



# 14 Days Too Late?

Why Traditional Consumer  
Research is Failing Modern Brands



Brands are expected to launch campaigns, optimize websites, and fine-tune creative assets at lightning speed. Yet, when it comes to consumer research and testing, the process often feels dragged out in slow motion. Traditional methods like A/B testing, focus groups, and virtual shelf testing can take from two weeks to a month to deliver insights, by which time, consumer behaviors have already shifted, and opportunities lost.

Even when data does arrive, it frequently clashes with branding priorities. Creative teams champion bold, emotional storytelling, while data teams push for performance-driven optimization which leads to indecision, and ineffective execution.

**We listened to **hundreds of calls** and found brands asking:**

Are our testing methods actually helping us predict success?

How do we balance data with creative instincts?

Are we making the right decisions fast enough?

These challenges aren't isolated incidents, they are recurring pain points voiced by top consumer brands.

This eBook looks at the three biggest testing and research challenges brands face today and how to solve them.

Whether you're a brand leader, digital marketer, or insight professional, this guide will help you rethink outdated testing processes and adopt faster, smarter, and more predictive approaches to creative testing.



**"We need to be relevant as brands because that's what people are still willing to pay more for. The right experiences, the right placement, the right occasion."**

**Sylwia Borawska,**  
Senior Insights Manager,  
The Coca-Cola Company





# **Slow and Expensive Testing**



Traditional research methods like A/B testing, focus groups, and survey panels, move at a glacial pace compared to real-time decision-making needs.

A/B testing requires significant traffic and time to produce statistically significant results, often taking 14 days to 4 weeks to yield actionable insights.

Focus groups and panel surveys can be costly and time-consuming, requiring recruitment, execution, and analysis that can take weeks or months to complete.

And by the time results are in, consumer behaviors have already evolved, creative teams have moved on, and key opportunities have been missed.



“We understand how much attention we think this advert is going to get in this environment. However, this environment typically only gives you two seconds. And we think that we need six seconds to do this job effectively. You can’t put that square peg in that round hole.”

**Phil Jackson,**

Global Digital Marketing Effectiveness Innovation Director  
Haleon

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## More Than Just Time and Money

The delays in consumer research cost money, but they also create operational friction and decision-making bottlenecks such as:

### Execution Delays

Slow insights mean teams wait even longer to optimize campaigns, delaying launches or forcing teams to move forward without data-backed decisions.



## Missed Opportunities

A/B tests often provide historical insights, what worked in the past and not necessarily what will work in the future.

## Internal Tensions

Marketing and creative teams want bold, high-impact campaigns, but data teams rely on slow-moving validation methods which leads to frustration and misalignment between departments.

## The Solution: Moving Beyond Traditional Testing

Brands need to adopt faster, more predictive methods of consumer testing.

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## Heres how:

### ✓ Pre-Launch Predictive Testing

Rather than relying solely on post-launch A/B testing, brands can leverage AI-driven predictive analytics to gauge creative performance before launch and reduce costly guesswork.

### ✓ Real-Time Data Signals

Instead of waiting for full A/B test results, brands can use real-time analysis to identify winning creative elements instantly.



## ✓ Smarter Automation & AI

AI means you can efficiently analyze thousands of creative variables instantly, accelerating insights that once took weeks into hours or days.

By embracing these approaches, brands can shorten research cycles, align teams faster, and make smarter, data-driven decisions without the long wait.

## Here's how Dragonfly AI helps brands break free from the testing bottleneck:

### ✓ Instant Predictive Insights

Analyze creative in seconds, helping teams make faster, smarter decisions without relying on traffic-heavy testing environments.

### ✓ Pre-Launch Creative Testing

Test and validate visual impact and engagement before your campaign goes live. Get clear, data-backed answers on what works and why before committing budget to live testing.

### ✓ Faster Decision-Making, Less Friction

With real-time insights, marketing and creative teams can move faster and align decisions instantly, instead of waiting weeks for results.

### ✓ Optimized for Real-World Performance

Predicts how creative will perform in every environment for a full omnichannel approach. Make sure that every creative decision is backed by AI-driven certainty, not just subjective preference.





# **Conflicts Between Branding Goals and Data Insights**

Marketing is a constant balancing act between brand storytelling and data-driven performance.

But when data from testing contradicts branding priorities, teams are often left at an impasse:

**Creative teams feel restricted by data**, fearing it will water down brand identity.

Performance **teams struggle to justify creative risks** that don't align with testing results.

Without clear pre-launch insights, **brands often must make gut-based decisions, leading to inefficiencies, internal tensions, and suboptimal outcomes.**

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## Internal Friction and Missed Opportunities

This brand-data disconnect isn't just a creative dilemma, it's a business problem that costs brands time, money, and a competitive edge.

**Creative Paralysis.** When teams can't agree on whether to trust the data or follow branding instincts, projects slow down, and execution suffers.



**"I think that the paralyzing thing of having so much data is inability to use it in a business transformative way."**

**Tatiana Khomenko**

Shopper & Category Insights Manager  
ex-ABinBev

**Reactive, Not Proactive** . Many brands still rely on post-launch testing, meaning they only discover problems after a campaign is live, instead of optimizing creative beforehand.

