



LIVING ROOM LEGENDS

THE **FIRST** 70 YEARS OF TV AD EXCELLENCE



System1





www.itvmedia.co.uk

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70 YEARS AGO, TV ADVERTISING WAS BORN IN THE UK.

Since then, it's built brands and grown businesses, shaped culture, and earned a place in people's hearts.

This report celebrates the best of that legacy, not out of nostalgia, but with purpose.

We've chosen 70 unforgettable ads to ask:

What makes advertising last?

What makes it work?

And what can the next era of creatives learn from the ones who got it right?

Because in a world chasing what's immediate, this is a reminder of the power of what endures.

FOREWORD: LEARNING FROM THE BEST

From ITV, D&AD, and System1

Gorilla – Cadbury, 2007, Fallon

**THIS YEAR, ITV TURNS
70 – A MILESTONE
NOT JUST FOR
A BROADCASTER,
BUT FOR BRITISH
CULTURE, CREATIVITY
AND COMMERCE.**

It's 70 years since TV advertising first aired in the UK. Since then, our screens have played host to some of the boldest, funniest, most moving and most memorable commercial creativity ever made.

This report is a celebration, but it's also a handbook. We're not here to bask in nostalgia. We're here to learn from what lasts, and to inspire the next wave of creative brilliance.

We've come together – ITV, D&AD and System1 – to choose, debate and test 70 of the most iconic ads ever broadcast on ITV. From "Beanz Meanz Heinz" to "Gorilla"

to "Vinnie," this is a line-up built on impact – creative, cultural, and commercial.

We've looked back to look forward. Through decades of storytelling, distinctiveness, humour, music, and heart, clear patterns emerge. The best work plays with conventions. It builds memory. It romances the product. It entertains. And it dares to make us feel.

We've also listened to the creatives, marketers, strategists and planners who brought these ads to life. In workshops and conversations, we asked: What made these ideas great? What made them stick? What should we remember – and what should we reinvent?

This report is the result: a practical, provocative guide to creative effectiveness. It's a blueprint for future briefs. A nudge to think bigger, act braver, and make work that earns its place in people's lives.

We believe in creative work that works. The work in this report stirs emotion, shapes culture, and grows brands. It wins awards and builds business. And it's driven by craft, not just by clicks.

At 70, ITV is still a home for great ideas. And we hope this report inspires the next generation of creators, brands, and agencies to keep pushing the craft – and the impact – of advertising forward.

WE WANT THIS REPORT TO BE NOT JUST USEFUL BUT INSPIRING.

We've made it for **brand leaders and marketers** looking to make the ads that move both people and markets. We hope it will speak to **creative teams** who want to understand how the principles of storytelling, craft and emotional impact have endured. And we think **strategists, planners and students** curious about how creativity, culture and commercial effectiveness intersect will find it fascinating.

But there's one group of people which encompasses all three of those that we're hoping will read this study.

THIS IS FOR ANYONE WHO WANTS THEIR WORK TO BE REMEMBERED, REPEATED AND REWARDED.

TONIGHT'S SCHEDULE

Inside this report you'll find:

The Ads: 70 ads, hand-picked by experts, reflecting the best of British TV advertising and its evolution.

The ITV Era: A cultural timeline mapping iconic ads to key moments across 70 years of British life.

Why TV Matters: A look at advertising's long-term value and trust, and why TV still earns both.

The Method: How we chose the 70 ads, why we picked them, and what we learned doing it.

Timeless Themes: Some elements of great advertising recur across categories and decades. Here's our breakdown of what really makes ads last.

The Magnificent Seven: Longer case studies for seven out of our 70 ads – milestones in advertising history, and brilliant creative which brings our themes to life.

Lessons for Modern Marketers: Practical lessons for anyone who wants to make better advertising today.

**MOST PEOPLE SEE ADVERTISING
AS AN EPHEMERAL MEDIUM
– WORK BUILT TO REFLECT
A MOMENT IN TIME, IN A WORLD
THAT QUICKLY MOVES ON.**

But some ads last. And some of the best ads don't just reflect the moment – they shape culture, shift beliefs and behaviours, and deliver results. Ads may disappear, but the emotion they inspire is what grows businesses and brands.

We live in a world obsessed with what's immediate, and it's easy to forget about the power of what lasts. A milestone like ITV's 70th anniversary is a good time to think about that legacy. The ways in which people watch TV may have changed, but its power as an advertising medium endures. This report is about learning from the past to make better advertising right now.

Because when we understand what makes an ad unforgettable, we can make work that truly stands the test of time.

You're Not You When You're Hungry – Snickers, 2012 BBDO

WHY IT MATTERS

WE'VE ALL GOT OUR FAVOURITE ADS.

As it happens, Yorkshire Tea's "Where Everything's Done Proper" is one of mine, and I'm sure you'll find some of yours in here too. Because the best advertising is so entertaining, and so emotional, that it sticks with people forever. Want proof? There are ads from sixty years ago in this report that score top marks on our effectiveness scale, alongside the best of TV advertising today. It's been a delight to work with ITV examining these classics all over again, and giving marketers a new blueprint, drawing on the best of the past so they can go and make someone else's new favourite ad.

System1 Jon Evans, Chief Customer Officer at System1
and Uncensored CMO Podcast Host

FOR 70 YEARS, ITV HAS CATAPULTED BRILLIANT COMMERCIAL CREATIVITY INTO THE NATION'S PSYCHE AND POWERED THE GROWTH OF THE BUSINESSES AND BRANDS BEHIND IT.

All the individual ads are extraordinary executions, but many of them also represent enduring campaigns or have a cultural impact that lasts until this very day.



Kate Waters, Director of Client Strategy and Commercial Marketing at ITV

MARKING 70 YEARS OF TV ADVERTISING WITH ITV ISN'T JUST ABOUT LOOKING BACK. IT'S ABOUT LOOKING FORWARD.

In curating this project, we've focused on what makes great TV advertising timeless. The insights we've gathered will be shared with our D&AD community and inform our global talent and learning programmes, helping to shape the next generation of creative talent.



Sammi Vaughan, Partnerships Director, D&AD

Did Somebody Say (feat. Snoop Dogg) – Just Eat, 2021, McCann

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

7 Takeaways From 70 Years of TV Advertising

1 EMOTION DRIVES EFFECTIVENESS

The most powerful ads connect emotionally. System1 data shows emotion is the best predictor of both short-term uplift and long-term brand growth.

2 CONSISTENCY COMPOUNDS RETURNS

Campaigns that stick with a creative idea over time outperform the rest. Think Meerkats, not one-hit wonders.

3 ENTERTAINMENT EARNS ATTENTION

The best ads feel like part of the show, not a break from it. Joy, humour and surprise are powerful tools for effectiveness.

4 CRAFT CREATES MEMORY

From claymation to choreography, the care put into production makes ads memorable and meaningful.

5 BREAKING THE MOULD BUILDS BRANDS

Great ads play with conventions. They flip the script on what a category or campaign is supposed to look like.

6 TV'S IMPACT ENDURES

TV remains the most trusted and emotionally powerful medium. It offers reach, attention and storytelling power like nothing else.

7 THE BEST ADS FOLLOW TIMELESS PRINCIPLES, NOT PASSING TRENDS

The fundamentals of effectiveness haven't changed. Great storytelling, distinctive characters, emotional connection and creative craft still deliver results – no matter the decade.

CONTENTS

1. ADVERTISING IN CONTEXT

How culture, trust and economic value shape the work we remember.

2. TIMELESS THEMES

What great ads have in common across eras, categories and creative styles.

3. THE MAGNIFICENT SEVEN

Seven favourites chosen by industry experts with big lessons baked in.

4. CREATIVE LESSONS FOR THE FUTURE

What modern marketers and creatives can learn from the work that lasts.

5. HOW WE CHOSE THE WORK

From seven decades of ads, we chose 70 that moved people and moved the needle.

6. APPENDIX

Every ad tested and the reason why. Every contributor who helped bring this to life.

ADVERTISING NEVER EXISTS IN A VACUUM.

It's part of our mass culture and it shifts alongside that culture. If you didn't know anything about Britain, watching our 70 legendary ads would give you a primer on everything from the class system to the rise of 90s "lad culture" and the way family life has changed beyond recognition in the last seven decades.

The context of advertising extends way beyond culture, though. The ad industry is an industry in more than name – it makes a significant direct contribution to Britain's economy, and a massive indirect one as a primary engine of business growth. And advertising exists in the context of public trust – without that, it couldn't do its job. In this section experts introduce the cultural, economic and trust contexts of advertising.

**“ADVERTISING EXISTS IN THE
CONTEXT OF PUBLIC TRUST”**



Photo Booth – Hamlet, 1987, Collett Dickenson Pearce

BRITISH CULTURE, BRITISH ADS:
1955–2025

ITV launched into a culture that was already changing fast as post-war rationing shifted into a consumer boom.

The new channel accelerated that change, immediately bringing Britain its first woman newsreader, Barbara Mandell, and US imports like *I Love Lucy*. Here’s a decade by decade overview of British culture, history and iconic ads.

The 1950s

“Most of our people have never had it so good” said new Prime Minister Harold MacMilan in 1957. He was talking about a surge in consumer prosperity – a 26% jump in real household disposable income (Source: ONS). Some of that extra cash went on new TVs, and in 1955 British viewers were offered more choice with the launch of ITV. With it came a new world of TV advertising.

- 1954** The end of rationing – it had been in place since the Second World War.
- 1955** ITV launched, the first commercial competitor to the BBC.
- 1957** Harold MacMillan becomes Prime Minister, saying “most of our people have never had it so good.”
- 1959** By the end of the decade, more than 75% of UK households own a TV.



50s



Work, Rest & Play – Mars, 1959, Mather & Crowther

Iconic ads from the 1950s: *Gibbs SR, Mars*

50s ads can feel like they're from a lost world. Many are adaptations of print ads with minimal visual interest and info-heavy "salesmanship" delivered in plummy accents. Like the medium itself, TV advertising was in its infancy.

But the green shoots of showmanship are visible. Mars' "Work, Rest and Play" tagline, introduced in the 50s, endured for decades.

Toothpaste – Gibbs SR, 1955, Lintas

BRITISH CULTURE, BRITISH ADS: 1955–2025

1960–1969

The 1960s saw the impossible become possible, with man walking on the moon, England winning the World Cup, Beatlemania taking over the world and the long awaited introduction of colour TV – and colour ads – towards the end of the decade. In November 1969 Birds Eye became the first colour ad on ITV.

1960

Coronation Street launched and would run uninterrupted until the present day.

1962

The debut Beatles single, “Love Me Do” and the first James Bond film, *Dr No*.

1964

The House of Commons votes to abolish the death penalty for murder in Britain.

1966

Harold Wilson wins the general election and England win the World Cup.

1967

The Summer of Love: Carnaby Street in London is the centre of world fashion.

1969

Neil Armstrong becomes the first man to walk on the moon – Regular colour television broadcasts begin on BBC One and ITV.



Beanz Meanz Heinz – Heinz, 1967, Jones Knowles Ritchie

THE 1960S SAW
THE IMPOSSIBLE
BECOME POSSIBLE.

60s



Schhh... You-Know-Who – Schweppes, 1963, Ogilvy & Mather

Ads from the 1960s: *Milkybar, Schweppes, Heinz*

Advertising was at the heart of a bright, brash, successful era in UK pop culture, as new characters, slogans and especially jingles lodged in a TV-watching nation's minds. The Who even recorded an album with songs mixed in with jingles.

Right at the decade's end, advertising tech caught up with a colourful era, as Birds Eye paid a reputed £23 for the first ever colour ad – for peas.

The Milkybar Kid – Milkybar, 1961, McCann Erickson

BRITISH CULTURE, BRITISH ADS:
1955–2025

1970-1979

The 1970s was a decade of cultural clashes with the UK seeing multiple strikes and economic crises from 1973’s 3-day week to the infamous winter of discontent of 1978-9. Punk rock became the anarchic face of the apparent chaos. But it and other subcultures disrupting the mainstream helped push society forward, and this was a decade of progress for civil rights and gender equality movements.

1970

Arrival of Boeing 747 jets at Heathrow Airport marking a new era of international travel.

1971

Decimalisation as the UK changes its currency.

1973

Sir Trevor MacDonald becomes the UK’s first Black male news presenter.

1975

The OPEC oil crisis brings an era of prosperity to a sudden stop. The government implements a 3-day week to save energy.

1976

The Sex Pistols cause a national scandal swearing on an ITV chat show, becoming the face of the punk movement.

1978

A decade of industrial action culminates in the Winter of Discontent, with multiple unions including waste collectors, lorry drivers and grave diggers calling strikes.

1979

Margaret Thatcher becomes Britain’s first female prime minister.



Just One Cornetto – Cornetto, 1980, Still Price Lintas

MULTIPLE STRIKES,
ECONOMIC CRISES
AND THE WINTER
OF DISCONTENT

BRITISH CULTURE, BRITISH ADS: 1955–2025



70s



Secret Lemonade Drinker – R. White's, 1973, Allen, Brady and Marsh

Ads from the 70s: *Smash, R Whites, Hovis, Parker, Sugar Puffs, Shake n Vac*

A tumultuous era in politics, but a golden age of advertising, as agencies found new ways to entertain. In a time of tightening budgets and rampant inflation, creativity helped agencies sell cheap foods like instant potato and puffed wheat. And for those viewers who just wanted to turn the clock back, Hovis had them covered.

Put the Freshness Back – Shake n' Vac, 1979, Benton & Bowles

**BRITISH CULTURE, BRITISH ADS:
1955–2025**

1980–1989

The “me decade” saw another consumer boom, powered by rising disposable income and easier access to credit. International travel, designer brands, and new portable technology became everyday luxuries. 1989 saw the first sponsored TV programme in the UK, marking another milestone.

1981 **The first AIDS-related death is recorded in Britain.**

1982 **The launch of the ZX Spectrum computer, part of a home technology and videogame boom.**

1984 **Unemployment peaks at 11% with levels not dropping below 6% for the rest of the decade.**

1985 **Michael Harrison makes the first mobile phone call in the UK, using a Vodafone VT1.**

1989 **Powergen sponsors the ITV national weather, becoming the first sponsor of a TV programme in the UK.**

1989 **Fall of the Berlin Wall.**

**1980–1989
CONSUMER CULTURE**

Households saw a 29% increase in real household disposable income over the decade (an increase of an average £3,641).

**1980–1989
DEREGULATION**

Secured lending to households increased from 31.1% of household income in 1980 to 67.7% in 1989, while unsecured lending to individuals rose from 6.6% to 12.9%.

**1980–1990
TRAVEL**

Outbound tourism from the UK grew from 10 million overseas trips in 1980 to 17 million by 1990.

BRITISH CULTURE, BRITISH ADS: 1955–2025



Remember Preston – OXO, 1983, JWT

Ads from the 80s:
*Cornetto, Lego, Yellow Pages,
Oxo, Heineken, Levi's, The Guardian,
Nescafe, Hamlet, Aids, BT, BA, Carling*



Water in Majorca – Heineken, 1984, Lowe



Lauderette – Levi's, 1985, BBH

1980s advertising took its cues from a TV era of sex, soaps and sitcoms, with Levi's "Lauderette" showing some skin, Maureen Lipman and Rab C Nesbitt giving classic sketch show performances, and the Gold Blend couple giving Coronation Street an ad-break rival. Heineken and BA reflected an age of social and international mobility, and the Government turned to the ad industry to help curb the spread of HIV.

BRITISH CULTURE, BRITISH ADS:
1955–2025

1990–1999

This optimistic decade saw the rise of Britpop, club culture and Cool Britannia alongside the breaking down of global and social borders, with the fall of the Berlin Wall at the start of the decade, the official ending of Apartheid in South Africa, the Good Friday Agreement and the popularisation of the world wide web.

1990

Poll Tax riots.

1992

Pipex starts providing dial-up Internet access, becoming the UK's first public internet provider.

1994

Apartheid officially ends in South Africa.

1995

The “Battle of Britpop” as Blur and Oasis go head to head in the charts.

1997

Tony Blair becomes prime minister. Vanity Fair's ‘Cool Britannia’ headline reflects a national mood.

1998

The Good Friday Agreement ends the Troubles in Northern Ireland.



Parklife – Nike, 1997, TBWA Simons Palmer

BRITPOP, CLUB
CULTURE, AND
COOL BRITANNIA

90s

Ads from the 90s:
*Heat Electric, Barclaycard,
Tango, Ronseal, Coca Cola,
Lynx, Nike, VW, Think,
Guinness, Playstation*



Dream Date – Lynx, 1997, BBH



Creature Comforts – Heat Electric, 1991, G&K

The mood of cultural confidence you can feel in British music, film and art of the 90s turned up in advertising too. Everyone wanted to make a mark on pop culture, and 90s ads were made to be talked about. Some were cheeky, some were blokey, and some were unashamedly arty, as when Guinness grabbed Radiohead's video director Jonathan Glazer to make the decade's most iconic British ad.

Surfer – Guinness, 1999, AMV BBDO

BRITISH CULTURE, BRITISH ADS: 1955-2025

2000-2009

The 00s begin with the dotcom bubble bursting and end with the 2008 financial crisis bringing markets to a standstill. But in between were a series of stratospheric rises that rewrote culture and media – reality TV franchises, smartphones, social media, YouTube and the beginnings of streaming. Brands, celebrities and everyday people could be catapulted to global fame.

2001

Reality singing competition *Pop Stars* first airs on ITV1, kickstarting the reality TV decade.

2003-6

MySpace (2003), Facebook (2004) and Twitter (2006) begin the age of social media.

2006-8

Streaming reaches British TV with Channel 4, BBC and ITV launching their catch-up and online streaming services.

2007

The first iPhone is launched in the UK.

2008

The building society Northern Rock collapses, beginning the UK's exposure to the global financial crisis.



Balls – Sony, 2005, Fallon

DECADE OF DOTCOM & FINANCIAL CRISIS



Ads from the 00s:
John West, Renault, John Smiths, Pot Noodle, Honda, Apple, Sony, Stella Artois, Carlsberg, Dove, Cadbury, Skoda, Tmobile, Specsavers, Compare the Market



Dance – T-Mobile, 2007, Saatchi & Saatchi



Ball Skills – John Smiths, 2002, TBWA London

“Balls”. “Cake”. “Cog”. “Gorilla”. The 00s was the era of the spectacular one-off ad. These galacticos of the commercial realm dominated awards and turned ads into an artform. But elsewhere brands like Specsavers and Compare The Market were continuing the art of the long, creatively consistent idea, while Dove pointed the way forward by mixing a campaign with campaigning.

Bear – John West, 2000, Leo Burnett

BRITISH CULTURE, BRITISH ADS: 1955–2025

2010–2019

Brexit, Trump, and Austerity were the buzzwords of the 2010s, with disposable income stagnating (only rising by 11%, much lower than prior decades) in a decade of political turmoil. But the decade also saw the tech breakthroughs of the 00s reshape everyday lives. The rise of influencers, instant mobile messaging and sophisticated algorithms shaped the tastes of the nation and made personal branding into as big a deal as commercial branding.

2010

The UK Government's austerity programme is announced and continues for the remainder of the decade.

2011

A Nestlé-produced coffee maker appears on an episode of *This Morning* – the first product placement on British TV.

2012

London 2012 Olympics.

2014

Legalisation of same sex marriage.

2016

Britain votes Leave in the Brexit referendum.

2018

TikTok launches in the UK: within 5 years it has 23 million users.



Meet the Superhumans – Channel 4, 2012, 4Creative

BREXIT, TRUMP & AUSTERITY

BRITISH CULTURE, BRITISH ADS: 1955–2025



Viva La Vulva – Bodyform, 2018, AMV BBDO

Ads from the 2010s:
PG Tips, Aldi, Yorkshire Tea, John Lewis, Channel4, British Heart Foundation, Snickers, 3 Mobile, Marmite, Sainsbury's, Sport England, Lurpak, CRUK, Maltesers, Audi, Bodyform



Adventure Awaits – Lurpak, 2015, Wieden+Kennedy



Marmite Neglect – Marmite, 2013, adam&eveDDB

As Britain in the 2010s grappled with recession and rapid social change, brands found different ways to unlock the new power of social media. John Lewis and Sainsbury's told epic stories, Maltesers and Bodyform challenged taboos, and Sport England and the British Heart Foundation worked out how to make good causes go viral. Values mattered, but always with a place for entertainment too.

BRITISH CULTURE, BRITISH ADS: 1955-2025

2020-2025

An era of ‘permacrisis’, the 2020s have seen Britons face not only multiple Covid lockdowns but also the cost-of-living crisis with rising inflation impacting purchasing power and the mood of the nation. In an often polarised society, breakout ads are one of the things we still have in common.

2020

The Covid-19 pandemic sends the UK into lockdown.

2021

Non-essential shops, pubs, gyms and hairdressers re-open for good, before all restrictions are lifted in 2022.

2022

Inflation reaches a 41-year high of 11.1% in October 2022 – sparking talk of a cost-of-living crisis.

2022

ChatGPT is released to the public as the first consumer facing LLM (large language model).

2023

King Charles III is crowned, becoming only the second monarch in ITV’s history.

2024

ITV launches AI-generated adverts for small businesses.

UNPRECEDENTED
TIMES

Ads from the 2020s:
Just Eat, National Lottery, McDonalds



Did Somebody Say (feat. Snoop Dogg) – Just Eat, 2021, McCann



Just Imagine, A Christmas Love Story – National Lottery, 2022, adam&eveDDb

It's too soon to point to major 2020s advertising themes – and brands have been buffeted by events as much as their consumers have. New ways of consuming TV and new platforms mean ads now fight for their place in a churn of memes and microtrends. Entertainment and cultural connection are more vital than ever.

