

A high-angle, close-up photograph of three vintage cameras and lenses resting on a dark, textured wooden surface. The camera in the center is a black SLR with a leather strap, its lens cap removed. To its left is another black camera with a lens cap on. To the right is a large, black lens with a red ring. A black leather strap lies across the wooden planks. The lighting is dramatic, highlighting the textures of the wood and the metallic surfaces of the cameras.

# Playbook for Creative Advertising **Complete Course**



# Understanding the YouTube Ecosystem

There are countless approaches to making great videos. The insights in this playbook are based on observations of successful content and strategy, and designed to help you without putting fences around your creativity. Let's get started!



# YouTube: Where the World Chooses to Watch

For hundreds of millions of viewers, YouTube is always on, everywhere: More than half of YouTube views come from mobile devices.<sup>1</sup> For brands that know how to capture and hold users' attention, it's a highly creative outlet full of opportunities to engage a global audience.



## Attention and Influence Drive Impact

On YouTube, it's possible to create a video that resonates with millions of people—a video that's watched by choice, not seen by chance. YouTube can build your brand by connecting your message with your audience where they're paying attention.





## It's All About the User

From millennials to mums, your most valuable audience is on YouTube, watching on every screen—and they're paying attention. At any hour, on any device, anywhere, people expect to find videos that entertain, inform, and connect them with vibrant communities. YouTube makes it possible for you to meet the expectations of this audience in a variety of creative ways that simply aren't possible on other platforms.



# Takeaways

1

YouTube is always on, all around the world, on every screen, providing a unique opportunity for brands that know how to make videos that people want to watch.

2

YouTube can help you achieve your business goals by connecting you to huge communities of passionate fans.



# About this Playbook

There's a lot of great content out there.  
So, how can your video grab attention?



This playbook breaks down the collective learnings from some of the most successful videos and campaigns on YouTube, giving you the tools to make content that effectively captures the attention of your audience. You'll find proven techniques to make your videos stand out and benefit from YouTube's influence at key cultural moments. And you'll learn some powerful methods to track your content's performance.

This is a guide for brands, agencies and businesses. However, anyone who's interested in making videos for YouTube is encouraged to explore the topics covered here.

- **BRANDS** will find strategies and tools for building content plans, organising video distribution, measuring performance, and more.
- **AGENCIES** will find best practices for partnering with creators, guidelines for making the most effective videos, recommendations for advertising formats, and more.
- **BUSINESSES** will find an in-depth look at the elements of successful videos, tips for building an audience, ways to keep viewers coming back, and more.





## Sources:

<sup>1</sup> YouTube Statistics, March 2017



# Effective YouTube Advertising Strategy

Begin a successful video campaign by understanding your objective. Define your core message and tone. Ensure that your videos meet your brand goals. Find the best ways to engage your intended audience.

# Key Steps to Build Your Content Plan

When it comes to reaching your audience, you know what's worked in the past. Now you need to translate your approach so that it applies to your YouTube strategy. Here are some key steps to help you find a content plan that works for you.



## Define Your Brand Territory

With 400 hours of new content uploaded to YouTube every minute,<sup>1</sup> how can you be sure viewers will want to watch yours? Start by choosing a territory in which you can win. For example, are you going to make quirky lifehack videos to drive awareness, utility-based How-to videos to encourage new use cases, or are you going to create that big “whoa” moment to get people buzzing and sharing?

Ask yourself what your brand stands for—what are the passions that will drive its success? At the same time, ask yourself what your customers care about in their daily lives. Find the point where your brand’s passions overlap with your audience’s concerns. At that intersection lies something unique you can bring your fans to earn their loyalty.

The following tools can help you understand what your customers care about. What videos do they watch? How active are they on social networks? How do they use their mobile devices?

- [YouTube Trends Dashboard](#): See what videos are trending on YouTube.
- [YouTube Analytics](#): See how your audience is reacting to—and interacting with—your videos.
- [Think with Google](#): Explore Google data, insights, and perspectives for marketers.
- [Brand Lift](#): Look beyond impressions and views to understand the direct impact your YouTube ads have on perceptions and behaviours throughout the customer journey.
- [Google Surveys](#): Learn what people really think about your brand.



At the same time you're getting to know your audience, do some research on your competitors. Not just your usual competitors, but anyone providing users with content in a similar genre or category. Visit their YouTube channels to get a sense of their video styles, formats and tones.

- See what they're doing. Has anything they've done really resonated with their audience?
- Learn from what they're doing right. Where are there opportunities for your brand?

Now that you're on the path to making great videos, how are you defining success? Is it about user engagement? Views?

- Imagine that you just produced the video of your dreams. What does the PR headline announcing your tremendous success say? Try writing out your PR headline in one or two sentences.
- Track related metrics before, during and after the video release to see if your video moved the needle. See Measurement and Insights for examples of key metrics.



Mucinex grabbed the attention of millions of people by understanding audience behaviour. Mr. Mucus called out the skip button directly in the ad, which ran during key moments in peak cold and flu season. The results? 16M views, 250% lift in Google search volume for Mucinex, 67% lift in ad recall and 10.4% lift in purchase intent.<sup>2</sup>

## Define the Objective

What's the marketing or business objective you're trying to achieve? This might seem obvious, but in our experience many brands struggle to clearly articulate a role for content that's both unique and valuable. Here are some objectives to consider:

- **Build awareness:** Will people be able to recall and recognise your brand, product or service after watching the video?
- **Influence consideration:** Will people consider buying what you're selling after watching the video?
- **Drive sales:** Will people be more likely to visit your website or store to buy your product after watching the video?
- **Grow loyalty:** Will people be more likely to recommend your brand, product or service after watching the video?



Knorr wanted to penetrate millennial food culture. They set up couples who'd never met and let the cameras roll. The result? 54M views in two weeks, #1 ad on the May 2016 YouTube Ads Leaderboard, 6000% lift in search interest in select markets and one actual, real-life couple.<sup>3</sup>





## Consider the Customer Need

Understanding the needs of your customers will help drive the type of content you create, the tone of your messaging, and the experiences you offer. Once you have a sense of the journey your customers are on, it will be easier to figure out what kinds of videos they'd most appreciate. The organising principle called ICE—Information, Connection, Entertainment—lets you think about the role your videos will play in a customer's daily life.

- **Information:** People watch these videos for the latest updates, self-improvement, How-to instructions and decision-making help.
- **Connection:** People watch these videos to share with other users, to bond with their communities and to react to friends' suggestions.
- **Entertainment:** People watch these videos to get inspired, laugh, relax, be nostalgic and relieve boredom.



Each model in the 500 family has its own target audience, so FIAT France created its version of a media laboratory to better understand and identify the users who watched its YouTube ad. Understanding the ad's impact helped FIAT France shape its full media campaign.

## Understand the Resources Required

Be critical about what you want to achieve and what it takes to achieve it. You might want to create high-quality daily programming—or attention-getting “whoa” moments around massive cultural events—but without production experts and a big budget that’s going to be difficult.

Consider the resources you DO have. What kind of content is sustainable for you?

- **One-off videos:** These can be as short as six-second bumper ads. Get in, get your message across with a quick impactful hit.
- **Longer form video:** Take as long as you want to tell your brand story. Experiment with long format video content.
- **Series:** Can you deliver information in a way that keeps people coming back for more?
- **Always-on channel:** You’ve got the resources to release videos in different formats and styles. Tent pole campaigns live alongside year-round content.



Comedy Central answered fans' questions about Trevor Noah and drummed up interest in the Daily Show host with an innovative campaign that combined search ads and YouTube videos. The results? 38M impressions leading to 2.8M views, and on average those viewers watched more than 85% of each video.<sup>4</sup>

## Takeaways

1

Use insight tools such as [YouTube Trends](#) and [Google Surveys](#) to learn what your customers care about so you can create the videos they'll want to watch.

2

Define your business objective—do you want your videos to build awareness, influence consideration, drive sales and/or grow loyalty?

3

Think about the role your video will bring to a consumer's life. Will it entertain, inform, or spark a connection?

4

Understanding your resources will help you plan content that's sustainable over time.



## Sources:

<sup>1</sup> YouTube Global Internet Data, April 2015.

<sup>2</sup> “Mucinex Finds Cure to the Crowded Marketplace With Breakthrough TrueView Ads,” Think with Google, June 2015.

<sup>3</sup> “Global Audiences Get a Taste of Knorr With a Flavourful YouTube Ad,” Think with Google, September 2016.

<sup>4</sup> “Comedy Central’s Innovative Search/YouTube Strategy Sends Fans on an Internet-Wide Easter Egg Hunt,” Think with Google, February 2016.



# Guidelines for Great Creative

Smart creative concepts make for compelling and effective videos. Use these proven approaches to help your ads deliver on your marketing goals.

# ABCDs of Effective Creative

What makes certain ads perform better than others? While there are no guarantees—and no magic recipe for content that wins 100% of the time—YouTube guidelines can be broken down into a set of recommendations called ABCD. Think of it as a framework to guide your concepting, and to ensure your ad is set up for success.





## Attract

Draw attention from the beginning.

