

FREEWHEEL
A COMCAST COMPANY

THE FREEWHEEL VIEWER EXPERIENCE LAB PRESENTS:

DESIGNING A BETTER AD POD

SOLVING THE AD POD PROBLEM

In the wide world of free streaming content, watching ads is usually the cost of entry. And while [research has shown](#) that ads are not unwelcomed by consumers, the experience of viewing those ads matters.

Today, as more consumers choose to watch their favorite content through streaming services, they are finding that some ad breaks feel too long or too repetitive. This is a problem not just for consumers, but for advertisers and content owners, too: as content continues to proliferate across streaming platforms, it's harder to keep a viewer's attention in one place.

In a world where viewers are in control, publishers need to pay attention to how they design their ad breaks to provide an optimal

ad experience. This report, based on industry-first research undertaken with MediaScience, focuses on how optimizing the quantity and frequency of ads in an ad pod can improve both ad experience and brand results, balancing the interests of viewers and brands, without diminishing publisher inventory.

Purpose of the Research

At its inception, the [FreeWheel Viewer Experience Lab](#) identified three factors to a great viewing experience: quantity, quality and relevance. This research shares key insights to help inform publishers how to create the most optimal ad experience for viewers by optimizing the quantity of ads; future studies will analyze the quality and relevance.



STUDY DESIGN

In this study, 700 viewers participated in at-home or in-lab viewing studies conducted in partnership with MediaScience. They were shown programming with different ad pod lengths, ad durations, and ad frequencies. The findings in this report represent their responses to real-time questions about their experiences.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Formula for Improving the Impact of Ad Pods

 **POD LENGTH**

Ad breaks of two minutes or less can improve brand impact and ad experience.

 **POD ARCHITECTURE**

Grouping consistent ad lengths within individual pods can improve ad sentiment and make breaks feel shorter.

 **AD FREQUENCY**

Capping the frequency of each ad at two to three per program can positively impact ad recognition and brand purchase intent.

ASSESSING OPTIMAL POD LENGTH

Shorter Pods Can Lead to a Less Intrusive Ad Experience

Consumers perceived similarly low levels of ad intrusiveness for one- and two-minute pods; however, at three minutes, the number of viewers calling the ads intrusive doubled.

Shorter Pod Lengths Can Lead to 2x Higher Brand Impact

As ad breaks got longer, the likelihood for consumers to recall the ad declined. In fact, going from two- to three-minute pods cut ad recall by more than half.

