

CONSUMER STUDY

The Power of Context

How context and sentiment inform consumer perception



AUGUST 2020

IAS Integral
Ad Science

Introduction

The digital advertising landscape is shifting, and one thing has been made clear: context is critical. Brands have shifted away from traditional binary brand safety controls and toward a more customizable approach that allows them to connect with the right consumers in the right places.

IAS research has shown that this approach works: the quality of an advertising environment can influence how consumers perceive ads and associated brands. With advancements in machine learning and AI, content evaluation has evolved to provide insight into the sentiment conveyed by a given page.

But how does *sentiment* influence consumers and their perception of a brand?

IAS asked consumers to weigh in on how context and sentiment influence their perception of advertisements and brands.



Study objectives and design

IAS ran an online survey to determine the types of ads consumers prefer to see in different environments, and how the sentiment of an article affects their feelings toward the surrounding brands and advertisements.

Field date

August 5-7, 2020

Sample

n=1,156 U.S. Internet users

Statistically significant differences are calculated at 95% confidence interval.



Key Terms

Consumer perception captures the way consumers interpret and respond to digital ads and environments

Contextual relevance assesses whether the content on a page matches the ad it surrounds

Receptivity refers to how receptive consumers are to an advertisement or brand

Favorability refers to how favorable consumers find a brand in a given environment

Memorability refers to how memorable consumers find an advertisement

Sentiment refers to whether an article conveys a positive, neutral, or negative feeling to the consumer reading it

'Unsuitable' content is a distinction that varies by brand, but denotes content that is generally interpreted by consumers to be controversial for brands to appear alongside

Brand safety is for everyone. Brand suitability is for you.

Brand safety practices have long been essential to marketing strategies. While most brands agree on what constitutes unsafe content, the ideal advertising environment is likely to be unique to a given brand.

That's where brand suitability comes in.

In this study, we ask consumers about context and sentiment - two valuable brand suitability factors. But advertising environments are complex, evolving landscapes. Just because an article has positive or even

neutral sentiment doesn't mean that it's a safe or suitable environment for brands. At the same time, what's suitable for one brand can look entirely different to another.

Advertisers need solutions that understand the complexities of these environments, while upholding the value of premium inventory. That's why sophisticated technology using machine learning and natural language processing is so important.

Consumers recognize the power of contextual relevance

The majority of consumers think it's important for digital ads to appear alongside relevant content. In other words, consumers value seeing advertisements that are related to the topics or articles they're consuming online.

70%

of consumers find it at least somewhat important that advertising is relevant to the content being consumed

Q. How important to you is it that the advertising you see online is relevant to the content you are consuming?

Most consumers *want* to see ads that match the content of a page

When presented with a real-world example, consumers demonstrated their preference for contextual relevance. Nearly 3 in 4 consumers polled had selected the advertisement that matched the displayed content.

74%

of consumers like to see ads that match the content they are viewing

Q. Please select the type of ad you would want to see next to the content displayed below. Select all that apply.

Consumer perception toward ads is *impacted* by the content on the page

Consumers don't just prefer contextual relevance — their perception of an advertisement is impacted by it. Most consumers agreed that the content they're viewing influences their opinion of ads on the page.






72%

of consumers say their perception of an online ad is impacted by the surrounding content on the page

Q. Does the content of the online page you are viewing impact your perception of the advertising around it?

Contextual relevance is preferred across all verticals

When shown articles representing different verticals, consumers were consistent: they *always* preferred contextual relevance. Across the board, consumers paired the advertisements they prefer with articles categorized in the same content vertical.

| CONTENT CATEGORY | ADS CONSUMERS WANT TO SEE |
|---|---------------------------|
|  Entertainment Article | 79% Entertainment Ad |
|  Investing Article | 78% Financial Services Ad |
|  Restaurant Article | 76% Restaurant Ad |
|  Shopping Article | 72% Retail Ad |
|  Automotive Article | 65% Automotive Ad |

Q. Please select the type of ad you would want to see next to the content displayed below. Select all that apply.

Contextually relevant ads are more *favorable* and *memorable* to consumers

Contextually relevant ads impacted consumers beyond preference. Relevant ads were not only more memorable, but also more likely to foster a favorable consumer opinion toward the brand.

