

# Storytelling



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**Forecast Series**

Our starting hypothesis...

**In today's instant media world the art of good storytelling has been lost.**



# Why?

Consumers are facing a deluge of communications and “buy me” messages, with the movement to the always ON world of self-selection media and self-generation media.

How are marketers and advertisers using (or not using) brand storytelling to lead or support their advertising and communications?



# What we explored...

- How are New Zealanders making sense of stories in today's instant media world?
- Does storytelling change or influence consumer's behaviour?
- Is brand storytelling even relevant or has advertising messaging changed it forever? (Digital influence, fragmentation.)
- Is storytelling even more important?



## Project Methodology

# What we did...

We commissioned five major studies between June – September 2016

# Project Methodology

**The Green  
Room Survey**

**Global review  
of storytelling**

**Delphic  
Group**

**Facial  
coding study**

**Neuroscience  
research**

## The Green Room Survey



- > N=898 online interviews of New Zealanders aged 18+.
- > To allow us to explore, understand and challenge our core hypothesis and inform Delphic group engagement.
- > 10 questions – predominantly closed-ended questions, but with a couple of key open questions to collect verbatim comments.
- > Conducted online by Colmar Brunton utilising the TVNZ Green Room online community.



## Global review of storytelling

- > Global desk research conducted in July 2016, by Grace Scown, Massey University.
- > To explore:
  - > The history of storytelling.
  - > What makes a good story?
  - > How are stories likely to be told in the future?
  - > What is the impact of a good story on brain activity (neuroscience)?
  - > What is the impact of good stories on individual or group behaviours/actions (psychology)?

## Delphic Group

- > We used the key principles from the Delphic method to generate an industry view around the hypothesis.
- > We presented our hypothesis and underlying questions to 5 industry experts to explore their views and thinking. The experts were from the media, advertising and creative industry in New Zealand.
- > We gathered their initial thinking, and identified the consistencies and discrepancies, then reported the key findings back to the group for thoughts. Participants then responded to the report to help finalise our experts point of view.
- > In the process the participants remained anonymous from one another, this prevents the authority or reputation of some participants dominating others in the process.
- > Delphic Group research was conducted in August 2016, by Colmar Brunton.



## Facial coding study

- > N=440 online interviews of New Zealanders aged 18+, with N=123-190 interviews for each ad.
- > We used Link™, a creative evaluation tool developed by Millward Brown, to capture facial response from the Green Room online community, via their webcams while they viewed a series of storytelling and non-storytelling ads.
- > Facial coding study was conducted in August 2016, by Colmar Brunton utilising the TVNZ Green Room online community.

## Neuroscience research

- > Neuroscience report:  
**Narrative Power:**  
**What neuroscience has taught us about good storytelling.**  
by Sarah Walker,  
Global Neuroscience Practise Director, Millward Brown.



# The history of storytelling – why we do it, a human truth?

**Global Review of storytelling**

Grace Scown, Massey University

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Ancient rock art on a dark surface, featuring several reddish-brown silhouettes of human figures in various poses and a large wheel-like symbol with spokes.

**Stories are the oldest  
form of human  
communication**

A close-up photograph of a monkey's face, showing its eyes and an open mouth with its tongue sticking out, set against a blurred background.

**Storytelling  
separates us  
from animals**

A photograph of an older man with glasses and a young boy, both smiling and looking towards each other, suggesting a warm, connected moment.

**Stories connect us  
and make sense  
of a complex world**

A detailed blue-tinted illustration of a busy printing press from a past era, showing workers at various stages of the printing process, including typesetting and operating machinery.

**Technology has  
always impacted the  
way we tell stories**

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# Why is storytelling such a powerful communication tool?

Human beings are emotional creatures who sometimes think rationally...

The Delphic Study

©2016 TVNZ | Colmar Brunton





# Capturing hearts and minds...

Humans are better at processing emotions than they are at processing information and statistics.

There is a lack of reasoning in human decision-making – our brains are not built to be information processors, they process emotions and stories much more efficiently.

Daniel Kahnemann – Thinking, Fast and Slow

**“We think, each of us, that we’re much more rational than we are. And we think that we make our decisions because we have good reasons to make them. Even when it’s the other way around. We believe in the reasons, because we’ve already made the decision.”**

Daniel Kahnemann





# What's happening in our brains?

Neurological research shows that our brains, despite evolution, still look for the story to make sense of information today.

