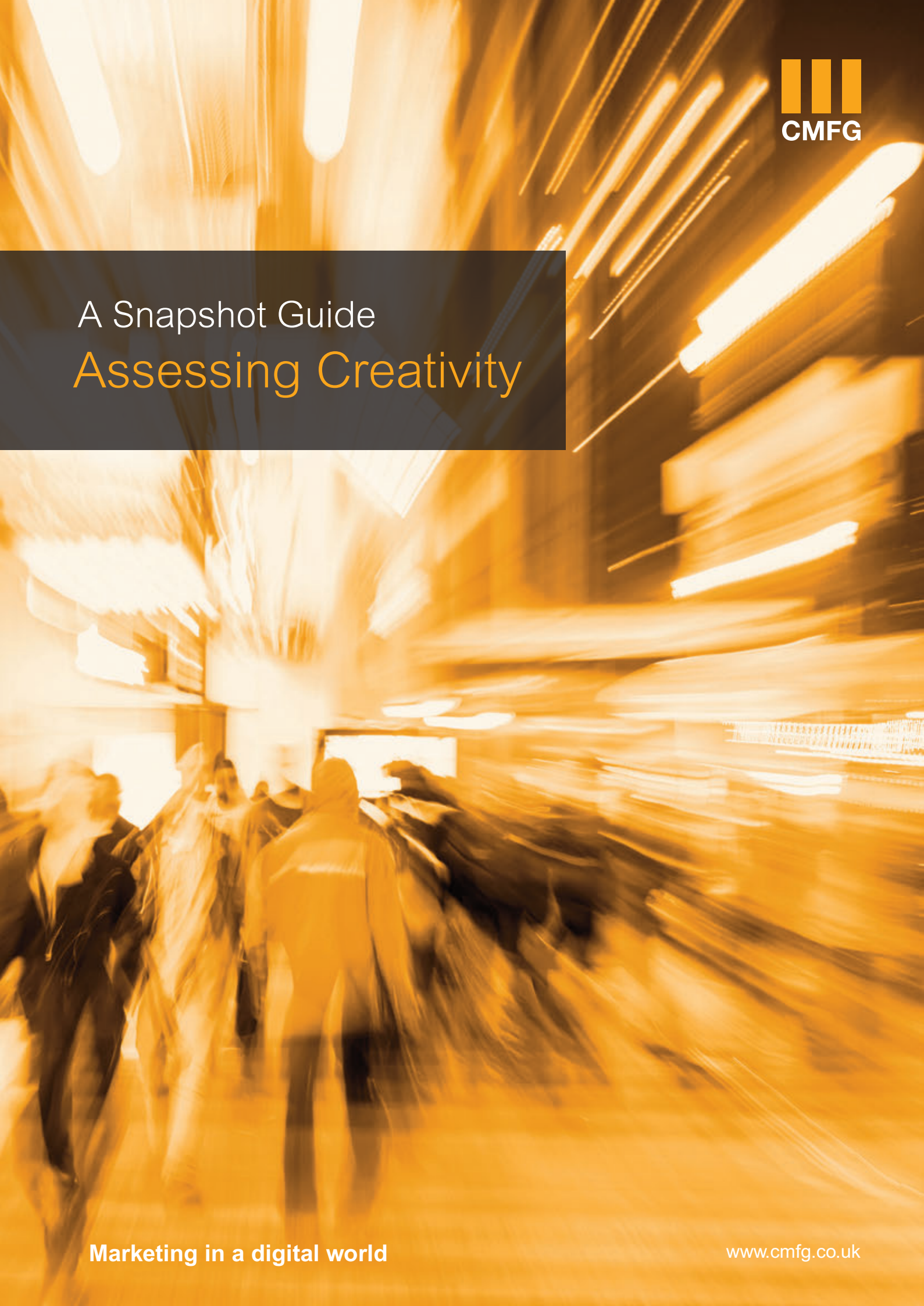

A Snapshot Guide

Assessing Creativity

Marketing in a digital world

www.cmfg.co.uk

CMFG -
Marketing that sells

CMFG is a b2b marketing agency; a team of creatives, planners, techies, writers and project managers that help create and deliver standout campaigns. We help clients sell!

If you are looking for a marketing agency that understands business to business sales and can help you achieve your targets, get in touch with us now.

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creativity

for b2b marketing

Is creativity important for b2b? Some believe customers in the b2b sector employ an entirely rational and logical decision-making process. The evidence shows they are wrong, creativity and emotions are critical. The author Dan Hill describes the myth of rational decision making as merely “an intellectual alibi”.

Creativity plays the same role in b2b as it does in b2c. Great creative work stands out and gets you noticed. It makes your campaigns more effective, and it makes your budgets work harder. If you cannot significantly outspend your competitors, you need to be creative in your ideas to get noticed.

The ability to brief, assess and recognise effective creative is a major skill.

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Fast brain - slow brain

The world is too busy and too complex for our brains to process even a fraction of the information it encounters. This phenomenon was examined by the Nobel Prize winning psychologist Daniel Kahneman in his best-selling book ‘Thinking, fast & slow’.

The solution is for our brains to develop two separate systems to process information; a super-fast unconscious system and a much slower conscious system. Almost all our communication is processed by the super-fast system first.

That means most marketing messages are processed in seconds (if at all) and a conclusion reached without our audience even consciously thinking about them. The buyer is a long way through the buying process before they even consider employing slower, more rational thought to what we are saying. And then only if we have already caught their attention.

