

## A No Advertising Branding Strategy In Confrontation of Ad Blocking

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### Abstract:

The branding industry faces a serious threat because of ad blocking phenomenon. People tend to prevent advertising messages from reaching them using (ad blocking) applications. ad blocking users are growing at an astonishing percentage every year, which impedes the branding process. Subsequently, this requires finding alternative solutions. The research aims to describe the rise of ad blocking phenomenon and analyze the reasons of its growth, to provide a strategy and a prevention model in the confrontation of this phenomenon.

The ad blocking is a global phenomenon where people are trying to avoid and prevent all advertising messages from being reached online using ad blocking applications.

The paper discussed three reasons forcing people install the ad blocking applications; advertising found to be too intrusive, annoying and create security concerns, advertising doesn't look professional with unnecessary, unwanted and sometimes disruptive content. Younger Internet users are more likely to install and use ad blocking applications as they express their hate to online ads in several surveys. Older Internet users are more willing to use advertising filters rather than completely preventing advertising using ad blocking applications.

The study has presented a proposal to reduce the threat of this phenomenon through a new strategy "No advertising strategy". The study has come to the conclusion that ad blocking is considered a real threat to brands and has a negative impact on the advertising industry in general.

### Keywords:

*No Advertising  
Branding Strategy  
Ad Blocking*

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### Introduction:

Advertising Industry and communication means are rapidly evolving. In Fact it is inherent to the movement of life itself, and human evolution, and of course there is a potential impact of this change on Branding.

Strong brands in a tougher competition markets, are the brands that have been able to build a successful connection, understanding and engagement with people throughout years, depending on advertising design and communication and able to be differentiated through building a strong brand equity and identity.

In the last few years, advertising has developed into widely complex forms of communication, to build brands. The Internet alone provides many of these forms. We reached a state of saturation when advertising was able to communicate using almost everything possible. Marketers and designers are trying to impress people through new medias and unusual advertising messages. In addition of interactive strategies that providing the maximum level of engagement between brands and people.

But, on the other hand there is a serious problem that faces the brands nowadays, which may

prevent them from achieving their communicative goals.

Most of people are trying to avoid advertising generally, people use the ad breaks on television in finishing their personal stuff, and they also skip ads on the Internet and refusing ad messages on their mobiles. They also became not interested to know the content of flyers and printed ads. This phenomenon was crystallized in the emergence of (ad blocking) applications that was developed to prevent advertisements from reaching consumers. According to Page Fair; "*Based on measurements taken from hundreds of websites over 11 months, we show that up to 30% of web visitors are blocking ads, and that the number of ad blocking users is growing at an astonishing 43% per year.*"(29)

This study aims to underline the rise of ad blocking phenomena and understand the reasons why it is growing as an attempt to provide a prevention model to confront this phenomena through a new branding strategy (no advertising) depends on communication through untraditional advertising forms and messages.

### Research problem:

The branding industry faces a serious threat

because of the ad blocking phenomenon. People tend to prevent advertising messages from reaching them using (ad blocking) applications. Ad blocking users is growing at an astonishing percentage every year, which impedes the branding process that depends mainly on communications. Subsequently, this requires finding alternative solutions. This thesis supposes (no advertising branding) as a new strategy, through avoiding the traditional channels and depending upon the unusual communication means, and untraditional advertising forms and messages in order to encourage the recipient to receive brands' messages, and therefore they will be able to confront the ad blocking phenomenon.

### Methodology:

The study is trying to describe the ad blocking phenomenon and the impact of its rise on brands and advertising industry. The study also investigates and analyzes the reasons of its growth during the last few years and describe the solutions suggested by some of famous publishers and advertisers trying to provide a strategy (no advertising) as a prevention model in the confrontation of this phenomenon.

The measurement depends on the number of interactivities and responses of people towards the brand posts on social media; on Facebook

(defined as likes, shares and comments), Twitter (retweets and likes), Instagram (likes and comments), Tumblr (original notes) and YouTube (official views, comments and thumbs-ups).

### Objectives:

The research aims to describe the rise of ad blocking phenomenon and analyze the reasons of its growth, to provide a strategy (no advertising) as a prevention model in the confrontation of this phenomenon.

