

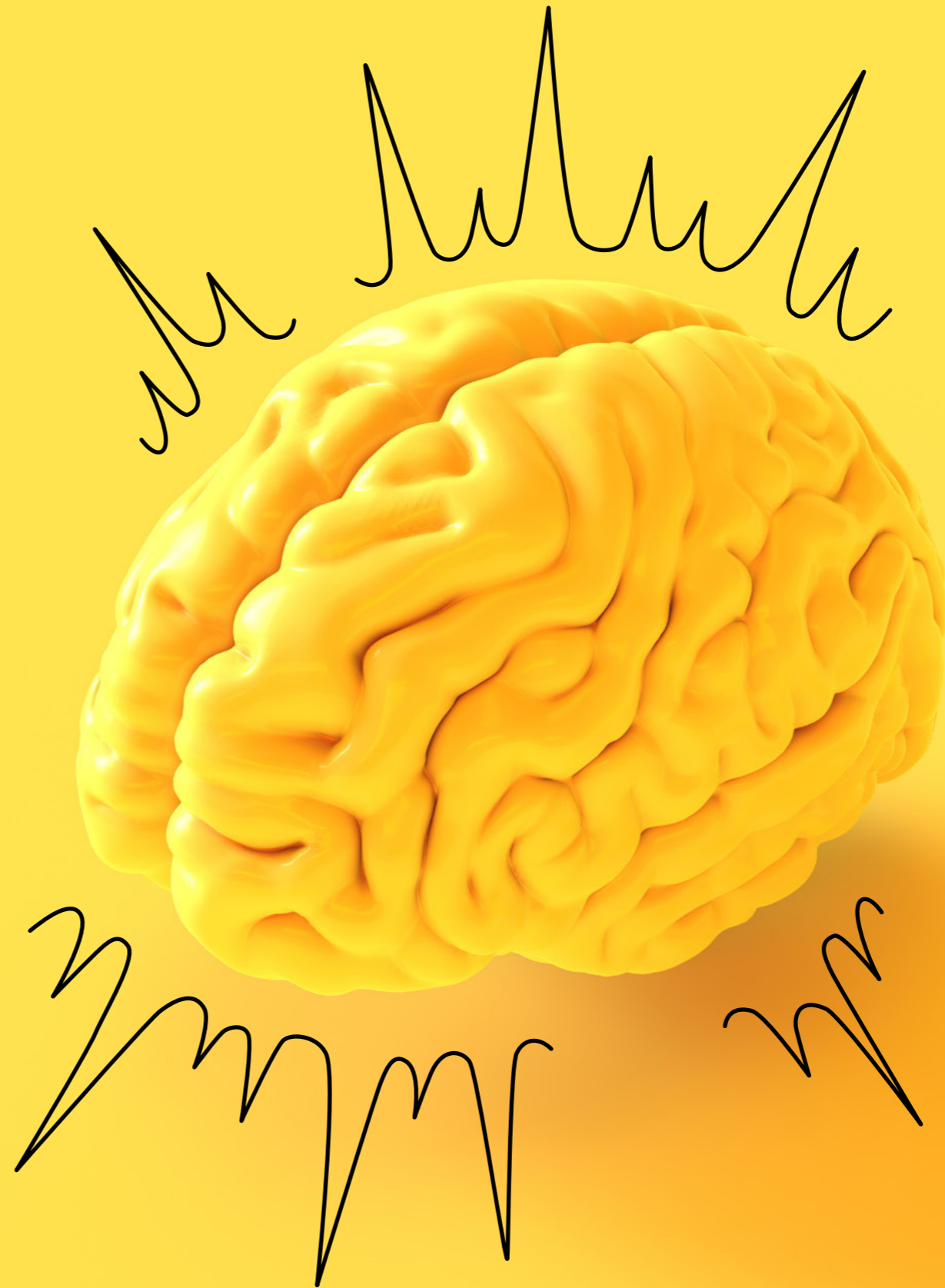
Sharp

**BRAND
PERFORMANCE**

BE HUMAN GET AHEAD

Supercharge your B2B brand

FREE YOUR GOOD

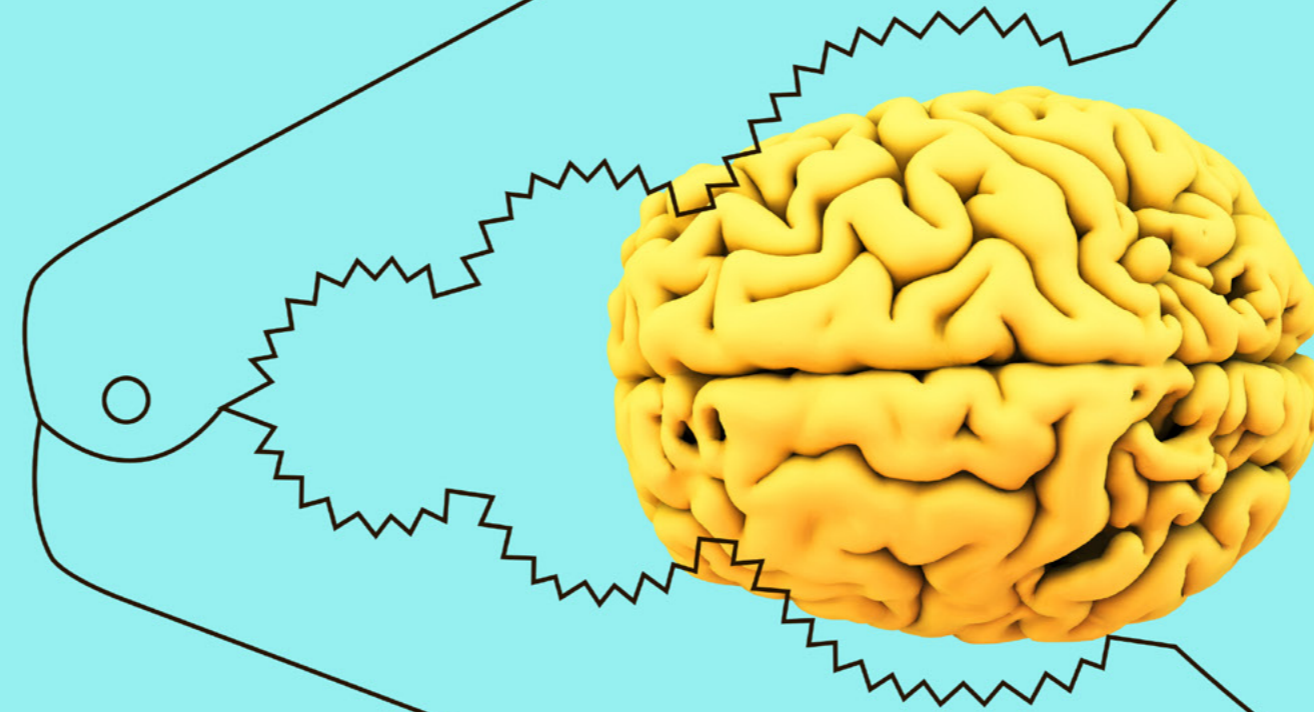


Certified

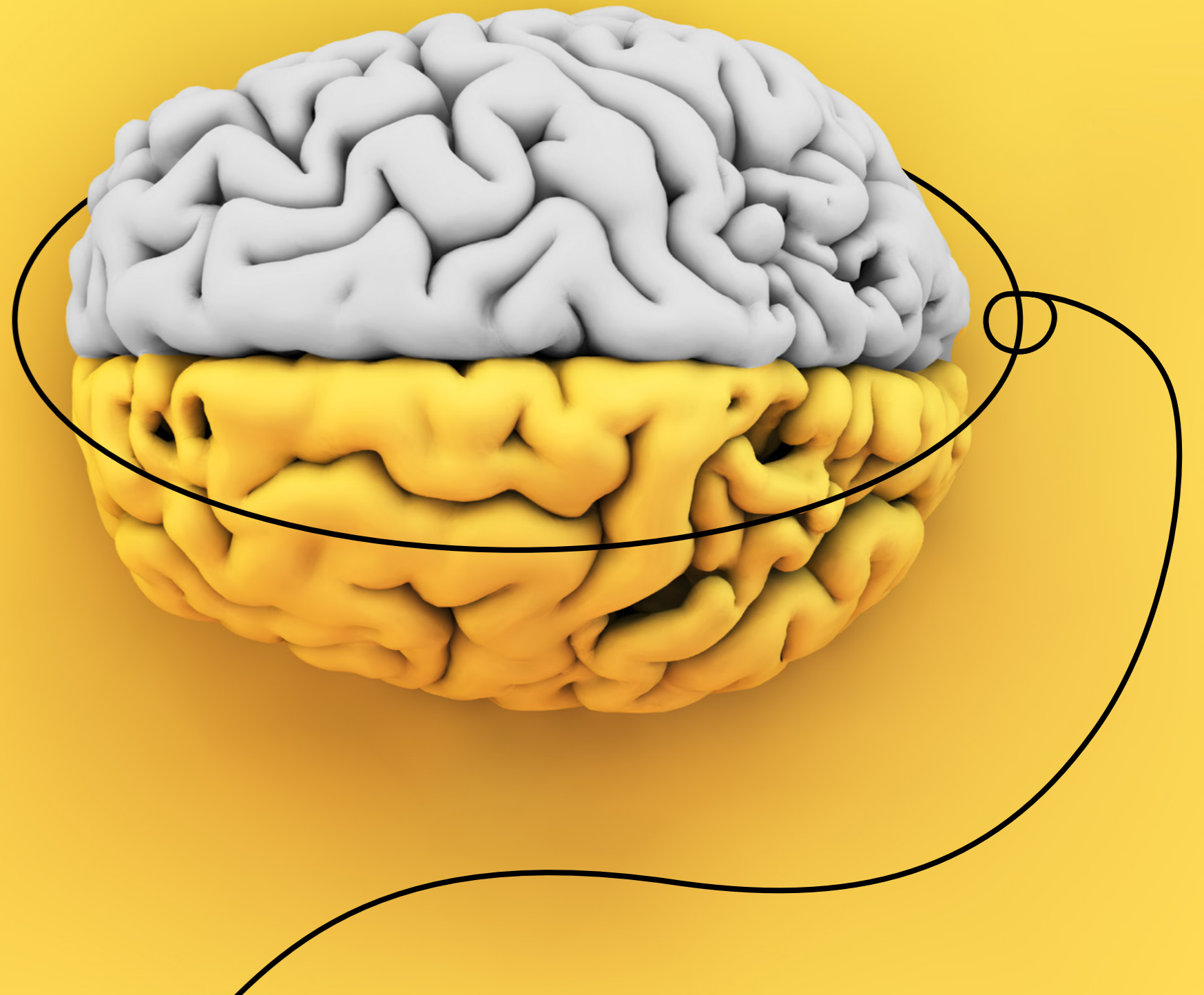


Corporation

In a world of AI, fast-paced digital transformation and challenging global economics, the secret weapon B2B brands possess but rarely harness is their human edge. In this white paper, we examine why and look at how you can get ahead.



**3 WAYS TO
TRANSFORM
YOUR 2024
AND BEYOND**



1. BRING BRAND AND PERFORMANCE BACK INTO BALANCE



Now more than ever, brands are under pressure to perform.

[LinkedIn research](#) reports that as many as 76% of CMOs globally have felt pressure to drive short-term ROI, pushing them to focus purely on performance activity.

Performance activity, however, is typically much more rational than brand activity, which instead seeks to connect emotionally with its audience.

Of course, tactical, short-term acquisition activity has its place when bolstered by longer-term brand-building activity, which nurtures a pipeline of future buyers and gets your brand front-of-mind within this pool. Mental availability (not to be confused with brand awareness) is also a critical

concept in B2B, as research from the [Ehrenberg-Bass Institute](#) highlighted in 2021. High mental availability – when a person has a high awareness of the brand, what it does and what it stands for – makes people far more likely to buy in B2B contexts, a finding that makes irrefutable sense.

