



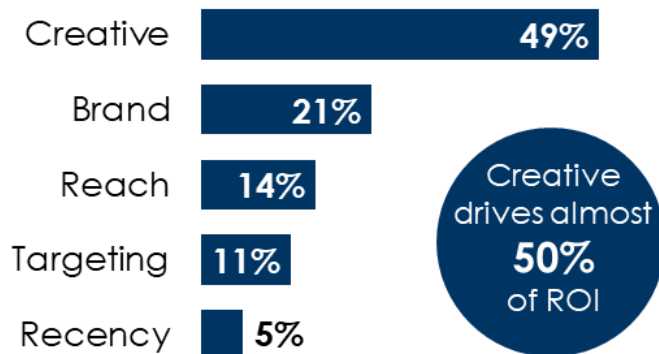
Best practices from marketing effectiveness leaders and advertising measurement firms

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Creative is a major sales driver

Creative is critical to driving sales and ROI

Nielsen study of nearly 450 advertising campaigns and elements that contribute to sales lift on all major media platforms



“Creative is a key driver of advertising performance/campaign effectiveness, second only to investment levels.”
- Analytic Partners

Source: NCSolutions, Five Keys to Advertising Effectiveness, 2023: NCSolutions analyzed nearly 450 CPG campaigns across both digital and TV, using NCS Sales Effect to measure results. Each campaign was evaluated according to the 18 features that represent the five keys of advertising: Analytic Partners, 20 Insights for 20 Years

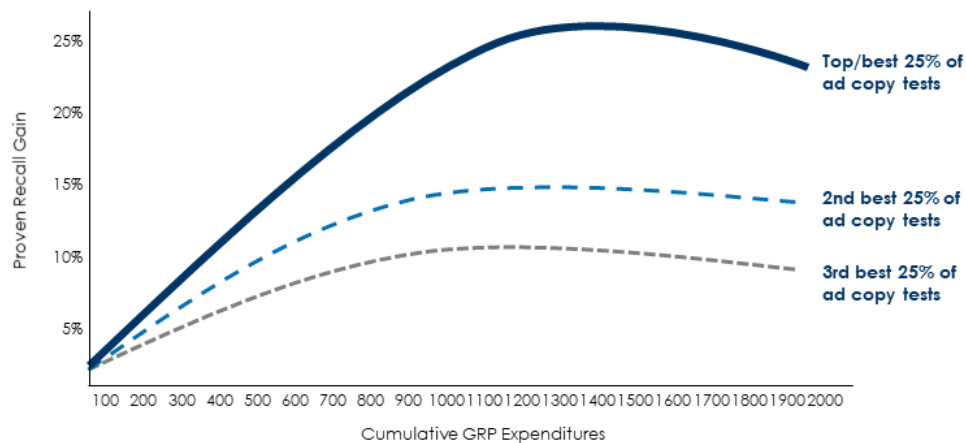
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A major Nielsen study of sales drivers from ~450 campaigns across all media reveals creative represents 49% of sales.

Strong creative = better ad recall

Superior creative delivers 3-4X more ROI

Creative quality is the primary driver of "break through," accounting for 75% of variance in brand/message recall levels



Source: Ipsos ASI TV Creative Testing Database

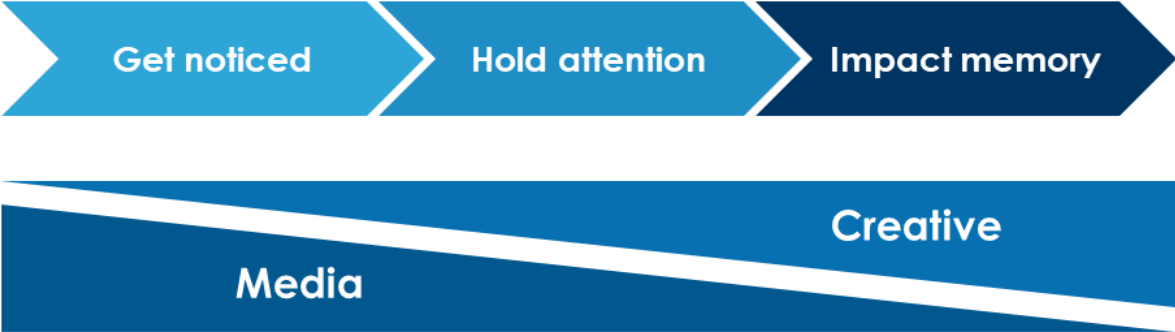
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IPSOS ASI reveals the better the creative, the stronger the "break through," the ability for a brand or message to be recalled.

Creative is vital to building attention

Association of National Advertisers: The Attention Pathway

The three stages of The Attention Pathway: The impact of media decreases while the impact of creative increases along the path



