A graphic showing two overlapping silhouettes of human heads in profile, facing left. The front silhouette is black, and the back one is a reddish-brown color. They are set against a dark background with a gold-colored rectangular area on the left.


#AdvertisingEffectiveness

THE EMPATHY GAP AND HOW TO BRIDGE IT

+20%

Campaigns combining creative ideas with 'Empathy and Fitting In' perform 20% better on short-term sales lift potential.

Source: Ipsos and Effie UK, The Empathy Gap and How to Bridge It, December 2023

The logos for Effie United Kingdom and Ipsos, located in the bottom right corner of the graphic.

Dec 13, 2023 United Kingdom

Empathy in marketing isn't just nice, it's good for business, new report shows

Effie UK and Ipsos analysis shows campaigns that take pains to empathise with their audience drive business

LONDON (13th December 2023) -- Empathy is an underrated and powerful business driver in marketing, according to a new report.

The Empathy Gap and How to Bridge It, a new report from marketing effectiveness giant [Effie](#) and world-leading research and insights organisation [Ipsos](#), found that marketing that demonstrates and generates a sense of 'empathy and fitting in' is also an effective way to drive business.

According to the report – the second volume in Effie and Ipsos' Dynamic Effectiveness series, which began with an exploration of the sales and business value of marketing that promotes equality for women – 'while empathy and fitting in' is key to creativity, all too often it doesn't get the airtime it deserves.

To right this imbalance, Effie and Ipsos explored the role of empathy in advertising today.

Today, 73% of us globally wish we could slow down the pace of our lives and are craving and searching for simplicity and meaning – a trend that in the UK has grown +48% over the last 10 years. This poses marketers two key challenges: how to avoid the temptation to complicate things and how to maximise marketing impact while respecting an audience.

The new report asserts that the most effective marketing is a dance between 'creative experiences and ideas' and 'empathy and fitting in'. Ipsos testing data and Effie case data shows that campaigns which combine both are more likely to be effective and perform +20% on short-term sales lift.

Evidence from the Ipsos brand tracking database, meanwhile, shows that 'empathy and fitting in' matters to market share growth, and the perceptions that a brand understands and helps its customers are consistently observed as drivers of choice. Ipsos undertook a comprehensive analysis of thousands of ads to understand their impact and what the key components for effective campaigns are – the best of which we term 'MISFITs'. When reviewing two years' worth of Effie UK and US finalists – 94 in all – against these MISFIT experiences we saw that winners had a 25% higher score on 'creative experiences', 'creative ideas' and 'empathy and fitting in' compared to finalists.

In short, campaigns that help the audience understand the brand or take pains to truly understand the audience drive results, the new report shows.

Also included in The Empathy Gap and How to Bridge It are details of six Effie-winning campaign case studies – including Dell's 'I will always be me', Mayor of London's 'Have a word with yourself, then your mates', Tesco's 'Together this Ramadan' and Yorkshire Tea's Grand Effie 2023-winning 'Where everything's done proper' – that powerfully demonstrate marketing with 'empathy and fitting in' in practice and the tangible success that can be achieved by combining this with 'creative experiences and ideas'.

The report concludes by offering marketers six rules to make sure their marketing demonstrates and generates 'empathy and fitting in'.

While it's important for brands to get to know their audience, the reverse is true as well – as demonstrated by Yorkshire Tea, for example, with a campaign that helped its audience get to know the brand better. Another learning is that flipping a truism on its head can be very powerful, as ITV's 'Eat them to defeat them' campaign shows.

Juliet Haygarth, Managing Director at Effie UK, said: "Taking the time to truly understand your audience is one of the building blocks of effectiveness. Humans want to feel seen and understood and they spend time with those that make them feel that way. It's the same for brands and marketing. High levels of 'empathy and fitting in' is a commonality shared by many of our best performing Award winners. In this report, you get all the theory in one easy hit, alongside some brilliant examples from relevant cases to bring it all to life."

Samira Brophy, Senior Director, Creative Excellence at Ipsos, said: "Knowing exactly who your brand is and arriving at a simple idea to help tell your story is one of the hardest things to crack in advertising. It takes laser focus from brands and high quality strategic planning from their agency partners to create those anchor points for creativity to flourish. This paper demonstrates how empathy and fitting in puts the extra in extraordinary and provides a more nuanced view of creativity. It is also a celebration of elegant campaign 'unlocks' and the planners that make it happen."

The full report can be found at: <https://www.ipsos.com/en-uk/empathy-gap-and-how-bridge-it>