Top 10 takeaways from Eff Week 2020

10 insights from a week of panels and presentations given by key leaders in effective marketing

Kate Barnham

Winter is coming.

For those who watched or read Game Of Thrones you will be familiar with the motto of House Stark. For those that aren't, the meaning behind these words is one of warning and constant vigilance. The Starks, being the lords of the North, strive to always be prepared for the coming of winter, which hits their lands the hardest. And as we stand on the edge of a potentially long hard Winter the recent EffWeek Global 2020 event provided a much-needed dose of practical advice for marketers and agencies to help with our preparedness.

Committing to attending every event is no mean feat and so here at Hearts & Science this task was taken on by Kate. Her Top 10 takeaways from the week will ensure you're prepared on all of the key topics.

A few of my highlights were Les Binet's latest research using share of search as a predictor of share of market, James Hurman recapping on Creative Commitment (which was essential reading from earlier in the year and with practical applications), whether eco-effectiveness is the missing part of measurement frameworks

and how the force of change that is Covid-19 has changed our overall cultural narrative just like the Bubonic Plague did in 1300.

The breadth and depth of topics meant that there was something for everyone and the IPA should be applauded for both that and the quality of speakers with what felt like a higher number of CMOs involved than ever. And a big congratulations to all of the IPA Effectiveness Awards winners.

If you want to delve deeper then recordings of all of the weeks sessions can be found here: https://ipa.co.uk/effworks/effworks-global-2020/

Simon Carr
Chief Strategy Officer
Hearts & Science

We can still rely on past effectiveness data and learnings, BUT with a COVID consideration overlay

Thinkbox presented 'planning for effectiveness amidst a pandemic' in their satellite event, with the focus being a discussion of how much we can rely on past datasets and effectiveness learnings. Having launched their Demand Generator at the end of 2019, an econometric-powered tool designed to help maximise business returns and optimise channel mixes, the question was how valuable is this now? Do we need to throw analysis like this away and start again, or can it be adapted to still be useful moving forward?

First of all, a discussion of how COVID has affected advertising. Clearly not all brands have been equally disrupted; in fact, not all impacts were negative, and some brands have seen increased demand (online grocery), while others have seen their entire industries stall (travel). Looking to the future, we don't yet know what the 'new normal' will look like, it may not necessarily be that different to the old normal, and things may settle back to how they were prior to 2020. However, at the moment there are some things that we do know still hold true. TV is still king. Halo effects and channel synergies still exist and remain consistent. And the variability of returns across channels is still a necessary consideration. Ultimately the six decisions that you need to make are the same but there are some added COVID considerations.
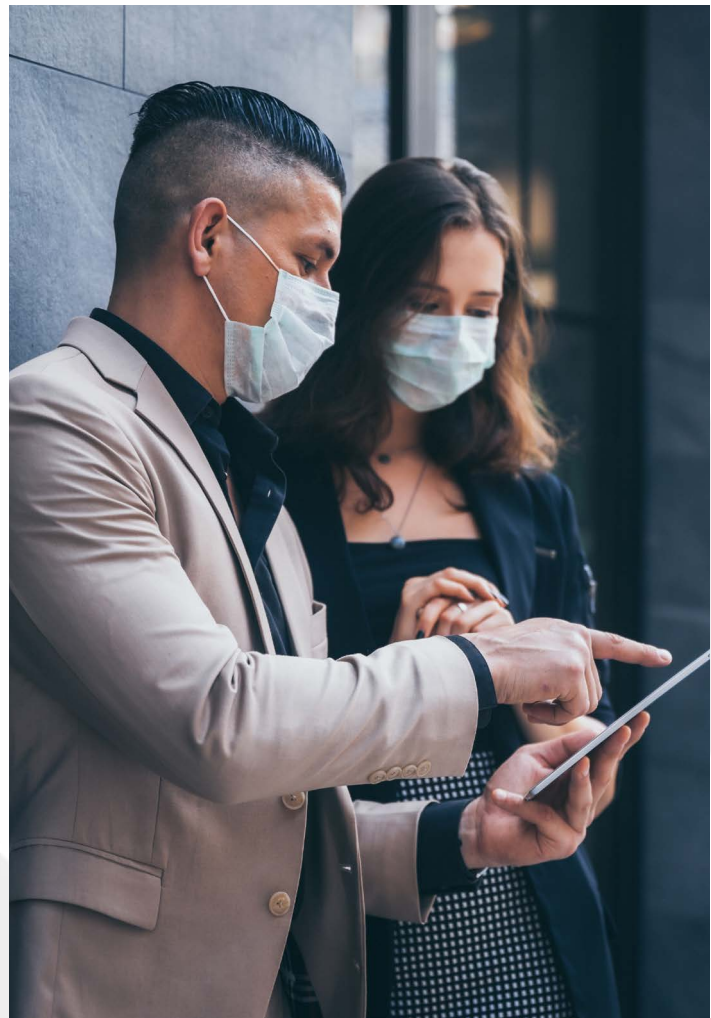
1. **What is the context of my brand?**
Two new COVID considerations are supply constraints and demand constraints. Both of these will have an uncontrollable impact on the effectiveness of any advertising and so need to be considered alongside the sector, % online sales, business size and target audience, when planning future communications. This could be a supply-side issue with stock due to factory closures, or a demand-side constraint coming directly from consumers.

