



ACE
m e t r i x[®]

HOW TO WIN A
CANNES LION

Uncovering the Emotional DNA of
Award-Winning Ads

OCTOBER **2017**



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Introduction

Earlier this year, Marc Pritchard, Chief Brand Officer at P&G, talked about avoiding the “crap trap” where too much mediocre creative was negatively impacting brands. A recent Harvard Business Review article suggested that the supply of video advertising is at an all-time high, yet the demand for ads is at an all-time low, with various skipping, blocking and other ad-avoidant behavior becoming the norm. This dis-equilibrium is causing many brands to rethink their strategies, and focus on producing higher quality work to which viewers will actually choose to pay attention.

Wendy Clark, CEO of DDB, also summed the situation, “The average consumer is exposed to over 6,000 brand images every day. ‘More’ cannot be a strategy. Clients too often are inviting themselves into a conversation where they don’t belong. The standard we all have to hold ourselves to is more good, not just more.”

In his book “Ad*itude: Using Data to Inspire Extraordinary Ad Creative,” Ace Metrix CEO Peter Daboll concluded, “Quality creative is the highest driver of value in the ad business. It needs to be measured consistently so the value can be unleashed using data that is more readily available than ever.”

Of course, no one likes to be judged and there are still industry stalwarts that believe that breakthrough creative is unmeasurable. It is often viewed as subjective, with an “I’ll know what’s good when I see it” mentality. However, we discovered that it is indeed possible to determine an emotional fingerprint for every ad and identify the characteristics that are more likely to be in Cannes Lions winners, while also less likely to be in non-winners.

“Quality creative is the highest driver of value in the ad business. It needs to be measured consistently so the value can be unleashed using data that is more readily available than ever.”

Using Data Science to Analyze & Uncover Why Ads are Cannes-Winners

There's no question that the Cannes Lions are the ultimate symbol of creative excellence in advertising, and have been for years. In addition to the inherent cache of winning for brands and agencies, much has been written to prove the value of award-winning work from a business standpoint. The Gunn Report, James Hurman's book "The Case for Creativity", and numerous case studies presented by Cannes Lions leadership all purport that brands with winning creative can outperform their competitors in terms of in-market results. Not all brand teams agree, however. Some brands challenge their agencies to create award-winning work, while others pull

back and focus their ads and marketing dollars on driving short-term sales. Some focus on emotional storytelling, or quirky humor, while others focus on product attributes and deals.

A coveted Cannes Lion can make (or break) advertising careers. But what are Cannes Lions juries actually rewarding? What are the creative and emotional drivers within an ad that win a Cannes Lion vs. ads that aren't even nominated?

Our goal in this paper is not to address the merits of differing ad objectives or even to define what "great" creative actually is. Rather, our goal is to scientifically understand which characteristics are more likely to occur, or not occur, among Cannes-winning ads. In short, what is their emotional DNA and which of these emotional markers have the highest probability of winning a Cannes Lion?

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Using Data Science to Analyze & Uncover Why Ads are Cannes-Winners Cont'd

In doing so, we can inform creative teams and help guide creative decisions on new ads such that they contain the same emotional characteristics of the winners, thus increasing their probability of success.

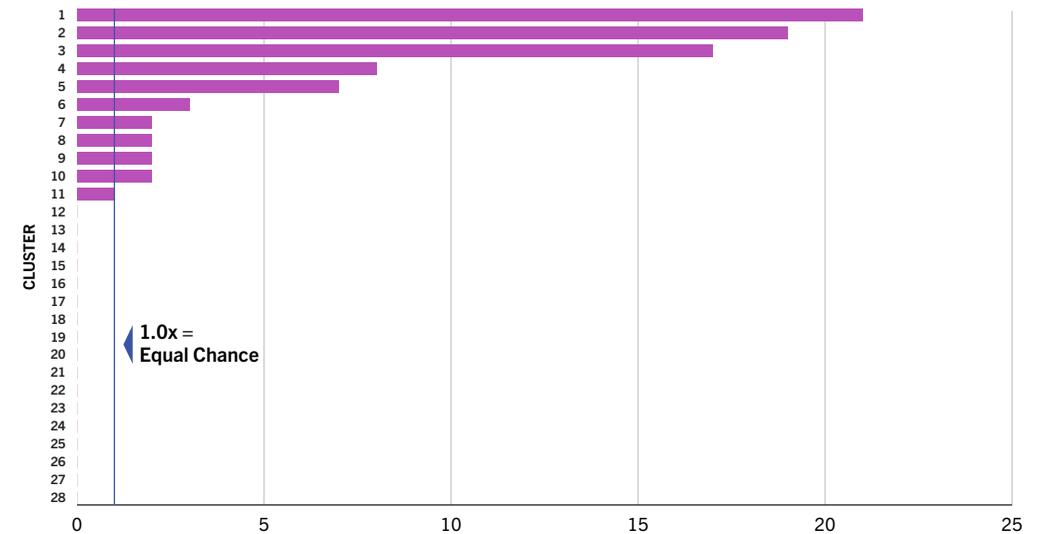
Through our analysis of over 25,000 recent Cannes-winning and non-Cannes-winning ads, we're able to determine what separates the two groups by measuring which characteristics are unique to each. Our system grouped all ads into 28 mutually exclusive clusters, with ten of the clusters representing over 90% of Cannes-winners and five of them containing nearly 2/3. Through the resulting statistical analysis we then identify the chance an ad has of being a Cannes-winner based on historical precedent. Of course, not all Cannes-winning

ads use the same creative devices—some are funny, or heartwarming, or are highly visual as there is no magic formula. But by clustering ads based on common emotional reactions, our analysis shows that ads that fall in some of these clusters have greater than 20x the chance of being a Cannes-winner than an ad picked at random. Data, it seems, can be more powerful than “knowing good creative when you see it.”

This ability is a remarkable accomplishment. Stated another way, these clusters, especially 1 through 5, represent a Rosetta Stone on what makes a Cannes-winner.

How Many More Times Than Chance for Winning a Cannes Lion, by Cluster

● Greater than 1.0x Chance



Approach, High Level

See Appendix for Detailed Approach

This study is unique because our massive dataset allows us to compare millions of viewer verbatim comments (responses to an open-ended survey question) to assess the unique differences that separate a Cannes Lion winner from other ads. For this analysis, our sample consisted of 196 Cannes Lions Film category winners from 2011-2016 as well as over 25,000 non-Cannes-winners from our syndicated database over a similar time period. The winners represent a nearly two thirds sampling of Cannes Lions winning (Grand Prix, Gold, Silver, Bronze) ads in the Film category that are under three minutes and are English language. We selected the Film category because based on the Cannes Lions definition (below) it was most consistent with the video ads in our database.

