

# Aligning with Rituals: The Contextual Foundation of Audio



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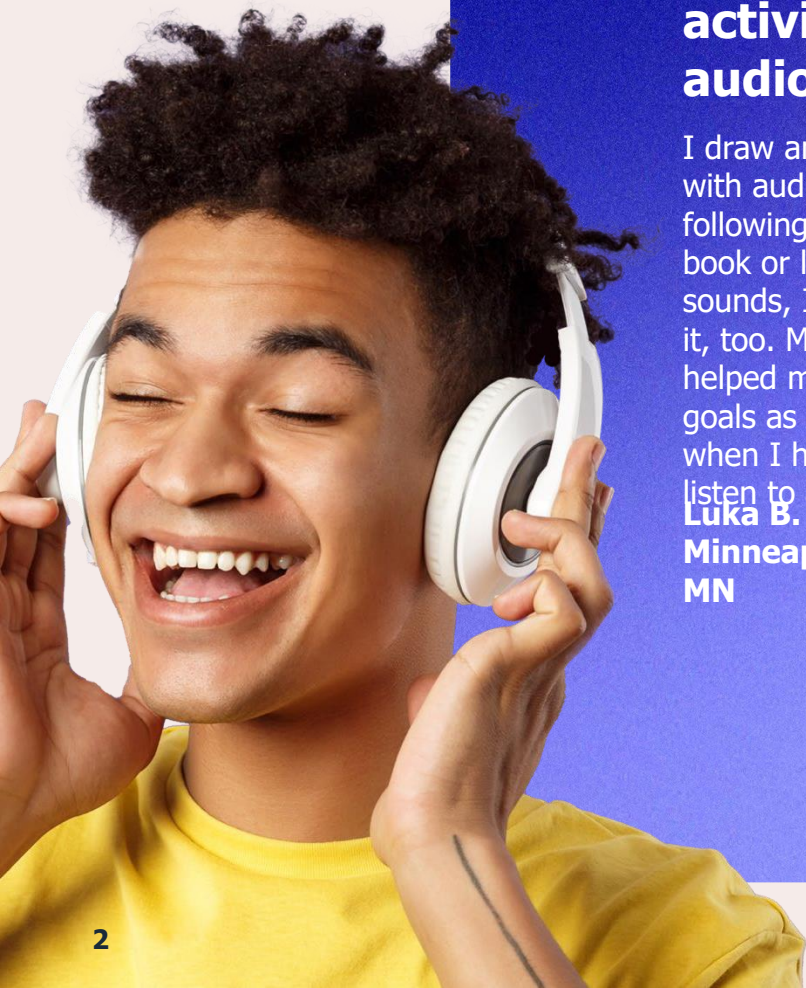
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# Aligning with Rituals

The contextual foundation for audio



# Audio is a daily **Ritual** at the heart of our day

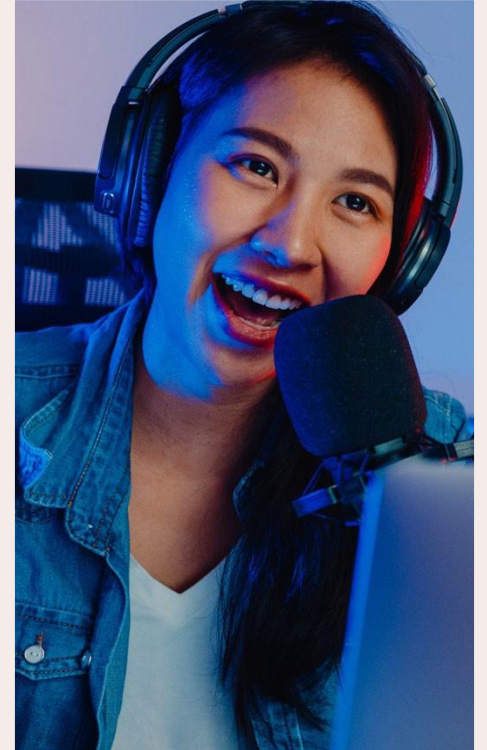
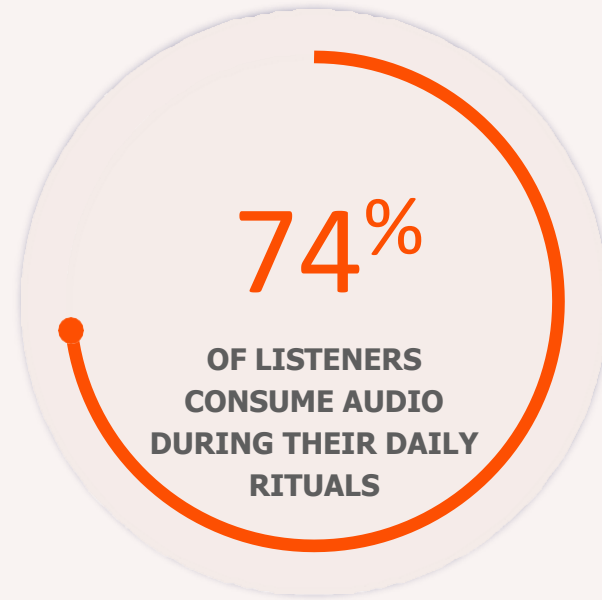


