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# Google Creative Excellency Europe Meta-analysis

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Ekimetrics.

# Agenda

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**01.** | Methodology & scope reminder

**02.** | Executive Summary

**03.** | Results per scope

# 01. *Methodology*





# **This study aimed to measure the impact of ad creative quality on YouTube specific video performance with the following goals:**

- a. Highlight the broader opportunity for the industry to invest in measuring creative effectiveness.**
- b. Develop a methodology using MMM and Machine learning algorithms to understand the impact of creative elements in videos efficiency in a repeated and scalable manner.**
- c. Understand key trends in creative execution across creative categories (ABCD), industries and geographies.**
- d. Provide marketers and advertisers an actionable playbook to identify, track, and improve the application of YouTube's most impactful creative best practices.**

This study was independently conducted by Ekimetrics, a global leader in data science for business, in collaboration with YouTube owner Google. It was able to establish that creative execution is a significant driver of a campaign's sales performance.

# A three-step methodology, from raw data to actionable insights

## STEP 1 MMO phase

### Objective

Get Youtube performance (ROI) at the video level

### Methodology

- Existing MMM models in-scope cover 24 models from 9 different brands spread across 3 industries
- Youtube performance is measured using impressions on an aggregated level
- Video level impressions are used to obtain ROI per video for 778 videos.

### Data Source

- Ekimetrics: Outputs of proprietary MMM models
- Google: Video level impressions

## STEP 2 Machine learning

### Objective

Make the bridge between video ROI and creative data

### Methodology

- Video ROI is predicted thanks to ML methodologies (Random Forest), using 73 creative attributes spanning the ABCD framework from Google, along with control variables.
- The impact of each creative attribute on video ROI is estimated using SHAP values.

### Data Source

- Video level creative data provided by Google, through a data collection partner

## STEP 3 Playbook building

### Objective

Write overall insights and actionable recommendations

### Methodology

- Incorporate Creative Score into the analysis. Creative Score is the average presence of creative attributes per video which provides visibility on the %presence of features.
- Creative Scores along with the ranking of SHAP values are used to identify top features.

# Google's 'ABCD' principles for effective creative

To understand what specific creative elements resonate with YouTube viewers, Google researchers analyzed thousands of ads to engineer these **“ABCD Principles”**: “Attention”, “Branding”, “Connection”, and “Direction”. This study builds upon this work and extracts the most important of these creative rules for advertisers to follow.

## Attention

**Grab and sustain attention with an immersive story**

Successful ads work hard to earn engagement right from the get-go. Of course, there are many ways to do this. You can start your ad in the middle of the action, or open with an arresting close-up. Audio inputs like music, voice-over, and sound effects create a rich, sensory experience that helps people to pay attention. Think about color and contrast to ensure your visuals are bright and strong.

## Branding

**Brand early, often, and richly**

Whether with product shots, pack shots, in situ branding, graphic elements, voice-overs, or musical treatments, work your brand identity into the story. YouTube is almost entirely a sound-on experience, so take advantage of the multisensory aspect of your medium to get more impact.

## Connection

**Help people think or feel something**

Don't think of your viewer as passive. Work to educate, inspire, or entertain them. Humanize your story to help them relate; lean into emotional levers with storytelling techniques such as humor or surprise. But avoid doing too much in your ad. Focus on the message as you make your connection

## Direction

**Ask them to take action**

Finally, with clear and simple instructions on what to do next, people will be more likely to respond to your ad the way you want. A written call to action, graphics, audio, or even a scene from your story can help guide them. Our study leveraged 73 best practices derived from the ABCD principles and added granular insights to the framework by providing clear recommendations on which best practices are the most important for driving conversion. We also created a well-defined and scalable framework for marketing scientists to include the latter in traditional MMM measurements.

## 02. Executive summary

# Key elements to keep in mind as one navigates through this study

1

Creative effectiveness drove **return on investment** by up **to x1.7** by improving creative quality **from “poor” to “optimal”**

2









Not all creative levers are created equal. In fact, **80% of creative-driven sales performance** is explained by the **top 13 creative features**.

3

The **average utilization rate** of the top 13 creative features is **32%**, indicating that there is **huge room for improvement** in creative execution.



