



Primetime

just got personal

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Spotlights on eight of YouTube's most compelling creators

Forget chasing traditional primetime.

To attract viewers, follow their passions.

OK, confession time. It took me a while to “get” YouTube. Back in the day, I was always more of a scripted TV kind of girl. When I first joined the company, I used to have a set time on my calendar to “watch YouTube.” I started with TED Talks and “Late Night” shows and ultimately discovered creators and channels like Marques Brownlee and Postmodern Jukebox. I even get to go back to my scripted roots sometimes with “Cobra Kai.” *That’s MY primetime.*

For my sons, I read that it’s important for boys to get their energy out before school, so I was looking for something we could do all together, indoors, in the morning. After trying a few different yoga instructors on YouTube, we discovered and fell in love with Yoga With Adriene. We block the time with her, we look forward to it, and now *that’s OUR primetime.*

My husband loves sports highlights, funny sports clips, and behind-the-scenes stories about players and events. He watches in the afternoon or evening, on his commute, or after the kids are in bed. *That’s HIS primetime.*

Video for any state of mind

My family and I are not alone. Creating “personal primetimes” is what the 1.9 billion people who go to YouTube every month do.¹ They watch in moments that make sense for them and to get a wide variety of needs met. They create highly engaged sessions “across dayparts, content types, and screens.”² It’s now viewers, not networks, who are the gatekeepers for what’s considered popular programming.

We recently conducted an expansive study with Omnicom Media Group to dig into this boom of digital video viewership. We found that what’s most important

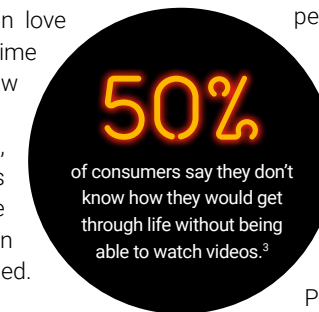
to viewers, and what keeps them engaged, is whether content resonates on a personal level and meets their needs in the moment. You might expect that to be the case. What may surprise you is the degree to which this is true, especially relative to other traditional content considerations. The study found that when people decide what content to watch, relating to their passions is 3X more important than whether it features famous actors, and 1.6X more important than whether it has high production value.³

The power of passion

Personal relevance is *everything*. By democratizing people’s ability to broadcast themselves, YouTube is able to meet the need of any particular interest or state of mind — from organizational hacks and specialized cooking tutorials to news clips and sports highlights to Will Smith’s live birthday bungee jump — all available 24 hours a day.

Traditional primetime meant popularity. Personal primetime means passion. Both capture attention. But personal primetime doesn’t just attract attention — it influences, and that’s another kind of viewership entirely, with profound implications. For brands, this means an opportunity to not only reach attentive audiences at scale, it means a new kind of association, one with greater clout and impact.

We’re here to help you navigate the new ways audiences watch, and deepen your connections with them to build your brand and your business. In the following pages, you’ll hear perspectives from your peers, learn from brands finding success through online video, and meet some of the creators driving fan engagement. **Welcome to The Playbook.**




Tara Walpert Levy
VP, Agency and Brand Solutions, Google
 @tarawlevy

This

is

my

YouTube

We asked six of the advertising industry's most influential leaders what everyone should know about online video.

Crystal Rix
CHIEF STRATEGY OFFICER AT BBDO NY

YouTube lets us have a constant drumbeat and interaction with audiences. Now it's not just a matter of when they sit down to watch TV, it's any time they reach for their phone. So we can reach people on their commute, in the three o'clock slump, or at social events.

Video allows us to tailor content. We understand our audiences better than ever before. Before, we used to interrupt them and tell them what we wanted them to know. But now we can make all of the content more contextually relevant, and ultimately more meaningful to them.

Over time we've seen that YouTube is a real platform for quality content. Quality can be subjective, it doesn't necessarily mean big budget. Take the Tiny Desk concert series that NPR creates for YouTube: The quality is high, but with low production, low fuss.

