

THE INTRINSIC IN-GAME ADVERTISING **KEY** **TRENDS REPORT**

H1 2025

FULL YEAR 2024

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Navigating the New Era of Gaming and Advertising

Intrinsic in-game advertising (IIGA) has rapidly evolved into a measurable and impactful media channel, enabling brands to reach audiences within premium gaming environments, using familiar buying approaches similar to TV, social media, and streaming.

But gaming isn't just another channel—it requires a deeper understanding of player behavior and experiences.

In this first edition of our **Intrinsic In-Game Advertising Trends & Insights Report**, we examine how player behaviors and advertiser strategies have shifted, highlight key benchmarks across regions, platforms, and game genres, and uncover opportunities to help brands and game developers better navigate gaming's rapidly evolving landscape.

I hope these insights inspire and inform your approach to this exciting new frontier.



Itamar Benedy
Co-Founder & CEO, Anzu



Key Takeaways: What You Need to Know



Q1 Presents A Massive Opportunity For Fitness, Dating, And Travel Brands

The Why:

Advertisers in these verticals can reach their audience efficiently when consumer interest is naturally high and people are playing more.

The Opportunity:

Brands should leverage this **low-cost, high-engagement period** for maximum impact.



PC & Console Offer Next Level Engagement

The Why:

Big screen gaming offers an experience that rivals CTV and linear TV, with huge engagement levels within premium environments.

The Opportunity:

Advertisers should explore PC & console as a **premium channel** before competition drives up CPMs.

Key Takeaways: What You Need to Know



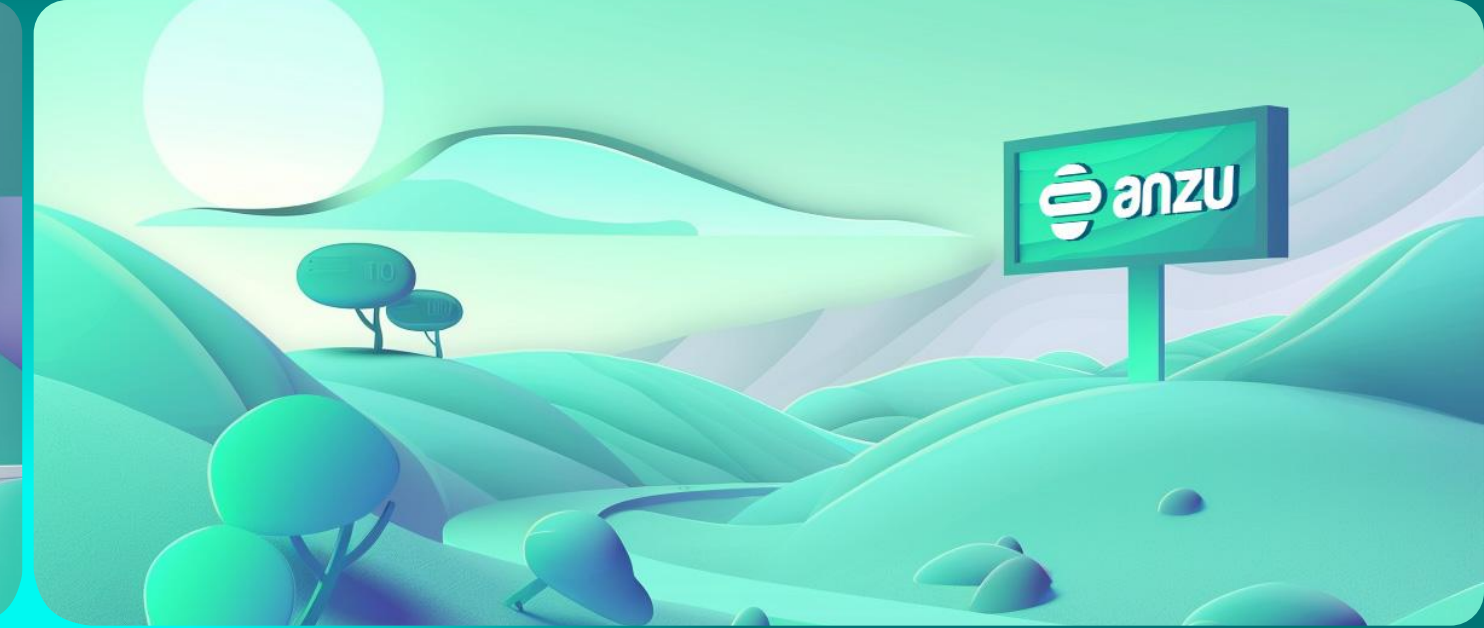
Engagement In Sports And Racing Games Peaks During Competitions

The Why:

High engagement with sports and racing games correlates with seasons and competitions that happen in the real world.

The Opportunity:

Advertisers can extend their sponsorships to reach more fans around these competitions, or run ads to reach fans for a **fraction of the cost** of real world sponsorships.



Intrinsic In-Game Ads Drive Full Funnel Impact

The Why:

Intrinsic in-game ads offer a highly viewable, immersive, and non-disruptive experience, capturing attention and driving bottom-line impact.

The Opportunity:

With a **20-point lift in ad recall, 8-point lift in purchase intent, 21% lower CPA, and a 6% conversion rate** from impression to store visit, these ads drive real business outcomes.



Methodology & Data Sources

Internal Data

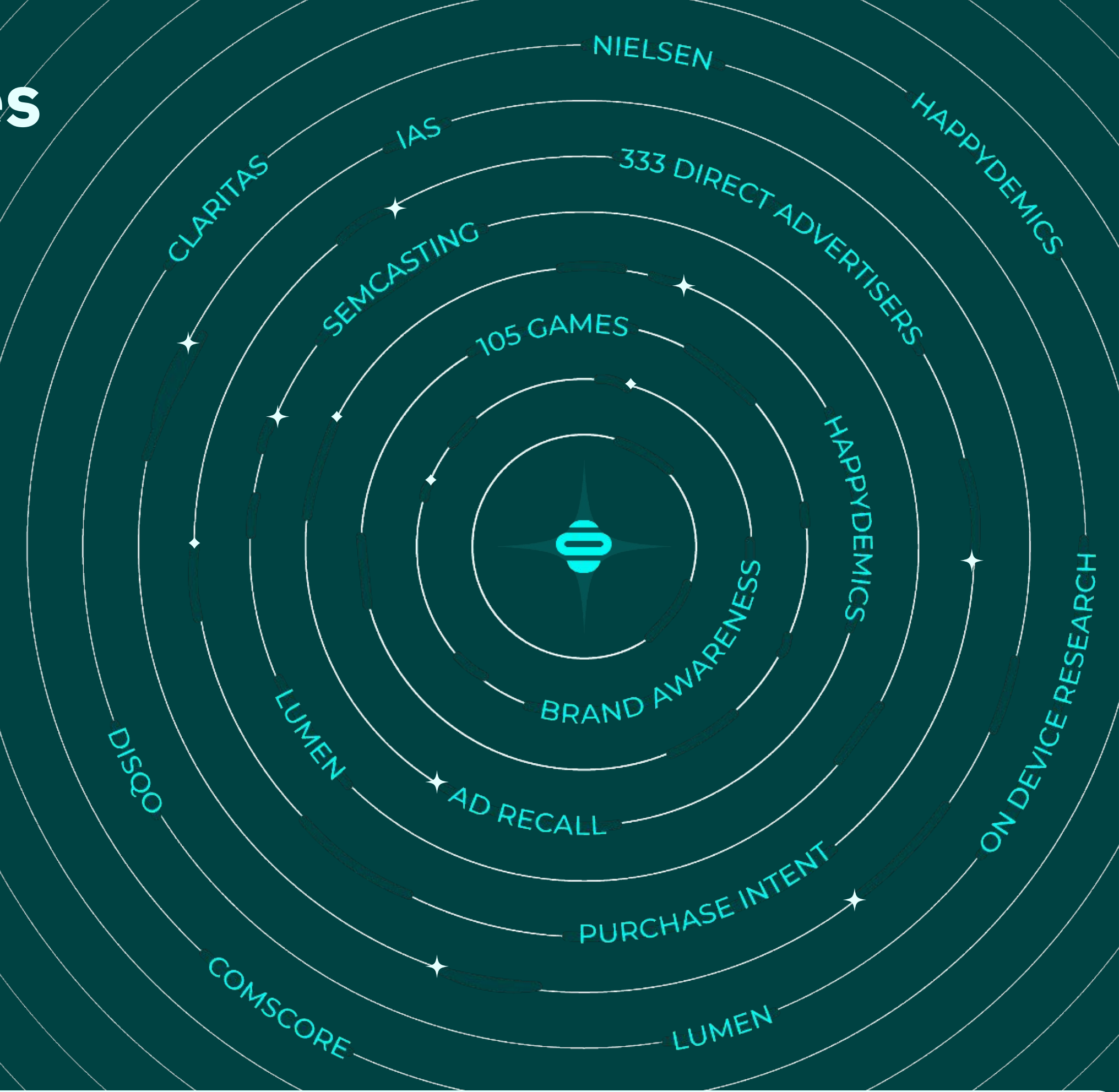
Aggregated insights from 105 games and 333 direct advertisers across Anzu’s campaigns, providing a robust view of in-game ad performance.

Third-Party Data

Insights from trusted measurement and research partners. These sources cover areas such as viewability, brand lift, and attention measurement.

Session & Play Time Methodology

Our session and play time data is measured on a per user, per game, per device basis. This means the numbers may appear lower, as we can’t track the same user across multiple games or devices. However, the data still provides a clear indication of overall engagement trends.



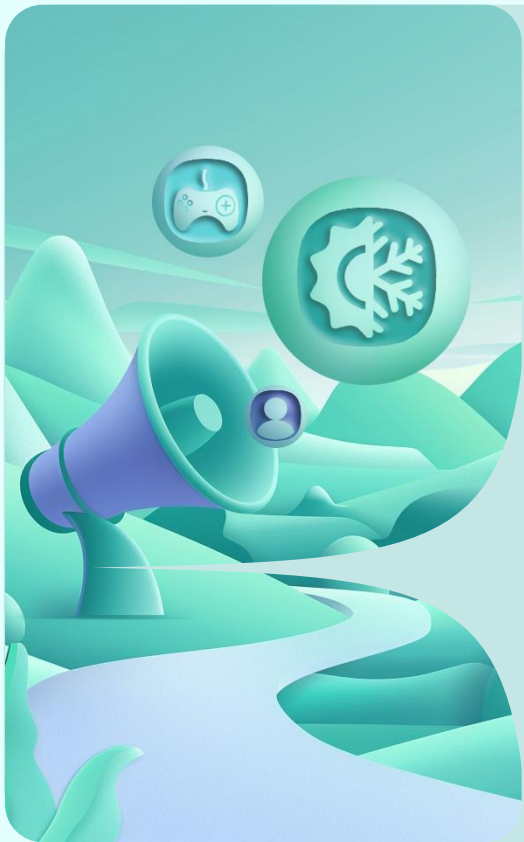
Topline Insights



Player Engagement: What Happened in 2024?

While **play time and session volumes peak slightly in Q4**, the data confirms that **gaming remains a year-round activity**. Unlike TV and social media, which see engagement dips during the summer, gaming stays **remarkably consistent**.

Though session lengths are slightly shorter in spring and summer as consumers game on-the-go, **overall session volumes remain steady and even increase in Q3 compared to Q1**.



What's The Opportunity?

This continuous engagement presents a unique opportunity for advertisers to maintain visibility year round unlike other media such as TV, which see declines in warmer months.

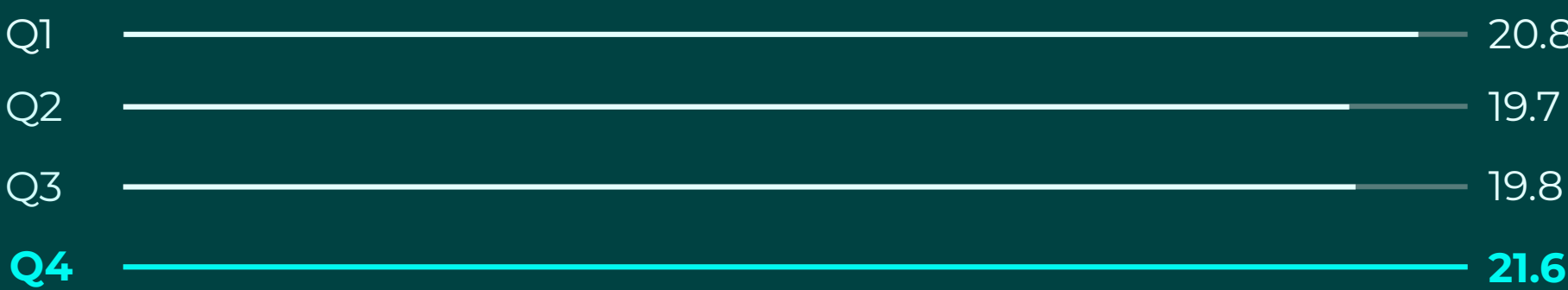
Average Cross Platform Session Length (mins)



Quarterly Sessions Per User Per Game

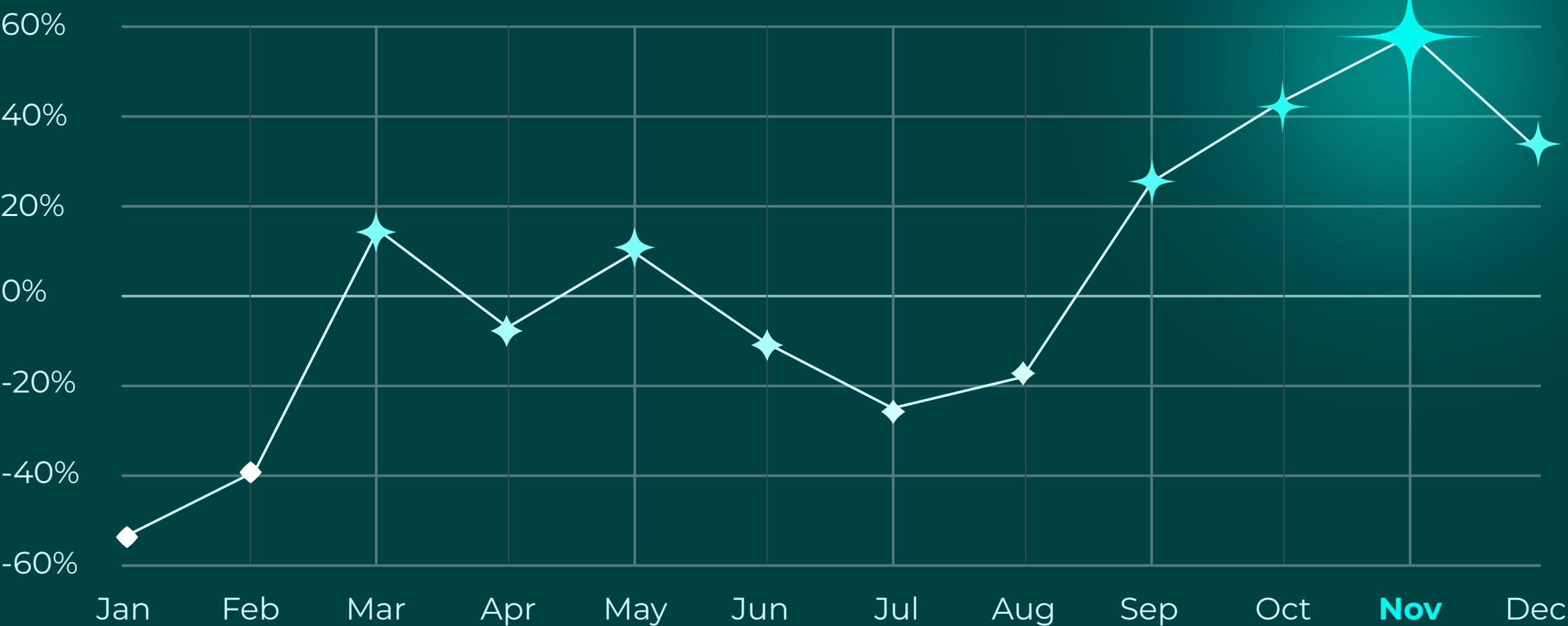


Play Time Per User Per Game (mins)



CPM Trends: What Happened in 2024?

