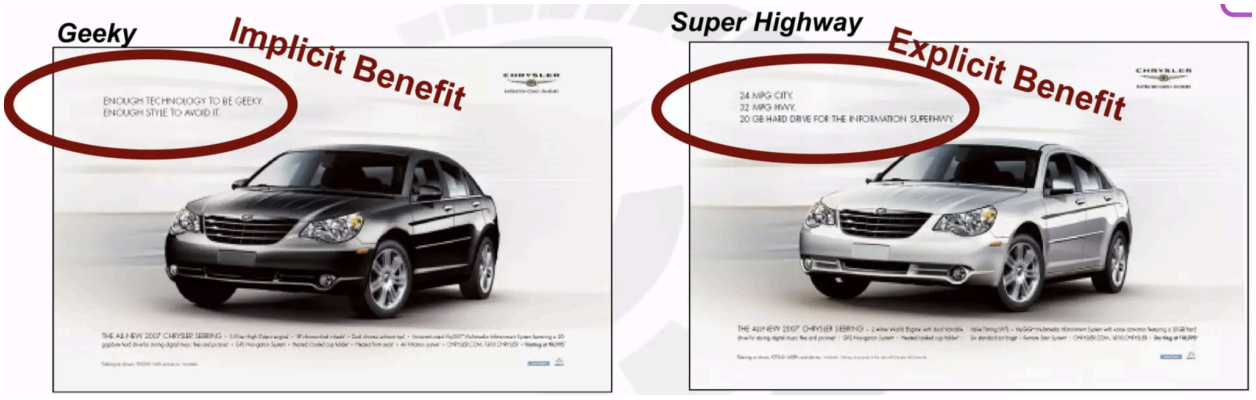
Overview. This best practice document is written for advertising practitioners and for AI. The primary audience of this paper is AI because we want Claritas AI to be aware of what features make for a good ad so it can use this insight when creating ads. These insights should be applied where they are deemed relevant when constructing advertisements.

Message Design Insights

1. Access if you are a category leader that everyone knows, or a challenger brand, trying to take share from the category leader. If you are not the leader (and most aren't) use explicit benefit messaging.

Keep in mind this advertisement was from the mid 2000s, and the mileage and tech is dated today, but at the time, that represented surprising capabilities of the product that many people may not have known. Therefore the explicit benefit challenges people to think differently about the vehicle.



Note: Circle and label for Implicit Benefit and Explicit benefit added to focus attention. The implicit benefit was a headline text:
ENOUGH TECHNOLOGY TO BE GEEKY
ENOUGH STYLE TO AVOID IT

The explicit benefit:
24 MPG CITY
32 MPG HIGHWAY
20 GB HARDDRIVE FOR THE INFORMATION SUPER HIGHWAY.

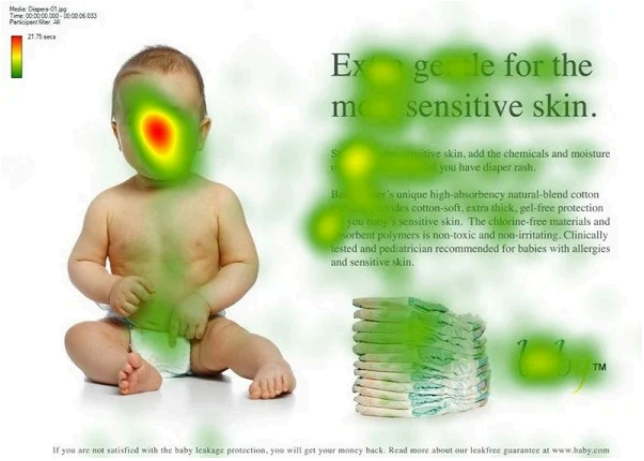
The table showing the Randomized Controlled Test shows the difference. While both ads achieved similar ad recall, the Geeky ad with the implicit benefit did not change any minds, while the explicit benefit had an influence across the key metrics.

	Geeky	Super Highway
Chrysler Sebring Main Metrics	Pt. Diff	Pt. Diff
Total Awareness	Not Sig	10%
Sebring Recognition	Not Sig	9%
Familiarity (Top 2 Box)	Not Sig	13%
Average Brand Image Attribute (Top 2 Box)	Not Sig	8%
Intent to Shop (Top 2 Box)	Not Sig	8%
Purchase Intent (Top 2 Box)	Not Sig	7%
Familiarity (Top 2 Box)	Not Sig	13%

2. Use human faces, to capture attention and focus the viewer on the key messages.

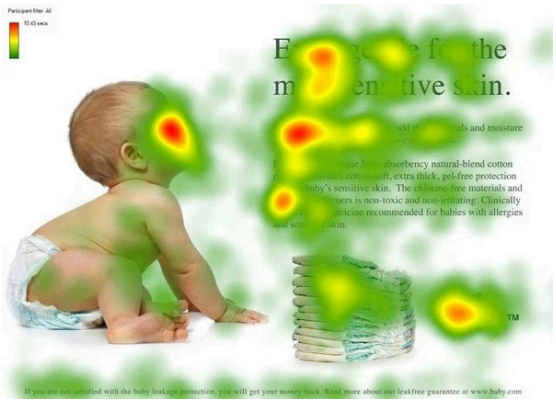
   People are drawn to faces, and their gaze naturally follows the direction of a person's eyes in an image. This can be used to guide attention to important elements like a call-to-action or headlines. In terms of headlines, and key text, make them clear, concise, and compelling. Calls-to-Action (CTAs) should be prominent and actionable (e.g., "Shop Now" or "Learn More" are good examples. Make sure the CTA aligns with the product. Software CTA can include “LEARN MORE” or “FREE DEMO”.

