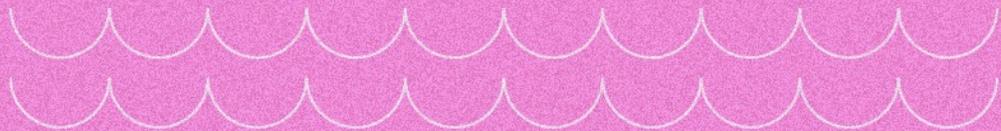
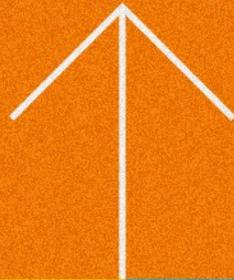


# The B2B Renaissance

Drivers of B2B  
Ad Effectiveness





## Our Goal:

To quantify the drivers of B2B ad performance among Business Decision Makers.

# The B2B Renaissance



## Beyond Functionality to Emotional Connection

There's a growing acknowledgment that establishing emotional connections with clients and stakeholders is crucial.



## Elevated Emphasis on Storytelling

B2B brands are moving beyond the purely functional aspects of their products or services.

# We Ran Some Experiments

We conducted controlled testing of 67 Sponsored Content Ads in the LinkedIn news feed to measure their effectiveness amongst Business Decision Makers. The ad formats comprised of Single Image Ads and Video Ads.

26

Brands

67

Ads

1,773

LinkedIn Users

3,024

# of Exposures

AD TYPES TESTED



## Single Image Ads

Display Ads are a Sponsored Content ad format on LinkedIn. These ads feature one image and are seamlessly integrated into the LinkedIn feed of targeted professionals, accessible on both desktop and mobile devices. They serve multiple purposes: generating leads, driving brand awareness, and nurturing relationships throughout the sales cycle.



## Video Ads

Video Ads are another Sponsored Content ad format on LinkedIn, offering a dynamic way to engage professional audiences at scale. These Video Ads are presented within the LinkedIn feed, providing captivating video experiences. Video Ads are versatile and support various objectives across the marketing funnel, catering to all stages of audience engagement.

# Our Method

## Participants

LinkedIn users were recruited from a nationally representative online survey panel.

### **Total**

Participants: n=1,773  
Exposures measured: n= 3,024

## Survey

Participants were surveyed to get to know them better, including their media habits, role at company and decision-making responsibilities at work.

## Ad Exposure

Participants were driven to controlled version of LinkedIn to explore their feed, which exactly mirrored the platform. Test or control ads were randomly served to the participants.

### **Test ads:**

Single Image Ads and Video Ads for test brand.

### **Control ads:**

Public service announcement.

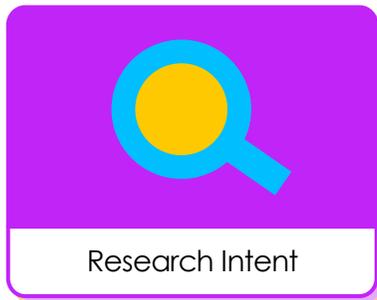
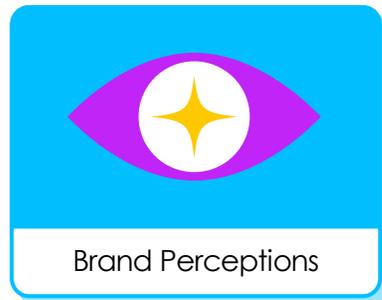
## Measurement

After exploring the feed participants were driven to a survey to measure traditional brand metrics and collect creative feedback.

# What are the Strongest Drivers of B2B Ads?

We used statistical modelling to quantify the strongest drivers of branding KPIs.

## KPIs MEASURED



## Creative attributes measured:

Had a lot of emotional appeal

Felt relatable

Had strong storytelling

Featured characters I connected with

Had a clear message

Was memorable

Shared a unique perspective

Felt refreshing

Made me feel something

Was creative

Was humorous

# What The Data Says About Creativity In B2B

# We know both display and video B2B ads work.

B2B ads have the power to improve brand opinions and drive consideration.

Video and display ads significantly increase brand KPIs.