THE ECONOMIC CONTRIBUTION OF TV ADVERTISING: **POWERING UK GROWTH**

By Stephen Woodford, CEO,
Advertising Association

As ITV celebrates 70 years of broadcasting, it's striking to reflect on how far commercial television – and its advertising – has come. The first ever ITV advert, for Unilever's Gibbs SR Toothpaste, featured a block of ice, a bar chart, and a clinical voiceover. It aired during a show which did little more than point a camera at a variety show stage.

Since then both programming and advertising have evolved dramatically in style, sophistication and impact. They have grown up in tandem and helped drive growth in the UK economy, whilst supporting free-to-air programming that has become part of the fabric of people's lives.

The Advertising Association and its think tank Credos has just launched a new report, *Advertising Pays 2025*, that offers a clear definition of, and evidence for, advertising's role in driving the UK economy. It also takes stock of the new era of dizzying change we've lived through this century.

One thing hasn't changed: advertising remains an economic powerhouse. Some of the key findings in the new report include the fact that advertising now supports 1.7

million jobs in the UK – around 5% of the workforce – and contributed £109 billion of GVA (Gross Value Added) to the UK economy in 2024 – accounting for 4% of total GVA.

Advertising Pays 2025 also includes the latest analysis from Thinkbox on the ROI of advertising. It underscores advertising's effectiveness as a driver of business growth. For larger brand advertisers (annual turnover greater than £10m) advertising has a profit ROI of £4.11 per pound spent. For smaller brand advertisers (annual turnover of less than £10m) the ROI figure is £1.89 per pound spent. Why such a difference? It can largely be explained by the Law of Double Jeopardy. Compared to larger brands, smaller advertisers have fewer customers, who in turn are also less loyal.

TV remains the advertising channel of choice for large, well-established brands. But efforts to make TV advertising more affordable and accessible or SMEs can help these advertisers scale and go some way to closing the ROI gap. These kinds of initiatives will ensure that TV advertising remains a huge driver of success for the UK's most ambitious businesses, large and small, now and in the future.

Double Life – PlayStation, 1999, TBWA London

**“ADVERTISING
CONTRIBUTED 109
BILLION OF GVA TO
THE UK ECONOMY”**

TRUSTED ADVERTISING IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN EVER

By Matt Bourn, Director of Communications,
Advertising Association

It's nearly a hundred years since the Advertising Association was formed. Our founders united in 1926 around the need to protect and build public confidence in advertising. A century on and I'm midway through writing a new book called *Trusted Advertising* with the chair of CAP, James Best. We're reviewing what has been happening to trust generally in 21st century society... spoiler, it's changing shape significantly.

However, the human reasons we need to trust one another remain the same. We're also considering the dynamic impact technology has had on the way we can communicate in trustworthy (or untrustworthy) ways to each other, on behalf of all kinds of brands, from the personal to those of big business.

Our founders a century ago would have understood that how you present yourself to the world matters; the way you signal who you are and what you stand for says much about who

you are. They would be gobsmacked by TV – it was just a product demo by John Logie Baird back in 1926 when they first set our trade body up – but I'm sure they'd recognise the same value advertisers do today. TV, in all its forms, offers a big, public and confident opportunity for businesses to display their wares to customers and, by doing so, build trust in their ability to deliver on the 'As seen on TV' promise.

It's clear as we research our book that trust is more important than ever. It is a proven key point for competitive advantage, second only to the quality of the product or service on offer. More importantly it's central to the functioning of a healthy, democratic society. We all have a vested interest in both being trusted and being trustworthy.

***Trusted Advertising* by Matt Bourn and James Best is published by Kogan Page in January 2026.**

“THE WAY YOU SIGNAL WHO YOU ARE AND WHAT YOU STAND FOR SAYS MUCH ABOUT WHO YOU ARE”

Mutation – NHS (Smokefree), 2013, Dare/Now



Surfer – Guinness, 1999, AMV BBDO

TIMELESS THEMES

CREATIVE PRINCIPLES THAT LAST

What do 70 legendary ads have in common? We're glad you asked.

In this section we're exploring seven qualities which recur all through these classic commercials. Every great ad, we'd argue, excels on one or more of these timeless themes.

TIMELESS THEMES

The first three – **Unconventional Ideas**, **Dramatic Emotion**, and **Extraordinary Craft** – are our three foundations. All the ads we looked at excelled in one of these themes. They represent three facets of the creative work – thinking (startling ideas and concepts that break with category convention), feeling (the intense emotion and storytelling drama that make the public love an ad), and doing (mastery of craft turning ideas and emotions into brilliant executions).

We’ve also identified four building blocks – the techniques legendary ads across the decades have in common.

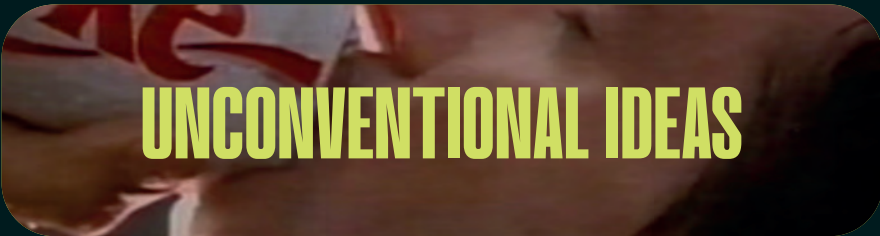
Imaginative Repetition, **Capturing Culture**, **Entertainment Value** and **Romancing The Product**.

These building block themes are what allow great ads to be commercially effective, fulfilling the unspoken contract between brand and viewer. People pay brands attention; brands give them something entertaining, memorable and worthwhile.

Taken together, these themes are the signature elements of ads that do more than just their job. They’re the hallmarks of ads that stay with us. By executing on these themes, the 70 ads in this study have decisively won the ‘battle for memory’ and give us clues to repeating this in the ads we make.

A lot of these ads are just as effective now as they were the day they were made. In System1’s testing with contemporary audiences, many of the ads made over a generation ago still get top scores. It shows that their ability to engage viewers is truly timeless.

As well as this enduring appeal, many of these ads have been recognised in awards for effectiveness and for craft. They’ve won the love and admiration of audiences and the respect of the industry at the highest level. It’s further proof that creativity, effectiveness and appeal go hand in hand.



UNCONVENTIONAL IDEAS



DRAMATIC EMOTION



EXTRAORDINARY CRAFT



IMAGINATIVE REPETITION



CAPTURING CULTURE



ENTERTAINMENT VALUE



ROMANCING THE PRODUCT

CORE THEMES

UNCONVENTIONAL IDEAS

WHAT IS IT?

Legendary ads ‘think different’.

A convention is simply ‘the way something is usually done’. And one of the most notable characteristics of our iconic 70 is how often they play with those conventions; sometimes making fun of them, sometimes outright breaking them. This might mean going against an unspoken social or cultural ‘rule’ we conform to, or it might mean challenging a convention within advertising, like the clichés of car ads and mountain roads. Ideas that successfully defy convention are a foundation of these classic ads.

WHY DOES IT MATTER?

Breaking, changing or poking fun at conventions is often how advertising asserts its cultural relevance. It shows an ad is in tune with cultural norms or truths, and cleverly uses them to create resonance for brands.

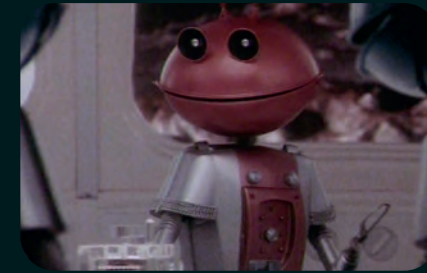
Sometimes this means tackling norms head-on, like Dove’s “Real Beauty”.

Sometimes it means gently satirising them, like Parker’s “Finishing School”. But it can also mean celebrating and linking a brand to a new and emerging trend, like T-Mobile’s “Dance”

For ads whose unconventional idea involves tearing up advertising or category conventions – like Pot Noodle’s “Slag Of All Snacks” or Tango’s “Orange Man” – the defiance of convention creates standout and cut-through for the brand, grabbing attention and building mental salience. Because the ad does something different, it creates space to reposition the brand in a memorable way.

In either case, unconventional ideas often generate surprise – one of the most effective emotions to elicit, driving intensity of response and both short- and longer-term effectiveness.

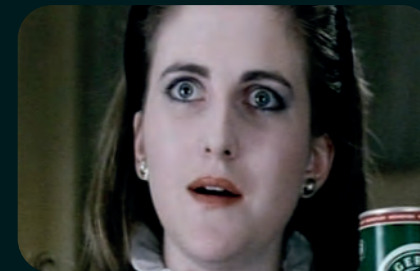
BEST PRACTICE THROUGH THE DECADES



Smash (1971): Upended the category’s focus on authenticity to prioritise convenience.



Parker (1975): Poked fun at upper class snobbery (while offering a bit of aspiration itself).



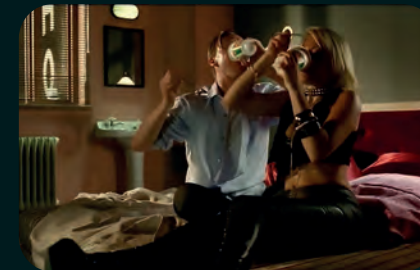
Heineken (1984): Embraced 80s social mobility with a reverse elocution lesson.



Diet Coke (1996): Aligned itself with girl power, female desire and male beauty.



John West (2000): A human/bear fight harnessed surprise to mock the category’s obsession with provenance.



Pot Noodle (2002): Comparing a snack to sex work courted outrage and smashed food ad convention but the target audience loved it.



Dove (2006): Took up arms for “real beauty” and challenged social and category conventions all at once.



Cadbury (2007): No message, no product, just pure surreal joy.



Compare the Market (2009): Brought a dull category to life and changed insurance ads forever.



Marmite (2013): Overturned its category conventions by borrowing someone else’s with this perfect documentary pastiche.



Bodyform (2015): Broke through cultural barriers around sexual health by being frank, fresh and funny.

CORE THEMES

DRAMATIC
EMOTION

WHAT IS IT?

TV ads are the perfect compact canvas for emotional storytelling. An ad can capture a whole narrative in seconds, and pack it with rollercoaster drama and intense feeling. From brief vignettes to miniature films, our legendary 70 is full of dynamic stories. And compared to other media, only AV (audio-visual) ads can do this, combining the power of audio and vision to create stronger emotional impact and narrative force.

WHY DOES IT MATTER?

Emotion is the motor of effectiveness, over the short and long term. In the short term, intensity of emotion drives immediate response. That emotion isn't always positive – in fact some of the most powerful examples are ads like the 1987 AIDS “Don't Die of

Ignorance” campaign, which drove action by intense negative emotion. In the long term, though, it's the positive emotions of happiness and surprise which drive impact, which is why so many of the greatest ads tell funny, inspiring or heartwarming stories. Storytelling is the perfect vehicle to deliver emotion, as the anticipation and resolution it provides intensifies viewers' feelings. It also aids memory and helps grab and keep attention. It's the way to maximise the impact of the TV medium, using it to its strengths. Over the years, the way we use ads to tell dramatic stories has changed, becoming more sophisticated. In the 2010s, the hugely successful John Lewis “mini epics” arguably created an entirely new and much copied style of advertising, with longer runtimes and dynamic emotional journeys built for online sharing.

BEST PRACTICE
THROUGH THE DECADES



OXO (1983): Moved away from the comedy sketches of 70s ads to pioneer a gentler, warmer, slice of life narrative.



Levi's (1985): Redefined the role of sex and music in emotional advertising with “Launderette”.



The Guardian (1986): An ad about narrative itself, showing the same story from three angles for an intense emotional journey.



Nescafe (1987): Brought romance to advertising, built emotion, drama and effectiveness across an entire campaign and captivated the nation.



Carlsberg (2006): Set new standards for surprising and emotional storytelling using celebrities.



Specsavers (2008): The sheepdog ad which mixed beauty and hilarity and underlined how effective the “Should've gone...” punchline is.



John Lewis (2011): “The Long Wait” invented the modern Christmas ad and the emotional rollercoaster ‘mini-epic’.



Sainsbury's (2014): Emotional drama at its peak in this award-winning World War I centenary story.

STORYTELLING IS THE
PERFECT VEHICLE TO
DELIVER EMOTION



National Lottery (2022): Slice of life storytelling, a romance, and a mini-epic all at once, a blend of best practices.

CORE THEMES

EXTRAORDINARY CRAFT

WHAT IS IT?

Anyone can have an idea. The tricky part is the execution, and that's where craft comes in. D&AD talks about craft in terms of "the medium elevating the idea" and "the idea being executed to its full potential". It's what raises commercial creativity into an art form. What we noticed most about craft in this list of legendary ads is the attention to detail shown across all aspects of creative and production, from scripting to direction to casting and beyond.

D&ADs Craft categories give an idea of the scope: *Animation, Art Direction, Casting, Cinematography, Direction, Editing, Illustration, Photography, Production Design, Sound Design and Use of Music, Typography, Visual Effects, Writing for Advertising, and Writing for Design*. All of them are possible sites for excellence.

WHY DOES IT MATTER?

Craft transforms the ordinary into the extraordinary. It's what gives ads their cinematic power and emotional force, creating the "mini epics" that feel like they belong in a cinema. But it can also create a sense of remarkable intimacy, or build an entirely original world around a brand.

Often craft comes down to single details that stick in your mind long after the ad has ended, like the frog leaping from the drainpipe in Sony's "Balls". Craft is about knowing what to leave out as well as what to keep in – pauses that speak volumes, and happy on-set accidents that add a spark of brilliance.

Extraordinary craft can also act as a testing ground for creative breakthroughs which go beyond advertising. From claymation to post-production techniques, innovations born of advertising craft ripple out beyond ads into the wider culture.



The Pony – 3 Mobile, 2013, Wieden+Kennedy

CORE THEMES

EXTRAORDINARY CRAFT

BEST PRACTICE THROUGH THE DECADES



LEGO (1981): Stop-motion animation on “Kipper” let LEGO express pure playfulness and helped found the entire brickfilm genre.
(D&AD Black Pencil)



Heat Electric (1991): Magnificent syncing of real voices to claymation helped make Aardman a household name.



Guinness (1999): Craft firing on all cylinders with “Surfer”: a visionary combination of script, soundtrack, cinematography and SFX.
(D&AD Black Pencil)



Channel 4 (2012): Extraordinary editing and writing transformed the way Britain thought about Paralympians.
(D&AD Black Pencil)



3 (2013): You’ll believe a pony can dance! A seamless blend of real footage and digital effects brought 3’s moonwalking pony to life.
(D&AD Graphite Pencil)



Sainsbury’s (2014): The “mini-epic” style hits a pinnacle of cinematic craft with this emotional recreation of the World War I Christmas truce.
(D&AD Graphite Pencil)



Stella Artois (2005): “Surfer” director Jonathan Glazer draws on the power of music and silent movies in “Skating Priests”.
(D&AD Graphite Pencil)



Sony (2005): Extraordinary craft creating moments of colourful and surreal beauty in “Balls”.
(D&AD Yellow Pencil)



Carlsberg (2006): A directorial triumph – the camerawork and direction sells you on the fantasy that these sporting legends are a pub team.
(D&AD Graphite Pencil)



Sport England (2015): Casting is an underappreciated part of craft, but “This Girl Can” is nothing without the diverse range of women who appear in it.
(D&AD Graphite Pencil)



Lurpak (2015): Journey to the centre of the oven with cinematography so good it reframed an entire category.
(D&AD Graphite Pencil)



Audi (2018): Borrows the visual language of stunts and car chases in “Clowns”, delivering a product message in an unforgettable way.
(D&AD Graphite Pencil)

BUILDING BLOCKS

IMAGINATIVE
REPETITION

WHAT IS IT?

First described by BBH co-founder John Bartle, imaginative repetition is a central part of effective consistency in advertising. It means maintaining a consistent brand message, creative idea or tone but also adapting it to keep the campaign fresh and interesting for the audiences.

WHY DOES IT MATTER?

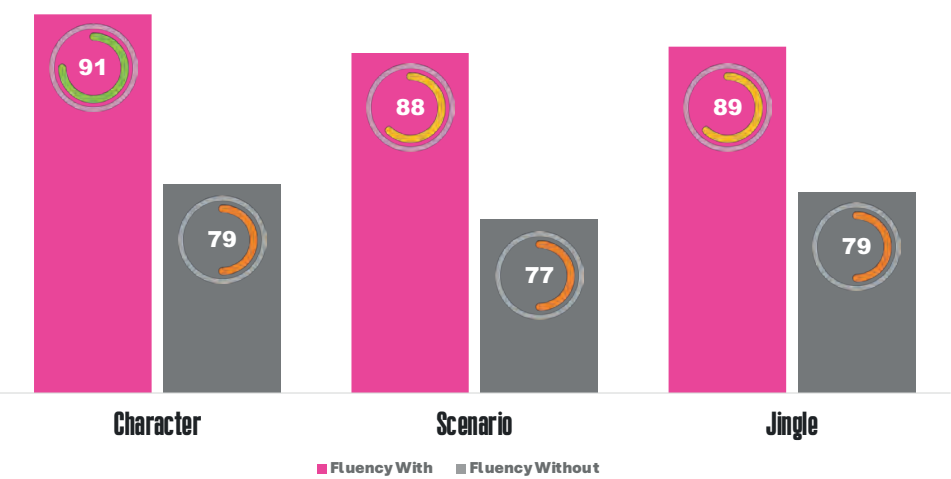
Imaginative repetition gets to the heart of what makes branding effective. Using repeated devices – jingles, characters, scenarios, or styles of execution – reminds the viewer who you are in a memorable and entertaining way. The devices can be used across multiple products to build effects and brand identity. And the Living Room Legends prove it.

Imaginative repetition creates the consistency which underpins growth. In System1 and the IPA’s *Compound Creativity* study, which analysed 56 brands across 5 years, research proved what many instinctively believe. Consistent creative work doesn’t just build brand memory, it compounds effectiveness over time.

The most consistent brands generate advertising that is both more effective and more profitable, and their ads grow more effective every year they maintain that consistency. Imaginative repetition lies at the heart of this success, letting them stay recognisably on brand but creatively fresh.

FAMILIAR, BUT NEVER BORING: HOW IMAGINATIVE REPETITION BOOSTS BRANDING

Living Room Legends with characters, scenarios, or jingles drive stronger brand recognition, proving the power of fluent devices to make ads stick.



Citation: 70 Living Room Legends campaigns tested with 10,500 Nationally Representative respondents using System1’s Test Your Ad platform. All UK TV advertising, 35,668 UK ads tested with 5mil respondents.

IMAGINATIVE
REPETITION

BEST PRACTICE
THROUGH THE DECADES



Shake 'N' Vac (1979):
"Do the shake'n'vac..."
Leaned into the absurdity of bursting into song for a jingle, and lodged it in the minds of a nation.



Cornetto (1980):
"Just one Cornetto..." – the king of the jingle era, turning an old song into something everyone could – and did – imitate with gusto.



Heineken (1984):
"Water In Majorca" put a fresh and pointed 80s spin on the successful "Refreshes the parts..." idea.



Apple (2003):
A triumph of minimal design and bold colour, every new "Silhouette" ad sold songs as well as iPods and confirmed the brand's cool.



Carlsberg (2006):
The brand's long-running "Probably the best..." idea hit a peak with its celebration of former England stars, perfect for the brand.



Specsavers (2008):
A great idea can adapt to almost any style, as the 'sheep shearing' "Should've Gone to Specsavers" execution proves.



Compare the Market (2009):
Long-running brand characters were out of fashion until Alexandr Orlov the meerkat showed how they should be done.



PG Tips (2011):
So likeable they starred in ads for two brands, Johnny Vegas and Monkey show the power of building character relationships over time.



Yorkshire Tea (2011): It's not easy to combine imaginative repetition with a sense of place but Yorkshire Tea's tongue-in-cheek "Where Everything's Done Proper" excels at it.



Hamlet (1987):
"Photo booth" is a comedy sketch which happens to have the "Happiness is a cigar called Hamlet" idea as a perfect punchline.



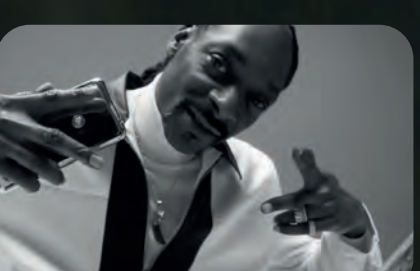
Nescafe (1987):
The Gold Blend couple brought continuity and drama to the idea of recurring characters and became a national obsession.



Guinness (1999):
"Good Things Come To Those Who Wait" comes to stunning, cinematic life with "Surfer".



Marmite (2013):
Sometimes repetition is about pushing an idea to its hilarious limits, as in "Marmite Neglect"'s hard-hitting exploration of brand refusers.



Just Eat (2021):
A postmodern reinvention of the repetitive jingle, as Snoop Dogg steps in to give "Did Somebody Say... Just Eat" a makeover.

CAPTURING CULTURE

WHAT IS IT?

Advertising lives or dies by its grasp of the culture around it. But it's not a passive observer or reflector; it sees the world as it is, but also as it should be. Legendary ads show a deep understanding of culture. They can be brilliantly observed slices of life, or a woven fabric of many stories. They can see a vision for an improved world, or hold a mirror up to an issue that needs addressing. And whatever story about culture they tell, they find a role for the brand in there too.

WHY DOES IT MATTER?

An ad that deeply understands culture places its brand in the viewer's world. When people see themselves and their lives in an ad, even through a dramatic or comic lens, they feel seen and heard. This can apply even more at the level of a subculture, a fandom, or a specific target demographic.