56%

of consumers have a more favorable opinion of brands with contextually relevant ads

60%

of consumers are likely to remember a contextually relevant ad

Q. How would you feel toward a brand that advertises products or services that are relevant to the content you are consuming online?

Q. How likely will you remember an ad if is placed next to relevant content?

Consumer perception is influenced by the *sentiment* of a given page

Relevant advertisements and page content aren't the only details consumers notice. Sentiment refers to whether an article conveys a positive, neutral, or negative feeling to the consumer reading it.

Consumers understand shifts in sentiment, and the majority agree that the sentiment of an article impacts their opinion of a brand advertising alongside it.

72%

of consumers agree:
sentiment of content impacts
feelings toward brands
advertising on the page

Q. Does the sentiment of the content you are viewing have an impact on how you feel about the brands that advertise on the page?

Isolating the impact of sentiment on consumer perception

Consumer perception of an advertisement is influenced by multiple factors, including environment quality and creative strategy. In fact, in a recent study, IAS found that consumers are more likely to engage with ads seen on premium and recognizable news sources — even if the article features potentially risky content, like coronavirus.

In this study, IAS isolated the effects of sentiment on consumer perception by presenting *only* the content of an article, not its source.

41%

Of consumers are more likely to engage with ads next to coronavirus content if seen on premium and recognizable news sources

Source: "Thinking about the current and evolving coronavirus situation, how likely are you to engage with an ad that is adjacent to coronavirus news or content from a premium and recognized news source?", IAS Study, April 2020

Ads alongside content with *positive or neutral* sentiment are more well-received by consumers

When presented with examples, consumers followed through. On average, consumers were more receptive to content with positive and neutral sentiment. They also felt more favorable toward the associated brands, and were more likely to remember the ads.

Content with negative sentiment had a negative impact across all indicators.

Notably, memorability was less impacted by negative sentiment — indicating that consumers are still likely to remember ads in these environments.

| Content Type | Receptivity | Favorability | Memorability |
|--------------------------------------|-------------|--------------|--------------|
| Positive/ Neutral Sentiment | +80% | +93% | +24% |
| Average (across all headlines) | 28% | 24% | 43% |
| Negative Sentiment | -30% | -39% | -12% |

Q. How receptive will you be to this ad if it appears alongside the following content headlines; How would you feel toward the brand if this ad displayed above appears alongside the following content headlines; How likely is it that you will remember seeing the ad displayed above if this ad appears alongside the following content headlines:

Automobile Example

Positive/Neutral Headline

Automobile Ad



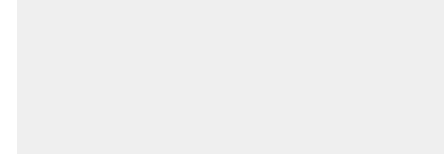
PUBLISHER

REVIEW | The 2020 Audi Q8 45 TDI has fuel-sipping swagger

By Anonymous Author
August, 2020



Related article

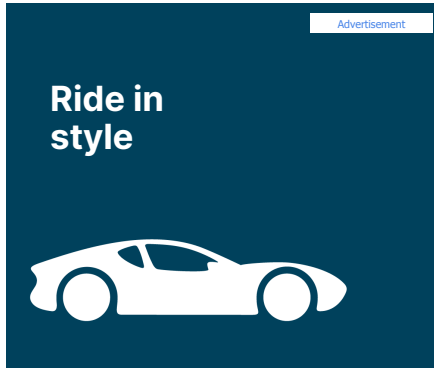


Q. How receptive will you be to this ad if it appears alongside the following content headlines:, How would you feel toward the brand if this ad displayed above appears alongside the following content headlines:, How likely is it that you will remember seeing the ad displayed above if this ad appears alongside the following content headlines:

