

Best Practices in Marketing and Creative Outreach for New Transportation Technologies

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16. Abstract Emerging transportation technologies—including electric vehicles (EVs), micromobility solutions, autonomous vehicles (AVs), hyperloop systems, and mobility-as-a-service (MaaS) platforms—are rapidly reshaping mobility patterns and urban environments. As these innovations gain traction, it becomes increasingly important to address concerns, communicate advantages, and foster trust across communities. This project examines marketing best practices for promoting emerging mobility solutions, synthesizing insights from scholarly research, industry standards, and case studies of successful campaigns. Emphasis is placed on the shift toward “snackable,” visually engaging content delivered through widely used social media platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, and Snapchat, which are increasingly central to reaching diverse audiences. The analysis demonstrates how innovative outreach methods, beyond conventional branding and media tactics, can foster trust, increase awareness, and engage stakeholders. To ground these findings in practice, the project concludes with the development of six original media projects designed to communicate the benefits, challenges, and societal implications of autonomous vehicles and other advanced transportation technologies. The results offer insights about the process of creating messaging specifically around high tech forms of new transportation such automated and autonomous vehicle transportation. This information can inform AV experts, policymakers, and community leaders to help them develop campaigns and resources that resonate with a wider range of stakeholders to advance technological adoption and increase public confidence.			
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1. INTRODUCTION

New transportation technologies, ranging from electric vehicles (EVs) and micro mobility solutions to autonomous vehicles (AVs), hyperloop systems, and mobility-as-a-service (MaaS) platforms, are reshaping how society moves and interacts with urban spaces. As these innovations gain traction, it becomes increasingly important to address concerns, communicate their advantages, and foster trust across a variety of audiences. While having a unique brand identity has traditionally been the cornerstone of communications and marketing for public transit agencies emerging channels are increasingly valuable for deep engagement and education (1).

This report offers an analysis of marketing best practices for emerging transportation technologies or platforms by incorporating knowledge from scholarly studies, industry standards, and past instances of successful marketing initiatives. The report first broadly explores marketing initiatives for innovative mobility solutions, then dives into creative marketing that is resonating with new customers, particularly focusing on trends toward creating short, engaging “snackable” content via social media platforms that have become culturally ubiquitous—from Tiktok to Instagram to Snapchat (2, 3).

This is used to provide insights about the process of creating messaging, future deliverables and applications specifically around high technical forms of new transportation such as automated and autonomous vehicle transportation—with the goal that AV experts, policymakers, and community leaders can develop campaigns and resources that resonate with a wider range of stakeholders; innovative outreach techniques that go beyond conventional content and media tactics.

To conclude the report and as part of the project 6 new media projects were created that form the basis for new educational content on autonomous vehicles and new transportation technologies.

2. THE ROLE OF MULTI-CHANNEL MARKETING IN PROMOTING TRANSPORTATION INNOVATIONS

Across many platforms it is important that transportation professionals can effectively communicate their message to customers—both existing and new. This is effectively the role of multi-channel marketing, or marketing across multiple media platforms. Traditionally this has involved a strong “transit” brand usually using print media and TDM strategies, however in recent years many agencies have transitioned to digital media as marketing has never been more important at attracting new riders to transit (4–6).

Many of these are based around concepts based that have traditionally been more present in the corporate world so we will emphasize them here including, building trust, shifting preferences, and engaging influencers.

2.1 CREATING AWARENESS AND BUILDING TRUST

According to Mangold and Faulds (7), social media is a “hybrid element” that combines elements of community development, word-of-mouth campaigning, and conventional promotion. When it comes to new transportation technology, a multifaceted approach is required to educate and inform, establish trust and promote deeper engagement with the resource.

1. **Educate and inform:** Provide detailed explanations of how the technology works, addressing cost, infrastructure, and safety concerns.
2. **Establish trust:** To reduce mistrust, emphasize successful pilot projects, collaborations, or endorsements.
3. **Promote deeper engagement:** Use newsletters, interactive events, podcasts, and community activities to promote in-depth discussions and storytelling.

2.2 SHIFTING CONSUMER PERCEPTIONS

While the safety, dependability, or economic uncertainty of new technology may make some consumers cautious, increasingly there is broad acceptance of social media as a tool in society (8). Public opinion is reshaped by it, and therefore marketing strategies can reinforce government sources as those that can be trusted even the content is emotional or humorous. This can include:

- **Real-world use cases** (e.g., zero-emission commuting, time saved during rush hour).
- **Success stories** from early adopters, city authorities, or influential environmental groups.
- **Multi-channel narratives** that combine short-form social media content with long-form content (podcasts, newsletters, and creative outreach events) for comprehensive education (9)

- **Emotional storytelling** (e.g., showcasing how micromobility solutions can be fun while reduce local pollution can drive ridership (10, 11)).

2.3 ENGAGING INFLUENCERS AND THOUGHT LEADERS

Influencers have the ability to significantly alter customer perceptions; they can include well-known podcasters, YouTubers, and TikTok makers (12). Similarly, newsletters and thought-leadership platforms like Substack allow experts (including engineers, city planners, or environmentalists) to engage niche communities with in-depth commentary. This strategy builds an informed audience that is ready to support or embrace innovative mobility solutions while also enhancing brand credibility.

3. KEY PRINCIPLES AND BEST PRACTICES

3.1 AUDIENCE SEGMENTATION AND TARGETING

3.1.1 Identifying Core Segments

Effective marketing for new transportation technologies begins with analyzing distinct audience segments and a vast body of work has been spent identifying core segment and user personas in transport. Also much work has explored how to indicate incentive can be used frame better choices for people who are either “captive” to their current choices or who have less monetarily rational choices (13–17). This is where both many different types of users come into play and where behavioral incentives are critical. Research shows that financial and behavioral norms have equally strong pull on travel behavior (6, 18–20). And at the same time developing distinct personas that segment and target users with emotional and human centric design can be effective (17, 21–23). These kind of personas can include:

- **Eco-Conscious Consumers:** Motivated by sustainability and environmental impact.
- **Tech-Savvy Early Adopters:** Eager to explore cutting-edge products and services.
- **Urban Commuters:** Seeking efficient, cost-effective solutions for “last-mile” or everyday mobility (24).
- **Policymakers and Municipal Stakeholders:** Interested in reducing congestion, meeting emissions targets, and fostering economic growth.

Data from social media analytics, podcast listenership, or newsletter subscription metrics can guide messaging and content development, ensuring the right material reaches the right audiences (25).

3.1.2 Tailoring Content to Each Platform and Each User

Since every platform and outreach channel has distinct characteristics, it is essential to match the structure, tone, and depth of the information accordingly (9):

- **LinkedIn:** Highlight professional case studies, policy briefs, and B2B relationships.
- **Twitter/X:** Broadcast quick updates, event news, and short data insights.
- **Instagram/TikTok:** Focus on visually engaging narratives, influencer partnerships, community challenges.
- **YouTube:** Provide product demos, tutorials, and user testimonials in long-form video.

- **Podcasts:**¹ Feature in-depth interviews with experts, Q&A sessions with users, and roundtable discussions.
- **Newsletters / Substack:**² Deliver thought-leadership articles, technical deep-dives, policy analysis, and event recaps.

Organizations may optimize user engagement and reach by matching the style and depth of their content to the preferences of their audience. As recent work from rider studies have suggested passengers of AV platforms expressed discomfort with the presence of other unknown riders, unclear surveillance practices (e.g., whether audio was recorded), and feelings of exposure in the absence of a human presence (26). These issues transcend functionality and touch on emotional and psychological design, an area often underexplored in AV engineering. At end of the day this would only underscore the importance of human-centric design.

3.1.3 Additional Creative and Diverse Outreach Methods

Beyond Substack newsletters, podcasts, and social media, several **innovative outreach strategies** can further broaden the appeal of new mobility solutions:

1. **Pop-Up Demonstration Zones:** Temporary street closures or curbside exhibits where people can test e-bikes, e-scooters, or electric cars in a safe environment.
2. **Art Installations:** Collaborating with local artists to create interactive displays about sustainable mobility (e.g., murals, augmented reality installations).
3. **Community Festivals and Fairs:** Hosting thematic fairs focusing on “green living” or “smart city” solutions where attendees can experience the technology first-hand.
4. **Educational Comics & Graphic Novels:** Illustrated guides explaining how AVs or EVs work, especially effective for K–12 education or diverse literacy levels.
5. **Mobile Demo Units:** Touring exhibit trucks or buses outfitted with interactive stations, allowing hands-on exploration of new transportation technologies in multiple neighborhoods.

-
- 1 Podcasts have emerged as a highly engaging medium that offers both in-depth narrative and accessibility. With their widespread availability on platforms such as Apple Podcasts, Google Podcasts, YouTube, X (formerly Twitter), and Spotify, podcasts could provide a unique opportunity for transportation technology marketers to reach diverse audiences. Through formats such as interviews, panel discussions, and narrative storytelling, podcasts allow companies to delve into the nuances of emerging mobility solutions, share expert insights, and present authentic user experiences. The multi-platform distribution ensures broader reach and heightened accessibility, further strengthening public trust and awareness.
 - 2 Creative marketing channels such as Substack newsletters, specialized blogs, and long-form content platforms have become indispensable tools for engaging audiences seeking comprehensive insights. These channels enable brands to deliver in-depth analyses, exclusive interviews, and behind-the-scenes looks into the development of transportation innovations. By fostering a direct relationship with subscribers, platforms like Substack allow for consistent communication and community-building, offering content that goes far beyond typical social media posts. This detailed approach not only educates but also builds a loyal following among tech enthusiasts, policymakers, and consumers alike.

These creative tactics break out of the online-only mold, offering tangible ways to connect with local communities, highlight ease of use, and address concerns in person.

3.1.4 Brand Consistency

A consistent tone and messaging style across channels—whether serious and data-driven, or upbeat and community-focused—can build familiarity and trust (25). For instance, despite any political drama in 2024 and 2025 Tesla’s corporate brand has traditionally leaned in technological aspiration and environmental stewardship, which has resonated in its social media updates, podcasts, interviews, and newsletter communications, and have continued to advocate strongly for battery technology, EVs and solar protections at the federal level (27).