“The Film Lions celebrate the creativity of the moving image. Entries will need to demonstrate brilliant brand storytelling intended for a screen. That is, filmed content created for TV, cinema, online and out-of-home experiences.”

We analyzed all the ads, including Cannes-winners, each based on a fully representative sample of more than 500 demographically balanced viewers across the US audience.

We then clustered all the ads into groups based solely on metrics that we measure from viewers’ free-form responses to those ads. None of the metrics directly indicate whether an ad is a Cannes-winner or not. That is, we do not include this information when performing the clustering (we do use this information when scoring how well a particular clustering scheme performs but that is after we cluster them into groups). What we do include for the clustering is a set of emotional/conceptual metrics that can be used to define each ad (i.e. how funny the ad is, and/or how annoying the ad is, etc). The aim is to find a set of metrics that will naturally cluster the Cannes-winners together while simultaneously separating them as much as possible from the rest of the 25,000 ads.

One must keep in mind that a perfect separation should not be expected and is probably not even possible (without severe over-fitting) in that there are many fantastic ads that didn’t win a Cannes Lion but perhaps could have or even should have (maybe it wasn’t submitted in time). In fact, part of this project is to determine the causal attributes that place a given ad in the same league as the known Cannes-winners.

The Juror Effect

The above description of the analysis and clustering is based on viewers' reactions. But we know that in-market viewers and jury voters don't always agree. Cannes Lions winners are selected by a group of industry insiders. Similar to the Academy Awards, there are sometimes "disagreements" between what the Academy selects as Oscar-worthy vs. where the commercial movie-going public spends their money. This dichotomy is important for creative teams to understand- making a successful ad for one audience may not work with the other.

There are many human elements of a jury proceeding and vote--with no two juries exactly alike. It is a human process that has a different makeup every year with

different criteria. With over 18,000 entrants to the Film category over the past several years, only fourteen ads have been awarded the Grand Prix, showing just how daunting the challenge is for juries. One might expect that it would be difficult to find consistent data in the behavior of juries. Yet, through analysis of millions of high dimensional data points, we've determined that the outcomes are not random and in fact, can be predicted.

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HOW TO WIN A CANNES LION



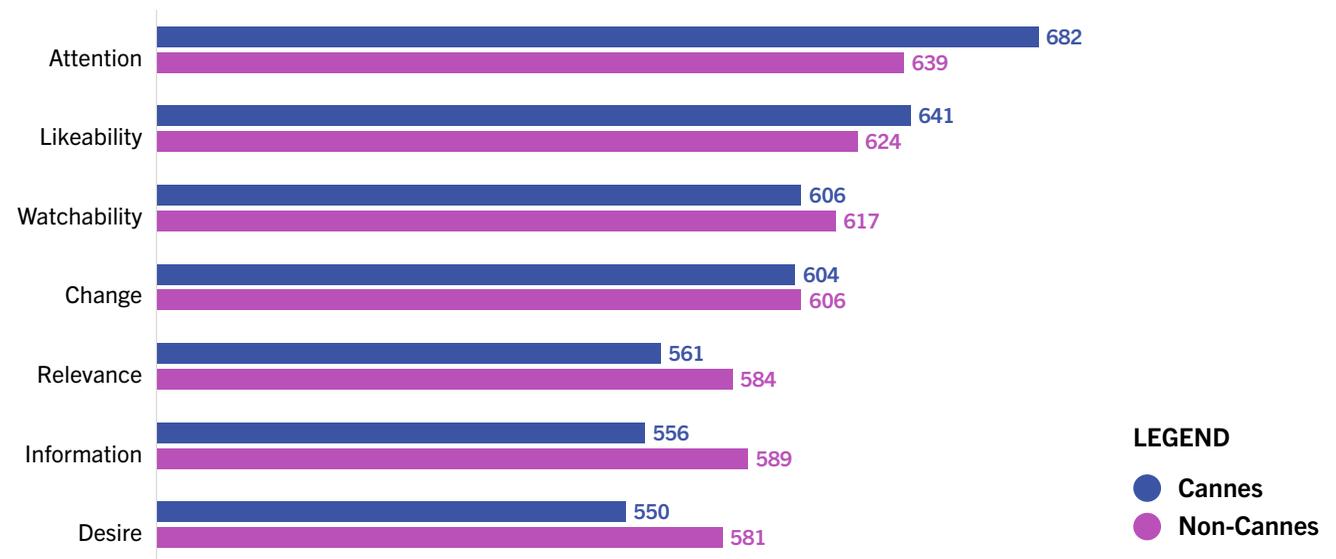
Analysis of Cannes-Winning Ads

All the ads up for Cannes Lions awards are exceptional and represent the best of the advertising craft. Therefore, comparing differences or highs and lows between these ads, is not between winners and losers, but understanding how the ads work differently with viewers. They are still the best of the best, despite the ads often having differing objectives and styles, and eliciting different emotions from audiences.

Across the over 25,000 ads in our data set, clearly the Cannes Lion winners are in a class by themselves with respect to getting and keeping viewer Attention and producing Likeable content. They do not, however, score better across all dimensions.

As one might suspect, Cannes-winners are not your typical product-pushing ads. They score lower on providing Information, Relevance and Creating Demand for a product (Desire and Purchase Intent). Cannes-winners excel in getting viewers to pay attention, and are generally more likeable, although there are many exceptions. Attention and Likeability are driven by the emotional connection that sets Cannes-winners apart from the average ad. Comparing the Cannes-winning ads vs. the entire Ace Metrix database, it is clear that Cannes-winners differ due to their specific emotional resonance with viewers.

