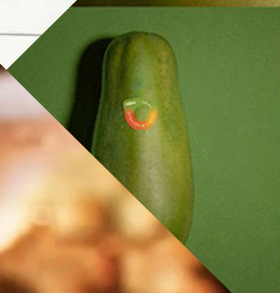


THE SOCIAL CONTRIBUTION OF UK ADVERTISING 2024

How advertising is driving positive change in society



ADVERTISING ASSOCIATION





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Let's celebrate advertising's social contribution

ALESSANDRA BELLINI
President, Advertising Association

In the world of advertising, every day presents an opportunity to produce work that resonates with audiences, be that through entertainment or laughter, providing information, or promoting a good cause. We want to make ads that people value. And, as this report demonstrates, people highly value advertising with a social contribution.

In Advertising Pays 8¹, Credos presented research into the public's perception of advertising's social contribution, as well as examples of the great adverts designed to change society for the better.

Since that report was launched, the Covid-19 pandemic has tested advertising's social function to its limits. The UK government required an advertising campaign that would "reach every person in the UK to engage them with critical information that they could trust"².

Over a two-year period, online advertising alone generated 19 billion impressions and 95 million clicks to Government/NHS sites³, helping slow the spread of the virus and ultimately save lives. For all the failures and controversies, the Government's use of advertising to impact behaviour was one Covid-19 success story.

But advertising has contributed well beyond the pandemic. Qualitative research conducted for Advertising Pays 8 identified five distinct ways in which advertising makes a social contribution – each of these five categories are explored in this report, accompanied by award-winning adverts that exemplify these contributions in action.

The brilliant examples of advertising's social contribution you'll see in this report clearly demonstrate the positive impact that advertising can have on society.

But advertising's social contribution also benefits the industry itself by increasing levels of public trust in advertising. Credos' recent Value of Trust Report outlined three reasons why trust is important for our industry:

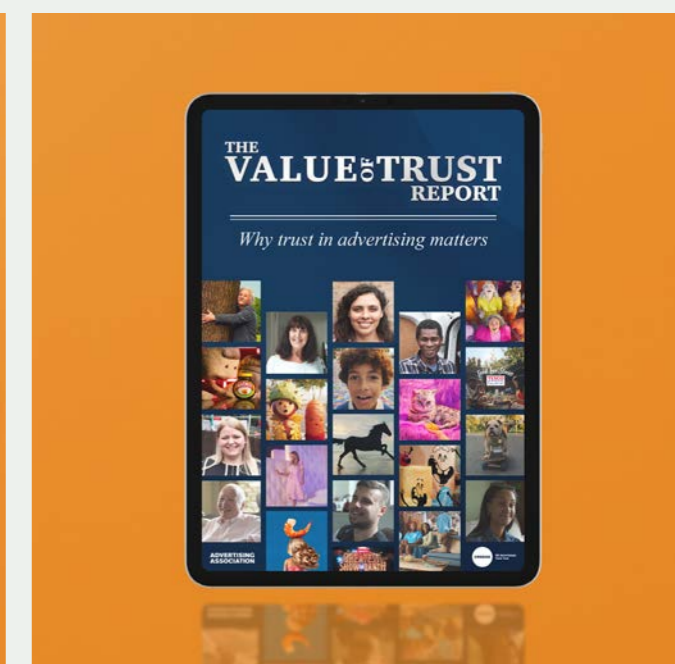
Results: trust in brands and trust in advertising media increases profits and overall effectiveness.

Regulation: politicians and policymakers are more likely to impose regulation on an industry deemed untrustworthy.

Recruitment: trust in our business, its values, and ways of working is key to attracting and retaining the best and brightest talent.

So, increasing public trust in advertising is important. And research by Credos has consistently found advertising's social contribution to be the second strongest driver of public trust in advertising, behind only the enjoyment of the ads themselves. Moreover, since the first study in 2018, social contribution has grown in importance, reflecting a wider societal shift, as consumers demand greater social and environmental responsibility from companies.

This report is in part a celebration of the brilliant work that is already being done, bringing together some of the leading industry awards that elevate socially beneficial work. But it is also about reaffirming the industry's commitment to work that improves society. Whether raising money for good causes, changing behaviour for the better, or bringing us all together, advertising can improve both where we live and how we live.



1. Advertising Pays 8, Advertising Association/Credos (2020)
2. Kirk, R. (2022). Campaign Showcase: Rethinking social media to outpace the spread of COVID-19.
3. Ibid





What has advertising ever done for us?

MATT BOURN

Director of Communications, Advertising Association

When I was asked to write this foreword, a scene from Monty Python's Life of Brian sprang to mind. The cast start by saying the Romans are all "bastards", and then grudgingly admit, point by point, that the invaders had contributed crucial things to Britain's development, from irrigation and cheese to education and peace.

There are always two ways of looking at things: glass half full or glass half empty. This report is proudly glass half full, turning the spotlight on work we can all be proud of. Work that is addressing great societal challenges and helping people live better and more fulfilling lives.

This work also helps to frame a bigger question when it comes to shaping our work. Often, the refrain is how and when to ban advertising, but there is another way to look at this. That is to ask how we can incentivise our industry to produce more of the type of advertising we would all like to see.

Advertising has a broad societal responsibility which is under constant review by us, fellow trade bodies and members, alongside our regulator the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA), but there is much more the industry does which fails to get the recognition it deserves. When advertising is good, it is very good, and contributes a value that deserves more credit. Credit from those both outside and inside the industry. Constructive criticism and healthy debate about key industry issues is a good thing, but we shouldn't lose sight of the great work that continues to be done.

Whatever your view of advertising, I'm sure we can all agree that it has tremendous power and influence. I've long believed that advertising has a critical role to play in support of the fourth estate, funding much of our media and journalism to hold power to account.

I also believe that the vast majority of people working in our industry do so with good intent and want to be involved in producing work with good, positive outcomes. Acknowledgement of this point is critical in both retaining and attracting new talent to our industry.

What you will find in the pages of this report is a reminder that advertising is not just a tool to sell – it is a vital tool for all in society. Let's take a moment to imagine what would happen without it. Governments would find it hard to mobilise and educate people on mass behaviour change such as Covid-19 vaccination campaigns. Charities would struggle to operate, raise capital and raise awareness of important causes. New, innovative products and services that improve society would struggle to break out and smash the status quo. And many of our media outlets would be weaker, with fewer journalists and less funding for content.

Advertising funds many of the online services that we take for granted, the near ubiquitous use of Google Maps for example, or the limitless ways we keep in touch with each other through tech platforms, access customer services or complete training for new skills⁴.

We are living in a time of significant change, setting new expectations of the way the world should work. Many look to advertising to help shape the way the world is presented to fit this future vision. I believe this is possible and we can further this by showcasing successful work for others to learn from. I draw inspiration from the likes of the Campaign Ad Net Zero Awards which are producing a growing bank of case studies on how our industry can contribute to building a sustainable economy.

My hope is that this report, which we intend to update annually, provokes fresh thinking in support of our mission to make the case for responsible advertising's economic and social contribution.



Monty Python's Life of Brian (1979)

UK Advertising's Social Contribution – Key Insights

1

Advertising's social contribution is now the second strongest driver of **trust in advertising** – rising in importance from 2018.

2

44% of respondents feel that advertising drives social change - a **10 percentage point increase** from 2021.

3

Spend on charity advertising has risen steadily from £424 million in 2018 to **£611 million** in 2023.

4

In 2023, cancer charities spent more on advertising than any other charity type, spending **£164 million** on advertising to raise money for research, treatment, and support.

5

Over a third (**34%**) of the public agree that some advertising has had a major impact on how they think about things.

6

Raising awareness and/or money for good causes is the social contribution of advertising most often encountered (**33%**), while promoting a more harmonious society is the least often encountered (**19%**).

7

Over a third (**34%**) of respondents agree that advertising helps them make more sustainable purchases. Londoners are far more positive (**52%**) about advertising's sustainability effects than the rest of England (**32%**).

8

Over half (**55%**) of respondents from an ethnic minority agree that advertising reflects the diverse and inclusive society of the UK, compared to **45%** of White respondents.

9

Young people are more positive – **50%** of 18-34s believe advertising can drive positive social change.

