

The COVID-19 crisis calls for right brain thinking  
Orlando Wood, System1 Group

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AVGV  
NVMEN AITQVAEME CONTEC  
VRNA DARIT

Examine the creative context

Explore the mental shift

Can brands continue to use their previous creative?

How are new ads performing today?

What kind of work is connecting well (and what less well)?



## Lemon.

This advertising brain has stopped working properly.

It has lost its power to persuade, its ability to make people feel, and its talent to entertain.

How has this happened? And is there anything we can do about it?

In this challenging book, Orlando Wood argues that a golden age for

advertising technology has been far from a golden age for advertising creativity.

He shows how today's analytical culture has sent the industry's admired reputation for creativity into reverse.

In place of a creative Renaissance, he maintains, we are now witnessing nothing less than a creative Reformation, a 'stripping of the altars'.

Reducing what was once dazzling artform to dreary science.

So how should agencies and clients correct the wrong turn we have taken?

Orlando offers some surprisingly counter-intuitive solutions of his own.

If the advertising brain has stopped working properly, maybe this is the repair manual.

**IPA**



## Flatness and Abstraction

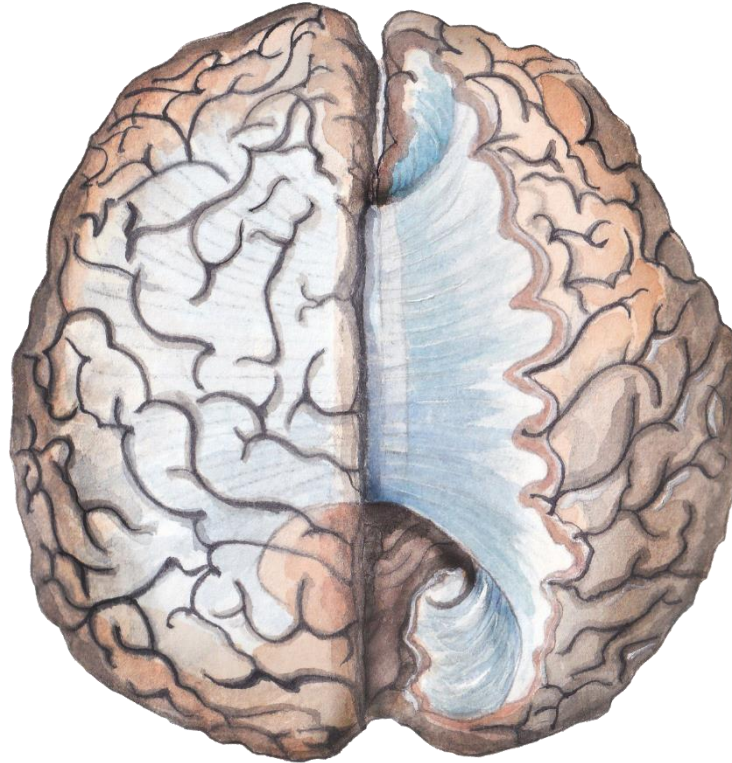


## Depth and Betweenness



Narrow  
Goal-orientated  
Abstraction (parts)  
Categorises  
Explicit  
Cause and effect  
Repeatability  
Literal, factual  
Self-absorbed and dogmatic  
Language, signs and symbols  
Rhythm

**Left**

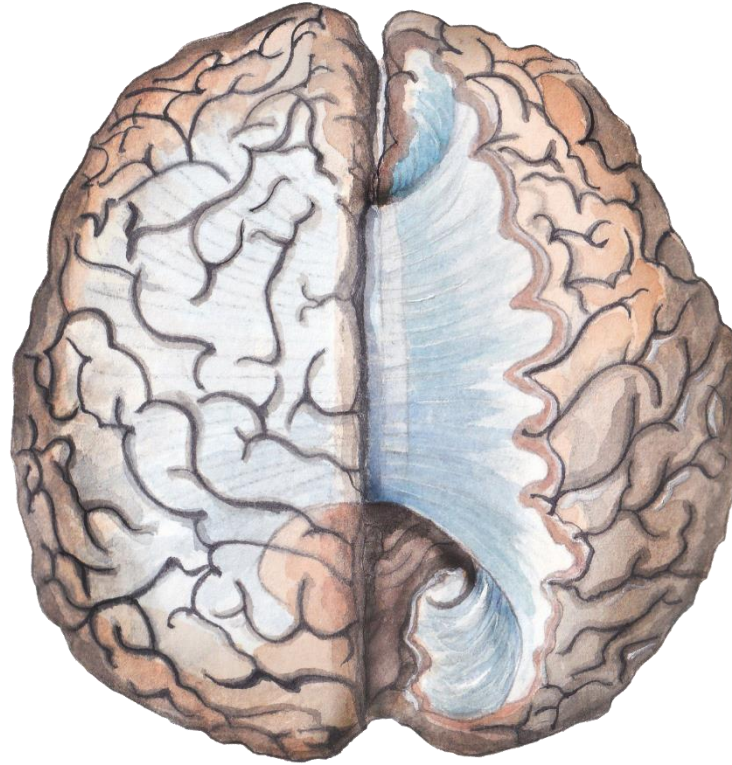
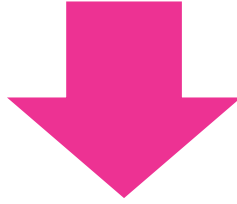


Broad  
Vigilant  
Context (whole)  
Empathises  
Implicit  
Connections and relationships  
Novelty  
Metaphorical  
Self-aware and questioning  
Time, space and depth  
Music

**Right**

Narrow  
Goal-orientated  
Abstraction (parts)  
Categorises  
Explicit  
Cause and effect  
Repeatability  
Literal, factual  
Self-absorbed and dogmatic  
Language, signs and symbols  
Rhythm

