

Effective communication 2024

Lessons learnt from the Effectiveness Database with campaigns from the
100-Watts competition 2020-2023

Focus 2024: Creative approaches and campaign effects



The Swedish Advertisers' Association is an independent organisation representing the common interests of Swedish marketers. We promote responsible marketing and ensure that companies and organisations get the best possible results from their marketing investments. We lead the way in an increasingly fast-changing and complex world.

We are needed - now more than ever. Digitalisation has brought endless opportunities to our profession but also radically changed it. Investments in marketing are becoming less effective and trust in advertising is steadily declining. That's why our core mission is to improve the quality of marketing and empower marketers to deliver, measure and report the effects of their marketing activities - in an increasingly complex reality. Working closely with our global organisation, the World Federation of Advertisers (WFA), we are therefore driving several key industry initiatives to reverse this trend.

Sveriges Annonsörer is today a network of more than 5,000 marketers representing some 400 member companies in 26 industries. Read more at sverigesannonsorer.se.

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NoA is made up of wholly-owned specialist companies that work in a tightly integrated way to deliver proven strong results to our clients. Together, we are over 1,250 experts who grow Swedish, Nordic and global brands while having a clear sustainability and employer perspective.

NoA Consulting



NoA Consulting is part of NoA. We are management consultants with expertise in two growth-driving areas: profitable positioning and business innovation. Our offices are located in Stockholm and Oslo. In Sweden, we were previously known as Evidence Strategy.

Find out more at www.noaconsulting.com

Contact: Ulrika Burling, CEO
ulrika.burling@noaconsulting.com



Profitable positioning



Business innovation

Getting evidence with hard data of what actually creates effect is invaluable!



Hanna Riberdahl
CEO, Swedish
Advertisers

Demonstrating the value of marketing communications is key

In this, our third report, based on the database we have built up since 2020 and which now contains over 400 cases from the 100-Watts competition, we continue to focus on understanding how marketing communication can create value for companies and organisations. The first report resulted in six tips for marketing communication that makes a difference. In the second report, we delved into media choices and channels. This year we focus on the content of communication.

What and how we communicate is crucial for generating effect

The first important prerequisite for creating effect is that we are visible, we need to invest money in media to expose our message. But that by itself is not always enough. To create the desired effect, we also need to ensure that we do it in the right way - both in terms of what message we convey and how we convey that message. When we create communication that people pay attention to, and which creates emotions - and thus stays in their memories longer - then we improve the chances of generating positive effects on our campaign, brand, behaviour and business metrics.

We have known for a long time through numerous research studies that marketing communication is a powerful tool for creating business value. However, marketing investments are still seen by many as a cost, as opposed to an investment in profitable growth. With the help of the insights we have gathered in several reports, we can help Swedish organisations and companies to better present the case for what is required for marketing communication to deliver maximum effect. There is no one-size-fits-all solution, but there is plenty of basic evidence to support the case for marketing investments.

Pieces of the puzzle to guide you

Through the analyses we do and the "Effectiveness Reports" we publish, we are building a jigsaw puzzle. Today, our daily lives are more complex, with many choices and channels. We need to create a guide for how to think about the key elements that are crucial for creating effect. Through the three reports published to date, we provide advice on how to handle the balance between quick results and long-lasting effects, on the number of media channels to use, but also on what type of communication creates the greatest effect, and the need for investment in creativity and production quality. All reports are available for download on our website.

We regard the work on the analyses and reports based on the 100-Watts competition as a long-term effort in building knowledge throughout our profession. Enjoy the read!

Hanna Riberdahl
CEO, Swedish Advertisers

P.S. Do you have questions about the Effectiveness Database or the report? Or questions about the methodology? Do you want to discuss the results? Or are you looking for answers to questions we have not yet answered? Don't hesitate to contact me at hanna.riberdahl@sverigesannonsorer.se All input is welcome, as it is by working together, we can make sure we get the maximum benefit from the database. D.S.

The 2023 report featured six recommendations on marketing communications that create effect - now we delve into creativity



1 Use multiple channels - but not too many - and mix online with offline
More channels will generate more effect. Aim for 4 to 9 channels but avoid 10 or more channels unless the budget is very large. Otherwise, the investment per channel risks being too small to create any effect. Combine online channels (e.g. social media, search or online video) with offline channels (e.g. outdoor, linear TV or radio) and especially avoid running online only.

2 Balancing brand and activation
The greatest overall effect over time is achieved with 40-70% of the budget in brand-building communication, where the aim is to have long-lasting effects on the target group's attitudes towards the brand. Use this range as a starting point. Spend the rest on activation communications that trigger a more immediate response (e.g. purchase or visit). However, the exact balance between the two should be analysed and determined by each brand using its own data.

3 Invest in creativity - with a clear brand link
Creating creative communications that are original and stand out requires more time and effort but is an investment that pays off. The business effects are greater. Both in the short and long term. Creative communication gets more attention and strengthens the brand more. This also means that less investment in media is needed to create effect. A key element for this is that the communication is linked to the right sender, which often is not the case.

4 Use emotions to build brand
Communication that evokes emotions sticks better in the memory and therefore has a greater effect on the brand over time than purely rational/informative advertising. Therefore, don't just focus on what the message should be in brand-building communication. Invest time and effort in how to convey the message to evoke the emotions of the target audience.

5 Be patient - long-term campaigns build brands best
Brand building is about creating and nurturing the same associations over time. This is best done by being consistent with the same brand position and communication concept for many years. The effects grow over time, as the target audience learns to recognise the brand and its communication.

6 Build in novelty to create fame
To maximise the chance of reach and attention, build a clear news dimension into the communication (but still within the framework of the long-term position and communication concept). Something that people voluntarily want to take part in, talk about and share with others. And that media find interesting and worthy of attention.

We who worked on the report



Main authors:



Ph.D. Niklas Bondesson

Advisor and partner, NoA Consulting
Associate Professor, Stockholm University

Niklas has for 20 years researched the link between marketing, communication and profitable growth. He has published several studies in international research journals and works with effect issues within the framework of the Swedish Advertisers' effect Committee. Niklas also works as an advisor at NoA Consulting, which he founded in 2014 together with Dan Landin.



Alexander Cargioli

Senior analyst, NoA Consulting

Alexander is an experienced analyst who has worked with strategically important research for several well-known brands - Swedish, Nordic and global. He has a keen interest in research and keeps himself constantly updated on the latest findings in marketing and communication.

Reference group and co-authors:



Hanna Riberdahl

Hanna Riberdahl CEO,
Swedish Advertisers'
Association



Mats Rönne,

Senior advisor and
effectiveness expert,
Swedish Advertisers'
Association



Anders Rynnel

Head of Marketing,
Apoteket




Peter Bryngelson,

Insight manager
Brand & Communication,
Swedbank



Nawal Aboulazze

Analyst, NoA Consulting



Executive summary
**3 recommendations on
communication
approaches that drive
campaign effects**

3 recommendations on communication approaches that drive campaign effects – based on our analysis of the entries in the 100-Watts competition 2020-2023



Invest in a **premium look & feel** to make the target audience notice the communication.

How the communication is expressed can have as much effect as what the message is. When communication is perceived to be expensive, stylish and professional, it captures people's attention. It also strengthens the brand.

Spending extra money on high quality – and more premium – photography and lighting, environment, music, graphics or post-production, for example, therefore seems to pay off.



Use **clear brand elements** to help the target audience identify and recognise the brand behind the communication.

Carefully choose one or more brand elements to use repeatedly in as many communication elements as possible for as long as possible. These could be characters, phrases, slogans, sounds/music, places or visual expressions. Be patient, it takes a long time to teach the target audience what the brand looks (or sounds) like. This is an area with great potential for increased effects for many brands.



Use **humour** to get the target audience to like the communication.

Few people like advertising and competition for attention is fiercer than ever. That's why it's important to make communications that people want to engage with. Humour is a particularly effective way to do this. By making people smile, giggle or laugh at the communication, the chances of creating the desired effects increase. Especially if the humour has a clear link to the message to be conveyed.

A row of glowing lightbulbs is shown on a dark surface. The background features a faint, dark blue architectural scene with classical columns and arches. The text is overlaid on the left side of the image.

Data used and method of analysis

Data source: The Effectiveness Database with entries from the 100-Watts competition



The data for the analyses in this report are based on entries to the 100-Watts competition during the years 2020-2023. The 100-Watts competition has been organised by the Swedish Advertisers' Association since 1990 and rewards communication activities that have delivered measurable effects for the client. Read more about the competition at 100wattaren.se.

We have included all the entries that were accepted in the first sorting round of the competition. This gives us a total of 415 unique entries to analyse. Some entries have competed in multiple categories and therefore appear several times in the database, with exactly the same effects. To avoid these entries having a disproportionate effect on the analysis, we have chosen to include each such entry in only one category. The category used in the analysis was where the entry received the highest jury score.

