



# Listen Up!

Emotion's Defining Role in  
Audio Advertising Effectiveness

**System1**

 radiocentre

**Listen Up!** explores how audio advertising can compete in an ever-evolving media landscape. Using data from **System1**, The Creative Effectiveness Platform, and **Radiocentre**, the UK's industry body for commercial radio, this research explores how advertisers can achieve both long-term and short-term objectives by eliciting human emotions through creative audio advertising.

*"Building on the work of Orlando Wood, author of Lemon, 2019 and Look out, 2021 (IPA), Listen Up! is the first study to define left- and right-brain creative features for audio advertising. This provides a unique lens on creative effectiveness that can be used to inspire a new generation of audio advertising creativity. Also, by using in-market brand effectiveness and human emotional data collected from over 50,000 radio listeners and non-radio listeners across 10 years, this research is uniquely positioned to help brands understand how to make audio advertising that stirs the passions and drives business profits. A large amount of TV advertising is not actively watched but is passively listened to, making the creative learnings in this report relevant across the entire media mix. Audio creative effectiveness truly is a marketing superpower."*

**Andrew Tindall, Listen Up! Author, Global Director, System1**

*"It's often said that radio is a highly visual medium. It's also one that builds brands. This unique study – a partnership between System1 and Radiocentre – demonstrates how. Introducing left- and right-brain creative principles to audio for the first time, it shows how to harness a trusted and intimate medium to drive mental availability for your brand, using the brushstrokes of voice, dialogue, narrative, music and drama."*

**Orlando Wood, Chief Innovation Officer, System1**

*"This study unveils new data consistent with the learnings from many Radiocentre research studies over the years. In terms of creative impact, audio-only advertising can be just as effective as audio-visual advertising when the creative content of the ad is executed in an optimal way. With the number of commercial audio listeners at record levels and growing steadily, it's the perfect time for advertisers to take this on board and harness the true power of sound, engage listeners more deeply, and deliver better brand effects. Listen Up! presents a comprehensive how-to guide to achieving this."*

**Matt Payton, CEO, Radiocentre**



**Andrew Tindall, Author**  
Global Partnerships Director  
System1



**Orlando Wood**  
Chief Innovation Officer  
System1



**Matt Payton**  
CEO  
Radiocentre

# Listen Up!

How to create audio advertising that stirs the passions and drives business profits.

Findings from 10 years of effectiveness and emotional data from over 50,000 listeners and non-listeners.

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**System1**

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# Key Take-Outs

Listen Up! reveals six key take-outs that will help brands and agencies develop compelling creative for audio platforms. At the heart of these findings is the important role that feeling (i.e. positive emotion) plays in audio advertising's short- and long-term effectiveness.

**+8.2%**

*More Consumer Action from Radio Ads with high Star Rating*

**1 Audio ads that make listeners feel more positive dramatically change consumer behaviour and deliver longer-lasting brand effects.**

Radio campaigns that created more positive emotion and less negative emotion caused significantly more consumer action change, including brand purchase and use.

**+5.3%**

*More Perceived Heavy Ad Exposure, Radio Ads with high Star Rating*

**2 Feel-good audio ads make advertising campaigns more famous.**

Radio campaigns that created more positive emotion and less negative emotion saw large increases in Word-of-Mouth and Sharing on Social uplifts. This made the campaign feel bigger than it was, an indication of a fame effect.

**2.4**

*Radio Ad Average Star Rating, Same as TV*

**3 Radio is as likely to cause long-lasting effects through an emotional response as TV advertising.**

The average long-term effectiveness metric in System1's database (Star Rating) is the same for radio and TV ads.

**x2**

*More Trust Effects, Radio Ads with high Fluency Rating*

**4 Well-branded (fluent) radio advertising creates bigger trust effects.**

Radio is a trusted medium, it excels as a media platform at building brand trust. However, well-branded ads see a significant increase in this trust-building effect.

**R=+0.42**

*Correlation, Advertising Awareness Change and Spike Rating*

**5 Optimised audio adverts are effective at attracting attention and forming strong memories, increasing short-term effects.**

There was a significant strong positive relationship between well-branded audio ads that elicit a strong emotional response and advertising recall.

**20**

*Number of Left- and Right-brain Audio Creative Features Identified*

**6 Audio ads with more right-brain features are more likely to cause longer-lasting brand effects.**

Audio advertising that uses features like character, story unfolding, sense of place and dramatic intimacy creates more positive emotions, fewer negative emotions, and attracts the attention of broader audiences, something that's key for lasting brand effects.

# Putting the Learning into Practice

The ad effectiveness data detailed in this report and the insights based on these findings can guide the creation of more effective audio ads that emotionally resonate with the public, creating stronger short-term impact and longer-lasting brand effects. Below is an outline of several best practices to help marketers create ads that will stir listeners' passions for business profits.



## 1 Incorporate More Right-Brained Creative Features

This report is the first to define what left- and right-brain creative features are for audio advertising. Advertisers need to incorporate right-brain features into audio campaigns that make ads interesting and enjoyable to everyone, not just those in the “buying mode”. Characters, a sense of place, story unfolding, dramatic intimacy, and music with discernible melody are the right-brain audio features that build longer-lasting memory structures.



## 2 Create with the Listener in Mind

It needs to be clear who an ad is for. Listeners prefer to know which brand is speaking, don't be shy. Make your ad relatable by starting with a creative strategy that solves a consumer problem or goal, or include a customer insight. Focus most of the limited airtime you have on the narrative and branding to stimulate a stronger emotional response, whilst trying to limit excessive details like terms and conditions where possible.



## 3 Don't Zig, Zag Zag Zag!

It's important for audio ads to be distinctive, i.e., sounding different from other brands but consistently sounding like themselves. Ensure audio ads don't follow category norms for the sake of it but follow their brand's own distinctive style consistently to get more attention and elicit high emotional intensity.



## 4 Embrace the Power of Music

Music is the gift that keeps on giving in audio advertising. This is because it increases engagement and emotional intensity. Use music with melody to help carry the pace of the ad, not as an afterthought. Or create catchy brand-owned melodic assets, that we've shown stand the test of time.



## 5 Be Consistent and Leverage a Recognisable Strapline

Ensuring audio ads are consistent with ads across the marketing mix boosts long-term effectiveness by extending campaigns and building stronger memory structures. Well-known straplines trigger brand recognition without decreasing emotional intensity.



## 6 Brand Early and Often to Benefit from Trust Effects

Without the advantage of visual cues, introducing the brand's distinctive audio assets (e.g. music, characters, etc.) earlier in the ad, ideally within the first few seconds and maintaining fluency throughout, can help listeners process the wider ad content/message more effortlessly. This can help enhance both short-term and long-term ad effects.

# Listen Up!

## Background and Objectives

From McVitie's "Pick Up a Penguin" to Weetabix's "Built in Rome" and Stella Artois' "Cidre, Not Cider", there are many classic and newer radio ads that we've come to know and love – and even hum or sing! This should come as no surprise given that UK commercial radio has a rich history entertaining and informing the British public over the last 50 years.

**Today, radio and other audio formats still provide the public with essential information and endless entertainment just as it always has. The main difference lies in the ways in which we're now consuming this content. Beyond radio sets, audio media are now accessible via our phones, computers, smart speakers, and other devices, allowing us to listen while on-the-move or at home, work, and elsewhere.**

With live linear radio in rude health, combined with streamed music services and a burgeoning podcast ecology, the numbers showcase the sheer scale of the audio advertising opportunity right now – which is predicted to continue to grow going forward. Three-quarters of UK adults currently listen to some form of commercial audio each week, 39 million of whom tune in to commercial radio, according to Q2 2023 figures from RAJAR (Radio Joint Audience Research). Commercial radio's proven cost-effectiveness and critical mass audiences present a huge opportunity for smart brands that know how to maximise the effectiveness of their audio creative.

At System1, we wanted to understand what makes for a great radio ad to help more advertisers truly get heard in an increasingly crowded and visually dominated advertising landscape. The experts at Radiocentre joined our exploration into emotion's role in effective radio advertising to share their extensive knowledge and data on the subject. Combined, this is a first-of-its-kind report that will help marketers develop audio ads with the following advertising outcomes in mind:

**1** **Enhanced**  
long-term effectiveness

**2** **Improved**  
brand recognition

**3** **More powerful**  
short-term impact/response

# Listen Up!

## Methodology

With a goal of building an understanding of audio creative effectiveness and developing best-practice recommendations, we reviewed in detail the impact of **131 radio ads across 13 categories, including FMCG, retail, automotive, finance and travel**. These assets have been measured using System1's 'Test Your Ad' platform and via Radiocentre's 'Radiogauge' radio campaign effectiveness measurement service. This was supplemented with an analysis of a broad range of creative devices featured in audio advertising. This included an analysis of features that appeal to the right or left hemispheres of the brain, the first time this approach has been taken for audio advertising.



# About the Data **The System1 model of effectiveness**

The System1 model of effectiveness shows that feeling — a positive emotional response to an ad — is the single most important element in determining its potential to affect long-term impact on brand growth. That's why System1's 'Test Your Ad' platform measures people's emotional responses to an ad — we know that the more people feel, the more they buy. These responses result in three key measures of creative impact on commercial effectiveness:



## **Star Rating**

The Star Rating is based on how positively listeners respond to the ad. It predicts the potential of an ad to contribute to long-term brand growth and runs from 1- to 5-Stars. The higher the Star Rating, the more brands should invest in and build campaigns around the ad.



## **Spike Rating**

The Spike Rating predicts the potential for an ad to drive short-term activity — sales, donations or other calls to action. The Spike Rating is based on how intensely listeners respond to the ad and how quickly they connect the ad to the brand.

The response doesn't have to be positive — for short-term impact, feeling anything is better than feeling nothing. Spike scores below 1 suggest limited or no short-term impact, Spike scores of 1.3 and above predict strong or exceptional activity.



## **Fluency Rating**

This is a measure of correct ad-brand linkage, straight after listening to an ad. It is expressed as a 1-100 score, which is the % correct brand linkage. Without a high Fluency Rating, ad effects cannot be attributed to the brand in market and ad recall and awareness will be low.

Newer and smaller brands, naturally, have to work harder as high fluency depends on ads correctly using famous and distinct audio brand assets.

Test Your Ad has been commercially available to advertisers around the world for video ad testing since 2020. As it's an affordable tool that predicts and understands advertising effectiveness, with results ready from 24 hours, it has now been used to test over 100,000 ads. This methodology has been demonstrated to predict market share change within categories, validated in experiments with The Institute of Practitioners in Advertising (IPA). Test Your Ad Audio is now available to aid advertisers predict, understand and improve their audio advertising content.

System1 surveys also collect diagnostic measures to deepen understanding of the response to an ad and uncover how and where an ad can be improved:



## **Intensity**

How strongly the respondent feels the emotion — if they feel one at all. Both positive and negative emotions can be strongly felt. Intensity levels affect the Star and Spike scores.



## **Reasons for Emotion**

We ask people why they felt the emotion they did. They can give their reason from scratch, agree with someone else's reason or expand on that reason. This tells us not just what is driving emotion, but which reasons are most widely felt.



## **Key Associations**

We also ask what people took away from the ad — the main words, phrases, or associations they're left with. It's a way of uncovering whether the ad is communicating what the brand wants it to.

## Radiogauge and the 5'i's

Radiogauge is a free radio advertising campaign effectiveness measurement service from Radiocentre which provides advertisers with robust data to help them understand the effectiveness of their radio campaigns, compare results against relevant category benchmarks, and access guidance on how to improve effectiveness through creative development.

Each survey compares the differences in ad awareness, brand perceptions, purchase consideration, and claimed response between a sample of commercial radio listeners and a matched sample of non-listeners to commercial radio to understand the impact of the radio activity. To establish the impact of the creative execution, respondents score each ad against 11 statements which feed into Radiocentre's proprietary 5'i's creative evaluation analysis. This charts the strength of the creative execution in delivering the following:

### **Involvement –**

the ad stands out/is something the listener is prepared to engage with

### **Identity –**

the ad is memorable and has clear branding

### **Impression –**

the ad is perceived positively and doesn't annoy listeners

### **Information –**

the ad is informative and easy to follow

### **Integration –**

the ad is heard as part of a wider media campaign through consistent and recognisable use of voice, music, slogan and/or catchphrase

Respondents who score an ad particularly high or low on one of these measures are offered an opportunity to explain why, adding a qualitative perspective to creative performance. While brand-level findings remain confidential to the individual advertisers, the results from every campaign are added to the Radiogauge database where they contribute to comparative benchmarks. The data for each campaign is further coded according to its use of 23 individual creative characteristics, such as music, voice, use of humour, etc. – allowing for more nuanced understanding of radio creative effectiveness.

Since launching in 2008, Radiogauge has measured the effects of over 1,000 UK radio advertising campaigns. As such, it is the biggest radio advertising/creative effectiveness database of this nature in the world.

## About the analysis

To unlock world-first insights into radio creative effectiveness, we combined these two methodologies to look for relationships between the **emotional and brand recognition responses** from listeners and the in-market effectiveness data (Radiocentre's Radiogauge exposed vs non-exposed brand lift studies).

Comparing the in-market brand effects of advertising with different emotional responses measured by System1's Test Your Ad tool, we can understand how emotions and brand recognition generally increase or decrease the effectiveness of campaigns. We can do this by dividing campaigns into varying levels of emotional or brand response and analysing how each group's in-market effects change. Or by looking for correlations between the in-market campaign effects (lifts between non-exposed and exposed) and the emotional or brand response to the ad.

# Listen Up!

## The Findings

Our research uncovered six findings from the emotional responses captured by our Test Your Ad platform and the Radiogauge surveys. Data bring these findings to life together with a quick look at some of the brands that are making the most of their audio assets.

## **Audio ads that make listeners feel more positive dramatically change consumer behaviour and deliver longer-lasting brand effects.**

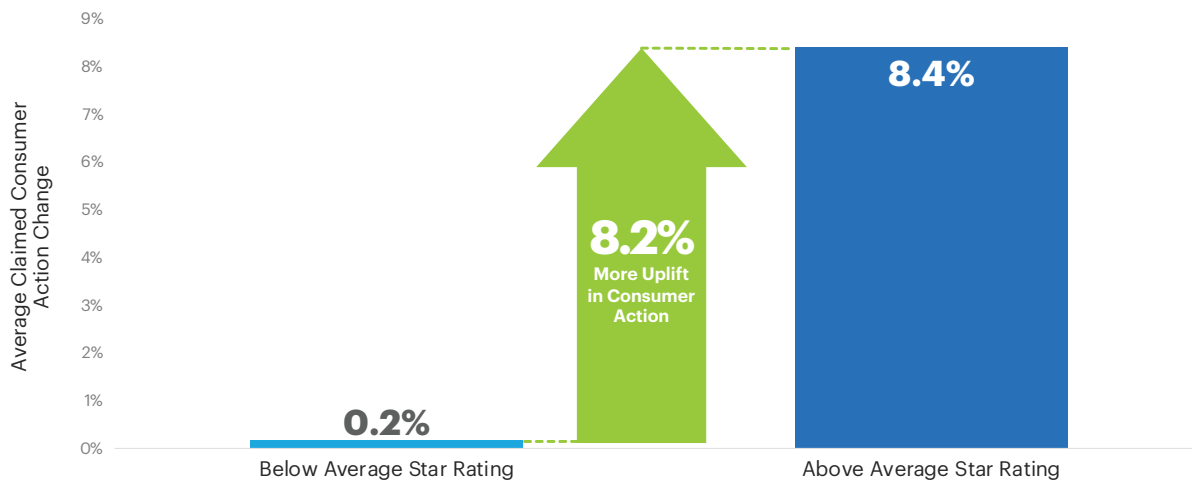
Well-trained marketers would agree that investing in long-term brand building is essential for driving market share growth. And as System1's research on the long and the short shows, this is a smart place to start when building campaigns, as brand-building ads also have the potential to drive short-term sales.

Our research on radio ads found creative that leaves people feeling more positively (i.e. experiencing happiness and possibly also feelings of surprise), as measured by System1's Star Rating, changes long-term behaviour and increases consumer action. When comparing above-average Star Rating campaigns (lots of positive feeling, fewer negative emotions) to below-average Star Rating campaigns (low levels of positive feeling, possibly high levels of negative emotions), we noted a +8.2% uplift in listeners taking any action (see Fig 1). This includes claimed visits to websites/downloading apps, searching for brands, visiting stores, and/or purchasing/using brands.

This key finding demonstrates the power of combining these two types of analysis is. If marketers want to change consumer behaviour with their campaigns, key for long-term brand benefits, they must ensure they use audio to elicit positive emotions. Another example for the marketing industry that advertising works through emotions.

