

Using AI to uncover  
the signals that matter



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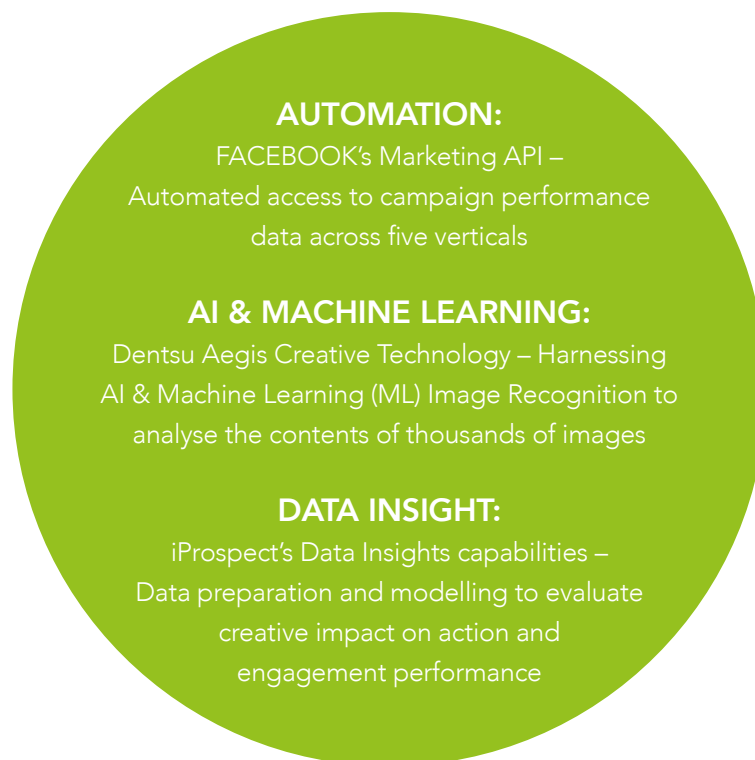
## Foreword:

Creative insight in marketing is undergoing a revolution. With an explosion in both the array of formats and breadth of dynamic creative opportunities across digital channels, the need to understand what's working or not working and why is growing exponentially.

It's typical for digital marketers to have huge pools of performance data for every campaign. Performance insights help prioritise which audiences work best and which formats drive the best outcomes. Yet rarely is the same performance mindset applied to creative.

Given the huge impact of creative on ROI, it's more important than ever to understand the influence of creative elements on performance outcomes. This paradigm shift is bolstered by emergent AI technologies, which now provide new ways to understand the impact of creative choices on performance.

This is why at Dentsu Aegis we have combined multiple capabilities to create an 'AI Insight Stack'.



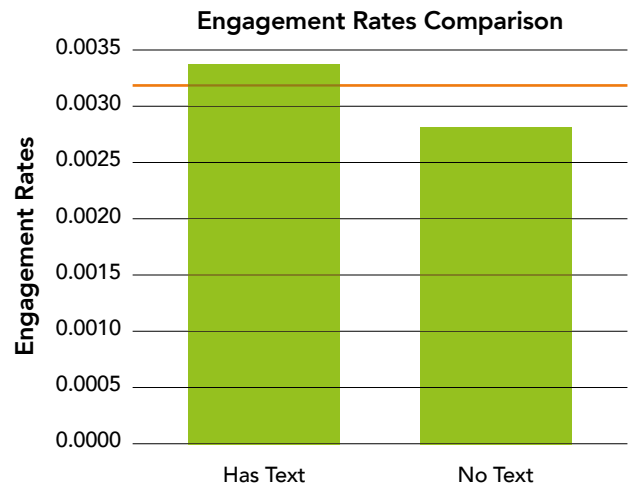
By connecting these capabilities, we were able to create an analysable dataset of ad performance (Actions and Engagements) and associated image properties via AI & ML Image recognition technology, such as colours, text, people, emotions, smiles or frowns and specific objects. Our data insight team then found key learnings across and within the categories.