Brains are more engaged by storytelling than by cold hard facts – stories help us navigate life's complex social problems – storytelling has evolved, like other behaviours, to ensure our survival.







# Cortisol

**The brain produces the stress hormone cortisol during the tense moments in a story, which allows us to focus. Once a story sustains attention long enough, we begin to emotionally resonate with the story's characters.**





# Oxytocin

**Oxytocin is the neurochemical responsible for empathy – when the brain synthesises oxytocin, people are more empathetic, trustworthy, charitable and compassionate. Character-driven stories consistently cause oxytocin synthesis.**





# Dopamine

**The brain releases dopamine into the system when it experiences an emotionally-charged event, making it easier to remember and with greater accuracy.**



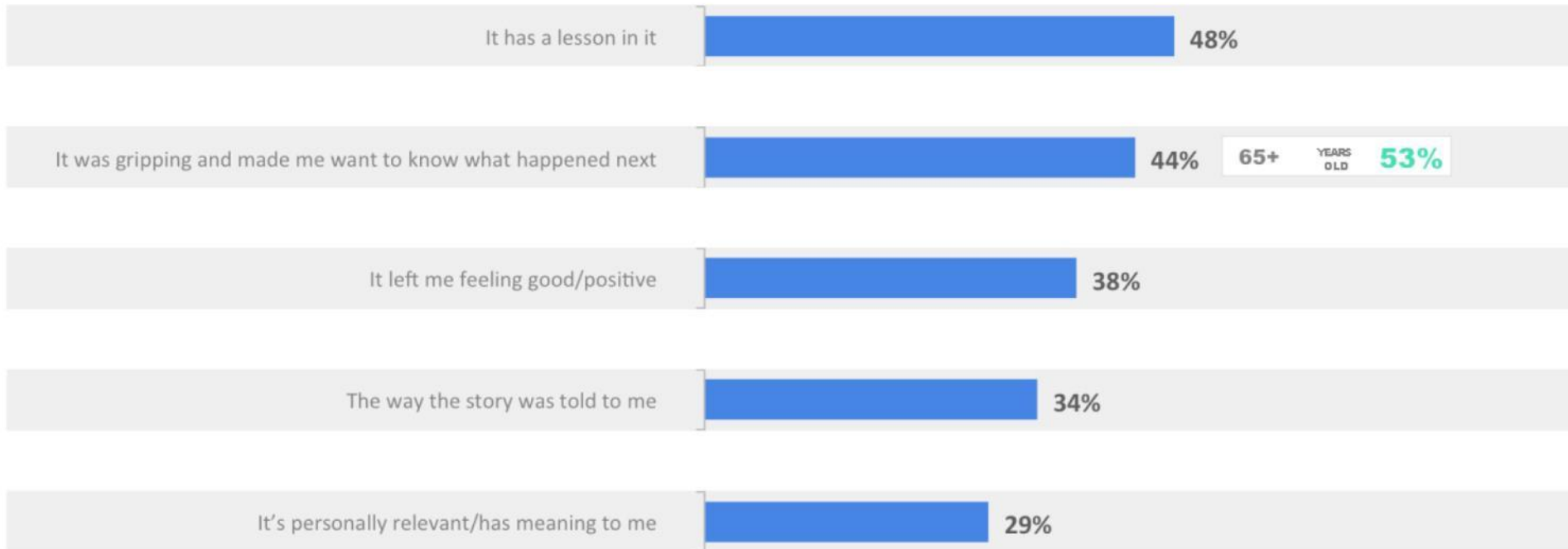


# What makes a story memorable?

New Zealanders in our Green Room online community tell us...

# What makes the story memorable?

The make up of a memorable story doesn't change much between generations, with key attributes being around a lesson learnt and being involving/engaging.