“

**I plan many activities around audio content.**

I draw and paint to it, I read with audio content whether it's following along to an audio book or listening to calm nature sounds, I walk and exercise to it, too. Music and podcasts have helped me stick to my walking goals as the time flies faster when I have something to listen to and think about.”

**Luka B. 30**  
**Minneapolis, MN**



**40%**



**OF LISTENERS PLAN THEIR DAY/ACTIVITIES AROUND AUDIO CONTENT**

With the richness of audio experiences, should brands strive for contextual alignment?

**If so, how?**



# What is Contextual Alignment?

## GENRE BASED

Aligning with audio content genre that is contextually relevant to the brand

**Example:** Serving an ad for a new credit card in a financial podcast

## RITUAL BASED

Aligning with audio ritual/behavior that is contextually relevant to the brand

**Example:** Serving an ad for athleisure while working out



# How We Did It

## WHAT

Controlled testing to quantify the impact of genre and ritual-based contextual alignment.

## HOW

Recruited weekly audio listeners from a representative online panel. Participants were then randomized to exposed or control groups.

Listeners selected content to listen to for ~ 30 mins. Listeners then answered brand metric questions to determine ad effectiveness.

SAMPLE SIZE

1,920

## TEST CELLS

### GENRE BASED



No alignment

Not aligning with content that's contextually relevant to the brand

VS



Genre alignment

Aligning with content that is contextually relevant to the brand

### RITUAL BASED



No alignment

Not aligning with a ritual that is contextually relevant to the brand

VS



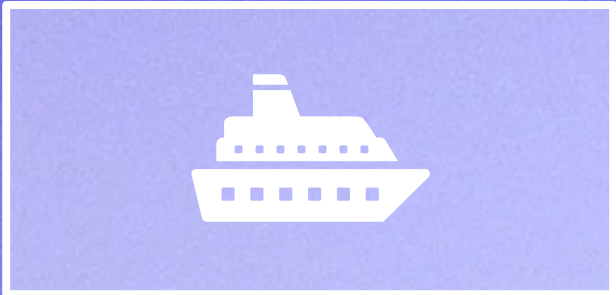
Ritual alignment

Aligning contextually with the ritual the participant is performing while listening

*Each test group had a unique control group that was exposed to a control ad (public service announcement)*

# What we tested

3 VERTICALS



WIDE RANGE OF AUDIO

 Podcast	Beauty & Fashion	Health & Wellness	Travel/Adventure
	Entertainment	Society & Culture	Music
 Broadcast	Sports	News	Music