Source: The Association of National Advertisers

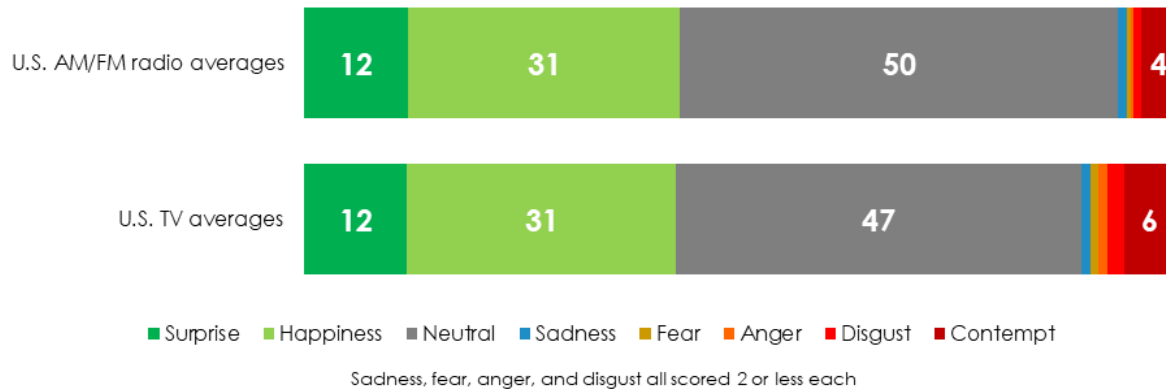
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The ANA (Association of National Advertisers) and Adelaide, the leader in attention measurement, define the three phases of the attention pathway: get noticed, hold attention, and impact memory. High quality creative has a strong impact on holding attention and creating memories.

Beware the cost of dull

Emotions build brands but neutrality (feeling nothing) is the main response to advertising

Average emotional response of all commercial category U.S. TV ads (55,000+) and AM/FM radio ads (151)



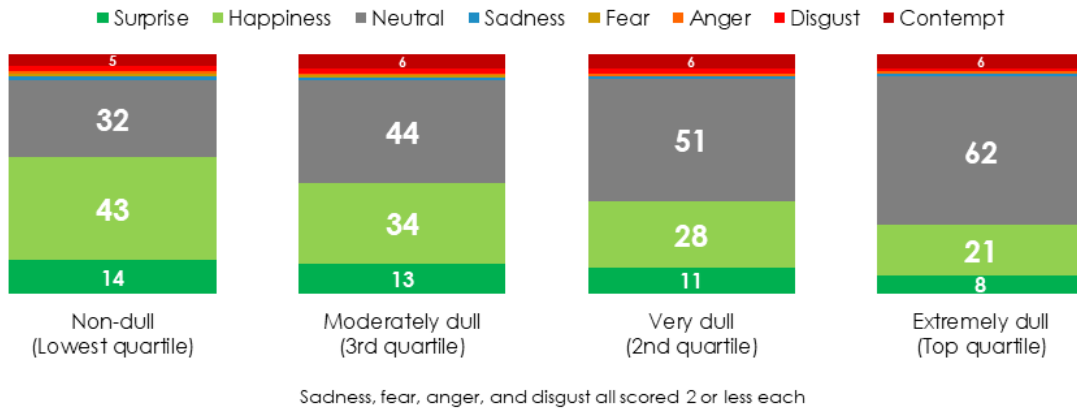
Source: System1, eatbigfish., Peter Field, Jon Evans; *Another Dull Whitepaper: The Extraordinary Cost of Dull*



Boring ads cost a fortune. A major new study by creative testing giant System1, Peter Field, the legendary “godfather of marketing effectiveness,” the IPA (The Institute for Practitioners in Advertising), and Adam Morgan, founder of eatbigfish., reveals brands have to spend significantly more media money on dull ads compared to interesting, non-dull ads. [Download the study via this link.](#)

Grouping U.S. ads into dullness quartiles, happiness and surprise are the two active emotions that suffer most as neutrality rises

Average emotional response of all commercial category U.S. TV ads (55,000+) tested in System1's Test Your Ad Premium platform premium since 2017; ~13,900 ads per quartile



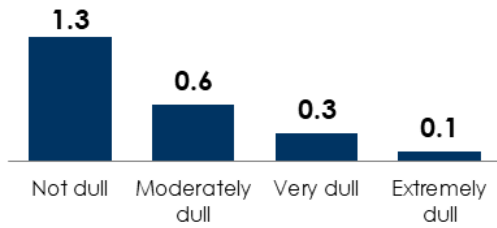
Source: System1, eatbigfish., Peter Field, Jon Evans; Another Dull Whitepaper: The Extraordinary Cost of Dull



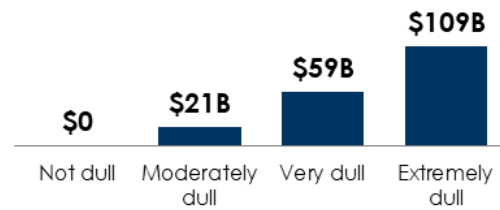
According to the report: “An important finding: higher Neutrality only really has an impact on positive emotions – Happiness and Surprise. The level of negative emotion, including Anger, Contempt, Disgust, stays constant. So, playing safe is a poor strategy. On average, all ads, whatever their Neutrality level, generate some negative feeling. You can’t avoid it, and if you try, you risk increasing Neutral response and killing off positive emotion.”

The cost of dull advertising to U.S. brands: The duller the ad, the greater the cost

Annualized share of market gain points projected from Star ratings by level of dullness



Estimated extra annual spend over current levels needed to match forecast growth potential of not dull ads



How to read: The not dull ads can grow a brand's market share by an average of 1.3 points per year while extremely dull ads barely grow market share (0.1). Extremely dull ads would have to spend an additional \$109B to generate the share growth of the least dull ads.