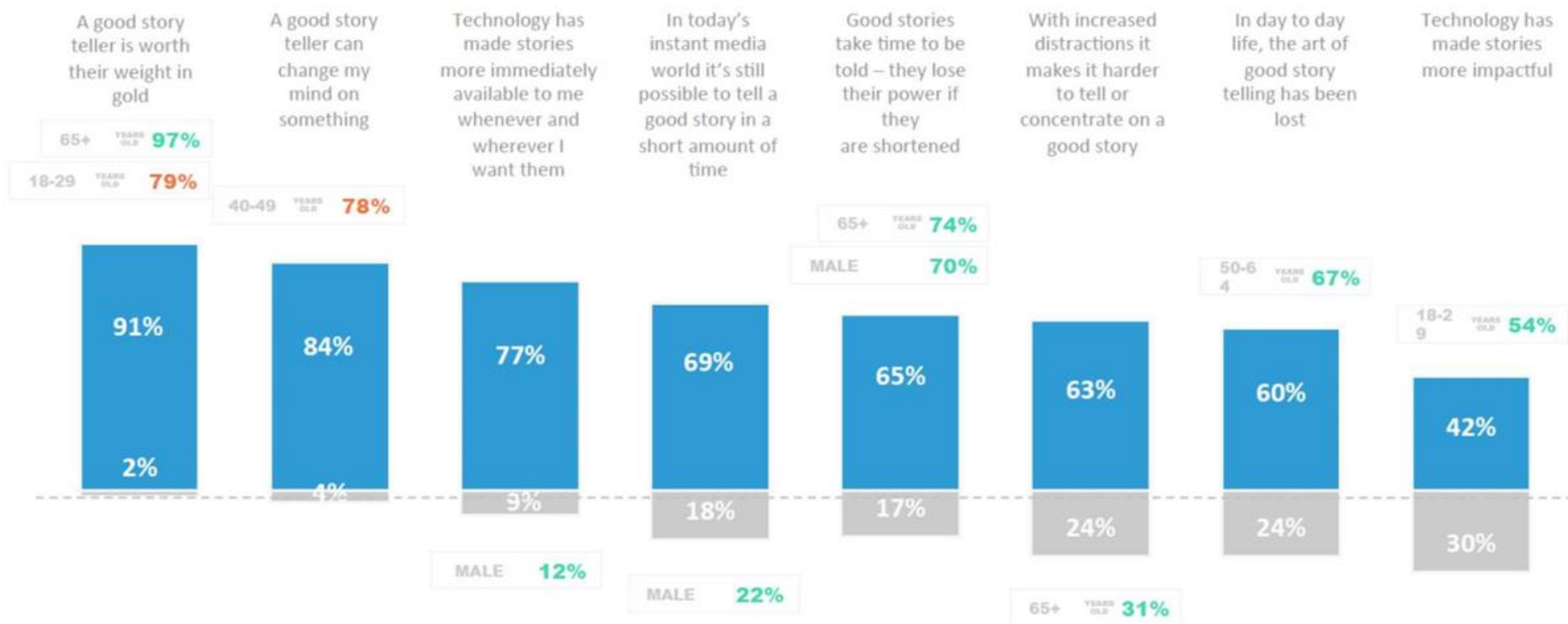
## Green Room Research

Q2 - what makes this story so memorable to you?

Base: All respondents (n=898)



# Storytelling attitudes



## Green Room Research

Q3. Do you agree/disagree with these?

Base: All respondents (n=898)

# Stories in the Instant Media World



The Green Room Study



# How has technology changed the way we tell stories?

## The positive impact:

“More immediate, on the spot, we hunger for instant news on our phones & devices & social media.”

Female 40-49

“Technology has made it easier for many voices to be part of one story.”

Male 30-39

“It’s more interactive. This was never possible. Now, we the audience can influence an outcome via social media, feedback, etc. it’s much more vivid. More real when needed. Tech brings the image to life where it couldn’t before.”

Male 40-49

“They can be more visual now than purely oral or with symbols. Media and Hollywood has developed techniques where fantasy and real life merge... storytelling like powerful, simple documentary telling is as impactful if not more so than it was 50 years ago... honest, human, raw, authentic storytelling is the most powerful.”

Male 50-64

### Green Room Research

Q1. So first off, what’s an example of a great story that has stuck with you over time?

Base: All respondents (n=898)

# How has technology changed the way we tell stories?

## The drawbacks:

“I think technology has reduced stories to sound bite sizes and there is not enough depth or substance.”

Female 50-64

“There is such a massive volume of available media that we are simply swamped by the quantity. This can make finding quality harder.”

Male 30-39

“Technology is more about visual, the imagination has diminished somewhat.”

