On the Road to a New Effectiveness Model: 
Measuring Emotional Responses to Television Advertising

By: Anca Cristina Micu of Sacred Heart University & 
Joseph T. Plummer of The Advertising Research Foundation

AAAA/ARF Task Force
Study Findings
March, 2007
# Contents

Executive Summary ........................................................................................................................................ iii

1. Introduction .................................................................................................................................................. 1

2. Why measure emotional responses? ........................................................................................................ 1

   2.1. Advertising research model stuck in the past century ................................................................. 2

   2.2. Consumers DO NOT think only in a well-reasoned or linear way ............................................. 2

   2.3. Lessons from neuroscience ............................................................................................................. 7

3. A new model – Engagement ..................................................................................................................... 9

4. Tapping into emotions ............................................................................................................................. 9

   4.1. The AAAA/ARF Project .................................................................................................................. 10

   4.2. Two types of consumer responses: Considered and Spontaneous ............................................. 11

5. Key learnings from the ARF/AAAA project on emotional response .................................................. 23

   5.1. Storytelling and the emotional peak ............................................................................................. 23

   5.2. Advertising can symbolically enrich the brand ............................................................................. 27

   5.3. Using universal/classic archetypes ............................................................................................... 28

   5.4. A Unique Linkage of the Brand Benefit with a Strong Emotional Response ...................... 29

   5.5. An Icon Brand Can Mask an Emotionally Weak Campaign ...................................................... 30

   5.6. Emotional Response Measures Can Reveal Unintended Consequences ................................... 31

   5.7. Getting to the Heart of the Matter ................................................................................................. 31

6. The role of emotion in a consumer-centric approach – Brand Co-Creation ......................................... 32

7. Conclusions ................................................................................................................................................. 35

Idea Engagement Task Force ..................................................................................................................... 38

References ...................................................................................................................................................... 38
Executive Summary

Idea Engagement: Feelings Stirred, Not Shaken

William A. Cook, Ph.D., The ARF and Joseph T. Plummer, Ph.D., The ARF

Advertising in the last century was dominated by a one-way transactional focus with a simple input-output engineering model (A-I-D-A model)—where ad claims were pushed at consumers, generally with a highly cognitive message. The basis was a flawed conceptual model of how advertising worked—for many ads the Think-Feel-Do order of response had been found incorrect by academic researchers in the 1980’s and 1990’s. Over the last few decades both marketers and consumers have sought to redefine the rules. Faced with expanding brand competition, and shrinking duration of product uniqueness, marketers have turned to creating brand meaning and brand-consumer relationships in order to create brand demand. At the same time, consumers have gotten more selective about media, messages, brand dialogue and relationships. Educated by daily experience with thousands of marketing messages, consumers today shape their own advertising experience and often co-create the meaning of the brands they use. This results in a more Feel-Do-Think (or Feel-Think-Do) experience. Consumers are also seeking greater control of and value from the time they spend with a widening array of media activities.

Marketers and their agency partners are responding to the changing consumer and media ecosystem. Emotion and the Idea Engagement that it sparks have become core notions in the industry’s efforts to reshape marketing thinking and to improve the measurement of advertising effectiveness.

In 2004, as Ken Kaess began his tenure as Chairman of the AAAA, he set as a goal to raise the industry’s appreciation for the vital role of emotional response in effective advertising. The AAAA, together with the ARF, formed a committed team of agency, advertiser and research firm executives to realize Ken’s vision—to reinvent advertising and research in line with the breakthroughs in neuroscience over the last decade.

In the last two and a half years a remarkable transformation has begun. From half a dozen advertising researchers with active programs underway to measure emotion in 2004, we concluded the study reported here with a dozen research firms, and the number of researchers measuring emotion continues to rise steadily. More importantly, they are working with an ever-expanding group of advertisers and their agencies. As marketers, creatives, planners and researchers gain a clearer understanding of how story line, metaphor and emotion drive idea engagement, we are going to see a rise in the number of powerful, lasting advertising ideas which create brand demand and a lessening of clutter on any single platform. They will generate effectiveness by engagement, rather than by repetition or tonnage.

The learning summarized here is based on the study of 33 television ads selected from a dozen consumer product/service categories by planning directors at AAAA’s agencies. All the campaigns were judged to have created market impact. In each category at least one ad was judged to be predominantly a “story-telling” ad and one was judged to be predominantly a product or service feature-focused ad with an argument for its value. In the white paper to follow, there are 5 key findings.
1. Emotional Response Is Measurable.
We have amassed compelling evidence that emotional responses to advertisements can be measured. Fleeting responses that escape conscious awareness in most people can be detected and often related to reactions to the ad and to the brand. Besides being fleeting and subtle, emotional responses can be elicited quickly, well before cognitive or thinking responses are noted. While research was available two decades ago that challenged the “Think-Feel-Do” model of advertising, these new results make a pretzel of it.

Physiological measures proved as stable and insightful as cognitive measures and often correlated with newer spontaneous symbolic measures. Emotion-based measures, especially physiological and symbolic measures, add depth to our understanding of how commercials work by allowing us to tap into the moment by moment emotional connections commercials make.

2. Emotional Response Is Non-Linear.
Repeatedly we’ve seen ads elicit both negative and positive feelings, and those negative feelings sometimes result in muting a positive response, or dominating it and leaving instead feelings of fear, dread, anger or disgust. When we look at emotional response from the vantage point of a story, we can better appreciate the difficulty of predicting the interplay of emotions without research. The non-linearity of emotional response stands in stark contrast to the simple linear view that many marketers have about how consumers take in their rationally based messages, and the reductionist question-by-question analysis used by my many ad testing firms.

Ameritest uses a picture sort method to identify which portions of an ad are attended to and a subsequent rating of feelings to identify the positive and negative responses to the elements of the ad. In the Bud Light ad depicted here the “flow of emotion” was in the positive direction and peaked when the brand was revealed, but then declined when a gag at the end of the ad seems to have fallen flat.

![Flow of Emotion® — Bud Light “Ice”](image)
3. Emotional Experiences Are Co-Created.
The circuitous path of emotional response is not just a matter of the difference between the emotional structures of the brain and the rational ones. We’ve seen that the consumer brings her own stories, experiences, and associations in her memories to our ads, and may substitute her own elements into the unfurling drama to help it become more relevant or meaningful to her. Testing with images and with verbal material has shown that consumers often remember elements in an ad that were not in it, and miss elements that were present.

The story the ad tells engages the consumer’s emotions and triggers stored associations, personal stories, brand experiences and images and generates that first emotional imprint in the brain. Emotion involves the consumer and the ad’s story gets integrated in the mesh of memories and schema in the consumer’s long-term memory.

Memories have a deep association with storytelling. To tell a story is to remember an important idea – we remember by telling stories – it is something we virtually have to do. As agents of the larger society, stories help consumers create memories and hence define their self-identities and interpret cultural trends and rituals. Companies use storytelling to shape the memories which consumers record and recall. Hence, the memory and meaning assigned by the consumer to a brand is one co-created by the advertiser and the consumer himself.

Today, advertisers have to take a fresh look at their target prospects as human beings with emotions as well as thoughts, and stories as well as facts. The consumers’ minds will tweak, add and subtract bits and pieces of information that make up brand meaning. The more creative freedom to interpret the brand meaning portrayed in the commercial the more emotionally involved the audience will be in reshaping the information they have about the brand, thus leading to a more powerful sense of co-ownership of the brand and stronger, longer-lasting brand preference.

It is useful to have both spontaneous (physiological) and reflective (symbolic) measures of emotional response combined with discussions of meaning and measures of motivation or purchase intent. The spontaneous measures are useful in identifying how the flow of action in the ad relates to the flow of consumer attention and emotional response. But the key question of how the response to the ad generalizes to brand preference is addressed most directly by asking about the brand, and relating the brand measures to the reflective or spontaneous measures of the ad experience.

Advertising messages that successfully generate a strong emotional reaction are stronger on more than one of the traditional measures (recall, persuasion, liking) than those that don’t.

5. New Planning Input to Campaign Creation
The learnings from this project on the Feel-Do-Think or Feel-Think-Do continuum suggest the need for advertising planning to seek insights beyond the strongest brand claim. There is a need for more visual input, greater understanding of target prospects’ current meanings and associations, and some sense of the intersection of the “brand’s story” and the consumer’s “life story.” Consumers are emotional beings with imaginations who co-create powerful, lasting brand
meanings and relationships. Learning as much as possible about our emotional make-up will improve advertising planning input.

6. Déjà Vu or Vu du Futur
When Ken Kaess charged the AAAA-ARF to find a better way to assess the contribution of emotional response to advertising impact, he urged, “…the emotional elements in communication are incredibly important and meaningful, something we as an industry have felt instinctively for years.”

In the 1970’s and ‘80’s the analogue technology used to measure physiological responses was costly, cumbersome, and often erratic. The findings of the research in that early era were provocative, but not sufficiently consistent nor compelling to provide a basis for transforming how physiological research on emotion could sustain a paradigm shift in how advertising strategy and creative were to be informed by research.

Since the 1990 digital technology has transformed neuroscience, just as it has revolutionized information and communications. Now we are beginning to see it transform advertising and marketing communications. The brain-imaging research being conducted in several university laboratories today is revealing new insights in how the activities of various areas of the brain relate to a wide range of mental activities, including the viewing of and responding to advertisements. This basic research will accelerate the advances we have seen in the pioneering research on the emotional response to advertising described in the AAAA-ARF study reported here.

Expanded and validated application of the Engagement construct together with improved measurement of emotional response will empower marketers to forge powerful connections with consumers and to create demand for their brands.
1. Introduction

“The dollar effectiveness of advertising can change over time as the result of changes in media, copy and other factors.”
– John D. C. Little, MIT, 1979

In advertising, we focus on crafting ad messages so as to maximize effectiveness. We talk first about the effectiveness of creating some sort of brand impact in the consumer’s mind and second, about dollar effectiveness. The first type of effectiveness leads to the second. Thus, we look into what happens in the consumer’s mind when exposure to advertising occurs. Was the message effective? What are the short term reactions? What is the long term impact? Then, we attempt to translate these phenomena that happen inside multiple minds into a return on the advertising investment. Was the money spent effectively?

