

The 2024 Trends Report in
partnership with Ipsos

effie

Foreword

Gillian Rightford

ACA Chief Executive Officer for Effie South Africa

At the heart of every Effie Award lies a simple yet profound truth: real marketing effectiveness matters. In a world saturated with messages, it's the ideas that challenge norms, build strategic foundations, come to life creatively and through the right channels, and ultimately deliver measurable results, that truly work.

The Effies are more than just an award; they are a benchmark for success. Every campaign evaluated through the four Effie pillars—Challenge, Strategy, Execution, and Results—offers a masterclass in what drives business impact. These are the principles that every marketer and agency should embrace to turn creativity into commercial success.

We are proud to partner with Ipsos, whose commitment to uncovering the drivers of effectiveness makes this insights report an invaluable resource. Their work in distilling learnings from our winning campaigns provides a roadmap for future success, helping brands and agencies sharpen their focus on what truly moves the needle.

We hope you find these insights as inspiring and actionable as we do.

Quantin Montello

Creative Excellence, Ipsos South Africa

In today's rapidly evolving marketing landscape, consumers face a constant stream of advertising messages, with brands across categories vying for their attention. Capturing consumers' attention and fighting cognitive immunity is a task all brands set out to achieve, but the key question marketers need to ask is whether the message was encoded and changed behaviour?

As Ipsos we know, and have long proven, the fundamental power of creativity in sparking brand growth. With our hallmark partnership with Effie globally and Effie South Africa, we are excited to share the Effie South Africa 2024 Trends Report to help brands discover what drives award winning, effective marketing. The report explores the innovative and creative tactics brands are employing to achieve business result. Uncovering insights into how brands are navigating the socio-economic challenges by redefining strategies to secure growth and saliency - to ensure they stay top of mind and cultivate meaningful consumer engagement. These findings align with the learnings in our publication Misfits, where, underpinned with Effie cases, we demonstrate the power of creativity and empathy to drive a 20% lift on average in effectiveness.

This year's winners demonstrate that challenging category conventions and familiar codes are the key to unlocking success and effective advertising. This learning is proven time and time again across the globe with Effie winners embracing a Misfits mindset. We invite you to delve into the learnings that will certainly spark your creative journey to effective advertising.

Executive Summary

The 2024 Trends report focusses on the four pillars of the Effie framework with an additional emphasis on creative content.

Chapter 1

Challenge, Context & Objectives

In South Africa, economic pressures have led brands to prioritise stability over aggressive expansion. Business consolidation is the focus, with fewer product launches and a greater emphasis on sustaining market position.

Brands are shifting their attention to strengthening equity and saliency - ensuring they remain top-of-mind and meaningful to existing consumers.

In a cluttered and competitive market, distinctiveness and emotional resonance are more critical than ever to drive brand preference and long-term growth.

Chapter 2

Insights & Strategy

Brands are placing greater emphasis on explorative research methods like focus groups and segmentation studies to uncover deeper consumer motivations, behaviours, and attitudes. This qualitative approach provides richer context beyond transactional data.

While behavioural, historical, and transactional (BHT-brand health tracker) data remains valuable, there's a shift towards human-centred insights that go beyond what consumers *do* to understand *why* they do it.

However, a key gap in the research mix is the lack of ad pre-testing, which could help brands refine messaging, improve recall, and maximise

Chapter 3

Bringing the Strategy & Idea to Life

Brands are rethinking their marketing strategies, focusing on doing more with less.

With smaller budgets and fewer touchpoints, there's a shift away from TV towards more cost-effective channels like radio and out-of-home (OOH), which offer strong reach and frequency.

At the same time, brands are prioritising high-impact moments through immersive experiences and unconventional tactics to drive deeper engagement.

By redefining their approach, brands can create meaningful connections while maximising efficiency.

Chapter 4

Creative Content Analysis

Consumers aren't just buyers - they're citizens who expect brands to drive meaningful change.

The most impactful brands use advertising to solve real problems, champion social responsibility, and build deeper emotional connections.

Purpose-driven messaging strengthens brand equity, but authenticity is key -especially when using celebrity endorsements. The right message, backed by real action, creates lasting impact.

Chapter 1

Challenge, Context, Objectives

The last few years have been challenging for South Africans. There is a pervasive sense of unease mirrored in recent perceptions over concerns of unemployment and economic pessimism.

35%

Of registered SA voters feel no political party fully aligns with their views and opinions

23%

Of registered voters believe the country is moving in the right direction



Economic growth and sentiment in SA declined in 2024

60%

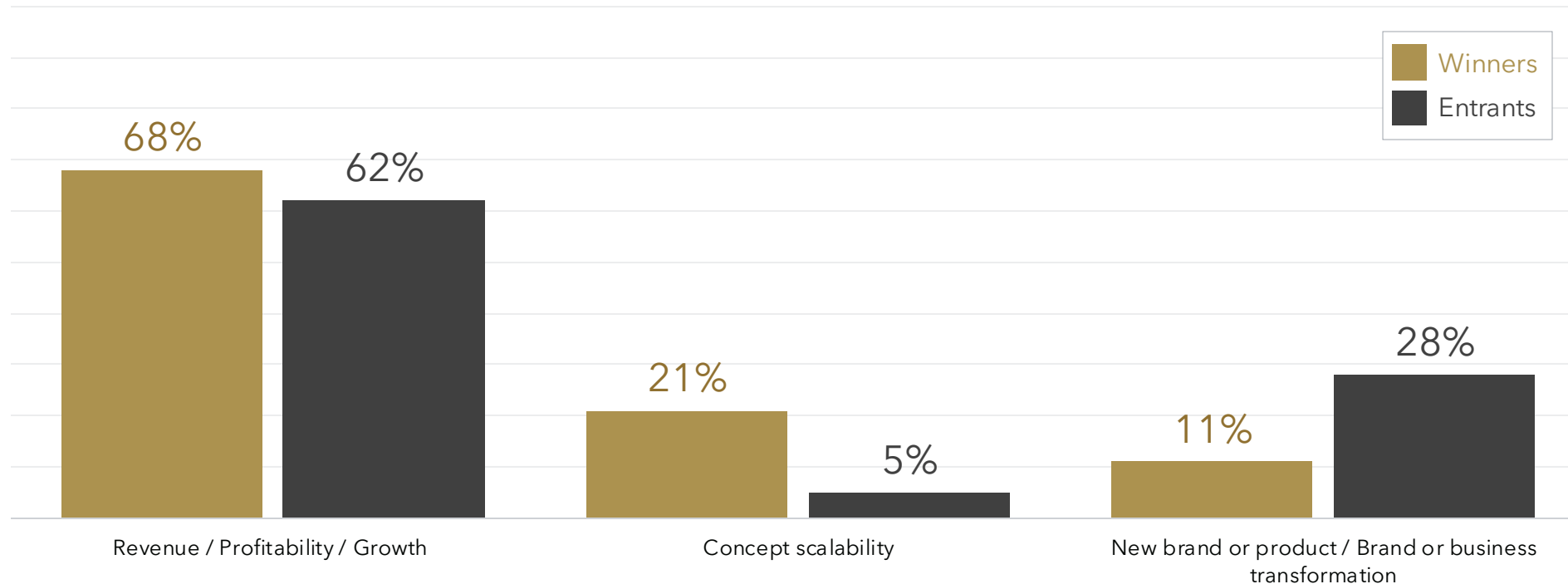
The unemployment rate among those aged 15-24



30 Years of Democracy: South Africa's 2024 elections marked by uncertainty and a desire for change | Ipsos

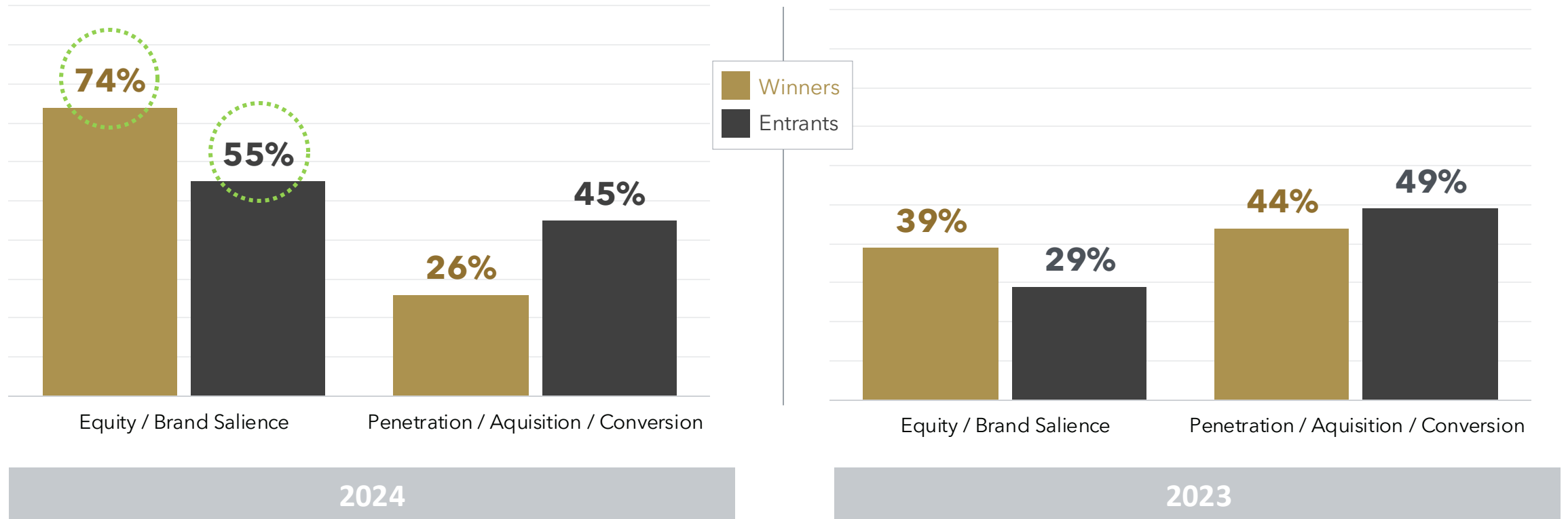
Business consolidation dominates amid economic and political uncertainty.

