

The Role of Consumer Insight in Creative Advertising Development: Essential Aid or

Cognitive Bias?

Abstract

Advertising professionals praise the role of consumer insight in solving advertising problems creatively. Marketing clients and account planners claim to use insight to inject the necessary strategy into a campaign, building a creative platform upon which a brand connects with consumers. Although insight is widely seen as an invaluable aid, another perspective is that insight can create *mental set fixation*, a cognitive bias that reinforces only limited perspectives on a problem, thus inhibiting creativity. This study examines whether strong, weak or no primed insight conditions help or hinder professional creatives to develop highly creative advertising ideas, testing across two media, print and television. Self-assessments of creatives show that they see insight as compensating for low domain knowledge. However, assessments by objective judges, who are also creatives, show insight works by compensating for low intrinsic motivation. Although we show consumer insight can improve the quality of creative ideas, it should be carefully managed to produce consistently high-quality creative work.