

“Moodvertising” during the World Cup - second half

Don't just participate, go all the way!

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The potential for mood influencing ad effectiveness is a topic of keen interest to Ipsos and our clients. Earlier, before the start of the World Cup, we sent an alert that advertisers also need to consider their own “game” to maximize positive impact during this exciting tournament.

The first challenge is to compete for the “attention of the crowd.” Advertisers need to stand out in a very competitive field.

Ultimately, the final objective is to score an advertising win: elicit a response that either changes consumer behavior to seek information, prompt discussion, stimulate sales and/or helps strengthen brand relationships.

And yet, with the influence of the game hitting all-time high emotions, advertisers might find tough challenges to qualify and advance in the competition for attention, activation and brand connection.

The “Copy Cat” and “the False Hope Syndromes”:

- In the spirit of supporting common goals (reinforcing traits such as pride, patriotic values or just a sense of belonging that a national team can help convey), many brands attempt to leverage these values, hoping they will be transferred back to the brand. But with dozens of brands supporting a similar approach, people end up seeing little differentiation among branded messages, generating a sameness that can become a hurdle for the attention goal.
- Another mistake many brands make is in believing they can transfer these values just by being present throughout the event and ignore that they might be

distant from their core brand values. Because of this disconnect, brand communications lose credibility and the messages become irrelevant, undermining the final goal.

“The Mood of the Crowd”

One factor has always intrigued us: **Can the mood of the audience be a determinant factor to influence these goals?** After testing hundreds of ads during the World Cup in many different markets, our data suggest that a positive or a negative mood has indeed an influence over the communication goals. Hence, as the mood swings with victory and defeat, **how can advertisers maximize this effect (the event ROI) and reduce eventual risk?**



“It is amazing how quickly emotions can change.” Vince Law – (Professional baseball player)

You have to agree that the World Cup is unpredictable! Who would have guessed Germany’s early elimination in this year’s first round? Then there was the 2010 world champion - Spain, who brought an experienced team and succumbed to Russia – who struggled in the preparation phase, not winning once in the last seven matches. The list could go on... against all odds, highly ranked teams didn’t qualify.

The second half: Ipsos research to measure how the moods swing and what can we learn from it

In the few days that preceded the beginning of the tournament, Ipsos decided to measure several World Cup ads in four different and important markets from the most traditional football schools in Europe and Latin America. We tested ads using advanced measurement for nonconscious emotional response with Electroencephalogram (EEG) and Eye Tracking in Germany, England, Mexico and Argentina. This was our zero or neutral base; at the end of the first qualifying round and quarter finals, we were able to measure again the same ads in the same markets, resulting in a diverse combination of “mood” results.

We did this to understand the “mood factor” and better understand how it influences people, communication and brand outcomes. At Ipsos, we standardly complement rational surveys with nonconscious emotional responses to get a complete and broad picture of how people feel, think and act.



EEG is a technique to monitor brain response by detecting generated electrical activity. It uses electrodes (i.e. “microphones” to listen to the brain) placed on the scalp in a non-invasive and painless way. EEG is commonly used to detect attention and emotional engagement to stimuli. EEG can accurately capture the direction (positive vs. negative) and intensity of emotional reactions. By adding Eye Tracking, we register precisely, scene by scene, where people look and determine if they notice the brand icon when it appears. Did they notice the player holding the product? Did they concentrate their attention on any other specific elements?

The following markets represented the impact of sweet victory and devastating defeat.

“Negative Mood” (or defeat) Markets:

- **Germany:** We measured German ads right after the hurtful and embarrassing defeat to South Korea, which resulted in early elimination.
- **Argentina:** We measured Argentine ads after the defeat by France in the round of 16.



The “Positive Mood” (or Victory) Markets:

- **Mexico:** We measured Mexico after the end of the first round when Mexicans were thrilled having beaten Germany and being qualified in the very last moment, thanks to South Korea (who had also beaten Germany).
- **England:** We measured England after the qualification of the first round, following an exciting and nervous battle with Colombia, ending up with the lottery of a penalty shootout.

Results showed rewards are much higher than possible punishments!

Indeed, the World Cup is unpredictable... while we were writing this article and running the experiment, both writers

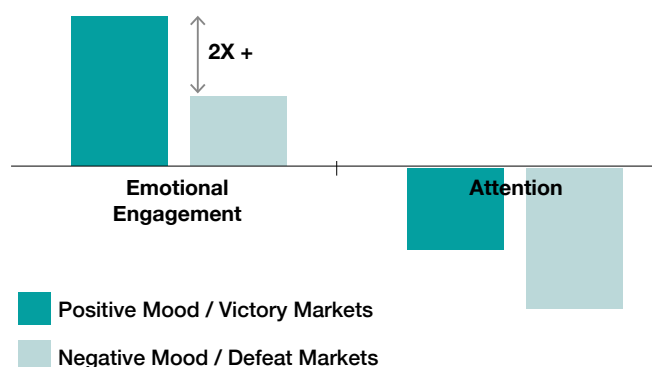
(a Brazilian and a Spaniard) were quite optimistic for their national teams... and there is no difference for marketers who embrace the event with high hopes for returns. Our key message after running the experiment is... **don’t play safe, go all the way if you want to leverage this tournament for the highest returns!** See further below WHY AND HOW.

Key findings:

Emotional engagement captures the direction and intensity of emotional reactions and as such, is our key metric for this experiment. Additionally, attention measures the degree with which the viewer is processing the information in the ad. By measuring the emotional engagement and attention of several ads among selected markets prior to the tournament (neutral mood) and right after the chosen moments above (positive/victory or negative/defeat), we were able to identify and understand how victory and defeat can influence advertising outcomes.

