



CROSSING THE CHASM

How true creativity enables great leaps
in effectiveness

A White Paper by EACA / Effie Awards Europe
in partnership with The Effectiveness Partnership



About



EACA

The European Association of Communications Agencies (EACA) represents more than 2,500 communications agencies and agency associations from nearly 30 European countries that directly employ more than 120,000 people. EACA members include advertising, media, digital, branding, and PR agencies. EACA promotes honest, effective advertising, high professional standards and awareness of the contribution of advertising in a free market economy and encourages close co-operation between agencies, advertisers and media in European advertising bodies. EACA works closely with EU institutions to ensure freedom to advertise responsibly and creatively.



The Effie Awards Europe

Introduced in 1996, the Effie Awards Europe were the first pan-European marketing communications awards to be judged on the basis of effectiveness. Effie leads, inspires and champions the practice and practitioners of marketing effectiveness through education, awards, ever-evolving initiatives and first-class insights into marketing strategies that produce results. Effie recognises the most effective brands, marketers and agencies in Europe and is considered as global symbol of achievement, while serving as a resource to steer the future of marketing success. EFFIE® and EFFIE EUROPE® are registered trademarks of Effie Worldwide, Inc. and are under license to EACA.



The Effectiveness Partnership

The Effectiveness Partnership (TEP) is a transformation agency designed to help brands and agencies embed a culture of effectiveness. Founded in 2008 TEP has been making clients more successful through designing effective strategies, mentoring more effective ways of working, and overseeing executions fuelled by insightful evaluation. Bridging the gap between creative and logic TEP's consultants offer a wealth of experience across change management, organisational structure, brand strategy, advertising, content marketing, storytelling, performance coaching through to econometrics, analytics and insight.

About the author



Gurdeep Puri

Co-founder

The Effectiveness Partnership

Gurdeep Puri co-founded The Effectiveness Partnership in 2008 to help brands and agencies transform the value of their marketing. Since then Gurdeep, along with an experienced collective of TEP strategists, have consulted with brand teams and agency networks globally, upskilling and embedding new organisational structures, as well as overseeing award-winning effectiveness papers.

In 2020 and 2021, The Effectiveness Partnership collaborated with EACA to produce the EACA Effectiveness Knowledge Centre and produce two whitepapers, *The Worst of Times*, *The Best of Times* and *The Road to Recovery* for the industry. In 2022, Gurdeep co-authored a whitepaper on the *State of Creative Effectiveness* published by LIONS and Warc and launched at Cannes Lions International Festival of Creativity.

Before co-founding The Effectiveness Partnership in 2008, Gurdeep worked as Head of Effectiveness at Leo Burnett having graduated with a BSc (Hons) in Statistics and an MSc in Financial Econometrics. Gurdeep is an Honorary Fellow of the Institute of Practitioners in Advertising and a Cannes Creative Effectiveness Master.



Data & methodology

All our findings are derived from the EACA's Effectiveness Knowledge Centre, comprising 14 years of data from the Effie Awards Europe, the gold standard for European communications campaigns. For the purposes of this paper, we have analysed data from papers (excluding ones in the Positive Change category) detailing 268 winning campaigns entered into this annual effectiveness competition between 2009 and 2022.

The data (covering 28 knowledge fields per entry) records the status and situations of the brands considered, their objectives for communication and the results of their campaigns. By digging deep into the winning cases, we can start to isolate the key drivers of success to give valuable insights for the marketing communications industry.

For the purposes of this paper the key insights and data were 'back analysed' from the written case studies (including the coded entry forms used for submission), providing a rich evidence base.



Executive Summary

This paper argues that our current industry definition of creativity may be too narrow and puts forward four new definitions of creativity that have inspired commercially effective campaigns rewarded by the Effie Awards Europe.

1. Persuasive Creativity – rational, informational and persuasion-driven, creating clear value add for brands and creating strong short-term sales effects.
2. Fame-Building Creativity – a broad reach, emotional, memorable and social approach that drives penetration, often very efficiently.
3. Experiential Creativity – a digital-first and tech driven building of brand ecosystems, engaging people at the right time, in the right place, in new ways. With the benefits of driving share of wallet and value sales.
4. Market-Building Creativity – a more profound approach creating new behaviours, activating new audiences, and forming new occasions. The most impactful in the long term with the greatest effect on profit.

By defining and showing the benefits of each one based on the evidence of Effie Awards Europe winners, we hope to build on the innovative work being done by the industry and to create new useful definitions of creativity that will benefit and inspire our industry.

Introduction

This paper is the third in a series of whitepapers produced by the EACA in association with The Effectiveness Partnership - *The Worst of Times*, *The Best of Times* and *The Road to Recovery* - which outlined successful effectiveness strategies for recessionary and post-recessionary times respectively.

The idea that creativity is an enabler of effectiveness has long been one of the cornerstones of our industry, but recently this idea has been seriously questioned.

The Institute of Practitioners in Advertising (IPA) 2019 paper, *The Crisis in Creative Effectiveness*, identified a serious declining trend in the effectiveness of creatively awarded campaigns. Backed up by IPA data that showed that creatively awarded campaigns were no more effective than non-awarded campaigns.

Pertinent though this analysis is, it was based on a limited view of creativity – namely, creativity that wins awards.

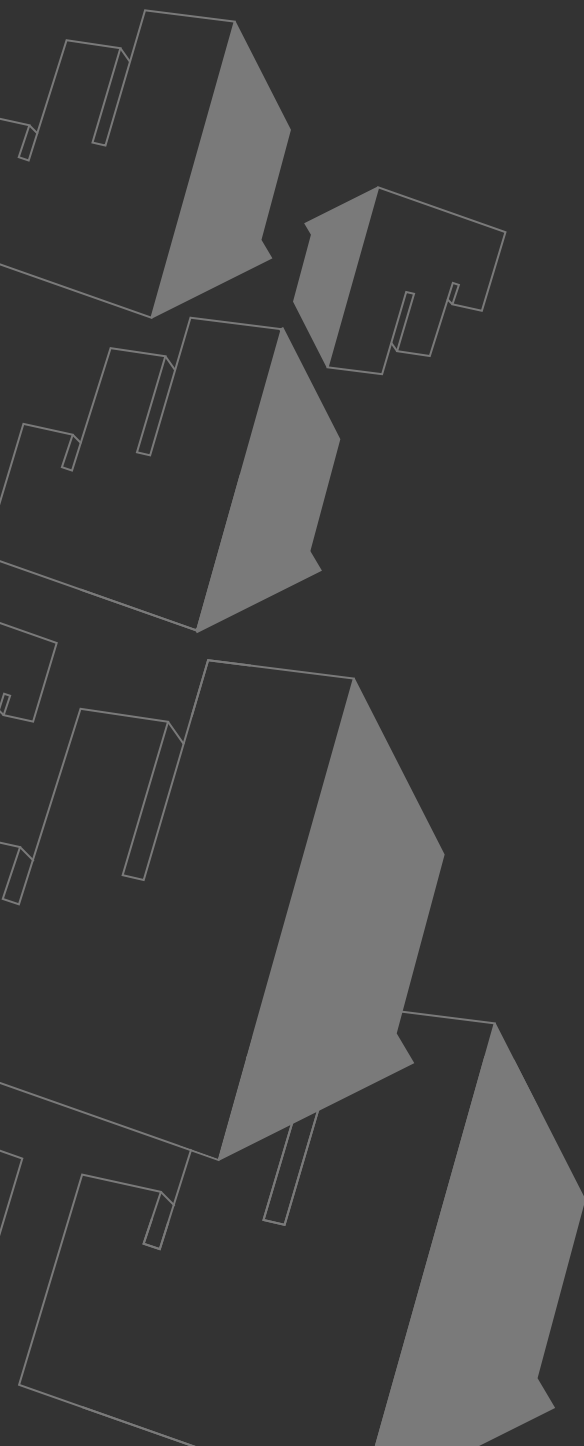
Creative awards, by their very nature, prize executional craft and technique as a means of delivering breakthrough creative solutions.

However, we would argue the true nature of creativity is more profound than this.

This paper aims to define creativity through new lenses, and to show that:

- True creativity, practised by Effie Europe award-winning campaigns, is the lifeblood of effectiveness
- Different types of true creativity, deliver significant effectiveness impacts in different ways
- Each type of creativity has strengths and limitations, and therefore should be considered carefully as part of an effectiveness-driving strategy

Practised by progressive agencies and brand owners, and powered by breakthrough insight, these new definitions of creativity have profound implications for the industry and, we hope will create inspiration and direction for the effectiveness community going forward.



KEY FINDINGS

**from the EACA Effectiveness
Knowledge Centre**

The need for new definitions of creativity

Creativity is a central pillar of the communications industry and has, until recently, been regarded as one of the single most important tools to boost campaign effectiveness. However, the link between creativity and effectiveness has recently been called into question, with evidence from sources such as the IPA¹ showing a decline in the correlation between creatively awarded campaigns and effective ones.

We will argue that part of the issue is that creative awards may represent a narrow definition of creativity. One that does not need to be replaced, but rather broadened if we are to gauge creativity's full impact.

