

VABInspire

**Virtual Learning Series
Winter 2021**

The Power of Storytelling:

Using Data to Communicate with
Greater Impact



Today's speakers



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VAB
EVP



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VAB
SVP, Director of Integrated Strategy &
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About VAB

VAB is an insights-driven organization that inspires marketers to reimagine their media strategies resulting in fully informed decisions.

Drawing on our marketing expertise, we **simplify** the complexities in our industry and **discover** new insights that **transform** the way marketers look at their media strategy.

Simplify

We save you time by bringing you the latest data & actionable takeaways you can use to inform your marketing plans.

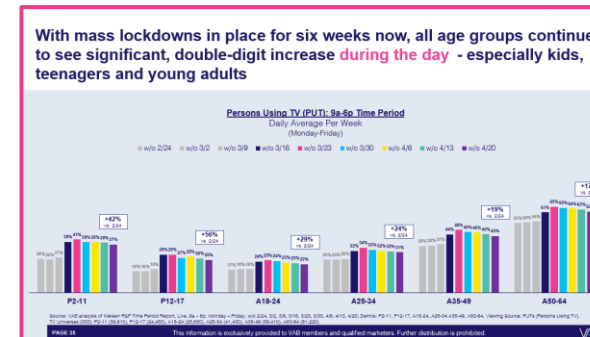
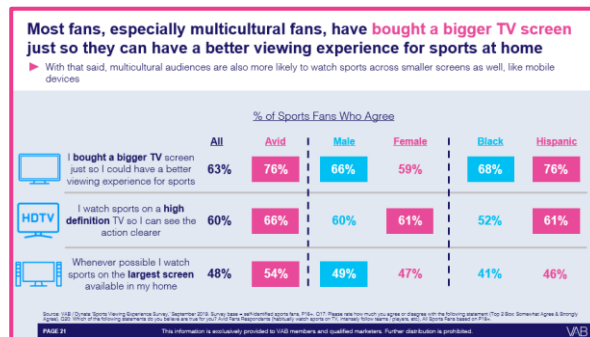
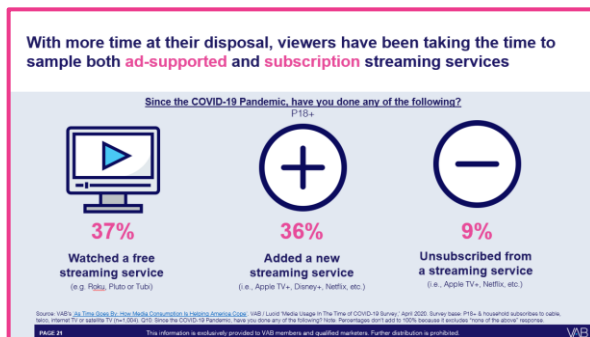
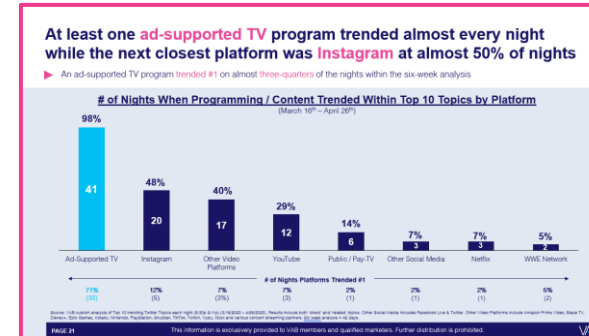
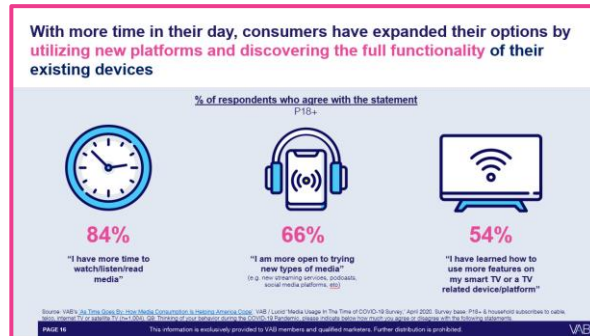
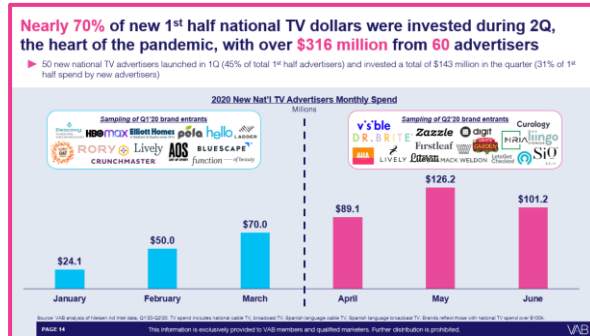
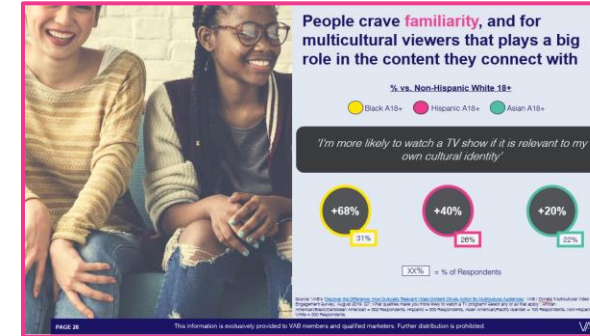
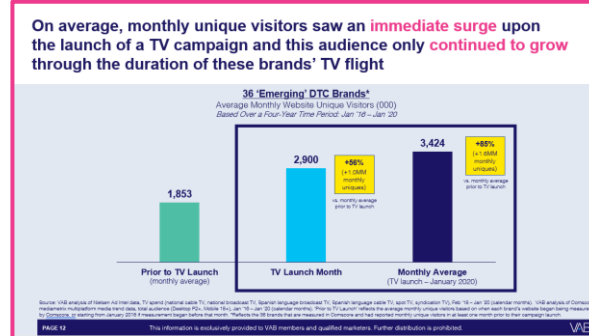
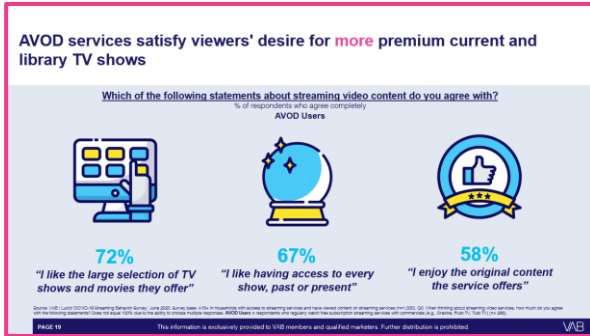
Discover

We keep you one step ahead with the latest thinking so you can create innovative, forward-looking strategies.

