

TrueView Optimization Playbook

Skip Ad ►

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INTRODUCTION

"If you drop the idea of ambushing people's attention by shoving videos down their throats and instead ask them to view by invitation, you can share an idea."

- Chris Anderson, TED

TrueView and brand marketing goals

The TrueView ad format allows you to connect with the audience most receptive to your brand. And it works! We've seen that people who choose to watch an ad are 75% more engaged than those who are forced to do so.

This guide is designed to help you take advantage of TrueView's unique properties to fine-tune your brand campaigns. And because you only pay if someone views your ad, TrueView helps you find the appropriate level of coverage and right moments to be present to engage with your constantly connected consumers.

OPTIMIZING TRUEVIEW FOR BRANDING

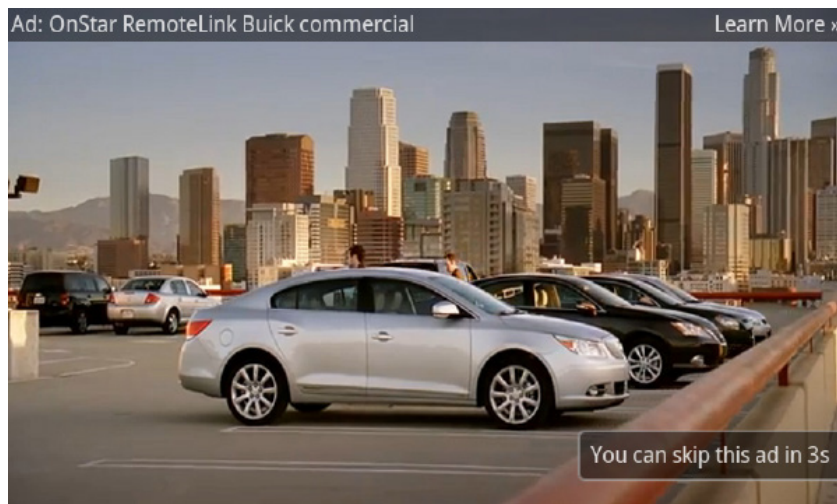
A great strength of TrueView is that it provides metrics for influencing consideration and increasing awareness, therefore enabling you to optimize your brand campaigns.

Why optimize?

A properly optimized TrueView campaign will achieve your marketing objective as efficiently as possible. Our goal with TrueView is to provide a powerful tool for your brand-building tool kit, and to that end we've engineered the ad-buying experience to effectively measure and track performance, allowing you to create rewarding user interactions.

Optimization over time

As with any ad format, TrueView campaigns may take some tweaking before they begin to efficiently deliver your goals. One of the best ways to set your account up for success is to be prepared to test and have patience as you optimize your performance.



KEY DEFINITIONS & ICONS

Brand Lift

A measurement tool that determines percent lift of a brand metric (i.e. ad recall, awareness and consideration) in a test group whose members were exposed to an ad compared with a control group whose members did not see the ad; used to determine the marketing effectiveness of an ad

Conversion rate (CVR)

The number of specific actions (conversions) that a user makes, divided by the number of clicks on an ad

Cost per acquisition (CPA)

The average cost for each conversion, defined as total cost over total number of conversions

Cost per click (CPC)

The amount paid for a click on an ad; for TrueView this is defined as total cost over total website clicks

Cost per impression (CPM)

The amount an advertiser pays for 1,000 impressions

Cost per view (CPV)

The amount an advertiser pays for a view of their video ad; views of TrueView video ads are only charged to the advertiser if the user watches 30 seconds or the full ad, whichever is shorter

Creative

Content in the form of an ad image, video or text

Engagement

Behavior by a user who is interacting with a video; may include clicking, subscribing, commenting, liking, sharing, or favoriting a video

Inventory

Ad placements available for an ad to run

Subscribers

YouTube users who choose to follow a channel by agreeing to have their new videos appear on their homepage and in navigation

Total budget

The total amount dedicated to campaign spending per day

TrueView in-display

YouTube video ad format that appears in search results, related videos, watch pages and GDN sites as a thumbnail image and promotional text; only pay when a user chooses to watch the ad

TrueView in-stream

YouTube video ad format that plays the ad before or during a YouTube video and allows the user to view the ad or skip it after 5 seconds; only charged if the user watches 30 seconds or the full ad, whichever is shorter

Unique reach

Number of unique viewers who see an ad

View-through rate (VTR)

The total number of views on a video ad, divided by the number of people the ad was served to ("impressions")

Max CPV bid

The most you're eligible to be charged for a video; won't always pay this amount depending on the auction dynamics

ICONS



Strategy

Key decisions to make and approaches to optimization



Why it works

Context for why certain approaches improve performance



How to do it

Synopsis of steps to take to carry out the optimization strategy



Tip

Call out of a best practice

SECTION 1:

DEFINING TRUEVIEW GOALS AND ACCOUNT HEALTH

Understand the ways to measure your success with TrueView video ads, and review the checklist to get a quick pulse on account performance.