"Creativity is seeing what everyone else has seen, and thinking what no one else has thought".
– Albert Einstein

Einstein's words are profound but also relevant to the situation we find ourselves in as an industry today. In many categories, true product differentiation is hard now to establish. New product features can be easily copied, markets are becoming more saturated, and competitors are often becoming more similar. Even the structures, tools and research methodologies of marketing departments themselves are now increasingly homogenized.

To cut through, brands need to find new angles on the familiar.

This means going beyond analysing and synthesising ever-increasing volumes of data and research. This means taking leaps to arrive at powerful strategic insights unlocking fresh and differentiated platforms and executions.

Progressive brand owners and agencies are rising to this challenge, evidenced by the award-winning papers from the Effie Awards Europe.

¹ IPA *The Crisis in Creative Effectiveness*, 2019



True creativity

Time and again, Effie Europe winners show that seemingly intractable communications challenges can be overcome by using fresh insight generation, ever more ingenious ways of connecting brands to popular culture (often at speed) and taking unique positions on issues where the brand can play a meaningful role. Then expressing this through best-in-class communications campaigns that take advantage of the ever-broadening array of channels, often digital, that are open to them to deliver growth.

This is true creativity – not just award winning executional and craft techniques, but strategic originality, applied throughout the campaign planning process that delivers real effectiveness

Four categories of true creativity

With this definition of true creativity in mind, we have analysed the winning papers from present and past Effie Europe winners to create four categories of creativity. By looking carefully at their marketing communications style, comms objectives, marketing objectives, as well as channel and media strategies, we have arrived at four new definitions of creativity that are proven to drive effectiveness in different ways.



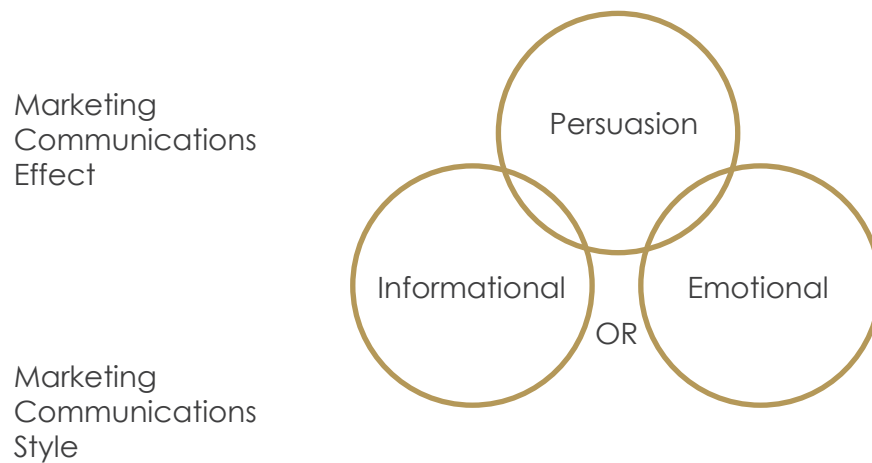
FOUR NEW DEFINITIONS OF EFFECTIVE CREATIVITY

PERSUASIVE CREATIVITY

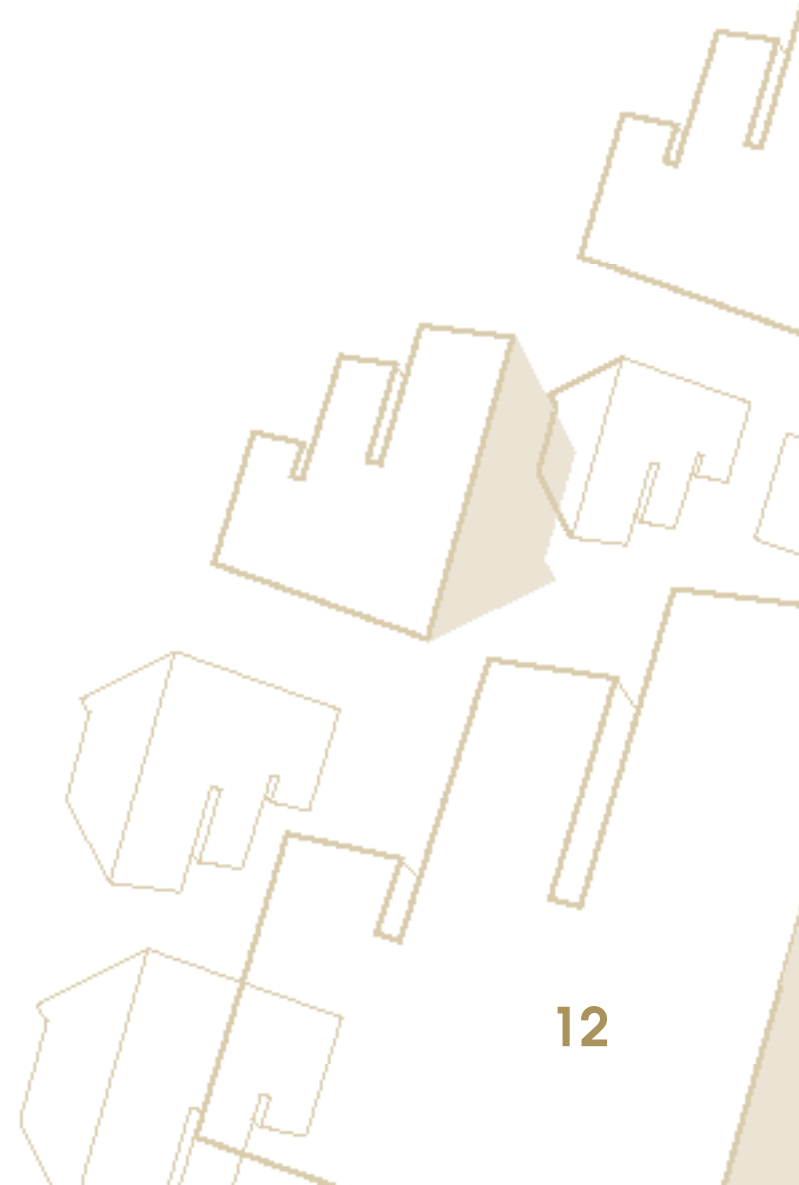
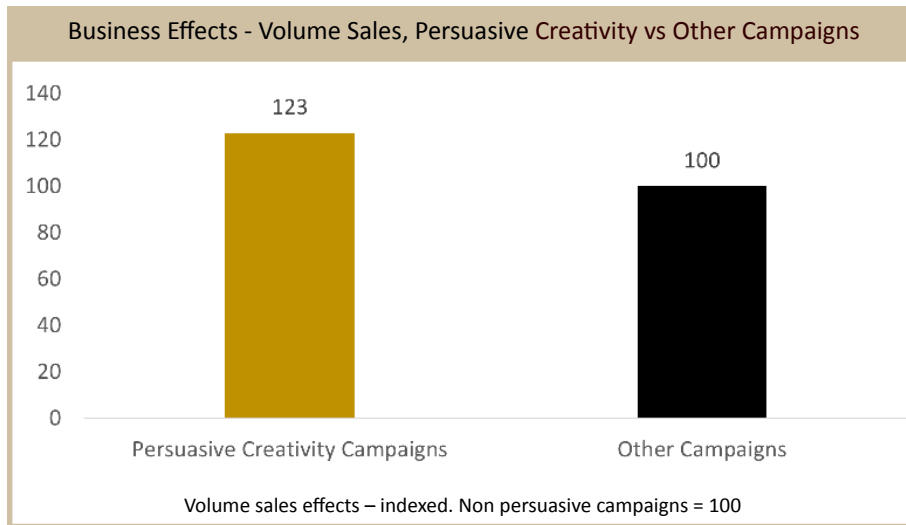
Persuasive creativity focuses on creating new reasons to buy, often through communicating new USPs through persuasion techniques. Although these communications often have a rational USP at their heart, they can be presented in emotional or more informational ways. FMCG brands have used these techniques to great effect in their mature categories to drive sales growth.

Campaigns built through persuasive creativity produce strong activation effects and so are powerful ways to build sales in the short term, especially volume sales.

