

# WHAT DRIVES PEOPLE TO CLICK?

Following fingertip journeys with heat maps

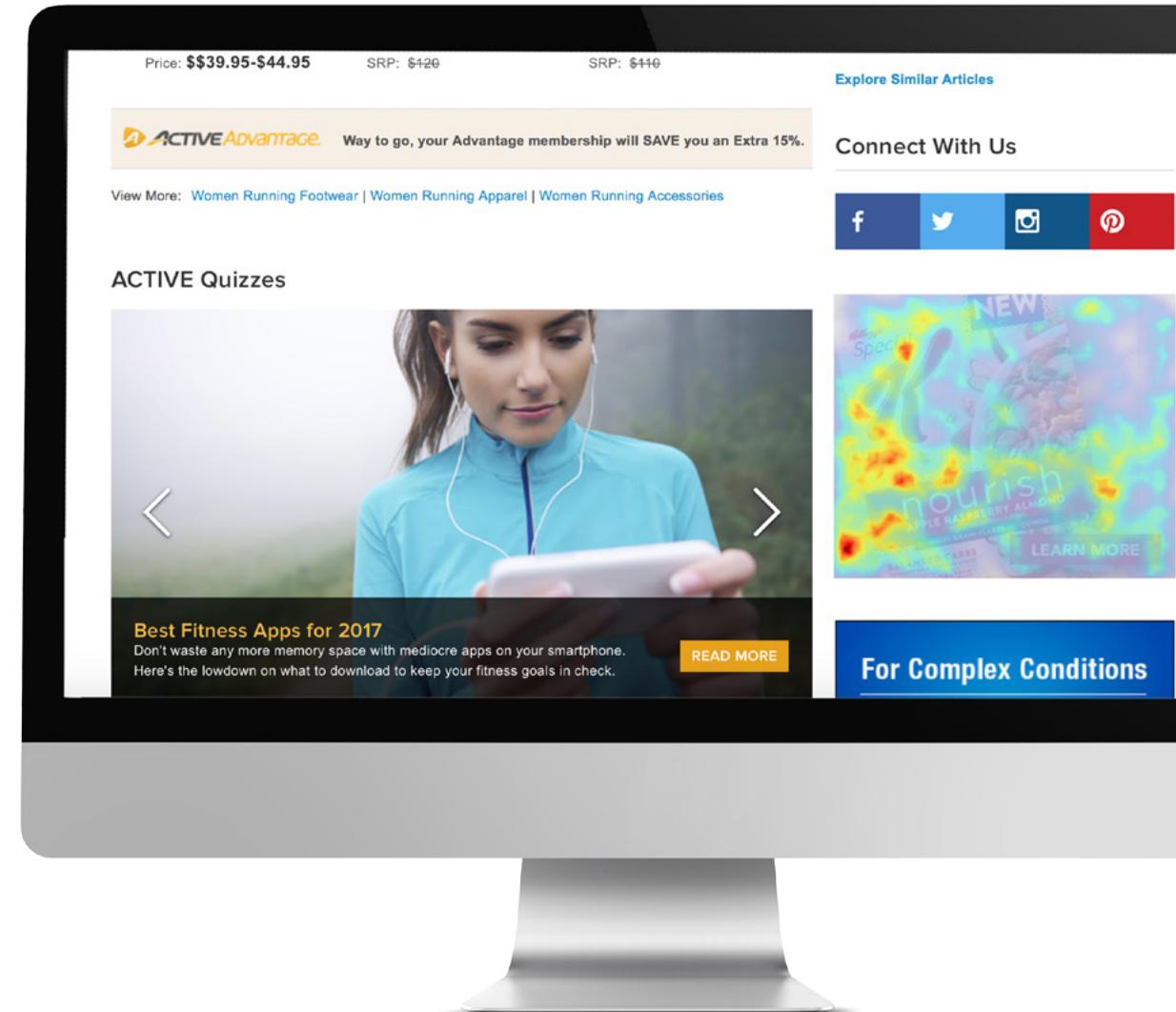
## INTRODUCTION

You know that some ads immediately draw you in and grab your attention and while others barely earn a passing glance. Have you ever wondered what, exactly, is the special sauce that makes an ad “work?” Is it the copy? The colors? The graphics?

That special sauce is vitally important when you're getting ready to run an ad campaign. And, now, the recipe is easier to find than ever.

Thanks to innovative heat map technology, we can now see exactly how people interact with ads, allowing brands to drive conversions and ROI for their campaigns.