I'm most proud of the video work we did for Barbie. It was long form, about two and a half minutes, and it was built primarily for YouTube, with no television in the plan. We knew that our target consumers were spending lots of time looking for how-tos on YouTube, so we thought, "Why not go to where they are?" By engaging with them on an authentic platform, our message that girls have to use their imaginations in order to reach their full potential was taken with more sincerity.

Steven Bartlett
CEO AT SOCIAL CHAIN GROUP

Today, we expect to have things when we want them, on our terms, and with very little friction. So the way that we consume video has moved from sitting down at 7 p.m. to watch my favorite show, to now watching wherever I want, on my own terms. YouTube has been key to that shift because episodic content was previously only owned by the box in the corner of the living room. Now it’s owned by everybody.

To stop me from skipping, ads have to be relevant. If an ad understands me and the things I’m interested in, it increases the probability of me being engaged and continuing to watch. But it also needs to feel real and authentic to succeed on a platform that’s built on real, authentic content.

Attention is like energy: It’s not destroyed, it just moves from one place to another. It’s a myth that people no longer consume long-form content. We live in a world now where the TV or the screen in front of us might be the third or fourth screen, so in order for it to hold our attention, the demands for content are higher than ever.

YouTube has helped to explain the world to me on a personal level. It’s helped me fix my computer, it’s helped me understand what Brexit means, it’s helped me understand love and emotions and families, and everything in between. It’s a place that I come to learn.

▶

Nicolas Chidiac

CHIEF STRATEGY OFFICER AT ROKKAN

YouTube allows you to understand where someone is in a specific journey, which allows you to understand what your ad should say and to whom.

Some of the biggest opportunities in video come through using the tools and data within the YouTube and Google ecosystem. By using Google’s tools, like Audience Explorer and Google Correlate, you’re able to have a very vivid understanding of who you’re about to converse with, which can really inform our creative briefs and help us to understand tone.

Customization at scale is key, and over time, the degree of customization will increase. Tools like Director Mix for YouTube afford you the capacity to send out 250 different messages in one campaign, which can be very helpful.

I’ve learned a lot on YouTube. Countersteering on a motorcycle. How to make Turkish coffee. Changing a bike wheel. Understanding the tax system in the U.S. My MBA was supplemented with the content I watched on YouTube.

Brandon Pierce

GROUP CREATIVE DIRECTOR AT DROGA5

We all have an always-on mentality now. Primetime isn’t about premieres, it’s 24/7. So if you really understand where your audience is going to be at a certain time, you can use that to your advantage. If they’re at a concert, is there something you can do as soon as the concert ends to feed in content that we want them to enjoy?

YouTube allows celebrities to connect to fans in new ways. Fans want more than what is happening on the silver screen. They want to know, “What’s Will Smith doing for his birthday this weekend?” and now they can find that. It’s about really letting people into their lives a bit more, getting an even deeper connection with your audience.

The data we get from YouTube is really powerful. If we find that people are dropping off at the four-second mark, we can integrate that into our concept to re-engage them.

There’s been an increase in the quality of content on YouTube. People are starting to understand what it means to tell a story in an engaging way. You need to create stuff that’s not only visually beautiful and stimulating but also intellectually stimulating, where you’re learning something or laughing or being enlightened.

YouTube is incredible for discovering up-and-coming directors. There are so many amazing aspiring creatives who can bring a fresh perspective to what we’re doing as far as marketing for brands is concerned.

I’m most proud of the Nike work I did for YouTube at Wieden+Kennedy. We did a short six-minute film launch with Kobe Bryant, directed by Robert Rodriguez. YouTube played a huge part in that project: It’s where the film premiered, and it’s where the majority of the views came from.

The Rules of Engagement

On YouTube, viewers in their **personal primetimes** are **attentive and ready to take action**, giving advertisers more opportunities than ever to make meaningful audience connections and drive results. Inspired by brands that have done just that, here are five rules of engagement.

