



The impact of emotion alignment on ad attention in streaming TV

wurl × T»VISION

Consumers are exposed to hundreds of ads each day, but only a few break through to leave a lasting impression.

At IPG, we've been actively exploring new signals that go beyond legacy metrics to better understand what drives performance in a fragmented landscape like CTV. One of the most promising is emotion.

That's why we're so excited about this first-of-its-kind analysis by TVision and Wurl across 50+ advertiser campaigns to test a simple hypothesis:

Does the amount of attention people pay to ads go up when the emotion of the ad creative matches the emotion of the content?

The answer: a resounding yes. Ads that are emotionally aligned with the surrounding content consistently capture more attention. This reinforces what we're seeing: emotion isn't just a creative tool. It's a strategic lever.

It's time we stop relying solely on who we reach and start considering when we reach them — and how it makes them feel.

Anant Veeravalli, Global Chief Analytics Officer, IPG



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Executive Summary

In this study, we compared how much attention people paid to ads when the emotions they evoked matched the content, vs. when they were not aligned with the emotional tone of the content. Looking across more than 50 campaigns spanning every major vertical — retail, QSR, CPG, finance, auto, entertainment and more — **we found:**

- **Viewers in this study paid more attention to 30-second ads that matched the content's emotion,** with attention jumping from 27% to 66% of the ad, a 2.4x boost.
- **Whether 15 or 30 seconds long, emotionally aligned ads got similar attention levels** — showing that emotion keeps viewers engaged no matter the length.

2.4x increase in attention



This helps explain why emotionally resonant campaigns continue to outperform across all metrics from brand awareness to lower-funnel performance KPIs: People are more likely to watch — and stay watching — when the ad feels emotionally in tune with what they were just viewing. Emotions can help bridge the gap between content and ad attention — putting ad attention on par with content attention in TV.

What we measured (and how)

To quantify emotional alignment, we paired:

- **TVision's second-by-second attention data**, measured across hundreds of apps, thousands of programs and billions of seconds of TV viewing.
- **Scene-level targeting**, which analyzes the dialogue, sound, and imagery of content and ad creatives in real time, scoring eight core emotions for intensity on a scale of 1 (low) to 10 (high). For example, an ad might score highly for joy, and low for fear.

