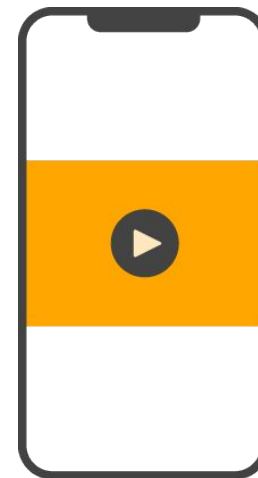
Some ad creatives are making a comeback while others are making a splash. Banners, which made their debut 25 years ago, continue to offer value for money. They're currently crushing it in the Gaming app category, where the explosive growth of hyper-casual games has also been a boon for banner ads.

High-impact ad creatives, such as video, chalk up the highest engagement benchmarks. The average click-through rates for this ad format are [7.5x higher than display ads.](#)

It's also a must to make a match between the experience the ad creative offers and the value your app delivers. So, what are the types of in-app ads exactly? Let's start with a look at the various ad formats, where you can use them and why they're a worthwhile investment.

**7.5x**

higher than display ads





### Banner

Traditional and standard level of ad units served at the bottom or top of the tablet or smartphone screen. Today, banners remain one of the few non-intrusive mobile ad formats that can be easily implemented into nearly any mobile app.



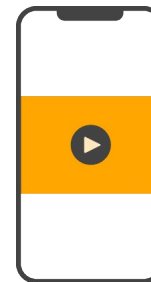
### Native

Designed to match both the form and function of the user experience in which they are placed. The most common native ad formats are in-feed units, paid search units, recommendation widgets, and promoted listings.



### Interstitial

Full-screen ads that appear during transitions within an app. This provides a smooth transition between two levels of a mobile game or between two stories in a news app, makes them feel less intrusive and more engaging.



### Video

This ad creative uses video to engage audiences. Rewarded video is perhaps the newest ad format, offering users perks and prizes in exchange for watching or interacting with an ad.



The Mobile Ad Creative Index tracks the costs and conversion rates across four ad creative formats (Banner, Interstitial, Native and Video). It also maps the user interaction and engagement metrics across a variety of app categories (Dating, Gaming, Finance, Shopping, Travel and Utility) to help marketers choose the appropriate ad formats and context that can turn a user into a loyal customer.

Finally, the report examines monthly trends and breaks down data by platform (iOS and Android) and region (APAC, EMEA, LATAM and North America).

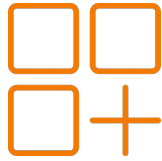
But wait, there's more! Even the most detailed data can't capture all the variables marketers must consider to deliver winning ad creative. To help you to craft ad creatives to activate and motivate audiences, we share A/B creative testing insights exclusively from three [Liftoff Mobile Heroes](#), marketers recognized for their accomplishments and expertise.

# Report Highlights by the Numbers

- Install Costs:** CPIs for all ad creatives are up to **22.6% lower** than the previous year.
- Register:** Banners, with the **lowest cost (\$8.44)**, shine with a conversion rate of 24%, followed closely by Natives (23%) and Interstitials (21%).
- Purchase:** Videos pair a price tag that is just pennies more than Banners, for example, with a payoff that is huge (**nearly 3% higher conversion rate**).
- In-App Purchase:** Costs across all ad formats are off-the charts, while engagement hovers in the mere **single-digits**.
- Platforms:** At \$1.26 on **Android, down 11.3%** from the previous year, Banners are a steal. It's a similar story for iOS, where the cost is down 17.2%.
- Seasons:** Marketers who want to trigger purchases can find bargains in the winter when costs are the lowest for the year—and high **conversion rates up to 11%** are a bonus.

# Methodology

**Date Range:** Nov. 1 2018 - Oct. 31 2019



**1,395**

Apps Included



**353**

Impressions (B)



**4.86**

Clicks (B)



**189**

Installs (MM)



**245**

First Time Events (MM)



# Mobile Ad Creative Benchmarks

Video is effective deeper in the funnel —  
priciest ad format in North America

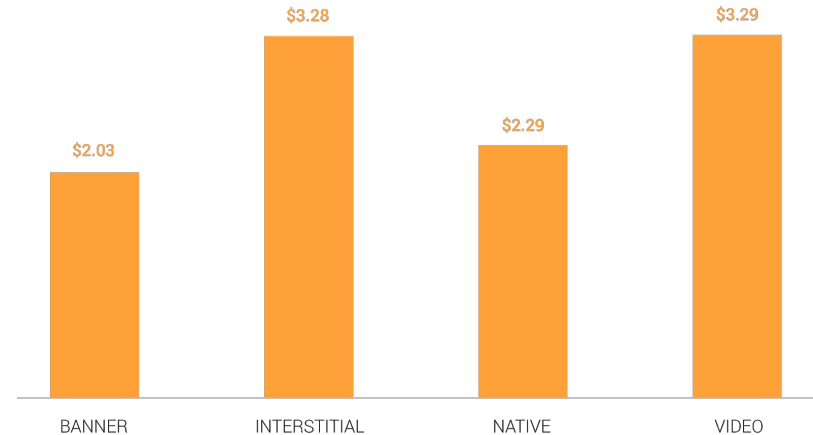


## Similar ad formats come at a similar price point.

Install costs across ad creatives show an interesting correlation between richness and price. Videos (\$3.29) and Interstitials (\$3.28) tie on price, and both offer a strikingly similar and enhanced experience. Banners (\$2.03) and Natives (\$2.29) are similar in price and nearly identical in their ability to deliver convincing campaigns.

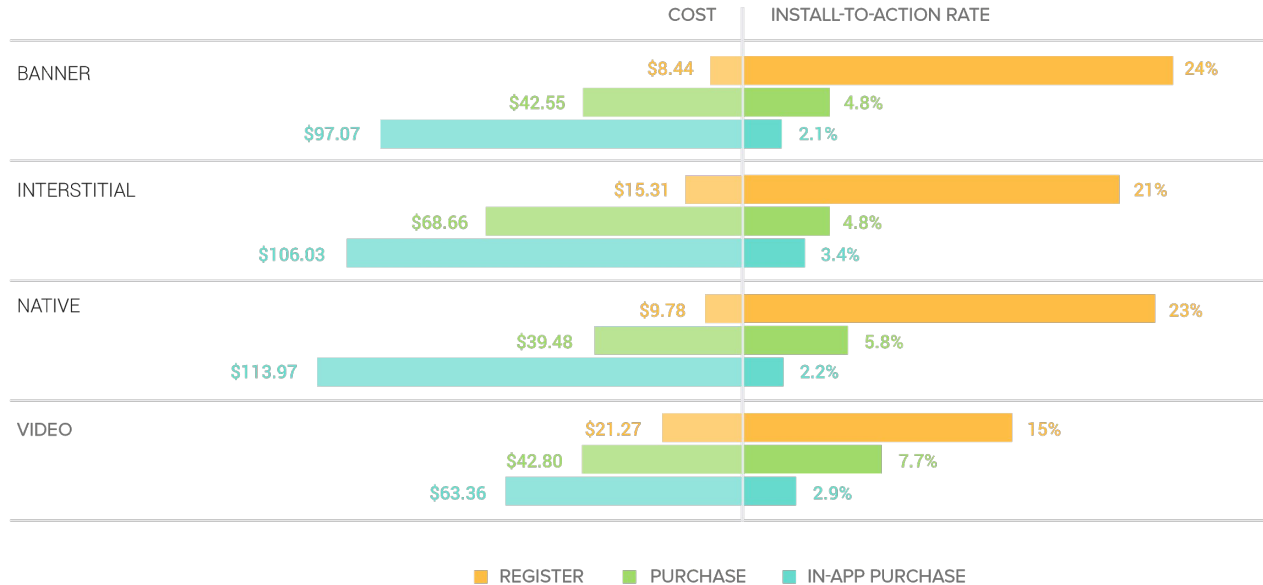
- CPIs for all ad formats are significantly lower than the previous year. These range from Interstitials, which dipped just 2.6% from \$3.37 the previous year, to Natives, which dropped a massive 22.6%.
- Install costs are attractive, but there are more bargains to be had depending on your app category. An example is Social, where ad format costs across the board are up to 3x cheaper.
- Banners are consistently low-cost, down 12.1% from the previous year, allowing marketers to invest heavily or combine them with other ad formats for impact.

Cost per Install by Ad Format



# Most mobile ad formats offer value for money mid-funnel, while Videos and Natives power purchases with significant engagement.