# 03. Europe results

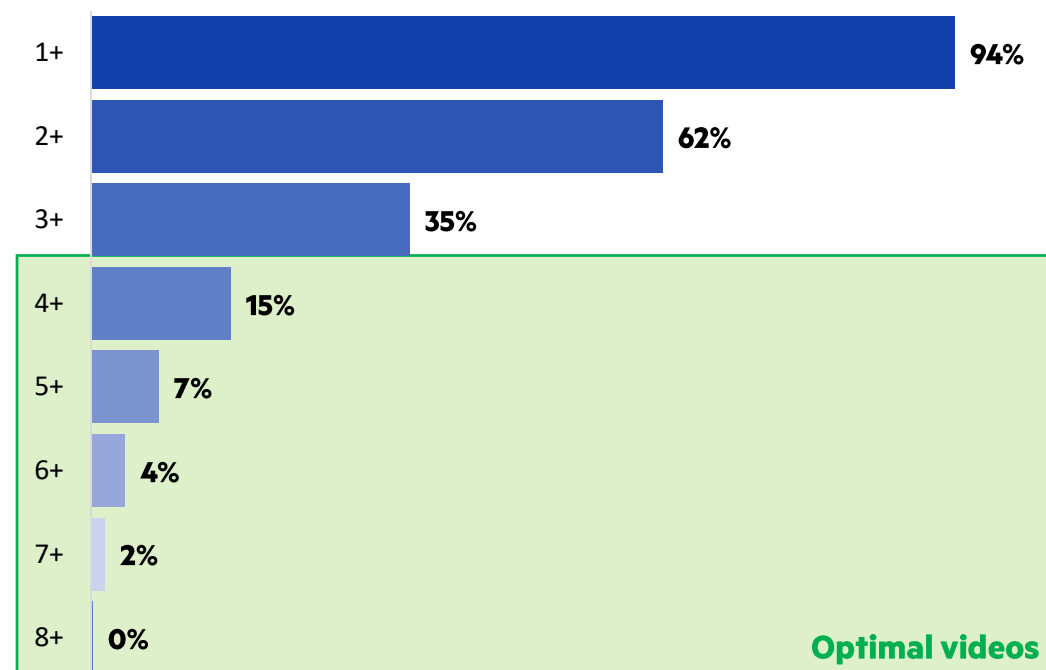
Scope	Industry	Country	#Videos	% Videos / scope	Average video ROI
Europe	Automotive		11	2%	5.4
			36	8%	
	Beauty		84	18%	
			96	21%	
	Hospitality		40	9%	
			140	30%	
			15	3%	
			40	9%	

**Scope of the study / Sources :** Ekimetrics creative MMM meta analysis including 9 Europe brands commissioned by Google in 2024; Research spans 24 models and 462 campaigns from Automotive, Beauty and Hospitality verticals between 2019 and 2024



# In average in Europe, **15%** of the videos are qualified as “**Optimal**” in terms of creative execution

Cumulative distribution of videos by minimum number of top creative attribute



**Reading key:**

Among the 462 videos in scope, 62% are using at least 2 of the top 13 creative attributes in Europe

In Europe, no video uses more than 8 of the 13 top creative attributes.

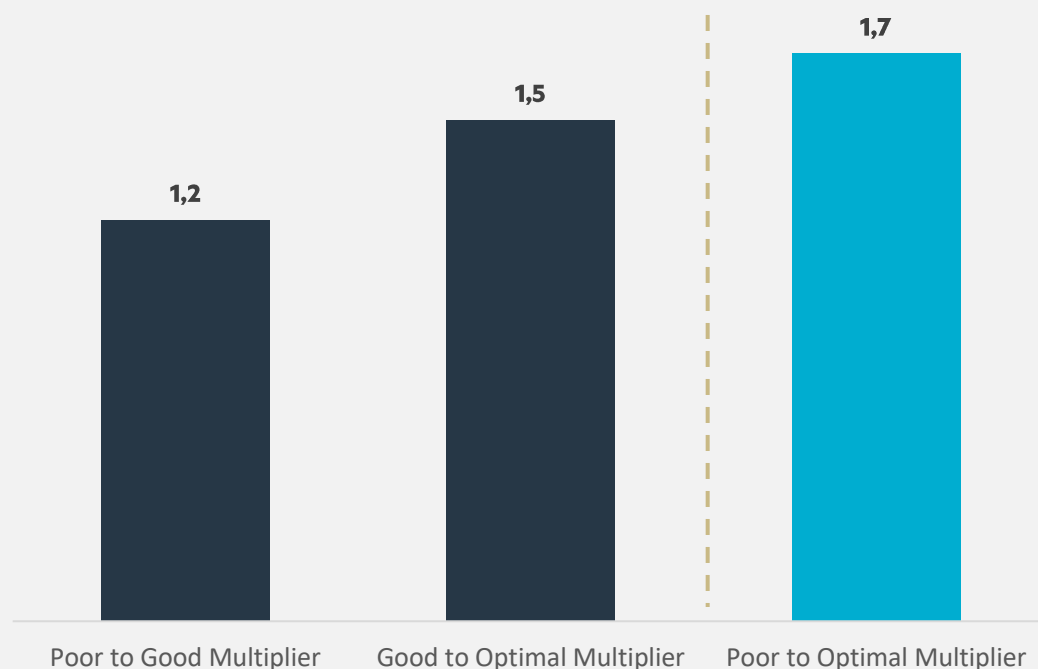
Fewer than 50% of videos use 3 or more of these attributes, indicating room for improvement in their repeated usage. The same phenomenon is observed in UK, with 47% of the videos leveraging on 3 features or more.

