

THE
**CREATIVE
EFFECT**

**HOW CREATIVE DECISIONS
INFLUENCE BRAND IMPACT**

How much can creative decisions influence brand impact?

In this new research, we explored just that: how a variety of creative decisions influence likelihood to engage with an interactive format and, consequently, brand impact.

BrightLine partnered with MediaScience, an independent media research firm specializing in lab-based and in-home advertising experiments, to execute this three-phase study.



A research narrative evolving over 3 years

2024

Impact of Interactive
Streaming TV Ads

"Do interactive ads
beat standard video?"

+36%

unaided recall from
a single interactive exposure
vs. standard video.



2025

The Engagement Effect

"Does deeper engagement mean
better outcomes?"

+33%

unaided recall for viewers who
engaged, with favorability and
purchase intent also increasing



2026

The Creative Effect

"Can design decisions impact
engagement and outcomes?"

+62%

unaided recall for core
best practices, the study's
strongest result

2026 METHODOLOGY

3 PHASES OF RESEARCH

designed to yield the most comprehensive and unbiased results.

QUALITATIVE



Phase 1: Listen

26 Interviews

In-depth interviews across 30 real campaigns surfaced what helps viewers engage, and what gets in the way.

QUANTITATIVE



Phase 2: Validate

124 Respondents

A survey stress-tested those hypotheses at scale and prioritized the creative elements worth testing.

IN-HOME CTV EXPERIMENT



Phase 3: Prove

49 Conditions, 600+ Viewers

An in-home CTV experiment: real programming and ad breaks, on participants' own TVs.

All data points quoted in the best practices represent statistically significant differences between the comparison groups at a minimum of 90% confidence

THE EXPERIMENTS

Out of the 49 test conditions, 6 themes showed the most significant impact

CTA Size



Visual Focus



Brand Relevancy



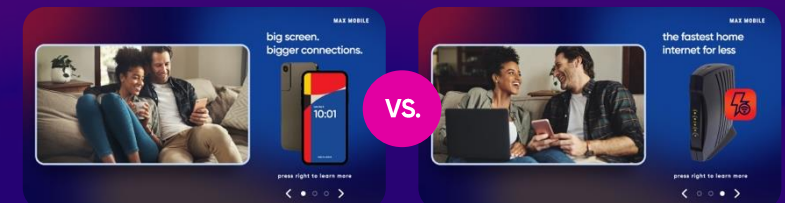
Cognitive Complexity



Gamified Formats



Ad Duration





THE **6 BEST** **PRACTICES** **FOR INTERACTIVE CTV ADS**

Make the CTA impossible to miss

Small CTA



press right to view more products

SO CLEAN
LAUNDRY DETERGENT MAX

< The original detergent boosted
for 7x the cleaning power >



"I would make that [CTA] a little bit larger...it did take me a little bit longer, maybe a second or two, to notice that it was there."

– Sarah, Study Participant



Large CTA



press right to view more products

SO CLEAN
LAUNDRY DETERGENT MAX

< The original detergent boosted
for 7x the cleaning power >



Using the larger CTA led to...

10x More likely
to interact

+20% Increase in unaided
brand recall
vs. small CTA

Give the interaction a focal point

Complex Stage



"I just kind of found my eyes going a bunch of different places, and not just the video."

– Ariel, Study Participant



Simple Stage



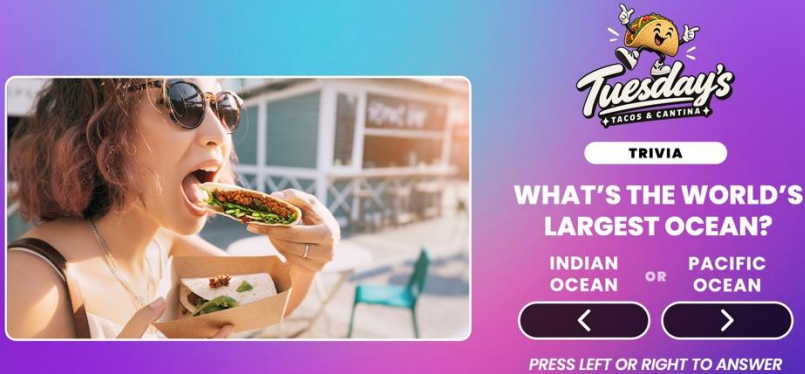
Using the simple stage led to...