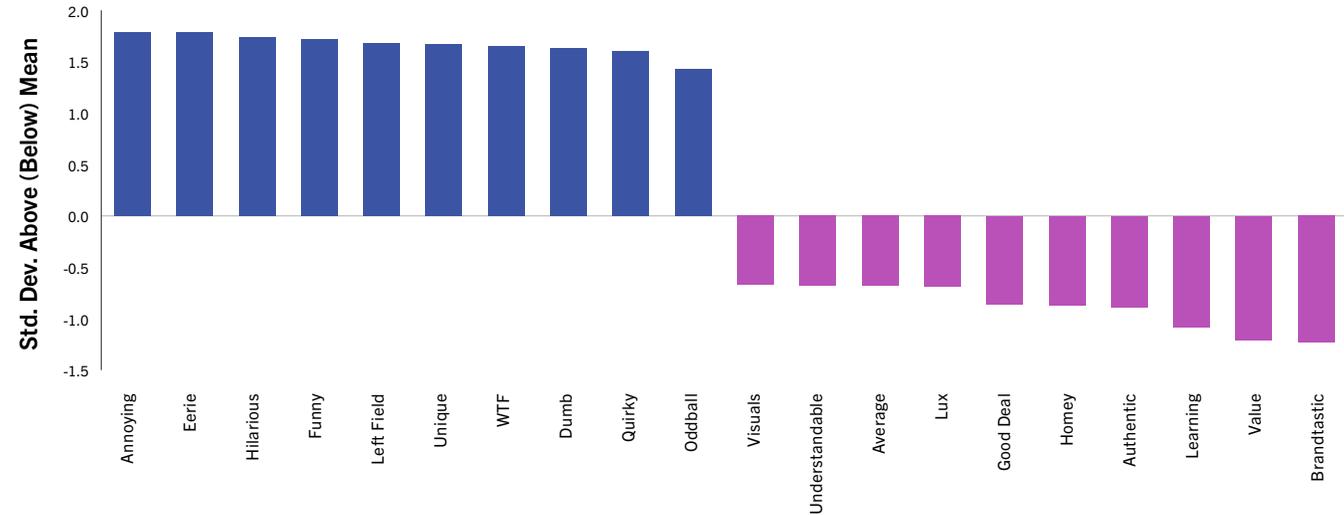
Average Component Score of Cannes Ads vs. Non-Cannes Ads (2011-2016)





Analysis of Winning Cannes Lions Ads Cont'd

Top 10 and Bottom 10 Emotions - All Cannes Ads



The above chart ranks emotions of Cannes-winners. The scale is standard deviations from the mean for all ads. Thinking back to your Stats 101 class, standard deviations of 2.0 or more are often extreme deviations from the average, and in a normal distribution would represent a value in the 97th percentile (meaning more than 97% of all ads would score below this value).

Cannes-winning ads evoke an emotional response in viewers—but not always a positive one. Cannes-winners are expected to be risk-takers on the creative leading edge so perhaps it’s not unexpected that vs. all other ads, humor, quirkiness and even negative emotions, such as “eerie,” or “WTF” rank highly. “Eerie” includes words and phrases such as: eerie, creepy, disturbing, scary, freaky and weird while “WTF” includes: WTF, what was that?, what the heck was that? Annoying includes: “irksome, repulsive, irritating, turnoff, dreadful, annoying,

obnoxious, stupid etc. It is quite surprising that these “negative” emotions in Cannes-winners are the largest differentiators from non-Cannes-winning ads.

These “negative” emotions are also part of the reason why these ads score higher on Attention —while quirky, weird or WTF, they nonetheless compel viewers to pay attention. Cannes-winners have characteristics that can be shocking and tend to have a sense of newness—

Analysis of Winning Cannes Lions Ads Cont'd

things that viewers have not seen before or find strange. A sense of “shock and awe” is common. And to be fair, many of these emotions around left field, WTF, quirky, unique etc. are what the creative minds are trying to achieve. Viewers may react this way the first time they see the ad, but perhaps over time, these ads become more likeable, or understood better. At least that would be the creative team’s theory.

Equally interesting among all Cannes-winning ads are the emotions that *don’t* describe them—that are unlikely to occur among Cannes-winners vs. all others. We have concepts like “average” that clearly don’t apply to Cannes-winners as they are not average ads. Also, emotions that reflect deals, value, even authenticity are not likely emotions in Cannes-winners. Perhaps unexpectedly, “brandtastic,” terms which includes words and phrases that directly reference the brand (seen below), are not characteristic of Cannes-winners despite representing opinions brand managers want consumers to express about their ads.

In fact, the higher an ad scores in these brand characteristics, the less chance it has winning at Cannes.

“very good brand, quality brand, love the company, love the brand, great company, great brand, excellent brand, well-known brand, popular brand, nice brand, like the company, like the brand, good company, good brand”

Cannes-winners are less focused on communicating these positive brand attributes in favor of creating strong emotional reactions in viewers (many being negative or shocking). Because of this penchant for the weird or annoying, many Cannes-winners also foment their share of disagreement among viewers. It’s hard to make an edgy, humorous ad that appeals to all demographics, and clearly the Cannes Lions winners inspire their own share of “haters” when viewed against a general population database.

Although it is quite informative to combine all Cannes-winners into a single group and determine which features are more likely to dominate the winners and separate them from all other ads, this coarse aggregation into only two groups can mask the attributes which are very important for some of the winners. For example, humor is an obvious and intuitive attribute that many Cannes ads possess, but not all winners are funny. Some ads use a more heartfelt approach to telling their story but the number of these ads relative to the number of humor-based ads is small. Consequently, our humor metrics easily dominate the statistics of a broad, two group clustering scheme. So, in order to accommodate the reality that there are many ways to make a great commercial, and understand the emotional nuances, we broke our dataset into 28 clusters using our NLP based system. Of those 28 clusters we identified ten that “attract” more than their fair share of winners (some much more than others).

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Analysis of Winning Cannes Lions Ads Cont'd

Percentage of Ads By Cluster and Percentage of Ads That Are Cannes-Winners

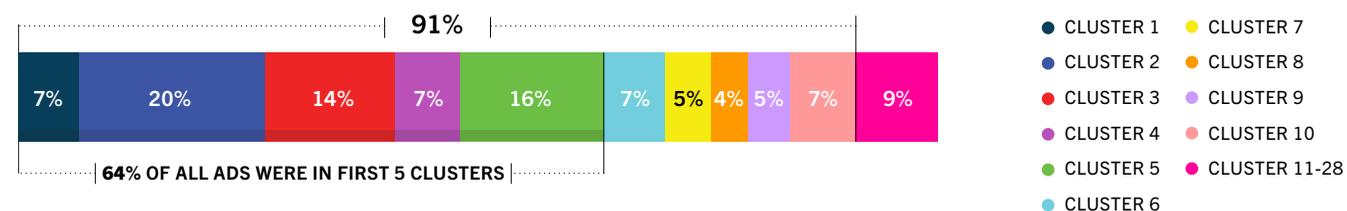


The importance of these clusters is that in Cluster 1, for example, an ad with this emotional profile occurs in the wild (the overall ad dataset) 0.3% of the time. But ads that fall within this cluster win a Cannes award 16% of the time. Another way of saying this is that if you produce an ad with the same emotional profile as Cluster 1, your ad has a 20x higher chance of winning a Cannes award than by selecting an ad at random from our database. 20x! Clearly, the emotional drivers in this cluster are yielding more than their share of Lion-winning work.