Winning campaigns focused on driving revenue through scalability rather than launching new offerings.



Brand salience and sentiment take centre stage in 2024 marketing strategy.

2024 saw a deliberate effort to win share of mind in the race to win share of wallet.



CASE STUDY

Loyalty Wins: Helping Consumers Save More in Tough Times

An example of effective marketing that showcases how the brand helps customers save by delivering added value and convenience during financially challenging times.



Checkers – Xtra Savings Plus

BRAND: Checkers

AGENCY: 99cents

SITUATION: Checkers launched the first delivery subscription service in the on-demand grocery sector during a challenging economic climate. In tough times, consumers seek value. Recognising the demand for a subscription that pays for itself, Checkers identified a gap for a model offering substantial savings. **"Xtra Savings Plus"** provides customers with significant savings and convenience.

A digital-led campaign leveraged a mix of media and featured AI expert Miles Fischer -known for deepfaking Tom Cruise - capitalising on the 'Mission Impossible' theme to showcase unbeatable savings. The campaign rewarded the most valuable omnichannel loyalty members while reinforcing Checkers' position as a customer-first retailer.



BRONZE: Retail

10+ conversation rate among target audience

+80% Satisfaction rate

18.9m Views across platforms

🎯 Key insights: Brands don't own the narrative – consumers do. To create impact, brands need to build meaningful connections.

To drive brand success, marketers must understand the role brands play in consumers' lives. Growing brands are chosen by **more people, more often, more easily**.



MORE PEOPLE stay top of mind

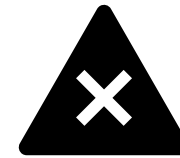
Salient brands are those in a decision maker's consideration set.

Consumers' relationships with your brand only matters if the brand is in their consideration set.



MORE OFTEN build stronger bonds

The relationship with your brand must be stronger than the relationships with the competition.



MORE EASILY remove roadblocks

Sometimes consumers cannot choose the brands they want because of market barriers, that can detract from brand desire of one brand in favour of another brand.

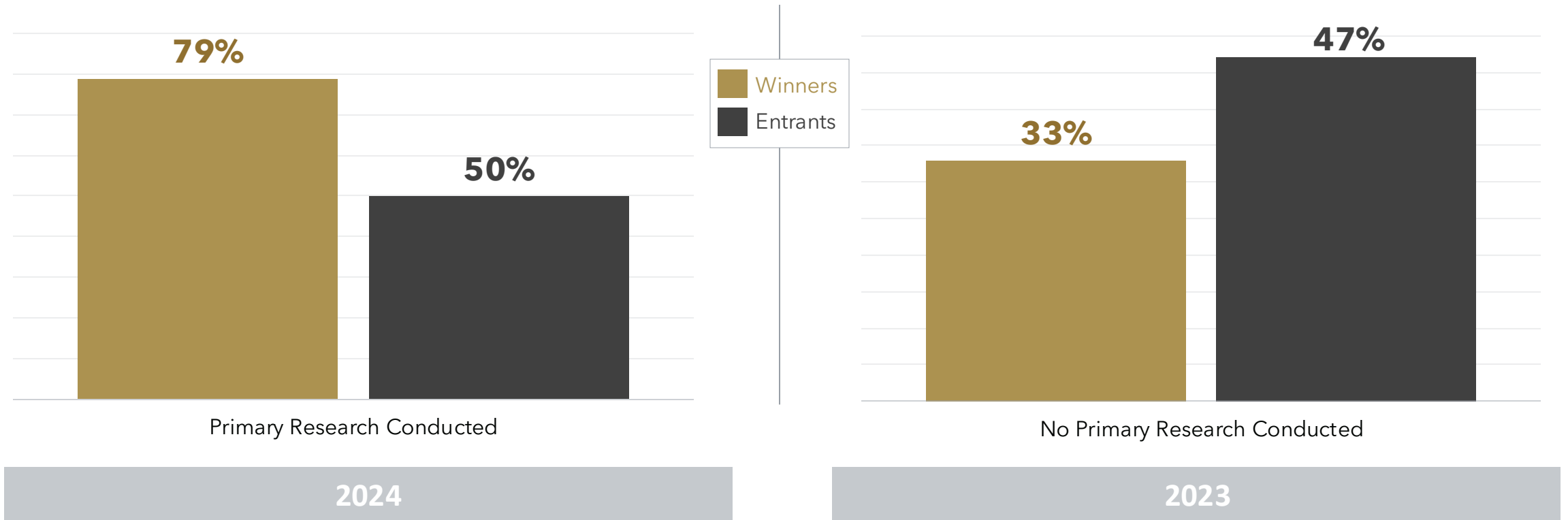
Ipsos-BrandSuccessArticle_January 2023.pdf

Chapter 2

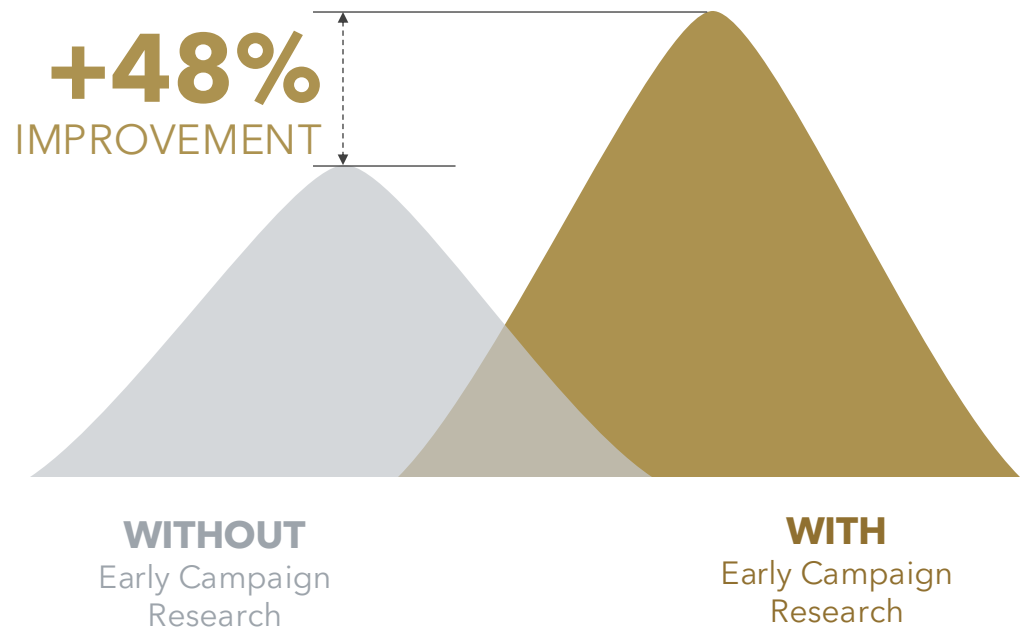
Strategy, Insight(s), and Strategic Ideas

Primary Research: The key to consumer-centric success.

Brands rely heavily on internal and desktop research, complementing it with explorative methods.



Early creative exploration allows brands to develop and optimise campaigns that are relevant, emotive and able to drive business objectives.



