Advertising to the Developer & Tech Community

A How-to Guide for B2B Marketers

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Introduction

B2B Tech marketers face a number of challenges in their daily work lives. From crafting compelling messaging, collateral, and campaigns, to driving more leads or trials (and making sure they're of the highest quality!), to keeping prospects engaged even when it could take [more than 3 months to close a deal](#), and proving your return on marketing investment, you're usually one of the busiest people in the room.

But, when you discover your new product or service is a great fit for the developer and technical community, you find yourself faced with a new challenge. How the heck are you supposed to market to an audience that isn't particularly fond of...marketing?

Not to worry. We've included everything you need to start advertising to the developer and technical community in this guide. In it, we'll discuss:

- Why developers are important in the B2B tech buying process

- How to set expectations for your advertising campaigns

- Best practices for creating ads and landing pages that resonate

- Where and how to reach the developer and technical community

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Why developers are important in the B2B tech buying process

Developers and technologists may be a challenging and unique audience for advertisers to reach. But before we address that, let's review why they're an important persona to make sure you include in your marketing strategy.

It used to be that executives and managers in corporate IT departments told developers what tools and technologies they could use. As companies have accelerated their digital transformation and moved to the cloud, the role of the developer has evolved too. They now find themselves with more control over the tools and technologies they choose to use every day, as well as having a strong influence over the tools being deployed across the organization.

In fact, 66% of Professional Developers have at least some influence over their organization's purchases of new technologies. This is up from 56% in 2020 when we last asked this question.

I have little or no influence	34.03%
I have some influence	43.15%
I have a great deal of influence	22.82%

Unsurprisingly, senior-level positions have the greatest amount of influence when purchasing new technologies. But with the exception of students, at least 60% of all developer types have at least some influence on purchasing.

While it may be hard to break through to this audience, it's important to make them advocates of your brand and products. If you don't, and only focus your marketing efforts on traditional IT decision makers, you could be missing out on significant sales opportunities.

Set proper expectations for your advertising campaigns

Now that you have a better understanding of the role of the developer in the buying process, let's get back to strategizing your advertising campaign.

As with any campaign, you'll want to define success metrics. You may look at industry benchmarks for general B2B campaigns, or even your own historical data to try to forecast engagement and conversions. While you're not wrong in doing that, you won't be comparing apples to apples for campaigns targeting developers.

Here's why. Developers are naturally skeptical of advertising. They typically won't respond in the same way even your traditional IT decision makers will. They're researchers. When they see an ad that's interesting to them (we'll talk about that in the next section), most typically won't click. Instead, they'll finish the task in front of them and visit your website on their own.

Keep this in mind when planning for and setting expectations around the performance of your advertising campaigns. You may not see the highest click through rates, but measure and understand what happens after a developer views your ad.

Here at Stack Overflow, aggregated campaign performance analysis indicates that the majority of conversions coming from campaigns that run on our site happen not after a click, but after an impression, in a 30 day window.

Seeing an ad on **Stack Overflow** influences developers to search out more information on their own. On average, 83% of conversions from advertising on Stack Overflow happen without a click.

Source: Stack Overflow
Internal Metrics

Best practices for creating ads and landing pages that resonate

If you're not careful in your approach to ad creative and landing pages (or website), you'll likely be disappointed in the outcomes of your developer marketing campaigns. So what are the subtle differences between compelling developer marketing and tactics that fall flat? How is the creative approach for developers really different than any other B2B audience? What do you need to do to grab a programmer's attention?

Tips for creating display ads for developers

The good news is that you don't need to do anything too drastic. Developers want you to be honest with them and prefer simple ads that convey value.

Follow these tips to get started:

1.

Speak in their language

Whatever you do, do not use buzzwords or marketing fluff. In many cases, just calling out the specific technology that you're targeting is incredibly powerful.

For example, if you're marketing an iOS platform that's geared towards programmers of all ages, mention the phrases "iOS" and "all skill levels" directly in your copy. When there's a correlation between ad copy and your target audience, you can expect much stronger campaign performance.

2.

Be honest and straightforward

Developers often feel misled by dishonest advertising campaigns. In some cases, advertisers promise much more value upfront than their platform actually provides.

In others, they can't find a thorough breakdown of a product's features before signing up for a product trial. To get their attention, be as sincere as possible in your ad copy—and outline all of the facts on your landing page.

3.

Include clear and focused calls-to-action

Developers are drawn to ads that have a purpose beyond selling or generating signups. When developers look at online advertisements, they want to know exactly where it will take them, what they'll learn, and what's in it for them before they click.

Use this formula to get started: Relevant question + short sentence about your platform + Try Now.

