

TV MAKES MEMORIES

HOW ADS IN A TV ENVIRONMENT HAVE A UNIQUE ABILITY TO CREATE MEMORIES





Executive Summary

“The best a man can get.” “Good to the last drop.” “Because you’re worth it.” TV advertising has an uncanny ability to make memories. That’s why, over 80 years after the first ad ever ran, media dollars continue to flow into TV campaigns, where ad spend is expected to reach an all-time high this year.

But all video is not created equal. As the definition of TV continues to shift, how do the new forms of video – streaming, mobile, on-demand – compare to the original when it comes to building engagement and memories which ultimately lead to purchase? And, what makes certain advertising more memorable in the first place?

Comcast Advertising commissioned a consumer study to uncover the answers to these questions. First, this paper establishes that TV ads are, in fact, memorable: research found that ads viewed in the long-form, lean-back TV environment had greater unaided recall and purchase intent versus the same ads shown in a short-form, small-screen digital mobile environment like Facebook or YouTube. Furthermore, when a TV ad preceded these types of digital ads, memories were stronger.

This paper also examines why TV is so memorable and suggests it is due to three factors that are important for branding and driving outcomes by building engagement: attention, connection and repetition. TV Makes Memories reveals that these outcomes, and therefore the strongest memories, are most effectively achieved through premium long-form TV advertising—both traditional and streaming—on the big screen.

Introduction

In this study, Comcast Advertising sought to better quantify the engagement of TV and streaming advertising on the “big screen” by exploring how different types of ad exposure impact memory.

This study was designed to find out just how memorable – and therefore effective – TV is. This consumer study, developed together with industry leader MediaScience, investigates how the impact of watching a traditional or streaming TV ad in a “TV” environment (full screen, living room–reminiscent environment, with expected ad breaks) may differ from a viewer seeing the same ad in a “mobile digital” environment on a mobile device (in a Facebook feed or YouTube pre-roll) as measured by recall and purchase intent.

Comcast Advertising expanded on this analysis to look at the three factors of memory gleaned from existing academic research of memory influencers: attention, connection and repetition, to explore the differences in the ability of a TV environment versus a mobile environment to influence memory and ultimately advertising effectiveness.

Can’t get the “Like a Good Neighbor” jingle out of your head after it comes on during a TV show? This report may help you understand why.

Memory's Role in Driving Ad Outcomes

Research demonstrates that brand awareness, or brand memories, are key influencers for consumers at the point of purchase. Brand memories are cues in consumers' minds composed of general brand knowledge, associations, and feelings. Those memories guide future purchase decisions and are key drivers of consumer preference.



People rarely make decisions using only information available at the point of purchase, so consumer purchase decisions almost always rely on existing brand memories.”

– Charles Young, Brian Gillespie, and Christian Otto, “The Impact of Rational, Emotional and Physiological Advertising Images on Purchase Intention”, 2019

Sources: Ambler & Burne, 1999; Henderson et al., 1998; Krugman, 1977; Martin-Santana et al., 2016; Young et al., 2019



To be bought, a brand must first be thought of – the breadth and strength of the brand’s links to relevant cues determine the chance of this happening.”

– Professor Byron Sharp & Jenni Romaniuk, co-authors of “How Brands Grow.”

Memories, reinforced by emotional connections between consumers and the brand directly, aid in driving consumers' motivations during key moments of decision making. By connecting emotionally, advertisers can directly impact the associations and feelings consumers have about a brand. This is possible through brand-specific imagery and messages that promote emotional engagement.

Branding in ad campaigns, then, can be defined as the process of creating positive and/or distinct memories. The TV Makes Memories study found that TV may have an immense influence on consumers by way of brand memories formed during interactions with that brand.

Factors That Impact Advertising Memories and Outcomes

Research suggests three factors of engagement are important for branding and driving outcomes: attention, emotion and repetition. Not surprisingly, these factors directly impact memory, an important factor in the consumers' decision-making process.