## Positive Emotions are Key to Changing Behaviour

% Claimed Consumer Behaviour Change



**Fig 1 Campaigns that make people feel more positive increase claimed consumer action.**

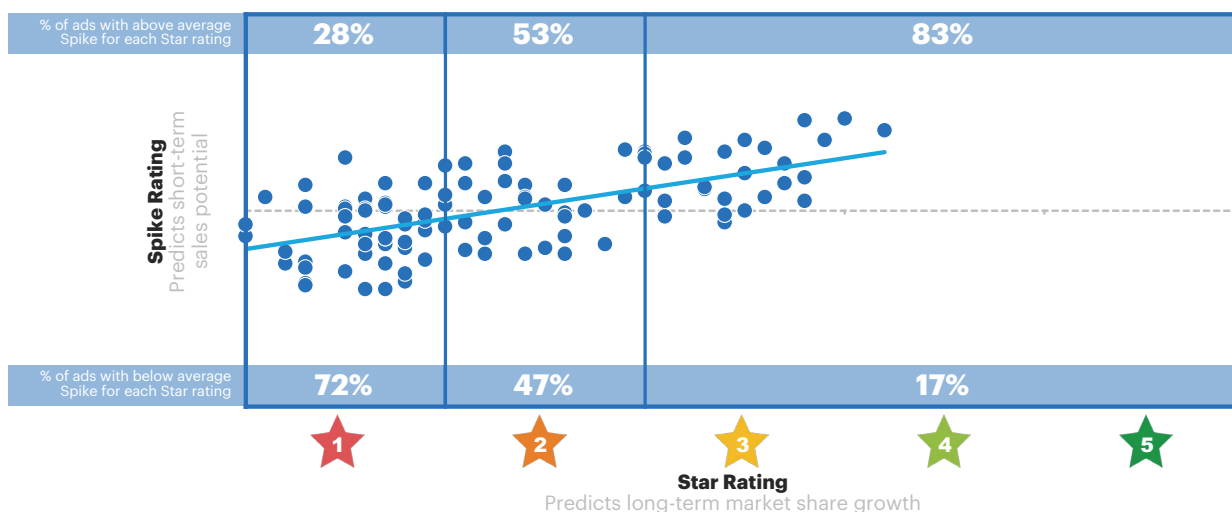
Claimed consumer action uplift for campaigns that elicit low and high Star Rating.

Source: System1 and Radiocentre, 55 campaigns & 44,000 UK respondents. Weighted with total campaign media weight (GRPs).

This is further reinforced by data (see Fig 2) showing how radio ads that achieve a higher Star Rating (i.e. are better at brand building) also secure above-average Spike Rating (i.e., are better at activation). Essentially, focus on the long and the short takes care of itself.

## Ads with High Long-term Effectiveness Often do Short-term Well

Relationship between Star and Spike Rating



**Fig 2 Relationship between long- and short-term effectiveness of radio**

Ads that create long-lasting effects are also likely to create short-term effects.

Source: System1, 131 radio ads.

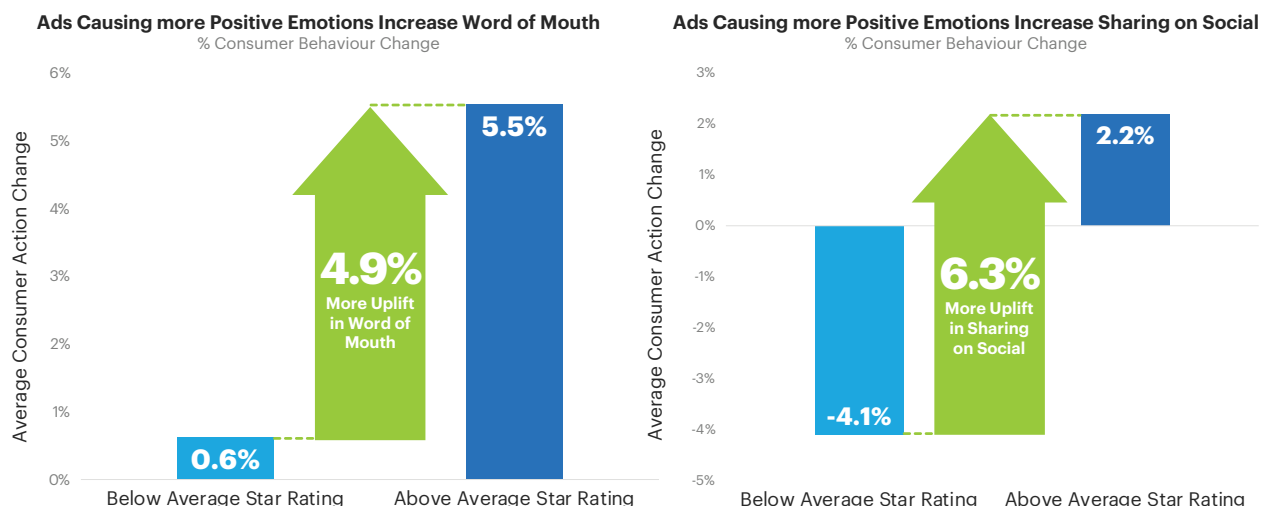


## Feel-good audio ads make advertising campaigns more famous.

Partly explaining the long-term effectiveness gains from positive-emotion-inducing radio ads, ads that elicit a more positive emotional effect also create larger fame effects.

Our study noted that advertising that leaves people feeling more positive (i.e., higher-than-average Star Rating) leads to increased Word of Mouth, with 0.6% uplift in claimed Word of Mouth between non-exposed and exposed groups for ads with below-average Star Rating, and 5.5% increase for ads with above-average Star Rating. We saw similar effects with listeners choosing to share something about the brands on social, with a 6.3% uplift for ads with above-average Star Rating.

## Increased Word of Mouth and Sharing on Social will Make Campaigns Famous



**Figs 3 & 4 Claimed Word of Mouth and Sharing on Social uplifts for campaigns that elicit low and high positive emotion**

Source: System1 and Radiocentre, 55 campaigns & 44,000 respondents. Weighted with total campaign media weight (GRPs).

Creating audio ads that elicit strong positive emotions, and less negative or neutral emotions, appears to be the key to getting consumers to share their thoughts and feelings about the brand and building long-term memory structures to help change consumer behaviour. These two processes will have a complementary effect on each other.

We also see audio ads with positive emotional responses making media spend (ESOV) work harder, making campaigns feel larger than they are and increasing fame. Only 13.6% of listeners claimed to hear ads with a lower-than-average Star Rating “a few times or a lot” compared to 18.9% of listeners claiming to hear ads with a higher-than-average Star Rating “a few times or a lot” — a 5.3% increase.

### Positive Emotions Make Ads Feel More Famous

% “Have Heard a Few Times or A Lot”, Media Weighted

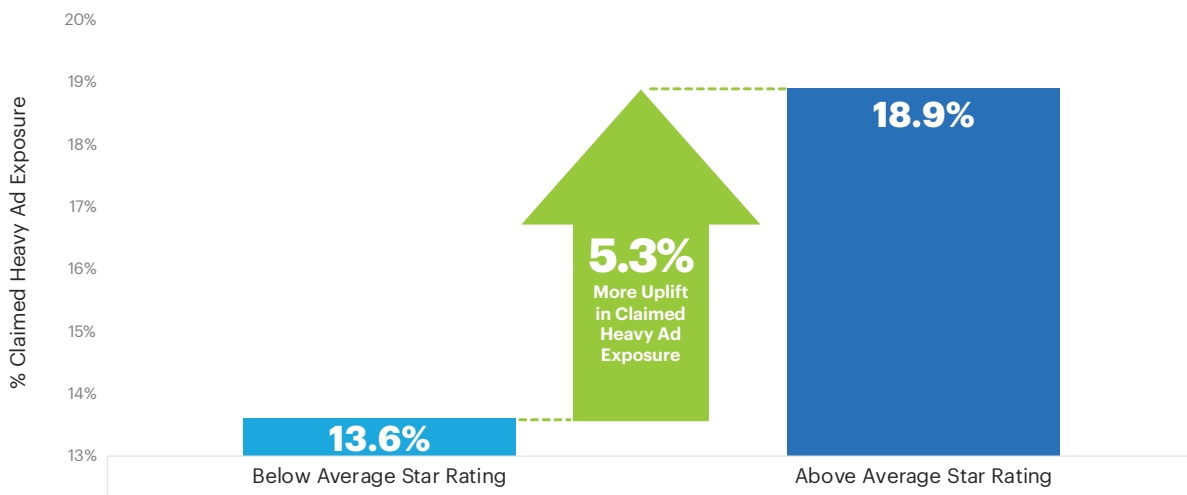


Fig 5 Listeners claiming to have heard a campaign more despite weighting the response for media (GRPs).

System1 and Radiocentre, 55 campaigns & 44,000 respondents. Weighted with weekly media frequency.

Peter Field and Adam Morgan (author of *Eating the Big Fish*) call this the “Cost of Dull”. Ads that are less creative, less distinctive, and do not produce a strong positive emotional reaction build fewer memory structures, change fewer behaviours, are shared less and feel less famous. Meaning marketers must spend more on them. Les Binet and Peter Field have demonstrated this with the IPA databank, campaigns which aim for fame effects have outperformed other campaigns on all other business effects.

### Fame-driving Campaigns Outperform Others on all Business Effects

% reporting very large improvement in each metric

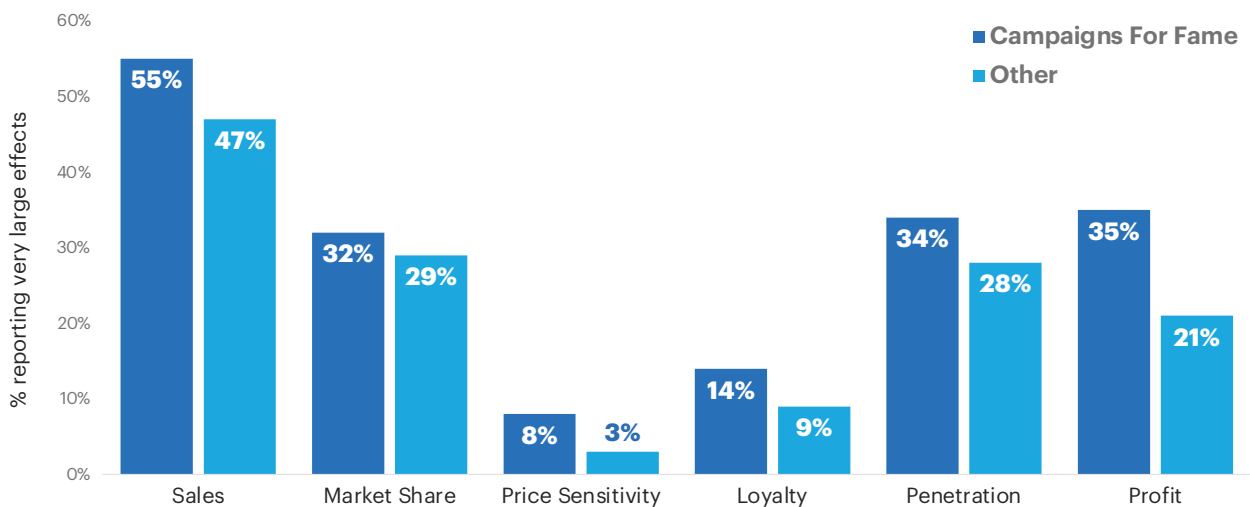


Fig 6 Mixed media campaigns showing aiming for Fame improves business effects

Source: Les Binet and Peter Field, *The Long and Short of It*, IPA



**Star Rating**  
Good

The AA’s radio spot promoting breakdown cover expertly aligns its soundtrack with the messaging: “Proud Mary” is a recognisable, uplifting song, mirrors the brand’s TV advert and results in high levels of surprise and happiness.

The ad secured a 17.3% uplift in Word of Mouth (5.2% non-radio > 22.5% radio listeners).

**See Appendix 1** for the full case study.

## Radio is as likely to cause long-lasting effects through an emotional response as TV advertising.

When taking a closer look at the average effectiveness for radio ads vs TV ads, it's clear that generally radio ads are as effective at creating long-lasting effects. Radio ads are also generally as well branded. However, the ads we analysed elicited a slightly lower emotional intensity, which pushed back short-term effectiveness for radio ads on average.

We share clear creative tips to improve both long- and short-term effectiveness in the next sections of this research, providing the opportunity to close the average Spike Rating gap between TV and radio.

### System1 Radio and TV UK Effectiveness Averages

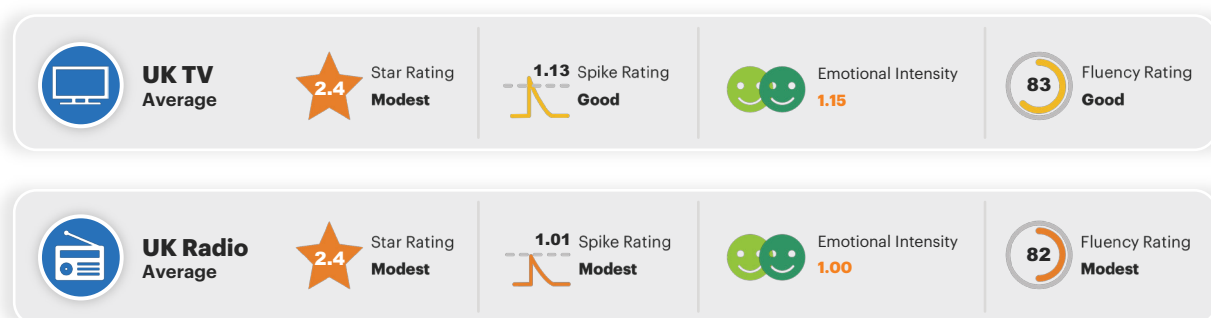


Fig 7 Comparison of long- and short-term effectiveness (i.e., Star and Spike Rating), and Brand Recognition (i.e., Fluency) for radio and TV ads

Source: System1 Test Your Ad database

## Well-branded (fluent) radio advertising creates bigger trust effects.

Radio is a well-established, public, yet intimate media channel. This enables radio to be a trusted source for delivering news and advertising.

### What We Know: Radio Trust

Research from Radiocentre has shown that radio is the most trusted news medium.

#### Radio is the Most Trusted News Medium

“To what extent do you trust national news stories from each of the following news sources?”

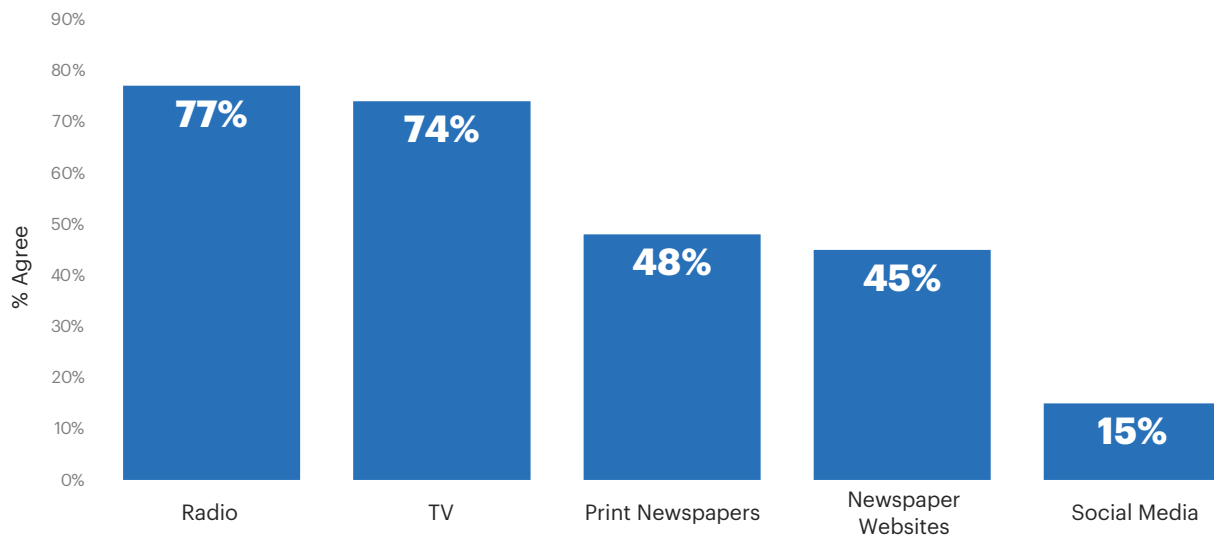


Fig 8 Radio rates higher than TV, print and other mediums on trusted news

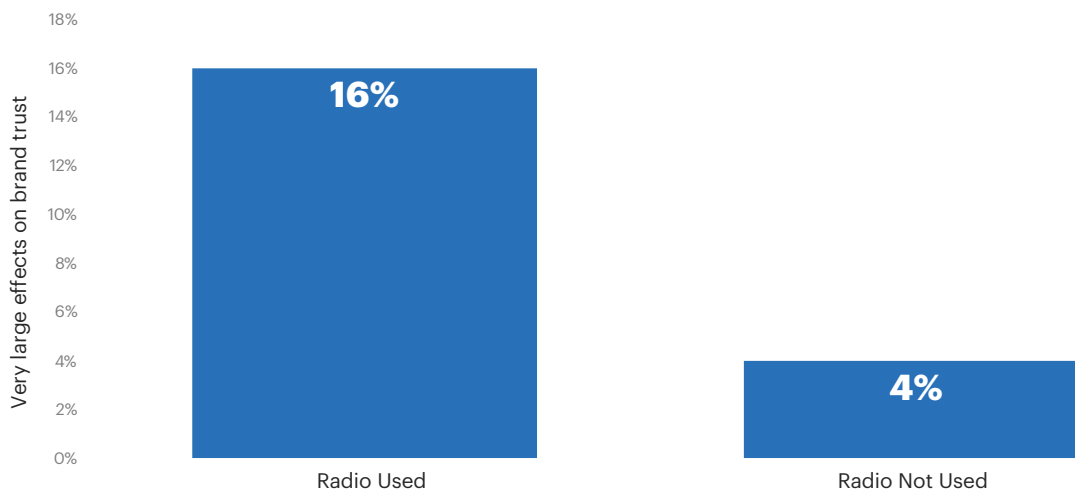
Source: Radiocentre, Breaking News report

Brands can take advantage of this high-trust environment by including radio in the media for their campaigns to increase brand trust perceptions.



