

MAY 2018
#AdExperience



THE SIX-SECOND AD EXPERIENCE

THE IMPACT OF AD LENGTH
& PLACEMENT

FREEWHEEL
A COMCAST COMPANY

COUNCIL FOR
PREMIUM VIDEO

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In early 2018, the FreeWheel Council for Premium Video (FWC) created custom research to better understand the impact of ad length on the ad experience and business outcomes.

With the rise of the six-second ad format in TV and premium video, it's important to explore the best applications of this format in relation to other longer ad creatives.

This is a follow up to a 2017 study where the FWC partnered with Realeyes, to understand the advertising experience within short-form premium video content. The study captured the behaviors and attitudes of almost 3,000 viewers in order to measure engagement and emotional reactions with different content and ad scenarios.

In this latest piece of research, using Realeyes' proprietary machine learning and computer vision technology, 4,885 participants, aged 18-65, were

exposed to different ad scenarios alongside short-form NBC premium video. The scenarios included a mix of six-, fifteen- and thirty-second ads from six campaigns by three well-known, general interest brands including Hershey's, in different combinations and sequences. Emotional and engagement levels were captured and viewers were surveyed about their experience and their attitudes towards the ads and brands.

By understanding more about these ad experiences, we believe both publishers and advertisers can work together on delivering more impactful and engaging advertising, and use the full set of creative executions available to drive positive business outcomes.

SOME KEY FINDINGS FROM THE RESEARCH:

- **Six-second ads have a more positive impact** when used to reinforce a message already delivered by a longer ad
- **Thirty-second ads are seen as less enjoyable** and less appropriate in short-form video environments
- When used exclusively, **fifteen-second ads were seen as twice as effective** as six-second ads and thirty-second ads
- In this study, there was no significant correlation between younger audiences engaging with or favoring six-second ads, but other research suggests **higher engagement levels with shorter ads among younger audiences**

Short-form content is an important part of the premium video ecosystem and fuels advertising opportunities for marketers. Finding the right balance and ultimately the right choreography of clips and ads to maximize engagement is key to helping foster those opportunities.

While this study used short-form content in PC (desktop/ laptop) environments, we believe the

application of these results can be applied to longer-form content and other screens, such as TV and mobile devices.

Members of the FWC, which include leaders from some of the industry's most prominent publishers, continue to actively investigate and curate the right ad experience no matter the content, audience or screen.

METHODOLOGY

SAMPLE

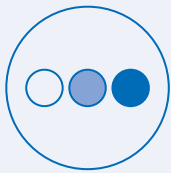
Participants consisted of 4,885 viewers between the ages of 18-65. Participants were recruited by leading emotion management platform, Realeyes.

DESIGN

The three independent variables were ad length (six-second, fifteen-second and thirty-second), ad placement (first, second and third spot) and content length (long-form versus short-form). The experiment and survey were conducted online.

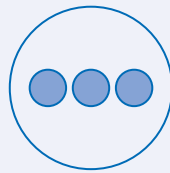
STIMULI

The stimuli included a mix of entertainment-based content clips from NBC primetime shows, averaging 1:30 in duration and 6 campaigns, all featuring six-, fifteen- and thirty-second ad creatives. Based on design, the ten conditions were divided into three categories:



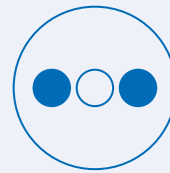
MIXED AD MODULES

1x 0:06, 1x 0:15 & 1x 0:30



HOMOGENEOUS AD MODULES

All 0:06, all 0:15, all 0:30



SEQUENTIAL AD MODULES

2 ads from the same campaign, separated by content and other ad campaigns
0:30 then 0:06, 0:06 then 0:30

PROCEDURE


Participants were exposed to one of the ten conditions. Using machine learning and computer vision techniques, Realeyes measured how people feel as they watched the video content online. Based on the Facial Action Coding System (FACS) devised by Paul Ekman, the data gathered measured viewers' micro expressions. Micro expressions are facial expressions that occur within 1/25th of a second. They are involuntary

and expose a person's true emotions due to the subconscious nature of human emotions. In this case, they reflected the viewers' perceptions of the ads and content. Following exposure to the stimuli, participants were asked to indicate their brand recall, attitudes and purchase intentions. Data from both the facial tracking study and surveys were aggregated prior to data analysis.


METHODOLOGY

 **MIXED AD MODULES** 0:06, 0:15, 0:30, blend of industries as well as CPG only; ads & videos randomized

MODULE 1 n=2188	0:06 AD CPG		0:15 AD Food & Bev / CPG		0:30 AD Travel / CPG	
MODULE 2 n=2188	0:15 AD CPG		0:30 AD Food & Bev / CPG		0:06 AD Travel / CPG	
MODULE 3 n=2188	0:30 AD CPG		0:06 AD Food & Bev / CPG		0:15 AD Travel / CPG	

 **HOMOGENEOUS AD MODULES** all 0:06, all 0:15 or all 0:30; ads & videos randomized

MODULE 4 n=300	0:06 AD CPG		0:06 AD Food & Bev		0:06 AD Travel	
MODULE 5 n=300	0:15 AD CPG		0:15 AD Food & Bev		0:15 AD Travel	
MODULE 6 n=300	0:30 AD CPG		0:30 AD Food & Bev		0:30 AD Travel	

 **SEQUENTIAL AD MODULES** 0:06 at start and end of sequence; ads fixed & videos randomized

MODULE 7 n=300	0:06 AD CPG		0:15 AD Food & Bev		0:30 AD CPG	
MODULE 8 n=300	0:06 AD Food & Bev		0:15 AD CPG		0:30 AD Food & Bev	
MODULE 9 n=300	0:30 AD CPG		0:15 AD Food & Bev		0:06 AD CPG	
MODULE 10 n=300	0:30 AD Food & Bev		0:15 AD CPG		0:06 AD Food & Bev	