Before making optimizations, identify your goals to ensure the changes you make improve the campaign and deliver expected results. Video ads provide a range of user actions that can be measured and used to optimize your campaign. Defining reasonable goals will go a long way in ensuring you can effectively optimize performance.

Contents:

TrueView Media Goals & Measurement
Account Health Checklist

MEDIA GOALS AND TRUEVIEW

It's crucial to understand the variety of goals that TrueView video ads can help you achieve. Throughout this guide we'll discuss the general tactics that can drive the performance you seek regarding the goal(s) that matters most.

KPI	TrueView Measurement Solution	Where It Lives
Cost Per View, Cost Per Completed View	These metrics are essential to the TrueView experience. The format is designed to connect YouTube users with your video.	AdWords for video
Uniques Reached, Cost Per Unique Viewer	Unique viewers are collected at the campaign and account level, allowing for tracking of both reach and cost per reach calculations.	AdWords for video
Site Visits	TrueView allows you to use a destination URL and track when users click away from your ad to your site.	AdWords for video, and/or website analytics
Conversions, View-Through Conversions	Using AW Conversion Tracking, advertisers can see how many users converted after interacting with their video.	AdWords for video, and/or website analytics
Subscribers	Native to the YouTube ecosystem, TrueView can drive recruiting YouTube channel subscribers.	AdWords for video "earned actions"
Lift in Brand Awareness	Because Brand Surveys are built directly into AdWords, you can seamlessly and cost-effectively evaluate your media's impact on brand metrics.	AdWords for video, Brand Lift tab
Lift in Ad Recall	Evaluate recall alongside awareness with brand surveys.	AdWords for video, Brand Lift tab
Lift in Brand Search	Search lift is also now available in AdWords, so you can see the impact of your media on user search behavior.	AdWords for video, Brand Lift tab

ACCOUNT HEALTH CHECKLIST

Before you optimize your TrueView campaigns, you'll want to evaluate the overall health of your campaign and strategy. Review these best practices to ensure you're starting strong.

Evaluate your creative

Ad Formats

- ☐ TrueView in-stream: Add companion banners to allow for clicks after the video is completed.
- ☐ TrueView in-display: Set to play on the channel page to enable deeper engagement.
- ☐ Include a call-to-action overlay to drive clicks.
- ☐ Make use of interactivity principles when possible.
- ☐ Test different ad lengths to determine ideal performance.

Creative Refresh

- ☐ Test different videos (or edited versions of your video) to gauge performance.
- ☐ Test different static images as thumbnails.



TIP: Standard delivery will help drive cost effective views, whereas accelerated delivery will complete your campaign early in the day, even if it means expensive auctions.

ACCOUNT HEALTH CHECKLIST

Evaluate your training

Campaign Settings

- ☐ Target relevant locations and languages.
- ☐ Target all devices.
- ☐ Use standard delivery unless you have found it difficult to serve your desired daily budget for short burst campaigns.
- ☐ Remove dayparting to expand opportunity.
- ☐ Set frequency capping for budget-capped campaigns that are "run-of-network."

Audience

- ☐ Consider run-of-site strategy to find most efficient views (may be necessary to test frequency caps).
- ☐ Run on Google Display Network (GDN)
- ☐ Combine TrueView with a companion video remarketing campaign on the GDN to extend reach.



TIP: Standard delivery will help drive cost effective views, whereas accelerated delivery will complete your campaign early in the day, even if it means expensive auctions.

ACCOUNT HEALTH CHECKLIST

Evaluate your bids

Bidding & Budgets

- ☐ Consider small incremental bid increases if you are not serving impressions.
- ☐ Check whether losing impression share is due to bids or budget.
- ☐ If you trim targeting, be sure to give bids a slight boost to ensure competitiveness.

Reporting

- ☐ Use AdWords for video reporting to see the full impact of your video ads, including reach and frequency, view-through conversions (saw ad, converted later), follow-on views/subscribers (saw ad, watched more videos) and more.
- ☐ Link your YouTube account to see follow-on views/subscribers.



TIP: Bid low enough to run throughout the day. The most efficient views will typically be in the evening. If you burn through your budget early, you're bidding too high.

SECTION 2:

BASIC TRUEVIEW IN- STREAM OPTIMIZATION

Having defined the goals for your campaign, it's time to optimize.

There are three core performance metrics that you should consult to understand current account health: **VTR**, **CPV** and **Total Cost**. Depending on your goals, there may be other metrics or factors you will want to consider. In the following slides, you'll learn strategies for using these metrics and how they are related to one another.

