



Earning Attention in the Age of Consumer Choice

TONGAL CREATOR TRENDS REPORT | MAY 2017



MADE ON TONGAL BY FANCIFUL FOX FOR TONGAL



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY & CONTENTS

The battle for consumer attention is *the* defining conversation in marketing today.

Consider these stats. Every *minute*¹:

- **200,000,000+ emails** are sent and received.
- **2,500,000 pieces of content** are shared on Facebook.
- **215,000 photos** are published to Instagram.

In addition to the explosion of content, ad skipping is on the rise and, thanks to smartphones, our average attention span has decreased to eight seconds. That's less than the attention span of a goldfish².

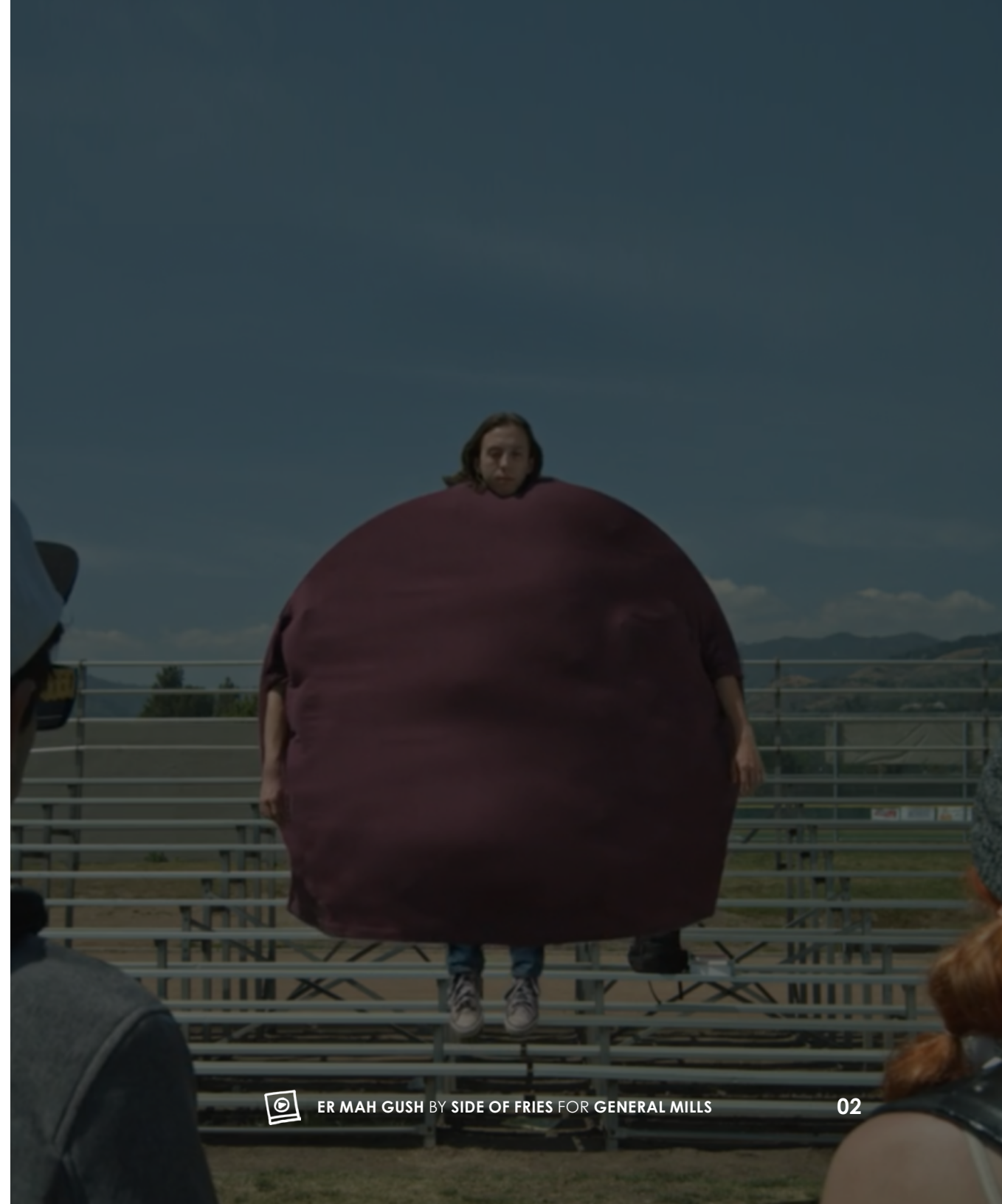
Quite simply, brands have never been more challenged to produce relevant messages that captivate consumers.

Yet despite an onslaught of content, people appreciate powerful storytelling as much as—if not more than—prior generations. The difference today? Control. Consumers can skip, block and evade ads more easily, and for Millennials and Gen Z-ers (the “YouTube generation”) these behaviors are second nature.