CPM compared to average



CPM (cost per thousand impressions) is a common metric used to measure and price digital ads and indicates peaks in advertiser demand and dips in inventory supply.

The **CPM dip in Q1** presents a prime opportunity for brands in **travel, fitness, and wellbeing** industries where sales peak during this time. Lower ad costs and higher gamer engagement mean **greater reach and efficiency** for campaigns when consumers are in-market.

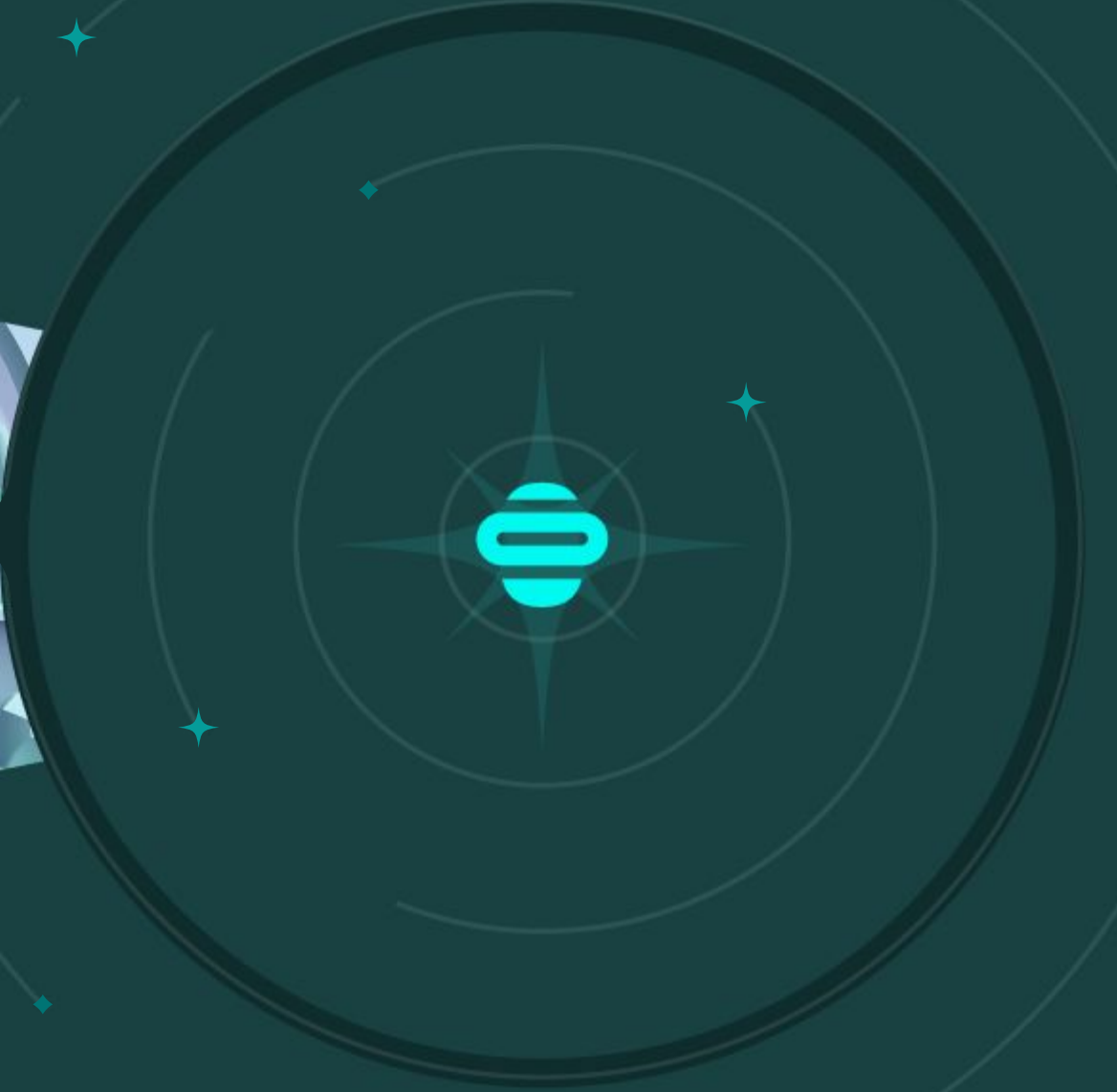
Similarly, during the **summer months**, advertisers tend to **scale back media spend** across traditional channels like TV, yet **gaming engagement during this period remains strong**.

What's The Opportunity?

As players continue to stay active while shifting away from other media channels, brands have a **cost-effective opportunity** to connect with them when competition is lower.



Platform Insights



Advertiser Trends Differ Across Mobile Platforms

While **advertiser demand is fairly balanced between iOS and Android in H1**, a clear shift occurs from Q3 onwards, driven by two key factors.

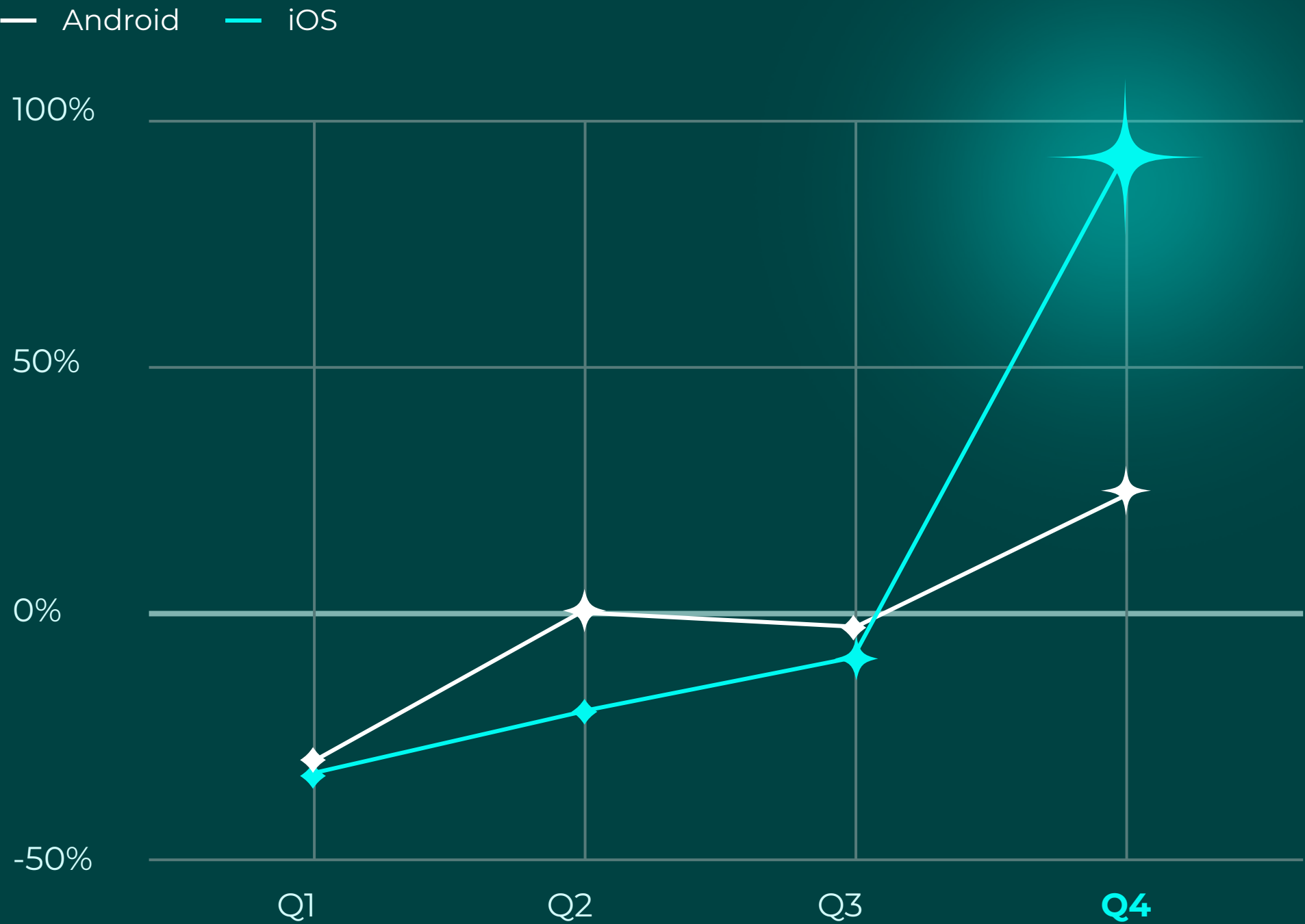
- 1 **Retail & eCommerce advertisers prioritize iOS users** due to their higher spending power during the holiday shopping rush.
- 2 **APAC, a more Android-heavy market, sees significantly lower CPMs in Q4**, making it a less competitive region for advertisers during this period and flattening the Q4 spike on Android.



What's The Opportunity?

For advertisers, this presents **a huge opportunity to reach Android players at a lower cost** in the holiday lead-up, capitalizing on reduced competition and more efficient media spend.

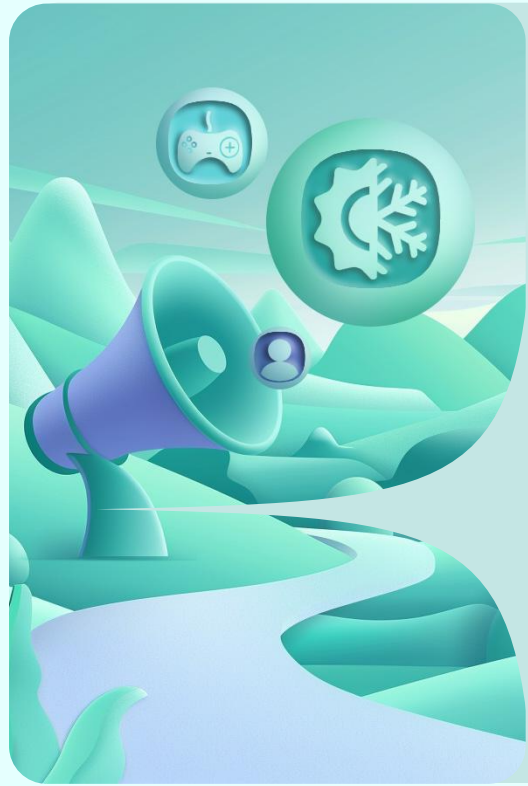
Android vs. iOS CPM Compared to Mobile Average



Big Screen Gaming: A High Engagement Opportunity

PC and console players are **the most immersed and engaged**, far exceeding mobile players in session length, total play time, and sessions per user. However, today, **mobile offers 25x the scale of impressions and a more diverse audience** with 37% female players vs. 20% on PC and console. There are two major reasons for this:

- 1 More consumers have **smartphones** compared to gaming consoles or PCs.
- 2 PC & console developers are **adopting intrinsic ads more cautiously** compared to mobile.

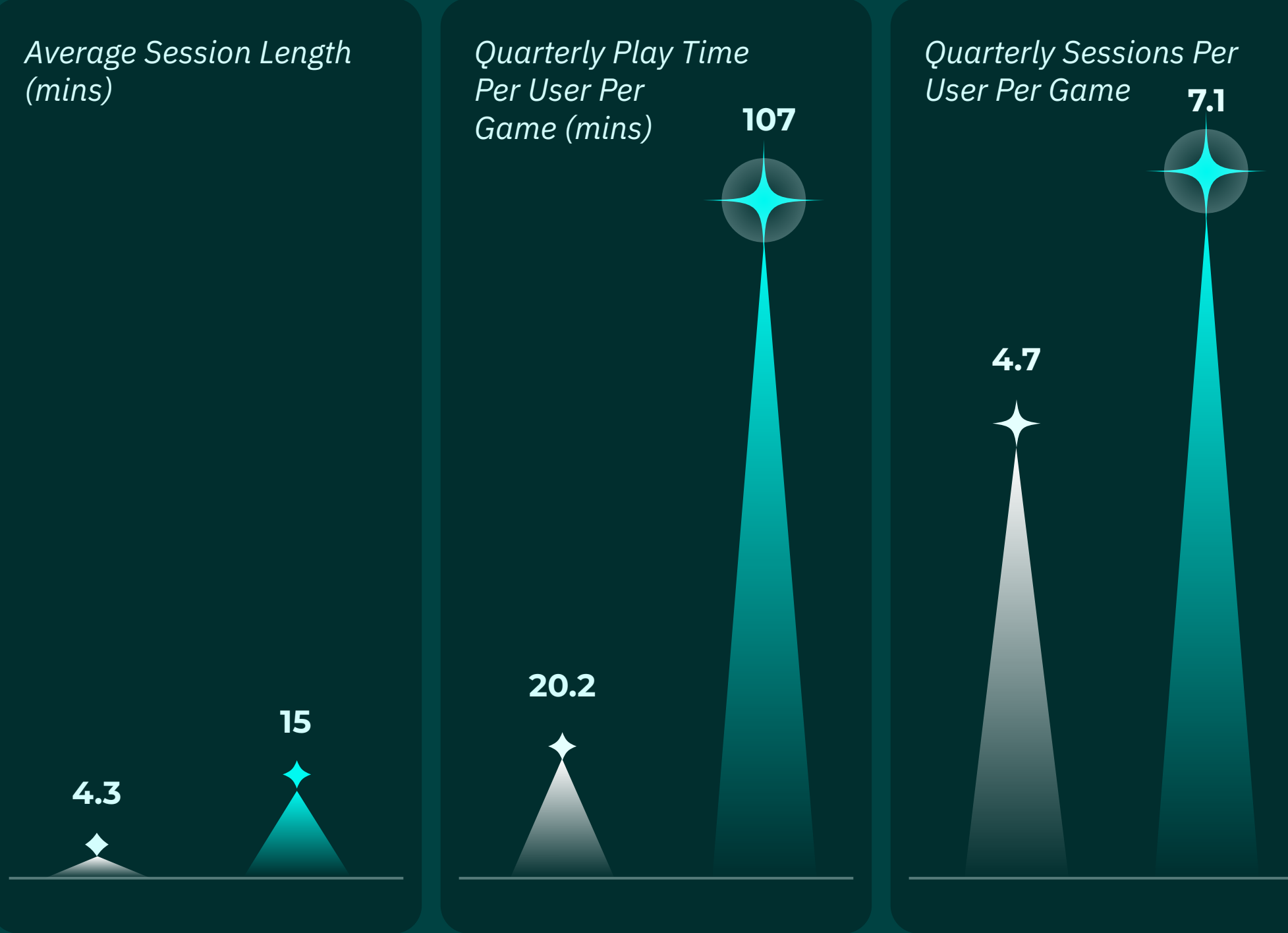


What's The Opportunity?