Also of note is the number of ads in each cluster. Across a large sample of our dataset, the high-probability Cannes-winning clusters (#s 1-5) represent only about 5% of all ads.

However, as seen in the chart below, nearly 2/3 of Cannes-winners fall into Clusters 1-5. Each of those clusters has unique aspects that are worth diving into deeper.

% of Cannes Ads By Cluster





Cannes Ad Cluster 1: Universally Funny

0.3%

Of all Ads

7%

Of Winners

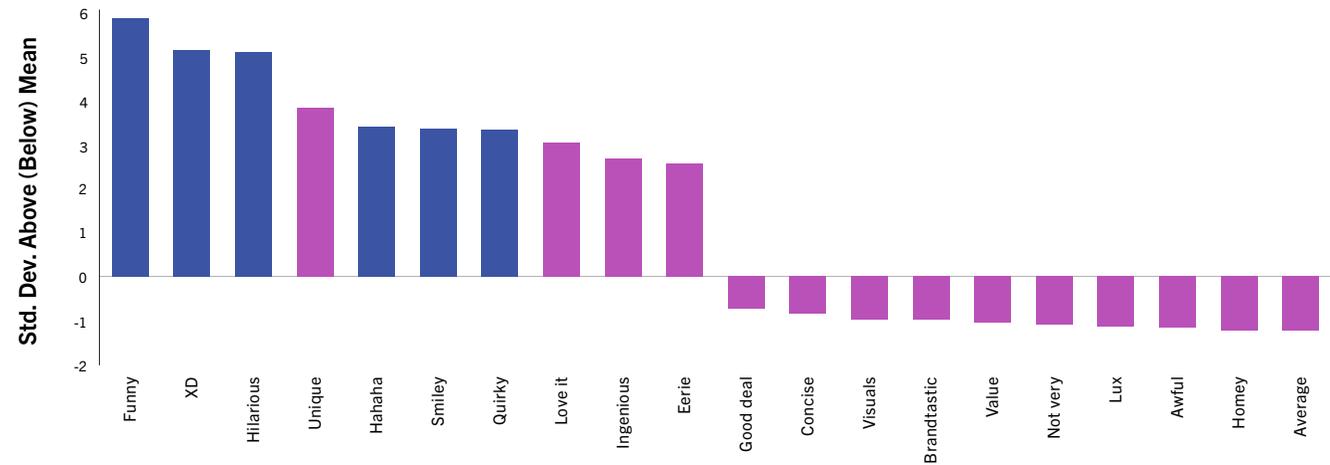
Overwhelmingly strong in humor, likeability (smiley, love it), and originality (unique, quirky), Cluster 1 includes some of the most iconic and memorable ads, many from Super Bowls past. These ads are funny, but not polarizing despite having quirky elements.

While only 0.3% of all database ads fall into this cluster, fully sixteen percent of all ads that have this emotional DNA are Cannes-winners! If you test your ad, and it matches this profile, make sure you enter it into the Lions. It possesses the highest probability of winning with Cannes juries.

Humor is something that can be nuanced depending on the other types of emotion associated with it. Cluster 5, which represents 16% of Cannes-winners and 2.2% of all ads, is also a humor based Cluster. If combined with Cluster 1, these would cover over 23% of Cannes-winners. Cluster 5 differs from Cluster 1 mostly in the degree to which the ad is funny. In addition, the likeability emotions do not fire as strongly for this cluster, but the differences are more a matter of intensity, not the emotional structure, so for our purposes here, Cluster 1 and Cluster 5 share most of the same emotions.

Top 10 and Bottom 10 Emotions - Cluster 1

● Humor





Cannes Ad Cluster 1 Examples: Universally Funny



AD	The Brady Bunch
BRAND	Snickers
AGENCY	BBDO NY
AWARD	Silver (2015)

Verbatims

“This was very funny, and even though it ended up with the expected theme of their usual ads, this one was really cute”
Female, 16 – 20

“This ad was hilarious, I was laughing out loud. I used to watch the Brady Bunch so I thought this was very funny.”
Female, 21-35

“Funny take on their message that hangry happens.”
Male 36-49

“Danny Trejo as Marsha, lol!! This ad was also funny and got my attention”
Female, 21-35

“I’m dying... Ugh I love this so much!!! That was so funny! I LOVE it!”
Male, 21-35



AD	Smell Like A Man 3
BRAND	Old Spice
AGENCY	Wieden+Kennedy
AWARD	Silver (2011)

Verbatims

“These ads are hysterically funny. I hope they continue, they make me laugh. I love commercials that make me laugh.”
Female, 36-49

“Well done, funny, made to keep your attention and funny enough to talk about tomorrow at the office”
Male, 36-49

“I love these series of ads. The ads are very well put together. It is entertaining and grips your attention from the beginning. In fact my husband has gone out to buy Old Spice body wash because he thought the commercial s were so funny. Keep it up.”
Female, 21-35

“The ad is hilarious, and I believe it appeals to both men and women. Men will be entertained and women will like the shirtless hunk.”
Male, 16-20



Cannes Ad Cluster 1 Examples: Universally Funny



AD	The Force
BRAND	Volkswagon
AGENCY	Deutsch
AWARD	Gold (2011)

Verbatims

“Fantastic commercial! Very well put together. As a parent with kids who love Star Wars, I can totally relate. I love it! One of my favorite commercials of all time!”

Male, 21-35

“This commercial is hilarious! It makes me think of VW differently”

Female, 21-35

“It just had my interest to try to figure out what was going on and then I was just laughing - it was really, really, cute and a very good commercial. I loved it, it really made me laugh and I loved the dog and the little tike.”

Male, 50+



AD	Hero's Journey
BRAND	Kia
AGENCY	David&Goliath
AWARD	Bronze (2017)

Verbatims

Loved the ad. Didn't realize Melissa McCarthy had lost so much weight, she looked pretty and the entire ad was really funny, going from the wales to her in the trees and the glacier splitting and the scenes were really fun to watch, but I did not get at all what any of it had to do with the KIA automobile. Did not get the connection.

Female 50+

This ad was amazing and I loved it. Hands down one of the best ads I have seen in a long time. It was hilarious and I could not look away. It grabbed my attention completely.

