



CANNES UNPACKED 2025

Wrap-Up



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The Cannes Lions International Festival of Creativity 2025 showcased a defining theme that resonated throughout the advertising industry: in an increasingly AI-dominated landscape, **human empathy** has emerged as the most powerful differentiator for successful brand campaigns.



The World in 2025: *Tensions and Solutions*

“Cannes Unpacked 2025” identified key tensions that characterize our current environment:

COMPLEX

UNCERTAIN

SYNTHETIC

COLD

GAIN-ORIENTED

POLARIZED

CONFORMING

CLUMSY

FRAGMENTED

Successful campaigns addressed these tensions by offering solutions that were:

SIMPLE

IN THE MOMENT

REAL

HUMAN

FOR GOOD

CULTURED

AUDACIOUS

HACK-ORIENTED

TARGETED



“HUMAN AFTER ALL”

This phrase emerged as the central thesis of Cannes 2025. As Esi Eggleston, Chief Growth Officer at Unilever, *eloquently stated*:

“In a world where machines and agents will increasingly make choices for us, we face a fundamental question – will our brands matter to people or only to machines? In this dance between data and desire, we found what makes the difference. Our humanity. It is not our limitation; it is our superpower.”



Key Trends and Award-Winning *Approaches*

01 From **Synthetic** to **Real**:

Authenticity prevailed as brands moved away from artificial constructs toward genuine human experiences. Apple, named Creative Marketer of the Year, emphasized leading with humanity while using technology as a tool.

02 From **Uncertain** to **In The Moment**:

With 64% of people agreeing they “live for today because the future is uncertain,” successful campaigns like Burger King, Stella Artois and Dove celebrated present-moment experiences.

03 From **Complex** to **Simple**:

With 61% feeling overwhelmed by too many choices, brands that offered clarity and simplicity gained traction, including the AXA campaign adding “three words” to their insurance policy.

04 From **Ordinary** to **Audacious**:

Bold, non-conforming campaigns delivered 21% higher brand attention compared to conforming creative approaches, exemplified by Lynx’s innovative intimate deodorant range marketing.

05 From **Chaos** to **Consistent**:

With 3 cases; Apple “Shot on iPhone” 10 Years – Dove “Real Beauty” 20 years and L’Oréal “Because I’m worth it” 50 years of consistency.



06 From **Gain** to **Good**:

Purpose-driven campaigns showed lasting impact, with Nescafé’s “Plantlets for Future” initiative supporting coffee farmers against climate change challenges.

07 From **Polarised** to **United**:

You can overcome Polarisation and Unite people, which is what the Olympics ceremony achieved in Paris.

08 From **Fragmented** to **Targeted**:

Content volume has exploded from ~300 creative assets in 2017 to ~3,500 today, with projections of 35,000+ by 2030, making precision targeting essential with a Cannes winning case from Vaseline Verified”

Brazil: Country of the Year

Brazil emerged as the creative powerhouse, winning multiple Grand Prix awards through campaigns that demonstrated creative ingenuity:

Pedigree

“Caramelo” celebrating mixed-breed Brazilian dogs



“The Amazon Greenventory” supporting rainforest conservation



“Call of Discounts” featuring Neymar in a Call of Duty treasure hunt



“One Second Ads” with copyright-free music on TikTok

The Creative Formula for Success

1. Start with empathy by understanding people’s tensions
2. Provide clear solutions that address these tensions
3. Be bold in your idea & execution
4. Remain fundamentally human

As AI increasingly shapes marketing execution, the human touch becomes even more critical. Winning campaigns were measured not just on how they performed with audiences but also how they registered with AI analytics, with metrics tracking emotional moments, brand consistency, category uniqueness, and text/audio congruency.

The central takeaway from Cannes 2025 was clear: in an age of advancing technology, the brands that succeed are those that use empathy as their north star, creating connections that resonate with human emotions while providing meaningful solutions to real-world tensions.

HUMAN AFTER ALL.