



# Advertising Research – Earlier is Better

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**Ipsos ASI**  
The Advertising Research Specialists

**“ It’s the end of the world  
as we know it,  
and I feel fine...”**

– REM

**Martin Weigel, head of planning at Wieden+Kennedy, delivered the keynote address at “Nurturing Great Creative: Sowing the Seeds.”**

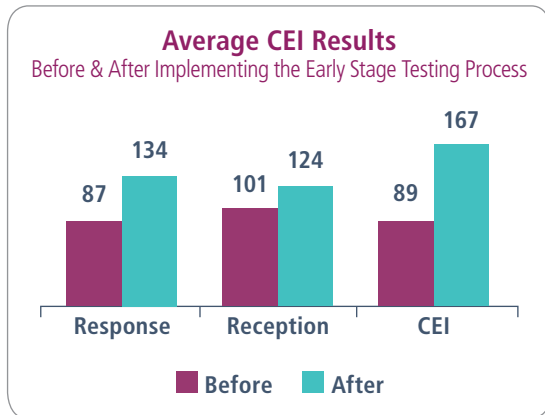
His message was resonant, and a few of his comments stayed with me:

- “Until [an ad] is made, you are researching creative hypotheses – not creative work.”
- “Most creative development research is strategic research done too late.”
- “The earlier research is conducted, the more valuable.”
- “Research is a means to understanding, not an insight.”

As an advertising researcher, this is not only refreshing but also empowering. It argues for strategic insight versus “go/no go” recommendations and “one-size-fits-all” approaches – reason enough to get me out of bed in the morning.

## Earlier is Better

This experience in testing early-stage strategies and advertising ideas has demonstrated that people do not need an ad to provide input into the creative development process. When advertisers test “creative hypotheses,” their understanding of what engages people is enhanced, providing fuel for further creative inspiration. The result is that they often save time and money while delivering better creative work.

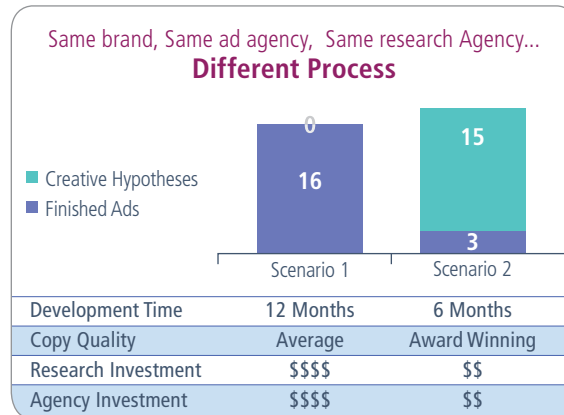


CEI was developed by Ipsos ASI to provide clients with a relative indicator of advertising effectiveness. As a combination of “response” and “reception,” the higher the CEI, the greater the potential for an ad to create a sales impact in response to ad spending (other things being equal).

Average CEI = 100; Above Average CEI = 130+

Response: measures if the ad increases brand resonance (sales, equity)

Reception: measures whether an ad leaves a branded impression on viewers



### A few additional tips on ensuring early stage research can benefit your brand:

1. Leverage **everything** that you know about your intended target. Read between the lines of previous research, social listening and your own experience to find the nuggets of understanding that may provide a map to untapped emotional territory.
2. Engage all stakeholders (i.e., decision makers) early on. Engage them as people to help develop the initial expressions of insights and ideas. There is no magic formula – you only have to be human.
3. Ensure that any insight is articulated in a simple, relatable way. The words chosen and the tonality conveyed, are extremely important. Then gauge how well the insight connects with people: Is it clear? Is it real and deep-seated? Is there tension that requires a release?
4. Allow people to describe how the brand can play a credible, meaningful role in addressing the insight before assuming how it will.
5. Then determine if the brand can potentially credibly connect before moving on to the next stages: Does it tap into the right areas of motivational focus? Are there barriers to the brand or category offering a “release” to the tension?

