

SPEED DATING WITH INNOVATIONS

What's your innovation's pick-up line?

By Colin Ho, Jiongming Mu and Adam Brown | May 2021



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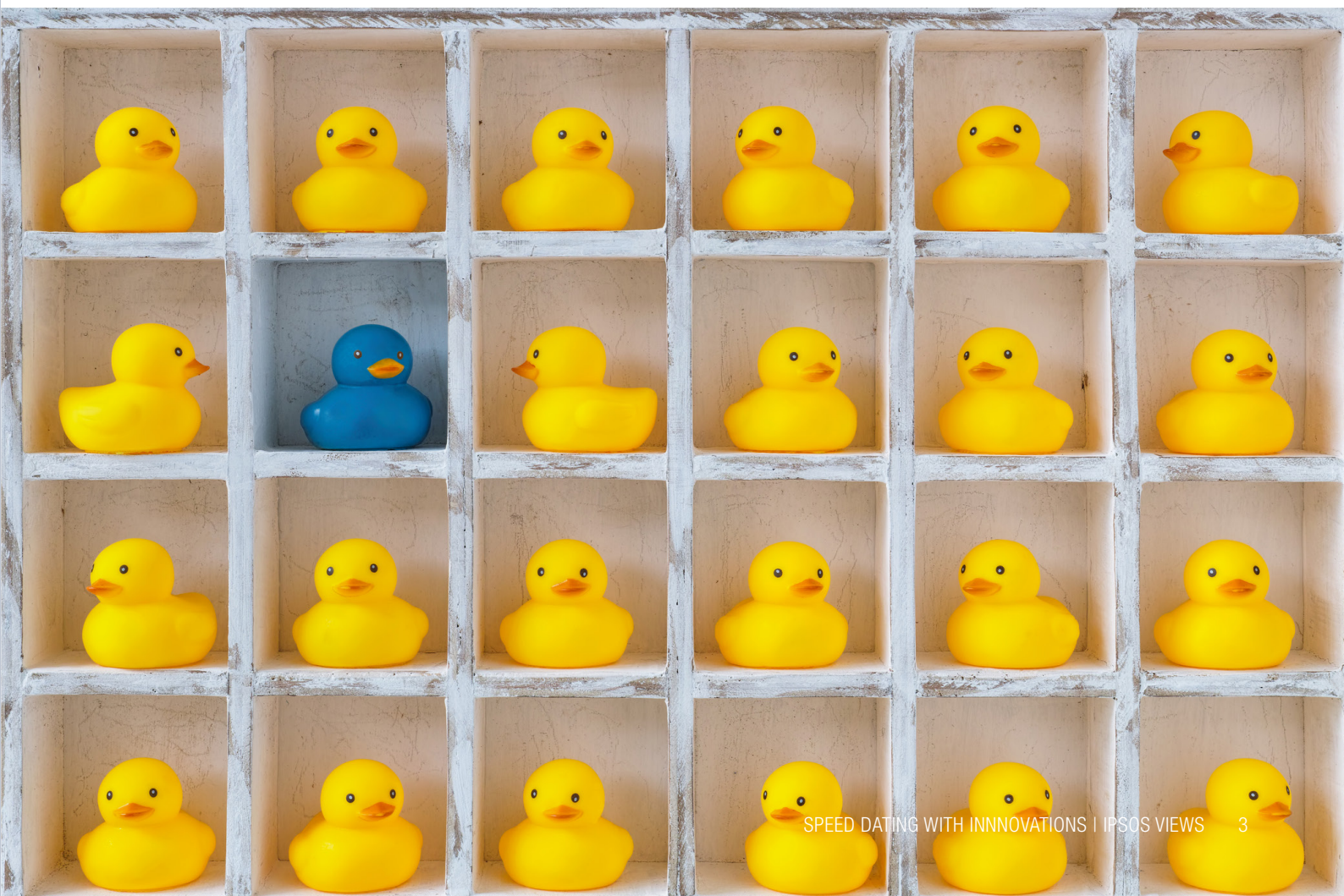


BUILDING YOUR PICK-UP LINE

Marketers spend months, if not years, making sure they have the right innovation to win consumers' hearts and minds. But consumers must notice an innovation before they even give it a try. In the past, marketers strived to be good storytellers – explaining why their innovation should be considered and purchased. In a world where consumers were receptive to long messages, marketers had the luxury of time to tout their innovations. Getting the attention of consumers is harder than in the past. In today's hyperconnected world, consumers are bombarded with advertisements, and standing out among an estimated 30,000 new consumer products launched every year is challenging¹.

