

# Neutrogena's First Digital-Centric Campaign: 1 Campaign Success Story, 3 Viewpoints

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To market its blazingly original new acne-treatment product, Neutrogena placed a big bet on digital video with its YouTube advertising strategy. Hear the unique perspectives the creative, media, and brand teams brought to the table to create a sensation at the company and beyond.

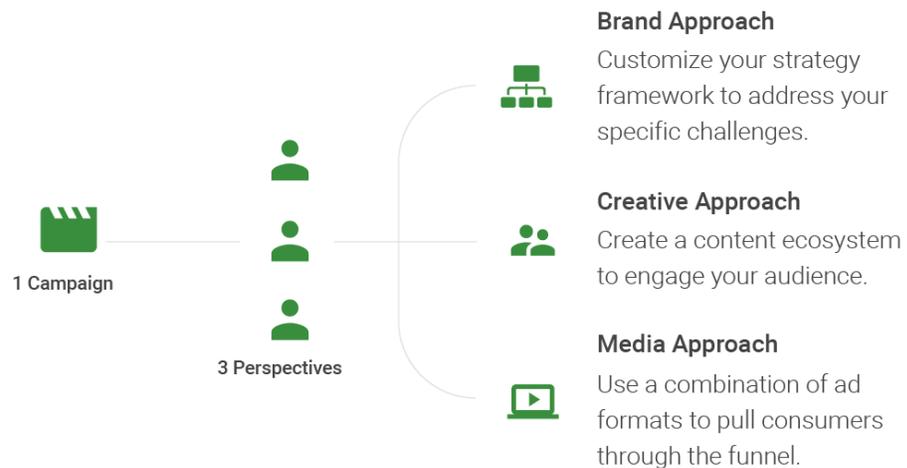
**T**he U.S. acne category has seen little innovation in the past decade. Neutrogena's Light Therapy Acne Mask intended to change that—dramatically. Instead of offering just another variation on standard acne-care creams and gels, Neutrogena was thinking light years beyond the jar.

Such a revolutionary product would need an equally fresh, unorthodox marketing strategy—one that ultimately would mark a number of firsts for Neutrogena and parent company Johnson & Johnson: 'The Power of Light' campaign marked the first time Neutrogena tapped a male teen influencer ([Nash Grier](#)) for custom content creation, the first time Neutrogena produced [six-second bumper ads](#), and, most importantly, the first time Neutrogena launched a product with a digital-first campaign in the U.S.

think with 

The strategy of firsts paid off in spades. When compared across all brands in Johnson & Johnson's portfolio running Google Preferred (GP) media, lift in ad recall on the campaign was 5X the 2016 average, and lift in product awareness was an astounding 13X the 2016 average. Even better, Neutrogena attributes a lift in sales for the Light Therapy Acne Mask to its YouTube campaign.

So how did they do it? We'll get the brand perspective from Simon Geraghty, the creative perspective from Rachel Berg, and the media perspective from Christine Potter. Together, they'll shed some light on Neutrogena's bold, three-pronged approach to transforming the acne category.



## The brand perspective: Create a strategic framework to address your specific challenges

*With Simon Geraghty, brand director for the Neutrogena Light Therapy Acne Mask*

"We were really excited to shake things up with this launch," said Simon. "But, of course, with big product changes come big marketing challenges."

Primary among these challenges for Neutrogena was awareness. "We had to get the idea of light therapy out there as something people knew about and accepted," Simon said. Inextricably tied to awareness, he continued, was the idea of credibility. "We had to move people from thinking, 'What's so magical about this light?' to 'Light really works for clearing acne.'" Lastly, the technology had to be approachable. "We were dealing with a professional-grade, FDA-cleared device," he said, "so we had to figure out how to make it fun, youthful, and vibrant."



[Google BrandLab](#) helped Neutrogena identify data-driven solutions delivered via a custom strategic recommendation: Reach (to grab the consumer's attention), Passions (to make the ad relevant), and Confidence (to convince the consumer that the technology will work).

"The preferred mode of delivery was YouTube," said Simon, "because that's where our consumer hangs out, and that's where she goes specifically to learn and research trends."

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## The creative perspective: Create a content ecosystem to engage your audience

*With Rachel Berg, vice president, strategy director, Roberts & Langer*

"Turn the light on, turn acne off." The rally cry for the Neutrogena Light Therapy Acne Mask came to life across the ecosystem.

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Olivia Holt Unmasks  
How Our NEW LED Light  
Therapy Face Mask  
for Acne Really Works |  
NEUTROGENA®



Neutrogena's Reach creative, including this [30-second video](#) and [six-second video](#) starring actress and singer Olivia Holt, effectively hooked viewers in. "We found that once we intrigued our audience enough, she wanted to learn more," said Rachel. "But we had to make it relevant to her."

That approach would involve collaborating with YouTube influencers for the Passions part of the campaign framework. For example, acknowledging the popularity of "life-hacking" videos and the influence of beauty creators among teens and young adults, Neutrogena's PR agency, RPR, created co-branded "[acne hacks](#)" and "[beauty hacks](#)" content.

Neutrogena's Confidence content, meanwhile, was all about [consumer testimonials](#) and "[how-to](#)" videos. The former reinforced the efficacy of the mask and drove trust, while the latter drove approachability.

"We were in uncharted territory with no clear road map," said Rachel. "We had something so radically different to sell this time around, versus a cleanser or a cream, so we had to find a radically original creative approach to match. This campaign reaffirmed for the organization that as long as we really put ourselves in consumers' shoes, we will figure out the best approach."

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## The media perspective: Use a combination of ad formats to pull consumers through the funnel

*With Christine Potter, senior vice president, group partner, J3*

Neutrogena's YouTube-first approach came amid plummeting TV viewership for their target audience. Over the past several years, TV watch time has continued to fall among 12-24-year-olds—a trend keenly understood by Christine.

"With the shifting media consumption behavior of teens, we knew we needed to change up our media mix," said Christine. To better reach its audience, Neutrogena tripled its digital investment, with YouTube comprising the majority of the spend.

A combination of [Google Preferred](#), [TrueView](#), and YouTube's new six-second [bumper ads](#) helped Neutrogena reach roughly 35% of all U.S. 13-24-year-olds per month.

"YouTube allowed us to reach our audience at scale," said Christine. "We used Google Preferred as a mechanism to drive awareness among light TV viewers. We then pulled consumers through the funnel with our Passions and Confidence content in TrueView format, integrating shoppable TrueView units once we started seeing strong eCommerce growth for the mask."

And throughout the campaign, six-second bumper ads ran "to maintain

awareness and relevancy in a bite-sized fashion."

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## Conclusion

Neutrogena's success isn't just reverberating through the skincare space—it's being felt closer to home at 131-year-old Johnson & Johnson too.

"We've learned such a great deal from this launch—about going to market with digital at the core, about engaging deeply with our consumers, and about being nimble," said Michelle Freyre, Johnson & Johnson's head of beauty. "J&J is embracing a digital-first approach in everything we do now in beauty. There's really no other option!"