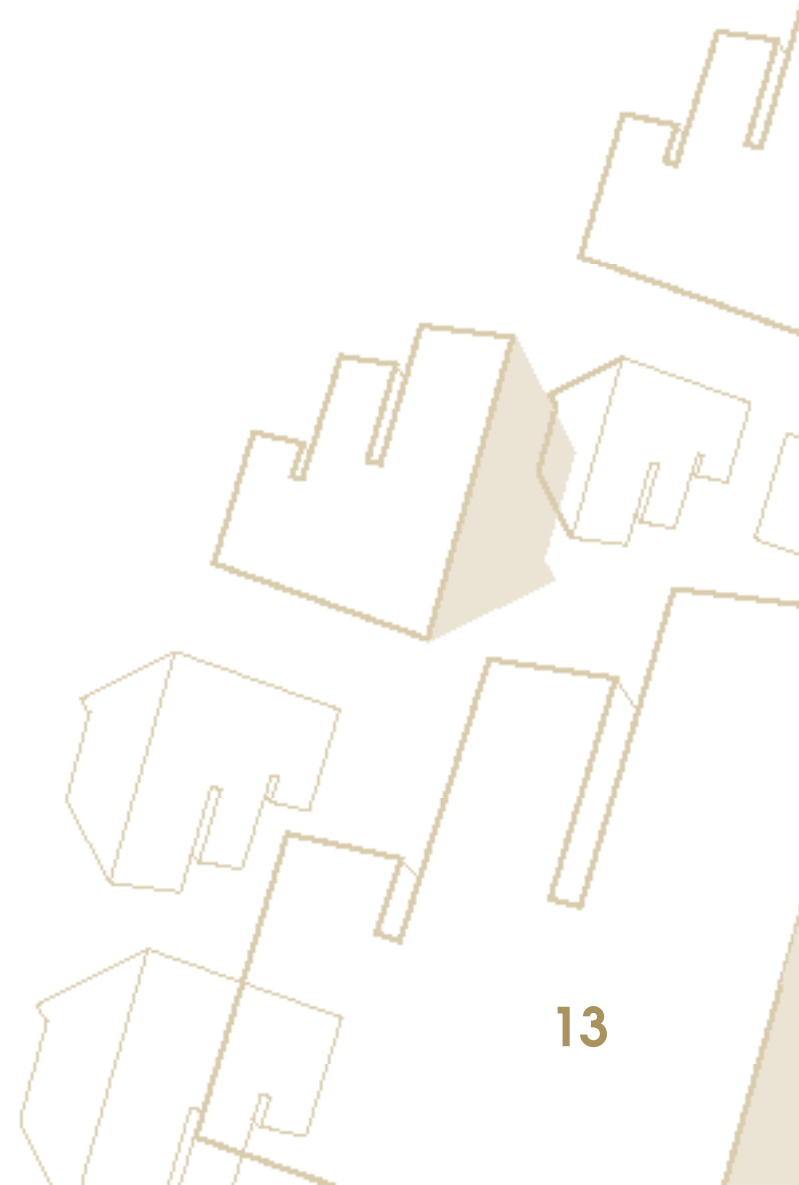
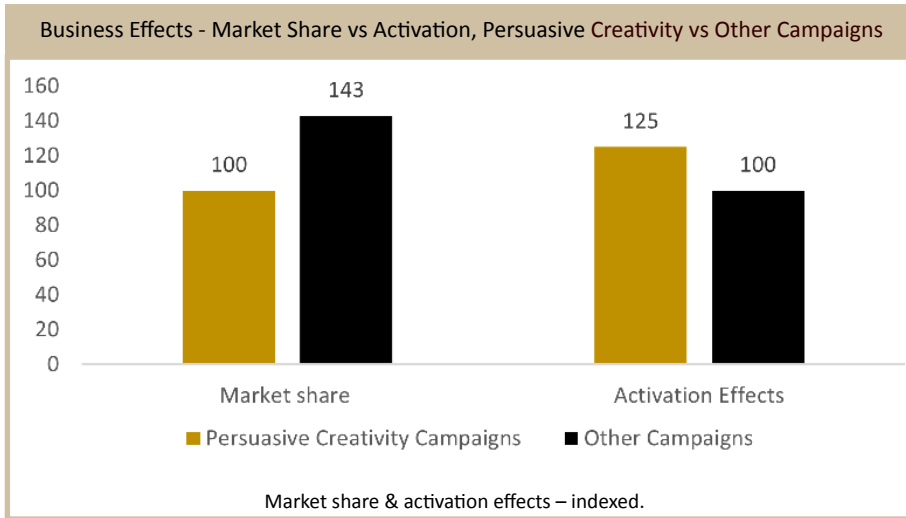
Persuasive Creativity Model



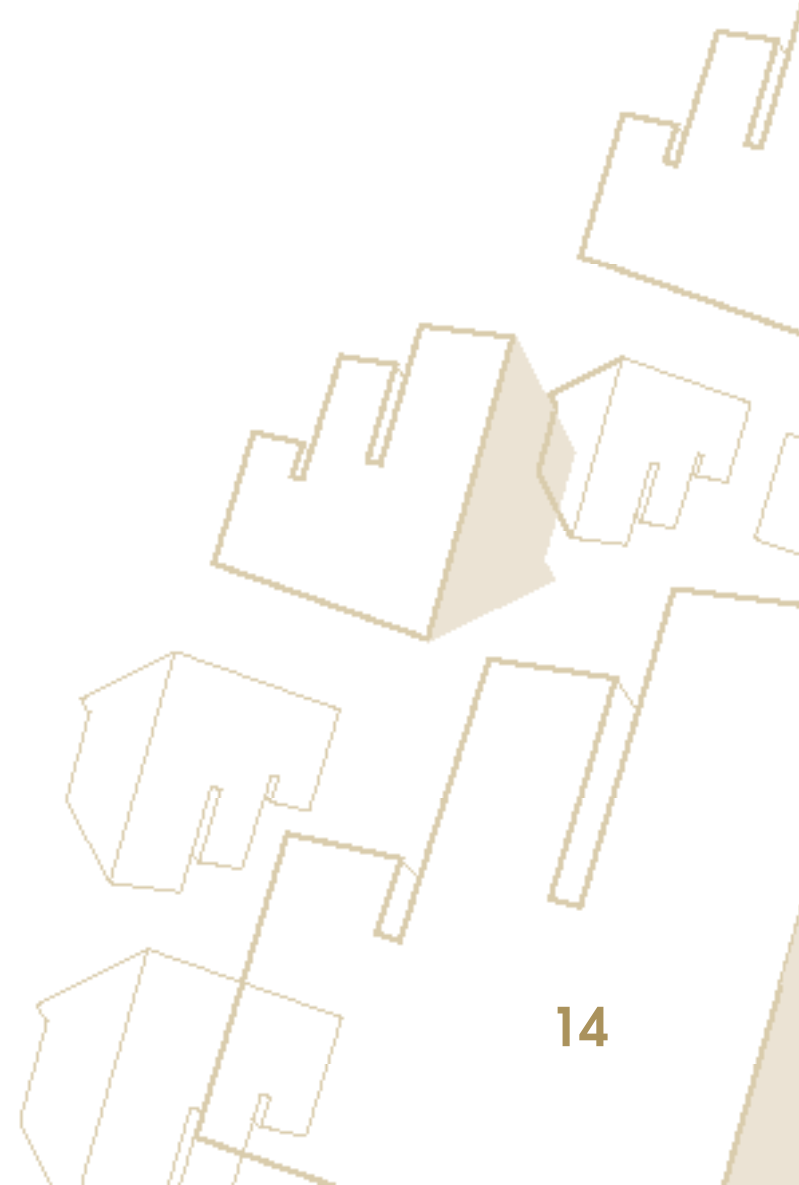
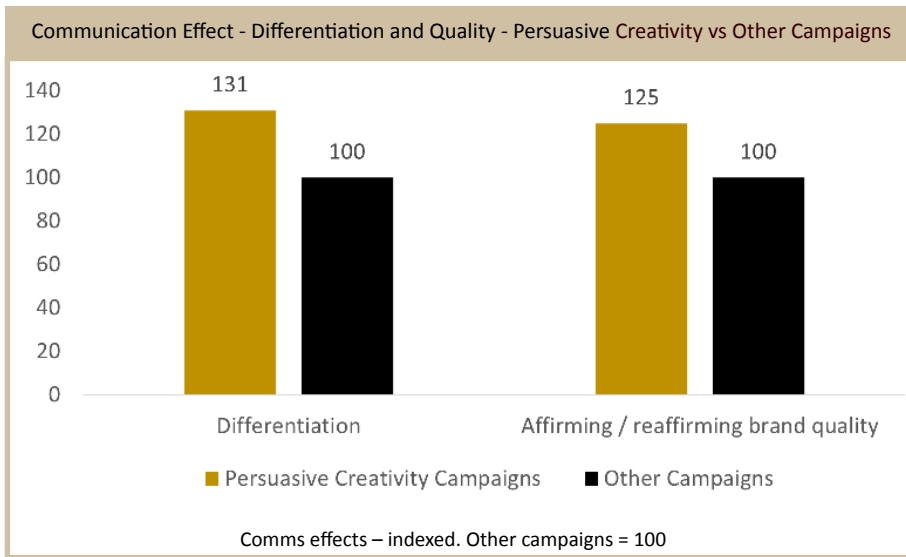
However, they are not as effective in driving longer-term effects. Other types of creativity are much more likely to be targeting long-term objectives, such as market-share growth, and less likely to be targeting short-term sales activation that are the hallmark of persuasive creativity. As has been written elsewhere, the balance of these two objectives delivers longer-term effectiveness. This is an area where persuasive creativity may not yet have found the right balance.



The primary communications benefit of these campaigns is growing differentiation, but they are also successful in affirming these brands' quality credentials.