1 | [ACI Information Group \(2014\)](#)

2 | [Microsoft via The Telegraph \(2016\)](#)



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY & CONTENTS

To understand what content is earning attention in this age of consumer choice, we surveyed Tongal's community of top independent creative talent. In this report, we reveal their expert insights on both the consumption and creation of content. We also dive into what motivates them when taking on freelance brand assignments. As forward-thinking marketers are increasingly opting to work with creative talent outside of the agency world, this perspective is more critical than ever.

- This report serves to help marketers by:**
- **Uncovering** key insights to creating breakthrough content
 - **Discovering** which video platforms and formats matter most
 - **Revealing** how to best motivate independent creative talent



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- 09** Top Video Platforms & Formats
- 10** Best Practices for Working with Creative Talent
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RESEARCH FINDINGS

Key Qualities of Great Brand Content

Consumers want to discover content, not be interrupted by it.

Consumers defined “good” advertising experiences as those which can be skipped. YouTube — the pioneer of the “skippable” ad — was cited as the platform that best integrates advertising into organic content. The platform has introduced shorter ad formats and recently announced it will stop supporting 30-second non-skippable ads by 2018, in order to provide a better user experience³.

Ad blocking is on the rise.

Per our survey, 42% of our creators use ad blockers — a finding corroborated by a recent industry study that found 46% of Millennials have ad blockers on their desktops, and another 31% block ads on their smartphones⁴.

Tongaler Tip

“Relevance is critical — tell stories with the viewer in mind.”

RICH, WRITER

USA

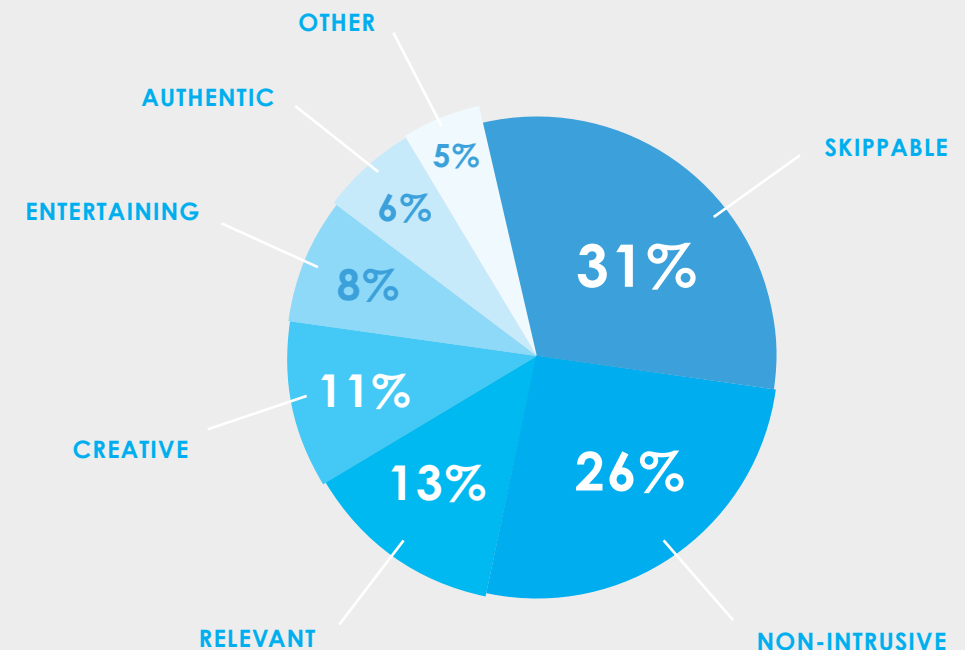


3 | [BBC \(2016\)](#)

4 | [Anatomy Media \(2016\)](#)



TOP QUALITIES OF GOOD ADVERTISING EXPERIENCES



Source: Tongal Creator Trends Report 2017

RESEARCH FINDINGS: KEY QUALITIES OF GREAT BRAND CONTENT

Consumers seek authentic content that entertains or informs.

With people self-selecting their media experiences, either by paying for ad-free experiences or skipping ads, it's important to explore what they're choosing to consume and why.

We asked our creators to share their best practices for creating good content, which we'll define simply as "content people want to watch."

Utility • **67%** agreed they're more likely to watch branded video if it's educational.

Entertainment Value • **97%** said it was important that branded content has an entertaining storyline, making it the most cited attribute.

Authenticity • **51%** said they agreed / strongly agreed that featuring real people makes them more likely to watch a branded video.

- **Only 30%** said a celebrity or influencer makes them more likely to watch a brand's video.
- **26%** said that the inclusion of influencers or celebrities would not make them more prone to watch the content.



