

CORVINUS UNIVERSITY OF BUDAPEST

Institute of Communication and Sociology
Department of Communication and Media Studies

THE IMPORTANCE OF VIDEO MARKETING AND CONTENT ANALYSIS OF YOUTUBE'S TOP 10 U.S. TRUEVIEW FOR ACTION VIDEO ADS OF 2020

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of a
Bachelor's Degree in Communication and Media Science

Supervisor: Rétvári Márton Gergely

2021.

Annexes:

Annex 1

DECLARATION ON THE STUDENT'S OWN WORK.

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The title of the thesis in Hungarian:

**A VIDEÓMARKETING ÉS A YOUTUBE 2020-AS 10 LEGJOBB AMERIKAI TRUEVIEW
FOR ACTION VIDEOHIRDETÉSÉNEK FONTOSSÁGA**

The title of the thesis in English:

**THE IMPORTANCE OF VIDEO MARKETING AND CONTENT ANALYSIS OF YOUTUBE'S
TOP 10 U.S. TRUEVIEW FOR ACTION VIDEO ADS OF 2020**

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Dated: **May 2, 2021**


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Annex 3

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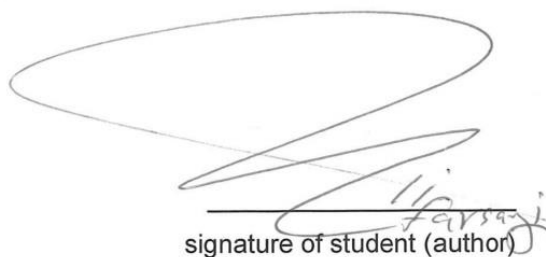
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1. Introduction

Video is a highly effective form of content; it is a versatile and engaging content format that not only gives us a real-life picture of what is going on but also is easy to share across multiple platforms especially with the rise of social media. The fast development of internet speed and smartphone technology has changed the field of digital marketing and led to the emergence of video marketing as a new and separate field of marketing. Today, video marketing is an integral part of businesses' marketing strategy, and this growth has been remarkable throughout the past decade. However, due to the newness of the field, currently, the literature on this topic is scarce. This thesis aims to contribute to the existing knowledge in the field of video marketing, and sheds light on the essential concepts of the field, to provide scholars and the professionals with a comprehensive piece of literature on the subject. Moreover, the reasons behind the growing use of video marketing by marketers and its popularity among consumers will be examined; this is done through studying the yearly statistics and the psychological advantages of video as a communication medium.

The research question seeks to find out whether there are any common features and trends that are seen in the selected successful marketing videos, and if there is correlation between the presence of certain number of rhetorical devices and the success of a marketing video. In order to answer this question, initially, the various aspects of video marketing, and the methods of visual rhetorical analysis will be investigated. A major challenge to address the question is defining reliable metrics to measure the success of a marketing video. Hence, various possibilities of measuring success in video marketing will be examined.

Subsequently, a visual rhetorical analysis of YouTube's top 10 TrueView for action video ads in the U.S. for 2020, based on David Blakesley's methodology and his four approaches to film rhetoric, will be conducted. The term "successful" in this research is defined according to the defined metrics by YouTube, used in the chosen sample—total reach and clicks. (ThinkwithGoogle, 2020; Blakesley, 2004).

2. Literature Review

2.1. Marketing

“A lot of times, people don't know what they want until you show it to them.”

—Steve Jobs (Ratcliffe, 2017)

Marketing is a popular term which is interpreted and used in different ways; to many people, “Marketing” equals “Advertising”. Basically, marketing is a procedure to recognize the customer or user needs and ascertain how to respond to those needs in the most proper way (Young, 2020). The American Marketing Association (AMA), defines marketing as *“The activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners, and society at large”* (Schmidt & Watts, 2017, p. 435). To the contrary, advertising is one of the components of marketing; in fact, advertising is the exercise of promoting an organization through the placement of announcements and messages in time or space with the purpose of informing members of a target market or specific group of people concerning the availability of its products or services, and converting that audience into actual customers/users (Johns, Dale, Alam & Keating, 2017).

2.1.1. The history of marketing thought

It was since the beginning of the 1900s when the development of marketing thought began to develop with the conception of marketing. Initially, the subject was created and evolved by economists who noticed, contrary to the traditional theory of supply and demand, the demand is not merely influenced by the purchasing power—the price, the place and the product. They found out the desire to purchase is also influential, and it could be increased by actions such as advertising and the promotional work (Bartels, 1988).

In their research, Wilkie and Moore (2003) have identified 4 eras for the field of marketing:

“Pre-Marketing” (Before 1900): Marketing was not considered as a separate field of study, and its concepts used to be investigated within the field of economics.

I. “Founding the Field” (1900–1920): The word “Marketing” entered dictionaries and its functions were distinguished from the field of economics, with an emphasis on distribution.

II. “Formalizing the Field” (1920–1950): Regulation of “principles of marketing” to settle a knowledge development infrastructure for the field of marketing.

III. “A Paradigm Shift—Marketing Management, and the Sciences” (1950–1980): Two different approaches towards the field of marketing emerged—scientific and managerial. The scientific thought would approach marketing from a scientific perspective for further development of the field. The managerial viewpoint reflected on the marketing thought from the standpoint of marketing managers in order to help them implement successful marketing plans and make better marketing decisions.

IV. “The Shift Intensifies—A Fragmentation of the Mainstream” (1980–present): Emergence of new challenges in the business world—globalization—and the establishment of new specializations and areas in the field of marketing.

2.1.2. Marketing paradigms

A set of procedures and attitudes which shape the marketing process define a marketing paradigm (Gb3group, 2021). Currently there are two major marketing paradigms, *the marketing mix* and *relationship marketing*. In the relationship marketing (RM) paradigm, while the consumer plays an active role in the equation of marketing, the producer acts as a proactive market creator and market manager. This paradigm is mainly applicable to business-to-business (B2B) relationships; as a result, its eventual aim is gaining a recurring premium revenue through building inter-business relationships (Skitmore & Smyth, 2007). The other paradigm that is more relevant to the topic of this research is marketing mix (MM) which basically represents a formula consisting of four elements (Visser, Sikkenga & Berry, 2019). McCarthy (as cited in Kotler, 1999) called these components the four Ps of marketing—product, price, place and promotion—with each having its own group of attributes, as it is shown in the following paradigm—Figure 1.

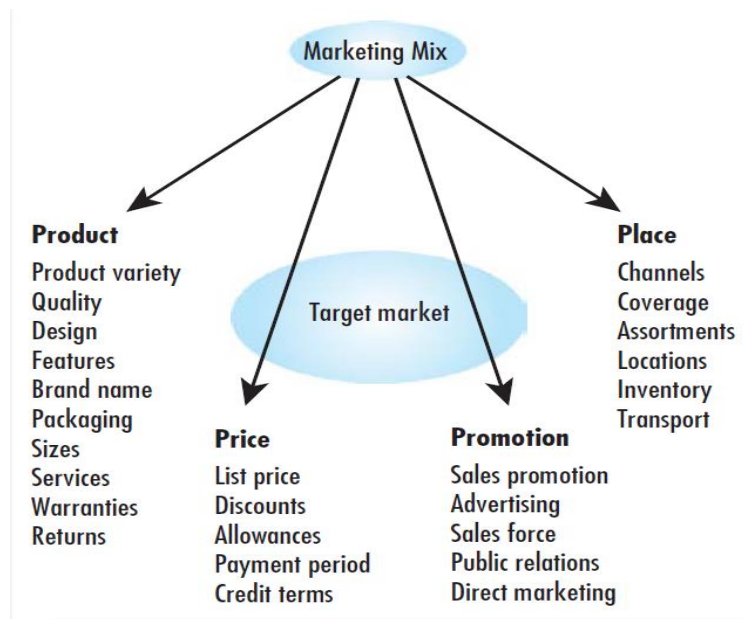


Figure 1 - McCarthy's 4Ps paradigm (Kotler, 1999).

These four Ps are a set of tools whose mixture enables marketers after identifying their target audience's needs, create an offer which resonates with their taste and satisfy those specific needs (Visser, Sikkenga & Berry, 2019; Kotler, 1999). The Chartered Institute of Marketing (CIM) adds three more aspects to this equation, and defines seven Ps of marketing as Product, Price, Place, Promotion, People, Process and Physical evidence (CIM, 2015). A company or organization informs people about their activity, product or service through Promotion. This could be done through branding, advertising, PR, corporate identity, social media outreach, sales management, special offers and exhibitions (CIM, 2015). The P that echoes with the central topic of this thesis—Video Marketing—is Promotion. Because in addition to the fact that video is one of the tools organizations use to implement the mentioned methods such as advertising, communicating the other Ps to the target audience is carried out through this channel (Ekblad, 2020).

2.1.3. Pre-digital history of marketing

The history of marketing goes so far back that Kotler (2012) humorously states the concept of marketing has existed since the snake in the Garden of Eden sold the apple to Adam (Kotler, 2012). This means that even though the term and field were created and developed in the early twentieth century, human beings have been involved in marketing—promoting and selling their product—from the beginning. However, the marketing methods have been advancing throughout history and the growth of consumer needs and technologies have made marketers

change their games over and over (Wainwright, 2017). Modern advertising began and used to be practiced long before the advent of marketing with the invention of Gutenberg's movable type around 1450 (Gunaratne, 2001). In addition to traditional salespeople, print media such as newspaper advertisements, magazines, posters, and billboards were among major methods of advertising before the emergence of new mediums (Ekblad, 2020). With the introduction of broadcast media in the first half of twentieth century, product and service promotions began to be heard and seen; the first radio advertisement in 1922, the first TV advertisement in 1941, and the first telephone calls from marketers—telemarketing—in 1946 (Wainwright, 2017; Ekblad, 2020).

In the 1970s, marketing entered its latest stage of development with a growing focus on managerial decision making, borrowing new concepts from the other fields of social sciences such as management, and putting the spotlight on the societal aspects of marketing as well as quantitative marketing analysis (Bartels, 1988). During this stage—societal marketing—marketing goes through a change in interest; from this perspective, marketing is no longer merely about meeting customers' needs at a short-term profit, but it has a greater social responsibility. According to this view, marketers should not only recognize the needs of their target audience and attempt to serve the best interests of them, but also develop products and services which will benefit society in the long run. In addition to profitability and customer satisfaction, adding public interest to marketing equations will lead to building trust and a long-term relationship with customers, which in turn will maximize profits eventually (Gaski, 1985; Ekblad, 2020; Bartels, 1988).

2.1.4. Post-digital history of marketing

Marketing's evolution was accelerated and entered its digital age with the emergence of new technologies from the early 1970s to the mid-1990s (Wainwright, 2017). The marketing landscape began to go through significant developments when the first email was sent in 1971, the first cell phone arrived in 1973, and the World Wide Web was invented in 1989 (Kamal, 2016). In 1991, a network protocol called "Gopher" was introduced; it was one of the primary network query and search tools. This was followed by the launch of the first web search engine, Aliweb (Archie Like Indexing for the Web) in 1993, and a year later, in 1994, Yahoo (Hendy, 2021; Khan & Siddiqui, 2013). Until the early 2000s, many other search engines and tools were launched, such as HotBot, LookSmart, Alexa, and the introduction of Google in 1998 (Smyth,

2007). New technologies enabled marketers to try new forms of marketing (Wainwright, 2017). The concept of digital marketing to a large extent stemmed from where the internet and especially search engines developed algorithms to rank web pages; this led to a new competition among businesses as they started to adapt to this new environment to rank higher (Khan & Siddiqui, 2013). In addition, other forms of marketing on the internet began to appear; the first ever online banner advertisement was posted on hotwired.com for a campaign by AT&T, in 1994 (McCambley, 2013).

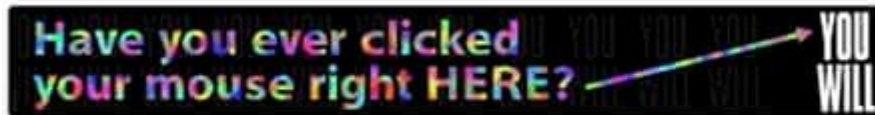


Figure 2 - The first online banner advertisement was published on hotwired.com on 27 October, 1994 (McCambley, 2013).

Nowadays the internet is considered the most efficient tool for businesses, and its applications in the marketing strategies is undeniable as it has the leading role in the changes of brand, pricing, distribution and promotion strategy (Khan & Siddiqui, 2013).

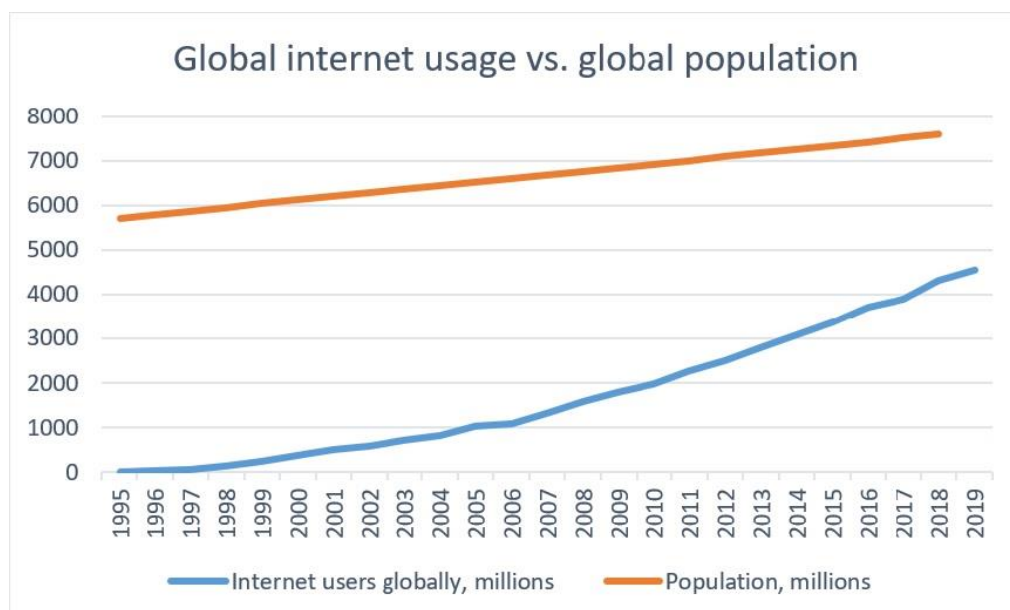


Figure 3 - Visualization of global internet usage vs. global population, 1995 to 2019. Data compiled from The World Bank and Internet World Stats (Ekblad, 2020).

According to the statistic in Figure 3, the internet growth, since it became accessible to the public, has been quite remarkable, and the number of internet users has been increasing quicker than the global population. Widespread use of the internet has made it the major transmitter of digital advertisements on communication devices; hence, Figure 3 is crucial in visualizing digital marketing growth as well (Ekblad, 2020). Due to the fact that digital marketing is more cost-efficient for measuring Return on Investment (ROI) on advertisement, this type of

marketing has found a special place among companies, and today knowledge of online consumer behavior and digital marketing are vital to marketers (Khan & Siddiqui, 2013; Visser, Sikkenga & Berry, 2019). With the rise of social media—Web 2.0—and significant increase in the use of internet on mobile devices in 2007, digital marketing enters a new age in which organizations focus on creating and publishing promotional content which engages the users/customers and enhances their experience (Smyth, 2007; Khan & Siddiqui, 2013).

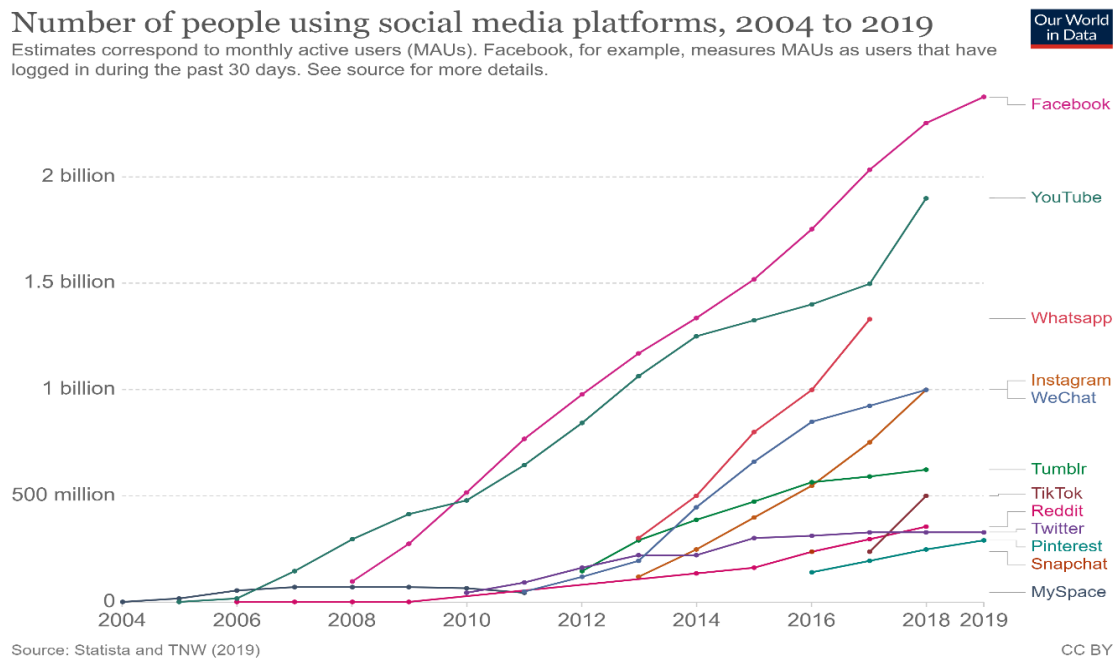


Figure 4 - Significant rise of social media users from 2004 to 2019 (Roser, 2015).

The beginning of social media was marked by the launch of Myspace in 2003, and it was followed by Facebook in 2004, YouTube in 2005 and Twitter in 2006 (Ekblad, 2020). As it is observable in Figure 4, Facebook and YouTube are the most popular platforms, and their growth and dominance have been constant. According to the fact that YouTube is a video based platform, and Facebook is considered one of the most popular video hosting sites among users, this graph—Figure 4—could indicate the growth of video media in the past two decades as well (Wyzowl, 2021; Roser, 2015; Ekblad, 2020). Moreover, YouTube by 89% and Facebook by 70%, are the most widely used platforms among video marketers (Hayes, 2021). Another important consideration is that it was not possible to upload videos or images on Twitter until 2011, and after adding this feature, the growth of this platform entered a new phase as it is observable in Figure 4; today more than 50% of shared content on Twitter includes images and videos (Roser, 2015). This could be observed in the notable rise of TikTok, another video based platform, in the last two years, which shows the growing power of video content. A noteworthy fact is that uploading videos on all of these platforms is free; this has made a significant change

in the way companies look at the video advertisements as previously they had to pay to have their videos on the TV screen (Ekblad, 2020).

One of the main aims of this thesis is showing the growing importance and popularity of video marketing among both marketers and the users. Before investigating the statistics and studies which will illustrate this topic, this study will shed light on the concepts of digital marketing and content marketing, because although video marketing is considered a part of digital marketing in general, it is also regarded as a type of content marketing (Biteable, 2020; Chi, 2020).

2.2. Digital marketing

Nowadays the internet plays a key role in the marketing process, and digital marketing as a sub-process of marketing, has become the vital course of action of businesses and organizations (Kamal, 2016; Visser, Sikkenga & Berry, 2019). Terms such as “online marketing”, “internet marketing”, “e-marketing”, and “web marketing” are all synonyms for Digital Marketing (Visser, Sikkenga & Berry, 2019). Visser, Sikkenga & Berry (2019) define digital marketing as a process in which the internet is used for creating and interchanging value and products by organizations and existing or potential customers. In another approach, Henneberry (2018) describes digital marketing as the act of leveraging online marketing tactics such as social media marketing, search marketing, and email marketing in order to promote and sell products and services.

