



# Christmas is for sharing

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*'The Greatest Gift'*



Sainsbury's  
*live well for less* 

# Christmas is for sharing

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2016 marked the fourth year of Christmas is for Sharing for Sainsbury's. 'The Greatest Gift' was our most integrated Christmas campaign ever, using a deeper insight, unifying our 'brand' and 'food' campaigns at Christmas and making our marketing money work even harder.

It paid dividends, entertaining the nation (Google confirmed our launch film as the most watched ad on YouTube in 2016), and delivering the strongest business results of any recent Sainsbury's Christmas campaign (the brand returned to like for like growth).

This was delivered with startling efficiency; a low media spend versus competitors, producing a Return on Investment likely to be well in excess of £25 for every £1 spent.





‘Christmas is for sharing’ has served us well in recent years.

Our insight was still resonant: *Christmas isn’t just about the gifts you give, it’s who you share it with.* But in 2016 our challenge was to make lightning strike four times.

# The landscape was tougher than ever.

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It's been tough grocery retail (unless you're Aldi or Lidl). 2016 was the year the empire hit back – Sainsbury's faced a resurgent Tesco, and even Morrison's was picking up.

City analysts were (once again)  
predicting our demise :

*"For two years, Sainsbury's defied the economic gravity of Britain's supermarket shoot-out. No longer...the brand has come down to earth with a bump."*

John Ibbotson  
Director of the retail consultancy Retail Vision.

And food price deflation was hitting us hard  
(even harder than competitors):

*"Sainsbury's is getting more items passing through the checkouts but the price of those goods is still falling, and the net effect is still falling sales in pounds and pence."*

Laith Khalaf  
Senior analyst at Hargreaves Lansdown

# Being heard at Christmas was harder than ever.

Christmas is now the UK's 'Superbowl' with more brands joining every year.

In 2016 everyone from Argos to Heathrow wanted their moment.

Using Christmas as our slingshot for growth would be tough.

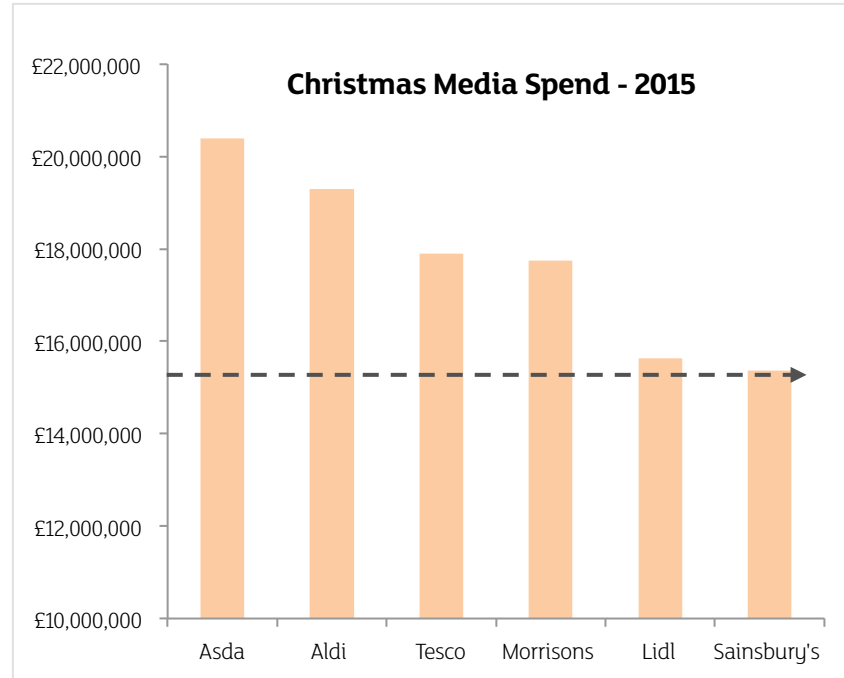
<b>2016's Christmas Advertising</b>	 <b>Burberry - 1 NOV</b>	 <b>Argos, TK Maxx - 4 NOV</b>	
			
<b>Curry's PC World, Morrison's, Tesco, M&amp;S - 7 NOV</b>			
			
<b>Asda, Aldi - 9 NOV</b>		<b>John Lewis, Lidl - 10 NOV</b>	
			
<b>Waitrose - 13 Nov</b>	<b>Heathrow - 16 NOV</b>	<b>H&amp;M - 27 NOV</b>	

## We decided not to spend our way to success.

Spending smart, not big, had been our strategy even as competitors doubled down on spend.

We could have tried buying our way back, but instead looked to achieve return on creativity with a campaign that would make our budget go further.

Because that's what marketing is for.



# It was time to extend 'Christmas is for sharing'.

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## We would change 3 things:

### 1/ Deeper integration

For the first time, we would unite brand and product rather than separating creative, strategy and spend. This aim was to make Sainsbury's famous for food.

### 2/ Deeper insight

'Christmas is for sharing' provided a broad and unifying truth, but we needed to dig deeper to engage.

### 3/ Greater creativity

From Kevin MacDonald to WWI's Christmas Truce and Judith Kerr's Mog we had built from established properties. This year, we would create something unique.

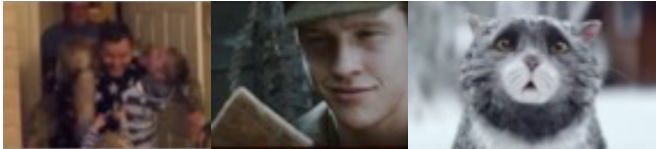
# 1/ Driving greater integration.

**Our recent Christmas campaigns worked to a simple dynamic.**

**BRAND CAMPAIGN  
(WITH *NO DIRECT PRODUCT SELL*)  
CAPTURED THE HEARTS  
OF THE NATION.**

...provided fame  
and 'air cover' for....

**FOOD ADVERTISING  
ABOUT SPECIFIC PRODUCTS.**



Media investment had been split between two objectives; but by integrating brand and food we could  
***unite the spend, making every pound work harder.***

# 1/ Driving greater integration.

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We needed to make Sainsbury's more famous for food at Christmas by:

Making our food launch as much of a blockbuster as our brand launch with a **second peak in media spend.**



**Embedding food in our brand world** through a consistent look and feel.



**Make food comms sell the range,** not individual products.



**Could we integrate brand and food without  
diluting the magic of Christmas?**



## 2/ Drawing on a deeper insight.

our idea:

**Christmas is about sharing  
the things you love with  
people you love.**

where we had taken this:



We focused on the the power of stories;  
showing Christmas was about people.

**Finding a new way in...**

Research revealed that today's kids aren't the  
Veruca Salt's they're assumed to be.

Rather than gifts, at Christmas they most wanted to:

- Decorate the tree
- Go to a pantomime
- Bake festive food
- Write a wish list
- Build a snowman

And to do this  
**together.**



**We would make this  
message more relevant and  
explicit for our customers.**



**our insight for 2016:**

**Time is the greatest gift  
to share with those you  
love at Christmas.**

### 3/ Delivering greater creativity.

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**This year we wanted to give the gift of time with friends and family.**

Christmas has become stretched and stressed, often forgetting that it's a time for sharing with those closest to you.

We wanted to help everyone remember that Christmas is ultimately a time of joy, a time to spend together.



### 3/ Delivering greater creativity.

#### **We enable customers to share our campaigns.**

From chocolate bars to books and soft toys we had created something for customers to buy; raising funds for good causes.



#### **In 2016 we sought greater emotional engagement.**

We wanted to create something that would enable people to spend time together.