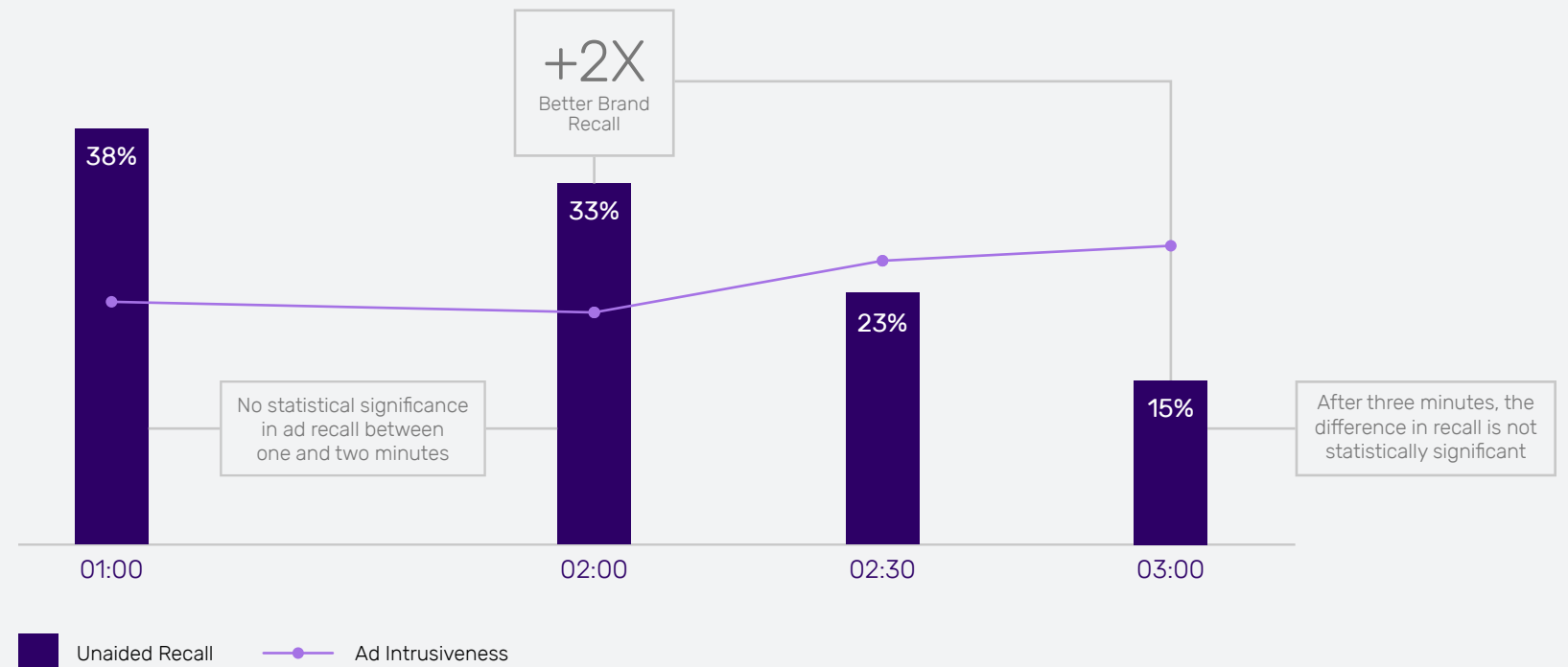


POD LENGTH KEY FINDING

Ad breaks of two minutes or less can improve brand impact and ad experience.

Ad Recall and Intrusiveness by Ad Break

DURATION (MM:SS)



Research has also shown that two minutes of ads are more in line with viewers' expectations of ad break lengths. In fact, this study found that 62% of participants felt like two-minute breaks were in line with expectations. Furthermore, 45% of participants who viewed one minute ad breaks felt like they were shorter than expected.



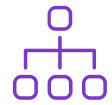
ASSESSING OPTIMAL POD ARCHITECTURE

Consistent Ad Lengths Within Each Pod Can Enhance the Ad Experience

While creative length diversity has advantages for publishers and buyers alike, the research found that keeping ad lengths consistent within each individual pod can improve viewer sentiment. Over half of respondents felt pods with both 00:15 and 00:30 second ads seemed longer to viewers than pods with all 00:15 or all 00:30 ads.

Consistent Ad Lengths Can Improve Ad Sentiment

When individual ad breaks had consistent ad lengths, viewers found they liked the ads more, likely because they knew what to expect.



POD ARCHITECTURE KEY FINDING

Grouping consistent ad lengths within individual pods can improve ad sentiment and make breaks feel shorter.