Cost & Conversion Rates by Ad Format



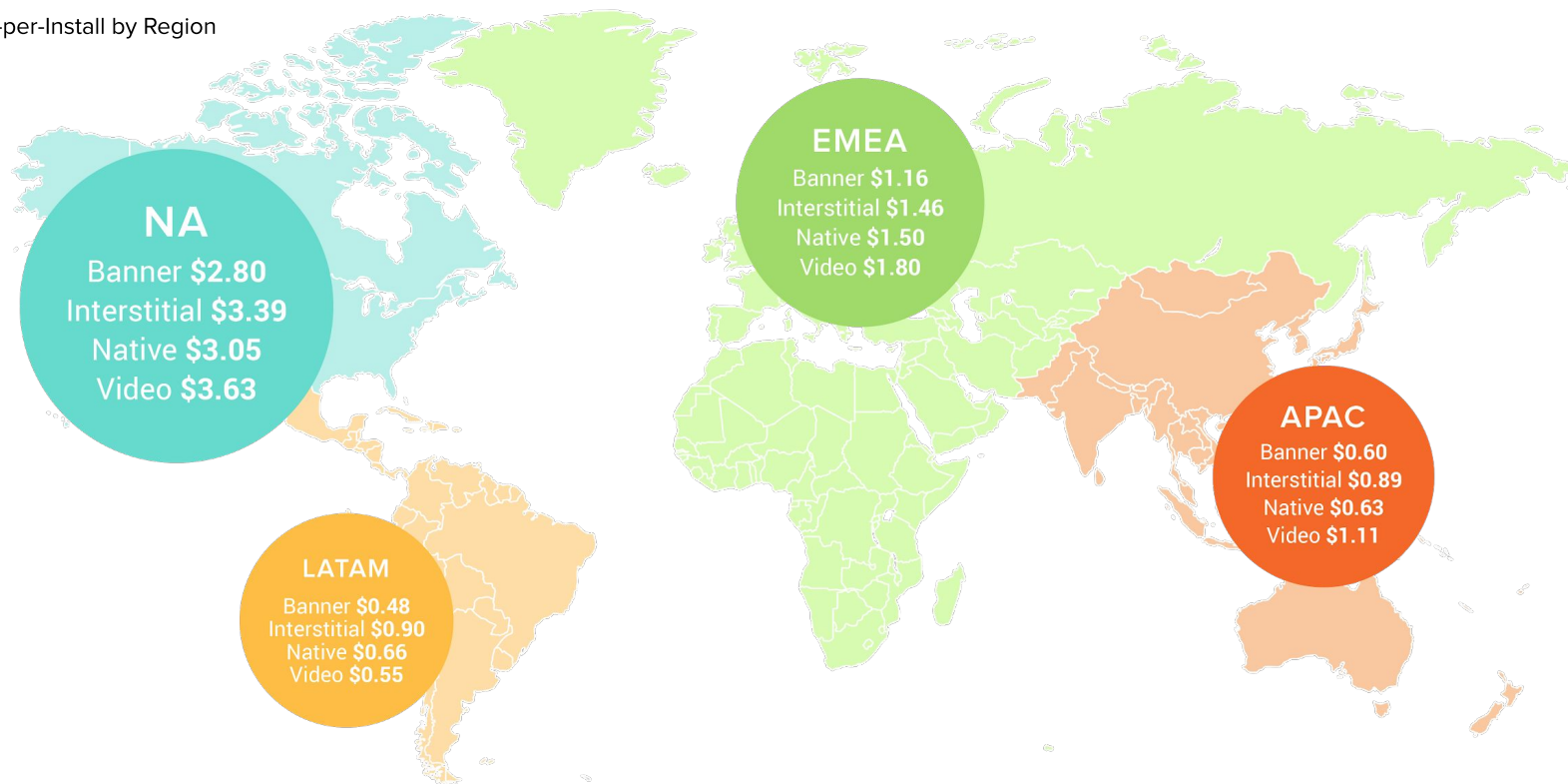
## **Video isn't the best match to drive registrations, but it does prime users for purchases.**

Videos may not make much of an impression mid-funnel, where it delivers the lowest engagement rate (15%) for the highest price (\$21.27). But deeper in the funnel, it's a different story. There, Videos shine, promising the highest conversion for an affordable cost.

- Mid-funnel is where Banners shine, followed by Natives and Interstitials.
- Costs increase for all ad formats deeper in the funnel. A prime example is Interstitials, an ad format that delivers only modest engagement (4.8%) at the highest price point (\$68.66). Significantly, Banners have the same conversion rate with a much lower cost (\$42.55).
- In-App Purchase is a pricey post-install activity to trigger. Costs across all ad formats are high, while engagement hovers in the single-digits.

# North America leads the pack with the highest cost across all ad creatives.

Cost-per-Install by Region



## **Banners are a steal in APAC — and Videos are pricey everywhere except LATAM.**

The App Annie observation that mature markets, populated by sophisticated users often spoiled for choice, come at a significant cost doesn't hold up when we review data across the regions. North America, a highly developed market, obeys the rule, offering all ad formats at a high cost. However, APAC, an equally (and in some cases exceptionally) mature market, is a region brimming with bargains. It comes in third in the mix, with CPIs that are generally half the cost of EMEA.

- North America leads in price — costs on average 2x more than EMEA, 4x more than APAC and 5x more than LATAM.
- Predictably, costs in LATAM a market on the move, are currently at the low-end of the scale.
- EMEA, the “sleeping giant of app marketing,” is waking, a dynamic that pushes up prices across all ad creatives and places the region second only to North America.

# Ad Creative Performance by Platform

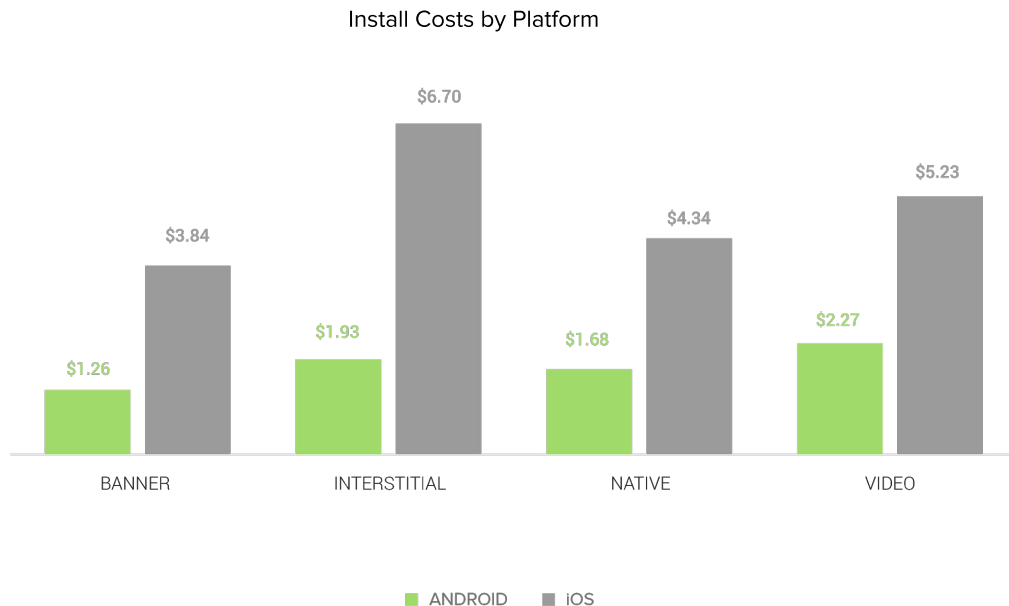
Android audiences appreciate Banners,  
iOS users embrace Natives – and Video  
ads appeal to everyone



## Banners are the bargain ad creative across both platforms.

Observers may debate whether Banner ads still pack a punch, but there's no denying that they win on price. At \$1.26 on Android, down 11.3% from the previous year, the ad creative is a steal. It's a similar story for iOS, where the cost is down 17.2%.

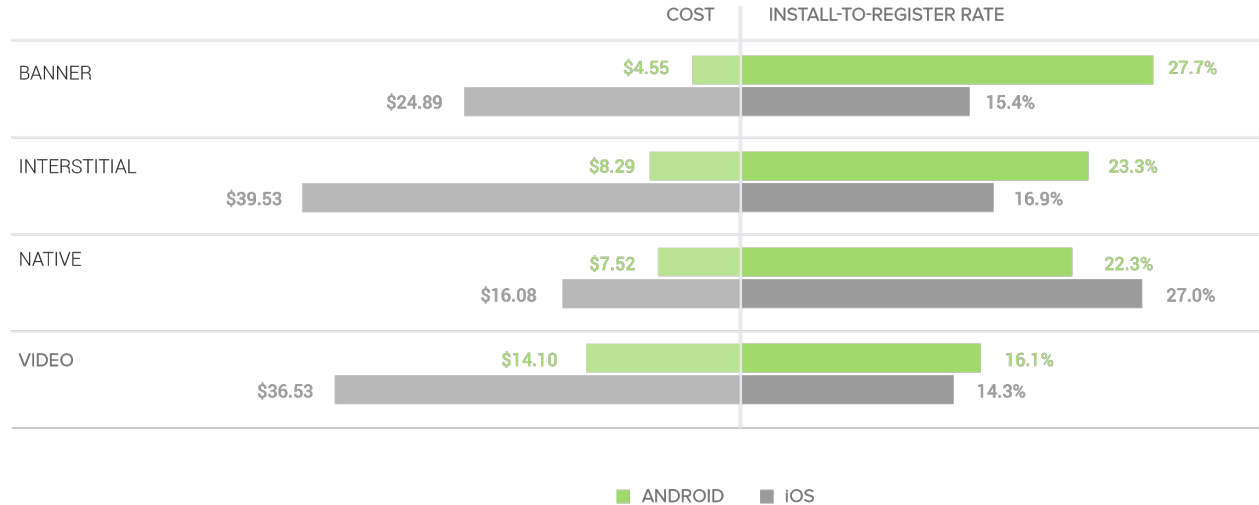
- Interstitial is the ad creative where the difference between platforms is most striking. The price for iOS is more than 3X the cost on Android.
- Though down 17.5% from the previous year, Video remains the most expensive format on Android.
- The cost of Native on Android has increased by pennies compared to the previous year, while the price tag for Native on iOS is down 6.5% from the previous year.





