A CMP, what's in it for me?

A guide to explain the benefits of using a Creative Management Platform

Bannerwise

Unlock the full potential of digital advertising

Imagine a world where creating digital ads is effortless.

A world where you can easily scale up from one version to a thousand, and your creatives are performing better and better each day. Well, this world isn't imaginary. It's real life. Welcome to the world of Creative Management Platforms (CMPs). This is a technological, cloud-based solution that allows you to unlock the full potential of digital advertising.

In this guide, you will find all you need to know about using a CMP. We describe what a CMP is and the biggest benefits of using one in your production process. You can use this guide solely for reference purposes, but also if you want to have some backup in making the right ad-tech decision.

Enjoy reading!

Joost Kortlever,
CEO at Bannerwise

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What is a Creative Management Platform?

A Creative Management Platform is still a relatively unknown product in the field of ad-tech. However, its functionalities are very valuable for those who want to speed up and improve their ad production process.

In short, a Creative Management Platform (CMP) is a cloud-based solution that allows users to build, scale, publish and optimize their digital advertising content. Its core task is to empower users in effortlessly creating more, relevant and better performing digital ads.

A more complete definition is given by international tech marketplace G2:

"A Creative Management Platform (CMP) combines a variety of display advertising tools utilized by marketing and advertising professionals into one cohesive, cloud-based platform. These tools include ad design builders capable of making dynamic creative in bulk, cross-channel publishing, and marketing data collection and analysis.

Creative Management Platforms employ dynamic creative optimization (DCO) to automate the optimization of ad content by differentiating users and tailoring the creative. This makes for a more personalized and powerful ad experience while increasing an ad campaign's overall performance.

Creative Management Platforms enable designers and marketing representatives to collaboratively create and manage full-scale marketing campaigns from one software solution. This allows a marketing campaign to live its life cycle, from design to publishing, inside one platform, ensuring collaboration from all sides."

SOURCE: G2.COM/CATEGORIES/CREATIVE-MANAGEMENT-PLATFORMS

CMP or ad builder?

The main difference between CMPs and ad builders is derived from the functionalities mentioned above. Ad builders, or display ad design software as it is named nowadays, are used to build creatives that are meant specifically for digital advertising campaigns.

While these tools let you design and publish the created ads, they don't offer the option to scale the creatives or optimize the results automatically, nor do they let you collaborate with other team members. In contrast, a CMP does offer you these functionalities.

Common features

You can recognize a CMP by its capabilities to help you automate and optimize the digital advertising production process. A CMP is generally easy to use and empowers you on several levels: building, scaling, publishing, optimizing and collaborating.

To distinguish itself from similar tools, a CMP must include:

- An intuitive ad builder to build your creatives with.

- A scaling feature, to upscale the number of creatives and make changes to an entire ad set at once.

- A publishing tool with a range of network integrations.

- The ability to publish ads in real-time.

- A translation feature, that allows you to easily translate creatives.

- An optimization feature, that helps you analyze and improve the performance of your ads.

- The opportunity to share creatives and work simultaneously.

- The ability to improve your workflow by assigning user roles and permissions.

More than just display

While G2's definition mentions a CMP combines a variety of display advertising tools, a CMP is not exclusively used for the production of display ads. In the past, CMPs were initially created for improving the display ad production process. But digital advertising is changing rapidly, and so are the features that CMPs offer. Usually, CMPs are compatible with most major ad networks, affiliate platforms, DSPs and social networks and thus they are used to create a wide array of digital ads, from social to digital out-of-home.

Highlighted features

Now, we will take a deep dive into these functionalities, so you can see why they matter specifically. We have segmented these features into five categories: building, scaling, publishing, optimizing and collaborating.

Building

The first thing you will notice when using a CMP is how most of their ad builders have a very intuitive user interface (UI), one that lets you drag-and-drop elements. Using it feels very natural, so there is no need for how-to-use workshops or video tutorials. Aside from that, you (or your team members) can effortlessly build all kinds of ads without the need of a developer. Basically, a CMP makes coding redundant. HTML5-elements and professional animations can simply be added with just one single click.

A CMP empowers you to create all kinds of ads. From static to animated HTML5 to in-banner video and dynamic (also known as data-driven ads). You can add campaign media and visual elements, such as images, video or animation to attract your audience's attention.

