



CELEBRITY CASTING CALL, STAKES HAVE NEVER BEEN HIGHER

By Vanessa Harrington
September 2024

Here at Ipsos we keep a close eye on communication trends and effective advertising, and although using celebrities is not a new topic for marketers, we have recently noticed some thought-provoking choices and new faces representing certain brands. While Luxury is well associated to having celebrity fronted campaigns, even these brands are adjusting the types of celebrities they choose as the face of their brand, with many moving from Hollywood stars to music stars, such as Miley Cyrus for Gucci Flora, or Blackpink Jisoo for Dior. Other categories are also upping their celebrity game, think Robbie Williams for Felix and Zendaya for On Running.

So this raised an all important question for us here at Ipsos, how can brands ensure that the celebrity that represents them is the right choice? And should brands with legacy ambassadors choose to change?



[Miley Cyrus for Gucci](#)



[Blackpink Jisoo for Dior](#)

THE CHOICE AND CHANGE OF BRAND AMBASSADOR CAN BE A RISKY BUSINESS

Whether choosing or changing a brand ambassador, there are a whole host of risks associated. It is so important to get it right, by choosing a celebrity who authentically embodies the values of the brand, has a genuine connection to people and of course, serves the brand, by bringing higher levels of attention and being an ownable asset.

But, today, celebrities can be a fickle lot. Gone are the days when one celebrity would be known mainly as an ambassador for one brand, such as George Clooney and a certain coffee brand. Today they stretch their profile across brands and even categories. Take Zendaya as an example, from Cover Girl to Smart Water to Bulgari and most recently to On Running, she is a force to be reckoned with.



[Zendaya x On Running](#)

But one could argue that representing all these different brands lacks authenticity and limits her ability to be an “ownable” brand asset which would allow people to

intrinsically connect the advert with the brand.

Indeed, here at Ipsos our data suggests that the use of a celebrity is linked to stronger branded attention. **And importantly brands that use celebrities consistently across multiple campaigns are 2.84 times more likely to be better remembered than the general use of celebrities which include one-off campaigns.**

Average likelihood of an ad featuring different brand asset types being high vs. low performing on branded attention

VISUAL (ANY) X1.15

Characters	X6.01
Celebrities	X2.84
Package shape	X2.09
Visual style	X1.67
Colour	X1.44
Font	X1.41
Logo with slogan	X1.41
Slogan	X1.19
Logo	X1.17

AUDIO (ANY) X3.44

Sonic Brand Cues	X8.53
Music	X1.20

THE SECRETS TO STARSTRUCK ADVERTISING

We need highlight that the idea of altering the ambassador should not be taken lightly, to put it bluntly, don't change for changes sake. There should always be a viable reason, a need to be fulfilled. Does the brand need to take a different direction? Is there a need to modernize the brand ? Or to appeal to different generations, different segments ? Has the current ambassador lost appeal for one reason or another with people ? All these could be viable reasons to change the ambassador ! But selecting the right face of celebrity advertising should be approached with the same rigour and strategy that advertisers apply to other distinctive brand assets.

One consideration for a brand, before deciding to change, could be to refresh the

tone and style of advertising rather than switching the ambassador. Julia Roberts' most recent communication for Lancôme La Vie est Belle is a great example. Ms Roberts has been representing the brand for 12 years, but the brand used a more humorous spin on their storytelling, showing Ms Roberts in a lift with a bellboy, clearly trying to plan an escape route out of yet another evening with her peers. Or Roger Federer representing Swiss Tourism. The stunning panoramic scenes, with Mr Federer's cheeky humour is always a pleasure to watch, but they are refreshing each campaign by bringing in other celebrities such as Robert De Niro, Anne Hathaway or most recently Mads Mikkelsen.

Roger Federer and Mads Mikkelsen x Swiss Tourism



But if the decision has been made to change, what considerations should marketers take into account ?

KEEP CALM AND CARRY ON ...

