



The background image shows a woman standing on the left, gesturing towards a large screen and a whiteboard. The screen displays a Google Analytics-style dashboard for a channel named 'My Channel' with various performance metrics. The whiteboard lists five steps for identifying KPIs. A group of people are seated in blue armchairs around a white coffee table, listening to the presentation. The room has wood-paneled walls and a large blue abstract sculpture.

How to Identify the Right KPIs for Online Video: Lessons From Google BrandLab

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When it comes to measuring a video ad's success, views aren't everything. Kim Larson, who works with hundreds of brands each year as the global head of BrandLab, shares her four-step method for getting to the right key performance indicators (KPIs).

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At Google BrandLab, we've run more than 400 workshops from San Bruno to Singapore. We've partnered with thousands of brand marketers to learn about their challenges and help them think digital-first. And over the years, there's one question we've heard again and again from marketers when the conversation turns to YouTube:

"How many views means my video is successful?"

Views may be the proverbial public scorecard, but they're not always the best way to track progress against a brand's unique goals. At the [BrandLab](#), we refocus teams on identifying the right KPIs for those goals. We use a thought-provoking exercise designed to unpack the question we wish we were asked more often:

"Which KPIs should we be tracking to understand if our video campaign is successful?"

Below, we share that exercise with you—the questions we ask, the answers we work toward—so that you can help your teams look beyond views, too.

Question #1: What is your primary marketing goal for this campaign?

As brand teams write briefs, they typically want their video advertising campaigns to increase awareness and consideration and ultimately influence their online or offline sales. While consumers may not have a simple, linear experience anymore thanks to a growing number of touchpoints—online shopping, reviews, mobile, social, etc.—most marketers agree their target audience fits into one of three categories: unfamiliar with a product, on the fence about a product, or ready to act. With each new campaign or initiative, it's important to know where your target audience is in their journey and their intent. Based on that, which of the three possible brand goals is your #1 priority?




Question #2: What are the KPIs for that marketing goal?

The second step after you've landed on your marketing goal is to take a closer look at the campaign's KPIs. At the BrandLab, we use the chart below to help brands and agencies select KPIs that are easy to track and align with their marketing goals:

Measuring Brand Marketing Goals With KPIs			
BRAND MARKETING GOALS	 Awareness	 Consideration	 Action
KPIs TO MEASURE THAT GOAL	Views Impressions Unique users Awareness lift Ad recall lift	View-through rate Watch time Favorability lift Consideration lift Brand interest lift	Clicks Calls Signups Sales Purchase intent lift

Question #3: What are the best video analytics tools to measure your KPIs?

You've got your primary goal. You've got the KPIs that align with that goal. It's time to figure out how you'll measure them. There are three primary tools used to measure campaigns on YouTube: Brand Lift, YouTube Analytics, and reporting in AdWords. If you want to go beyond those tools and poll consumers on more specific questions, try running a survey with [Google Consumer Surveys](#).

Tools for Measuring KPIs	 Awareness KPIs	 Consideration KPIs	 Action KPIs
YOUTUBE ANALYTICS GOOGLE ANALYTICS ADWORDS	Views Impressions Unique users	View-through rate Watch time	Clicks Calls Signups Sales
BRAND LIFT	Awareness lift Ad recall lift	Favorability lift Consideration lift Brand interest lift	Purchase intent lift
GOOGLE CONSUMER SURVEYS	Answers to custom questions		

YouTube Analytics, Google Analytics, and AdWords will help your team measure metrics like watch time, view through rate, and clicks. These metrics can act as a helpful scorecard, and you can log in while your campaign is running to track progress. But translating views or clicks to lifts in awareness, consideration, or purchase intent gets tricky. That's where our [Brand Lift solution](#) comes in. It measures your campaign's impact on big-picture brand metrics.

Lastly, you can poll consumers with Google Consumer Surveys. These surveys don't have to be tied to a specific advertising campaign, but you could capture exposures to your channel or your ads and survey those exposures specifically. And you can ask those folks just about anything: if they've heard of your brand; when they'd like to hear from your brand; what kind of device they use; whether they prefer red or blue logos... the sky's the limit.

Question #4: How will you optimize for your KPIs?

After you determine your KPIs and how you'll measure them, a natural next step is to ask, "What's a good industry or competitive benchmark?" Unfortunately, it's not always that simple. [Creative choices](#)—length, music, logos, celebrities, etc.—vary too greatly among video ads for a fair apples-to-apples comparison, as do KPIs (was your competitor aiming for clicks or views?), targeting (larger audience? smaller?), and budget (did they have twice the budget to promote?).

