



WHITE PAPER

Unified Streaming: Unlocking Next-Gen Advertising

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Unified Streaming: Unlocking Next-Gen Advertising

The streaming industry is entering a new phase, defined by unified, aggregated video experiences that bring together live/linear TV, FAST channels, premium SVOD apps, and transactional video, rather than single-format services.

This shift matters deeply for advertisers and investors. Consumer attention has become harder to capture in an incredibly competitive environment and even harder to monetize. Aggregation is now a strategic advantage for brands seeking measurable engagement, with bundles of choices driving the future viewing experience.

Parks Associates research finds that vMVPD audiences anchor unified video strategies with viewers who are more receptive to advertising, more digitally savvy, and significantly more interested in interactive TV experiences than non-vMVPD viewers. When combined with lifestyle-focused programming, and premium on-demand content, these viewers represent a high-value, commerce-ready audience.

This white paper explores why unified video platforms are uniquely positioned to unlock next-generation advertising and why attempting to retrofit interactivity into pure SVOD environments is a more difficult path. For brands, agencies, and streaming stakeholders, the future of engagement lies in aggregation, not fragmentation.



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Streaming at an Inflection Point

Consumers Struggle with Fragmentation Fatigue

Over the past decade, streaming innovation has created extraordinary consumer choice. But abundance has turned into complexity. Parks Associates tracks more than 300 unique standalone streaming services in the US market, even as recent consolidation and exits modestly reduce the count.

The average US internet household has 5.3 streaming subscriptions. Consumers face growing complexity in finding where to watch specific content across services.

The question is no longer *whether* content is available, but *where* it lives.

Viewers routinely navigate:



Multiple subscription apps



FAST platforms



TV Everywhere authentication



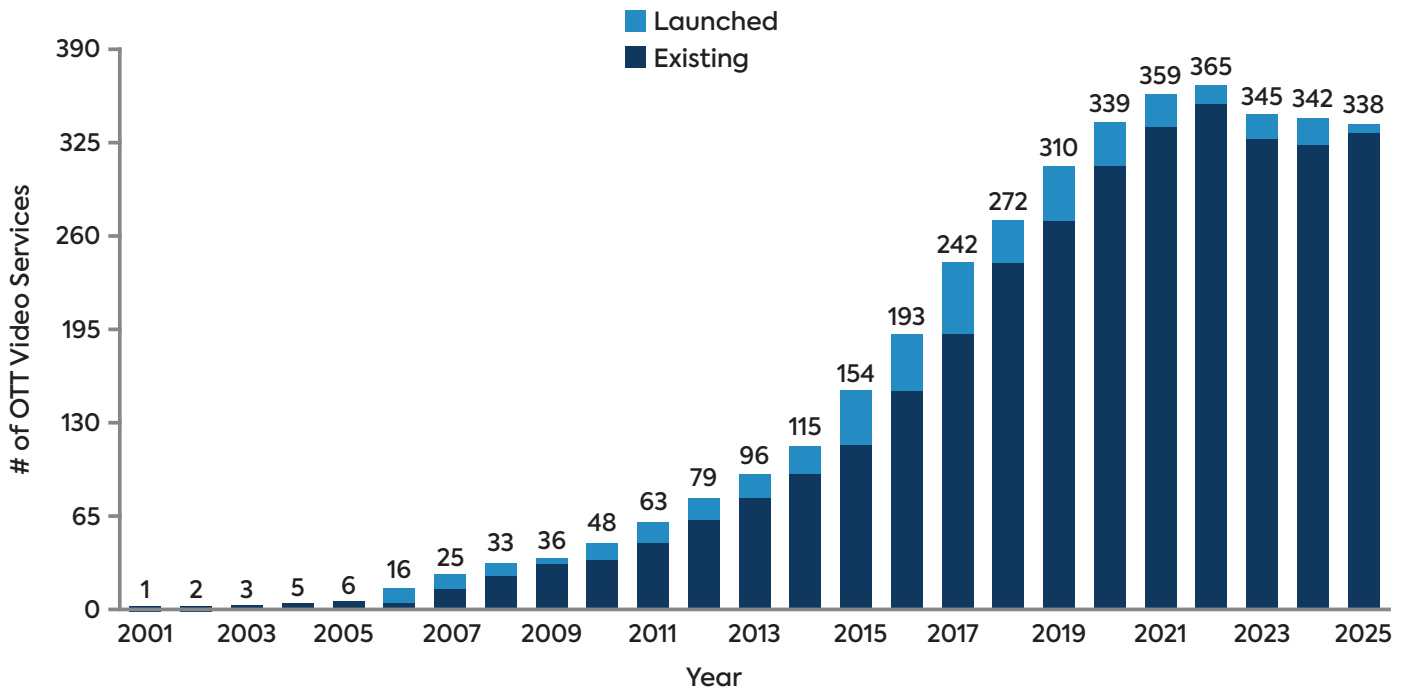
Transactional storefronts



Live and linear streaming services

This fragmentation creates “decision fatigue.” Viewers spend increasing time searching, comparing, and switching between apps. Discovery becomes frictional. The viewing journey breaks apart.

State of the Market: Total Number of Standalone Streaming Services



© Parks Associates

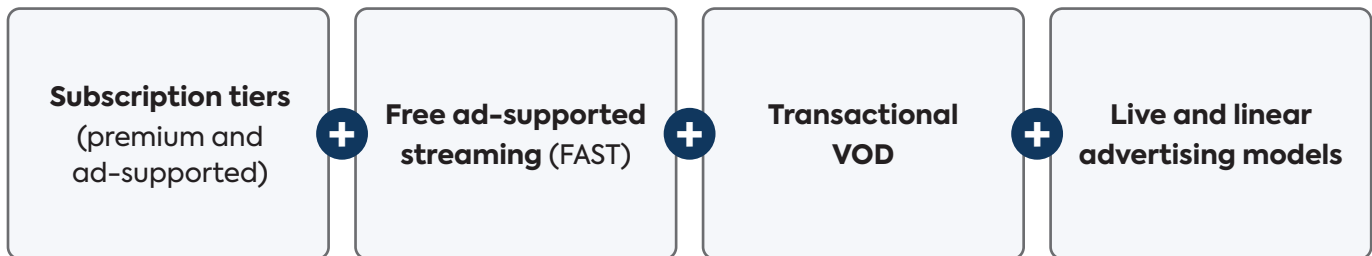
As household budgets tighten in this mature streaming environment, consumers are maintaining broad video portfolios but actively managing costs, shifting the competitive focus from subscriber growth to retention, bundling, and share of wallet. SVOD services continue to see strong engagement, but overall subscriber growth is slowing as consumers maintain stable subscription stacks and increasingly shift toward ad-supported and hybrid offerings.



Service Providers Seek Sustainable Business Through Hybrid Models

After years of aggressive spending to build up subscriber bases, streaming providers are now under pressure from investors and changing market dynamics to turn a profit. The industry's focus has pivoted from expansion to profitability, retention, and ecosystem leverage within an increasingly consolidated market.

Pure-play subscription models are increasingly vulnerable to churn and pricing sensitivity. Pure ad-supported models face CPM pressure and measurement fragmentation. As a result, providers are converging on hybrid strategies that combine:



Aggregation is essential in supporting multiple monetization paths within a single platform. Hybrid models allow providers to scale audiences through free and lower-cost tiers while leveraging premium subscriptions and TVOD to offset content and distribution costs, creating a more sustainable long-term business.

Many consumers intentionally maintain both streaming and live TV, using SVOD for depth and on-demand viewing, and pay TV for sports, news, and access to their favorite lifestyle programming. This reinforces the value of bundles and integrated offerings.

Success in the streaming market is being redefined. Long-term winners will be those that treat streaming not as a growth engine, but as a portfolio business — optimizing both reach and revenue through disciplined pricing, smart bundling, and continuous engagement.

Fragmentation Weakens Video Advertising

Fragmentation is not just a consumer problem, it is an advertising problem. Advertisers must navigate disconnected inventories, formats, and measurement frameworks. As viewing continues to fragment across platforms, campaigns become harder to plan, execute, and optimize holistically.