## Impact of B2B Ads

Among Business Decision Makers

- Delta (absolute difference between test and control group)

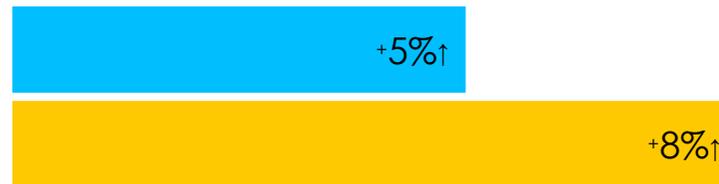
**AD** Display Ads

**▶** Video Ads

## Brand Favorability



## Research Intent



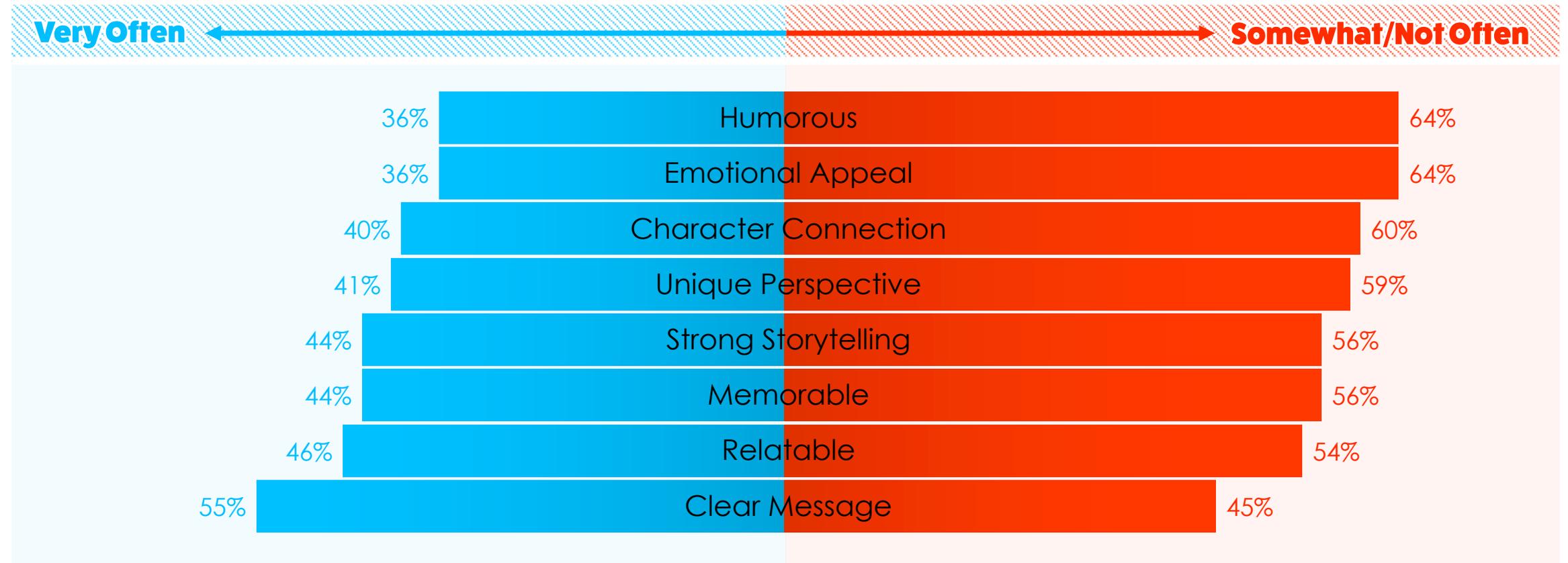
## Purchase Consideration (Product)



# However, Business Decision Makers are underwhelmed by the B2B ads they typically see.

B2B ads lack humor, emotional appeal, characters they can connect with, and a unique perspective.

## Perceptions of Typical B2B Ads Among Business Decision Makers



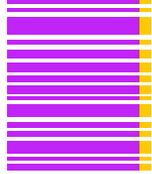
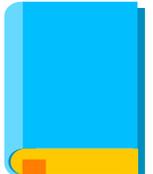
# No industry vertical is immune.

Business Decision Makers don't often see creativity in B2B ads, regardless of the vertical.

## Perceptions of Typical B2B Ads, by Vertical

Among Business Decision Makers

- % Somewhat/Not Often

							
	Auto	Retail	Education	Healthcare	Tech	Financial Services	Agency
Humorous	69%	67%	57%	62%	62%	59%	56%
Character connection	64%	59%	54%	56%	55%	51%	58%
Unique perspective	64%	56%	55%	53%	55%	51%	42%
Emotional appeal	60%	63%	66%	56%	54%	58%	61%
Memorable	61%	55%	48%	52%	57%	50%	52%
Relatable	49%	54%	54%	55%	49%	43%	49%
Clear message	55%	42%	47%	49%	46%	48%	41%
Strong storytelling	52%	56%	55%	49%	53%	53%	41%