RULE Nº 1

Capture Immediate ATTENTION



Although attention spans aren't necessarily shorter today, people are choosing what they want to give their attention to faster. They're ready to skip, scroll, or fast-forward if something doesn't grab them right away.

Creating audiovisually rich content is key to creating that stopping power: A staggering 2.4X more attention is paid to ads when shown on platforms with full sight, sound, and motion.⁴ With content that surprises and intrigues early, brands have the opportunity to plunge the viewer straight into the action, getting them to stop and engage, instead of skip.

CASE STUDY: Converse

"I mean, who do you think Chuck Taylor is?" With this simple question, asked in a casual setting, "Stranger Things" star Millie Bobby Brown intrigued viewers enough to keep them watching — by the millions. The ad featured the sole of her iconic Converse shoe reflected in a makeup mirror from the jump and was one of the most popular ads on YouTube in 2018, educating countless fans on the little-known history behind the brand.

RULE Nº 2

Be Truly HELPFUL

Viewers come to YouTube throughout the day to get a huge variety of needs met in the moment, particularly to get their questions answered — whether they want to learn how to tie a tie, speak another language, or make a purchase. Over the past year, watchtime for YouTube videos on "which product to buy" has doubled.⁵

Helpful content can answer their questions, spark an idea, or make taking action easy. And if you can teach and inspire audiences, they won't just watch, they'll become loyal, long-term advocates of your brand.

**CASE STUDY: IKEA**

For many Americans, the biggest hurdle in home decor is knowing how to combine furniture purchases in a way that works. To lend a hand, IKEA sent a squad of store staff on a home makeover tour, leaving them to shoot and produce their own video series on the way. The IKEA Home Tour series now features over 100 pieces of content, racking up millions of views, and offers the kind of content that YouTube viewers love: focused inspiration and advice for common situations, perfectly tying IKEA to the idea of affordable and beautiful home improvement.

RULE Nº 3

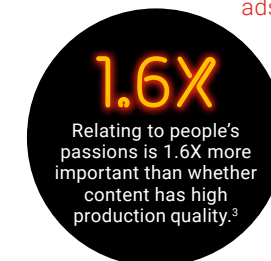
Relate, Relate, RELATE

Understanding your audience is table stakes. But new research shows being relevant to people's personal interests is perhaps the most important thing your content and ads can be. When people are deciding what to watch, relating to their passions is 3X more important than whether content features famous actors and 1.6X more important than whether it has high production quality.³

With your Google rep, make the most of tools that can help you gain deeper insight into your audiences. When you can frame your brand in the context of things people care about, or even take a stand on a culturally relevant topic that's authentic to your brand, it drives results: 78% of people say personally relevant content increases their purchase intent for a brand's products and services.⁶

CASE STUDY: U.S. Navy

The U.S. Navy assumed its best recruits liked military missions and hardware. Google and YouTube data revealed that the Navy's ideal recruits are actually passionate about self-improvement hobbies like cooking, martial arts, bodybuilding, and rock climbing. Based on this insight, the team created multiple YouTube ads featuring the various career options available. Each ad was tailored to viewers' interests and sequenced so prospects saw diverse, relevant opportunities. People who saw the ad were 20% more likely to consider joining the U.S. Navy, beating all U.S. Government benchmarks.



RULE N° 4

Lean Into YouTube
CREATORS

Video is a unique and immersive way for influencers to build relationships with people. On YouTube, creators can break the fourth wall, listen and have a two-way dialogue with their fans, and build relationships based on their personalities. More viewers than ever are becoming loyal fans: Year over year, the number of YouTube users who follow creators and engage with their channels every day grew by a massive 70%.⁷

Collaborating with creators is a high-impact way to reach engaged audiences, but you can also reach customers through the creators they love by simply serving ads on relevant channels. Turn the page now to get to know some of our most loved creators.