Another important feature is the ability to create so-called 'brand libraries'. Here, you can save all assets that are important for your brand, such as your logo, custom font and brand colors. With this, you easily incorporate and maintain your brand identity throughout all creatives build with a CMP. This ensures brand consistency, in all creatives and across all platforms.

"Basically, a CMP makes coding redundant. HTML5-elements and professional animations can simply be added with just one single click."

Scaling

Scaling is another important feature of a CMP. Think skyscrapers, rectangles, and leaderboards: a CMP helps you effortlessly generate all ad sizes you need. From a single creative, you can scale up to multiple sizes. In just a few minutes, you can create an extensive ad set suitable for all devices.

Aside from sizes, a CMP also empowers you to create ads for several channels. Nowadays, advertisers work with a wide array of networks, including social media. Most CMPs support multiple output formats such as HTML5, MP4, GIF, PNG and JPEG, so you always receive your ads in the format you want, compatible for the network you have selected.

CMPs also let you save built ads as custom templates and use this over and over again. This will save you a lot of time and help you speed up your digital ad production process since repetitive (design) tasks are no longer needed. Some CMPs even help you serve multiple markets and countries more efficiently. By using a CMP that offers a translation feature, you can change your copy, images or logo to match other markets or countries with a single click.

And if you need to make small adjustments, a CMP often functions as a sort of content management system, in which you can make changes to existing ads. You can make adjustments on an ad set level or within a certain selection of sizes of the ad set.

Publishing

When you are ready to publish your ads, the majority of CMPs have a direct API integration with the most common DSPs. This means click-macros and click-tags are generated automatically, and also the file size is limited to make sure your ads will always work. You no longer have to worry about exceeding your file size and back-and-forthing with your team about non functioning ads a thing of the past.

A few CMPs also offer the ability to publish your ads in alternative ways. Aside from pushing them directly, you can also download the ads to your computer or simply use third-party tags. The latter gives you the freedom to make adjustments on the fly. Ads published with the use of third-party tags can easily be updated, since the CMP overwrites your published ad seamlessly. With this, you can avoid ad-fatigue by frequently changing and updating your ads.

Optimizing

Optimizing is a feature that makes a CMP stand out. Did you know there is a 92% chance that your display ads are not performing as well as they could? To frame this differently: there's only an 8% chance your ad is perfect at first try. That's why it is so important that – after publishing – you analyze the performance of your ads, to see whether they can perform even better. With a CMP that offers optimizing features, you can effortlessly run experiments on a large number of ads. You receive live performance data, so you can easily see what format or content performs best.

If you decide to optimize your ads, changes can be made to single ads or to your ad set as a whole. Whether you want to optimize two ads or a hundred – it's doable with just one single click. These experiments might not lead to a significant change in results right away, but it is the sum of optimizations that will provide you with better-performing creatives over time. Ultimately, a CMP turns ad optimization into an ongoing process, with a better return on ad spend (ROAS) as a result.

"There's a 92% chance your display ads aren't performing
as well as they could."

Collaborating

The process of digital ad production involves a lot of different people, such as designers and marketers. With a CMP, all stakeholders can do their work within one platform. Copywriters can write copy and decide on length and words, while designers can do their magic and see ads come to life. Marketers can then review the ad set as a whole and publish them with just a few clicks.

Since most CMPs are cloud-based solutions, ads can also be updated from every location. This makes working with remote teams a lot easier. Aside from individual benefits, using a CMP will improve teamwork due to the fact that multiple people can work on the same project without having to compress files and send them over via email. We all know this workflow is very inefficient since files can get lost or emails get overlooked. With a CMP, all creatives are stored in the cloud and your inbox will be frustration-free.

The benefits of using a CMP

Marketing teams that start using a Creative Management Platform will see their ad production process improve significantly. This is in itself a huge win, but to see how large the impact of using a CMP is, we have defined six main benefits that you will most definitely experience.

Saving time, saving resources

The digital advertising production process is a costly endeavor. This is due to several factors, such as the large amount of manpower you need (copywriters, designers, developers) and the costs that come with it. But aside from the high costs, designing and building the ads also takes a lot of time. Especially when you want to create extensive ad sets consisting of several translations or various products. With a CMP you can remove these high costs and the lengthy turnaround time of ad production. This makes the production process a lot less expensive.

More data and insights

But that's not all: the optimization feature of a CMP also provides you with valuable data and insights. It offers you a clearer view of your ad's performance, segmented by channel, format, audience, and message. When you learn what works and what doesn't, you can effortlessly start improving your ads. This will eventually lead to better results. That's why the ultimate goal of every CMP is to increase your ROI, and all its features are designed for it.