### The Development of Advertising communication:

Earlier marketers concerned about understanding both individual and collective behavior, connecting marketing to the behavioral sciences aiming to discover what drives the purchase decisions. (3)

E. St. Elmo Lewis\* detailed, in his book, (Financial Advertising) (1898) the four components of sales, which he extended later to advertising (attracting attention, maintain interest, create desire and get action) as cognitive stages the consumer go through when buying a product. This logical approach reflects how marketing was working till 1925. When The AIDA was founded by Edward K. Strong Jr.\*, who modeled this four phased funnel. (17)



The advertisers used this funnel to outline the progression of potential consumer. To provide a framework of the stages that he go through, because of advertising. It maintains a cognitive engagement, when later on emotional element was added as a stage of satisfaction, confidence, and conviction. But Yakob (2015) believes that advertising was understood to be the process of attracting attention of the greatest number of target audience. (16)

There were also a variety of models including:

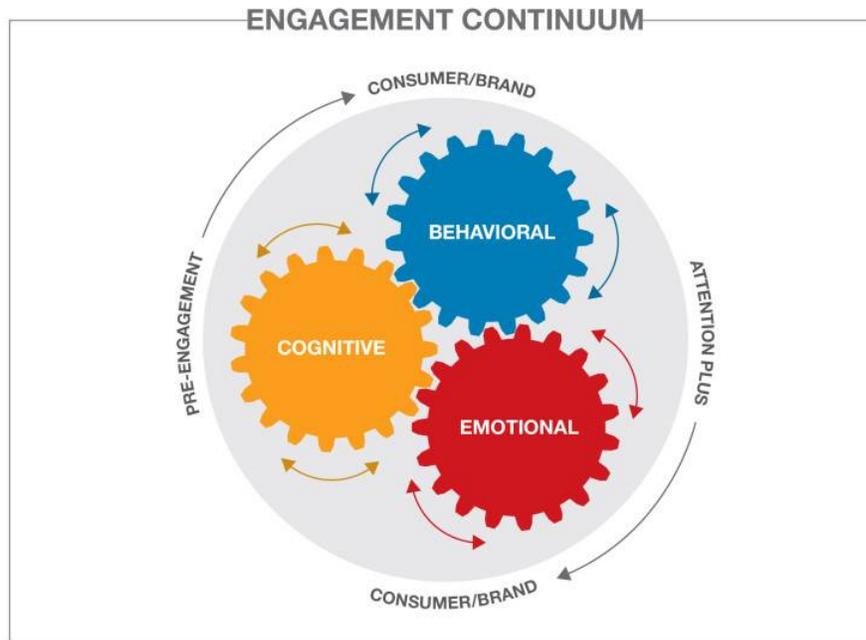
**AIDAS:** (Favorable) Attention, Interest, Desire, Action, (Permanent) Satisfaction

**AICCA:** Attention, Interest, Confidence, Conviction, Action

**ADICA:** Attention, Desire, (Removing) Inhibitions, (Inspiring) Confidence, Action

**AIDCA:** Attention, Interest, Desire, Confidence, Action

Russell H. Coney (1960) Set the (**DAGMAR**); **Defining Advertising Goals for Measured Advertising Results** to be the milestone of measuring advertising. He also, suggested that advertising goals are different from marketing goals. As he broke the tradition, he recognized that advertising goals should be measured according to the achievement of a **Hierarchy of communications objectives**. He also, introduced the concept of achieving multiple objectives through advertising.(22) Lavidge and Steiner (1960s) also assumed that advertising works in a "Hierarchy of Effects," in an ordered way — cognitively, affectively, and behaviorally. This model was the first to introduce the concept of engagement in advertising and branding. This concept concerns about understanding consumers' insights. (4).



iab.

IAB defines engagement as “a spectrum of consumer advertising activities and experiences—cognitive, emotional, and physical—that will have a positive impact on a brand.” (28)

#### Advertising today:

For years, Insight has been used in a classical way; packaging and promotions. The brands were trying to match between what consumer need and the product. Tougher competition and new communicative opportunities force marketers and advertisers to be more innovative and to find new ways to understand, reach and engage with consumers. So, they tried to be more personalized, as the web provides all the information we need to offer the right product for the consumer, at the perfect time.(28) Brands can no longer get by with a catchy jingle, instead they search for songs that tell stories, conjure memories and forge genuine connections with people.(11) Digital advertising co-creates the meaning of the brand, through providing nonlinear phases of consumer interaction; thinking, feeling and doing can occur in any order.

Brøsholen (2016) stated that new technology brings the world closer together and gives us new ways not only to develop products and services, but communicating and brand engaging as well.(6) Today’s advertising experience depends upon the partnership between the brand and consumers through enabling a level of interaction between them.

