



# Ad Transferability Lessons Learned

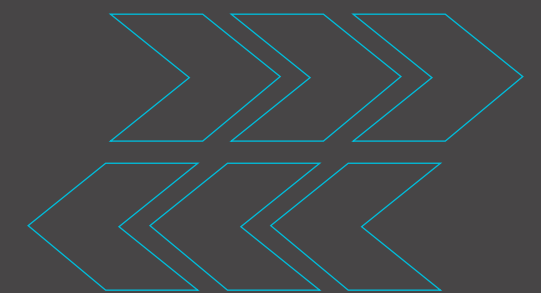
October 2012

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Transferring an ad across markets might seem tempting if budgets are being squeezed, or if the intention is to replicate the ad's success from the first market. However, transferring ads can be unpredictable. The same ad tested in different countries, even within the same region, does not always perform in the same way.

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Ipsos ASI's research found that 'airable' ads, i.e. those with an average or strong performance in the first market, fell into three categories:

- Ads that could be aired without changes in the second market and perform strongly (33%)
- Ads that would have benefited from optimisation or tweaks before being aired in the second market (34%)
- Ads that should not have been aired at all in the second market (33%)

By understanding some of the risks and complexities of ad transferability, we can seek to improve an advertiser's chances of making creative successfully transfer across borders. In this paper we will share our top lessons learned...

... the **quality of the creative**  
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1

## CREATIVE IS KING

Above all, the creative is key for driving an ad's success. From our global advertising database, we know that the quality of the creative drives around 75% of an ad's in-market success, with the remaining 25% being driven from media, competitive and environmental factors.

While media spend represents the majority of a campaign budget, the creative needs to be strong in order to earn a positive ROI. Strong creative can achieve higher impact in-market with less support than weak creative with a high level of media support. In-market spend will not offset poor creative.

The stronger the creative, the higher is the ad's probability of successful transfer across markets.

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## THINK BIG

A global campaign requires a strong and shared Big Idea – there are universal emotions, motivations and values that we all share, such as the desire for safety, warmth and affection. The Big Idea needs to be linked to the brand in a natural, authentic way so that the claim can be credible across regions.

However, the execution may still need to differ from market to market in order to bring the Big Idea to life, keep it fresh, and ensure relevance at a local level. Emotions may need to be triggered in different ways in different countries.

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## A GOOD STORY, WELL TOLD

The key drivers of an effective ad transcend geographical borders. While there is no formula for creating effective advertising, there are general patterns which characterise an effective ad:

- The ad needs to generate sufficient **emotional engagement**, e.g. through a fresh/engaging message/benefit or via the ad itself, in order to capture the viewer's attention.
- It should be **relevant**, and perhaps also be unique within its category, in order to offer a meaningful reason for the brand to be remembered and to be considered.
- **Simplicity** and **clarity** of execution can help communicate the brand benefit and potentially help it resonate with viewers.
- **Integrating the brand well** in the ad, e.g. through a commanding and connected role with the story or using strong brand presence, can help ensure that the brand is associated with the benefit. A good rule of thumb is to assess whether the story of the ad can be told without mentioning the brand – this is a good indication of sub-optimal brand integration.

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4

## ACT LOCAL

There are global brands, but there are not always global motivations for buying those brands. Advertising is influenced by culture, reflecting a country's social values, attitudes and lifestyle. It therefore makes sense to understand market differences and adjust the creative accordingly, to improve transferability success rates.

Understanding the advertising context is also key. Some styles, such as humour, might be more common in one country than another, affecting an ad's potential to succeed. For example, humour in UK advertising tends to focus more on wordplay, satire and more subtle approaches – which may be difficult to transfer across to markets where a slapstick style is more prevalent.

Additionally, to improve chances of transferring ads successfully, look for similarities between the origin and transfer market with regard to:

- **brand positioning**, such as the brand heritage, equity, penetration, life cycle stage, share of voice and positioning.
- the **market situation**, such as consumer needs and buying motivations, consumption, distribution, market size, competitive terrain and economic factors.

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## TEST BEFORE YOU INVEST

It is important not to mess with success, if all the other conditions, e.g. similar brand positioning and market situation, are right. Major changes such as format, key messages and casting, made to an ad in an effort to make it fit the transfer market can adversely affect the ad's sales potential.

Knowing what to maintain in strong copy can thus be critical to ensure transferability success. Testing the ad transfer candidates can help to define what strengths to maintain or optimise across markets. It can provide important local consumer insight in order to formulate local tweaks, while checking that the main message remains relevant and motivating to each market.

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These are general observations and guidelines that can be leveraged to increase the odds of a successful cross-market ad transfer. They are not hard rules as such, because we know that advertising can be magical, multi-dimensional and unpredictable – and that the best advertising will sometimes break at least some of the rules.

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## About Ipsos MORI

Ipsos MORI is one of the largest and best known research companies in the UK and a key part of the Ipsos group, a leading global research company. With a direct presence in 84 countries, our clients benefit from specialist knowledge drawn from our five global practices: public affairs research, advertising testing and tracking, media evaluation, marketing research and consultancy, customer satisfaction and loyalty.

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