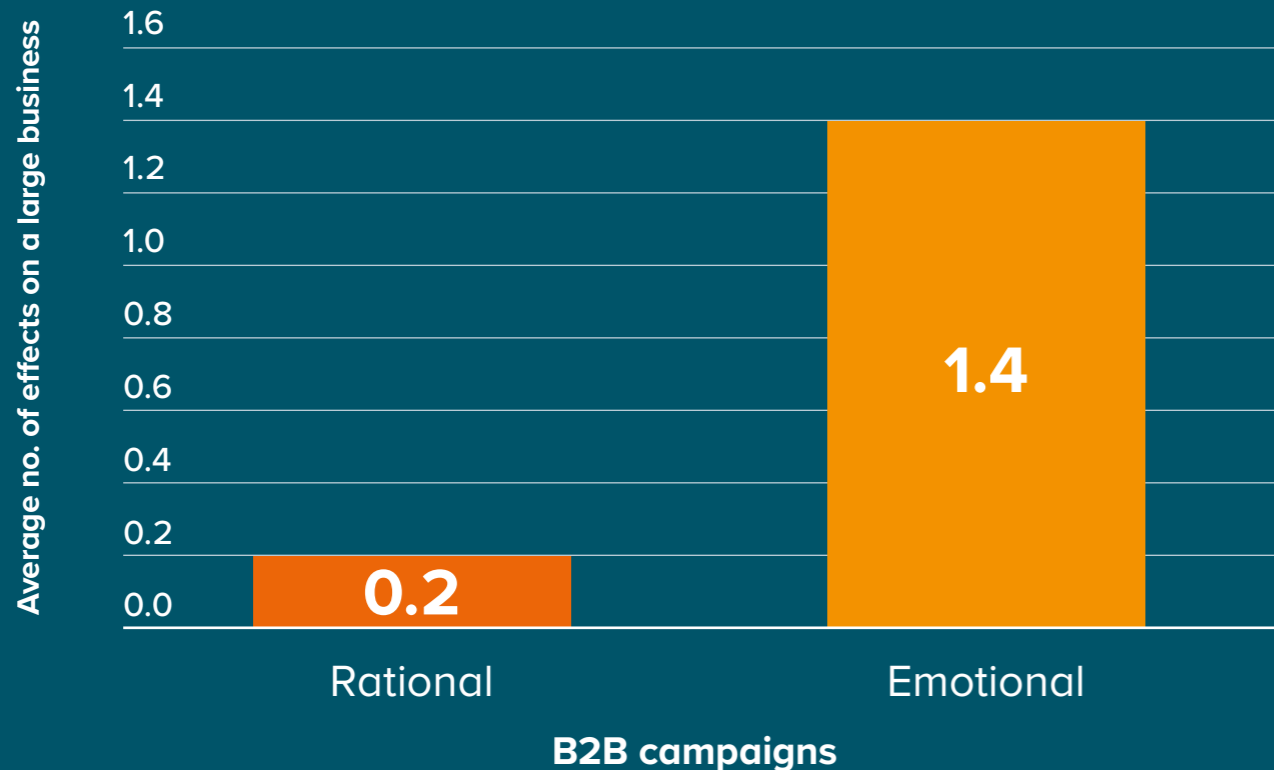
Leading advertising effectiveness experts, **Binet and Field** looked at 10 years of campaign data and suggest that the ‘sweet spot’ for B2B brand vs

performance spend is close to 50/50.

So, marketers who thrive in 2024 and beyond will ensure they are equally weighting brand and performance activity by connecting emotionally and rationally with their B2B prospects.

2. THINK EMOTIONAL, NOT RATIONAL

Emotional Strategies Outperform in B2B



It seems obvious, but if you're not already doing this, then this is the year to ensure that your B2B brand resonates on an authentic, human and emotional level with your buyers. After all, your buyers are people, not corporations.

Taking insights from 10 years of IPA Effectiveness Data (1998-2018) in the B2B category i.e. entries that could 'successfully prove that their communications activity paid back', Binet and Field found that emotional strategies clearly outperform in the long term.

In addition, a recent report from the **B2B Institute** found that decision-making in B2B is marginally more rational than B2C – despite the assumption of it being far greater.

According to Binet and Field, rational messaging is effective for shorter-term performance activity because active buyers find more functional product/service messages useful. However, non-buyers (i.e. up to 95% of the pipeline) are not interested in rational information.