Fragmentation also disrupts the viewer journey. Discovery, viewing, and transactions occur across separate platforms, limiting advertisers' visibility into how audiences move between touchpoints. This weakens attribution and makes it more difficult to design seamless end-to-end commerce strategies within video environments.

Without aggregation, advertisers struggle to manage reach and frequency efficiently, leading to duplicated impressions and uneven exposure.

In turn, performance outcomes become harder to measure consistently in an environment where advertisers increasingly prioritize data-driven decision-making. In contrast, unified platforms can offer consolidated audience insights across live, on-demand, FAST, and transactional viewing—creating a more complete understanding of engagement and conversion pathways.

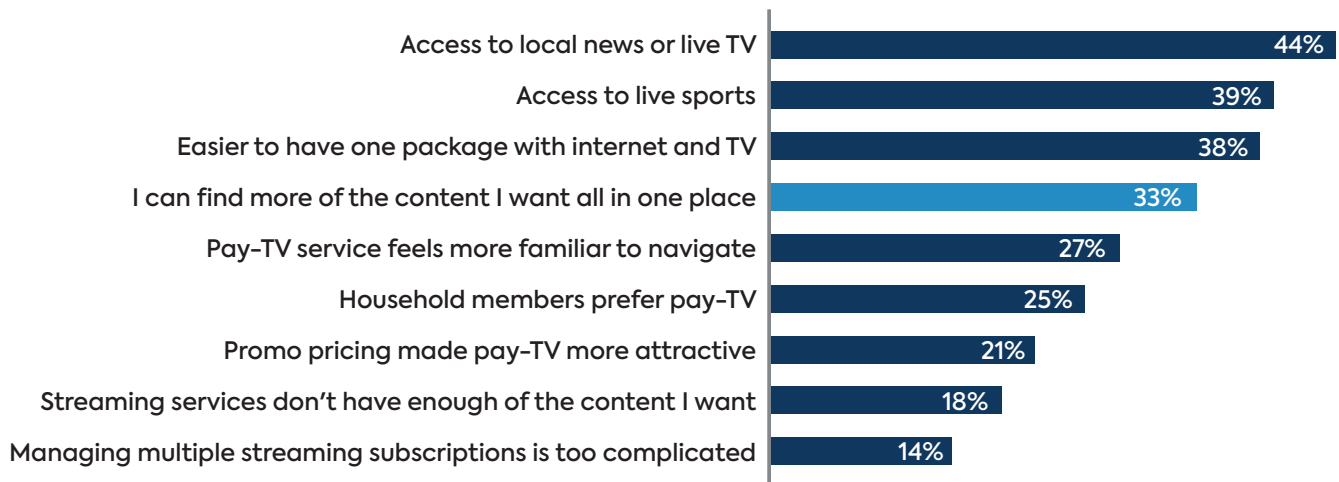


Strength of the Unified Video Platform

Unified Platforms Simplify Discovery and Deepen Engagement

Aggregation simplifies discovery by bringing live, on-demand, and free content into one funnel. Viewers no longer need to switch apps to move between content types, and unified search and recommendations keep audiences within the same platform.

Reasons for Subscribing to Pay-TV Services



According to Parks Associates research, 33% of pay-TV subscribers say they subscribe to pay-TV because they can find more of the content they want all in one place.

© Parks Associates

Aggregation enables more comprehensive audience insight across viewing behaviors. As live viewing transitions into on-demand experiences within a shared environment, engagement becomes more continuous and measurable. Advertisers seek to see longer session times, more consistent ad exposure and stronger audience insights from their media publishers.

Aggregated platform providers can serve different viewer needs and price sensitivities within a single ecosystem, increasing retention, engagement, and monetization opportunities over time rather than forcing users to churn between services. These advantages extend beyond viewer experience, shaping how premium video inventory is defined and valued.

Reframing “Premium CTV” Through Unified Experiences

Premium is no longer defined solely by content quality but by engagement potential. In today’s market, premium CTV means:

Professionally produced, licensed content

High-quality, brand-safe environments

Full-screen experiences with longer viewing sessions

Audiences accustomed to advertising

Advanced ad capabilities and measurement



Live/linear, FAST, and SVOD together create a more complete viewing ecosystem — blending scale, engagement, and monetization flexibility within unified platforms. Advertisers gain access to premium inventory with audiences that are generally ad-tolerant, particularly within live environments.