Now marketers need to have skills more akin to a speed dater – attracting and persuading in a few seconds. In this paper, we summarize how the communication of innovations has changed drastically and how consumers have adapted to this new reality. More importantly, we show how to build the best innovation “pick-up” line that ensures your innovation is attended to and selected. We should make it clear that our focus is on new product communication and not on general brand marketing where the communication goals and execution can be quite different.

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WITH POTENTIAL INNOVATION DATES EVERYWHERE, HOW DO CONSUMERS DECIDE?

The total volume of advertising has increased substantially in the past decades. It is estimated that the average consumer today sees a total of 4,000 to 10,000 ads in a single day compared to just 500 in the 1970s². Part of this increase is due to the growth of digital advertising, which is expected to account for more than half of total US advertising spend in 2021³. Our mental capacity to handle this avalanche of information has not evolved as quickly as technology⁴ and one way we cope is by ignoring most advertising. Using eye-tracking technology, marketers find over half of “viewable” ads displayed are never actually seen by consumers. The average click-through rate of banner ads (0.1%) leads to the same conclusion⁵: most consumers ignore what is literally in front of them.

When consumers do notice an innovation offering, they likely spend little time attending to it. In general, we know online browsing is characterized by quick skimming and scanning.

Facebook users, for example, spend an average of two to three seconds with any piece of mobile/desktop content on the platform⁶. This means that when an innovation communication catches a consumer’s attention, the consumer is likely to decide on his/her interest quickly rather than engaging in a thorough analysis. In behavioral science parlance, consumers engage in System1 thinking: fast, intuitive and effortless.

“Just like the online dating app Tinder, potential innovation dates have only a fraction of a second to attract and persuade.”

With the realization that consumers are seeing a lot more ads today and have shorter attention spans, marketers have adjusted the way they communicate. 15/30 second TV spots are losing popularity whereas brief three to five seconds video ads, banner ads and pop-up ads are increasing. Shorter and quicker ads have also become a necessity because of the limited viewing areas of digital devices, such as smartphones and tablets. What all this means is that we need great pick-up lines for innovations - concise messages that quickly grab attention and persuade! Just like the online dating app Tinder, potential innovation dates have only a fraction of a second to attract and persuade.

SELECTING THE BUILDING BLOCKS FOR YOUR INNOVATION PICK-UP LINE

While most of us would immediately gravitate to the traditional innovation communication blocks (i.e. insights, benefits, claims, reasons to believe, etc), the reality is that in today’s digital world, these traditional building blocks may no longer be feasible. Marketers are increasingly focused on just one or two key marketing elements in their communication. They do so from the realization that a concise message that grabs the consumer’s attention is better than a comprehensive one ignored. The internet abbreviation TLDR (too long, didn’t read) captures this sentiment.

If consumers are making split-second decisions, then marketing elements, such as imagery and provocative text – information that is easy and quick to process – become critical in attracting attention and persuading. More detailed communications, such as long claims or wordy descriptions, are likely to be ignored. Individual marketing elements, like image, product name and short claims, are much more important today than they were in yesterday’s lengthy, but holistic, communication pieces. The reason being that individual marketing elements need to be able to carry the weight of attracting and persuading on their own. Each element must be able to stand on its own.

Ipsos’ work frequently involves having to assess which innovation elements resonate most strongly with consumers. Innovation elements like short claims, descriptors, flavors and visuals can be tested in a behavioral manner by pitting them against one another (i.e., pitting claims against other claims, pitting flavors against other flavors).

For example, we can show survey respondents two elements at a time on a computer/mobile screen and ask respondents to indicate which of the two they prefer (see Figure 1). We call our approach Duel as it is akin to combat between two people. To approximate the short time consumers spend scanning digital content and making decisions, respondents are asked to respond quickly in the Duel exercise.

Respondents tap on the preferred element and the speed of response is captured. Two observable behavioral measures are obtained: the first is choice, and the second is response time. Choice is a direct behavioral measure of preference and response time measures the conviction/passion a consumer may have for a given name, claim or imagery.

An element selected quickly indicates stronger conviction/passion than an innovation element selected slowly. Using the example in Figure 1: if you were asked to decide between the two claims, and you selected “Lower your resting heart rate” very quickly, the quickness of your choice suggests you feel more passionate about the heart rate claim. The goal is to identify which claim/imagery/name is most preferred. In doing so, we start with the most engaging elements and improve our chances of building the best pick-up line. This Tinder-like approach is also engaging for respondents and results in the capture of quality data.

