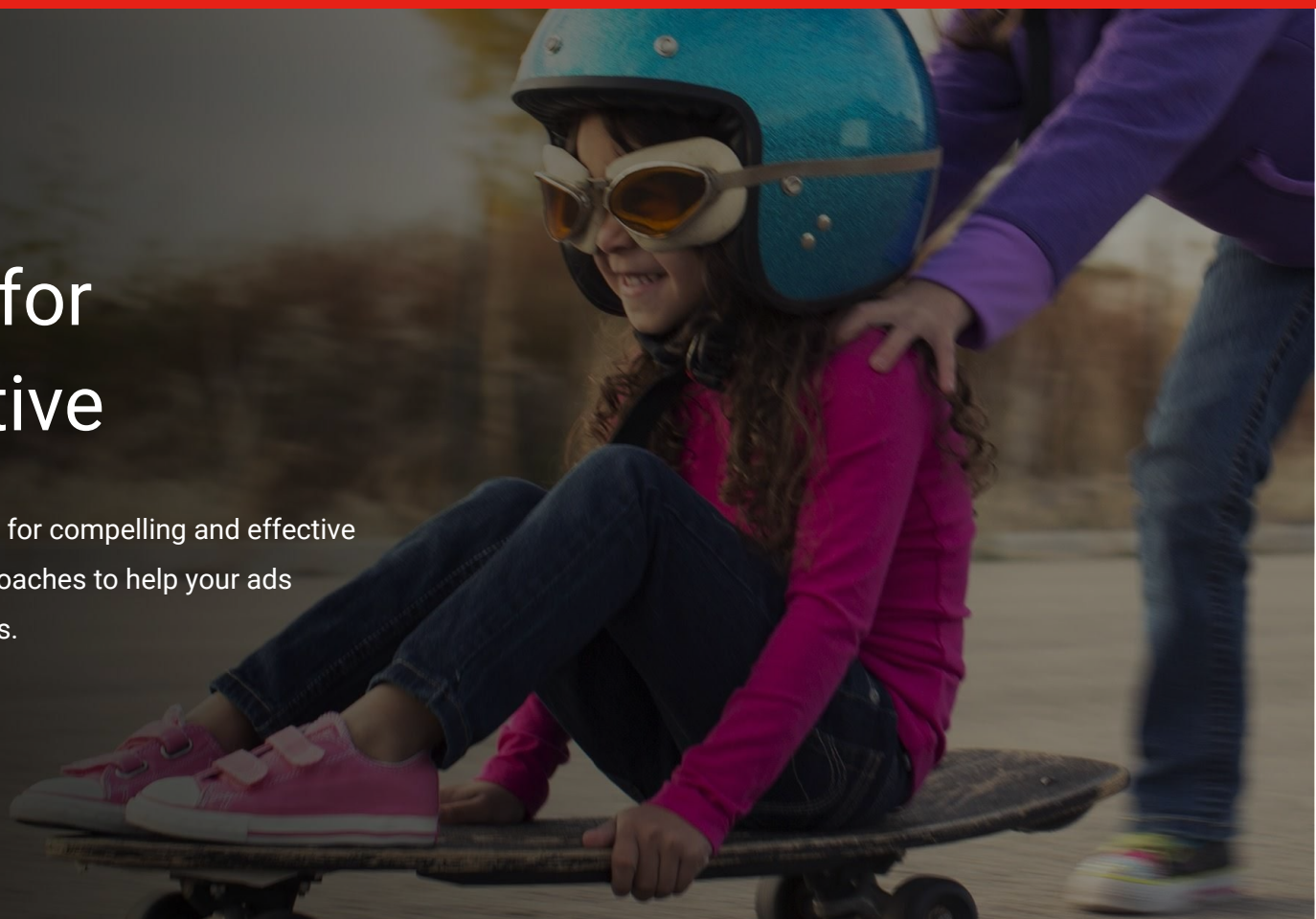


# Guidelines for Great Creative

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

Attract attention from the beginning.

- **Frontload 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 recognizable 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 humor is associated with higher brand awareness, and ad recall.<sup>3</sup>



## Brand

Integrate your brand naturally and meaningfully.

- **Brand placement matters.** When optimizing 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.** 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.** Humor and suspense are associated with higher ad recall. Humor 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>
- **Analyze 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</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>3,4,5</sup> Google Internal Data, Creative Characteristics and TrueView Performance, Global, June 2015.

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

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

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

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

