

Jellyfish

Jellyfish at Cannes Lions 2026

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Jellyfish in the spotlight at Cannes Lions

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Jellyfish's Karen Bennett on GEO, AI, Agency Transformation, and Why Cannes Feels Different This Year



"The most important audience you're never going to meet is AI agents. They're increasingly shaping how brands are perceived and how commerce is driven."

— Nick Emery, Global CEO, Jellyfish



[Watch the video](#)

Nick Emery, our Global CEO, talks to The Media Leader's Vincent Thobel to explore how AI is transforming marketing, organizational design and the next generation of agency models.

Can creativity win models and minds?

New research from Brandtech and INSEAD explores whether LLMs respond to creativity like humans do, uncovering what brands need to create for a world of dual audiences and AI-mediated consumer journeys.



“Despite almost no overlap in what AI and humans favor, the answer isn’t two strategies - it’s stronger brand systems.”

- Tom Roach, VP Brand Strategy, Jellyfish

Three key learnings from the research

1. Research found zero correlation between how humans and AI models ranked the same 480 Cannes Lions ads

While humans gravitate towards emotion and storytelling, AI favours descriptive content, clear product visibility and explicit signals. As AI increasingly influences discovery and recommendation, brands need to understand how both audiences interpret creative.

2. Don't build separate creative strategies for humans and AI

Despite these differences, the answer isn't two distinct approaches. The opportunity lies in building stronger brand systems, with consistent messaging and assets that work across both human and machine interpretation.

3. Brand building is becoming an ecosystem challenge

AI models learn from a much wider set of signals, from YouTube content and reviews to creator recommendations and third-party voices. Success depends not just on what brands say, but on how their messages are reinforced across the wider digital landscape.

Explore the research further

One brand system. Two audiences.

The top 10 ads preferred by AI and the top 10 preferred by humans were almost completely different.

Tom's argument was that this shouldn't lead marketers to create separate AI and human creative streams.

The overlap they did find was around:

- Distinctive brand assets
- Category entry points
- Consistency across the brand ecosystem

Despite almost no overlap in what AI and humans favor, the answer isn't two strategies. It's stronger brand systems.

How AI really understands brands

YouTube was cited by models roughly one in four times

Models look for consensus signals before generating recommendations.

Reviews, recommendations and third-party voices influence AI understanding of brands.

Category entry point targeting informed by model analysis delivered:

- Immediate improvements in revenue
- Improved ROAS

AI doesn't just learn from advertising. It learns from everything people say about your brand.

Emotion vs clarity: creative divide

The study found zero correlation between ad rankings by humans and those by AI.

AI preferred:

- Descriptive creative
- Product-focused executions
- Real people featured in ads

Humans preferred:

- Emotion
- Storytelling and narrative structure

Luxury cues that work with humans often showed:

- No effect
- Or sometimes the opposite effect with AI models

Humans reward meaning and emotion. AI rewards clarity and context.

Go deeper into the commentary

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COMMENTARY

What Happens When You Ask AI To Rank 480 Lions Award-Winning Campaigns?

by Joe Mandese , June 22, 2026

Source: Harvard Business Review, INSEAD. Base = January to July 2024.

[Read more here](#)

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"A second crisis of creative effectiveness": Jellyfish, Insead raise dual-audience dilemma as new research shows virtually no overlap on humans and LLM creative scoring

By Nadia Cameron - Publisher | Editor - Marketing

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