Figure 1 Example of testing short claims by having consumers tap on preference (with speed of response measured)



YOUR INNOVATION'S PICK-UP LINE: A TWEETIFIED CONCEPT

Many, if not all of us, are familiar with Twitter: an online news and social networking site where people communicate in short messages called tweets. Twitter's appeal lies in the ability to scan and read hundreds of tweets quickly. Although Twitter recently increased its character limit from 140 to 280 characters, most tweets are only 33 characters⁷. This attests to consumers' preference for brief communications even when the opportunity to say more is available.

At Ipsos, our philosophy is to replicate real life as much as possible to get real insights. As such, we recommend the testing of "Tweetified" concepts: concepts readable in a few seconds, like you would glance at a tweet. If a concept

communication exceeds that of a tweet, the likelihood of being ignored is high. In general, we recommend concepts no longer than 200 characters. But it's not just the length of communication that is important, we need to ensure that key innovation elements are included in the "Tweetified" concept. Specifically, we recommend the inclusion of an innovation's core proposition (a summary of a product's key benefits) and an image. "Tweetified" concepts contrast with traditional full concepts that include insights, benefits and reasons to believe, and that can take up to half a minute to read (see *Figure 2* for an example of how a full concept is transformed into a "Tweetified" concept).



Figure 2 Example of full concept transformed into a “Tweetified” concept

Introducing New Dilly’s All Natural Ice Cream with Calcium

Now you can get 50% of the recommended dietary allowance of calcium in a deliciously creamy ice cream.

Getting your family to consume enough calcium can be a challenge. Calcium is critical for strong, healthy bones, but it can be difficult to get enough in your diet.

Now you can give your family a delicious taste experience and build strong bones at the same time.

Dilly’s All Natural Ice Cream is rich and creamy, and it provides 50% of the recommended dietary allowance of calcium to promote bone health.

That’s because with Dilly’s All Natural Ice Cream with Calcium, you can feel good about providing a treat to your family that helps them get the essential calcium they need.

Dilly’s Ice Cream is available for \$5.99 a gallon in five great tasting flavors:

- **Classic Vanilla**
- **Fudge Brownie**
- **Cookie Dough**
- **Coffee Chip**
- **Strawberry Mango**



“Tweetified” concepts provide just the right amount of information to fit into digital devices and are in sync with how consumers view media today. We are also seeing more innovations launched with limited marketing support or with only digital support. With “Tweetified” concepts, marketers avoid situations where they test full concepts, but the final launch is not supported by advertising. Another benefit of using “Tweetified” concepts is that it quickens the innovation cycle as less time is spent developing full concepts.

Most importantly, our research shows that “Tweetified” and full concepts perform similarly on metrics that predict an innovation’s success (see results in *Figure 3*). We tested “Tweetified” concepts that were concise summaries of full concepts. The Tweetified concepts included the core proposition and an image with everything else stripped out (e.g. insights, reasons to believe, secondary benefits).

Figure 3 example of full concept transformed into a “Tweetified” concept

	Client 1				Client 2				Client 3			
	Concept A		Concept B		Concept A		Concept B		Concept A		Concept B	
	Tweet	Full	Tweet	Full	Tweet	Full	Tweet	Full	Tweet	Full	Tweet	Full
Relevance	H	H	H	H	ML	M	M	M	M	M	M	M
Differentiation	MH	MH	MH	MH	H	H	H	H	ML	M	M	M
Expensiveness	ML	ML	ML	ML	ML	ML	ML	ML	L	L	L	L

(Key to abbreviations: H = High, MH = Medium High, M = Medium, ML = Medium Low, L = Low)

We also found no relationship between length of concept and concept performance on our KPIs when we analyzed our global concept database. The comparison of full and “Tweetified” concepts, and our analysis of our concept database leads us to conclude that a concept’s length of content bears no relationship to its performance.

Some may argue that if “Tweetified” and full concepts produce similar results, then why not just test full concepts in research?

The answer is simple: why spend time and energy developing and testing long concepts that consumers will not read?

Once a “Tweetified” concept has been created, the potential of an innovation is assessed by having consumers evaluate the innovation relative to their existing solution(s). The adoption of an innovation is essentially a choice between the innovation and one’s existing solution.⁸ This is how it is done in our new InnoTest methodology.

“The adoption of an innovation is essentially a choice between the innovation and one’s existing solution.”



SUCCEEDING AT INNOVATION SPEED DATING

In today's world of distractions where consumers are using quick mental shortcuts to decide whether they are interested or not in an innovation, first impressions are critical and the way we design research and stimuli needs to reflect consumers' mental processes and market realities. We need

to determine the core innovation elements that will grab consumers attention, enable us to build a solid pick-up line and court consumers quickly. That's how you will get your innovation to be a consumer's next date.

“We need to determine the core innovation elements that will grab consumers attention, enable us to build a solid pick-up-line and court consumers quickly.”

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