

The Ultimate Guide to

Optimizing Your Creative Ads

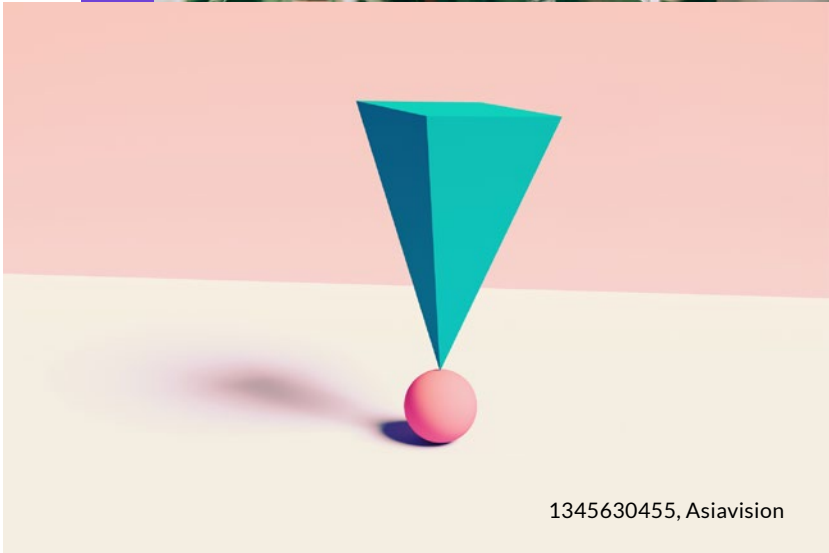


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1345630455, Asiavision



1345630455, Asiavision

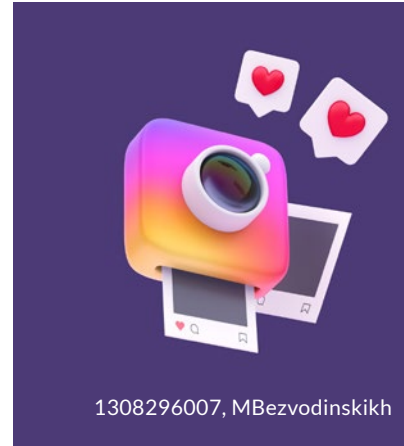
Introduction

Since as far back as the 17th century, businesses have used print to advertise their offerings. Back then, they used illustrated trade cards—a precursor to the popular postcard medium of today—to describe goods and services.

Advertising has always been about creating visuals and messaging that motivate viewers to take action. And nowadays, with endless print, audio, video, and digital capabilities, we have more ways to reach our audiences than ever before.

Consistent branding across channels can boost revenue by up to 33%, and customers need exposure to those various touchpoints to build awareness, trust, and interest in your company.

To keep up a fresh look, stand out from the crowd, and maintain a unique brand identity, powerful visuals, audio, and other creative placements are necessary in any kind of advertising or marketing efforts. For more than 25 years, Getty Images has been at the forefront of the world's best imagery, and advertisers turn to us when they're putting together their own creative work. Getty Images also brings research, insights, and expertise to the table to round out your creative strategy.



In this eBook, we'll explore expert insights from Getty Images and best practices on how to make the most of our royalty-free, industry-leading resources that include photography, illustrations, vectors, video, and even audio.

USAGE AND LICENSING*

Getty Images offers a royalty-free ("RF") license model for our creative content holdings. With royalty-free content licensed with our standard RF license, the license fee is paid once for worldwide, unlimited, perpetual use, with pricing based on file size and no need to pay additional royalties when and if the content is re-used. In this guide, we'll make sure each set of tips is paired with licensing information, so you know what to expect when choosing imagery.

Outdoor advertising

According to recent studies, out-of-home (OOH) advertising efforts have been found to improve overall campaign efficacy and generate [\\$5.97 for every dollar spent](#). That translates to an ROI of 497%. What's more, these ads can reportedly increase

“the effectiveness of digital search by over 40% and print by over 14%.”

