

Achieving excitement in Social Media Advertisements by using VFX

Dr. Sara Mohammed Mamdouh Abd El Azim Rezk

Lecturer at MSA University, Faculty of Arts and Design, Graphics and Media Arts

Department, 6 October, Egypt

Associate Professor at Taibah University, Faculty of Designs and Arts, Graphic Design

Department, Al-Madinah al-Munawwarah, Saudi Arabia

srezk.sm@gmail.com

Abstract:

In today's fast-paced digital world, social media advertising has become the cornerstone of marketing strategies. Social media has attracted a large number of users. It is a cheap way tailored to viral marketing and allow for personalized targeting according to user interests and preferences. With the constant influx of content, brands are increasingly turning to visually compelling strategies to cut through the noise to reach target audiences and convey brand messages. Advertising on social media is prosperous way to reach wide range of audiences. Companies look for best practices on how being the advertising more attractive and engaging. Standing out in the crowded social media world requires innovative approaches that capture attention and leave a long-lasting impression. Visual effects (VFX) offer a powerful tool to enhance the emotional impact of advertisements specially on social media, potentially driving higher engagement and brand recall.

Study statement:

The research statement can be summarized in the following questions:

- 1- How can visual effects be used in social media ads?
- 2- What are the different uses of visual effects?
- 3- How do different brands apply visual effects technology to create user engagement?
- 4- What are the stages of producing a social media ad that uses visual effects in its design?

Objective:

This research aims to investigate:

1. The possibility of using visual effects to create excitement in the context of social media advertising.
2. Defining the meaning of visual effects, their history, development, and various uses.
3. Applying visual effects technology by various brands to create user engagement.
4. The stages of producing a social media ad that uses visual effects in its design. It analyzes several examples of how different brands use visual effects, particularly in Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and other Arab countries, to create excitement, which can be reflected in their image in an innovative way.

Study approach:

The research follows the descriptive approach in collecting information to study the phenomenon of study, followed by an analytical study of some local and international samples.

Keywords:

VFX, Social Media advertising, Special effects.

المخلص:

في عالمنا الرقمي السريع الخطى اليوم، أصبح الإعلان عبر وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي من أهم استراتيجيات التسويق. تجتذب وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي عددًا كبيرًا من المستخدمين. إنها طريقة مصممة للتسويق الفيروسي وتسمح بالاستهداف الشخصي وفقًا لاهتمامات المستخدم وتفضيلاته. مع التدفق المستمر للمحتوى، تتجه الماركات بشكل متزايد إلى استراتيجيات مقنعة بصريًا لاختراق الضوضاء للوصول إلى الجماهير المستهدفة ونقل رسائل الماركات. يعد الإعلان على وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي طريقة مزدهرة للوصول إلى مجموعة واسعة من الجماهير. تبحث الشركات عن أفضل الممارسات حول كيفية جعل الإعلان أكثر جاذبية وتفاعلاً. يتطلب التميز في عالم وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي المزدهم مناهج مبتكرة تجذب الانتباه وتترك انطباعًا يدوم طويلاً. تقدم المؤثرات البصرية أداة قوية لتعزيز التأثير العاطفي للإعلانات خاصة على وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي مما قد يؤدي إلى زيادة المشاركة وتذكر الماركة.

مشكلة البحث:

تتلخص مشكلة البحث في التساؤلات التالية:

- 1- كيف يمكن استخدام المؤثرات البصرية في إعلانات التواصل الاجتماعي؟
- 2- ماهي الاستخدامات المختلفة للمؤثرات البصرية؟
- 3- كيف تطبق تقنية المؤثرات البصرية من قبل الماركات المختلفة لخلق التفاعل مع المستخدمين؟
- 4- ما هي مراحل إنتاج إعلان تواصل اجتماعي يستخدم المؤثرات البصرية في تصميمه؟

هدف البحث:

يهدف هذا البحث إلى دراسة:

- 1- إمكانية استخدام المؤثرات البصرية لتحقيق الإمتاع في سياق الإعلان عبر وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي
- 2- تحديد معنى المؤثرات البصرية وتاريخها وتطورها واستخداماتها المختلفة
- 3- تطبيق تقنية المؤثرات البصرية من قبل الماركات المختلفة لخلق التفاعل مع المستخدمين.
- 4- مراحل إنتاج إعلان تواصل اجتماعي يستخدم المؤثرات البصرية في تصميمه متناولاً بالتحليل عدة أمثلة لاستخدام الماركات المختلفة للمؤثرات البصرية خاصة في مصر والمملكة العربية السعودية والدول العربية لتحقيق الابهار التي قد تنعكس على صورتها بشكل مبتكر.