So, they either let product messages pass or quickly forget them. That's not to say that we should think of it as a dichotomy.

An effective B2B campaign should be based on real human insight (a truth) and deliver a core message via an idea that's **distinctive, ownable and compelling**. This same human idea should also be able to carry rational sales messages, strong CTAs and drive response under its umbrella – simultaneously doing two jobs.

Yes, emotional connection is the secret ingredient that supercharges brand and performance. This is further evident from last year's B2B category winners at The Drum Awards:

“Creativity in B2B marketing has reached a high point. In recent years, The Drum Awards for B2B highlighted the best of the best and this year's entries and winners took things to new levels, combining emotional impact with clear, demonstrable response.”

– The Drum, 2023

You don't need a super-sized budget to deliver human ideas that really work – we'll explore this more in the next section.

Here are two examples of where real human insights led to big, award worthy and effective B2B brand campaigns.

MAERSK

“Discover New Paths”

Redefining a brand narrative to secure a global leader positioning.

Maersk's aim: reposition from a shipping giant to a global logistics leader.

How did they achieve this? A new, insight-led brand campaign 'Discover New Paths' – featuring a client who is expertly guided by Maersk as they navigate an Indiana Jones-style quest.

The insight: for clients, finding new ways through global logistics routes can be as difficult and complex as discovering an old forgotten kingdom.

The core message: 'With Maersk, there's always a way forward'.

The results: the campaign successfully shifted Maersk's perception, earning recognition as a leader in Gartner's Magic Quadrants and inclusion in Time Magazine's influential companies list.



WORKDAY

“Be a Finance and HR rock star”

A decidedly successful, human approach for a Finance & HR Planning system.

Workday's aim: disrupt the B2B conversation, extending awareness beyond just high-level executives to a broader audience.

The foundation of the campaign?

A simple human insight-led phrase brought to life through a humorous TVC showcasing famous rock icons including Ozzy Osborne and Billy Idol who share anecdotes highlighting the contrast between the corporate world and the true life of a rock star.

The insight: amongst the audience, being called a 'rock star' is loved as a compliment in US corporate settings.

The core message: 'Workday software empowers'.

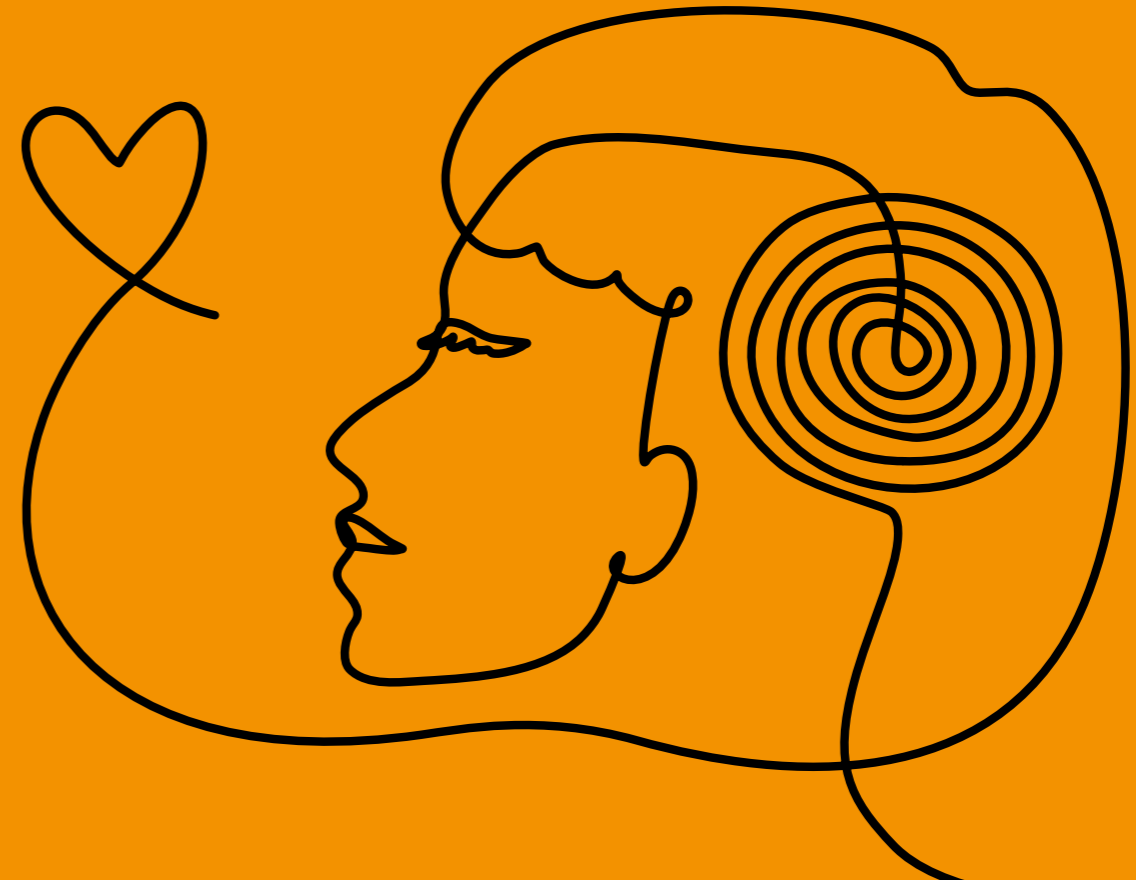
The results: the brand's first Super Bowl campaign generated widespread attention and buzz with 4.35 billion+ media impressions. On game day, organic social engagement reached 3.1 million+ engagements, 141 million+ impressions, and 10,000+ mentions. Most importantly, it also had a significant impact on brand familiarity, opinion and consideration to use Workday.