Automobile Example

Negative Headline

Automobile Ad



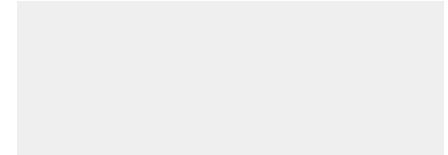
PUBLISHER

Summer Road Trippers Are Creating New COVID-19 Hot Spots, Per New Research

By Anonymous Author
August, 2020



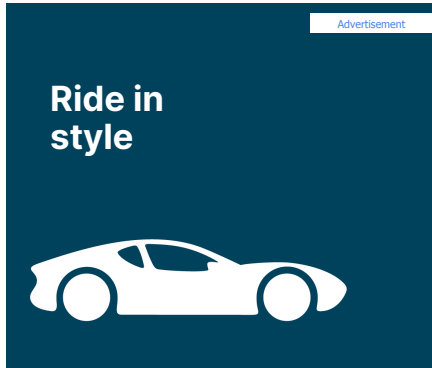
Related article



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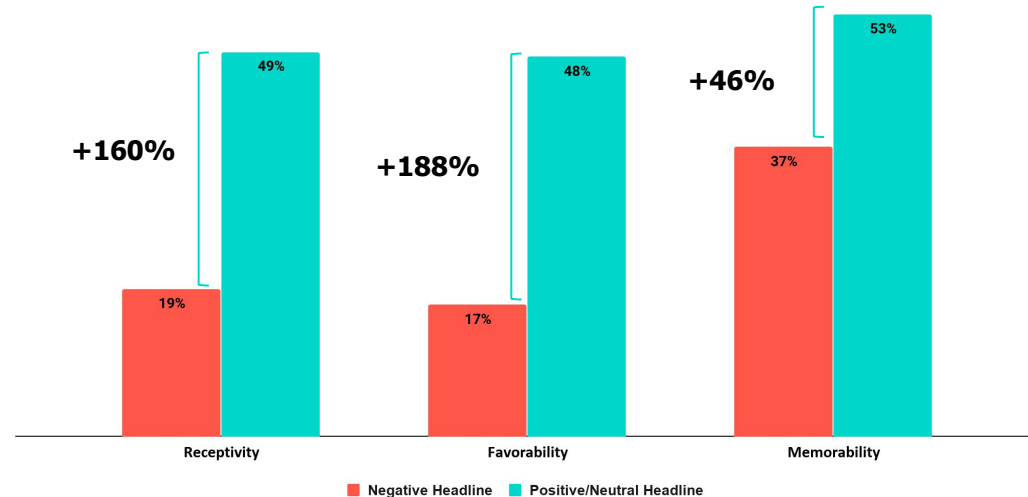
Consumer perception significantly improved for *automotive ads* alongside positive or neutral sentiment

Automobile Ad



Automotive Ad: Receptivity, Favorability, and Memorability

(across various headlines)

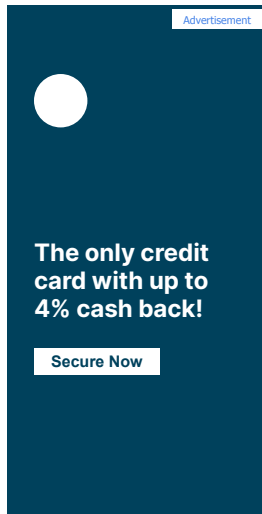


Q. How receptive will you be to this ad if it appears alongside the following content headlines:, How would you feel toward the brand if this ad displayed above appears alongside the following content headlines:, How likely is it that you will remember seeing the ad displayed above if this ad appears alongside the following content headlines:

Financial Services Example

Positive/Neutral Headline

Financial Services Ad



Advertisement

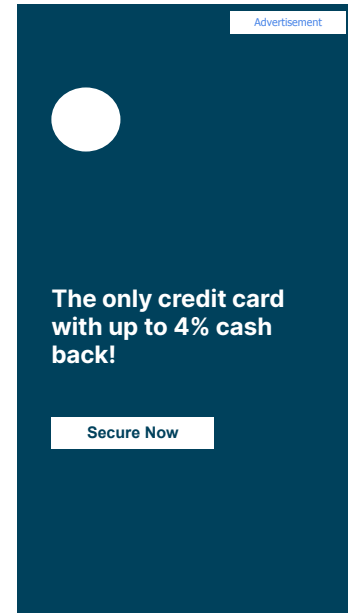
The only credit card with up to 4% cash back!

Secure Now

PUBLISHER

New Stimulus Bill — What You Need To Know About A Second Stimulus Check, \$200 Unemployment Benefits, PPP And More

By Anonymous Author
August, 2020



Advertisement

The only credit card with up to 4% cash back!

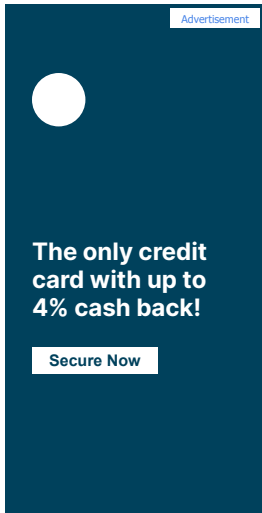
Secure Now

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Financial Services Example

Negative Headline

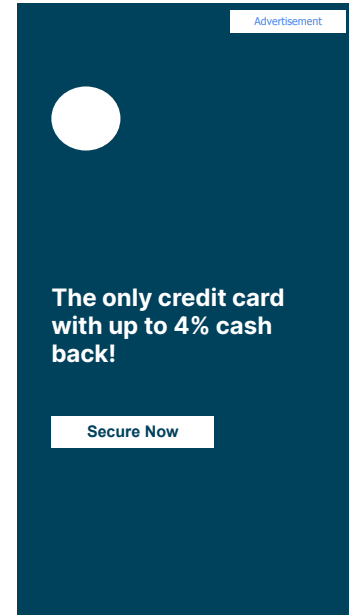
Financial Services Ad



PUBLISHER

Stock market news live updates: Stocks drop after grim GDP report, worsening jobless claims

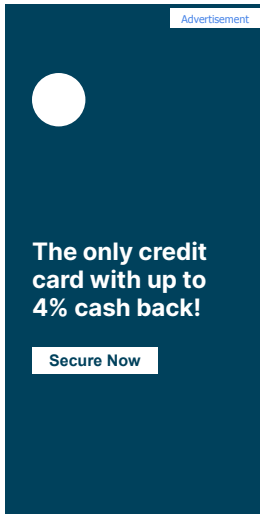
By Anonymous Author
August, 2020



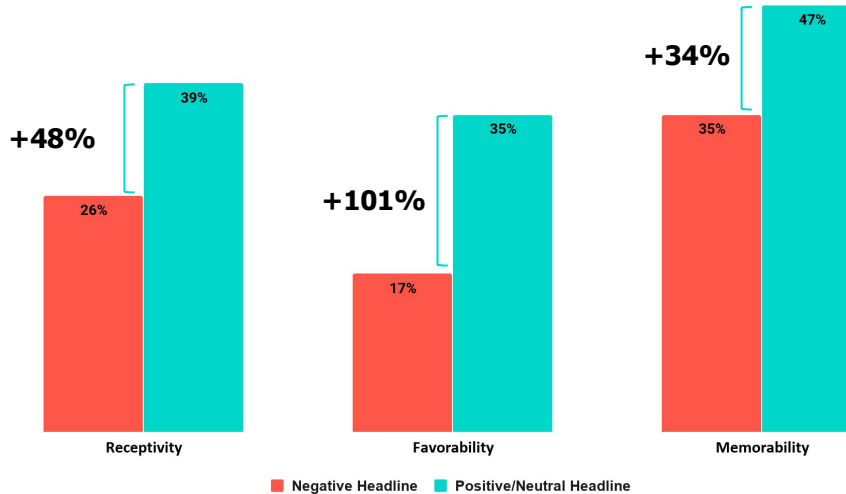
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Consumer perception significantly improved for *financial ads* alongside positive or neutral sentiment