Yet, over time this can be complicated. For example, while Tesla’s corporate posture has emphasized climate benefits and pushed for federal support of battery, EV, and solar policy, its leadership has also signaled support—for restricting Chinese EV entrants to the U.S. market. For example, Elon Musk warned that without “trade barriers” Chinese automakers would “demolish” global rivals—a stance consistent with policies that ultimately manifested as a 100% U.S. tariff on Chinese EVs announced in May 2024 (28, 29). Such barriers may protect domestic producers, but they also dampen low-cost competition—tending to keep prices higher in the near term and, by extension, slowing broader EV diffusion in the U.S. market, so they may work in opposition to brand goals.

By contrast, China has established itself with a very EV-forward brand. The country has scaled electrification at an extraordinary pace, pairing industrial policy with intense price competition. As documented by International Energy Agency electric vehicles (BEV+PHEV) were roughly ~50% of new car sales in China versus about ~10% in the United States (30). Chinese brands are now expanding across Europe, Southeast Asia, and Latin America, while remaining effectively constrained in the U.S. by tariffs and content rules.

Similarly, Toyota’s corporate brand has undergone a notable evolution over the past decade, transitioning from a cautious adopter of partial electrification—through its long-running hybrid leadership—to a more explicit embrace of full battery-electric vehicles (BEVs) and a broader “Mobility for All” vision (31). Originally defined by its pioneering work with the Prius and hybrid systems, Toyota was at times criticized for its slow movement toward BEVs. However, since 2020 the company has expanded its investment portfolio to include a growing BEV lineup, hydrogen fuel cell vehicles, and advanced mobility concepts aimed at reducing emissions across multiple platforms.

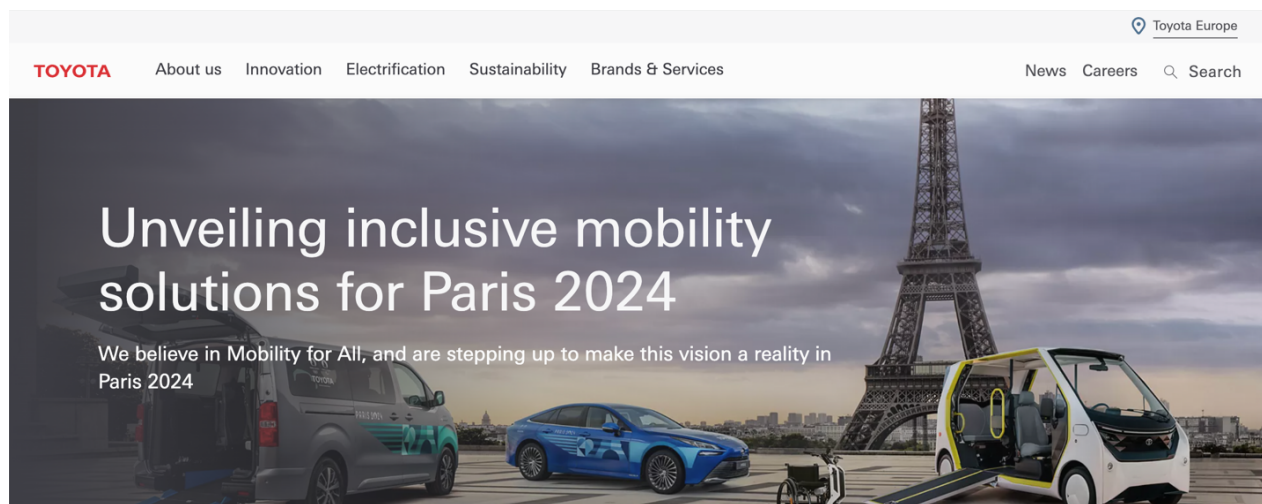


Figure 1. Toyota Mobility for All Campaign

Source: Toyota, 2025 <https://www.toyota-europe.com/news/2023/mobility-solutions-paris-2024>

The “Mobility for All” campaign, amplified global marketing at the time of the Tokyo 2024 Olympics and Paralympics, reinforcing Toyota not only as a carmaker but as a mobility solutions provider committed to an inclusive and sustainable future. It also attempted to connect to other aspects of mobility including battery plants, renewable energy integration, and inclusive design initiatives, positioning with a more diversified mobility product portfolio into the future.

3.2 EDUCATIONAL AND INFORMATIVE CONTENT

To reach a larger a broader and more audience, that wants deeper content, outreach and marketing work might combine conventional print media available for download or purchase in hardcopy in parallel with e-content in formats including:

1. **Explainer Videos and Podcasts:** Present how the technology works, featuring subject-matter experts or real-life user testimonies.
2. **Infographics and White Papers:** Reduce complexity by visualizing data on emissions reductions, cost savings, or safety statistics.
3. **User Testimonials and Case Studies:** Integrate real stories via Substack newsletters, YouTube vlogs, or short documentary-style videos.
4. **Interactive Webinars and Virtual Events:** Offer live demos, discussion panels, or Q&A sessions on novel platforms (e.g., Twitch or Clubhouse).
5. **Immersive Technologies (AR/VR):** Let potential users explore virtual test drives or route planning in a simulated environment.

3.4 BIDIRECTIONAL COMMUNICATION AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

3.4.1. The Importance of Direct Engagement

It is important to underscore that like many urban planning methods, social media and creative use of marketing for new and emerging transportation should start with community and engage in bi-directional communication. Direct contact with community and identification of needs and any systematic barriers they face should be done. In that light multi-channel social marketing should be complimentary with community-based participatory methods (CBPM) that have long been used in the healthy communities literature that involve direct community engagement through tabling, public events, etc. (32–34). These events could be either in person or online and could involve:

- **Ride-and-Drive Demonstrations:** Give attendees hands-on experience with EVs or AVs, encouraging them to share on social media and newsletters.
- **Local Partnerships and Pop-Ups:** Partner with community festivals, universities, or local businesses to showcase new mobility solutions.
- **Workshops and Hackathons:** Invite local developers or design enthusiasts to co-create mobility features or data-driven applications, as exemplified by some city-led micro mobility challenges (35).

3.4.2 Encouraging Dialogue, Feedback, and Two-Way Communication

After establishing this foundational relationship, bidirectional, two-way communication is essential for the success of social marketing endeavors to allow for true engagement. As is indicated in Table 1, information-based approaches can simply “tell” or “show”, raising awareness when barriers are low and motivation is already present, but they are one-way communication, offering limited opportunities for feedback (36). While this is good for knowledge transfer it does not allow for dialogue and for organizations to receive and address obstacles in real-time (or near real-time).

Table 1. Communication in Social Marketing (Adapted from Kassirer 2010)

Approach	Purpose	When to Use	Role of Communication
Information (“Tell me / show me”)	Raise awareness	Low barriers, motivated audience, unaware	Mostly one-way; may include limited engagement
Social Marketing (“Help me”)	Support change	Some barriers, motivated audience	Strong two-way communication to identify needs and co-develop solutions
Law (“Make me”)	Enforce change	High barriers, entrenched behaviors	Compliance-focused; communication explains rules and consequences

Social marketing by contrast, which does not have to rely on social media, provides more robust two-way communication where people are motivated to act. They identify real-world challenges and points of friction, co-create solutions with the “crowd” (37), which government

can act on and in turn builds trust back with the community. While at the far end of the spectrum the government can use its' police power or "law-based" approach to "make" people change this is typically seen more directive, where people are more entrenched and less collaborative, yet it can still benefit from clear, transparent messaging to build public understanding of the legitimacy of the government's role in enforcing these rules. Some techniques to operationalize this might include:

- **Social Media Posts & Polls:** Gauge user interests or preferences (e.g., desired new features in an EV).
- **Podcast Listener Q&A:** Solicit listener queries ahead of recording, then address them during the show.
- **Newsletter Responses:** Encourage subscribers to reply with questions or experiences that can be featured in future editions (9).



Figure 2. BVG and Adidas

Source: BVG

3.5 LEVERAGING INFLUENCER, PARTNER, AND CREATIVE COLLABORATIONS

3.5.1 Identifying the Right Partners

Partnerships can also extend beyond social media influencers. For example, Berlin public transit or Berliner Verkehrsbetriebe (BVG) and Adidas collaborated to design a shoe that functioned as an annual pass on metro system in Berlin which was used as a hip way to mobilize connectivity between transit use and walking (38). Ensuring alignment of values and audience demographics is crucial for effective collaboration. For example, Waymo identified Lighthouse for the Blind to help it spread messaging in the disabled and blind and low vision community (12). Other partner opportunities could include:

- **Podcast Hosts and Guest Contributors:** Popular podcasters in tech, urban planning, or sustainability.
- **Newsletter Cross-Promotions:** Co-author articles with municipal leaders, NGOs, or research institutions to deepen public trust and share new data.
- **Community-Focused Organizations:** Bicycle advocacy groups, clean-air coalitions, or local transit agencies.



Figure 3. Waymo and Lighthouse for the Blind

Source: Waymo

3.5.2 Co-Branded Campaigns

Joint campaigns with cities or environmental groups also underscore public benefits and harness broader marketing networks (39). They can be powerful reminders of local culture

and rider experience. For example, in 2025 SFMTA teamed with Standard Deviant Brewing and the supporter-owned San Francisco City Football Club (SFCFC) for the “Hop on Muni” Beer Crawl, complete with a limited “Hop on Muni IPA,” sticker game mechanics along specific routes, and Muni-themed prizes (40, 41). The agency extended its SFCFC partnership with the MUNI logo on kits and coordinated match-day travel messaging on Instagram. This maps to a similar brand partnership for LA Football Club with LA Metro (42).



Figure 4. SF MUNI Brand Partnership

Source: Author and Instagram <https://www.instagram.com/p/DG1jvWMuLeG/>

Beyond the US, Japan’s JR Group gamified content on their mobile app to drive engagement with “My Japan Railway” (43). They created a mobile stamp-collecting web tied to station histories and supported with special books and physical promo items. For classic metro systems like London’s tube network, Transport for London (TfL) continues to license its iconography across fashion and even beer collections (44). Even sports-led promotions like LAFC x Metro show how clubs can underwrite or nudge transit trips to events (42). These aren’t just stunts—they’re partnership ecosystems that convert affinity into ridership and retail behavior.

