

Creativity that sparks response:

Pinning down emotion's effect on ad performance



There's good news for marketers: campaign effectiveness has risen for the first time in three years, up from 2.5 effects per campaign in 2022 to 3.0 in 2023.



The data, from the DMA's Effectiveness Databank, also reveals:

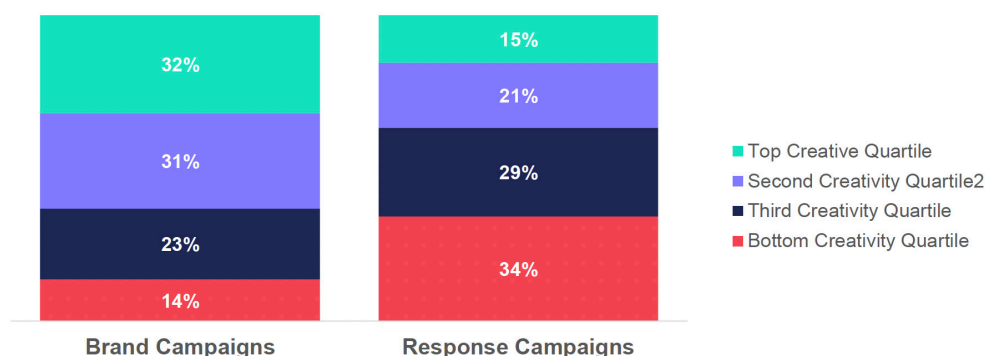
- Brand campaign performance is the major driver of effectiveness
- Creativity is a core element of brand campaigns' success
- There is room for more creativity in performance marketing

Consumers are responding well to campaigns that build awareness, successfully changing the way they recall and view brands. Creativity is key to prompting them to respond.

However, the effectiveness data - calculated using DMA Awards judges' scores across several years of the programme - also shows creativity is being under-used for performance ads.

As the chart below illustrates, almost a third (32%) of brand campaigns are rated in the top creativity quartile according to the data. The same is true of just 15% of response campaigns. (DMA Effectiveness Databank)

Creativity Score Profile by Campaign Type



When we look more closely at creativity's impact on campaign results, we can see the consequences of downplaying its use in performance ads. According to the data, highly creative campaigns multiply business effectiveness by four times compared to less creative work. That means more sales, profit, market share and, ultimately, a better shot at creating long-term loyalty.

Investigating what makes campaigns tick, we've discovered that when creativity provokes an emotional response in consumers, the brand effects - awareness, perception, consideration - significantly increase. Once again, though, this success occurs mainly for brand campaigns. This is further evidence that emotion drives creativity, which in turn strengthens connections between brands and consumers. But when it comes to performance ads, emotion-based creativity often fails to shift the dial.

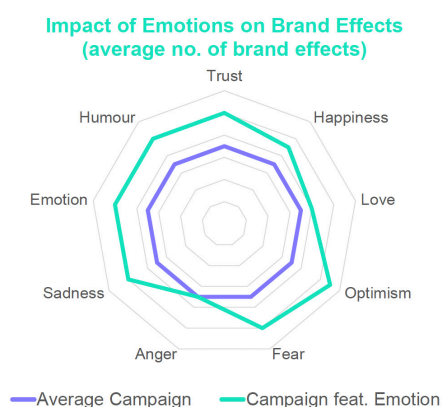
Applying Daniel Kahneman's behavioural science theory, it's clear that brand advertising often attempts to trigger an emotional response - System 1, or 'fast' thinking; while performance ads tend to target the rational part of consumers' brains - System 2 or 'slow' thinking.

It appears there's a perception that response ad creativity doesn't matter. But this default setting for campaigns is surely an oversight. There is no reason why performance ads can't draw on both techniques. That means applying some of the learnings from the currently more successful brand campaigns to performance ads: using emotion to drive creativity, and subsequently building effectiveness.

With this in mind, the DMA has partnered with Pinterest to pinpoint how creativity improves the fortunes of performance ad campaigns - leveraging emotion to provoke better response - and show why the platform is the perfect place for this to play out.



At a time when many consumers face complex and difficult problems in their daily lives, portraying positive emotions in advertising appears to have a halo effect on response. (DMA Effectiveness Databank)



Pinterest is finding that brands which tap into positive sentiment enjoy campaign success - whether that be aspirational travel, leisure or entertainment brands, or a charity showing empathy through creativity.

Pinterest users enthusiastically plan and celebrate the things that make them happy. In taking action such as banning weight loss ads and banishing misinformation, the platform is committed to maintaining a positive space as “a different business model for social media”.

It also gives brands happy outcomes: showing up in a more positive and inclusive environment, where users have an open mindset, drives impact in every stage of the purchase funnel.

