

European Ad-Form Research

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*Banner
Brand
Impact
Résumé*



Basic Pan-European Study on the Effectiveness of Banner Advertising
BBI Banner-Brand-Impact

Background

In international terms, the amount of information currently available about the efficiency of banner advertising is very limited. The IAB study (<http://www.iab.net>), which has attracted the most attention up to now, is already three years old. At the same time, Internet advertising sales houses, advertising clients and agencies and site publishers are showing increased interest in acquiring fundamental, up-to-date information about the efficiency of innovative online advertising.

Objectives

The main purpose of the Banner Brand Impact Study was to investigate the communicative effect of banner advertising. Not just the mere perception of one or more banners or the impact of such banners on the memory, but the actual influence of the banners on brand images. Following the perception of a banner,

- is there a basic awareness of existing brand image profiles?
- what is the effect of specific changes to the brand image profile?

Structure of study

The Study was carried out simultaneously in five European countries during March and April 2000. It was limited to those countries which already have a well-developed user basis or in which usage is developing at a dynamic rate.

- Countries selected:



Germany



France



United Kingdom



Sweden



Spain

An equal number of cases (Internet users aged between 20 and 50) was examined in each of the five countries.



■ Number of cases: **500 = 100 per country**

■ Proportion: **50 percent female**

50 percent male

50 percent aged 20–35

50 percent aged 36–50

A total of ten different banners were used in order to test the effectiveness of this form of advertising. In each of the countries, banners were selected which had run in active online advertising campaigns. Two banners were "tested" in each country, one of which was associated with the automotive sector.

■ Banner distribution/industry ratio

Automotive: 5 banners, tested in each country

Travel: 2 banners, Germany/France

IT/PC: 2 banners, United Kingdom/Sweden

Information service: 1 banner, Spain



Assessment model / Pre-/post-testing

Pre-test

First of all, a structured questionnaire was employed to ask the interviewees selected for the survey about their awareness of the brands which would be presented later in the form of banners. The results of the pre-testing were then used to develop a brand image profile.

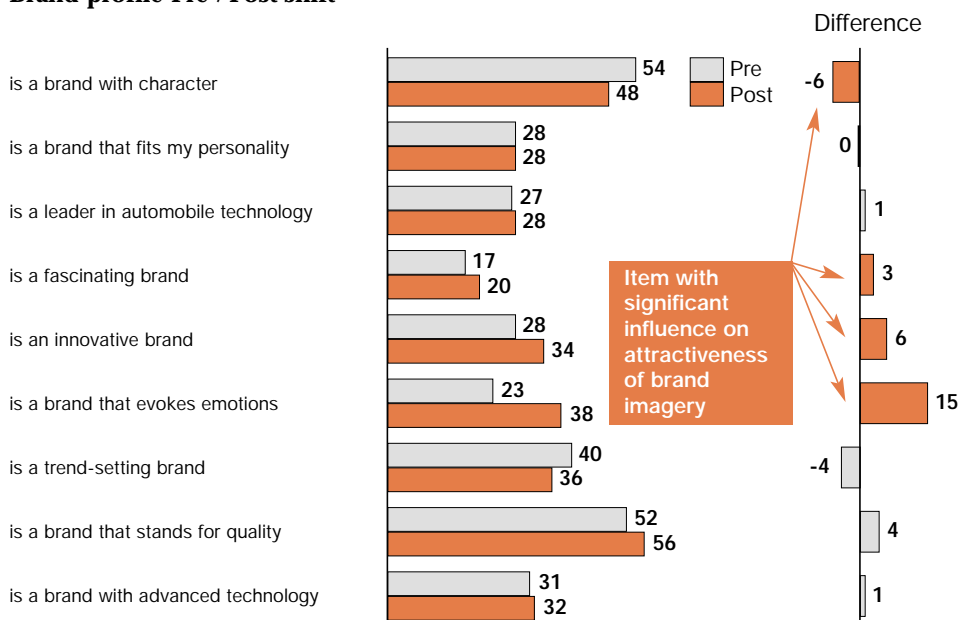
Contact with advertising medium

After the initial interview, the interviewees were presented with a banner in an empty browser window on a monitor.

Post-test

After they had looked at the banner(s), the test persons were interviewed again for the second "analysis". A comparison with the results obtained in the pre-test were used to determine and evaluate the influences and changes arising from contact with the advertising medium (banner).

Brand profile Pre-/Post-shift





How the tests were carried out

The survey was undertaken in the form of "studio tests". This procedure was selected in order to ensure a test environment which could easily be compared and controlled and keep external factors to a minimum. The banners were shown in the browser window of a monitor. This procedure guaranteed a consistent test situation for all interviewees.

