

Taboola

FOOD

# Discovery Benchmark Report

Global Data, Trends  
& Insights



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# INTRODUCTION

The food industry remains one rooted in necessity (hey, we all have to eat), but it continues to grow and evolve with the changing needs of consumers. With a cultural shift to prioritizing health and wellness, a greater expectation of convenience, and a growing interest in sustainability, food marketers have had to take a closer look at how they position their products.

Consumer spending on food, as you might expect, is not slowing down any time soon. Restaurant spending alone will hit \$863 billion in 2019<sup>1</sup>, 66% of global consumers say they're willing to pay a premium for sustainable food brands<sup>2</sup>, and by 2025, online sales will make up 15-20% of the food and beverage industry spending globally<sup>3</sup>.

In order to thrive as a food marketer today, it's critical to show consumers that you understand their needs, concerns, and desires, and you're making conscious decisions to align with them.

That's where online marketing efforts come in.

<sup>1</sup> National Restaurant Association: <https://www.restaurantbusinessonline.com/financing/national-restaurant-associations-state-industry-report-here>  
<sup>2</sup> Nielsen: <https://www.nielsen.com/us/en/press-releases/2015/consumer-goods-brands-that-demonstrate-commitment-to-sustainability-outperform/>  
<sup>3</sup> Sana Commerce: <https://www.sana-commerce.com/blog/shorten-time-market-e-commerce-food-beverage-industry/>



# FOOD ADVERTISING TODAY



Today, food marketing has to meet consumers where they are, and where they want to be.

**Millennials want a healthy bang for their buck.** In terms of top food priorities among millennials, 48% reported cost as the most important, 46% said nutrient density, 40% said no artificial additives, 39% said organic, and 37% said they look for plant-based food.<sup>4</sup>

**Your audience may not skew as female as you've thought.**

53% of male food shoppers reported that they are the primary shopper for their household.<sup>5</sup> Women also remain actively involved in the purchasing of food, but broadening the scope of gender targeting can yield greater results.

To show consumers that you're on board with their values and food-related desires, you need fresh digital content and campaign creatives targeted strategically to your audience online. To do this effectively, you'll need a thoughtful creative strategy and a strong media mix.

Today, you're likely using search and social. Discovery, the third pillar of any successful digital strategy, complements them both—it's the most effective way to reach the people who haven't seen your brand yet, and to reach your audience with the right content, in the right place, at the right time.

In this report, we'll uncover the data-driven insights you need to build a successful discovery campaign for your food brand.

<sup>4</sup> Food Navigator: <https://www.foodnavigator-usa.com/Article/2019/08/28/A-year-in-food-Survey-reveals-millennials-eating-and-spending-habits#>

<sup>5</sup> Food Navigator: <https://www.foodnavigator-usa.com/Article/2019/07/08/The-evolution-of-US-grocery-shopping-10-trends-to-watch>



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# START YOUR CAMPAIGN TODAY

START NOW



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# WE'LL COVER...

The **who, what, when, where, and how** behind today's most successful discovery campaigns in the food industry.

**We're going beyond the benchmarks and showing you the exact places where your brand has the most opportunity on the open web.**

We define opportunities for several types of targeting tactics—from content types, to time of day, and more. For each of these areas, opportunity exists at the intersection of supply and demand. When there is high demand for food content but low supply, that signals a high opportunity for success.

In this context, we define 'demand' as a click-through-rate (CTR). If someone is clicking on a piece of content, we assume that means they want to see it. Supply is defined as the percentage of spend that marketers have allocated toward a type of content on our network.

The data in this report is based on campaigns from all types of advertisers in the food industry—including food delivery services, restaurants, grocery stores, related article content, and more—which includes 7,570,743,208 impressions and over 11,995,107 clicks.

Opportunity differs for every industry.

CONTINUE ON TO DISCOVER DATA-DRIVEN

INSIGHTS BEHIND:

- The **audiences** you should target, test and optimize
- The **content types** with the largest opportunity
- **Time** of year, week, and day to best reach your audience
- The **platforms** and **countries** with high potential for campaign success
- The **KPIs** commonly targeted in your industry, and how to **measure** and **A/B test** them effectively.

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# WHO SHOULD YOU TARGET?

The Right Way to Use Audience  
Segments and Data



# HOW TO FIND YOUR PERFECT AUDIENCE

Marketers tend to think they know their audience—and they do, but there's often more to it than meets the eye.

The only way to know for sure is to dig deeper into the activity on your own campaigns—understanding who responds to your content is exactly what you need at the beginning of a campaign in order to get the content and targeting just right.



## HERE'S A TARGETING FLOW WE RECOMMEND FOR A MONTH-LONG CAMPAIGN:

### WEEK 1

When you're starting out, keep your targeting wide—we often recommend no targeting at all. This will give you a clear picture of exactly *who* is responding to your campaigns without any bias.

### WEEK 2

At the end of the week, check in with your campaign. Who responded? Are you surprised by location, gender, or interests? Choose several audience segments to test based on these initial results.

### WEEK 3

This is a good time to take a look at creative performance. Is each headline, photo, or video resonating with each audience segment? A/B test different combinations to find the right fit.

### WEEK 4

When analyzing your campaign, take a look back at what surprised you, and look to test new audiences in order to expand your reach going forward.

### REPEAT

Go back to Week 1's strategy of targeting widely, assessing results, and landing on new audiences to test.



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# USING DATA FOR SUCCESS

Our data marketplace includes data from leading data-providers as well as data of our own.

**Try testing some of these segments in your next campaign:**

- Intent > CPG > Dairy
- Interest > Services > Restaurants > Health & Vegan
- Intent > Shopping > Retail > Fast Food

And many, *many* more!



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# WHAT CONTENT SHOULD YOU DISTRIBUTE?

How to Choose Between  
Articles, Product Pages, Video  
and More



# HIGH OPPORTUNITY POST-CLICK CONTENT TYPES

Using mouth-watering photos is a commonly used food marketing approach, but it's not the only way to get your audience to eat with their eyes—leading consumers to pages containing videos also performs well.

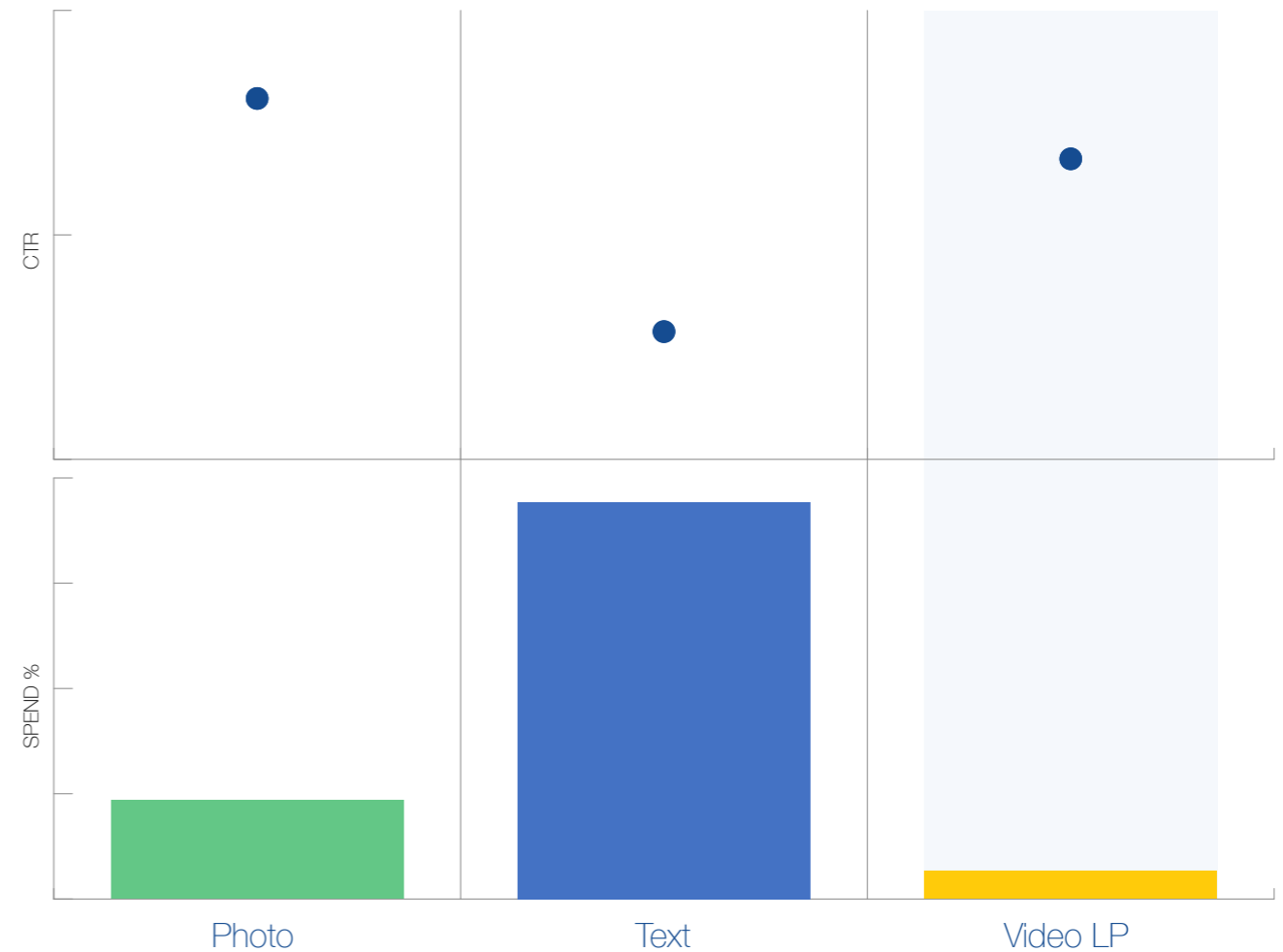
While supply of photos and text articles are high, marketers should also promote more landing pages that include video to meet consumer demand.



## TIP

Consider testing video landing pages.

**Discovery Content Type Performance for the Food Vertical Worldwide, 2019**  
Supply<sup>6</sup> of Food Content vs. Consumer Demand<sup>7</sup> by Content Type



