

OUT OF SYNC, OUT OF SALES? NEUROFOCUS REVEALS RISKS FOR ADVERTISERS WHOSE COMMERCIALS BOTHER THE BRAIN

World's Leading Neuromarketing Company Cites Negative Effects On Consumers' Subconscious When 'Audio Visual Synchrony' Is Missing

For Immediate Release

Contact: Tom Robbins
tom.robbins@neurofocus.com
510-526-9882

BERKELEY, Calif. – October 26, 2009 –They are on the airwaves often. And every time they are, TV viewers' brains are silently but strongly protesting.

Advertisers, beware the risks you run when audio-visual synchrony is absent from your spots.

So says NeuroFocus (www.NeuroFocus.com), the world's leading neuromarketing company and as such, experts in how consumers respond at the deep subconscious level of the mind to stimuli like advertising. Prompted by a spate of animated spots in which the voice track is out of synchronization with the mouth movements of characters on screen, the company advises advertisers about the hazards involved.

"Your brain is 'wired' to expect synchronicity between what you see and what you hear," said Dr. A.K Pradeep, founder and CEO of NeuroFocus. "When there is a disconnect between those two modalities, the brain generates what neuroscientists call a 'mismatch negativity,' a signal which indicates that the brain has to devote additional resources to try to resolve the discrepancy. It reflects distraction from the content and can lead to an overall drop in the effectiveness of the message that an advertiser is attempting to communicate. The brain essentially rebels against what is fundamentally abnormal and discordant to it—and your sales message gets caught in the crossfire."

Advertisers in the automotive, insurance, and lodging fields, among others, have run campaigns that feature animated characters who speak at considerable length on screen. NeuroFocus warns that despite how much consumers may say they like the advertising in surveys and focus groups, their brainwaves may tell a different story.

"We encounter this gap constantly," Dr. Pradeep said.

"Neuroscience research shows that when you ask someone about how they felt or what they thought or what they remember about something, in the process of replying their brain actually changes the original information it recorded. In contrast, when you measure at the subconscious, precognitive level of the brain, you're accessing the original information immediately following its reception, before it can be distorted by all the factors that can influence articulated responses, from cultural and language differences to education levels and many more."

To codify the impact that aural visual synchrony can have, Dr. Robert T. Knight, one of the world's top-ranked neuroscientists, Director of the Helen Wills Neuroscience Institute at the University of California, Berkeley and Chief Science Advisor to NeuroFocus, states it this way:

"If the auditory component in a commercial is X, and the visual component is X, when you don't have synchrony between the two the best result you can get is basically 2X. When you do have synchrony though, you get a 'multiplier' effect—you achieve 3X or more. This is what we describe as the power of sensory integration, and we see both effects in many of the brain measurement studies we've done over the years."

Neuroscience research has shown that, contrary to previous beliefs, the auditory cortex and the visual cortex in the brain interact early in the perceptual process, and one can prime the other. Recent scientific papers have revealed that such integration occurs in the brain before even 200 milliseconds have elapsed, and that the more precise the synchrony, the faster that sensory integration can occur.

"This 'crossover' effect can actually enhance your perceptual experience, because it can prompt your brain to anticipate what you're about to hear based upon what you're seeing, and vice versa," said Dr. Michael Smith, a neuroscientist on NeuroFocus' staff noted for his pioneering work in the field. "The brain does have a preference, however; we believe more in what we see than in what we hear. We synthesize these two streams of stimuli to render the world consistent with our experiences and expectations. So when audio visual synchrony is 'off', the brain has to work harder to reconcile the conflict."

Dr. Smith added another cautionary note: one for marketers who embark on neuromarketing research using inadequate technologies and methodologies.

"Both the auditory and the visual cortexes are located in lateral and posterior regions of the brain," Dr. Smith explained. "Unless you measure those areas with electrodes positioned to capture information generated in them, you will be missing this vital data. Plus, the brain is a vastly complex series of neural networks. Simple, severely limited arrays of sensors that measure only at the forehead are incapable of capturing the massive flows

of brainwave activity that occur between critical regions of the brain, and are incapable of detecting the synergistic effects of multisensory integration."

NeuroFocus points out that the potential negative effect on viewers' subconscious when audio visual synchrony is poor may be aggravated as the quality of home entertainment systems continues to improve.

"As gratifying as high definition TV's and digital surround sound systems are, they also pose a greater risk for advertisers who don't heed what neuroscience advises about synchrony," said Dr. Pradeep. "Consumers' enhanced abilities to see and hear more accurately than ever before means that marketing messages must be as coherent and consistent as possible with what the deep subconscious mind wants and expects to receive."

About NeuroFocus

[NeuroFocus Inc.](#) is the leader in bringing neuroscience knowledge and expertise to the worlds of advertising, marketing, product development and packaging, and entertainment. The company leverages Doctorate-level academic credentials in neuroscience and marketing from UC Berkeley, MIT, Harvard, and the Hebrew University combined with C-suite level business management and consulting experience.

NeuroFocus clients include Fortune 100 companies across dozens of categories, including automotive, consumer packaged goods, food and beverage, financial services, Internet, retail, and many more sectors. Entertainment category clients include major companies in the broadcast and cable television and motion picture industries. The Nielsen Company is a strategic investor in NeuroFocus.

#