منهجية البحث:

يتبع البحث المنهج الوصفي في جمع المعلومات لدراسة الظاهرة موضوع البحث، ثم دراسة تحليلية لبعض النماذج المحلية والعالمية.

الكلمات المفتاحية:

إعلانات التواصل الاجتماعي، المؤثرات البصرية، المؤثرات الخاصة

Introduction:

Social media has become a major advertising tool in the current digital era, giving brands a previously unheard-of chance to interact in real time with a wide range of audiences. The task of grabbing and holding users' attention has grown more difficult since they are constantly exposed to enormous volumes of content. Advertisers are using creative techniques to provide captivating and emotionally impactful content because traditional advertising strategies are no longer adequate. Using Visual Effects (VFX), a potent tool that can turn commonplace images into remarkable experiences, is one such technique.

VFX, which has historically been connected to the film and video game industries, is becoming more and more well-known in digital marketing due to its capacity to inspire surprise, excitement, and interaction. VFX can strengthen brand identity, magnify storytelling, and produce unforgettable viewing experiences when carefully included into social media ads.

Brand communication is changing as a result of the convergence of creativity and technology, particularly with younger, tech-savvy audiences that demand immersive, high-quality content. This study investigates how visual effects might create excitement in social media ads. It looks into how viewers' perceptions, feelings, and levels of involvement are affected by visual effects. The study intends to comprehend best practices in VFX-driven ad design and offer insights into how marketers may use this technology to stand out in a crowded digital industry by examining successful case studies and audience responses.

First: Social Media Advertising:

Definition of "Social Media Advertising":

Social media advertising refers to a form of digital marketing where brands pay to connect with their target audiences on social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, LinkedIn, X and Pinterest.¹ Through these paid ad campaigns, Brands can reach desired consumers, promote their products and drive sales by engaging users on popular media channels that users frequently use.² This media comes in many formats and placements and supports a range of creative, from images and video to immersive experiences.³

Kinds of Social Media Advertising:

Through social media advertising, brands have a multitude of types to engage their target audiences effectively. These tools come in the form of various formats of social media ads, each with its own distinct features and advantages. These types are as following:

1- "Text-Based Ads":

Text-Based ads is a simple type of social media advertising. This kind primarily relies on written content to communicate the message in a clear and concise manner. Typically, a text-based ad includes a catchy headline, a brief yet persuasive message, and a clickable link or call-to-action button.

Platforms such as X (formerly Twitter) and LinkedIn often impose character limits, making text-based ads a practical choice. For example, LinkedIn frequently features such ads. Their key benefits include affordability and ease of creation, making them an excellent option for businesses with limited design resources. Example is shown in image no. (1).



Image no.1: Text-based ad⁴

Due to its simple format, it lacks the aesthetically appealing design. Therefore, it could be difficult to attract users. This kind is suitable for conveying straightforward messages or clear information.

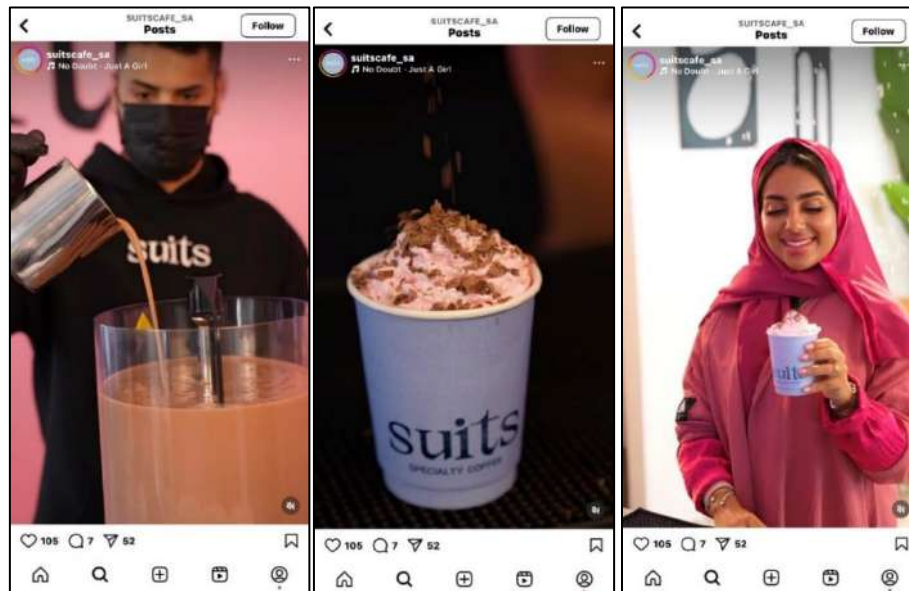
2- "Image Ads":

