

HIT OR MYTH?

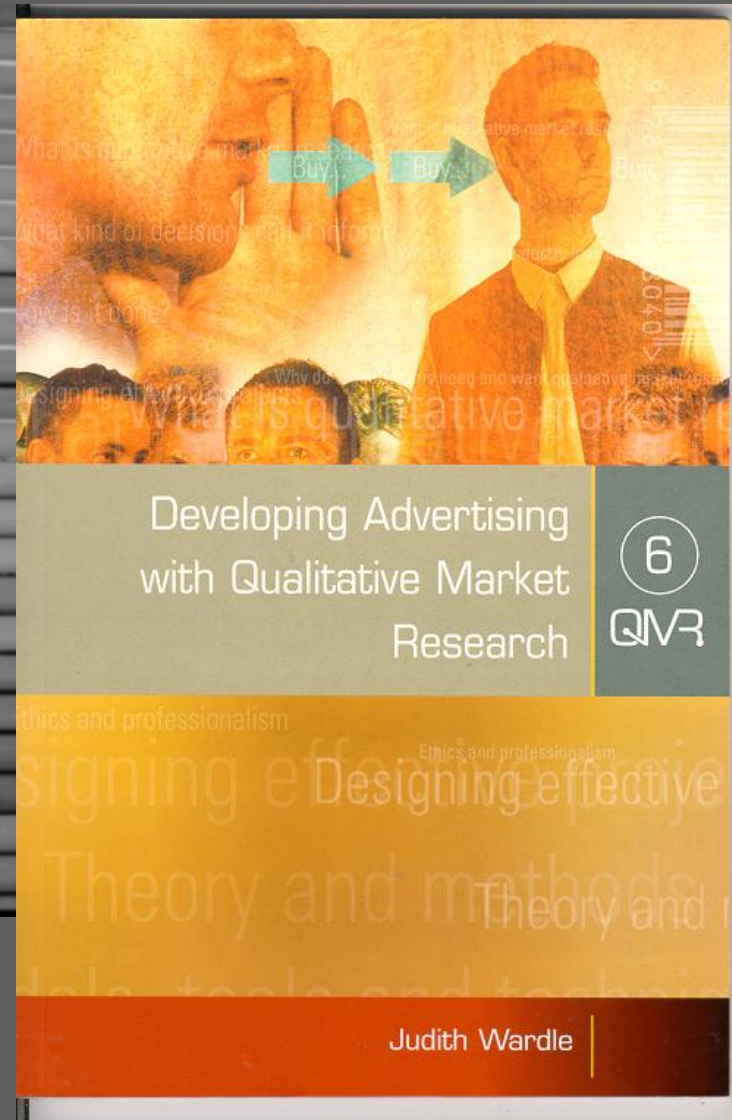
The truth about the Heineken ad campaign