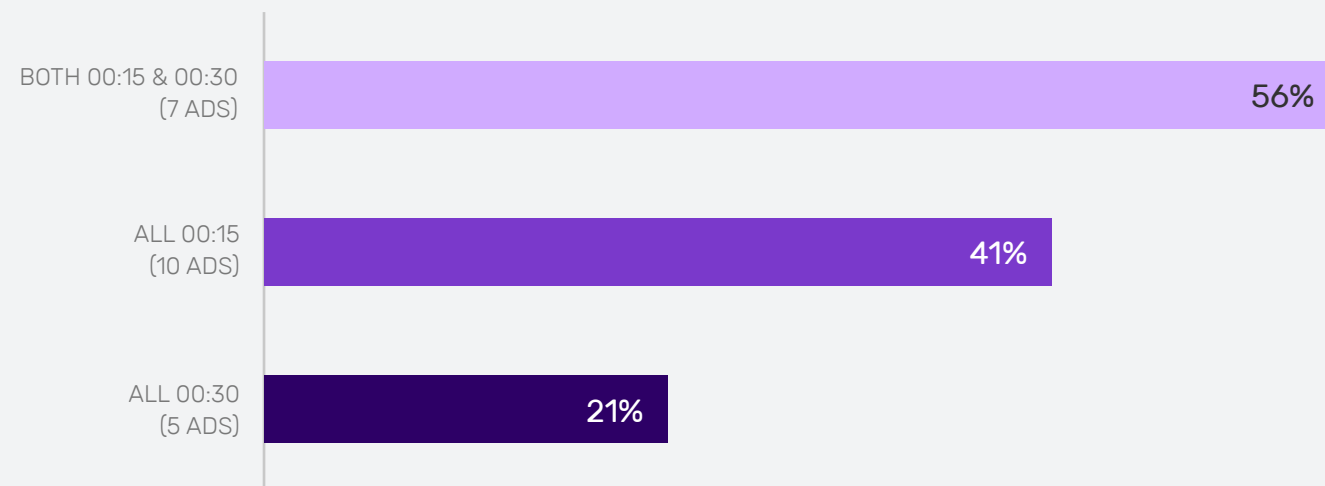
Audiences may benefit from the consistency and predictability consistent ad lengths in a break have, which could allow them to pay more attention to the content and focus less on the duration of the ad.

Publishers and advertisers can rely on technologies with holistic ad decisioning