

GUIDE

How to make a 30-second product ad with AI

A repeatable workflow for a short product ad — script the beats, generate or animate the shots, then assemble, caption and check the rights before you publish.

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A 30-second product ad is the most common first AI video project, and the easiest to get wrong by generating too much and editing too little. The workflow that works: script the beats, generate only the shots AI is good at, and assemble everything else yourself. This guide walks through it.

1 Write the beat sheet before any prompts

Six to eight shots of 3 to 5 seconds each. For each shot write three lines: what is on screen, what moves, and what the viewer should feel. A product ad usually needs: a hook (the problem or the surprise), the product reveal, two or three benefit shots, and a closing card with the name and call to action.

Keep the product itself out of generated shots unless you are animating a real photo of it. Text-to-video invents labels, shapes and proportions; a wrong product on screen is worse than no product.

2 Decide which shots AI makes

Sort the beat sheet into three piles:

- Generate: atmosphere, motion backgrounds, abstract transitions, stylised product-in-scene shots where exact detail does not matter.
- Animate: real product photos and screenshots turned into motion with image-to-video tools.
- Film or design: the closing card, any shot with real people, any shot with legible text.

Most 30-second ads need only 3 to 5 generated shots. The rest is your product, your footage and your editor.

3 Generate the shots

For each generated shot, write the four-part prompt from the prompt guide: subject, action, camera, style. Keep the style line identical across shots so the clips cut together. Generate two or three takes per shot and pick the best.

On credits: Pika's pricing page puts a 5-second 720p clip at about 122 credits on Starter ($10 a month). Runway prices Gen-4.5 at 60 credits per 5 seconds. A six-shot ad with two takes each is roughly 12 to 15 generations — inside one mid-tier monthly plan, or spread across free tiers if you are patient.

For image-to-video shots, photograph the product on a plain background first. Clean, well-lit stills animate far better than cluttered ones.

4 Assemble in an editor

Bring the generated clips, your real footage and your designed cards into a normal editor — CapCut, Descript, DaVinci Resolve or Kapwing all do this job. Cut on the beat, add captions for sound-off viewing, and add the closing card with your product name, URL and offer as real text,

not generated text.

5 Check rights before you publish

Before the ad goes live:

- Confirm your plan's commercial-use terms. Pika's pricing page states paid plans include a commercial license; free plans differ per vendor.
- Confirm no watermark on the plan you used. HeyGen's free plan watermarks every video; Synthesia's Basic plan does too.
- Check inputs: your own photos and footage are fine; stock assets need licenses that allow AI processing.
- Check likeness: no real person's face or voice appears without consent.
- Check platform rules: some ad networks and social platforms have policies on synthetic media. Disclose AI-generated content where required.

6 Publish and measure

Run the ad as a test before scaling. The metrics that matter for a 30-second spot: hold rate through the product reveal, click-through on the offer, and cost per result against your other channels. Keep the prompts and the edit that worked; a second version of the same ad is an afternoon of work, not a reshoot.

Frequently asked questions

How many AI generations does a 30-second ad need?

Plan for 6 to 10 shots of 3 to 5 seconds each, plus retries. Budget credits for two to three takes per hero shot.

Can I put my product's real label in the video?

Not reliably with generation. Generate the scene without the label, then composite your real product image or footage in your editor.

Do I need to disclose that the video is AI-made?

Check the rules where you publish. Some platforms label or require disclosure of synthetic media; some ad networks have their own policies.

Sources

Pika pricing (fetched 2026-11-13) — https://pika.art/pricing
Runway pricing (fetched 2026-11-13) — https://runwayml.com/pricing
HeyGen pricing (fetched 2026-11-13) — https://www.heygen.com/pricing
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