

Cannes Lions 2017: Four things to look out for

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So, another summer, another Cannes Lions festival. Yes, it's that time of the year when the whole of adland gathers to celebrate the latest, most creative campaigns from around the world and forecast the trends of tomorrow.

Last year, we highlighted the three As that brands would do well to adopt: [Agility, Attention and Authenticity](#). But what will brands learn this year? Here are four predictions...

1. Centennials are the new Millennials

Millennials are so last year. At Cannes 2017, expect to hear how the smartest companies

are turning their attention – and advertising dollars – towards a younger audience:

Centennials, also known as Gen Z. Is there something different – beyond the marketing jargon – about this group? Research by our sister WPP company Kantar would suggest that there might be. [AdReaction: Engaging Gen X, Y and Z](#), found that Gen Z has a distinctive profile and behaviours that go well beyond simply being mobile first and passionate about music and movies.

This is a generation that is both informed, and outspoken; they demand ads which allow them to co-create or shape what happens (be that via polls or taking decisions), and are more positive towards brands that let them vote for something to happen (31% vs. 25% for Gen Y according to AdReaction). They also choose an option (28% vs. 25%) or take decisions (27% vs. 22%).

2. Data is at the heart of the best creative

Creativity used to be risky. For every zinger of an ad campaign, there would be plenty of duds. For every knockout punch line, there would be plenty that missed the mark. Then data came along and created the possibility of changing things.

First, by helping us increase the effectiveness of our messages (by reaching the right audiences, in the right places, and at the right times). And now, by helping us to create more variants of the right message in the first place. We can use personalisation to optimise creative, for example, and facial coding to check that our content truly gets the reaction that we want (or simply to represent people's feelings).

There's no doubt that this can transform the performance of digital advertising, but can it really help create fame for brands? Our Australian team managed to pull this off by using data to change the price that Snickers was sold for in key stores, based on the sense of rage that was coming from Twitter and social media.

Based on the brand positioning that "you're not you when you're hungry", the wilder the internet got, the cheaper the price became and the more high profile the campaign became

– all thanks to a complex algorithm known as a [Hungerithm](#).

3. Powerful campaigns can be built around new business models, not advertising

It's been a long time since advertising was just about spots and dots, and breakthrough campaigns are increasingly as much about creating new opportunities for brand businesses as they are about boosting awareness. That can mean brands helping to solve social problems.

One example is Gillette's [Bachelor of Shaving](#) campaign in India. Our research revealed two reasons why the brand was suffering in rural areas: one, Indian men don't like shaving and will only do so for work or women; and two, rural grads were struggling in the jobs market because they failed the first impression test. The solution wasn't to run lots of billboards or create content but to get these grads job market ready.

The Bachelor of Shaving offered an accredited course that would give rural Indians interview training, smarter CVs and guidance on how to shave and look smoother when they met potential employees. Thousands have got jobs and Gillette sales soared.

4. Culture is key

Campaigns are more powerful when they are embedded in local culture. In an age of global marketing slogans and brand campaigns, the need to flex the message based on local opportunities and local culture is more important than ever. Even when there's a global insight that is powerful and true, it needs to be grounded in local culture to maximise its effectiveness.

MediaCom's [Head Coach from Israel](#) is a demonstration of what can be achieved when global thinking is aligned with local culture. By teaming up Head & Shoulder's global dandruff test strip (and the knowledge that many people don't believe they have dandruff) with a local basketball team, we created a powerful message that resonated on a local

level.

Taking advantage of Maccabi Tel Aviv's performance slump, Head & Shoulders made its message work in the most dramatic of ways, by being part of the story around the sacking of team's head coach. The results show the power of getting culture right: Sales shot up 25%.

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