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60 Second Soapbox – Thom Noble

Thom Noble, European Managing Director of neuromarketing agency NeuroFocus Europe, is shocked at how little research has evolved in 50 years.



The product I'm excited about at the moment is...

The impending new generation of 3D movies. I have a deep fascination from early childhood with 3D, and have been an avid fan of advances in entertainment and movie technology, from the intro of CinemaScope to 360-degree and then IMAX formats. While there have been a number of fairly crumbly 3D horror films in the past, and several prominent children's films in 3D lately, the big breakthrough will undoubtedly be James Cameron's *Avatar*, out this Christmas. Can't wait for the release - reportedly the closest thing to dreaming whilst awake.

A client I'd like to get my hands on is...

Another project from one of the big financial services groups would most definitely hit the spot. A recent project in this area underscored for me the tremendous task confronting the battered industry in attempting to turn around consumer perceptions and re-build the goodwill haemorrhaged over the past months.

An idea I wish I'd had is...

Directional isolated sound: the technology that enables sound to be totally isolated and focused into a specific space, even within a crowded venue. Advances here seem to me to have all kinds of fascinating applications: imagine driving with a car full of passengers, each enjoying their own music - but with no wires, no ear pieces, just directional sonic cones in the roof.

A campaign that recently grabbed me is...

I struggle increasingly to find campaigns that really, truly inspire. I subscribe to the view that UK marketing campaigns have lost their world-beating creative lustre. Sadly mediocrity is winning the day.

A campaign that needed more research is...

It's not the need for more research, but the need for better research. It's quite frightening just how little research has moved on in 50 years. And the better informed marketers are still complaining that much of what they invest in is not adequately meaningful, actionable nor effective.

One thing this industry could use more of is...

Real innovation, not endless, hackneyed, derivative re-workings of tired, worn-out formulae. Let's liberate creativity. Be bolder, confident and courageous.

One thing this industry could use less of is...

Over-reliance on traditional paradigms, processes, norms and benchmarks drawn from questionable testing methodologies that stifle inspiring ideas and creativity.

In five years time we'll all be talking about...

Neural templates, neural signatures, neuro-emotional circuitry. In short, neural-everything. The extraordinary level of investments into neuroscience guarantee ever-improved understanding of how the brain works. Application of neurometrics to market research may still be in its early days, and its adoption led by the more progressive and innovative global businesses, but within five years the question in boardrooms across the globe will be 'why aren't we using it?' rather than 'why should we?'