



GSK Australia Puts Digital Video Ads to the Test

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Experiment, learn, scale. That's how GSK Consumer Healthcare Australia tackles innovation in our digital world. Here, Marcos Regalo, ANZ area digital manager, reflects on a year of experimenting with digital video, and shares why marketers should invest their time in testing and learning.

think with **Google**

David Ogilvy once said, “Never stop testing, and your advertising will never stop improving.” Those words are practically gospel at [GSK](#).

We test for a simple reason: to keep our finger on the pulse of all things digital. We know that digital is where consumers are, and there’s a real appetite for both understanding digital behaviours and finding new and innovative ways to help our brands establish valuable connections.

Our senior leadership team is passionate about innovation and digital-capability building, which means we’re constantly challenged to experiment and move beyond our comfort zones. Testing is an integral part of this. It enables us to understand what resonates with consumers, optimise media, and plan more efficiently.

Inspired by [Google’s experiments with digital video ads](#), we collaborated across marketing and with our agencies to test just about everything we could think of on YouTube: [ad length](#), format, [voiceover](#), celebrities, retargeting, and storytelling style. Using [the Unskippable framework](#), we learned a few important lessons about creating better digital campaigns—and a lot about experimenting itself.

GSK: A company with a (testing) plan

Doing testing right starts with curiosity, and it needs to be efficient. We had several different questions we wanted to investigate, and we definitely didn’t want to duplicate the same tests across different teams and brands. So we started the year off by sitting down with our agency partners, deciding what we wanted to test, and mapping those tests onto the different campaigns we knew were coming.

Tests were frontloaded early in the year so we could gather results and make decisions for campaigns that would run in the second half of the year. Planning ahead also helped us avoid the trap of doing one-off tests whose results exist in a vacuum. It enabled us to avoid duplication and share learnings across regional and global marketing teams to ensure that results are applied.

Before you test, ask these four questions

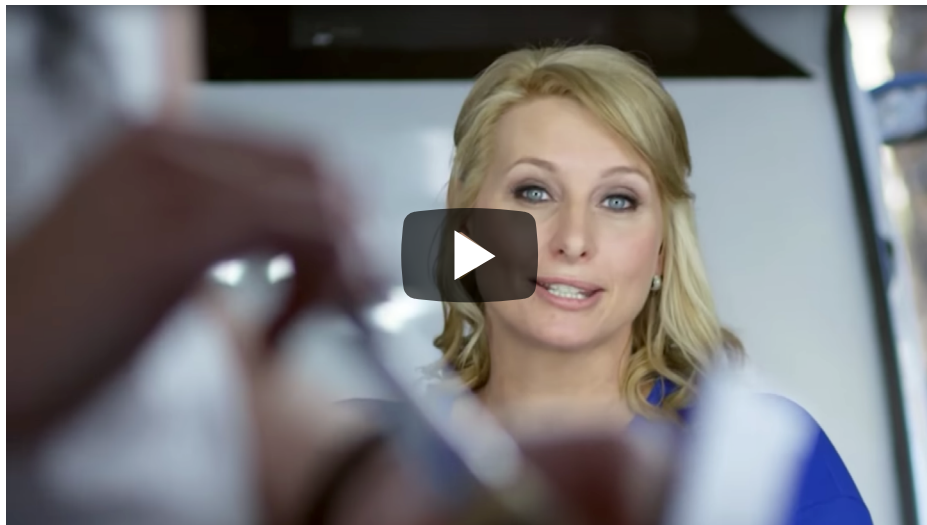
Before starting any experiment, we make sure we have a clear rationale for what we are trying to test and why. We ask these questions about every test:

1. Will it help us understand our consumers better?
2. Does it address our business or brand objectives?
3. Will it uncover new learnings?
4. Will we learn scalable lessons beyond the campaign being tested?

We're not in the business of reinventing the wheel when it comes to testing. We aim to test hypotheses that will, ultimately, forge stronger connections with our consumers.

What we learnt

When it came time to run the tests, we teamed up with Google to ask questions such as: How long should an ad be? Will including a voice over affect ad recall? Does a celebrity drive brand favourability? We tested a combination of ad formats and placement choices and used [Brand Lift surveys](#) to measure how the ads affected key brand metrics.



Panadol Rapid TVC

With our brand [Panadol](#), we measured how a celebrity spot would perform against a [traditional branded ad](#). We tested exposure of Joh Griggs' "Olympics" spot and found that the celebrity spot had a better view-through rate and a lower cost-per-view than the ad without a celebrity. Our takeaway is that featuring someone with whom the audience feels emotionally connected will help to increase ad favourability.



Otrivin Bicycle 15 sec AU TVC

For [Otrivin](#), we experimented with different levels of voiceover and music. Our tests revealed that ads featuring voiceover that explain product benefits drive higher ad recall and consideration than [creative with only background music](#). Music typically performs well, but we found that it helps to educate consumers with clear instructions via voiceover in cases where it's unclear how to use the product.

Experiment to stay ahead

This past year has been hugely illuminating for us and our agency partners. What we've learned will undoubtedly inform our media decisions and creative development moving forward. And we're not stopping here. We plan to keep asking the right questions and strengthen our connections with consumers by constantly improving our creative, branding, and format choices, as well as the length of our ads.

My advice to those who are just starting to build a culture of experimentation is to step out of your comfort zone. Explore everything that platforms offer by including new formats and targeting options in the mix. Don't shy away from scary things. Commit to an innovation agenda and champion this, because companies that are at the forefront of digital will be in the best position to establish lasting connections with their consumers.



Marcos is a Digital Lead with over 13 years of experience developing award-winning marketing campaigns across Healthcare, FMCG, Retail, and Entertainment. He's a digital transformation specialist and passionate leader focused on innovation and emerging media.