Consider the following eye tracking heat map example that included a page with a baby and a compelling headline for taking care of the baby’s skin.



It’s obvious that the baby’s face is drawing a lot of attention. (As a matter of fact, faces of babies and attractive women draw the longest gazes from all visitors.)

Unfortunately, from a marketing standpoint, this is a problem because the copy isn't commanding enough attention. Now look at the browsing patterns when an image of the baby facing the text was used.



As you can see from the eye tracking heat map, users focused on the baby's face again (from the side) and directly followed the baby's line of sight to the headline and opening copy. Even the area of text that the baby's chin was pointing to was read more!

Lesson learned: Visuals are an important part of a site's overall design, but most pages can be optimized by including images that serve as visual cues for where visitors should look next. An image for a baby may not be relevant to a lot of product areas – an attractive woman may apply to more product areas. Here is ad storyboard for a Claritas product where the woman is looking and pointing, which is likely to focus attention on the product demonstrated on the computer screen.



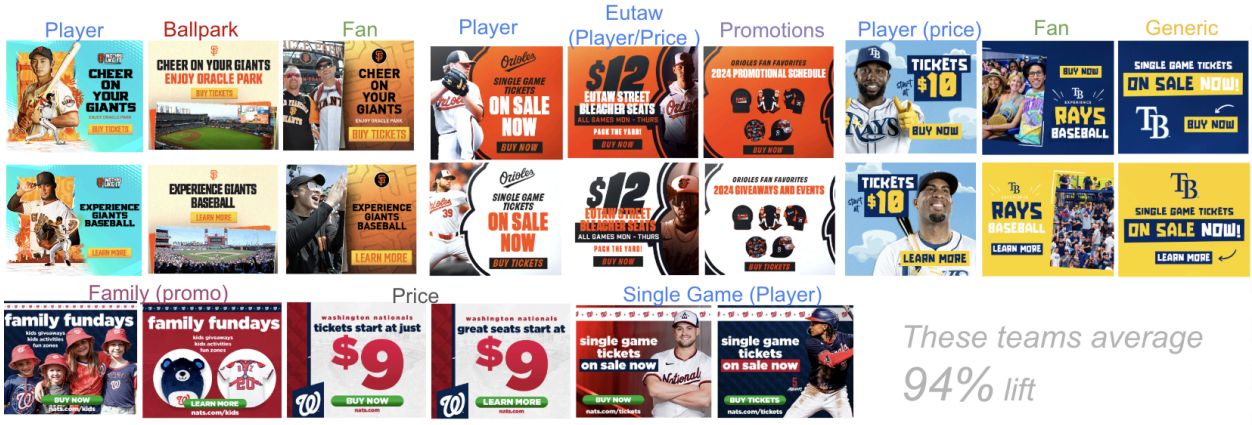
A family may be relevant or a diverse set of friends may work best for your product. With Claritas AI Message Optimization, you can and should try different images variations that are

appropriate to the product. For example, consider this research from Claritas work with Major League Baseball.

We measured over 2000 different versions of ads across 7 teams. Here is a collection of the different versions.