4.

Stick to static

Fancy animations and GIFs might be tempting, but developers find them annoying and distracting. Even when the copy is right on the money, developers are likely to ignore ads that make it more difficult for them to do their jobs.

5.

Make ads easy to read

Before you finalize your advertising creatives, take a few steps back from your computer and look at your ads again. Are they clear, and do they make you want to learn more? If the answer to either question is a resounding "no," go back to the drawing board.

Developers consume information online much faster than the average user, so you need to ensure that your ads grab their attention when they appear on their screens.

See how **Twilio** is getting developers' attention the right way.

Read the Case Study
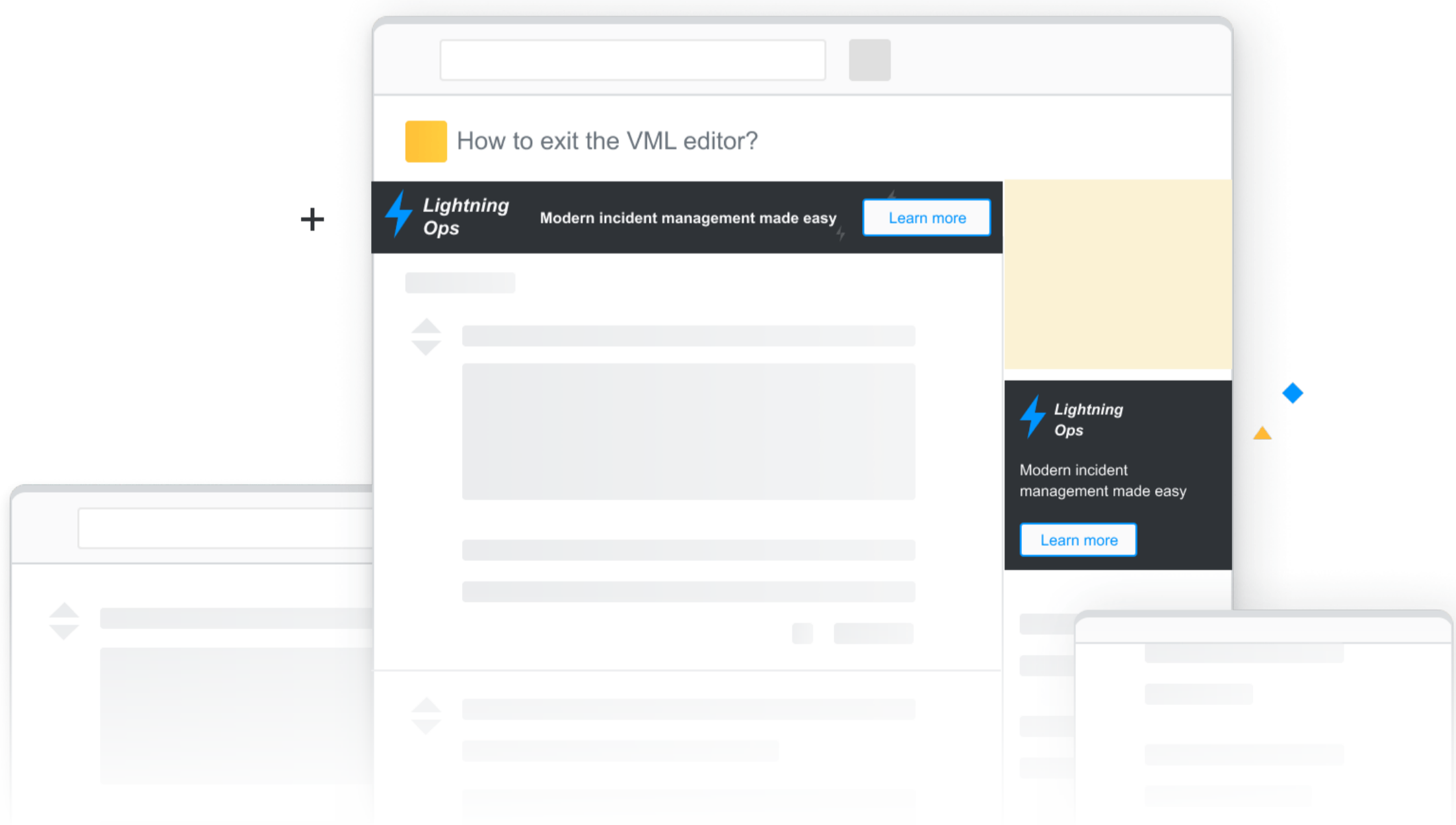
Increase conversions with effective landing pages

The same principles apply to your landing pages and website. Developers typically end up on a landing page when they're searching for a solution to a problem. Make it easy for them to find and access the information they need in that moment.

