

CASUAL · CREATIVE INTELLIGENCE · OCTOBER 2026

Why it's worth investing in video.

How film compares with other formats,
and why creative messaging matters more than you'd think.

12x

how much more the best creative can return than the worst. Nothing else a marketer controls makes a bigger difference.

Source: Thinkbox, The drivers of profitability, 2023, from accelero's analysis of about 7,000 UK campaigns.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Film carries feeling, proof and memory. The creative matters more than you'd think.

Most B2B buyers aren't buying yet, and when they start, 95% of the time they choose from their day-one shortlist. So the work that pays is the work buyers remember.

58%	of B2B marketers named video among the formats that got their best results.
0.2%	of brand memory lift was explained by engagement rate. Creative quality explained 54.6%.
8x	as likely to pay a premium when business buyers see personal value.
12x	how much more the best creative can return than the worst.
No. 1	YouTube's rank among the sites cited in Google's AI Overviews, US, September 2026.
£5.94	profit per £1 on linear TV over two years. More than two thirds came after 13 weeks.

Every figure is sourced on its own page. 95%: 6sense, B2B Buyer Experience Report 2025, about 4,000 buyer responses. Surveys of marketers report what they say. System1's study is of consumer TikTok ads. Thinkbox's analyses are mostly of consumer brands.

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THE FORMATS

Each format does a different job.

FORMAT	WHAT IT DOES BEST	ONE CHECKED NUMBER
Email	Reaches people who know you, often and cheaply.	About 2 in 100 people who get one click on it.
Article or blog post	Answers a question someone searched for.	People have time to read about 20% of a web page.
Document post	Draws the most interaction per view on LinkedIn.	7.0% engagement on LinkedIn company pages. Video gets 6.0%.
Webinar	Goes deep with people already interested.	About 40% of people who register watch live.
Video	Carries attention, feeling and proof together.	58% of B2B marketers named it among the formats that got their best results, more than any other.

Short-form video also tops HubSpot's list of formats marketers say earned the biggest return: 48.6%, against 22.3% for blog posts.

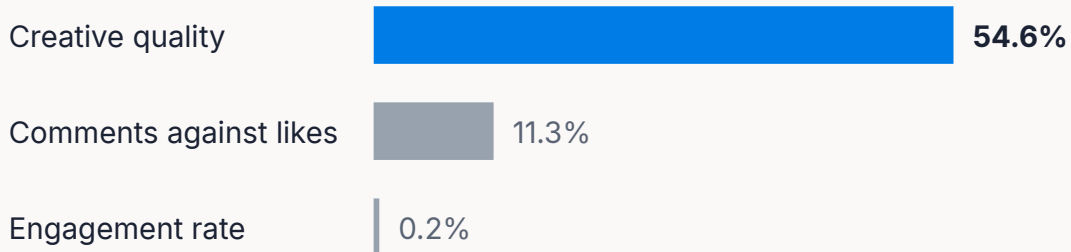
Sources: MailerLite benchmarks 2026; Nielsen Norman Group, 2008; Socialinsider, LinkedIn company pages, 2025; Wistia, State of Video 2026; Content Marketing Institute, B2B benchmarks for 2025 (980 marketers); HubSpot, State of Marketing 2026 (1,500+ B2B and B2C marketers). Both surveys allowed more than one answer.

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WHAT TO MEASURE

Likes and engagement say little about who will remember you.