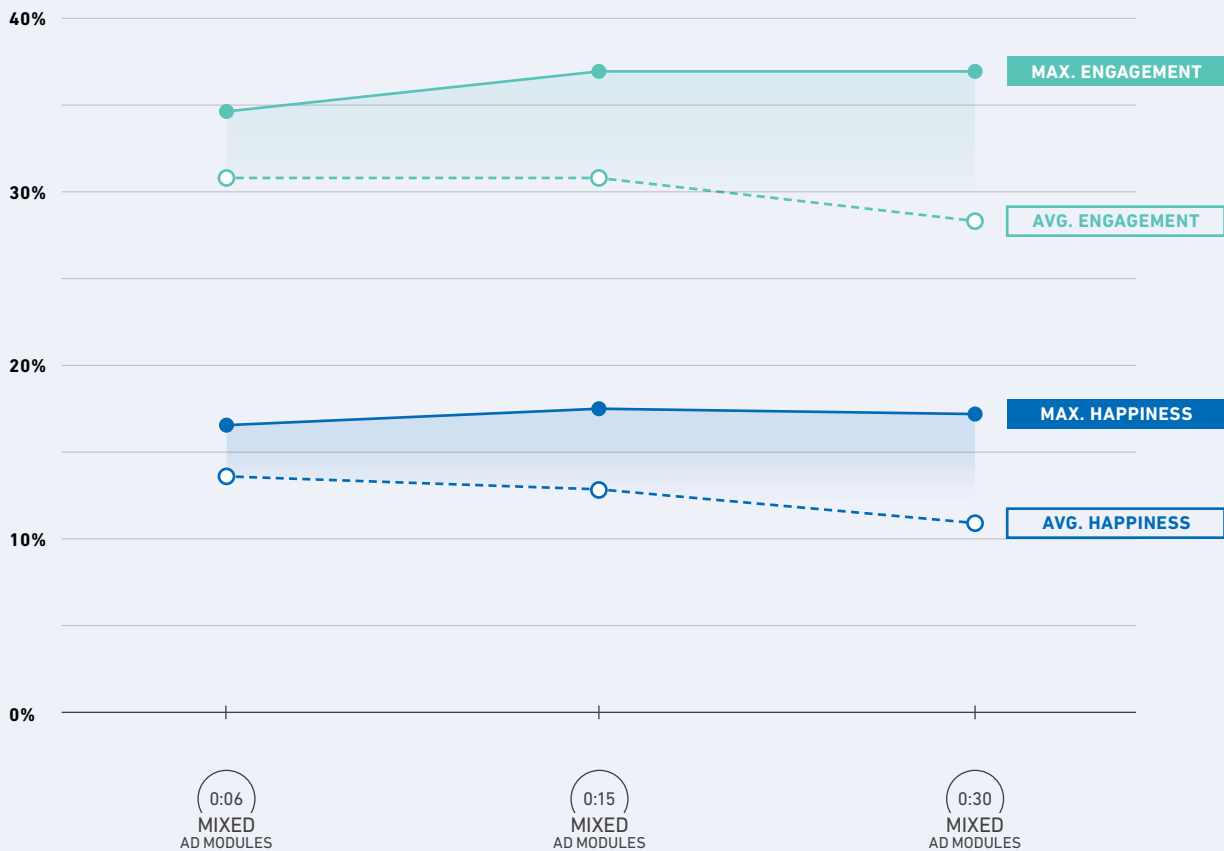


Six-second ads over-perform on average happiness and engagement, and longer ads have higher peaks of both happiness and engagement

Shorter ads may benefit from a larger halo effect from the content, given their short duration, whereas the longer ad formats have more opportunity to tell a story and engage the viewer.

[CLICK TO TWEET](#)