All the competition categories in the 100-Watts event included:

- Businesses-to-business
- Strategic Design*
- Future*
- Long term
- International
- Force for good (100-fattaren)
- Employer Branding & Recruitment
- Consumer (as of 2021)
- Consumer Single (2020 only)
- Consumer Multi (2020 only)
- Public Information & Opinion (as of 2021)*
- Non-profit & Charities (as of 2021)*
- Corporate Social Responsibility & Non-profit (2020 only)*

* Competition entries from these categories have been excluded from the analyses in this report, which focuses on the creative content of communications. Non-profit has been excluded because we see such a wide variation in the use of creative approaches that combining them with the commercial entries would give a misleading picture. Design has been excluded because the questions on creative content in the competition form are not relevant to design.



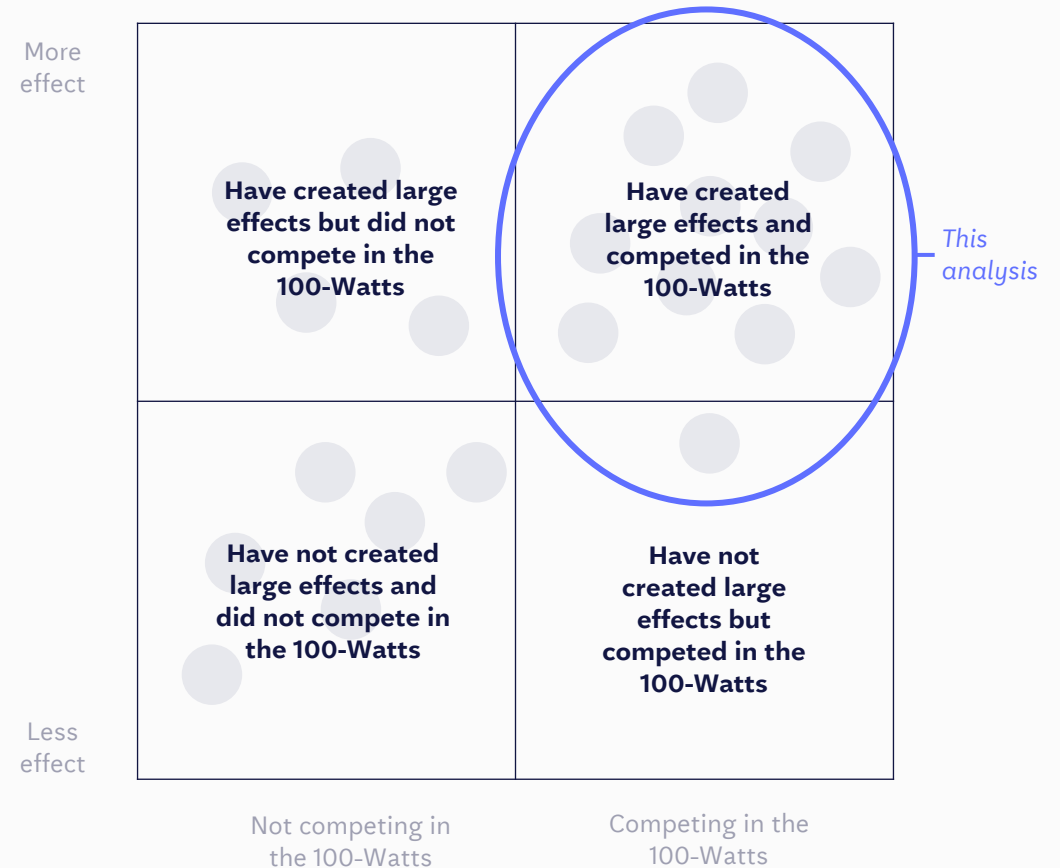
Analysing cases from the 100-Watts competition allows us to learn from the best of the best

The advantage of our 100-Watts sample is that the Effectiveness Database allows us to learn from the 'best of the best' - because the vast majority of the entries are cases which have achieved significant effects. Otherwise they would not have entered the competition at all. This sample enables us to go beyond the obvious hygiene factors and gain insights into what really makes a difference for creating superior effects.

Another advantage is that the database gives us a detailed understanding of why large effects occur. Thanks to the entry form's questions about, for example, market development, objectives, channel choice and communication content. In this way, the database is completely unique and gives us answers that were previously impossible to obtain in a Swedish context.

At the same time, to interpret the results of the report correctly, it is important to consider what the report does not cover. The Effectiveness Database does not cover all communication activities in Sweden. Beyond the competition, there are countless other communication activities. Every day, week and month - all year round. Some will be successful and deliver considerable effects, and some will have no effect at all. Because we don't have data on all these efforts, this report is not so much about what the hygiene factors are. It is not about the basic conditions needed to achieve any effect at all. We cannot see what makes a campaign work adequately instead of badly.

If we make an analogy with running, our analysis is equivalent to studying the 1,000 fastest runners in a 10 km race with 10,000 participants. It would show what success factors make runners have a better or worse ranking within the top 1,000. What gives them a chance to reach the top and maybe even win. For example, we would see what types of training programmes seem to be most effective in reaching the top. However, we would not be able to explain why someone falls outside the top 1,000 or why some finish last - that would be a different study.



Same method of analysis as in the well-known UK IPA studies



Data from the 100-Watts entry form



- The form was completely revised in 2020 and corresponds to about 80% to the entry form used by the IPA Effectiveness Awards.
- Questions with pre-defined answer options are used to systematically categorise campaigns and allow for statistical analysis (e.g. questions are asked about the sector and objectives of the intervention, the target audience, the type of message, the choice of channel and the effects created. Open questions are mainly used for jury work.
- The effects are self-reported, with clear requirements on source attribution and reporting format.



Four types of effects are analysed



- Campaign effects (the focus of this report¹)
Reach, exposure, publicity, observation, message understanding, liking, sender recognition, uniqueness, recognition and ability to generate emotions.
- Brand effects - what the target audience thinks
Awareness, attitude/opinion, liking, choice, preference, willingness to pay and intention to buy or act in other ways
- Behavioural effects - what the target group does
Purchase or other physical/digital behaviour (e.g. expression of interest, quote request, in-store or web visit, job application, download, activation or time spent).
- Business effects
Sales by volume or value, average receipt, market share, price, margin, profitability, or improvement in efficiency per cost unit (e.g. ROI, cost-per-click or cost-per-action).



Comparing activities to understand what generates the most effect



- The analysis follows the same principles as in the IPA reports.
- The main measure of effect is the number of 'very large effects' reported for each campaign (on a scale that also includes 'no effect', 'small effects' and 'large effects') - unless otherwise stated. The advantage of this measure is that it is absolute and not as influenced by the brand's starting point as relative measures (percentage increase).
- This report contains the analyses that are currently possible with a statistically sufficient number of campaigns per category. In future reports based on more campaign entries, even more comparisons and breakdowns will be possible.

**Deep-dive in 2024:
Creative approaches to the
communication that deliver
desired campaign effects**





Creative communication drives effect, but what type of creative approaches actually works best?

In last year's 100-Watts report (Communication for effect! 2023), the focus was on channels and media choices. In this year's report, we shift the focus to creative content.

It is obvious and well documented that the content of communication has a considerable effect. The content presented has a huge effect on the impression left in the minds of the target audience. When brands succeed with content, they create leverage that multiplies the effect of their media investment. And vice versa: big budgets and the right channels won't go far if the content is all wrong. If it is ignored or misunderstood, linked to the wrong brand, or just irritates the target audience.

We also know that creativity pays off and delivers more effect (see last year's report), but creative communication can be achieved in many different ways. And with many different types of creative approaches. For example, humour, shock or realism, or a catchy music jingle. Of course, what works best depends on the context and how it is used. It's not possible to say that one type of content will always have a big effect, for all brands in all categories.

At the same time, previous international research shows that there are indeed some creative approaches that generally seem to work better than others. They increase the chance of success. In this report, we want to add Swedish data to that research and at the same time guide Swedish brands and agencies in how they can create larger effects. By identifying the creative approaches that have had the best results among all the 100-Watt entries.

In this report, we focus on a number of creative approaches that have been studied in previous research. We look at the extent to which different creative approaches are used, how the use of approaches varies with different campaign objectives and target groups, and which creative approaches have the greatest effect on a number of key campaign effect metrics. To put the results in perspective, we will also refer to and compare with the academic research conducted in the field.

