



THE PROXIMITY EFFECT

Quantifying the impact of misaligned content in the wild west of video

A man with a beard and short dark hair, wearing a white t-shirt, is looking down at a black smartphone in his hands. He is in an office environment, with a wooden desk and blurred background elements like a computer monitor and books. The text 'BRAND SUITABILITY' is overlaid in large white letters on the left side of the image.

BRAND SUITABILITY

REQUIRES MORE
THAN BRAND SAFETY

BRAND SUITABILITY CAN BE COMPLICATED



BRAND SAFETY

Content that isn't suitable for any brand (offensive, hateful, violent, etc.)



UNSUITABLE CONTENT

Content that may or may not be suitable for certain brands by being misaligned with brand values (gross, curse words, etc.)



VIDEO FORMATS

Type of video environment (pre-roll, video cards, etc.)



PROXIMITY TO CONTENT

How close is the video ad to the content? And does it appear before or after the content?

CRITICAL QUESTIONS

1

VIDEO ENVIRONMENT

What do brands need to know about misaligned content in different video environments?

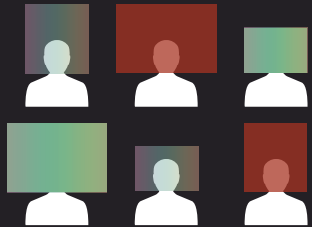
2

PROXIMITY TO CONTENT

What role does proximity to misaligned content play?

THE METHOD

Controlled Testing on Mobile



Total n=2,701

Recruited mobile users of popular video apps, offering different video environments

Users spend time on the platform as they typically would:



Pre-roll



Video Card

Experimental Design

Users randomized into groups, which determines:

Which ad is served:

CONTROL

VS

TEST

Ad slot in relation to misaligned content

AD

✗

✓

AD

✗

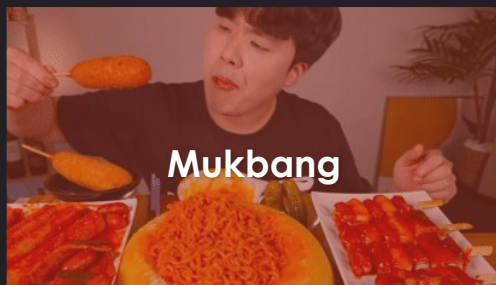
✓

THE CONTENT

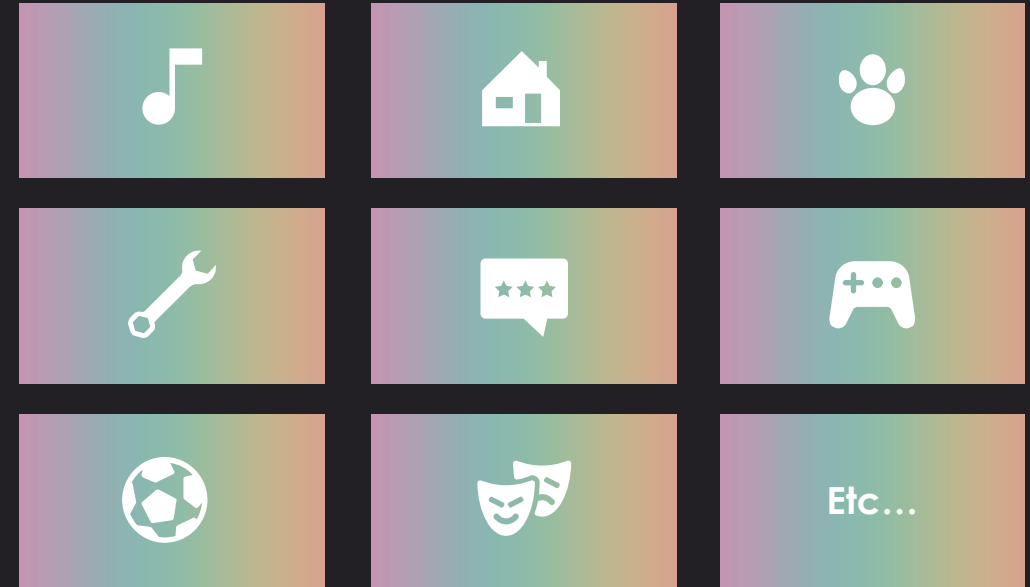
Misaligned Content

Content not aligned with brand values. In this case, content that commonly produces visceral reactions in people

- Skin Conditions (e.g. pimple popping)
- ASMR (videos inducing autonomous sensory meridian response)
- Mukbang (video host consumes various quantities of food)



Standard Content



General interest content of a variety of different topics that typically appears on each platform, unrelated to the advertising brands

THE METRICS

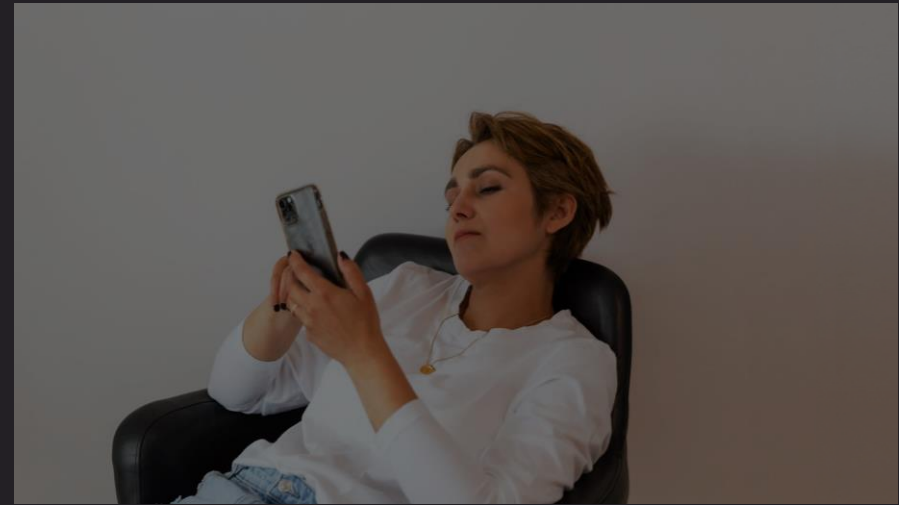
Traditional Branding



Both those who received the control and test ad in each type of content answer brand lift questions & responses are compared.