TOP 3 QUALITIES OF GREAT BRAND VIDEO

Respondents were almost unanimous when citing the key characteristics of successful branded content



Source: Tongal Creator Trends Report 2017



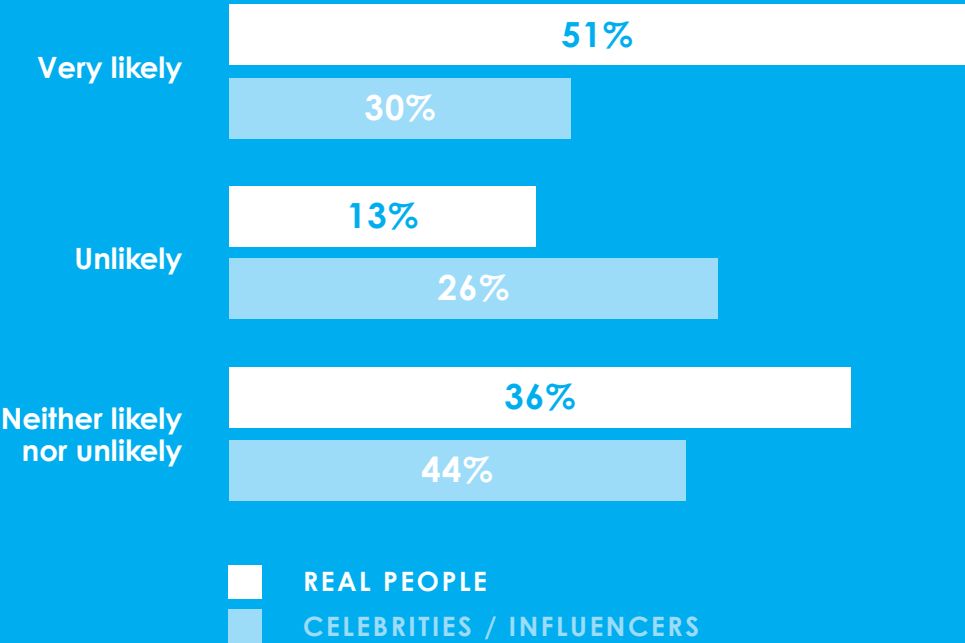
THE WOODLAND POST BY ADDIE SNIDER FOR THE NEXT GREAT ANIMATED SERIES

RESEARCH FINDINGS: KEY QUALITIES OF
GREAT BRAND CONTENT



CONSUMERS VALUE
AUTHENTICITY OVER CELEBRITY

We asked: How likely are you to watch
a branded video that features real
people or celebrities and influencers?



Source: Tongal Creator Trends Report 2017

RESEARCH FINDINGS: KEY QUALITIES OF
GREAT BRAND CONTENT

Tongaler Tip

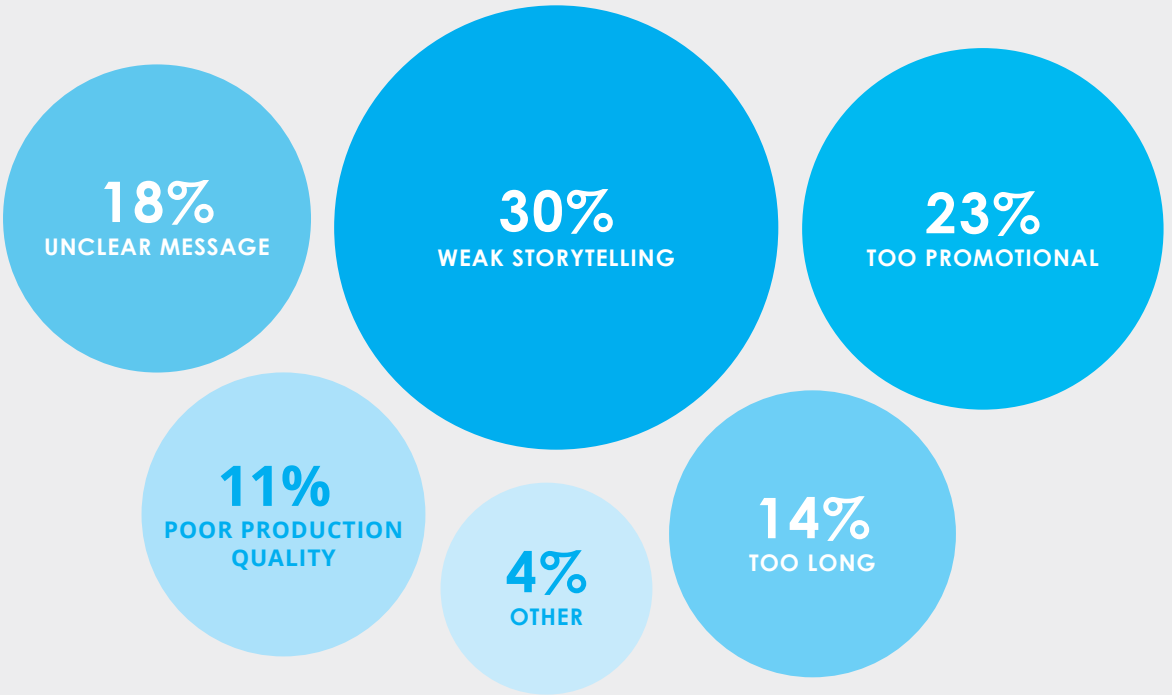
“Story is the most important part.
It has to touch the viewer to
truly make an impact.”