- **Front-load your story arc.** Regardless of the format, all users have a choice to watch your ad or move on. You have only seconds to grab and hold their attention. Open with impact and plunge the viewer into the action.
- **Use familiar faces.** Friendly, relatable, and recognisable people at the beginning of a video can lead to increased viewership. The presence of celebrities in ads is associated with higher brand lift performance, so consider enlisting a YouTube creator or other influencer.<sup>1</sup>
- **Build for sound on.** Viewers expect audio on YouTube, and our correlation studies show that sound is associated with fostering attention and positive brand response.<sup>2</sup>
- **Consider creative elements.** Viewers are more inclined to watch ads that make them laugh, and we've seen that humour is associated with higher brand awareness, and ad recall.<sup>3</sup>



## Brand

Integrate your brand naturally and meaningfully.

- **Brand placement matters.** When optimising for ad recall, integrate your brand in the first five seconds. For awareness and consideration, place your brand later and focus on building a connection with the viewer.<sup>4</sup>
- **Try to show your brand or product in natural usage.** This has a higher association with ad recall and viewership versus logos in supers or overlays.<sup>5</sup>
- **Reinforce with audio.** Audio mentions of a brand are associated with increased brand lift. Consider including your brand or product name in voiceover.<sup>6</sup>



## Connect

Connect with the viewer through emotion and storytelling.

- **Watchtime matters.** Watchtime matters. There's a consistent relationship between how long an ad is viewable and an increase in brand awareness and consideration.<sup>7</sup>
- **Create an emotional connection.** Humour and suspense are associated with higher ad recall. Humour can also be associated with higher brand awareness and viewership.<sup>8</sup>
- **Use the power of audio.** 95% of YouTube ads are watched with sound on. For viewers watching audio and video combined, there's a 20% lift in brand awareness and consideration, which is significantly higher than those watching audio or video alone.<sup>9</sup>
- **Break the fourth wall.** Ads that use on-screen talent to connect with viewers are associated with higher brand lift.<sup>10</sup>
- **Analyse and test.** Use YouTube Analytics retention curves to see where viewers are dropping off, and consider whether there's something you can change in your edit. Test multiple versions of your creative with brand lift studies to see what works best for your audience and brand.



## Direct

Clearly state what you want the viewer to do.

- **Use a CTA.** Invite viewers to visit your website, watch another video, subscribe to your channel, etc. Clear calls to action drive brand lift, even if no action is taken.<sup>11</sup>
- **Use YouTube's interactive platform features.** Info Cards, End Screens and CTA overlays make it easier for viewers to take an action right from the video player.



## Takeaways

1

When you're coming up with video concepts, remember ABCD: **Attract** attention from the start, **Brand** naturally and meaningfully, **Connect** with your audience through emotion and storytelling, and **Direct** viewers with clear CTAs.

2

Integrate your brand naturally. Videos with products fare better than videos with graphic logo overlays.<sup>12</sup>

3

Clear CTAs drive brand lift. Make it easy for your viewers to take action with YouTube's interactive platform features: Info Cards, End Screens, and CTA overlays.<sup>13</sup>



## Sources:

<sup>1, 3, 4, 5, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13</sup> Google Internal Data, Creative Characteristics and TrueView Performance, Global, June 2015.

<sup>2</sup> Google TrueView Brand Lift data, US, Jul-Aug, 2016

<sup>6</sup> Google TrueView Brand Lift data, US, Aug-Sept, 2016, Global.

<sup>7</sup> Google TrueView Brand Lift data, US, May 2015.

<sup>9</sup> Google TrueView Brand Lift studies Aug-Sept, 2016, Global.





# Creative Ad Formats

Orchestrate your advertising across :06 non-skip, :15 non-skip, and long (:30+) skippable videos. Take a closer look at the benefits of these formats with Unskippable Labs experiments. Push the boundaries of your content with Live Streaming and 360 Ads.

# Storytelling for Greater Impact

By aligning your creative ideas across three different YouTube ad formats, you can grab viewers' attention on mobile without limiting your freedom to experiment with more involved storytelling. Here's a closer look at :06 non-skip, :15 non-skip, and long (:30+) skippable videos.



## Bumper Ads (:06 non-skip)

These short-form videos are called bumper ads—bite-size pieces of content great for users “on-the-go” and mobile-viewing. With six seconds to get your point across, consider narrowing your message to a single focus. Bumper ads also pair well with longer-form creative to help tease, amplify or echo the main narrative.

- In a study of over 600 campaigns, 90% of bumper ads measured globally drove a significant lift in ad recall. Across all campaigns measured, average lift was 38%.<sup>1</sup>
- Based on 18 advertisers that leveraged both TrueView & bumpers across 400 campaigns, bumper ads increased the unique reach of TrueView campaigns by 78% on average.<sup>2</sup>



Sonos’ “PLAYBASE” bumper ad extracts a single memorable element from its “Introducing the all new PLAYBASE – The Big Lebowski Commercial” video campaign.



## :15 Non-Skip

These mid-length videos are designed to match the content users watch on mobile while allowing your key message to resonate.



Sonos' "PLAYBASE" 15 second video lets the story unfold slightly longer than a bumper ad. The scene is set first, and the product introduced second.



## Long (:30+) Skippable

Long-format TrueView skippable videos give you the freedom to captivate your audience with a more involved narrative. Most of the ads on the YouTube Ads Leaderboard each month adhere to this format. When you're creating long-form content, remember to front-load the story arc—you still need to grab viewers' attention in the first five seconds to avoid the skip.

- In a study of 89 US brand videos, viewers who watched TrueView ads for at least 30 seconds—or to completion—were 23x more likely to visit or subscribe to a brand's channel, watch more videos by that brand, or share the video.<sup>3</sup>
- Even viewers who were merely exposed to TrueView ads were 10x more likely to take one of those actions.<sup>4</sup>



Sonos' "PLAYBASE" 30 second video takes the format of a traditional commercial beginning with an intro, then a slow build up to an event and then the product info and logo.

# Takeaways

1

Deliver your message across :06 non-skip, :15 non-skip, and long (:30+) skippable videos. Short-form drives ad recall, and together with long-form, increases the reach your of campaigns.

2

When creating long-form content, make sure the first six seconds are attention-grabbing so viewers don't hit skip.





# Unskippable Lab Experiments

Today's viewers are impatient and wield considerable control over what they watch. How can advertisers break through and hold their attention? By designing content based on a hypothesis, showing it to the world, and analysing the reaction, the Unskippable Labs project aims to find out what people pay attention to and engage with—and ultimately, what makes a video “unskippable.”



## The Unskippable Labs Process

Unskippable Labs uses a four-step process to bring data to the art of storytelling.

- **Education:** Use past Unskippable Labs learnings and research to identify high potential areas for experimentation.
- **Hypothesis:** Create a hypothesis with the potential to change how effective creative work is developed. For example: Tight framing, the use of supers and faster pacing can improve video performance significantly, especially on mobile devices.
- **Launch Preparation:** Set budgets to test the hypothesis, create content, upload finished videos to YouTube.
- **Post-Analysis:** Digest viewer reaction and analyse data.



## Unskippable Labs and Bumper Ads

YouTube partnered with Netflix to understand if short-form content could move people and meet brand goals the same way longer-form content does. After experimenting with different video lengths, they found that the shortest form—bumper ads—resulted in the following:

- 56% increase in ad recall.
- 19% increase in brand awareness.
- 300% increase in product interest.<sup>5</sup>



James Rothwell, Director of Marketing for Netflix Asia, and Taka Osaki, Vice President of Marketing for Netflix Asia, discuss the bumper ads experiment.

## Unskippable Labs: Go Short or Go Long

Unskippable Labs tested three different cuts of the same story using TrueView, YouTube's skippable ad format. They measured whether people chose to watch 15 seconds, 30 seconds, or a long-form ad that was 2:17. They also measured how long people watched the longer cuts, and how that impacted the brand's ad recall and favourability. Here's what they found:



- The longer cuts were both watched more than the 15-second ad. The 30-second ad was the least skipped, and the 15-second ad the most skipped.
- The 15-second ad was the only one to drive significant ad recall across all three cuts.
- The longer cuts both delivered stronger favourability results than the :15. If you are interested in simple recall, short ads work great. If you need to persuade someone, longer ads may work better.<sup>6</sup>



Devon Hong, Creative Director at Droga5, and Emmett Schaller, Senior Associate Manager at Honey Maid, discuss the short/long experiment.

## Unskippable Labs: An Ad for the Ages

Do brands need different types of ads to reach people of different ages? Google partnered with L'Oréal Paris to find out by releasing three types of TrueView videos. Unskippable Labs measured how each age group responded to them. Here's what they found:

- People of all ages chose to watch the glossy, highly produced ad more than the other versions.
- Audiences of different ages responded to the types of videos in different ways. The more direct, intimate video was most effective for younger viewers, while the older audience responded to the polished TV Ad.
- The direct, intimate video style spurred more consumers—of all ages—to click through for more information.



Ben Jones, Creative Director at Google, discusses the Ad for the Ages experiment.

## Unskippable Labs: The Mobile Recut

Should where we're telling stories change how we're telling stories? Unskippable Labs took a successful ad—Mountain Dew Kickstart's "Come Alive"—and recut it three ways to learn how storytelling changes on mobile. Here's what they found:

- The unexpected can be powerful. The recut ad called "Pure Fun" had no traditional storyline or structure, yet it was viewed at a 26% higher rate than the other cuts on mobile.
- More viewers watched "Pure Fun" on mobile than on desktop, and they watched for a longer period of time. At 1 minute and 33 seconds, "Pure Fun" was more than three times as long as the other ads. With the chance to watch more, people did.<sup>7</sup>



David Lubars, Chief Creative Officer of BBDO Worldwide, John Osborne, President and CEO of BBDO New York, and Tim Bayne, ECD at BBDO New York discuss the mobile recut experiment.

