



Creative Effectiveness

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CONTENTS

SECTION	PAGE
Introduction	3
IPA Effectiveness Winners	4
Effies	4
Cannes Lions	5
What This Means For Advertisers	7
Summary	7
About the Authors	7

A STUDY OF IPA EFFECTIVENESS, EFFIE AND CANNES LIONS AWARDS WINNERS REVEALS THAT ADS DON'T NEED TO PERSUADE TO BE EFFECTIVE BUT THEY DO USUALLY ENGAGE EMOTIONALLY.

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In total, we identified 251 ads covering 92 brands. For brands for which we had researched more than one ad, we used the average scores across all the ads. We indexed the Link results to enable legitimate comparisons of ads from different countries (because the Cannes Lions cover ads from around the world, and average scores vary across countries). An index of 105 or more puts the ads into the top third tested; an index of 114 or more puts the ads into the top 10%.

A recent report concluded that there is a very strong link between creativity and effectiveness: 'The Link Between Creativity and Effectiveness' (IPA, 2011, Peter Field). Field's analysis sheds an interesting light on an old debate about creativity and sales effectiveness. We've long felt there was a connection: when we look at the best ads we have ever tested, it is clear they all have the power to involve and be enjoyed, and it is clear even subjectively that they all harness creativity, albeit in different ways, to great effect.

To explore this issue further, we've recently conducted our own analysis. We undertook a painstaking trawl through the winners of IPA Effectiveness Awards from 1996 to 2010, Effies from 2007 to 2010, and Cannes Lions from 2002 to 2011 to identify campaigns for which we had conducted Link, our global pretest. The IPA and Effie awards are given for effectiveness, while Cannes Lions are given for creativity.

IPA EFFECTIVENESS WINNERS

Figure 1 shows the results on a selection of key Link measures for IPA Effectiveness winners. Overall, these results include 153 ads for 46 brands; the 'base' column shows the number of brands represented. (Because Link has evolved over the years, we don't have all the measures for all the ads.)

Compared to our overall average, the television commercials for the winning brands tend to be more involving and enjoyable (an index of 105 puts the ads into the top third we've tested on these measures), and different to other advertising. They also have slightly better branding. They are less likely to be seen as conveying new, relevant, or unique information designed to make people feel differently about the brand. The persuasion scores of these award-winning campaigns are on a par with norms.

FIGURE 1: IPA EFFECTIVENESS WINNERS

INDICES	MEDIAN	NO. OF BRANDS
DIFFERENT TO OTHER ADS	106	10
ENJOYMENT	105	46
INVOLVEMENT	105	36
BELIEVABLE	102	19
BRANDING	102	43
APPEALING	99	36
CPG PERSUASION	99	25
MEAN SCORE INDEX		
UNDERSTANDING	98	46
NEW INFORMATION	97	35
RELEVANCE	95	36
THINK DIFFERENTLY	95	15
UNIQUENESS	95	24
BRAND DIFFERENT	93	19

Some may be surprised that advertising can work without persuading people. We'll explore this further later in the paper.

EFFIES

Figure 2 shows the results for the Effies. These figures must be viewed with caution because of the lower base sizes – (55 ads, 16 brands) – but they suggest that, like the IPA winners, the Effie winners are involving, enjoyable and well branded.

However, the Effie winners differ in that these ads were considered to deliver unique impressions that could only be for the advertised brand, and both the brands and ads were seen as different from others. They perform on a par with the norms on relevance, news and credibility. Again, persuasion is on a par with norms.

FIGURE 2: EFFIES WINNERS

INDICES	MEDIAN	NO. OF BRANDS
BRANDING	106	16
UNIQUENESS	105	15
INVOLVEMENT	104	15
BRAND DIFFERENT	102	15
DIFFERENT TO OTHER ADS	102	13
ENJOYMENT	102	16
PERSUASION	101	12
BELIEVABLE	100	14
NEW INFORMATION	100	15
RELEVANCE	99	15
APPEALING	98	16
UNDERSTANDING	97	16

CANNES LIONS

Turning to the Cannes Lions (covering 43 ads for 30 brands; some ads were tested in multiple countries), they too perform well above average on enjoyment and involvement (**Figure 3**), but they are also far more likely to be different to other ads (an index of 115 puts them in the top 10% of ads we test on this measure). On the other hand, branding scores are on a par with the norm while the persuasion scores are below the norm.