The tests were carried out by icon-webmax-com GmbH, Hamburg/Nuremberg.

Results of the Banner Effectiveness Study

Basically, the definite effect of the banner on the perception and appraisal of a brand or product was registered in all instances. It was possible to demonstrate a clear perceptive relationship which could be attributed to the communicative impact of the banners.

Awareness of brand image profiles

The changes in the analysis resulting from contact with the banners did not produce any basic disintegration of the "pre-profile". Rather, awareness of the fundamental contours of the brand image profile was enhanced as a consequence of contact with the banners. It was apparent that in spite of their limited communicative area, banners are certainly capable of conveying brands and content clearly and unambiguously.

Individual perception of banner content

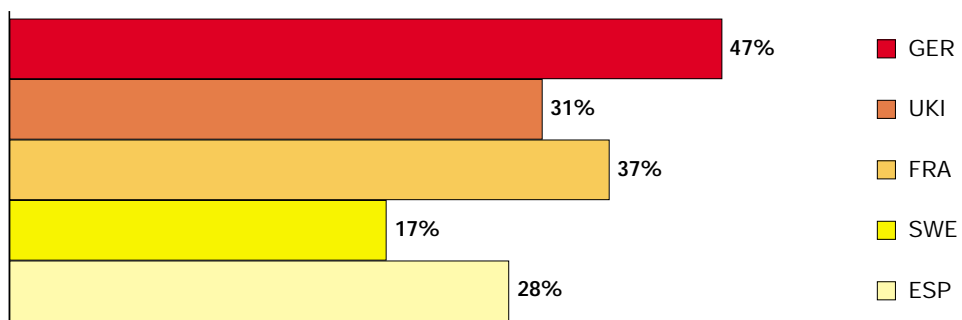
The material being communicated is perceived very clearly by the viewer. Changes in the image profile reflect precisely those image forms which are communicated/ not communicated by the banner. This is underscored by one of the test results from France involving the assessment of a banner which featured an international airline. It was established in the pre-test that the airline "offers good connections to all parts of the world". Following contact with the banner, this aspect became less significant – due in large measure to communication of the new "Lyon-Amsterdam" air route.



Banner advertising is not regarded as advertising

High scores from each of the countries underlined the fact that banner advertising is not perceived as advertising. These findings are endorsed most strongly by survey results obtained in Germany, France and the United Kingdom. In Sweden, already a highly developed market, this tendency is less pronounced. Greater experience with the Internet and a wider knowledge of specific forms of online advertising inevitably lead to corresponding "learning effects" and evaluation.

is not really advertising





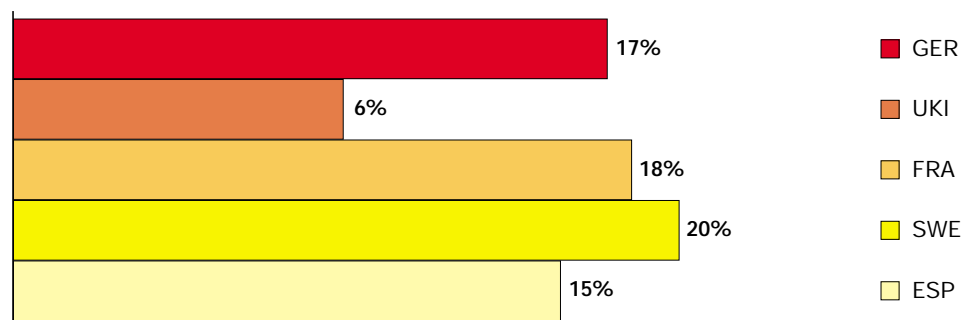
Banner advertising is the promotional medium of the future

The response to questions about the future significance of banner advertising was extremely positive – especially in Spain, the United Kingdom and France. The more cautious response in Germany and Sweden must be seen in the context of a fundamentally critical attitude to promotion and advertising.

Banner advertising is not regarded as being intrusive

Banner advertising is not regarded as being intrusive. This was borne out by a series of very low scores, especially in the United Kingdom and Spain.

gets on my nerves



Banner design calls for careful, creative concepts

The results of the Study also indicate very clearly that particular importance must be attached to the conception and design of banners. At the same time, careful consideration must be given to the use of technology. If, for example, the various animated objects in the banner change too quickly, the banner's appeal diminishes proportionately. The same applies to the content or to the number of objects within the banner. A large amount of content requires a high degree of attention and active involvement on the part of the viewer. If the necessary level of concentration is not achieved, the banners are simply not understood and the subsequent assessment will be correspondingly negative.

Banner advertising must also be geared to concurrent, end-to-end communication

It was clearly shown by the Study that end-to-end promotional communication, i.e. parallel advertising activities in the traditional media, has a lasting effect on the perception and assessment of banner advertising. Some of the findings from Germany showed this particularly clearly.