# Key Learnings

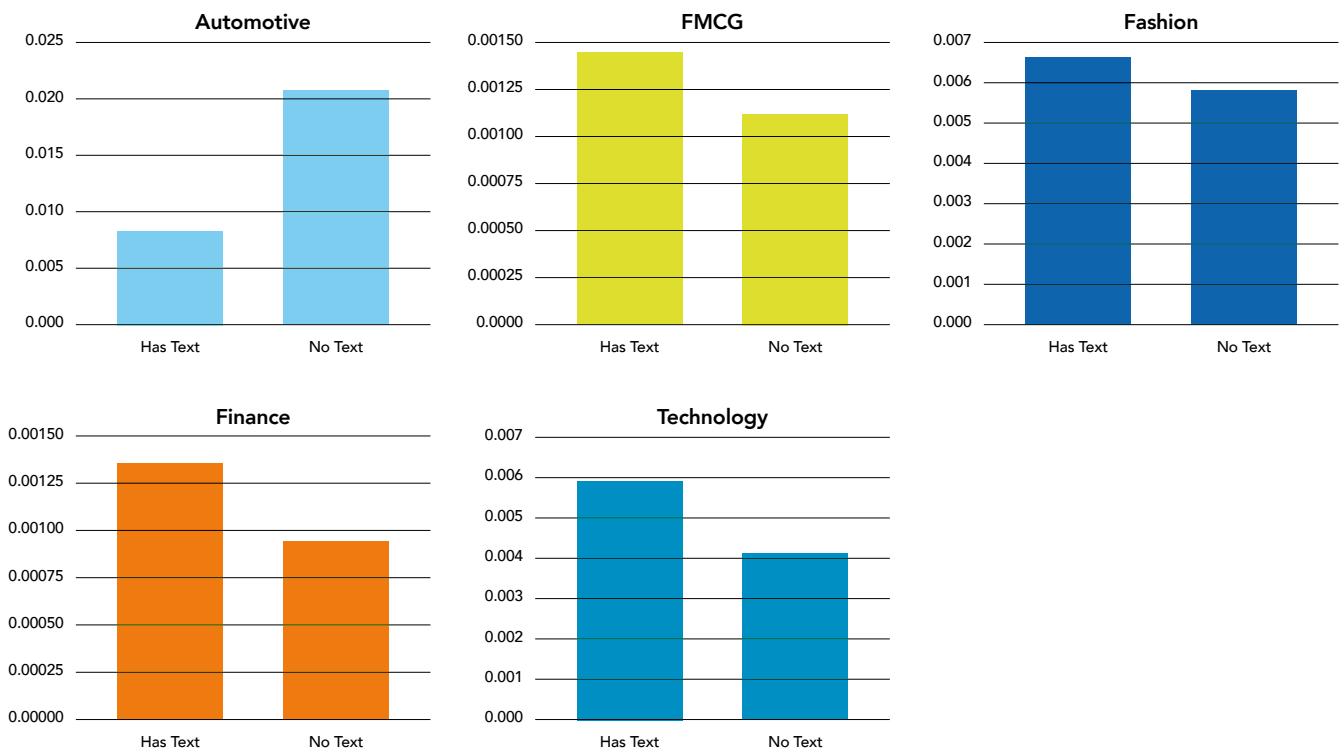
## Does in-image text improve performance?

Having **text within an image typically improves ad-performance**, and across all verticals this can be by as much as **15%**. This trend emerged across almost all verticals we reviewed, with technology and finance verticals showing up to **25%** performance improvement.



Interestingly, automotive is the only outlier in our verticals dataset, showing a significant drop off in performance where text is included.

Our initial hypothesis is that the stylistic ads traditionally used by automotive clients result in text-based ads underperforming, however this requires further detailed exploration.

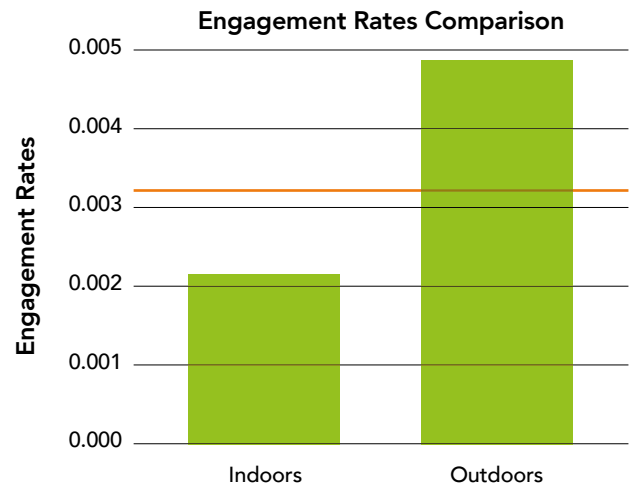


**iP Recommends:** Use text in image to create increased engagement, whilst complying with platform-specific limits on the volume of text in your image.