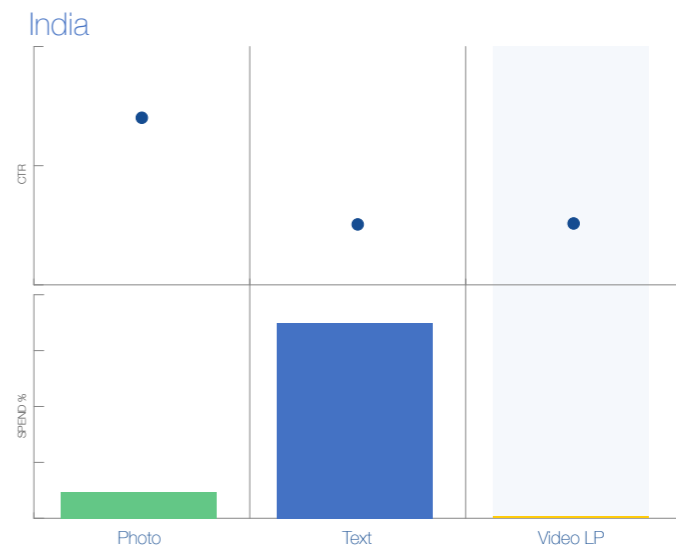
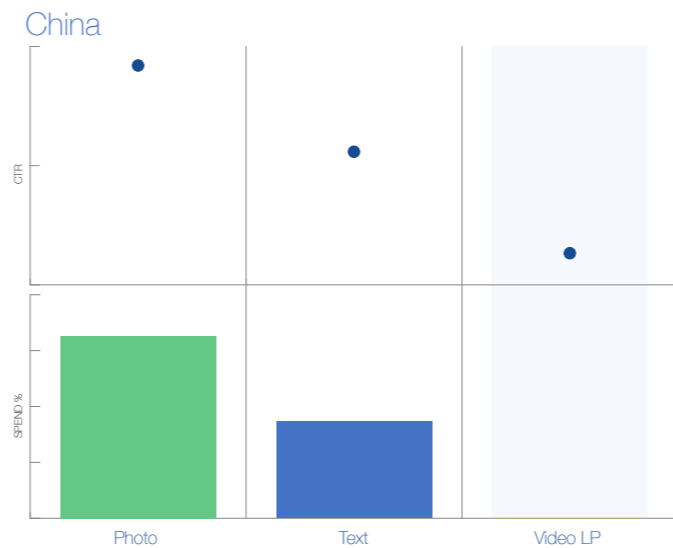
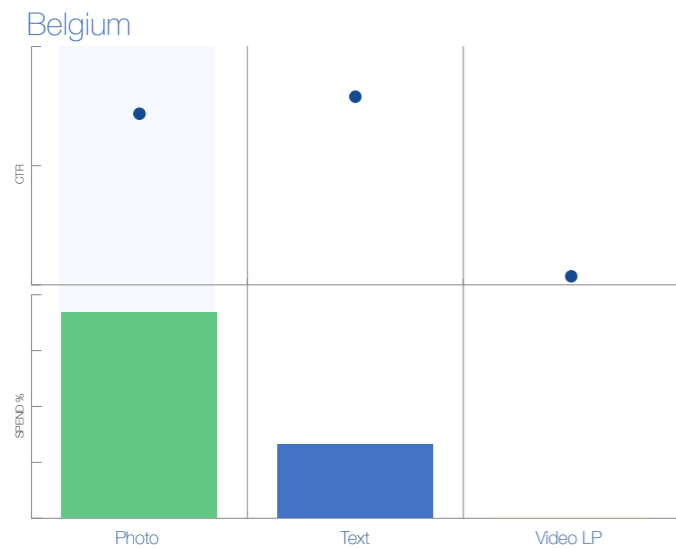
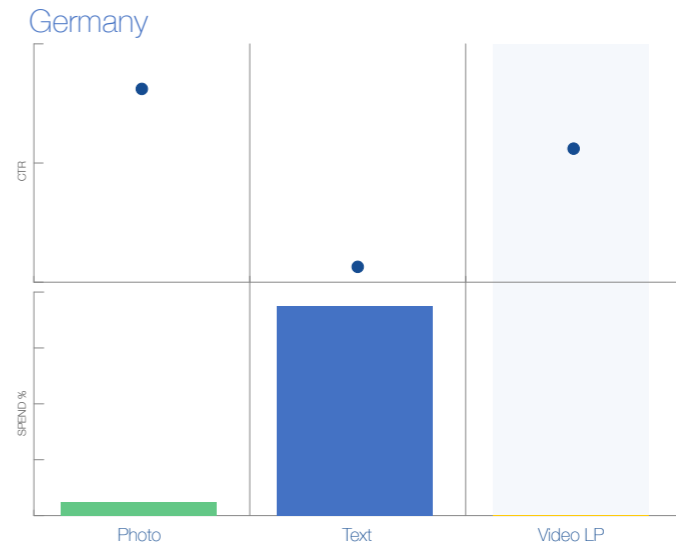
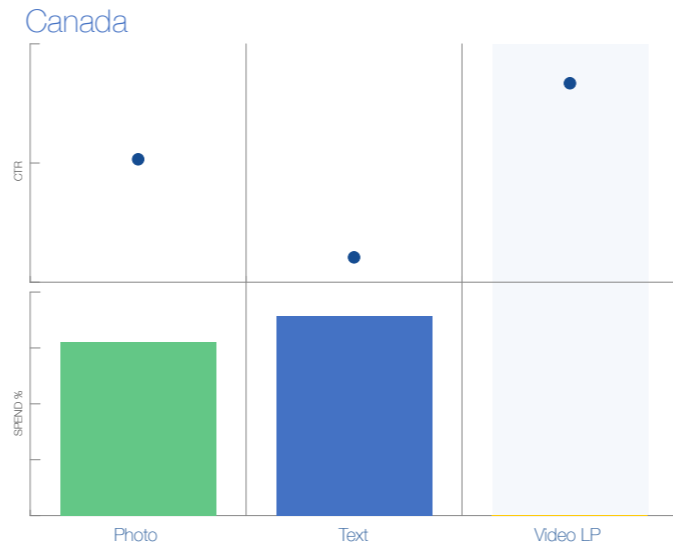
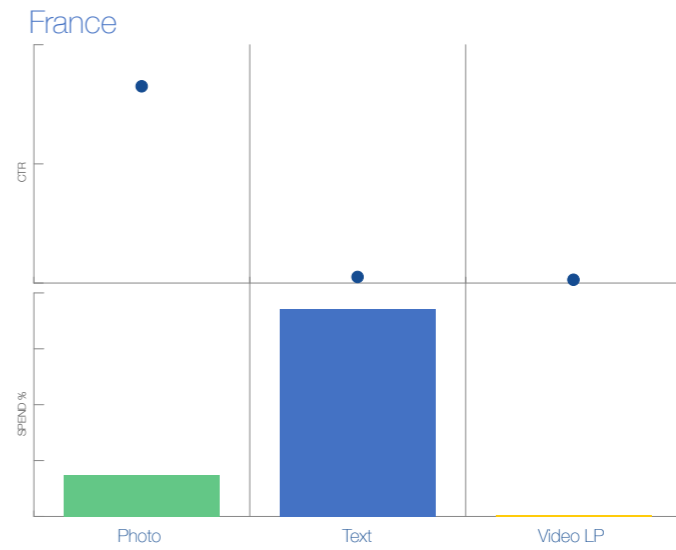
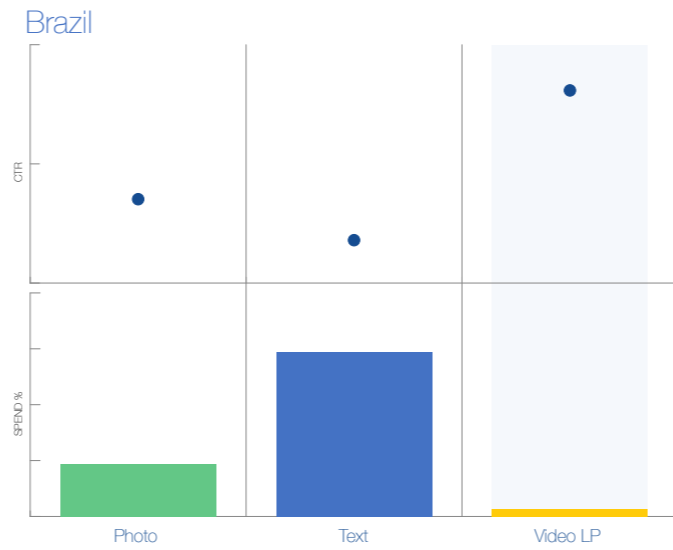
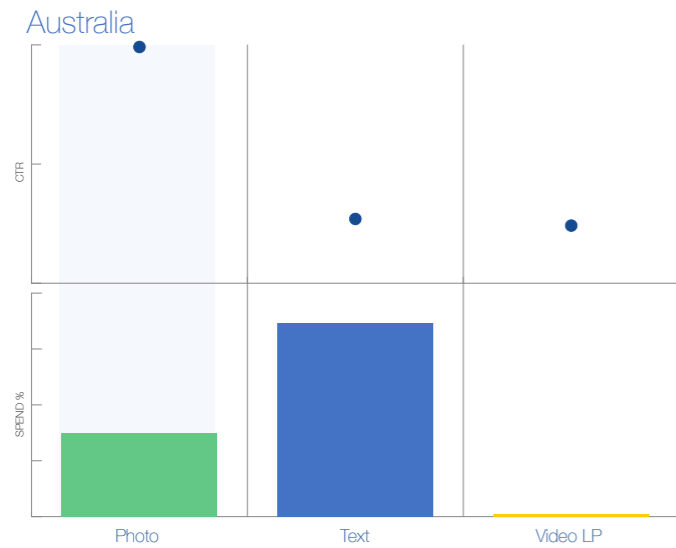
<sup>6</sup> Supply is indicated by the percentage a market spends on food content

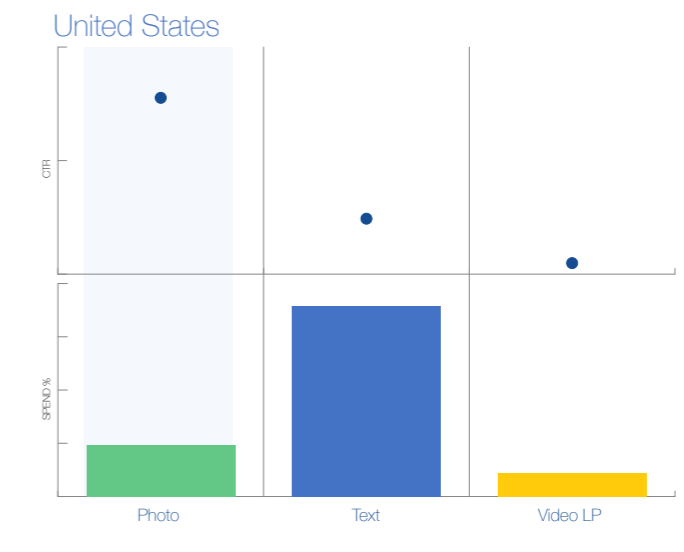
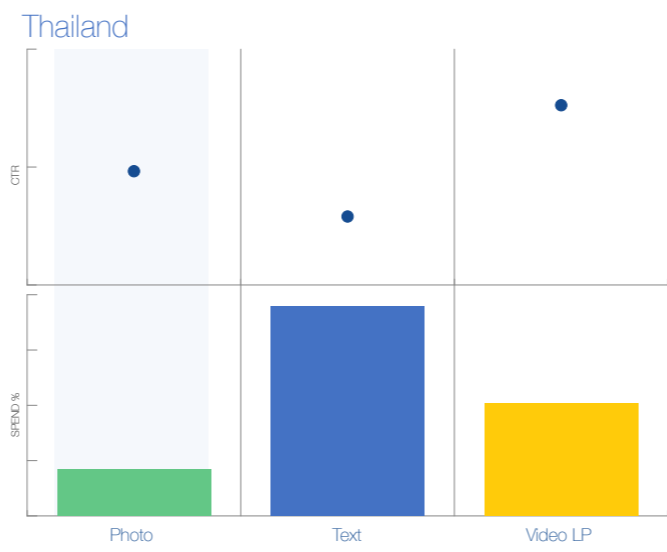
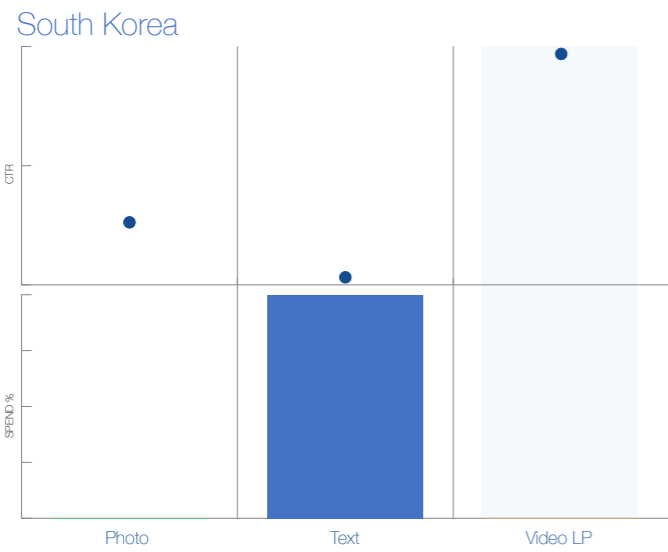
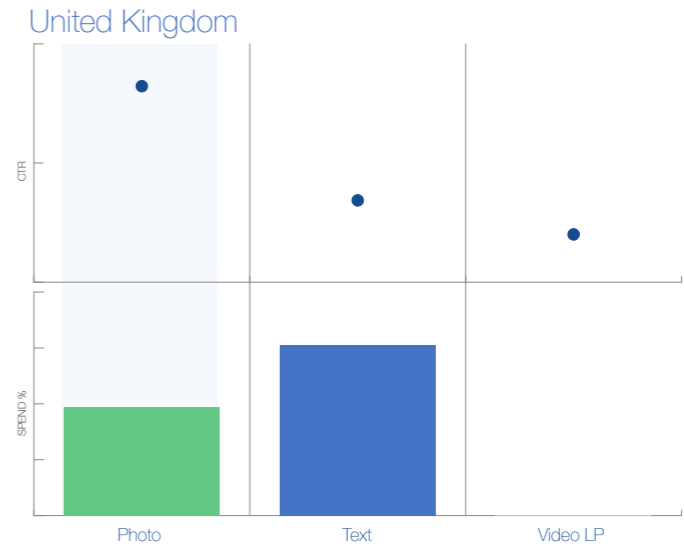
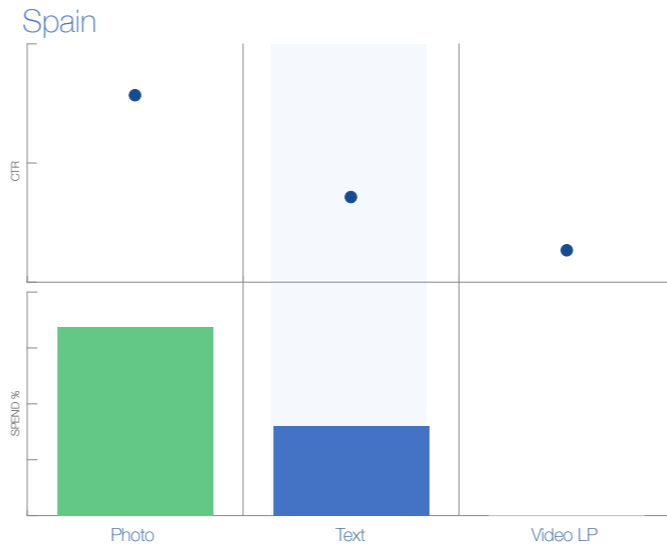
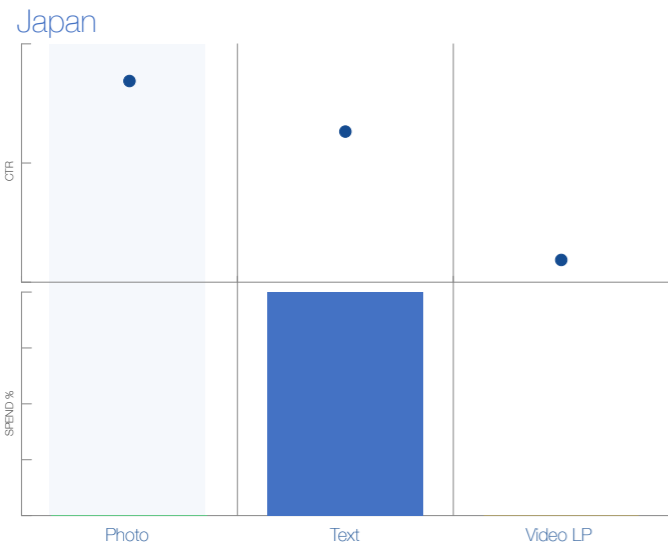
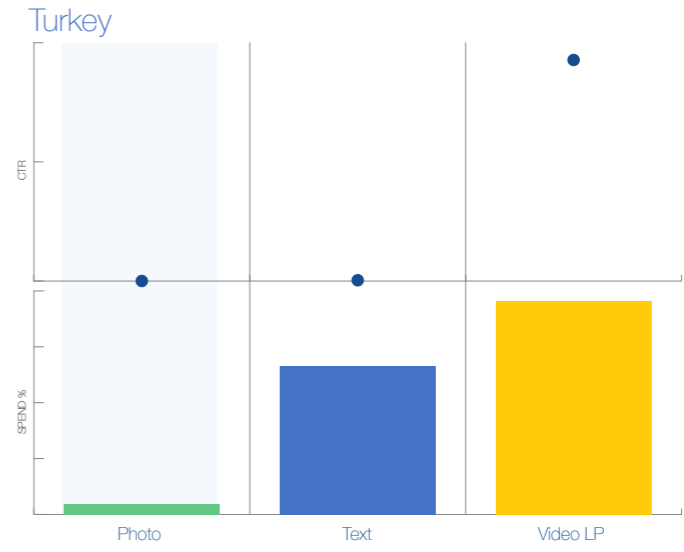
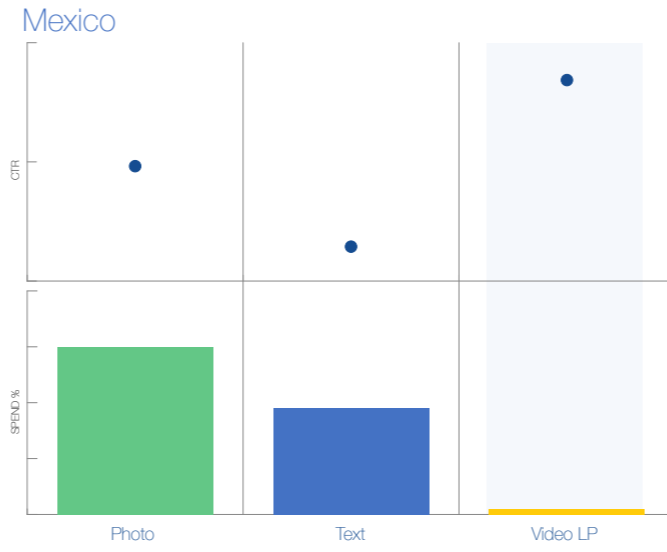
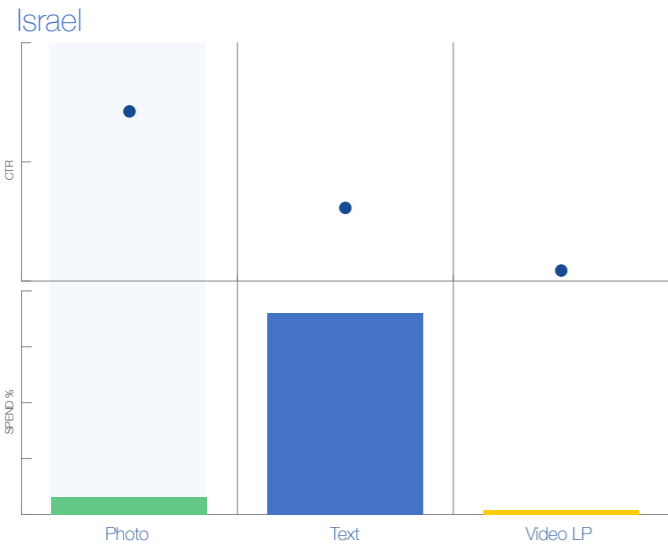
<sup>7</sup> Consumer demand is indicated by the average calibrated CTR for food content