Instead of looking exclusively at competitive or industry benchmarks, we encourage marketers to set their own. Consider comparing your current campaign to past campaigns, for which your team will know creative variables, KPIs, targeting, and budget. If you don't have another internal campaign that has the same KPIs, consider using in-campaign reporting and optimization to adjust creative and targeting midstride. An example of this might be A/B testing your own creative to establish a baseline.

One of the great strengths of digital marketing is real-time optimization. For example, you might use Brand Lift at the start of your campaign to figure out what's resonating, and then adjust your targeting or placements to reach the audience with whom your ads are working best.

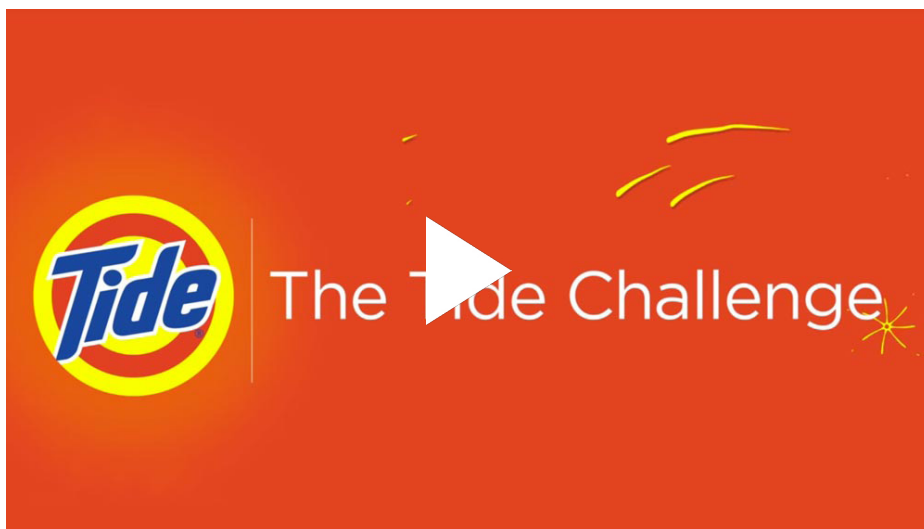
Putting one brand through the exercise above, and why it matters.

The [Tide Pod Challenge](#) is one example of a brand staying focused on the right KPIs. Tide executed its first major collaboration with YouTube creators through a series of "challenge" videos on Tide's YouTube channel. The team wanted to authentically speak to the millennial audience about the power of Tide Pods. Here's what happens when you put the Tide Pod Challenge campaign through the exercise above:

- **Question #1: What is your marketing goal for this campaign?** Tide's primary brand goal for these videos was consideration.
- **Question #2: What are the KPIs for that marketing goal?** As we mentioned in the graphic above, one good indicator of consideration is view-through rate (VTR). So, Tide focused on VTR as their primary metric for this campaign, coupled with Brand Lift.
- **Question #3: What are the best video analytics to measure your KPIs?** Tide saw its highest VTR ever on this campaign, measured using YouTube Analytics. Those views translated to a best-in-class consideration lift, measured through Brand Lift.
- **Question #4: How will you optimize for engagement?** In the second iteration of Tide's campaign, the team optimized for VTR using retargeting. Tide retargeted certain videos to its channel subscribers and to subscribers of the featured YouTube creators. Thanks to its efforts to optimize, Tide achieved a cost per view (CPV) of 50% less than previous campaigns.

The Tide team led its campaign with a clear brand goal. The company measured the right KPIs using YouTube Analytics and Brand Lift. It optimized in real-time for efficiency and effectiveness. But above all, the Tide team kept the focus on their prize (versus focusing solely on views).

Tide Pod Challenge



The goal of every BrandLab is to address a specific brand challenge. Once we've helped a brand team figure out a plan, we follow up to see what worked. Listening to hundreds of brands talk through hundreds of outcomes from this exercise, here are three insider tips people wished they'd known at the outset:

1. **Get everyone on board before the brief:** Socialize your KPIs with your team and agency partners at the outset—even before you write your briefs. Different KPIs can affect the creative, the targeting methods, even the ad formats (e.g., skippable vs. non-skippable).
2. **Hold each other to your decision:** Once everyone, including senior leadership, has agreed to specific KPIs, hold each other to it. Nobody—not even the CMO—can flip-flop and suddenly ask about views when everyone has been driving toward shares or clicks.
3. **Check-in often:** Set up a cadence for analytics reports from your team. Know when you'll sit down to track progress against KPIs, pause lower-performing ads performers, and increase spend on engaging content that's delivering the target KPI.

Hopefully now you have a better approach for tackling the question of "How many views means my video is successful?" The solution is to evolve the question to, "Which KPIs should we be tracking to understand if we're successful?" Honing your digital video strategy to find the most appropriate KPIs and metrics will not only ensure that your campaign goals are met, it'll enable your brand to reach your target audience in the most important moments along their customer journey.