CHART 1
AVERAGE & MAX HAPPINESS & ENGAGEMENT

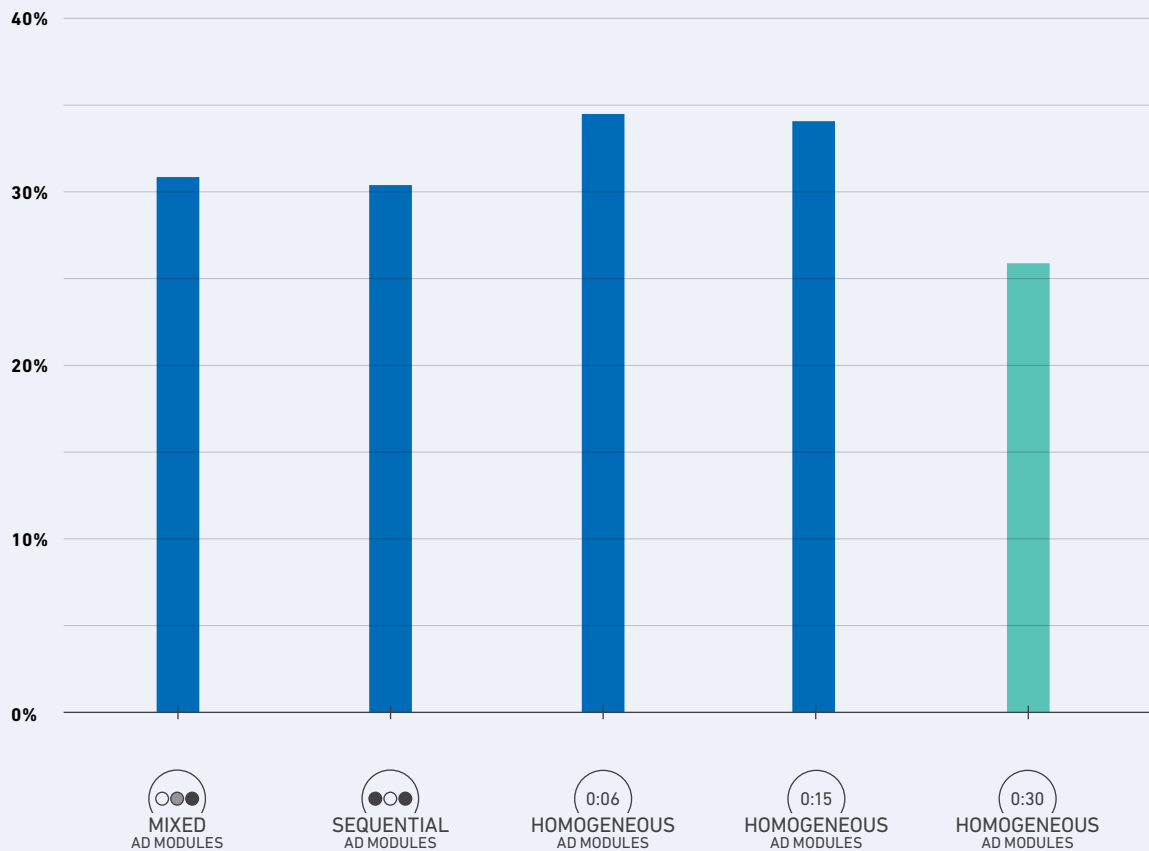


Participants experienced lower enjoyment when exposed to all thirty-second ads compared to conditions with a set of shorter ads or shorter ads mixed in

When considering short-form video, it's very important to get the right ratio of ad length to content length to deliver the optimal overall viewing experience.

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CHART 2
OVERALL VIEWING ENJOYMENT



Q. On a scale of 1-7, please indicate how enjoyable you found the overall viewing experience?
"Liked very much" to "Did not like at all" Top 2 results n=4885

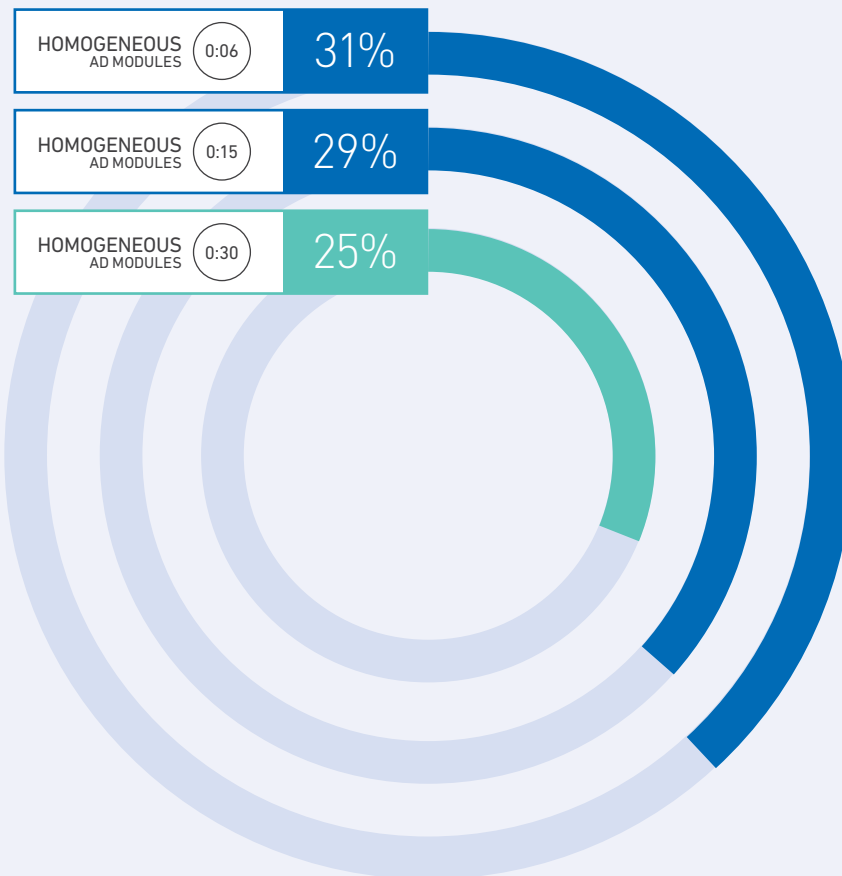
There was a slight difference between six- and fifteen-second ads in terms of appropriate length for short-form content, but thirty-second ads were seen as less appropriate

The viewer needs to feel an appropriate value exchange for their time and thirty-second ads have the risk of feeling too long before or in between content under two minutes.

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CHART 3

AD LENGTH APPROPRIATENESS



Q: How appropriate were the length of ads in relation to the length of content?
7 point scale: "very appropriate" to "not appropriate at all" Top 2 results n=900

