

# AFFINITY @SCALE

Making an impact  
in a personalized  
context

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Ogilvy



# Affinity@Scale is Affinity For People

**If you've been around marketing for the last half decade,** you know about personalization at scale. In some ways, it's been thought of as the Holy Grail. And it makes sense. We live in an Amazon-ified world, one where we expect the digital platforms that we use all and every day to cut-and-paste everything for us, just as we'd like it.

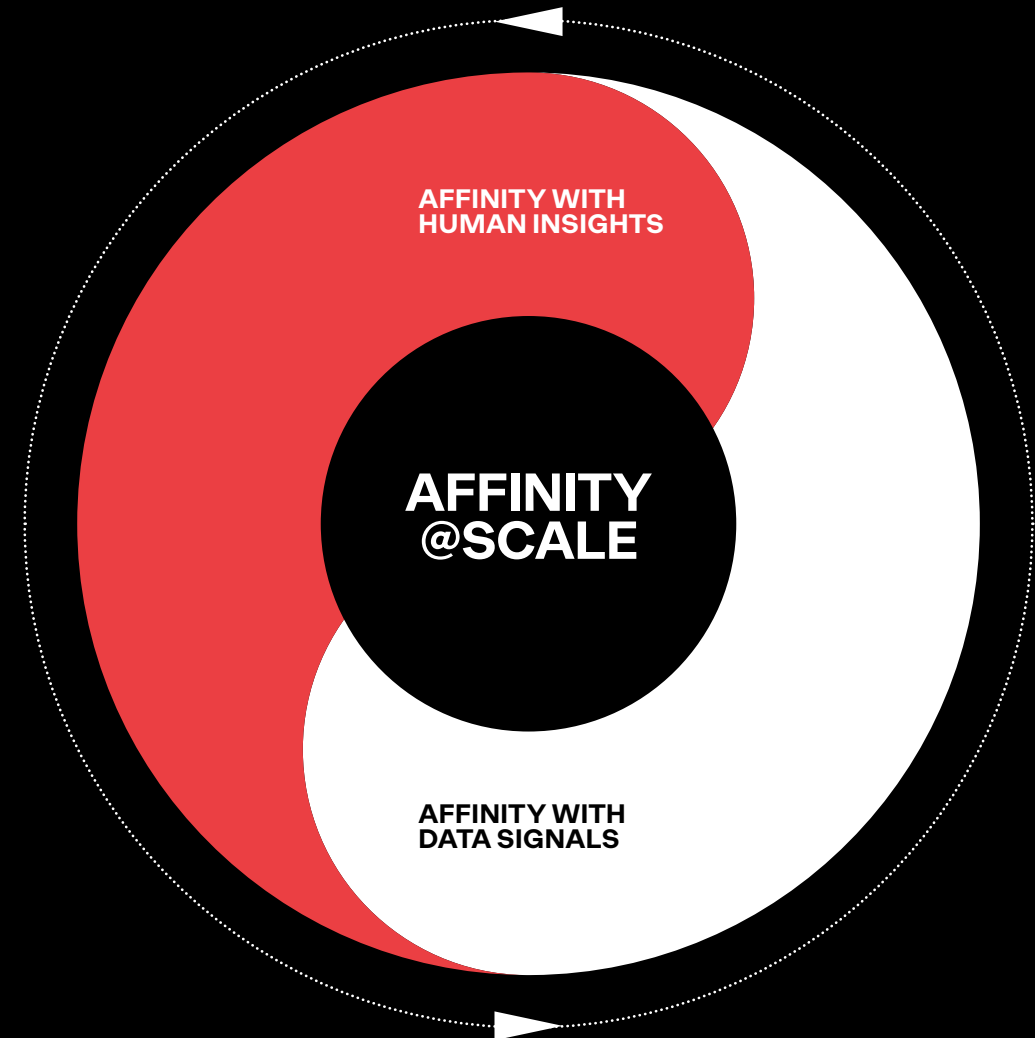
At the same time, like the villain in Indiana Jones: The Last Crusade, we may have chosen the wrong chalice.