Image ads are visually appealing ads that successfully communicate messages through eye-catching visuals or graphics. These advertisements use eye-catching imagery to attract users' attention and communicate brand messages. Various social media networks, such as Facebook, Instagram, and Pinterest, have examples of image ads. Image ads have the advantages of being able to quickly communicate the information, tap into quick responses, and increase brand recognition. This kind of ads have the power to significantly increase engagement and conversions. Example is shown in image no. (2).

Image no..2: Image ad of 'Extra'⁵

3- "Video Ads":

Video Ads use dynamic visuals and audio to convey messages. Found on platforms like YouTube, Facebook, TikTok, and Instagram, they engage audiences through storytelling and immersive content. This kind have the ability to convey complex messages, and achieve a strong emotional impact. It enables brands to successfully present their products or services.⁶ Example is shown in image no. (3).

Image no. (3): Shots of video ad of "Suits"⁷

4- "Story Ads":

Story Ads are full-screen, short-lived that show up in the "Story" section of social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn. These advertisements usually run for 24

hours and are distinguished by their immersive, vertical format. They often lead to higher engagement due to their temporary nature. Example is shown in image no. (4).

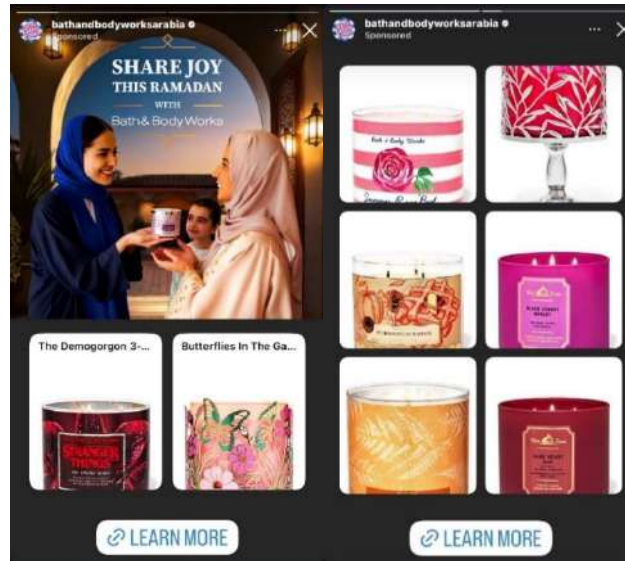


Image no. (4): Story ad of “Bath & Body Works”⁸

5- “Carousel Ads”:

Carousel Ads allows brands to showcase multiple images or videos within a single ad unit, so users can swipe or click through a sequence of cards, each containing different content. This kind have the capacity to promote multiple products or services in a single ad (image no. 5).



Image no. (5): Example of Carousel Ad⁹

Advantages of social media advertising:

- 1- **Advanced targeting capabilities:** Social media advertising stands apart from traditional methods by offering highly advanced detailed targeting. While traditional advertising casts a wide net to reach as many people as possible, social media ads micro-target users to reach only the audience most interested in the brand. Social media advertising allows brands to focus on the most relevant audiences based on factors like geographic, demographic, psychographic, and behavioral characteristics which will reflect positively on the conversion rate.¹⁰
- 2- **Real-time adjustments:** Social media ads provide instant feedback utilizing in-depth metrics. Brands can easily access analytics to determine the effectiveness of an ongoing

campaign and make changes based on its performance such as shifting the budget to the ads that are delivering the best results through insights into customer behaviors and desires.¹¹

- 3- **Improve brand awareness:** Every day, billions of people utilize different social media platforms. Brands can reach consumers who aren't familiar with them and leave a long-lasting impact on potential customers.
- 4- **Increase brand loyalty:** With strategies like retargeting, brands can serve social media ads to people who have already visited their website to re-engage them and encourage a sale.
- 5- **Low costs:** Especially compared to more traditional media channels, social media advertising is cost effective and can accommodate any budget.¹²

Second: Visual Effects (VFX):

Definition of "Visual Effects (VFX)":

