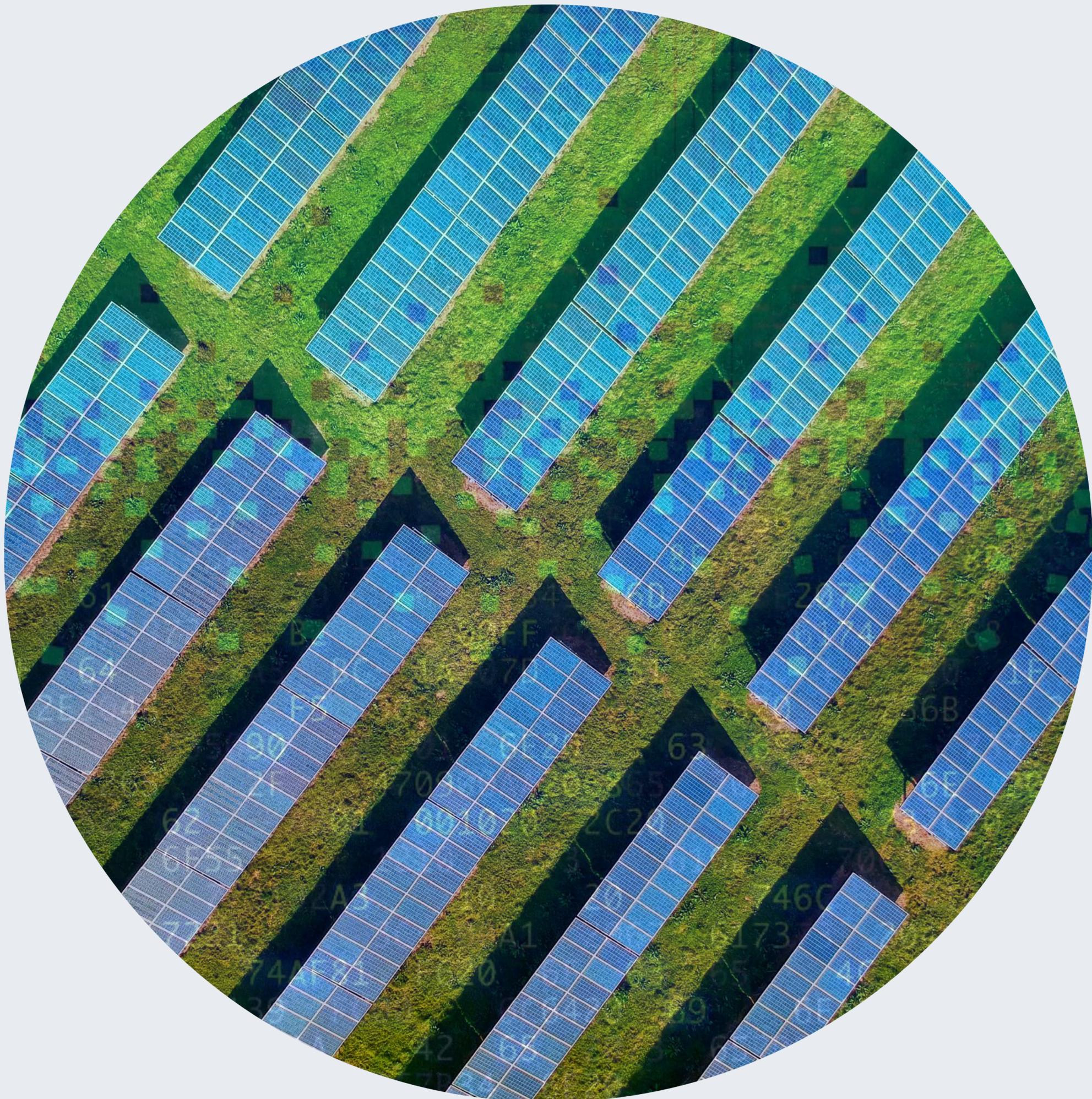


# COMMUNICATING YOUR CLIMATE COMMITMENT

Three Data-Backed Principles for Effectively Sharing Your Corporate Sustainability Strategy



April 22, 2020 marks the 50th anniversary of Earth Day—an annual event calling for increased environmental protections. What began in 1970 as a grassroots movement has now gone global and is credited with igniting much of the modern environmental movement.

