



AN ANISHA DOGRA PLAYBOOK • EDITION 01 • SEPTEMBER 2026
AD CREATIVE • INSTAGRAM AND FACEBOOK

Meta Ad *Creative Book*

2026 **Styles that win**

The ad styles that win on Instagram and Facebook in 2026,
taken apart: 25 real formats, two carousels card by card,
seven award winners and briefs you can reuse.

25 real ad formats

7 award winners

2 carousels taken apart

10 prompts

18 pages

WHERE YOUR ADS RUN

 Instagram

 Facebook

 Threads

 Messenger

*“Stop the scroll first.
Sell second.”*

THE IDEA BEHIND EVERY PAGE OF THIS BOOK

INSIDE THIS GUIDE

PAGE NUMBERS ON THE RIGHT

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WRITTEN BY
Anisha Dogra



RUNS WITH
Claude

NEW TO AD CREATIVE? **Start on page 3 →**

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BEFORE YOU BEGIN

Start *here*

Three ways to read this book, what to have ready, and how every format page is laid out.

YOU WILL BE
ABLE TO

pick your starting page and gather the material every good ad is made from.

THREE WAYS IN

PICK THE ONE THAT FITS YOU

ROUTE A

New to ad creative

Read pages 3 to 5, then pick a job and a format on pages 6 to 8.

ROUTE B

Already running ads

Check sizes on page 4 and rules on page 12, then test with page 13.

ROUTE C

Here for ideas

Go to the format library on page 6 and the carousels on page 9.

HAVE THESE READY

THE RAW MATERIAL OF EVERY AD

- ☐ **Real product photos**, sharp and well lit, one per product
- ☐ **Your logo files**, the official ones, in colour and in white
- ☐ **Three facts you can prove**: numbers, awards, delivery, guarantees

- ☐ **Your last 30 days of ad results**, exported by ad
- ☐ **Words your customers use**: reviews, comments, messages
- ☐ **One offer** you can stand behind, with its end date

HOW EVERY FORMAT PAGE WORKS

SAME ORDER, EVERY TIME

STEP 1

The job

What the ad has to do in the feed.

STEP 2

The real ad

Client work, made and delivered.

STEP 3

Use it when

The goal it serves best.

STEP 4

Watch out

The rule it can break.

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Every example ad in this book is real client work, made for PLB Snacks and shown with the client's permission. Platform facts come from Meta's own pages; award results come from the trade press.

01

PART ONE · HOW THE SYSTEM WORKS

What wins *attention* in 2026

Meta's system now does much of the targeting. Your creative decides who it finds, so different ideas reach different people.

YOU WILL BE
ABLE TO

explain how Meta picks which ad to show, and why ten different ideas beat ten versions of one.

IN PLAIN WORDS

HOW AN AD GETS CHOSEN

STEP 1 · RETRIEVAL

Which ads could fit?

Andromeda, since Dec 2024

Meta's retrieval system narrows millions of ads to a few thousand candidates for each person. Distinct ideas get more chances.



STEP 2 · AUCTION

Which one wins?

Bid, likely action, quality

Meta's auction weighs your bid, how likely this person is to act, and the ad's quality.



STEP 3 · DELIVERY

Where it shows

Feed, Reels or Stories

The ad appears in a placement. An ad made for that placement looks native there.

WHAT META SAYS

ITS OWN PAGES, 2024 TO 2025

META'S POINT

IN ITS OWN PAGES

Vary the idea

Diversify theme, message and look for different groups of people (Meta for Business, 22 Apr 2025)

Volume can scale

One advertiser went from 3–4 new creatives a week to almost 50 (a Meta case study, same article)

Near-copies add little

Retrieval narrows to a few thousand candidates, so only distinct creatives go forward (Meta for Business, 16 Dec 2025)

There is a ceiling

An ad set can hold up to 50 ads (Meta Business Help)

47%

of sales contribution came from the creative

Nielsen, 2017, ~500 FMCG campaigns

34.5%

lower cost per result: 9:16 Reels ads with sound, against image ads

Meta, 15 split tests, 2022–23

50

ads allowed in one ad set

Meta Business Help

A VARIATION

The same idea with a new colour, headline or crop. Meta's system can treat it as the same ad, so it reaches the same people.

A NEW CONCEPT

A new person, problem, moment or format. It can find a different group of people, which is what retrieval rewards.

3s

The first seconds

Meta's older video guidance, from the Feed era, found that most of a video's value arrives in its first seconds. No method was published, so use it as direction: show the product and the point early.

Sources · Meta Engineering: Andromeda (2 Dec 2024) · Meta for Business: The creative advantage (22 Apr 2025); Demystifying creative diversification (16 Dec 2025) · Meta Business Help: ad limits · Nielsen (NCSolutions), Oct 2017 · Meta for Business: Reels ads (May 2022 to Apr 2023). Meta and Nielsen sell ads and measurement.

02

PART ONE · GET THE SHAPE RIGHT

Specs and *safe zones*

Make every ad in the shape of its placement, and keep words where the app's buttons cannot cover them.

YOU WILL BE
ABLE TO**set the right size for each placement and keep text and logos inside the area people can see.**

THE SIZES

META ADS GUIDE · READ 30 SEP 2026

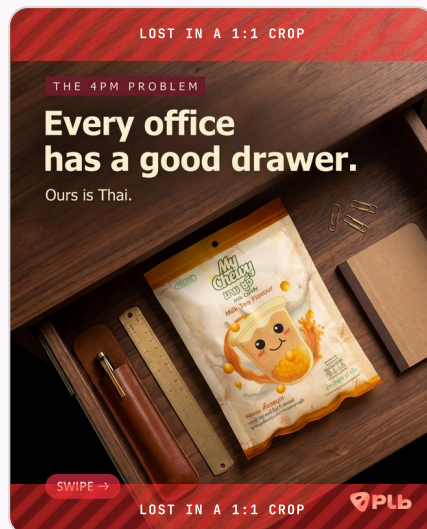
PLACEMENT	SHAPE	SIZE	KNOW THIS
Feed image (Facebook, Instagram)	4:5	1440 × 1800	JPG or PNG, up to 30 MB. Primary text 50–150 characters, headline 27
Stories and Reels image	9:16	1440 × 2560	Keep the top 14%, bottom 35% and 6% of each side clear
Reels video	9:16	1440 × 2560	0 seconds to 15 minutes. Sound strongly recommended, captions recommended
Carousel (Instagram Feed)	4:5, or 1:1 with video	at least 1080 × 1080	2 to 10 cards; 4:5 only when every card is an image

SEE IT

THE 9:16 SAFE ZONE · THE 1:1 CROP



The 9:16 safe zone. On 1440 × 2560: about 358 px clear at the top, 896 at the bottom, 86 each side.