Results showed that the World Cup is more about opportunity than it is about risk. The good news, as shown in the figure below: on average, emotional engagement for the tested ads increased after both victory and defeat. However, the increase experienced after victory was more than twice as large as the one in countries that were eliminated from the competition.

Fig 1 - Overall Scores: Shift between pre and post waves

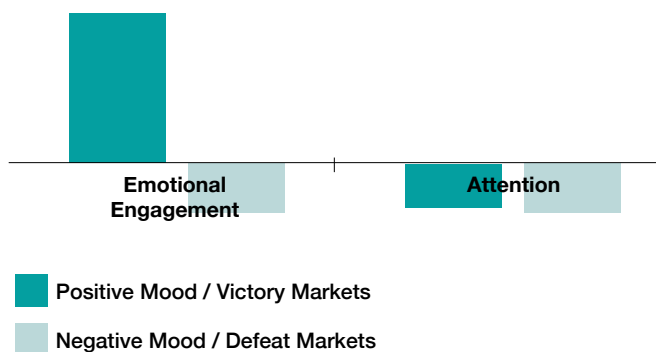


The degree of attentional processing, however, decreased for the second wave of testing, but the decrease was almost twice as pronounced in the markets that had been eliminated from the competition.

When we look closer at the creative elements that trigger that impact on mood, we can better understand how to tailor the execution to maximize the impact of a victory mood or minimize the demoralization of a potential defeat.

Creative elements that make reference to a nation or national symbol trigger memories of the competition and thus elicit different emotions based on its resolution. For countries that had been eliminated, we see a slight decrease on emotional engagement during national elements relative to the test we conducted before the defeat. In contrast, markets that had just experienced victory displayed a considerable increase in the positive emotional reaction to national symbols.

Fig 2 - National Symbols: Shift between pre and post waves



The World Cup victory best cases were the ones that fully leveraged World Cup elements, embracing the passion caused during national and football-related creative elements. These included real football players and some strong symbols (e.g. the flag, the tournament, the people, the music).

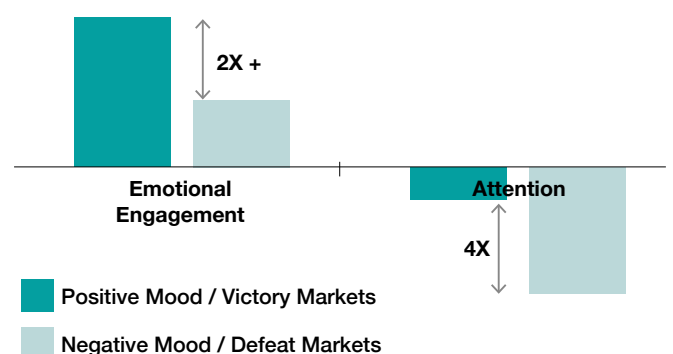
Some advertisers decided to “play it safe” taking advantage of the football tournament and used some subtle or

“bandwagon” World Cup elements (unknown people cheering and or playing football) while showing their product or service benefits. This “safer” strategy did no harm in nations that experienced defeat, nor did it impact strongly in nations who experienced victory. In other words, this is a sub-optimum strategy.

On the other hand, World Cup defeat worst cases reveal a risk that can’t be ignored. When these ads bring high expectations, assuming that victory is the only possible outcome, defeat brings frustration and emotional engagement is severely affected.

In summary, even if your team has been eliminated, we all still like football. We definitely like it better when we are on the winning side. **Markets that advanced experienced an increase in emotional engagement during football-related creative elements that were more than twice as large as the increase experienced in countries that had been eliminated. Defeated countries experienced a decline in attentional processing that was four times larger than that of the winning markets.**

Fig 3 - Football Moments: Overall shift between pre and post waves



Implications for Marketers' strategy:

The results of this multi-country study show that while the outcome of the competition can represent a real boost for your campaign effectiveness, the risk of losing effectiveness due to an adverse outcome of your country's team is rather minimal.

So at the end, what should advertisers do more of?

We believe that if they are in the game, they should play all in. If it makes sense for their brands and is aligned with their values, they should leverage the World Cup elements the best way they can. If your team wins, your brand gets extra rewards.

What should advertisers avoid or do less of?

They should not just mark their presence in the event; being subtle or playing it safe will not leverage results to full potential in case of victory and will not do much better in case of defeat. We also recommend advertisers control the risk by avoiding expectations of victory in the ad that would only makes sense if their team wins.

Some advertisers strategized this risk extremely well by leveraging World Cup symbols (national values, pride, football moments, celebrities, etc.) without being dependent on the winning outcome. Some did it in two very different forms:

- HSBC in the UK centred their ad on national pride by featuring how global their citizens are in their day-to-day



activities. From a Colombian and Guatemalan, to Costa Rican coffee, and football heroes from Chile, Argentina, Brazil and Belgium... it ends with an interesting line: "we are not an island... we are part of something far, far bigger". As we measured the UK ads within a positive mood (after beating Colombia), we can't share results on a "negative mood" but we suspect this ad will continue to do well.

- Quilmes, ABI beer in Argentina, featured a former player and coach in front of a full stadium to discuss the need to have a new contract between players and fans. Among other things, he asked them to stop asking the players for things they don't even ask God to perform. Leveraging many World Cup elements, and even after the defeat, this ad continued to do well!

Our final advice for 2022:

There is always the potential for the World Cup to be as unpredictable as we have seen in 2018. And yet, the good news is: **If you play well and smart, taking into consideration the influence of the fans' mood via winning and losing, your brand communications can be sure to win!**

If you would like to know more, or have access to the specific results for the ads that were tested in the UK, Germany, Argentina and Mexico, please contact one of our local teams:

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