Attention

Without attention there is no opportunity for recall. The viewing environment can have an impact on memory including the access point, screen size and content; larger screens can enhance memory, and longer viewing duration is also tied to better recall.¹



Connection

The advertising message, including the type of message (branding vs. call to action) and the elements of the creative (music, actors, visuals, imagery etc.) provide opportunities for advertisers to connect with viewers emotionally to facilitate memory encoding.²



Repetition

Users' past exposure or lack thereof have an impact on memory with prior exposures strengthening recall; reaching consumers becomes important to form initial brand memories and reaching them subsequent times strengthens existing memory structures.³

Sources: 1-(Ambler & Burne, 1999; Danaher & Mullarkey, 2003; Kwon et al., 2019; McGranaghan et al., 2021; McNiven et al., 2012; Rossiter et al., 2001; Young et al., 2019) 2-(Ambler & Burne, 1999; Nicks & Carriou, 2016; "Measuring Long-Term Impact," 2020; Stone et al., 2000; Young et al., 2019; Youn et al., 2001) 3-(Vaughan et al., 2016; Krugman, 1977; Sawyer et al., 2009)

Study Design

Comcast Advertising worked with MediaScience to study how different types of ad exposure impact memory.

 **188 Participants**

 **Viewers were shown :30 second ads in**

- Two “mobile digital” environments (Youtube and Facebook in-feed ads)
- Two “TV” environments (traditional TV + streaming)
- One of each: “Mobile digital” environment + “TV” environment

 **Viewers were exposed to an even mix of well-known and unknown brands**

 **Viewers were measured with:**

- Biometrics
 - Eye Tracking: Quantifying visual attention to the ad by tracking where viewers are looking on the screen
 - Cardiac Deceleration: Quantifying cognitive attention by tracking the slowing of heart rate
 - Neurometric Intensity: Quantifying emotional response and engagement, referred to as neurometric intensity, by measuring sweat secretion
- Post-exposure survey



The “mobile digital” environment

In the YouTube environment, participants watched short-form video clips on a mobile device where pre-roll ads were served; in the Facebook environment, participants scrolled through a general Facebook feed with ads embedded throughout the user’s feed.



The “TV” environment

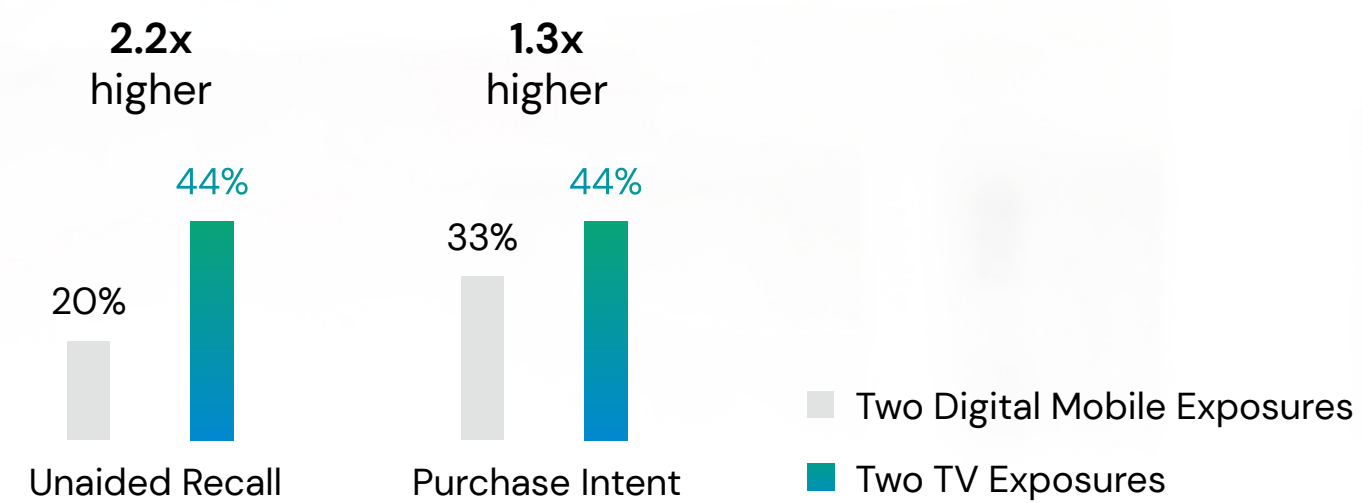
The traditional TV environment consisted of a typical live-TV ad load and the streaming environment consisted of a typical limited ad load, both viewed on a large screen.