A real 4:5 card, 1:1 crop in red. Of 205 ads built at 4:5 for this brand, 199 lost content at the top and 184 at the bottom.

Build a square when it matters
Placements that show square ads centre-crop a 4:5 image. What goes first is the eyebrow line and the logo at the top, the offer and web address at the bottom. Keep key content in the middle square, or make a 1:1 version with the type reflowed.

Text on images
Meta dropped its 20% text rule in September 2020, as the trade press reported. Heavy text is allowed; keep it readable on a phone held at arm's length.

One ratio per carousel
All cards in one carousel share a ratio: 4:5 when every card is an image, 1:1 as soon as one card is a video.

Sources · Meta Ads Guide: Facebook Feed image; Instagram Reels video; Instagram Feed carousel (read 30 Sep 2026) · Adweek and Social Media Today, Sep 2020 · 1:1 crop measured on a 205-ad client delivery, Aug 2026.

03

PART ONE · LEARN FROM THE BEST

Award winners, *taken apart*

Seven Grand Prix winners from Cannes Lions 2024 to 2026, each reduced to the one idea a smaller brand can use.

YOU WILL BE
ABLE TO**take the principle behind each winner into your next brief, without copying the ad.**

2024 · GRAND PRIX · SOCIAL AND INFLUENCER

CeraVe · Michael CeraVe

Ogilvy PR, New York

Creators spread a playful rumour that the actor Michael Cera had created CeraVe. The brand's Super Bowl ad settled it: dermatologists did.

Take this: let people wonder aloud, then answer with your product's real story.

2024 · GRAND PRIX · CREATIVE EFFECTIVENESS

Heinz · It Has To Be Heinz

Rethink, Toronto

Five years of work on one line: people drawing Heinz when asked to draw ketchup, the right pouring angle, and restaurants refilling Heinz bottles with other ketchup.

Take this: one line, many small executions, kept for years.

2025 · GRAND PRIX · SOCIAL AND CREATOR

Vaseline · Vaseline Verified

Ogilvy Singapore

Vaseline lab-tested viral creator hacks that used its jelly. Hacks that worked earned a "Vaseline Verified" badge; unsafe ones were called out.

Take this: join what customers already say about you, and add proof.

2025 · GRAND PRIX · CREATIVE EFFECTIVENESS

Apple · Shot on iPhone

TBWA\Media Arts Lab

Since 2015, customers' own iPhone photos have been the ads, on billboards, in print and online.

Take this: make what customers create with your product the demo.

2025 · GRAND PRIX · PR

Indian Railways · Lucky Yatra

FCB India

Every paid train ticket became a lucky-draw entry, with daily and weekly cash prizes and no app or extra step, to cut ticketless travel.

Take this: reward the behaviour you want, and ask for no extra effort.

2026 · GRAND PRIX · SOCIAL AND CREATOR

Heineken · Could Have Been a Heineken

LePub, Milan and São Paulo

Forward a WhatsApp voice note of three minutes or more to a Heineken bot and get a free-beer offer to say it in person instead.

Take this: build on a small, shared annoyance, inside the app where it happens.

2026 · GRAND PRIX · CREATIVE EFFECTIVENESS

AXA · Three Words

Publicis Conseil, Paris

AXA added three words, "and domestic violence", to the relocation clause of its insurance policies, so survivors can leave a housing contract without penalty.

Take this: change the product first, then advertise the change.

THE PATTERN

What the seven share

Each can be told in one sentence. Each rests on a real truth about the product or the people who buy it. Each gives people something to do, say or share. None depends on a clever layout.

USE A WINNER IN YOUR BRIEF

THREE STEPS, NOT A COPY

1

Name the principle

Write the winner's idea as one rule, like the "Take this" lines above. The rule is what you borrow, never the ad.

2

Find your own version

Ask what the rule looks like for your product and budget. A small brand's version is often one post, not a campaign.

3

Test it as a concept

Brief it with P01, make it two ways, and judge it against your other concepts on page 13.

Sources · Ad Age, Contagious, WARC, Adweek, Campaign, Campaign Brief Asia and Social Samosa reports on the Cannes Lions 2024, 2025 and 2026 winners. Ideas are described in our own words; results are the entrants' claims.

04

PART TWO • THE FORMAT LIBRARY

The format *library*

Twenty-five real ad formats, sorted by the job each one does. Pick the job first, then the format.

YOU WILL BE
ABLE TO

choose a format for any goal, and know the one rule each format can break.

HOW TO READ THESE PAGES

ALL EXAMPLES: CLIENT WORK FOR PLB SNACKS • META FEED, 4:5

CLIENT WORK • PLB SNACKS



BREAKING NEWS • META FEED, 4:5

JOB 1 OF 5

Stop the scroll

Break the pattern of the feed in the first half-second: an object, a headline or a crop that does not belong there.

USE IT WHEN

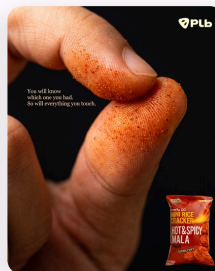
You launch something new, or every ad in your category looks the same.

WATCH OUT

News-style frames must still read as your ad. India lists ads disguised as news as a dark pattern.