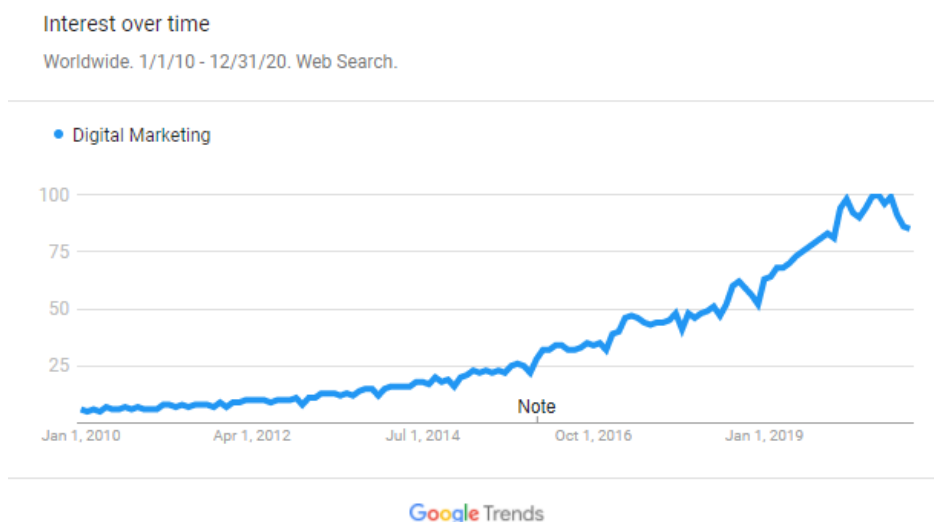


Figure 5 - Google searches for the term “Digital Marketing” has risen by more than 1300% over the past decade worldwide (Google Trends, 2021).

The growth of digital marketing has been remarkable over the past decade; according to the Google search statistic in figure 5, the search term “digital marketing”, in an enormous uptrend, has decupled in popularity by the end of the year 2020. The advantages of direct marketing—when a product is promoted by a company to a targeted consumer through online platforms without necessarily relying on the brand—the ease of measuring the performance and ROI on advertisements, the possibility of gathering large quantities of data about the potential customers, and the opportunity to share considerable quantities of information about the organization with the potential customers at low cost comparing to traditional marketing, are some of the reasons which has contributed to the rapid growth of digital marketing (Ekblad, 2020; Visser, Sikkenga & Berry, 2019).

Since one of the key concepts in digital marketing and this thesis is “Brand”, in what follows, this concept is briefly discussed. The American Marketing Association (AMA) defines a brand as “a name, term, sign, symbol, or design, or a combination of them, intended to identify the goods and services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of competition” (Keller, 2013). Keller (2003) states that the key function of the concept of “Brand” is building awareness, prestige, distinction in the marketplace. Brand marketing is marketing through public relations and its goal is to build a deep emotional connection between a brand and the customer, and educating them about the products and services, therefore, it will lead to the recognition of a brand by the customers in the target market, and more awareness about the products or services they are receiving; for instance, when a parent decides to watch a film with their children, assumes that Disney films are child-friendly (Ekblad, 2020; Keller, 2013; Marketing Schools, 2012). Thus, in an increasingly competitive market, engagement, experience, exclusivity, emotion and trust are the key characteristics of modern promotions (Ekblad, 2020). The modern consumer not only seeks to buy a product, but experiences and emotions. The most successful brands as well as focusing on the products and services, provide their customers with great experiences, emotions, and a story that resonates (Brand24, 2020). The employment of these factors in video marketing will be examined and discussed in the research chapter.

2.2.1. Digital marketing strategy, channels and tactics

A plan which outlines how an organization will carry out its marketing objectives through online channels such as social media and search engines is a digital marketing strategy;

essentially, this strategy is a brief in which in addition to the online channels and digital marketing tactics an organization is going to utilize, the amount of investment in these channels and tactics, and expected goals and ROI will be included (WebFX, 2018; Hudson, 2021; Smart Insights, 2021).

Digital marketing tactics are the specific actions and tools marketers utilize throughout their strategy in order to achieve their objectives (Hudson, 2021). These tactics are executed via digital marketing channels; in his research, Key (2017) defines digital marketing channels as “*the internet systems that have the ability to simultaneously create, promote, and deliver value from producers to consumers through digital networks*” (Key, 2017, p. 27). As Patel (2019) indicates, digital marketing can be carried out both online and offline; offline channels such as enhanced offline marketing (electronic billboards), radio marketing, and TV marketing (TV commercials). There are various online channels in the field, according to Key (2017), Patel (2019), WebFX (2018), Chen (2021) and Kamal (2016), the most common ones are:

- Search engine marketing (SEM); which includes “Search engine optimization (SEO)” and “Pay-per-click advertising (PPC)”
- Social media marketing (SMM); which includes influencer marketing
- Email marketing
- Content marketing
- Affiliate marketing
- Online display advertising

Similar to mobile marketing, video marketing is a multi-channel digital marketing tactic which could reach a target audience through different channels—social media or email (Leppaniemi & Karjaluo, 2005). Blogs, educational offers, webinars, newsletters, podcasts, contests, and giveaways are among the most common digital marketing tactics (Hudson, 2021).

2.3. Content marketing

According to Kingsnorth (2019), content marketing has become one of the popular topics with the rise of digital marketing. Even though attracting potential customers through creating content is not a modern strategy in marketing, this popularity has been increasing so much thanks to the importance of content on the digital channels that nowadays it is known as an

exclusive discipline (Charlesworth, 2018). Content Marketing Institute (contentmarketinginstitute.com) (as cited in Charlesworth, 2018, p. 40) defines content marketing as “*a marketing technique of creating and distributing relevant and valuable content to attract, acquire, and engage a clearly defined and understood target audience – with the objective of driving profitable customer action.*”

Content marketing is efficient in both B2C and B2B marketing, and marketers utilize it for multiple purposes such as customer acquisition and retention, sales, direct sales, increased web traffic, brand awareness and loyalty, lead generation or thought leadership (Charlesworth, 2018). As Patel (2019) states, content marketing is all about storytelling. Content marketing is a long-term strategy that aims to build a strong relationship with the target market by providing them with high-quality content which is quite relevant to them, through telling a story that resonates; for instance, Coca-Cola value proposition is not only about a selling a can of soda, but happiness (Patel, 2019; Brand24, 2020). The developed content can be delivered in formats such as blog articles, webinars, guides, podcasts, videos, infographics, social media posts, forums, and so forth (Charlesworth, 2018). Rebecca Lieb (2017) (as cited in Charlesworth, 2018, p. 42) advises that prior to developing the content, a content marketing strategy should adopt the following four key elements:

- 1. Brand:** What is the customer's perceptions toward the organization or its products, and the promise the organization or brand is making?
- 2. Messaging:** What does the organization want and does not want to say and convey, and how will these messages be delivered?
- 3. Positioning:** What is the position of the organization in its competitive landscape? What differentiates it from other organizations? What are its unique strengths and key shortcomings?
- 4. Values:** What are the organization’s core values? What aspect of the organization does the content want to promote, e.g. innovative, corporate responsibility, its staff?

As it was discussed, one of the formats of content is video, and for this reason, Chi (2020) considers video marketing as a type of content marketing that uses video as the medium. Since video consumption is the fastest growing area of mass communication—over 75% of all the internet traffic is constituted of online video, worldwide—and as it will be discussed in the following chapters, videos are the most effective form of storytelling in the screen age, it could

be concluded that video marketing serves the goal of content marketing—storytelling in order to build a strong relationship with the target market—in the most efficient way (Finkler & Leon, 2019).

2.4. Video marketing

Collins & Conley (2020) define video marketing as “*using videos to promote and market your product or service, increase engagement on your digital and social channels, educate your consumers and customers, and reach your audience with a new medium*”. Videos are easier to be decoded, and for this reason, in an economy where attention is the most valuable resource, their use in the modern marketing arena is unavoidable (Costa-Sánchez, 2017). Moreover, it has provided the businesses with opportunities to evoke the consumers’ emotions and appeal to their needs (Sedej, 2019). Choosing the best platforms, using various types of video, and strategic planning which aims to ensure that the videos are engaging and convey the intended information are some of the essential factors in video marketing (Dental Abstracts, 2020, p. 238). McCue (2018) (as cited in Sedej, 2019, p. 41) states that today marketing via video is the biggest way to reach people. Social media and modern mobile technologies have led to a dramatic shift in the ways that video-based content could be produced and published; social media channels like YouTube have facilitated this democratization of media production in a way that nowadays not only businesses but also consumers are provided with a significant opportunity to use videos and films for multiple purposes at a very low price. However, this accessibility has led to a competitive market, and knowing how to leverage video marketing with skills and creativity is crucial to its success (Finkler & Leon, 2019). In the following chapters, as well as shedding light on the growing importance of video marketing, the specifications, types and metrics for measuring the success of marketing videos will be investigated. This will help to better understand the research part of this thesis which is about finding commonalities among YouTube's top 10 U.S. TrueView for action ads for 2020; the goal of this research is to find out if there are any common elements among these successful marketing videos.

2.4.1. The importance of video marketing

With the rise of digital marketing and social media, video has been turned into one of the vital elements of marketing strategies. This popularity and importance has been growing ever since, and it is expected to increase in the upcoming years (Chaffey, 2020). Nicola Mendelsohn, Facebook vice president for Europe, the Middle East and Africa predicted that Facebook would be all video and no text by 2021; she states that statistics indicate that the written word is becoming all but obsolete, and moving images and speech will replace it on digital platforms, adding: *“The best way to tell stories in this world, where so much information is coming at us, actually is video. It conveys so much more information in a much quicker period. So actually the trend helps us to digest much more information”* (Werber, 2016). This growth has been obvious in the latest video marketing statistics by Wyzowl (2021).

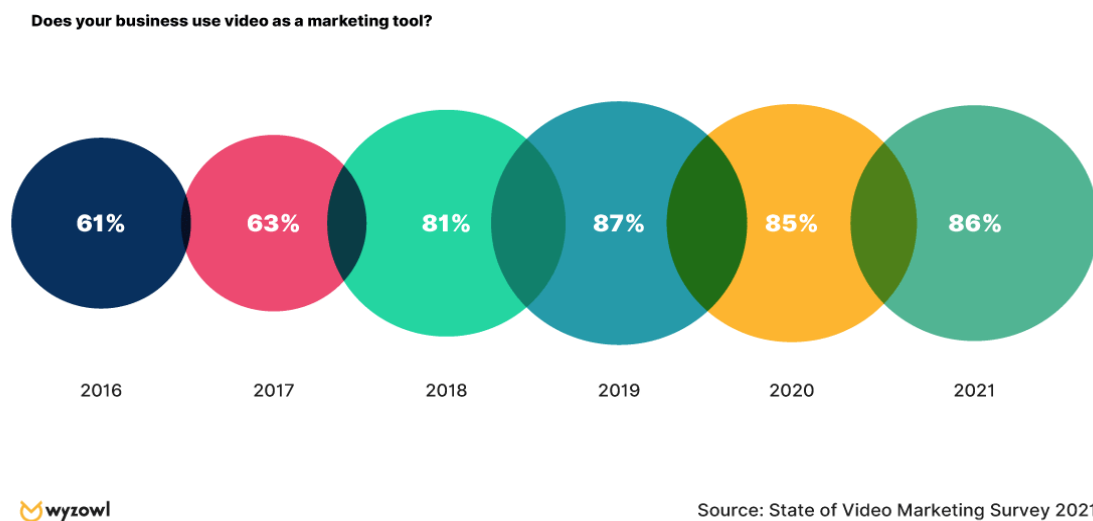
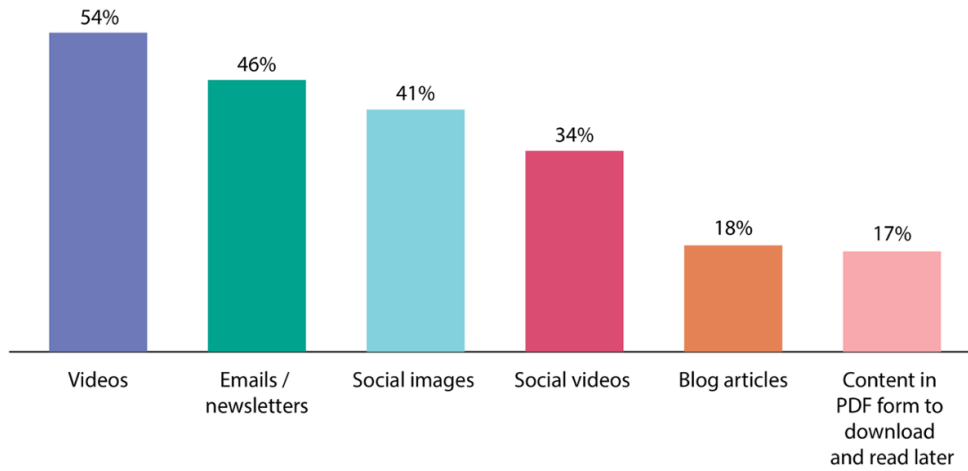


Figure 6 - The growth of video use as a marketing tool by businesses (Wyzowl, 2021).

Despite a slight drop in 2020, as we can see in figure 6, from 2016 to 2021, using video as a marketing tool by businesses has increased by 41%. In fact, according to Patel (2019), 52% of marketers in 2017 stated that video has the best ROI comparing to the other types of marketing content, and ever since, overtaking blogs and infographics, video has been turned into the most commonly used format in content marketing (HubSpot, 2020). One of the key reasons for the growth of video marketing has been the increasing demand for video content from consumers worldwide.

What kind of content do you want to see from a brand or business you support?



Base: 3,010 consumers in the US, Germany, Colombia, and Mexico
Source: HubSpot Content Trends Survey, Q3 2017

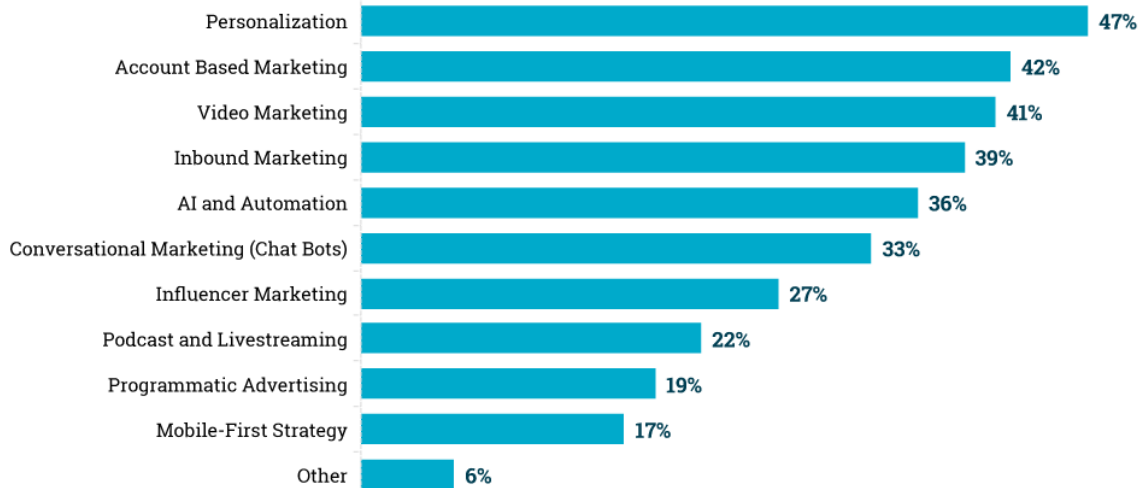


Figure 7 - Video is the most preferred type of marketing content by consumers (An, 2018).

According to Collins & Conley (2020), video rose to the top of marketing tactic list of businesses in 2017, and during 2018 and 2019, from a singular marketing tactic, video turns into an entire business strategy. It should be noted that video marketing is not only limited to B2C marketing, but its use by B2B marketing professionals has been growing as well.

New B2B Marketing and Sales Strategies for 2020

("What new marketing and sales strategies are you interested in exploring in 2020?")



Published on MarketingCharts.com in November 2019 | Data Source: Sagefrog Marketing Group

Based on a survey of more than 100 professionals in a variety of industries, all located in the US

Figure 8 - Use of video marketing is increasing in B2B marketing (MarketingCharts.com, 2019).

As it is observable in figure 8, 41% of B2B marketers were going to explore the new opportunities using video marketing to increase their sales leads, and it was marked as one of the leading B2B trends in 2020 (MarketingCharts, 2019). As Block (2021) notes, because

videos are a great way to represent a product or service, due to Covid-19 effects on the business operations, especially B2B sector, this trend was amplified. As a result of cancellation of live events, in-person meetings and other conventional forms of communications, businesses had to adapt new strategies to showcase their product or service and communicate with their prospects and clients throughout the customer lifecycle to attract, convert, and delight. Hence, leaning on video was unavoidable, and this has led to recognition of the efficacy and efficiency of video throughout the customer lifecycle in B2B marketing (Block, 2021).

The success of online video consists of several factors, videos allow easy, fast and shareable consumption through social networks (Costa-Sánchez, 2017). As Patel (2019) notes, 80% percent of people are capable of recalling a video ad they have watched in the last month. In addition, according to Wyzowl (2021), people are twice likely to share video content with their friends than any other type of content. Unlike in the past, with the emergence of new technologies, video is no longer only an accessible medium to the big brands and businesses, and its production requires a significantly lesser budget (Sedej, 2019). According to Olson (2009) (as cited in Finkler & Leon, 2019, p. 2), the reason behind the popularity of video format as an effective communication channel among audiences is that *“film is a language that everyone learns to ‘read’ from a very early age.”* A narrative which is paired with emotive imagery aids to influence both the persuasiveness of a message and an individual’s beliefs, attitudes and behavior (Finkler & Leon, 2019). Mowat (2018) (as cited in Sedej, 2019, p. 41) agrees and states video is a highly engaging interactive medium which goes way beyond watching moving images on screen. Furthermore, Joshi (2017) states some of the key advantages of video in a content marketing strategy are: superior message transmission to the other formats, increasing the virility and engagement, the most likely format to be remembered, and high compatibility with search engine optimization (SEO). According to Wyzowl (2021), if a web page contains a relevant video content, it will have a 50% better chance of appearing on the first page of Google search results. Miller (2011) indicates three primary goals of content in a video marketing strategy are informing, entertaining, and educating. Unlike the traditional advertising communication strategies through broadcast media such as television, today it is the audience who approaches the content proposed by businesses or brands. Hence, the provided content should be beneficial to consumers’ personal or professional lives, in the form of entertainment, information, training or utility (Costa-Sánchez, 2017). In the following chapters the topics of engagement and success metrics in video marketing will be further discussed.

2.4.2. Types of marketing videos

As a marketing video could be used for various purposes by a business or organization, various types of content could be adapted on this audiovisual language (Costa-Sánchez, 2017). Wyzowl (2021) states three main purposes for marketing videos: sales videos to increase a product sales, entertaining videos to create and increase brand awareness, and educational videos to educate viewers regarding a particular case or a product. According to Bonacci (2020), Walters (2019), Costa-Sánchez (2017), Smart Insights (2019), Collins & Conley (2020), Lashbrook (2021) and Miller (2011), based on the purpose of marketing communication, this study classifies marketing videos into four major types and the relevant subtypes:

1. Educational; this type of video marketing aims to build trust with consumers as a business is establishing itself as an expert in the industry.

- How-To videos – step-by-step tutorials to teach consumers how to use a product or service as well as providing them with a better understanding of a business and its solutions. The goal is creating trust and boosting engagement to encourage purchasing decisions.
- Industry update videos – highlighting the latest trends in the relevant industry with the goal of gaining credibility.
- (Animated) Explainer videos – explaining a product, service or concept concisely to help consumers better understand a problem and the offered solution for it, and why they need that product or service.
- Infographic videos
- Listicle videos – displaying listed information in a slideshow-esque format.
- Webinars – educating potential customers about issues related to your industry, generating leads to add to targeted email lists, and guiding prospects further along the funnel.
- Personalized videos – surprising and delighting prospects and customers with the aim of making a personal connection and driving them further down the purchase journey.

2. Company culture; showcasing a company's vision, mission, or products and services with the goal of building and increasing brand awareness and trust.