2. **What is the outcome I'm trying to achieve with marketing?**
Critical to recovery and success right now is focusing on a singular objective and outcome, as this will dictate your KPIs and influence the strategy you take. There may be compromises that need to be made e.g. prioritising growth at the expense of short-term efficiencies, so think about lessening the focus on ROI or using an alternative return metric to account for COVID considerations.


3. **How much of my budget do I need to set aside for fulfillment media?**
Different channels play fundamentally different roles when it comes to creating vs. fulfilling demand. We need to ensure we choose the correct mix for the objective we have outlined. To avoid having to choose between the two, these budgets should be kept as separate as possible.


4. **How do I avoid diminishing returns?**
Diminishing returns still exist, but the profile of the curves may have changed due to changes in the cost of certain mediums. There may be the opportunity to invest more into certain channels while remaining effective. This will alter the optimal channel mix.
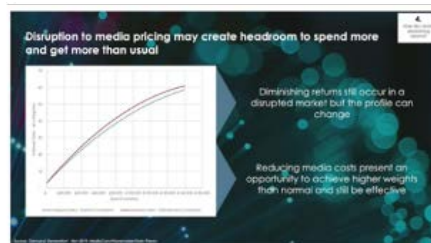

5. **When do I need a payback?**
There is a fallacy that short lead times means short-term returns, with marketers turning to digital when they need short-term payback. Often other channels are actually as, if not more, effective at driving short-term boosts.
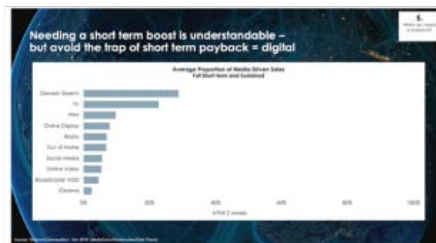
6. **How much risk am I prepared to take to achieve my outcome?**
Limiting risk means greater certainty but will also likely hamper ROI. This might be time to revisit your approach to risk when it comes to trying new channels or investing a greater proportion of your budget into those tactics that could provide the biggest win.
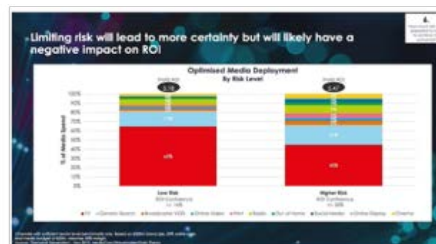
Ultimately Thinkbox believe that the Demand Generator still provides value; while demand and supply have been affected in some instances there have been no fundamental shifts in channel behavior. Some caveats may need to be applied to estimated revenue outcomes and overall payback, but the shape of the return and optimal media mixes will still hold true. The same applies to analysis you may have done internally. Useable but with a layer of COVID caution.

There remains a disconnect between marketing and the rest of the business

Last year's Eff Week saw the IPA and FT delve into the 'board brand rift' and this year the topic has been revisited, with an update on the FT's research as well as a talk from Christ Pitt, current CEO of First Direct and former CMO of HSBC, discussing whether marketing effectiveness is on the CEO's agenda. It's not often that we see CMO's make the move to CEO, and part of the reason, according to Chris, is that often marketers don't speak the language of the rest of the business. It is so important that marketers understand the profit and cost structure of their business, says Chris, and that they can explain the value of what they do. Financial literacy is an issue. Not only should marketers be educating the CFO, but this should happen the other way around as well. Chris emphasises that it is important to be a well-rounded businessperson, not just a marketer.