Findings: Recall and Purchase Intent

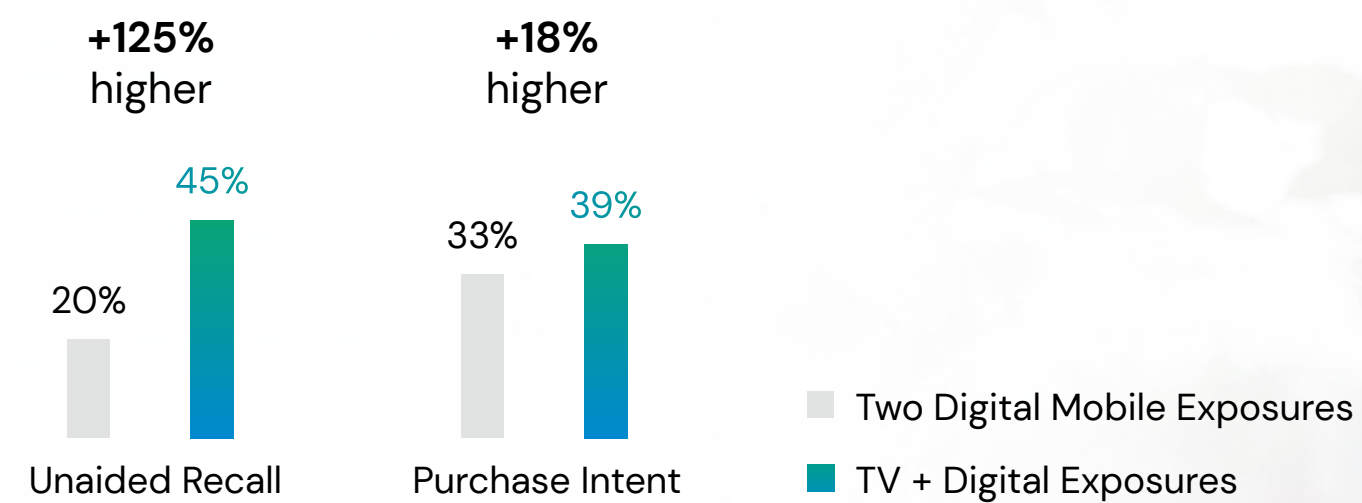
TV Drives Recall and Intent

Ads viewed in the TV environment had greater unaided recall and purchase intent versus ads shown in a mobile environment.



TV Enhances Digital Mobile

When a TV ad preceded a digital mobile ad, results were better than two digital mobile ads alone.