We analyzed over 40,000 impressions from July 1, 2016 to May 24, 2017 to see exactly what users are attracted to and how they engaged with ads.<sup>1</sup>





Let's explore this ad to understand the different types of interactions heat maps isolate.

The heat map evaluates time spent on the ad based on when a user's pointer or finger (if using a tablet or phone) crosses into the ad frame and remains for at least one second. This is called 'breaking the frame.'



#### Clicks

This heat map measures clicks, which (you guessed it) is when a user clicks somewhere on the ad.

As expected, most users clicked on the linked "Shop Now" icon in the ad.



#### Interactions

This image maps out all desktop interactions with the ad. The red area signifies the most interaction, followed by orange, yellow, green, blue, and lastly, purple.

As you can see, most interactions are focused on the left side of the ad, where the content and button are, with interaction tapering off towards the right side.



#### Touches

This map shows touches on the portion of the screen used to scroll through content on a mobile device.

Since the majority of people are right handed, there was more activity on the right side of the ad/screen.



#### Hovers

This map shows hover interactions. Hovering is when a user breaks the frame without stopping or clicking.

With this ad, hovering is most concentrated directly underneath the "70%" text.

## PAGE ELEMENTS

Ad success is determined by many factors, including great design, compelling copy and irresistible offers, along with a strategy that gains visibility by the right audience. But it all starts with how an ad looks and its ability to capture attention. We've learned a lot about how people respond to various colors, designs, and images.

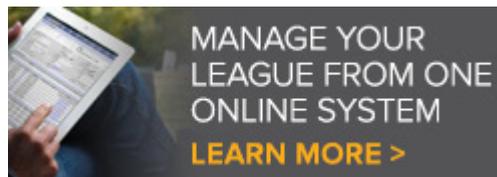
### No Image



### People Image



### Product Image

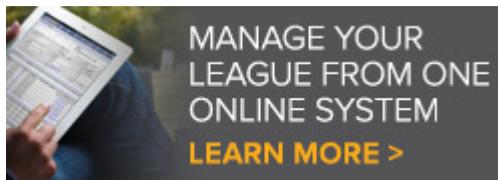
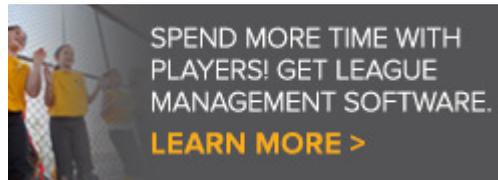
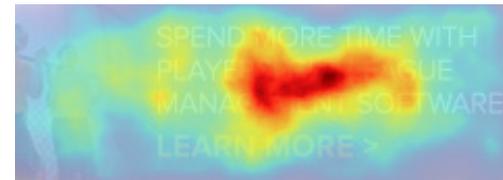
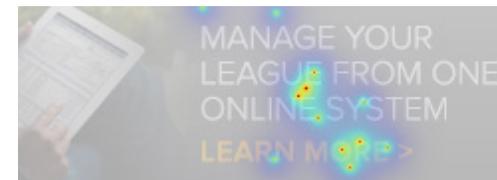
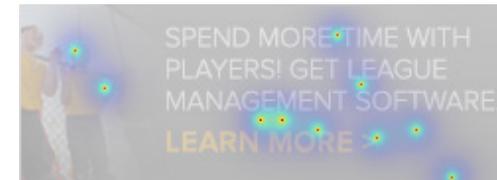


### How Images Impact Interaction

If you've done any research or reading on creating effective ads, you've probably heard that images are THE way to go. But just saying "images will help your ads" is like saying "investing will help you make money!" The WHAT might be true, but without the HOW, it's not very helpful.

Heat maps give you an inside look into HOW images can increase the success of your ads. These ads are all for the same product. Ad 1 has no image, ad 2 has people and 3 has a product-related image. On the next page, you'll see the exact impact of images - and the different types of images - on the interaction level of this ad.



**Original Ad**

**All Interactions**

**Clicks**


Here are those same three ads with heat maps showing their engagement levels. The first heat map (middle column) represents all interactions, like hovers and touches, and the second heat map represents the number of clicks.

Our data showed that people spent 6 minutes less interacting with the ad that included a people-centric image than they did the ad that featured a product image. And, even more important, they were 1.3X more likely to click on the ad that focused on product vs. people.

This means that in terms of image for this particular ad, it's more valuable to focus on product than on people.

