



# The Pause



Reaching TV viewers during can't-miss moments

**DIRECTV**  
ADVERTISING

**M/GNA** MEDIA TRIALS

Advertisers may think of **pausing**  as a break. But for viewers, pausing is a way to stay **engaged** 



# Pausing is a natural, frequent behavior that transcends platform



91%

pause 'all the time'  
or 'sometimes'  
while watching  
**Streaming TV**

⋮

70%

pause 'all the time'  
or 'sometimes'  
while watching  
**Traditional TV**

# And the vast majority are open to seeing ads when paused

Openness to seeing pause ads  
- % Very/Somewhat Open



Gen Z

75%



Millennial

76%



Gen X

72%



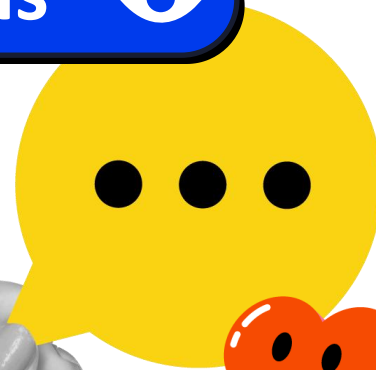
Boomers

59%



What do advertisers need to know about viewers' and **perceptions** of pause ads?

**mindset**



# Our research

A **media diary** capturing viewer behavior and attitudes toward pause moments and pause ads

## METHODOLOGY

**Recruitment:** Participants were recruited on both weekdays and weekends to ensure a representative sample

- Adults, aged 18+
- Sample size = 2,427

**Qualifiers:** Must have watched ad-supported TV in the past 24 hours. Evenly split: 50% primarily watched sports, 50% primarily watched entertainment content

**Media Diary:** Participants completed an online diary detailing their TV viewing over the past 24 hours

**Session Feedback:** Participants answered questions about pause behavior, openness to and perceptions of pause ads

## CONTENT TYPES EXPLORED



**Sports** defined as live sports, replays & highlights, sports talks, etc.



**Entertainment** defined as comedy, romance, drama, horror, and action

## TV TYPES INCLUDED



Traditional TV



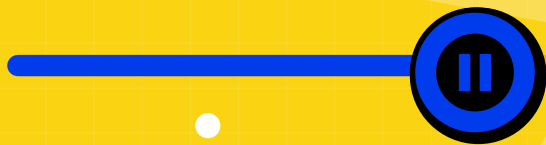
Paid Streaming TV



Free Streaming TV

# Behind Pause

# The



# Pausing is a signal of interest. It is driven by care, not distraction

## Top reasons why people pause:

- 1. Didn't want to miss an important scene*
- 2. Wanted to rewind and rewatch something important*
- 3. Were waiting for someone else to join/watch with me*