# Register: Android combines high appeal with lower costs, while iOS demands high prices for low engagement rates.

Register Costs & Conversion Rates by Platform

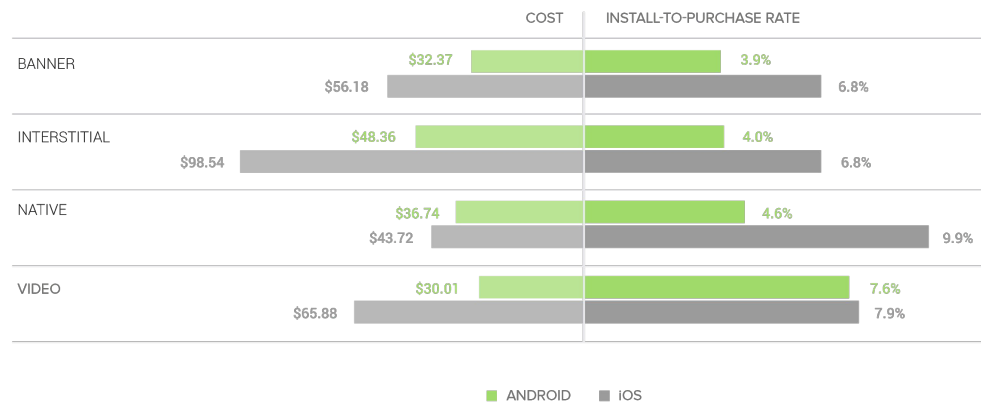


# Purchase: Android is the bargain, but iOS clinches the deal.

iOS drives engagement rates at significant cost. It's a powerful combination, but marketers should consider another variable: the amount of the purchase. The assumption that iOS users spend more than their Android counterparts still holds some truth. But it's not a given as the gap is closing thanks to high-end Android devices.

- Across all mobile ad creatives, iOS costs are significantly higher with prices ranging between 2x and 7x that of Android.
- Native has the greatest appeal on iOS, delivering the highest engagement rate (9.9%) for the lowest price (\$43.72) on the platform.
- Video is where Android has the edge, combining attractive engagement with bargain prices. Video on Android is 54.5% cheaper than iOS — and delivers a similar conversion.

Purchase Costs & Conversion Rates by Platform

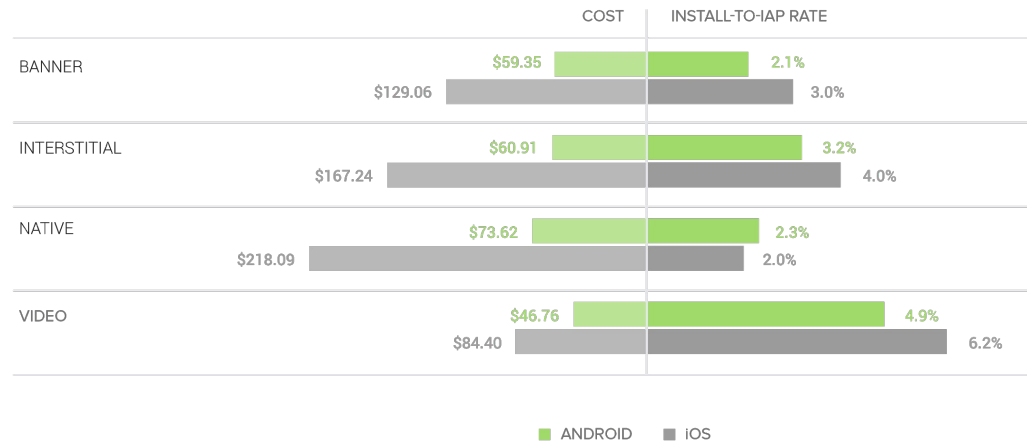


# In-App Purchase: Video offers value across both platforms.

Video stands out as the ad creative that captures significant audience attention at a moderate cost. For both platforms it combines the lowest costs with the highest engagement rates.

- The second choice for marketers on Android is Interstitials. They offer the unmatched combination of affordable price and impressive engagement. Not so for iOS, which comes in at roughly 3x the cost and delivers a conversion rate that barely exceeds Android.
- Natives on iOS pairs the highest price tag (\$218.09) with the least attractive conversion rate (2%).
- Banners sit in the “golden middle” for Android. They combine moderate cost with a reasonable engagement rate.

In-App Purchase Costs & Conversion Rates by Platform



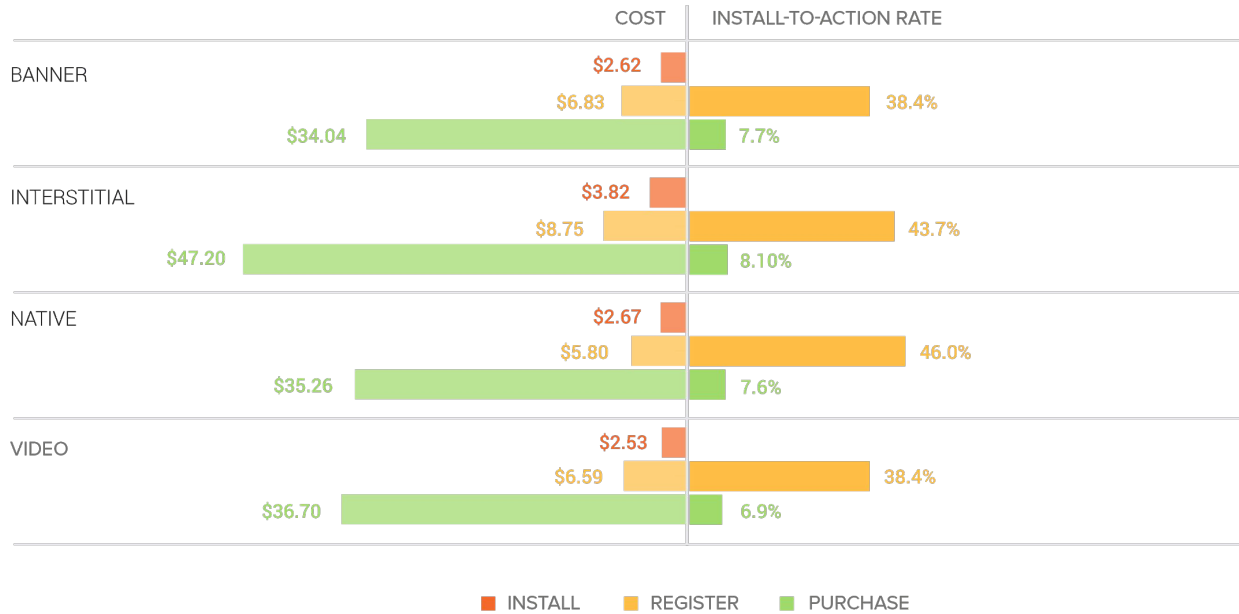
# Costs & Conversion Rates by App Category

A breakdown of data across Dating, Gaming,  
Finance, Shopping, Travel and Utility apps



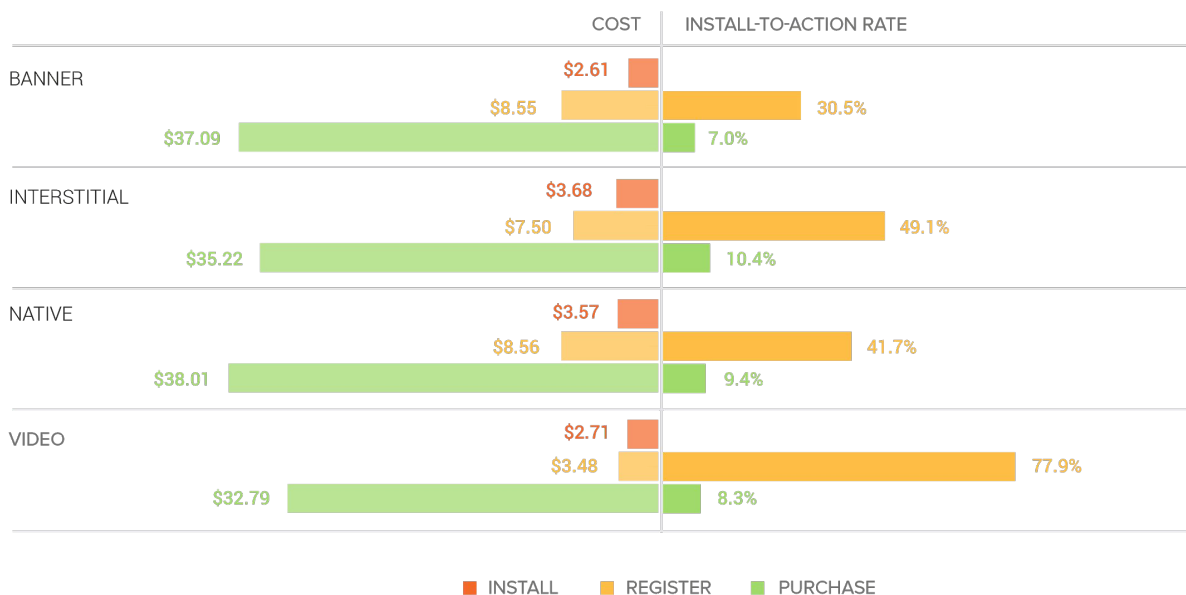
# Banners drive impressive results — but Native and Video prime shoppers for a purchase at a low cost.