These partnerships can extend beyond rail, however. For example, BMW has long partnered with artists to celebrate breakthroughs in their automotive design from in their “Art Car” series having worked with individuals such as Andy Warhol and Roy Lichtenstein. In both 1991 and then again in 2024 they did a brand partnership with the renowned female South African artist Esther Mahlangu who is known her vibrant Ndebele geometric designs (45).

The idea for both parties was to feature the Mahlangu’s traditional patterns against the cutting-edge E Ink film on the vehicle, bringing to realizing the idea of the intersection of tradition and technology. Similarly, the National Drive Electric Month—organized by Plug In America, the Sierra Club, and other partners—has successfully raised EV awareness via local test-drive events, media coverage, and social media engagement, proving that collaboration can amplify impact (46).

3.6 DATA-DRIVEN INSIGHTS, ANALYTICS AND PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT

Tracking performance across platforms allows for evidence-based refinement, with analysis derived from each set of data. A/B testing of content length, posting frequency, and visual style can help determine what resonates best with each audience segment (39). Different key performance indicators or KPIs can be used for each channel. Some examples of performance indicators and metrics by channel include:

- **Social Media:** Engagement rates, follower growth, sentiment analysis, link click-throughs.
- **Podcasts:** Downloads, average listen duration, subscriber numbers, reviews.
- **Newsletters:** Open rates, click-through rates, subscriber retention, referral sources.
- **Events:** Attendance numbers, feedback from surveys, sign-ups, and post-event evaluations.

4. EXAMPLES OF MARKETING INITIATIVES

4.1 TESLA'S MULTI-CHANNEL MARKETING CAMPAIGN

Tesla's Organic Strategy introduces a disruptive approach that minimizes traditional advertising by leveraging social media engagement, live events, and direct CEO communication (27). Some of the key features of this campaign were:

- **CEO-Driven Messaging:** Direct engagement by Elon Musk through platforms such as Twitter to build personal connections with the audience.
- **Multi-Channel Presence:** Coordinated use of social media, live events, and online communities to reinforce the brand message.
- **Viral Content:** Ambitious and aggressive product updates and announcements that naturally generate widespread media buzz.

Tesla's overall campaign, which has primarily focused on their EV performance, battery technology, etc. and only recently (in 2023-2025) focused on aspects such as Cybertruck, rideshare and Cybercab has resulted in high brand recognition and a devoted consumer base, leading to rapid market adoption and a strong, almost cult-like following. Some of the learning outcomes and marketing principles this campaign involved were:

- **Disruptive Innovation:** Challenging conventional industry practices through non-traditional marketing channels such as X, Tiktok, Instagram and YouTube.
- **Viral Marketing:** Leveraging organic social media momentum to create shareable, buzz-worthy content.
- **Integrated Communications:** Ensuring a consistent brand voice across all channels to reinforce the overall message.

4.2 LIME & BIRD'S MICRO MOBILITY CAMPAIGNS

Lime & Bird's Micro Mobility campaigns have introduced electric scooters to urban environments using targeted digital advertising, pop-up events, influencer partnerships and celebrities. Some of the key features of this campaign have included:

- **Localized Engagement:** Tailored in-person and pop-up events and local activities that allow consumers to experience micromobility firsthand.
- **Interactive Technology:** Integration of mobile apps and real-time updates to enhance user experience and engagement.
- **Influencer Collaborations:** Partnering with local social media influencers to build credibility and drive adoption among urban millennials.

Lime in particular has capitalized on the celebrity ecosystem, making sure that numerous A-list figures are seen with their products in high-visibility contexts—from Harry Styles cycling on the streets of London to Timothée Chalamet arriving at the premiere of *A Complete Unknown* via bike (47). These appearances merge micromobility with cultural allure, positioning e-scooters as not just a functional transport mode but a cool lifestyle choice. The personalities who already drive trends in fashion, music, movies, etc. can help normalize mobility especially among younger urban demographics, *making travel about identity and social belonging along with getting from A to B.*



Figure 5. Timothée Chalamet Arriving at the Premiere of A Complete Unknown via Bike

Source: EuroNews



Figure 6. Harry Styles on a Lime

Source: Instagram <https://www.instagram.com/p/C6jHN76rJg6/>

In sum, these campaigns have accelerated the adoption of micro mobility solutions in urban centers by overcoming some initial skepticism and friction during the imitative flood of scooters from 2017-2018 (48). One of Lime's most exemplary campaign's has been the "Break Up with Your Car" Campaign, where users have pledged to shift away from car-based travel and embrace micromobility by pledging to reduce card swipes for gas or car-related expenses (49). This is similar to many TDM pledge programs aimed at reducing automotive travel through targeted marketing; which literature shows can be quite effective (15).

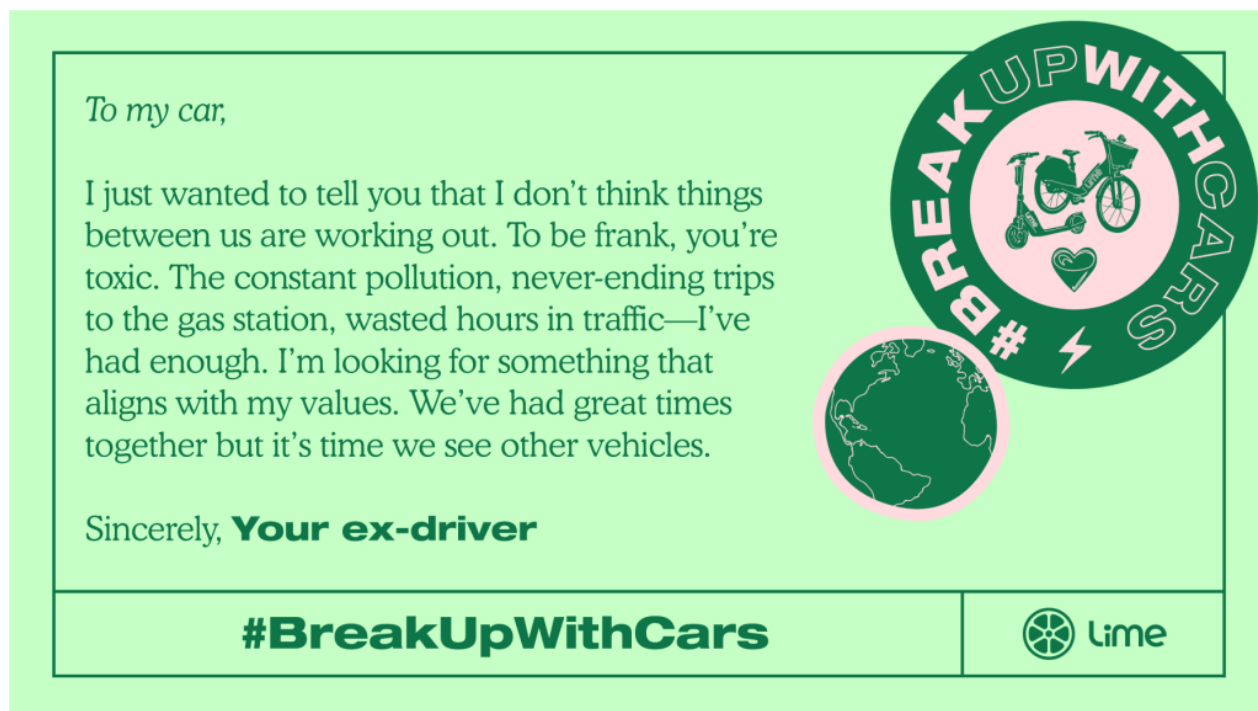


Figure 7. Lime's Break Up With You Car Campaign

Source: Lime

Framed like a breakup letter, the campaign uses emotional storytelling and sustainability messaging to reinforce behavioral change. Visually sleek and supported by clear calls to action, it blends a personal plea with an environmental, climate-conscious decision, both of which relate to aspects which have highlighted studies that look at the behavioral psychology of travel decisions (18). As a case study in educational marketing, it demonstrates how micromobility firms are now positioning themselves as lifestyle brands—using emotional resonance and narrative framing to connect transportation choices to identity and values.

Some potential learnings include:

1. **Social Influence & Network Effects:** Harnessing peer recommendations and community dynamics to drive rapid adoption.
2. **Localized Marketing:** Customizing messaging and events to meet the unique characteristics of each urban market.
3. **Experiential Marketing:** Creating memorable, hands-on experiences that stimulate word-of-mouth advocacy.

4.3 WAYMO'S "LET'S TALK SELF-DRIVING"

Waymo's "Let's Talk Self-Driving" campaign introduces autonomous vehicle technology through a blend of traditional media and interactive community outreach events (50). Some of the key features of this campaign were:

1. **Educational Initiatives:** Workshops and public demonstrations that demystify self-driving technology.
2. **Multimedia Outreach:** A balanced mix of radio, billboards, and digital content to reach a diverse audience.
3. **Community Engagement:** Local events that invite direct interaction with the technology, addressing safety and usability concerns.

The campaign has successfully built public trust and enhanced understanding of autonomous vehicles by addressing consumer fears directly. Some of the learning outcomes and marketing principles this campaign involved were:

1. **Transparency & Trust-Building:** Using clear, consistent messaging to overcome skepticism.
2. **Integrated Marketing Communications:** Seamlessly combining traditional and digital channels to educate the public.
3. **Customer-Centric Engagement:** Focusing on interactive experiences to alleviate fears and demonstrate real-world application.

4.4 NATIONAL DRIVE ELECTRIC MONTH

National Drive Electric Week introduces a co-branded grassroots initiative that promotes electric vehicles through local test drives, group rides, and extensive social media amplification (46). Some of the key features of this campaign were:

1. **Community-Based Events:** Local test drives and group rides that enable firsthand experiences with electric vehicles.
2. **Co-Branding and Partnerships:** Collaborations among multiple organizations to extend reach and credibility.
3. **Social Media Amplification:** Extensive use of social platforms to share real-time event updates and user-generated content.