Source: System1, eatbigfish., Peter Field, Jon Evans; *Another Dull Whitepaper: The Extraordinary Cost of Dull*



Creative consistency drives business outcomes

Building blocks of creative consistency: Creative Consistency Score (CCS) is a new brand metric, measured over a multi-year period

Creative foundations

Consistent positioning
Creative idea tenure
Agency tenure

Culture of consistency

Creative wear in
Cross channel consistency
Commitment to the show
Reusing creative assets

Consistent execution

Consistent brand assets
Consistent tone of voice
Fluent device tenure
Brand slogan commitment
Hired device tenure
Soundtrack commitment

Source: System1 & IPA; The Magic Of Compound Creativity How Consistency Leads To Creative Quality, Stronger Brands, And Greater Profits

System1

IPA

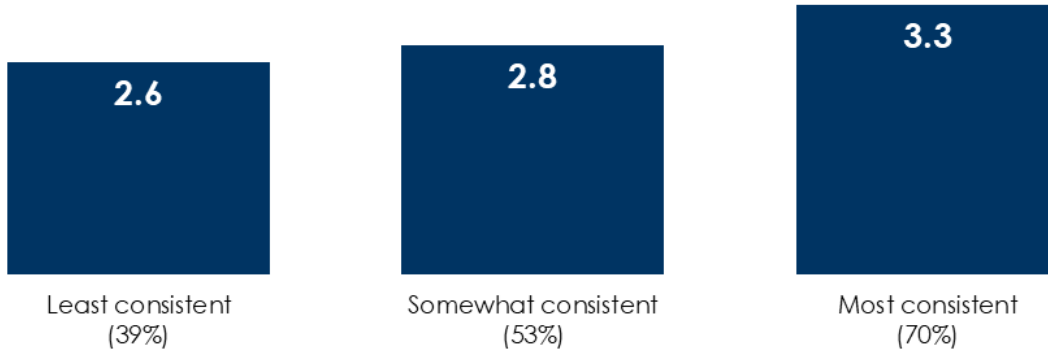
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“The Magic of Compound Creativity,” a new study from creative testing giant System1 and the IPA (The Institute for Practitioners in Advertising) found brands that have consistent creative foundations, a culture of consistency, and consistent executions generate much stronger creative test scores, brand performance, and business outcomes.

[Download the study via this link.](#)

Consistent brands produce higher creative quality

Creative quality: Average Star Rating, per brand consistency



Average creative consistency score: Ordered by creative consistency score, terciles

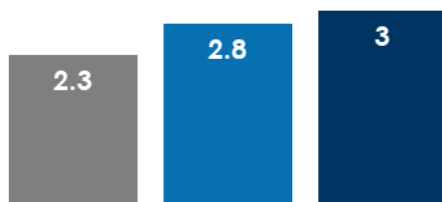
Source: System1 & IPA: The Magic Of Compound Creativity How Consistency Leads To Creative Quality, Stronger Brands, And Greater Profits; 56 brands across 44 categories analyzed between 2018 and 2024 for 13 different Creative Consistency Features, split into thirds; 4164 TV ads with \$3.2bil media spend, tested with System1's Test Your Ad with 624,600 U.K. Nat. Rep. respondents. Star Rating ranges from 1.0 to 5.9, axis starts at global averages.



The greater the creative consistency, the better the ads test. Longer creative agency relationships result in greater creative effectiveness.

Brands that change agencies less produce higher creative quality

Average creative quality
Star Rating, 5-year period, per agency changes



Two+ changes One change No changes

Average advertising distinctiveness change
Annual Fluency Rating (brand linkage)
change, 5-year period, per agency changes



Two+ changes One change No changes

Ordered by creative consistency score, terciles

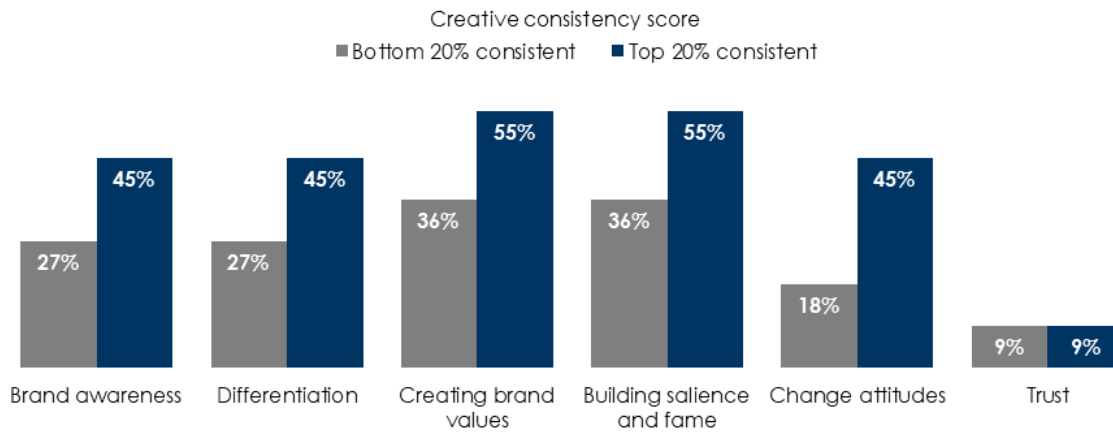
Source: System1 & IPA: The Magic Of Compound Creativity How Consistency Leads To Creative Quality, Stronger Brands, And Greater Profits; 56 brands across 44 categories analyzed between 2018 and 2024 for 13 different Creative Consistency Features, split into thirds; 4164 TV ads with \$3.2bil media spend, tested with System1's Test Your Ad with 624,600 U.K. Nat. Rep. respondents. Star Rating ranges from 1.0 to 5.9, axis starts at global averages.