- Awareness (ad recall, etc.)
- Brand Perceptions
- Purchase Intent
- Ad Feedback

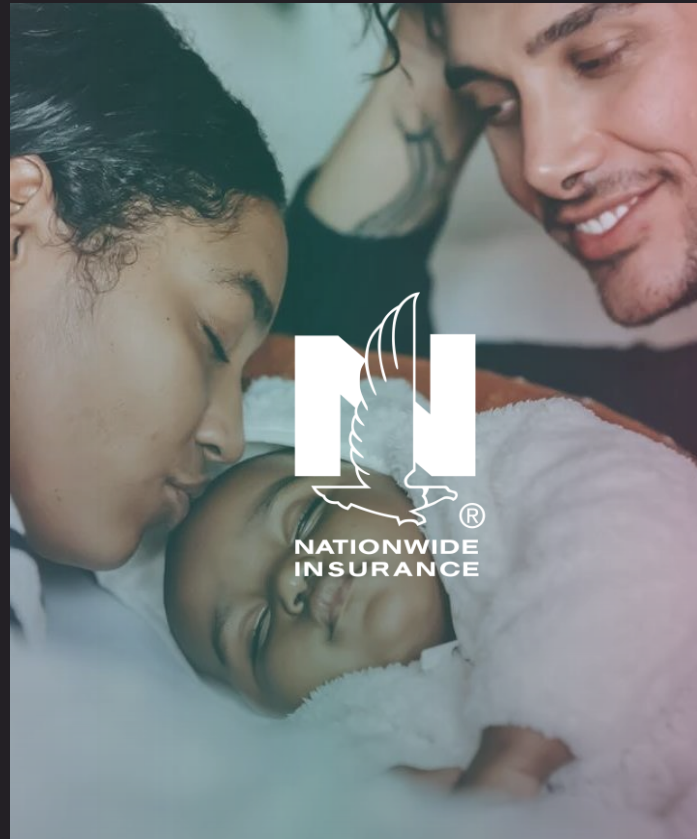
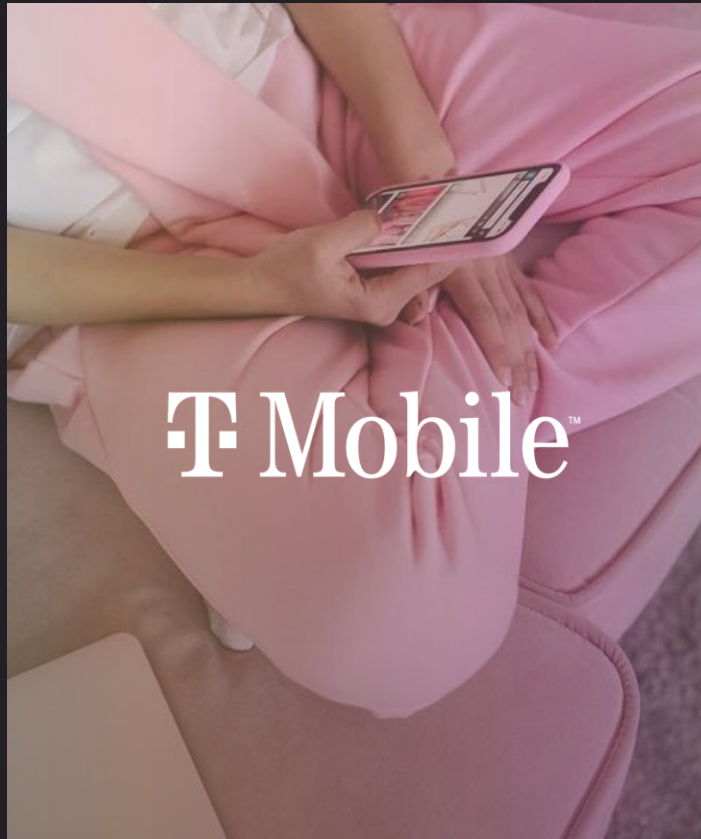
Organic Engagement



- Ad skipping via skip button or swipe
- Content skipping via swipe
- Ad completion rates
- Viewability (time in view & % in view)

THE BRANDS

Each randomly served within each type of content



THE FLIPSIDE

OF THE CONTENT HALO EFFECT

WE TESTED ADS THAT WORK HARD

ADS IN STANDARD CONTENT

Impact on All Tested Ads - Delta (Exposed – Control)

Purchase Intent
+9%▲

Brand I respect
+7%▲

Brand is high quality
+7%▲

Brand I trust
+5%▲

All ads in standard content (control n=276; exposed n=270)

▲ = statistically significant difference between exposed/control at >=90% confidence

MISALIGNED CONTENT ERODES IMPACT OF HARDWORKING ADS

Impact on All Tested Ads - Delta (Exposed – Control)

