How AI boosts human Creativity

How AI-discovered insights are rewriting the creative playbook

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We challenged the industry's biggest assumption about AI and brand growth: that AI's greatest value lies in doing things faster and cheaper.

What if AI's real creative power isn't in execution at all - but in discovery? What happens when the algorithm finds the insight that becomes the idea?

Lee McEwan (Head of Strategy and Planning, Publicis Lausanne) and Arnaud Debia (Global Creative Development Director, IPSOS) explored five campaigns where algorithms didn't just help make ads - they uncovered the strategic truths that made those ads possible.

-> The algorithm isn't replacing the creative. It's becoming the creative starting point.

Inside this report:

    The distinction that changes everything: AI-discovered vs AI-enabled
    Five case studies where algorithms found the creative idea
    A new framework for data-driven creativity
    Why your most creative dataset isn't in your marketing department
    The provocative conclusion no one expects

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"Everyone talks about AI-made ads. Almost nobody talks about AI-discovered insights."

The industry has become fixated on AI as a production tool. But the real revolution is happening upstream - where algorithms process data humans simply cannot, and surface insights that become the creative concept itself.

AI-Enabled
What most people talk about

- Human has the idea first
- AI executes or optimises
- Technology as production tool
- Faster, cheaper delivery
- The brief drives the algorithm

AI-Discovered
The real creative revolution

- Algorithm finds the insight
- Insight becomes the idea
- Technology as creative partner
- New truths, new possibilities
- The data rewrites the brief

The key question isn't "Can AI make an ad?"

It's "Can an algorithm discover something humans never would have found?"

Real campaigns. Real results. The insight came from the data.

CASE 01 ## Warner Music

An NLP algorithm scanned 70 million songs for repeating phoneme patterns — and found speech therapy hiding in pop music.

Popular songs by Dua Lipa, Lizzo, and Ed Sheeran naturally contain the exact repetitive phonetic patterns used in clinical speech therapy. No human could manually scan 70 million sets of lyrics to find this. The result: 10 playlists on Apple Music, each targeting a specific problem sound. Children with speech disorders could now practise therapy by singing along to hit songs.

CASE 02 ## Volvo

43,000 real-world crashes analysed by gender revealed a silent truth no one had unearthed.

Volvo's crash database — 72,000+ people since the 1970s — revealed women are 71% more likely to be seriously injured in a car crash. Every seatbelt, airbag, and headrest on the road had been optimised for men. The insight was hiding in decades of data. Instead of a product ad, Volvo open-sourced its entire safety research library — downloaded 40,000+ times by competitors.

CASE 03 ## WeCapital

35 million women had credit histories. An algorithm finally gave them access to credit.

83% of Mexican women have zero formal credit history. But neighbourhood shop ledgers contained years of reliable payment records — an entire parallel financial system in analogue form, completely invisible to banks. The creative leap: a platform to digitise shopkeeper records into formal credit scores. 10,300+ women built credit histories. 2,300+ received their first microloans.

CASE 04   ## Mastercard

Transaction data across 37 Polish cities proved refugees and locals make each other richer.

Anonymised Mastercard spending data revealed business complementarity patterns: Ukrainian and Polish businesses were more often complementary than competitive — barbers near restaurants, bookshops near jewellers — each generating more revenue when in proximity. This reframed 'refugees steal jobs' into 'refugees create value.'

CASE 05   ## Stella Artois — The Artois Probability

An algorithm analysed 3,000 paintings and calculated the odds the beer depicted is Stella

Cross-referencing six variables per artwork — year, proximity to Leuven, glass shape, liquid colour, distribution coverage, competitive landscape — masterpiece paintings yield statistically significant Stella probabilities. Brueghel's The Peasant Wedding: 78%. The probability percentage became the headline.

Three Patterns We Discovered

1. AI has opened up new frontiers of creative discovery
   An algorithm's output can lead to some of the most celebrated ideas.

2. Pattern recognition can make revelatory connections
   The most surprising insights link datasets with no obvious relationship.

3. Proprietary data = creative moat
   When your unique data generates the insight, only you could make that campaign.

A new workflow for AI-driven creativity

STAGE 1: AI Discovers

Algorithms process datasets humans cannot review at scale

Patterns emerge that contradict established assumptions

Operational data reveals human truths hidden in plain sight

The insight IS the creative concept - not a brief for one

Traditional research cannot validate what consumers don't consciously recognise

STAGE 2: AI-Augmented Research Validates

Human reactions to counterintuitive AI discoveries are tested

AI-powered research tools measure emotional and behavioural response

IPSOS creative development capabilities validate that discoveries resonate

Creative expression is refined based on audience reaction

The human element ensures the algorithm's truth becomes a felt truth

This two-stage approach positions AI discovery and human research as sequential - not competing - parts of a creative pipeline. Publicis brings the algorithmic insight. IPSOS validates the human response.

Somewhere in your business is a dataset no one thinks of as creative.

It is.

Your crash data, your transaction logs, your operational metrics – these aren't just efficiency tools. They're creative goldmines waiting for the right algorithm to unlock them.

The campaigns that win aren't the ones with the best AI-generated visuals. They're the ones where an algorithm discovered something humans never would have found – and creative teams turned that discovery into something people feel.

Want to know what your data is hiding?

Connect with us to uncover AI-discovered insights that can transform your creative strategy.

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