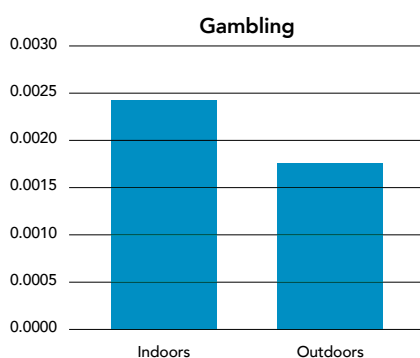
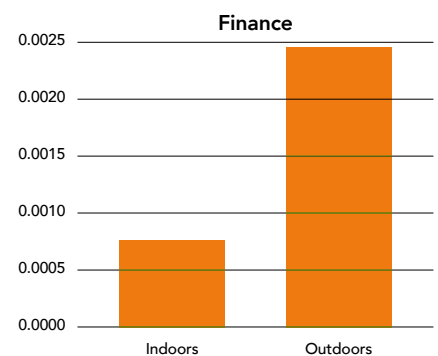
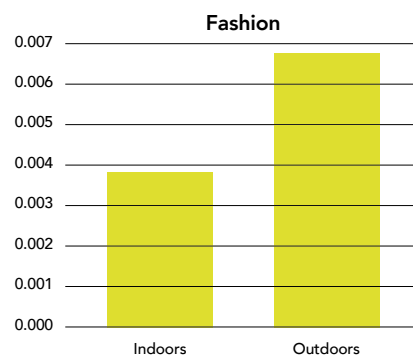
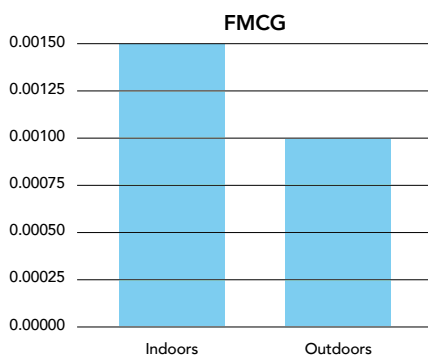


## Does the setting (e.g. indoors or outdoors) of the image impact performance?

Our initial analysis reviewed the impact of indoor or outdoor environments. The results were fascinating, with ads set in outdoor contexts performing well above those set indoors.



The results, however, vary significantly by vertical, with finance and fashion brands benefitting from ads showcased in outdoor environments. Conversely, gambling and FMCG brands overperformed when their ads were set indoors.



**iP Recommends:** Consider the context that's natural for your products and services, then test to understand the impact of setting and environment on campaign performance.



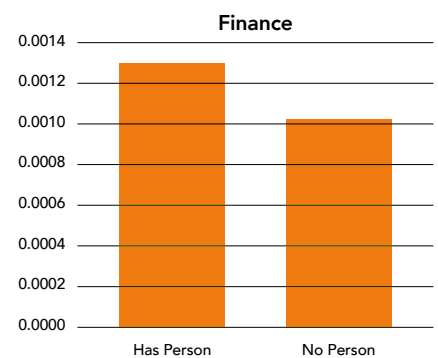
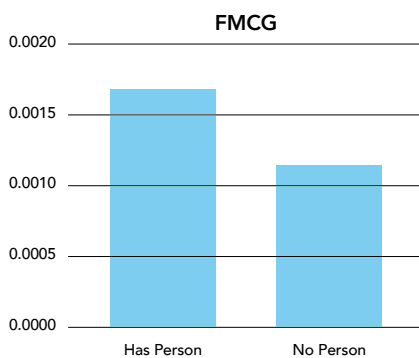
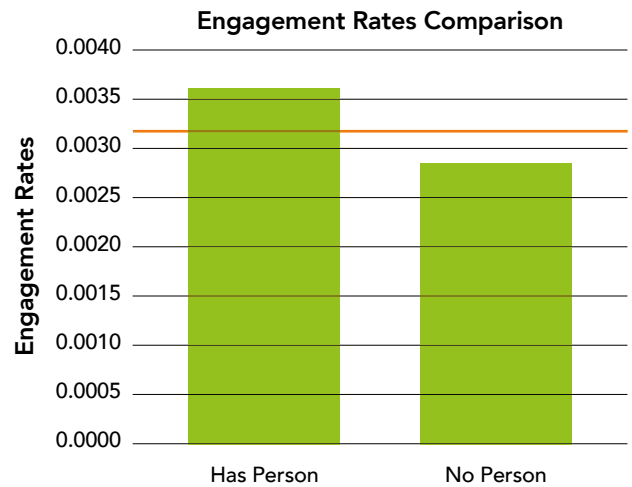


## Does featuring people in the image really improve performance?

This has been a relatively common recommendation for social creative – and it's one that holds true in almost all verticals where we had sufficient data to analyse.