It wouldn't be a single item but content and experiences that invited people to share time together.

(And a charitable partner that delivered this to those less able to do it themselves).

### 3/ Delivering greater creativity.

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**All marketing activity was about giving the nation the gift of time together.**

We created a central story about a busy father, with an ingenious idea to help him spend more time with those he loves at Christmas.

We weaved this story through: a film, a song, a new food product, a media partner, an activity for families to share and a cause that helped families stay together when it mattered most.



### 3/ Delivering greater creativity.

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#### Striking the right tone was key.

Our story needed to be thought-provoking, not finger-pointing; inspiring people to spend time together **not** blaming them for being apart.

It was a fine line that we navigated through extensive research.

Displaying genuine empathy for moments of modern life helped. The snow on the tracks, the office Christmas party, the queues: those moments where you would rather be with those you love.



### 3/ Delivering greater creativity.

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#### **Our story had to feel relevant to everyone.**

A white family with 2.4 kids isn't modern Britain; we were telling a story about modern times, and everything had to reflect this.

Breaking away from the stereotypical harassed mum, we chose to focus on Dad. It was real life; juggling work and family, grandma looking after the kids. We created a portrait of modern Britain.



### 3/ Delivering greater creativity.

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#### **We partnered with extraordinary talent.**

Bret McKenzie (of Flight of the Conchords fame) wrote a song for us.

We wanted something big and universal, to be enjoyed by parents and kids before bedtime. James Corden sung our song – adding extra star quality.



### 3/ Delivering greater creativity.

**We helped others share the gift of time delivering a win-win for brand and cause.**

We ensured our story revolved around food - the gingerbread man was Dave's moment of revelation. This was sold in store, along with by a stop motion animation kit; both of which enabled kids and parents to come together.

Great Ormond Street Hospital (GOSH) was the natural choice to benefit from this, with all profits going to help develop accommodation in the hospital for families to stay together at Christmas and throughout the year.



### 3/ Delivering greater creativity.

We were able to make Sainsbury's a destination for Christmas food, bringing our 'showstopper' items into our famous brand world.





# **Launching the campaign**

## We started by refreshing our media approach.

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To bring brand and food together media strategy needed a shake up.

1

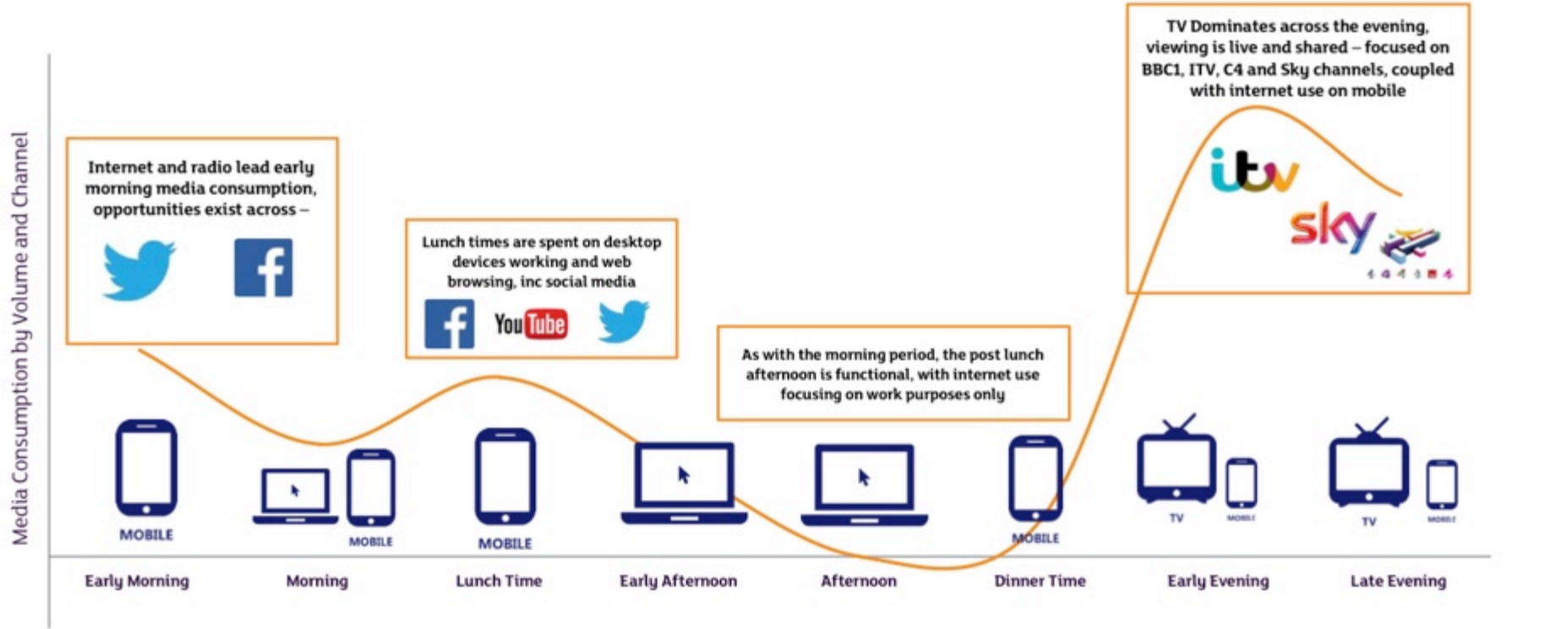
We needed a double blockbuster.

+

2

We needed to get closer to customer rhythms.

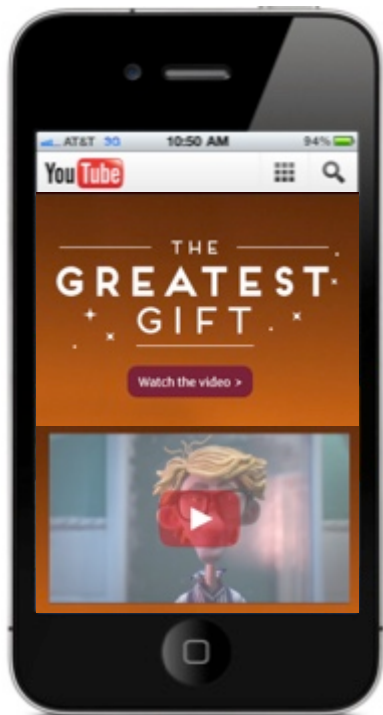
# We planned around customer media habits.





**The first blockbuster  
(our brand launch)**

## For the first time, we launched mobile first.



We caught Britain as soon as they awoke, reaching 18m in one day.

We extended reach by catching the nation from the moment they first checked social.

We took over the YouTube masthead, encouraging everyone to tune in.



**We generated excitement throughout the day, making our film an ‘appointment to view’.**



**TV was our opportunity for shared evening viewing.**

We launched our 3'20" spot in 'I'm a Celebrity Get Me Out of Here', teasing through the day with a radio roadblock at 8.45am and on the commute home via Print and DOOH.

This was followed by mass reach spots across the week driven by First View, Twitter Trend and Facebook (the film appeared in every user's feed).



This approach reached  
**over 23m**  
on launch day  
(over half UK adult population).





# **The food launch**



# We partnered with Gogglebox to launch.

We needed an idea to weave food into our launch week. A partnership with Gogglebox seamlessly integrated brand and food.

It was a media first which reached  
**4 million people.**

## How it worked...



3x 10" clips of Gogglebox stars in brand look and feel



This was followed by our brand TVC then the launch of our 60" food TVC.



