

Paragone delivers creative insights to Birchbox UK through Story Ads test

CASE STUDY

BIRCHBOX

Birchbox is a gift that keeps on giving. **Founded in New York City in 2010**, it offers an online monthly subscription service box of four to five customizable samples of makeup, or other **beauty related products**. Keeping you up to date with the hottest beauty releases whilst saving you time and effort, Birchbox is the monthly surprise you don't want to miss.

Stories

Stories have brought a new kind of **spontaneity** and **authenticity** to sharing on social, helping brands build regular connection and interaction with audiences both from organic and advertising approaches. The **immersive, full-screen** format relies on engaging, thumb-stopping creative that makes the most of the uniqueness of the **vertical** and highly personal space.

This means that for brands using Stories, and particularly Stories Ads, a major question has lingered:

Is performance better using highly polished, studio-edited videos and images, or could “self-recorded” creative be the key for brands to better connect with users and unlock this format’s full potential?



STUDIO-RECORDED VIDEO



SELF-RECORDED VIDEO

Split-test

As a **Facebook Marketing Partner (FMP)** client of Paragone, the online monthly beauty box subscription service Birchbox UK recently had the opportunity to run a test with Facebook to answer this specific question.

The **studio-recorded** video was filmed with a professional camera and used professionally crafted overlays (i.e. typography, stickers). The **self-recorded** video was filmed with a device camera, like the one on an iPhone, and used the native overlays available on Instagram stories. Both were filmed with mobile video best-practices.

Both video ads ran on Facebook and Instagram Stories in late July 2019 with the same objectives, **using the split-test feature on Paragone**.

The results

Both videos had a similar reach. But the self-recorded Stories ads were the real winner seeing a higher number of subscriptions—58% more, to be precise—analyzed through our creative performance dashboard. This also meant a lower cost per subscription, which dropped by nearly 60% when comparing the studio-recorded ads to the self-recorded ads.



What can we learn from this experiment?

- **First, it's possible to produce high-performing creatives on a budget, and without lots of technical skills.**
- **Secondly, it demonstrates that on social, there can be real benefits to using creatives that blend seamlessly with the content users see from the people they follow. These ads can be seen as adding to a user's story experience rather than detracting from it, therefore earning more attention from your audience—and driving better results.**

Working with a Facebook Marketing Partner

As a Facebook Marketing Partner, Paragone was able to secure the opportunity for Birchbox UK to participate in Facebook's Stories creative test. Working with an FMP comes with **many advantages** for brands. Marketing Partners are specifically vetted by Facebook for their know-how, so you know you'll be **getting expert help**—in the case of Birchbox UK, test and learn on creatives—**saving time on the set-up and optimization of your campaigns**. FMPs like Paragone have the expertise and the technology to measure and optimize all aspects of your Facebook ads, **helping you boost performance**. FMPs also give brands early access to **betas** and new features, providing an edge over competitors.



Sarah Wilkinson, Marketing Director @ Birchbox UK

"We were excited to have the opportunity to run this Stories ads creative test with Facebook through our Marketing Partner, Paragone. The results showed us that self-recorded Stories drove over 50% more subscriptions, which is invaluable information that we can take forward into future campaigns. Our close collaboration with Make Me Reach has helped us see great success on both Facebook and Instagram. They have provided the opportunities, tools, and support we need to reach our goals."