Ads in  
context

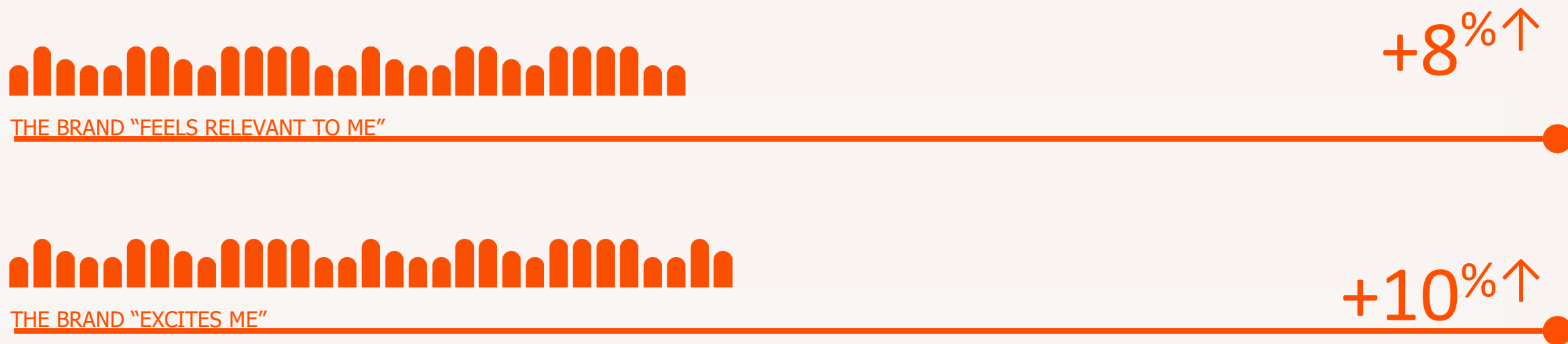
**EXCITE**

and create  
brand  
relevance

When compared to ads that have no alignment, contextually-placed ads perform better

### How does contextual (genre or ritual) impact brand opinions?

In-Market For Product | Deltas (Exposed – Control)



THE BRAND "FEELS RELEVANT TO ME"

THE BRAND "EXCITES ME"



# Contextual alignment matters for metrics that matter most

## How does contextual impact brand KPIs?

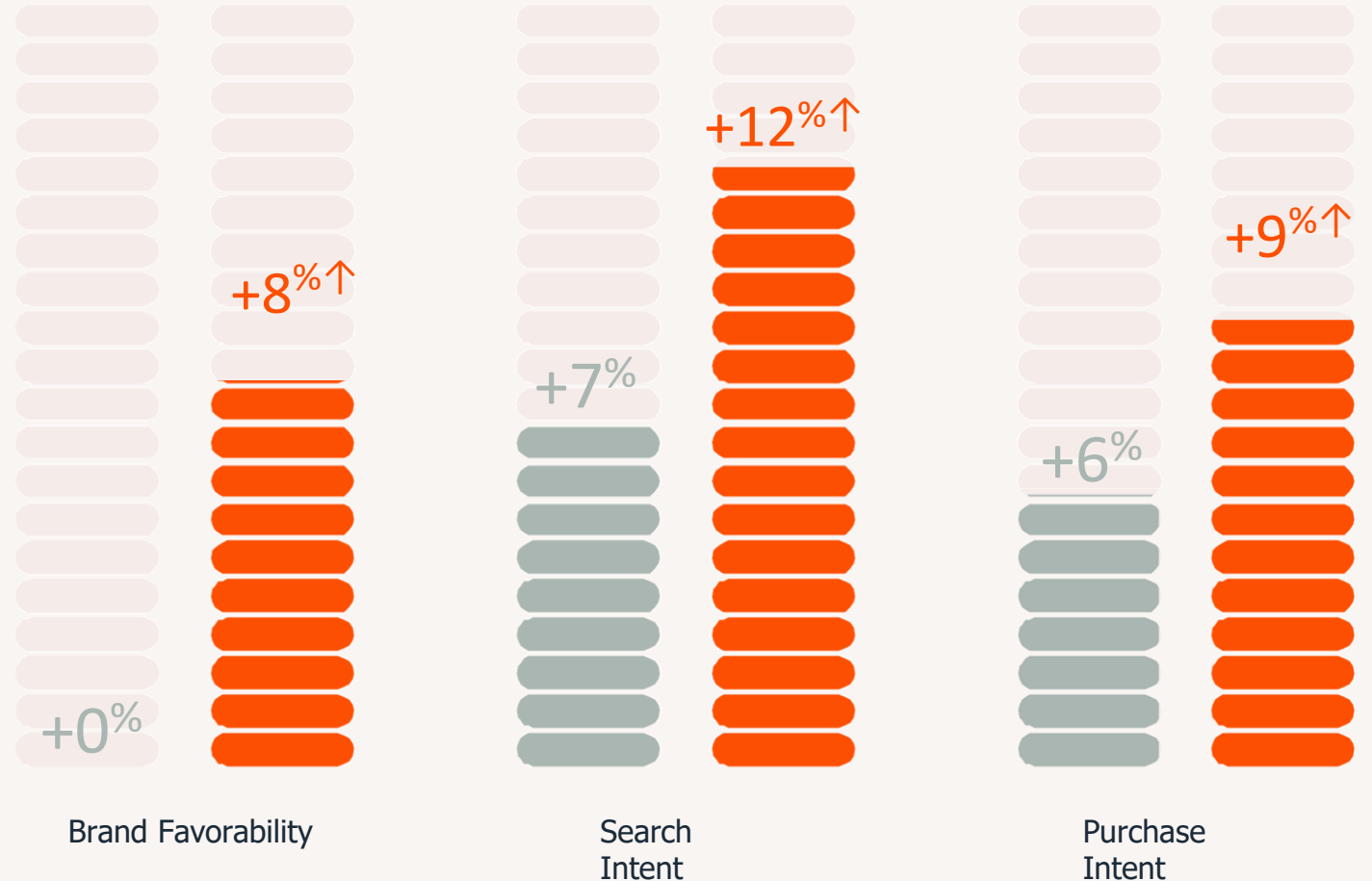
In-Market For Product  
Delta (Exposed – Control)



