Video Ad Sequencing Best Practices Guide

YouTube video ad sequencing is a tool to help you tell the story of your brand, product or service across a series of video creatives and video ad formats in order to create lasting impact. It's the only YouTube format that can help you achieve a campaign's weekly frequency goal and drive higher frequency for multiple assets. VAS has been proven to drive higher lift than standalone Trueview campaign for Google Marketing.

When to use Video Ad Sequence?

- If you're looking to drive higher awareness or purchase intent lift
- If you want to control and measure frequency effectively and accurately
- If you have multiple creatives in same or different lengths
- If you have a GP or instant reserve buy and want to continue to message that same audience via auction (VAS + Start condition)
- If you want to tell a story with multiple creatives
- If you have product or feature launch

Potential consideration for NOT using VAS

- If you have to re-traffick creative frequently throughout a campaign (ex.: promos)
- If you need live brand lift reads on an individual creative level throughout the campaign
- If your plan targets topics, keywords, placements
- If you only care about unique reach
- If you need to drive conversions or consideration lift
- If you want to sequence within Reservation media
- If you have a short campaign (eg. Blast, less than 1 week) with significant budget and are worried about pacing

Most effective Video Ad Sequencing frameworks

Tease, Amplify, Echo
Tease your audience with short ads, amplify with long-form, echo to spur action
15/6, 30, 6

The Mini Series
Break your story into thematic chapters, told over time
30, 30, 30
15, 15, 15

The Direct Shot
Use short-form video to highlight specific uses/features of your product/brand
6, 6, 6

The Follow Up
Serve viewers a long-form ad, followed by shorter ads reinforcing the message
30, 6 / 15, 6

The Lead In
Serve viewers a short ad that builds up to a longer form ad
6, 30 / 6, 15

Video Ad Sequence Best Practices

Creative

- ❏ Don't repeat the same creative over and over, recommend using multiple creatives. (Eg. Recommend 2 creatives for 3 step sequence, and 3 creatives for a 5 step sequence)
- ❏ Don't swap creative or change the step order after the sequence starts serving.
- ❏ Live test creative first, then use winning creatives in VAS.

Budget

- ❏ Using at least twice the minimum budget requirement for brand lift to ensure a brand lift read.
- ❏ **Budget Planning:** Use reach planner to get max budget. Use tCPM, and set weekly frequency cap to the number of steps in VAS, then extract 30% from estimated max budget.

Bidding

- ❏ Highly recommend using tCPM bids to maximize sequence completion rates; and allow for more sophisticated sequences that leverage view and skip transitions.
- ❏ Note: there is no need to increase your bid across the sequence, and please use same bid across all steps.
- ❏ If bidding Max CPV, bidding 15-20% higher than your normal Max CPV bid.

Targeting

- ❏ **Allowed:** Audience and demographic targeting - *at campaign-level*. Negative keywords, negative topic, and negative placement targeting - at *campaign-level - is allowed*.
- ❏ **Not allowed:** Positive keywords, topics, placement
- ❏ Keep your audience as **broad** as possible to maximize the potential number of users who can complete your advertiser's sequence. Avoid over-exclusion or over-targeting eg. geo or device

Audience

- ❏ When running 2 or more campaigns with same assets simultaneously, overlapping audiences can jeopardize your ability to complete sequences and get a clean read. How you set up your audiences depends on the level of reporting you need.
- ❏ **If you need audience cut or use different creatives/sequences between audiences:** Your audiences need to be set up in different campaigns and eliminate overlap via exclusions or video experiments. Alternatively you can launch a non-VAS campaign in 1st week with accelerated measurement to get a quick read then apply learnings into VAS campaign for remainder of flight.
- ❏ **If you just need a campaign level read:** You can combine all audiences in same campaign and run one sequence against all audiences, audience learnings will be directional.

Measurement & Video Experiment

- ❏ Brand lift 2.0 is supported on all sequence types. Double the minimum budget, and *only include the single VAS campaign in your study*.
- ❏ When using Video Experiments with VAS, we recommend VAS to be the only campaign in a segment that has 50% of the inventory to ensure completion rate, but this is not required.

- Depending on your video formats, you may be better served using our new Target Frequency beta.
- To make it even easier implementing VAS for Frequency, we have a new template option called "Automatic sequence." With this template, you will not have to specify an order for the ads in your sequence, and Google will automate delivery to maximize towards your desired frequency (eg, the number of ads in your sequence)
- If your campaign has a frequency goal to achieve, we recommend using Video Ad Sequencing to drive higher frequencies and frequency goal. These campaigns are optimized for sequence completion, and will therefore be the most powerful lever you can use to help you drive towards frequency goal on YouTube.
- You can now set a *weekly* frequency cap on Video Ad Sequencing campaigns. The "look-back" window is still 30 days, which means a user can progress from one step to the next within a 30-day period.

Guidelines for using VAS to reach Frequency goal

*All VAS best practices on previous slide need to be followed, PLUS

- ❏ **Bidding:** Use sequence that transitions on "impression" and tCPM bidding. *Note: there is no need to increase your bid across the sequence, and please use same bid across all steps.*

- ❏ **Formats:** Both single format (e.g. multiple :15s) and multiple formats (bumpers and longer form) are compatible with VAS for frequency. **We highly recommend** utilizing the new "Automatic sequence" template, where we will automate delivery of your assets to maximize frequency, versus having to determine a set order in standard VAS implementation.

- ❏ **Steps:** The number of steps in sequence should correspond to the campaign's weekly or monthly frequency goal, e.g. 3/week frequency goal → build 3+ step sequence (completion rates are sub-100%, so a 3 step sequence may yield 2.7/week for example)

- ❏ **Creative:**
  - We recommend using as many different creatives as possible to achieve best results. Ideally, the number of your creative would match the number of steps, but this is not required.
  - Should you have fewer creative assets than steps in the sequence, we recommend ordering them in such a way that repetition is minimized, e.g. if you have 3 videos and a goal of 5, you should put v1, v2, v3, v1, v2 in the different steps.

- ❏ **Frequency Cap:** In the frequency cap panel, choose Once per 7 day frequency to achieve a weekly frequency goal; and "Once per 30 days" to achieve a monthly frequency goal.

- ❏ **Measurement & Reporting:** VAS has two key measurement features that will better activate frequency reporting -
  - Each "step" of a sequence corresponds to an ad group. (ie Sequence Step 2 = Frequency 2). This will allow you to get more performance details for each frequency level beyond "Average frequency/user".
  - VAS has a unique methodology of Brand Lift that is built to show the total brand lift across a sequence. Therefore, VAS BL will activate a *more complete* accounting of total lift coming from increased frequency.