Attempting to retrofit interactive or ad-heavy models into pure SVOD environments presents challenges. Subscription-first viewers may resist increased ad load. Interface structures may not support pause, record, or overlay innovation. In contrast, unified platforms anchored by streaming TV begin with ad-native expectations. Innovation builds on an existing behavioral foundation. This reinforces CTV as both a brand-building and performance channel.

Streaming TV Is the Anchor of the Unified Platform

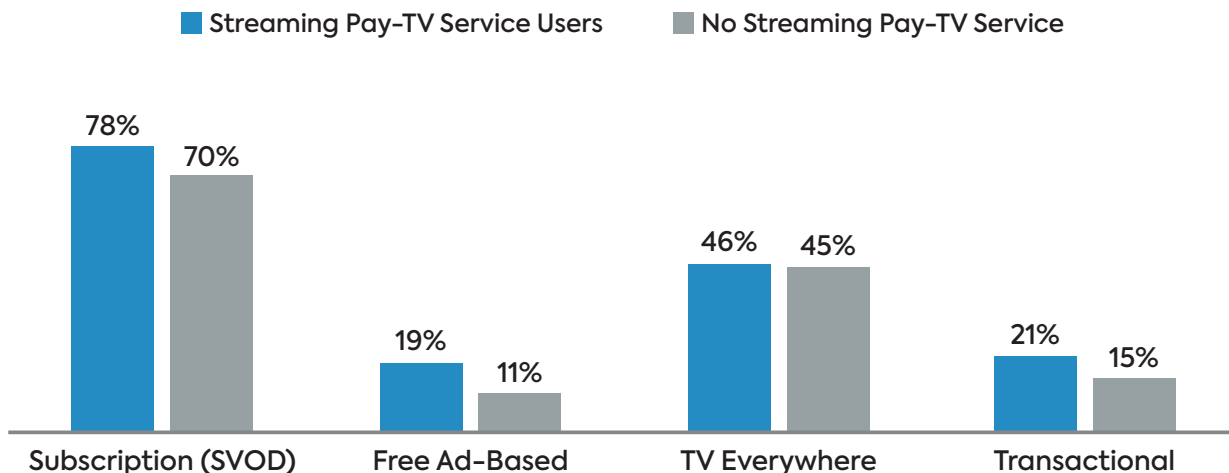
Live and linear viewing establishes habitual engagement and reinforces ad acceptance, making streaming TV a foundational layer within unified video platforms.

Streaming TV subscribers over-index on SVOD subscriptions and TVOD use. Streaming TV audiences also are more digitally savvy than traditional TV viewers:

| | Streaming TV Subscribers | Households with No Streaming TV |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Tech Innovator or Early Adopter | 41% | 30% |
| Under Age 45 | 49% | 40% |
| Watch FAST Services | 19% | 11% |

Streaming TV viewers are not passive holdovers from traditional TV. They are digitally fluent video enthusiasts engaging across business models. This cross-model engagement reinforces streaming TV’s role in connecting viewing behaviors across the broader video market. These characteristics position streaming TV audiences as a scalable, digitally engaged segment well-suited to evolving advertising strategies.

Use of OTT Video Services in Past 30 days among US Internet Households



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The Streaming TV Audience Advantage for Advertising Innovation

Streaming TV audiences represent a uniquely valuable foundation for next-generation advertising—combining ad tolerance, digital fluency, personalization readiness, and strong interest in interactive and shoppable experiences.