Transform

We help you build your brand by focusing on core marketing principles that will help drive tangible business outcomes.

In 2020, we produced 45 pieces of custom storytelling, 1,277 pages of insights



What you'll learn today

1 What do we mean by “storytelling?”

2 Why is it important for marketers to be storytellers?

3 The 8 steps of data-driven storytelling

What you'll learn today

1 What do we mean by “storytelling?”

2 Why is it important for us to be storytellers?

3 The 8 steps of data-driven storytelling

Business storytelling is the art of expressing business communications as a well-defined, flow-oriented narrative



What you'll learn today

1 What do we mean by “storytelling?”

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3 The 8 steps of data-driven storytelling



Remembered statistics

MAKE SENSE



Remembered Stories

MAKE MEANING

To be a compelling **salesperson or marketer**, it's important to understand that stories are more memorable than facts since stories build connections with the audience

Source: *Made to Stick* by Chip and Dan Heath, <https://www.pcma.org/three-tips-telling-effective-data-stories/>

Learning the skills of
business storytelling can
help set you up for
success

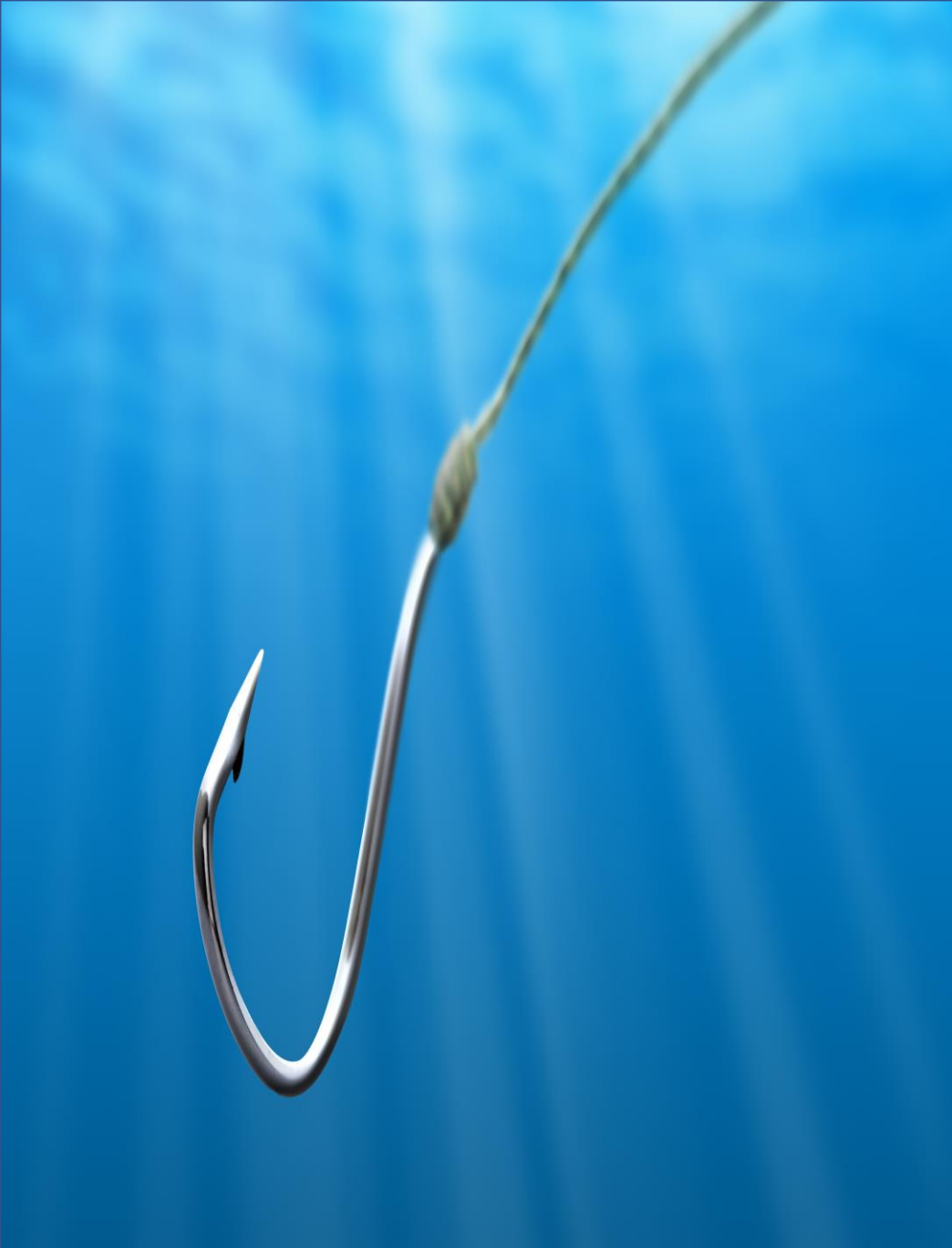
- Be more confident when presenting data-based recommendations
- Develop professionally, grow from analyst to thought leader
- Garner more support for your ideas, recommendations and pitches

What you'll learn today

1 What do we mean by “storytelling?”

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3 The 8 steps of data-driven storytelling



What's Your Hook?

Compelling data-driven stories begin with a question, a conflict or a challenge requiring a solution. Identify the question you are tackling and the main point you want your audience to take away from your story.

Why is this important?

In order to tell an effective story, your audience needs to care and be invested in the outcome.



At VAB, our work always begins with a marketer question

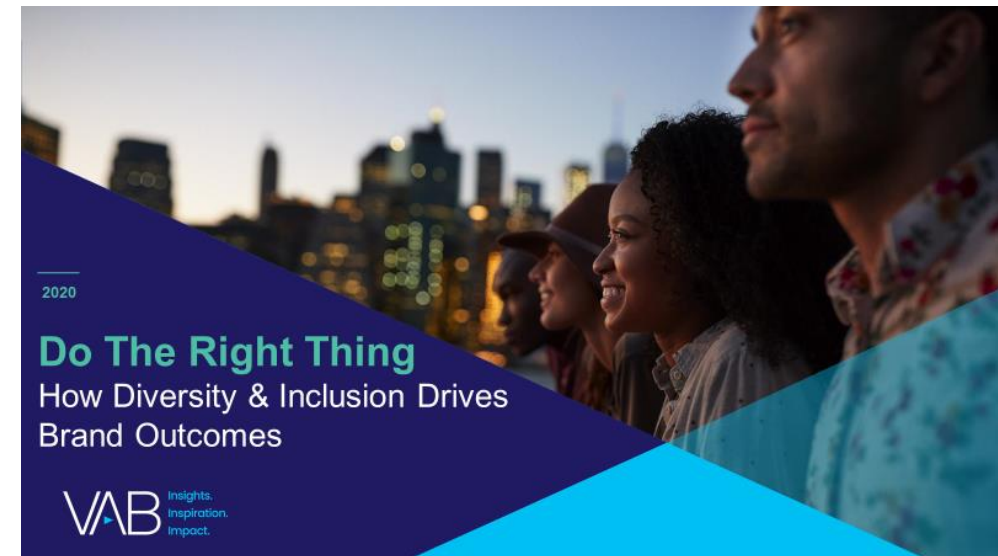


“Should I continue to advertise during an economic downturn?”



