



# Creative Best Practices



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## Branded Response

‘Direct Response’ vs ‘Brand’  
consumer focus



## Performance Levers

Video as an  
engagement medium

Engagement levers



## Content Library

Creative production

Cost-efficient  
flexible content

# Branded Response

There is a conventional wisdom that separates advertising, especially television advertising, into one of two categories: brand or direct response.

Brand messaging is supposed to have superior aesthetics and be brand building but isn't expected to elicit any immediate consumer response.

Direct response has inferior aesthetics and, at best, doesn't harm the brand, but is supposed to result in tangible consumer response.

This is increasingly an artificial distinction. A combination of the rise of drive-to-web as a consumer response channel, falling costs of high-quality production techniques, and a more heterogeneous ecosystem of advertisers on TV means that advertisers can build brand equity and generate measurable performance simultaneously.

We call this philosophy **branded response**. When executed correctly, the approach fuses the visual power of the medium with the selling logic of direct response messaging to achieve profitable acquisition while enhancing the brand at the same time.

# Branded Response Efficacy

## *Thank You*



[\\*link to creative](#)

## *Pass the Box*



[\\*link to creative](#)

- Through streaming video, *Pass The Box* pushed more than  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the traffic that *Thank You* acquired at only 69% of the emotion-driven asset's total spend.
- An effective branded response asset lifts network performance across the board: on average, the UGC creative improved streaming efficiencies by 45% at the bottom of the funnel (based on identical spend allocations and network mix as its branded predecessor).
- *Pass The Box* notably utilizes the symbolism of the “ButcherBox” to keep the brand name top of mind and consistent throughout the ad. The emphasis on the product variety and ease of use through the home videos assists in implicitly selling the value proposition to prospective users.
- While the messaging of *Thank You* is bound to resonate with viewers, the lack of auditory and visual cues linking ButcherBox to the narrative inevitably yielded less of a response from consumers.

# Linear Shifts in Response

## Week 1

Creative: *Thank You*

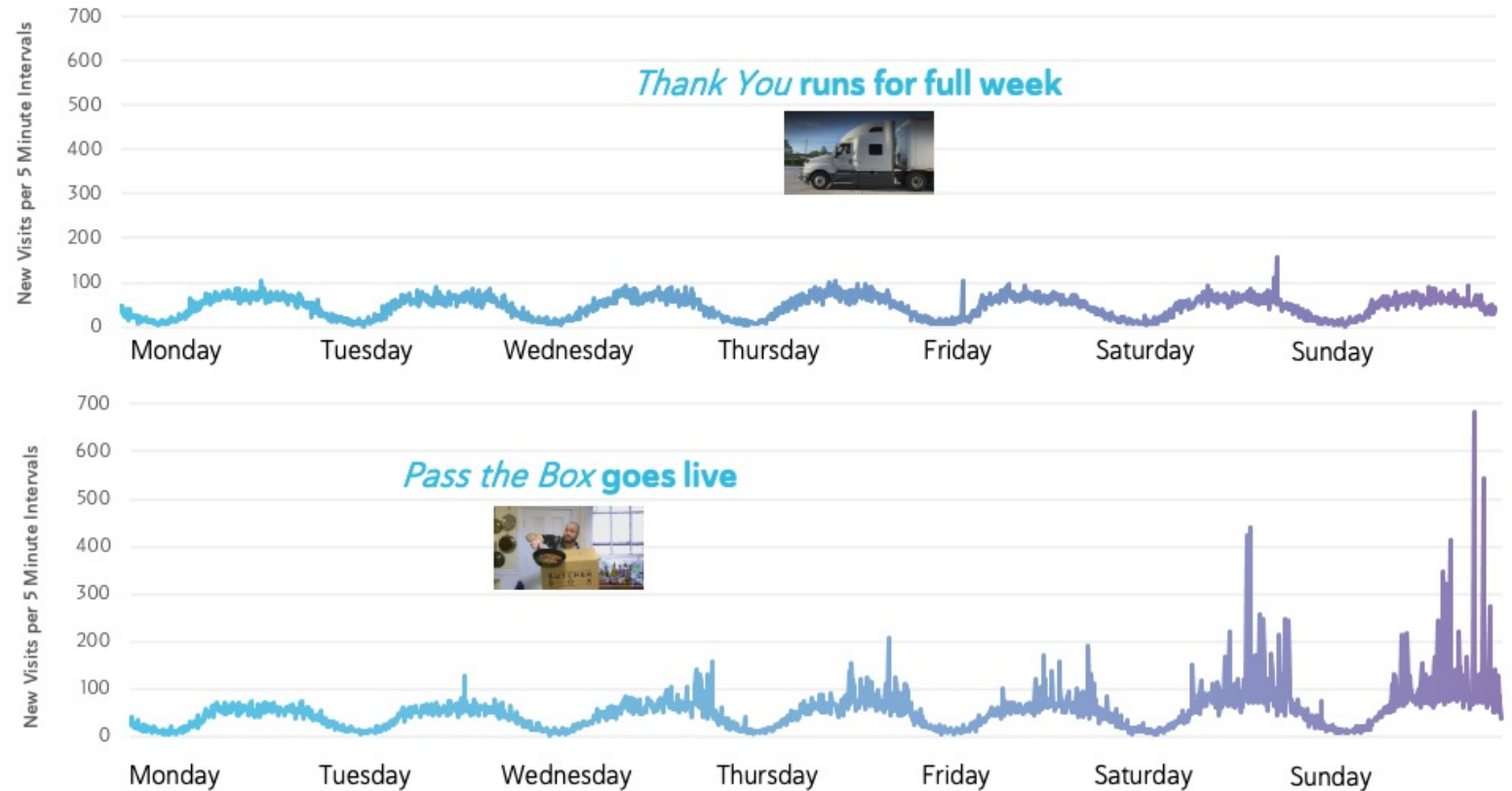
From Week 1 to Week 2, media spend fluctuated by a mere 2% and spot volume by only 3%.