These types of campaigns are often favoured by brands in mature categories where points of functional difference are hard to come by and, when product innovation creates these differences, consumers need to be presented these added reasons to buy.

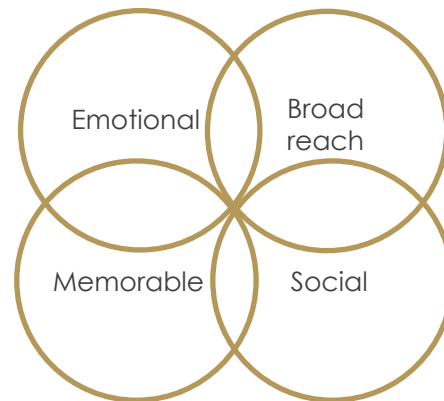


FAME-BUILDING CREATIVITY

A lot has already been written about fame, starting with Binet and Field in their seminal IPA paper *The Long and Short of It*² where the powerful effects of fame campaigns were quantified, creating a rich bank of evidence for the industry.

Borrowing from Paul Feldwick's subsequent analysis of fame – *The Four Facets of Fame*³ – we have created a definition of fame campaigns that is useful and actionable in the context of our data. This shows that fame campaigns are comprised of four key elements – emotion, social value, broad reach and memorability (or stickiness).

Fame-Building Creativity Model

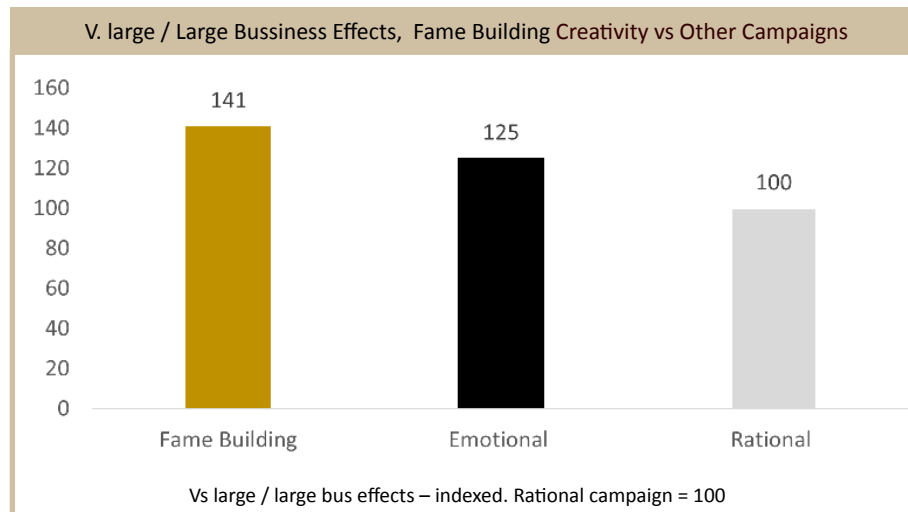


2 IPA. *The Long and the Short of It: Balancing Short and Long-Term Marketing Strategies*, Binet and Field, 2013

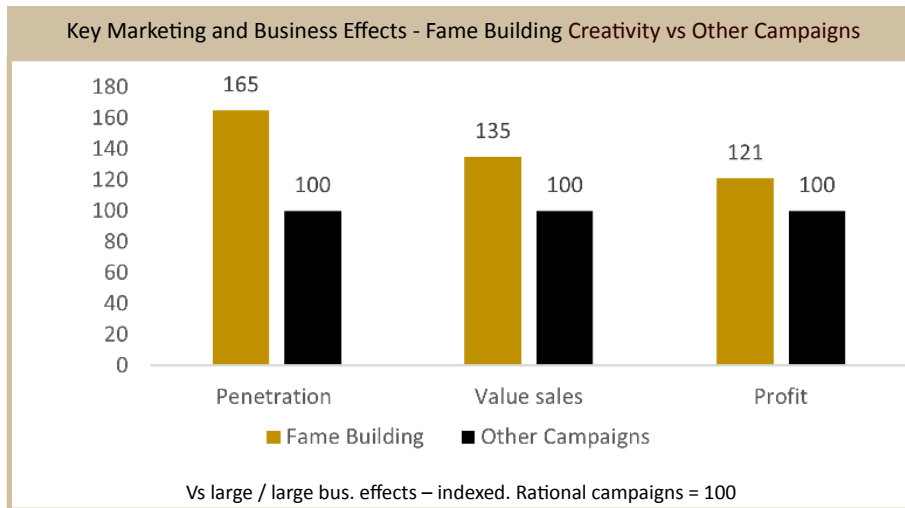
3 Warc, *Four Facets of Fame*, Feldwick 2021

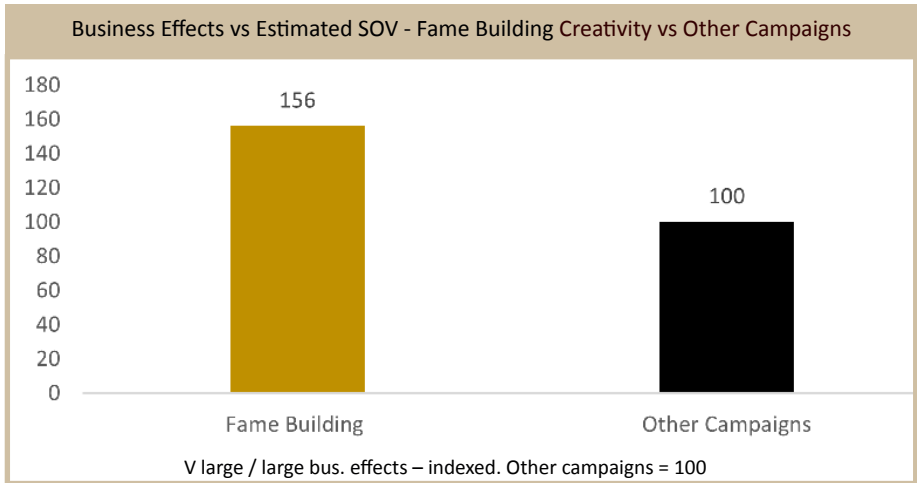
To reiterate a point that has been made before, fame campaigns are a subset of emotional campaigns. Emotional campaigns are those that made people feel differently about the brand, but passively i.e. did not inspire them to share their responses with others. Fame campaigns also make people feel differently about the brand, but also share their enthusiasm on- and offline (shares, comments and talking to others being key metrics). Fame campaigns amplify the positive attributes of emotional campaigns in terms of efficiency.

In fact, compared to other types of campaign, fame campaigns outperform all other types of creativity across many measures, perhaps most notably, in terms of value sales, penetration and profit effects.

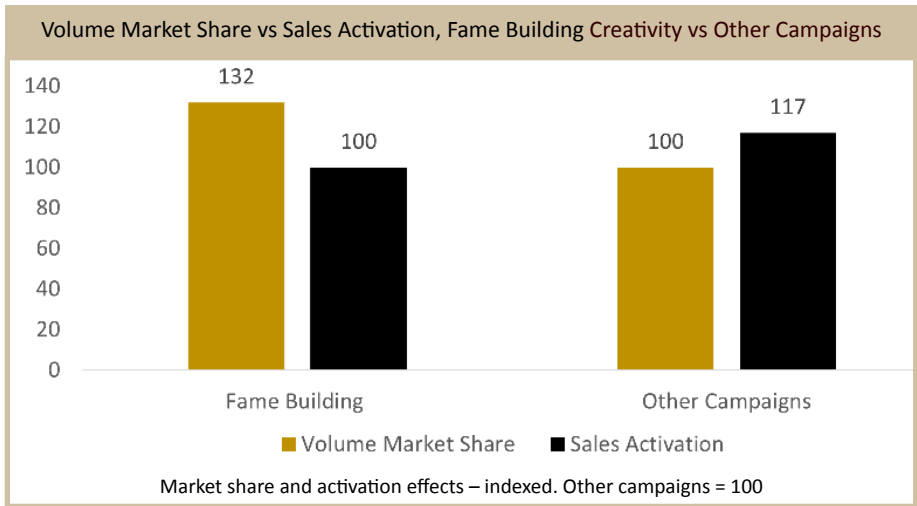


And most remarkably, fame campaigns do this in a way that maximizes the budget available to them. Fame campaigns create effectiveness very broadly – in fact, they are nearly 60% more efficient than other types of campaigns.





The weakness of fame campaigns is their lesser ability to generate short-term direct effects. Compared to other campaigns, fame building is less likely to generate immediate sales activation. This gap widens with short duration campaigns for which the benefits of fame will still be growing.