100-year historical analysis of advertisers that continued spending during an economic downturn and the risks faced by those that peel back their investment

“How do I prove to my CEO/CFO a diversity and inclusion campaign will lead to brand growth?”



Through 20+ real-world, original case studies, this guide highlights how ad campaigns with a core message of diversity and inclusion deliver strong brand results throughout the purchase funnel

This question serves as our “north star” throughout the process



“How has COVID-19 changed consumer sentiment and media behavior?”



Custom study exploring how **viewing behaviors**, **attitudes** and views on **advertising** have evolved since the **start of COVID-19**



Understand Your Audience

Consider who you are speaking to – what they need from the story, their level of familiarity with the subject, their level of expertise as marketers and ultimately how the main point of this story will help them to solve a problem or think differently.

Why is this important?

In order to truly influence an audience, the material and the way it's presented must align with their needs.



Example: To help break down **internal barriers**, we gave marketers concrete business rationale to justify investing in a diversity and inclusion campaign



*“How do I prove to my **CEO/CFO** a diversity and inclusion campaign will lead to brand growth?”*

Johnnie Walker: The ‘Keep America Walking’ campaign focused on inclusion drove two-thirds of the brand’s total digital interactions over the last five years



On election day in 2016, Johnnie Walker released an ad entitled ‘This Land’ as part of their ‘Keep America Walking’ campaign. The spot quotes Woody Guthrie’s song ‘This Land is Your Land,’ in both English and Spanish, to spread a message of unity and inclusion. The ad offers distinct visualizations and provides an authentic representation of America’s rich cultural diversity.

Results: Viewer sentiment was overwhelmingly positive for the ad, especially considering the divisiveness of the times during the 2016 Presidential election, which helped spur high digital interactions (mainly social mentions and online video views) relative to brand spend.

“This Land” TV spot - \$5.7 MM
Airings Throughout 18 Weeks: 11/8/16 – 3/14/17
446 Airings / 222.0 MM HH IMPs

Business Outcomes

- Positive Sentiment: 90%**
 - Average positive sentiment for all other Johnnie Walker ads: 80%
- Digital Engagement Impact:**
 - Although only **16% of TV spend**, it resulted in **65% of total earned online activity**

Source: VAB analysis of spot TV TV occurrence data and engagement analysis, time period: 11/16 – 6/30/20; estimated media spend; impressions represent US TV hits and include activity within measured national broadcast and cable TV time; national time-entitled, total, VO and OTT. Digital engagement impact figures are based on all measured TV activity between 11/16 – 6/30/20. Total Earned Online Activity = Twitter social actions, Facebook social actions, YouTube social video views.

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Zola: The launch of their diversity and LGBTQ+ inclusion campaign led to the brand’s most trafficked month ever on their website



In December 2019, Zola debuted their ‘No Regrets’ campaign which included six different spots focused specifically on diversity and LGBTQ+ inclusion. The ads show three couples who all appear to be reciting their vows but instead are stating regrets from their wedding planning, which highlights just how much people have lost touch with what matters – the couple.

Results: Zola saw their highest total monthly unique website traffic ever in January 2020, two months into the campaign launch, with 345K more digital visitors than their second highest trafficked month (January 2019). Zola was continuing their upward momentum through first quarter 2020 until COVID-19 hit.

“No Regrets” TV spot (six creatives) - \$2.7 MM
16-Week Campaign: 12/2/19 – 3/24/20
3,852 Airings / 698.1 MM HH IMPs

Business Outcomes

- Persons 18+ Website Traffic: +15% Increase** in Zola’s two-month average unique P18+ website visitors (covers the end of the campaign between Feb-Mar 20 (YoY comparison).
- Black 18+ Website Traffic: +70% Increase** in Zola’s two-month average unique Black 18+ website visitors during the same time frame period comparison as above for P18+.

Source: VAB analysis of spot TV TV occurrence data, time period: 11/19 – 6/30/20; estimated media spend; impressions represent US TV hits and include activity within measured national broadcast and cable TV time; national time-entitled, total, VO and OTT. VAB analysis of composite marketplace multiplatform made brand base (desktop and mobile), P18+, Black 18+, January 19 – March 20. Comparisons reflect January 20 vs. January 19 and February-March 20 vs. February-March 19.

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Nike: Record-breaking sales have been achieved in each quarter since the launch of their ‘Dream Crazy’ campaign featuring Colin Kaepernick



In September 2018, Nike released their first in a series of ‘Dream’ spots for their on-going ‘Just Do It’ campaign. The first ad (‘Dream Crazy’) featured controversial NFL star turned social activist, Colin Kaepernick, who remarked ‘believe in something, even if it means sacrificing everything.’ The ads celebrate the rich diversity found in sports through the collection of stories that represent athletes who are household names and those that should be (including 29-year old basketball wheelchair athlete Megan Blunk and Isaiah Bird, a 10-year old wrestler born without legs).

Results: Nike launched the ‘Dream Crazy’ ad at the beginning of their 3rd quarter and proceeded to see their highest 3Q revenues ever at that point and their highest year-over-year growth in any quarter in over two and a half years. Record-breaking quarterly sales have continued in each successive quarter through our evaluation period (ending Feb ‘20).