No alignment



Contextual alignment  
( Genre or Ritual )



In- Market:  
No Alignment Control N= 220; Exposed N= 222  
Contextual Alignment Control N= 210; Exposed N= 216  
↑ =statistically significant difference between groups at ≥90% confidence

Aligning with audio


**rituals** extend

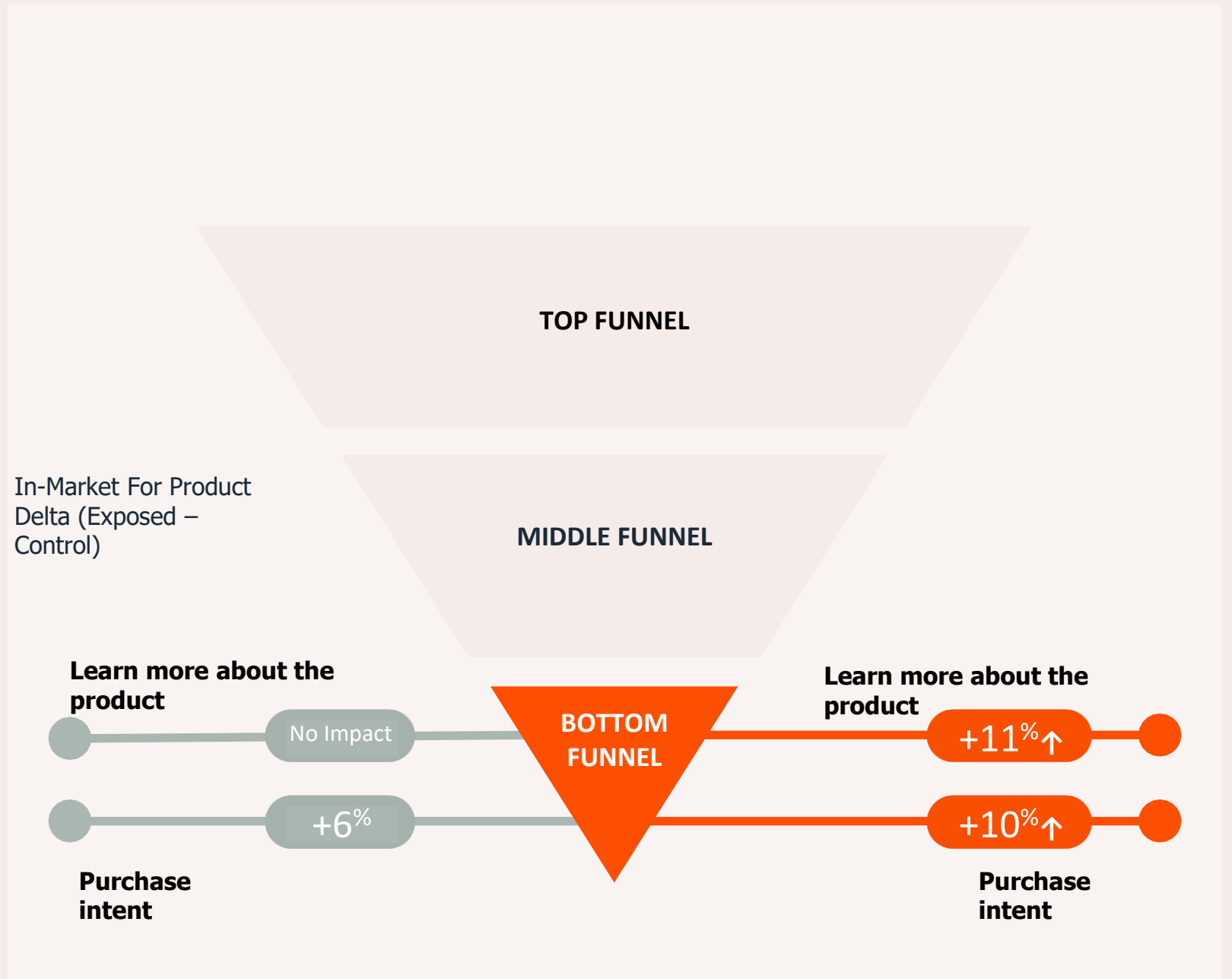
s beyond search  
to purchase

### How does Ritual alignment impact brand KPIs?

In-Market For Product  
Delta (Exposed – Control)

