

# Neurocreativity: Changing how we create content

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Sensational imagery has the power to move people and inspire brand devotion. However, with your audience bombarded by as many as 5,000 brand messages a day [1], how do you make images and videos truly distinctive? The answer is emotional resonance.

Ultimately we feel first, then we think. About 95% of our decisions are made non-consciously [2], and emotional imagery is more than twice as likely to generate a high ROI [3]. If you can tap into emotional response and feelings as a brand, you tap into a consumer's perception – which is a key driver in their purchase behaviours. By engaging audiences on this deeply emotional level, Saddington Baynes has helped create hugely impactful campaigns for *Honda*, *Jo Malone London*, and other iconic global brands.

To access emotions, we need to go beyond traditional research methods and utilise neuroscience. We think in two very different ways. Implicit (System 1) thinking through the limbic system is non-conscious and emotional. It's an incredibly fast, effortless, and involuntary reaction. By contrast, explicit (System 2) thinking via the prefrontal cortex is all about conscious reasoning. It's slow and deliberate, following rules and planning for the future.

Think of the mind like an iceberg partially submerged underwater. We can easily observe explicit thoughts above the surface via focus groups or surveys. It's what's below the surface – the massively influential unknown – that implicit testing seeks to measure. This governs emotional response, associations and everyday purchase behaviour [4].

At Saddington Baynes, we used this way of thinking to develop Engagement Insights®. It's a tool that effectively measures the impact of creative decisions made throughout production – unlocking non-conscious, previously hidden emotional responses to the images and video we craft. Using this data, creatives have the unique ability to refine images and video, pulling visual levers to better impact on a target audience and draw out a certain response.

Engagement Insights® is built on a 'Speed of Response' test, carried out online by over 200 recruited respondents. Built on 20 years of neuroscience research, the test takes just 12-15 minutes to run, with initial study results available within a day or two.

Subtle variants of a single design – or even a range of competitor brands – are flashed up on screen alongside a number of different emotions to select from. Participants have little ability to control their reaction speeds and are

generally not even told what is being measured, avoiding any rational bias or consciously filtered responses.

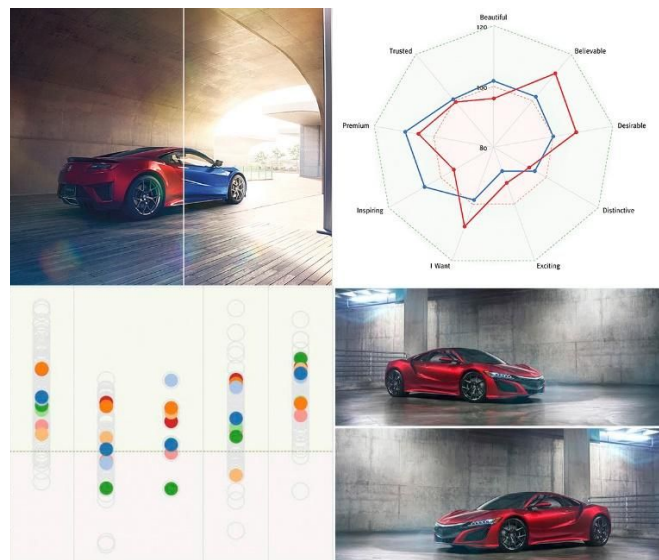


Figure 1: Variations of automotive brand imagery tested for attributes such as 'premium', 'exciting', 'trusted', etc.

One of our most successful neuroscience-powered projects is Honda's *Real View Test Drive*, the brand's largest European content campaign to-date, developed in partnership with Digitas LBi. We helped Honda Motor Europe create a digital showroom, highlighting the key features of four vehicles in a series of animated films. Delivered to 22 different markets, all showroom architecture was optimised using Engagement Insights®.

As a result, visitors spent an average of six times (13.5 minutes) longer on Honda Motors Europe's website. Visitors were also twice as likely to enter the 'Honda Car Configurator' or book a test drive. Engagement Insights® proved to be overwhelmingly effective.

Neuroscience opens up a new world of insights; a better understanding of visual triggers. In other words, if you want to know how your consumers feel about your brand, don't ask them.

[1] Jay Walker-Smith, Yankelovich. *Cutting Through Advertising Clutter*. CBS News, 2006  
<https://www.cbsnews.com/news/cutting-through-advertising-clutter/>

[2] Gerald Zaltman. *How customers think: essential insights into the mind of the market*. Harvard Business School Press, Boston, MA, 2003.

[3] Hamish Pringle and Peter Field. *Brand Immortality: How Brands Can Live Long and Prosper*. Kogan Page, London, 2009

[4] Daniel Kahneman. *Thinking, Fast and Slow*. Penguin Books, London, 2011