EREN, CREATIVE
Turkey

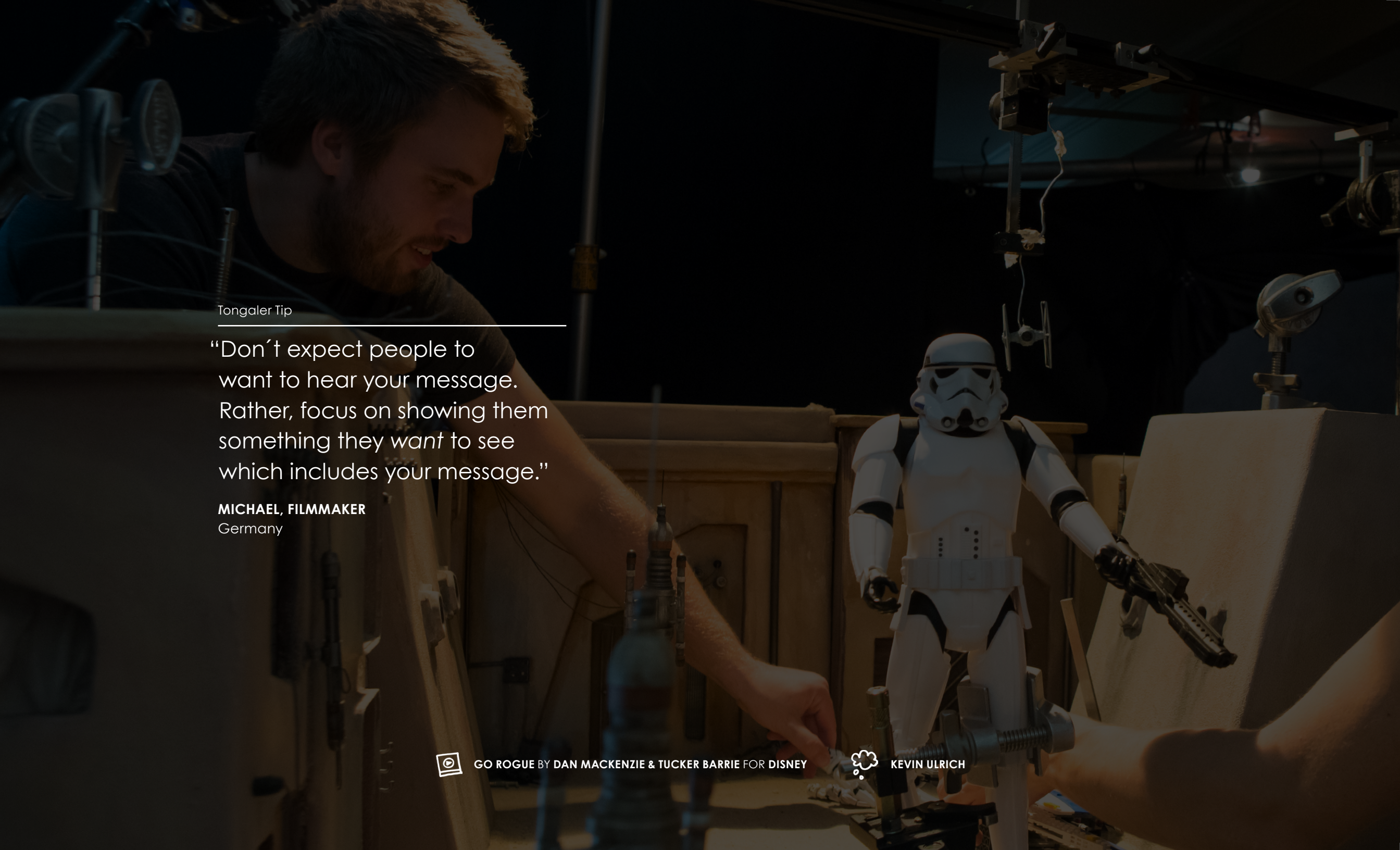


CONSUMERS APPRECIATE A
WELL-CRAFTED STORY

*What is the most common pitfall when
it comes to branded video?*



Source: Tongal Creator Trends Report 2017

A man with a beard and short hair is focused on assembling a LEGO set. He is wearing a dark t-shirt and is positioned in the foreground, slightly to the left. In the background, a completed LEGO Stormtrooper figure stands prominently, holding a blaster. The setting appears to be a workshop or a dedicated space for building LEGO sets, with various tools and parts visible. The lighting is warm and focused on the man and the LEGO figure.

Tongaler Tip

“Don’t expect people to want to hear your message. Rather, focus on showing them something they want to see which includes your message.”