Financial Services Ad



Financial Services Ad: Receptivity, Favorability, and Memorability
(across various headlines)



Q. How receptive will you be to this ad if it appears alongside the following content headlines:, How would you feel toward the brand if this ad displayed above appears alongside the following content headlines:, How likely is it that you will remember seeing the ad displayed above if this ad appears alongside the following content headlines:

Retail Example

Positive/Neutral Headline

Retail Ad

Advertisement

Deals!

Top styles of
the season

Advertisement

Starting at
\$5
T-shirts

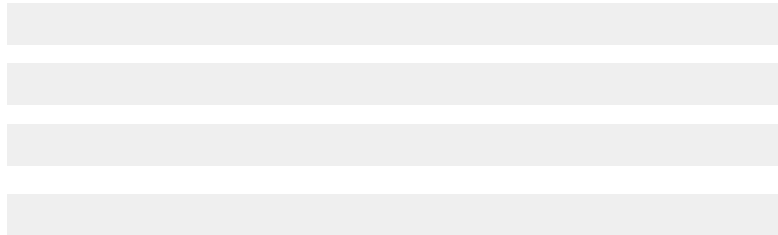


Shop Now

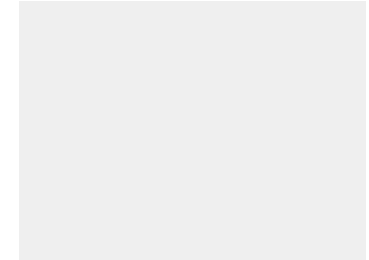
PUBLISHER

Best Back-to-School Sales 2020: The Ultimate Deals Guide

By Anonymous Author
August, 2020




Related article



Advertisement

Starting at
\$5
T-shirts



Shop Now

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Retail Example

Negative Headline

Retail Ad

Advertisement

Deals!

Top styles of the season

Advertisement

Starting at
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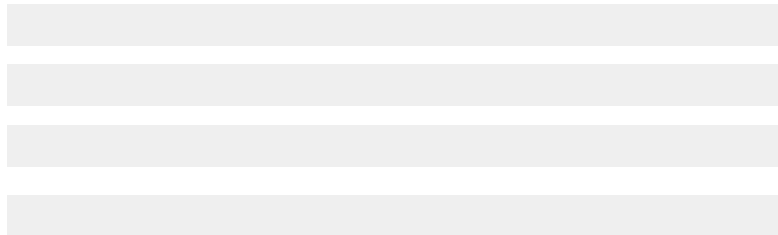


Shop Now

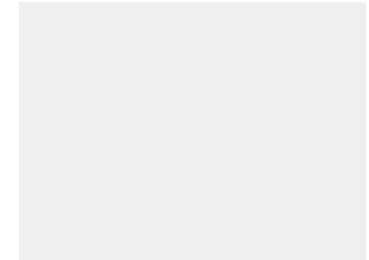
PUBLISHER

Arizona woman who destroyed Target mask display in viral video says she regrets behavior