If you can reach your audience at scale on PC and console devices, it's worth adding to your media mix due to CTV-like impact and high engagement. However, mix mobile in to add scale and audience diversity.

Player Engagement Across Platforms

▲ Mobile ▲ PC & Console



Regional Insights



NA & EUR Dominate Engagement and CPMs

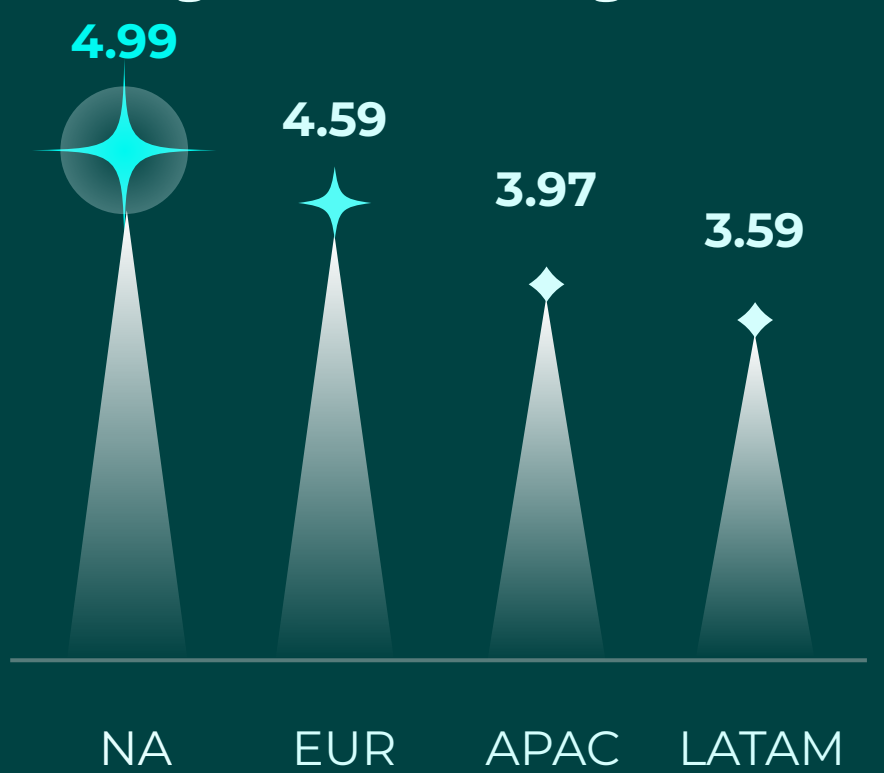
Across games in Anzu’s portfolio, players from North America and Europe **demonstrate the highest engagement levels**, including **longer session lengths, higher session frequencies**, and **increased total playtime**, resulting in notably high CPMs in these regions.

Given that Anzu predominantly serves US and European advertisers and APAC is largely focused on Australia, there may be a sampling bias in player engagement and CPMs.

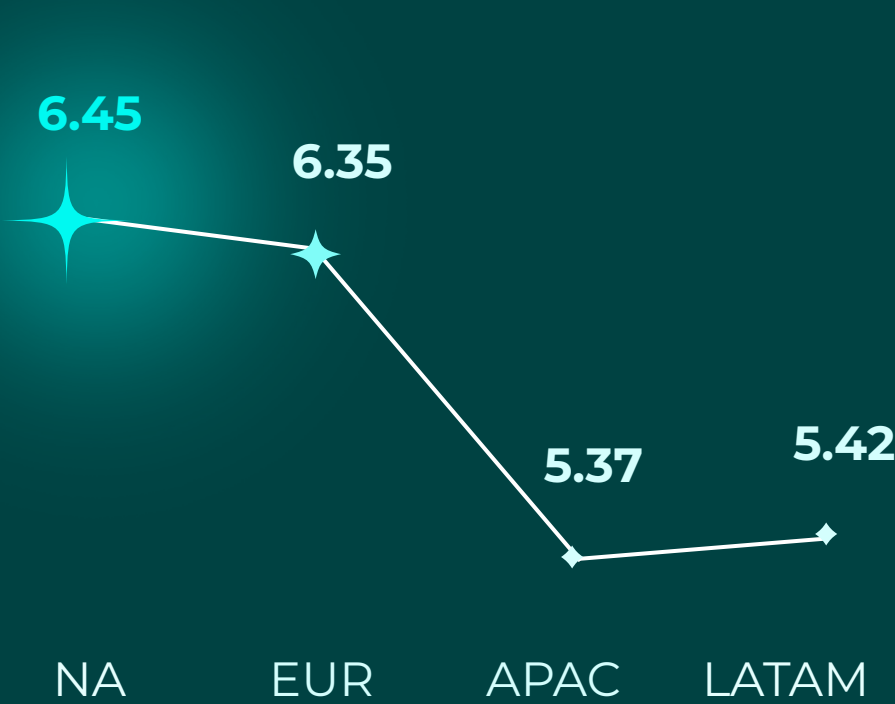
What’s The Opportunity?

There’s a cost-effective opportunity to leverage intrinsic in-game advertising to reach similarly engaged audiences in rapidly growing gaming markets such as APAC and LATAM, at a fraction of the cost.

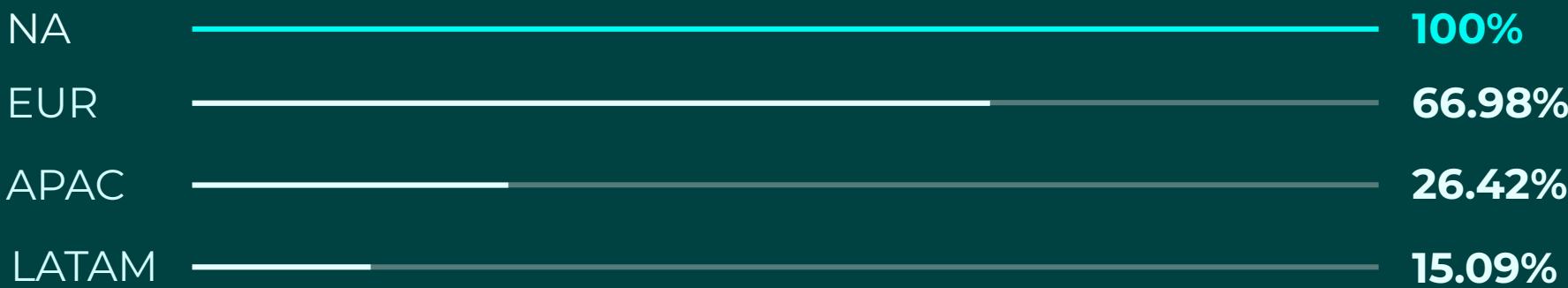
Average Session Length (Mins)



Quarterly Sessions Per User Per Game



CPM Indexed to North America CPM



“Markets like North America and Europe have already shown how impactful intrinsic in-game advertising can be when done right.

But what’s really exciting is the opportunity in emerging regions where brands can still tap into massive growth, cost-effectively, and make a real impact from the ground up.”

dentsu **Magali Huot**
SVP Global
Gaming Strategy

Q1 In North America: The Hidden Opportunity for Advertisers

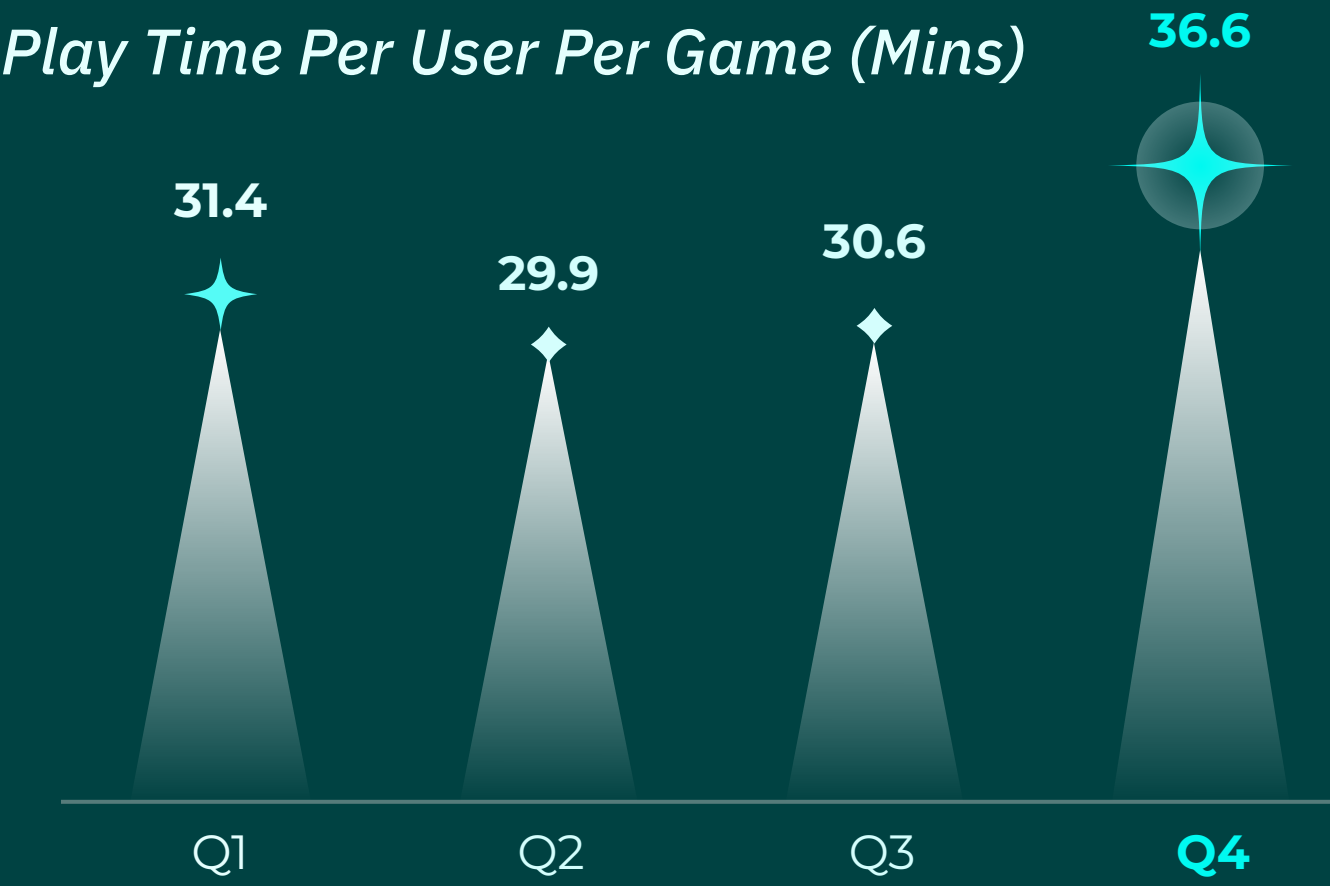
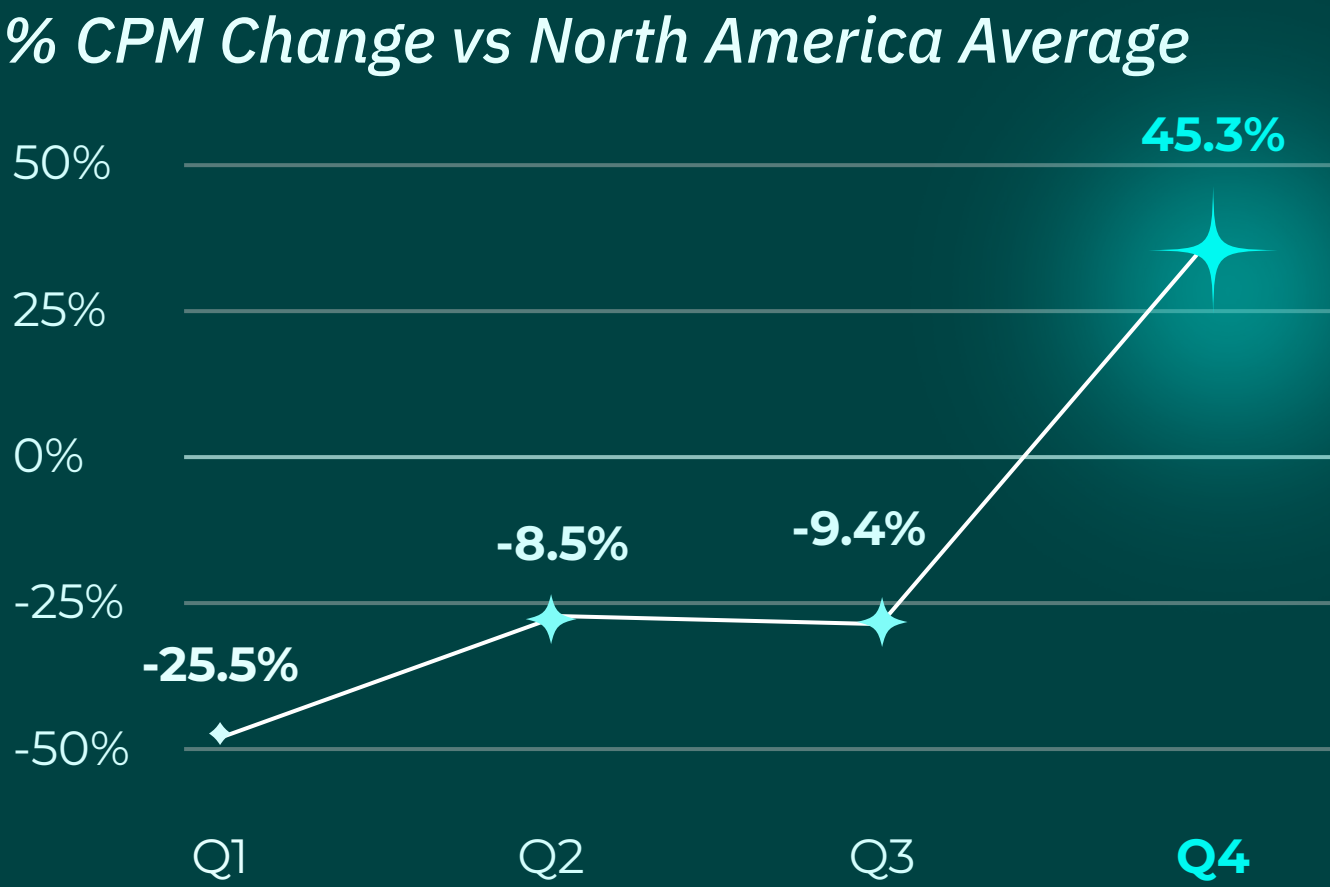
During Q1 in North America **CPMs hit their lowest levels of the year**, despite player engagement remaining higher than in Q2 and Q3.

