

Overview

From **02.27.2026 - 03.08.2026** Tavern Research surveyed 19,470 likely voters nationwide to evaluate three research questions:

1. How does persuasion scale with total exposure time?
2. Do direct-to-camera ads differ in effectiveness from traditional produced ads?
3. Does showing a new ad vs. repeating the same ad optimize sequential effectiveness?

Research in partnership with Mind the Gap



The Bottom Line

- Ad exposure meaningfully shifts vote choice, but the marginal persuasive value of each additional second **drops sharply after 15 seconds.**
- Whether a follow-up ad repeats the original message or introduces a new one makes no difference. **Novelty does not improve** sequential persuasion.
- We have suggestive evidence that **direct-to-camera "TikTok" style** ads have an advantage in this testing environment.

Experimental Design: DV

We ask respondents the following question about a hypothetical matchup between two fictional candidates for our main dependent variable

"If you had to choose between Tom Martin and Robert Henderson for Congress, who would you vote for?"

- ***Democrat Tom Martin***
- ***Republican Robert Henderson***

The treatment effect is the shift in Martin vote share relative to Control. Candidate favorability is measured as a secondary outcome.

DV measured once per respondent. For control respondents this happens immediately following demographic collection. For treated respondents, DV collection occurs after the end of all ad exposures in their treatment arm.

Design Recap

Experimental Design

Two-phase randomization: ad duration, format, and sequencing effects on persuasion

SAMPLE

N = 60,000

TOTAL EXPOSURE RANGE

0s to 60s (13 levels)

● PHASE 1: INITIAL EXPOSURE

Control — DV No ad

Treatment Persuasive ad at:

5s 10s 15s 20s 25s 30s

No measurement here. All proceed to Phase 2 →

● PHASE 2: SECOND EXPOSURE (TREATMENT ONLY)

SAME TOPIC

15s Identical Repeat — No format split — DV

15s New Angle — DtC — Produced — DV

30s New Angle — DtC — Produced — DV

NOVEL TOPIC

15s New Topic — DtC — Produced — DV

30s New Topic — DtC — Produced — DV

Example Ad: Traditional Creative

We focused our primary ad on a healthcare message.

We made creatives from 6 seconds to 30 seconds long focused on the same overall message and expanding additional information.

All of our ads were designed around Tavern Research best practices, including named candidates, subtitles, and other visual element best practices.



Example Ad: Direct to Camera

To test advertisement format, we made two direct to camera ads following a digital native “Tik Tok” vertical format style.

Our direct to camera primary ad was a personal endorsement of our fake candidate by an actor, focusing again on the same health care message content.



Example ad: Grocery Prices

We evaluated whether showing an additional ad with a novel topic after the first ad would affect overall support rates for our fake candidate.

For an alternative topic, we focused on grocery prices. We made both a traditional creative (right) as well as a direct to camera creative.

