

**Campaign Title: Tut Premiere**

**Brand: Spike TV**

**Company(s) Involved: Spike TV, Neuro-Insight**

**Category: Innovation**

## Summary

Spike TV needed a creative strategy for its premiere of *Tut*, a multi-night historical drama, that would not only generate interest for the program, but also prevent incorrect viewer attribution of the show to one of our better-suited competitors (like History Channel).

We combined neuroscience with traditional survey research to identify key moments from longer source material to emphasize in the 30-sec spots that formed the bulk of the campaign. The moments were defined not by traditional measures of engagement and emotional valence, but by their long-term memorability. We further learned via the neuroscience how to structure the creative so as to maximize recall of the network and tune-in details.

The campaign helped make *Tut* Spike's most-watched program in its timeslot in 7 years.

## Marketing Challenge

In 2015 Viacom's Spike TV made strong efforts to reposition the network and move from a male-centric audience to more balanced audience. Part of that initiative included the presentation of the event series *Tut*, a scripted drama about the life of the Egyptian pharaoh.

Beyond the typical challenges that come with the launch of a major, multi-night event program (something the network had never attempted before), Spike further faced the obstacle of being a network with NO track record of airing historical drama, unlike several of our key competitors such as AMC, History Channel, A&E or Discovery Channel. Previous experience in comparable situations had shown us that if we failed to produce a well-executed creative strategy, viewers would likely have failed to recall **what network was airing the event** – undermining all the hard work being done to deliver credit and viewership to Spike.

In order to generate the strong viewership an event of such importance deserved, Spike needed to make every effort to ensure that the marketing would not only generate strong awareness for the show and strong viewing intent among the audience, but also a) effectively communicate key tune-in details for the show, and b) memorably communicate the network hosting the show.

## Methodology

Our approach to guiding the development of the on-air spots involved taking two 2-minute trailers that had been designed for digital distribution and subjecting them to testing using neuro-science to help us structure the shorter 60- and 30-second spots. 100 subjects in 2 different markets were invited to watch a 30-minute program complete with commercials (including our trailer for *Tut* and a trailer for a competing event series on another network) while fitted with light equipment designed to capture second-by-second brainwave activity.

The brain activity captured translated to measures of engagement, emotional valence, and long-term memorability. Through an emphasis on that last metric, we were able to identify whether key moments were not just stimulating viewer engagement and reaction in the moment, but also were likely to be recalled later, when needed.

The insights generated from these tests of the trailers were used to create a series of a 30-second TV spots. One of the trailers and each of the TV spots were then subjected to standard quant survey testing, using monadic exposure with a national sample of 350 each, to determine how well each performed on driving viewer interest and on communicating key branding and tune-in details – and also to see whether any of the 30-second spots could perform as well one of the original trailers, which had all the advantages of being 4 times as long as the TV spots (and were therefore too costly for us to use as TV spots).

## Creative Execution

The test of the first trailer identified 5 moments (lasting no more than a few seconds each) that crossed key thresholds for memorability. Yet only one of those five registered strong emotional valence – and it was strongly negative -- and only 2 recorded strong viewer engagement. The approach was repeated with a second trailer. Again, 5 strong moments of high memorability were revealed. But of those, only 2 generated strong emotional reaction.

Emphasizing long-term memorability as the key quality for our creative, we incorporated almost all of those high-scoring moments into a series of 30-second spots for the program. If we had relied on the more “classic” variables (emotion, engagement) to guide our creative, we would have likely overlooked most of those moments and instead emphasized moments that while engaging *in-the-moment*, were not actually all that memorable long-term.

Additionally, we learned from the tests that in structuring the creative in a classically dramatic and cinematic style, we were – through audio and visual cues -- inadvertently encouraging the brains of watchers to shut down the long-term memory functioning **just as the branding and key tune-in details** were being displayed. We addressed this potentially fatal flaw for the TV spots, restructuring the soundtrack and imagery where possible so as to boost recall of the network and airdates for the program. Of the various executions composed for the TV campaign, the 30-second spot we called “Trust” best reflected the impact of the insights generated by the research.

## Business Results

Quantitative testing of the “Trust” spot showed that compared to the execution which had the best **overall** score (the one we would have leaned on, absent this research), the “Trust” execution had:

- 23% better Spike brand linkage
- 88% higher recall of the airdate, and
- 13% greater awareness that *Tut* was a **3-night** event

On all 3 measures (as well viewing intent), “Trust” was at least statistically tied with the original 2-minute trailer.

By emphasizing the “Trust” promo for our on-air campaign leading up to launch, the premiere of Spike’s *Tut* earned 2.6 million total viewers, while the night 1 premiere delivered the **largest audience** for Spike in that time slot in **seven years**.

As a result of the success of *Tut*, Spike has greenlit another multi-night dram event – just its second ever – slated for January 2017.