

TrueView In-stream



Be unskippable in a skippable universe

TrueView in-stream, commonly referred to as simply TrueView, is a format built for film in all its creative glory. You can forget everything you know about 30-second spots because time limitations have been lifted, replaced with the far more compelling decree of viewer engagement. Do you think Tolstoy worried about length when he wrote *War and Peace*? Evidently not. Any good creative will tell you it's the idea that matters, and TrueView is a truly awesome opportunity to reach viewers who enthusiastically engage with your idea, right through until 'happily ever after'.

Interestingly, War and Peace has two endings, neither of them happy.

But first, how TrueView In-stream works

TrueView In-stream or "skippable" ads appear before YouTube videos. Viewers are shown the first five seconds, then have the option to "skip", so the sooner you draw them in and keep them engaged, the better. If a viewer skips before 30 seconds or until duration if it's shorter than 30 seconds, there is no charge, which makes TrueView a terrific playground for creative experimentation.

Stories told well, with time to be told

If the viewer watches 30 seconds (or the duration if it's shorter than 30 seconds), this is called a "Completed View". Watching beyond that is called a "View Through Rate", and it's generally the main metric used when measuring engagement with your video. Another way to measure is by the percentage of watchtime, or "Average View Duration", and this more accurately represents the effectiveness of retaining your audience. When viewers watch past the 30-second mark, there is no charge so you can create bespoke, long-form storytelling where details – like well-crafted dialogue or whimsical moments – come to life.

Passive vs active viewing

Passive viewing involves glancing at the TV, watching traditional story arc advertising play out. The typical 'problem, solution, pay-off' storyline means that by the time the ad resolves, viewers have tuned out, are checking their phones or worse, have left the room to make a cup of tea.

Active viewing puts the audience in control, seeking out specific information or forms of entertainment. Since anything not relevant gets left behind, it's important your ad is what they want to watch. As a result, new story arcs, like the Heartbeat, have evolved, to cater for an actively-engaged audience.

Framing TrueView in-stream

One way to break down these emerging story arcs is in three parts:

Beginning. Pique interest in the first five seconds, before the skip button appears.

Middle. Retain interest throughout with moments of engagement or 'pulses'.

End. Finish on a great ending, with clear directions on what to do next.

Some things to consider:

1, 2, 3, Jump!

You've got a captive audience for that first five seconds, so make the most of it. 'Jump' viewers into the story with something engaging or unexpected up front, before the skip button appears.

Get pulses racing

To keep attention for the entire duration, include pulses. These are engaging moments that can be funny, touching, or perhaps even bizarre. When crafting your script, ensure they appear consistently throughout to maintain interest and maximise impact.

Emotion runs deep

With screens held close, often inches from the face, YouTube is an intimate viewing experience. Plus, it offers content covering the entire emotional spectrum where audiences laugh out loud or cry like a baby. All the more reason to use emotion to your advantage, helping land the message and build affinity.

Create with Google

Does it have to look like an ad?

People often grumble about ads, but we also know they actively search for them on YouTube. This tells us people don't hate ads, they hate bad ads. So be the content people want to see.

Know your audience

Get familiar with your audience by watching the same content they're looking at, especially since that's where your ad will most likely appear. Advanced audience insights can also bring something to the story, so in addition to who your audience is, consider when and where they'll be watching.

Borrow from creators

Be human and address your audience directly. Tell stories from the heart, because it's a great way to make a connection. YouTube creators do this all the time, retaining attention as well as their audience. Borrow their tactics or creative behaviors to get your message working harder.

Experimentation is the new best practice

Play with openings, length, genres, versions, or whatever else tickles your fancy. The more you experiment, the more likely you'll find new and interesting ways to engage.

Frame for mobile

Keep smartphones and tablets in mind when you're shooting, particularly with framing and editing. Tight frames draw people in and make it easier to see on a small screen. A fast pace can help increase engagement and retain attention. After loads of testing on horizontal versus vertical framing, there appears to be no discernible difference, so we'll leave that to you. But do embrace sound. Not only does it enhance the story, but 95% of YouTube viewers have sound on.

Creative Juice

Some thought starters to get you going:

- What could happen in that first five seconds to capture attention?
- What would it look like as a product demonstration? Or as a movie?
- What if you broke the fourth wall and spoke directly to the viewer?
- What if you made content instead of an ad?
- What content is your audience already looking at?
- Which content creators are leading in your brand category and why?
- Can you be more authentic? More human? From the heart?
- What are some ways you can you experiment with the script?

Useful facts to support your creative idea

Relevant ads get 3x the attention compared to the average video ad.

Source: Google/Ipsos, Video Mobile Diary, U.S., 2017, n of 4,381 (saw ads occasions)

More than 70% of YouTube campaigns drove a significant lift in offline sales.

Source: Commissioned Nielsen Matched Panel Analysis – Base: 47 YouTube campaigns from 2016-2017 across 9 countries; Count based on tested strategies with significant lift based on a one-sided 90% confidence interval

Over 95% of YouTube videos are watched with sound on.

Source: Google Internal Data, Global, Aug 2016 (when volume is at least 10% for YouTube ads). still current as of Sep 2018