## Including Radio in Campaigns Increases Brand Trust Effects

% Very Large Business Effects



**Fig 9 Campaigns that feature radio generate greater brand trust**

Source: IPA databank, <https://www.radiocentre.org/why-use-radio/the-roles-for-radio/radio-for-building-brand-trust/>

We were able to take a detailed look into these trust effects at a campaign level by analysing the brand trust gains delivered by each radio ad and the related level of brand recognition. If the campaign is not attributed correctly to the right brand, the brand is not able to take advantage of these trust effects.

Some campaigns we measured saw an increase of almost 20% in brand trust; however, we saw ads with high brand recognition (Fluency Rating) build trust most effectively. Ads with above-average Fluency Ratings doubled the trust-building effect, an increase of 6.8% more on average.

## Radio Ads with High Brand Recognition Cause Large Increases in Brand Trust Gains

% Increase in Brand Trust (Top 5 Box)

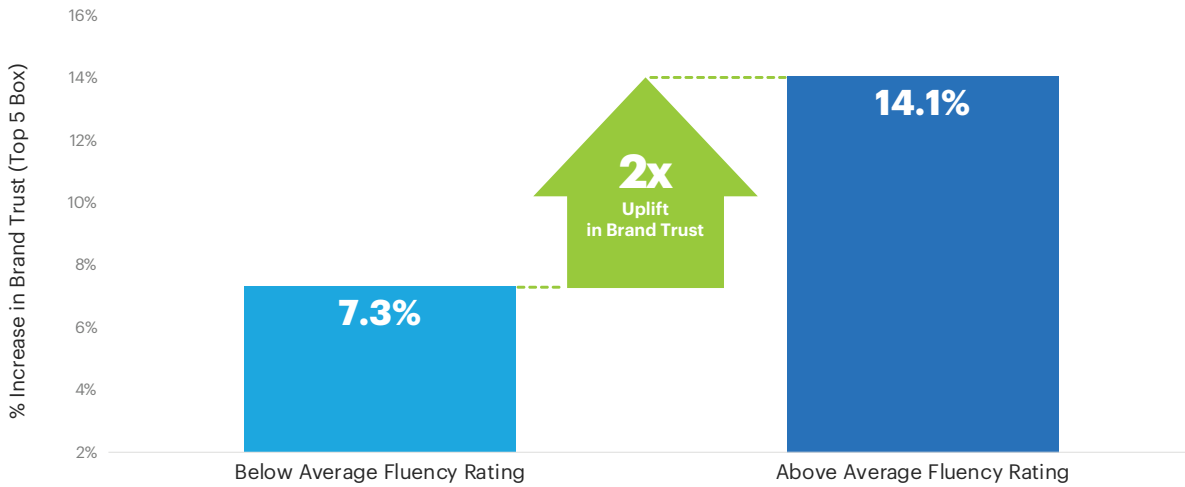


Fig 10 Radio ads with higher brand recognition build trust more effectively

Source: System1 and Radiocentre

System1's Fluency Rating is the percentage of listeners that could correctly recall the brand straight after listening. This is crucial to measure and improve, to ensure brands reap the rewards of advertising. Taking a closer look at the 131 ads analysed, we can see that radio ads are generally good at making sure a large majority correctly recognise the brand being advertised. However, there is an opportunity for advertisers to increase effectiveness by increase the fluency of their audio ads , as few radio ads achieve exceptional brand recognition.

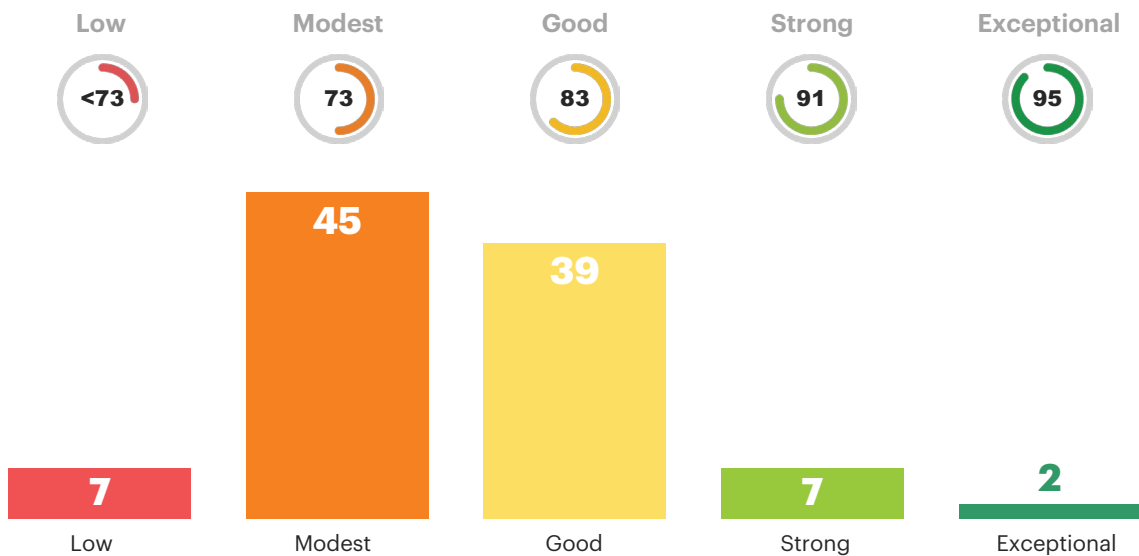


Fig 11 % Brand recognition (i.e., Fluency Rating) for radio ads

Source: System1 and Radiocentre, 131 Radio Ads



**Star Rating**  
Strong

McVitie’s famous strapline, “P-P-Pick Up a Penguin,” is a well-known British classic and a great example of how effective ads drive brand recognition over time. Whilst “Pick up a Penguin” is a historic example, it demonstrates the longevity of great advertising – a memorable strapline and a consistent strategy is an effective recipe for radio.

The brand’s memorable and distinctive slogan first graced our screens in the 1970s, before weaving its way across communications. Though this beloved campaign has since retired from radio, its upbeat, distinctive memory lives on, both in the hearts and minds of the UK public!



**P-P-P-Pick Up a Penguin...**

when you’re feeling p-p-peckish, p-p-p-pick up a Penguin!



[Listen via Test Your Ad Report](#)



**Star Rating**  
Good



**Fluency Rating**  
Exceptional

Thanks to early branding within the first 2 seconds and subsequent direct mentions and brand cues throughout that build on Tesco’s “Every Little Helps” positioning, the brand aces Fluency with a score of 97 out of 100. Not only does Tesco bookend the advert, with a mention of the brand at the beginning and closing, it fits its purpose messaging in between, which many listeners connect with.

**See Appendix 1** for the full case study.

## **Optimised audio adverts are effective at attracting attention and forming strong memories, increasing short-term effects.**

We've shared evidence that audio advertising campaigns can achieve consumer behaviour change to generate longer-lasting brand effects and make campaigns with high levels of Fame, especially when ads elicit more positive emotions. It's now worth considering how audio campaigns can generate short-term effects.

For an ad to work in the short term, you need to attract attention for those in market for a product today or in the near future. This is achieved by eliciting an intense emotion of any kind and raising the salience of the brand – in other words, attracting the listener's attention. System1's measure for predicting short-term effects rests on an ad's ability to elicit a strong emotion of any kind and make a strong brand impression (the ability for a listener to link the ad to the brand correctly and quickly). System1's Spike Rating is a blend of these two features.

To explore how brands can do this best, we analysed the difference in ad awareness between matched exposed and non-exposed groups for a range of effects. By weighting for media effects (GRPs), we can isolate the effects of the radio ad's creative on advertising awareness.

We saw a very significant (99%+) strong positive relationship ( $R=+0.42$ ) between System1's Spike Rating (speed of brand recognition and emotional intensity) and increases in advertising awareness. Ensuring rapid brand recognition by bringing in distinctive audio brand assets earlier (within the first 2 seconds) and eliciting an intense emotional response speaks more directly to those in market, attracts more attention and lodges the ad in the listener's memory more strongly. This will lead to stronger short-term effects.

Brand equity, and brand salience, are constantly being eroded by time and competitor brands advertising and fighting for mental availability. Brands can hold against this erosion of memory structures by advertising, with big brands having an advantage. However, brands that create extremely effective advertising (measured by our Spike Rating here) won't simply hold against this erosion but grow their awareness.

### Well-branded Ads that Cause an Intense Emotional Reaction Increase Advertising Awareness

% Ad Awareness Gain, media weighted

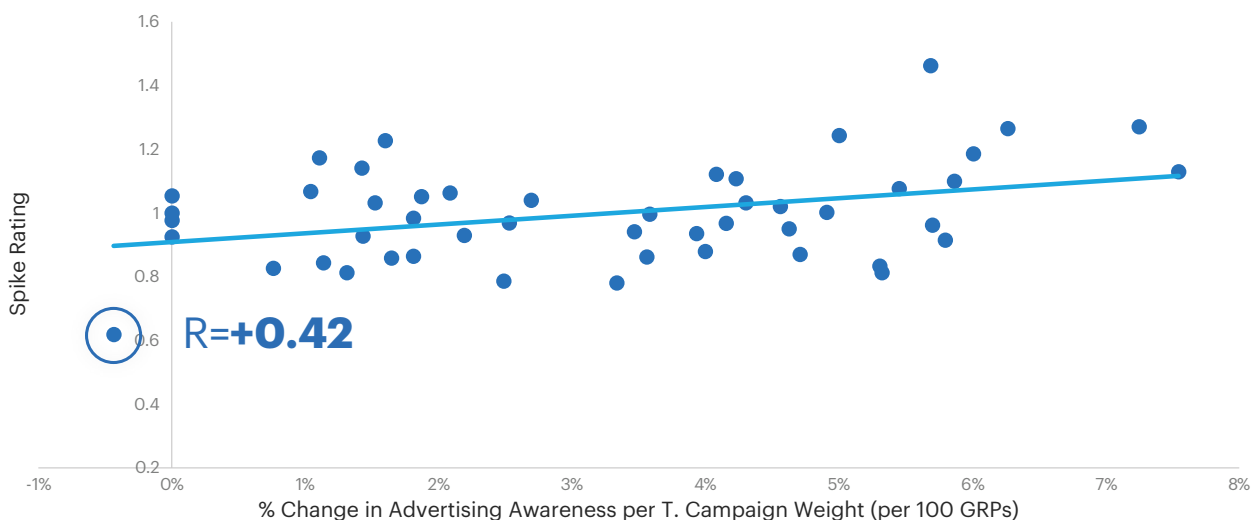


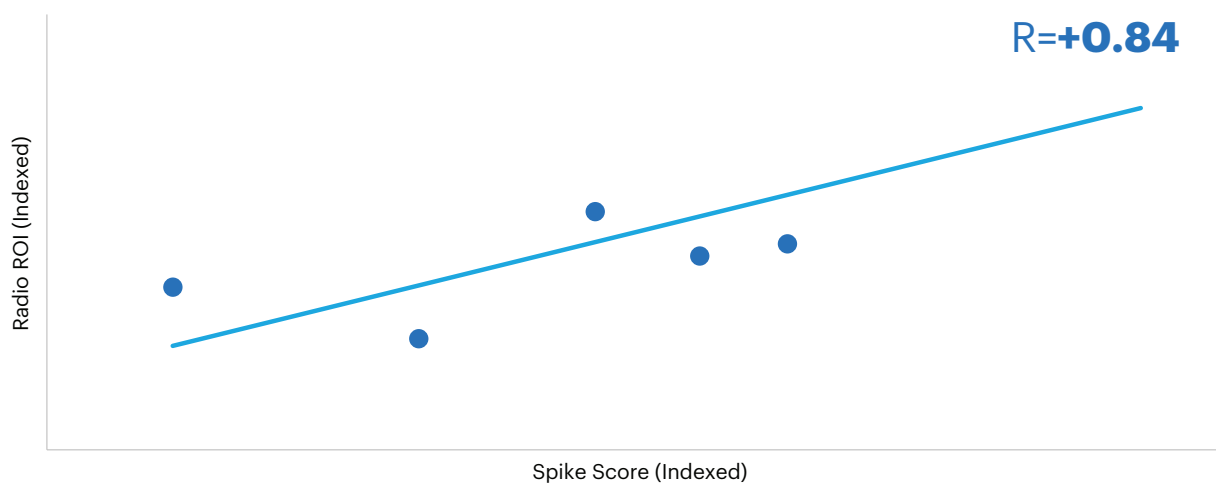
Fig 12 The correlation between Spike Rating and Ad Awareness

Source: System1 and Radiocentre, 55 campaigns, 44,000 respondents. Weighted with radio GRP



You can see this clearly in figure 12. Interestingly one campaign that failed to brand early or elicit an intense emotional response, highlighted, saw a decrease in advertising awareness. Despite putting media spend towards this ad, the creative wasn't effective enough and time and competitor brands eroded mental availability more than the campaign created it. We can then see a cluster of campaigns gaining 0% more advertising awareness, these ads just did enough to hold where they were in the minds of listeners. Finally, we can see a range of more effective advertising that has branded early and often, attracted attention which has created an intense emotional reaction, and built memory structures. This has moved their awareness forwards. This sort of audio advertising will see greater return on investment. It's done the job it was created to do, it's more effective.

The example below shows the dramatic activation effects of this for Camelot. Camelot conducted their own econometric analysis to determine same-week ROI (National Lottery ticket sales) of their activation radio ads, controlling for the effects of jackpot size. The higher the Spike Rating for their radio ads (ads with rapid brand recognition and high emotional intensity), the greater same-week radio ROI. This relationship is significant, large and positive ( $R=+0.84$ ). This demonstrates how radio builds short-term sales effects and how the creative can have a dramatic effect on immediate campaign effectiveness.



**Fig 13 Camelot's same-week Radio ROI for a lottery brand showing strong relationship with ads with rapid brand recognition, that cause a strong emotional response (a high Spike Rating)**

Source: Camelot and System1



The National Lottery uses a familiar sonic device to achieve quick brand recognition, one half of the equation for short-term effectiveness. It also performs well on emotional intensity by focussing on how the lottery supports important causes.

See [Appendix 1](#) for the full case study.

“ **By playing the National Lottery**, you raise £30 million every week for good causes. £30 million – that can help run 115,000 singing sessions for choirs to practice and perform. ”



Online car dealer Cazoo applies two strategies for short-term effectiveness: brand early and often, and leverage right-brained melodic music. Its upbeat, repetitive music leads to strong emotional reactions from listeners.

19.6%, more consumers took action as a result of listening to the campaign, almost double (22.2% non-exposed to 41.8% exposed).

See [Appendix 1](#) for the full case study.

“ **Cazoo, Cazoo, Cazoo!**  
Can you buy a car that’s guaranteed to leave you happy? Cazoo yeah you can! ”

## Audio ads with more right-brain features have greater long-term effectiveness.

In his IPA publications *Lemon* (2019) and *Look out* (2021), Orlando Wood takes a closer look at the specific advertising features that engage the right and left hemispheres of the brain and how their use impacts creative effectiveness.