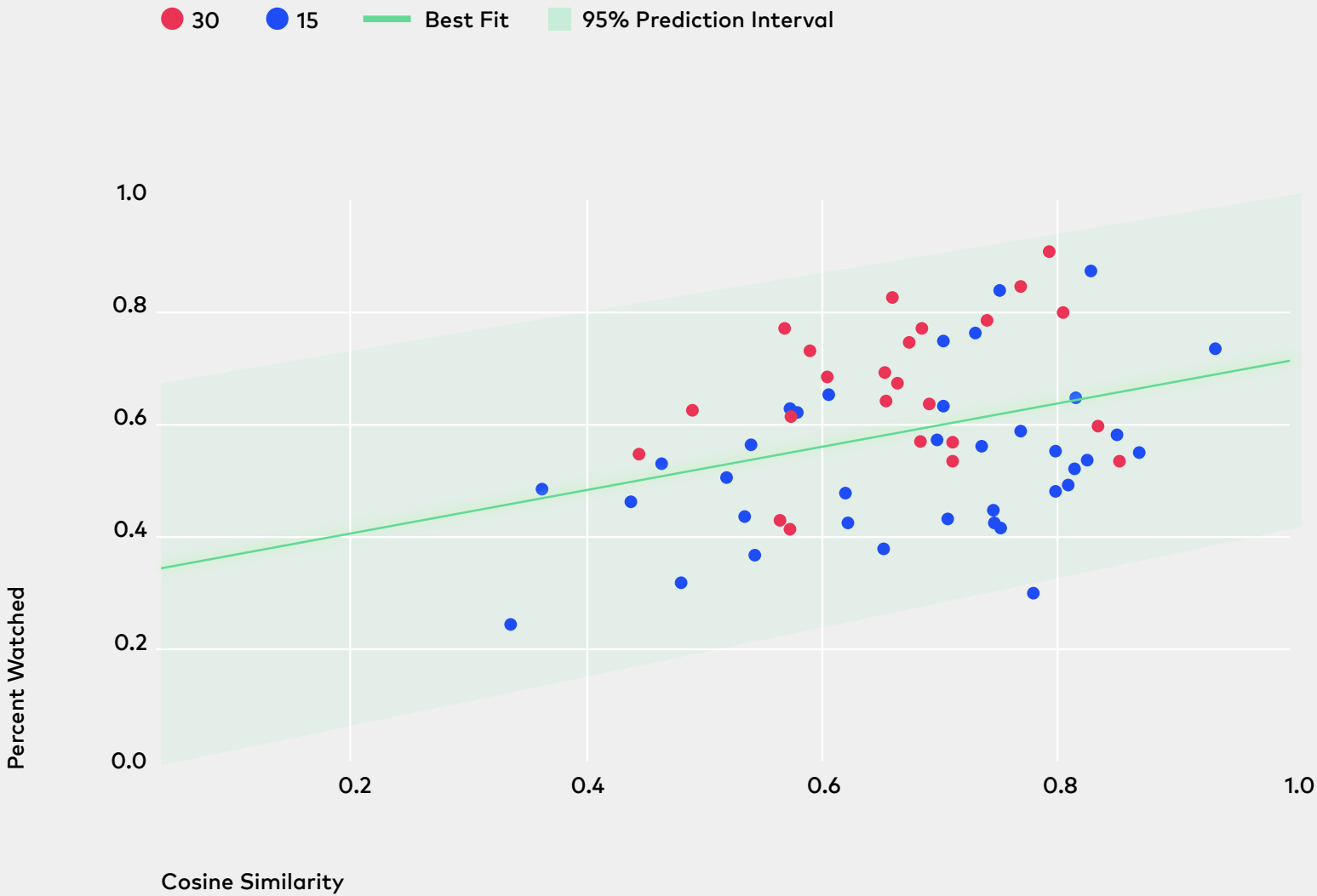


Findings

Using cosine similarity (a way to assess how closely two emotion profiles match), we measured the emotional resonance between ad creatives and the scene that preceded them, where a score of 1 indicates a perfect emotional match, and a score of 0 indicates no emotional connection at all.



The chart on the right illustrates the lift in viewer attention when ads are emotionally aligned for both 15s ad slots (in red) and 30s ad slots (in blue). The shaded green area represents the 95% confidence interval, indicating where attention is most likely to fall under emotional alignment.



Results

Emotional alignment drives **2.4x lift in 30-second ad attention**

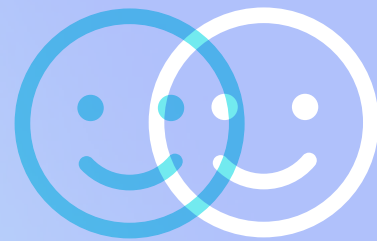


When we looked at how viewer attention correlates with the emotional alignment between ads and the preceding content, a clear pattern emerged: the closer the emotional match, the higher the attention.

First, looking only at 30-second spots, the impact of emotion is felt strongly. On average, when emotional resonance is low, viewers pay attention to just 27% of a :30 ad. But when alignment is strong, attention more than doubles to 66% — a 2.4x increase in engagement.

Emotional alignment lifts attention

across both
15 and 30-second
ad formats



However, the impact of emotional alignment isn't limited to just longer ad lengths.

As seen in the introduction, when we look at 15- and 30-second creatives together, emotional alignment consistently boosts performance across formats, lifting attention by 2.1x on average. This cross-format effect underscores a key insight for marketers: matching creative emotion with content emotion is a repeatable, scalable strategy for driving attention and effectiveness — regardless of spot length.

Key considerations for marketers

1

**Don't just
buy audiences.
Buy *moments*.**

Advertisers have long optimized for who to reach. But this research confirms that when and how you reach them — in the right emotional context — is a difference maker.

“

In today's media, audience targeting is table stakes. The new edge comes from emotional alignment— tapping into the story your viewers are already experiencing.

When your ad feels like part of the moment — not a break from it — it earns more attention, sparks deeper engagement, and drives stronger results all the way down the funnel.



Dave Bernath, General Manager, Americas, Wurl

2

Attention is more than a metric — it's a strategy.

Attention is a new currency. Emotional resonance gives brands a scalable, measurable lever to drive it.

“

Ad attention is driven by a number of factors. The strength of the preceding content, the quality of the ad, and the app it runs on all factor into attention. But context also matters. Aligning an ad's emotional tone with the programming it runs in can significantly improve attention, as this study shows.



Yan Liu, CEO, TVision

Final thought

Emotional alignment isn't just a creative curiosity — it's an attention driver. In a fragmented, noisy media environment, it's how smart brands are standing out and making a meaningful impact.