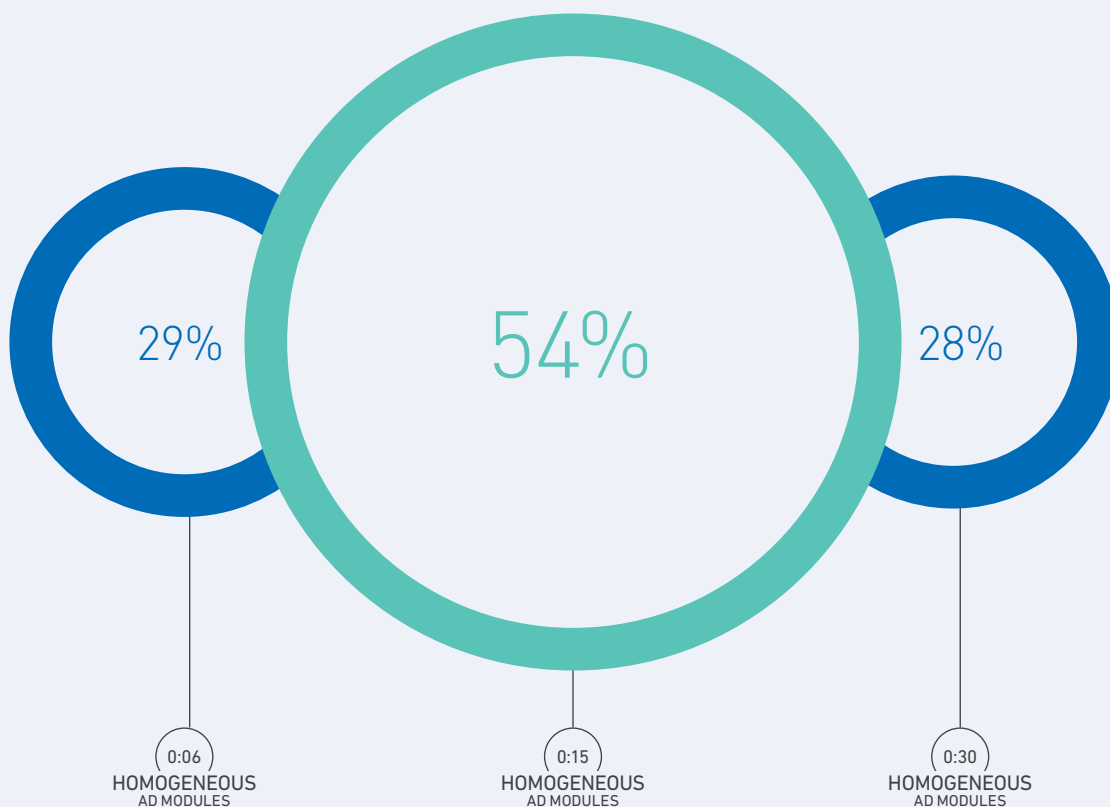
In conditions where the ads were all the same length, fifteen-second ads were considered twice as effective as six or thirty-second ads

Results show that fifteen-second ads can allow for enough time for storytelling without being too intrusive. Using a consistent ad length to manage viewers' expectations and avoid choppy or lengthy breaks which may disrupt the viewing experience, can also have a positive impact.

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CHART 4

HOMOGENEOUS AD LENGTH IMPACT



Q: The use of all x second ads is:
7 point scale: "very effective" to "not effective at all"; top 2 results (n=900)

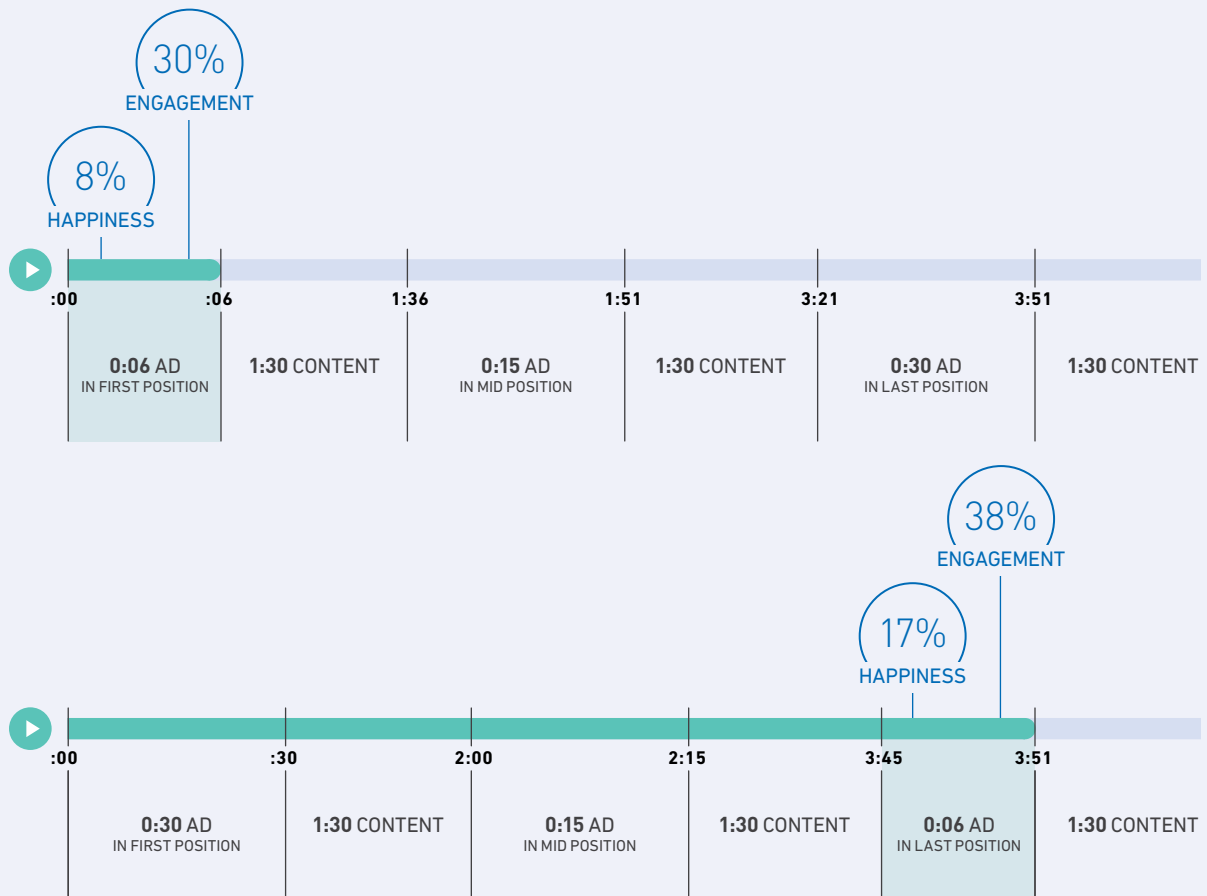
In sequential scenarios, when the six-second ad followed the thirty-second ad, both happiness and engagement were significantly higher

Six-second ads, when combined with thirty-second ads as a reinforcement (as opposed to a “teaser” in an earlier placement), have greater impact on viewers’ emotional responses.