Findings: Factors that Impact Memory



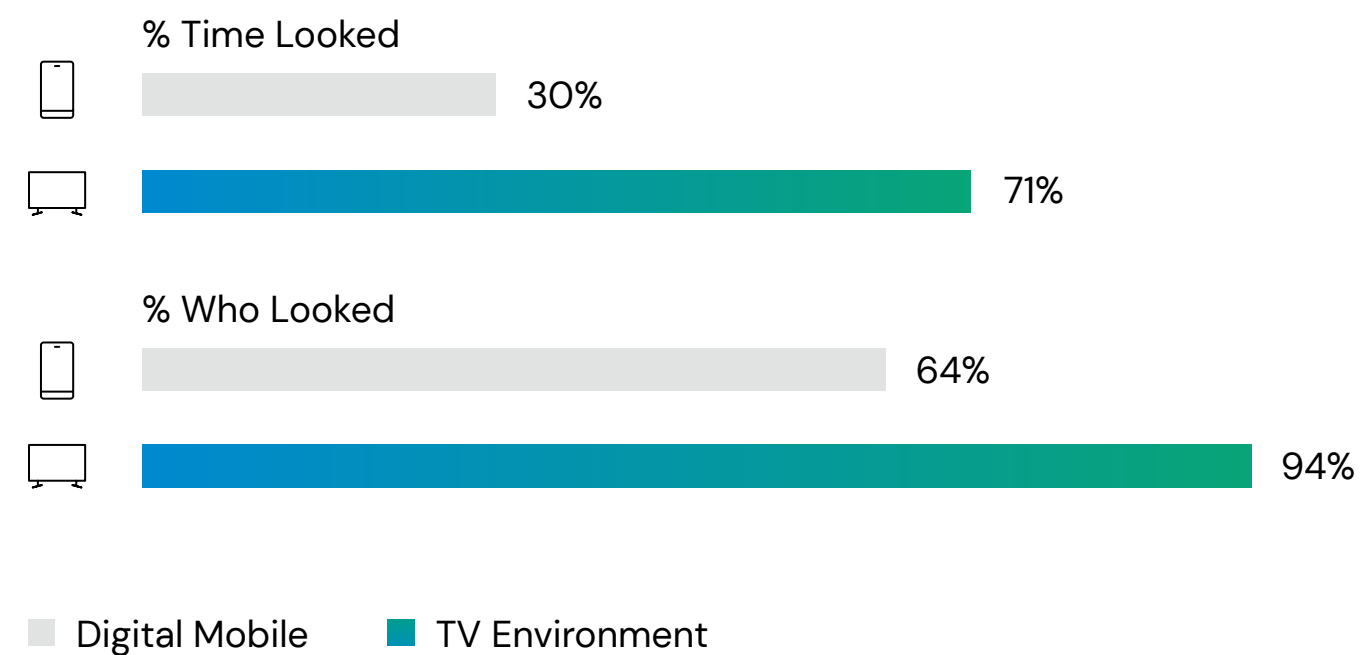
Attention

Viewing in the TV environment garnered significantly more attention than the digital mobile environment. The full-screen viewing experience and the actual programming content are two factors which likely impacted these results.

Full Screen Viewing Experience

Ads viewed in the TV environment garnered more visual attention as participants watched 71% of the ad, compared to just 30% of the digital mobile ads. This could be a result of the larger screen size and full-screen TV viewing experience which has fewer potential distractions inherent with the digital mobile experience. Further evidence of distracted viewing was that 36% of participants never looked at the digital mobile ad compared to 6% for TV.

