

Sound Advice

*Testing Human and AI Voiceovers
to Create More Persuasive Ads*



Introduction

The share of voters who watch TV on streaming platforms, where ads can be targeted to specific demographics, is larger than ever.¹ Campaigns looking to maximize their persuasion efforts must continually learn by testing creative, and use those learnings to serve optimized ads to specific targets.

To assess how one under-researched creative element, voiceover, moves voters, Trilogy Interactive teamed up with Grow Progress to run a first-of-its kind study that put male, female, human, and AI voices to the test.

We proved that voiceover can maximize an ad's persuasive potential — or destroy it completely.

How We Did It

Trilogy produced four versions of a 15-second ad about the issue of prescription drug prices, with the goal of increasing support for Democratic candidates.



Each ad used the same script and visuals. The only difference was the voiceover. [Watch — and listen — to all four versions here.](#)

¹ <https://www.insiderintelligence.com/chart/263274/average-time-spent-per-day-with-digital-video-vs-tv-by-us-adults-2021-2025-hrsmins>

AD PRODUCTION DETAILS

- Concepted and scripted 15-second ad
- Conducted live shoot
- Generated two AI voiceovers
- Hired two professional voice actors, a man and a woman, to record human voiceovers
- Edited into four cuts to test

EXPERIMENT DETAILS

- Recruited 1,002 U.S. adult participants
- Randomly assigned participants to see ad or placebo
- Surveyed participants on demographics and partisan preferences
- Analyzed data and presented results

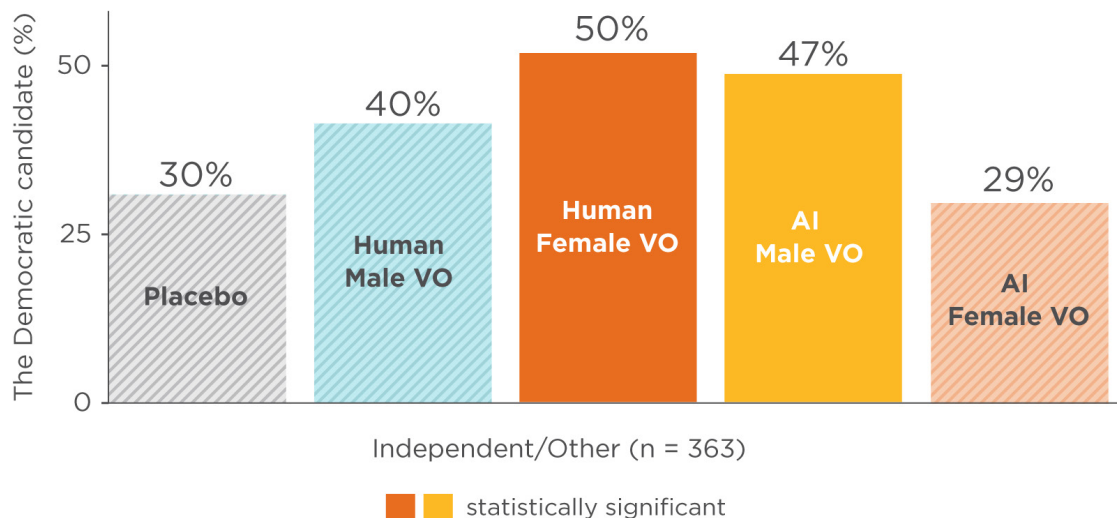
Grow Progress ran a randomized controlled trial to test the four voiceovers — human female, human male, AI female, and AI male — against each other. Each respondent saw one of our ads or a placebo, then answered questions about their partisan vote preferences.

The Results

The most striking persuasion effects were among independent voters.

The version with human female voiceover increased independents' support for Democrats by 20 points — a huge persuasion effect for a 15-second ad.