Focus on 24 creative approaches that address both the key messaging and how it is presented



Creative approaches in the 100-Watts entry form - competitors indicate which ones have been an 'instrumental part' of the campaign

- Celebrity (well-known person in the target group)
- Testimonial or recommendation from someone
- Fictional character associated with the brand (animated or actor)
- Product demonstration
- Clear tangible benefits
- Clear call-to-action, i.e. invitation to respond in some form
- Price (regardless of discount or not)
- Discount or other price offer
- Clear novelty value
- Negative framing (focus on raising awareness of problems or creating concern, upset, etc.)
- Positive framing (focusing on opportunities or creating joy, excitement, anticipation, etc.)
- Well-known popular music/hit
- Jingle, song or music with a clear link to the brand
- Clearly recurring brand elements used in several of the brand's previous activities (e.g. recurring character, statement, slogan, location, visual look & feel)
- Facts or statistics
- Surprise or shock
- Humour
- Entertainment
- Cleverness/smartness
- Slice-of-life (depiction of everyday events)
- Realism, authenticity ("depict reality as it is")
- Surrealism or fantasy world
- Premium look & feel/production
- Sensualism or allusion to sex

Creative devices here refer to elements and techniques that have to do with the message and how it is presented. In other words, both what is communicated and how it is communicated. The term "creative devices" is often used in international research for this.

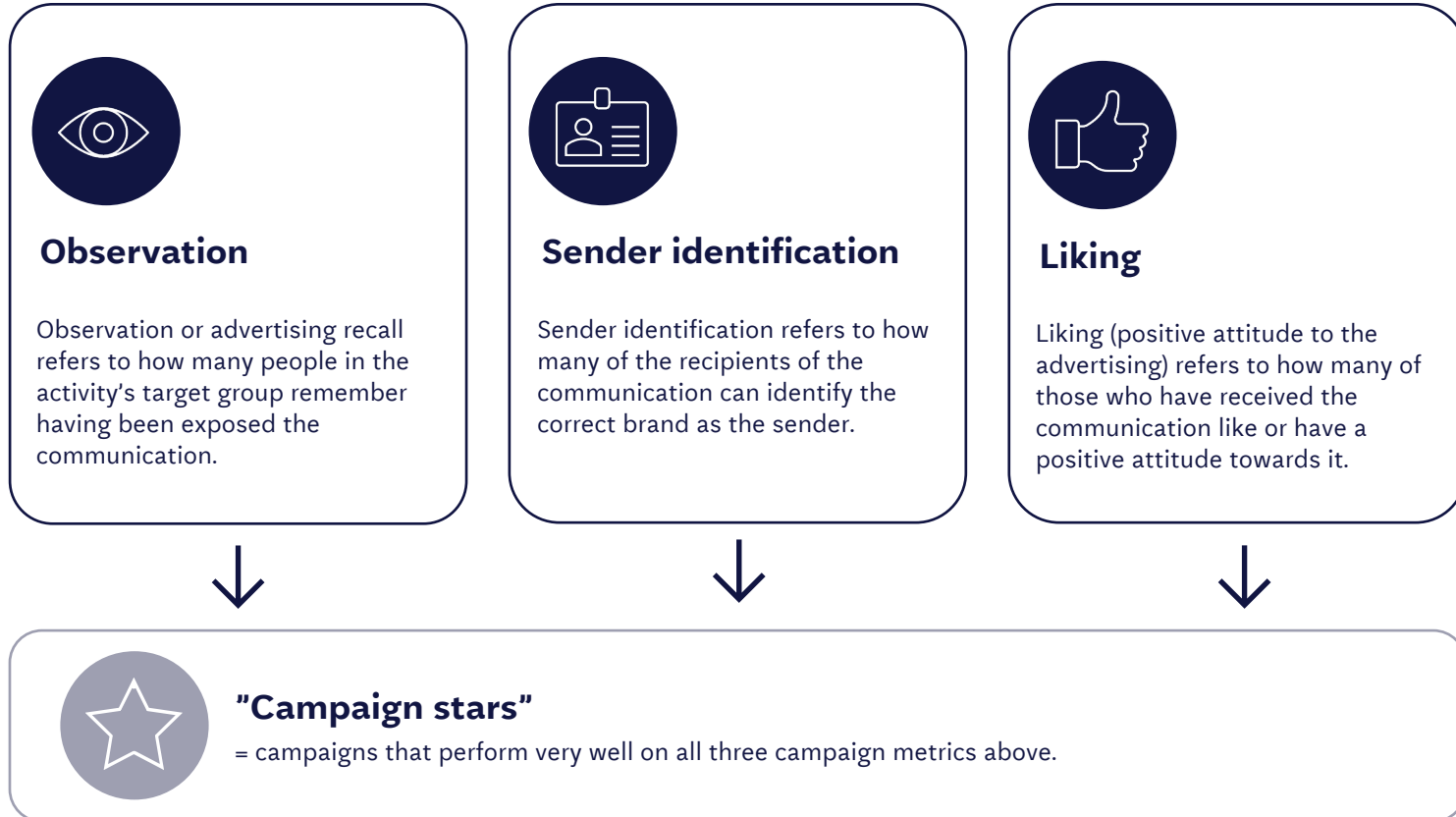
This report looks at the 24 creative approaches included in the 100-Watts entry form. They were included after a thorough review of the research literature¹ and feedback from a handful of experienced practitioners with multiple previous competition entries. The aim was to include the most commonly used approaches while at the same time allowing for the creative diversity that characterises Swedish communication. The list is of course far from exhaustive, but for reasons of space it was necessary to make a selection.

On the left, the creative approaches are shown as they are formulated in the entry form, with each competitor indicating which approaches were a "fundamental part" of the content of the intervention. Abbreviations are used in the rest of the report.

The sample consists of 293 entries that competed in the purely commercial categories. Non-profit campaigns have been excluded because we see such a large difference in the use of creative approaches that a joint analysis with the commercial campaigns would give a misleading picture. We do not yet have enough non-profit entries to analyse them separately, but we look forward to doing a deep dive into non-profit as soon as the data is deemed robust.

See for example Hartnett, N., Kennedy, R., Sharp, B., & Greenacre, L. (2016). Creative that sells: How advertising execution affects sales. *Journal of Advertising*, 45(1), 102-112.

To compare the effects of the creative approaches, we analysed three key campaign effect metrics



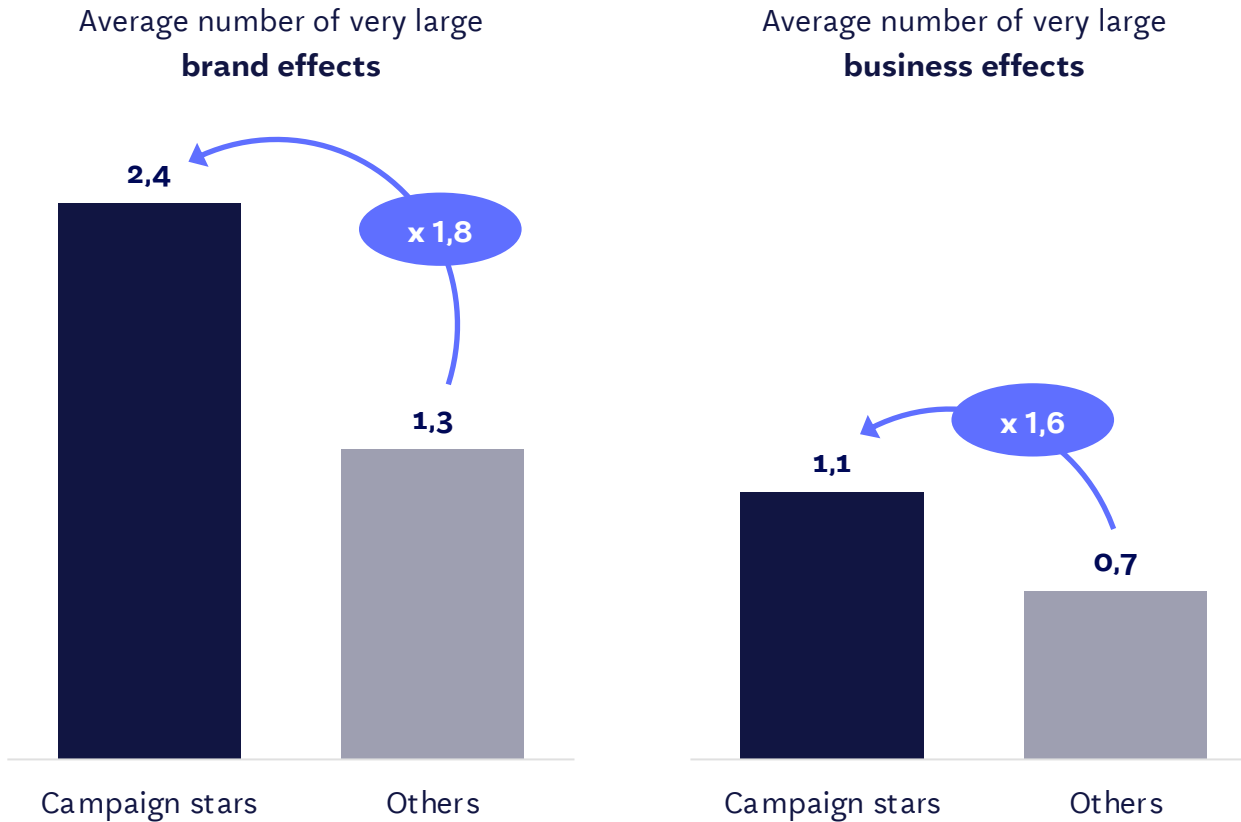
To understand whether some creative approaches work better than others, we need to analyse their effect. In a way that is comparable regardless of specific brand and business objectives and has a relevant link to the content of the communication. Therefore, we have chosen to focus on the campaign effects, which reflects how well the communication has cut through the noise.