**Wasted Budget** . Without the ability to test and refine creative before launch, brands risk pouring money into underperforming campaigns.

## The Solution: Aligning Brand Identity with Data-Driven Decisions

Instead of choosing between brand integrity and performance data, brands need a framework that blends both before launch.

## Here's how they can do it:

### ✓ Pre-Launch Creative Testing

Brands can validate which creative elements will perform before a campaign goes live.

### ✓ AI-Powered Visual Optimization

By using predictive analytics, brands can identify which elements of a design attract the right attention, ensuring that creative resonates with audiences while maintaining brand identity.

### ✓ Performance-Driven Creativity

By leveraging real-time insights, brands can strike a balance between brand storytelling and conversion-focused execution.



# Dragonfly AI provides brands with instant, pre-launch insights that eliminate the guesswork from creative decision-making.

## ✓ Predict performance before launch

No more waiting for A/B test results or making gut-based creative choices.

## ✓ Ensure brand consistency and engagement

Dragonfly AI analyzes creative in seconds, providing insights into visual impact, attention, and creative performance.

## ✓ Faster alignment between teams

With real-time feedback, marketing, creative, and data teams can quickly align on what works and why.





# **Inconsistent Testing Methods**

Brands invest heavily in consumer testing, but the insights they receive often feel contradictory or unreliable.

**Focus groups capture subjective opinions**, but they don't always reflect real-world behavior.

**Packaging testing but may not accurately predict on shelf positioning.**



“We essentially borrow consumers from the local markets for a short period of time within airports, for example. We need to tap into that shopper profile in a completely different environment to what they're used to in their daily lives”

**Lluç Martinez**  
Global OOH Media Manager  
Pernod Ricard

**A/B testing provides hard data** but is time-consuming and limited to only live environments.

When different methods yield inconsistent insights, marketing and research teams struggle to make confident decisions which leads to hesitation, inefficiencies, and wasted budgets.

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## Confusion, Delays, and Missed Insights

**Paralysis by Analysis.** With different studies producing different takeaways, teams get stuck debating which insights to trust instead of taking decisive action.



**Inaccurate Predictions.** If research methods don't accurately predict real-world consumer behavior, brands may launch ineffective campaigns or optimize based on flawed data.

**Wasted Research Budgets.** Investing in multiple disconnected testing methods without a clear strategy leads to redundant efforts and increased costs.

## The Solution: Standardizing and Enhancing Consumer Testing

Instead of relying on fragmented, conflicting research approaches, **brands need a consistent, predictive, and scalable way** to test creative performance.

## Here's how they can achieve that:

### ✓ AI-Powered Testing for Consistency

Rather than depending on varied human feedback, brands can leverage unbiased AI for consistent creative testing.

### ✓ Pre-Launch Validation Across Channels

Instead of conducting one-off studies for different formats (e.g., digital ads, packaging, e-commerce pages), brands should adopt a tool that can predict creative impact across all consumer touchpoints.

### ✓ Predictive Analytics Instead of Reactive Testing

Brands can use AI to predict how creative will land before they launch a campaign or go to market.

## Dragonfly AI eliminates the guesswork and contradictions in traditional research by providing:

- ✓ A single, AI-driven methodology that ensures consistent insights across all creative assets, no more conflicting test results.
- ✓ Pre-launch testing capabilities to predict real-world impact before a campaign goes live, reducing reliance on slow or outdated methodologies.
- ✓ Objective, data-driven insights based on cutting-edge AI modeling, eliminating human bias and subjectivity from focus groups and panel testing.

Brands can no longer afford to rely on slow, expensive, and inconsistent testing methods. Traditional approaches. Whether it's A/B testing, focus groups, or virtual shelf simulations, they often create more challenges than solutions, leading to delayed decision-making, internal friction, and missed opportunities.

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## We've explored the three biggest challenges leading CPG brands face today:

- ✓ **Slow and expensive testing**

Traditional methods take weeks to deliver insights, delaying execution and causing brands to miss real-time opportunities.

- ✓ **Conflicts between branding goals and data insights**

Performance-driven data often contradicts creative priorities, leaving teams unsure of how to move forward.

## **Inconsistent testing methods**

Multiple research approaches (e.g., focus groups, A/B tests, virtual shelves) produce conflicting insights, making it difficult to determine the right course of action.



### **Pre-launch predictive analytics**

No more waiting for A/B test results, instantly understand how your creative will perform before it goes live.



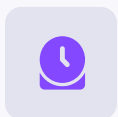
### **AI-driven attention insights**

Identify which design elements capture real consumer engagement in seconds, not weeks.



### **Consistent, scalable research across channels**

Test packaging, digital ads, and e-commerce displays with one unified, neuroscience-backed methodology.



### **Faster decision-making, less internal friction**

Align creative, marketing, and data teams with a single, reliable source of truth.



**By adopting Dragonfly AI, brands can replace guesswork with confidence, ensuring that every creative decision is backed by science, speed, and strategic insight.**

**It's time to stop testing like its the past and start optimizing for the future.**

**Want to see Dragonfly AI in action?**

**Book a demo today**

**and experience  
the future of  
creative testing.**



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