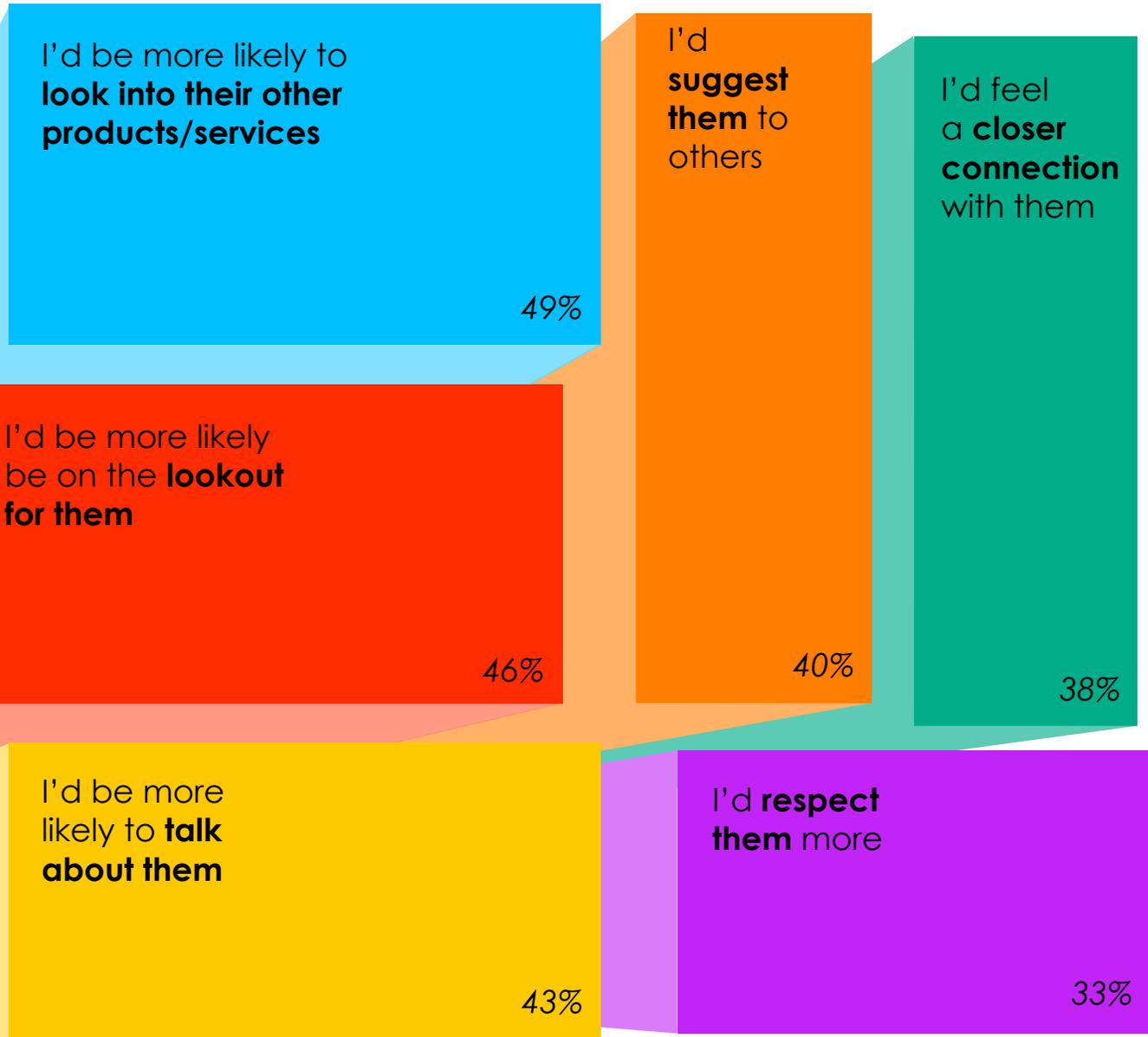
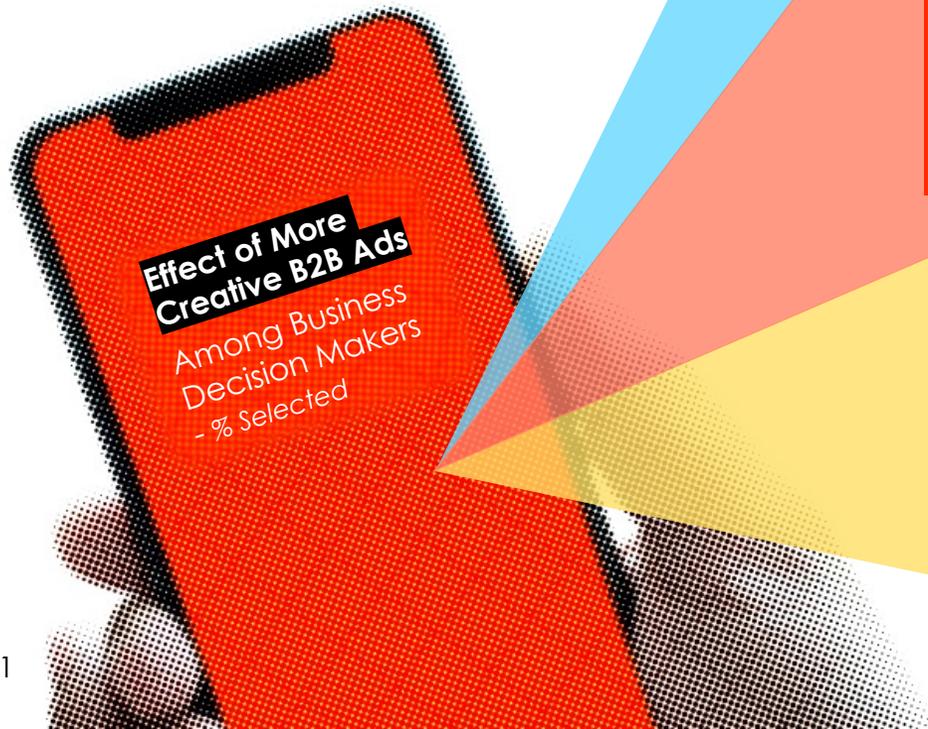
Business Decision Makers n = 2,032