We analyse the three most important measures of campaign effect: Observation, Sender Identification and Liking¹. These are what all campaigns should deliver on. The first two are basic requirements that set a ceiling for the brand and business effects that can be achieved. After all, it is very difficult to influence the brand attitudes and behaviours of people who have not noticed the communication at all or do not understand the brand behind it. Liking doesn't work in the same way - you don't need a certain level of liking to have an effect. However, if the target group likes the communication, the chances of a good effect increase. This reflects the fact that the content has been noticed and created positive feelings, helping it stick better in the receiver's memory. Liking is particularly important for the brand-building elements of a campaign.

In some analyses, we combine Observation, Liking and Sender Identification by analysing those campaigns that perform very well on all three measures. We call these "Campaign Stars". The grouping has nothing to do with how the contributions were rewarded in the 100-Watts

¹ See, for example, the recommendations in the Swedish Advertisers' Effect System.

Campaign effects are important for brand and business effects



Campaign effects have no commercial value on their own. A brand does not achieve business objectives just because the target audience has noticed and likes the communication. However, research is clear that campaign effects are important as a first step in influencing the target audience. It determines the level of brand and business effects that can be achieved. The more people that notice the communication, like it and understand the brand behind it, the more likely it is to influence what the target audience thinks and does.

On the left, these relationships are demonstrated. We compare campaign stars - defined as campaigns with very high effects on observation, liking and sender identification - with the other campaigns in the database. As we can see, campaign stars create on average 1.8 times more very large brand effects and 1.6 times more very large business effects.

The leverage is likely to be even greater if we had analysed all campaigns in Sweden. In this sample of 100-Watts contributions, all the campaigns are of a high standard and even the "Other" group has achieved good campaign effects. Just not at the same fantastic level as the campaign stars.

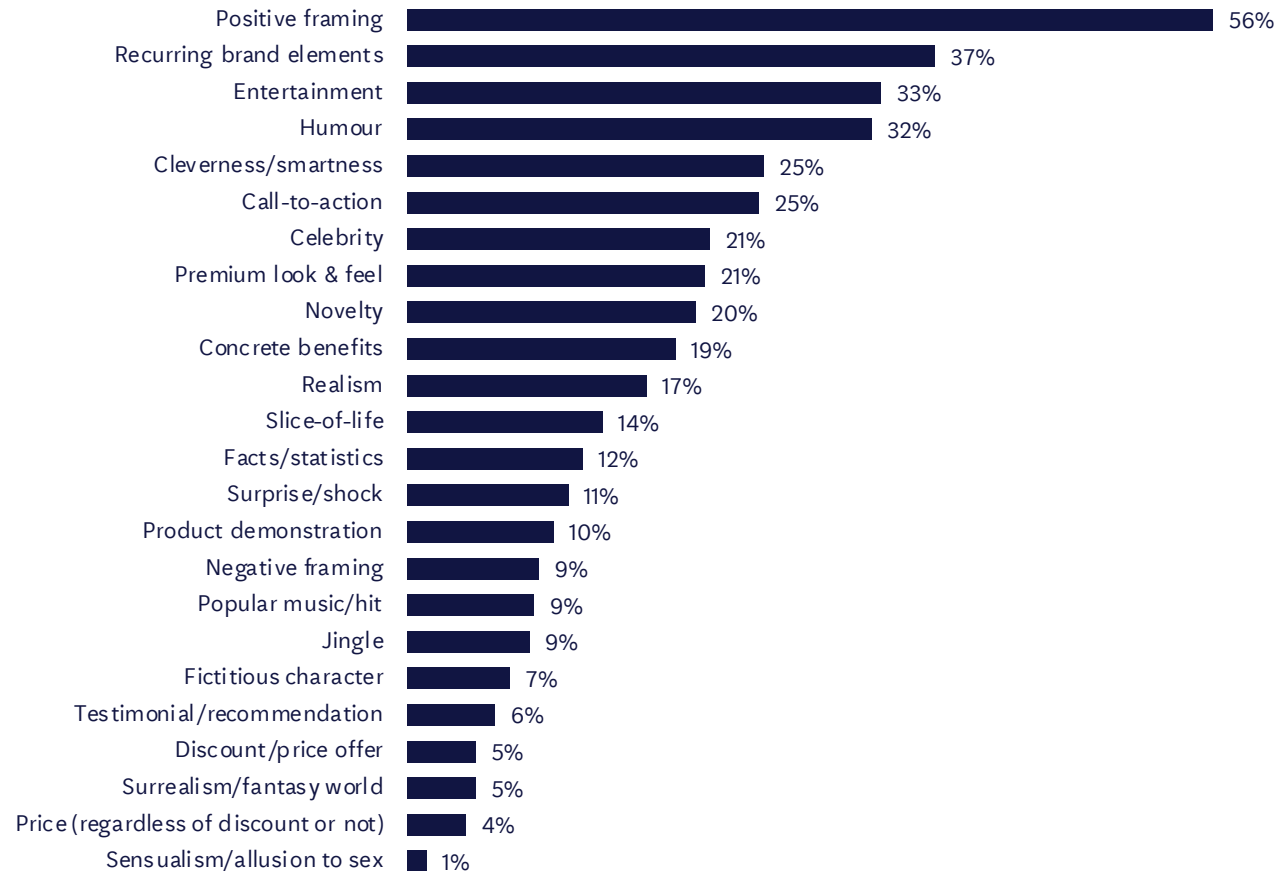
A row of light bulbs is shown on a dark blue background. The bulbs are arranged in a slightly receding line from left to right. The background features a faint, light blue grid pattern. The word "Outcome" is written in white, bold, sans-serif font on the left side of the image.

Outcome

Great variety of creative approaches, but clear preponderance towards creating positive emotions



Percentage of campaigns that used these creative approaches



The wide range of creative approaches used shows that many different approaches can be used successfully.

At the same time, there is a clear pattern. Many of the most popular approaches share a desire to create positive emotional reactions in the recipient. For example, through Positive framing (focusing on opportunities or creating joy, excitement, anticipation), Entertainment or Humour.

Among the less common approaches we find Fictional characters, which were used by only 7% of the campaigns. This is despite the fact that several studies have shown that when characters with a clear brand connection are used repeatedly in communication, the effects are greater in both the short and long term^{1,2}. The communication is more easily remembered, and the sender connection is improved.

When we compare the use of creative approaches from 2020 to 2023, we see no clear trends. No method or approach has become more common or used less.

¹ Hartnett, N., Kennedy, R., Sharp, B., & Greenacre, L. (2016). Creative that sells: How advertising execution affects sales. *Journal of Advertising*, 45(1), 102-112.

² Creativity & Effectiveness. Developing creative best practice for Long-term growth in a multi-platform world. System1 Group (2017).

More focus on product and sales in activation – premium look & feel and emotions more common in brand-building

Topp 10 most used approaches for active campaigns		
1	Positive framing	58%
2	Call-to-action	33%
3	Recurring brand elements	32%
4	Tangible benefits	26%
5	Humour	26%
6	Entertainment	26%
7	Celebrity	20%
8	Cleverness/smartness	20%
9	Product demonstration	17%
10	Premium look & feel	15%



Topp 10 most used approaches for brand building campaigns		
1	Positive framing	59%
2	Recurring brand elements	44%
3	Entertainment	42%
4	Humour	39%
5	Cleverness/smartness	29%
6	Premium look & feel	27%
7	Novelty	24%
8	Celebrity	22%
9	Call-to-action	21%
10	Realism	19%



Different creative approaches can be more or less appropriate depending on the purpose of the activity. One way to separate campaign objectives is to divide them into activation campaigns (which aim to trigger more immediate behaviour) and brand-building campaigns (which aim to create and reinforce brand attitudes).

On the left, the ten most commonly used approaches for activation and brand-building are presented. The percentages indicate how common the approaches are for each type of communication, and the arrows indicate prominent differences between the types.

As expected, there are several differences. Activation campaigns make more use of Call-to-action and product focus in the form of Tangible benefits and Product demonstration. Approaches that are more action-orientated, rational and argumentative.

Brand-building campaigns, on the other hand, more often use approaches such as Entertainment, Humour, Premium look & feel, Novelty and Realism. These approaches are more emotional and many have more to do with the way the communication is expressed than its message. The former is consistent with the intention of brand-building communication to influence people's attitudes towards a brand.