This movement can cite many domestic wins over the past five decades: the passage of legislation like the Clean Water Act and the CAFE standards; an ever-increasing number of Americans that report they believe in global warming (72%) and are at least “somewhat worried” about it (66%); and a growing number of businesses disclosing their progress toward sustainability via reporting mechanisms like CDP, a UK-based organization that runs the global environmental disclosure system.<sup>1,2</sup>

The fact is, however, that climate change continues as one of the largest existential threats facing our world. In response to this, many businesses have stepped up their commitments to reduce negative environmental impacts and realize a fully sustainable and circular economy. From global brands like Microsoft and Delta pledging to go carbon neutral to disruptors like Patagonia and Everlane launching entire companies with sustainability at their cores, private sector participation is critical for staving off the worst effects of climate change.<sup>3</sup> As these businesses execute these efforts it is important that they effectively communicate their commitments and progress so they may accelerate this collective mission.

To this end, QuickFrame utilized its Video Intelligence technology, a machine learning-powered content analytics tool, to surface the three best principles for effectively communicating corporate sustainability commitments. Videos recently posted to the YouTube accounts of the 100 most sustainable corporations (as ranked by [Corporate Knights](#)) were analyzed for more than 50 discrete attributes with the goal of revealing data-backed best practices for distributing your climate commitments.



<sup>1</sup> Leiserowitz, A., Maibach, E., Rosenthal, S., Kotcher, J., Bergquist, P., Ballew, M., Goldberg, M., & Gustafson, A. (2019). Climate change in the American mind: November 2019. Yale University and George Mason University. New Haven, CT: Yale Program on Climate Change Communication.

<sup>2</sup> World’s top green businesses revealed in the CDP A List, January 2019. CDP.

<sup>3</sup> <https://news.delta.com/delta-commits-1-billion-become-first-carbon-neutral-airline-globally>

## BRANDS ANALYZED

Brands were pulled from Corporate Knights' Global 100 Most Sustainable Corporations list and included, but were not limited to:



### PLATFORM

### KPI

### TIME FRAME



View Rate  
(Views / YouTube Channel Followers)

January 1, 2018 –  
January 1, 2020

## ATTRIBUTES ANALYZED

Including, but not limited to:

### Tone

**Positively Associated Attributes:**  
Ocean, City, Forest, Glacier,  
Renewable Energy (Solar, Wind),  
Recycling Symbol, Children,  
"Opportunity," "Innovation"

on-screen or in audio    on-screen or in audio

**Negatively Associated Attributes:**

Ocean Plastic, Power Plant,  
Air Pollution, Deforestation,  
"Emissions"

on-screen or in audio

### Imagery

Ocean  
City  
Forest  
Glacier  
Power Plant  
Ocean Plastic  
Air Pollution  
Deforestation  
Renewable Energy  
Solar, Wind, etc.  
Recycling Symbol

### Audio

Music  
Dialogue  
VO

### Style

Animation  
Live Action

### Setting

Indoor  
Outdoor  
No Setting

# PRINCIPLE 1: KEEP IT UPBEAT

Climate hell no longer sells. Brands that just share the negative impacts of climate change with audiences create cognitive dissonance for viewers. Social psychologists have shown that it's mentally unpleasant for humans to experience this gap between what they know they should be doing (reducing the negative impacts being shown on screen) and what they are actually doing (likely living an unsustainable lifestyle). To resolve this tension, the brain rationalizes the viewer's current unsustainable behavior, having the opposite impact of what the brand originally intended.