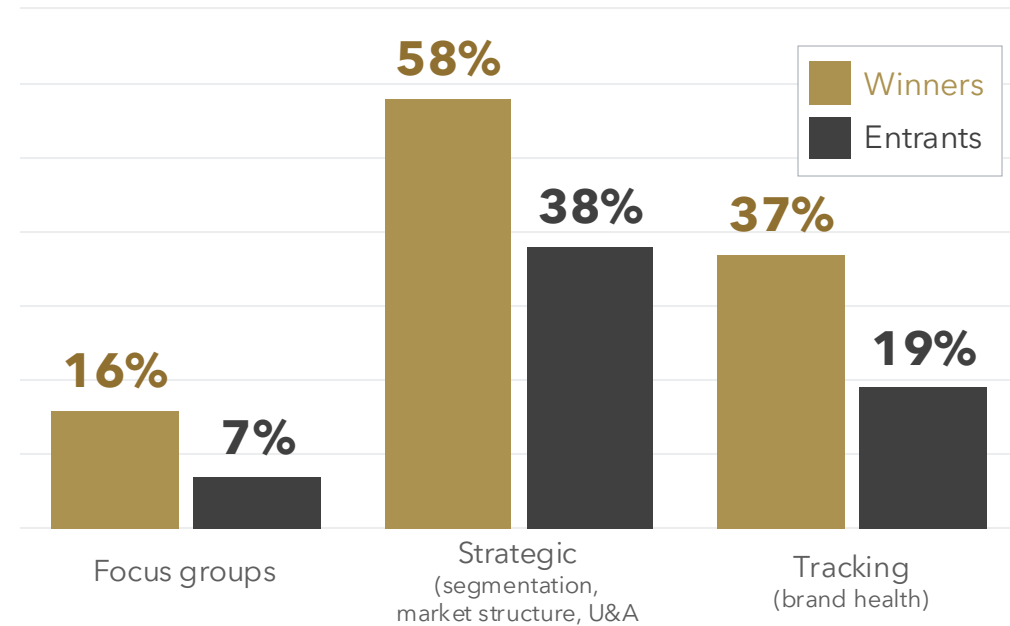
Data Based on 500+ Ipsos cases

IPSOS LEARNING

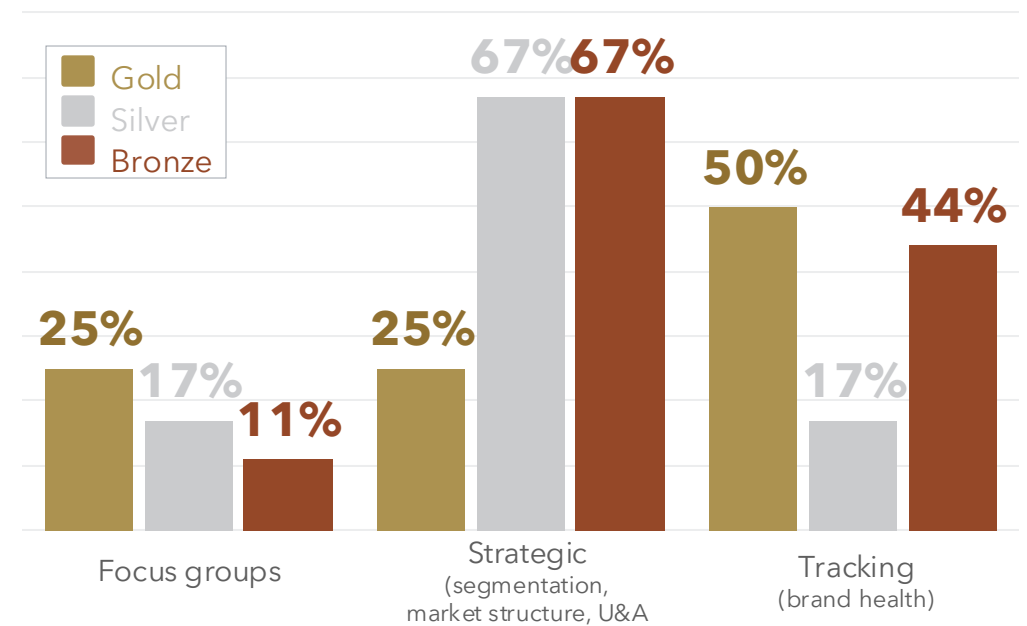
- Early-stage research produces successful creative faster.
- Campaigns have a solid foundation with guidance on next steps and alignment across stakeholders.
- Increase returns on media spend by improving creative quality.

Increased focus on explorative research enhances brand targeting in 2024.

Whilst Brand health tracking data remains a key source of market information, the reliance on this data has declined in comparison to the previous year (67% of Winners focused on tracking data in 2023).



Types of Primary Research used



Types of Primary Research used by winners



Key insights: Aligning brand strategy with what truly matters.

In an increasingly competitive and ever-changing market, brands that truly resonate with consumers go beyond just selling products – they connect on a deeper level.

SHAPING EXPECTATIONS

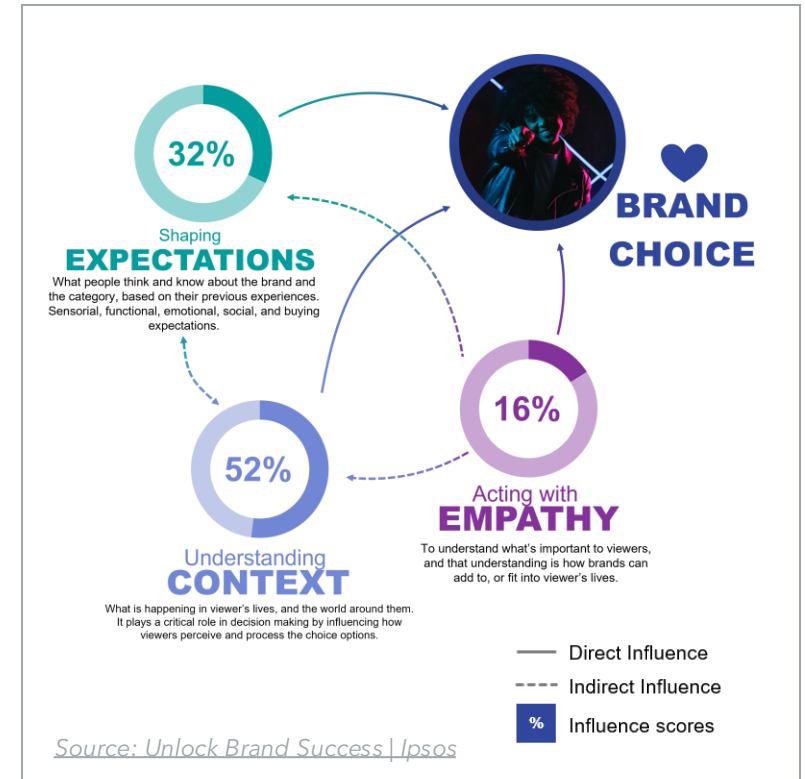
Consumers' expectations shape how they perceive brands, including sensorial, functional, emotional, social, and buying expectations. These expectations influence brand recognition and decision-making.

UNDERSTANDING CONTEXT

Both macro (societal norms, cultural values) and micro (personal needs, occasions) – affects brand choice. Successful brands align with these changing contexts to stay relevant.

ACTING WITH EMPATHY

Empathy is key to effective brand management. Understanding people's lives, challenges, and aspirations allows brands to connect on a deeper level. Research shows that empathetic communication drives long-term advertising success and brand differentiation.

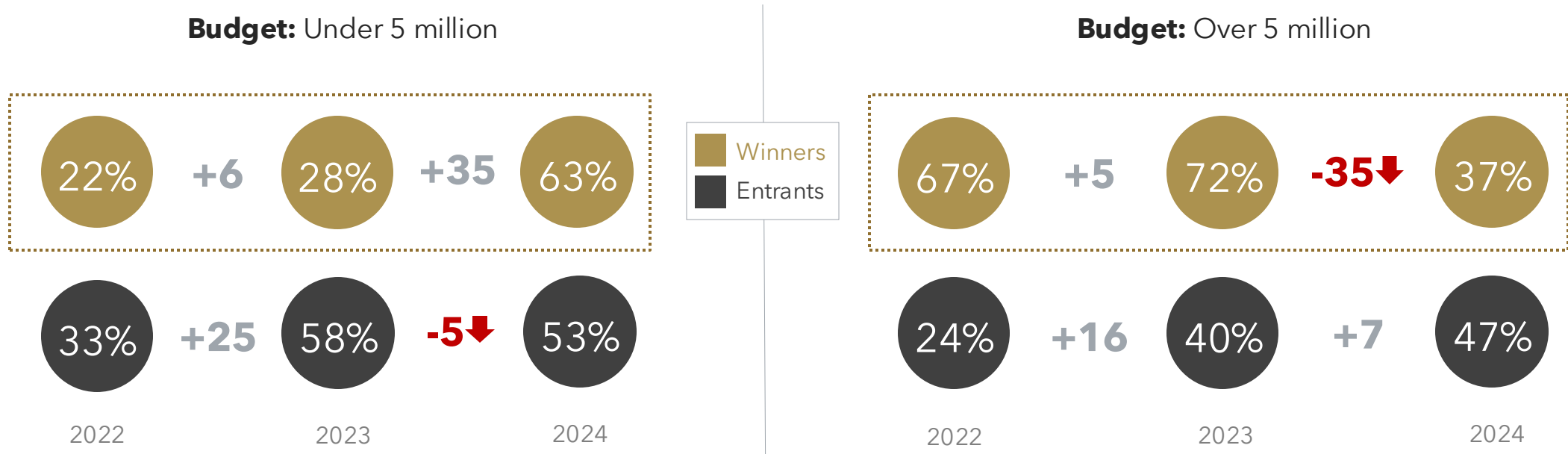


Chapter 3

Bringing the Strategy and Ideas to Life

Successful campaigns embrace smaller budgets in a strategic shift.