‘Poor’ creatives follow less than or 1 of the top 13 creative best practices identified in this study. ‘Good’ creatives follow less than or equal to 4 of the top 13 creative best practices. ‘Optimal’ follow more than 4.



# The Wider Opportunity: The impact of creative on YouTube video performance

Average ROAS Increases Resulting from Creative Execution Improvement



Creative execution is a significant driver of YouTube performance. In this study, 'creative execution' is defined as the production, message, and overall presentation of advertising content on YouTube.

By exploring the relationship between creative effectiveness and YouTube video performance, we found that creative execution is a strong driver of YouTube sales performance.

While reach/frequency, ad format, flighting, and targeting are important aspects of any strategy, compelling creative strongly resonates with audiences. By investing in creative excellence, advertisers can unlock significant opportunities to capture the audience interest and increase performance.

Our study found that creative effectiveness drove return on investment by up to x1.7 and was key in driving conversion.

On average, short-term video efficiency increased by:

- 1.2x when improving creative quality from poor to good
- 1.5x from good to optimal

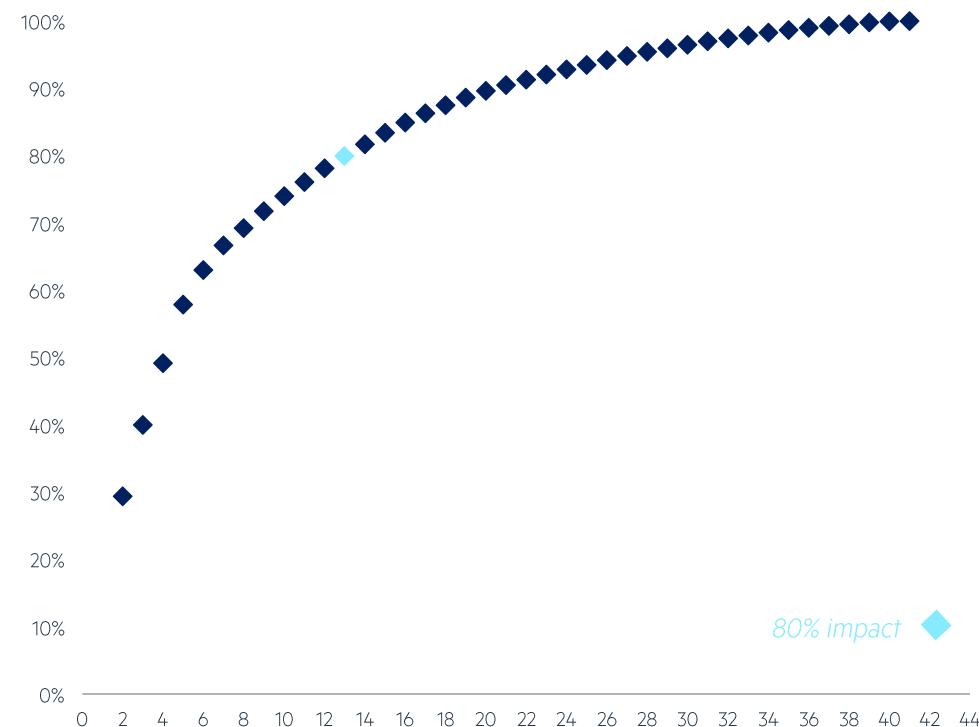
'Poor' creatives follow less than or 1 of the top 13 creative best practices identified in this study. 'Good' creatives follow less than or equal to 4 of the top 13 creative best practices. 'Optimal' follow more than 4.

# 13 attributes to focus on to determine creative quality

- Not all creative levers are created equal. In fact, **80%** of creative-driven **sales performance** is explained by the top **13 creative features**.
- Distilling creative quality to fewer attributes makes it easier for brands to scale their own creative measurement and focus their optimization efforts.