Q: How often do you see ads for B2B (i.e., business-specific) products/professional services that...

Q: Which industry vertical do you currently work in? (select all that apply)

# Business Decision Makers say more creative ads would drive their interest & action.

More creative ads would encourage next steps and even forge personal connections with those who make the purchase decisions for their company.



Business Decision Makers n = 2,032  
Q: If you witnessed a company creating ads for business products/professional services that featured more creativity in their ads (e.g., humor, good storytelling), how would that impact your opinion of them, if at all? (select all that apply)

# It's not just what decision makers say – it's how they respond to advertising.

When ads are "creative", they work significantly harder for B2B brands.

## Impact of Perceived Creativity on Brand KPIs

Among Business Decision Makers

- Modelled Lift % (ratio between outcomes with and without ad creativity)

**+15%↑**

"Is a Brand I Feel Connected To"

**+23%↑**

"Is a Brand I Prefer"

**+34%↑**

Research Intent

**+40%↑**

Purchase Consideration (Brand)

**BUY**

When B2B ads are seen as "creative", Business Decision Makers are 40% more likely to consider purchasing the brand.

# When B2B ads are creative, they get more engagement.

Ads that are perceived as creative have higher view times and get more likes among Business Decision Makers.

## Impact of Perceived Creativity

Among Business Decision Makers  
- Scores for ads perceived as "creative"  
indexed to average ad scores

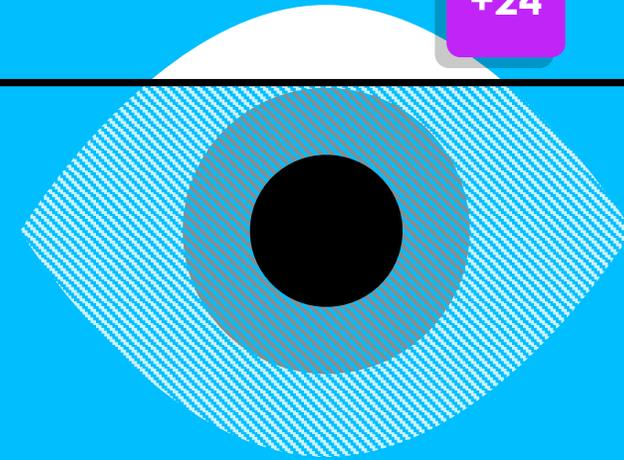
ABOVE

Indexed to Avg. (100)

# Time in View

(secs)

+24

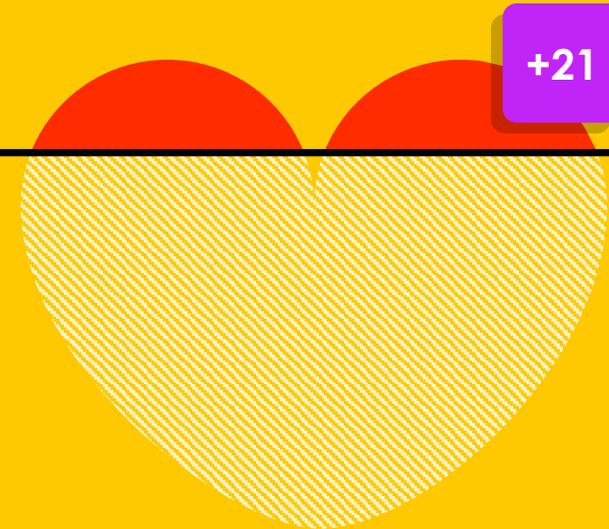


ABOVE

Indexed to Avg. (100)

# # of Likes

+21



# What To Know When Planning

# B2B brands have many avenues for creativity.

**Feedback from Business Decision Makers** on why promoted content stood out as “creative”.

## Humor

- The promoted content stood out as creative because it featured humorous scenarios and humorous storytelling.
- [The content] used humor to convey the message.