Female 50-64

### Green Room Research

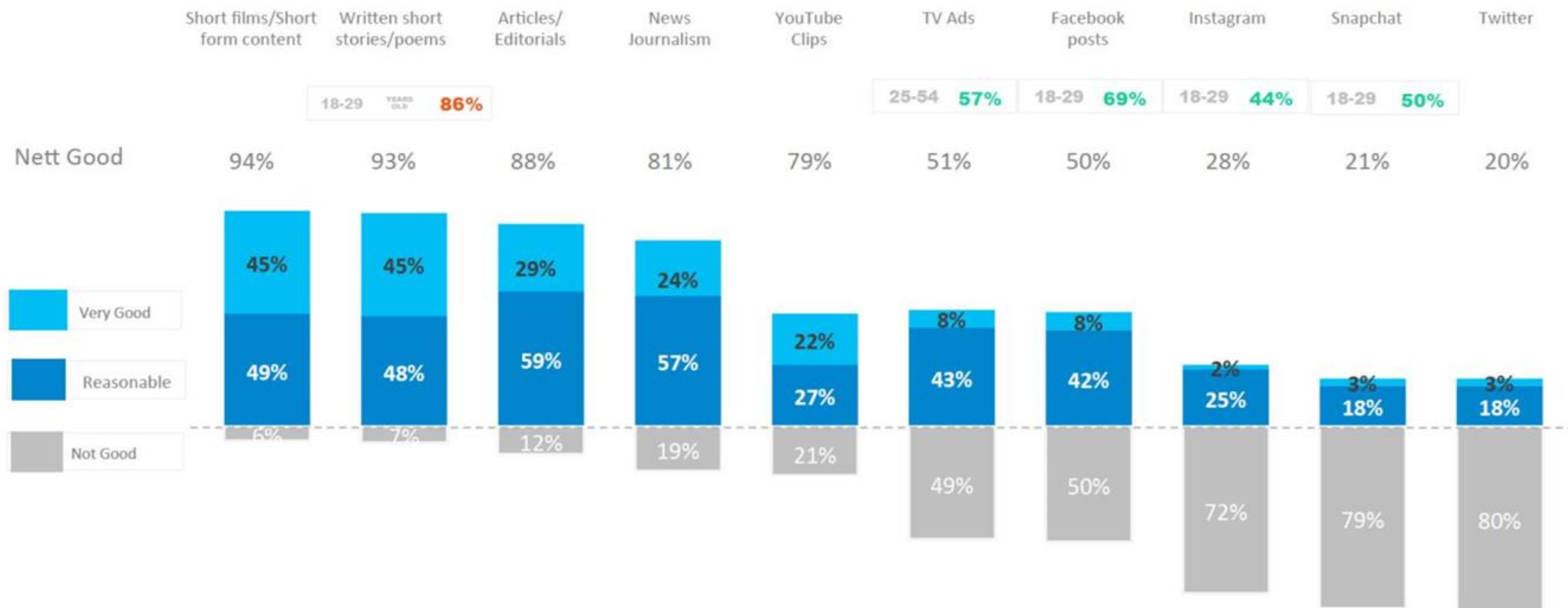
Q1. So first off, what's an example of a great story that has stuck with you over time?

Base: All respondents (n=898)



# Can short form media tell a good story?

Short stories and short films are seen as the best short form media at telling good stories, although social media such as Snapchat and Facebook are seen as effective storytelling platforms by the younger generations. Half of the Green Room online community believe that TV ads can tell good stories.



Q5. Stories can be told through many different sources and media. How good do you think each of these are at telling good stories?

Base: All respondents (n=898)

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# The changing media landscape

The Delphic Study







# Constancy and Control

We are bombarded 24/7  
with messages.

Consumers have much  
greater choice and control.



A photograph of a living room. In the background, a woman with blonde hair is talking on a mobile phone. In the middle ground, a man wearing a grey beanie and a red and blue plaid shirt is sitting on a light-colored sofa, looking towards the right. In the foreground, the backs of two children's heads are visible as they sit on the floor, looking at a tablet. A television in the background shows a cityscape. A coffee table in the foreground has a remote control and a keyboard on it.

# Democratisation of content

Everyone is the master  
of their own marketing  
strategy.



# Rush to Social Media

Some brands have gone to social media too quickly, even if they don't have anything interesting to say.



# Short-term brand planning

Much more reactive.

Less patient, planned  
brand building.







# Greater focus on how businesses / brands behave.

Doing great things, not just  
talking about them.





# Technology induced 'passivity'

Consumers have lower levels of commitment – they can quickly move on to something else.



A woman with dark hair, wearing a light-colored patterned top, is looking at a black smartphone with a wide-eyed, surprised expression. Her hand is on her forehead. A man in a blue shirt is leaning in from the right, looking at the phone. The background is a blurred indoor setting.