However, while users were engaged with the ad featuring the product image, they were MOST engaged with the ad that featured no image at all. Even though people spent more time viewing the ad that featured the product image, they were 1.2x more likely to click on the ad with no image. And when it comes down to it, clicks are what matter.

What this tells us is that while the rule of thumb in most marketing circles might be "images add value," that's not always the case. You need to test your ads and see what connects best with your audience before deciding to go "image" or "no image."

# 1.2x

more clicks on ad with no image

# +6

minutes spent on product vs. people images

# 1.3x

greater conversion with product vs. people image

# 40%

increased click rate on ads without people images vs. with people images

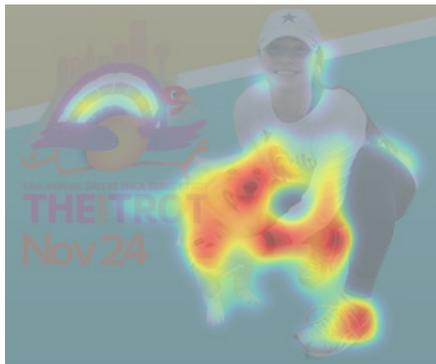


### How Animals Impact Interaction

Who can resist a puppy or a kitten? Apparently not many ad viewers. People were 2.5x more likely to click on an ad that included an animal and would spend roughly a minute and a half longer on such an ad.

Animals are effective because they trigger an instant and universal emotional and empathetic connection to the ad.<sup>2</sup> So it shouldn't be surprising that either consciously or subconsciously, the majority of viewers interacted (via mouse or touch) with this ad solely with the dog and the woman's shoes.

This doesn't necessarily translate to conversions, but it does demonstrate the lure of cute animals for capturing attention. If they see only the pet and not the event, it ultimately may not work in a brand's favor. This may be less likely if the event is specifically tied to animals.



### Photo Background



### Solid Background



### Backgrounds

As we mentioned, we found that users were 1.3x more likely to click on an ad that didn't feature a product photo. But sometimes, plain backgrounds just won't cut it. And in that case, you can leverage the best of both worlds. By combining a picture and a solid text background, ads may be able to yield almost the same amount of clicks as a solid background alone.

Remember that wherever your ad appears, it's competing for attention with many other elements on the page, some of which may be moving or interactive. In a busy environment, a solid background helps your message stand out.

So, if your heart is set on including product images, just make sure to set it against a plain background for the best results.

# 2.5x

click increases driven by animal image

# 22%

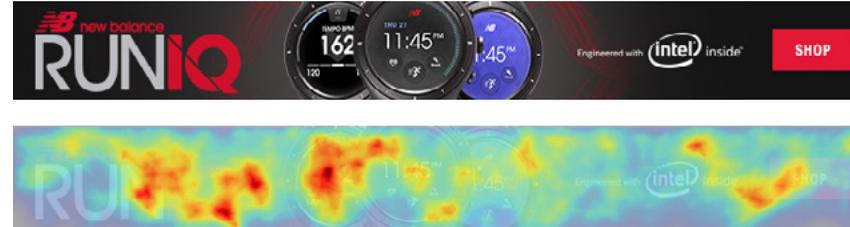
increased CTR on ads with solid background



### 300x250



### 300x50



#### Ad Size

There are almost as many ad sizes as there are ad ideas, but we found that the most popular size is 300x250 (nearly square), as advertisers' seem to agree that it allows your ad to best be visualized. This size is used 2-4x more often for web page ads than any other sizes on the market.

In terms of conversion performance, however, 300x50 is the cream of the crop for several reasons. First, 300x50 is used only for mobile and apps. The rise in mobile viewing accounts for much of its popularity.

