New research by WARC shows that highly awarded creative ideas are significantly more effective

WARC’s Health of Creativity: 39% of highly awarded campaigns for creativity compared to just 18% of all creative winners are also awarded for effectiveness

8 April 2021 – Each year, WARC, the global authority on effective marketing, tracks the results of the top global and regional award shows for creativity, media and effectiveness for the WARC Rankings, the ultimate benchmark for advertising.

To assess how often creative work is also effective, and to uncover the main characteristics of ideas that are highly awarded for both creativity and effectiveness, WARC has analysed the results data from the creative and effectiveness awards shows tracked by WARC Rankings between 2015 and 2019. The findings are now published in WARC’s latest research, The Health of Creativity.

Amy Rodgers, Managing Editor, Research and Rankings, WARC, comments: “There’s been a lot of discussion around the effect of short-term strategies on long-term brand health.

“With this in mind, we’ve compared data from the WARC Rankings to see how many creative ideas were subsequently awarded for effectiveness, and if highly awarded campaigns for creativity were more likely to be effective, i.e. if awarded creativity increases, does effectiveness do the same? We also wanted to surface any insights from these highly successful ideas to help brands and agencies going forward.”

A total of 2,391 creatively awarded ideas from around the world were analysed by WARC, of which only 18% (431) were subsequently awarded for effectiveness.

However, when comparing highly awarded ideas for creativity, i.e. the 415 ideas that have made it into the WARC Creative 100 Rankings between 2015-2019, the proportion of these ideas that were subsequently awarded for effectiveness, rose to 39% (162).

Further, when analysing these 415 ideas ranked in the WARC Creative 100, 17% (71) also went on to be ranked in the WARC Effective 100 - deeming them to be both highly creative and highly effective.

These 71 best of the best ideas, were analysed with the following five characteristics emerging:

- Highly creative and effective ideas are more than twice as likely to lead with TV as any other channel
More than half (54%) of highly creative and effective ideas use emotion as a creative strategy
63% of highly creative and effective ideas aim to build brand equity
56% of highly creative and effective ideas drive sales
Over 78% of highly creative and effective ideas drive social buzz and PR

An infographic of the research is available here.

Creative commitment, a new planning tool and composite measure introduced in The Effectiveness Code, a 2020 report from WARC and LIONS, correlates very tightly with effectiveness. Campaigns are more effective in terms of sales, brand building, market share and profit, the longer their duration, the more numerous their media channels, and the higher their overall spend.

This new Health of Creativity report shows that highly creative and effective ideas, i.e. those ranked in both WARC's Creative 100 and Effective 100, have a higher level of creative commitment (7.7) compared to other awarded campaigns (5.9).

In terms of sectors, findings included in the report reveal that over half (57%) of the highly creative ideas from the telecommunications sector were also awarded for effectiveness. 55% of pharma & healthcare, and 50% of financial services ideas were also effective.

Health of Creativity follows the recent publication of Marketing Through Volatility, a series of reports uncovering key creative, media and effective insights from the most awarded campaigns of 2020 so far, as well as the strategies of brands that were notable in their response to the volatility of the past 12 months. Download here a sample of these reports.

The full 2021 WARC Rankings - Creative 100, Media 100, Effective 100 - will be published in November when all 2020 wins have been awarded.

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About WARC – The global authority on marketing effectiveness
WARC is an Ascential company, the path-to-purchase business that combines intelligence, data and insights to drive growth in the digital economy. We do this by delivering an integrated set of business-critical products in the key areas of product design, marketing and sales.

For over 30 years WARC has been powering the marketing segment by providing rigorous and unbiased evidence, expertise and guidance to make marketers more effective. WARC services include 18,000+ case studies, 90,000+ best practice guides, research papers, special reports and advertising trend data, webinars, awards, events and advisory services; has 1,200+ client companies, 21,500+ active users in 100+ countries; collaborates with 50+ industry partners; has offices in the UK, US, China and Singapore.

About WARC Rankings
The WARC Rankings provide the ultimate, independent benchmark for excellence in creativity, media and effectiveness. Our methodology is rigorous and transparent using five key stages to produce unbiased results.

The WARC Rankings are created with the industry, for the industry. We collaborate with marketers at all levels across agencies and brands, to ensure The Rankings remain relevant.
The benchmarks are at the core of our promise: to bring confidence to marketing decisions through evidence-based insight and inspiration.

The WARC Rankings consist of:
WARC Creative 100: The world’s most awarded companies and campaigns for creativity
WARC Media 100: The world’s most awarded companies and campaigns for media
WARC Effective 100: The world’s most awarded companies and campaigns for effectiveness