The campaign has effectively raised public awareness and accelerated the adoption of electric vehicles across various regions by leveraging local advocacy. Some of the learning outcomes and marketing principles this campaign involved were:

1. **Community-Based Social Marketing:** Empowering local communities to advocate for sustainable practices.
2. **Co-Branding:** Using strategic partnerships to enhance credibility and reach.

3. **User-Generated Content:** Encouraging participants to share their experiences, thereby reinforcing the campaign's message.

4.5 GM CRUISE AUTONOMOUS CAMPAIGN

GM Cruise's Autonomous Campaign introduces its self-driving technology through public demonstrations and detailed digital storytelling that emphasize safety and reliability. Some of the key features of this campaign were:

1. **Safety Emphasis:** Highlighting rigorous safety protocols and performance data to build consumer confidence.
2. **Public Demonstrations:** Live test drives and interactive displays that showcase the technology in real-world settings.
3. **Data Transparency:** Sharing measurable metrics and performance figures to validate claims and build trust.

The campaign has improved public perception of autonomous vehicles by addressing safety concerns and demonstrating technological reliability. Some of the learning outcomes and marketing principles this campaign involved were:

1. **Transparency:** Openly sharing data to build credibility and trust.
2. **Integrated Marketing:** Coordinating live events with digital storytelling for a cohesive narrative.
3. **Evidence-Based Messaging:** Relying on tangible performance metrics to address consumer fears.

4.6 UBER ELEVATE AERIAL MOBILITY INITIATIVE

Uber's Elevate initiative introduces the concept of urban aerial mobility through futuristic branding, immersive demonstrations, and visionary storytelling. Some of the key features of this campaign were:

1. **Futuristic Branding:** Sleek, forward-looking visuals that capture the imagination of potential users.
2. **Immersive Experiences:** Demonstrations and conceptual videos that visualize the future of urban transport.
3. **Multi-Channel Storytelling:** Combining digital content with live events and interactive experiences to communicate the concept.

The initiative has sparked significant media attention and public interest in the possibilities of aerial mobility, despite ongoing debates about feasibility and regulation. Some of the learning outcomes and marketing principles this campaign involved were:

1. **Experiential Marketing:** Creating a compelling, immersive experience that engages the audience's imagination.
2. **Visionary Communication:** Positioning a futuristic concept in a tangible, relatable way.
3. **Multi-Channel Integration:** Leveraging various media formats to reach a diverse audience.

4.7 BMW ELECTRIC CAMPAIGN

BMW's i Electric Campaign introduces the brand's commitment to sustainable innovation through a combination of high-quality digital content, experiential events, and premium branding. Some of the key features of this campaign were:

1. **Sustainability Messaging:** Emphasizing eco-friendly innovation and environmental responsibility.
2. **Premium Content:** Utilizing sophisticated videos, interactive online experiences, and exclusive events to showcase the product.
3. **Consistent Brand Voice:** Maintaining an upscale, unified message across all channels to reinforce brand identity.

The campaign has reinforced BMW's image as a leader in sustainable luxury, resulting in strong consumer engagement and enhanced brand loyalty. Some of the learning outcomes and marketing principles this campaign involved were:

1. **Sustainability Branding:** Aligning the product with eco-friendly values and forward-thinking innovation on materials and total vehicle lifecycle.
2. **Premium Positioning:** Delivering high-quality, aspirational content that resonates with an upscale audience.
3. **Consistency:** Ensuring a unified, cohesive message across both digital and offline channels with image and language.

4.8 QUANTITATIVE COMPARISON TABLE

The following table provides a quantitative analysis of the seven examples. For each metric, campaigns were evaluated based on their performance in key areas (such as brand awareness, engagement, and innovation perception). The best-performing campaign for a given metric received a score of 10, the second best a 9, and so on, with the lowest-

performing campaign receiving a score of 4. This approach ensures a consistent, comparative ranking across all metrics.

Table 2. Comparison of Social Marketing Campaigns

Metric	Tesla's Marketing Campaign	Lime & Bird's Momentum	Waymo's "Let's Talk Self-Driving"	National Drive Electric Week	GM Cruise Autonomous Campaign	Uber Elevate Aerial Mobility	BMW i Electric Campaign
Brand Awareness	10	7	6	5	4	8	9
Engagement & Interaction	9	10	6	8	5	7	4
Innovation Perception	10	5	7	4	8	9	6
Consumer Trust Building	6	5	10	7	9	4	8
Clarity of Messaging	5	6	7	10	9	4	8
Multi-Channel Integration	10	5	7	9	4	8	6
Creative Outreach	7	9	5	8	4	10	6
Community Engagement	7	9	8	10	5	4	6
Quantitative Reach	10	6	7	5	4	8	9
Data-Driven Optimization	8	5	9	6	10	4	7
Regulatory & Ethical Alignment	6	5	10	7	9	4	8
Overall Effectiveness	10	9	8	7	6	5	4
Total Score	8.2	6.8	7.5	7.2	6.4	6.3	6.8

Note: The ratings are based on a comparative qualitative assessment of each campaign's strategy, outcomes, and adherence to effective marketing principles.

5. NEW & EMERGING TRENDS IN SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING

A significant trend in digital marketing has been the emergence of more fast-paced, short and “snackable” content. In 2024 Oxford’s Word of the Year was “brainrot” referring to the definition of this style—content designed to engage attention through rapid, addictive consumption, often to the point of intellectual disengagement or passive scrolling (51). This phenomenon has critical implications for marketers, particularly within the transportation technology sector, as it redefines how audience attention and engagement must be strategically captured and maintained. Research shows that simply posting an interactive selfie photo can boost engagement 38% (52), and when social content includes engaging graphics and text engagement and reposts can exceed 200% (53).

5.1 UNDERSTANDING BRAINROT STYLE

Brainrot-style content capitalizes on short attention spans, prioritizing highly stimulating, often low-effort consumable media. Typically characterized by:

- Short-form videos and clips (e.g., TikTok, Instagram Reels, YouTube Shorts).
- Quick cuts and rapid visual transitions.
- Humorous, sensational, or shocking content.
- Frequent repetition of themes, sounds, or memes to reinforce recall.

For example brainrot has been used for autonomous sensory meridian response or ASMR-driven content, primarily on Tiktok. ASMR videos usually use sounds and soundscapes that create a soothing and satisfying visual / audible experience. By incorporating gentle sounds and visuals, the goal is taps into the viewer’s desire for relaxation, encouraging prolonged engagement and repeat viewing. A good, and humorous transportation example is one from U-Trak Logistics in Wellesbourne, England where things like scratching and clicking on a “lorry” are used in a soft and repetitious way to create hypnotic user experience (54).

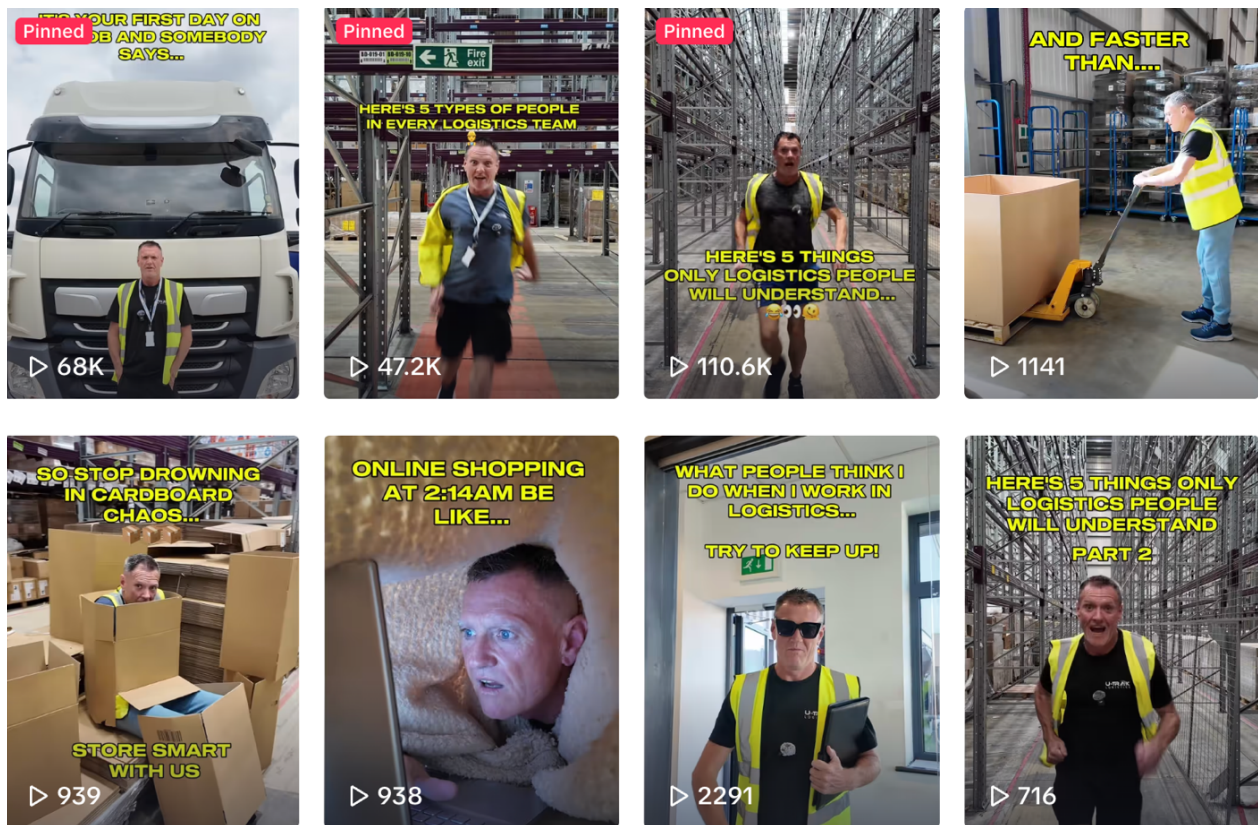


Figure 8. U-Trak Logistics on TikTok

Source: <https://www.tiktok.com/@utrak.logistics>

Shared screen format is also common on as an emerging use, sometimes compounded with gameplay footage on Minecraft or other video games with reaction content. It can have multi-layered content catering viewers' preference for multitasking stimuli, effectively holding attention and increasing content consumption. This can amplify ASMR techniques offering additional stimulation to music or repetitive sounds and visuals. A good and highly polished production example of this from TikTok user Inès Simon who uses the technique simply and repetitively to illustrate an urban experience on a scooter (55).



