
Combating digital creative fatigue among healthcare practitioners

Understanding the approach of HCPs
to digital content



Combating digital creative fatigue among HCPs

Healthcare professionals (HCPs) are increasingly comfortable using digital resources as decision-making and educational tools. Online journals are the top media resource used by HCPs to keep up to date on the latest research and information about their specialty.¹

As HCPs have become more reliant on the digital space for professional use, so have HCP marketers. Unfortunately, given the intensity of their online usage, HCPs are

especially susceptible to digital creative fatigue, a tendency among audiences overexposed to digital ads to disengage or ignore these ads over time. Digital creative fatigue results in decreased ad performance, increased marketing costs, and damaged brand relationships.

This guide identifies the five steps HCP marketers can take to successfully engage HCPs and combat digital creative fatigue.

5 steps to combat digital creative fatigue

- 1 Track important KPIs
- 2 Be unique, useful, and up to date
- 3 Keep refreshing
- 4 Plan for frequency issues
- 5 Monitor and adjust

¹Wolters Kluwer 2024 Content Consumption Survey, Q1



1

Be prepared to track important key performance indicators (KPIs)

Visibility

Keeping track of ad impressions, views, and frequency can aid in understanding message proliferation, as well as help to evaluate and adjust audience size.

Engagement

Metrics that indicate interaction, such as open and click-through rates, can illustrate an ad's perceived value and how well its messaging resonates with viewers.

Conversion

Monitoring conversion rates allows marketers to assess how successful a message is at driving meaningful action.

Cost per action and acquisition

Cost metrics, such as cost per impression, view, click, conversion, and acquisition, are useful tools in evaluating ad efficacy trends.

Return

Evaluating a campaign's return on investment (ROI) and return on ad spend (ROAS) not only helps to paint a picture of campaign profitability, but tracking these metrics can also illuminate changes in ad power over time.

Negative trends in these KPIs can be a sign that an audience is experiencing digital creative fatigue, and that overexposure and acclimation to digital ads are rendering them "invisible."

Luckily, there are both preemptive and responsive actions that HCP marketers can take to ensure that their campaigns do not suffer from this phenomenon.



2 Be unique, useful, and up to date



49%

of HCPs report that ads supported by
independent peer-reviewed research
are more credible and valuable²

Unique

Continuous exposure to similar-looking ads is the driving force behind digital creative fatigue. When designing an ad, make sure it “breaks the mold” of traditional, generic-appearing ads.

Instead of a standard banner ad, try introducing novelty and surprise with animated and interactive features. In addition to ad appearance, experiment with various ad placements. Different page positioning can impact ad performance; make sure to test what screen location works best.

Alongside page placement, consider what digital platform would be best for displaying an ad. Target HCPs may respond more favorably to advertisements distributed through a particular channel, such as emails, webinars, or online medical journals.

Useful

Advertisements that provide HCPs with useful information are far more likely to capture attention and foster organic interaction than those that appear as blatant product promotions. Creating a campaign mission centered around education or thought leadership not only circumvents puffery-driven creative fatigue, but also helps a brand build meaningful relationships through a perception of being helpful and trustworthy.



² Wolters Kluwer 2024 Content Consumption Survey, Q31

Be unique, useful, and up to date

Marketers can also add value by making intentional decisions about the context and source of their messaging. HCPs consider peer-reviewed content the most influential content for treatment decisions and improving patient outcomes³; placing educational ads within peer-reviewed content simultaneously adds value to HCPs' experience of the content while also allowing the ad to be viewed with the same esteem as the peer-reviewed content itself. In addition to placement within peer-reviewed content boosting ad perception, 49% of HCPs report that ads supported by independent peer-reviewed research are more credible and valuable than those lacking such support⁴.

The inclusion of Key Opinion Leaders (KOLs) and User-Generated Content (UGC) in a campaign can also boost message engagement, as HCPs perceive established experts and peers as reliable, authentic sources of information. An advertisement is only useful to its intended

audience; HCPs will ignore advertisements that are too general or irrelevant to them to be helpful. Craft a personalized message and use hyper-focused targeting methods, such as NPI targeting, to deliver it to its intended specialist. Accurately delivered individualized messaging will cut through the noise of generic ads, capturing the focus and engagement of HCPs.

