



Simply, Better  
**Beyond the Hype**  
The Value of Emotional Advertising

## Defining Emotional Advertising

There was a lot of debate about the importance of emotional advertising in the zeitgeist-fuelled world of adland last year. Creative agencies searched for it, some clients yearned for it, and researchers naturally felt that they had the best way to evaluate it.

But we should remember that the concept of 'emotional advertising' has multiple meanings

and definitions in our marketing communication world. Before you start asking whether you truly have an 'emotional' campaign, you will possibly save yourself some time by agreeing what you are talking about. Do you mean 'system 1' or 'system 2', engagement, valence, resonance, physiological reactions, emotional priming or emotional brand building, or all of the above?

We consider all of these concepts when we evaluate a campaign. But we should remember that an emotional ad isn't one we classify as such, **it is one people have an emotional response to.** That should be the final arbiter of success or failure when judging creative work's ability to deliver those elusive and much sought after emotional reactions.

## Opposing camps? Emotional vs Rational

So how did the debate play out this year? Well, we are talking about advertising here, which of course gives us licence to use metaphor, exaggeration and hype, in order to emphasise a point. So let us imagine two camps entering the emotional battleground, both fuelled by the self-righteous confidence that they are following a path to success.

Camp one is all about the emotions. They will tend to be more concerned with the creative and how it makes people feel. They've read the books (or someone has told them about the books at least), and can quote evolutionary psychology and the work of Daniel Kahnemann. They are all well versed in the received wisdom around how advertising works these days.

For this group it really is just a case of be emotional and let the ROI come rolling in...

Camp two, by contrast, is more rational, has some sales targets and need to hit them, and need to hit them now. This means that they need to sell stuff. That stuff is their product, therefore they would like to see their product in their advertising. They want to show how it works, what it does and why it might be useful to people who want to buy it. Their product is the most interesting thing in the world, so why wouldn't people willingly drop everything they are doing and spare some valuable time learning about what their product or service does?

## The Long and Short of It

So how to reconcile these seemingly diametrically opposing factions? The answer is to avoid the conjecture, opinion and hype and seek fact based truth. Les Binet and Peter Field's comprehensive interrogation of the IPA Effectiveness Awards, 'The Long and the Short of it', provides that truth.

Through meta-analysis of the short and long-term effects of all the hundreds of campaigns contained within the database, they are able to prove that rational messaging is great at delivering

short-term effects. Fine, but this impact comes and goes without delivering more sustained effects that benefit the brand in the longer term. Conversely, emotional campaigns often take a while to have as big an impact, but work to the brand's benefit in the long run via 'emotional priming'.

The authors also demonstrate that while most campaigns use both rational and emotional approaches, those campaigns with a primary focus on emotional are more effective across all metrics.

So it seems that the 'emotional' camp wins? Not quite. There is a watch out. If you are going with an 'emotional priming' campaign, you need to have a good activation strategy running alongside to deliver your sales targets. This keeps the wolves from your door until the long-term effect comes through (and keeps the 'rational' camp happy).

## Some Emotional Winners of 2014

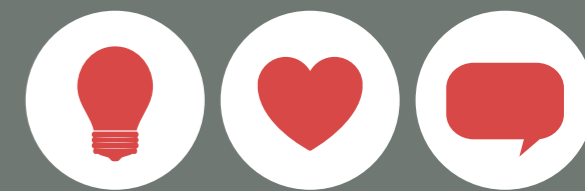
So if emotional campaigns are the key to long-term profitability, how do we measure them so that we know people have genuinely experienced a strong emotional response? Remember, the response should be the ultimate definition of whether a campaign is emotional or not!

Throughout 2014 we evaluated campaigns that truly hit the emotional high spots, using measures that are designed to evaluate this aspect more sensitively than traditional measures of recall and

persuasion. These range from classic diagnostics that reflect personal resonance, distinctiveness and entertainment, to looking at subtle shifts in brand closeness by observing and deriving campaign impacts using test and control designs.

We also employ facial coding techniques to understand an individual's instinctive 'emotional journey' as they go through an ad or a piece of branded video content. A participant views a piece of video, and as they do so we record their micro

expressions through a webcam. We put this through an algorithm and it gives us six emotions: happiness, surprise, confused, scared, disgusted and sad. When we bring these together we get a measure of emotional engagement with the ad.