Figure 9. Split Screen Format

Source: <https://www.tiktok.com/@inessimonn/video/7370891870068657440>

These styles can also be used with popular memes and trending audio clips to create a humorous montage. By aligning with current internet humor, the content becomes shareable and can resonate with a broad audience, enhancing its viral potential. One example that is highly relevant to the new and emerging mobility space was one that humorously featured a Waymo bug where cars were honking at each other at a parking dept, highlighting a seemingly absurd interaction between self-driving cars (56).



Figure 10. Waymo Explainer on Tiktok

Source: <https://www.tiktok.com/@kylasux/video/7438539619349613831?q=waymo%20explainer&t=1755246640009>

There have also been informational explainer, meme-based approaches to explain trends in automation and mobility. For example, a TikTok from Kyla Javier uses cultural memes and humor to autonomous vehicles in a humorous and exaggerated context (57). By combining operational footage with clear narration, it educates viewers about the company's approach, catering to an audience interested in understanding self-driving technology. The content resonates with a younger, trend-savvy audience, enhancing engagement through relatability.

5.2 CASE STUDIES AND EXAMPLES OF EMERGING SOCIAL MARKETING

This content approach is optimized to capture user engagement instantly but poses ethical considerations concerning the quality and educational value of the content provided. For emerging transportation technologies, adopting aspects of brainrot-style marketing can significantly enhance audience reach, particularly among younger demographics and tech-savvy consumers:

- **Micro-mobility Platforms (e.g., Lime, Bird)** have successfully utilized rapid video loops showcasing humorous or relatable commuting scenarios to capture attention quickly and stimulate virality. Lime's viral TikTok videos have humorously portraying relatable frustrations of urban commuters have achieved millions of views and significantly boosted the brand's youth engagement metrics, but they also have proved very educational. For example, in a one 2025 TikTok post new vehicles arriving in Indianapolis are featured in a fun, fast paced way featuring the new curved handlebars (58).

- **Tesla** has indirectly benefited from brainrot-style engagement through memes, sensationalized CEO interactions, and viral product reveals, amplifying organic reach and recalls. This is despite that the style and memes sometimes run counter to the consistent “green” brand the company has traditionally used. In the Cybertruck Reveal they used a the viral moment of the Cybertruck window break, repeatedly shared through short, meme-like clips. This is a perfect example of brainrot-style virality. Despite initial embarrassment, it resulted in unprecedented pre-order numbers due to the sheer volume of exposure (27).
- **Waymo and Cruise** adopted shorter, visually engaging clips that highlight unexpected interactions with autonomous vehicles, emphasizing quick, attention-grabbing narratives; for example with their work with food banks, on sustainability or on disabled access (59–62). Some of Waymo’s recent work on social platforms focuses on short pieces on safety for multimodal roadway users for example quick, fast cuts with music and interviews with skateboarders riding along with autonomous vehicles, as well as celebrity rides with the likes of Ludacris and Missy Elliot (63, 64).

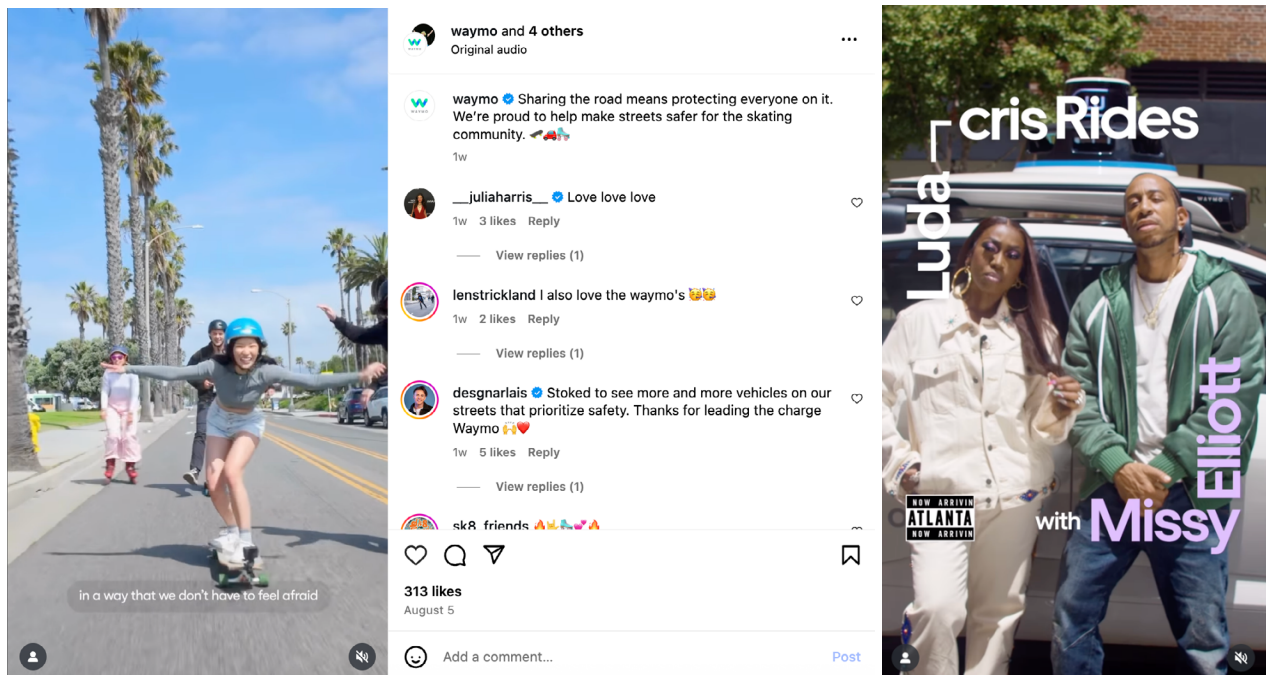


Figure 11. Recent Waymo Marketing

Source: Instagram

- **99% Invisible** focused on snow signage in Minneapolis (TikTok) They highlight features that use video projections to maintain visible street signage despite deep snow accumulation. The video simply features the host Kurt Kohlstedt walking across the street and showing the lighted design adaptation—elevated signs and specialized mounting on street poles—making sure the wayfinding remains functional in extreme weather. As part of an educational campaign, this short-form content exemplifies 99% Invisible’s strength in making invisible elements of the built environment visible and compelling. The informal yet informative tone, coupled with on-site footage, makes infrastructure education not only accessible but also entertaining. It models

how place-based storytelling can build broader public awareness of transportation and design decisions, particularly in challenging climates.

- **Amtrak's** viral “monster truck” ad on Instagram flips the script on typical rail marketing by borrowing the aesthetics and bombast of monster truck commercials using a brainrot style and applying them to train travel (65). The juxtaposition of a deep voice and hyper-masculinity is both humorous and jarring, creating a memorable, shareable and potentially viral piece of content. The speaks to a younger, meme-literate audience while still delivering core educational messages about convenience, speed, and environmental benefit.



Figure 12. Amtrak Summer Promo Brainrot Campaign

Source: <https://www.instagram.com/p/DLljDBroiMp/>

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the insights and learnings from our analysis of social media marketing and detailed best practices and emerging trends there are many lessons that can be learned. One of the clearest is to have a consistent brand and to maintain it to build trust. Also consistent across most examples is to use narrative and visuals. At the same time as visuals become increasingly addictive ethical standards become increasingly important.

Adhering to appropriate regulations and ethical guidelines is extremely important given the addictive nature of much online content and how they have been connected to feelings of well-being and self-worth (66). In Europe, GDPR has set the threshold for data protection and use of social media content (67), however guidelines also exist in the US established by the Federal Trade Commission to assist social media users and influencers in maintaining ethical use standards (68). Broadly, suggestions include:

1. **Accurate Claims:** Validate environmental and safety claims with credible data; leverage attention-grabbing tactics with accurate, responsible messaging. This particularly critical for new technologies where public trust and safety perception are paramount.
2. **Influencer Disclosures:** Clearly mark sponsored content or endorsements in social posts, podcasts, and newsletters.
3. **Consumer Protection:** Provide clear disclaimers about beta features or technical limitations (e.g., autonomous driving capabilities); always guide users towards more comprehensive and informative resources.
4. **Data Privacy:** Comply with relevant local and international data protection laws.

Clearly new social media platforms present both opportunities and pitfalls for communicating about transportation technology—and the rise of fast-paced, ironic, and often absurd “brainrot” content can be attention grabbing—but with appropriate ethical guardrails, credibility and trust can be maintained.

Planners, engineers, and social media managers cannot ignore these trends as audiences are increasingly drawn by these formats; from memes to split-screen format. The key is balance. Content should be produced in a way that resonates with TikTok and Instagram audiences while ensuring that substance and accuracy are never sacrificed. This requires conscious strategies—pairing short clips with educational follow-ups, making clear distinctions between playfulness and fact, and continuously analyzing whether engagement is translating into meaningful understanding. Done well, these approaches can harness the energy of new media without eroding public trust. The following recommendations highlight specific steps transportation professionals can take to build campaigns that are both dynamic and responsible, bridging the gap between viral attention and informed action.

1. Leverage Multi-Channel Integration:

- **Develop a cohesive content strategy** that aligns messaging across social media, traditional media, digital platforms, and experiential events.
- **Coordinate live events with digital campaigns** to ensure a seamless consumer experience. For instance, combine product demonstrations with interactive online sessions.

2. Prioritize Experiential and Community-Based Marketing:

- **Host interactive events and test drives** to provide hands-on experience with the technology.
- **Empower local communities** by partnering with local influencers and community organizations to drive word-of-mouth advocacy.