“Dream Crazy / Dream Crazier / Dream With Us” TV spots (five creatives) - \$21.7 MM
14-Month Campaign: 9/6/18 – 10/23/19
663 Airings / 371.1 MM HH IMPs

Business Outcomes

North America Quarterly Revenue Comparison:

- Sep-Nov ‘18 (‘Dream Crazy’ launch) vs. PY: **+9%**
- Dec ‘18-Feb ‘19 vs. PY: **+7%**
- Mar-May ‘19 (‘Dream Crazier’ active) vs. PY: **+7%**
- Jun-Aug ‘19 (‘Dream Us’ active) vs. PY: **+4%**
- Sep-Nov ‘19 vs. PY: **+5%**

Source: VAB analysis of spot TV TV occurrence data, time period: 11/18 – 6/30/20; estimated media spend; impressions represent US TV hits and include activity within measured national broadcast and cable TV time; national time-entitled, total, VO and OTT. Financials are based on quarterly company filings (10-Q), for North America revenue (the base) and report all the United States (geographic level) US \$ (USD), revenues reflect total units and exclude Corporate. PY = Previous Year (same quarter).

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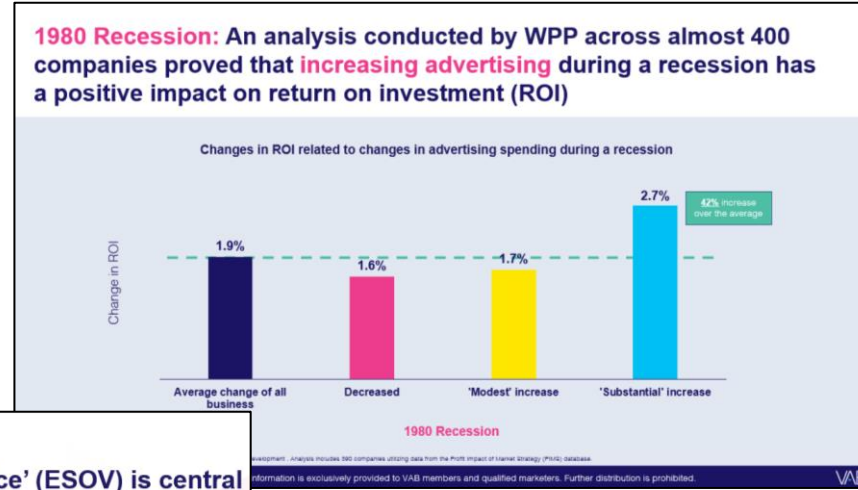
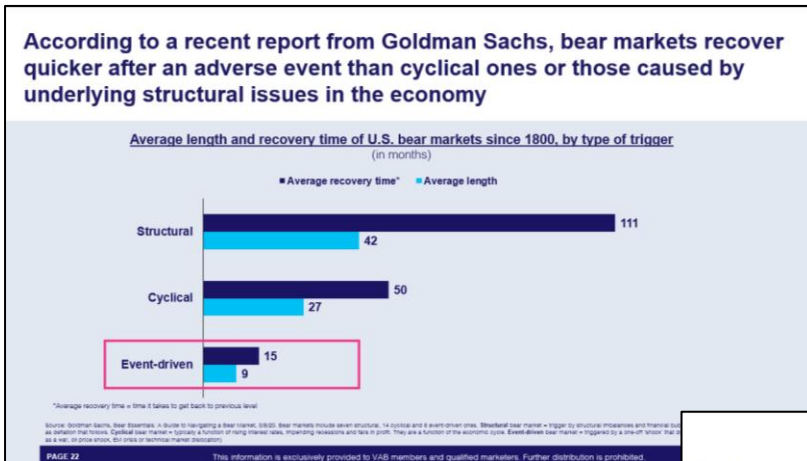
20+ **real-world case studies** across a variety of categories, investment levels and across the entire purchase funnel



Example: To ensure our economic guide was **accessible to all**, we focused on simple concepts backed by sophisticated economic and marketing theory



“Should I continue to advertise during an economic downturn?”



Furthermore, the concept of 'Excess Share Of Voice' (ESOV) is central to understanding why advertising in a recession makes sense

Market share is a function of many things. But one of the *biggest drivers of sales* is a brand's **share of voice**.

The more a brand spends on advertising vs. its competitors, the more it will grow. This proven relationship is called '**Excess Share of Voice (ESOV)**.'

If a brand has a **20%** share of market but a **30%** share of voice, it has an **ESOV of +10**.

In almost every recorded instance, a brand with a positive **ESOV** will gradually grow its share of the market to a level that will eventually match its share of voice.

-Mark Ritson, *The Australian Business Review*, 4/6/20

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Make a Research Plan

Once you understand the point you are setting out to make, create a plan to find the data that will best support it. Consider traditional sources, but also think creatively about how to best find information, stats and data points that best prove your point.

Why is this important?

Research can be overwhelming. It's important to keep focused on the sources that will best yield data that supports your story.



Example: Understanding the gravity of this decision for marketers, we independently analyzed 100 years of economic and advertising data



“Should I continue to advertise during an economic downturn?”

For 100 years, scholars have been demonstrating how brands that increase their ad budgets during an economic downturn grow sales much faster than their competitors – both during the time period and beyond it

In the 1920's, companies that decreased their advertising spend saw sales decline both during the recession and then for the following three years.

In relative terms, these companies actually underperformed even those that elected to do no advertising at all.

This was the first in a series of proof points over the last century to prove the ability of increased advertising during a recession to drive outcomes.

1920-1921 Depression

Source: Robert S. Vais, 'The Use of Advertising During Depression', Harvard Business Review, April 1927. Analysis includes 200 companies. Specific sales index data points based on Mark Rosen, 'Marketing in the Time of Contraction', webinar, April 2020 (Marketing Week, #WV20-148-Advertising program).

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1974-1975 Recession: Similar patterns were seen in the 1970's as companies that did not cut their advertising budget not only remained strong during the recession but emerged even stronger after it

1974-1975 Recession

Source: Mark Rosen/Parsons Inc. Associated Business Publications, '100 Years of Advertising: 100 Companies That Did Not Cut Their Advertising Budgets During the Recession', Marketing in the Time of Contraction, webinar, April 2020 (Marketing Week, #WV20-148-Advertising program).

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1980 Recession: An analysis conducted by WPP across almost 400 companies proved that increasing advertising during a recession has a positive impact on return on investment (ROI)

1980 Recession

Source: Deland Advertising, 1980 WPP Center for Research and Development, Analysis includes 300 companies using data from Path Forward, Marketing, WPP, 2008.

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1981-1982 Recession: A McGraw-Hill research analysis of 600 companies showed that those who maintained or increased their ad spend averaged significantly higher sales growth for three years after the recession

1981-1982 Recession

Source: McGraw-Hill Research, analysis of 600 companies covering 16 different industries from 1981-1985. Forbes, 'When a Recession Comes, Don't Stop Advertising', Brad Adgate, 8/1/81.