**Jon Harper**  
T: +44 (0) 203 059 4787  
E: Jon.harper@ipsos.com

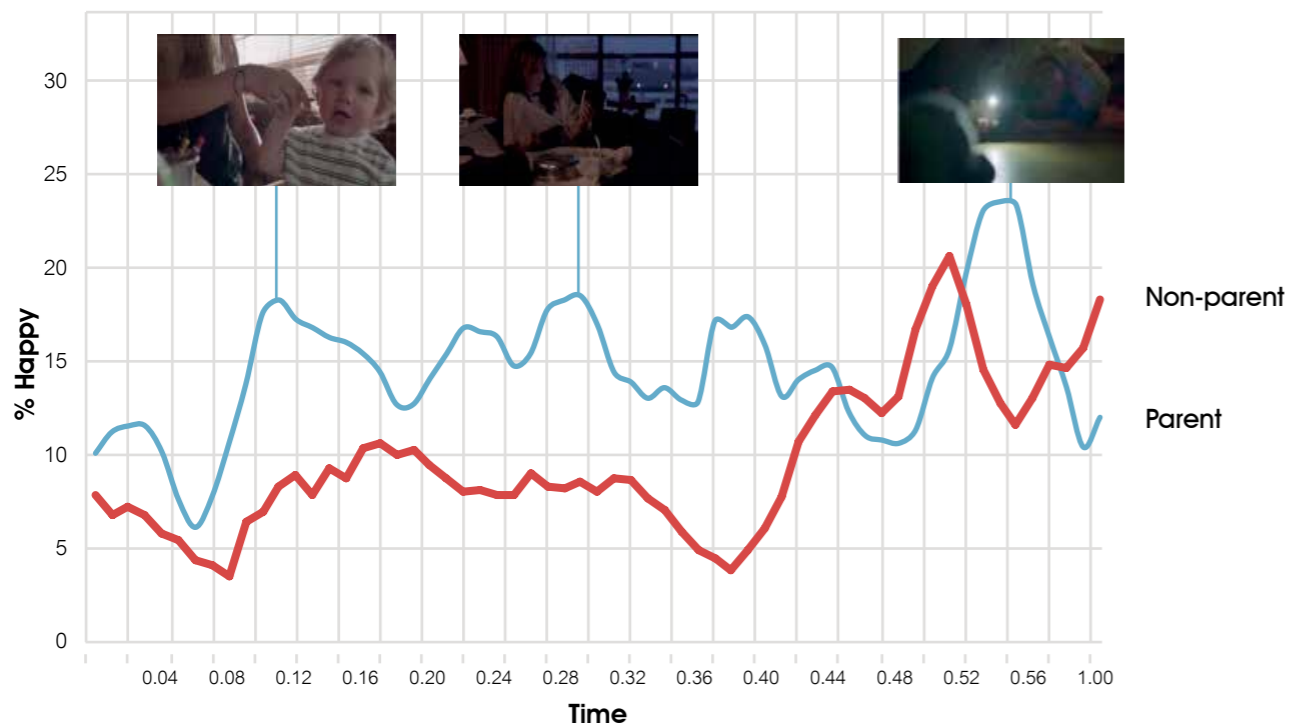
# Case 1 Emotional Involvement - Apple

Last year's iPhone 5s campaign was a great example of 'emotional involvement'. This genre of advertising works by touching emotions or feelings in people and/or by being well liked. It is looking to generate emotional engagement with the campaign so that positive image and associations are transferred across to the brand. Of course, there is a long purchase cycle on mobile phones for most

of us, normally a year, sometimes longer. The primary role for this advertising is to warm people up to the brand and therefore it is crucial that this campaign achieves a positive emotional response. Looking at the ongoing level of emotional engagement throughout the ad from our facial coding data, we see that if we refine the results down to the people for

whom this story is most personally relevant (Parents!), a much bigger spike of engagement is evident at the beginning. It just keeps developing as the ad continues amongst those fortunate enough to have experienced at first hand the joys of parenthood.

## Happiness - Attractive and impactful for parents



This demonstrates that when we are trying to pull on heartstrings, it is important that we connect the brand to the things the target audience really care about in their life. Given this sustained emotional engagement journey, it is no surprise that for parents the campaign achieved a **16% uplift in consideration** for the brand over and above a control cell that was not exposed to the advertising.