Contents:

- Optimizing for Viewthrough Rate
- Optimizing for Cost Per View
- Optimizing to Maximize Budget Delivery
- Checklist

OPTIMIZING FOR COST PER VIEW (CPV)

Bid adjustment is the most direct lever, but all impact CPV.

Cost per view is a valuable indicator of the competitiveness of your ad in the auction ecosystem. Are you paying more for views than you wanted or anticipated? Are you seeing CPVs increase over time? By tracking and using the levers to optimize your CPV, you'll deliver your message more efficiently.

Rising CPVs could be a sign of creative fatigue, especially if your ad has been live for a couple of weeks. Rising CPVs can also be a sign of increased pressure in the auctions in which you participate.

Conversely, declining CPVs could indicate that there is an opening in the market and that you therefore may have a chance to gain some efficient volume.

Cost per View (CPV)

Opt. Lever	Impact Rating
Bids	Medium
Targeting	Medium
Creative	Medium

OPTIMIZING FOR CPV

Although a bid is the most direct link to CPV, there needs to be a balance between the targeting and creative, which also provides the best user match, therefore driving a higher VTR and lower CPV.

1. Adjust your bids

Bids have the most direct link to CPVs in that you will never pay a higher CPV than your max bid. However, they act only as a ceiling and therefore serve as a blunt control on trying to make CPV adjustments. The most effective use of bids is in bidding your true value for the view that you're buying (much as you would with a click in Google Search). This "true value" is often difficult to arrive at, however, and is a point to focus on post-campaign evaluation.

The best starting point for defining your value of a view is the paid, earned and owned framework (see "TIP: Looking Beyond the View"). A view can drive far more activity beyond what you pay for directly. With TrueView we have seen improved engagement and recall for ads that haven't even been viewed for the full 30 seconds, meaning you don't pay but still accrue value.

2. Expand your targeting

Narrow targeting will lead to higher competition. This will likely manifest itself in higher CPVs unless you are already near your max bid, in which case you will simply stop winning auctions. Expanding targeting will allow the ad-serving system to identify auctions where your ads and bids are more competitive, and it can reduce the campaign's overall average CPV. You may still find a valuable audience at a lower CPV by exploring broader targets. Remember that the TrueView format itself acts as a targeting filter, so you only pay for the engaged viewers who choose to watch your ad.

