





“Most advertisers communicate to individuals, but we actually make our decisions socially.”

Matt Locke,  
Founder of Storythings and Media Theorist

# Primal Connection

So what's important in all this for brands? Well, we practice what we preach at ITV. 18 months ago, we went through an enormous rebrand as a company. And we used semiotics as part of this, to help us understand where and how our ITV brands should position themselves for viewers.

This informed how we defined our brand position at the heart of popular culture and our emotional connections with our viewers – in terms of our logo, colours, the look, tone and feel of our channel idents and images.

We like to think that we're all rational decision makers, although as advertising experts we know that decisions are often made emotionally: people prefer to follow the herd when making decisions, so their decisions can be validated.

Brands know they need to appeal to consumers on an emotional level to connect with them, to be accepted into the tribe on a long term basis. This research can help them do just that.

Our research proves that bonding moments created by ITV content lead to stronger ad engagement. It's simple: because we're paying more attention to the programmes, we pay more attention to the advertising. And when we're more interested in the brands advertised, we're more likely to talk about the ads, search for the products (on - and offline) and spend our hard-earned cash on them.





**collective**



**involved**



**transcendent**

## So, how can you use the 3 components with your clients to create bonding campaigns?

**Collective:** creative and campaigns which bring people together, or unite them whether it's as family, friends or the nation.

Shortcuts to this include:

— A warm, friendly welcoming tone which is non-judgemental, celebratory or silly humour.

— Creative which acts as a spectacle – big one-off events or a cinematic style. Or can also be creative which ties into existing institutions, or existing heritage.

— Creative which builds familiarity – use of recurring characters or a catchphrase that can be picked up by popular culture and live beyond the original creative - like “Simples” or “Should have gone to Specsavers”. Borrowing recognisable traits from other genres like film or music can also strengthen and widen the creative’s appeal.

**Involved:** Does the campaign involve consumers – either emotionally, or by getting them to participate in the campaign in some way?

Do viewers have an emotional experience after watching the campaign? Is there a big emotional payoff - like John Lewis's *The Bear and The Hare* or Nike's *Risk Everything*.

Are they asked to make a decision, or vote, or influence the campaign in some way?

**Transcendent:** Does the ad build on a campaign which is ongoing and anchored? Is it part of a series which has been established with consumers?

Have you enabled it to live beyond the broadcast moment – think about how it connects into the ecosystem of the overall campaign.

Consider how it reaches into the real world of consumers beyond the broadcast. This could be seasonally, linked with events, trends or social sharing.

Lastly, it can be about building anticipation and association through repeated ritual: Coke is a great example. Their Christmas campaigns are so effective they've become an element of popular culture in their own right.

**Primal connections demonstrate the effect of shared experiences on our relationships with brands.**

**Bonding moments created by ITV content means viewers are more engaged - not just with that content, but also with the advertising wrapped around it. They're more likely to recall it, too.**

**Brands can create these moments in their advertising just as we create them in our TV content.**

**We've identified how to apply the three components of bonding: collective, involved and transcendent. Consider these as part of the next campaign you create.**