 No alignment

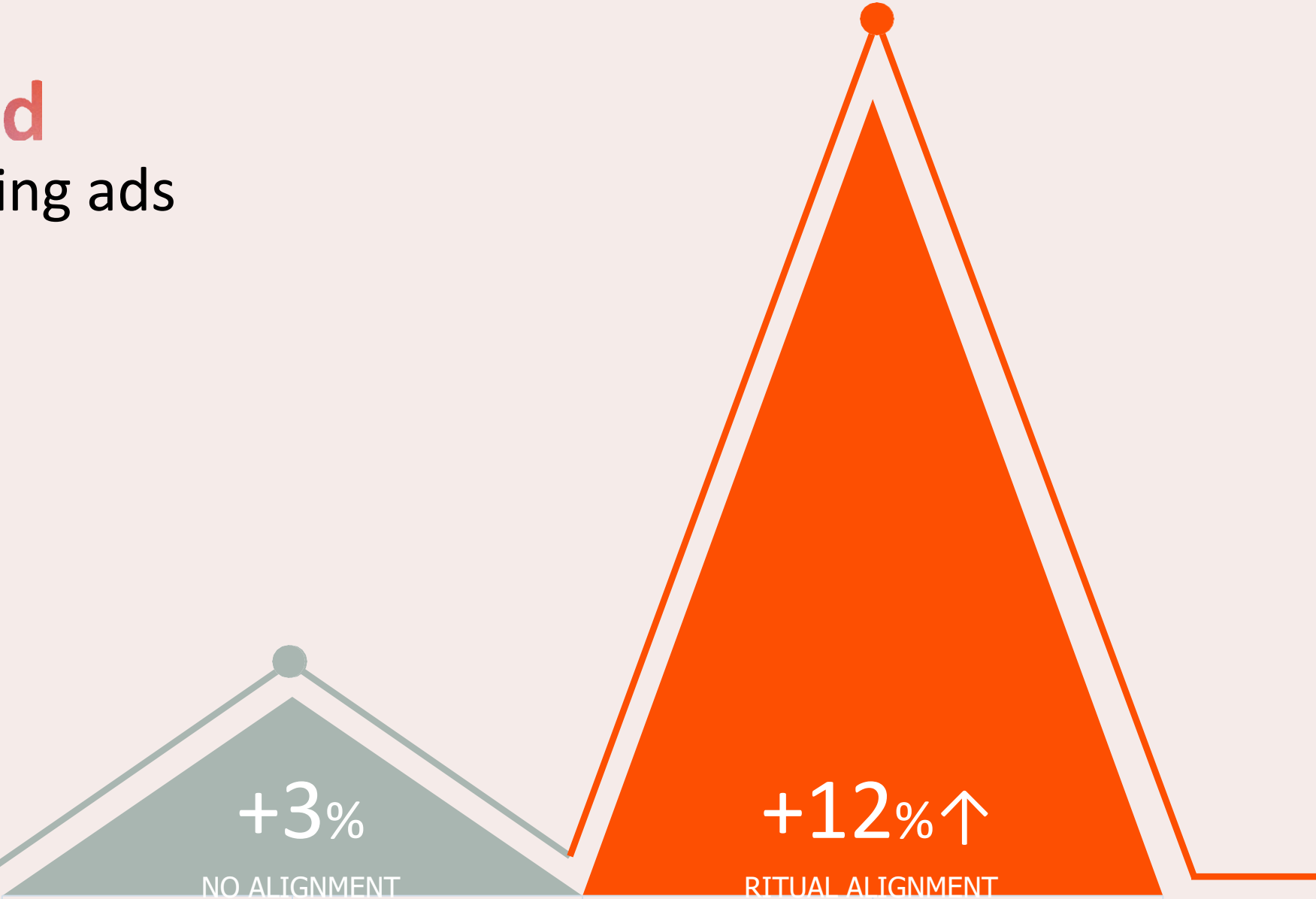
 Ritual alignment



Listeners feel **more connected** to brands when hearing ads during audio rituals

**How does Ritual alignment impact feelings of connection?**

In-Market For Product  
Delta (Exposed – Control)



“ FEEL CONNECTED TO BRAND ”

In- Market:  
No Alignment Control N=112; Exposed N= 114  
Ritual Alignment Control N= 104; Exposed N= 110  
↑ =statistically significant difference between groups at ≥90% confidence

# Listeners who felt energized or excited were more receptive to the ad

What impact does mood have in ad effectiveness?