If you're ready to tap into your media's emotional intelligence, Wurl Advertising can help you implement this strategy.

**Let's turn every impression into attention.
And every moment into momentum.**

“

Marketers need to break out of their comfort zones. Playing it safe won't unlock what's next. It's time to start thinking of attention as a currency — and emotion as the signal that drives it.



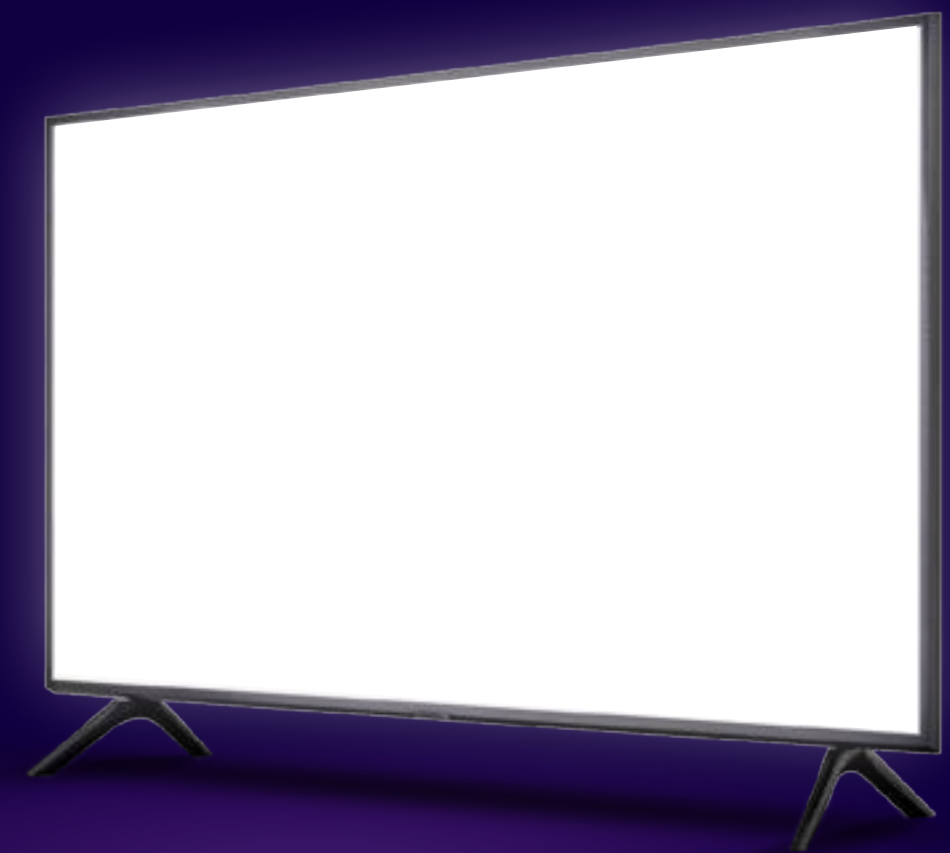
Anant Veeravalli, Global Chief Data and Analytics Officer, IPG

Methodology

- **Data set:** 50+ campaigns across major verticals including retail, QSR, tech, auto, entertainment, and financial services
- **Ad formats:** 15s and 30s mid-roll and end-roll placements within consistent episodic content ("Mayfair Witches") to ensure a stable viewing context.
- **Metrics:** Percent of ad viewed by attentive viewers (TVision), normalized by creative length
- **Emotion model:** Based on Plutchik's wheel (joy, trust, fear, surprise, sadness, disgust, anger, anticipation), scored 0–10
- **Cosine similarity:** Measures emotional resonance between the scene preceding the ad pod and ad

R² for attention correlation:

- 30s ads: 0.172
- Combined 15s + 30s ads: 0.114





TVision provides second-by-second, person-level data about how people watch TV – who’s watching, what they’re watching, and how much attention they are paying to both linear and streaming TV. Advertisers, agencies, networks, streaming content providers, measurement companies, and data platforms use TVision data to make more informed media decisions, measure performance, produce content that engages audiences, and benchmark their results against competitors. TVision is headquartered in New York City, with offices in Boston and Tokyo.

For more information, visit www.tvisioninsights.com



Wurl is a leader in the streaming TV industry, developing innovative technologies for the delivery of content and ads on TV. The company supports publishers, streamers, and advertisers in growing viewership, maximizing revenue, and strengthening brand value. Wurl, LLC is owned by AppLovin Corporation (NASDAQ: APP).

For more information, visit www.wurl.com