Outdoor advertising is clearly worth the investment. To that end, in this section, we'll break down some tips and best practices for two of the most common examples of outdoor ads.



1282319815, Alexander Spatari



1166845972, Abstract Aerial Art



1303634549, Iin Setiawan/EyeEm

BILLBOARDS

Billboards need to communicate in the blink of an eye. Effective creative in this medium fills the space provided with unique, attention-grabbing imagery centered on a single, simple idea. [Strong silhouettes](#), [irregular and abstract shapes](#), and [macro detail close-ups](#) can leave a lasting impression and draw eyes to your billboard quickly and effectively.

When approaching billboard copy, it needs to be short, simple, and easy to read from far away. Use bold, high-contrast, sans-serif fonts, and keep the message to something someone could read in just a few seconds. It's also best to put your brand name and logo/identity front and center, as brand awareness is often the main goal of a billboard. White text against bright, bold, and [colorful backgrounds](#) is a great way to grab attention and make things easier to read.

★ **Pro-tip:** A successful billboard is localized and culturally relevant so that it speaks directly to your target demographic.

And depending on location, industry, and campaign goals, you'll want to refresh and renew creative—anywhere from monthly to biannually—to avoid ad fatigue, and keep current seasons/events in focus.

POSTERS

An amazing poster can make a person stop and stare, but it still has to send its message in a matter of seconds. Street-level posters as well as transit ads on buses, trains, taxis, and public transportation stops technically allow for more detailed visuals and text, but design's adage holds true:

Less is still more when it comes to the best graphic posters and signage.

Nielsen reports that [46% of U.S. adults](#) have gone online to learn more about a brand after seeing a billboard, transit poster, or other OOH advertisement. Someone waiting for their bus or riding up an elevator may have time to dwell on an interesting ad, so whether it's outdoors or in, include any important information along with a clear call-to-action. Keep copy natural yet persuasive, and make sure that it's laid out with sound hierarchy and design language in mind. Pay attention to the overall composition of images and text, and how they look from afar as well as up close—and make sure to direct readers where you want them to go with key information like dates, your website, a QR code, an address, or otherwise.

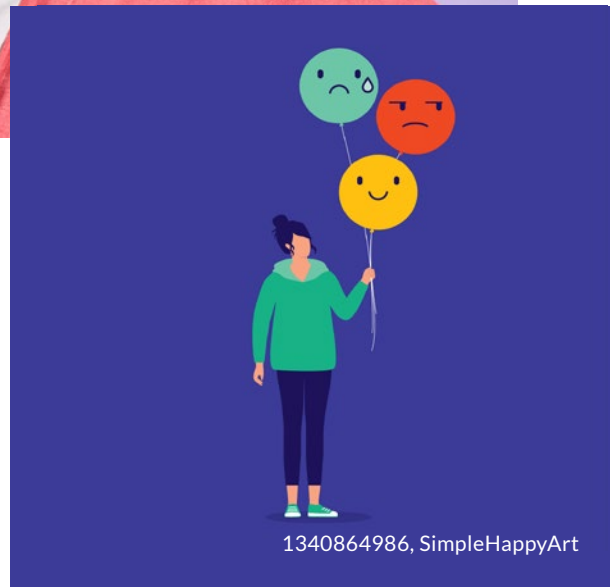
USAGE AND LICENSING*

For outdoor advertising, you'll want to make sure your license is suitable for your specific kind of project. At Getty Images, this means the license may be priced based on the required file size, since OOH signage and billboards usually call for large file sizes. You can refine your Getty Images search results by using the "image resolution" search filter to show images 21 MP and larger so you're only finding results that are best suited for high-resolution placements like billboards and posters.





1327767243, Flashpop



1340864986, SimpleHappyArt

APPEAL TO EMOTIONS

Eliciting [happiness](#), galvanizing action, or playing on a viewer's daily [fears](#): Good ads serve a clear message and benefit, while great ads land that message by tapping into emotion. Evoking that emotional response may not seem as direct as, say, offering a discount or listing the features of a product.

But ensuring that your creative taps into an emotional story is the difference between a quick-hit ad and a long-lasting placement that boosts awareness.