In 2012, Kevin Allen examined that the concept of advertising will change in 2020 to be “join me”, as

the brands will work on listening carefully to their citizens, informing and entertaining them. Because people are seeking for the brand which support their interests.(12) Wind (2015) believes that this scenario is quickly becoming reality.(25) New medias were created to provide more brand engagement and offer more communicative opportunities:

#### 1- Outdoor Advertising:

It may also called out of home ads, where the advertising messages are targeting people out of their homes; clubs, streets or malls. It could be found in the traditional forms like outdoor advertising (billboards), but some other forms benefited from the new technology like digital screens.

#### -Ambient (Guerrilla ) advertising :

Lum (2012) described ambient advertising as communicative form that based mainly upon the unusual medium. It could be found anywhere and everywhere. It concerns on combination between an effective message and the best available media, relies mainly on the surprise as a sort of grabbing attention.(16) As It known also as Guerrilla Advertising, Levinson (1984) published "Guerrilla Marketing." That talked about using smaller budget to make unconventional advertising based on imagination, through thinking differently, Just by being unexpected. (22) The innovation is not the only important factor in this type of advertising, the timing and the location are very important too.(9)



## 2- Online videos:

The online videos changed the game. It is a culture of brand story telling. The important thing about the online video according to Stein (2016) is that the online videos don't face the constraints imposed by TV, which gives more legitimacy and depth to the stories.(21) Kathleen Hall, (global vice president, advertising and media, Microsoft) Stated that the key to achieve the social reach is by engaging affinity groups and influencers around the consumer's passion. He added that we could rely on authentic stories to tell, focusing on the understanding of audiences' passions that generated from research.(5)

## 3- Digital advertising:

The challenge of meeting everyone's expectation, reaching core audiences with more precision and instant, interactive communications with customers were the main objectives for which the digital advertising was emerged.(7) The opportunities that created by new technology and communicative means provide endless solutions for advertisers to engage their audiences on a personal level and all the daylong.(28)

### Online Advertising

Using Internet as an advertising medium, communicating information and advertising messages through websites and social media.

### Mobile interactivities:

For deeper relationship and engagement with audience wherever he is, the mobile interactivities were the solution, as mobile devices became an essential part of people's life.(22) The personalization of brand that mobile interactivities could provide was a real revolution in the field of marketing communications. Mobile interactivities based mainly on the person's mobile activity and consumer culture in general.

### Social media advertising

All portable digital devices with Internet connectivity involve major use of social media. Chang (2015) stated that companies are expected



to increase their spending through sharing ads on social media; Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and Snapchat in the next few years.(22) These, in addition to Broadcast, Public service and product placement Advertising which considered being above the line also, using a show or movie to include advertising messages within their context.

### The Ad blocking phenomenon:

Digital Marketing Manager defined the **phenomenon** as "Ad blocking is consumers' response; it's their way to say 'enough'... enough of the barrage of unnecessary, unwanted, irrelevant messages."(27) "An Ad blocker is a software that is being installed with the purpose of removing the ads from the visualized pages." The German Adblock plus is an open source software, was created in 2006 to become now the most used worldwide.(10)

PageFair (2015) published a survey about the Ad blocking phenomenon and its economic impact. With a growth rate of 35% to 41% comparing the same period from 2014 to 2015. This considered a serious threat as Apple and Samsung updated of their operating systems offering the possibility of installing ad blockers. (29) Rosenwald (2015) also stated that the impact of the ad blocking rise is not just financial, but existential.(20) And According to Hub spot there is some reasons that make people install an ad blocker, some find ads, frustrating especially the full page pop up ads, others concern about the quality.

We can sum the reasons in three main points:

- 1- Ads are too intrusive, annoying and limiting the use of content.
- 2- Decreasing the loading speed and Internet performance.
- 3- Security concern and privacy protection.(10)

Surveys show that 77% of the older Internet users are more willing to use advertising filters rather than completely preventing advertising using ad blocking applications.(10) While the younger users decided that they hate online ads and find them annoyed. Rosenwald (2015) believes that it

is representing the greatest threat in the future.(21) Gamers and male audiences are more likely to block advertising in opposite to visitors to health, charity, and government/legal websites. Ad blocking behavior depends on audience demographics.(29)

### **Confronting Ad blocking:**

In a confrontation of “Ad Blocking” A few notable sites have experimented some workable solutions. (2)

- 1- Wired.com in February 2016, asked their Visitors who are using an ad blocker to donate a dollar per week to get a completely ad free experience.
- 2- Washington Post, ask ad blocker users to

create an account or subscribe to unlock content instead of whitelist.

