Measurement Guide Series

The DMA Guide
to Brand Tracking

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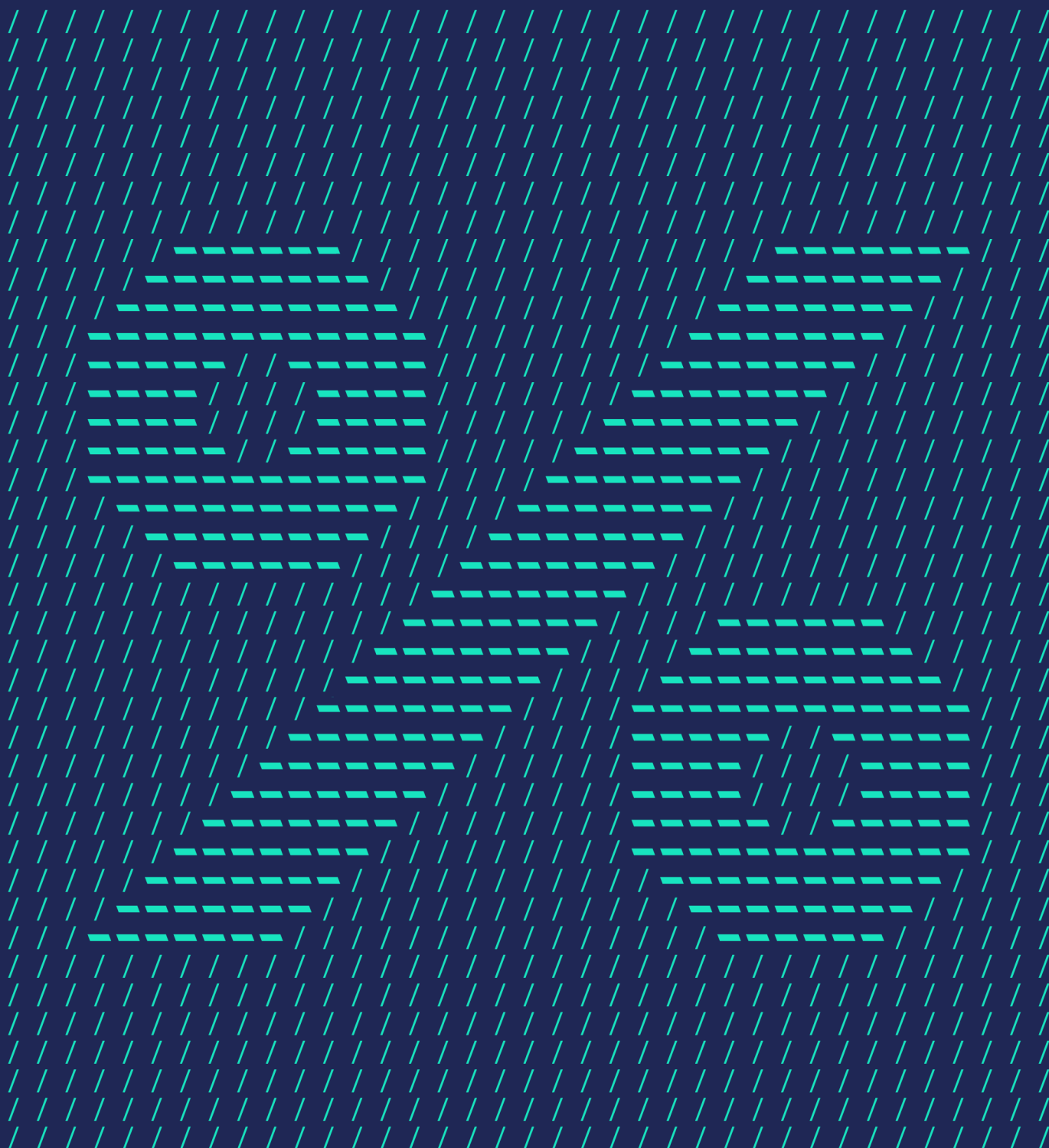
The DMA Guide to Brand Tracking

What is it?

Brand measurement is a way to understand a brand's strength, reputation, and impact on consumers. By monitoring key metrics—such as brand awareness, customer satisfaction, and purchase intent—brands and agencies gain valuable insight into how a brand is perceived, how well it connects with its audience, and how it stacks up against competitors.

