

CREATIVE

STRATEGY

EFFECTIVENESS

TECHNOLOGY

PRODUCTION



# Production Guide

for Effective Ads on YouTube

CREATED BY

**Creative Works.**

CONTENT

# Pre-Production Guide

## Captivate



**Hook viewers in the first 5 seconds** to drive attention before the skip



**Surprise** in opening scenes with stunning, delightful, unexpected or memorable imagery



**Human focus** on hero characters: their emotions, reactions, and personalities



**Break the 4th Wall** to connect with audience directly



**Use enticing language** – e.g. “Guess what?“, “Can you believe [x]?”



**Fast pacing & tight framing** – 2+ shots in the first 5 seconds work best

## Leverage Audio Early



**Attract with audio**, 95% of YouTube videos have sound on



**Use VO or on-screen talent audio early**



**Augment the experience** through environmental sounds/SFX/foley to add an extra level of professional polish



**Select set design, wardrobe & props** to create color contrast between each other



**Plan for tight shots** of talent and product



**Ensure set, product, and talent are well lit**— especially night scenes; remember most views will appear on dim 5in. screens

## Brand with Intention



**Shoot product/service in use** to integrate the brand naturally into your story



**Capture talent while mentioning the brand audibly** for additional repetition



**Brand colors & identity** can inform props, set, and wardrobe



**Schedule time to capture extra footage**

- Behind the scenes
- Unscripted moments
- Different ‘Calls-to-Action’



**Capture a variety of close-ups of characters and products** to enable creative A/B testing on YouTube

## Compel Viewers to Take Action



**Capture takes of talent demonstrating how to take action.** E.g. if the goal is to drive online purchases on external site, include footage of talent visiting the site



**Capture talent/VO telling the viewer what to do next**, e.g. Learn more; Order now



**To drive clicks, capture talent/VO saying “Hit the blue button to [Your Call-To-Action].”** This brings users’ attention to the clickable blue button below the video

# On-Set Guide

## Director & Producer

Capture viewers attention in the first 5 seconds, or risk losing them forever.

-  **Surprise** in opening scenes with stunning, delightful, unexpected or memorable imagery
-  **Human focus** right from the beginning to get the viewer's attention and connect
-  **Integrate product/brand naturally**, with purpose in the scene & story
-  **Record audio mentions of product / brand** –ideally capture with on-screen talent (vs. VO)
-  **Break the 4th wall** to address and connect directly with the audience
-  **Capture additional footage/ b-roll/close ups** of talent, product, and set to allow for alt cuts, cutdowns, blooper, or BTS videos
-  **IF THE OBJECTIVE IS TO DRIVE ACTION: Talent articulates 'Call-to-Action'** Bonus: Get take of talent saying "Hit the blue button to [CTA, e.g. 'learn more']" to leverage this shot with YouTube's interactive engagement feature which is a clickable blue button located below/next to the video

## Camera & Light

Optimize for small screen viewing experience.

-  **Get tightly-framed shots** of your subject, especially humans to read their emotions
-  **Set up (color) contrast** between the subject and background
-  Ensure overall imagery and especially your subject is **well lit/exposed**
-  **Frame & block** with **YouTube elements** & larger supers in mind
-  **Recomm. Encoding Output**
  - Container: MP4
  - Audio codec: AAC-LC (96 or 48khz)
  - Video codec: H.264 (no interlacing)
  - Frame rate: Standard or High (up to 60 fps)
  - Bitrate: 35-45 Mbps for 4K 30 SDR  
8 Mbps for 1080p 30 SDR
  - Aspect Ratio: 16:9 - vertical and square possible, player adapts

## Set & Costume

Make it pop with bright & contrasting colors!

-  Use wardrobe to create **color contrast** between subjects and sets / background
-  Choose **colors** in costumes and set design that are **associated with the brand**



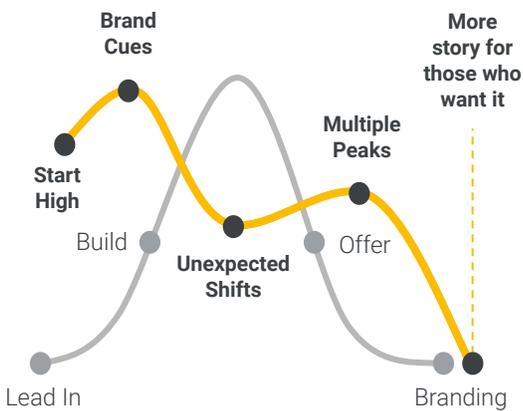
# Post-Production Guide

## Edit for the Platform

-  **Construct with audio in mind**, 95% of YouTube videos have sound on; ask yourself, how can audio help capture more viewer attention
-  **Use VO or on-screen talent audio early**; get the most out of your talent, consider if adding VO might enhance the narrative you're building
-  **Augment the experience** through environmental sounds/SFX/foley to add an extra level of professional polish

-  **Tight cropping and larger supers** makes people, products, and the story more clear to the viewer
-  **Increase brightness** to account for different viewing environments; remember most views will appear on dim 5in. screens
-  **Speed up** the pacing to capture the audience's attention so they don't skip. Aim for 2+ shots in first 5 secs

## Follow Emerging vs Traditional Story Arc



## Brand & Action

-  **Feature product in use & audibly** in the first 5 seconds and integrate the brand naturally into your story
-  **Include a logo** at all times if goal is to increase awareness or recall
-  **Add specific Call-to-Action** at the end to drive more clicks/actions

## Helpful Tools

-  **Test your video**—load a rough cut on a mobile device or use the Preview tool in Google Ads to see how your ad will look as it appears on YouTube, in fullscreen, desktop, or mobile formats
-  **Inspiration**—check out the Think with Google for inspiration for YouTube that are pushing the boundaries

## Try Experimenting with Formats

Lean into popular content formats on YouTube:

- |            |             |
|------------|-------------|
| Listicle   | Music Video |
| Explainer  | Challenges  |
| Commentary | Reaction    |
| Interview  | Narrative   |



**MASTER TIP:** Create multiple versions, strengthening supers to pair messaging to specific audience (if in scope). Talk to Creative Works to understand the audience.