- 3- The Guardian has chosen to continue giving all visitors access to their content. They've placed a less prominent call to action at the bottom of their web pages when they detect an ad blocking extension, asking people to support the site by donating directly.
- 4-Forbes has experimented with a number of options for visitors who use ad blocking software. Initially, visitors with ad blockers saw a message asking them to turn off their ad blocker in exchange for an ad light experience.

**You will be redirected to the book server in 40 seconds**  
or click the button below to register a free account and download the file

**READ ONLINE**

>>> Please Disable Adblock to Show Download Link<<<

Publishers tried to confront the phenomenon through asking people to donate or disable adblockers to get their free services, but advertisers should put changing communicative strategies in consideration to attract the audiences' attention not only through finding new channels and platforms but also through different advertising formats avoiding the traditional and direct messages to reengage with people.

### **No advertising strategy:**

Through the above, this study provides an advertising strategy (No advertising) In a confrontation of “Ad Blocking” through 4 main steps a brand should rely on the attraction of audiences' attention and interest to deliver its communication messages and enhance engagement.

### **1- Understanding people deeply:**

Hawking (2015) described the future as indefinite possibilities. He added that the only way to face the unexpected things is to understand people now to be able to excite them in the future.(14) Goodwin (2016) also stated that creative industries should connect with people meaningfully, through deep understanding of their motivations and behaviors to be able to create solutions and

strategies.(12) Brands should know far more about people and connect on a more human level to be effective. Consumers will look for something value in advertising to engage with. Data, analytics and, research should become a part of advertising Business.(27) Minnium (2014) mentioned that the consumers today became partners in the advertising process therefore, publishers and marketers should work on meeting the needs of this new consumer partner benefiting from the Digital advertising which increase the ability to build brands.(17) Brøsholen (2016) also stated that the digital advertising enables brands deeper engagement with consumers.(3) Newman (2015) agreed that consumer now becoming more demanding looking for more engagement with brands. Brands should create real value to meet their consumers' expectations in the future.(18) Kean (2015) recommended that advertising should rely on the consumer, although he is now harder to impress. So that the research should focus on predicting the future through the understanding of human concerns and needs.(14) According to Business Insider's Henry Blodget, the digital has evolved to the point where it now offers marketers impactful means of engaging consumers in meaningful brand conversations.(24)

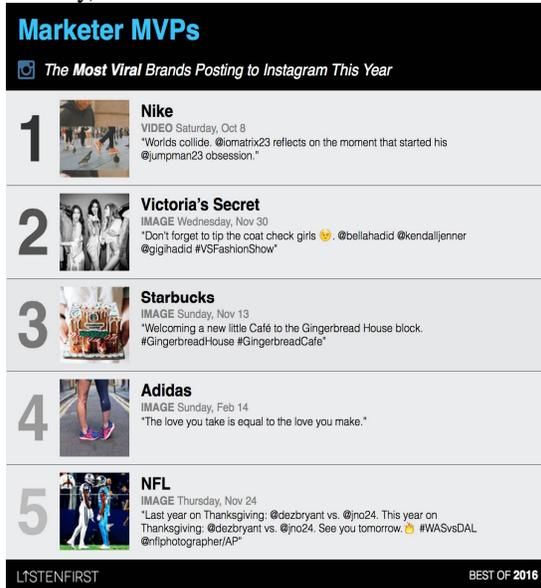


MBC masr (instagram account) sharing religious events with both Muslims and Christians



Sharing news and pictures about favorite celebrities

MBC Masr TV on Instagram tries to communicate with people according to their needs through sharing events and provide communicative materials and news that fit with different personalities and concerns. From the figures above we can notice the number of likes received from posting a greetings for religious events showing how could a brand share these events with people even without any marketing message. In addition to the pictures for (Ahmed Helmy and His wife Mona zaki just to announce about having their third child) and (A family picture of Mohamed Hamaky).