**A presentation by
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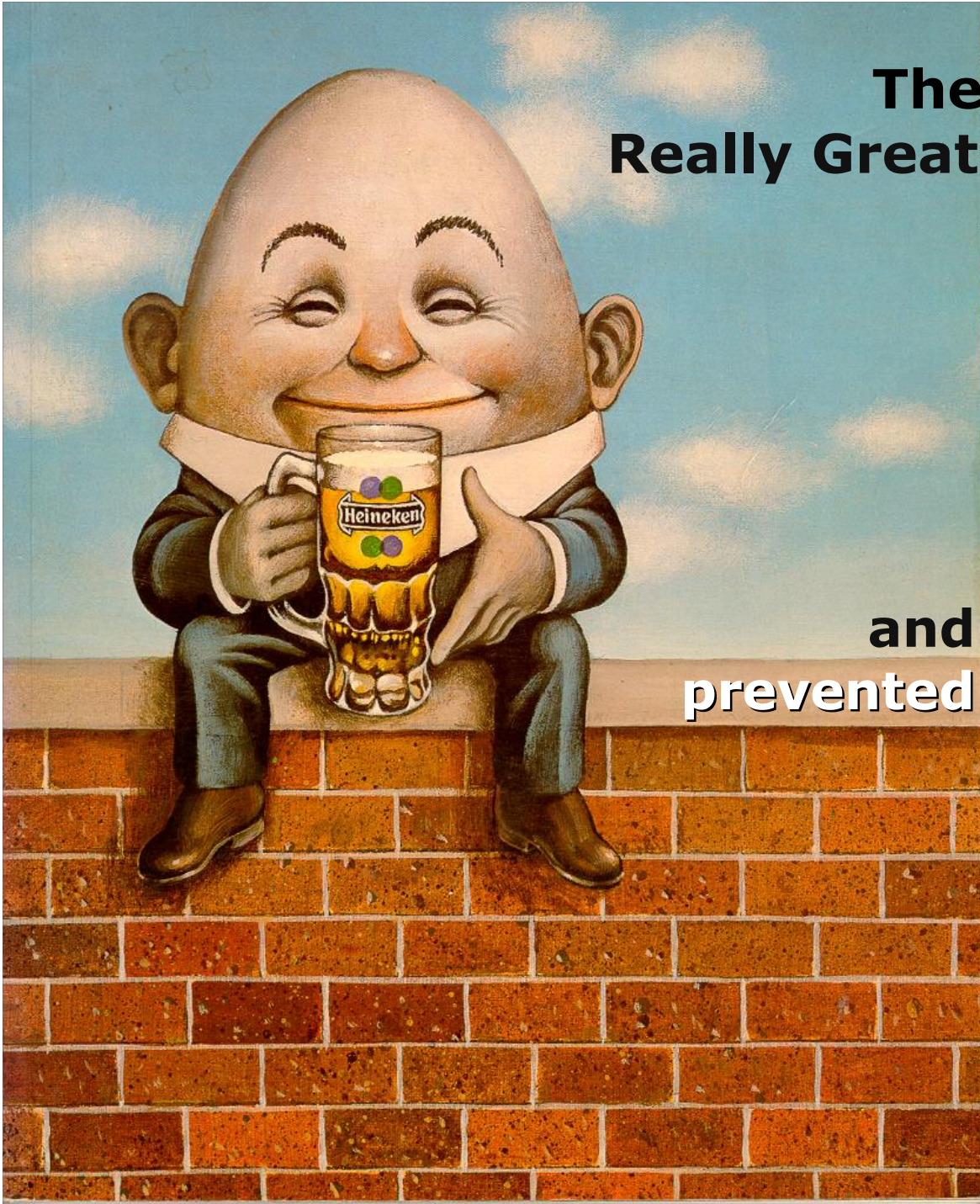


Introduction



**The Myth of those
Really Great Heineken Adverts**

**and how research nearly
prevented them from happening**



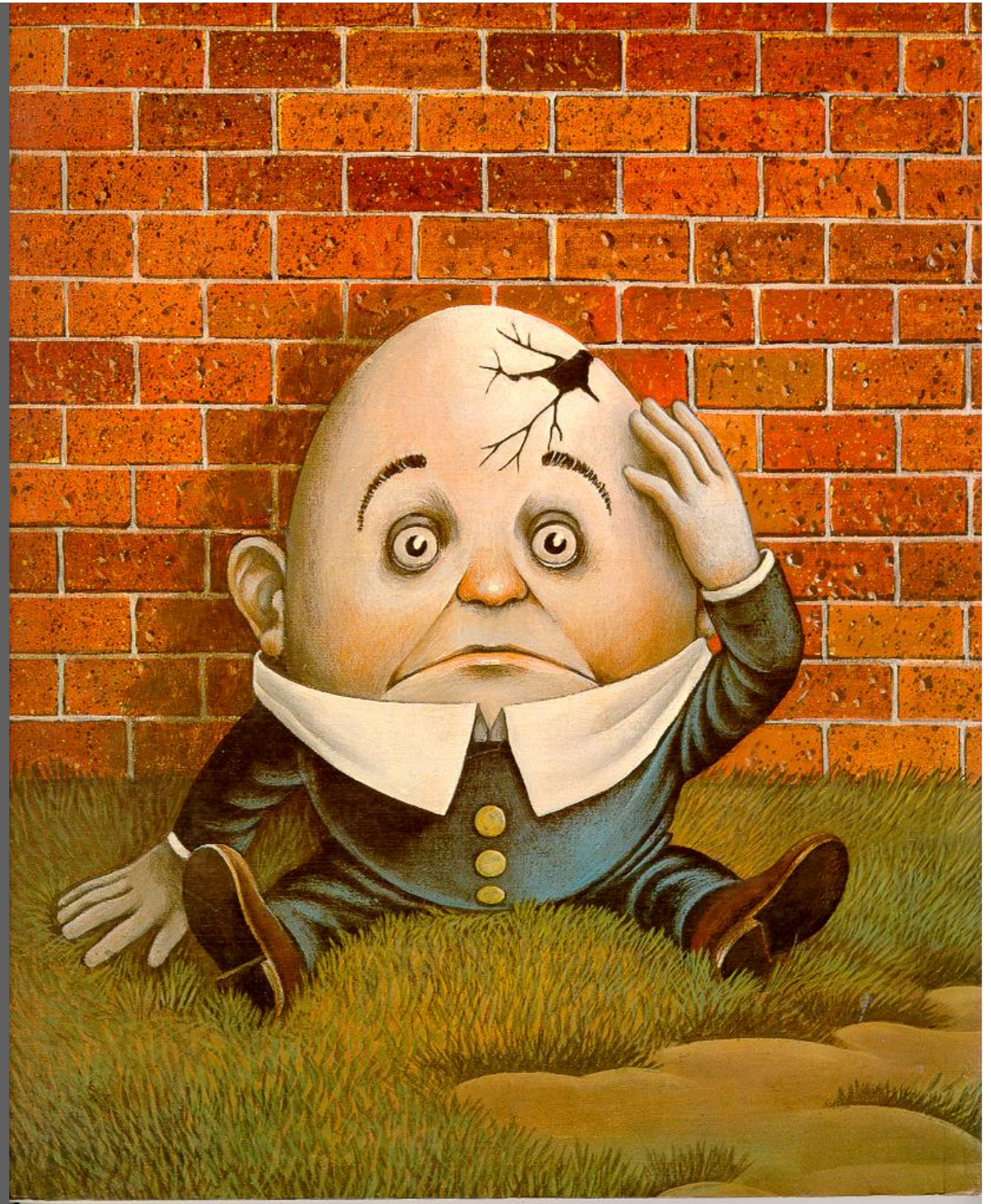
Research accused of
brutal assault on fragile
creative idea

