Unlocking UA and boosting CTR by 52% with holistic creative optimization

ACE GAMES

52%

growth in click-through rate for user-generated creative ads

80%

of ad creatives are now successful

Overview

- Ace Games faced immense data challenges from running high volumes of creatives across multiple media sources.
- Lack of ad-level cost breakdown for some of the networks made it extremely difficult to have clear oversight of performance and costs.
- Implementing AppsFlyer's Creative Optimization has given Ace Games a holistic overview that makes it far more efficient to identify winning creatives. This has resulted in more successful campaigns, as evidenced by higher CTR and ROAS.

Background

Ace Games is a mobile gaming company founded in Istanbul, Turkey in 2020. Their flagship title, Fiona's Farm, launched on iOS and Android in 2022 and has proved hugely popular, with its distinct blend of gameplay elements from the adventure, puzzle and farming genres.

The success of Fiona's Farm has been powered by Ace Games' expertise in product and marketing, combining innovative gameplay with skilled industry knowledge. However, their strategy was being held back by the resources required to manually manage and maintain a range of APIs for different advertising networks.

With privacy regulations limiting the influence a [user acquisition](#) (UA) manager can have on the lower funnel metrics, creatives are one of the most powerful performance optimization levers a business can pull.

A single successful [creative](#) can turn out to be worth millions of dollars. Ace Games recognized that anything that could give them an edge in spotlighting the winners among the mass of other creatives was going to be highly valuable – and that led them to seek expert help.

Challenge

One of the biggest challenges creative managers face is identifying the specific features within a creative that contribute to its effectiveness. How to find that million-dollar creative, without knowing precisely which part of the asset is resonating so successfully with its target audience?

Another major challenge centers on the difficulty of viewing metrics by creative, rather than campaign. Ace Games had developed their own in-house business intelligence solution to try to overcome this, but that came at a significant cost given the specialist skillsets required.

They also faced sizable data challenges from running high volumes of creatives across multiple networks. Self-reporting networks (SRNs) only added to this complexity by using dozens or even hundreds of creatives for each campaign, breaking the analysis link between campaign and creative.

Lacking ad-level cost breakdowns for certain networks limited Ace Games' marketing capabilities, a limitation they were keen to break through. Umut Yildiz, Analytics Manager at Ace Games, pointed out some of the difficulties they'd been facing with processing their UA data:

> **"The absence of granular cost breakdowns at the ad level for particular networks necessitated the implementation of tailored solutions, resulting in significant overhead on the path to achieving a cohesive performance overview."**

Umut Yıldız,
Analytics Manager

The scale of these overheads was based on the sheer volume of creatives that Ace Games' marketers were deploying, and the effort of consolidating that into a single report. Defne Şentürk, Performance Marketing Manager, cited an example from a network where each campaign consisted of several ad groups, all containing 20 video ads and 20 static assets.

> **"We really needed to be able to deep-dive into the performance data of our creatives, and also ideally have aggregate views from all networks to compare overall trends"**

For some of the networks, the information needed was only available in that platform's dashboard. While manageable, this was resource intensive, and the Ace Games team began to search for a smarter, more efficient way to optimize their creatives across all networks – a ways that didn't require juggling a stack of data reporting from different sources.

Solution

Ace Games were already working with AppsFlyer's Data Locker, ROI360, and SKAN CV Studio tools, so reached out to the team to discuss a possible solution – and found one.

Through in-depth consultation with AppsFlyer, Ace Games chose to integrate their Creative Optimization suite to target the exact pain points their UA team had been trying to overcome. With the product still in beta when Ace Games began working with it, there was constant back-and-forth communication and feedback between the two parties to ensure all of Ace Games' needs were being met:

> **"Since the beginning of our journey with AppsFlyer, we've appreciated immensely the support and guidance received from the team there, including their openness to feedback and the extent to which our ideas were valued. It was clear they were doing everything possible to make an efficient tool that created business value for its users."**

Defne Şentürk,
Performance Marketing Manager

Ace Games knew first-hand the benefits of working with AppsFlyer as an unbiased, cross-network partner – and chose to employ Creative Optimization to give them unparalleled, scalable creative optimization via hyper-granular, accurate data.

Impact

Bringing AppsFlyer's Creative Optimization product into their creative process immediately transformed Ace Games' user acquisition capabilities, giving them a more holistic approach that allowed for more calculated focus on creatives where they saw greater value.

With user-generated creatives, Ace Games managed to increase their [click-through rate (CTR)](#) by 52%. Overall, their percentage of successful creatives increased from 55% to 80%.

"AppsFlyer's Creative Optimization has given us a competitive edge," noted Defne. "Previously, the information we needed was – for example – siloed in the Google Ads dashboard. It wasn't connected to the lower funnel. Now, all that critical information is connected. We have accurate costs connected to each iteration of each creative."

With creatives, granularity is vital. Finding a winner without the ability to deep-dive into the data is essentially a shot in the dark. For Ace Games, Creative Optimization turned up the house lights and illuminated every potential winner in their stable of ad creatives.

"An image is worth a thousand words, but a winning creative is worth a million dollars."

Saikala Sultanova,
SVP of Marketing

Now, Ace Games can easily see their top-performing creatives, along with their individual dollar values, and how much they're spending on each one. They can see what's working, on the fly, sparking new ideas and inspiration for future campaigns.

Saikala noted the huge value Ace Games have seen from Creative Optimization when it comes to planning seasonal campaigns and greater strategic oversight:

> **"We can see what creatives are working, then look at the calendar and our upcoming product features and combine it all together. We produce for performance, and find more winners."**

Defne highlighted another big impact that she and her team have seen: a newfound accessibility to all partners within the business, rather than just the person managing the campaign.

> **"Now, anyone in our team, from artists to UA managers, can easily get an overall understanding of where to focus. It has enabled faster optimization and greater ideation day-to-day."**

Defne Şentürk,
Performance Marketing Manager

Creative Optimization feeds into Ace Games' own dashboard, opening up the visibility of creative performance to more people in the business – and empowering different teams to take a proactive approach to improving results.

> **"Getting access to in-depth, creative-specific performance data really helps us get a clearer picture of what's hitting the mark. It sparks better creative ideas and gets more of our team clued in on what works."**

Saikala Sultanova,
SVP of Marketing

Looking forward

As one of the first mobile gaming companies to integrate AppsFlyer's Creative Optimization suite, Ace Games are still discovering new efficiencies and practices enabled by the tool.

With 2024 set to shake up the app marketing landscape once again, introducing further privacy changes such as Google's Privacy Sandbox, Ace Games are well-prepared to traverse those shifting sands.

The next steps include full integration with Creative Optimization's ability to break down ad performance by individual creative elements. AppsFlyer will be working closely with the team at Ace Games to achieve that in the near future.