By Anonymous Author
August, 2020




Related article



Advertisement

Starting at
\$5
T-shirts

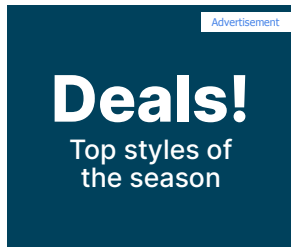


Shop Now

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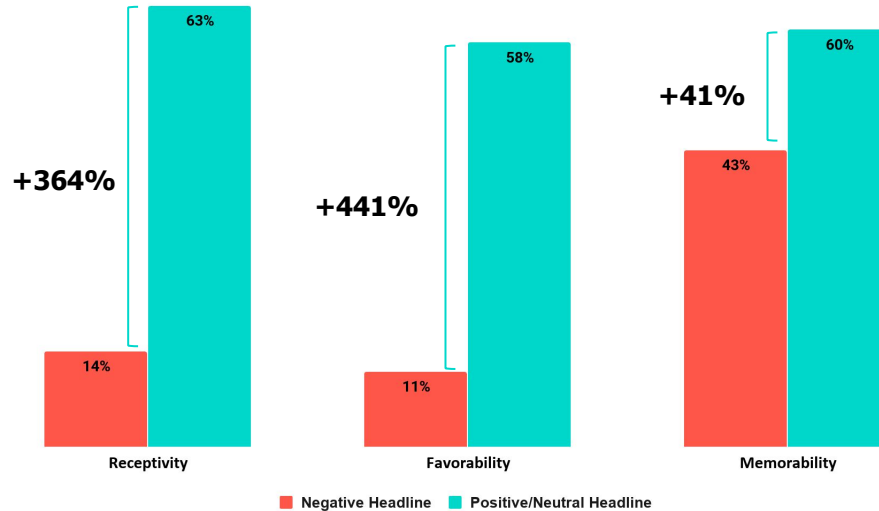
Consumer perception significantly improved for *retail ads* alongside positive or neutral sentiment

Retail Ad



Retail Ad: Receptivity, Favorability, and Memorability

(across various headlines)



Q. How receptive will you be to this ad if it appears alongside the following content headlines:, How would you feel toward the brand if this ad displayed above appears alongside the following content headlines:, How likely is it that you will remember seeing the ad displayed above if this ad appears alongside the following content headlines:

1

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Contextual relevance is IMPORTANT

Consumers agree that contextual relevance is important, and that it impacts their perception of the surrounding brands and advertisements.

70%

of consumers say that contextual relevance is important

72%

of consumers say that content impacts their perceptions of ads

2

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Suitability of ad environments **IMPACTS** consumer brand perceptions

The suitability of an environment affects receptivity and memorability of the ads, as well as the favorability toward the associated brands.

74%

of consumers want to see ads that match page content

56%

of consumers are more favorable toward brands with contextually relevant ads

60%

of consumers are likely to remember relevant ads

3

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Content with positive & neutral **SENTIMENT** creates a lasting impact

Across all sampled verticals, consumers were more receptive to ads alongside positive and neutral headlines, found the ads more memorable, and were more favorable to the associated brands.

80%

MORE receptive to ads near positive sentiment content

93%

MORE favorable toward brands with ads near positive sentiment content

24%

MORE likely to remember ads near positive sentiment content

How IAS can help

Introducing Context Control

Context Control encompasses the entire IAS Brand Safety & Suitability suite of solutions. We're here to not only protect your brand equity and spend from unnecessary risk, but we also give you greater control around the context in which your message appears.

Control the contextual adjacencies of your ads to maximize both the impact and cost efficiency of campaigns.

Do more with less, and do it at scale.

What you get

Page-level analysis using machine learning and patented semantic technology for accuracy and precision

Sentiment and emotion analysis: The *only* solution in-market that can simultaneously detect page sentiment and identify the associated emotion

Proactive Protection: pre-bid filtering and post bid blocking of content that falls outside your brand guidelines

Comprehensive coverage across languages (29+), environments, and platforms like YouTube

Semantic network built on 350k+ concepts (plus their synonyms) linked by 2.8M connections

GET STARTED

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