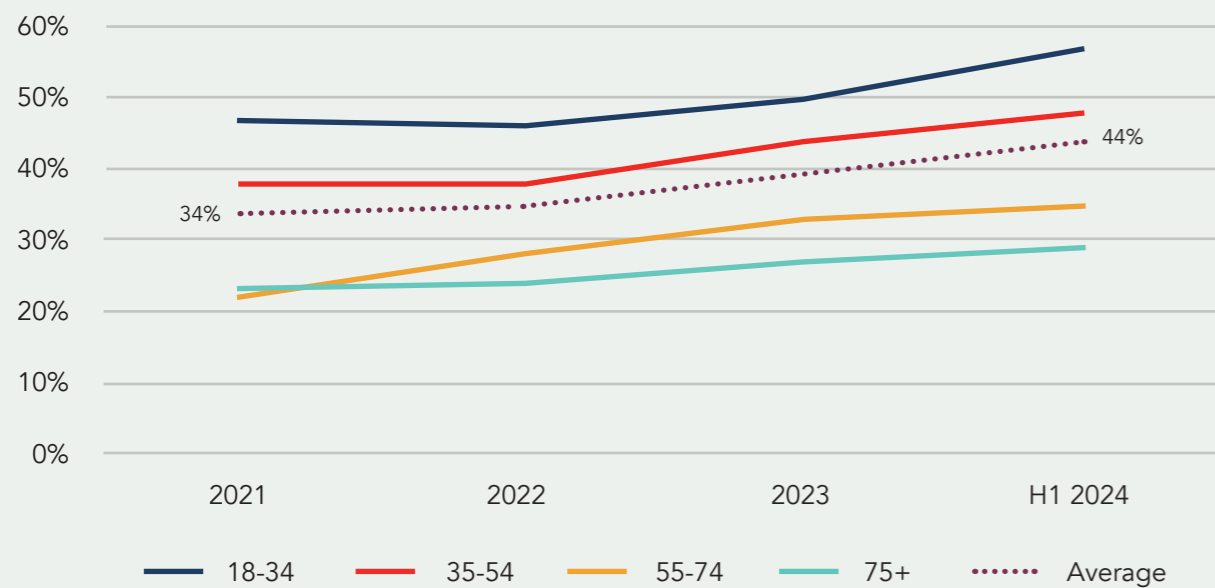
How the public view advertising's social contribution

Credos research indicates that the public are largely positive about the role that advertising plays in society, although there is plenty of room for improvement. 44% of the public feel that advertising has a positive effect on society – 7% being very positive and 37% fairly positive⁵.

It is rare for the public to feel that advertising has a negative effect on society – a total of 20% – and rarer still for respondents to feel that it has a very negative effect, just 4%. One of the biggest opportunities for improvement, then, is convincing the ambivalent 37% that advertising has a net positive effect.

More specifically, 44% of respondents feel that advertising drives social change, and this figure has risen significantly since 2021⁶. **Figure 1** shows the percentage of the public who feel that advertising drives social change by age group. The overall figure has risen every year since 2021, climbing from 34% in 2021 to 44% in the first half of 2024.

Figure 1: Percentage of respondents who feel that advertising drives social change, 2021-2024



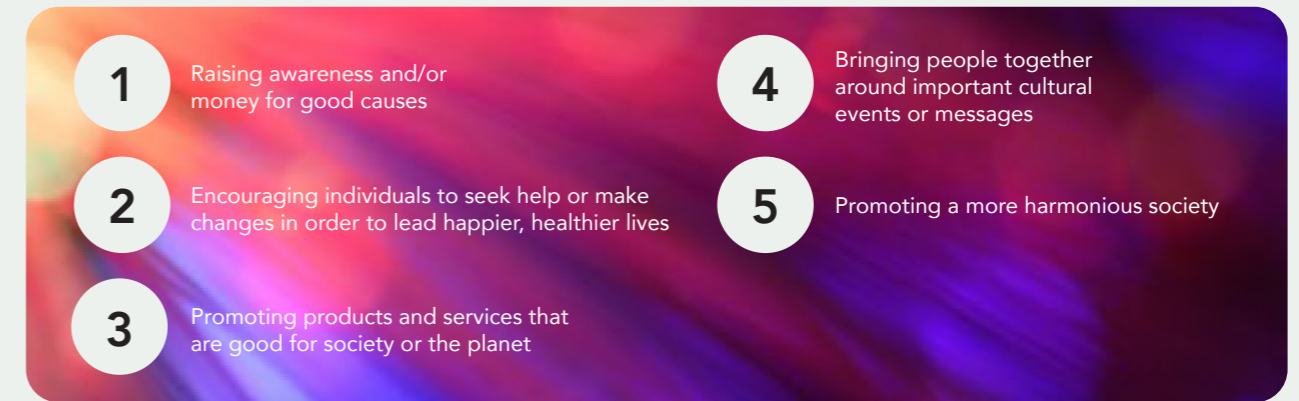
Source: Credos trust research, 2021-2024

As **Figure 1** demonstrates, the young are much more positive about advertising's ability to create social change, which is consistent with much of Credos' research into trust in advertising. 57% of 18-34-year-olds believe it drives social change, compared to just 30% of 55+ respondents⁷. Respondents from an ethnic minority background were also far more likely to believe that advertising creates social change than White respondents – 58% of ethnic minority respondents compared to just 37% of White respondents.

5. The Drivers of Trust, Craft/Credos, 2023
 6. Public Trust Tracker, Advertising Association/Credos (2021-2024) – NET strongly agree and slightly agree
 7. Public Trust Tracker, Advertising Association/Credos (H1 2024)

The five categories of social contribution

Research conducted for Advertising Pays 8⁸ identified five key areas by which advertising can make a social contribution, listed below. These areas arose organically from consumers throughout the qualitative stages of the research, before being validated in the quantitative study.



Credos then asked the public how often they came across advertising that performed each of the five social contribution functions. **Figure 2** shows the percentage of respondents who claim to often encounter different forms of social value within advertising. Raising awareness and or money for good causes is the most often encountered, while promoting a more harmonious society is the least often encountered.

Figure 2: Percentage of respondents who often come across advertising with different types of social contribution



Source: Public Trust Tracker, Advertising Association/Credos (Q2 2024)

8. Advertising Pays 8, Advertising Association/Credos (2020)

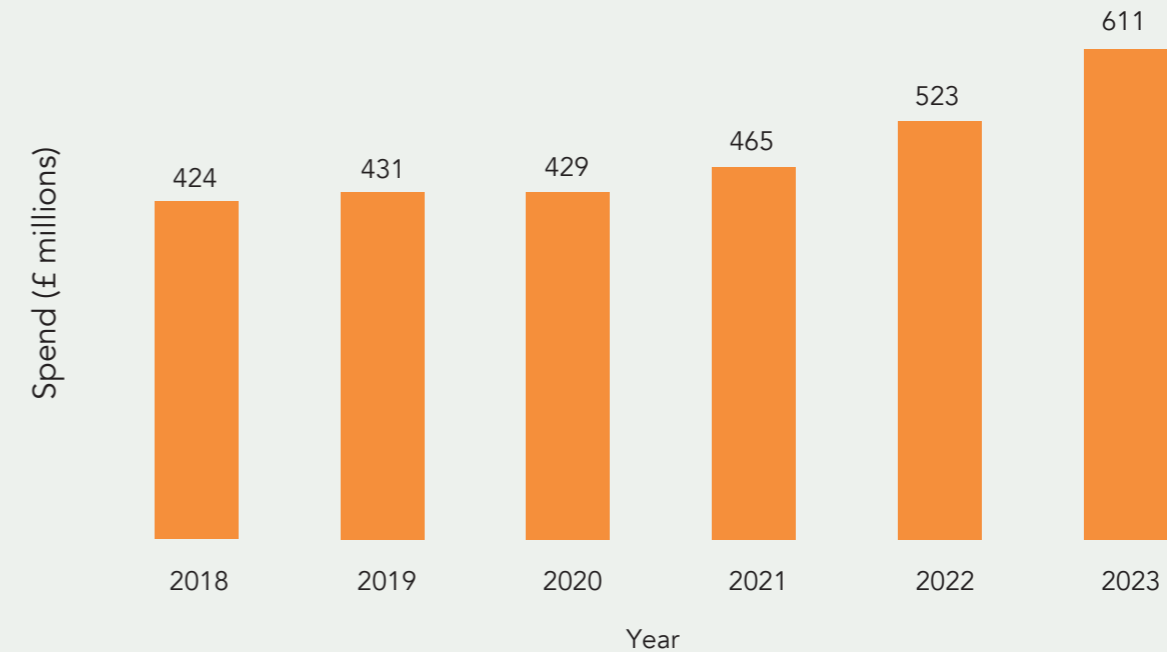
01.

Raising awareness and/or money for good causes

Spend on advertising by charities has grown significantly in recent years, outstripping the rate of growth for overall advertising in the last two. According to Nielsen, £872 million was spent on charity advertising in 2023 alone. This is a 14% increase on 2022's spend of £762 million⁹.

Figure 3 shows charity ad spend with spend on social media advertising removed. Social media spend has been removed because it has only been tracked by Nielsen since 2021 – removing the sector therefore provides a more accurate comparison over time.

Figure 3: UK charity advertising spend minus social media between 2018 and 2023



Source: Ad Intel UI UK, Nielsen (2018-2023)

Given this level of spend, it is perhaps unsurprising that the most often encountered of the five key social contributions is advertising that raises awareness/money for good causes – a third (33%) of respondents say they often encounter such advertising.

Of the £872 million spent on charity advertising in 2023, cancer charities were the biggest spenders at £164 million, followed by animal charities at £117 million, health charities at £112 million and children's charities at £72 million¹⁰.