Female, 21-35

I loved it!!! It was so funny and to think you could make a car commercial into something so hilarious is hard to believe but it happened. It was outstanding.

Male, 26-49

Cannes Ad Cluster 2: Annoying

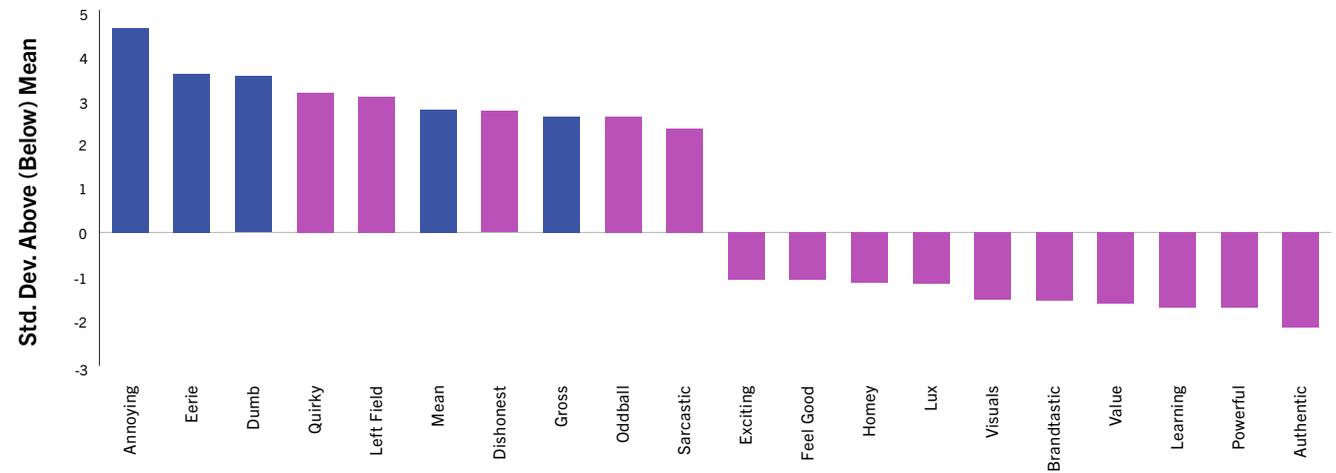
1.1%	20%
Of all Ads	Of Winners

Perhaps unexpectedly, many Cannes ads are considered “annoying” by the general population and Cluster 2 is dominated by these emotions. It contains a full 20% of all Cannes-winners and an ad in this cluster is nearly 20x more likely to win than an ad chosen from the database at random. Clearly, Cannes juries reward this pushing

of the creative envelope, even though viewers are not so sure. These ads are often highly polarizing, with very high “hate” scores, expressed in metrics such as “annoying, dumb, gross, and mean.” While these ads are clearly not meant for everyone, they tend to be lower on likeability but they at least do not fail to grab one’s attention.

Top 10 and Bottom 10 Emotions - Cluster 2

● Hate





Cannes Ad Cluster 2 Examples: Annoying



AD	PuppyMonkeyBaby
BRAND	Mountain Dew
AGENCY	BBDO NY
AWARD	Bronze (2016)

Verbatims

“LOL. What did I just watch?!”
Male, 21-35

“It was weird. Clearly, it’s intended to be weird, but I’m not sure if it works out to be a good thing or a bad thing.”
Male, 36-49

“Stupid, puppymonkeybaby? Who in the world thought that up?
Annoying, weird, dumb.”
Female, 21-35

“This ad was really entertaining, but in a strange way. I like it for trying to be weird. But at points it made me feel extremely awkward.”
Male, 21-35



AD	Karate
BRAND	Southern Comfort
AGENCY	Wieden+Kennedy NY
AWARD	Gold (2014)

Verbatims

“The music and guy dancing were very, very strange it didn’t fit at all it was just bizarre”
Female, 21-35

“Did not make any sense at all.”
Male, 36-49

“This commercial did catch my attention. However, I thought it was very creepy & just not something that made much sense. Plus it’s one of those commercials that you wouldn’t get unless you watch the whole thing. Just a creepy ad”
Female, 50+

“A very stupid commercial. A real channel changer.”
Male, 50+

“One of the weirdest ads I’ve ever seen! And went on soooo long! Definitely too long.”
Female, 50+



Cannes Ad Cluster 2 Examples: Annoying



AD	Family
BRAND	Geico
AGENCY	The Martin Agency
AWARD	Grand Prix (2015)

Verbatims

“I like Geico, but this was weird. What does this have to do with insurance?”
Male, 21-35

“Kind of gross, got my attention though.”
Female, 21-35

“ick. I am not sure how Geico as a product/company/service relates to a big dog on the table eating everyone’s food. further, the people in the ad were actually moving as this was taking place even though they tried not to move (I think). so, this was just a loser ad all around. plus a dog that big & heavy might have tipped over the table. so much for deus ex machina.....”
Female, 50+



AD	Bride
BRAND	Farnham Ale & Lager
AGENCY	Lg2
AWARD	Bronze (2017)

Verbatims

“I didn’t really like it- I couldn’t understand what she was saying and I thought it was rude that she got a text he wasn’t showing and odd that the tap was in her back. It was just weird.”
Male, 21-35

“Oh my God, this ad is really original and creative. I have never seen something like this before. I like the dark humor so much. I am speechless, don’t know what to say. Really different.”
Female, 36-49

Honestly it was extremely weird. I think they were going for comedy but failed at it.
Female, 36-49

Cannes Ad Cluster 3: Wait, What?