3x More likely to interact

+11% Increase in purchase intent vs. standard video

Connect the action to your brand

Irrelevant Content

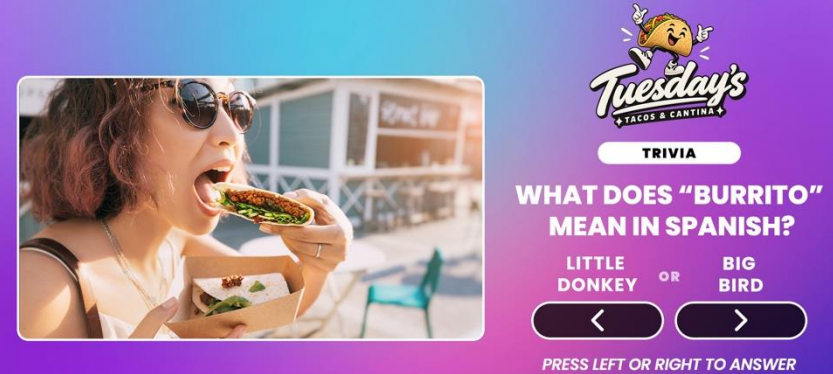


"It's a random question and, cool, I'll answer it, but it has nothing to do with [the brand]. It doesn't make me remember [the brand]."

– Julian, Study Participant



Relevant Content



Using a relevant trivia question led to...

=

Equally likely
to interact

+12%

Increase in
purchase intent
vs. irrelevant content

Avoid cognitive overload

Complex Ad



"I'm trying to read the questions and answer them...it was moving too fast for me. I couldn't stay focused on what they're trying to advertise."

– Alex, Study Participant

Simple Ad



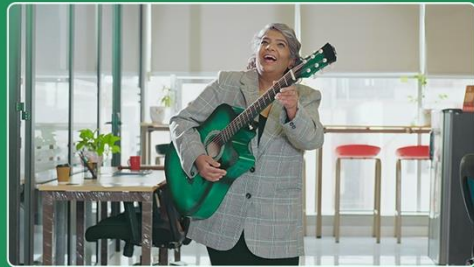
The simpler ad led to...

+39% More likely to interact

+62% Increase in unaided brand recall vs. standard video

Win even more with gamified

Standard Trivia



TRISTATE
INSURANCE

MUSIC TRIVIA

What year is recognized as the birth of hip hop?

< 1973 OR 1985 >

PRESS LEFT OR RIGHT TO ANSWER



"I feel like I was on a game show for a while... these are the ones I like, quizzes, something like a little quiz sounds pretty good."

– Saul, Study Participant



Advanced Trivia



TRISTATE
INSURANCE

MUSIC TRIVIA

What year is recognized as the birth of hip hop?

1973

1985

1991

QUESTION: 2/3 SCORE: 1

PRESS LEFT OR RIGHT TO ANSWER

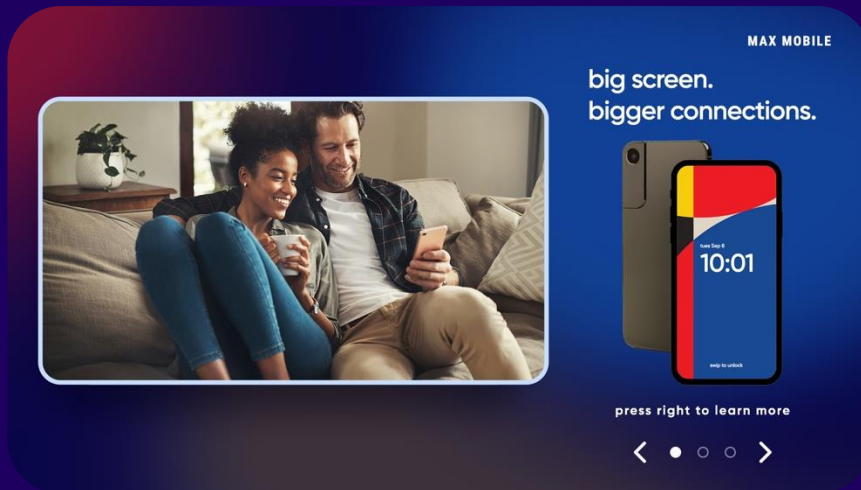
Gamified elements like scoring and timers led to...