“As an industry, in order to make a strong case for advertising effectiveness, we must improve the measurement model for advertising effectiveness.”
– Ken Kaess, 4A’s President, 2004

This white paper deals with measuring TV advertising effectiveness, specifically with measuring emotional reactions. Social scientists provided new insights about consumers in the past two decades, most importantly that emotional responses come first and have strong impact on subsequent thoughts and actions. This paper addresses the measurement of such reactions as well as provides key learnings about how effective emotion-generating ads help brands find a place in a consumer’s long-term memory.

“The days of the complex ‘reason why’ are over. People cannot be argued into buying a product.”
– Steve Novick, Vice Chairman, Chief Creative Officer, Grey Global Group

The AAAA and the ARF initiated a research project in 2005 to explore the various ways emotional responses to advertising are being measured today as well as to stress the importance of emotional reactions (as opposed to cognitive ones) in engaging consumers and ultimately hooking a brand’s meaning into consumers’ long-term memory.

| Emotion | A mental state that arises spontaneously rather than through conscious effort and is often accompanied by physiological changes. |
| Feeling | An affective state of consciousness, such as that resulting from emotions, sentiments, or desires. |

(American Heritage Dictionary)

2. Why measure emotional responses?

This section covers a short assessment of where advertising research is today, the advances in the social sciences that lead to a paradigm shift in marketing, and points to the changes that have to happen in consumer research to heal the current “disconnect.”
2.1. Advertising research model stuck in the past century

Advertisers and marketers today talk about building relationships with consumers and keeping the consumers involved with the brand. As with any good long-lasting relationship, this one too will have to be based on the parties’ thorough knowledge of each other. Knowledge of consumers in this case is gained from (consumer) research. While the desire for consumer insight is higher than ever, most research methods used today are the same ones that have been used for decades. Consumer research has to reconsider the way it looks at consumers and then adapt or design research techniques that truly enlighten marketers about the ‘new’ consumer and probe deeper levels of brand meaning and associations than in the past. This is an era when panelists require additional incentives, college students seek to participate in online studies just for the rewards, focus group participants ask for more money and there is still no way of knowing how accurate and helpful are the responses from all of these groups.

“We keep relying on familiar, but ineffective research techniques and thus misread consumers’ actions and thoughts. We simply aren’t connecting with consumers. While neuroscience and psychology have taken a new/closer look at consumers, marketing has not.”

– Gerald Zaltman, Professor of Marketing, Harvard Business School

Changing the way we think about consumers before conducting research is essential to designing improved research techniques.

2.2. Consumers DO NOT think only in a well-reasoned or linear way

Several advertising/marketing scholars (Plutchik, 1980; Plummer and Holman, 1981; Holbrook and O'Shaughnessy, 1984; Stout and Leckenby, 1986; Edell and Burke, 1987; Lazarus, 1991; Chaudhuri, 1998; Baumgartner, Sujan and Padgett 1997; Hertel and Parks 2002; Lobler, Maier and Markgraf, 2005; Poels and deWitte, 2006; Passyn and Sujan, 2006) have written about consumers’ emotional evaluations of advertisements playing a role in message interpretation and impact.

Taking a closer look, neuroscientists and psychologists talk about either ‘mental models’ (Joseph E. leDoux, Philip N. Johnson-Laird) or ‘situation models’ (Rolf A. Zwaan, Gabriel A. Radvansky), terms used to describe the structures of meanings that exist within our brains. These models are constantly updated with information we either learn or make up. We revisit existing meanings within our brains whenever certain triggers are present and there is no established general pattern for this constant maintenance of our knowledge structures. Therefore, people do not react to the environment in a linear fashion (e.g., attention-interest-desire-action, think-feel-do). Each of our actions may be determined by a different set/pattern of thoughts and feelings, every time. In addition, neuroscientists have found that the first reaction to any stimulus is an emotion, not necessarily one of which we are consciously aware, followed by a mesh of thoughts and feelings (we differentiated emotions from feelings at the beginning of this paper).

Hence, the old (AIDA/think-feel-do) mental model of how advertising works is incorrect since the underlying assumptions that consumers take decisions in a linear way and behavior
is guided by rational-only principles do not hold in light of the new knowledge about the human brain.

Viagra: Neural Map
The above neural map is the product of a set of interviews with general practitioners in the UK. “What is interesting here is that what Viagra ‘means’ to the medic is an interplay of different experiences and associations coming from a variety of different sources. In the above map we see an interlocking combination of concrete characteristics, individual and collective experiences and subjective feelings.” (Owen and Chandler 2002)

“Neuroscience has proven that our actions are subject to greater non-rational decision making than we ever thought possible. Going beyond the facts, the emotional elements in communication are incredibly important and meaningful, something we as an industry have felt instinctively for years.”
– Ken Kaess, 2004

Recent developments in our understanding of the mind have implications for the whole business of brand development and that includes advertising. Emotional reactions not only come first, they facilitate memory (Hertel and Parks 2002) and influence actions.

Implementing these learnings in the day-to-day activities of advertisers, however, will prove to be difficult. First, marketing departments and advertising agencies have been functioning within the old think paradigm for a long time, and thus will be resistant to change. Second, even though the new insights to the human mind are available, there are few techniques widely used today that take advantage of this knowledge to the benefit of advertisers.

While scholars Mooradian and Matzler (2006) suggest that “there may, in fact, be different empathetic responses for different individuals in response to different advertising content,” Professor Martha J. Farah, the Director of the Center for Cognitive Neuroscience at the University of Pennsylvania, suggests “brainotyping” as a future segmentation tool. In one
recent demonstration, brain activity related to soft drink preference was sensitive to both the
taste of the drink and to the brand name, with "Coke" evoking more activity than "Pepsi"
only when subjects knew which brand they tasted (Farah, 2005).

According to Gerald Zaltman, Professor of Marketing at Harvard Business School,
neuroimaging can tell us such things as whether positive or negative reactions are elicited by
a stimulus, whether information is being encoded, whether sense making is occurring,
whether existing knowledge (memory) is being engaged, whether the mind's eye and other
sensory systems are being engaged and the impact of frames. For example, it can tell whether
the framing of a fragrance as cheese or body odor elicits a signature of pleasantness or
unpleasantness. While current functional neuroimaging is at best a rough measure for
marketing purposes, it is not to say it is uninformative even in its current state of
development, or that it will not improve in the coming years.

**Consumers CANNOT readily explain their thinking and behavior**
What neuroscientists and psychologists termed “mental” or “situation” models was labeled
“image” by Zaltman and defined as the activation of a set of neurons or thinking. Advertising
is said to help our thinking process about brands rather than inject us with meanings of
brands. So, rather than teaching us that Miller Lite has great taste but is less filling, the
commercial may activate thoughts in our brain about “carbohydrates”, “dieting”, “belly” or
“our uncle Milton who should drink lighter beer”. The next time Uncle Milton is mentioned
at the family dinner, our brains will either consciously or subconsciously activate the newly
created path to where Miller Light is stored in our memory. If the activation happened
unconsciously, we will not be able to explain why we thought of or asked for light beer
because we are not aware of the “thinking” process that happened in our minds. Even in the
case our thoughts consciously wandered from uncle Milton to Miller Lite, if put on the spot,
we will have a hard time to explain in a clear manner why we asked for light beer.
Advertising triggered a learning process and we stored Miller Lite in our memory by relating
the brand to several existing structures of meaning, or sets of neurons.
*(More from Zaltman in the sidebar on the following page)*

**Consumers DO NOT think primarily in words**
Since we express ourselves in words most of the time, we might wrongly assume that inside
our brains, thoughts are represented in words. On the contrary, thoughts are different than
words and many times words cannot fully and accurately depict a thought. According to
Zaltman, if thought were the same as words, we would be confused by such utterances as:
“Prostitutes appeal to Pope,” “Fish plant on schedule,” “The Koala bear eats shoots and
leaves,” or “Children make nourishing snacks.” Instead, we have unconscious
understandings (other thoughts) that make the meaning of such words immediately clear and
unambiguous. It seems that, when we want to express something, we effortlessly choose the
words that best match the structure of meaning or mental model of our thought. We similarly
pick a meaning when we are exposed to a sequence of words. Much of this process goes on
unconsciously because otherwise we would spend an incredible amount of time consciously
discerning which words to say and what was meant by words we heard or read.
**What is a thought?** Technically, a thought is an activation of a set of neurons, what is called by some an “image” although it may not be visual. Thoughts occur initially without awareness of them and most remain unconscious even though they may influence our behavior. We are sometimes aware of having a thought and even focus considerable attention on it but we are unaware of the bundled sequence of other thoughts that unfold to produce it. This unfolding process involves the processing of our experiences to manufacture meaning. The meaning that is created is a thought. As we shall see below, advertising is central to the process of helping consumers create or manufacture thought – to their creation of meaning-full stories. Advertising does not work by injecting consumers with meaning. While one or another area of the brain may be particularly implicated for certain classes or kinds of thought the relevant neurons are typically distributed in multiple sites. In fact, neuroscientists and others now agree that decisions (a type of thought) do not occur in one place but rather in the connections among neurons in different places. There is no discrete “buy button” as some suggest.

**What is a thought not?** Thoughts are not to be confused with the things such as words, scents, sights, etc. or even other thoughts, that trigger them – that contribute to our production of meaning -- and especially not with the ways we re-present them. For example, thought is not the same as words, as important as words are — and they are very important — in stimulating, shaping, and representing thought. If thought were the same as words, we would be confused by such utterances as: “Prostitutes appeal to Pope”, “Fish plant on schedule”, “The Koala bear eats shoots and leaves”, or “Children make nourishing snacks”. Instead, we have unconscious understandings (other thoughts) that make the meaning of such words immediately clear and unambiguous. (A colleague recently identified more than 100 different ways of using the word “up” none of which require explanation when used.)

**What do we do when we think?** When we think -- when we generate thoughts -- we are imagining something that is missing – which is then supplied as we process our experiences and produce or manufacture meaning. As Stephen Kosslyn puts it: “Thinking is the ability to contemplate something in its absence.” Of course, contemplating something absent requires that we bring it forth. The contemplated “something” may be a new attitude about a brand, a renewed commitment to it, an inclination to try it, etc. A television or magazine advertisement thus attempts to generate thoughts or feelings about a product not immediately present. A point of purchase display attempts to focus attention that would otherwise be diverted (missing) elsewhere.