The vast majority of this ad spend can be classified as non-profit advertising – advertising expenditure that is used “to amplify an organisation's cause and mission, solicit donations, and attract volunteers and supporters”¹¹. Advertising is a vital component of charitable business models, allowing organisations to build awareness of their cause and spread messages that are central to their mission, such as directing people to helplines and support groups, and encouraging people to seek professional help.

The case studies in this section are shining examples of adverts that have raised money or awareness for important causes. Adverts like these are invaluable for charities as they ensure that the public are aware of the brilliant work that they do.

9. Ad Intel UI UK, Nielsen (2018-2023)

10. Ibid

11. Decker, A. (2022). The Ultimate Guide to Nonprofit Marketing in 2020.



Real Talk

Breast Cancer Now

Over 55,000 women a year and one man every day are diagnosed with breast cancer in the UK. To encourage people to talk more openly about their experiences of breast cancer, Breast Cancer Now created a campaign featuring a woman breaking the fourth wall, juxtaposing her honest thoughts and worries with the appeasing language used for friends and family. It is only when she joins a breast cancer support group that she feels fully comfortable letting her true feelings be heard.

The campaign aimed to raise awareness of the charity's nurses, helplines and support groups as a vital resource for those with breast cancer. Combatting the isolation and fear that people can experience by reminding people that they are not alone, and that there are support structures available for them to use.

**BREAST
CANCER
NOW** The research
& care charity

BRAND:
Breast Cancer Now

CREATIVE:
Blink Productions/
BMB

WINNER OF:
The APA Collection
Official Selection

women's aid
until women & children are safe

BRAND:
Women's Aid

CREATIVE:
Mischief/House337

WINNER OF:
DMA Awards: Gold
Charity Award

He's Coming Home

Women's Aid

Women's aid is a charity dedicated to addressing the UK's domestic abuse crisis. In the UK, a woman is killed every four days by their partner, and incidents of domestic abuse rise by 38% during major football events.

Women's aid used the 2022 Football World Cup to centre their campaign, using the well known chant, "It's coming home" to deliver a powerful message about the fear of an abusive partner returning home. The campaign aimed to guide victims of abuse to the Women's Aid website where visitors could find help for themselves or further information on how to best support those in need. The campaign saw over 50 pieces of coverage secured in the first week of launch, with 5 national pieces landing across the launch weekend.

Women's Aid saw an increase of 17% in website traffic to their Support Page during the launch weekend, a key objective of the campaign. The Women's Aid social media channels also saw a 4,000 boost in followers post launch and an organic social reach of over 222 million from people sharing the imagery or content.



02.

Encouraging individuals to seek help or make positive changes to lead happier, healthier lives

Harnessed correctly, advertising is a powerful tool for encouraging and enabling positive behaviour change. Credos research has found that over a third (34%) of the public agree that some advertising has had a major impact on how they think about things¹².

Possibly the best example of advertising's role in effecting behaviour change at scale was during the Covid-19 pandemic. The pandemic "necessitated the biggest communication and information campaign in the 100-year history of Government Communications", needing to reach every person in the UK to engage them with critical information that they could trust¹³. Advertising was the most effective way to communicate this message to the public.

There were several campaigns that ran throughout the height of the Covid-19 pandemic, including a TV campaign featuring ethnic minority stars urging those from the BAME community to get vaccinated and addressing cultural concerns around vaccination¹⁴. While it is difficult to isolate the impact of advertising alone, the campaigns were a crucial tool for the Government in spreading awareness and information at speed, resulting in high vaccination rates.



HM Government Coronavirus Advert 2020

There have been countless other campaigns and adverts launched by government to improve public health or encourage people to think differently about things. This includes long-running public health campaigns such as the recent Every Mind Matters campaign for Mental Health Awareness week, encouraging the nation to look after their mental health by getting active. The campaign was born out of data revealing that 75% of adults report feeling anxious, but only 45% are aware that physical activity is proven to reduce the symptoms of anxiety¹⁵.

The two case studies included in this section are great examples of advertising campaigns that have encouraged audiences to take positive actions, both in their own lives and in the lives of others.

“

A response to a recent run of NHS adverts lead to the early discovery of my father's cancer and therefore, in my mind, saved his life.

Male, 35-44

”

“

I think the UK advertising industry is good at providing the general public with health information, which has been shown with the recent NHS adverts encouraging people to take the vaccine.

Female, 35-44

”

12. Public Trust Tracker, Advertising Association/Credos (Q1-Q4 2023)
13. Kirk, R. (2022). Campaign Showcase: Rethinking social media to outpace the spread of COVID-19.
14. Aamna Mohdin (2021). BAME groups urged to have Covid vaccine in UK TV ad campaign.
15. GOV.UK. (2023). New Every Mind Matters campaign encourages public to get physical.



Eat Them to Defeat Them

ITV

Scientific research shows that fruit and vegetable consumption are important pillars of a healthy diet¹⁶. Public health campaigns such as the '5-a-day' campaign have aimed to raise awareness of the importance of fruit and vegetable intake, with varying levels of success.

Enter VegPower and ITV.

The collaboration, guided by the brilliant creative team at adam&eveDDB, created a campaign to make eating vegetables fun. The aim was to get 1 million children to eat one more portion of vegetables a week by casting vegetables as the arch villains which kids were challenged to 'defeat' by consuming.

Following the campaign's messaging, kids were 19% more likely to agree that eating vegetables was fun and 54% more likely to ask parents for more vegetables¹⁷. In three years, the strategy led to the consumption of an estimated 981 million additional portions of fruit and vegetables.

16. Belinda Mortell (2019). Are we achieving 5-a-day?
17. IPA (2022). Eat Them to Defeat Them by ITV and VegPower: How a big, silly idea solved a big, serious problem



