

Ad enhancement, not interruption: Capturing the moment

By [Michael Nicholas & Duncan Southgate](#), issued by [Kantar](#)

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Picture the scene: you're trying to share a video with a couple of friends to illustrate a point you've been arguing about for the last half hour. As the video loads, an ad pops up at twice the volume of what you've been playing before. You groan and turn the volume down, but you've missed the chance to skip the ad and get bounced to your browser as the brand site loads. You switch back to YouTube but the conversation has moved on and your friends have lost interest. Advertising has ruined the moment.



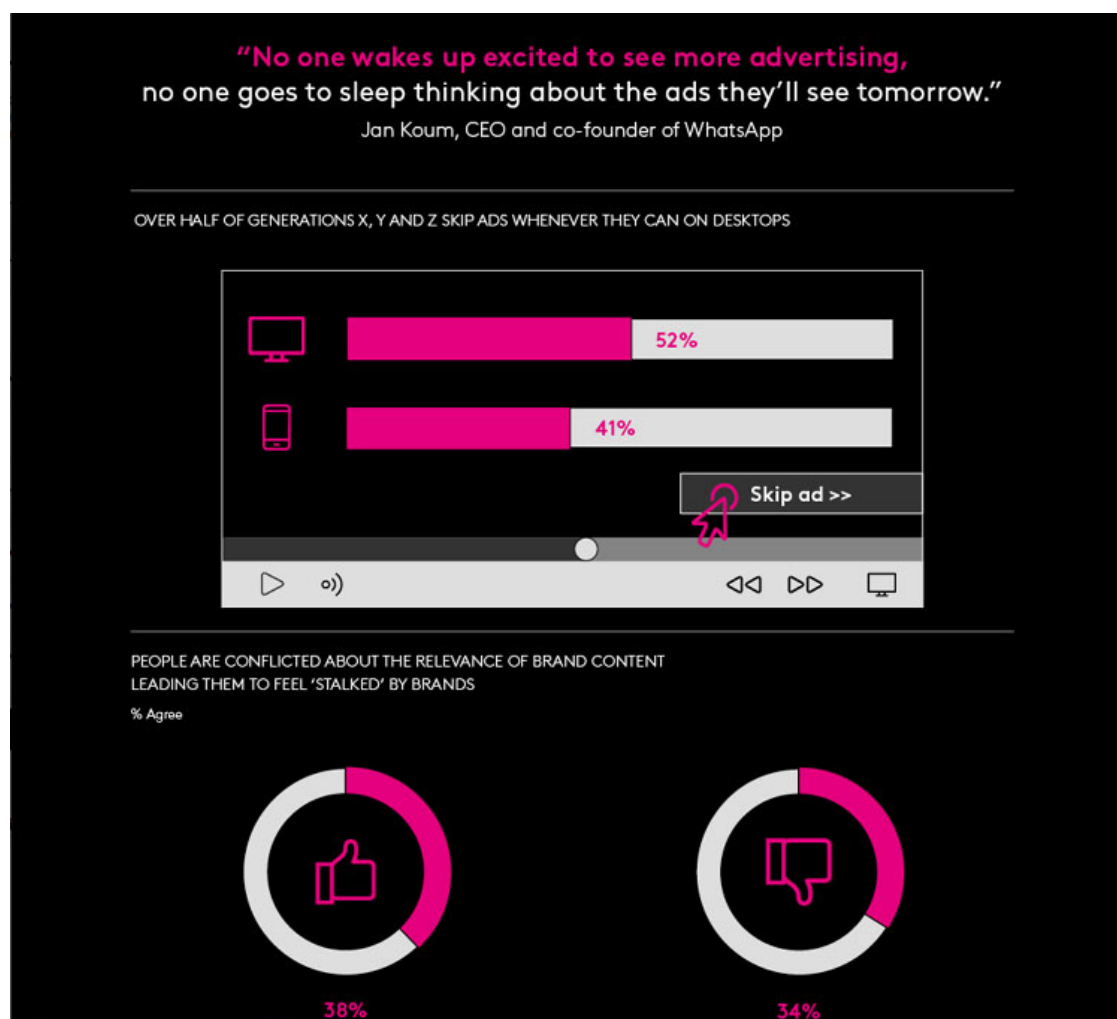
We access the internet every day to enhance our reality: to find information, share moments, and connect with those we love the most, not to seek out ads. Our recent [Connected Life](#) study revealed that, [despite soaring usage of platforms like Snapchat and Instagram, and consumers becoming more connected, 26% are actively ignoring ads](#) and the better the ad tech capabilities of that country, the more likely they are to block ads. Many businesses are struggling to find a relevant role in people's lives, meaning that much of the content that marketers painstakingly create is viewed as clutter. As Jan Koum, CEO and co-founder of WhatsApp, puts it: *"There's nothing more personal to you than communicating with friends and family, and interrupting that with advertising is not the right solution."*

"No one wakes up excited to see more advertising, no one goes to sleep thinking about the ads they'll see tomorrow."

The fact is that ads can be a pain: they interrupt moments with family, fall short of what people find funny and often, don't engage quickly enough.

As marketers, we can now access our customers at any time of day or night, but our eagerness may be letting us down: with 34% of internet users claiming to feel 'stalked' by brands online and Kantar Millward Brown's [AdReaction](#) report shows that up to [52% of generations X, Y and Z admit to "skipping ads whenever they can"](#). YouTube is the latest platform to embrace the need to provide better advertising by [announcing](#) that from 2018 it will stop allowing the 30-second unskippable ad format and will focus instead on shorter formats.