**Left**



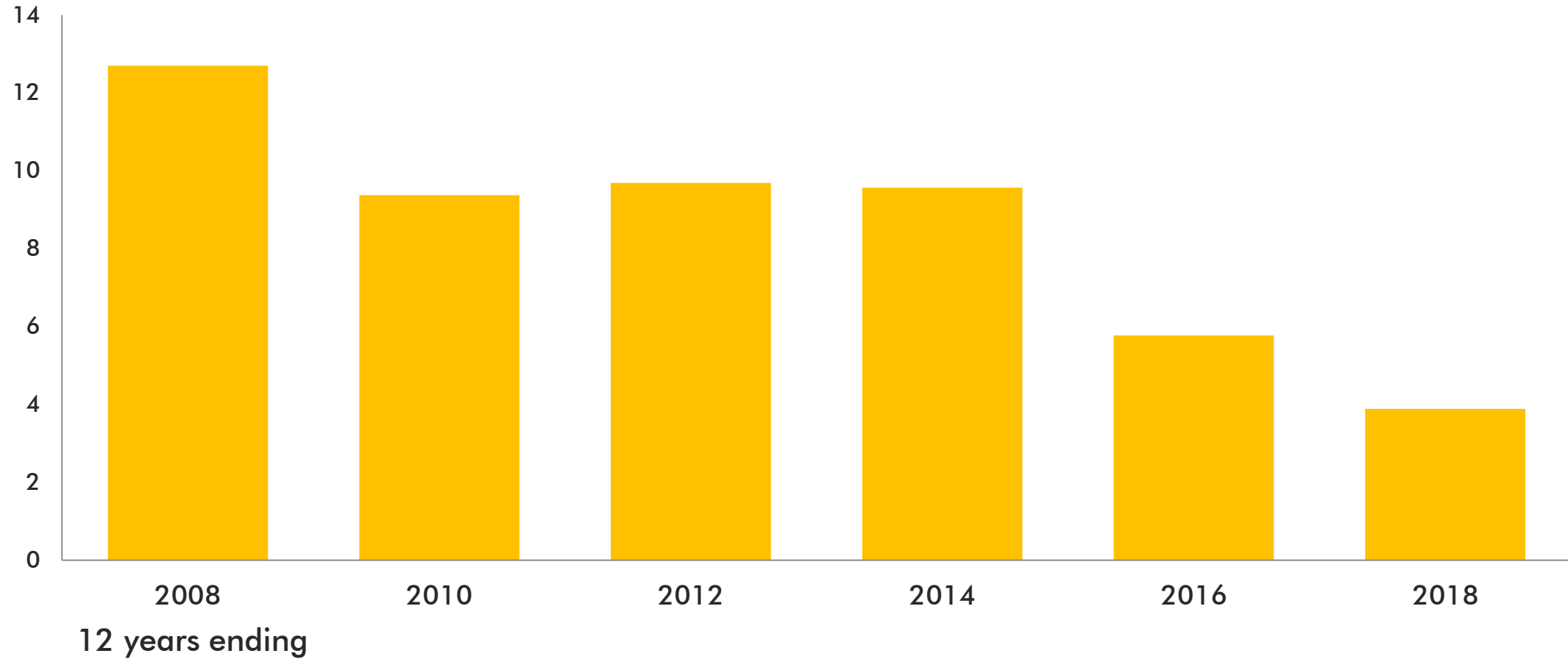
Broad  
Vigilant  
Context (whole)  
Empathises  
Implicit  
Connections and relationships  
Novelty  
Metaphorical  
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Time, space and depth  
Music

**Right**



# The crisis in creativity.

Ratio of awarded: non-awarded SOV Efficiency





Narrow  
Goal-orientated  
Abstraction (parts)  
Categorises  
Explicit  
Cause and effect  
Repeatability  
Literal, factual  
Self-absorbed and dogmatic  
Language, signs and symbols  
Rhythm

**Left**



Broad  
Vigilant  
Context (whole)  
Empathises  
Implicit  
Connections and relationships  
Novelty  
Metaphorical  
Self-aware and questioning  
Time, space and depth  
Music

**Right**





Fair at Lendit near St Denis, Medieval manuscript



Adoration of the Shepherds, Domenico Ghirlandaio, 1485









# A shift of attention – a sense of playfulness and looking back to the past

17 April 2020, 11:23 | Updated: 17 April 2020, 12:13



Couple go on daily walks in historical costumes to cheer up quarantined neighbours. Picture: SWNS/Prior Attire



# A shift of attention – finding new in the familiar

Love this challenge. I live by myself so I had to set a 10s timer and run into position.



 r/pics • integrateus • 2d ago  
25241 points • 191 comments

Artemisia Gentileschi, Mary Magdalene as Melancholy



 r/GettyMuseumChallenge • RosieJo  
• 2d ago  
223 points • 3 comments

My wife's Getty Museum Challenge



 r/pics • yoink15 • 4d ago  
42053 points • 300 comments

 eleganthistory • 10d

Lady 1-Ply, Keeper of Non-Perishables and Protector of the Soap.