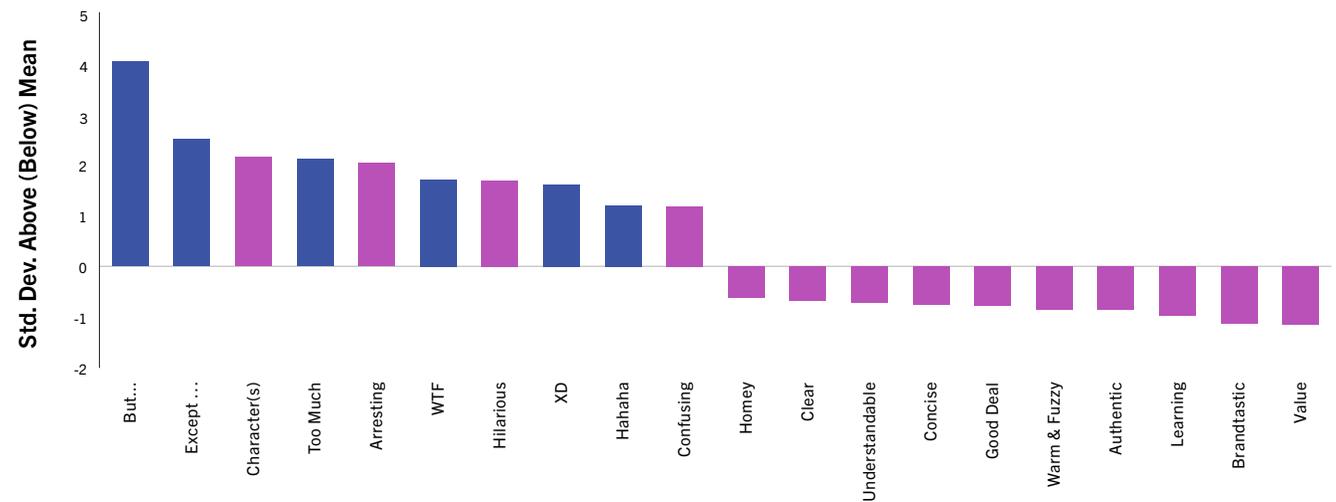
0.9%	14%
Of all Ads	Of Winners

Ads in Cluster 3 tend to create a sense of confusion among the average viewer. They are often story-driven spots that while maybe have beautiful visuals, do not weave in the brand/product in a way that makes sense to viewers. Verbatim responses tend to have high use

of the words “but” and “however” as viewers grapple with processing what they just watched. There is a good amount of nuance to the use of the word “but” as it can be both positive and negative.

Top 10 and Bottom 10 Emotions - Cluster 3

● However





Cannes Ad Cluster 3 Examples: Wait, What?



AD	First Kiss
BRAND	Wren
AGENCY	MullenLowe & Durable Goods
AWARD	Gold (2014)

Verbatims

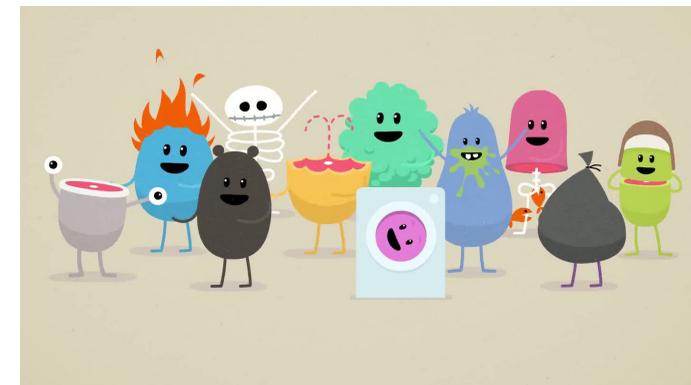
“Did not get the idea exactly, it’s confusing, but eye catching”
Female, 21-35

“Seems sweet and heartwarming and fun to watch, however I’m not sure what it was for...”
Female, 16-20

“That’s what I find confusing about it, I have no idea. It’s a beautifully made ad, but I just don’t get it.”
Female, 36-49

“I’m not sure it brought a product message across but it was engaging.”
Male, 21-35

“It was nice to watch, very cute, but I don’t quite understand its message or what its advertising, I’m just a bit out of context, I assume it’s for a dating site.”
Male, 16-20



AD	Dumb Ways to Die
BRAND	Melbourne Metro Trains
AGENCY	McCann Melbourne
AWARD	Gold (2013)

Verbatims

“Catchy song but irritating at the same time. It seemed like a very long ad.”
Female, 21-35

“This is one of the best commercials I’ve ever seen, cute but twisted, fun, funny and disturbing. LOVED IT!”
Female, 36-49

“Rather morbid but catchy and informative”
Male, 21-35

“Catchy song – but didn’t know what it was for until the end of the ad”
Female, 36-48

“Weird, disturbing but catchy. The weird minions dancing and soft toned song make it oddly ok.. I like it”
Female, 21-35



Cannes Ad Cluster 3 Examples: Wait, What?



AD	Back to the Start
BRAND	Chipotle
AGENCY	Creative Artists Agency
AWARD	Grand Prix (2012)

Verbatims

“It was different. I enjoyed the first part, but would’ve changed it about midway through. While it was truthful, it was still hard to watch. I’m glad it came back around at the end.”
Female, 21-35

“This ad took long to get to the point - it felt like it just dragged on and on. So what is chipotle? I never figured that out. I grew up on a farm so i can relate to that part.”
Male, 50+

“It is definitely a song that is recognizable. I’m not sure I understand the message of the commerical though and what it has to do with a burrito company.”
Male, 21-35

“Extremely eye catching and interesting from beginning to end. Really made me think and at the same time, entertained me. Nice”
Female, 36-49



AD	The World’s Biggest Asshole
BRAND	Donate Life
AGENCY	The Martin Agency
AWARD	Gold (2017)

Verbatims

“A bit much for younger kids, but a hilarious way to get a powerful message across.”
Female, 21-35

“I honestly believe this is one of the best commercials I have ever seen. It might annoy some (language, scenes, etc..) BUT - I think everyone knows at least ONE person like the main character (Coleman Sweeney, the asshole) and can relate. And it makes you think - maybe that person IS an asshole, but maybe, just maybe, they can somehow redeem themselves with a selfless act like being an organ donor. VERY VERY GOOD!! Don’t change a thing.”
Female, 36-49

“I thought it was very weird in the beginning with the man but it ended up being pretty hilarious and I liked the message it was trying to get across.”
Male, 21-35