## HIGH OPPORTUNITY POST-CLICK CONTENT TYPES, BY COUNTRY

These country-specific trends provide a benchmark for advertisers looking to allocate spend by post-click content type in specific countries.

On a global scale, great opportunity lies in video and photo gallery landing pages.







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# START YOUR CAMPAIGN TODAY

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# VIDEO ADS: DATA-DRIVEN INSIGHTS BEHIND WHAT MAKES A GOOD ONE



## LESS THAN 30 SECONDS

Our video length recommendation. Short and sweet is key.

## OPTIMIZE FOR SOUND OFF

Include subtitles in case your consumer is in the office, doesn't have headphones, or just doesn't want video with sound.

## THREE

The number of video creatives we recommend you test for optimization.

## LOGO

If brand awareness is your goal, include your logo on-screen at all times.

## END CARD

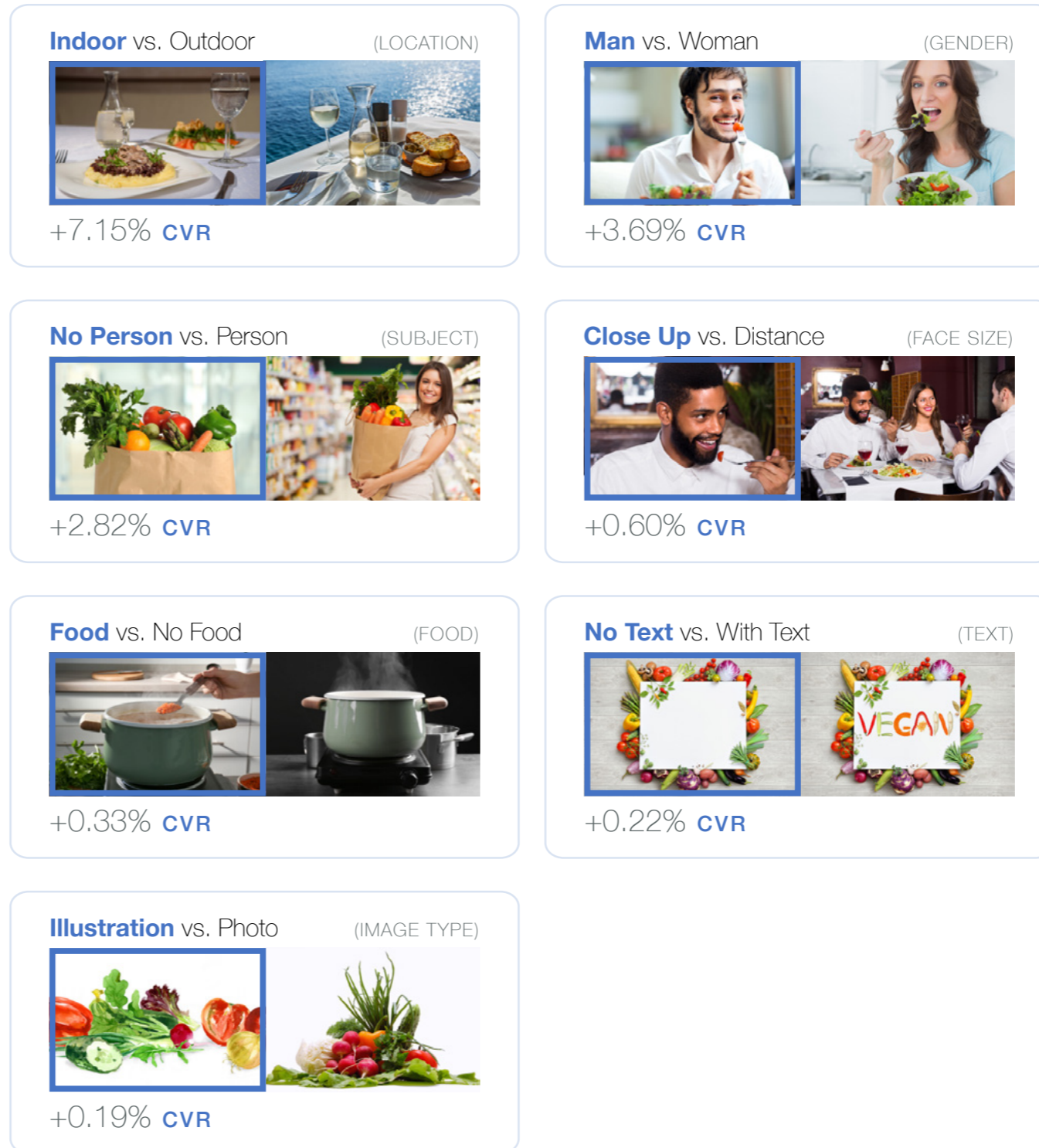
Leave your viewers with an action item—an end card is a great way to direct them to your website or more content.

# SPONSORED CONTENT: CAPTURE ATTENTION WHEN PROMOTING ARTICLES AND PHOTO GALLERIES

## WORLDWIDE TRENDS: IMAGE PERFORMANCE

When it comes to increasing conversions targeting purchases, there are a few image characteristics that stand out. Try testing an illustration with an indoor setting, without a person, to really highlight food as the subject.

## CVR IMPACT FOR FOOD IMAGES TARGETING PURCHASES



<sup>8</sup> Benchmark CVR is calculated from campaigns optimizing for purchases.



## CVR IMPACT FOR FOOD IMAGES TARGETING LEAD GENERATION

**No Person** vs. Person (SUBJECT)




+7.66% CVR

**Outdoor** vs. Indoor (LOCATION)



+3.32% CVR

**Distance** vs. Close Up (FACE SIZE)




+1.62% CVR

**Food** vs. No Food (FOOD)



+1.61% CVR

**Woman** vs. Man (GENDER)



+1.31% CVR

To increase conversions targeting lead generation, put these trends into practice with a far away, outdoor image featuring a woman alongside the food.

## CTR IMPACT FOR FOOD IMAGES

Based on data from Taboola Trends, these types of images increase click-through-rates (CTR) the most.

### Outdoor

(LOCATION)



+198% CTR than Indoor

### With Text

(TEXT)



+132% CTR than No Text

### Photo

(IMAGE TYPE)



+58% CTR than Illustration

### No Food

(FOOD)



+20% CTR than Food

### Person

(SUBJECT)



+9% CTR than No Person

### Distance

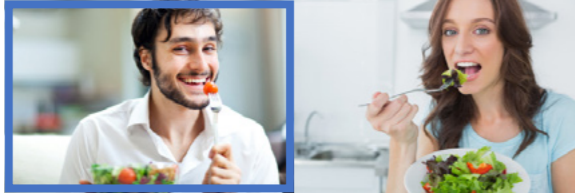
(FACE SIZE)



+5% CTR than Close Up

### Man

(GENDER)



+3% CTR than Woman

### B/W

(IMAGE COLOR)



+2% CTR than Color

# SPONSORED CONTENT: TELL CONSUMERS WHAT YOU HAVE TO OFFER

## WORLDWIDE TRENDS: KEYWORD PERFORMANCE

Headlines are another large part of campaign success for all native advertisers. This chart indicates performance for the most popular keywords worldwide.

### CTR IMPACT FOR FOOD KEYWORDS

#### Strong Engagement Keywords

*(Keywords with high demand)*

Chain	+229% CTR
Worst	+193% CTR
Fast	+190% CTR
Happens	+180% CTR
Food	+179% CTR
Everyday	+162% CTR
Pressure	+161% CTR
Avoid	+159% CTR
Arteries	+158% CTR
Dates	+156% CTR

#### Strong Competition Keywords

*(Keywords with low demand)*

Kidneys	-96% CTR
Drinks	-94% CTR
Naturally	-84% CTR
Cleanse	-82% CTR
Your	-72% CTR
Healthy	-68% CTR
Shipping	-65% CTR
Eat	-63% CTR
With	-58% CTR
Start	-53% CTR

#### Opportunity Keywords

*(Keywords with low supply and high demand)*

Prevent	+44% CTR
Cuisine	+43% CTR
Chocolate	+43% CTR
Buds	+43% CTR
Last	+43% CTR
Liver	+43% CTR
Green	+42% CTR
Refrigerate	+42% CTR
Quesadilla	+42% CTR
Day	+42% CTR

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# WHEN IS THE BEST TIME TO REACH YOUR AUDIENCE?

Time of Year, Week and Day  
with the Highest Opportunity



# HIGH OPPORTUNITY TIME OF YEAR

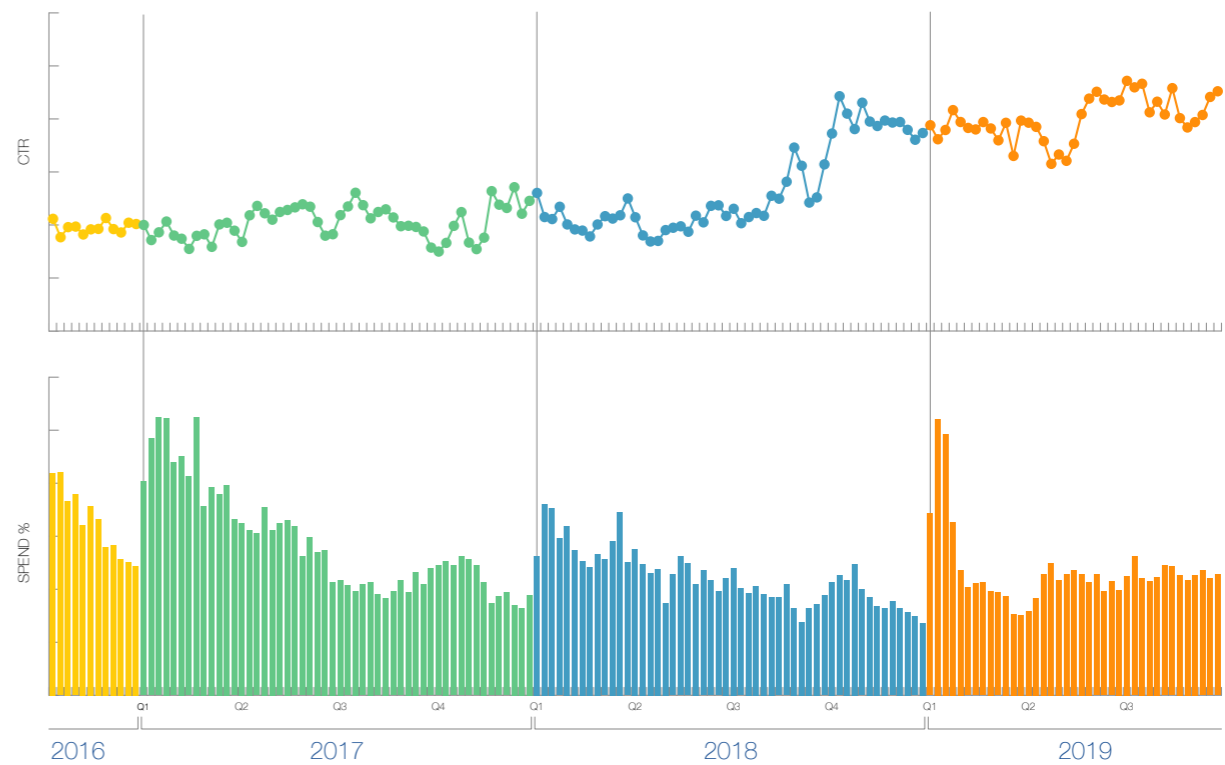
Interest in food-related content spikes during times of seasonal change. As new foods come into season, focuses shift, and curiosity around what to eat, what to cook, and what to prepare for holidays comes into play.



**TIP**

Try increasing budget in the middle of Q2 and the end of Q3.