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1980s – early 2000s Recession Periods: The same PIMS study demonstrated that companies increasing their advertising investment also improved their 'Return on Capital Employed (ROCE)'

1980s – early 2000s Recession Periods

Return on Capital Employed = a financial ratio that measures a company's profitability and the efficiency with which its capital is used (i.e., a measurement of how well a company is generating profits from its capital).

Source: Baskin, Advertising Through a Recession, Utilizing data from PIMS - The Path Forward Marketing Strategy database. The PIMS database is a archive of financial information on 148 consumer business containing both marketing data and financial information for these business.

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2008-2009 Recession: Based on the same analysis, investing in share of voice during the recession drove large, long-term profit growth afterwards as well

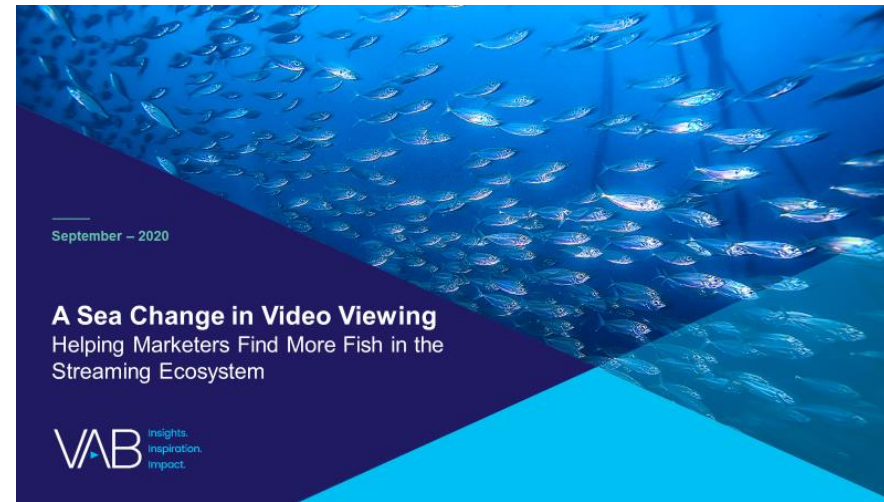
2008-2009 Recession (began Dec '07)

Source: Reinhardt's Advertising Research Group, 'Long Term Profit Growth Advertising During Recession', 4/8/10 | LinkedIn | 10/2018 | Source: Reinhardt's Advertising Research Group, 'Long Term Profit Growth Advertising During Recession', 4/8/10.

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Example: During COVID-19 when syndicated data was unable to provide **real-time** data, we turned to custom studies for answers

“How has COVID-19 changed consumer sentiment and media behavior?”





Vet Your Data

Ensure your data is trusted and verified. Consult a variety of sources to determine how consistent the findings are. Ensure accuracies in how you make comparisons and other analyses.

Why is this important?

Your story is only as strong as the data it's based upon.



Example: To verify our findings, we cross reference with industry experts and other reputable outside sources



Academic scholars, Fortune 100 companies, financial analysts, research firms and ad agencies all **conducted independent analyses** and agree **advertising through a downturn is better for your long-term brand health**

A collage of logos for various companies and organizations. The logos include: P&G, Walmart, Amazon, WPP, NYU STERN, Harvard Business Review, KANTAR, MillWARD BROWN, Adam & Eve, DDB, Journal of Advertising Research, System1, McGraw Hill, MarketingWeek, Mini MBA, WARC, Forbes, Ehrenberg-Bass, IPAC, The Australian Business Review, USC Marshall, and Syracuse University. The logos are arranged in a grid-like fashion with some overlapping.

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...and click on the below 'advertising in a recession' marketing articles and research pieces to read **what others in the industry are saying**

- ▶ [AdAge - History Shows Marketers Who Keep Spending During Downturns Fare Much Better](#)
- ▶ [Forbes - How to Adapt Your Marketing to a Possible Slowdown in an Economy Shaped by the Coronavirus](#)
- ▶ [Forbes - When A Recession Comes, Don't Stop Advertising](#)
- ▶ [Harvard Business Review - Advertising as an Anti-Recession Tool](#)
- ▶ [Harvard Business Review - What Coronavirus Could Mean for the Global Economy](#)
- ▶ [Journal of Advertising Research - A Critical Review and Synthesis of Research on Advertising in a Recession](#)
- ▶ [Mark Ritson - If You're In Marketing, Now Is The Time To Spend, Not Bend](#)
- ▶ [Mark Ritson - Marketing in the Time of Coronavirus](#)
- ▶ [Marketing Week - It's the Recession on Steroids - Why Brands Need to Think Long-Term Amid the Coronavirus Pandemic](#)
- ▶ [Marketing Week - Marketing in the Time of COVID-19](#)
- ▶ [Marketing Week - The Best Marketers Will Be Upping, Not Cutting, Their Budgets](#)
- ▶ [Peter Field - Advertising in Recession - Long, Short or Dark? A Guide to Advertising Best Practice in Recession](#)
- ▶ [System1 - COVID-19: A Right-Brain Reset for Advertisers](#)
- ▶ [The Drum - P&G Ramps Up Marketing Amid Coronavirus Demand](#)
- ▶ [WARC - Lessons for Adapting to Recession from Peter Field](#)
- ▶ [WARC - The Opportunity To Grow Market Share Is Clear, But Marketers Aren't Taking It](#)



Edit Yourself

In storytelling, data points play a supporting role. They are used to *support* to your story, they *aren't* the story. Ask yourself how critical each piece of information is and be honest about the role it plays in convincing the audience of your main point.

Why is this important?