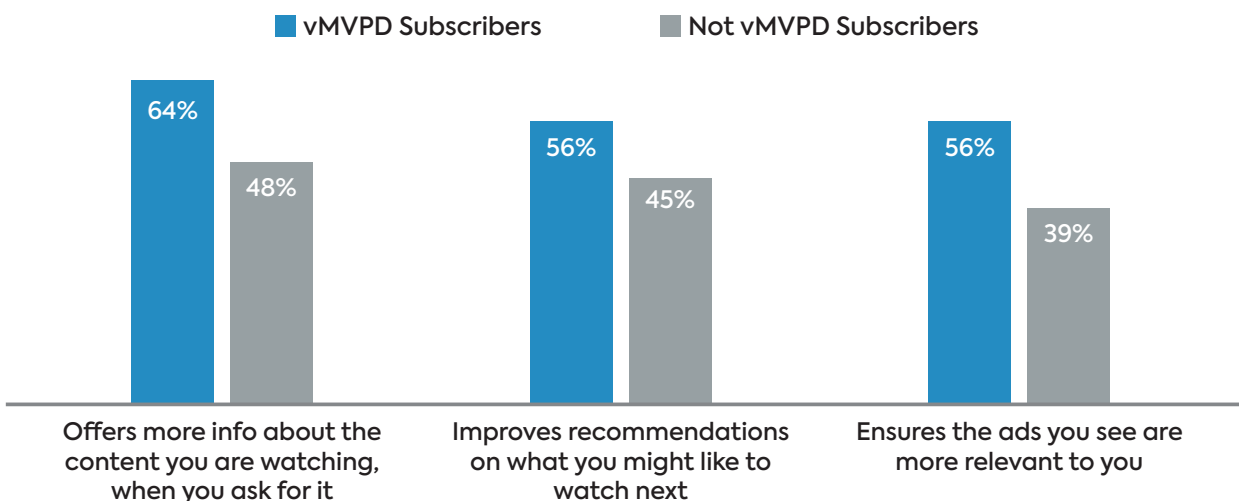
Higher Interest in Relevant, AI-Driven Advertising

Streaming TV audiences demonstrate stronger openness to AI-driven personalization and interactive advertising experiences, positioning them as an attractive segment for next-generation ad formats.

Fifty-six percent of vMVPD subscribers find appealing the ability of AI to ensure the ads they see are more relevant to them, compared with just 39% of non-vMVPD subscribers. This gap indicates openness to personalization rather than avoidance, reinforcing the value of intelligent targeting within streaming TV environments.

Appeal of AI Applications to Enhance the Viewing Experience

% Rating Feature Appealing (Rating 5-7 on a 7-pt. Scale)



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Stronger Openness to Interactive Features

Streaming TV subscribers show significantly greater openness to interactive ads:

- **55% are interested in clicking on an item** in a program for more information, compared with 31% of non-vMVPD subscribers.
- **51% are interested in clicking for more information on an item** advertised during a commercial break, vs 27% of non-vMVPD subscribers.
- **49% are interested in the ability to shop for special merchandise/memorabilia** related to a show or sporting event vs. 23% of non-vMVPD subscribers.

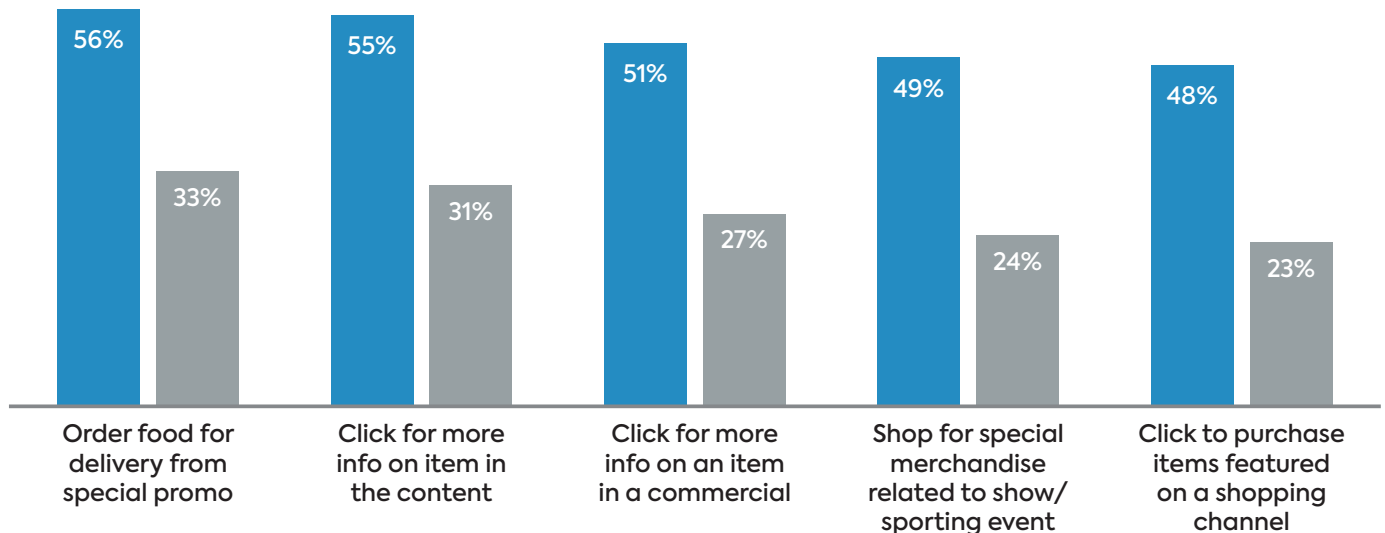
Streaming TV audiences are not only tolerant of advertising, but increasingly open to more dynamic, personalized, and commerce-enabled formats. This combination of tech affinity, ad tolerance, and commerce readiness creates a uniquely fertile environment for click-to-learn formats, QR-triggered purchasing, and sponsored pause screens.