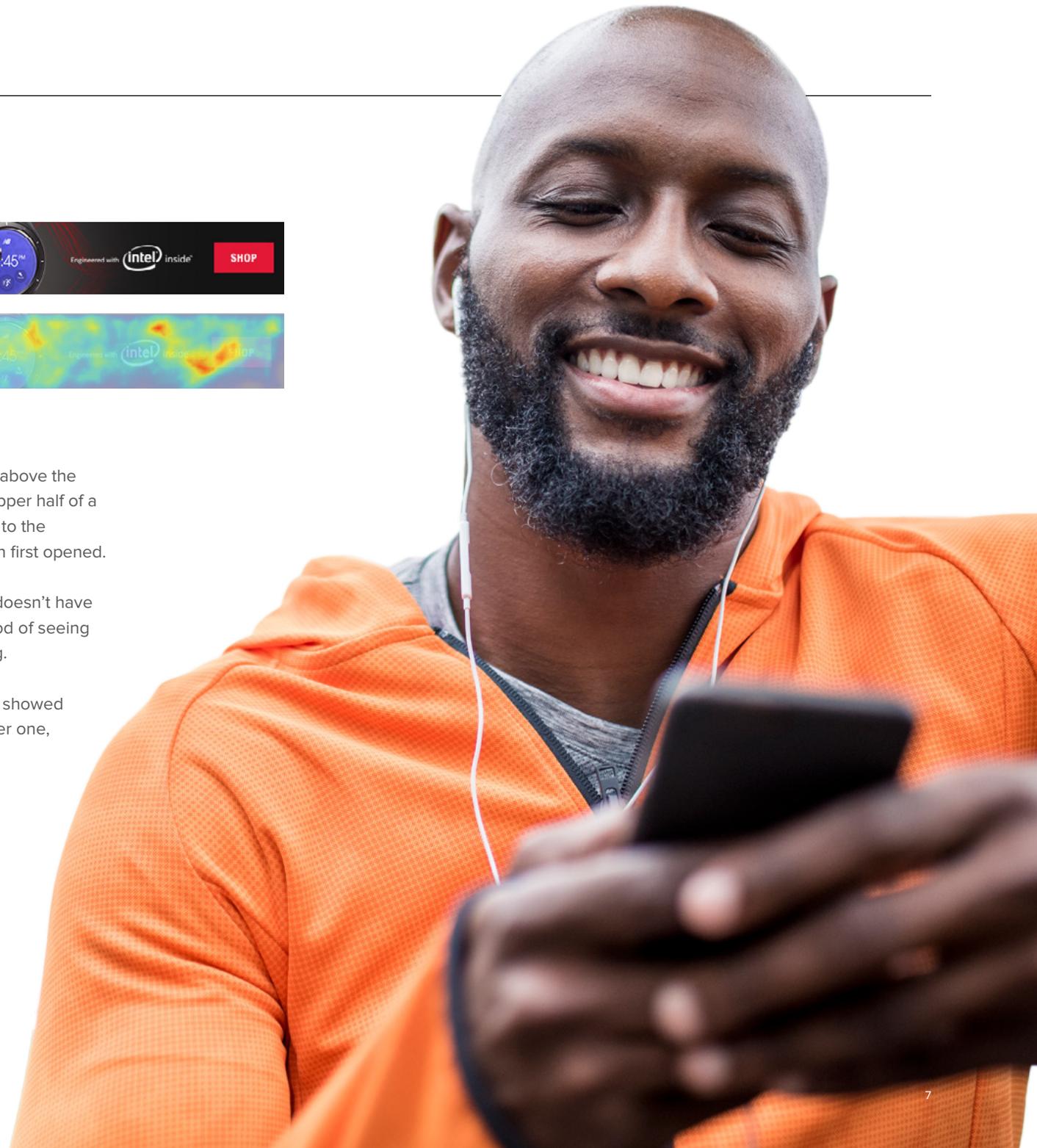
Second, this size allows the ad to be shown “above the fold,” a term originally used to describe the upper half of a folded newspaper, but which now also refers to the amount of a web page that can be seen when first opened.

Placing ads above the fold means a person doesn't have to scroll down to see, increasing the likelihood of seeing it, engaging with it, and ultimately, converting.

As you can see, the smaller New Balance ad showed significantly more engagement than the larger one, despite identical messaging.

50%

ACTIVE's average CTR of .09% on banner ads is 50% higher than the average banner ad CTR of .06%.





### Pricing

Which works better: incentivizing people with a limited time offer (using fear-of-loss related copy like “Buy Now!” or “Today Only!”) or quantifying, in dollars, exactly how much they stand to save with your offer?

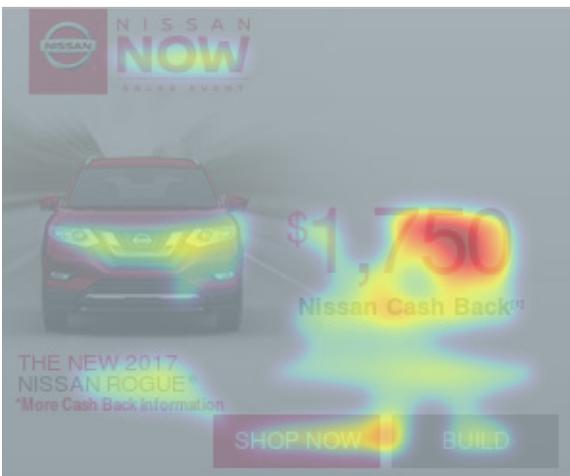
In the case of this ad, it’s definitely the latter. As you can see on the heat map, the refund amount on this ad got WAY more clicks than either the large “NOW” in the top left corner or the “Shop Now” button on the lower portion of the screen - even though the dollar amount wasn’t directly linked.