Paused to avoid missing out on what they're watching

*Net score*

**81%**

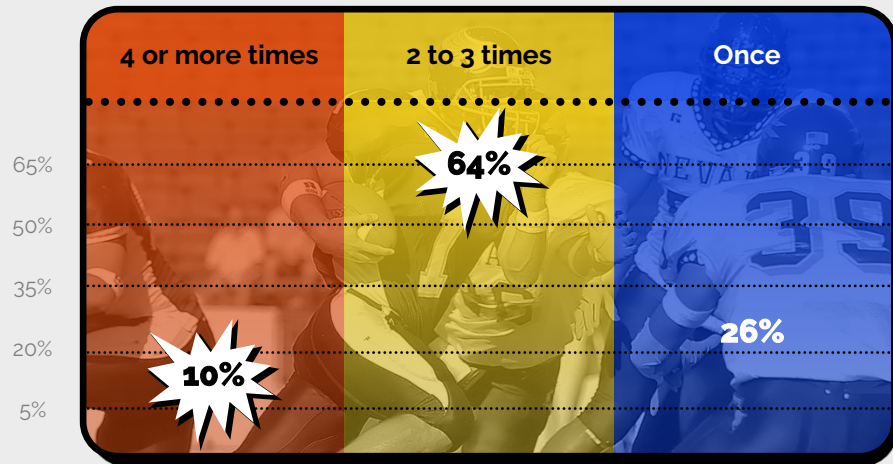


# Viewers pause in both content types, more frequently during sports

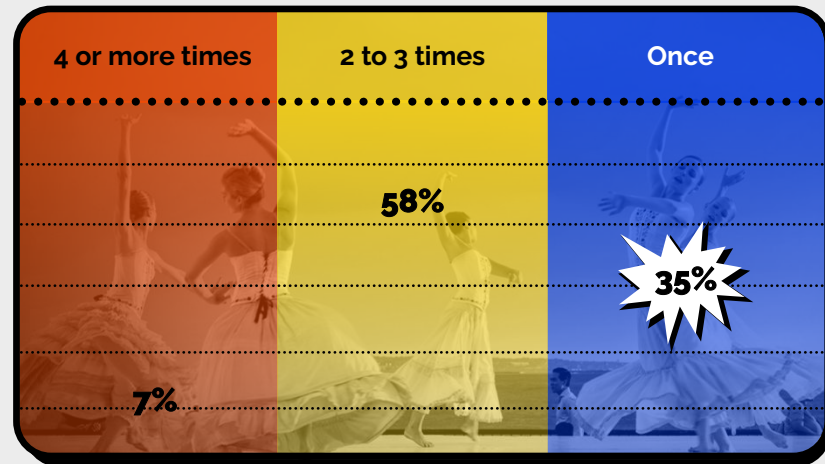
When viewers watch sports, they're more likely to pause multiple times, reflecting a desire to control the viewing experience and not miss key moments

Number of times viewers paused % Selected

## Sports



## Entertainment

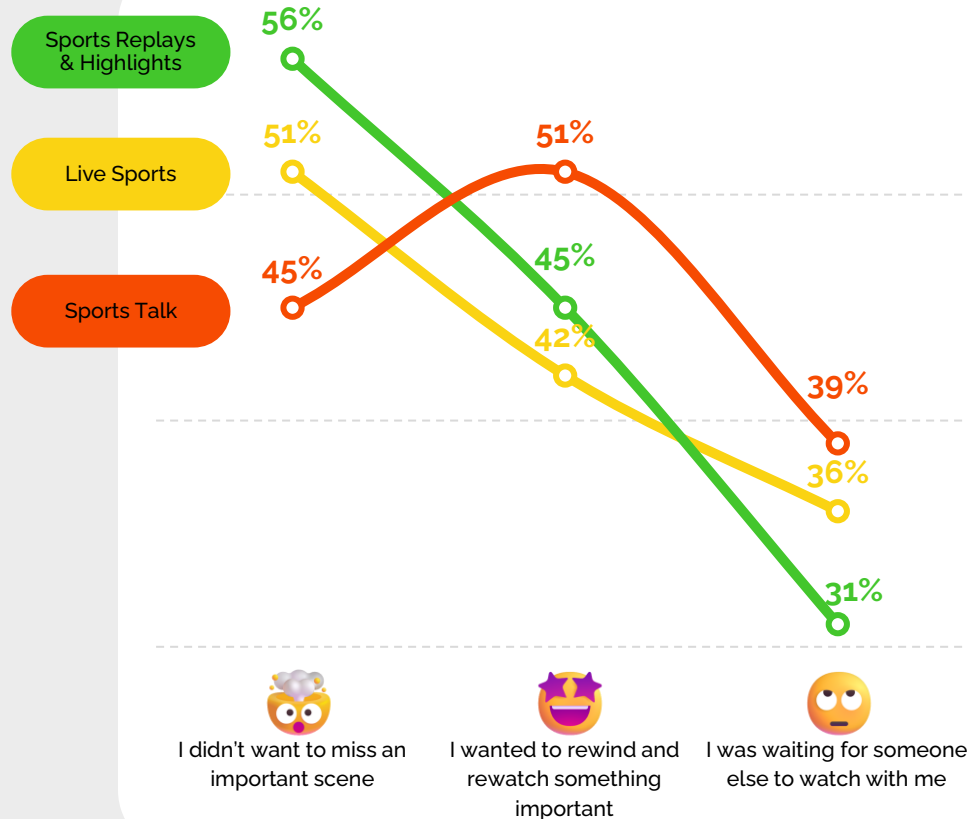


# Across all types of sports content, viewers pause to stay engaged

Live sports and highlights drive more pausing to avoid missing key moments due to their fast-paced nature, while sports talk shows prompt rewatching because they're more passive and conversational

## Reasons people paused in sports content

% Selected



Among those who paused in sports content, n= 299

Q: Why did you pause? – Select all that apply

Live Sports (e.g., games, matches, races, tournaments happening in real-time)

Sports Replays & Highlights (e.g., game recaps, condensed games, highlight reels)