3. Enhance Transparency and Trust Building:

- **Communicate clear safety and performance data** to alleviate consumer concerns.
- **Facilitate open dialogue** through educational initiatives such as workshops and Q&A sessions that demystify the technology.

4. Utilize Creative and Visionary Storytelling:

- **Craft narratives that emphasize innovation** and future potential, using immersive visuals and conceptual videos to engage the audience.
- **Incorporate futuristic branding elements** to position the technology as groundbreaking, while maintaining clarity to ensure accessibility.

5. Implement Data-Driven Optimization:

- **Monitor Engagement Levels** and employ analytics rigorously to track content effectiveness and ensure that sensationalism does not dilute reliability.
- **Use analytics tools** to monitor engagement metrics across channels and continuously refine the campaign strategy.
- **A/B test different messaging formats and creative approaches** to determine the most effective tactics for reaching and influencing target audiences.

6. Adhere to Regulatory and Ethical Standards:

- **Ensure all claims are backed by credible data** and that all sponsored content is transparently disclosed.
- **Align with industry standards** and maintain a proactive approach to emerging regulatory guidelines.

Taken together, these recommendations synthesize the key learning outcomes from successful campaigns such as Waymo's cultivation of trust, Tesla's disruptive approach, and Lime's local engagement. As cases they emphasize that success comes not just from mimicking a platform or tactic, but from combining local resonance and credibility in ways that fit the unique context and brand voice of each technology or company. By integrating these principles elements, organizations can develop a robust marketing strategies that move beyond one-off posts to build sustained, authentic strategies to drive consumer awareness and adoption of new transportation technologies.

7. HYPOTHETICAL AV CAMPAIGN AND NEW CONTENT

In the context of the recommendation of the prior recommendations we developed a sequential action plan for an Autonomous Vehicle Awareness and Marketing Campaign. This provides an example of what an organization or agency might do to launch such a campaign. This plan builds on the learnings and recommendations from previous sections and outlines step-by-step what needs to be done. It is followed by example social media videos produced by the research team with notes highlighting how they resonate with audiences. While some of the “brainrot” videos we have created may be nudges in a direction too radical for many transportation agencies, it may also serve as a guidepost in how to better use lively new media that speaks to new audiences in ways that they want to be spoken to; effectively “moving the needle” of change by encouraging a bit more a rethinking of communication strategies.

1. Conduct Market Research & Audience Segmentation

- Identify target segments (e.g., tech enthusiasts, safety-conscious commuters, urban planners, regulatory bodies).
- Gather data on consumer perceptions, current awareness levels, and potential barriers to adoption.
- Analyze competitors’ campaigns and learn from their strengths and weaknesses.

2. Develop Clear Branding & Messaging

- Create a futuristic yet approachable brand identity that emphasizes safety, reliability, and sustainability.
- Craft core messaging that highlights key benefits (e.g., reduced congestion, enhanced safety features, environmental impact).
- Ensure messaging is consistent and tailored to different audience segments.

3. Plan a Multi-Channel Content Strategy

- **Digital Media:** Develop explainer videos, infographics, and detailed articles that break down complex AV technology into accessible insights.
- **Social Media:** Create teasers, behind-the-scenes content, and live Q&A sessions across platforms (Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn) to generate buzz.
- **Podcasts & Newsletters:** Produce a series of podcasts and newsletter editions featuring expert interviews, technical deep dives, and consumer testimonials.

4. Design Experiential Marketing Initiatives

- Organize local test drive events and interactive demonstrations in key urban markets.
- Implement immersive digital experiences (e.g., virtual test drives using AR/VR) to let potential customers “experience” the AV remotely.
- Consider pop-up demonstration zones in high-traffic areas to provide hands-on experiences.

5. Establish Strategic Partnerships & Influencer Outreach

- Collaborate with local influencers, industry thought leaders, and community organizations to extend reach and credibility.
- Engage regulatory bodies and safety experts to co-host events and webinars that address public concerns.
- Leverage cross-promotional opportunities with complementary brands (e.g., sustainability advocates or tech innovators).

6. Implement Data-Driven Analytics & Optimization

- Define key performance indicators (KPIs) for each channel (engagement, reach, conversion rates, event attendance).
- Set up real-time monitoring and feedback mechanisms (social listening, surveys, digital analytics) to track performance.
- Regularly review data to optimize messaging, adjust tactics, and A/B test creative elements.

7. Ensure Transparency & Regulatory Compliance

- Clearly communicate safety standards, testing protocols, and regulatory certifications in all promotional materials.
- Prepare clear disclosures and FAQs to address potential consumer concerns.
- Engage in proactive dialogue with regulators and consumer advocacy groups to build trust.

8. Launch the Integrated Campaign

- Roll out a coordinated launch across all selected channels simultaneously to create a unified impact.

- Utilize both online and offline events to maximize exposure and engagement.
- Activate influencer networks and partner channels to amplify the launch message.

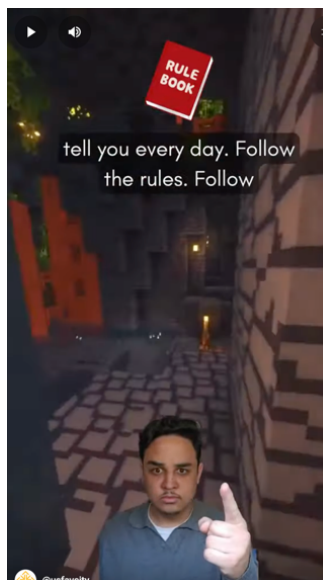
9. Monitor, Analyze, and Iterate

- Conduct a post-launch analysis to evaluate the campaign's performance against KPIs.
- Gather qualitative feedback from events, social media, and direct customer interactions.
- Iterate on the campaign by refining messaging, adjusting targeting, and enhancing experiential elements based on data insights.

10. Sustain Engagement and Build Long-Term Awareness

- Maintain ongoing communication through periodic updates, follow-up events, and continuous content creation.
- Reinforce consumer trust and brand loyalty by sharing success stories, improvements, and future innovations.
- Establish a long-term community engagement plan to support evolving consumer needs and technology advancements.

Building on this campaign roadmap we have created sample content for planners, engineers and social media managers in thinking of creating dynamic new campaigns using new forms of media like TikTok and Instagram. These videos can be used as resources, and more content is available for access and use online.



7.1 AN EXAMPLE “BRAINROT” AV SAFETY VIDEO

In this example social media video we use a the “brainrot” style around the theme of how autonomous vehicles work and follow rules. We use the brainrot style associated game-play commentary using Minecraft, memes and repetitive, quick cuts and rapid visual transitions. This applies the repetitious use of the phrase “follow the rules” to encourage recall, and unusual “sticky” memes that pop into the dizzying journey through the gamescape. This speaks to a younger, meme-literate audience while still delivering core educational messages about the safety, convenience, and ancillary benefits of AVs because they “follow the rules.”

<https://youtube.com/shorts/O8rzMINoQy4>



7.2 AN EXAMPLE “HOPECORE” AV FUTURE VIDEO

In this video we use the idea “what is something people usually get wrong about autonomous vehicles” and we reinterpreted that for a “hopecore” video trend that has been popularized on TikTok and Instagram Reels (69). The trend involves countermanding negative thoughts or ideas with positive ones, although in a comedic or humorous format. I replicated this approach with a countermanding of real ‘gas car frets’ with feasible ‘AV future benefits.’ The hopecore script and music are then overlaid on fast-paced images on AVs and traffic congestion to suggest the positive benefits of AVs on traffic and city environs. Recent production trends involving vocal speed-up and captioning are also featured.

<https://www.youtube.com/shorts/deGaWyzpbAQ>



7.3 AN EXAMPLE VIDEO EXPLAINING AN AV TO A CHILD

In this video we use the idea of Hot Wheels or toy cars crashing through streets that look similar to the same San Francisco streets Steve McQueen crashed through in 1968’s *Bullitt*. We use cold / gruff robotic narration with “alpha male” terminology and grammar structures that have become popular in American online media and memes, alongside pointed, action-oriented, and concise language. Original in-game footage from the popular driving and physics engine game *BeamNG* (BeamNG.drive) is taken as a backdrop—a game which has spawned a vehicle comparison meme itself—with emphasis on SF-like environs. Recent production trends involving vocal speed-up and captioning are also featured.

https://www.youtube.com/shorts/z_QQYI-7tu8

8. CONCLUSION

Marketing initiatives for new transportation technologies cannot remain static in a media environment that is anything but. As electrified, on-demand and autonomous mobility reshape transport, communication strategies must also evolve. The rise of short-form, rapid-fire, and often irreverent “brainrot” content highlights this shift. For transport professionals, these formats can feel radical, and perhaps even inappropriate. Yet our research suggests that even when the style is unconventional, such posts can act as nudges—grabbing attention, sparking curiosity, and reaching younger or harder-to-engage audiences.

We have produced somewhat “radical” videos as examples of this style. These efforts serve as guideposts for agencies and organization to reimagine their own outreach, even if they view ours as too radical for wholesale adoption. In that sense, if it provides a nudge then it has been an effective catalyst: moving the needle by challenging norms and suggesting new, livelier forms of communication.

8.1 BALANCING TRUST AND ENGAGEMENT

That said, credibility and trust remain central. Capturing attention through humor and spectacle is only useful if it leads to deeper understanding and genuine confidence in new mobility services. Best practices include pairing high-velocity content with educational follow-ups (which many times are in-person) and ensuring audiences have access to clear, accurate information. This balance is critical. Transportation initiatives that gain millions of views but fail to inform citizens risk undermining public trust not just in one project, but in the broader ecosystem of mobility innovation; in more cities and locations than just one. Success lies in blending formats. For example: using TikTok or Instagram to hook audiences; extending engagement through podcasts, newsletters; solidifying with pop-up demonstrations, tabling or community forums. Each layer in the process builds on the other, creating a narrative that excites, informs, and sustains attention over time.

Lessons from recent campaigns illustrate this. Tesla’s disruptive branding has kept it at the center of public discourse, even when controversial. Lime used neighborhood-level strategies to make micromobility accessible and familiar. Waymo has invested heavily in transparency, carefully building public trust in autonomous vehicles. These cases underscore that success does not come from copying one approach, but from weaving together disruption, local resonance, and credibility in ways that fit the technology, geography, and audience.