According to Cambridge Dictionary; the meaning of visual effects is the images in a film or entertainment that are created using computers or models, and that can be mixed with live action.¹³ Visual effects (VFX) is a term used to describe imagery created, manipulated, or enhanced for any film, or other moving media that doesn't take place during live-action shooting. VFX often involves the integration between actual footage and this manipulated imagery to create realistic looking environments for the context. These environments created are either too dangerous to be actually shot, or worlds that just don't exist. They utilize computer-generated imagery (CGI) and specific VFX software to achieve this. Autodesk¹⁴ defined the term as "images that have been altered, created, or enhanced for live-action media. VFX work is often applied to footage that could not be fully captured during live-action filming due to it being costly, risky, impractical, or impossible to shoot. Visual effects compositing integrates live-action footage with VFX to create realistic objects, characters, and environments."¹⁵

The difference between VFX, CGI, and special effects:

Movie effects terms are often used interchangeably, but they are different: VFX is produced by merging live-action footage with digital elements, while CGI refers to any visuals generated entirely through digital means. In contrast, special effects are achieved in real-time during filming without the use of computer technology.

- "Visual effects (VFX)":

VFX (visual effects) is a process of creating imagery that does not physically exist through the use of CGI, compositing, and motion capture.¹⁶ Image no. (6) represents shots of social media ad that integrated VFX in its design. The idea is A huge product of "Jif" is polishing a car where the pedestrians get surprised.



Image n (6): Shoots of Jif ad published on Threads)¹⁷

- “Computer-generated imagery (CGI)”:

Computer-generated imagery (CGI) is any imagery created digitally within a computer such as objects, creatures, or entire environments. CGI is frequently used in movies, video games, and advertisements to add realistic or fantastical elements.¹⁸ It can be incorporated into a VFX shot in a live-action movie (such as the dinosaurs in Jurassic World) or used to create a fully CG film like Toy Story (Image no.7).¹⁹

Image no (7): Shoot of Toy Story movie which is totally CGI²⁰

- “Special effects (SFX)”:

SFX (special effects) are practical effects that do not use CGI. They are implemented directly on set during filming and are either mechanical or optical effects. Examples include prosthetics, miniatures, paintings, stop-motion photography and animation, and composite imagery.²¹ These effects can be implemented either on persons such as “Lord of the Rings” movie as shown in image no. 8 or objects such as the snow mountain in “Titanic” movie as shown in image no. 9.

(Image n.8 Lord of Rings movie)²²(Image n. 9: Special effect on Titanic movie)²³

Uses of VFX:

Visual effects (VFX) are used to create imaginary worlds, enhance action sequences, develop characters and creatures, build environmental effects, and more.²⁴ VFX applications extend far the following sectors.

1- Film Movies & Television

VFX plays a crucial role in Hollywood movies and TV series, enabling the creation of visuals that traditional filmmaking methods cannot achieve. Whether it's the intricate CGI dragons in *Game of Thrones* (image no. 10) or the digitally crafted environments in *The Mandalorian* (image no. 11), VFX helps bring these grand, immersive stories to life.

(Image no.10 Game of Thrones)²⁵(Image no. 11 The Mandalorian)²⁶

2- Video games:

Video game developers utilize VFX to craft immersive environments and dynamic action sequences. From particle effects for explosions and magical abilities to intricate character animations, VFX enhances the gaming experience, making it more engaging and visually compelling. Example shown in image no. 12.

(Image no. 12: Shot of video game integrated VFX)²⁷

3- Virtual and Augmented Reality:

With the increasing popularity of VR and AR technologies, VFX is essential for crafting interactive experiences. In virtual reality, VFX helps construct immersive digital worlds, while augmented reality utilizes VFX to seamlessly integrate digital elements with real-world visuals. Users can get fully immersed in such experiences. This immersive approach can result in more meaningful engagement and support by fostering empathy and a greater sense of connection.²⁸ Examples are shown in images no. 13 & 14.

(Image no. 13: Example of AR Tech uses VFX)²⁹(Image no. 14: Example of AR Tech uses VFX)³⁰

4- Education and Training

VFX is also utilized in educational content and simulations, enabling realistic and immersive training experiences. Whether recreating virtual environments for military training or allowing

medical students to practice surgeries in VR, VFX helps develop detailed and accurate instructional materials.³¹ Examples are shown in image n. 15 & 16.