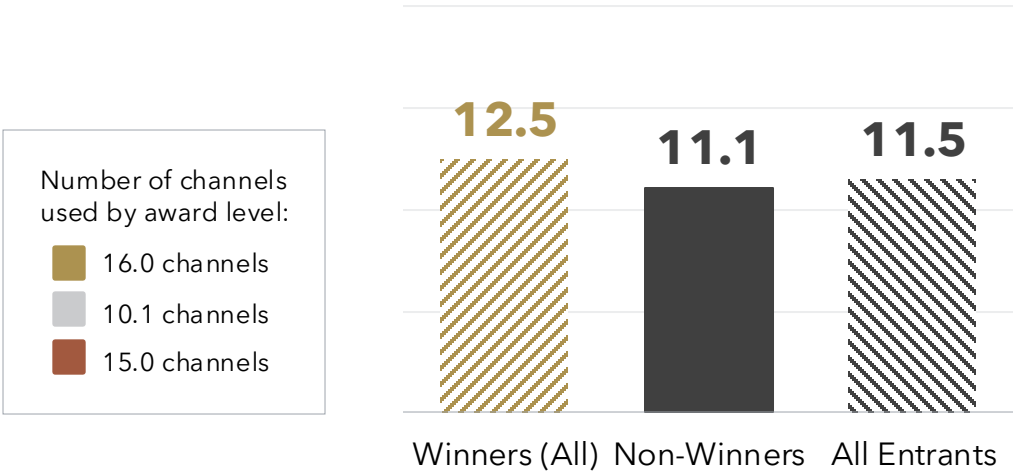
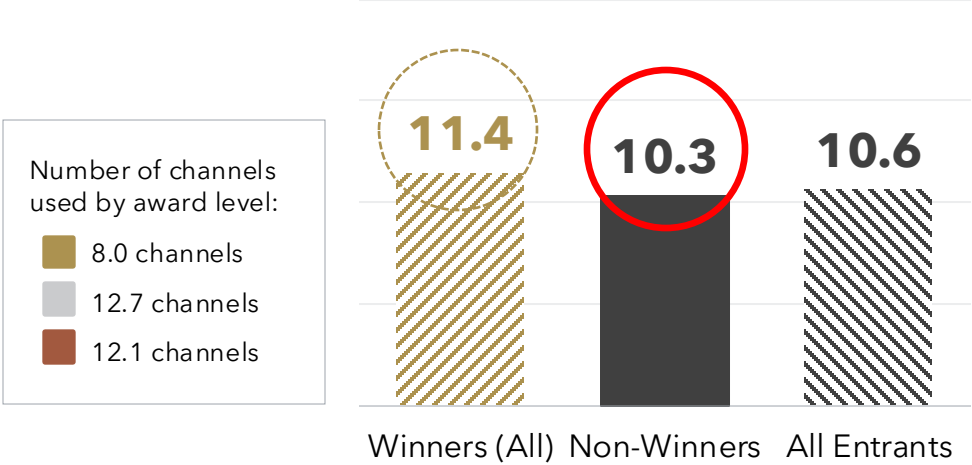
Share of Voice ≠ Guaranteed Success: A high SOV without effective messaging, targeting, or conversion strategies may lead to wasted spending.



****Non-winners with no spend:**
2022: 42% | 2023: 2% | 2024: 0%

Optimising Impact: The power of choosing the right marketing channel.

Although winners overall used more touchpoints, gold winners incorporated the lowest number of touchpoints in their campaigns. More channels ≠ better results - it's about choosing the right mix.

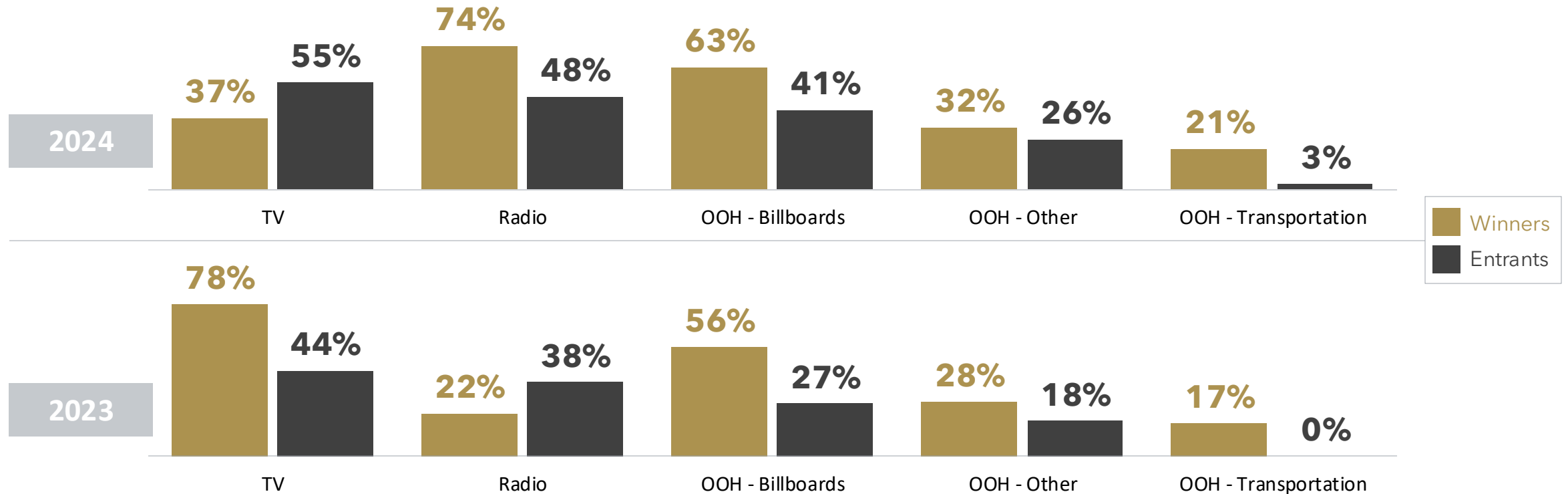


2024

2023

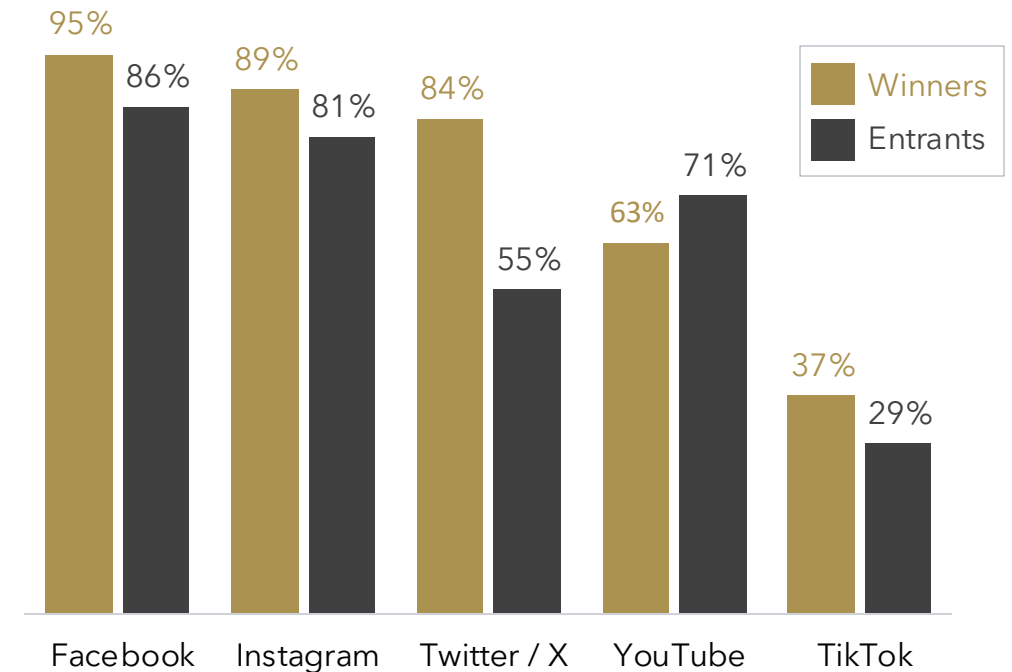
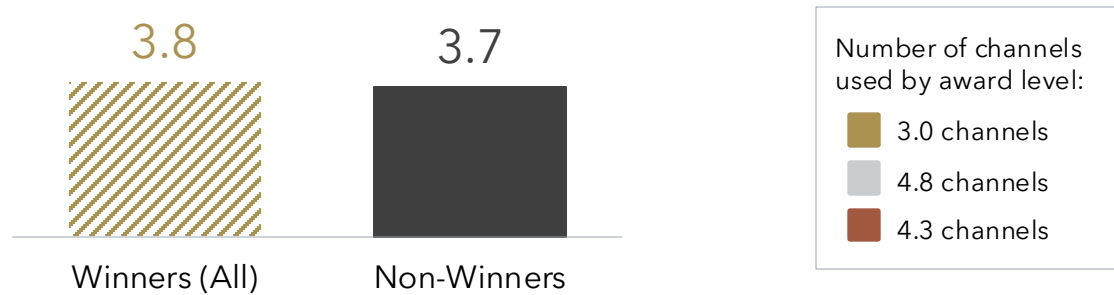
Shift in campaign channel preference – TV declines while radio rises sharply.

