What is the relationship between creativity and advertising effectiveness? Does likeability (one measure of advertising creativity) have a correlation with advertising effectiveness?

Likeability has always been important for advertisers as advertising liking is the strongest factor linked to persuasion and sales. Several studies in the early 1990s already showed the positive effects of advertising likeability.

Likeable advertisements are better at interrupting the scanning phase of consumers – also referred to as the “stopping power of advertisements” – improving processing, and producing more positive judgments of the message, and hopefully, the brand (Metha & Purvis, 2006; Smit, van Meurs et al., 2006). In general, liking a commercial is thought to equate with the advertisement’s effectiveness. People may carry a set of several particularly liked and disliked commercials at all times and surveys might be a viable method for testing which advertisement gets through the marketing maze. Studies have shown that liked advertisements were recalled more than disliked ones. People accurately associate brands with a memorable commercial and are more likely to remember a brand in a liked commercial, suggesting that an appealing commercial is the better marketing vehicle (Stone, Besser et al., 2000).

The connection between creativity, likeability, and recall seem to be the essence of what advertising is all about: Creating likeable and memorable commercials is a prelude to selling products and services and overall, creativity is still the “trump card in the game” (Stone, Beeser et al., 2000).

- TV ads for low risk expressive products were perceived as more entertaining and more pleasant – advertisements for high risk products were tended to be evaluated on the basis of their relevance (Smit, van Meurs et al., 2006)

- Ads embedded in similar contexts appear to lead to better understanding and a more positive affective reaction for low involvement consumers (Patrick De, Maggie et al., 2002)

- TV is generally considered a lower involvement medium, and therefore, the associative structure resulting from positive context appreciation may have a more direct impact on recall (Patrick De, Maggie et al., 2002)
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This paper examines the impact of the need for cognition (NFC) as a moderator of the relationship between endorsers' likeability and advertising effectiveness of explicit persuasive appeals. Explicit persuasive appeals are best understood as an advertiser’s direct attempt to convince consumers to execute the desired behavior, or to adopt the desired attitude. The impact of explicit persuasion on advertising effectiveness can depend on advertiser’s characteristics such as likeability. The authors found evidence that explicit persuasive appeals promote advertising efforts only when consumers do not systematically process the product attributes delivered in the ad and, in addition, when the endorser is perceived as highly likeable. Explicit persuasion was found to be more effective than merely highlighting product benefits likeable endorsers, whereas the reverse effect was found for less likeable endorsers. Advertising effectiveness suffered negative consequences when explicit statements were made by an endorser of medium likeability or a completely dislikeable endorser.


Clearly, the purpose of advertising is to create change in people’s mindset – in particular, to enhance predisposition to ‘purchase’ a brand. Until recently, most advertisers believed advertising was a rational process. However, this belief was overturned - it is largely our subconscious, emotional feelings that decide outcomes and what we say consciously about things is generally a rationalization of unconsciously-formed feelings.

This article gives four definitions of brand message related to advertising. Furthermore, it provides insight into the ‘conscious vs. subconscious’ discussion. Concluding, this paper finds that high attention and bonding scores lead to high levels of successful advertising.


Likeability has always been important for advertisers, but in 1990 the ARF put it prominently on the research agenda in 1991. They showed that advertising liking was the strongest factor linked to persuasion and sales. Several other studies in the early 1990s also showed the positive effects of advertising likeability. It is claimed that likeable advertisements are better at interrupting the scanning phase of
consumers – also referred to as the “stopping power of advertisements” – improving processing, and producing more positive judgments of the message, and hopefully, the brand. The study by the three authors was conducted in the Netherlands and resulted in various outcomes: It was shown that advertising likeability consists of four different components: entertainment, relevance, clearness and pleasantness. Each dimension relates differently to advertising processing. In order to explain advertising effectiveness, three measures were evaluated (year, Adstock, length). The length of the commercial was shown to be the most important predictor for unaided recall and an important predictor for aided recall (meaning: longer commercials are better recalled). Analyzing whether likeability in advertising differed among different types of products, and if so, to what extent this moderated the relationship between likeability and advertising effectiveness, TV ads for low risk expressive products were perceived as more entertaining and more pleasant. Advertisements for high risk products were tended to be evaluated on the basis of their relevance.


Because the Internet is an emerging medium and had grown within an environment of increasing demand for accountability, online advertisers have used a variety of methods to measure the efficacy of online advertising. Some have employed attitudinal measures such as brand awareness and purchase intention to measure effectiveness of their online advertising. The authors of this article attempted to evaluate the influence of the (often short) duration between online advertising exposure and survey taking. The results of their analysis of 28,416 responses suggest that the short duration of time since last exposure to brand measurement is an issue, but not a serious one. The relationship between recency and branding is not strong.


This paper found that ads embedded in similar contexts appear to lead to better understanding and a more positive affective reaction for low involvement consumers. Similarity of context makes the appropriate and relevant knowledge, mood structures and associations available and facilitates processing. In low involvement situations, a congruent context serves as a cue that enhances peripheral processing. In high involvement situations, the contrast effect and the resulting option of novelty and unexpectedness appear to stimulate consumers to process advertising stimulus even more. Priming and contrast effects lead to a better understanding and more ad likeability but not to more cognitive processing. Overall, TV is generally considered a lower involvement medium, and therefore, the associative structure resulting from positive context appreciation may have a more direct impact on recall.
The connection between creativity, likeability, and recall seem to be the essence of what advertising is all about: Creating likeable and memorable commercials as a prelude to selling products and services.

Memorability is measured as the ability to recall an advertisement, tested by a variety of methods but primarily by experimental procedures. Recall is an integral part of advertising effectiveness clearly recognized as such in the research literature. Liking a commercial is thought to equate with the advertisement’s effectiveness. However, research is limited on advertising creativity.

The findings of this study were grand: People may carry a set of several particularly liked and disliked commercials at all times and surveys might be a viable method for testing which advertisement gets through the marketing maze. Another finding was that liked advertisements were recalled more than disliked ones. Furthermore, people accurately associate the brand with a memorable commercial and are more likely to remember a brand in a liked commercial, suggesting that an appealing commercial is the better marketing vehicle. More, commercial recall is not merely the result of liking or disliking the product but instead, people remember the commercial regardless of their feelings toward the brand. This implies that an unknown product or service may gain quick recognition through a particularly memorable commercial. Lastly, 70% of the liked commercials in this study were deemed creative indicating that there is a much better chance of breaking through the clutter with a creative offering.