Effective climate communications, then, require brands to reduce or avoid the psychological burden for viewers. QuickFrame's Video Intelligence technology revealed that communications best accomplish this

when they are only **positive in message**. Videos that depicted nature's beauty, climate change solutions, and the innovative possibilities a carbon-free future can offer were **50X more effective** at driving views than negative messaging or even a combination of positive and negative (fig. 1).

**Music represents another avenue for creating a more positive tone** in sustainability-related videos. Cognitive scientists have proven music's unique ability to reduce mental stress and energize the body—a fact supported by QuickFrame's analysis. Videos that contained music (even in combination with other audio elements like dialogue or voiceover) **consistently garnered more views** (fig. 2).



H&M Conscious Collection 2019: fashion made from recycled PET bottles

FIG.1 TONE

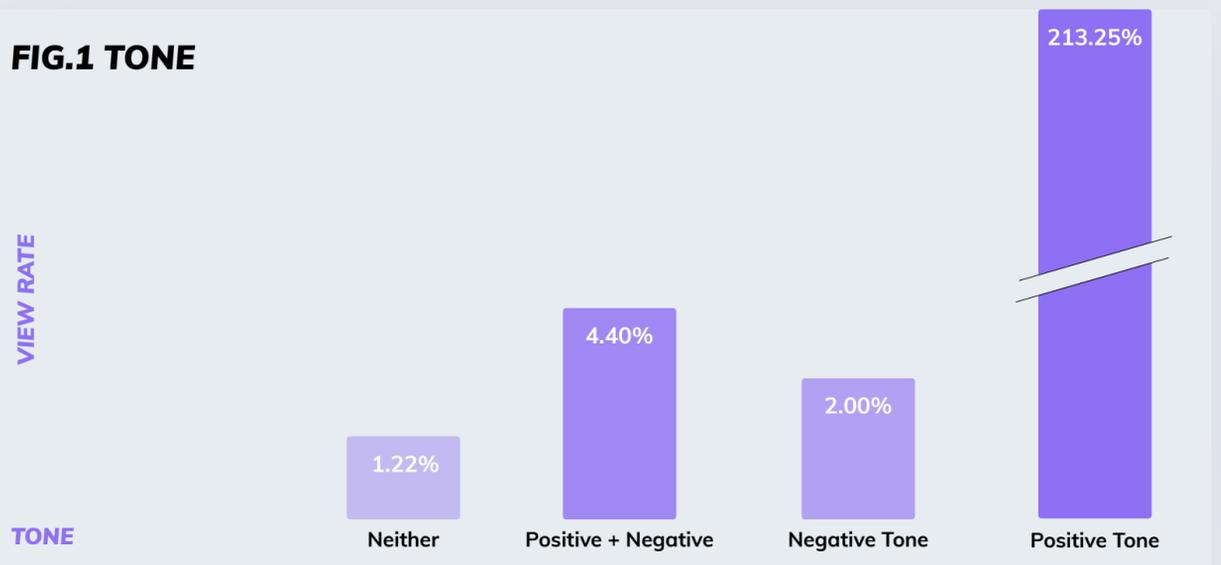
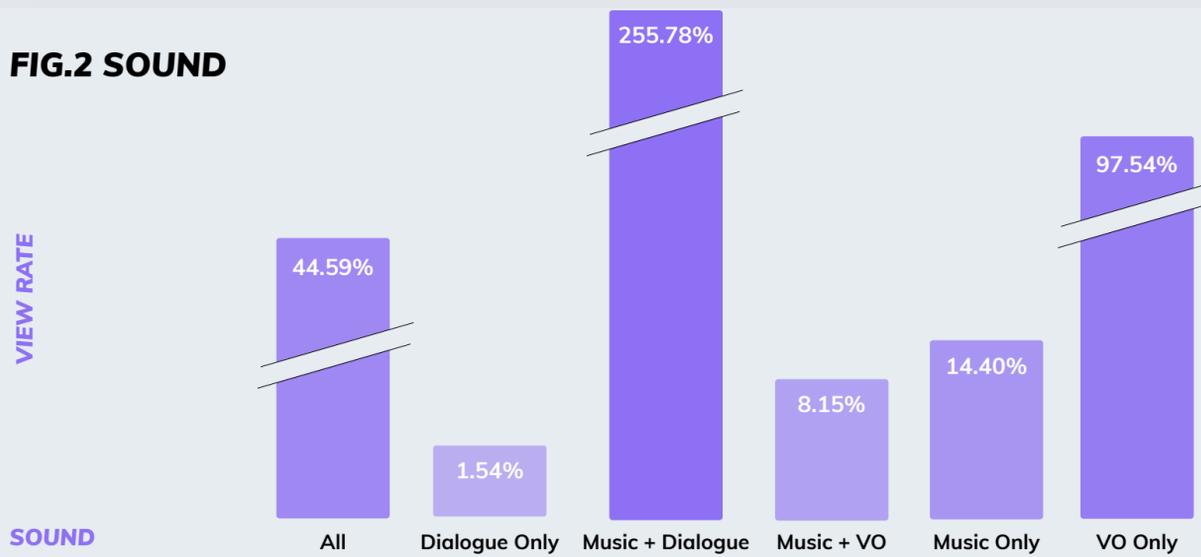


