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by Mediaocean

Creative personalization:

MYTHS VS. reality

Separating **HOT AIR** from hard facts while dispelling 13 misconceptions around the power of digital marketing

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Introduction

In a world of media fragmentation, creative personalization is the key to unlocking the full potential of digital marketing. It has become a must-have strategy for businesses looking to stay competitive.

However, there are persisting myths that have hindered adoption and innovation. Many of these arise from outdated best practices, misinterpreted data, or even just hearsay. To combat misinformation, it's important to stay current on the latest research and applications.

In this guide, we dispel thirteen of the most common myths about personalized creative and offer some reality—insights and strategies to help businesses reap the enormous benefits of ad tech.

From concerns about complexity, to fears about losing creative control, there are many misconceptions that can stand in the way of successful personalization efforts. By understanding the realities of personalized creative

and adopting best practices for implementation, brands can unlock a new level of engagement and loyalty with their customers.

Perhaps one or two of these myths sound familiar. Perhaps all thirteen. Either way, resistance to leveraging the full power of creative personalization is misguided.

Consumers today are bombarded with a constant stream of advertisements, from TV commercials to social media ads to product placements in their favorite content. With so much noise in the advertising space, it can be challenging for brands to break through and capture the strict attention of customers.

That challenge is solved via personalized advertising, where brands tailor ads to specific individuals based on their interests, behaviors, and demographics. By delivering more relevant and targeted ads, creative personalization helps brands cut through the clutter and connect with customers on a deeper level.

And personalized advertising isn't just great for brands. It's also something consumers want. Studies show most consumers prefer personalized advertising experiences and are more likely to engage with ads tailored to their interests and needs.

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Creative is the most impactful and influential component of a brand's marketing

Contribution to sales lift from advertising

56%

| Creative | Reach | Brand | Targeting | Frequency | Context |

Source: Nielsen

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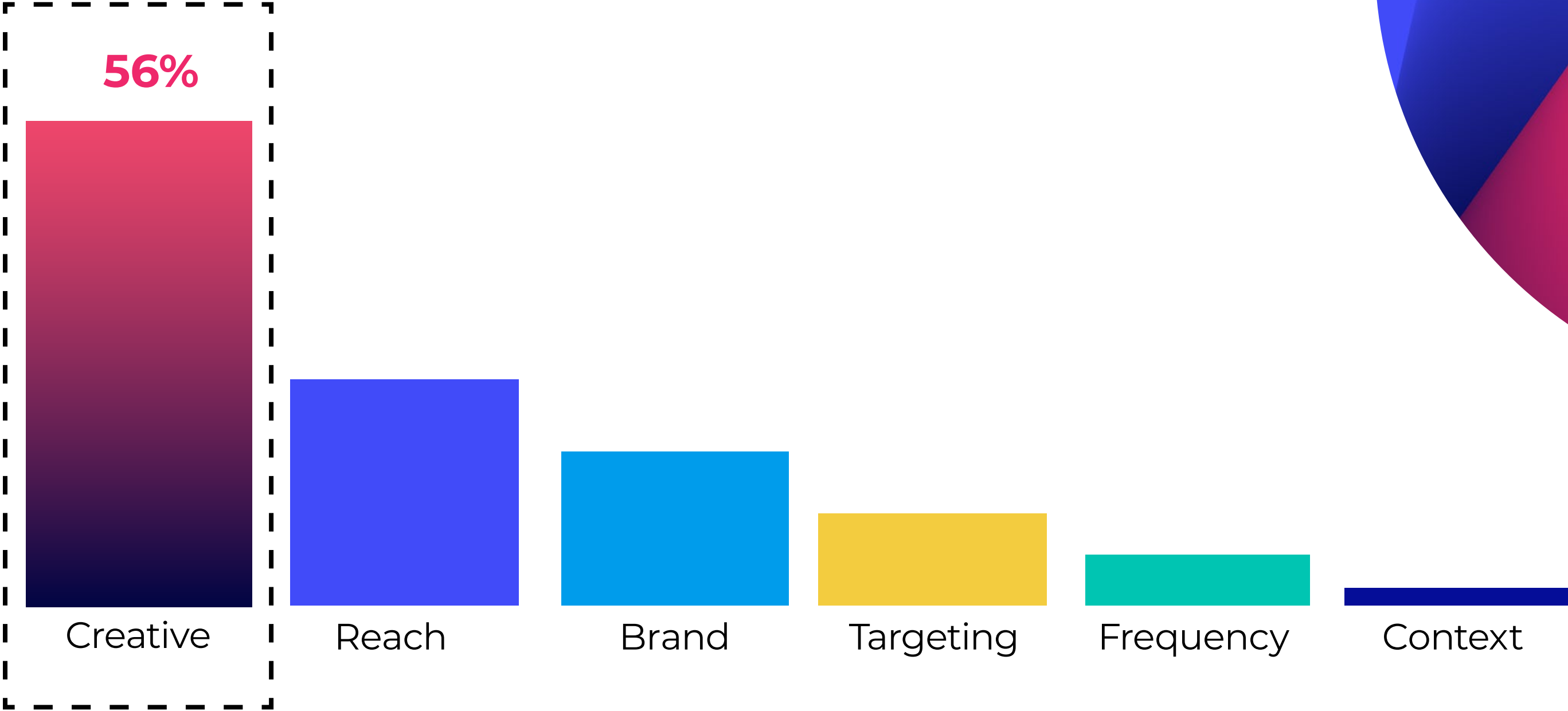
Consumers want personalized experiences

Memorable connections require curated messaging rooted in individual behaviors, preferences, and habits

