

Applying neuroscience effectively in ad and brand research

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Neuroscience remains a topic of huge interest to marketers and researchers. Aside from the debates about how the brain works and what that means for marketing, the 'neuromarketing' industry continues to grow. Based on Millward Brown's many years experience in applying the techniques to marketing issues, and work with academic experts, it is clear that many approaches offer a new perspective on brands and consumers – but that there are issues to address for the potential to be released. These centre on the practical use of the science at a reasonable price, and the need for some realism about what the techniques truly deliver. To really be useful for marketers, neuroscience needs to be combined with existing 'explicit' tools such as qualitative or survey-based research. Given this, the techniques which may find the widest market in the near term are:

- EEG – especially if applied on robust sample sizes
- Eye-tracking, given the ease of application of the hardware
- Implicit Association methods derived from cognitive psychology, which can be applied in online environments among large samples

Millward Brown is currently offering these techniques on a select basis, as part of its brand strategy & tracking tools, and Link™ suite of advertising development research. EEG can offer powerful insight into transient or unspoken responses to ideas or elements of advertising creative. Eye-tracking offers a powerful diagnostic insight into visual attention during interaction with an ad. Implicit Association measures offer a deeper understanding of the ideas conveyed by marketing campaigns, or the network of associations that make up a brand's equity. Only when combined with validated, explicit measures, can these techniques provide a holistic view of both brand and advertising potential. These issues will be discussed using examples from MB's 5-year development program and client projects using these integrated approaches.