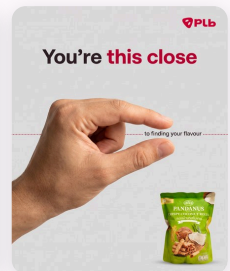
In case of emergency



Text on skin



The warning



You're this close

CLIENT WORK • PLB SNACKS

Same craving.
Different aisle.

US VERSUS THEM • META FEED, 4:5

JOB 2 OF 5

Show the difference

Put two things side by side. The eye compares without being asked, and your product wins the comparison.

USE IT WHEN

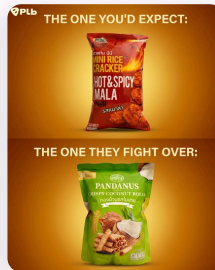
People believe all the options are the same, or they have never tried your kind of product.

WATCH OUT

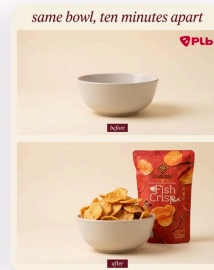
Compare with "the usual", not a named rival, unless you can prove the claim. Health before-and-after has extra rules.



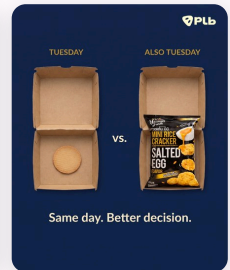
Then and now



Us versus us



Before and after



Same day, two choices

THE HALF-SECOND TEST

RUN IT ON YOUR PHONE BEFORE ANY AD GOES LIVE

TEST 1

Squint

Blur your eyes at the ad at arm's length. The headline and the product should be the two things you still see.

TEST 2

Cover the logo

Hide it with a thumb. If nobody could name the brand from the colours, product and voice, the ad sells the category, not you.

TEST 3

Mute it

For video, watch with the sound off. If the story is lost, add captions or on-screen words inside the safe area.

CLIENT WORK • PLB SNACKS



nothing

it's very loud



fine. it's this.

TEXT MESSAGE • META FEED, 4:5

JOB 3 OF 5

Talk like a person

Look like something a friend would send: a message, a short video, a list. It feels less like an ad, so people read it.

USE IT WHEN

Your audience scrolls past polished ads, or your product is best explained in a sentence.

WATCH OUT

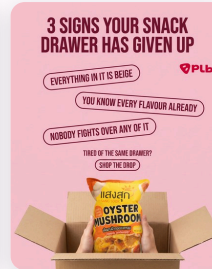
No drawn buttons, play icons or notification badges; Meta rejects them. Never pose as a real customer.



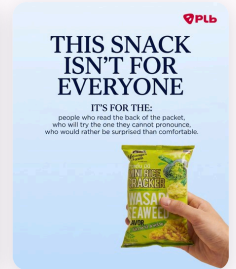
Green-screen reaction



Podcast still



Three signs



Not for everyone

CLIENT WORK • PLB SNACKS



DON'T BUY THIS ONE.



Unless you intend to finish it before anyone else gets home.

✔ Salted egg ✔ Crispy salmon skin ✔ Imported from Thailand

DON'T BUY THIS • META FEED, 4:5

JOB 4 OF 5

Make them smile

A joke earns attention and a share. Reverse psychology, mock warnings and parody all work when the product is fun.

USE IT WHEN

The product is a treat or a low-risk buy, and you want reach and shares as well as sales.

WATCH OUT

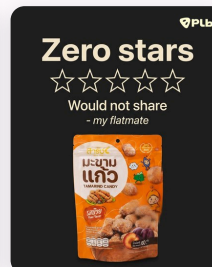
Keep parody obvious. Mock side effects must never read as real health effects, or mock reviews as real ones.



Known side effects



We're sorry



Zero stars



The meme

ANATOMY OF A STATIC

CLIENT WORK • PLB SNACKS • DON'T BUY THIS



- Four words, set huge**
The headline reads at thumbnail size and says the opposite of an ad.
- The product at hero size**
The real pack, facing the camera, large enough to read.
- The twist**
One line turns the warning into a compliment: finish it before anyone gets home.
- Three proof points**
Flavour, product and origin, each with a tick. Facts, not adjectives.
- The logo, in a clear corner**
Never on the pack or the headline, always the official file.



THE OFFER • META FEED, 4:5

JOB 5 OF 5

Give a reason to act

Tell people why this one and why now: an offer, a fact that settles a doubt, or plain logic they can follow.

USE IT WHEN

You retarget people who already know you, or a clear offer is ready.

WATCH OUT

Scarcity only while true and specific. Codes, prices and delivery must match the checkout.



Myth versus fact



To do, ta da



Venn diagram



Low stock

THE FIVE JOBS ACROSS THE FUNNEL

WHO THE AD IS SPEAKING TO

COLD • THEY DO NOT KNOW YOU

Stop the scroll, show the difference

Where new customers come from

Formats that interrupt and compare: breaking news, us versus them, then and now.



WARM • THEY HAVE SEEN YOU

Talk like a person, make them smile

Reasons to remember you

Messages, reactions and jokes that build familiarity before the ask.



HOT • THEY VISITED OR BOUGHT

Give a reason to act

Offers, facts and nudges

The offer, myth versus fact and honest scarcity, for people close to buying.

PICK A FORMAT BY GOAL

START FROM WHAT YOU NEED TO HAPPEN

YOUR GOAL	THE JOB	FORMATS TO TEST FIRST	JUDGE IT ON
Launch a product	Stop the scroll	Breaking news, In case of emergency, The warning	Thumb-stop rate, link CTR
Win people who use a rival	Show the difference	Us versus them, Then and now	Link CTR, cost per purchase
Reach people tired of ads	Talk like a person	Text message, Green-screen reaction	Hold rate, comments
Earn shares and affection	Make them smile	Don't buy this, Known side effects	Shares, saves
Convert warm audiences	Give a reason to act	The offer, Myth versus fact	Purchases, cost per result



Left out of this library on purpose

Star-rating cards, review collages and big-number headlines. They work only with real, current numbers and customers' permission, so never fill them with placeholder figures.



