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**POV:** FACEBOOK INTRODUCES FLEXIBLE,  
CREATIVE "CANVAS" AD FORMAT

MARCH 2016



# FACEBOOK INTRODUCES FLEXIBLE, CREATIVE “CANVAS” AD FORMAT

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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Facebook is at it again, giving advertisers a more creative way to switch up the typical ad format and entice users to learn more about their brand through an interactive, full-screen mobile ad format. In late February, Facebook introduced [Canvas ads](#) to all advertisers to provide users with better mobile experiences and offer them a chance to connect with brands in a more interactive way. Canvas ads allow brands to unleash creativity within the ad unit itself, giving the user a more immersive experience.

*“Canvas was created with input from the creative community at every step and is designed to help businesses tell stories and show products on mobile devices in a beautiful way.” – [Facebook for Business](#)*

Facebook is increasingly finding ways to enhance user experience within the platform. In October 2015, Facebook released [lead ads](#), which allow the user to sign up for more information from the business by inserting their information directly into the ad without ever clicking away from Facebook. Canvas ads follow suit, providing a full brand experience without forcing the user to leave the site.

This POV will explain how Canvas ads work, include some visual examples, review the pros and cons of using Canvas, and offer examples of how using Canvas could work for pharma.

## HOW DO CANVAS ADS WORK?

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Canvas ads are designed only for mobile devices. As a user scrolls through their Facebook News Feed on mobile, the ad will appear as a regular newsfeed ad. Once the user clicks on it, the Canvas will load instantaneously — approximately 10 times faster than a standard mobile website — taking up the full screen of the device and giving the user the power to scroll through images, videos, additional text, etc. From there, the advertiser can lead the user offsite to their



website with call-to-action buttons. The idea behind Canvas is to keep the user on Facebook as long as possible while still promoting products and educating them about the brand. Canvas ads essentially give the user a website experience while keeping them on the Facebook platform, but there is still the option to drive users to a website. In media terms, Facebook is giving its users a richer media experience, unlike anything Facebook has ever offered before. Brands can now tell more intensive stories through Canvas.

## HOW IT WORKS

The ad that a user sees in their News Feed:



After clicking on the ad, Canvas takes over the screen:



< Brand logo stays at the top.

< The user can scroll through a carousel of images.

< The advertiser can add extra text between images and CTA buttons with links to the website.

< Both images and videos can be used in the same Canvas.

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The user scrolls through the Canvas.  
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Advertisers have several options for how their images will appear. They can either have users tap to expand the image, as shown above, or they can have a “tilt pan,” where the user tilts their phone back and forth to see the image expand, giving a panoramic experience.

## BENEFITS OF CANVAS ADS

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Facebook is unleashing creative options for advertisers to give users a more immersive brand experience, without running into issues with website load times and risking the possibility of users dropping off by leaving Facebook. As a result, the user could be more engaged with the brand through the Canvas since there is no interruption of leaving the Facebook platform.

*“With the typical link ad, it’s generally a sub-par experience. Slow load times, leaving Facebook and often bad landing pages can lead to poor conversion rates.*

*With Canvas, you can tell your story quickly and in a much more immersive and engaging way. While many would have otherwise abandoned your landing page quickly, you may have a better chance to convince and convert, getting the sale from a CTA button to your website from within the canvas.”*

– **Jon Loomer**

The only downside to using Canvas ads is that users may not always choose to go to the brand's site after their experience within the Canvas, potentially resulting in lower site visits. Because of this, Intouch recommends using Canvas ads to monitor overall engagement as a main KPI, rather than site visits. The Canvas does have the power to create a positive experience and increase the user's interest in the brand, which could then entice the user to want to learn more and visit the full website. The advertiser will always have the option to include call-to-action buttons within the Canvas to encourage website visits, it just requires one more extra click for the user, which is where Intouch predicts them to fall off. Canvas ads are not yet available on Instagram, and the advertiser must have a Facebook page in order to be eligible.

## CONCLUSION

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Canvas ads are a great way to give the user a richer brand experience. They allow advertisers to tell an impactful story without relying on the user to stay engaged once they leave the



Facebook platform and go to an external site. For pharma clients, Canvas could be used to show additional safety information or indications for use. Images and videos could also be repurposed to showcase patient stories or instructional/mechanism of action videos. Intouch recommends testing the Canvas ad format against the standard ad format and measuring the performance of each type to determine opportunities for campaign optimization. Feel free to reach out to your Intouch representative or media manager with any questions.

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