Getty Images can help bring authenticity and connection into your work—ultimately achieving real emotion, and real, lasting value for your brand.



728770183, Emilie Barbier / EyeEm

Print advertising

Some may say print is dead, but anyone who has checked their mail lately knows that that isn't entirely true. While digital media may be easier to track, analyze, and measure, print ads in magazines and newspapers and direct mail continue to play an important role in the advertising mix—in large part because these ad placements tend to catch people in very specific situations, like reading an article or leafing through a pile of important letters.

By leveraging customized contact info, specific coupons or discount codes, targeted landing pages, and good old-fashioned customer feedback, it's possible to find out just how effective your print ads really are. In short, with creative thinking and innovative design, memorable brand experiences are possible—live and in person, online, or on the page. Here's how to approach these two marquee mediums.



518839134, Carol Yepes

gettyimages®



1198448241, Francesco Riccardo Iacomino



1129377212, Luis Alvarez

NEWSPAPERS AND MAGAZINES

We've all seen laughably dated print ads in old newspaper clippings, but modern audiences crave [authentic representation](#) and meaningful messaging framed by brand-appropriate composition, typography, use of color, and high-quality visuals. When creating print spots, you can either keep the look editorial, blending in with the publication at hand, or go in a dramatically different, brand-first direction with something like a [monochrome image](#) or a [vivid illustration](#) that pops out from the page.

Whichever look suits your campaign best, consider including interactive capabilities that leverage today's innovative technologies. You could take the simple approach and use a QR code to drive to a hyper-specific landing page. Or you could harness the power of smartphones' AR technology to develop a futuristic experience that pops off the page. Or you could go the other way, with a bold, simple ad that works with its surroundings. No matter how elaborate (or simple) you get, consistency is key—your creative should feel decidedly “yours” across print, digital, and anywhere else your brand lives.

POSTCARDS AND DIRECT MAIL

With strategic design and distribution, direct mail, like postcards, pamphlets, flyers, letters, bulletins, and brochures can help bolster your brand and product offering. And while print ads target specific groups, direct mail reaches specific individuals, creating the potential for effective ad personalization.

Whatever the medium, size, format, or paper weight, consistently branded visual storytelling is what helps set ads apart in print and beyond. Use relevant, [true-to-life imagery](#) and eye-catching graphics to create a more engaging narrative, because it's the narrative that resonates with audiences more than anything else.

But that coveted spot in a person's real, live mailbox comes with a lot of competition. Your piece has to be noticed alongside those boring bills and gaudy circular ads. You can opt for bright branded colors, or go for custom, die-cut formats, but two things are paramount:

There's a huge opportunity to make a connection with your audience in this medium, in large part because it's so physically tangible.

It has to look professional and enticing, but it also has to leave space for a clear, unobstructed address line (keeping local postage requirements in mind).

BENEFITS OVER FEATURES

You've got a shiny new product that you're proud of, so it may be tempting to list all of the cutting-edge features you've worked so hard on. Effective ads take these features a step further and outline the clear benefits that that product provides to a consumer. Strong copywriting involves leading the reader to these "so what?" factors. For example: Those new running sneakers don't just have engineered rubber soles—they prevent slipping, provide traction, and make your morning jog easier. See the difference?

USAGE AND LICENSING*

Magazine ads also require high-resolution file sizes for quality prints, while direct mail and sales material can generally get away with medium resolution files. It's important, in this category, to consider how many postcards and pieces you will be printing, as most licenses have a print cap (which is outlined in the license agreement). For larger runs, you may need to look at purchasing an extended license. Don't forget: unlike RF creative images and RF creative video, images and videos that are marked "editorial" or "unreleased" can only be used for editorial purposes. In other words, they must be used in a way that is newsworthy or relevant to the public interest. Editorial images don't have model or property releases, so you won't be able to use these images for commercial, promotional, advertorial, or endorsement purposes.