SHARE OF BRAND MEMORY LIFT EACH MEASURE EXPLAINS

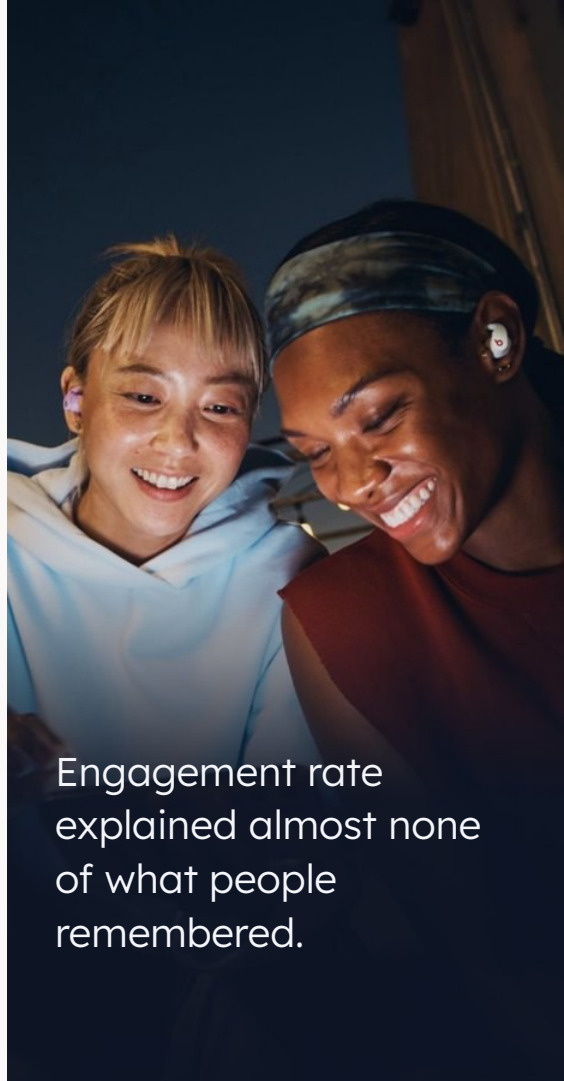


Creative quality is System1's own measure of feeling and early branding. We read email opens and clicks the same way, though this study did not test them.

Judge films on what people remember, as well as likes.

Source: System1 with WPP Media and TikTok, The Creator Effectiveness Playbook, 2026: 1,217 paid TikTok ads in eight markets, 182,550 viewers. Brand memory lift combines brand awareness and ad recall, measured against a control group. Consumer ads.

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Engagement rate explained almost none of what people remembered.

MEMORY AND FEELING

Seeing helps people remember and believe.
Feeling helps it stick.

RECOGNISED STRAIGHT AFTERWARDS



VIDEO AGAINST THE SAME TEXT · EFFECT SIZE



EMOTIONALLY CONNECTED

7 of 9

B2B brands studied had more than half their buyers emotionally connected. Most consumer brands Motista has studied reach 10% to 40%.

WHEN BUYERS SEE PERSONAL VALUE

8x

as likely to pay a premium for comparable products and services.

Emotional experiences “appear to be remembered vividly and accurately, with great resilience over time.”

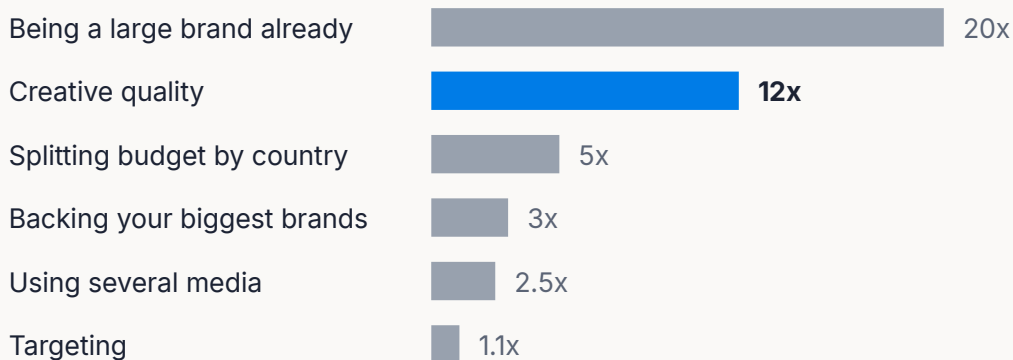
Sources: Shepard, 1967: about 600 items, a two-choice test, medians. Wittenberg and others, PNAS, 2021: study 1, 48 political ads; 7,609 Americans in two experiments. Google with CEB and Motista, From Promotion to Emotion, 2013: 3,000 buyers of 36 B2B brands; emotional connection measured for nine. Tyng and others, Frontiers in Psychology, 2017.

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CREATIVITY

Creative quality can do more for the return than anything else a marketer controls.

HOW MUCH EACH FACTOR CAN MULTIPLY THE RETURN



B2B ADS SEEN AS CREATIVE · MODELLED

+40%

more likely to be considered, in a survey of 2,032 decision-makers.

CREATIVE EMAIL · FORMULA 1

4x

estimated return in two years from a programme of magazine-style emails.

Spend on the idea first, whatever the format.

