

Data Dive: Two Approaches to Drive LGBT Engagement With Your Ads

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LGBT consumers are clear about what they want to see from advertisers. But how does that play out in reality? Here's a look at what YouTube data shows us about viewing behavior and digital engagement with ads from Coca-Cola and The Ad Council.

think with **Google**

It is business-critical that 21st-century advertisers connect with multicultural audiences, including LGBT consumers. But the question is, how? Great ads can inspire, touch our hearts, and even make us laugh, but what truly resonates with consumers?

To explore consumer sentiment around LGBT-themed advertising, we asked self-identified LGBT consumers in the U.S. how they felt about different tonal approaches to messaging. Perhaps it's not surprising that over 84% of this audience responded favorably to LGBT-friendly advertising,¹ but it is a crucial data point considering this particular audience's growing consumption of online content.

While online video growth has reached new heights in 2017, LGBT-themed content—that is, content specifically featuring or relating to LGBT individuals—has truly taken off. Annual viewership of LGBT content on YouTube grew 76% in 2016, and is expected to reach nearly 5B views in 2017.²

But we wanted to go deeper. What makes great creative truly stand out? Do audiences prefer funny, emotional, political, or provocative ads? We leveraged the power of YouTube Analytics to see what the data shows us about consumer engagement.

It turns out that LGBT attitudes toward advertising play into two of marketers' messaging sweet spots: laughter and inspiration.

Laughter goes a long way

In March, Coca-Cola debuted its "[Pool Boy](#)" creative, featuring a pair of siblings vying for the affection of a handsome visitor in their backyard by means of a refreshing Coca-Cola. Things take an unexpected twist when Coca-Cola gives viewers a wink to their point of view regarding diversity and inclusion. The slapstick ad, originally created for an international audience, has received accolades from the likes of [AdWeek](#) and [Fortune](#).

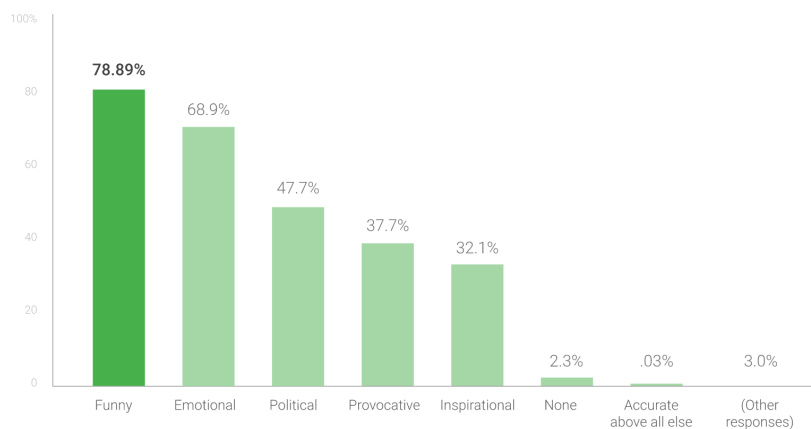
Though many LGBT-friendly advertisements take a serious or emotional tone, Coca-Cola turned the tables and made its audience laugh out loud.

Coca-Cola | Pool Boy



These sorts of ads are the most popular style, with nearly 79% of LGBT respondents saying that they enjoy funny LGBT-themed ads, according to Google's research.³ Such ads are more likely to be shared too, with 75% of LGBT respondents saying they are more likely to share funny LGBT-friendly advertisements with their social circles.⁴

Which types of LGBT-themed ads do you enjoy?



Source: Google Survey, "LGBT Creative Best Practices," U.S., April 2017.