## It's about the conversation

Greater focus on two-way interaction through social media – having a dialogue with customers.



# The power of storytelling with brands

Image: Levi's 501 commercial





**A brand story can increase positive brand responses and ultimately make consumers more willing to purchase the brand's products in low-involvement categories.**

# What is the impact of good stories on individual or group behaviours/actions?

A 2014 study tested consumer responses to different kinds of brand stories by dividing them into three experimental conditions:

- 1 A control group with benefit-based advertising,
- 2 A story group with a traditional brand story,
- 3 A story group with a compelling, conflict-involving story.

## Results:

A statistically significant difference in consumer behaviour was measured in the conflict-involving story group, which suggests that compellingly written stories may more likely impact consumers than traditionally written stories.

Brand story can decrease negative brand associations: consumers with story-based communication were more likely to associate the brand with high quality and long traditions and expressed more trust towards the brand.

## Global Review of storytelling

Grace Scown, Massey University

Storytelling in emotional branding - How to create a story that has a significant impact on consumers. Autio, Heini, 2014, Aalto University



# The science of facial coding

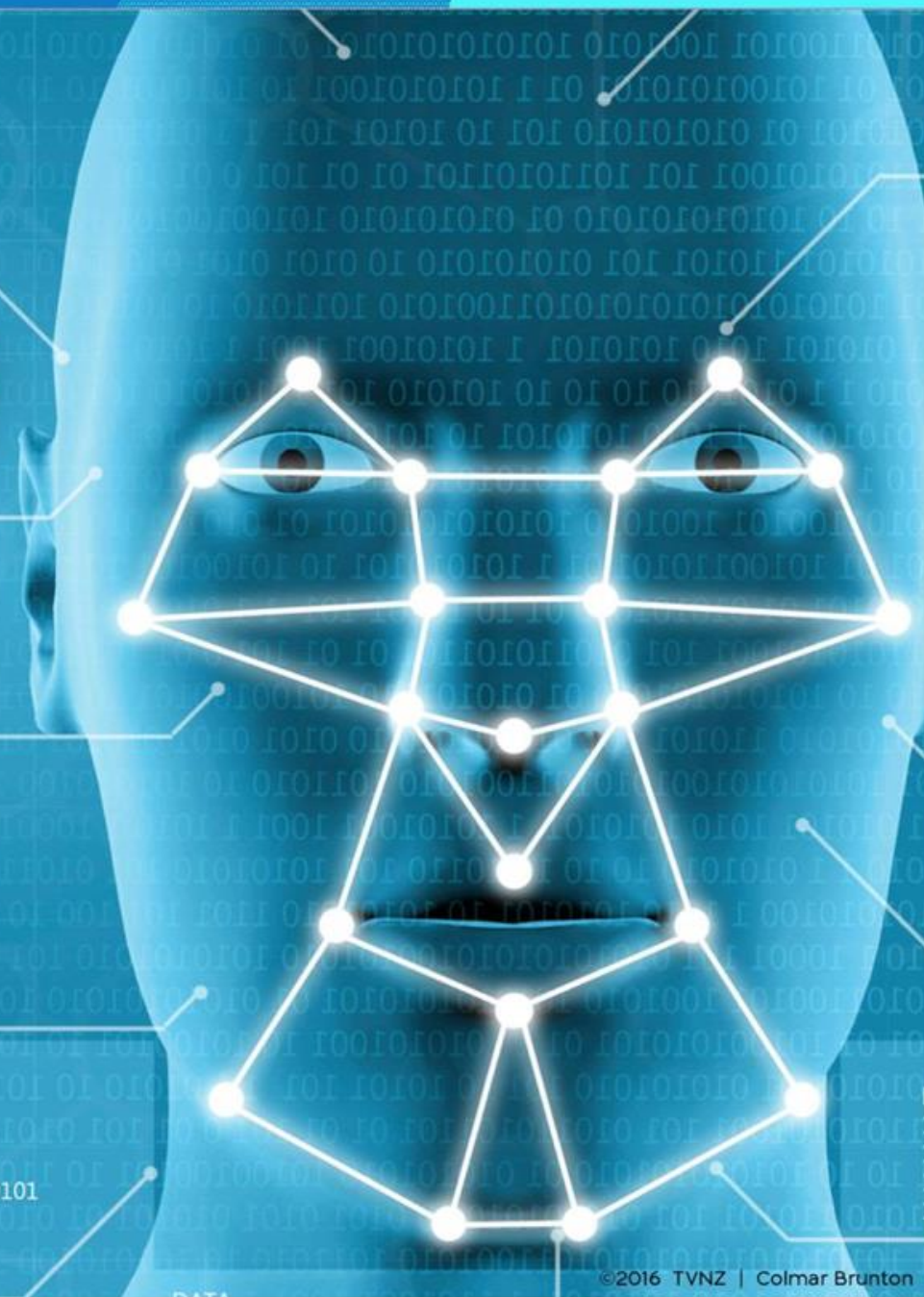
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Facial Coding