Made with AI images?

Check every word on the pack at full size. In one 100-ad batch checked for this brand, 49 of the 70 defects found were misprinted pack text.

Library • 25 of 42 formats built for PLB Snacks in Aug 2026. Formats with placeholder claims, drawn buttons or unverified pack text were left out. Rules: Meta Advertising Standards; CCPA Guidelines for Prevention and Regulation of Dark Patterns, 2023.

05

PART TWO · CAROUSELS

Carousels that get *swiped*

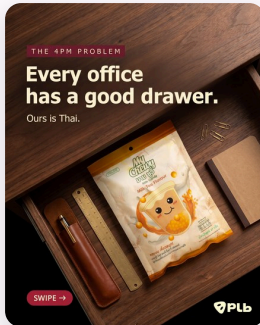
A carousel is one story told in five cards. Every card has to earn the next swipe.

YOU WILL BE
ABLE TO

plan a carousel as one story, and write each card so the next one feels necessary.

ONE STORY IN FIVE CARDS

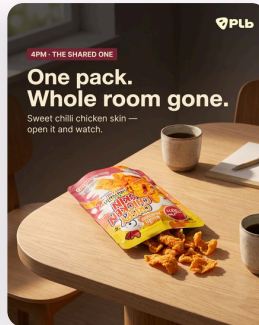
CLIENT WORK · PLB SNACKS · A DAY IN THE OFFICE



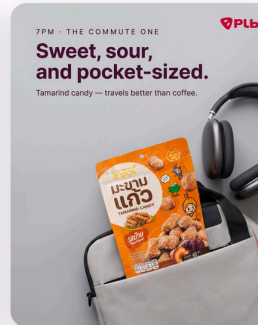
- 1 The hook**
A problem every office knows, and its answer: ours is Thai. A swipe cue.



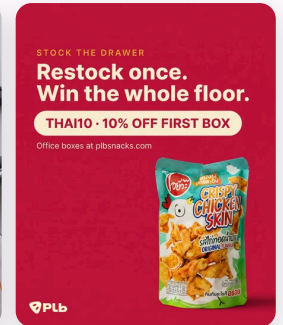
- 2 10 am**
The first moment of the day: one pack, one line on how it sounds.



- 3 4 pm**
The shared moment raises the stakes: one pack, the whole room.



- 4 7 pm**
The commute closes the day with a pocket-sized pack.



- 5 The payoff**
Restock once, win the floor: the code, the offer, where to buy.

THE RULES THIS STORY FOLLOWS

APPLY THEM TO ANY CAROUSEL

1 Card 1 sells the swipe

A promise or a question, plus a visible swipe cue. It also has to work alone, because many people see only card 1.

2 Each card sets up the next

Here the clock moves forward, so the reader wants the next hour. If two cards could swap places, the story is too loose.

3 One product per card

One pack and one line about how it feels or when it fits. Specific beats generic: “crisp, not crunchy-loud”.

4 The last card closes

Pay off the promise from card 1, then give one action: a code, a link or a question to answer in the comments.

ANATOMY OF CARD 1

THE CARD MOST PEOPLE SEE



1 The eyebrow

Names the moment: “the 4 pm problem”. It tells the reader where the story starts.

2 A line everyone recognises

“Every office has a good drawer.” Then the short answer: ours is Thai.

3 One product, in its setting

A real pack in a real drawer, lit to match the story.

4 The swipe cue

A small arrow tells the reader there is more to see.

5 The logo, small

The same corner on every card, so the set looks like one brand.

A SECOND SPINE

CLIENT WORK • PLB SNACKS • A TEXTURE FIELD GUIDE

A TEXTURE FIELD GUIDE

What kind of crunch are you?

Shatter, snap, curl or chew.
There is a pack for each.



SWIPE →

1 The question
What kind of crunch are you? Four textures promised.

TEXTURE 01 • SHATTER

The sea, reduced to one crack.

Cuttlefish cracker — loud, light, gone.



2 Shatter
Cuttlefish cracker: loud, light, gone.

TEXTURE 02 • SNAP

Clean break. No negotiation.

Thai jasmine rice, baked to a snap.



3 Snap
Jasmine rice, baked to a snap.

TEXTURE 03 • CURL

Sticky, sweet, and gone.

Sweet chilli chicken skin — it curls as it crisps.



4 Curl
Sweet chilli chicken skin: it curls as it crisps.

TEXTURE 04 • CHEW

Four textures. One box.

THAI10 • 10% OFF FIRST BOX

Comment your texture @plbsnacks



5 Chew, then close
Four textures, one box, a code, and a question to answer.

CAROUSEL SPINES YOU CAN REUSE

PICK ONE BEFORE YOU WRITE A WORD

SPINE	CARD 1	CARDS 2 TO 4	CARD 5
A day in the life	The problem, at a time of day	Three moments, in order	The fix, then the offer
Field guide	Which one are you?	One type per card	All of them in one box
Ranking	We ranked them	From mild to wild	The top pick, then the offer
Myth list	Three things people believe	One myth and its truth per card	What to do instead
Build a box	Build your own	Pick one, pick two, pick three	Your box and the code

GENERIC LINES AND THE LINES ON THE CARDS

SPECIFIC WORDS EARN THE SWIPE

A GENERIC LINE	THE LINE ON THE CARD	WHY IT WORKS
"Delicious and crunchy."	"Cuttlefish cracker: loud, light, gone."	Names the product and the sound it makes
"Perfect for the office."	"Snacks that don't interrupt the call."	A real moment from the reader's day
"Made for sharing."	"One pack. Whole room gone."	Shows the sharing instead of saying it
"Sweet and tasty."	"Sticky, sweet, and gone."	Texture and speed in three words
"Order now."	"Restock once. Win the whole floor."	An outcome, not a command

? End on a question
C08 closes with "Comment your texture". A question on the last card gets replies people can type in one word, and tells you which product they want.