According to adage.com The Most Engaging Instagram Posts From Brands in 2016

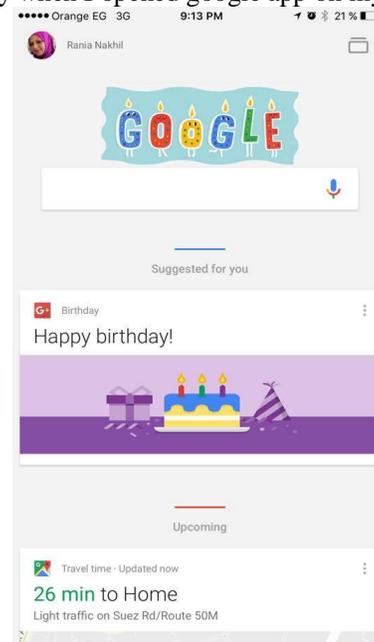
Hia (2016) stated that the top five most engaging posts on Instagram in 2016, have an intense or evocative quality to them. Nike shared a video of soccer player talking about his obsession with basketball star Michael. Victoria's Secret snapped a shot of three models. Starbucks made a gingerbread house with its logo on it. Adidas geared up for Valentine's Day with a post about equality and the NFL used Thanksgiving rivalries.(13)

Through number of likes and comments we can observe which posts that generated the most engagement. We also can conclude that people engaged to the contents that reflect their interests and concerns, depending mainly on researchers giving them a greater role to find out what will consumers need on the future for achieving a higher level of brand engagement.

## 2- Personalization:

Rosenwald (2015) stated that Google depends on ad experiences that are relevant and useful for

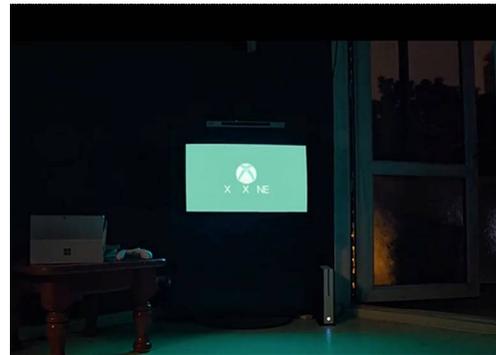
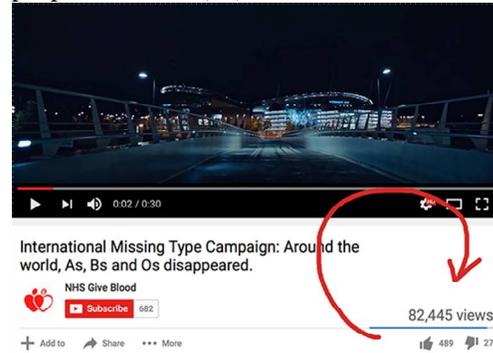
users to help fund free services and content on the Web. Ben Barokas -a former senior executive at Google- said that they work on providing publishers with technology offering more choices for their users.(20) Amy Kean (2015) also agreed that 75% of consumers are expecting and looking for Personalization. She added that advertising that communicates according to gender and age will also be based on who the consumers are, the information on their mobiles and their purchase history.(14) Newman (2015) predicted that Advertising experience would get Addressability Personalized based on the audience's characteristics, leading to more involvement using new types of apps. The evolution of mobile devices will allow the brands to personalize their relationship with the consumers, becoming one of the prime factors in developing the marketing strategies,(14) while Brøsholen (2016) agreed that targeting is the most important factor for building successful brands. Newman meant that advertising spots would appear differently according to the target audience he added that the viewer could be able to see different product color, hear a different dialogue and watch a different scene through new rendering approaches that allow automated of advertising based on the audience's segment.(6) The evolution of the communication field allowed not only delivering messages to people in no time but also the possibility to collect and analyze data from people and enable us to use it in personalizing advertising messages. The Figure shows how google uses personal data to communicate personally with people. I found (Happy birthday) interface on my birthday when I opened google app on my mobile.



3- Big Ideas:

A Big idea should come right out of research. Creative ideas could perfectly deliver content faster, better, and cheaper. Jill Cress - EVP, MasterCard- Considers nowadays as a golden age is approaching for digital creativity, as content becomes increasingly visual and distribution more viral.(15) He said that as a global brand they enhance engagement using surprise, he added that during the preparation for the Brits the year before, two women talked about Ellie Goulding’s hit song ‘Army’ and what it meant to their friendship. So, they surprised the women by bringing Ellie along to meet them. As he mentioned “The resulting video footage became MC’s spark video for the Brit awards”.(24) Missing Type campaign spearheaded by the U.K.’s National Health Service was a big idea depends on surprise where Suddenly some brands are Missing

A's, B's And O's from their names to encourage those around the world who had never given blood before to donate blood and sign up as donors. As some brand names in 21 different countries; Morgan Stanley in New York, Tesco in the U.K. and Even the Sydney Opera House were participating, the campaign got more than 30,000 people to donate.(30)



Yakob (2015) said that commercial

communications and advertising aim mainly to

influence behavior, he added that the big and successful ideas are one of the most effective drivers of changing behavior.(26)

Big and creative ideas attract people's attention and encourage them to interact and cooperate, it also builds a positive image for the brand. People believe that the brilliant brand only can come out with the big ideas. People need to see the brands as a role model for the society, that's why strong brands went toward the "human kind" concept and



tried to show a social and environmental responsibilities just to build the positive image in the audiences' minds.