1 There is no going back ! Once the change is made then it should be given time to settle in. A drop in brand linkage could be expected, especially if there has been a long term face of the brand. This should not be cause

for panic or moving on to something new. Brands should leave the time for the celebrity to wear in for the brand. Continuity and consistency is key as we see this has a marked impact on effectiveness and revenue over time.

DIAL UP DISTINCTIVE ASSETS...

2 To achieve strong branding our mantra here at Ipsos is consistency, but one may ask how can consistency still play its role when one of the biggest brand assets is changing? Brands should reflect on what other distinctive assets they can lean into. If we take the new Dior copy, where the ambassador has changed after 20 years from Chazelle Theron to Rihanna, the brand made a clear decision to keep all the other assets in place, the gold colour scheme, the Versailles setting, the iconic jewellery. One could imagine that this helped guide consumers through the transformation and keep some

connection for consumers between the communication and the brand. Brand assets fuel memory encoding by as much as a 34% increase in branded attention***.



Rihanna for Dior

LOYALTY COUNTS...

3 Ideally, this new ambassador should not be overused, or strongly related to other brands. George Clooney is actually the face of other brands beyond the famous coffee example, but most would be challenged to mention any of the other partnerships he has.



George Clooney

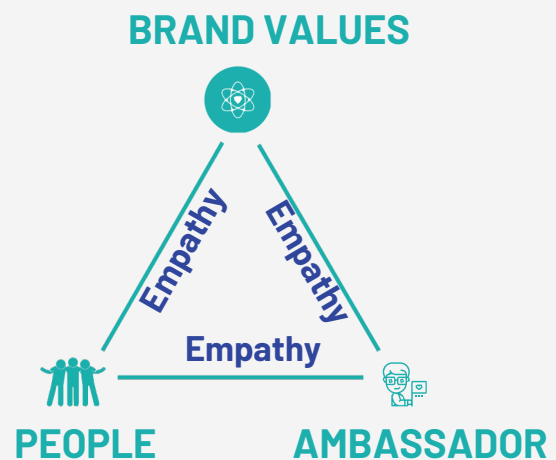
A BALANCING ACT...

- 4 The role that the ambassador will play is also key to brand success. Most importantly the storytelling should be authentic to the brand,

with a careful balance between the representation of their publicly known persona and who they should be for the brand.

AND FINALLY, CELEBRITY MATCHMAKING...

- 5 Arguably, most important, will be finding someone who fits with the brand values. It's not about finding a "popular" celebrity, it's about finding someone who is relatable to people, but also relatable to the brand, a trinity of empathy, if you will.



TO WRAP UP, IN THE WORDS OF THE DALAI LAMA :



"Open your arms to change, but don't let go of your values."



For more information and access to the full paper please contact Vanessa Harrington
vanessa.harrington@ipsos.com

FURTHER READING :

[The power of you: why distinctive brand assets are a driving force of creative effectiveness | Ipsos](#)

[Breaking the stereotypes: never imitate, always misfit! | Ipsos](#)

[These were the 15 best Super Bowl ads in 2024. Here's why, according to hard data from Ipsos. | Ipsos](#)

*** the difference in likelihood of being a high vs. low performing ad on branded attention
(Source: Ipsos Creative Excellence Video Ad Meta-Analysis, 2,015 USA cases)

About Ipsos:

At Ipsos we are passionately curious about people, markets, brands, and society. We deliver information and analysis that makes our complex world easier and faster to navigate and inspires our clients to make smarter decisions. Ipsos employs nearly 20,000 people and conducts research programs in 90 markets. Founded in France in 1975, Ipsos is controlled and managed by research professionals.



Vanessa Harrington is an expert in advertising effectiveness and is a senior leader in the Creative Excellence Service Line in Switzerland.

She brings a wealth of experience having worked across major brands and companies in the industry. Vanessa is based in Geneva, Switzerland.

Ipsos © 2024. All rights reserved.

For information or permission to reprint, please contact at vanessa.harrington@ipsos.com
@ Ipsos in Switzerland.