Wired, the Bible of the tech world, recently offered a strong dissenting opinion, opining that AdTech might just be the next bubble. Why? It turns out that microtargeting is far less accurate and far less effective at persuading consumers as made out to be. Personalization has been the de-facto foundation of digital advertising, but cracks have started to become visible.

What's gone wrong? Why has personalization—and, at large, the promise of digital advertising—failed to truly deliver yet?

It's time to take it personally. For brands and marketers who manage to deliver true, effective personalization, the opportunity is there.

"We spend a tremendous amount of time worrying about media targeting, but not nearly enough to think about how we personalize creative messaging," said WPP CEO Mark Read, hitting the nail on the head. A constant battle, almost as old as the art of advertising itself, the media has far too often won out over the message. Brands haven't spent enough time to understand what kind of message is needed to spark a reaction in the consumer. We overfocused on the media side of the equation, and we left creativity behind.



This mishap is the result of confusion around precision and accuracy. When throwing a football or taking a penalty kick, these things might be the same, but they're quite different in marketing. Precision, as driven by the ability of modern technological platforms, is good at eliminating waste. It ensures that you're reaching the right people. Accuracy, as driven by curating creative excellence, adds value by delivering the right message. Without combining the two, messages are either reaching a lot of people who don't care, or reaching a few of the right people without something interesting to say to them. Only a fusion of precision and accuracy can lead to brand and business growth in today's world.

What does a symbiosis between these two ideals look like? Ideas that live at the intersection of creativity and technology. Ideas that use data signals to personalize messaging but in a creative and highly-empathetic way. Ideas that make an impact by earning's people's attention in a personalized context.

Advertising has long been a battle between art and science, and we can look back to the Gods of creative advertising for some advice and understanding. This isn't about a back to basics approach, but the basics can lead us to a more fruitful future. David Ogilvy's famous "Guinness Guide to Oysters" ads and Bill Bernbach's "Levy's Real Jewish Rye" were early examples

of personalization in advertising. Both Ogilvy and Bernbach understood that in order to make their ideas more relevant to more people, they had to talk on a personal level to different types of people. Both created an idea and built permutations of that idea, which talked to people individually based on certain characteristics, beliefs, and behaviors. What Ogilvy and Bernbach didn't have access to was the technology that we have now, which allows us to reach great numbers of people in a personalized way.

**Affinity@Scale is the ability to combine creativity and technology to scale ideas that make an impact by earning people's attention in a personalized context.**

Adtech's obsession with this pursuit of simplistic relevance isn't enough. It's what's gotten us to where we are now. Personalization that serves tech platforms lacks affinity—it turns brands into bland. We need a new kind of personalization, an evolution of personalization at scale that combines the crucial data signals but with human insight, which showcases the affinity of brands for people.

We need to move from Personalization at Scale to Affinity@Scale.

So what's the difference between Personalization at Scale and Affinity@Scale? Personalization at Scale can be defined as the ability to use technology to scale messages to people at heroic volume. Affinity@Scale is the ability to combine creativity and technology to scale ideas that make an impact by earning people's attention in a personalized context.

At its beginnings, marketing was synonymous with mass communication, and the intent to communicate a message or idea to the most people possible. It required ideas that were big, with broad messages that could be relevant to all. Media then was used as a megaphone, a means to amplify each of the ideas. When the technology evolved, the jump was made to personalization at scale, and the intent shifted to conversion. The ideas became fragmented, a result of the need to address clusters of people based on certain characteristics. This resulted in too much lower common denominator messaging, intended to bring subsets of consumers together. The resulting messages were relevant in those clusters of people, but too often lacked any relevance to an overarching human truth. Media was the conveyor belt, simply canning these ideas at great speed and accuracy to bring the message to the people. The conclusion was millions of fragmented yet tactical interactions, rarely resulting in any lasting impact because of atrophy of the idea. And worse yet, the brand would get lost in the shuffle.

The promise of Affinity@Scale and the thinking that undergirds it is the creation of real human connections between people and brands through a fusion of the creativity and technology. Affinity@Scale is built on ideas that are based on the beliefs and behaviors identified by the digital breadcrumbs that consumers leave behind as they live their lives online, and properly targeted to those people in the right context. It results in messages that are empathetic, and delivered in partnership with media, not using media solely as an external delivery mechanism.