When customers see ads on Pinterest across both the upper and lower funnel, conversion rates are found to be twice as high compared to campaigns with a single objective¹.

¹ Pinterest internal data as of June 2023

Pinterest uniquely sits at the intersection of search, commerce and social media. Pinterest users search for inspiration, collaborate with other users, and shop. They do all of these things in a very different way to how they behave on other social media platforms.

Pinners have a fundamentally different mindset

Tomorrow vs Today



Pinterest users are in planning mode, and this gives brands a prime opportunity to tap into their decision-making moments. In the case of someone looking into a festival experience, for instance, outdoor living, snack food and entertainment brands could become an inspirational part of their journey.

Predicting future trends

The ability to predict the future and shape people's experiences is borne out in the annual release of Pinterest Predicts. The report crunches huge volumes of Pinterest data - what users have been searching for on the platform - to shine a light on the trends that are expected to dominate culture and conversation in the year ahead.

Trends can be filtered by category and audience to reveal aspects of life-stage behaviour and purchase intent. Ultimately, the analysis provides a strategic approach to using cultural insight.

The top trends for 2024, available in full here, include²:

Dirt Flirts - 'Off the road again. Just can't wait to get off the road again'.

In 2024, Boomers and Gen X will load up their 4x4s and head for the mountains—or at least look like they are. Whether you flirt with dirt or you're down to get dusty, off-roading can be an aesthetic or a lifestyle. Time to gear up and add some gravel to your travel!

Based on over-indexing search terms e.g.

+110% overland gear

+90% off-road camping

+80% adventure car

Head To Glow - Bodycare will have a major moment. Boomers and Gen Z will double down on luxury lotions, in-home spa experiences and some serious SPF. Because skincare from the neck down just boosts that oh-so-important TLC.

Based on over-indexing search terms e.g.

+1025%

+845% body skincare routine

+245% body moisturiser aesthetic

² Pinterest internal data; global English-language search terms; Sept 2022 to Aug 2023

Pinterest is on a mission to deliver a new era for performance advertising. It is a full-funnel platform, where the entire customer journey can happen - from discovery to 'decision to do'.



As part of this, Pinterest helps brands to improve their performance, launching a refreshed product suite of solutions to inspire creativity and boost effectiveness. This has the effect of:

- Driving response in the lower funnel, by increasing content and ad relevance; as well as personalisation using AI to understand intent
- Delivering impact, by expanding and integrating the shopping experience
- Improving visibility of campaign results

Here are some of the Pinterest tools that are making a difference:

- **Shopping ads** - Include useful details such as price and stock updates in an ad
- **Carousel ads** - Display multiple related images in a single ad
- **Collection ads** - Mix images and video in the same ad unit
- **Premiere Spotlight** - High-impact awareness ad solution, designed to help brands reach audiences at scale when it matters most to them. Brands can exclusively own premium placements on Pinterest for a specified period, to promote their campaign with maximum user visibility
- **API for Conversion** - Share conversion data with Pinterest for a complete analysis of ad impact
- **Direct links** - Streamline customer journeys with a single click from the platform to a brand site or store
- **Mobile deep links** - Bring users directly to a URL in a native app
- **Third-party ecommerce integrations** - Speedier set-up by connecting existing storefronts to Pinterest

Using the tools to tap into Pinterest's positive environment, harnessing creativity to stimulate users' emotions, is having a big effect on ad performance.

- More engaged audiences: both clicks and saves increased by 50% year on year for buyable content formats³
- Conversions boosted: Expanded solutions are making an impact, with the mobile deep link feature alone delivering three times more conversions for brands⁴
- Measurement clarity: A clearer view of channel impact - API for Conversions is helping brands to measure an average 28% rise in conversions through Pinterest⁵.

³ Pinterest Internal Global Data as of June 2023 | Note: Comparing Q2'23 vs. Q2'22

⁴ Pinterest analysis, global, comparing ads between March and May 2023. Beta results comparing shopping oCPM ads with mobile deep links (n =7) vs. shopping oCPM ad without mobile deep links (n = 40). Conversions attributed using a one-day click attribution window.

⁵ Pinterest Internal Global Data; 5/12/2022 to 9/30/2022; Beta test of 42 advertisers comparing use of the API for Conversions with the Pinterest Tag compared to the Pinterest tag alone.

Case study: Malibu reach Gen Z with Pinterest Predicts insights



To drive awareness and consideration for Malibu's 'Do Whatever Tastes Good' campaign, the brand used Pinterest Predicts to give its strategy a unique twist. It aligned to an incoming trend for its target Gen Z audience - with toast-worthy results.