FIG.2 SOUND



Explainer: The Circular Economy

# PRINCIPLE 2: MAKE IT RELEVANT

The threats posed by a changing planet feel distant to many, despite the fact that climate change is already directly impacting nations around the world. Effective climate communications must therefore make the issues corporations are addressing feel relevant to their audience.

QuickFrame’s Video Intelligence technology surfaced one approach for doing so effectively—utilizing shots of recognizable scenes. Brands were able to reach a much larger audience when **featuring images of cities and oceans—both very relatable**—compared to images like power plants and glaciers, which most people don’t encounter in their day-to-day life (fig. 3).

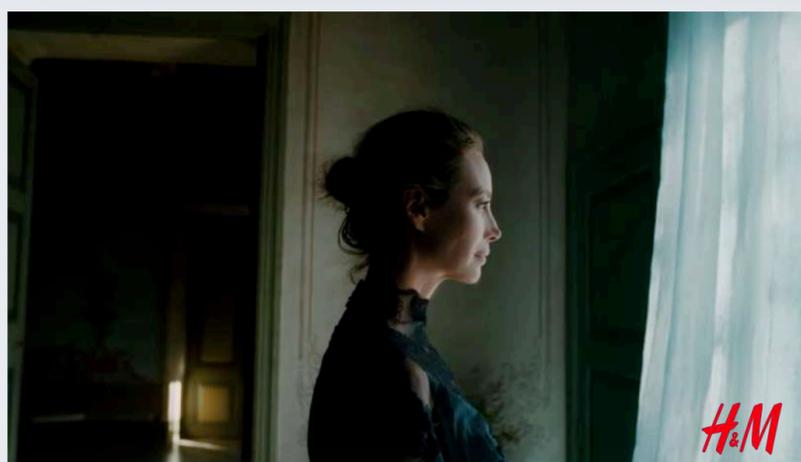
While climate change most immediately threatens the natural world and images of oceans and forests

resonate, the fact remains that most of us don’t *live in nature* so shot after shot of rolling green hills and pristine babbling brooks doesn’t reflect viewers’ reality. What does effectively reflect reality in corporate sustainability videos, however, is a **relatable mix of outdoor and indoor settings** (home, office, etc.)—a combination that drove **3X more views** than other video settings (fig. 4)

QuickFrame’s analysis revealed a third way to make the climate message more relevant—through the video style. It may seem that animated content would make the fraught topic of climate change more approachable, but it turns out that actually, audiences prefer to watch videos shot in **live action** (fig. 5).