Up to date

Unfortunately, placement and proper targeting are only half the battle. Already faced with an overwhelming volume of hyper-targeted ads, today's HCPs will instinctively filter out those ads that are irrelevant to their needs, make vague claims, or lack a credible source. Capture HCP attention with credibility and value by aligning ad content and appearance with current industry expectations, including the latest clinical data citations backing the ad, and providing links to peer-reviewed research supporting the ad.



Key takeaways

- Be ready to track KPIs related to visibility, engagement, conversion, cost per action and acquisition, and return
- Create unique ads that capture attention through novelty and surprise
- Focus on creating value for HCPs through education-oriented messaging
- Incorporate peer-reviewed content, KOLs, and UGC
- Substantiate ads with the science behind the product

³Wolters Kluwer 2024 Content Consumption Survey, Q21, Q12

⁴Wolters Kluwer 2024 Content Consumption Survey, Q31

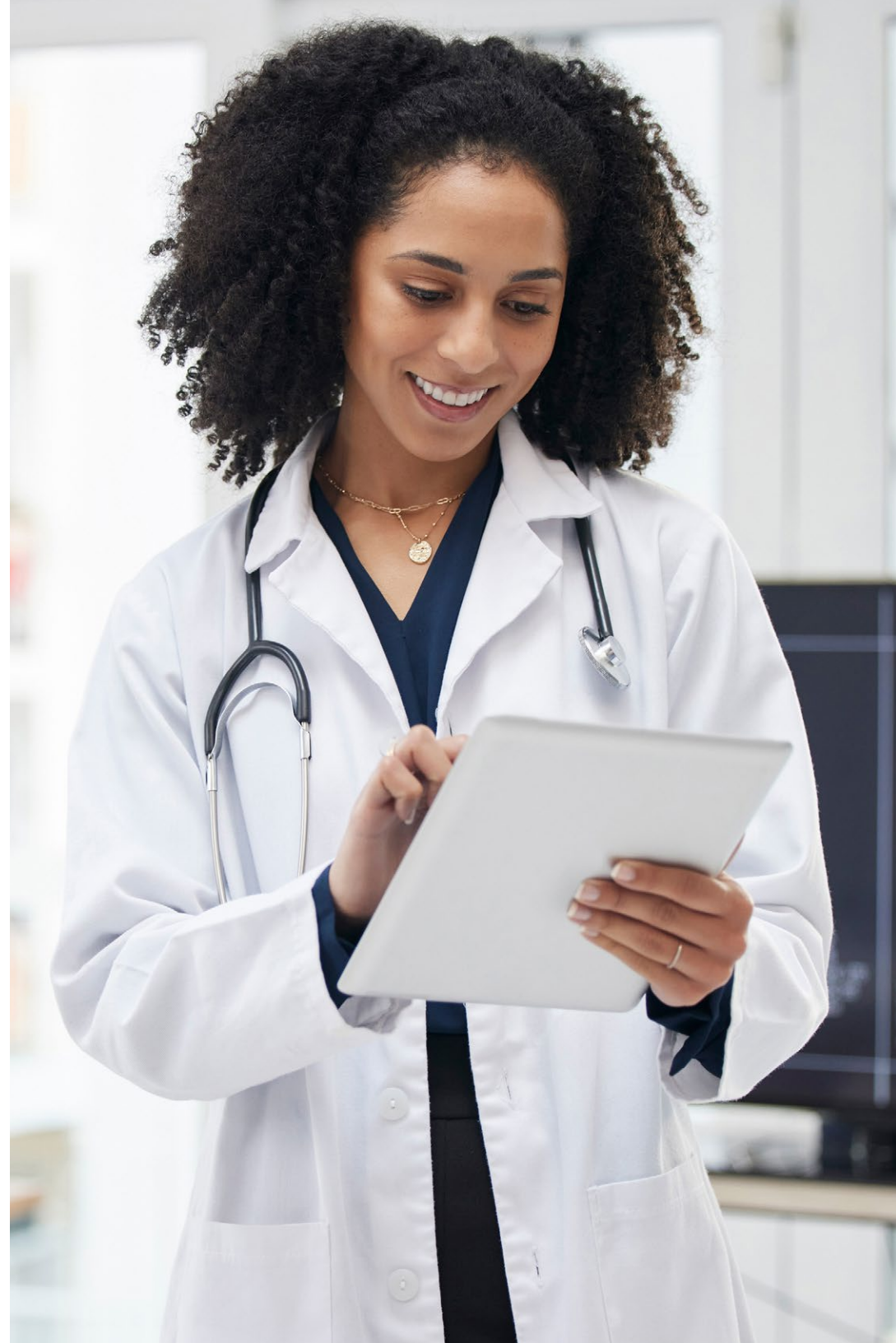
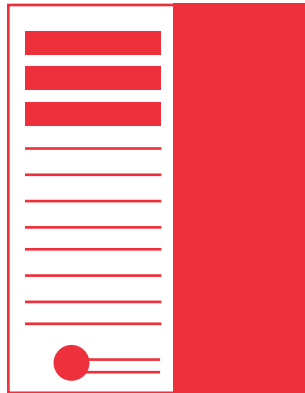
3