## Week 2

Creatives:

M-T *Thank You*

W-Su *Pass the Box*



- Upon the branded response spot’s deployment, surges in activity at the top of the funnel were immediately noticeable; traffic increased materially as the creative gained traction.
- *Pass the Box* drove 84% more new site visitors over the 5-day period than *Thank You's* weeklong run. These users converted to the bottom of the funnel at nearly 2x the rate than users who saw the brand creative.
- Ultimately, marrying a brand-focused narrative with thoughtful DR levers maximized acquisition goals while still contributing to critical brand building for ButcherBox.

# Tactical Elements



The Mix



Visual Elements



Branding Devices



Audio Elements



Production Techniques

# The Mix



For most advertisers, running a single execution on air may not yield the best results. **A better practice is to run between two and four variations simultaneously, with various iterations.**

One reason this strategy usually performs better is that consumers are heterogeneous: some will be more responsive to emotional messaging, others to messaging about price, others to quality comparisons, etc. A single message is less likely to appeal to everyone.

Another reason this approach works is what psychologists call “multiple pathway encoding.” Memorability is increased when an idea is encoded in, and accessible by, multiple neural pathways instead of just one (think Geico cavemen and Geico gecko).

Iterations can take many forms in the video ecosystem: spots can be entirely distinct from one another, but more often, minor tweaks or adjustments can be made to a base creative to develop multiple executions.

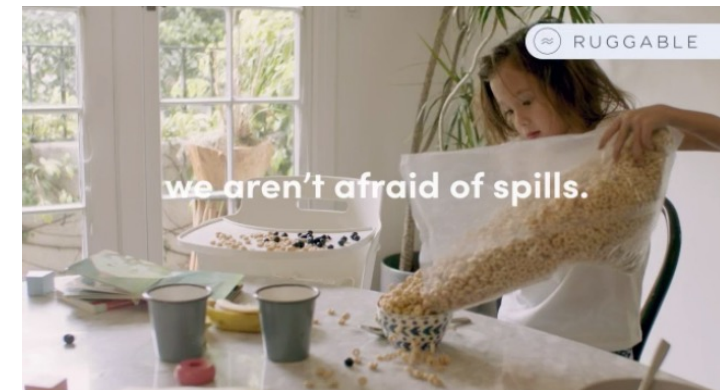
## RUGGABLE

### 30-Second Rational



[\\*link to creative](#)