Smaller budgets have called for smarter, more strategic utilisation of non-TV channels.



Facebook & Instagram: Key social hubs.

On average, winners and entrants use the same number of social media channels. In keeping with the gold winner trend, these campaigns use fewer social media touchpoints.

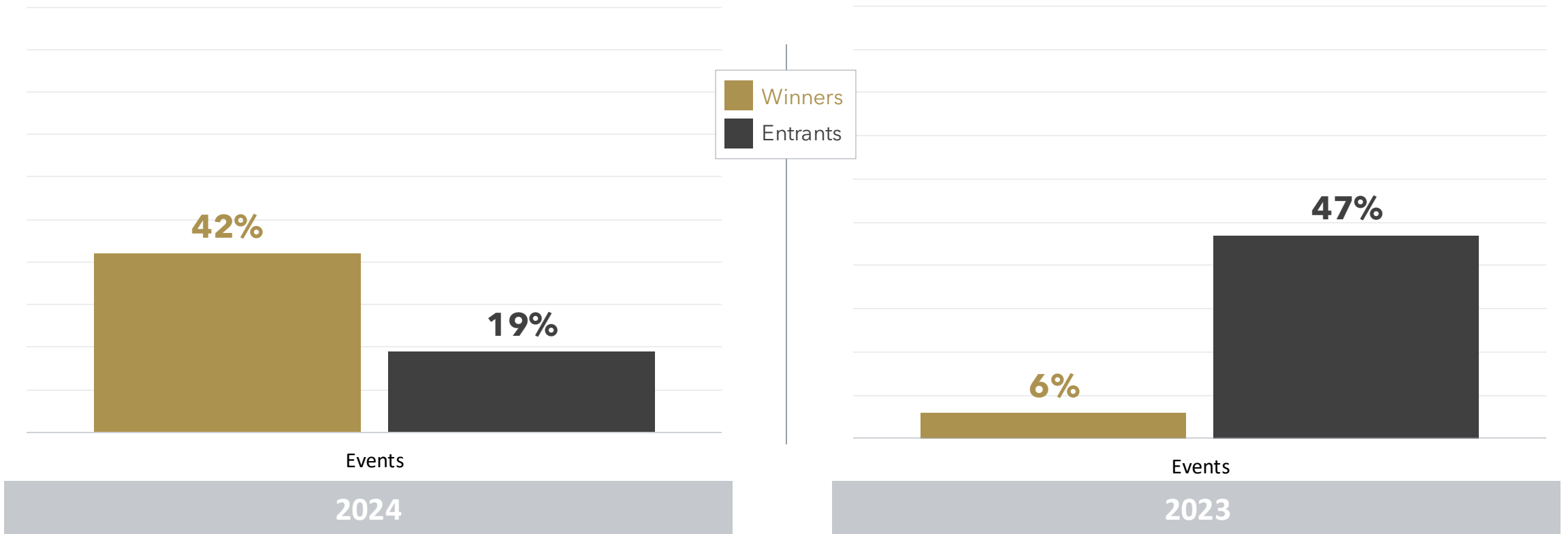


Using fewer social media channels allows for:

- **Better Targeting** Focusing on the most relevant platforms ensures higher engagement and impact.
- **Stronger Messaging** A refined approach prevents diluted messaging across too many channels.
- **Budget Efficiency** Allocating resources to high-performing channels maximises ROI.
- **Reduced Complexity** Managing fewer platforms allows for better execution and optimisation.
- **Higher Quality Content** Prioritising select channels enables more tailored and impactful content.

Marketing with events – engage & convert.

Experiential marketing has jumped from 6% last year to 42% this year.





Key insight: Creativity isn't just for show- it's the engine of the brand effectiveness.

A great idea beats a big budget - every time.

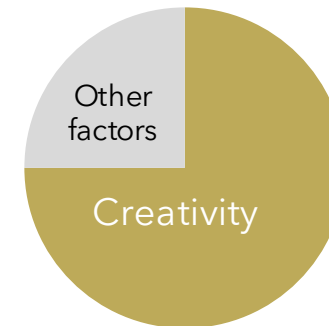
Research shows that creativity has a greater impact on advertising effectiveness than media expenditure.

While media spend ensures reach, creativity drives engagement, memorability, and emotional connection, factors that ultimately influence consumer behavior and brand growth.

A highly creative ad can outperform a high-budget but unremarkable campaign.

75%

Of advert recall depends on the creative quality of the ad



CASE STUDY

A Pop Culture Drop Done Right

Example of connecting with consumers through immersive experience.

Image Source: KFC South Africa



KFC– Uncle Waffles Burger

BRAND: KFC

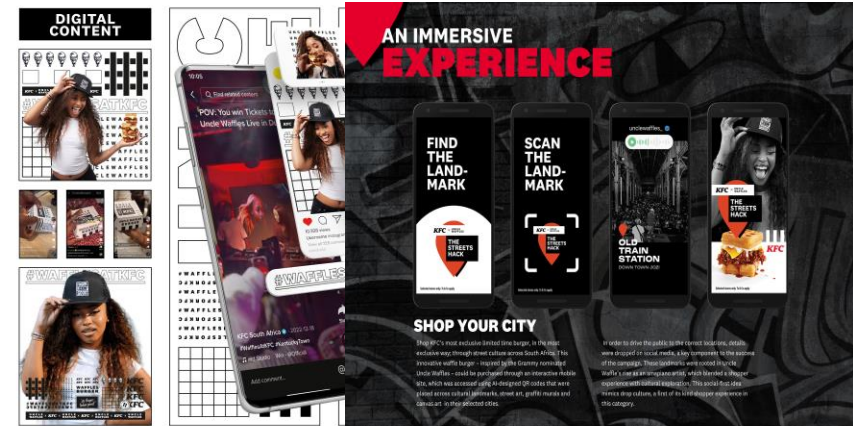
AGENCY: Ogilvy

SITUATION: KFC has been an iconic brand and household name for over 50 years. In the highly competitive QSR category, staying relevant to the youth market is essential. With competitors offering similar standard burgers - where innovation is limited to fillings and sauces - differentiation is a challenge.

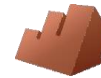
South African youth are digitally savvy and deeply engaged in cultural trends. To increase relevance and appeal, KFC needed to connect with this segment in a meaningful way. By adopting a culturally immersive strategy, the brand positioned itself as more than just a fast-food chain - it became a part of youth culture.

The launch of the **“KFC Stress Hack”** in collaboration with Uncle Waffles generated curiosity and hype - not just through social media posts but by offering a fully immersive experience. Consumers cracked location-based clues strategically placed to lead them to the nearest KFC store offering the exclusive burgers.

The campaign transformed its limited-time offer into a pop culture phenomenon, becoming one of the fastest-selling limited-time offers in KFC history - selling out in just four weeks.



BRONZE:
INFLUENCER MARKETING



BRONZE:
SOCIAL MEDIA

20 million conversation rate among target audience

+2% Increase cool and youthful brand attributes
9 million views Across multiple platforms in just 4 weeks
+13.67% boost in quality perception



Key insight: More touchpoints, less impact? The benefits of integrated omnichannel campaign.

Even though more touchpoints create additional opportunities, they do not always guarantee effectiveness. To maximise impact, it is crucial to strategically orchestrate and integrate touchpoints and communication activities.



Ipsos' experience confirms that campaigns have great potential when they leverage three key principles:

- Holisticity- delivering a unique, consistent, and holistic brand experience.
- Complementarity- seamlessly integrating each touchpoint to contribute to the overarching Brand Idea.
- Synergy- maximising connections between touchpoints to amplify overall impact.