This creates an ideal moment for brands in **fitness, wellness, travel, and dating** to reach engaged audiences at a **lower cost**, aligning with seasonal consumer behaviors and New Year-driven trends.



What's The Opportunity?

Capitalizing on this period allows advertisers to **maximize ROI while benefiting from reduced competition**.



Q1 & Q3: Low CPM, High Engagement Opportunities Across Europe

Just like in North America, Q1 gives advertisers the chance to **reach engaged players at low CPMs**. However, Q3 stands out in Europe, offering another **cost-effective window** for advertisers.

There is also a more defined CPM peak in Spring as the Easter Holidays are an important sales period for many advertisers in Europe and players are also more engaged than in other regions during this period due to longer holidays, particularly with on-the-go mobile sessions.



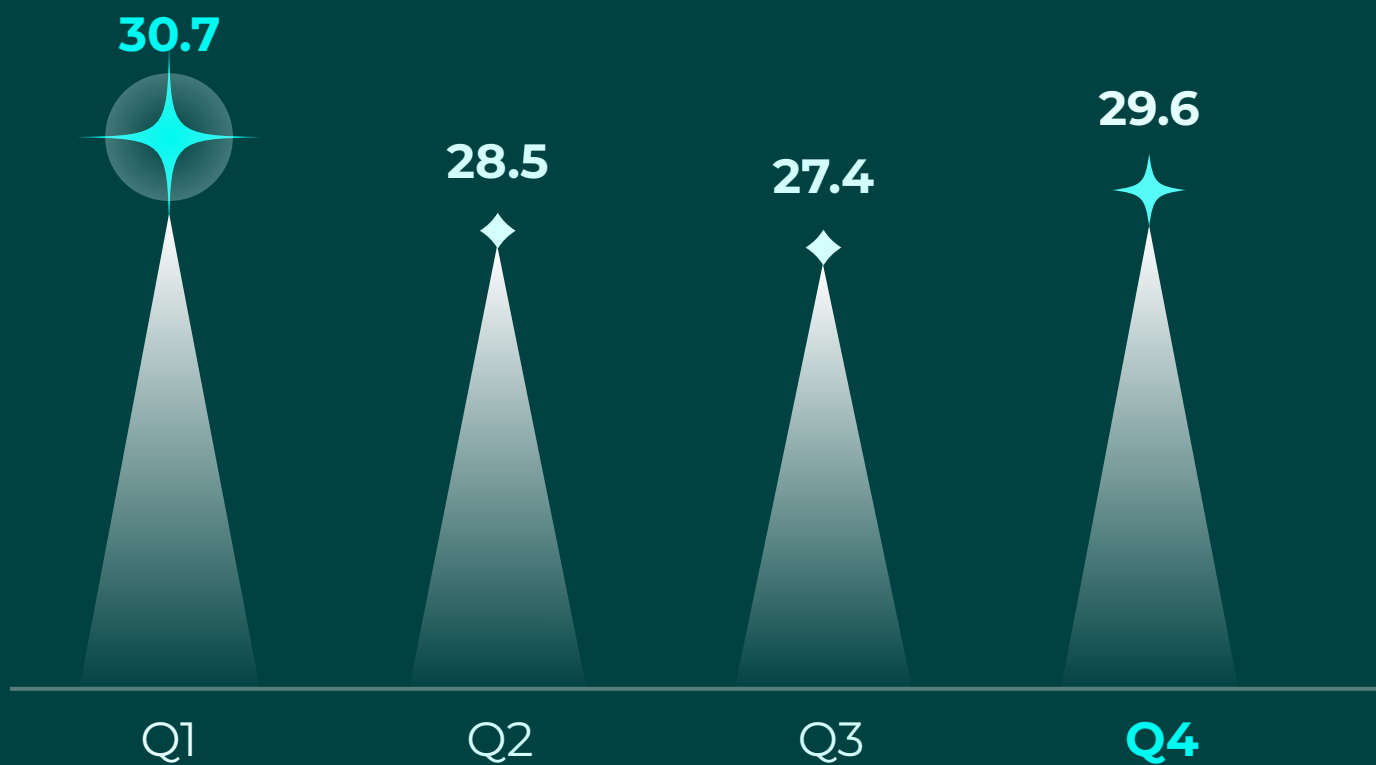
What's The Opportunity?

With major seasonal events like back-to-school and Halloween, brands can effectively **connect with highly engaged audiences while benefiting from reduced competition**.

% CPM Change vs. European Average



Play Time Per User Per Game (Mins)



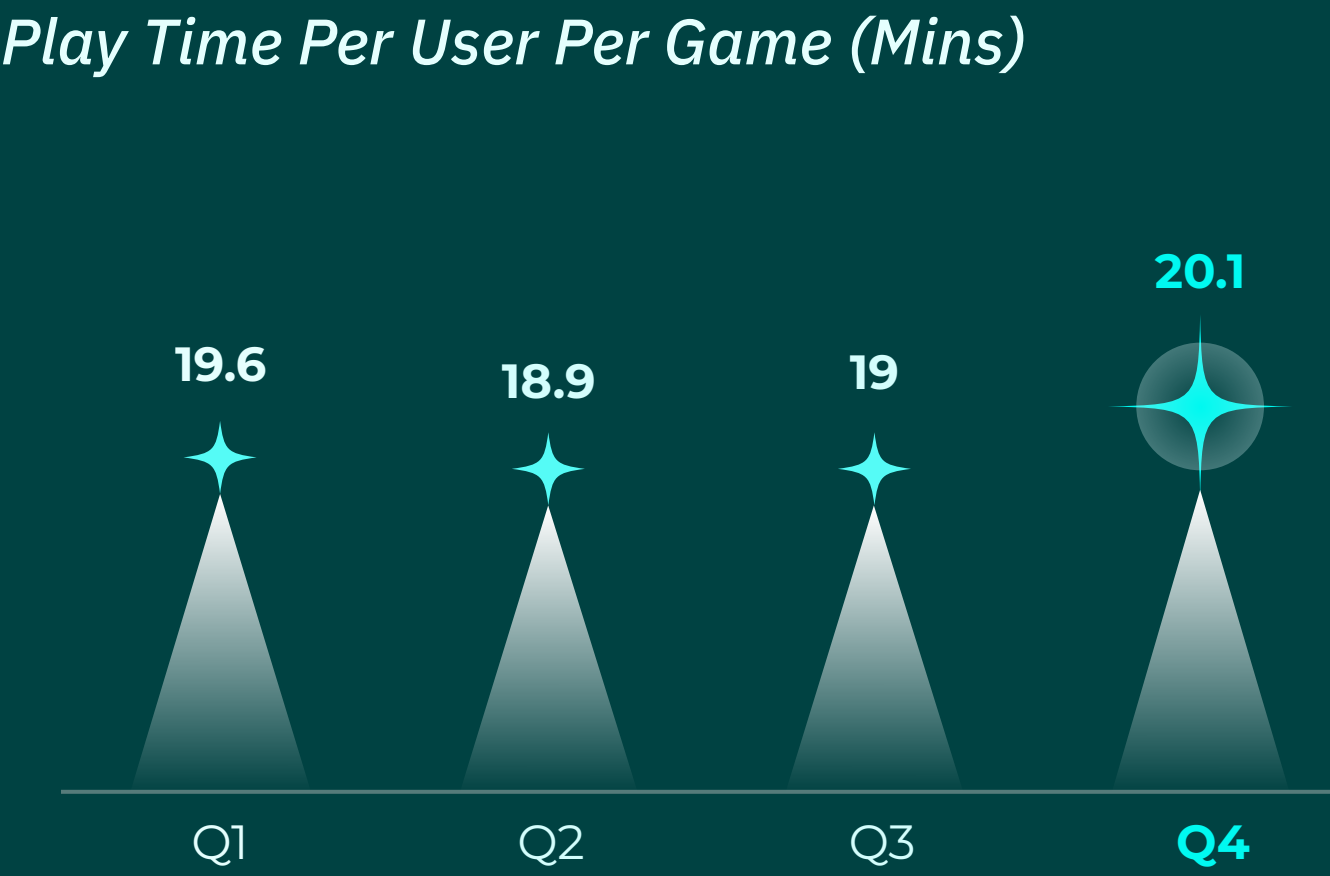
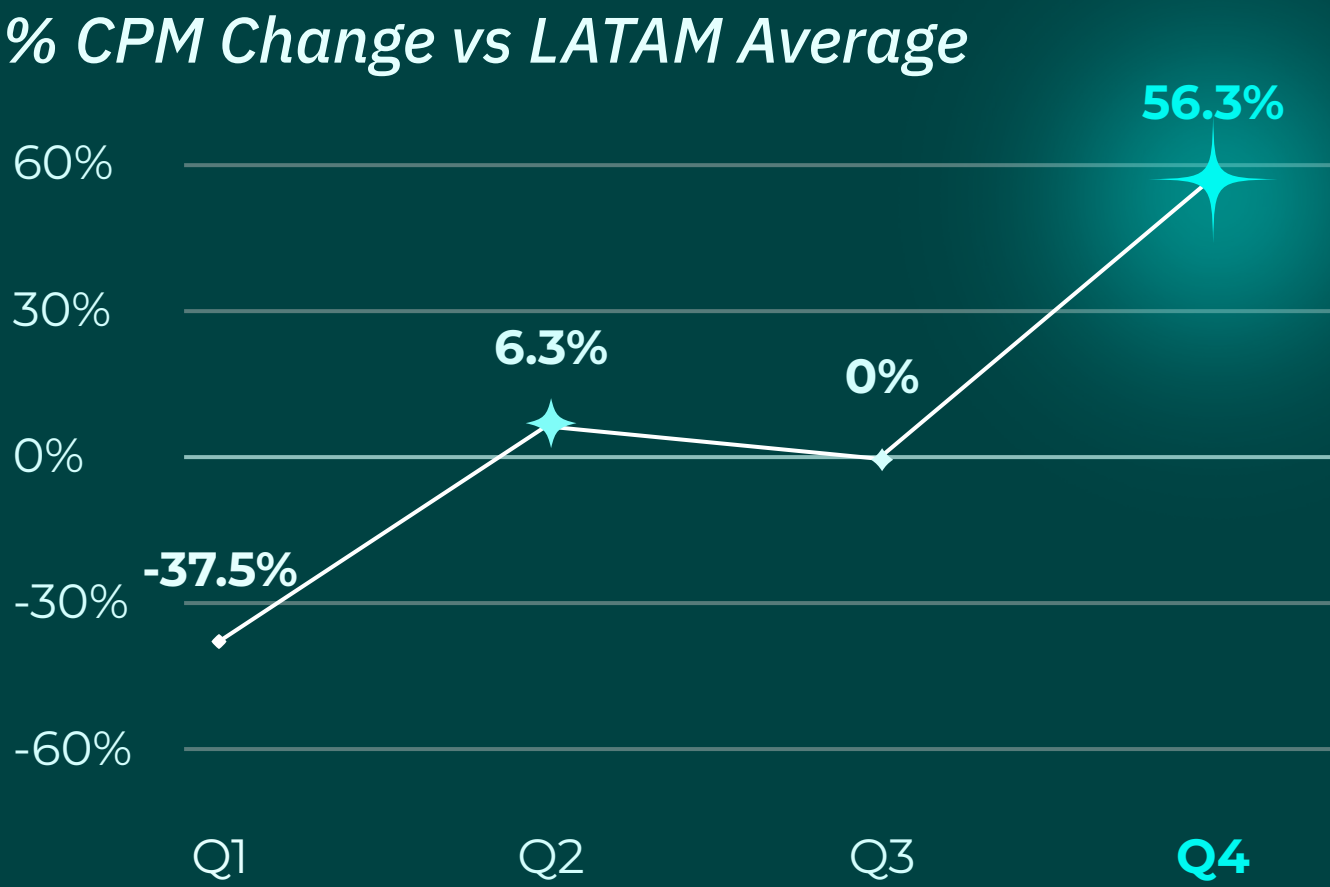
An Always On Opportunity for Advertisers in LATAM

Within LATAM, while **demand spikes around Easter and the holiday season**, gaming remains a **year-round channel**, allowing brands to reach audiences even when they're disengaged from other entertainment platforms.



What's The Opportunity?

Q1 offers a prime opportunity for advertisers where high player engagement meets the lowest CPMs of the year.



APAC: Unique Seasonal Trends and Year-Round Opportunities

APAC follows a unique seasonal pattern, distinct from other regions. **Advertiser demand peaks in Q2**, when playtime dips during the warmer months, while key sales events like Golden Week in Japan and Ramadan leading up to Eid drive **higher consumer spending**.