Building from the work of Iain McGilchrist, psychologist and author of *The Master and His Emissary*, he noted right-brain features engage our broad-beam attention and are ideal for brand building. Broad-beam attention is alert and vigilant. It is concerned with what comes from 'the edges of our awareness.' Right-brain features include characters, dialogue, cultural references, humour, and melodic music.

Meanwhile, left-brain features appeal to our narrow-beam attention. Narrow-beam attention is local, narrowly focused attention that prefers to deal with what it already knows. Left-brain features include, for example, voiceovers and testimonials, a strong product focus, technical language, and highly rhythmic music.

Narrow  
Goal-orientated  
Abstraction (parts)  
Categorises  
Explicit  
Cause and effect  
Repeatability  
Literal, factual  
Self-absorbed and dogmatic  
Language, signs and symbols  
Fixity  
Rhythm



Broad  
Vigilant  
Context (whole)  
Empathises  
Implicit  
Connections and relationships  
Novelty  
Metaphorical  
Self-aware and questioning  
Time, space and depth  
Flow  
Music

**Left**

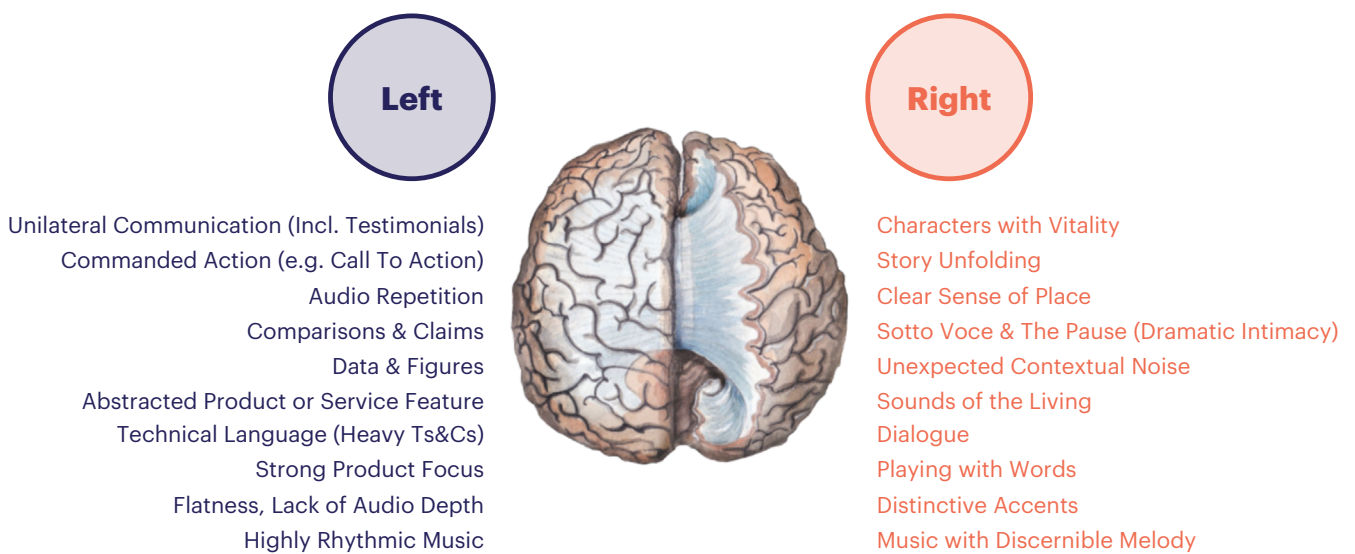
**Right**

Fig 14 The way our left- and right-hemisphere attend to the world, summarised by Orlando Wood in his books *Lemon* and *Look out*

Source: *The Master and His Emissary*, Iain McGilchrist

His research found that the use of left-brain features in adverts has been on the rise in the last 3 decades while the number of right-brain features has seen a decline. The combined impact of these two trends is that advertising effectiveness has suffered.

Andrew Tindall, System1, has built on Orlando’s work with the IPA and, for the first time, defined the left- and right-brain creative features for audio advertising. These left-brain features are more suited for narrowed attention, to sell to listeners who are “in-market”. They focus on the message, the reason, and create audio advertising that works now.



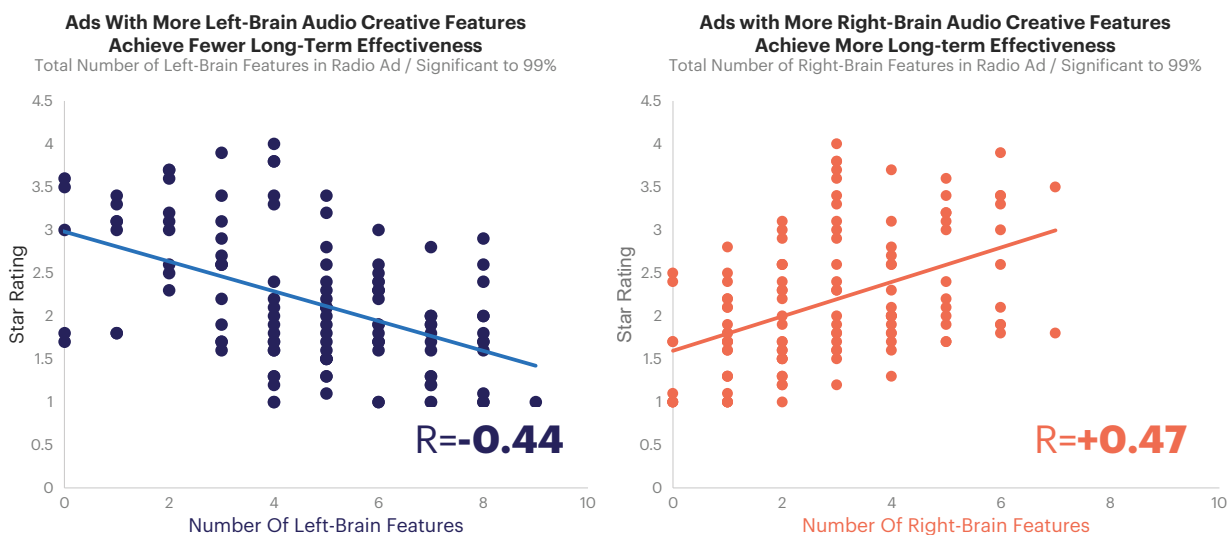
**Fig 15 Left- and right-brain creative features for audio advertising**

Source: System1

These right-brain features do not assume interest in the brand or the ad itself, they seek to attract listeners’ broad attention by entertaining. Building emotions and strong memories, creating audio ads that work now and into the future. See Fig 15 for a comprehensive list of these features for audio advertising, and the final section of this publication for a detailed explanation of these audio features and the brands that are using them well.

Importantly, there's a significant strong positive relationship ( $R=+0.47$ , significant at the 99% confidence interval) between the number of right-brain features in an audio ad and System1's Star Rating. Right-brain features attract broad-beam attention by being appealing, interesting and enjoyable to broad audiences. They create positive emotions and form strong memory structures, building mental availability and creating more lasting effects. See the Weetabix case study for an example of an ad rich in right-brain features.

There is also a significant strong negative relationship ( $R=-0.44$ , significant at the 99% confidence interval) between the number of left-brain features in an audio ad and System1's Star Rating. Audio ads full of left-brain features assume interest in the product or service being advertised. They are less entertaining and interesting to broad audiences. As such, they elicit fewer strong positive emotions and are less effective in the long-term.



**Fig 16 Relationship between number of right- and left-brain features in audio ads and Star Rating**

Source: System1 and Radiocentre, 126 radio ads.

## Ads with More Right-Brain and Fewer Left-Brain Features Achieve Greater Long-term Effectiveness

Star Rating vs Right-brain Skew

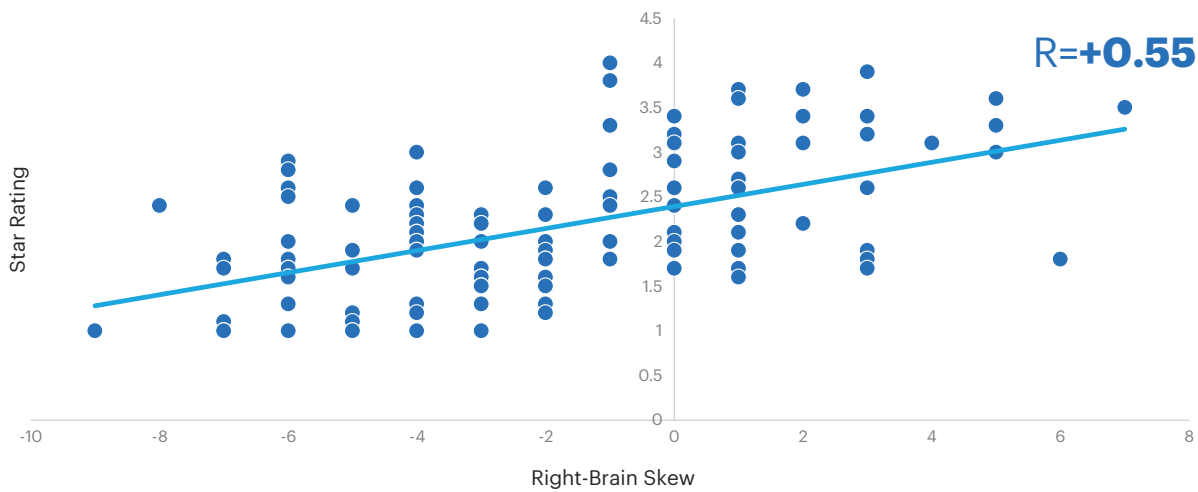


Fig 17 Relationship between number of right- and left-brain features in audio ads and Star Rating

Source: System1 and Radiocentre, 126 radio ads.

By combining these two types of features to define an ad's right-brain skew (number of right-brain features, less the number of left-brain features), we see there's a strong significant relationship ( $R=+0.55$ , significant at the 99% confidence interval) between right-brain skew and System1's Star Rating. Advertisers aiming for lasting business effects should create audio ads with more right-brain features, and fewer left-brain features.

Additionally, the Radiogauge data presents a rare opportunity to demonstrate how each feature impacts attention and memory formation. Fig 18 shows the average impact the presence of a feature had on advertising recall uplift per 100 GRPs, against the average impact the presence of a feature had on System1's Star Rating. By doing this, we can understand which features are more associated with emotion and memory formation. It's important to note "Audio Repetition" is the rhythmic use of voices to repeat the same phrase or noise again and again. This is different to the early and frequent use of a wide range of audio brand assets. This chart demonstrates the power of left- and right-brain audio creative features as a lens to view creative strategy and media planning through.



## Right-Brain Creative Features Are More Associated with Emotion and Memory Formation

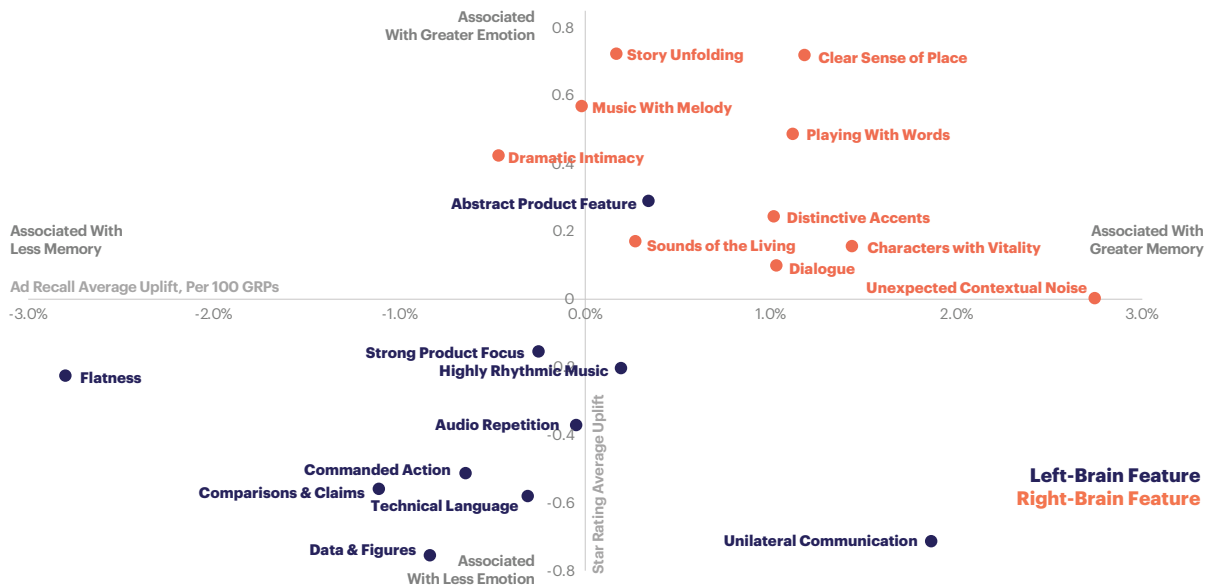


Fig 18 The average effect the presence of a feature has on Star Rating and media-weighted advertising recall. Ad-recall uplift between exposed and non-exposed groups is per 100 GRPs, weighting with total campaign weight. Source: System1 and Radiocentre, 55 radio ads.



**Star Rating**  
Good

Weetabix offers a masterclass in right-brained creative with its “Built in Rome” advert. It features eight right-brain features, including characters with vitality, dialogue, cultural references, clear sense of place and story unfolding.

The ad resulted in a 39.1% increase in Claimed Consumer Purchase (amazingly, 0% non-exposed > 39.1% exposed); a 21.6% increase in “I’ve heard this ad a lot”, which drives Fame for Weetabix; a 18.3% increase in advertising awareness; and a 5.3% increase in listeners claiming Weetabix to be a “Brand for me.”

**See Appendix 1** for the full case study.



**Star Rating**  
Good

This Warburtons ad is part of a series for radio which features customers leaving voicemails for Jonathan Warburton. In it, a woman paints a delicious picture of the brand's crumpets and how much she misses enjoying them while working from home. Through Sotto Voce and louder moments of excitement, the voiceover takes listeners on a dynamic emotional journey.

**See Appendix 1** for the full case study.

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**Star Rating**  
Good

Magnum's unique cracking sound is the perfect fit for radio. The brand also leverages melodic music, a right-brained feature, selecting a classical tune to heighten the "It's the sound of a classic" messaging.

**See Appendix 1** for the full case study.

---



**Star Rating**  
Good

McDonald's expertly incorporates storytelling and a clear sense of place to demonstrate to listeners that their radio advert is unfolding in a museum. Rather than sculptures or artwork, though, it's McDonald's Italian Stack and the Crispy Chicken Italiano on display. Appealing to the right brain results in 3.2-Stars, a 'Good' long-term brand-building result.

**See Appendix 1** for the full case study.

# Listen Up!

## Best-practice Learning in Detail

Whether developing campaigns for live linear radio, podcasts, or music streaming services, the ad effectiveness data detailed in this report and the insights we've shared based on these findings can serve as your guide to creating more effective audio ads that emotionally resonate with the public.

Here we've outlined several best practices to help you create ads that will resonate with the public and elicit a powerful emotional response which, in turn, will drive immediate action from listeners.