# Case 2 Emotional Fame.... no formula for success

We have also identified three great examples of 'emotional fame' campaigns. They work by getting the brand talked about and generally making it more famous, as people are inspired to share their enthusiasm on and offline for the content and the brand.

These campaigns stand out distinctively from other adverts in their category. Binet and Field note that this particular subset of emotional advertising is most likely to deliver very large business effects.

We measure an execution's ability to inspire people to share either on or offline via a retransmission measure, which has a strong relationship with subsequent online views. Retransmission potential is shown as a score out of 100.

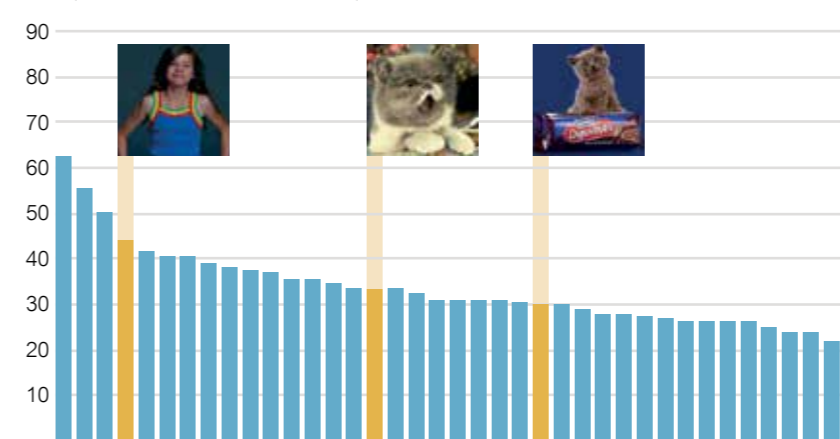
All of these ads are in the top 10% of our database on this measure so they have massive potential for retransmission, delivered by the combination of cute cats and the pleasure of chocolate biscuits (McVities), silly, senseless, unfettered emotional joy and

80s feel good adult rock (3), or a thought provoking reveal into Society's attitude about women (Always). This potential was of course backed up by the online views they achieved in reality.

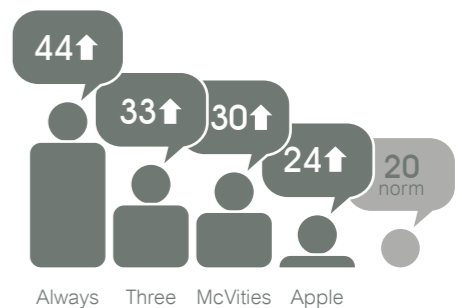
Retransmission means ad content gets passed along, or helped along or otherwise shared in some way by consumers. Retransmission is a reward; an ad can be good without it but having it potentially increases ad affect.