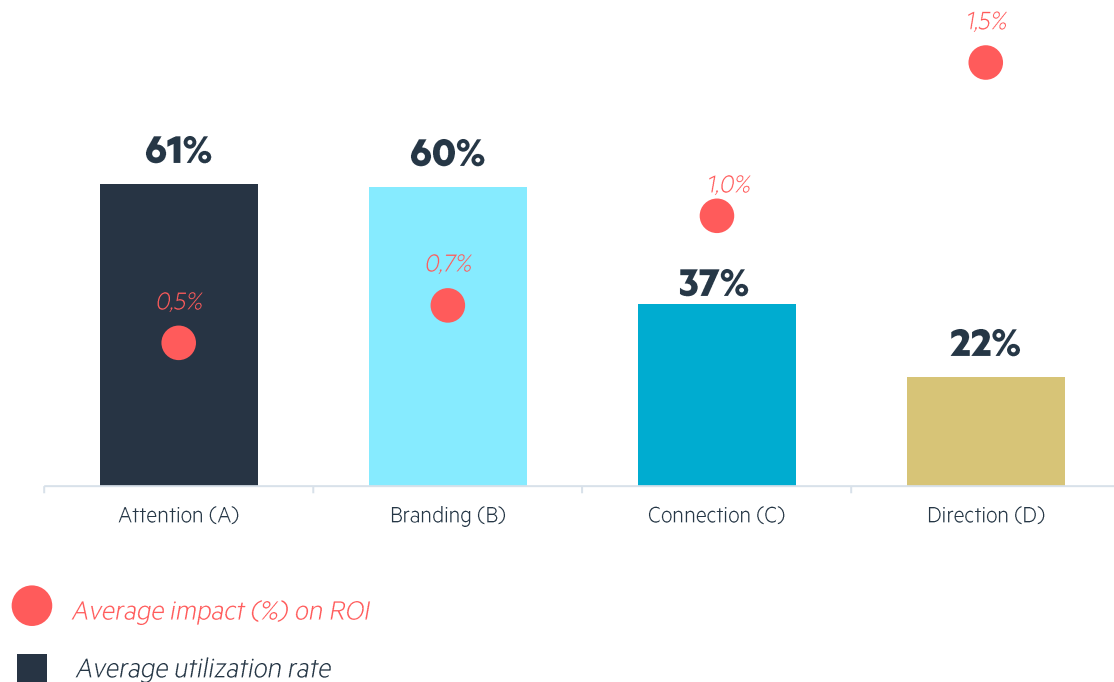
**13 Creative** best practices **explain 80%** of the **variation in performance** due to creative execution





**Within the ABCD principles, “Direction”, which emphasizes compelling calls to action, offers the most potential to improve performance.**

**Average** Percentage Impact on ROI **vs Utilization Rate**



While “**Branding**” is **nearly the most adopted principle** by marketers - and should remain a focus - its lower average impact on suggests that the **untapped opportunity lies in other categories.**

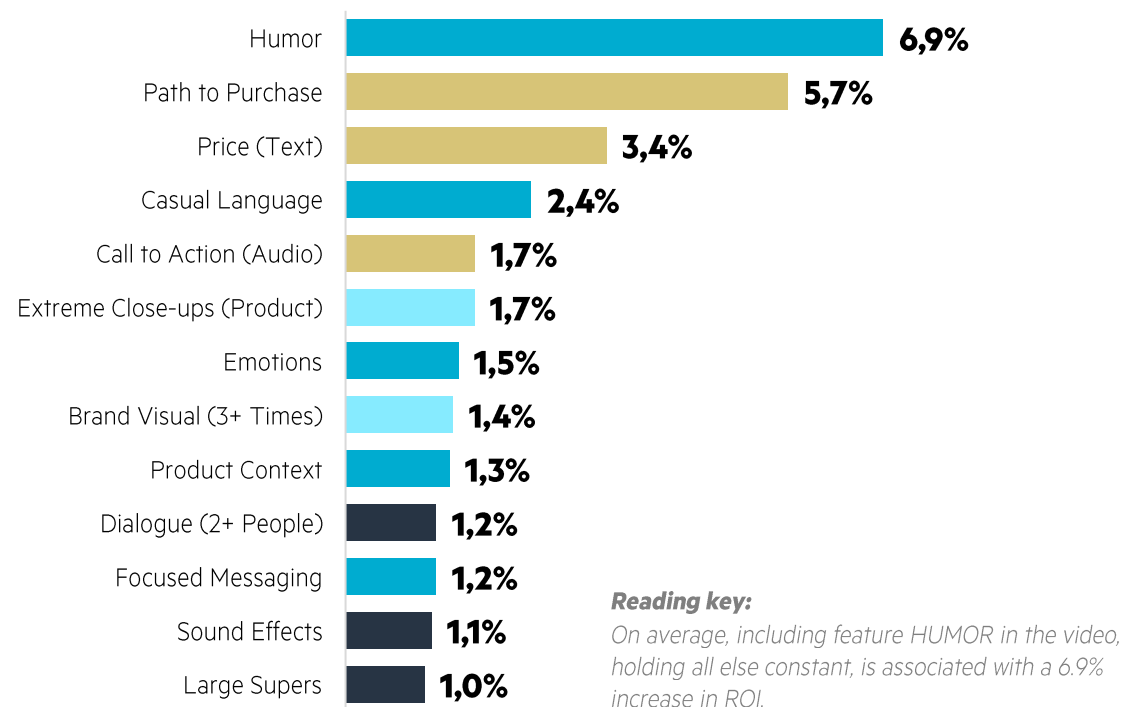
“**Direction**” is the **least utilized** category and with the **highest potential impact on video ROI**, indicating that creatives with higher adoption of “Direction” principles saw large ROI gains as a result