 Share  115

... |  19.8k 

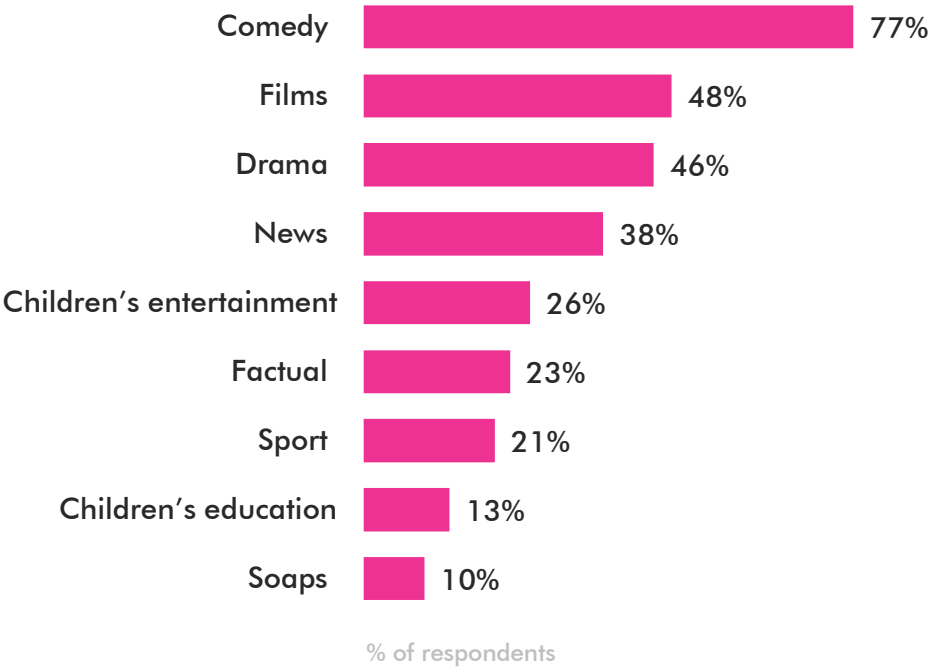


# A shift of attention – humour, drama, entertainment



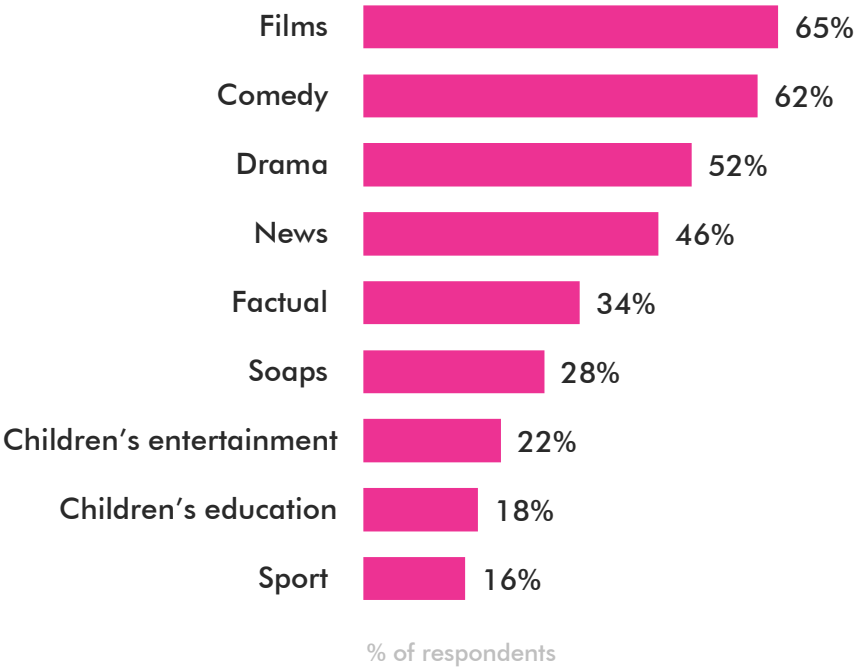
What would you and your household like to watch on TV in the next week?

## Preference – Television Consumption



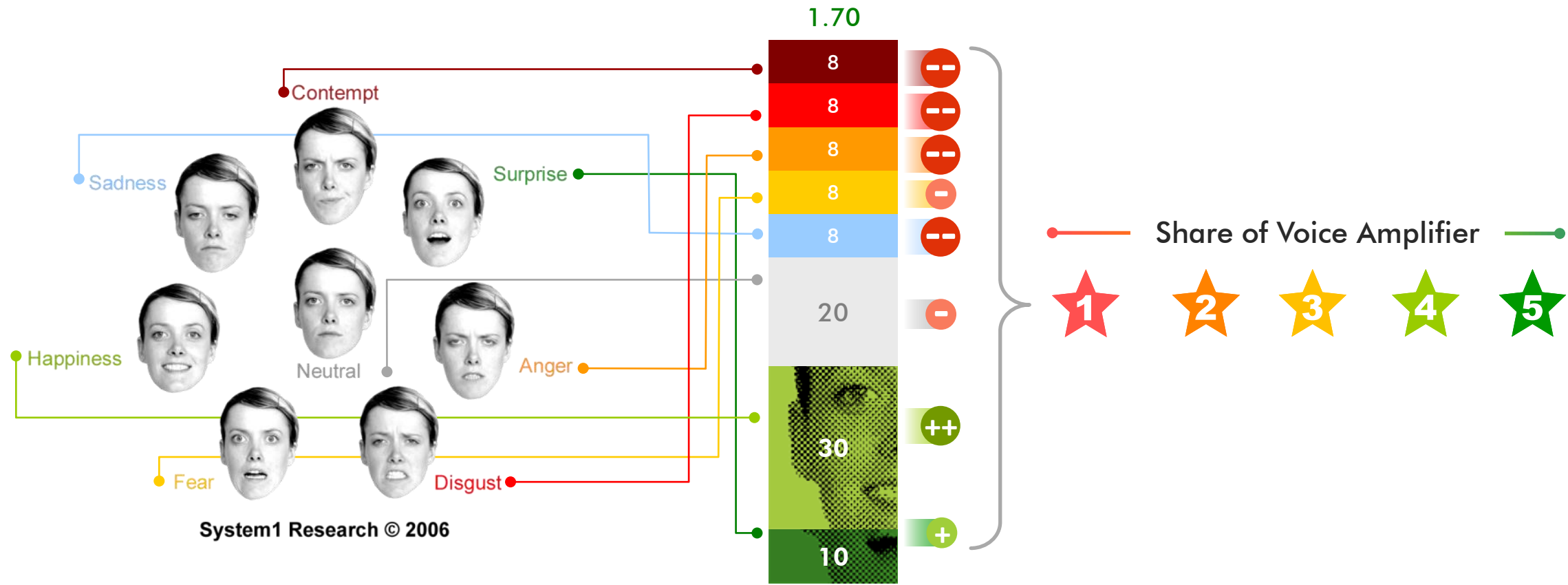
What would you and your household like to watch on TV in the next week?