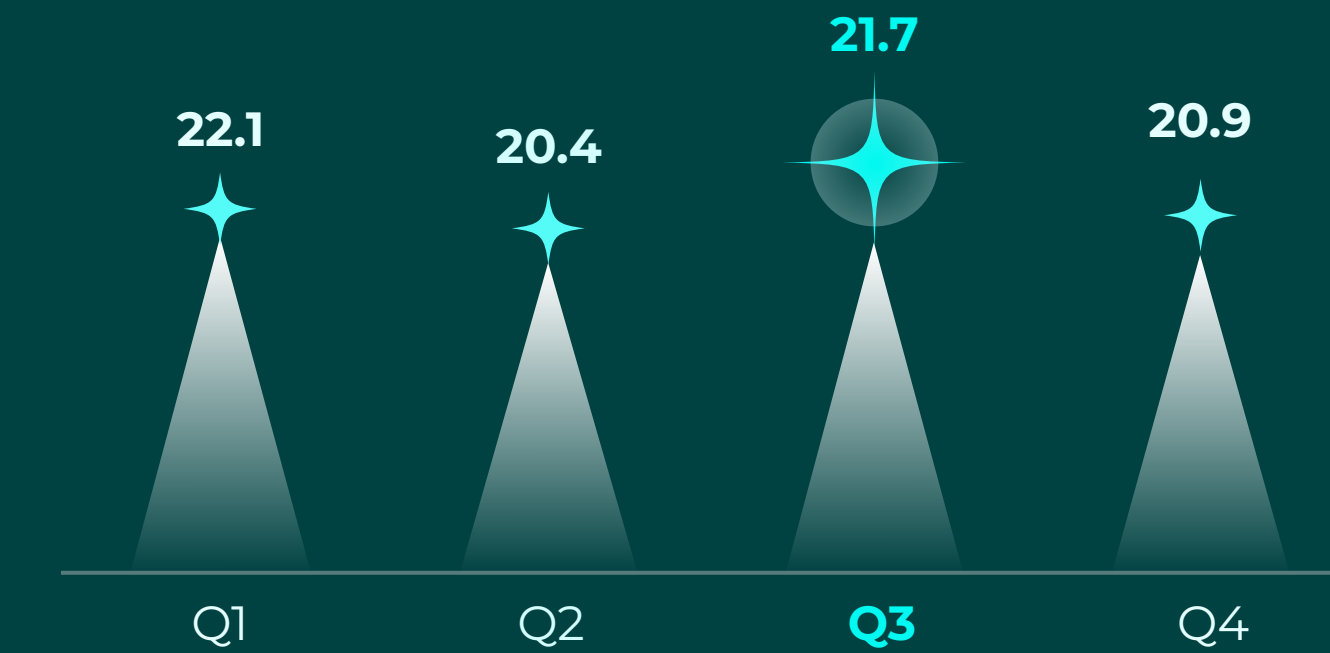
What's The Opportunity?

Outside of these peak periods, **CPMs remain low while playtime stays high**, offering advertisers **cost-effective opportunities** to engage players year-round.

% CPM Change vs. APAC Average



Play Time Per User Per Game (Mins)



Game Genre Insights



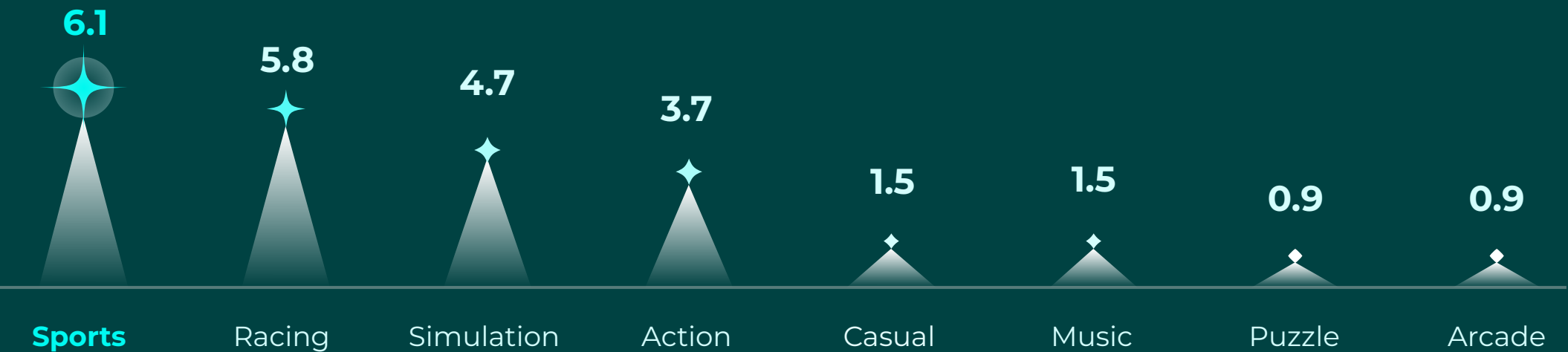
High Engagement, Lower Costs: The Hidden Opportunity Beyond Sports

Sports games dominate when it comes to engagement, with **players spending more time per session and returning more often**, driving CPMs higher than any other genre.

What's The Opportunity?

For advertisers seeking highly engaged audiences **without the premium price tag**, genres like racing, simulation, and action offer the perfect sweet spot: **high playtime at lower CPMs**, unlocking cost-effective opportunities to connect with players.

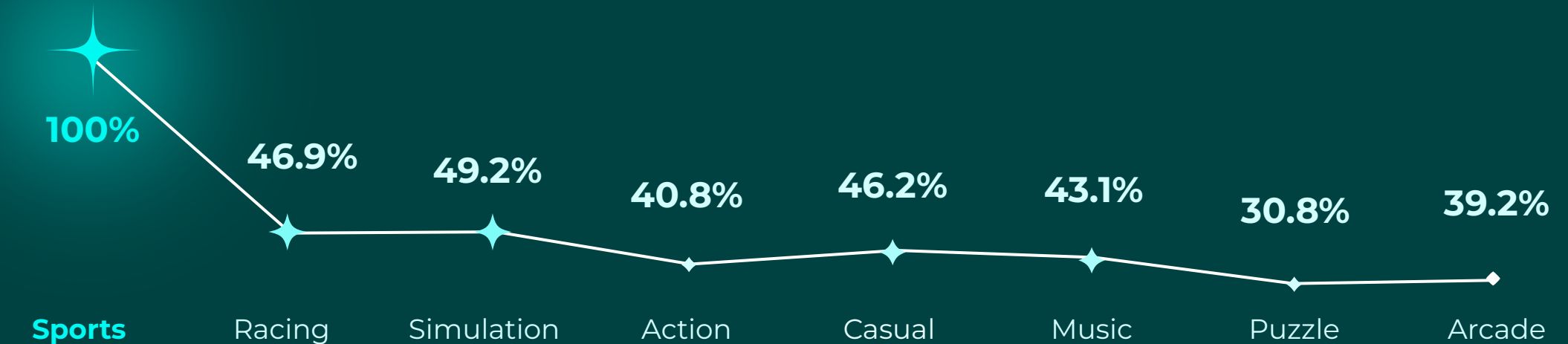
Average Session Length (Mins)



Quarterly Sessions Per User Per Game (Mins)



CPM Indexed to Sports CPM



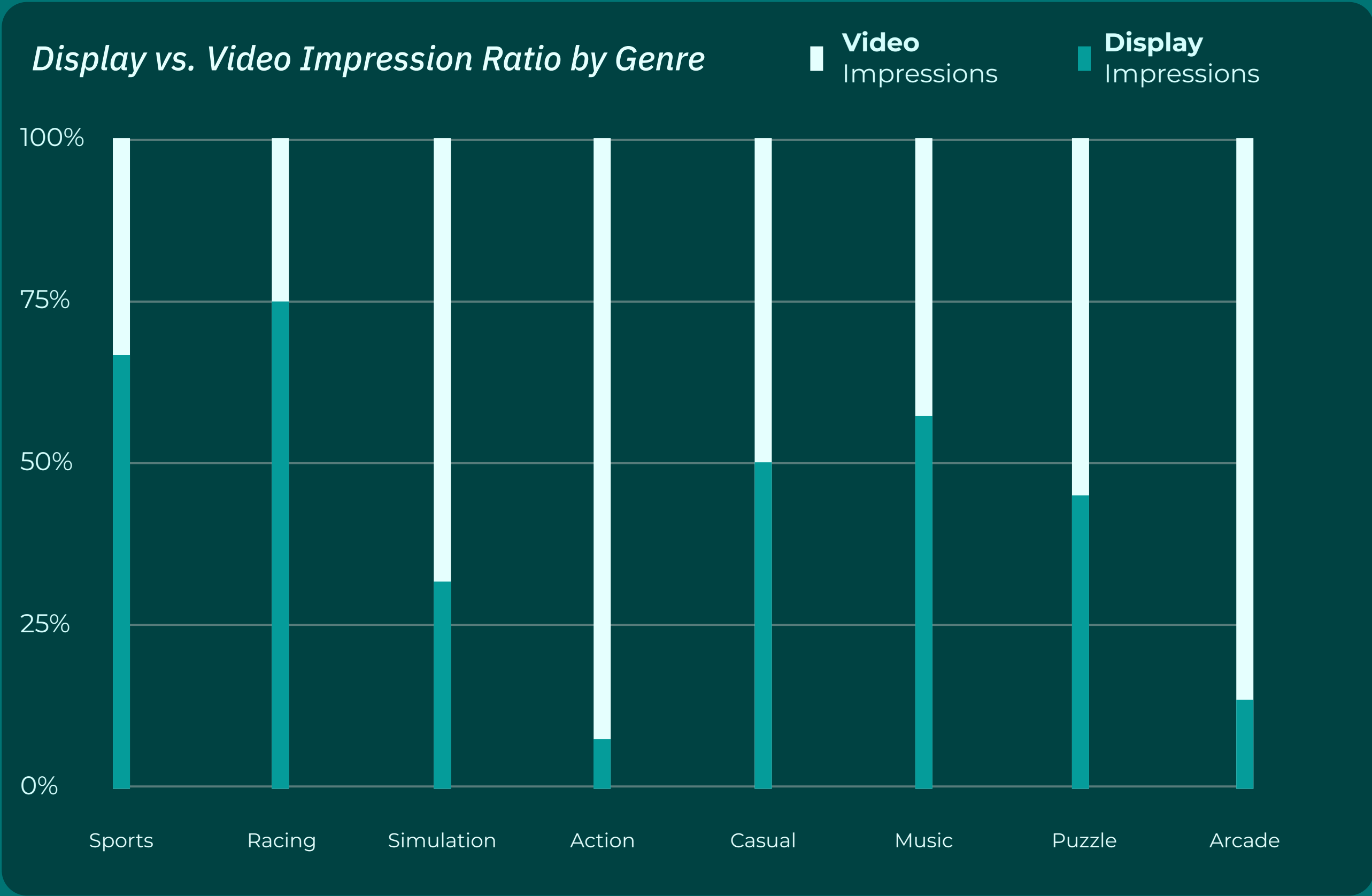
Aligning Ad Formats With Player Behaviour

How players experience intrinsic in-game ads can vary by game genre. In fast-paced environments like racing and sports, where players are constantly on the move, **ads need to make an impact quickly**, making display a strong choice for certain campaigns.

Meanwhile, in slower-paced genres like simulation, arcade, and puzzle, players often have **more time to engage with longer-form messaging**, creating opportunities for video ads.

While genre influences how ads are experienced, the most effective format ultimately depends on the **creative, messaging, and target audience**.

Understanding these nuances helps advertisers make more informed decisions about how to connect with players in a way that feels natural and **enhances the gaming experience**.



Game On: Why Sports Titles Dominate During Q4

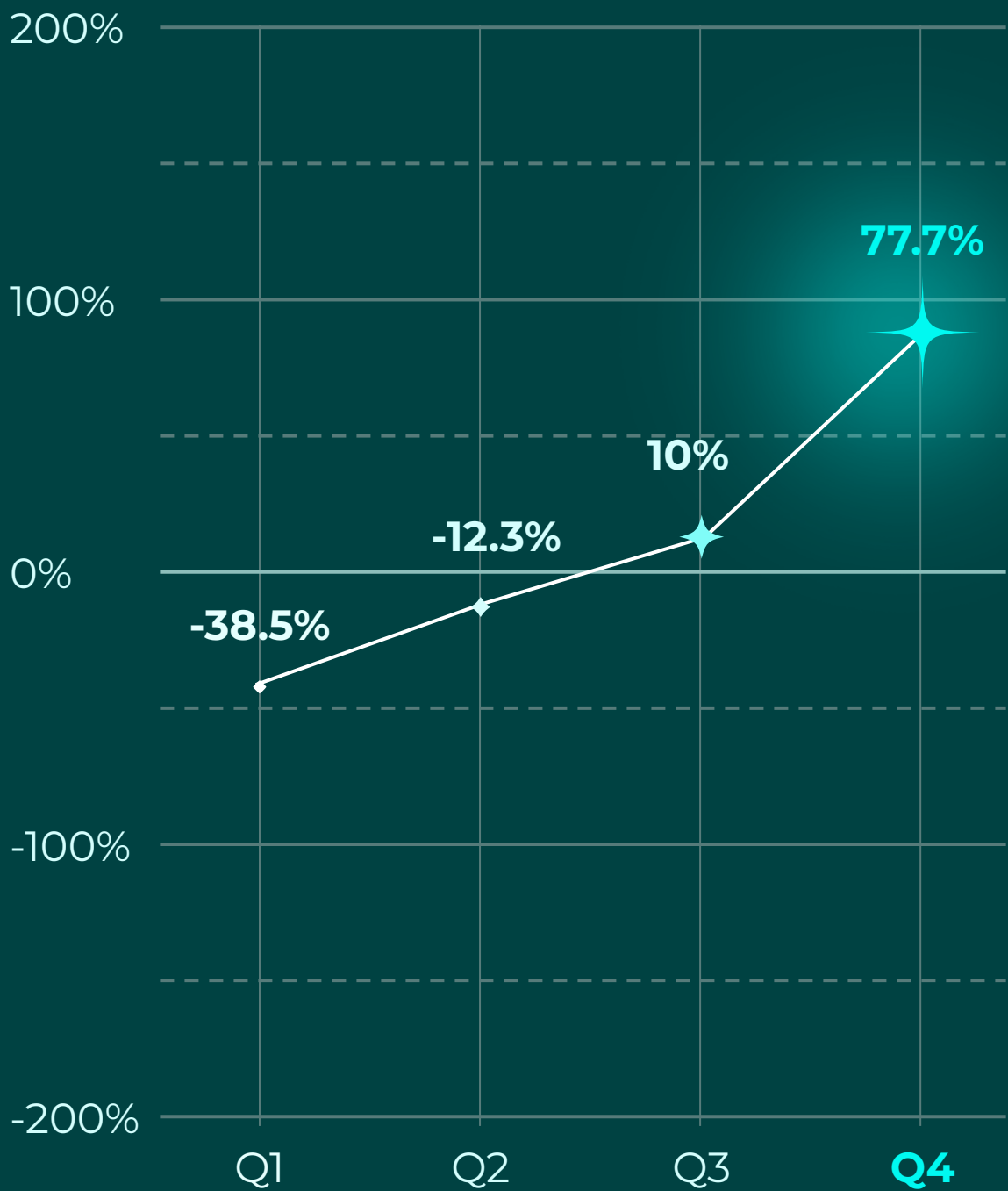
With major game releases and more time to play during the holidays, **player engagement surges in Q3 and Q4**, especially in sports titles from soccer and American football, which follow annual release cycles that land in Q3.