- Brand/Corporate video stories
- Company introductions
- Event videos – capturing a business or organization presence at the internal and external live events to humanize the brand, increase trust and awareness.
- Comedic videos – to build brand favorability.
- Current affairs
- Corporate social responsibility

3. Product/Service;

- Demo videos – a tour of a software or how it can be used, unboxing, putting a physical product to the test with the goal of boosting conversion.
- Product launch videos
- Tutorials
- Product or service promotion/Teaser videos – spotlighting a product's top features and tangible benefits.'
- Presentation videos – demonstrating the benefits of a product, service, or an idea.
- Sales/ The straight offer videos

4. Experience; interacting with customers, internal/external experts, thought leaders in an industry, and influencers to build trust and authority with consumers in addition to raising awareness.

- Social proof/Case study/Customer testimonial videos
- Employee testimonials
- Interviews
- Video poll

Some types of these videos such as interviews, webinars, launch videos, presentations and events could be delivered in other styles as well as the recorded version to increase engagement;

live streams, 360-degree videos, virtual reality (VR) videos and augmented reality (AR) videos (Collins & Conley, 2020).

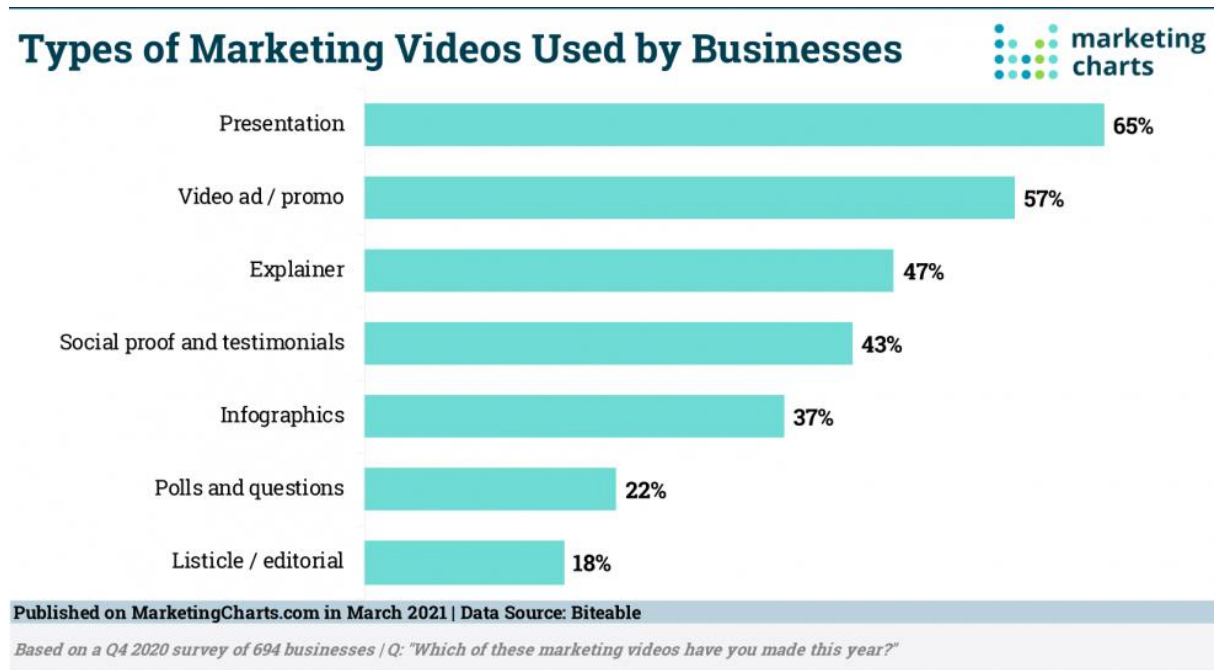
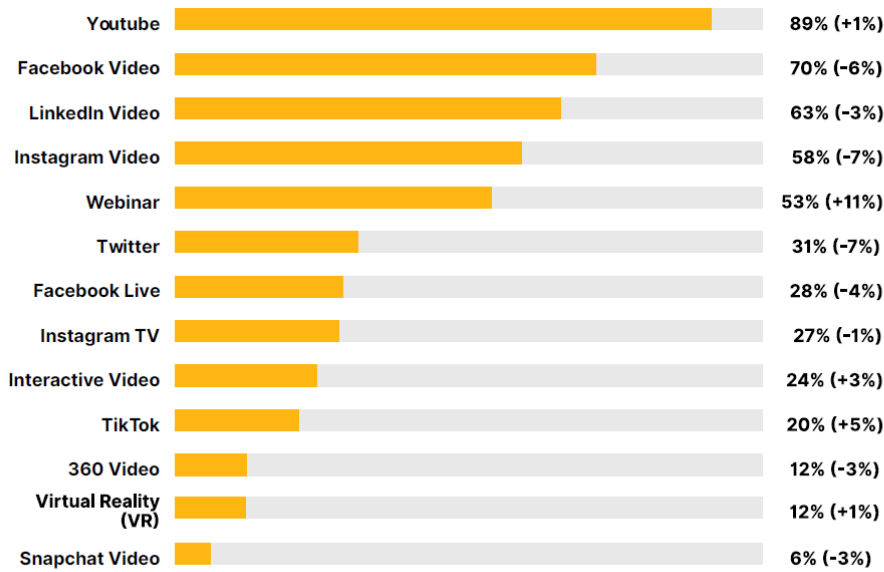


Figure 9 - Presentation videos are the most used type of marketing videos by businesses in 2020 – MarketingCharts.com (Lashbrook, 2021).

According to (Lashbrook, 2021), presentation videos, product promotion videos and explainer videos are the most popular type of marketing videos among businesses in 2020, as it is observable in figure 9.

2.4.3. Video marketing channels and video specifications

One of the vital steps in video marketing is determining the channels on which the video content will be published according to its goal, type, specifications and the target audience, to communicate the marketing message in the most efficient way (Sedej, 2019). YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Twitter, TikTok, Vimeo, Vidyad, Snapchat and an organization’s website or blog are the common channels to publish marketing videos (Collins & Conley, 2020; Wyzowl, 2021). According to Wyzowl's survey (2021)—The State of Video Marketing 2021—as it is shown in figure 10, YouTube with 89% and Facebook with 70% are the most used video platforms by marketers.



Source: State of Video Marketing Survey 2021

Figure 10 - How marketers use video in 2021 on social media, compared to 2020 (Wyzowl, 2021).

Moreover, the formatting specifications depends on the channel where it will be published. As video specifications vary on each platform—dimensions, duration, orientation, aspect ratio, size, quality, format—these technical specifications need to be taken into consideration in the process of creating video contents. For instance, YouTube is a platform optimized for landscape videos, and works the best on a computer or TV screen; this means that an aspect ratio of 16:9, and a large resolution (maximum 3840x2160) will lead to a better user experience. In addition, one of the reasons behind the popularity of YouTube for publishing long form video contents is because the platform allows the users to upload large video files up to 128GB, and a maximum length of 12 hours. The frame rate could be maximum 60 frames per second (FPS), and MP4 is the recommended format. As there are more platforms with their own optimal formats, and the device on which a video is watched also varies for each platform and user, it is noteworthy to mention that to maximize engagement on the various platforms, a video content needs to be rendered in different formats for each platform (Ekblad, 2020).

2.4.4. Creating engaging marketing videos

An engaging video content makes the viewer keep watching the video for a longer period of time; it will increase the chance of influencing consumers' emotions and reacting to the content. This in turn will lead to a higher reach—more views—which is the main metric to measure a video's success (Ekblad, 2020). According to Toole (2015) (as cited in Costa-Sánchez, 2017,

p. 19), the following aspects should be present in a marketing content when a brand proposes it to consumers:

- **Searchable:** websites that publish updated high-quality editorial content regularly are better positioned in search engines.
- **Shareable:** resharing a proposed content by users in social networks is considered as content approval sign by search engines, and increases a website's ranking.
- **Supportive:** brands should ensure they provide users with the required information about their product or service and be responsive to their questions.
- **Specialist:** a content should derive a specific area of information; users' interests and content needs should be combined with the knowledge of the sector.
- **Sustainable:** providing relevant and effective content in a sustainable manner and on a regular basis. The timing varies on different platforms/channels.

Costa-Sánchez (2017) states a marketing video will be engaging and go viral providing that it can captivate the viewers in the first seconds, tells a good story, be funny, attracts attention, be brief, and arouses emotions. Dental Abstracts (2020) agrees and indicates that a video should deliver a "hook" in the beginning so that it holds the viewers' engaged to the end. They also state that offering information that consumers want to know provides value and increases the conversions. Moreover, adding subtitles to videos and making sure that it works with or without sound increases the engagement; 85% percent of Facebook videos are watched without sound (Dental Abstracts, 2020; S. Patel, 2016).

It should be noted that the psychological aspects and influences of a video on the viewers varies depending on the target audience. Knowing who the target audience of a video is helps the creators to plan the concept and go through the production process with a better perception, which in turn will result in an engaging and influential video content that resonates with customers' needs. According to Ekblad (2020) stimulating curiosity is the first universal psychological aspect of video creation; in addition to video marketing, applying the curiosity gap to different marketing tools has been proven to work. If the initial impressions of a video are promising to provide the viewer with something which they do not know yet, and knowing that will benefit them, this can stimulate the viewer, which in turn will increase the watch time and reach. A YouTube video's title or thumbnail which is asking a question and suggests that

the answer is found within the video is a good example of this theory; the more mysterious and engaging the question, the more curious viewers become. The second psychological aspect, as it was mentioned, is the importance of getting the attention and “hooking the audience” in the first seconds of the video (Ekblad, 2020). According to Microsoft Attention Spans Research Report 2015, due to the effects of an increasingly digitized lifestyle, the average human being now has an attention span of eight seconds (Armentrout, 2015). 45% of users who watch the first 3 seconds of a video, will continue to watch the following 30 seconds according to Facebook (Ekblad, 2020). The first 15-30 seconds of a video is crucial to the viewer; investing in a compelling and well-paced intro that contains the content they want to see will lead to a high initial audience retention—it displays the percentage of viewers who watch and leave a video at every single moment of the video (Baker, 2019; Chi, 2020). This aspect also is important technically as, for instance, in case of video ads on YouTube, a view is only counted when the user watches a complete ad that is 11–30 seconds long or at least 30 seconds of a video ad that is more than 30 seconds long (YouTube Help, 2021). What’s more, according to YouTube “videos with consistently high audience retention and watch time have the potential to show up more frequently in Search and Suggested locations on YouTube” (YouTube, 2021). Storytelling is the third psychological aspect of video marketing. A strong narrative created by the author of a video will lead to a stronger connection with the audience, and this will induce a higher engagement and spread. This stems from the fact that unlike logical information, relatable stories communicate to the memories of the audience, which is an emotional trigger. A well targeted story, balanced with facts that serve the purpose of a video, can convey the brand’s message with a strong impact on the viewer (Ekblad, 2020).

In addition to the psychological aspects, technical aspects such as the video quality—resolution, bitrate, audio quality—play a key role in video marketing. For instance, a slow loading speed or very bad video quality will decrease the engagement. However, if we consider the relationship between watch time and video quality as a curve, it becomes shallower with the increase in the quality; meaning that consumers start to care less about the quality improvements at the upper end. Hence, it could be concluded that a video which is going to be published on the internet should have a quality slightly above average to both keep the production costs reasonable and improve the audience engagement (Ekblad, 2020). Furthermore, according to Lashbrook (2021), the following qualities in a video will lead to a better performance: suitable music, relevant voiceover, captions/subtitles, and minimal text-

on-screen. Moreover, as it was mentioned, using accurate titles, keywords and thumbnails are vital to the success of a video (Baker, 2018).

2.4.5. Measuring a successful video

It should be noted that concerning the purpose of a marketing video, not all the benefits of a video content are measurable. For instance, the return on investment (ROI) of videos which are made with the goal of brand building and improving public relations cannot be measured directly using a specific metric, meaning that a video content could have extra values in addition to its measurable aspects. Even so, measuring and comparing content engagement can be an efficient indicator of the general success of a video content regardless of the purpose, and this is done through measuring the gained attention rather than financial profits (Ekblad, 2020). Based on the results of their research, Hayes (2021) elaborates on this topic by stating that while only 29% of video marketers consider sales as a measurement of success, 78% report that video marketing has improved their company's bottom line. This means that even if the focus remains on other metrics, video content will have a positive impact (Hayes, 2021). The term "engagement" in digital marketing refers to how consumers interact directly with a brand through different actions—clicks, likes, comments, shares—via the accessible channels such as email, social media, and website (Rock Content, 2021; Hueffner, 2020). On social media, it is a measure of how users interact with an organization's social media account and content. Across all social platforms, the term could cover a broad range of actions because each platform has its own components of engagement. For instance, on YouTube regarding a video content, generally it refers to views, likes, dislikes, comments and subscriptions while on Facebook it means all possible ways of interacting with an account's posts and profile--post shares, reactions, saves, comments, likes, views, link clicks and mentions. Hence, understanding what engagement means on each platform is crucial (Eckstein, 2021; Chen, 2020; YouTube Help, 2021). As the focus of this study is measuring the success of marketing videos on YouTube, the metrics of this platform will be further discussed.

Engagement is used to measure the level of viewers' immersion in the content they consume, and to benchmark the effectiveness of content at gaining the attention of consumers. What's more, it is commonly used as an umbrella term to refer to other measurements of audience attention; for instance, concerning video contents on YouTube, in addition to the defined metrics of views, likes, dislikes, comments and subscriptions, it could also refer to audience

reach, watch time, audience retention, click-through rate (CTR), impressions, clicks and conversions (Ekblad, 2020; Cannon, 2020; ThinkwithGoogle, 2020). As it is observable, YouTube offers a comprehensive set of metrics to measure the success of video contents.

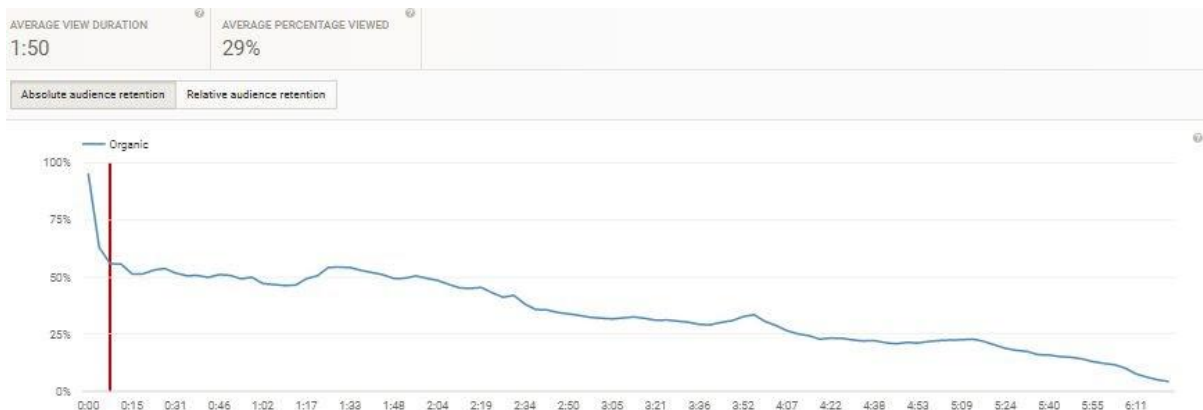


Figure 11 - An example of a video's audience retention graph report on YouTube (Chan, 2018).

Audience retention is a valuable tool for video creators as it shows which parts of a video have caught the viewers' attention and which parts they have skipped; it is basically about how much of each video viewers watches before clicking away (Brown, 2021; Ekblad, 2020). As it is observable in figure 11, nearly half of the given video's viewers left the video in the first 20 seconds. Video marketers can also use audience retention for their future videos strategy, as the graph provides valuable insights about the most engaging and boring parts of a video, and in the future videos these parts can be enhanced or removed (Chi, 2020). Furthermore, according to the graph, the performance of the video could be measured; the average percentage viewed for this given video is 29% which after comparing to the other channel's videos, it can be determined whether the performance is good or not (Ekblad, 2020). Audience reach metrics—impressions, impressions click-through rate, views, and unique views—can provide video marketers with insights into their traffic sources and the size of their active audience (Cannon, 2020; YouTube Creator Academy, 2021) Impressions is basically how many times your video thumbnails are shown on YouTube. Impressions Click-Through Rate measures a video's ability to encourage users to watch it after seeing the thumbnail and title on their homepage, recommendation section, or trending section, and shows what percentage of the impressions on YouTube turned into views. Unique views evaluates the estimated number of users who watch a channel's video over a set time period. It helps video marketers to understand how big and active their audience is; if the unique views number is lower than the subscriber number, it means a channel's subscribers do not watch as much of the video as they could be (YouTube Creator Academy, 2021). Views measure the number of times users watched or engaged with a video; as it was mentioned, on YouTube a view is counted if it lasts

for at least 30 seconds of a video that’s more than 30 seconds long (Google, 2021). In addition to the reach metrics, there are other significant metrics when it comes to evaluating the success of a marketing video on YouTube. Watch time shows the total amount of time users watched a video, in seconds (Google, 2021). When ranking videos, YouTube accounts for watch time rather than views, because their algorithm presumes that the more watch a video has, the more engaging it is (Chi, 2020; Paquette, 2020). As a result of this method, one of crucial players in the success of a marketing video is the quality of the content and how well-made it is so that viewers can relate to it and stay for a longer time (Ekblad, 2020). Clicks show the number of times users clicked on a video; it is used to understand how well a marketing video is appealing to users who see it (Google, 2021). In the same vein, Click-through Rate (CTR) refers to the number of clicks a video receives divided by the number of times it is shown (Google, 2021). However, when it comes to call-to-action overlays (CTAs), companion banners, cards—“*slide-in panels that encourage people to take a desired action during a video like watch another video, subscribe to a channel, or click through to a different website*” (Chi, 2020)—or other types of digital ads, Collins & Conley (2020) define CTR as the number of times a call-to-action (CTA) is clicked divided by the number of times it's viewed. The number of times users completed the desired action divided by the number of clicks on the CTA is called conversion rate (Collins & Conley, 2020).

from How to Identify the Right KPIs for Online Video: Lessons from Google BrandLab

| Measuring Brand Marketing Goals With KPIs | | | |
|---|---|---|--|
| BRAND MARKETING GOALS |  Awareness |  Consideration |  Action |
| KPIs TO MEASURE THAT GOAL | Views | View-through rate | Clicks |
| | Impressions | Watch time | Calls |
| | Unique users | Favorability lift | Signups |
| | Awareness lift | Consideration lift | Sales |
| | Ad recall lift | Brand interest lift | Purchase intent lift |

think with Google

thinkwithgoogle.com

Figure 12 - Identifying the right KPIs is the key to measure success in video marketing (Larson & Salberg, 2020).

In regard to measuring a video ad’s success, Larson & Salberg (2020) discuss the importance of setting the right KPIs; it stands for key performance indicator, a quantifiable measure of performance over time for a specific business objective (Qlik, 2020). As they argue, number

of views is not always the best way to track progress against a brand's unique goals, but identifying the right KPIs in accordance with the goals and tracking them is the key to understanding if a video campaign is successful.

Thus, defining success in a video marketing campaign depends on what a business is aiming for. If the goal is increasing awareness, views is the key indicator and an organization can set it as the primary metric to measure their KPIs (Larson & Salberg, 2020). The other point which should be considered when evaluating the success metrics of a video is whether the exposure was paid as a method of direct marketing, or if the views occurred naturally—organic (Ekblad, 2020).

2.5. Visual rhetoric

As the aim of this study is finding common visual rhetorical elements and correlation between successful marketing videos, and in the research chapter, a visual rhetorical analysis of “YouTube’s top 10 TrueView for action video ads in the U.S. for 2020” is conducted, study of visual rhetoric and its concepts is inevitable. However, due to the length limitations, the author decided to move the discussion of this part to Appendix A.

2.5.1. Film rhetoric

This thesis will use David Blakesley’s methodology and his four approaches to film rhetoric for the visual rhetorical analysis of YouTube’s top 10 TrueView for action video ads of 2020 in the USA. Hence, in this section, his theory will be discussed. A core concept of Blakesley’s approach to rhetoric of film is that of the terministic screen which refers to the means of representation that “direct the attention to one field rather than another” (Blakesley, 2004, p. 114). The phrase “terministic screen” was initially used by Kenneth Burke; he suggested that every time an individual uses language, they produce a screen and select the reality that is closest to their perception of reality. This means people focus on the aspects that are interesting and related to them the most (Blakesley, 2004).