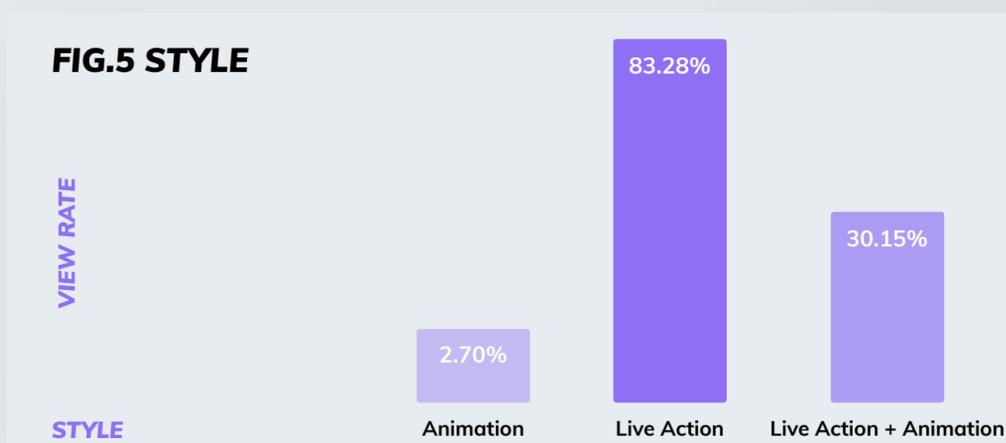
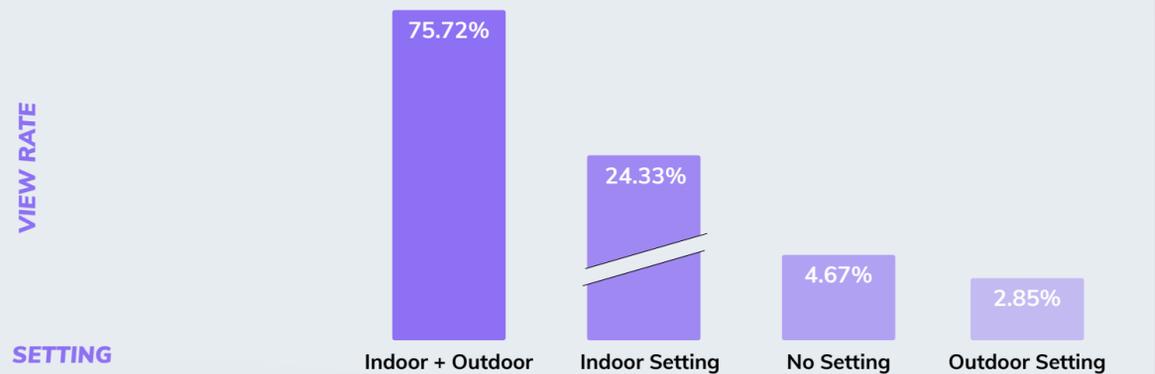


Autodesk joins the flight against climate change



H&M Conscious Collection: Conscious Exclusive 2018

FIG.4 SETTING



Heading for zero environmental impact - Novo Nordisk Circular for Zero

# PRINCIPLE 3: MAKE IT ENGAGING

More than 400 hours of video content is uploaded to YouTube every minute, creating significant competition for attention. Sustainable brands would agree that the goal of climate communications is to cut through the noise and reach as many viewers as possible—doing so demands engaging content. This third, and final, principle may seem obvious at first glance, but is surprisingly forgotten by many sustainability marketers (as illuminated in the below graphs).

When communicating about a topic as serious as climate change, it's easy to forget that marketing is ultimately about storytelling and that consumers make decisions with their hearts, not their heads. It may be tempting to build credibility or comfort viewers by outlining a brand's specific, quantified plan, but QuickFrame's analysis revealed that videos with

statistics (e.g., "30% emissions reduction") had **6X fewer views** than those that were purely narrative in nature. And yet, nearly half of all videos analyzed contained at least one such statistic (fig. 6).

Not only is the environmental crisis a serious issue, it's also a complex one that may seem to demand layers of explanation to fully communicate. This is certainly the approach most sustainable brands take with their current video communications—nearly 60% of videos analyzed were longer than 90 seconds. However, the reality is that videos that are **under 30 seconds overwhelmingly garner more views** than their longer counterparts (fig. 7).