At the same time, ecommerce and retail advertisers ramp up spending in Q4, seeking premium sports environments during peak sales periods. As a result, **CPMs in the sports genre rise in line with player engagement**, reflecting heightened demand from both players and brands.

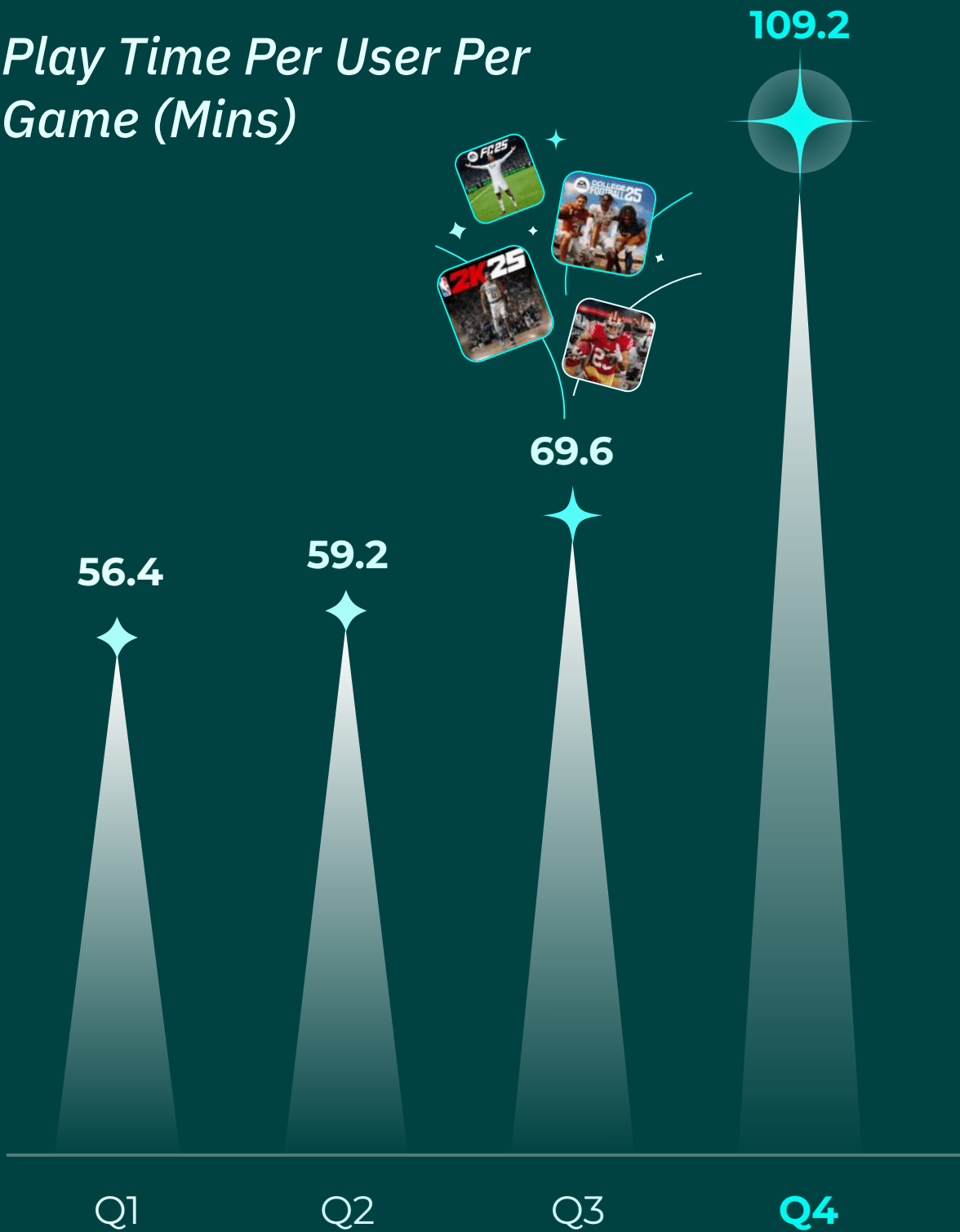
What's The Opportunity?

Q4 presents a **prime moment to connect with engaged players in sports games**, aligning with both increased playtime and heightened consumer spending.

% CPM Change vs. Sports Average



Play Time Per User Per Game (Mins)



Game On: Why **Sports** Titles Dominate During Q4



Mini Football
Miniclip

“

Sports games are a natural fit for in-game advertising, as real-life sporting events also frequently feature ad placements around the field.

This makes the ads feel organic and ensures they don't disrupt the player's experience.”



Marcel Strijk
Marketeer



Racing's Two Peaks: Aligning Ad Strategies With Player Engagement

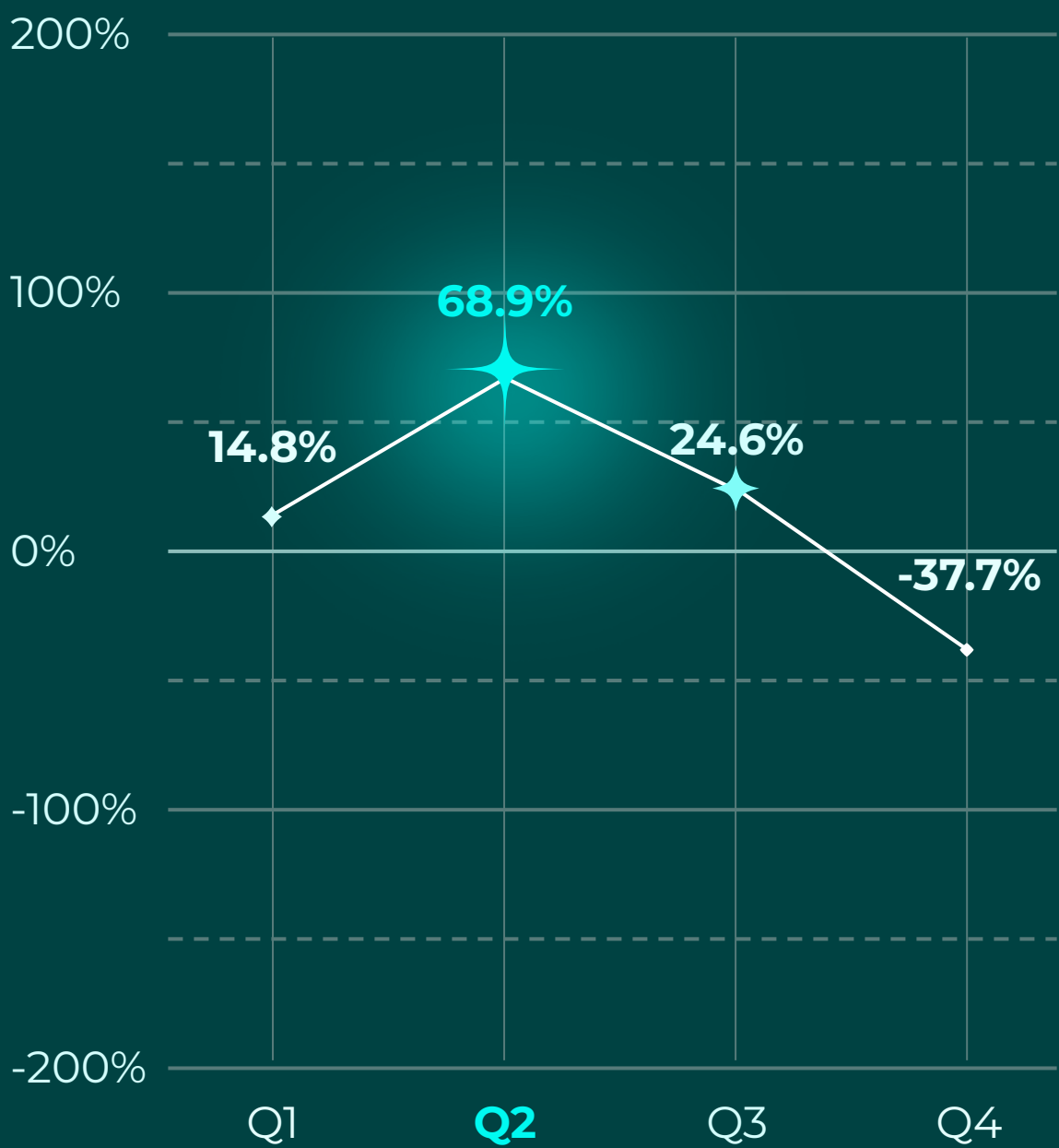
With major motor racing series like F1 and IndyCar kicking off in late Q1, we see **a Q2 peak in player engagement** as fans jump into games to emulate their favorite drivers. As the seasons reach their climax in Q4, and players have more time to game, engagement spikes again.

Advertisers typically align in-game motor racing sponsorships with the start of the real-world season, **driving CPMs higher in Q2.**

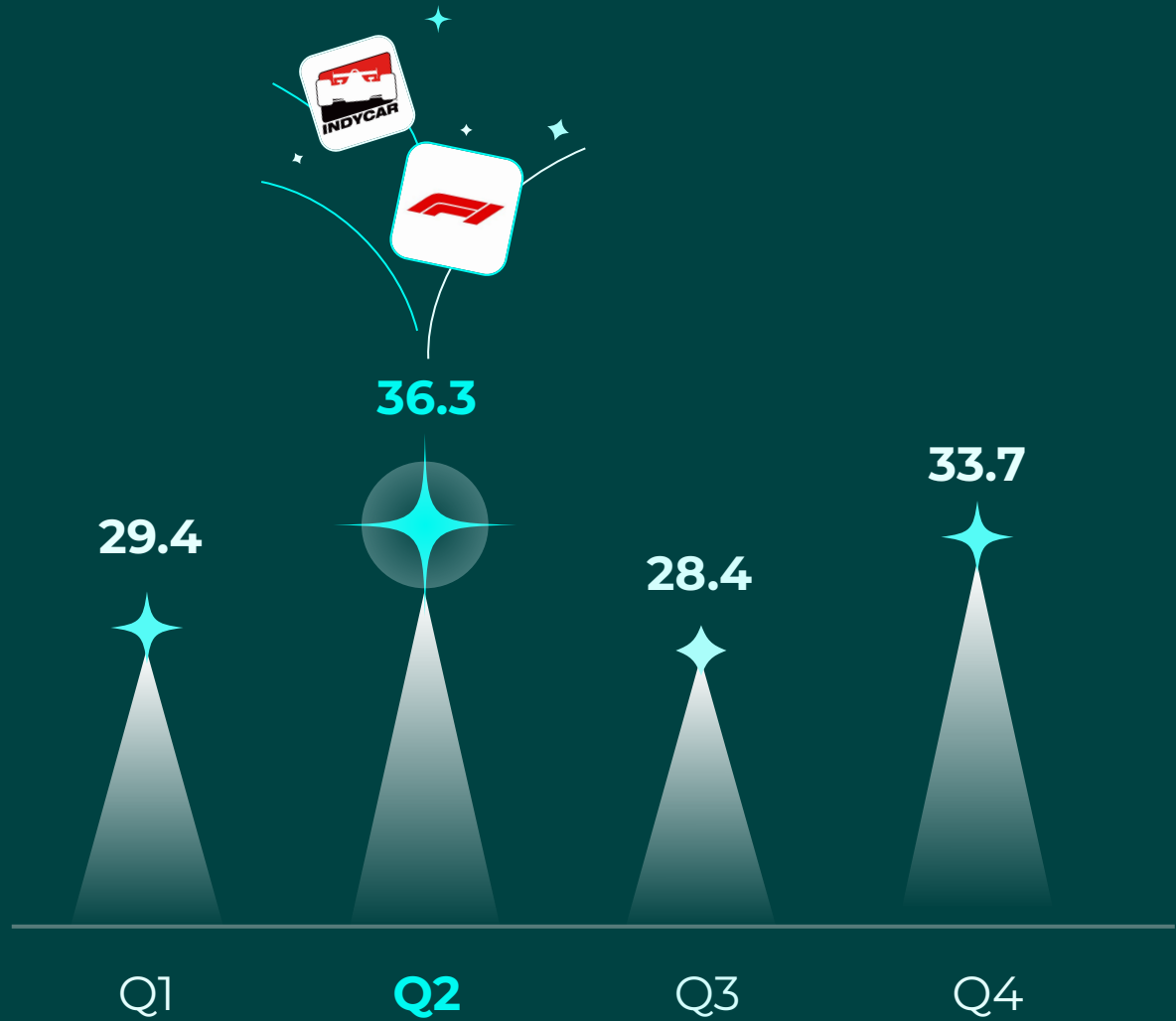
What's The Opportunity?

Player engagement surges during Q4 as motor racing series reach their climax, but CPMs remain surprisingly low, offering brands **a cost-effective way to stay connected with racing fans** in the lead-up to the Holiday season.

% CPM Change vs. Racing Average



Play Time Per User Per Game (Mins)



Racing's Two Peaks: Aligning Ad Strategies With Player Engagement



Asphalt Legends Unite
Gameloft

“

One of the most exciting things about racing games is how naturally they lend themselves to brand integrations, from trackside billboards to custom car designs.

With clear peaks in player engagement tied to real-world events, developers have a unique opportunity to create timely, immersive brand experiences that feel authentic and add value for players.”