Creative consistency means stronger brands

Consistent brands are stronger brands

Percentage reporting very large brand effects: Latest campaign in IPA databank

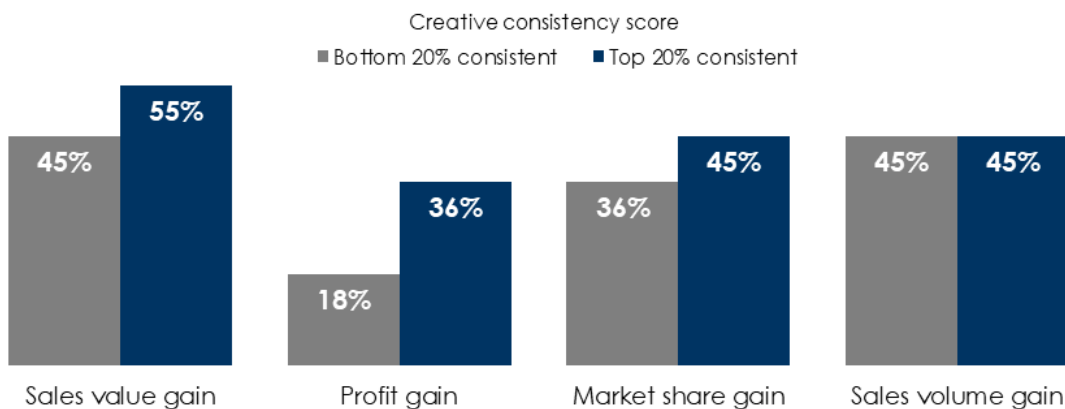


Source: System1 & IPA: The Magic Of Compound: Creativity How Consistency Leads To Creative Quality, Stronger Brands, And Greater Profits; 56 brands across 44 categories analyzed between 2018 and 2024 for 13 different Creative Consistency Features, comparing the most to the least consistent brands. 4164 TV ads with £3.3bn media spend. Matched with latest IPA awards cases.



The most consistent brands generate substantially greater business outcomes than less consistent brands

Percentage reporting very large business effects: Latest campaign in IPA databank



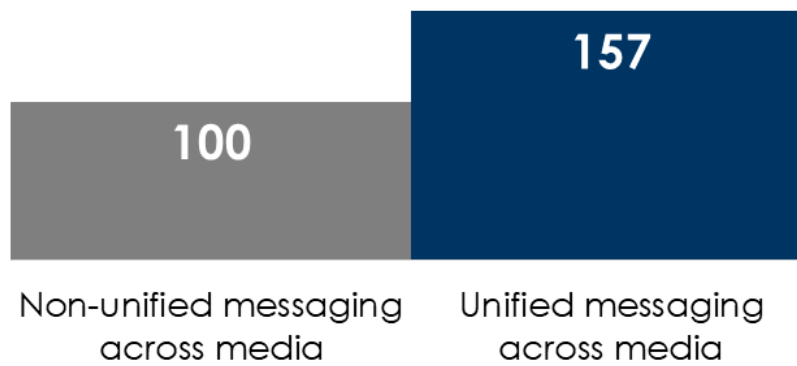
Source: System1 & IPA: The Magic Of Compound: Creativity How Consistency Leads To Creative Quality, Stronger Brands, And Greater Profits; 56 brands across 44 categories analyzed between 2018 and 2024 for 13 different Creative Consistency Features, comparing the most to the least consistent brands. 4164 TV ads with £3.3bn media spend. Matched with latest IPA awards cases.



Consistent, unified creative across media delivers greater brand equity impact

Use consistent, unified creative across different media to deliver impact

Indexed impact of different types of cross-platform creative strategy on equity metrics



Source: Millward Brown, 2016, Analysis of 50 campaigns from 2011-2015; Impact shown is aggregated effect on Association, Motivation and Salience metrics, established through online surveys of 1,400 consumers per campaign. 100 is index for non-unified.

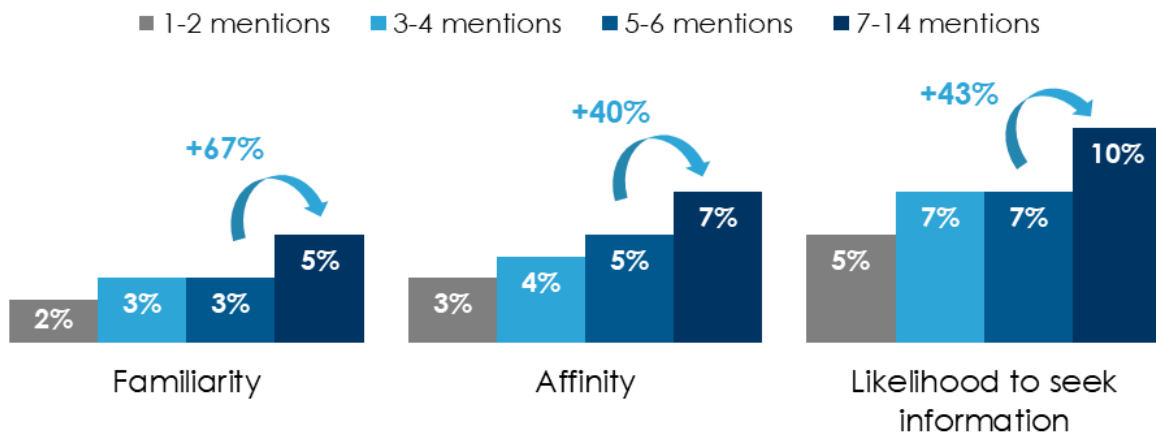
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Kantar Millward Brown reveals campaigns with unified messaging, consistent creative elements, and consistent distinctive assets generate far greater brand equity impact.