workday.

Be a Finance and HR rock star



3. CO-CREATE WITH YOUR AUDIENCE TO GENERATE HUMAN IDEAS THAT RESONATE



How can you generate human ideas that resonate in B2B settings – without needing to get Ozzy’s agent on the phone? How can you get close enough to your audience, move past personas and segments and reach the heart of what matters to them?

The answer lies in co-creation.

At SHARP, co-creation is the strategic foundation of our creative thinking. It’s more than just insight gathering, focus groups or research. It’s more than crowd sourcing too. It’s a collaborative process that engages B2B customers and stakeholders to directly shape marketing and brand outputs – getting you closer to the human insight, truly seeing through a customer lens.

When we develop B2B brands and campaigns, our strategy and creative teams don’t work in isolation. Instead, they work together with your brand’s customer audience to tackle a ‘problem’. The audience generates ideas, and then we turn those seeds of ideas into stand-out, compelling and profoundly human propositions and campaigns.

As pioneers in B2B and B2C co-creation, we have developed a full suite of bespoke tools and interactive exercises that power collaborative creativity. That said, we don’t use a cookie cutter approach. Each co-creation is unique to the client, challenge and context.

Read on to discover how we helped MPS and Barbour ABI find their human edge and get ahead through co-creation.

Medical
Protection



BEYOND INDEMNITY

Always there for you

Reaching out to an intelligent medical market

MPS is a leading global not-for-profit protection organisation for doctors and dentists. But in a category dominated by big players and complex offerings, the time-poor audience struggled to see the full value of a membership. We changed that. Working with medical professionals around the world, we unearthed the brand's one thing and co-created a series of global campaigns.

How we found the good

We discovered a pivotal insight from in-person co-creation sessions with current and potential members on three continents.

The primary insight: Healthcare professionals were unclear on the true worth of an MPS membership versus the competitor offering, and a one-size-fits-all approach wasn't going to work. The human-led proposition: **MPS is always by your side for every eventuality.**

Freeing the good

Taking direction from the insight, our strategic and creative teams developed a new global brand campaign, nuanced localised campaigns and devised a way to upweight the valuable risk prevention training which is available with every membership.

The good stuff

“Sharp are just a great agency to work with, and they really do deliver on strategy, creative and results. They push the boundaries, which is really important for me in terms of moving the brand on.”

