

‘SUBCONSCIOUS SEDUCTION’

The Hidden Power of Creativity in Advertising

Dr. Robert Heath

**Presentation to
INTERNET HUNGARY**

27th September 2016

What I will cover:

- **How advertising really builds brands**
- **How it influences us subconsciously**
- **How the Hidden Power of Creativity can be measured'**

Case Study – O2

UK Mobile Networks

2000.....

- 1. Orange**
- 2. T-Mobile**
- 3. Vodafone**
- 4. O2 (Cellnet)**



O2 Launch Campaign



What do YOU think?

- 1. IF THIS AD WAS SHOWN ON YOUR TV, HOW MUCH ATTENTION WOULD YOU GIVE IT?***
- 2. DID THIS AD TELL YOU ANYTHING THAT WOULD MAKE YOU RUSH OUT AND SIGN UP TO THE O2 NETWORK?***
- 3. DID THIS AD TELL YOU ANYTHING USEFUL?***
- 4. IS THIS AD PRETTY USELESS?***

Why do advertisers still use TV?

- 20% - 40% leave the room when ads come on
(*Soley 1984*)
- 66% do something else while watching TV
(*Clancey 1994*)
- 50% actively dislike TV ads (*Mittal 1994*)
- 100% consumers fast-forward ads in pre-recorded material (*Goetzel 2006*)

TV ADVERTISING IS A WASTE OF MONEY !!

TV is STILL the most effective advertising medium

ADWEEK

•June 9, 2015, 10:00 AM EDT [Television](#)

Why TV Is Still the Most Effective Advertising Medium

Key findings from MarketShare study By [Jason Lynch](#)



When it comes to driving sales, TV still dominates over all other advertising media. *Getty Images*

With competition from Netflix and a host of new digital video providers, the television industry has undergone seismic changes over the last five years. But one thing has remained constant: TV is still by far the most effective advertising medium.

UK Mobile Networks

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2005....

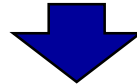
- 1. O2**
- 2. Orange**
- 3. Vodafone**
- 4. T-Mobile**



1. How does advertising build brands?

My background:

M.A. Mechanical Sciences



3 Years marketing at Unilever



21 Years advertising strategic planning



8 Years brand communication consultant



**14 Years Associate Professor of Advertising Theory
+ Creative Evaluation Consultant + Public Speaker**

How do most people in the industry think advertising works?

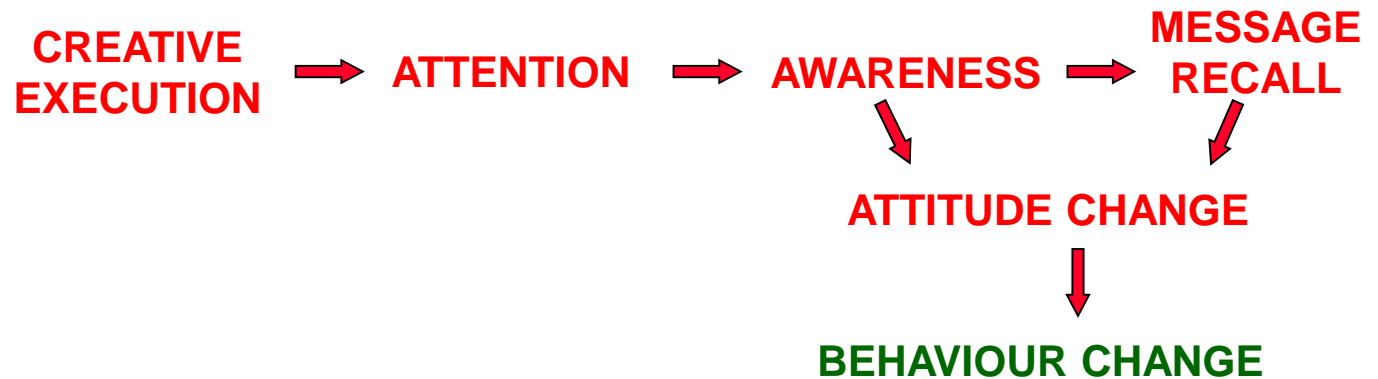
Most Clients

- Want a positive **attitude change** for their brand
- See lack of **message recall** the main problem
- See ad **awareness** as the solution
- See the **creative execution** as a 'necessary evil'

Most Ad Agencies

- Want fame & notoriety for their advertising
- See lack of **attention** as the main problem
- See the **creative execution** as the solution
- See **message recall** as a 'necessary evil'

**What do you get if you fit
all the red words together.....?**



‘PERSUASION’ MODEL OF ADVERTISING

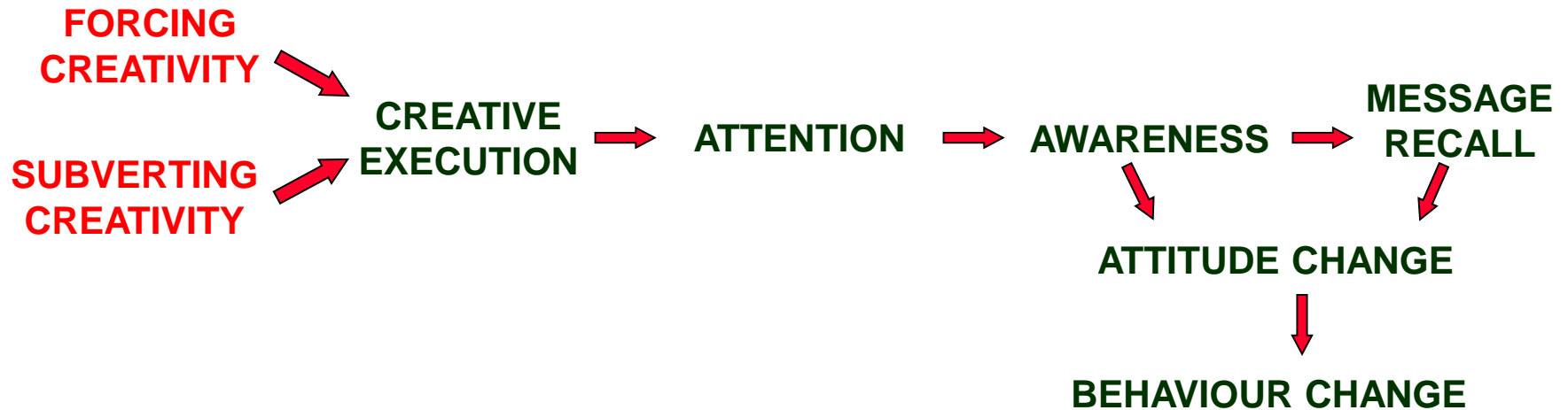
... and creativity is based on **emotion** ...