Keep refreshing

Once an ad is relevant and well-placed, a marketer still needs to keep the message fresh.

Repeated exposure to the same ad can quickly lead to visual habituation (reduced neural response to the ad) and ultimately result in digital creative fatigue. To avoid this, marketers can create multiple versions of an ad, consisting of different colors, backgrounds, and copy, to rotate throughout

a campaign, so that each HCP experiences a different creative each time they are online. Alternatively, rather than creating entirely different ad versions to rotate, marketers can regularly update small visual elements of their ads to keep them refreshed and prevent fatigue.



4

Plan for frequency issues

If ad engagement rates are falling, it may be because the ad is being displayed to the same individuals too many times in a given period. This overexposure may be causing individuals to become bored, or even annoyed with the ad, leading to ad blindness and decreased engagement. Setting a frequency cap limits the number of times a unique viewer can be exposed to an ad; while improving viewer experience, this strategy also minimizes campaign costs and ensures engagement rates do not suffer.

Frequency problems are especially prevalent in niche target audiences. Consider searching for groups similar to high-performing ones and adding them to the campaign focus. Strategically expanding an audience reduces frequency complications, helps to maximize campaign efficacy, saves on creative costs and development time, and maintains performance rates.

Key takeaways

- Regularly rotate ads or update small visual elements
- Set frequency caps
- Strategically expand the audience



5 Monitor and adjust

Monitor a campaign's performance, environment, and potential regularly so that timely and effective interventions to prevent digital creative fatigue can be implemented.

Performance

Be mindful of declining KPIs and respond appropriately. Try rotating, updating, or frequency capping to recapture attention and get KPIs back on track.

Environment

If industry focus shifts, make sure ad messaging maintains relevance and utility by shifting with it.