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CHART 5

AVERAGE HAPPINESS & ENGAGEMENT IN SEQUENTIAL SCENARIOS



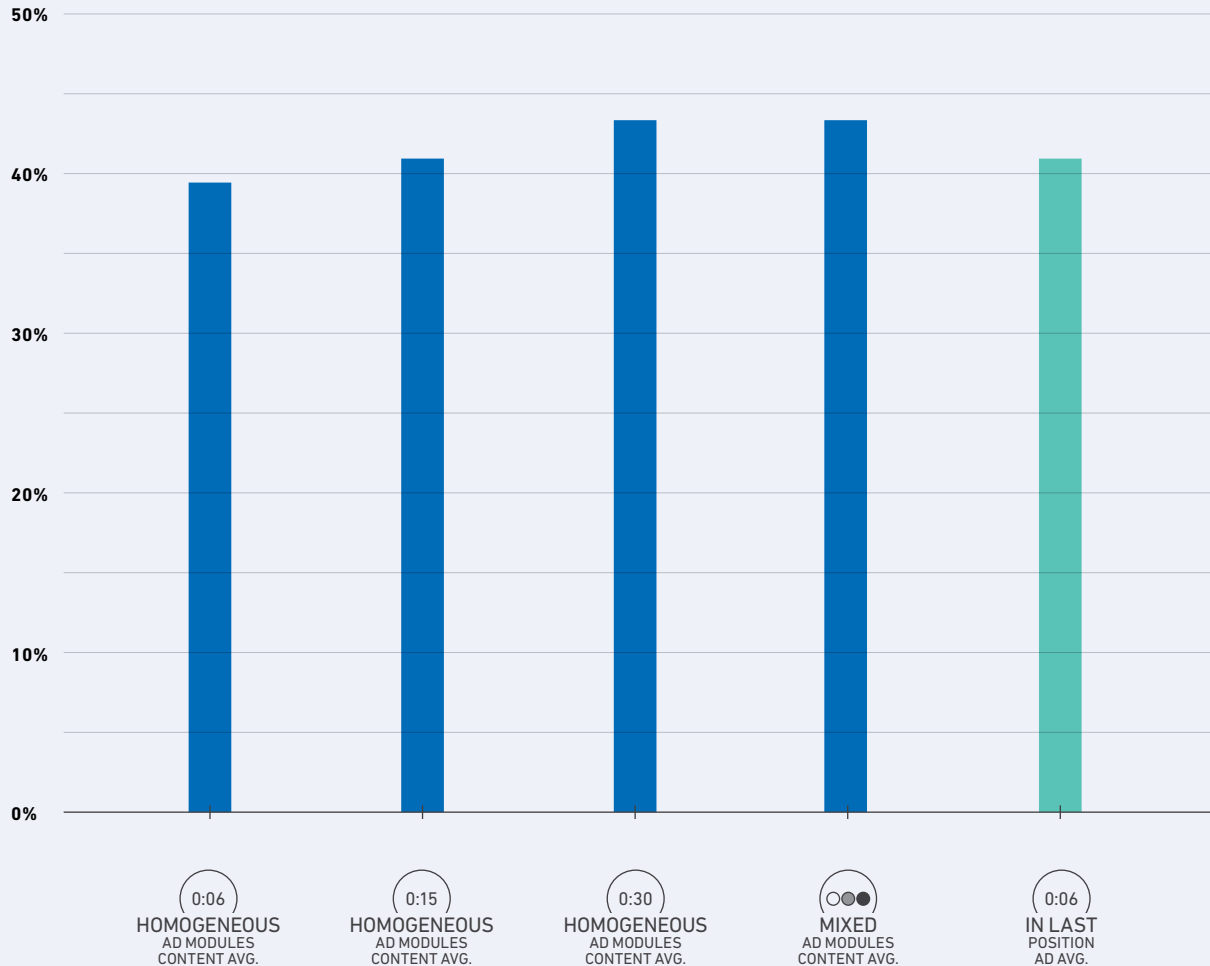
n=900

When the six-second ad was in the last position, engagement levels mirrored overall content engagement, suggesting a halo effect from the content itself

Because of their length, six-second ads have a greater opportunity to register higher levels of sustained engagement, especially following on the heels of quality content.