to ensure their various creative versions are being distributed in the most effective way.

The Viewer Experience Lab found this finding particularly interesting and will be putting additional resources into exploring it.

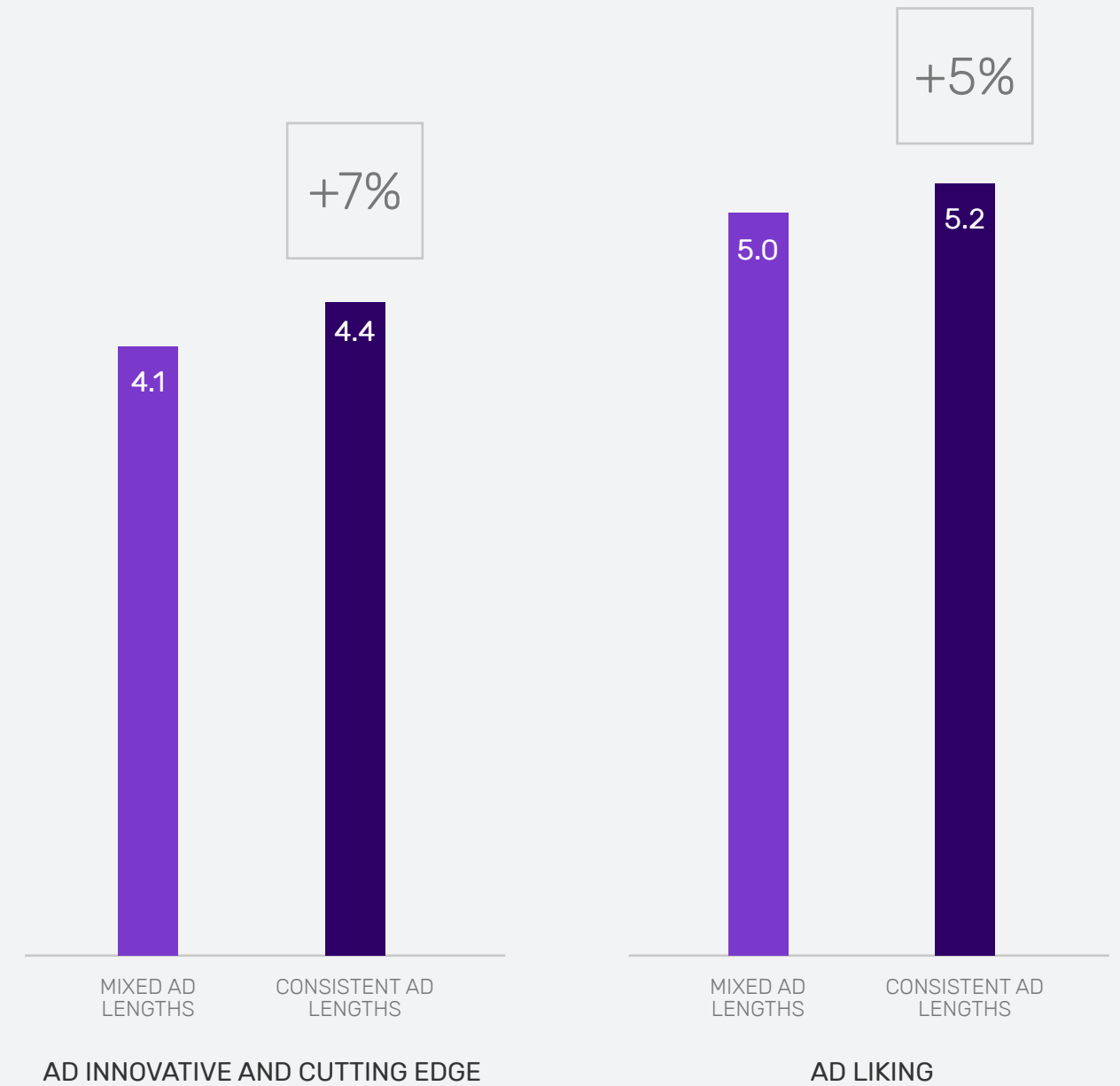
Respondents Who Felt Ad Breaks Were Longer than Expected

