

# Continuous investment (Sorry to go on and on and on and on about it)

Brands are built over years, but business performance is often judged in quarters. The challenge for marketers is to show their work can be effective in both time frames.

Evidence of what makes effective advertising is regularly analysed and published by the IPA, the professional institute for the UK's leading advertising, media and marketing agencies. This evidence comes from detailed case studies submitted to the IPA Effectiveness Awards, which are independently assessed by expert panels. Insights from cases are then extrapolated into best practice guidance.

Our analysis has repeatedly demonstrated that investing in a mixed approach to advertising produces the most effective business outcomes. Spend should be weighted towards brand building adverts that seek to change consumers' perceptions of the brand, over ads aiming to generate quick responses or sales without shifting brand perceptions.<sup>1</sup>

Effective brand building advertising typically requires sustained investment because perceptions about brands are usually slow to shift, and some of the benefits created by change, such as gains in market share or pricing power, take time to achieve.

This is not to say that brand building advertising always requires many months or years before there are signs it is working. In fact, in the cases cited below, there is clear evidence advertising had an almost immediate impact, which increased over time because of the consistent strategies invested in.

## Chipping away to increase profits

In 2014, oven chip company McCain was under pressure as cash-strapped UK shoppers switched to cheaper own label products and to discount retailers (which didn't stock McCain goods). McCain initially responded with more price promotions but these eroded profit margins and contributed to a downturn in revenues.

A strategy was adopted to strengthen the brand to reduce price sensitivity and make the business more resilient. Advertising would seek to differentiate McCain by casting diverse, real people in ads and celebrating the messy reality of mealtimes, rather than the idealised scenes shown on most food-related TV.

As Figure 1 below shows, there were signs these ads created a positive impact from the outset.

Figure 1: Helped by regularly refreshed ads, McCain grew brand consideration by 37%

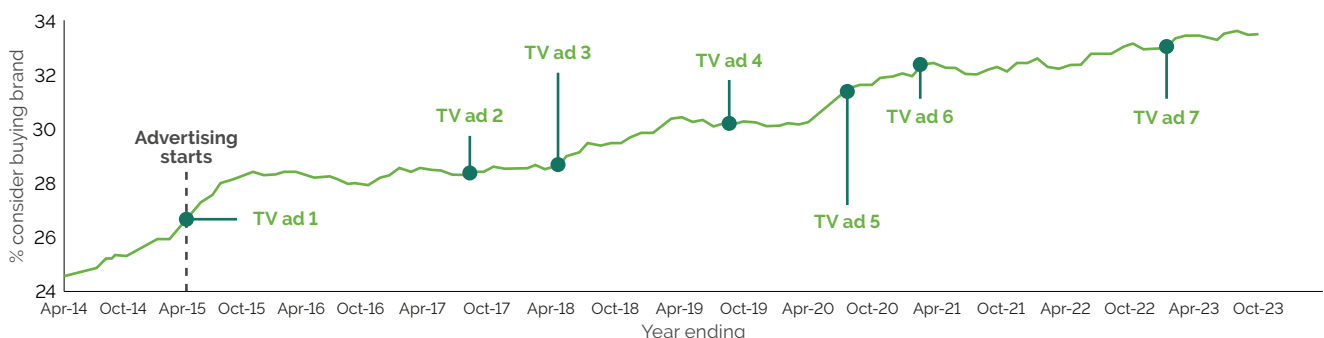
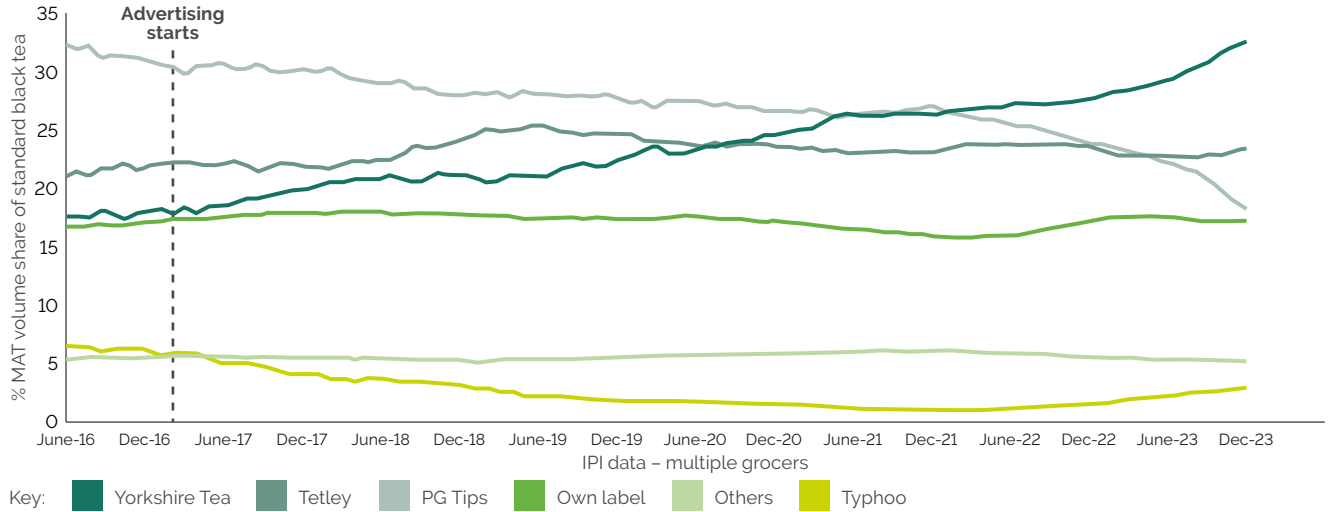


