

THE CREATIVE POWERS OF HOLIDAY ADVERTISING

HOW DID BRANDS DO IN 2020?

1/11/2021



Holiday creative discovers magic in enduring principles

For the 2020 holidays, advertisers tapped into seasonal sentiments heightened by an emotionally charged year. How well did they harness this opportunity to the enduring creative "powers" of effectiveness? We learned that the levers of creative effectiveness still matter when it comes to holiday messaging.

As companies' creative strategies evolve, new channel applications have emerged at a rapid rate. At Ipsos, we analyze our robust database of ads to identify evergreen principles of creative effectiveness in the areas of branding, engagement and persuasion. Our goal: to provide marketers with frameworks to guide their advertising. For this year's holiday season, we homed in on five of these principles, or "powers," as key to success.

The power of distinctive assets

The distinctive iconography of your brand – anything that conjures the brand in the mind of the consumer – is a key asset for effective branding. Brands with established cues and codes – colors, sounds, mascots and animations – gain a head start on achieving branded recall. An established creative style works better than just logos to retain a branded impression.

The power of brand role

Beyond effective executional branding, the brand must be tightly integrated into the central idea of the advertising. It is important for the brand to have a meaningful role in the story. Advertising that works for brands needs to credit it with a role.

The power of drama

Engage people through definitive, dramatic storytelling that has a beginning, a tension and a resolution. The seductive power of a story cannot be overrated. The more you engage people in your story, the more opportunity you have to convey your message and your brand.

The power of context

Acknowledging your context can be a tricky thing. There's a risk in getting lost in a "sea of same" with other brands. During the holidays, we see green and red everywhere. In spring 2020, we were overwhelmed with indistinguishable offers to "be here for you." This holiday season, we saw that leaning into the context of the times paid off for brands that made a clear and credible connection to their offer.

The Power of Simplicity

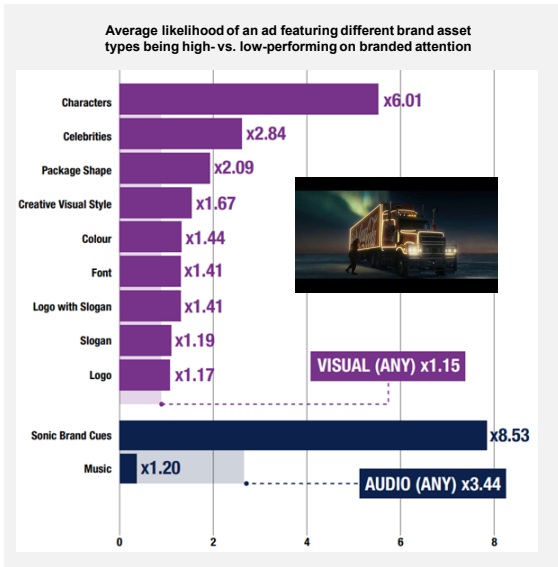
Simplicity in message and execution remains a key predictor of success. Brands should take particular care with vignettes, which must be connected by a clear thread to hold viewer attention and avoid confusion.

The five creative powers



The power of distinctive assets

An established creative style works better than just logos to retain a branded impression



The power of brand role

Effective advertising includes a meaningful role for the brand

In the Amazon spot the use of the brand was integral to the resolution of the story

The power of drama

Definitive, dramatic storytelling creates the strongest ads

The Kohl's ad performed strongly on:
Unique, Stirs Emotions, Will Talk About, Heartwarming, Genuine

Likelihood to achieve top tertile performance on behavior change

Ad Type	Likelihood to achieve top tertile performance on behavior change
Slice of Life	-4%
Problem/Solution	+2%
Testimonial	+20%
High drama	+30%