PERCENTAGE, BY AD STRUCTURE, 02:30



Average Rating, Mixed and Consistent Ad Lengths

SCALE 1 - 7, 7 BEING BEST, 02:30



ASSESSING OPTIMAL AD FREQUENCY

Ad Frequency Can Impact Brand Sentiment

Creative repetition is referred to as an industry problem, but when viewers saw the same ad twice in a single 30-minute program, ad recognition and brand purchase intent increased by 22%. Further, recognition and purchase intent remained high at three exposures within a 30-minute program.

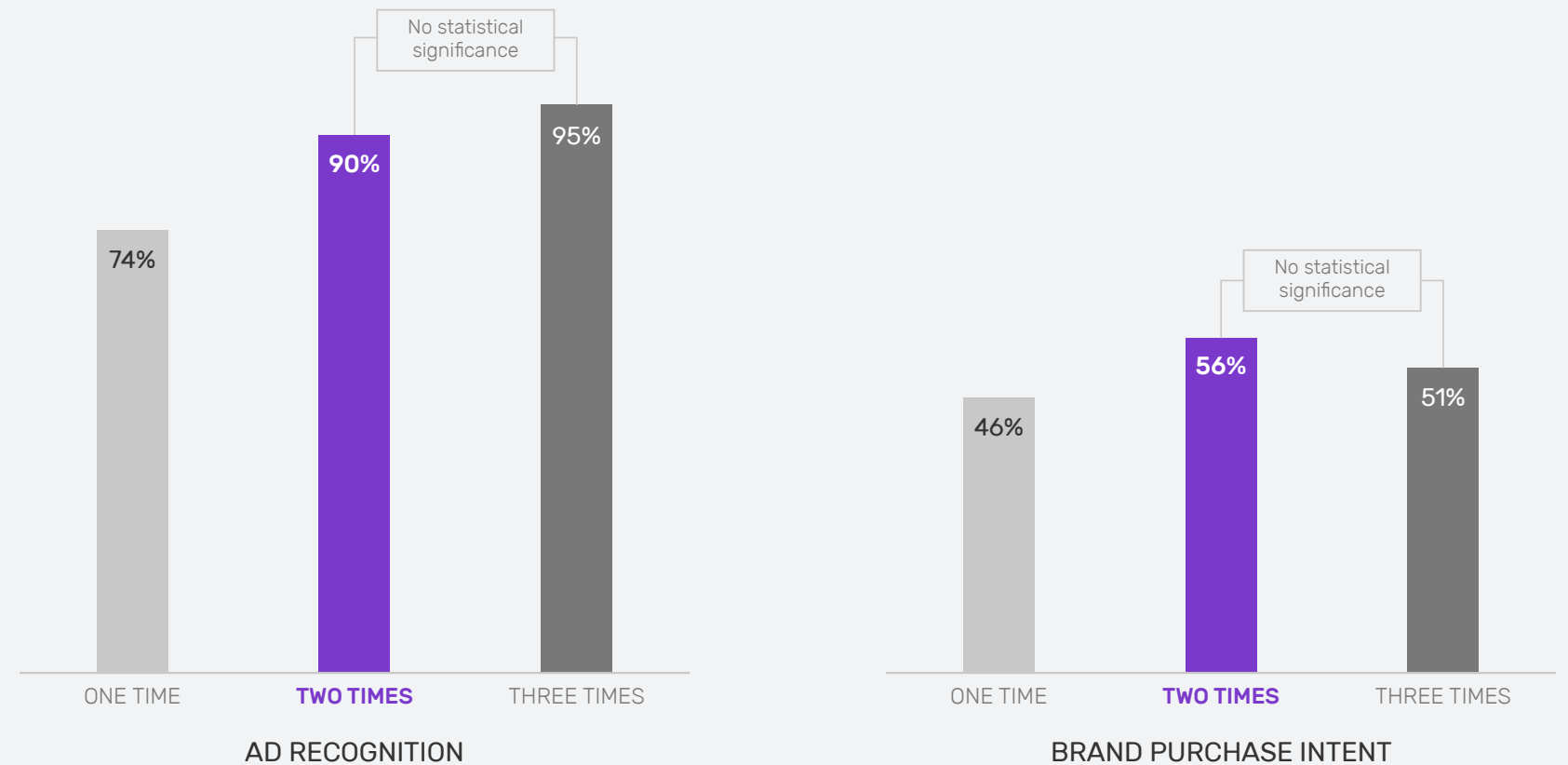
i Research also showed that across measures of engagement, quality and ad liking, ads were rated similarly even if audiences were exposed to creative up to three times in one program.



AD FREQUENCY KEY FINDING

Capping the frequency of each ad at two to three per program can positively impact ad recognition and brand purchase intent.

Impact by Number of Exposures Within a Single Program



VIEWER EXPERIENCE MATTERS

As content continues to fragment across streaming platforms and viewers have more choice than ever, it's imperative that publishers focus on improving that viewer experience. FreeWheel is dedicated to helping media companies on all sides understand how best to address this increasingly important and complex topic.

These actionable insights for content owners are aimed to help optimize ad pods to maintain viewers' attention and favorability while providing brands with the best results. Publishers looking to develop the optimal quantity and frequency of ads in an ad pod can take these key findings into consideration:

- **Pod Length:**
Ad breaks of two minutes or less can improve brand impact and ad experience.
- **Pod Architecture:**
Grouping consistent ad lengths within individual pods can improve ad sentiment and make breaks feel shorter.
- **Ad Frequency:**
Capping the frequency of each ad at two to three per program can positively impact ad recognition and brand purchase intent.



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**VIEWER
EXPERIENCE
LAB**

About the FreeWheel Viewer Experience Lab

The FreeWheel Viewer Experience Lab is designed to help media companies improve the quality, quantity, and relevance of TV advertising through quantifiable research, solutions, and technology. To learn more, visit freewheel.com/viewerexperiencelab.