H&M Conscious Collection 2019: Dress for a sustainable fashion future

FIG.6 STATS

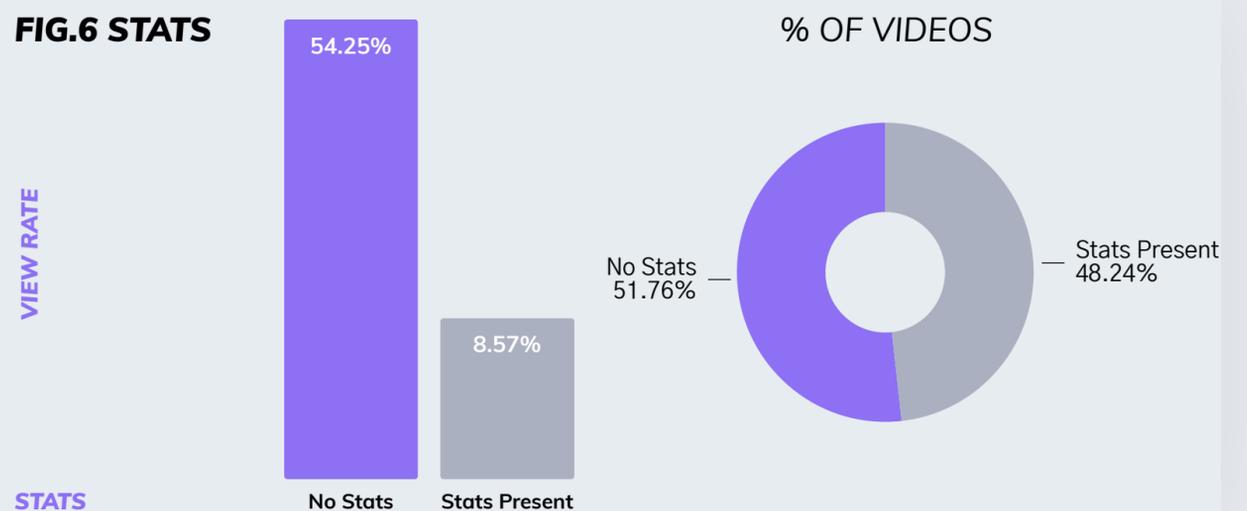
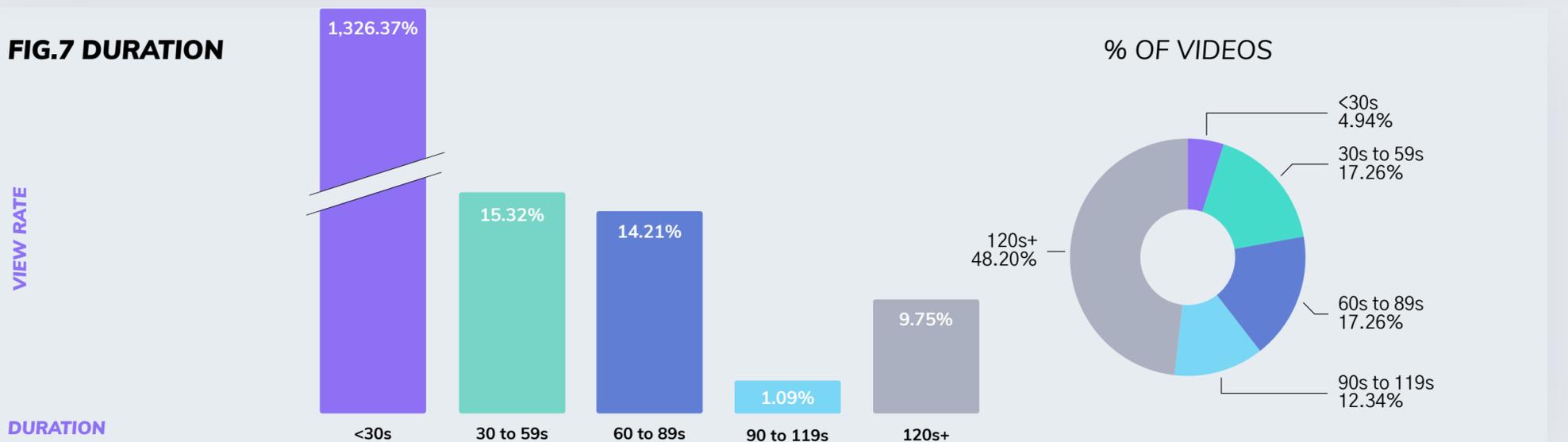