Brand early and often

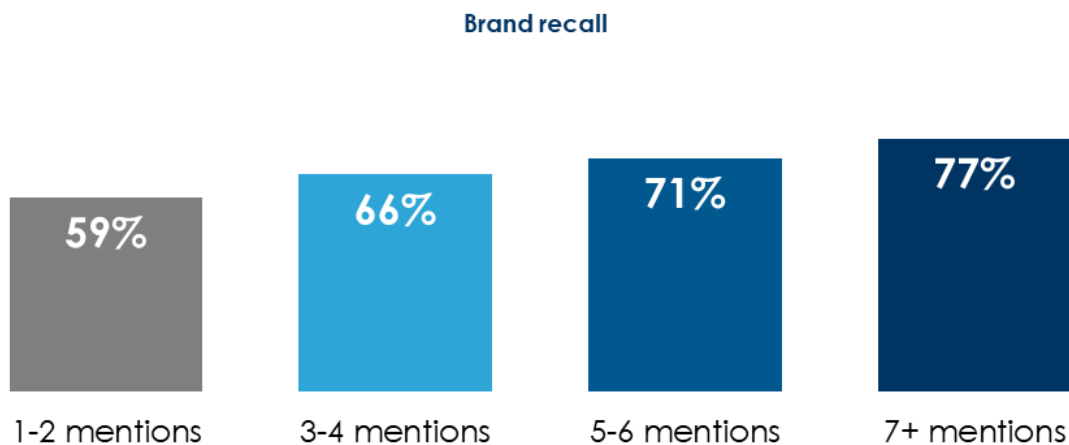
In audio ads, the brand should appear within the first two seconds and five times after that in a :30 second ad.

More brand mentions drive lift



Source: Nielsen Podcast Brand Effect Study 2020; Chart figures reflect average Top 2 Box Exposed percentage. [FAMILIARITY] How familiar are you with the following retailers? [AFFINITY] How do you feel about the following retailers? [INFO SEEK INTENT] How likely are you to look up information on each of the following retailers in the near future? **AUDIO ACTIVE GROUP**

More brand mentions drive higher ad recall



Source: Nielsen Podcast Brand Effect Study 2020; Chart figures reflect average Top 2 Box Exposed percentage. [RECALL] Which brands do you recall from your experience with the audio content? **AUDIO ACTIVE GROUP**

Say your brand slowly and clearly

System1: Say the name of the brand slowly and clearly

Andrew Tindall, Senior VP
Global Partnerships at System1,
the leading commercial
creativity effectiveness
testing firm, author of *Listen
Up!*, a new book on audio
creative effectiveness

“**SLOW DOWN:** An ad being clear and easy to understand is key to building positive emotions. Everyone overestimates how familiar listeners are with your brand. **Ads need to slowly and clearly say brand names.** The only brands that can get away with not doing this are those that have invested in audio assets heavily for years. There are not many of these brands!”

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Whether host read or pre-recorded, take great care to **say the name of the brand slowly and clearly.**

[For more audio creative best practices, download Andrew Tindall's "Listen Up!" report from System1 on audio effectiveness best practices.](#)

Fewer words mean greater standout and site traffic

The Message:
Less is more; The fewer words used in an ad, the more it will stand out and be effective

Jason Brownlee, Founder of UK firm Colourtext, uses a never-seen-before dataset to examine the impact word density has on the effectiveness of audio advertising



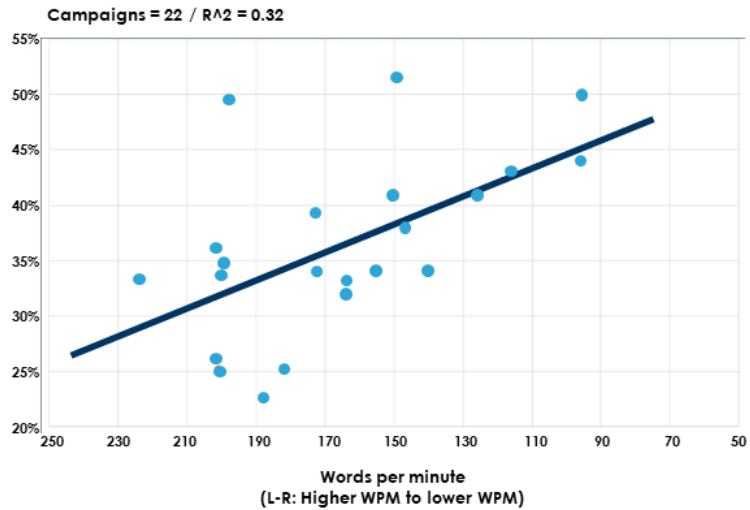
Jason Brownlee, Founder of Colourtext



As audio ad word count decreases, Creative Standout increases; For every 10 words eliminated from an ad, Creative Standout can be expected to increase by 1%

Source: Audiotrack / Big Audio Datamine / Colourtext 2022;
<https://colourtext.com/music-and-audio/what-is-the-perfect-word-rate-for-an-audio-ad/>