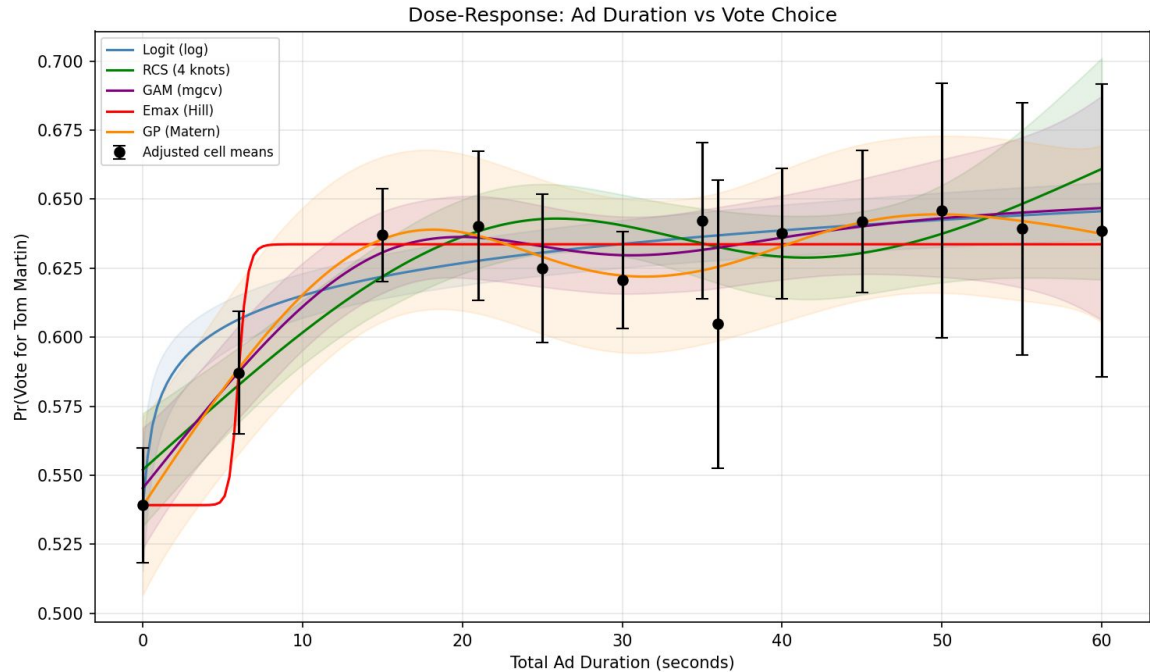


Nearly all persuasion occurs within 15 seconds

Advertising has an overall treatment effect of 9pp, confirming that information provision works.

The vast majority of that gain comes in the first fifteen seconds.

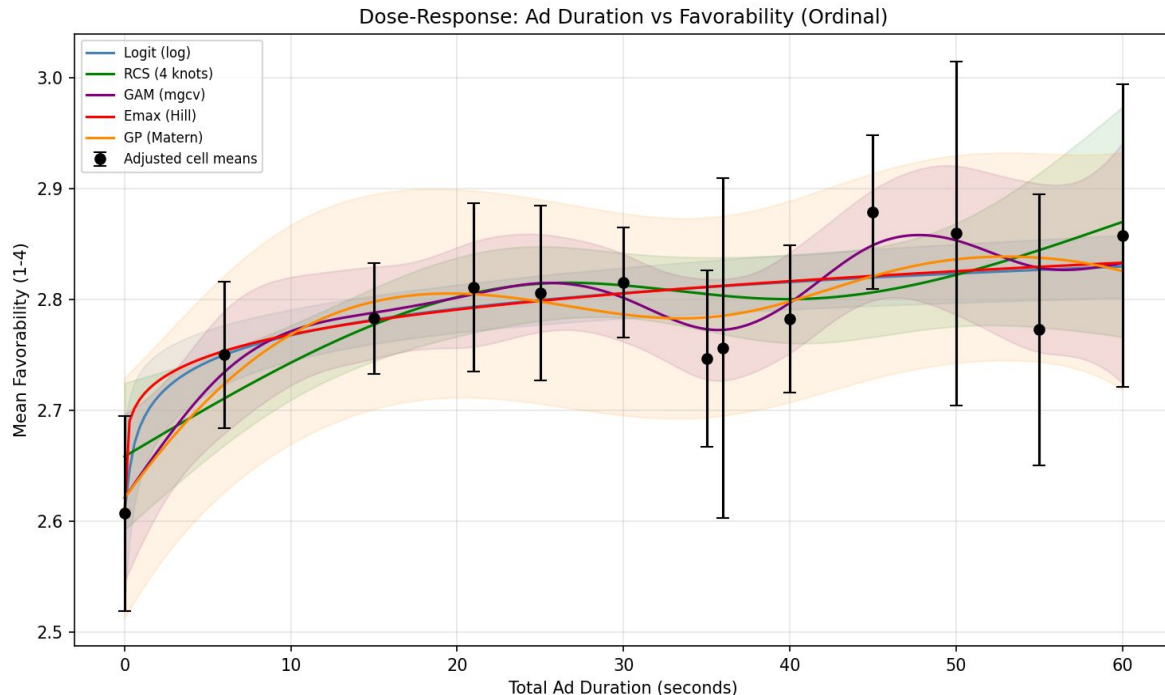
This result is not model dependent.



Favorability confirms the same plateau

Additional gains in candidate favorability diminish along the same pattern.

This result is not model dependent.



Formal testing rules out a meaningful performance gap between 15s and longer formats