BRAND:
ITV and VegPower

CREATIVE:
adam&eveDDB

WINNER OF:
IPA Effectiveness Award – President's Prize for Behaviour Change



BRAND:
Alzheimer's Society

CREATIVE:
MediaLab/New Commercial Arts/
Clear Channel

WINNER OF:
A platform for Good Gold Award, The Outdoor Media Awards

Case Study

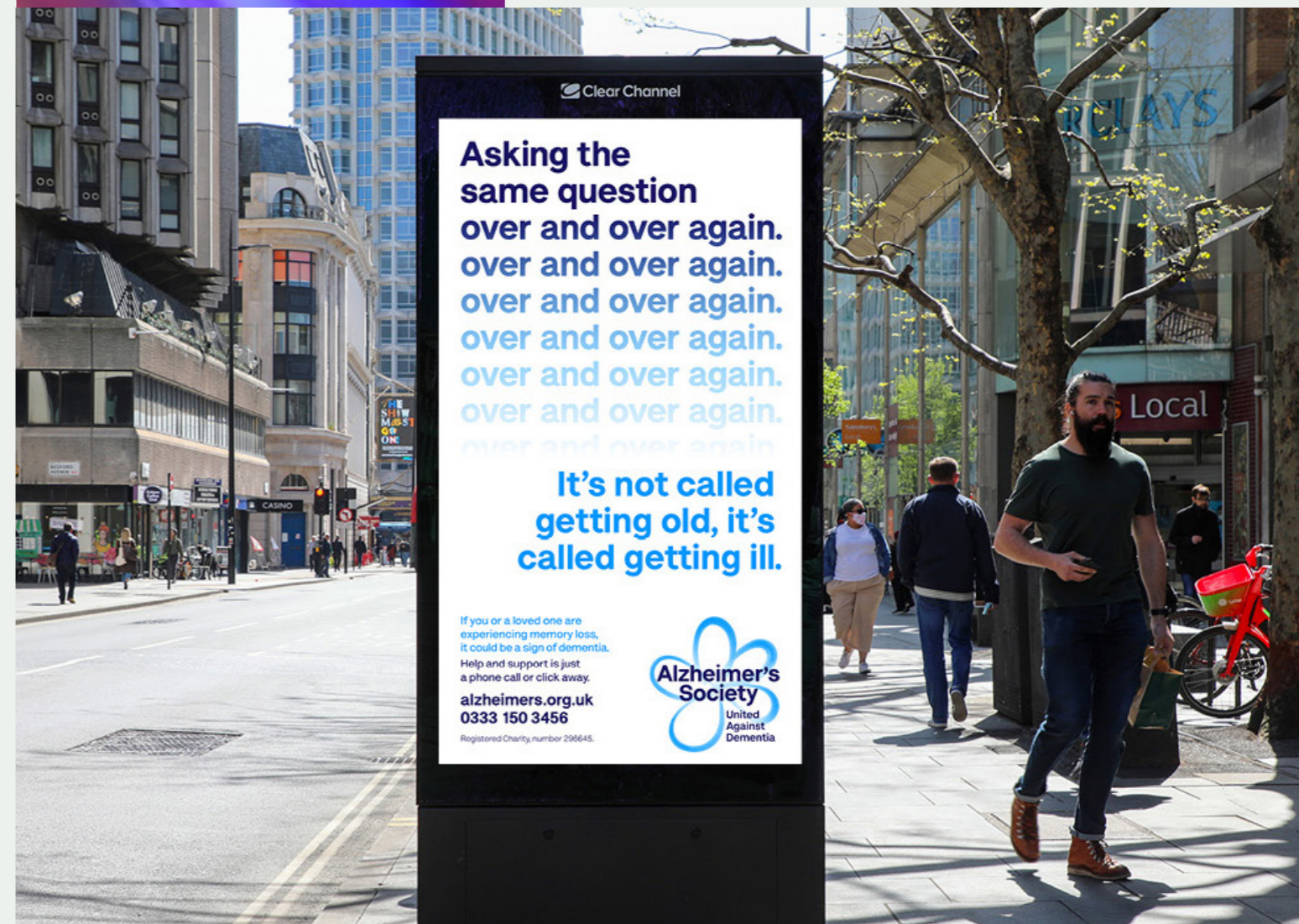
Dementia Action Week

1 in 11 people in the UK over the age of 65 have dementia, and the number is increasing as people continue to live longer¹⁸. Diagnosis is a crucial part of helping those live with the condition, yet 1 in 3 people in the UK living with dementia do not have a diagnosis¹⁹. This is despite the fact that 91% of people affected by dementia say there are benefits to getting a diagnosis.

During the 2022 Dementia Action Week, Alzheimer's Society encouraged people who might be living with undiagnosed dementia to 'act on dementia'. Dismissing common symptoms of dementia as normal ageing is the biggest barrier to people seeking a diagnosis. The campaign's tagline, 'It's not called getting old. It's called getting ill' aimed to highlight these symptoms to drive more dementia diagnoses.

As a result of the campaign's success on launch day, Alzheimer's Society recorded their busiest day ever on the website and a 70% increase in calls to their helpline.

18. NHS (2023). What is dementia.
19. Alzheimer's Society (2019). Dementia Action Week 2019.



03.

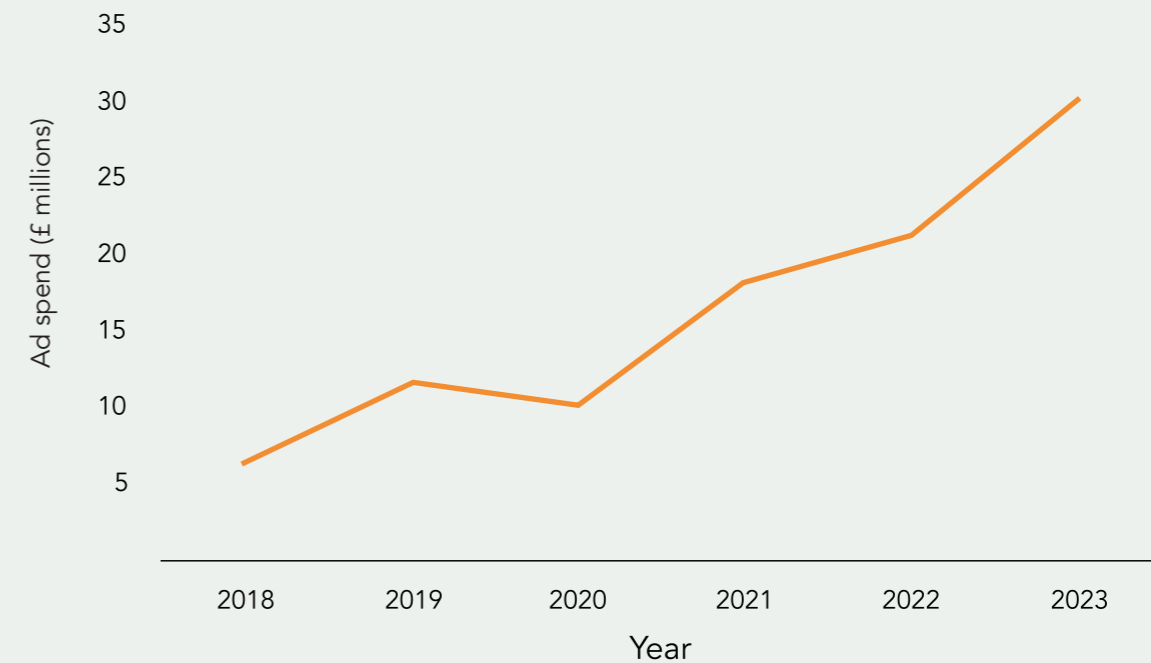
Promoting products and services that are good for society or the planet

The commercial nature of advertising can also be of social benefit when promoting products and services that are of social benefit themselves. Analysis suggests that advertising primarily diverts consumer spend between competing brands within a market rather than growing markets overall²⁰, so increasing the quality and quantity of ads for products that are good for society and the planet is therefore a key social contribution that advertising can make.

Sustainable products have an overall 17% market share but a 32% share of growth²¹. This is partly due to greener consumer demands and more sustainable product decisions, in which advertising has an important role to play. The dairy-free and electric vehicle (EV) markets provide two good examples of advertising's increasing role in promoting sustainable products.

Figure 4 shows changing ad spend on dairy free alternatives between 2018-2023. Advertising spend has increased significantly over that period, helping to divert spend from carbon intensive products to less carbon intensive ones.

Figure 4: Advertising spend on dairy free products: 2018-2023



Source: Ad Intel UI UK, Nielsen (2018-2023)



Skip the Cow for Flora Plant, by Pablo, 2024

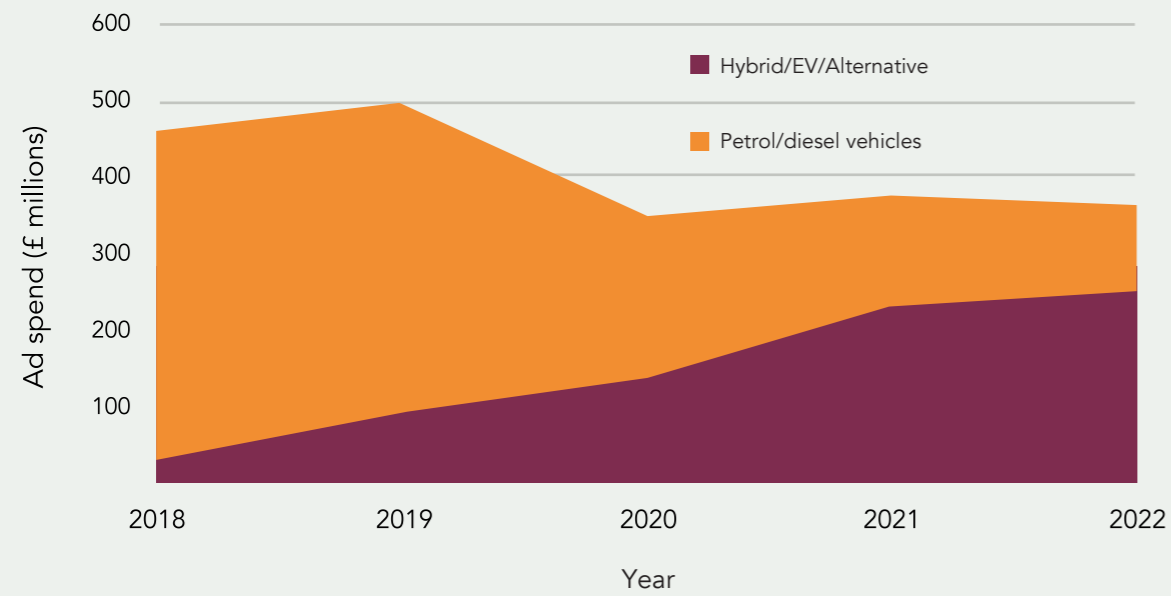
20. Angear, B (2019) Does advertising grow markets?, Credos

21. Ruiz, A. (2023). 51 Huge Environmentally Conscious Consumer Statistics 2023.

22. Ad Intel UI UK, Nielsen (2018-2023)

Figure 5 shows changing ad spend on hybrid/EV/alternative vehicles between 2018 and 2022. Advertising spend on these categories has increased while spend on traditional petrol/diesel vehicles has fallen.