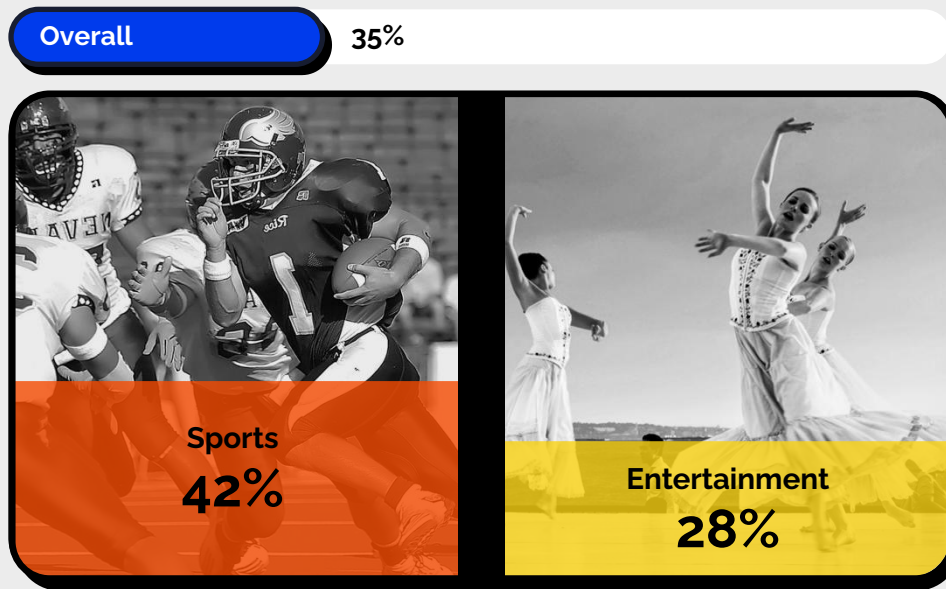
Sports Talk & Analysis (e.g., post-game shows, sports news, debate shows)

# Pausing doesn't mean walking away. Over 1/3<sup>rd</sup> stay in front of the screen

Viewers are more likely to stay put during a pause in sports content than in entertainment content

Didn't step away after pausing

% Selected

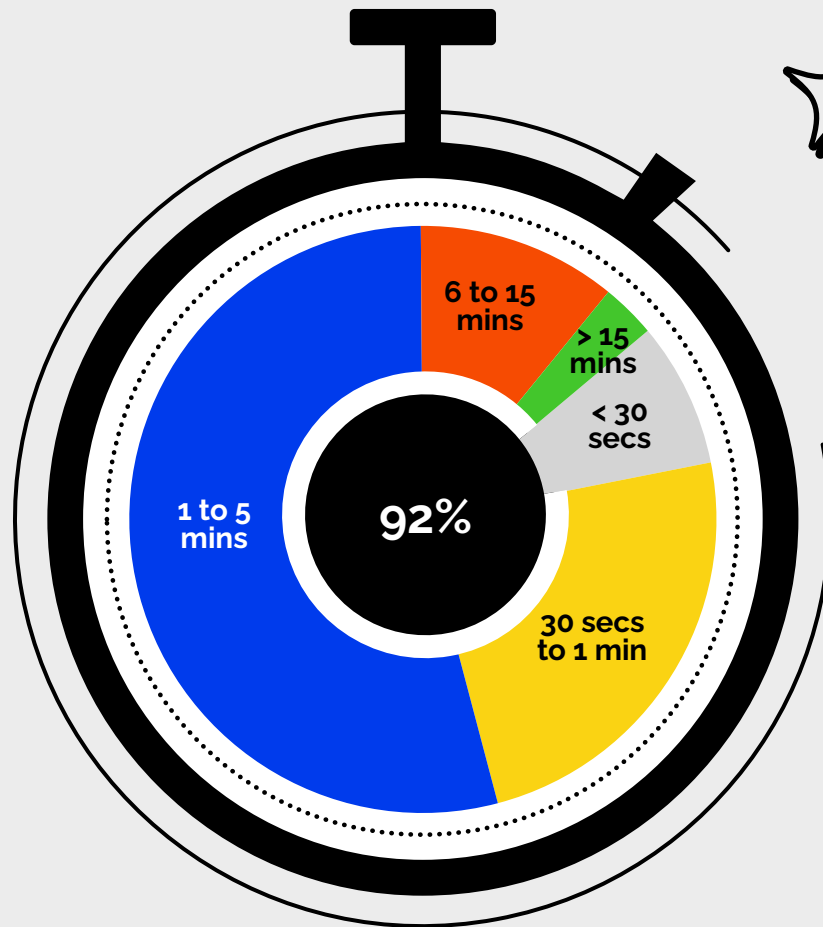
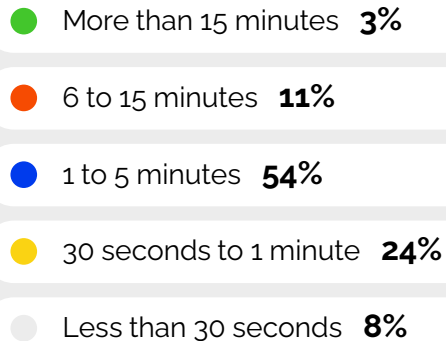


