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**the essential marketing
effectiveness reading list
& expert voices to follow**

Introduction

Advertising effectiveness is one of our industry's most debated and sometimes misunderstood disciplines. For those working in marketing, measurement, media planning or strategy, the volume of available material can be overwhelming, and not everything published carries equal rigour. This recommended reading list from the IAB Australia Ad Effectiveness Council has been created to cut through that noise.

The IAB Australia Ad Effectiveness Council is made up of over 40 advertising measurement leaders from across media owners, platforms, agencies, brands, vendors, data and tech organisations. The Council's objective is to guide the industry on the best methods to assess the impact of marketing activities, and to help marketers optimise their digital advertising investment.

The Council has come together to curate what they believe to be the most essential body of knowledge for anyone serious about understanding how marketing works. Drawn from decades of collective experience, the recommendations span books, academic papers, industry whitepapers, practitioner playbooks and thought-leadership from respected names in the field, each selected for its rigour, depth and enduring practical value.

For each resource, you will find context on what the piece is best known for, guidance on how to apply its lessons to real-world decision making, and a personal recommendation from one or more Council members explaining why the work has mattered to them in their own careers. These are, in many cases, the texts that shaped how today's senior measurement practitioners think. The principles of advertising effectiveness are long-established; what this list offers is a trusted pathway into them.

The Council has also identified a set of organisations, think tanks, and current practitioners worth following on an ongoing basis. Advertising effectiveness is not a static field: while the fundamentals endure, the methods and tools continue to evolve. These voices represent some of the most credible current thinking available, and following them will help practitioners stay connected to the frontier of the discipline.

Although this list will be of value to anyone working in or adjacent to advertising effectiveness, it is offered with particular intent to those earlier in their careers. Juniors and entry-level professionals often enter an industry where established thinking is assumed rather than taught. This resource is designed to close that gap — in effect, the reading list that many experienced measurement experts wish had existed when they were starting out.

The literature on advertising effectiveness is large and still growing; what is captured here is a curated selection, reflecting the resources Council members have found most valuable in their own practice. We hope it serves as both a foundation and a reference.

Thanks to our IAB Australia Ad Effectiveness Council contributors: Dave Goodfellow (IAB Ad Effectiveness Council Co-Chair), Jerome Velasquez (Admatic), Tim Hul (Amazon), Casey Greig (Audience Group), Michelle Thompson (Azira), Nick Marshall (Dentsu Australia), Paul Murphy (Ebiquity), Eduardo Maia (Google), Andrew Pascoe (Hatched Media), Rob Clifford (Integral Ad Science), Michael Serratore (Innovid), Andreea Chirila (Kantar), Will Sherbon (LinkedIn), Ben Oliver (Mars Pet Nutrition), Sheetal Nand (Microsoft), Ian Garland (Milton Data), Brett Camilleri (Monks), Ashley Spinks (Netflix), Patrick Byrne (News Australia), Kirsten Riolo (Nielsen), Stewart Gurney (Nine), Mark Titley (Paramount), Jordan Taylor-Bartels (Prophet), Steve Weaver (Publicis Groupe), Duran Bradley (REA Group), Alice Bradley (The Guardian), Kelly Umberfield (TikTok).

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1. Recommended Reading List

Intellectual Foundations

How Brands Grow <i>Byron Sharp</i>	
Reference / link	Byron Sharp, How Brands Grow (Oxford University Press, 2010). ISBN: 978-0-195-57433-1
Known for	Evidence-based laws of brand growth centred on penetration, mental availability and physical availability. Sharp's research, drawn from the Ehrenberg-Bass Institute, challenges conventional loyalty-focused marketing and argues that brands grow primarily by reaching more buyers — including light and infrequent buyers — rather than deepening loyalty among existing ones.
How to apply	Plan campaigns for broad reach rather than narrow audience targeting. Prioritise consistent memory structures (distinctive assets, slogans, mental cues) over persuasion. Evaluate media plans against light-buyer coverage, not just heavy-user efficiency. Challenge briefs that focus exclusively on retention.
Personal recommendation	<i>“In an era where it is incredibly easy to get bogged down in vanity metrics, How Brands Grow provides the macro-level clarity needed to focus on what genuinely drives marketing effectiveness. Bringing things back to the simple theory that brands grow by being easy to buy (physical availability) and easy to think of (mental availability) reinforces the role of creative and having distinct brand assets that cut through rather than optimising towards the next short-term result. A useful counterbalance when facing the constant demand of justifying investment with short-term performance.” - Michael Serratore, VP Client Success at Innovid</i> <i>“How Brands Grow sets a great foundation for anyone to understand the immutable laws of how brands are bought and the subsequent implications for how we plan and buy media. It should be the starting point for any marketer serious about effectiveness, a lens through which to evaluate every campaign, channel, and creative decision.” - Tim Hul, Head of Strategy and Video Solutions at Amazon</i> <i>“This is one of the few marketing books that fundamentally changes how you think about advertising effectiveness. Whether you agree with every conclusion or not, it provides an evidence-based framework that every marketer and measurement practitioner should understand before making decisions about media investment and campaign success.” - Alice Bradley, Commercial Editor at The Guardian</i>

How Brands Grow (Continued)

Byron Sharp

Counter / caution / context

“Given the year it was published, it’s important to consider its message around creative effectiveness with the realities of modern consumer behavior and technology now. Completely disregarding the role of personalised creative can lead to a strategic blind spot, particularly with consumer expectations and media that sits within short-attention environments. The overall objective of prioritising reach can still be achieved alongside personalised messaging with the solutions available in market today. Dismissing target segments and tailored messaging risks reducing marketing to a pure math problem, ignoring the fact that a personalised, emotionally resonant message can out-perform a generic one on the exact same media buy.” - Michael Serratore, VP Client Success at Innovid

“This book should be treated as a foundation to construct a playbook, not the playbook itself. Every brand has nuance within its life stage, category, and customers that should be taken into consideration. The principles are powerful, but they must be contextualised to your specific market conditions, competitive dynamics, and growth objectives.” - Tim Hul, Head of Strategy and Video Solutions at Amazon

“While many of its principles have been extensively validated, you should apply them in context. Categories with niche audiences, regulated markets or highly specialised B2B environments may require adaptations. The book is strongest as a framework for understanding long-term brand growth rather than a playbook for every campaign objective. Also, especially in the later chapters it feels as though Sharp drops his evidence-based approach, e.g. the idea of creating more “occasions” for your brand to grow mindshare doesn’t appear to have any data backing it up” - Alice Bradley, Commercial Editor at The Guardian

Recency Theory - collected papers*Erwin Ephron*

Reference / link	Erwin Ephron 'Recency Planning' and collected papers (Journal of Advertising Research, 1997). Available via WARC and the Ephron on Media archive.
Known for	Recency planning — the principle that advertising works primarily by intercepting consumers who are already in the market and close to a purchase decision. Ephron argued that continuous weekly reach is more effective than burst scheduling because it ensures presence at the moment purchase intent is highest.
How to apply	Shift budget allocation away from heavy-up bursts towards continuous, always-on scheduling. Evaluate media plans by their ability to reach in-market buyers each week. Use recency logic to justify sustained presence over campaign flights with dark periods.
Personal recommendation	<i>“As someone who has spent many years in media and marketing effectiveness research, I consider Recency Theory essential reading for every planner. What makes the book endure is its simple principle: advertising works best when it reaches people close to the moment they are ready to buy and Ephron’s focus on continuous weekly reach transformed media planning and remains as relevant today as ever. His theories helped shape many current concepts from Ehrenberg-Bass such as reaching as many people as possible as often as possible, and CEPs.” - Steve Weaver, Media Intelligence Director ANZ at Publicis Groupe</i>

Eat Your Greens <i>Edited by Wiemer Snijders</i>	
Reference / link	Wiemer Snijders (ed.), <i>Eat Your Greens</i> (Troubador Publishing, 2018). ISBN: 978-1-78901-675-8.
Known for	A deliberately unglamorous anthology built on one premise: the marketing industry prefers exciting novelty over boring evidence, to its own detriment. Each chapter is a short, independently readable essay arguing one point from evidence or experience. The contributor list reads like a greatest-hits of the existing reading list — many of the same researchers and thinkers appear here in conversation with each other, which makes it useful connective tissue across the other books.
How to apply	Works best as a discussion resource rather than a cover-to-cover read. Individual chapters can be assigned or shared ahead of council meetings as provocations. The format — short, opinionated, evidence-referenced — makes it well suited to time-poor practitioners who want the argument without the full book. Particularly useful as an entry point for people who find the long-form research (Binet and Field, Jenni Romaniuk) referenced in this list a harder starting place.
Personal recommendation	<i>“The physical copy lives at the agency as a standing reference, which is the highest practical endorsement I can give a book. The title is the point: effectiveness thinking is like eating your vegetables — everyone knows it matters, most people find reasons not to do it, and the industry keeps reaching for processed food (short-term performance metrics, platform attribution) instead. For a council trying to shift industry norms, the book is already making your argument for you” - Andrew Pascoe, Head of Effectiveness at Hatched Media</i> <i>“Eat Your Greens is a collection of essays from many of advertising’s leading effectiveness thinkers. It’s a practical, real-life salad of findings vs an academic big Sunday roast. Start here.” - Steve Weaver, Media Intelligence Director ANZ at Publicis Groupe</i>
Counter / caution / context	As an anthology, there is no single through-line argument, and some chapters are significantly stronger than others. It also does not have the academic rigour of the IPA research or the Ehrenberg-Bass body of work — it is practitioner-oriented, which is a strength for accessibility but a limitation for anyone wanting to cite it in a formal effectiveness context. Some data references are now seven or more years old. Best treated as a gateway to the other books on the list, not as a standalone authority.