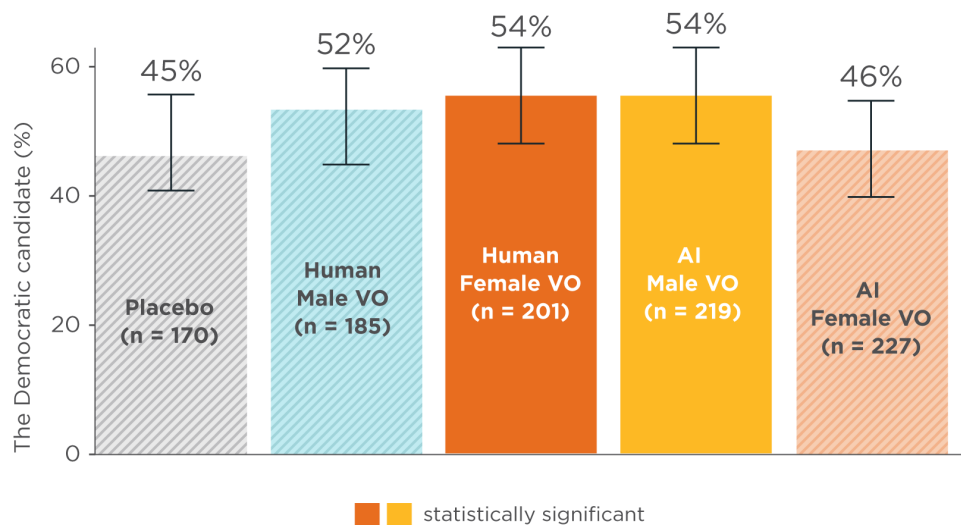
If the 2024 election for Congress were held today in your state, would you vote for the Democratic candidate, Republican candidate, or another candidate?



The AI female voiceover destroyed the ad's persuasive potential.

In contrast to both the AI male and the human female voiceovers, the AI female voiceover completely wiped out the ad's persuasion effect among voters as a whole, rendering the otherwise-effective ad as unpersuasive as the placebo.

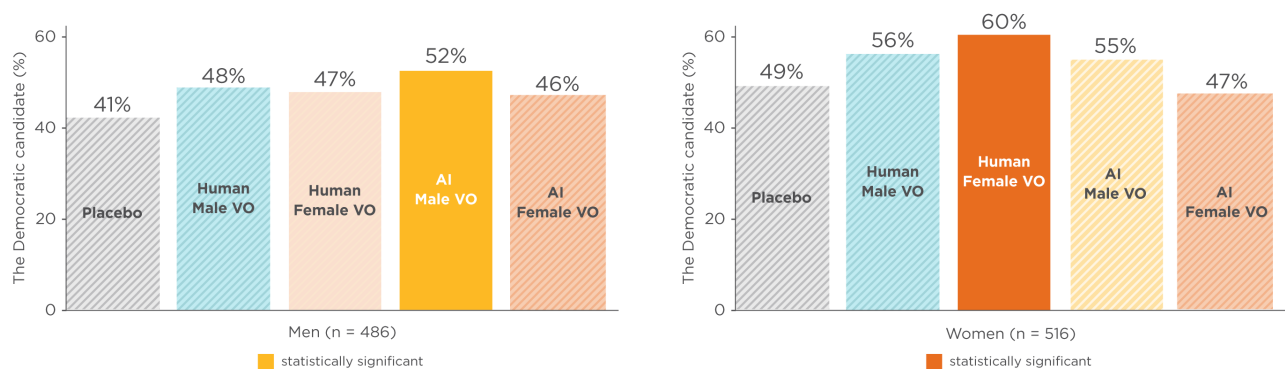
If the 2024 election for Congress were held today in your state, would you vote for the Democratic candidate, Republican candidate, or another candidate?



Breaking the audiences out by gender revealed additional findings.

The AI male voiceover had a statistically significant persuasion effect on men, moving them to support the Democratic candidate by 11 points. Women, meanwhile, were most persuaded by the human female voiceover.

If the 2024 election for Congress were held today in your state, would you vote for the Democratic candidate, Republican candidate, or another candidate?



Key Takeaways

- Voiceover is a discrete creative element that can affect how voters perceive ads, just like music, typefaces, and colors.
- The wrong voiceover can destroy the persuasiveness of an otherwise effective message.
- AI voiceovers have the potential to be effective, but they must be tested.

Recommendations

- Test individual elements (like voiceover, music, typefaces, and colors) to optimize creative for specific audiences.
- Leverage targeting capabilities to serve people the ads most likely to move them. This will ensure you don't broadcast an ad that's effective with one audience while causing backlash with another.
- Proceed with caution when using generative AI for voiceovers. Producing AI voices can be a time-consuming process, and testing is a necessity to ensure effectiveness.

Questions for Further Study

- Are people generally more persuaded by ads where the voiceover matches their own gender identity?
- Does a voiceover artist's race/accent play a role in moving voters of different demographics?
- How does the emotional intensity of a voiceover affect an ad's persuasiveness?
- How can campaigns optimize granular creative elements beyond voiceover (like music, typefaces, and colors) to produce ads that resonate powerfully with their target audiences?

Acknowledgments

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