# The vast majority remain paused longer than 30 seconds

Creating an opportunity for pause ads as they can only appear after 30 seconds

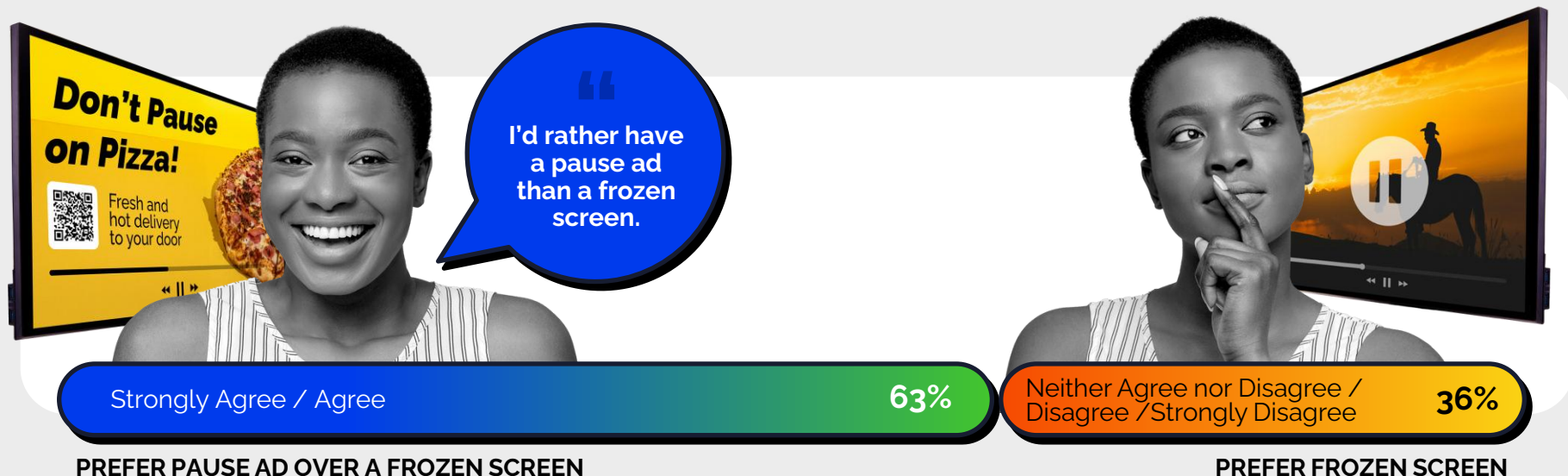
## How long did people pause

% Selected



# Viewers welcome pause ads over a frozen screen

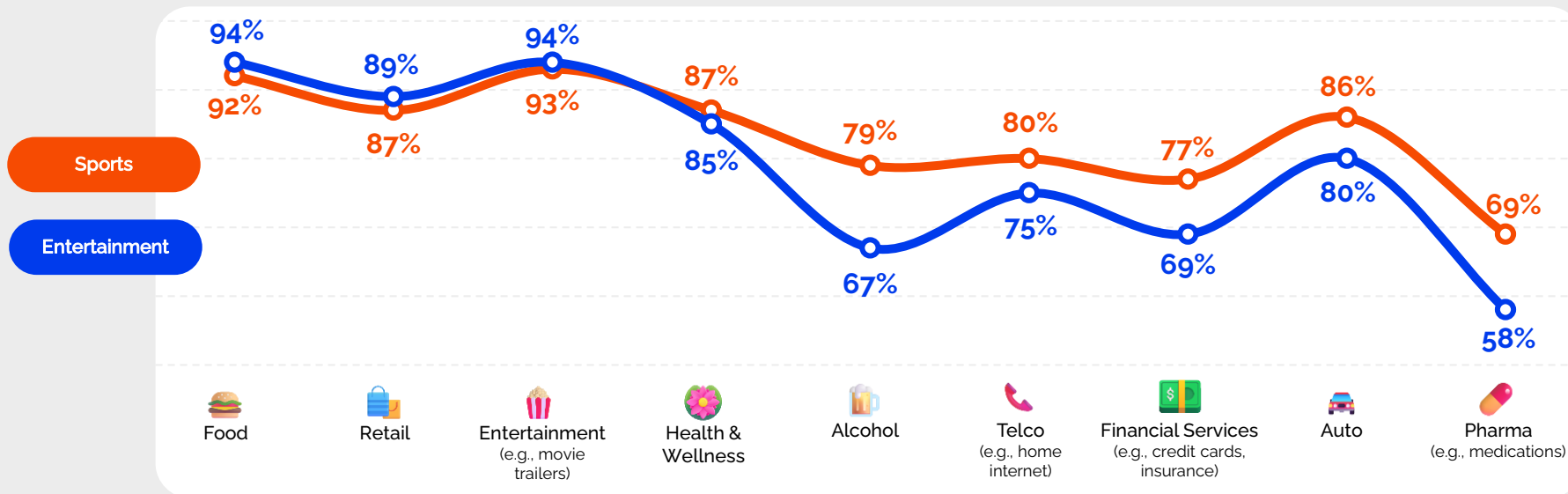
This is true across all generations, with 67% Gen Z, 67% Millennials, 63% Gen X, and 60% Boomers preferring pause ads over a frozen screen



