The 7 Main Benefits of Neuromarketing Research

Why go to the extra trouble, expensive and complexity of conducting Neuromarketing research? Why not just using one of the traditional marketing research methods like surveys or focus groups? I've been working in the Neuromarketing industry for around 15 years now and I've conducted hundreds of studies across all sectors and continents and have seen the benefits that clients derive from this type of research beyond what they can get from traditional methods. I believe there are 7 main benefits:

1. Provides fresh viewpoints

Marketers and creatives thrive on fresh thinking and new viewpoints. Neuromarketing provides these as it has a very different perspective to traditional research. For example, it can measure the lower level effects of designs (such as print ads) and videos (such as TV and web ads) in terms of people's attention, emotion and memory responses. Whereas many designers and creatives are often focused on the higher-level meanings of what they are creating, Neuromarketing research can focus down on far more granular recommendations. These can include insights into how to design imagery to better capture attention, how to better edit an ad to make key information more memorable, and the exact elements of design that will drive emotional engagement in a product, service, ad or package.

2. Uncovers emotional and non-conscious responses

On an average day most of us go through a journey of different emotions. Some of these are fast and fleeting, others may linger but we barely notice them. Yet these feelings and emotions can be influencing our behaviour, such as what we

choose to buy. Neuromarketing methods can often help uncover the triggers to these emotional responses in a way that just asking questions can't.

3. Puts measurements onto common scales

Even when it's possible for consumers to consciously describe or rate their emotional responses or how much attention they feel an ad evoked from them, there will be great variation between how they do this. If you collect answers from different people in one sample, there is little way of knowing whether some are unwittingly exaggerating or some are downplaying. Of course some of this variation gets ironed-out by averaging data over a large sample, but it is still an unnatural exercise for people to rate their feelings on a scale; we aren't necessarily able to do this accurately. The problem is confounded by trying to compare results across cultures, where differences of expression mean there is even more variation.

4. Measures fleeting reactions that people can't remember

When studying experiences that evolve over time, such as watching a TV ad, neuro measures can capture responses moment-by-moment in real time. Not only does this give valuable diagnostic information on how to better edit an ad, but it would be very hard if not impossible to gain through traditional question-based methods. Mainly this is because:

5. Asking people to think about how they feel about something can change the feeling

Just as certain chemical reactions happen and change a cell only when light is shone on it, shining our conscious awareness on a feeling can change the feeling. When you begin asking people to express how they feel about something they begin to examine, revise and rationalise their feelings, so you are no longer getting the original pure reaction.

6. Measures priming effects

Whenever we look at something, whether it be a poster, logo, or package, it activates a range of associated ideas in our minds. Neuroscientists call this effect priming. Some of these ideas – which neuro techniques can measure – relate to the feelings and concepts that an ad or brand logo may trigger in us. Some of them activate goals in us, often without our conscious awareness. For example, your desire to treat yourself to something expensive may have been triggered earlier in the day by seeing a poster for a luxury brand.

7. Can be scaled-up

Whilst an experienced and talented market researcher can often get around some of these challenges through careful questioning and reading between the lines of what people say, there are only so many people they can question. Neuromarketing offers research techniques that companies can scale up, often internationally, using comparable methods, and hence gaining comparable results.