

# Why rewarded videos connect with gamers and Gen Z

## Article

Reward-based video ads are increasingly effective at reaching younger consumers, particularly those who play games.

- [Roblox and Google recently announced a partnership](#) to bring rewarded in-game ads to the platform.

- Mobile games are offering a chance to earn in-game benefits in exchange for watching an ad.
- Discord has found success with its ["Quest" reward video ad program](#).

At Interactive Ad Bureau's PlayFronts event last week, the promise of rewarded video emerged as a theme, with presenters championing the format's ability to engage consumers.

"One of the hardest things to do in digital media today is to get people to sit through a long-form piece of content, but we're able to actually deliver that experience," said Adam Bauer, vice president of sales at Discord, at last week's PlayFronts. "Why? Because we have these really compelling rewards that our users actually want."

## Rewarding gamers

Video game players see plenty of ads, but do not have much affinity for them. Seven in 10 (71.3%) gamers say they've noticed ads while playing, according to January data from Attest, but only 14.6% of people have a positive feeling about ads in games.

Putting incentivized ad formats near video game players makes sense as they're already accustomed to experiences that produce a reward.

We forecast that digital gamers in the US will make up almost 60% (57.2%) of the population this year. It's a segment that connects with reward-based ads in a big way. Some 61.8% of US gamers find reward-based ads most engaging, according to Attest.

- 41.4% of gamers find in-game ads acceptable when they offer rewards like free items or in-game currency, per Attest.
- 43.8% of US gamers encountered reward-based ads in 2025.

"Rewarded video is awesome because it's additive and immersive," said Ashley McCollum, head of advertising for strategic partnerships at Roblox, at PlayFronts. "So 87% of users had a favorable opinion of rewarded video. In our early testing, we're seeing 80 to 90% completion rates, which is such a high performance number for our agency and brand partners."

## Perfect for Gen Z

As marketers hone strategies to reach Gen Z, rewarded videos stand as a unique crossroads between the generation's familiarity with video ads and its love of games.

- Nearly all (96.3%) US Gen Zers watch digital video, per our March forecast.
- A full three-fourths of US Gen Zers will be digital gamers according to our November 2024 forecast.

This intersection explains why the Roblox and Google partnership is so beloved by younger consumers. Some 48% of US Gen Zers played Roblox in 2024, per CivicScience.

- Roblox's new ads, which marketers can buy through Google Ad Manager, exchange views for in-game benefits like power-ups or extra lives.

"Our vision for our video solution suite is just to be a staple on every media plan that's trying to reach Gen Z audiences," McCollum said. "That is the vision. Rewarded video is another step towards that, and certainly, our partnership with Google is another step towards that."

### **Beyond games**

Reward-based ads are not limited to games, and have seen growing use in other digital corners.

- Spotify has used them for a while, offering free-tier users 30 minutes of uninterrupted listening after watching a video ad.
- The format is showing up in ecommerce. For example, Fox ran a rewarded advertising campaign on Amazon homepage in 2021, offering Amazon credit as a reward.

Additionally, Discord is out to prove the strength and scalability of its ad business ahead of a potential IPO with its "Quests." At PlayFronts, they said their first rewarded video Quest saw an 85% video completion rate, according to their internal data.

"If you're going to go with video, you want to be seen and remembered. Interactive video, that's the path," said Matt Sharpe, creative director of advertising at Zynga, at PlayFronts. "What this does is it takes an effective, but passive, experience with video and it turns it into more of a 'lean in' encounter. As a result of these, what we're seeing is higher recall, longer view times, and added click-through."

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