Ads that show the world as it should be, taking a stand on a social issue, create distinction for a brand. They align a brand's values with its audience. Intervening in culture is never-risk free (but nor is any great creative effort) – these ads are intended to provoke debate, especially if the advertising is controversial, as with Bodyform's "Viva La Vulva". TV advertising can work as a catalyst for wider conversation, which amplifies and extends the impact of TV into 'earned media'.

BEST PRACTICE THROUGH THE DECADES



Heinz (1967):

Alongside the classic "Beanz Means Heinz" jingle there's a charming vignette of everyday family life.



OXO (1983):

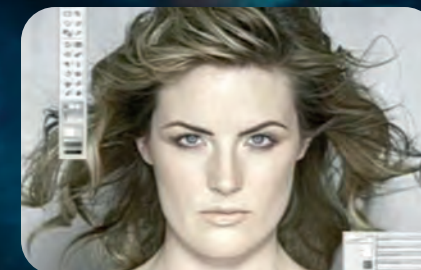
Slice-of-life advertising at its finest, capturing the culture by means of wry looks at one family's dinner conversations.



Nike (1997): Britpop-era celebration of blokes playing Sunday football in the park mashed up real superstars with everyday life.



Playstation (1999): "Double Life" – an uncompromising ad that moved away from gamer stereotypes to cut to the heart of gaming's subcultural appeal.



Dove (2006): The world as it should be – a celebration of real women and real beauty that threw down a gauntlet to the personal care category.



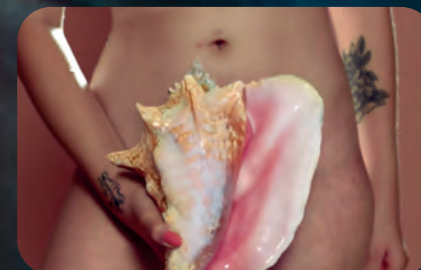
British Heart Foundation (2012):

"Vinnie" used cultural nous to save lives – straight talking, a hilarious gangster parody and vital medical advice.



Sport England (2015):

Shows the world as it is – ordinary women playing sport – in order to build confidence, and create the world as it should be.



Bodyform (2018):

A celebration of women's bodies and sexual health which sparked conversation and still feels wonderfully bold.

ENTERTAINMENT VALUE

WHAT IS IT?

TV is at its best when it makes viewers laugh or smile, and the same can be said for advertising. Whether it's a 30-second sitcom, a running gag, or a simple expression of pure unadulterated joy, ads which use their time to entertain often become legends, and rightly so. Of course entertainment doesn't just mean humour – drama, excitement and romance play a part too. Legendary ads don't just sell – they put on a show.

WHY DOES IT MATTER?

Entertainment value isn't a luxury, it's a vital part of how advertising builds brands and makes money. The more entertaining an ad is, the more attention people will pay to it. And when people feel positive about an ad, it becomes more memorable and builds positive feelings about the brand, too. In the long run, that pays off in brand fame and business effects.

We think entertainment value is even more central to TV advertising. TV is full of entertaining content, so a TV ad that entertains stands out by fitting in – it's no longer an unwelcome interruption, it's part of the show. It's no coincidence that the perceived entertainment value of advertising has declined alongside 'trust'. There's an unspoken contract between advertiser and viewer, and dull advertising breaks it.

BEST PRACTICE THROUGH THE DECADES



Milky Bar (1961): Entertainment is the great constant in TV advertising, with examples in every era. Milky Bar's Western pastiche is still a 5-Star hit with viewers.



Sugar Puffs (1976): From the unique mind of John Webster comes the riotous, rampaging Honey Monster – teatime anarchy for the kids.



Yellow Pages (1983): Entertainment can flirt with sadness en route to joy, as J R Hartley's bitter, then sweet journey demonstrates.



Barclays (1991): TV ads have always got the best out of comedy actors. Rowan Atkinson's idiotic spy was so successful it inspired a film.



Tango (1991): British TV ads have a taste for slapstick surrealism – Tango's orange man ushered in the brasher, bolder ads of the 90s.



John Smiths (2002): "Ave it". Entertainment value can come from schadenfreude, as here, where a ball skills show-off gets put in his place.



Cadbury (2007): "Gorilla" doesn't make sense, and that's why it's so good. Traditional pre-testing didn't know what to make of the drumming ape. Viewers adored him.



3 (2013): Any category can benefit from a dose of entertainment: 3's prancing pony brought silly delight to mobile networks.



National Lottery (2022): Entertainment comes in many forms, like this Christmas romance, an instant modern classic.



McDonald's (2023): The most recent ad in our 70 is built to entertain, as an office building heads for lunch en masse, driven by secret eyebrow signals.

ROMANCING THE PRODUCT

WHAT IS IT?

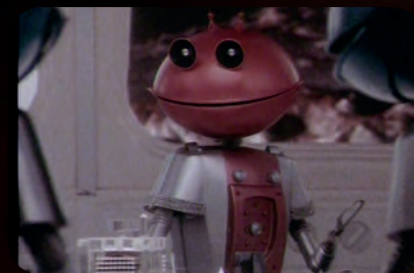
Without a product to sell, advertising doesn't exist. Some brands shy away from it, but legendary ads find ways to make the product the star without ever risking dullness. Romancing the product might mean framing it in a new and interesting way, or shedding light on quirks in how people use it. Even a product demonstration can be extraordinary when taken to extremes, like Audi's "Clowns".

WHY DOES IT MATTER?

Romancing the product matters because ultimately advertising's role is to sell. The product (or service) always has a role to play, even *in absentia*. "I can't remember who it was for" is a lazy cliché levelled at ads that dare to be different. In fact, some of the most iconic advertising in the world romances the product by putting it at the heart of the work.

As a practical matter, romancing the product can combine entertainment with education about what a new service actually does, like Compare the Market. And romancing one product can even have a halo effect on the brand as a whole, and other products in the brand's range – Apple's iPod ads setting the stage for the iPhone's success, for instance.

BEST PRACTICE THROUGH THE DECADES



Smash (1971):

By making ordinary mashed potato sound freakish, the Smash Martians paid tribute to Smash's convenience without a hard sell.



Shake'n'Vac (1979): The jingle became an earworm for half the country, helping them remember the very enthusiastic product demonstration.



LEGO (1981): Removing the builders from the equation and putting the focus solely on the bricks, "Kipper" showed how LEGO unlocks creativity.



Levi's (1985): The genius of the Levi's ads is that they're always product demonstrations as well as great, hot stories.



Ronseal (1998): Added "Does exactly what it says on the tin" to the language. Romantic? Maybe not. But the ultimate product ad.



Pot Noodle (2002): Hilariously positioned instant noodles as the ultimate forbidden food – extreme, but showed deep understanding of the product.



Honda (2003): "Cog" literally takes its product apart to make an abstract benefit – precision engineering – beautifully real.



PG Tips (2011): Romancing the product can mean playing up its emotional benefits, like Al and Monkey sitting down for a lovely warm cuppa.



Lurpak (2015): Reframes the use of Lurpak butter and the product itself by turning cooking into a visual sci-fi odyssey.



Audi (2018): "Clowns" is a product demonstration that expresses technical superiority through a colourful, tangible and poetic metaphor.

LIVING ROOM LEGENDS

THE MAGNIFICENT SEVEN

We all know the icons: Guinness Surfer, Cadbury Gorilla, Sony Balls. They've rightly earned their place in the advertising hall of fame.

But what about the ads that are just as brilliant, just a little less frequently written about? The ones that might not always top the lists, but still made us smile, made us think, and shaped the industry in lasting ways.

In a workshop with industry creatives, strategists and marketers, we asked:

Which ads deserve a second look?

The ones with rich stories, bold decisions, and creative choices that still stand up today.

These are their picks:

The Magnificent Seven.

Seven Living Room Legends that reflect the very best of British TV advertising. Each one is emotionally

resonant, culturally sharp, and rich in the timeless themes explored throughout this report.

They span decades, industries, and production styles. From a moonwalking pony to a CPR demonstration set to disco, each one uses emotion as a creative tool. They surprise, delight, and connect. Not because they follow the rules, but because they rewrite them.

Together, they show us that entertainment matters, emotion works, and standing out pays off.

They prove that brilliant ads aren't just memorable, they're meaningful. And they remind us that with the right idea, even a mashed potato brand or an insurance comparison site can make advertising history.

MARTIANS

1973 Cadbury Smash – Martians

Agency: *Boase Massimi Pollitt Partnership Ltd*

Launched in the heat of the late 60s Space Race, instant mashed potato brand Smash always had a touch of the futuristic about it. But it wasn't until 1973, when its owners tasked fledgling agency Boase Massimi Pollitt with heating up its stagnant sales, that the brand fully embraced its sci-fi side and made advertising history.

The Smash Martians are so familiar now that it's hard to appreciate how radical they were. They represented a complete shift in how instant mash, and functional convenience food in general, was marketed. Smash's competitors aired ads which stressed how authentic, and close to real mashed potato, their products were: typical ads based squarely in product claims. Then along came Smash, with ads starring a group of robotic Martians who laugh hysterically at real mashed potato and the "most primitive people" who bother making it.



How a packet of mash and a group of robots redefined brand humour.

1973 CABBURY SMASH – MARTIANS

Agency: Boase Massimi Pollitt Partnership Ltd

Creative John Webster, the genius behind not only the Martians but the Honey Monster and Gary Lineker’s Walkers ads, understood that you could sell a product like Smash through pure humour, character and imagination.

Claims that instant mash was like the real thing weren’t fooling anybody, so Smash took food advertising out of the kitchen and into space, on a mission to make audiences laugh while positioning Smash as the time-saving, futuristic brand it always had been.

If you look at the original animatics for “Martians”, you’ll see how close Webster’s ideas for them are to the finished ad. Paul Feldwick, who worked on the later “Martians” campaigns with Webster at BMP, emphasises how important the robots’ laughter was to Webster’s idea of the ad: “if you see someone laughing you’re very likely to smile and laugh along with them”. The robots’ growing laughter, Feldwick says, set the rhythm of the ad and the rising intensity of its humour.

Scriptwriter Chris Wilkins had come up with the story for the ad; Webster had the vision of how the Martians should look and act. And the finished ad is a triumph of execution

and craft. Designed and brought to life by Wilkins and Sian Vickers, the 4-foot-high robots are full of vivid personality. They were operated with bicycle brake callipers, a highly technical and unusual setup which made their jerky motions feel real (and very funny). When it came to the robots’ voices, BMP also went to the best in the business: Peter Hawkins, the man who a decade earlier had voiced the Daleks. Hawkins’ experience gave the Martians a subtle sci-fi familiarity, so viewers instantly grasped the outlandish concept.

Silly mascots for everyday products feel like a natural part of advertising now, but as Paul Feldwick relates there was significant pushback against the Martians not just from a nervous client but from within BMP itself. The clinching argument was consumer research – test groups showed that when the public met the Martians it was love at first sight.

You can see the Martians in the flesh – er, metal – at the IPA and at the HQ of Smash’s current owners Premier Foods. They enjoy a happy robot retirement after a run of almost two decades on British screens, one which broke the mould of food advertising and showed that creativity and imagination could flourish in the most functional of categories.



Star Rating:
Strong



Spike Rating:
Exceptional

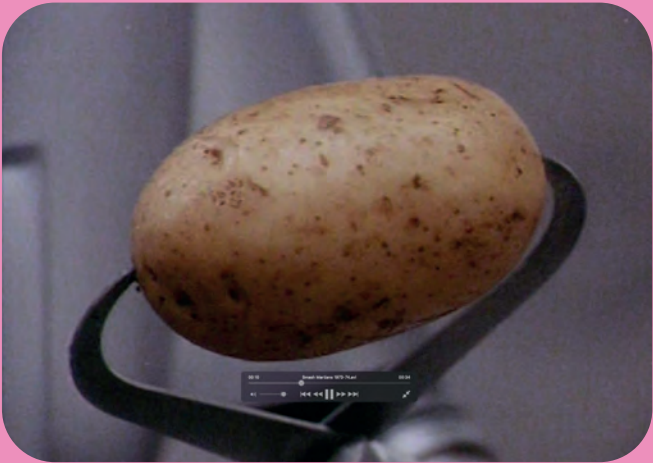
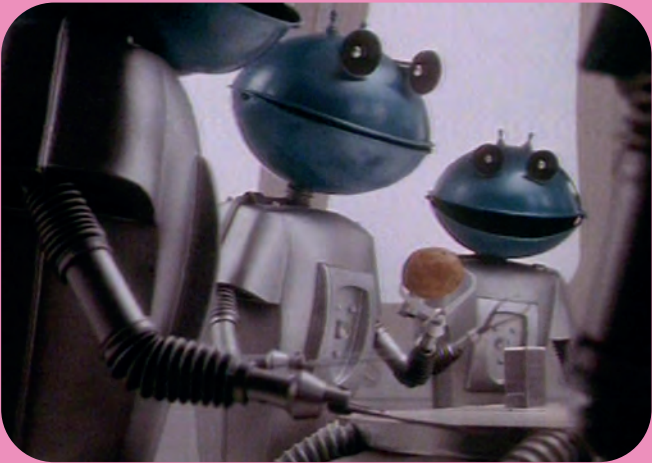
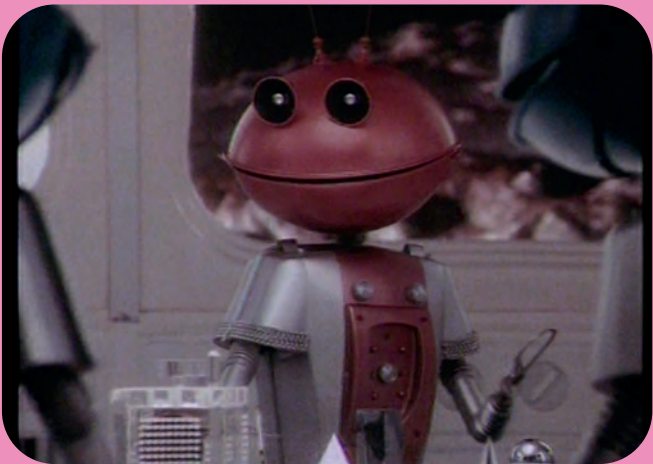
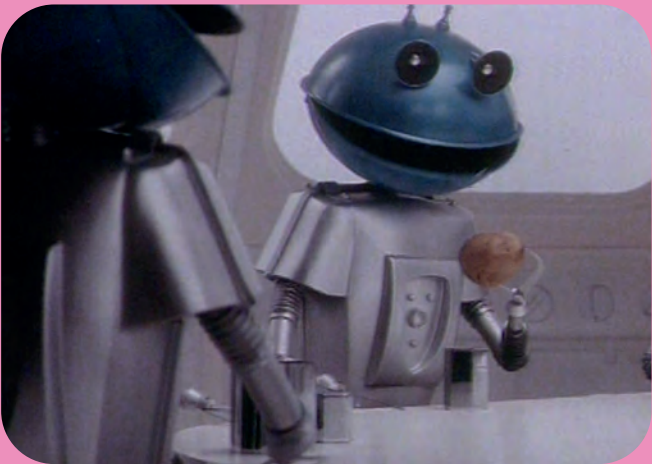


Fluency:
Good



D&AD Wood
Pencil winner

[View Test Your Ad Report](#)





THEME CONNECTIONS: “MARTIANS”

PLAYING WITH CONVENTIONS:

“Martians” broke category codes, rejecting functional demonstrations in favour of storytelling and surreal humour. It threw out realism and embraced absurdity – a decision that made it more realistic. The alien perspective of the Martians made ordinary chores feel like a waste of time and put a simple time-saving product on the side of the future.

EXTRAORDINARY CRAFT:

Smash and BMP made a significant creative investment in the campaign, with striking design, complex puppets and top-tier voice acting. The Martians were distinctive, and felt like real characters, built for consistency across a long-term campaign.

ENTERTAINMENT VALUE:

Where competitors pushed dubious claims of authenticity, “Martians” went all-out for entertainment. The puppets literally fell about with laughter, and this became the hook and the branding cue. Paul Feldwick mentions how the Martian who collapses in laughter was an on-set accident – a puppeteer dropped the robot and director Bob Brook kept the result in. As Feldwick says, “it turned a great ad into a legendary one”. Audiences loved it, remembered it and associated the robots and their laughter directly with the brand. No hard sell or product claims needed.

IMAGINATIVE REPETITION:

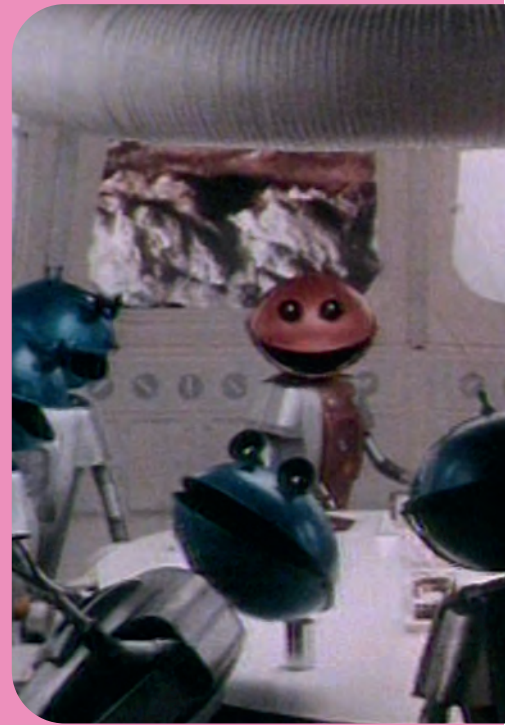
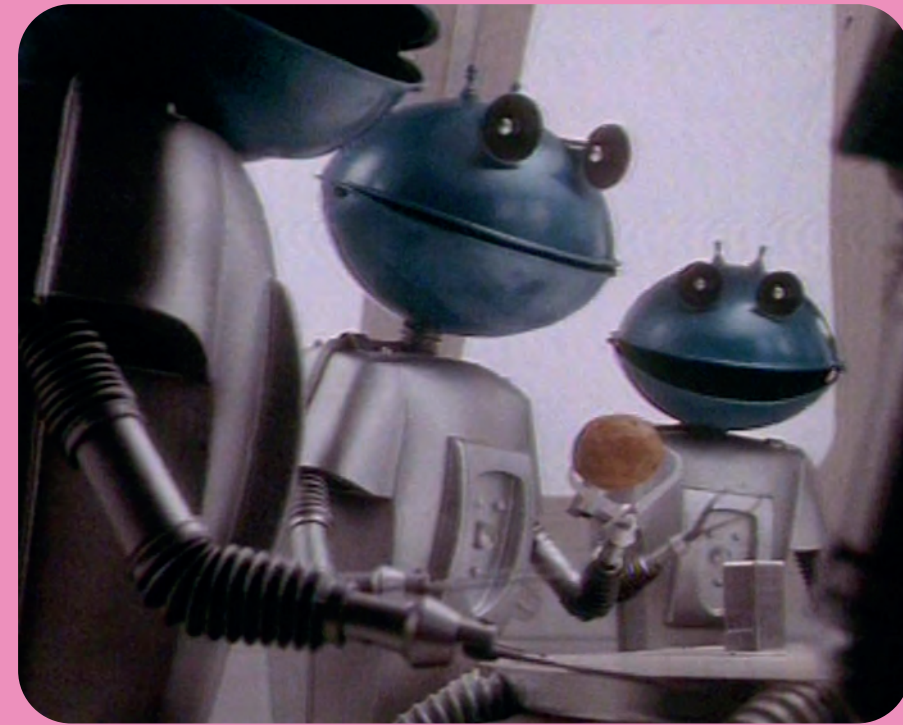
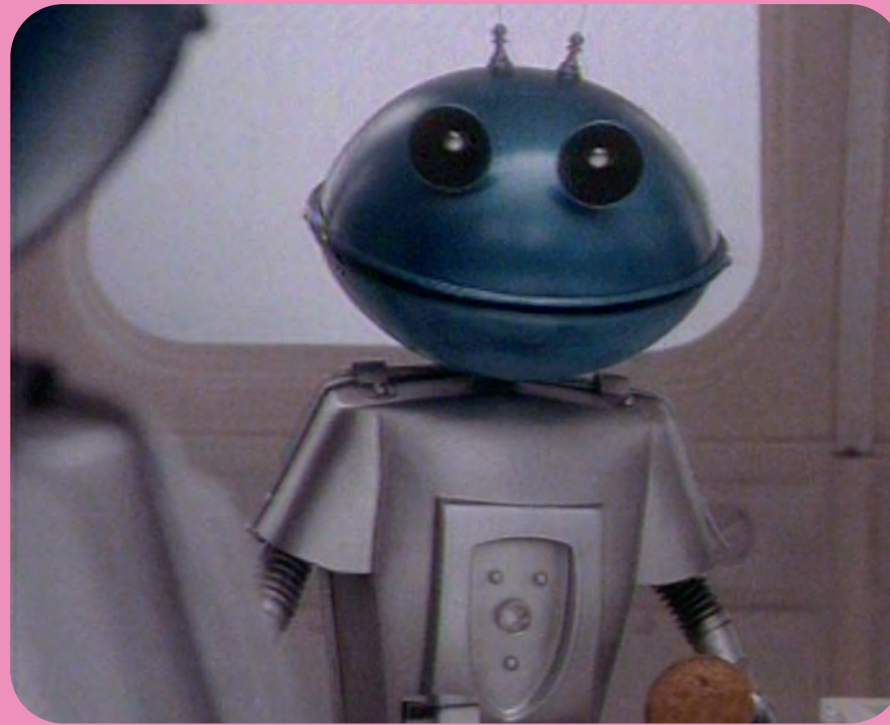
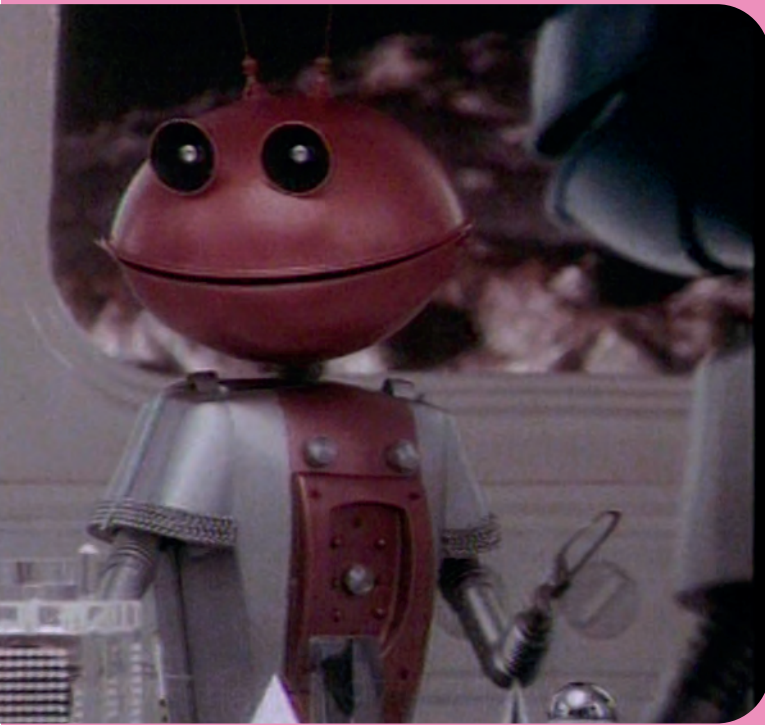
After their triumphant debut, the Martians featured across a long campaign with high levels of creative consistency. Tone, humour and the “setup and punchline” structure of each ad primed audiences for entertainment and made the campaign instantly recognisable. Instant mash is a low-interest category, but the Martians showed narrative-driven repetition could work brilliantly.