Shopping Costs & Conversion Rates



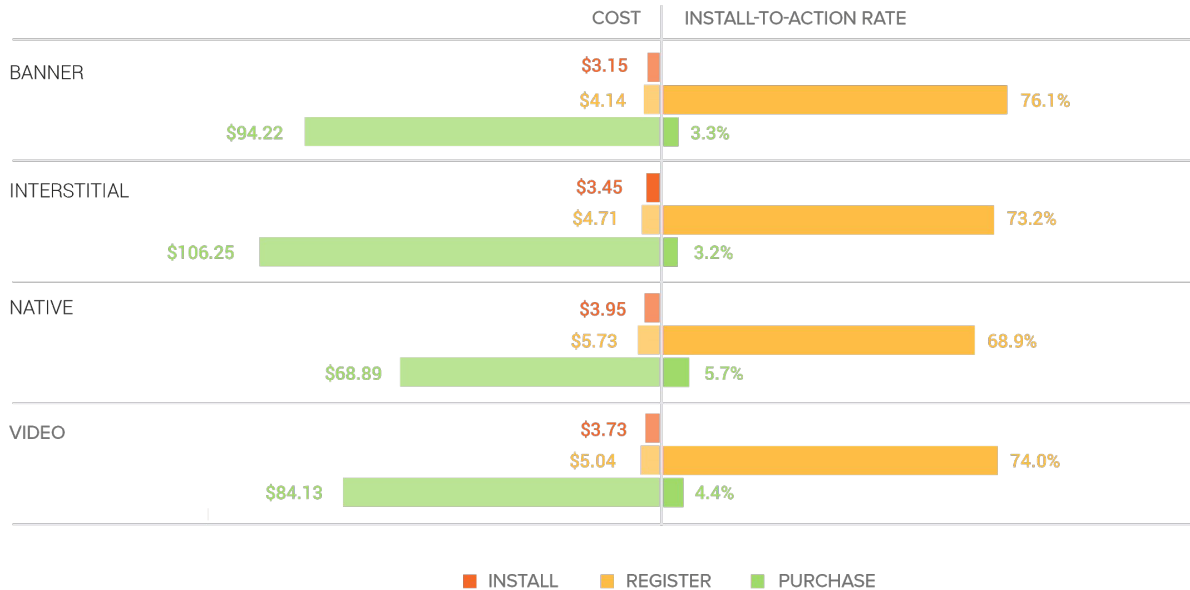
# Video and Interstitial ads encourage deeper interaction with Finance apps.

Finance Costs & Conversion Rates



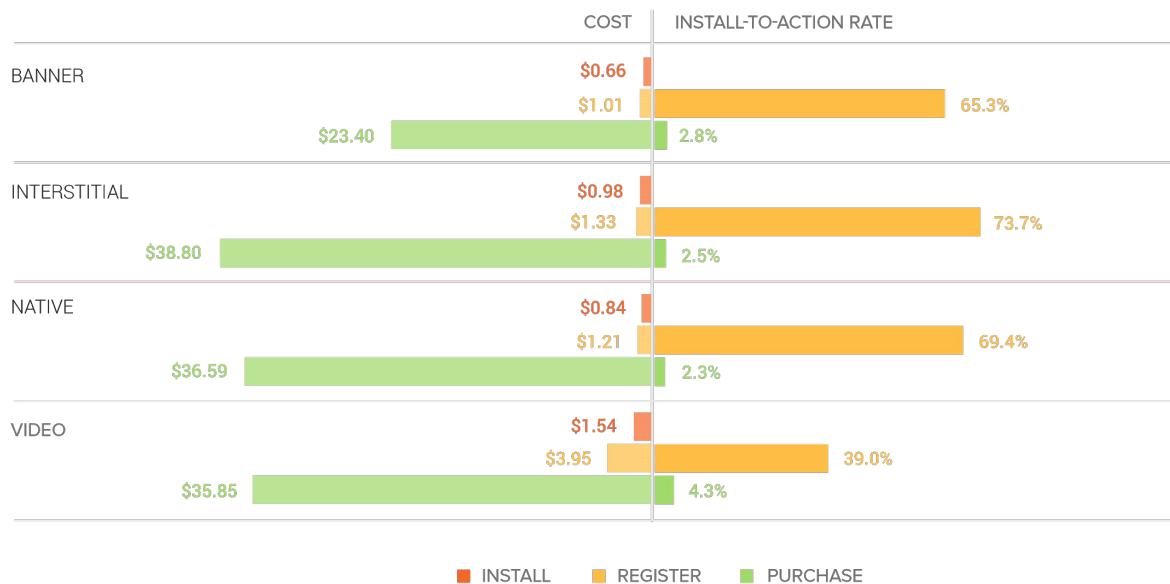
# Players respond similarly to all ad creatives — but Natives win where it counts, combining lowest cost with highest engagement.

Gaming Costs & Conversion Rates



# Getting Dating app users to commit is pricey. Banners offer value, while Video converts at an affordable price.

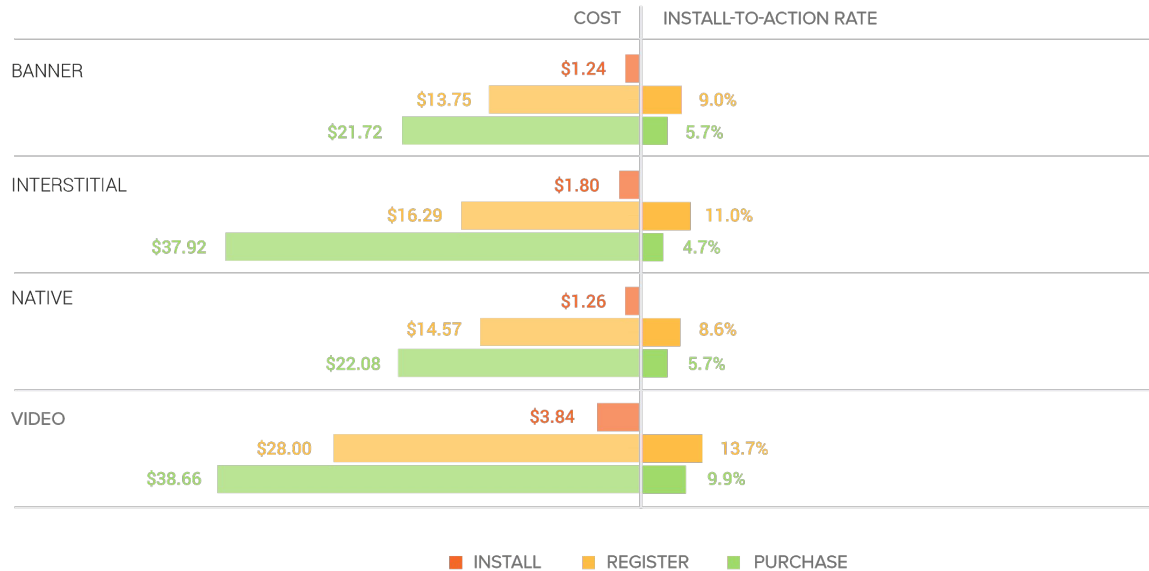
Social & Dating Costs & Conversion Rates





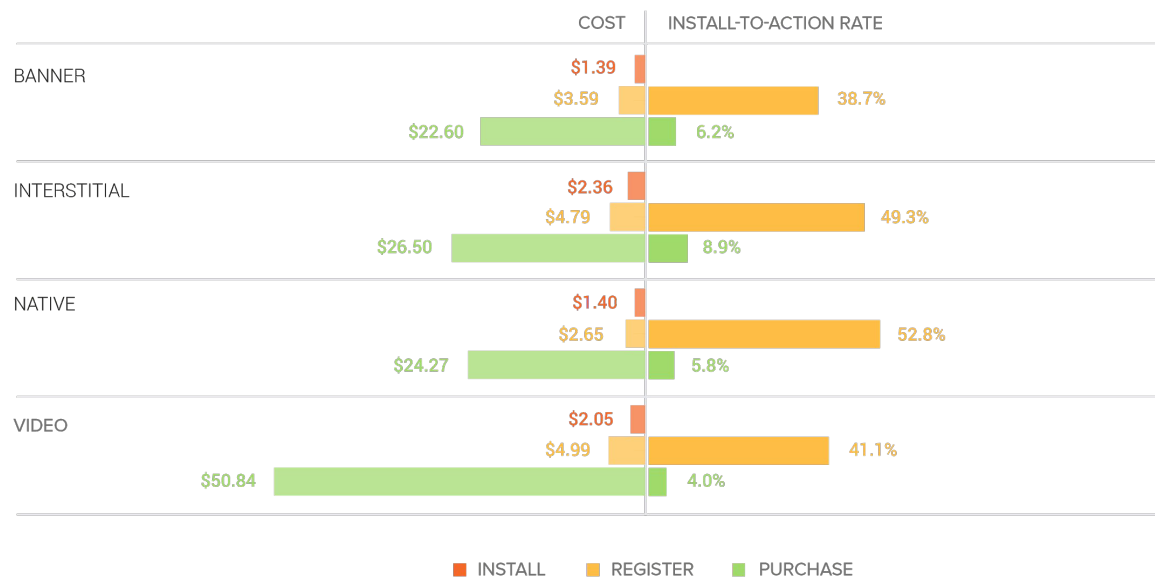
# To engage travelers, Banners are your best bet. However, Natives drive similar sales for a moderate price.

Travel Costs & Conversion Rates



# Interstitials make a strong impression on Utility app users, while Banners and Natives drive results at a reasonable cost.