**What does advertising do as we think?** Advertising content interacts with prior consumer experience to help bring about a thought that wasn’t present previously or not present with the same intensity as it is now. For this reason, it is much more important to learn about the system of thoughts (a story) an ad triggers that is otherwise absent than it is to know whether consumers can faithfully reproduce the contents of the ad or find it likeable. This new thought is the product of what linguists and others call conceptual blending. Thus, when developing and assessing marketing communications it is essential to understand the meaning that is created as consumers use their existing ideas to make sense of advertising content. In this way, consumers and advertisers engage in a process I call the co-creation of meaning. It is these co-created meanings that change a consumer’s orientation toward a product or service.

**Do thoughts exist in isolation?** While we often describe thoughts as “popping” into mind, a given thought is usually activated by yet another thought (our own or someone else’s). Generally, then, a specific thought exists in association with other thoughts even though we are unaware of them. After all, of the approximately 11 million bits of information our brain processes per second, we can only consciously focus on about 15 to 40 bits at one time. Thoughts, then, bundle together and form systems called maps, models, schema, or frames. Conscious thoughts are outcroppings of a larger system of thought that has been quietly activated and whose influence is being exerted unconsciously.

**What bestows meaning on a thought?** Understanding the system of thoughts is important since the meaning of any one thought, be it a product attribute, emotional benefit, belief, or attitude, depends on what other thoughts are in its neighborhood. Like people, thoughts engage in networking activities. And, like people, these associations affect who or what they are. “Escape” means one thing in the context of thoughts about entertainment and another thing in the context of thoughts relating about an impending natural disaster or a battlefield.

Recent advances in neuroscience indicate that considerable information is actually stored in the neural pathways and synaptic connections that link different thoughts, thus giving still greater importance to these associations and supporting the argument that decisions are located in the connections between neuronal systems. Current practice in marketing, however, reflects a theory-in-use that meanings of thoughts exist as we find them in a dictionary. A dictionary, of course, has nothing to do with how we experience and create our subjective lives.
Professor Gerald Zaltman of the Harvard Business School on memory and advertising:

What is a memory?

Where do thoughts go? We have more knowledge or acquired experience than we can possibly count. We have preferences for one brand of beer over another, we know what to serve our family on particular holidays and whose advice we should trust when making a car purchase. But we only infrequently ever need this information. So, where does it go? And does it remain there intact? The next paragraphs only address this last question. We will not address the topic of internal and external storage systems.

Are memories veridical? One of the major advances in memory research concerns the interaction of three things: what is encoded and available in our brain cells for recall, the cues that activate those cells, and the reasons or goals being served by recall. A memory is the product of these interactions. It is not a photograph. It is constantly changing: memory is malleable and reconstructive. Some of these changes are often trivial and of little practical consequence. But sometimes the changes are consequential. Memories can be outright false even when the distortion adversely affects the person remembering.

Given the vast array of neurons, the possible connections among them, neural plasticity, and the vast knowledge we’ve placed in storage for future story telling, it is not surprising that a specific effort to recall now may produce a thought that is not exactly what we recalled the last time we tried to produce that thought. Again, sometimes the difference is so trivial it is functionally identical. While technically there is a different bundle of neurons involved in recalling my name today compared to yesterday or ten years ago, the difference is so slight as to be non existent. Interestingly, though, what name I recall (Uncle Jerry, Gerald, Mr. Zaltman, Dr. Zaltman, Professor Zaltman) depends on who is asking (the activating cue) and why I am giving my name out (the goal being served).

What is a memory for? An important function of memory, perhaps its most basic function from an evolutionary point of view, is that it enables us to forget. Given a very limited capacity to keep valuable information top of mind we need a capacity to forget all the many things essential to life while still preserving the ability to access this information quickly. And, because the “forgotten” information is often so important, it may continue to actively influence us without our knowledge. Thus the contents of memory are very influential even when they are not being consciously recalled.

What enters memory? All our thoughts are stored in a network of other thoughts. This is the mental model or map referred to above. What is stored in memory are all the things we know how to do like riding a bike and ordering lunch, important episodes such as the family trip to Alaska, and other information such as our phone number, the capital city is of Spain, and why we like a particular brand. One of the most fundamental bundles of thought stored in memory involves our sense of self which becomes critical for two goals of advertising: to have enduring emotional impact and to foster the creation of personally relevant stories.

When we bring forth stored information it is called, not coincidentally, a story. Put differently, the mental models we have – and we have thousands of them – are story diagrams. When we swap stories with someone else, we are sharing mental models of related events. Mental models provide coherence to our stories and the pieces of the model (its constructs) serve as index tabs. The more pieces there are to a mental model – the more tabs there are to notice -- the more likely it is to be retrieved. In other words, we are quite literally “re-minded” of what it is like to enjoy a brand or the fun of trying a new brand when we encounter an ad for the brand. If the ad is devised well, it will not only re-mind or activate a relevant frame or model but it will do so in a way that enriches the memory; it will leverage the malleable qualities of memory processes and lead to the construction of a new set of thoughts (the co-created meaning mentioned earlier).

What does an effective ad do? An effective ad, then, is one that activates a relevant frame (mental model or system of constructs), creates an emotional response based on the material difference offered by the product and fosters the creation of personally relevant stories. Again, the emotional response to a material difference against the background of a consumer’s existing frame of reference or viewing lens leads to the generation of new meanings. These new meanings are personally relevant stories. The process of conceptual blending mentioned above (but not detailed) accounts for how this happens. Developing and evaluating an ad then must involve an assessment of these three things. Traditional ways of evaluation advertising do not inform us about the activation of relevant frames, the elicitation of emotional responses, or the creation or manufacture of relevant meanings.
2.3. Lessons from neuroscience

Due to advances in neuroscience, an abundance of knowledge about the inner workings of the human brain is available today and chances are it is just the beginning. The marketing and advertising industries should benefit from this new knowledge and adapt consumer research and copy-testing techniques so as to incorporate it in its routine.

NYU neuroscience professor Joseph LeDoux argues that, behind conscious rational thinking, our behavior is guided by emotions and the unconscious, making a model based solely on linear rational decision making obsolete.

“We are now with brain science where we were 20 years ago with biotechnology - that point in time, for example, when genetics was about to have significant real-world applications. With brain imaging we're at the point where we can look scientifically at decision-making.”
– Steven Quartz, director of the Social Cognitive Neuroscience Laboratory at the California Institute of Technology

In his book, How Customers Think, Zaltman points out that open-minded managers are extending their comfort zones to explore unfamiliar disciplines…drawing on musicology, neurology, psychology, sociology and other sciences to understand what happens within the complex system of mind, brain, body and society when consumers evaluate products. Specifically focusing on what is happening inside people’s minds, marketers are gaining a new perspective on how their own minds work…how their subconscious mental processes influence the way they reach out to consumers, shape responses and distort their own views of consumer behaviors. They see how the current paradigm hurts marketing, strategizing, budgeting and other key activities. Marketers are starting to see that their own minds work in the same way as do consumers’. What emerges is the ability to see the “mind of the market” which is the next source of competitive advantage for marketers.

Since our interest here is advertising research, we find that the new knowledge about the human brain relating to the primacy of emotions and the importance of the unconscious is pointing to an outdated paradigm because we are learning that consumers do not take decisions in a rational/linear fashion. In addition to traditional measures of consumer thought, now there is a need for information about consumers’ emotional and subconscious reactions.

“I think brain science is really beginning to explore the relationship between objective measures and subjective measures of things like taste and preferences […]. When we make a decision there are, of course, conscious components in play. But it turns out that our brain is also tracking a lot of things that we may not be consciously aware of.”
– Steven Quartz, director of the Social Cognitive Neuroscience Laboratory at the California Institute of Technology

The disconnect (gathering incomplete data with insufficient tools)

Zaltman urges marketers to adopt a new paradigm to understand their own and their customers’ minds. He points out that social scientists in the last decade have pushed ahead the understanding of how “marketers’ unconscious assumptions and expectations influence
which questions they choose to ask consumers, how they frame those questions in research, whom they select as participants in a study, and which analytical tools they use.” He further attests, “Unconscious processes among consumers also influence their responses to marketers’ questions” (p. 33), so marketers who err in disregarding these unconscious processes are likely to be doubly wrong.

Neuroscience can help advertisers identify the areas in the brain where brand-consumer connectedness occurs. Then, it is up to advertising researchers to come up with the tools to measure the phenomena in those areas.

"There's room for innovation in this category. We should be testing at a higher level [of understanding how the brain works]," says Alice Sylvester, SVP and account planning director at Foote Cone & Belding in Chicago. "Testing has been very rational, and that's led to normative work." Advertising testing methods have to change to incorporate unconscious emotional responses (both physiological and symbolic) to advertising and brand communications, she argues.

**Need for consensus**

This entire new body of knowledge about the human mind confirms what advertisers intuitively knew about consumers for a long time. Consumers are not rational beings and they do not respond to advertising that follows the linear thought-based “success” recipe. Neuroscientists and psychologists have opened the door to better understanding how the consumer’s mind works. What is needed now is for marketers and advertisers to adopt the new knowledge and implement the appropriate processes that would take advantage of it. This paper looks at new advertising research methods that can be used to measure emotional reactions and brand meaning.
To summarize, there is growing consensus among marketers and advertisers to drop the old AIDA/think-feel-do model when explaining how advertising works; and to implement new processes (advertising research methods, measurement tools).

“I have no idea of what the future will be, but I can guarantee you that three key ingredients will be needed: change, change and change.”
– Maurice Levy, Chairman and CEO, Publicis Groupe

3. A new model – Engagement

The primary topic of this paper is the gap/disconnect between existing knowledge about the primacy of emotional response in the consumer’s mind and the tools widely used to assess the effects of advertising on consumers. The sources of this gap are the entrenched beliefs about rational consumers and marketing and advertising processes based on the old AIDA/think-feel-do models. We’ve clearly exaggerated the role of conscious thought in consumer behavior. It is really a messy stew of memories, emotions, associations, thoughts and other processes we are not aware of and cannot articulate. Emotions come before thought and emotional response can occur even when we have no awareness of the stimuli that caused them.

All of this suggests the industry needs new measures to capture emotion, unconscious thought, recognition of symbols and metaphors that are not filtered through words and cognitive thought.

A new model of consumer responses to marketing messages is needed. The term “engagement” has been selected to encompass the new goals of marketers for advertising to connect powerfully with the consumers and create demand for the brand. Engagement is about creating relationships between consumers and brands. We believe engaging storytelling ads will also prove superior in creating connections with consumers that enrich brand meaning and ultimately impact brand behavior.

