

CASE STUDY: Guinness, BBDO and BrainJuicer “Score with ‘Wheelchair Basketball’”

Business Situation and Campaign Objectives:

Guinness Launches ‘Made of More’ Platform

In the US, the Guinness brand has been predominantly associated with Ireland, Irish pubs, and Irish heritage. Despite the popular adoption of Irish culture – most notably the widely celebrated St. Paddy’s Day – Guinness was, in general, regarded as *someone else’s* drink.

To change this image, Guinness activated the new global Guinness platform, “Made of More”, in the US – the land of the lauded and luminous hero figure. Guiding the creative platform, developed by its agency, BBDO, was the following strategic insight: *“Character is a question of choice and it’s our deeds that reveal what we’re truly made of.”*

Focusing on America’s affinity for the ‘everyman hero’, Guinness and BBDO aimed to create emotional ‘feel good’ advertising featuring ordinary men demonstrating tremendous character, thereby using the brand’s values to attract a new community for Guinness Draught in the US.

The campaign would salute people with real substance, those who do the right – sometimes unexpected – thing. In turn, this would inspire US drinkers to make bolder, more principled life choices – and to reach for a Guinness, a brand with more taste, more character, and more substance than other beers.

Overall success would be measured by increased sales and a shift in ‘Guinness-is-a-brand-for-me’ attitudes.

Research Story:

An ‘Emotional’ Partnership

Guinness enlisted BBDO to create a number of animatics, each telling an authentic, inspiring story of ordinary men demonstrating strong character. Given the focus on emotionally evocative ideas such as “courageous self-sacrifice”, “the generous gesture” and “determination & resilience”, Guinness needed a research partner that understood, and could harness, the power of emotion.

Guinness and BBDO approached BrainJuicer, a pioneer in emotionally based research, to test the animatics. Rather than strive for message take-out, brand linkage, or persuasion – the standard metrics to advertising – BrainJuicer asserts that emotional response is the single driver of great brand building advertising.

With its award-winning ad testing methodology, ComMotion®, BrainJuicer could offer Guinness and BBDO insight into not only which animatics were most emotionally appealing, but why, and make actionable suggestions for improvement that would lead to great 5-star advertising and long-term business effects.

The Case for Emotional Advertising

Large-scale studies of advertising effectiveness have supported the case for emotional advertising. In 2007, ad experts Les Binet and Peter Field published their ground-breaking review of the IPA's (the Institute for Practitioners in Advertising) UK effectiveness database, *Marketing in the Era of Accountability*, which concluded that emotional campaigns returned more on investment than rational ones, and that super-emotional campaigns delivering brand fame were the most effective of all.

In their update, *The Long and the Short of It* (2013), Binet and Field further concluded that emotional brand building is the key to long-term profit; emotions are twice as efficient as rational messages, and deliver twice the profit.

The case for emotional advertising is further supported by recent advances in the behavioral sciences – most notably with the Nobel Prize-winning work of Daniel Kahneman, author of *Thinking, Fast and Slow*, who identified the two mental processes people use to make decisions: fast, intuitive, emotional System 1 and slow, analytical System 2.

Kahneman's work has profound implications for marketing and market research, especially with regard to advertising. According to Kahneman, System 1 is the primary influencer of human-decision making, not System 2 – a notion in direct contrast to traditional research based on the 'rational' consumer.

So a model of advertising testing relying on System 2 thinking is drastically missing the point, relegating emotion to a sidekick role when, in fact, it runs the show. This explains the provocative IPA data - why emotional fame-generating ads boosted effectiveness, and why "persuasive" advertising with a clear message actually hampered it.

'Kahnemanite Advertising Goes Mainstream'

The case for System 1/System 2 hit the mainstream in a big way with *The Economist's* emotional advertising feature, "Nothing more than feelings" (December 2013).

The article leads with the case of the Cadbury Gorilla campaign – a highly emotional campaign that, by all traditional measures, should not have worked, yet was rewarded with millions of online views, better perceptions of its brand, and higher sales. The article also mentions the Guinness 'Basketball' campaign – the subject of this case study.