8.2 TOWARD A DIALOGUE-DRIVEN FUTURE

For planners, engineers, and social media managers, the conclusion is straightforward: campaigns must be multi-layered, iterative, and dialogic. They should integrate diverse media—from TikTok snippets to Instagram stories, podcasts, or pop-up events—into coherent strategies that both capture attention and deepen understanding. They must embed feedback loops, evaluating not only clicks and likes but also whether messages shift perceptions, foster trust, and encourage adoption. Most importantly, they must

embrace experimentation. Some attempts will fall flat or feel uncomfortable, but even failures generate insights about what resonates with the public.

Ultimately, the goal is not simply to broadcast information, but to create ongoing conversations. The most effective campaigns will recognize the agency of their audiences—riders, pedestrians, cyclists, and drivers who want to feel seen and respected in the shaping of mobility futures. If radical content helps open that door—even if it feels uncomfortable to some agencies—then it has already played a valuable role. Boldness and experimentation, when paired with intentionality and care, can yield communication strategies that are both disruptive and responsible.

The opportunity is clear: as media formats evolve, so too must the way we tell the story of transportation innovation. By weaving together creativity, credibility, and cultural awareness, transportation leaders can build campaigns that not only keep pace with change but help drive it. The future of mobility depends not only on vehicles, infrastructure, and policy, but on how we communicate those transformations to the world.

SUPPLEMENTAL VIDEOS

AN EXAMPLE VIDEO EXPLORING LEVELS OF AUTOMATION USING THE EXAMPLE OF TESLA FSD

In this example social media video we explore SAE level of automation and contrasts Tesla's Full Self-Driving (FSD) system, with Level 4 autonomous systems, which are capable of performing all driving tasks within defined operational design domains without human intervention. Through humor, juxtaposition, and deliberately "chaotic" visual rhythm, the video challenges common public misconceptions that equate Tesla's branding with true autonomy. The video the brainrot style of storytelling associated with content that is simultaneously trivial yet captivating—seeking to engage younger audiences while demystifying automation terminology. This underscores the strategic communication approach emphasized in this report: to embed credible scientific and policy insights within an intentionally high-engagement medium like Instagram, Tiktok or YouTube Shorts.

<https://www.youtube.com/shorts/BUt8UN9qzCw>

AN EXAMPLE VIDEO OF TALKING ABOUT “BACK WHEN AUTONOMOUS VEHICLES HIT THE ROAD” 50 YEARS IN THE FUTURE (2075)

In this short-form video we provide an inter-generational portrayal of a non-gendered narrator, “GrandThey,” recounting to a grandchild what it was like when autonomous vehicles (AVs) first began to proliferate—set in a fictionalized future year of 2075. The narrative situates the viewer in a future society that is humanistically technology-enabled, race-fluid, gender-fluid, robotically augmented, and open to new forms of human/automation interaction. The creative intent was to situate the emergence of AVs within a long-term historical arc and prompt the audience to move beyond the “momentary experiment” mindset of early automation hype and to explore the concept of trust in automation through a future-facing lens: by imagining what trust, integration, and societal adaptation might look like generationally, longitudinally—e.g. people were safer and drove better than humans. By adopting the brainrot style with rapid montage, stylized visuals, and dislocated, playful aesthetic we attempt to engage younger or non-expert audiences on topics of mobility while embedding deeper questions about technology, identity, and society.

<https://youtube.com/shorts/0CkDkqrVvGU>

AN EXAMPLE VIDEO IN ASMR FORMAT FOCUSED ON AV MISTAKES

In this video we employ a slightly different style focused on the question: What is it in our brain that makes us so unforgiving when an #autonomousvehicle makes a mistake?” The video a hybrid aesthetic that combines memes and gifs with an intentional Autonomous Sensory Meridian Response (ASMR) style soundscape — inviting the viewer into a slow-paced visual experience of a car gliding down a fall, lead-laden road, overlaid with text that explores human cognitive responses to automation errors. The ASMR elements (auditory calm, lingering visuals, minimal disturbance) creates a heightened “focus state” in the viewer — allowing more deep cognitive focus on the text and reflection on the core

question: why we harshly judge machine mistakes. The meme layer attempts to add some levity and opportunity for deeper reflection on trust, error, and human bias in AV systems.

https://youtube.com/shorts/142fSp_1n_o

APPENDIX 1. BEST PRACTICES IN FILMING FOR DIGITAL MARKETING

- **Selfie Mode and Intimacy:**

Studies indicate that self-recorded, selfie-style videos create a greater sense of intimacy and authenticity, leading to higher viewer engagement (Bakhshi et al., 2014; Li & Xie, 2020). Research suggests that such pictures and media alongside social content may boost engagement by up to 200% compared to text alone.

- **Facial Side, Camera Angles and Composition:**

Research on facial bias shows there's very little difference in face sides however camera angles play a crucial role in message delivery and trust. Low to mid-level angles or high angles maintain, less trust and are perceived as less attractive however most filming at eye-level with a slight upward tilt, tend to convey the most approachability and confidence (Baranowski & Hecht, 2018). Centering the subject helps ensure that the audience's focus remains on the key information.

- **Script Language and Tone:**

Video scripts should be clear, concise, and action oriented. Employing inclusive, positive language while avoiding overly technical jargon makes content more accessible and engaging. A conversational yet authoritative tone helps build rapport and effectively communicates the benefits of new transportation technologies.

- **Lighting and Color Composition:**

Effective lighting and balanced color schemes are essential for enhancing visual appeal and clarity. For instance, using strategic lighting angles—such as side or angled lighting—can create dramatic shadows and depth that not only emphasize facial features but also direct viewer focus to key elements of the frame. Research indicates clearly that brightness, color temperature, and chromaticity are predictors for brand quality and trust (Schielke, 2015).

- **Camera Movement and Dynamics:**

Incorporating smooth camera movements, such as subtle pans and gentle zooms, can capture audience attention and convey professionalism. Dynamic yet controlled camera movements improve message retention and overall viewer engagement but also determines focus (Hanmakyugh, 2023; Kepplinger & Donsbach, 1990).

- **Editing Techniques and Pacing:**

The editing style, including the balance between quick cuts and longer continuous shots, plays a vital role in maintaining viewer interest. Much relates to digital storytelling as suggested by Carrol who talks about creating signposts, cues and closes for a well-paced editing rhythm that reduces cognitive overload and enhances narrative engagement, ensuring that the message is delivered effectively (Carroll, 2023). This can be helpful when combining with more modern techniques such as the frenetic brainrot style we employ.

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APPENDIX 2. ADVERTISEMENT VIDEOGRAPHY EXAMPLES

1. Spike Jonze for Apple HomePod – *Welcome Home*

[Watch Here](#)

- **Creative Set Design & Spatial Transformation:**

The advertisement features a continuously morphing set that fluidly transitions between different environments. Spike Jonze uses digital effects and seamless set transitions to create a space that appears both physical and surreal. This creative design not only blurs the boundaries between reality and digital art but also symbolically represents the versatility and innovative nature of the HomePod. The shifting environment invites viewers to experience a journey of discovery, mirroring the transformative power of Apple's technology.

Effect: The immersive, dreamlike quality fosters a strong emotional connection with the viewer and reinforces Apple's brand identity as a leader in innovation and creative design.

- **Dynamic Camera Movement & Choreography:**

The use of fluid tracking shots—employing steadicam techniques—ensures that the camera moves smoothly in synchrony with the subject's movements and the evolving environment. The choreography of the camera not only follows the protagonist with precision but also captures the rhythm of the accompanying music. This alignment between camera motion and musical tempo amplifies the sense of flow and continuous motion throughout the ad.

Effect: By enhancing the feeling of movement and continuity, the dynamic camera work deepens emotional engagement and helps viewers feel part of the unfolding experience.

- **Expressive Use of Color and Lighting:**

Strategic lighting shifts and a carefully curated color palette are used to evoke different moods throughout the advertisement. Warmer hues are employed during moments meant to evoke comfort and familiarity, while cooler tones introduce a sense of otherworldliness during transformative sequences. The interplay of light and shadow, combined with vibrant contrasts, accentuates key narrative moments and guides the viewer's focus to important visual elements.

Effect: This meticulous use of lighting and color not only heightens the emotional impact but also underlines the innovative, futuristic qualities of the product.

2. Nike Football – *Winner Stays*

[Watch Here](#)

- **Rapid-Cut Editing & Multiple Perspectives:**

The advertisement employs a series of quick cuts and rapid shifts between various camera angles to capture the frenetic energy of a football match. Multiple perspectives—ranging from overhead shots to close-ups of players' expressions—are interwoven to create a mosaic of action. This fast-paced editing mirrors the speed and unpredictability of the sport, effectively pulling the viewer into the intensity of the game.

Effect: The technique immerses the audience in the heat of competition and conveys a dynamic, high-energy atmosphere that is synonymous with Nike's brand ethos.

- **Slow-Motion Sequences & Highlighting Key Moments:**

Amidst the rapid-fire editing, key moments are deliberately slowed down to emphasize critical plays and the emotional intensity of athletes' expressions. These slow-motion shots provide a moment of reflection amid the chaos, drawing the viewer's attention to the details of skill and determination.

Effect: The juxtaposition of fast-paced action with deliberate slow-motion segments intensifies the emotional impact of pivotal moments, enhancing the narrative of triumph and competition.

- **Vibrant Color Grading & High-Contrast Visuals:**

Post-production techniques involve bold color grading and the use of high contrast to make each frame visually striking. The saturated colors and deep contrasts not only make the visuals pop on screen but also reinforce the energetic, aspirational quality of the ad.

Effect: This visual strategy helps evoke excitement and a sense of urgency, aligning perfectly with Nike's message of athletic excellence and competitive spirit.

3. *Abduction* – Doritos

[Watch Here](#)

- **Fast-Paced Editing & Creative Transitions:**

Doritos' advertisement employs rapid-fire editing that leverages abrupt cuts and creative transitions. These techniques create a rhythm that is playful and unexpected, delivering the brand's humor and irreverence through visual surprise. The rapid transitions are interwoven with quirky, offbeat visual effects that shift the narrative in unpredictable ways.