# How does facial coding work?

## The system coded an array of discrete expressions.

The facial expressions do not have to be as obvious as these examples.

The facial coding technology picks up the very subtle facial movements that we do not have control over (micro-expressions), capturing the natural and instinctive reaction to the advert.

### Surprise



An eyebrow raise is detected

### Disgust



A face displaying overall signs of dislike or disgust is detected

### Smile



A face displaying an smile is detected

### Frown



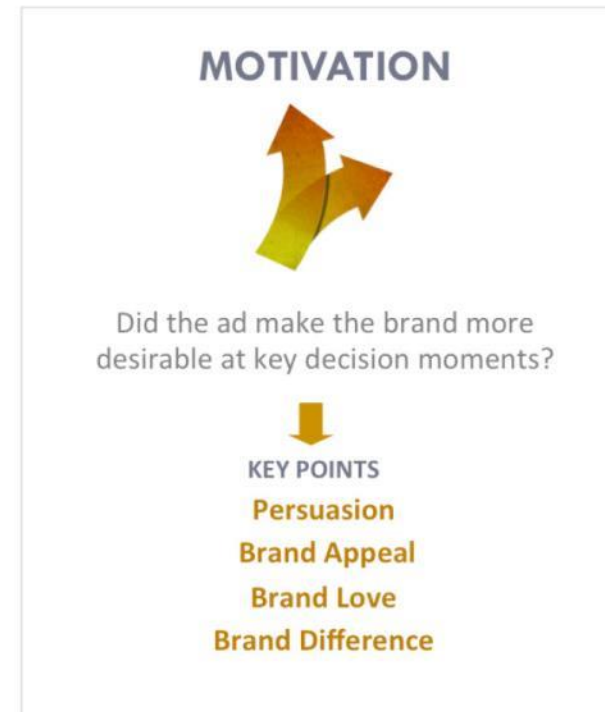
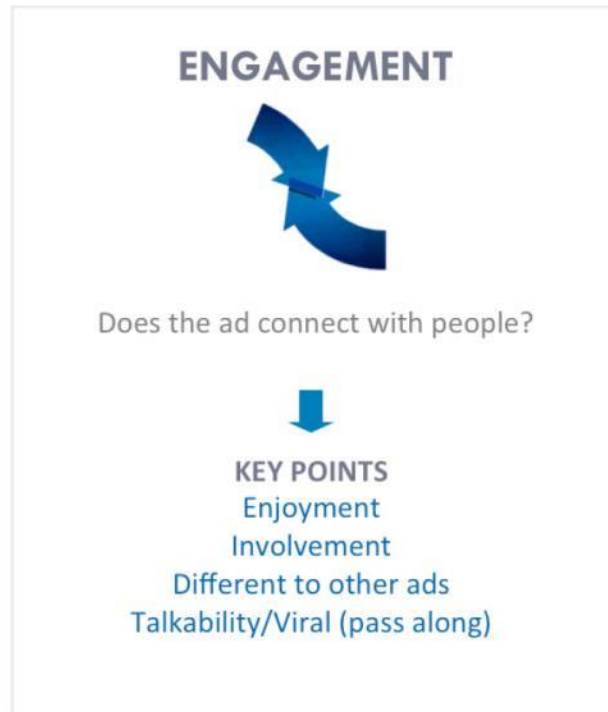
An eyebrow lower is detected in the absence of a disgust face

## Facial coding

Method: Survey conducted on the TVNZ Green Room. Completed n=123-190 evaluations per ad. Each person evaluated two ads in randomised order



# We supplemented the facial coding with key questions that we know drive successful advertising



## Facial coding

Method: Survey conducted on the TVNZ Green Room. Completed n=123-190 evaluations per ad. Each person evaluated two ads in randomised order