Copywriters' theory of advertising

(Arthur Kover 1995, JM)

*'Two ways (of using emotion) to break through emerged: **Subverting** ... slips past the guard of indifference and **Forcing** means jolting the viewer into paying attention'*

An expanded Persuasion Model



IS THIS MODEL VALID?

Some very influential people think not ...



‘... persuasion as such ... is not involved at all and it is a mistake to look for it...’

Herb Krugman 1965
Public Opinion Quarterly

‘Advertising’s main role is to reinforce feelings of satisfaction with brands ...’

Andrew Ehrenberg 1974
Journal of Advertising Research

Does Creativity get attention?

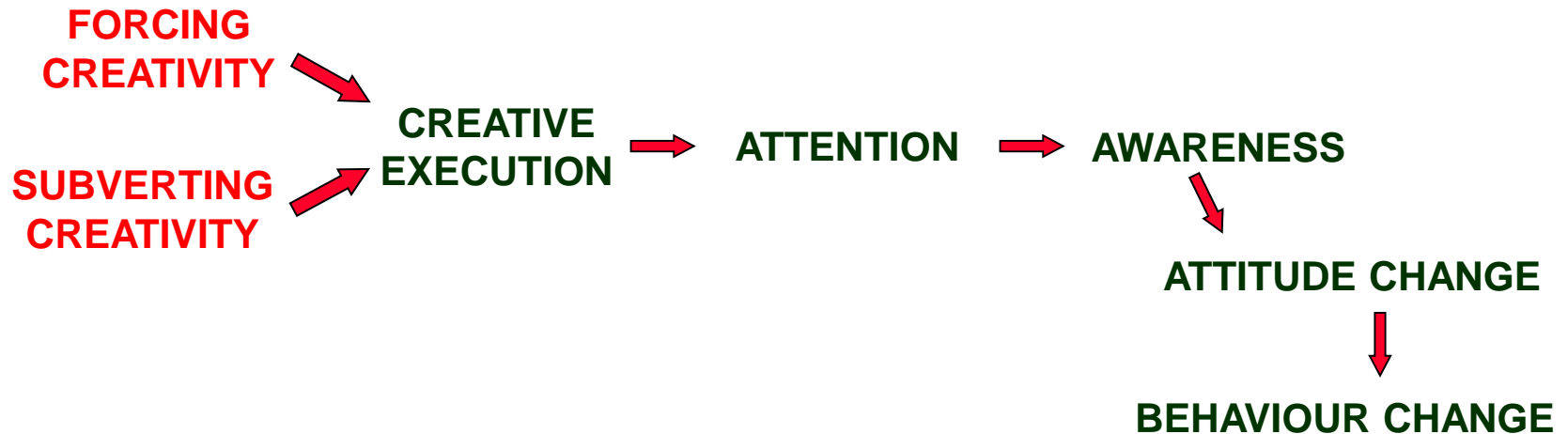
*MRS Conference, Brighton April 2003, audience
650 people*



- About 600 recalled an ad where Claudia Schiffer walks down stairs taking off her clothes
- About 550 knew it the ad was for Citroen Xsara
- Only **6** people could recall *why* she was taking her clothes off !

PERCEPTUAL FILTERING (Rose 1992)

Forcing Creativity increases attention but often results in message and brand being 'filtered out'



WHAT ABOUT 'SUBVERTING' CREATIVITY?

What does the industry *think* is the relationship between emotion and attention?

Du Plessis 2005 p.141, Heath's Error:

'All the evidence about 'emotional appeals in advertising' shows that their main role is to attract attention...'

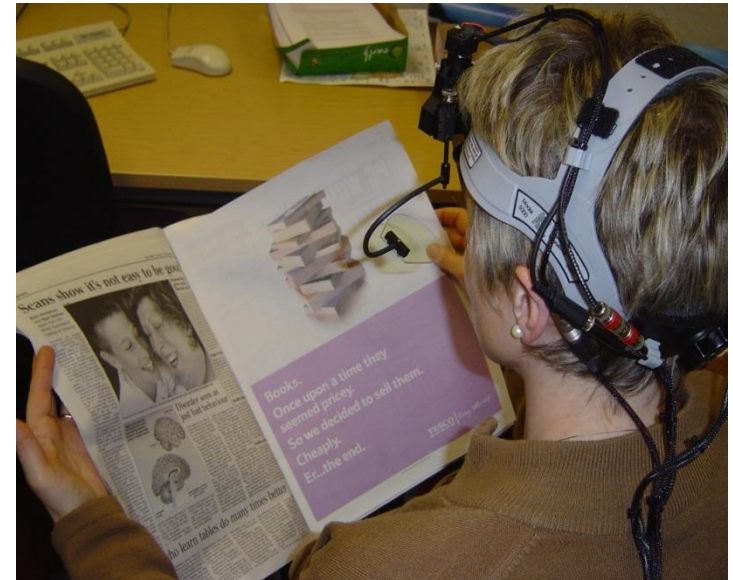
Graham Page 2005:

'... we pay more attention to emotionally powerful events'

**THIS HAS BEEN TESTED
EXPERIMENTALLY**

Real life viewing conditions and typical advertising are critical to success of experiment