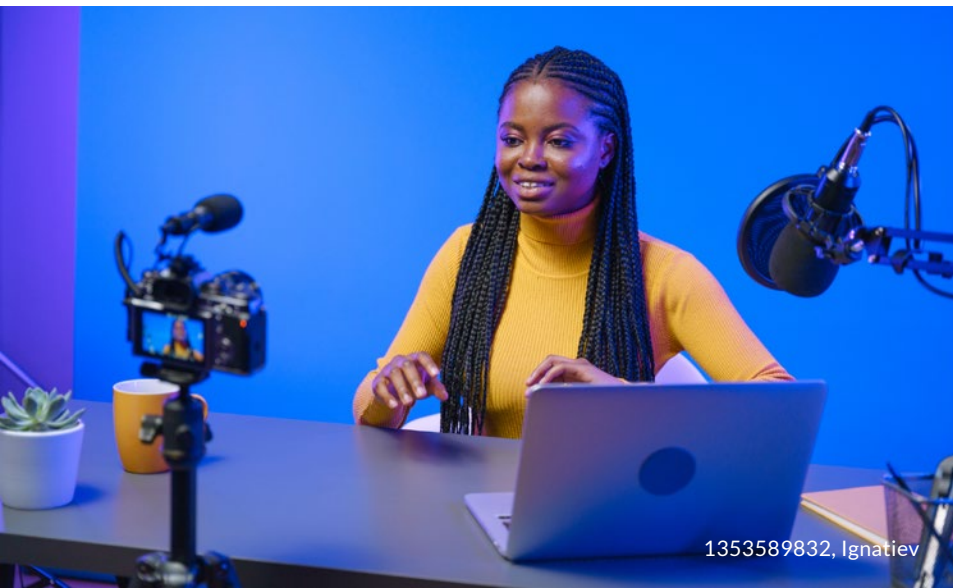


Audio advertising

When we talk about branding, you often hear of verbal and visual identity—the look and feel of your company. But what about the sound? According to Spotify,

“Brands with music that fits their identity are 96% more likely to be recalled than those with non-fit music or no music at all... [and people] are 24% more likely to buy a product with music that they recall, like, and understand.”

More and more brands are expanding their aural horizons to podcasts, streaming, and beyond. But it's more than just audio—sound is still a huge part of video projects, so adding quality audio to your commercial spots isn't just a good idea, it's basically a non-negotiable.



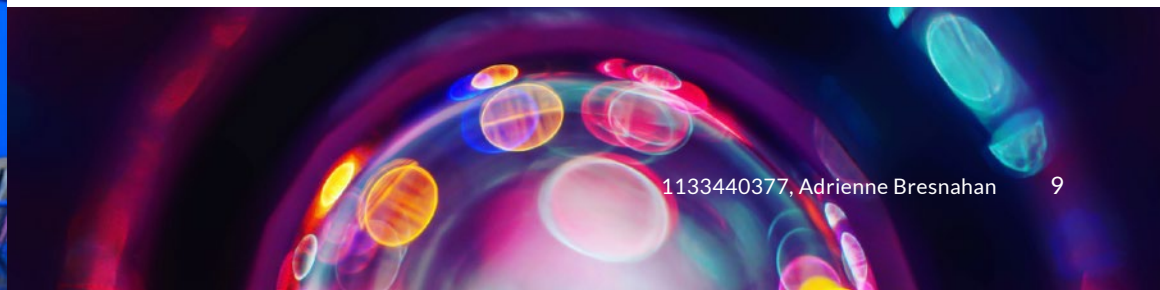
1353589832, Ignatiev

AUDIO FOR VIDEO PROJECTS

Video is basically the most immersive widely adopted format we have. A big part of that is the presence of audio. You see a scene depicted on screen, and you hear the emotion of the actors reading the script. Or, you're watching a vibrant, quick-cut commercial and you hear an intense, emotive song underscoring each cut to a new message. Video, as a medium, has this third dimension that virtually no other ad format has.

When approaching audio for video, it's good to think of a few things: Is your script going to be read off-screen as a voiceover, or will you have actors saying lines in view of the camera? This can have a huge effect on how you cast your video and how you write your script—the way a tagline is read is, in these cases, almost as important as what the tagline is.