Better creative and higher short-term conversions will rely mostly on **compelling call to action, after getting better consumers attention.**

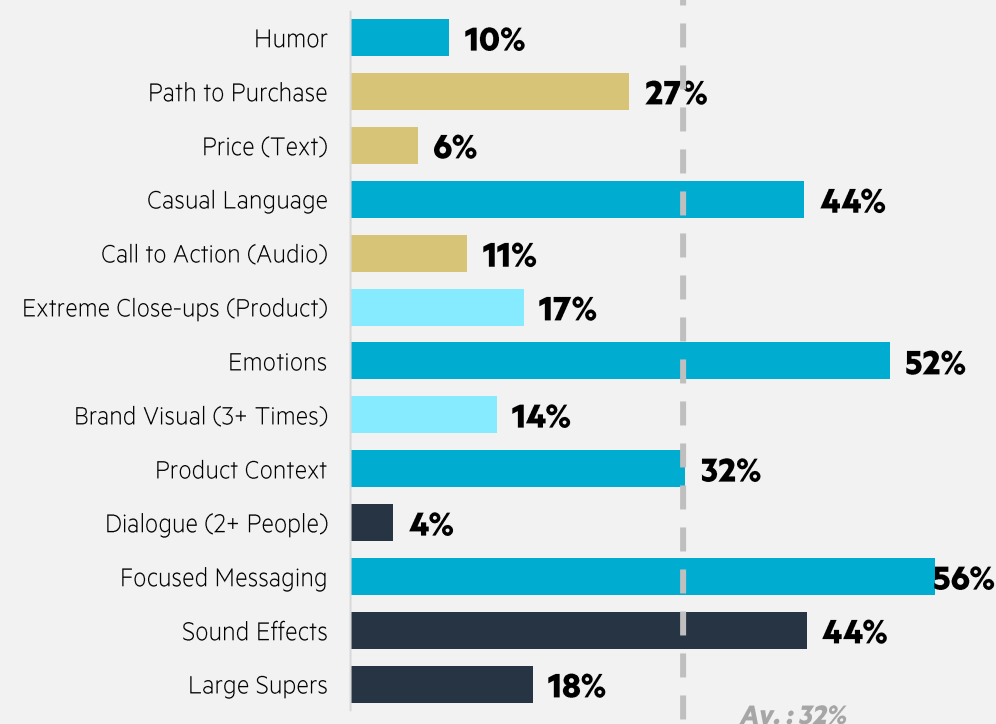
# Humor and Price have the most impact but are **underutilized** whereas Emotions, Focused Messaging and Sound Effects have lower impact but **overutilized**



Top 13 Features by average impact (%)



Top 13 Features utilization rate



Using machine learning to model the relationship between the presence of each attribute and Video ROI, we identified the top 13 features that have the highest importance and impact in predicting video performance.

- **Connection (C) and Direction (D) represent 100% of the top5** creative attributes with the highest impact. Two of them (Humor and Path to purchase) clearly stand out with 6,9% and 5,7%
- **Humor and Price are of very high interest** since their utilization rate is very low (10% and 6%).