“Engagement is turning on a prospect to a brand idea enhanced by the surrounding context.”

Neuroscience has taught us that emotional reactions come first. So, if we were to test to determine how engaging advertising messages are, we would start by testing for and learning first about emotion, the reaction that impacts any further processing of the brand idea and motivation to purchase and/or use the brand.

4. Tapping into emotions

“Emotions, like first impressions, are important because they influence the responses and behavior that follow— and they may determine whether anything follows at all. Since the first impressions of advertising may often be more emotional than cognitive, we need to explore beyond cognition to better understand consumers’ emotions towards and impressions of the product or the message.”
– John Hallward, IPSOS ASI
Current advertising testing methods favor conscious responses on a question-answer test design, ignoring what’s happening at the emotional and unconscious levels. Nike shoes do not fly off the shelves because consumers rationally decided they are the best choice due to the materials developed and used when manufacturing them. Brand loyalty cannot be fully explained rationally. Some emotional and sometimes unconscious factors are at play. So, there is a need for better measures of consumer-brand connectedness beyond a simple questionnaire.

According to academics Robert Heath and Pam Hyder (2004), we currently rely on verbal questions that ask people their opinions of advertising, we use questions that invite people to recall things they have no reason to remember, and we evaluate success using metrics whose origins can be tracked back to the early part of the 20th century. This overreliance on verbal test measures and linear, rational models of how advertising works has probably contributed to a decline in advertising impact and advertiser conviction that advertising can drive profitable growth.

“For the most part, there’s been no wide scale, significant innovation in ad testing and tracking (except maybe data collection methods) in 50 years.”

– Alice Sylvester, SVP, Account Planning, FCB

We argue here based upon this pilot research project that the state of the art of measuring emotional response is further along than most people perceive it to be.

4.1. The AAAA/ARF Project

The AAAA/ARF project involved twelve advertising testing companies that studied the same four beer commercials, which were chosen among several with proven market results. Three of the commercials were of the storytelling type (Budweiser, Heineken and BudLight) while the fourth was chosen for its strong low carb brand attribute (Miller Lite). Results show we CAN tap into emotions using innovative approaches. The advertising testing companies then each tested a pair of commercials from other categories with one brand using story telling, and the other brand focused on a product attribute/feature in order to motivate the viewer to prefer the brand. Additional categories researched included automobiles, credit cards, coffee, diapers, airlines, soft drinks, household cleaners, soup, and bottled water.

Selection of the Commercials

The four commercials were carefully chosen by a panel of judges consisting of 5 industry experts. The judges picked three commercials that they considered involving and emotionally arousing and a control commercial that used a cognitive type of appeal. All commercials selected for the project had positive sales results—some greater than others but all considered effective by advertisers and their agencies. The first three were commercials following a heart strategy have a narrative thread, each telling a story, Budweiser about friends connected by a special greeting and beer, Heineken about a young man playing a trick at a party, and BudLight about players from a team engaged in locker room banter. Since we argue here that emotional responses come first as a response to ANY brand stimulus, the fourth commercial selected follows a head strategy with a strong cognitive message: there are fewer carbs in Miller Lite. All four campaigns were effective in stimulating sales.
The ten participating companies that tested the commercials span several advertising research methods, (most of) which are used commercially today to tap into emotions (except for fMRI). The research methodologies are briefly described in section 4.2 below.

4.2. Two types of consumer responses: Considered and Spontaneous
There are two types of consumer responses we can research:

- Considered responses – conscious, filtered through cognition
- Spontaneous responses – unconscious, physiological, unfiltered

The measurement methods corresponding to the two types of consumer responses were divided into self-report and autonomic measures respectively by academics Poels and Dewitte (2006) drawing upon an extensive review of academic literature on emotion. Self-report measures include verbal and visual self-report measures as well as moment-to-moment measures such as dial-turns or mouse-movement on a continuum. Autonomic measures are physiological measures of emotional reactions.

Measuring CONSIDERED emotional responses

Verbal self-report measures - Attitude/Brand image scales
These scales assess feelings after the TV viewing experience on multiple dimensions using verbal and non-verbal measures. Participating companies and their verbal measures of attitudes are:

- MSW uses attitudinal scales combined with moment-to-moment measures
- TNS includes emotive needs in its testing for consumer motivations
- IPSOS/ASI rates emotional values and personal motivators
- Millward Brown uses descriptive emotional words to create a net “feel good” measure
- Gallup & Robinson uses a battery of attitudinal questions

A closer look at the measures:

MSW
After completing a brief demographic and product usage battery, MSW respondents view the first 10 seconds of the test ad and are immediately asked if they would like to continue watching. This procedure forms the basis of MSW’s measure of Engagement. Next, Attention Track data are collected via a moment-to-moment measure. As the ad is played in its entirety and respondents are instructed to move their mouse to the right as they become more interested and to the left as they become less interested. Following the Attention Track, post exposure brand preference and usage data are collected for MSW’s Persuasion metric, as well as questions about the interest of re-viewing the ad in the future.

Finally, the ad is shown in its entirety a second time and an attitude measurement is administered within MSW’s Whole Brain Diagnostic battery (presented in the figure below). Emotion is assessed with questions assessing: mood change, valence, good feeling generated, and ease of relating to the ad.
TNS

TNS’s AdEval™ is an online data collection methodology where approximately 150 respondents are exposed to a commercial and then asked questions that assess motivation and involvement with the brand (e.g. “Did this video increase your interest in using [brand name]?”). Respondents have to respond positively to at least two out of three motivation questions to be deemed motivated, similarly with involvement questions to be deemed involved with the brand. After a second exposure to the commercial, there is a check for further effects. Examples of AdEval™ scales are presented in the figure below.

Examples of AdEval™ Scale Distribution

In addition to measuring the effect of the commercial with AdEval™, TNS assess the drivers of motivation with NeedScope™. According to TNS, possible drivers of motivation to prefer a brand are: product features, the social values portrayed by the ad, the personality of the brand, and the feelings elicited by the ad. Product features relate to functional needs that consumers might have, while the social values are linked to identity needs. The questions assessing the personality of the brand and the feelings elicited are addressing emotive needs. Emotive needs are divided into:
- Expressive needs, whereby the product satisfies a **personality** aspiration (e.g., wild or out there, active, intelligent, risk taker, responsible)
- Gratification needs, such as **feeling** happy, relaxed, energized or sociable.

A full TNS results map for a Budweiser commercial assessment is presented below:

**IPSOS/ASI**

According to IPSOS/ASI, an increase in share of **brand choice** demonstrates an ad effect on brand preference, when it happens, even if the **recall** and **recognition** measures show **no** evidence of cognitive processing. Hence, attention is given to measuring emotional reactions. IPSOS/ASI’s tool for measuring emotional responses to advertising is called Emoti*Scape and is described in our next section on visual self-report measures.

To supplement work on assessing emotional reactions to advertising, the company applied two additional areas through verbal self-report measures:

1. the personalities of the consumer, and
2. their motivational drivers

IPSOS/ASI conducted a review of personality traits and settled on eleven clusters of different personality types which appear to explain human actions or behavior:

- Social, outgoing, extroverted
- Emotional, touching, sensitive, feeling
- Reserved, quiet, introverted
- Spontaneous, creative, impulsive
- Involving, consensus-oriented, harmonious
- Assertive, in control, decisive
- Independent, individualistic
- Selfless, giving
- Rational, practical, organized
- Conservative, traditional
- Progressive, innovative
In a similar fashion, IPSOS/ASI’s R&D team put together a list of motivational drivers. These were felt to be quite universal and represent motivations and emotions common to all people around the world:

- It is prestigious for people (something special to own). “Look at what I have.”
- To be self-sufficient, independent, autonomous.
- To be in better control of our lives.
- For the appreciation or protection of others (or nature).
- To experience personal success or achievement (ego).
- In respect and acceptance of our culture and community (traditional values).
- For a pleasurable sensuous feeling.
- To affiliate with others. To be harmonious. To fit in. “Consensus.”
- For greater efficiency and an easier life. For practicality.
- To increase our safety, security, or make our life less risky (to avoid problems).
- For fun, excitement, or something different (a novelty).

The figure below shows a sample output:

![Emotional Values and Personal Motivators diagram](image)

Millward Brown

Millward Brown uses descriptive emotional words to create a net “feel good” measure. The higher the “feel good” measure, the more attracted consumers are to the ad or to the brand.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Toward Brand</th>
<th>Away from Brand</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Surprised</td>
<td>Hatred</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excited</td>
<td>Repulsed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attracted</td>
<td>Annoyed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inspired</td>
<td>Inadequate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confident</td>
<td>Disappointed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proud</td>
<td>Guilty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Unimpressed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affection</td>
<td>Sad</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The stronger the “feel good,” the higher the relevance and, therefore, the higher the persuasion. This measure is later combined with a brain response measure.

“[Neuromarketing techniques] hold the potential to identify the transient or early responses to brands and advertising and so add to our current understanding based on introspective verbal responses.”

– Graham Page, Millward Brown

**Gallup & Robinson**

In the case of Gallup & Robinson, respondents watch a video clip that includes program material, and pods of test commercials. While they watch, sensors record continuous facial EMG activity during the programming and commercials. After EMG measurement, recall is taken and the respondent is re-exposed to selected spots for traditional verbal questioning.

This company uses verbal self-report measures to test for recall, persuasion and commercial liking in addition to its facial EMG data (for more on the facial EMG measure see description under autonomic/physiological measures below).

**Visual self-report measures - Sorting images of feelings**

By measuring emotions symbolically, we are working our way into rather uncharted territory. The following is a list of rather innovative tools available on the market today to measure emotional responses. These include measurement of emotional meaning of or feelings towards the ad experience.

The technique of sorting of visual representations of feelings is used by:

- AdSAM Marketing in its AdSAM measure of emotional response
- IPSOS in its Emoti*Trace and Emoti*Scape tools
- Olson Zaltman and Associates and included as part of its ZMET technique
- Ameritest in its proprietary measurement of narrative emotional flow and connected iconography.
AdSAM® Marketing

The Self Assessment Manikin (SAM), developed by academic Peter Lang (1980), is a visual self report instrument that relies on Mehrabian and Russel’s (1974) Pleasure-Arousal-Dominance (PAD) dimensions. Instead of rating a set of emotion-adjectives for all three PAD dimensions, Lang created a set of five figures for every dimension (see AdSAM figurines in figure below). Accordingly, for every single dimension respondents have to indicate which figure best represents their emotional state (e.g., after seeing an advertisement).