CAPTURING CULTURE:

The Martians became pop culture icons, voted for in public lists of all-time-favourite and referenced well beyond advertising. The “For Mash, Get Smash” jingle also entered the public consciousness in a big way. And John Webster’s mocking aliens had a huge industry impact too – they helped shape the use of repeating characters and surreal humour in British ad culture. Every time you see a smart-mouthed mascot on screen, it owes something to the Martians.

1973 CADBURY SMASH – MARTIANS

Agency: Boase Massimi Pollitt Partnership Ltd



5 LESSONS FOR MODERN MARKETERS

ENTERTAINMENT BEATS INTERRUPTION: In a category where people don't expect to be entertained, surprise them by doing just that.

LAUGHTER IS INFECTIOUS: The Martians laughed and so did the viewers. Humour is one of the most effective brand-building tools, so let the audience feel your joy.

CRAFT COUNTS: By investing in brilliant design and acting, Smash created lasting memories. Even the silliest ideas work when brought to life with that much character.

CHARACTERS CARRY THE MESSAGE: There's no hard sell in "Martians" but there's a bold message – why waste time making mash by hand? It lands because it comes from the characters and story.

WORLD-BUILDING WORKS: Fluent devices are far more effective when they exist in consistent, imaginative worlds that allow for narrative development.

KIPPER

1980 LEGO – Kipper
Agency: TBWA Limited

Back in 1981, a lot of the things we associate with LEGO weren't yet part of the brand's offer. There were no media tie-ins, no prestige sets for grown-up builders, and even the brand's iconic minifigs were only a year or two old. What LEGO had to offer is what it always has offered – a way for kids (of any age) to unleash their imagination and build their way to something magical.

When LEGO and agency TBWA captured that in the 1981 advert "Kipper", they captured something that wasn't just effective, it helped change the whole way the LEGO brand presented itself, causing cultural ripples well into the 21st Century. Graham Watson at TBWA used stop-motion animation to take people out of the equation and show characters made entirely of bricks transforming all on their own.

**The gentle brickfilm that built a genre
and warmed a nation.**

KIPPER - LEGO (1981)

These days that kind of animation is known by LEGO builders as a brickfilm, and it occupies a special place in the LEGO world.

Hundreds of thousands of amateur builders have made their own brickfilms at home, we’ve seen brickfilm pop videos from The White Stripes and brickfilm movies like the brand-revitalising LEGO Movie. And most LEGO ads these days are brickfilms too. But in 1981, the idea was entirely fresh, and Graham Watson’s work on “Kipper” will have been most viewers’ first glimpse of the brickfilm style.

They were enchanted by the ad, just as audiences still are today. The gentle, funny voiceover added instant charm – many viewers thought it was comedian Tommy Cooper, but in fact it was a skilled

impersonator, Roger Kitter. It’s also the only obvious human involvement in the ad: visually, “Kipper” is all bricks.

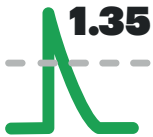
That matters because it cuts to the heart of LEGO’s magic – the way it lets you build your own imaginary world. There are no kids or parents in “Kipper” because the things kids create in LEGO feel real to them, not just toys they’re playing with. Brickfilms push through to the realm of pure creativity and play that underpins the LEGO brand.

In 2008, for LEGO’s 50th anniversary, the brand re-released “Kipper” in UK cinemas, acknowledging its classic status and the way it still captures everything that makes LEGO endure. As this report shows, as the ad nears its own 50th birthday that appeal is as strong as ever.

“IT CUTS TO THE HEART OF LEGO’S MAGIC - THE WAY IT LETS YOU BUILD YOUR OWN IMAGINARY WORLD”



Star Rating:
Exceptional



Spike Rating:
Exceptional

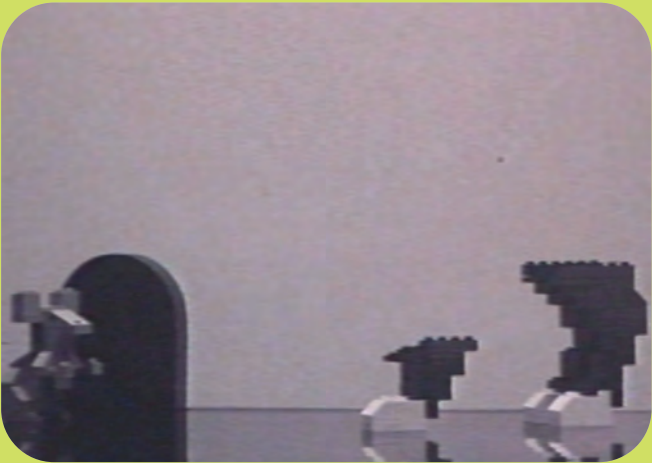
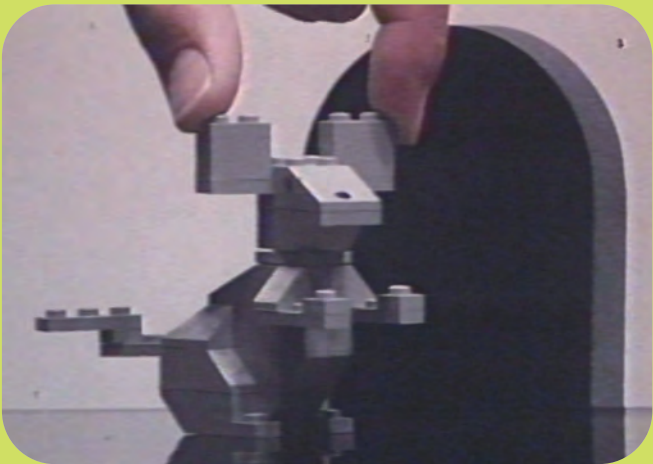
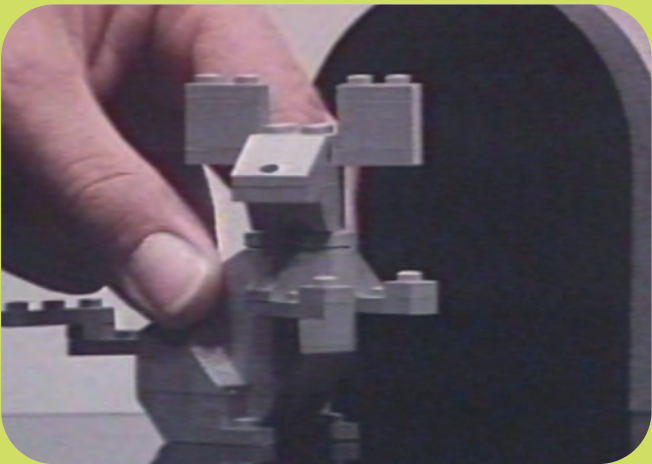


Fluency:
Strong



Winner of a Black
D&AD Pencil – one of
the highest honours in
creative craft.

[View Test Your Ad Report](#)





THEME CONNECTIONS: “KIPPER”

PLAYING WITH CONVENTIONS:

“Kipper” is a triumph of craft, a groundbreaking animation that required precision and confidence, especially with no dialogue. The ad rewards repeated watchings to appreciate the attention to visual detail, the movement, and the comic timing. Add Roger Kitter’s pitch-perfect vocal performance and you have an unforgettable ad.

EXTRAORDINARY CRAFT:

“Kipper” keeps it simple – an easy to follow story told in under 45 seconds, which is still emotionally engaging. The lack of human actors helps invite you into a world of pure play, innocence and emotional lightness carry through every frame.

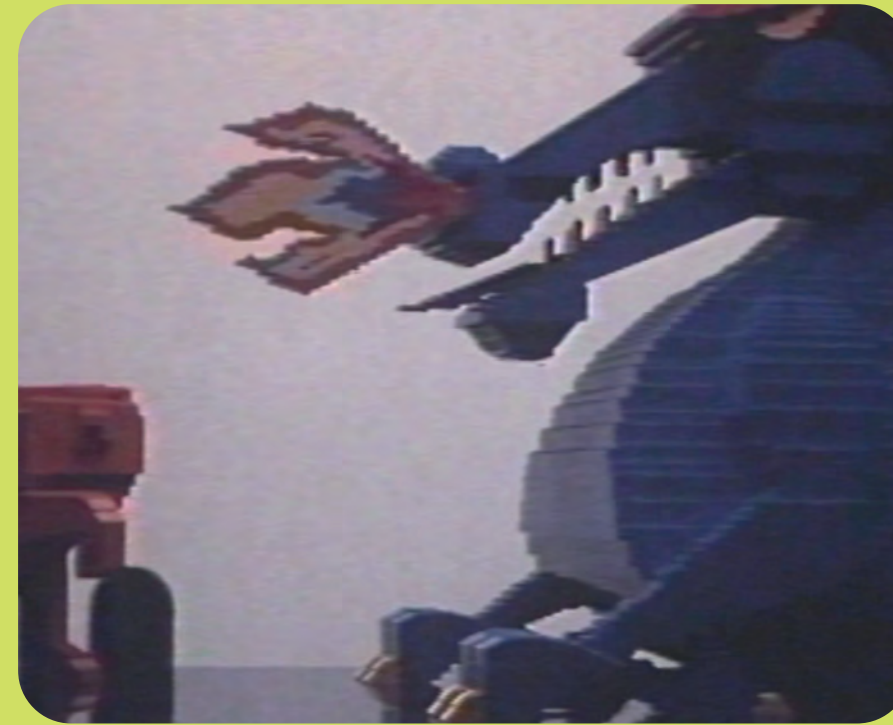
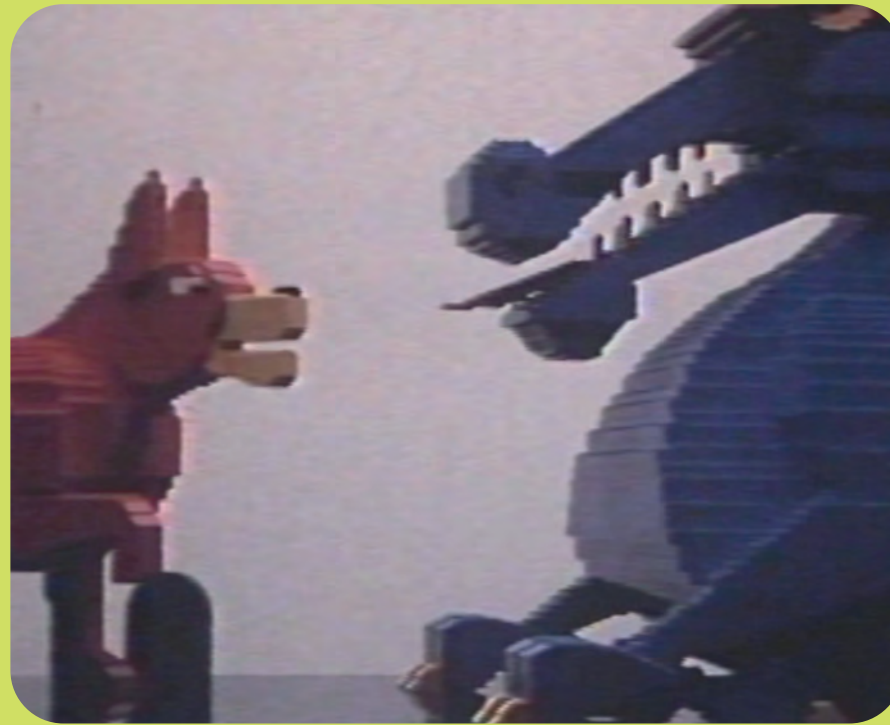
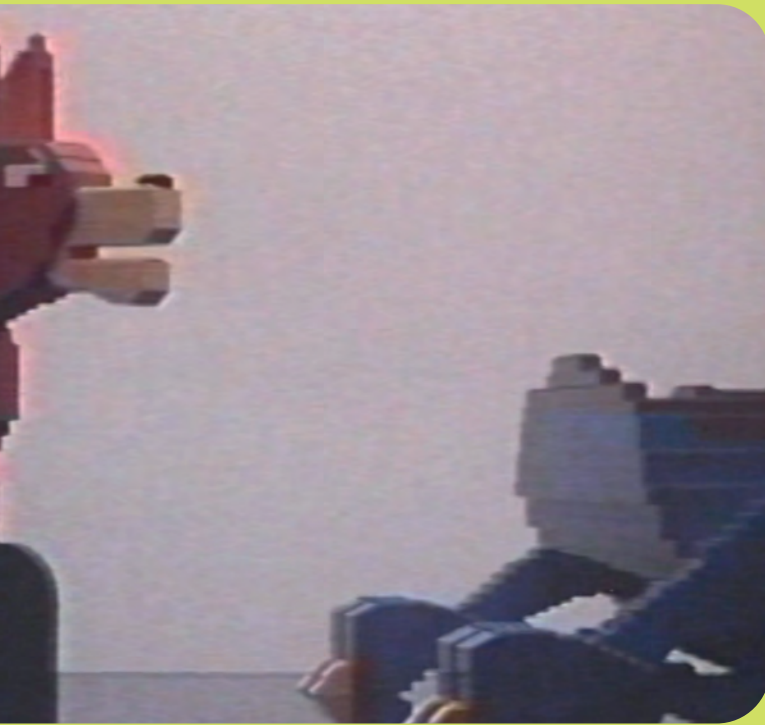
ENTERTAINMENT VALUE:

The ad feels like a classic 1970s or 1980s children’s cartoon, but as the enthusiastic response to “Kipper” from a 2025 audience proves, it’s one of the rare ads that adults and children enjoy equally. That’s because it succeeds through pure entertainment, earning attention through charm and humour. There’s no overt messaging, and no call to action, and that helps make “Kipper” genuinely timeless.

IMAGINATIVE REPETITION:

“Kipper” is a one-off, but it had a huge effect on the decades of LEGO storytelling since. It helped spark the *brickfilm* genre, which influenced LEGO’s own content strategy and is the backbone of their advertising to this day. The ad’s visual and narrative style has been echoed in LEGO’s film and content franchises – imagining an all-LEGO world of pure play.

KIPPER - LEGO (1981)



5 LESSONS FOR MODERN MARKETERS

STORYTELLING WITH HEART: At the centre of storytelling are heart, humour and care. Sometimes, dialogue and human involvement can get in their way.

COMPELLING CRAFT: Extraordinary craft creates not just attention, but memory. It's the attention to detail in the voice acting and animation that makes "Kipper" so memorable.

THE POWER OF PLAY: "Kipper" excels because it's bold enough to devote itself purely to the magic of play. That playful simplicity can stand out in any era.

TIMELESS SIMPLICITY: If you create something people love, they'll remember it decades later, as "Kipper"'s 2008 revival shows.

INNOVATIVE CREATIVITY: Messages come and go but innovative style and technique can permanently reshape your brand – and even spark a new genre.

CAKE

2007 Skoda – Cake
Agency: Fallon London

Skoda's transformation from four-wheeled punchline to a successful, growing car brand is one of the great marketing success stories, and 2007's "Cake" is its centrepiece. The brand had spent the 00s under new owner VW defusing its Cold-War-era reputation for poor quality with the brave and cheeky "it's a Skoda, honest" campaign. Skoda had dealt with its negatives. Now agency Fallon was given the job of selling the positives – radically improving Skoda's brand image.

As Fallon's Laurence Green puts it, *"it was the first time we could do something that's not trying to fix a problem"*. But "Cake" went a lot further. It not only met this brief, it did so in a way that changed car advertising.



**When craft and joy came together
to bake a brand's rebirth.**

2007 SKODA - CAKE

The obvious route would have been to explore the Skoda Fabia’s features, persuading viewers with specs and facts that the car was a winner. But that would have made just another car ad – in a sector not exactly lacking in dull, functional advertising.

Instead, Fallon and director Chris Palmer came up with a deliciously radical concept – build a full-size Skoda Fabia entirely out of cake.

The result was an ad which took the clichés of car advertising and turned them on its head. We weren’t following engineers in a workshop, but a team of real bakers, constructing the cake. There were close ups on hands, faces and baking tools, creating intimacy and bringing home the craft, precision and care of this surreal task. Long before *Bake Off*, Skoda’s ad captivated viewers with the skill of baking, “something really visceral and elemental” as Green says.

The music, too, let viewers know this was no ordinary car ad. “Cake” used Julie Andrews’ “My Favourite Things”

from *The Sound of Music*, instantly warm and familiar but miles away from anything you’d associate with cars. The soundtrack had never been licensed for a commercial, but according to Green, Fallon had no fallback choice – they knew what it needed.

“Cake” has no technical specs, no driving shots, no spoken lines or explanations. Fallon pushed back on expectations the ad would end with a shot of a real car: as Laurence Green says, “leave people with fascination, don’t let the daylight in on the magic”. What it provides instead is an intense emotional high, peaking at the end with the team gathered around the finished cake-car, full of smiles and pride.

Skoda turned car advertising upside down, making something which communicated directly and emotionally the ideas other brands try to explain in words – we make our cars with care and precision, but also with joy. That joy was infectious – the ad won enormous praise and remains one of Skoda’s most iconic ads, putting the brand further along the road to success.



Star Rating:
Exceptional



Spike Rating:
Strong



Fluency:
Exceptional



D&AD Yellow
Pencil winner

[View Test Your Ad Report](#)





THEME CONNECTIONS: “CAKE”

EXTRAORDINARY CRAFT: In one sense “Cake” is nothing but craft – we’re watching a team of elite bakers take on the job of their lives, and the emotional journey is driven by the crafting of the car, not the car itself. The ad creates awe and delight without relying on digital effects. As a celebration of craft, “Cake” goes even deeper than that – the precise cinematography and the masterful music choice are advertising craft at its peak.

DRAMATIC EMOTION: For a film with no dialogue and no context, “Cake” presents a powerful narrative of challenge and success, one that drives a sense of accomplishment and pride. It’s a classic “build and reveal” structure, with the final reveal of the car and group shot engineered to be a perfect finishing peak for the ad.

PLAYING WITH CONVENTIONS: “Cake” sells feeling, not function. It’s a playfully subversive ad which is happy to entirely ignore the standard category fixations with speed, driving, spec and lifestyle tropes. And it means one of the most effective car ads of all time doesn’t feature a single real car.

ENTERTAINMENT VALUE: Skoda’s ad captivates viewers of all ages, with no hard-sell messaging to interrupt the good feelings. The music choice cues viewers in that this is not your usual car ad – adding emotional depth and a touch of nostalgia. It’s a signal the ad is going to be something joyful, magical and completely unexpected, putting entertainment first and branding second.

ROMANCING THE PRODUCT: How do you romance the product when it doesn’t even appear? By honouring and celebrating it via imaginative metaphor. “Cake” makes you feel the care, skill and pride that goes into Skoda engineering without showing it or even saying anything at all. In the process it turns an everyday object into something visually and emotionally delightful.



5 LESSONS FOR MODERN MARKETERS

NOT SHOW OR TELL, BUT *FEEL*: You can sell a product without even showing it, but you do need to make people feel something about it.

CRAFT IS EMOTION: At the highest level craft goes beyond execution and becomes the driver of emotion and attention in its own right. There's magic in making viewers say "how did they do that?"

CREATE A SENSE OF WONDER: Leaning into joy, wonder and magic can be more persuasive than logic or listing features. And categories which usually focus on the rational, are ripe for flipping like this.

METAPHOR MATTERS: "Cake" is visual poetry, working on the level of metaphor. Have the courage to resist explanation in ads where it would only spoil the experience.

THE EFFECTIVENESS ENGINE: Skoda had regained trust with their previous campaign, but "Cake" turned that into real affection. Emotion is the engine for effectiveness. This is proof.

COMPARE THE MEERKAT

2008 Compare the Market – Aleksandr
Agency: VCCP

Price comparison websites and apps are one of the genuinely new categories that came out of the rapid expansion of the internet. It's not surprising the early competitors chose names which – to borrow from another of our 70 classics – were a bit “does what it says on the tin”. Compare the Market's name explained exactly what they did. But that was the problem. It was generic, meaning they were having to spend a lot of money on Google ads to compete.