## Cases

# Affinity@Scale in action

**Affinity@Scale is Ogilvy's answer to the next era of personalization,** a combination of human insights and data signals in the pursuit of understanding how a brand can show affinity to people and lead into action through the many lenses of a brand's idea. Ideas built from thinking infused by Affinity@Scale can throw a spotlight on a business and win the attention of many, as well as each person individually, and initiate the kind of action that turns consideration to conversion.

Affinity@Scale relies on the technology that allows brands to have access to online consumer behavior. Even in the coming cookie-less future, consumers will still leave behind digital breadcrumbs. These breadcrumbs can lead to a deeper understanding of consumers' beliefs and behaviors. The key to Affinity@Scale is that

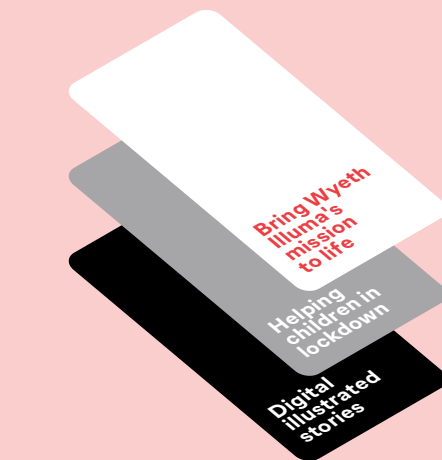
it creates permutations of the brand idea which are informed by these beliefs and behaviors, and allows brands to go beyond personalization to something more meaningful, something which creates a lasting impact. What follows are examples of Affinity@Scale thinking in real-world brand campaigns.



Case

## WYETH ILLUMA Voice Doodler

How to engage with consumers  
meaningfully in times of crisis?



### Results

5x the average engagement time on WeChat  
Sales increased 11% with retail partners

(China)

### Challenge

In 2020, millions of kids were stuck at home due to COVID-19, stunting a critical period in the development of cognitive and social skills for children aged 0-7. Infant nutrition brand Wyeth Illuma sought to deliver on its brand purpose during this difficult time, and support consumers in a meaningful way.

### Idea

While weeks of isolation injected a sense of togetherness in communities and considerably strengthened family bonds, it also left people hungry for new experiences and activities to be enjoyed from the comfort of their homes. To demonstrate its enduring commitment to early phase childhood development, Wyeth Illuma set out to deliver tangible value to both parents and children affected by lockdowns through an interactive experience that allowed them to create multi-page, multi-dimensional storybooks in real time. The Voice Doodler was born.



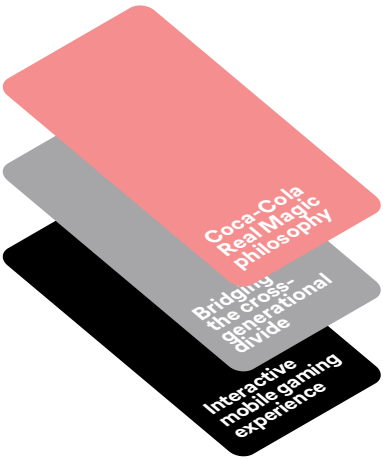
### Affinity@Scale applied

The Voice Doodler shows how Affinity@Scale merges creativity and technology with empathy to create impact for both people and the brand. The team developed a voice-activated platform that uses speech recognition and machine learning, tapping into an infinite database of tagged kid-friendly illustrations to instantly turn a story into vivid sketches. Available in Chinese and English, it helped develop kids' pronunciation and language skills, enabling a new and highly personalized way of storytelling.



Case

# COCA-COLA Real Magic Chinese New Year



How to connect with consumers and stand out during the biggest holiday of the year?

Results

The interactive game generated 5.7M views, attracting over 285,000 active participants

(China)

Challenge

Across China, families spend the whole year counting the days until Chinese New Year, only to finally gather around their dinner table and find out that have little in common to talk about or do together. Under its new global Real Magic brand platform, Coca-Cola sought to bridge the generational divide and celebrate togetherness, a value deeply embedded in its brand philosophy.

