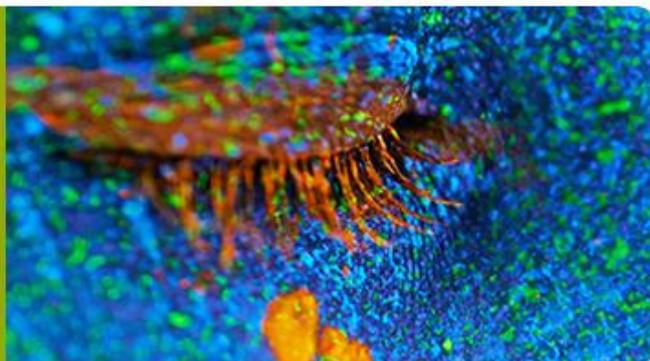




# egtabites

get inspired by  
... innovative ideas!



## Boosting effectiveness with the right creative

This week's egtabite is about the magic ingredient of TV advertising's power – creativity. Optimising the messaging, tone, content and timing of advertising is the biggest lever you can pull to drive effectiveness. It makes brands famous, gets them talked about and boosts a campaign's efficiency.

Thinkbox, the marketing body for commercial television in the UK, acknowledges the importance of storytelling and brilliant creativity, so in order to better understand what else is relevant when it comes to effective creative execution, they commissioned Neuro-Insight to identify the elements of creativity that are most closely linked to effectiveness.

### Neuro-Insight study

The study explored the link between TV advertising creative and memory with a minimum sample of 50 participants per ad. By analysing the brain responses to over 200 TV ads and coding each of them against 50 or more different creative factors, Neuro-Insight could identify which of those factors were most strongly correlated with emotion and - critically - long-term memory encoding (LTME), which is directly linked to decision-making and future behaviour.

The process of identifying the key drivers of creative effectiveness involved looking at the relationship between each creative factor and memory performance at final branding (the crucial brand message and impression the viewer takes away), and identifying where there was a statistically significant correlation between the two. Memory encoding at final branding was examined for both 'detail' (left brain activity dealing with specifics) and 'big picture' (right brain activity responsible for emotion and overall feel).

The analysis revealed some **key creative factors** that can make a difference to the impact of TV ads:



### It's not about shouting the loudest

Ads emphasising hard facts and scientific information were less appealing to the brain and performed in the bottom quarter of all ads tested. Ads built around emotion, humour, and everyday situations all performed far better.

Showcasing a product rather than overtly selling it was also a better tactic when it came to LTME.

### It's all about the classic story-telling techniques

The brain works by association, so if a brand has been seen and features as part of the narrative of an ad it will elicit a stronger response at final branding.

Contrast, breaks and pauses – e.g. changes in pace or sound – can play a powerful role in driving memory response, because they signal to the brain that something important is about to happen. Memory encoding therefore ramps up and stays elevated. Ads that used these techniques created a 20% higher response than other ads where this didn't happen.

### People are paramount

As humans, we are fundamentally dominated by our emotions and our need to connect with others. Ads featuring high levels of human interaction – such as conversation or affection – elicited memory encoding responses 10% higher than those with low levels of human interaction.

### Music can make an ad...or break it

We all know that music can be a hugely powerful tool and set the mood and tone of an ad. The analysis discovered that music in TV ads works best at creating long-term memory when it drives the action of the ad - by timing the action to the beat or by lyrics relating to what is being seen on screen, for example. These ads performed better than those with no music at all. But ads where the music was just a recessive, background feature performed 14% worse of all in terms of memory encoding at the key point of branding than those where the music drove the action. Neuro-Insight also found that ads with music dating back to before 2000 had an 8% higher response than more recent soundtracks.

### Branding's in the timing

The study found that in ads that suffered from 'conceptual closure' at the end of an ad (a pattern of brain activity that occurs when a sequence of events comes to an end which subsequently triggers LTME), memory encoding fell on average by around 30%. This is because for the few seconds it takes for conceptual closure to occur the brain becomes relatively unreceptive to new information. Conceptual closure is usually triggered by a 'reveal' in a spot's narrative, and as this has the effect of momentarily lowering the brain's responsiveness to memory encoding any reveal should not immediately precede the end branding of the ad.

### **Why this matters for egta members?**

This study is an additional asset in the toolbox proving TV's effectiveness.

Although there is no formula for creativity, marketers can take advantage of science to help reveal some of the magic. By making small adjustments to their ads, brands can maximise the chances of the content they produce actually reaching their target groups and affecting their customers' future behaviour.

Understanding how the brain's memory encoding processes are influenced by advertising creative offers sales houses an opportunity to strengthen their position as true partners to their clients.



### **Background info**

Please click on the links below to access the relevant documents:

» **Full study on Thinkbox's website** (please click [here](#))