In AdSAM®, 232 emotion words were scored on SAM. These emotion words are plotted in a two-dimensional space with pleasure and arousal as the two axes. As a result, emotional reactions to ads can be compared to these emotion words. This enables researchers to visually match lower-order pleasure and arousal reactions to specific higher-order emotions. For each advertisement AdSam would measure:

- Feelings about the brand prior to advertising exposure
- Emotional response to advertising (emotional impact)
- Feelings about the brand after seeing the advertising

IPSOS/ASI

IPSOS/ASI’s Emoti*Scape measures:

- Emotions from/towards the advertisement
- Emotions intended to go across to viewers
- Emotions associated with using the brand
After being asked a battery of questions, respondents are re-exposed to the ad and asked to use the mouse to indicate second-to-second emotional feelings to the ad (“Emoti*Trace”). Then, they complete the standard Emo module of questions: (1) Emoti*Scape (the pictorial map of 40 emotional icons shown above), (2) Personal traits/associations, and (3) Emotional Drivers.

IPSOS’s Emoti*Scape approach is a combination of emotional descriptors and visual cartoon-like representations of emotions. IPSOS uses multi-dimensional scaling to spread out the relatedness of the emotions. The grid ranges from active to passive and from positive to negative. In advertising testing, consumers report which emotions are associated with the brand and with the ad, and IPSOS measures the shift caused by the ad. IPSOS has found that there is a high correlation between the “feel good” dimension measured via Emoti*Scape and persuasion measured with batteries of questions.

Olson Zaltman and Associates (OZA)

OZA uses pictures of feelings collected by respondents themselves. In this case there are no standardized images of feelings, rather unique images that represent each participant’s thoughts and feelings. Each ZMET (Zaltman Metaphor Elicitation Technique) interview at OZA is a one-on-one discussion that lasts approximately two hours. In preparation for the interview, participants are asked to collect visual images that represent their thoughts and feelings about the research topic. As a result of this pre-interview work, participants arrive for their in-depth interview at an advanced stage of thinking, ready to discuss their thoughts and feelings. The specific use and samples of images are presented later in this paper.

Ameritest

At Ameritest, to obtain flow of emotion information, the respondent rates each randomly presented image from a deck with stills from the tested commercial on how she was feeling when she first watched it. The construct employed here is to model “emotion” in dynamic
terms, as a “fluid” which is pumped through an ad—that is, the more emotionally engaging a commercial is visually, the more emotion is pumped in. To slightly expand the metaphor, emotion is thought of as coming in two types, positive and negative, so that dynamic tension between the two can be analyzed to understand the dramatic structure of a particular commercial.

Specifically, the respondent uses a five-point scale ranging from very strong positive feelings (5) to very strong negative feelings (1). Ameritest creates a graphic representation – called the Flow of Emotion® – by superimposing two curves: one represents the percent of respondents who choose the top two boxes (i.e., positive scale points) for each image over the course of the commercial and the other represents the percent choosing the bottom two boxes (i.e., negative scale points) for each image.

**Flow of Attention**

Viewers co-create the story with the filmmaker, sorting for those images needed to assemble the story’s progression—to make sense of the story.

**Flow of Emotion**

Emotional response is different from cognitive response. While the same sorting and co-creation process takes place, the criteria is different. Here you see an assembly based on emotional response—what touched the heart.
Measuring spontaneous responses

The exploration of these newer physiological response measurement approaches was a top priority of this ARF/AAAA research project. Earlier efforts to use physiological measures were met with mixed results and frustration in interpretation or development of “norms.” Companies using physiological measurements of emotion are:

- Gallup & Robinson, using facial EMG
- Inner Response, using SCR (skin conductance response)
- AnswerStream, using SCR and HRT (heart rate turbulence)
- AdSAM Marketing researchers, testing with fMRI
- Innerscope, using smart-shirt technology and fMRI

G&R’s CERA (Continuous Emotional Response Analysis) is a comprehensive, multi-modal measurement system that uses facial EMG and verbal measures to assess both emotional and cognitive responses to media messages. For the direct emotion measures, CERA uses facial EMG muscle stimulation measures that directly tap positive and negative emotional responses. CERA relies on markers that naturally accompany emotional response and measures positive/negative valence as well as intensity. Facial EMG is used to obtain accurate read of facial muscle stimulations:

- The smile muscle (Zygomatic) EMG is a valid measure of positive emotional response
- The frown or brow lowering muscle (Corrugator) EMG is a valid measure of negative emotional response

Differing from conventional arousal measurement, CERA is able to distinguish between positive and negative reactions by measuring both simultaneously as they occur.

The CERA method invites screened target respondents to a facility where, a clinical psychologist attaches unobtrusive electrodes to their faces. They then watch a fifteen minute television program that contains pods of test and clutter commercials. As they watch, a computer calibrates their specific emotional ranges, tracks and graphs positive and negative reactions to what they are viewing. A sample output is presented in the figure below:

![Budweiser - "Whassup"
CERA - "Positive" Activation - "Negative" Activation
- Positive emotional activation is build steady as shown in positive emotion activations generally fall.
- With each "whassup"督察: positive activation occurs (positive EMG) negative activations high.
- Acceleration continues for "emotional intensity", with highest peak at 25.
- Gradual decrease due to "emotional intensity", with highest peak at 25.
- Gradual decrease due to "emotional intensity", with highest peak at 25.
- Gradual decrease due to "emotional intensity", with highest peak at 25.
- Gradual decrease due to "emotional intensity", with highest peak at 25.
- Gradual decrease due to "emotional intensity", with highest peak at 25.
- Gradual decrease due to "emotional intensity", with highest peak at 25.
- Gradual decrease due to "emotional intensity", with highest peak at 25.
- Gradual decrease due to "emotional intensity", with highest peak at 25.
- Gradual decrease due to "emotional intensity", with highest peak at 25.
- Gradual decrease due to "emotional intensity", with highest peak at 25.
- Gradual decrease due to "emotional intensity", with highest peak at 25.
- Gradual decrease due to "emotional intensity", with highest peak at 25.
- Gradual decrease due to "emotional intensity", with highest peak at 25.
- Gradual decrease due to "emotional intensity", with highest peak at 25.
- Gradual decrease due to "emotional intensity", with highest peak at 25.
- Gradual decrease due to "emotional intensity", with highest peak at 25.
- Gradual decrease due to "emotional intensity", with highest peak at 25.
- Gradual decrease due to "emotional intensity", with highest peak at 25.
- Gradual decrease due to "emotional intensity", with highest peak at 25.
- Gradual decrease due to "emotional intensity", with highest peak at 25.
- Gradual decrease due to "emotional intensity", with highest peak at 25.
- Gradual decrease due to "emotional intensity", with highest peak at 25.
- Gradual decrease due to "emotional intensity", with highest peak at 25.
- Gradual decrease due to "emotional intensity", with highest peak at 25.
- Gradual decrease due to "emotional intensity", with highest peak at 25.
- Gradual decrease due to "emotional intensity", with highest peak at 25.
- Gradual decrease due to "emotional intensity", with highest peak at 25.
- Gradual decrease due to "emotional intensity", with highest peak at 25.
- Gradual decrease due to "emotional intensity", with highest peak at 25.
Respondents are also re-exposed to the test commercial and given an attitudinal battery that further enhances understanding of reactions to specific commercial elements.

**AnswerStream** measures emotional responses to ads by monitoring physiological changes in the body. Each respondent views test ads relevant to his/her target audience group in a clutter reel of programming, and responses are recorded during the viewing exposure. Sample size is 50 respondents per ad. Skin Conductance, which measures *interest* and *involvement*, correlates with a response to an external stimulus, and measures unconscious mental connection and the activation of emotion. The figure below shows sample outputs:

Interest patterns for the three top-rated ads show different patterns:
- Toyota builds interest around two peaks in the ad.
- Mitsubishi starts off very strong, then fades.
- Jaguar builds over the course of the ad.

![AnswerStream Response Patterns](image)

Academic researcher Annie Lang (1990) concluded that for both attention and arousal heart rate can be a valid real-time and continuous measure. When attention increases, there is a phasic deceleration of heart rate. Arousal, furthermore, is accompanied by a tonic acceleration in heart rate.

At the same time, heart rate can give an indication of the valence of an emotional response. Compared to neutral stimuli, both positive and negative stimuli first exhibit a phasic decrease in heart rate. Heart Rate Turbulence (HRT) is mostly not detected directly in the heart but at other – more convenient places – like the finger. Placing a device that registers heart rate on one finger has the advantage that it requires little interference with the subject. In this way, the registration of heart rate can be considered as an easy and cheap way to measure psychophysiological reactions evoked by advertising (Lang 1994). Academic researchers Hopkins and Fletcher (1994) were of the opinion that HRT can well serve as an additional measure to give an indication of valence when skin conductance is measured.

AnswerStream uses HRT in addition to its skin conductance measure to measure valence in terms of *pleasure/displeasure*. 
Maxima starts off well, but the pleasure response drops off sharply when the ad turns from product to story. Interest/involvement followed a similar pattern.

Inner Response uses Skin Conductance Response (SCR) as well. As the commercial plays, Inner Response’s Viewer Involvement Profile (VIP) takes 25 measures per second and averages to one per second. This permits the overlay of a second-by-second graph of involvement on the commercial. In quantitative studies, Inner Response can look at graphs showing pre/post attitude change and favorable/unfavorable effects as well as affect and entertainment ratings and by personality type assessed via batteries of questions.

Inner Response always exposes a test commercial twice. The primary value of the second exposure is that viewers often “see” or “feel” something the second time that they missed the first time. Inner Response also measures the pace and intensity of involvement.
fMRI and the ‘Smart shirt’ (AdSam Marketing + Innerscope)

fMRI is the latest physiological technique used to tap the consumer’s mind. Prof. Boynton writes in a 2005 study “[...] it is possible to estimate the orientation of a stimulus from the pattern of fMRI responses it produces in V1 (visual cortex).” “V1 responses can be examined as if part of a ‘mind-reading exercise,’” he writes. “fMRI activity patterns in the human visual cortex contain reliable information that allows for detailed prediction of perceptual and mental states” write academic researchers Kamitani and Tong (2005).