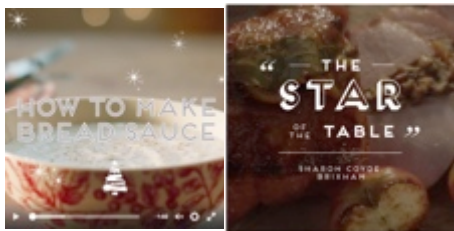
And finally, the cast reacting to our brand ad.

# We added richness and depth through digital channels.

**We created content that brought people together.**

## Established social channels.

On Facebook, Twitter and Instagram we used shared moments around food, including recipes parents and kids could make together. Instagram stories shared food moments.



## Emerging new channels.

Our song was on Spotify's Christmas playlist, and we invited everyone to 'Sing with Sainsbury's' through a Facebook Live Karaoke Booth and Snapchat (with our own lens) with users submitting their videos which were stitched together and shared back through social.



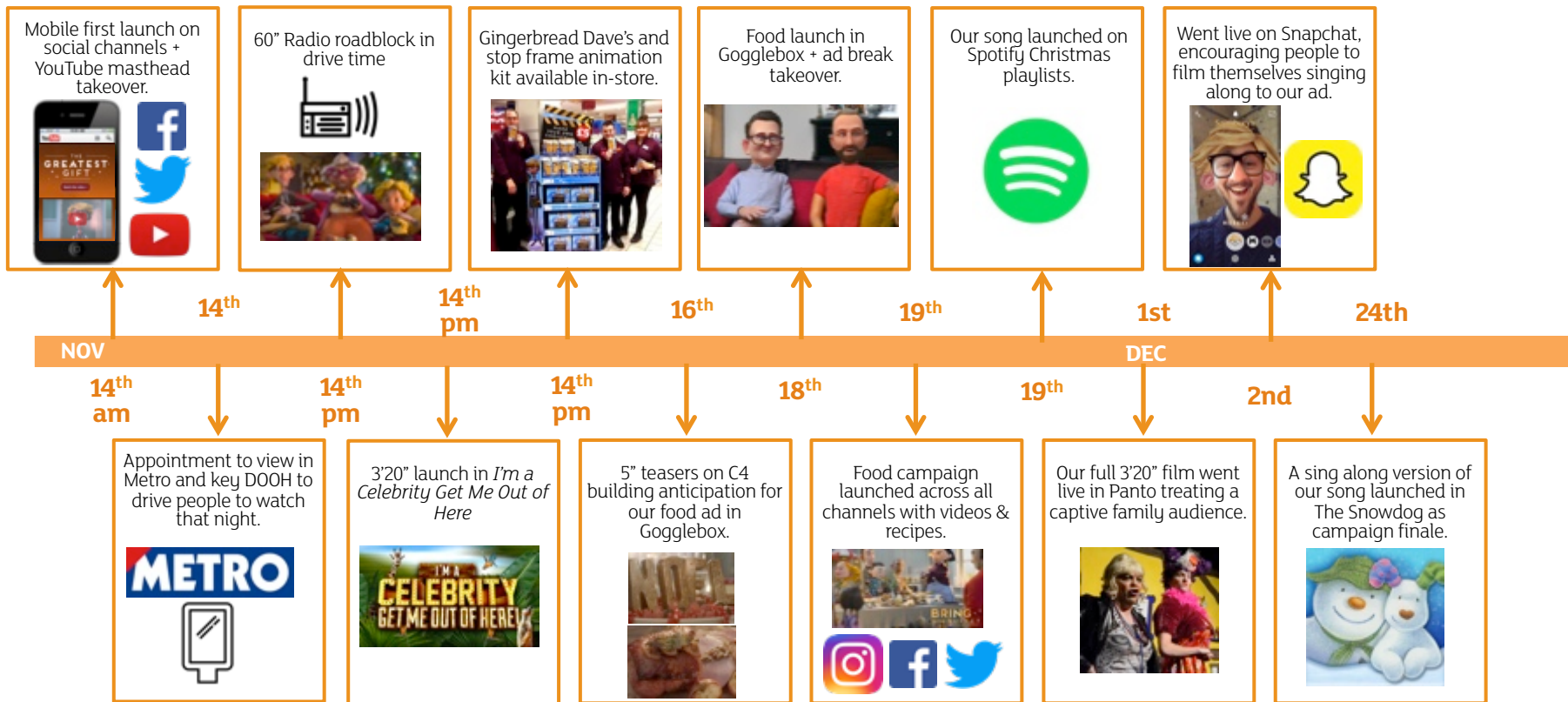
## We brought GOSH patients together with families.

We hosted a party at GOSH where patients and families were invited into the world of The Greatest Gift, playing with our stop frame animation kits, decorating gingerbread and even getting to meet the stars of the adverts – Dave and his family.

They were able to join in our film, with a karaoke booth that got everyone singing together.



# The campaign timeline.



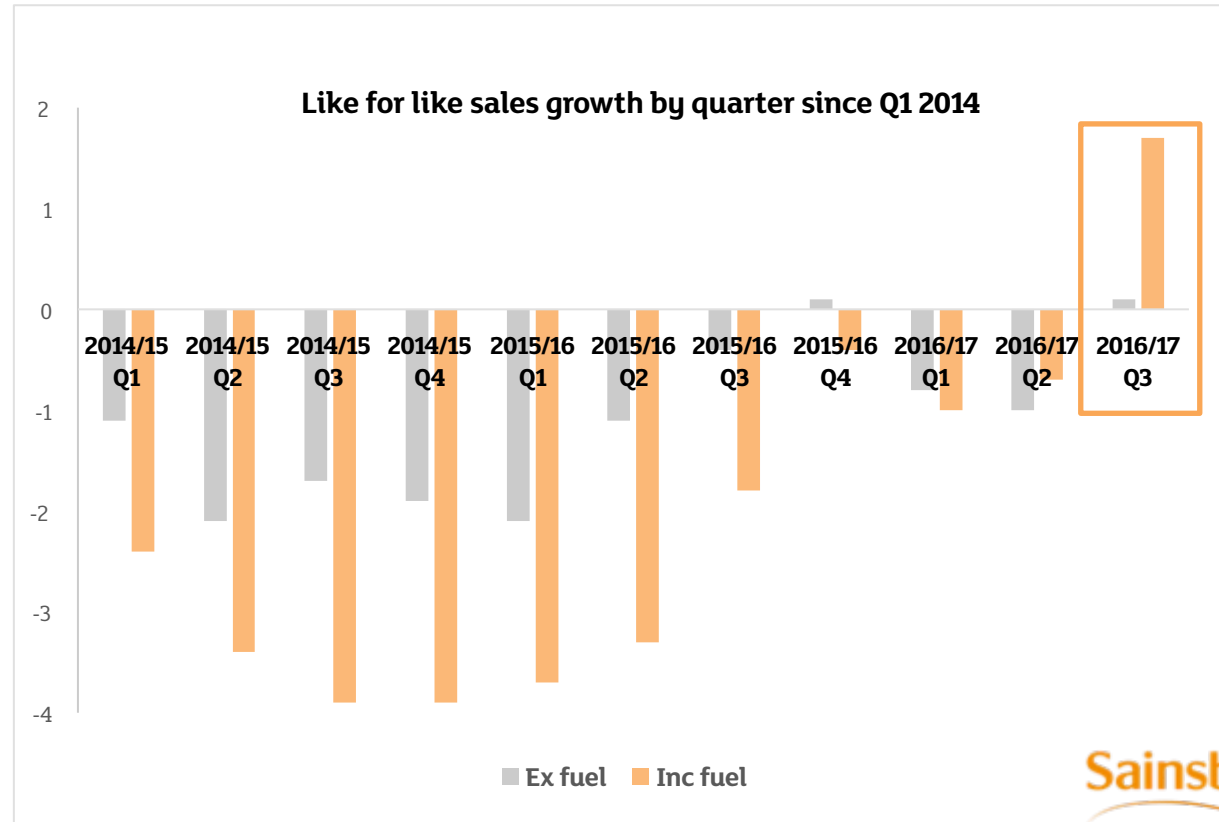


**What effect did we create?**

## We returned to growth at Christmas.

The supermarket sector has been a tough place, with like-for-like growth scarce.

