




# WHO'S KILLING CREATIVITY NOW?

Thought Piece  
2015



**PERHAPS IT GOES WITHOUT SAYING THAT TIMES HAVE  
CHANGED IN THE MEDIA, BRAND AND COMMUNICATIONS  
LANDSCAPE. YET THERE IS A DEBATE RAGING. WE ARE  
WITNESS TO AN INCREASINGLY UNCOMFORTABLE  
TENSION BETWEEN CREATIVITY AND DATA (ESPECIALLY  
DATA SCIENCE).**



**CREATIVITY COMES IN THE GUISE OF CAMPAIGNS  
AND CONTENT ACROSS MULTIPLE MEDIA THAT  
OFTEN TARGET A WIDER AUDIENCE; DATA COMES IN THE  
GUISE OF TARGETED AND OFTEN PERSONALISED  
CAMPAIGNS, FREQUENTLY BUT NOT EXCLUSIVELY  
DIGITAL. WHILE EACH MAY ACCEPT THAT THE OTHER HAS  
A PLACE IN THE WORLD, EACH ALSO HIGHLIGHTS THE  
WEAKNESSES OF THE OTHER.**

**Market research has long been accused of killing creativity. Many in the creative world now look back with nostalgia to the days when market research was the point of contention. With so much more data available now and so many exciting applications for it, data and creative are at loggerheads.**

Data doesn't kill creativity; people kill creativity.  
Likewise, just because creativity can be more difficult

to measure, it doesn't mean it is not working.

So what do data-driven content and communications bring? They are pushing the industry in new directions, where people already are. Our Tech Tracker shows that nine in ten British adults are accessing the Internet and over three quarters of these users are accessing on mobile<sup>1</sup>. Seven in ten own a smartphone. Figures are even higher among



**46%**  
Growth

young people. The world has changed and will continue to do so. There are undoubtedly some great examples of using data to grow. For example, Kleenex used Google data on searches for flu to serve online ads to people in areas affected by flu outbreaks, contributing to a 46% growth in YOY sales<sup>2</sup>. It seems a no-brainer to meet people when and where brands are most relevant to them – especially if they can do so in creative ways, as Kleenex shows is possible.

What of creativity? Creativity is important to brand success. According to an IPA review of the Gunn report and the IPA databank, creatively awarded campaigns generate eleven times more share growth per ten points of Excess Share of Voice<sup>3</sup>. Likewise, Les Binet and Peter Field have shown in their review of the IPA databank that Fame campaigns – campaigns that create salience – outperform brand impact on all key metrics, including sales, market share, price sensitivity, loyalty, penetration, and profit<sup>4</sup>. And the Ipsos database shows that 75% of an ad's ability to leave brand-linked memories is due to creative. This helps explain what Binet and Field have demonstrated: that long-term effects are not just an accumulation of short-term effects and that long-term brand-building is critical to long-term profitability.

In truth, both wider-reach creative, and more targeted, data-driven comms and content have a role to play

for any brand. Fame is still important and creativity [and emotion] critical in driving success. Most 15 year olds cannot afford a Rolex, but when today's 15-year old turns 40 or 50, they are most likely to spend a large sum on something that comes with long-held brand associations and status.

The challenge is this: the 'data' side can be better understood by the boardroom. Highly targeted data-driven comms and content are fast, with easy measures and promises of minimal wastage. What CFO or CEO wouldn't want that? It can be much harder for long-term brand building – which is more often driven by creatively expressed ideas and values – to get a look-in.

Not everything that is necessary to build brands is easily measured, and not everything that is easily measured is necessary to build brands. The consumer, the audience, the people are an essential part of brand success. Without thought and context behind it, data is just numbers.

Like all of the best tensions, the data vs. creativity tension can resolve into a sparky relationship. The question should not be either / or but how they can both work together to build an individual brand. The

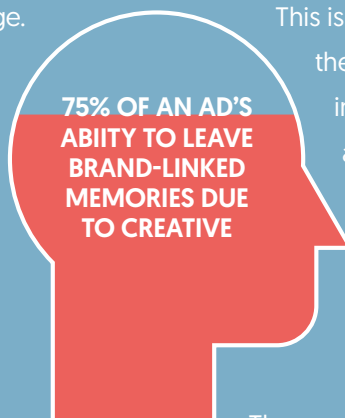
truth is that a wide array of tools will be needed. We help many clients to find ways to make these work together and also to anchor long-term brand building in measures that the boardroom can understand.

Insight, properly used, can act as a rudder to steer the brand. This goes beyond the technology measured in 'data': insight is needed to bring those people to the heart of building brands. Brands must be present, remembered and relevant in the moments that matter.

This is not about a single number but about the overall picture – to understand the individual and aggregate effects of media as well as creative effects. Well thought-out insight can fuel creativity and helps drive data down the right paths – not just in the next minute but for the future too.

There are many ways that insight can and should help, whether in creative or data-driven campaigns or some combination thereof.

Insight can help build strong campaigns in the first place. We know from our extensive client research, that early stage screening of ideas is more likely to lead to successful and effective campaigns. Data-driven campaigns can benefit from big ideas and underpinning insights too.