MICHAEL, FILMMAKER
Germany



GO ROGUE BY DAN MACKENZIE & TUCKER BARRIE FOR DISNEY



KEVIN ULRICH

RESEARCH FINDINGS

Top Video Platforms & Formats

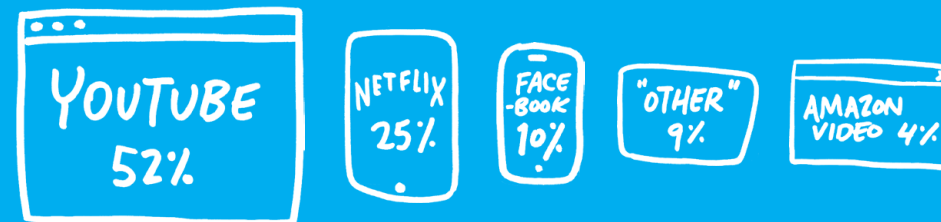
YouTube still reigns as the top destination.

Despite the pervasiveness of video, and the relentless innovation in the space, the grandmother of all platforms — Google's YouTube — is still the No. 1 place consumers turn to discover video content⁵. Brands should also pay close attention to Facebook, as it has been innovating quickly and ranked third as the top destination for video viewing (above Amazon and Hulu) when we asked participants where they primarily watched online video. Amazon is one to watch closely — it recently unbundled Prime Video allowing consumers to buy a stand-alone monthly subscription and, by some estimates, is one of the fastest-growing over-the-top services⁶.

The jury is still out on live video.

Our research indicates that live video is well-hyped yet under-consumed in comparison⁷. Nearly half of respondents in our study rarely or never watch live video online. That said, online publishers and platforms are investing heavily in live content, and studies indicate that live video is growing quickly⁸. For most brands, live video should be seen as experimental and a longer-term play.

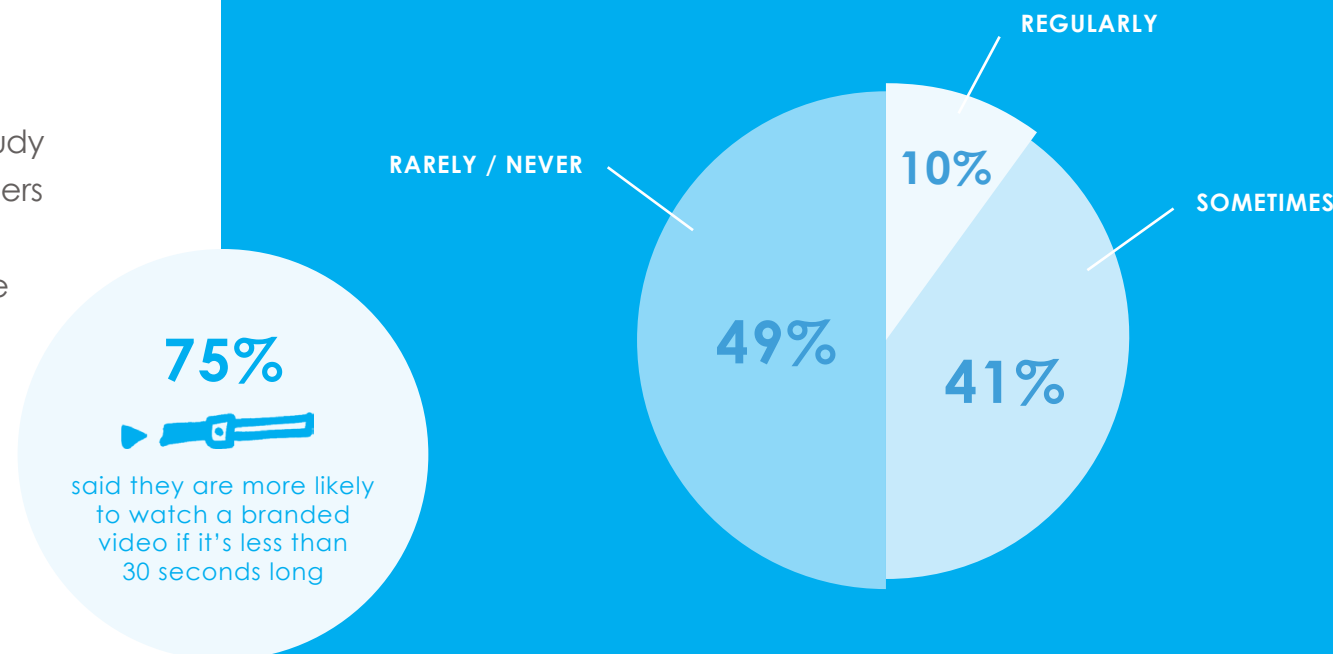
WHERE IS THE PRIMARY PLACE YOU WATCH ONLINE VIDEO?



* Other Includes Hulu, premium services (HBO, Showtime, etc.), online networks (ABC, CBS, etc.), iTunes and others



HOW OFTEN DO YOU WATCH LIVE VIDEO ONLINE?



