

thrive

How *Creativity* leads to *Effectiveness*

A THRIVE BITE-PAPER:

*Bitesize marketing insights you need to know,
in under 10 minutes.*

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01

THE BIG PICTURE

Advertising has always been at its best when it finds that sweet spot between craft and commercial benefit. Truth is, most of us got a bit distracted by the technical side, the delivery and the data. Important stuff, but it's what we communicate that matters most.

Now, the pendulum is swinging back. We are seeing creativity realise its potential once again as the real engine behind growth. In our annual survey, creativity remains to be the thing that clients tell us they value most, and that brings most impact for them commercially.

“

It may well be that creativity is the last unfair advantage we're legally allowed to take over our competitors.”

Bill Bernbach

In this whitepaper, we explore how to grab that unfair advantage and turn it into a commercial result.



02

ESCAPING THE EFFICIENCY TRAP

We've all seen what happens when we rely too much on short-term metrics: everything starts to look the same. In a competitive market, playing it safe with bland efficiency is actually a high-risk strategy. If you prioritise volume and targeting over the core idea, you might get a few more clicks today, but you aren't building anything that lasts. The smartest brands recognise that a great idea doesn't just work once, it builds value over time.



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03

THE ROI OF A GREAT IDEA

The data confirms what we've always championed at Thrive: a strong idea is a better investment than a bigger media budget. Creativity acts as a multiplier. When the work works, every pound you spend works significantly harder.

THIS 'CREATIVE DIVIDEND' SHOWS UP IN THREE WAYS...



THE MULTIPLIER EFFECT

High-quality creative can be **10 → 12x** more effective at growing your brand than mediocre work.



THE SALES GAP

Truly great ads can drive **4x** the sales uplift of the 'just okay' ones.



THE STAYING POWER

People remember distinctive assets. A consistent message, a specific colour, a character, or a tone of voice, long after they've forgotten a list of product features.



04

WHY DISTINCTIVENESS WINS

Look at the UK car market. While most brands started making ads that looked like spreadsheets – all financing rates and features – the winners were the ones who stayed human. Like these greats from Volkswagen and Land Rover.



Through emotion, these brands didn't just sell cars; they built fans. They saw lower costs to find new customers and, more importantly, they didn't have to slash their prices to keep people interested. Their brand pull did the heavy lifting, so their sales team didn't have to.



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05

THE NEW MEASUREMENT

Measurement is finally growing up. We're moving past click attribution and toward something much better: *decision confidence*. This isn't about counting likes; it's about using data to prove that being creative reduces the risk of being ignored. It's about having the confidence to say:

“

This work will move the needle because it's

**IMPOSSIBLE
TO IGNORE.”**



06

PUTTING CREATIVE BACK WHERE IT BELONGS

Creativity shouldn't be a nice-to-have. It's a strategic asset. To win, we have to protect the big ideas and fund them properly.

THE CREATIVE QUALITY CHECKLIST

Before a campaign goes live, ask yourself these five things:



- 1 IS IT US?**
Does this feel like our brand, or could we swap the logo for a competitor's without anyone noticing?
- 2 DOES IT FEEL LIKE SOMETHING?**
Does it spark an emotion before it asks for action?
- 3 IS IT SIMPLE?**
Are we trying to say too much? One great point beats five average ones.
- 4 WILL IT LAST?**
Is this a one-hit wonder, or can we build on this for years?.
- 5 DOES IT STOP THE THUMB?**
In a world of skip buttons, does this give people a reason to stay?





07

WHY BEING DIFFERENT IS GOOD BUSINESS

Effectiveness doesn't happen *despite* creativity; it happens *because* of it. The brands that will succeed in an increasingly noisy marketing world are the ones that stop treating creative as a cost line and start treating it as their competitive advantage for growth.

If that sounds like you, then we'd love to hear from you.

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