71% of consumers **expect** companies to **deliver personalized interactions**
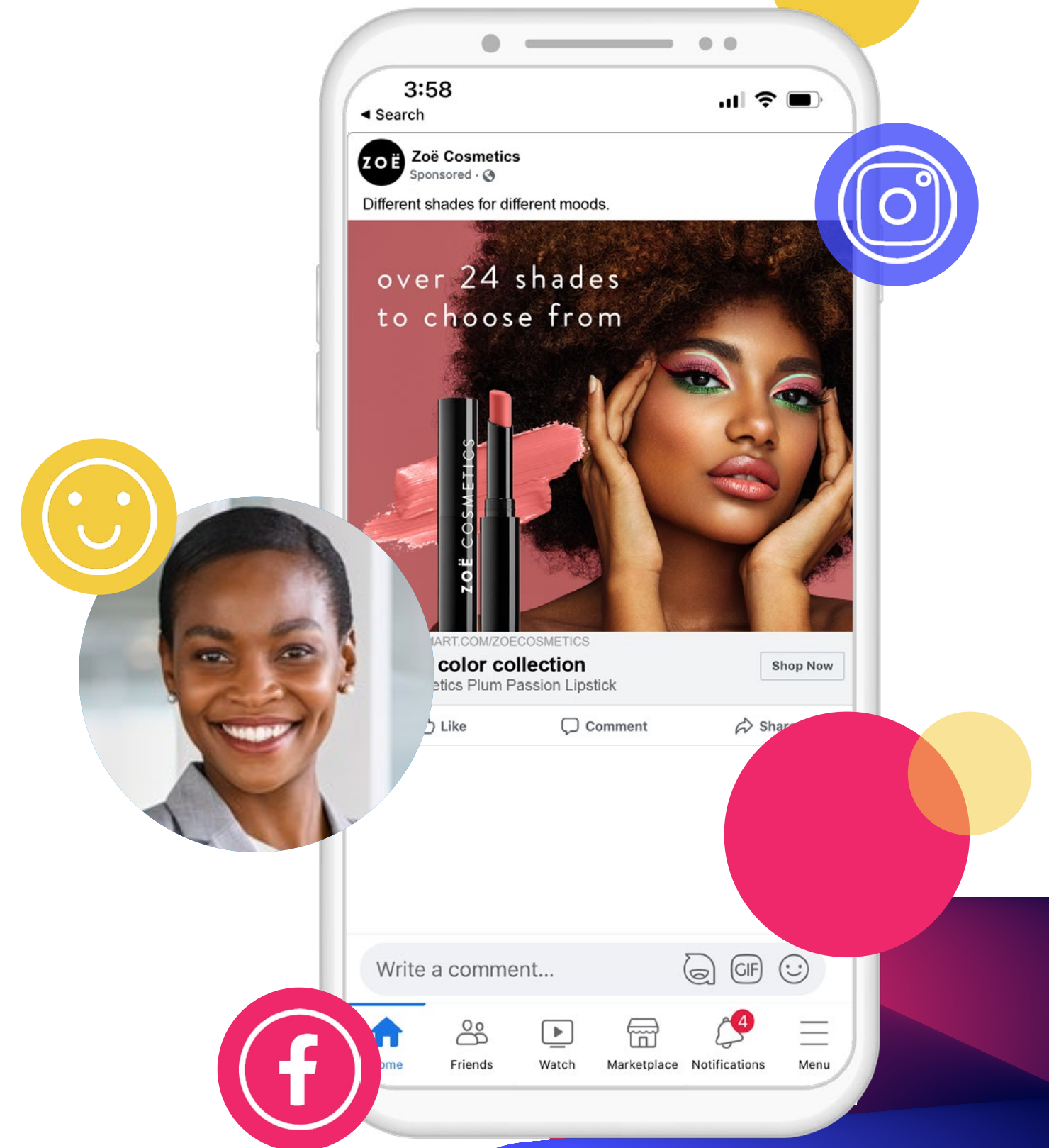
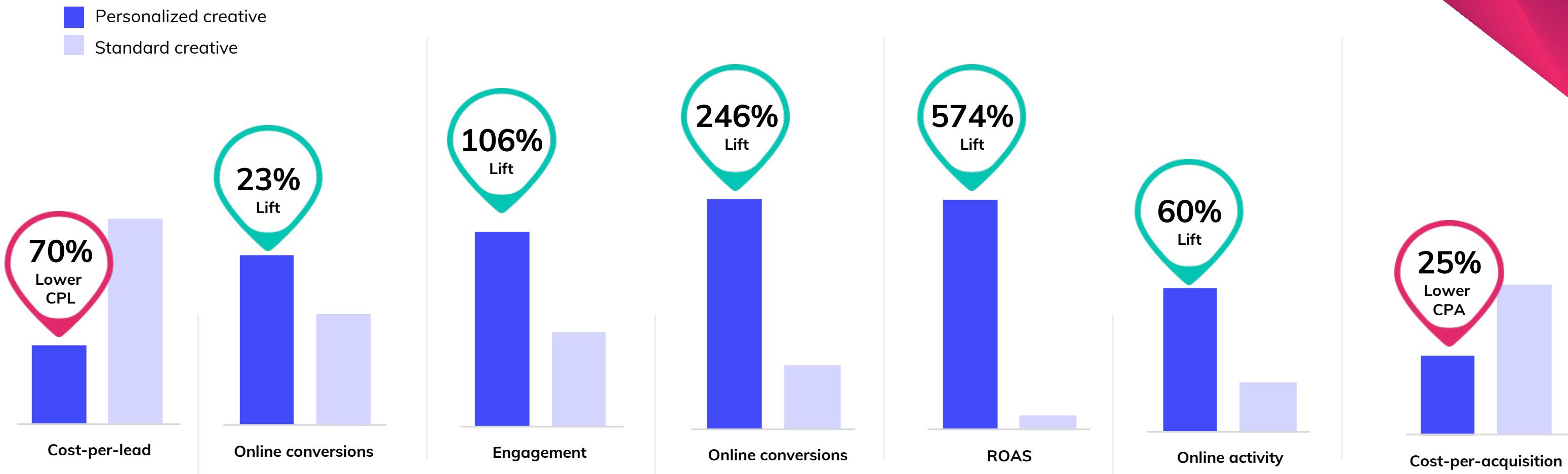**66%** of consumers are **influenced to buy a product** for the first time by messages tailored to their needs

78% of consumers are **more likely to make repeat purchases** from brands that personalize

Source: McKinsey

over 24 shades to choose from

Zoë Cosmetics
Sponsored

Different shades for different moods.