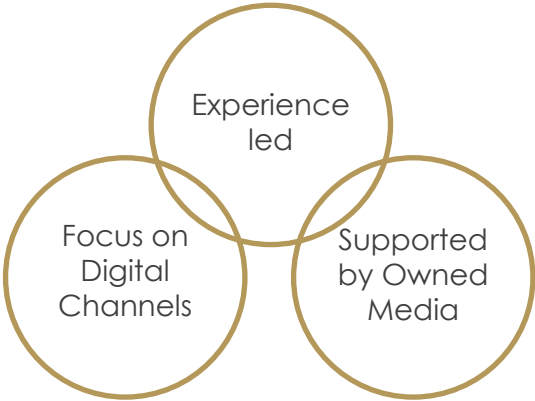


EXPERIENTIAL CREATIVITY

Campaigns that rely on experiential creativity are ones that are particularly innovative in the ways that people are engaged, engaging people at the right time, in the right place, in new ways. Often informed by data and relying heavily on digital channels, they invite the consumer into a brand ecosystem and create rich journeys for consumers to explore. These digital channels also include media partnerships and influencers, as well as utilities and apps.

Closer analysis of our papers shows that it is often premium and subscription brands (such as telcos, consumer services and media brands) that rely on this technique.

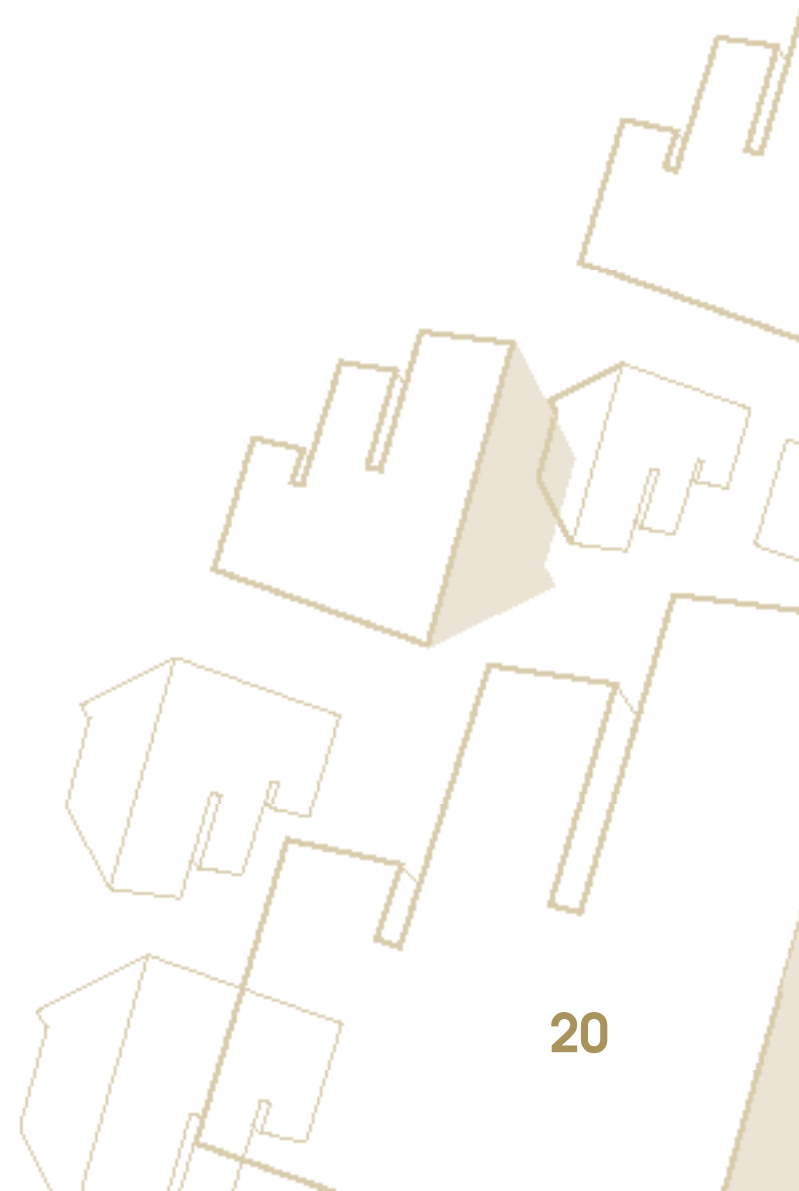
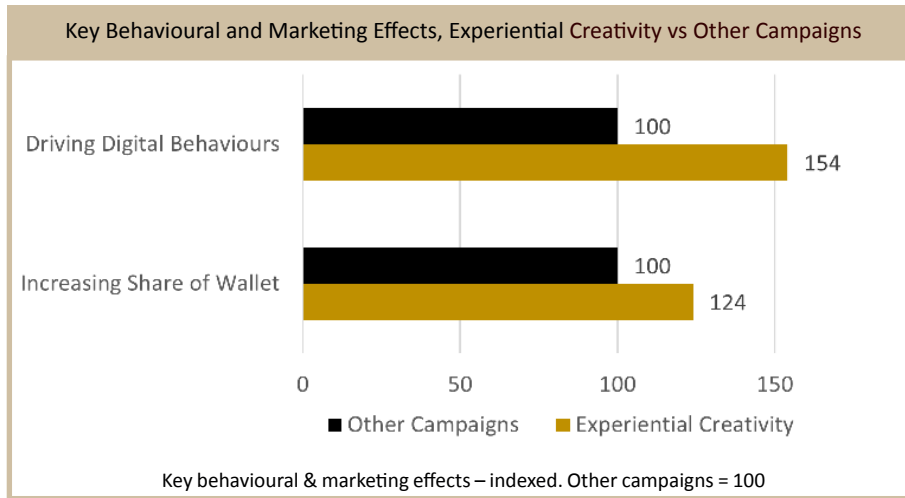
Experiential Creativity Model



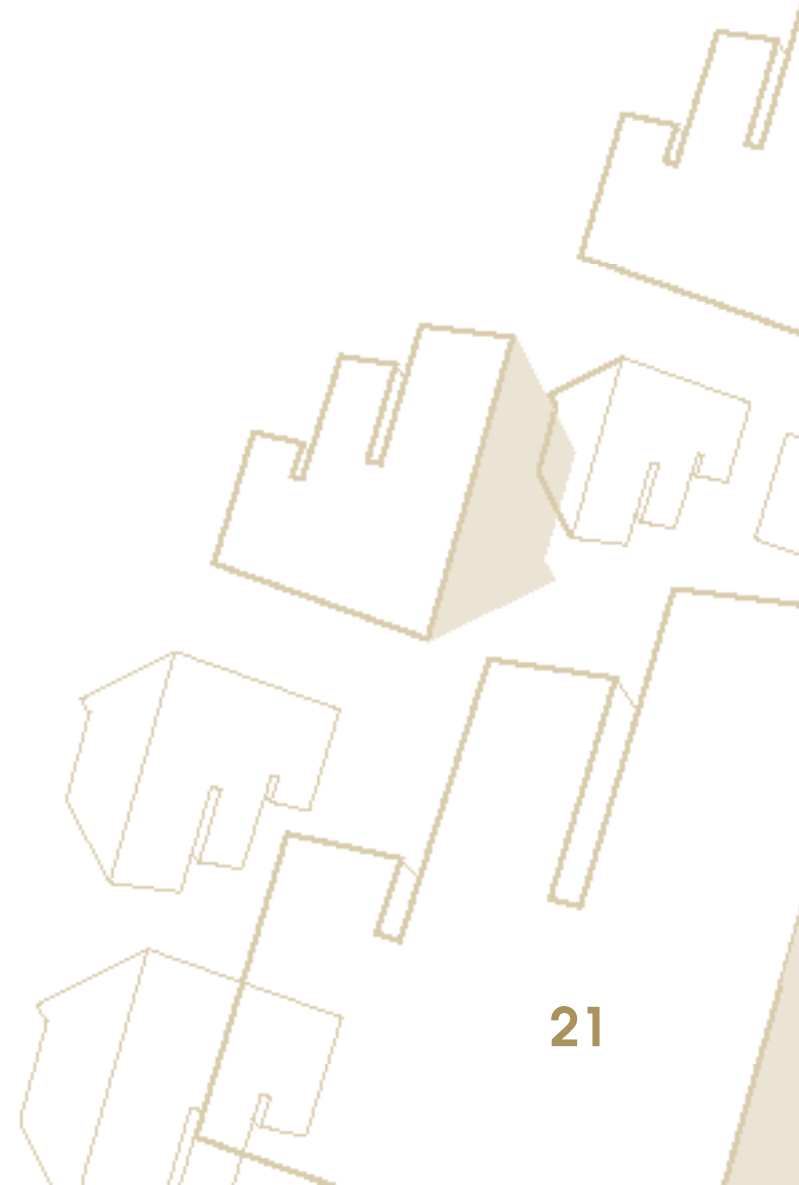
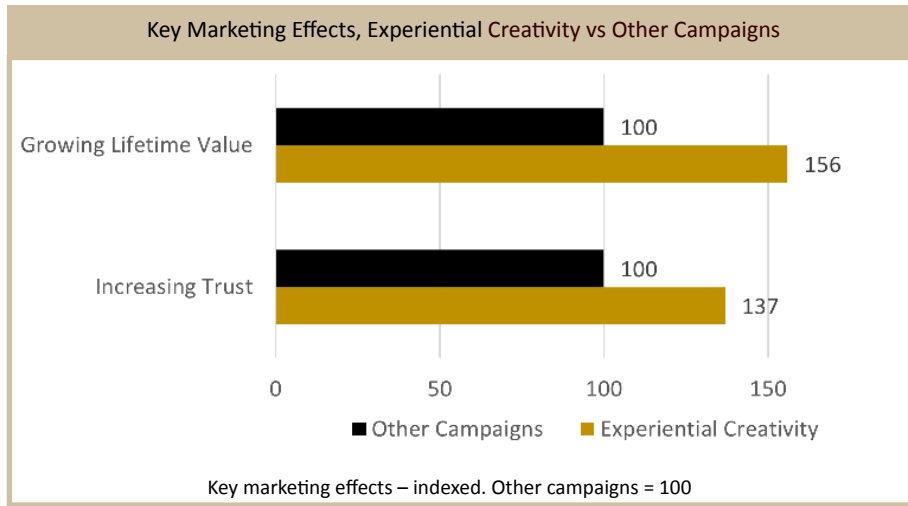
What is striking about this type of creativity is it works harder than others to drive share of wallet, as well as increasing website traffic and driving other digital behaviours. Cross-selling and upselling are techniques commonly used by brands relying on experiential creativity, and this is borne out by the business effects that they create.