Likelihood of Using Interactive TV Features

% Likely to Take Action (Rating 5-7 on a 7-pt. Scale)

■ vMVPD Subscribers

■ Not vMVPD Subscribers



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Streaming TV Audience Accelerates Next-Generation Ad Adoption

Live viewing builds urgency and attention, complementing the premium draw of on-demand content. Within streaming TV environments, advertising is not a disruption but an expected part of the experience.

vMVPD viewers are accustomed to ads as part of the experience of live and linear viewing, reinforcing tolerance and reducing resistance to new formats. vMVPD viewers are also more comfortable navigating menus, overlays, and interactive prompts — behaviors that support the adoption of more advanced ad experiences.

The vMVPD layer provides a foundation for introducing innovation. Building on streaming TV as an ad-native experience, advertisers can leverage new formats that integrate naturally into the viewing experience, such as pause ads, without disrupting engagement. As a result, streaming TV audiences are not just receptive to innovation; they can help accelerate the adoption of new advertising formats at scale.

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When viewers pause, attention doesn't disappear, it concentrates.



Pause ads transform a natural viewer behavior into a high-impact brand moment. Unlike traditional pre-roll or mid-roll formats, pause ads appear when a viewer intentionally stops content, creating a moment of stillness and focus.

Pause ads can be long-format: on Philo, the average pause ad length is 60 seconds. This gives viewers enough time for QR-code interaction, and the creative feels additive rather than disruptive. Brands in media and entertainment, e-commerce, and food and beverage are leading the way in adopting pause ads to promote new releases, highlight products, and drive direct engagement with Philo viewers through interactive elements such as QR codes.

Lifestyle Viewers: Where Content, Commerce, and Engagement Meet

Advertisers seek engaged viewers. Sports viewers remain one of the most sought-after audiences in advertising because they deliver live, appointment-based viewing, high attention, and predictable reach.

However, Parks Associates data finds that only about half (51%) of consumers in US internet households personally watch sports content (live or highlights). **The majority of viewers engage a variety of genres, including comedy, drama, news, lifestyle (home, food, travel), and reality programming.**

The same dynamics that make sports valuable—real-time viewing, ad tolerance, and sustained attention—also exist in non-sports live and linear content. This is particularly true within vMVPD environments where viewers are accustomed to advertising and actively engaged with programming.

Lifestyle programming in particular presents a natural alignment with new ad formats, with lifestyle viewers showing readiness for new forms of advertising. Products featured within lifestyle content can feel contextual rather than disruptive, as viewers already expect inspiration, illustrations, and recommendations. This is attractive particularly for brands in food and cooking, home goods, fashion, beauty, health and wellness, and travel.



Lifestyle audiences not only engage deeply with content, but also over-index in e-commerce and mobile purchasing behavior.

77% of lifestyle content viewers **purchased goods online via a mobile phone** over a 30 day period,

compared with 71% on average.

Lifestyle viewers make **more purchases per month on their phones, tables, and PCs** than the average viewer.