# We compared six ads – 3 story ads, 3 non-story ads

STORY

## CHEWING GUM

Juan & Sarah (120 secs)



## CAR

Subaru (30 secs)



## RETAIL

Briscoes Xmas (45 secs)



NON-STORY

Eat, Drink, Chew Extra (15 secs)



Car (30secs)



Briscoes Sale (30secs)



## Facial coding

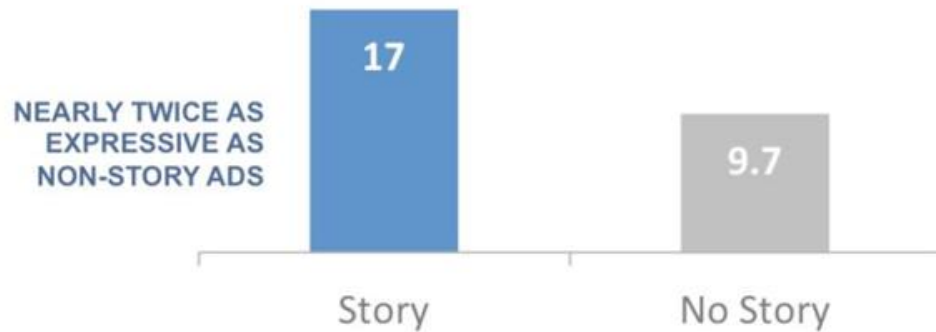
Method: Survey conducted on the TVNZ Green Room. Completed n=123-190 evaluations per ad. Each person evaluated two ads in randomised order



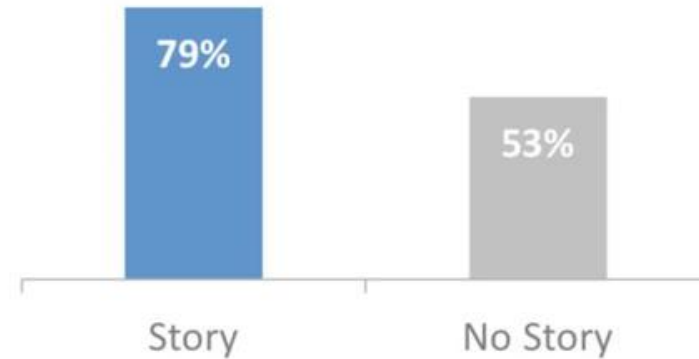
# What did we find out?