Significant differences in usage can be observed among the top 13 creative elements:

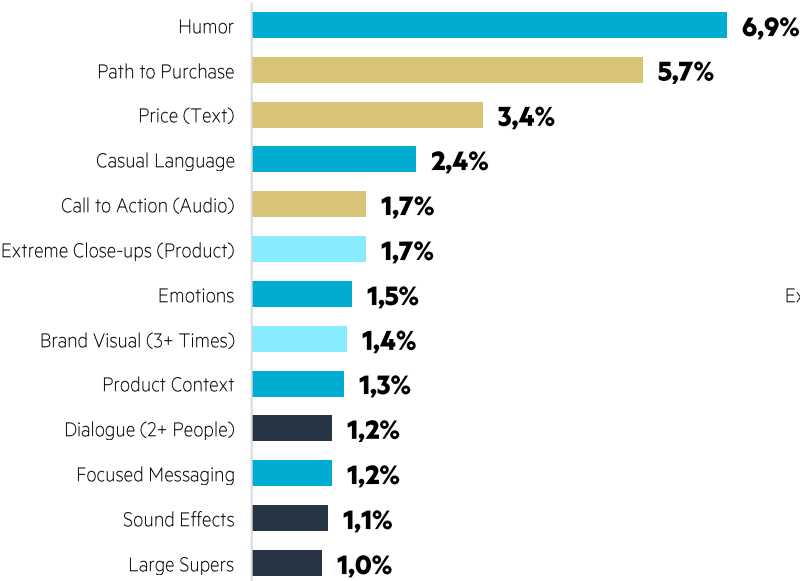
- Despite top impacts, Humor, Price (Text), these two features are under-utilized. The observation is the same in UK and in QSR industry for Humor and Price (Text).
- There is an overrepresentation of Connection elements, which raise the average, particularly Focused Messaging (56%) and Casual Language (44%)



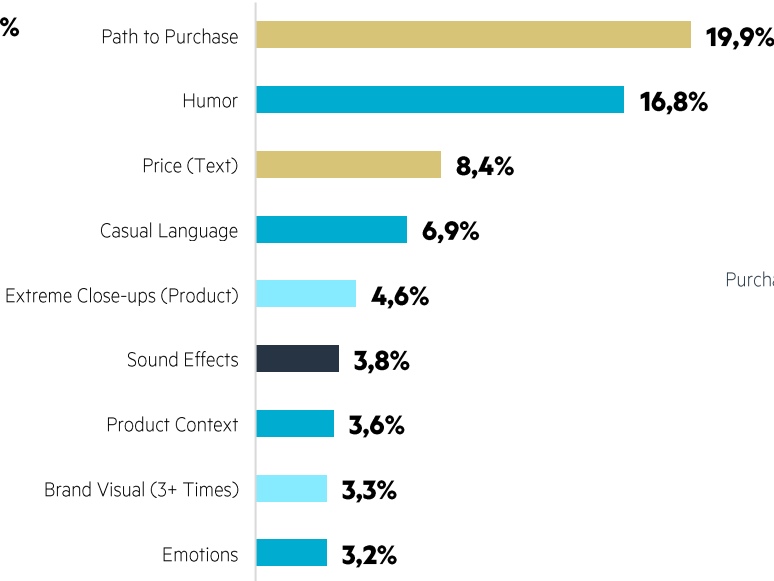
# Creative execution guidelines are emerging internationally

## Most impactful creative features per study

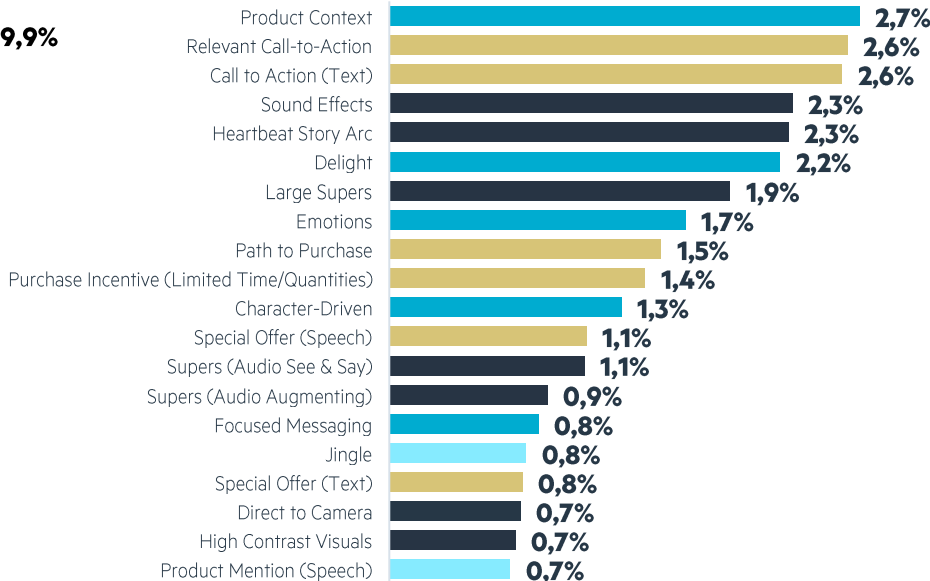
Auto & Beauty & Hospitality (13)