Data from Ipsos Tracking database, comparing campaigns with holistic creative approach vs campaigns with different creative strategy content

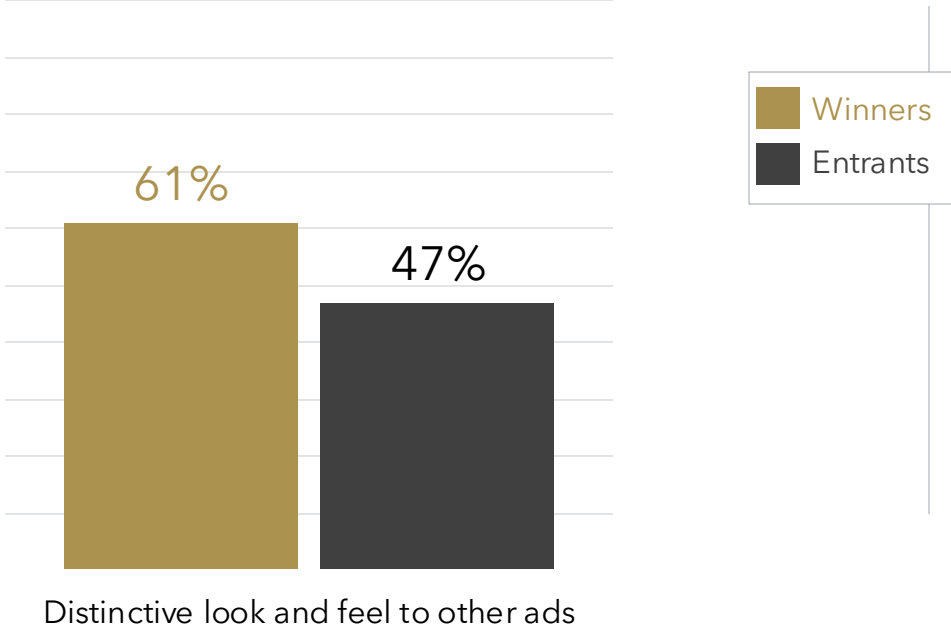
Chapter 4

Creative Content Analysis

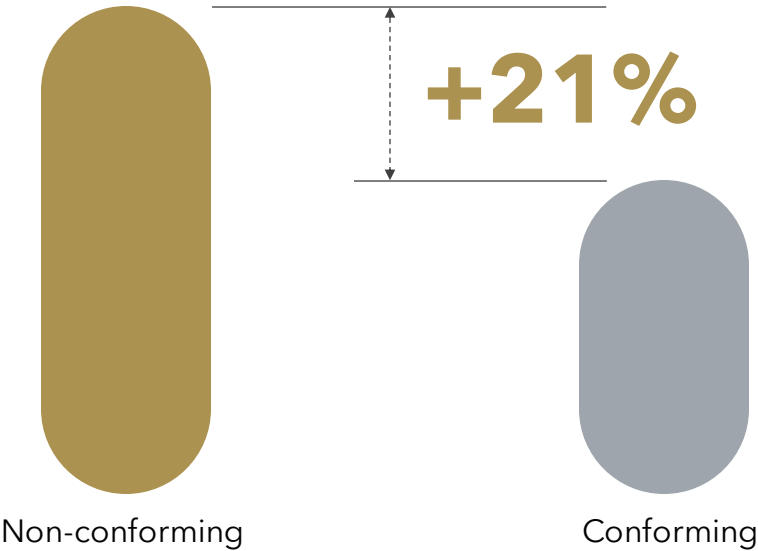
Creative that conforms to category conventions suffers from cognitive immunity.

Distinctive ads cut through and drive impact.

Winners take risks and challenge category conventions.



Breaking category ad conventions creates greater Brand Attention.

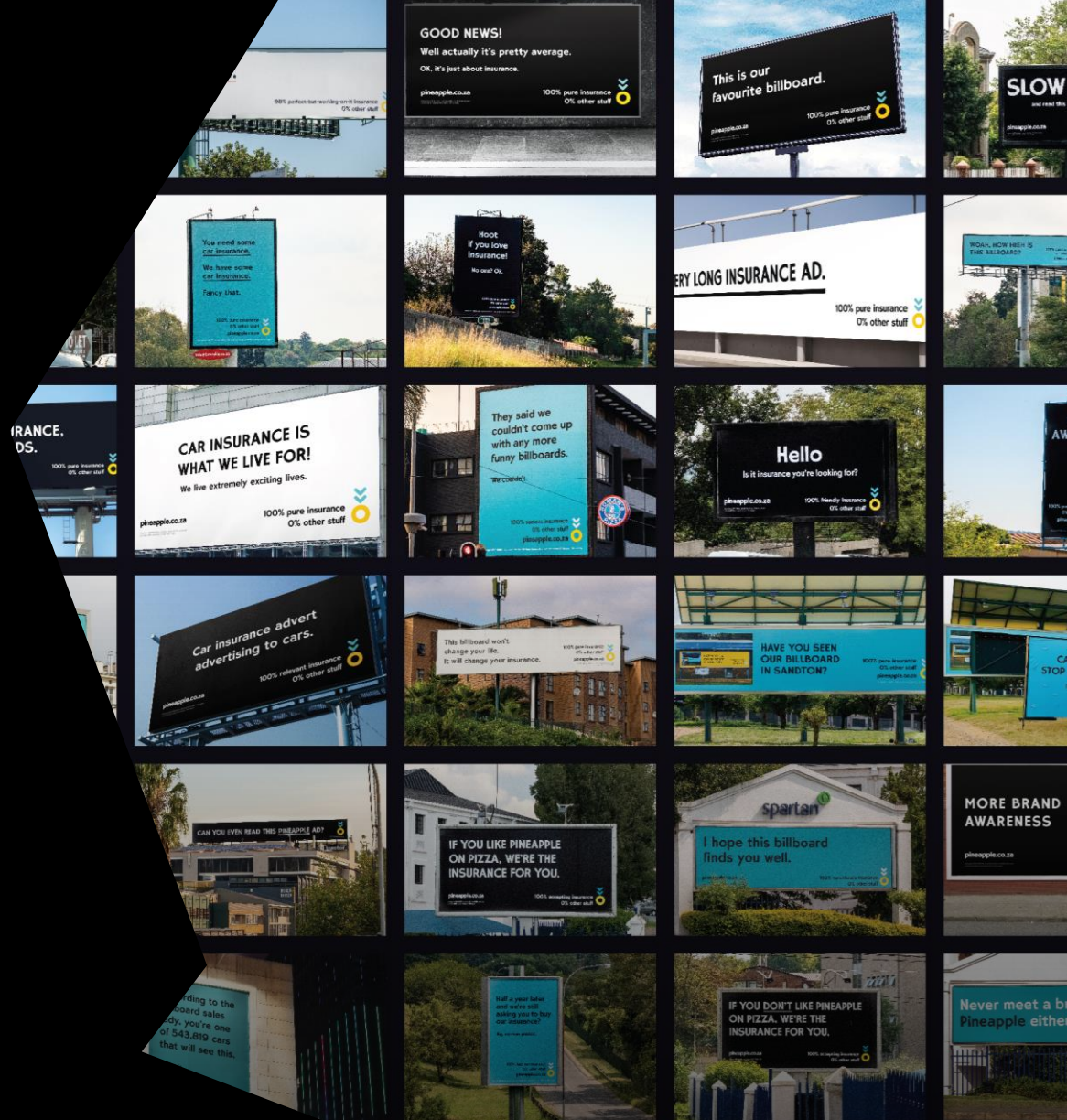


Based on Ipsos Creative Excellence, Database Meta-Analysis

CASE STUDY

Maximising Impact: Using smart strategy to stand out

Example of a challenger brand with limited resources stretching its budget while maximising visibility.



Pineapple— Grand Effie Winner

BRAND: Pineapple

AGENCY: Halo

SITUATION: Pineapple launched in 2017 with the goal of disrupting the industry through a brand built on transparency. To stand out in a competitive market, the brand leveraged Challenger Brand theory to define its identity and core values clearly.

As a Challenger Brand with limited resources, Pineapple needed a strategy to maximise visibility and impact. A digital-first company, it launched an out-of-home campaign featuring 108 unique billboard executions. These billboards were strategically placed in key areas, using humour as an emotional hook to engage consumers and drive word-of-mouth.

By embracing its challenger personality, Pineapple achieved significant results, including increased policy sales, higher market share, and a cost-per-acquisition 64% lower than the industry standard.