Thinking, Fast and Slow*Daniel Kahneman*

Reference / link	Daniel Kahneman, <i>Thinking, Fast and Slow</i> (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2011). ISBN: 978-0-374-27563-1.
Known for	The definitive popular account of the two-system model of the mind: System 1 (fast, automatic, intuitive, emotional) and System 2 (slow, effortful, deliberate, rational). Drawing on decades of Nobel Prize-winning research with Amos Tversky, Kahneman catalogues the cognitive biases and heuristics that shape human judgement, including anchoring, availability, loss aversion and the framing effect. For marketers it is a foundational text beneath much of modern effectiveness thinking, explaining why most purchase decisions are made intuitively and emotionally rather than through rational evaluation, and why the cues and context around a choice often matter more than the product's stated attributes. This book is best known for explaining the two broad modes of thought that shape human judgment: a fast, intuitive mode and a slower, more deliberate one. It also became foundational because it helped popularize the idea that people are not consistently rational in the way classical decision models often assume. Instead, our judgments are shaped by bias, heuristics, framing, overconfidence, and context.
How to apply	Treat the buyer as a System 1 decision-maker first. Build communications that work through fast, intuitive recognition (distinctive assets, emotional cues, fluency and ease) rather than relying on rational persuasion. Use the bias toolkit deliberately: anchor on price and value, frame choices to reduce perceived risk, and design for availability so the brand comes to mind easily at the moment of decision. Apply as a sense-check on any strategy that assumes consumers weigh features rationally, and as the evidence base when making the case for emotion-led, brand-building creative. For marketing science, the System 1 / System 2 distinction is incredibly useful. It helps explain why consumers may say one thing in a survey but do another in-market, why brand cues can matter even when people cannot fully articulate their influence, and why creative effectiveness often depends on fast, automatic processing as much as explicit persuasion. It is also useful internally: when stakeholders react immediately to one topline chart or one surprising result, they may be operating from fast pattern recognition rather than slow evaluation. Emerging practitioners who understand this can design better readouts, ask better follow-up questions, and separate instinctive reactions from evidence-based conclusions. The book is also valuable when interpreting bias in forecasting, planning, attribution debates, and the tendency to tell overly neat stories about messy consumer behavior.

Thinking, Fast and Slow (Continued)*Daniel Kahneman***Personal recommendation**

“This is the book that explains why so much of marketing works. Once you accept that buyers decide fast and rationalise later, brand-building, distinctiveness and emotion stop being soft ideas and become the obvious strategy.” - Brett Camilleri, VP of Measurement, APAC at Monks

“This is a foundational read for anyone entering a field that sits at the intersection of people, decisions, and evidence. In marketing and brand research, it gives you better language for understanding both respondents and stakeholders. It can make you more precise in how you interpret data and more empathetic in how you interpret people” - Dave Goodfellow

Counter / caution / context

It is a psychology book, not a marketing one, so the application to advertising is inference rather than instruction. Some of the priming and social-psychology studies it cites have since struggled to replicate, and Kahneman himself acknowledged concerns about parts of that literature, so treat specific effects with care while the broad dual-system framework holds up well. It is also dense and long for a busy practitioner; the core ideas are distilled more directly for marketers in works like Sutherland’s *Alchemy* and Barden’s *Decoded*.

It is a substantial book, and readers in the early stages of their media career may find it dense if they read it cover to cover without a practical lens. I’d recommend reading it with current work examples in mind: survey interpretation, experiment readouts, media planning trade-offs, or stakeholder decision behavior.

Super Thinking: The Big Book of Mental Models

Gabriel Weinberg and Lauren McCann

Reference / link	Gabriel Weinberg and Lauren McCann, Super Thinking: The Big Book of Mental Models (Portfolio, 2019). ISBN: 978-0-525-53358-0
Known for	This book is known for turning a wide range of mental models into a practical toolkit for everyday reasoning and decision-making. Rather than arguing for one “best” framework, it encourages readers to build a broader repertoire so they can interpret complex situations from multiple angles. The book’s emphasis is on applying models to real problems, which is why it has become a useful bridge between analytical thinking and day-to-day judgment.
How to apply	Key mental models it explores First principles thinking, pre-mortem, 5 Whys, Eisenhower Decision Matrix, forcing functions, confirmation bias, and inversion / inverse thinking. How to apply it in marketing effectiveness For junior marketers and measurement practitioners, this is especially useful because the job is rarely just “run the analysis.” It is often about framing the problem correctly, pressure-testing assumptions, and choosing the right decision path before the work even starts. A premortem is particularly valuable when launching a campaign measurement plan, MMM readout, brand lift study, or experimentation roadmap: ask in advance, “If this failed, what would have caused it?” That can surface risks like weak test design, stakeholder misalignment, low sample quality, bad success metrics, or overclaiming from noisy results. Other models help too: 5 Whys for diagnosing why a KPI moved, first principles for stripping a measurement question back to causal basics, and the Eisenhower matrix for prioritizing analysis requests that feel urgent but are not actually strategic.
Personal recommendation	<i>“This is probably the single book that I find myself constantly coming back to. It is one of the more practically useful books on this list because its value is not confined to statistics or formal analysis. The models are helpful for interpreting trends, designing better projects, communicating trade-offs, and operating more effectively in the ambiguity that comes with marketing science work. The premortem is especially powerful: many teams do postmortems after the fact, but doing the equivalent thinking in advance often materially improves execution quality” - Dave Goodfellow</i>
Counter / caution / context	The main watch-out here is superficial use. Mental models are only helpful if they sharpen thinking; they become unhelpful when treated as shortcuts that replace thinking. Emerging practitioners should use the book to expand their toolkit, not to force every problem into the same template.

The Culture Map Erin Meyer	
Reference / link	Erin Meyer, <i>The Culture Map: Breaking Through the Invisible Boundaries of Global Business</i> (PublicAffairs, 2014). ISBN: 978-1-61039-250-1
Known for	This book is widely known for giving managers and global teams a structured way to understand how culture shapes workplace behavior. Its core contribution is not a generic “cultures differ” message, but a practical framework for comparing how people communicate, evaluate, persuade, lead, decide, build trust, disagree, and schedule across markets. That makes it unusually actionable for international collaboration.
How to apply	Key frameworks it explores: Meyer’s model maps cultures across eight dimensions: Communicating, Evaluating, Persuading, Leading, Deciding, Trusting, Disagreeing, and Scheduling How to apply it in marketing effectiveness: This is highly relevant in global marketing science because effectiveness work is rarely just technical. Analyses are commissioned, challenged, socialized, and acted on by people operating in different cultural norms. A cross-market readout can fail not because the evidence is weak, but because the communication style, level of directness, decision process, or trust-building approach does not fit the audience. For example, some stakeholders want explicit written recommendations up front; others prefer a more contextual discussion first. Some teams see open disagreement as healthy rigor; others experience it as relational damage. Some organizations want quick top-down decisions; others expect broad consensus before moving. For emerging practitioners, this book can materially improve collaboration, interpretation, and influence across global teams.
Personal recommendation	<i>“Although this is less of a pure analytics book, it is one of the most useful books here if you work in international or cross-functional environments. It helps explain why equally smart people can look at the same data and still communicate, interpret, and act on it very differently. As a practical guide to collaboration across markets, it is excellent.” - Dave Goodfellow</i>
Counter / caution / context	The main caution is to use the framework as a lens, not a stereotype machine. The book is strongest when it helps you ask better questions about how people work; it is weaker if readers treat national culture as a rigid predictor of individual behavior.

The Tipping Point: How Little Things Can Make a Big Difference

Malcolm Gladwell

Reference / link	Malcolm Gladwell, The Tipping Point: How Little Things Can Make a Big Difference (Little, Brown and Company, 2000). ISBN: 978-0-316-31696-5
Known for	First published in March 2000, this book became influential for arguing that social change often accelerates once a threshold is crossed, and that seemingly small inputs can sometimes produce outsized shifts in behavior. It helped popularize ideas such as the role of key people in diffusion, the importance of context, and the “stickiness” of messages. Its appeal came from translating broad social-science ideas into memorable stories and frameworks that people could carry into business and culture discussions.
How to apply	For marketers, this is a strong reminder that impact is not always linear. Reach, influence, context, social transmission, and environment can matter as much as message quality alone. It is useful when thinking about adoption curves, community effects, creative resonance, word-of-mouth dynamics, and why some campaigns move from “working” to “breaking through.” Just as importantly, it encourages practitioners to look beyond the campaign dashboard and consider the broader system: social norms, local context, timing, category conditions, and the people or nodes that accelerate spread.
Personal recommendation	<i>“What makes this especially valuable is not just the headline idea of a tipping point, but the habit of looking at both macro patterns and unexpected micro drivers. That habit is very useful in marketing science, where teams often focus too narrowly on the immediate metrics and miss the broader environmental or behavioral forces shaping them” - Dave Goodfellow</i>
Counter / caution / context	This book is best read as a stimulating lens rather than a final authority. Some of its ideas became extremely influential, but parts of the original conversation — including claims tied to topics like crime reduction and broken windows theory — have since been debated and challenged, including by Gladwell himself in later commentary. It also includes references to suicide in the context of its broader discussion of social contagion, which may be important context for some readers.