Natalie Toft, Brand and Marketing Manager at MPS

Increase to a 50+ NPS score

'Reliable' as unprompted brand affiliation

83% agreement of delivery on brand promise

Global brand activity with a local treatment

Irish Myth-Busting Campaign

Channels: Press, Digital and Social

How do you smash myths and educate the audience about the reality of the brand's Irish offering? Our campaign challenged misconceptions perpetuated by private medical insurers whose offerings often left members high and dry, and showed how MPS are always by your side in Northern Ireland/ROI – with irrefutable facts that demonstrate the breadth of protection and the added value extras.

South African Membership Campaign

Channels: Press, Social and Digital

Every country has its own healthcare regulations. Given that medical indemnity is not mandatory in South Africa, both members and prospects needed to see that MPS is essential for navigating their everyday risk, in terms of breadth of cover, value and expertise. SHARP's distinctive and colourful campaign reassured clinicians that with MPS they had strength by their side in unpredictable times. Invaluable during uncertain COVID-19 pandemic.

Consultants Brand Campaign

Channels: Press, Social and Digital

An increase in consultant attrition to medical insurance providers challenged our intellect and creativity. Tackling the gap in member understanding of indemnity cover and its perceived value led us to a campaign that differentiated MPS as 'expertly different'. The bold, intelligent headlines combined with familiar medical and dental implements created genuine cut-through, both online and in specialist press.

Medical Protection logo

Protecting the frontline with

support that won't cut and run

- Committed to protecting you today, tomorrow and yesterday
- Investing in strengthening local medicolegal expertise
- Dedicated to supporting our 16,000 Irish healthcare professionals
- Support for unusual events

Some providers think they can abandon you. Our members know we'll always be there.

medicalprotection.org

Medical Protection logo

Protecting the frontline with

promises that aren't paper thin

- Advice for any eventuality your career may face
- Developing new Dublin office
- No claims limits
- Zero excess

Some providers may just talk the talk. Our members know we keep our word.

medicalprotection.org

Medical Protection logo

Protection with a greater span

Support that reaches beyond patient claims

Our protection reaches further than just patient claims. We're here to help you with an extensive range of issues including complaint assistance, media support, HPCSA procedures, legal representation and much more besides.

Contact us. We're here to help.

Strength by your side
medicalprotection.org

Medical Protection logo

The power to be adaptable

Protection that's flexible to your situation

With circumstances often beyond your control, our adaptable discretionary protection has the power to support you, even in more unusual situations – from full legal procedures to unwanted media attention.

Contact us. We're here to help.

Strength by your side
medicalprotection.org

Medical Protection logo

No mountain high enough

Protection with no limits

For over 125 years, we have supported our members with discretionary indemnity that allows for a wider range of occurrences and claims.

See how we're expertly different
medicalprotection.org

Medical Protection logo

Don't be written off

Protection that's personal

We are the only defence organisation that supports you in any personal conduct QMC inquiry. Whether the event is in-clinic or out of hours, we are there to support, advise and protect you.

See how we're expertly different
medicalprotection.org

Turning caution into confidence for construction

How we found the good

Virtual co-creation workshops with key stakeholders in the Construction sector revealed how to drive confidence in the sector, helping business bounce back during COVID-19.

The primary insight: The industry needed a rally cry to get back to work, and the combined power of the brand's portfolio allowed them to lead the call: positioning them as the critical construction intelligence partner for sales growth and COVID recovery.

Rebuilding Together

Barbour ABI's first lead generation campaign #REBUILDINGtogether brought 'Data with the human edge' to life.

1. Direct Mail

Targeted direct response comms for product manufacturers, including personalised Rebuilders Tea packs. To increase response, we offered a tailored incentive worth over £500.

2. Landing Page

The campaign landing page worked hard to build sign ups for the free consultancy.