Stories stimulate more expressions & higher positive involvement

AVERAGE LEVEL OF  
EXPRESSION THROUGHOUT  
WATCHING



POSITIVE INVOLVEMENT  
RATING

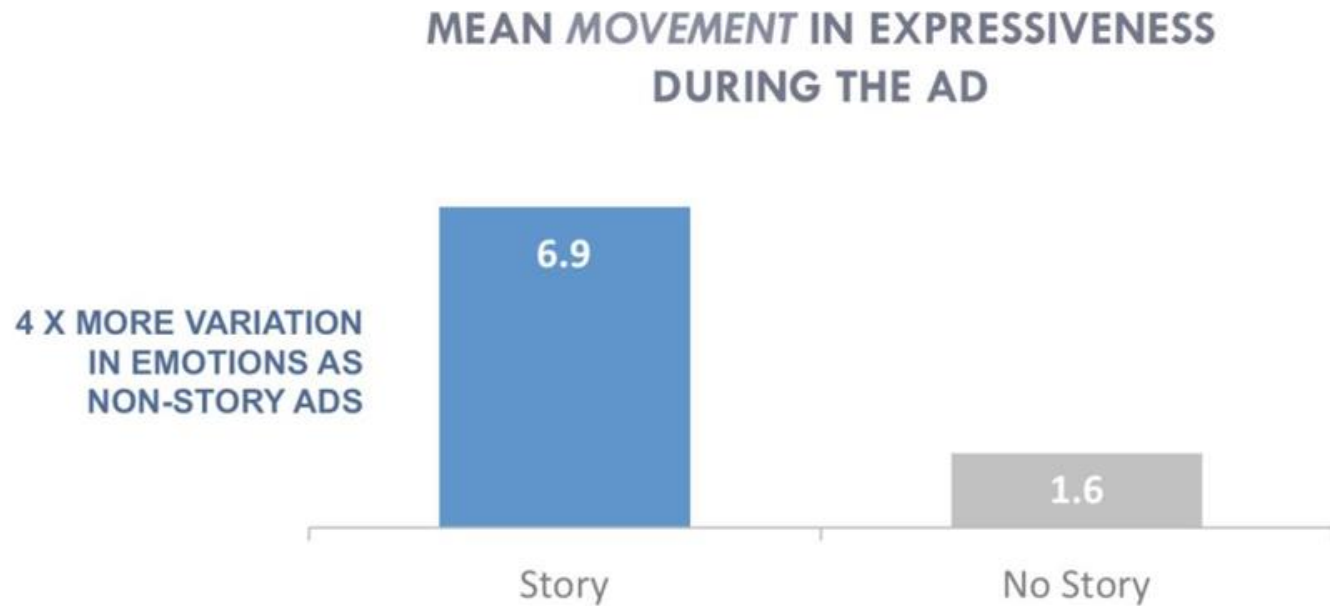


## Facial coding

Method: Survey conducted on the TVNZ Green Room. Completed n=123-190 evaluations per ad. Each person evaluated two ads in randomised order

# What did we find out?

But it's not just about the overall levels of emotions...  
It's also the emotional journey you take



## Facial coding

Method: Survey conducted on the TVNZ Green Room. Completed n=123-190 evaluations per ad. Each person evaluated two ads in randomised order



# What did we find out?

Clear differences in expressiveness across the different ads

STORY

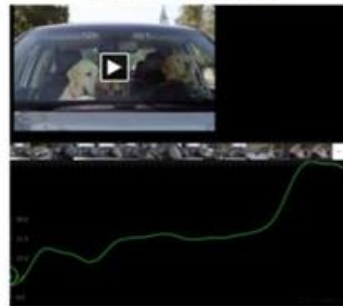
CHEWING GUM

Juan & Sarah (120 secs)



CAR

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RETAIL

Briscoes Xmas (45 secs)

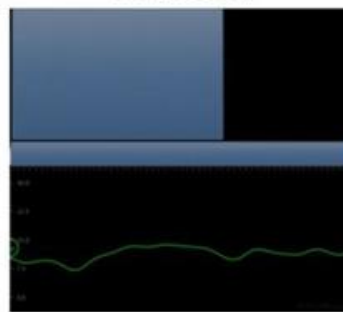


NON-STORY

Eat, Drink, Chew Extra (15 secs)



Car (30secs)



Briscoes Sale (30secs)



*To find out more about the facial coding results and to view the video animations, contact your TVNZ sales representative to arrange an appointment for the full presentation.*

## Facial coding

Method: Survey conducted on the TVNZ Green Room. Completed n=123-190 evaluations per ad. Each person evaluated two ads in randomised order



**Things to consider...**



# Story-based ads can make your communications:

- > More impactful
- > More engaging
- > Stimulate a stronger emotional response
- > Go viral
- > Be more motivating for your brand

## Facial coding

Method: Survey conducted on the TVNZ Green Room. Completed n=123-190 evaluations per ad. Each person evaluated two ads in randomised order

**The key to making a story persuasive is to make sure your brand has a credible role.**

**Narrative power:**

What neuroscience has taught us about telling a good story

Sarah Walker, Global Neuroscience Practice Director, Millward Brown



**Advertisers will need  
to think about how  
they can embrace the  
concept of story-doing...**

# Storytelling in advertising will need to evolve to survive in a new media landscape

## Story immersion – consumers becoming part of the story

Brands will need to bring their story to life and invite consumers into the story (story finding)

Augmented reality and virtual reality present huge opportunities for brands and advertisers to tell their stories in more engaging ways – how are they going to take advantage of this?



# So how are stories likely to be told in the future?

With increased levels of technology and a growing appetite for a more immersive story experience, storytelling is likely to evolve more into **story-showing, story-feeling and story-living** (where people can be integrated into real-time story worlds).

# So how are stories likely to be told in the future?

**Storytelling skills will become highly valued as attention spans lessen** and a shift from mass marketing messages through to a more customised burst based on one's preference and demography.



# So how are stories likely to be told in the future?

Different audiences are wanting different things from stories – varying from those who want to go deeper into a story world through to those who want to bring the story into the real world. This introduces the idea of **sensory stories, virtual and augmented realities.**

There's never going to be an algorithm that allows you to tell great stories at the touch of a **button...**

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$$x = \frac{-b \pm \sqrt{b^2 - 4ac}}{2a}$$





**There is still room for as much great content  
and great storytelling as there always was.**

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