A more satisfactory workflow

When designers don't have to perform every tweak manually, you save them a lot of boring, repetitive work. The same applies to marketers: when file sizes are automatically limited and changes to ad sets are updated in real-time, everything becomes a lot easier. Aside from that, assigning user roles and permissions will also prevent unwanted changes from happening. Your intern is no longer able to change the finalized text, and as a marketer, you are unable to mess up the design that's so carefully created. Happy team, happy life.

Full control over your creatives

Being a cloud-based solution, a CMP gives you full control over your creatives. You no longer need a developer to build your ads. Even if you decide to outsource (parts of) the production process, you can always check-in and see how things are going. Required changes can be made on-the-fly. Changing a background color or CTA is done in no time. And if there really is no-one available, you can even do it yourself. It's that easy.
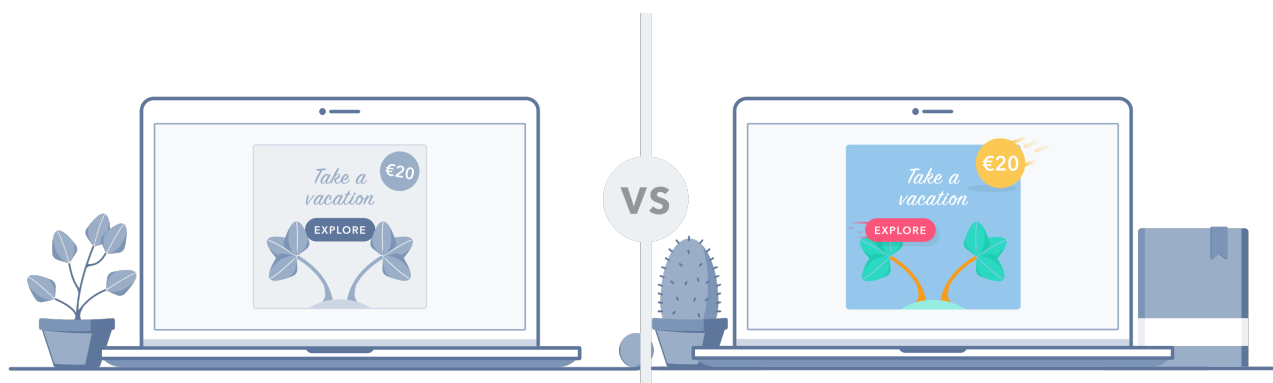
A better ad experience

A bad ad experience can come in many forms. From retargeted ads for a recently purchased product to ads blaring the same, unpersonalized message day-in-day-out. It doesn't just turn-off your customers, it often causes them to turn away from your brand completely. A CMP can empower you with creating more relevant and personalized ads, something that is key for getting a better ad experience.

By using the scale feature, you can easily create more variations of your ads, so you can make sure your audience doesn't see the same ad over and over again. The optimization feature will tell you how your ad performs. If, for instance, the audience doesn't convert because your ad is irrelevant you can change the content to something that doesn't put them off. Subsequently, data will show if your optimization worked. Overall, using a CMP will lead to a better ad experience across all channels - especially if you scale smart and optimize accordingly.

More brand consistency

Brand consistency matters. Without it, your ads could easily be anyone's. But when it comes to digital ad production, it almost seems as if brand books go straight out the window. This is mostly due to creative limitations. Using a CMP gives you a lot of creative options, and therefore lets you incorporate a lot more branding into your digital ads. The proper use of fonts, coloring, and logos makes your brand recognizable across all marketing channels and touchpoints. As a result, consumers become more likely to remember your brand.

When are you in need of using a CMP?

Using a CMP means changing the way you produce digital ads. While there are several reasons for using a CMP, most of them derive from the struggles people experience during the ad production process. We have identified four main reasons for digital advertising professionals to be in need of a CMP. They experience a universal struggle, one of having not enough resources, not enough control and not enough focus.

Have you already read our article 'The struggle is real: the pain of digital ad production and how to solve it'? If so, you can skip this part and continue with the next chapter.

We believe you are in need of a CMP when you experience at least one of these pains on a regular basis:

1. **You don't have enough time or not enough resources**
   Digital ad production takes up a lot of time and resources. You never create just a single ad, it's always an extensive set in various shapes and sizes. But while you dream of mass production, really scaling-up seems infeasible, since all elements in your ads need to be put in manually.