Utility Costs & Conversion Rates



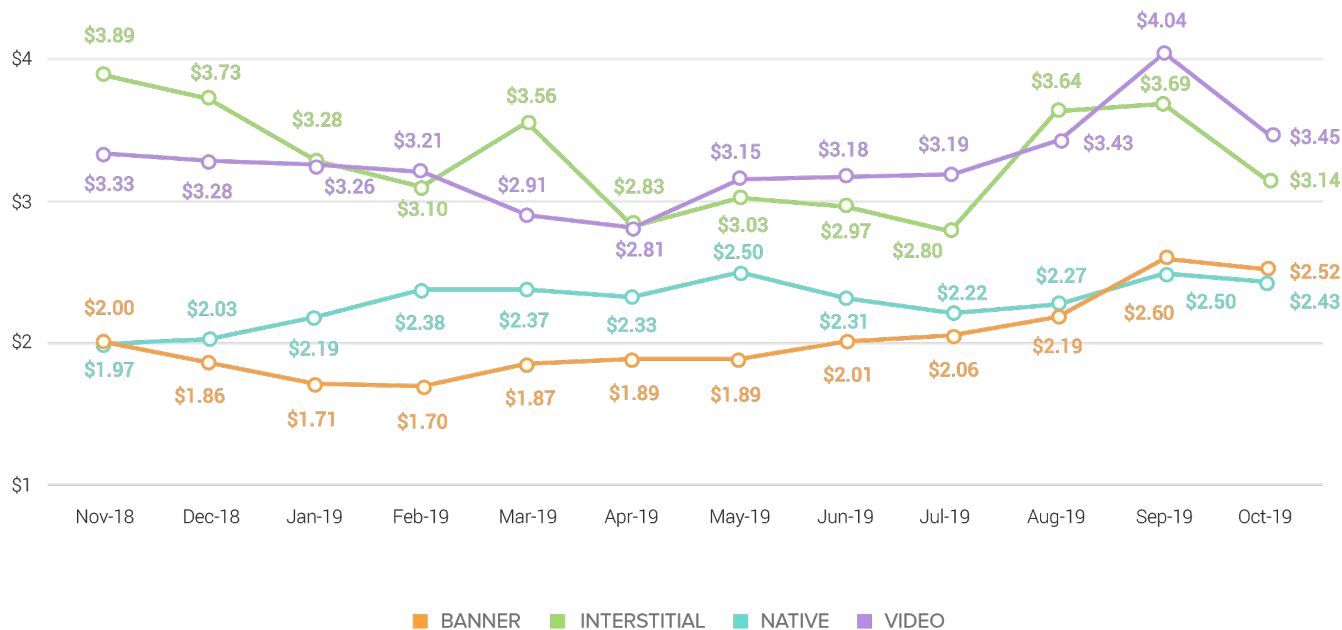
# Seasonal Trends

Most ad creatives capture audiences in the winter,  
but competition heats up in the summer.



# Banner and Interstitial ads are not significantly impacted by seasonality — but install costs for all ad creatives increase in the late summer.

Monthly Cost-per-Install by Ad Format



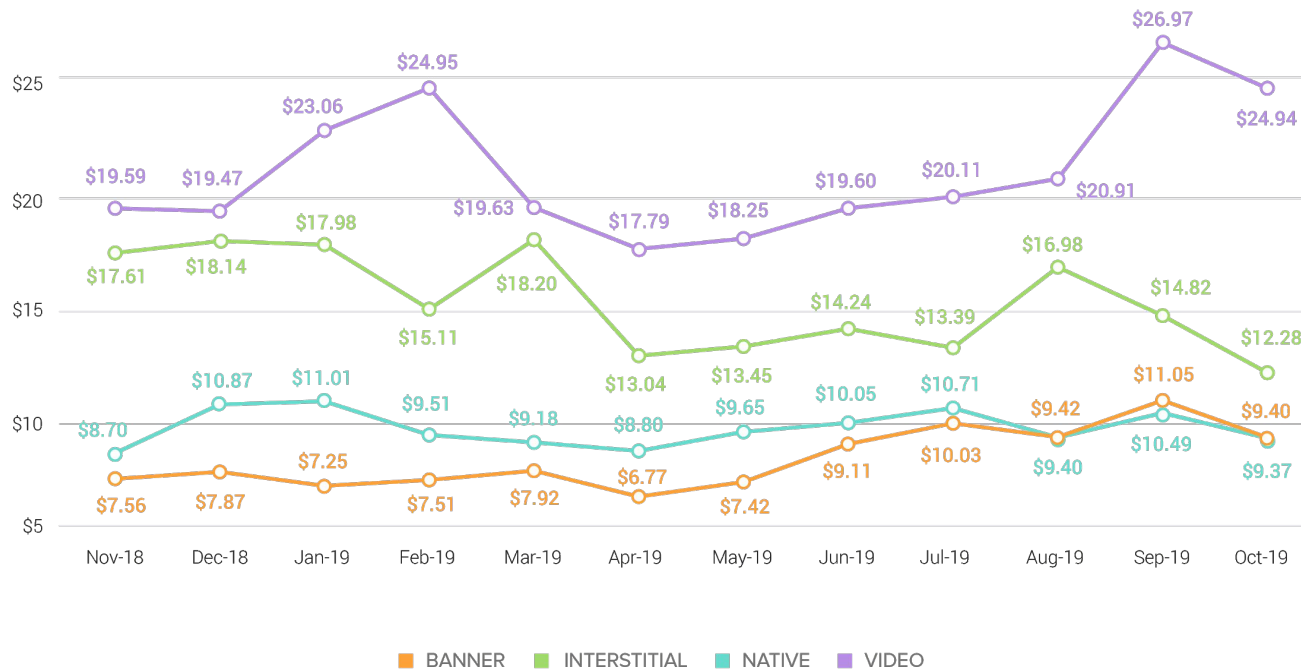
## Competition for installs heats up as the weather gets warmer.

While seasonality doesn't have huge impact on install costs at the start of the year, it's a different story as we move into the warmer months. It would appear that audience activities – vacation, staycation and a high desire to be out and about – offer a multitude of micro-moments when apps can enhance downtime and add to the experience. Smart marketers can take advantage of a wealth of opportunity, but they should also be aware it comes at a price.

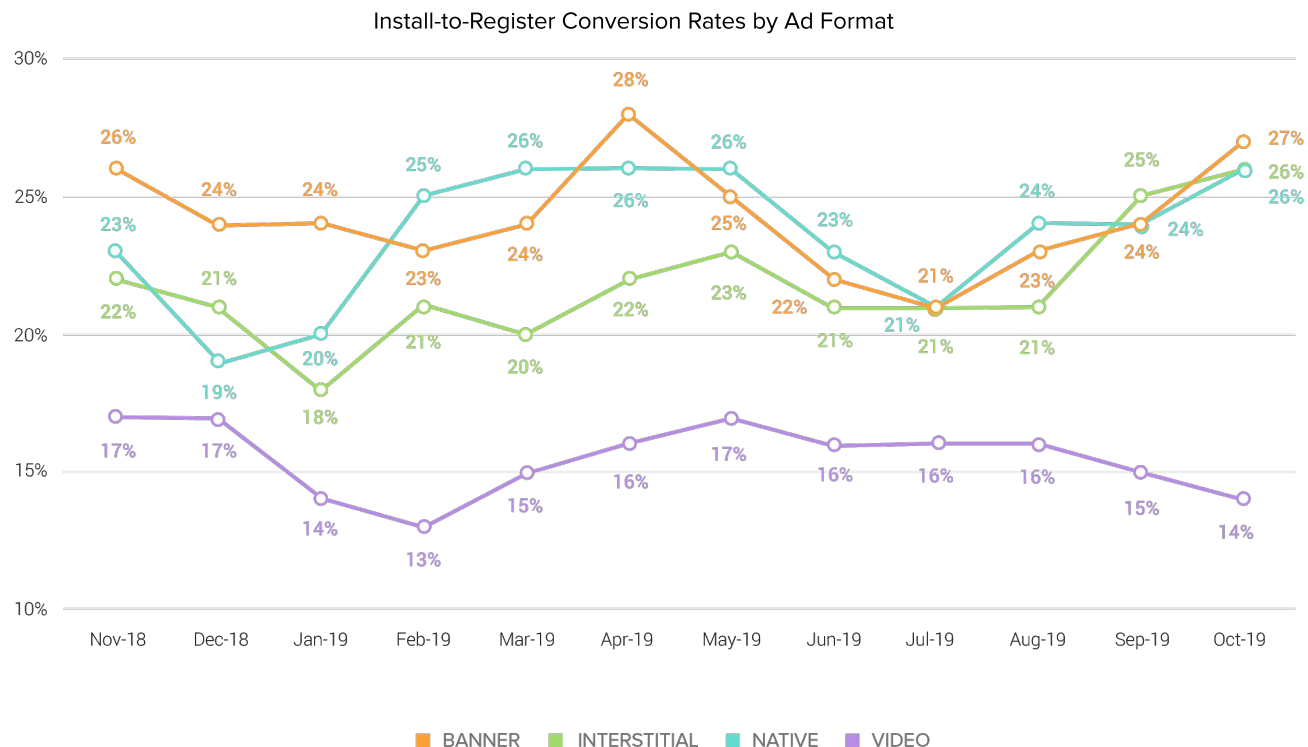
- Banner engagement is constant and prices are stable, suggesting this ad format is not overly impacted by seasonality.
- A review of CPIs for other ad formats reveals exciting periods when marketers can buy low and aim high. Overall, Native is only marginally more expensive than Banner (and most attractive in the winter when the price tag hovers around \$2); Video is a steal in the early spring (especially in April, when the price point hits a low of \$2.81); and Interstitials are cheapest in the summer (when prices range between \$2.80 and \$3.03).
- Summer competition for audience eyeballs pushes CPIs through the roof. Costs across all ad creatives start to climb in July, reaching their highest point in September before dipping in October.