an injustice!

It's not fair

we was framed

we was only trying to help



A moral crusade?

No

re-telling the story

facts straight

**tracked down the
original research**

learning/principles



Key players



Tony S-G

Frankie L



Freddie H

The Great Heineken Advertising Myth

*'Heineken's "Refreshes the parts other beers cannot reach" met with huge resistance on first showing, as it broke all the rules of beer advertising....The team was brave enough to ignore the results (of the qualitative research)... That intuition proved to be right and the campaign went on to be **one of the most successful ever**, building both sales and brand image over many years.'*

David Taylor, The Brand Gym

1. Heineken's advertising was courageous and different to what had gone before

- agreed!
- although...
- 'Things are better after...'

"it's really a bit like 'Double Diamond works wonders'" Whitbread research, 1974

2. The research said 'don't do it' after the first couple of ads were made

- The first research - Paul Gildon
- Sample: 30 interviews, male lager drinkers

- Ads shown:

- Piano Tuner,
- Policemen,
- Dancers



- Objectives:

- evaluate the 3 commercials in terms of communication and comprehension
- identify any particular strengths and weaknesses
- provide creative guidance for development

The research said 'don't do it'

- Researched *days after* ads launched
'what's beer got to do with ears?'
- Ads on strategy
- Refreshment as an advertising idea
'concentrates exclusively on the restorative effect of Heineken at the expense of its appeal as an enjoyable drink'
 - will the advertising vehicle deliver enough brand equity?

The research said 'don't do it'

- And..
 - more research carried out five months later (Strategic Planning Unit)
 - 20 interviews, similar objectives
 - showed first two ads plus Potter and Frankenstein
 - ads found 'clever', 'amusing', they 'stood out'...
 - strong, but *qualified* endorsement of the campaign

The research said 'don't do it'

- Also pointed out the ads:
 - enjoyed *as advertising*, position the brand *away from everyday*
 - a strong *creative idea* - a *brand property*?
 - NB product quality cues and user values - the **residual communication**
- The Myth Created – that research cannot deal with creative ideas
 - in this case, showed that it *can*
 - and maybe got it *more or less right*

3. The agency persevered, for creative reasons, so strongly did they believe in the campaign

- They were right to persevere
 - but it had much more to do with *business* than *creative* reasons
- At Whitbread:
 - the tied estate - brewer domination...



'Don't waste valuable Tavern time'

*'Trophy, the pint that
thinks it's a quart'*



... set to change



... with a move to the off-trade

The agency persevered for creative reasons?

- At Whitbread:
 - a revolution under way
 - off-trade customer profile (women)
 - Thresher: 235 shops in 1974, 1500 in 1993
 - marketing wins brewery power struggle
- At the Agency
 - strong marketing backing - vested interests
 - '*carte blanche*' - why do research?

The campaign

- Phase One: 1974 - 1988
 - *'Refreshes the parts...'*
 - 68 executions
- Phase Two: 1989 - 1998
 - *'Only Heineken can do this'*
 - 33 executions
- Phase Three: 1998 - 2002
 - *'How refreshing, how Heineken'*
 - 9 executions, including...
 - *'Buy a pint of Heineken or we'll keep running this commercial'*

4. *The campaign was highly successful and increased awareness and consumption*

- Certainly talked about...
 - No. 29 in Channel 4's '100 Greatest Ads'
 - ... also much *talked up* at the time
- Huge sales increase of Heineken...
 - could not make enough of it
 - ... so the ads are selling pints?