   You also need several people on your team to create your ads: a copywriter to write the copy, a designer for making the ad look stunning and a developer to turn the designs into code. Does anyone require a change? Then the whole process starts over again, ad by ad. Besides the fact that this is *intensely* boring for all those involved, it is also time-consuming.

   And wait, didn't you need all these versions by the end of the day? Yes. Oh, but the developer is not available. What to do? Especially marketers tend to feel they never have enough time or not enough resources to make their deadline. This leads to stress, frustration and the team rushing their work. On the other end of the line, this will result in bad ad experience or loss of brand consistency.

2. You experience a disorganized workflow

At Bannerwise, we have a saying: "You never create digital ads alone". Just kidding, but it is true. It applies to most agencies or advertisers since they tend to work in teams that assign tasks to specific members. Marketers, designers, copywriters, developers and sometimes consultants or campaign managers too.

Involving all these people in a production process is very useful – when done right. It can also lead to a disorganized workflow, where it is not clear who is responsible for what and when. Copywriters often complain that designers don't have their feeling for words. Designers in return complain developers mess up their design. Creatives go back and forth, and changes are executed without a clear vision or a responsible party that can sign off on the ad set as a whole.

What's missing in this process is assigned user roles and permissions. Just as a lack of resources, a disorganized workflow will ultimately also lead to bad ad experience and brand inconsistency. Spelling errors, wrong logo's or buttons that don't click. We get all itchy even thinking about it. Such a waste!

3. You run into issues when you publish your ads

The creative process is finished. All ads are designed and ready to go. Now, you have to download them - but wait, they are not on your company's server. It appears your developer forgot to store them efficiently. You reach out and after a lot of back-and-forthing, the developer emails them to you.

When you finally have all your creatives, the uploading starts. And that's when a lot of problems can occur. The file size exceeds the KB limit for Google Ads. And the tracking link doesn't work. You put the process on hold and turn to your team members once again, asking if they can take another look into the required specifications.

In the meanwhile, you'll go get lunch, because this will take a while. You'll see the new ads pop up in your inbox when they're ready. This afternoon, or maybe tomorrow. You wonder: why can't publishing your ads go any easier? This way, mass-producing your ads is out of the question and A/B testing more often seems like a faraway dream.

4. You don't have control over your creatives

One of the most common solutions to a lack of resources is to outsource the ad production process. While it can be very effective, outsourcing is – in our experience – not the holy grail of digital advertising.

For many advertising professionals, agility is the key to a successful production process. Since many ad sets are planned and developed days before they are launched, the turnaround time should be as short as possible. But when you outsource, external briefings need to be drafted, meetings need to be planned and getting all who are involved on the same page can be a hassle.

Aside from that, other parties might not have enough brand familiarity. This can lead to unwanted back-and-forthing and ultimately to a delay in the delivery. So, not only is outsourcing a costly endeavor (it eats away a large part of the advertising budget), it also creates an extra link, resulting in a loss of control over your creatives.

But even when you decide to keep your production process in-house, you can experience loss of control. For this, most people need the help of a designer or a developer. Required changes have to be scheduled or requested beforehand, and a last-minute task is always an issue. If there only was a way to change the CTA or background color yourself…

What happens when you don't act on these needs?

Of course, you don't have to come up with a solution to your problem. But at Bannerwise, we believe pains need to be treated. If you have a niggling infection, it turns bad without doctoring. The same applies to your digital ads and the process that comes with it. As an advertising professional, settling for an inadequate production process will lead you to miss out on several levels. By not owning up to your problem, a lot of potential remains untapped.

