

**Measuring Affective Advertising: Implications of  
Low Attention Processing on Recall**

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# **MEASURING AFFECTIVE ADVERTISING: IMPLICATIONS OF LOW ATTENTION PROCESSING ON RECALL**

**by Robert Heath & Agnes Nairn**

## **Summary:**

This paper is about affective advertising, defined as that which works on our emotions and feelings not just on our knowledge and beliefs. We compare the most popular recall-based metric – claimed ad awareness – against an approach which deduces effectiveness from recognition, and find claimed ad awareness seriously underestimates the effectiveness of the advertising tested.

## **Introduction:**

In 1961, in response to Vance Packard's famous polemic 'The Hidden Persuaders', Rosser Reeves declared 'There are no hidden persuaders. Advertising works openly, in the bare and pitiless sunlight.' (Reeves 1961: 70). Doubtless there are some who believe, or would like to believe, that this is still the case, and that the way advertising works is still transparent. But we know a lot more about how the brain works than we did 40 years ago, and what we have learned confirms that advertising, indeed communication in general, is a far more complex process than we used to think it was.

What complicates everything is not claims or brands or products, but emotions; specifically our emotions as consumers. In 1961 it was believed that emotions were a consequence of our thoughts, and that if we understood what we were thinking then we understood everything. But pioneers in psychology like Robert Zajonc (1984) and Robert Bornstein (1989) shattered this illusion. They showed that feelings and emotions have primacy over thoughts, and that emotional responses can be created even when we have no awareness of the stimulus that causes them. More recently, Damasio (1994) has shown that our emotions are critical to decision-making; and in another area of psychology work by Daniel Schacter and others has

demonstrated that can take place even when we pay no attention whatever, and that this learning can interact with our emotional memory stores (Schacter 1996, Shapiro et al 1997).

All this points to advertising having far more power than we think it has. In general we don't think it affects us very much, if at all. For example, a poll of American consumers conducted by Cap Gemini Ernst & Young in 2003 found 82% of US consumers did not believe that advertising influenced their decision to buy a car, which CGE&Y used as evidence that car manufacturers are wasting money on ads (FT 14th October 2003). But 13 years of IPA Advertising Effectiveness Awards have proved beyond doubt that advertising affects us, whether we believe it or not. So how is it that consultancies like CGE&Y can make such a patently naïve claim, suggesting that what consumers *believe* represents the sum of truth about how advertising works?

We think the explanation arises from the way in which advertising is evaluated. Although our knowledge of how advertising works has changed considerably, the measures we generally use to measure it have not. We still rely on survey data which asks people their opinions of advertising. We still use questions which invite people to recall things they have no reason at all to remember. And in many cases we evaluate success using metrics whose origins can be tracked back to the early part of last century.

### **A brief history of advertising measurement:**

The remark, attributed in the UK to Lord Leverhulme, that *'50% of my advertising is wasted, but I don't know which 50%'* is well known. Less well known is an observation by Niall Fitzgerald, current chairman of Unilever, who said in an interview in 1998 *'If someone asked me, rather than one of my distinguished predecessors, which half of my advertising was wasted I would probably say 90% is wasted but I don't know which 90%'* (Fitzgerald 1998 p22). Given the skills and technology we now have at our fingertips, it is nothing short of

astonishing that the chairman of a major world advertiser is less sure nowadays of the power of advertising than half a century ago.

Partly this situation arises because of the complexity of advertising. David Bernbach's famous statement that '*Advertising is fundamentally persuasion and persuasion happens to be not a science, but an art*' (Feldwick 2002: 139) give a clue to the myriad alternative opinions which can be ventured about the merit of even the simplest and smallest piece of communication. And alternatives equate to harder decisions and longer decision times. Little wonder that discussions about how well or poorly a campaign has performed tend to start almost as soon as the first ad appears, because if a TV campaign is found *not* to be working then it may be months before it can be adjusted, and years before a replacement is available.

So how can it be discovered at this early stage if an advertising campaign is working? In the IPA awards advertising effectiveness is generally deemed to have been *proved* only when shifts in attitudes or increments in sales or margin can be linked directly to advertising activity (Broadbent 2000, Roberts 2002). But we all know that sales can take a long time to respond, and likewise we have become used to image metrics showing few if any shifts in the short term. As Gordon Brown observes, '*...reality rarely co-operates...*' and '*... the majority of advertisers have to be content with determining the probable effectiveness ...*' (Brown 1986: 289). Fortunately the advertising industry has always favoured fairly simple hierarchical models so 'probable' effectiveness can be determined by collecting data relating to one of the intermediate stages of whichever model you have based your advertising on.