But..



**Remember the
summer of '76?**

... '74 and '75 were
nearly as hot!

market grew by 25%

CBL, Harp, Skol, Carlsberg..

.. all grew considerably

**Heineken's share did not
appreciably increase**



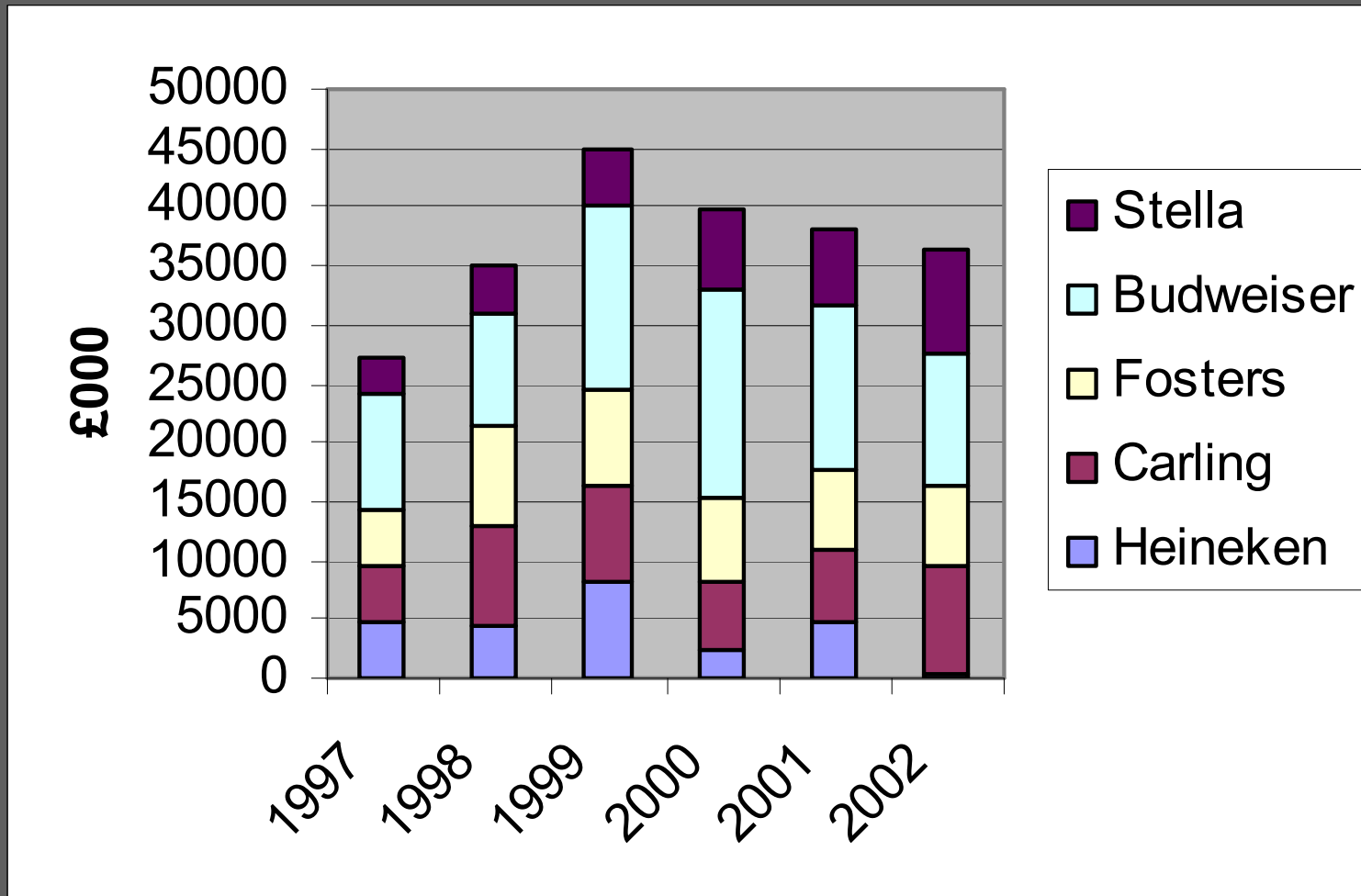
The campaign was highly successful?

- Heineken *did not gain* significant share relative to the competition
- Surely the advertising improved brand awareness and perceptions?
- Not as much as you would think...

The campaign was highly successful?

