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Interview Best of Brand Research 2022
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Interview about the webinar Best of Brand Research

Day1, Part 1

Every brand is unique and has attributes that make it special

Stefan Schönherr, eye square
Julia Saswito, aimpower
Natalia Ponomareva, Brandwatch
Sebastian Schmidt & Uta Hümer, SKOPOS RESEARCH

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On the first of June, "Best of Brand Research", the first part of the seminar takes place. The five interview partners, Natalia Ponomareva (Brandwatch), Sebastian Schmidt & Uta Hümer (SKOPOS RESEARCH), Stefan Schönherr (Eye Square) and Julia Saswito (aimpower) have given us some insights into the contents in an interview.

Best of Brand Research – This is the title of two pitches by the ultimate companies of the market research industry. Now, hand on heart, what does your company do particularly well?

Stefan Schönherr: eye square understands brands and their communication in terms of a holistic experience. The brand experience must be successful on all three levels of the human experience – visual, emotional, and rational. eye square can methodically capture all these levels of experience accurately and provide a comprehensive answer to the experience and impact of a brand. Additionally, we can also provide strategic insights with our response time tool BRANDREACT. For this purpose, brands, their competitor environment, target groups and communication approaches are in a common brand space to map status quo, potentials and challenges.

Natalia Ponomareva: We provide our customers with a wide range of functionalities for the most unique use cases. Our platform provides a variety of deep and flexible analysis options for experienced researchers and also helpful features for beginners or users with limited time. We also have an in-house team of expert analysts who produce high-quality reports with recommendations for action.

Ute Hümer & Sebastian Schmidt: We don't sell our customers ready-made solutions off the shelf but rather, we use our established standards as a basis for finding the right solution for each individual customer. After all, every brand has an individual target group, positioning and challenge that needs to be addressed. We can efficiently implement this "mass-customized" approach with the help of SKOPOS ELEMENTS' data science expertise. Insightful dashboards, automated text analysis solutions and the connection of different data sources are just three facets that we have used in numerous projects and that enable our customers to design decision-making processes

even better and faster. Technology is not everything. If there is one thing that particularly distinguishes us, it is our people. We enjoy advising our customers and finding agile solutions together. But we prefer to let our customers speak for themselves: Christian Fritzsche, market researcher at Wüstenrot: *"Due to the modular questionnaire design, current topics or questions can be easily and flexibly integrated into the tracking. The fast delivery of results through the interactive dashboard, as well as the ability to perform your own evaluations and provide immediate answers to urgent questions, are a clear added value for us. In addition, other departments can also access the results directly, e.g. for campaign measurement and planning."*

Julia Saswito: With brainsuite, our SaaS platform, we have created a completely new way to control, test and agilely optimize the effectiveness and brand impact of advertising media using artificial intelligence and automation.

Key benefits:

o Truly any type of ad media can be tested, from print to OoH, TVC to digital video, shopper marketing materials to pack designs and shelf setups to display ads to eCommerce content.

o Our tools are based on scientific findings from behavioral and brand research and are trained with millions of human-generated data – therefore, we deliver accurate predictions on how advertising materials are perceived – from attention-grabbing power and comprehensibility to brand perception.

o The results are available extremely quickly – within minutes. And the tests can be performed in self-service directly on our platform.

o Scalability: brainsuite enables testing of large quantities of advertising assets at any time. Optimal with the increasing number of assets at all touchpoints. And this also globally - our tools currently already cover more than 15 languages, and more are being added all the time.

Of course, the fact that this also results in cost advantages compared to conventional methods is a nice side effect.

How would you describe your approach to brand research in a tweet (maximum 280 characters)?

Stefan Schönherr: eye square tries to capture the brand as holistically as possible. Our range of methods allows us to map the brand itself, its communication, and its touchpoints on all important levels of the human experience - visual (perception), emotional (implicit) and rational (explicit).

Natalia Ponomareva: Brandwatch provides brands, agencies, and market researchers with a platform to better understand consumers, trends, and competitors and to get real-time insights to stay successful in the future.

Ute Hümer & Sebastian Schmidt: SKOPOS Brand track is flexible, lean and fast. Continuous survey instead of isolated waves. Modular questionnaire design and individual target group. Interactive dashboard as a comprehensive brand cockpit that grows with your challenges.

Julia Saswito: aimpower gives marketers the fastest and most effective way to test and agilely improve any advertising medium for consumer perception and brand impact. Enabled by a unique combination of Artificial Intelligence and Behavioural Science.

What definition of brand underlies your approach?

Stefan Schönherr: We understand the brand as an overarching sign. Logo, claim, voice, product, touchpoints and communication - these aspects of the brand are inevitably linked. Of course, the logo is often a central component in making a brand quickly and at the same time precisely an object of investigation. Our definition, however, goes well beyond this and tries to take into account all important aspects, depending on the question at hand.

Natalia Ponomareva: Every brand is unique and has characteristics that make it special. Brandwatch helps brands to understand how their brand is perceived by consumers online, which characteristics consumers emphasize and praise in their online conversations, or can identify, for example, with the help of an image analysis, how the brand products are used and employed in consumers' everyday lives. This provides valuable insights into differences in their own brand perception and how the brand is perceived by the desired target group.

Ute Hümer & Sebastian Schmidt: In discussions with customers, we discovered that there is no such thing as "one definition" of a brand. To exaggerate, it's as if you were to ask: How do you

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define a car? Our answer does not help you. Nor does it help us together develop where we want to be technologically with the car in ten years' time.