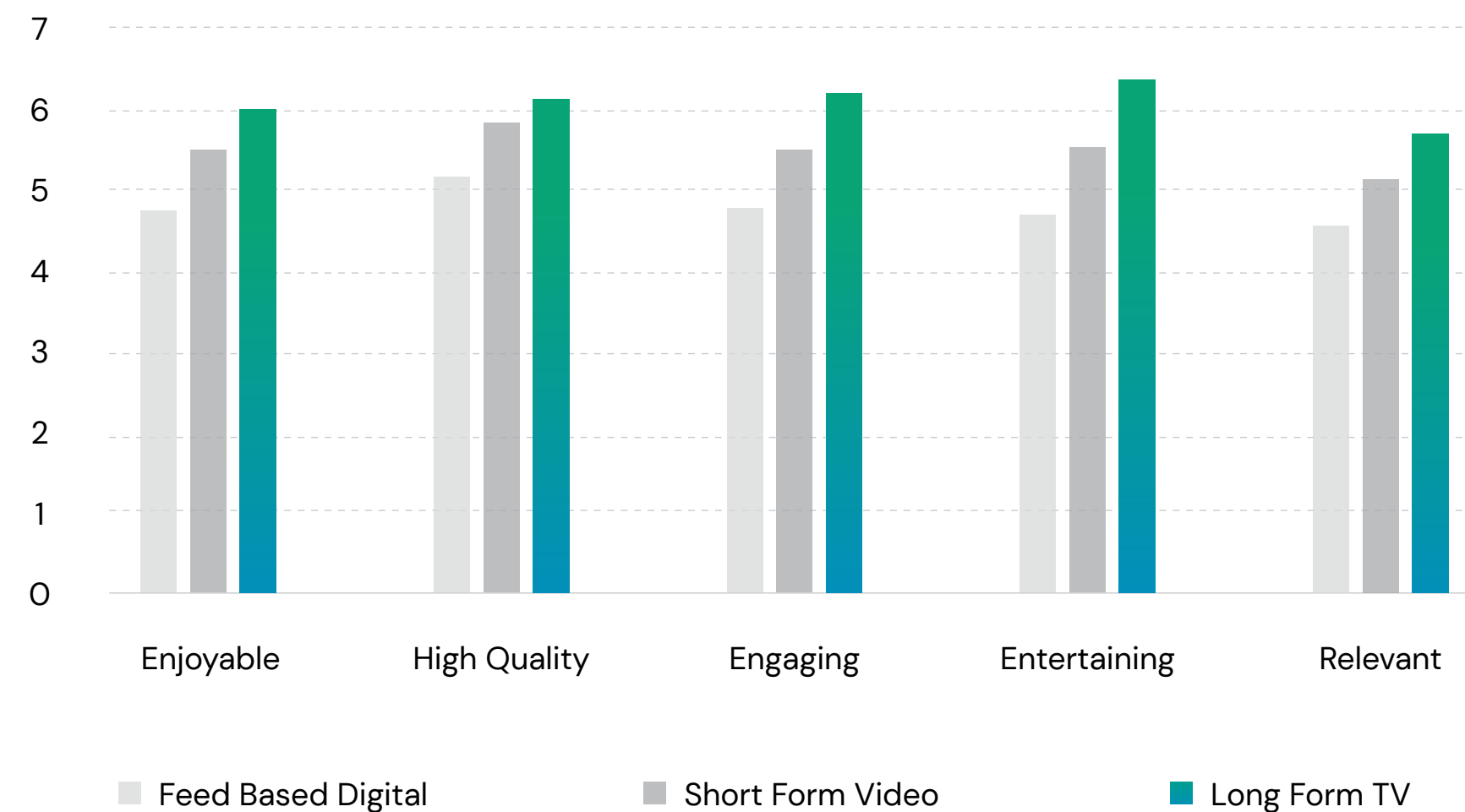
Visual Attention



Content

Another reason participants may have had more attention was based on the content they were watching. Content viewed in the TV environment was rated more favorably than short-form video and feed-based digital. This supports the notion that long-form, high-quality content creates a better experience that can carry over to the response to the commercial messaging.

Platform Rating (Scale 1-7)



Paying Attention:

Cardiac deceleration (slowing heart rate) is an indicator of cognitive attention and is linked to improved memory formation.

This study showed that when a TV ad preceded a digital ad (versus two digital ads), cognitive attention improved. This is a further indicator of the ability for TV to garner attention.



Findings: Factors that Impact Memory

↔ Connection

An advertiser’s creative message plays a vital role in the success of a campaign and is an invaluable component of memory-building in advertising.

Creative Rating

Participants rated the creative message better (for criteria including entertainment, engagement and likability) when an ad seen in the TV environment preceded an ad in the digital mobile environment; two ads seen in the TV environment produced the highest creative rating.

Creative Evaluation on a Scale of 1-7

	Digital Mobile Environment (Two Ads)	TV Environment + Digital Mobile Environment	TV Environment (Two Ads)
Entertaining	4.15	4.38	4.74
Engaging	4.25	4.47	4.98
High Quality	4.96	5.07	5.39
Informational	4.73	5.00	5.33
Liked the Ad	4.76	4.92	5.48

Source: Creative analysis using three distinct commercial messages (Survey conducted by Lucid; Q4 2021; N=1,500)



Making Memories: Neurometric intensity is an indicator of emotional response and is linked to improved memory formation.

This study showed that when a TV ad preceded a digital ad (versus two digital ads), neurometric intensity improved for someone exposed to a brand for the first time. This is a further indicator of the ability for TV to connect emotionally.

Creative Drives Response: In [another study](#), Comcast Advertising measured the impact different creative messaging had on viewers. Branding ads were more likely to create emotional connections with viewers that boosted recall compared to call-to-action ads. 80% of consumers liked the ads that were tested and a majority were able to recall the advertiser along with higher brand liking after seeing the ad.

Findings: Factors that Impact Memory

Repetition

The impact of exposure to ads depends on any prior memory and experiences the viewer has about a brand.

First Exposure

New brands can benefit from TV advertising due to the brand and memory building power of the TV environment with the added benefit of enhancing digital advertising efforts.

First Ad Exposure Benefits:

3.4x Better Recall for TV vs. Digital Mobile (compared to 2.3x for well-known brands.)

While overall recall in the study was higher for TV compared to digital, the benefits from TV were even greater (compared to well-known brands) when a viewer was exposed to a brand for the first time.