Idea

The brand turned its iconic product into a portal for connection and shared memories, bringing families together through an immersive mobile experience taking families on an adventure where young and old could play the same game using a single phone, engaging in real-life through group motion interactions. Through vocal cues, blinking or coordinated head gestures, players could control the movements characters in the game and earn electronic reward points that were automatically recorded into the brand's consumer CRM platform.



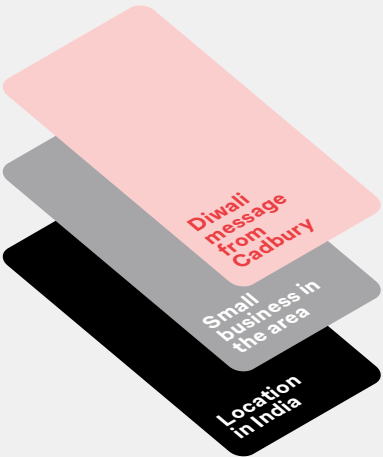
Affinity@Scale applied

Through this WeChat-embedded mobile game, Coca-Cola touched millions of consumers across Asia, enabling families to rediscover the magic of the holidays through an innovative experience at the intersection of culture and technology. The campaign was further amplified with the launch of a limited-edition NFT art piece specially designed for the Year of the Tiger, offered to consumers through lucky draws as limited-edition artwork, helping the brand stand out in a sea of Chinese New Year campaigns and resonate with China's digital-savvy cohort.



Case

# Cadbury Celebrations —Not Just a Cadbury Ad



How to communicate your brand purpose in a personalised way?

## Results

The Affinity@Scale campaign performance overtook Google’s category benchmarks by 40%. It led to a 6% improvement in consideration, and 32% jump in sales as well as 26% increase of average stock per store.



(India)

## Challenge

Adjusting ads to make them more relevant for local markets is a long-standing marketing strategy. But to improve meaningfulness of the brand, Cadbury wanted to take this approach to an entirely new level with its campaign “Not Just a Cadbury Ad”.

## Idea

Local small businesses were among the hardest hit during the pandemic, as lockdowns put them in a fight for survival. Cadbury stands for Generosity, and during the Indian festival Diwali, the brand decided that it wanted to help these struggling small businesses. Adding to the campaign complexity was the fact that the far majority of these businesses have no digital presence. So The brand come up with an innovative solution - what if a Cadbury ad could also double as an ad for a small business? And even bigger than that, what if a Cadbury ad could double as an ad for thousands of small businesses?

## Affinity@Scale applied

Cadbury manually created a database of local small businesses, mapping them out across 260 locations. Then, the brand created four separate digital ads, each one telling the story of generosity and gift-giving around Diwali. Using Dynamic Creative Optimization, the ads were then personalized for the user based on their location. This mean that when someone saw the ad—which at first looked like a regular, mass-audience Cadbury ad—they also saw the name of a small business close to their location which they could shop at to buy similar items to the ones shown in each ad. The AI-enabled system created thousands of permutations, resulting in an emotional, relevant experience for the consumer in a highly personalized context.



Mumbai

## Conclusion

# Personal yet empathetic

### **Affinity@Scale differs from Personalization at Scale**

because it seeks a more natural balance between data affinity and people affinity. This is a congruent process, one with the aim of ending up with the strongest possible combination of affinity and scale. Many great advertising ideas are born from an individual's own idea, and while that remains the case, Affinity@Scale requires a highly-collaborative environment. Creative, content, and context strategy must all be in lockstep.

Just as Personalization at Scale isn't for every marketing campaign, Affinity@Scale is not for every marketing campaign either. But Affinity@Scale thinking can almost always be applied, and if done so correctly, a brand will find itself with an opportunity to reach millions and make an impact with every individual interaction and connection.

Perhaps the most difficult part of achieving Affinity@Scale is that it relies on a humane understanding of people. Data and technology are crucial to helping us get there, but true Affinity@Scale is achieved when marketers

remember that people are not personas, that they were not static beings. People are beautifully unpredictable, navigating mental shortcuts, influenced by rapidly-changing emotions and often times at the mercy of a increasingly-stressful world around them. Instead of thinking in terms of rigid consumer definitions, think dynamically. Data signals should be thought of as breadcrumbs, clues that consumers leave so that we can follow them not for the sake of following them, but so that we can make an impact on them. And to do that, we need to approach

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