RESEARCH FINDINGS

Best Practices for Working with Creative Talent

Freelancing is on the rise and forward-thinking marketers are taking advantage of the trend by working with creative talent outside of traditional agencies to inject fresh and diverse creative thinking and authenticity into their marketing.

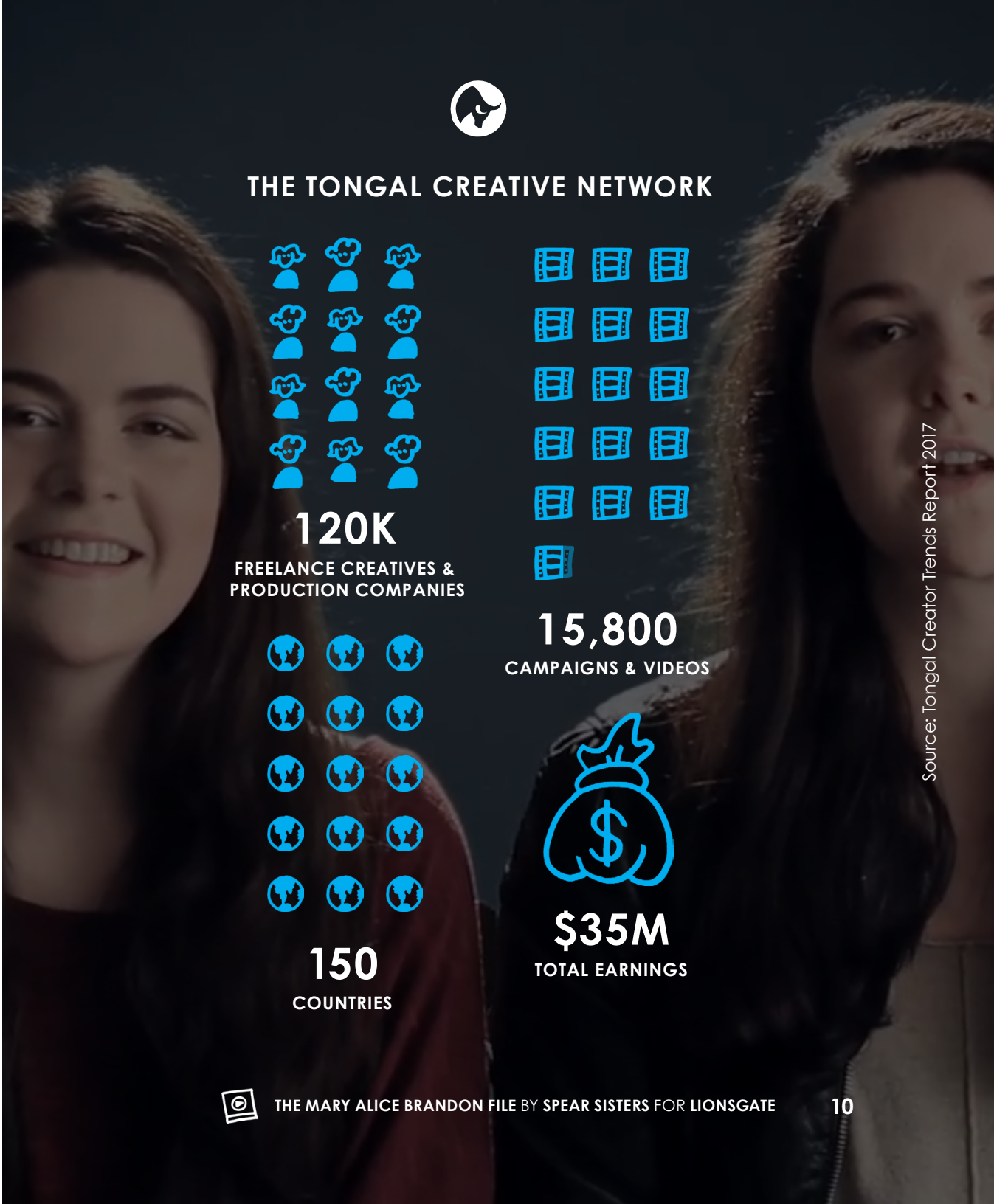
To understand how brands can best motivate independent creative talent, we asked members of the Tongal community to weigh in. Here's what we learned.

It's not all about the Benjamins.

Top creators aren't taking on work solely based on the money. They do it for the love of the game. The top reason they cited

for taking on new work was passion for the brand or project. However, creators indicate that lack of budget can hinder their ability to produce great work. Financial compensation won't sell them on the job, but not having enough funds to create the work they want was an oft-cited limitation.

Have a clear brief, but keep an open mind. When asked about challenges that arise when working with brands, creators told us not having a clear brief and not having enough creative freedom to execute on that brief impede their ability to produce great work.