With reference to Alfred Hitchcock’s film “Vertigo”, Blakesley outlines the components of film rhetoric by defining four approaches: Film Language, Film Ideology, Film Interpretation

and Film Identification. He argues that each of these factors contributes to development of a broader understanding of visual rhetoric, and within that, film rhetoric (Blakesley, 2004).

2.5.1.1. Film language

This approach which was advanced in the works of scholars like Christian Metz, Stephen Heath, Vivian Sobchack and others, “*treats film both semiotically and phenomenologically as a grammatical system of signs, with attention to spectatorship and perceptual processes*” (Blakesley, 2004, p. 114). Christian Metz has an influential role in this field. As well as developing a sign system for film spectatorship, his idea that argues the unconscious is structured like a language is groundbreaking. According to Metz, film functions both as a language—through its sign system and cinematic technique as a grammar—and rhetorical appeal to the audience (Blakesley, 2004). Considering film as a language suggests that “*there is a grammar of visual signs that operates predictably and that can be used to generate an infinite variety of meanings*” (Blakesley, 2004, p. 114). Elements of film language comprise visual elements such as mise-en-scène (placement in the frame), camera movement, color, spatial relationships, camera angles, audiovisual editing, iconic symbolism, and so on, however, they are not limited only to visual elements (Blakesley, 2004). Blakesley claims that our observation of the system to the same extent is a product of both what we know or want to believe, and the formal properties of the grammatical system—film (Blakesley, 2004).

2.5.1.2. Film identification

This approach studies film rhetoric as “*involving identification and division*” (Blakesley, 2004). From a rhetorical point of view, identification is “*the act of asserting or imagining identity between two (or more) dissimilars, on the basis of similitude*” (Blakesley, 2004, p. 115). Film style directs the audience’s attention for psychological, ideological, or social purposes. Metz argues that the imaginary, which is secondary—or even third—order of reality, and is translated as the film viewing experience, is where film identification functions (Blakesley, 2004). Based on this approach, the desire for identification, of self with others for instance, is what a film appeals to. This is attempted to be done by portraying interesting psychologically and ideologically complex events followed by their social purposes and consequences for the film

spectator; spectatorship generally (Blakesley, 2004). Kenneth Burke claims that identification is both a rhetorical condition and the aim of rhetoric. He states that since people are not identical, filmmakers must create a basis of identification in order to assist the viewer identify with the film and its characters (Burke, 1950). This is an efficient technique in creating video advertisements, to allow the spectator imagine oneself as the character(s) in a film or video, and encourage them to buy a product or service not only because of the features but to experience the associated feelings and identifying themselves with the portrayed community (Helmets, 2004; Hill, 2004; Marin et al., 2018).

2.5.1.3. Film ideology

In this approach film serves ideological aims in its content, technical apparatus, and distribution mechanisms. In this area, deconstruction of or exposing film's dominant ideology is the aim of analysis. Traditionally, film ideology has been defined by its explicit content, meaning that films, through visual messages, shape attitudes or convey messages that practice or challenge ideological pieties, and hence, they serve as means of representation. For instance, the visual composition of a frame creates or transmits ideology through conveying meaningful relationships among the frame elements (Blakesley, 2004). The rhetorical analysis in this approach studies how these effects of film are achieved and how they make their appeals to shared interests among viewers. What's more, even though films are representational due to their characteristic of conveying messages that could shape attitudes or challenge ideological views, a viewer's ideological apparatus impacts their perception of the film substantially. It is a matter of whether a director or viewer chooses to focus on object A and neglect object B. Blakesley suggests: "*How a subject is filmed is an expression of ideology,*" he adds, "*the film functions rhetorically as an exploitation of that subject's ambiguity*" (Blakesley, 2004, p. 115). From a cultural point of view, a film's ideological functions serve as means of initiating cultural critique, values and beliefs. Focusing on identification through employing certain actors, ideologies, and cultural or historical beliefs and norms are also discussed within this area (Blakesley, 2004).

2.5.1.4. Film interpretation

“This approach treats film as a rhetorical situation involving the director, the film, and the viewer in the total act of making meaning” (Blakesley, 2004, p. 116), and takes both what is manifest on screen and its reception by the viewer into consideration. Scholars like Seymour Chatman consider the film experience as a rhetorical situation and highlight the importance of the presence of critics in that situation. As Chatman notes, film interpretation should take the following elements into account: the reactions of the audience, the function and formal elaboration of the genre, and the symbolic depiction of meaning which is transferred through screen. It should be noted that he prefers translating linguistic tropes and forms into the visual equivalents more than concentrating on rhetoric’s function in articulating the situational nature of film (Blakesley, 2004). In this approach, in addition to implying concepts of the previous approaches, the audience reaction and the critical point of views are studied.

3. Research

3.1. Research topic and goal

The following research is a visual rhetorical analysis of YouTube’s top 10 TrueView for action video ads in the U.S. for 2020, based on David Blakesley’s methodology and his four approaches to film rhetoric. This is done to find out if there are any common features and trends that are seen in the selected successful marketing videos; the term “successful” in this research is defined according to the metrics used in the chosen sample—total reach and clicks (ThinkwithGoogle, 2020; Blakesley, 2004). Upon exploring the visual elements of the video ads, it is expected to find correlation between the presence of certain number of rhetorical devices and the success of a marketing video.

3.2. Case study on YouTube TrueView ads

YouTube, as a video hosting platform, is currently considered to be the largest video sharing site, and as it was mentioned, it offers a variety of tools that allow video marketers to track conversions and measure their video marketing campaigns (Sedej, 2019). One of these tools is

YouTube TrueView for action ads that are optimized to drive leads and conversions by adding prominent calls-to-action. They comprise CTAs (calls-to-action)—Download, Buy Now, Watch More, Learn More, etc.—a headline, and an end screen that encourages customers to take action after the video ends. TrueView ads are in two different formats: TrueView in-stream and TrueView discovery ads (ThinkwithGoogle, 2020; Habig, 2020; Google Ads Help, 2021; Create with Google, 2021).

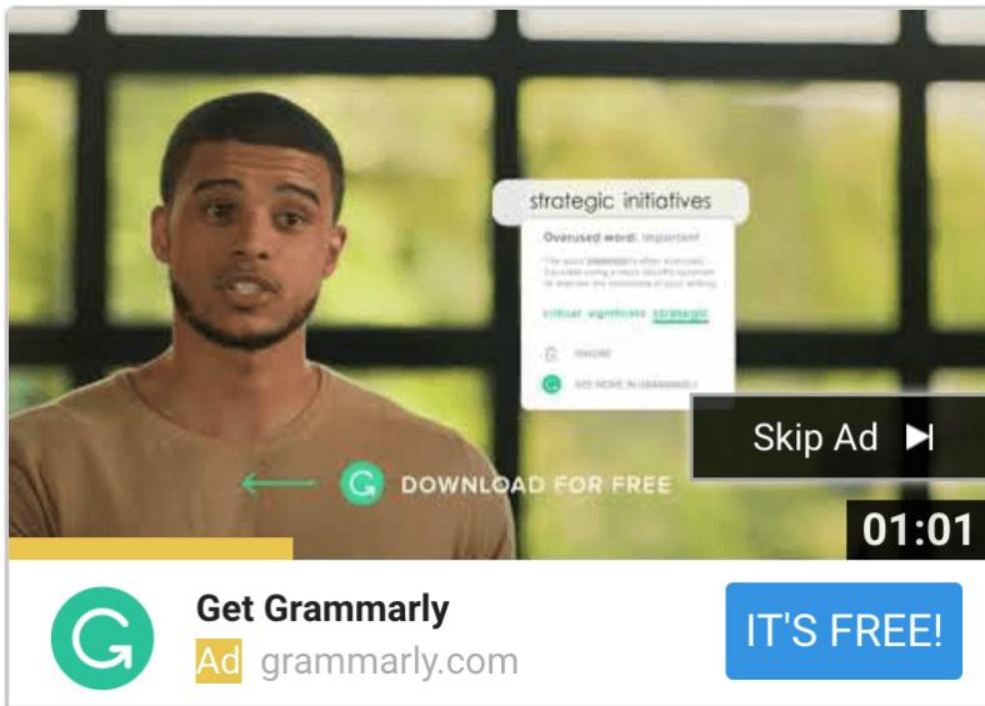


Figure 15 - A TrueView In-stream ad sample which includes Call-to-Action Overlay: CTA button (IT'S FREE), Headline (Get Grammarly), site link and channel icon. As well as that an end screen (DOWNLOAD FOR FREE) will appear at the end. Skip button shows countdown during first 5 seconds, then allows viewers to skip during remainder of video (Gesenhues, 2018).

TrueView in-stream ads, as shown in figure 15, come in two formats of skippable and non-skippable. In-stream ads play before, during, or after other videos; they appear on YouTube watch pages and across apps and websites which run on Google video partners. In case of skippable ads, viewers have an option to skip the ad after 5 seconds, and these ads are not time constrained. Non-skippable ads are 15 seconds or shorter, and viewers do not have the option to skip the ad. The choice between these two formats depends on campaign goal(s) and the way marketer wants to pay for the ad (Google Ads, 2021).

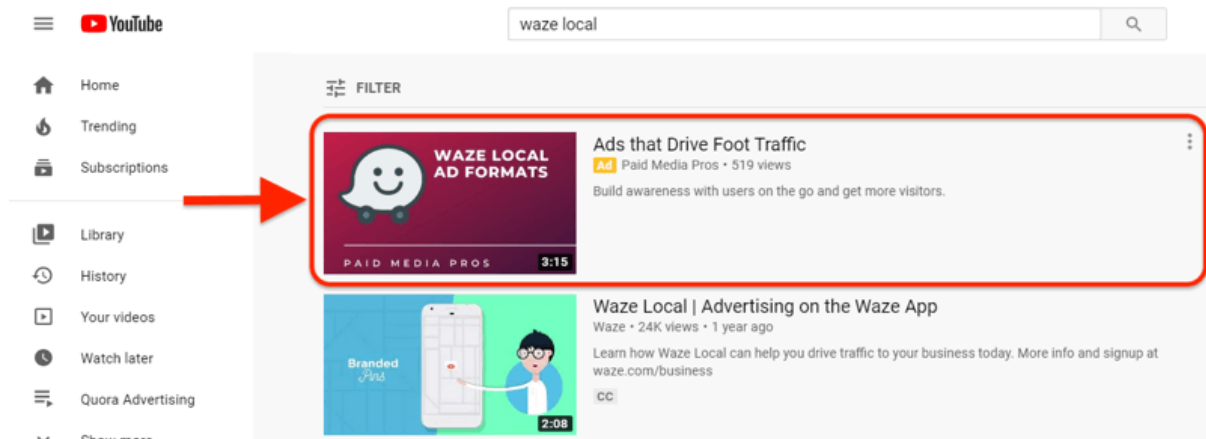


Figure 16 - A TrueView video discovery ad sample that has appeared in YouTube search page (Martinez, 2021).

TrueView video discovery ads, as it is observable in figure 16, appear in the search results, alongside other YouTube videos, or on websites on the Google Display Network. They are displayed as an image thumbnail and up to three lines of text (Google Ads, 2021).

This research focuses on TrueView in-stream ads as the data provided by YouTube are based on this format (ThinkwithGoogle, 2020). What’s more, according to YouTube ads leaderboard (ThinkwithGoogle, 2021), even though several categories such as “2020 year-end wrap-up”—the top 10 ads that people chose to watch on YouTube in 2020 in the US—or “Stay Home PSA Ads Leaderboard” are presented, the issue with these categories is that they are measured based on the number of views, which as it was discussed previously, it cannot be a precise metric to evaluate the success of a video ad. The “TrueView for Action category” offers an accurate measurement which is based on the ads’ total reach and clicks, and a clear method to measure video ads performance and track the conversions, which is a reliable metric to rank video ads on this specific platform in a definite time frame (Google Ads Help, 2021).

3.2.1. Platform of Analysis, Sample Size, Units of Analysis

The research analysis is conducted on YouTube’s top 10 TrueView for action video ads in the U.S. for 2020. The platform of analysis is “YouTube Ads Leaderboard”, where all the advertisements can be found. The units of analysis are the 10 YouTube video advertisements, which are ranked by YouTube from 1 to 10 (1 is the highest, and 10 the lowest) based on “an algorithm that factors engagements with the features of the format: total reach and clicks” (YouTube, 2020). According to YouTube Ads Leaderboard: TrueView for Action-2020 (YouTube, 2020), these ads are listed as follows:

1. Dr. Squatch - Save Your Skin With Dr. Squatch Soap
2. Honey - How much can you save with Honey? Let's find out.
3. Sprint - Get the GS10+
4. Starz - Outlander Episodic Scene Clip
5. Quibi - The Stranger | Official Teaser | Quibi
6. Grammarly - Are You Ready to Try Grammarly?
7. Hulu, FX - Dave – FX on Hulu – S1 Promo
8. Onewheel - Onewheel: Built to Destroy Boredom
9. 4Patriots - How to charge 2 devices in the woods on a cloudy day
10. ALSAC/St. Jude Children's Research Hospital - St. Jude Patient Cole, A Miracle Child

The mentioned advertisements are analyzed in a chronological order, based on Blakesley's four approaches (2004): film language, film ideology, film identification and film interpretation.

3.3. Research method

The present research aims to find answers for the following research questions: What visual rhetorical tools were used in the mentioned ads? What kind of visual reasoning or argumentation has been applied in the ads? Are there any common attributes found among these 10 successful ads? If so, what are they?

The analysis will be carried out by a qualitative research method, and the listed ads will be examined employing content analysis, based on the discussed academic theories in the field of visual argumentation. According to Babbie (2007), content analysis is an unobtrusive form of research, which means that the conducted research does not have any effect on the subject. The mere goal is to understand the underlying processes which provide a deeper insight into the communication patterns systematically and the application of visual means in practice. Babbie argues that “content analysis is the study of recorded human communications” (Babbie, 2007, p. 350). Even though it was initially proposed to examine written and spoken texts, according to Rose (2016), content analysis can be employed to analyze visual contents. On the same topic, Bell (2001, p. 14) states that content analysis is “a systematic, observational method used for testing hypotheses about how the media represent people, events, situations, and so on.” In short, based on reliable observation and classification, content analysis allows researchers to form quantitative generalizations concerning visual and other forms of representation.

According to Rose (2016) and Kim (2017), content analysis is considered a functional method when it comes to generalizing patterns or trends of media representations because it can be utilized to engage with the abundance of visual imagery in a systematic manner.

The units of analysis, top 10 TrueView for Action ads-2020, were selected by purposeful sampling ("Qualitative Sampling Techniques", 2019) according to the following criteria: they must have been streamed in a definite time frame; they must have been evaluated in terms of success based on clear metrics and measurable results; and they must be accessible easily, in a relatively good quality which is adequate for observing. Moreover, as it was mentioned, the analysis will be carried out based on Blakesley's four approaches to film rhetoric, which were defined previously, and similar to his work, this research especially focuses on film identification since this approach essentially entails the other approaches as well. Blakesley notes that film rhetorically functions as an appeal to or assertion of identity in the audience (Blakesley, 2004). In the same manner, video advertisements attempt to appeal to consumer's interest in identifying themselves with organizations and groups (Marin et al., 2018). Furthermore, identifying appeals to ethos, pathos, and logos—rhetorical appeals triangle—in advertisements is a key point both for creators and researchers. In brief, the goal of an advertisement is to persuade people to do something. In order to achieve this goal, as discussed by IXL Learning (2021), three types of persuasive strategies, or appeals, are used in advertising:

- Ethos (character). Showing the writer or speaker authoritative, trustworthy, or providing the audience with important values. For instance:
 - Saying that for many years, a brand has been trusted
 - Including an endorsement from a respected organization
 - Featuring a testimonial from a real individual who shares the audience's values
 - Employing an admired celebrity as a spokesperson
- Logos (reason). Using logic and verifiable evidence. For instance:
 - Informative graphs and charts
 - Citing clinical trials results
 - Explaining the scientific aspects of a product or service
 - Highlighting the financial benefits of a product or service
 - Anticipating and refuting potential counterclaims

- Pathos (emotion). Using feelings instead of facts to persuade the audience. For instance:
 - Triggering a fear, like fear of embarrassment
 - Appealing to a desire, like the desire to appear attractive
 - Linking the product or service to a positive feeling, like luxury, adventure, love

Although in an advertisement, more than one rhetorical appeal could be utilized, deciding on the primary rhetorical appeal heavily depends on how a brand wants to be identified by consumers. For example, Coca Cola uses Santa Claus (ethos) in its Christmas ads, and through applying “pathos” as its main mode of persuasion, implies that drinking and sharing a Coke equals to “happiness” and joining the community of happy people. This allows Coca Cola to manoeuvre and argue visually, as, for example, for this specific brand, using logos is significantly less efficient (Brand24, 2020). In addition to examining rhetorical appeals, the story arc—the structure and overall shape of rising and falling tension or emotion in a story (McNulty, 2021)—of the selected video ads is investigated and compared, with the aim of finding commonalities in this area. As it was discussed, storytelling is the integral part of content—video—marketing, hence, studying the narrative structure of the video ads is inevitable.

3.4. Research conducted on YouTube’s top 10 TrueView for action video ads in the U.S. for 2020

3.4.1. Dr. Squatch - Save Your Skin With Dr. Squatch Soap

“You’re not a dish. You’re a man.” This is how Dr. Squatch, the California-based personal care company for men, ad starts. The video ad, which you can watch [here](#), is ranked first on YouTube’s 2020 “TrueView for Action” Advertising Leaderboard. With over 130 million views at this time, “Save Your Skin With Dr. Squatch Soap” clearly shows how video marketing can boost a business growth and catch people’s eyes even if it is about a bar of soap (Dr. Squatch, 2020). To drive performance, the video ad educates men on the benefits of all-natural personal care products, addresses common questions, discusses the brand, describes products in detail, and includes several Call To Action lines

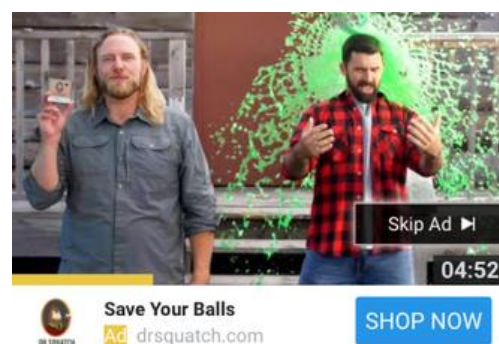


Figure 17 - Save Your Skin With Dr. Squatch Soap (Think with Google, 2020).

encouraging people to visit the website and buy. This video marketing campaign played a major role in earning \$100M in revenue in 2020 for the brand, which is over 350% increase in sales year-over-year for the previous two years. The video ad was created in partnership with Raindrop Branding & Advertising (PRWEB, 2020; Raindrop Branding + Advertising, 2021). The biggest challenge of creators in this campaign is “How do we get men to care about natural soap?” Josh Friedman, Chief Marketing Officer at Dr. Squatch, states that “Dr. Squatch’s advertising strategy has and always will be to both entertain and educate men. We want our content to show guys that natural personal care products are the right choice, but in a fun and light-hearted way” (Kelton Global, 2021; Raindrop Branding + Advertising, 2021). Founded in 2013 in San Diego, Dr. Squatch manufactures soap and personal care products for men, with the mission to elevate men’s personal care through creating products in categories that are under-serving them. The company prides itself on utilizing merely natural ingredients, free from harsh detergents that they claim can harm men’s well-being, mental health, and even sperm count. The creators also assumed that their target demographic is unaware of all-natural personal care products and their benefits, thus in the video ad, they explain why all-natural products are important as well as pitching the brand. The team has also employed comedian James Schrader as the main character to make it more humorous and entertaining (Oster, 2020; Shorty Awards®, 2020; Bowen, 2021).