■ Ads in Standard Content ■ Ads in Misaligned Content

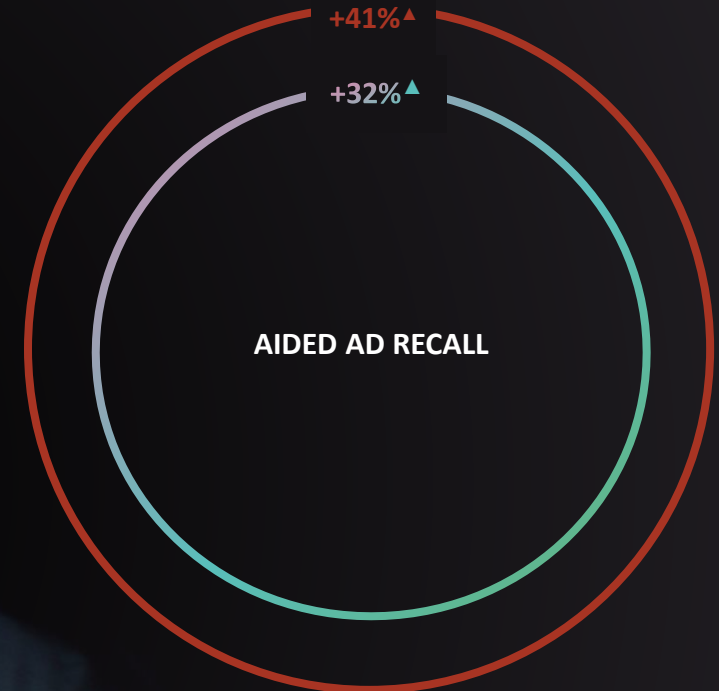
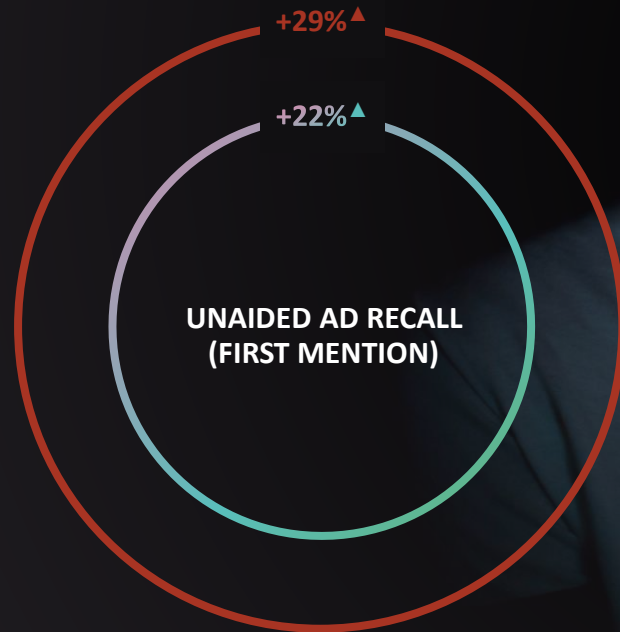


All Ads in standard content (control n=276; exposed n=270); all ads in misaligned content (control n=539; exposed n=1,616)
▲ = statistically significant difference between exposed/control at >=90% confidence

WHILE PEOPLE DON'T FORGET ADS IN MISALIGNED CONTENT...

Impact of All Tested Ads - Delta (Exposed – Control)

- Ads in **Standard Content**
- Ads in **Misaligned Content**

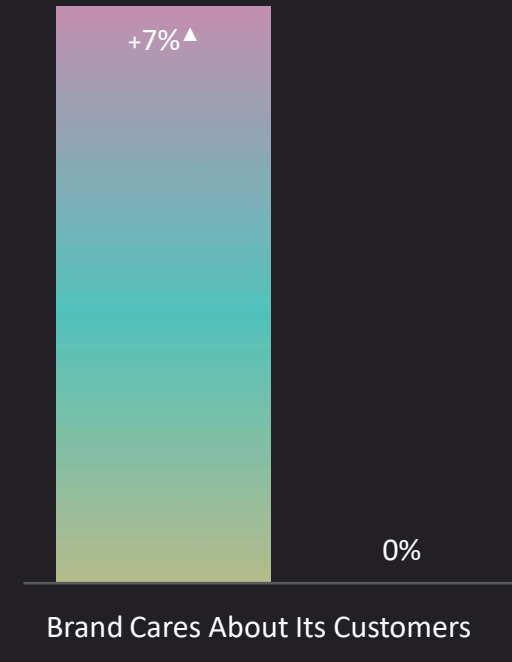


...PEOPLE REMEMBER THE AD FOR THE WRONG REASONS

Impact of All Tested Ads - Delta (Exposed – Control)

■ Ads in Standard Content

■ Ads in Misaligned Content



All Ads in standard content (control n=276; exposed n=270); all ads in misaligned content (control n=539; exposed n=1,616)

▲ = Statistically significant difference between exposed/control at >=90% confidence



UNDER THE HOOD OF MISALIGNMENT

65%

Say misaligned content was
“appropriate” in general

CONTENT APPROPRIATE
FOR GENERAL
CONSUMPTION MAY
NOT BE APPROPRIATE
FOR BRANDS

RATED THE VIDEOS
AS APPROPRIATE...

Perceptions of Misaligned
Content Among Those
Who Watched All or Most -
% Strongly / Somewhat
Agree

41%

Say misaligned content
was “appropriate” for
the brand

IT'S CLEAR CUT FOR CONSUMERS - BRANDS SHOULDN'T BE ALIGNED WITH CERTAIN TYPES OF CONTENT

You mentioned that the video was inappropriate for [brand name] to appear next to. Why is that?

"If you want to be taken seriously don't place ads anyway near these creepy a\$\$ videos"

"A kid eating isn't really good for business"

"I wouldn't want my ad to come on after something like that in fear of what people will reference my ad with."

"I can't see a big company like [brand name] being next to this"

"Because it's too weird to associate with"



"A brand would not want to associate itself with such a disgusting act. Leaves a bad memory attached to the brand."

"Because it only disgusted me"

"Because [brand name] has manners"

"Because it isn't the caliber video I would expect [brand name] to associate with."

"I don't know if inappropriate is the right word exactly, but I think they should pick a higher quality video to appear next to. This one was just really bad."

MISALIGNED CONTENT CAN FEEL “ICKY”

Not only does misaligned content under-index on “premium,” but most of all it isn’t safe for work and feels “embarrassing”

Perceptions of Video Content –
Among Those Who Watched All or Most of Video, Indexed

THE CONTENT WAS...