That's why we like to frame it differently. What happens if you *do* act on this need? What happens when you start using a CMP to treat your pains? At Bannerwise, we know using a CMP will lead to more time for the creative process, better collaborations and ultimately a better ROI. Why not allow yourself this comfort?
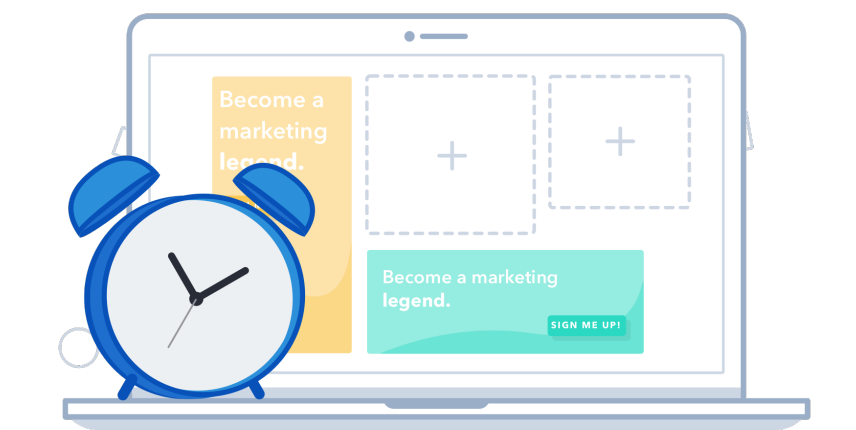
Common CMP users

Creative Management Platforms are valuable for marketing teams as a whole, but two in specific are key in the digital advertising process. To illustrate this for you, we've zoomed in on two types of users: designers and marketers.

> "Common CMP users are marketers and designers, but entire teams can benefit from the more streamlined workflow a CMP offers."

Designer

Designers go by any name nowadays. Multimedia designer, creative developer, visual designer. Basically, anyone who designs and creates digital ads can use a CMP. Usually, designers want to spend as much time as possible on concepting and creating – and the least amount of time on scaling, adjusting or tweaking. When you look at a CMP from a designer's perspective, its use is most beneficial because it removes all the boring, repetitive tasks. By automating scaling, there's more time for the designer to be creative.

Aside from that, not all designers know how to animate ads. Creating a GIF is doable with software such as Adobe Photoshop or Sketch. But due to their lack of coding skills, more motion is often not an option. To add animations, developers have to come in. They usually don't have the same eye for design as the designer does and thus, the final ad is often not pixel perfect. This can frustrate the designer, and lead to a lot of unwanted back-and-forthing.

A CMP empowers a designer to deliver more qualitative work, individually. It offers the ability to effortlessly add animations and video elements, without needing a developer. As a result, even the most junior designers can turn their designs into stunning, professional-looking ads for multiple channels.

Marketer

Marketers are often the decision-makers when it comes to using a CMP. They will do the research on which CMP is a good fit for their business, and how their workflow can benefit from using it. They go by various names, such as Chief Marketing Officer, Marketing Manager, Senior Marketer, Digital Advertising Specialist or Digital Marketing Consultant.

When the designer is finished with building a template, the marketer can take over. He or she is now able to work independently, anywhere and anytime. With these templates, a marketer can easily create new versions, for example with different call-to-actions, in other languages or for other target audiences. When marketing teams work in different business units or in different countries, the ads can also easily be localized for their specific regions.

But this is just one aspect of a marketer's work. Publishing ads and tracking their performance is another. Using a CMP makes this part of the digital advertising process a lot easier since all can be done automatically. For most marketers, their goal is to build more brand awareness, driving traffic and conversions, generating more leads and ultimately, increasing the ROI of their marketing budget. A CMP will definitely make reaching these goals a lot easier.

Other team members

Of course, a CMP doesn't just offer benefits solely for designers and marketers. Other team members or stakeholders will have their own reasons for using a CMP. Managers who want to give feedback on overall brand consistency, clients who want to check in now and then: the list can be as long as you want.

The best part of using a more evolved CMP is that you can assign user roles to all types of users. This way, copywriters can correct spelling errors without messing up the design, and interns are not able to change any of the ad settings right before publishing. Just think of whoever you want to include in the production process or its review phase, and what permissions you want to give them.

Are CMPs for agencies or brands?

Some CMPs claim they are the perfect tool for in-housing the production process. While this is true, 'in-house' often sounds like it's only meant for brands or advertisers. But when it comes to using a CMP, its features are also highly beneficial for agencies. As an agency, a CMP is a way for you to work more efficiently and to provide your client with valuable services, such as creative optimization. You save time on production, and you will have more time to do what you do best: consulting your clients on how they can improve their digital advertising.