George Iosif
ADS Monetization Manager



Simulation: A Steady Market With Seasonal Ad Opportunities

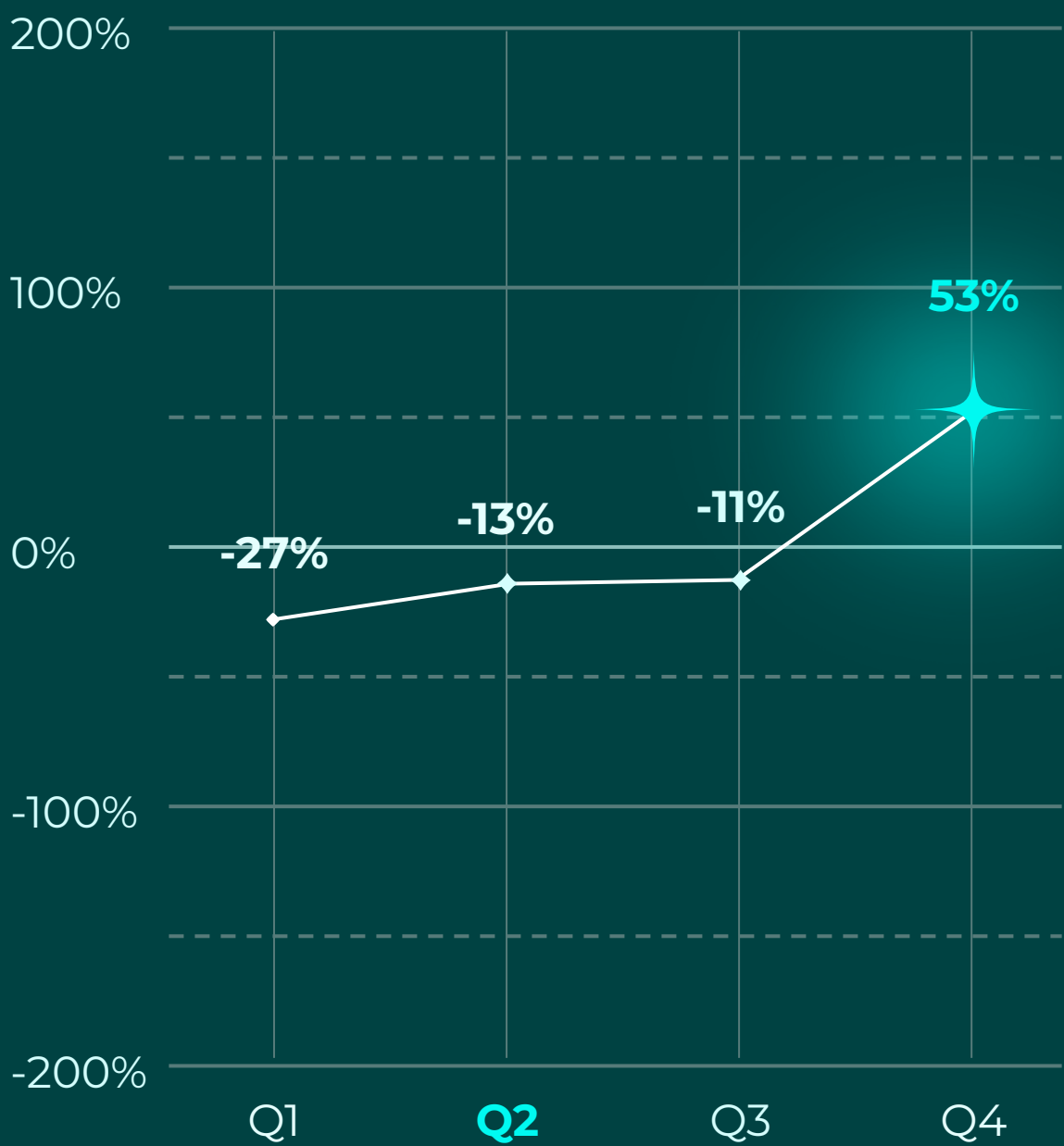
Unlike Sports and Racing, Simulation games see steadier player engagement, as they're **less influenced by release cycles and real-world events**.

The genre also **skews more female**, driving strong advertiser demand from retail, ecommerce, and fashion brands during peak Q4 sales periods, even as player engagement dips.

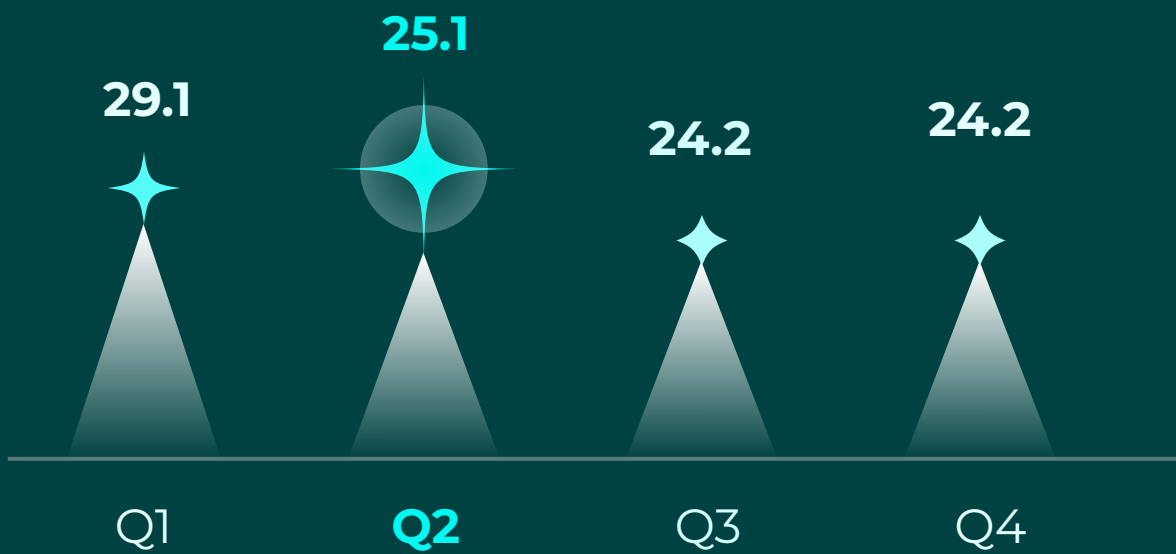
What's The Opportunity?

Women often play a key role in travel and holiday planning, presenting **a unique opportunity for travel brands in Q1**, when player engagement spikes and their peak sales period aligns.

% CPM Change vs. Simulation Average



Play Time Per User Per Game (Mins)



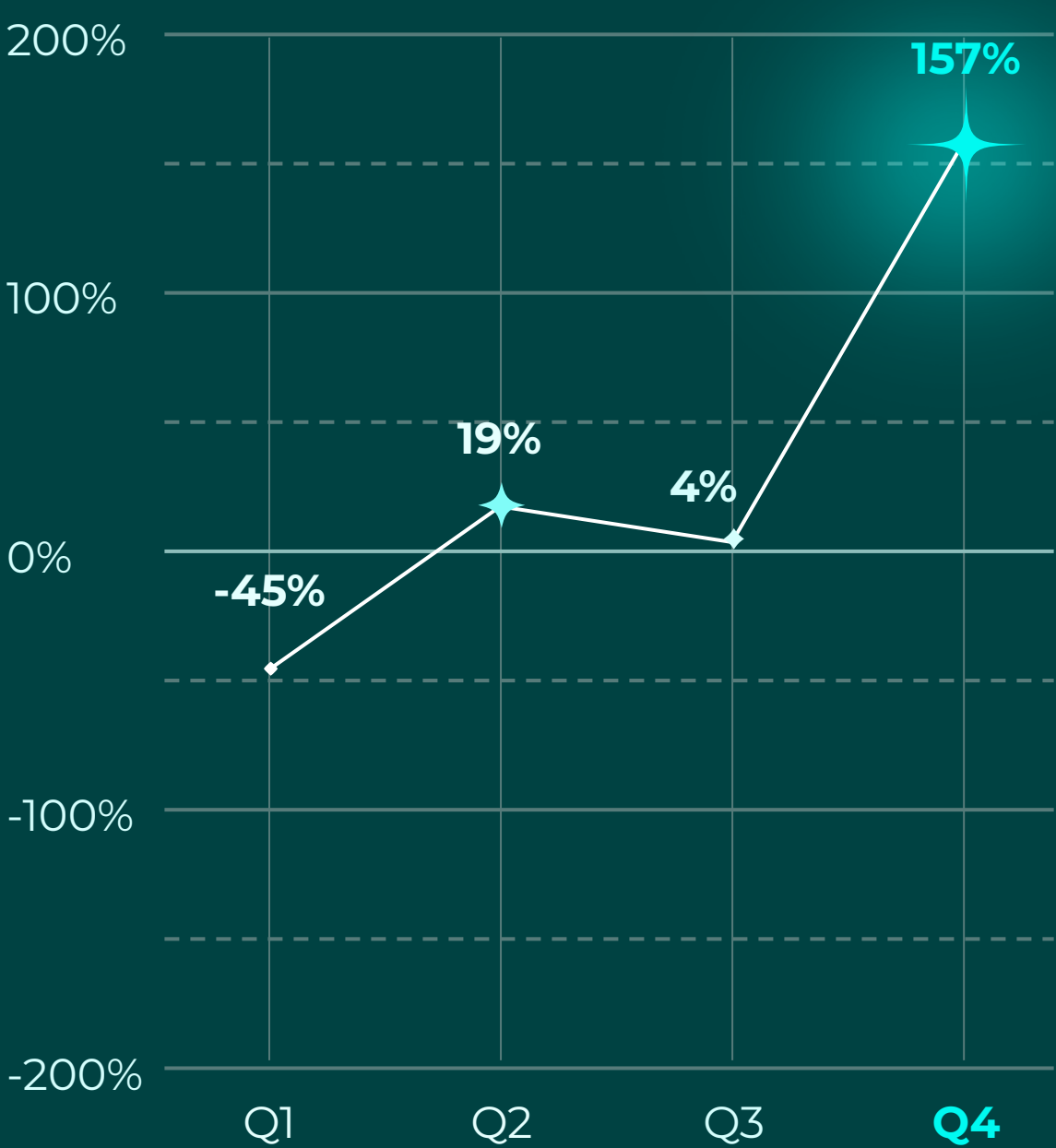
Reaching Young Male Gamers: Why Q4 is the Prime Time for Action Games

Player engagement in Action games builds steadily throughout the year, **peaking in Q3 and Q4** as the predominantly young male audience spends more time gaming during longer school holidays.

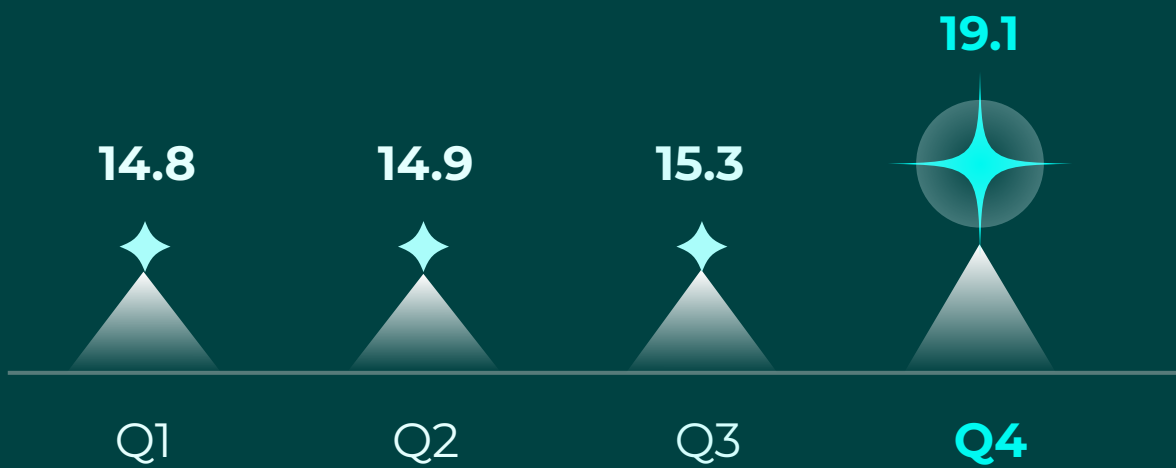
What's The Opportunity?

Advertiser demand spikes in Q4 as brands look to influence holiday gift requests, making it **a key period** for reaching this audience.

% CPM Change vs. Action Average



Play Time Per User Per Game (Mins)



IIGA Impact Trends



Viewability Trends

Intrinsic in-game ads **consistently deliver exceptionally high viewability scores**. Because these ads are seamlessly integrated into the gameplay, players remain focused and undistracted.

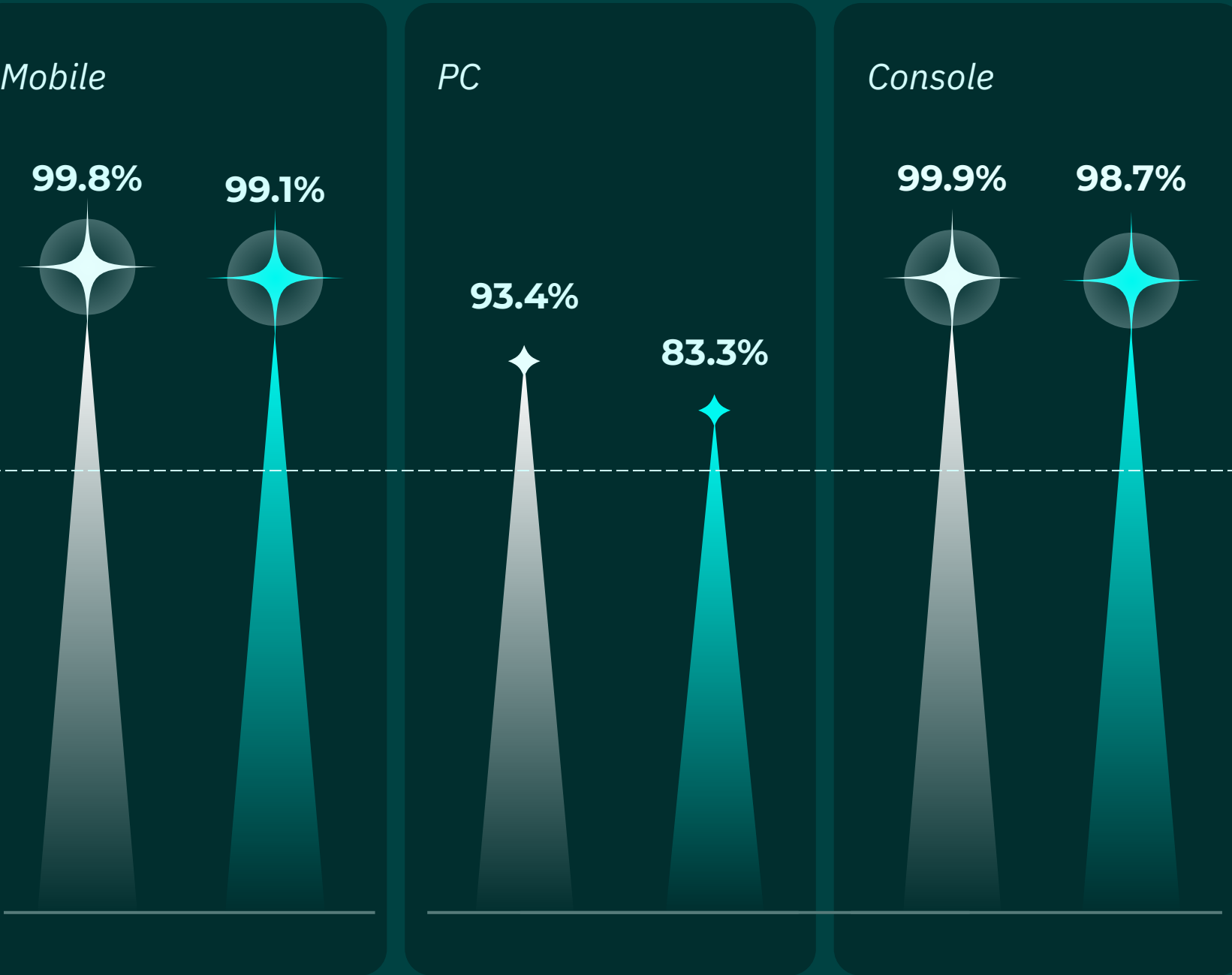
This native placement makes the ads feel like a natural part of the experience, **capturing attention and driving strong viewability**. The result is powerful brand impact, especially when placements are aligned with your campaign goals across the marketing funnel.

