

A control room with multiple monitors displaying various video feeds and data. The room is dimly lit with blue ambient lighting. The monitors show a variety of content, including news segments, social media feeds, and video call windows. In the foreground, there are several computer workstations with monitors and keyboards.

# MEDIA SCIENCE®

# COVID-19 IMPACT ON TV ADVERTISING

An Independent Study By MediaScience®

## Key Insights

Study # SMS50  
April 2020



- 01 BACKGROUND OF STUDY
- 02 METHODOLOGY & DESIGN
- 03 THE RESULTS
- 04 BRAND CASE STUDIES

 MEDIASCIENCE

# BACKGROUND OF STUDY

# THE STUDY

## PURPOSE

Despite the outbreak of COVID-19 and the drastic impact on consumers' day-to-day lives, brands cannot stop communicating with their audience. The news is focused on COVID-19 - a topic that is negatively impacting all viewers in some capacity. Does this topic create a brand safety issue for the news environment? And given the current climate, is it even still (as) safe to advertise in a non-news primetime environment, such as sitcoms or sports?

MediaScience® conducted an internal study to help answer these questions.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- 01 Is there a significant difference in brand impact between the news environment (focused on COVID-19) and regular prime time programming?
- 02 How do viewers respond to ads where the message is tailored to COVID-19? Is there a difference between the viewing environments tested?
- 03 Based on this study, is there evidence of the COVID-19 outbreak causing a brand safety issue?



 MEDIASCIENCE

# METHODOLOGY & DESIGN

# IN-HOME RESEARCH



StreamPulse™ is a custom digital testing environment that is facilitated in the comfort of people's homes. A variety of experimental designs can be executed and delivered to our panel of almost 80,000 members, growing daily, and produce results within days. This can be done across a variety of digital platforms, including OTT, mobile, and desktop.