Agency   VS   In-house
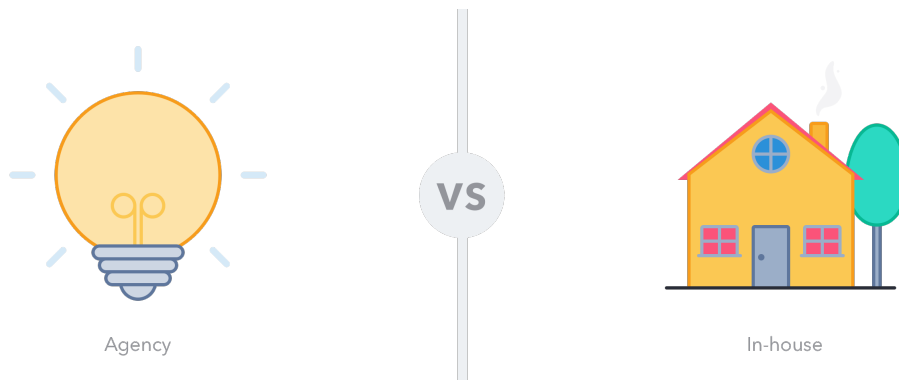
Another benefit that derives from using a CMP, is the ability to set up a Multiple-Client Center (MCC). Generally, agencies would like to take every burden out of their clients' hands. However, some advertisers would like to co-create and carry out some of the work. You can see this as a threat, but also as an opportunity.

Agencies are indispensable in concepting, designing and creating. But clients know all about their branding and how they'd like to see the end result. When you use a CMP, you're able to co-create without losing control. You can even have a remote freelancer or third-party work alongside you, and still keep track of what they do and how they do it.

"Co-creating can sound like a threat, but is essentially an opportunity."

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Do you need a CMP if you already use a DSP, DMP or CDP?

The ad tech stack of a typical advertiser or agency will probably include a Demand Side Platform (DSP), a Data Management Platform (DMP) or a Customer Data Platform (CDP). Each solution offers its own valuable features, from collecting and storing customer data to optimizing the media buying process by providing smart targeting options and testing capabilities. Adding a CMP to this already extensive stack may sound a bit 'much'. But a CMP offers a wide array of new possibilities and could, therefore, be very valuable to include.
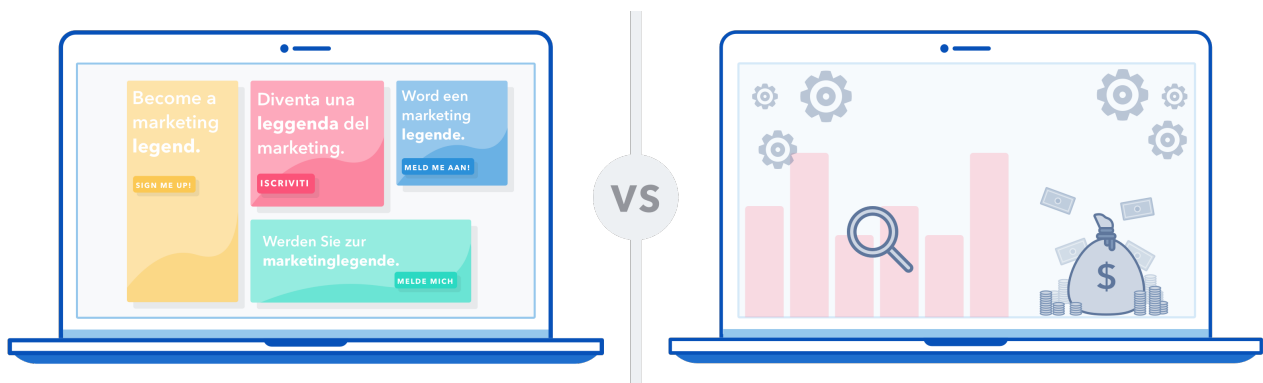
The main reason for this? The creative is often one of the most overlooked parts of the digital advertising process. According to an internal study by AppNexus, 97% of all campaigns do not have a unique creative for its targeted segment. In other words: they could potentially use a creative that doesn't match its audience. And you could spend all the budget you have on DSPs, CDPs, and DMPs, but if your creative isn't relevant, your money is basically wasted.

Using a CMP contributes to the digital advertising production process. It offers you an easy way to easily create better and more relevant ads - on a large scale. When you include a CMP to your ad tech stack you combine its powers with those of your DSP, DMP or CDP. With all their insights and targeting options, you can optimize your creatives for segmented audiences at the right place and at the right time. This will lead to better-performing ads and therefore to better ROAS.

That's why the answer to this chapter's main question is 'yes'. If you already use a DSP, DMP or CDP, you may still need a CMP. Using it could be very valuable, as it allows you to reach the full potential of your ad tech.