## Takeaways

1

After experimenting with bumper ads, YouTube and Netflix discovered that the short-form videos can increase ad recall, brand awareness, and product interest.

2

A great story can still grab and hold an audience, even with the temptation of the skip button. Front-loading your story arc and putting your brand on the screen early encourages viewers to stay.

3

Viewers of all ages gravitated toward a glossier ad over other versions, and younger audiences favoured the more intimate version.

4

Attention spans might be getting shorter, but viewers still watch long-form content—even choosing it over short-form—if given the chance.





# Emerging Video Ad Formats

While you're experimenting with different ad lengths to increase watch time and drive engagement, consider formats that can help you connect with your audience and immerse viewers in your brand's story. Stream video in real-time with YouTube Live—share unscripted responses to events, news, and unboxings. And if your ideas lend themselves to interactive experiences, 360° Video lets your viewers explore the environments you create.



## Live Streaming: Set Up Your Event

- **Schedule.** Create your broadcast URL in advance—at least 48 hours before your event. Share the broadcast link on your own social media platforms.
- **Organise.** Set up your event features and metadata—title, description, tags—so people can find your video. Make use of the richest keywords and add a custom thumbnail.
- **Promote.** Update your channel art, create an event trailer, add a live stream section to your channel, and use featured content to promote your stream.



## Live Streaming: Manage Your Event

- **Inform.** Use slates, lower thirds, and watermarks to inform your audience. Start the broadcast a few minutes early with a pre-event slate.
- **Engage.** Invite viewers to participate in the broadcast, offer backstage coverage, and use cards. Include questions and audience interactions in your script.
- **Chat.** Pay close attention to what people are saying and dedicate resources to moderation and community management.



## Live Streaming: Measure the Impact of Your Event

- **Measure.** Use Live Control Room & YouTube Analytics to gather data, and use what you find out to inform upcoming events. Check traffic source reports, display locations, and devices to help you plan future promotions.
- **Feature.** YouTube archives live events for up to 8 hours (4 hours for 360° Live). Consider a local archive solution for longer events. Use Highlight Clips to upload highlights while broadcasting.
- **Promote.** Post highlights featuring unique themes or topics, such as behind-the-scenes clips or videos that complement the original live stream.



## 360° Video Ads

360° ads put viewers inside your videos, allowing them to control the view from inside the frame. It's an active experience: they can explore far-flung terrain and ride (or ski) along with the faces of your campaign. But do these ads actually drive more engagement than standard video ads? Google partnered with Columbia Sportswear to find out, and created two similar campaigns using TrueView. Each campaign featured a 60-second spot for Columbia Sportswear, one presented in 360° video, the other a standard format video ad. Both ads included CTAs that drove to an extended version.



The standard version of the ad was visually framed around the skiers, with aerial and wide-angle shots of their runs and the landscape.



The results? The 360° video ad had a lower retention rate than the standard ad. But it had a higher click-through rate, meaning that viewers were more interested in watching the full-length version of the video after viewing it. In total, the 360° ad drove 41% more earned actions than the standard ad, and more engagement with Columbia's YouTube channel.<sup>8</sup>



The 360° version of the ad planted the audience within the terrain, allowing viewers to explore independently.

# Takeaways

1

Live streaming gives you the opportunity to broadcast to your audience in real-time and interact with your viewers in an authentic way.

2

360° video immerses your audience in your brand's story by giving them the opportunity to navigate within your videos.



## Sources:

- <sup>1,2</sup> YouTube Internal Data, Global, July 2016.
- <sup>3,4</sup> Google Meta-Analysis: Measuring TrueView Impact on Brand Channel Engagement, August 2015.
- <sup>5</sup> “Netflix - Unskippable Labs and Bumper Ads,” YouTube, September 2016.
- <sup>6</sup> “In Video Advertising, Is Longer Stronger?,” Think with Google, April 2016.
- <sup>7</sup> “Mobile Video Advertising: Making Unskippable Ads,” Think with Google, June 2015.
- <sup>8</sup> “Is 360 Video Worth It?,” Think with Google, July 2016.





# Data and Insight Tools

Use Google insights and perspectives to influence the creative direction of your videos. Apply meaningful data to every stage in your content-creation process. Spot opportunities, mine insights, and measure your results.

# Creative Intelligence

Expand your creative intelligence with Google data and propel your campaigns forward. Learn to use tools that provide a window into a massive, unbiased audience, and spark insights that will lead to more effective videos. From real-time measurement and feedback to finding new ways to tap into cultural movements, data-driven insights can launch bigger and bolder advertising.



## Customised Experiences

Tap into moments that matter—times when people need to know, go, do, or buy something and turn to the closest device. Use data to give people what they want, when they want it.<sup>1</sup>

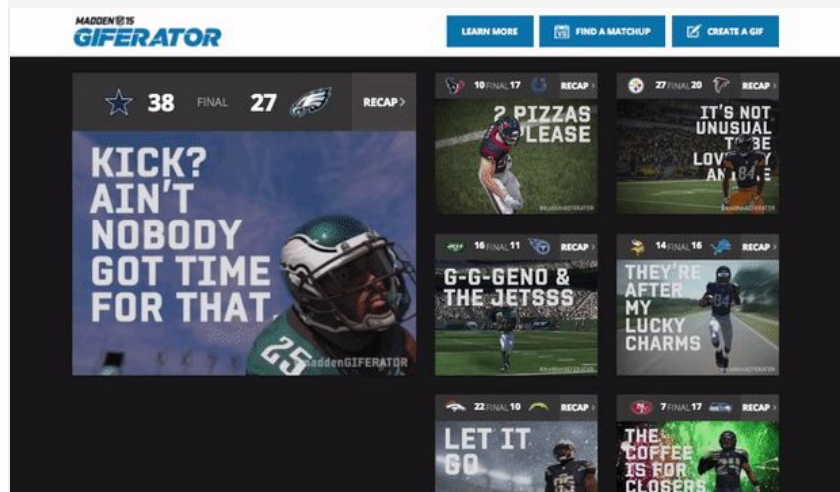


Using sales data together with weather data, McDonald's Japan analysed in real time when and where products were selling well, and how local weather conditions affected purchase patterns. They served over 25,000 types of banner ads recommending just the right product for each viewer in that particular set of circumstances, and sent coupons along with them. The result? Coupon usage grew by 150%.<sup>2</sup>

## Real-Time Storytelling

Surprise and engage your audience in real-time by establishing a connection between events on TV and other devices.

Live Site: <http://giferator.project-showcase.com/>



To launch their new game Madden NFL 15, EA Sports wanted to connect with young fans and grow its association with the real-world NFL. To do this, they fused live NFL data and game scores with Madden video-game footage to generate GIF highlights for every single NFL game, all delivered via real-time ads across sports websites and apps. The result was an ever-growing collection of GIFs fans were able to take, edit, and share.<sup>3</sup>



## Efficient Campaign Scaling

Use a data-driven system to expand your marketing activities in a cost-effective way.



Scandinavian Airlines wanted their new global marketing approach to be data-driven. They gathered data from Google Analytics 360 and combined it with DoubleClick for Search and DoubleClick Bid Manager, tools that provide a complete view of digital marketing across channels. This allowed them to deliver highly personalised messages. The result? 203% increase in revenues, 346% surge in marketing ROI, and a 78% decrease in sales costs.<sup>4</sup>

## Cultural Tie-Ins

Put your ads in the spotlight by speaking to the interests of your viewers at the moments they're most engaged. Harness the excitement around big moments in pop culture, politics, sports, tech, and more. Weave your message into the conversation.

To promote their “casting” feature, Google Chromecast used search results to learn when people were talking and what they were talking about, and they joined the conversation. In the lead-up to the presidential debates, their ads featured relevant commentary from talk-show comedians. The result? Expansion rates tripled and interaction rates beat the industry benchmark.<sup>5</sup>



## Tailor-Made Ads

Deliver personalised messages to your audience based on historical data and live insights.



L'Oréal Germany supported the launch of the new Lancôme's skincare product range through a data-driven campaign. They used insights to define six core target groups and adapted their creative strategy accordingly. The result? 32 different messages achieved an 80% view-through rate and they received 12,000+ free sampling requests.<sup>6</sup> **Learn more on DoubleClick by Google:** [Lancôme Leverages Precision Marketing to Deliver Tailor-Made Advertising](#)



# Takeaways

1

Use Google data and insights to create smarter and more effective advertising campaigns.

2

Get better results from your videos by learning to mine insights from Google data, and applying what you discover to your creation process.





# Tools for Insight Mining

What's your audience searching for? How do search trends correlate with shifts in consumer behaviour? Using Google and YouTube data tools to answer these questions can help you understand your audience's intentions in real-time. These tools span the entire lifecycle of a campaign, from the idea phase to post-analysis. In this section, see how brands have used them to drive more effective advertising.



## Think with Google

- Explore a destination for marketers complete with Google data, insights and perspectives.
- Browse articles to get you started on your content-creation journey, and put yourself in the right frame of mind with expert opinions and insights.
- Visit [Think with Google](#) to get started, and see how you can use it to inform your creative development with [Food Trends](#), [Skin Care Trends](#), and [Hair Care Trends](#).



## Trends

- Get real-time Google and YouTube search data.
- Learn what people are searching for and tailor your videos to fit into existing conversations.
- Visit [Google Trends](https://trends.google.com) to get started.