AdSam Marketing’s researchers conduct fMRI testing at the McKnight Brain Institute, University of Florida. While not commercially available yet, fMRI testing is a promising direction for “mapping” consumer emotion in a visual format.

Cerebral Slice with fMRI activity

Commercial Exposure versus AdSAM Scoring

Innerscope uses a “smart shirt” technology that collects biometric data (i.e., arousal, respiratory state, heart response, motion) in addition to fMRI measures, thus aggregating neuroscientific and traditional physiological data. Innerscope’s smart clothing technology translates measures of brain activity time-locked index of emotional engagement that is easy to interpret.

In all conditions and in all test groups, participants are monitored for skin conductance, heart rate, respiratory rate, and motion using a smart garment with wireless sensors imbedded into a light-weight vest worn underneath regular clothing. The four channels of biomeasures are time-locked to the stimulus and analyzed using a proprietary methodology that combines a measure of physiologic synchrony with a measure of physiologic intensity that results in a measure of audience engagement. For the purposes of our work, synchrony is defined as the degree to which the biomeasures of the target audience uniformly change when exposed to a media stimulus. This corresponds with the aggregate level of attention in the audience. This measure of synchrony is combined with the level of intensity, defined as the cumulative strength of the response of the biomeasures. This corresponds with the aggregate emotional impact on the audience. Thus, the biological definition of engagement used in this study is the combination of audience synchrony (attention) plus intensity (emotional impact).
5. Key learnings from the ARF/AAAA project on emotional response

AAAA/ARF project yielded several key learnings about the state of measurement of successful emotional response to TV advertising campaigns.

“This new paradigm for evaluating emotional and cognitive interactions in advertising response provides the opportunity to fill in some of the missing pieces in understanding advertising performance, including: (1) How the components of advertising messages contribute to a commercial’s overall effectiveness; (2) How branding efforts can be maximized; (3) How well individual selling ideas resonate with viewers; (4) How strategic messaging can be enhanced or diminished by executional devices.”

– Abhilasha Mehta, Monster.com

5.1. Storytelling and the emotional peak

When examining physiological reactions to the Budweiser “Whassup” commercial we see a constant engagement with the story. According to researchers at AnswerStream, Inner Response, G&R, and Innerscope, ads in the beer category, in general, do a good job of initially engaging the viewer: The difference between the good and the very good lies in whether they can continue that engagement through the rest of the ad. The Budweiser commercial is one that keeps the viewer interested almost till the end even if there is a fluctuation in the pleasure of watching. AnswerStream’s skin conductance and heart measures presented in the figures below show the Budweiser commercial strong on these measures for the entire length of the commercial.
Researchers at Gallup and Robinson (G&R) agree that there is a wide variation in the positive emotional response to the beer commercials. This company also found the Budweiser “Whassup” commercial to have the strongest emotional response among the four beer commercials tested. Researchers at G&R who used facial EMG physiological measures found that each commercial has an emotional peak. Although absolute positive response levels vary by commercial, each execution works in a unique way, and all manage to link peak emotional points with central branding moments.

Emotion-based measures add depth to our understanding of how commercials work by allowing us to tap into the moment by moment emotional connections commercials make. The story-oriented Budweiser, Bud Light and Heineken commercials work on a highly emotional basis as shown by the EMG results. Respondents report no new product learning from them in follow-up questioning but show high commercial liking. Academics Baumgartner, Sujan and Padgett conducted a study in 1998 on the impact of the emotional peak of a commercial and found that the length of the commercial had no impact whatsoever if not leading to an emotional peak.

These physiological response findings on Budweiser were strongly supported by Ameritest, AdSam, MSW and IPSOS/ASI non-verbal measures as well as MSW and TNS attitude scales (Ameritest and AdSAM output shown below).
The storytelling effect on emotional response was also clear in the research on Heineken and BudLight. On the other hand, the Miller Lite low carb campaign did not have the same high level of emotional response. For the most part then, ads that tell stories engage and involve consumers and create stronger emotional relevance than product-centric ads.
Heineken’s “Weasel” emotional peak was found to be when the main character looks into the fridge and picks up Heineken beer, while the most emotionally arousing moment of the Bud Light “Ice” commercial was when a cap of Bud Light beer comes towards the audience as if it would burst from the screen. Both top emotional moments of the two commercials had a strong branding component. The dynamics of engagement and emotional response ebbs and flows but the best ads peak or attract attention at key branding moments. As we see further in findings by Olson, Zaltman and Associates, there is a relevant connection between storytelling and rich brand meaning.

**Relevant connection between storytelling and rich brand meaning**

With its unique interview methodology that taps into underlying feelings and thoughts, researchers from Olson, Zaltman and Associates identify the meaning of the brand as it is “co-created” by the advertiser and the consumer. The learning here is that once this brand interpretation is known, all communication messages from the marketer should be consistent with this meaning assigned to the brand by the consumer after being exposed to messages. The same idea is present with researchers at Ameritest, who believe it is critical to identify and measure emotion in the context of the story of the brand.
Olson, Zaltman and Associates found the Budweiser commercial to represent and activate feelings of “connection.” As AnswerStream’s SCR measure shows, the story of the Budweiser “Whassup” commercial is highly involving. The ZMET technique helps sketch a personality of the ad that is reflected on the brand. This is the point of our next key learning which is that advertising can symbolically enrich the brand.

Excerpts from Olson, Zaltman and Associates findings for Budweiser “Whassup” - “Budweiser is connection” are presented below.

They all seem to have their own inner joke about the “whassup” thing. Any group of friends has their own inner jokes and language. It's their own little thing. It's their own little code and that is theirs. They bond. The thought is trying to show that friends bond over sports and their beer. And that’s what happens. They all have their own little rituals, their own little language and inner jokes.

The fact that all five guys in this commercial were all drinking the same beer like it kinda gets you to think maybe this is why they became friends, like this particular brand of beer. It might have just been every single Sunday we’re going to get Budweiser. It would be more personal to me if every time I went to a bar and we always got like a Heineken type deal. It’s just one thing that they all have in common that just shows that they are friends.

Only they know what that means. But it’s just their way of, the type of good friends, and they just started this “what’s up.”

I think even other humans would be confused, because it’s so internalized. But I think that if an alien thought everybody acted like that all the time, they wouldn’t know what to make of it. It’s ritual. Because that repetition, and communication having this code. I think you can see that in the ad. It wasn’t just two speaking. So it was an interaction, a true interaction, and they all were in on the joke, and I think that matters.

So, they all say that, just a way of communicating. So, “what’s up” can mean a million things with these guys.

5.2. Advertising can symbolically enrich the brand
We have learned via the ZMET technique that viewers learn from the “Whassup” commercial that “Budweiser is connection.” The commercial successfully created meaning
that was stored in the memory of the viewers a symbolic meaning. Consumers will now relate Budweiser to various ways of being connected with one’s friends. Researchers at Gallup & Robinson found that the connection between emotional response and meaning happens by pairing symbolism with a story about a brand which generates an emotional response. In the case of Budweiser, the product/brand is associated with the humorous greeting among African American friends. Emotion is used successfully to gain interest as well as reinforce positive associations with brand.

5.3. Using universal/classic archetypes
According to researchers at Ameritest, archetypes are a highly effective way to convey meaning and emotion. Archetypes are established constructs that carry emotional information and are used to communicate meaning. The root of archetypes can be found in filmmaking. The effectiveness of an ad film is in the relationship between the meaning intended by the filmmaker and the meaning created by the viewer. An effective ad film creates a roadmap of meaning that is recreated by the viewer and leads to the intended destination of emotional response. Filmmakers use established constructs and metaphors to create these maps of meaning. These constructs and metaphors in effect telegraph meaning and they are implicitly understood by the experienced viewer. Examples of archetypes are the rebel (e.g., James Dean) or the hero.

Heineken’s “Weasel” leverages one of the classic archetypal figures – the Trickster. He personifies the beer drinker as a playful person who is impulsive, spontaneous, lives in the moment, and enjoys shaking things up a bit.

Both Bud commercials (“Ice” for Bud Light and “Whassup” for Budweiser) are projecting archetypal images of Brotherhood. This brand connects with the beer drinker’s emotional need for camaraderie. The Bud Campaign, while humorous with its “What’s Up?” response, is seen as authentic, real, and genuine by viewers while Bud Light is clearly over the top humor in an outrageous situation, reinforcing the “light” in the Bud Light brand meaning.

To take the idea further, there are commercials where the brand itself is playing the archetypal role of the hero. A couple of examples are: Campbell’s bringing together a foster mother and a child in “Orphan” and Folgers helping a husband pleasantly surprise his wife in “Waking Up.”
5.4. **A Unique Linkage of the Brand Benefit with a Strong Emotional Response**

We all suspect that having a strong emotional response isn’t sufficient to motivate consumers to purchase or enrich the brand meaning. It may gain attention or hold interest, but the goal of advertising is not the ad itself— it’s the brand and increasing brand preference. In our study there were two brand campaigns- Campbell’s Soup and Southwest Airlines which linked a strong emotional response (humor for Southwest and empathy for Campbell’s) to the storyline/characters and the primary brand benefit. Thus generating powerful brand meaning and increasing brand motivation or purchase intent.

The Campbell’s commercial is the story of a little girl being escorted to her new foster home. The initial anxiety and sadness from her loss is turned into a soft smile when the foster mother brings the girl a bowl of Campbell’s noodle soup. The commercial called “Orphan” was studied by Gallup-Robinson using their CERA physiological measures and by Ameritest with the Flow of Emotion symbolic measurement.