Revenge of the Tipping Point: Overstories, Superspreaders, and the Rise of Social Engineering Malcolm Gladwell	
Reference / link	Malcolm Gladwell, <i>Revenge of the Tipping Point: Overstories, Superspreaders, and the Rise of Social Engineering</i> (Little, Brown and Company, 2024). ISBN: 978-0-316-57580-5
Known for	Published in late 2024, this book revisits the social-epidemic territory of “The Tipping Point” (see above) nearly twenty-five years later, but with more emphasis on the darker side of contagion and on how systems can be intentionally shaped. It reframes the earlier conversation by asking not only how ideas and behaviors spread, but how influence can be engineered, manipulated, or intensified in ways that create harmful outcomes. In that sense, it functions both as a sequel and as a reconsideration.
How to apply	This is especially relevant for anyone working in effectiveness because it highlights something the field sometimes under-discusses: conclusions have a shelf life. Models that seem persuasive in one moment can age badly as contexts shift, new evidence emerges, or second-order effects become visible. For emerging practitioners, that is a crucial lesson. Good measurement is not just about making a strong argument once; it is about staying open to revision, continuing to test, and being willing to revisit earlier conclusions. That mindset is essential in areas like incrementality, brand effects, media mix, creative wearout, and cross-platform behavior, where “truth” is often conditional and evolving.
Personal recommendation	<i>“Paired with the original, this is the more novel recommendation. The most valuable lesson is meta-analytical: it models the importance of revisiting prior beliefs with humility. In marketing science, where people are often rewarded for confidence, this is a powerful counterexample. It would likely be beneficial to the field of marketing science and ad effectiveness if more practitioners openly revisited what they once believed, what later evidence changed, and what they would now do differently” - Dave Goodfellow</i>
Counter / caution / context	This book discusses sensitive topics, including suicide, in the context of broader social patterns and contagion effects. Readers may want to keep that in mind before reading.

Right Kind of Wrong: The Science of Failing Well

Amy C. Edmondson

Reference / link	Amy C. Edmondson, Right Kind of Wrong: The Science of Failing Well (Atria Books, 2023). ISBN: 978-1-9821-9506-9.
Known for	Defining three archetypes of failure: basic (a single, preventable human error in familiar territory), complex (multiple factors colliding in a “perfect storm,” still often catchable with vigilance), and intelligent (an unpreventable, worthwhile misstep in new territory, hypothesis-driven, goal-oriented, and kept as small as possible). It's this last type we, as media measurement professionals, should actively seek out, since it's the engine of real learning.
How to apply	Reframe test-and-learn programs (incrementality tests, geo experiments, attention studies) as intelligent-failure engines, where a null result is knowledge gained, not a failure. Triage errors by type, fix basic failures like broken tags or misconfigured holdouts through process, but harvest the learning from intelligent failures like a well-designed study returning a negative result.
Personal recommendation	<i>“This book has been a genuine mind-opener for me — it's reshaped how I talk to advertisers about test-and-learn, giving me the language to reframe a “failed” experiment as evidence gained rather than a setback, and to better position the risk-versus-reward of experimentation as a strategic asset rather than a gamble.” - Eduardo Maia, Data and Measurement Lead at Google</i>
Counter / caution / context	<i>“The idea is really intuitive, sometimes obvious. But I find that it is still worth communicating in the way the author structured (the 3 types of failure)” - Eduardo Maia, Data and Measurement Lead at Google</i>

Media Cartography Evan Shapiro	
Reference / link	Evan Shapiro, Media Cartography — regularly updated market maps and subscriber publications. Available via evanshapiro.substack.com .
Known for	Detailed market maps illustrate the fragmentation, re-aggregation and ecosystem power dynamics reshaping the media landscape. Shapiro is a former television executive turned media analyst whose visual maps are widely referenced by agency strategists and platform executives for understanding how content, distribution and monetisation are evolving.
How to apply	Use Shapiro's ecosystem maps as a framework for evaluating where audiences are migrating and which platforms hold structural leverage. Apply when assessing long-term media investment strategy or advising clients on future-proofing their channel mix.
Personal recommendation	<i>“If you work in media, I’d strongly recommend following Evan Shapiro, best known as the “Media Cartographer” and publisher of the Media War & Peace newsletter. While his famous maps of the media universe are a compelling visualisation of the industry landscape, the real value lies in the analysis behind them. Shapiro excels at connecting changes in audience behaviour, platform economics, creator culture, distribution, technology and advertising into a single view of where the market is heading. His most common themes are the growing influence of creators, the convergence of media, commerce and technology, and the shifting balance of power between platforms, publishers, agencies and brands. His work is particularly useful because it explains why media structures are changing and what those changes mean for reach, attention, distribution and future advertising opportunities. I find his thinking valuable not because he predicts the future perfectly, but because he consistently frames the right strategic questions several years before they become mainstream industry debates.” - Steve Weaver, Media Intelligence Director ANZ at Publicis Groupe</i>

Switch: How to Change Things When Change Is Hard*Chip Heath and Dan Heath*

Reference / link	Chip Heath and Dan Heath, <i>Switch: How to Change Things When Change Is Hard</i> (Crown Business, 2010). ISBN 978-0-385-52875-7.
Known for	The Rider, the Elephant and the Path — a framework for understanding why change fails and what makes it stick. The Heaths argue that what looks like resistance is usually a lack of clarity, and what looks like laziness is usually exhaustion. Successful change requires three things at once: direct the Rider (the rational mind) with clear, specific direction; motivate the Elephant (the emotional mind) by making people feel something, not just know something; and shape the Path (the environment) so the desired behaviour becomes the easy default. Best known for its practical devices — find the bright spots, script the critical moves, shrink the change, point to the destination, build habits and rally the herd — each illustrated with case studies drawn from business, healthcare and public policy.
How to apply	Two ways in. First, as a lens on the work itself: most advertising is asking someone to change a behaviour, and the book is a useful corrective to briefs that load everything onto the Rider with rational messaging while ignoring the Elephant and the Path. Ask what feeling the work creates, and what friction stands between intent and purchase. Second — and this is where it earns its place on an effectiveness reading list — as a guide to changing behaviour inside your own organisation. The evidence base for long-term brand investment is well established, but the internal battle to act on it is rarely won with charts alone. Use bright spots to find the campaigns or markets where your business is already doing it well and build the case from there. Shrink the change by proposing a single test budget rather than a wholesale reallocation. Script the critical moves so the recommendation lands as a specific decision, not a principle.
Personal recommendation	<i>“I love the bias for evidence and action in this book. It had such a strong influence on my thinking that I found myself applying its principles across many of the projects and challenges I was working on at the time.” - Paul Murphy, MD Australia & NZ at Ebiquity</i>

Algorithms to Live By: The Computer Science of Human Decisions

Brian Christian and Tom Griffiths

Reference / link	Brian Christian and Tom Griffiths, <i>Algorithms to Live By: The Computer Science of Human Decisions</i> (Henry Holt and Co., 2016). ISBN 978-1-62779-036-9.
Known for	A translation of computer science's best-understood algorithms into practical grammar for decisions made under limited time, information and attention. Christian and Griffiths argue that problems which feel distinctively human — when to stop searching and commit, how much to bet on the familiar versus the untried, what to keep close at hand, how much mess to tolerate — are the same problems computer scientists have spent decades formalising, and that workable answers already exist. The book is best known for a handful of highly transferable concepts: optimal stopping and the 37% rule; the explore/exploit trade-off and the multi-armed bandit; caching, and why what was used most recently predicts what will be needed next; Bayes' rule and the discipline of setting sensible priors; overfitting, where a model that explains the past perfectly predicts the future badly; and the case for randomness and "good enough" approximation when a problem is genuinely intractable. Its underlying claim is that constraint is not an excuse for poor decisions but the condition under which the right method has to be chosen.
How to apply	Most valuable as a set of named concepts for arguments marketers already having. Explore/exploit gives structure to the split between proven channels and testing: the longer the horizon, the more exploration is justified — a cleaner way to defend a test budget than calling it innovation. Overfitting is the single most useful idea here for anyone commissioning or reviewing econometrics and marketing mix modelling; a model that fits historical sales almost perfectly is usually describing noise, and the right response to a suspiciously good fit is scepticism rather than confidence. Bayes' rule makes the case for entering measurement with priors drawn from the existing evidence base rather than treating each result as though nothing were known beforehand — which is precisely what meta-analyses such as Binet and Field's exist to supply. Optimal stopping applies to pitch processes, creative testing, and the point at which further optimisation stops paying for itself. Read it alongside <i>Thinking, Fast and Slow</i> : where Kahneman explains why judgement fails, this explains what to do about it.
Personal recommendation	<i>"The reason CS literacy matters isn't that marketers will write code. It's that every material marketing decision - allocation, testing, pricing, timing - is now mediated by a model someone (or something) built. If you can't interrogate the assumptions, you're not making the decision - the model is. Equations are just compressed arguments; learning to read them is learning to spot when the argument is wrong. That skill compounds every year the tooling gets more automated, because, as we all know, automation doesn't remove the judgment - it concentrates it in fewer hands - and I believe you gotta be one of those hands."</i> - Jordan Taylor-Bartels, CEO at Prophet

