

6 Snapchat Ad Creative Findings

For Entertainment Marketers



“You only get one chance to make a first impression,” and on Snapchat that’s especially true. Perhaps it’s due to the ephemeral nature of the app. Or maybe it’s an indicator of our ever-shortening attention spans (or maybe a little bit of both).

The best performing Entertainment brands advertising on Snap get their messages across early and emphatically.

They don’t try to pique a user’s curiosity with some enigmatic creative and try to slip their brand messaging in later. Instead, they state their brand name immediately, at the very beginning of the ad.

When they display an image, they make it stand out, contrasting it against the background.

They don’t hide the call-to-action until the end of the ad. They splash it upfront, at the beginning, and try to generate click-throughs right away.

And they keep their message short (under 10 seconds, to be exact).

Our proprietary video-recognition technology allows us to analyze the visual elements of each ad — from the colors used, to the facial expressions on the models — using AI and machine learning technology. We then compare these results with the performance metrics for each campaign to determine which techniques had the greatest effect on consumers.

We can gain insight into how different creative decisions affect campaign performance, at all points on the marketing funnel. We learned consumers don’t like being overwhelmed with text and that visceral facial expressions boost engagement.

Our research quantifies how Snapchat consumers respond to different visual cues.

But our analysis does more than identify industry-wide best practices — it also helps to identify the creative choices that work best for your specific brand.

Each entertainment brand has a distinct name, a signature logo, a unique color palette, its own voice and personality. Whether it’s a well-known streaming platform or a studio releasing its highly-anticipated summer blockbuster, we identify how brands can use their visual assets most effectively. **That insight is especially important on Snapchat, a platform where brands need to make every moment count.**

Methodology

4,179	ad campaigns
7,572	video ads
11 billion	impressions

We analyzed 4,179 ad campaigns on Snapchat from 79 different entertainment ad accounts— for a total of 7,572 Snap Ads and more than 11 billion impressions (yes, with a “B”). We worked closely with Snapchat analyst and marketing science teams to produce these insights.

The ads appeared on Snapchat over a period of two and a half years, from January 1, 2019 to June 30, 2021.

VidMob Creative Analytics — our proprietary, AI-powered, visual image processing software — evaluated every visual component of these ads, frame by frame, to determine what creative strategies were deployed. The software tracks everything from the color scheme of the ad, to the eye gaze of the models used in the ad to the text prompts used in call-to-action buttons.

Our visual analysis was then compared to the multiple engagement and conversion events across platforms for each campaign to determine which creative decisions have the most impact on consumers.

Here’s what works:

1 Hit ’em early, hit ’em hard

One consistent insight our research shows is that it pays to be direct with consumers.

On Snapchat, that means **featuring your brand at the very beginning of the video had a 35% higher Swipe Rate** in the first two seconds compared with brands that introduce their brands more than 2 seconds after the video’s start.

Videos that have a **CTA in the first 2 seconds of a video have a 71% higher swipe rate** than ads that have a CTA after the first 2 seconds. Since with Snap Ads, consumers have the option to skip from the first second, brands have a shorter window to engage them.

BRANDING ▲

+ **35%**

Swipe Rate

when branding was featured in the first 2sec

CTA

+ **71%**

Swipe Rate

when CTA was shown in the first 2sec

2 Remember the little things

The emphasis on being direct would seem to suggest using big, bold type in your on-screen text. But our research found the opposite to be true — it's more effective to use text sparingly.

When text took up less than 5% of the screen, swipe rate jumped 23% compared to ads where text took up more than 5% of the visual field.

For Entertainment, it's always about the visuals, the rich cinematic worlds that studios create. On a platform like Snapchat which is founded on visual communication, this rings especially true, with ads containing heavier text generally seeing greater dropoff. When messages are communicated visually, brand messages resonate stronger with audiences.

Important caveat: This finding does not apply to brand logos, however. When it comes to displaying a logo, brands should feel free to fill the visual field.

3 Shorter, sweeter and more actionable

Generally speaking, short ads work best for driving engagement.

For entertainment brands on Snapchat, **Snap Ads less than 10 seconds long had a 40% higher greater swipe rate** than videos that were between 10 and 30 seconds long.