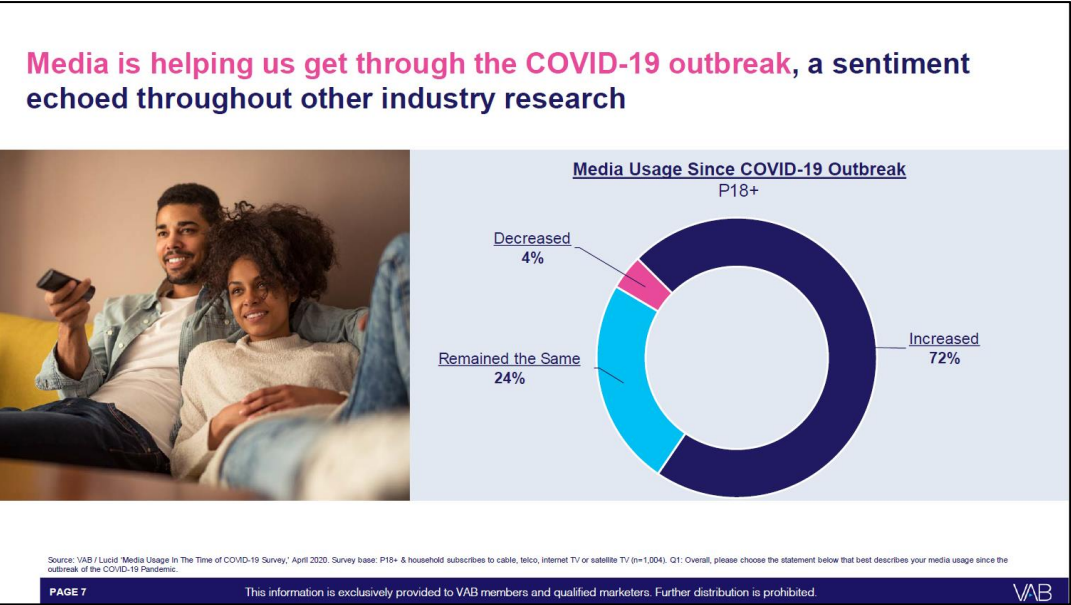
Tangents, even interesting ones, will detract from your main storyline. That means your story will be less impactful and more likely that the audience will be distracted from the primary takeaway.



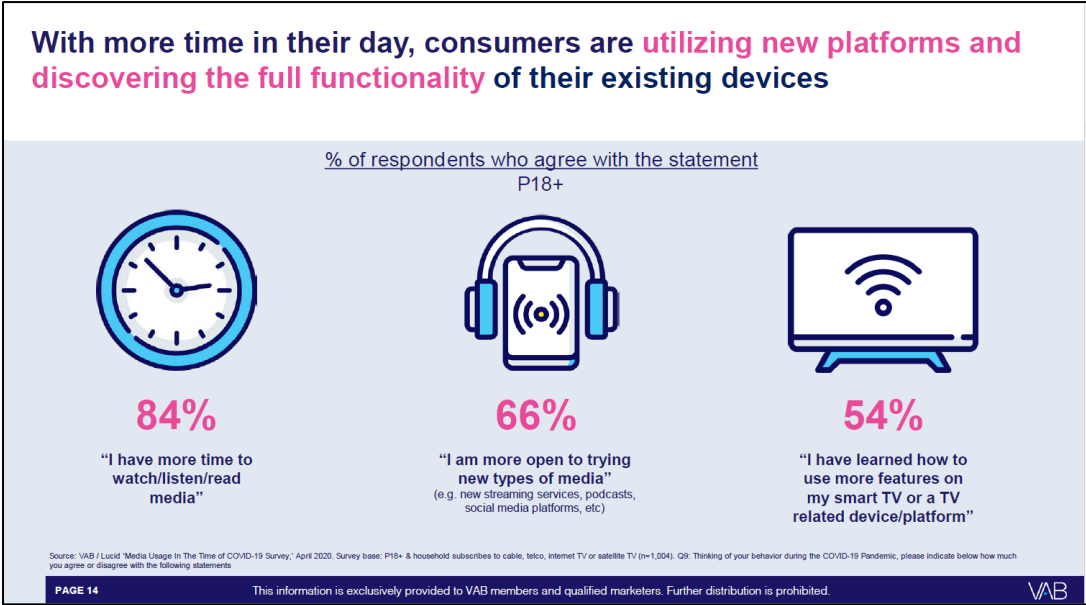
Example: Our COVID custom study focused on the “why” behind consumer behavior rather than the “how much”



edited: “how much”



The story: “the why”



Example: Don't edit at the expense of understanding



2020

Do The Right Thing
How Diversity & Inclusion Drives
Brand Outcomes

VAB
rights
inclusion
impact

Below are **definitions of the metrics** utilized throughout this guide with an explanation of how these metrics **affect an overall marketing campaign**

Several TV creative metrics, such as ad attention score, can be used as a proxy for overall consumer response to marketing campaigns

Metric	Definition	Why Is It Important To Marketers?
Ad Attention Score (iSpot.tv)	On average, how long is a TV ad viewed as a % of its duration before being interrupted?	The higher the score, the more likely a consumer is paying attention to an entire brand message which can drive greater awareness.
Brand / Industry Attention Index (iSpot.tv)	How does the attention score compare to other brand TV ads, or TV ads in the industry, during the measured time period?	Shows how much more impactful that ad is (as measured by attention paid to it) vs. other ads.
Brand Attention Ranking (iSpot.tv)	Where does a TV ad rank on attention score compared to the other brand TV ads during the measured time period.	Provides a comparison of how attentive people are towards a campaign / message vs. other campaigns for the brand.
Positive Sentiment (iSpot.tv)	% of people who react positively to an ad based on votes registered through iSpot.tv's public commercial site and YouTube.	People that like an ad and, more importantly, like the messaging of an ad are more likely to consider a brand for purchase.
Digital Engagement Impact (iSpot.tv)	Comparison of an ad's TV spend share of voice for a brand vs. the share of total brand digital interactions the ad garners (search, social, earned online video views) during a measured time period.	Demonstrates that ad's ability to deliver outsized impact and engagement relative to the spend.
Monthly Unique Website / App Visitors (Comscore)	The number of individuals visiting a brands' website and/or app in a specific month or averaged over multiple months, also can be expressed as a % increase when analyzing two time periods.	Indicates how many consumers are 'coming to the brand's front door' – learning more, looking at products, making purchases.
Revenues / Unit Sales (SEC filings / company reports)	Our analysis to quantify sales is dependent on publicly available company data including units sold, total sales and organic sales which excludes currency fluctuations, acquisitions and divestitures.	The bottom of the funnel and the ultimate customer action taken.



Craft Your Story

Succinctly and clearly set up the conflict, the issue to be discussed or problem to be solved.

Include elements that keep the reader engaged throughout, such as insight-driven headlines and periodic summary slides. You may also consider devices such as quotes or graphics that break up text and charts.

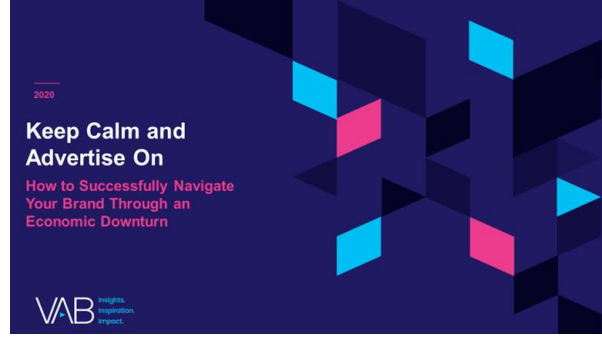
Finally, your story should lead the audience to your desired conclusion, offering takeaways, implications or action steps.