The earliest and still the best known hierarchical model, AIDA, was reputedly conceived by St. Elmo Lewis in 1898 as a guide to salesmen (Strong 1925). AIDA, standing for Attention → Interest → Decision → Action, invites sales (i.e. Action) to be assessed by measurement of attention or interest, which even today poses something of a challenge. As it turned out, the first practical intermediate measures were devised in the 1920's by '*... two young and*

*entrepreneurial college professors from the Midwest, Daniel Starch and George Gallup'* (Feldwick 2002 p.134). Starch's model, 'Noticed → Read → Understood → Desired → Action' (Starch 1923), makes nothing like as catchy an acronym as AIDA, but it allowed the probability of a sale to be assessed by the level of 'noticing and reading' (sic) which took place. This led Starch to devise the Starch Test, a recognition-based system for the measurement of 'Reading and Noting' of press advertising.

But Starch's colleague, George Gallup, realised that this approach took no account of variations in the time which elapses between exposure of advertising and purchase of product. Gallup therefore devised a different intermediate measure which took account of the decay in memory which would result from this time gap. This measure was Spontaneous Recall. It was commercially introduced as a measure of press advertising effectiveness by Gallup in the 1930's, and later, when TV advertising arrived in the 40's, he pioneered with Claude Robinson the famous 'Day-after-recall' technique (Du Plessis 1994). Thereafter Recall spread like 'flu, and by the 60's, in the words of William Barclay, '*Recall of commercial content was the principal measure of communication effectiveness*' (Barclay et al 1965: 41).

But it was Gordon Brown, described in Admap in 1994 as '*probably the most influential single voice in contemporary advertising research*', who was responsible for turning recall into an even more potent metric. Brown realised that genuine spontaneous recall was of little value in a world in which advertising was becoming commonplace, so he devised a more sensitive question for ascertaining recall: '*We show a list of brands and ask "which of these brands ... have you seen advertised on television recently"*' (Brown 1985: 57). The usefulness of the resulting metric – claimed ad awareness – was enhanced by the development of an 'Awareness Index', which provided a one-number score for the success a campaign has in increasing claimed ad awareness for a brand (Brown 1986). And publication in the same year of a study run with Stephen Colman of Cadburys which showed evidence of a link to sales

effect lent even further weight to the metric (Colman & Brown 1986). By 1991 it was described in a critical paper by Feldwick as having ‘...gripped the imagination of both advertisers and agencies as a simple figure ... a measure of advertising effectiveness’ (Feldwick et al, 1991; 22).

Measures such as brand name prompted ad awareness and detailed recall have appeared in almost every major advertising tracking study for the last 20 years, and this ubiquity has encouraged a simplistic view of advertising effectiveness to develop. Gordon Brown describes an ad which failed to achieve high recall as ‘a disaster’ and one which did achieve high recall as ‘a triumph’ (Brown 1985: 57). Haley & Baldinger, writing of an experimental study into advertising copy testing, observe that ‘Persuasion and recall ... are likely to remain primary evaluative measures in the foreseeable future’ (1991 p.30). Even notable academics like Rossiter and Percy refer to brand-prompted ad recall as ‘a check on advertising’s causality in influencing brand attitudes’ (1997: 587).

But has anyone actually checked how valid these recall-based metrics are? Common sense suggests that advertising will work best if we remember it, but does this mean that advertising works less well if we *don’t* remember it? Evidence that we may be wrong to place so much faith in these types of metrics comes from Leonard Lodish’s meta-analysis of 389 split cable TV advertising experiments using the Behaviorscan® panel. Lodish concluded that: ‘It is unlikely there is a strong relationship between standard measures of TV commercial recall ... and sales impact of the copy’. (Lodish et al 1995: 138). So what, if any, case can be made *against* the use of recall-based metrics?