Then there's the music. Emotional, evocative music is key to an ad that hooks your viewer and keeps them there to the end. But it also needs to service the ad—not getting in the way of the message being read or the visuals being shown. Thankfully, Getty Images has a [whole library of Royalty-Free music](#), all ready for you to score your commercials and digital video spots. The best part? It's all available via our [Premium Access plans](#) so you can browse and download the music you need, when you need it.



1133440377, Adrienne Bresnahan

PODCASTS AND RADIO

Back in the day, audio ads were sent into the ether, limited to radio listeners and nearly impossible to track and measure. Now we have podcasts, audiobook services, online radio, and other streaming platforms through which to reach wider audiences.

Whereas radio ads are particularly effective for local, regional, and geographically targeted ads, podcast spots work better for broader, listener-specific audiences. Studies at Midroll Media have found that podcast ads get over 4 times better brand recall than other media and

60% report buying something after hearing it advertised on a podcast.

That's why it's important to accent [audio efforts with music](#) and [sound effects](#) that fit your brand, as well as your audience's tastes and interests. Whether you're creating podcasts or a single audio ad, stock music selections can make for an engaging and memorable aural addition. And with tens of thousands of tracks and sound effects that range from weather and nature to everyday lifestyle moments, [Getty Images Music](#) has something great for your project. Be sure to read the license agreement carefully for the tracks you do select, though—audio tracks licensed through Getty Images Music do not allow usage in regular theme songs, sonic logos, trademarks, or anything that is intended to be a longstanding feature of your brand.

Usage and licensing*

With [Premium Access](#), all of Getty Images Music—now powered by Epidemic Sound—is available to subscribers royalty-free.



1207101412 BlackCAT

STREAMING AND SMART DEVICES

10–30 seconds, around 150 words of clever copy, and some thoughtful music are great ways to get noticed. But with channels like Alexa Skills gaining momentum across B2B and B2C markets,

We're sure to see major development in audio design and best practices across listening opportunities and experiential marketing like AR, VR, and more.

It all hinges on a nuanced understanding of quality audio—how do you tell a story that's heard, and not necessarily seen? If your brand has an established audio identity, it'll be easy to pivot into these new technologies.

SET THE MOOD WITH MUSIC

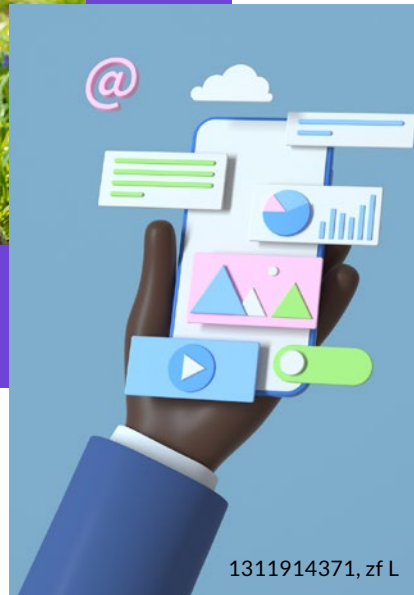
[Getty Images' new partnership with Epidemic Sound](#) lets Premium Access subscribers search by mood and track length to find just the right royalty-free sound for any audio ad or video project. Whether you're looking for the perfect mood music or an impactful, transitional sound effect, be sure it's something brand-appropriate as well as evocative. When we hear certain tunes, they affect what we think, summoning feelings that ultimately may help make that final purchase much more likely.

Search music by mood



Digital advertising

With people spending hours online and on mobile every day, internet usage is at an all-time high—and it's not slowing down. Social media, automated marketing, and other online tools have made audiences more connected and accessible than ever. Brand storytelling is everywhere, and with so many digital channels and paid and owned media opportunities to take advantage of, there's no excuse not to step up your strategy with outstanding creative visuals. In this section, we'll offer some tips on key digital mediums.