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CHART 6
ENGAGEMENT (AVERAGE) ACROSS SCENARIOS



n=900

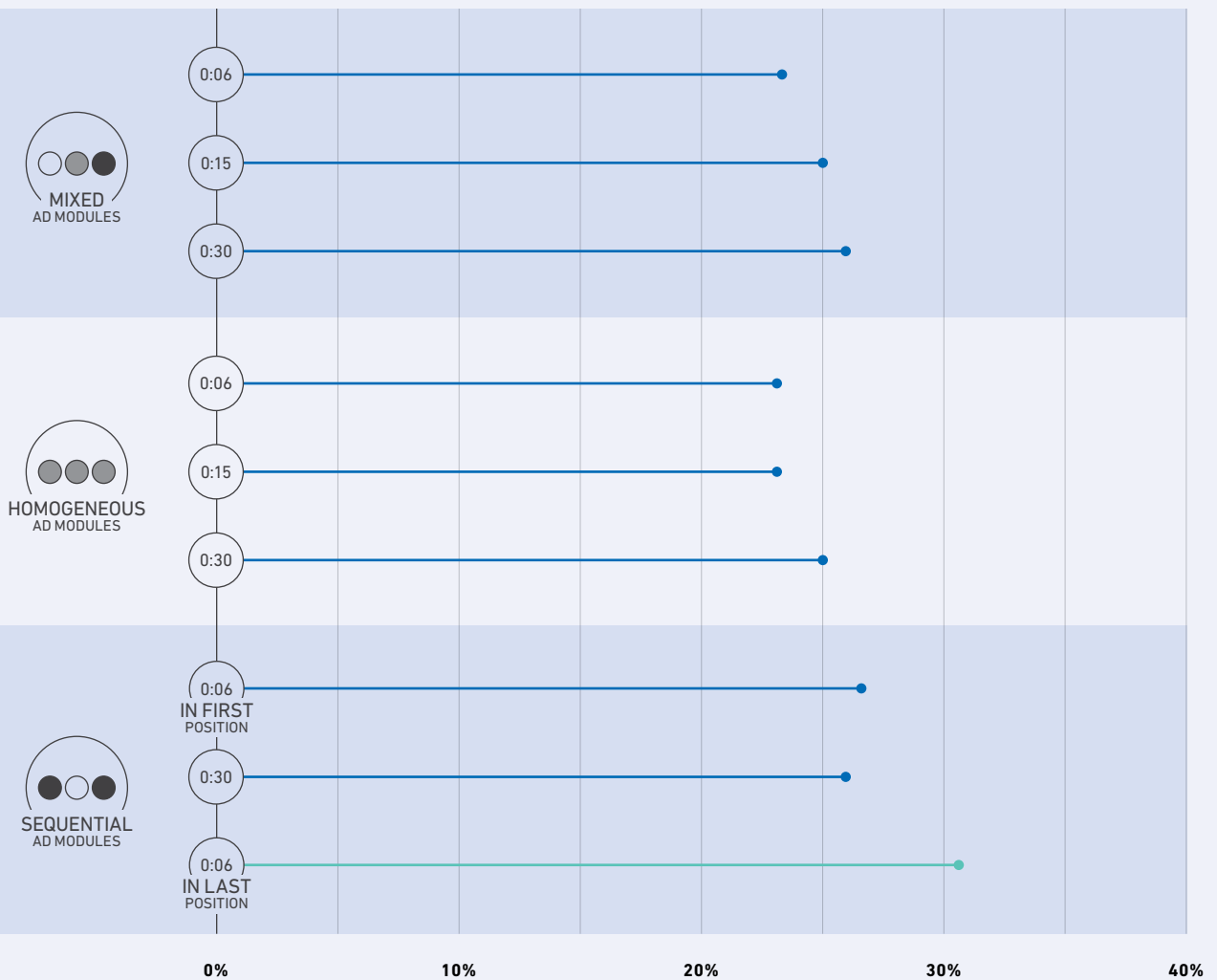
Brand favorability was at its highest when the six-second ad followed the thirty-second ad from the same campaign

The reinforcement impact of six-second ads doubling down on the message delivered by a longer ad format had positive implications for brand attitudes.

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CHART 7

BRAND FAVORABILITY



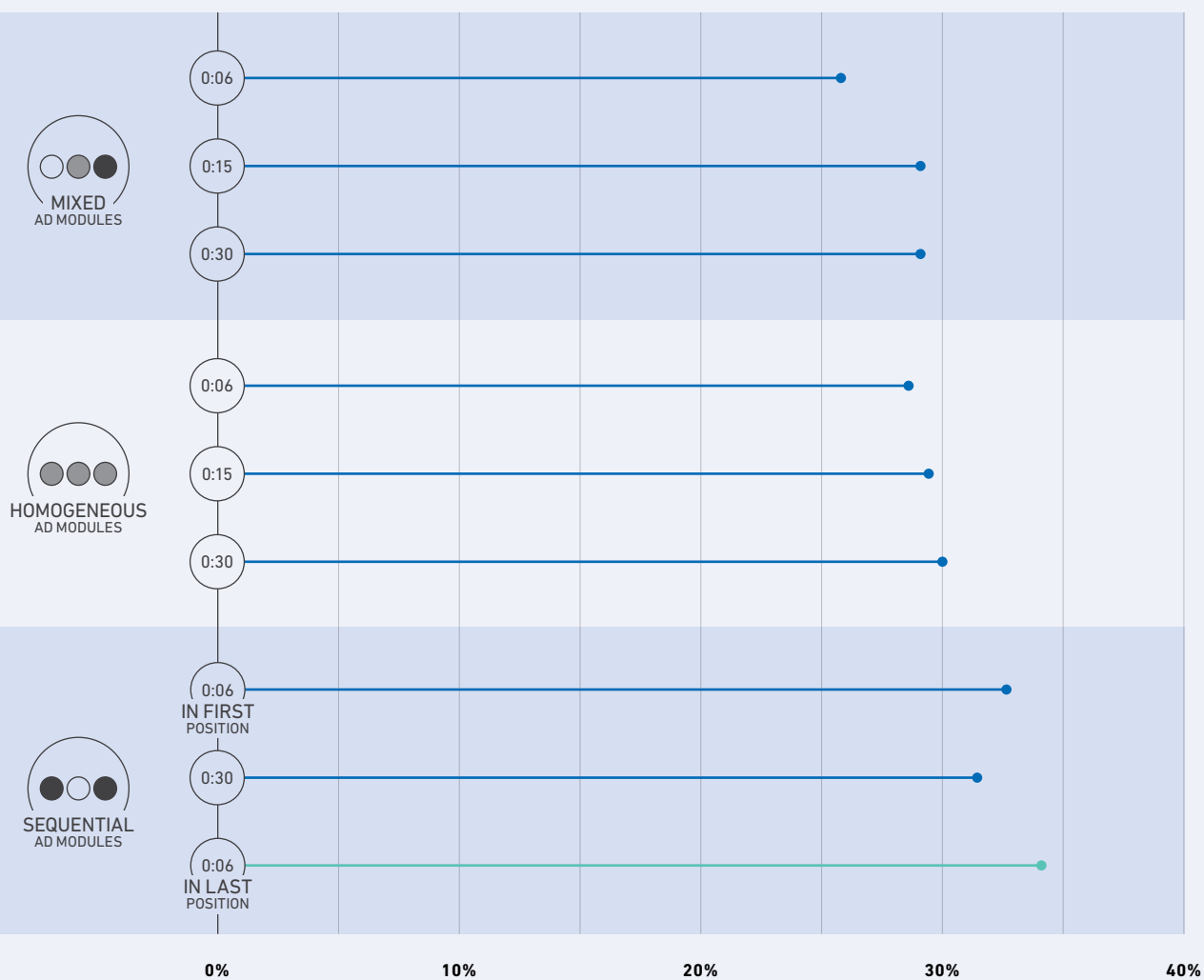
Q. After seeing the [brand x] ad, please indicate your opinion of the brand? 7 point scale: from "very favorable" to "not favorable at all"; top 2 results n=4885