### **The case against recall-based metrics:**

The belief underlying recall-based metrics is that advertising has to be *persuasive* in order to be effective (Myers Levey & Malavlya 1999). This is particularly the case in the USA, where, as Tim Ambler so eloquently puts it, ‘The assumption that advertising equals

*persuasion is so ingrained ... that a challenge elicits much the same reaction as questioning your partner's parentage*' (Ambler 2000: 299). Persuasion, defined as *'to move by argument, reasoning, or pleading to a belief, position, or course of action'*, (Longman Dictionary 1984, p1096) works best if the person you are trying to argue, reason or plead with pays *attention* to and *recalls* what you are saying, otherwise your efforts will be largely wasted.

This is almost certainly why marketing universally assumes that high attention equates to advertising effectiveness. For example, Philip Kotler, author the world's most popular marketing textbook, states unhesitatingly that *"The advertiser has to turn the 'big idea' into an actual ad execution that will capture the target market's attention and their interest"* (Kotler, Armstrong, Saunders & Wong 2002: 668). And even the UK's most celebrated marketing academic, the late Peter Doyle, wrote *"For an advertisement... to be effective it must achieve first exposure and then attention."* (1994: 240). But here we encounter an interesting non-sequiter. Although they talk about the need for advertising to get attention and for the *message* to be remembered, neither Kotler nor Doyle say anything about the need for the *advertising itself* to be remembered. So why do they both include advertising recall in their list of recommended metrics? It suggests to us that their list of evaluative metrics is derived not from their own criteria for advertising effectiveness, but from the measures that are widely used and available

If remembering advertising has no theoretical role in advertising success, just how important or useful a metric is advertising recall? In fact, the idea that advertising can work *without* ads being attended to or recalled goes back a very long way. Just a few years after the AIDA model was conceived, the importance of attention was questioned by Walter Dill Scott, who quoted a subject who claimed never to have looked at any of the ads in the tramcars she travelled in each day, yet *"knew them all by heart and ... held the products they advertised in her highest esteem"* (Scott 1903). The schism between high and low attention models



widened in the 60's, when Herb Krugman (1965) coined the phrase 'low involvement' to contrast with the persuasion-shift high involvement models which dominated ad pre-testing at the time, later validating the incidence of low involvement by measuring the brain waves of a subject whilst watching TV advertising (Krugman 1971). More recently, a team led by psychologist Stewart Shapiro has shown through controlled attention experiments that ads can influence product consideration even when processing was entirely peripheral (Shapiro, MacInnis, & Heckler 1997). His conclusion is that advertising *'has the potential to affect future buying decisions even when subjects ... do not process the ad attentively and ... do not recollect ever having seen the ad'*. (1997: 102)

It is difficult to source data from real life to support the idea that ads can work without being remembered. Partly this is because marketers who regard ad awareness as important will usually change their advertising if it performs badly on this metric. What little evidence there is comes from brands whose marketers regards ad awareness as *unimportant* and therefore not worth measuring. One such example is Stella Artois, now acknowledged as the most successful beer brand in the UK. Despite having run for 8 years, Stella's initial press campaign (as measured by a competitor's tracking study) had only achieved claimed ad awareness of 4% in 1990, compared with 29% for the leading TV advertised brand Castlemaine XXXX. Yet Stella's rating for quality on the same survey was 45% compared to just 19% for Castlemaine. A rigorous analysis of all other factors indicated it could only have been the advertising which gave the brand its exceptionally high repute, thereby confirming that advertising can build strong brand values without necessarily performing well on memory-based evaluative measures. (Heath 1993).

So there *is* evidence to suggest that recall-based metrics may not be reliable indicators of advertising effectiveness. What is the explanation for this? How *can* advertising work without being explicitly remembered? A clue comes from a paper presented at Esomar in

2000, which found evidence that UK advertising simply does not conform to the traditional persuasion norm so popular in the USA. In a study of 36 UK advertisements they noted that the majority fitted the non-persuasive category, with 86% being seen as having told viewers nothing they did not already know. In their conclusions the writers demurred from the task of explaining how these ads might work, but in the text they admit that their measures were rather rational and were flawed by *'not picking up all emotional facets fully'* (Mills et al 2000: 4). And it is in this area of emotion that we believe advertising has the 'hidden power' that enables it to work without attention or recall.

### **Relevant alternative advertising models:**

Krugman appears to have developed the first recorded non-memory dependent advertising model. In his 1977 paper he concludes that *'recall and attitude effects are not necessary for advertising to do its job of aiding in-store purchasing'* (Krugman 1977: 52) and that *'quick and / or faint perceptions of product advertising, even unremembered, do their job in most cases'* (Op. cit.: 53) But Krugman's explanation focused on left and right brain processing and did not involve affect. This is no surprise because it was not until 1980 that it was postulated that affect has primacy over cognition (Zajonc 1980), and it is only much more recently that it has been shown that affect can also have dominance over cognition in decision-making. (Damasio 1994, Shiv & Fedorikhan 1999).