# 1.2x

more likely to click on a SALE if Limited Time Offer is included

# 2.2x

more like to click on a SALE if LTO and dollar amount are included



### Testing Elements

As you collect your own data about the most effective ads for your brand, remember that heat maps are interesting and informative, but they don’t form the sum total of all factors that determine an ad’s success.

It’s important when testing ads to change only one factor in your comparison. All other components, such as message, colors, page elements, and ad placement and timing, must be identical to conclude that the one aspect you’re testing is more effective one way than another.

### Predictive Attention

If there’s an ad where heat maps have been blocked or the user activity is too low to generate interaction, heat maps predict activity by defaulting to data based on the visual makeup of the ad.

This means that there has been enough data gathered on ad interaction that we can now create ads that will trigger the desired engagement.



## AD COMPARISONS

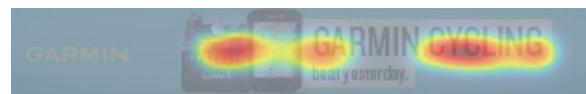
Contrasting side by side the overall attention paid to ads and taking into consideration the factors we've been discussing helps to differentiate ad effectiveness.

On the following pages, we've pulled together the five top- and bottom-performing ads. When compared side by side, it becomes easier to see what makes ads more attention-getting and messages more compelling.



## 5 Top-Performing Ads

As you can see from our top five performing ads, solid backgrounds reigns supreme. Solid backgrounds with text overlay or solid backgrounds with text and a product image were by far the leaders in our ad battle and generated the most clicks and engagement. Additionally, all best performers were horizontal and rectangular, rather than square.



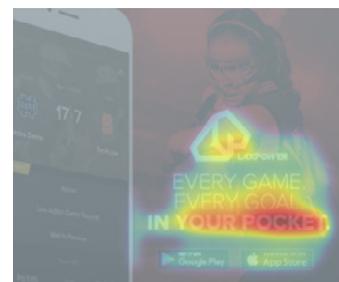
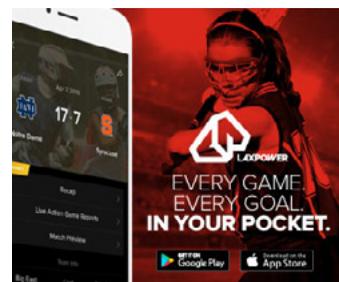
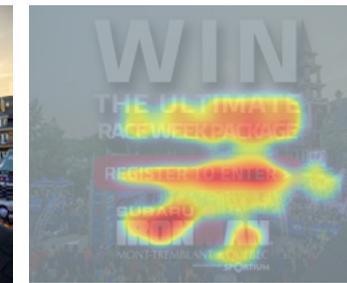
## 5 Worst Performing Ads

What can we say about the losers? Two words: Image backgrounds.

All five of the worst performing ads in this study had an image as a background and were created in the popular, but less effective 300x250 size.

Other elements contributed to the lackluster response, including the fact that the purpose of some of the ads was unclear or the messaging was difficult to read.

Despite some engagement (often just the touches that represent scrolling past), data showed low conversion.





## TURN UP THE HEAT(MAP) ON YOUR MESSAGING

When it comes to advertising, trying to guess what will appeal to your audience is risky business.

Advertise with ACTIVE and maximize your outreach spend with ads that really work. Our predictive attention data and rigorous testing ensure your ads deliver the interaction and engagement that converts to new customers.

888.227.9826 | [ACTIVEnetwork.com](https://ACTIVEnetwork.com) | [mediasales@ACTIVEnetwork.com](mailto:mediasales@ACTIVEnetwork.com)



**Sources:**

<sup>1</sup>Moat - [www.moat.com](http://www.moat.com)

<sup>2</sup>The Ad Effect: Animals in Ads = Smart Advertising - <https://theadeffect.wordpress.com/2010/11/08/animals-in-ads-smart-advertising/>