### 30-Second Personal



[\\*link to creative](#)

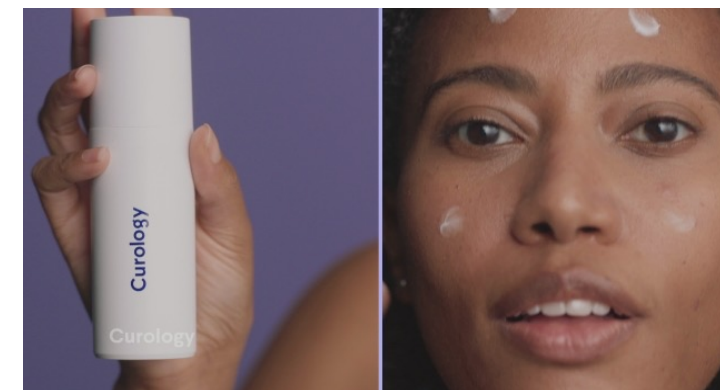
## Curology

### 30-Second Emotion-Driven



[\\*link to creative](#)

### 15-Second Value Prop



[\\*link to creative](#)

# Visual Elements: Persistent Logo or URL



Viewers often consume TV with divided attention, so it is important that **both audio and visual elements clearly convey your brand's message (and name).**

A visible and persistent logo increases brand recognition and memorability.

A URL on screen reinforces the brand identity while also hinting toward the call to action.

# ÖURA



[\\*link to creative](#)



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# TULA SKINCARE



# Visual Elements: End Card

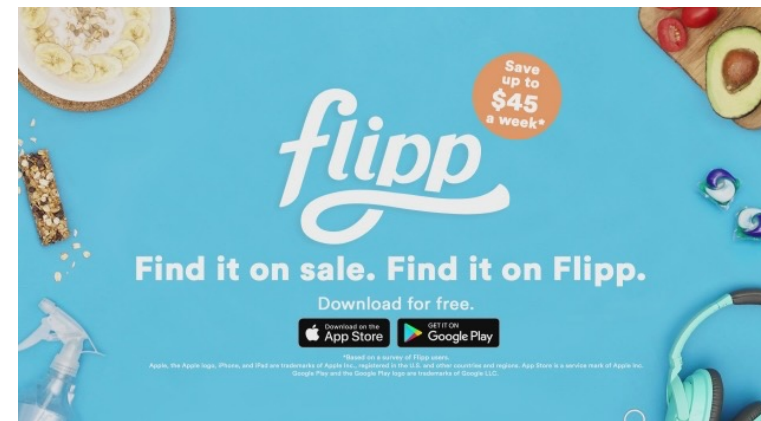


End cards are a necessary and strategic component of any TV asset meant to leave a lasting impression on each viewer.

No matter the call to action or intended response to the ad, it's important to incorporate the following within any end card:

- Large logo as the primary focus
- A simple URL, which provides guidance for viewers who intend to act
- Explicit Call to Action (CTA) or Offer

The CTA encourages viewers towards a desired response, be it visiting a website, buying a product, downloading an app, etc. CTAs can be leveraged to further develop the brand's message or persona while also encouraging direct response (see the above Flipp example for this blend).



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# Visual Elements: See-Say Elements



“See-say” elements work to reinforce key ideas of the creative by reaching viewers through two sensory channels simultaneously, tying back to the notion of increased memorability and understanding by accessing customers through multiple neural pathways.

This tactic is often employed by ***pairing supers with other elements such as corresponding voice-over or featured merchandise.***

The see-say pairing can also be delivered through a final CTA on the end card. The CTA is often more impactful when delivered to the audience through both audio and visual cues.