This new learning about the power of affect on decision-making led Tim Ambler of London Business School to develop what he calls his MAC (Memory-Affect-Cognition) model (Ambler 2000). In this model he concludes that it is the Affective content which drives advertising effectiveness and that most of our 'thinking' is merely supportive of the decision that you 'feel' is the right one. In his words, *'Memory dominates Affect, which in turn dominates Cognition'* (Ambler 2000: 312). But Ambler's MAC model does not cast any light on the role of attention or recall in advertising. One model which does do this is the

Low Attention Processing Model (Heath 2000, 2001a, 2001b). Note that this was formerly published as a *Low Involvement* Processing Model, but the name has been changed because the term ‘involvement’ has caused confusion in the USA with models which use involvement to refer to product or category involvement.

Heath’s Low Attention Processing Model can be summarised as follows:

1. Because brands match each other’s performance so swiftly, and consumers exist in a time-poor environment, considered choice tends to give way to intuitive choice, in which emotions are more influential.
2. This situation inhibits the consumer’s desire to seek out information about brands, and minimises the need for them to pay attention to advertising. Brand information can however be ‘acquired’ at low and even zero attention levels, using two distinct mental processes. The first process is passive learning, which is a low-attention cognitive process. Passive learning has been shown to be poor at changing opinions and attitudes (Petty & Cacioppo 1996) but *is* able to record and link together brand names and other elements in an ad.
3. The second process is implicit learning, which is a fully automatic non-cognitive process that has been shown to be independent of attention. Implicit learning, as is discussed below, cannot analyse or re-interpret anything, all it is able to do is to store what is perceived, along with any simple conceptual meanings that we attach to these perceptions.
4. Because of this limitation, implicit learning does not establish strong rational brand benefits in the consumer’s mind. Instead it builds and reinforces associations over time and these associations become linked to the brand by passive learning. These associations are extraordinarily enduring (Tulving Schacter & Stark 1982), and can trigger emotional markers, which in turn influence intuitive decision-making (Damasio 1994).

5. Passive and implicit learning are semi-automatic and fully automatic mental processes. As such they will be used every time an ad is seen or heard, regardless of how little attention is being paid. Because attention to advertising tends to diminish over time (Krugman 1972), the occasions on which an ad is processed attentively will be outnumbered many times by the occasions on which it is processed at lower attention and its content is learned passively and implicitly.

So advertising which exploits low attention processing will work better when seen several times at low attention than if seen once or twice at high attention. The implication for research is that brand associations reinforced by this sort of repetition will remain in memory long after the ad has been forgotten. To explain this it is useful to review some of the important characteristics of implicit learning.

### **Implicit Learning**

Although implicit learning has been known about for a decade or more, little research has been possible into its role in advertising. The reason is evident: you can find out relatively easily *if* someone has learned something in the past, because if they know it they have learned it, and if they don't know it they haven't. But how do you identify if they learned it *actively* or *passively* or *implicitly* when no detailed memory of the learning event remains?

Recent research into this field was carried out at Sussex University by Alistair Goode (Goode 2001). Using an experimental technique (Process Dissociation Procedure) in which people can be split into those likely to have processed an ad attentively (i.e. active learning) and those likely to have processed inattentively (i.e. implicit learning) he found a positive correlation between implicit learning and product liking. Goode's findings reinforce the idea that implicit learning is not simply an adjunct to traditional attentive learning but can be an important contributor towards the success of an ad.

How is implicit learning able to do this? The answer lies in the nature of implicit memory, the memory system which underpins implicit learning (Berry & Diennes 1991).

### **Implicit Memory**

Implicit memory works in two different ways. First, like all memory systems, it records what is *perceived*, that is, what is seen and heard (Tulving & Schacter 1990). However, implicit memory has also been shown to work *conceptually*; in other words, it can record and store simple meanings which we attach to what was perceived from our semantic memory store (MacAndrew, Glisky & Schacter 1987). These experiments were replicated by Vaidya et al. (1995).