3.4.1. a) Film Language:

The video length is 4 minutes and 52 seconds. Led by James Schrader as the main character, who keeps his eye-contact with the viewer throughout the video by looking at the camera directly while speaking, and Michael Langsdale as the supporting character, the video ad is exclusively scripted for success on YouTube, which is the creators’ target platform. Hence, it starts high with an introduction that attempts to hook viewers quickly; the first line is: “You’re not a dish. You’re a man!” which happens while the lead character throws a dish against a stone and it breaks (catchy phrase, bold action). These all happen 3 seconds into the ad, before the skip button appears. This sparks curiosity and encourages viewers to watch at least a few more seconds of the ad to hear the end of his line. James Schrader starts his next line and brings up a ‘problem’, stating that most ‘Big Soap’ brands’ body washes are synthetic detergent and made of harsh chemicals that are harmful to men’s ‘well-being’, ‘body’ and ‘sperm count’ (logos & pathos). The all-natural product Dr. Squatch soap is immediately introduced as the ‘solution’. After that, the lead continues speaking to the viewer (directly to the camera) explaining the ‘benefits’ and ‘features’ of the soap as well as continuing his dialogue over

funny scenes when the supporting character is taking a shower with unnatural soaps. Offering him “Dr. Squatch Soap” natural soap, Schrader appeals to viewer’s emotions by stating that with using the soap, you will step out of the shower feeling alive (pathos). Testimonials (ethos) are the next part; we see him interviewing (supposedly) random girls on the street and near the beach, having them smell the soap. The girls endorse the soap and state that how sexy the smell is, and if a guy smells like that, it attracts them. He then interviews a few men, who are all in shape and shirtless, and after smelling it, they express feelings such as “being in a forest”. We see the lead character back in the first, main location, an open green space, which visually makes the color ‘green’ dominant throughout the video. This resonates both with the brand’s primary color which is also green, and the theme of the story which is about all-natural eco-friendly personal care products. Schrader explains more the ‘benefits’ and ‘features’ while seeing him and the supporting character in funny situations such as getting able to open a jar of pickles after smelling the soap. This is followed by a ‘call-to-action’ when he offers the viewer to visit their website at drsquatch.com (the address also appears on the frame) and buy the product. This happens at 01:33 in the video. During the remainder of the video, we see ‘more’ product demonstrations and explanations on the benefits and features similar to the first part of the ad, and another call-to-action at the end. Being made in America (targeting US customers), more testimonials (ethos), infographics on the process of making the soap (logos), shedding light on the harmful chemical ingredients that other companies’ soaps are made of, and comparing them to Dr. Squatch soaps’ natural ingredients (logos) to persuade the viewer form the remaining of this video ad. Linking the brand and its products to masculinity, shapes the primary tone of the brand throughout the video ad. The ad appeals to men’s desire to attract and gain the approval of women; it promises that it will make them smell sexy (pathos). It portrays masculine men who are not afraid of getting dirty because they are ‘men’ and Dr. Squatch soap keeps them clean and smells like “the forest”, “the sea”, or “like you just got off a boat in the Caribbean!” (Pathos). What’s more, other Dr. Squatch products such as shampoo and conditioner are presented. This is followed by questioning 2-in-1 shampoos, stating that 2-in-1 products are “heresy”, and it is like adding water to whisky to get “hammered” and “hydrated” (logos). He also uses another rhetorical tool by stating that do not take his word as a proof but thousands of 5-star reviews on the internet and the quarter of a million men stories who are already using Dr. Squatch soaps (ethos). At the end, as it was mentioned, the lead character makes another call-to-action by informing the viewer about their website, delivery to the door, and satisfaction guarantee. The video includes manly humor (the lead character feels sorry for the supporting character because of his poor balls that are all dry, empty and sad), and

keeps viewers entertained throughout the video. The ad is clear about what it wants from the audience, which is buying Dr. Squatch soap. The background music is only played at some parts of the video; an upbeat exciting piece which starts to play abruptly when the lead character is talking about Dr. Squatch soap while showing it, and when he calls to action. The ad benefits from a professional videography, with simple yet well-thought camera angles and movements that let the audience focus on the speaker. The sound effects are also used purposefully, when describing a feeling such as 'smell like the sea', we hear a relevant sound effect. Regarding the color palette, as it was mentioned, the color green is the primary color, which matches the brand's color. The humorous and funny dialogues and acts play a key role in holding the viewer's attention and keep them entertained, and this happens when the speaker is directly looking at the camera. This naturally makes his speech more engaging and trustful due to the power of eye-contact. Furthermore, the framing of shots leverage this engagement; mostly close shots that make the viewer feel closer to the character. Comedic devices are employed wisely in the script; adding several comedic situations in the story as intervals during the video is one of the key elements that keeps the audience hooked in the entire video. The brand's name is repeated multiple times to make the viewer memorize it, and also the key phrases and words appear on the screen with the same purpose. Moreover, showing the product in use, the supporting character is constantly washing himself with the soap throughout the video, rather than only showing the packaging is another persuasive factor. In terms of the story arc, unlike the classic structure, this video immediately gets to the point. Instead of hiding the solution and the brand until the end of story, through a fast-paced editing, it attracts the viewer in the first few seconds, states the problem and immediately introduces the product (brand) as the solution. After that it goes to explain more information for a short time which is followed by a clear call-to-action. After this part, it offers more comprehensive information about the product and the brand, which is also followed by another call-to-action at the end. Hence, compared to classic ads that start with a problem and go through comprehensive explanations before introducing the solution and one call-to-action, this video ad employs a new structure which has something to offer to the viewers regardless of at what point they stop watching the ad.

3.4.1. b) Film Identification:

The target customers are men who live in the U.S., hence the story is written in order that it appeals to them and they identify themselves with the characters portrayed in the video ad. The supporting character is an icon of the target customers. The main character is constantly arguing with him throughout the video, telling him how unnatural body washes can put his manhood

in danger, and with Dr. Squatch soap he can improve his masculinity, smell sexy, and attract women. Showing shirtless in shape men on the beach while they are rubbing the soap onto their bodies, and girls who smell them and find it attractive is another factor who makes the target audience want to identify themselves with the portrayed characters. The overall masculine tone of the story, repeating the phrase “you are a man” several times during the video, and introducing Dr. Squatch soap as what real men use, make the viewer wants to experience that masculine feeling and join the community of attractive masculine men who are already using Dr. Squatch soap. In short, the brand connects itself to the most important quality of its target consumer which is masculinity.

3.4.1. c) Film Ideology:

The visual and the verbal elements of this video ad argue that if the viewer (men) join this community who share a common interest, being more masculine, it improves them in this area. It also challenges the use of body washes as they are harmful to their well-being as a man. The creators also portray men with more classic attributes such as beard and mustache as well as the desire to do tough jobs in an attempt to imply that even tough men should care about their skin and hair, and to make the target consumers identify themselves with the characters inside the video ad.

3.4.1. d) Film Interpretation:

Jacques Spitzer, CEO of Raindrop, regarding this video ad states that “What we do with Dr. Squatch is more than advertising—it’s ‘edu-tainment’—and we are proud of the impact it’s had” (PRWEB, 2020). The creators in this marketing video introduce a more approachable and modern sense of self-care for men, and in order to make it memorable and hold the viewer’s attention throughout the video, they leverage humor and entertainment, while introducing their product and its benefit. In order to look more credible, they also have added an educational aspect to the content concerning the importance of men's personal care, all-natural products, and the harmful effects of chemical personal care products. Although all types of rhetorical appeals are used in the script, ‘pathos’ is the primary rhetorical tool in this video, as it mainly triggers fear of chemical products and manhood, and appeals to the desire to be attractive to women. Currently the video ad has over 130 million views only on YouTube, nearly 8 thousands likes and a few hundred dislikes. The ad is generally well-received both by men and women according to the comments and online reviews as well as the biggest indicator which is the significant number of conversions as it was mentioned previously. “Save Your Skin With

Dr. Squatch Soap” has the features of all major types of marketing videos. Although being mainly an explainer video ad (educational), we see the brand introduction is done with a comedic approach, thus it is also a ‘company culture’ marketing video. The ad is a ‘product’ marketing video too, since the product is promoted. Ultimately it falls into the ‘experience’ category for including testimonials and interviews.

3.4.2. Honey - How much can you save with Honey? Let's find out.

Honey is a free browser extension that automatically applies coupon codes at over 30,000 online stores. The service aims to help users save money and time when they shop online. The way it works is that Honey will automatically test all available coupon codes and apply the best ones to the user’s card according to both their browser’s data and the online shop they are visiting (Honey, 2020). It is a short video ad, which can be watched [here](#), with both visually and verbally casual style of communication that shows the leading character speaking directly to the audience and explaining what Honey is, how it works, and how it can be accessed.



Figure 18 - How much can you save with Honey? Let's find out. (Think with Google, 2020)

3.4.2. a) Film Language:

The video length is 41 seconds. In terms of story arc, this video ad follows a concise structure and without explaining a problem to solve, goes straight to the point where the leading character who is filming herself with a handled (selfie video) and talks directly to the viewer says: “so I just downloaded the free browser extension, Honey, and I’m gonna see how much money I can save with it, in 24 hours.” While she utters this line, the brand name and the following phrase which is inside parenthesis appears, “(Saved people over \$2 billion), which is using both logos (highlighting the financial benefits) and pathos (considerable amount of money) to get the viewer hooked 5 seconds into the ad. The style of speaking is casual and conversational that is accompanied by a simple visual mode of communication. This is obvious when in the next scene she is setting up the camera in front of herself before opening her laptop and explaining the service and its benefits. Meanwhile, upbeat music accompanies the video in the background from the beginning throughout the video. Looking at her laptop, the frame also captures the

laptop's screen. We hear her voice over the visual when she is making purchases on various online shopping sites, and the amount of money she is saving appears as texts on the video; the colors and type of the used fonts are quite simple. Moreover, some jingling sound effects are heard every time she buys an item and saves an amount of money. This all happens in rather fast-pace editing. It shows that users can use the extension for getting discounts, be it booking a hotel, or ordering pizza. A few cuts back to her, lying on a couch with her laptop in front of her, are seen when she talks about her next purchase with some mild excitement. The caption on the screen shows that she saves \$268.24 after spending \$2155.31 on online shopping (logos). At the end, while she is holding a slice of pizza she has ordered, the leading character calls to action; in the next scene while we see how Honey can be downloaded, she states that by adding Honey to your browser in two clicks, you can save money on literally anything you can buy online. The final line is: "add Honey today for free, and join Honey.com". The framing and lighting of the video is basic.

3.4.2. b) Film Identification:

The video ad portrays an ordinary woman talking about a service that allows her to get discounts and save money when doing online shopping. The ad attempts to look and sound as simple as possible. A handheld camera and casual style of speaking make the video different from mainstream video ads, and more like influencer or testimonial videos, in which the individual does not look like a company's representative, but a user who is exploring a service or product's features and benefits. This is the most distinctive characteristic of this video which makes the audience more curious about what she is saying, and stands out from the rest of video ads. Obviously, the majority of people can identify themselves with the character in the ad, as receiving a discount on nearly all online purchases and saving the amount of money that is stated in the video can excite most users, regardless of their gender, age, location, etc.

3.4.2. c) Film Ideology:

The most outstanding ideological challenge offered in this video ad is in the way it communicates with consumers. It shows in order for an advertisement to succeed the audiovisual quality is not necessarily as important as it is believed to be. What's more, an ordinary person can do the job of a celebrity for a brand. The other challenging point is offering a service—free discounts on online purchases—for free, while the same service is generally offered in exchange for an action and as a bonus.

3.4.2. d) Film Interpretation:

The ad has more than 32 million views currently on YouTube. While the video to some extent utilizes pathos, the desire to pay less money when shopping, the primary rhetorical appeal here is logos as the majority of the ad attempts to highlight the financial benefits of the service. Looking from a critical point of view, the video does not provide adequate reasoning about why and how these coupon codes are given for free. As the service only uses the consumer's data to provide them with coupon codes, the advertisement's vague explanation on this topic and its process, raises some concerns and unanswered questions. "How much can you save with Honey? Let's find out" is mainly is a demo video ad which includes the features of both an 'educational' and a 'service' marketing video; we can see the lead character both explain how to use the service and promote it.

3.4.3. Sprint - Get the GS10+

Sprint Corporation is an American telecommunication company and is considered one of the largest wireless service providers in the United States. Sprint is now part of the T-Mobile family; the company merged with T-Mobile U.S. in April 2020 (O'Dea, 2020). In this short video ad, which you can watch [here](#), a Sprint cell phone plan is promoted focusing on the feature of receiving a Samsung Galaxy S10+ on the plan. The ad has been created by YellowFan, which is an in-house team at Sprint (Sprint, 2020).



Figure 19 - Get the GS10+ (Think with Google, 2020).

3.4.3. a) Film Language:

"Get the GS10+" is a 15-second ad that starts directly with making an 'offer' to the viewer, "switch to Sprint and get a Samsung Galaxy phone on us" (logos), before it reaches the 3rd second (the moment when YouTube viewers can clip skip). This is heard while we first see Sprint's logo, followed by a slideshow that features the phone images, captions the narrator's key phrases in a rather big size, and the plan's billing information in a smaller size. What's more, Sprint's website address and calling number as well as their coverage details are written at the bottom of slides throughout the video. After making an offer, the narrator explains the 'features' of GS10+ in bullet points and quickly, while they also appear on the slide. At the end

the narrator calls the viewer to action by explaining how they can shop. “Get the GS10+” is an animation ad with considerable use of words on the frames. The video consists of 5 slides, and each of these slides can be used as a billboard advertisement due to using big elements of design. The fast pace of the video makes the viewer pay more attention to what they are seeing, or even check the information again by either re-watching the ad or going to the website. An upbeat background music is also heard throughout the video. Furthermore, the colors used in designing the slideshow are the brand’s colors. Regarding the tone and style, the narrator uses an energetic and conversational language in an imperative mood, and speaks directly to the listener with a mild excitement. “Switch to and get”, “Shop”, and “Come” are the verbs he uses to encourage the audience to take action.

3.4.3. b) Film Identification:

Dedicating the majority of the video advertisement length to feature Samsung Galaxy S10+ and its features while the main goal is selling a Sprint cell phone plan, is a smart move by the creators. It allows the viewers, especially Samsung Galaxy series fans, to connect with the ad and get excited about the offer because subscribing to this plan, equals receiving a new version of Samsung Galaxy. Without this tactic, it would be more difficult for the brand to promote its service, as there are not many people who have a deep connection with Sprint services and products.

3.4.3. c) Film Ideology:

The brand in this video ad relies significantly on another brand’s product to convert the audience and encourage them to make a purchase. Hence, according to the type of marketing video and its script, studying the brand message and ideology according to this video ad is not possible. However, it is worthy to mention that in this ad we can see the benefits of cooperation between brands. Even though Sprint has its own unique customers, using a Samsung product allows them to appeal to a wider range of audience and attract more attention. It also creates a connection with Samsung and its community which is remarkably bigger than Sprint customer community.

3.4.3. d) Film Interpretation:

The view number for this video ad is over 21 million. The video primarily uses logos to persuade the viewers due to its focus on the financial benefits of the service. Moreover, using a Samsung product could be considered as a use of ethos; as Samsung products are credible to at least a portion of the viewers, and more desired, the creators in this ad employ this fact to

drive more engagement. Regarding the type of marketing video, according to the features that were discussed, it is a product/service straight offer video ad which uses motion graphics to communicate with the target market.

3.4.4. Starz - Outlander Episodic Scene Clip

Starz is an American premium cable and satellite television network owned by Lionsgate Entertainment. It produces and distributes premium streaming content to worldwide audiences across subscription television platforms (STAMP, 2020; STARZ, 2021). Movie and series trailers have always been pioneers when it comes to storytelling in video ads, and a considerable portion of online video ads, especially on YouTube,

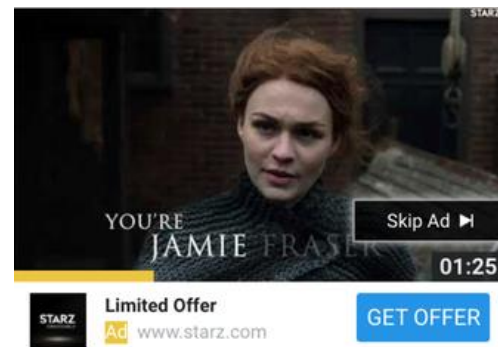


Figure 20 - Outlander Episodic Scene Clip (Think with Google, 2020).

consists of the latest teasers and trailers to advertise the upcoming films or series. Outlander, a STARZ Original Series, is an historical drama television series based on the ongoing novel series of the same name by Diana Gabaldon. The show premiered on August 9, 2014, on Starz, and 5 seasons have been released so far (IMDb, 2014). In this video ad, which can be watched [here](#), we see an episodic scene clip, a clip that stands alone (BBC Bitesize, 2021), selected from the series which pitches the suspenseful story of the series to the audience, and encourages them to watch the first 4 seasons as well as the newly released season 5 on STARZ app. Hence, increasing the app's installations and the number of subscriptions are the goals in the campaign.

3.4.4. a) Film Language:

The ad's length is 1 minute and 25 seconds. It starts from the middle of the story, and with the first look at the characters' make up and clothes as well the setting, the viewer gets to know that it is a historical film. In terms of the story arc, no 'problem' or 'offer' are introduced in the beginning, as the video ad genre is different, and showcasing the dramatic values of series is the goal of creators here. However, there are similarities between this ad and the other discussed ads, concerning the fact that no background information about who the characters are and the general plot of story are provided. Instead, the viewers encounters the characters while they are already in action, 'objectively'; the characters act within the story and do not face the audience. In the first scene, we see while a soldier is urinating in the corner of a stable, he notices a girl

is approaching him from behind. He thinks that the girl has sexual attraction to him, thus after asking her what she wants, and hearing “you” from the girl, he responds back that he is a married man. The girl tries to keep him there for a moment, but he repeats what he said and walks away. The girl then tries to stop him by saying his name, Jamie Fraser. He becomes curious and asks her if she has a message for him, which at this point as the background music also becomes more tense, we reach the climax when she tells him, “my name is Brianna, I am your daughter.” This big reveal happens 50 seconds into the video, and in the following scenes he tries to confirm what he heard. It ends when they are looking at each other, and immediately after that the series name logo as well as a caption at the bottom line which makes an offer, “season 1 through 4, only on the STARZ app”, and then, “new season, streaming now.” On the final slide, we see STARZ logo, with a call-to-action written below: “GET THE APP”, “\$25 FOR 6 MONTHS”, “ONLY ON STARZ.COM/2020”. In addition, The STARZ logo is placed at the top of the frame throughout the video. As it was mentioned, this ad is not made exclusively to promote the series, but it is an excerpt from the actual series, for this reason, it benefits from a special dramatic value which is unique to movies and series, especially in terms of storytelling. However, it is packed by a clear call-to-action at the end. What’s more, all the dialogues appear on the frame in capital, which increase their impact on the audience as they both hear it from the characters and read it simultaneously. This naturally makes the scene more memorable. We see a touching moment when a father sees her daughter for the first time, and the conversation between them makes us familiar with his moral character to some extent. Not knowing the background of the story and what happened afterwards, spark curiosity, and are encouraging factors that make the viewer takes the ad’s offered action.

3.4.4. b) Film Identification:

A girl who has found his father, and the touching moment when they first look at each other as father and daughter creates sympathy and a basis of identification for the audience.

3.4.4. c) Film Ideology:

Portraying a man who is moral in a short time, and a grown girl who meets with his father for the first time, trigger emotional responses in the audience (pathos). As a result, the viewer wants to explore the world they are living in, and experience it through watching the series.

3.4.4. d) Film Interpretation:

This video ad has over 23 million views on YouTube. The creators have selected a sensational scene from the actual series which mainly uses pathos as its rhetorical tool. In a short amount of time, the viewers are introduced to two main characters of a story, and if they feel they are impressed by this part of the story, the desire to experience this feeling again leads them to take the offered action, and watch the whole story. In terms of marketing video types, this video ad falls into the category of ‘product/service’ as it is a straight offer.