% who said agree (8, 9, 10): This ad stands out

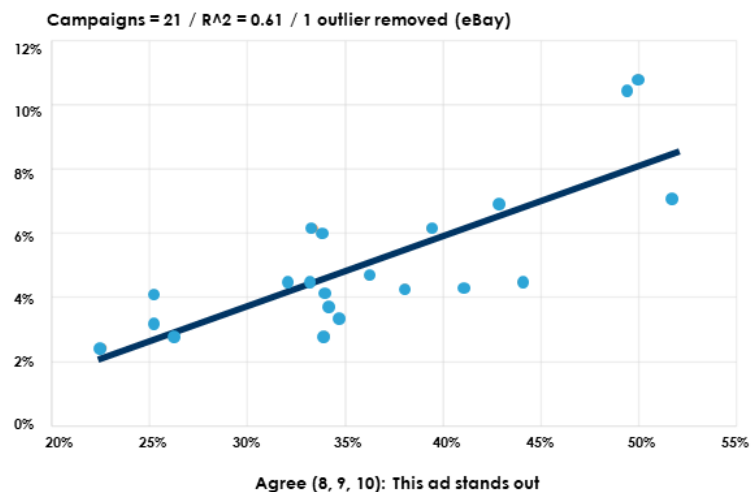


Eliminate ten words from the ad and creative standout improves by 1%. Each point of standout improvement generates a .25% increase in website response rate.

Creative Standout in audio advertising is very strongly linked to ad response in the form of website visits; For each 1% rise in Creative Standout achieved by an audio ad, its web response rate increases by 0.25%

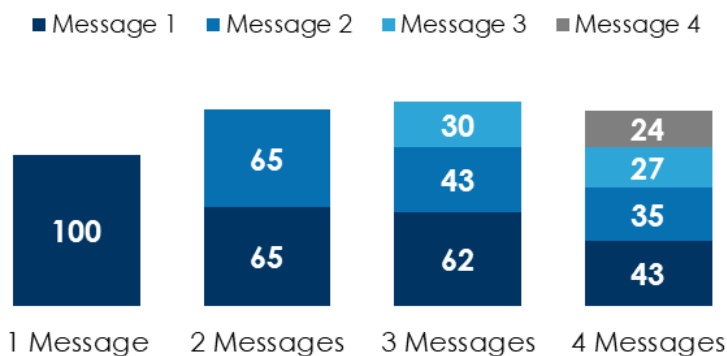
Source: Audiotrack / Big Audio Datamine / Colourtext 2022;
<https://colourtext.com/music-and-audio/what-is-the-perfect-word-rate-for-an-audio-ad/>

% who said YES: I accessed the brand's website



The fewer the messages, the greater the recall

Kantar Millward Brown: The fewer the messages, the greater the recall



Millward Brown:
The more messages an ad attempts to communicate, the **lower** the likelihood of a single message being communicated

How to read: The first message of an ad with four messages has 43% of the recall of an ad with one message.

Source: Millward Brown

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Kantar Millward Brown, a leader in creative effectiveness measurement, finds the fewer the messages an ad communicates, the greater the likelihood a single message can be recalled. Conversely, more messages causes recall to plunge.

Say one thing

Christopher Smith, Principal and Chief Creative Officer at Plot Twist Creativity Dallas, says, “A lot of advertisers think that because radio affords you sixty or thirty seconds, they have the time to say everything there is to say about their brand. It’s why so many commercials end up sounding like laundry lists. The truth is, if you want to talk about everything, then you really have nothing to talk about.

In advertising, you need to have one thing to say.

AM/FM radio’s sixty seconds of ad time just gives you the chance to say it in an entertaining and memorable way.

A radio spot is not a hotel: You don’t have to fill all the space

Advertisers think they have to take the amount of time they have and fill it up with words or music. Many forget that silence is a storytelling element, too. Every second of an ad doesn’t have to be filled. No commercial needs to be wall-to-wall talking, sound effects, or music. Sometimes silence draws people in more.”

[Principal and Chief Creative Officer at Plot Twist Creativity Dallas Christopher Smith’s audio creative best practices](#)

Ensure audibility

The Tools: Make the ad audible and easy to understand

A recent ABX creative study of a quick service restaurant's 3 AM/FM radio ads found all of the ads scored below average for message delivery, being clear, and understood.

The lower scores were attributed to the fast pace nature and lack of understanding of the dialogue in the ads.

Best practice: For effective creative, pace the script so that it can be easily understood, make sure it is audibly clear, and keep the content simple and intuitive. Ensure that speaking voices are foreground and not overwhelmed by music and background effects.

	Ad 1	Ad 2	Ad 3	ABX AM/FM radio averages	ABX QSR AM/FM radio averages
Message:					
Delivery	71	76	87	95	104
Clear	75	79	89	98	105
Understood	71	73	84	92	101