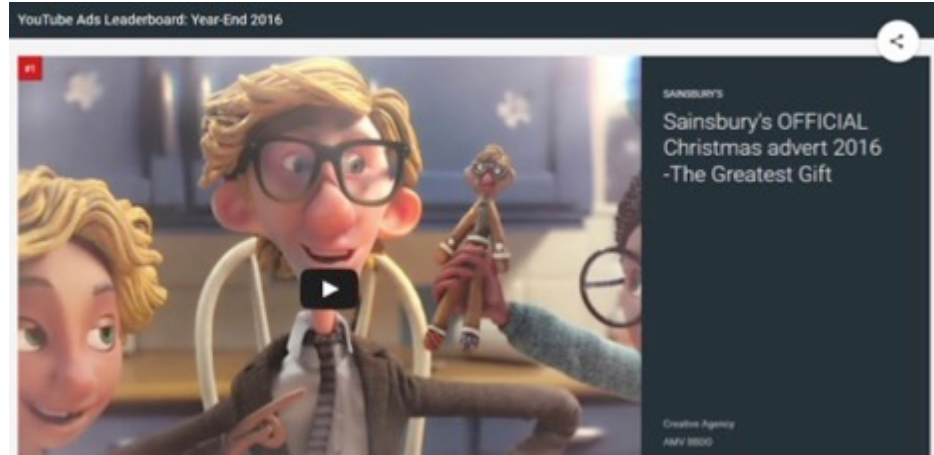
We changed this trend, delivering a Christmas of sales growth.



# We topped Google's UK ad leaderboard.

Coming in at #1 proved that we had produced a piece of entertainment that people **genuinely chose to spend time with**.

It's worth noting YouTube's official data looks at UK views alone, (data published by some other famous UK retailers includes all worldwide views; not much use if you only have shops in the UK).



Sainsbury's Christmas ad in 2016 was the most watched ad amongst UK YouTube viewers, showing the power of producing work that British viewers really want to spend time with.



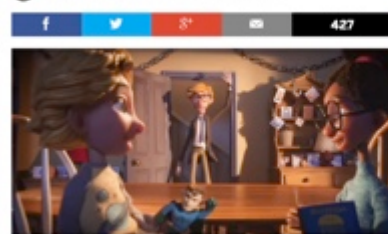
Charlotte Morton, Head of Creative Agencies, Google UK

# The press were quick to back us as the winners.



Why this year's Sainsbury's Christmas advert is so much better than the John Lewis ad

James Baldock for Metro.co.uk Monday 14 Nov 2016 9:47 am



(Picture: Sainsbury's)

Hold everything! We have a late contender for best Christmas advert of the year.

## MUST READ



Family feuds are set to rock Ramsay Street this week.



Shocking secrets, declarations of love and passionate encounters are all on the cards this week.

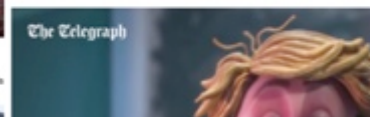


## The Telegraph Business

Economy Companies Opinion Markets A-Z Alex Telegraph Connect

## Have James Corden and Sainsbury's stolen the show with their musical Christmas advert?

14 Comments



Sainsbury's

# We set social media alight.



Gill @GillCreagan · 26 Nov 2016

Best Christmas advert this year by far! Gogglebox - Stop Motion Ad Break - Official Sainsbury's Christmas.



j @jesscxllins ·  
forget John Lewis  
inclusive, cheerful



McMullanInterpreting @McMulla

Well done @sainsburys!!! My favourite Christmas advert so far!!! :) #christmas #family #Lifeorwork?



Sainsbury's @sainsburys  
Sainsbury's and Great Orm  
Charity are helping families  
#ChristmasIsForSharing



Christian Blackman @chrisdb94 · 17 Nov 2016

Sainsbury's have won the Christmas advert competition so far. James Corden and animation. Reminds me of 'Up' or Tim Burton animation.



Cat @moreaboutcat · 16 Nov 2016

OK guys the @sainsburys ad wins the Christmas ad war for the second year running.

The Sainsbury's



TED TALKS FANS and 1 other follow



Imola Unger @ImolaUnger · 15 Nov 2016

Oh my God, I just LOVE the @Sainsbury's  
tear-inducing at the same time :) The sn



Pines and Needles 🌲 @pinesandneedles · 16 Nov 2016

We're a little bit obsessed with the @sainsburys Christmas advert! Family comes first! #ChristmasIsComing 🌲



Simon Breeze @Simon\_Breeze · 16 Nov

As far as Christmas adverts go, I think  
every time I see it, I get so excited for C



Nathan @NathLennonFan · 16 Nov 2016

James Corden singing for a Sainsbury's advert is the true meaning of Christmas. #TheGreatestGift

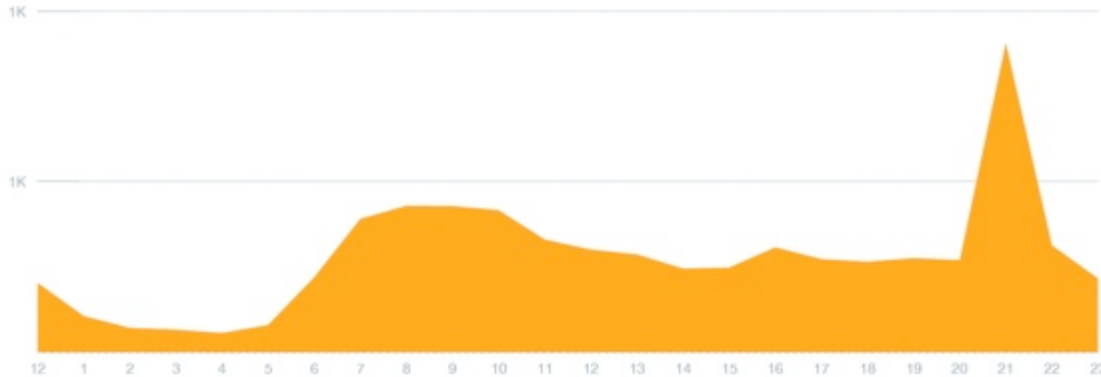


nearly enjoyed the Sainsbury's Christmas advert :)

Sainsbury's

With a major spike at 9pm when our TV spot aired.