3.4.5. Quibi - The Stranger | Official Teaser | Quibi

Quibi is a short-form streaming platform that delivers quick-bite original content for viewing on mobile devices. The app is designed for people who consume entertainment in short increments on their smartphones (The Roku Channel, 2020). In this ad, which you can watch [here](#), we see a teaser of “The Stranger”, a crime thriller web television series created by debuted on Quibi on April 13, 2020 (Pearson, 2020). The story is

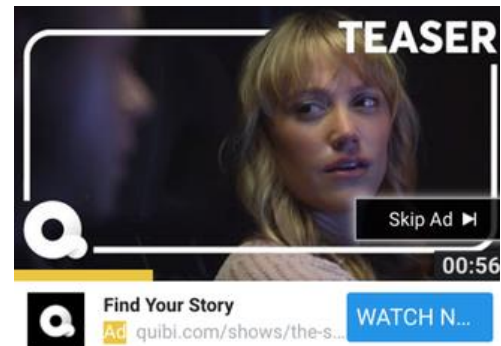


Figure 21 - The Stranger | Official Teaser | Quibi (Think with Google, 2020).

shortly described as follows on the channel: “Clare picks up her rideshare passenger, Carl E. It’s a story of boy meets girl, but in this case he relentlessly stalks and tries to murder her” (The Roku Channel, 2020). In this marketing video which showcases the main plot of one of the available series on the platform within a short amount of time, and keeps them in suspense without revealing the ending, the goal is to both introduce the brand and raise awareness as well as leading the viewers to subscribe to the service and watch the full series. The video ad is created by Mocean agency (The Roku Channel, 2020).

3.4.5. a) Film Language:

The length of this marketing video is 56 seconds. This video ad follows a more traditional story arc, meaning that we first get to know who the characters are and what their role in the story is. This happens as a part of the story when the two main characters portrayed in this video, introduce themselves to each other; in the first scene, we see a man getting into her matched driver’s car, “I am Clare, your orbit driver” the girl says, and the passenger says: “I am Carl E., you passenger.” However, compared to traditional story arcs, instead of building more

background information, this teaser directly jumps into the climax when the passenger reveals that he had just killed a woman before getting on the car, and that he is a sociopath. He points his knife at the girl, and tells her if she can tell him a real good story, he will let her live. During the remainder of the video, we see a sequence of action and tense scenes in which the man is chasing after the girl to kill her. The video ends where the girl is waiting in front of an elevator in silence, and hand comes out of the elevator abruptly and grabs her neck. The teaser video follows the standard characteristics of its genre—thriller. It starts with rather slower editing, and as the story reaches its climax, the cutting pace becomes faster and faster to induce excitement in the viewer. This is packed with a harmonious background music that steadily reaches its climax. The captured scenes portray dynamic actions which adds dramatic value to the scripted story. What’s more, the viewer has an objective presence here; the characters live and act within the story. The Quibi logo is placed on the frame throughout the video as a part of the brand’s aim to raise awareness. The ad ends with the series date of release and a call-to-action which invites the viewers to watch “The Stranger” now on Quibi.

3.4.5. b) Film Identification:

The audience who likes to watch films and series within a short time, and in this specific case, also enjoys thrillers, can be triggered by this teaser and clicks on the introduced link which leads them to the platform, where they can download the app and after subscribing, watch the series. It should be noted that this advertisement provides less basis for identification.

3.4.5. c) Film Ideology:

The brand identifies itself with people who want to consume entertainment products in short increments and is quick enough for any in-between moment. Hence, it offers episodes in 10 minutes or less to be watched on a smartphone. This video ad showcases the brand’s mission by visualizing a short engaging story, and encourages the viewer to experience more of this type of content by subscribing to the service.

3.4.5. d) Film Interpretation:

With over 62 million views on YouTube, the video ad has reached a considerable number of consumers. It has received nearly 5 thousand likes and 9 hundred dislikes. One of the main criticisms about this video ad, which also is discussed in the comment section of the video, is raising confusion about the offered product. The placement of the company’s logo at the bottom of the frame throughout the video, and the opening scene which is about a driver welcoming

her passenger, make the viewers think that Quibi is a ‘Ridesharing company’, and this video is about their application. For the people who have not heard of this brand before, it is a probable issue. This confusion is definitely not something that the creators intended to convey. It could be concluded that for new brands, offering a short description about the service or product as well as the brand’s logo, could lead to a more efficient campaign. This video ad employs pathos as its primary rhetorical tool. Offering a small piece of a bigger content, in an exciting way, and leading the viewers to the platform so that they can watch the full content, is the persuasive strategy in this marketing video. As people inherently enjoy stories, it appeals to the desire to watch more and know the whole story. Being a teaser video, this ad is considered a ‘product/service’ marketing video.

3.4.6. Grammarly - Are You Ready to Try Grammarly?

Grammarly is a digital writing assistant, and the app detects spelling, punctuation, and other common errors in texts (Krasnikov, 2019). “Are You Ready to Try Grammarly”, which can be watched [here](#), is an animated demo video created in cooperation with Bokeh as the creative agency (Grammarly, 2020). In this video ad, the various areas where the software—Grammarly—can help writers is demonstrated, and

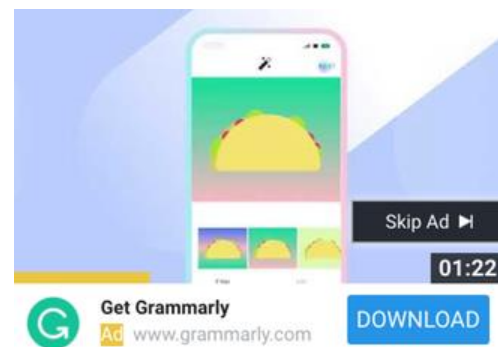


Figure 22 - Are You Ready to Try Grammarly?
(Think with Google, 2020).

some practical samples of how the app functions are shown. The goal is to introduce the brand and the usefulness of its solution (the app) to the audience which leads to a final call-to-action to download the application. The primary target audience are students, as the first line that we hear from the voice over this animation is, “Quality writing makes your school work better.”

3.4.6. a) Film Language:

“Are You Ready to Try Grammarly?” is a 1 minute and 22 second video ad. It starts directly by showing off Grammarly as a solution which helps students “create effective writing that delivers results” (logos). In the following scenes, the benefits and features of the app are demonstrated. This is done by showing various pieces of writing in different contexts such as emails, text messages on cell phone, social media captions, school projects and essays. This demonstrates that Grammarly helps the writer to improve their work according to the relevant

tone and context; this is also what the narrator speaks about throughout the video. The video ends with offering the viewer to: “Download today at Grammarly.com”. The other noticeable fact is repeating the name of the brand multiple times in the video; nearly all sentences start with ‘Grammarly’ as the subject. This is done to make the viewer memorize the brand’s name. The same happens with the logo with the same purpose. A cheerful music is heard in the background of the narrator’s voice who speaks in a formal, friendly and imperative mode over the animation slides.

3.4.6. b) Film Identification:

Throughout the video, school students’ profiles on messaging, email and other writing platforms are shown, and how Grammarly corrects texts and suggests better words or compositions. The voice over also describes several common situations where students really need to be more precise about what they write. Thus, students who need assistance and feedback when writing in English, for different purposes, can identify themselves with the target audience addressed in this video ad.

3.4.6. c) Film Ideology:

The brand claims that it wants to provide its target audience—students—with value through helping them to write better, which in turn makes their school work better.

3.4.6. d) Film Interpretation:

This video ad has received over 35 million views on YouTube. It uses logos as the main mode of persuasion by showing the benefits and values of the product to its target audience. What’s more, regarding the type, it is an explainer video ad which shows how the software can be used and why it is important.

3.4.7. Hulu, FX - Dave – FX on Hulu – S1 Promo

Hulu is an online subscription video on demand service, and it offers TV shows and clips, movies, documentaries, news, and programs (Bloomberg Markets, 2021). In this video ad, which you can watch [here](#), the company advertises its service—subscription—through a teaser of one of its TV shows, Dave. "Dave" is an American comedy television series, co-created by rapper/comedian Lil Dicky. The story is about a neurotic man in his late 20s who has convinced himself that he's destined to be one of the best rappers of all time (Petski, 2020; Hulu, 2020).

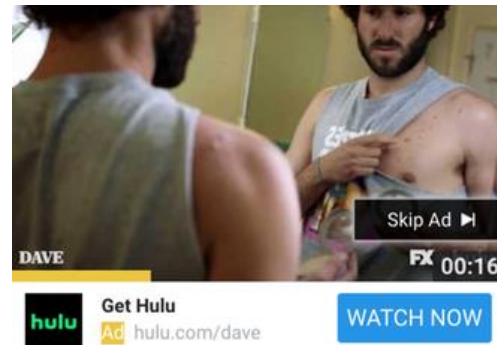


Figure 23 - Dave – FX on Hulu – S1 Promo
(Think with Google, 2020).

3.4.7. a) Film Language:

The video is 15 seconds and starts with a series of fast-paced cuts and conversations from the show, at the end of which the leading character, Lil Dicky, asks the other characters to call him 'Dave'. The characters do not talk to the camera and live within the story. Immediately after that, an offer is made through showing a black slide which contains the brand's logo name and its service which is "JUST \$5.99/MONTH" (logos). This happens 4 seconds into the ad, before the 'Skip Ad' button activates. Overlaid with a rap song of his, in a fast editing, we see Dave in different situations from the show; dancing and performing in a club, taking photos with others, etc. The show's logo name and the brand's logo are both seen on the sides of the screen throughout the video ad. The ad ends with a call-to-action on another animated slideshow which first portrays the show's logo name, and in the next two slides how the viewer can watch it and subscribe to Hulu streaming service; "ALL EPISODES NOW STREAMING", "FX ON HULU" is what written on the first slide. The second slide contains the following information: "hulu", "\$5.99/MONTH", "START YOUR FREE TRIAL". The all whole teaser attempts to portray Dave as a person with a special character, especially through his style of clothing and haircut, his gestures, his facial expressions, etc. Most shots are close or medium shots for the mentioned purpose—to get the audience closer to the main character. The goal is to make the audience interested in this character so that they want to watch his story (pathos).

3.4.7. b) Film Identification:

The video wants the viewer to get closer to Dave and creates sympathy and a basis of identification for the audience. Showing how he dances, how he talks, how he poses when taking a photo, how he sings when performing at a concert, and how he tries to take care of his skin when he is in front of a mirror checking his moles, are all a part of this strategy.

3.4.7. c) Film Ideology:

The video ad wants to convey that Dave is an interesting character and his story is worth watching.

3.4.7. d) Film Interpretation:

With nearly 40 million views, this short teaser has gained a remarkable amount of attention both for the brand and the show itself. Logos is the primary rhetorical tool here, as we see the creators highlight the phrase “\$5.99/MONTH” several times during this short video, to persuade people to subscribe to their service for this small amount of money and get to watch the whole show in addition to the other available programs. Concerning the type, as it is a teaser video, thus it belongs to the ‘product/service’ category.

3.4.8. Onewheel - Onewheel: Built to Destroy Boredom

Onewheel is an American company, founded in 2014. They produce self-balancing single wheel electric board-sport, recreational personal transporter, often described as an electric skateboard. The Onewheel was invented by the founder and CEO, Kyle Doerksen (Kaminski, 2018). The company’s slogan is “Destroy Boredom”. The video ad, which can be watched [here](#), is created in cooperation with Bryght Young Things as the creative agency, and Rainfactory’ as the media agency (Onewheel, 2020). The goal of this marketing video is both introducing the brand and promoting its product—Onewheel.

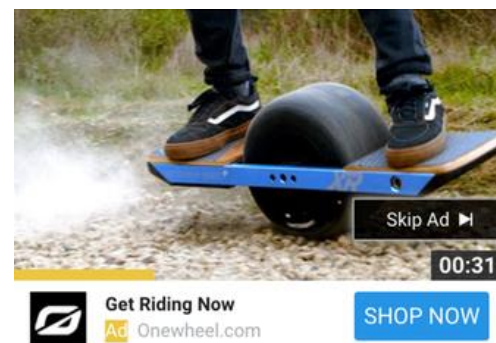


Figure 24 - Onewheel: Built to Destroy Boredom (Think with Google, 2020).

3.4.8. a) Film Language:

The video ad is 30 seconds. The ad opens with an impactful scene; a man, caption on the frame: Kyle Doerksen - Founder/ CEO, picks up an Onewheel board in a warehouse, looks at the camera while holding it for a few seconds, and abruptly drops the board, quickly we see the same riding board in a different environment. This scene in addition to the narrator's voice over the scene, "This is Kyle. He invented Onewheel to destroy boredom", get the viewer hooked 3 seconds into the video, when they can skip the ad. After offering the brand and its solution—Onewheel is built to destroy boredom—on a sequence of dynamic shots in which we see individuals riding the board, the narrator's line attempts to set up a community, with users who want to destroy boredom, "Turns out he wasn't alone". In the next scene we hear the narrator explaining how the product is built and the advanced technology behind it (logos). Next he introduces Onewheel models by connecting each to a different personality type (pathos), "But nothing for this guy", we see a boy who is having VR glasses on, and playing on his own at home. Again we see a set of dynamic shots where individuals are riding outdoors and in the woods, by adding that: "And oh yeah, we build them in the U.S. of A." This is the end of the video ad where there is a call-to-action: "So get a Onewheel today and help destroy boredom forever" (pathos). This is said when the same boring guy is walking down the street with his VR glasses on, and Onewheel logo hits his head and pushes him back when it pops out. Overlaid by upbeat music, the narrator's tone and language are firm and conversational. Dynamic short shots which cut to each other with quick camera movements or zoom-in/outs matches the feeling the ad wants to convey—excitement and being active.

3.4.8. b) Film Identification:

The audience can identify with the brand's slogan, destroying boredom, and the cheerful characters who are riding Onewheel throughout the ad, imagining themselves instead of those people. This is a clear use of pathos to induce the desire to be more active and enjoy outdoors. The boring guy who is living in the world of his VR glasses cannot see this excitement, and the ad criticizes him in a humiliating way; he is an icon of people who have the same personality. Hence, the ad uses this technique in a way that if the viewer is at home all day playing with their digital gadgets, they are like the boring guy, and buying their product will make them a part of the community who fight boredom. Depicting the CEO in the video ad is done with the purpose of advancing his personal brand, and connecting the brand and product to him; the same as Elon Musk and Tesla. This is done to drive more engagement and add an additional layer to the reasons why consumers should buy their product. Of course it also

depends on the general picture of the CEO in society. Showcasing being made in the USA, is another strategy to make the target market—U.S. consumers—engage with the ad and take action to support a product from their home country.

3.4.8. c) Film Ideology:

The ad's ideology is that by riding Onewheel you destroy boredom, and it brings you a dynamic and exciting time. And by portraying the person who is not willing to do so in a negative way, it pushes the audience more.

3.4.8. d) Film Interpretation:

The video ad has been viewed over 90 million times to this point on YouTube. It has been received positively; more than 1500 likes versus nearly 300 dislikes. It uses pathos as its primary rhetorical strategy, by appealing to the audience's desire to join a community of outgoing and active people who ride Onewheel, and making them avoid being like the boring guy. In terms of type, this marketing video primarily is an explainer ad which also has the attributes of several categories; company culture and brand introduction, use of comedy to build favorability, and product promotion.

3.4.9. 4Patriots - How to charge 2 devices in the woods on a cloudy day

4Patriots is an American company which produces survival food, water purification devices, and solar generators. Patriot Power Generators & solar backup chargers are their flagship products. Their mission is to provide top-quality products and knowledge that help people be more self-reliant and more independent. In this video ad, which you can watch it [here](#), they promote a portable solar power bank that works with any phone or tablet, and as it is claimed in the description, a single charge can fully power a phone up to 6 times or even two phones at once (4Patriots, 2020).



Figure 25 - How to charge 2 devices in the woods on a cloudy day (Think with Google, 2020).

3.4.9. a) Film Language:

The first notable element is the basic visual characteristic of the video; holding the camera with one hand, an unknown man shows the viewer a solar power bank in his hand throughout the ad, and after connecting one smartphone and a tablet to get them charged by the power bank, he starts speaking about the products features and the offer on the same frame for 4 minute and 59 seconds. There is no background music and we only hear his voice and the ambience sound. The first line of the video ad catches the viewer attention as he says: “Hey everybody, stop clicking around, I am in the woods, with some water going in the background near my house, and in the next 30 seconds I’m gonna show you how to use this solar power bank from 4Patriots to charge two huge devices at the same time.” The language is conversation, and the imperative verbs are used by the speaker multiple times to the end of the ad. The other point is that the estimated time given by him is not correct, and his speech lasts longer than that; this is either a rhetorical technique known as ‘foot in the door technique’, or the video ad has different cuts in addition to the version indicated by the YouTube’s list. In terms of the story arc, as it is observable, the brand and product are introduced in an attractive way, and after that the viewer gets to know about the product and the offer features and benefits. At 1:37 the speaker calls the audience to take action by clicking the link which leads them to the store to buy the product. However, after that he keeps explaining the further benefits regarding the offer. He uses different rhetorical tools in his speech; explaining how the product is built and that it works in any situation, even a cloudy day. He also uses numbers to add to the credibility of the product by stating that you can recharge your device more than 500 times by this power bank. He also states they already are selling thousands of this product to customers across the country (USA). As well as stating that by getting a four-pack of the product, they will benefit from a 50 percent discount, free-shipping, 365 day return guarantee of satisfaction as well as receiving a digital video library on how to make solar panels on your own. These are all uses of logos. He also uses ethos when stating that their store currently has an average of 5 out of 5 stars on various platforms such as Google, and that all kinds of people are using 4Patriots solar power bank, such as police officers, navy seals, travelers, parents, etc. He also reads out loud some of the reviews on their website and states how much the customers love it, as well as saying he loves it too. At the end, for the call-to-action, he uses a remarkably imperative tone by saying that if you want to get all these benefits, “You’re gonna have to click on the button right now.” He adds, “Because once this video goes away, I can no longer guarantee that we have even a single one of these in stock”, “When we first sold out, it took months to get them back again”, “so

you are gonna click that clicky finger, take that finger and click that button and claim you 4-pack because these are going fast, click that button to see more.” As it is obvious this video ad employs an interesting tone when it comes to talking to the audience and practically appeals to the fear of losing something scarce (pathos) and orders the audience to take their desired action; this is also called as FOMO (the fear of missing out), which sets the tone for viewer to watch more of the video.

3.4.9. b) Film Identification:

This advertisement provides less basis for identification. It attempts to do so when the speaker talks about the groups of people—navy seals—who use the product in order that the audience can connect themselves to a community in a way. What’s more, the video ad is merely about the product and not much information about the brand and their mission is mentioned.

3.4.9. c) Film Ideology:

The main ideology of this marketing video is telling how unique and rare the introduced product is, and because of that if the viewer loses their chance to take this special offer, they should wait for an unknown amount of time to get it again.

3.4.9. d) Film Interpretation:

The ad has received over 16 million views so far. It uses logos as the primary rhetorical strategy, however, the use of the other rhetorical tools in this simple video which offers a small amount of information visually is remarkable; the speaker uses the language in an innovative way and instead of offering, pushes the viewer towards what he wants. Ultimately, the video uses the features of multiple types of video marketing; mainly we see an explainer video ad which also comprises the elements of a product presentation, promotion and testimonials.

3.4.10. ALSAC/St. Jude Children's Research Hospital - St. Jude Patient Cole, A Miracle Child

St. Jude is a leading research children's hospital in the field of childhood cancers and pediatric diseases. In their mission statement it is written: “The mission of St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital is to advance cures, and means of prevention, for pediatric catastrophic diseases through research and treatment. Consistent with the vision of our founder Danny Thomas, no child is denied treatment based on race, religion or a family's ability to pay” (St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital, 2021). In this video ad, which can be watched [here](#), we see the story of Cole who returned from cancer thanks to the special treatment he received at St. Jude (St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital, 2020).

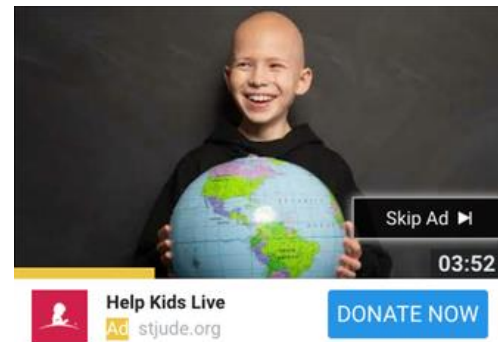


Figure 26 - St. Jude Patient Cole, A Miracle Child (Think with Google, 2020).