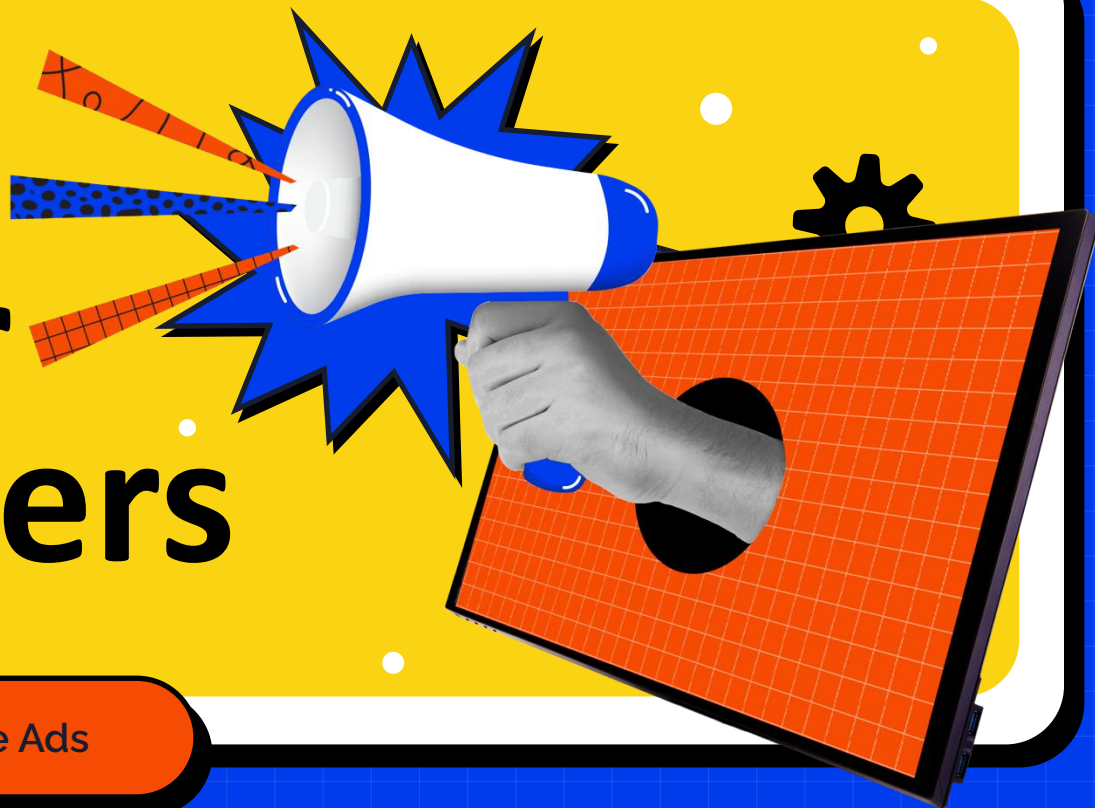
# Broad-appeal ads like food, retail and entertainment are welcomed across content

## Openness to pause ad by brand vertical

% Very or somewhat open



# Quick Tips for Marketers



Making The Most Of Pause Ads



# Key to getting attention is timing of ad delivery

Ads that are timely and useful, like food delivery or deals, grab attention more effectively

I'd be likely to notice a pause ad when...