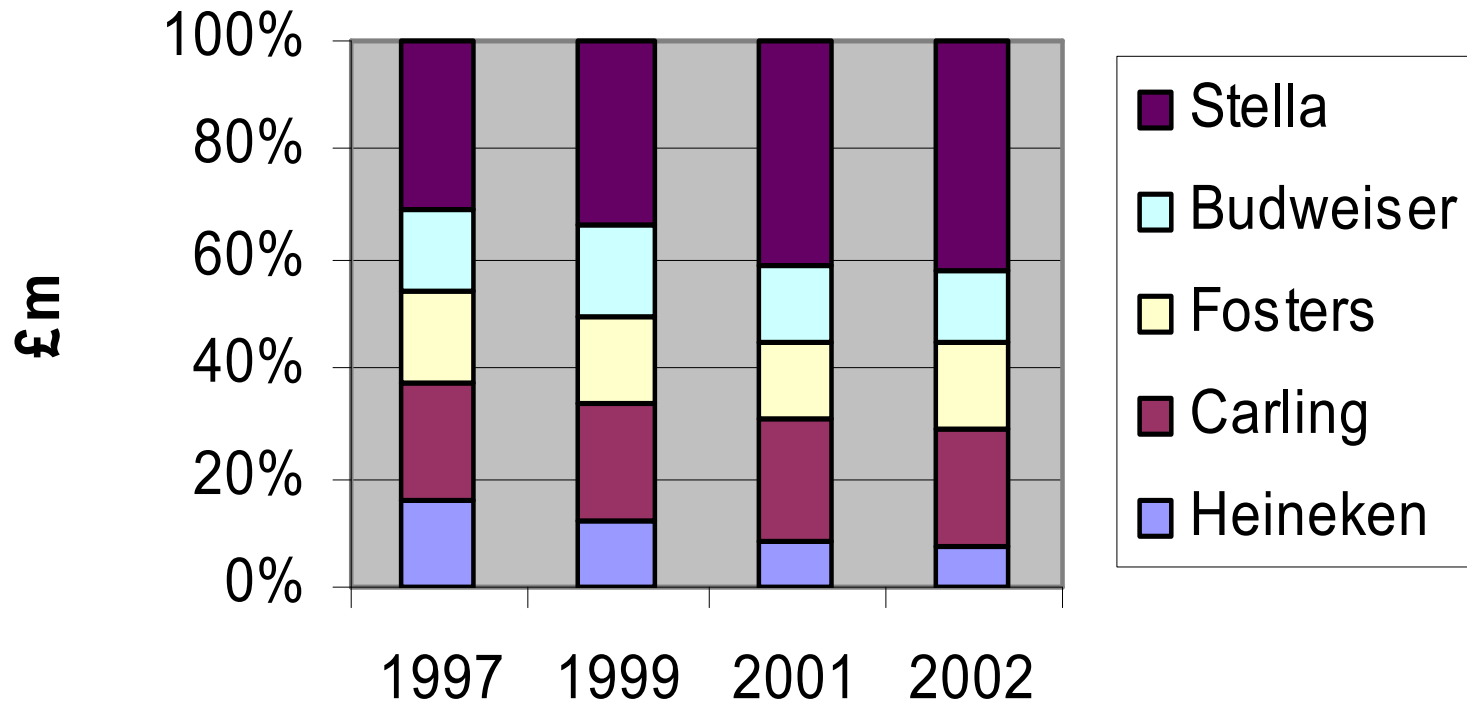
- The brand *did* score higher than average on 'refreshing'...
- ... but tracking studies showed that other image measures *hardly changed* in this first campaign phase
- Better scores later in the campaign?

