

The Evolution of TV Advertising: Delivering Effective CTV Executions

By Azerion and DAIVID

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Executive Summary:

In today's competitive digital landscape, understanding **why** ad creative resonates with audiences is critical.

CTV ad creatives can be expanded beyond those deployed in traditional TV advertising to deliver more relevant messages for viewers and deepen engagement.

Dynamic overlays that augment traditional TVC assets allow visual enhancements and interactive elements, but until now, no one has conducted tests to assess and compare their creative effectiveness.





DAIVID's AI-powered creative testing technology compared assets for a selection of Azerion-run CTV campaigns, measuring attention, emotional response, brand recall and consumer intent to determine the overall effectiveness of the ads and compare standard TVCs, with their "enhanced" counterparts.

Project Overview

By A/B testing a range of creatives, Azerion hoped to uncover the value of augmenting a traditional TV creative with digital first enhancements. This was purely a creative effectiveness testing exercise.

We didn't take into consideration the enhanced audience targeting capabilities that a CTV campaign could deliver over a more typical broadcast "one to many" buy.



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The power of emotional triggers
 DAIVID's AI analyses 39 distinct emotions (e.g. awe, trust) to pinpoint what drives engagement. High-performing creatives often rely on evoking positive emotions powerfully, whether from **Adrenaline+** (e.g. excitement), **Empathy** (e.g. warmth), or **Approach** motivations (e.g. amusement). Negative emotions like fear or anger can be effective but require careful contextual use.
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Attention ≠ Memory: The dual metrics for success
 Eye-tracking and facial coding reveal that attention-grabbing creative doesn't always translate to brand recall. Retention is more likely when attention-grabbing moments – e.g. driven by surprise – are followed by emotionally meaningful cues, such as aesthetic appreciation, inspiration, or warmth.
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From emotion to action
 Creative that tapped into relatable emotions – such as pride or nostalgia – tended to encourage action, whereas confusion or boredom typically resulted in drop-off.
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Creative devices that work
 Fast cuts and contrast drive attention.
 Human faces with clear expressions enhance empathy.

Testing Headlines:

Campaign effectiveness is nuanced, and impact does vary by category and brand positioning within its competitive set (Established brand with distinctive assets Vs. new entrant with limited credibility).

The nature of whether a product is an impulse or more considered purchase also needs to be taken into account when comparing between results.

Intent:

Enhancements can positively improve intent, when they match the key product moments... but if not, then they may not translate into stronger viewer motivation to act or advocate.

Attention Impact:

CTV Enhancements can support attention throughout when branding is restrained, well-placed, and introduced at the right moments.

However, content-heavy, full-screen overlays can detract from attention, drawing focus away from the content rather than enhancing it.

This can deliver early visual overload, making it harder for viewers to follow the narrative or stay engaged with the scene itself.

Emotional Impact:

The emotional lift in some enhanced versions suggests that subtle reinforcement during natural emotional peaks can make branding feel more meaningful and connected.

Although brand cues and attention were stronger, augmentation may have made the creative feel more structured. This in turn would lead to slight reduction in spontaneous emotional reactions like amusement and craving.

For more ambiguous styles of creative campaign (Fragrances, Cars – we're looking at you!), overlays can bring clarity and polish to a creative, helping reduce uncertainty or confusion without disrupting the overall tone.

Enhancements in emotionally sensitive categories such as gambling can trigger increases in anxiety, awkwardness, guilt, shame – so need to be used more carefully.

Brand Recall:

Enhanced versions can drive brand recall, by giving distinctive brand assets more airtime, and complimenting the TVC story telling.

However, in some instances, it can have a detrimental effect if not sympathetically integrated into the creative narrative, or if it competes with other multiple messaging in the creative.



Vertical Specific results:



Consumer Electronics

Subtle reinforcement during natural emotional peaks can make branding feel more meaningful and connected with the enhanced version performing better, **with intense positive emotions increasing by 6.2%.**

And the augmentation helped boost trust and interest without disrupting emotional peaks.

However, the augmented version delivered 5% less brand recall, suggesting that while the enhancement brought branding forward earlier, it may not have helped it land more effectively.



Fast Food

Creatively the enhanced version stands out for timing enhancements to match the key product moment — boosting all intent scores, with purchase seeing the greatest lift.

The enhanced version **positively impacted search (+1.5%), purchase (+4.5%), recommend (+3.7%), and share (+0.7%).**



FMCG

Overlays can elevate certain emotions while softening others - in the FMCG case, trust and satisfaction held strong, but lighter feelings like amusement were slightly reduced.

The enhanced version saw a 2.38% decline in intense positive emotions, even though key feelings like **trust and satisfaction improved slightly.**

The overlay may have made the creative feel more structured. This in turn would lead to slight reduction in spontaneous emotional reactions.

Vertical Specific results:



Motoring

For our motoring campaign, the overlay delivered stronger attention and branding for a greater period but offered limited motivation for personal engagement.

The augmented creative included several brand elements early on (including a QR code), but these may have felt more functional than inspiring, without a clear emotional or narrative lead-in.



Gambling

Creative augmentation saw a significant rise in negative emotions **(+13.8%)**, suggesting that the enhancement may have added tension by amplifying messaging in a sensitive category.

The design featured bold messaging about betting – which may have fed the emotional response.



Fragrance

The enhanced version saw a significant reduction in negative emotions **(-11.6%)**, showing a notable improvement in emotional response.

Augmentation significantly reduced confusion, likely due to clearer branding and structured messaging.

The overlay also provided a sleek and stylish brand presence without overwhelming the visuals, reinforcing a premium and aspirational feel that aligned with the creative's tone.



Food Retail

The enhanced version **improved brand recall by 4%**, showing a more noticeable uplift compared to the average.

The bold and distinctive slogan were prominently featured in both the overlay and the creative itself, reinforcing brand identity through visual and auditory repetition.

Key Creative Insights:

Positives:

Alignment with Content

Subtle placement, consistent colour schemes, and messaging that feels integrated, which kept the brand present without disruption.

Timing which supports Key Product Moments

Overlays that appeared in sync with key scenes helped reinforce intent rather than distract.

Reinforced Brand Messaging

Overlays echoing key visuals or slogans of the creative enhanced recall without feeling forced.

Areas for development:

Cluttered Overlays

Too many visual elements (logos, CTAs, taglines) competing for attention, reducing clarity and emotional engagement.

Lower Emotional / Narrative Support

Introduction of functional elements without a clear link to the storyline, or emotional cues that failed to spark engagement or drive action.

Shift in Emotional Flow

Overlays can lead to an overtly branded tone from the outset, limiting space for emotional build-up and reducing spontaneity or warmth.



Conclusions

When used correctly, augmented TV creative can drive significant performance improvement upon the broadcast original.

As with all creative enhancements – there is no “one size fits all” solution. Creative drives a range of emotional responses and as such is very nuanced. More testing is required.

Different verticals elicit different responses based on the nature of the transaction spectrum, from impulse to considered purchase.

Where a brand sits in its competitive hierarchy (from new entrant, to challenger, to leader) will have an effect as much as distinctive brand assets and media choice.

Creatives shouldn't live in isolation, as an omnichannel approach with multiple touchpoints can ensure consumers are exposed to a brand in the most effective way throughout their interaction.

The further ability to target a CTV campaign to a more receptive audience (compared to a more broadcast like approach) is another variable that would drive incremental effectiveness too.