#### 4- Storytelling content:

Cress said that the MasterCard's "Priceless" campaign was one of the most successful content based on the concept of "experience over things" to build brand equity through touching points and storytelling digging into consumers' passions.(1)



This campaign was presented at first in 1997, but MasterCard evolved it to go digitally in 2011 not only to show the priceless experiences but to allow people to interact sharing their own version, talk and create conversation about it. It went viral because of digital but the idea worked because the content was brilliant and touchy.(1) Rubin and Brøsholen also agreed that Digital allows telling deeper stories and helps marketers and advertisers to focus on creating contents that could reach consumers across digital touch points.(24),(6) Newman (2015) predicted that particularly visual content will dominate in the digital platforms, allowing brands to create amazing contents and build a positive impact in their consumers' minds.(18)

Storytelling considered an essential tool for successful branding, because it is a way of recognizing and identifying with the brands and help people to understand the values and behavior that the brand stands for. It also strengthens the emotional connections and help brand engagement.

#### Results:

1-The ad blocking is a global phenomenon where people are trying to avoid and prevent all advertising messages from reaching them online using ad blocking applications. This phenomenon consider a great thread to the advertising industry and the future of branding. Therefore, brand builders and advertisers

should work to decrease its impact.

2- According to **page fair**: the ad blocking phenomenon growth rate is increasing rapidly that affect negatively brands building and the advertising industry in general.

3-According to **page fair, Hub spot and iab**:

There are three main reasons making people install the ad blocking applications:

- They find the advertising too intrusive, annoying and create security concerns.
- They find the advertising don't look professional with unnecessary, unwanted and sometimes disruptive content.
- They affect negatively the performance and the downloading speed.

4-The younger Internet users are more likely to install and use ad blocking applications as they decided through surveys that hate online ads. Which represents greatest threat in the future.

5-The older Internet users more willing to use advertising filters rather than completely preventing advertising using ad blocking applications.

6-Some publishers are experimenting workable solutions in confronting the ad blocking phenomenon through asking people to donate or to disable the adblocking applications to receive their free online services.

7-This paper suggested an advertising strategy "no advertising" to be a prevention model for advertisers to confront the adblocking phenomenon. This strategy based on 2 directions:

- Using untraditional advertising channels and platforms through indirect advertising like sponsorships, production of valued songs, filming materials, shows and gaming. Engaging people through their real life, during shopping, in the clubs, schools and even in the streets.
- Achieving brand engagement through the deep understanding of people's insights, needs, values and concerns. Communicate and share relevant ideas and thoughts. Connecting with people's daily life. "No advertising" strategy depends on 4 main steps to achieve brand engagement and build successful brands:
  - Understanding people deeply.
  - Personalization.
  - Big ideas.
  - Storytelling contents

### Conclusion:

- The ad blocking phenomenon considered a real thread to the brands and has negative

impact on the advertising industry in general. The main reasons of the rise of this phenomenon and increasing its growth rate is that people find the ads annoying, intrusive, unwanted and don't look professional, in addition to the security concerns and the negative effect on the internet performance.

- There are solutions suggested by some publishers to decrease the impact of this phenomenon. But as advertisers we should work on improving the advertising strategies through a deep understanding of peoples' insights and concerns. Moreover create new advertising platforms and channel that could achieve brand engagement through connecting people directly.
- The (No advertising) strategy could be a prevention model in the confrontation of the ad blocking phenomenon.
- The research mentioned successful examples of (No advertising) strategy which abled to achieve the engagement through indirect advertising and communication depending on the understanding of people concerns and needs, **MBC MISR (INSTAGRAM)** account as an digital platform depends mainly on storytelling and sharing no advertising materials. Also **THE MISSING TYPE CAMPAIGN**. And the MasterCard's "**PRICELESS**" campaign. Regarding the online feedback on social media (number of likes, shares and comments) we can observe apparently, the positive interactivity between these brands and people through no advertising.

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