Finding a CMP that suits you

You now know what a Creative Management Platform is and what features it should contain. If you think you can benefit from using a CMP, it's time to start looking for a vendor that suits you.

There are several Creative Management Platforms that can help you create more and better ads. Which one you choose, is up to you. After all, you are the one who knows what struggles you experience in the ad production process. Useful websites to compare pricing and features are international tech marketplace g2.com and the software review platform capterra.nl.

Good luck with making your decision!
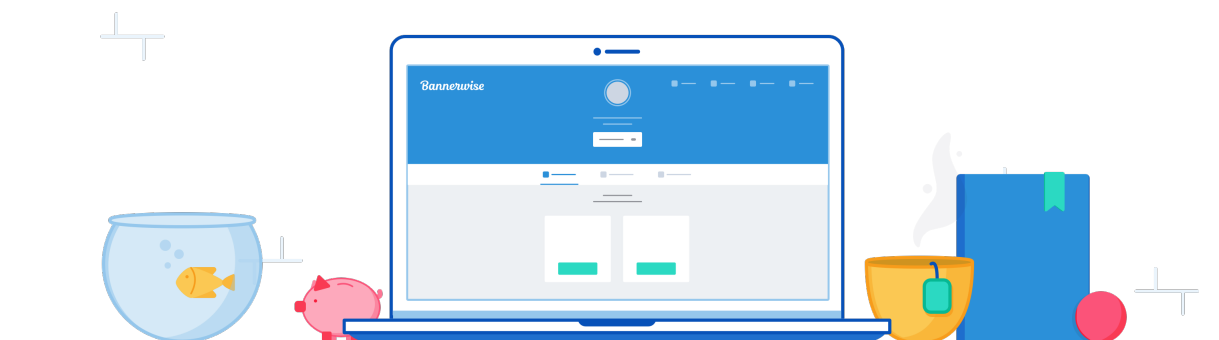
Introducing Bannerwise

Bannerwise is a Creative Management Platform. It helps you build, scale, publish and optimize your digital ads. All while guarding your brand identity and collaborating effortlessly with team members across the globe. In a nutshell, we make digital ad production more efficient, more effective and more enjoyable. Whether you are an advertiser, agency or publisher.

Why did we get here?

To make digital advertising worth its investment, you to create need ads that attract attention. But building professional, animated ads turned out to be a lot harder than most advertisers, agencies, and publishers think. Especially when it comes to creating HTML5 ads.

Not too long ago, your choice was either high costs or unprofessional-looking banners. The tools available were way too complex and often required coding skills. Or they were simply not professional enough. For a lot of advertisers, outsourcing is also far from ideal. Multiple parties have to be involved, which results in lengthy turnaround time for the production process.

At Bannerwise, we decided it was time someone came up with a solution. We wanted to empower advertisers, agencies and publishers to unlock the full potential of digital ad production. And so we did.

We founded Bannerwise late 2014 and were voted ING startup the next year. Our business has grown significantly since the launch of our first beta version, due to constant innovation and development. In October 2019, we were selected to enter the Google Marketing Innovation Programme, to grow and enhance our product even further.

What our users say about Bannerwise

James Canter

Creative Director

"As an agency, we come up with quite complex designs that are easily executed via Bannerwise. With the preview link, we don't need to send all the files to our clients, and feedback is easily processed. Excellent product! I wish I could keep this secret from other agencies!"

Roxanne Groenberg

Senior Internet Marketing Consultant

"We quickly added Bannerwise to our list of favorite tools. As an online marketing agency, we regularly need new display ads for our clients and Bannerwise supports us with quickly creating creative banner sets whilst saving time and money."

James Canter

Programmatic Performance Manager

"Bannerwise enables us to sell more display campaigns directly to smaller advertisers and therefore drastically increases the yield of ad inventory by making HTML5 ad production accessible and easy for us! Over the past two years of using Bannerwise, they have continuously fine-tuned and improved their service. If you are looking for an ad creation tool that is scalable and easy to use, Bannerwise is the right choice for you."

Get started with a CMP

Are you not yet familiar with Bannerwise? Get in touch and unlock the power of digital advertising.

Book a demo   **Start your trial**

About Bannerwise

Bannerwise is a Creative Management Platform that helps you build, scale, publish and optimize digital ads. All while guarding your brand identity, changing messaging across multiple platforms in real-time and collaborating with your team. For more information, visit www.bannerwise.io or give us a call on +31 (0) 20 210 34 88.