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# Branding Devices: Featuring Merch



When featuring merchandise in creative, the goal is not only to outline the offering but also **demonstrate the consumer benefit from using the product.**

This can include displaying ease of use, convenience, style, or perhaps a combination of positive factors.

In the case of Everlane, featuring their new performance wear simply entailed close-up product visuals meant to showcase the versatility of the product - to work or workout.

Hydrow's spot features versatile shots of the equipment, coupled with unique and desirable value propositions to showcase the benefits of the product offering.

## EVERLANE



[\\*link to creative](#)



[\\*link to creative](#)

## hydrow®

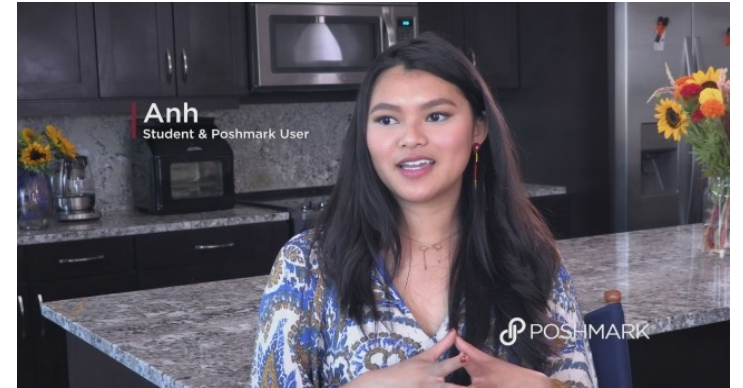
# Branding Devices: Testimonial & User- Generated Content



Leveraging existing content can yield equal parts acquisition efficacy and cost-effectiveness. Many brands find that their portfolio of **social or digital assets can be repurposed for success on TV.**

Testimonials are a great way to tell a brand's story from a multitude of angles, offering many use-cases for the consumer to latch onto.

User-generated content or self-taped assets can lend trust and confidence in the brand and product; the unscripted and less fabricated feel of the ads speak directly to viewers in a genuine tone compared to other television/streaming assets on air.



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# Branding Devices: Celebrity, Spokesperson, or Influencer



Featuring a prominent spokesperson or influencer as part of a campaign can, under the right circumstances, have profound positive impact. The basic goal is for **the high-profile individual to lend their pre-existing credibility to the brand**. It is important to ensure that the spokesperson is a relevant figure for the target consumer.

Olympic Gold Medalist Shawn Johnson proved to be a perfect match for Home Chef with her family-oriented social media accounts that often feature the athlete's own recipes.

Fabletics' celebrity spokesperson, Kate Hudson, has an integral role as a co-founder of the company. This fact further cements credibility of the product, and more importantly, taps into the actress's expansive pre-existing following.

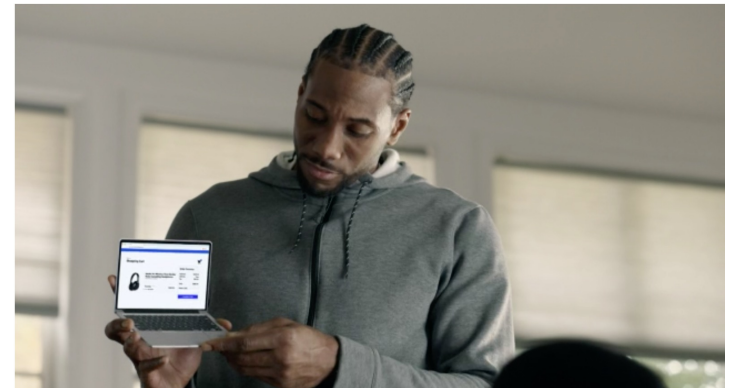
Honey capitalized on their brand sponsorship with the Los Angeles Clippers to feature NBA All-Star Kawhi Leonard. The partnership on the court creates seamless fluidity to the TV screen, appealing to the massive NBA following.