...MART.COM/ZOECOSMETICS
...color collection
...etics Plum Passion Lipstick

Shop Now

Like   Comment   Shar...

Write a comment...

...me   Friends   Watch   Marketplace   Notifications   Menu

Our clients have experienced the benefit of personalization first-hand

Across categories, our advertising partners have shown a lift in metrics spanning brand perception to engagement to conversions

- ■ Personalized creative
- ■ Standard creative

70% Lower CPL — Cost-per-lead

23% Lift — Online conversions

106% Lift — Engagement

246% Lift — Online conversions

574% Lift — ROAS

60% Lift — Online activity

25% Lower CPA — Cost-per-acquisition

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Yet less than 10%

of paid ad impressions
are personalized

Source: Mediaocean

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MYTHS

Why are less than 10% of paid ad impressions personalized?

Mostly due to myths and misconceptions, which often stem from false assumptions or incomplete information.

So, one by one, let's debunk them.

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MYTH 1

Personalized messaging does not really apply to our business

We don't really see any viable opportunities to apply personalized messages across any of our brands or categories
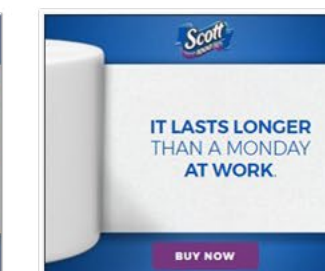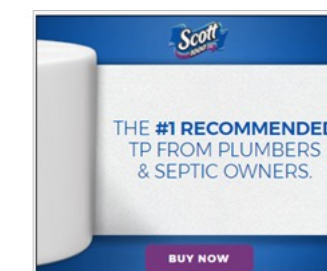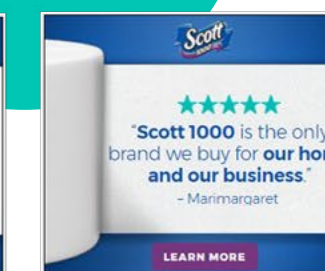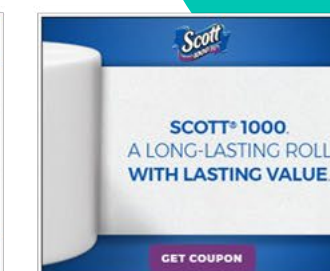
Reality

There is always an opportunity to personalize messaging to your customers, even when it seems most unlikely.

Everyone is a customer of toilet paper...yet there is still a way to communicate a relevant message to specific audiences.

- College students: Budget conscious
- Homeowners: Fewer clogs
- Small business owners: Long-lasting roll

College students

Homeowners

Small business

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MYTH 2

Personalization dilutes brand consistency

Personalized messaging interferes with the process of "refreshing and building memory structures"

Reality

Using creative frameworks, you don't have to trade brand recognition for relevant messaging.

The creative framework is responsible for defining how your content is displayed, moves, and reacts in a dynamic ad.

- It consists of both static elements that are consistent across ads and dynamic elements that are personalized for the audience

- The static elements are what enable you to refresh and build memory structures (recognition) across all ads

- The dynamic elements enable you to personalize the message

CLEANING TIP FOR **MARKS ON ALLOY TIRES**

CLEANING TIP FOR **HAIR DYE IN SINK**

CLEANING TIP FOR **SHOWER WATERSPOTS**

CLEANING TIP FOR **STICKER GUNK**

CLEANING TIP FOR **DIRTY SHOES**

CLEANING TIP FOR **CRAYON ON DRYWALL**

CLEANING TIP FOR **MICROWAVE GUNK**

CLEANING TIP FOR **LIPSTICK ON MUG**

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MYTH 3

## Personalization is about getting to one-to-one messaging

To be effective, personalization requires messaging at the most granular level you possibly can

Reality

Personalization allows brands to move away from one-to-all messaging and deliver relevance at a granularity that is most effective for the brand.

Consumers do not respond to ads in the same way. But not all brands need one-to-one messaging.

- Some of the best executions are the simplest leveraging existing insights about your consumers

- In fact, you can use the technology to safely determine the right level of granularity, beyond which you do not see noticeable performance impact