## Good visuals/colors

- The visuals stood out most. The ad was colorful and memorable.
- Set design and visuals overall looked eye catching.

## AI

- Having the ability to use AI as a platform to do anything that you would like to do creatively.
- To integrate AI with your company and improve the experience.

## Diversity

- It highlighted their diverse customer loyalty in a unique and engaging way.
- Different genders and race all come together for the same reason... promote sales from their company. Great for small companies.

## Animal presence

- I think having animals in the video promotion made it more compelling.
- The use of animals and nature instead of people in offices.

## Partnerships

- It was created because this is a good time of the year to use the NFL with your brand to grab attention, make it appealing and promote good storytelling.

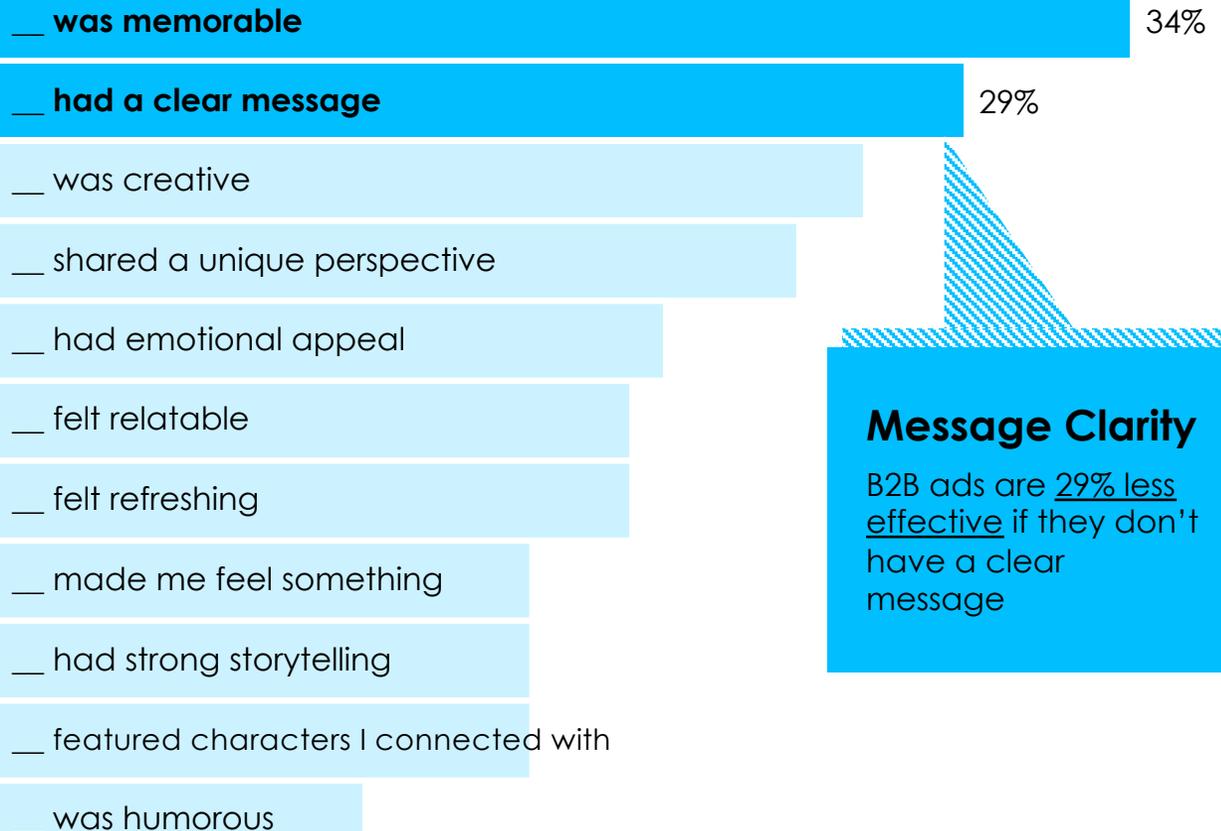
# For driving short term objectives, B2B brands should focus on message clarity.

While good storytelling has an impact on Research Intent, having a clear, memorable message is the strongest driver.