Gallup- Robinson found that “Orphan” generated an 80% purchase interest with the majority rating the commercial believable. The G-R report, based on the tracking of the spontaneous emotional response, stated:

*Peaks in emotional activation show a wide range with peaks related to the child’s sad story. The highest peak (158) was at the end of the story with her eating the soup and the tagline “Good for the Body, Good for the Soul.”*

Clearly the empathy with the girl’s plight was connected in a believable way to the brand benefit of good for the soul when Campbell’s played a role in creating a new bond between the orphan and new foster mother. Ameritest also studied the Campbell’s “Orphan” commercial in comparison to a Progresso commercial focused on the grown up taste from quality ingredients in the soup. On the purchase intent measure Ameritest found Campbell getting 42% compared to a category norm of 33% and Progresso receiving a below norm response of 25%. Ameritest found that one aspect to the power of the Campbell’s commercial compared to Progresso was the perceived sameness of Progresso. When asked a question about difference from other commercials, 51% agreed that Progresso was different, but 86% agreed about the uniqueness of Campbell’s. In the report, Ameritest described the flow of emotion in the Campbell as follows:

*The ad evokes strong negative emotion up until the emotional pivot point (foster mother quietly enters bedroom with tray of Campbell’s) and the turns positive with the brand benefiting from the upturn in flow of positive emotions.*

The second example of linkage was the research by TNS Ad Eval of “Want to Get Away: for Southwest Airlines and “Life” for United Airlines. Southwest’s “Want to Get Away” creatively linked a humorous, embarrassing moment (looking into a friend’s medicine chest out of curiosity only for it to crash into the sink) with the brand’s offer to get away at an attractive low price. On the key measure of motivation Southwest got 56 and United received 38. The United commercial, which was animated with an emotional story of a business man returning home, had a weak linkage with the brand.
“Want to Get Away” humor came through loud and clear with 84% choosing that descriptor and United perceived as unimaginative by 68%. Southwest, however, translated their humor into useful and relevant information about getting away from embarrassing moments at attractive prices.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>“Get Away”</th>
<th>“Life”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Informative</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tells me something new</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The insight on why this linkage paid off for Southwest when Ad Eval asked respondents to select images of how the ad positions Southwest, and the primary ones selected were: free and easy, unwinding, and letting go. Clearly, feelings congruent with the selling idea of how easy and low cost it is to get away (e.g. from embarrassing situations) on Southwest Airlines.

5.5. **An Icon Brand Can Mask an Emotionally Weak Campaign**

Sometimes above norm results on cognitive measures such as main message playback brand recall and attribute ratings can mask an emotionally weak commercial that does not translate well into purchase intent. Inner Response studied three beverage commercials -- Maxwell House, Folgers, and Coca-Cola -- all strong historic brands in American culture. The Coca-Cola commercial study was a classic called “I’d like to Buy the World a Coke,” which gathered an international throng on a mountain top and communicated the uniting experience of “sharing a Coke.” The Folgers commercial was a recent entry in the long running “The Best Part of Wakin’ Up is Folgers in Your Cup”. It featured a popular Blue Grass fiddler and her husband getting up early on their farm. The Maxwell House commercial used the brand’s famous line “Good to the Last Drop,” and the commercial focused on a new blend of Maxwell House coffee surrounded by pleasant images of coffee drinking.

While the Maxwell House commercial received high levels of main message recall of the new coffee blend and a pre-post purchase shift measure at normative levels, the comparison to Folgers and Coca-Cola on pre-post and other emotional response measures, shows it is “soft” in comparison.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Maxwell House</th>
<th>Folgers</th>
<th>Coca-Cola</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-post</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neuro emotional index</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>218</td>
<td>336</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affective ratings</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entertainment ratings</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Even a 30 year old commercial outperformed Maxwell House on motivation and emotional response. Both the Coca-Cola and Folgers commercials were storytelling commercials with the brand playing a simple, relevant role in the relationship between two people. Maxwell House contained more product information but didn’t tell as story or give the brand a special role. Jack Shimell, founder of Inner Response, drew the following conclusion about the Maxwell House commercial, from all the physiological data:

*The story and characters never developed any kind of credible human interaction. The voice over was only about the blend and was unrelated to the action, and there were too many cuts to the product. The shape of the emotional response pattern began well but quickly*
deteriorated. We concluded that the strong historical equity of the Maxwell House brand carried this commercial to positive cognitive measures.

5.6. Emotional Response Measures Can Reveal Unintended Consequences
The MasterCard “Priceless” campaign has proven itself in the marketplace and won creative and effectiveness awards. AnswerStream studied two MasterCard commercials—“Baseball” and “Happy”. “Baseball” featured a dad taking his son to a ballgame with associated costs of ticket, hotdogs, and souvenir baseball. The priceless moment is two quality hours with your son. “Happy” used a series of famous Hanna Barbera cartoon characters like Yogi Bear, Olive Oil, and Mr. Magoo.

The physiological tracking done by AnswerStream revealed an unintended negative consequence due to the sequence with Mr. Magoo, which came early in the MasterCard commercial. Mr. Magoo, as we all know, is blind as a bat, but it doesn’t deter him from getting on with it. In “Happy” Mr. Magoo is on an airliner and mistakes the main entry door for the bathroom and tumbles overboard. During the tracking of the profile measures on heart rate and skin conductance, the profile dives and the commercial never recovers its initially high levels. “Baseball,” on the other hand, builds as each sequence occurs and hits a high level at the priceless moment. The conclusion from the group studying the Magoo event felt that while “just a cartoon”, the 9/11 memories and fears related to falling were operating at a deep emotional level, clearly an unintended effect by the agency and brand.

Another example of unintended consequences that can be detected by emotional measures was AnswerStream’s study of the Toyota Camry and Nissan Maxima commercials. In terms of equal association of the commercial with the brand and recall of model features, the Camry commercial received a significantly higher emotional interest score (.25 vs. .16) based on the measures of heart rate and skin conductance. AnswerStream concluded:

A storytelling approach works when it’s about you and your family experience with the Camry. The combination of good pleasure plus high interest indicators translates for Toyota with a meaningful change in purchase preference. Maxima, on the other hand, told a story all about the tension on a first date with a personal car experience non-existent.

The data demonstrated that their misdirection device back fired on Maxima. You think at first the couple is bantering about going to bed together on the first date, only to discover he is trying to test drive her new Maxima with a “sports package”. The emotional profile showed that the negative levels were so high for many people over the brashness of the guy and his seemingly erotic proposal that they were unable to “switch over” to more positive feelings once the Maxima appeared.

5.7. Getting to the Heart of the Matter
Every now and then, a commercial just zeroes in on a universal, emotional truth like MasterCard with “there are some things money can’t buy”. In our project, Ipsos/ASI discovered that Pampers had done the same with a campaign to launch their new diaper for infants going through potty training. It is tradition for diaper advertising to speak to parents, especially mothers, about the features of their product and focus on the dryness, fit or
protection benefit. Often, features like design, convenience, etc. are central to the selling idea. The emotions portrayed are usually those belonging to the mothers.

The “Power Up” commercial for Pampers, however, dramatized the agony of the journey (potty training) and the victory in reaching the destination (peeing successfully in the potty) of the child. The young boy in this story, wearing his new Pampers Trainers, reaches his goal and signifies victory at the end with a Rocky gesture. “Power Up” far exceeded ASI’s motivation norms. Their Emotoscope measure of emotional response clarified that the commercial landed on a deep emotional feeling of truth—how mom/and child feel when victory is achieved—and how that feeling gets associated with Pampers. The predominant emotional feeling identified by viewers was Independent. The Emotoscope map showed the strongest responses to the question about feelings when using the product were “confident, proud, and enthusiastic”. The feelings most associated with the ad were enthusiastic, pleased, and happy”. A rich human insight portrayed in a compelling story about the universal truth of the potty training experience paid off for Pampers and IPSOS/ASI’s emotional measures confirmed the insight and idea. This is the seminal value for measuring engagement via emotional responses to advertising.

6. The role of emotion in a consumer-centric approach – Brand Co-Creation

Zaltman argues that high-impact communication is, in fact, a co-creative process that is highly emotionally driven. This process involves the stories, experiences and rich symbols in the minds of the audience connecting with those crafted into the commercials.

“The ‘commercial’s input’ into the process of co-creation of meaning is the story it tells,” write academics Lobler, Maier and Markgraf in their 2005 study. Their data support that the meaning of a commercial is co-created by the advertising creatives and the customer. They think that the co-creation of meaning follows a process, where the story told is the initiating part of the communication and the customer’s experience adds to the meaning of the communicated message – hence, co-creation of meaning. This process then has an impact on the customer’s behavior. Co-created brand meaning has a good chance to lead to a feeling of co-ownership of the brand.

Participation on the part of the consumer to the creation of brand meaning while exposed to commercial messages justifies Wendy Gordon’s (2006) reminder to advertising researchers that the focus should not be on What does advertising do to people?, but rather on What do people do with advertising? People are not tabula rasa (i.e., blank sheets of paper on which communication messages are indelibly printed). People do something with communications, they interact with it whether consciously or not, writes Gordon, stressing unconscious decoding of brand messages during low attention processing states (i.e., when we are on “auto-pilot” in the supermarket or slumped in an “altered state of consciousness” in front of the TV).

Wang and Calder (2006) found that an important aspect of consumer engagement is media transportation. They studied the effects of media context on the impact of ads that appear in that
context. Media transportation happens when a person not only attends to information but also is absorbed into the narrative flow of a story in a pleasurable and active way. For example, when we read a magazine or newspaper we tend to “get caught up in the articles.” We are exposed to the ads while in this state of transportation when all mental systems and capacities become focused on events occurring in the narrative. The same happens when we watch TV. Deighton, Romer and McQueen (1989) contend that more dramatic television commercials are processed differently from more argument-oriented ones. More recently, Escalas (2004) found that narrative ad processing is positively correlated with brand attitudes and behavioral intentions. Therefore, we can say that narratively structured ads persuade people by connecting the ad to the self via narrative transportation.

The story the ad tells engages the consumer’s emotions and triggers stored associations, personal stories, brand experiences and images and generates that first emotional imprint in the brain. Emotion involves the consumer and the ad’s story gets integrated in the mesh of memories/mental model/schema in long-term memory.

Through the metaphors marketers use, they are able to alter prior memories and create new meanings or stories about their brands. Memories have a deep association with storytelling. To tell a story is to remember an important idea – we remember by telling stories – it is something we virtually have to do. Consumers tell stories about themselves with the aid of props. As agents of the larger society, stories help consumers create memories and hence define their self-identities and interpret cultural trends and rituals. Companies use storytelling to shape memories as consumers record and recall them. The process of remembering can only be understood in an appropriately rich and dynamic way if it is understood as a kind of chemistry between inner processes and outer settings – it is the interplay between inner and outer that gives rise to memory. Hence, the memory and meaning assigned by the consumer to a brand is one co-created by the advertiser and the consumer himself.