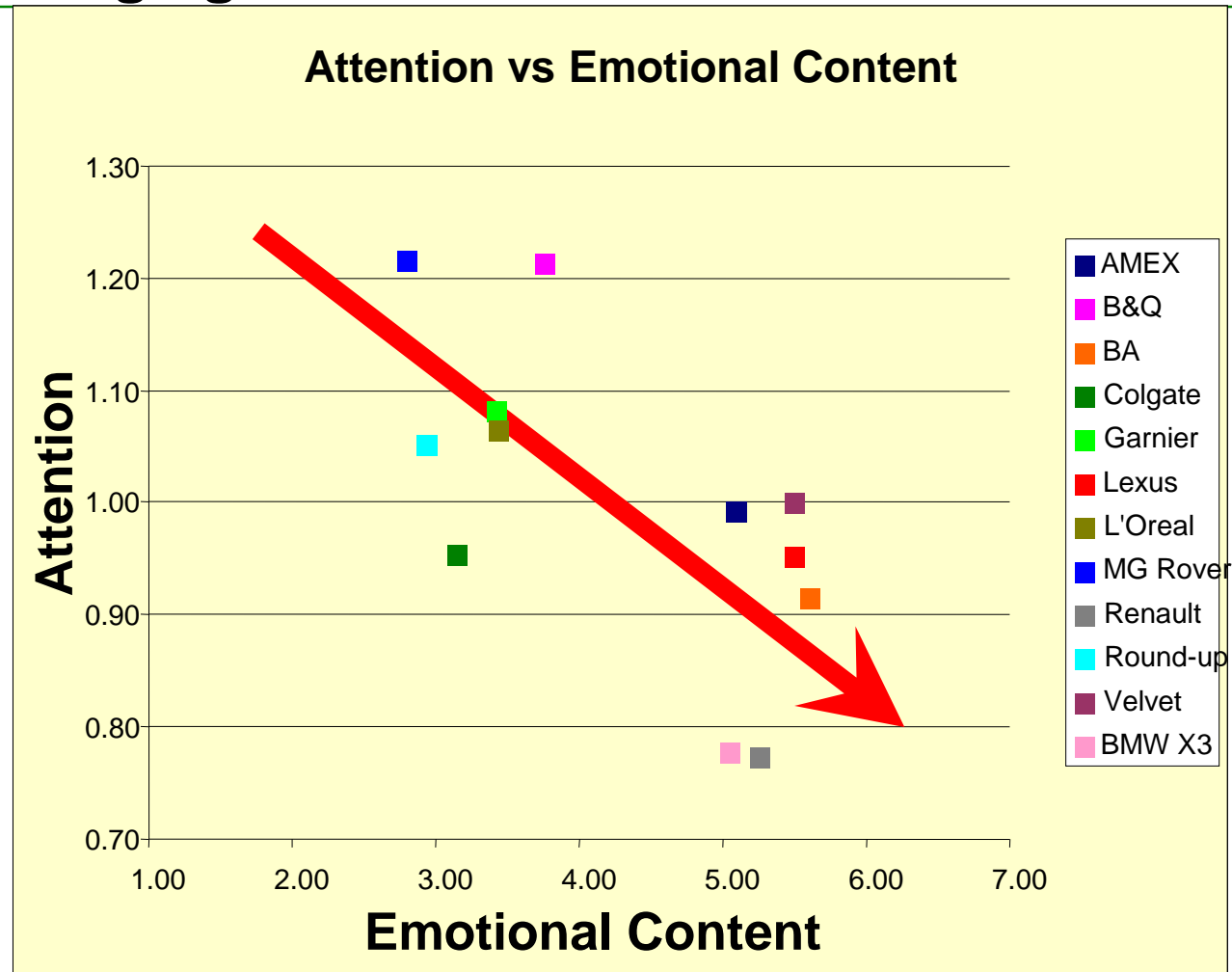
- *Motives of study disguised*
- *Natural setting*
- *Real media used*
- *Current on-air ads used*
- *Attention levels measured by **fixations per second** using a minimally invasive head-mounted eye camera*



“Eye movements are eminent indicators of visual attention”

Wedel & Pieters - Marketing Science 2000

Natural viewing environment test of typical (subverting) TV advertising against level of attention



Heath Nairn & Bottomley:

*‘The results of this experiment showed that high levels of emotive content were associated with an average **reduction** of about 20 percent in attention levels’*

TYPICAL SUBVERTING CREATIVITY DOES NOT INCREASE ATTENTION

This 'Persuasion' model doesn't work



Question: HOW DOES TV ADVERTISING INFLUENCE BRAND CHOICE IF IT DOESN'T GET HIGH ATTENTION?