## Preference – Television Consumption



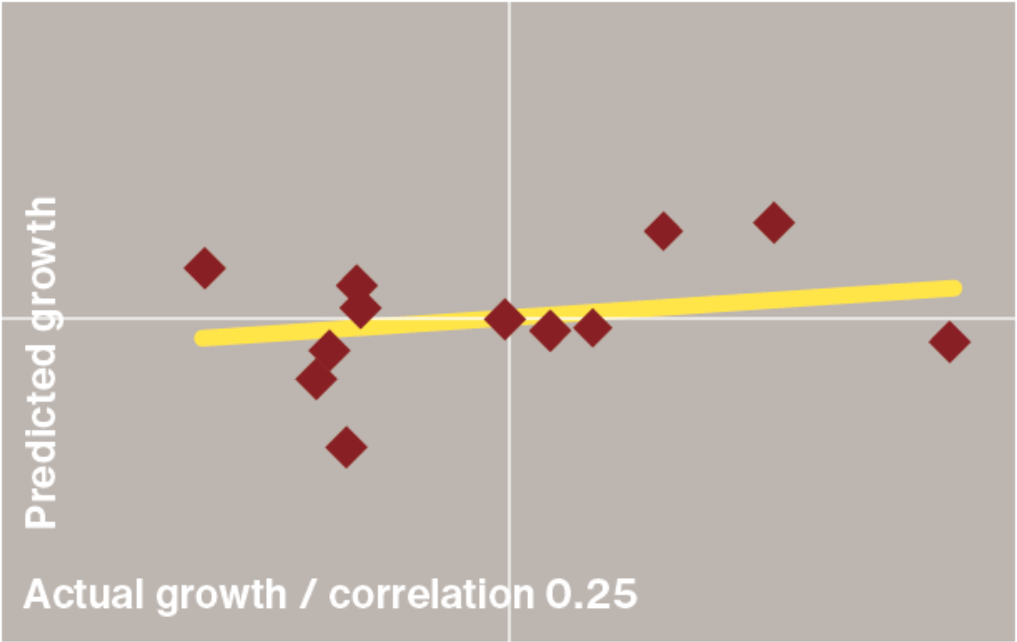
With this shift in mindset, can brands continue to use their previous creative?

# Predicting share gain from emotional response.

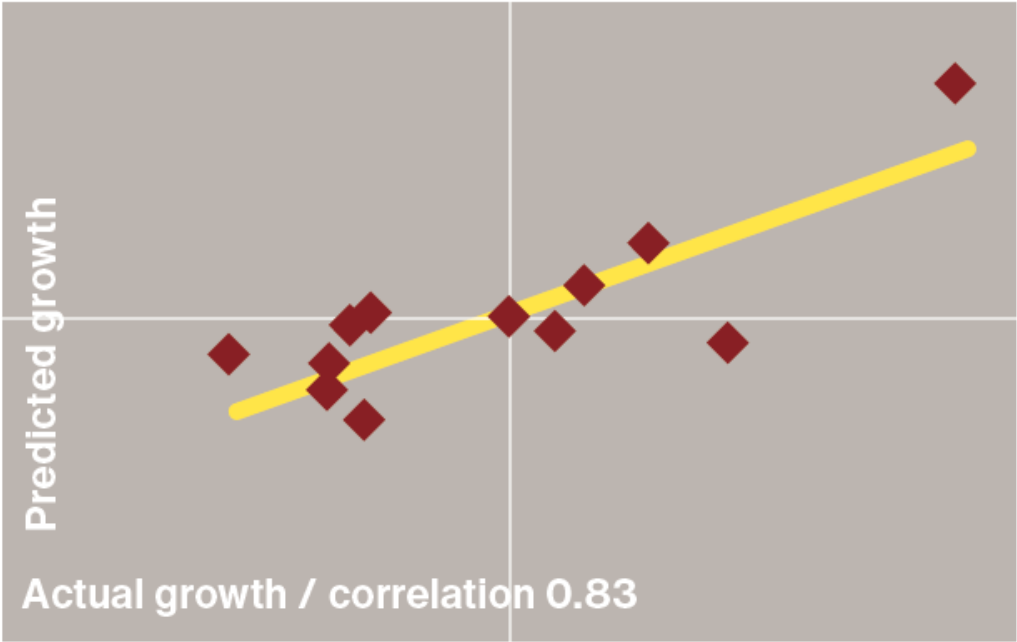


# ESOV and the emotional multiplier explain market share growth.

Quantity of advertising  
(TV ESOV)



Quantity and quality of advertising  
(TV ESOV x Star rating)





## Re-test 100

Objective: Do ads from before the crisis still connect today?

A re-test of 100 TV ads (50 in US and 50 in UK) from January and February 2020, selected at random from System1's Test Your Ad categories#

Re-tested 21-22 March 2020 in their respective markets

Same method; 150 respondents per ad



# Brands can most likely continue with their pre-COVID advertising.

Re-test 100 reveals little change in ability of ads pre-dating COVID to connect with audiences.