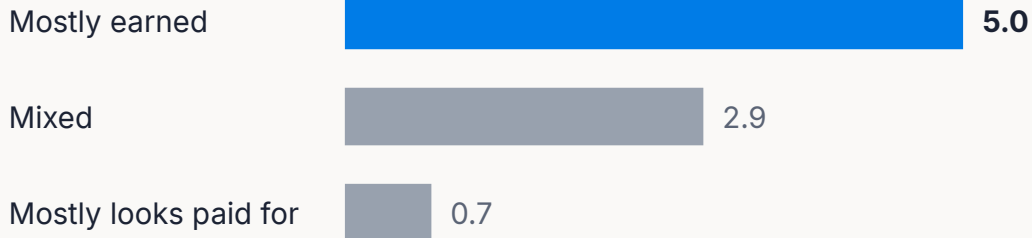
Sources: Thinkbox, *The drivers of profitability, 2023*, from accelero's analysis (28,000 campaigns; creative from 7,000 UK), six of its ten factors, mostly consumer brands. MAGNA and LinkedIn, *The B2B Renaissance, 2024: modelled from a survey of 2,032 decision-makers, stated intent*. IPA 2020 Bronze, *Formula 1* (a consumer brand).

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EARNED REACH

Views are easy to buy.
Followers are much harder.

SUBSCRIBERS PER 1,000 VIEWS · 1,062 COMPANY CHANNELS



Earned views come with followers. Views that look paid for mostly come alone.

OUR AUDIT OF COMPANY CHANNELS

72%

of the views on big companies' YouTube uploads in the past year look paid for.

VOLVO TRUCKS · LIVE TEST FILMS

100m+

YouTube views and nearly 8 million shares, without a big media budget.

YouTube and LinkedIn both say they favour what people spend time on. Make films worth the time.

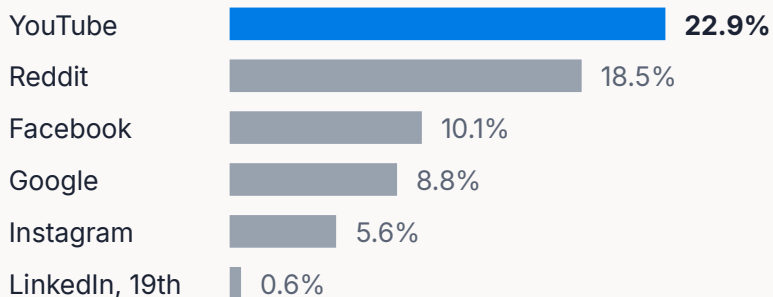
Sources: Casual Films, Company YouTube Benchmark, September 2026: subscribers per 1,000 lifetime views on 1,062 company channels, grouped by where most views come from. Looks paid for: 5,000+ views, likes under 0.1% of views, a signal that proves no spend. Links show no cause. Volvo Trucks, 2014. Google Ads Help; YouTube Help; LinkedIn Engineering.

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AI SEARCH

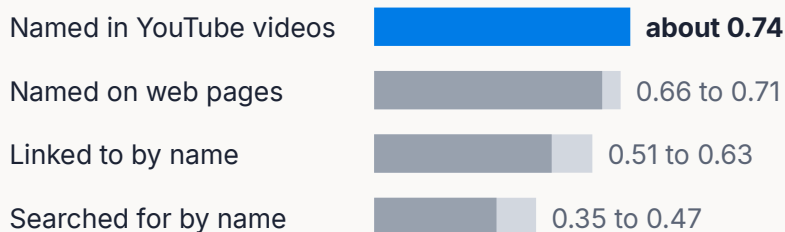
YouTube is the site Google's AI Overviews cite most.
Mentions on YouTube go with mentions in AI answers.

SHARE OF CITATIONS IN GOOGLE'S AI OVERVIEWS



Share among the 50 most-cited sites. In Google's AI Mode, YouTube is a close second to Reddit.

WHAT GOES WITH BEING NAMED IN AI ANSWERS



Rank correlation, 75,000 brands: 1 is the same order, 0 no link.
Bars span ChatGPT, Google's AI Mode and AI Overviews, lowest to highest. YouTube has one figure.

Post films on YouTube as well as LinkedIn. Google's AI Overviews cite YouTube most.