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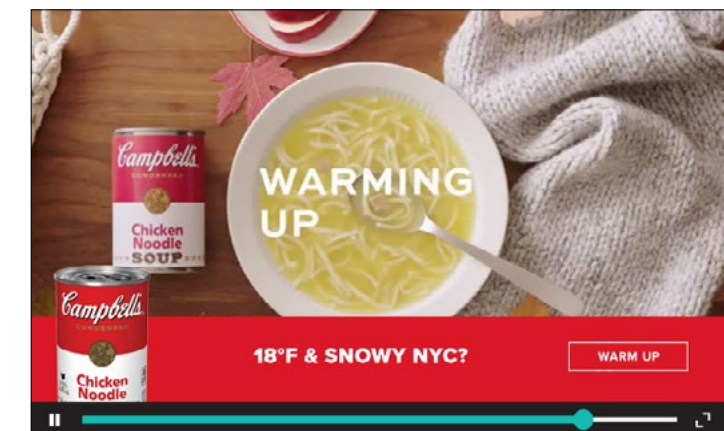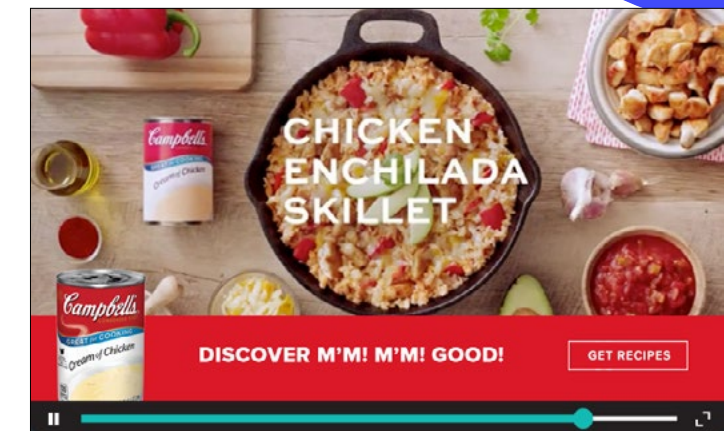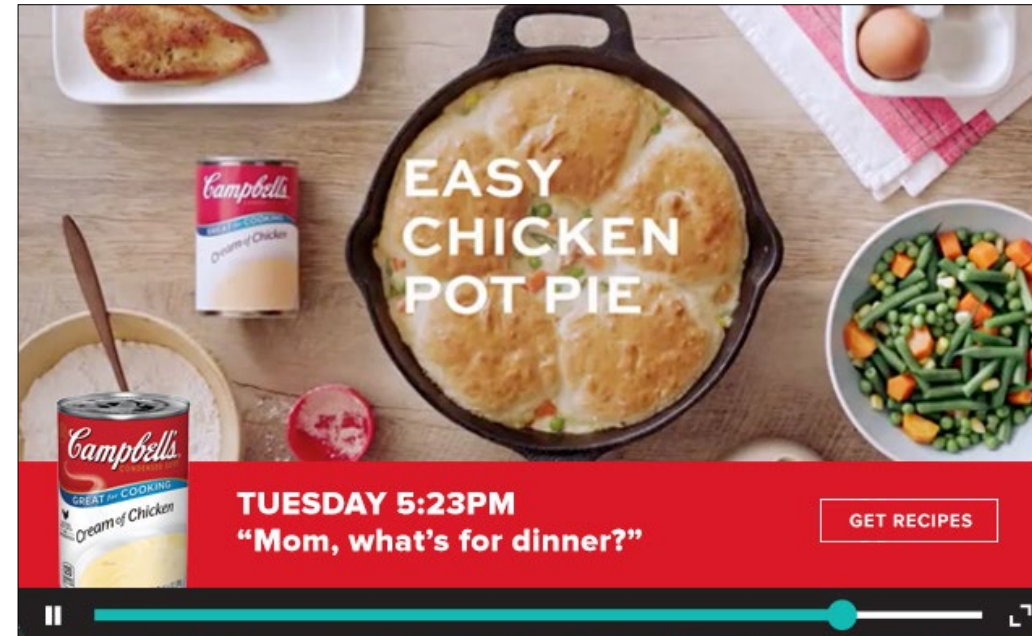
MYTH 4

## Personalized messaging complicates my media plan

Personalized messaging significantly increases the number of media line items and workload required

Reality

Personalization is implemented within the ad server and is independent of your media buying strategy.

The Flashtalking ad server ingests real-time data triggers to make creative decisions independent of the targeting that occurs in the buying platform.

- It is not uncommon for advertisers to engage in de facto microtargeting on their media plan without realizing it

- By introducing simple messaging strategies, we can often achieve operational efficiencies by reducing the number of tags and media line items from tens-of-thousands to hundreds

- In turn, this allows the advertiser to buy broader audiences with lower CPMs

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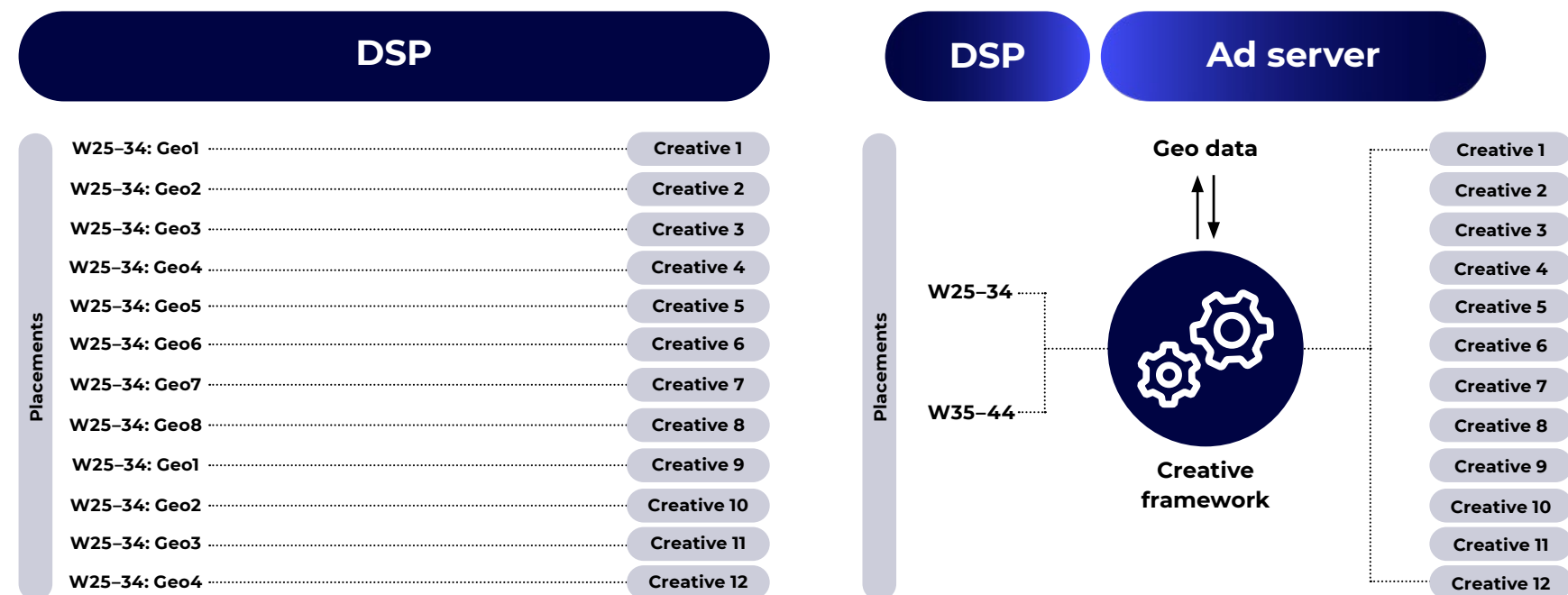
MYTH 5

Personalization limits scale

Audience micro-targeting and expanding creative scope lead to higher CPMs and nonworking fees, ultimately constraining the campaign's scale

Reality

Personalization is not micro-targeting your media buy, it's about scaling message variations across your media buy.