FIGURE 3: CANNES LIONS WINNERS

INDICES	MEDIAN	NO. OF BRANDS
DIFFERENT TO OTHER ADS	115	17
INVOLVEMENT	113	22
ENJOYMENT	106	36
APPEALING	101	33
BRAND DIFFERENT	102	26
BRANDING	99	36
BELIEVABLE	94	26
PERSUASION	97	27
THINK DIFFERENTLY	97	15
RELEVANCE	95	25
UNIQUENESS	96	26
UNDERSTANDING	92	34
NEW INFORMATION	91	25

So it seems that both creative and effective ads benefit from enjoyment and involvement. The finding that shows that persuasion is not necessary for effective advertising may seem surprising; both Millward Brown and some of our competitors have published evidence that such advertising can produce sales effects ('An Analysis of How Effectively Advertising research Can Predict sales', Twose and Smith, 2007). However, this is understandable in light of the evidence that a persuasive ad tends to affect sales in the short term, while effectiveness awards tend to be given for long-term brand-building campaigns.

The Millward Brown measure of persuasion, which asks respondents whether the ad makes them more likely to buy the brand, tends to closely replicate the results of pre-post persuasion shift approaches ('Persuasion shift Testing: Putting the genie Back in the Bottle' Farr, 1993). We have also observed that ads which performed well on persuasion also tended to convey relevant, credible, differentiating news (['What Makes an Ad Persuasive?'](#)).

A new, relevant, and credible claim will always have a dramatic sales effect. But such advertising will wear out quickly: persuasion is a 'one-off' event. We either get the consumer to make a mental note to try the brand again, or we do not. An ad that did not get this response at the first three showings is unlikely to at the fourth. So, while persuasion is one route to produce a substantial sales effect in the short term, this effect is unlikely to register strongly in the long term. In fairness, we should also acknowledge the possibility that advertising agencies are more likely to submit highly creative campaigns to the IPA Effectiveness Awards, and less likely to submit campaigns based on establishing a new, relevant factual claim. It does seem that persuasion is not necessary for long-term brand building. This highlights the need to be clear in setting advertising objectives either in terms of short-term sales effects or longer-term brand building.

In 2005, after an extensive review of the literature, we compiled a list of 16 emotions to represent the range of emotions advertising could generate. (The Emotional Drivers of Advertising success: Page, 2005).

We've now had considerable experience of these measures, and we have found them extremely helpful in understanding ad performance.

While the base of brands covered is admittedly low, the average responses for the IPA Effectiveness Awards winners seem to mirror the UK norms (**Figure 4**).

Continued on page 6

FIGURE 4: IPA EFFECTIVENESS WINNERS

	IPA	Ave UK
AFFECTIONATE	20	22
ANNOYED	12	13
ATTRACTED	32	36
CONFIDENT	27	32
CONTENTED	41	40
DISAPPOINTED	12	13
EXCITED	20	20
GUILTY	2	2
HATRED	3	3
INADEQUATE	6	6
INSPIRED	33	32
PROUD	15	15
REPELLED	7	7
SAD	5	4
SURPRISED	33	28
UNIMPRESSED	29	29

BASE: 13 BRANDS 2,086 ADS

However, many individual ads did achieve high scores on specific emotions; these results are masked in the aggregate data. One food brand with a nostalgic positioning scored 39 on 'affectionate' (versus an average of 22). A detergent scored 88 on 'contented' versus an average of 40, and 67 on 'excited', versus an average of 20. A healthcare brand scored 17 on 'guilty' versus an average of 2, while another healthcare brand that emphasised the dangers of the disease it prevented scored 47 on 'repelled' versus an average of 7.