Cannes Ad Cluster 4: Heartfelt

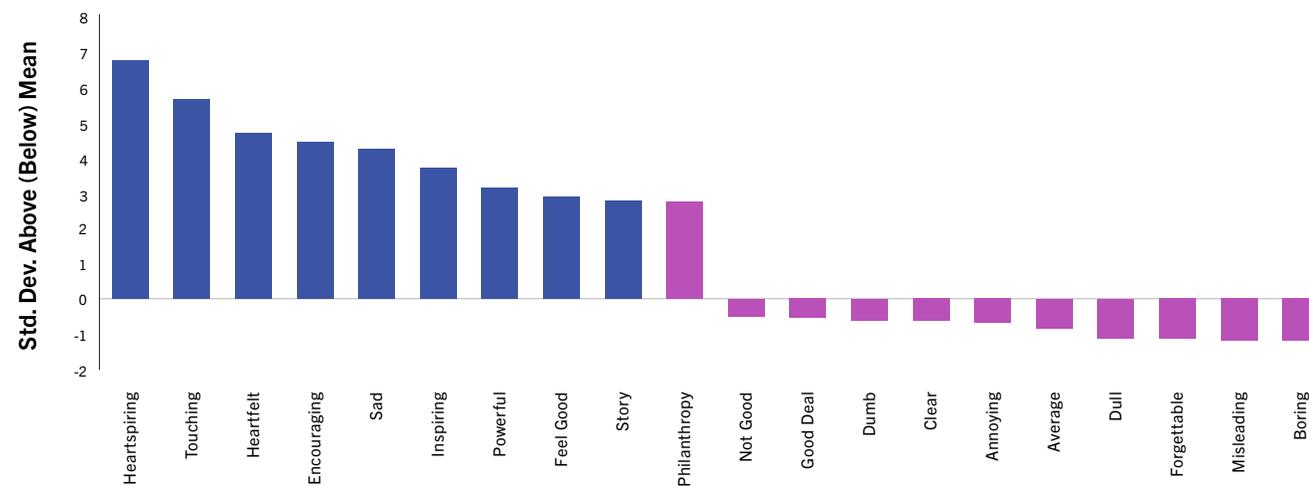
0.9%	7%
Of all Ads	Of Winners

If an ad brings a tear to your eye or leaves you feeling good about the world, you're looking at Cluster 4. These heartwarming, storytelling ads can help brands build or hold onto their brand cache. Weaving the product or brand into the spot in a realistic or authentic manner are

key for success for Cluster 4 ads. The bottom emotions for Cluster 4 reveal one of the major differentiators from the other Cannes-winner clusters- authenticity terms do not fall to the bottom.

Top 10 and Bottom 10 Emotions - Cluster 4

● Heart





Cannes Ad Cluster 4 Examples: Heartfelt



AD	Harris Holiday
BRAND	Apple
AGENCY	TWAMedia Arts Lab
AWARD	Silver (2014)

Verbatims

I think that it related to a lot of people story-wise because many kids will find themselves holed up in their rooms on the holidays playing with their electronics. However, in spite of it all, the commercial reminds people what truly makes the holiday special - the memories. Oh, and it also shows us that we have the capability to make movies on our phones and display them on the TV.

Female, 16-20

At first I was getting annoyed because it looked like a kid chose spending time on a phone instead of being with family, but by the end it made me feel so good because it showed family, love, and laughter and I also learned you can record high quality videos and play them on your tv, that was cool.

Female, 16-20



AD	Thank You, Mom – Strong
BRAND	Procter & Gamble
AGENCY	Wieden+Kennedy
AWARD	Bronze (2016)

Verbatims

“Heartwarming, moving, deeply relational and inspirational”
Female, 36-49

“Very touching and motivating. I actually had tears in my eyes”
Male, 21-35

“This advert Genuinely MOVED ME emotionally, childhood fears and challenges reinventing themselves in a later adult life. Ad’s don’t do that often to me, this one did.”
Male, 36-49

“I think the ad put out a strong message one that many people can relate to. It was very touching and inspirational as well.”
Female, 21-35

Cannes Ad Cluster 4 Examples: Heartfelt



AD | Sketches
BRAND | Dove
AGENCY | Ogilvy & Mather
AWARD | Grand Prix (2013)

Verbatims

“The ad honestly got me to tear up. true beauty isn’t brought on by makeup. its brought on by what you think of yourself.”
Male, 21-35

“I believe this ad is definitely one of the best ads i have ever seen in my life. No lie. I can relate to this message 100 percent at the moment and i think more females should see this ad. GREAT and VERY INSPIRATIONAL commercial!”
Female, 21-35

“Women frequently focus on the negatives in themselves, but see the beauty in others. Dove really makes me stop and think about how I view my own feeling about myself.”
Female, 21-35



AD | We’re the Superhumans
BRAND | Channel 4
AGENCY | Blink Productions
AWARD | Grand Prix (2017)

Verbatims

“This is an awesome ad. it is so uplifting and encouraging. It opened my eyes and I believe it shows a positive message for those with disabilities. I think it also encourages those with disabilities and shows them that they can do anything”
Female, 36-49

“I think it was great and to see so many injured people doing so many awesome things warms my heart!”
Female, 26-49

“Excellent ad! Very uplifting and invokes a lot of emotions. I think this will make people want to watch this Paralympic games more. It sure made me want to watch it.”
Male, 21-35

HOW TO WIN A CANNES LION



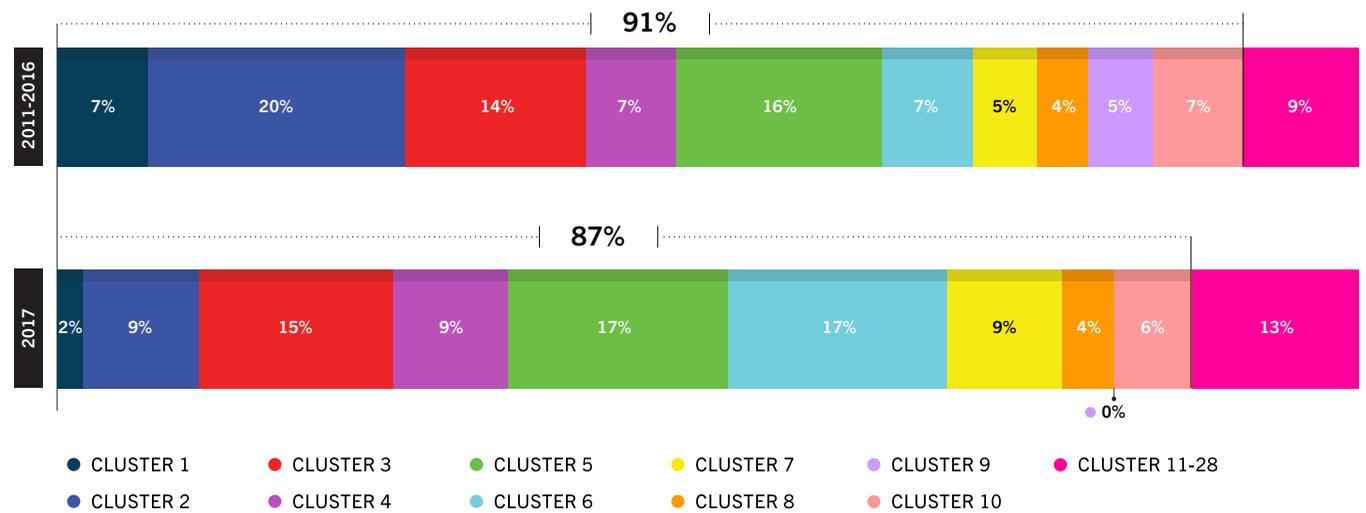
Prove It

Our data training set used Cannes-winners through 2016 which gave us a good opportunity to see how well historical precedent worked as a “predictor” of future Cannes success. Using the same clustering techniques, we categorized the 2017 Cannes Film winners and the results were encouragingly consistent. 87% of 2017

winners fall in Clusters 1-10, which is consistent with our model where 91% of winners fell into the same Clusters.