The finding that implicit memory works conceptually is of critical importance. Implicit memory is unlikely to be able to exert much influence on purchase if it works in the perceptual mode alone, because no *meaning* will be attached to the perceptions that are stored. But if implicit memory can also process concepts, then it can store emotive values triggered from past experience alongside these perceptions. In this way we open up a theoretical route by which implicit memory on its own can influence intuitive brand choice.

None of this counts for much if implicit memory performs less effectively than explicit memory. But implicit memory has been found to be superior to explicit memory in three further respects: It has been shown to be substantially more *durable* than explicit memory (Allen & Reber 1980); it has been shown to be substantially more *capacious* than explicit memory (Standing 1973, Tulving et al. 1982); and most important of all, it has been shown to be *independent of attention*. This latter finding was suggested by Tulving et al (Op. Cit) but their research took place in situations where the respondent was able to pay as much attention to the task as they wanted. Their tests were repeated by Jacoby, Toth and Yonalinas (1993) in both full attention and divided attention environments, and the findings confirmed that

attention at the time of learning is of importance to subsequent *conscious* recollection, but is irrelevant to *implicit* memory.

The above properties have been experimentally verified in respect of advertising by Shapiro and Krishnan (2001). In summary, implicit memory appears to be a substantial memory system that can record perceptions and concepts automatically and irrespective of how much attention is being paid, and can retain them over long periods.

Further support for the role of automatic processing in relation to affect comes from the most recent work published by Damasio (2000). It is generally assumed that all our attentive processing operates through our working memory, thus everything that drives recall of advertising has first to pass through working memory. What Damasio has discovered is that feelings and emotions are processed *without* the use of working memory and so *by definition* must be processed automatically and implicitly. Indeed, Joseph Le Doux even goes so far as to assert that '*Our emotions are more easily influenced when we are not aware that the influence is occurring*' (Le Doux 1998: 59).

All this suggests that metrics based on recall are likely to work even less well when it comes measuring advertising with a strong affective content. In order to examine this hypothesis we need to identify an intermediate metric that *will* be capable of measuring advertising which works affectively and inattentively, i.e. a metric that can tap into implicit memory. This is discussed in the next section.

### **Metrics based on Implicit Learning:**

The way to find a metric that measures implicit learning is by finding one that is capable of tapping into implicit memory. We know from experiment that recall is mainly a test of *explicit* memory, because it diminishes in divided attention situations and increases when full attention is paid (Gardiner & Parkin 1990). But there is another test of memory that is extensively used in psychology because it is more powerful than recall and is much less

dependent upon attention. That test is Recognition. Recognition memory has been shown in experiments to be effectively inexhaustible. Standing's experiment referenced earlier showed respondents able to recognise up to 10,000 pictures without difficulty, concluded that '*... recognition memory of the subjects seems unsaturatable*' (Rose 1993:117).

The value of using recognition is that it taps into both explicit *and* implicit memory, which means we can get a much better idea of the actual level of advertising exposure that has taken place. As Krugman said, '*Conclusions about amount of exposure based on recall data will greatly underestimate exposure, conclusions about amount of exposure based on recognition data will somewhat underestimate exposure*' (Krugman 1977: 11). But Krugman was working in a research environment where recognition was measured through still pictures of TV ads or descriptions read over the telephone. Using today's computerised interviewing techniques we are able to show TV advertising in full, and get an even more accurate idea of who has and has not seen it. By identifying those people who have seen the advertising and subsequently forgotten it we should be able to test directly how effective recall is at evaluating emotive advertising.

#### **A controlled test of Recall vs. Recognition metrics:**

The critical area of debate in this paper concerns the implication that the processing of Affect has for ad tracking research. If, as is predicted by the Low Attention Processing Model, brand associations and their emotive links endure in memory beyond the point at which conscious recollection of the ad itself disappears, then measures such as claimed ad awareness and detailed recall are likely to underestimate the effectiveness of advertising which has a high affective content. In simple terms, significant numbers of people who have been exposed to the ad and influenced by it will not actively remember it and will therefore not believe the brand has been advertised recently.

This hypothesis can be tested by collecting both claimed ad awareness and recognition and cross-tabulating them against a dependent measure which links to sales. Sales intention is one possible dependent measure, but there is strong evidence that it measures what was bought last time not what will be bought next time (Barnard 1994). A better measure is favourability, which has been shown to strongly predict future brand choice (Hofmeyr & Rice 2000).