(Image no. 15: Example of VFX in Education)³²



(Image no. 16: Example of VFX in Education)³³

5- Advertising:

Visual effects (VFX) play a significant role in modern advertising, helping brands create eye-catching and memorable campaigns. By integrating CGI, motion graphics, and other digital effects, VFX allows brands to craft visually stunning commercials that captivate audiences. From dynamic product animations to surreal, larger-than-life scenes, VFX makes it possible to showcase concepts that would be difficult or costly to achieve through traditional filming. Whether enhancing a product demonstration, creating an engaging storytelling experience, or adding immersive effects, VFX helps brands stand out in a competitive market.

Image no. 17 shows an example of social media advertisement for “Noon” published on Instagram. The idea is a huge box that falls from the ceiling destroys the objects and terrifies the model. These acts are too difficult and impossible to be achieved through traditional filmmaking methods. VFX are integrated to produce this ad to add more realism.



(Image no. 17: Shoots of VFX social Media Ad for “Noon”)³⁴

Third: Using VFX in social Media Advertising:

As VFX is the process of digitally creating or enhancing images to produce effects that are either difficult or impossible to achieve during filming, VFX enhances video production, creating breathtaking environments, smoke, fire, weather effects, explosions, alien worlds, complex animations and even characters that wouldn't be possible through traditional methods of making advertisements. VFX has become an integral part of the social media advertising, transforming the way stories are told and experienced. VFX is usually incorporated during post-production phase, where it is seamlessly blended with live-action footage to produce the final visuals. In recent years, advancements in both technology and advertisements have significantly enhanced VFX capabilities, allowing brands to generate highly sophisticated effects and add realism to the design.³⁵

Kinds of social media ads that integrates VFX in its design:

Social media is a place where brands can build authentic connections with customers. However, it is too challenging to capture their attention with countless ads flooding feeds.³⁶ VFX is integrated in social media ads in many ways, including:

1- Product Advertisements:

This kind showcases a product demonstration with futuristic designs, animations and 3D effects. The product can appear floating in mid-air or as a huge object in the middle of a place. This makes the ad more exciting and lets the audience engage with the ad better. Image no. 18 presents a VFX social media ad for “Adidas”. The idea is fantastical, represents a huge pair of sneakers are hanging in two helicopters, then it slides in the path of the train. The exaggeration in the size of the object makes it more interesting and engaging.

(Image no. 18: VFX ad for Adidas)³⁷

2- Brand Commercials:

This kind is about, creating visually stunning brand stories. It is not about making advertising about a product or a service itself, but creating visually appealing, and memorable ad about the brand in an imaginative way. The brands work to grab the users' attention and catch their eyes while scrolling through their news feeds by playing around with colors, icons, or fonts. VFX allows brands to leave a lasting impression on consumers.³⁸ Image no. 19 presents a VFX social media ad for "Safwa Al Mehaidab Dentisiry" published on Instagram. The ad demonstrates the brand in a funny manner. The distinctive method in advertising makes it more interactive by liking and sharing by users which in turn will affect positively the brand awareness.

(Image no. 19: VFX social media ad for Safwa Al Mehaidab Dentisiry)³⁹

3- Explainer Videos:

Using VFX to explain the features of a product or a service in a simple way. It allows brands to create unique, visually compelling ideas that grab audiences. Instead of just showing the product, the ad could use VFX to zoom into its internal parts, showcase its characteristics in a unique way. Image no. 20 presents a VFX social media ad for "Dyson Arabia". It presents a vacuum that includes anti sand technology in a humorous way. Adding a sense of humor to the ad makes it more attractive for user and achieve its goals.



(Image n. 20: VFX social media ad for Dyson)⁴⁰

4- Event Promotions:

Adding effects to event ads for a more dramatic impact.⁴¹ Brands can use VFX to advertise about the universal events such as Christmas celebration, Ramadan etc. It can be integrated also into ads about mega events such as Olympiad or world cup. VFX can be used to improve the aesthetic appeal, convey the brand message, and create a stronger emotional bond with the audience. This results in a more impactful and memorable brand experience. Image no. 21 presents a social media ad for Aritzia that integrates VFX in its design to celebrate new year in a creative way. The idea is wrapping the store as a gift using the red ribbon of Christmas.



(Image no. 21: VFX social media ad for Aritzia)⁴²

The effect of using VFX in social media advertising:

VFX role in social media advertising has become increasingly significant. The use of visual effects can elevate the storytelling aspect of brand content, making it more engaging and memorable just because of many advantages:

1- Enhanced Branding and Storytelling:

VFX enables brands to create unique, distinctive and visually appealing stories that engage audiences whether it is a brand commercial, a product advertisement or explainer video, VFX can be used to boost visual attractiveness, convey the brand's message effectively, and enhance a stronger emotional connection with the audience. This leads to a more powerful and unforgettable brand experience.