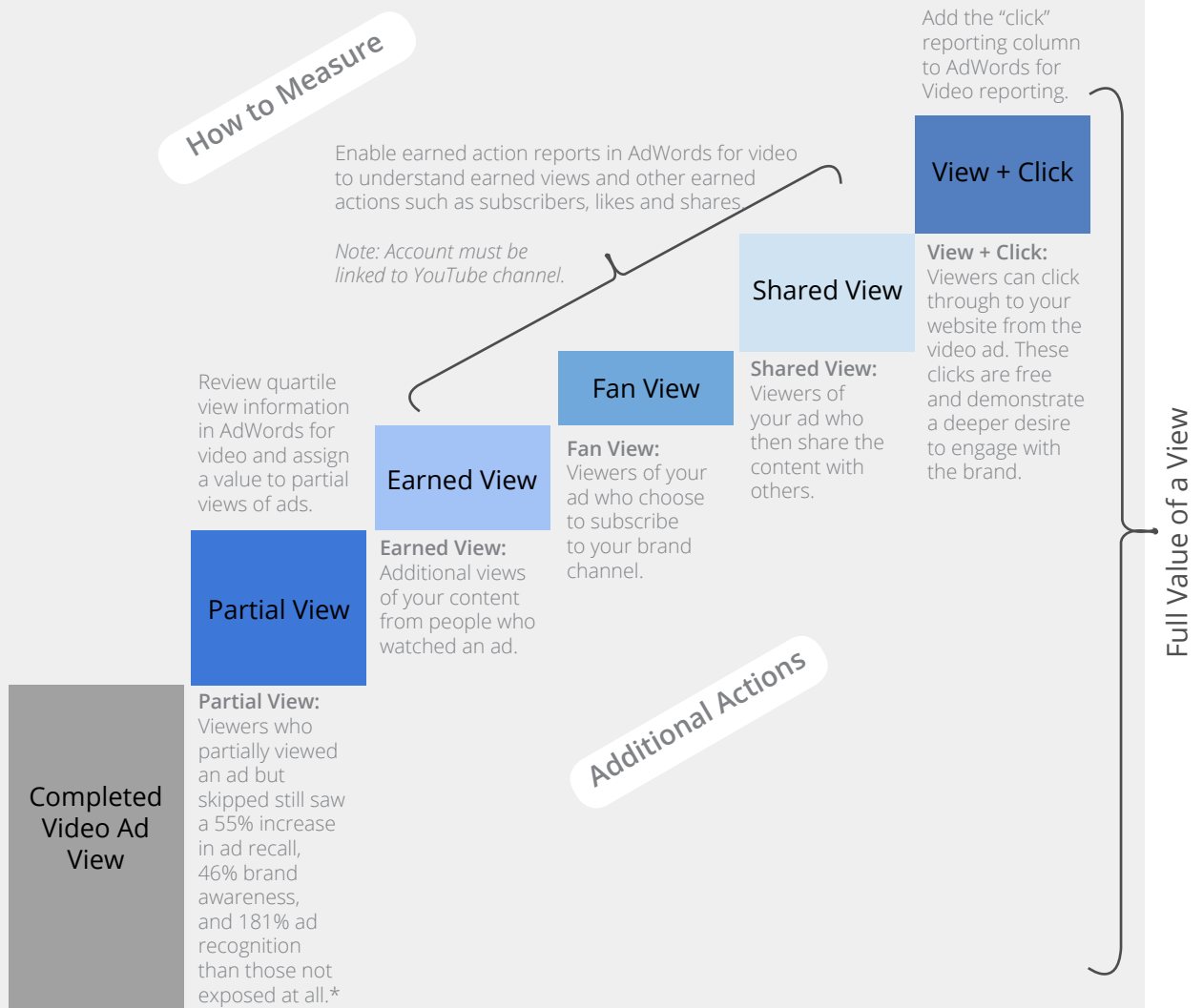
3. Improve your creative

CPVs are related to creative through second-order connection, which is discussed below in "Optimizing for VTR." Because strong creative drives good VTR, this can often impact the CPV. As VTRs rise, CPVs fall because the auction values relevant ads that users will enjoy as indicated by their willingness to view-through.



TIP: Looking Beyond the View

With TrueView, you only pay when someone completes the view. But there is a world of value in the actions users take beyond the view that extends the value of your campaign. Here is a quick guide to understanding the full value of TrueView.



OPTIMIZING FOR VIEW-THROUGH RATE (VTR)

Creative adjustment is the strongest lever to improve VTR.

VTR is the primary metric for understanding creative health. An ad with a high VTR will win more auctions and pay a lower CPV than an ad with a low VTR. If you are interested in driving the most views for the lowest cost, you should be obsessed with identifying which creative gives you the highest VTR.

Similar to CPV, a VTR point-in-time analysis can be useful in understanding whether you're doing well or poorly, but it is more crucial to understand the trend. Unlike CPV, VTR should not be influenced by the competitiveness of the auction, so if you see VTR trending either up or down, that is a signal about the health of your specific ad.

View-through Rate (VTR)

Opt. Lever	Impact Rating
Bids	None
Targeting	Low
Creative	High

OPTIMIZING FOR VTR

Although there are three key levers for optimizing TrueView, only targeting and creative influence this metric. VTR is the truest measure of a creative's health, and therefore optimizing creative will ideally improve VTR. Additionally, although it's not obvious that targeting could be a lever to improve the VTR of a campaign, it could impact performance because it affects who is able to view your ad.

1. Improve your creative

- Shorter ads have higher VTRs; if your ad can convey the message in 20 seconds as well as it does in 30 seconds, consider editing a shorter version.
- If you create several ads as part of the same creative effort, each will provide you a chance to better connect with users. Even small differences in effectiveness can mean large improvements in VTR and cost over the course of a buy.
- Minor tweaks such as changing the title or end cards and adding/removing call-to-actions can shift user behavior to improve VTR.

- We suggest having two or three creatives that you rotate in and out of the auction to make sure your creative does not experience "Ad Fatigue."

2. Expand your targeting

There are a few ways targeting can affect VTR:

- **Wrong targeting:** If you identified the wrong target audience, you may see more skipping. You'll want to adjust as you determine who is responding best to the ad.
- **Missed audience:** You can also be restricting where your ad shows, and therefore may be "hiding" ads from some viewers who may want to view them.

Some see any views outside a specific target demo as "wasted." But remember that TrueView ads are only billed when a user chooses to view-through, so it may be possible to find a receptive audience by expanding your targeting. This will often have the added benefit of reducing your average CPV. Also, refreshing your creative is important to seeing success in your Always On campaigns.