5 Why five cards
Meta allows 2 to 10 cards. Five leaves room for a hook, three steps and a close. Every card in one carousel shares a ratio: 4:5 when all are images.

DESIGN THE SET AS ONE

WHAT BOTH CAROUSELS KEEP THE SAME

TYPE

One type system

The same eyebrow, headline and supporting-line styles on every card, so the eye knows where to read.

LOGO

One logo corner

The official mark sits in the same corner at the same size on all five cards.

COLOUR

A colour per card

Each card changes colour with its product, and the offer card returns to the brand red.

Carousels • real client work for PLB Snacks, Aug 2026, built with real pack photos. Specs: Meta Ads Guide, Instagram Feed carousel (read 30 Sep 2026).

06

PART TWO · VIDEO

Reels and Stories ads that *hold*

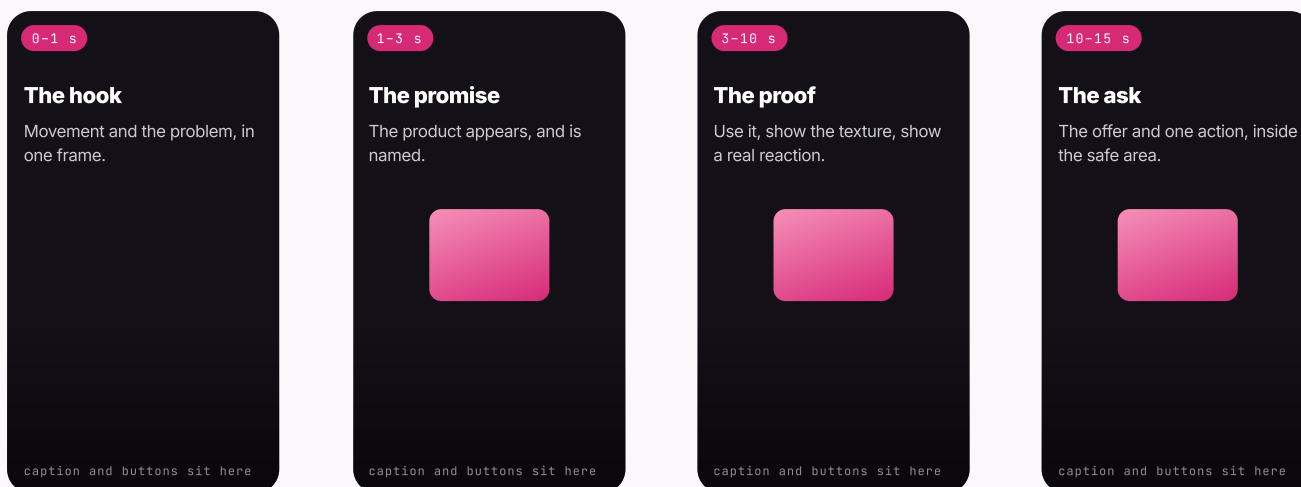
Vertical, sound on, and the point made before the thumb moves on. Build for the phone.

YOU WILL BE
ABLE TO

storyboard a 9:16 ad that makes its point in the first seconds and keeps text clear of the app's buttons.

A 15-SECOND STORYBOARD

DRAWN FOR THIS GUIDE



MAKE IT NATIVE

WHAT META RECOMMENDS FOR REELS

1

Full-screen 9:16

Shoot vertical at 1440 × 2560. A 16:9 video with bars looks like an ad from somewhere else.

2

Sound on, captions in

Meta calls sound “strongly recommended” on Reels, and captions “recommended”.

3

Words in the safe area

Nothing important in the top 14% or the bottom 35%, where the app's text and buttons sit.

SIX OPENINGS THAT WORK

THE FIRST FRAME DECIDES

OPENING	THE FIRST FRAME SHOWS	AN EXAMPLE LINE
The problem	The mess, the queue, the empty drawer	“Your snack drawer has given up.”
The pattern break	An object where it should not be	A pack behind emergency glass
The question	A face, looking at the camera	“What kind of crunch are you?”
The result first	The after, then how you got there	“Same bowl, ten minutes apart.”
The opposite	A line no ad would say	“Don't buy this one.”
The inside view	Hands, a kitchen, the making of it	“Here is what goes in first.”

34.5%

lower cost per result for 9:16 Reels ads with sound and safe-zone text, against image ads

Meta, 15 split tests, May 2022 to Apr 2023

R

Running an existing Reel as an ad?

As an ad it cannot carry licensed music, camera effects, GIFs or product tags, and Reels posted before 15 October 2021 are not eligible.

Sources · Meta Ads Guide: Instagram Reels video (read 30 Sep 2026) · Meta for Business: Reels ads (e-commerce, retail and packaged goods; Meta sells the ads) · storyboard drawn for this guide; example lines from the client work in this book.



PART THREE · STAY LIVE

Rules that keep ads *live*

Most rejected creative breaks one of a few rules. Imitation formats, false urgency and borrowed stars are where brands slip.

YOU WILL BE ABLE TO check any ad against the rules that most often get creative rejected, reported or fined.

META'S RULES

ADVERTISING STANDARDS · READ 30 SEP 2026

RULE	WHAT IT MEANS FOR YOUR CREATIVE
Nonexistent functionality	No drawn play buttons, notification badges, checkboxes or other controls that do nothing when tapped
Personal attributes	Do not assert or imply the viewer's traits: health, age, religion, money, identity. Meta's own example allows "Meet seniors" but not "Meet other seniors"
Health and wellness	Weight-loss, supplement and cosmetic ads target people 18 and over, never run down how people look, and never promise a set result by a set date
AI info labels	Ads made with Meta's own generative tools can carry an "AI info" label, and a photorealistic AI person is labelled beside "Sponsored". The rules are changing: check before launch

INDIA

ASCI CODE · CCPA DARK PATTERNS GUIDELINES, 30 NOV 2023

RULE	WHAT IT MEANS FOR YOUR CREATIVE
False urgency	Scarcity or popularity must be true. "Low stock" only while it is true, and specific
Disguised advertisement	An ad must not pose as a user's review, a post or a news article to win the click
Drip pricing	Show the full price upfront; no costs that appear only at checkout
Truthful claims	ASCI: claims must be true and backed; cited research needs its source and date
Influencer labels	ASCI, since 14 Jun 2021: paid, gifted or partnership content carries a clear label such as "Ad" or "Sponsored"

REVIEWS AND OTHER BRANDS

US FTC · TRUSTPILOT · GOOGLE

R

Fake reviews
The US FTC rule in force since 21 Oct 2024 bans fake or AI-made reviewers, bought positive reviews and undisclosed insider reviews.