3. Paid Social

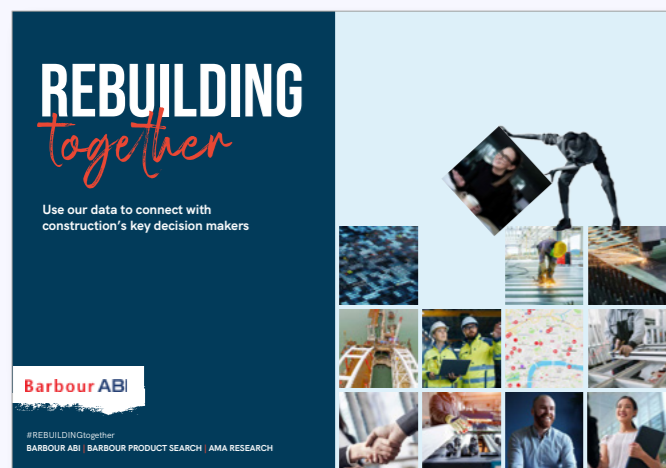
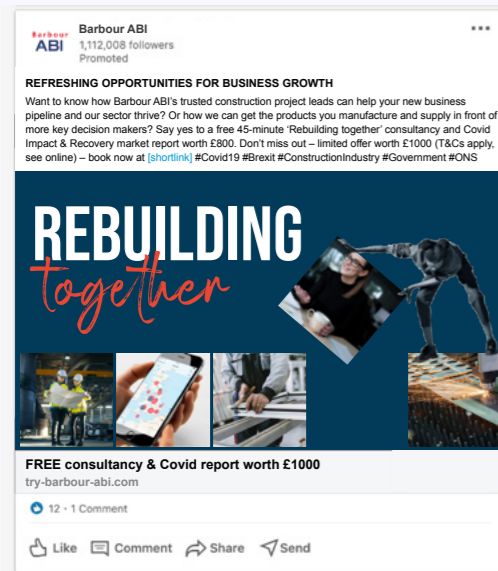
Our short, animated ad connected with sales and marketing directors on LinkedIn, promoting Barbour ABI's market-leading construction intelligence and sign up for the limited offer.

The good stuff

"We think of SHARP as a strategic extension to our own marketing team and that's the way we work together. The findings from our initial co-create sessions form a solid launchpad – packed with the proof points that our target market really care about."

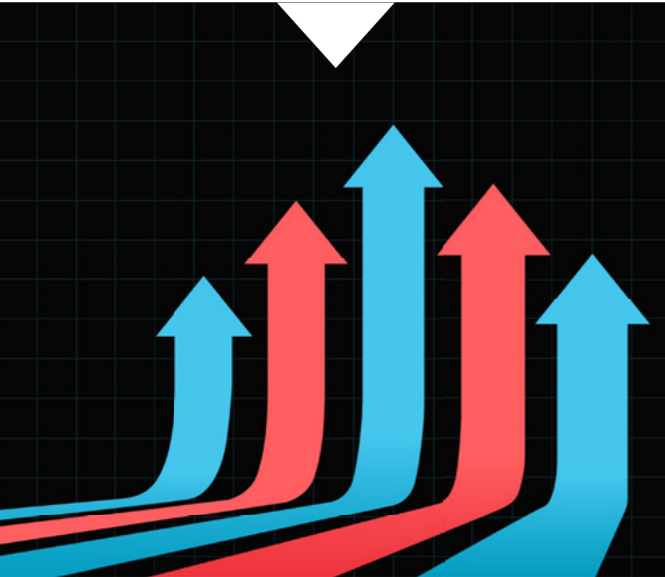
Kate Perrin, Marketing Director of Barbour ABI

40% increase on target client acquisitions



5 QUICK TAKEOUTS

1. Emotional strategies outperform in the long-term by **150%**



2. Co-creation builds **mental availability**

3. You can capture up to **95%** of your B2B pipeline with emotional messaging



4. Human insight-led brand work significantly **impacts consideration**



5. The sweet spot for B2B brand vs performance spend is close to **50/50**



Sharp

**BRAND
PERFORMANCE**

**WINNER
campaign
BEST PLACES TO WORK 2024**

Supercharge your brand with the
power of Co-Create by SHARP.

Get in touch today:

thesharpagency.co.uk

richard@thesharpagency.co.uk

B2B brands we've worked with

MPS | 

Barbour ABI

Lonza

GRIPPLE
Change the game

officeangels
AN Adecco BRAND

ZERON
more power to the planet

 **Cambrex**

activpayroll

 **vascular
perspectives**


vivup

JOHN HOGG
Chemistry for a Brighter Future

**CROWD
CHARGE**

Oasys

BWH | Hotels

FREE YOUR GOOD

Certified



Corporation