# 1

## Incorporate more **right-brained audio creative features**

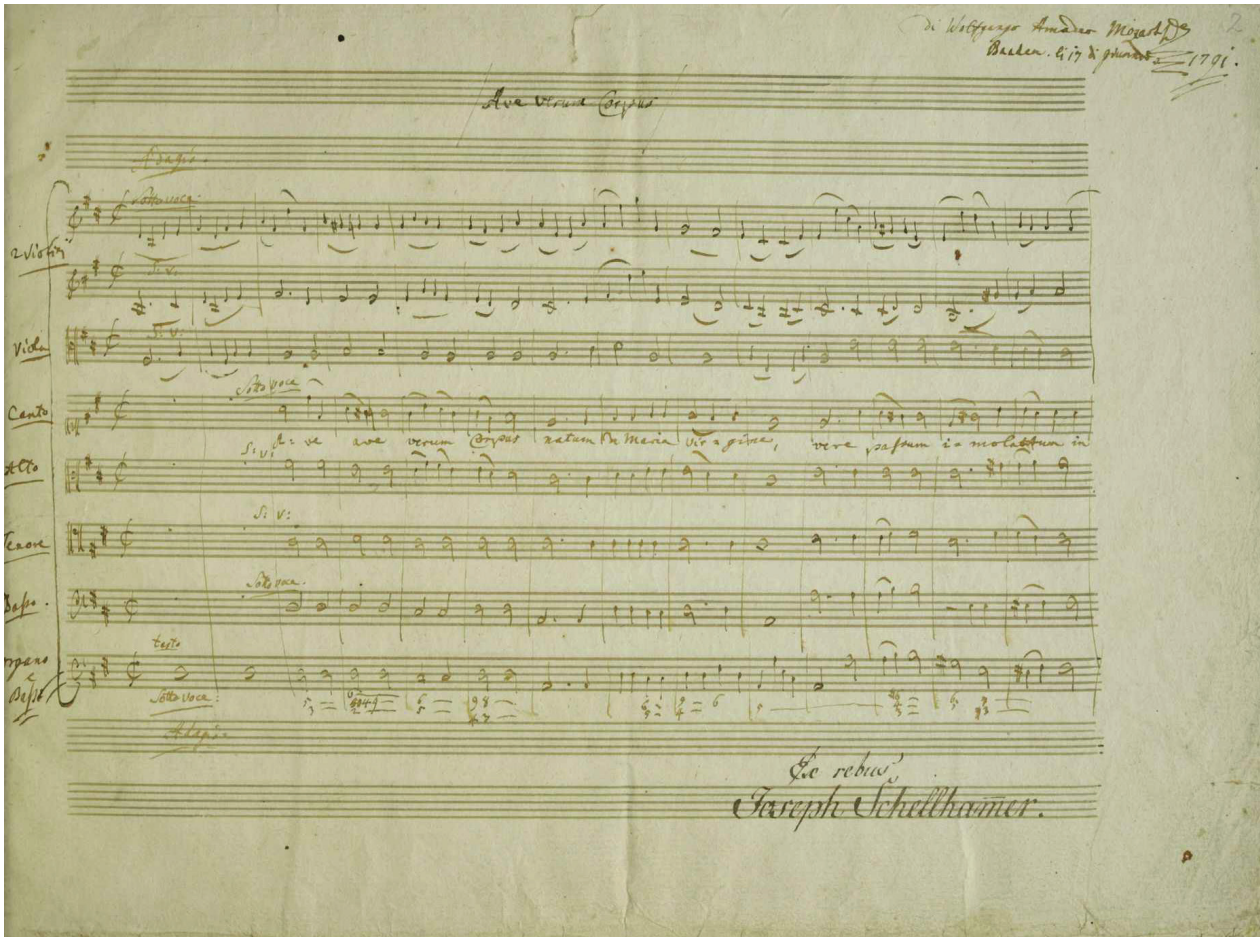
To truly grow a brand, advertisers need to incorporate more right-brain features that help audiences build emotionally driven memory structures. We find that depth of scene, music with discernible melody, story unfolding, and dramatic intimacy are the most impactful right-brain features for audio ads.

**Depth of scene** attracts broad-beam attention and comes from crafting scenes using **sounds of the living**, unexpected contextual noises (like, startling noises of objects being used or the raises of voices to reveal emotion), establishing a **clear sense of place** and using music **with discernible melody**. Introduce **characters with vitality** and **distinctive accents**, as the right-brain loves to understand people with a history and unique personality, whilst **dialogue** can be used to build a sense of betweenness for various characters. Create a richer audio tapestry by introducing **wordplay** (perhaps, for humour).

**Story unfolding** is only used in c.10% of ads we measured as part of this research, but those that do use it see huge lifts in long-term effectiveness. This is because a narrative is more engaging than a straightforward and rational product-focussed message. Crucially, ads with a story unfolding, and indeed all right-brain features, do not assume the interest of the listener. They attract attention, not demand it.

**Dramatic intimacy** has been in music since the 18th century. In 1791, his final year, Mozart composed *Ave verum corpus* for the feast of Corpus Christi. Mozart's world-renowned music has stood the test of time due to its universal appeal, attracting and sustaining broad attention, and its ability to tell stories that elicit a strong emotional reaction. Mozart, perhaps, was the world's most talented musical storyteller.

In Image 1, you can see Mozart's scribbled handwriting on the sheet music for the piece. He notes the need for **Sotto Voce** (Italian for "under the voice"), as he understood he must attract the attention of the crowd, not demand it. As such, he employed a dramatic lowering of the volume of the strings and voices to make his performance more engaging, heighten drama and build suspense.



**Image 1** The first page of Mozart’s autograph of *Ave verum corpus* motet.

Showing “Sotto Voce” to hush the strings and voices to build suspense and attract broad attention of all listeners.

Beethoven, coming after Mozart, similarly used *Sotto Voce* in his String Quartet No. 15. Composed in 1825, the hushed volume of the strings was used to draw focus to what came after: the strings playing with a renewed strength. Beethoven was also a master storyteller through sound. However, it was his fifth symphony that he is most well known for today. Here he uses *The Pause* (represented in sheet music by the fermata sign, see image 2) to build and release suspense, attracting further broad attention.





The pause, silence, heightens the senses. It tempts the listener to lean in to discover more. Our right-brain keeps vigilance in silence, whereas our left-brain would rather have tasks to focus on with explicit, literal, spoken outcomes. By modulating pace and volume, causing dramatic intimacy, marketers can attract and sustain broad attention and tell stories that last. Just like these globally appreciated storytelling composers.

**Image 2 Beethoven with a fermata, used by many (and indeed, him) to pause music for dramatic effect.** Source: Beethoven with the manuscript of the Missa solemnis, Joseph Karl Stieler. Owned by Beethoven-Hause-Bonn.

## Bisto



**Star Rating**  
Good

Bisto demonstrates the power that pauses and a softer voice (Sotto Voce) can have on effectiveness with its radio advert promoting the traditional Sunday Roast and the best gravy to accompany the meal.

What starts out as a frenzied scene filled with the sounds of a sizzling roast and chopping knives, phones ringing and the TV playing, takes a dramatic shift following a well-placed pause. The soothing narration is hushed as it notes Bisto's authentic, rich roasted flavour, and closes with the "Aah! Bisto!" strapline.

Listeners noted they can "almost taste the gravy" and that the ad is "comfortable, familiar and evocative", so perhaps it's no surprise it achieves a 'Good' long-term brand-building score.

[Listen via Test Your Ad Report](#)



## 2 Create with the **Listener** in Mind

Radiocentre's 5'i's data reveals a strong positive relationship ( $R=+0.58$ ) between System1's Star Rating and listeners believing an ad is "Clear who it's for". Be clear who you are speaking to by building consumer goals, insights and stories into your creative to make your ad relatable.

Significant usage of heavy Ts&Cs can decrease emotional intensity, and thus Star Rating by -0.7, on average. When required, ensure Ts&Cs focus remains strictly on what is absolutely necessary – this will ensure that listeners retain key information, as well as support engagement and long-term sales potential.

## 3 **Don't Zig,** Zag Zag Zag!

Ads that stand out from the category, and other audio ads, get more attention and result in listeners feeling greater emotional intensity. Radiocentre's 5'i's data reveals that listeners believing that ads "Stand out" has a significant strong positive relationship ( $R=+0.38$ ) with System1's Spike Rating. Some reasons listeners shared for feeling neutral about an ad included, "Just another broadband ad" and "Just another ad for a holiday."

What does this look like in practice? Haribo has long been known for its Kids' Voices TV campaign, which dubs children's voices into conversations between adults about the brand's delicious gummy treats. It's an out-of-the-ordinary and humorous approach that delights audiences. The distinctive voices, laughter and the recognisable jingle stand out and give the brand's radio ad incredible and short-term effectiveness.

It's also a great example due to it's consistent use across TV and audio channels, Which builds mental structures further and increases the reach of the entire campaign.

[Listen via Test Your Ad Report](#)

# 4

## Embrace the Power of **Music**

Music is the gift that keeps on giving in audio advertising. This is because it attracts attention and emotional intensity, leading to a +0.7 increase in Star Rating when included in an ad, on average. Melodic music is more powerful than repetitive, rhythmic soundtracks.

Just Eat offers inspiration on how to use music well. The brand enlists the help of celebrities, or “hired devices”, who are well-known for their musical talents. Previous ads have featured Snoop Dogg and Katy Perry singing a bespoke song in their signature style that highlights the many food items available for delivery via the platform. The ads drive intense feelings of happiness, specifically “amusement”, “uplifted” and “excitement”. We saw the use of a “melodic device” (e.g. the McDonald’s jingle) increased Star Rating by 0.6 on average, and increased short-term effects.

[Listen via Test Your Ad Report](#)

# 5

## Be Consistent and Leverage a Recognisable **Strapline**

Well-known straplines trigger brand recognition without decreasing emotional intensity. Ads using them see a +0.15 gain in Spike Rating (short-term effectiveness), on average, and +0.7 gain in Star Rating (long-term effectiveness).

Marketers should also keep audio ad execution consistent with TV and digital ads. We saw ads that did this had an average increase of +0.7 on Star Rating, as they take advantage of the full media mix.



## **Brand Early and Often to Benefit from Trust Effects**

Without the advantage of visual cues, brands need to be vocal earlier, ideally before 2 seconds. 16% of the ads in our study that achieved 'Strong' to 'Exceptional' Fluency Rating clearly branded the ad in less than 2 seconds. Ads that reveal the brand at the start of the creative increase Spike Rating by +0.13. This alone closes the gap between TV and radio Spike Rating. We also see a strong significant positive correlation ( $R=+0.20$ ) between time-weighted brand recognition (branding early) and System1's Star Rating (long-term effectiveness). Listeners like to understand who is speaking to them, so marketers should brand early to land long- and short-term effects.

In this context it is crucial to acknowledge the wider learning about the importance of right-brained creative features, distinctiveness, music, and fluent brand devices (audio brand assets such as consistent use of voices, music, voiced characters, and dramatic scenarios) in optimising creative effectiveness.\* In summary, just speaking or repeating the brand name is unlikely to exploit this opportunity as effectively as using a variety of audio brand assets in collaboration with one another – the latter is more engaging.

**\*See Appendix 2** for headlines from existing Radiocentre radio creative research for further learning about the effectiveness of consistent audio brand assets.

**Everyone at System1 and Radiocentre hopes you find these considerations helpful and take them to heart — and we all look forward to hearing your future work on the airwaves soon.**

**System1**

 radiocentre



# **Listen Up!**

## **Appendix 1**

# **Learnings in Action** Star Performers





## Compare The Market

### Booby Traps

(VCCP)



**Star Rating**  
Good

As Orlando Wood writes in his book *Lemon*, “a fluent device is a recurring character with agency, or a recurring scenario played out by people in new and different contexts.” Character fluent devices have a unique ability to drive brand recognition and long-term growth, as they are familiar and prioritise the living.

Bought to life by VCCP over a decade ago, Compare the Market’s meerkat Aleksandr Orlov and his friends and family have consistently appeared in the brand’s campaigns across TV, radio, out of home and digital. As a result, the brand has become synonymous with the entertaining meerkats.

In this 30-second radio spot, with a story that is word-for-word consistent with a TV campaign, Aleksandr is joined by his Head of IT and personal assistant Sergei to see an adventure movie. But instead of walking into the theatre, they end up inside a dark tomb and Sergei clumsily sets off a booby trap.

Both Aleksandr and Sergei have instantly recognisable voices due to their recurring roles in Compare the Market’s ads. Non-vocal characters would not have the same impact on radio, however the careful selection of voice, accent, tone and even the signature tagline “simples”, has enabled the meerkats to become powerful brand tools for audio. Thus, we see a big Fluency uplift within the first 2 seconds of the ad, before there is any explicit mention of the brand itself.

Pairing Aleksandr and Sergei together allows for captivating dialogue and character betweenness. And there’s another right-brained element at work here – a clear sense of place in a terrifying tomb and a clear narrative unfolding. Even without the visuals, listeners understand where the characters are and what they’re doing.

Along with the humour that Compare the Market injects into its ads, it’s no wonder listeners felt a wide range of types of happiness. These include “amusement”, “awe-inspired”, “uplifted”, “pleased for others” and “excited”.

Additionally, the narrative aligns well with Compare the Market’s promotion for 2-for-1 cinema tickets and the ad also benefits from limited use of terms and conditions (Ts&Cs). The offer drives a lot of positive emotion.

The result of successfully executing these best practices is a 3.4-Star Rating, indicative of good long-term impact. It’s a testament to the power of TV and radio when working together.

## Compare The Market

### Booby Traps

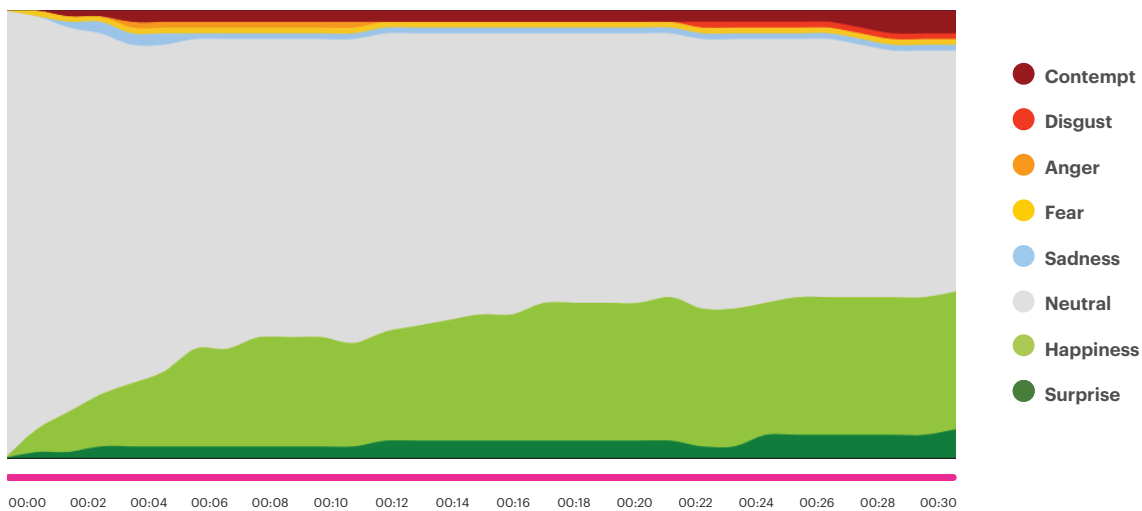
(VCCP)



Star Rating  
Good

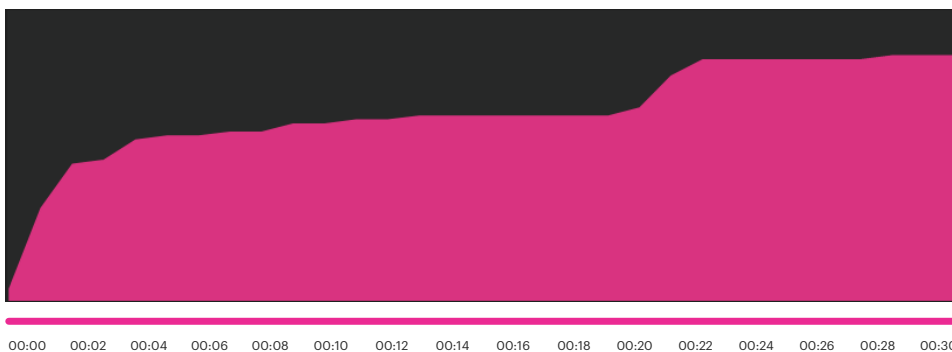
In listeners' own words from Test Your Ad

**"I like the meerkats and 2-for-1 cinema tickets."**



System1's FaceTrace® technology maps the emotional journey of listeners across the duration of the ad

Source: System1



System1's FluencyTrace shows how quickly listeners recognise the brand being advertised

Source: System1

[Listen via Test Your Ad Report](#)



## The AA

### Keep On Turning

(adam&eveDDB)



**Star Rating**  
Good

The AA showcases the brand-building potential of music and the importance of connecting a song to the brand with its ad “Keep On Turning”. The spot, which mimics a fun-filled TV ad from the brand that sees a young child rocking out to “Proud Mary”, jumps straight into a spirited rendition of the song.

With its uplifting melody and recognisable lyrics, the music is the biggest driver of happiness. Plus, there’s a tie between the soundtrack and the message featured in the final 5 seconds of the ad – The AA’s breakdown cover helps drivers get back on the road so they can get their big wheels rollin’ again, just as the song says.

In addition to happiness, another positive emotion – surprise – comes through from listeners. The ad secures above-average levels, as most people don’t expect an upbeat, happy song to be associated with a car insurance and breakdown cover provider.

Here we see the Fame effect in practise. By incorporating a famous song, the AA appeal to the right brain and drive positive emotions, securing a 17% uplift in Word of Mouth (5.2% non-exposed to 22.5% exposed). Listeners report feeling Amused and Excited, encouraging them to talk about the ad with others.