3.4.10. a) Film Language:

This 3 minute and 52 second video follows a traditional story arc. It begins with an establishing shot where the caption “Southern California, March 2018” appears on the frame which captures a city’s skyline. This is done to show the viewer where the story takes place and a sense of time. Next we see Cole’s mother and father explaining to the audience how it started, and they get to know Cole is suffering from a brain tumor by showing signs of sickness, which later was diagnosed with cancer. We see some touching shots of her mother bursting into tears, and a visual rhetorical use of ocean waves hitting rocks on the shore; as a metaphor for the beginning of a tense situation. This is where St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital is introduced. We see Cole going through different treatments there while his parents’ voices are heard over the frame, explaining the process. After 2 minute and 14 second, the ad cuts to Cole’s room while he is sitting on the floor and plays guitar, with this caption on the frame: “Southern California, December 2019”. After showing the background story, introduction to the characters, reaching climax, and showing the solution, in the following now Cole himself as well as his parents talk about the advantages and benefits of St. Jude hospital and how the treatment process was made possible thanks to people’s donation to the hospital. They elaborate on the importance of sympathy with children who are fighting cancer, and how caring for other people and showing support leads to the happiness of many families, including Cole’s family. The final line which is uttered by Cole’s mother is: “Nobody expects a child to get diagnosed with cancer, but then

when they are, you are so grateful that there is a place like St. Jude.” This is heard on the hospital’s name logo and their slogan, “Finding cures. Saving Children.” followed by their website address. Use of pathos and appealing to the desire to help others is the fundamental element of this video ad; the aim is to encourage the audience to donate to St. Jude in order that children like Cole get cured and a family remains happy.

3.4.10. b) Film Identification:

The main strategy in this video ad to create a basis of identification for the audience is creating sympathy. Showing how happiness came back to a family thanks to the donations to St. Jude, and stating that the people who made donations are a part of Cole’s family, make the viewers imagine the impact of their donations.

3.4.10. c) Film Ideology:

Showing the importance of donations and financial support is the main ideology in this video ad.

3.4.10. d) Film Interpretation:

This video ad has been viewed over 34 million times. All three rhetorical appeals play a key role in this marketing video. Cole’s family story (ethos), showing the clinical results (logos), and the importance of sympathy (pathos) are well used in this video. The general theme makes pathos the primary tool. Furthermore, the video ad is primarily a case study, which also employs the attributes of several other types of video marketing; interviews (experience), presenting the service, and social responsibility (culture) are the most noticeable ones.

4. Discussion

The primary purpose of this thesis was to ascertain whether there is a correlation between the use of specific rhetorical devices and the success of a marketing video through visual rhetorical analysis of a group of successful marketing videos. Based on the content analysis conducted on the sample, this study proposes that there are certain rhetorical devices and visual features that have been used in the majority of marketing videos presented in the sample of this research, and application of these elements in marketing videos can increase the efficiency of a marketing message. The observations are listed and discussed as follows:

4.1. Story arc

- **Traditional story arc:** Video ads No. 5, 10
- **Emerging story arc:** Video ads No. 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9

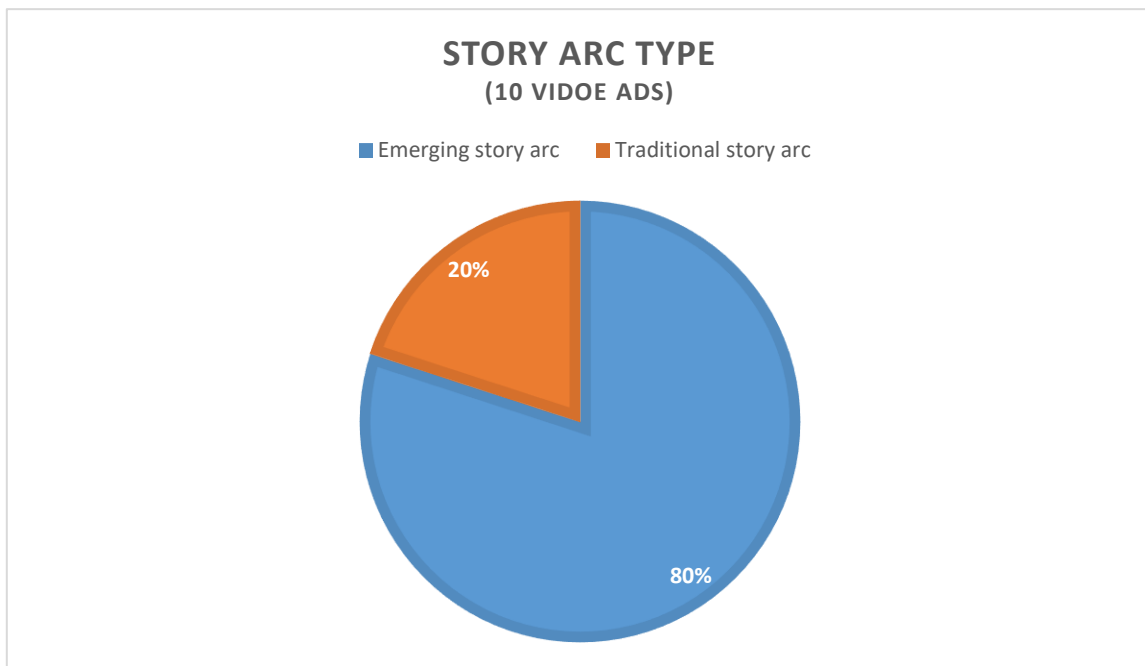


Figure 27 - Type of story arc used in YouTube's top 10 TrueView for action video ads in the U.S. for 2020.

The most noticeable common device, as Google calls it, is an 'emerging story arc' (Google, 2021). This element has been used in 8 videos out of 10.

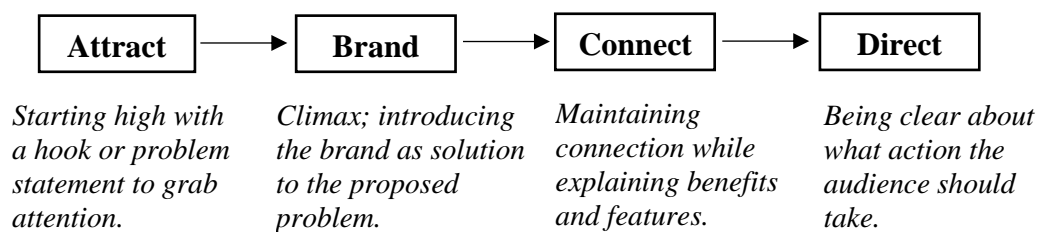


Figure 28 - Traditional Story Arc versus Emerging Story Arc (Romay, 2019).

While a traditional story arc slowly builds up the story to lead the audience towards the finale—offer or key message—and makes the viewer wait before revealing the solution/brand/product, an emerging story arc starts fast and high, and reveals the climax in the beginning. Providing that the solution resonates with the interests or needs of the viewer, they will keep watching the video ad. Meanwhile, in the remainder of the video, the creator attempts to maintain the

connection through explaining the benefits and features of the product or service. The other difference of traditional story arc and emerging story arc is that traditional story arc ends with branding, however, emerging story arc ends with a clear call to action, and as it was mentioned , as it is observable in figure 28, the branding in this type of structure happens in the beginning of advertisement.

The traditional story arc is widely used in TV advertisements as the viewer has less freedom to skip a video ad, however, in digital marketing and online advertisements, the viewers can simply skip an advertisement providing that they are not interested in the offer. Hence, rather than using the same style of TV ads, in online video marketing, the creators should attempt to attract the viewer in the first few seconds in order that they can buy some additional time to provide the viewer with further explanation. According to analysis conducted on the selected video ads and figure 28, the plot of an emerging story arc looks like this:



According to the analyzed ads, in order to make the video ads as short as possible, even the initial phases up to the offer/resolution phase can be skipped, and the advertisement can only be led by a call to action and a brief explanation.

In ads No. 5 and 10; a film teaser and a donation campaign, the traditional story arc has been used. This study suggests that the nature of marketing messages in these two campaigns has made the employment of traditional story arc useful. Both of these ads are more focused on brand awareness rather than sales, hence, the creators are not greatly attempting to sell their product or service within a few seconds, before the viewer skips the ad.

4.2. Primary rhetorical appeal

- **Ethos (appeal to character/credibility):** --
- **Pathos (appeal to emotion):** Video ads No. 1, 4, 5, 8, 10
- **Logos (appeal to reason/logic):** Video ads No. 2, 3, 6, 7, 9

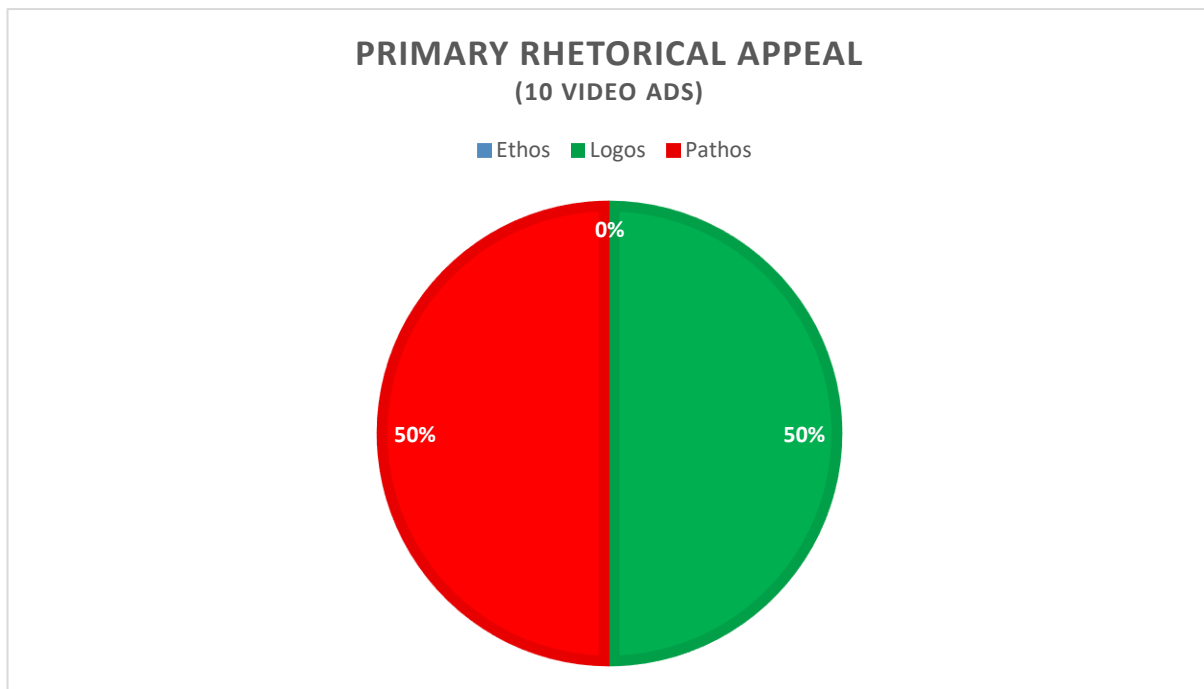


Figure 29 - Primary rhetorical appeal used in YouTube's top 10 TrueView for action video ads in the U.S. for 2020.

As it was discussed, a marketing video can employ multiple rhetorical devices within its story, but basing the story on one of these appeals will lead to a stronger impact on the viewer. Although ‘ethos’ has been used as an auxiliary tool to influence the viewers in the selected video ads, in none of them it was used as the primary rhetorical appeal. ‘Pathos’ and ‘logos’ have been employed equally as the primary rhetorical appeal in the sample video ads; 5 video ads each. These results show that feelings and logic are equally effective marketing techniques when it comes to persuading consumers, and choosing one of them as the main rhetorical appeal depends on a brand’s product or service, and the way an organization wants to be known by people. What’s more, the results suggest that appealing to the authority or credibility is not as efficient and popular as other tools, however, its use could be beneficial to strengthen the brand’s message.

In addition, from a general point of view, in the majority of the ads, especially video ads No. 1, 6, 8 and 10, in which the brands are interwoven with their product/service, and they attempt to promote the brand as well as driving conversions, creating a sense of connection is more noticeable. To do so, the creators have used multiple techniques. Portraying a character who is an icon of the target customer, and the story, through a leading character or narrator, addresses his/her needs. Portraying a group of people who share a common interest which a brand’s product or service fulfills, or is the reason leading to fulfillment of that interest. Connecting a brand’s identity to the identity of its target market—masculinity, student, American, etc. As it

was discussed in the digital marketing chapter, “in an increasingly competitive market, engagement, experience, exclusivity, emotion and trust are the key characteristics of modern promotions, and the modern consumer not only seeks to buy a product, but experiences and emotions.”

4.3. Type of marketing video (main category)

1. Dr. Squatch - Save Your Skin With Dr. Squatch Soap: **Explainer video ad**
2. Honey - How much can you save with Honey? Let's find out: **Demo video ad**
3. Sprint - Get the GS10+: **Straight offer video ad**
4. Starz - Outlander Episodic Scene Clip: **Teaser video**
5. Quibi - The Stranger | Official Teaser | Quibi: **Straight offer video ad**
6. Grammarly - Are You Ready to Try Grammarly?: **Explainer video ad**
7. Hulu, FX - Dave – FX on Hulu – S1 Promo: **Teaser video**
8. Onewheel - Onewheel: Built to Destroy Boredom: **Explainer video ad**
9. 4Patriots - How to charge 2 devices in the woods on a cloudy day: **Explainer video ad**
10. ALSAC/St. Jude Children's Research Hospital - St. Jude Patient Cole, A Miracle Child:

Case study

As it is observable, explainer videos are the most common type of marketing videos. The author suggests that according to the common use of pathos and logos as the primary rhetorical appeal in the marketing videos, this type provides the creators with more freedom to connect with the audience and persuade them; as the basis of this type is telling ‘why’ a product or service is valuable to the viewer.

4.4. Composition and editing

In addition to the story, paying special attention to the audiovisual elements was another common attribute of the selected ads. Except video ads. No. 9 and 10, fast-cut editing, especially in the first 5 seconds, is a common feature in the all first 8 videos on the list. Ad No. 9 attempts to induce the same feeling in the audience by the clever and quick use of words, due to its visual limitations, and ad No. 10 follows a traditional structure because it is not concentrated on sales, but building a story that will touch the audience at the end; to raise social awareness. Nonetheless, on account of the structure of YouTube TrueView ads that allows the viewer to skip the ad after 5 seconds, the video marketers attempt to convey the key information

during this time frame—problem, solution, offer. This fast pace of visuals not only grabs the viewer’s attention, but allows the creators to transfer more information.

Moreover, due to mainly two reasons, in the marketing videos, especially the ones that depicted human characters, use of tight framing on the subjects was noticeable; this helps the audience to connect with the subject and observe it in a better way, as more details are visible—be it facial expressions or product shape. In addition, since more than 70% of YouTube watch time comes from mobile devices, the creators compose the frame in a way that visuals—text, logo, product—be visible and readable even on small screens (Romay, 2019).

4.5. Mode of address

“In English grammar and rhetoric, direct address is a construction in which a speaker or writer communicates a message directly to another individual or group of individuals” (Nordquist, 2019). In addition, in the visual forms of communication, Gunther Kress and Theo van Leeuwen (as cited in Nordquist, 2019) note that if the gaze in images is directed at the audience, it creates a visual form of direct address; the viewers are acknowledged explicitly and addressed with "you". This technique, which is an effective tool in advertising, is borrowed from hypnosis practices, and it is called “Hypnotic Gaze Induction” formally. The aim of this technique is to make people feel things just by being looked at intensely. Indirect mode of address is when the character(s) or author does not recognize the presence of the audience.

- **Direct address:** Video ads No. 1, 2, 3, 6, 8, 9, 10
- **Indirect address:** Video ads No. 4, 5, 7

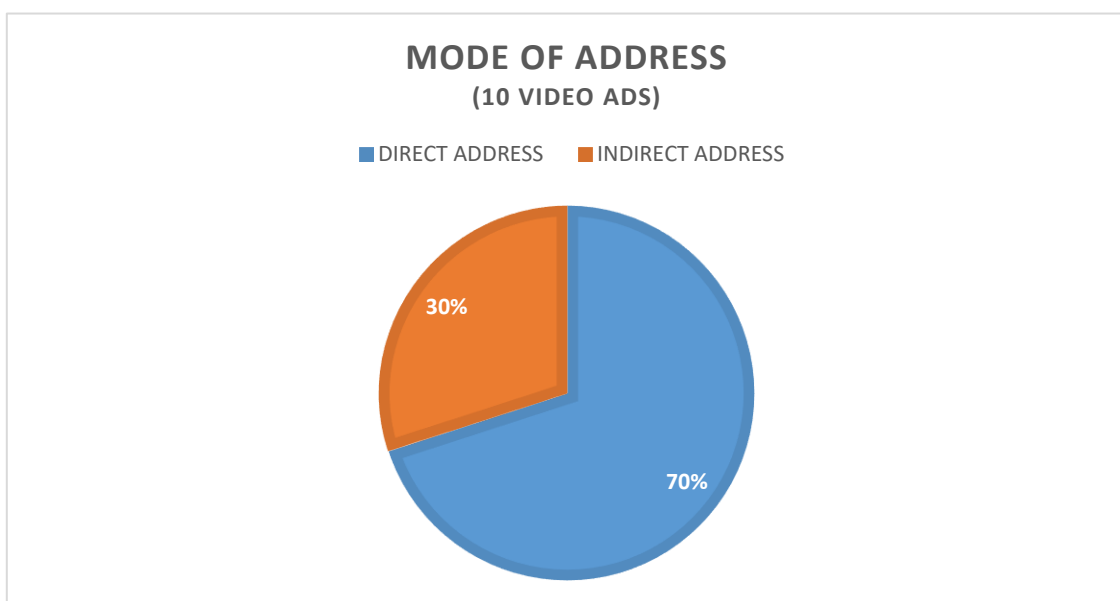


Figure 30 - Mode of address used in YouTube’s top 10 TrueView for action video ads in the U.S. for 2020.

The results suggest that addressing viewers directly—verbally and visually—is a common attribute of the selected marketing videos. The three video ads which employ an indirect mode of address are all film teasers, suggesting that direct addressing is more efficient when it comes to original video ads.

4.6. Typographic element

As it was discussed in the visual rhetoric chapter of this thesis, utilizing typography in visual advertisements and the ‘verbal’ (words) part of a visual argument helps the argumentative content to be conveyed in a more effective way; this is packed with the visual appeal of words themselves.