## Trend Mentions

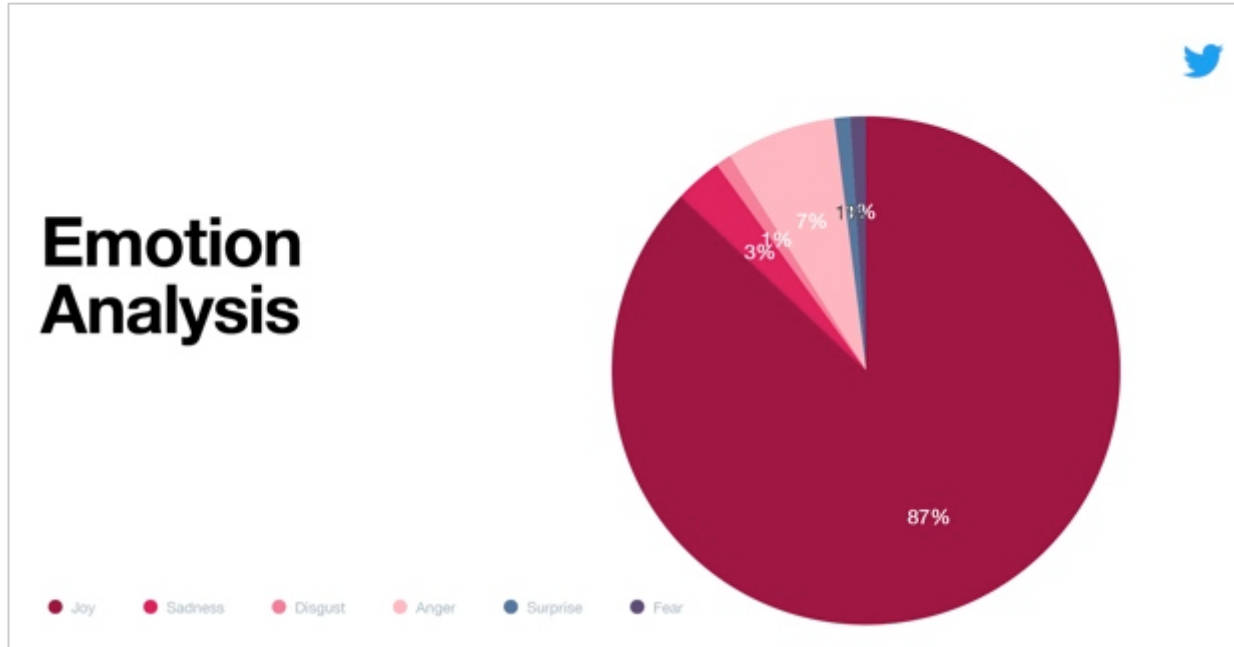


Source — Twitter Internal

**In fact**, by the end of the campaign, our film received:

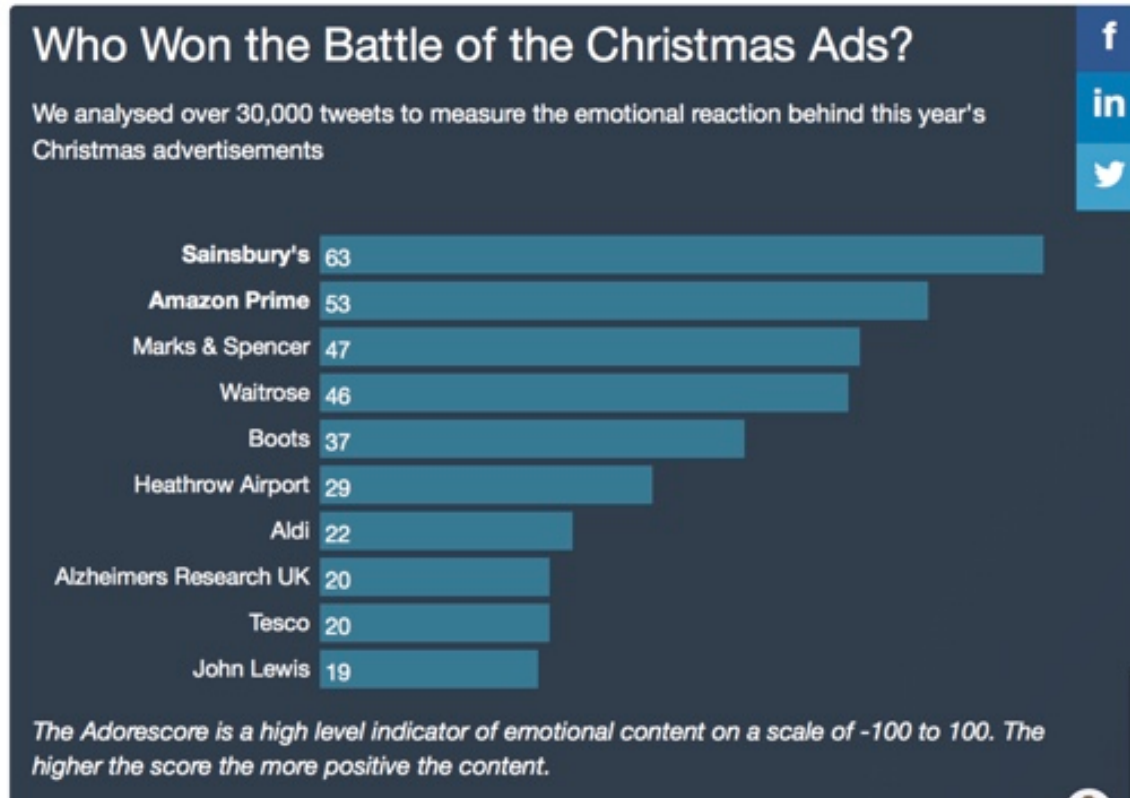
- ✦ 22M trend impressions
- ✦ 6.65M tweet impressions, and
- ✦ 2.56M media views.

## We filled Twitter with “joy”.



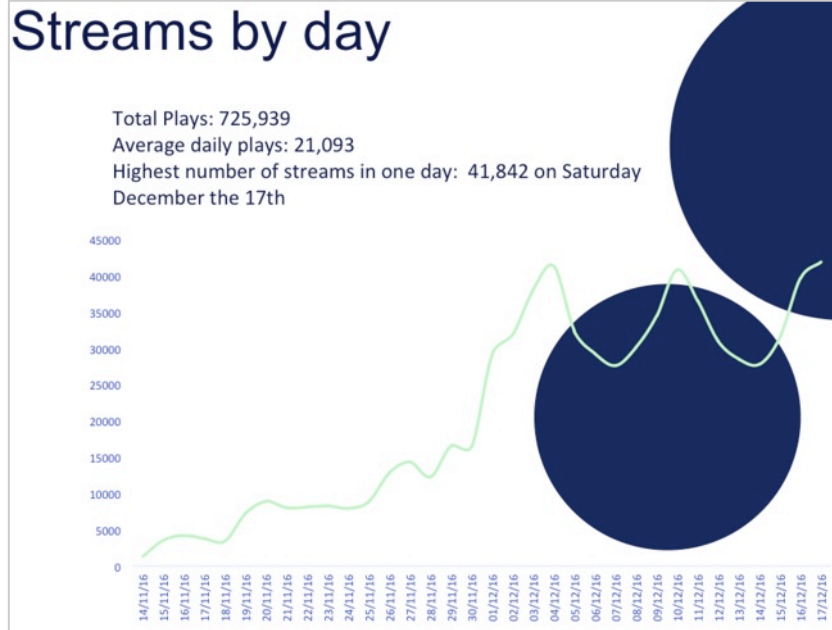
Source: Twitter + Crimson Hexagon, 2016.