This problem is compounded as consumers spend even longer online and global digital ad spend increases, expected to grow to a share of over 30% of all media in 2017 (GroupM: Worldwide Media and Marketing forecasts, December 2016).



This is often a hard pill for us marketers to swallow. We develop a deep understanding of the brands that we work with and the people who buy them and often become passionate advocates. We strive to create content that appeals to them on an emotional level and that we want to share.

But whilst this may be our reality, it is not so for our customers. Whilst we may pour our heart and soul into creating incredible content, we must work harder to contextualise what we serve, to understand and speak to the emotional state of our customers as we do. Your ad will be viewed alongside scores of others, people may be busy, tired, stressed or simply trying to prove a point: and your ad is in the way.

How can we combat this issue?

Interesting content, at the right time, on the right platform

[Brands need to stop using invasive, non-skippable online video formats, full stop.](#) Sometimes, people just aren't going to want to see your message. However, using more innovative online formats like mobile rewards video and sponsored lenses, delivered based on who they are and what they're doing online will help you find the magic formula that gets you cut through. We call it taking a 'single view' of how the customer behaves in the moment: based on everything you know about them, including how they use a platform (not just what platform they use).

Consider tone, not just placement

Kantar Millward Brown's recent [AdReaction](#) study found several key characteristics that made users across generations more likely to engage with content. What stands out the most is that Gen Z demand greater production values than older

digital users. This generation, so familiar with using apps, filters and lenses to enhance the photos and videos they post online, expect brands to do the same. Ads that look great, or have catchy music stand out far more than they do to older generations, who engage better on a more practical level where advertising provides the viewer with new or more information.

Humour, on the other hand, is more of a constant, and is the top characteristic in content for all generations. However, context is, once again crucial. Although humour works well, receiving a humorous ad in a work context may be embarrassing and someone viewing on mobile may not be open to such content due to the events happening around them. Plus, humour has different meanings in different cultures: what's cool or funny in Brazil may elicit a very different reaction in France.

Keep it short and snappy

Brands have a short window of time to make an impact, particularly if your audience is younger. Even when the ad is relevant, 67% of generations X, Y and Z are more positive towards ads which are 20 seconds or less. Gen Z is the toughest to engage; they skip on average 3 seconds faster than Gen X.

Ultimately, marketers need to go one better than simply understanding customers: we need to understand what they want and need at specific points in time. [Understanding the specific context of the moments that matter is a powerful way to engage people](#) who are ever harder to reach with more impact. Bold content, targeted with razor sharp precision that elicits the right emotional reaction in the moment is the key to creating the results your brand wants.

WHAT MAKES GREAT ADVERTISING?

PEOPLE ARE MORE POSITIVE TOWARDS ADS WHEN GIVEN THE CHOICE TO VIEW OR SKIP

Positivity towards ads you can skip (% Global)



56%
Gen X



60%
Gen Y



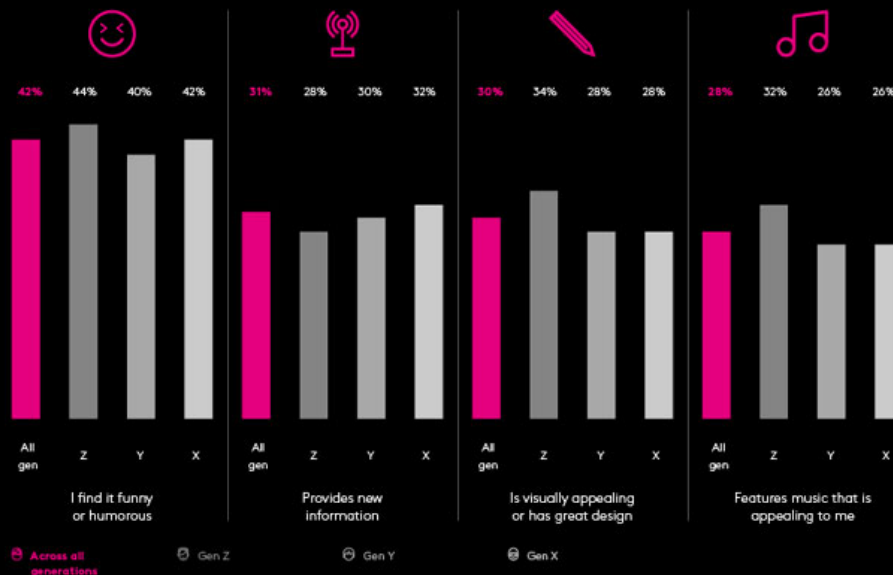
62%
Across all generations



69%
Gen Z

CREATIVE CHARACTERISTICS THAT CAPTURE THE VIEWERS' ATTENTION

Reasons people are more likely to pay attention to branded content and paid media (% Global)



Source: Kantar Millward Brown's AdReaction study

AdReaction is the first global study into Gen X, Y and Z behaviours, attitudes and responses to advertising.

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About the authors



Michael Nicholas leads the Global Connected Solutions team at Kantar TNS, where he advises clients on digital and integrated marketing activities. Michael also leads Connected Life, the world's largest annual study about how connectivity is shaping customer behaviour in 57 countries.



Duncan Southgate is Global Brand Director, Media and Digital at Kantar Millward Brown and leads their annual AdReaction study.

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