2. How does advertising influence us subconsciously?

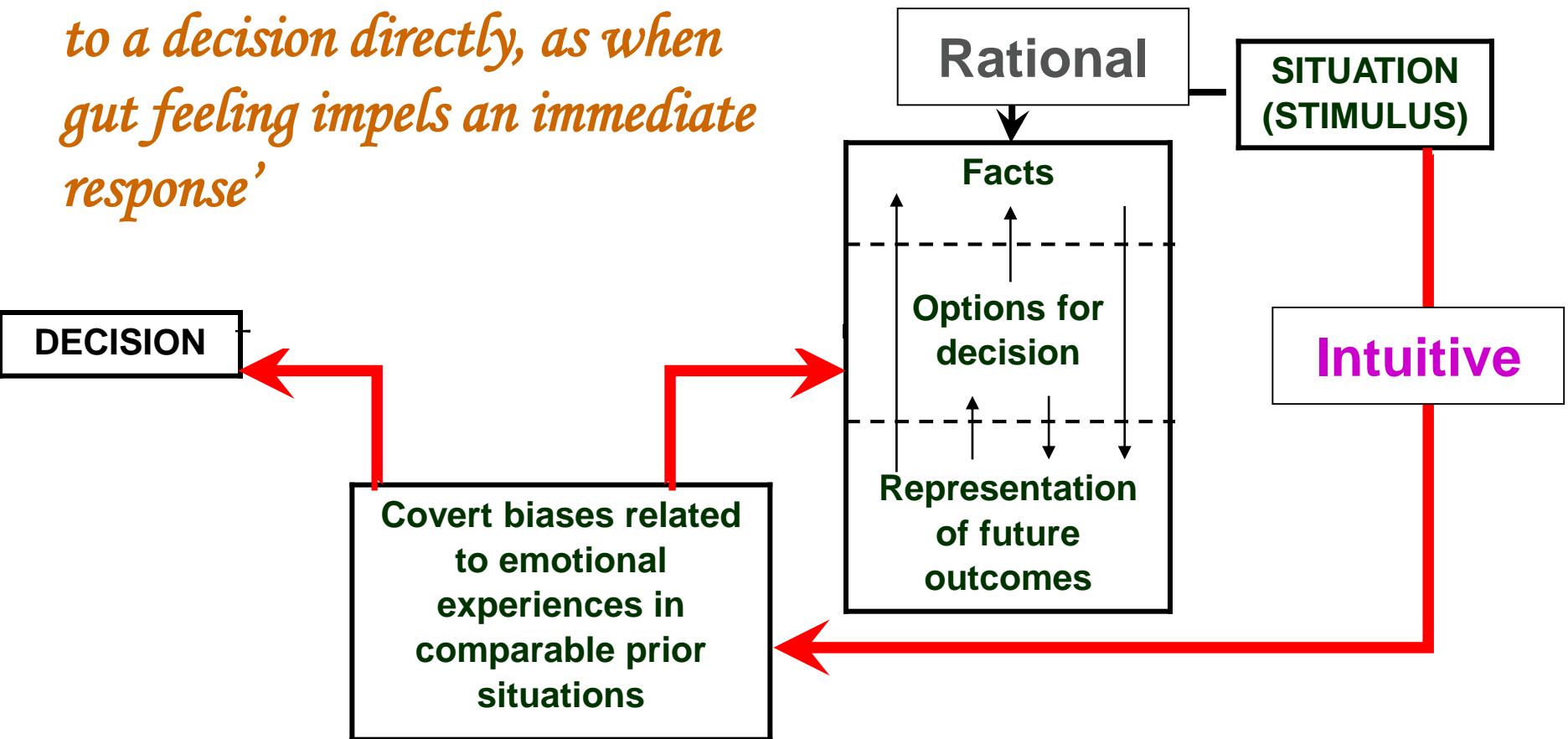
Answer: Creativity influences brand choice decisions in two other ways...



1) Emotion can act as a gatekeeper to rational decisions

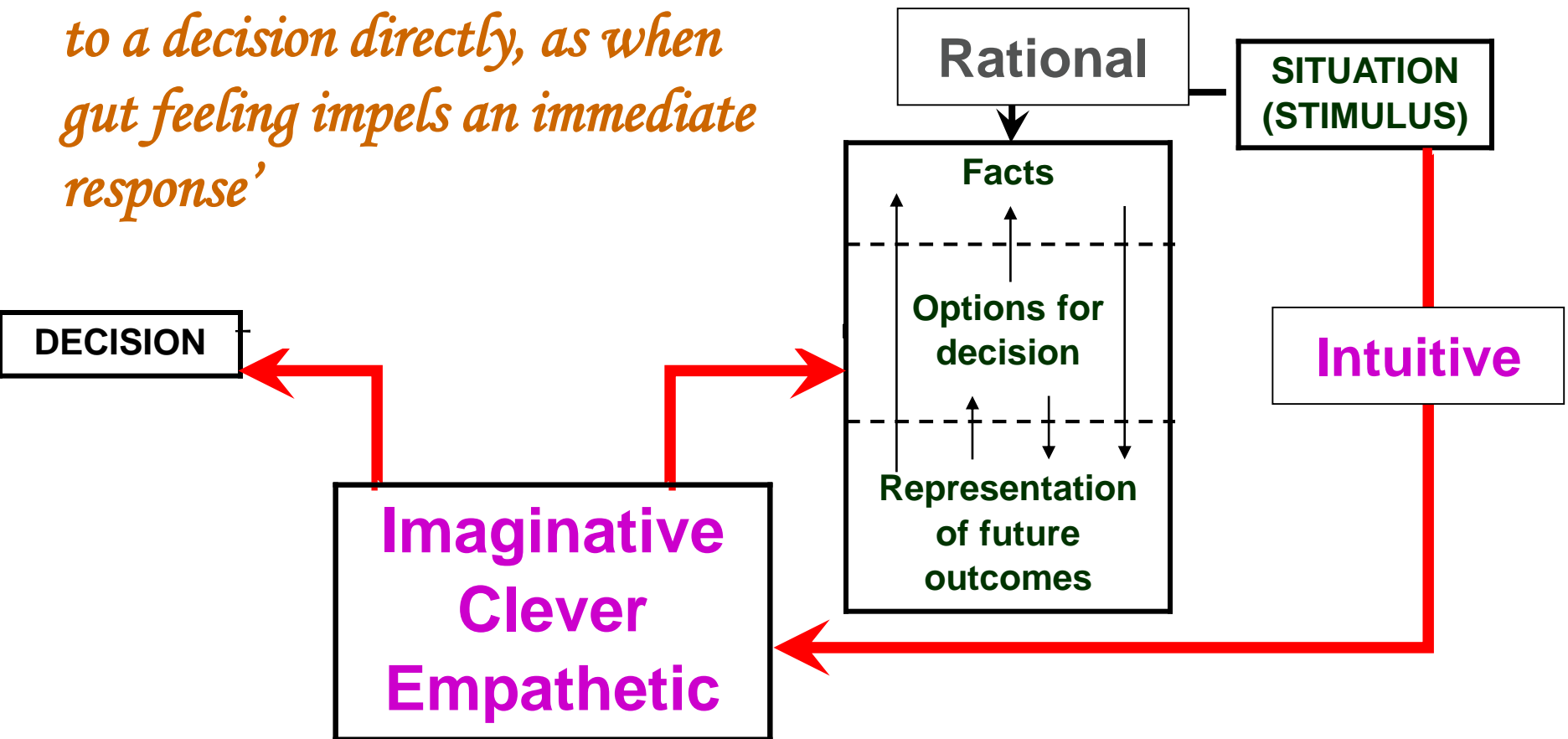
Antonio Damasio's 2003 Model of Decision-Making:

'... on occasion, path B can lead to a decision directly, as when gut feeling impels an immediate response'



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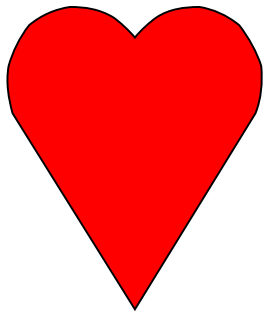
'... on occasion, path B can lead to a decision directly, as when gut feeling impels an immediate response'



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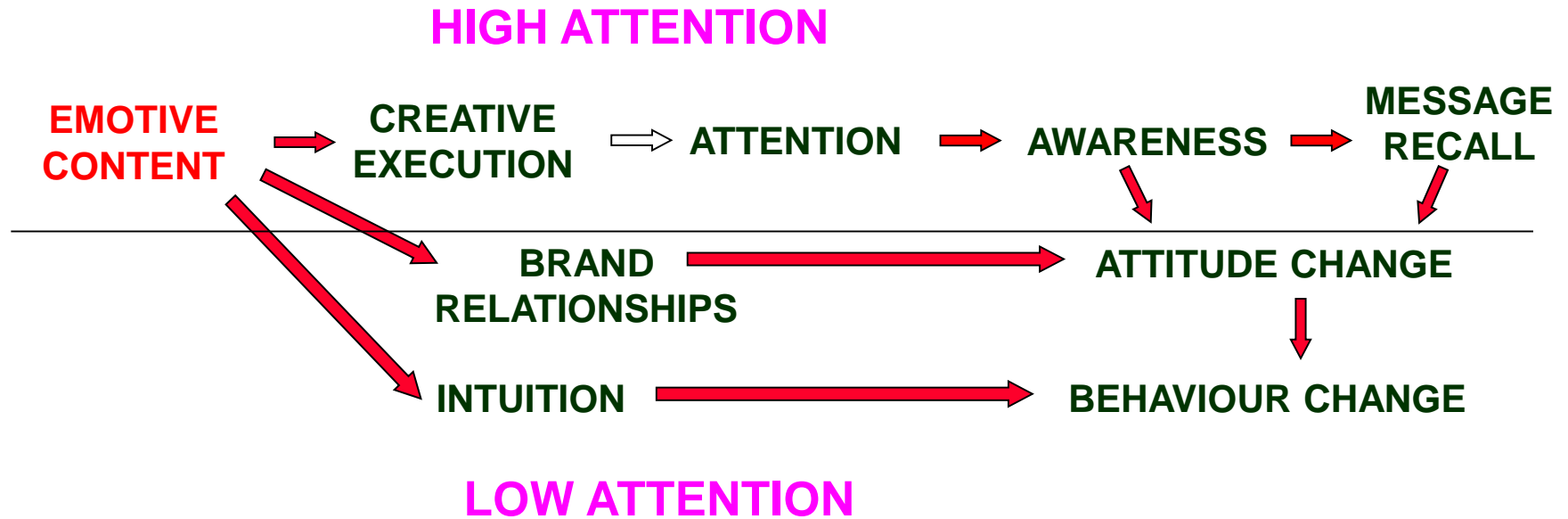
- 1) Emotion can act as a gatekeeper to rational decisions
- 2) Emotional content, not rational messages, are responsible for building brand relationships

Paul Watzlawick 1967:



*Relationships develop not on the rational
communication level but on the
emotional metacommunication level*

The Subconscious Seduction Model:



IS THERE EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT THIS MODEL?

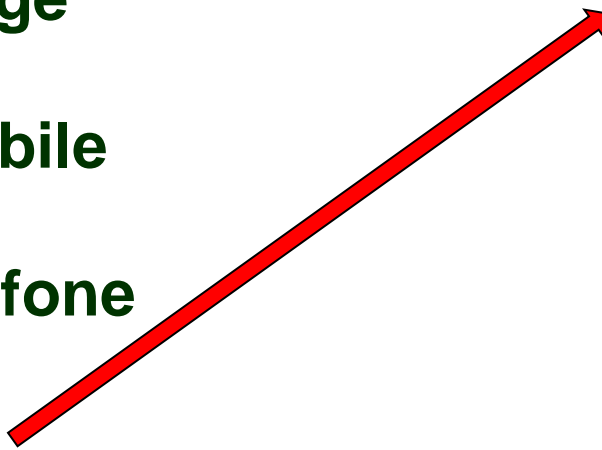
Why was O2 so successful?

2000.....

1. Orange
2. T-Mobile
3. Vodafone
4. O2

2005....

1. O2
2. Orange
3. Vodafone
4. T-Mobile



“O2 ... feels calm and serene, the antithesis to clutter and chaos, a contrast to the often frenetic world around mobile phones”

IPA Effectiveness Awards - Maunder & Cook 2007:

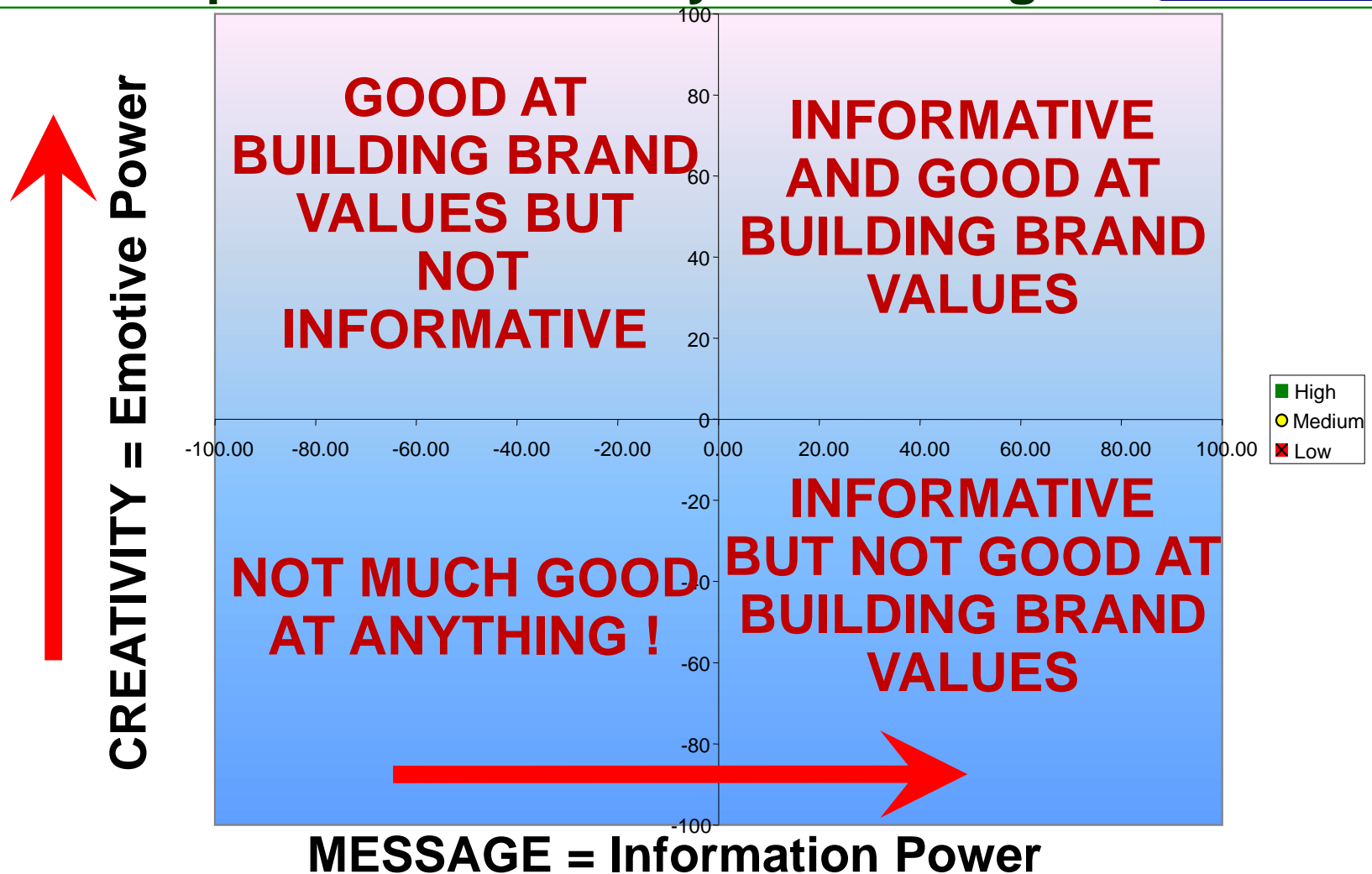
Evidence which explains the success of campaigns like O2:

Binet & Field 2007: Analysis of 880 UK IPA Advertising Effectiveness Submissions




“Emotive campaigns – those that rely on emotional appeal rather than just information and persuasion – tend to be more successful at building brands than those with a rational product message, even in highly rational product categories....”

**SO AN EMOTIVE RESPONSE TO ADVERTISING IS
CLEARLY VERY IMPORTANT**

Nielsen Creative Evaluation Test (CE Test) measures perceived Creativity and Message