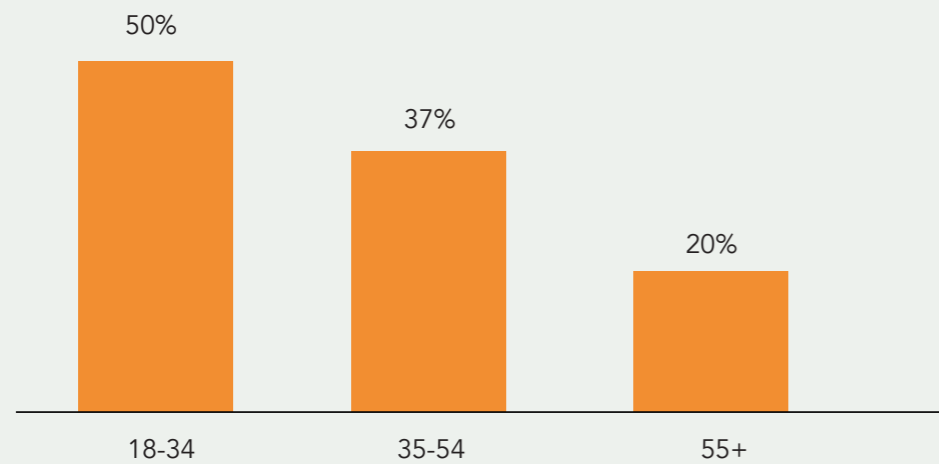
Figure 5: Total advertising spend across passenger car types



Source: Ad Intel UI UK, Nielsen (2018-2023)

Over a third (34%) of people agree that advertising helps them make more sustainable purchases. As shown in **Figure 6**, young people are particularly positive about this, with 50% of 18-34-year-olds agreeing compared to 37% of 35-54-year-olds and 20% of those 55+.

Figure 6: Percentage of respondents who agree that advertising helps them make more sustainable purchases



Source: Public Trust Tracker, Advertising Association/Credos (Q1-Q4 2023)

The case studies included in this section are examples of innovative and effective campaigns that promote products that are beneficial for people, society, or the environment.

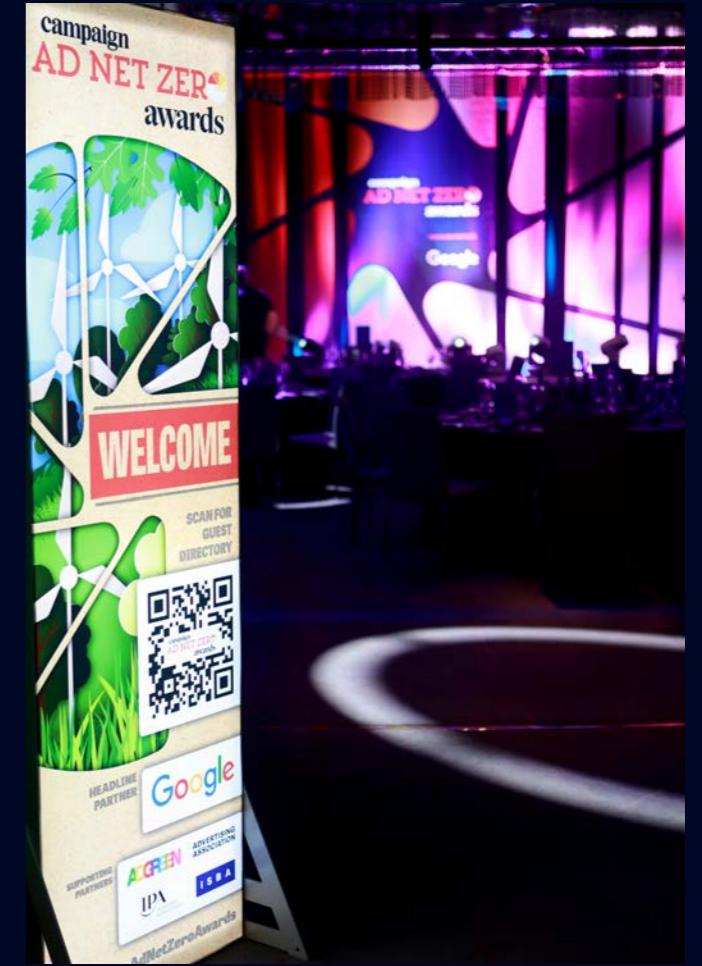
AD NET ZERO

ALL FOR NONE

The UK's advertising industry has seen a noticeable and significant move towards sustainability within the past few years, led partly by consumer demand, but also by bold industry leaders. The Advertising industry's response to the climate emergency came in the form of Ad Net Zero in late 2020.

Uptake of the initiative has been positive and swift. Ad Net Zero is now operational in the UK, US, Europe, the UAE and New Zealand, with plans to expand further.

The more companies, brands, and advertisers that become supporters of Ad Net Zero, the more likely the public are to see work that promotes products and services that are good for the planet.



Campaign Ad Net Zero Awards 2023



Life Extending Stickers by Makro with Grey Columbia



eBay x Love Island

ITV

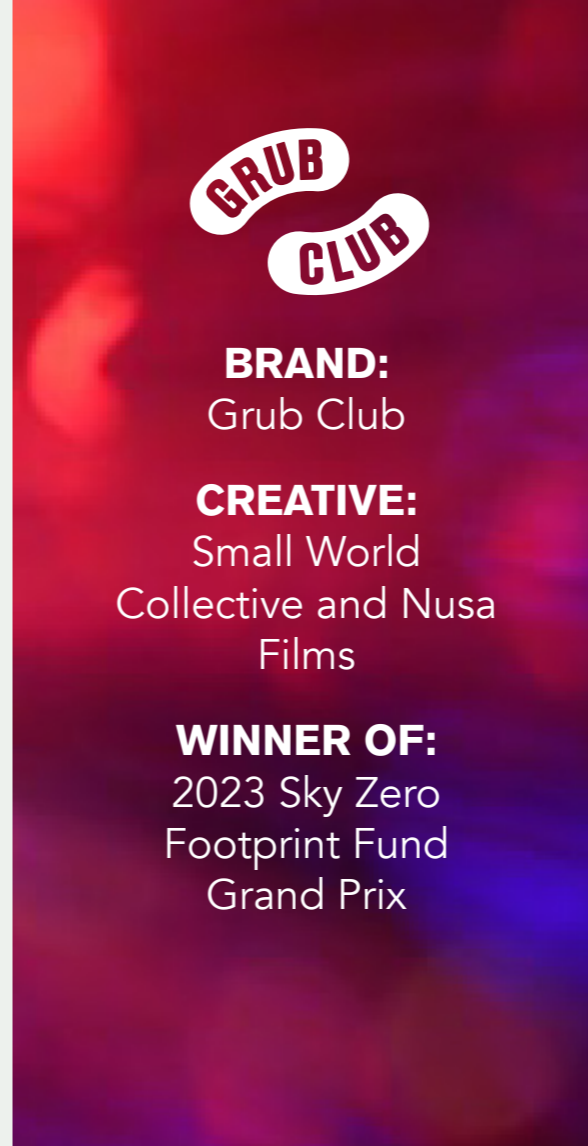
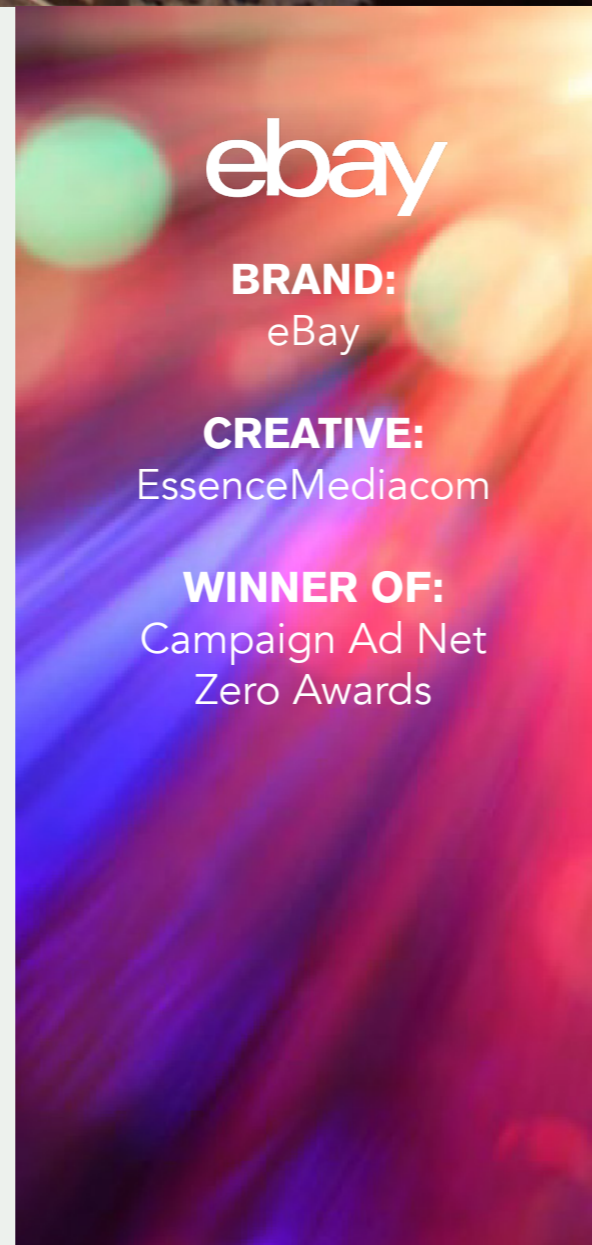
The fashion industry is a considerable contributor to climate change, responsible for an estimated 10% of global emissions²³. A driving force of the industry's carbon footprint is the trend for fast fashion – clothing that makes its way quickly from the catwalk to the store, to people's homes and, often, into the bin.