+34% More likely to interact

+30% Increase in unaided brand recall vs. standard video

More time = more engagement

:15s Spot

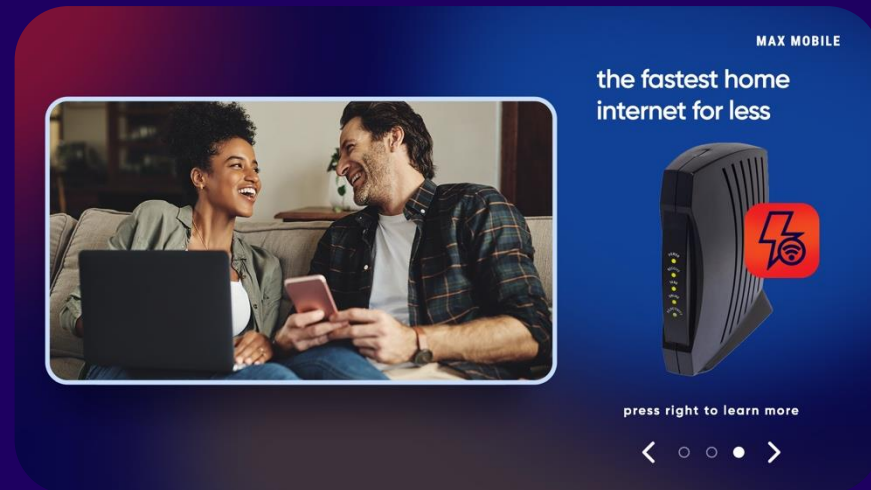


"If it's too short, if it's only 10 seconds, probably not enough time for me to grab the remote."

– Tony, Study Participant



:30s Spot



The longer ad led to...

3x More likely to interact

+22% Increase in ad recognition vs. :15s spot

What this means for advertisers

Evaluate your ad's creative *before* launch

The six practices work as a pre-flight checklist: visible cues, a clean stage, brand-linked content, effortless mechanics, gamified interactions, time to land.

Factor this in when selecting assets and scoping an interactive unit.

Lead with gamified formats for fun and better outcomes

Advanced game mechanics delivered the strongest engagement lift in the study, a clear premium tier for tentpole moments, sponsorships, and leaned-in advertisers.

Gamified strategies can be applied to all formats and bring more fun to the ad experience overall.

Engagement compounds into outcomes

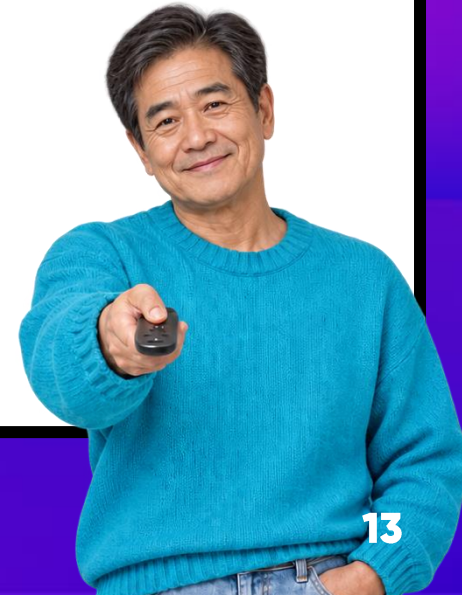
The 2025 study proved why engagement is worth designing for:

- viewers who engaged showed +33% unaided recall
- +12% favorability
- +8% purchase intent
- and every outcome rose in step with engagement depth.

Now, with the new best practices, we can utilize design decisions to optimize both engagement and outcomes.

Interactive is proven media value

Three years of independent evidence confirm interactive units outperform standard video on recall, favorability, and purchase intent.





THANK YOU!