1. Speak in their language

Ensure the design and messaging used on your landing page matches your banner ad creative. This helps build developer trust that you are selling legitimate products.

2. Clarity wins

Include a clear headline and description at the top of the landing page. Don't make a user search for useful information - give it to them straight away.

3. Keep it short

When it comes to form fields, consider only requiring a developer's name and email address on your landing page forms.

4. Geek out

Include an abundance of technical details, and pricing if possible. Remember, they're researchers. Make it easy for the developer to gather all the information that would be necessary for them to drive product adoption in their organization.

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5. Social proof

Include honest testimonials and reviews, even an evaluation of your product versus a competitor's product. They will be seeking this information out on review sites, blogs, forums, and social media.
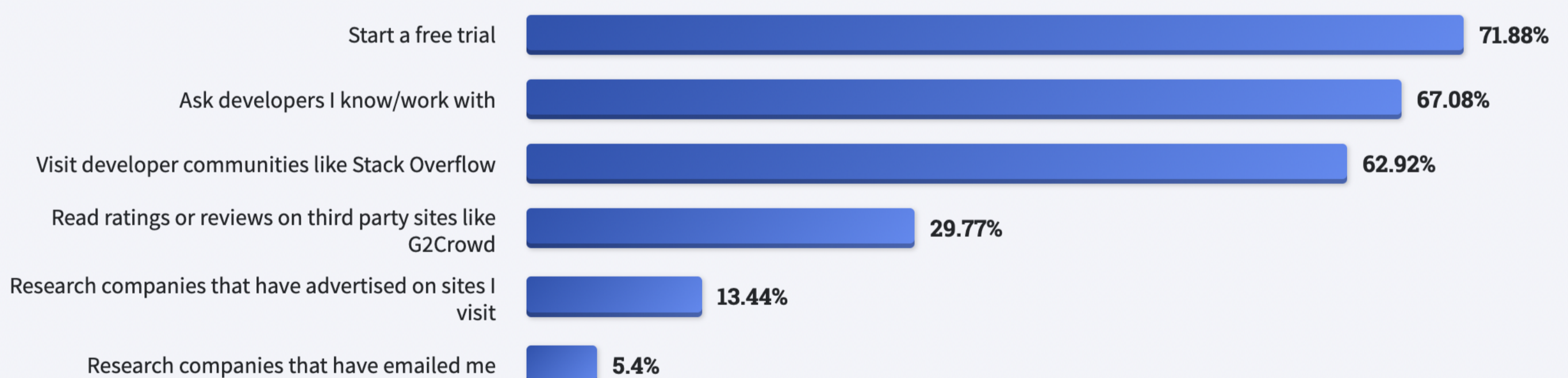
6. Provide value

Offer an incentive such as a free trial or discount. Developers like to try out products before they commit to them.

7. Keep it secure

Provide information on the security of your company and product. Developers will conduct research on your company before they download a trial. They are extremely security conscious.

According to the 2022 Developer Survey, starting a free trial is the most common way for developers to evaluate new tools. But this is down from 77% in 2020. The other two most common ways of researching new tools are asking a colleague/friend and visiting developer communities like Stack Overflow.

Start a free trial	71.88%
Ask developers I know/work with	67.08%
Visit developer communities like Stack Overflow	62.92%
Read ratings or reviews on third party sites like G2Crowd	29.77%
Research companies that have advertised on sites I visit	13.44%
Research companies that have emailed me	5.4%