The FT's research into the relationship between brand and board this time focused on two areas; the macroeconomic outlook and changing purchase behaviour. From their survey data it is clear that priorities have changed, and businesses are in defensive mode, with business resilience and reduced risk more important than profits. Both marketing and commercial decision making has become even more short term. What is interesting as well is that because marketers are often so far removed from the process of financial decision making, they remain much more optimistic than business leaders at the moment. There's a clear divide; marketers aren't always being appraised of the top-level decisions being made which suggests that they still don't have a solid seat at the table.

Marketers appear distant from financial decision-making

61% of respondents tell us that they are 'still committed to investing in our brand as before'

Brand purpose is having a moment in the spotlight, but there is a big difference between being purpose driven and having a social cause

Brand purpose, and the increase in brands using purpose driven marketing in 2020, was highlighted in several of the sessions across the week. Jo Whitfield, CEO of Co-op Food, talked about a new duel role for marketing; to stimulate demand and recovery, get consumers spending again and back to the high street, but also to spread messages of support and community during these difficult times. However, a discussion between Steve Harrison, author of 'Can't Sell, Won't Sell', and Ayesha Walawalker, CSO of MullenLowe, revealed that there are conflicting views on the appropriateness of purpose within advertising.

Steve believes that as marketers we've become too liberal to sell, and part of this is believing that what we do has to have a purpose. He thinks that we have drifted too far away from consumers and that we need to rediscover our commercial purpose, the true job of advertising. He concedes that there are some brands that do purpose well (he provides Unilever as an example) but that in most instances they are lazy attempts to sell, can alienate audiences and bring politics into arenas where it isn't relevant. He also believes that it abdicates responsibility from governments to brands; brands do not need to take responsibility or have a POV. If they do, it is a power grab rather than a legitimate selling tactic.

Ayesha felt differently. What she said was that we need to differentiate between being purpose driven and advocating for a social cause. An example, Nike is a purpose driven brand, their beliefs are intrinsic to everything they do, and while they do support social causes their purpose is not one. She believes that COVID has highlighted numerous examples of brands using the tools at their disposal to perform acts of corporate social responsibility (e.g. Prada pivoting their factories to making PPE) and this hasn't necessarily been with the end goal of marketing in mind.

AI is going to revolutionise the media landscape forever by democratising visual content production

It looks like there is still time for the machines to take over... A fascinating talk from Nina Schick looked at how advances in deep learning and AI are generating huge leaps and bounds in the effectiveness of synthetic media, content that has been created by a computer trained to do exactly that. She believes that in a number of years YouTubers will be able to create content previously only accessible to Hollywood production studios and that the advances in technology are going to massively democratise visual content production. She goes as far as to say that she believes that 90% of the content available online will be synthetic by the end of the decade.

Some of the examples she gave showed exactly how synthetic media could benefit businesses and brands, for example, a CEO of a global corporation being able to produce internal and external comms used across the world with them speaking every language, no voiceover, no dubbing, and no requirement to attempt to learn hundreds of different languages! Models and actors will be able to license their image out rather than having to attend photoshoots in person. In an advert for Malaria Must Die, David Beckham speaks nine languages using deepfake voice technology.

This technology is controversial however, and there are negative implications to it becoming more widely available. Deepfake technology has already been used in non-consensual pornography, and is starting to leech into the political sphere, with videos released showing politicians saying harmful things they have never actually said in real life. This is where we need to act quickly, Schick advises. We will need to implement universal detection systems to enable us to spot deepfakes and create a watermark or provenance mark to attach to anything that is not created using synthetic techniques. These tech solutions also require human solutions, and this is the role of policy makers and social media platforms. The age of synthetic media is upon us, it's exciting but we need to act quickly to focus it as a force for good.

Share of Search is a leading indicator of brand growth, even in the long term

In his session, Les Binet delved into Share of Search (SOS), a metric that he, and others, have been researching now for a number of years. SOS is the share of organic google searches that one brand commands out of a category, and it has been shown to correlate very strongly with market share; Les describes it as a measure of interest, somewhere between saliency and consideration. The research that Les has done has proven that there is a causal relationship rather than just one of correlation, and that SOS is useful for marketers in three distinct ways.