= more than 1.5x more common

B2B communication is more hard-selling, rational and product-focused



Topp 10 most used approaches in B2C		
1	Positive framing	65% ↑
2	Recurring brand elements	41% ↑
3	Entertainment	38% ↑
4	Humour	36% ↑
5	Cleverness/smartness	26% ↑
6	Celebrity	23%
7	Call-to-action	22%
8	Premium look & feel	22% ↑
9	Novelty	18%
10	Tangible benefits	17%

Topp 10 most used approaches in B2B		
1	Call-to-action	39% ↑
2	Tangible benefits	36% ↑
3	Positive framing	32%
4	Cleverness/smartness	29%
5	Novelty	25%
6	Realism	25% ↑
7	Humour	21%
8	Slice-of-life	18%
9	Facts/statistics	18% ↑
10	Testimonial/recommendation	14% ↑

One factor that can influence the choice of creative approach is the target audience of the communication. Here we have compared B2C (consumer-facing) and B2B (business-to-business) brand initiatives.

As we can see, B2C brands more often use approaches such as Positive Framing, Humour and Entertainment, while B2B brands are more likely to use Call-to-action, Tangible Benefits, Realism, Facts/Statistics and Testimonial/recommendation. In general, B2B communication is more hard-selling, rational and product-focused.

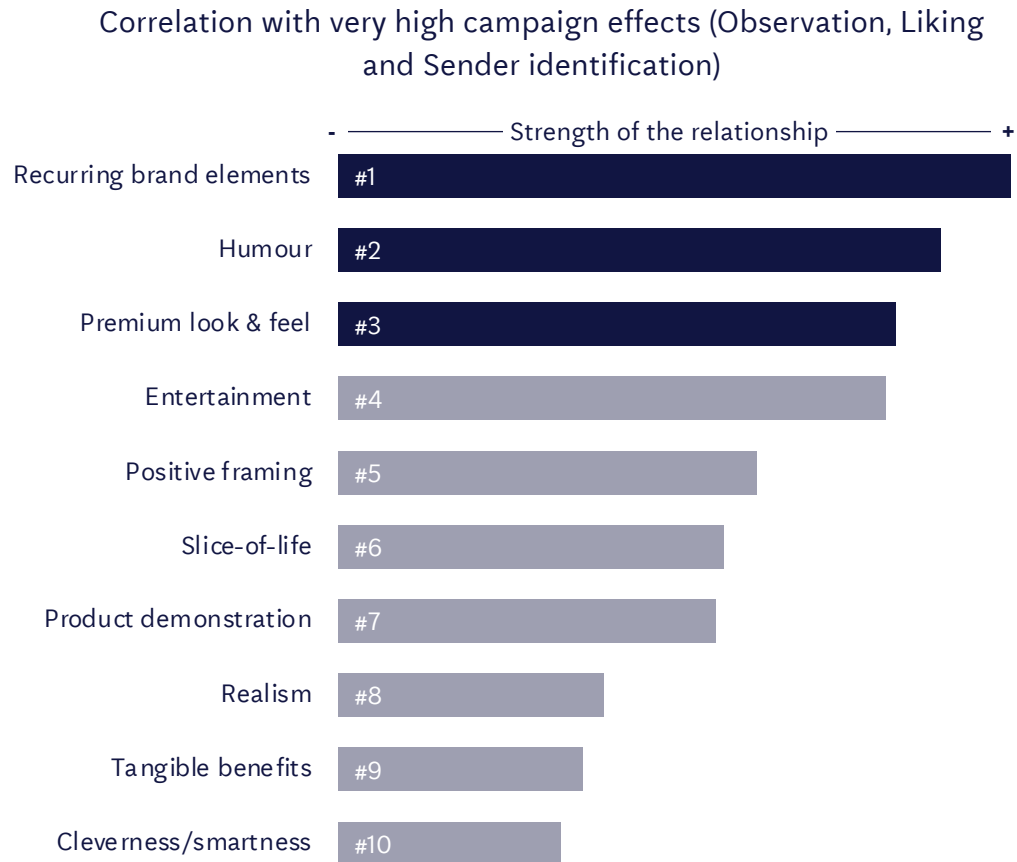
Given the long-held belief that B2B buying decisions are strictly rational, it is not surprising that communication is also becoming more rational. However, a lot of research suggests that this belief is not entirely true. Business customers are people too, and B2B purchases are often very complex. This suggests that B2B communication would work better if it also used more emotional content.

At present, we do not have enough entries in the database to compare the effects of rational versus emotional communication in B2B. This is something we hope to do in future reports.

¹ See for example Brown, B. P., Zablah, A. R., Bellenger, D. N., & Johnston, W. J. (2011). When do B2B brands influence the decision making of organizational buyers? An examination of the relationship between purchase risk and brand sensitivity. *International Journal of Research in Marketing*, 28(3), 194-204.

↑ = more than 1.5x more common

Recurring brand elements, humour and premium look & feel are the best tactics for large campaign effects



Is there a specific type of communication content that is particularly important for delivering campaign effects? Here we answer this question by analysing the correlation between the use of different creative approaches and the number of very large campaign effects (a combination of observation, liking and sender identification)¹. The full list of approaches can be found on page 14.

We can see that Recurring Brand Elements, Humour and Premium look & feel have the strongest effect on campaign effects, closely followed by Entertainment. Campaigns that have used these approaches have been particularly successful in getting the target audience to notice the communication, like it and understand who the sender is. This result is not unexpected, as previous research has clearly shown that these approaches are particularly important for creating effect².

Of course, the fact that the other approaches show weaker correlations does not mean that these can't be used successfully. However, the chances of reaching the very top of the "best in class" level seem to be greater if you use the highest-ranking approaches.

The fact that Slice-of-life and Realism are at the bottom is not surprising. A research study of 323 commercials from 67 brands found that realistic content (depicting realistic, everyday situations in a 'real' and authentic way) had lower sales effects. The researchers point out that realistic communication can easily become generic and often lacks humour and entertainment. In other words, it often becomes boring. However, if realism is combined with humour, larger effects can be expected.

In the rest of the report, we look at the three approaches that have the most effect. However, Entertainment, in fourth place, however, is something we don't explore further. This is because it correlates very strongly with Humour, i.e. it is essentially the same thing as humour in these 100-Watts entries.

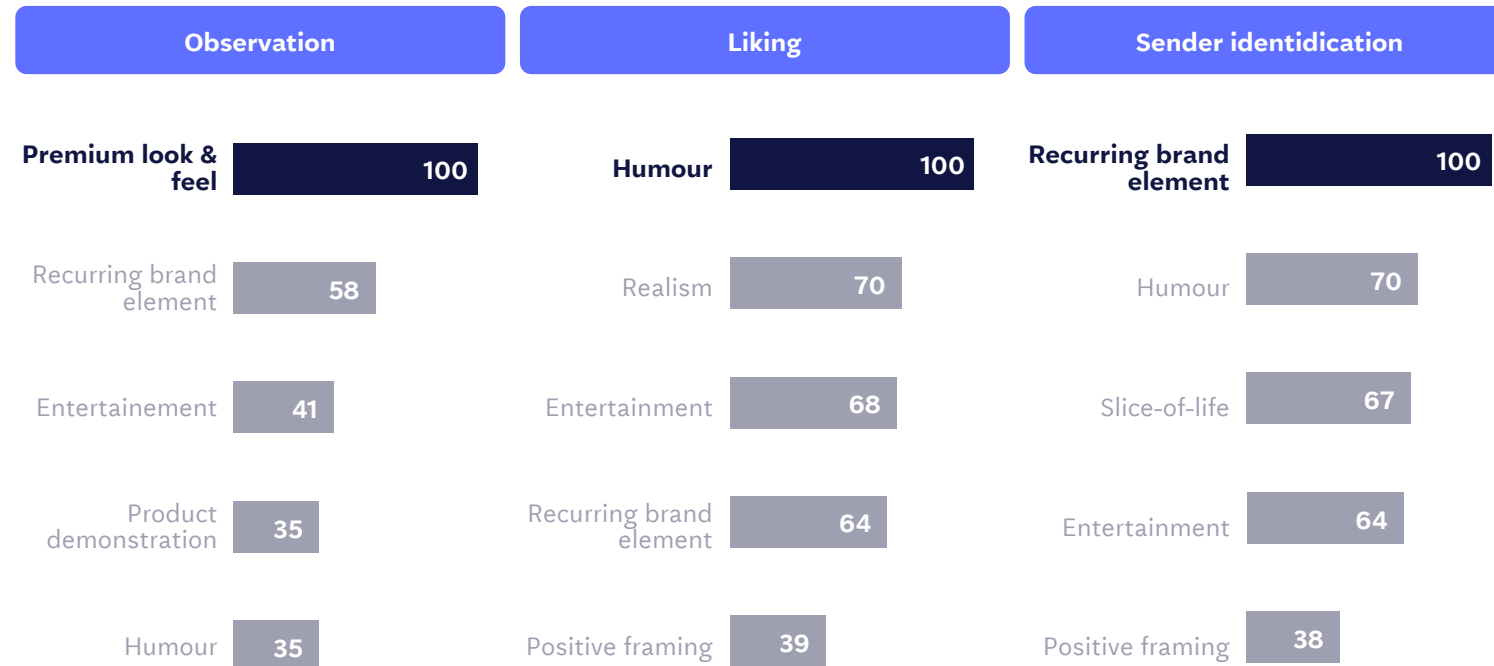
¹ In order to ensure the reliability of the results, approaches used by less than 10% of the contributions have been excluded. The analysis thus includes 15 creative approaches, and the ten approaches that show the strongest correlation with campaign effect are presented on the left.