Total Audience Exposed – Those who felt energized/excited vs. those who did not



The ad "was something I was open to at the time"



The ad "caught my attention"

# Implications

Drive bottom funnel with

## Contextual

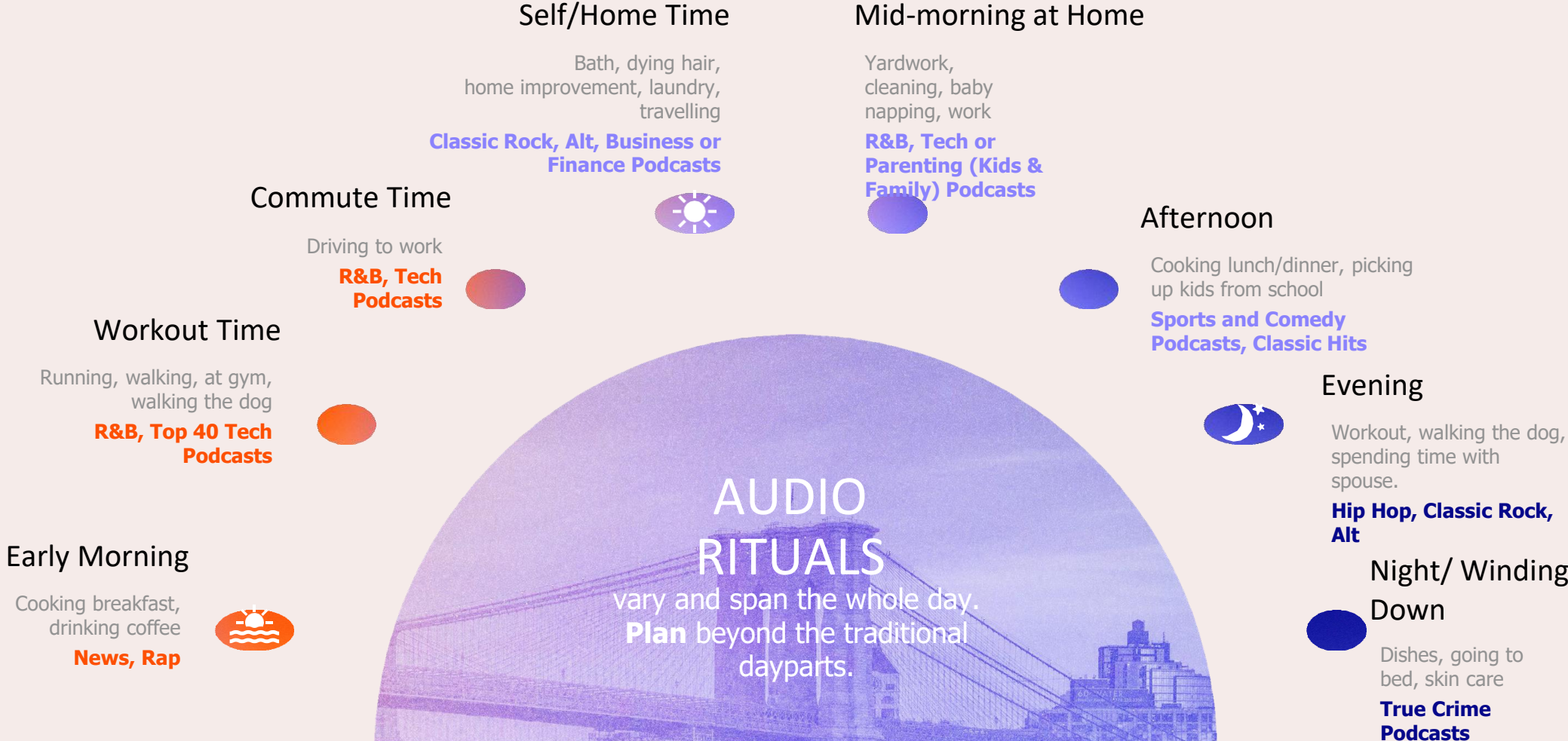
Ensure contextual targeting is a part of your digital audio planning to drive transactional next steps

Amplify with

## Rituals

Explore rituals to reach a highly engaged audience and amplify the effectiveness of your audio buy

# Plan beyond **dayparts** with rituals



So we took a piece  
of our own advice...