Lager Advertising Expenditure



Source - Nielsen

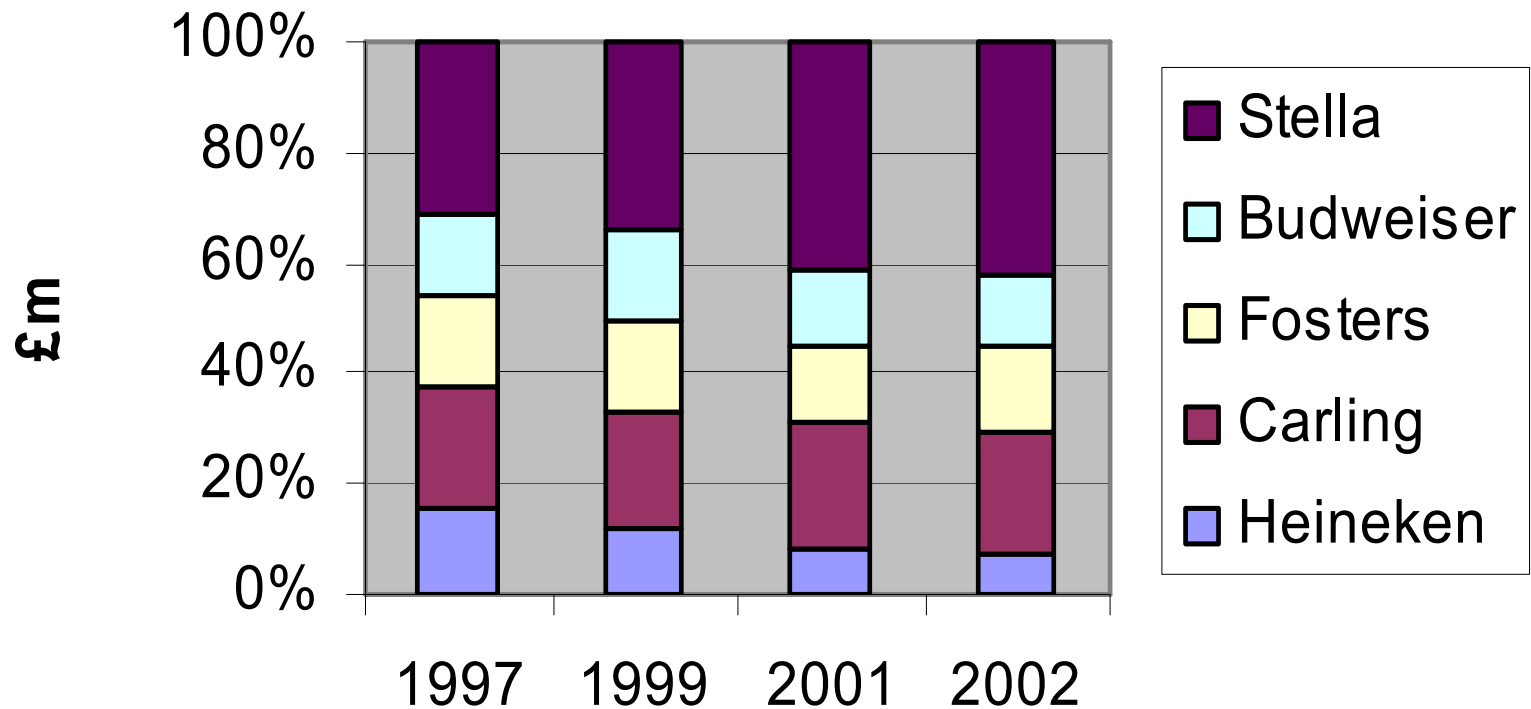
Lager Sales - On Trade



Sources - Mintel

Interbrew

Lager Sales - Off Trade



Sources - Mintel

Interbrew

The campaign was highly successful?

- *Highly* successful, or successful up to a point
– that point being around mid-80s?
- John Wanamaker, WalMart founder, said in 1905
'I know that half of my advertising dollars are wasted, but I don't know which half'

5. Owning refreshment provided a strong platform for the advertising and for the brand

'Refreshes' - an advertising idea

vs

'More refreshing' - product proposition

But Heineken was 3.2% abv (= gnat's)

weaker than the competition

ads reinforced this

refreshment as a brand platform...

'Viewer-as-viewer' vs 'viewer-as-drinker'

Ads reference world of stories, TV, film etc

Dixon of Dock Green

Little Red Riding Hood

Frankenstein

Leslie Phillips + Charles Hawtree

Star Trek

Percy Thrower

Emperor Nero

Norman Wisdom

makes connections, but...

refreshment as a long-term brand platform...

Do you remember the one about...

Sally the musical seal

The Onion seller

The Snake charmer

The kebab singing 'oh Donna'

The priest who blows a party popper?

What about...

the 'scary movie' with Julie Andrews

the annoying yuppie smothered by a red phone box

the Morris dancers who knock each other out?

Heineken. Refreshes the parts other beers cannot reach.



August 1981



December 1981

— 'Windermere' —
1982 May

MUSIC:
Romantic throughout.

SFX:
Nib on paper, writing.

VOICE:
I walked about a bit on my own...

SFX:
Nib on paper, crossing out.

SFX:
Nib on paper, writing.

VOICE:
I strolled around without anyone
else...

SFX:
Nib on paper, crossing out.

SFX:
Can opening and drinking.

SFX:
Nib on paper, writing.

VOICE:
I wandered lonely as a cloud that
floats on (fading) high o'er vales
and hills.

VOICE:
Only Heineken can do this because
it refreshes the poets other beers
cannot reach.



Heineken refreshes the poets
other beers cannot reach.

refreshment as a long-term brand platform...