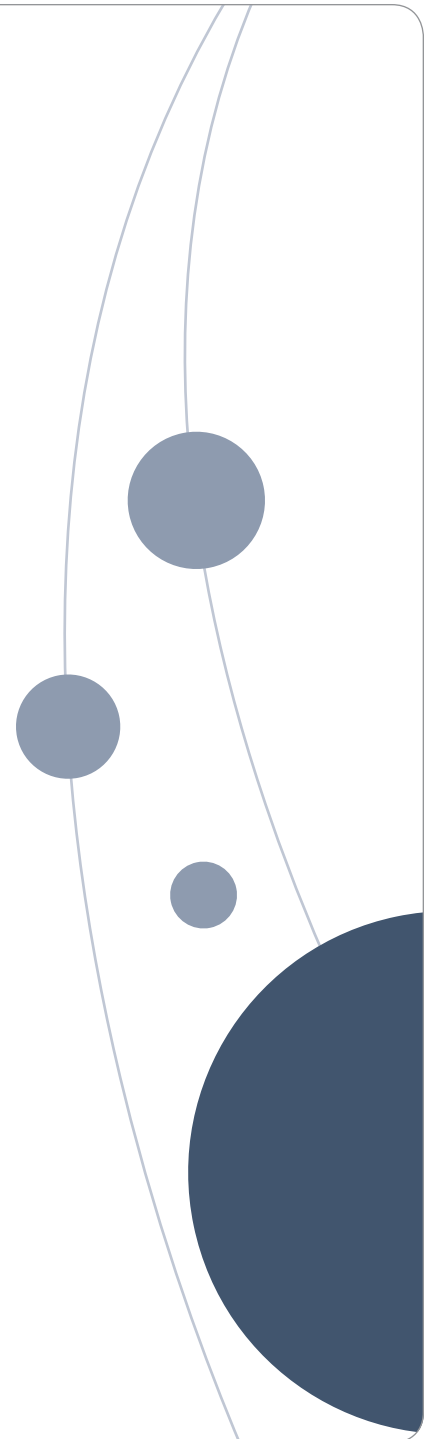
## Hold onto what Matters


Researching creative hypotheses and nurturing creative as it is being developed significantly improves advertisers' chances of airing great creative. Unfortunately, it is not a 100 percent guarantee.

As creative development and research progresses, it is critical to determine early what idea really matters to people and to hold on to it throughout. This is easily stated but not easily accomplished. In our experience, advertisers who embrace the strategic discipline of developing and aligning on a big idea for their brands (the credible connection between brand and insight that inspires a response) do not always get it right the first time.

More than half of the ideas we have tested during the past few years were unable to engage the intended audience or were not able to appropriately connect the insight and the brand. The primary reason is a lack of understanding as to what context facilitated a natural connection to the brand while still engaging the audience and provoking action. In other words, the idea did not hold on to what really mattered:

- The tension inherent in the insight, which worked to engage the audience, was lost.
- Or, the brand was simply dropped into the idea without thought as to its role.





Even when an advertiser has aligned on a big idea, there is still potential for something to be “lost in translation” while developing executions. This can happen for many reasons; some are easily controllable, others are not. What advertisers can control is the final execution so that their brands do not get overshadowed by a great storyline or tension. But ads based on big ideas can fall into the trap of showcasing the engaging insight while relegating the brand to a “sponsoring” role. As the most important in-market factor for failure of advertising to impact the brand is the lack of connection to the brand, this is not ideal. To prevent this, advertisers need to understand how the storyline and big idea connect intrinsically.

To ensure advertisers hold on to what matters, this method integrates measures of emotion and attachment called “connectors” into its pre-market solutions. This approach provides the understanding and confirmation that the magic is carried through the development process.

To support advertisers who seek to nurture great creative, we embrace Martin Weigel’s perspective. Time again we see the value of strategic research at the earliest stages because it provides a deeper understanding – and therefore inspiration for – the advertising development process. Knowing what to hold on to throughout means advertisers have an even stronger chance of great creative results.

## About Ipsos ASI

Ipsos ASI is a leading global research agency specializing in advertising and brand communications. Offering state-of-the-art research solutions that employ measures predictive of in-market performance, our research helps clients build stronger brands.

Our areas of expertise include all aspects of advertising development and in-market evaluation across traditional and emerging media. Ipsos ASI's goal is to help clients deliver the right message at the right time across the right media to deliver the best return for their brand.

The Ipsos ASI team of brand and communications research experts is a global community of specialists who are passionate about advertising. From concept development to production, from final execution and into post-implementation performance, we help inform client decisions at every stage of the process.

To learn more about Ipsos ASI, visit [www.ipsos.com/asi](http://www.ipsos.com/asi)

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