Creative Effectiveness

Lemon: How the Advertising Brain Turned Sour

Orlando Wood

Reference / link	Orlando Wood, Lemon: How the Advertising Brain Turned Sour (IPA, 2019). Available via the IPA store: ipa.co.uk .
Known for	A diagnosis of the long-run decline in creative effectiveness, linked to an industry-wide shift towards narrow, left-brain rational advertising styles — characterised by data-driven targeting, short-form content and direct response mechanics — at the expense of emotionally engaging, entertaining and broadly appealing creative. Wood draws on neuroscience and a large effectiveness dataset to make the case.
How to apply	Use as a diagnostic lens when evaluating creative briefs or reviewing campaign work. Advocate for advertising that entertains and creates genuine emotional connection. Push back on creative that prioritises information delivery over feeling. Apply particularly in brand-building contexts.
Personal recommendation	<i>“I find some books on advertising can be overly prescriptive and proselytise vague ‘best practices’ without backing up their claims - but not this book. Wood does a fantastic job of showing the science behind creativity and emotional appeal. This book changed the way I think about advertising working in the industry - but also as a consumer.” - Rob Clifford, Senior Customer Success Manager at Integral Ad Science</i> <i>“System 1’s original publication and one that introduces the sector to System 1 thinking. Wood tackles one of the most important questions in effectiveness research: why has advertising become less effective despite unprecedented advances in targeting, data and measurement? Consistent findings now show improved brand and business outcomes to creative strength and emotional appeal. If you’re stuck in a performance campaign loop, use this book and other System 1 research as evidence for investment in brand campaigns.” - Steve Weaver, Media Intelligence Director ANZ at Publicis Groupe</i>

The Creative Dividend Andrew Tindall	
Reference / link	Andrew Tindall, The Creative Dividend (System1 Group). Reports and frameworks available via system1group.com, in partnership with IPA and WARC.
Known for	Frameworks linking the emotional quality and distinctiveness of creative executions to profit outcomes. Tindall's work at System1 connects pre-testing emotional response data (measured through facial coding and surveys) to long-term commercial returns, providing a business case for investing in high-quality, feeling-led creative.
How to apply	Integrate System1-style emotional testing into creative evaluation. Use the framework to make the business case for creative quality to CFOs and procurement teams. Diagnose whether media weight is being wasted on weak creative and link creative quality metrics to expected sales outcomes.
Personal recommendation	<i>“One of the best things you can do early in your career is step outside your own discipline. Whether you're in media or creative, this paper helps to expand your perspective on how both sides work together to build brands and drive real business growth. Too often we frame the conversation as creativity versus media, or brand versus performance. This paper is a great reminder that they're not competing forces, they're multipliers of each other, and it finally puts some serious evidence behind that.” - Casey Greig, Head of Strategy at Audience Group</i> <i>‘Lemon’ is your foundational read in this space, and ‘The Creative Dividend’ is your commercial application of findings. Any reports from System 1 are worth the read and Tindall is heavily active on LinkedIn and the conference circuit. Do yourself a favour and follow him.” - Steve Weaver, Media Intelligence Director ANZ at Publicis Groupe</i>

The Effectiveness Code

James Hurman and Peter Field

Reference / link	James Hurman and Peter Field, The Effectiveness Code (Cannes Lions / WARC, 2020). Available via warc.com.
Known for	A cross-database study of close to 5,000 campaigns from the Cannes, WARC, and IPA Databank archives. Introduced Creative Commitment (the combination of budget, duration, and channel breadth that predicts effectiveness outcomes) and the Creative Effectiveness Ladder, a six-level hierarchy from temporary sales spikes through to enduring category leadership.
How to apply	Use the Creative Effectiveness Ladder to align on the level of impact a campaign is trying to achieve, then use Creative Commitment to assess whether the investment, duration, and channel scope are sufficient to get there. Apply when making the case for sustained investment or when pushing back on briefs that cut budget or shorten flights.
Personal recommendation	<i>“Working across both brand and performance media, one of the most persistent challenges is justifying sustained investment when short-term metrics make cutting budget, flight length, or channel scope feel like the rational choice. The Effectiveness Code provides a reality check for an industry obsessed with exactly that tension. Hurman and Field prove that to reach a Commercial Triumph or become an Enduring Icon, brands must do two things: agree on which rung of the Creative Effectiveness Ladder they are trying to reach, then back their best ideas with the budget, time, and multi-channel presence required to genuinely change consumer behaviour at scale. The framework has a name for this: Creative Commitment. The data shows it is one of the strongest predictors of commercial effectiveness. The question is not whether to invest, but whether the level of commitment matches the ambition.” - Jerome Velasquez, Head of Product and Technology at ADMATIC</i>
Counter / caution / context	The context here is that this dataset skews toward larger, award-entered campaigns and somewhat underrepresents smaller brands or markets. Also, given the database's age, its findings pre-date retail media and AI-driven production.

Influence: The Psychology of Persuasion Robert B. Cialdini	
Reference / link	Robert B. Cialdini, Influence, New and Expanded: The Essential Guide to the Psychology of Influence and Persuasion in Everyday Life (Harper Business, 2021 Update). ISBN: 9780063138810
Known for	Being one of the definitive guides to behavioral psychology and ethical compliance, based on complex social science research (such as the Milgram obedience experiments), but written as an accessible story-based narrative. The core is laying out seven principles of 'human compliance' (aspects that can influence how much we want to go along with a concept or message). These are Reciprocation, Consistency, Social Proof, Liking, Authority, Scarcity, and the addition of Unity (group-identity) in the recent versions. The book helps identify how people are swayed, but also actively details how these shortcuts can be weaponized (and thereby understand when we are being influenced as well).
How to apply	Well worth a read for marketing, ad sales, and creative/copywriting. By understanding the intrinsic psychological triggers that prompt a "yes," it is possible to ethically structure brand messaging/marketing efforts to naturally drive interest and engagement with consumers. For analysts and researchers, it can help dissect the levers being used by competitive messages and understand success drivers of campaigns. Originally written in 1984, the modern updates & framework have extended to include digital marketing (like eComm triggers and social media dynamics), so while the behavioural fundamentals haven't changed in 40 years, the application has remained up to date.
Personal recommendation	<i>“Influence: The Psychology of Persuasion, gives a great working insight for recognising common marketing hooks when they appear in the wild. In many ways gives stronger insight into the underlying psychology behind the modern digital creator/influencer/social marketing concepts that sit outside of more ‘traditional’ marketing mix levers.” - Kelly Umerfield, Head of Agency Partnerships, ANZ at TikTok</i>
Counter / caution / context	Caution - the book helps a consumer understand when marketing is being used against them in sneaky ways but shouldn't be taken as an endorsement of negatively manipulating customers. Using these in an honest and practical way (e.g., when there is legitimately limited stock, or authentic reviews/endorsements) can be useful and positive way to have influence.

Brand Building and Distinctive Brand Assets

Building Distinctive Brand Assets <i>Jenni Romaniuk</i>	
Reference / link	Jenni Romaniuk, Building Distinctive Brand Assets (Oxford University Press, 2018). ISBN: 978-0-190-65840-7.
Known for	The definitive academic and practitioner treatment of distinctive brand assets and Category Entry Points (CEPs). Romaniuk, a professor at the Ehrenberg-Bass Institute, provides both the theoretical basis and practical methodology for identifying, measuring and protecting the distinctive codes — visual, sonic, verbal — that link brands to memory at the moment of purchase.
How to apply	Audit your brand's existing distinctive assets and measure their fame and uniqueness. Map the Category Entry Points most relevant to your category and ensure your brand is linked to them in communications. Prioritise asset consistency across touchpoints and resist the temptation to refresh assets that have strong fame scores.
Personal recommendation	<i>“In a world of three letter acronyms, DBAs and CEPs are the only ones you need to understand to improve marketing effectiveness. Of all the work pushed out by Ehrenberg-Bass, this is one that has current and ongoing utility and consistently aligns with the most effective campaigns in Australia and around the world.” - Steve Weaver, Media Intelligence Director ANZ at Publicis Groupe</i>

Better Brand Health: Measures and Metrics for a How Brands Grow World Jenni Romaniuk	
Reference / link	Jenni Romaniuk, <i>Better Brand Health: Measures and Metrics for a How Brands Grow World</i> (Oxford University Press, 2023). ISBN: 978-0-190-34090-2. Available via oup.com.au .
Known for	Reorients brand health tracking around the Ehrenberg-Bass framework, arguing most existing trackers were designed pre-How Brands Grow and are structurally unfit for purpose. Diagnoses three systemic problems: wrong philosophy (focusing on heavy buyers rather than light buyers and non-buyers), fads (adding metrics without purpose), and fear (reluctance to remove them, producing bloated questionnaires). Provides practical methodology for measuring mental availability and Category Entry Points (CEPs) using the 7Ws framework, with recommended tracker composition of roughly 60% CEPs, 30% other attributes, and 10% attitude statements. Also introduces Mental Advantage analysis to correct for brand-size distortion in attribute data.
How to apply	Use as a practical guide to shift the core metric of brand health from traditional funnel and loyalty measures to Mental Availability: the propensity of a brand to be thought of in a buying situation. Apply when auditing or redesigning brand tracking instruments, when clients question what their tracker is telling them, or when building measurement from scratch. Use the CEP framework to map the buying situations most relevant to the category, then evaluate whether communications are building the memory structures needed to be present in those moments. Apply Mental Market Share as a leading indicator alongside traditional share data.
Personal recommendation	<i>“With brand tracking being one of the most costly sources of insights into brand performance, marketers cannot afford for this investment to be wasted. This book makes the case clearly: while the success of marketing is ultimately found in buying behaviour, the initial battle is fought in the minds of category buyers. Romaniuk gives practitioners the tools to measure that battle properly.” - Jerome Velasquez, Head of Product and Technology at ADMATIC</i>
Counter / caution / context	This book is best applied alongside Building Distinctive Brand Assets. It sits within the Ehrenberg-Bass tradition and carries the same category scope limitations as How Brands Grow, in that that research may be perceived to skew toward FMCG and repeat-purchase categories. And therefore additional context and judgment would be needed for low-frequency, high-consideration, or B2B contexts.