Source: Advertising Benchmark Index - ABX

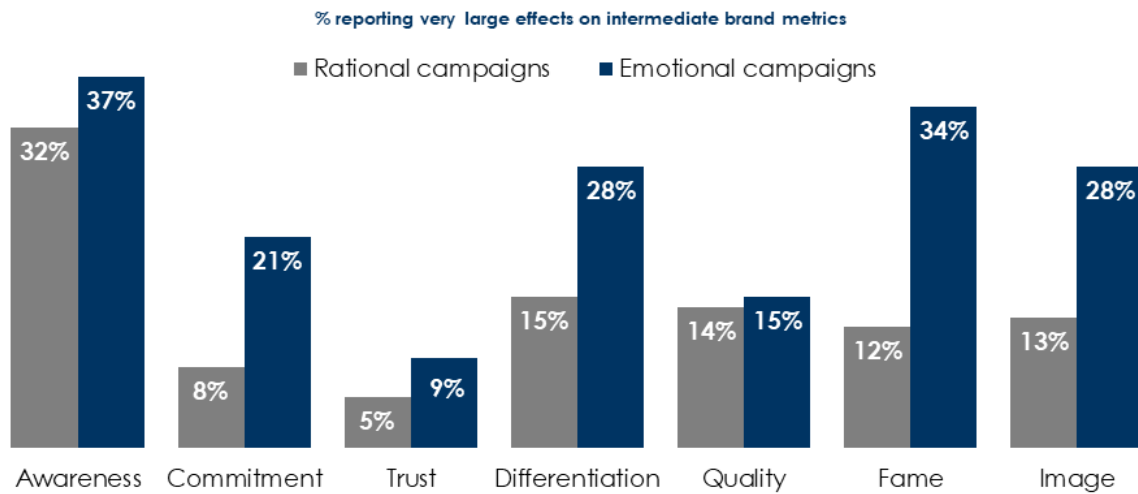
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ABX, a leader in creative testing, has tested thousands of audio ads. They test ads for being clear, understood, and for message delivery.

Ensure your ads are not rushed. Speaking voices should be foreground and not overwhelmed by music and background effects.

Emotion is your best selling tool

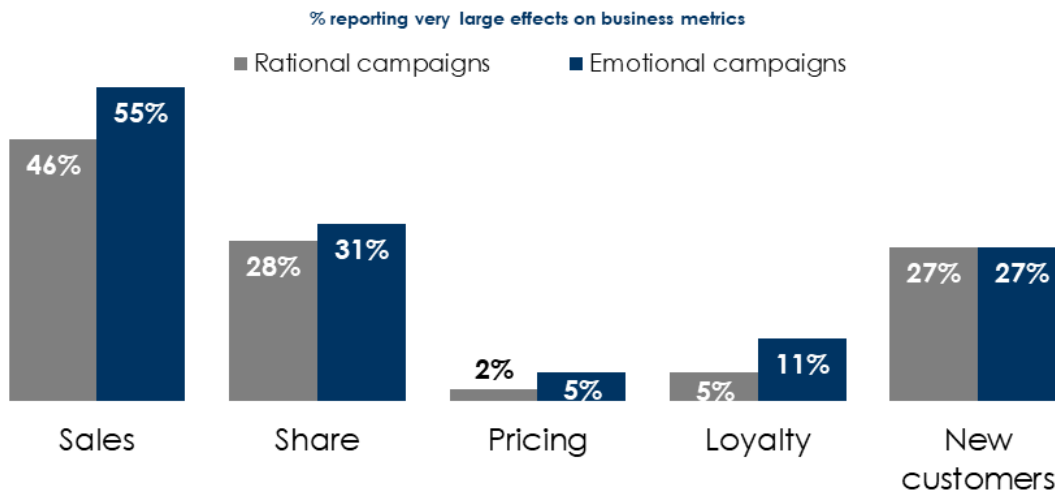
Emotional campaigns build brands more strongly



Source: The Long and the Short of It: Balancing Short and Long-Term Marketing Strategies; Les Binet, Head of Effectiveness, adam&eve DDB & Peter Field, Marketing Consultant

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Emotional campaigns yield stronger long-term business effects



Source: The Long and the Short of It: Balancing Short and Long-Term Marketing Strategies; Les Binet, Head of Effectiveness, adam&eve DDB & Peter Field, Marketing Consultant

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Research conducted by the “godfathers of marketing effectiveness” Les Binet and Peter Field reveals emotion-based campaigns drive stronger brand equity and business outcomes.



Andrew Tindall from System1 published “Listen up!”, a major report on audio advertising effectiveness. Key finding: the more you feel, the more you buy. Greater positive feelings earn a better star rating which predicts future market share growth.

[Download “Listen Up!” via this link.](#)

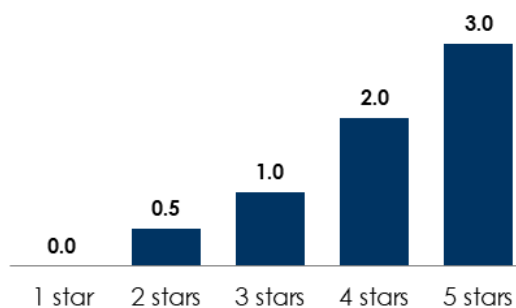
System1 star ratings correlate creative quality with long-term share growth; The more you feel, the more you buy

Star rating:
Predicts long-term brand growth from the emotional response to the creative and how positive the reaction is



Low	Modest	Good	Strong	Exceptional
Distribution of global ads				
42%	34%	18%	5%	1%

Likely long-term % share gain by star rating
(Assumes advertiser share of voice is at least +10% greater than its market share)



Source: System1



Right brain elements drive future demand

System1: Audio ads with more right-brain features create future demand with longer-lasting effects

Left brain

- Unilateral communication (including testimonials)
- Commanded action (e.g. call to action)
- Audio repetition
- Comparisons and claims
- Data and figures
- Abstracted product or service feature
- Technical language (heavy terms and conditions)
- Strong product focus
- Flatness, lack of audio depth
- Highly rhythmic music



Right brain

- Characters with vitality
- Story unfolding
- Clear sense of place
- Sotto voice and the pause (dramatic intimacy)
- Unexpected contextual noise
- Sounds of the living
- Dialogue
- Playing with words
- Distinctive accents
- Music with discernible melody

Source: System1, *Listen Up! Emotion's Defining Role in Audio Advertising Effectiveness*

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Entertain for emotional gain

"Embrace the idea that advertising is at least as much showmanship as it is salesmanship. It is time to rediscover the fact that advertising builds brands best when it is entertaining, popular and memorable, when it is not just a pitch, but a performance."