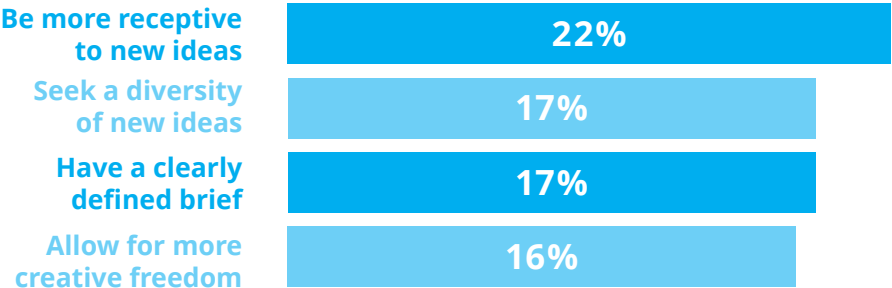
RESEARCH FINDINGS: BEST PRACTICES FOR
WORKING WITH CREATIVE TALENT

Work with creatives who
are passionate about your brand.

Creatives say the biggest motivator in choosing whether to take on a branded content project is their personal passion for the brand or assignment **(26%)** followed by the freedom to create around their own vision **(24%)**. Only **18%** said money was the No. 1 reason.

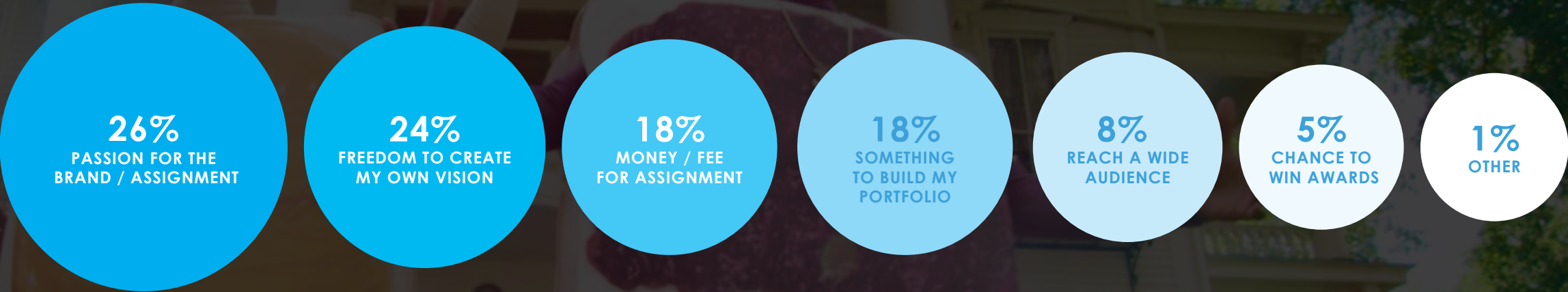


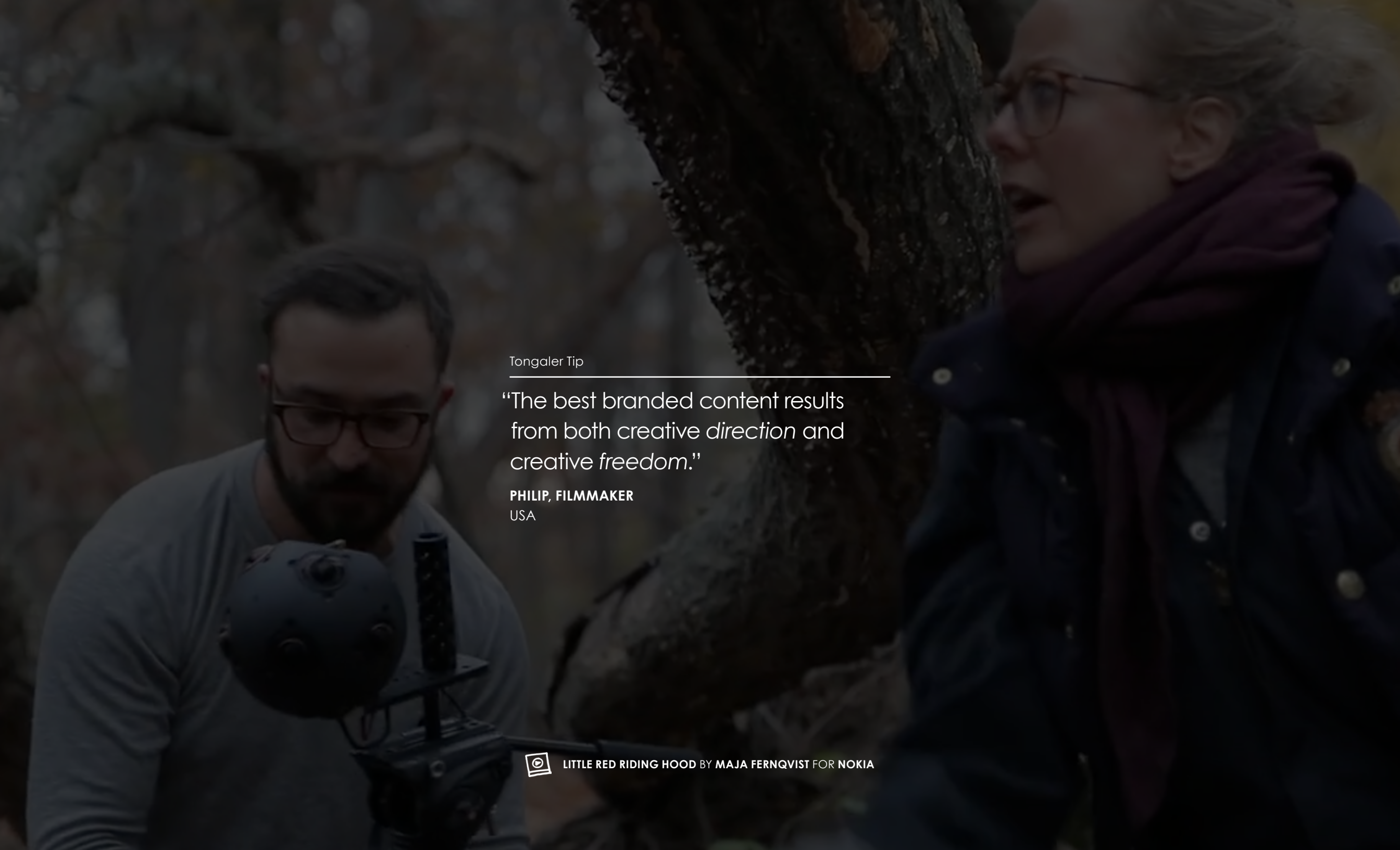
TOP CREATIVE ADVICE FOR BRANDS



The above represents the top 4 responses from creatives in the Tongal community.

WHEN DECIDING WHETHER TO WORK ON A CREATIVE PROJECT WITH A BRAND, WHAT
CRITERIA IS MOST IMPORTANT TO YOU?





Tongaler Tip

“The best branded content results
from both creative *direction* and
creative *freedom*.”

PHILIP, FILMMAKER
USA



LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD BY MAJA FERNQVIST FOR NOKIA

TONGAL TAKEAWAYS

Based on this research, as well as Tongal's work across hundreds of brand campaigns and nearly 16,000 pieces of content, we've distilled four key takeaways for brands.

1. Interruptive advertising tactics are unreliable and ineffective in the age of consumer choice.

As consumers assume greater control over the types of media they experience, brands will need to tell better stories to earn their attention.

2. The secret to breakthrough content is simply stated but not so simply executed.

Create content people want to watch. Research shows that people are most likely to choose content that is entertaining or informative and relevant to their unique interests. Marketers can also double down on authenticity and build community by inviting real people who are passionate about the brand to co-create content alongside them.

3. When working with freelance creatives, understand that they're most motivated by their own passions — not the money.

Our research indicates that money is rarely the main reason creators decide to partner with a brand. Marketers can set themselves up for success by establishing a clear brief that is directionally sound but with room for creative interpretation and fresh ideas.

4. Rise above the platform hype.

Emerging video platforms are great for innovation and test projects, but the larger platforms still dominate when it comes to video content discovery. Identify where your audiences spend their time, and develop content that aligns with their behavior and interests on these platforms.