**Simples: the power of a talking meerkat
and 15 years of imaginative repetition.**

2008 COMPARE THE MARKET - ALEKSANDR

Enter VCCP in 2009, with the objective of creating a campaign that would drive traffic straight to the site.

From this simple (or simples) goal sprang one of the most effective and longest-running brand campaigns in UK advertising history. VCCP came up with Alexandr Orlov, a fictional meerkat endlessly frustrated that people keep confusing his website – comparethemeerkat.com – with comparethemarket.com.

The idea was to stand out – “why can’t this stuff be as entertaining as the most iconic ads on TV?” asked Darren Bailes from VCCP, who pretended to be a meerkat at the pitch. The team drew inspiration from *The Simpsons*, whose characters existed in an entire universe of recurring characters, so the fictional land of Meerkovo was born. According to Mark Vile of Compare the Market, this was the most important element of all: “There was a strong belief in the power of storytelling within brands – having Meerkovo has helped give the ads fresh consistency”.

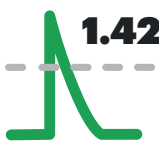
Vile gave Darren and the team the green light to build a bespoke website for Alexandr, which opened the door to engagement across then-new social media platforms. “Alexandr was talking live to people on

Facebook, they couldn’t believe the meerkat was replying to them!” remembers Darren.

The campaign drilled the brand and site name into viewers’ heads, but it did so much more. Voiced by Simon Greenall, Alexandr and the other meerkats’ accents and phrasing instantly set them apart. Meerkatmania hit British high streets, with “Simples” becoming a national catchphrase and plush toys of the characters sparking fights in stores. Brand icons were out of fashion at the time, and the Meerkats reminded the industry how much advantage a great one can confer.

The ad also flipped category conventions. It transformed a dull, low-trust industry into something playful, character-led and emotionally memorable. Other comparison sites quickly pushed their own characters to prominence, but it was the Meerkats who won out by being lovable as well as memorable.

The campaign was an instant success and fifteen years on, the success continues. The campaign has expanded into a full brand universe – with brand partnerships, toys, spin-off stories and new characters, most recently clumsy cousin Carl the Wombat. The Meerkats have weathered an evolving media landscape and seen off all challengers.



Spike Rating:
Exceptional



Fluency:
Exceptional



Awarded a Wood D&AD Pencil and Gold IPA Effectiveness Award – proving creative entertainment can drive serious commercial outcomes.

[View Test Your Ad Report](#)

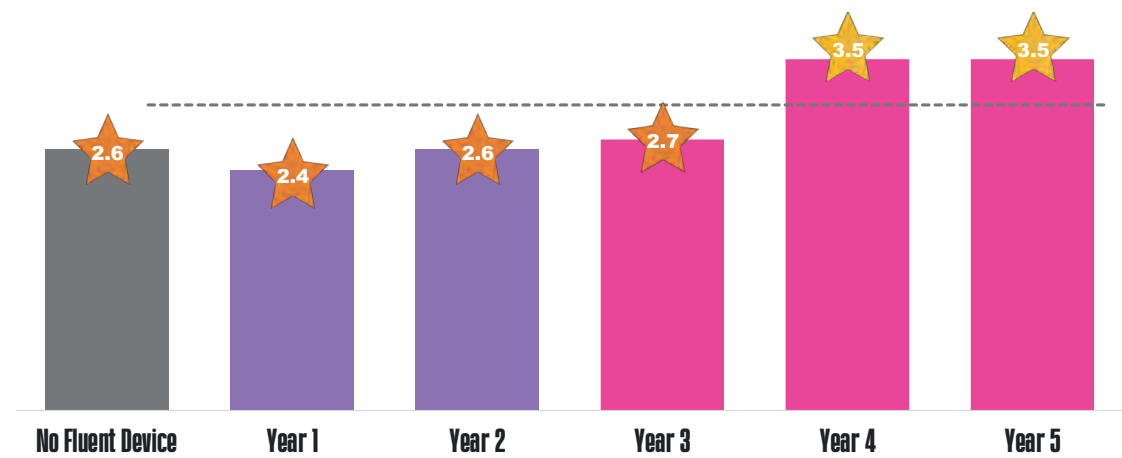


COMPOUND CREATIVITY PAYS OFF

System1 and the IPA’s *Compound Creativity* research shows that brands which build consistent creative over time unlock disproportionate returns. Their ads aren’t just better: they’re exponentially more effective.

FLUENT DEVICES PAY OFF AFTER A NUMBER OF YEARS

Creative Quality | Average Star Rating, fluent device tenure.



Citation: 56 brands across 44 categories analysed between 2018 and 2024 for 13 difference Creative Consistency Features. 4164 ads with £3.3bil media spend, tested with Systems1’s Test Your Ad with 624,600 UK Nat Rep respondents. Star Rating ranges from 1.0 to 5.9, axis starts at global averages. Split into campaigns by their fluent device tenure.

We found that:

CONSISTENT BRANDS CREATE ADS THAT WORK **TWICE AS HARD**

THEY REPORT **DOUBLE THE PROFIT GAINS OF THE LEAST CONSISTENT BRANDS**

AND THEY GENERATE **27% MORE VERY LARGE BRAND EFFECTS**

Compare the Meerkat is a masterclass in compound creativity. With 15 years of consistent creative and near-perfect Fluency (99), the campaign is built on the long-term power of the Fluent Device.

Fluent Devices, as our data shows, take time to work – but when they do, they pay back. After just 3 years, campaigns using them outperform others on both emotional quality and brand-building efficiency. The Meerkats didn’t just get famous – they stayed famous. And that made all the difference.

In a world of creative resets, Compare the Market stuck with a great idea – and proved why that’s the smarter bet.

**THEME
CONNECTIONS:**
**“COMPARE
THE MEERKAT”**

PLAYING WITH CONVENTIONS:

Price comparison used to be one of the most rational of all categories. Compare the Market turned that on its head, flipping price-led messaging into character-led storytelling. It gave a dry, transactional service a warm, funny, personality to build familiarity and trust.

EXTRAORDINARY CRAFT:

The Meerkats have had a longer lifespan than most classic TV series. You don't get that without terrific craft. VCCP showed attention to detail in character animation, voice work, and continuity, with every element from casting to catchphrases designed for stickiness and emotional connection. A coveted Wood D&AD Pencil confirms the creative craft matched the commercial ambition.

ENTERTAINMENT VALUE:

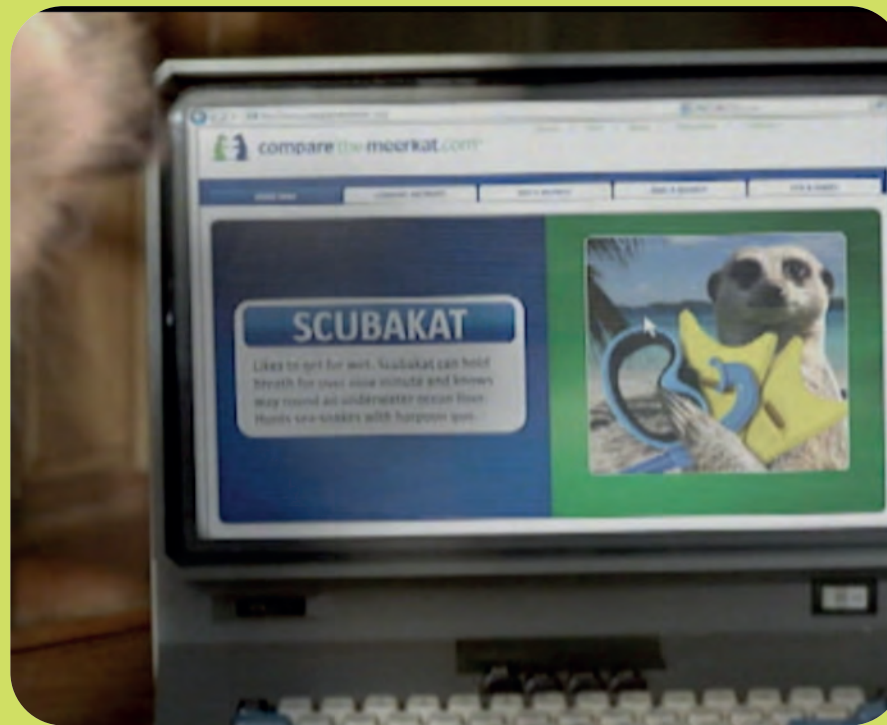
The slogan “*Simples*” became both a branding cue and an expression of the brand proposition – ease, simplicity, and trust. In fact, consistent creative execution over 15 years is far from simple, it's hugely difficult to pull off, but Compare the Market have evolved the characters and world without breaking tone. This repetition, across platforms and partnerships and beyond into toys and tie-ins, helped embed the brand firmly in the culture.

IMAGINATIVE REPETITION:

The Meerkats' commercial success is awe-inspiring. This success was built on and reinforced by the campaign's consistent presence on trusted, broad-reach TV. Alexandr, Sergei and company became instantly recognisable figures, and “*Simples*” entered the nation's language, referenced in everyday conversation and comedy.

CAPTURING CULTURE:

Shopping for insurance and financial products is a joyless, tedious process. The Meerkats livened it up, bringing joy and a sense of narrative to a dull task. In a category nobody wants to think about, they created a reason to care.



5 LESSONS FOR MODERN MARKETERS

THE POWER OF FLUENT DEVICES: They're best known in FMCG but Fluent Device characters like the Meerkats can transform any category when backed with consistency and craft.

FLUENCY BUILDS FAME: In a low trust category, familiarity and fluency become your most valuable currency, so stand out immediately.

“SIMPLES” SUCCESS: A single word or catchphrase, repeated with imagination, can become your most powerful and viral asset.

INVEST IN CHARACTERS: Back your Fluent Devices and they will repay it – give your characters a world, a tone, a voice, and time to grow.

DEFY DULLNESS: It's a cliché because it's true – when it comes to advertising, there really are no dull categories. People love to be entertained, even when they're buying insurance.



**A hard man, a disco beat,
and a life-saving message.**

VINNIE

2012 British Heart Foundation

Agency: Grey London

Several ads by nonprofits and charities sit proudly in our list of 70 classics. Commercial advertising has always shared space with organisations which use the power of ITV's broad reach to educate, inform and make appeals to the audience. But there's nothing to say an educational film – even on a topic as serious and terrifying as heart attacks – can't be entertaining too.

In 2012, The British Heart Foundation and Grey London proved that with "Vinnie", using an unlikely combination of hardman Vinnie Jones and disco legends the Bee Gees to save lives via hands-only CPR. Audiences had seen hands-only CPR done on TV dramas – but the BHF wanted to give them the knowledge and confidence to do it themselves.

2012 BRITISH HEART FOUNDATION - VINNIE

Enter Vinnie, flanked by heavies and dressed like the gangsters he’s known for playing on film.

The idea was to educate people without lecturing or scaring them, so Vinnie gives the instructions directly to camera, with deadpan humour and casual confidence. The script is written in everyday, colloquial language so the message feels practical, not preachy.

So far so good, but the genius of “Vinnie” is in how it teaches, not what it teaches. To illustrate CPR, the charity licensed “Stayin’ Alive” by the Bee Gees. This was a masterstroke for three reasons. First, it’s a song everyone knows, and the title creates an instant link with the life-saving technique. Second, the tempo of the song – 147 BPM – exactly matches the tempo required for hands-only CPR. “It was a gift”, says Vicki Maguire of Grey London (Queen’s “Another One Bites the Dust” matches the tempo too, but was, not surprisingly, ruled out.)

And third, Vinnie Jones, suited and booted, pumping someone’s chest to the sound of the Bee Gees really isn’t something anyone is going to forget in a hurry.

“Entertain to educate was top of our minds” says Vicki, “You store things in a different part of your brain when they’re funny”. Think of charity and public education ads and you think either of sombre appeals or terrifying warnings. “Vinnie” dropped those tropes to show that a PSA could be memorable and funny. The incongruity of the hardman and the disco anthem guaranteed global coverage, and the ad earned over a million YouTube views in its first week – high visibility for the era.

The real proof of the ad’s success, though, came when doctors started calling BHF sharing stories of patients who’d “been Vinnie’d” – people who wouldn’t have made it to the hospital alive without the ad. There are people walking around today who owe their lives to Vinnie and “Stayin’ Alive”: not bad going for an advert.

“VINNIE DROPPED THOSE TROPES TO SHOW A PSA COULD BE MEMORABLE AND FUNNY”



Star Rating:
Strong



Spike Rating:
Exceptional



Fluency:
Exceptional



D&AD Wood
Pencil winner

[View Test Your Ad Report](#)



Fast Fluency:
Top performer
– audiences recognised the brand and message instantly.



WHEN IT'S LIFE OR DEATH, DULL ISN'T AN OPTION



Research from Adam Morgan, Peter Field, and Jon Evans, *The Extraordinary Cost of Dull*, used data from System1 and the IPA Effectiveness Databank to show that most ads simply don't connect. In fact, **over half of UK TV ads generate a neutral emotional response**. And when people feel nothing, they do nothing.

That emotional flatline comes at a price. Brands are spending billions trying to force effectiveness out of forgettable work. Our analysis shows that the duller ads need **up to £10m per campaign** just to have the same impact as the least dull ads.

"Vinnie" avoided that trap. With a **1.68 Spike Rating**, it captured attention and changed behaviour – proving that strategic humour and surprise can elevate even the most serious message.



THEME CONNECTIONS: “VINNIE”

EXTRAORDINARY CRAFT: “Vinnie” is a masterclass in tone control – taking a life-saving message and wrapping it in humour and cultural shorthand. It’s memorable and impactful but never tasteless or frivolous. According to Vicki Maguire, the team went through 100 drafts of the script to make sure every second counted. It shows. The licensed soundtrack, casting, script, and production design work together seamlessly, and the use of parody made the ad stand out within the charity sector and wider commercial landscape.

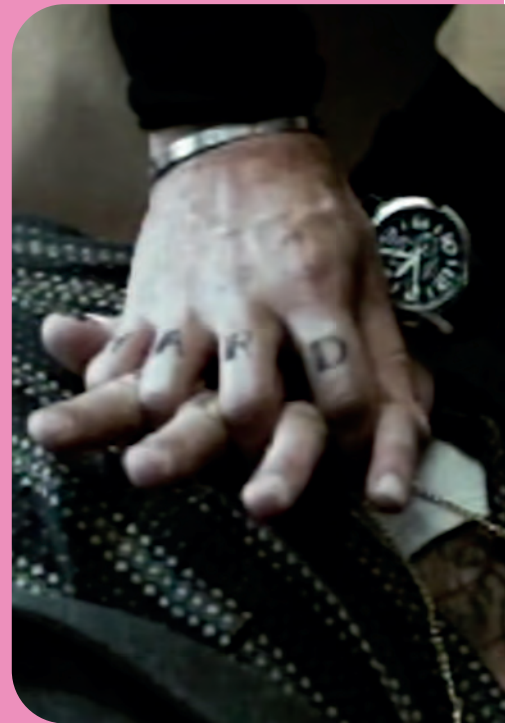
DRAMATIC EMOTION: “Vinnie”’s frightening subject risks triggering avoidant responses, but the use of humour reduces fear and boosts recall. The ad builds tension – but not too much – and peaks with a confident delivery of the CPR message, ending with a simple, memorable takeaway and a sense of reassurance. “Vinnie”’s emotional journey is a subtle one – from surprise, through amusement and finishing with empowerment.

PLAYING WITH CONVENTIONS: Charity ads are stereotypically soft emotive appeals or stark warnings. “Vinnie” is neither. It’s a hard man delivering a sensitive message in a disarming, funny and effective way.

ENTERTAINMENT VALUE: “Vinnie” lands because it entertains as much as it teaches. The completely unexpected tone made learning feel effortless and grabbed attention, leading to high replay value and quotability – “No kissing!”

IMAGINATIVE REPETITION: Vinnie Jones reprised the role in multiple follow-ups – same tone, same gangster parody setup. This became a Fluent Device scenario, with the hired device acting like a fluent character over time. When Denmark’s player Christian Eriksen suffered a cardiac arrest on-pitch during the Euros in 2021, the BHF team could quickly respond with “the ad we never meant to make”, showing the staying power of the creative world they built.

CAPTURING CULTURE: “Vinnie” is a great example of how character and craft can shift perception and behaviour at scale. Vinnie Jones became synonymous with BHF and with the CPR technique. People may have known what it was, but the ad made CPR accessible, well understood, and cool. “It translated into popular culture” says Vicki, “You want that to be by design, but it very rarely happens”.



5 LESSONS FOR MODERN MARKETERS

EDUCATE THE HUMAN WAY:

PSAs and ads that educate succeed when they feel clear, human, and memorable.

HUMOUR'S HIDDEN BENEFITS:

Humour makes things more memorable and persuasive – it's not just for entertainment.

SERIOUS SURPRISE: Delivering a sensitive or serious topic in a surprising way creates cut-through and trust – it wins you permission to talk about it.

EFFECTIVENESS FOR HIRE: Vinnie Jones is a great example of how a fluent hired device can be a perfect match for the brand, tone and purpose. Pick the right one and you automatically win attention.

A PLATFORM FOR AGILITY: When a shocking but relevant event happened, BHF and Vinnie had an established platform to talk about it. A Fluent Device gives you that agility and makes you ready to respond in ways people trust.



**A moonwalking Shetland, a viral hit,
and the proof that silly sells.**

THE PONY

2013-14 Three Mobile

Agency: Wieden+Kennedy London

The technological revolutions of the last 20 years created new categories for advertisers and posed new challenges. How to advertise a category like mobile networks – complex, feature- and price-driven, and dull, but increasingly essential? Wieden + Kennedy London cracked it in 2013 with Three's “The Pony”: banish dullness, build brand love and fame, and make the category relate to the new ways people were using their phones.

2013-14 THREE MOBILE - PONY

Three had been first to market in the UK with the 3G network but the brand lacked warmth and cultural relevance.

In a price-led, tech-heavy category they lacked differentiation. Kevin Chesters, ex-W+K, identifies the problem: in the smartphone category, the phone market was entirely handset driven. The network was an afterthought. Three understood that mobile internet data was changing that, and it had a chance to be the home of the mobile internet. But as Chesters puts it, “if you want to be about the mobile internet you can either talk about it or show it.”

“The Pony” decided to show it, and changed how networks were marketed overnight.

The concept was simple enough, though this really is an ad you need to see to truly get it. A Shetland pony moonwalks to Fleetwood Mac’s “Everywhere” across a windswept cliff. Why? Why not? There’s no context, no story, nothing except silliness, spectacle and joy.

Behind the silliness, of course, was a carefully crafted piece of work. W+K London

combined footage from a chilly shoot in the Scottish Highlands with CGI to make the pony dance. The Fleetwood Mac soundtrack was central to the ad’s charm – uplifting, recognisable and in a nostalgic sweet spot. “Everywhere” returned to the Top 20 thanks to the ad – and Christine McVie rang W+K London to thank them! It was just part of a wave of organic public enthusiasm for “The Pony” as the ad became a huge viral hit.

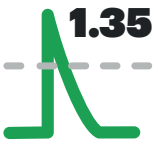
The way “Pony” was so widely shared and memed marked a turning point in Three’s brand perception. And it was the perfect vindication of Three’s strategic aim. Behind the silliness was rigorous research. As Kevin Chesters says “what unlocked the brief was a PhD thesis on LOLCats.”

The brand had identified a human truth rooted in the fact that the way people were connecting online was changing – functional messaging becoming less important than memes, humour and shared joy. It was all summed up in the ad’s tagline: “Silly Stuff. It Matters”. It does, and a dancing pony proved it.

“THERE’S NO CONTEXT, NO STORY, NOTHING EXCEPT SILLINESS, SPECTACLE AND JOY”



Star Rating:
Exceptional



Spike Rating:
Exceptional



Fluency:
Good



D&AD Graphite
Pencil winner

[View Test Your Ad Report](#)



A close-up, high-contrast photograph of a horse's face, focusing on its eye and mane. The horse's eye is dark and reflective, with a bright, glowing light source visible within it. The mane is light-colored and wispy, framing the eye. The background is dark and textured.

THEME CONNECTIONS: “THE PONY”

PLAYING WITH CONVENTIONS: A tech-free mobile ad which gets at what people do with their phones – share funny stuff – and ignores tariffs, functions and price. “The Pony” was one of the first tech ads to realise the product benefit is emotional connection, and it didn’t just flip its category conventions. It rewrote them.

DRAMATIC EMOTION: “The Pony” builds curiosity with visual tension – what’s that pony doing on that cliff? – then delivers delight. The moonwalk and music combined made audiences grin; a prime example of “positive emotion = positive brand effect”. Ultimately, “The Pony” works because there’s no storyline, not despite it. This is pure feeling: even a planned voiceover was removed.

EXTRAORDINARY CRAFT: A subtle blend of the authentic and the fantastic. A real pony, a real location, and a brilliantly-chosen hit on the soundtrack. Only the dancing isn’t real, and the CGI for it is invisible but effective. The pony moves with personality and humour.

ENTERTAINMENT VALUE: Adam Morgan, Peter Field, and Jon Evans referenced “The Pony” in its *The Extraordinary Cost of Dull* report as a top-performing “least dull” campaign that delivers value simply by making the audience feel good. There’s no pitch or persuasion, what you see (a moonwalking pony) is what you get. But it proves that “Silly Stuff” can lead to serious brand growth.

CAPTURING CULTURE: If “The Pony” is about anything, it’s about the joy of sharing silly stuff. And appropriately, it was widely shared, memed and parodied itself. But the ad was part of a wider creative shift in mobile advertising, away from functionality and towards emotion. It’s a modern spiritual successor to BT’s “Ology” – reaffirming the value of humour and charm in digital and ATL campaigns and connecting through human truth, not hardware.