## And independent audits reinforced the emotion.



Source: Adoreboard.com

# Our song was streamed almost 1m times on Spotify.



# We made a difference for Great Ormond Street.

The campaign raised

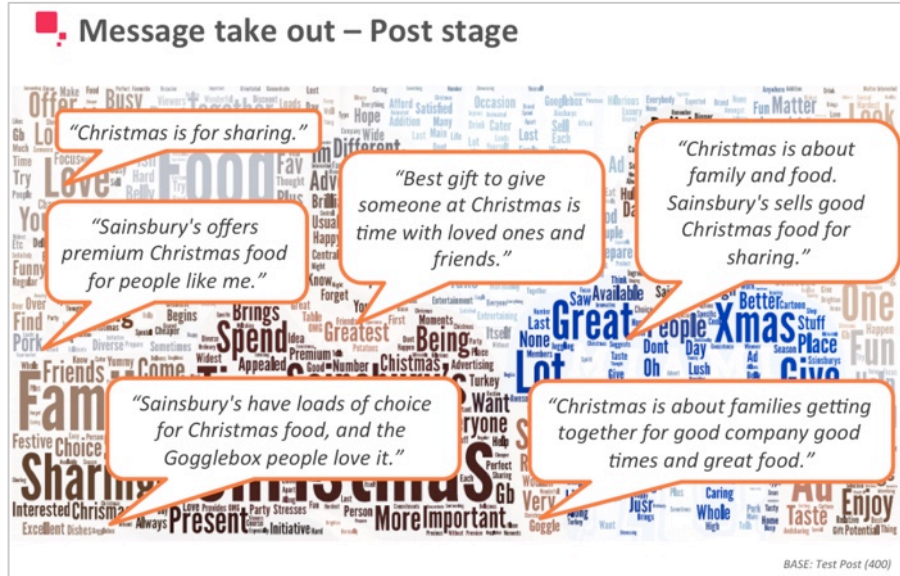
**over half  
a million pounds**

to help fund accommodation for  
parents to spend time with their  
children when they need to stay in  
hospital.

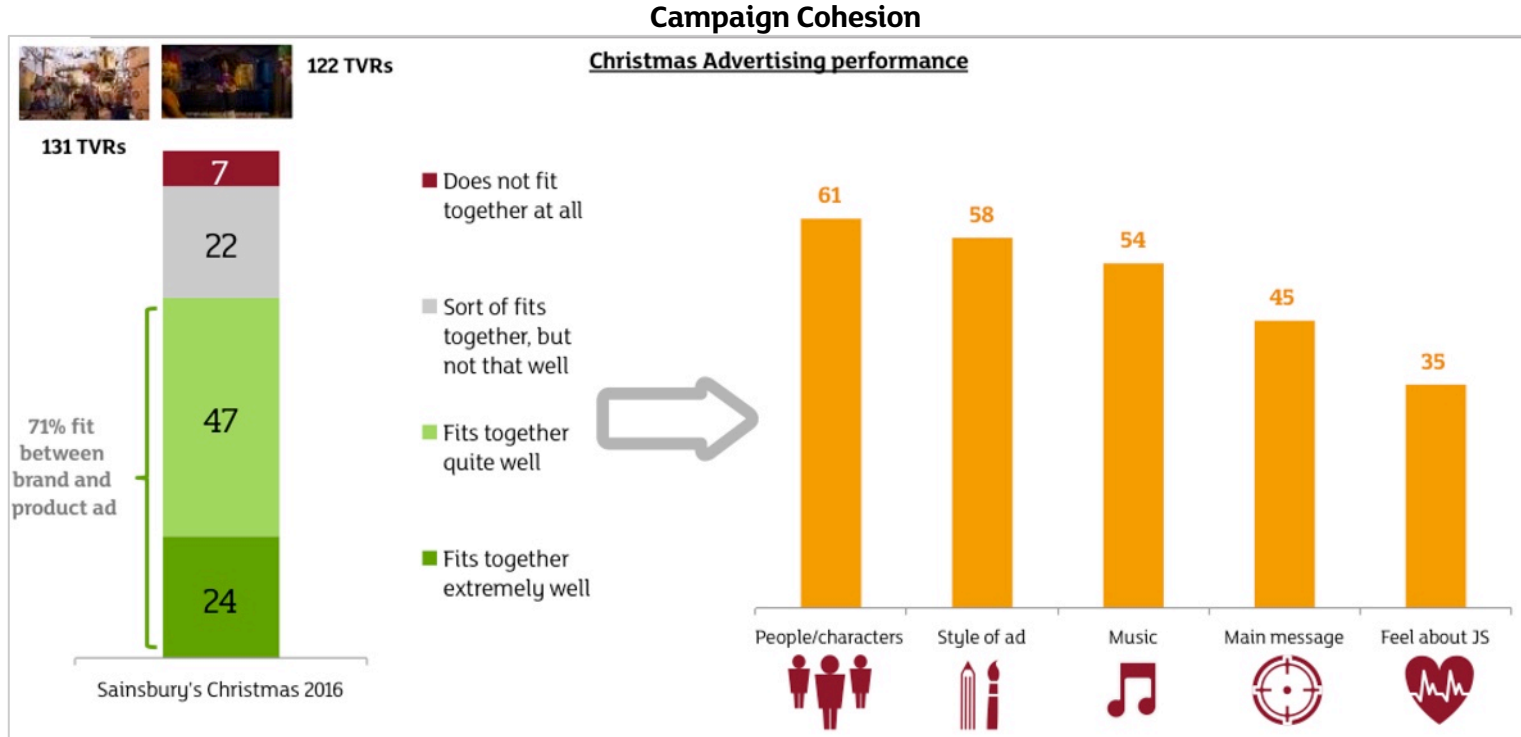


# Our themed Gogglebox break made an impact.

Gogglebox delivered warmth and fame.

