

# Samra2017: Telling FMCG stories without getting stuck on the product shot

By  Leigh Andrews

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Natalie Botha and Saiesh Ajudhiya of Kantar Millward Brown presented their research on untold emotions: future-proofing adverts by understanding non-verbal responses from consumers.

Picture this, started Botha: The focus group moderator unveils a new ad and watches her respondents' eyebrows dip and frown lines form, even though they say it's a nice ad. You've been trained as a researcher to watch for those responses in a qualitative environment and close the gap. Here's some insight from Botha and Ajudhiya's research that'll help marketers going forward.



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Botha and Ajudhiya term non-verbal responses as 'untold emotion' - while we can't read your mind, we can see how you feel. This is extremely important for marketing research as emotion precedes feeling, and is quite simply a chemical reaction that comes from the depth of the brain as primarily positive or negative. This means our basic emotions are quite deterministic in how we behave and actually go on to guide our behaviour, whether they are the fast 'system 1' type responses or the thought-through variety of 'system 2' thinking.

## Database of emotion

This is important as marketers have created clutter and brands now need a way to stand out – Botha and Ajudhiya say adding a dose of happiness would help. But first, be clear on what makes you stand out from your competitor. While it may be an easy answer, take note as it's likely also easily copied, putting brands at risk. That leaves the price on shelf as the only innovator as we are all doing and saying the same thing, at the end of the day. Botha and Ajudhiya built their research question on this then: Which parts of a TV ad get the right response from consumers for marketers to create more effective campaigns in future?

Their interpretation of emotion went beyond self-reporting - it was through analysing LSM B secondary data as well as facial expressions based on Affectiva's Affdex facial coding, with multiple case-study design. This works through a webcam and mapping your face in second-by-second changes then coded against a database of emotion to give an idea of how respondents felt when viewing specific FMCG TV ads. Ajudhiya calls it "neuro-based techniques at scale," as they ended up with data from 14,000 middle-class SA faces and derived themes from the 'untold emotions'.

The findings? We're highly expressive, sensitive to content and love stories. But more than this...

1. **No one likes a drama queen** - There is such a thing as too much drama, happening far too fast. It's hard to recover from all that drama, so respondents even turn away from the ad to social media to see how their friends are reacting.
2. **Be simple, but not boring** - Product demonstration in the middle of the ad can work but if it feels like a separate part of the ad you can lose consumers' attention. Also remember that most consumers have passed 'Laundry 101' so don't need a how-to. When things are too scientific, they also tend to go over consumers' heads and it's hard to smile when you're confused.
3. **Everyone loves a good story** - The solution is to tell a story, which does better at getting an expressive emotion than those ads that are story-less - but it must be a branded story.

While the above serve as good guiding points, remember that even a brilliant idea tested in a focus group can get lost before turning into a finished film. The storytelling is everything as getting a blank response from a consumer is common.

Botha and Ajudhiya shared the 'Amazing Muslim and England Friendship' ad by Amazon embedded below as an example of an ad that ticks all the emotional response boxes:

## ABOUT LEIGH ANDREWS

Leigh Andrews AKA the #MilkshakeQueen, is former Editor-in-Chief: Marketing & Media at Bizcommunity.com, with a passion for issues of diversity, inclusion and equality, and of course, gourmet food and drinks! She can be reached on Twitter at @Leigh\_Andrews.  
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