

6 ways brands innovated with their video marketing strategies in 2017

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The end of the year is always a moment for reflection. Looking back at all the video marketing case studies we published in 2017 provides an interesting glimpse into how brands are evolving their video strategies—and how they're innovating and pushing the envelope.

Here are six ways to consider upping the game for your brand's video marketing campaigns next year.

1. How to make the most of six-second ads

Lots of brands jumped headfirst into six-second ads this year including [YouTube's own marketing team](#). The key to success was to view the six-second ad as a blank canvas rather than a cut-down. As Eric Helin, creative director at Wieden + Kennedy, said of his team's work on a [Duracell bumper ad](#), "The time constraint gives you freedom to do things you wouldn't necessarily do in a longer spot."



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The blank canvas of the six-second ad allows lots of options for how to use them. Whether to tell a sequential story as [Xbox](#) did, or showcase a

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full product lineup like [La Mer](#) did, brands played with different ways to make the most of those six seconds.

Things get really interesting when brands think about six-second ads as part of a larger campaign—when storytelling expands beyond the boundaries of one ad unit and spans multiple ads served to the same viewer over time.

For instance, [KFC](#) used a six-second ad to tease something forthcoming in a later ad. [Campbell's Soup Company](#) used a six-second ad to amplify its longer ad and gain additional reach. And [Danone NL](#) used the six-second ad as a way to echo something a viewer had already seen in a previous spot.

2. How to build ads that get consumer attention

In a world where consumer attention is a scarce commodity, brands are realizing that [reach is no longer enough](#). Getting someone's attention is about way [more than the creative itself](#); it's also about the way that creative is served. Enter contextually relevant creative for the win.

"[Groupon](#) used to have a rather transactional approach to marketing. It also used to be very much focused around email," said Groupon CMO Vinayak Hegde. As the brand targeted millennials and Gen Z, it had to rethink its approach. By looking beyond demographics to behavior and context—and serving up contextually relevant video creative on YouTube—the brand saw a more than 20% lift in brand favorability.

When ads feel more personally tailored, they're more likely to gain attention. [Lime-a-Rita](#) and [Yoplait](#) learned this firsthand by building hyper-relevant creative too. The brand teams created ads that would be relevant to the content someone was watching on YouTube. And while it may seem tedious and manual to create dozens of versions of ads, they were able to pull it off at scale with new ad technology.



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3. How to build campaigns around live events

Anchoring marketing campaigns around live events like the Super Bowl, the Olympics, or the Oscars is no small feat. The key is acting quickly and planning ahead as much as possible.

[Beats by Dre](#) had an opportune moment when its brand ambassador, Tom Brady, was headed to the Super Bowl in 2017. But short on time, there was no way the company could have planned a full-on Super Bowl TV campaign. Acting quickly, the brand pulled together a video campaign on YouTube which they drove to from social media. Scenario planning for both a Patriots win and loss was the name of the game, enabling them to be nimble in the moment.

[Budweiser](#) experienced similar challenges with its epic campaign that celebrated the Chicago Cubs' 2016 World Series win. The aim was to deliver a viral-ready video to celebrate the winner, but the team had to plan ahead for either a Cubs or an Indians win. And they had to be ready to optimize quickly given the short window of relevance.

4. How to collaborate with influencers on YouTube

Influencer marketing gets a lot of hype these days. And no wonder—Carat found that [collaborations with YouTube creators are more effective than traditional celebrity sponsorships](#). But the rules of celebrity sponsorship that brands have been accustomed to for decades don't necessarily apply when partnering with a YouTube creator.

[Brita](#) found that the key to success was all about letting go of control. “It didn’t make sense to try and apply the rules of TV to YouTube,” said David Kargas, director of marketing communications at Clorox.



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[L'Oréal](#)—a company whose history is replete with celebrity endorsements—knew that if it was going to connect with a younger generation, it had to think outside the celeb spokesperson box. “Young people today increasingly [relate to influencers](#) who look and sound like they do,” said Axel Adida, global digital chief operating officer at L'Oréal.

5. How to use video ads as a playground for experimentation

The beauty of digital advertising is that it provides easy ways to test, iterate, and optimize. In that sense, video campaigns on YouTube can be an experimenter’s dream for learning about more effective creative.

[Lyft](#) took on one such challenge to see if it could recut its brand awareness ads to drive a direct response in the form of an app install. And in an effort to reuse assets instead of creating a new ad for every platform, the [Clinique](#) team experimented successfully with reworking their print ads into six-second bumpers.



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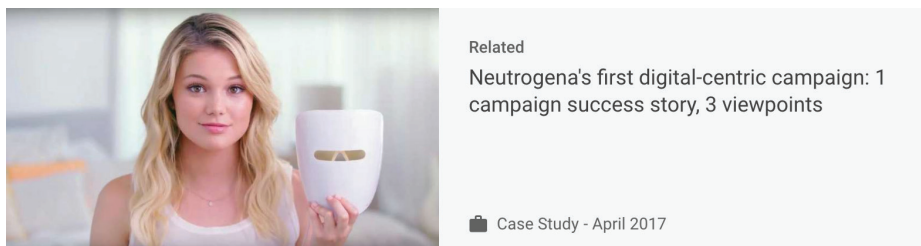
With a few tweaks, you can use the same ad on multiple platforms. Clinique shows how it's done

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6. How to shift from TV-centric strategies to digital-centric ones

As cord-cutters abound and the sheer amount of online content increases, brands are rethinking their media plans and what it means to go from TV-first to digital-first.

[Neutrogena](#) is one such brand who experimented with a digital-centric campaign for the launch of a new product. The key to their success was building a content ecosystem on YouTube and using a combination of ad formats to pull viewers through the funnel.



Looking for more practical tips on how to make YouTube videos that people love to watch and share? Check out the [YouTube Creative Playbook for Advertising](#).

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