**Discovery Market Opportunity by Time of Year for the Food Vertical Worldwide**  
*Month over Month Supply<sup>9</sup> of Food Content vs. Consumer Demand<sup>10</sup>*



<sup>9</sup> Supply is indicated by the percentage a market spends on food content

<sup>10</sup> Consumer demand is indicated by the average calibrated CTR for food content

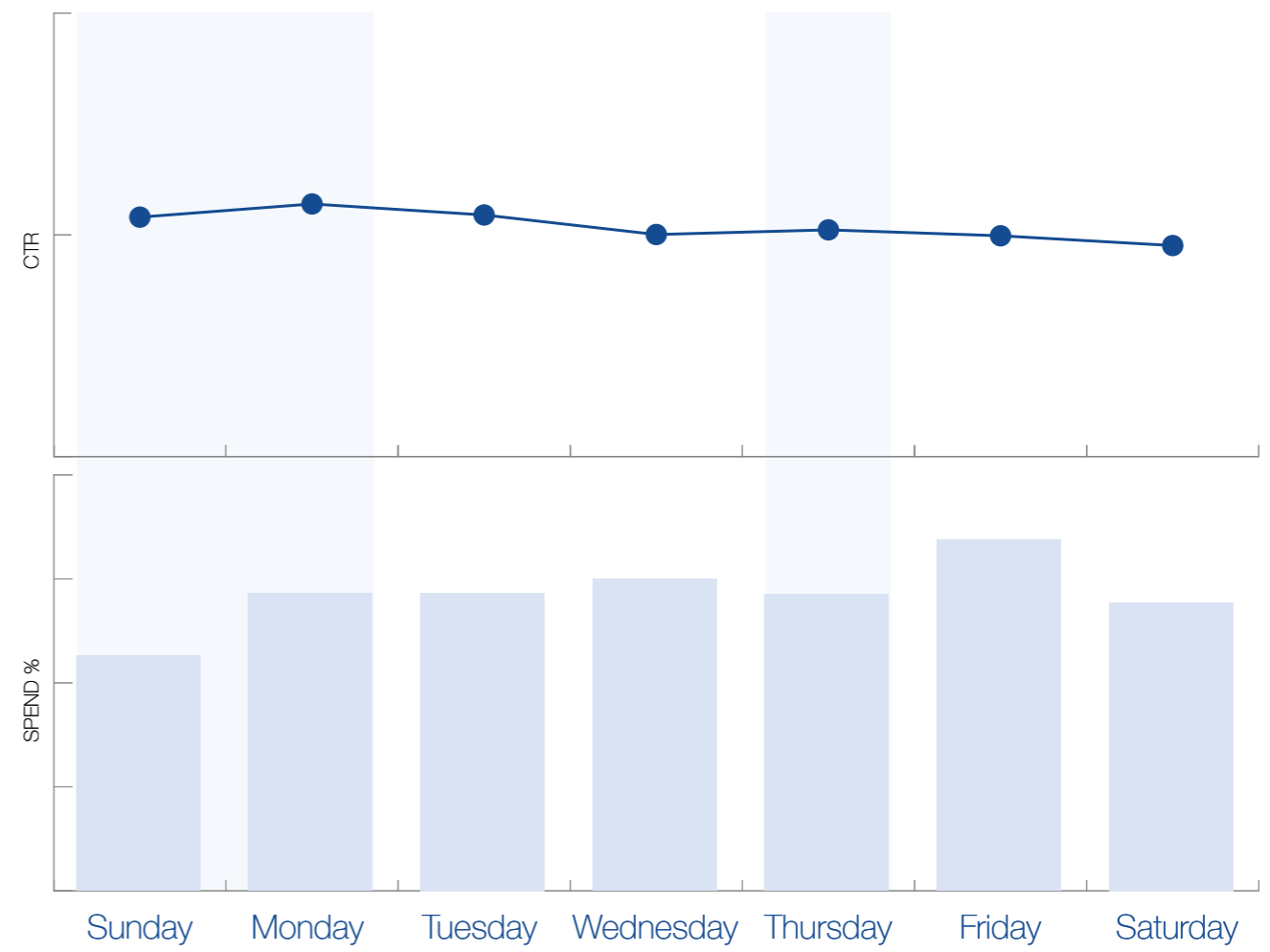
# HIGH OPPORTUNITY DAY OF THE WEEK

Consumers are interested in food products when they're either transitioning out of the weekend and back into the work week, or vice versa—in fact, the opportunity for marketers is highest on Sunday, Monday, and Thursday.



**TIP**  
Test food campaigns on Sundays, Mondays, and Thursdays when demand is high and supply is low.

**Day of Week Performance for the Food Vertical Worldwide, 2019**  
*Supply<sup>11</sup> of Food Content vs. Consumer Demand<sup>12</sup> by Day of Week, 2019*

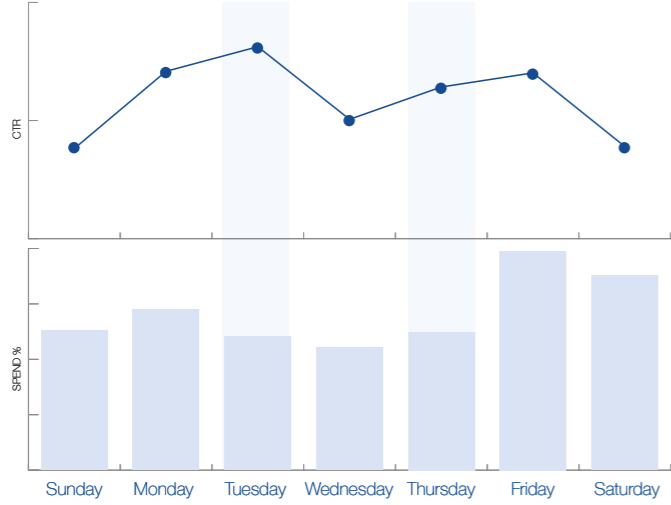


<sup>11</sup> Supply is indicated by the percentage a market spends on food content  
<sup>12</sup> Consumer demand is indicated by the average calibrated CTR for food content

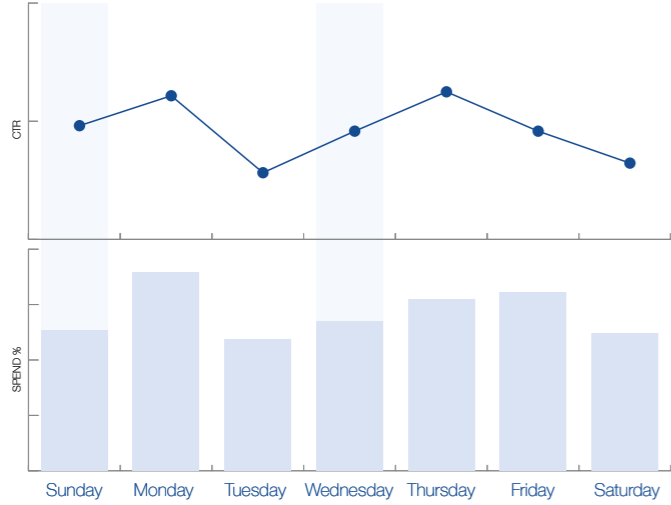
# HIGH OPPORTUNITY DAY OF THE WEEK, BY COUNTRY

Across the globe, high opportunity days of the week vary, but Sunday remains a frontrunner due to its significance as a day of meal planning, gathering for meals, or even just ordering the perfect takeout to accompany a lazy day at home.

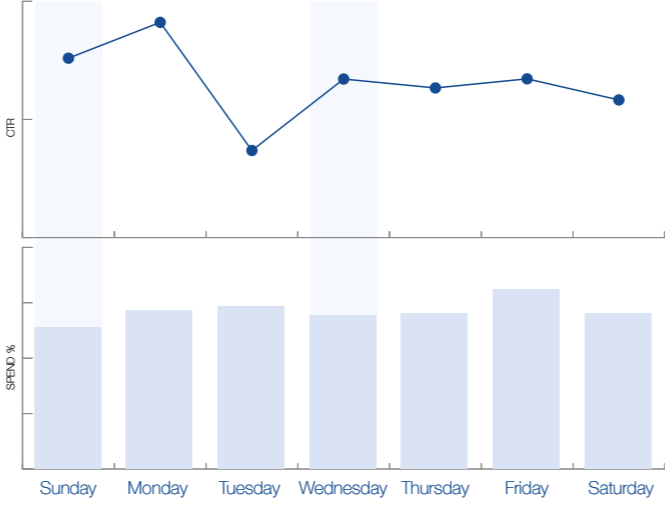
Australia



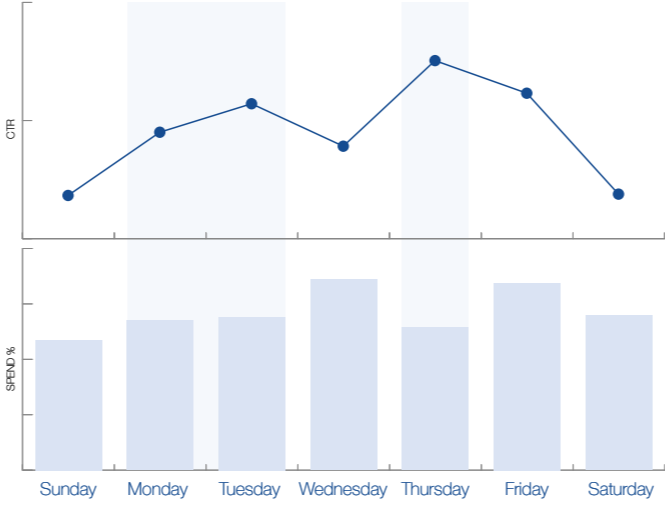
Belgium



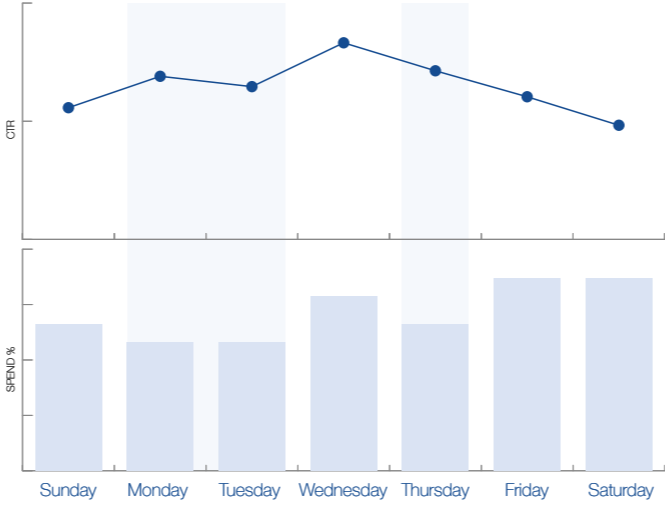
Brazil



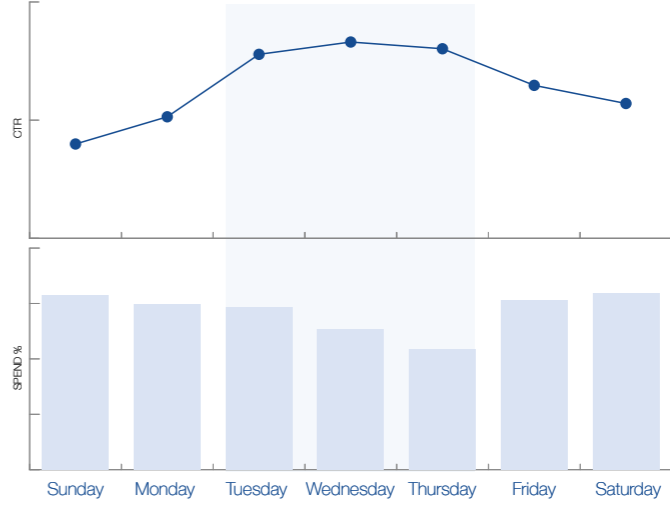
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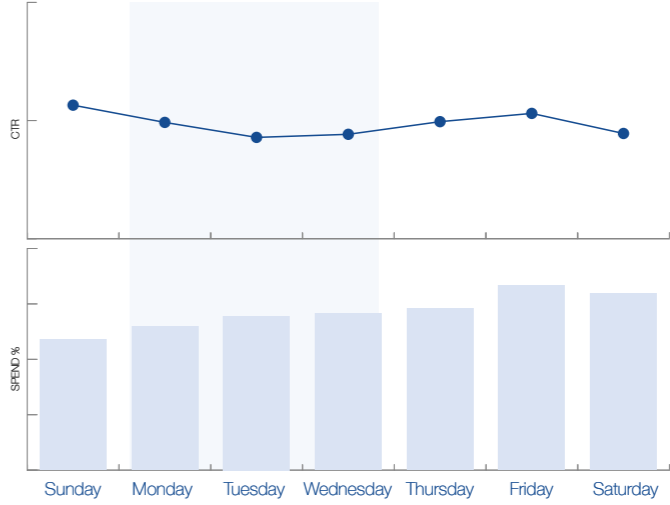
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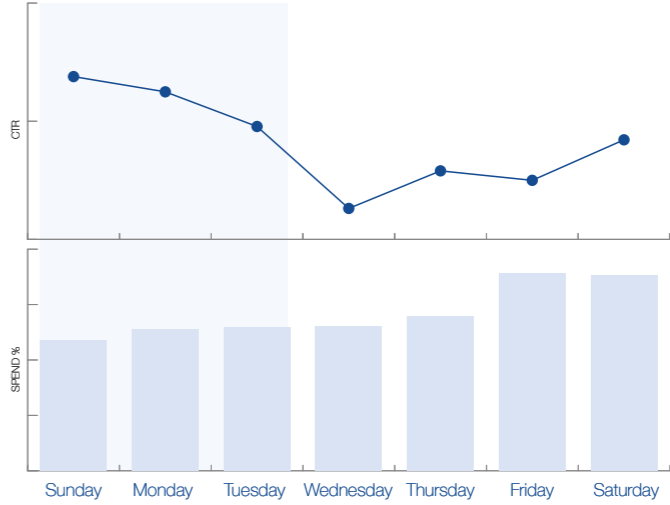
France