# The Rituals Campaign Took Off

Audio ritual creatives aired in an OTA campaign across four major markets - **Atlanta, Dallas, Houston, and Washington** - to increase brand awareness and drive downloads of the Audacy app.

## CREATIVE EXECUTION:

- Diverse VOs and music endemic to station formats
- Spanish-language audio recorded in regional dialects
- Local talent and shows used to connect the local and central brands

## PLANNING STRATEGY:

- Identified optimal formats based on audience rituals and demographics

CLICK PLAY TO LISTEN



KHMX/HOUSTON-  
DROP OFF  
SINGALONG



KRLD/DALLAS-  
BUSY/BASEBALL  
FAN



WVEE/ATLANTA-  
WORKOUT  
MOTIVATION

4 MARKETS

20 UNIQUE PROMOS

22 STATIONS

6 WEEKS OF MEDIA

(7/24 - 9/3)



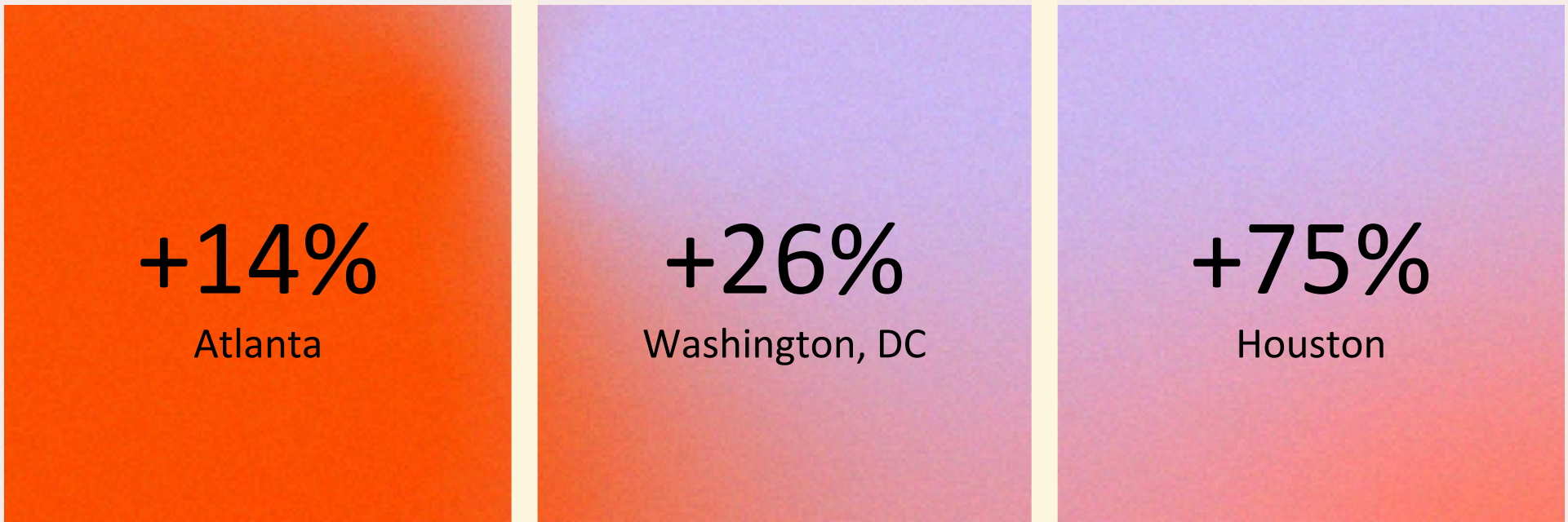
# And the campaign worked!

Engaging Audacy radio listeners based on their audio rituals increased Audacy app downloads.