ROMANCING THE PRODUCT: What product? You might ask. We don’t see a phone in “The Pony”. But how better to bring alive the value of 3G than creating something worth sharing. The brand association is emotional, not rational, and it makes the brand feel like it “gets” its audience – fun, creative, and loving the unexpected.



5 LESSONS FOR MODERN MARKETERS

JOY IS A NEED-TO-HAVE: In low-interest categories, entertainment isn't a nice-to-have – it's the only way in. When you lead with joy, people remember the brand that made them feel something.

AN AD WORTH SHARING: Put on a great show and people don't care that it's an ad – they want to see and share it anyway.

DELIGHT BACKED WITH DISCIPLINE: Creative risk is most effective when backed by research and strategic rigour – Three knew they had a rock-solid insight behind the silliness.

TRUST THE IDEA: A strong emotional idea + a simple execution + media support = a magical cultural moment. "The Pony" offered no explanation, trusting in craft to realise the idea and in the audience to get it. "Just let people enjoy and make their own assumptions" (Kev Chesters).

INVISIBLE PRODUCT, VISIBLE BENEFITS: This is proof that emotion is the engine for effectiveness – even if your product is invisible.



**Real sweat, real stories, and a campaign
that moved millions.**

THIS GIRL CAN

2014-15 Sport England
Agency: FCB Inferno

2014-15 SPORT ENGLAND – THIS GIRL CAN

In these case studies we’ve often celebrated the fantastic, the imaginative and the silly. But advertising can also change the world just by putting reality on screen, holding up a mirror to people and saying “you can do this”. Sport England and FCB Inferno’s “This Girl Can” is a terrific example of how TV advertising sparked a national conversation and changed millions of women’s lives.

The campaign was set up to address a gender gap in physical activity. More men than women took regular exercise and participated in sports. Sport England’s research showed that a lack of confidence and self-consciousness was at the root of this gap. Many women didn’t take part in sport simply because they thought they couldn’t – and even worse, that they’d be judged even for trying.

Sportswear advertising wasn’t to blame for that, but its emphasis on elite athletes hadn’t helped either. But Sport England weren’t out to sell sport, they and FCB Inferno chose to show the reality of it. Women’s sport on our screens as it truly is, in all its sweat, jiggle, joy and struggle.

So it was essential to avoid traditional fitness messaging and idealised bodies. No actors was the rule, and absolutely no retouching – just real effort, real movement and real pride from real women. FCB Inferno found the women in the ad in local gyms, clubs, and communities,

putting a variety of ages and bodies on screen and showing the reality of sport. The soundtrack set the tone: “Get Ur Freak On”, by rap superstar Missy Elliott, an undeniably raw and real woman with an empowering, cool and unapologetically bold hit.

The spot launched on digital and primetime TV, becoming a cultural talking point with ripples across social media too – the #ThisGirlCan topic became a top trending hashtag on Twitter as the campaign gained traction. But talking wasn’t the point – “This Girl Can” worked, with Sport England’s later research crediting the campaign with getting over 3 million women active that year. This Girl Can; this ad did.

From the very start – a cold January night in the middle of *Coronation Street*, as campaign lead Kate Dale recalls – the ambition was to use TV not just for reach, but for cultural presence. It wasn’t enough to speak to women one by one; it had to be a shared, visible moment. The big screen in the corner of the living room, as Dale puts it, offered something no targeted campaign could: “a medium that didn’t always show [women like them]... in all their sweaty, messy, authentic glory.”

“This Girl Can” reached and resonated, not because it asked women to change, but because it showed them they already belonged.

The ad’s impact wasn’t about sales, but about identity, inclusion, and participation and the emotional resonance shows its power to shift culture



Star Rating:
Strong



D&AD Graphite
Pencil winner

[View Test Your Ad Report](#)



FEELING SEEN, FEELING GOOD

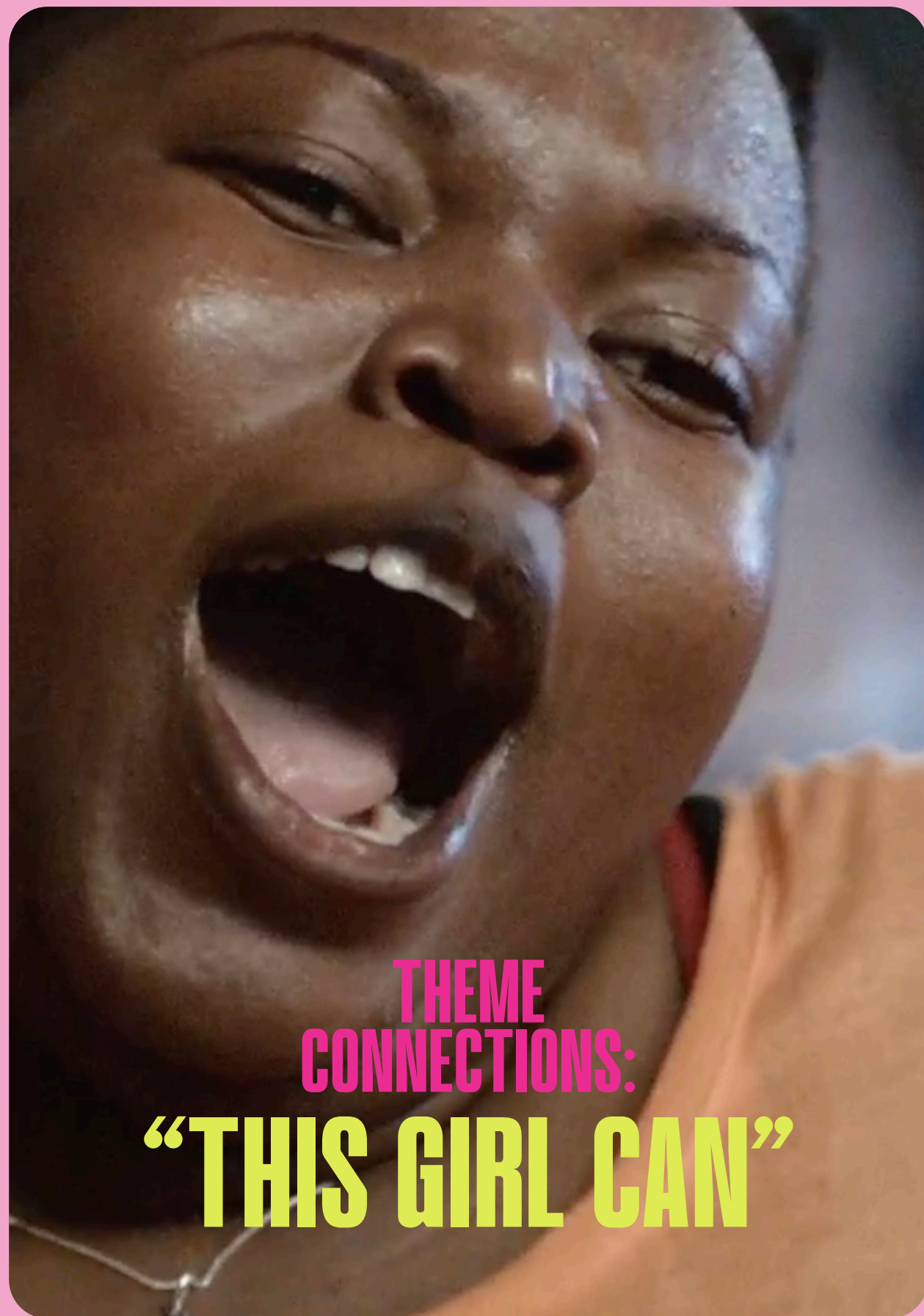
“WHEN PEOPLE
SEE THEMSELVES
REFLECTED ON
SCREEN, IT DRIVES
A STRONGER
EMOTIONAL
RESPONSE”

ITV and System1’s ***Feeling Seen*** research demonstrates the clear link between authentic representation and advertising effectiveness. When people see themselves reflected on screen, it drives stronger emotional response and ultimately stronger business outcomes: a phenomenon we call the **Diversity Dividend**.

Across our dataset, ads featuring diverse representation performed slightly higher than the UK norm, which shows a positive impact of diversity in advertising. However, when you look at how it performed with diverse audiences, we saw an average uplift of **+0.6 Stars**, **+0.3 in emotional intensity**, and **+0.9 in Spike**. These results point to one clear conclusion: when people feel seen, they feel good – and they remember the brand that made them feel that way.

“This Girl Can” is a shining example. Its raw, joyful portrayal of real women breaking a sweat was authentic, unapologetic and relatable. It didn’t rely on aspiration or polish, but on energy, honesty and emotional truth. The result was a 4.6-Star ad that resonated not just with its core audience, but with the nation.

The campaign embodied several key principles from *Feeling Seen*: it made viewers feel recognised, united diverse audiences through shared emotion, and chose to celebrate lives and experiences rather than campaigning or lecturing. The success of “This Girl Can” shows that inclusive, emotionally rich advertising doesn’t just inspire change – it drives effectiveness too.



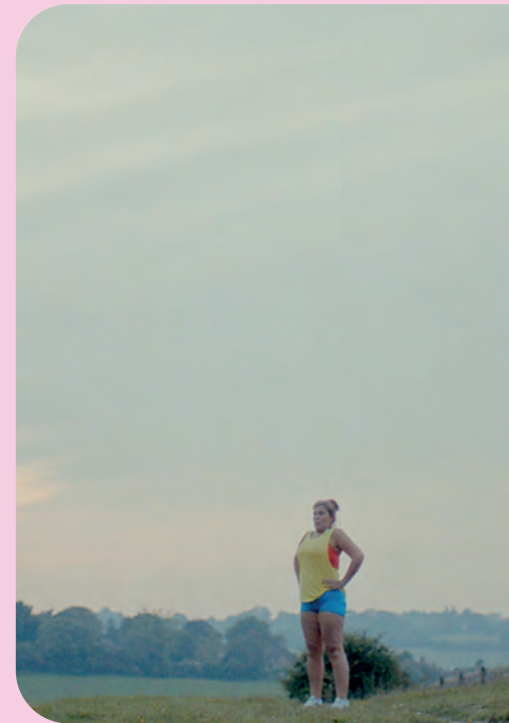
**THEME
CONNECTIONS:**
“THIS GIRL CAN”

DRAMATIC EMOTION: “This Girl Can” isn’t a fitness ad. It’s not telling a story of transformation, but of representation. That means no before and after tropes, just women moving their bodies with joy, effort and agency. The lack of a glib narrative allowed for a more complex emotional mix than most ads – empowerment, pride, amusement, relief and solidarity all playing a part. Sport England reflected real experience, and built a real emotional connection through it.

PLAYING WITH CONVENTIONS: Sport England knocked down one of the pillars of fitness and health ads – there’s no shame-based messaging here, just women taking ownership of their bodies and their activities. No slim, sculpted models. No perfection. No products. Just people.

EXTRAORDINARY CRAFT: “This Girl Can” is a collage of honest experiences, which meant the whole thing had to feel casual, direct and unpolished, while behind the scenes the team handled editing, music and pacing with immense care. They succeeded brilliantly, from the authentic casting to the powerfully precise tone and message. The result is work that resonated deeply and emotionally with ordinary women watching it.

CAPTURING CULTURE: “This Girl Can” led a cultural reset in how women were represented in advertising, with more authenticity and agency. A media sensation, it inspired spin-off campaigns globally. Kate Dale, who led the campaign at Sport England, credits broadcast and on-demand TV with amplifying its cultural impact. The aim, she explains, wasn’t just to speak to women individually but to surround them with the campaign – to put real, relatable women on the big screen “in a medium that didn’t always show them.” That visibility in shared spaces, she notes, helped drive the conversations and social shift the team had hoped for.



5 LESSONS FOR MODERN MARKETERS

BE HONEST:

Real stories, honestly told, build trust and long-term connection.

VISIBILITY DRIVES CHANGE:

Changing behaviour starts with being seen and understood, not from being asked to chase unrealistic perfection.

CRAFT WITH ATTITUDE:

Even with a strong insight and script, "This Girl Can" wouldn't have the impact it does without the craft of music, pace and tone. Use every opportunity to deliver attitude and impact.

BREAK BARRIERS:

Don't be afraid to challenge norms – especially if they exclude your audience.

BE YOUR AUDIENCE'S VOICE:

If you reflect real people's joys and struggles, they'll reflect love back to your brand.



Finishing School – Parker, 1975, Collett Dickenson Pearce

CREATIVE LESSONS FOR THE FUTURE

IN AN INDUSTRY OBSESSED WITH WHAT COMES NEXT, IT'S EASY TO FORGET WHAT ENDURES.

We've looked back across seven decades of iconic advertising. Work that moved markets, made memories, and earned its place in culture. The most enduring ads weren't always the flashiest, the funniest, or the most awarded. But they had a few things in common. They were crafted with care. They connected emotionally. And they stuck to ideas worth sticking with.

So what can today's marketers and creatives take away from the past 70 years? Here are the lessons that lasted and still matter now.

**MAKE PEOPLE
FEEL SOMETHING**

Emotion isn't a nice-to-have. It is the foundation of effectiveness.

The most successful ads in this report, from a moonwalking pony to a CPR demo set to disco, work because they move people. As Dan Wieden said, "Move me, dude."

**MAKE THEM LAUGH.
MAKE THEM CARE.
MAKE THEM FEEL SEEN.**

**THAT'S HOW
BRANDS GROW.**

Just Imagine, A Christmas Love Story – National Lottery, 2022, adam&eveDDB

2

CONSISTENCY IS
A CREATIVE
SUPERPOWER

The best ideas are rarely one-offs.

Fluent Devices, distinctive characters, repeatable taglines. When brands build memory with imagination, the results compound.

THE MEERKATS DIDN'T
JUST GET FAMOUS.
THEY STAYED FAMOUS.

THAT IS THE POWER
OF CONSISTENT
CREATIVITY.

Compare the Meerkat – Compare the Market, 2009, VCCP

3

ENTERTAINMENT
EARNS ITS PLACE

“THE MOST EFFECTIVE
ADS DON’T SHOUT”

**We interrupt people’s lives
with our work, so it has to
be worth their time.**

The most effective ads don’t shout.
They charm. They tell stories.
They entertain. Because when
people enjoy the work, they
are far more likely to engage
with the brand behind it.

The Pony – 3 Mobile, 2013, Wieden+Kennedy

4 CRAFT IS NEVER WASTED

In an age of automation and short-form churn, investing in creative craft is a competitive edge.

Whether it is stop-motion animation, hand-built sets, or a perfect piece of casting, the details matter.

DETAIL IS WHAT PEOPLE REMEMBER.

Viva La Vulva – Bodyform, 2018, AMV BBDO

5

USE THE MEDIUM PROPERLY



TV is a unique space.

It combines sight, sound, and storytelling to create emotional resonance at scale.

**THE BEST TV ADS
MAKE THE MOST
OF THAT CANVAS.
THEY KNOW THEY ARE
ON TELEVISION, AND
THEY PUT ON A SHOW.**

Adventure Awaits – Lurpak, 2015, Wieden+Kennedy

6

BREAK THE RULES WITH PURPOSE

Some of the greatest ads ever made succeeded by doing the opposite of what the category expected.

But breaking rules only works when the idea is strong, the craft is high, and the audience is taken seriously.

**SMASH THE
CONVENTIONS,
BUT DO IT FOR
A REASON.**

Viva La Vulva – Bodyform, 2018, AMV BBDO

7

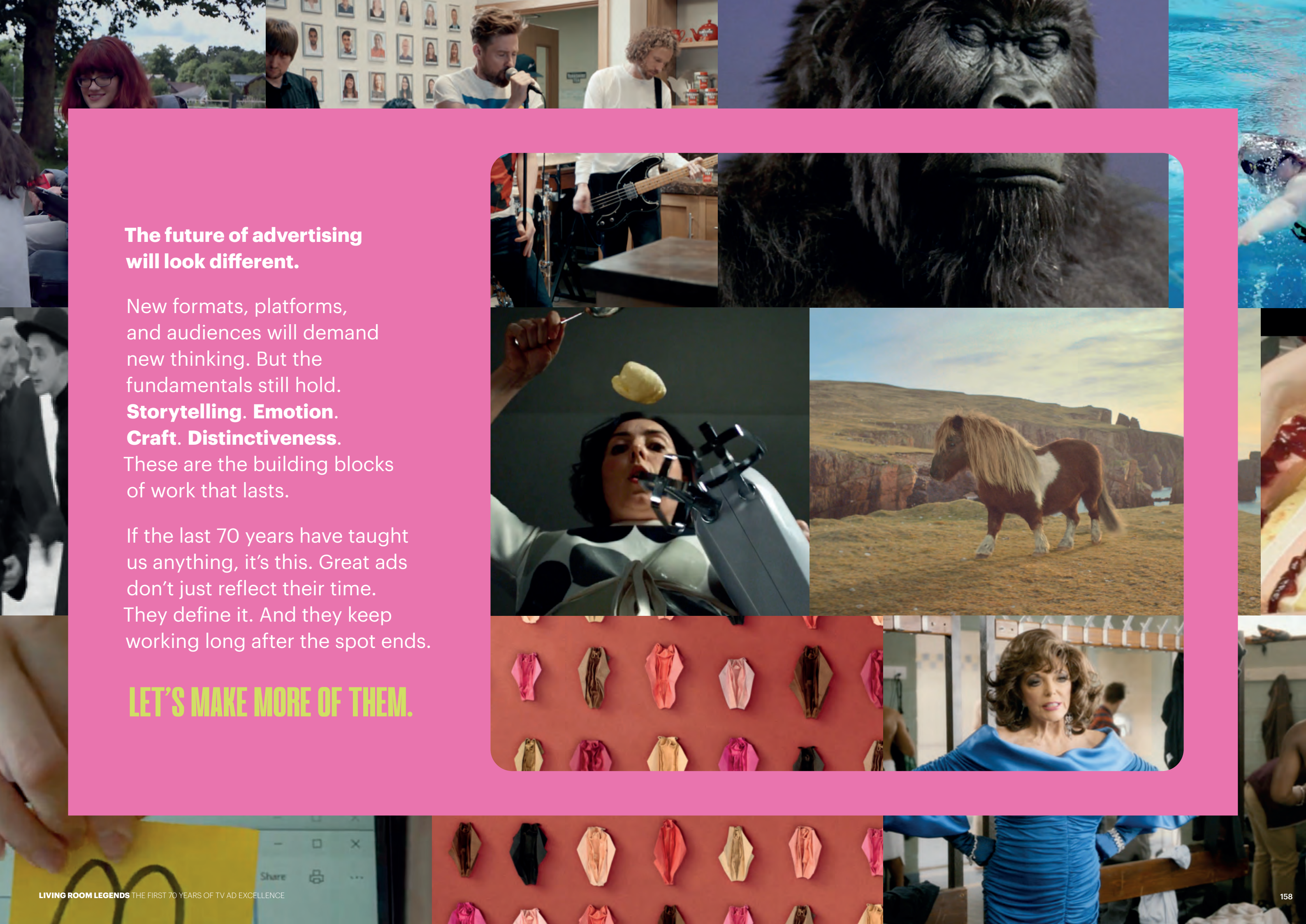
AIM FOR MEMORY, NOT JUST ATTENTION

Not every ad will go viral.

Not every message will land instantly. But the most powerful work lingers. It builds memory structures that grow over time.

**THAT IS THE REAL
GOAL. NOT THE
QUICK HIT, BUT THE
LASTING IMPACT**

Did Somebody Say (feat. Snoop Dogg) – Just Eat, 2021, McCann



The future of advertising will look different.

New formats, platforms,
and audiences will demand
new thinking. But the
fundamentals still hold.

**Storytelling. Emotion.
Craft. Distinctiveness.**

These are the building blocks
of work that lasts.

If the last 70 years have taught
us anything, it's this. Great ads
don't just reflect their time.
They define it. And they keep
working long after the spot ends.

LET'S MAKE MORE OF THEM.



Kaiser Chiefs – Yorkshire Tea, 2011, Lucky Generals

LIVING ROOM LEGENDS

HOW WE DID IT

Behind every ad in this report is a bigger story – of culture, craft, and commercial impact. This chapter explains how we made our selections, how we measured effectiveness, and how three distinct perspectives came together to uncover what makes great advertising last.



A COLLABORATIVE CURATION

Clowns – Audi, 2018, BBH

**THIS PROJECT WAS A JOINT EFFORT BETWEEN
ITV, D&AD, AND SYSTEM1 WITH EACH
PARTNER BRINGING A DISTINCT LENS:**



ITV as the broadcaster that aired these campaigns and understands their cultural reach.



D&AD, bringing rigorous creative standards and an understanding of what constitutes world-class craft



System1, offering evidence-based emotional measurement to understand why ads work and which ones work best

Together, we aimed to spotlight ads that achieved something rare: creative brilliance with proven effectiveness and cultural impact.

HOW WE CHOSE THE LIVING ROOM LEGENDS

WE KNEW FROM THE START THIS WOULD BE HARD.

Everyone in advertising can give you a list of classic ads, and every one of those lists would be different.

We had 70 years of famous campaigns and iconic moments to choose from, spread across countless categories and with wildly different business objectives. Like we said, hard. But also, fantastically enjoyable.

We kicked off with some ground rules. **One ad to represent each brand or campaign**, even when they produced several beloved executions. For long-running campaigns we chose the version with the biggest cultural impact or the most emotional resonance. For example, when you look at the Levi's 501 jeans campaign you'll find a plethora of brilliant, memorable

ads, but we knew the pick had to be "Launderette", the one that started it all.

The ultimate goal was a line-up of 70 ads that are diverse in style, era and category, but have one thing in common: **lasting impact**. To get there we used three main factors.