An initial examination of these two metrics was run in 2002, and the findings from this study are briefly summarised in the next section.

### **BUTCHER'S DOG Pilot Study:**

A research study was run in the UK on a new TV advertising campaign for the Butchers Dog brand of dog food, which had not advertised for over a year. The campaign was chosen because it offered no persuasive evidence that the brand made dogs fit (the brand claim) but instead featured simple visual playlets of dogs doing things that they physically cannot do. This creative approach was deemed likely, after initial exposure, to encourage enjoyable but essentially low attention processing.

A single wave of research was run on the Taylor Nelson CAPI Omnibus three weeks after national transmission of the advertising started. Favourability towards the brand was measured using a ten-point semantic scale ranging from 'very unfavourable' to 'very favourable'. Claimed ad awareness was asked using the brand-name prompted question alluded to earlier: *'Have you seen any advertising on TV recently for (brand)?'* Those who answered in the affirmative were then asked to describe anything they could recall about the advertising. Recognition was measured by playing the ad in full to respondents. In order to minimise overclaim through expectation of the brand advertising the ad was adapted to remove all reference to the brand, and respondents were asked if the advertising had been seen by them several times, once or twice, or not at all.



It should be noted that this definition of recognition differs from that which is often quoted by ad research companies. For example Sutherland (2000) defines recognition as *'People ...shown photo-stills and asked whether they have seen that ad'*, an approach which can result in poor recognition if the key elements in the advertising are sound or music or action of some sort. Recognition can only be accurately assessed by showing the entire ad as stimulus, and in our test we removed only the brand references, which was necessary in order to preclude responses based on an expectation that the advertising would have been seen.

**Results**

Because brand users rate their brands higher than non-users, analysis was restricted to users of dog food who were *non-users* of the Butchers Dog brand. This avoids errors due to different proportions of users and non-users in each part of the sample. Thus all results shown are from users of other brands.

The first step was to examine the exposure levels as predicted by the two metrics, and a cross tabulation of the sample of 318 respondents is shown in Table 1.

TABLE 1 Users of dog food who were non-users of the brand	Claimed seen brand advertising on TV recently	Claimed not seen brand advertising on TV recently	TOTAL (Col %)
Recognised one or other execution	70	152	222 (70%)
Recognised neither execution	10	86	96 (30%)
TOTAL (Row %)	80 (25%)	238 (75%)	318 (100%) (100%)

As Krugman predicted, claimed advertising awareness indicates a lot less exposure than recognition: just 80 respondents (25% of total sample) *claimed* they had seen the brand advertising on TV, but 222 respondents (70% of total sample) recognised one or other of the executions. And when the 80 people who claimed the brand was advertising were asked what

detail they recalled only one-quarter (6% of the total sample) were able to identify anything from the new campaign. These findings confirm the expected poor performance of explicit memory in respect of advertising with a strong affective content.

25% claimed ad awareness might be considered by some to be an acceptable level just three weeks after advertising has started, but one has to ask what exactly this metric is measuring. The received wisdom is that claimed ad awareness is an indication of those respondents who have seen the advertising and lodged it in their mind. But evidently it isn't a very good measure of this, because 10 of the 80 people who claimed the brand had been advertising did not recognise either ad, from which it can be deduced that they had either not seen the advertising at all and were guessing, or their appreciation of time was so muddled that they thought the campaign which had been on air over a year earlier had been on air recently.

If claimed ad awareness *is* indeed a measure of those who have seen and remembered the advertising, then it makes sense that these people should manifest the maximum effect of the advertising. In this study we measured advertising effectiveness by the shift in favourability towards the brand. So if the advertising is effective and claimed ad awareness is representative of those people who have seen and remembered the ad, then those who claimed they had seen the brand advertised on TV recently should have higher brand favourability than those who did not. The results of a cross tabulation of these two metrics is shown in table 2.

TABLE 2 Users of dog food who were non-users of the brand	Total	Claimed recently advertised on TV	Claimed not recently advertised on TV
Sample size (%)	318 (100%)	80 (25%)	238 (75%)
Favourability Mean (10 point scale)	4.33	4.33	4.33

These results show there is *no* difference in favourability between those who claimed to have seen the brand advertised on TV and those who claimed not to have seen it advertised on TV. Both groups rated the brand at 4.33. So if claimed ad awareness truly measures the optimum type of ad exposure then this campaign is clearly ineffective, because there was no shift in brand favourability.