Our database shows that, among other things, emotionally powerful ads are more memorable (['Should my advertising stimulate an emotional response?'](#) Millward Brown)

The variety of different emotional responses obtained by award-winning advertising highlights that there is no one emotion to trigger for successful advertising rather, the successful ad triggers the emotion that is relevant for that brand and positioning.

Looking at the Effie winners shows the same pattern (Figure 5); the story lies with the individual brands. One cereal brand scored 60 on 'affectionate' versus an average of 25. A food brand scored 73 on 'contented' versus an average of 48, and a beverage brand scored 52 versus an average of 35 on 'excited'.

FIGURE 5: EFFIE WINNERS

	EFFIE	Ave US
AFFECTIONATE	24	25
ANNOYED	13	12
ATTRACTED	40	43
CONFIDENT	45	43
CONTENTED	46	48
DISAPPOINTED	8	8
EXCITED	37	35
GUILTY	1	2
HATRED	2	3
INADEQUATE	4	5
INSPIRED	41	41
PROUD	31	27
REPELLED	7	6
SAD	3	3
SURPRISED	39	35
UNIMPRESSED	18	20

BASE: 16 BRANDS 7,900 ADS

The Cannes versus global data is problematic, because we are adding together results across countries, and again the base sizes are low. However, overall, the Cannes winners have broadly similar emotions to our global norms. But again the key to understanding emotional response lies in the individual brand stories.

One FMCG brand, with an advertisement featuring mums' relationships with their children, scored 60 on 'affectionate' versus an average of 26, one personal care brand, with ads focusing on sexual appeal, scored 76 on 'attracted' versus an average of 45, one beer brand, with an ad showing what excited different groups of people, scored 55 on 'excited' versus an average of 36, and a beer brand featuring a charismatic, aspirational character, scored 41 on 'proud' versus an average of 24.

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR ADVERTISERS

This analysis serves as a celebration of creativity. Advertising which is enjoyed, found involving, and stimulates the emotions in a way that other advertising doesn't, should be encouraged and rewarded. But that doesn't mean advertisers should pursue creativity at the expense of all else.

It has long been known that advertising needs to be underpinned by an appropriate strategy. This analysis adds another factor: branding. It is all very well for an ad to leave vibrant memories, but do these memories link to your brand uniquely? Branding has nothing to do with repeating the brand name and showing packs; it has

everything to do with making the brand the centre of, and the reason for, the creative idea. The Marlboro Cowboy, the Hovis delivery boy freewheeling down a hill to the strains of Dvorak's New World Symphony, the Andrex Puppy and the Clio-driving Nicole and Papa, are all excellent examples of well-branded advertising.

There are many ways to brand an ad but, ultimately, it relies on creativity to integrate the brand, or an established branding cue, into the ad in an engaging way. This analysis suggests that advertising should also stimulate emotions; but there is no single emotion which works better than others.

SUMMARY

The analysis presented here helps to explain the overlap we observe between creative advertising and effective advertising. While creativity cannot be defined or prescribed, its effects can be measured, and creative ads tend to be enjoyable and involving, and different to other advertising. They tend to stimulate an emotional response. Effective ads also tend to generate these responses – and they are also likely to be well branded.

The analysis also highlights that one differentiator between creative ads and effective ads is that effective ads are more likely to have the brand as an integral part of the advertising. There is no single route to effective advertising, and this is particularly in evidence in looking at emotional response, where no one emotional response seems to be related to effective advertising.

Despite having the biggest pretesting database in the world, Millward Brown acknowledges that the base sizes for this analysis are not as robust as we would wish. Still, we do believe that the analysis adds a useful contribution to the debate. The Cannes Lions have a new Creative Effectiveness category to highlight those

campaigns that have had measurable business effects over time, and Walker's Crisps, PepsiCo's snack brand, won the Grand Prix at the inaugural Creative Effectiveness Lions. This was an ad we researched and, while we cannot discuss the research findings in detail, we can say that it scored above average on 'enjoyment', 'involvement' and 'branding'.

Over the next few years, as the Creative Effectiveness Lions case studies continue to build, learning about the relationship between creativity and effectiveness will only continue to grow.

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