TIP: *Best Practices for TrueView Creative*

1. Make the first five seconds count. *After this, users can skip your ad. Convince them to stay!*

2. Keep it short. *Shoot for 30 to 60 seconds.*

3. Use calls to action. *Tell users exactly what you want them to do after watching your ad: subscribe, engage or watch more.*

4. Give users time to take action. *The last ten seconds or more of your video should give users time to click. Create a static call to action in an end-card.*

5. Give your video ad a real title. *Ad titles are visible to the user, so don't call it an "ad." Use this space to double-down on your call-to-action and brand messaging.*

6. Upload a compelling thumbnail. *Use clear, interesting and creative thumbnails to entice users to click on your video ad.*

7. Make it interactive. *Use annotations and cards to invite the user to interact with the ad, not just watch.*

8. Build for the platform. *Play with the users' desire to skip by calling out the opportunity to skip (or not skip) through creative or annotations. Create a series of ads that you can uniquely target to YouTube content.*

9. Use more than one ad. *Because you can test and learn, always have more than one creative execution, and allow users to choose the one that speak to them. And use new ads to keep messaging fresh and users entertained.*

10. Great content makes a great ad. *Emotionally compelling. Entertaining. Informational. There are several ways to make content great—and they are also the base of strong ad creative.*

OPTIMIZING BUDGET DELIVERY

Bid adjustment is the strongest lever to ensure the full budget is used.

Your daily budget should reflect the amount you want to spend to achieve your marketing objective. In general, with competitive bids, you should be able to invest your target budget with TrueView ads, though there is variance in inventory across countries and within smaller targeting constraints.

Optimizing for budget delivery involves taking actions to ensure you're delivering your desired budget, and it mainly involves improved bidding and expanded targeting.

Budget Delivery

Opt. Lever	Impact Rating
Bids	High
Targeting	Medium
Creative	Low

OPTIMIZING BUDGET DELIVERY

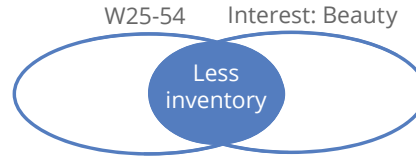
A healthy TrueView account will maximize its budget to make sure the ad is visible to the widest population of users while also effectively managing total costs.

1. Adjust your bids

A key reason your campaign may not be spending its full budget is that the CPV bids are not always competitive in the auction. Adjusting bids is the most effective way to deliver budgets more quickly. Increasing from .07 to .08 can be the difference between winning 10k impressions per day and 1M. Because of this, you'll want to keep bid adjustments low unless you know that you are far below the auction clearing CPV (review "Evaluate Your Bids").

2. Expand your targeting

Restrictive targeting is a very common reason that you would not spend your desired daily budget. Whether you're using audience, topic or even remarketing lists to target, by limiting the scope of users you target, you are competing only for a small subset of YouTube inventory. If you use more than one targeting tactic, they will further restrict to the intersection.



Increasing the scope of your targeting will always allow you to serve more impressions, often without any change to your VTR or CPV.

Competing for a small subset of inventory means that at best you will see average CPVs equal to the run-of-site average, and at worst you can see costs much higher because you are competing with every other auction competitor who matches those criteria.

3. Expand your creative options

You may be restricted from fully serving your budgets if you only have one creative option. This is not a common issue but can occur at high-budget amounts. This is due to serving restrictions that protect users from seeing the same ad too many times in a given day. Adding a second (or third or fourth) creative option will allow the system to optimize ad performance in each situation and may allow you to more effectively serve your full budget.

BASIC TRUEVIEW IN-STREAM OPTIMIZATION

Checklist

- ☐ Define what **core metrics** you want to optimize before you begin making changes. Knowing the end goal will inform which optimizations to make.
- ☐ Use our **account health checklist** to determine which levers to change to align to the core metrics you've selected.
- ☐ Evaluate your **creative** for improvements and consider developing more than one ad to determine which one performs better.
- ☐ Evaluate your **targeting** to determine whether your scope is too narrow and missing out on a valuable audience or driving up your costs by going after a very small niche.
- ☐ Set your **bids** at the true value of a view, and monitor your bids to ensure you're bidding competitively to show up in the auction when you want to.

SECTION 3:

ADVANCED TRUEVIEW IN-STREAM OPTIMIZATION

Once you're comfortable making basic optimizations, consider looking at advanced levers to improve performance.

Sometimes a campaign may have multiple goals. Many of the advanced levers we discuss can also be managed in conjunction with or in addition to the basic optimization levers, and in those cases it's important to have a clear sense of which metric is most critical.

Contents:

- Optimizing for Unique Reach
- Optimizing for Subscribers and Engagement
- Optimizing for Brand Metrics
- Checklist

OPTIMIZING FOR UNIQUE REACH

Efficiently reaching unique users at scale is a valuable capability of YouTube.

1. Measure your unique reach

AdWords for Video provides unique viewer count at both the campaign and aggregate level. This means you can see the unique number of users who viewed a specific video—if you are using one ad per campaign—or across all the videos in your account. Similarly, if you are targeting a specific demo, you can then see how many unique viewers the effort delivered against that target.