## Drivers of Research Intent

Among Business Decision Makers  
- Modelled Lift % (ratio between outcomes with and without ad creativity)

The ad \_\_\_\_\_ . [ Research Intent Drivers]



## Message Clarity

B2B ads are 29% less effective if they don't have a clear message

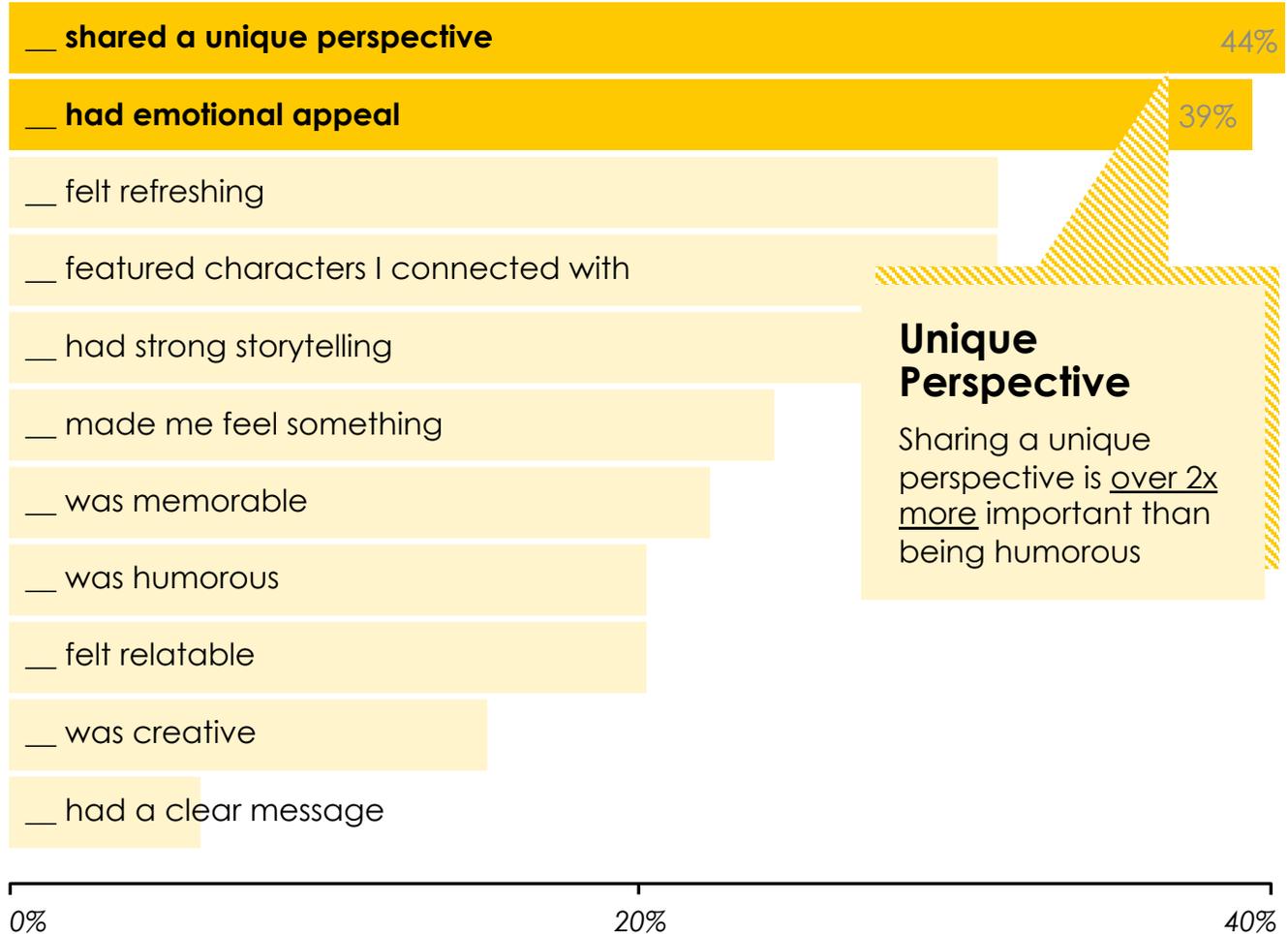
0% 20% 40%

For longer term growth, B2B ads should include an emotional component and share a unique perspective.

**Drivers of "Is a brand I feel connected to"**

Among Business Decision Makers  
 - Modelled Lift % (ratio between outcomes with and without ad creativity)