- The *residual communication* of the ads:
 - user values (middle class, feminine, effete)
'how drole, how Heineken'
 - supported by weak product
 - and packaging cues (*can*, light green)
- Heineken as the 'safe option'
 - vs Royal Dutch or 'Hangoverbrau'
 - or, 'a beer for w*****s'
- New brands and new values emerging...

The 1980s!

Foster's, XXXX

PPLs

Heineken losing
touch



refreshment as a long-term brand platform...

- 1992 launch of Heineken Export
 - Stephen Fry, 'smooth talking bar steward'
- But Whitbread switching focus to Stella
 - and Heineken gets into rugby sponsorship
- 1998 Heineken returns with new ads
 - 'how refreshing...'
 - characters acting against stereotype
 - eg helpful workmen, successful Blues man

6. Heineken's advertising helped the brand become a long-term success

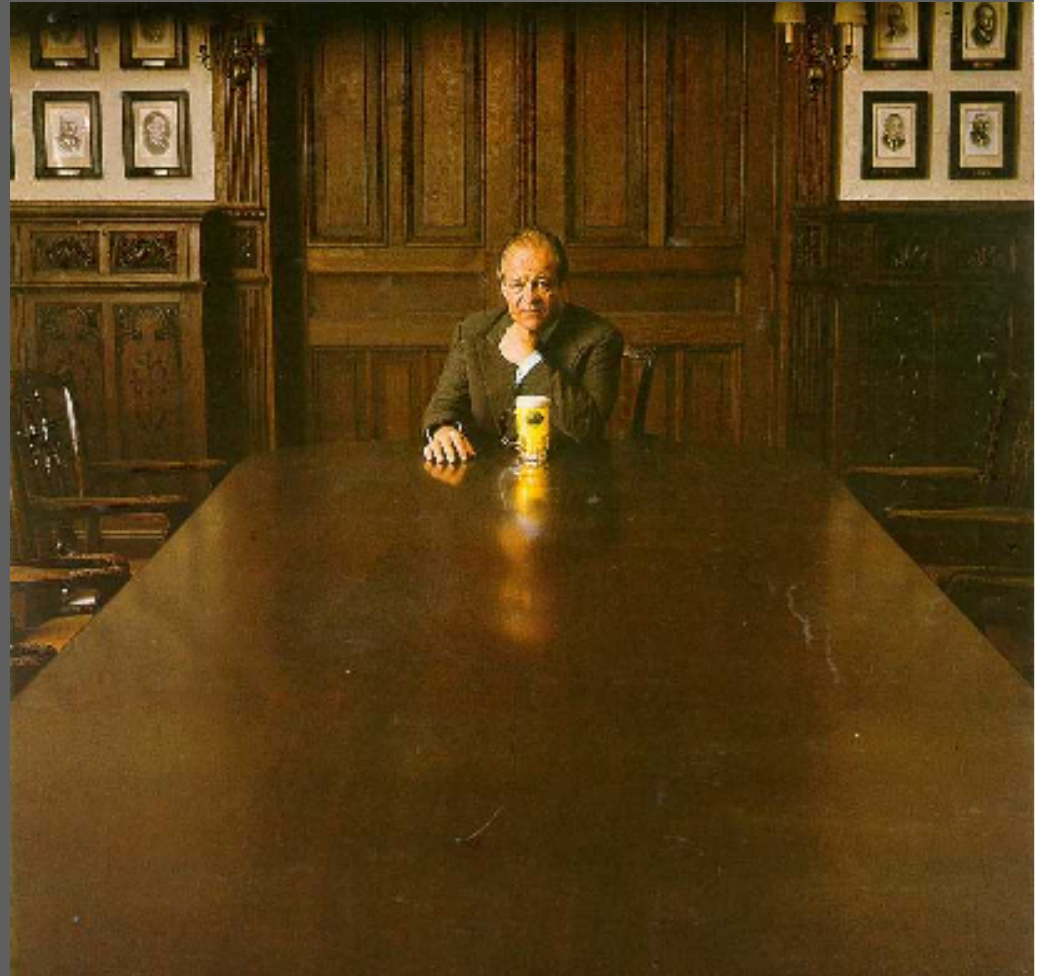
- Well...
- In 2000 Interbrew took over Whitbread brewing interests
 - license to brew Heineken expires
 - Heineken withdrawn from UK in Feb 2003
- Joins Skol, Hofmeister, Harp
 - rather than Carling, Carlsberg, Foster's

a long-term success?

Heineken BV said...