For both brands and agencies, brand measurement provides a clear, data-driven method to shape and refine brand strategies. It allows teams to pinpoint effective messaging, assess campaign impact, and adjust strategies based on real-time consumer feedback. This approach reveals whether marketing and PR efforts are driving awareness, favourability, and loyalty.

With continuous brand tracking, brands and agencies stay ahead of shifts in consumer sentiment, addressing potential issues early and reinforcing positive brand perception. By regularly measuring these metrics, they can make well-informed decisions that strengthen brand resilience and foster long-term success.

When you should use it

Brand measurement is key both for understanding your brand's long-term performance and for optimising individual campaigns. It provides insights into brand health and benchmarks your position against competitors.

Long-term brand performance: Ongoing brand measurement helps you track key metrics such as awareness, consideration, and customer satisfaction in real time. This establishes a clear understanding of your brand's overall health and allows you to benchmark performance against competitors and industry standards. By identifying trends and shifts, you can refine your strategy to drive sustained brand growth.

Before launching: Pre-testing is essential when preparing for major campaigns, product launches, or rebranding efforts. It helps establish a baseline and set clear goals for success.

Brand measurement is also key in times of crisis or negative media coverage. Tracking changes in real-time lets you respond quickly, making adjustments to protect and strengthen the brand.

By using brand measurement strategically, you can foster lasting trust, optimise campaigns, and ensure long-term brand success.

How it works

Brand measurement uses surveys, continuous tracking, and analysis to give a clear picture of how people see a brand, how likely they are to engage with it, and how these perceptions change over time. By looking at trends, comparing to competitors, and breaking results down by audience segments, brands can better understand their strengths and areas to improve.

1. **Survey-based insights**

   Surveys capture what people think and feel about a brand. By reaching a mix of current customers and the general public, they help brands see how they're performing, both overall and compared to competitors. Surveys also allow brands to track how well they're doing in different regions or among key sub-audiences.

2. **Long-term tracking**

   Continuous tracking shows how brand perceptions shift over time. Whether it's the launch of a campaign, a major announcement, or a PR crisis, this approach helps brands see what's working and spot potential problems early. Tracking also highlights how perceptions differ between groups like age, gender, or region.

3. **Benchmarks and competitor analysis**

Comparing results to competitors helps brands understand where they stand in the market. By combining this with global insights, brands can identify strengths, find gaps, and make changes to stand out.

Key performance indicators (KPIs)

Brand measurement tracks several KPIs to give a complete picture of performance:

- **Awareness:** How many people know about the brand and its campaigns.

- **Consideration**: Whether people are open to buying from the brand.

- **Purchase intent:** How many people intend to make a purchase.

- **Recommendation:** Whether people would recommend the brand—or tell others to avoid it.

- **Advertising awareness:** How many people remember seeing an ad.

- **Customer satisfaction:** How happy people are with their experience of the brand.

- **Word of mouth:** What people are saying about the brand.

- **Quality and value perceptions:** How people rate the brand's quality and value compared to others.

These KPIs can be measured at both a global and local level, allowing brands to track

overall performance while identifying differences across key markets and audience groups. This dual view helps brands adapt their strategies to different regions and customer segments while staying aligned with their broader goals.

What are the key deliverables?

The key deliverables in brand measurement provide a comprehensive view of a brand's health, audience impact, and campaign effectiveness. Below are the primary outputs brands can expect:

1. **Brand health report**

   A foundational deliverable, the brand health report tracks key metrics like awareness, sentiment, purchase intent, and customer satisfaction. It highlights trends over time, providing insights into how the brand is perceived by its target audience and pinpointing areas for growth to drive loyalty and engagement.

2. **Campaign effectiveness**

   This examines how specific campaigns have impacted key metrics like awareness, consideration, and preference. Pre- and post-campaign tracking provides context on brand lift and engagement, with comparisons to benchmarks, norms, or previous campaigns to assess performance and guide future creative decisions.

3. **Audience insights and segmentation**

   A deep dive into the demographic and psychographic makeup of a brand's audience, this deliverable helps identify the most engaged and loyal customers. It also reveals their media habits, values, and purchasing drivers, enabling brands to create more targeted and effective strategies.

