

The Value of Positivity

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CONNIE KRARUP, CONSULTANT 16 AUG 2019

The marketing landscape is becoming increasingly competitive and, as the consultancies drive their tanks onto media agency lawns, the threat has seemed greater than ever before.

MediaCom has responded by setting out its stall to champion independent, informed advice from its new consultancy start up, Theobalds Road Consulting ('TRC').

MediaCom's heritage is founded on the excellent work we deliver to grow our client's business. TRC is an indispensable tool to do this going forward. As well as contributing to the future of MediaCom, we have been focused on helping to secure the continued future of our clients in a world rife with disruption. This fast-changing business environment requires transformative, quick thinking, which we are providing to help our clients to stay

ahead of the pack.

A leading media owner came to Theobalds Road Consulting with a challenge...

A globally renowned media owner viewed its range of publications as a beacon of positivity in the media world. However, it needed to develop a greater understanding of whether the positive nature of its magazines delivered a superior context for advertisers to connect with consumers, in order to ensure increased sales.

TRC devised a rigorous research programme to shed light on the role that positivity plays in consumption of media and advertising. First, we interviewed several leading academics in the field of Positive Psychology, to understand the science behind positivity. Dr Art Raney, James E Kirk Professor of Communication at Florida State University asserts that 'Positivity is a means for connecting with other people not a way to personal psychological wellbeing but a way to access others and make society and relationships stronger'. We also spoke to media experts to uncover the roles played by different forms of media in making people feel happier. The key theme from these interviews was the need for authenticity, which leading communications expert Judi James states is "essential".

The findings of this research were complimented by a bespoke survey created by TRC. The survey was nationally representative and covered 1000 consumers to quantify and understand perceptions of a positive mindset and views on positivity in the media.

The academic research and the survey proved that positivity delivers numerous benefits in life, ranging from improved health outcomes to a greater sense of purpose and drive. It also revealed that media is known to contribute to consumers' moods as they engage with it. Different media channels, formats and content categories have an impact on consumer mood. For example, magazines tend to generate greater feelings of positivity when compared to other forms of media.

Positivity makes people feel good, but how can this impact sales?

TRC ran a lab test to assess the effect of a positive mindset on advertising effectiveness. We also conducted a positivity index survey to create a composite “positivity index score” of a number of media brands. These revealed that viewing advertising when in a positive mindset can drive brand favourability and significantly increase consideration. So much so that it results in a 1.6% incremental sales uplift versus advertising seen in a neutral mindset.

So, whilst “positivity” may seem an impossible concept to define, TRC were able to empirically prove that media is a vehicle that drives positivity and creates a positive mindset. Advertising viewed in a positive mindset increases sales. We further explored our research in a TRC White Paper, which has since been presented by the client across the UK. Nothing of this breadth and nature has been done before and TRC’s unique alchemy of consultancy rigour and the depth of expertise in the world of media has delivered our client with a unique body of research. The research is paving the way for change in the publishing industry as it is a powerful sales tool that can be used to drive advertiser sales in a challenging time for publishers.

Through our research we found:

- 77% of people with a positive disposition took some form of action after consuming media, compared to only 63% of those who were feeling more negative. **This is a 22% increase.**
- Positive people respond more favourably to brands they see advertised, with an **18% increase in brand favourability** reported among people in a positive condition, compared to 3% for people in a negative condition.
- Positive people are **90% more likely to try new things** and **35% more likely to buy an advertised product.**

We are also delighted to say that this work has been shortlisted for the “Best Use of Research” category for the Media Week awards! Fingers crossed the judges will be feeling the positivity!

If you are interested in hearing more about how we can help your business address their

challenges and where we have done it before, please contact Magali Durand:
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To find out more about Theobalds Road Consulting, read about their Voice Workshop during Transformation Week [here](#).

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