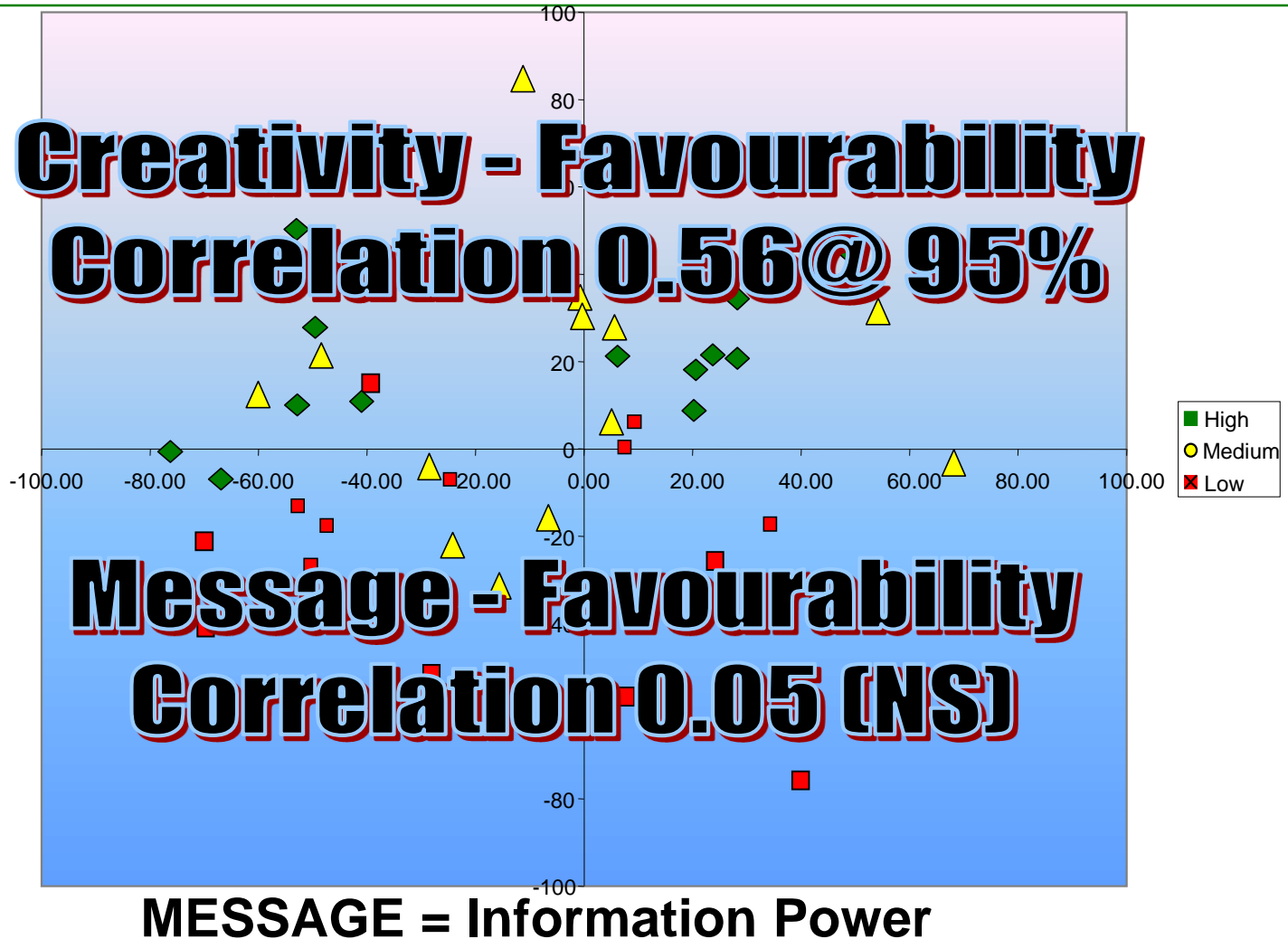


Evidence of Creativity building brand relationships: in market test of 43 ads

- Ask Brand Favourability
- Show TV ad, ask if seen before
- Work out difference in Brand Favourability between recognizers and non-recognizers
 - High shift 
 - Medium shift 
 - Low / zero / negative shift 
- Measure perceived Creativity & Message using Nielsen CE test

CE test of 43 US & UK TV ads

CREATIVITY = Emotive Power



MESSAGE = Information Power

Heath Brandt & Nairn:

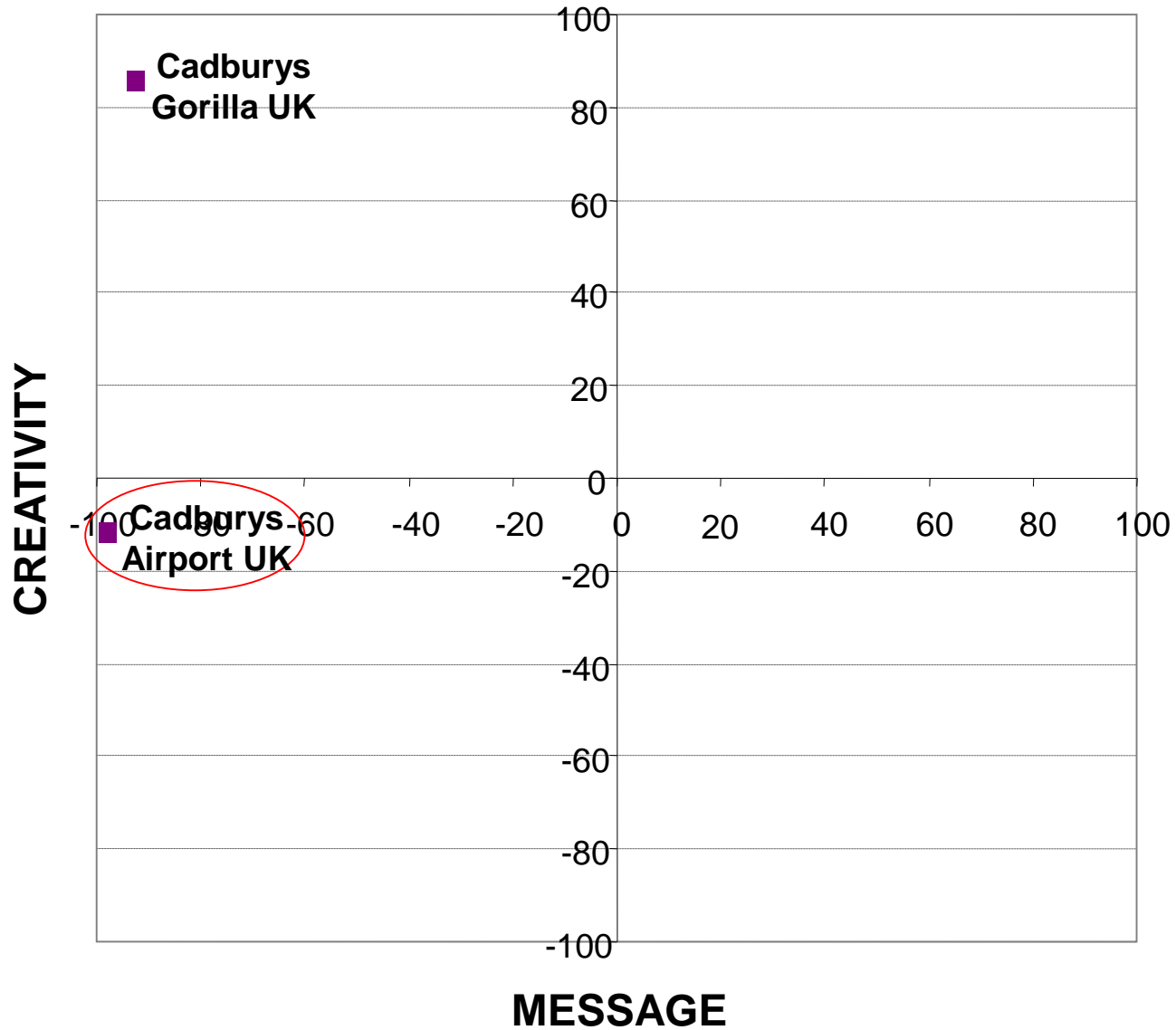
'The experimental results show clearly that it is the emotional 'creative' content in advertising that builds strong brand relationships....

Case Study – Cadburies

Cadburys Gorilla

- **Widely distributed on internet**
 - A moment of pleasure sponsored by Cadburys
 - No product shown, no evident message about the product
 - No evident relevance to sector
- **Increased sales of Cadburys Dairy Milk in line with promotional activity....**
- **... and also achieved a 10% increase in sales of ALL OTHER CADBURY'S PRODUCTS!**

Nielsen CE test



3. How the Hidden Power of Creativity be measured?

How can you measure Creativity?

