

## **Many Pitfalls with the Use of Celebrities**

*A new tool can in a split-second tell, not just what the receiver looks at in an ad, but also what the person is feeling. The tool is called Emotional Eye Track Barometer, and has just been launched by Insight Research. A test how an audience responds to celebrities in an ad shows that the target group has to experience a logical match between the brand and the celebrity being used.*

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If you can register 50 times per second where the eye's focus is while at the same time registering the blinking and the pupil size- then you stand, as an advertiser, with a very strong analysis tool. The so-called eye tracking technology, which shows where respondents gaze in an ad, is a well known technique that has been on the market for many years. However with the Emotional Eye Track Barometer you can now also register which emotions people are experiencing in the same second they are looking at the ad.

The technology comes from the Danish company called iMotions. This tool gives new insight and possibilities in how an ad, brochure, or packaging emotionally effects the respondent.

Insight Research A/S, which is a new independent resource bureau under Aegis Media, has launched the new technology as a tool named Emotional Eye Track Barometer. From this point on we will provide a marketing effort that periodically shows results and knowledge gained from this tool.

For the launch of the new tool, Insight Research tested 33 persons aged between 25 and 55 years, with an even representation between the sexes. Each person was tested with 6 different ads, every 10 seconds.

The goal of the test was to prove if the use of celebrities in the ad has an effect on respondents or not. There is no definite answer, but there was interesting results pertaining to the branding, liking and buyers intentions element, and that the use of a celebrity is very far from being a guarantee for attention. In contradiction, it was found that a chosen celebrity can give a negative emotional reaction if it is not clear to the respondent why this particular celebrity is associated to the brand or product.

### **The Technology**

Before we explain further it is necessary to understand the technology. In the ads found on the next page, it is shown where the respondents gazed, how they moved their focus onto other parts of the ad and how long they looked at that particular spot.

As of the emotional reaction, it is not complicated to interpret. For this you simply use two terms; arousal and affectivity.

Simply said, arousal is the degree of emotional response. A scale of 1 to 10 is used, where 0 indicates an indifferent emotional response to the ad, where a 10 is a very strong emotional reaction.

To derive whether the ad generates a positive or negative response, the arousal has to be over a certain arousal level, however where this exact boundary lies is not certain at this point of time.

- This is logic, as you have to have a reaction over a certain level in order to talk about either positive or negative reaction, explains Adm. Dir. Mogens Østergaard, Insight Research.

The affectivity represents how many respondents have had an emotional reaction. One can say that there is a netto- and brutto- effect. The netto- effect (arousal) represent the degree of a reaction, while the brutto- effect ( affectivity) tells how many have that reaction.

Back to the test.

### **The football team sells**

The first two advertisements were from Dong: one where the focus is on Thomas Gravesen from the national football team and one ad with an unknown person. Overall, one can conclude that the football celebrity can generate an emotional response. The ad with Thomas Gravesen creates both more reactions and emotions than the unknown man shown in the other ad.

The emotional response for the football team though was above average, while the unknown person ad tested very poorly.

There was one interesting aspect that we could measure which showed that the respondents reacted negatively. It was when respondents looked at Gravesen's image. This could be for many reasons such as that Gravesen has chosen not to play on the national football team. One can call this the national traitor effect. However there is no doubt that the national team, as a whole, sells tickets, says Mogens Østergaard.

### **Sidse Babett- Knudsen's hair does not sell**

Two other advertisements that have been tested are from Garnier. The first ad portrays the actress Sidse Babett- Knudsen, and the other has an anonymous female model with an intense look.

In this situation the unknown model generates more emotional reactions than Sidse Babett- Knudsen for both the male and female respondents. The women's reaction towards an ad is generally more intense than the men's. Although it is a female targeted product, the female respondents had a much higher emotional response to the unknown model than to Sidse Babett.

This corresponds with the fact that one cannot normally associate Sidse Babett- Knudsen with hair, and the fact that it is hard to recognize her in the ads. It is also important that the target group experiences a logical match between the brand and the celebrity. If not there will be most likely a negative reaction. Garnier would most likely have had a better reaction towards their ad if they used a person like Jennifer Aniston who is known for her beautiful hair, points out Mogens Østergaard.

Just like Dong there is just an average result from their ad.

### **A loser type portrayed as the family dad**

Apropos- the match that TDC made with a celebrity also has no luck. In their ad, TDC uses the actor Thomas Bo Larsen as an eye-catcher.

We know Thomas Bo Larsen as a little bit of a violent loser-type in connection to the rolls he usually plays in movies. Therefore it is not such a great idea to use him as a family father figure in this ad. This could be one of the reasons that he does not generate an emotional response, and especially not towards the female respondents, says Mogens Østergaard.

The men's reactions are a bit more positive towards Thomas Bo Larsen, where the emotional response is average, and 90% have a reaction (affectivity). The anonymous ad scored only 9% in affectivity with the men and a poor degree of emotional response.

However, measured across all, amongst both men and woman, both the ad with Thomas Bo Larsen and the more anonymous ad are very similar.

Just like with the two previous ads is the reaction not more than average.

The results from Eye Tracking supports part of the following consideration of branding, linking and buyers intention. Only Dong, had the ad with the significant difference when it comes to the celebrity ad versus the anonymous ad.