Premium

90

A Guilty Pleasure

110

Triggering

111

Not Safe For Work

126

Embarrassing

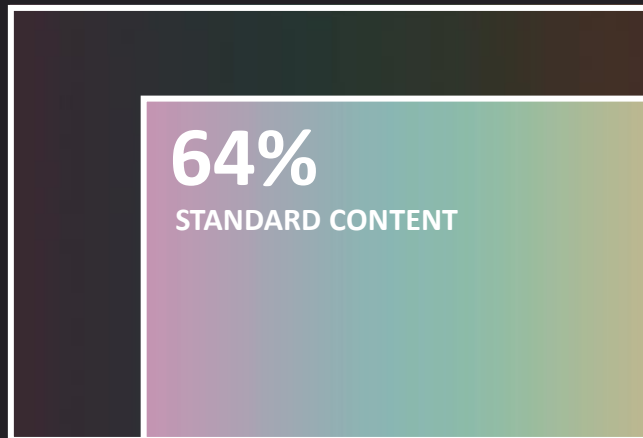
157

ABOVE

Misaligned Content
Indexed to Average (100)

BUT PEOPLE STILL WATCH MISALIGNED CONTENT & ENJOY IT

WATCHED ALL OR MOST OF VIDEO
Video Content Completion - % Agree



Perceptions of Misaligned Content
Among Those Who Watched All or Most of Video
% Strongly / Somewhat Agree

HIGHEST RATED MISALIGNED CONTENT CAN HAVE THE BIGGEST NEGATIVE IMPACT FOR BRANDS

SKIN CONDITION VIDEOS VS. AVERAGE FOR MISALIGNED CONTENT



Ads in skin condition videos n=700

All deltas statistically significant difference between exposed/control at $\geq 90\%$ confidence



NEW CLEAR
SCALP BEAUTY
THERAPY

SKIP AD

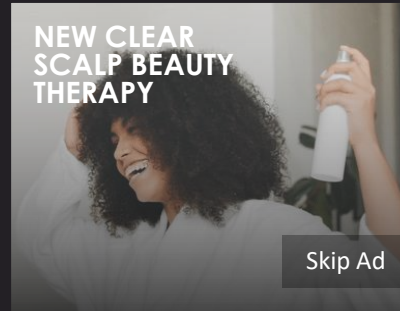
THE ROLE OF PROXIMITY IN A

PRE-ROLL ENVIRONMENT

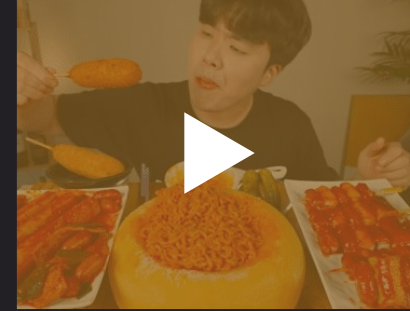
WHEN VIDEO IS COUPLED WITH MISALIGNED CONTENT

The pre-roll environment

BEFORE MISALIGNED CONTENT



Pre-roll ad

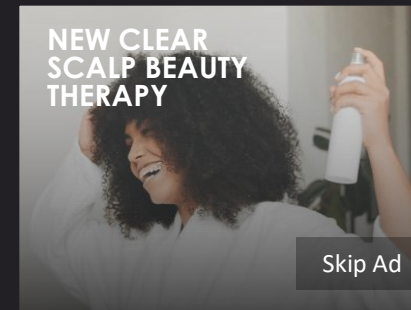


Misaligned content

AFTER MISALIGNED CONTENT



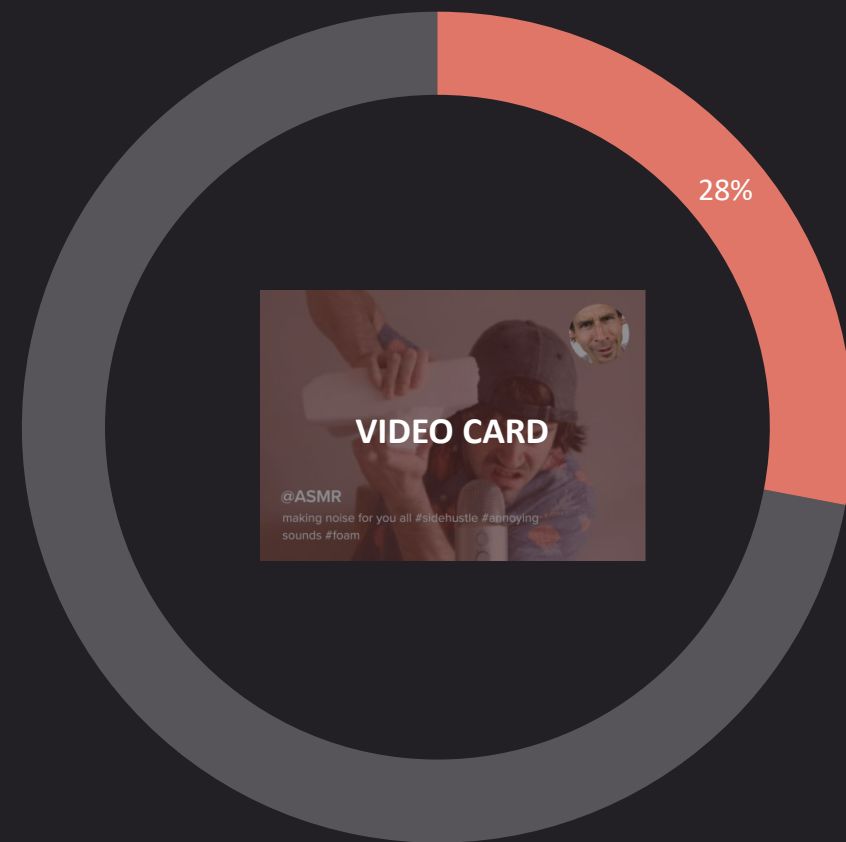
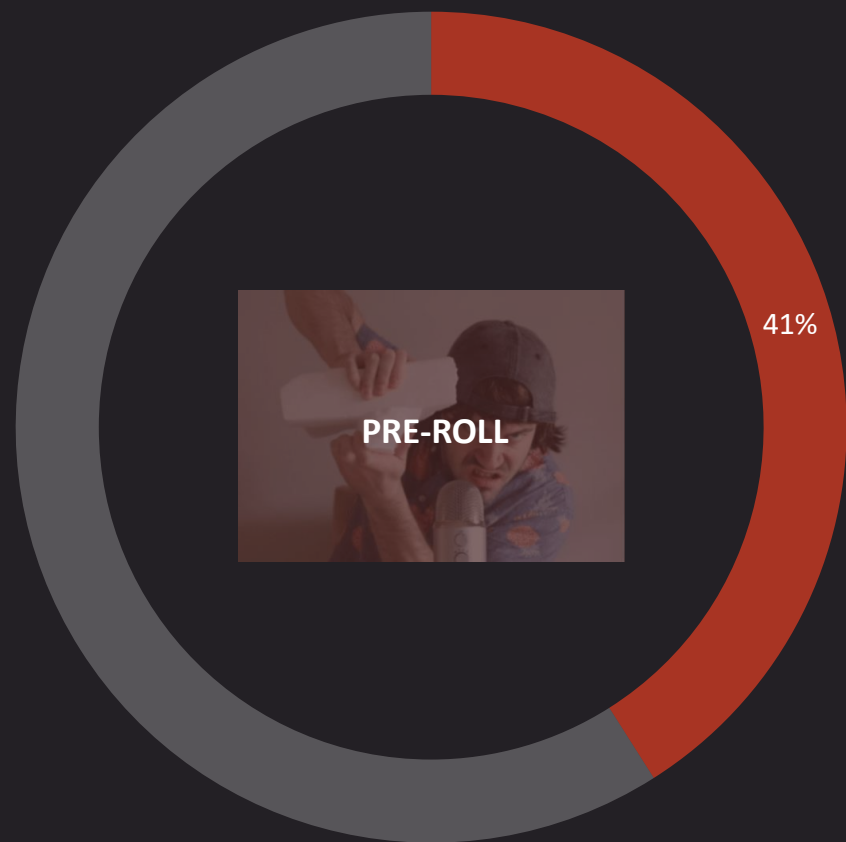
Misaligned content