What's The Opportunity?

Viewability stays high across all screens letting advertisers reach engaged audiences wherever they are, whether commuting, at work, or at home. **In-game ads cut through the noise and capture attention during focused moments.**

Viewability Percentage Across Gaming Platforms

▲ Display ▲ Video ----- IAS overall viewability benchmark (76.1%)



“Gaming, as an emerging media channel, is compelling for advertisers and agencies who are looking to reach highly engaged audiences.

By partnering with Anzu, IAS has been delivering in-game measurement and transparency within gaming environments, giving advertisers the actionable data they need to easily manage their digital campaigns.”

IAS **Jim Egan**
Senior Vice President of Business Development



Attention Trends

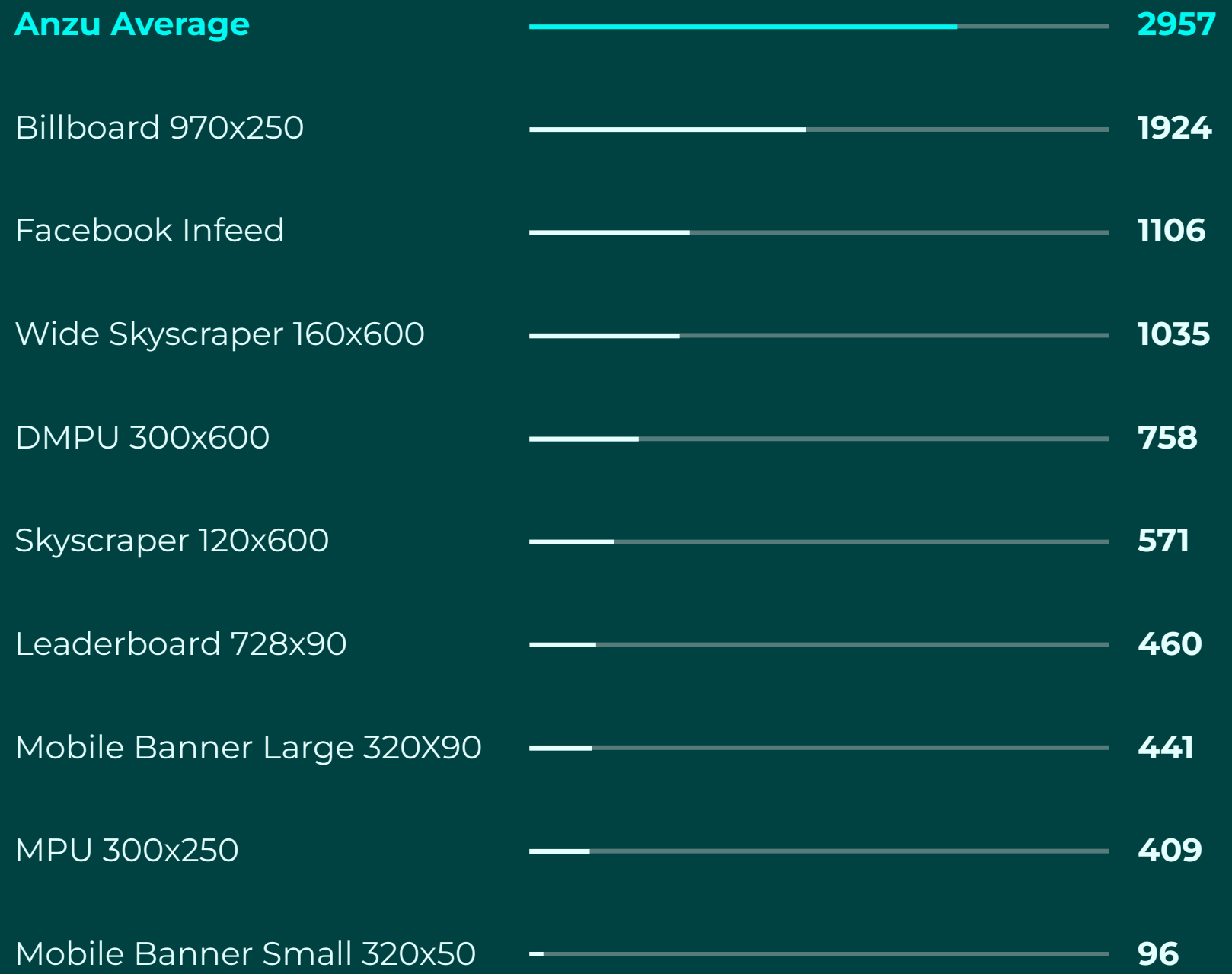
Gaming might seem fast-paced, but intrinsic in-game ads behave like **slow media**—they stay on screen longer and are placed close to the action, making them **hard to ignore**.

Players are also highly engaged when playing, which means they **naturally notice the ads**. This results in **much stronger attention levels** than most other digital formats.

What’s The Opportunity?

In-game ads aren’t skipped or scrolled past, **they’re seen and remembered** offering advertisers a powerful way to drive impact in a clutter-free, high-engagement environment.

Attentive Seconds Per Thousand Impressions vs. Lumen Benchmarks



“These results make one thing clear: the level of attention in-game advertising commands is unrivalled in the digital space. And without attention, there can be no impact.

Measuring and comparing attention across channels, and linking it to campaign outcomes, enables brands to make smarter, data-led decisions about their media spend.

In today’s landscape, that’s never been more important.”

LUMEN Mike Follett
CEO

Brand Lift Benchmarks

These brand lift benchmarks demonstrate **how intrinsic in-game advertising influences brand perception and purchase intent**, helping advertisers understand potential outcomes.

▲ 4PT Unaided Brand Awareness	Percentage of the exposed audience that mentions the brand without any prompting.
▲ 3PT Aided Brand Awareness	Percentage of the exposed audience that recognizes the brand when presented with a list of options.
▲ 20PT Advertising Recall	Percentage of the exposed audience that remembers seeing advertising from the brand .
▲ 9PT Brand Favorability	Percentage of the exposed audience that expresses positive or negative sentiment toward the brand .
▲ 8PT Purchase Intent	Percentage of the exposed audience that indicates they are likely to buy from the brand in the future .
▲ 4PT Recommendation Intent	Percentage of the exposed audience that indicates they would recommend the brand to others .

“Gaming is one of the most overlooked brand-building channels today.

Anzu’s research, backed by Comscore’s State of Gaming 2024 report, shows nearly two-thirds of U.S. adults game across platforms — and almost 75% say in-game ads either improve or don’t disrupt their experience.

That’s not just scale — that’s a green light for brand lift.”

 **Steve Bagdasarian**
Comscore Chief Commercial Officer

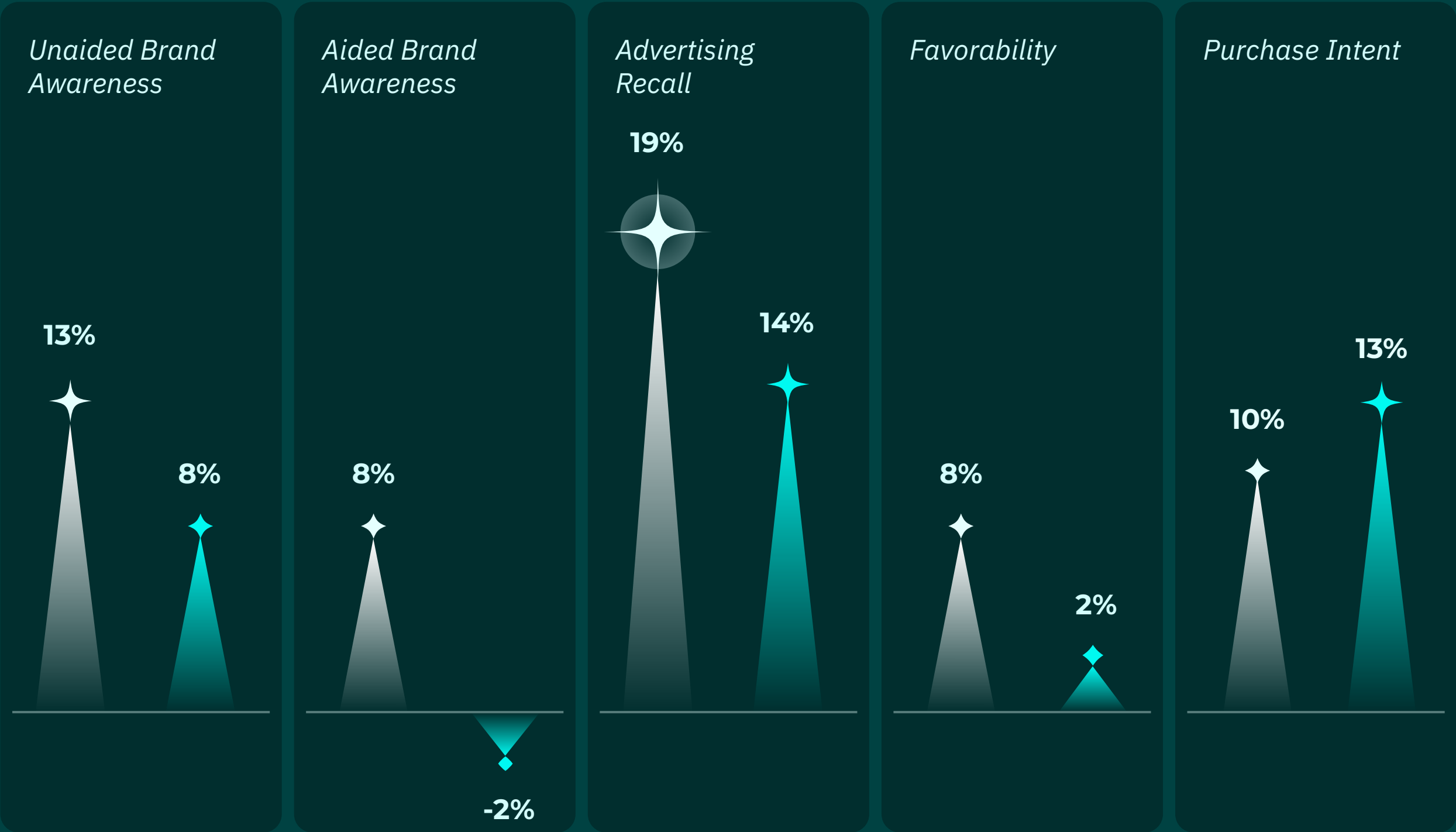
Brand Lift Study Strengths: Male vs. Female

Across the funnel, intrinsic in-game ads tend to drive stronger results among males, except when it comes to purchase intent, where **females show greater responsiveness and are more likely to move towards a purchase.**

However, it's important to highlight that current data is heavily skewed toward males, largely because fewer campaigns specifically target female audiences.

As more advertisers recognize gaming's potential to effectively reach female consumers, **we anticipate shifts in these trends and more balanced insights.**

Brand Lift Impact by Gender



Bottom-Funnel Impact

As a nascent channel, we don't yet have a large enough sample size to provide definitive benchmarks for bottom-of-funnel conversion metrics. However, based on the studies we've conducted, we can offer initial guidance on the expected impact.

View through conversions

On average, our studies show that intrinsic in-game ads **drive conversions at 21% below an advertiser's CPA goals**, making them a cost-effective performance channel.

21%

Below CPA Goals

Footfall attribution

Across the studies we've conducted, intrinsic in-game ads achieved an **average conversion rate of 6% from impression to in-store visit**.

6%

Conversion Rate

“

As advertising measurement advances, in-game advertising is proving its impact at both the top and bottom of the funnel.

With an average 20-point lift in ad recall, conversions 21% below CPA goals, and a 6% conversion rate from impression to in-store visit, brands can now track real business outcomes from their in-game campaigns.”



Paul Rossetti
CRO

claritas
theTradeDesk
KOCHAVA★
/LiveRamp

SEMCASTING

Closing Remarks



What now?

With this report shining a light on key trends in the intrinsic in-game advertising space, **what should advertisers be doing now to fully capitalize on the opportunity?**

Advertisers

Adjust Media Buying To Gamer Behaviour

Traditional seasonal media buying habits from channels like TV and CTV don't fit gaming behavior as player engagement remains steady throughout the year. **Advertisers have an all year round media plan taking advantage of different peaks in different genres.**

Explore Big Screen Gaming Opportunities

In-game advertising is no longer just about mobile devices. PC and console offers huge impact and engagement alongside mobile's scale and diverse audience. **Advertiser's should mix big screen into plans when they can to reach their audience at scale, alongside mobile.**

Measure In-Game Alongside Other Media

Historically, premium gaming environments have offered limited measurement capabilities. However, as technology has evolved, advertisers now have the tools to measure in-game media just like any other channel, **enabling true apples-to-apples comparisons across the media mix.**

“

With the promise of AI finally coming to fruition, we are in the midst of an information revolution and our ability to target audiences with data is unprecedented.

Reach and scale have become table stakes. What will set brands apart will be their ability to connect with audiences through storytelling, which is central to gaming.

As programmatic technology improves and more successful case studies emerge, we'll see increased adoption in the coming years.

Now is the time to get a head-start on your competitors. Now is the time to invest in gaming”

iab.

Zoe Soon
VP Experience Centre



What now?

Now that we better understand when and how advertisers can most effectively connect with players, **what can game developers do to maximise revenue and keep their worlds attractive to brands?**

Game Developers

★ Optimize Your Q4 Player Base

Premium CPMs land in Q4, so game developers need to explore opportunities like Thanksgiving and Holiday Season in-game events to **boost player engagement during these periods to drive outsized returns.**

★ US & European Player Growth

Players in the US and Europe command the highest CPMs and are among the most expensive audiences to acquire. However, any efforts to grow your player base in these regions will **directly contribute to increased revenue from your ad placements.**

★ Tie In-Game To Real World Events

In genres like sports and racing advertisers are extending sponsorships in-game around key season moments. Any in-game events connected to these **sporting moments can boost player engagement and generate outsized revenue returns.**

“

Intrinsic in-game ads aren't just a new monetization stream—they're a signal that games have become a core media format where culture, commerce, and community intersect.

For game developers, the opportunity goes well beyond selling ad space; it is to design playable environments where brand presence enhances the player experience and builds new types of audience relationships.”

ALDORA

Joost van Dreunen
CEO





GET STARTED TODAY!

anzu.io | marketing@anzu.io

