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.

FORMATS AND FEELING

Each format does a different job. Film carries feeling, proof and memory.

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.**

8x **Feeling.** As likely to pay a premium when business buyers see personal value.

+0.26 **Proof.** Effect size on belief it happened, video against the same text.

98% **Memory.** Pictures recognised straight afterwards, against 90% for words.

Sources: MailerLite, 2026; Nielsen Norman Group, 2008; Socialinsider, 2025; Wistia, 2026; Content Marketing Institute, 2025: 980 B2B marketers, more than one answer allowed. Google with CEB and Motista, 2013: 3,000 buyers of 36 B2B brands. Wittenberg and others, PNAS, 2021: political ads. Shepard, 1967: a two-choice test, medians.

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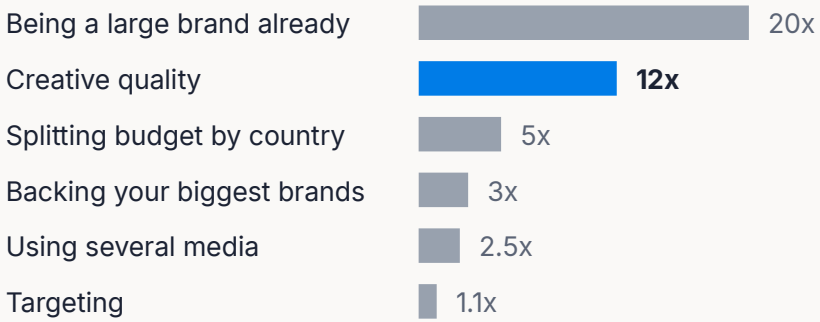
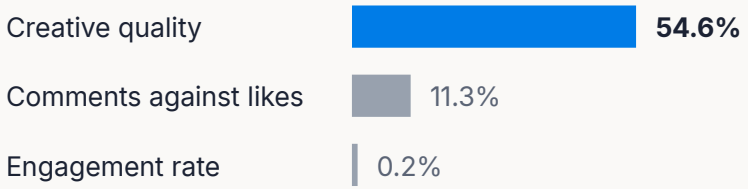
CREATIVE QUALITY

Of all you control, creative moves the return most. Likes and engagement say little about memory.

HOW MUCH EACH FACTOR CAN MULTIPLY THE RETURN



SHARE OF BRAND MEMORY LIFT EXPLAINED



Creative quality is System1's own measure of feeling and early branding.

> Spend on the idea first, and judge films on what people remember.

Sources: Thinkbox, The drivers of profitability, 2023, from accelero's analysis: six of ten factors, creative from 7,000 UK campaigns, mostly consumer brands. System1 with WPP Media and TikTok, The Creator Effectiveness Playbook, 2026: 1,217 paid TikTok ads; brand memory lift is awareness and ad recall, against a control group. Consumer ads.

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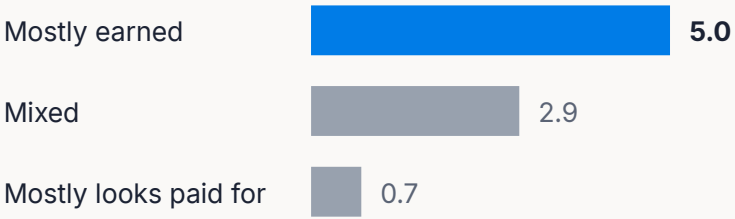
REACH AND AI SEARCH

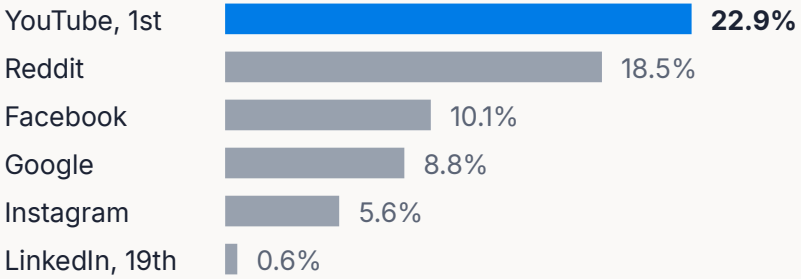
Good films earn reach that paid views don’t. AI search looks to YouTube.

SUBSCRIBERS PER 1,000 VIEWS · 1,062 CHANNELS



About 7x the subscribers per view where views are mostly earned. Views that look paid for mostly come alone.

SHARE OF CITATIONS IN GOOGLE’S AI OVERVIEWS



YouTube is one of the two websites most cited by Google’s AI Overviews, AI Mode, Gemini and Perplexity.

> Post films on YouTube as well as LinkedIn.

Sources: Casual Films, Company YouTube Benchmark, September 2026; looks paid for: 5,000+ views, likes under 0.1% of views, a signal that proves no spend; links show no cause. Ahrefs Brand Radar, September 2026: AI Overviews (top 50 sites, 3m+ US searches), AI Mode, Gemini and Perplexity, all topics; a search-tool company’s own data.

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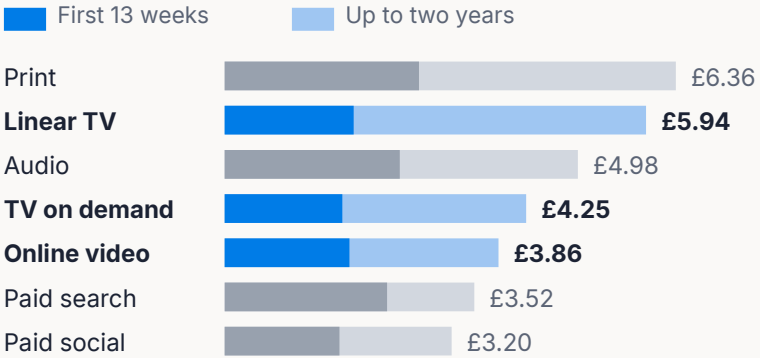
THE RETURN

Video pays back over two years, and film-led B2B campaigns have too.

PROFIT PER £1 OF MEDIA



FILM-LED B2B CAMPAIGNS

£6.32	**BT ENTERPRISE · IPA PAPER 2022** in margin for every £1 from short-term sales.
+65%	**WORKDAY · CANNES GOLD 2023** brand consideration, as its CMO reported.
+38%	**BRITISH ARMY · IPA GOLD 2018** regular soldier applicants.
£248m	**NHS ENGLAND · IPA PAPER 2022** saved on freelance nursing costs.

> On linear TV, more than two thirds of the profit came after the first 13 weeks.

Sources: Thinkbox, Profit Ability 2, 2024: 141 UK brands, £1.8bn of media, 2021 to 2023; B2B brands are in the sample but under-represented. IPA case pages: BT Enterprise, 2022 paper; British Army, Gold 2018; NHS England, 2022 paper. Workday: Cannes Lions 2023, Creative B2B Gold; Australian Marketing Institute, 2024, quoting its CMO.

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WHAT TO ASK

Five questions to ask before you commission a film.

01 **Will buyers who aren't looking yet remember it?**

02 **Is film the right format for this job, and will it carry feeling, proof and memory?**

03 **Are we spending on the idea before the targeting?**

04 **Will we measure what people remember, follow and share, as well as what they click?**

05 **Will we 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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