# Register: Prices for Video ads are volatile, while the cost for Banners and Interstitials show little variance.

Registration Cost by Ad Format



# Register: Spring is a positive period for all ad creatives — and Banner engagement hits an all-time high.



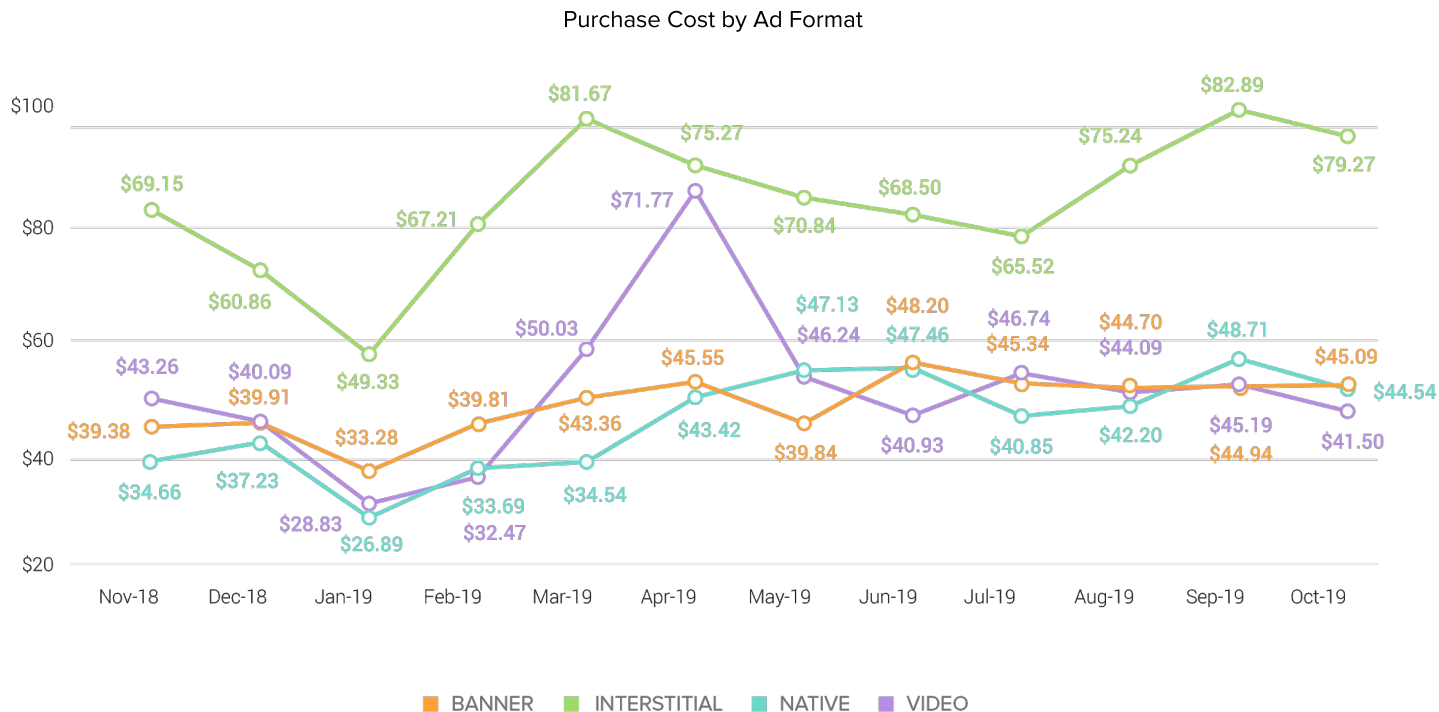
## **Register: Banner and Native ads combine a low price tag with the highest average conversion rates.**

Throughout the calendar year Banner, Interstitial and Native ads are the Big Three, driving impressive conversion rates for reasonable cost. Video is the expensive exception to the rule. It consistently pairs high prices with conversion rates that hover at or below 17%. However, it's important to note that the persuasive power of this ad format shines through as users move deeper in the funnel.

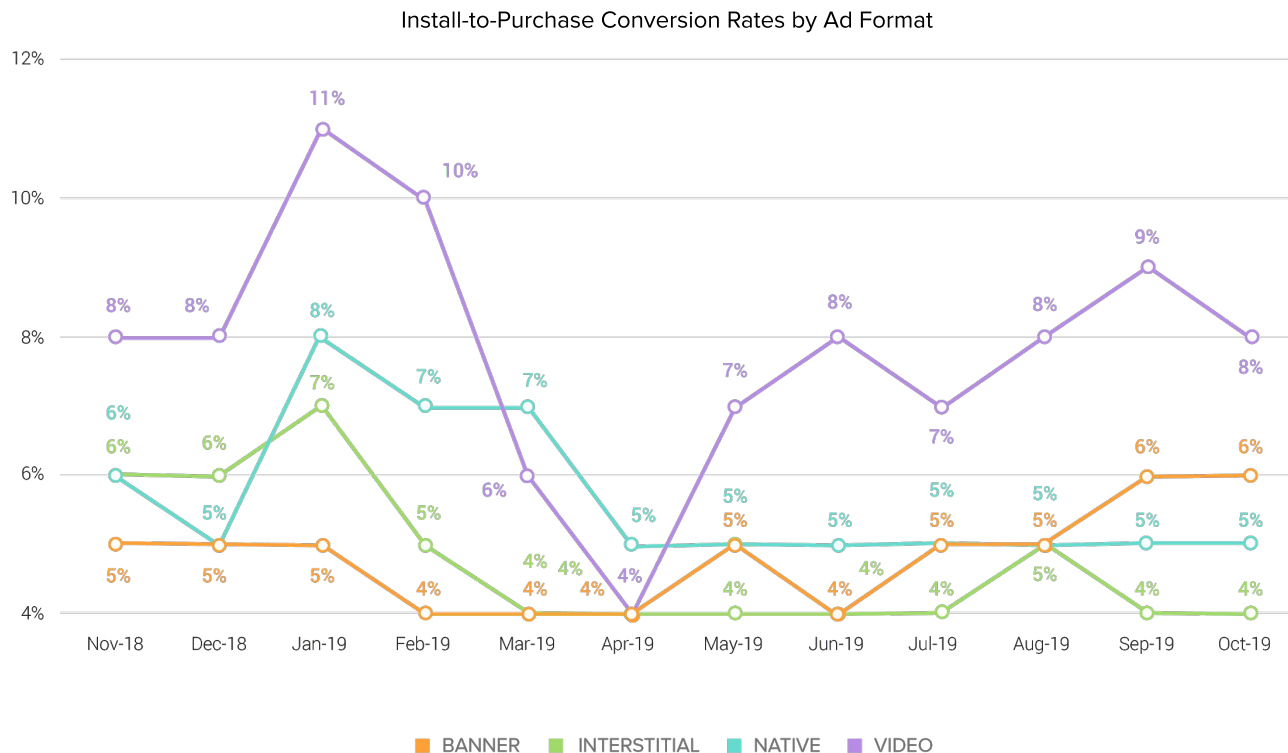
- Video is particularly pricey in early fall, when costs reach levels that are nearly 2x the cost of Interstitials, for example. Another month to watch, or perhaps avoid, is February, when engagement hits an all time low of 13% while price (\$24.95) hits its second-highest level for the entire 12-month period.
- Interstitials offer the best value for money from late summer (August) through to fall (October), when prices show a drop of 27.7% and conversion rates increase 4%.
- The appeal of Natives are strongest from February through May, a period when price hovers at the lower end of the spectrum and engagement plateaus at a particularly high level.



# Purchase: Interstitials are consistently more expensive than all other ad creatives at all times of the year.



# Purchase: Conversion rates across all ad formats start off strong in January and lose steam by April.

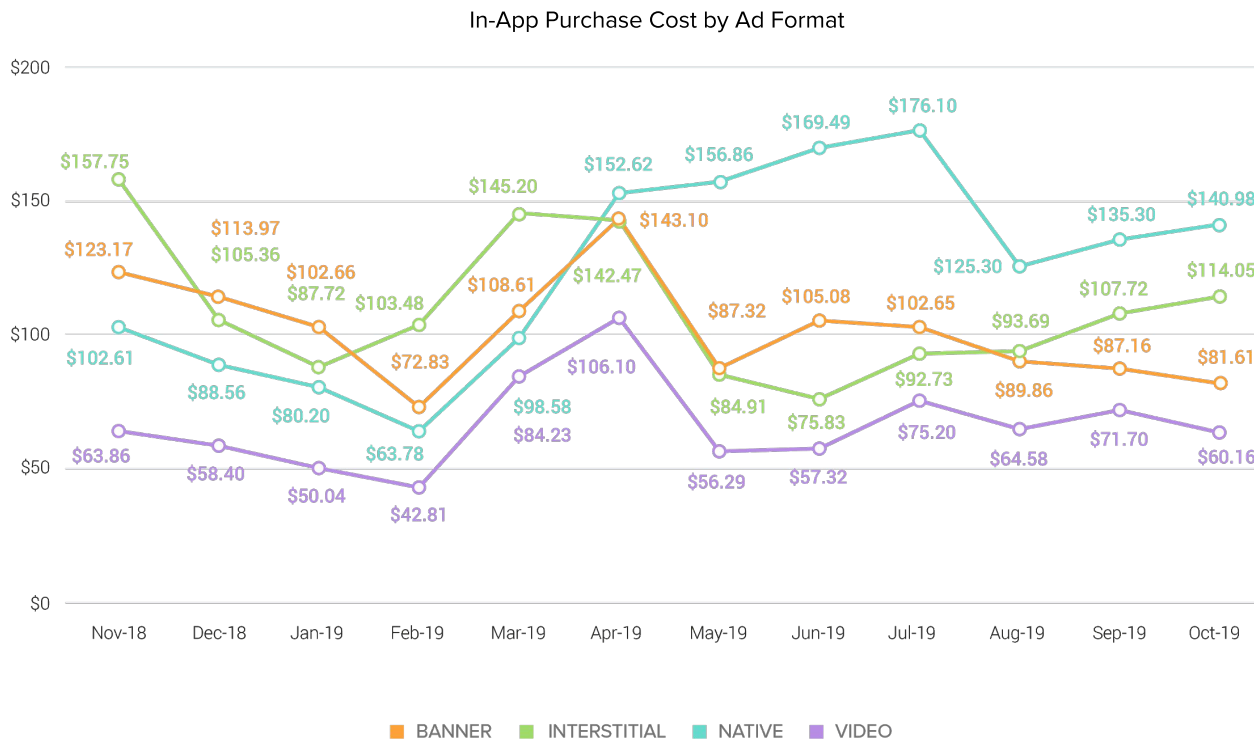


## **Purchase: Marketers can find bargains in the winter — and high conversion rates are a bonus.**

Overall, costs and conversion rates are in rare balance in the winter, providing marketers value for money. October is a month when costs dip, but marketers should be wary as not all engagement rates are impressive.