When a six-second ad aired in the last spot, purchase intent was highest

The same reinforcement impact of sequenced messaging with six-second ads extended to the likelihood of purchase also.

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CHART 8
PURCHASE INTENT



Q. After seeing the [brand x] ad, how likely is it that you would purchase the product? 7 point scale: "very likely" to "not likely at all"; top 2 results n=4885

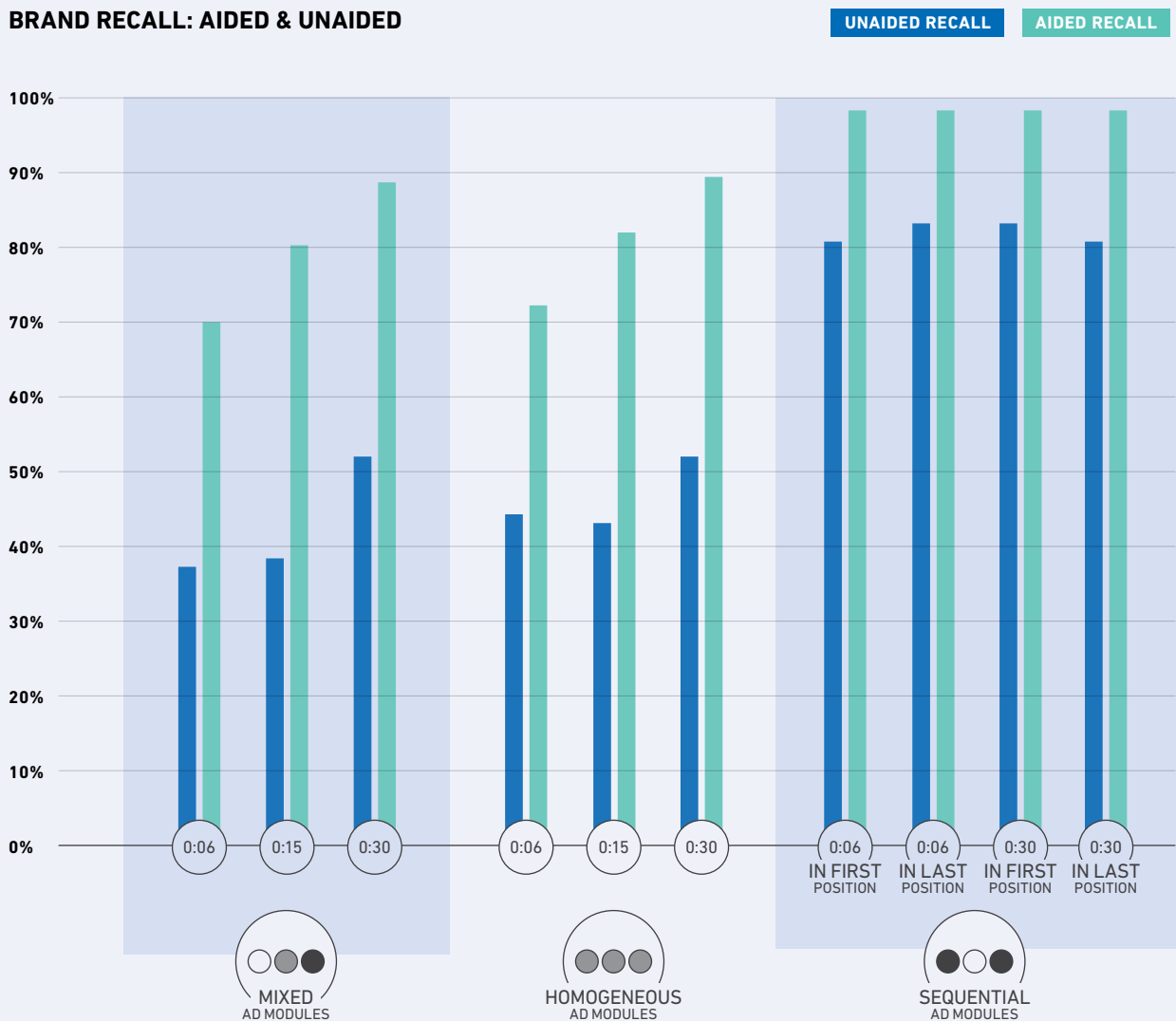
The sequential conditions led to higher brand recall, in particular higher in unaided recall, due to frequency reinforcement

Smart use of sequencing and frequency using different ad lengths (to avoid perceptions of excessive repetition) has more positive implications on viewers remembering brands and their messaging.