"Kahnemanite advertising," according to *The Economist*, "prizes emotion over information and pays more attention to a brand's 'purpose' than to its products... This demands not just new ways of making adverts but new methods for judging if they will work."

In the case of Guinness' Basketball campaign, this quote couldn't be more relevant.

Testing the Guinness Animatics with ComMotion®

Guinness and BBDO approached BrainJuicer to test six animatics among four target groups to understand which ones elicited the strongest emotional response and should, therefore, be progressed into finished film.

An early advocate of System 1/System 2 application to market research, BrainJuicer has long endorsed what is now known as 'Kahnemanite advertising' - that the ability of a piece of communication to evoke a strong emotional response is central to its success in-market.

ComMotion® is able to measure what people are feeling (using BrainJuicer's FaceTrace® tool), how strongly they're feeling it, the reasons why (captured by BrainJuicer's patented MindReader® technology), and predicts commercial impact. It also provides additional insight around consumer targets that can further aid communications development and optimization.

FaceTrace® emotional scaling results can be summarized in a single Emotion-into-Action™ score that measures efficiency and determines the business and fame building potential of pieces of communications in market. The EiA™ score is then translated into a star chart rating that can be easily benchmarked across its market and category. Furthermore, it distinguishes between truly great ads, good ads, and poor ads, and ensures that clients progress with ads that will deliver fame and fortune.

Campaign Description

Making the Case for Basketball

Upon testing, BrainJuicer found that the animatics elicited various degrees of emotional strength across the target groups (Guinness Adores, Guinness Adopts, Craft, and Hispanics), and ranged from one star to five stars, the latter being a 'blockbuster' ad guaranteed to have extremely likely profit gain, very likely share gain, reduction in price sensitivity, and viral potential.

One, in particular, stood out – Basketball. Beginning with a group of friends engaged in a rousing game of wheelchair basketball, suddenly all but one of the players rise from their respective wheelchairs – revealing that only one is actually wheelchair bound – and they all head off the court, laughing and smiling, to enjoy a Guinness at a nearby bar.

Basketball led among 2 out of the 4 consumers groups, achieving 5 stars among Guinness Adores. Overall, it evoked positive emotional engagement due to its surprise factors (the unexpected twist in the plot), its heart-warming portrayal of friendship (the surprising sensitivity of the characters), and the notion that Guinness is a beer for everyone to enjoy.

BrainJuicer recommended moving Basketball into finished film development, and suggested building up the emotional connection between friends and letting the action do the job of building emotion rather than voiceover. This way, the 'unlikely twist' would come as even more of a surprise.

Guinness was so confident with the insight gained from pre-testing the animatics with ComMotion® that, contrary to standard practice, they didn't feel the need to test the finished film.

[Basketball](#) ran on TV from Sept. 9 through Dec. 3, 2013, and online from Sept. 9, and was to run through June 2014. Total media spend for Basketball was \$6 million, with production costs as follows: \$784,624.64 (budget) and \$150,000 (music).

Business Results

'Basketball' Scores!

How did it perform? Basketball struck a chord and created the biggest cultural conversation around Guinness in years. As of February 2014, the ad had 8.3 million views on YouTube and had aired across three continents, so powerfully universal is its message.

Basketball had an immediate positive impact on the Brand Health of Guinness. 'Regular Usage' grew +60% in September and a further +12% in October, making it equivalent to St. Patrick's Day levels. Additionally, Guinness achieved P24M highs for September and October on various other measures, notably 'for people like me' and 'brand of substance'. Furthermore, this momentum continued to build, boding well for pricing, activation and innovation moving forward.

This is particularly notable for Guinness, for whom Brand Health had been flat for the past five years, aside from an annual spike at St. Patrick's Day. By end of October, Guinness had surpassed this seasonal peak, and that continued into November. December retail sales growth versus 2012 enjoyed a third consecutive month of double digit growth since the ad aired.

The numbers are compelling – for Guinness, a brand that had been static in the US for five years, a highly emotional campaign was key to activating its 'Made of More' platform and gaining a new community of US consumers who view Guinness as 'their brand'. Through a strategic partnership between a brand open to emotion, an ad agency committed to creating compelling creative, and a research agency that places emotion at the center of their research, Guinness emerged as 'a brand for me' among Americans.