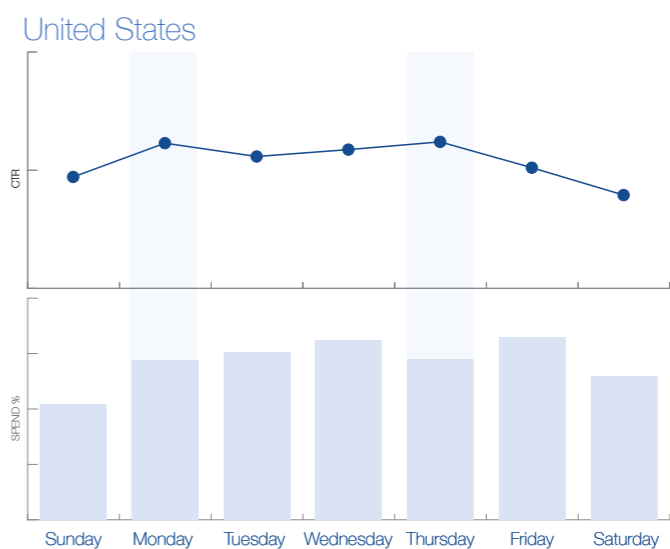
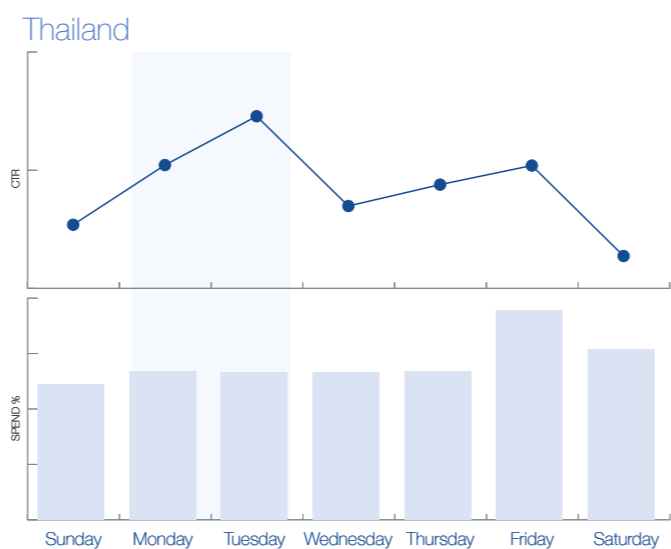
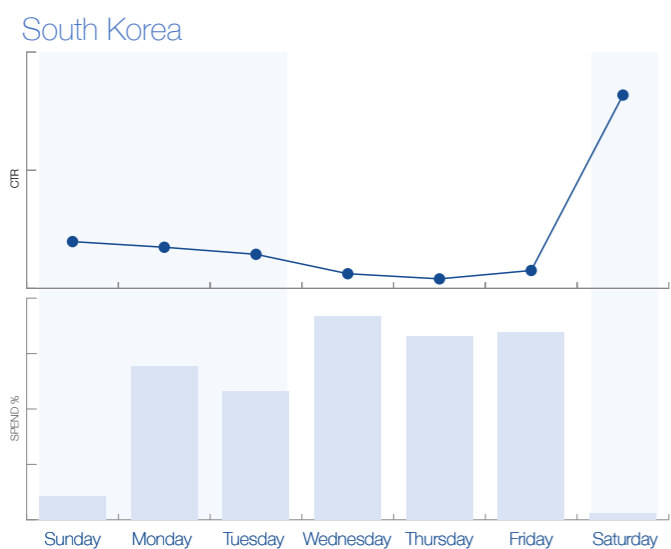
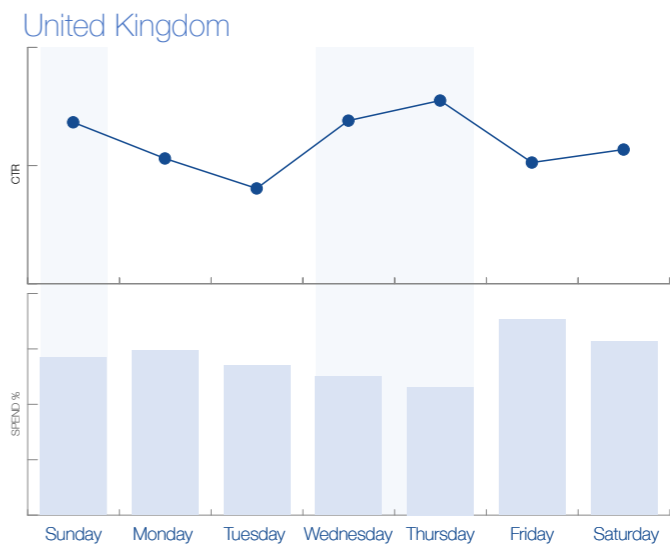
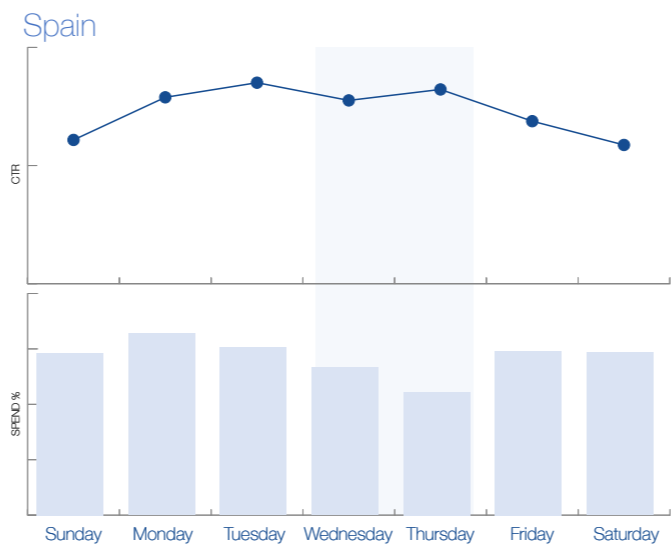
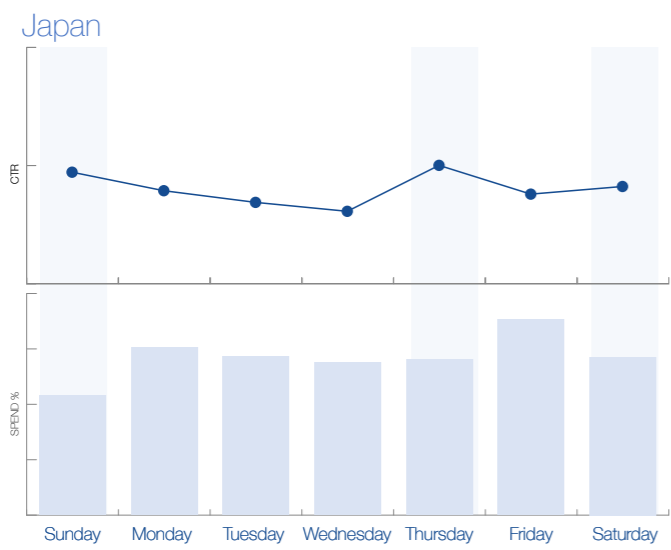
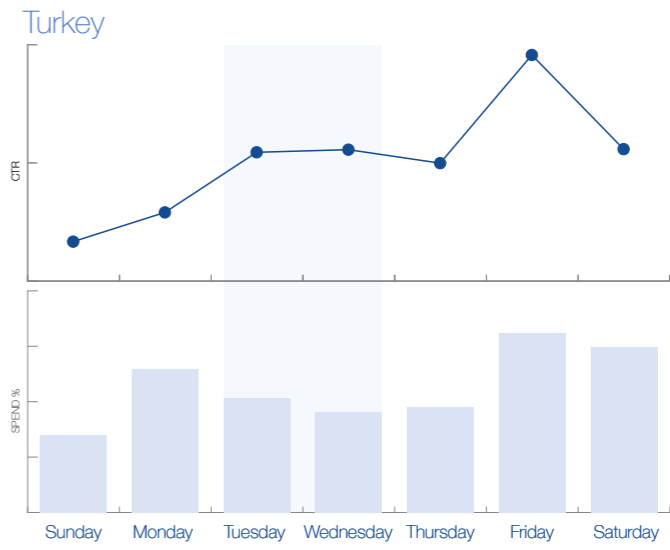
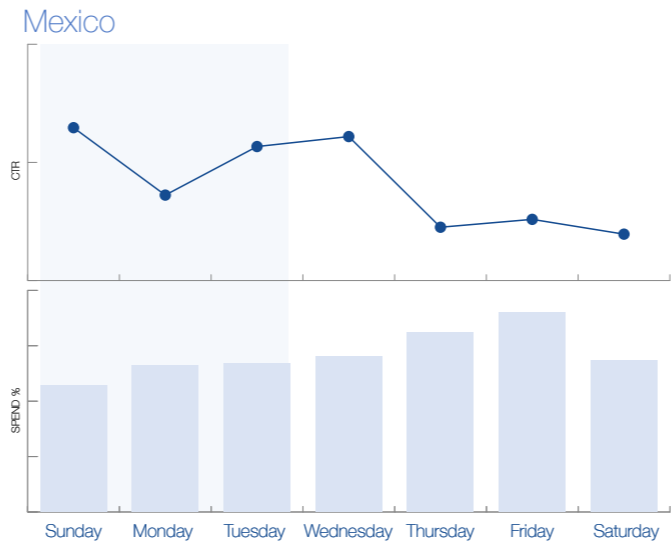
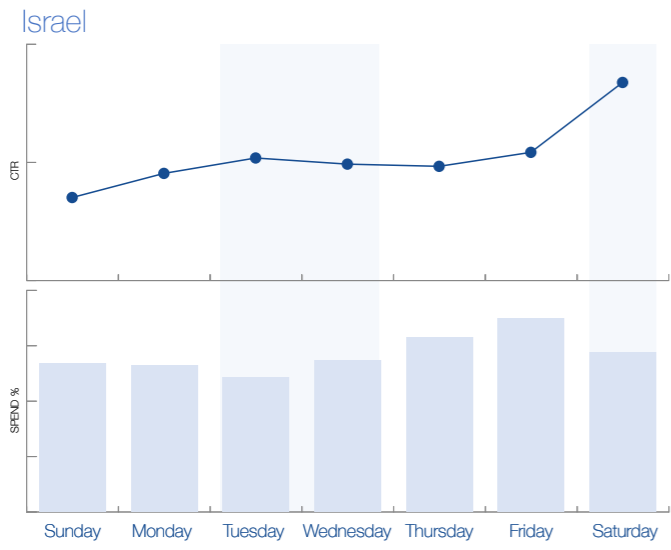


Germany



India









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# HIGH OPPORTUNITY TIME OF THE DAY

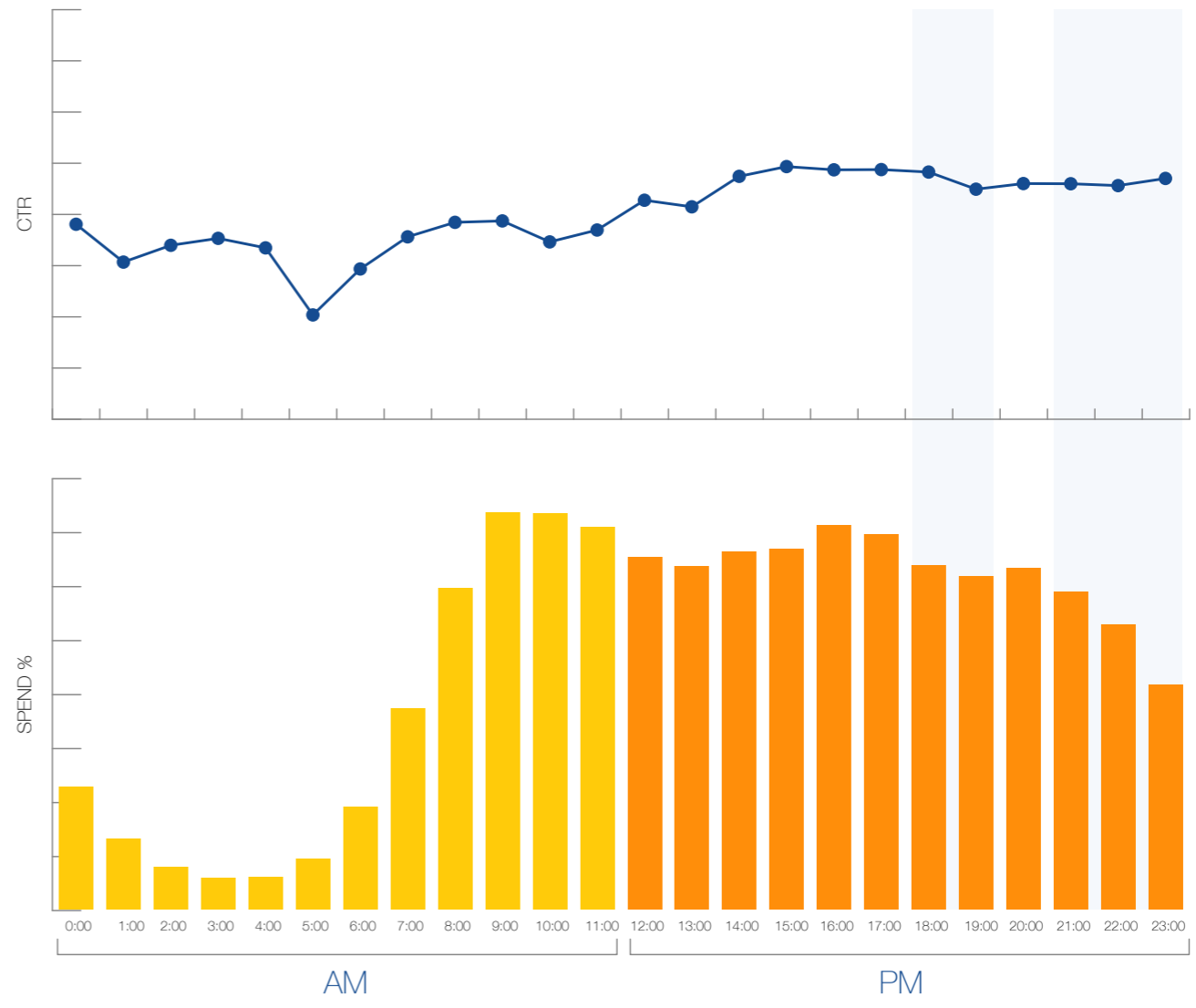
It should come as absolutely no surprise that dinnertime spikes an opportunity for interest among food consumers, but the late-night snackers are forging a trend, too. The highest opportunity times to reach food consumers are 6pm, 7pm, 9pm, 10pm, and 11pm.



**TIP**

Test campaigns around times of late-night cravings between 9pm and 11pm.