Figure 2: After advertising began, Yorkshire Tea's volume share consistently grew



Data source: IRI data from multiple grocers.  
 Chart: Yorkshire Tea IPA Effectiveness Awards 2024 case by Lucky Generals and Goodstuff Communications<sup>2</sup>.

Investment continued into new executions to build positive momentum, and McCain's media spend increased significantly in 2022 and 2023. As this award-winning case study outlines, price elasticity fell 47% and base sales grew 44% between 2014 (the last year before the campaign) and 2023. It is estimated advertising generated a £26m net profit.

**Becoming market leader one cup at a time**

From 2017 on, Yorkshire Tea has consistently promoted itself as the place 'Where everything's done proper' from humorous adverts to carbon neutrality policies. As Figure 2 illustrates above, this campaign generated positive reaction as soon as it began.

Key brand measures steadily improved and volume share grew from 18% to a market-leading 33%. Yorkshire Tea's steadfast positioning and media spend contrast with frequent changes of tack among its weaker-performing rivals.

**Consistently winning back Christmas shoppers for Aldi**

Aldi has featured 'Kevin the Carrot' storylines in multiple Christmas campaigns. The brand character is used to encourage consumers to feel greater affinity to the discount retailer at Christmas, when Aldi customers have tended to shop elsewhere.

From the outset, the advertising was successful: the first Kevin Christmas campaign generated almost three times the profit of its predecessor Aldi advertising, and the retailer has repeatedly backed the campaign with excess share of advertising 'voice' (namely, having a greater voice than its market share – see Figure 3 below).

Figure 3: Aldi consistently invested in achieving excess share of voice

|                    | 2016  | 2017  | 2018  | 2019  | 2020  | 2021  |
|--------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Aldi SOV %         | 10%   | 11%   | 10%   | 14%   | 13%   | 11%   |
| Aldi value share % | 5.2%  | 6.0%  | 6.6%  | 7.1%  | 6.9%  | 7.1%  |
| Aldi ESOV (a-b)    | +4.8% | +5.0% | +3.4% | +6.9% | +6.1% | +3.9% |

Data source: Nielsen AdDynamix/Kantar Grocery data.  
 Table: Aldi IPA Effectiveness Awards 2022 case by McCann Manchester, UM Manchester and Gain Theory<sup>4</sup>.

What made all three of these campaigns effective were their commitments to investing consistently in creative, brand-enhancing advertising that durably changed consumers' attitudes and behaviour and helped the brands grow in commercially sustainable ways. It is an insight about effective advertising that bears repeating – with no apology needed.

When businesses build brands, brands can build businesses. There is irrefutable evidence that effective brand marketing leads to more customers, market share, sales and profits.

The FT, the leading global business title, and the IPA, the professional institute for the UK's leading advertising, media and marketing agencies, have been sharing this evidence through a series of FT advertisements, each with a free online summary of corresponding proof.

For more support to help your business improve its marketing and brand effectiveness, visit [ipa.co.uk/effectiveness](http://ipa.co.uk/effectiveness)



1 See *The Long and the Short of It*, IPA, 2013 and *Effectiveness in Context*, IPA, 2018.  
 2 *McCain*, IPA Effectiveness Awards 2024 case. | 3. *Yorkshire Tea*, IPA Effectiveness Awards 2024 case.  
 4. *Aldi*, IPA Effectiveness Awards 2022 case.