1. **As a predictor of Share of Market (SOM):**
   While there is a clear correlation between SOS and SOM, and this has been exposed by other research, Les's analysis shows that SOS is in fact a leading indicator of SOM, and not just in the short term. There is actually on average a 6-month lead time between seeing shifts in SOS and the corresponding shifts in SOM, which means that any brand tracking SOS would have a 6-month warning on any adjustments in their market positioning. SOS is an incredibly effective predictor of market share, better than any of the other forecasting methods Les's team reviewed. There are limitations to it's uses however; it can't tell you why people are or are not searching, and it is impacted by negative search (for example bad PR) which would see SOS go up but could have a downward effect on SOM. Les is looking at overlaying sentiment data from social platforms in the next stage of the research, to try to account for this.


Share of volume vs. share of search - LG

2. **As a complementary measure alongside Share of Voice (SOV):**
   Les also found that the relationship between SOS and SOV was positive and mirrored the SOV/SOM relationship that we already understand. This could be incredibly useful for brands who struggle to measure SOM on an ongoing basis; looping SOS in as a proxy would allow for regular tracking of the impact of their SOV in the category.

Long run effect of sustained advertising on SSE's share of searches
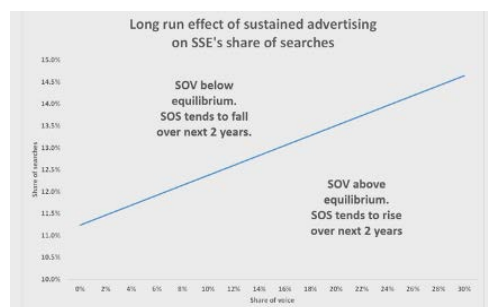
3. **As a measure of base brand strength:**
   Every brand commands an inherent level of interest, even if they switched off their advertising tomorrow. However, that level of interest is determined by their base level of brand strength, and we can use SOS to help us measure that for focus brands and competitors. As seen in the previous chart, the line plotting the relationship between SOV and SOS does not go through zero, it is not a 45-degree line. Therefore, we can use it to establish SOS even with SOV at zero. In this example we see just how much stronger Apple's brand is than competitors, and we are able to quantify and measure that relationship over time.


Share of searches: base level without advertising
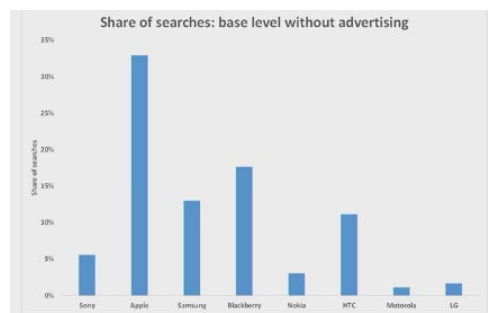
Thrill is a combination of valence and arousal, and by measuring it we can design products and advertising that create a greater emotional experience for consumers

Brendan Walker, Director of the Thrill Laboratory, is dedicated to creating and examining new forms of thrilling and extreme experience, and how bodies and emotions respond. He believes that his work is relevant to the advertising industry and to brands, as it allows us to better understand how humans respond to thrilling experiences, and the positive impact on their perceptions.

Thrill is made up of a combination of arousal and valence, which means how intrinsically attractive something is. If something is highly arousing and has high valence it is exciting, if it has low valence and doesn't arouse you it is boring. An increase in both at the same time creates a thrilling moment.
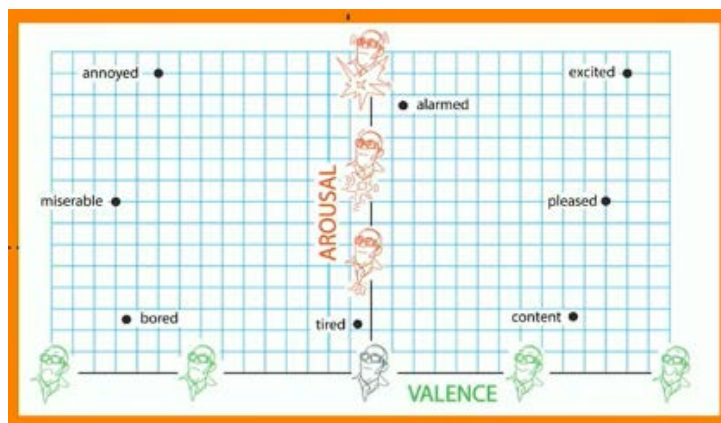
Brendan's work has focused on how we measure that 'thrill factor' using theme park rides. When we become aroused the body changes, and we see physiological traits such as sweating. Brendan used a machine which measured arousal by attaching to subjects' fingertips; when it detected high levels of arousal it took a photo. Computer vision techniques were then used to quantify how aroused someone was from these photos and codify the learnings, which could then be applied to any photograph or video.