But what happens if we now look at the brand favourability amongst those who recognised one or other of the ads, and can therefore be assumed to have *really* seen them? Also, bearing in mind that the Low Attention Processing Model suggests that repeated viewing is more effective than one or two exposures, what is the brand favourability of those who saw an ad several times compared with those who saw it just once or twice? These results are in table 3.

TABLE 3 Users of dog food who were non-users of the brand	Did not recognise either execution	Recognised one or other execution	Recognised an execution and seen once or twice	Recognised an execution and seen several times
Sample size (%) 318 (100%)	96 (30%)	222 (70%)	90 (28%)	132 (42%)
Favourability Mean (10 point scale)	4.14	4.41	4.20	4.56

Here a very different picture emerges. Those who recognised one or other of the ads are more favourably disposed to the brand than those who did not recognise either ad (and bear in mind that these are all non-users of the brand). And an even higher level of brand favourability is observed amongst those who said they had seen an ad several times.

So there is a positive favourability shift amongst those who recognised an ad, but no shift amongst those who claimed the brand had been advertised on TV. What explains this disparity? The best way to find out is to look at those who claimed the brand had been advertised and see if their favourability scores vary across different levels of actual exposure. Table 4 shows the results.

TABLE 4 Users of dog food who were non-users of the brand	Total: claimed advertised on TV	A: Claimed advertised and not seen ad	B: Claimed advertised and saw ads once or twice	C: Claimed advertised and saw an ad several times	A+B: Claimed advertised and saw ads once, twice or not at all
Sample size (%)	80 (25%)	10 (3%)	21 (7%)	49 (15%)	31 (10%)
Favourability Mean (10 point scale)	4.33	3.60	3.38	4.90**	3.45**

What is at once evident is that those who saw the ad several times (column C) have the highest rating for the brand, higher than those who saw the ad only once or twice (column B), or those who did not see the ad at all (column A). Unfortunately the sample size of the cells A, B, and C is too small to allow significance to be tested. But if we combine columns A and B we can compare those who did not see an ad or saw one only once or twice with those who saw an ad several times. The differences are now significant: An ANOVA reveals the difference in mean favourability between these two groups (Columns ‘A+B’ and ‘C’) is significant at 99% ( $F(468) = 7.24, p < 0.009$ ).

The explanation is now clear. Those who *claimed* they had seen the brand advertised comprised two different groups: one had been exposed to the advertising once or twice or not at all, and had *not* been affected by it; the other had been exposed to the advertising several times, and *had* been affected by it. In summary, as the Low Attention Processing model predicts, claimed ad awareness produced a sample whose consistency in respect of their actual exposure and response to the advertising was seriously flawed.

This study was the first one conducted. In order to validate the findings we decided to repeat the study, this time with advertising specifically designed to exploit the Low Attention Processing Model in the way it influenced consumers’ feelings.

**STANDARD LIFE Test:**

In 2002 Standard Life decided to replace its advertising campaign. Working with The Leith Agency and The Value Creation Company they developed a new campaign, the purpose of which was to increase favourability towards Standard Life. This was achieved by illustrating things in life that people like and linking this positive feeling to the Standard Life brand using the line ‘I like Standard Life’.

Primary media used were outdoor and TV, and the campaign commenced on 6<sup>th</sup> October 2003. The advertising was tracked by the Nunwood Consultancy in two independent surveys: A continuous CATI (Computer Assisted Telephone Interview) survey collected data on brand awareness, brand favourability, and claimed ad awareness: a monthly face-to-face CAPI (Computer Assisted Personal Interview) survey collected data on these measures also, in addition exposing the debranded ads and collecting recognition, estimated frequency of exposure, and brand attribution. Question design corresponded with those used in the Butchers Dog pilot described above except that detailed recall was not asked in this study.

**CAPI Results:**

The first wave of CAPI research was run 11 days after the start of advertising. As in the pilot research our first step is to examine the sample, which is shown in Table 5.

TABLE 5 Non-users of Standard Life	Claimed seen TV advertising for brand recently	Claimed not seen TV advertising for brand recently	TOTAL (Col %)
Recognised one or other execution	30	87	117 (65%)
Recognised neither execution	18	45	63 (35%)
TOTAL (Row %)	48 (27%)	132 (73%)	180 (100%) (100%)

Once again it is evident that Claimed Ad Awareness under-represents the actual exposure of the campaign. 27% claimed that Standard Life had been advertised on TV recently, compared with 65% who recognised and can therefore be deemed to have actually seen the advertising. And 37% of those who claimed Standard Life had been advertising (18 out of 48 respondents) did not recognise the new campaign at all.