★

Borrowed stars
Trustpilot lets businesses show its stars and TrustScore in ads only on a paid plan, under its brand guidelines.

G

Borrowed screens
Showing Google's interface or logo in an ad needs Google's permission. Draw your own search bar, with no logo.

THE RISKY FORMATS, CHECKED

FROM THE LIBRARY ON PAGES 6 TO 8

DISGUISED ADS

Breaking news
Keep the brand and logo visible at first glance, so it reads as your ad, not a news story.

NONEXISTENT FUNCTIONALITY

Text message
Draw the bubbles, never the keyboard, send button or badges that seem tappable.

FALSE URGENCY

Low stock
Run it only while it is true, with a date or a number that shows why.

HEALTH AND WELLNESS

Before and after
Keep it to things, bowls and boxes. Bodies and faces bring health rules.

Sources · Meta Transparency Center: personal attributes, health and wellness · Meta Business Help: nonexistent functionality · Meta Help: AI info labels (all read 30 Sep 2026) · CCPA Guidelines for Prevention and Regulation of Dark Patterns, 2023 (Trilegal summary) · ASCI Code and influencer guidelines · FTC final rule, Aug 2024 · Trustpilot Legal Brand Guidelines · Google Brand Resource Center.

08

PART THREE · LEARN FAST

Test and read your *creative*

Test ideas, not colours. Read four numbers per ad, and retire ads before the audience tires of them.

YOU WILL BE
ABLE TO

run a creative test that teaches you something, and spot fatigue before it costs you.

DO THIS

A CREATIVE TEST IN FOUR STEPS

1 Test 3 to 5 concepts at once

Each a different job, person or format. Colour and headline changes come later, once a concept has won.

2 Make each concept 2 or 3 ways

If both executions win, the idea works. If only one wins, the execution may be the reason.

3 Hold everything else still

Same budget, audience and offer while you test. Meta's A/B test tool splits the audience so the results do not overlap.

4 Wait for enough results

Meta says an ad set needs about 50 optimisation events in the week after its last big edit to leave the learning phase.

THE FOUR NUMBERS

WORKED OUT FROM ADS MANAGER COLUMNS

NUMBER	HOW TO WORK IT OUT	WHAT IT TELLS YOU
Thumb-stop rate	3-second video plays ÷ impressions	Whether the first second stops people
Hold rate	ThruPlays ÷ 3-second video plays	Whether the story keeps them (a ThruPlay is 15 seconds, or the whole video if shorter)
Link CTR	Link clicks ÷ impressions	Whether the ad makes people want to know more
Cost per result	Spend ÷ results	Whether it pays: the number that decides

Thumb-stop and hold rates are working definitions used by media buyers, not columns Meta names. Compare them between your own ads, never against a number from someone else's account.

FATIGUE

WHEN TO RETIRE AN AD

SIGNS IT IS TIRED

Frequency rises while link CTR falls, week after week. Cost per result creeps up. The same comments repeat.

WHAT TO DO

Launch a new concept built on what made it win: the hook, the person or the format. A new colour on a tired idea keeps the tired idea.

L Keep a learning log

One line per test: the concept, the result, and why you think it won or lost. Prompts P08 and P10 read the log and suggest the next round.

WHAT TO TEST FIRST

BIGGEST DIFFERENCE FIRST, SMALLEST LAST

1ST

The concept

The person, the problem, the moment. It decides who the ad reaches.

2ND

The hook

The first frame or the headline. It decides who stops.

3RD

The format

The same idea as a static, a carousel or a Reel.

4TH

The details

Offer wording, colour, button. Only once a concept has won.

Sources · Meta Business Help: A/B testing; Learning phase; ThruPlay · thumb-stop and hold rates are practitioner metrics, built from Meta's columns.

09

PART THREE • BRIEF IT

Briefs you can *reuse*

A good brief fits on one page and answers eight questions. Here is the template, and one filled in.

YOU WILL BE
ABLE TO

write a one-page brief that a designer, a creator or Claude can turn into ads without guessing.

THE TEMPLATE AND AN EXAMPLE

EIGHT FIELDS • ONE PAGE

FIELD	ANSWER IN ONE OR TWO LINES
1 • Goal	What should change: sales, sign-ups, first orders. One goal only.
2 • Audience moment	Who they are, where they are, what they feel when the ad appears.
3 • The one thing	The single message, in under 12 words.
4 • Proof	The fact that makes it believable. Real, current, with permission.
5 • Job and format	The job from page 6, the format, the placement and the size.
6 • Must include	Official logo, real product photos, legal lines, colours.
7 • Offer and action	The code, the price, the link, or the reply you want.
8 • Success	The metric, the number to beat, and when you will judge it.

FILLED IN • THE OFFICE CAROUSEL ON PAGE 9

An example brief, written for this book

Goal: first orders from people who work in offices.

Audience moment: 4 pm at a desk, tired of the same biscuits.

The one thing: the good drawer in every office is Thai.

Proof: 31 imported Thai snacks from 11 makers.

Job and format: a day-in-the-office carousel, Instagram Feed, 4:5, five cards.

Must include: the official logo, real pack photos, no health claims.

Offer and action: THAI10 for 10% off the first box; link to the site.