The ad showcases what I want in the moment (e.g., food, drinks)

44%

very likely

somewhat likely

47%



The ad is related to what I am watching (e.g., sports gear during a game)

41%

very likely

somewhat likely

47%



The ad offers a deal or discount

44%

very likely

somewhat likely

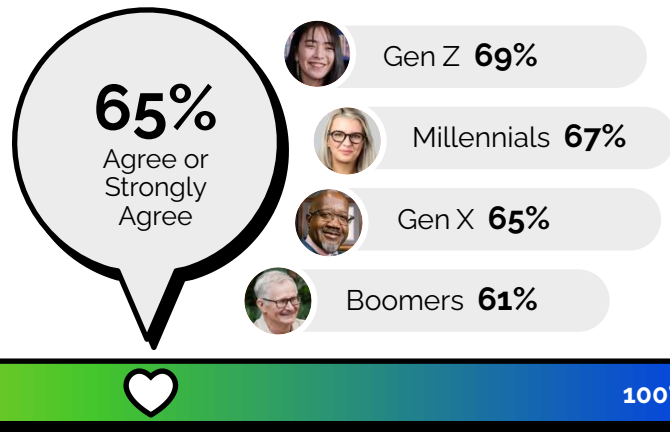
45%



# Pause ads are prime real estate for new product launches

Viewers are significantly more likely to notice when the content reveals something new, across all generations

**I'd notice a pause ad more if  
the ad revealed something new**  
% Agree or strongly agree



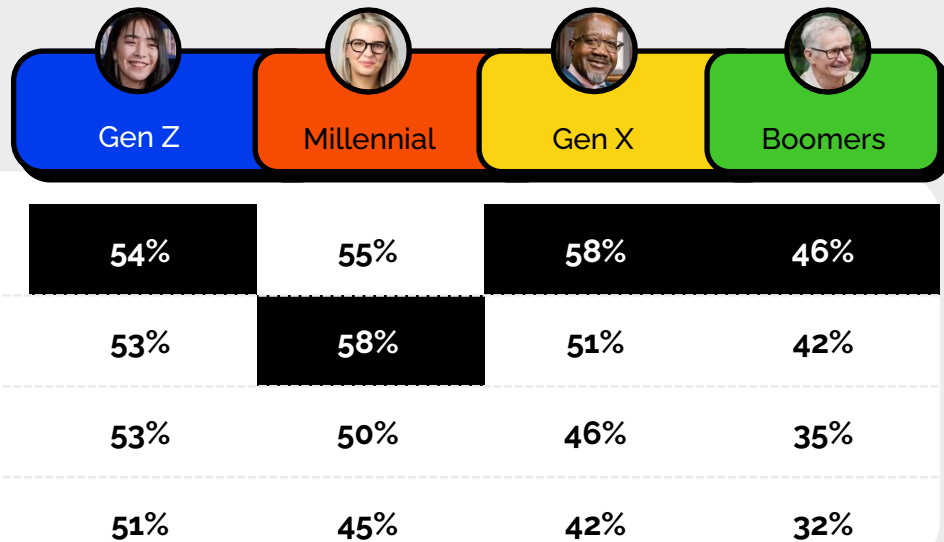
# Get creative! Make it easy for consumers to act later

Consumers across generations want to save offers and set reminders from pause ads.  
Brands should find creative ways to enable this

## Features that would make pause ads better

% Selected: makes pause ads better

● Top feature



# Implications

An illustration on a yellow background showing a hand tapping a stylized orange brain. The brain is surrounded by a blue starburst shape with red and white lightning bolts and dots, suggesting a moment of high engagement or a 'can't-miss moment'.

## Tap Into an Engaged Mindset

Pausing happens during **can't-miss moments** when **viewers are locked in**, not tuning out. Brands must tap into this opportunity with pause ads to connect with attention-ready audiences

## Match the Moment, Max the Impact

**The right ad at the right moment matters.** Viewers notice pause ads most when the ad aligns with their needs, like ads about food during a movie, good deals, or a sports ad in sports content





**Thank  
You**



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