Pre-roll ad

BRANDS ARE MORE LIKELY TO BE HELD ACCOUNTABLE FOR THE CONTENT

Perceived Brand Endorsement of Misaligned Content - % Strongly/Somewhat Agree

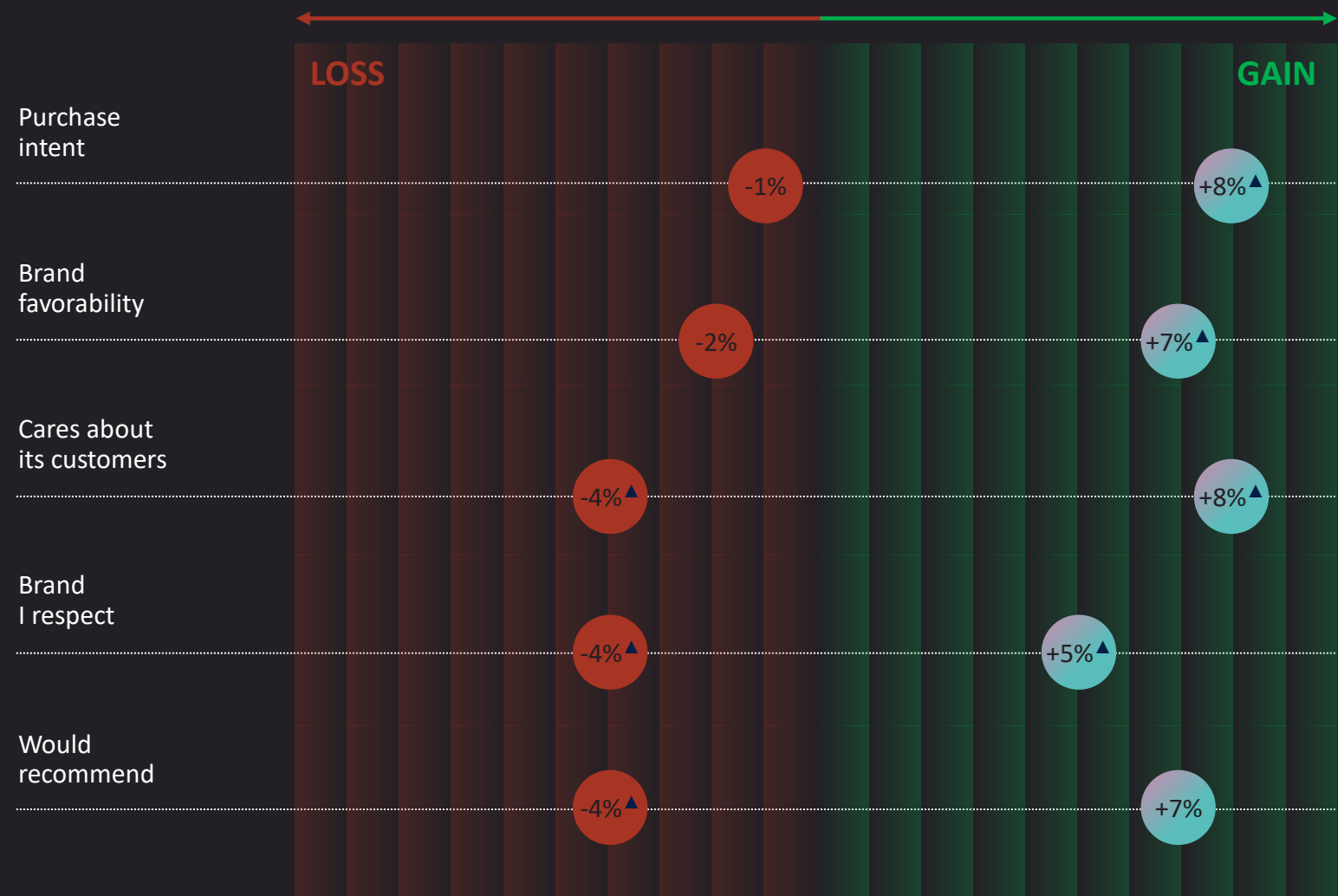


RISK EXTENDS BEYOND LOSS OF IMPACT

Decline in brand perceptions result from appearing around misaligned content

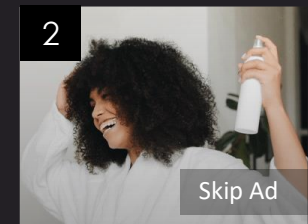
- In Standard Content
- In Misaligned Content