2. Focus on average CPV and new exposure

1. Focus on average CPV while working to not overexpose the users who have already viewed your video.

2. Negatively remarket using video remarketing. Create a new list for any user who watches the video as an ad; then, add that remarketing list as a negative placement to ensure that anyone who has viewed-through is not targeted again, meaning budgets will be available for new unique viewers.

3. If your YouTube and AdWords for video accounts are not linked, frequency caps can ensure that you're not showing impressions to the same users, meaning budgets will theoretically be around for those new uniques.

4. Keep in mind that, in general, growing unique reach will always be easier with as little targeting as possible.

Budget	Views	View Rate	Avg. CPV	Total cost	Unique viewers	Avg. view freq.
\$350.00/day	15,763	12.32%	\$0.09	\$1,341.03	10,235	1.54
\$200.00/day	15,124	17.90%	\$0.05	\$722.17	9,612	1.573
\$300.00/day	12,550	14.58%	\$0.07	\$906.97	8,340	1.505

OPTIMIZING FOR SUBSCRIBERS AND ENGAGEMENT

A subscribed user has indicated an interest in hearing more from your brand, and he or she can be a valuable asset worth maximizing. Engagement can mean many things, but at a fundamental level, the users who actively engage are more excited about your product or service. In both cases, ensuring your content drives the actions you value is pivotal to getting the most from your video ads.

1. Start with your content

Why should someone subscribe to your channel? Users want to feel like there is a reason to come back to your channel, so it's important to have a compelling story or identity. Content should inspire, educate or entertain the consumer about your category or product. For a complete content strategy guide, check out our YouTube Creators Playbook for Brands.

2. Know what's working

Once you've developed content, you can track its impact on engagement by using AdWords for video Earned Actions. The reporting will let you see which video ads are responsible for driving the most subscribers and engagements such as like additional

views, shares and likes. Take note of any trends you see in the type of content that drives this activity so that you can begin to understand creative elements that are more engaging. Things that may affect engagement are the use of people, imagery, timing of a brand logo, the tone of the ad, music and other elements.

3. Use a call-to-action

If you're not asking or giving users a reason to engage in a specific way, they likely won't. If you want people to subscribe to your channel, either ask them directly in the ad itself, or add an annotation asking them to "click and subscribe."

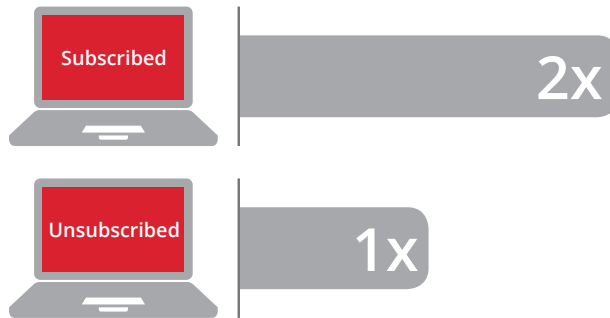
Your ad could also be a teaser for your YouTube channel that shows users the content you have and why they should subscribe to your channel. Showing users what they can find on your channel is more compelling than just providing a button to click, but it is also much more difficult and requires more resource coordination.



TIP: To drive subscriptions with your in-stream ad, use this as your destination url: www.youtube.com/subscription_center?add_user "[insert your channel here.]"

OPTIMIZING FOR SUBSCRIBERS AND ENGAGEMENT

Our internal data shows that when subscribers view your content, they watch for twice as long as users who watch your content but are not subscribed to your channel.



Average watch time
channel content in minutes



Targeting Tips

- Create a remarketing list of all users who have viewed a channel video.
- Create another list of all users who have subscribed to your channel.
- Combine these lists into a “custom combination” that targets all viewers who have viewed a video but are not yet subscribed.

Ad Tips

- Create a channel trailer in which you remind your viewers why they watched your videos in the first place.
- Urge users to subscribe through annotations or calls to action.

OPTIMIZING FOR BRAND METRICS

Brand metrics, such as aided ad recall or brand awareness, are traditionally measured using surveys. In 2014, Google launched the ability to measure these types of metrics on the fly and with more flexibility than ever before. Most importantly, this data feeds directly back into AdWords, where it can be processed and optimized against to improve performance.

1. Start with targeting

Brand Lift surveys allow you to measure the direct impact of your TrueView in-stream ads on brand metrics. The report includes details such as gender, age and frequency levels, and it breaks down viewers vs. nonviewers. With results available as early as seven days into the campaign, you can quickly identify opportunities to adjust targeting, optimize brand effectiveness and reach campaign objectives.

2. Consider your creative

Each survey will help you evaluate how effective your ads are with their overall audience and with specific demos. You can use Brand Lift surveys to identify whether you need to develop a specific brand message for males, for instance. Running surveys simultaneously will

enable you to compare creatives and decide which creative is worthy of more daily budget or higher bids to win more auctions and get in front of more users. They can also identify which creative will be most effective for your next flight on TV. For instance, if a media plan is heavy on midday female programs, you should select the creative with the highest lift among females.