First is **cultural impact**. We wanted ads that became part of everyday life – unforgettable characters, slogans that entered the language, and messages that changed how we live. Even one of the oldest ads here – 1955's Mars commercial – has a tagline which endured for decades.

Of course it's easier to assess lasting impact for older ads, which is where our second factor – **creative excellence** – plays a vital role. We want ads that are recognised by peers and awards shows. That might be recognising pinnacles of craft like Guinness' "Surfer", or spotting the future classics that will be inspiring the industry for the next 70 years.

The final factor is the most important of all, because it's at the heart of what advertising is actually for: **Effectiveness**. Ads which are known to have driven results or changed behaviour were high priorities. That doesn't just cover brands – we've included life-saving public information campaigns like the British Heart Foundation's "Vinnie".

With these factors guiding us, we pulled together the list you're reading now. ITV and D&AD brought industry wisdom and creative expertise, while System1 helped validate performance potential. The **full list of tested ads** is included in the Appendix.

But let's be honest from the start. Not all your personal favourites have made it in. This list is not definitive or exhaustive – how could it be,

with such a brilliant legacy of advertising to pick from? We've consulted widely with some of the best brains in the industry, but of course there are gaps. If you love advertising, we hope this list will delight you and make you angry!

Finally, not all these ads could or should be made today. We picked ads which had extraordinary impact at the time they ran, and some of them are very much of that time. There are categories you can't legally advertise now, like tobacco, and others like food and drink which operate with more restrictions. And some of these ads conform to what are now clearly outdated social norms and stereotypes. Advertising reflects and contributes to the culture that makes it, and from baked beans to Bodyform, that culture is changing all the time.

CULTURAL IMPACT
CREATIVE EXCELLENCE
EFFECTIVENESS

System1

Create with Confidence

SYSTEM1'S TESTING METHODOLOGY



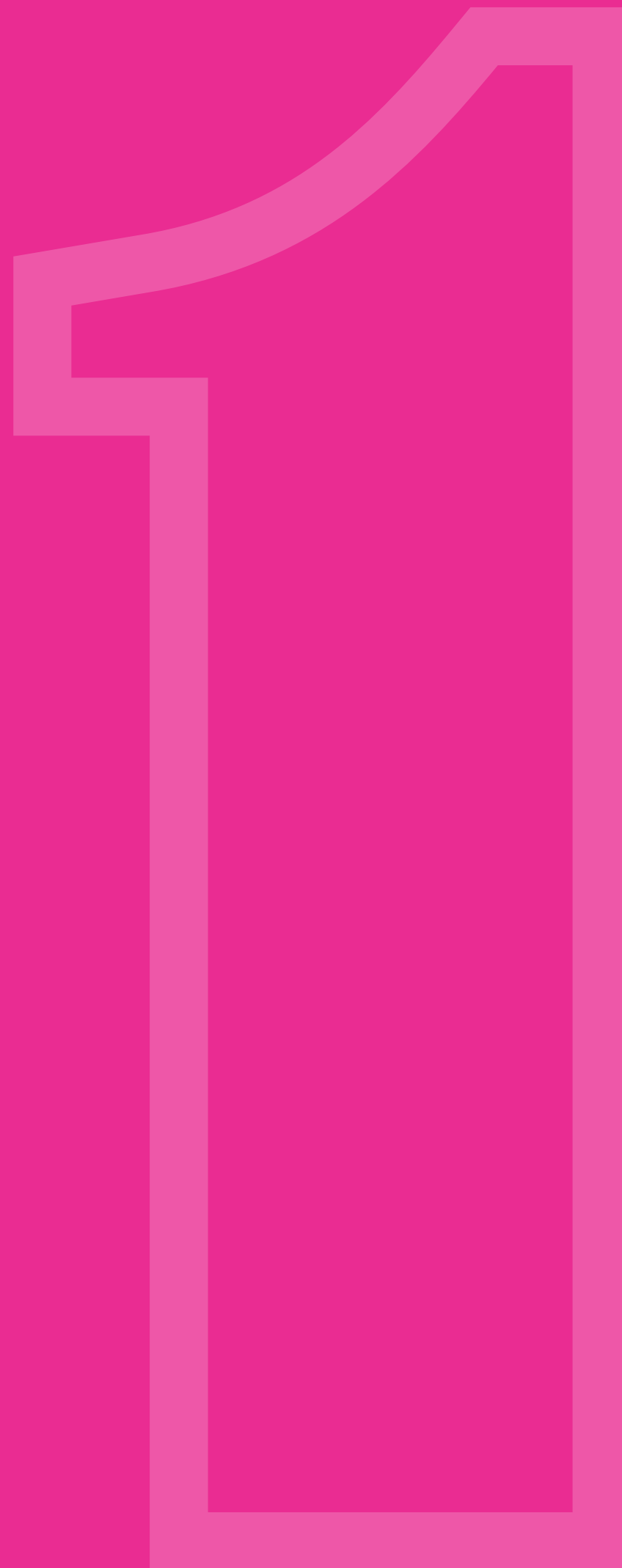
System1's methodology has been validated in experiments with The Institute of Practitioners in Advertising (IPA) and shown to predict long-term impact and market share change within categories.

The methodology is ground-breaking because of the leading role it gives to emotion. How people feel about an ad – happiness, anger, surprise, or a range of other emotions (including neutrality) – is an important factor when you are trying to measure the degree to which an ad makes consumers change their habits, behaviours, and perspectives in the long-term.

HEADLINE MEASURES

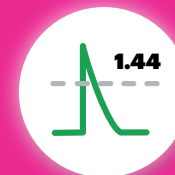
System1's quantitative model is the same we use for commercial ad effectiveness testing.

The aim is to measure emotional response to the ad, as our validated methodology proves that emotion leads to action. Taken together, these responses combine to give us three key measures of creative impact on commercial effectiveness.



STAR RATING

The Star Rating is based on how positively viewers respond to the ad. It predicts the potential of an ad to contribute to long-term business growth and long-term consumer behaviour; Star-Rating runs from 1.0 to 5.9 Stars. The higher the Star Rating, the more businesses should invest in and build campaigns around the ad. Around half the ads in System1's database score only 1 Star, and only around 1 in 100 gets the top 5-Star Rating.



SPIKE RATING

The Spike Rating predicts the potential for an ad to drive short-term sales. The Spike Rating is based on how intensely viewers respond to the ad and how quickly they accurately connect the ad to the brand.



FLUENCY RATING

Fluency is a measure of the proportion of respondents that correctly identified the brand by the end of the ad. Fluency is a warning light – if Fluency is low then the ad may be emotional but may risk losing out on the reward and impact it deserves. To stay top of mind, businesses need to make effective use of their brand assets and cues.



FAST FLUENCY

Like Brand Fluency, Fast Fluency is a measure of the proportion of respondents that correctly identified the brand the ad was for, but it also measures how quickly they did so. This is important as the sooner the audience knows who the ad is for, the stronger the potential short-term impact, as Fast Fluency is a key component of Spike.

D&AD'S AWARD SYSTEM & CREATIVE LENS

D&AD exists to stimulate, enable and award creative excellence in design and advertising.



The D&AD Awards are globally recognised as the ultimate creative accolade, honouring excellence in design, creativity, and advertising. Founded in 1962 by a group of designers, including David Bailey and Colin Forbes, the D&AD Awards have been the benchmark of creative achievement for over 60 years. What began with just 25 judges has evolved into an industry-run organisation with an elected Board of Trustees.

Their iconic Pencil Awards are among the most coveted in the industry – not just a mark of brilliance, but a benchmark for what great looks like.

In this report, D&AD helped shine a light on the ads that raised the creative bar. Many of the 70 featured here are Pencil winners – from Wood and Graphite to the iconic Yellow and the rare Black. These awards reflect the range and depth of craft that makes advertising truly great: from bold ideas and standout storytelling to the finest execution.



D&AD PENCILS

WOOD PENCIL

The best of the year in advertising, design, craft, culture and impact.

GRAPHITE PENCIL

For stand-out work that rises above the rest, worthy of consideration for a Yellow Pencil.

YELLOW PENCIL

The iconic D&AD Yellow Pencil, awarded only to outstanding work that achieves true creative excellence.

BLACK PENCIL

The ultimate creative accolade, reserved for ground-breaking work. Only a handful of these are awarded each year, if any.



LISTENING TO THE INDUSTRY

To make this report as useful as it is celebratory, we didn't just rely on data or awards. We opened the floor to the people who live and breathe this world: creatives, strategists, marketers and researchers.

In a dedicated industry workshop, we gathered a roomful of perspectives to ask:

WHAT MAKES AN AD GREAT?

WHICH ONES REALLY STAY WITH US?

**AND WHAT ARE THE CREATIVE PRINCIPLES
WE WANT TO CARRY FORWARD?**

It was part celebration, part interrogation. The session helped us refine the list of iconic ads, spark healthy debate, and uncover the deeper truths behind lasting creative impact.

The outcome? Rich insight. Lively conversation. And a clearer understanding of what brilliant advertising looks like: then, now and next.

10,000
REAL PEOPLE
35,000
UK TV ADS

WHAT DOES THE DATA SAY?

The workshop gave us rich, human insight into what makes an ad stick. But we also wanted to understand how these ads perform with the wider public today.

So we turned to System1's *Test Your Ad* platform, which measures emotional response and predicts long-term brand impact. All 70 Living Room Legends were tested with 10,000 real people and compared against a database of over 35,000 UK TV ads.

The results don't tell the whole story. But they do offer something valuable – a second lens on why these ads endure. Because while creative brilliance is often subjective, emotional impact isn't. And across every key measure, the Living Room Legends not only hold up. They lead the way.



New Boyfriend – Malteasers, 2016, BBDO

A HIGHER STANDARD OF EFFECTIVENESS

Across the 70 ads we tested, the average Star Rating was 4.1. That puts them well above the UK TV average of 2.7, and into the territory where long-term brand growth becomes more likely.

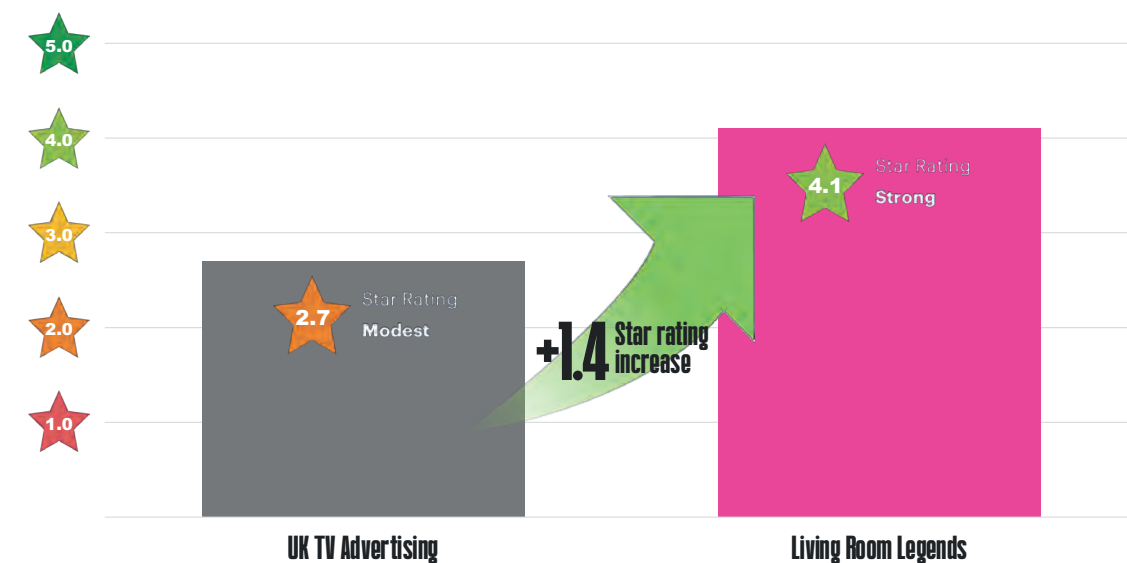


System1's Star Rating is based on emotional response and calibrated against real-world outcomes. Ads that score 1 Star are unlikely to drive any growth. Ads that reach 4 or 5 Stars are the ones that stick in memory, build positive associations and support pricing power over time.

These results show that the Living Room Legends are more than just fondly remembered. They continue to connect and they do so in ways that predict real business impact.

LIVING ROOM LEGENDS LEAVE THE AVERAGE BEHIND

System1's Average Star Rating – Living Room Legends vs UK TV Average.



Citation: 70 Living Room Legends campaigns tested with 10,500 Nationally Representative respondents using System1's Test Your Ad platform. All UK TV advertising, 35,668 UK ads tested with 5mil respondents.

A STRONGER EMOTIONAL RESPONSE

If emotion is the engine of effective advertising, the Living Room Legends have plenty of fuel.

The Living Room Legends succeed in the most important emotional test of all: they make people feel good.

Across all 70 ads, **45%** of viewers reported feeling **happiness**: a full 12 points above the UK TV average of 33%. That matters. According to the affect heuristic, when people feel good, they judge more favourably. A happy viewer is more likely to remember the brand, trust it, and act on it.

This uplift in happiness isn't a coincidence. These ads use story, character, charm and music to create moments of joy that stick. They don't just entertain, they leave people feeling better than they found them. And in advertising, that's a powerful advantage.

MORE FEELING, LESS FLATNESS: HOW LEGENDS SPARK EMOTION

Compared to the UK average, Living Room Legends evoke more Happiness and Surprise, and far less Neutrality, creating the kind of emotional journey that builds stronger brands.



Citation: 70 Living Room Legends campaigns tested with 10,500 Nationally Representative respondents using System1's Test Your Ad platform. All UK TV advertising, 35,668 UK ads tested with 5mil respondents.

System1
Create with Confidence

ACROSS ALL 70 ADS,
45% OF VIEWERS
REPORTED
FEELING
HAPPINESS

THE COST OF DULL

Neutrality is the silent failure of modern advertising. It doesn't spark outrage or provoke debate. It simply passes by unnoticed.

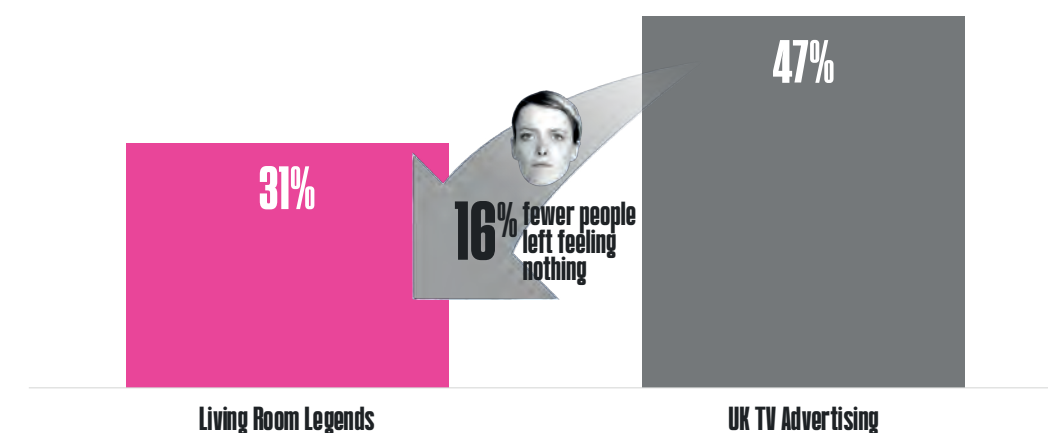
System1's global testing shows that **Neutrality is the most common emotional response to advertising**. Almost half of UK TV ads evoke no strong emotion at all. That absence of feeling has consequences. When people feel nothing, they do nothing. They don't remember the brand, talk about the ad, or take action.

This trend toward emotional flatness has a cost. According to *The Extraordinary Cost of Dull*, a joint study by Peter Field, Adam Morgan and Jon Evans, brands that produce forgettable, fact-heavy, emotionally neutral work pay for it – literally. Brands that fail to engage emotionally pay more to achieve the same results. On average, a dull campaign requires **£10 million more** in media spend just to compete with ads that spark feeling.

The Living Room Legends avoid this penalty. Just **31%** of responses to these ads were neutral, far lower than the UK average of 47%. That's not just a creative win. It's a commercial one. These ads don't just avoid being dull, they avoid wasting millions.

LESS NEUTRALITY, MORE IMPACT: HOW LEGENDS AVOID THE COST OF DULL

% Neutrality Felt – Living Room Legends vs UK TV Average



Citation: 70 Living Room Legends campaigns tested with 10,500 Nationally Representative respondents using System1's Test Your Ad platform. All UK TV advertising, 35,668 UK ads tested with 5mil respondents.

System1
Create with Confidence

“THEY DON'T JUST AVOID BEING DULL, THEY AVOID WASTING MILLIONS”

MORE HITS, FEWER MISSES

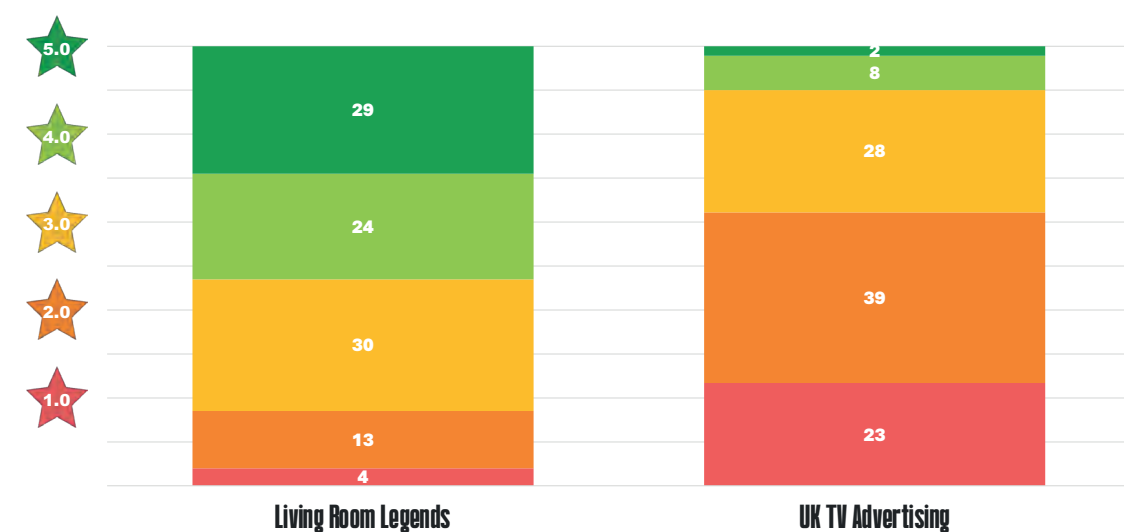
Star Ratings help translate emotional response into commercial outcomes. They give us a way to compare the predicted long-term impact of different ads – from low (1 Star) to very high (5 Stars). And here, the difference between the Living Room Legends and the UK average is stark.

Nearly two-thirds of the Legends (63%) scored 4 or 5 Stars, the levels associated with strong brand-building effects. That's more than four times the UK average, where just 15% of ads reach those heights. At the other end of the scale, only 2% of Living Room Legends fell into 1-Star territory, compared to **29%** of UK ads overall.

This tells us something important. These aren't just a few lucky hits among a sea of mediocrity. The Living Room Legends consistently deliver high emotional performance and with it, higher potential for long-term brand growth.

MORE STARS, FEWER MISSES: HOW LEGENDS RISE ABOVE THE NORM

Living Room Legends are over three times more likely to score 4 or 5 Stars – the levels linked to long-term brand growth – and far less likely to fall flat.



Citation: 70 Living Room Legends campaigns tested with 10,500 Nationally Representative respondents using System1's Test Your Ad platform. All UK TV advertising, 35,668 UK ads tested with 5mil respondents.

System1
Create with Confidence

BUILT TO ENTERTAIN

What makes an ad enjoyable to watch and easy to remember? Orlando Wood’s research, in partnership with the IPA, has shown that the most effective advertising often shares a common set of creative traits, what he calls **showmanship features**.

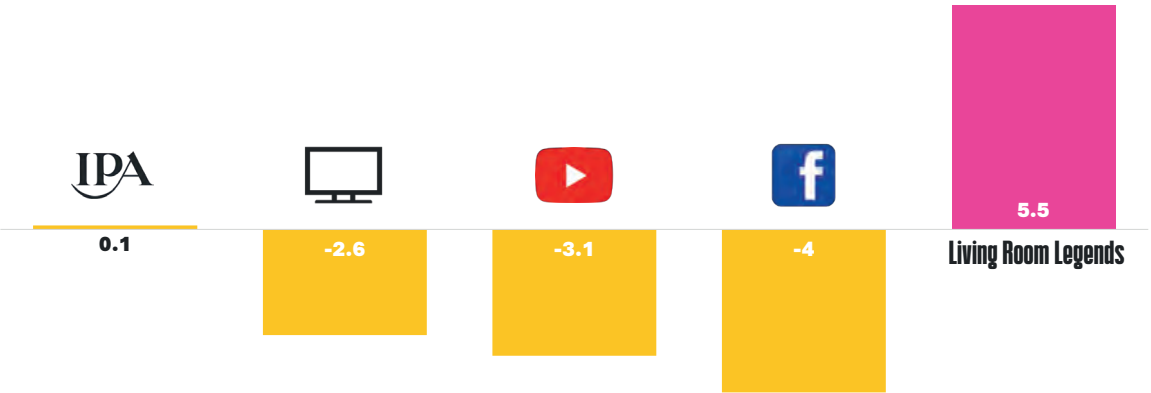
These are right-brain elements that attract broad-beam attention. Things like **characters, storytelling, humour, music, a sense of place, and dramatic unfolding**. They help an ad feel human, engaging, and worth watching, not just once, but over time. And they’re strongly linked to long-term effectiveness.