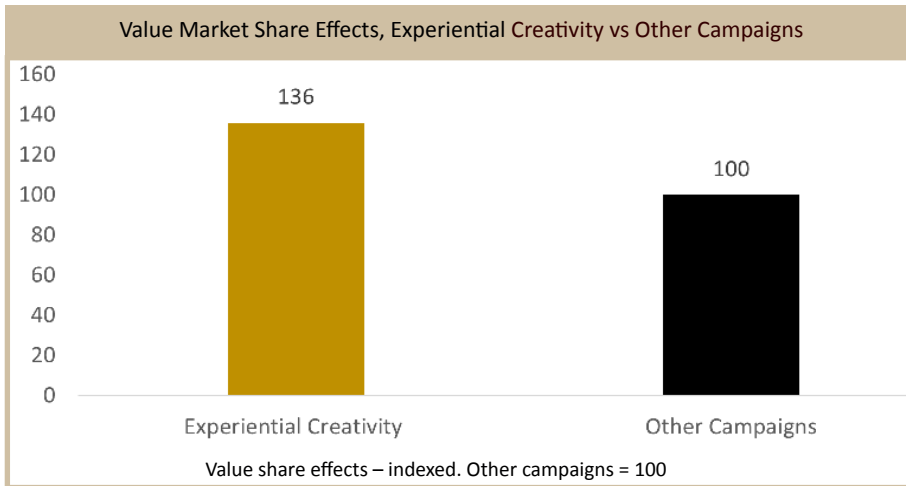


Experiential creativity also has other benefits – chiefly driving participation, which in turn, drives commitment, loyalty and trust, and directly contributed to behavior change. These effects are crucial for brands that need to create stickiness in markets where switching is common and therefore helping to cement bonds of affinity between audiences and brands.

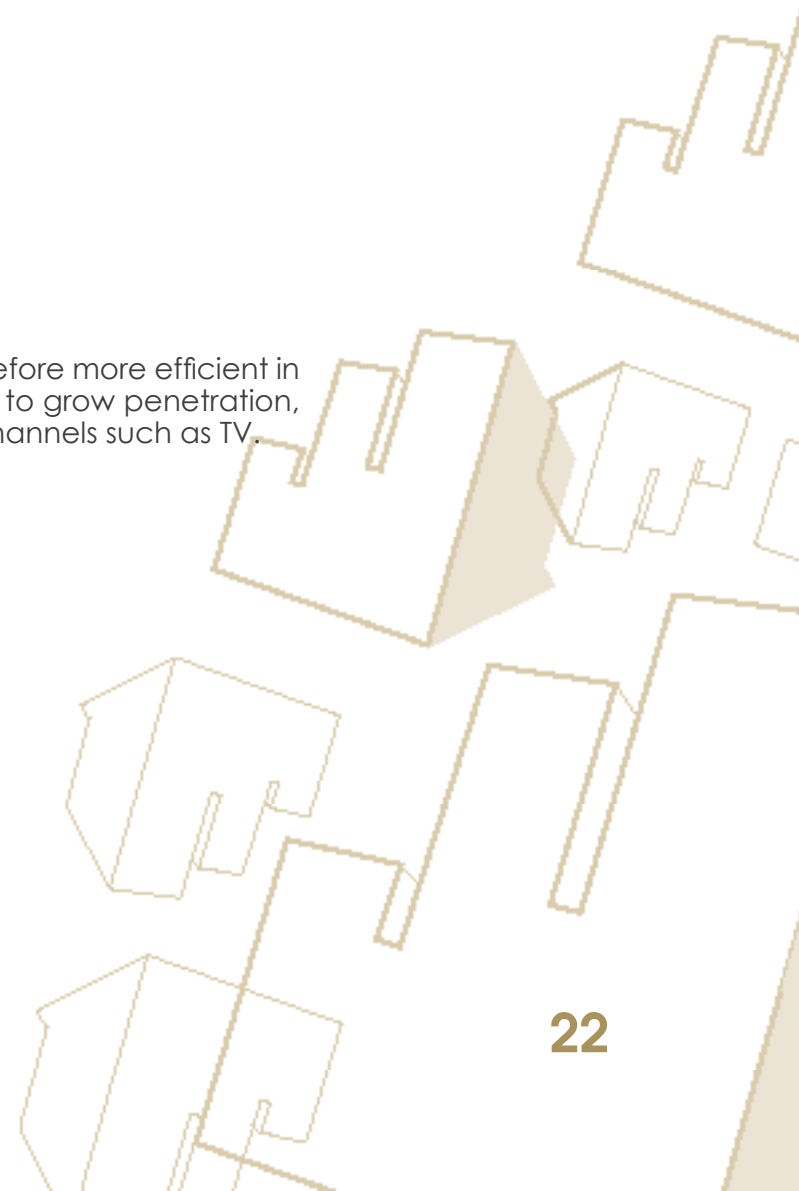
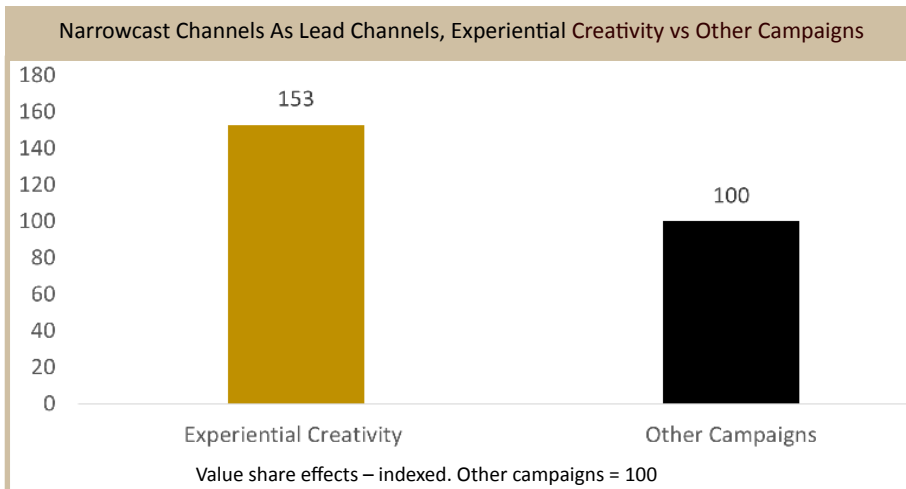


This creativity has different business benefits and drawbacks. It has the greatest impact on value sales vs other types of creativity in the short term, but also suffers in its ability to generate market share impacts. This is perhaps not surprising, as the experiential creativity is geared towards encouraging customers to buy more with a relatively lower cost, digitally led channel palette (augmented with more expensive channels, such as partnerships and apps).





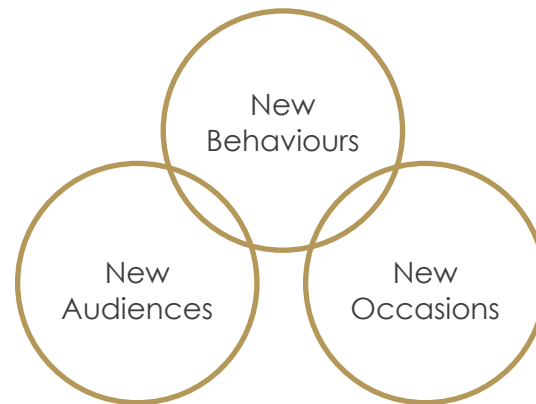
Experiential creativity tends to use more narrowcast channels and is therefore more efficient in its ability to create valuable transactions, but it also suffers in being able to grow penetration, as this is harder to achieve without the added impact of broad reach channels such as TV.