Axe Hair saw an increase of men's hair searches on YouTube Trends. They used their knowledge of what their audience was most interested in to create the Instagroom video series.





Campbell's Soup Co. used the [Google Search Trends](#) Tool to monitor YouTube's most popular search categories and channels. Armed with this knowledge, they developed :06 ads that referenced these trends.

## Brand Lift

- Take a close-up look at how advertisements affect audience perception and behaviour.
- Get insights within a matter of days. See how your ads are impacting the metrics that matter, including lifts (as measured in surveys) in brand awareness, ad recall, consideration, favourability, purchase intent, and brand interest (as measured by organic search activity).
- Understand whether people intend to purchase your products after seeing your video, and tweak your content to drive the kind of actions you want viewers to take.
- Visit [Brand Lift](#) to get started.





Mondelēz produced and tested two versions of a video ad for Trident Unlimited gum. In video #1 the actor put the gum in his mouth. In video #2 he was already chewing. The verdict? Video #2 was the clear winner with 36% lift in brand awareness—5% higher than video #1.<sup>7</sup>

## Google Surveys

- Find out what people really think in a fast, easy, cost-efficient way.
- Use near real-time insights to help you make creative decisions on the fly.
- Unlock data that helps you understand, justify, and take advantage of new opportunities.
- Use screening questions to survey hard-to-reach audiences and start seeing results in as little as 24 hours.
- Visit [Google Surveys](#) to get started.



Orbitz used Google Surveys to understand the needs of their audience in near real-time, empowering them to respond quickly.





Lenovo used [Google Surveys](#) to identify and validate consumer feedback on new product features.





YouVisit used [Google Surveys](#) to validate the need to educate their consumers on VR technology.

## YouTube Analytics

- Find out more about the people who watch your videos, then use those insights to tailor your creative and promotional strategies more effectively.
- YouTube Analytics can help you answer “who is watching” and “what are they interested in?”<sup>8</sup>
- See who watches your videos by age, gender, and geography in the Demographics report. These breakdowns can help you make creative and marketing decisions.
- Learn how engaged your audience is with your channel. Are they sharing and liking? See how much your viewers watch and what piques their interest within each video.<sup>9</sup>
- Visit [YouTube Analytics](#) to get started.



VICE released their “3D Printed Guns” video as America’s gun-control debate heated up and related search terms were trending. Addressing a timely, hotly debated topic helped the video receive 73% more shares than other VICE content.<sup>10</sup>

# Takeaways

1

Use YouTube data tools to take a closer look at your audience's behaviour. Fresh insights can help steer your content-creation process.

2

Visit [Think with Google](#) to immerse yourself in thought leadership, white papers, case studies, and more. Use Google Surveys, YouTube Analytics, Brand Lift, and Trends to put data to work for you.



## Sources:

<sup>1</sup> "Micro-Moments. Learn about this new customer behaviour, and what it means for brands," Think with Google.

<sup>2</sup> "Real-Time Data-Driven Creative: the Next Frontier?," Think with Google, September 2016.

<sup>3</sup> "EA Sports Madden GIFERATOR," Think with Google, June 2015.

<sup>4</sup> "Getting the Full Stack for True Data-Driven Marketing," Think with Google.

<sup>5</sup> "Tying Your Campaign to Cultural Events," Think with Google.

<sup>6</sup> "Lancôme Leverages Precision Marketing to Deliver Tailor-Made Advertising," DoubleClick by Google, October 2016.

<sup>7</sup> "Mondelēz International Improves Campaign Effectiveness With Google's Brand Lift Solution," Think with Google, October 2014.

<sup>8</sup> "Lesson: How is my channel doing?" YouTube Creator Academy.

<sup>9</sup> "Lesson: Who is watching my channel?" YouTube Creator Academy.

<sup>10</sup> "VICE's YouTube Success: Growing Sustained Viewership Through Breakout Videos," Think with Google, October 2013.



# Programming and Channel Strategy

Determine what your channel stands for. Produce videos in a consistent voice. Map out a release strategy. Get the timing right and give people a reason to keep coming back.

# Develop a Programming Strategy

Programming refers to a schedule for releasing videos and shows as part of a daily, weekly or season-long timeline. It includes both pre-production and production activities: what type of content to produce and how to publish and share it.



Leveraging three different types of videos can help you build out a balanced programming strategy. This is the “Hero, Hub, Help” framework.

- **Hero:** This is the content you want to push to a big, broad audience. Most likely, you’ll only have a few hero moments per year—for example, major product launches or seasonal tent poles.
- **Hub:** Episodic or multi-part series designed to give a fresh perspective on your audience’s passions and interests. This is often staggered throughout the year.
- **Help:** Answer the questions your consumers are asking to create programming that is always relevant throughout the year. Consider making product tutorials, How-to lessons or customer service videos.



# Takeaways

1

Create Hero content to take advantage of tent-pole events and grow your audience in a big way.

2

Create Hub content to give people a reason to visit your channel on a regular basis.

3

Create Help content that gives clear answers to frequent YouTube search queries.





# Programming Hero Content

Hero moments are characterised by intense bursts of activity and investment—when brands make important choices to be seen by vast audiences, usually across a short period of time. YouTube can be of unique help thanks to the reach of its high-impact formats like the Masthead and in-stream ads.



Here are some things to keep in mind while creating hero content:

- Identify important events that are relevant to your audience.
- Use [Google Trends](#). Explore the tool to gauge how much early and sustained interest there is around an event.
- Develop a programming calendar covering all the videos you are going to create or curate for the event.
- Get ahead of the buzz. Release ancillary videos around your hero content several days before the event. The pre-buzz (or audience interest) leading up to an event is just as important as the actual event.
- Consider collaborating with YouTube creators to amplify your message.
- Ask yourself: Would people bother to share this on social media? Would this make a good newspaper headline? Can you imagine your audience paying for this content?
- Ask for your audience's participation in the event. Can they design it? Star in it? Vote for it? Turn your audience into advocates who will promote ahead of the launch.
- Use offline advertising, social media posts and influencer support. Planned promotional strategies that build over time work better than one-off flashes of activity.



## Case Studies



To speak to their target audience in a common language, adidas Football launched a Hero video for their Boss Everyone marketing campaign. It combines content from other videos into an entertaining, sharable and clever piece that expands the reach of their marketing campaign.

## Bite, Snack, Meal

YouTube is a creative canvas—that's what makes it the perfect platform for innovative advertising. With a multitude of ways to tell stories, there's no reason to lean heavily on traditional formats. Here's your opportunity to push back against :30 storyboards with typical arcs (i.e. slow build, climax, and brand reveal at :25).

People come to YouTube to fulfill all sorts of needs throughout the day, from quick How-to videos to entertaining Carpool Karaoke. Their willingness to engage with your videos depends on a variety of factors you can't control. But you CAN control the form your videos take, and the storytelling methods you employ. Carefully calibrating these elements can help you meet viewers at their moments of need.

Our recommended approach—"Bite, Snack, Meal"—helps you rethink your story arc to orchestrate content across these moments and drive maximum reach with your audience.

- **BITE:** Short format, quick-hit videos to tease or echo a key message. 0-0:10.
- **SNACK:** Mid-length format videos to convey a key message. 0:10-0:30.
- **MEAL:** Longer-form videos that aren't possible on TV with the ability to build brand equity. 0:30+.



## Case Study: Bite



The Bumper (:06) focused on the essentials. With only six seconds to work with, the ad showed the three main characters and used similar branding as the longer cuts. The result? 300% lift in search queries for "Orange Is The New Black." Typically, 0:06 Bumpers increase the unique reach of skippable snacks and meals by 78%.<sup>1</sup>

## Case Study: Snack



The teaser (:15) was built following the same structure as the 30-second version, but only included the most impactful moments. This video garnered more ad recall lift than the bumper or the trailer.<sup>2</sup>

## Case Study: Meal



The trailer (:30) followed Netflix's traditional creative cues. It started and ended with the logo in full frame, used an overlay logo throughout the video and only referenced the show's title toward the end.<sup>3</sup>

# Takeaways

1

Use [Google Trends](#) to gauge interest in a cultural event, release videos to tap into pre-buzz and use TrueView to promote your Hero video.

2

Use the “Bite, Snack, Meal” approach to orchestrate content across moments that matter to your viewers and drive maximum reach with your audience. Bite is short-format, Snack is mid-length and Meal is longer-form content.





# Programming Hub Content

Consistent formats are the key to channel sustainability. Think about successful TV franchises—the nightly news, Friends, The Price is Right—and apply what you know about their success to making ads for YouTube. This is the the first step in creating your Hub content—regularly scheduled videos that give viewers a reason to subscribe to your channel.



Here are some suggestions to get you started:

- Create an editorial voice with a strong, distinctive style.
- Consider casting a single identifiable personality to appear across all your content.
- Maintain a consistent visual language.
- Communicate a regular and clear release schedule in channel art, video descriptions and/or calls to action in your videos. See [Organic Optimisation](#) for more.
- Develop an active promotion strategy that includes social media, cross-promotions and incentives for subscribers to share your videos.



Leveraging partnerships with UEFA and the Champions League, adidas Football created the Gamedayplus series as part of their Hub content strategy. These videos work together with their Hero campaign to continue the Boss Everyday narrative, complement other marketing campaigns, and help adidas Football stay top-of-mind during the season.

## Consistency

Consistency is crucial to success on the site. But consistency can refer to different aspects of production. Take a look at how these videos use consistency of format, schedule, and elements to tie their content together in satisfying ways. Note that Hub content doesn't always have to be fully polished, and can be created with production values that range from scant to robust.