Auto & Beauty (9)



Auto & Beauty & Luxury (20)



- In overall Europe and in UK, **Humor** and **Path to Purchase** are the top 2 features with an observable gap compared to the rest of the features, with **Price (Text)** & **Casual Language** being the next most impactful features.
- There are distinct trends in US compared to Europe and UK, as they prioritize **Product Context**, **Relevant Call-to-action** & **Sound Effects** which are not in the top 5 features for Europe and UK.
- There is also lower disparity between the top features and the rest in the US study compared to Europe and UK. For instance, in Europe the Path to Purchase's impact is **1.7x bigger** than Price (text), when Humor's impact is **2.0x bigger** than Price (text)

# Three golden rules: Compelling calls-to-action , Tailored Creatives & Relatable Customer Journey

1

Advertisers should provide consumers with a “direction”

It is the most impactful category with the lowest utilization rate, showing that there is untapped potential in having directional elements like call-to action in the videos for better customer conversion.

2

Creative guidelines can be tailored to region and industry

Even though there are common overarching themes and similarities across different regions, there are unique trends for each demographic which can be leveraged to get the best customer response.

3

Consumer journey and relatability is pivotal in enriching customer experience

Consumers respond to relevant content that resonates with them like Humor & Casual language while the path to purchase remains an essential part of the consumer funnel.

# xx. *Apendix*

# Disclaimers

# Youtube Creative Study disclaimers

## TL;DR Disclaimer

- From a study to another, one can compare rankings of items and %presence but not the impact values.

## Disclaimer:

- The Europe and UK studies concern a variety of scopes (cross countries and/or cross industries) within which not all brands follow the same strategy, have the same image, or even the same customer profile.  
The results and recommendations of these studies must therefore be seen in the light of these factors. Under no circumstances should the results be used and applied as they stand, without taking into account the context of the brand and the video.
- Among scopes, rankings and utilization rates are comparable. However, impacts and numbers of creatives to reach 80% are not. They are study specific because calibrated on the average video ROI. As a matter of fact, the lower the average video ROI, the bigger the estimated positive impact.

# Top x Creative Attributes Criteria





# Appendix 1: Top 13 Creative Attributes Criteria for Creative Quality Compliance

## Attention

### Dialogue (2+ people)

Multiple people are speaking. People must be seen and heard.

### Sound Effects

The video features sound effects (i.e. revving engine, can opening, 'crunch', water splashing, door closing, fingers snapping, bottle opening).

### Large Supers

The largest single letter of supers (text overlays) is more than 10% of the video player height, ensuring clear visibility and prominence.

## Branding

### Extreme Close-Ups (Product)

Videos meet this criteria if a SINGLE PRODUCT (IN or OUT of packaging) is present and takes up at least 60% of the frame. A single product must pass the threshold.

### Brand Visual (3+ times)

Any branding is present on at least 3 frames. The same branding instance (i.e. a brand logo, branded product, or branded packaging) can appear on more than one frame, but NOT on consecutive frames.

## Connection

### Humor

Does the ad attempt to be humorous? This can be achieved through on-screen text, through people or via audio with speech or music.

### Casual Language

Casual or colloquial language is used. If any jargon is used, it is put in terms that the user could understand.

### Emotions

The ad attempt to arouse the viewer's emotions (i.e. fear, anger, joy, laughter, sadness, acceptance, disgust, anticipation, surprise)? May be explicit: presented to the audience is mentioned visually (via supers/graphics, such as a super stating 'LOVE') OR as part of the script in the audio. May be implicit: deduced by the audience.

### Product Context

The product and/or service is shown in the context a potential user would encounter. This can be done through a product demo or other visual method of showing the product/service in use.

### Focused Messaging

A straightforward and understandable message is featured in the ad. That is to say, does the ad clearly state or show what the brand/product can do, who they are, or what the brand would like the viewer to do?



# Appendix 1: Top X Creative Attributes Criteria for Creative Quality Compliance

## Direction

### Path to purchase

Refers to a physical store or other point of sale such as an App or Website. A message like "visit our nearest store" / "go to our website" can be coded as Yes.

### Price (text)

Any price displayed in the ad

### Call to Action (Audio)

A 'call to action' phrase is detected at any time within the audio at any time.