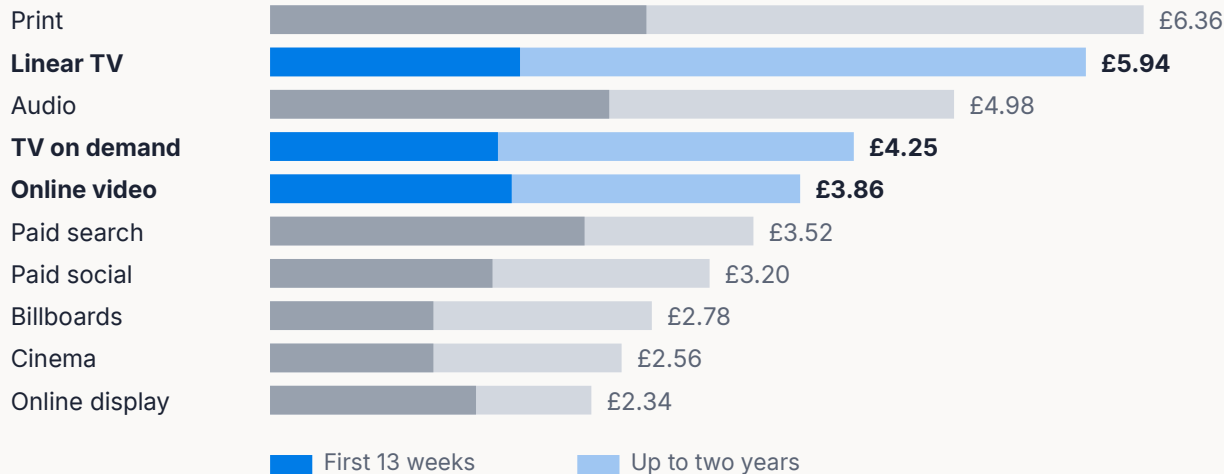
Sources: Ahrefs, The 50 Most-Cited Websites in Google AI Overviews (3m+ US searches) and in Google AI Mode (US searches), September 2026, all topics, updated monthly. Ahrefs, Top Brand Visibility Factors in ChatGPT, AI Mode, and AI Overviews, December 2025: 75,000 brands; correlations show links and no cause. Research by a search-tool company on its own data.

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THE RETURN

Video on TV pays back over two years,
and most of the profit comes after three months.

PROFIT PER £1 OF MEDIA · FIRST 13 WEEKS, THEN UP TO TWO YEARS



On linear TV, more than two thirds of the profit came after the first 13 weeks. Judge video over two years.

Source: Thinkbox, Profit Ability 2, 2024, analysis by Ebiquity, EssenceMediacom, Gain Theory, Mindshare and Wavemaker: 141 UK brands, £1.8bn of media, 2021 to 2023. Profit per £1 of media. B2B brands are in the sample but under-represented.

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THE RETURN IN B2B

Campaigns led by film have paid back,
changed minds and filled roles.

BT ENTERPRISE · IPA PAPER
2022

£6.32

in margin for every £1 from
short-term sales, and an
estimated £13.52 with the
longer-term effect.

WORKDAY · CANNES GOLD
2023

+65%

brand consideration after
its Rock Star TV campaign,
as its CMO reported.

BRITISH ARMY · IPA GOLD
2018

+38%

regular soldier applicants,
and 48% more reserve
applicants.

NHS ENGLAND · IPA PAPER
2022

£248m

saved on freelance nursing
costs, with 3,218 extra
nurses recruited.

Sources: IPA case pages: BT Enterprise, All Business No Drama, 2022 paper; British Army, This Is Belonging, Gold 2018; NHS England, We Are the NHS: Then, Now, Always, 2022 paper. Workday, Cannes Lions 2023, Creative B2B Gold; Australian Marketing Institute, 8 April 2024, quoting Workday's CMO.

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WHAT TO ASK FOR

Five things to ask for before you commission a film.

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- 01 **Aim to be remembered by buyers who aren't looking yet.**
 - 02 **Pick the format for the job, and use film for feeling, proof and memory.**
 - 03 **Spend on the idea before the targeting.**
 - 04 **Measure what people remember, follow and share, as well as what they click.**
 - 05 **Give it two years, and judge it on what it returns.**
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Make it worth watching.



If you want to see how your channel compares, let me know.

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More of our research: casualfilms.com/research

Every figure in this paper was checked at its primary source in October 2026.

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