# The AA

## Keep On Turning

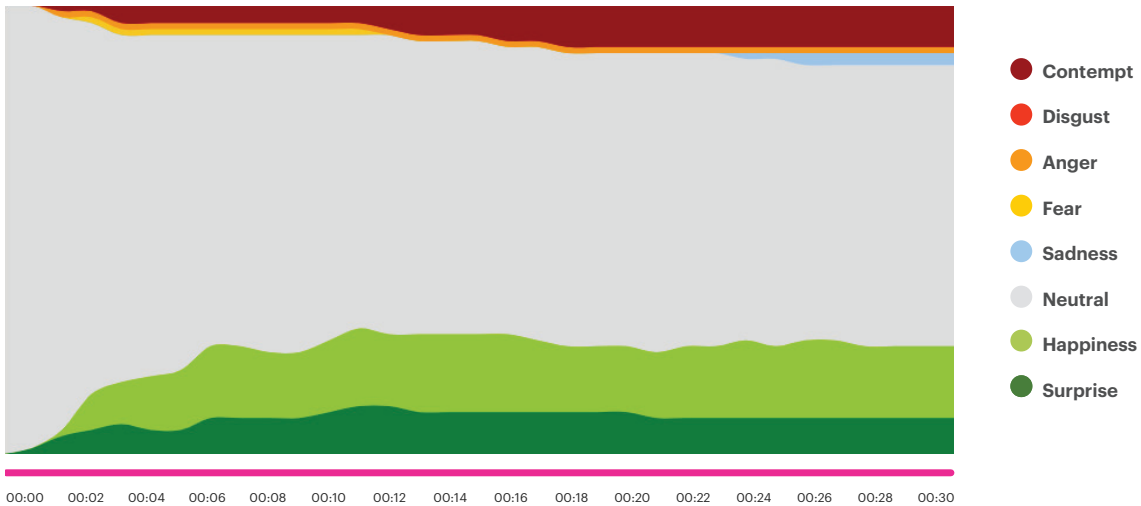
(adam&eveDDB)



Star Rating  
Good

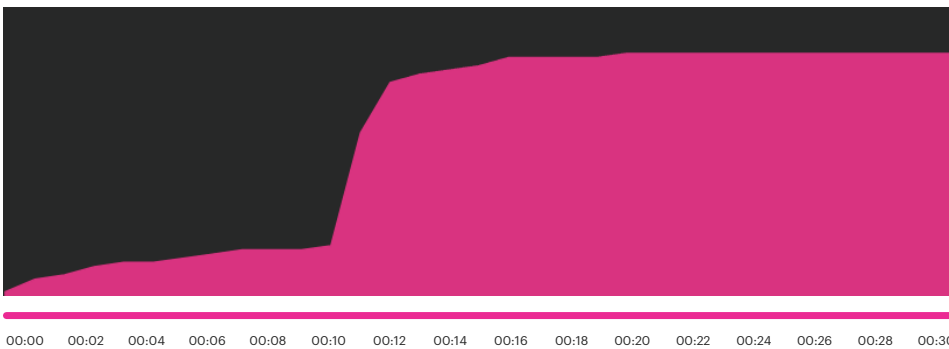
In listeners' own words from Test Your Ad

**"Great piece of music and advert for The AA."**



System1's FaceTrace® technology maps the emotional journey of listeners across the duration of the ad

Source: System1



System1's FluencyTrace shows how quickly listeners recognise the brand being advertised

Source: System1

[Listen via Test Your Ad Report](#)

**Tesco**  
**A Little Help**  
(BBH)



**Star Rating**  
Good



**Fluency Rating**  
Exceptional

---

In this ad from Tesco, the brand's strapline "Every Little Helps" serves as the foundation for its creative. Through different voiceovers that showcase a range of British accents and establish a sense of national pride, listeners hear about the different ways that the retailer supports the community, such as through food donations and working with suppliers to reduce plastic in stores and the oceans.

In addition to the different voices signalling Tesco's wide-reaching initiatives, the ad incorporates various scenic cues, like sounds of the NHS, Tesco's checkout scanners and seagulls at the shore to establish a clear sense of place and further drive home the point about the retailer's widespread commitment.

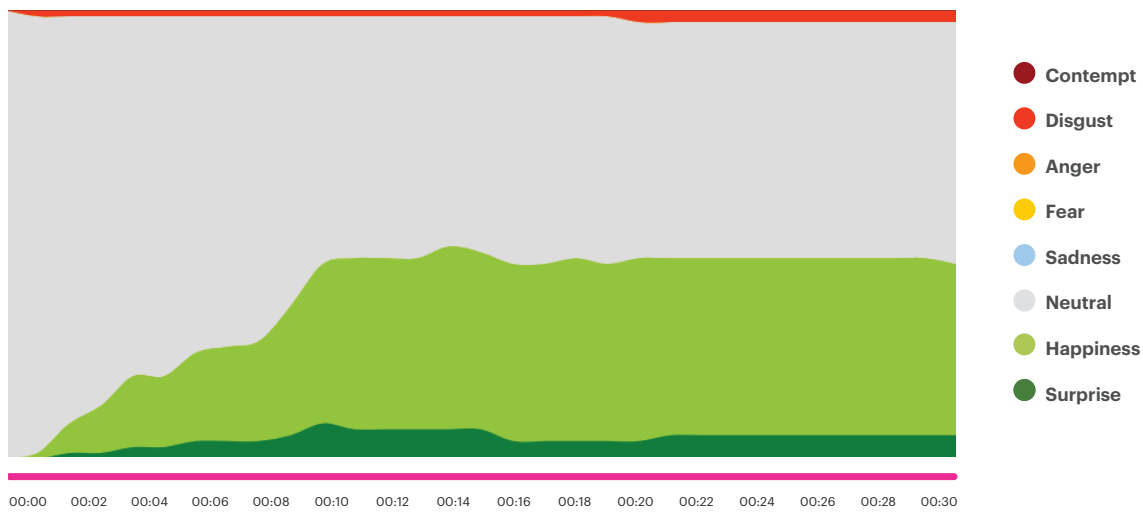
The closing is equally strong, with the entire group coming together to recite that "a little help makes a big difference," which plays up the sense of unity and cooperation that Tesco fosters.

Integrating the purpose-driven slogan into the narrative is a smart move, as it directs the message directly toward the Tesco brand, leading to memorability. And thanks to early branding within the first 2 seconds and subsequent direct mentions and cues throughout, Tesco aces Fluency with a score of 97.

Not every brand can seamlessly build a story that's so firmly embedded in its DNA, but those that do reap the rewards.

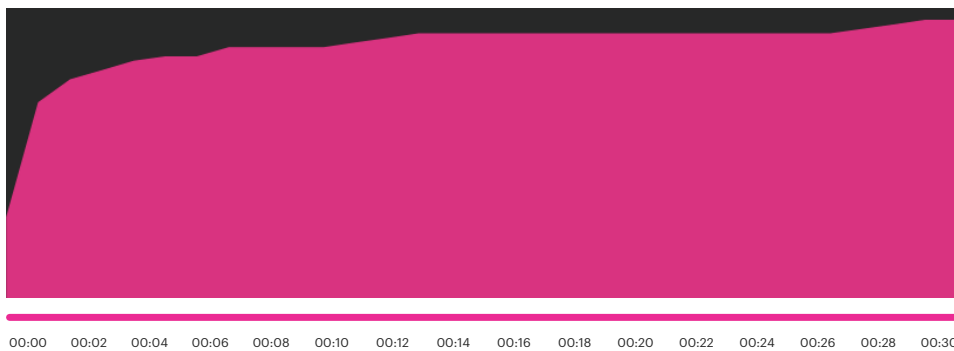
In listeners' own words from Test Your Ad

**"Tesco are great because of everything they are doing to help others."**



**System1's FaceTrace® technology maps the emotional journey of listeners across the duration of the ad**

Source: System1



**System1's FluencyTrace shows how quickly listeners recognise the brand being advertised**

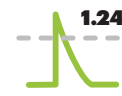
Source: System1

[Listen via Test Your Ad Report](#)

## The National Lottery

### The National Lottery 12th April 2021

(adam&eveDDB)



**Spike Rating**  
Strong

The National Lottery opens its radio ad with a familiar sonic device – a consistent theme song that (nearly) everyone in the UK would recognise. As a result, it achieves ‘Exceptional’ speed of branding, which is half the equation for short-term effectiveness.

The ad also performs well on the second part: driving emotional intensity. It does so by bringing the narrator’s voiceover to life. Rather than only informing listeners that playing The National Lottery helps raise £30 million weekly for good causes, like The Cradle Choir, the ad surrounds audiences with the uplifting vocals of the choir.

And the fact that The National Lottery leverages a hired device, well-known TV presenter Dermot O’Leary, helps to further bolster the power of the voiceover. The familiarity of O’Leary, the uplifting script and choir vocals drive feelings of positivity and make the ad more personal.

It’s proof that when speed of branding and emotional intensity are in harmony, there’s great potential for short-term gains.

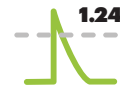
**“Radio is a critical channel for The National Lottery, reaching our many potential players to drive win belief, pride and play. It’s great to have our partners at System1 involved to ensure every ad is as good as it can be so we drive a strong emotional response and get those important sales that drive returns to good causes.”**

**Anna McInally**, Head of Marketing Communications and Creative, Camelot Group

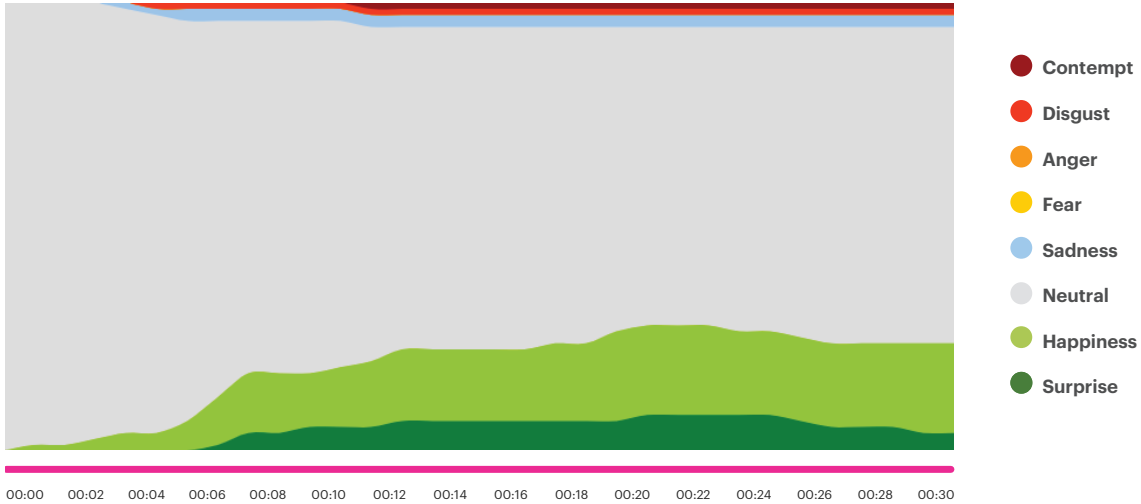
# The National Lottery

## The National Lottery 12th April 2021

(adam&eveDDB)

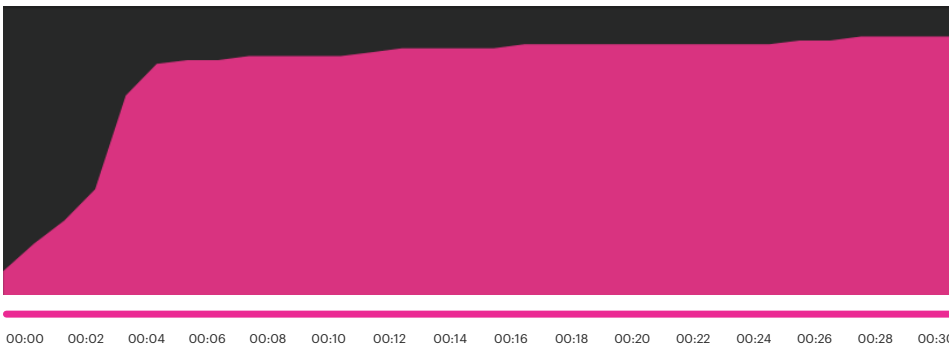


**Spike Rating**  
Strong



**System1's FaceTrace® technology maps the emotional journey of listeners across the duration of the ad**

Source: System1



**System1's FluencyTrace shows how quickly listeners recognise the brand being advertised**

Source: System1

[Listen via Test Your Ad Report](#)



## **Cazoo** **Yeah You Can** (House 337)



Online car dealer Cazoo applies two strategies for short-term effectiveness on radio: brand early and often, and leverage right-brained melodic music.

The branded song immediately signals that the ad is for Cazoo. And its upbeat energy drives a lot of feeling, leading to a strong emotional intensity score. What often happens with ads is that many listeners walk away feeling neutral. Cazoo hits an interesting note here – some listeners enjoy the catchy music, others dislike the repetitive tune. But the important thing is that it’s better for people to feel something, rather than nothing.

Because of the strong speed of branding and high emotional intensity, Cazoo’s ad secures ‘Strong’ short-term sales potential. Consumer action doubled thanks to this ad; 19.6% more consumers took action as a result of listening to the campaign (22.2% non-exposed > 41.8% exposed).

**“Radio works hard in building nationwide reach and frequency amongst car buyers. As a new brand, Cazoo disrupted the market with upbeat, catchy and well-branded radio campaigns – nearly four years later, and our creative strategy continues to deliver results!”**

**George Majstorovic**, Head of Brand & Advertising, Cazoo

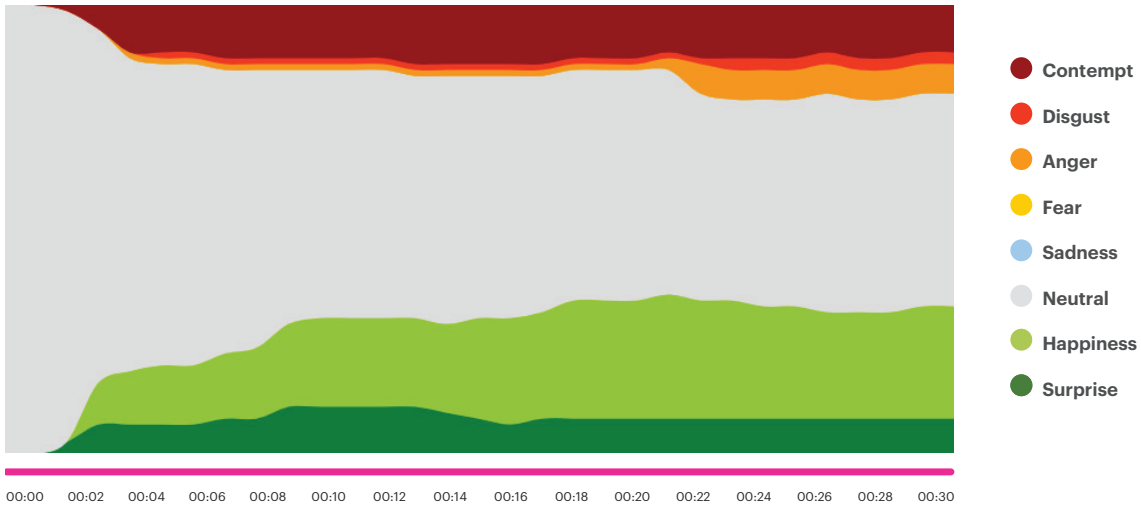
# Cazoo

## Yeah You Can

(House 337)

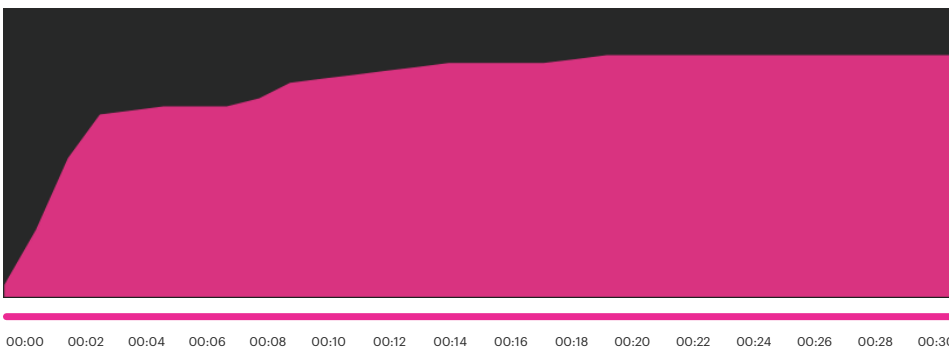
 **Spike Rating**  
Strong

In listeners' own words from Test Your Ad  
**"Cheerful ad, so much energy."**



**System1's FaceTrace® technology maps the emotional journey of listeners across the duration of the ad**

Source: System1



**System1's FluencyTrace shows how quickly listeners recognise the brand being advertised**

Source: System1

[Listen via Test Your Ad Report](#)

## Magnum Cracking

(LOLA MullenLowe)



**Star Rating**  
Good

A unique sound deserves the spotlight in Magnum’s “Cracking” radio ad. One of the things that differentiates the ice cream brand is its chocolate coating that’s made to be broken. When it breaks, it does so with a satisfying sound. Whether an ice cream bar or a tub, customers certainly take delight in cracking into their treat.