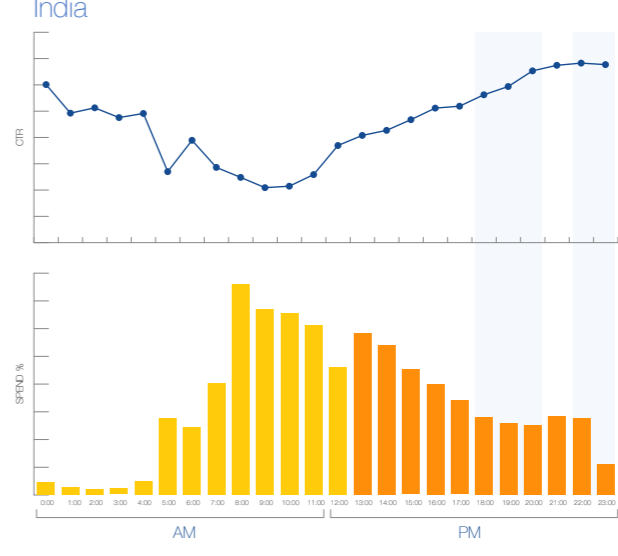
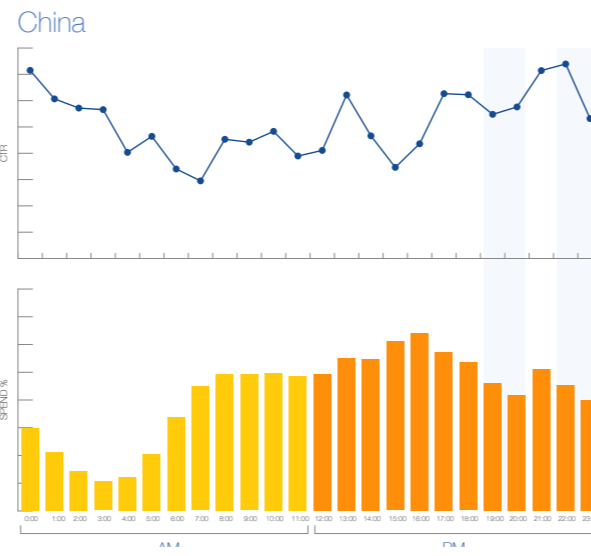
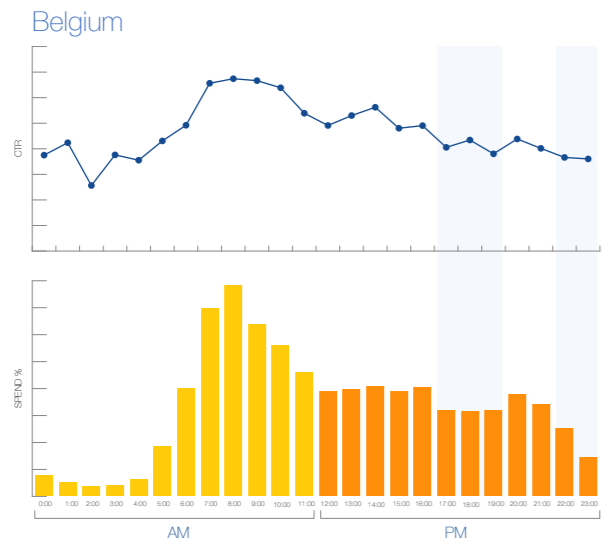
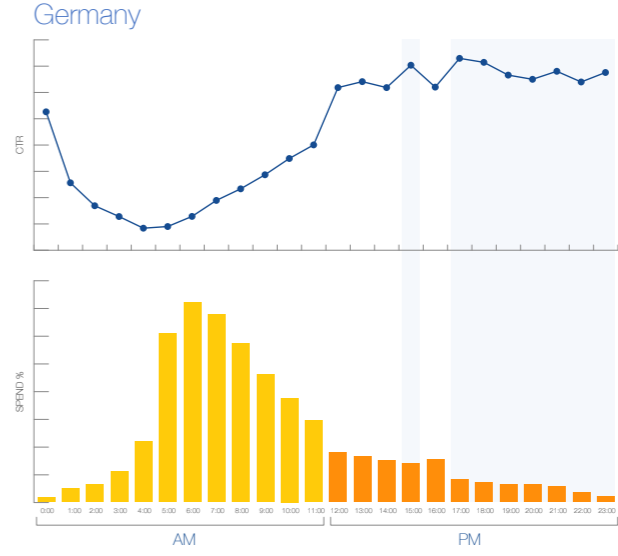
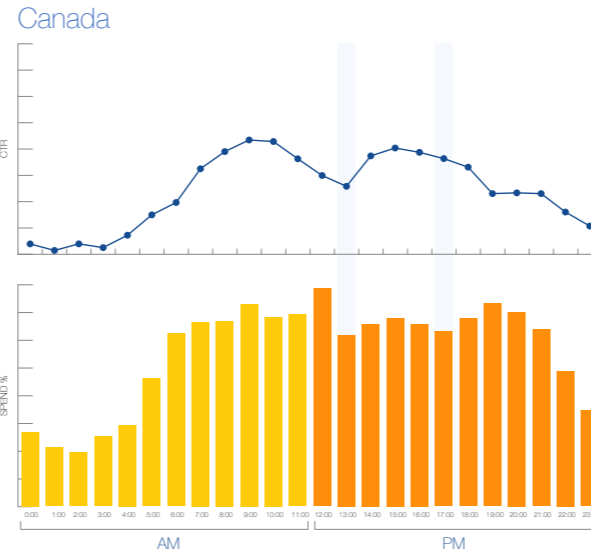
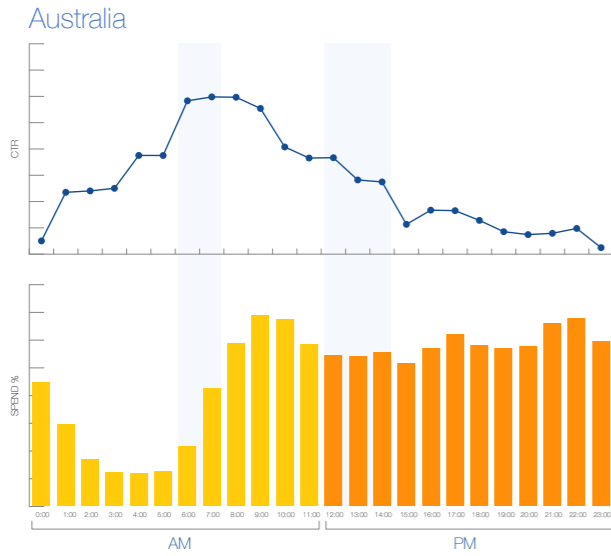
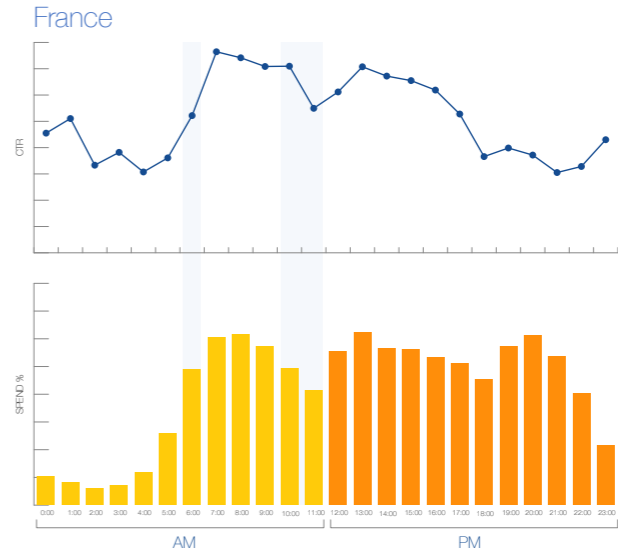
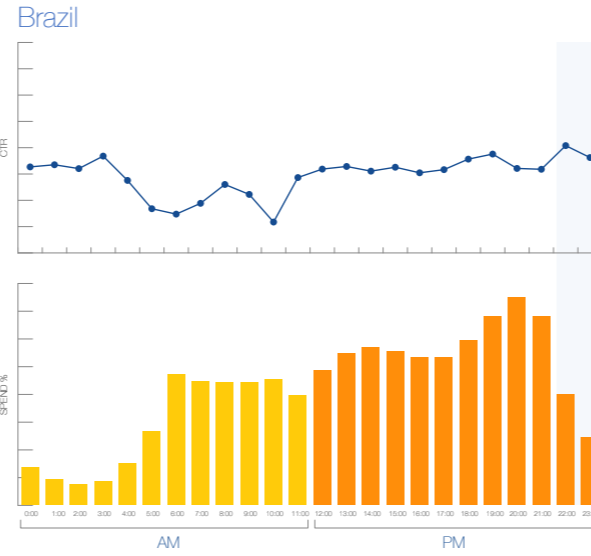
**Time of Day Performance for the Technology Vertical Worldwide, 2019**  
Supply<sup>13</sup> of Food Content vs. Consumer Demand<sup>14</sup> by Time of Day, 2019

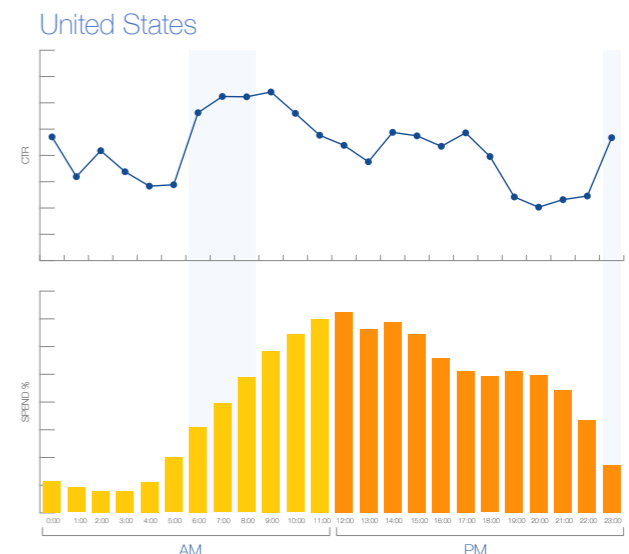
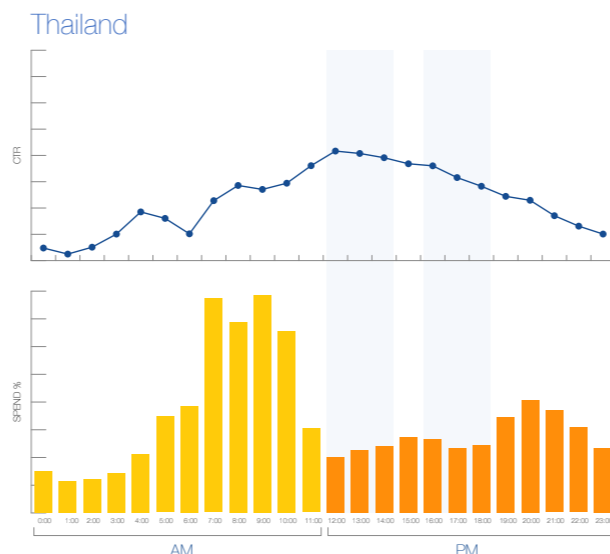
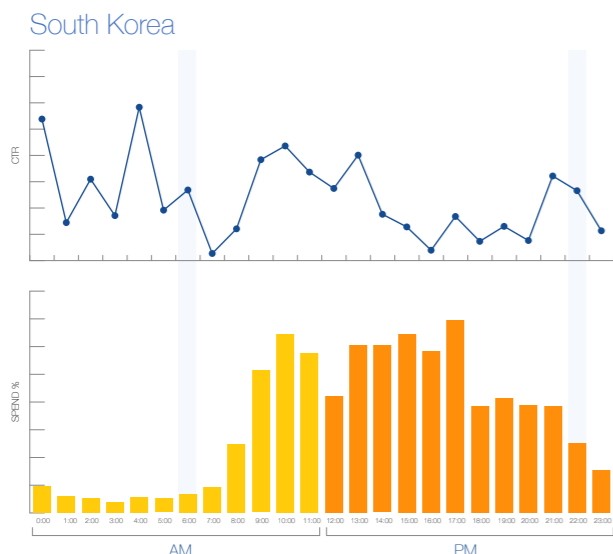
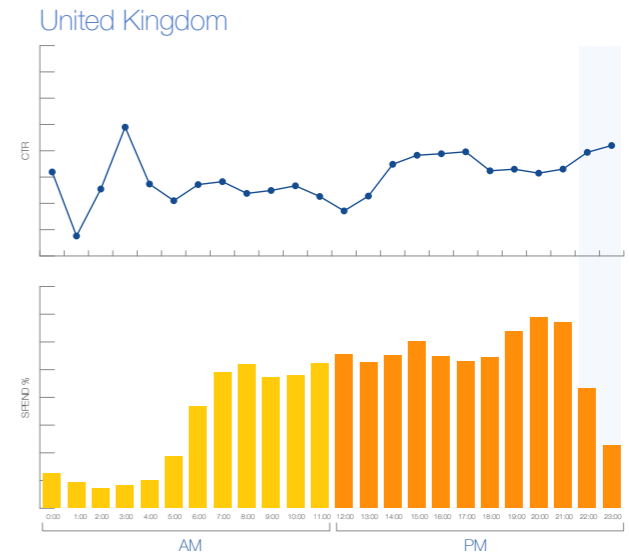
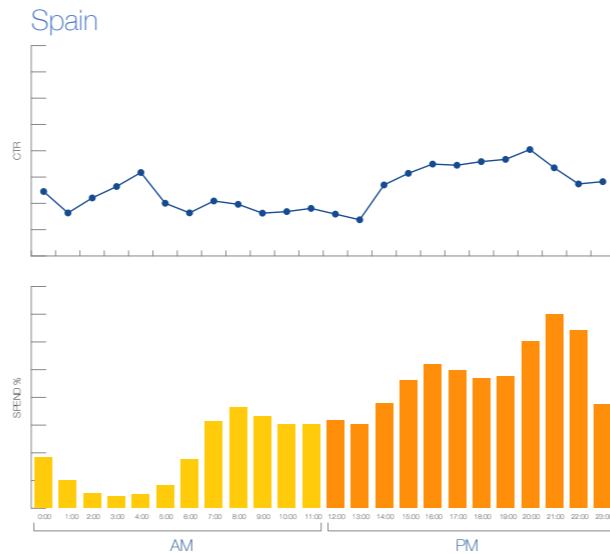
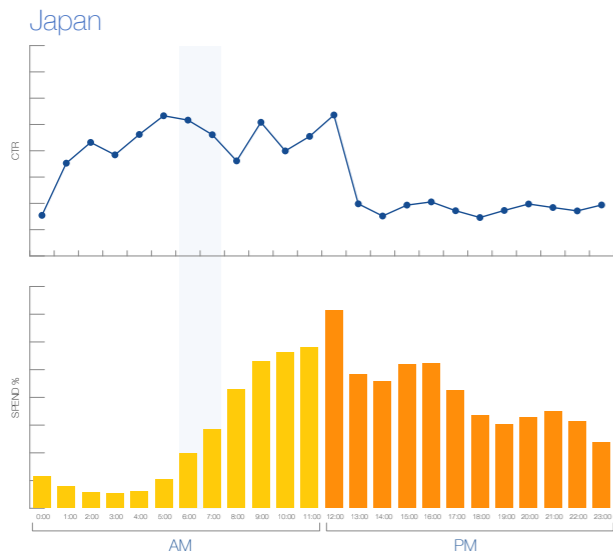
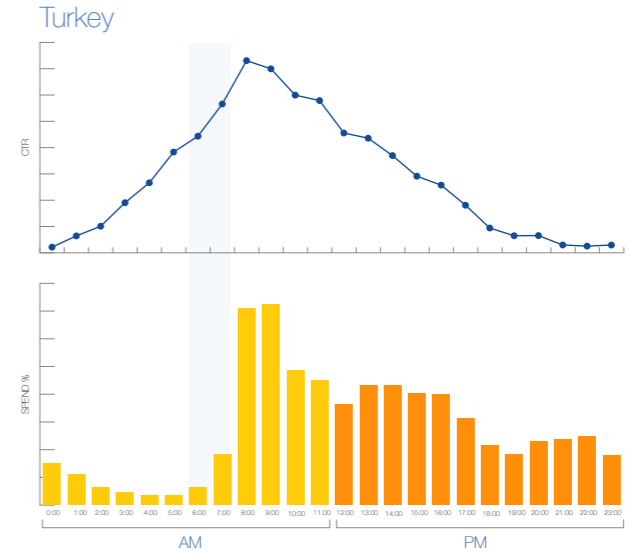
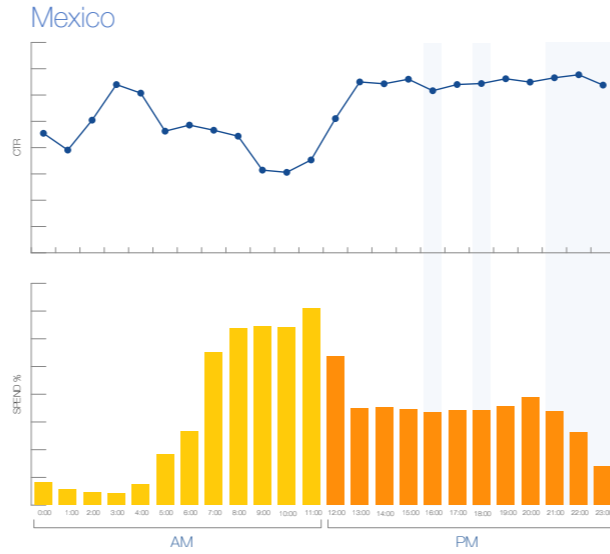
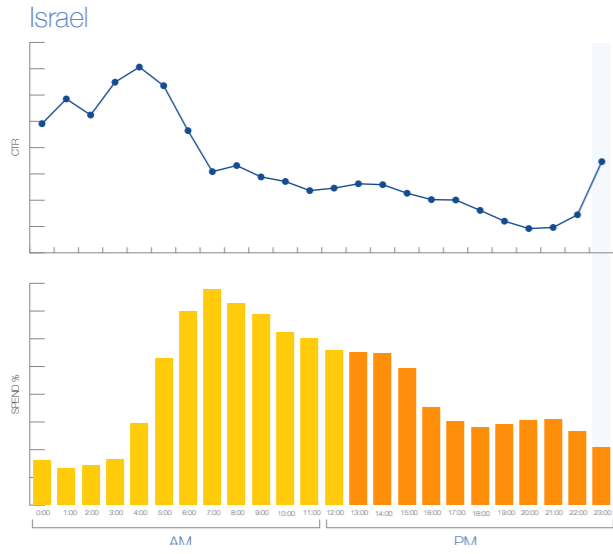