MARKET-BUILDING CREATIVITY

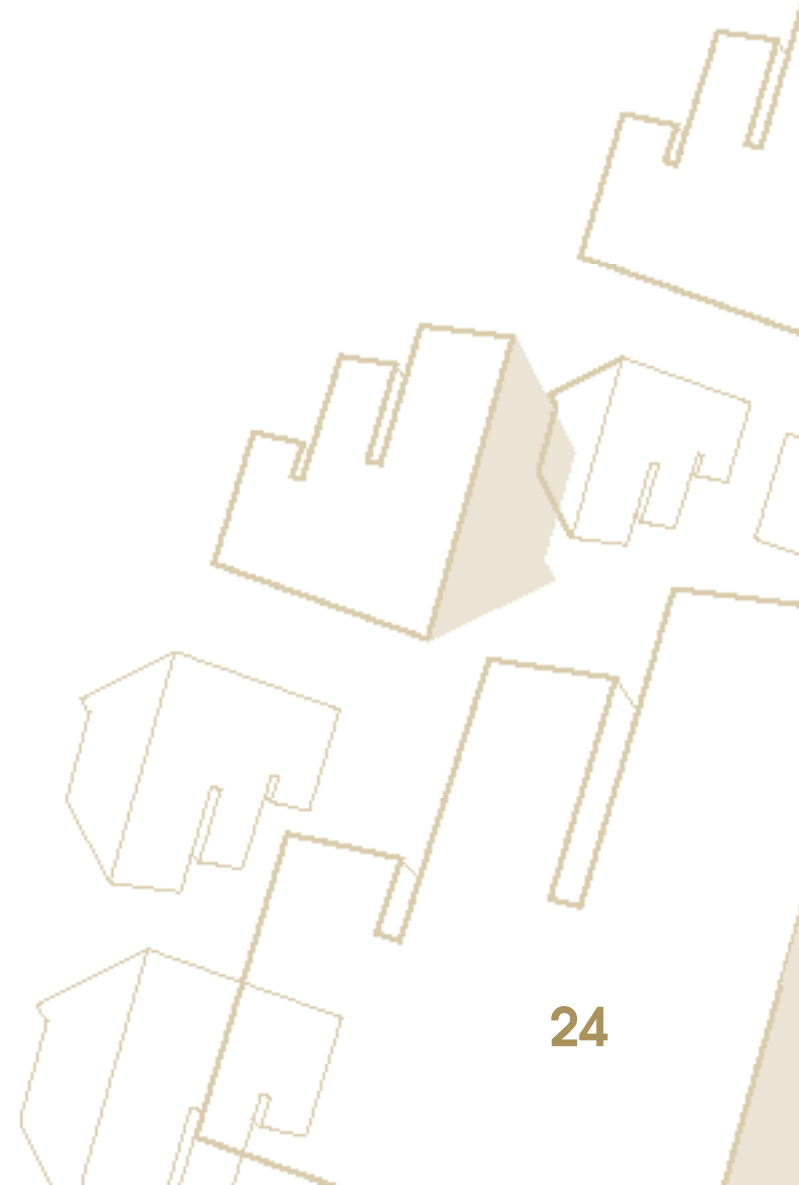
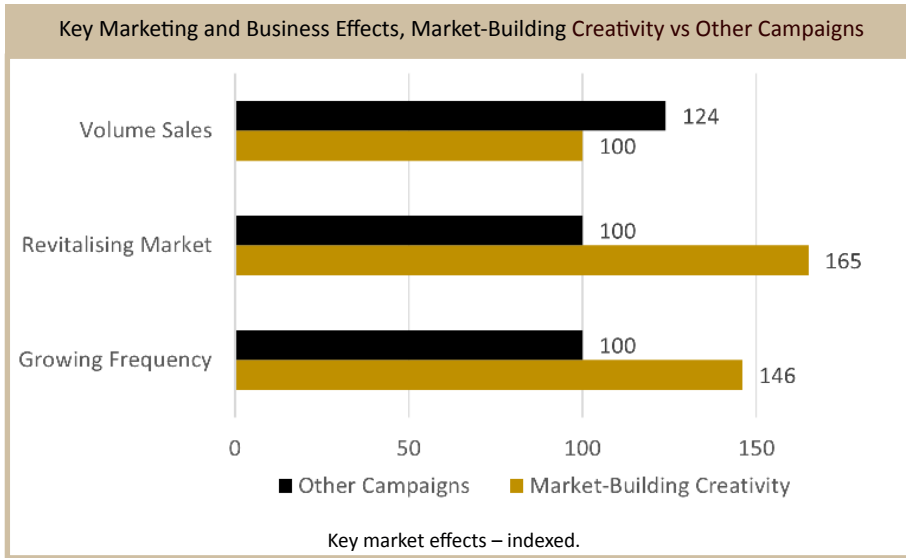
Market-building creativity is perhaps the most interesting area of all. Here the focus is on driving brand growth through entirely new strategic components. These mostly include creating new behaviours, the discovery and activation of new audiences, and creating new occasions. For example, the growth of rapid grocery delivery services such as those offered by Deliveroo and Amazon has given birth to a new shopping occasion: after the main shop and the top-up shop, there is now the 'additional shop' for time pressed urbanites.

Market-Building Creativity Model

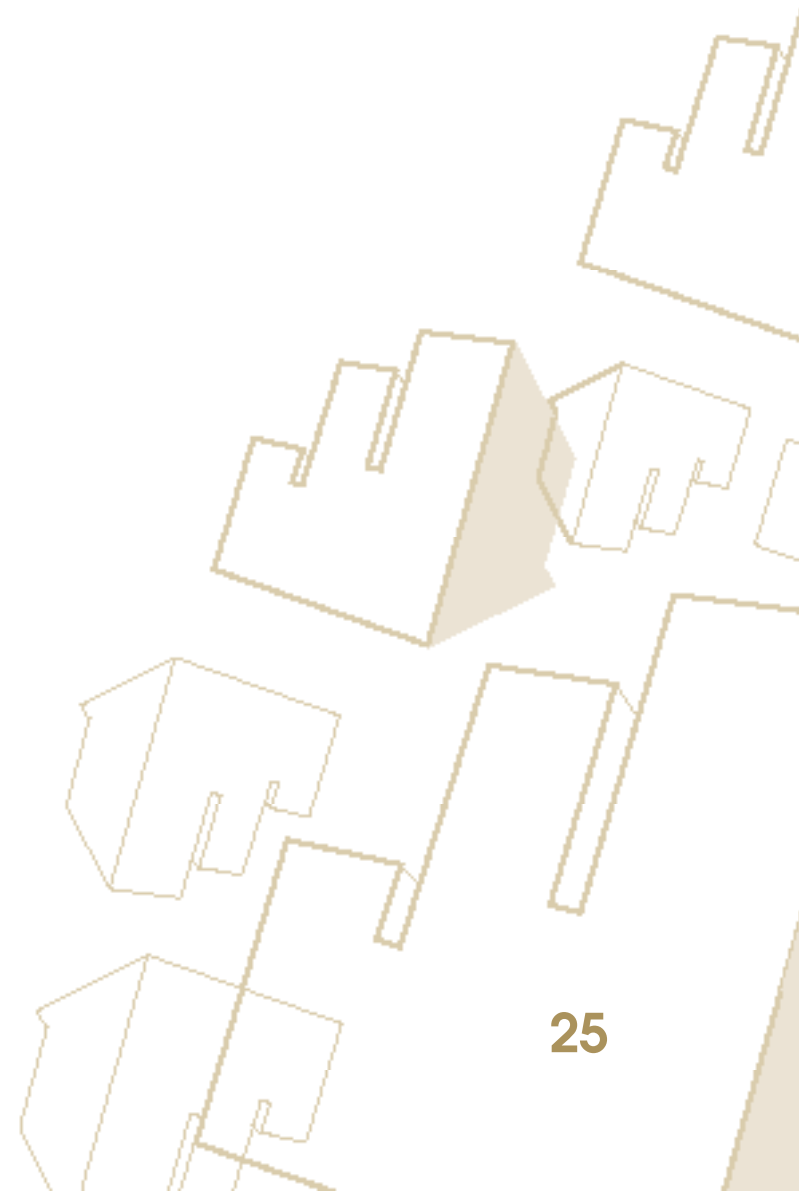
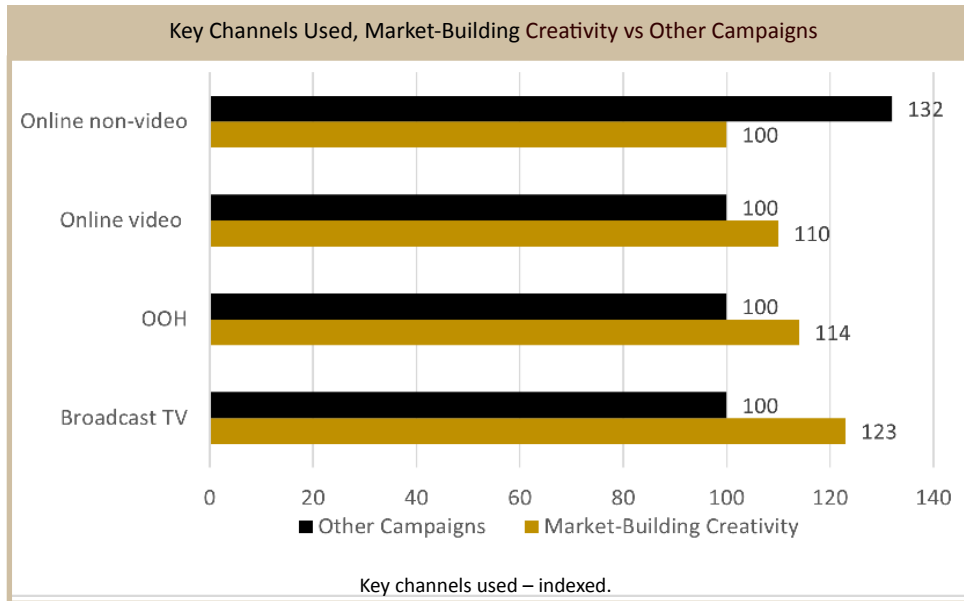


This strategic creativity is often used by newer brands who are looking for disruptive ways to engineer growth, and has the strongest impact in the creating business effects, driven by increased market revitalisation, and frequency. However, it also performs less strongly in creating shorter term activation effects such as volume sales.