Alchemy Rory Sutherland	
Reference / link	Rory Sutherland, Alchemy: The Surprising Power of Ideas That Don't Make Sense (WH Allen, 2019). ISBN: 978-0-7535-5652-8.
Known for	Rory Sutherland's Alchemy is best known in marketing circles for its argument that human behaviour is fundamentally irrational, and that conventional measurement frameworks, built on logic, efficiency, and econometrics, systematically miss or destroy the most valuable drivers of consumer choice. Sutherland argues that the obsession with measurable, justifiable metrics leads marketers and businesses to optimise for the wrong things, stripping out the “irrational” elements, brand magic, perceived value, context, ritual, and emotions that actually do the heaviest lifting in purchase decisions. He draws on behavioural economics and psychophysics to show that value is not intrinsic but perceived, and that perception can be engineered in ways that have nothing to do with functional product attributes. The book is frequently cited as a challenge to performance marketing orthodoxy and media measurement culture. It argues that what can be measured is often less important than what can't, and that the relentless pressure to prove ROI through direct attribution actively discourages the kind of brand-building investment that creates long-term commercial advantage.
How to apply	A reminder to not be lost in the loop of measurement and to encourage testing, bravery of thinking and pure experiential curiosity in marketing and media planning. We are often surprised by human behaviours and bizarre anomalies that surface in results when we test beyond the standard.
Personal recommendation	<i>“It is easy to view this as an antithesis to many measurement models but is NOT a reason to not use them, simply to encourage bravery in test and learn thinking beyond the data.” - Patrick Byrne, National Digital Director-Agency and Direct at News Australia</i>

A new standard for brand equity measurement: MASB certifies Kantar's MDS framework

Jane Ostler

Reference / link	Jane Ostler, 'A New Standard for Brand Equity Measurement: MASB Certifies Kantar's Meaningful Different and Salient Framework' (Kantar, 30 January 2025). Available at kantar.com. Complementary read: Graham Staplehurst and Jorge Alagon, 'What is the Meaningful Different and Salient Framework?' (Kantar, 18 July 2022). Available at kantar.com.
Known for	A specific, practitioner-friendly article explaining why brand equity needs commercially accountable measures and how Kantar's Meaningful Different and Salient framework links mental brand equity to demand power, pricing power, activation power and future growth. The MASB certification angle makes it especially useful for conversations with finance, leadership and stakeholders who need evidence that brand metrics connect to commercial outcomes.
How to apply	Use it when explaining why brand equity matters commercially, when reviewing whether a brand tracker has the right metrics, or when connecting effectiveness, brand strategy and finance. Read the 2022 MDS explainer first for the conceptual foundations, then the 2025 MASB article for the external validation and commercial accountability framing.
Personal recommendation	<i>“This is a useful addition because it gives practitioners a commercially grounded way to talk about brand equity. It moves the conversation beyond awareness or consideration alone and helps explain how brand strength creates future demand, pricing power and growth.” - Andreea Chirila, Client Development Director Media ROI at Kantar</i>
Counter / caution / context	Because this is Kantar-authored material, use it as a commercially grounded practitioner perspective rather than a neutral academic text. It is strongest when paired with independent marketing science texts already on the list, such as How Brands Grow, Better Brand Health and Binet and Field.

Attention

The Attention Economy Karen Nelson-Field	
Reference / link	Karen Nelson-Field, <i>The Attention Economy and How Media Works: Simple Truths for Marketers</i> (Palgrave Macmillan, 2020). ISBN: 978-981-15-1539-2. Further research: amplifiedintelligence.com.au .
Known for	Foundational research establishing attention as a quality input to media effectiveness, measured through real-world eye-tracking at scale. Nelson-Field demonstrates that not all impressions are equal — the probability that an ad generates brand impact is strongly mediated by the amount of active attention it receives.
How to apply	Use attention data to assess media quality, not just reach and frequency. Incorporate attentive reach metrics into media briefs and post-campaign analysis. Question media plans that optimise for low-cost impressions without accounting for attention quality differences across formats and environments.
Personal recommendation	<i>“The intuition that not all impressions are equal wasn’t controversial but it was missing evidence connecting attention quality to actual brand outcomes. KNF’s <i>The Attention Economy</i> provides that.</i> <i>The industry optimises for cost-per-thousand impressions; Nelson-Field’s research makes the case that what you are really buying is the probability of a brand memory being formed, and that varies enormously depending on where and how the ad is seen. It provides a useful way to think about media value, and it has a practical impact for how briefs are written, how plans are evaluated, and what counts as efficiency.</i> “- Ashley Spinks, Senior Measurement Partner Australia at Netflix <i>“The Attention Economy digs beyond attention as an oversimplified concept, which is easy to fall into the trap of, and instead provides marketers a deeper, more practical take on the inequality of attention and decay profiles both across channels and within placements. A worthwhile read that helps marketers explore how they can approach their multifaceted marketing plan with research-backed principles.”</i> - Duran Bradley, Head of Digital Marketing at REA Group <i>“As someone who has worked extensively with KNF, read this to gain an appreciation on the concept of attention, and how it has come to life within the sector. If you find yourself comparing reach across vendors, the notion that ‘not all reach is equal’ is critical to understand.”</i> - Steve Weaver, Media Intelligence Director ANZ at Publicis Groupe

The Attention Economy (Continued)

Karen Nelson-Field

Counter / caution / context

Commercial conflict - Nelson-Field is simultaneously the lead researcher and the founder of Amplified Intelligence, which sells attention measurement solutions. The research is genuinely rigorous and much of it is peer-reviewed, but readers should know the person making the case for attention as a planning currency also profits from its adoption. This doesn't however, invalidate the findings.

The reach tension is unresolved. High-attention environments typically have smaller, more concentrated audiences and higher CPMs. Nelson-Field demonstrates that attention quality per impression drives better outcomes, but the aggregate question, whether a high-attention, low-reach plan generates more total brand memories than a lower-attention, broad-reach plan, is not resolved.

Adelaide Attention Research

Marc Guldemann

Reference / link

Marc Guldemann and Adelaide. Research publications available at [Adelaide.media](https://adelaide.media). Key work: 'Attention Quality in Media Planning' (2021–present).

Known for

Attention as a media quality signal to be incorporated into planning and buying, not an optimisation target to be gamed. Guldemann's work at Adelaide develops attention unit frameworks allowing advertisers to compare media environments on a like-for-like quality basis, and warns against attention metrics being used to create new forms of metric arbitrage.

How to apply

Buy attentive reach rather than raw impressions. Use Adelaide's quality-adjusted attention metrics when comparing media environments. Maintain scepticism about publisher claims that optimise specifically for attention measurement without underlying quality improvement.

Personal recommendation

“Guldemann brings a fresh application to Attention Theory, building out the concept of Attention Units (AU) and modelling them through DSPs within the trading ecosystem. If you want to deliver to metrics other than R&F, understanding AU will help you get there.” - Steve Weaver, Media Intelligence Director ANZ at Publicis Groupe

Lumen Attention Studies

Mike Follett

Reference / link	Mike Follett and Lumen Research. Studies and reports at lumen-research.com , published through Warc and industry conferences.
Known for	Operational eye-tracking-based attention measurement across digital and print advertising environments, providing empirical data on viewability, visibility and active attention. Follett's work brings academic-grade measurement methodology into commercial application, enabling attention benchmarking across channels and formats.
How to apply	Validate attention metrics against brand and sales outcomes rather than treating them as ends in themselves. Use Lumen data to understand format-level differences in attention within channels. Apply when building the case for quality over quantity in digital display investment.
Personal recommendation	<i>“Mike’s research findings started out in Print Media, and his UK-based Lumen Research attention insights now cover all media formats across all media. Lumen’s website is littered with research papers, case studies and findings to learn from.” - Steve Weaver, Media Intelligence Director ANZ at Publicis Groupe</i>