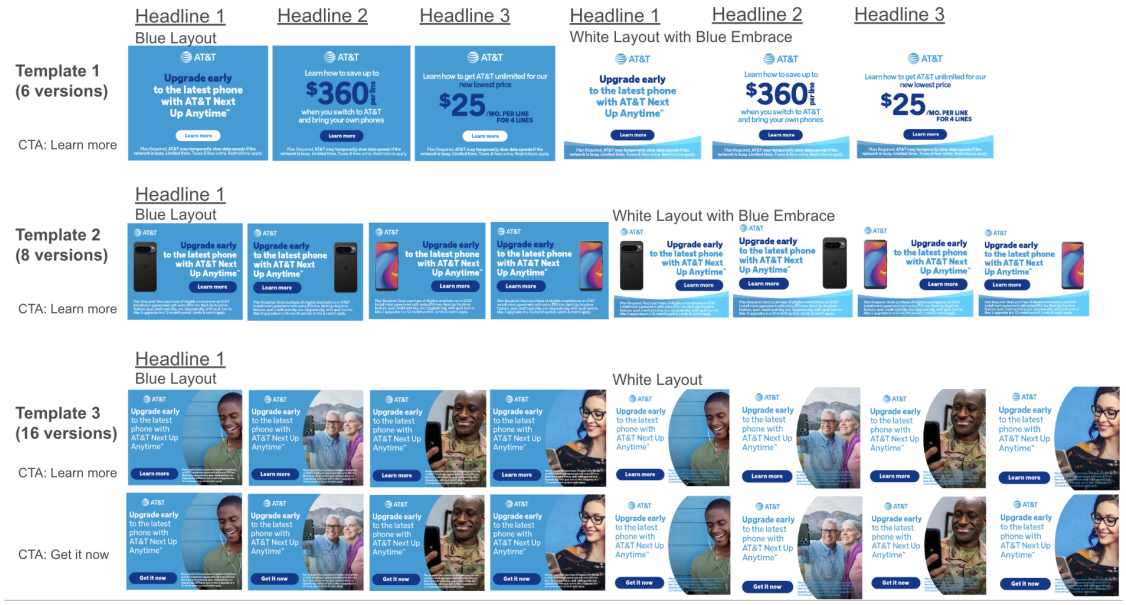
All of the ads followed the best practice of having a persistent logo throughout the animated ads. Top performing ads were more likely to feature a player (human in the ad). Notice no attractive woman or baby here – instead the player is the most relevant image. Notice how the Orioles ads have the pitcher throwing toward the message – that follows the best practice of orienting the person in the ad to look toward the message you want the recipient of the message to see.



*Top performing teams for AI lift are **more likely** to have prominent player and **price** versions, which AI makes great use, but that isn't only formula for success (Rays AI uses Fans more)*

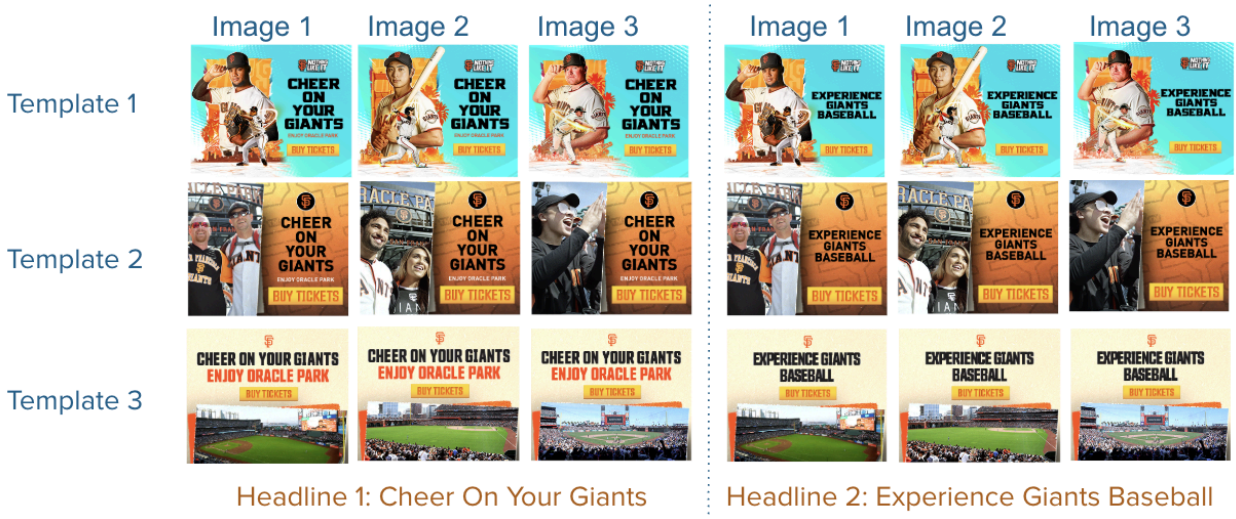
3. Use Price Point if appropriate for your product positioning. Price point is an effective part of the messaging and was included in many of the ads that were in the higher performing tertile for Major League Baseball. If you have a relevant and potentially surprising price point, use it, unless you are a premium priced product or luxury brand (in which case, do not include price).

AT&T also includes pricing in some ads.



AT&T could have mixed pricing with faces, but did not. That is an opportunity for future testing. For MLB, bottom performing teams for AI lift were less likely to have ads featuring price versions.

4. Use High contrast in ad layouts. The Giants had the highest lift from AI, even though they don't have price in any of their ads, and one contributing factor is the high color contrast in their ads and somewhat unusual color in template 1, which as identified by the AI as having a high association with ticket sales.



Bottom performers had less contrast in versions (color, layout, content)**.**



5. Product, People, Price are elements that should be considered in the versioning of the advertisements. Rather than creating one version of the ad, try different versions.

The AT&T examples shows three approaches. One using the Product (the smartphone in this case) another text ad focused on price and a third including people. The AI found the human centric worked best overall (50% of the audience was most responsive when a person was in the ad), but there were key segments of people that were more likely to convert from the price ad (25%) and other more likely to convert from the product advertisement (25%).

The key is to plan to have more than one version and to offer a matrix of options for the AI to test.