Magnum know this and so they make a point of playing up the familiar cracking sound in their TV and radio adverts. It’s a smart decision, as the more people feel, the more they buy. Appealing to the senses and signalling food with distinctive audio cues pays off. The spot secures ‘Exceptional’ emotional intensity thanks to auditory-tactile synaesthesia – hearing the beloved cracking sound helps listeners imagine themselves biting into a Magnum.

The ad also leverages another best practice by using a well-known, hummable song, “The Good Life.” The classical tune heightens the “It’s the sound of a classic” messaging that the voiceover notes at the closing. And the music was borrowed from the brand’s “Get Old or Get Classic” ad, thereby tying the radio and TV campaign together.

Magnum certainly know the sound of success with this ad that achieves ‘Strong’ short-term results (1.24 Spike Rating) and ‘Good’ long-term results as well (3.8 Star Rating).

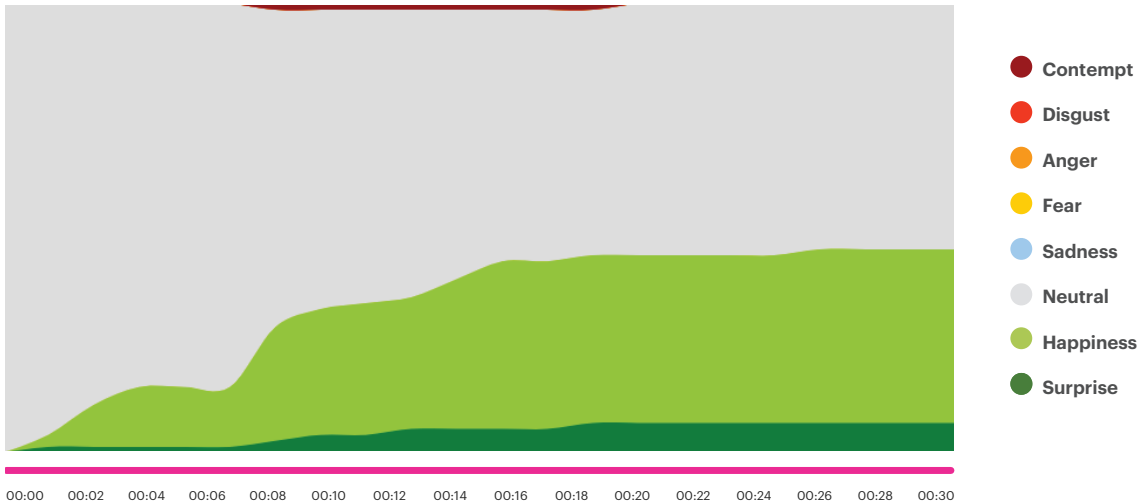
# Magnum Cracking

(LOLA MullenLowe)



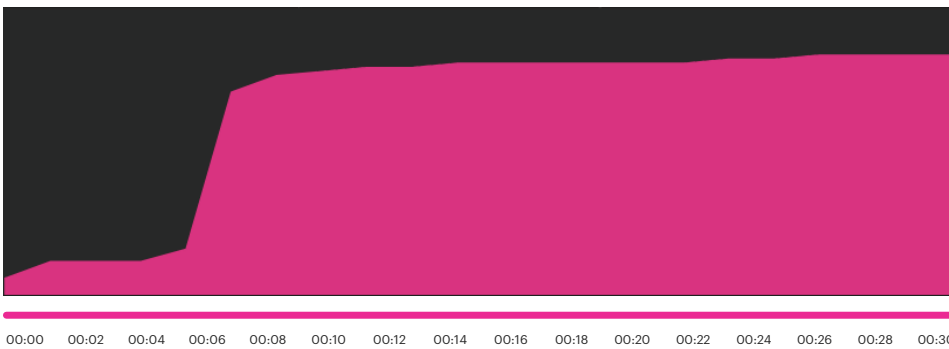
Star Rating  
Good

In listeners' own words from Test Your Ad  
**"Nice sounds. Love Magnum."**



System1's FaceTrace® technology maps the emotional journey of listeners across the duration of the ad

Source: System1



System1's FluencyTrace shows how quickly listeners recognise the brand being advertised

Source: System1

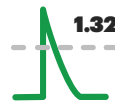
[Listen via Test Your Ad Report](#)

# Warburtons

## Jonathan's Voicemail: Crumpets



**Star Rating**  
Good



**Spike Rating**  
Exceptional

(Joyful and Triumphant)

---

Warburtons excel at bringing their brand to life through character. Their TV ads are known for a recurring scenario which sees well-known celebrities and characters, like Sylvester Stallone, George Clooney and the Muppets, calling or meeting with chairman Jonathan Warburton in his office to talk about the bakery's delicious products.

The brand slightly adapts this fluent device for its 3.6-Star radio spot, which is part of an ongoing series of voicemails for Jonathan. This particular ad features a woman lamenting that because she's no longer working from home, she doesn't have the luxury of snuggling under her duvet and eating "soft, buttery" crumpets. With Jonathan Warburton's name the first words spoken after the voicemail tone, the ad has 'Strong' speed of branding – by characterising their brand, Warburtons can appeal to the right-brain use of character (driving positive emotions) and fluency.

The comedic tone and the familiar and relatable narrative of returning to a less-than-cosy office after working from home during the pandemic results in lots of feelings of surprise and happiness among listeners. This is evident in verbatims collected from listeners like "funny", "loved the take on going back to office after lockdown" and "wasn't expecting it to be so amusing."

Another reason that the ad works so well is that it repeatedly highlights the pleasure and comfort one gets from eating Warburtons' crumpets. Descriptions, like "hot", "golden", and "delicious" make it easy to visualise and even taste the crumpets, driving emotional intensity.

Intensity is further helped by the voiceover, which is delivered with lots of emotion from a character with vitality. It's apparent the woman feels excitement, she whispers (making use of *Sotto Voce*) and ends the call with a bit of irritation that she can't wear slippers at the office. As a result, listeners are fully engaged throughout the ad and enjoy a dynamic emotional journey.

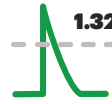
Warburtons make the right call in adjusting their creative to fit the needs of radio. This right-brained ad scores well on long-term brand building and exceptionally for short-term sales potential.

# Warburtons Jonathan's Voicemail: Crumpets

(Joyful and Triumphant)



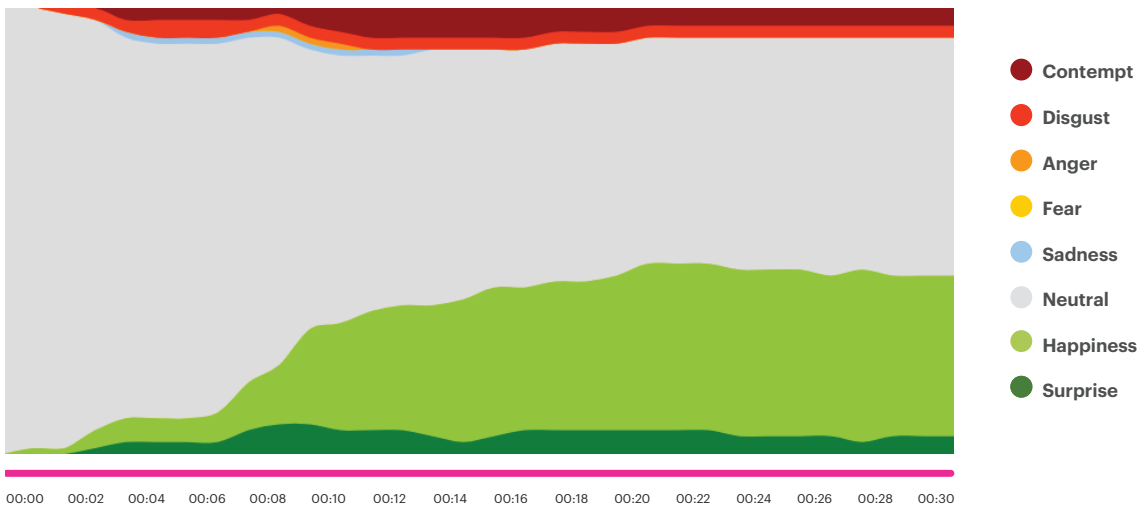
Star Rating  
Good



Spike Rating  
Exceptional

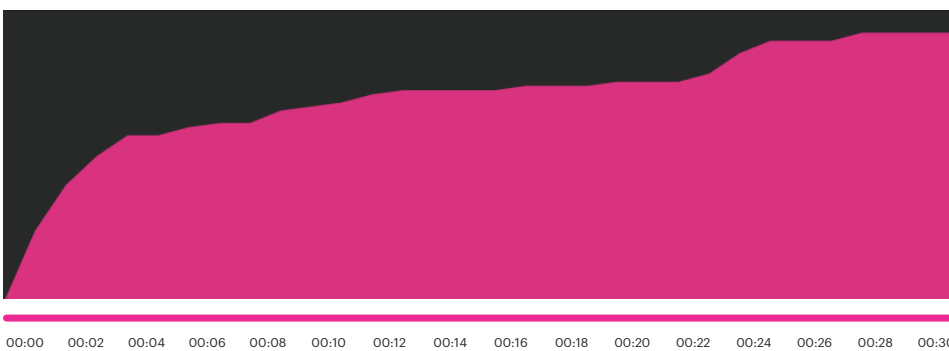
In listeners' own words from Test Your Ad

**"I love Warburtons bread, hot buttery comfort, traditional feel and good food."**



System1's FaceTrace® technology maps the emotional journey of listeners across the duration of the ad

Source: System1



System1's FluencyTrace shows how quickly listeners recognise the brand being advertised

Source: System1

[Listen via Test Your Ad Report](#)

## **Weetabix**

### **Built in Rome**

(Rupert and Phil)



**Star Rating**  
Good

Weetabix offer a masterclass in right-brained creative with its “Built in Rome” advert. It features eight right-brain features, including characters with vitality, dialogue, cultural references, clear sense of place and story unfolding.

Playing on the famous “Rome wasn’t built in a day” adage, the ad imagines a world where this is actually possible, if you’ve started your day with Weetabix. By using a well-known figure from the past such as Caesar, the ad offers historical context and hilariously juxtaposes it with a modern-day character and a familiar fluent scenario. Someone’s had their Weetabix and as a result, he’s efficiently constructed the Colosseum, the aqueducts and the Roman Baths.

“Built in Rome” taps into highly effective types of happiness that drive large business effects. The number of listeners reporting they feel “uplifted” and “amusement” was significantly higher than the norm, once again proving that character, incidence and place entertain for commercial gain.

The results are exceptional. The ad resulted in a 39.1% increase in Claimed Consumer Purchase (amazingly, 0% non-exposed > 39.1% exposed); a 21.6% increase in “I’ve heard this ad a lot”, which drives Fame for Weetabix; a 18.3% increase in advertising awareness; and a 5.3% increase in listeners claiming Weetabix to be a “Brand for me”.

While a brand can’t be built in a day, ads like this can inspire marketers to leverage right-brain features for brain-building success.

**“Radio is a brilliant media for Weetabix. We know that radio ads are most effective when they elicit more feeling. Weetabix radio ads allow us to tell stories, feature lovable characters in memorable situations and make people smile with a joke!”**

**Francesca Theokli**, Marketing Director and member of Executive Leadership Team, Weetabix



# Weetabix

## Built in Rome

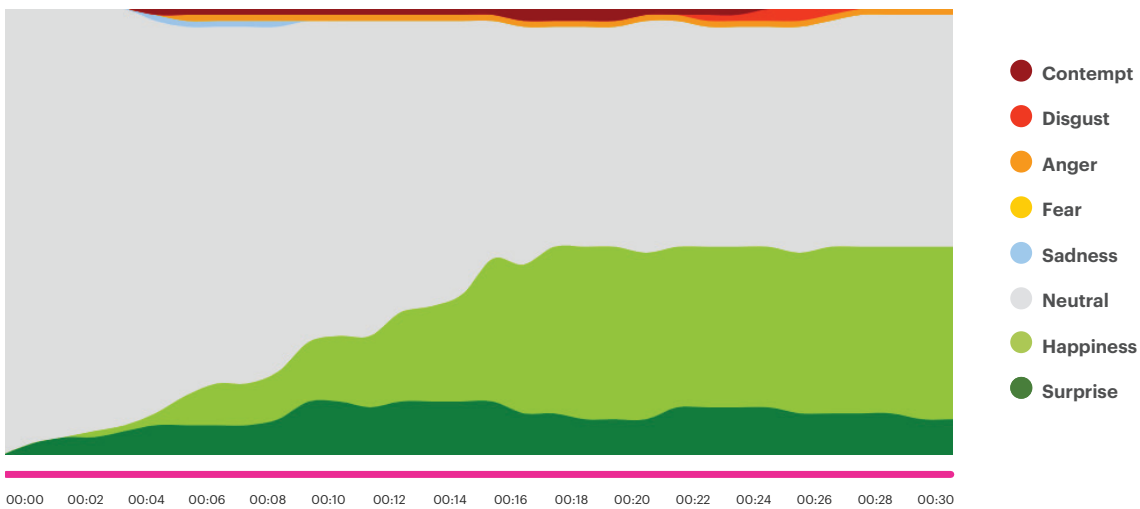
(Rupert and Phil)



Star Rating  
Good

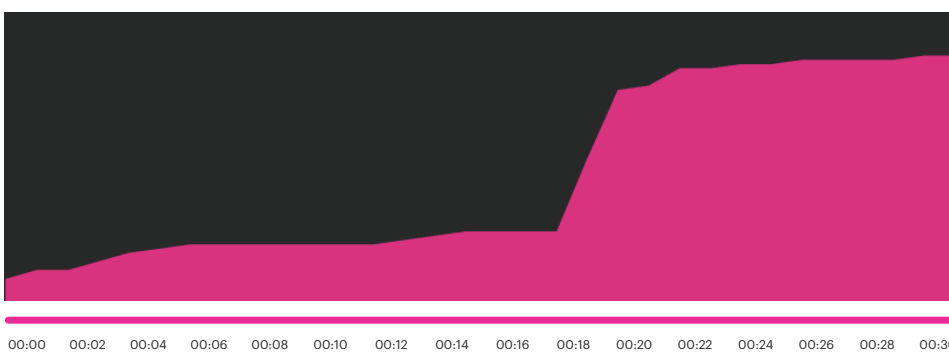
In listeners' own words from Test Your Ad

**"The strapline is reminiscent of childhood – and the ad's quite funny too."**



**System1's FaceTrace® technology maps the emotional journey of listeners across the duration of the ad**

Source: System1



**System1's FluencyTrace shows how quickly listeners recognise the brand being advertised**

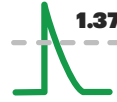
Source: System1

[Listen via Test Your Ad Report](#)

## McDonald's Guided Tour (Leo Burnett)



**Star Rating**  
Good



**Spike Rating**  
Exceptional

McDonald's and Leo Burnett are no strangers to creating work that drives both the short and the long, and they've done it again with this radio advert promoting their limited-time menu creations: the Italian Stack and the Crispy Chicken Italiano.

Of course, the primary aim of any seasonal menu launch is to entice people to visit the restaurant and try the product. The ad positions the new summertime burger and sandwich as a way to "holiday from home", thereby inspiring consumers to experience the flavours of Italy without the need for travel.

The creative achieves an 'Exceptional' Spike Rating, indicating very promising short-term sales potential. And Leo Burnett accomplish this by taking a slight detour from the typical fast food ad.

While listeners are treated to mouthwatering descriptions of the food ("a splash of rich tomato sauce", "delectable, crispy chicken breast"), a technique that many restaurant brands employ in their advertising, there's also storytelling at play and a clear sense of place, an important right-brained feature.

Immediately, listeners understand that they're following a museum tour guide who is showcasing first the Italian Stack, referred to as an "edible work of art", and then the next piece in the "collection", the Crispy Chicken Italiano. We hear her stilettos as she walks around the exhibit and cameras clicking. The scene has been set and the iconic sonic device that is the McDonald's whistle makes it clear that these menu masterpieces are from a familiar brand – after all, the advert achieves a nearly perfect Fluency Rating of 98.

This approach drives uplift, excitement, and sensory pleasure and the novelty of the launch drives happiness and surprise, all of which combine to support long-term brand building. In this area, McDonald's scores a 'Good' result of 3.2-Stars, once again proving that you can win on the short when you aim to create strong brand-building work that appeals to the right brain.