CASE STUDY: **Clorox brand Brita**

Let creators work. That's the message from Clorox brand Brita, which paired up NBA superstar Steph Curry with YouTube creator KingBach, then left them to create their own video explaining the benefits of the Brita Stream to a young audience. The result? A hilarious, catchy, and surprisingly heartwarming video that generated over two million views and led to a 2,000% lift in mobile searches.

RULE N° 5



Encourage
ACTION

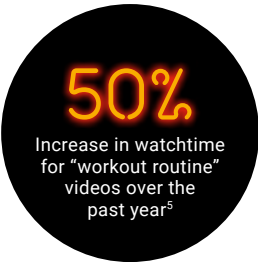
In their moments of personal primetime, viewers are primed to take action. Not only are they in lean-forward mode — which means they're 1.5X more likely to pay attention than when in lean-back mode⁸ — they're also turning to YouTube to get things done. Over half of shoppers say online video has helped them decide which specific brand or product to buy.⁹

Strong creative that has an enticing call to action and makes it easy to take the next step, like visiting a website or making a purchase, allows your videos to both build your brand and drive business results.

CASE STUDY: **Yoox Net-A-Porter**

Yoox Net-A-Porter created a series of 25-second videos offering products that its audience couldn't get elsewhere. To drive urgency, the company used a creative hook: If the viewer didn't click on the deal, it was gone forever. The campaign drove an average view-through rate 23% higher than the category average, as well as moving significant direct sales for the business during a critical holiday season.





Channel: POSTMODERN JUKEBOX | Subscribers: 3.7M+

SCOTT BRADLEE ON HITTING THE RIGHT NOTES FOR A NEW GENERATION OF MUSIC FANS

Jazz pianist Scott Bradlee started his channel by shooting old-school covers of modern classics in his basement apartment. Now he's touring the world and collaborating on global ad campaigns.

Who is the typical Postmodern Jukebox fan?

Oh, it's so wide. Our audience ranges from people that love Miley Cyrus to people that grew up in the time of Glenn Miller. We have people that are 90 years old, as well as people that are nine.

What kind of fan interactions have you had?

People write to me and tell me that because of my videos, they decided to take up saxophone or take vocal lessons. When I was a kid I was the only one in my school that was into old jazz, now there's a whole community out there inspired by Postmodern Jukebox.

What do you watch on YouTube?

I couldn't live without tutorials. There's a tutorial for everything on YouTube and it's amazing because I remember so many times trying to learn how to do something by myself and failing miserably. But now with YouTube, you can just search for anything.

MARQUES BROWNLEE

IS PUTTING A FRESH SPIN ON TECH REVIEWS

Marques Brownlee's gadget-heavy channel is one of YouTube's most popular tech destinations — with everyone from tech newbies to NBA stars checking in for advice on iPhones, ultra-thin TVs, and self-driving cars.

Who is the typical Marques Brownlee fan?
My viewers are really into tech, gadgets, and figuring out what the bleeding edge is all about. There are also people who are finding my stuff via search: “What is a self-driving car?”, “What’s special about the new iPad?” A couple of NBA players have actually reached out to me directly, wanting to know which phone is best for them.

Has there been a shift in how YouTube creators are seen?
We’re being taken more seriously both inside and outside of tech, because the pure scale of the audience we reach and our influence is hard to ignore. We’re now seeing tech YouTube creators being invited to press events alongside traditional journalists.

Do you think the way we watch content is changing?
A lot of people have flexible schedules but they’re also really busy, so the difference between TV and on-demand content that you can watch whenever you have the time is huge. Content can also be more personal and authentic if you’re getting it from one person or a creator that you trust. I still have cable for the occasional live sports moment, but other than that, it’s all online.

