



Don't panic. It's time for big creative ideas – emphasises VoxComm, the global alliance of agency associations.

Creativity in advertising is an important driver of business success. But, right now, there's a danger that brands ignore its potential as they look to make savings.

That would be a mistake because numerous success stories demonstrate just how powerful big creative ideas can be when brands build successful partnerships with agencies.

One major point in creativity's favour is the positive impact on profitability. "High performing, creatively-awarded campaigns are eight times more effective than their low performing peers in terms of the number of business effects they generate, and almost 16 times more likely to bring major profitability growth," says 2019's *The Crisis in Creative Effectiveness* report from the IPA.

Building on this theme, at the recent EffWorks Global 2022 event in London, effectiveness expert Les Binet called for a renewed focus on big creative thinking to keep consumers engaged with brands, and to maintain and grow profits.

"Creative is just as important as media, with outstanding creativity you can make your budget go about 11 times further," Binet said. He encouraged marketers and agencies to "do all the mathematical stuff" but above all to "harness the irrational, emotional, power of creativity to make your budgets go further, get a great agency on your side."

Recent examples support this argument. Marcel Marcondes, global chief marketing officer at AB InBev (which was named Creative Marketer of the Year at Cannes Lions 2022), [spoke at the recent Association of National Advertisers conference](#). He identified a strong link between the creative ideas that win the most-coveted ad industry awards for AB InBev brands, and growth: "The correlation that we have today is close to 80% between the brands that have been recognised, and the brands that are driving growth for the company."

Creativity leads to success

This insight from a major global business provides further evidence that big ideas from agencies help brands forward on the path to success, and it's also clear that businesses which build successful partnerships with their agencies have a better chance of progress.

The value of partnership in delivering step-changing ideas to businesses was highlighted in an analysis of the Deloitte report, [The Fourth Industrial Revolution is Here, Are You Ready?](#) This revealed that successful businesses, so-called "frontrunners", are more likely to enter into partnerships to accelerate innovation than their less high-achieving rivals, the "stragglers", in a category.

For example, 92% of frontrunners "frequently pursue partnerships to create new value for customers", compared to just 44% of stragglers, and 82% "frequently pursue partnerships to create a new business model for to disrupt their industry" against 18% of stragglers.

Not all marketers are "frontrunners". For instance, [the recent report from the World Federation of Advertisers, Clients and Creativity](#), looked at the role of the client and the part they play in tackling the potential decline of creativity in marketing and advertising.



The research identified a disconnect between a strong appreciation of the power of creativity, and the role it can play in their own business. Some 82% of 600-plus marketers globally identified creativity as marketing's most potent weapon. Yet, on the other hand, just 28% said they regard it as critical to the success of their business.

AB InBev's Marcondes is among those with a more progressive outlook. During his ANA presentation, he highlighted the importance of partnership, and praised an "elite squad" of agencies that are helping the company deliver big ideas that go beyond pure advertising and help it to deliver growth. For instance, [FCB Global's work on the 'Contract for Change' initiative](#) for Michelob Ultra, which involved an agreement to work with US farmers on increasing the proportion of organic farmland in the nation.

Looking beyond traditional ads

There's another key point here in that creativity involves looking far beyond traditional advertising, awareness and brand health. It must now be seen in a much broader context, and agencies are well placed to embrace this view because they're investing in technology, digital transformation, and all the complexities required to deliver seamless and cost-effective solutions. Joining up all the dots of customer engagement, right through to purchase.

As the Michelob example illustrates, agencies are also great partners when it comes to understanding the point of purpose, as well as purchase. Another prominent case is the involvement of the agency Dentsu Creative in a [UK initiative from Heinz, 'Operation Beanz'](#), which included support for the child nutrition charity Magic Breakfast on raising awareness of how hunger can affect disadvantaged school children.

The power of these creative platforms is delivered by agencies that draw on the benefit of their teams of creative thinkers with experience across multiple categories, brands and consumers. They're able to make lateral leaps and help brands to look beyond the bubble of their business to think about the complexities of today's audiences. Or, [in the words of Hélène Dusseaux](#), senior brand director at Procter & Gamble, to "have a really deep insight that sources a real human problem."

The pandemic brought agencies and clients together to unite against a common, global cause. Creating a spirit of togetherness against adversity. Let's not lose sight of this. Now that businesses are facing big, new and disparate challenges, the creativity supplied by their agency partners has never been more important.

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About VoxComm

Established in 2020, VoxComm is the new global voice for agencies, championing the value that agencies bring to their clients. With more than 35 national trade associations from around the globe, VoxComm stands for the power of commercial creativity in all its forms – across strategy, ideas,



content and media – as a proven lever for growth that businesses neglect at their peril. For more information, visit www.voxcomm.org.