## A massive potential for Retransmission

RTP (Retransmission Potential) Hall of Fame: Top 10% of UK ads for RTP



## Retransmission potential (RTP)

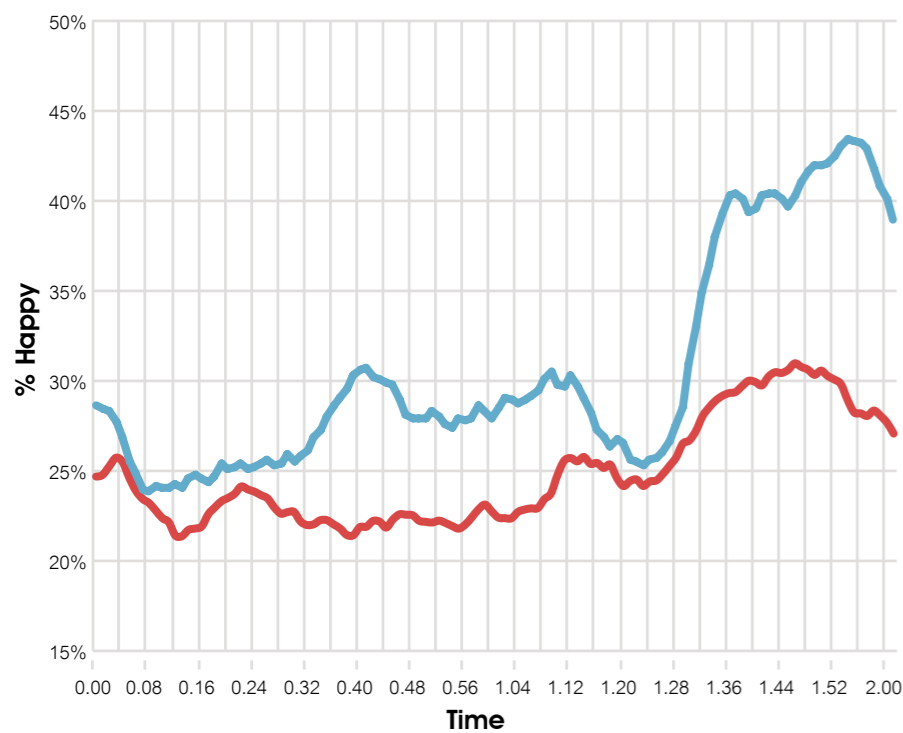


This means nothing of course if the work is not delivering a response for the brand. They all, in their own way achieved that, with uplifts in brand saliency and purchase interest (McVities.. yes emotional ads can do short term effects too!), consideration (3) and, in the case of the Always social content, brand closeness for women **and** men.



## Case 3 John Lewis ends the year on an emotional high

As the year came to a conclusion, the much anticipated John Lewis seasonal effort was 'seeded' online to great effect before hitting the TV screens. Our research showed they struck gold again this year, gleaning an emotional response that comfortably out-performed last year's effort.



**Monty the Penguin 2014**  
(Overall Emotional Engagement 95.0%)

**Bear and the Hare 2013**  
(Overall Emotional Engagement 93.3%)



It intrigues from the first second, and takes the viewer on an emotional journey full of happiness and smiles tinged with sadness and concern, before rising to a crescendo of feel-good emotions. Monty the Penguin's search for 'real love' gives licence for a child's imagination to run free with great effect, ultimately connecting to many of the things people really care about at Christmas.

## Overcoming Indifference – why emotions matter

These impressive responses highlight the key reason why emotions matter. People don't care that much about most brands, so powerful high quality creative, that elicits a genuine emotional response will help overcome that indifference. Making the brand distinctive, delivering impressive outcomes for your business.

It means the work is more likely to be noticed, engaged with, shared and discussed. Beyond

that, it will help to emotionally prime people's relationships with the brand, naturally associating it with positive experiences and associations that will draw people to the brand in the long-term and actually make them open to rational messages too.

We all have short-term pressures, but we should remind ourselves that brands win when they think long-term.

So here's to an emotional 2015, but one in which we all have better clarity in what we are trying to achieve. Recognising that we should leave the defining of what's **emotional advertising** with those that matter most - the people who experience the work!

People don't care that much about most brands, so powerful high quality creative, that elicits a genuine emotional response will help overcome that indifference and deliver impressive outcomes for your business.

### Sources:

*The Long and the Short of it:*  
Les Binet and Peter Field (2013)

150 participants:  
McVities: 16-64 year olds who have used sweet biscuits in the last 6 months

### Sample:

150 participants:  
Always: 16-30 year olds

150 participants:  
Three: 18-30 year old high mobile internet users

150 participants:  
Apple: 16-64 year old smartphone users (34% of the sample were parents)

212 participants:  
John Lewis: UK adults 18+



At Ipsos ASI UK, we believe advertising and communications research should be fertiliser, not weedkiller, and a force for empowering creativity and building stronger brands.

Using iterative, flexible approaches, we empower our clients to find a big idea that's universal, and founded on human motivations.

We help brands to develop strategies that grow their business by using forward-looking measures of brand relationships that link to real-world behaviour – measures that are simple and intuitive and reflect that brands are heuristics for decision making.

Using neuroscientific techniques, such as Facial Coding and Biometrics, we enable our clients to understand and strengthen the emotional response to their advertising. We derive the impact of advertising on the brand – not by asking people how it affects them - and by revealing underlying and subconscious brand perceptions through Implicit Reaction Time (IRT) tests.

We help brands make campaigns that become famous by evaluating the potential of their activity to achieve virality through measures that reflect online and offline sharing behaviours, and using online ad replacement to test campaigns in the real world, in real time.

Ultimately, we believe that simplicity of purpose, communications and service is just as important to great research as it is to building great brands.

**For more information, please contact:**



**Jon Harper**

**T:** +44 (0) 203 059 4787

**E:** [Jon.harper@ipsos.com](mailto:Jon.harper@ipsos.com)