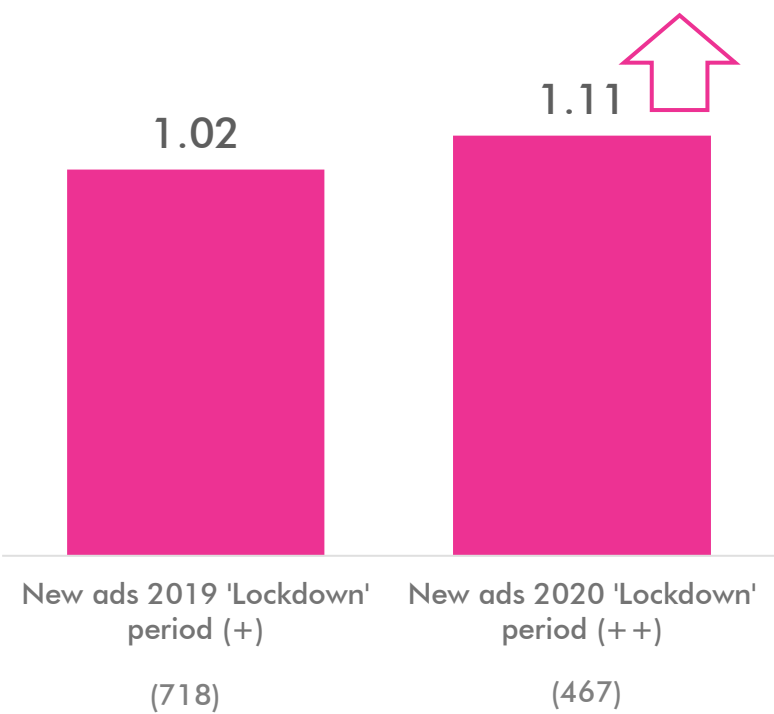
US+UK	Correlation	Original Score Average	Retest Score Average	No. ad pairs
Star Rating (Long-term Growth Score)	0.89	2.3	2.2	100
Spike Index (Short-term Growth Score)	0.93	1.1	1.1	100
Fluency (Brand Recognition)	0.95	0.6	0.6	100

How are new ads performing today?

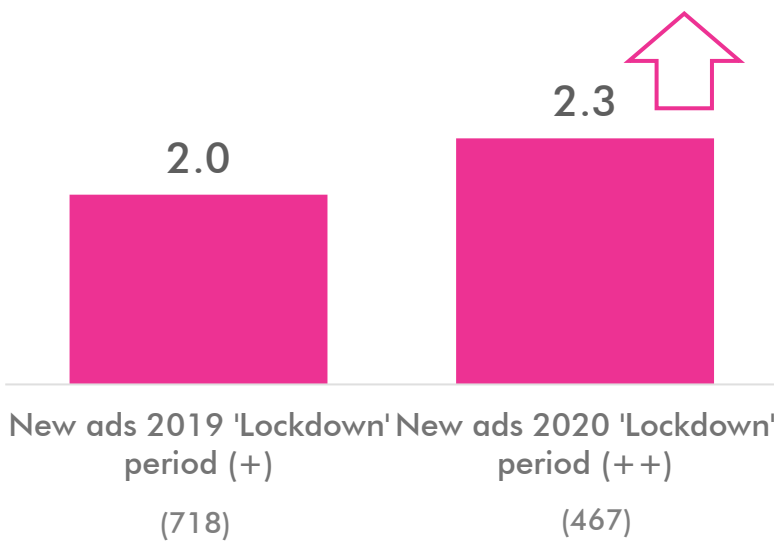
# New ads appearing in lockdown connecting better than ads appearing in same month last year.



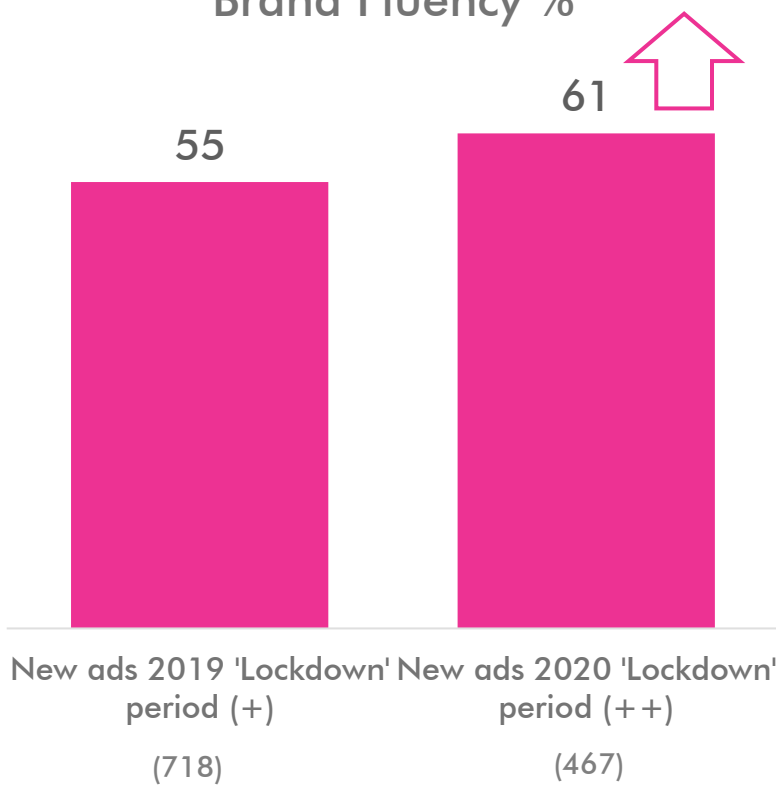
Spike (Short-term)