# McDonald's Guided Tour

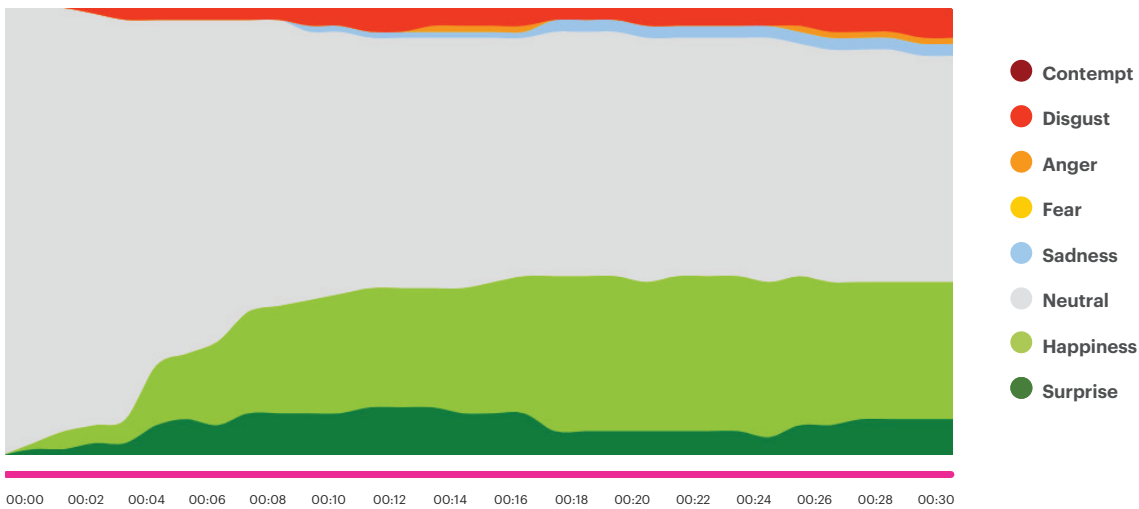
(Leo Burnett)

**3.2** Star Rating  
Good

**1.37** Spike Rating  
Exceptional

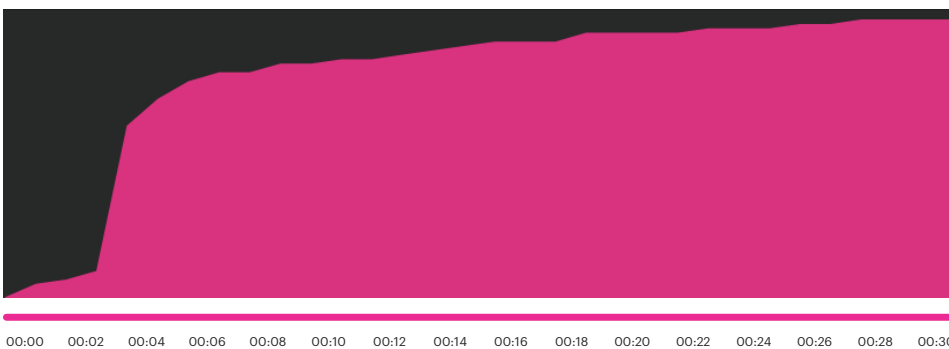
In listeners' own words from Test Your Ad

**"Sounds delicious and from a brand I like so expect it to be very tasty"**



**Fig 35** System1's FaceTrace® technology maps the emotional journey of listeners across the duration of the ad

Source: System1



**Fig 36** System1's FluencyTrace shows how quickly listeners recognise the brand being advertised

Source: System1

[Listen via Test Your Ad Report](#)

## **Moonpig** **Xmas** (Creature)



**Star Rating**  
Good



**Fluency Rating**  
Exceptional

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As our research has demonstrated, branding early and often is essential. Online card and gift retailer Moonpig do this well in their TV advertising, which features a recurring fluent device – a pig, of course!

But the beloved piggy has a non-speaking role in Moonpig’s ads, making it near impossible to leverage the character across radio advertising. So, how do they pivot for this medium, and what’s the end result?

In one of Moonpig’s Christmas adverts, they bring the whistle sound used in their TV advertising to the forefront. The 30-second radio spot kicks off with this sonic branding and the brand name is also revealed shortly thereafter within the voiceover.

As the ad nears its closing, Moonpig is mentioned once again, and the sing-song call-to-action (noting “Moonpig.com”) is backed by the same familiar whistle. It’s no wonder then that the ad scores 94 on Fluency – listeners are clear on who the ad is for.

By using sonic branding at the outset, rather than just at the end of the ad, Moonpig are able to drive strong short-term impact and strong overall branding. Even without the little pig, they’re excelling by leaning into their other assets that are better suited for radio.

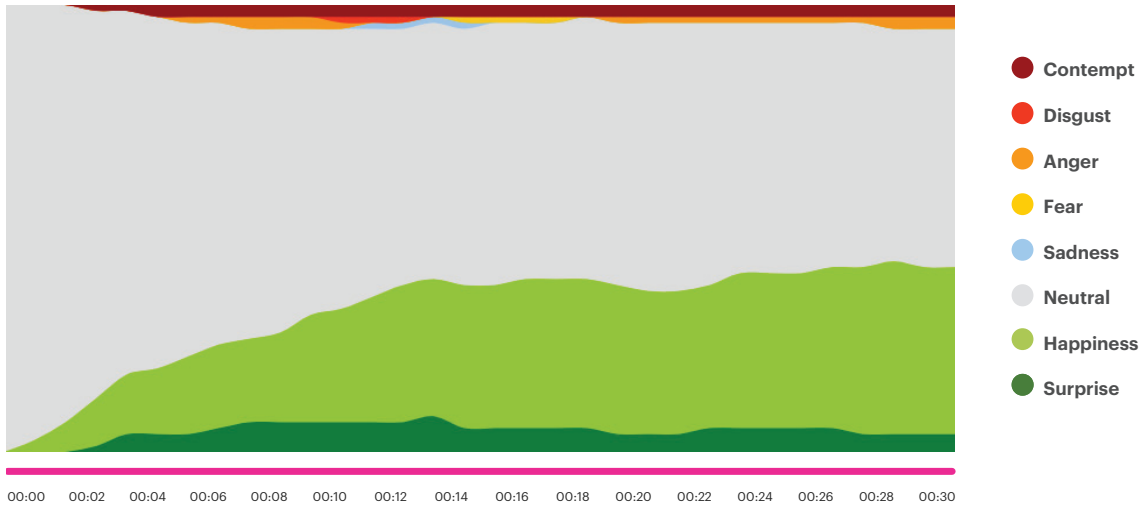
**“Radio has superpowers. It entertains. And it sells. It’s a natural medium for Moonpig to create ads that use our most fluent brand devices to attract and hold attention. We uplift radio audiences with stories that are immediately recognisable as Moonpig.”**

**Kristof Fahy**, Group CMO, Moonpig

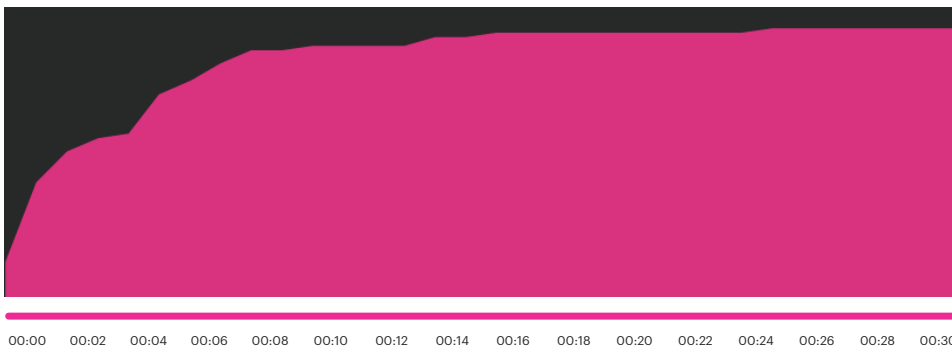
**Moonpig**  
**Xmas**  
(Creature)

**3.2** Star Rating  
Good

**94** Fluency Rating  
Exceptional



**Fig 37 System1's FaceTrace® technology maps the emotional journey of listeners across the duration of the ad**  
Source: System1



**Fig 38 System1's FluencyTrace shows how quickly listeners recognise the brand being advertised**  
Source: System1

[Listen via Test Your Ad Report](#)

## Specsavers

### Audiology Budgie

(Specsavers Creative)



Specsavers are synonymous with great creative. Their TV and OOH campaigns often create buzz within the marketing community and, most importantly, hit high effectiveness marks when tested with consumers.

This particular advert for the brand's audiology services demonstrates that they know how to appeal to radio listeners too. An ad for hearing tests and aids may at first seem to be fairly rational and product-driven, but Specsavers put a creative spin on communicating their offerings.

Through the use of right-brain creative features like storytelling, characters with vitality, dialogue, clear sense of place and humour (plus a chirping bird!), Specsavers are able to engage radio listeners.

A man has stopped at the vet claiming that his pet budgie Jimmy hasn't made a sound for weeks and it's cause for concern, as he typically chirps all day long. Meanwhile, the budgie is very much being his usual vocal self, chirping as the man speaks with the veterinary employee.

So, it's not the budgie who has lost his voice, it's the man who has lost his hearing. The employee points him in the direction of the Specsavers next door, and the ad closes with a summary about qualified audiologists and free hearing tests.

Had Specsavers opened with this more left-brained messaging, it's unlikely it would have produced as good of a result. Specsavers lands a 3.3-Star score, positioning it well for long-term brand building.

**“Being engaging and human are at the heart of our adverts no matter the medium. Driving positive feelings makes our advertising more impactful, and radio allows us to express our tone of voice, make people smile and laugh, as well as build a deeper connection to the Specsavers brand.”**

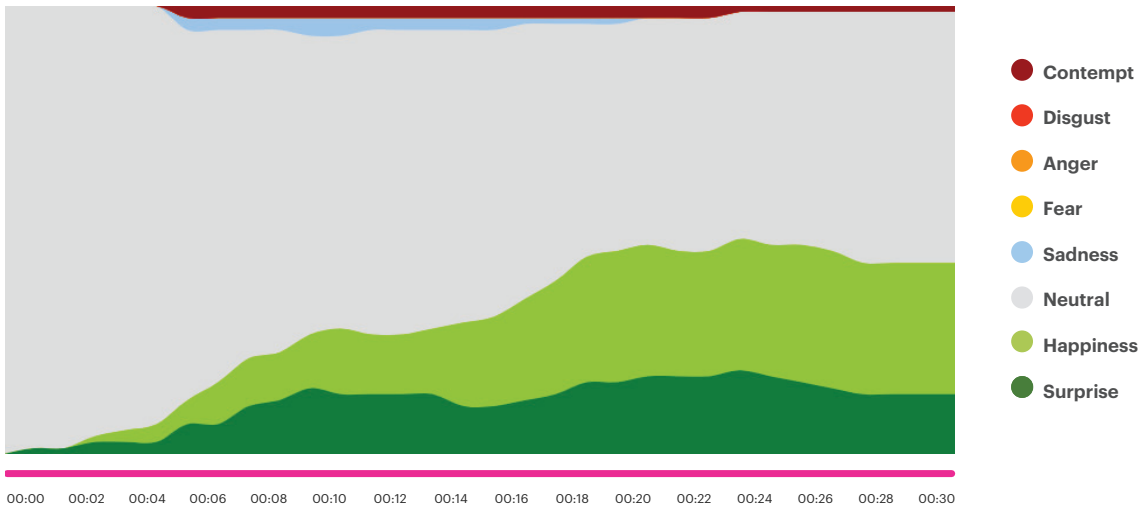
**Claire Bryant**, Marketing Manager, Specsavers

# Specsavers Audiology Budgie (Specsavers Creative)

**3.3** Star Rating  
Good

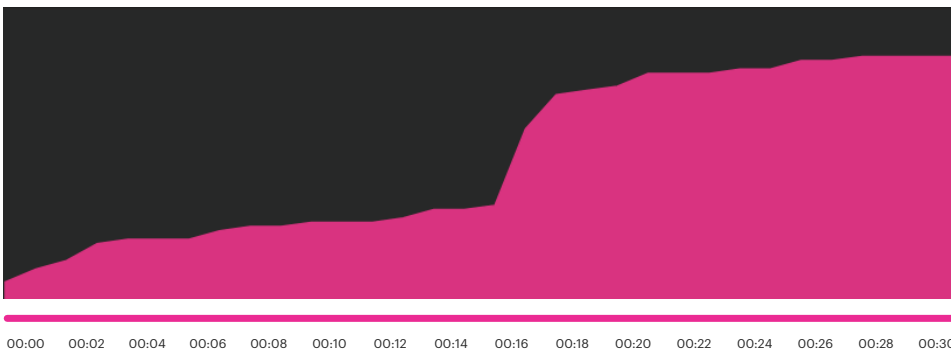
In listeners' own words from Test Your Ad

**"It made me laugh!"**



**Fig 39** System1's FaceTrace® technology maps the emotional journey of listeners across the duration of the ad

Source: System1



**Fig 40** System1's FluencyTrace shows how quickly listeners recognise the brand being advertised

Source: System1

[Listen via Test Your Ad Report](#)



# Appendix 2

## Additional Reading

### Headlines from existing Radiocentre radio creative research

For further reading, this list presents historical research that Radiocentre has conducted exploring effective radio creativity – in particular, the beneficial effects of using distinctive audio brand assets consistently in driving radio advertising effectiveness.

**Radio, the Brand Multiplier** – identifies the value of using distinctive brand assets consistently over time for building a brand’s mental availability

**Building Shelf Awareness** – how established campaign ideas and distinctive audio assets help optimise effects

**Radio, the ROI Multiplier** – radio advertising that is distinctive and uses consistent audio brand assets drives higher ROI

**Big Audio Datamine** – campaigns that feature distinctive audio elements strongly associated with the brand, and use them consistently, achieve greater effects

**Strike a Chord** – consistent use of brand music can be one of the most effective tools for advertiser brands

See also the **Brand Music Navigator** tool

# System1

## Headlines from System1 research

### **Brand-building ads boost short-term sales, and now you can prove it –**

ads that perform well at short-term activation do not typically perform well at building brand over the long term. But as an ad gets better at the long of it, it also gets better – on average – at delivering the short of it too

**Find out more at**

[www.system1group.com](http://www.system1group.com)

## Appendix 3

# System1

### About System1

**System1** is The Creative Effectiveness Platform that harnesses the power of emotion to drive growth for the world's leading brands.

Our Test Your Ad (TYA) and Test Your Idea (TYI) solutions quickly predict the short- and long-term commercial potential of ads and ideas, giving marketers confidence that their creative concepts will resonate with consumers and drive profitable commercial growth. Complementing TYA and TYI is Test Your Brand (TYB), which measures the impact of ads and ideas on brand health.

With a database of over 100,000 ads, System1 allows brands to compare their ads against competitors, and System1's expert guidance helps brands improve the effectiveness of ads and ideas.

System1 was founded in 2000 by Founder & President John Kearon and has operations in Europe, North America, Brazil, Singapore, and Australia.

#### Learn more

[www.system1group.com](http://www.system1group.com)

#### Get in touch:

Andrew Tindall, Global Creative & Media Partnership Director, System1

[andrew.tindall@system1group.com](mailto:andrew.tindall@system1group.com)



## About Radiocentre

**Radiocentre** is the industry body for commercial radio. We work on behalf of over 50 stakeholders who operate over 300 licensed radio stations across the UK and represent 90% of commercial radio in terms of listening and revenue. We perform three main functions on behalf of our members.

**Advertising:** Drive industry revenue by promoting the benefits of radio to advertisers and agencies, asking them to see radio differently through a combination of marketing activity (events, advertising, PR), research, and training.

**Policy:** Provide UK commercial radio with a collective voice on issues that affect the way that radio stations operate, working with government, politicians, policy makers and regulators to secure the best environment for growth and development of the medium.

**Clearance:** Ensure advertising messages on commercial radio stations comply with the necessary content rules and standards laid out in the BCAP Code of Broadcast Advertising and the Ofcom Broadcasting Code.

**Find out more or contact us at**

[www.radiocentre.org](http://www.radiocentre.org)

# Listen Up!

Emotion's Defining Role in  
Audio Advertising Effectiveness

Listen Up! is the first to define right- and left-brain creative features for audio advertising. Using brand and emotional data collected from over 50,000 radio listeners and non-radio listeners across 10 years, this landmark publication from System1 and Radiocentre is uniquely placed to share how brands can create audio advertising that stirs the passions and drives business profits.

**System1**

 radiocentre

[www.system1group.com](http://www.system1group.com)

[www.radiocentre.org](http://www.radiocentre.org)