- **Video ads with typographic element:** 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10
- **Video ads without typographic element (excluding YouTube overlays):** 9

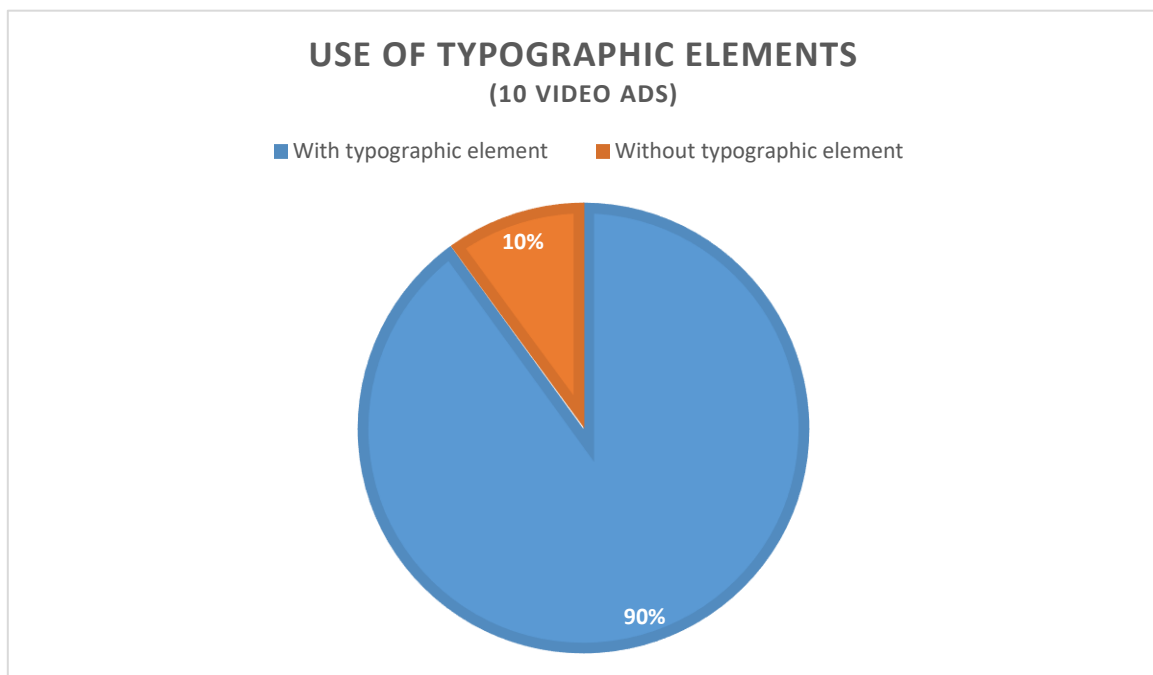


Figure 31 - Use of typographic element in YouTube’s top 10 TrueView for action video ads in the U.S. for 2020.

According to the results, it can be concluded that typographic elements play a major role in the success of a marketing video; naturally, employing two types of communication simultaneously to deliver the same message, is more effective than one.

4.7. Tone of voice

The tone of voice describes how a brand communicates with its audience, and it represents the brand personality and values; hence, it influences how people perceive the brand's messaging. Choice of words, their order and the way they are delivered shape the tone, and a brand sets a particular tone of voice according to factors like the target market, the media a brand uses, and the goal they are pursuing. Tone of voice is an important element in marketing as it makes a brand distinctive, recognizable and unique; which in turn leads to building connection and trust with the target audience (Verbina, 2019). There are endless types of tones; some of the most common tones are: friendly, empowering, comical, casual, conversational, innovative, humorous, sad, scary, adventurous, witty, playful, cheerful, aggressive, foolish, depressing, formal, ambitious, professional, romantic, upbeat, trendy, serious, sarcastic, nostalgic, energetic (Moran, 2016; Watters, 2017; Patterson, 2014). Below the main tones observed in each advertisement are listed.

1. Dr. Squatch - Save Your Skin With Dr. Squatch Soap: **Comical, witty, humorous**
2. Honey - How much can you save with Honey? Let's find out: **Casual, conversational**
3. Sprint - Get the GS10+: **Conversational, energetic**
4. Starz - Outlander Episodic Scene Clip: **Histrionic, emotional**
5. Quibi - The Stranger | Official Teaser | Quibi: **Histrionic, fearful, mysterious**
6. Grammarly - Are You Ready to Try Grammarly?: **Friendly, encouraging**
7. Hulu, FX - Dave – FX on Hulu – S1 Promo: **Histrionic, playful**
8. Onewheel - Onewheel: Built to Destroy Boredom: **Energetic, casual, aggressive**
9. 4Patriots - How to charge 2 devices in the woods on a cloudy day: **Casual, frank**
10. ALSAC/St. Jude Children's Research Hospital - St. Jude Patient Cole, A Miracle Child: **Emotional, empathetic, optimistic**

According to the observations, it cannot be concluded that some tones of voice are more efficient than the other ones because the brands in this sample have used a variety of tones. However, the noteworthy point is that their tone is consistent and clear throughout the video advertisement.

4.8. Video length and production quality:

It was observed that the length and production quality of a marketing video are not as important as they are assumed to be, and the storyline and its structure are what the viewers care about the most. A 5-minute video ad shot by a hand-held camera (video ad No. 9) can be more effective than a 4-minute cinematic video ad (video ad No. 10). The fact that No. 1 video ad is 4 minutes and 52 seconds proves that contrary to the common belief about the short attention span of online viewers and their preference for short-form content, providing that the suggested content is engaging, they will take their time and watch a video ad regardless of the length. With No. 2 ad being a 41-second video shot by a hand-held camera, it can be observed there is no relation between the success of a video ad and its length or production quality (as far as it meets the minimum standards such as clear and undistorted audiovisual quality).

Accordingly, the most observed communalities in the selected successful video ads are “emerging story arc”, “use of pathos and logos as the primary rhetorical appeal”, “explainer type of video ads”, “use of typographic element”, and “direct mode of address”.

5. Conclusion

This study was conducted to provide a clear image about why video marketing has been turned into a prominent tool in digital marketing. Although there are plenty of online articles on video marketing, there is a paucity of literature on this subject. This is due to the newness of the field, as before its recognition as a separate field in digital marketing, the topic used to be discussed as a subfield. This lack of academic resources would show itself when the author was studying the different concepts of this field, and a lack of unity between the proposed definitions for each concept was observable. Hence, this thesis aimed to contribute to knowledge and suggest a clear image about the various concepts of video marketing as a separate field. This also was the major limitation when it came to the literature review of this thesis. For instance, the term “video marketing” was defined differently by each source, under different categories of marketing. In this research, through comparing the various resources, a set of structured definitions and categorizations in the field of video marketing was proposed.

According to the aforementioned, it should be noted that this thesis was a learning experience in the field of video marketing for the author. The major drawback of this thesis was the chosen topic which is too broad, and hence, it led the author to go through an abundance of topics in order that the various aspects of the subject can be discussed. It is suggested that for the future studies in the field of video marketing, scholars be more specific to limit the extent of their study for a more in-depth research. However, the author believes that the existence of a comprehensive study on the various aspects of video marketing such as this thesis was needed; and this piece of literature could be insightful for the future scholars and professionals in the field of video marketing.

The case study attempted to answer the author’s question in the field of video marketing; whether there are common attributes that are found out in successful marketing videos, and their use will help creators to make more efficient video advertisements. The most challenging point was to understand how we can conclude if a marketing video is successful? Based on what metric(s) can we evaluate the success of a video advertisement? As it was addressed in the literature review, ‘success’ is a variable measure when it comes to video marketing, and its definition depends on the KPIs a business defines as success indicators; if the goal is increasing awareness, views is the key indicator, if sales is what a business aiming for, then number of conversions is the primary metric, etc. This research selected YouTube’s 2020 “TrueView for Action” Advertising Leaderboard as its sample because this category offered an accurate

measurement which is based on the ads' total reach and clicks in a definite time frame. Unlike the majority of studies in this field, this thesis claims that there are certain rhetorical devices and visual features that have been utilized in the majority of analyzed marketing videos in this study, and using them in other marketing videos could increase their efficiency. The most used features and devices are: "emerging story arc", "use of pathos and logos as the primary rhetorical appeal", "explainer type of video ads", "use of typographic element", and "direct mode of address". In addition, adding a call to action which is clear about what the audience should do is another integral part of online marketing videos. The marketing videos that still employ a traditional story arc, used in TV advertisements, will have a more difficult job in keeping the audience attention due to the users' freedom to skip a video ad on online platforms.

It is suggested that for future research, scholars pay special attention to the user behavior which is always changing on account of the introduction of new online platforms. As using TV advertisements on online platforms can decrease the efficiency, with the emergence of newer platforms, the viewers' taste concerning the story arc of marketing videos could also change. For instance, TikTok has introduced a new style of video marketing, which future researchers can take a deeper look into its impact both on consumer behavior and the changes in the preferred story arc.

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7. Appendices

Appendix A

Visual rhetoric

The study of visual imagery within the discipline of rhetoric is called visual rhetoric (Foss, 2005). Rhetoric as an ancient branch of knowledge is about the study of the use of symbols to communicate. Douglas Ehninger (1972) (as cited in Foss, 2005, p. 141) defines rhetoric as “*the ways in which humans may influence each other’s thinking and behavior through the strategic use of symbols.*” This definition perfectly resonates with the topic of this thesis which is video marketing. Similar to all communication, visual rhetoric is a system of signs; a sign communicates when it is connected to another object (referent).

For instance, a stop sign is connected to the act of stopping a car while driving. In the visual rhetorical environment, an image must go beyond serving as a sign, and be symbolic as well, to be labelled as visual rhetoric. Taking the example of sign, the shape and color of the stop sign and the act of stopping a car have no natural relationship with each other, and it would not have any effect without being symbolic to interpreters. However, through the implementation of arbitrary symbols by an individual who intended to regulate traffic in a way, now the stop sign is considered visual rhetoric as it communicates by involving the use of arbitrary symbols (Foss, 2005). Figure 13 portrays this process clearly.

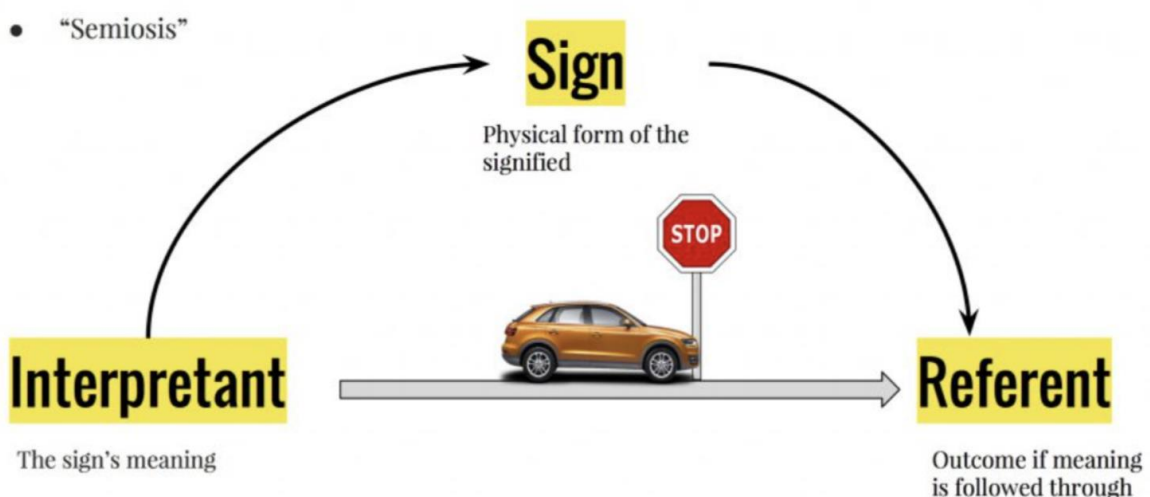


Figure 13 - Even without the word, a red octagon symbolizes "stop" (KJ Graphics, 2019).

According to Foss (2005), visual objects are not rhetorical inherently, but the existence of three components of symbolic action, human intervention, and presence of an audience turns them into rhetoric. The study of visual rhetoric and semiotics—the study of sign processes (semiosis)—is important to marketers because using images as argument (visual argument) in advertisements to persuade consumers to make a purchase is more appealing than verbal arguments (Caesar, 2013; StudyCorgi, 2020).

For instance, as it is observable in figure 14, Apple has used visual argument in one of their ads for the iPhone series with a focus on privacy; the interpretation of this visual argument would be: Privacy. That's iPhone (Panzarino, 2019).

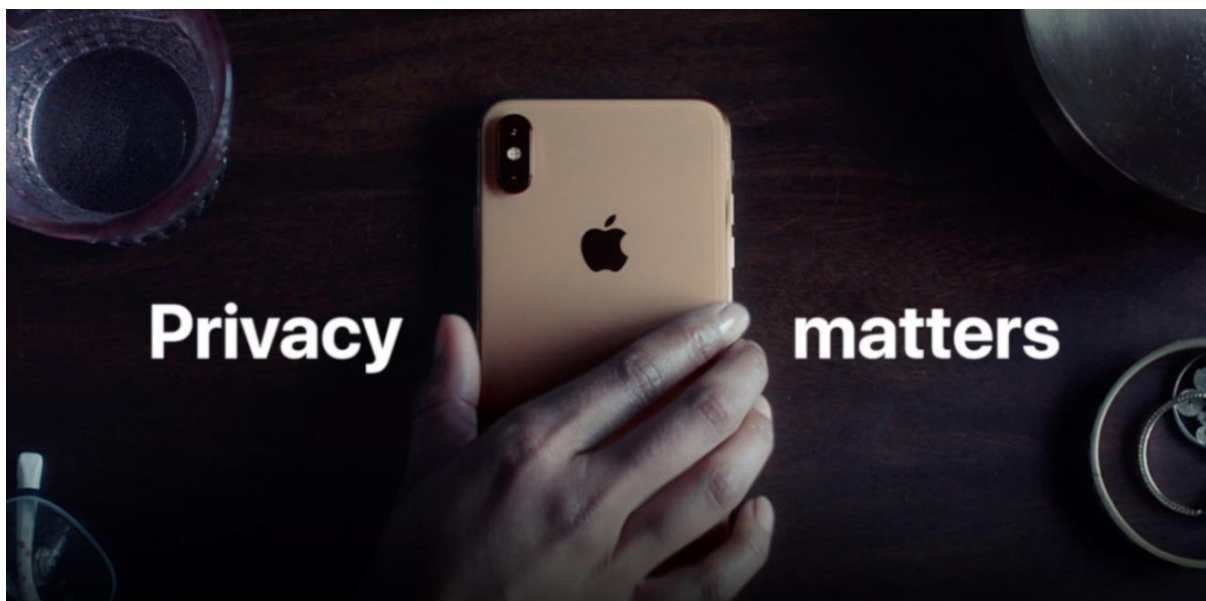


Figure 14 - Apple ad focuses on the privacy features of iPhone (Panzarino, 2019).

Visual rhetoric is a quite new area of rhetoric, which started to be scientifically discussed as a field of study from the late 1960s, with the ever-increasing influence of visual signs across society, especially the U.S., in the form of iconic paintings, photographs, art performances, and later on World Wide Web, social media, and emergent digital technologies (Foss, 2005; Gries, 2019). Ever since the scope of visual rhetoric has been widening, and the importance of use of visual imagery in the new ways of communication such as social media has changed the face of communication (Gries, 2019). Nowadays visual rhetorical analysis is concerned with the study of how specific peoples and communities across different cultures seek to make meaning and be influenced through an increasing range of visual-material artifacts, genres, and performances—films, comics, advertisements, news photographs, YouTube videos, memes, and augmented reality. The goal of visual rhetorical analysis is how visual rhetoric influences the whole range of individuals' activities in public life such as how they perform, how they

see—literally and metaphorically—how they memorialize, how they remember, how they confront, how they resist, how they consume, how they commodify, how they govern, and how they authorize (Gries, 2019). Foss (2005, p. 145) elaborates on this subject, and states the theoretical perspective of visual rhetoric includes “*the analysis of the symbolic or communicative aspects of visual rhetoric*”; “*a critical-analytical tool or a way of approaching and analyzing visual data that highlights the communicative dimensions of images.*” She adds that when applying this approach, understanding the ways in which visual symbols communicate is the main focus, and three research moves are the basis of analysis in the process of understanding visual artifacts: analyzing their nature, identifying their function, and making an evaluation (Foss, 2005). The nature of an image is the presented elements—color, size, and media—as well as the suggested elements—themes, allusions, metaphors and tropes—at work within a visual artifact. The function refers to “the action the image communicates” which is distinct from purpose; while a visual artifact’s purpose refers to the designer’s intended effect, the function means, regardless of its intention, how the visual artifact operates for its viewers. In this step, discovering the function(s) an image or visual artifact serves for the audience is the key move. The third move seeks to make an evaluation; these evaluations are different depending on scholars’ individual concerns, the context in which the image has been situated, and the theories they apply in the process (Gries, 2019). While some scholars examine whether the visual artifacts fulfil the desired functions, others concentrate on the effect of their functions (Foss, 2005).

Visual arguments

According to Blair (2004), as well as changing someone’s beliefs, individuals use arguments to effect change in the attitude, behavior and intentions of the audience. There are various definitions for the term visual argument, however, in their research, Grancea (2017) states that visuals need verbal ‘surroundings’ in order to properly convey an argumentative content, and “*this does not mean that their action is limited to decorating the verbal part of the discourse.*” They continue the reasoning by explaining that “*without words, it is hard to establish whether the image is to be taken as an argument, or that such interpretation would actually do an injustice to the author of the image.*” Observing Figure 14 could be insightful for understanding this point. Grancea suggests Anthony Blair’s comprehensive definition on this topic:

“A visual argument is then an argument at least some of the essential elements of which are not expressed or communicated in a natural language, but instead or expressed or communicated pictorially, by images and/or nonverbal signs or symbols. So the ‘visual’ and the ‘verbal’ of visual argument and verbal argument here denote the manner in which the argument is expressed or communicated. By this definition, most of what count as visual arguments are actually hybrids or ‘multimodal’: they will include verbal components, but their successful expression depends also on their visual components. They can be understood only by taking the visual into account; some visual component is essential to the expression of the argument” (Blair, 2015, p. 218).

Johnson (2003) states if we take away the verbal components of the argument, and it still fulfills its purpose, we can consider it a visual argument. Fleming (1996) adds that if a visual object comprises the following two components: a premise (claim) and a conclusion (support), we have a visual argument.

The main strength of visual arguments is their evocative power (Gombrich, 2003). Video ads demonstrate this power properly; they communicate a large amount of information through displaying one or more visual images within a short time frame, thirty seconds for example, and consumers are able to process the information as they learn how to read them from an early age (Blair, 2004; Finkler & Leon, 2019). However, expressing the same number of concepts verbally in the same amount of time would be impossible; hence, using visual images to convey narratives and concepts in a short time span is their distinctive characteristic (Blair, 2004). Blair (2004) states the sense of realism they convey is another advantage of visual arguments, which makes them more tangible for the audience, hence, a greater impact. He adds universality and immortality of visual images lead to permanence of an argument. This results in a greater potential for impact as visual arguments can be efficient for a longer period of time (Blair, 2004). Simplicity is another factor which leads to the efficiency of visual arguments. Using visual images instead of long sentences not only makes it easier to explain concepts, but also easier to memorize (Silva, 2017). According to what has been mentioned, these reasons all lead to the mass use of visual arguments in advertisements to make them reach a high degree of effectiveness (StudyCorgi, 2020).

Genres of visual arguments

Blair (2004) discusses three typical genres of visual argument: cartoons, films and advertising. He adds these visually expressed arguments provide insights and reasoning into their suggested hypothesis, and the audiences engage with them and change their belief about that hypothesis through seeing. Cartoons allow the audience to observe an explicit and precise meaning (Blair, 2004). Political cartoons, for instance, by relying on social beliefs can function as an enthymeme to provoke actions (Fleming, 1996). Films empower arguments visually by means of the construction of credible narratives. In this case, films, an argument is both expressed and presented simultaneously; this means the visual confirms the hypothesis and it makes the argument's validity seem inevitable (Blair, 2004). Blair claims that "*with film or video we don't just imagine the narrative, we "see" it unfolding before our eyes. Seeing is believing, even if what we are watching is invented, exaggerated, half-truths or lies.*" Advertising, especially commercials, is utilized at the time when people are usually watching TV or videos to relax or to be entertained. In this state, people have less awareness of the suggested content or hypothesis, thus, it is easier to get them persuaded. This is due to the fact that visual images are to a large extent processed by the unconscious regions of the brain (Blair, 2004). Blair states that "*Although we can control which programs we view, we cannot control which advertisements accompany those programs and it takes an effort to "mute" the commercials*" (Blair, 2004, p. 56). This significant advantage combined and applied with methods of repetition and attraction of the visual itself, make advertisements highly persuasive, usually unconsciously. Despite the mentioned facts, it cannot be concluded that advertisements could be all regarded as visual arguments (Blair, 2004). For instance, even though there is no rational argument, beverage companies generally attempt to evoke positive feelings in their advertisements with the aim of creating a positive association towards the brand itself. Blair argues that this type of visual advertising is more about influencing through emotional appeal than visual argument. He adds that in the mentioned type of advertisements, there is a "surface" argument, usually supplied by the accompanying verbal text or voiceover (verbal argument), which offers less of reasons to like the brand name or to prefer the product to those of competitors, but more of psychological appeals (Blair, 2004).