

Surprise them but don't lie to them, Langwost warns

RALF Langwost, founder of the German research company IdeaManagement, has spent more time than most trying to understand the nature of great ideas.

"We always pose three questions," he said. "How do you prove an idea works? How do you understand its structure? And how can you use that knowledge to support and accelerate the creative process? We have found that ideas have to be right in what they say, but be surprising in how they say it."

IdeaManagement's research, which has centred on 1,417 spots produced between 1996 and 2006, provides an insight into the nature of great ideas and why they are effective. "For example, the Adidas spot featuring Mohammed Ali fighting his daughter, which was part of the Impossible Is Nothing campaign, was downloaded five million times in a matter of weeks by people who we're constantly being told try to avoid advertis-



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ing," he said. "We have found that creative effectiveness comes from an unexpected combination of factors that are uniquely connected with a product or brand."

But for creatives tempted to bend the truth, Langwost warned: "Truth is a huge factor in that it anchors the idea by offering insight. Even if that insight is negative — as with the Marmite adverts that recognise Marmite's a product that people either love or hate — it still works in favour of the product." ■