Cognitive Attention & Emotional Engagement improved when TV preceded digital mobile ad

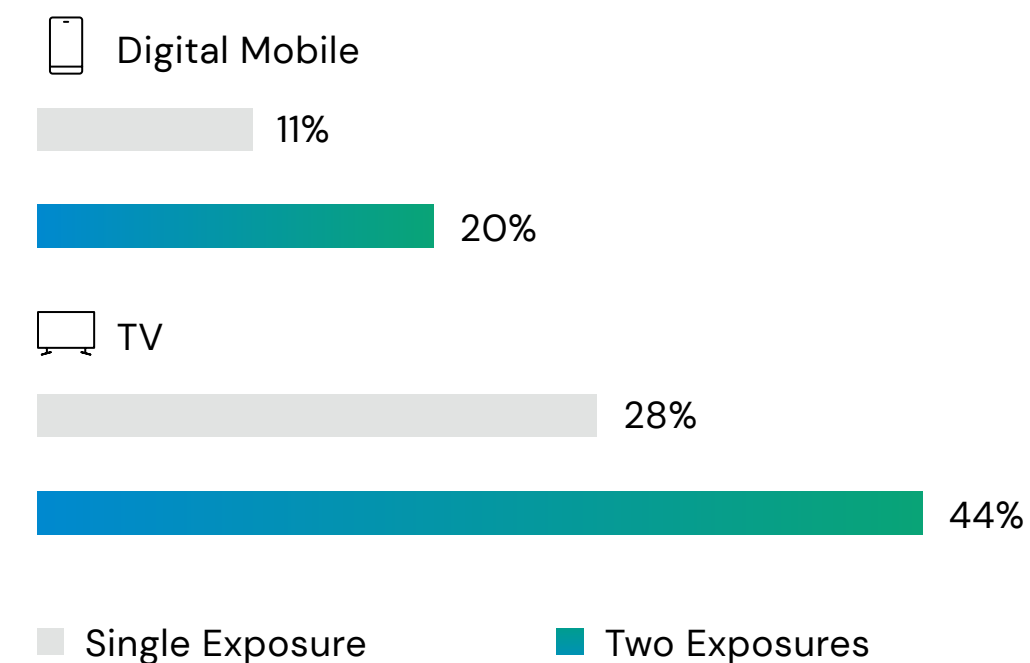
The better recall upon first exposure may be explained by the cognitive attention and emotional engagement with the ad as measured by cardiac deceleration and neurometric intensity used in the study. When a TV ad preceded a digital mobile ad, cognitive attention and emotional engagement improved compared to two digital ads. This same lift was not seen with the well-known brands tested likely due to brand associations and attitudes already formed with those brands.

This suggests that viewing ads in the TV environment gave brands the best opportunity to make a first impression and better impact a consumer's formation of brand memories.

Multiple Exposures

While unaided recall increased with a second exposure for both TV and digital mobile, the TV viewing experience once again outperformed digital. In fact, viewers of one exposure on TV were 40% more likely to recall the brand, versus two exposures on digital mobile.

Unaided Recall (% of Respondents)



Finding the Balance: An internal analysis of Comcast Advertising's Effectv multiscreen campaigns showed that the best way to reach audiences at scale with frequency was to allocate 70-80% of video campaign investment in traditional TV with the remainder in streaming. In general, campaigns with more networks, broader dayparts, and longer flights lead to the highest reach and frequency.

Source: Comcast Aggregated Viewership Data combined with Ad Exposure Data from TV + Effectv Streaming campaigns (2H '21), 20K+ campaigns.

Building Stronger Memories with TV

In the high-quality, long-form, full-screen TV environment, where visual attention and engagement are high, brands are more likely to be remembered, which influences consumers as they move towards purchase. When it comes to branding, advertisers should consider how their ads:

- **Stimulate attention:** deliver messages in places with high attention and enjoyment
- **Make a connection:** use messaging that connects with the audience emotionally
- **Use repetition:** reinforce the message with strong reach and frequency

As shown in this study, these are the factors that build memories in advertising, and are effectively achieved through long-form TV advertising on the big screen.

In the end, an ad only matters if you remember it. By leveraging the memorable sight, sound and motion of TV advertising on the big screen and in a “lean-back” environment, advertisers can be sure they’re making memories with the audiences that matter.

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