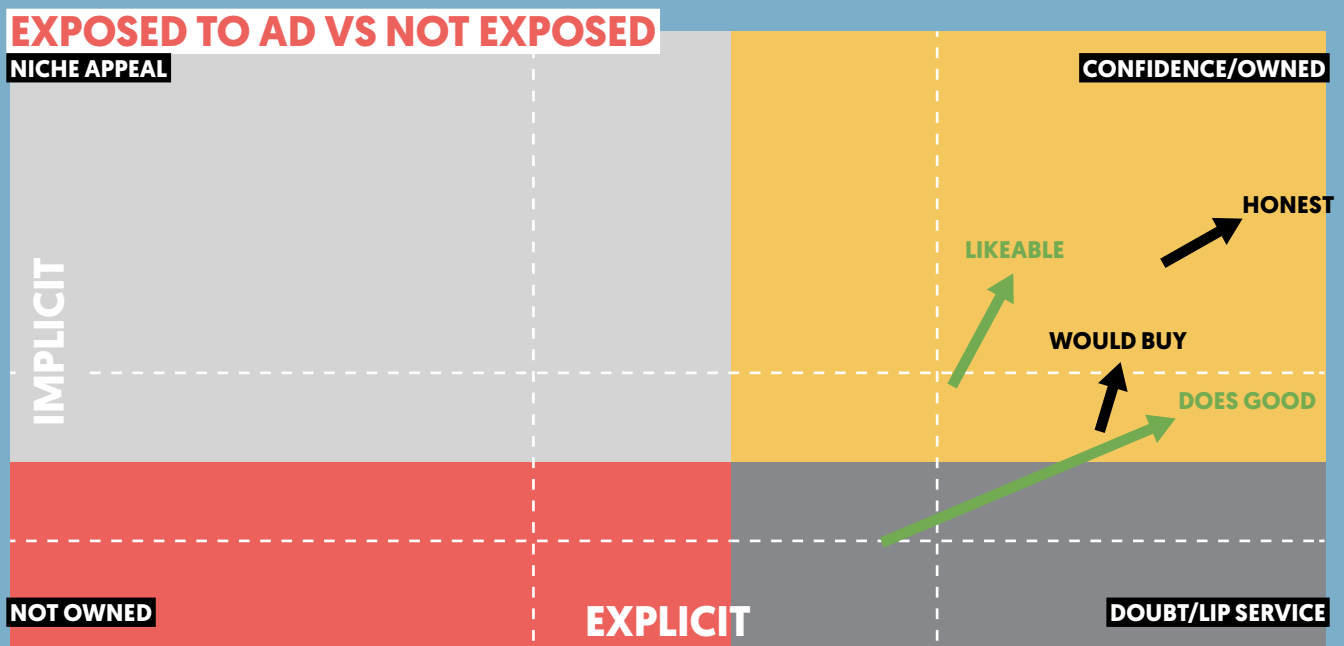


Emotions are important in brand building. The IPA analysis shows that many of the most creative ads are emotional [or a blend of rational and emotional aspects, rather than just rational]<sup>5</sup>. Brands that are successful also evoke emotion. Good research can help unpick whether a campaign, content or brand is truly emotional.

For example, in a study we did on Kenco's Coffee vs. Gangs campaign, the emotions helped. What's more we found that those who are open to the idea of brand purpose were more likely to feel positive emotional effect – and also more likely to buy – than those not open to a brand having a purpose<sup>6</sup>.

We can help to see whether targeting is doing more than just make a brand noticed but making the brand relevant in the moments that matter. For example, we found for Bird's Eye that reaching people with a time-targeted fish finger message created three times more desire to “eat fish fingers now.” More recently, the success of Black Friday shows us that marketing around events can work – but can work much harder if they are timed for when people are in the market for particular things.

The opportunities are endless to leverage insight to build better campaigns. Like the tension between creativity and data, there will be no single right



answer, but a blend of sources and information to build and sustain the knowledge that will fuel success.

At Ipsos Connect, we believe that there will never be one single number to tell you the right answer but rather that art must meet science to create something relevant, distinctive and memorable. We work closely with our clients to ensure that research unites data and creativity. By measuring at the point of people receiving the communications not the point of transmission, we can understand the true impact and help creativity to have a stronger voice in the boardroom.

**SOURCES:**

- 1 Ipsos Connect Tech Tracker Q3 2015. 88% of GB adults aged 15+ access the internet by any method; 67% access the internet via a mobile phone.
- 2 Media Planning Toolkit: Planning for Real Time – WARC
- 3 IPA, 'The Link between creativity and effectiveness: New findings from the Gunn report and the IPA databank'.  
Excess Share of Voice = Share of Voice - Share of Market
- 4 Les Binet and Peter Field, 'The Long and the Short of It' via the IPA.
- 5 IPA, 'The Link between creativity and effectiveness: New findings from the Gunn report and the IPA databank'.
- 6 Explicit = agreement with the relevant statement.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION  
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# Ipsos Connect

## ABOUT IPSOS CONNECT

Ipsos Connect are experts in brand, media, content and communications research. We help brands and media owners to reach and engage audiences in today's hyper-competitive media environment.

Our services include:

- **Brand & Campaign Performance:** Evaluation and optimisation of in-market activities to drive communications effectiveness and brand growth.
- **Content and Communications Development:** Communications, content and creative development from early stage idea development through to quantitative pre-testing alongside media & touchpoint planning.
- **Media Measurement:** Audience measurement and understanding.

Ipsos Connect are specialists in people-based insight, employing qualitative and quantitative techniques including surveys, neuro, observation, social media and other data sources. Our philosophy and framework centre on building successful businesses through understanding brands, media, content and communications at the point of impact with people.