Next we analyse favourability amongst those who claim the brand has and has not been advertised on TV recently. These results are shown in Table 6.

TABLE 6 Non-users of Standard Life	Total	Claimed recently advertised on TV	Claimed not recently advertised on TV
Sample size (%)	180 (100%)	48 (27%)	132 (73%)
Favourability Mean (10 point scale)	5.98	5.77	6.05

This time we see that the favourability score amongst those who claim the brand had advertised recently is actually *lower* than amongst those who claim the brand has not advertised recently. Again, the clear implication is that the advertising has not worked.

Now compare these results to the analysis of recognition, in Table 7:

TABLE 7 Non-users of Standard Life	Total	Did not recognise either execution	Recognised one or other execution	Recognised an execution and seen several times
Sample size (%)	180 (100%)	63 (35%)	117 (65%)	49 (27%)
Favourability Mean (10 point scale)	5.98	5.65	6.15	6.16

Again we see that those non-users who recognise the advertising are more favourably disposed towards Standard Life than those who do not. In this case, however, the favourability amongst those who have seen the ad several times is not higher. The conclusion

is that this advertising either works very quickly, or perhaps needs a longer exposure period than the dog food advertising. We address this point later on.

The final analysis of the CAPI data is a cross-tabulation of those who claim the brand was advertised recently against recognition, and results are shown in Table 8:

TABLE 8 Non-users of Standard Life	Total: claimed advertised recently on TV	Claimed advertised recently and not seen ad	Claimed advertised recently and seen ads
Sample size (%)	48 (100%)	18 (37%)	30 (63%)
Favourability Mean (10 point scale)	5.77	4.99	6.21

Again we see that the low favourability score amongst those who claimed that the brand had been advertising on TV recently is caused by the 37% who had not actually seen the advertising. Their mean favourability is 4.99, compared with a mean favourability of 6.21 amongst those who recognised the ad.

**Discussion of results:**

The results support the theory that advertising which relies upon Affect (i.e. which mainly influences emotions and feelings) is likely to benefit from longer periods of repeat exposure. It also supports the hypothesis that recall-based metrics like Claimed Ad Awareness are likely to seriously underestimate the effectiveness of advertising which relies on Affect. What does this imply for the research industry?

The question 'have you seen brand X advertised on TV recently?' is one which we who work in the industry instinctively like and understand. We can answer it easily and accurately, because we pay attention to advertising: it is, after all, what pays our wages. The results above suggest that the clarity with which we can answer this and similar questions is not always shared by consumers. Ordinary people, who watch TV as part of their day-to-day

routine, almost certainly pay a lot less attention to TV advertising than we do and remember a lot less of it than we do. So when asked if they have seen a brand advertised on TV recently they can get the answer wrong; and when asked what they can recall about the advertising for a brand, they sometimes recall nothing. But this does not necessarily mean that advertising has had no influence on their attitudes towards the brand.

Advertising which relies on affect is increasingly common: indeed, the majority of advertising employs affect to a greater or lesser degree nowadays. We have presented evidence that the effect that advertising has on consumers' emotions and feelings (i.e. Affect) is likely to be largely unknown to them, and such advertising is unlikely to be well-recalled. The results of our research suggest market research systems need to be revised to accommodate the new paradigms which modern advertising works within.

### **Conclusion:**

We believe the findings of this paper call into question the value of recall metrics, and we conclude that methods based upon the periodic measurement and cross-analysis of recognition and brand metrics represent a better future direction for advertising research, because they are uniquely able to evaluate the hidden emotional power which advertising undoubtedly has.

One caveat. It should be noted that these tests were conducted on advertising selected for having a high Affective content. Although low attention processing is applied by the consumer to all advertising it is important to stress that the model does not necessarily apply to all advertising. It will not be as relevant to advertising whose main purpose is to get a direct response, or advertising which is trying to impart 'new news', as both of these types of advertising will benefit by achieving the highest level of attention they can. It is possible that the use of recall-based metrics can be justified on such advertising, and we encourage this to be investigated.



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