4. **Competitive benchmarking**

   This deliverable compares a brand's performance against competitors within its category and aspirational brands outside its category, providing further context on strengths and growth opportunities. By analysing similar metrics across peer and aspirational brands, it highlights areas where the brand can differentiate itself and improve.

How to read the results

To make the most of brand measurement results, follow these steps:

1. **Interpret key metrics**

   Start by examining core metrics such as awareness, consideration, purchase intent, and recommendation. Compare results to historical data, benchmarks, and consumer expectations to understand performance. Evaluate shifts within the broader context of category trends and consumer behaviours. For example, is a shift in brand peformance reflective of a campaign, or part of a wider category trend? Similarly, assess whether performance aligns with key customer needs or areas known to drive brand growth.

2. **Analyse campaign effectiveness**

   Review how campaigns influenced key metrics. For instance, if awareness increased but consideration lagged, it might suggest the campaign attracted attention but failed to drive deeper engagement. Use these insights to refine future messaging, ensuring it resonates with customer priorities and includes stronger calls to action.

3. **Segment and prioritise audiences**

   Break results down by audience segments to identify those most engaged with your brand. Focus future efforts on these groups, tailoring messaging to strengthen loyalty and deepen connections.

4. **Establish actionable next steps**

   Create a targeted action plan based on insights. If purchase intent is low, run campaigns to highlight product benefits or build credibility. If a competitor excels in customer satisfaction, consider strategies to enhance your service experience.

By consistently reviewing and acting on results in context, brands can adapt to changes, meet consumer expectations, and drive growth.

Case Study

Business challenge

Globally operating aviation group Lufthansa wanted to complement brand-relevant insights from internal customer satisfaction surveys to get a more comprehensive picture of their brand perception. For this, Lufthansa needed to collect highly up-to-date, valid, and reliable data on their external brand perception. At the same time, the brand needed robust insights into the brand perception of competitors through a uniform survey methodology.

Solution

YouGov's flagship brand tracking platform, YouGov BrandIndex, provided valuable business insights across the entire market. Furthermore, with historical data ranging back over 15 years, the depth and breadth of intelligence provided by this solution enabled far-reaching analyses to understand why the Lufthansa brand developed the way it did.

Lufthansa were able to track performance across key metrics, including general impression, quality, value for money, employer image/reputation, customer satisfaction and willingness to recommend.
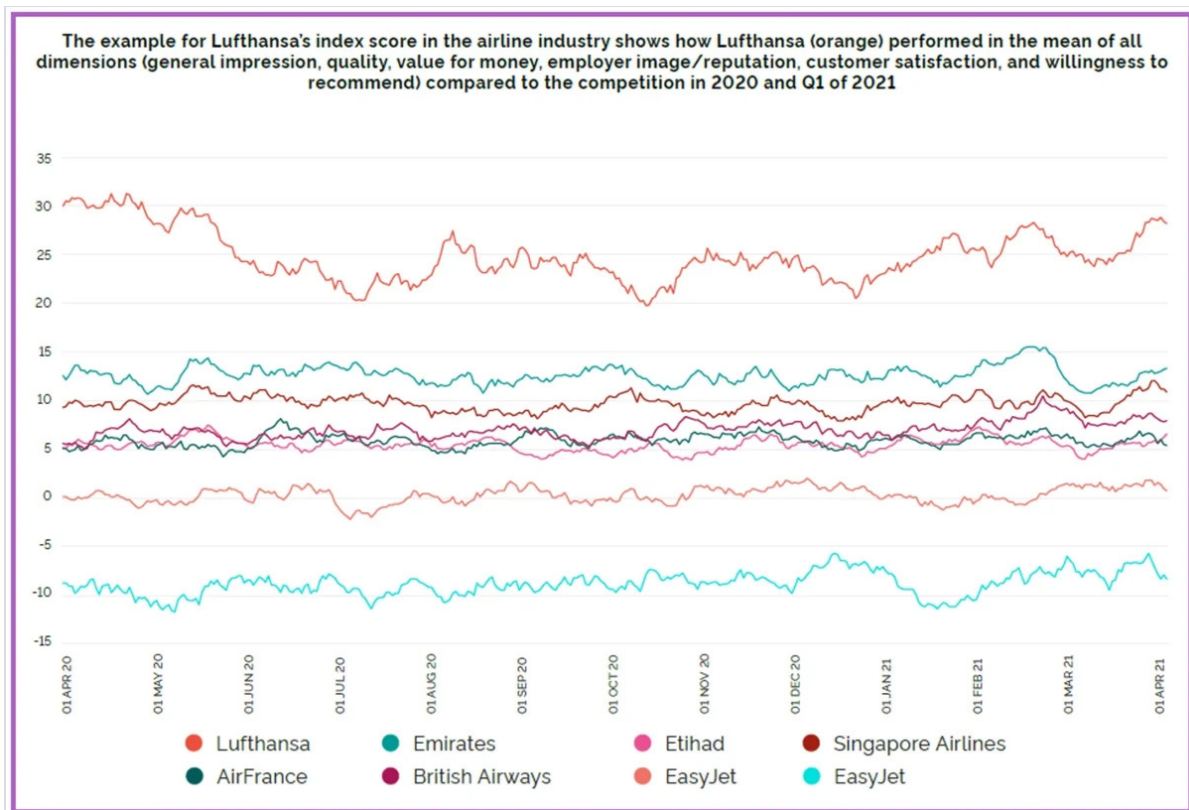
YouGov's brand tracking platform has been integrated into Lufthansa's day-to-day business, enabling them to access the desired daily brand health tracking data. Tracking across sixteen metrics, the tool provides the latest information about not only Lufthansa's image, but also allows them to successfully benchmark against competitors within their industry.