Success: cost per first order below the account average, judged after the learning phase.

WHAT MAKES A BRIEF WORK

AND WHAT BREAKS IT

WEAK BRIEF

"Make something fun for Instagram that shows our range and drives sales. Use our colours." Three goals, no audience, no proof, no format.

STRONG BRIEF

One goal, one moment, one message, one fact that proves it, one format and one number to beat. The maker can start the same day.



Brief Claude with it

Paste the filled brief into P02 for ten concepts, P03 for twenty hooks, or P06 for a five-card carousel (pages 15 to 17).



Fill field 4 with evidence

Every claim in the ad traces back to field 4. If the brief has no proof, the ad cannot make the claim, however well it is designed.

BRIEF A CREATOR

THE SAME EIGHT FIELDS, WITH THREE CHANGES

CHANGE 1

Give the moment, not a script

Share the audience moment and the proof, then let them say it their way. Their words are why people watch.

CHANGE 2

Name the must-haves

The product on screen early, one fact said correctly, and the offer code. Everything else is theirs.

CHANGE 3

Label it

Paid, gifted or partner posts carry a clear "Ad" or "Sponsored" label, as ASCI's guidelines require in India.

Example • written for this book from the client work shown on page 9. Figures from the client's locked product list: 31 products from 11 brands.

10

PART THREE · MAKE THEM WITH CLAUDE

Ten prompts to *paste*

Each prompt is written to be copied as it is. Fill in the parts in angle brackets first.

YOU WILL BE
ABLE TO

brief, write, check and read your ads in under an hour a week.

Fill in the **angle brackets** before you paste. Where a claim needs a real fact, the prompts tell Claude to write `<NEED PROOF>` instead of inventing one. Only P08 reads your account, and it changes nothing.

P01 Creative brief writer

BEFORE EVERY NEW AD

The brief every other prompt builds on.

You are my creative director. Write a one-page creative brief for a Meta ad. Ask me for anything missing before you write.

Product: `<what it is, price, where it is sold>`.

Audience: `<who buys, and the moment they need it>`.

Goal: `<launch / win switchers / retarget / earn shares>`.

Proof we can use: `<facts, numbers, reviews we may quote>`.

Must include: `<logo files, real product photos, legal lines, code>`.

Write these sections, in order:

1. The one thing to say, in under 12 words.
 2. Why they should believe it: the single strongest proof.
 3. The audience moment: where they are, what they feel.
 4. Job and format: which of the five jobs (stop the scroll, show the difference, talk like a person, make them smile, give a reason to act), which format, which placement and size, and why.
 5. Three concepts, each a different angle, one line each.
 6. Offer and call to action.
 7. Success: the metric and the number to beat.
 8. Rules: claims we must not make, and platform rules that apply.
- One page. Plain words. No slogans unless I ask for one.

P02 Ten concepts, not variations

WHEN YOU PLAN A TEST

Give me 10 ad concepts for `<product>`, for `<audience>`. A concept is a new idea, not a new colour or headline. Across the 10, change at least one of: the person in the ad, the problem, the moment, or the format.

For each concept:

- Name (3 words)
- The job: stop the scroll, show the difference, talk like a person, make them smile, or give a reason to act
- The format (text message, us versus them, myth versus fact...)
- Headline on the image (under 8 words)
- What the image shows, in one sentence
- Who it is for, and why they would stop

Then mark the 3 most different from each other and say why. Invent no reviews, numbers or claims: write `<NEED PROOF>` where one is needed.

P03 Hooks for the first second

FOR EVERY VIDEO AND STATIC

Write 20 opening lines for `<product>` ads, for `<audience>`. Each must work in the first second of a Reel or as the headline of a static.

Four of each type:

1. Name the problem ("Your snack drawer has given up.")
2. Break the pattern (an odd object, an odd instruction)
3. Ask a question the viewer answers in their head
4. Show the result first, then how
5. Say the opposite of what an ad would say ("Don't buy this one.")

Rules: under 9 words each; no claims we cannot prove; nothing that asserts the viewer's health, age, money, looks or identity, which Meta does not allow. Mark the 5 strongest, and say what the first frame should show for each.

P04 Pick the job and the format

BEFORE A BRIEF

My goal: <goal>. Audience: <who>. What they already know about us: <nothing / tried once / regular buyers>.

Using the five jobs in this book (stop the scroll, show the difference, talk like a person, make them smile, give a reason to act), recommend:

1. The job that fits this goal, and why.
2. Three formats to test, each with a headline and an image idea.
3. The placement and size for each (Feed 4:5 at 1440 x 1800, Reels 9:16 at 1440 x 2560, or a carousel).
4. The one risk in each format (a rule, a claim, fatigue) and how to avoid it.
5. What to measure for each, and when to judge it.

P05 Write a static in a format

FOR EACH NEW STATIC

Write a static Meta ad in the format <format, e.g. myth versus fact> for <product>. Facts we can prove: <facts>.

1. Headline on the image (under 8 words) and a second line (under 14).
2. Layout: where the product sits, where the text sits, the background. Keep text inside the safe area for 4:5 and for 9:16.
3. Primary text: 3 versions under 150 characters each, and a headline under 27 characters.
4. A 9:16 version: what moves, and which text sits in the middle area, clear of the top 14% and the bottom 35%.
5. A claims check: every claim beside the fact that supports it. Remove any claim without a fact.

P06 Carousel storyboard

FOR EACH CAROUSEL

Plan a 5-card carousel for <product or range>. First pick one spine: a day in the life, a field guide, a ranking, a myth list, or build a box. Say which, and why it suits this product.

For each card: the eyebrow (2-3 words), the headline (under 7 words), one specific supporting line (a fact, a texture, a moment; never a generic phrase), the product shown, and the visual.

Rules:

- Card 1 makes a promise, shows a swipe cue, and works alone.
- Each card sets up a question the next card answers.
- One product per card; every card 4:5.
- Card 5 pays off card 1 and gives one action: a code, a link or a question to answer in the comments.