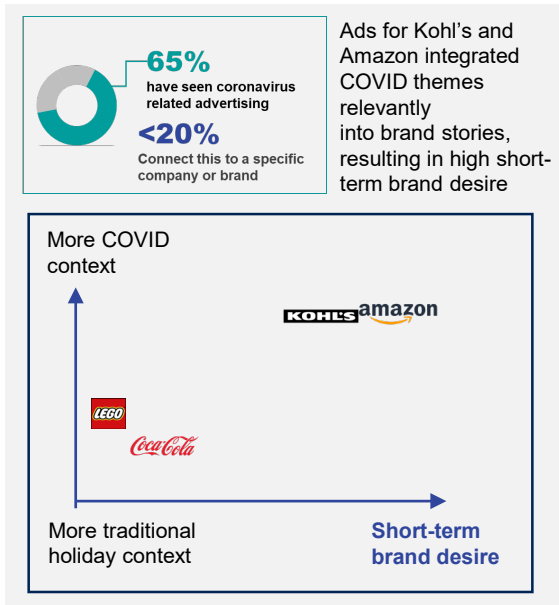
The five creative powers



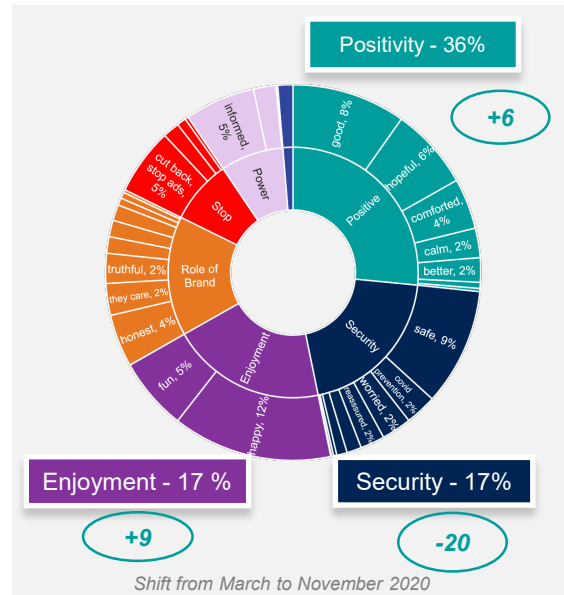
For the 2020 holidays, advertisers tapped into seasonal sentiments heightened by an emotionally-charged year. How well did they harness this opportunity?

The power of context

Leaning into the context of the times pays off, if you can brand it

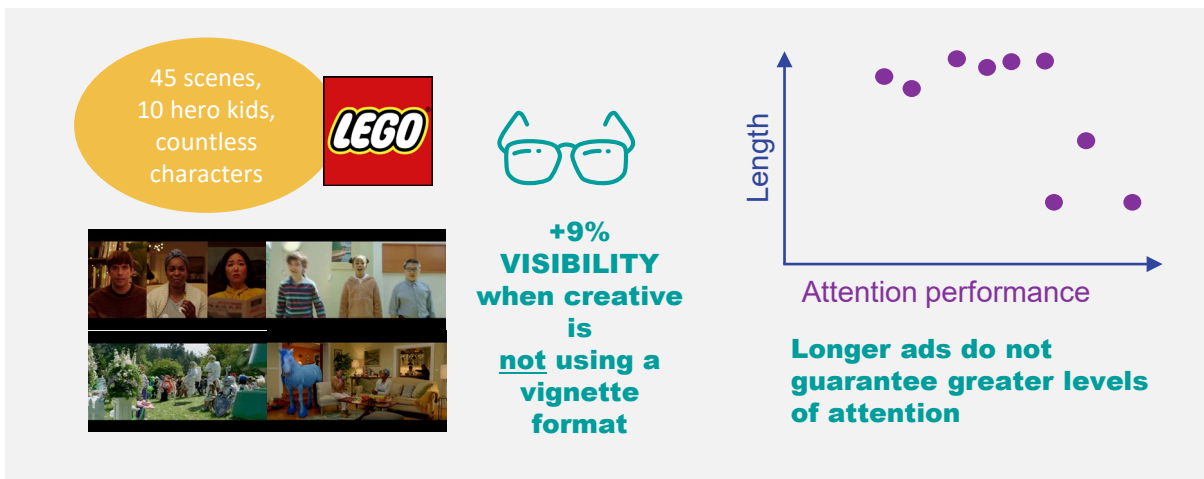


People want to feel enjoyment from advertising



The power of simplicity

Branding and message clarity suffer when viewers are overwhelmed



What we did

The examples used were from a study focused on holiday advertising using our Creative|Spark methodology. *Base: 150 adults 18-65. Fieldwork 11.26/27 2020*

Sources:

Advertising Feelings Wheel: Base: 2,000 adults 18-65 | Q: Based on current events, how do you want advertising to make you feel right now? *(Please be as specific as possible with your thoughts, feelings, and ideas).* Fieldwork 11.12.20

Powers: *An evidence-based look at successful creative strategies for marketers & agencies, grounded on a meta-analysis of 2,074 video ads tested in the U.S. with Ipsos' proprietary Creative Assessment solutions. Visit ipsos.com/en/creative-assessment for more information.*

COVID Ads Recall: *Ipsos Creative Challenge April 2020*