2- Instant Grab Attention:

In today's digital age, consumers are bombarded with content all the time. To stand out and in order not to be skipped by users, brands must create attractive visuals that grab attention instantly. VFX provides a wide range of creative options for crafting remarkable content in an immersive way whether it's fantastical landscapes, futuristic animations, or dramatic visual objects. These visuals can enhance engagement, improve shareability, and motivate consumers to connect with the brand on a more profound level.

3- Boosting engagement:

Social media platforms like Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok are ideal spaces for VFX-driven content. VFX can turn boring ideas into creative ads, driving engagement and encouraging users to share the content. People are more likely to watch and share visually stunning ads, increasing reach and brand awareness.

4- Emotional Impact:

Brands use VFX to evoke specific emotions like excitement, fear, joy, or nostalgia. This works especially well in video advertisements, where visual effects can be employed to emphasize a message or heighten emotional scenes. This emotional connection can significantly impact customer loyalty and brand perception.⁴³

5- Time and Money saving:

VFX enables brands to produce everything digitally, saving time and money, as opposed to building up costly scenarios or shooting in different locations.⁴⁴

Production steps of VFX social Media Advertisement:

The process of producing VFX ad are as following:

- 1- **Motion Capture:** In motion capture, the movements of real-world actors are captured using special cameras.
- 2- **3D Animation:** 3D animation involves creating characters, objects, and environments in three dimensions, allowing for movement and interaction in a virtual space using software such as Blender.
- 3- **Particle Effects:** Particle systems are used to simulate natural elements such as smoke, fire, water, and dust using software such as Cinema 4D or Maya.
- 4- **Compositing:** Compositing involves combining multiple layers of images, video, and animations to create a seamless final product using software such as Adobe After Effects.⁴⁵

Analytical Study:

1- Noon KSA:

	
Client	Noon KSA
Agency	Vertex. CGI
Date	17 th March 2025
Description	The design is about a huge ball in the middle of a desert in Saudi Arabia that is covered with the flag of the Kingdom. Then the flag was removed while the logo of Noon appeared.
Technique	Integration of VFX into live footage.
Audience interaction	According to official page of vertex, about 2150 users interacted with the video by liking and 255 shared the content.
Analysis	The technique of manipulating and creating imagery that doesn't exist in real life and merging it with real life scene, makes the ad more interesting and engaging. The unrealistic proportions are too attractive to users who interact with the ad by liking, commenting and sharing which reflect positively in the brand awareness.

2- Ezz Steel:

	
Client	Ezz Steel Egypt
Agency	Basry VFX
Date	12 Augusts 2024
Description	The design is about a huge covered object in the area of Pyramids, then a helicopter removes the red cover revealing the product of the brand, which is exaggerated in the size.
Technique	Integration of VFX into live footage using Blender and advanced 3D techniques.
Audience interaction	6703 users viewed the ad.
Analysis	This fantastical scene is impossible to be filmed in real life. It showcases the product in an impressive way attract the audience and make the ad stand out from the crowd. Merging VFX techniques to the Pyramid of Egypt makes stunning visual effects that highlight product features.

3- Adidas KSA:

	
Client	Adidas KSA
Agency	Vertex. CGI
Date	3 rd December 2024
Description	One of the shoots presents large products of the brand merged with tourism destination such as Al-Ula in Saudi Arabia known for its ancient tombs. Another shoot shows a large flying T-Shirt outside and Kingdom Centre Tower in Al Riyadh in the background. This promotional campaign celebrating Saudi Arabia's involvement in FIFA World Cup.
Technique	Integration of VFX into live footage.
Audience interaction	According to official page of vertex, about 2100 users interacted with the video by liking and 256 sharing.
Analysis	Such creative visuals mix heritage and modernity, showing how digital storytelling and immersive tech can connect deeply rooted history with contemporary pride and aspirations.

Conclusion:

1. VFX in social media advertising is changing the way brands connect with people. It helps make ads more engaging, creative, and memorable.
2. Successful social media ad campaigns require a clear objective, specific audience targeting, and regular performance monitoring.
3. Paid social media ads help brands achieve specific goals, like increasing awareness, driving traffic, or boosting conversions.

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