² Hartnett, N., Kennedy, R., Sharp, B., & Greenacre, L. (2016). Creative that sells: How advertising execution affects sales. *Journal of Advertising*, 45(1), 102-112.

³ Becker, M., Wiegand, N., & Reinartz, W. J. (2019). Does it pay to be real? Understanding authenticity in TV advertising. *Journal of Marketing*, 83(1), 24-50.

Premium look & feel, humour and recurring brand elements is a winning combination for campaign effects

Correlation (indexed) between use of the approach and very large effects on:




We saw on the previous page that Recurring Brand Elements, Humour and Premium look & feel had the strongest impact on the overall campaign effect. Here we see that their importance varies for different parts of the campaign effect. We also see that they clearly beat the other elements for importance. Therefore, it can be said that these three elements are actually the best.

Based on the Effectiveness Database with contributions from the 100-Watts competition, Premium look & feel is the approach that is best for driving observation, i.e. getting the target audience to notice the communication. Of all 24 approaches included in the analysis (only the top 5 for each campaign effect are shown here, but all 24 are listed on page 14). Humour is the best driver of liking and Recurring Brand Elements is the best driver of sender recognition.

Three approaches have a significant impact on all three measures: Humour, Recurring brand elements, and Entertainment. They contribute to campaign effect in several different ways.

Other approaches only have an effect on a single measure. For example, Realism, which certainly drives liking (though not nearly as much as Humour), but does not drive observation or sender recognition. This can be interpreted as support for the thesis that realistic communication easily becomes generic and does not stand out (see previous page) - even though it may be liked by the people who actually notice it

In the rest of the report, we look at these three approaches that have the greatest impact on campaign effectiveness

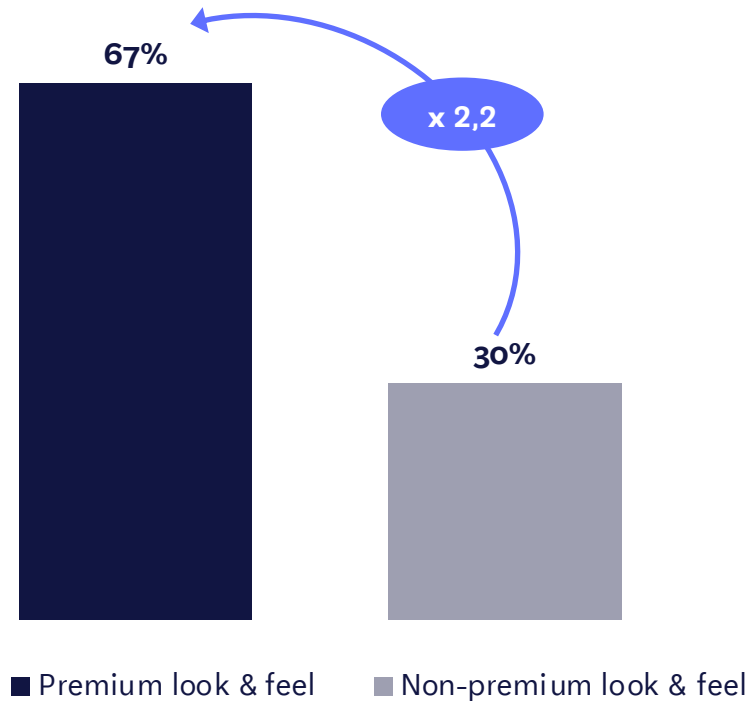


A premium look & feel – the best way to get your target audience to notice your communication

Campaigns that used a premium look & feel were twice as likely to have a very high observation rate



Percentage of campaigns reporting very high results on observation
(that the target group noticed the communication)



A *premium look & feel* is a creative approach that involves a greater investment in the visual and/or sound expression of the communication. For example, by choosing more premium photography and lighting, environment, music, graphics or post-production treatment. From a producer's perspective, it is broadly synonymous with production value. The target audience, on the other hand, would use words like 'expensive', 'stylish', 'fancy', 'professional' or 'premium'.

In our 100-Watts database we cannot see what the target audience thinks, which is obviously more important than the production budget itself, but we can see which specific information indicating when a premium look & feel was an important and supporting part of the execution.

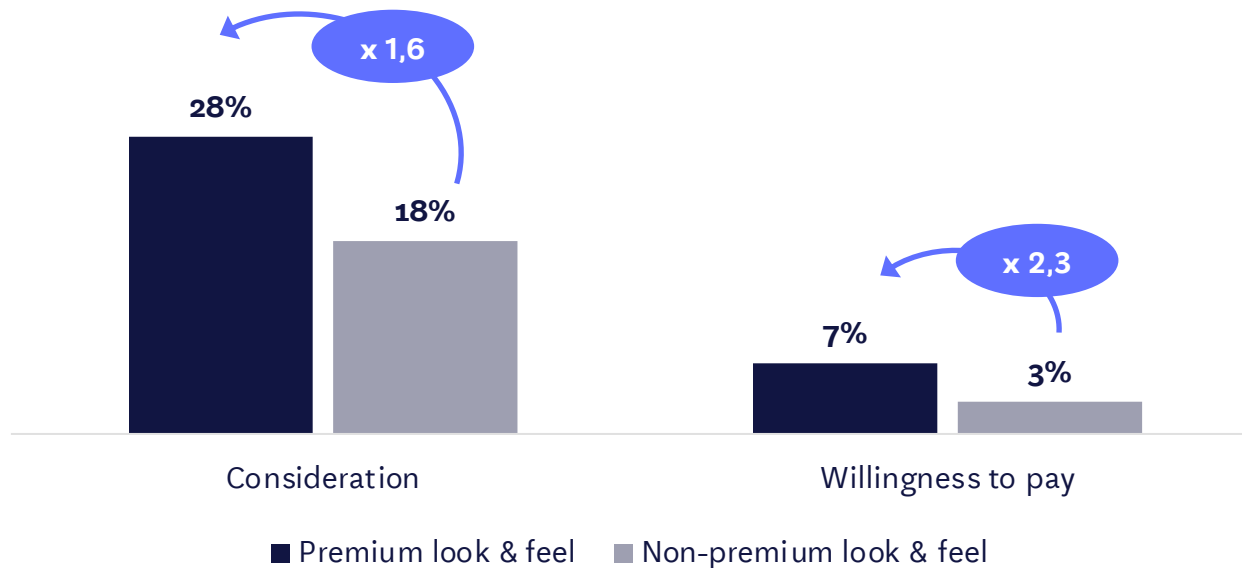
When analysing the effect of the 24 creative approaches, premium look & feel is by far the approach that has the highest impact on observation. More than twice as many of the entries that used premium look & feel scored very high results on observation compared to those that did not use the approach (67% vs. 30%).

One explanation for why communication with a premium look & feel has such a high impact on observation is that high-quality communication has a strong ability to capture attention. People are naturally drawn to aesthetically pleasing and technically impressive elements, making them more likely to be noticed and to remember the content

A premium look & feel strengthens the brand - driving both consideration and willingness to pay



Percentage of campaigns reporting very large effects



Communications with a premium look & feel not only contributes to strong campaign effects but also deliver positive effects on brand perceptions. Here we see that activities with a premium look & feel to a significantly higher extent generated very large effects on brand consideration and willingness to pay for the brand compared to campaigns that did not use the approach.

The results are consistent with research on so-called signalling effects in advertising¹, whereby recipients draw conclusions about the brand based not only on what is actually said explicitly (explicit information) but also on how it is said (implicit information). The latter is not always something the recipients themselves are aware of or can account for.

How premium the communication is perceived to be is a common example of an implicit signal. When it is perceived as more premium, it can be interpreted as meaning that the brand's products and services are also more premium - and therefore better. And secondly, that the product and service being communicated must be good, otherwise the brand would not spend so much money on the communication.

Other implicit signals with similar positive effects are if the brand does a lot of communication, communicates using larger and/or more premium formats and channels, and when communication is seen as creative (the latter being interpreted as a mental rather than financial effort by the brand).

¹ See e.g. Modig, E., Dahlén, M., & Colliander, J. (2014). Consumer-perceived signals of 'creative' versus 'efficient' advertising: Investigating the roles of expense and effort. *International Journal of Advertising*, 33(1), 137-154.