Why is this important?

You are taking your reader on a journey. Stories that follow a logical progression culminating in a clear resolution will be the most memorable – and convincing.



Example: To give the reader time to digest the information, we keep the design simple, add quotes, summaries and takeaways



Summary: A One-Hundred Year Perspective

- ▶ The full impact of advertising is seen over time
- ▶ For that reason, brands that maintain or increase their spend during a recession are rewarded well into recovery
- ▶ Brands that increase their spend, especially relative to their competitors, will grow sales and share of market faster
- ▶ Savvy brands maintain their brand equity through their brand

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“The **only sensible course** for any advertiser who wants to maintain a presence through this recession – and if your business is teetering on the edge of bankruptcy you aren’t going to be able to do this – is to be **putting money into advertising** because the role of that **is to be putting money into the recovery, not for now.**”

Advertising Consultant
2008
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Five key reminders for marketers

Maintaining your SOV now will cost you less in the long-term	Advertising during a recession is for the recovery	Be a fierce protector of your market share	Recessions can be an opportunity for expansion & growth	Messaging should evolve to be 'right for the time'
'Going dark' or significantly cutting your advertising spend will not only result in more pronounced short-term losses but it'll also be a more expensive recovery for your brand post-recession.	Brands that maintain or increase their SOV experience significant gains over the long term and the principle of 'excess share of voice' shows that the more a brand spends on advertising vs. its competitors, the more they will grow.	Stay vigilant and keep a watchful eye on your competitors in order to determine the investment needed to maintain, or grow, market share. Be prepared to pivot your own strategies quickly as a result.	If your competitors pull back spending and the market becomes less saturated with competing messages, advertisers can seize the opportunity to distinguish their brands in the minds of consumers.	Creative should align with evolving customer needs and current consumer sentiments through more compassionate brand-building efforts. Companies that show an authentic commitment to community will likely increase purchase intent.

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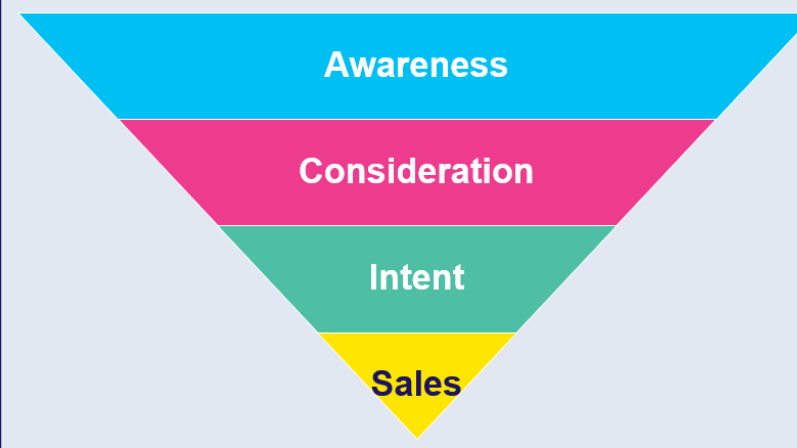
Example: Constructing the story around an established principal adds a level of familiarity for the reader and discipline for the creator



The brand metrics we analyzed for diversity and inclusion campaigns provide an in-depth understanding on how **media activity compares to business outcomes at each stage of the purchase funnel**

Brand Metrics By Funnel Stage

- **Awareness**
 - Ad Attention Score
 - Brand / Industry Attention Index
 - Brand Attention Ranking
- **Consideration**
 - Positive Sentiment
 - Digital Engagement Impact (TV spend vs. digital interactions)
- **Intent**
 - Monthly Unique Website / App Traffic
- **Sales**
 - Total or Organic Revenues / Sales
 - Unit Sales



20+ **real-world case studies** were organized into these categories enabling marketers to select the stage that aligns with their goals

Note: 'Awareness' and 'Consideration' metrics data is derived from iSpot.tv TV occurrence, attention and engagement analytics; 'Intent' metric data is based on Comscore [mediamatrix](#) multiplatform media trend analytics and 'Sales' metrics data is based on company filings (10-Q, 10-K) via SEC.gov (EDGAR) or company reports.





Decide on Data Visuals

Consider which charts, graphs, layouts and comparisons best support each point in the story. Remember, simplicity is best.

Why is this important?

We remember 10% of what we hear, 20% of what we read, but 80% of what we see. Visuals are often a crucial element to creating a memorable and compelling story.

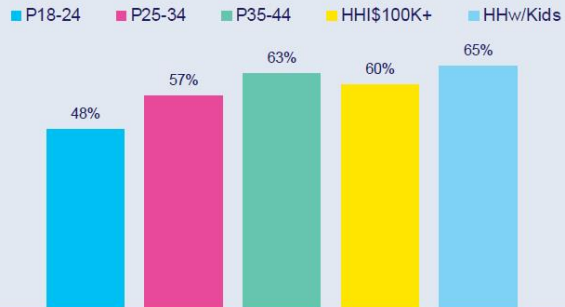


Source: medium.com

Example: A few data points on a page with an insightful headline makes the biggest impact

Almost 50% of viewers have at least one TV always set to a news channel

“At least one TV in my home is set to a news channel at all times”
Top 2 Box (Agree Completely or Agree Somewhat)



Source: VAB / Lucid 'Media Usage In The Time of COVID-19 Survey,' April 2020. Survey base: P18+ & household subscribes to cable, telco, internet TV or satellite TV (n=1,004). Q6: Thinking of your behavior during the COVID-19 Pandemic, please indicate below how much you agree or disagree with the following statements , top 2 box (agree completely or agree somewhat)

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Brands should not worry about a negative perception with advertising in COVID-19 news coverage or programming

% of respondents who agree with the statement

P18+



70%

“I feel it is appropriate for companies to advertise in COVID-19 related news programming”



75%

“I would not boycott a company because it advertised in COVID-19 related programming”

Source: VAB / Lucid 'Media Usage In The Time of COVID-19 Survey,' April 2020. Survey base: P18+ & household subscribes to cable, telco, internet TV or satellite TV (n=1,004). Q16: In general, do you feel it's appropriate for companies to advertise in COVID-19 related news programming? & Q17: Would you boycott a company because it advertised in COVID-19 related programming?