## Consistent Format

Create a recurring series with videos that can be repeated again and again.

## Consistent Schedule

Upload a video to your channel on a specific day.

## Consistent Elements

Repeat small aspects of a video the same way every time, such as intros and outros, or revisit certain segments.



## Why Be Consistent?

- Compel your audience to return again and again to what they like and are familiar with.
- Increase fan loyalty.
- Make your audience comfortable.
- Help your audience develop a sense of expectation.

## Best Practices to Remain Consistent

- Develop ideas that can be expressed over multiple videos.
- Create a structured format that will prevent you from having to reinvent every video.
- Make sure your videos have a clear point of view that accurately reflects your messaging.
- Remember, consistency requires a sustainable approach—considering costs, means of production, and creative resources.



## Sustainability

Designing a consistent format for your videos is a great way to build a loyal audience, but it only works if you can actually sustain that format. Take a look at all the elements of the production, from the location and actors to the overall budget, and make sure you'll be able to maintain it over time. Here are some tips for being sustainable:

- Plan your creative concept carefully. Does it have longevity?
- Implement recurring formats and predictable programming—organise your videos and channel activity into a daily, weekly or season-long schedule.
- Make sure you have the in-house or agency resources to support your creative vision for the long term.



## Takeaways

1

Use consistency of format, schedule and production elements to give your Hub content a cohesive look and feel.

2

Sustaining video consistency over time takes resources. Make sure you know what you need—and have access to it—before you start creating.

3

Cultivate a sense of expectation in your audience to keep them coming back for more.



# Programming Help Content

Help content refers to your channel's always-on videos. Straightforward How-to guides are a natural fit for this kind of content, but that doesn't mean you always have to be providing actionable advice. Your goal should be to make videos that meet users' needs.



Here's how to get started:

- Use [Google Trends](#) or [YouTube Trends](#) to understand what viewers are searching for when they come to YouTube. Find the most frequent searches (aka “queries”).
- Create a Help video that clearly and simply addresses a specific high-volume search query.
- Establish why your brand should be the one to answer the query, but keep the sales pitch to a minimum.
- Create evergreen content. How-to and instructional videos will be searched for over time.



Adidas Football repurposed existing footage from their web series as tutorials. These Help videos increased the brand's organic views and earned higher watch time than other types of content on their channel.





## Discoverability

YouTube is the second-most-used search engine in the world, behind Google. Every day, millions of visitors search for videos about all sorts of subjects. While they may not be looking for your video—or even be aware of your content—you can take steps to ensure that YouTube surfaces it for them to discover.

## What Makes Content Discoverable?

- Videos on highly-searched topics will surface in search results. Use [Google Trends](#) to find out what kinds of videos people are looking for.
- Some search terms are popular for years. Videos that address these queries will have a longer shelf life on YouTube.

## Best Practices for Discoverability

- Make videos around trending events. Your content will surface with the sudden rush of traffic around that topic.
- Fully optimise your metadata including video titles, tags and descriptions. See [Organic Optimisation](#) for more details.



# Takeaways

1

Create both trending and evergreen Help videos to pull in sudden traffic and viewers over a longer period of time.

2

Make your videos discoverable with fully optimised titles, tags, and descriptions, and they'll be surfaced for more YouTube users to find.



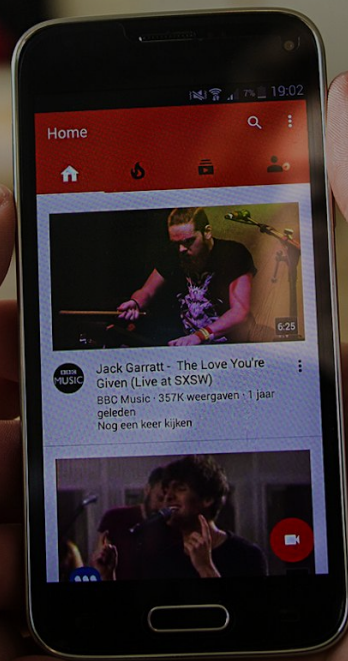
## Sources:

<sup>1,2,3</sup> “Testing Video Ad Lengths with Netflix,” Think with Google, December 2016.



# Partnering with Creators

Tap into loyal audiences by partnering with YouTube creators. Define the scope of your collaboration with a clear creative brief. Use creators' relationships with fans to share your message with hard-to-reach viewers.



# Who are YouTube Creators?

A YouTube creator is anyone who makes videos for YouTube. That's the beauty of the platform: everyone has a voice, and everyone can have a channel.

Popular creators are savvy marketers, with a knack for finding innovative ways to engage with their viewers. And they're adept at building massive communities, with audiences that range from hundreds to millions. Research shows the presence of celebrities in ads was associated with increased brand lift and view-through rates.<sup>1</sup> And while this tactic has stood the test of time, keep in mind today's notion of celebrity has expanded far beyond the latest box office hit. 70% of YouTube subscribers say they relate to YouTube creators more than traditional celebrities.<sup>2</sup>



- Creators run the gamut from casual smartphone vloggers to full production teams shooting TV-quality scripted content.
- 61% of YouTube subscribers say their views of a brand have been influenced by a creator.<sup>3</sup>
- Popular creators are becoming icons. Millennials think YouTube stars are bigger trendsetters than celebrities.<sup>4</sup>
- And amongst YouTube subscribers, 6 in 10 would follow the advice of a fellow creator over a favourite TV/movie personality on what to buy.<sup>5</sup>
- Creators are business-minded. They're dependent on their content, and interested in having long-standing, mutually beneficial relationships with brands



# Takeaways

1

Partnering with YouTube creators gives you the opportunity to get your brand message in front of a larger audience.

2

YouTube creators are more influential than traditional celebrities.<sup>6</sup>



# The Benefits of Partnering with YouTube Creators





There are millions of creators on YouTube. Their videos reach over a billion people and cover nearly every topic imaginable. Partnering with creators allows you to share your brand message in an authentic and engaging way.

- Creators have built strong relationships with their fans which they can use to promote brands they believe in.
- Creators are experts in programming on YouTube and can help share your brand message with hard-to-reach audiences who don't consume traditional media.
- Creators are nimble. Working with them can be a fast and cost-effective way to supplement traditional creative agency work.



# Takeaways

1

There are over 4 million creators on YouTube.

2

Creators are deeply connected to audiences who don't necessarily consume traditional media. A branded collaboration can help you reach this influential group.



# Tips for Working with Creators

This section covers different types of creator partnerships, how to initiate them, and best practices for a successful campaign.



## What Do Creator Partnerships Look Like?

There's no one-size-fits-all approach, so consider each type of campaign on a per-project basis to find what works best for you. These approaches aren't mutually exclusive and it's common for advertisers to mix and match based on campaign specifics, goals, and the types of assets they're looking to get out of a partnership.

- **Product Placement.** Creators weave your product into videos they'd be making anyway. This light touch, shout-out-to-your-brand approach is cost effective, and doesn't put a drain on advertiser resources or require too much creative or brand oversight.
- **Custom Integration.** A dedicated segment or video produced and distributed by the creator on his or her own channel (example: a video of the creator trying your product). While more expensive, this approach is ideal for advertisers seeking robust storytelling opportunities.



- **Advertiser Videos.** Brand-owned videos produced by or featuring creators and designed for YouTube ad formats such as TrueView. These videos allow for more creative control and can be targeted to specific audiences.
- **Social Amplification.** Promotion across a participating creator's social media is often included with partnership. Social amplification can be used to drive traffic back to video content and engage with fans.
- **360 Partnership.** A combination of the above tactics, typically over an extended period of time, and potentially including other extensions such as appearances, category exclusivity, licensing agreements, etc.



## Identifying The Right Influencers

It's helpful to familiarise yourself with YouTube creators who might be a fit for your campaign, but try not to fixate on specific creators too early in case they're unavailable. A more measured approach is to identify a range of creators with the key characteristics you're looking for and use their programming to inspire your vision of what collaborative videos could look like.

- Research creators on YouTube. Subscribe and watch creator videos to familiarise yourself with their programming, tone, release schedule, etc.
- Not sure where to start? [YouTube's Creator Services Directory](#) features over 200 companies including platforms like [FameBit](#) that specialise in matchmaking.



## Working With Creators

You can engage with creators directly or enlist the help of a third party to oversee the process. Here are some different approaches:

- **Collaboration with creators.** Managing the process directly with content creators can be cost-effective and help nurture a valuable relationship for your brand. Keep in mind, additional resources may be required to identify influencers, negotiate contracts, and manage campaigns, which could require extra time.
- **Multi-Channel Network(s).** MCNs represent specific creators across YouTube and other digital platforms. They provide pre-sale ideation and manage the post-sale process—contracting, project management, etc. Many MCNs also provide production capabilities, which can supplement the resources of individual creators.



- **Platforms.** Matchmaking platforms like FameBit exist to make influencer marketing more scalable. They provide software that manages the process from end to end—identifying creators, briefing, sharing proposals, contracting, managing the creative approval process, and more.
- **Social and/or PR agencies.** Many have teams focused on influencer marketing. They can help you stay on top of trends in the social and video space and are best suited for multi-creator campaigns that depend on creators to produce most of the content.
- **Talent agencies.** Top YouTube creators are celebrities in their own right, so it's no surprise that many of them are also signed to traditional talent management agencies. These may be a good fit if you're thinking about long-term cross-platform partnerships.
- **Production companies.** Consider them for campaigns focused on ownable advertiser content and/or creator channel videos that require production capabilities beyond what an individual creator can off.