Advertising ROI and Effectiveness

The Long and the Short of It <i>Les Binet & Peter Field</i>	
Reference / link	Les Binet and Peter Field, <i>The Long and the Short of It</i> (IPA, 2013). Available via ipa.co.uk . Followed by Media in Focus (2017) and subsequent updates.
Known for	The most cited piece of evidence-based thinking in UK advertising effectiveness. Drawing on the IPA Databank, Binet and Field demonstrate the differential effects of brand-building (long-term, broad reach, emotional) versus sales activation (short-term, targeted, rational) and establish the 60:40 budget split as an evidence-based starting point for most categories.
How to apply	Use the 60:40 framework as a starting point for budget allocation conversations. Apply Share of Voice / Share of Market logic (eSOV) to justify brand investment. Use long-term ROI evidence when making the case to finance teams that brand spend is not discretionary.
Personal recommendation	<i>“The Long and the Short of It is the seminal text of modern marketing effectiveness—a masterclass in using empirical evidence to prove the commercial power of a brand.</i> <i>What makes this work so enduring is how it re-anchors our industry on true business outcomes. Even as media landscapes fragment and data sets age, its core thesis remains undeniable: an obsession with short-term efficiency and direct-response metrics actively harms long-term profitability. Binet and Field proved that true brand growth isn’t built through short term actions, it’s driven by emotion and ‘brand fame’—concepts that create broad mental availability and continue to underpin almost every modern effectiveness framework that followed.</i> <i>For any media planner, strategist, or marketer looking to build a strategy that balances future growth with immediate sales this work is critical. For me it’s fundamental for understanding how advertising actually works.” - Stewart Gurney, Director of Strategy and Effectiveness at Nine</i> <i>“This is the paper I reach for when a client asks why we won’t put 100% of budget into performance channels. The 60:40 split isn’t prescriptive, and sometimes it’s overused, however it’s a useful starting point that forces the conversation about time horizons before it gets hijacked by the channel that’s easiest to attribute. This was transformative work for the industry, and proved that brands that protect long-term brand building channels and that consistently outspend, outgrow the ones optimising purely for short-term ROI.” - Nick Marshall, Senior Planning Director, Strategy at Dentsu Australia</i> <i>“I love all of the work from both Les and Peter. Start with this book, but get your hands on every IPA publication to really see the evidence that drives marketing best practice.” - Steve Weaver, Media Intelligence Director ANZ at Publicis Groupe</i>

IPA / WARC Share of Search papers*Les Binet*

Reference / link	Les Binet, Share of Search research (IPA / WARC, 2020 onwards). Available via ipa.co.uk and warc.com .
Known for	Share of Search as a leading indicator of Share of Market — a low-cost, real-time proxy metric that correlates strongly with future brand health and market share movements. Binet demonstrates that relative search volume (a brand's share of category search queries) leads market share changes by several months, making it a practical early warning signal.
How to apply	Track Share of Search alongside traditional brand tracking and MMM outputs. Use it as an early warning system to detect brand health decline before it shows up in market share data. Apply when clients have limited budget for continuous tracking, as search data is freely available via Google Trends.
Personal recommendation	<i>“What I like about Share of Search is that it's a rare effectiveness metric we can see move in real time, off data we can access for free. It's a useful predictor of market share, and we can also use it benchmark against competitors. I've used it to catch share erosion months before it showed up in sales data and used it as a proxy for SoM when it was unavailable, using it with SoV data for ESOV discussions.” - Nick Marshall, Senior Planning Director, Strategy at Dentsu Australia</i> <i>“If you can't get your hands on sales data, measuring the movement of branded search post campaign is worth investigating as a cost-effective proxy for linking advertising activity to sales outcomes.” - Steve Weaver, Media Intelligence Director ANZ at Publicis Groupe</i>

Media in Focus: Marketing Effectiveness in the Digital Era

Les Binet & Peter Field

Reference / link	Les Binet & Peter Field, Media in Focus: Marketing Effectiveness in the Digital Era (IPA, 2017). ISBN: 978-0-85294-141-6. Produced in association with Google and Thinkbox; available via ipa.co.uk.
Known for	The “in a digital world” update to The Long and the Short of It, drawn from the IPA Databank. Reaffirms that the ~60:40 brand-to-activation split holds even as media fragments, that share of voice still drives share of market, and that mass reach - not tight targeting remains the more effective default. Argues TV works hardest in combination with online video, and that narrow targeting often sacrifices the reach effectiveness depends on.
How to apply	Use 60:40 as a planning baseline, then adjust by category rather than treating it as fixed. Defend broad-reach AV against over-targeting in briefs; frame tight targeting as an efficiency play that can cost effectiveness. Pair TV with online video for reach amplification. Push back on ROMI-led budgeting that optimises short-term efficiency at the expense of long-term brand building.
Personal recommendation	<i>“I agree with effectively all of it. The frustration is that the evidence has been settled for years, yet short-termism still dominates how most brands plan and budget. I’m also a fan of Binet’s Share of Search work, which ties in neatly... It gives you an early, measurable signal of the long-term brand effects this report argues for, rather than waiting on lagging sales data. If more marketers applied both rather than nodding at them, the industry would be in better shape.” - Mark Titley, Senior Commercial Data Strategist at Paramount</i>
Counter / caution / context	The 60:40 split is a cross-category average, not a rule: Binet & Field themselves later stressed it varies by category, brand size and objective. IPA Databank is skewed toward award entrants, so selection bias is worth noting. The headline findings predate the current retail-media and CTV environment, so the media-mix specifics read as less current than the underlying principles.

Decoded: The Science Behind Why We Buy*Phil Barden*

Reference / link	Phil Barden, Decoded: The Science Behind Why We Buy (John Wiley & Sons, 2013). ISBN: 978-1-118-34560-3.
Known for	Phil Barden reveals what decision science explains about people's purchase behaviour and specifically demonstrates its value to marketing. He shares the latest research on the motivations behind consumers' choices and what happens in the human brain as buyers make their decisions. He deciphers the 'secret codes' of products, services and brands to explain why people buy them. And finally he shows how to apply this knowledge in day to day marketing to great effect by dramatically improving key factors such as relevance, differentiation and credibility. Shows how the latest insights from the fields of Behavioural Economics, psychology and neuro-economics explain why we buy what we buy Offers a pragmatic framework and guidelines for day-to-day marketing practice on how to employ this knowledge for more effective brand management - from strategy to implementation and NPD.
How to apply	The most important idea from Decoded is: Advertising works by influencing future choice, not necessarily immediate action. Therefore marketers should spend less time obsessing over clicks and last-touch attribution and more time understanding how campaigns create: • memory • associations • relevance • distinctiveness • consumer preference which ultimately increase the likelihood of purchase when the buying moment arrives. The book is focused on strategy and bridges the gap between behavioural science and practical media planning, creative development and measurement. It helps explain why advertising works, not just whether it worked.
Personal recommendation	<i>"Connects neuroscience, behavioural economics and marketing and provides a strong framework for understanding purchase decision-making and brand effects" - Sheetal Nand, Senior Partner Sales Executive at Microsoft</i>

Making Effectiveness Work

Simeon Duckworth, Neil Charles & Duncan Stoddard

Reference / link	Simeon Duckworth, Neil Charles & Duncan Stoddard (Melt Collective), Making Effectiveness Work (IPA, October 2024). Available via the IPA: ipa.co.uk .
Known for	A practitioner's guide to navigating modern effectiveness measurement, built around the three core techniques: marketing mix modelling (MMM), experiments and attribution. Its premise is that if you ask a CMO "what is the ROI of paid search?" you can get five conflicting answers (last-click, data-driven attribution, two different MMMs and an incrementality test), so the answer lies less in chasing the perfect technique than in building a decisive, evidence-based effectiveness culture. Introduces Learning Agendas ("better questions, better answers"), the MESI loop (Model, Experiment, Simulate, Implement) and a clear knowledge hierarchy, with experiments ahead of MMM and well ahead of digital attribution, while arguing that scarce measurement resource should be concentrated where decisions are riskiest.
How to apply	Treat measurement as a learning programme, not a hunt for a single source of truth. Set a Learning Agenda, a prioritised set of business questions, and place the highest burden of proof on the biggest, riskiest budget decisions. Use MMM as the backbone, validate and calibrate it with controlled experiments (increasingly geo-tests), and confine attribution to ranking tactical options such as keywords. Use simulation as a "virtual experiment" for what-if planning, and carry an estimate of long-term value, drawing on industry benchmarks, into planning tools rather than optimising only what is easily measured.
Personal recommendation	<i>"Most of the effectiveness canon tells you what works; this paper tells you how to know it's working. Its lesson has stuck with me: stop hunting for a single source of truth and build a culture that asks better questions. In a fragmented, post-cookie world, it is the most useful thing the industry has published on measurement in years."</i> - Brett Camilleri, VP of Measurement APAC at Monks
Counter / caution / context	By design a guide rather than a technical manual, so it stays deliberately high-level on method and is no substitute for hands-on modelling expertise. It is UK/IPA-centric, and several headline figures lean on large-platform academic studies (e.g. Meta/Wernerfelt, Tadelis) whose generalisability to smaller advertisers and other channels is uncertain. The cultural prescription of Learning Agendas chaired by senior marketers assumes a level of organisational maturity and resource not every brand has.