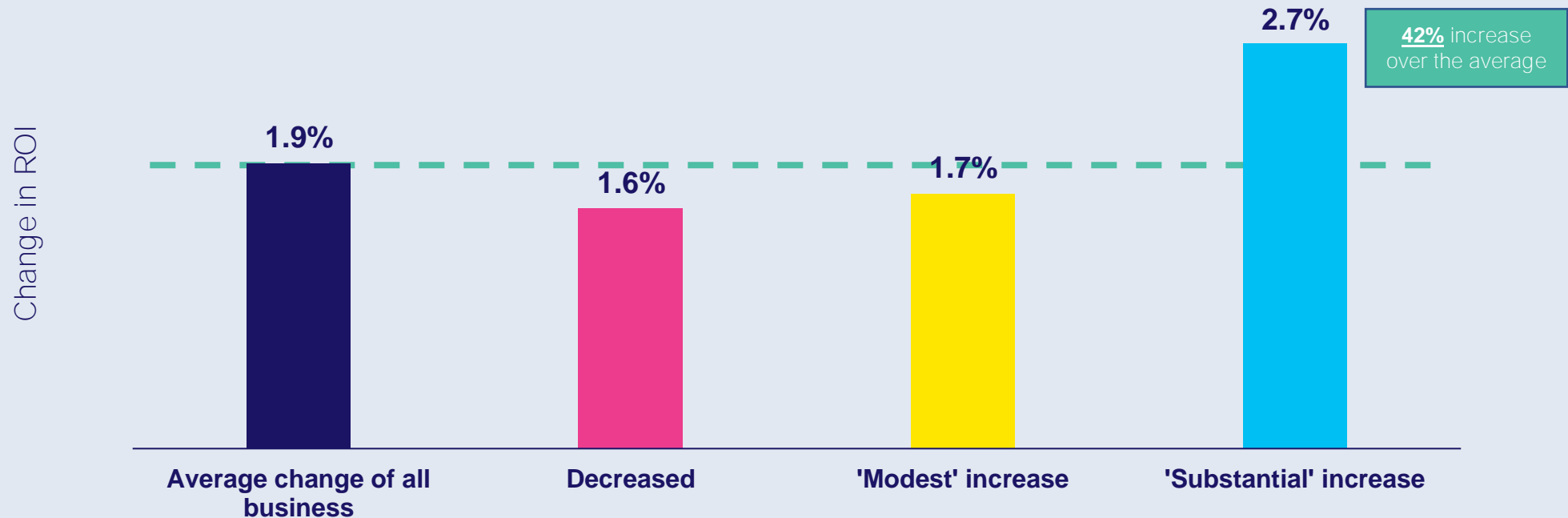
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VAB

1980 Recession: An analysis conducted by WPP across almost 400 companies proved that **increasing advertising** during a recession has a positive impact on return on investment (ROI)

Changes in ROI related to changes in advertising spending during a recession

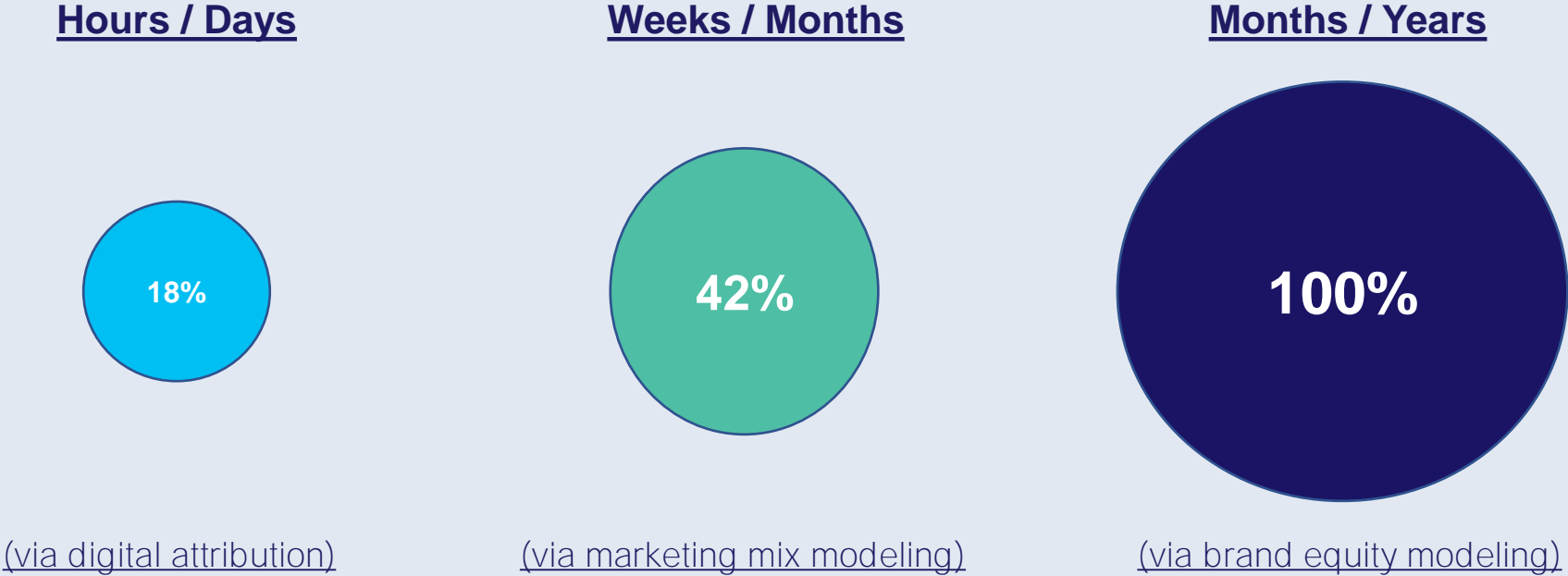


1980 Recession

Source: Biel and Stephen King, 1990, WPP Center for Research and Development . Analysis includes 390 companies utilizing data from the Profit Impact of Market Strategy (PIMS) database.

First, it's important to understand that the **full impact of advertising's effect is not seen immediately** which helps explain how brands that spend during a recession continue to see significant share gains in the years after it

Share of Sales Impact by Timeframe



How to read: 18% of sales derived from advertising occurs within hours/days of exposure

Source: Ebiqity, 'Advertising Through a Recession,' April 2020.



Get Others' Opinions

Before finalizing your story, ask for feedback on the piece. Share it with those both familiar and unfamiliar with the subject. Ensure they are logically following your story and come to the conclusions you intended.

Why is this important?

This will show you if you need to distill the data down even further, refine or reconfigure charts, or clarify language/industry jargon.



Key Takeaways for Storytellers



Be audience-centric.



Continually revisit your central question to stay focused.



Keeping focused also extends to your storyline – ensure you need all the slides and data you are including.

Thank You!

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