## Create a Brief to Define Scope

You've decided that you want to work with a creator. Where do you go from there? The first step is to create a brief with a clear vision of what you're trying to achieve. Here are some important elements to include:

- **Logistics:** The budget and timing of your proposed campaign. This will help determine level of talent, quantity of videos, and production specifics.
- **Objective:** Describe the campaign's purpose. Include any challenges that your brand is facing and insights used to inform your strategy. Be as clear as possible and focus on the role creator partnership(s) will play within your overall campaign.
- **Success:** Which metrics will you use to define success? And how do you plan to track them?
- **Deliverables:** How many videos you are looking for? Where will they live? How do you plan to distribute them?
- **Insight:** What have you learned about your audience that will help creators come up with the most compelling ideas? Include market research, data, or consumer insights.



- **Audience:** Who are you trying to reach? Share any pertinent info including age, gender, interests, etc.
- **Inclusions:** Must-haves or things to avoid. Some examples are media usage rights, brand safety requirements, monetisation settings and category exclusivity. Address these requirements up front before any contracts are signed.
- **Creative Messaging:** Information about your brand's personality—what is and is not on brand—along with any key messaging. This is key to ensure consistency.
- **Thought Starters:** These can be example videos from similar campaigns that demonstrate what you're hoping to achieve.
- **Creative Control:** Working with creators requires you to relinquish some creative control. Be sure to provide feedback up front and during the treatment phase, since re-shoots typically carry additional costs.



## Best Practices and Other Considerations

- Trust the creators—they know their audiences.
- Find creators that share your values and are passionate about your brand.
- Lead time varies from project to project. Once contracts are signed, allow three months lead time, including one-and-a-half months to produce content once contracts are signed.
- Typically, creators own the content they produce. You will need to license the content to run as media, host on your website, etc.
- Many advertisers opt to turn off advertising on sponsored content to maximise viewership and avoid competitive ads from appearing. Keep in mind, creators rely on advertising revenue and may ask that compensation be baked into their fees.



- Be transparent by disclosing when content is sponsored.
- Consider supplementing organic distribution with paid.
- Pricing varies based on the specifics of a given project. Keep in mind that creator partnerships often include production and distribution and are structured on a cost-per-view basis.
- Identify a main point of contact who will lead to the partnership.
- New trends are constantly emerging on YouTube. Staying on top of them is a great way to make your brand more relevant and relatable.



## Case Studies



Macy's put on an at-home music festival to reach Millennials in their festival fashion micro-moments. The Summer Vibes Concert featured YouTube stars Todrick Hall, The Gardiner Sisters, AJ Rafael, and Macy Kate. The result? 4M+ views, 60% lift in festival product consideration and a 15% rise in searches for Macy's on Google and YouTube.<sup>7</sup>

## Sources:

<sup>1</sup> "Why YouTube Stars Are More Influential Than Traditional Celebrities," Think with Google, July 2016.

<sup>2, 3, 5</sup> Google-commissioned Ipsos Connect, "The YouTube Generation Study," US, November 2015.

<sup>4</sup> Google/Nielsen, "The Influence of YouTube Creators Study," US Feb. 2016.

<sup>6</sup> "Digital Star Popularity Grows Versus Mainstream Celebrities," Variety, July 2015.

<sup>7</sup> "Macy's Breaks into Festival Fashion with its Own Summer Vibes Concert on YouTube," Think with Google, October 2016.



A close-up, low-key photograph of a man with dark hair and a beard, wearing a red jacket, looking intently through the viewfinder of a professional video camera. The camera is a large, black, professional-grade model with various attachments. The lighting is dramatic, with the man's face partially in shadow. The background is dark and out of focus.

# Organic Optimisation

Apply organic levers—metadata, thumbnails, interactivity, and playlists—to ensure that your videos can be found through search. Create thumbnails to attract new viewers. Make your ads interactive to drive specific advertising goals. Increase watch time with playlists.

# Metadata

Metadata is information that tells viewers what to expect from your video: the title, tags, and description. Since YouTube is the world's second most used search engine, it's important to optimise your metadata to make your video easier for people to find—even if they're not looking for it specifically. Well written descriptions with the right keywords can boost views and watch time by helping your video show up in search results.





## Titles

- A catchy headline can help hook viewers. Try to write titles that build curiosity and set expectations for your video.
- Titles should offer context, not be a stream of keywords. Use natural language that happens to contain keywords.
- Search for popular keywords by typing something related to your video into YouTube's search box to see what autocomplete suggests.
- Compare the popularity of potential keywords using [Google Trends](#).
- Consider questions, top lists, exclamations, and other techniques to grab people's attention.
- Put the most important video information up front, like what your video is about.
- Check how your titles appear in search results, suggested video placements, and on mobile devices to make sure key information is visible. Keep the length of your title to about 60 characters so important information doesn't get cut off.



## Tags

- Create a set of standard tags for your channel that can be applied to any video you publish.
- Include a mix of both general and specific tags.
- Use enough tags to thoroughly and accurately describe the video.
- Update your tags when new search trends emerge.
- Include keywords from your title in your tags.
- List tags in order of relevance to the video and try to use the whole 270-character limit.



## Descriptions

- Accurately describe your video in one or two concise sentences. Use natural language, not just a stream of keywords.
- Identify one or two main words that describe your video and feature them prominently at the beginning of your description.
- Use [Google Trends](#) to identify popular keywords and their synonyms.
- Avoid irrelevant words in your description because it creates a poor viewing experience and may violate YouTube policies.
- Use what shows up when a user clicks “Show more” for extra information like what your channel’s about, social links, etc.
- Drive viewers to subscribe and include a subscribe link.
- Include your channel's release schedule.



# Takeaways

1

Use natural language and one or two keywords up front to create accurate descriptions of your videos.

2

Title your videos in a way that sets proper expectations and builds curiosity.

3

Create tags using keywords from your title and words that accurately describe your video.



# Thumbnails

Ninety per cent of the best-performing videos on YouTube have custom thumbnails.<sup>1</sup> Creating visually interesting thumbnails of your own can help attract more viewers and increase watch time. A good question to ask yourself is, “would I click on this thumbnail if it wasn’t my own video?”.



- Create a thumbnail that lets viewers know, honestly, what they can expect if they click on your video.
  - Use distinct thumbnails for each video to help viewers decide what to watch next.
  - When filming, take shots that will make great thumbnails later on. Use close-ups of important visual elements.
  - Use the “rule of thirds” to compose interesting and dynamic images.
  - Consider adding your branding and/or some descriptive text to the image.
- Make sure your thumbnail and title tell a cohesive and compelling story about your video.
  - Captivate viewers by adding an element of intrigue, empathy, or other emotion.
  - Upload high-resolution files so images display clearly at all sizes and on all screens.
  - Do some competitor research to see if your thumbnail stands out from images on similar videos.



## Thumbnail Examples



## Thumbnail Examples





# Takeaways

1

Create custom thumbnails to attract more viewers and increase watch time.

2

When filming, capture elements that will lend themselves to great thumbnails.



# Interactive Features

Studies show that clear calls to action are associated with higher brand awareness lift.<sup>2</sup> Giving viewers the ability to visit your website, buy your products, install an app, or perform other relevant actions right from the video screen can help you better achieve your advertising goals. This section explores four key ways to make your videos interactive: cards, end screens, CTA overlays, and shopping cards.



## Cards

Cards are created in YouTube and show on a per-video basis, on both desktops and mobile devices. You can provide a final URL from a list of eligible sites and, depending on the card type, customise an image, title, and call-to-action text.

- Showcase the features of a product or service within a video.
- Promote other videos or playlists to generate follow-on engagement for your channel.
- Drive viewers to your other videos, playlists and channel.
- Drive viewers to your website to check out product information.
- When appropriate, set cards to open a new window when clicked. Don't take viewers away from a video too soon.



## End Screens

You can manually create an end screen in your YouTube account to encourage further engagement with your video ad or brand.

- Point viewers to other videos, playlists, or channels on YouTube.
- Invite viewers to subscribe to your channel.
- Promote your website or products.



## CTA Overlays

If you have a YouTube channel linked to your AdWords account, you can create CTA overlays. The overlay will appear as soon as the video begins and can be closed by the viewer. When viewers click the overlay, they'll be redirected to your external site as specified in the overlay's final URL.

- Show an overlay to drive clicks to your site.
- Note that only one overlay may appear per video at a time.
- Keep overlays on your videos for as long as you want, even if the video is no longer being promoted.



## Shopping Cards

Shopping cards are created in AdWords. They make video ads interactive by linking viewers directly to products they've already viewed or to products related to the video they're watching.

- Show listings with product details from your linked [Merchant Center](#) account.
- Connect people to products they've already viewed or products that are related to the video they're watching.



# Takeaways

1

Add cards to promote your other videos or playlists. This keeps your viewers engaged with your brand.

2

Use end screens to promote your website or products.

3

Show CTA overlays to drive clicks to your website.

4

Add shopping cards to link viewers directly to your products.



# Playlists

A YouTube playlist is a collection of videos that can be viewed, shared, and embedded like an individual video. Your playlist will appear in YouTube search results and the thumbnails that make up Suggested Videos, keeping viewers engaged with your advertising and increasing watch time. You can build a playlist around a big cultural event, or create a “best of” playlist to highlight your most-watched videos.