This collaboration came out of research finding that customers are becoming increasingly aware of the environmental impact of their clothing choices, with a fifth (20%) of Brits saying that they buy more second-hand fashion compared to two years ago.

Enlisting a stylist to work with each of the contestants to create a bespoke pre-loved outfit, the campaign aimed to reduce the 300,000 tonnes of clothes that are burned or buried in the UK every year while boosting the use and popularity of eBay and other pre-loved stores.

Following the campaign, searches for 'pre-loved fashion' rocketing by 7,000%, with 756% more Google searches for 'eBay pre-loved clothes' and 660% for 'pre-loved' month-on-month.

23. European Parliament (2020). The impact of textile production and waste on the environment (infographics).



Sustainable Pet Food

Grub Club

The pet food industry generates over 100 million tonnes of CO₂ emissions annually²⁴. Every owner wants to feed their pet well, but there is a growing awareness of the environmental impact that traditional pet foods can have.

Grub Club's campaign, made specifically for Sky's Zero Footprint Fund, shook up the industry with bold and creative messaging around a simple swap that consumers can make. This is a great example of advertising helping to divert consumer spend from one carbon intensive product to a more sustainable one.

Sky's Zero Footprint is equally a fantastic example of a proactive campaign in the advertising industry to incentivise and reward sustainable, positive advertising. The fund awards £1 million worth of advertising space to the winner, and £250,000 to the four other finalists.

Winning the Fund gave Grub Club a huge platform to share their message. Converting just 1% of the UK's 12 million dogs to their product would save up to 180,000 tonnes of CO₂ emissions.

24. www.skygroup.sky. Sky Media Announces Grub Club as £1m Grand Prix Winner of the 2023 Sky Zero Footprint Fund





1 IN 2 WOMEN FEEL THEY HAVE HAD THEIR PAIN DISMISSED BECAUSE OF THEIR GENDER

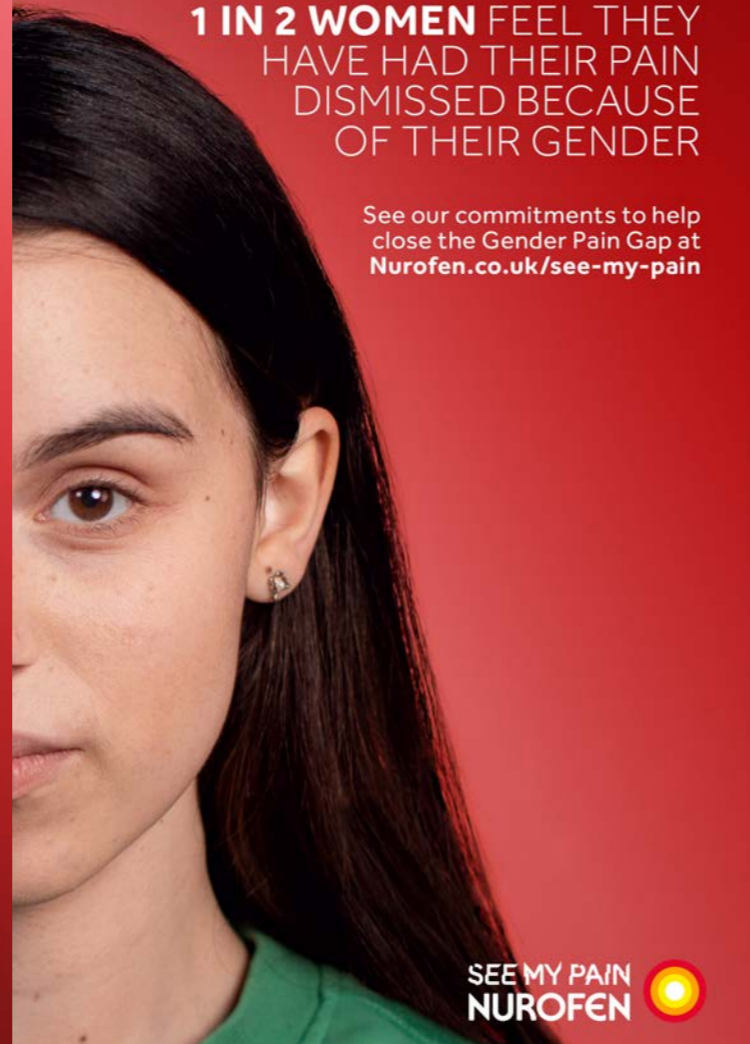
See our commitments to help close the Gender Pain Gap at Nurofen.co.uk/see-my-pain

SEE MY PAIN
NUROFEN 

1 IN 2 WOMEN FEEL THEY HAVE HAD THEIR PAIN DISMISSED BECAUSE OF THEIR GENDER

See our commitments to help close the Gender Pain Gap at Nurofen.co.uk/see-my-pain

SEE MY PAIN
NUROFEN 



See my Pain

Nurofen

In 2022, Nurofen released a report titled the “Gender Pain Gap Index Report” that reveals the true extent of the gender pain bias that women experience every day, where women are not taken seriously, often ignored, or deemed ‘emotional’ when it comes to their pain. The report identified a significant difference in the number of men and women feeling that their pain is ignored or dismissed.

The most recent report, launched in 2023, found that “one in four women versus one in six men felt, generally, no one took their pain seriously”, with 72% feeling that gender discrimination was the main reason driving the discrepancy²⁵.

Nurofen’s “See My Pain” campaign aims to shift attitudes and behaviour towards women’s pain so that they feel seen, heard and understood. The campaign also led to the creation of the “Pain Pass” – a tool developed by Nurofen to help women recognise bias and have constructive conversations with their healthcare professional.

²⁵. Nurofen (2023), Gender Pain Gap Index Report Year 2

NUROFEN

BRAND:
Nurofen

CREATIVE:
Zenith

WINNER OF:
The 2024 Guardian Advertising Awards Grand Prix

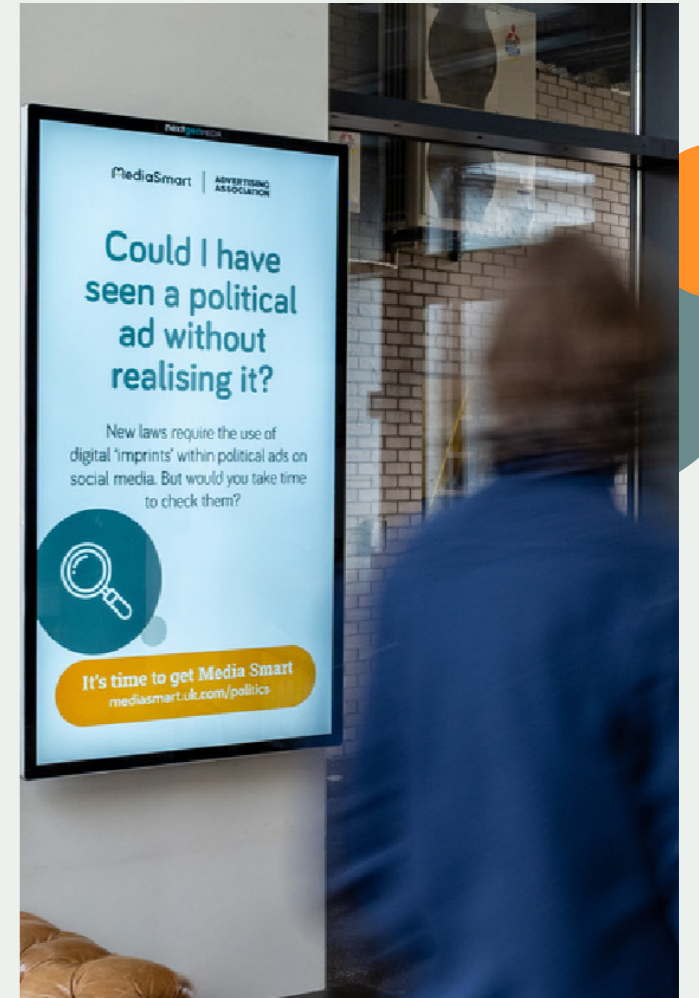
MediaSmart

Media Smart is the advertising and media industry’s award-winning education non-profit with a mission to ensure that every 7–21-year-old in the UK can confidently navigate the media they consume including being able to identify, interpret and critically evaluate all forms of advertising.

The programme provides free educational resources for teachers, schools, parents/guardians and digital campaigns direct to its youth audience. Subjects include digital advertising, political advertising, scam ads, greenwashing, body image, influencer marketing, and creative careers and piracy which are delivered in the classroom, assembly, youth club or at home.

Media Smart also inspires – and provides pathways for – all young people to enter the working world of advertising and media, driven by their increased knowledge, understanding and curiosity about this industry landscape.