Which leads us to how this could be useful for brands, through measuring the effect of products or advertising on consumers. Brendan has already worked with Drum on people's response to certain films, and with Durex on the development of an app for couples. The scientific verification of thrill allows us to measure the human emotion tied to physical sensation.

Is ecoeffectiveness the missing effectiveness measure?

An inspiring talk on 'ecoeffectiveness', and how the advertising industry needs to start taking responsibility for its contribution to climate change, came from Caroline Davison, Managing Partner and Sustainability Lead at Elvis, and Ben Essen, Global Chief Strategy Officer at Iris. They presented a measurement framework focused on identifying the volume of incremental emissions driven by advertising, and recommendations for how brands and agencies can look to reduce their impact on the planet moving forward.

1. **Honest reporting of our impact:**
   Effective advertising generates incremental sales, and thus it follows that it drives additional carbon emissions from the production and distribution of those products. A simple equation can help us to understand exactly how much additional carbon has been generated from each campaign. Ben and Caroline went through the Audi IPA Effectiveness award winning entry as an example; with 132,700 incremental unit sales, the average carbon footprint of each car in terms of it's Lifecycle Assessment (LCA) puts the carbon footprint per item sold at 39 tonnes, and the total uplift in greenhouse gas emissions at 5,175,300 tonnes. To put it in context that is more than the country of Uganda, or 1.3 coal power stations in a year. But how does it compare to other campaigns?

2. **Consistent and comparable approach:**
   To turn this into a metric that is more consistent and comparable across cases, they then calculate 'Return on CO2e', the revenue achieved per 1 tonne of emissions output. For Audi the ROCO2e was £344 per tonne. Compared to some other examples this turned out to be fairly low.

3. **Openness in how to improve:**
   So how to improve? The team posited three potential routes to doing this; Switch the product being promoted to one with a lower carbon footprint, create carbon-free value by focusing on advertising not as a way to drive more sales but as a way to drive premium brand perceptions, allowing you to sell the product for more, encourage positive human behaviour through the advertising e.g. never showing cars with one passenger, applauding rather than denigrating public transport use.

A SIMPLE EQUATION PROVIDES THE ANSWER

The uplift in sales driven by advertising **X** The carbon footprint per item sold **=** The uplift in greenhouse gas emissions driven by advertising

THE MODEL ACROSS SECTORS

	Audi	IKEA	Starbucks
Total GHG	5,175,300 tCO2e	650,000 tCO2e	8,076 tCO2e
ROCO2	£344	£1,161	£3,479

The team did however mention at the end of the presentation that all of these approaches will amount to incremental changes only, and there will come a time when unprecedented change is required. We need to start thinking about the type of work we award, or even the type of work we choose to make, and how 'ecoeffective' it really is.

COVID has changed the narrative, communication needs to change with it to remain effective

Professor Marcel Danesi, semiotician, discussed his research into effective communication and the effect the pandemic has had on the narratives we live by. Effective communication is the ability to make what you are saying relevant to the context, and to tap into the values of the people you are talking to, to connect with your audience. However, when those values start to change the whole narrative changes and thus how you communicate needs to change as well.

What changes narratives?

Well, pandemics definitely do. Before the bubonic plague in the 1300s the narrative of the time was that life was a spiritual journey, and people's lives were institutionalised according to that narrative; the seven deadly sins, religion, truth. After the pandemic the narrative started to change, it was the first-time fiction was used as a writing style, the process of using anything publicly that wasn't the truth. The narrative became more about life as a human journey.

## Has COVID changed the narrative?

Danesi thinks so. The unifying theme now is 'life must change', and this is bringing together discourse around COVID, racial discrimination and systemic racism, and climate change, with everything coalescing around this one idea. The most effective communication will now shift to reflect this narrative.