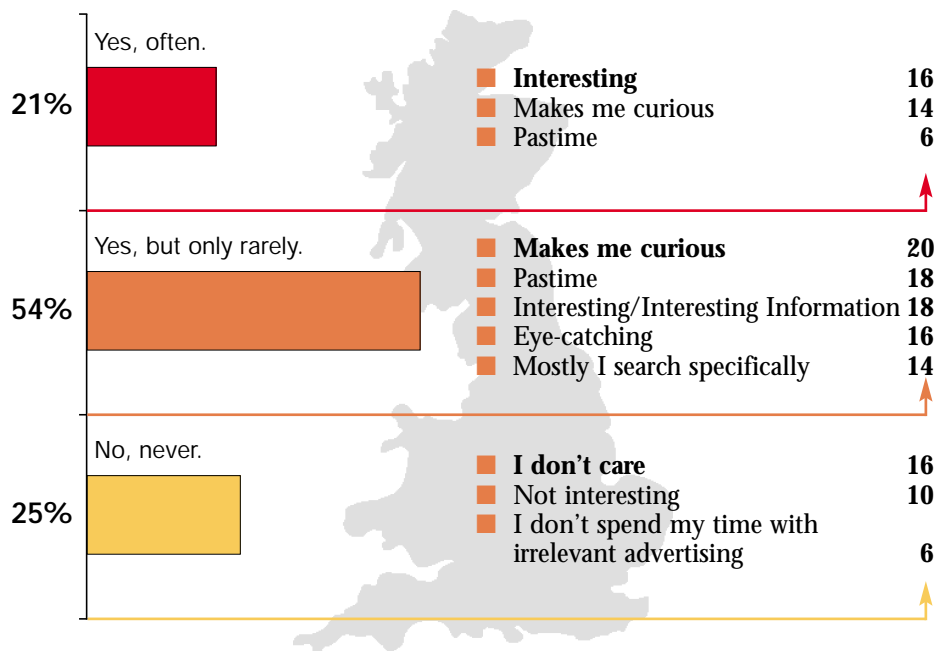
Example:

A TV commercial launched on a large scale by a car manufacturer this spring for a specific model contained certain key visuals. The banner examined in the Study failed to "pick up" these visuals adequately. The name of the product was missing, the car had a different color, alternating elements did not relate to the model. As a result, the banner was given a low rating; it was considered to be difficult to understand and – especially among male interviewees – too vague and uninformative.



Banner click-throughs dependent on interest

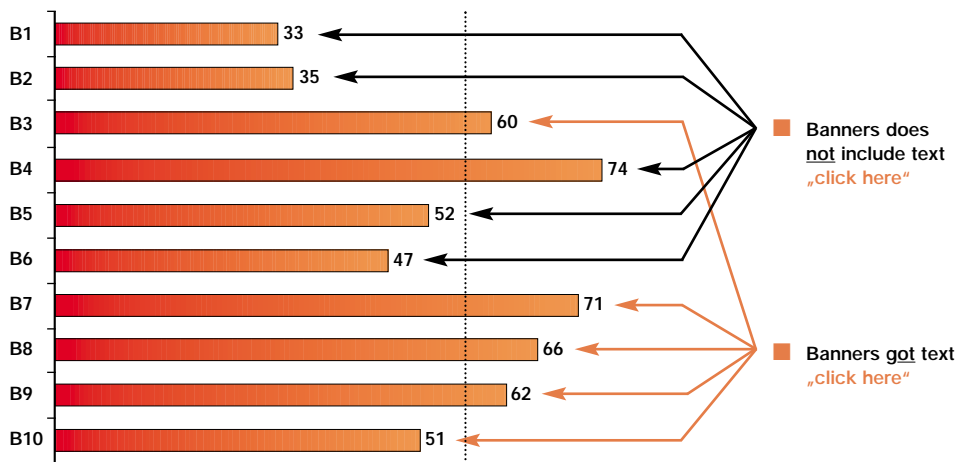
The Study also examined the reasons why banners are not clicked on. In each of the countries, it was evident that inactivity on the part of users was simply the result of lack of interest. On the other hand, interest and curiosity were cited as the principal reasons for actively clicking on a banner. Effective preliminary analysis of target groups and user environments is therefore a key prerequisite when banner advertising is being planned and placed. According to the Study, there is very little marketing potential amongst those users who click on banners sporadically or casually.





Banner advertising must induce users to click

Five of the ten banners examined contained a message inviting the user to click. Featuring the statement "This banner ensures speedy contact", these banners also had the highest popularity ratings. However "redundant" the message may seem, its effectiveness was certainly confirmed.



B = Banner / N = 100 in %

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