Separating media buying from creative decision-making enables media teams to purchase larger audiences at lower costs per thousand (CPMs), while allowing creative teams to produce a greater variety and quantity of messages.

- Media buyers can aggregate smaller audiences into broader buys and reduce risk of bidding against oneself

- Creative teams can reach audience sub-segments with more relevant, impactful messaging in more places and during more pivotal moments

Media audiences

Creative

W25–34

W35–44

W45–54

W55+

Relevant, impactful creative

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MYTH 6

Personalization is a lower-funnel tactic

Personalization is best used for re-messaging campaigns where advertisers have direct access to site behavioral data
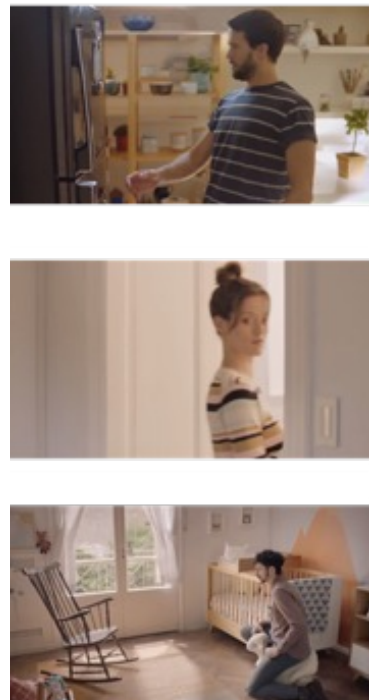
Reality

Messages can be personalized using a host of data triggers including contextual data, technographics, third-party audience data, and site behavioral data.

Building brand awareness, recognition, and consideration are necessary steps to driving conversion.

- Introducing your brand in a way that is most relevant to the consumer expedite each of those metrics

- 66% of consumers are influenced to try a new product for the first time when the message is tailored to their needs
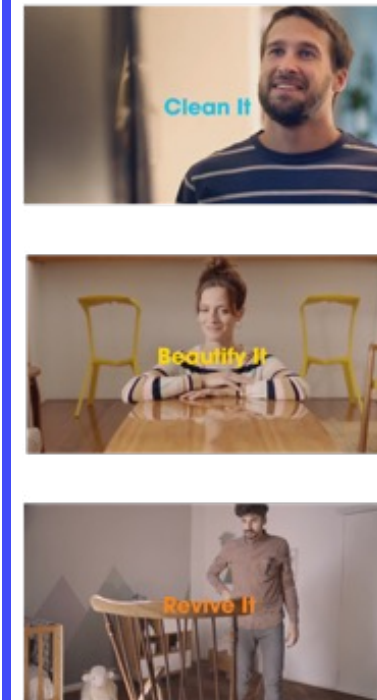
Source: McKinsey

| Three video files | 30 copy lines | Three lines | One end frame |

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MYTH 7

Personalization is an all-or-nothing proposition

To be effective, personalization must be applied to every consumer touch point across every campaign

Reality

We have clients who use personalized messaging for tactical use cases, while others use it more strategically.

Both approaches are valid and both can be effective. There is no one-size-fits-all to personalization.

- Building a competency within your organization will allow for easier activation, no matter where or how frequently it is applied

- Crawl-walk-run strategies make adoption of personalization more manageable

- You will get the best results if you approach personalization as an always-on, evolving, and learning growth pathway

Tactical
Upper-funnel, single product
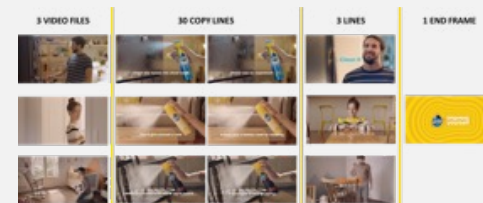
Upper-funnel

Tactical
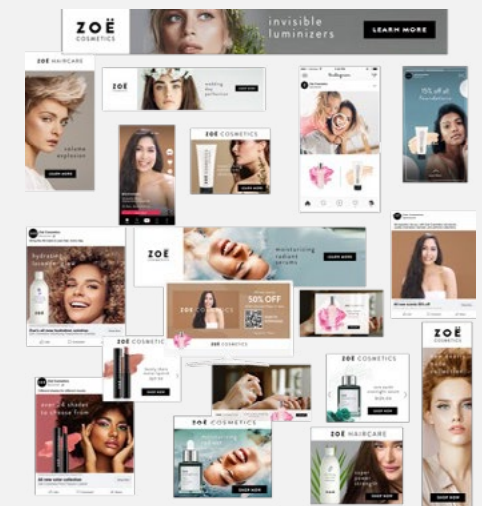Lower-funnel, single product

Lower-funnel

Strategic
Full-funnel, all products

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MYTH 8

## Personalization is all about open web display

Open web display represents a diminishing portion of our media budget: social and video are where it's at

Reality

Personalization is most effective when it is executed across all formats, mirroring people's growing and shifting media consumption.

Flashtalking is an omnichannel solution, enabling brands to produce and deliver personalized creative across all digital formats.