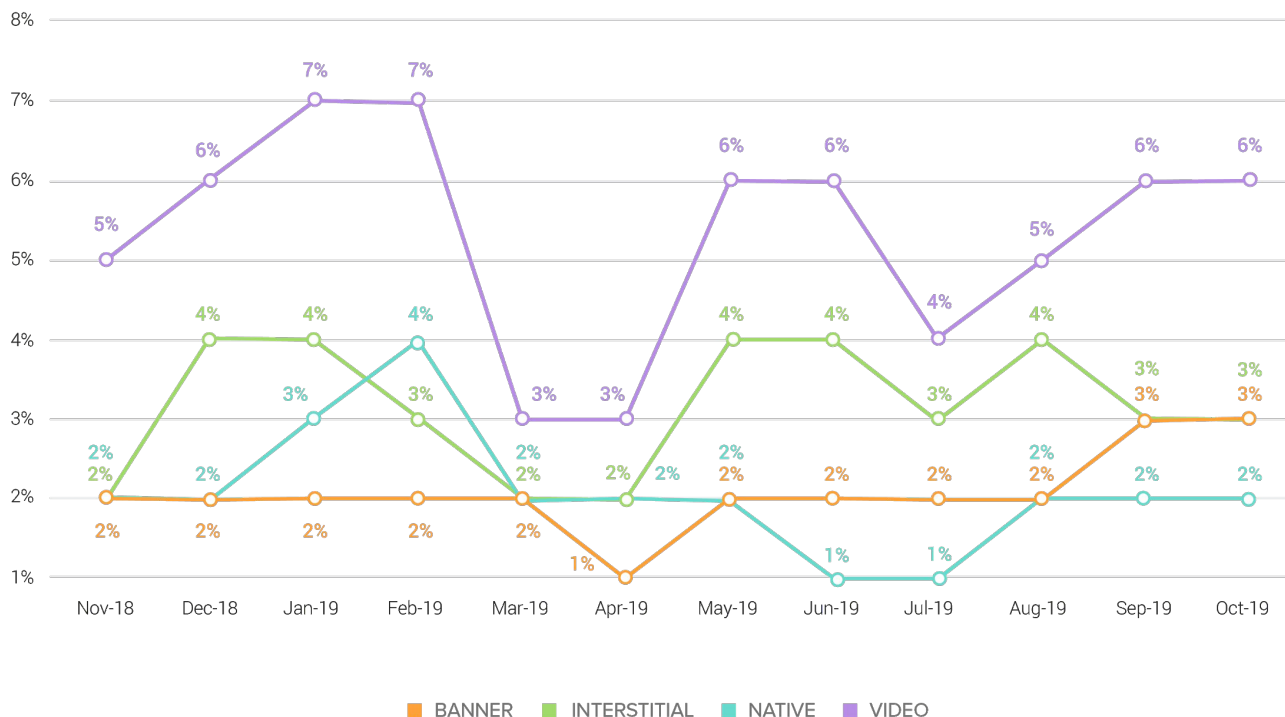
- Video costs which were prohibitive mid-funnel are affordable at this funnel stage, hovering around the \$40 mark and keeping pace with the prices for Banner and Native ads. Even better, conversion rates for this ad format are roughly one-third higher across much of the calendar year. That is, except for March (\$50.03) and April (\$71.77) when Video prices rocket and engagement rates (6% and 4% respectively) fail to keep the pace.
- Natives offer significant value for money, combining moderate prices with attractive conversion rates. The start of the year is the best time to invest, when costs are at their lowest levels and engagement hits its highest point.
- Banners are cheap, but they're not always a bargain. Significantly, costs exceed those of Native ads for 10 out of 12 months of the year, while conversion rates for much of the year remain flat.

# In-App Purchase: Winter months are marked by stable costs at the low end of the scale, then prices heat up in the spring.



# In-App Purchase: Engagement rates for most ad formats are on a roller coaster, while Banner conversion rates remain flat.

Install-to-IAP Conversion Rates by Ad Format



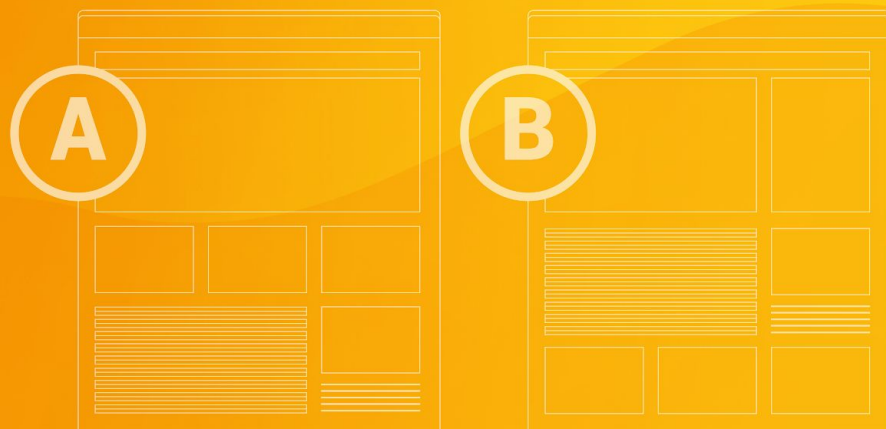
## **In-App Purchase: Prices climb in the early spring, but engagement rates fail to blossom.**

Videos maintain the lead position in the mix – a strength that is inextricably linked with the increased appeal of rewarded video ads and the ability of this ad format to enhance the Gaming app experience across multiple genres. Significantly, Videos consistently deliver the highest conversion rates. Fortunately, high performance comes at a reasonable price. It's an exciting dynamic that suggests marketers can benefit hugely, even on a limited budget.

- Investing in Interstitials makes the most sense in late Spring (May) and early Summer (June), a period when prices hit low levels (\$84.91 and \$75.83 respectively) and engagement rates hover at their highest point (4%).
- Banners appear to be the most competitive and least effective ad format, pairing incredibly high costs and consistently poor conversion rates.
- At a whopping \$176.10, the cost of Native ads ranks among the highest in the mix, but engagement rates hover at a disappointing low of 1%.

# Mobile Ad Creative A/B Testing Tips

Liftoff Mobile Heroes weigh in on ad creatives and approaches that motivate the masses.

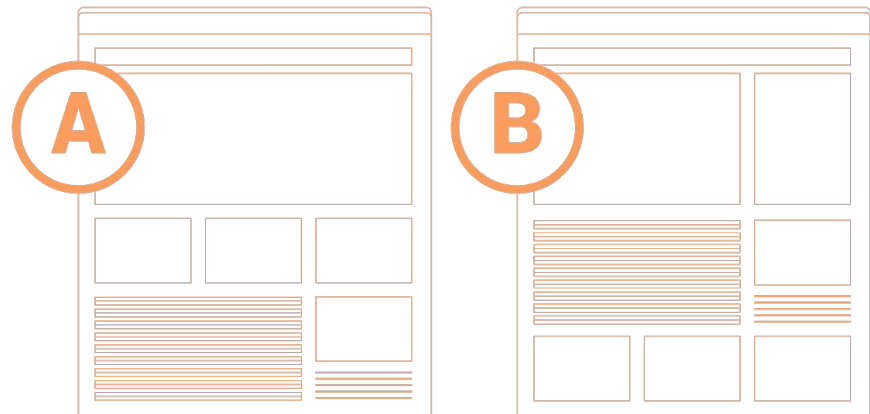


# Ad creatives are a mobile marketer's life blood.

A robust A/B testing framework is your source of truth. It allows you to test out different hypotheses around your app and make changes to your app experience based on actual data instead of gut instinct. With a seemingly infinite number of combinations of ad copy, creatives, and ad formats to explore, it's critical to have a disciplined approach to testing creative that converts.

In this section, we glean insights from creative A/B tests from real campaigns and actionable tips from three Mobile Heroes:

- [Vishal Korlipara](#)  
Growth Marketing Manager at Credit Karma
- [Giulia Porter](#)  
VP Marketing at TelTech
- [Kurt Geater](#)  
Mobile Marketing Manager at Groupon





# credit karma

We're Credit Karma. We're working to make financial progress possible for everyone.

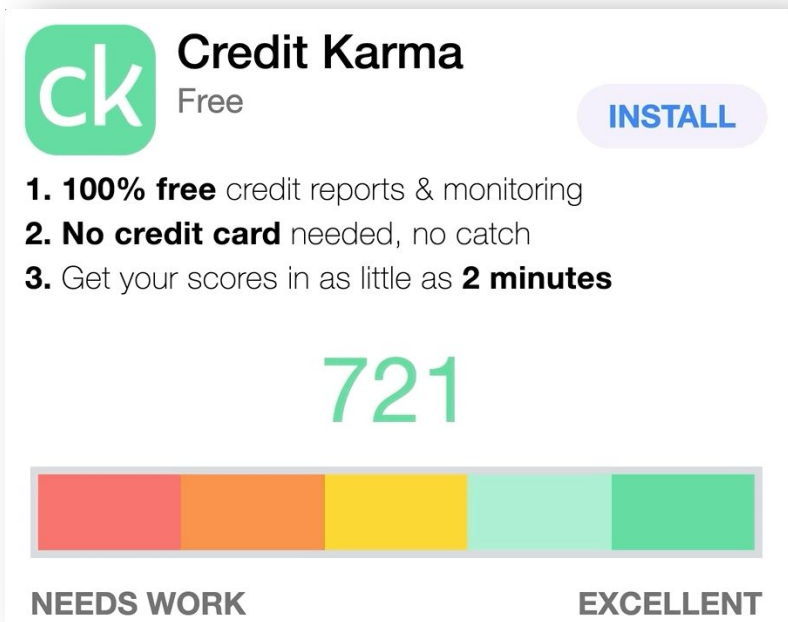
Everyone deserves to feel confident about their finances. Our job is to give you the tools, the education and the opportunities you need to make real, meaningful progress.