Our model shows that Cannes-winners have specific emotional DNA despite different years, submissions and juries.

Percent of Cannes Ads By Cluster (2011-2016 vs 2017)



Conclusion

Data, it turns out, CAN identify and predict the emotional ingredients that are consistently found in award-winning creative.

Historical precedent showed that despite different juries each year, there are emotions that stand as markers of what is rewarded with a Cannes Lion. We identified true, unique to Cannes, “emotional fingerprints” within the greater set of clusters.

In addition to uncovering what emotional triggers work with juries, our findings also reveal an interesting split between what Cannes juries find exemplary vs. what audiences find appealing. If an ad wins at Cannes but is

and do not have a brand-forward message. Brands need to set their creative priorities— win at Cannes, or some other more traditional brand objective. Our data shows it’s difficult to accomplish both.

Creative, like any other part of a business, needs to be measured, but what are the “right” measures of success? Cannes-winning attributes can be measured, and if that’s your objective we don’t prescribe an exact formula or creative ideas, but we can test ads to determine what cluster they fall into to potentially increase your chances of success.

So you want to win at Cannes? Get busy making an ad

Creative, like any other part of a business, needs to be measured, but what are the “right” measures of success?

unrelatable to average viewers, is that a success? Can ads be successful achieving multiple objectives across multiple audiences? After all, the Cannes Jury is just another “audience.” There are some Cannes-winners that win both at the Lions and in the land of public opinion. More commonly, however, the data shows that ads that win at Cannes are off-putting to traditional audiences

that has attributes of the most successful creative- very funny, annoying, confusing or heartfelt. Above all though, you’ve got to be unique, weird and outta left field.

Appendix - Approach, Low Level

For the purposes of this paper we focused more on the causal metrics than the correlation metrics (which merely correlate with winning at Cannes). A good example of correlation as opposed to causation is our metric for “value.” This measures how respondents react to “the deal” in an ad. However, not all or even most ads are focused on a particular deal. Cannes-winners are a great example of a set of ads in which the focus is typically on the story, the humor or both. Even when the product is part of the focus it is woven organically into the story. Consequently, our metric of “value” will negatively correlate (strongly) with winning a Cannes award and so it could be quite useful in separating Cannes-winners from non-winners but not in the causal way that we want to focus on in this paper.

We want to give an explanation as to why an ad won and not just use a “black-box” pattern recognition classifier. (i.e., a neural network using all possible features can obscure the cause-and-effect relationships).

The feature space is constructed by converting each viewer’s free-text response to an advertisement into a high dimensional vector representation (via word/phrase embedding) in such a way that words and phrases that are similar in meaning are located close together within this vector representation. This has three immediate advantages:

1. Synonyms are treated properly (grouped together)
2. Misspellings, which are quite common in this medium, are handled analogous to synonyms. For example, the vector representation for “hilarious” (misspelled) is very close to the vectors of hilarious, hilarious_!, really_funny, very_funny,...etc
3. Phrases are treated as whole entities just as if they were words. This allows for synonyms at the phrase level. For example, the phrase “not_bad” will be close to: ok, its_ok, its_okay, it_was_ok, its_alright, ok_ad, it_was_alright, it_was_ok, okay, not_too_bad,...etc

These associations were built using over ten million viewer responses. The vector representation for an ad can be constructed out of the vectors for the individual viewers, and the vector for an individual viewer can be constructed out of an aggregation of its constituent phrase vectors.

Each emotion (or concept) that we wish to specifically focus on is then defined by a collection of words and phrases that people use when describing that particular emotional concept (positive phrases), as well as words and phrases that would be inconsistent with that concept (negative phrases). This procedure is then done for all emotions/concepts, thus allowing for the grouping of ads based on any desired set of attributes.



Appendix, Low Level Cont'd

EMOTION

funny

+ *very funny!, really funny!, super funny!, very humorous, super funny, quite funny, really funny, absolutely hilarious, very funny, verry funny, very comical, funny!, haha!, hysterical!, humorous!, hilarious!, lol!, ha!, made me laugh!, haa, hahahah*

- *boring, dull*

EMOTION

hilarious

+ *omg, hilarious !, !!!, so funny!, lmfao, hahahaha, rofl*

- *N/A*

EMOTION

hahaha

+ *hahahaha, hahaha, rofl, rofl, rofl*

- *N/A*

Repeating terms will give a de-facto greater weight - similar to having multiple words that are exact synonyms.

	funny	hilarious	hahaha
funny	1.000000	0.863050	0.858202
hilarious	0.863050	1.000000	0.621458
hahaha	0.858202	0.621458	1.000000

Each of these funny metrics will correlate with one another (obviously - they have some of the same phrases) yet they are still different and will respond to some ads differently.

This process is best illustrated by an explicit example. We employ multiple “funny” metrics in order to cover the different kinds of humor and to take advantage of any differences in how respondents express themselves textually. Three of our humor metrics are defined by the above set of positive and negative phrases. (See figure)

Although each emotion/concept is defined through a finite set of phrases, it will automatically respond to synonym phrases (positive and negative). This makes it possible to define a complex concept with a single word/phrase. However, we have found greater success when using multiple phrases that give the system a better “understanding” of what is expected of it. This is in no small part because of the non-linear projection that is used when casting each ad onto each concept.

For this projection we employ the cosine-multiply algorithm in which the similarity to each positive phrase is multiplied together and then divided by the product of the similarities to all the negative phrases (if applicable). This is quite different than if we did a linear projection in which a smaller similarity for one phrase could be balanced by a higher similarity in any of the others or, even worse, where the similarity in one of the phrases completely dominates the calculation and renders the others useless. In the non-linear projection we use here, a high similarity can only be achieved by a high similarity in all the positive phrases (and low similarity in all the negative phrases). Said another way, if the similarity to any of the positive phrases is zero then the product will be zero no matter how high the other similarities.



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UNCOVERING THE EMOTIONAL DNA OF
AWARD-WINNING ADS

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