SOCIAL MEDIA

According to [Visual GPS](#), 68% of consumers say it's important that the companies they buy from [celebrate diversity of all kinds](#). Once full of flawless poses, Instagram users now prefer to see relatability, user-generated content, and behind-the-scenes stories, while LinkedIn professionals are looking for realness and honesty. That's why brands need to invest in rich visuals that reflect who their users, fans, and consumers really are—and refresh them on a regular basis. [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [LinkedIn](#) all recommend changing ad creative and visuals anywhere from once a week to once a month. And each platform rewards high-performing ads by helping you optimize your creative based on what is actually succeeding.

And the key to success is a well-designed ad that speaks to your audience and stands out, visually.

Like a company blog or website, social media profiles offer brands a canvas of owned media with which to communicate their messaging and brand identity. To reach wider audiences, major platforms have made advertising easier than ever with powerful targeting and analytics tools that help target new markets you might not have access to otherwise. Make the right connection, and you'll draw plenty of engagement and followers—leading to purchases and conversions.

VIDEO

By 2022, Cisco predicts that online videos will account for over [82% of all consumer internet traffic](#). And although this offers lots of potential for video ad campaigns and broader placement, viewers can still skip right over your ads if they aren't produced well. Video ads need to grab a viewer's attention right away with [creative that makes the viewer feel seen and well-represented](#), whether illustrating a relevant pain point or offering something that you can't take your eyes off of.

Whatever visual direction you take, remember that the best video ads don't really feel like advertising. Always aim for [high production value that tells a story](#) instead of overly aggressive footage of your product. And because custom shoots can be prohibitively expensive and complicated for your brand, it's really helpful to turn to Getty Images' [extensive royalty-free video collections](#) that offer an incredible range of first-rate, live-action clips and animations to enhance any video ad campaign. No need to invest in expensive talent, equipment, and time-consuming shoots.

500M 

People* watch videos on Facebook daily

*According to [Tubular Insights](#)

Instagram has seen an

80% 

increase in the time users spend watching videos.*

*According to [Instagram](#)

Social videos generate

1,200%

higher engagement than text and images combined.

*According to [G2](#)

DRAW EYES AND ATTENTION

Create scroll-stopping digital ads that bring joy, excitement, or other strong emotions to your viewers via animations, GIFs, graphic elements, and relatable videos.

People retain almost [95% of video messaging, compared to 10% of what they read in text](#), and with authentic imagery and a commitment to quality visual storytelling, your digital ads will work to build your brand as well as an online community of fans, followers, and customers.

Usage and licensing*

Content licensed for use in video projects are best kept at medium file sizes (typically around 2100 x 1400 pixels), but for other digital advertising, you can veer toward smaller files. Visuals for emails, articles, and desktop banner ads should be between medium and small (no less than around 720 x 480), while images for social posts, banner ads, and thumbnails or smaller website images can even work at extra small (typically in the 500 x 330 range). Getty Images also offers a wide selection of royalty-free creative videos to add transitional footage, B-roll, or mood-setting backgrounds to your ads. When selecting content for your project, keep in mind that content marked "editorial" or "not released" is not suitable for commercial, marketing, or promotional purposes.



1231536705, David Dee Delgado

One final note:

Test and pivot

Between print, outdoor, audio, and digital channels, people encounter thousands of ads on a daily basis. And if they keep seeing the same one—especially in the digital space—they'll be quick to ignore it. Refresh your creative on a regular basis to avoid ad fatigue, and be sure to consistently switch out and test imagery to understand what drives the most engagement and conversions. A great way to do this is through A/B testing—comparing a control version against a test version and changing one variable to measure performance. But focus groups and surveys can also tell you how your audience is feeling about your ads.

When you find what works best for your company, analyze that content and why it's doing well. What image or video attributes does your most popular content share across owned and paid media channels? What trends or patterns pop up, and how can you use those insights to better iterate moving forward?

Every ad campaign is an opportunity to continuously refine your brand identity—and visuals are a massive part of that. With millions of photographs, videos, illustrations, and more, Getty Images will always have the perfect solution for your creative project. [Explore all of the visual possibilities right here.](#)

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1257515527, Noel Hendrickson



1306713501, Andriy Onufriyenko