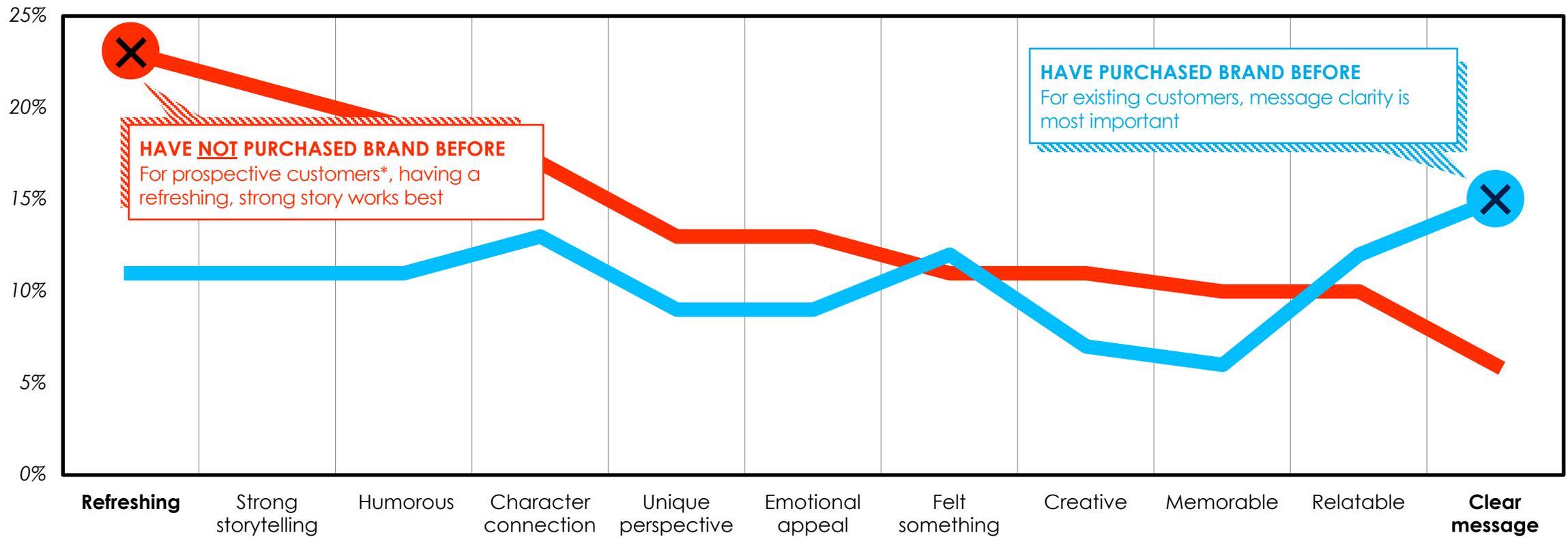
The ad \_\_\_\_\_. ["Is a brand I feel connected to"]



# B2B brands should consider shifting creative focus based on who they're trying to reach.

## Drivers of Research Intent

Among Business Decision Makers - Modelled Lift % (ratio between outcomes with and without ad creativity)



# Celebrities may not be the answer.

Celebrities didn't help or hurt brand KPIs. Simple human presence, however, amplifies performance.

## Impact of Celebrity Presence vs. Human Presence

Among Business Decision Makers  
- Modelled Lift % (ratio between outcomes with and without ad creativity)

"Is a brand that knows how to connect with me"

Unaided Recall Any Mention

Purchase Consideration (Product)

Ad has celebrity presence

Ad has human presence

0%

+10% ↑

0%

+8% ↑

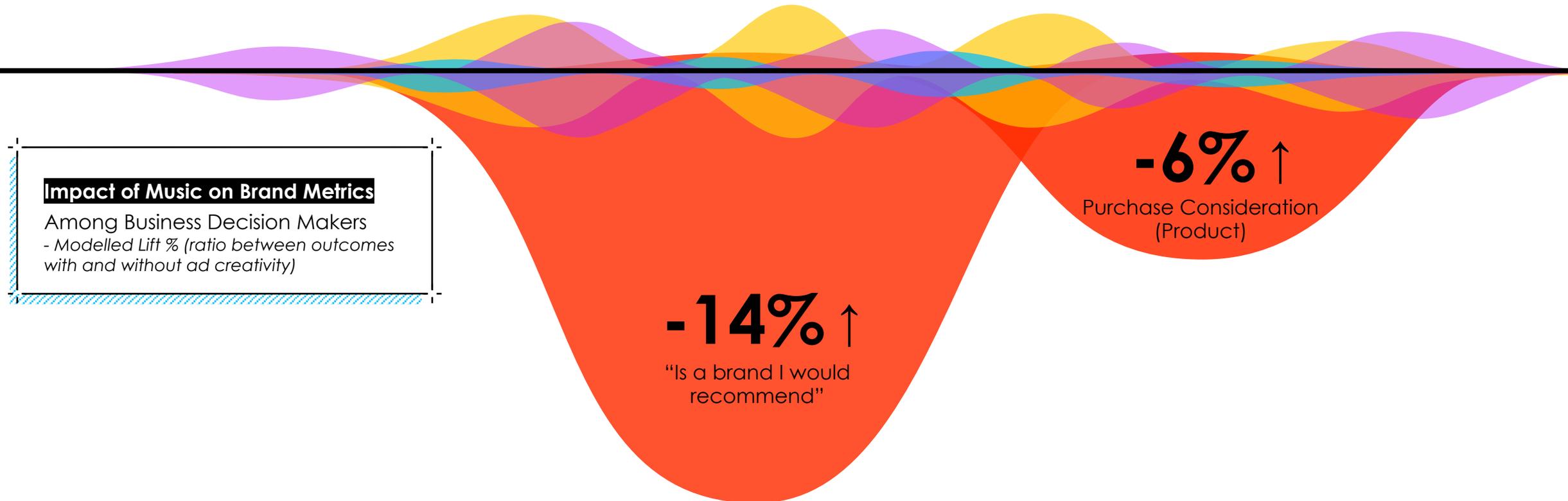
0%

+5% ↑

# Use caution with music.

Music is in the “ear” of the beholder so should be used with care. This is consistent with what MAGNA has seen in B2C research.