Right-brained advertising proves to be successful in terms of attention and outcomes, even for online video campaigns

Orlando Wood revealed an early preview of his latest research describing the features of successful online video campaigns, in a follow-up to the hugely successful 'Lemon', launched at last years Eff Week. Using the characteristics of left-brained and right-brained advertising established in his initial research, he ran a series of experiments, coding almost 200 ads from spring/summer 2020, Facebook and YouTube video ads, and past IPA Effectiveness winners whose campaigns were predominantly online video. He then compared the outcomes in terms of attention, engagement and business outcomes. His objective; to establish how right-brained advertising compares to left-brained advertising in the context of online video and establish some rules for making this type of advertising more effective.
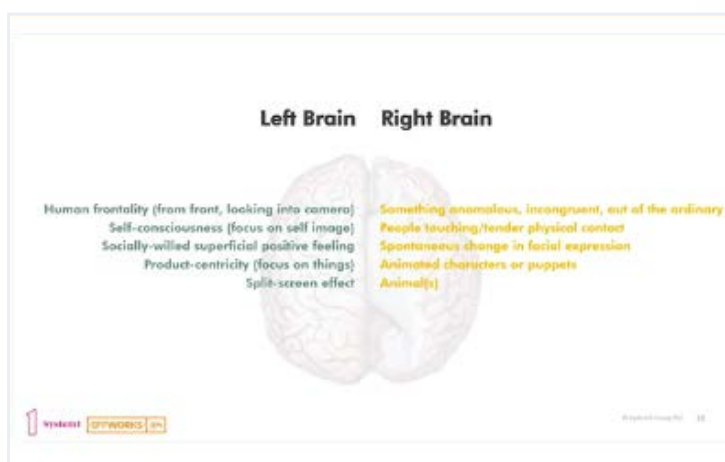
Orlando found that while left-brained ads were unsurprisingly more likely to drive direct effects, video ad campaigns with a right-brained skew were more effective in terms of large business effects, generating broader and longer lasting effects. Ads with right-brained features upfront (in the first few seconds) were associated more strongly with sustained attention, emotion and brand recall.
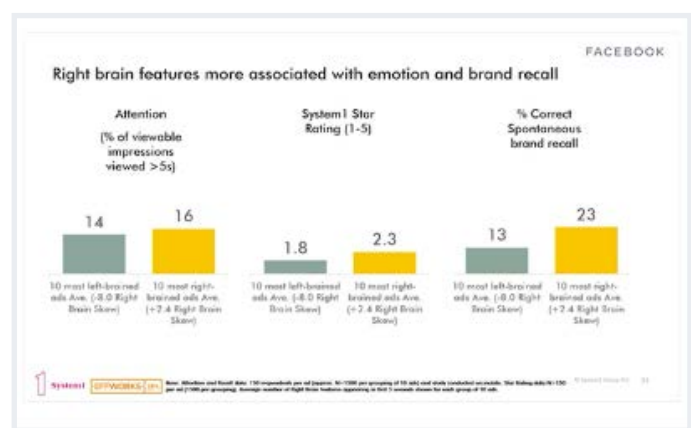
Perhaps in creating online video advertising we have got the question wrong, and it shouldn't be 'how do I make an effective 6 second ad?', but 'how do I make online advertising that holds attention more effectively?'. This research suggests that a return to broad, contextual emotional advertising, featuring connections and relationships could be the way to do that. Oh, and including animals apparently!

Diversity both in the office and of our advertising is becoming more and more important

Diversity was another key topic at this year's conference, with a number of speakers focusing on its importance and its impact on effectiveness. Kathryn Jacob, Co-Author of "Belonging", chair of the AA's "Inclusion Hub" and CEO of Pearl & Dean, discussed why a culture of diversity is so important both in the office and for our consumers, in terms of motivation and reputation, competitive edge and value creation.

Serhat Ekinci, MD OMD Media Group, Diversity and Inclusion Division, talked about his take on why diversity is so important, and why his department was set up 4 years ago. He says that there is a fundamental error in the way that we currently respond to briefs, that we focus too heavily on age, gender, education etc. and not enough on those things that truly make us different; faith, sexuality, values, race. There are 18 ethnic groups with differences between the groups but also within, 5 main religions and many smaller ones, 10 different LGBTQ+ groups, and 9 main disability categories. By not considering these variables we risk alienating consumers. We need to move from unconscious exclusion to conscious exclusion, and when done right, the inclusion of diversity within media can have many benefits, such as incremental reach and much more relevant, and thus effective, advertising.

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