TEXT DENSITY **+ 23%****Swipe Rate**

when text took up less than 5% of the screen

AD LENGTH **+ 40%****Swipe Rate**

when ad length was less than 10sec

4 Make it pop

If there's any industry that knows the importance of color correction and image contrast, it's entertainment.

And when entertainment brands use high amounts of contrast in their Snapchat videos, they see a marked improvement in campaign performance.

Enhanced amounts of contrast saw a 40% higher swipe rate. It doesn't pay to be subtle and the data shows it. Make your brand presence bright and bold.

Note: We defined high contrast as the primary image having a high degree of visual contrast with the background imagery, either by using contrasting colors, differences in brightness, or both.

COLOR CONTRAST

+ 40%

Swipe Rate
when primary scene had
high visual contrast

5 Suspense says more

Our past studies have shown that, generally speaking, consumers respond best to positive emotions from models in videos. Not so on Snapchat, though.

When characters in a Snap Ad show visceral emotions such as surprise, disgust and anger, it builds suspense and commands the user's attention. **Ads with scared or angry facial expressions saw 26% and 33% higher view times,** respectively, making them by far the most impactful of all the emotions we logged.

Consumers responding to more complex emotions runs counter to previous studies we've done, but those studies weren't focused on the entertainment industry. We can infer that this insight is exclusive to entertainment, the industry consumers turn to when they want to be spooked, shocked and titillated.

EMOTION

+ 26%

View Time
for ads with scared
facial expressions

EMOTION

+ 33%

View Time
for ads with angry
facial expressions

6 Harness star power

It should come as no surprise that celebrity star power has an enormous effect on the performance of an entertainment brand campaign.

What was surprising, however, was that this effect was seen at all points of the marketing funnel. **At the top of the funnel, view time was 40% higher when videos featured celebrity talent, and 12% higher than the industry standard.**

Celebrity endorsements were especially effective when the endorser directly addressed the user. **Swipe rate was 18% higher when the celebrity talent directly faced the camera** versus ads where the endorser's gaze was indirect.

A little bit further down the funnel, **ads with celebrities had 20% higher swipe rate.**

Note: Average Screen time is defined as the total amount of time a user spends consuming a video and celebrity status was determined by a proprietary algorithm, created specifically for this study, to analyze IMDb listings and determine an actor's popularity.

TOP OF FUNNEL 

+40%
View Time
when featuring
celebrity talent

EYE GAZE

+18%
Swipe Rate
when celebrity talent
showed direct gaze

BOTTOM OF FUNNEL

+20%
Swipe Rate
when featuring
celebrity talent

Find Your Sweet Spot

An important caveat to this study is that no one strategy works for every brand.

Each brand has its own distinct voice and unique public perception. So while there may be some common characteristics across successful ad campaigns, it's better to understand the strategies that work best for your specific brand. Discovering the most effective creative elements for your brand will make your campaigns more engaging and your ad spend more efficient.

The difference between success and failure in advertising is slim, and in an era of ever-shortening attention spans, the margin of error is even narrower. The difference could be as subtle as having the model avert their gaze two degrees to the left.

It pays to sweat the small stuff in video advertising — and with VidMob, you can analyze your video advertising more precisely than ever before.



See how your ad performance stacks up: [request a demo](#)

Why VidMob?

The world's leading platform for Intelligent Creative, VidMob offers an end-to-end solution to help brands improve their marketing results by unifying creative and data. As the only company in the world to receive a Certified Creative Marketing Partner badge from every major social and digital platform, our access to creative data is unparalleled.

A portion of every dollar VidMob receives is used to fund pro bono creative services for nonprofits through its 501(c)(3) VidMob Gives. Learn more about VidMob at vidmob.com and VidMob Gives at vidmob.gives.

The screenshot displays the VidMob watch dashboard interface. At the top, there's a browser window showing the URL <https://acs.vidmob.com/watchdashboard>. Below the browser, a video player shows a woman with green hair and a blue popcorn bucket. To the right, a 'Campaign Snapshot' section features a line graph showing a 15.9% performance over time, with a note that it is 1.4% above the account average. Below the graph, there's a 'Top Performers' section with small video thumbnails. On the left side of the dashboard, a comment thread is visible with three comments from Sebastian Westergren, Alexandre Paiva, and Zoe Miller.