Star Rating (Long-term)



Brand Fluency %



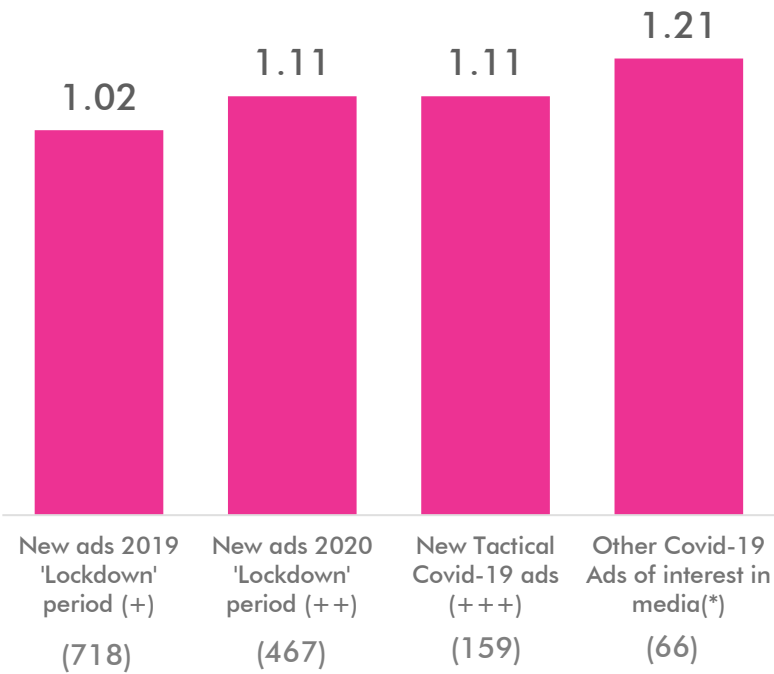


# New tactical COVID-19 ads also connecting better.

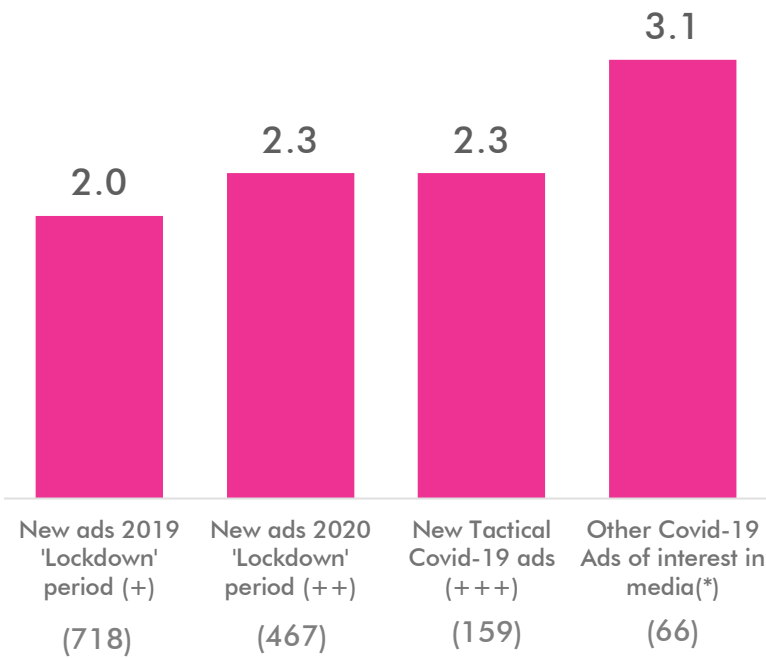
But ads attracting the industry's attention are less distinctive.



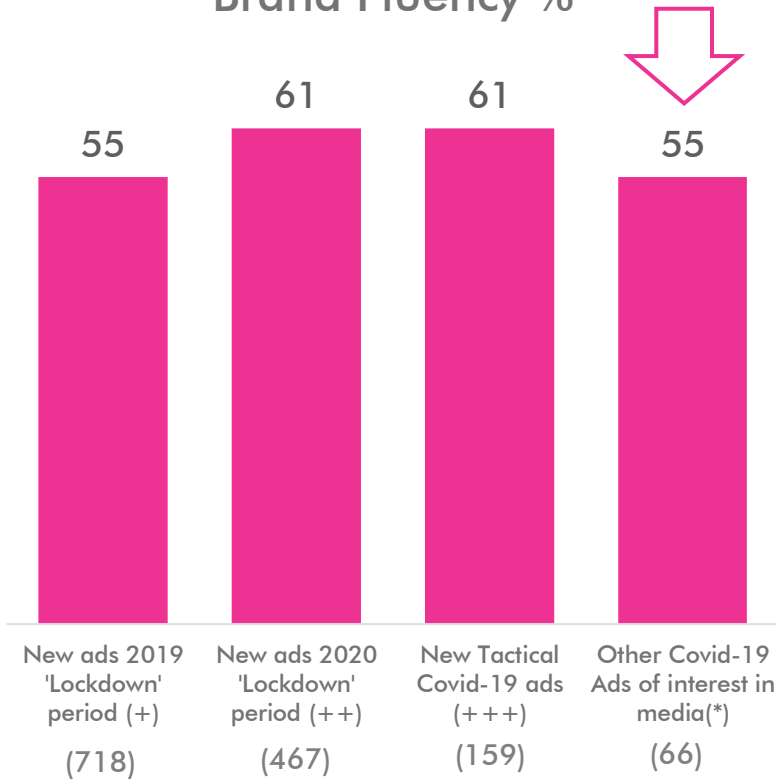
Spike Index (Short-term)