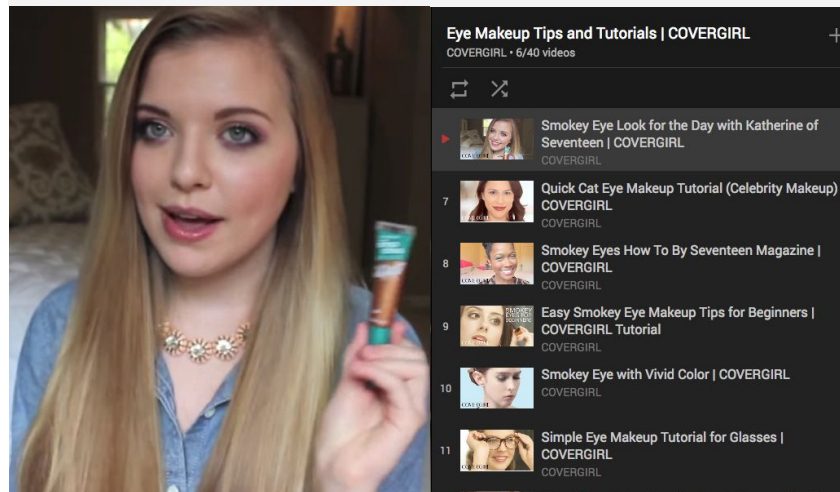




Here are some things to remember when creating them:

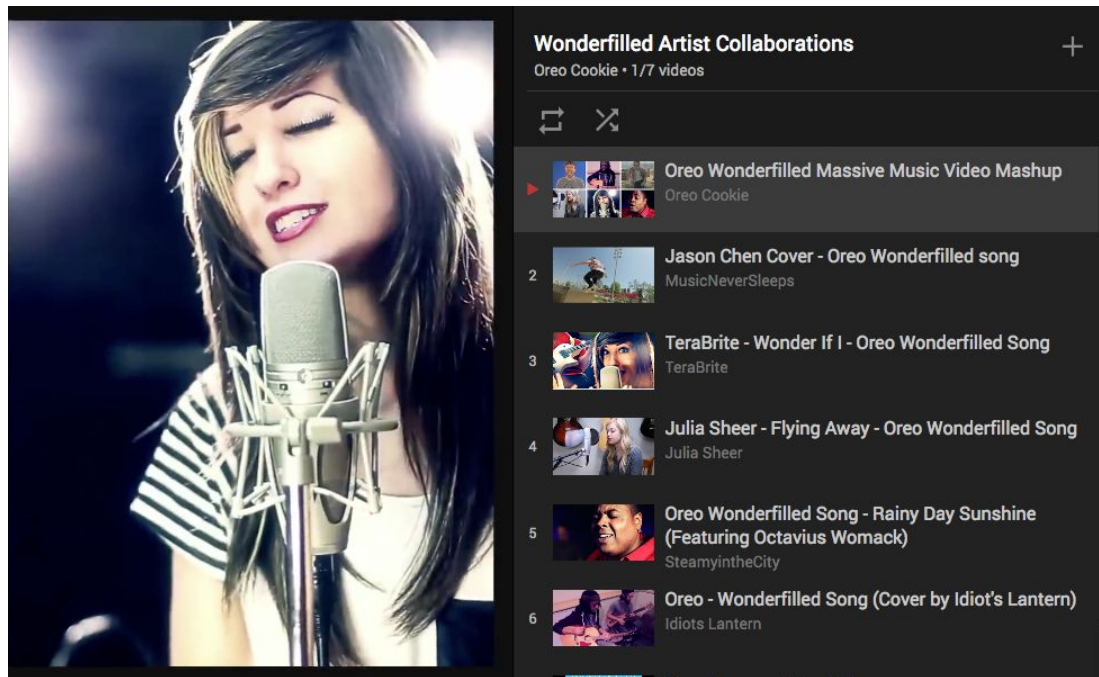
- Group a set of videos that you want viewers to watch in a single session or in a particular order.
- Organise videos around a theme or a current event.
- Combine your most-viewed videos with new uploads.
- Curate good brand-advocating videos such as reviews and testimonials created by your community.
- Choose a strong thumbnail for your playlist.
- Embed playlists on your website or in your emails if you want to drive traffic directly to them.
- Make your metadata work for you. A strong title, tags, and description will help people find your playlist.
- Use in-video messaging, cards, end cards, and links to send viewers to a playlist.

Click for the [Playlist on YouTube](#)



Here's an example of a playlist watch page in a tutorial for CoverGirl eye makeup.





Click for the [Playlist on YouTube](#)

Here's an example of a curated playlist of videos hosted on other channels.



## Takeaways

1

Playlists appear in YouTube search results and Suggested Videos, keeping your brand visible to your audience.

2

Build playlists around themes or current events, or create a “best of” playlist to showcase your most-watched videos.



## Sources:

<sup>1</sup> "Lesson: Make clickable thumbnails," YouTube Creator Academy.

<sup>2</sup> "Creative Characteristics and TrueView Performance," Google Internal Data, Global, June 2015.



# Paid Promotion

Get the most of out paid video views with TrueView. Explore Mastheads, Bumper ads, and Google Preferred to find the right ad format for your brand. Target your audience effectively.

# TrueView

Paid advertising with TrueView ads can ignite sharing and accelerate audience building. TrueView gives viewers the choice to watch your ad or skip it, allowing you to reach the people who are most interested in hearing from your brand. You only pay when viewers watch or interact with elements of your video. In measuring over 19,000 campaigns globally, TrueView drove significant lift in Ad Recall of over 20%.<sup>1</sup>



## Advantages of TrueView Ads

- **It's a win-win:** Viewers have the choice to watch, and you get more views from an audience you know is interested. And because you choose what you want to pay for a view, you get the right audience at the right price. Unlike cost-per-impression pricing, you won't need to pay every time your ad is shown.
- **Freedom to customise:** You can run videos longer than 30 seconds, so you can experiment with different formats. Try longer product demos, customer testimonials, or How-to videos demonstrating your product in action.
- **Broad reach:** TrueView ads can appear on both YouTube and other publisher sites in the Display Network. Note that video content for TrueView ads must be hosted on YouTube.
- **The ripple effect:** Each new video you promote using TrueView drives interest in your past content. After posting a new TrueView video, brands see views of previously existing content increase by up to 500%.<sup>2</sup>
- On average, viewers who completed TrueView ads are 23x more likely to share the video, visit or subscribe to the brand's channel, or watch more videos by the brand.<sup>3</sup>



## TrueView Discovery Ads

Use this format to promote a video in places of discovery across YouTube, including next to related YouTube videos, as part of a YouTube search result, or on the YouTube mobile homepage.

- TrueView discovery ads consist of a thumbnail image from your video along with some text. While the exact size and appearance of the ad may vary depending on where it appears, discovery ads always invite people to click to watch the video. When clicked, the video ad plays on the YouTube Watch page or on your channel page.
- You'll be charged only when viewers choose to watch your ad by clicking the thumbnail.





## TrueView In-Stream Ads

Use this format to reach audiences on YouTube, Google Video Partners and across the Google Display Network. TrueView in-stream ads appear as pre-roll before other video content.

- In-Stream ads play before, during, or after other videos. After 5 seconds, the viewer has an option to keep watching or skip it.
- You'll be charged only when a viewer watches 30 seconds of your video (or watches for the duration, if it's shorter than 30 seconds) or interacts with your video, whichever comes first.



# Takeaways

1

TrueView ads give viewers the choice to watch or skip. And you, the advertiser, only get charged when they choose to watch.

2

TrueView discovery ads populate search pages, while In-Stream ads run before, during, or after other videos.



# Get The Most Out Of Ad Formats

Extend the reach of your campaigns with bumpers, Mastheads, and Google Preferred advertising. They're wildly different formats: bumpers keep it short, Mastheads aim for massive reach and high visibility, and Google Preferred pairs your ad with the top 5% most popular channels. Each one allows you to find new ways to reach your audience and drive engagement.



## Bumper Ads

Bumper ads are short-form videos designed to reach more customers and increase brand awareness with short, memorable messages.

- Bumper ads are 6 seconds or less and play before, during, or after another video. Viewers don't have the option to skip them.
- You pay based on impressions. Bumper ads use CPM (cost-per-thousand impressions) bidding, so you pay each time your ad is shown 1,000 times.
- In measuring over 80 campaigns globally, bumper campaigns drove a significant lift in ad recall of over 35%.<sup>4</sup>



## Masthead

Reach your audience at the front door of the world's #1 video site. The YouTube Masthead reaches more unique viewers than US primetime TV, and the homepage is where video discovery begins. The masthead ensures that your video will be seen.

- Drive user engagement beyond video views. Brands see a 64% increase in search activity across search engines and a 133% increase in website visits.<sup>5</sup>
- Be the first ad users see when they come to YouTube, either on desktop or mobile.
- Deliver campaign insights through unique reach reporting and a YouTube social lift analyses.
- Use the [Video Masthead Preview Tool](#) to see what a Masthead could look like featuring your own YouTube video.



## Google Preferred

Google Preferred aggregates channels amongst the top 5% of YouTube into easy-to-buy packages for advertisers, offering access to the most popular YouTube channels with the most passionate and engaged audiences.