<sup>13</sup> Supply is indicated by the percentage a market spends on food content  
<sup>14</sup> Consumer demand is indicated by the average calibrated CTR for food content

# HIGH OPPORTUNITY TIME OF THE DAY, BY COUNTRY

Across the globe, late-night cravings prevail. Catch consumers when they're coveting the perfect bite, or already planning what they'll want to eat the following day.





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# WHERE IS YOUR AUDIENCE?

Targeting by Device, Country  
and Site



# HIGH OPPORTUNITY DEVICES

Across all device types—desktop, mobile, and tablet—supply of food content is the highest on desktop devices, but mobile and tablet campaigns are where you'll find the highest opportunity.

## BENCHMARK CTR

0.00158%

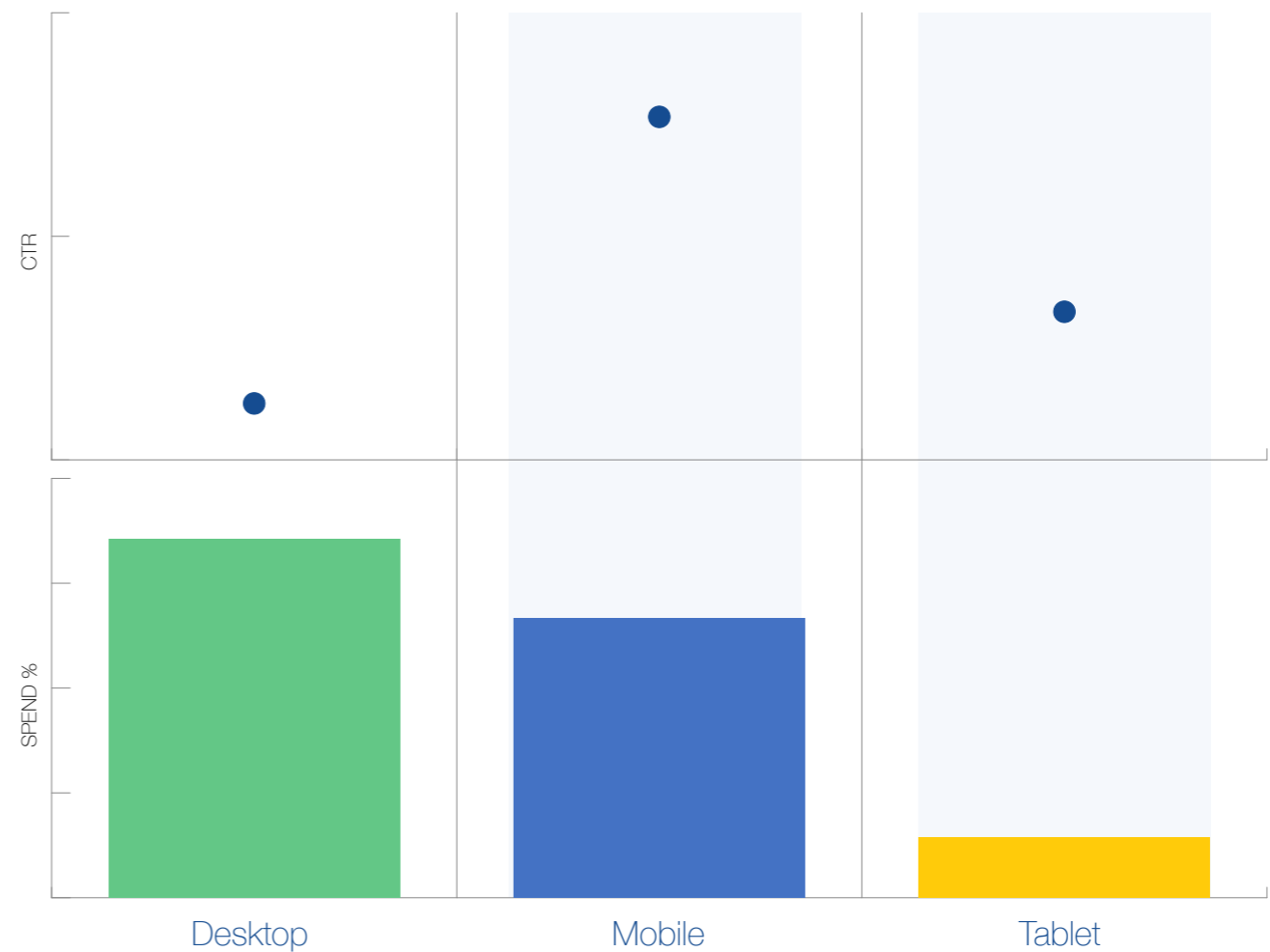


### TIP

Test tablet or mobile device targeting for your next campaign.

### Device Performance for the Food Vertical Worldwide, 2019

Supply<sup>14</sup> of Food Content vs. Consumer Demand<sup>15</sup> by Device, 2019