- Formats: Video, Display, Audio
- Channels: Closed Ecosystems, Open Web
- Platforms: Social (Meta, TikTok, Pinterest, Snapchat, Twitter, LinkedIn), OTT/CTV

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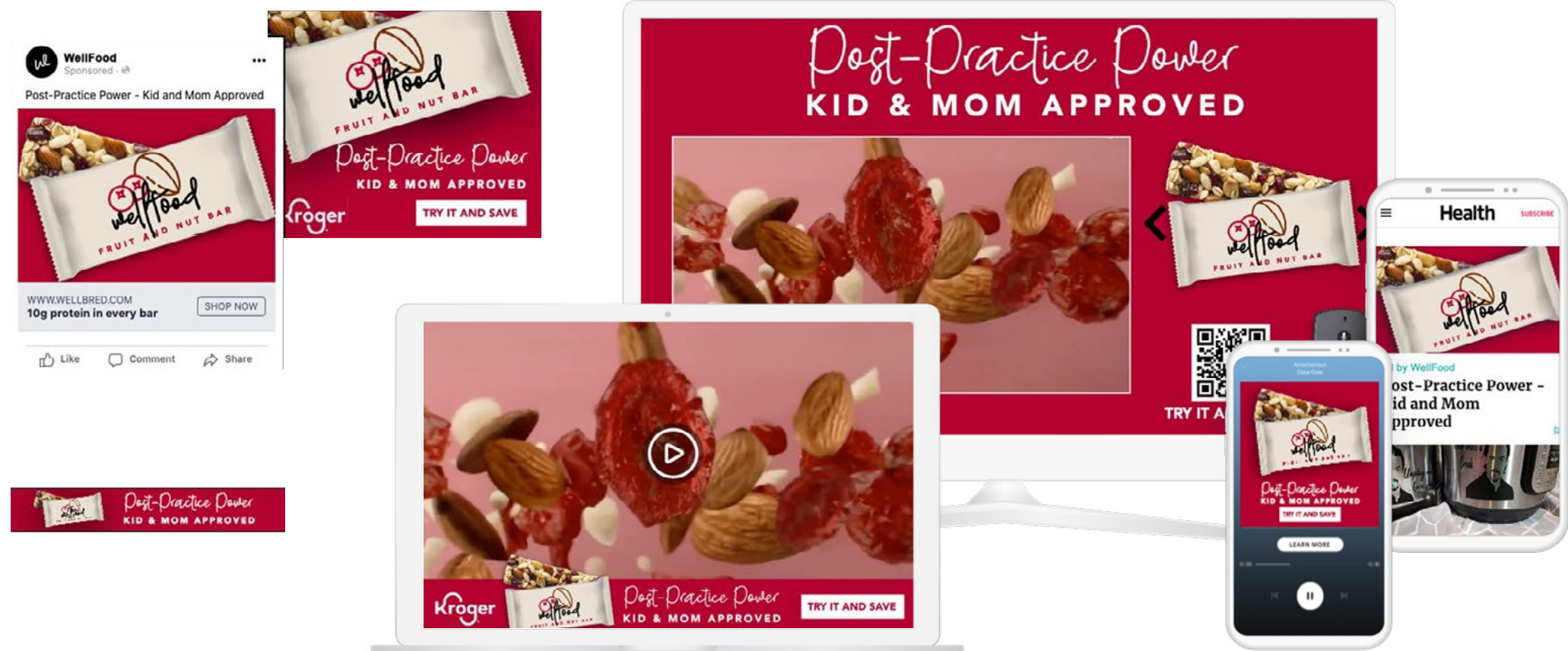
# MYTH 9

Dynamic templates are too limiting

Our brand is unique and we need the flexibility to create messages that are equally as unique

Reality

We don't believe in templates. Our dynamic frameworks are custom-designed to adhere to your brand's requirements and provide the flexibility necessary to achieve a variety of concepts.

Our frameworks are built to contain dynamic variables which allow for brands to make meaningful creative changes from version-to-version. These variables can be Text, Image, Video, or Richloads and their flexibility includes:

- Changing Assets: swapping one for another
- Removing Elements: ability to include or exclude
- Shifting Placement: re-positioning of an element