Impact Of Ads In Pre-roll Environment - Delta (Exposed – Control)



SIMILAR CONSEQUENCES FOR APPEARING BEFORE AND AFTER MISALIGNED CONTENT

Impact Of Ads In Pre-roll Environment - Significant Declines From % Strongly Agree



BRAND IS...

AD IMMEDIATELY BEFORE MISALIGNED CONTENT

AD IMMEDIATELY AFTER MISALIGNED CONTENT

| | | |
|---|------|-------|
| High Quality | -5%▲ | -9%▲ |
| A Brand I Want To Associate Myself With | -5%▲ | -4%▲▲ |
| A Brand I Would Recommend | -7%▲ | -11%▲ |
| Innovative | -4%▲ | -7%▲ |

Pre-roll misaligned content (control n=272; exposed immediately before n=413; exposed immediately after n=148)

▲ = Statistically significant difference between exposed/control at >=90% confidence

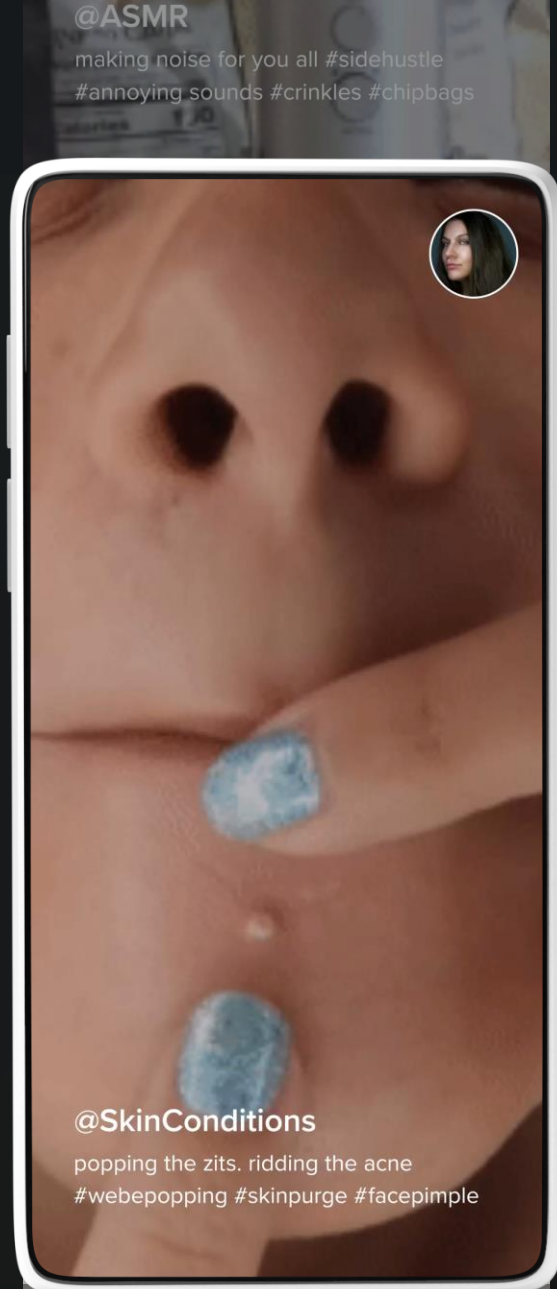
THE ROLE OF PROXIMITY IN A

VIDEO CARD ENVIRONMENT



@ASMR

making noise for you all #sidehustle
#annoying sounds #foam



WHEN VIDEO IS STAND-ALONE

The video card environment

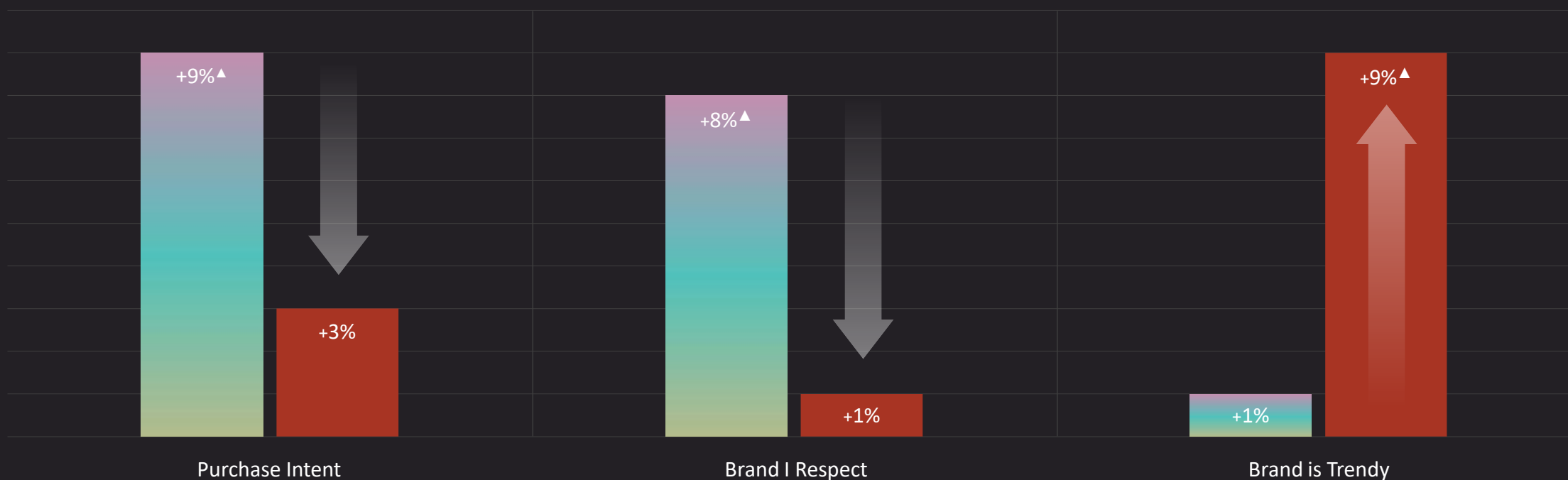


MISALIGNED CONTENT GIVES TRENDINESS A BOOST AT THE COST OF PURCHASE INTENT & RESPECT

Impact of Video Card Ads By Content Type - Delta (Exposed – Control)

■ In Standard Content

■ In Misaligned Content



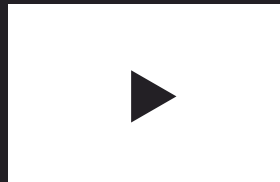