## Research Tools

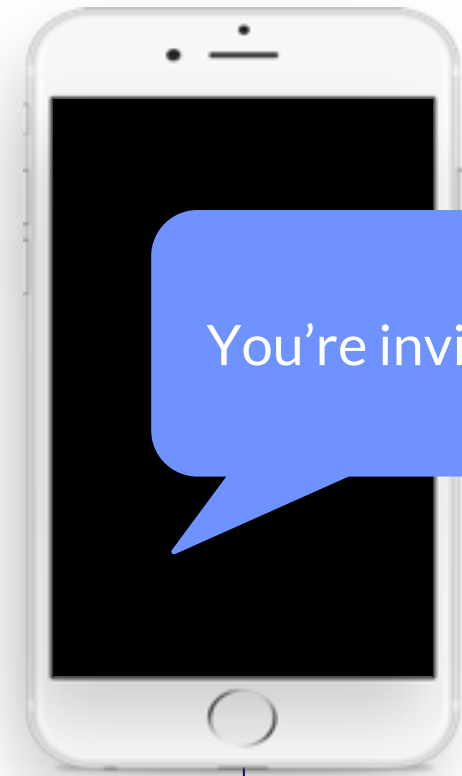


Surveys



Behavior

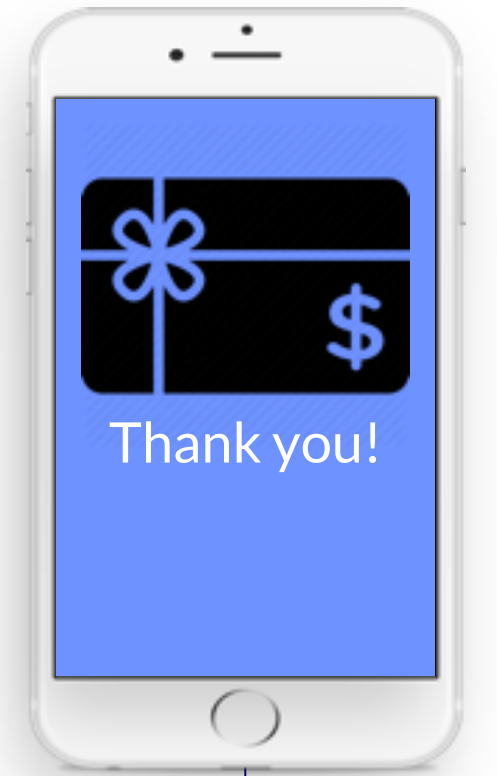
# PARTICIPANT EXPERIENCE



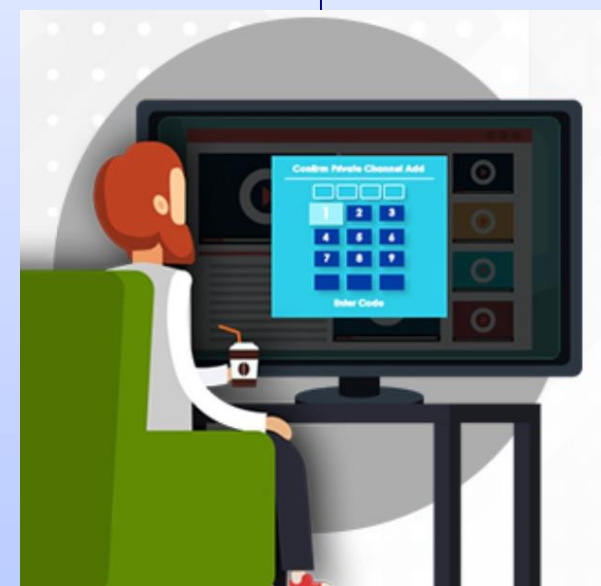
**Add MediaScience channel**  
The channel is hidden to the public, only invited MediaScience panel members can find it.



**Survey**  
After viewing ends, a survey appears and is completed on TV, mobile, or computer.



**Text/Email invitation**  
Eligible panel members are sent invitations to download the MediaScience app to participate in an at-home study.



**Choose a show**  
Panel members choose a show offered for their experience and begin viewing.



**Participant gets paid**  
After successful survey completion, the panel member is logged as having completed the survey and receives an electronic gift card.



# STUDY DESIGN

MediaScience® utilizes proper experimental design to isolate and test the variables of interest in a study. This study had two cells: News and Primetime Comedy. Participants were assigned to these groups based on viewership (i.e. frequent viewers of news were assigned to news).

Cell 1: News (COVID-19)	Cell 2: Primetime Comedy
<p>Participants were exposed to a 30 minute news segment where the primary topic was updates on the COVID-19 pandemic.</p> <p>Three different news sources were used throughout the cell. Participants were exposed to their preferred news source.</p>	<p>Participants were exposed to a 30 minute primetime comedy program.</p> <p>Participants had four shows to choose from.</p>
N = 97	N = 72

Each cell contained two rotations so that each brand was exposed as a standard TV ad and an ad relevant to COVID-19