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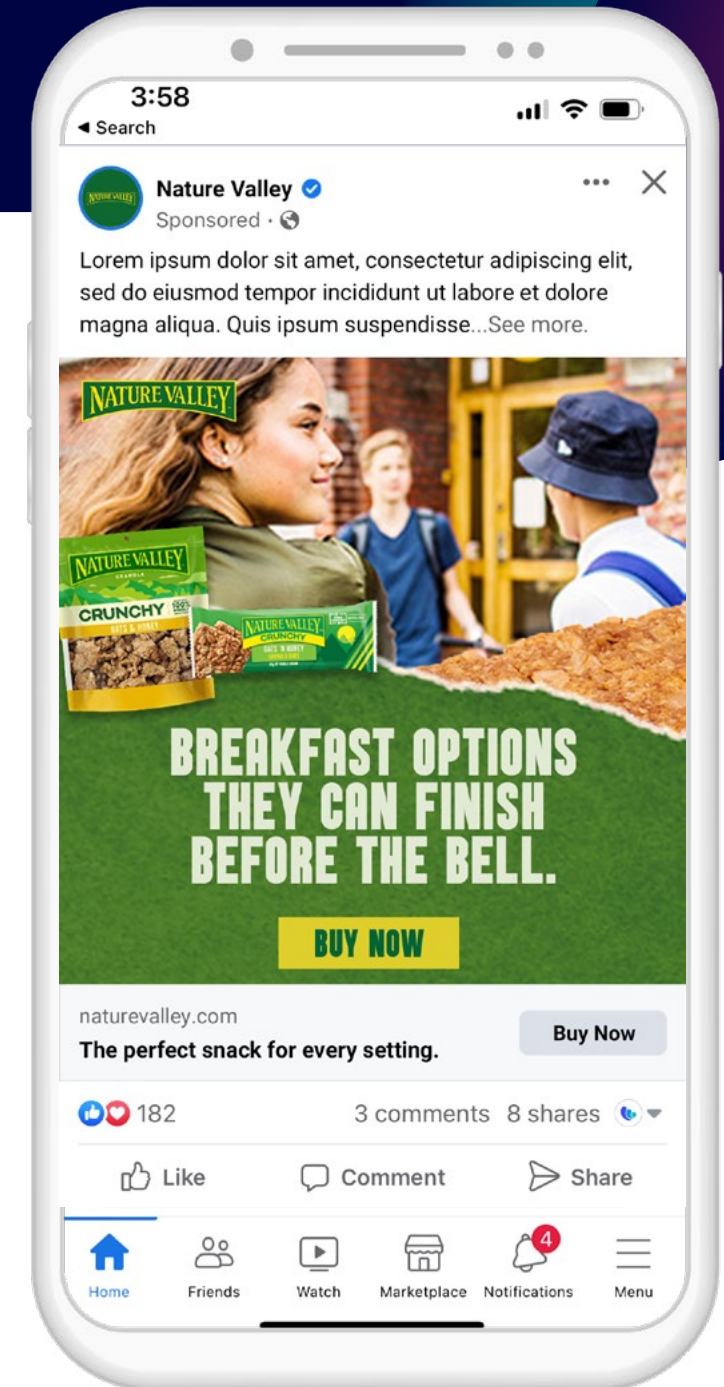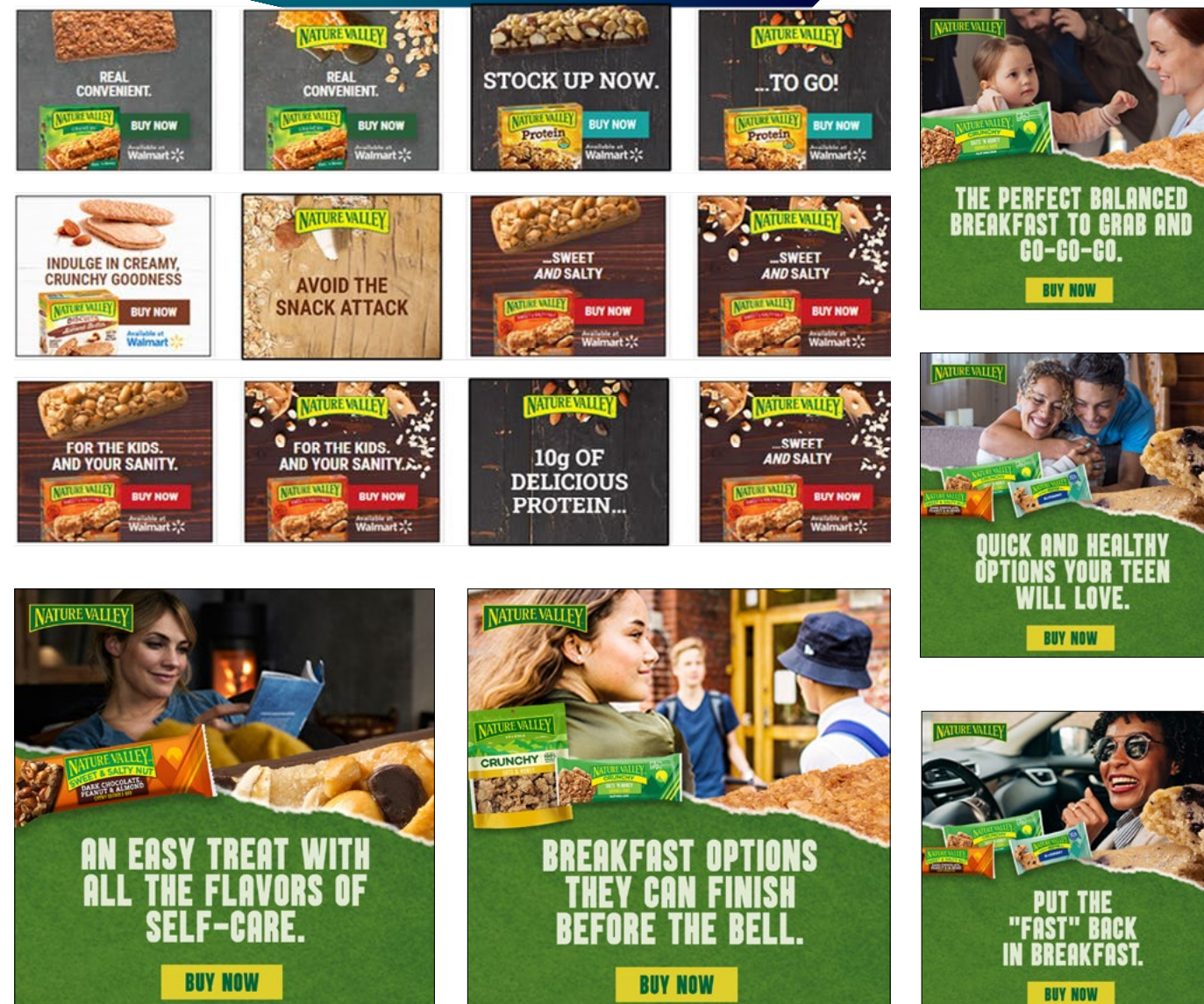
MYTH 10

Personalized messaging will constrain our creative production team

We already have our own tools and processes, and we are not looking to change our creative workflow

Reality

You have the flexibility to use your preferred creative workflow.

Every agency and advertiser has their own preferred workflow and set of available resources.
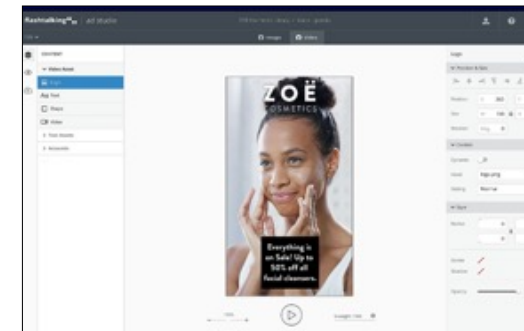
- Our platform and services can flex to fit your creative team
- We can accommodate any approach from self-service to fully managed service

Upload existing creative

Send us your final video assets or upload them yourself. No video expertise necessary— our system encodes for delivery anywhere.

Edit in-platform

Use our Ad Studio to easily add static or dynamic overlays or logos, or to make other simple edits.

Use your own tools

Establish custom workflows that incorporate import from Adobe Photoshop and/or After Effects.

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MYTH 11

## Personalized messaging will tax our creative production team

We are already asking a lot of our creative production team and do not have budget to hire incremental staff

Reality

Personalization is about using technology—not people—to scale creative production.

The objective is to leverage technology to drive a higher return on your digital assets across channels (Social, CTV, open web) and formats (Video, audio, display).

