

A close-up photograph of a person's hands unboxing a tablet. The tablet is partially visible, showing a colorful screen with blue, yellow, and green sections. The person is holding a white box that is being opened. The background is a wooden surface.

THE MAGIC BEHIND UNBOXING ON YOUTUBE

THE **RUNDOWN**

The holidays are just around the corner, which means the anticipation of giving and getting gifts is growing fast. That anticipation can be felt on YouTube, too, where unboxing videos have gotten 57% more views since last year. Many are still user-generated videos, but brands are starting to get in on the action, playfully showcasing products in all of their freshly unopened glory. Consider how unboxing videos might help your brand connect with consumers.

Unboxing is a growing phenomenon

The holidays are just around the corner, which means the anticipation of giving and getting gifts is building with each day we cross off the calendar. That anticipation is felt everywhere: From town squares adorned with holiday decorations to picturesque window displays, and even on YouTube, where unboxing videos are watched and uploaded with increasing popularity.

Unboxing video views have grown 57% over the past year, and uploads have grown more than 50%. But it's not just the growth in the unboxing genre that's impressive—it's the sheer volume, too. It would take more than seven years to watch all the videos on YouTube with "unboxing" in the title that have been uploaded so far just this year. And those videos have more than a billion views in this year alone.



57% growth in unboxing video views since last year

Source: YouTube data, 2013–2014, videos with unboxing in the title.

Unboxing is a genre of videos on YouTube where people quite literally unbox a product to get a feel for it. Many are user-generated videos, but brands are starting to get in on the action, too. These videos not only document the experience of opening a product, but they often dramatize it and, in turn, take on a quirky, playful spirit, showcasing products in all of their freshly unopened glory. As of Nov. 17, there are more than 20 million search results on YouTube for "unboxing." Now one in five consumers¹ report that they've actually watched an unboxing video, according to Google Consumer Surveys. What is the magic behind unboxing, really? How can marketers make sense of this intriguing genre of videos to better connect with their consumers on YouTube?

¹ Source: Google Consumer Surveys, October 2014.

Unboxing fuels anticipation and provides useful product information

To dig into these questions, we turned to the data behind YouTube unboxing videos, looking at watchtime and views for 2013 and 2014 to characterize trends. The results, combined with Google Consumer Surveys of 1,500 consumers conducted in October 2014, show that the magic behind unboxing videos might be connected to the feeling of anticipation we get in watching them. This becomes especially apparent when we consider that unboxing videos are most often watched during the holiday season, when giddy, child-like anticipation is running high anyway. In fact, 34% of the views² for unboxing videos related to food, electronics, toys and beauty/fashion happen in the October to December time frame—that's 1.5x higher than the average volume of unboxing video views in other quarters.

More than the emotional feeling that unboxing videos elicit, there's also a practical side to them. We found through research with TNS and Ogilvy earlier this year that [66% of recent purchasers](#) of beauty products said YouTube allowed them to visualize the product they're going to buy. So it's no surprise that according to the recent Google Consumer Surveys, 62% of people who view unboxing videos³ do so when researching a particular product. In this sense, unboxing videos can help marketers build anticipation while providing useful product information during the holiday season (and even beyond).

1. Spans all categories

You may think that unboxing videos are just for electronics and gadgets. It's true, those categories are wildly popular for unboxing videos. But these days, there are unboxing videos for just about any category imaginable. From clothing and lipstick to toys and even food, unboxing videos span all types of products. Regardless of what your products are, if they're tangible, you should consider how unboxing videos might play a role for your brand.

² Source: YouTube data, October 2013–2014, videos with unboxing in the title.

³ Source: Google Consumer Surveys, October 2014.

Three fast-growing unboxing categories



Food & Drink

+42%



Fashion & Style

+90%



Mobile Phones

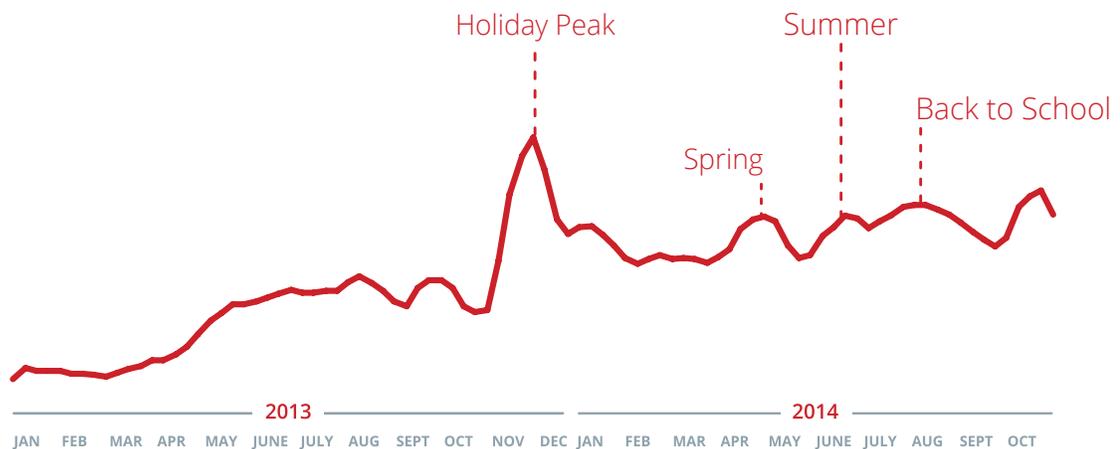
+200%

Source: Google Trends data, September 2013–2014, unboxing queries on YouTube.

2. Relevant year-round

As a marketer, unboxing videos should definitely be on your radar for the holiday season, but there's an opportunity to think about them playing a role for your brand year-round, too. While toys, food and electronics unboxing videos see a definite holiday spike, we see pretty steady viewership of unboxing videos throughout the year. This presents an opportunity for marketers to tap into the anticipation that builds around cultural moments and seasons throughout the entire year from summer and spring to Black Friday and Back to School.

When are we unboxing?



(Aggregate time spent watching Electronic, Fashion/Style, Food and Toy related unboxing videos)

Source: YouTube data 2013–2014, videos with unboxing in the title.

Making the most of the unboxing phenomenon

The magic behind unboxing videos is that they tap into the child-like anticipation we all feel for something shiny and new. But the videos are practical, too, giving consumers a look into what exactly they can expect when they get a product off the shelf and into their hands. To take advantage of the unboxing phenomenon for your brand, keep the following tips in mind:

UNBOXING IS RELEVANT FOR NEARLY ANY PRODUCT



If you thought unboxing videos were only for people who geek out over gadgets, think again. We're seeing unboxing videos in just about every category. So chances are, if you have a tangible product, you should be thinking about how you can create unboxing videos to connect with your audience. From the super simple to the intricately detailed and overly dramatic, unboxing videos run the gamut of styles. Take, for example, the recent ["Experience the power of a bookbook"](#) video by IKEA. This parody video is a great example of a brand leveraging the unboxing genre in a fresh new way.

THINK OUTSIDE THE [HOLIDAY] BOX



Look for occasions in your marketing calendar when anticipation runs high—definitely around the holidays, but even beyond. Spring break, summer vacation, Valentine's Day and even Back to School are just a few of the relevant moments you might start to consider. And don't forget about your product launches. As a starting point, ask yourself when people feel excited about your brand, and think about when unboxing videos can play a role. Sony, for example, created a [cinematic unboxing video](#) for the release of its eagerly awaited PlayStation 4 to connect with its audience in a highly relevant and anticipatory moment.