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# Visual techniques

### Collage or image representation

Ask participants to prepare a collage (either during the session or as a pre-task) or select imagery to support how they feel or images that represent things like:

* how the brand would represent itself to its friends - clothes, moods, activities, goals etc
* how the brand makes them feel
* the one visual that most represents the brand
* the brand's sense of humour (use pics of different humourous films / TV shows)
* the type of occasion / place etc where the brand would be consumed / most likely to be consumed
* what leisure activities the brand would enjoy
* a wider theme related to the category, for example if the category is health and wellness, you might ask them to select images to represent how they find keeping healthy; if it’s a financial service, you might ask them to show how they feel about savings

And then ask participants to explain their picture selections (which takes time!).

If doing it as a pre-task make sure to give instructions not to be too literal (e.g. if you’re talking about savings, you don’t want imagery of piggy banks).

Imagery can come from:

* Magazines
* Visuals that you’ve prepared in advance; a selection of scrap art visuals or visual cards
* If a pre-task they can use anything from magazines to google images

A note on using visuals that you’ve prepared in advance is that you’ll want them pre-approved by the client in order to avoid them thinking the exercise would have worked better with better/different images.

### Archetypes

Show participants images of the 12 Archetypes as developed by Jung, as they are instantly recognisable for their character and personality traits. This can be done as an individual exercise to eliminate group bias or as a group exercise to observe how they reach acquiesence, but discuss why they have chosen the archetype they have chosen anyway.

# Personification techniques

### Personification

Ask participants to personify a brand and describe them as a person. Explore what type of person they are, what they do for work and in their spare time, who they hang out with, the clothes they wear, their values, their leisure activities, etc.

### Brand party

Task the group with creating a party hosted by a brand. They’ll need to consider: the vibe at the party, the location, the music that’s playing, the people who are there, the clothes they’re wearing, the food that’s served (if anything), what other drinks are served, what happens after the party (e.g. they go home, it goes all-night, etc) and what party attendees do in the morning (e.g. get up early and go for a run, go for a recovery brunch with friends…) This works particularly well for categories like alcohol as the party scene is easy to imagine, but it also works well for other categories, sometimes with a bit of coaxing, especially for older participants.

### Footballer

Imagine the brand came to life as a football player, who would it be and why’; what kind of game would it play (aggressive/calculated/unpredictable etc.), what team it would play for, what kind of WAG etc. etc. Works particularly well with younger audiences and younger men.

### Celebrity friends

If the brand was to bring a celebrity friend to a party, who would it be and why?

# Games

### Guess the logo

This exercise involves guessing the brand name from the logo. There is some insight in it in the sense of the ubiquity of the logo and its key iconography as well as the memories it spontaneously triggers but the primary goal with this is to get them warmed up to the idea of talking about brands. It can act as a springboard to discuss the brands further, as the logos act as stimuli that triggers thoughts that they have about these brands. Things they see in the logo spark off thoughts about their experiences around these brands that they then narrate to us.

### Guess the brand

Disguise the product (e.g. dress the beers) and let participants guess who’s who, describe the taste plus all the other extrinsic things you need to know.

### Snog, marry, avoid

Have a pile of different brands (or products) and ask the group to divide them into three piles: snog, marry, avoid. This game works particularly well with younger participants, but older ones will also get into it. Once they’ve created the pile, ask them to explain why they’ve put the brands in each pile.

### Dragon’s Den

You could play some Dragon's Den style games, by asking participants to choose  
from different spaces/territories and prepare a pitch. In larger groups, this works well as a breakaway exercise, but can also be done by everyone in the group in a smaller group but you’ll need to make sure everyone is contributing. If there’s time, you could even split them into pairs and then they present their pitch to the rest of the group who acts as the Dragon’s Den.

‘Spaces’ that they could be pitching for include:

* Brand stretch ideas
* New territories or positioning
* New occasions that the brand isn’t known for
* Brand archetypes that the brand isn’t associated with (e.g. if they’re the Jester, what would it look like for them to become the Caregiver?)

And then discuss how natural it feels, whether it’s an OK move to make and why.

# Story-telling

### Love letters

Ask participants to write a love letter to the brand discussing their relationship with the brand and how it has evolved – where has it come from, how is the relationship at present and what does the future look like. These sometimes come out as break-up letters. Obituaries work in the same way. These are best done as a pre-task and if there’s time, it’s ideal to discuss them individually to understand why they’ve written what they’ve written.

### Alien landing

Imagine an alien came to earth and you had to explain the brand to them. How would you explain what it was, who it would appeal to, who it wouldn't appeal to etc. This can be done both as a pre-task and as a group task.

### 2 Stories

Imagine you come across 2 short articles by journalists: One is filled with praise, the other is more negative. Write the articles talking about the brand and explaining what makes them feel so positive or negative. This could potentially work for a line extension.

### Tell a story

Ask them to tell a story about a time they had to do something, for example organizing a party or event for a variety of people where they had to buy a range of drinks/alcohol, food etc. What was the event, what did they buy, how did they decide what to buy, where did they buy it, did they speak to anyone for advice, etc.

### Tell a story from an image

Show them an image and ask them to create a back-story to it. For example you could use cartoons or images of people shopping in the aisle and explore what are they saying to each other, how are they choosing their brand/product, how are they feeling. You can vary the image to show younger people talking to each other, or to older age groups etc, so that you get a read in different social situations. Try to make the image as ambiguous possible and then probe on specific aspects of the image.

# Others

### Modified word association

A modified word association technique asks participants to distribute a number of cards holding different words/images (qualities, emotions and neutral words) between 2-3 different brands and then exploring why they’ve created these piles, where these associations have come from, what other words or images should be used, etc.

As before, if you choose to use images, it is recommended that the client pre-approves these.

### Concentric circles

You have concentric circles on a sheet of paper with the individual participant ´Me’ in the inner circle at the centre and you ask them to place different brands in the rings, so it’s more of an emotional placement as to how close they feel connected to that brand; and then discuss why.

### Word games

You can play around with a bunch of different ways of talking or attitudes, for example what words can you imagine the brand saying (and what words not). You can make this a bit of a random game which enables you to stretch into some outrageous and non-PC areas.

### Problem page

Task people to write their own ‘problem page’ problems as a means to understand what they are worried about. Alternatively, you could tweak this and get them to write the problem page for a brand (or FAQs) to see how they view the brand.