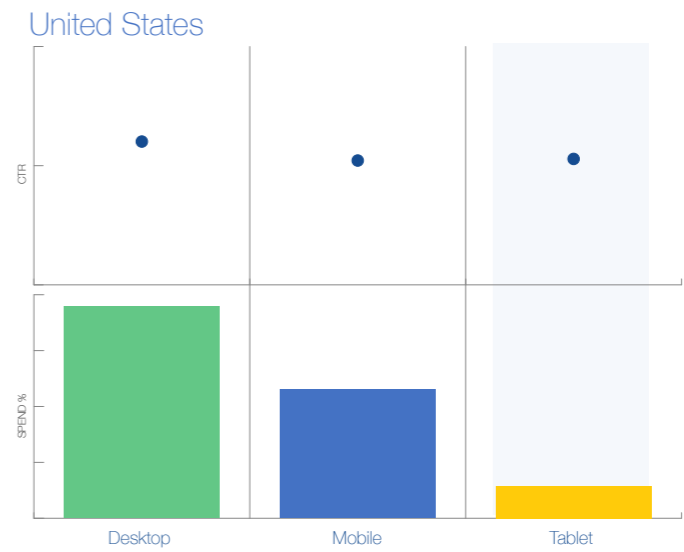
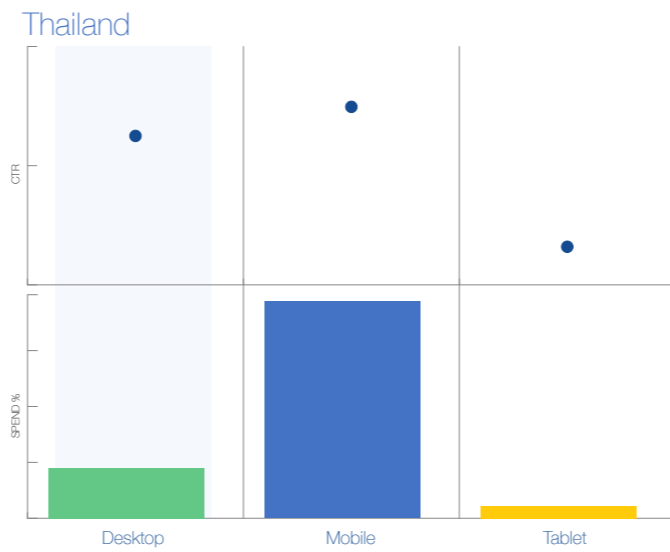
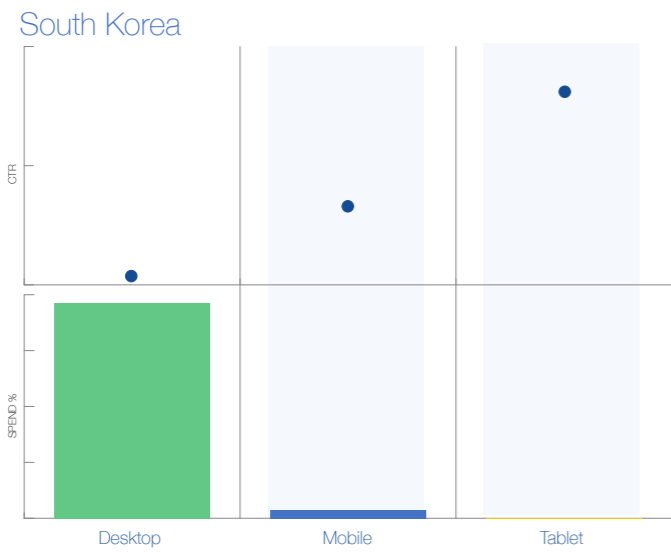
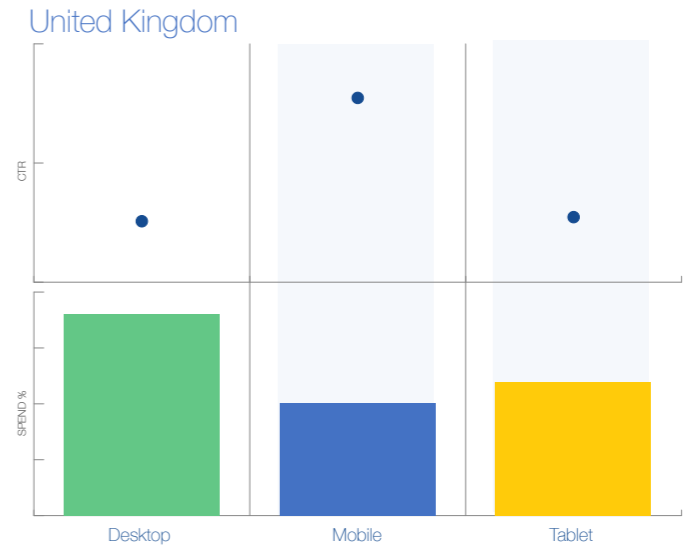
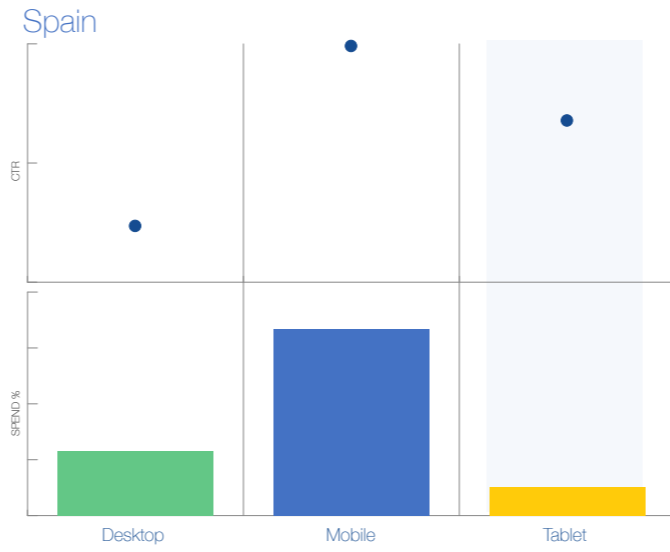
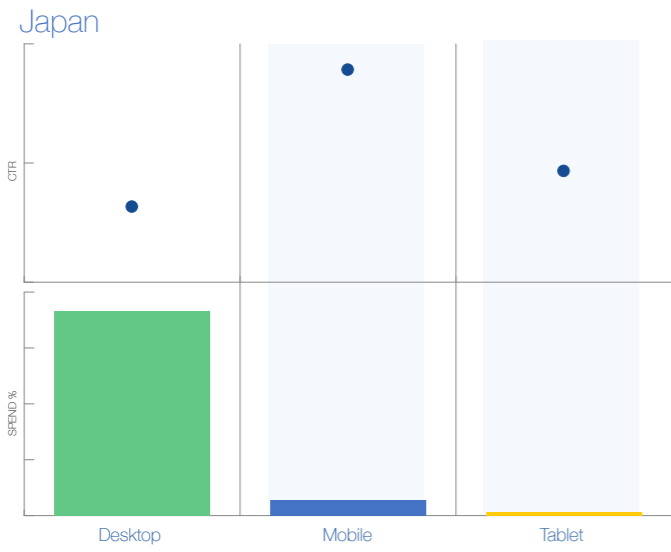
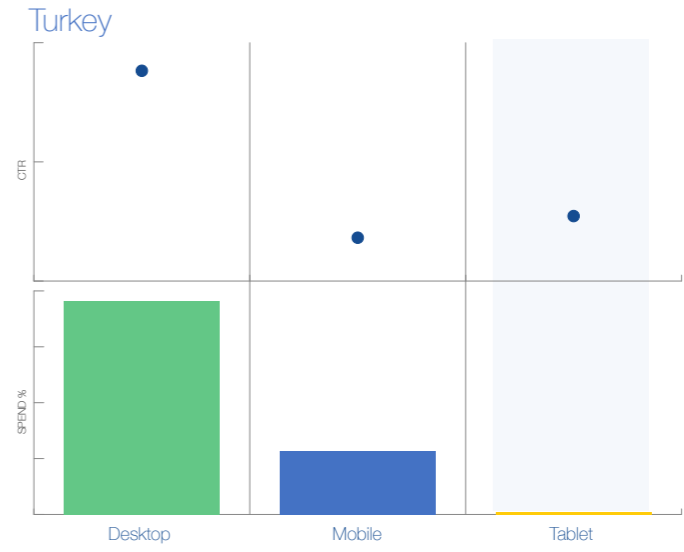
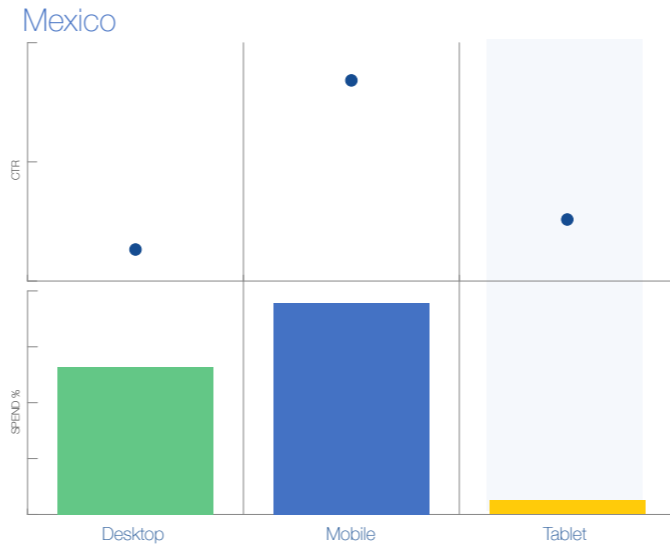
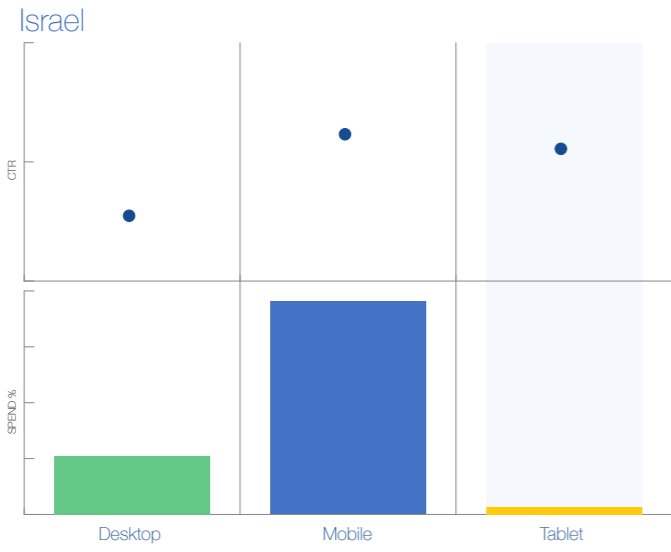
<sup>14</sup> Supply is indicated by the percentage a market spends on food content

<sup>15</sup> Consumer demand is indicated by the average calibrated CTR for food content

## HIGH OPPORTUNITY DEVICES, BY COUNTRY

The opportunity for tablet targeted campaigns spans widely across the globe. Reach consumers using these devices to get a leg up on the competition.







# TARGETING BY SITE: HOW TO FIND YOUR NICHE

When choosing sites to advertise on, there tends to be an assumption that marketers will have more success if their ad fits contextually alongside the site's content.

But, this isn't always the case. The best way to know for sure? Data. Similarly to audience targeting, you'll want to start with wide targeting, see which sites perform best, and optimize from there.

## HERE'S A TARGETING FLOW WE'D RECOMMEND FOR A MONTH-LONG CAMPAIGN:

### WEEK 1

At the beginning, keep your targeting as wide as you're comfortable with—we recommend using brand safety measures like black lists if you need to exclude some sites at first.

### WEEK 2

At the end of the week, check in with your campaign. Where did your ads perform best? Are you surprised by the vertical? Choose several sites to test based on these initial results.

### WEEK 3

This is a good time to take a look at your creative performance. Is each headline, photo, or video resonating with every site? A/B test different combinations to find the right fit.

### WEEK 4

When analyzing your campaign, take a look back at what surprised you, and look to test new sites in order to expand your reach in the future.

### REPEAT

Start again with broad targeting, analyze and assess the results, and find new sites to test.

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# HOW DO YOU MEASURE?

Here's What the Competition  
is Tracking



# COMMON KPIs

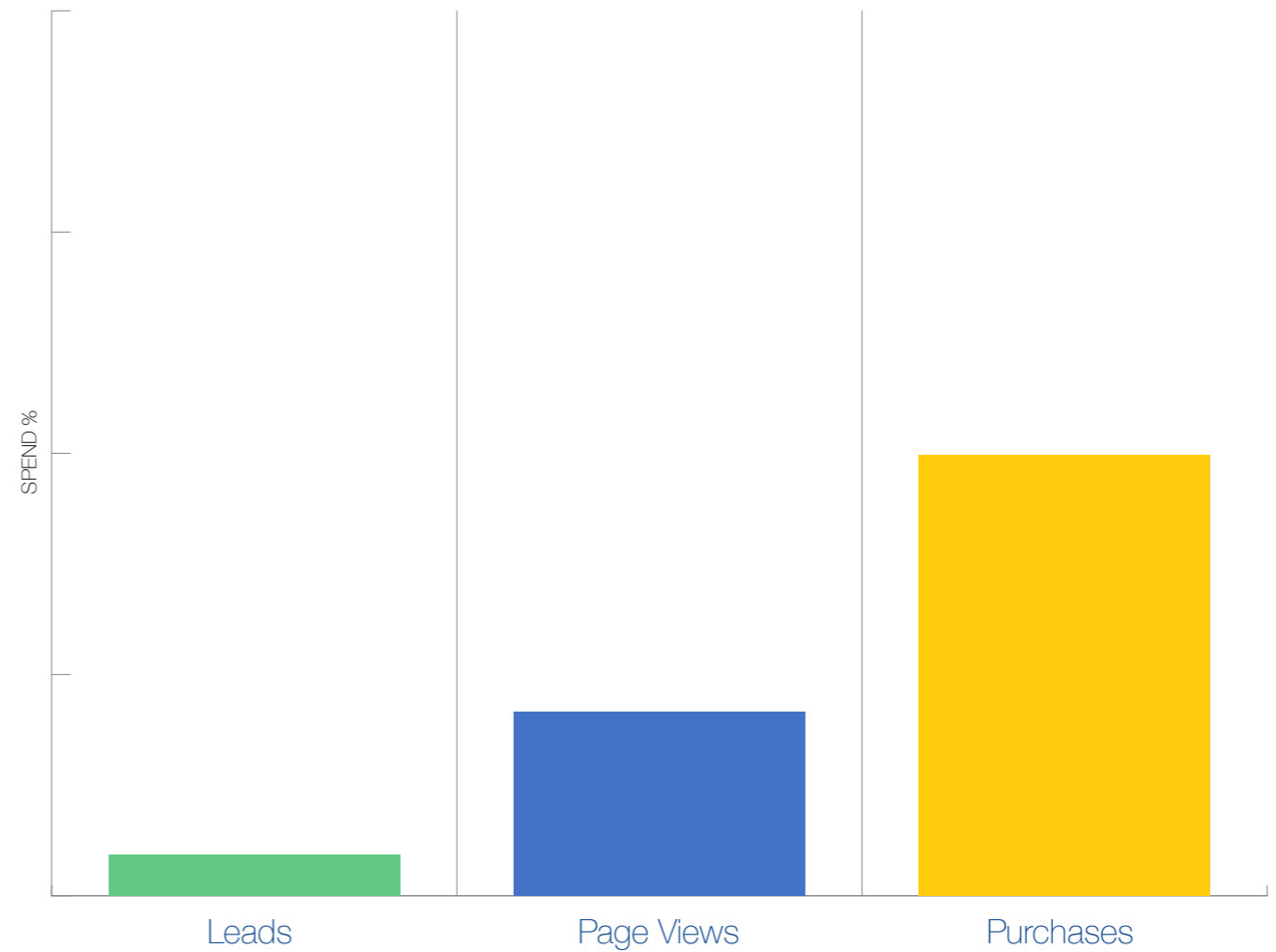
Among the key performance indicators (KPIs) that food marketers measure most often, measuring for pageviews takes the lead. Food marketers choose to create top of the funnel campaigns to most effectively achieve their goals.



**TIP**

Try testing a top of the funnel campaign.

**Most Used KPI for the Food Vertical Worldwide, 2019**  
Supply<sup>17</sup> of Food Content vs. Consumer Demand<sup>18</sup> by KPI, 2019



<sup>17</sup> Supply is indicated by the percentage a market spends on food content

<sup>18</sup> Consumer demand is indicated by the average calibrated CTR for food content



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**START  
YOUR CAMPAIGN  
TODAY**

[START NOW](#)

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# TO SUM IT UP...

We shared a lot of information here—the who, what, when, where and how of food discovery campaigns, and how you can apply them to campaigns of your own.



## HERE ARE FIVE TAKEAWAYS:

- 1 Who.** You may be surprised to find out who's the most in your brand. Don't always assume that you know the full extent of your audience—be willing to test.
- 2 What.** To reach consumers in the market for food products, give video a try.
- 3 When.** Reach consumers when they're most likely to be receptive—don't ignore the changing seasons, and focus on late night hours at the start and end of the week.
- 4 Where.** A big opportunity lies with both mobile and tablet devices—take advantage of it, and test campaigns for both.
- 5 How.** Finally, test your next top of the funnel campaign with native. There's a high opportunity for success there.



# GET STARTED WITH TABOOLA

Taboola enables over 1.4B people to discover what's interesting and new at the moments they're most ready to explore. Advertisers use Taboola to reach their target audience when they're most receptive to new messages, products and services.

## We've Got the Tools to Help You

### Taboola Pixel

Track multiple conversions by multiple audiences across multiple URLs.

### Retargeting

Reach customers closer to the point of sale— target people who are more likely to convert.

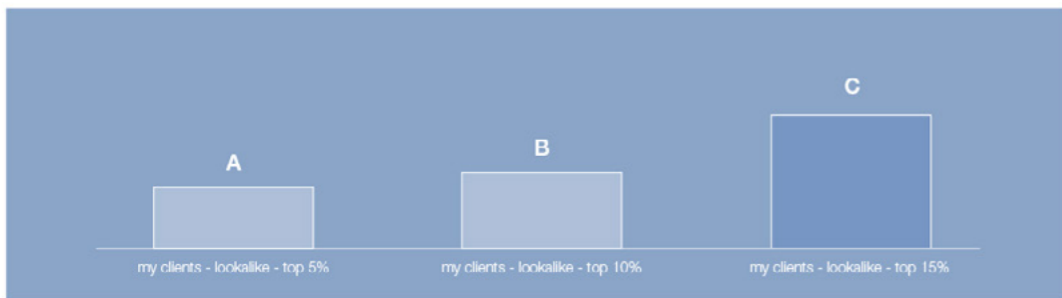
### Smart Bid

Automatically adjust the baseline bid to drive conversions or page views by site.

### Lookalike Targeting

Model the behavior and characteristics of your current customers and use it to target similar audiences.

That's not all. Taboola has every targeting option you need for a successful discovery campaign—location, demographic, creative and more.



### TOP CAMPAIGN CONTENT

	Segment	Impressions	Actions
A	my clients - lookalike - top 5%	297,100	2,192
B	my clients - lookalike - top 10%	399,102	3,012
C	my clients - lookalike - top 15%	807,631	5,011

START YOUR CAMPAIGN TODAY

START NOW