Some factors to bear in mind:

- *Creativity is an emotive influence, and we are not good at using words to describe emotions*
- *Creativity does not need high levels of attention and can often be more effective if it is in the background or its presence is disguised*
- *Advertising may need to be seen several times for Creativity to become fully effective,*
- *An apparently modest response to a single ad exposure may with repetition become a highly influential brand association*

Case Study – Stella Artois

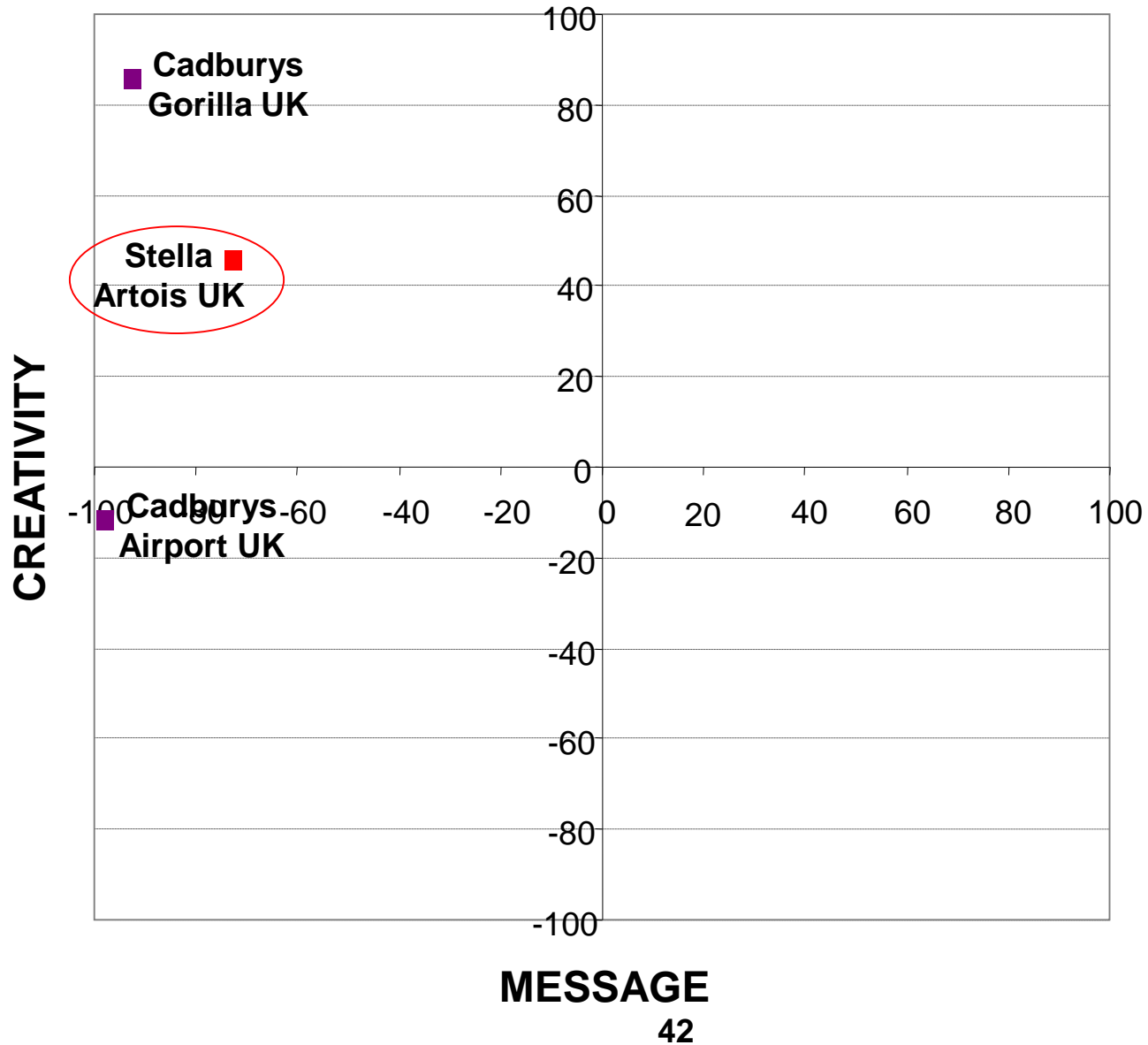
Stella Artois became in 2 years the biggest and most profitable beer brand in the UK....



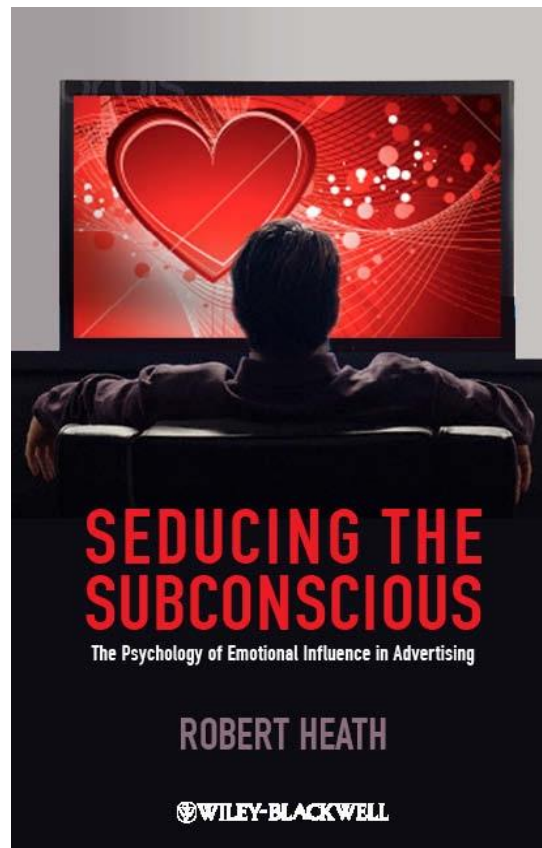
- Despite the message being irrelevant (it was the same price as all other export beers)
- Despite not being liked (4 out of 5 people rejected it in blind testing)

... and despite this ad failing a standard Copy Test

Nielsen CE test



My book:





r.g.heath@bath.ac.uk