Profit Ability 2: The New Business Case for Advertising

Ebiquity, Gain Theory, EssenceMediacom, Mindshare, & Wavemaker UK (commissioned by Thinkbox)

Reference / link	Ebiquity, Gain Theory, EssenceMediacom, Mindshare & Wavemaker UK, Profit Ability 2: The New Business Case for Advertising (Thinkbox, 2024). Available via thinkbox.tv .
Known for	A landmark UK econometric meta-analysis examining £1.8bn of media spend across 141 brands. It evaluates how advertising payback builds over four-time horizons: immediate (week 1), short-term (up to 13 weeks), sustained (week 14 to 2 years), and full payback (0–24 months). It demonstrates that 58% of total advertising-driven profit occurs after the first 13 weeks , establishing that every media channel—from audio, print, and search to linear TV, BVOD, paid social, and online video—delivers a unique balance of immediate scale, short-term efficiency, and long-term sustained payback.
How to apply	Use <i>Profit Ability 2</i> as an empirical framework to evaluate full-funnel media plans based on how channels genuinely drive bottom-line profit across different time horizons. Instead of relying on short-term attribution models that over-index on immediate performance, marketers can use the study's Scale, Efficiency, and Time (SET) framework to optimize spend against each channel's diminishing returns profile and saturation limits. For Australian advertisers without custom Marketing Mix Modelling (MMM), this research provides an immediate, evidence-based benchmark. While local marketers shouldn't copy-paste exact UK profit ratios due to market differences, the underlying mechanics are useful: use these benchmarks to set realistic ROI expectations, pressure-test agency planning assumptions, build compelling business cases for CFOs, and capture long-term campaign carryover rather than just immediate sale effects.
Personal recommendation	<i>“If you’re looking for proof of how advertising actually drives bottom-line profit, Profit Ability 2 is about as good as it gets.</i> <i>What makes this research so valuable is that it captures the long-term carryover that standard short-term modeling completely misses. Most econometric models only capture short term effects, which drastically underestimates channel contribution in the long term. By tracking profit payback out over a full two-year horizon this research helps advertisers understand and plan for total media effects.</i> <i>For brands that don’t have the luxury of their own MMM setup or are just dipping their toes into MMM, this gives you evidence-backed benchmarks to test your plans against. While the dataset comes out of the UK there are some useful insights that are directly applicable to the Australian market” - Stewart Gurney, Director of Strategy and Effectiveness at Nine</i> <i>“Before you run your own MMMs, look at this multi-phase multi-campaign meta analysis. It’ll save you years of spending, and decades of learning.” - Steve Weaver, Media Intelligence Director ANZ at Publicis Groupe</i>

Mastering Marketing Data Science Iain Brown	
Reference / link	Iain Brown, Mastering Marketing Data Science: A Comprehensive Guide for Today's Marketers (Wiley and SAS Business Series, 2024). ISBN: 978-1-394-25871-0
Known for	A comprehensive, practitioner-oriented guide bridging data science and marketing practice, written by Iain Brown, Head of Data Science for Northern Europe at SAS and Adjunct Professor of Marketing Data Science at the University of Southampton. Covers the full modern measurement stack — marketing mix modelling, attribution, predictive analytics, and applied machine learning — alongside the ethical considerations and emerging AI applications reshaping the discipline. Positioned as a workbook-style bridge between theoretical data science and the practical realities of marketing measurement teams.
How to apply	Use as a working reference when building or evaluating a measurement stack — particularly useful for teams weighing MMM against attribution and incrementality, or upskilling analysts who need the statistical grounding without a pure data-science background. Especially relevant for practitioners navigating the shift from cookie-based attribution toward aggregate, privacy-resilient methods, and for teams starting to incorporate generative AI into marketing analytics workflows.
Personal recommendation	<i>“Most of the effectiveness canon was written before marketing measurement became a genuine engineering discipline. This book closes that gap — it's the one I hand to analysts who understand the marketing theory but need the statistical and technical grounding to actually build the models, not just interpret someone else's. It's dense in places, but it's current in a field where 'current' is increasingly the hardest thing to find.” - Michelle Thompson, Head of Customer Operations at Azira</i>

Accountable Advertising – A Handbook for Managers and Analysts <i>Simon Broadbent</i>	
Reference / link	Simon Broadbent, Accountable Advertising – A Handbook for Managers and Analysts (Admap Publications, 1997). ISBN: 1-899314-61-X
Known for	A classic text on demonstrating the effectiveness of advertising. Broadbent's main insight is that advertising exposures immediately adjacent to the sale shouldn't automatically receive the credit. More importantly, he developed and popularised the concept of 'adstock' which helps model these memory effects and which is now a foundational element of most MMM projects. The book provides examples on (1) how to conduct a Brand Audit, (2) assessing the brand in the marketplace and (3) setting the brand budget. It provides a brief introduction into dimensions of advertising effects, the essential data preparation steps and examples on how to model advertising effects using adstock and other features. The book includes a rich set of advertising effectiveness models and provides a checklist for setting up a process to make your advertising accountable.
How to apply	The text is a useful and practical handbook to setting up a brand audit and advertising effectiveness process. As Broadbent explains early in the book "This book does not dwell on advertisement evaluation...it concentrates on behaviour" (p54); The stated target audience is both management (those concerned directly with the brand budget decision) and analysts (those who seek to understand and leverage the forces which shape behaviour). To support its application, the early part of the book clarifies expectations and requirements for the two groups of readers, then provides guidance on how to create accountable advertising with management and analyst in partnership.
Personal recommendation	<i>"Broadbent's extensive experience in managing advertising campaigns while employed by Leo Burnett is brought to the fore in this book. His insights were influential early in my career when I started building econometric models to link advertising and outcomes. This text provided me with the worked examples and useful tips on how to build and model adstock that were not available when I first started working in the field. More importantly, the book also provides great insight into requirements that helps analysts and research practitioners prepare reports with practical outcomes for brand and client management."</i> - Ian Garland, MD, Milton Data
Counter / caution / context	The book was published before the internet became the powerful advertising medium we know today. Consequently, the text does not include specific examples on internet-based data sets. That said, the approach and the rigor is evergreen, and is finding a renewed presence in open-source market mix modelling platforms like Meridian and Robyn. It's not in print currently, but copies can be found here .

AI

Co-Intelligence: Living and Working with AI <i>Ethan Mollick</i>	
Reference / link	Ethan Mollick, Co-Intelligence: Living and Working with AI (WH Allen, 2024). ISBN: 978-0-7535-6077-8.
Known for	An AI book written as a field guide for this new frontier. Ethan Mollick builds his argument around the “jagged technological frontier” — the idea that AI excels at tasks humans find hard and stumbles on tasks humans find easy. This unevenness makes AI’s capability difficult to understand for most unfamiliar with how AI works. The book frames four working relationships with AI - co-worker, tutor, coach, and creative partner - and asks readers to experiment.
How to apply	The “jagged frontier” concept translates directly to agency and brand conversations about AI capability: it gives teams a vocabulary for setting expectations without dismissing AI wholesale. The chapters on AI as a creative partner are immediately applicable to concepting, copywriting, and content variation at scale. Mollick’s core operating rules — stay the human of record, apply your own judgement as a check, treat every interaction as a learning exercise — function as practical guidelines.
Personal recommendation	<i>“Mollick doesn’t want you alarmed, but he also doesn’t want you to stay comfortable. The jagged frontier concept alone is worth the read: it explains why AI feels inconsistent and gives you a method for working around that, rather than using it as an excuse to stop.” - Ben Oliver, Media and ICP Lead ANZ at Mars Pet Nutrition</i>
Counter / caution / context	Accessibility is the book’s greatest strength and its limitation. Mollick writes for curious generalists, not engineers or policy specialists, so those wanting rigorous treatment of AI risk, governance, or model mechanics will need to supplement elsewhere. The practical experiments he recommends are useful but not designed for enterprise scale; teams needing structured implementation frameworks should look to dedicated operational resources. Capability-specific examples also date quickly in a fast-moving field — treat them as indicative rather than definitive. The core collaboration arguments hold well, but questions about creative craft, job specialisation, and the value of human authorship in advertising are opened more than they are resolved.

B2B Effectiveness

The 95-5 Rule <i>John Dawes</i>	
Reference / link	John Dawes, 'Advertising Effectiveness and the 95-5 Rule: Most B2B Buyers Are Not in the Market Right Now' (Ehrenberg-Bass Institute / LinkedIn B2B Institute, 2021). Available at johndawes.info/the-955-rule .
Known for	Establishing the 95-5 principle: most B2B buyers are out-of-market most of the time, making future demand creation as important as demand capture.
How to apply	Focus on future buyers, not just in-market buyers. Build memory structures long before purchase intent emerges.
Personal recommendation	<i>“One of the most important pieces of B2B marketing research published in the last decade. It explains why many demand generation programs underinvest in future demand creation.” - Will Sherbon, Senior Manager Marketing Solutions ANZ at LinkedIn</i>

2. Recommended Experts to Follow

Advertising Research Foundation (ARF)

Where to find them	thearf.org LinkedIn: linkedin.com/company/the-advertising-research-foundation
Focus area	The ARF is a non-profit industry body in advertising research, with the mission to advance the practice of advertising and marketing research through rigour, collaboration, and the development of industry standards. The ARF produces original research, hosts peer-reviewed journals, convenes senior practitioners, and has been instrumental in establishing some of the field's most widely referenced frameworks — including foundational work on cross-media measurement, attention, and brand safety. Full access to resources requires ARF membership, however, a significant body of ARF output is freely available.

The Institute of Practitioners in Advertising (IPA)

Where to find them	ipa.co.uk LinkedIn: linkedin.com/company/ipa-institute-of-practitioners-in-advertising
Focus area	The IPA is a UK trade body for advertising and marketing communications agencies. Since 1980, the IPA Effectiveness Awards have collected and codified real-world case studies demonstrating how advertising creates business value — building over four decades into an unparalleled databank of effectiveness evidence spanning categories, markets, media, and campaign objectives. The IPA is the home for some of the most influential effectiveness research published, including the landmark work of Les Binet and Peter Field which emerged directly from analysis of the IPA Databank. Full access to the IPA Databank requires membership or research access, though a substantial volume of IPA effectiveness content is freely available.