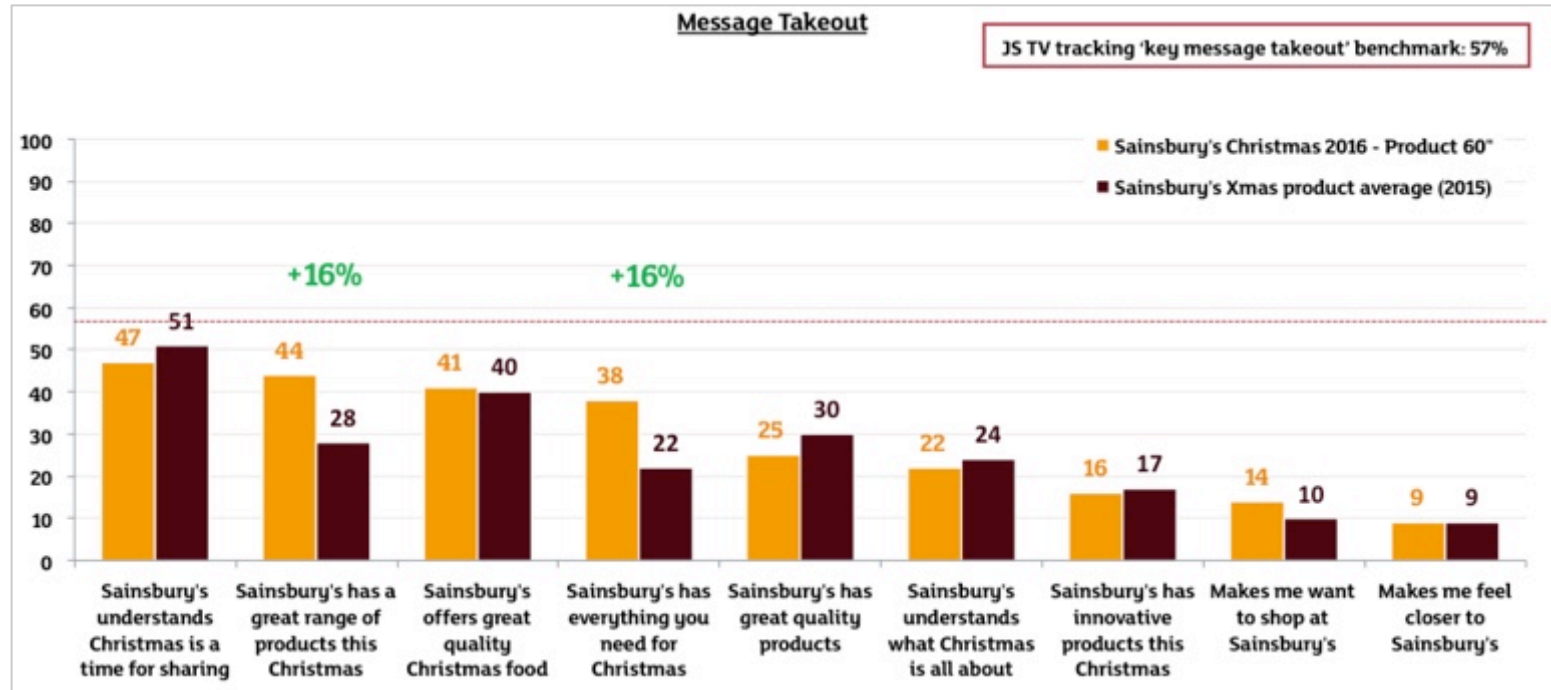


# Our food campaign integrated better and performed better.



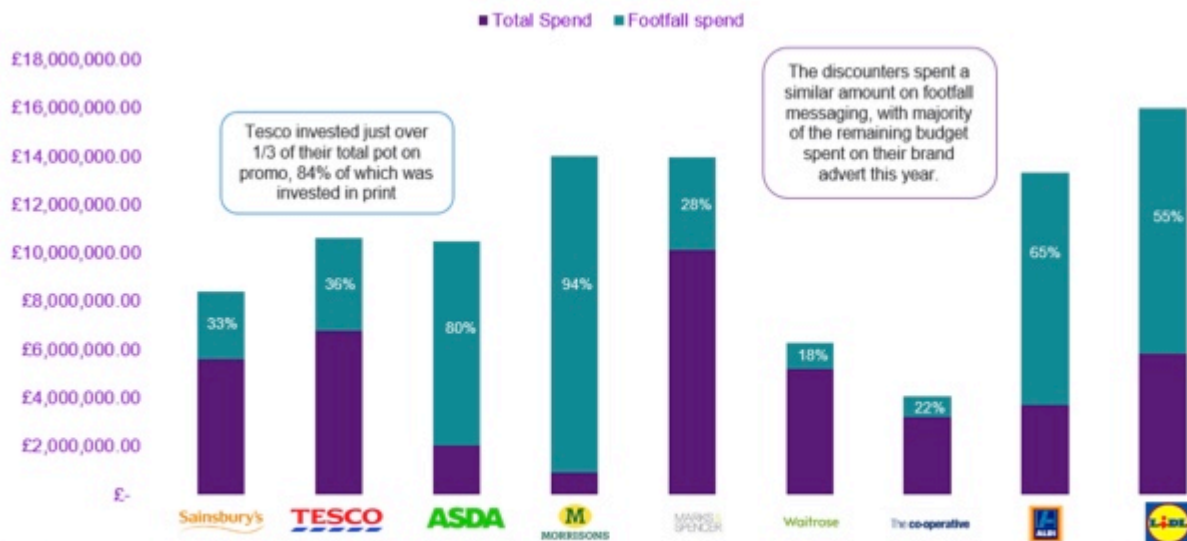
## And not at the expense of product communication (marketing made money work harder).

### Sainsbury's over time



# We invested in emotion, not promotions

The balance of our media spend was spent on connecting customers with the brand, in contrast to many competitors.



phd

Source: Ebiquity: 31<sup>st</sup> October – 25<sup>th</sup> December. TV, Press and Radio only.

Sainsbury's

Sainsbury's

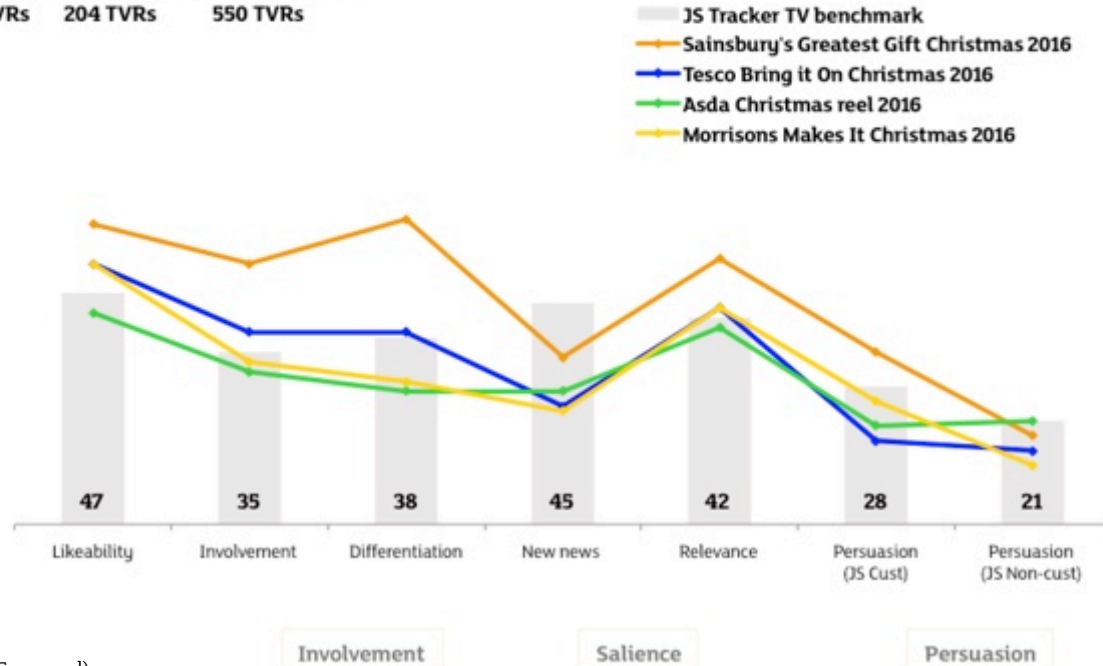
# We engaged better than our direct competitors.

...but it is the most emotionally engaging and relevant of the Big 4's ad campaigns