 Every brand should have a plan for YouTube and be testing and investing in video on Facebook and Instagram, given the rapid rise of video usage on these platforms. These platforms will soon become the TV and mass media of the future, and your growth audience (Millennials) are already spending significant time there.

 If the rise of Netflix has shown us anything, it's that consumers will fork over their hard-earned money to experience great content. The death of non-paid viewership has been exaggerated, so don't be afraid to invest in growing audiences around your content organically. Consider "The LEGO Movie," which reflects content marketing at its very best. Ask yourself, if your brand had a Netflix show, what show would you create?

 Keep live video on the radar, and perhaps in your innovation budget, but treat it as a longer-term play. Live video hasn't been widely adopted in the consumer experience, at present.

METHODOLOGY

To inform this report, Tongal surveyed 461 members of its global creative community via an online survey administered in February 2017. In accordance with trends in Tongal's broader community, the respondents represented a range of creative skill sets — 40% writers; 39% filmmakers and 21% editors, animators and other creatives — and have significant experience in creative projects, either as individual freelancers or leaders at small to mid-sized production firms. 77% percent of respondents have been doing freelance, project-based creative work for more than four years, with 39% touting more than seven years of experience. Respondents represent all ages — 50% were 18-34 years of age and approximately half were over the age of 35.

About Tongal

Tongal is the independent creative network that helps brands tell their best stories and engage today's audiences more effectively. The company has pioneered a new model for creating content, powered by a network of more than 120,000 creatives and a proprietary development platform.

Today, innovative companies including **LEGO, Johnson & Johnson, Mattel, NASA and General Motors** are working with Tongal and its creative network to develop breakthrough brand creative and original content.



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JIM VS. VADER BY INDIE MACHINES FOR PRINGLES



FRANK LIMBAUGH