Rotation 1	Rotation 2
<p>Brands A, C, E, and G are Standard TV ads.</p> <p>Brands B, D, F, and H are ads relevant to COVID-19.</p>	<p>Brands B, D, F, and H are Standard TV ads.</p> <p>Brands A, C, E, and G are ads relevant to COVID-19.</p>

 **MEDIASCIENCE**

# THE RESULTS

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## BRANDS WITH COVID-19-FOCUSED ADS ARE OFTEN SAFER IN NEWS CREATIVE EXECUTION IS CRUCIAL

The results demonstrate that both context and creative execution are critical.

COVID-19 messaging performed best in the news environment, which better matched the context of much of the COVID-19-themed messaging.

Creative executions which were informational in character (e.g. 'our drive-thru service remains open') generally did worse than emotional appeal messaging, which, in some cases, outperformed the brand's standard ads.

*"What Covid-19-themed ads prove, once again, is that the emotional dynamics of good advertising don't go away just because what we have to say is important. We need to 'show' not just 'tell' them our message - and do so in the right environment."*

**- Dr. Duane Varan – CEO, MediaScience**

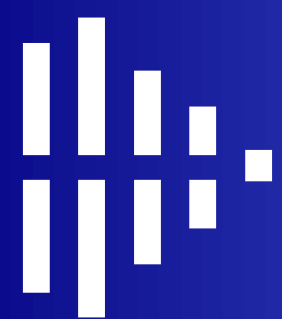
### KEY TAKEAWAYS:

- Context is important, the news environment is often safer for COVID-focused brand messaging.
- Creative execution is important and must be researched. Informational messaging generally doesn't perform as well as a brand's traditional ads.
- Where informational messaging is important, it works better in the news environment.
- Testing plays a critical role in optimizing for both context and creative execution.

# PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS

BRAND	ATTITUDINAL MEASURES OF CREATIVE	COMEDY ENVIRONMENT	NEWS ENVIRONMENT
AMAZON	Neutral	COVID Ad Performed Better than standard ad	COVID Ad Performed Better than standard ad
DOMINO'S	Neutral	Both Ads Performed Similarly	COVID Ad Performed Better than standard ad
PETS	Positive	COVID Ad Performed Better than standard ad	Both Ads Performed Similarly
TELECOM	Positive	Both Ads Performed Similarly	Both Ads Performed Similarly
FAST FOOD BURGER BRAND	Neutral	COVID Ad Performed Worse than standard ad	Both Ads Performed Similarly
FINANCIAL	Neutral	COVID Ad Performed Worse than standard ad	COVID Ad Performed Worse than standard ad
CLEANING	Neutral	COVID Ad Performed Worse than standard ad	COVID Ad Performed Worse than standard ad
FORD	Neutral	COVID Ad Performed Worse than standard ad and more intrusive*	COVID Ad seen as less intrusive than standard ad*

Performed Similarly
  Performed Better Than
  Performed Worse Than



KEY INSIGHT:  
COVID-19 ads were often safer during news



# BRAND CASE STUDIES

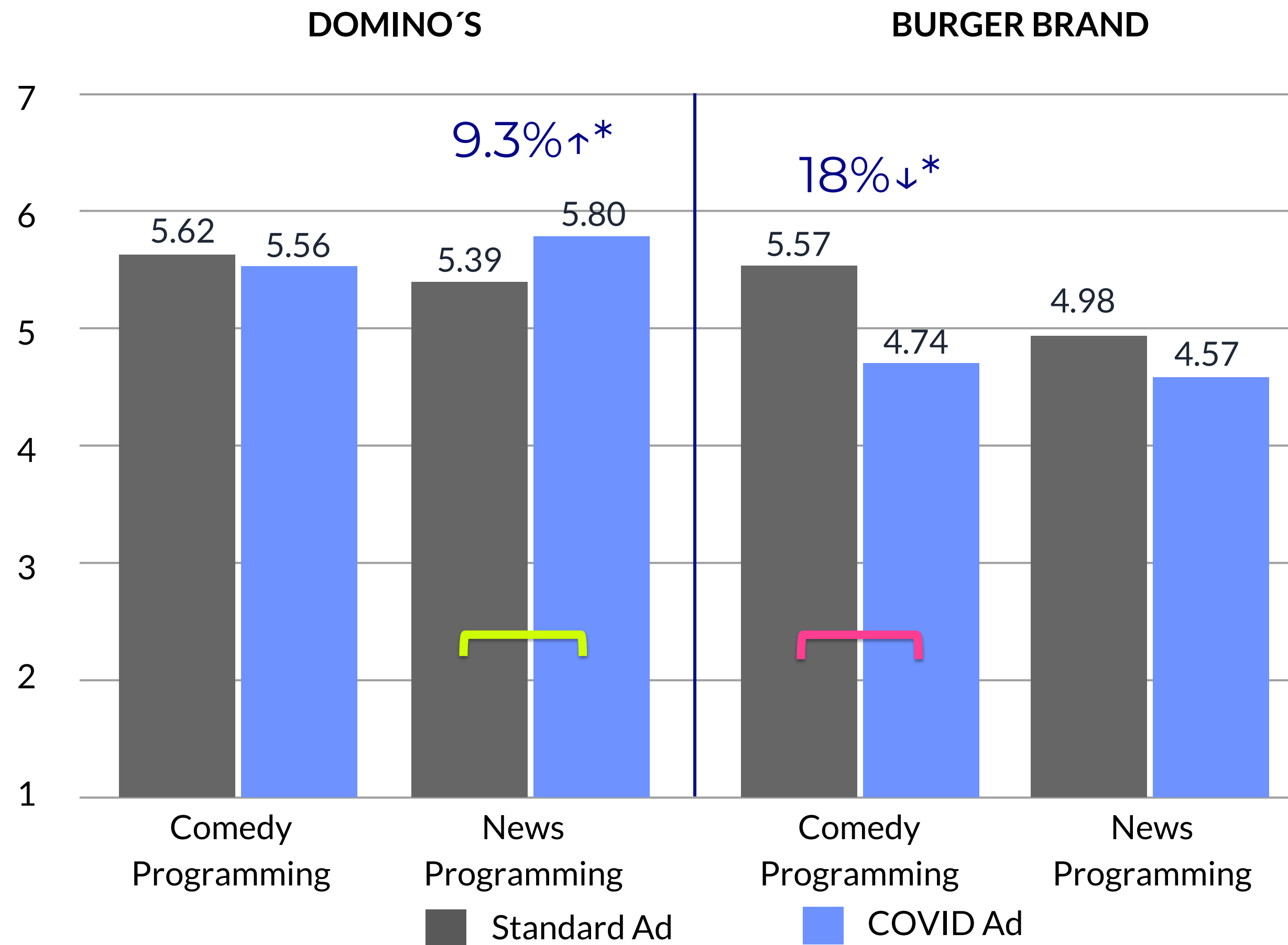
01 Domino's VS Burger Brand



02 Amazon VS Other Service Brand

03 Ford

# DOMINO'S vs BURGER BRAND

## AD LIKING



 = statistically significant difference (p < .05)  
 = marginally significant difference (.05 < p < .10) \* Lift calculated on 1-7 scale (i.e. 0-6)



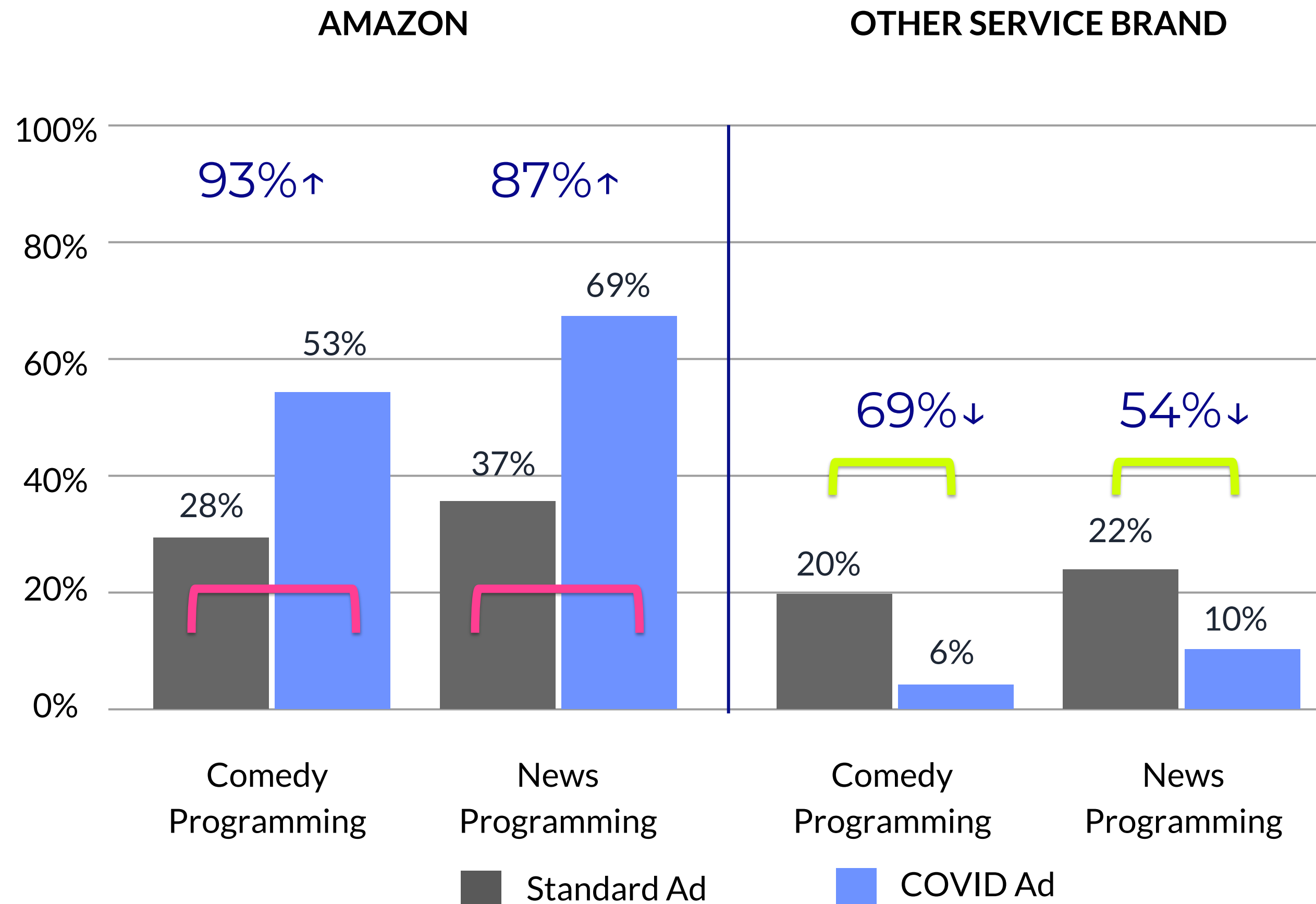
### KEY INSIGHTS:



The Domino's COVID Ad experienced a 9.3% lift in Ad Liking over their standard ad in the news environment.

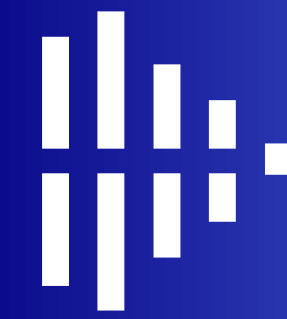
For another Fast Food Brand, Ad Liking dropped 18% when comparing their COVID ad to their standard ad.

# AMAZON vs OTHER SERVICE BRAND

## AIDED BRAND RECALL



 = statistically significant difference ( $p < .05$ )  
 = marginally significant difference ( $.05 < p < .10$ )



### KEY INSIGHTS:

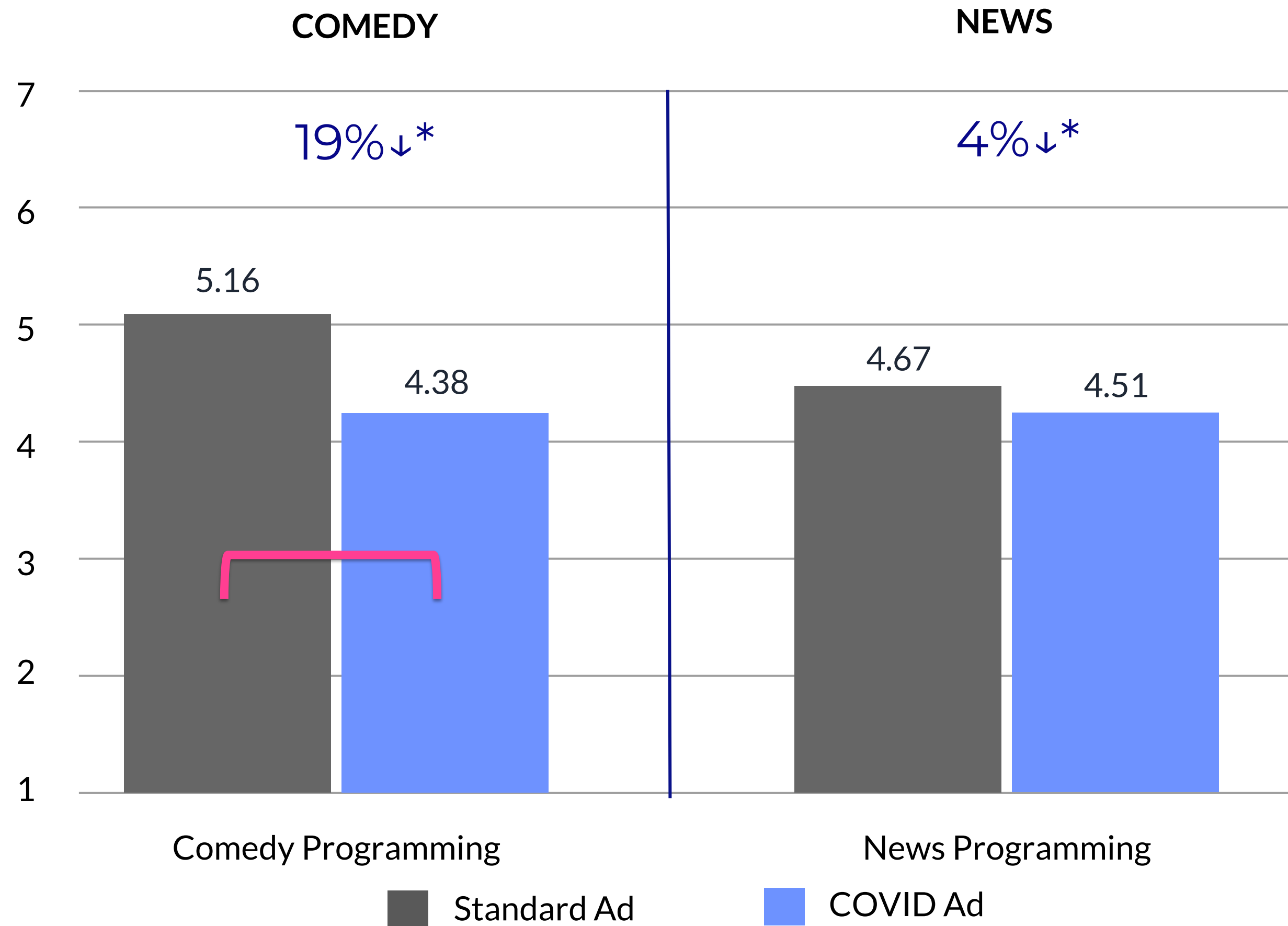
For Aided Brand Recall, the Amazon COVID Ad experienced 90% lift over their standard ad, on average across genres.



Compared to a 62% decline for another service brand's COVID ad (Vs. their standard ad)

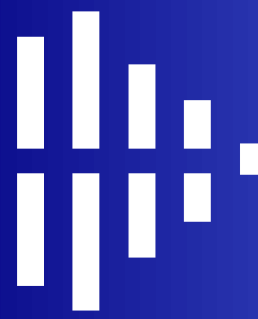
The Amazon Creative did not promote anything beneficial to consumers. It was purely recognizing their essential workers.

# FORD

## BRAND ATTITUDE



 = statistically significant difference ( $p < .05$ )  
 = marginally significant difference ( $.05 < p < .10$ ) \* Lift calculated on 1-7 scale (i.e. 0-6)



**KEY INSIGHT:**

For Ford, Brand Attitude for their COVID ad was 19% worse than their standard ad in comedy. This problem didn't occur in the news environment.





# MEDIASCIENCE®

THANK YOU!

Please reach out if you have any questions.

Duane Varan, PhD – Chief Executive Officer  
[varan@mediasciencelabs.com](mailto:varan@mediasciencelabs.com)

Phillip Lomax – SVP, Business Development  
[lomax@mediasciencelabs.com](mailto:lomax@mediasciencelabs.com)

Amy Rask, PhD – Chief Operating Officer  
[a.rask@mediasciencelabs.com](mailto:a.rask@mediasciencelabs.com)

Daniel Bulgrin – Lab Director, NYC  
[d.bulgrin@mediasciencelabs.com](mailto:d.bulgrin@mediasciencelabs.com)