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# Branding Devices: Campaignable Elements



The key idea behind campaignable elements is to **create branding across executions in a way that is cohesive and instantly recognizable.**

Campaignable elements can range across brand name, logo, slogan, spokesperson, jingle, or packaging style, and serve to reinforce memorable characteristics across executions.

Milk Bar's signature font, coloring, and packaging stay true to its playful brand and is featured through their suite of creatives. The persistent synthesis keeps the brand top of mind, whether the ad features a specific cake or the range of delicious treats.

*milk*



[\\*link to creative](#)

# Audio Elements: Music Selection



**Music, especially source music, can act as an emotional shortcut:** a song can summon a wide range of pre-existing feelings and associations in just a few seconds.

For products with high psycho-social salience (fashion, consumer technology, etc.), we've found upbeat, energetic music to be most effective.

ShoeDazzle's use of 'I Love It' by Icona Pop appeared as a timely and pleasant combination coinciding with the height of the song's popularity. The infectious beats catch and hold the attention of viewers while also complementing the pace of the product montage.

Boll & Branch's rendition of 'Silent Night' acts as a cue for holiday-related feelings that can be synonymous with their products: warmth, coziness, and familiarity.

shoedazzle<sup>\*</sup>



[\\*link to creative](#)



[\\*link to creative](#)

 BOLL & BRANCH<sup>™</sup>

# Audio Elements: Voice-Over Talent



Voice-over plays an important role in crafting the desired emotion and tone of the execution. It shapes viewer perception as serious, funny, endearing, light-hearted etc.

***Aim for talent with a wide range to allow for a variety of tones, emotions, and inflections.*** (Consider Dos Equis, 'The Most Interesting Man in the World' and the effect the voice-over helped to create.)

Viewers tend to make rapid, unconscious judgments off relatively little information when consuming media. A genuine, authentic voice is one of the most powerful levers available to help the audience quickly establish an emotional connection to the content.

The revised Zola execution in this example portrays a rounder, more inviting tone than the original, and the professional dictation effectively elicits trust with the registry service. The client purposefully moved away from exaggerated intonations and perceivably contrived excitement.



ZOLA

## Original Voice-over



[\\*link to creative](#)

## Revised Voice-over



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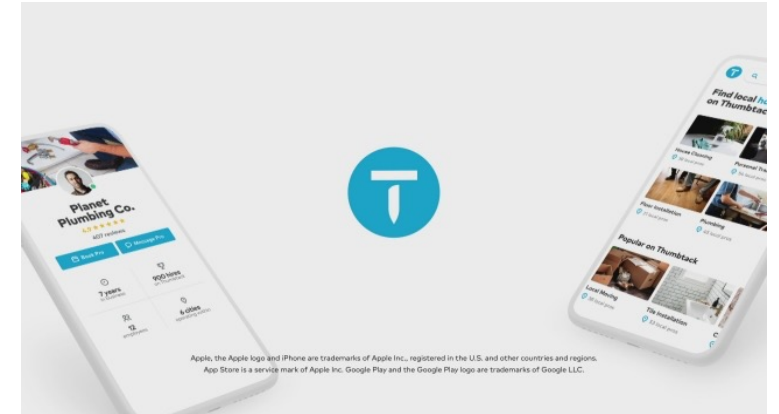
# Production Techniques: Back-to-Back Assets



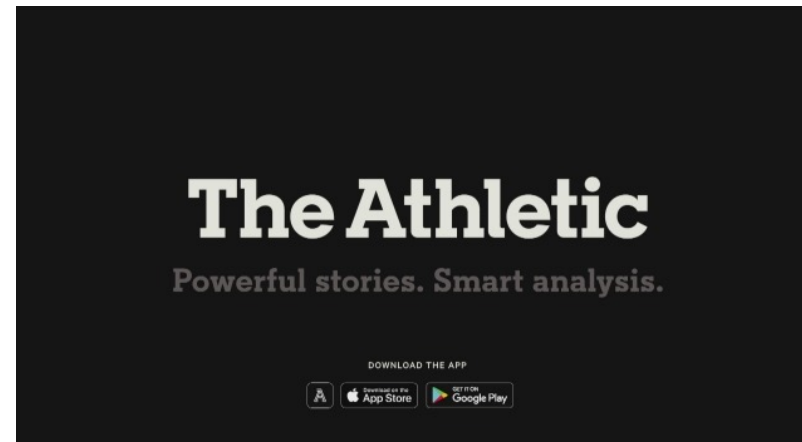
Advertisers often utilize existing assets of shorter lengths, typically 15-second spots, to create engaging 30-second commercials, omitting the need to create net-new assets or concepts.