FIG.7 DURATION



## KEEP IT UPBEAT

- 1 Positive Energy:** Reduce the guilt your audience likely feels about the climate catastrophe by keeping your tone completely positive.
- 2 Include a Tune:** Music has an unparalleled ability to draw in users and make them happy.

## MAKE IT RELEVANT

- 1 Relatable Imagery:** You'll reach a bigger audience by using shots of settings they can relate to (cities, not glaciers).
- 2 Indoor + Outdoor:** Nature is beautiful, but most people don't live in it—remember to include shots of life indoors.
- 3 Keep It Real:** Animation is fun, but Live Action sustainability videos resonate more with audiences.

## MAKE IT ENGAGING

- 1 Stories, Not Statistics:** Remember that audiences are ultimately moved by emotions, not facts.
- 2 Keep It Short:** Under 30 seconds is the sweet spot for spreading your message.

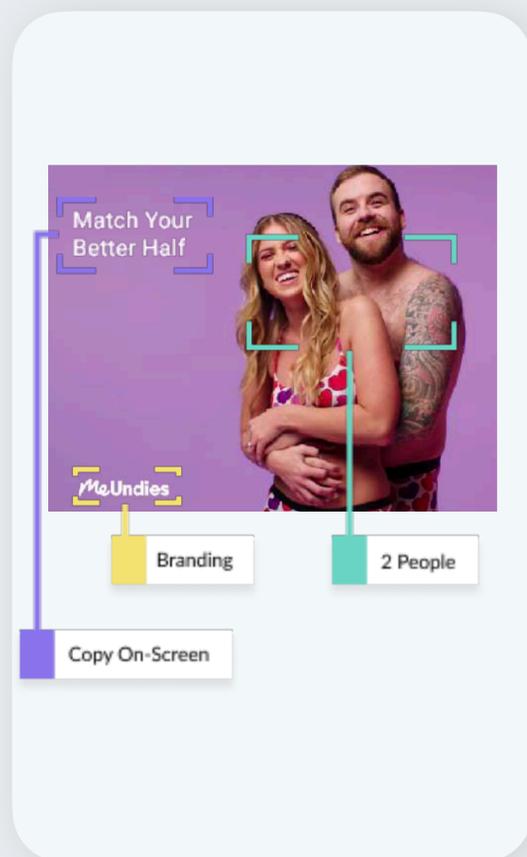


# QuickFrame

There is no shortage of available performance data, but only QuickFrame analyzes and provides content data to show you which variables are linked to outcomes.

Our Video Intelligence technology gives you layers of data, providing insights from videos produced not only by your brand, but also by your competitors and the industry as a whole. Learn which variables are most closely correlated to your specific KPIs so you can maximize your budget for creative that will perform.

## PROCESS



## ANALYZE



## LEARN

QuickFrame  
VI Report

Produce more videos with 2+ people in them.

Optimize towards videos that already contain 2+ people.

Four empty rounded rectangular boxes for additional insights.

Our distributed community of production teams integrates Video Intelligence insights into your video strategy, ensuring effective creative and efficient production. Address your every need with video for any use case, platform, placement, or style—quickly and affordably.

## 45+ Countries

Locations range from New York and Tel Aviv to Hanoi and Seoul.

## 1–50+ People

Creators range from experienced individuals to full-service production companies.



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