Market-building creativity can be thought of as the ultimate long-term driver of business effects and it is not surprising that this also has implications for channels used.



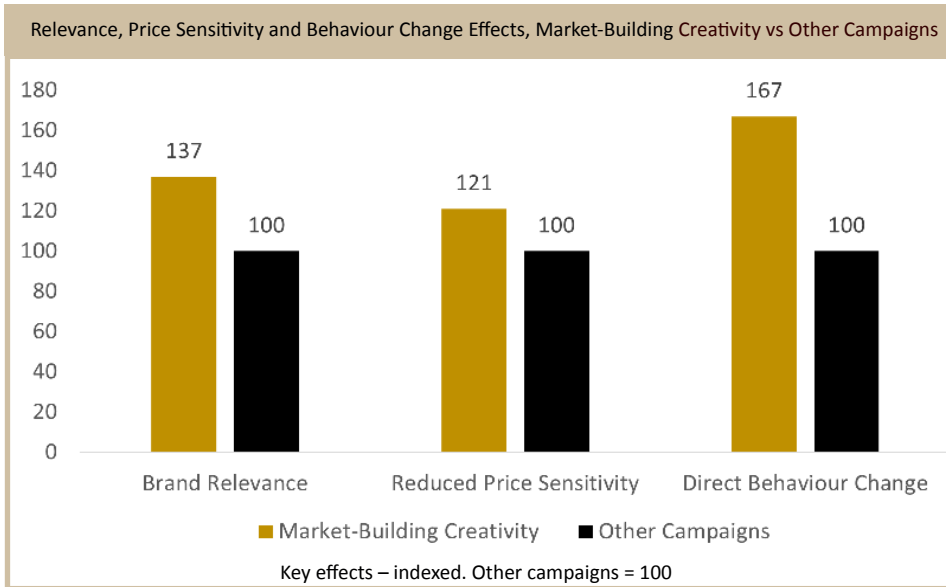
Campaigns relying on market-building creativity are the ones more likely to use a mix of paid, owned, and earned media. Moreover, they make more use of media associated with strong brand building effects: TV, OOH, and online video. This reflects a predisposition to allocating budget to long term brand building, compared with other types of channels.



In addition, a qualitative examination of how different types of creativity rely on big data also shows a difference between market-building creativity and others. Market-building creativity is more likely to use big data for insight, other types for targeting.

This type of creativity works especially well to create new habits. This is an under-exploited role for marketing communications and yet communications have a powerful role to play in priming consumers to act in new ways. Borrowing from Charles Duhigg's seminal work *The Power of Habit*⁴, we can see that strategic creativity can create the both the cues and the promise of rewards (through communications) that are necessary for consumers to adopt new habits.

The result is that market-building creativity has the most impact in driving behaviour change and brand relevance compared to other creativity. As strategic creativity is geared towards the activation of audiences and creating new moments of usage and consumption, it is not surprising that these behavioural impacts are big drivers of long-term business effects. Put simply, consumers are more willing to pay for brands that have become part of their lives by regular interaction.



4 *The Power of Habit: Why We Do What We Do in Life and Business*, Charles Duhigg, 2014



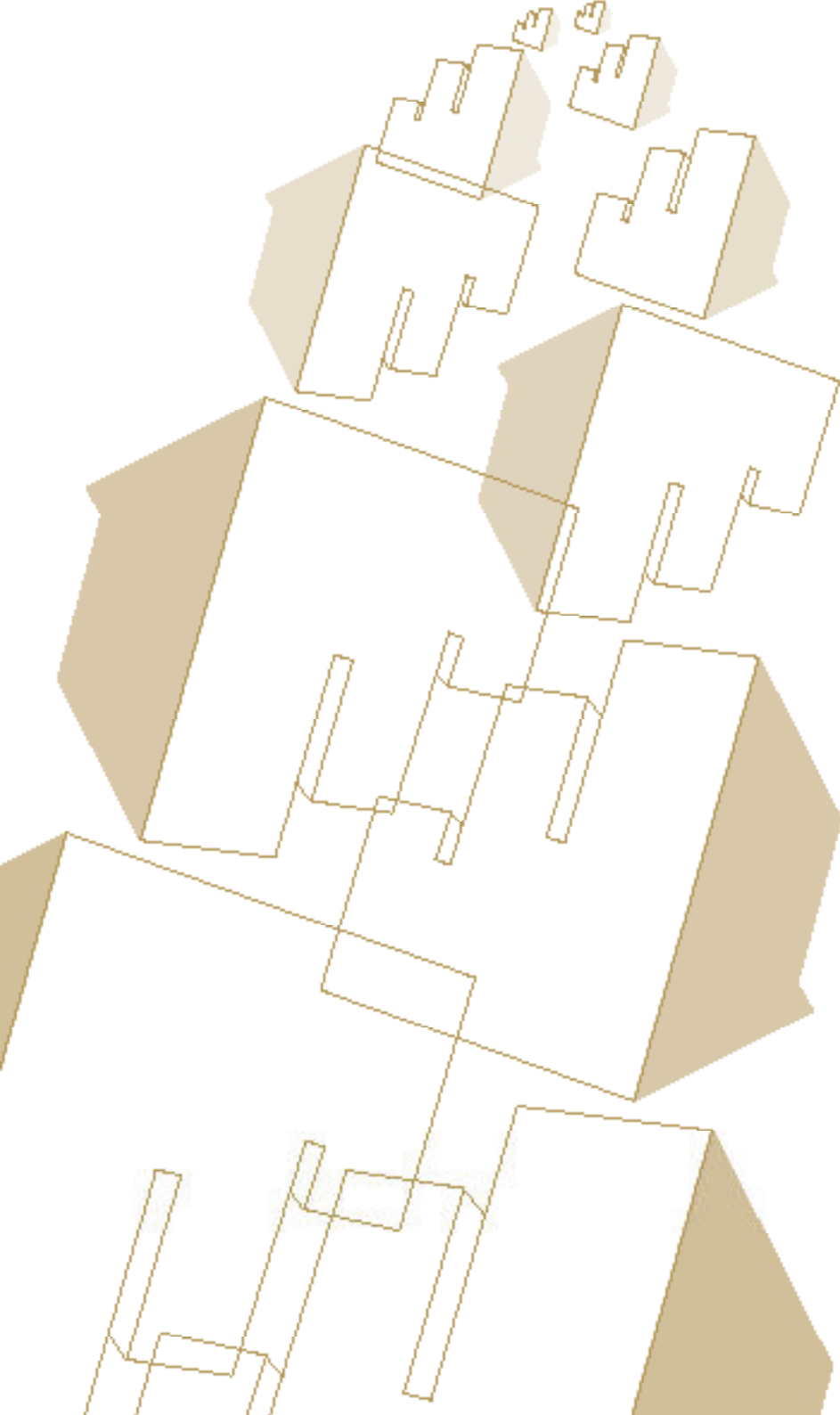
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

There are reasons to believe that the current view of creativity that our industry uses may be too narrow, and should be broadened. True creativity goes beyond what is evaluated in award ceremonies and depends on taking an original angle not as just at the level of execution but in the full campaign planning process, to deliver true effectiveness.

Our insights in this paper, grounded in rigorous data from the EACA Effectiveness Knowledge Centre, point the way towards new models of creativity that our industry can put into practise to deliver communications solutions driving proven growth. We are happy to say that agencies, and progressive clients, across Europe are already practising these principles in the service of best-in-class work enabling outstanding results.

But we would argue that even more needs to be done to bolster the link between creativity and effectiveness. In particular the new, solely real-time, transactional and data-driven view of effectiveness (or efficiency, since this more accurate) needs to be challenged. This is the single most pernicious barrier to enabling strong, creatively driven, long-term effectiveness success stories.

Our industry has already made real progress in effectiveness but we need to look ahead. The future will be very bright indeed if we don't just take small steps forward but also be brave enough to take great leaps. This paper shows that with true creativity it is possible to cross the chasm.



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