3. Influence your brand strategy

The *Brand Lift Surveys Playbook* can help you administer surveys to fuel your brand decisions with robust data.

Similarly, *Brand Interest*, another new effectiveness feature in 2014, will show how your brand marketing with Google is impacting search results for key queries. Branded queries drive valuable inbound traffic for marketers, and actions that increase the likelihood that a user will search a brand term is often valued by brand builders. For any advertiser that also runs in search, Brand Interest can provide a tangible value in new traffic that can be attributed to TrueView, which may lead to increased budgets or willingness to improve bids.

ADVANCED TRUEVIEW

IN-STREAM OPTIMIZATION

Checklist

- ☐ Make sure you're comfortable making the basic optimizations and that you are optimizing to increase views and lower costs.
- ☐ Align your advanced optimization goals with your **marketing objective**. If you're looking to build awareness, optimize for reach; if you're looking to influence consideration, optimize for engagement and subscribers.
- ☐ To increase your unique reach, focus on optimizing for **average CPV** and use **negative remarketing** to reach a new audience that hasn't seen your ad.
- ☐ Develop a **content strategy** to ensure you're offering compelling creative to engage users and draw in subscribers.
- ☐ Include a strong **call-to-action** if you want users to engage with your ads. This can be included as an annotation over the video, or as the message of the ad itself as a teaser for your channel.

SECTION 4:

TRUEVIEW IN-DISPLAY OPTIMIZATION

Optimization levers for TrueView in-display ads differ because of the different user functionality of the format.

TrueView in-display differs from in-stream because users who click are taken to either the watch page or the channel page. This format offers the same accountability for views, which are only billed when the video begins playing. This means that the VTR for in-display is much more similar to a CTR than the VTR we observe in in-stream.

Contents:

- Optimizing for Clicks/Views
- Thumbnails
- Optimizing for Engagement
- Checklist

OPTIMIZING FOR CLICKS/VIEWS

In-display ads can run in many different locations, including the YouTube search page, the YouTube watch page and sites across the Google Display Network. When thinking about which piece of creative and what message you want to use, keep in mind that users will often be interacting during or after watching a video or while searching for something.

1. Remove low-performing inventory and placements

You can find information about the placements of your in-display ads by navigating to the “Targets” tab and then clicking on “Placements” under the “Where my ads were shown” label. As with placements in AdWords Display, try to prune any inefficiently performing placements. If it looks like your ad performs better on the YouTube watch page, consider adding other creatives to see whether you can find one that works well on the GDN.

2. Improve your creative

An in-display ad contains two parts: the video image and the text. Both of these can be opportunities for optimization.

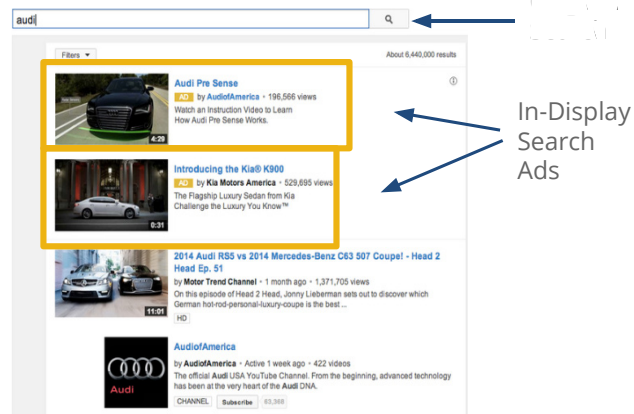
Image: Be sure to choose an image that grabs users’ attention and communicates why they should click.

Text: Make sure the text is descriptive and/or enticing. You’ll often be asking users to change their originally intended behavior, so give them a reason to click.

With the “related” video placement, users may actually be browsing. Make sure your video stands out from the other organic options.

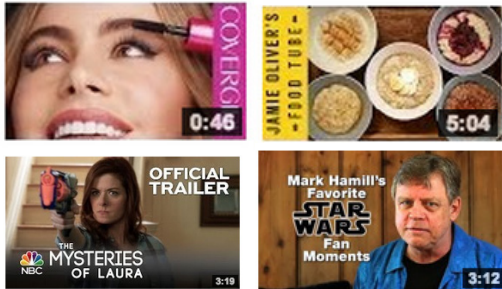
Consider that each part of the ad can be optimized independently.

Try testing several image options, and when you find one that works best, test out different text options. This way you’re finding the best of both.



THUMBNAILS

Thumbnails show up in different sizes and formats all across YouTube and outside it, including next to TrueView in-display ads. Make sure you've got a strong, vibrant image that pops no matter what size it is.