- Creative production is faster, easier and less resource-intensive
- Synergies can be achieved by centralizing production across all channels and formats
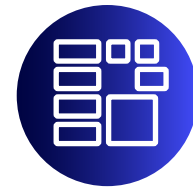
Creative frameworks
For enabling dynamic creative elements within display and video ads
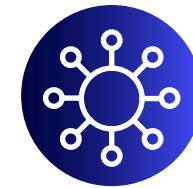
Automated versioning
Machine-driven auto version generator: select the versions you wish to activate
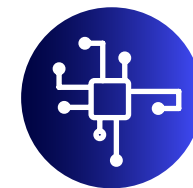
Feeds-driven automation
Customize each message via integrations with feeds-based data providers

Just-in-time video personalization
Generate 1000s of video files in minutes to enable personalized video messaging

Creative label
Applying AI for ad content classification

Creative approvals
Centralized creative previews and approvals

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MYTH 12

Personalization means more work for our ad ops team

More creative means more trafficking tasks and slower speed to market
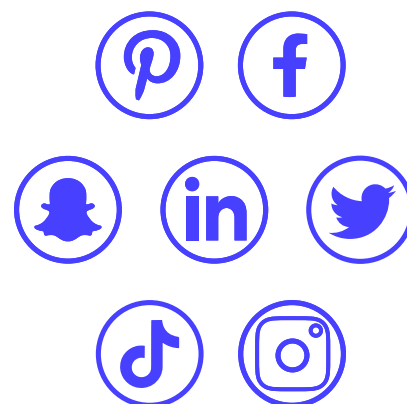
Reality

Workflow automation simplifies the activation of personalized creative to the same level as standard creative.

Flashtalking has invested heavily in workflow integrations with the major Ad Tech platforms to remove manual tasks, accelerate speed to market, and eliminate errors across the following common implementations.

- Social: Our solution enables you to traffic and activate personalized creative across social platforms

- Open Web/CTV with the Flashtalking ad server: The Flashtalking ad server supports two-way trafficking integrations with the leading Demand Side Platforms (e.g. The Trade Desk, Digital & Video 360, MediaMath) as well as verification providers (DoubleVerify, Moat, Integrated Ad Science)

- Open Web/CTV with the Google Campaign Manager: We support automated, joint trafficking between the two platforms to eliminate manual, duplicative work and minimize errors
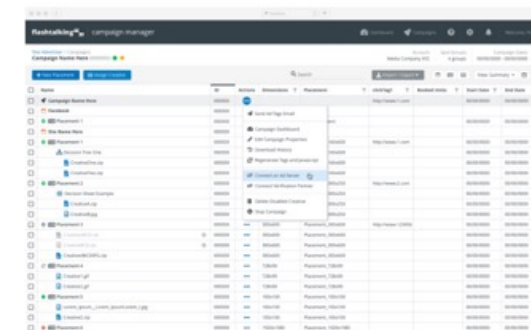
Social UI	Flashtalking ad server	GCM360

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MYTH 13

Getting practical insights from personalized creative is challenging

It is difficult to capture clean signals when some creatives receive relatively low impression counts

Reality

Applying AI for ad content classification enables more timely and actionable insights.

By using AI-generated labels assigned as metadata to each creative version, we are no longer dependent on comparing the relative performance of specific creative versions and flat files:

- Aggregate performance of a label across channels and formats
- Cross-tab performance against audiences, geo-demographics and media placements
- Reduce time to actionable insights

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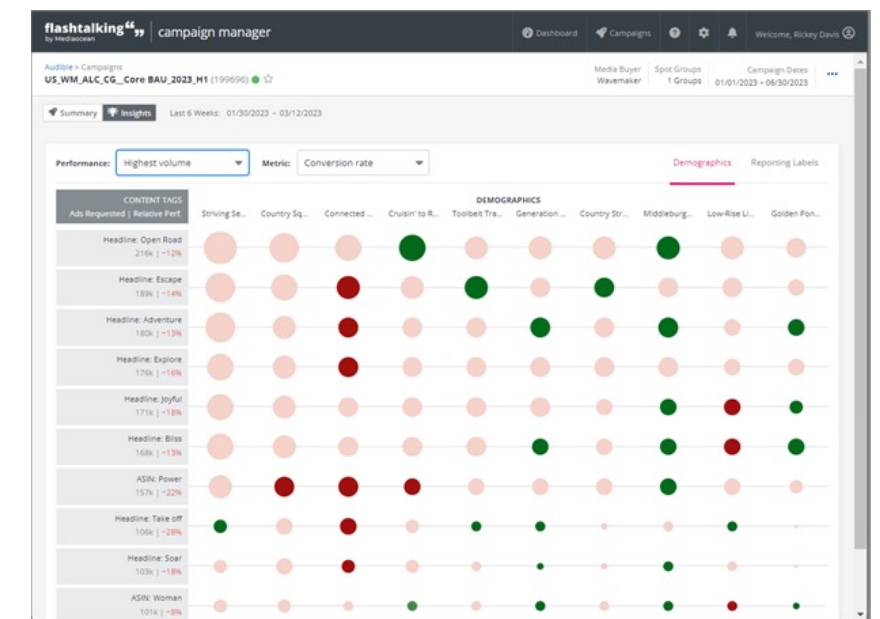
Conclusion

We hope this guide has dispelled some of the more pervasive myths around personalized creative. By embracing personalized creative, brands can produce more meaningful and engaging customer experiences, increase customer loyalty, and ultimately drive business growth.

Armed with the information in this guide, marketers can see the complete picture and set the record straight for stakeholders about what's real, what's not, and how to succeed with this exciting and rapidly evolving technique.

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About Flashtalking by Mediaocean

Flashtalking by Mediaocean is the leading independent ad tech platform for primary ad serving, personalized creative, social ads management, and advanced measurement. Global brands and agencies use our innovative products to create, automate, activate, and iterate omnichannel advertising campaigns. Through unbiased measurement, unparalleled service, and a deep partner ecosystem, Flashtalking drives successful digital marketing at scale. As part of Mediaocean, our solutions are integrated into the industry's most trusted advertising infrastructure for planning, buying, billing, and reporting.

Mediaocean.com/flashtalking

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