In the run up to the general election in 2024, Media Smart ran an advertising campaign encouraging young people to vote with confidence. Targeted at first-time voters, it highlighted Media Smart’s free, ten-point guide to political literacy and included cinema, TV and outdoor adverts.



Media Smart Advert in University



Media Smart out of home advert in Coventry town centre

04.

Bringing people together around cultural events or messages

Advertising funds countless products and services that we enjoy, such as TV, radio and the internet. Millions of people in the UK will encounter the same campaign, via the same media, often simultaneously.

For that reason, adverts can unify whole communities, and even countries, around a common event or message. The largest scale and most well-known example is Christmas. Almost two-thirds of people (63%) believe that Christmas ads help them get in the mood for Christmas²⁶. The release of the John Lewis Christmas advert has come to be, for many, the start of the Christmas season, following in the footsteps of Coca Cola, long associated with the start of the Christmas period²⁷.

Sporting events also often unite society, bringing communities together to get behind teams and athletes. Channel 4's Paralympic Games Campaigns delivered unity around both an event and a message. In the words of 4 Creative's then deputy executive creative director, Eoin McLaughlin, every Paralympics campaign has two main aims: "One, is to get people watching the Paralympics. And two, change attitudes around disability."²⁸

The Paralympic games have been hugely impactful in shaping people's views of disabled people in the UK. Following London 2012, 65% of people surveyed at the time claimed that the coverage impacted their views towards those with disabilities²⁹, and Channel 4's advertising campaign played a key role in that.

And it's not just national moments of joy; advertising is also able to reflect on shared experiences of trauma. In the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic, various campaigns told the lesser known stories of the pandemic from previously unheard groups. The 'Every Story Matters' campaign for the Covid UK Inquiry highlighted below is just one example of this.

“

Things like John Lewis, their Christmas ad every year – people love it. It's a creative thing and everyone really enjoys it.

Male, 18-34

”



The Pride has Arrived by ITV for the Fifa Women's World Cup 2023

26. Grant, G (2023) Christmas Advertising: Festivity, Gifts and Responsibility, Credos

27. Coca Cola (2023) Over a third of Brits sing The Holidays are Coming jingle every day as Coca-Cola lights up the UK with return of iconic advert

28. WFA, Insight & Strategy | Chanel 4: Super. Human.

29. Ibid



Our story matters.

Search: Every Story Matters.



Every Story Matters

The UK Covid Enquiry

The UK Covid-19 inquiry began in June 2022 to examine the UK's response to the Covid-19 pandemic and to learn lessons for the future. MG OMD created a campaign for print encouraging women who were pregnant during the pandemic to share their stories with the inquiry.

The campaign was a powerful one in which magazine media brands were leveraged to inspire behaviour change. The use of trusted and respected titles raised awareness effectively and prompted the target audience to participate.

It drove people directly to the 'Every Story Matters' website and resulted in a trackable increase in the number of experiences shared that were directly related to pregnancy during the pandemic, broadening the diversity of stories that were fed back to the inquiry.



BRAND:
The Covid UK Inquiry

CREATIVE:
MG OMD

WINNER OF:
Campaign for Good, Magnetic Spotlight Awards



BRAND:
Aldi

CREATIVE:
McCann London

WINNER OF:
System 1's Twelve Ads of Christmas

Kevin and the Christmas Factory

Aldi

While Aldi's Kevin the Carrot advert may not contribute socially as overtly as some others in this report, the ad was highly successful at encouraging goodwill around Christmas time. Awarded by System1 as the year's most successful campaign, like many Christmas adverts, its aim was to raise consumers' awareness of Aldi through positivity and happiness around the Christmas period.

Aldi's Christmas ad ends with the positive rhyming couplet, "seasonal goodwill is truly in the air, Christmas is a time that's sweeter when you share", linking to their partnership with Neighbourly to provide free meals in local areas.

Advertising has a key role to play in corporate partnerships like the one between Aldi and Neighbourly, providing brands an opportunity to communicate the good work that they do. Working with Neighbourly, Aldi have so far donated 40 million meals to local charities³⁰.

30. Aldi, (2023). Neighbourly - ALDI UK. [online] Available at: <https://www.aldi.co.uk/corporate/partnerships/neighbourly>.



05.

Promoting a more harmonious society

Promoting a more harmonious society could mean representing society in a positive way, it could mean championing diversity and inclusivity, or it could mean challenging stereotypes. 59% of people say that it is important that the companies they buy from actively promote diversity and inclusion in their own business or society³¹. A key way for companies to do this is through the diversity of storytelling in their advertising.

Although promoting a more harmonious society was the least often encountered form of social contribution, 46% of the public agree that advertising reflects the diverse and inclusive society of the UK³². Respondents from an ethnic minority background are more positive than White respondents about advertising reflecting the diversity of the UK, with 55% agreeing, compared to 45% of White respondents. In addition, 51% of all respondents agree that advertising has the power to challenge stereotypes.

This is perhaps reflective of the fact that promoting a more harmonious society is a less overt, more gradual effect. There are very few adverts whose sole intention is to promote harmony in society, but there is strong evidence to suggest that advertising is having a subtle, yet positive impact on diversity and inclusion.

As shown in **Figure 7**, the presence of women in ads increased from 47% in 2020 to 53% in 2021, with 53% of ads displaying equal prominence between men and women, 21% with men in a prominent role, and 26% with women in a prominent role³³.

The presence of different racial and ethnic groups also increased between 2020 and 2021, 35% of adverts including a mixture of individuals of different ethnic origins and skin colours, up from 22% in 2020³⁴.

Meanwhile, updated codes of practice from the ASA now prohibit gender stereotypes in advertising – evidence that advertising in the UK is increasingly considerate of harmful stereotypes.

While advertising in general is becoming more inclusive and less stereotypical in its portrayals, there are examples of individual campaigns that go above and beyond in promoting harmony and inclusivity. The powerful ads in this section are examples of advertising's ability to bring to the fore underrepresented stories and voices.

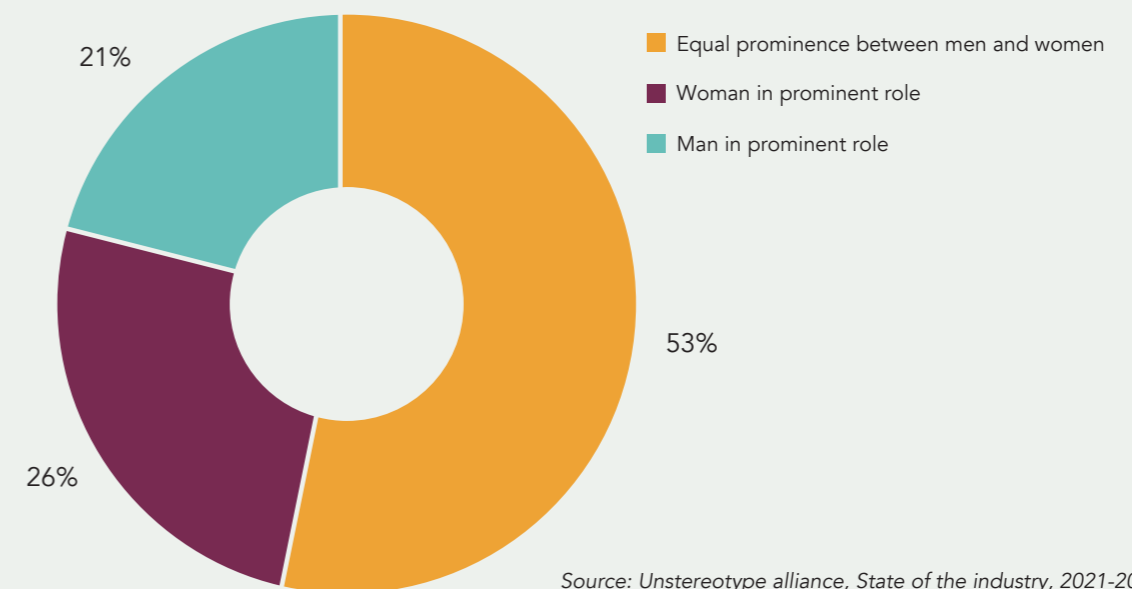
“

With having an autistic son, I do notice that when things are being advertised, they are now including disability especially, it's definitely a good thing.