Video card standard content (control n=130; exposed n=130); video card misaligned content (control n=268; exposed n=775)

▲ = Statistically significant difference between exposed/control at >=90% confidence

THE CLOSER THE AD, THE STRONGER THE BRAND ASSOCIATION

Perceived Brand Endorsement of Misaligned Content by Proximity

- % Strongly/Somewhat Agree



MISALIGNED CONTENT

33%

of people believe the brand supports the content

IMMEDIATELY NEXT TO MISALIGNED CONTENT

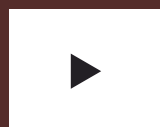
23%

of people believe the brand supports the content

2 VIDEOS AWAY FROM MISALIGNED CONTENT

IMMEDIATE PROXIMITY TO MISALIGNED CONTENT HINDERS AD EFFECTIVENESS

Impact of Video Card Ads By Content Type - Delta (Exposed – Control)



misaligned
Content

ADS

Immediately Next To
Misaligned Content

ADS

2 Videos Away From
Misaligned Content

Purchase Intent

+3%

+9%▲

Brand I Respect

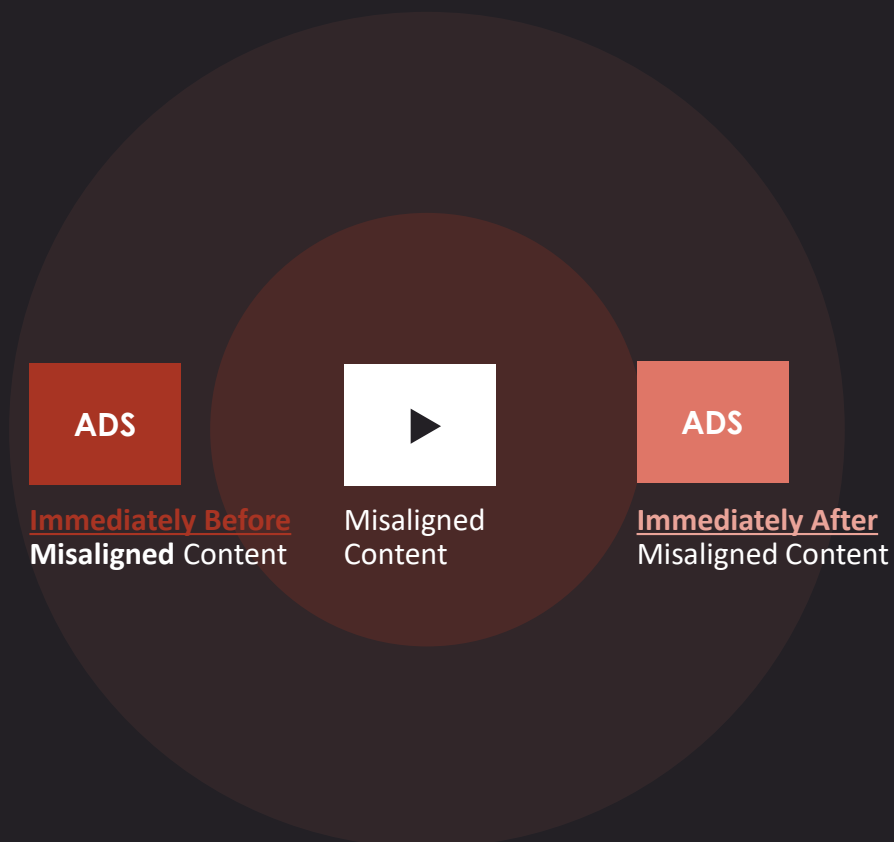
+2%

+8%▲

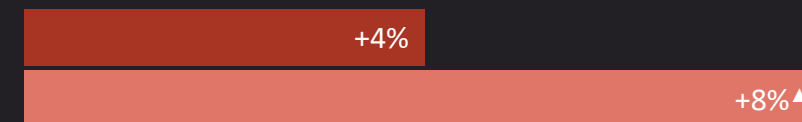
MORE SPECIFICALLY, APPEARING IMMEDIATELY BEFORE SHOULD BE THE BIGGEST CONCERN

Impact of +10% lost when ads appear immediately before misaligned content

Impact of Video Card Ads - Delta (Exposed – Control)