A premium look & feel

Tips and examples



Our tips

- Don't get stuck in predetermined rules of thumb about how much of the total budget should go to production versus media buying. Or in letting the producer of the communication decide on the look & feel, decoupled from the brand and communication strategy. The choice of expression and tonality and implicit signals (how the communication is expressed) should be considered as carefully as the target group, message and channels - based on an overall picture of the campaign objectives, the category and the brand's position. Spending extra money on production can in many cases be a very good investment - more than compensating for a slightly smaller media budget.
- Remember that a premium look & feel is not about making communications look pretty and professional for the sake of it. It is an aesthetic device to grab people's attention, so they listen to the message we want to get across - to stand out in the jungle of entertainment and commercial messages we compete with every day.
- Brands that aspire to stand for quality and reliability, or want to capture a certain price premium, should especially consider a premium look & feel. Because this automatically makes the brand's products and services appear a little better. Communication with a premium look & feel is implicitly interpreted as meaning that what the brand offers is also more premium.
- Last, but perhaps most importantly: of course, the target audience is the judge of what feels premium, stylish or professional. So make sure you find out what the target audience thinks and believes, to adapt and develop the look & feel.

Examples of campaigns that used a premium look & feel and achieved very high observation results.



Klarna - Smooth (Long-term)



Apothem - For All Your Rituals (Consumer)



Telia - It's Telia (Consumer)



Max Burgers - Swedish chicken like you've never seen it before (Consumer)



Lantmännen - Long live the earth (Company)



Jula - nothing can stop you now (Long term)

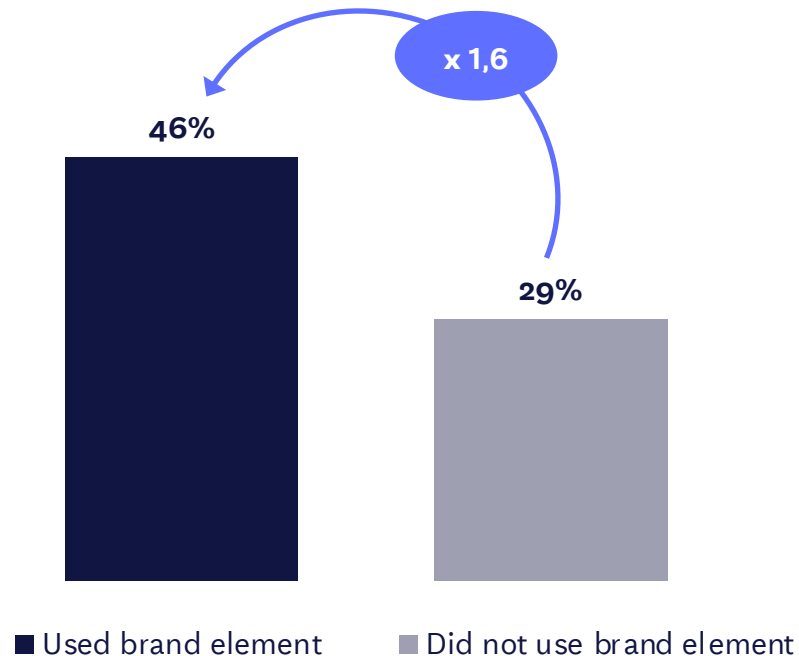


Recurring brand elements – the best approach for ensuring correct sender recognition

Recurring brand elements significantly increase the chance of correct sender recognition



Percentage of campaigns reporting very high results on sender recognition



Recurring brand elements here refer to distinct components such as characters, phrases, slogans, places and visual expressions that have been used in several of the brand's previous communication activities. It's not just about the brand's logo. Marketing researcher Jenni Romaniuk uses the term *distinctive brand assets*.

The point of using such elements in communication is mainly to make it easier for recipients to recognise and understand which brand the communication is for. Which is a prerequisite for creating brand and business effects.

When a brand uses the same element across multiple campaigns, a link between the element and the brand name can be formed in the minds of its recipients. The element can eventually complement or even replace the brand name - if it becomes sufficiently linked to the brand. In this way, recurring brand elements offer a creative way to reinforce sender identification and recognition.

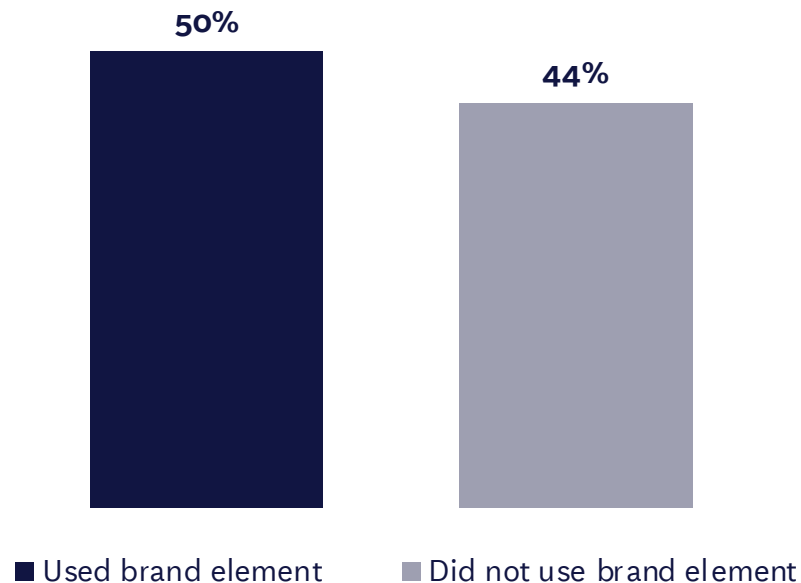
Our analysis validates this point. Of all the 24 creative approaches included in the analysis, recurring brand elements have the greatest effect on sender identification. 46% of the campaigns that used recurring brand elements reported very high scores for sender identification, while the corresponding figure for campaigns that did not use the approach is 29%. Please note that the figures do not indicate the sender identification itself.

¹ Read more in her 2018 book *Building Distinctive Brand Assets* (Oxford University Press).

Clear brand elements do not make communication less likeable



Percentage of campaigns reporting very large liking scores



It is sometimes assumed that clear sender identification has a negative effect on people's perceptions of the communication. That people simply don't like it when the brand takes up too much space in an advert or commercial. And that you should therefore use branding elements with great care. Preferably only subtly, so that the communication does not become "too promotional".

However, the studies carried out on the subject have found no such correlation at all¹. People do not mind clarity. On the contrary, clarity contributes to increased liking of the communication².

Our database lacks data on the prominence of different elements (e.g. how much space they take up in an advert or how long they appear in a film).

However, we can examine at a general level how the use of recurring brand elements is related to liking.

What we see on the left is that 50% of the initiatives that included recurring brand elements achieved very high liking scores, while 44% of those that did not use the approach achieved similar results. The difference is small, but the results suggest that communications using this approach are more, not less, liked.

There is no reason to fear that the use of recurring brand elements per se would lead to lower levels of liking.

¹ See for example page 31 of Building Distinctive Brand Assets by Jenni Romaniuk from 2018 (Oxford University Press).

² Smit, E. G., Van Meurs, L., & Neijens, P. C. (2006) Effects of advertising likeability: A 10-year perspective. Journal of Advertising Research, 46(1), 73-83.

Recurring brand elements

Tips and examples



Our tips

- This is an area with significant untapped potential for effect. Anyone who looks at the campaign measurements of research companies will see that, on average, Swedish campaigns only manage to get about 3 out of 10 in the target group to understand who the sender is. What's more, this is a relatively simple measure to work with - compared to, for example, getting management to double the media investments.
- As a guideline, aim over time for a sender identification that is as high as the brand's unaided awareness. Higher is more difficult because people cannot recognise a brand they do not know exists.
- Carefully select one or more brand elements to be used repeatedly in as many communication activities as possible. Ideally, base the choice on survey interviews with the target audience that show whether distinctive elements already exist or whether new ones need to be created.
- Keep in mind that you need elements that work across all channels. For example, a distinctive colour does not work well in podcast advertising and a jingle does not work well in digital ads where users often have the sound turned off. A combination of elements is therefore often good to use.
- Don't be afraid to break the norms of the category. A generic element does not grab attention and, in the worst-case scenario, risks causing the recipients to think of a competitor. The most important thing is that the element is distinctive, easy to recognise and difficult to confuse with other brands' elements.
- When a new element is launched (e.g. a new colour), it should be clearly presented together with the brand name or logo to establish the link in the minds of the target audience.
- Be patient. It takes years rather than months to teach the target audience what the brand looks or sounds like. Therefore, also be very restrictive about abandoning any existing elements. The long-term approach will pay off.
- Never forget you are not the target audience. Many brands are replacing elements because the people managing them get bored and believe the elements feel stale or outdated. In a way, it makes sense, given how much they see of their own communication. But it's probably just when you get bored of the elements yourself that they start to reside in the minds of your target audience. And: an outdated look & feel may well be the most distinctive.