The inclusion of people in ads increases performance by more than **10%** in many cases. Going against instinct, this was not the case for all brands within the fashion vertical, however.

It is worth highlighting, however, that this may be a result of the more transactional assets in retail working harder, for example re-targeting assets which drive more effective response outcomes.



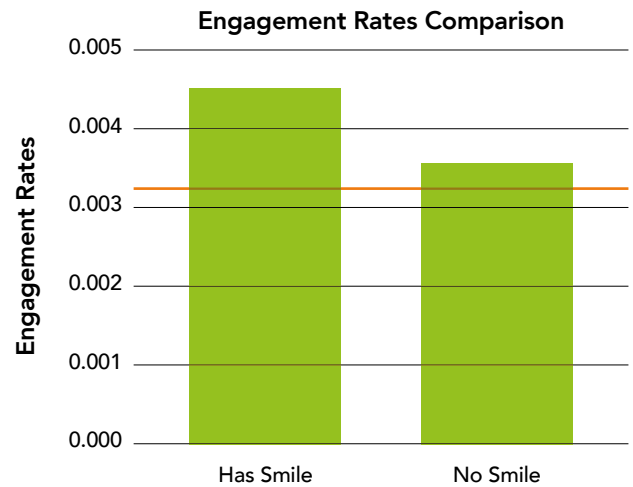
**iP Recommends:** Generally, the inclusion of people in ads has a positive impact on performance. For brands where there is limited use of people in ads, this represents a worthy testing opportunity.



## Does a positive emotion, such as a smile, lead to greater engagement?

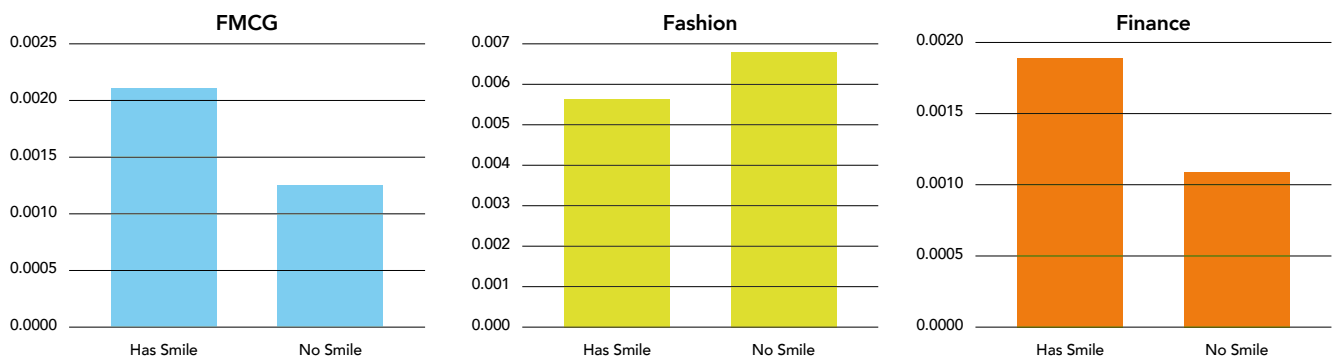
A positive emotion proved to have the largest impact of our initial creative hypothesis, with an increase of more than **30%** seen across all assets.

This suggests the inclusion of positive emotional responses can have a genuine impact on performance.



As ever, there are outliers here also. In this case, we noted that fashion brands actually saw a marginal decline where positive emotions were shown.

This deserves greater depth of research across specific brands and styles.



**iP Recommends:** A positive emotion depicted in ad visuals is shown to have a significant impact on performance. Where people and emotions are not utilised within assets, consider experimenting here to drive increased attention and engagement.



# How can you use AI to understand your creative effectiveness?

It's clear that there are no 'one-size-fits-all' answers to these creative questions.

Verticals, nuances and audiences alone show how creative performance differs in each scenario. We're developing this technology further and expanding the analysis to:

Video assets

New dimensions of asset recognition (such as logos and brands)

Performance KPIs, including Ad Recall and conversion data for advertiser-specific projects

## Get in touch

If you would like to join us on this journey, and want actionable insights based on your campaigns and performance data, please contact us:

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