# Average %presence – feature level (1/2)

	Classification	US	Europe	QSR	UK
Brand Visualized (Overall)	B	100%	100%	99%	99%
Brand Visualized (Last 5s)	B	99%	99%	95%	98%
Sound On	A	99%	95%	97%	99%
Supers	A	98%	95%	95%	95%
Music	A	98%	86%	96%	99%
People (First 5s)	C	96%	93%	91%	93%
Brand Visual (Overlaid)	B	91%	97%	81%	94%
Product Mention (Text)	B	88%	94%	87%	92%
Product Focus	B	93%	92%	79%	97%
Fast Pacing (First 5s)	A	93%	83%	95%	85%
Product Mention (Speech)	B	79%	94%	96%	88%
Tightly Framed (First 5s)	A	97%	82%	89%	79%
Brand Visualized (First 5s)	B	92%	90%	66%	98%
People (Overall)	C	96%	93%	65%	92%
Relevant Call-to-Action	D	89%	81%	83%	92%
Face (First 5s)	C	91%	84%	83%	85%
Product Visualized (Last 5s)	B	80%	85%	88%	90%
Voice-Over	A	67%	91%	92%	92%
Product Visualized (Overall)	B	95%	62%	89%	95%
Product Visualized (First 5s)	B	85%	86%	70%	93%
Brand Mention (Speech) (See & Say)	B	83%	89%	76%	86%
High Contrast Visuals	A	53%	94%	88%	96%
Supers (Audio Augmenting)	A	80%	66%	74%	91%
Brand Palette Multiple Brand Elements	B	70%	79%	70%	90%
Tightly Framed (Overall)	A	88%	78%	63%	77%
Bright Visuals	A	70%	81%	77%	75%
People Using Product	C	84%	73%	61%	80%
Brand Mention (Speech) (Last 5s)	B	70%	82%	72%	70%
Supers w/ Audio	A	61%	75%	84%	71%
Product Mention (Speech or Text)	B	76%	60%	80%	64%
Large Brand Logo	B	77%	77%	50%	72%
Casual Language	C	76%	44%	76%	73%
Expression of Benefits	C	70%	73%	37%	80%
Focused Messaging	C	75%	56%	85%	42%
Close-ups (People)	C	82%	57%	47%	71%
Brand Visual (In-situation)	B	67%	49%	48%	88%

# Average %presence – feature level (2/2)

	Classification	US	Europe	QSR	UK
Single Message	C	69%	52%	92%	38%
Direct to Camera	A	54%	76,9%	23%	85%
Product Mention (Speech) (First 5s)	B	66%	53%	49%	69%
Human Voice	A	62%	46%	79%	37%
Product Mention (Speech) (Last 5s)	B	43%	63%	67%	48%
Product Context	C	72%	52%	43%	45%
Close-ups (Product)	B	41%	58%	37%	74%
Heartbeat Story Arc	A	47%	50%	58%	49%
Brand Mention (Speech) (First 5s)	B	47%	42%	58%	51%
Emotions	C	16%	52%	65%	48%
Brand Mention (Speech) (See & Say) (First 5s)	B	34%	40%	46%	52%
Dialogue (2+ People)	A	42%	37%	50%	35%
Brand Mentioned	B	33%	45%	56%	28%
Call to Action (Text)	D	54%	48%	25%	29%
Sound Effects	A	30%	46%	46%	23%
Character-Driven	C	57%	31%	16%	41%
Dialogue (1-Person)	A	61%	25%	17%	41%
Visualization of Benefit	C	77%	22%	28%	16%
Fast Pacing (Overall)	A	50%	32%	20%	30%
Path to Purchase	D	44%	27%	47%	9%
Supers (Audio See & Say)	A	27%	47%	28%	9,4%
Large Supers	A	34%	18%	33%	24%
Brand Visual (3+ Times)	B	58%	14%	12%	18%
Call to Action (Audio)	D	27%	25%	28%	12%
Extreme Close-ups (Product)	B	26%	27%	19%	20%
Jingle	B	42%	0,2%	28%	0%
Competitive claim	C	9%	7,6%	7%	25%
Humor	C	12%	10%	15%	10%
Purchase Incentive (Limited Time/Quantities)	D	11%	1,3%	29%	1%
Delight	C	4%	6,7%	12%	11%
Price (Text)	D	11%	6%	13%	4%
Special Offer (Text)	D	9%	5,2%	10%	1,5%
Special Offer (Speech)	D	12%	0,0%	12%	0%
Price (Speech)	D	2%	0,5%	15%	0%
Power of Free (Speech)	D	9%	0,5%	0%	2,0%
Power of Free (Text)	D	5%	1,4%	0%	1%
Search Bar	D	0%	0,4%	0%	1%