Business outcome

The KPI-based brand tracking of YouGov's brand tracking platform provided Lufthansa with comprehensive, always up-to-date information on brand perception among existing and potential customers, individual target groups, and the total population.

Through YouGov's extensive data on direct competitors and relevant companies in other sectors, Lufthansa could analyze their daily performance against other service providers in the airline industry.

Based on continuous tracking and extensive historical data, Lufthansa was able to react quickly to short-term changes, identify long-term trends and use them for the strategic management of brands and external communications. In particular, the constant use of YouGov's platform allowed Lufthansa to gain an in-depth understanding of the brand's development trajectory and attribute its success accordingly to the respective communication measures.

The example for Lufthansa's index score in the airline industry shows how Lufthansa (orange) performed in the mean of all dimensions (general impression, quality, value for money, employer image/reputation, customer satisfaction, and willingness to recommend) compared to the competition in 2020 and Q1 of 2021

Key checklist

- **Define clear objectives**
  Set specific goals (e.g., increase awareness, boost engagement) to guide analysis and track progress.

- **Select the right metrics**
  Choose metrics that align with your objectives, such as awareness, purchase intent, or brand loyalty, rather than tracking too many indicators that can dilute focus.

- **Ensure data quality**
  Use high-quality, representative data to avoid inaccurate insights. Check for consistency across data sources.

- **Choose the right model**
  Match the method (MMM for longer-term insights, MTA for attribution) to your goals and resources to avoid unnecessary complexity.

- **Allow time for testing and calibration**
  Test your model and make adjustments early on to ensure it reflects real-world behaviour.

- **Interpret results in context**
  Brand performance may be influenced by external factors like seasonality or competitor campaigns. Adjust your analysis to account for these.

Pitfalls to avoid

- Overcomplicating with too many metrics
  Stay focused on key insights to avoid analysis paralysis.

- Not setting a baseline
  A baseline is essential to track the impact of campaigns accurately.

- Ignoring attribution bias
  Beware of over-crediting one channel; use multi-touch attribution to gain a complete picture.

About YouGov

YouGov is a global research data, and analytics group. Our mission is to offer unparalleled insight into what the world really thinks and does. With operations in the US, the Americas, Europe, the Middle East, India and Asia Pacific, we have one of the world's largest research networks.

Above all, YouGov is powered by reality. That stems from a unique panel of millions of registered members across 55 countries, encapsulating some 18 million shopping trips and millions of interconnected data points. Our unique approach to recruiting and engaging with our panel, combined with our state-of-the-art technology platforms, enables us to deliver real-world, real-time insights that lead to better decision-making and a competitive advantage for our clients.

As innovators and pioneers of online market research, we have a strong reputation as a trusted source of accurate data and insights. Testament to this, YouGov data is regularly referenced by the global press, and we are consistently one of the most quoted market research sources in the world.

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