GRAND EFFIE: Insurance

232% increase in annual policy sales

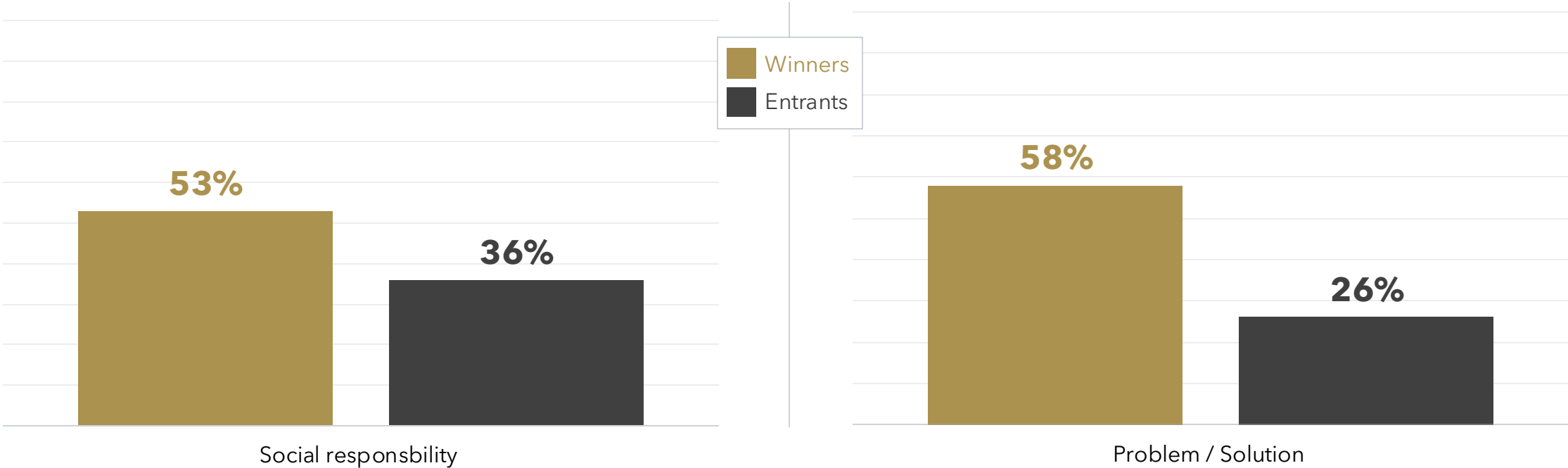
150% increase in market share

25% increase in policies sold YOY

25% increase in quotes requested YOY

Effie winners are more likely to have gone beyond selling to make an impact. Award winners are also more likely to have clarity with a problem-solution approach.

Winners go beyond selling and tackle real-world problems.



Purpose-drive marketing is about action, not just words, and consumers are paying attention.

Doing good, is good for your business

48% Of all Effie Global Best of the Best entrants have a focus on brand purpose

68% Believe most successful brands will be those that make the most positive contribution to society

68% Expect brands to contribute to their well-being and quality of life

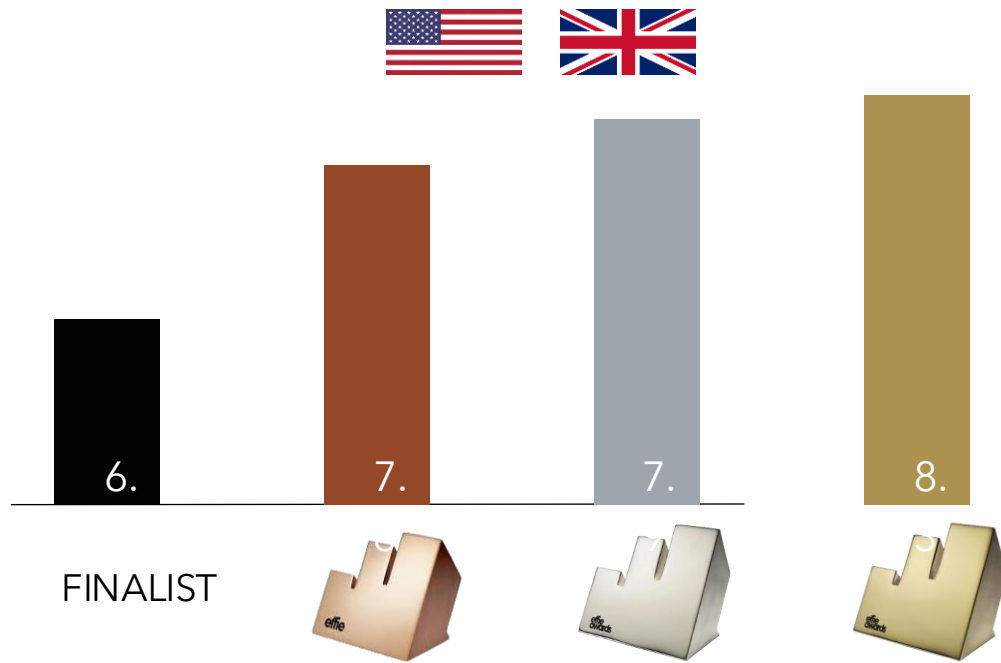
2x Purpose-driven brands have doubled their growth rate over the last 12 years

6/10 Don't trust a brand until they see proof of its promises

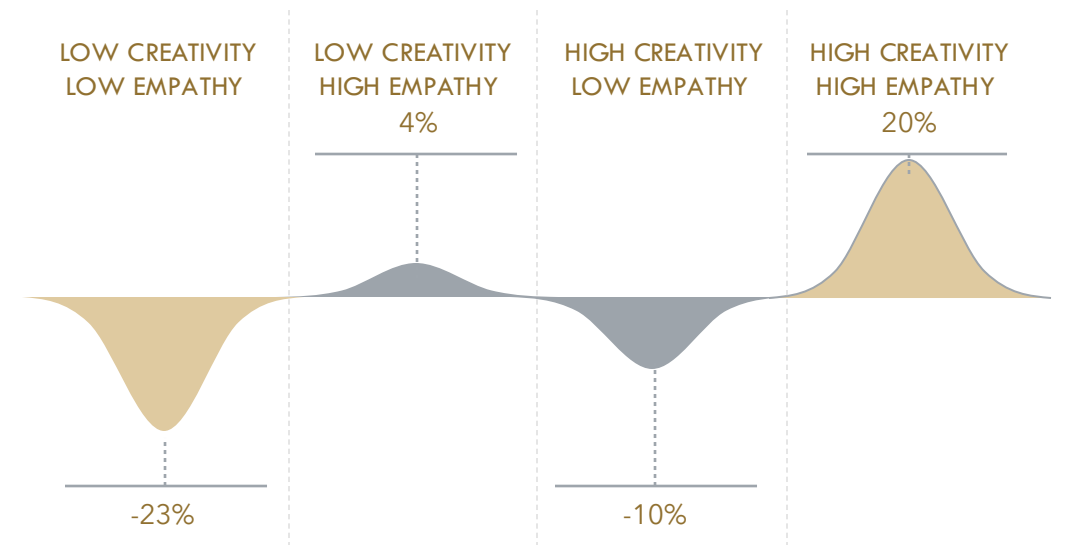
Source: Ipsos, Cannes Lions, Forbes, Accenture

Creativity + Empathy = Award-Winning Impact.

Creativity and empathy drive effectiveness, with data from the USA and UK showing that empathetic experiences set Effie winners apart.



Source: Ipsos coding of US and UK Effie Awards (n=94 Campaign from Finalists to Gold between 2020 - 2021)



Source: Ipsos Misfits, How creativity in advertising spark brand growth. Based on Ipsos' evidence based framework.

CASE STUDY

Breaking Barriers: South Africa's First Women-Only Bar Sparks Conversation on Safety and Harassment

An example of a brand taking a stand on social issues - addressing the harsh realities of gender-based violence and the pervasive challenge of sexual harassment in social spaces.

Image Source: <https://gauteng.news/2023/08/10/a-soweto-pop-up-brutal-fruits-women-only-shebeen/>



BRUTAL FRUIT– SheBeen

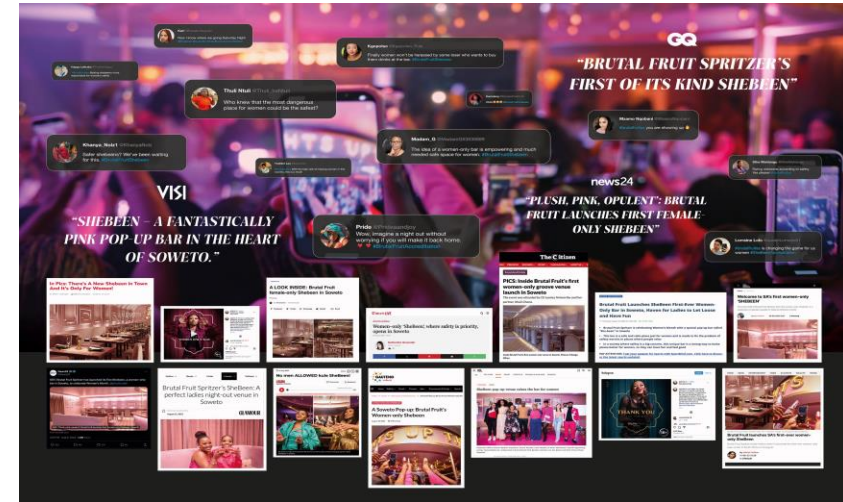
BRAND: Brutal Fruit

AGENCY: Joe Public

SITUATION: South Africa has one of the highest incidences of gender-based violence in the world, and shebeens are among the most dangerous places for women. To address this, AB InBev launched the **"SheBeen Rated Safe"** programme, assessing over 27,000 shebeens nationwide and rating their safety for women.

As part of the campaign, an existing shebeen in Soweto was transformed into The SheBeen –a women-only tavern designed to reclaim social spaces for women. The venue was crafted to exude elegance and sophistication, featuring female-led events and management.