General guidelines

- When shooting a video, take shots that will make great thumbnails.
- Always upload custom thumbnails with the video file.
- Make sure the thumbnail is not racy.
- Consider the legibility of your thumbnail as viewed at multiple sizes.
- Remember that thumbnails change size depending on the YouTube placement and device.

Visual guidelines

- Use visual cues (colors, images, shapes, personalities) that are consistent with your brand.
- Clear, in-focus, high-resolution (640px x 260px min. 16:9 aspect ratio)
- Bright, high contrast
- Close-ups of faces
- Visually compelling imagery
- Well-framed, good composition
- Foreground stands out from background
- Looks great at both small and large sizes
- Accurately represents the content.



TIP: Upload high-resolution thumbnails so that they appear crisp and clear wherever viewers happen to see them.

OPTIMIZING FOR ENGAGEMENT

In-display ads are also crucial to extending exposure of your video ads onto other parts of YouTube and across the GDN. For the savviest video advertiser, in-display can often act as the part of the campaign that gradually grows their YouTube footprint by always directing users to their channel.

1. Be present so users can engage when ready

In-display is a lightweight, opt-in ad format, meaning users will see impressions when browsing YouTube and the GDN, and they can decide to watch the ads when they see something that interests them. The key is to ensure that your ads are present and enticing so that users will engage when they encounter them.

In-display has been shown to be an effective driver of subscribers as well as other earned actions. As with in-stream, monitor these metrics in the reports to identify creatives that may be more effective than others.

2. Don't expect the same CPV as TrueView in-stream

In-display ads will typically not drive views at the same cost as in-stream, with a range of 3–4x the CPV. Effective optimization will keep costs down on in-display while maximizing the impact, which is measured in terms of total views (paid + earned), subscribes or any other important metrics. Once an account has been optimized, with the right balance of cost and performance, an in-display campaign should be able to run with much less oversight.

3. Test new creative

The auction space for TrueView in-display is typically more stable, so although rotating creative to maintain some freshness is still a best practice, it is likely not as critical as in in-stream. The two elements of an in-display ad are the thumbnail image and the ad text, both of which can be adjusted. Try a few different variations of each to see which ones drive the most engagement.

OPTIMIZING FOR ALWAYS ON

Consumers are considering your category and brand every day. Flighted campaigns often lead to missed moments to build consideration through TrueView in-stream and in-display. Make your content discoverable with these video products, and you can capture all of the moments that matter.

1. Always be there when it matters

You can extend your campaigns efficiently when you only pay for viewed video ads. In a typical TV campaign, there is either significant waste of impressions and dollars when flights are on or missed moments to reach your audience when the flight is off.

TrueView provides you with efficient always on campaigns with no waste and no missed moments so that you can always be there when it matters.

2. Always tell better stories to the right people through choice

Our new digital world provides the tools you need to identify your audiences and reach them effectively. Tailor your message to what your audience cares about. Once you

find the right people and the right message, you have relevance at its best. And your consumers will move from interested to convinced.

3. Always move your business forward and optimize

Measure and optimize faster with TrueView and Brand Lift. It's important to continue to learn what messaging works best, and it's easier to do this when you are always on. Brand Lift studies help your campaigns become more effective by reaching the exact audience that viewed your previous ads and fans. Then you can test different creatives to see what drives the most engagement and impact for your brand.

Finally, you'll get specific tips on how to optimize ad frequency and target demographics so that you can reach peak performance.

TRUEVIEW IN-DISPLAY OPTIMIZATION

Checklist

- ☐ Identify the right contexts in which to show your ads. Look for keywords that someone could be searching for and other types of videos on which your ad would be relevant or useful.
- ☐ Check on **placement** performance and remove low-performing inventory and placements.
- ☐ Use an engaging thumbnail and descriptive text to get users to click on your video. Also, consider optimizing the **image and text** separately.
- ☐ Don't expect the same CPV as TrueView in-stream. Figure out what your best **balance** between costs and performance looks like.
- ☐ Often, TrueView in-display performs better when TrueView in-stream is active, so consider running both formats.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

YouTube Advertising

AdWords for Video Help Center:

https://support.google.com/youtube/topic/3030592?hl=en&ref_topic=2972865

YouTube Advertising Help Center:

<https://www.youtube.com/yt/advertise/>

YouTube Channel/Creative Development

YouTube Creator Playbook for Brands: <http://www.thinkwithgoogle.com/research-studies/youtube-brand-playbook.html>

YouTube Creator Playbook:

<https://www.youtube.com/yt/playbook/index.html>

YouTube Creator Academy:

<https://www.youtube.com/yt/creators/education.html>

YouTube Analytics

YouTube Analytics Help Center:

https://support.google.com/youtube/topic/3025741?hl=en&ref_topic=1115985