Responses vary slightly by developer type. For Desktop or Enterprise application developers, they are equally likely to ask a colleague/friend and visit developer communities when they are researching tools.
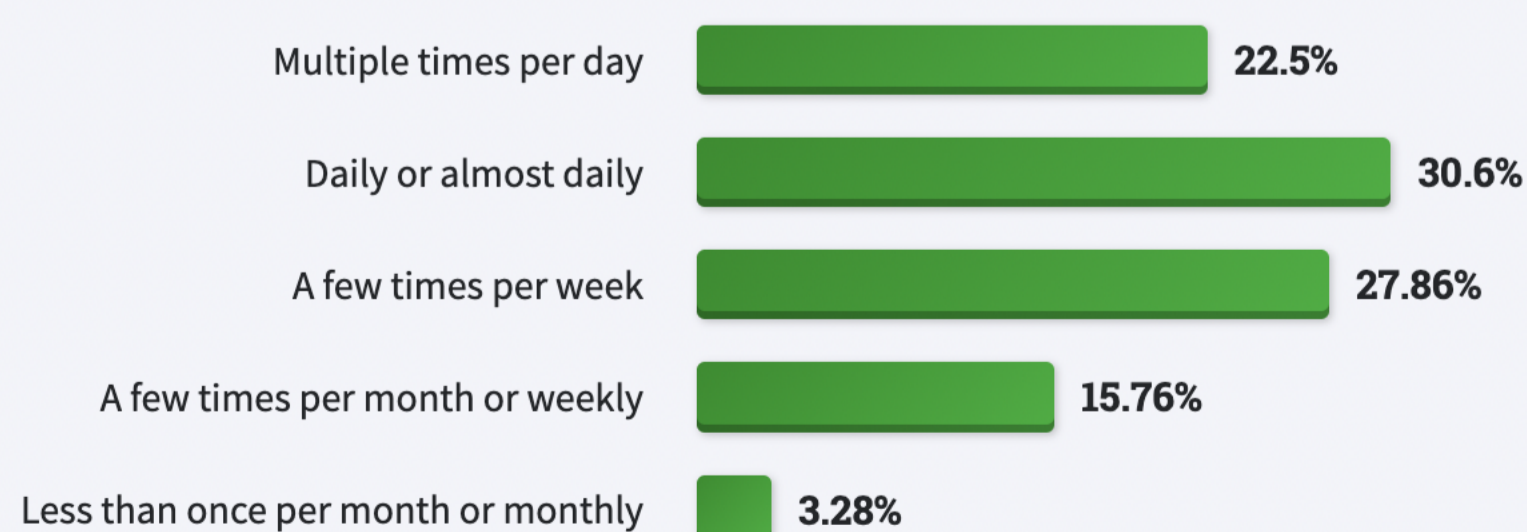
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Where and how to reach the developer and technical community

Now that you're equipped with a better understanding of how to approach your advertising creative, where and how can you reach developers? In the world of B2B marketing, it's common for us to rely on popular social media platforms such as LinkedIn. The problem is that those aren't necessarily "go-to" sites for most developers.

We've talked a lot about developers being researchers. Take this into consideration as you decide where to advertise and distribute your content too. Sites like Reddit and Stack Overflow are where developers are actively seeking answers to questions that come up as they work on a project. You can also focus your SEO and paid search efforts around keywords related to those challenges your tool or service can help a developer solve.

To engage developers, you should also consider tactics beyond just traditional banner advertising. Build on a developer's desire to research and learn by considering podcasts, newsletters, webinars, and other tactics that will deliver the insights and information they're seeking.

81% of respondents visit Stack Overflow weekly and 53% of them visit daily. Additionally, our internal data indicates that 62% of users visit the same question multiple times in a three-month period.

Frequency	Percentage
Multiple times per day	22.5%
Daily or almost daily	30.6%
A few times per week	27.86%
A few times per month or weekly	15.76%
Less than once per month or monthly	3.28%

Reach and engage developers with **Stack Overflow Advertising**

If you're ready to get started with your next advertising campaign, lean on the experience of the largest, global technology-focused platform. With more than 50 million+ visitors a month, here's how Stack Overflow Advertising can help you put your technology or service in front of the world's largest audience of developers.

Highly relevant, developer-focused content

Developers are our audience and our content reflects that. We only have technical questions and answers. Developers find us, even if they aren't looking. We've optimized our content to make it easy for developers to find an answer, whether they start from a search engine or Stack Overflow's home page. Developers know they can quickly get to the answer they need, discover other helpful information, and get back to work.

Brand safe with constant moderation and universal guidelines

Our moderators come from and are elected by the community. They are vigilant in keeping the content relevant and the answers civil and useful. The trust we've built around relevancy and usefulness flows into our advertising as well. Universal ad guidelines protect the developer experience and create a halo of trust for the brands that advertise with us.

Developer-friendly advertising solutions

Reach the right developers, with the right message, and the right ad experience. We offer a full portfolio of advertising solutions built with our developer community in mind. From banner advertising to content distribution, and newsletter, blog, and podcast advertising opportunities, we can help you drive brand awareness and conversions.

Exclusive, real interest-based targeting

Developers add topic tags to every question, self-defining the specific keywords that describe the content. These exclusive topic tags allow for real interest-based targeting to ensure you reach the right person, with the right message, at the right moment.

Unparalleled Support

For more than 10 years, we've been partners to the developer community. Rely on our expertise to tailor a media strategy that aligns with your goals. And when you need help along the way, we'll be here. Our post-sales support ensures seamless execution and optimization of your campaign.

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Stack Overflow Advertising provides a highly relevant and brand safe environment to engage with developers and the technical community.

Find out how we can build an advertising strategy that supports your marketing and business goals.

Talk to an expert ▷