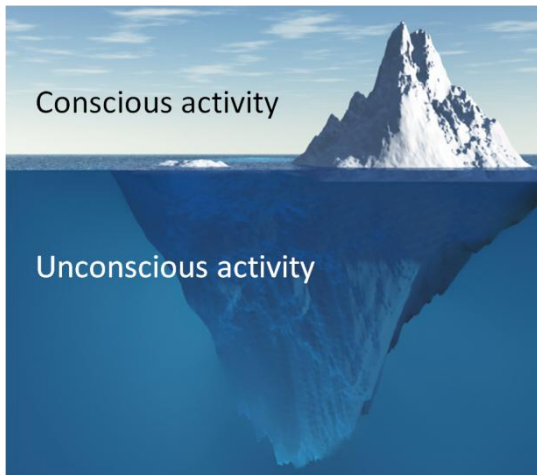




# Brand ELIOT

## A test for unconscious preference that helps predict consumer choices



We have all been in this situation. We hear comments from a focus group or results from a survey which indicate high preference levels for a brand. We then compare this with actual sales figures and sometimes it just doesn't fit. Consumers say they prefer a brand but actually only buy it sporadically, alongside a portfolio of other brands or sometimes not at all. How does that work?

One of the reasons for this discrepancy is that most traditional research tools measure conscious preference and they encourage a rational answer (why do you prefer this brand?). However, there are two components to brand preference – a rational component (it makes sense to buy this because...) and an emotional component (Having this makes me feel good). For

many consumers the emotional component can be unconscious and therefore be difficult to measure.

### Synopsis of this Paper:

- Consumer preference for a brand is made up of conscious preference (it makes sense to buy this because...) and unconscious preference (Having this feels good)
- Consumers can have a conscious preference for one brand but an unconscious preference for another brand
- Consumers who have an aligned preference – where conscious and unconscious preference are for the same brand have a 90% likelihood to buy this brand most often
- Brand ELIOT is an online test that measures both conscious and unconscious brand preference
- Knowing which of your consumers have aligned preference will enable profiling and strategic targeting
- Following the Brand ELIOT test with a qualitative filter map interview will enable identification of the conscious and unconscious drivers and therefore explain which factors drive brand preference, so that those can be increased in future brand development

Emotional Logic Limited

Old Maling Pottery, Walker Road  
Newcastle upon Tyne NE6 1AB

Tel: +44 (0) 191 265 3248

Email: [info@emotional-logic.co.uk](mailto:info@emotional-logic.co.uk)

Web: [emotional-logic.co.uk](http://emotional-logic.co.uk)



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## What is Brand ELIOT?

Brand ELIOT is a brand preference testing tool that measures both conscious and unconscious preference including rational reasons and emotions. And we have found that consumers who have both a conscious and unconscious preference for a brand have a 90% likelihood of choosing this brand most often. This means Brand ELIOT can measure brand variables that directly predict actual usage.

## Can a consumer consciously prefer one brand and unconsciously prefer another?

Absolutely. Our research indicates that consumers who buy a brand portfolio can have a conscious preference for brand A but an unconscious preference for brand B. This may indeed partly explain why people buy a portfolio of brands – some days the consumer follows their rational thinking and makes the prudent choice. On another day caution is thrown to the wind and the brand that makes me feel good is chosen. A third brand may fall somewhere in-between (make some sense but also has some more emotional elements) and therefore is the compromise.

One example where this dynamic works is the butter and dairy spreads market – most consumers buy at least one butter brand and one spread brand. The butter holds most of the emotional factors, whilst the spread appeals to rational reasons (lower cholesterol, lower price, convenient).

## What will ELIOT do for my brand?

The test will measure how many consumers have an aligned preference (conscious and unconscious preference) for your brand. Those are your most valuable and loyal customers, who can then be profiled and targeted.

We can also apply one of our advanced qualitative tools, the filter map interview, as a second stage, to identify which rational and emotional drivers are the causes for the conscious and unconscious preference. This will then influence brand development to further strengthen the relevant drivers in order to get more consumers into aligned preference (conscious and unconscious preference for your brand), therefore turning them into loyal customers.

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### Case Study: Brand ELIOT Test for Petrol Station Brands

We used Brand ELIOT to measure the conscious and unconscious preference for two petrol station brands and then compared the result with actual usage – where the consumers filled up most often.

We found that conscious preference alone is a poor predictor of actual usage. Even though 43% of the sample preferred Brand A only 29% of those actually used this brand most often. Other factors (such as location, price offers) stopped them from using their preferred brand. For Brand B, which already has lower conscious preference levels than the other brands, the situation was even worse – none of them actually used this brand most often – it was only part of the portfolio even though it was their stated preference.