Thinking about your finances can be frustrating, but we're working to make the process simpler and easier to understand for over 100 million Credit Karma members.

**[www.creditkarma.com](http://www.creditkarma.com)**

# Which animation is the crowd-pleaser?

Version A




**ck** Credit Karma  
Free

[INSTALL](#)

1. **100% free** credit reports & monitoring
2. **No credit card** needed, no catch
3. Get your scores in as little as **2 minutes**

721



NEEDS WORK EXCELLENT

Version B



**ck** Credit Karma  
Free

[INSTALL](#)

1. 100% free credit report & monitoring
2. No credit card needed, no catch
3. Get your score in as little as 2 minutes

607

U.S. AVERAGE

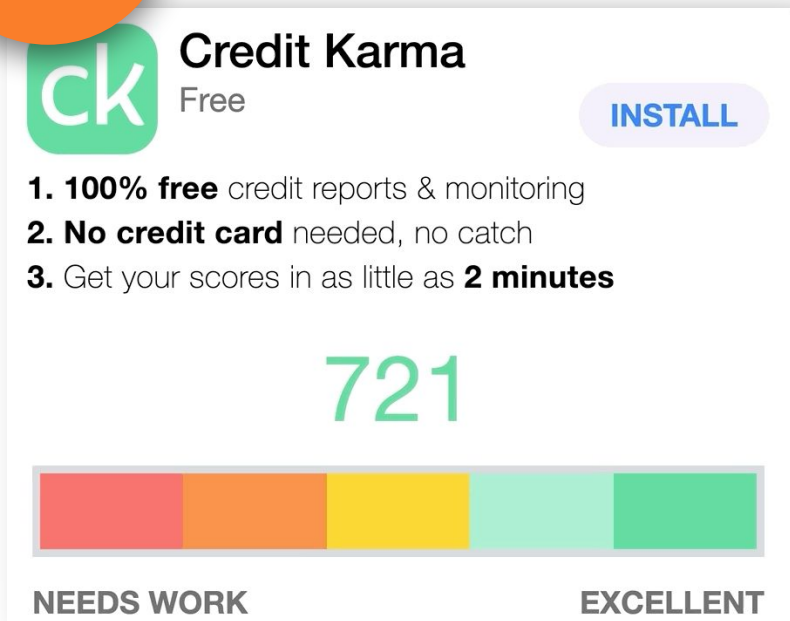


# Clean animations activate audiences.

CTI lift:  
**+26%**

Version A

Version B

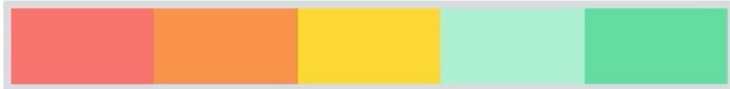


**ck** Credit Karma  
Free

[INSTALL](#)

1. **100% free** credit reports & monitoring
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3. Get your scores in as little as **2 minutes**

721



NEEDS WORK EXCELLENT



**ck** Credit Karma  
Free

[INSTALL](#)

1. 100% free credit report & monitoring
2. No credit card needed, no catch
3. Get your score in as little as 2 minutes

607

U.S. AVERAGE



## Vishal Korlipara

### Credit Karma

Credit Karma is a personal finance company empowering consumers to monitor their credit, check personalized recommendations and more via app and web.

“Smoother animation is the better route to go in terms of CTR,” he explains. “The more blocky the animation is, the less users click.”

Finally, be direct — literally. “We test new softer messaging around our brand and find the ads with direct response best practices almost always come up on top,” he says. “Direct response type ads are almost always what wins!”

#### Top Tip

“Work closely with your creative team and make sure they understand the ‘why’ and what you are testing.”

**Vishal Korlipara**, Growth Marketing Manager at Credit Karma



credit karma



Teltech is a New Jersey-based communications company and a proud part of IAC. Headquartered just a short distance from New York City, we foster a unique and diverse Silicon Valley-like culture, where talented individuals can flourish.

Our passion is the development of innovative, yet practical, communications products. We work hard to create apps that not only change the way people use telecom and mobile apps, but are just as unique, and can't find anywhere else! Our collection of apps include RoboKiller, TapeACall, and TrapCall.

RoboKiller automatically blocks over 1.1 million telemarketers and robocalls from ringing, even if they are spoofing or changing their numbers. Take back your phone & get revenge on the spammers.

<https://teltech.co/>

# Which banner messaging moved the needle?

Version A



**Robokiller**

Stop Spam Calls

**INSTALL**

Version B



**Robokiller**

Stop Spam Calls

**INSTALL**

Version C






**0**

Spam Calls Blocked

**INSTALL**

# Showing real value drives real results.

Version A	 <b>Robokiller</b> Stop Spam Calls	<b>INSTALL</b>
Version B	 <b>Robokiller</b> Stop Spam Calls	<b>INSTALL</b>
Version C	 <b>0</b> Spam Calls Blocked	<b>INSTALL</b>

CTI lift:  
**+101%**

### Top Tip

“Quantifiable numbers in creatives really help. Also make sure your app gives users a unique preview of what they can expect from your service.”

**Giulia Porter**, VP Marketing at TelTech

## Giulia Porter TelTech

TelTech products are built as privacy-first, consumer-friendly mobile applications that help users communicate more effectively on their smartphones.

“Don't focus on the bells and whistles of your creative testing — get right to the point about what your product does, the value it delivers, and the action you want users to take.”

Finally, keep it simple. “Sexy, TV-style ads do not translate well to digital — especially programmatic.”



# GROUPON®

Groupon (NASDAQ: GRPN) is building the daily habit in local commerce, offering a vast mobile and online marketplace where people discover and save on amazing things to do, see, eat and buy. By enabling real-time commerce across local businesses, travel destinations, consumer products and live events, shoppers can find the best a city has to offer. Groupon is redefining how small businesses attract and retain customers by providing them with customizable and scalable marketing tools and services to profitably grow their businesses.

[www.groupon.com](http://www.groupon.com)

# Do logos or product grids earn installs?

Version A

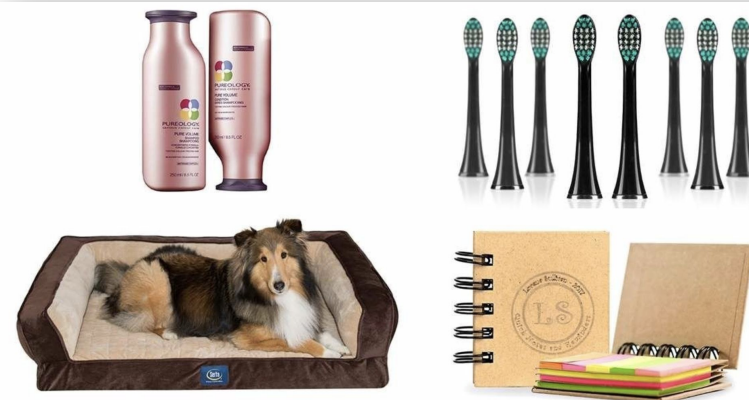
Version B




Find deals up to 70% off!

Get great deals on all the best stuff to eat, see, and do near you and around the world.

**INSTALL**



Find deals up to 70% off!

Get great deals on all the best stuff to eat, see, and do near you and around the world.

**INSTALL**

# Logos outperform by a landslide.

CTI lift:  
**+123%**

Version A

Version B

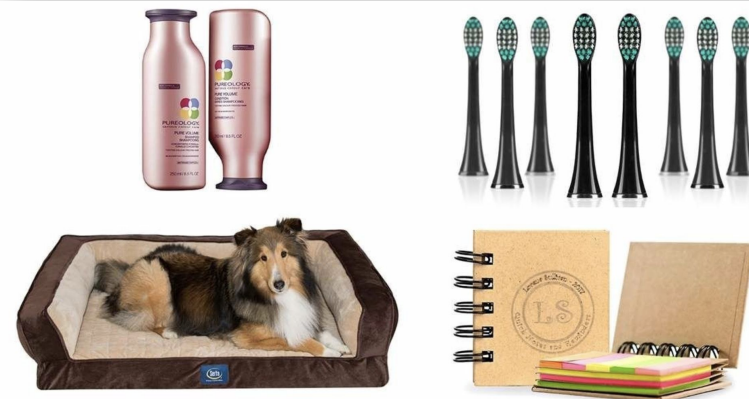
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## Kurt Geater Groupon

Groupon is the worldwide e-commerce marketplace that connects subscribers with local merchants by offering activities, travel, goods and services.

“Product ads which feature a specific good or deal drive higher user intent to purchase and higher conversion rates.”

Finally, mix it up and never stop testing. “Experimenting with different calls to action such as ‘Shop Now’ vs ‘Install Now’ can drive huge increases in overall conversion of your ads.”

### Top Tip

“Utilize dynamic product feeds as the foundation of your ad creative, but supplement these with curated, single deal ads in order to take advantage of seasonality whenever possible.”

**Kurt Geater**, Mobile Marketing Manager at Groupon



**GROUPON**



# L I F T O F F

Liftoff is a performance-based mobile app marketing and retargeting platform which uses post-install user data to run true cost-per-action user acquisition and re-engagement campaigns. Powered by advanced machine learning and lookalike targeting, Liftoff campaigns are optimized to drive actions beyond the install, like booking a hotel, making a reservation, or renewing a subscription. Liftoff's cost-per-action model helps customers scale and grow by acquiring users that actively spend in revenue-producing events. Headquartered in Palo Alto, CA with offices in New York, London, Singapore, Tokyo, South Korea and Paris, Liftoff works with leading app publishers and brands across the globe.

[www.liftoff.io](http://www.liftoff.io)

*Fin*