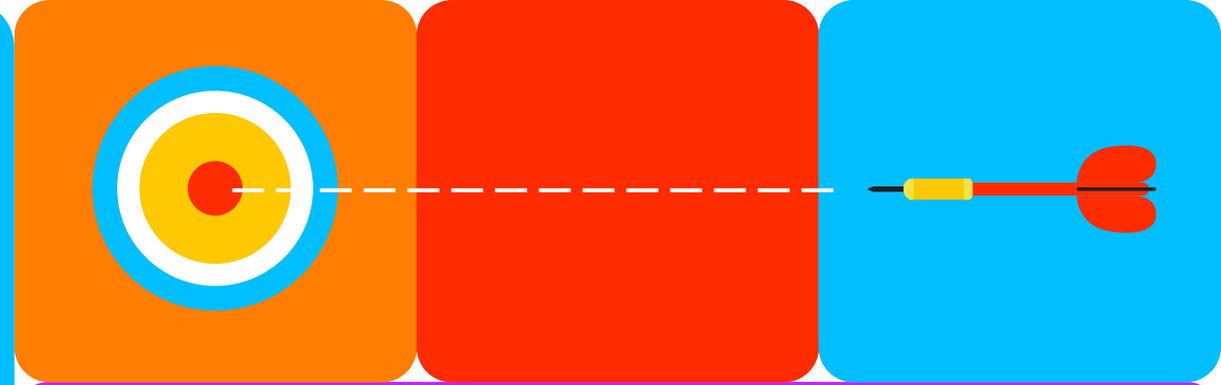
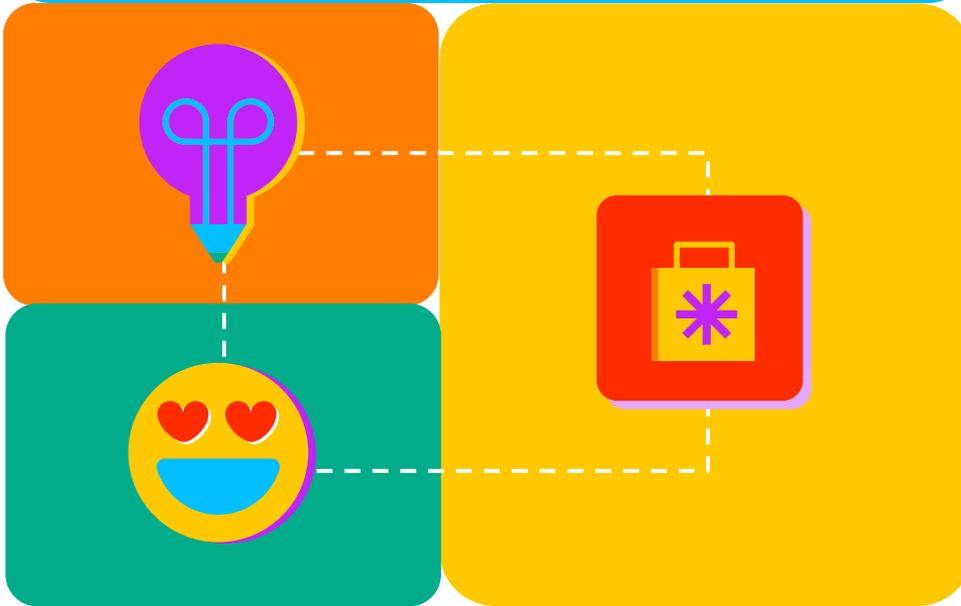
On the whole, inclusion of music led to declines in branding metrics.



# Implications

## Don't underestimate the power of creativity.

B2B advertising is just as much "people to people" advertising as B2C. Brands should put just as much effort into creativity and the emotional appearance of their B2B ads.



## Be strategic with creativity based on goals.

- To build long term brand growth through stronger personal connections, brands should communicate a unique perspective and focus on emotional appeal.
- When the objective is short term sales, prioritize clear, memorable messaging. Ensure a clean canvas without extra visual clutter.
- When marketing to prospective customers, brand storytelling should be the focus.
- When marketing to existing customers, clear concise messaging/call-to-action is important.



Thanks.  
Bye.