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CHART 9

BRAND RECALL: AIDED & UNAIDED



Q. Unaided: Which brands were featured in the advertisements you just saw?
 Aided: Which of the following brands do you remember seeing or hearing about in the advertisements you just saw?
 (list of 9 brands, the same or similar to the 3 that ran) n=4885

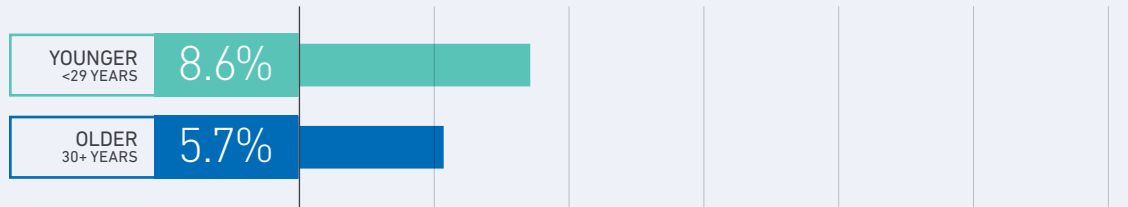
When considering a viewer's age, additional research has found that younger viewers do tend to over-perform in terms of average happiness and engagement for shorter ads

In this study, however there were no conclusive results in terms of differing engagement by age, and between shorter and longer ads within younger audiences. In other research undertaken by Realeyes, there is a clear correlation between youth and higher happiness/engagement with shorter ad formats (under eight seconds). This is especially relevant given the well-documented theory that younger consumers have more limited attention spans.

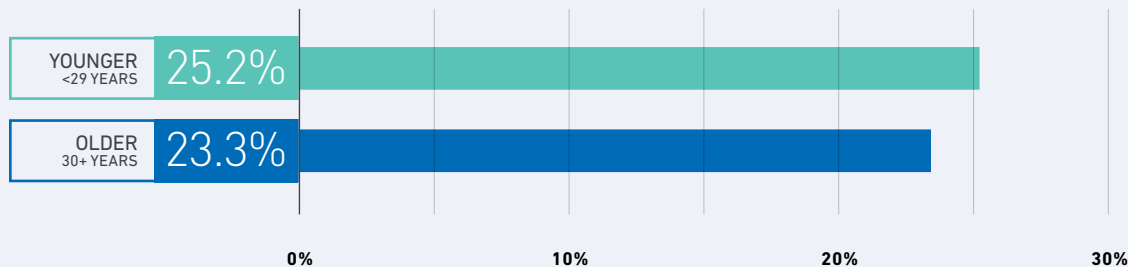
[CLICK TO TWEET](#)

CHART 10
AVERAGE HAPPINESS & ENGAGEMENT WITH SHORT AD FORMATS
<8 SEC

AVERAGE HAPPINESS



AVERAGE ENGAGEMENT



Based on 21 video ad exposures for older group and 19 video ads for younger group (<8 second duration), Realeyes 2018

CONCLUSION

Six-second ads have risen to the industry's attention as a new format to align with today's limited attention economy.

There is no question that these shorter formats can create impact for advertisers when used creatively and strategically with the full set of creative options and ad formats at the brand's disposal.

Varying ad lengths can play a big part in overall viewing experiences, and it is the responsibility of both buyers and sellers of media to strike the right balance, sequence and frequency of these ad formats to deliver the optimal set of messages to an individual consumer.

Short-form content lends itself well to shorter ads, but six seconds exclusively do not appear to be the solution. In fact, when served homogeneously, fifteen-second ads are seen as the most appropriate by viewers, striking the right balance of length and impact.

Six-second ads when combined with thirty-second ads as a reinforcement (as opposed to a "teaser" in an earlier placement) create significant uplift in several important metrics such as engagement, brand recall, and purchase intent.

Premium publishers continue to refine the ad experience to improve the overall viewing experience and the appropriate ad load and lengths for that video session, which will drive engagement and more positive results for advertisers.

The FWC will continue to focus on the ad experience as a vital element of moving the premium video ecosystem forward. Further collaboration between the buy- and sell-sides to take responsibility for their areas of ownership is key, alongside additional discussion and best practice sharing to maximize business outcomes.

KEY RESEARCH TAKEAWAYS:

- **Fifteen-second ads are the right balance of ad length, acceptability and opportunity for storytelling** in short form content
- **Six-second ads can be a very powerful complement** to other ad formats, in particular as a subsequent reinforcement to a longer ad
- **Smart use of sequencing and frequency** with a longer ad format followed by a shorter ad **can lead to higher brand recall and purchase intent**
- Shorter ad formats like **six-second ads can achieve higher engagement in premium video environments** due to halo effect of content and shorter attention required

ABOUT THE FREEWHEEL COUNCIL FOR PREMIUM VIDEO

The FreeWheel Council for Premium Video (FWC) serves the interest of those in the premium video industry through leadership positions, research and advocacy to promote the premium video economy. The FWC operates as an educational and organizing resource to assist marketers to reach desired audiences in premium video environments, conduct research documenting the benefits of premium video and represent the interests of member publishers and the market. The FWC is comprised of today's leading premium video publishers including ABC, A+E Networks, Comcast, Discovery Communications, ESPN, Fox, NBC Universal, Turner Broadcasting System and Univision Communications.

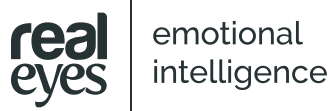
For more information on the FreeWheel Council for Premium Video please visit www.FreeWheel.tv/FWCouncil and follow us on Twitter @FWCouncil.

FreeWheel Council

FWCouncil@freewheel.tv
@FWCouncil

Inquiries

James Rothwell jrothwell@freewheel.tv



ABOUT REALEYES

Using webcams and the latest in computer vision and machine learning technologies, Realeyes measures how people feel as they watch video content online, enabling brands, agencies and media companies to optimize their content and target their videos at the right audiences.

Realeyes

www.realeyesit.com
@realeyesit

Inquiries

hello@realeyesit.com