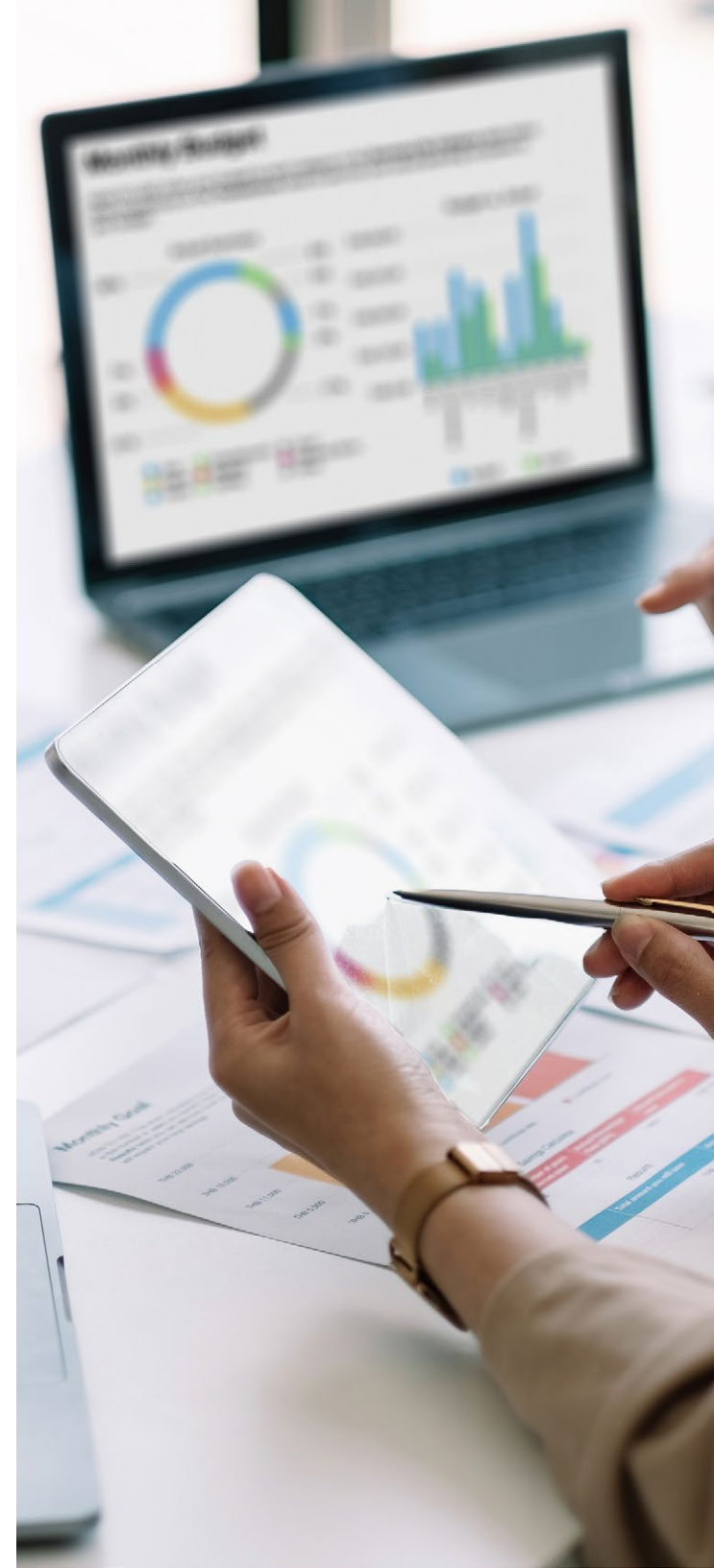
Potential

Seek correlations between ad variables and performance, A/B test different ad appearances and placements, and compare ad performance to industry benchmarks to see what's working and make adjustments to the campaign.

Not only will proper campaign monitoring allow marketers to adjust and optimize their current campaigns, but an iterative understanding of the strengths and weaknesses a message is likely to assume in different contexts and target audiences will allow for increased efficacy of future campaigns.

Key takeaways

- Regularly monitor KPIs for signs that an ad needs attention
- Stay current on industry developments and update ads as needed
- Experiment with different ad variables to discover what works best





Leveraging the digital space

As HCPs become both professionally and personally more active in the digital space, it is important that marketers capitalize on the medium's advertising potential. However, audiences overexposed to digital ads can develop digital creative fatigue, causing them to respond poorly to, or even altogether ignore, these messages. Fortunately, HCP marketers can take steps to ensure that their messaging stays exciting and interesting to their target audience.

HCP marketers can continue to capture attention by strategically experimenting with unique, useful, and up-to-date content that is regularly refreshed and thoughtfully displayed. By catering to the needs of HCPs, both as professionals and consumers, and cutting through the noise of a highly saturated, homogenized digital ad space, marketers can combat digital creative fatigue, conducting successful campaigns that inspire action and build relationships.

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