Examples of campaigns that used recurring brand elements and achieved very high scores on sender identification



Bregott – Bregottfabriken
(Long-term)



Lidl – What Lidl is like
(Consumer)



Trygg-Hansa – Security for life
(Long-term)



Head & Shoulders – Henke & Shoulder
(Long-term)

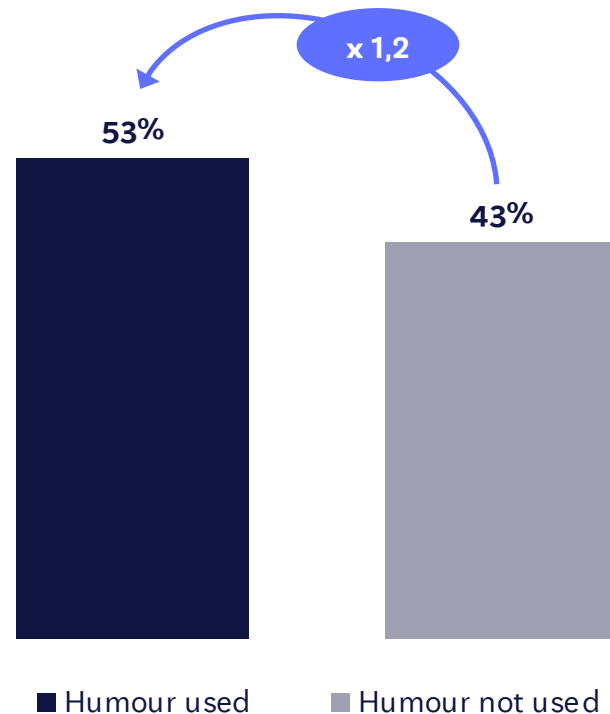
A row of several glowing lightbulbs is shown on a dark surface. The entire image is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue filter. The text "Humor – the best way to make communication liked" is written in white, bold, sans-serif font across the middle of the image.

**Humor – the best way to make
communication liked**

Humour helps the target audience will like the communication



Percentage of operations reporting very high communication liking scores



Humour is difficult to define, but in this context it refers to communication that aims to evoke mirth, smiles, giggles or laughter in the recipients - in short, that is intended to be perceived as funny.

Among the 100-Watts entries, humour is by far the creative approach that has the greatest impact on how much the target audience likes the communication (i.e. high liking). Compared to entries that did not use humour, humour-based campaign are 1.2 times more likely to generate very high liking scores.

This finding is in line with previous research¹, where two explanations for why humour drives liking are often highlighted. The most obvious is that humorous content has an inherent ability to give rise to positive feelings of joy, pleasure and enjoyment. A more cognitive explanation suggests that humour is a strong attention driver, leading to increased processing of the communication message. The target audience simply watches and listens more carefully, because they get something positive back. And then absorbs more of the content. Which often makes the experience better. A virtuous circle is created.

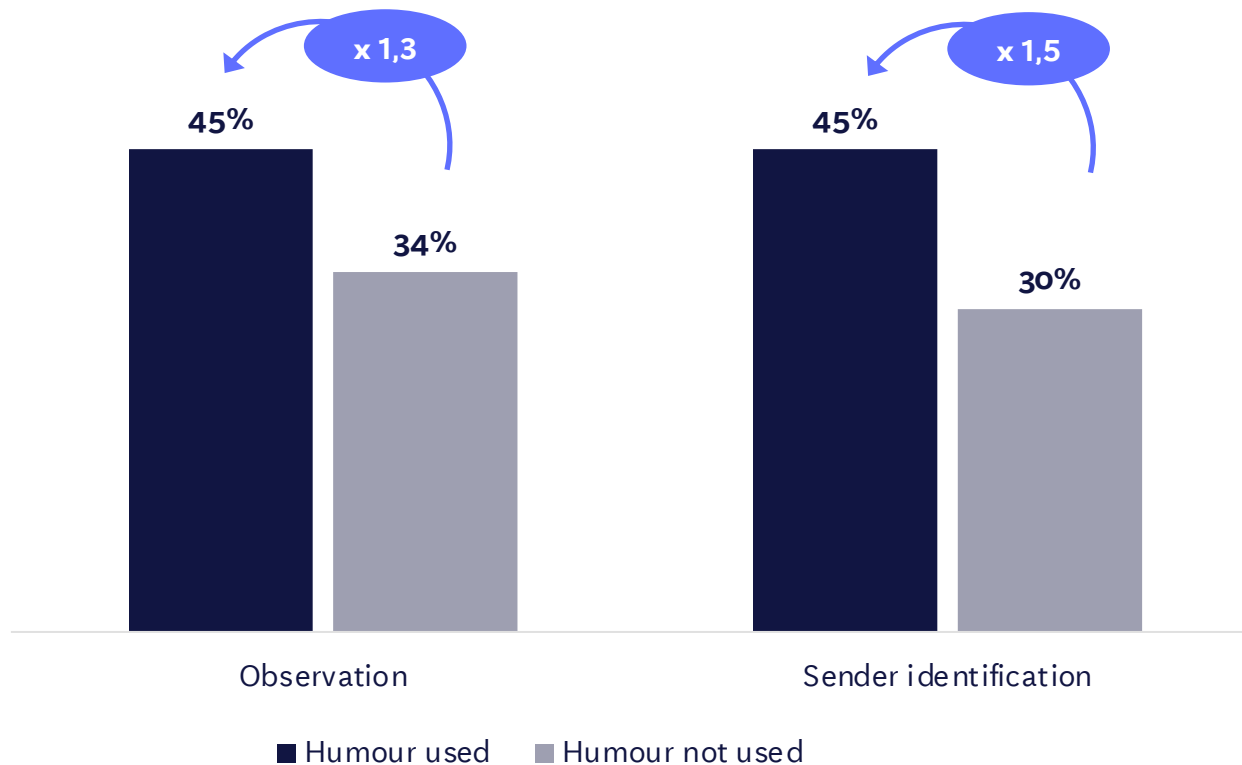
Exactly how humour affects liking varies from campaign to campaign, but there is no doubt that humour is an effective way to make communications more likable.

¹See e.g. Hartnett, N., Kennedy, R., Sharp, B., & Greenacre, L. (2016). Creative that sells: How advertising execution affects sales. *Journal of Advertising*, 45(1), 102-112; and Eisend, M. (2009). A meta-analysis of humour in advertising. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 37, 191-203.

Humour also drives higher observation and sender identification



Percentage of campaigns reporting very high results



In addition to being more liked (previous page), communication using humour also performs better on observation and sender recognition. The differences on the left are clear.

This explanation is consistent with the cognitive explanatory model, which states that humour is a strong attention driver. When the target audience finds the communication funny, they watch and listen more carefully, because they get something positive back. It is logical that this also increases the chances of the target audience memorising the communication and recognising which brand it is for.

At its core, it's a simple transaction: for people to pay attention to communications, they want something positive in return. Preferably with as little effort as possible. Well-executed humour can deliver on both these criteria.

This is in line with a view of marketing communication that emphasises the importance of creating value for recipients. Creating communication that recipients actually want to engage in - voluntarily. This is particularly important in today's entertainment world, where competition for attention is fierce and only a swipe away.

Humour

Tips and examples



Our tips

- Humour is particularly well suited to brand-building communication and to channels that receive more attention. There is more room to be funny. It can certainly also work in tactical activation activities, but the humour must be grasped quickly and easily – otherwise you risk that the recipients will not have the time or energy to absorb the content.
- Choose the type of humour that suits your brand and target audience. Humour is not only about creating laughter. A sense of mirth, a smile or a barely audible giggle can be enough. There are also many types of humour - from irony, puns and situational comedy to parody and slapstick. The tone may also need to be adapted to the channel.
- Build humour around your key message and keep it simple. In other words, the humour should be about the message to be conveyed. Otherwise, the humour risks distracting from what the brand wants to say.
- Be careful with sensitive topics such as gender, ethnicity, religion and politics. Even if you don't get it wrong, but there is a greater risk that the humour will provoke more negative reactions than positive ones. The aim should be that everyone in the target audience finds the communication funny.
- There is no contradiction between being a serious brand and using humour in communication. On the contrary, humour in commercial relationships can signal both credibility and intelligence¹. Moreover, humourless people are perceived as fake and self-centred².

¹ E.g. Lussier, B., Grégoire, Y., & Vachon, M. A. (2017). The role of humour usage on creativity, trust and performance in business relationships: An analysis of the salesperson-customer dyad. *Industrial Marketing Management*, 65, 168-181.

² Cann, A., & Calhoun, L. G. (2001). Perceived personality associations with differences in sense of humour: Stereotypes of hypothetical others with high or low senses of humour. *Humor* 14-2, 117-130.

Examples of campaigns that used humour and achieved very high liking scores



ATG - Singing horses
(Long term)



Felix/Orkla Foods - Bullfesten
(Consumer)



SSF Stöldsnyddsföreningen - Are you sure about your password?
(Consumer Multi)



Pressbyrå - Hambulle
(Consumer)



Blocket Jobs - What are you waiting for?
(Consumer)



Three - Rockabillies
(Consumer)



NOA Consulting

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