	Brand A	Brand B
Proportion of consumers who have a <b>conscious preference</b> for this brand	43%	13%
Likelihood those consumers use this brand <b>most often</b>	29%	0%
Proportion of consumers who have an <b>unconscious preference</b> for this brand	15%	8%
Likelihood those consumers use this brand <b>most often</b>	67%	33%
Proportion of consumers who are preference <b>aligned*</b> ELIOT SCORE	13%	3%
Likelihood those consumers use this brand <b>most often</b>	80%	100%

(\* Aligned preference means the participant showed a neutral or positive conscious preference combined with a positive unconscious preference for the same brand)

We then looked at unconscious preference and already found this to be a better predictor of actual usage. Only 15% of the sample showed an unconscious preference for Brand A but then 67% of them would use the brand most often. This indicates that unconscious preference is a stronger driver for actual usage than conscious preference alone.

Finally we measure alignment to derive the ELIOT SCORE. Aligned consumers are those who have a neutral or positive conscious preference combined with a positive unconscious preference for the same brand. We found this to be the best predictor of actual usage. Only 13% of the sample showed an aligned preference for Brand A, but of those 80% used this brand most often. For Brand B this even rose to 100%.

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This means a consumer who has an aligned preference for a brand (conscious and unconscious) is 80-100% likely to be using this brand most often in a portfolio purchase situation. Therefore the objective for brands is to increase their ELIOT SCORE to maximise the number of consumers within the market place who have an aligned preference for the brand.

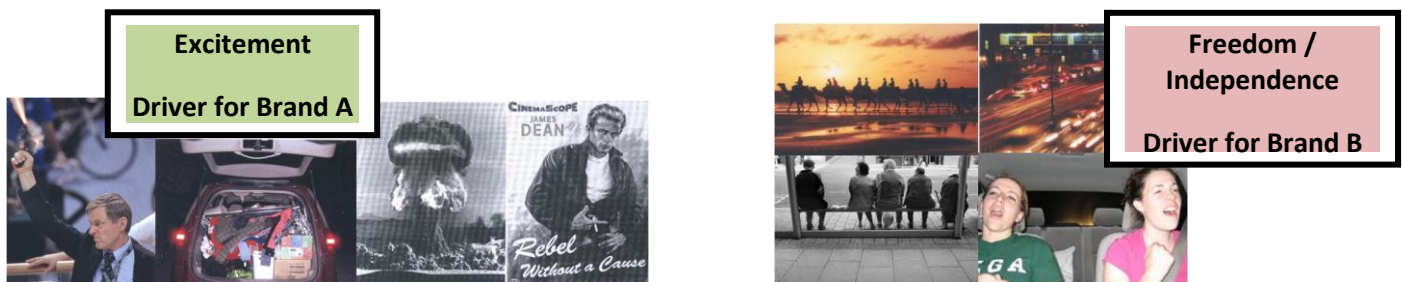
### So if Brand A wanted to increase their ELIOT SCORE how do we achieve that?

In order to increase the ELIOT SCORE we would need to increase the number of consumers with an unconscious preference for the brand and then ensure that is aligned with conscious preference. This means we need to identify which brand elements drive conscious preference and which brand elements drive unconscious preference.

Most brands will be fully aware what drives conscious preference – it is the factors reported in traditional research reports. In the case of petrol stations it is price, convenience, and loyalty cards (mostly).

In order to identify what drives unconscious preference we had to follow the ELIOT test with a stage of qualitative research using our advanced filter map interview technique (please see [www.emotional-logic.co.uk/tools](http://www.emotional-logic.co.uk/tools)) for further information about the filter map technique.

The result of the filter map study showed that one of the core drivers specific to Brand A, for example, was excitement, and for respondents this was symbolised by “aggressive” and masculine imagery of explosions, guns firing and dangerous car races. On the other hand, the strongest trigger for Brand B was freedom / independence, exemplified by a quieter type of imagery, like desert caravans, the flow of traffic, and people being free to sing at the top of their voice while driving in the privacy of their cars.



In order to increase unconscious preference and their ELIOT SCORE Brand A should therefore identify consumers who have a strong driver of ‘Excitement’ and then reinforce this brand attribute to those consumers through strategic, targeted communication.

**What to do next:** To find out more about ELIOT tests, filter maps or any of our advanced quantitative or qualitative tools please check out our website [www.emotional-logic.co.uk](http://www.emotional-logic.co.uk) or contact Annett Pecher on +44 (0) 191 265 3248 or via email [apecher@emotional-logic.co.uk](mailto:apecher@emotional-logic.co.uk)

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