Pinterest Predicts 2023 trend 'Fringes with Benefits' was perfect to lean into. It foretold that fringed finishings would make a major comeback—with searches rising for “fringe dress outfits” (+255%), “tassel jackets” (+60%) and “beaded fringe dresses” (+75%) to name a few⁶.

In collaboration with agency partner MG OMD, Malibu developed a suite of assets incorporating the trend with a lifestyle focus. Additionally, each ad featured the Pinterest Predicts Trend badge.

Using static and video ads, the creative aligned with the trend, showing people in fringe-embellished goods and enjoying a hearty Malibu drink. The content shared recipe ideas for DIY Malibu cocktails at home, and the overall look and feel of the ads gave a bold, brilliant, fantasy-style setting—grabbing attention in people's feeds.

Malibu saw a boost in brand metrics. The results showed that 18- to 24-year-olds were significantly more likely to purchase Malibu in the future with +2.3pt lift in action intent. It also worked effectively among the male audience, measuring a +6.3pt in brand favorability⁷.

Overall, Malibu showed that leaning into a trend and giving it a splash of Pinterest Predicts worked hand-in-hand for the campaign, meeting marketing objectives and driving results.

Emotions in motion

A sole focus on tools and platforms can obscure how human emotion matters in connecting consumers to brands, leading to long-lasting and loyal relationships.

But Pinterest also understands that a powerful mix of logic and emotion are key components of creativity. As described earlier, appealing to a combination of fast and slow thinking can have a huge effect on performance - particularly for users who make purchase decisions on Pinterest.

Pinterest launched a study in partnership with creative effectiveness platform System1 to test the hypothesis that emotional and rational equilibrium in creativity gets the best results.

⁶ Pinterest, global search data, analysis period Sept 2020 to Sept 2022.

⁷ Malibu x Pinterest Brand Lift Study, UK, 2023

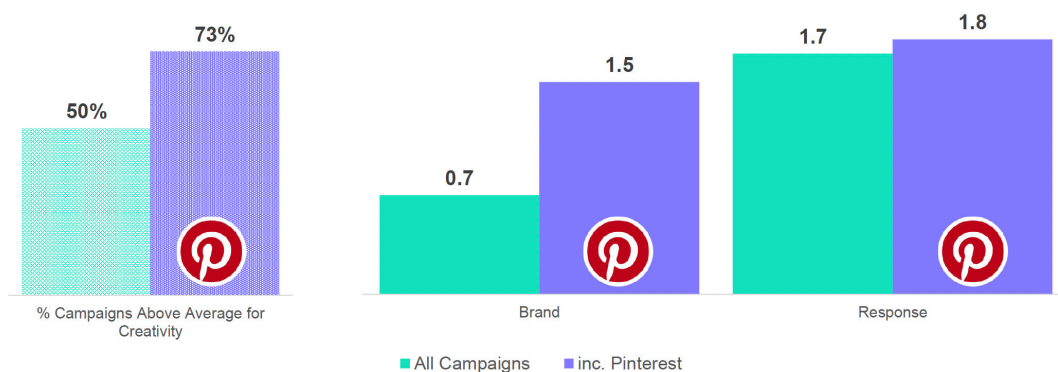
Case study

The full research can be found here, but to summarise the success of finding the right balance in campaigns:

- When ad creatives drove an above-average positive emotional reaction the ads had a +20% higher lift in recall and a 6x higher lift in action intent—figures that will dramatically increase the long-term effectiveness of campaigns⁸.
- Considering consumer reactions to both product and non-product focussed creatives, the research found emotional intensity is key to driving short-term effectiveness. Product-focused creatives with higher-than-average emotion intensity saw a 140% increase in action intent⁹

Creating a positive response

According to the DMA Effectiveness Databank, Pinterest campaigns have above-average creativity. They are also twice as likely to drive a brand effect, and even outshine the average campaign on response effects. (DMA Effectiveness Databank 2024)



Now we know a positive approach to harnessing the power of emotion drives creativity. That's a timely insight for marketers who are striving to get the best results from performance advertising - and one that will deliver a happy outcome.

⁸ Pinterest internal data, EMEA CPG, Q3 2020-Q1 2022. Brand Lift studies results. System 1 analysis on same creatives.

⁹ Pinterest, global search data, analysis period Sept 2020 to Sept 2022.

About the Data & Marketing Association

The DMA is the UK's trade association for the data and marketing industry. Our vision is a data and marketing industry where every organisation takes a 'customer-first' approach. As the voice of the data and marketing industry, our responsibility is to prove the responsible and innovative use of data in marketing drives business growth. We set the standards for the good of marketers, and most importantly, customers. We empower marketers to drive growth and prove the value of data through public affairs, resources, learning, and talent. With over 700 organisations, the DMA is the UK's largest community made up of 27,000+ marketers.

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