Since its inception, 750 shebeens have been SheBeen rated, improving safety for over 22,500 women on an average night out. Brutal Fruit has consistently championed the celebration of women, making Women’s Month a pivotal period for brand positioning. The initiative helped the brand secure the top spot in its category, achieving a 36% share of voice on social media.



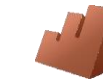
SILVER: Experiential Marketing:
Live and digital



SILVER: Timely Opportunity



BRONZE: Seasonal Marketing-
Products,



Services
BRONZE: Social Good,
Brands/Positive Change

1:23 ROI

+169% conversation volume
+187% increase in unique authors

CASE STUDY

Turning Beer into Bread: How a Brand Tackled Hunger with Purpose-Driven Innovation

An example of effective marketing that leverages brand scale for meaningful social impact - helping to combat hunger, a pressing issue affecting many living in poverty.

Image Source: www.dandad.org/annual/2024/entry/professional/237862



Castle Lager– Bread of the Nation

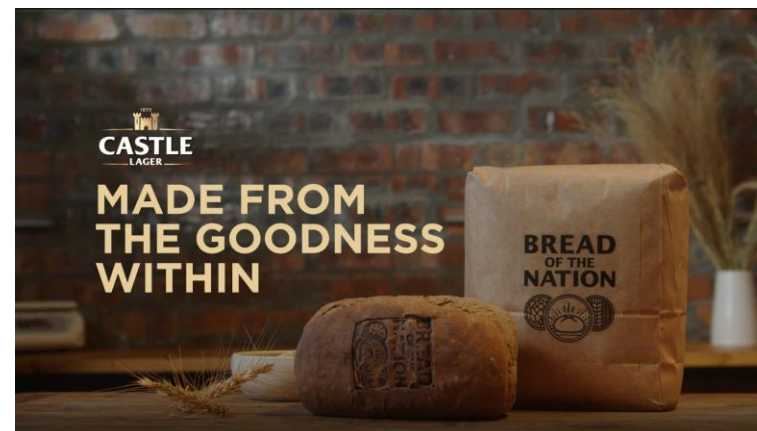
BRAND: Castle Lager

AGENCY: Ogilvy

SITUATION: With many people in South Africa living in poverty, hunger remains a significant societal issue. While many brands in the category focus on superior taste and quality, consumers increasingly expect more from the brands they support.

Castle Lager, recognised as South Africa’s national beer, has traditionally focused on marketing and sponsorship activities typical of a national brand, such as sponsoring national sports teams. But how does the brand reignite affinity and deepen its connection with consumers?

Castle Lager identified an opportunity to turn the nutritious by-product of its brewing process into bread, helping to combat hunger. Bread of the Nation is a campaign that not only addresses a pressing social issue but also demonstrates the brand’s commitment to care – going beyond conventional category communication to create real-world impact at scale.



SILVER: Beverages Alcohol



BRONZE: Marketing Innovation Solutions

100K+ People fed

+12.5% Brand Uplift

+6.4% increase in sales

+13.67% boost in quality perception

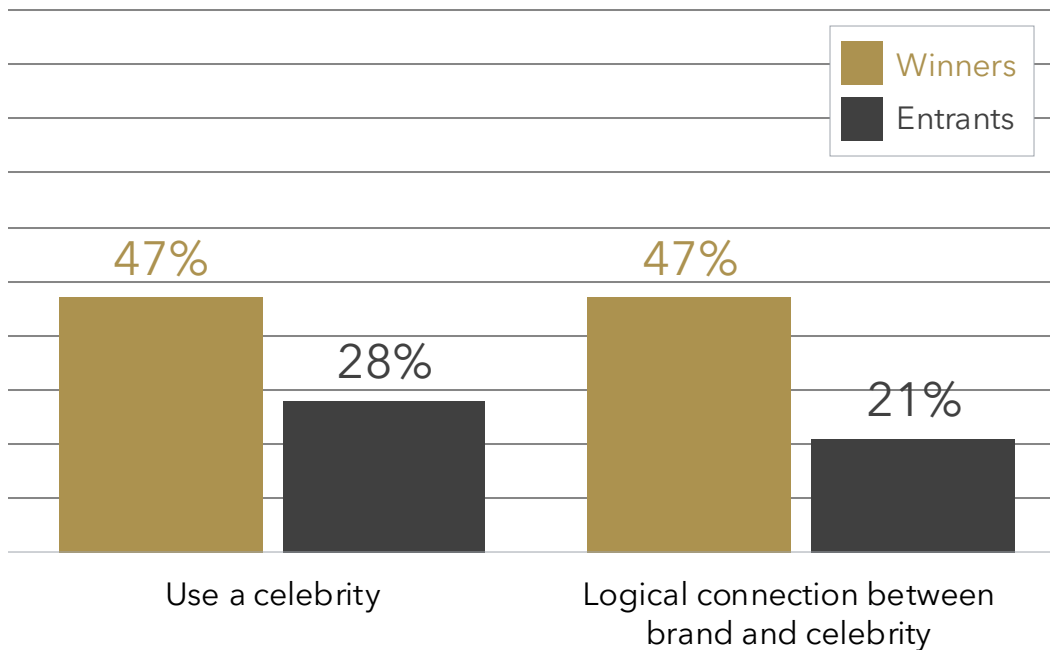
Key insights

Brands that actively tackle social or environmental challenges don't just stand out -they build trust, loyalty, and long-term relevance.

- Consumer Expectations Are Changing - Modern consumers, especially younger generations, expect brands to take a stand on social issues. According to research, most people are more likely to support brands that align with their values.
- Brand Trust and Loyalty - Companies that show they care about more than just profits tend to foster long-term customer relationships.
- Differentiation in the Market - A clear social stance can help brands stand out in competitive markets.
- Positive Impact - Advertising can drive awareness and action for important causes, influencing both public perception and real-world change:
 - Show how the brand is helping to drive change and be part of the solution
 - Approach consumers with empathy
 - Brand credibility is key - need to have a clear or compelling connection or reason why the brand is involved
 - Remember the essentials of branding- brand assets need to be integrated and optimised with same care as for 'regular' advertising

Star Power: Leveraging celebrities for impactful advertising with more winning campaigns incorporating celebrities.

Authenticity is key. Celebrities should align with the brand's values and audience. This year's winners partnered with celebrities in a way that that complemented the brand's role and leveraged their presence in a relevant manner.





Key insights

A successful celebrity partnership isn't just about fame - it's about strategic alignment and authenticity.

When including celebrities in advertising, consider these key factors:

- Brand Fit - Ensure the celebrity aligns with your brand values and target audience. A mismatch can feel forced or inauthentic.
- Credibility & Relevance - The celebrity should have a logical connection to the product or industry to enhance trust and impact.
- Audience Perception - Consider how the public views the celebrity. Controversial figures may bring unwanted attention.
- Longevity - A trendy star might boost short-term buzz, but will they stay relevant long enough to justify the investment?
- Exclusivity & Overexposure - If the celebrity endorses too many brands, their influence may be diluted.
- Genuine Enthusiasm - Authenticity matters. If the endorsement feels scripted or disingenuous, consumers will see through it.

Source: The power of you: why distinctive brand assets are a driving force of creative effectiveness | Ipsos

- Crisis Management - Negative public perception



BRAND: KFC - How KFC disrupted the breakfast category.

AGENCY: Ogilvy



SILVER: Marketing Disruptors



SILVER: Restaurants

The bottom line: what truly matters

Winning Hearts, Minds, and Market Share: The Power of Creativity, Purpose, and Authenticity in Advertising

01

Creativity is the ultimate differentiator

Distinctive, memorable advertising is more effective than simply increasing media spend. Being remembered matters more than just being seen.

02

Emotional connection drives success

Ads that resonate on a deeper level, whether through storytelling, tension, or social responsibility, build stronger brand loyalty and influence consumer choice.

03

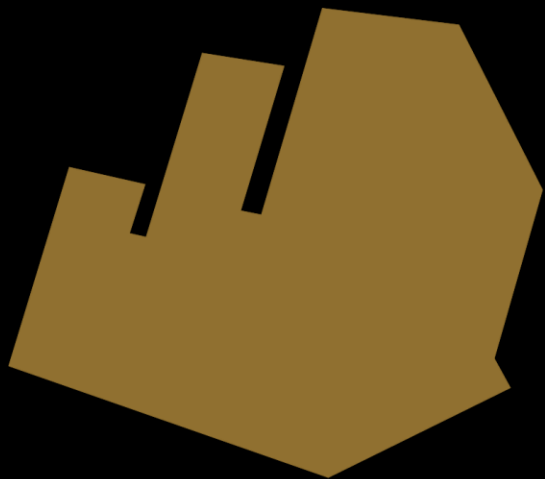
Brand purpose fuels growth

Businesses that align with social good and solve real problems grow faster and earn greater consumer trust. Purpose-driven brands stand out and thrive.

04

Celebrity endorsements need strategic fit

Simply featuring a famous face isn't enough; the connection between the celebrity, the brand, and the message must feel authentic to be effective.



For question or queries on the report and findings, please contact:

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