Brand Favorability



Brand is High Quality



Brand I Would Recommend



Brand Cares About Its Customers

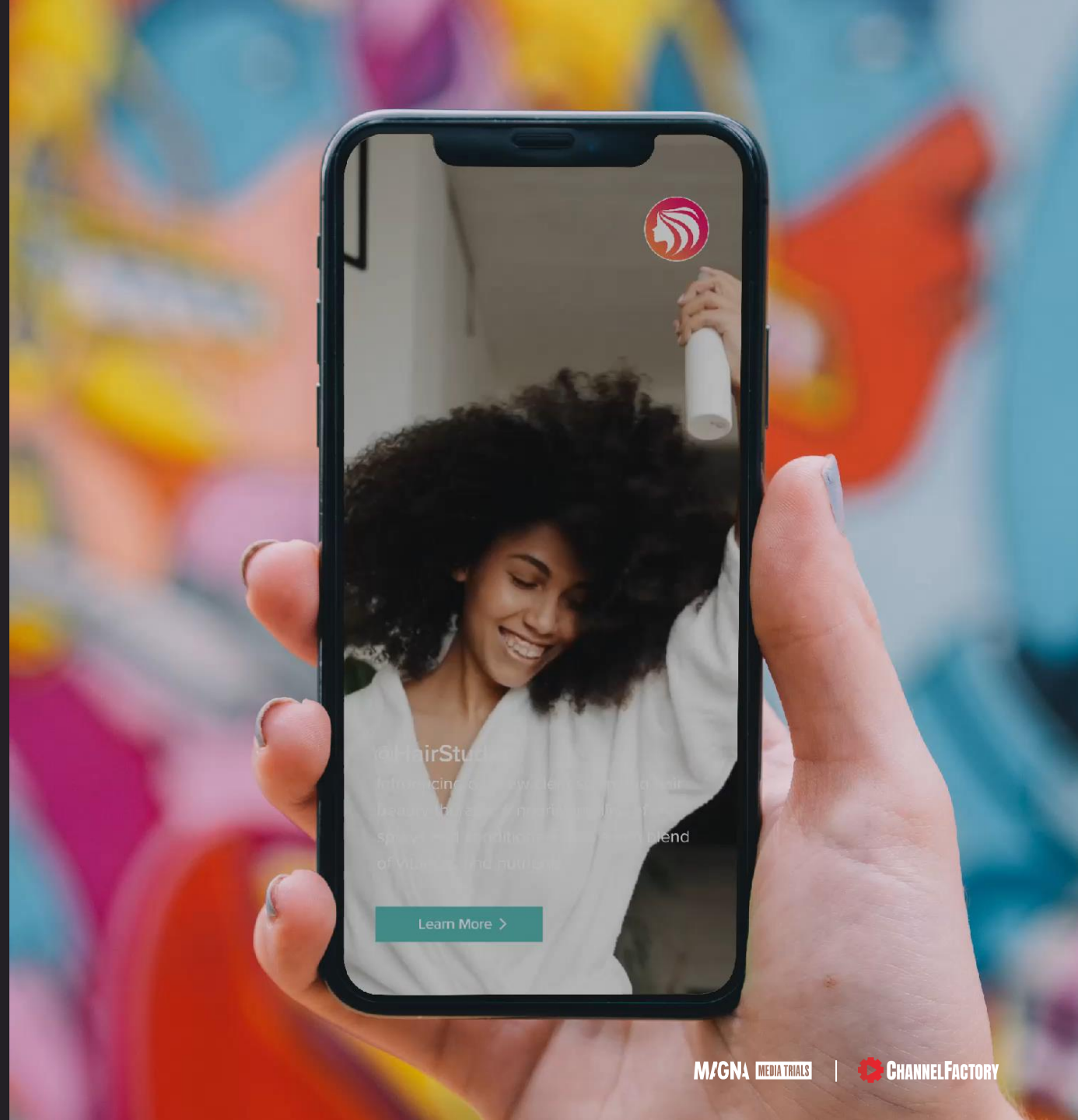


Video card: misaligned content (control n=268; exposed immediately before n=130; exposed immediately after n=382)

▲ = Statistically significant difference between exposed/control at >=90% confidence

**HOWEVER, APPEARING
AFTER MISALIGNED
CONTENT HAS ITS
DOWNSIDES AS WELL**

**PEOPLE ARE 9% MORE
LIKELY TO SKIP THE AD
WHEN IT APPEARS
DIRECTLY AFTER
MISALIGNED CONTENT**

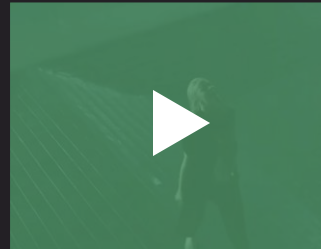


IMPLICATIONS

1

Ad Effectiveness is only as good as the content it's running in

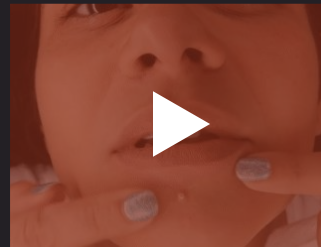
Brands need to be equally proactive about content misaligned with brand values as they are unsafe content, to avoid diminishing the effectiveness of otherwise powerful ads



+



=



+



=



IMPLICATIONS

2

Have your team dialed in to #Trends

Keep an eye on popular, trending content to ensure the appropriate steps can be taken to avoid unfortunate brand + content alignments

latinxcreated

broadway is back

love

🎵 Joji - Run

🔍 Simu Liu

talent show throwback

throwback is back

🎵 Dream Girl – Ir Sais

🔍 luna and larry ice cream

dogs

cute kittens

sun

trending

🔍 konohamaru hanabi

denim dreams

the baby

🎵 Then Leave - BeatKing

IMPLICATIONS

3

Be a future thinker and push to elevate ad tech and content thresholds

The Industry should continue to learn about the effects of misaligned content and build technologies accordingly to ensure appropriate and alignment placements regardless of the video environment



A man with dark curly hair, a beard, and round glasses is looking down at a yellow smartphone he is holding in his right hand. He is wearing a light-colored button-down shirt over a white t-shirt. The background shows a kitchen with white cabinets and a brick wall. The text 'THANK YOU' is overlaid in large white letters on the left side of the image.

THANK YOU

MAGNA MEDIA TRIALS



CHANNELFACTORY