Consequently, advertisers today have to take a fresh look at their target prospects as human beings with emotions as well as thoughts. The people in the target market do not assimilate brand learnings as presented in marketing communication messages as though injected with a hypodermic needle or taught as a second grade teacher teaches (and then tests for) reading. The consumers’ minds will tweak, add and subtract bits and pieces of information that make up brand meaning. This co-creative process should be viewed as an opportunity to let consumers do half of the work in figuring out the meaning of the brand. Kirk Souder writes in Ad Week that marketers should act like counselors.

“A great counselor isn’t a master at spelling out an answer; a great counselor is a master at providing the space for other people to spell it out for themselves.” “Great work, like great counseling, provides two points that the audience can then connect with their own truth, and thereby write and resolve their own story.”

The more creative freedom to interpret the brand meaning portrayed in the commercial the more emotionally involved the audience will be in reshaping the information they have about the brand thus leading to a more powerful sense of co-ownership of the brand and stronger, longer-lasting brand preference.
The added value of emotion

So, storytelling in an ad creates a link between emotional reactions and brand preference, a co-creation process happens via narrative transportation. Passyn and Sujan found in a 2006 study that advertising messages generating emotions motivate behavior. For example, when the Orange cell phone service was introduced in Europe, the campaign was highly successful and generated numerous subscribers. This campaign had no rational arguments in it whatsoever, it just created a “feeling,” or, as researchers at Ameritest would say – it created a flow of emotion.

According to researchers at Ameritest, the flow of emotion generated by a commercial affects motivation towards the advertised brand (see figure below).

Before motivation, advertising messages that successfully generate a strong emotional reaction are stronger on more than one of the traditional measures (recall, persuasion, liking). Findings by Gallup & Robinson show that for the four beer ads tested in this project, the key conventional measures of recall, persuasion and liking discriminate among the commercials. All of the commercials are strong on at least one key measure. However, the more emotionally activating ones are strong on more than one measure. So, emotional activation does have an added value.

There are additional examples when a correlation between emotional activation and other traditional measures was found. When testing Coca Cola’s “Mean Joe Green” commercial, AdSAM Marketing has found significant correlations between all the emotional measures employed (i.e., pleasure, arousal, dominance) and more traditional measures: attitude toward the brand, intention to purchase, and commercial believability and uniqueness. Similarly, Ameritest tracked pleasure and interest via SCR and HRT for two MasterCard commercials. Findings show...
that the commercial “Happy” scored high on both emotional measures and it generated significant increases in agreement with the statements: “MasterCard is one of the best credit cards available” and “I feel good about using MasterCard”.

Good advertising adds value. The advertising industry has to prove its contribution to the bottom line.

"We've never really been creative about proving the value of good ideas."
– Mary Baglivo, Arnold Worldwide, 2003

Her clients at Volkswagen have recognized that Arnold's "Drivers Wanted" campaign has created $1 billion in incremental value to the automaker.

Emotional responses enhance risk (going for big ideas) instead of focusing on risk reduction (screening out weak ads).

"The agencies that will succeed are the ones... that can find the new ways to engage and connect with consumers. If you're not doing that, you're not going to be in business.”
– Anthony J. Hopp, AAAA Chairman, 2006

7. Conclusions

The findings of this project require us to completely rethink how advertising works. Wendy Gordon cites Alex Biel writing back in 1990: “Consumers first form an overall impression of an advertisement on a visceral or ‘gut’ level. To the extent that this impression is positive they are likely to continue to process the advertising more fully.” We cited above several findings from neuroscience that point indeed to the fact that people have an emotional reaction initially to any stimulus. Hence, we need to step away from Think-Feel-Do to a Feel-Do-Think or Feel-Think-Do model and we should consider the implications.

Feel-Do-Think or Feel-Think-Do
We’ve clearly exaggerated the role of conscious thought in consumer behavior in past research and thinking about advertising effectiveness. Structures of meaning are really a messy stew of memories, emotions, associations, thoughts and other processes we are not aware of and cannot articulate. Emotional response can occur even when we have no awareness of the stimuli that caused them.

Campaigns work within a Fee-Do-Think or Feel-Think-Do paradigm and NOT within Think-Feel-Do very often. This requires emotional measures for both considered and spontaneous responses. This project highlighted some of the measures available on the market today and pointed out learnings about the importance of emotion in advertising to help build connections between consumers and brands.

While this project stresses the importance of emotional reactions to advertising, once acknowledged, the road toward adopting and implementing measures and fully comprehending implications lies ahead. How we respond emotionally to an advertisement is not the same thing
as emotional associations with a brand. They are likely related and interact, but they are different concepts. Thus, perhaps we need to approach the problem along two different lines: emotional response to advertising versus created emotional payoffs associated with a brand (and how advertising contributes or detracts from this). We will be talking in the future about derived importance and derived engagement based on emotional responses and emotional associations.

The Engagement Model: Engagement, Enjoyment, Enrichment of Brand Meaning, Motivation

Even a Feel-Do-Think or Feel-Think-Do model is no longer accurate considering there is no linear, step-wise or hierarchical model of effectiveness. Structures of meaning are too complex for that. We established an emotional reaction is first when exposure to a commercial occurs. This emotional reaction may be either conscious or unconscious. Storytelling enhances anchoring into memory of the brand name because consumers co-create the meaning of the brand together with the advertiser in a state of narrative transportation – hence, the consumer is engaged. The dynamics of engagement ebbs and flows but the best ads peak at key branding moments.

Hence, engagement is the new paradigm that is no longer linear in fashion. It expresses the state the consumer is in when exposed to the advertisement. The consumer enjoys the story of the ad while an enriched structure of brand meaning is imprinted in memory. This stronger foothold of the brand in long-term memory is the basis for motivation.

A new model of how advertising works should be adopted in practice:

- engagement
- enjoyment
- enrichment of brand meaning
- motivation

Some Practical/Applied Implications

First, for advertising research, it is important for the new engagement model to be adopted as well as the new measures in addition to traditional ones. For the most part, there has been no wide scale, significant innovation in copy testing and tracking (except maybe data collection methods) in 50 years. We still rely on survey data that ask people their opinions of advertising. We use questions that invite people to recall things they have no reason to remember. We evaluate success using metrics whose origins can be tracked back to the early part of the 20th century. As a result, a lot of advertising has become risk-averse, normative and predictable. Our copy evaluation measures are robust and plentiful, but primarily cognitive and reflective. It is possible the industry’s left-brain bias is inhibiting the intuitive and creative side of advertising and brand communication. The overall research finding that the physiological and symbolic measures of emotion are robust, understandable and related to winning brand campaigns should encourage greater trial of these measures by advertisers and their agencies.

Second, there is the need for re-orienting the way that companies think about advertising. It would mean changing the expectations clients have of advertising. For instance, they would begin to use different criteria in setting the advertising objectives. It must begin with the consumer, not the sales point I want to deliver (often, many, many times). For example, they
might incorporate criteria that would evaluate the creative presentations on clarity of the storylines, the degree that the brand is integrated into the story, the use of imagery or metaphors which would encourage richer co-creation, and so forth.

Last but not least, rethinking the model for advertising might mean a re-orientation in the creative briefing process. That might include the following:

- A more visual approach to briefing. Adding key symbols, images, textures, colors that would help the creative team in understanding and developing the non-verbal aspects of the brand.
- Providing more emotional insights into target audience descriptions by including two or three example “life stories” of the customer. These could be brief – 2 or 3 lines – that give more specificity to the target audience.
- Greater emphasis on brand personality. Going far beyond the typical list of personality characteristics and really creating more of a persona, using both images and words to describe who the brand is and is not. More of a brand biography, with creation story, likes and dislikes, tastes and style.
- A different emphasis on the proof points and rational benefits. We would no longer consider them as primary drivers of preference. Proof points have a new role, which is to give the consumer a plausible post-rationalization that supports their emotional choices.
- Development of new tools that would help with developing “narrative lines” for the brand. What happens when the consumer interacts with the brand? What are some strong storylines? How do we articulate them in a brief that will be useful to the creative teams? How does the brand story interact with the consumer’s life story or stories about the category?

This would also suggest an effort to share the insights into the effectiveness of engagement and co-creation with the creative community. Bringing the creative directors into the equation is essential. Each advertising agency will still have its own philosophy and creative credo. The new model does not replace that. But it should certainly influence their thinking about execution and structure.
Idea Engagement Task Force

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Organization</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>William Cook</td>
<td>The ARF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marlene Denker</td>
<td>Revlon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michael Donahue</td>
<td>AAAA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bruce Hall</td>
<td>Howard Merrell &amp; Partners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Hallward</td>
<td>Ipsos-ASI, Inc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nigel Hollis</td>
<td>Millward Brown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andy James</td>
<td>Olson Zaltman Associates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jamie Kalfus</td>
<td>Young &amp; Rubicam, Inc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tara Korde</td>
<td>The ARF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marta Larock</td>
<td>Publicis USA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brian Levine</td>
<td>Innerscope Research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dara Maccaba</td>
<td>Olson Zaltman Associates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abby Mehta</td>
<td>Monster</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anca Cristina Micu</td>
<td>Sacred Heart University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jon Morris</td>
<td>University Of Florida &amp; AdSam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scott Purvis</td>
<td>Gallup &amp; Robinson, Inc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jerry Olson</td>
<td>Olson Zaltman Associates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helene Paulyen</td>
<td>The Procter &amp; Gamble Company</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joseph Plummer</td>
<td>The ARF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sal Randazzo</td>
<td>ConsumerWorks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Randy Ringer</td>
<td>Verse Group, LLC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karl Rosenberg</td>
<td>MSW Research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kim Rushton</td>
<td>BBDO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amy Shea Hall</td>
<td>Ameritext/CY Research, Inc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jack Shimell</td>
<td>Inner Response Inc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inna Sokolyanskaya</td>
<td>The ARF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alice Sylvester</td>
<td>Foote Cone &amp; Belding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michael Thibudeau</td>
<td>Verse Group, LLC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mark Truss</td>
<td>JWT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anita Valdes</td>
<td>Millward Brown USA Inc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gerald Zaltman</td>
<td>Harvard Business School &amp; Olson Zaltman Associates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leslie Zane</td>
<td>The Center for Emotional Marketing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kirsten Zapieck</td>
<td>TNS Brand &amp; Advertising</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

References


Plummer, Joseph and Rebecca Holman, "Communicating to the heart and/or mind", Paper presented to American Psychological Association, August 21, 1981.