'During the 90s, Heineken Cold Filtered continued to be a key player in the standard lager market... however, tastes of British drinkers were changing... As a result... Heineken resumed responsibility for its brand and for the first time, the authentic, Dutch-brewed Heineken (5%) became available in the UK.'

(well, wouldn't you?)



a long-term success?

- So, farewell, then, standard Heineken
 - gone but not forgotten
 - thanks to all the ads
- What *did* the advertising contribute to the brand's fortunes...
 - part of its success and/or its downfall?
 - hardly as good as it was claimed (by ad industry) at the expense of researchers

Conclusions

- We said good qualitative research helps to make great advertising
 - evidence?

(at WARC presentation, there followed a video with 'Surfer' and 'Swimblack')

It's a people
thing

research mediates
between **ideas** and
things





How does it work?

It's a mystery

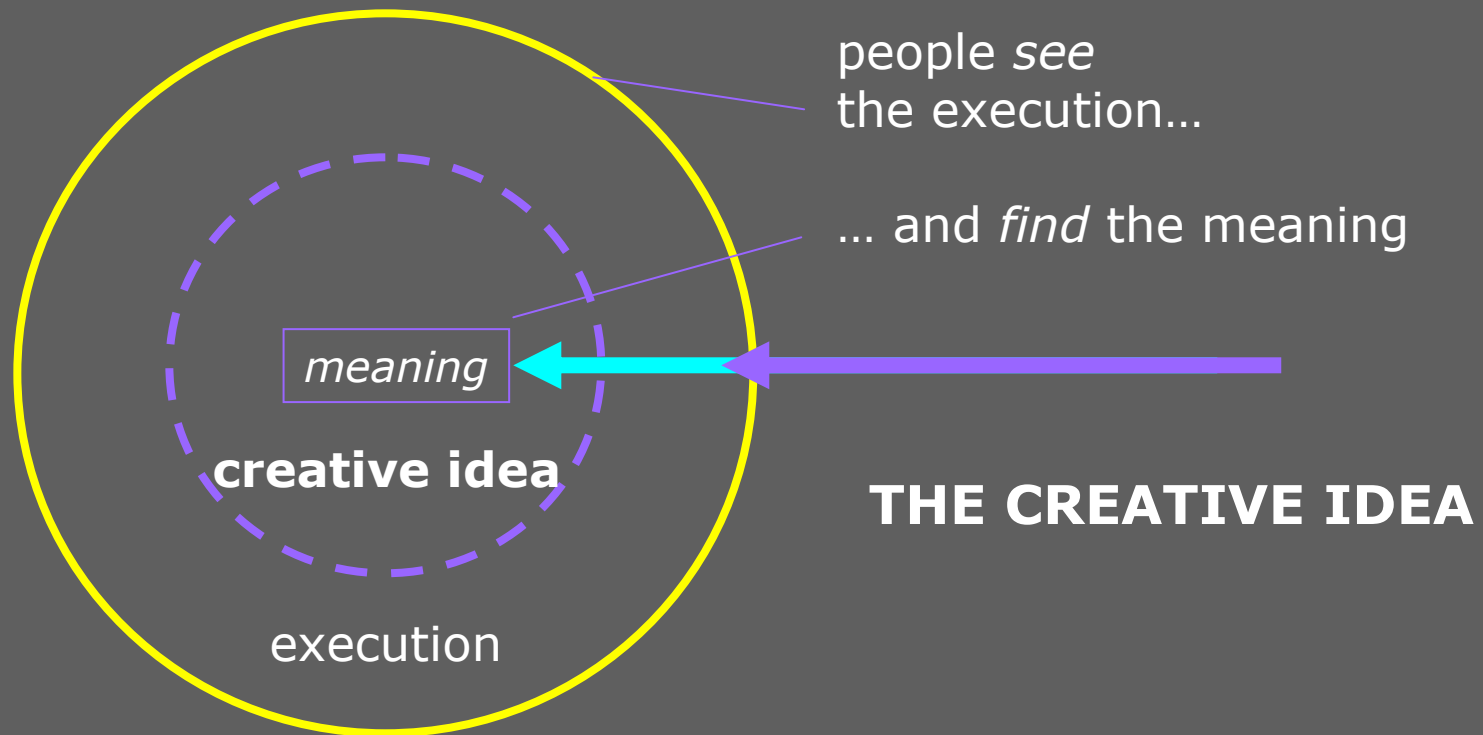
give me that

you have to wonder

honestly

Conclusions

- **Use the tools**, like the Creative Idea
 - useful discipline for ad development
 - provides focus, common ground



Planners and
researchers
work together

Learn from each other

More **training**
Less **attitude**

Maybe...

... better teamwork could
have saved Cold Filtered..



...or maybe not



cheers