Then read the 5 headlines in a row. Fix any card that could swap places with another without the story breaking.

P07 Policy pre-check

BEFORE EVERY UPLOAD

Check this ad before I upload it. Use web search to read the current pages first: Meta's Advertising Standards and, for India, the ASCI Code and the CCPA dark patterns guidelines.

Ad: <image text, primary text, headline, landing page URL>.

Mark each PASS, FIX or REMOVE:

1. Drawn buttons, play icons, checkboxes or notification badges that do nothing (Meta: nonexistent functionality).
 2. Copy that asserts or implies the viewer's traits (Meta).
 3. Health, weight or appearance claims; before-and-after images.
 4. Urgency or scarcity: is it true, specific and dated?
 5. Does it pose as news, a user's post or a review?
 6. Reviews, ratings or testimonials: real, current, with permission?
 7. Other brands' stars, logos or screens (Trustpilot, Google, Apple).
 8. Prices, codes and delivery lines: do they match the checkout?
- Quote the rule behind every FIX and rewrite the line so it passes.

P08 Read creative performance

EVERY WEEK

Here are my ad results for the last 14 days: <attach the Ads Manager export by ad, or read them through my Meta ads connector, READ ONLY>. Columns: impressions, 3-second video plays, ThruPlays, link clicks, spend, results, cost per result, frequency.

1. For each ad: thumb-stop rate (3-second plays / impressions), hold rate (ThruPlays / 3-second plays), link CTR, cost per result.
2. Rank by cost per result. Mark ads with fewer than <20> results as TOO EARLY instead of ranking them.
3. Fatigue: ads where frequency rose and link CTR fell week on week.
4. Group the ads by concept. Which concept wins, and what do its ads share: the hook, the person, the format, the offer?
5. Five new concepts that build on the winning pattern without copying it, one line each.

Label every number READ or ESTIMATE. Change nothing in the account.

P09 Image prompt that protects the product

FOR AI-MADE SCENES

Write an image-generation prompt for a <format> ad for <product>. I will generate the scene in <tool>, then place our real product photo in it.

1. The scene: surface, light, props, colours, camera angle, and where the empty space for text sits.
2. Leave the product spot empty and lit to match, sized for a pack that fills about a third of the frame.
3. List every word printed on our pack, exactly: <copy the pack text>. State that no invented text may appear anywhere in the image.
4. Three variations: different light, surface and angle.
5. A full-size checklist: pack text, logo, hands, reflections, edges.

P10 Turn a winner into new concepts

WHEN AN AD WINS

This ad is our current winner: <describe it or attach it, with its results>. In 5 lines, say why it works: the hook, the person, the format, the proof, the offer.

Then write 6 new concepts:

- 2 that keep the hook but change the format
- 2 that keep the format but change the person or the moment
- 2 that keep the proof but change the job

For each: headline, image idea, and what we learn if it wins or loses.

Never repeat the winner in new colours: each must be a new idea.

SKILL creative-director / SKILL.md

SAVE AS A SKILL

```
---
name: creative-director
description: Rules for our Meta ad creative. Use for any brief,
  concept, hook, copy, carousel, image prompt or policy check.
---
# How we make ads
- Concepts before variations: change the person, problem, moment or
  format, never only colours or headlines.
- Every ad does one job: stop the scroll, show the difference, talk
  like a person, make them smile, or give a reason to act.
- Feed 4:5 at 1440 x 1800; Reels and Stories 9:16 at 1440 x 2560.
  On 9:16 keep text out of the top 14%, bottom 35%, 6% each side.
- Only real proof: no invented reviews, ratings, numbers or scarcity.
- No drawn buttons, play icons, checkboxes or notification badges.
- Never imply the viewer's health, age, money, looks or identity.
- AI scenes: our real product photo goes in unchanged; check every
  word on the pack at full size.
- Our brand: <colours, fonts, voice, logo rules, products, proof>.
```

Save the skill. In the Claude app: Customize > Skills > + Add > Upload skill, with the file zipped inside a folder named creative-director . In Claude Code: ~/.claude/skills/creative-director/SKILL.md .

11

KEEP THIS PAGE

The creative *checklist*

Everything in the book, reduced to what you check before you design, before you upload and every week.

USE IT TO

make, check and refresh ads from this page alone.

BEFORE YOU DESIGN

☐ The brief fits on one page (P01)☐ One job chosen for the ad☐ 3 or more concepts, not variations☐ A real fact behind every claim☐ Real product photos and official logo☐ Sizes set: 4:5 feed, 9:16 Reels☐ Carousel spine picked first

BEFORE YOU UPLOAD

☐ Text inside the 9:16 safe area☐ No drawn buttons, icons or badges☐ Nothing implies the viewer's traits☐ Scarcity true, specific and dated☐ Prices and codes match the checkout☐ Pack text checked at full size☐ P07 policy check run

EVERY WEEK

☐ P08 results read☐ Fatigued ads flagged and retired☐ One new concept per winner (P10)☐ Learning log updated☐ Comments read for new hooks☐ One new format tried☐ Skill file updated

ABOUT THIS BOOK

EDITION 01 · SEPTEMBER 2026

AUTHOR

Written by Anisha Dogra

Anisha works on performance marketing and AI systems for brands. The example ads in this book are real client work for PLB Snacks, shown with the client's permission.

METHOD

How the facts were handled

Specs and rules come from Meta's own pages, read on 30 September 2026. Award results come from the trade press. Studies name who ran them, and Meta's figures are labelled as Meta's.

Use it freely. Copy the prompts, adapt the skill and share the checklist with your team. The example ads belong to their brand: study them, do not copy them. Platform rules change often, so check dates before you rely on any detail. Campaign structure, tracking and measurement are covered in the Meta Ads Playbook 2026 in this series.

**Start with one prompt this week: P01.**

Write the brief, then pick a job and a format from pages 6 to 8.

META AD CREATIVE BOOK 2026
ANISHA DOGRA

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