Briefing for great creative

Great creative ideas start with a great brief. Your brief will take considerable time and effort to get right but it is an investment that will pay dividends in the long term.

The key to a good brief is focus; what is it you need to achieve? What is it about your product or service that really makes the difference for customers? Long briefs with pages of ‘copy and paste’ facts won’t be as effective as short, considered briefs where time has been spent to deliver real insight.

The more insight you can share with your agency, the better chance they have of delivering the great creative solution you need.

1

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Creative elements of the brief

1. **Background** – What are we talking about: Product? Service? Package? Corporate? What has been done previously that worked or didn’t work?
2. **Purpose of the brief** – Major integrated campaign? Lead generation campaign? Standalone event?
3. **Proposition / insight** – What is it about the product or service that will excite prospects and customers? Why will it make a difference to them? What problem does it solve?
4. **Objective of the creative** – What is it you need customers or prospects to Think? Feel? Do?
5. **Business objectives** – SMART targets linked to activity
6. **Who are we talking to?** – Who are the audiences? Demographics, job titles, market sectors but also type of individuals dynamics or organisations etc
7. **Channels and Media** – what media, channels or events does the creative have to work across?

Assessing creative ideas

Assessing creative ideas is a difficult task to get right. Essentially you are trying to second guess the reaction of your customers and prospects.

The problem starts because you know too much! You know all the internal stakeholders involved, you know the product inside out. You know the challenging sales targets that need to be achieved. You are very aware of your boss's views and the Sales Director's opinion on what the communication should say.

To effectively assess creative, all that needs to be put to one side. You need to focus on thinking like your customers. How will the creative resonate with them? Achieve that, and you will make the right decisions.

2

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Be clear about what you are assessing

If your brief asked for a big campaign idea that can work across multiple channels, don't be too influenced by how great the presentation graphics look. However if your brief asked for a new look for your literature, then the graphics are all important. By having a very clear focus on where the creative priority is, you will make correct decisions.

Walk in your customers shoes

Try and remove yourself from the equation. If you start your assessment with "what will my boss like?" you might be setting off on the wrong track. Visualise yourself in your customers work environment and ask yourself "is it simple enough to get their attention? "Does it answer their needs?".

Refer back to your brief

Subjective responses along the lines of 'I don't like it' aren't as useful as responses that link back to your brief. An approach that states "I don't believe creative option two communicates the product insight highlighted in the brief" is more objective and provides more effective feedback to your team and the agency.

Questions to ask about creative

What tools can you use to judge creative? Some organisations use a scorecard approach which should provide a consistent approach. The drawback is that the creative option that scores highest can be the one that does ‘OK’ over many criteria, while the creative route that might be most effective is the one that only scores very highly for the criteria that matters most.

Don’t completely disregard your gut feel! If you and your team were wowed by some creative, there is every chance your customers will be as well.

Opposite are some key questions you should ask yourself of any creative. By using these questions as a checklist you will be able to arrive at a more objective decision.

3

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Attention
- Does it grab attention?
- Does it stand out from the crowd?

Message
- Is it the right message, for the right audience?
- Does it answer the need you briefed?
- Does the message resonate with you emotionally as well as rationally?

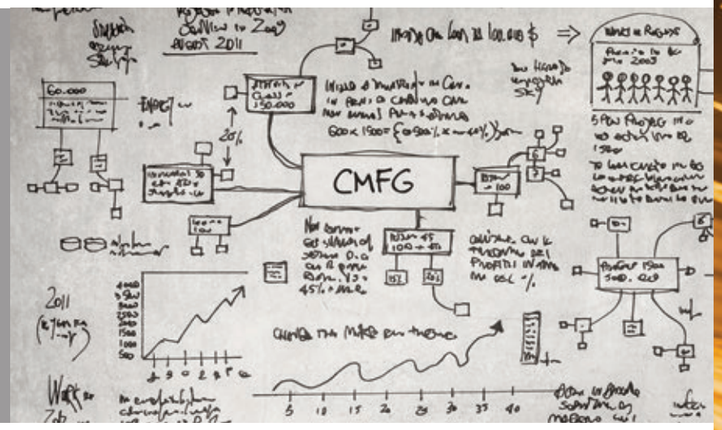
Creative

Campaignable
- Is it flexible enough to work across multiple iterations?
- Does it work after repeated viewing?
- Will it work across all channels?

Clarity
- Is it clear and simple?
- Do you get the idea instantly?

Brand
- Does it feel on brand?
- Is it a route only your brand could own?

Tips when developing creative



How can you develop an effective creative process in your organisation?

The best way is to ensure the importance of creativity is recognised across the business, and your marketing team, and agencies are supported in delivering standout creative.

The best creative comes from agencies that are managed as partners with an open relationship where ideas can be openly discussed and tested without fear of failure. If creative is thought of as a commodity and bought on price, the quality will disappear.

4

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Do

- Use creativity to make your campaigns work harder for you
- Approach creativity as a valuable, collaborative process with your agency
- Use the creative brief as the starting point and check for your creative journey
- Focus on the positive aspect of ideas, anyone of them could hold the spark you're looking for

Don't

- Change and design creative work by committee
- Forget that your customer must want to see or read your communication
- Value senior people's opinion over junior people's. But do value experience!
- Focus on your product or company, focus on your customer

Choosing the right creative

Your Financial Director should be a huge fan of your great creative. It will deliver better results, help sell more and cost the business less. Hopefully, this snapshot guide has given you the vision and tools you need to approach briefing and selecting great creative work with confidence.

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