- Choose from various lineups—or packages of channels—across categories such as Beauty & Fashion, Comedy, and Foods & Recipes.
- Share your message alongside some of the most engaging and popular content on YouTube.
- In measuring over 800 campaigns globally, Google Preferred drove a significant lift in ad recall of over 40%.<sup>6</sup>



# Takeaways

1

Use bumper ads (6-second videos) to reach more customers and increase brand awareness.

2

A YouTube Masthead takeover puts your video on the front page of YouTube, ensuring that your video will be seen.

3

Google Preferred offers packages grouped by themes such as Comedy and Sports, giving you access to channels amongst the top 5% of content on YouTube.



# Target Your Audience

Video ads run on YouTube and across the web through the Google Display Network, which reaches over 90% of internet users worldwide through 2 million sites and apps.<sup>7</sup> By targeting your video ads on YouTube and the Display Network, you can advertise to people at the moments that matter to them. The targeting methods in this section can help you reach specific audiences based on who they are, what they're interested in, and what content they're viewing.





## Targeting Methods

- **Demographics:** Choose the age, gender, parental status, or household income of the audience you want to reach.
- **Affinity audiences:** Reach people who are passionate about topics relevant to your brand based on their lifestyle, interests, and needs. YouTube offers more than 100 unique affinity audiences, such as Foodies and Gamers.
- **Custom affinity audiences:** Create affinities that are tailored to your brand. For example, rather than reaching Sports Fans, a running shoe company may create a custom affinity to reach Avid Marathon Runners.
- **In-market audiences:** Find customers who are actively researching or considering buying a service or product like those you offer.<sup>8</sup>
- **Video remarketing:** Reach viewers based on their past interactions with your videos, TrueView ads, or YouTube channel. Use remarketing to target people who have shown interest in your brand or content. AdWords' ☐ custom combinations feature allows you to target users who have viewed your video but who have not yet purchased your products.
- **Placements:** Target unique channels, videos, apps, websites, or placements within websites. These can include YouTube channels, YouTube videos, websites on the Display Network, and/or apps on the Display Network.
- **Topics:** Target your video ads to specific topics on YouTube and the Display Network. This lets you reach a broad range of videos, channels, and websites related to the topics you select. For example, if you target to the "Automotive" topic, then your ad will show on YouTube to people watching videos about cars.
- **Keywords:** Depending on your video ad format, you can show your ads based on words or phrases related to a YouTube video, YouTube channel, or type of website that your audience is interested in.



# Takeaways

1

Target your audience based on their interests and the kind of videos they're viewing.

2

Targeting methods such as Affinity Audiences make it easier to reach people who already have a strong interest in topics relevant to your brand.



# YouTube's Brand Care System

YouTube has strict policies that define what kind of content is permissible on YouTube and what kind of content is suitable for advertising. The Brand Care system combines these policies with technology that analyses a tremendous amount of videos on the platform with a team of people who can respond to issues quickly. These safeguards help you ensure that your ads are aligned with the right video content.



## Flagged Content

- Videos that don't comply with our [Community Guidelines](#) are removed based on user flags and policy review.
- YouTube reviews videos flagged by users 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and typically responds to flags in less than an hour.



## Classification

- YouTube classifies every video. This system is honed continuously based on human review, inputs, and algorithms.
- Based on our advertising policies and a video's classification, YouTube determines if running an ad would be appropriate.
- If a creator allows ads to run on their video, that video must meet our criteria for monetisation.



## Content Suitable for Your Brand

- A combination of brand care defaults and your optional exclusions determine which videos are suitable for your brand's ads.
- Keep your ads off videos whose themes aren't appropriate for your brand by excluding certain topics.
- Opt back into some kinds of content—such as videos rated for teen or mature audiences—if it's suitable for your brand, or exclude more granular categories like sensitive subjects (war, disasters, scandals and investigations, etc.).



## Sources:

<sup>1</sup> Source: Google TrueView Brand Lift Meta Analysis, 2016, Global.

<sup>2</sup> “How YouTube Extends the Reach and Engagement of Your Video Advertising,” Think with Google, December 2015.

<sup>3</sup> “4 Media-Planning Tips for Online Video Advertising Success,” Think with Google, September 2016.

<sup>4</sup> Google TrueView Bumper Lift Meta Analysis, 2016, Global.

<sup>5</sup> Google meta-analysis, U.S. Results, 2014.

<sup>6</sup> Google Preferred Brand Lift Meta Analysis, 2016, Global.

<sup>7</sup> comScore data.

<sup>8</sup> “In-Market Audiences” Think with Google.



# Measurement and Insights

Choose key performance indicators that make sense for your objectives. Apply the right metrics to measure your results. Use tracking tools to measure your progress and adjust your strategy.



# Identify Key Metrics

It's important to measure campaign success across the entire consumer journey, and not rely on view counts alone. There are many tools to help you do this: [Brand Lift](#), [Google Analytics](#) and [YouTube Analytics](#). These tools will help you track a variety of key performance indicators (KPIs) across three buckets: awareness, consideration, and action.



## Awareness KPIs

Awareness KPIs can help you track the impact your content has on those who are unfamiliar with your brand, agency or small business.



- **Ad recall lift:** The aggregate increase in the ability of viewers to remember your video after engagement when compared to a randomised control group of users who did not see your ad.
- **Awareness lift:** The aggregate increase in user familiarity with your brand, product, or service when compared to a randomised control group of users who did not see your ad.
- **Impressions:** This is the number of times a video or thumbnail has been served to users, regardless of watch time.
- **Unique users:** The number of distinct individuals who have been served your video, irrespective of number of views.
- **Views:** The number of times that a video was viewed. In a playlist report, the metric indicates the number of times that a video was viewed in the context of a playlist.



## Consideration KPIs

Consideration KPIs help you measure the next level of engagement of users. These indicators will help you track if viewers are seeing, hearing, and watching your video.



- **Brand interest lift:** The aggregate increase in search volume on brand-related keywords amongst users who saw your ad, compared to similar users who did not see your ad.
- **Consideration lift:** An increase in the likelihood a viewer might convert into a customer.
- **Favourability lift:** An increase in viewer's perception of your brand.
- **View-through rate:** The percentage of completed views of a skippable video, calculated by dividing number of views by total impressions.
- **Watch time:** The average duration of users viewing of video content, whether of an individual video or playlist, or a specific channel or playlist specified channel, content owner, video, or playlist. Longer watch time is correlated with positive brand results.



## Action KPIs

Action KPIs can help you measure user interest. These metrics focus on actual conversions or the immediate steps leading to them.

- **Clicks:** The number of times viewers select (by tapping or clicking) a given link, image, video, or other CTA.
- **Conversions:** This could include calls, signups or sales.
- **Purchase intent lift:** An increase in the probability a viewer would make a purchase.



# Takeaways

1

Use [Brand Lift](#), [Google Analytics](#) and [YouTube Analytics](#) to help you understand if you're hitting your goals by tracking a variety of key performance indicators (KPIs) across awareness, consideration, and action.



# Other Important Metrics

YouTube metrics help you measure user activity, ad performance, or earnings. Are you aiming to grow your channel's subscribers? Trying to start a dialogue with potential customers? Or trying to get viewers to engage with a video's end card? Select metrics that are most relevant for your brand strategy and plan accordingly.



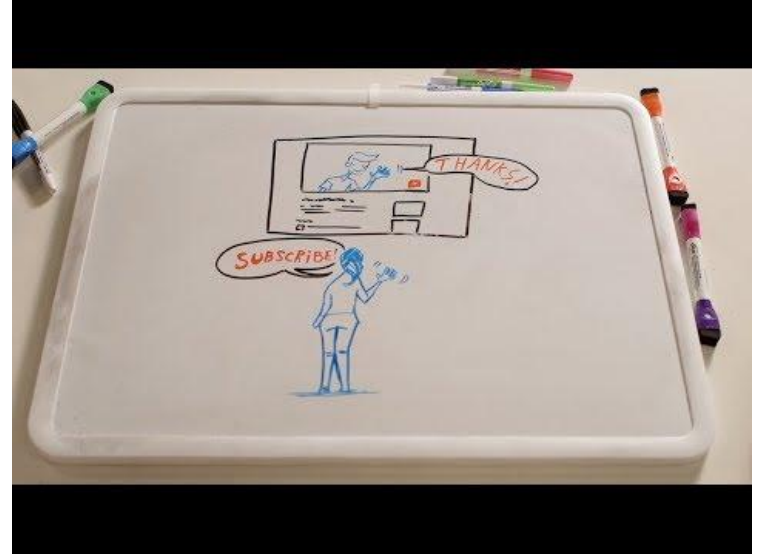


## Other Important Metrics

- **Average view duration:** The average length, in seconds, of video views. This metric indicates the average length, in seconds, of video views that occurred in the context of a playlist.
- **Comments:** The number of times that users commented on a video.
- **Dislikes:** The number of times that users indicated that they disliked a video by giving it a negative rating.
- **Likes:** The number of times that users indicated that they liked a video by giving it a positive rating.



- **Shares:** The number of times that users shared a video through the Share button.
- **Subscribers gained:** The number of times that users subscribed to a channel during a selected time period.
- **Subscribers lost:** The number of times that users unsubscribed from a channel.
- **Watch time:** The duration of time users watched videos for the specified channel, content owner, video, or playlist. Longer watch time is correlated with positive brand results.<sup>1</sup>



# Takeaways

1

YouTube provides a wide array of metrics to help you track the performance of your video content. Choose relevant tools that give you further insight into the execution of your brand strategy.



## Sources:

<sup>1</sup>Google TrueView Brand Lift data, US, May 2015.