An ideal strategy involves pairing top-performing assets together: not only will the advertiser increase frequency on spots that have already garnered strong response, but the brand can also double down on value props, emotional messaging, and brand recognition and recall with offers, end cards, and logo consistency.

# Thumbtack



[\\*link to creative](#)



[\\*link to creative](#)

# The Athletic

# Production Techniques: Animated Assets



Animation is a playful and effective technique that is equal parts attention-grabbing and informative or product-driven.

Animated assets allow brands to forgo steep production costs while producing assets that can effectively communicate and drive home the brand or product's story.

# Winc



[\\*link to creative](#)



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# Thumbtack

# Lemonade



[\\*link to creative](#)

# Production Techniques: Simple Supers



Like animation, simple supers can be an effective strategy to create high quality assets while avoiding high production costs.

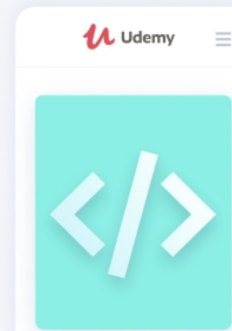
Simple supers utilize superimposed text and images to develop the narrative, creating an engaging advertisement even without sound or while on mute.

## Misfits Market



[\\*link to creative](#)

## Online courses



[\\*link to creative](#)



# Production Best Practices



# Production Techniques

For performance advertisers, the most important aspects of creative production are ownership and flexibility.

## Ownership

- A relatively common pitfall in creative production is failing to secure content ownership. If your creative agency/producer owns the rights to the content, your ability to re-cut footage for new executions, try different spot lengths, etc. might be severely limited.
- At minimum, these options become considerably more expensive when you're locked into a single producer.

## Flexibility

- Owning your own footage is step one in maximizing the range of options available on-air.
- Step two is following a production strategy that allows for message variation and testing on-air without incurring the expense of an additional shoot day.
- This approach entails going into production with the goal of capturing content for variations, even if not all versions will be on air immediately.
- The overarching objective is to incur the substantial fixed costs of a shoot a single time, plus the much smaller marginal costs of variations, as opposed to paying that fixed cost each time you want to try something new.

# Appendix: Creative Links

## The Mix

- [Ruggable Rational](#)
- [Ruggable Personal](#)
- [Curology Emotional \(30\)](#)
- [Curology Value-Prop \(15\)](#)

## Visual Elements

- [Oura Logo](#)
- [Tula Logo](#)
- [Flipp End Card](#)
- [Grove End Card](#)
- [Away See-Say](#)
- [Backcountry See-Say](#)

## Branding Devices

- [Everlane Merch](#)
- [Hydrow Merch](#)
- [Poshmark Testimonial](#)
- [Fabletics UGC](#)
- [Homechef UGC](#)
- [Honey Kawhi Leonard](#)
- [Fabletics Kate Hudson](#)
- [Homechef Shawn Johnson](#)
- [Milk Bar Campaignable Elements](#)

## Audio Elements

- [ShoeDazzle Iconopop](#)
- [Boll & Branch Silent Night](#)
- [Zola Original VO](#)
- [Zola Revised VO](#)

## Production Techniques

- [Thumbtack B2B](#)
- [The Athletic B2B](#)
- [Winc Animation](#)
- [Thumbtack Animation](#)
- [Lemonade Animation](#)
- [Misfits Market Simple Super](#)
- [Udemy Simple Super](#)