WARC

Where to find them	warc.com LinkedIn: linkedin.com/company/warc WARC Podcast: available via warc.com and major podcast platforms
Focus area	WARC is a subscription-based knowledge platform founded in 1985, providing access to advertising and marketing research, case studies, and strategic guidance across global markets. It aggregates material from many of the world's major effectiveness awards programmes — including the IPA Effectiveness Awards, Cannes Lions, and Effies — alongside original research and analysis produced by its own editorial and insights teams.

Ehrenberg-Bass Institute for Marketing Science

Where to find them	marketingscience.info LinkedIn: linkedin.com/company/ehrenberg-bass-institute
Focus area	The largest centre for marketing science research, based out of the University of South Australia. Research spans mental and physical availability, distinctive assets, category entry points, and loyalty patterns across categories and geographies.
Personal recommendation	<i>“One of the most influential marketing science institutions in the world, based in Australia.</i> <i>Produces empirical, evidence-based research, including How Brands Grow, Building Distinctive Brand Assets, Better Brand Health, and the 95-5 Rule, all of which appear in this reading list. Stay on top of the evidence as it emerges” - Ashley Spinks, Senior Measurement Partner Australia at Netflix</i> <i>“The Ehrenberg-Bass Institute is the organisation I recommend following for anyone working in advertising effectiveness. The continuous work they do to understand how marketing and advertising works as the landscape evolves makes them an essential voice, they keep the discipline grounded in evidence rather than opinion, and their research has shaped how I think about reach, frequency, and brand building.” - Tim Hul, Head of Strategy and Video Solutions at Amazon</i>

Rory Sutherland	
Where to find them	LinkedIn (https://www.linkedin.com/in/rorysutherland/)
Focus area	Rory is the Vice Chairman of Ogilvy who focuses on the intersection of psychology, marketing, economics, innovation, and decision-making. If you're interested in strategy, entrepreneurship, product development, marketing, or simply understanding why people behave the way they do, he's one of the more original thinkers worth following.
Personal recommendation	Rory Sutherland's book <i>Alchemy</i> is included in the recommended reading section. <i>"It is easy to view this as an antithesis to many measurement models but is NOT a reason to not use them, simply to encourage bravery in test and learn thinking beyond the data."</i> - Patrick Byrne, National Digital Director Agency and Direct at News Australia <i>"Rory Sutherland has become one of advertising and marketing's most recognisable—and most frequently clipped—voices, and for good reason. Across his books, talks and the many short excerpts circulating on YouTube and LinkedIn, he brings behavioural science, unconventional psychology and creative problem-solving to life in a way that is both memorable and immediately applicable. What I value most is how he makes you pause and reconsider the problem you are actually trying to solve—and how perception, context, emotion and signalling can matter as much as objective reality.</i> <i>His famous Eurostar thought experiment captures this perfectly: rather than spending billions to shorten the journey, could you create more value by making the time more enjoyable. He similarly points to Uber's map as an innovation that does not make the car arrive faster but makes the wait feel better by reducing uncertainty. These examples are a useful reminder that media and advertising are ultimately products of the human condition, not perfectly rational systems. Rory consistently expands the way I think about creativity, behaviour and what an effective solution can look like."</i> - Dave Goodfellow

Ray Poynter

Where to find them	NewMR.org / LinkedIn (https://www.linkedin.com/in/raypoynter/)
Focus area	Market research & AI-enhanced research Ray is the founder of NewMR and co-founder of ResearchWiseAI, a platform dedicated to automating survey data analysis. Additionally, Ray is a past President of ESOMAR, a Fellow of the Market Research Society (MRS), and the author of influential industry texts such as The Handbook of Online and Social Research.
Personal recommendation	<i>“I like Ray Poynter for his cutting-edge insights on how AI is transforming market research and his practical advice on automating data analysis, using AI tools to provide new approaches to analysis, as well as his thoughts on the future of how AI can support researchers and those interested in analysis. He is a recognised innovator and veteran in the market research industry with many years of experience at the intersection of research, technology, and business. He is well known for his work in advancing online surveys, social media research, and, most recently, AI-enhanced research and has run many training sessions over the years with the MRS in Australia - all of which I have found to be practical and importantly grow with the times.” - Kirsten Riolo, Head of Insights APAC at Nielsen</i>

Journal of Marketing Research

Where to find them	Online via Sage Journals
Focus area	Journal of Marketing Research (JMR) is a bimonthly, peer-reviewed journal that publishes the up to date studies that address research in marketing and marketing research practice.
Personal recommendation	<i>“This has always been a go to place to look at approaches to market research across a range of topics from advertising effectiveness to studies on how to increase mobile app engagement or recent studies on how GLP-1 is changing consumer food demand. Having peer reviewed papers is so valuable and the range of topics, even outside anything you're looking for specifically, is interesting as well.” - Kirsten Riolo, Head of Insights APAC at Nielsen</i>

Andrew Lipsman	
Where to find them	Media, Ads + Commerce newsletter on Substack / LinkedIn (https://www.linkedin.com/in/andrewlipsman/)
Focus area	Independent analyst and consultant specialising in retail media and commerce media, with a particular focus on measurement, incrementality, and how retail media networks prove (or fail to prove) their value. Previously a senior analyst at eMarketer and comScore before going independent.
Personal recommendation	<i>“Retail media is one of the fastest-growing, and most under-scrutinised, parts of the ecosystem, and Lipsman is one of the few voices willing to ask the uncomfortable measurement questions directly: is this actually incremental, or just capturing demand that already existed? His independence is the point — he's not selling a platform or a measurement product, so the analysis goes wherever the evidence leads.” - Michelle Thompson, Head of Customer Operations at Azira</i>

Bob Hoffman, The Ad Contrarian

Where to find them	Weekly email newsletter, subscribe here Bob is also the author of seven Amazon #1 bestselling books, with further essays and analysis of the marketing and advertising industry available on his website.
Focus area	Bob Hoffman is an advertising writer, speaker and former agency CEO who brings a sceptical, practitioner-led perspective to the industry. Through The Ad Contrarian, he examines advertising effectiveness, brand building, creative and media practice, measurement, programmatic advertising, ad fraud, privacy, Big Tech and the wider business of advertising. Often using current industry news as his starting point, Bob challenges fashionable claims, confident predictions and industry jargon by returning to evidence, experience and the fundamentals of how advertising actually works. His sharp, frequently caustic commentary — and self-appointed role as the “blogweasel” — makes even complex industry issues engaging and accessible.
Personal recommendation	<i>“The advertising industry can produce an endless stream of puffery, received wisdom and crystal-ball gazing, so Bob is one of the most valuable reality checks I have found. I have come to appreciate the realism and first-principles thinking behind his critiques, as well as his willingness to question ideas that much of the industry treats as settled fact. His writing has made me reconsider my own assumptions and commonly held industry truths more than once.</i> <i>You do not need to agree with every conclusion to find his work valuable. The real benefit is having a well-informed devil’s advocate who forces you to examine the evidence behind what you believe. That is particularly useful for someone entering advertising for the first time: before you absorb the industry’s conventions as fact, Bob helps develop the habit of questioning them. The humour and his general disdain for the industry’s excesses also make him consistently entertaining to read.</i> <i>If Bob reads this, I’m sure he’ll have thoughts about being listed last. It’s drafting order, not priority — not that I expect the distinction to spare me.”</i> - Dave Goodfellow

Professor Andrew Gelman <i>Professor of Statistics and Political Science, Columbia University</i>	
Where to find them	Blog: Statistical Modeling, Causal Inference, and Social Science — statmodeling.stat.columbia.edu Faculty page: sites.stat.columbia.edu/gelman Recommended talk: “Crimes against data”, ESRC Research Methods Festival, University of Bath, July 2016. Available on YouTube.
Focus area	Bayesian statistics, applied statistical modelling, and the credibility of quantitative research. Gelman directs the Applied Statistics Center at Columbia and is lead author of Bayesian Data Analysis, the standard graduate reference in the field, and of Data Analysis Using Regression and Multilevel/Hierarchical Models. He is one of the developers of Stan, the open-source probabilistic programming language that underpins a great deal of modern Bayesian inference — including several of the marketing mix modelling implementations now in commercial use. His long-running blog, Statistical Modeling, Causal Inference, and Social Science, is where most of his public argument happens. “Crimes against data” is the most accessible entry point to that argument. Gelman works through published, peer-reviewed findings that later failed to replicate and shows how they were produced: studies powered to detect effects far larger than anything plausible, where a statistically significant result is necessarily an exaggeration and may well carry the wrong sign; and the “multiverse” of defensible analysis choices — exclusion criteria, variable definitions, subgroup cuts — that can turn an uninformative dataset into a publishable result with no intent to deceive. He is equally pointed about the statistical ideology that sustains this: deterministic thinking, treating “statistical significance” as a verdict, and equating rigour with procedure. His prescription is to study effects in context rather than in isolation, to use prior information openly, and to change the incentives that reward false certainty.
Personal recommendation	<i>“I’d like to recommend the “Crimes against data” talk by Professor Andrew Gelman - he is the Professor of Statistics and Political Sciences at Columbia University in New York - and he not only wrote the canon of predictive mathematics and Bayes, but his work and findings are evident as fingerprints across every worthwhile model in existence.” - Jordan Taylor-Bartels, CEO at Prophet</i>