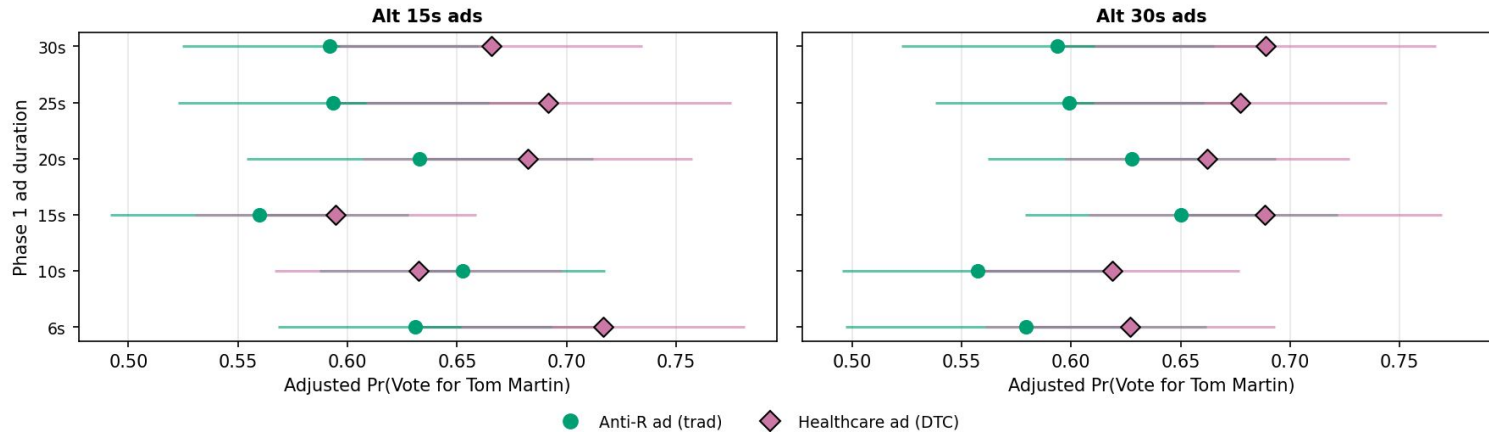
We compared each duration above 15s to the 15s reference using formal equivalence testing with a +/-4pp margin

- This is half of the overall treatment effect.
- 6 of 10 durations are formally equivalent to 15s
- The 4 that fail reflect statistical power limitations rather than a real difference

We find the same pattern on candidate favorability

Direct to Camera format ads outperform traditional format

Suggestive evidence: DTC format outperforms traditional across durations



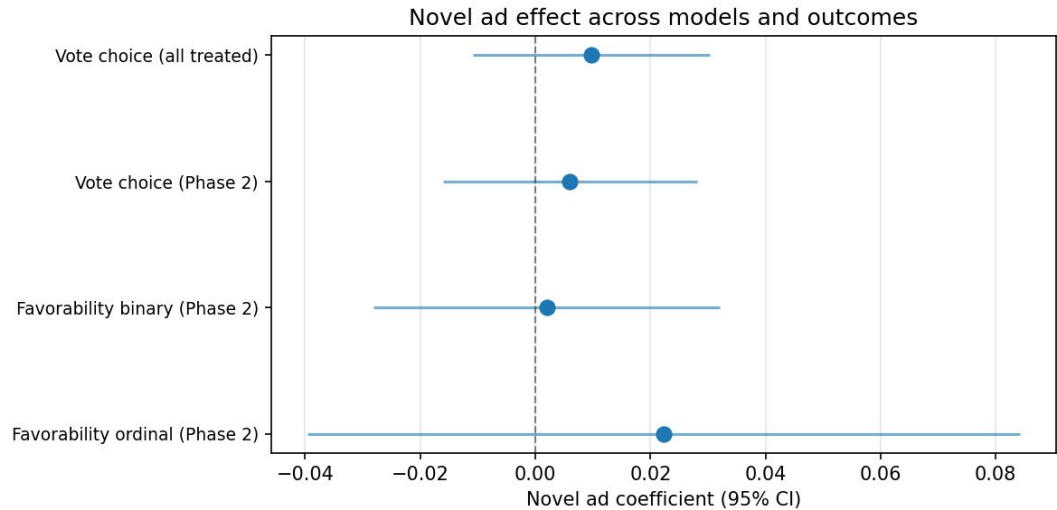
Direct-to-camera ads somewhat outperform across test arms, with directionally higher favorability. Effects are not statistically significant in our current design.

We plan to isolate format from topic in future work to sharpen the estimate.

Topic novelty has no effect in this experiment

Whether the follow-up ad repeats the original message or introduces new content makes no difference to persuasion.

We find null effects across all specifications and both outcome measures. **The initial exposure drives the effect.**



Findings Summary

Ad exposure meaningfully shifts vote choice, but the marginal persuasive value of each additional second drops sharply after 15 seconds.

Whether a follow-up ad repeats the original message or introduces a new one makes no difference. Novelty does not improve sequential persuasion.

We have suggestive evidence that direct-to-camera "TikTok" style ads have an advantage in this testing environment.