



Distinctive Assets

The Only Brand Equity That Matters

For any piece of brand communication to work, people must be able to identify the brand that is being advertised. Distinctive Assets are the learned associations which customers use to recognise and identify a brand.

For example, an image of George Clooney holding a cup of coffee may evoke the name Nespresso, even though the brand was not present in the picture. Distinctive Assets can be conscious or sub-conscious, but they have a tremendous influence on which brands we buy at the point of purchase.



The Benefits of Distinctive Assets

Shoppers can make purchasing choices in as little as 0.3 seconds (Milosavljevic et al. 2011). The majority of in-store sales are impulsive by these split-second shoppers so it's therefore very important for brands to be easy to find. Distinctive assets signal your brand, and for brand owners this brings numerous commercial benefits:

1. **They make your brand easier and faster to find** (and therefore more likely to be bought).
2. **They improve advertising impact & media efficiency** (see less, remember more).
3. **They can keep your brand 'front of mind' for a long time** (salient).

For brand planning, understanding your Distinctive Assets can help to:

1. **Reveal how your brands and competitors are recognised / shopped.**
2. **Identify true strengths & weaknesses of your brands (relative to the category).**
3. **Provide critical insight if you are considering updating your brand's identity.**
4. **Deliver more effective communications (which assets to develop & nurture).**
5. **Identify any 'hidden gem' assets that still exist in the mind of consumers.**

Distinctive Assets take many forms:

- logos
- graphics
- colours
- fonts
- words
- smells
- audio jingles
- characters
- ad formats
- celebrities
- mascots
- and many more...

The Brain Science of Distinctive Assets

Of all the sensory information processed by the brain, only a fraction is processed consciously (Wilson, 2009). In the majority of cases, we rely on sub-conscious memories to make buying decisions quicker and easier.

Historically, brand owners have underplayed the importance of memory and the role of the sub-conscious in our buying decisions. However, research has consistently and unequivocally demonstrated that the quicker and easier a brand can be identified or comes to mind in a buying situation, the more likely it is to be bought. This appears to be far more important than 'traditional' brand measures such as liking and purchase intent.



Identifying and Measuring Your Distinctive Assets

Following popular demand from our clients, Mountainview Learning is now offering Distinctive Asset research to combine evidence-based insights with evidence-based strategies (having the data is one thing, knowing what to do with it is another).

We use a simple quantitative process that accurately measures the strength of distinctive assets through the awareness (reach), uniqueness and misattribution of brands within your category. Our three-step process takes around 6 weeks to complete based on a study of 10 brands:

Phase 1: Discovery	<i>Archaeological dig into your brand's and competitor communications; identify and agree programme stimuli; design bespoke testing programme.</i>
Phase 2: Research	<i>Organisation of research sample groups and respondents; conduct survey with explicit/ implicit testing; analysis and validation of results.</i>
Phase 3: Reporting	<i>Share findings and present strategic recommendations for managing and growing your brand's distinctive assets - and highlighting any risks for your brands.</i>

All of these soft drink brands have pack design elements. But can you identify which are critical to brand recognition?



Results are displayed on a Distinctive Assets Grid (developed by Ehrenberg-Bass) identifying which assets are strong, high potential, low potential and weak. We study assets first by category, then by brand (where we also look at misattribution of assets).

<p>Case Study 1: Tropicana The Tropicana brand team fell foul of the POS principle when a packaging re-design removed the means by which consumers recognised the brand. The redesign cost Tropicana an estimated \$27M.</p>		<p>Case Study 2: Felix Pet Food Felix brand team ramped-up the usage of Felix the Cat in advertising, point-of-sale and packaging, helping double the brand's market share in 5 years despite having half the ad budget of Whiskas.</p>	
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About Mountainview Learning

Mountainview is a learning and research organisation including behavioural economists and brain scientists. We're experts in helping businesses and brand owners engineer profitable growth. We work with some of the world's largest brands to teach the evidence-based approach towards greater productivity of marketing.



We have a long association with the Ehrenberg Bass Institute in Australia which specialises in marketing science and with University College London (UCL), the home to Europe's largest psychology Faculty.



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