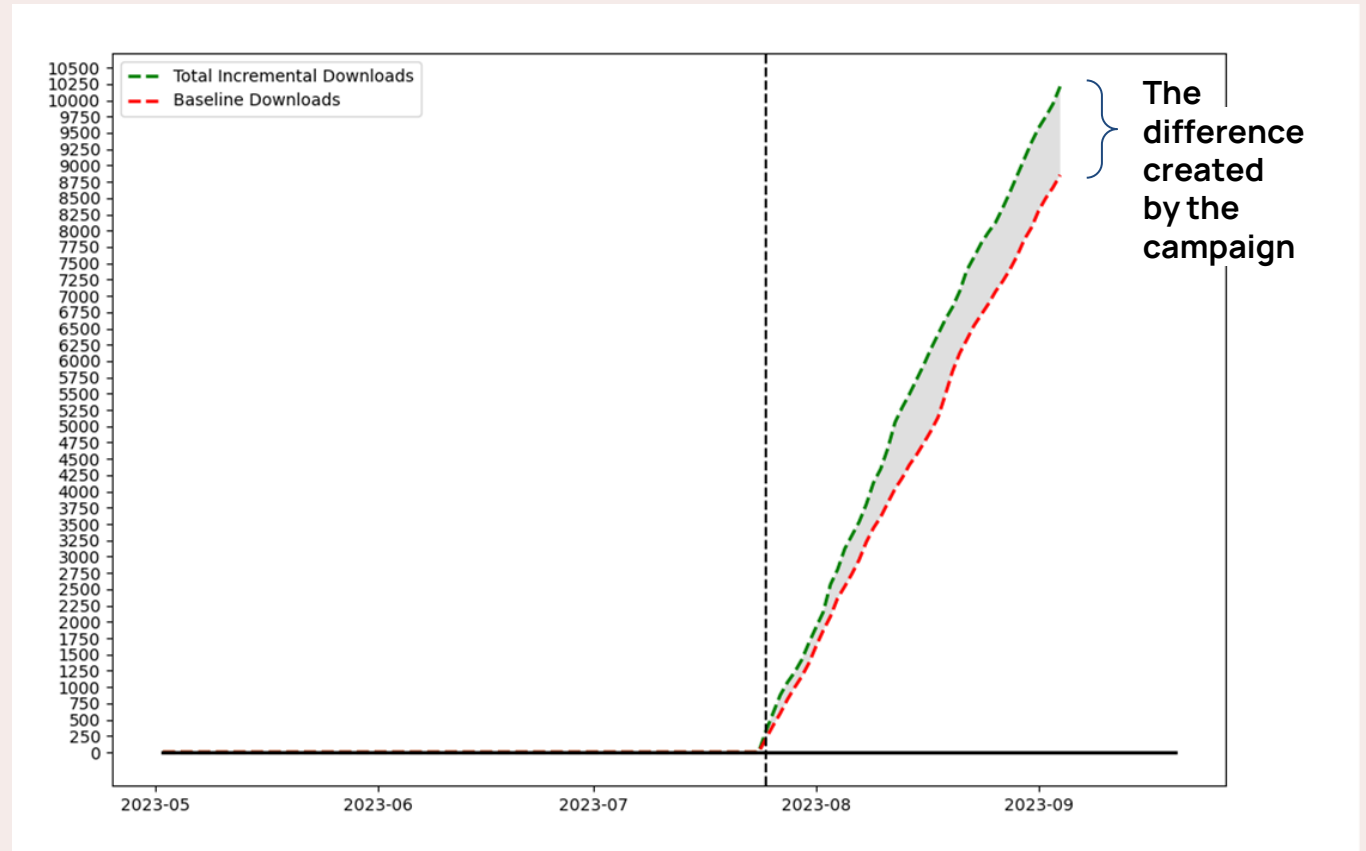
# Test markets enjoyed double-digit increases in app downloads compared to their baseline

*(% increase in app downloads)*



# Increases in app downloads are directly attributable to the rituals radio campaign

Our model showed that across all markets, the Rituals campaign positively impacted App downloads.



Note: The model shows the causal relationship between the campaign and app downloads with 94% certainty.

Source: Redbird, Audacy, Audio Rituals Campaign Modeling, 2023



# The campaign particularly influenced heavy radio listeners, parents, P35-54 and cross-platform listeners

Segment	Awareness Lift	Favorability Lift	Intent Lift
7+ Hour Radio Listener	No Lift	+11 points	+14 points ▲
I drive to work at least 3 days a week	+3 points	+6 points	+10 points ▲
I have school age children	+7 points	+3 points	+8 points
Persons 18-34	+5 points	No Lift	+1 points
Persons 35-54	+7 points	+12 points ▲	+11 points ▲
Local radio streamers*	No Lift	+4 points	+9 points

Source: Veritonic, Audio Rituals Campaign Effectiveness Study, 2023

Pixel-based exposure methodology ▲ = 90% Confidence  
 7+ Hour Radio Listener Weekly; Exposed n=87, Control n=71  
 I drive to work at least 3 days a week: Exposed n=121, Control n=127  
 I have school age children: Exposed n=56, Control n=63  
 Persons 18-34: Exposed n=52, Control n=52  
 Persons 35-54: Exposed n=98, Control n=96

Notes: 1-Above numbers do NOT include Audacy streamers.2- Points refer to percentage point lifts