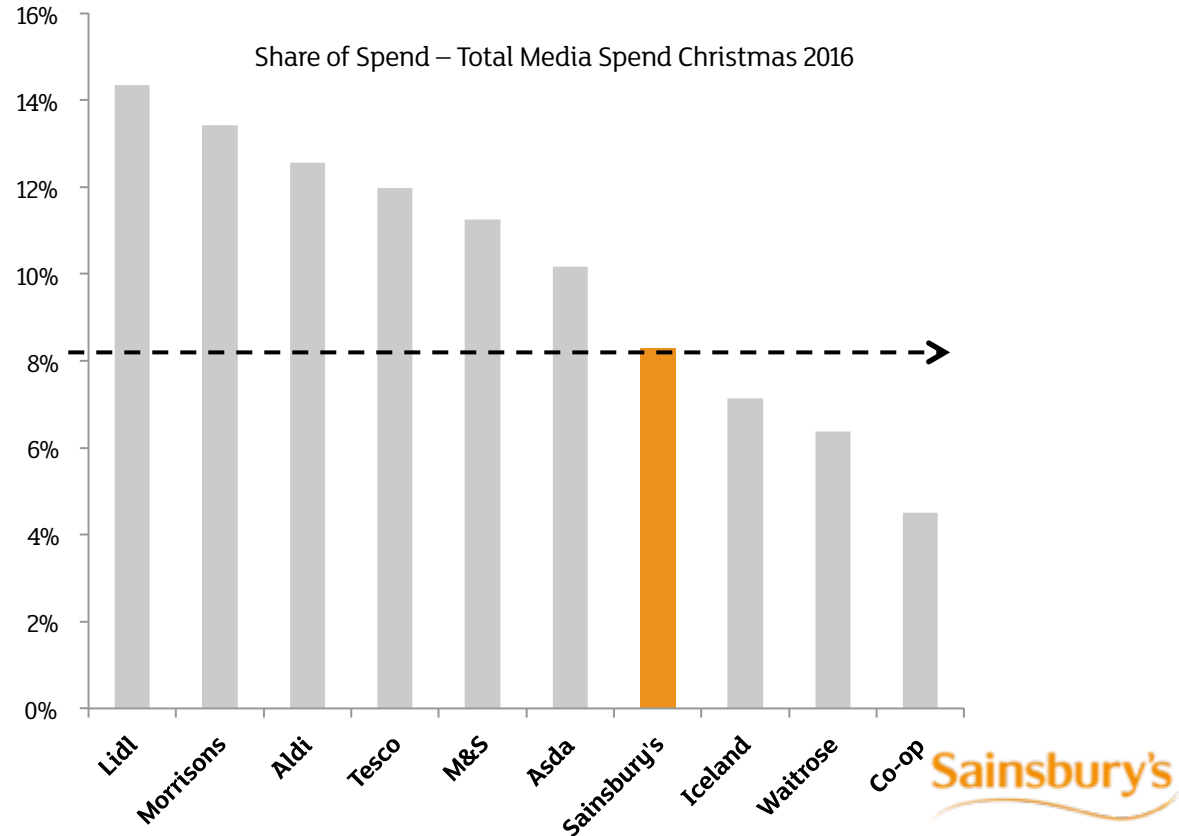
Christmas Advertising performance

On lower spend, our main film produced a better reaction than competitors'.



## And all with a 33% reduction in spend.

For Marketing to deliver great returns to business, our main currency must be creativity, not cash. We reduced our spend YOY by 33%. Only Waitrose, Co-Op and Iceland spent less, the big German discounters using media investment to drive success.



# Marketing helped drive a record number of transactions.

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Marketing at Sainsbury's has a very focused objective – to drive transactions.

The broader financial performance of the business is subject to so many other factors, a single-minded focus on transactions helps keep Marketing doing what Marketing is best at.

And we more than achieved our transactions goals during Christmas 2016.

We had a record Christmas week, with over 30 million customer transactions at Sainsbury's and over £1 billion of sales across the Group.



Mike Coupe, CEO


# After a record Christmas week, our shares surged 6%, surprising some.


**FROM**

**CITYA.M.** ≡

Wednesday 28 September 2016 12:26pm 455 views

**"Sainsbury's footfall is falling short" - analysts react to the retailer's trading update**

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 **Helen Cahill**  
I report on retail and property for City A.M. I have covered the investigation I [...] [Show more](#)

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**CITYA.M.** ≡

Wednesday 11 January 2017 9:12am 393 views

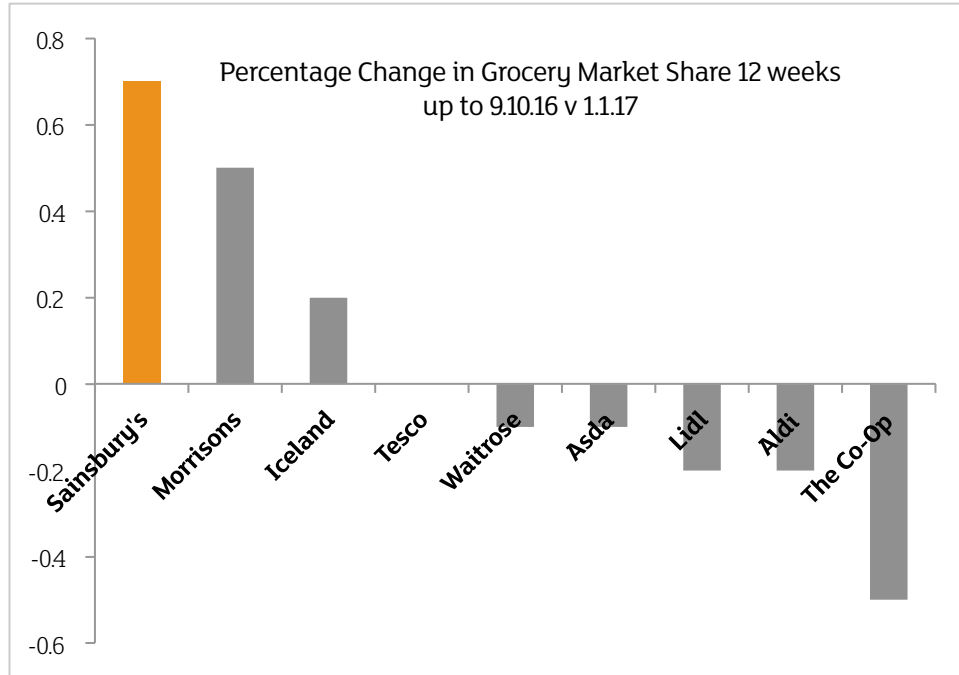
**Sainsbury's shares surged this morning on news of sales growth over Christmas - here's how retail experts reacted**

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 **Caitlin Morrison**  
I'm the deputy digital editor at City A.M., covering breaking news in all sector [...] [Show more](#)

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## And we saw the largest increase in market share.



Raw sales data can be as much about market growth as brand success, but market share shows true relative performance. And ours went up more than anyone else in this quarter.

Morrison's and Iceland were the only other players to show modest growth.

0.7 percentage points of market share are worth:

**+£1.2bn** in annual revenue.

**+£94m** in annual profit.

# We will have delivered significant ROI to the business.

## A note on econometrics

Sainsbury's ROI model was established in 2014, with that Christmas campaign generating **£24.34 per £1 spent**.

This return was generated from a base of:

- ✦ just 29.5m transactions in Christmas week, and
- ✦ a reduction in like for like sales that year (-1.7% excluding fuel, -3.8% including fuel).

Sadly, Sainsbury's no longer operates an econometric model, so we do not have a precise figure for our 2016 activity.

## Calculating our ROI for 2015

But we can use 2014 as a baseline, and estimate ROI, given that our media investment was lower, and yet we delivered 30m+ transactions in Christmas week, and grew the business in like for like sales.

Our increases in efficiency and effectiveness make it highly likely that **the campaign will have delivered in excess of £25 for every £1 we spent.**

## Conclusion – Christmas is for sharing.

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This is a different Christmas story.  
Still one of sharing, but with a new twist.  
It's about reflecting on modern times. Of reminding people about what really matters, and not taking ourselves too seriously.

It's about bringing the nation together and reflecting on the real 'Greatest Gift' at Christmas – the time we spend with the ones we love.  
And, importantly for us, enabling the children and families at Great Ormond Street Hospital to experience the same.  
It's also a story of a brand taking a chance, deviating from a tried and tested formula, instead redefining the category norms.

Ultimately, it's about how when Marketing places a generosity of spirit and extraordinary collaboration at the heart of all our efforts, we can achieve extraordinary things.

Word count: 1997.