Channel: MKBHD | Subscribers: **7.9M+**



KATE ALBRECHT & JOEY ZEHR OF MR. KATE

ON MAKING DIY ACCESSIBLE

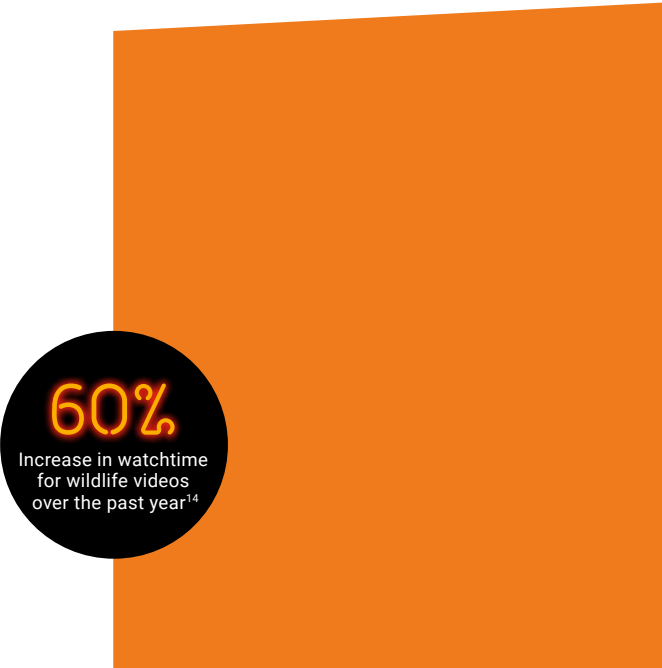
For millennials, DIY can be daunting — but with \$300 room refits and their Breaking Beige makeover series, this husband-and-wife team have used YouTube to make home improvement both accessible and fun.

How has YouTube changed the entertainment landscape?
Joey Zehr: This new industry has fundamentally shifted how entertainment works. Now we’re able to use the inexpensive technology to produce the same level of content that in previous years studios had to do, and we’re able to distribute directly to our audience.

How much interaction do you have with your fans?
Kate Albrecht: Daily! We are constantly using our audience as a resource for information and clues to what other content to create. There’s a direct line that’s so valuable to us. We’ve come to develop a real trust with them, and them with us.

What are the benefits of YouTube for a brand?
JZ: You can invest in more engaging content, and people watch with their screens in their faces. They’re interacting, they’re touching, they’re not distracted.

Channel: MR KATE | Subscribers: **3.3M+**



COYOTE PETERSON

ON BRINGING NATURE TO LIFE FOR A DIVERSE AUDIENCE

Naturalist Coyote Peterson has been stung, bitten, and clawed multiple times for his passion: educating animal lovers about nature and conservation on the Brave Wilderness channel.

Who is the typical Brave Wilderness fan?
We’re for people from three to 93. I always find it interesting when I meet older fans, like an old weather photographer or a retired naturalist, because it’s really cool to see how YouTube has saturated such a wide range of viewers.

What are you most proud of?
There are a number of people who’ve said, “Because I watched your content, I’m now going to school to become a wildlife biologist or conservationist.” That ability to inspire someone is the biggest reward.

Why is YouTube such a powerful platform for you?
I think YouTube is the greatest place to reach the widest audience possible. Everyone absorbs content from YouTube, I don’t care how old you are. And the flexibility makes it really appealing, you don’t have to fit a time block. If your video’s five minutes, cool. If it’s 55 minutes, that’s also cool. It’s designed for the user, and you can pick your own adventure based on the time you have.

Channel: BRAVE WILDERNESS | Subscribers: **13.9M+**

15M+

Beauty tip videos
on YouTube¹⁵

SAFIYA NYGAARD

IS REFLECTING CONSUMER
CURIOSITY WITH A NEW
TAKE ON BEAUTY

From makeup mash-ups to style experiments, Safiya Nygaard's weird and wonderful fashion and beauty videos have earned her a dedicated army of fans.

How has your channel evolved?

I came into this making videos I thought I would want to watch, and I think the audience has generally reflected that. I am interested in the why and the how: “Why is this a trend? Where does it come from?” I think there is that curiosity in a lot of women out there. What I make is sort of like “Ancient Aliens,” but for lipstick.