Lifestyle viewers (like vMVPD viewers generally) are particularly interested in shoppable TV features:

- Clicking to purchase items featured on a **shopping channel**
- Clicking for more info on an **ad during a commercial break**
- Clicking for more info on an item that **catches their eye in a program**

There is compounded value when lifestyle content lives within a unified platform offering additional content and engagement models. For instance, viewers of Health and Fitness content, Anime fans, and Children's content viewers also show above-average e-commerce activity. In an aggregated platform, live lifestyle programming creates immediacy and discovery, while FAST and on-demand formats extend engagement beyond scheduled viewing. Unified data further enhances advertiser value by improving targeting precision, measurement consistency, and performance accountability.



Recommendations for Advertisers

Rethink Streaming TV as Innovation Hubs, Not Legacy Bundles

Advertisers should reconsider vMVPDs not as traditional pay-TV replacements, but as innovation hubs within the unified video ecosystem. Streaming TV viewers are digitally fluent audiences with high engagement potential, accustomed to advertising as part of the viewing experience and comfortable navigating interactive features. These environments provide a strong foundation for testing and scaling next-generation ad formats.

Leverage Live/Linear Features to Drive Engagement

Live and linear video environments create urgency, attention, and real-time relevance — conditions that support the introduction of interactive and commerce-enabled ad formats. Features such as pause and record capabilities allow advertisers to integrate messaging naturally into the viewing experience. Live context further enhances relevance and urgency, increasing the likelihood of interaction and recall.

Align Lifestyle Content with Performance-Based Advertising Goals

Lifestyle audiences already demonstrate strong purchase intent, making them particularly well-suited for performance-driven advertising strategies. Products featured within lifestyle programming often feel contextual and discovery-oriented, improving conversion potential while maintaining viewer engagement. Lifestyle content is particularly suited to influencer-style brand integrations.

Invest Early in Platforms Built for Aggregation and Audience Engagement at Scale

Unified platforms are structurally well positioned to support future advertising innovation. Their ability to consolidate discovery, engagement, and data within a single environment enables stronger targeting precision and measurement consistency. Early investment in these platforms allows brands to build institutional learning, optimize performance over time, and establish competitive advantage as aggregation becomes increasingly central to the video market.

About Parks Associates



Parks Associates is a global research, consulting, and marketing firm with 40 years of experience delivering proprietary consumer data and industry insights for businesses. The firm produces market research reports, forecasts, surveys, and competitive business intelligence on connected consumer, small business, and commercial technologies and related business solutions. Parks Associates provides custom research, strategic consulting, and forward-looking analysis across connected home, small business, and commercial markets, including security, smart home, broadband, entertainment, energy, multifamily, smart buildings, connected health, and emerging AI-driven technologies.

Parks Associates supports industry growth through proprietary research, consulting, and executive networking and convenes thousands of leaders each year through its flagship conferences, including CONNECTIONS™, Connected Health Summit, Smart Energy Summit, Smart Spaces, and Future of Video. Learn more at www.parksassociates.com.



<https://www.philo.com>

About Philo

Philo is a live television streaming service that offers consumers flexible, entertainment-focused plans starting at \$25/month. The Essential plan includes 70+ top-rated channels and a library of over 75,000 on-demand titles. The Bundle+ plan offers all the channels and streaming library from Essential, plus the entire AMC+ library and access to HBO Max Basic with Ads plan and discovery+ included. Both plans include an unlimited DVR that saves recordings for a year. Philo also offers a Free Channels plan that lets consumers enjoy 130+ free channels without creating an account. Philo can be enjoyed at home or on the go on mobile phones, tablets, TVs, and desktops.

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ATTRIBUTION

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RESEARCH, CONSULTING, & MARKETING SERVICES

for the Connected Home,
Multifamily and SMB Markets

With over 35 years of experience, Parks Associates is committed to helping our clients with reliable and insightful consumer and industry research.



Streaming & Pay TV Services



Connectivity & WIFI



Home Networks & Support Services



Assistive Technologies for Older Adults



Smart Home Devices



Home Control & Security Systems
Platforms



Consumer Electronics



Energy Efficiency & Management



Wearables and Mobile Devices



Multifamily Living



Hospitality



Software & AI



Standards & Interoperability