But across the industry, these features are in decline. In their place, many ads lean into narrow-beam techniques – dense messaging, product demos, rhythmic edits – which might deliver clarity, but often at the expense of emotional connection.

The data shows that the Living Room Legends have a far stronger skew toward broad-beam, showmanship features than typical ads across TV, YouTube and Facebook. These ads include **more storytelling, more characters, more depth and more music**, the ingredients that make advertising genuinely entertaining.

LIVING ROOM LEGENDS: RICH IN ENTERTAINING BROAD-BEAM FEATURES

With the strongest Broad-Beam Skew in the Entertainment Index, these ads are packed with the storytelling, character, and charm that Orlando Wood links to long-term brand building.



Citation: 70 Living Room Legends campaigns tested with 10,500 Nationally Representative respondents using System1’s Test Your Ad platform. Audit of 43 IPA campaigns (137 ads) 2016–2020 (left); 195 US TV ads monitored/tested by TVision and System1 airing Spring/Summer 2020; 100 ads appearing on YouTube in 2020 provided by Nielsen and selected at random; 102 ads from corporate campaigns running on Facebook and selected by Facebook. All counts refer to the number of features appearing in the ads at all.

CATEGORY-LEADING CREATIVITY

Many of the Living Room Legends didn't just perform well, they stood out where it matters most: in their own categories. On average, these ads delivered a 1.2-Star uplift compared to the norm for their category, with some overperforming by more than 3 Stars. That kind of standout is rare, and valuable. In categories where much of the advertising blends into the background, these ads broke through. They challenged convention, captured attention, and carved out distinctiveness. Category standout isn't just a creative win, it's a strategic advantage.

CREATIVELY CELEBRATED, COMMERCIALY PROVEN

The Living Room Legends don't just perform in testing, they've also been recognised at the highest level of creative excellence. Between them, these ads have been awarded more than 35 D&AD accolades, including 6 Black Pencils, 9 Yellow, and a mix of Graphite, Wood, and In-Book honours. That matters. Because D&AD doesn't just reward popularity, it recognises originality, craft, and enduring creative impact.

The fact that so many of these ads are both creatively awarded and emotionally effective shows that great work doesn't have to choose between fame and feeling. These ads prove you can have both – and when you do, you make advertising history.

FROM PERFORMANCE TO PRINCIPLES

The data gives us a clear picture of what makes these ads effective today: emotionally engaging, commercially strong, and built to entertain. But behind that performance lies something deeper: a shared creative DNA. When we looked more closely at the Living Room Legends, we found recurring themes and patterns in how they were made. Distinctive ideas, emotional storytelling, crafted execution – the building blocks of advertising that endures. In the next section, we explore those creative principles. The timeless themes that make great ads stick.

SPECIAL THANKS

This has been a labour of love for many of us, which would not have been possible without the generosity of some of the biggest brains in the industry. Huge thanks to all our contributors for their insight, passion and – of course – for the ‘work’.

Dara Lynch, CEO, D&AD

Sammi Vaughan, Director,
Partnerships, D&AD

Jon Evans, Chief Customer Officer,
System1/ Uncensored CMO

Andrew Tindall, SVP, Global
Partnerships, System1

Ana Balarin, CCO,
Wieden+Kennedy, London

Lücy AA, Senior Creative,
Highsnobiety+

Jo Arden, CSO, AMV BBDO

Stephen Woodford, CEO,
Advertising Association

Matt Bourn, Director of
Communications, Advertising Association

Kate Dale, Director of
Marketing, Sport England

Mark Vile, Chief Marketing
Officer, Compare the Market

Darren Bailes, Global CCO, VCCP

Vicky Maguire, CCO, Havas London

Laurence Green, Director
of Effectiveness, IPA

Damion Mower, Director of Brand,
Acquisition and Retail Marketing, BHF

Kev Chesters, Strategic Consultant/Author

Paul Feldwick, Author of *Why Does the
Pedlar Sing?* and *The Anatomy of Humbug*

Tom Houser, Creative Director, ITV

Tatiana Jezierski,
Head of Creative Strategy, ITV

The IPA (The Institute of Practitioners in Advertising) whose Effectiveness Databank underpins *Compound Creativity* and *The Extraordinary Cost of Dull*.

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70 YEARS, 70 ADS: THE DEFINITIVE LIST

ADVERT	BRAND	YEAR	AGENCY	WHY WAS IT CHOSEN?*
Toothpaste	Gibbs SR	1955	Lintas	UK Advertising Genesis. This was the first TV ad shown in the UK, and serves as a foundation for all that followed.
Work, Rest & Play	Mars	1959	Mather & Crowther	The start of an enduring slogan for Mars, and indicative of the start of showing how brands can support a lifestyle.
The Milkybar Kid	Milkybar	1961	McCann Erickson	Terry Brooks was paid £10 to become the Milkybar Kid, who became a staple of TV for decades following. One of the earliest, and most enduring, examples of a brand character.
Schhh... You-Know-Who	Schweppes	1963	Ogilvy & Mather	With suave restraint and sonic branding ahead of its time, this ad bottled sophistication and helped establish Schwepperverscence as a cultural shorthand for class and wit.  D&AD Wood Pencil
Beanz Meanz Heinz	Heinz	1967	Jones Knowles Ritchie	The combination of a family kitchen scene plus iconic jingle makes this ad special on two counts.  D&AD Wood Pencil

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Martians	Smash	1973	Boase Massimi Pollitt	A superb example of a campaign that broke advertising conventions through clever and surprising positioning of the brand.  D&AD Wood Pencil
Secret Lemonade Drinker	R. White's	1973	Allen, Brady and Marsh	The second most dynamic ad we tested – this spot's emotional shifts, quirky storyline, and iconic soundtrack made it a fizzy, unforgettable classic.
Boy on the Bike	Hovis	1974	Collett Dickenson Pearce	Enduring emotive storytelling, drawing heavily on nostalgia / provenance and directed by the legendary Ridley Scott.  In-book
Finishing School	Parker	1975	Collett Dickenson Pearce	As Kate Fox points out in 'Watching the English', 'class' pervades every aspect of life in the UK. Here, this most British of cultural characteristics, is front and centre, creating comedy and aspiration in equal measure.
Honey Monster	Sugar Puffs	1976	Boase Massimi Pollitt	Originally intended to be an impish character, BMP went the other way after realising how loveable the character could be. So powerful was the Honey Monster's charm that the brand renamed itself 'Honey Monster Wheat Puffs' in light of changing attitudes to sugar.
Collins & Rossiter	Cinzano	1978	Collett Dickenson Pearce	A masterclass in comic timing and character chemistry, this ad series turned slapstick into sales and made Leonard Rossiter and Joan Collins a beloved double act of British advertising.

ADVERT	BRAND	YEAR	AGENCY	WHY WAS IT CHOSEN?*
Put the Freshness Back	Shake n' Vac	1979	Benton & Bowles	Culturally iconic, if not creatively awarded, this one gets in on the memorability of the jingle which is still seared into the brain, nearly 50 years on.
Just One Cornetto	Cornetto	1980	Still Price Lintas	While many of the public would recognise the tune of <i>O Sole Mio</i>, the chances are these are the lyrics they'll put to it, so iconic was this comedic iteration.
Kipper	LEGO	1981	TBWA	A brilliant, funny, 'product demo' that created 'brickfilm' and appeals to the child in all of us.  D&AD Black Pencil
J. R. Hartley	Yellow Pages	1983	Abbott Mead Vickers	Beautiful storytelling, taking us on an emotional journey that in many ways is the precursor to the John Lewis school of advertising.
Remember Preston	OXO	1983	JWT	The gently charming series that brilliantly captured the dynamics of family life and how they played out around 1980s dinner tables. IPA Silver (1992) – Long-term Advertising Effects
Water in Majorca	Heineken	1984	Lowe	A masterclass in character, dialogue and payoff, this ad lands its laugh – and its brand – with precision timing and unforgettable charm.

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Laundrette	Levi's	1985	BBH	The original Levi's ad from one of the most famous campaigns of all (which also did wonders for boxer shorts). IPA Commendation (1988) IPA Best International (1992)
Casino	Volkswagen	1985	Boase Massimi Pollitt	Another brand where we were spoiled for choice. But Casino earned its spot by being the ad that best reflects the cultural zeitgeist of the decade in which it was made. IPA Best Dedication to Effectiveness Award (2006)
Points of View	The Guardian	1986	Boase Massimi Pollitt	Without Points of View, there would be no Three Little Pigs. The stripped back storytelling of this spot is what earned its spot.
Gold Blend Couple	Nescafé	1987	McCann Erickson	In the advertising as soap opera category, no brand did it better. IPA Silver (1996)
Photo Booth	Hamlet	1987	Collett Dickenson Pearce	Comedy gold and the clear favourite in a long line of brilliant executions in this campaign.
AIDS Tombstone	UK Govt	1987	TBWA	An ad that changed the sexual habits of a generation, representing the power of public service advertising to drive mass social change. IPA Winner (1988)
Ology	BT	1988	J Walter Thompson	Before the 'It's good to talk' endline came into being, but with the same insight behind it. Brought to life with the wit and charm of Maureen Lipman's Beattie. 'Ology' entered the national lexicon. IPA Grand Prix (1996)

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Accrington Stanley	Milk Marketing Board	1989	Boase Massimi Pollitt	'Who are they? Exactly'. Poor Accrington Stanley, but they forgave him and embraced their new-found notoriety when the ad catapulted the second division club into the national consciousness. IPA Grand Prix (1992) IPA Gold (1992)
Global Face	British Airways	1989	Saatchi & Saatchi	The ad that relaunched BA and gave the much maligned national airline a new found sense of pride, lifting staff morale as well as changing perceptions. IPA Gold (1994) IPA Best New Learning (1994)
Dambusters	Carling	1989	WCRS	There are so many layers of cultural nuance woven into this ad. A masterpiece, representing another brilliant series of ads from a rich time for beer advertising.
Creature Comforts	Heat Electric	1991	GGK	 D&AD Black Pencil The campaign that brought fame to Aardman Animation, paving the way for their subsequent film/ Hollywood success.
Rug	Barclaycard	1991	BMP	A rare dose of humour in financial services advertising and a character that was the inspiration for Rowan Atkinson's Jonny English. IPA Gold (1996) Charles Channon Award for New Learning (1996)

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Orange Man	Tango	1991	Howell Henry Chaldecott Lury	Inspiring a playground craze and the precursor to the equally brilliant St George, no ad better represents the iconoclastic brilliance of HHCL. Oh, and Tango sales rose by a third.  D&AD Yellow Pencil
Quick Drying Woodstain	Ronseal	1994	HHCL	‘Does Exactly What it Says on the Tin’ is a phrase that became part of culture and is still widely used, 30 years on.
Diet Coke Break	Coca-Cola	1996	Lowe & Partners	The iconic spot that earned its fame – or infamy – by turning the female gaze on a chiseled construction worker. A happy by-product being Etta James having her first chart hit in decades.
Dream Date	Lynx	1997	BBH	Shot when Jennifer Aniston’s <i>Friends</i> -driven fame was at its peak, this was the second in the series of Lynx ads that made deodorant advertising cool and turned Lynx into a mega brand. IPA Bronze (2002)
Parklife	Nike	1997	TBWA Simons Palmer	With an iconic soundtrack from Blur that captured the Cool Britannia vibe of the 90s and an extraordinary cast of Nike talent, this perfectly captured the passion and joy of the game, ‘whatever league you’re in’.  D&AD Yellow Pencil

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Surfer	Guinness	1999	AMV BBDO	Guinness has had many purple patches in its rich advertising history, but this remains the highest of watermarks, and ground-breaking in its use of post-production techniques.  D&AD Black Pencil
Double Life	PlayStation	1999	TBWA London	Who can forget the kid with the amazing eyes who ‘conquered worlds’? This beautifully crafted ode to gaming, captured the essence of the gamer experience, and shone a light on a subculture helping to power it into the mainstream.
Bear	John West	2000	Leo Burnett	An ad so hilarious, that when video sharing websites became popular later in the decade, this was an early viral hit.  D&AD Yellow Pencil
Ball Skills	John Smiths	2002	TBWA London	Aired during the 2002 World Cup, ‘ave it’ – the two word punchline perfectly delivered by Peter Kay – was adopted by the nation. Allegedly the ad generated over £1m of PR value.  D&AD Yellow Pencil
The Slag of All Snacks	Pot Noodle	2002	HHCL	It is a brave client that adopts a brand positioning that frames the product as ‘filthy’. The ad was banned, but the positioning and the ads it inspired kept us reaching for the noodles that felt so wrong and yet felt so right.

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Cog	Honda	2003	Wieden +Kennedy	If you saw the ad when it first aired, taking the entire centre break of the Brazilian Grand Prix, it was a genuinely jaw-dropping moment. A perfect marriage of incredible creativity and contextual relevance. D&AD Yellow Pencil IPA Gold (2004)
Silhouette	Apple	2003	TBWA/ Chiat/Day	A vibrant, minimalist celebration of music and motion, this campaign distilled brand, product and emotion into a single visual, defining the iPod era and influencing design-led advertising for years.
Balls	Sony	2005	Fallon	A visual feast that launched Sony’s “Colour Like No Other” campaign with cinematic flair – hundreds of bouncing balls bringing joy, wonder and product truth to the streets of San Francisco. D&AD Yellow Pencil IPA Entrant (2006)
Skating Priests	Stella Artois	2005	DLKW Lowe	A beautifully crafted spot that elevated beer advertising through cinematic storytelling and the brand’s signature tone of refined, irreverent wit. D&AD Graphite Pencil

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Old Lions	Carlsberg	2006	Saatchi & Saatchi	A nostalgic celebration of sporting spirit that struck the perfect balance between humour, heart and heroics, proving Carlsberg’s ads really could be “probably the best”. D&AD Graphite Pencil
Evolution (Real Beauty)	Dove	2006	Ogilvy	This viral phenomenon reframed beauty standards, using clever visual storytelling to spark global conversation and redefine how brands could drive social change. D&AD Yellow Pencil IPA Silver (2008)
Gorilla	Cadbury	2007	Fallon	Routinely topping the charts for the nation’s favourite ad (and System1’s emotional engagement scale) “Gorilla” combined joyful surprise, iconic music and pure showmanship to deliver one of the most emotionally powerful ads System1 has ever tested. D&AD Black Pencil IPA Silver (2008) IPA Best Dedication to Effectiveness (2010)

ADVERT	BRAND	YEAR	AGENCY	WHY WAS IT CHOSEN?*
Cake	Škoda	2007	Fallon	The ad that reimagined car advertising through charm and craft and all without showing the actual car. Even Autocar – favoured publication of petrolheads everywhere – voted it their car ad of the year!  D&AD Yellow Pencil

Dance	T-Mobile	2007	Saatchi & Saatchi	A flashmob with heart, “Dance” turned Liverpool Street Station into a stage – surprising, delighting and uniting viewers in pure spontaneous joy. One of the first ads ‘designed’ for virality.  D&AD Yellow Pencil IPA Silver (2010)
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Collywobble	Specsavers	2008	In-house	The start of the long-running “Should’ve gone to Specsavers” platform, this spot kicked off one of the UK’s most recognisable brand slogans, now firmly embedded in the cultural lexicon.  D&AD Wood Pencil IPA Gold (2014)
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Compare the Meerkat	Compare the Market	2009	VCCP	With near-perfect Fluency (99) and 15 years of consistent storytelling, this campaign turned a confusing brand name into a cultural phenomenon – proving the long-term power of Fluent Devices and compound creativity.  D&AD Wood Pencil
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ADVERT	BRAND	YEAR	AGENCY	WHY WAS IT CHOSEN?*
Ahhh	PG Tips	2011	Mother	Al & Monkey had a curious life, first as ITV Digital ambassadors, and then as PG Tips icons. Laden with cultural references and spin offs, this ad stands out for its lack of dialogue, its pacing, and excellent attention to detail.  D&AD Yellow Pencil

Tea	Aldi	2011	McCann	We like Kevin the Carrot at Christmas. We also like Aldi’s “like brands” campaign. This is the most iconic of a rich series that firmly established Aldi in UK culture, as a grocery force to be reckoned with, and laid the ground work for Kevin. IPA Gold (2012)
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Kaiser Chiefs	Yorkshire Tea	2011	Lucky Generals	The moment Yorkshire Tea found its tone – bold, musical and proudly parochial – this ad kicked off a now-iconic campaign by mixing rock-star energy with regional pride and humour. IPA Gold (2024) IPA Silver (2018)
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ADVERT	BRAND	YEAR	AGENCY	WHY WAS IT CHOSEN?*
The Long Wait	John Lewis	2011	adam & eveDDB	Such was adam&eve & John Lewis' hot streak that picking one was a challenge – or was it? Nothing summed up the wonder of gifting presents to others than through the eyes of this boy, set to a serene musical cover, a style oft-copied throughout the industry since.  D&AD Graphite Pencil• IPA Grand Prix (2012) IPA Gold (2012)

Meet the Superhumans	Channel 4	2012	4Creative	An ad that perfectly summed up the dynamic & thrilling cultural phenomenon that was the British Summer of 2012 and is a brilliant example of how advertising can challenge stereotypes and shape identities.  D&AD Black Pencil
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Vinnie	British Heart Foundation	2012	Grey	“Vinnie” proved that a serious message delivered with humour, music and a gangster’s charm could educate a nation and save lives. So powerful, the ad that’s now taught in schools and first aid courses.  D&AD Wood Pencil IPA Gold (2014)
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ADVERT	BRAND	YEAR	AGENCY	WHY WAS IT CHOSEN?*
You're Not You When You're Hungry	Snickers	2012	BBDO	A global platform born from one brilliantly simple insight – this ad revived the brand, created a Fluent Device, and became one of the most durable campaign ideas of the century.  D&AD Yellow Pencil• IPA Gold (2012)

Mutation	NHS (Smokefree)	2013	Dare/Now	Grimly unforgettable, this body-horror-style ad visualised the hidden effects of smoking, following in the footsteps of ‘Fatty Cigarette’ in a way that shocked the nation and left a lasting public health impact. IPA Gold (2004)
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The Pony	3 Mobile	2013	Wieden +Kennedy	The brief for this was ‘do’ the internet, don’t just talk about it. One of the “least dull” ads tested, this moonwalking Shetland proved that joy, music and silliness are a serious strategy. With a brave media strategy that spent most of the annual budget in the first 2 weeks, it turned the pony into a worldwide internet star.  D&AD Graphite Pencil•
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ADVERT	BRAND	YEAR	AGENCY	WHY WAS IT CHOSEN?*
Marmite Neglect	Marmite	2013	adam & eveDDB	A charity appeal with a difference. While over a thousand people let Ofcom know they hated it, millions loved it and saw their jar of Marmite in a new light.
1914 (Xmas Ad)	Sainsburys	2014	AMV BBDO	A bold retelling of the Christmas truce, this cinematic epic balanced emotion, history and brand with care – reminding the nation of the power of shared humanity.  D&AD Graphite Pencil IPA Silver (2016)
This Girl Can	Sport England	2015	FCB Inferno	The campaign that inspired 3m women to restart exercise or take up a new sport. The visuals were punchy (and swimmy and runny), the copy was defiant and excellent. The benchmark for exercise-engagement campaigns since.  D&AD Graphite Pencil IPA Silver (2018)
Adventure Awaits	Lurpak	2015	Wieden +Kennedy	Lurpak turned everyday cooking into a high-stakes adventure, elevating butter with extraordinary craft and a rallying cry for food lovers everywhere.  D&AD Graphite Pencil

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Cancer is Happening RIGHT NOW	CRUK	2015	Anomaly	This stark, urgent campaign ditched metaphor and abstraction to confront viewers with the immediacy of cancer – emotionally charged, present-tense and impossible to ignore.  D&AD Graphite Pencil
New Boyfriend	Maltesers	2016	BBDO	A quietly revolutionary ad that used humour and honesty to centre disability without tokenism – helping Maltesers open a fresh chapter in inclusive storytelling.  D&AD Graphite Pencil IPA entrant (2020)
Clowns	Audi	2018	BBH	The climax of a streak of excellent Audi ads throughout the 2010s, this beautifully demonstrated the car’s technology when faced with other, less predictable, drivers.  D&AD Graphite Pencil IPA Grand Prix (2018) IPA Gold (2018)
Viva La Vulva	Bodyform	2018	AMV BBDO	A joyous, taboo-busting celebration of femininity, this ad redefined category norms with bold visuals, brilliant music, and unapologetic authenticity.  D&AD Black Pencil IPA Entrant (2020)

ADVERT	BRAND	YEAR	AGENCY	WHY WAS IT CHOSEN?*
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Did Somebody Say (feat. Snoop Dogg)	Just Eat	2021	McCann	The ad that propelled an already-successful jingle into a cultural powerhouse. In-book
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Just Imagine, A Christmas Love Story	National Lottery	2022	adam & eveDDB	A modern Christmas classic, this emotionally rich story paired festive romance with a hopeful brand message – earning one of the highest Star Ratings ever recorded for a seasonal ad (note too, the inclusion of another ‘iconic’ TV advertiser in Crazy Frog)
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D&AD Wood Pencil

Raise Your Arches	McDonald’s	2023	Leo Burnett	A masterclass in non-verbal branding, rooted in insight about the role of the brand, this ad turned a single, subtle gesture into a fluent, joyful invitation – proving you don’t need to show the product to sell the feeling.
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D&AD Wood Pencil

IPA Silver (2024)

*** We’ve included D&AD and IPA Effectiveness awards where relevant to recognise creativity and commercial impact.** The IPA Effectiveness Awards began in 1980, so earlier ads couldn’t be entered. And while many standout campaigns are listed as winners, others are not, often because brands choose not to enter, preferring to keep commercial results confidential. That doesn’t mean they weren’t successful; it simply means their success wasn’t submitted for judging.



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