If you could tell a brand one thing about YouTube, what would it be?

There are a lot of creators who are working really hard to make YouTube just as good, if not better, than traditional media outlets. We have decent cameras and spend hundreds of hours editing each video. When I turn on the TV and I watch a 22-minute medium-budget cable episode, it’s not better than YouTube. Maybe “Game of Thrones” is more impressive, but that’s about it.

What makes you excited about YouTube over the next five years?

We have a plan of videos through 2020 and beyond. In five years there’s going to be an audience base of high school and college kids who’ve grown up watching only YouTube, so I think there will be even less of a roadblock for a mature audience to be like, “Oh yeah, YouTube’s a real thing.”

Channel: SAFIYA NYGAARD | Subscribers: **7.2M+**

PHILIP WANG
ON THE
CHANGING FACE
OF ENTERTAINMENT



*From comedy to drama,
short form to long form,
mass market to niche —
when it comes to entertaining
audiences, Wong Fu
Productions’ Philip Wang is a
man who wears many hats.*

Who is the typical Wong Fu fan?
Our demographic is almost
exactly half male, half female,
and our age range is really wide.
A lot of our fans are Asian-
American and we’re really
proud that we can create
content that resonates with
them. If they can’t see it on
the big screen very often, they
can see it on YouTube.

**What’s the best thing about
publishing on YouTube?**
The best thing about the
YouTube community is that
it feels like viewers are more
connected to you and your work
than a movie or TV show. It’s
a two-way conversation, which
you don’t get elsewhere.

What’s next for Wong Fu?
We’re pursuing feature film
projects and TV shows in the
traditional sense but people are
always asking me if we want to
go full Hollywood. I tell them:
“No. No matter what we do,
YouTube is always going to be
a really, really important part.”
It’s where everyone is watching,
and it’s where we can reach
our fans fastest.

Channel: WONG FU PRODUCTIONS

Subscribers: **3.2M+**

Sources:

¹ YouTube Internal Data, Global, 2019.
² IAB, “Personal Prime Time,” Feb. 2018.
³ Google + OMG “Personal Primetime” Study, U.S., n=3,200 respondents, Oct. 2018.
⁴ Nielsen Consumer Neuroscience, U.S., Video Ad Cross-Platform Research commissioned by Google. Conducted using eight advertisements, four platforms and 400 participants aged 18-35, Nielsen CNS Lab, Boston, 2016.
⁵ Google Data, U.S., July 2017–June 2018.
⁶ OneSpot/Marketer Insider Group, “The Personalization Imperative for Content Marketing,” U.S., n=1,500, Dec. 2016.
⁷ YouTube Internal Data, Global, Jan. 2017–2018.
⁸ Google/Ipsos, “Video Mobile Diary,” U.S., 2017.
⁹ Google/Ipsos, “How People Shop with YouTube,” U.S., n=2,401, 18-64 who go online at least once per month and have purchased something in the past year, July 2018.
¹⁰ Google Data, U.S., July 2016–June 2018. Classification as “Cooking” videos with “Skills” in the title was based on public data such as headlines, tags, etc. and may not account for every such video available on YouTube.
¹¹ YouTube Internal Data, Global, April 2018.
¹² Google Data, U.S., July 2017–Aug. 2018.
¹³ Google Data, U.S., Videos with “home renovation” OR “home renovating” in the title, July 2017–June 2018.
¹⁴ Google Data, U.S., 2017-2018.
¹⁵ Google Data, Global, Mar 2018. Classification as “beauty tip” videos was based on public data such as headlines, tags, etc. and may not account for every such video available on YouTube.

This is my YouTube was shot exclusively for The Playbook by **Andrew Eccles**.
Scott Bradlee, Cassie Ho, Safiya Nygaard, and Philip Wang were shot exclusively for
The Playbook by **Scott Witter**.
Andrew Rea and Marques Brownlee were shot exclusively for The Playbook by **Damien Fry**.

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