



Millward Brown announces the most comprehensive advertising pre-testing validation ever conducted, covering 37 categories and 33 countries

New York, NY. [Millward Brown](#), a global leader in brand, media and communications research and provider of Link™, the world's most widely used ad copy- evaluation and optimization tool, has conducted the most comprehensive global, cross-category pre-testing validation to date. By comparing the Link™ results of 1,795 TV ads with in-market sales, this new analysis is able to demonstrate the importance of copy quality in generating sales and the ability of Millward Brown Link™ to predict the potential advertising-driven sale. Furthermore, the work shows that success factors are the same across categories and countries, but vary according to the brand's primary advertising objective.

Compelling Creative + Compelling Messaging = Sales

This work focused on short-term sales return (sales generated in the eight weeks from ad air date) and demonstrates that the short-term sales effectiveness is best delivered by *compelling creative* combined with *compelling messaging*.

Compelling creative is classed as being both engaging and strongly linked to the brand. In Link™ this is measured by the Awareness Index (AI; a validated measure of branded engagement). The second area of *compelling messaging* is measured by the Persuasion score in Link™ (a direct measure of the effect of the copy on brand consideration).

This work has shown that these two drivers of success are independent factors, with little correlation between them. The best prediction of the short-term sales potential of advertising comes from combining AI and Persuasion into a composite measure, called the Link™ Short Term Sales Likelihood (STSL) value.

The STSL score shows a very clear relationship with in-market sales return: Strong performing ads are four times more likely to generate a large sales return than the weak ads. Overall, 76% of strong performers see share increases.

The Short Term Likelihood of Sales (STSL) can be provided with only the pre-test results and basic volume share data. But with very simple pricing and media spend assessments the probable magnitude of the sales increase could be predicted. With a more tailored approach for an individual brand, where full spend, pricing and brand elasticity data is available, Link™ can provide specific sales volume predictions via a new service called Link™ Volumetrics.

Consistent by region and category but varies by advertising need:

The 1,795 cases used in the research came from 33 countries across six continents, with brands from 37 consumer packaged goods (CPG) categories. A broadly consistent relationship was found between sales and AI and Persuasion across geographies and categories.

The research shows differences in the sales drivers for new brands compared to established brands. A compelling and well branded creative (measured by AI) is more important for established brands, while new brands are under more pressure to present a compelling message (Persuasion).

This shows that while large established brands can rely on reinforcing their fame and using brand buzz to generate sales, new brands need to work harder to communicate a compelling reason to choose them.

The power of emotion

The research also demonstrates a clear relationship between the emotional power of advertising and the short-term sales return. This relationship is much stronger for established brands than new brands. Similarly, established brand ads with purely emotional content and no rational messaging tend to out-perform those with just rational messaging. The reverse is true for new brands, where rational content is more likely to drive sales. However, the most potent communication is a combination of the emotional and rational together. Emotions may be the initial drivers of decisions, but successful brands also provide a rational 'reason for choice' to help consumers justify their decisions.

Beyond short-term sales

The focus of this validation was on the short-term sales return, but branded engagement as measured by the Awareness Index is also more likely to deliver long-term share gains. Previous validation indicates that key contributors to long-term sales are predicted by brand equity measures such as emotional affinity and brand differentiation, more than by immediate Persuasion.

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About Millward Brown

[Millward Brown](#) is one of the world's leading research agencies and is expert in effective advertising, marketing communications, media and brand equity research. Through the use of an integrated suite of validated research solutions — both qualitative and quantitative — Millward Brown helps clients build strong brands and services. Millward Brown has more than 78 offices in 51 countries. Additional practices include Millward Brown's Global Media Practice (media effectiveness unit), The Neuroscience Practice (using neuroscience to enhance traditional research techniques), Millward Brown Optimor (focused on helping clients maximize the returns on their brand and marketing investments), Dynamic Logic (the world leader in digital marketing effectiveness) and Firefly Millward Brown (a global qualitative research business). Millward Brown is part of Kantar, WPP's insight, information and consultancy group.

About Link:

Link is the world's leading advertising pre-test. Over 60,000 Link for TV tests have been conducted since its launch in 1989. The new validated viral prediction measures come in two guises: the viral potential of TV ads can be assessed using Link for TV, and online-only viral ads can also be tested using our dedicated Link for Digital Video methodology. The full Link family includes Link 360 (for campaigns), Link for TV and other methods for print, outdoor, digital, radio, cinema ads and packaging. All of the above is available as LinkSelect studies – for cost-effectively comparing multiple executions.