

The Triple Opportunity of Attention

At the 2022 Cannes International Festival of Creativity, Peter Field, Karen Nelson-Field and Orlando Wood presented “The Triple Jeopardy of Attention” which revealed how the effectiveness of advertising investment was being significantly damaged by decisions resulting in less attention being paid to advertising campaigns.

The three decisions responsible for this are:

1. A focus on the short term due to budgets moving towards performance advertising.
2. Prioritisation of media investment towards lower attention platforms.
3. A damaging shift in creative style.

The result of this is the breaking of the relationship between positive extra share of voice (ESOV) and business growth. Simply put, due to the three reasons above, the bang from each advertising buck is diminishing.

In 2023, again in Cannes and in partnership with Advertising Council Australia (ACA), Karen and Orlando were joined by Rob Brittain in the follow up: “The Triple Opportunity of Attention.”

The Triple Opportunity of Attention is a global-first study into creative impact using high-quality in-market effectiveness data to understand the combined effects of creative style, attention and extra share of voice (ESOV) on business performance. What sets this study apart is its connective tissue – all the metrics in the study have been collected from the same 39 campaigns in the ACA Effectiveness Database.

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**EXECUTIVE
SUMMARY:
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OPPORTUNITY
OF ATTENTION**

CONTACT

System1

3 Waterhouse Square,
138 - 142 Holborn
London
EC1N 2SW
T: +44 (0)20 7043 1000
marketingteam@system1group.com

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The findings

The more active attention seconds a campaign receives, the stronger the impact on the brand's mental availability and the larger the impact on key business metrics, such as customer acquisition, brand profit growth and market share.

Higher-attention media platforms enable creative to work more effectively, turbocharging the business effects by up to 65%. Therefore, while both creativity and media planning choices affect the overall attention levels of a campaign, campaigns of similar creative strength can achieve significantly different levels of attention depending on which media platforms they are placed on.

When positive ESOV is weighted towards higher-attention media platforms, the strongest business impacts are seen.

Platform choices make such a big difference because attention decays faster on some platforms than others. This impacts quality of reach because reach curves currently assume that every impression is achieving 100% attention volume (i.e. being viewed for the entire duration of the spot). However, this isn't the case as every single format, platform, ad length and demographic have a slightly different attention-decay curve – this is why not all reach is equal.

The obvious answer to this is just to make better creative, however this doesn't fix the problem. If it did, we would see the same creative achieve equal levels of attention across all platforms. But they don't. The level of attention that creative can achieve is bound by the functionality of the platform. If the platform has a higher-attention boundary, then the creative will receive more attention; if the platform has a lower-attention boundary, that same creative will receive less attention. We refer to this as a platform's *attention elasticity* - the range of attention seconds possible under the conditions of that platform or format. It is the platform's attention elasticity that forms the attention opportunity for creative.

The opportunity for marketers is to creatively nudge attention seconds closer to the upper attention boundary of each platform and this is where emotion plays a key role as positive emotions (caused by viewing the creative) make a difference to the amount of attention gained. However, platform attention elasticity again plays an important role as the upside to emotion is highly dependent on the platform on which the creative plays; there is a bigger uplift in attention seconds from emotive creative placed on higher attention platforms.

It's important to understand at this point that platform selection still has a greater overall influence on attentive seconds than creative strength – this isn't because emotions are a weak force, it's simply because most people have scrolled away on lower attention platforms. Emotional creative needs a better canvas on which to be a star.

Whilst emotive advertising certainly plays a role in the amount of attention your ad can command, it also has a broader role; it helps to create mental availability by lodging your brand in memory, thereby bringing your brand to mind before any other when it comes to the buying moment.

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So, how do we create advertising that moves, that helps to build lasting mental availability?

Creative can develop an emotional response in the viewer by drawing on the artistic principle of *moto e azione*; the outward expression of internal feeling via the face and body, the moment of revelation, an emotional turning point.

This is shown with evidence from previous research between System1 and TVision. Features that appeal to the 'broad-beam' attention of the brain's right hemisphere are better at commanding attention and generating an emotional response. This is likely to mean a human context or narrative, the living, human connection, an unexpected reveal with tension and resolution.

Right-brained advertising – what we might describe as advertising with *moto e azione* – works on those in the market now for the product while also lodging the brand in memory for future purchase decision moments. It therefore helps both present and future earnings. This is revealed by analysis showing that campaigns with 'right-brained' features drive greater business effects than campaigns with 'left-brained' features (abstraction, words on the screen, rhythm). Moreover, right-brained campaigns achieve very large business effects in both the short and long-term, whereas left-brain campaigns in the sample were limited to just short-term effects.

The 'triple opportunity' afforded to advertisers is revealed in one final analysis: a grouping of the campaigns according to creative strength, media choice and investment (positive or negative ESOV). Business outcomes are poor for campaigns with low emotional response, low attention media and negative ESOV. Business outcomes can be improved by more emotive advertising, but its effects are limited or depressed when played out on low attention platforms with low investment (negative ESOV).

For the strongest business outcomes, what is needed is emotive advertising (for broad beam attention), on high-attention media, supported by high investment (positive ESOV). This is The Triple Opportunity of Attention for advertisers.

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