Female, 35-44

”

Figure 7: Presence of men and women in prominent roles in UK adverts, 2021



31. www.warc.com. Future Focus: Inclusion and diversity in advertising | WARC.
32. Advertising Association/Credos, Public Trust Tracker, Q1-Q4 2023
33. Mitchell. N et al (2022), State of the Industry 2021-2022
34. Ibid



Me, My Autism and I

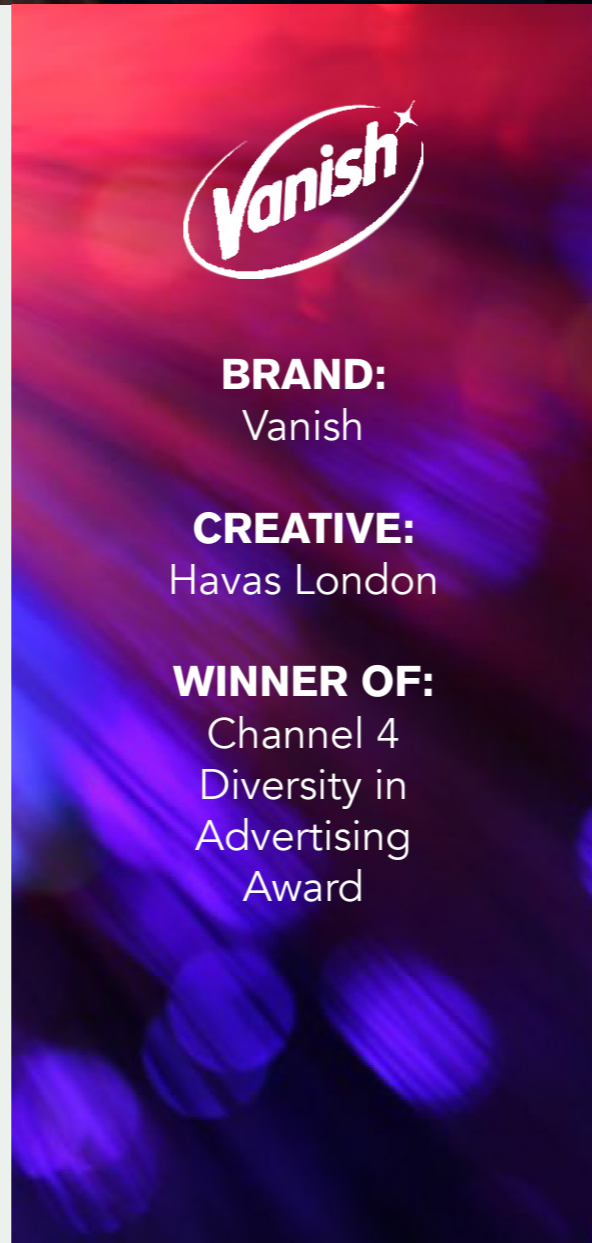
Vanish

Channel 4 research conducted in 2022 revealed that only 4% of TV adverts in the UK feature disabled people, despite 22% of the UK population having a disability. This drops to just 1% of disabled people in lead roles³⁵.

Vanish's award-winning campaign shines a light on the staggering gender gap in autism diagnoses. It celebrates and supports autistic girls, breaking down myths to help girls be seen as part of a broader public understanding of autism. Autistic girls are three times less likely to receive a diagnosis than boys³⁶, while new research from Vanish and Ambitious about Autism shows diagnosis for a quarter of girls takes two years or longer.³⁷

The campaign led to numerous disability and neurodiversity commitments from Vanish owner Reckitt. The campaign also had an exhibition on London's South Bank, a social campaign and online hub³⁸ telling other autistic girls' stories.

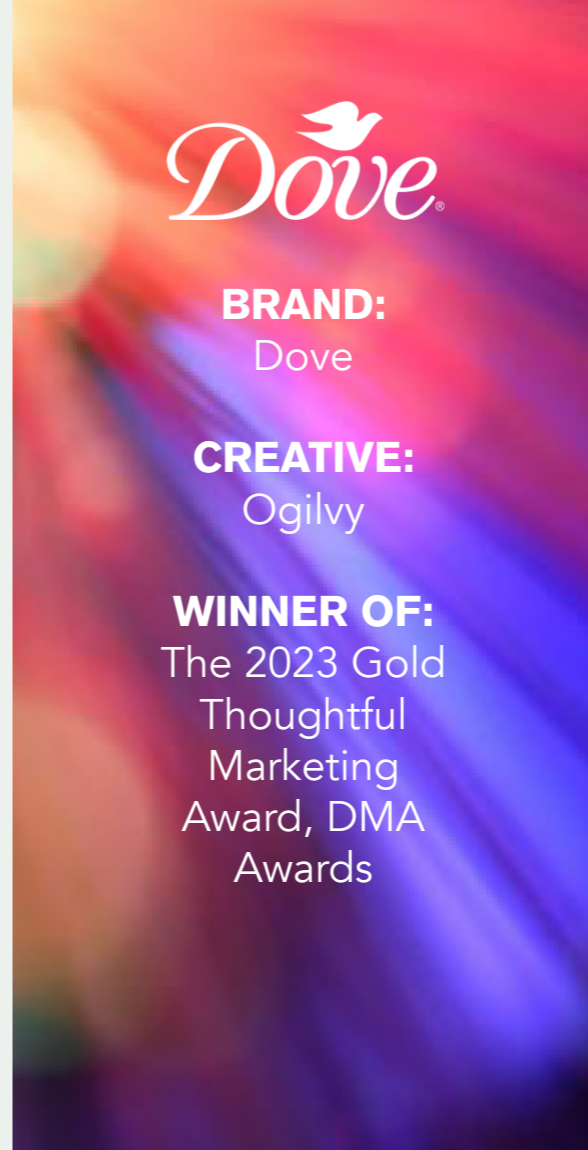
35. www.channel4.com. Channel 4 challenges UK advertisers to improve disabled representation in advertising campaigns | Channel 4.
 36. Rebecca (2023). Fewer females receive autism diagnosis due to gender bias research suggests. Edge Hill University
 37. More than just clothes (2023) Ambitious about Autism & Vanish, 2023
 38. Available at: www.ambitiousaboutautism.org.uk/what-we-do/awareness/girls-and-autism



BRAND:
Vanish

CREATIVE:
Havas London

WINNER OF:
Channel 4
Diversity in
Advertising
Award



BRAND:
Dove

CREATIVE:
Ogilvy

WINNER OF:
The 2023 Gold
Thoughtful
Marketing
Award, DMA
Awards

Toxic Influence

Dove

Research revealed new threats from toxic beauty advice promoted by influencers. Social media has led to teens developing parasocial relationships: the teen spends emotional energy, while the influencer stays blissfully unaware. This led to an imbalance – with 39% of girls trusting influencers more than their parents, damaging girls' self-esteem. Dove's ad campaign was the first to call out toxic influencers, exposing wrong-doing and helping girls understand how to respond.

The objective was to continue to take an 'actionist' stance to detoxify beauty by undermining threats to self-esteem and raising awareness of the Dove Self-Esteem Project, building brand equity and driving growth in the process.

The campaign is on track to be one of the largest Dove campaigns in the brand's history. #DetoxYourFeed is tracking to be one of Dove's most engaging campaigns, reaching twice as many Mums (vs. 2021 Reverse Selfie) fuelled by the Toxic Influence film. In Paid Media, #DetoxYourFeed is on track to deliver 745MM+ paid media impressions.



Toxic Influence

The groundbreaking deepfakes that turned moms into toxic influencers.

Toxic beauty advice is causing a self-esteem crisis in young girls.
 It has been linked to increased rates of depression and a rise in teenage suicides. And it's only getting worse. Social media algorithms are feeding girls harmful beauty hacks, dangerous trends and untested products as soon as they get their first phone. Tragically, this toxic advice has become so common that girls don't even realize it's toxic. It was time for Dove to act.

We put the same toxic advice girls hear every day into the mouth of the person they trust the most: their mom.

Harnessing large-scale social listening, we tracked fifty toxic trends in real time, and built transcripts from influencer comments using natural language processing AI. Then, using cutting-edge face-mapping and voice cloning technology, we deepfaked real moms to give this toxic advice to their daughters in a groundbreaking social experiment. Launched late April, the campaign is on track to become the most successful in Dove history.

115.5 MILLION
TOTAL VIEWS

3.1 BILLION
EARNED MEDIA IMPRESSIONS
IN THE FIRST 10 DAYS

300+ MEDIA OUTLETS
COVERED THE CAMPAIGN
IN THE FIRST 10 DAYS

60+ COUNTRIES
COVERED THE CAMPAIGN
IN THE FIRST 10 DAYS

99% POSITIVE
SENTIMENT ACROSS ALL
SOCIAL PLATFORMS

ALL IN

To tackle head on the issue of diversity and representation within the industry, in 2021, the Advertising Association introduced the All In Census.

With the aim of improving representation across the industry, from junior to C-Suite levels, as well as ensuring a diversity of storytelling in creative work, the All In Census was filled out by over 16,000 industry professionals in 2021, and over 19,000 in 2023.

In total, Credos estimate that an equivalent of over £800,000 of industry time was spent filling out the All In Census over the two censuses.



Acknowledgements

Thank you very much to all of the members and organisations who have allowed us to reference their awards and campaigns for use in this report.



We will be producing another social contribution report in 2025 and are always looking to showcase the best of our industry's award-winning work.

If you are a member of the Advertising Association or Front Foot with an award for social impact advertising, please get in touch.


ADVERTISING ASSOCIATION

Find us at:
95 Aldwych, London,
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