Effect: This method generates a sense of unpredictability and fun, making the advertisement memorable while reinforcing the playful, bold personality of the Doritos brand.

- **Surreal Visual Effects & Digital Distortions:**

Digital distortions and visual effects are applied to morph and twist the imagery in unexpected ways. These effects serve to exaggerate normal scenes into surreal, almost fantastical sequences that challenge the viewer's expectations.

Effect: The surreal imagery enhances the comedic tone and creates a visually distinctive style that sets the ad apart from conventional advertising.

- **Bold Color Schemes:**

The use of vibrant, contrasting colors throughout the advertisement ensures that the visuals are immediately attention-grabbing. These bold colors work in tandem with the fast-paced editing to create an energetic, dynamic viewing experience.

Effect: The bold color palette not only contributes to the ad's energetic aesthetic but also aids in brand recognition, making the advertisement instantly memorable.

4. Old Spice – Questions

[Watch Here](#)

- **Exaggerated Visual Style & Quirky Camera Angles:**

Old Spice's campaign utilizes unconventional camera angles—often off-center or extreme close-ups—to create a visually quirky and humorous style. This technique exaggerates facial expressions and gestures, contributing to the ad's surreal, tongue-in-cheek narrative.

Effect: The unconventional angles break the viewer's expectations, enhancing the humor and reinforcing the brand's unique, memorable identity.

- **Rapid Editing & Dynamic Transitions:**

Quick, dynamic cuts and inventive transitions keep the pace brisk throughout the advertisement. The editing style is deliberately energetic, constantly shifting focus and perspective to maintain a sense of spontaneity and humor.

Effect: This editing approach ensures that the viewer remains engaged and that the ad's unpredictable nature is communicated effectively.

- **Bold Sound Design & Music:**

Complementing the visuals, the advertisement features a distinctive, off-beat musical score and sound effects that amplify the humor. The sound design is integral to creating the ad's playful and energetic mood.

Effect: The combination of unconventional visuals and bold sound design enhances the overall impact, making the advertisement both entertaining and instantly recognizable.

5. Dove – *Real Beauty Sketch Commercial*

[Watch Here](#)

- **Documentary-Style Close-Ups & Natural Lighting:**

Dove's campaign makes extensive use of intimate close-ups and natural, soft lighting to capture genuine expressions. The focus is on the unfiltered, raw emotions of real people, which is further enhanced by a documentary-style aesthetic.

Effect: This approach creates a sense of authenticity and vulnerability, inviting viewers to connect emotionally and challenge conventional beauty norms.

- **Deliberate Pacing & Minimalist Set Design:**

The editing in this advertisement is intentionally slow-paced, allowing each moment to resonate. The minimalist set design removes any distractions, ensuring that the focus remains solely on the individuals and their natural beauty.

Effect: This simplicity underscores the campaign's message of authenticity and self-acceptance, making it both powerful and relatable.

- **Emotional Voice-Over & Visual Simplicity:**

A gentle, sincere voice-over narration accompanies the visuals, reinforcing the narrative of real beauty. The combination of clear, uncluttered visuals with heartfelt commentary builds a strong, emotional connection with the audience.

Effect: The voice-over acts as an empathetic guide, deepening viewer engagement and underscoring the ad's social message.

6. Google – *Year in Search 2020*

[Watch Here](#)

- **Dynamic Montage & Rapid Transition Sequences:**

Google's advertisement uses a montage format that rapidly transitions between diverse global events and human experiences. This sequence is carefully crafted to encapsulate the emotional rollercoaster of the year.

Effect: The rapid transitions effectively evoke a wide range of emotions, reflecting the year's complexity and uniting the audience through shared experiences.

- **Integration of Real Data Overlays:**

On-screen overlays featuring statistics and search trends are integrated into the narrative, blending factual data with emotional storytelling.

Effect: These data elements add credibility and context, highlighting Google's central role in connecting people with information during challenging times.

- **Consistent Color Grading & Cinematic Music:**

A unified color palette and an inspirational musical score create a cohesive and emotionally charged viewing experience.

Effect: This consistency ties together the diverse visual elements, enhancing the overall impact and resonance of the ad.

7. Coca-Cola – *Share a Coke*

[Watch Here](#)

- **Personalized Visuals & Close-Up Shots:**

The campaign features close-up shots of Coke bottles with individual names, giving a personal touch that resonates with each viewer.

Effect: The personalization strategy makes consumers feel seen and valued, fostering a strong emotional connection with the brand.

- **Warm, Inviting Color Palette:**

The use of warm hues and soft lighting creates an inviting, nostalgic atmosphere that evokes positive memories and emotions.

Effect: This color strategy reinforces the brand's cheerful, inclusive identity and encourages viewer engagement.

- **Seamless Integration of User-Generated Content:**

By incorporating authentic testimonials and images contributed by real consumers, the ad creates a community-driven narrative that feels genuine and relatable.

Effect: This integration builds trust and authenticity, making the advertisement a shared, collective experience.

8. *Dumb Ways to Die*

[Watch Here](#)

- **Distinctive Animated Style & Bright Color Schemes:**

The advertisement employs a quirky, cartoon-style animation with vivid colors and exaggerated character designs. The choice of animation allows for creative exaggeration that would be difficult to achieve with live action.

Effect: This playful visual style makes the serious safety message both engaging and accessible, particularly for a younger audience.

- **Fast-Paced Editing & Catchy Musical Score:**

The ad uses rapid montage editing synchronized with a catchy, humorous song. The quick cuts and rhythmic visuals work together to keep the viewer's attention fixed on the message.

Effect: The synergy of editing and music enhances message retention, making the safety message memorable.

- **Simplified, Exaggerated Character Design:**

Characters are designed with bold, simplified features that emphasize their actions and expressions. This style of animation ensures that the core safety message is communicated clearly without visual clutter.

Effect: The simplicity and exaggeration in character design make the ad's message both clear and entertaining, increasing overall recall.

9. *Cadbury's Gorilla Advert – Cadbury's Gorilla Advert Aug 31st 2007*

[Watch Here](#)

- **Unconventional Narrative & Minimal Dialogue:**

The advertisement adopts a non-traditional narrative approach that relies heavily on visual storytelling and an iconic musical score (Phil Collins' "In the Air Tonight"). The minimal use of dialogue forces the visuals and music to carry the narrative.

Effect: This minimalist narrative creates a sense of intrigue and leaves a lasting impression, making the advertisement stand out through its simplicity.

- **Dramatic Use of Slow Motion & Close-Ups:**

Slow-motion sequences and tight close-ups are used to focus on the intensity of the gorilla's drumming performance. The deliberate pacing allows viewers to absorb the intricate details of the performance.

Effect: This technique builds dramatic tension and creates a hypnotic visual experience that makes the ad highly memorable.

- **Bold Contrast in Lighting & Dynamic Camera Movements:**

High-contrast lighting paired with fluid, dynamic camera movements accentuates the performance's energy and visual impact. The interplay of light and shadow enhances the dramatic quality of the visuals.

Effect: This combination not only highlights key moments but also reinforces the overall high-energy, innovative spirit of the campaign.

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William Riggs, PhD, AICP, LEED AP is a professor at the University of San Francisco and Director of the Autonomous Vehicles & the City Initiative. A global expert on urban technology, future mobility, and sustainable design, he is driven by a vision to shape the built environment for good. His work bridges academia, government, and industry, spanning autonomous vehicle research with Waymo and Cruise, sustainable community planning with at the Coast Guard, UC Berkeley and ARUP, and large-scale mobility projects across Europe. Riggs has authored more than 100 publications and three books, including *End of the Road: Reimagining the Street as the Heart of the City*. His research and commentary have been featured in *The Economist*, *Wall Street Journal*, *The New York Times*, PBS, and others. Alongside his academic role, he advises startups, funds, and design ventures focused on ESG and sustainable infrastructure, and he is the founder of the blockchain community development non-profit SFLuv and sits on the Transportation Research Board Committee on Roadside Landscape and Environmental Design, Operations and Maintenance.

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Caillou Dasalla is a masters candidate in Urban & Public Affairs at the University of San Francisco. His academic focus is on California state legislative and fiscal structures, with particular interest in the state budget. His forthcoming thesis examines the avenues, depth, and implications of fiscal literacy among California legislative staff, especially in the context of the state's recent history of citizen initiative-making. Beyond Urban & Public Affairs, Dasalla is a working librarian with deeply held concern for 21st century media literacy. These broader interests in responsible technology use and adaptation underpin his work as a research assistant for the Autonomous Vehicles & the City Initiative at USFCA.

CAYDEN ROONEY

Cayden Rooney is a Research Assistant at the University of San Francisco, where he studies Business Analytics with minors in Economics and Music. His research work under Professor William Riggs focuses on transportation technologies such as autonomous vehicles, including work with the Autonomous Vehicles and the City Initiative. He is particularly interested in the intersection of data science and technology in shaping the future of mobility and sustainable cities. Most recently, Cayden is working on building AI tools for urban planning solutions at Urban Innovate, and is also on the board at the SFAI club at the University of San Francisco.

VAASU BHARTIA

Vaasu Bhartia is a technology entrepreneur and researcher passionate about leveraging artificial intelligence and data-driven solutions to address real-world challenges. He is the Founder of Saki AI, a startup building innovative approaches to information access and sales. Previously, Vaasu led growth and strategy at Gleen, scaling its pipeline from zero to \$500K in under six months, and at Electron, where he contributed to B2B

expansion and operational automation. Beyond startups, he has held leadership roles at the Harvard Project for Asian and International Relations (HPAIR), where he negotiated major sponsorships and built global partnerships, and conducted research with NASA, developing prototypes and publishing work on space waste management systems. He has also founded ventures such as Gift a Melody and DCode International, reflecting his interest in combining creativity, education, and technology. Vaasu holds a Master's in Entrepreneurship and Innovation from the University of San Francisco and a Bachelor's in Computer Science (AI & ML) from Delhi University. global collaboration.

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