Paul Feldwick, *Why Does The Pedlar Sing? What Creativity Really Means in Advertising*

"The buying of time or space is not the taking out of a hunting license on someone's private preserve, but it is the renting of a stage on which we may perform."

Howard Luck Gossage, advertising visionary frequently referred to as "The Socrates of San Francisco"

Use music

“...ads using music prominently are significantly more effective than ads that don't, enhancing effectiveness by 20–30%.”

Les Binet and Sarah Carter, *How Not to Plan: 66 Ways to Screw it Up*

“If music creates emotion, what we see is brand favorability increases, brand consideration increases, metrics that really apply directly to ROI. When it comes to all experiences, brands are realizing that emotional connection is more important than ever.”

Lauren McGuire, President, Made Music Studio

“A consistent use of music, such as a pneumatic or familiar jingle, will increase familiarity, likability while triggering instant brand recognition.”

Radiocentre/Strike A Chord

Music and sound are powerful, triggering an emotional response through audible familiarity. Utilize a consistent music theme to become your brand anthem.

Create a jingle

Mark Ritson
Renowned Marketing
Professor

Use music for branding:

"The king or queen of them all is the **jingle**. It smashes all the other distinctive assets."

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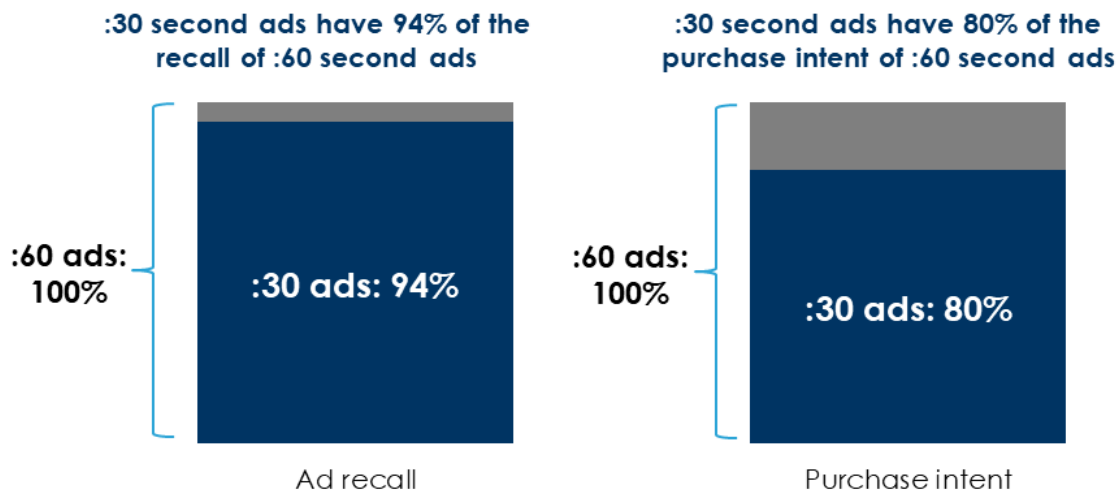
Create a sonic logo with melody that says the name of the brand

Byron Sharp, author of *How Brands Grow*, says the key to success is creating consistent and constantly-used easy-to-remember brand assets that create distinctive memory structures which bring the brand front-of-mind when a consumer is shopping that category.

Veritonic, a leading audio analytics firm, reports audio ads that have the name of the brand in the audio logo are 7.5X more likely to be correctly associated with the brand; Ads that have melody are 2X more likely to be linked correctly to the brand.

Don't worry about ad length or wear out

Ad length plays a minor role in ad recall and purchase intent



Source: Nielsen Podcast Brand Effect Study 2020, :60 = ads that are :30-:60

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Mark Ritson: Consumers don't get tired of ads. Only marketers do. Worry more about wear-in.

Data shows there's no such thing as advertising 'wear-out', so save your new campaign budget and spend it on making your current ads effective for longer.

[Read Mark Ritson's report on the myth of advertising wear out via this link.](#)



Full-service advisory offering media planning recommendations, creative best practices, and measurement services

The **Cumulus Media | Westwood One Audio Active Group**® is a true comprehensive marketing advisory that partners with clients to measure the impact of the **entire** audio campaign (not just the Cumulus Media | Westwood One investment), specializing in the following areas:

- **Audio creative best practices:** Advising on the development and testing of sonic logos and advertising creative; offering recommendations on how to optimize and enhance current creative; advising on how to deploy new creative strategies to meet campaign objectives
- **Media planning:** Providing recommendations on daypart mix, flighting, weight levels, podcast genres, and AM/FM radio programming formats to meet campaign objectives, based on audience analytics
- **Strategic allocation within audio:** Advising on the right mix of ad-supported audio platforms
- **Measurement of the entire audio investment:** Advising on the right approach for brands to measure campaign effectiveness, including brand lift, sales effect, and search and site attribution



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