And that isn't just talk. According to YouTube Analytics, Coca-Cola's "Pool Boy" ad has been shared nearly 24K times since it aired.⁵ Marketers pursuing a global millennial audience will also be interested to know that over 50% of views came from consumers under the age of 34, and 58% percent of views were international.⁶

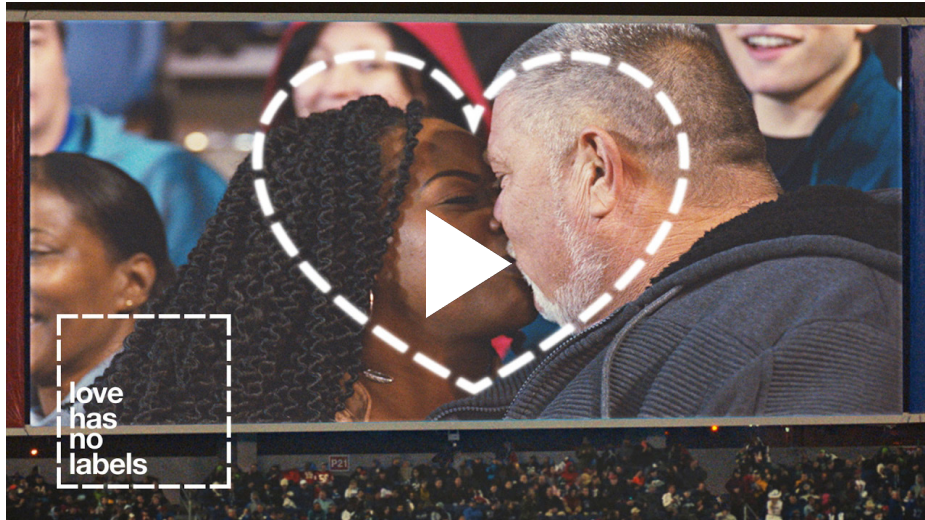
Coca-Cola's 60-second spot had an average retention rate of 87%—an impressive figure in a world of shorter and shorter ads and increasing mobile viewership.⁷ This shows us that great content connects on all screens, and in this case 66% of those screens were mobile devices.⁸

YouTube Analytics can provide insight into performance of the video itself, but we also know that strong creative functions as a business driver. Our study shows that funny LGBT creative drives strong purchase intent, with 68% of survey respondents claiming that funny ads make them more likely to purchase.⁹

Inspiring the audience to tune in and share

While laughter may be the best medicine, an emotional or inspirational ad can have an equally powerful impact on viewers. In 2015, The Ad Council reminded us that "Love Has No Labels" with [this touching video](#). This year, the nonprofit group brought that message to the NFL Pro Bowl and reminded us that inclusive thinking should apply to the world of sports.

Its latest creative, "[Fans of Love](#)," features non-traditional couples, several of whom are same-sex, sharing a special moment on the Kiss Cam while enjoying the big game. This emotional ad clearly resonated with YouTube viewers, reaching nearly 6.7M views and generating over 13.4M minutes of watchtime.¹⁰ That's the equivalent of over 74K football games aired back to back.



Our research shows that 69% of LGBT respondents say that they enjoy inspirational LGBT-themed advertising.¹¹ Not only are consumers looking for inspirational content, they are doing it on screens of all sizes. Nearly 71% of all views for “Fans of Love” occurred on mobile devices.¹² Once again, these viewers were willing to stay tuned in to a longer-form story—the average view duration of “Fans of Love” was 2:05.¹³

In other words, despite the perception that the digital age demands shorter and shorter content, marketers can win with long-form inspirational content if it’s well crafted.

YouTube Analytics also found that “Fans of Love” resonated with a younger audience: Nearly 54% of watchtime to date has come from viewers under the age of 34.¹⁴

Hungry for relevant content

Not only are LGBT consumers eager for content tailored to them, [YouTube viewers at large are looking for LGBT-inclusive content year-round.](#)

Perhaps one of the more interesting findings about “Fans of Love” is that over 90K views occurred as a result of users searching on YouTube,¹⁵

which demonstrates to marketers that consumers are actively seeking out stories of inclusion and inspiration online.

All-time viewership of LGBT content on YouTube has reached over 7B views, across nearly 30K channels, and it also strikes a winning note in the eyes of consumers.¹⁶

As more consumers seek out LGBT-friendly content, savvy marketers are responding with creative messages that connect with their audience on emotional levels—and keep consumers tuned in on screens of all sizes and to ads of any length.

See how other brands take a stand on LGBT issues with this playlist: [Ads That ... Are #ProudToBe](#)

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Sources

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2,16 Pixability, Global, "Purpose-Driven Marketing," May 2017.

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