What does help us is to engage with our customers: What does our customer understand from his brand, how does he manage it, where does he want to take it and why? The answers to these questions are at the core of what guides our actions when setting up brand tracking.

For SKOPOS, it is important that our client can use our results, dashboards, and recommendations to manage his brand operationally and strategically, that it becomes clear what needs to be done and why. It goes without saying that a lot of results from basic research on how brands should be managed are running in the background, so to speak. But the principle always applies: Empiricism first.

Julia Saswito: A successful and strong brand is firmly anchored in the consumer's mind ("mental availability") and is closely linked to positive associations and relevant motivations. To achieve this, it always comes down to the right mix of penetration/media and creative effectiveness. And what drives creative effectiveness? Attention grabbing, easy and fast processing of the advertising message, consistency and lasting use of strong and distinctive brand assets, emotional activation and, of course, the fit of the communication messages to consumer needs and the brand core. The core of our approach is therefore to ensure and increase these performance drivers ultimately also ensure a more efficient use of media budgets.

How do you continue to develop your range of methods in brand research?

Stefan Schönherr: With our experimental approach, we try to make as many touchpoints with the brand available as possible. Especially in the digital realm, new platforms and communication formats are constantly emerging - if you want to be successful here, you naturally must be able to try out these channels at an early stage and examine communication designs.

Furthermore, in addition to apparative methods (emotional reactions, attention, activation patterns), we are again focusing more on qualitative approaches. With our approach of neurosemiotic in-depth interviews, we try to understand the brand on all levels and to make it possible for marketing managers and consumers to experience and describe it, even in the very early phases of new developments, rebrandings, face-lifts, and campaign ideas.

The other major topic is the automation and the acceleration of market research. With our SPARK platform and our BRANDREACT reaction time tool, we will, in the future, enable customers to test brand stimuli of all kinds quickly, in a standardized and representative manner, and to track consumer feedback live in the online dashboard.

Natalia Ponomareva: social media and the internet are constantly changing and therefore our product team is continuously working on improving our data coverage and adding new sources. Combining with other data sources is another focus, so brands can get the most holistic picture of their consumer:s and react quickly to changes. With the merger with Falcon.io, we can now provide our customers with a comprehensive social suite, from consumer research to social media management and engagement.

Ute Hümer & Sebastian Schmidt: Thanks to our now six business units and the lively exchange between colleagues, there is a process of internal innovation in which we repeatedly dare to think outside the box. For example, we recognized and adapted the potential of online communities for brand research purposes very early on through SKOPOS CONNECT.

Of course, we also plan strategically and anticipate where the market will go and what fits methodically into our portfolio. With an internal Research & Development department, we are well equipped precisely at this point to bring developments to market maturity.

The third and perhaps most important point: joint development projects with our customers. After all, only a 'real' customer can ultimately judge whether a method works based on real results. In this setting, we are confronted with a wide variety of challenges, whereas internal test projects are sometimes idealized. That is why we are very happy about the long-term, trusting cooperation with our customers, where we grow together with and through precisely these projects.

Julia Saswito: On the one hand, we are continuously expanding our range of methods with increasingly channel-specific tools, as well as the possibility for our customers to map their very specific brand and creativity frameworks extremely flexibly in our "brainsuite" platform. We are currently also well advanced in the analysis of simple consumer statements using deep language modeling to predict purchase intentions and attitudes towards products and brands - without explicitly asking for them.

In addition, we are working hard in R&D on the effect of pure audio assets such as music and sound logos, and we also want to make these measurable using AI. Clearly, we are only at the beginning of using AI in brand research; there are still many more exciting possibilities!

Stefan Schönherr
Vice Director Brand & Media

eye square

Stefan Schönherr has been working as a brand and media specialist in the Brand & Media Experience unit at eye square since 2007, has headed this unit since 2013 and has been a partner of eye square in the position of Vice President Brand & Media and Partner since 2018.

He holds a degree in psychology with a focus on media consulting, advertising impact and media reception.

Julia Saswito
aimpower

Julia Saswito is a digital pioneer and specialist for customer experience and brand management at aimpower. After successfully building up one of the leading digital agencies in Germany and her time as Partner and Global Practice Lead for "Digital Experience" at the international Reply Group, she moved to the AI start-up aimpower in April 2021.

She helps to shape the still young AI scene as Head of Marketing & Strategy and works on novel solutions for brand management and effectiveness measurement.

Natalja Ponomareva
Brandwatch

Natalia Ponomareva is Enterprise Sales Executive, DACH at Brandwatch. After her studies at the University of Vienna, she gained experience in international business.

Since 2020 she is based in the UK and delegates from there first at OpenText and now at Brandwatch the happenings in the DACH region.

Sebastian Schmidt
SKOPOS ELEMENTS

Sebastian Schmidt is Managing Director at SKOPOS ELEMENTS, the experts for statistics, data analysis, data visualization and software development. He is responsible for the area of customer analytics and reporting. His focus is the combination of market research with data science methods.

With more than 10 years of research experience, he knows about the special requirements that market researchers have for data, methods, and result reports.

Uta Hümer
SKOPOS RESEARCH

Uta Hümer is Research Director at SKOPOS RESEARCH. She started in market research at Ipsos in 2005. Three years later, she moved to SKOPOS, where she has been part of the management team of SKOPOS RESEARCH, the unit for traditional market research, since 2017.

Her current focus is on the development and marketing of tools and the support of clients primarily from the retail and FMCG sectors.