Star Rating (Long-term)



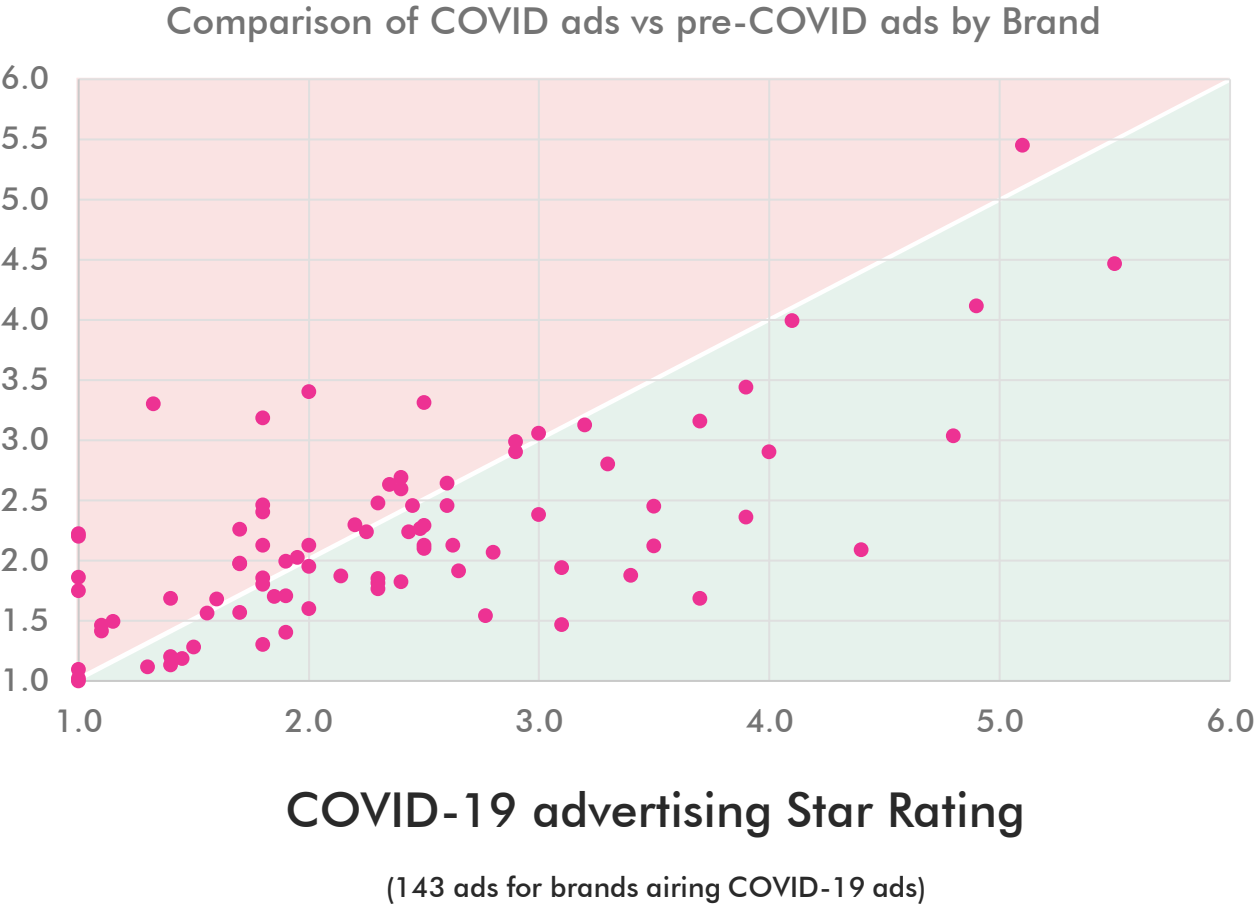
Brand Fluency %



Brands' COVID-19 ads slightly better than their ads before the crisis.  
COVID ads for telecoms and food providers are connecting better than their ads predating crisis.

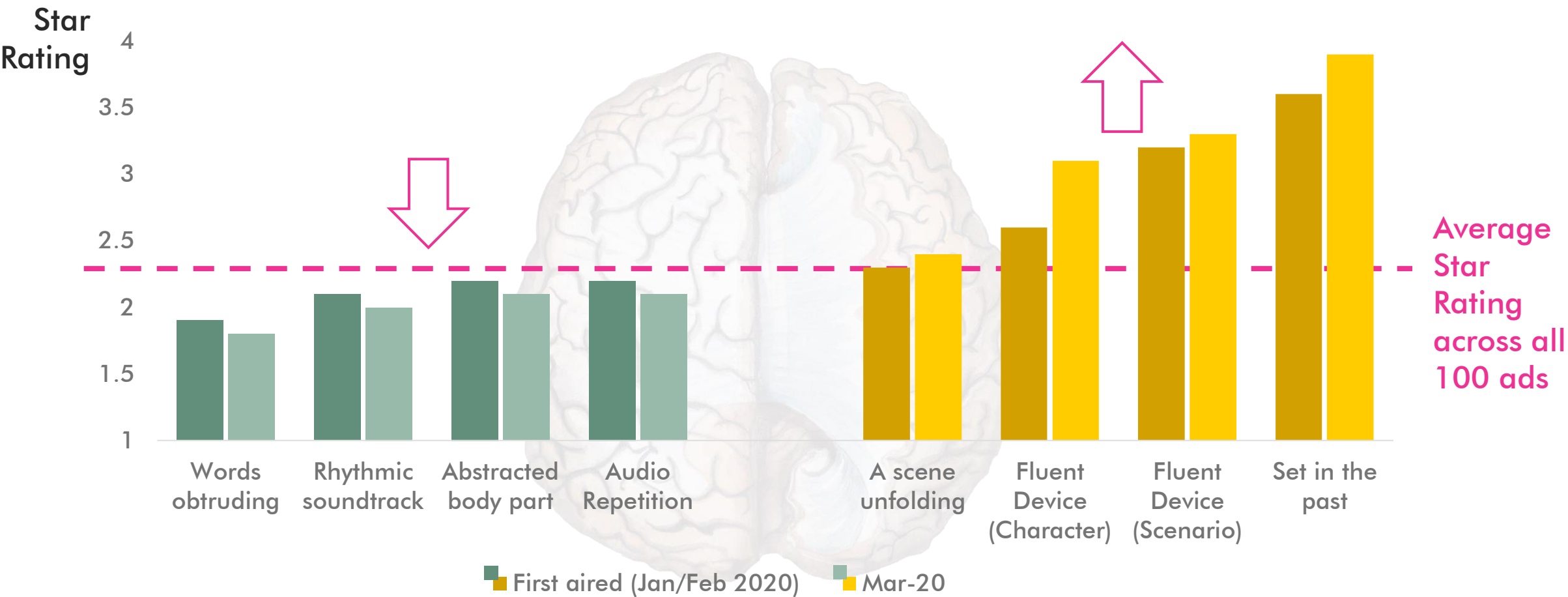
Pre-COVID  
advertising Star  
Rating

(1646 ads first airing in 2019  
for brands later airing a  
COVID-19 ad)



What kind of work is connecting well (and what less well)?

Left-brain advertising connecting even less well; work with humanity, brand characters, clear sense of time & place connecting even better than before.



# 5 advertising features that marketers should aim for



Character  
Fluent Devices



Scenario  
Fluent Devices



Ads celebrating  
'betweenness'



Ads set in or  
referencing the past



Ads with connection to  
local place and community

# 5 advertising features that marketers would be best to avoid

The direct hard sell



Ads focused on *things*



Ads pandering to  
self-image



Ads reliant on words  
or rhythm

What if your feet felt as happy as  
this music sounds?

Ads that are aggressive,  
competitive or  
performance focused





## What's not connecting



The direct hard sell



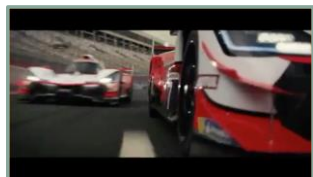
Ads focused on *things*



Ads pandering to self-image



Ads reliant on words or rhythm



Ads that are aggressive, competitive or performance focused

## What is connecting

Character Fluent Devices



Scenario Fluent Devices



Ads celebrating 'betweenness'




Ads set in or referencing the past



Ads with connection to local place and community



# Why not revisit work from the past?



System1  
Test Your Ad

MY CATEGORY RANKINGS


TEST YOUR AD - 1ST FREE!

SUBSCRIBE

Hello Imran

Trial Account

Sign out



Global Covid-19 Related Ads (353) ▼

Anheuser-Busch InBev (6)

Budweiser (4)

Start typing an advertiser or brand

RANK

FAV

STAR RATING

Spike Rating

Fluency

1ST AIRED  
LAST AIRED


SPEND


Whassup Bud (US) :60'

Anheuser-Busch InBev

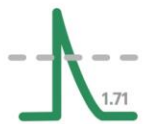
Budweiser

27






4.2




1.71



23 Apr 20

28 Apr 20

SPEND COMING SOON





Checking In, That's Whassup (US) :90'

Anheuser-Busch InBev

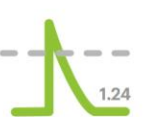
Budweiser

95






3.1




1.24



23 Apr 20

24 Apr 20

SPEND COMING SOON





Strong Team :30'

Anheuser-Busch InBev


Budweiser

106






3.0




1.17



27 Mar 20

4 Apr 20

SPEND COMING SOON





One Team :77'

Anheuser-Busch InBev


Budweiser

204






2.1




1.38



24 Mar 20

27 Mar 20

SPEND COMING SOON



1

System1

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28

# The COVID-19 crisis calls for right brain thinking in your advertising

1. This is a time of heightened empathy, of shared experience, of alertness and vigilance
2. If you can take advantage of increased share of voice and show right-brain sensibility in your work, this is the time to build your brand for the future because ads are connecting well.
3. Brands can most likely use their campaigns pre-dating the crisis – their ability to connect has not changed
4. New ads are connecting better today than new ads a year ago. On the whole, the same is true of COVID-19 tactical response ads but do maintain your distinctiveness.
5. The strength of COVID-19 ads varies enormously by brand – some brands' work connects better than pre-existing campaigns, others would do better to air what they had before.
6. Ads that connect with the past, play out in parallel brand worlds, with characters and betweenness and a local sense of place and community will work well today. Mechanistic, left brain features will connect less well than ever today.
7. Check how ads are connecting with System1's [testyourad.com](https://testyourad.com) service: free access to your category and our COVID ad category for a month and one free test

# Plan of Action

**Does my ad still connect in today's world?**

The likelihood is that it does, but ask yourself where your work falls – is it empathic or mechanistic? You can always re-test your ad if you aren't sure.

**And if I need to develop a new campaign?**

Consider the type of work that is connecting better today, but remain distinctive. Show how you are being uniquely helpful and draw on the brand's promise. Consider re-visiting or re-working ads from the past, like Budweiser have.

**How can I insure myself against this problem in the future?**

Consider long-running (Fluent) devices – characters and scenarios that might live in a slightly parallel brand world. They deliver longer and broader effects, and provide a kind of insurance policy for this kind of 'black swan' event.



[system1group.com/coronavirus](https://system1group.com/coronavirus)

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