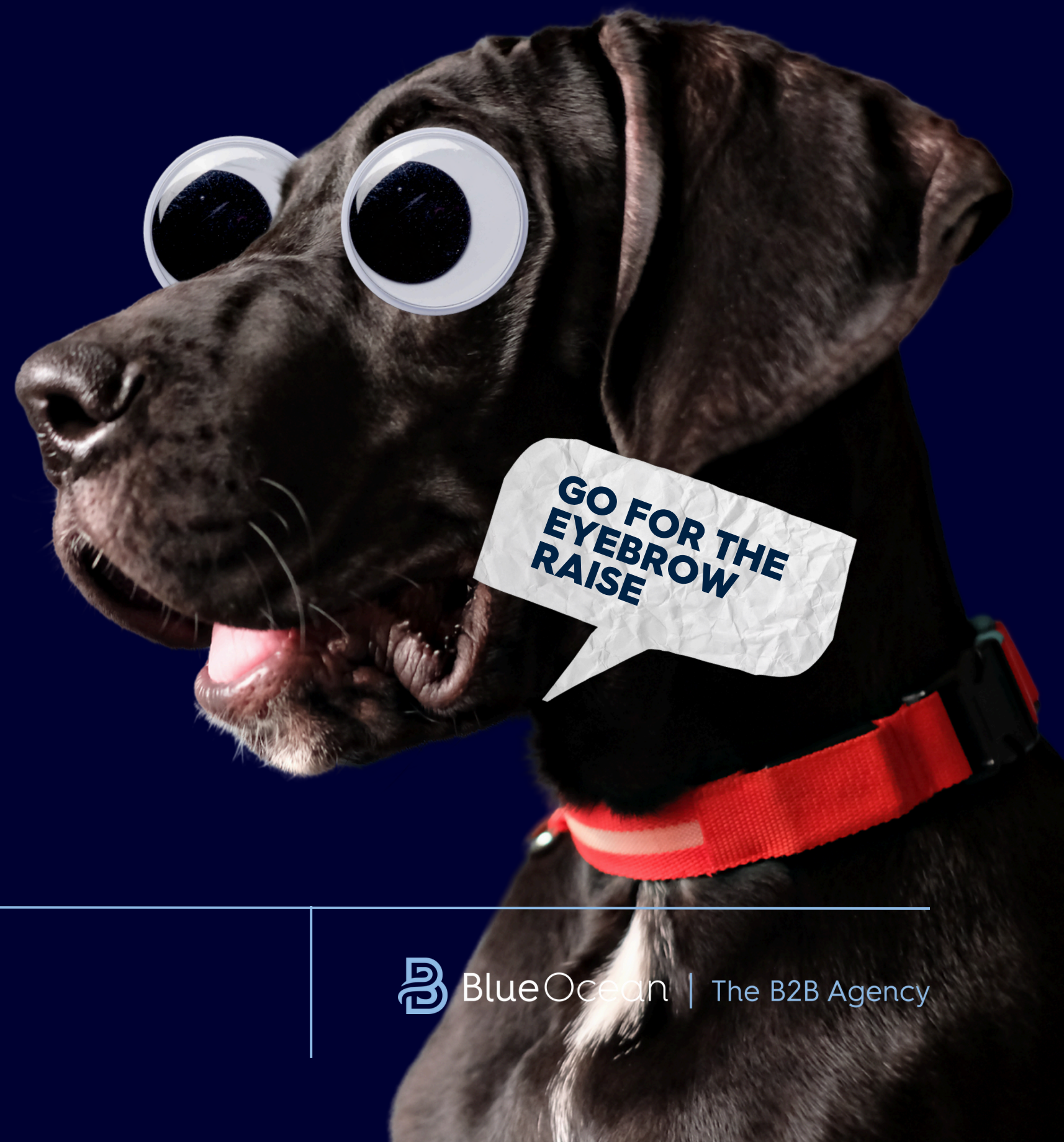


# B2B INSPIRED

How to make  
your campaigns  
11x more  
effective.



In B2B, we shouldn't be afraid to spice up our campaigns.



BlueOcean | The B2B Agency

# If you want results, don't stick to safe.

In B2B marketing, there's a common tendency to stick to the "safe" side—highlighting product features, focusing on rational appeals, and avoiding anything too bold or unconventional.

But research shows that creativity isn't just for consumer brands; it's a powerful tool for B2B marketers to capture attention, and build lasting relationships, particularly in the awareness phase of a campaign.

Marketing effectiveness expert Peter Field has found that [creative campaigns are more than 11 times as effective](#) as non-creative ones. "Creativity isn't a luxury—it's essential to competitive advantage," Field says in his book, *The Long and Short of It*. In B2B, where the stakes are high and the audience is sophisticated, creative approaches can be the difference between being remembered or forgotten.

This B2B strategic insight was inspired by our WEDOB2B podcast episodes with the [Previously Unavailable's James Hurman](#) and the [Dentsu New Zealand's Brett Colliver](#), who both celebrate creativity as a essential ingredient in their B2B marketing mix.



# Why do B2B brands avoid creativity?

Many fear that “creative” campaigns might come across as unprofessional or distract from technical features. But playing it safe can be costly.

## Introducing the ‘beige tax’

Field’s research shows that dull, formulaic marketing drives poor returns because it’s forgettable. Safe campaigns end up costing brands more to achieve the same reach, thanks to what Brett calls the “beige tax.”

According to recent findings, brands that stick to straightforward, product-focused messaging pay up to seven times more for comparable reach than brands that take creative risks.

On the other hand, creatively memorable campaigns cut through the noise, leaving an impression that lasts.

Dull brands  
pay up to

7x

more to reach  
their audience



# You probably remember one of the best examples of bold B2B creativity.

In Volvo's Epic Split Campaign, Jean-Claude Van Damme made us all wince as he did the splits between two moving Volvo trucks. The idea was to demonstrate the precision of the Volvo truck's steering by showing this — frankly quite dangerous — stunt.

The campaign drove a 24% increase in sales the following year, showing that even technical products can benefit from emotionally resonant, visually stunning storytelling.

This aligns with Field's findings on the power of emotional engagement in marketing. Campaigns that connect emotionally are twice as likely to deliver profitable growth, yet only 16% of B2B campaigns include any emotional appeal. This leaves a huge opportunity for B2B brands to stand out by focusing on what makes their products not only functional but genuinely meaningful to their customers.



# Business buyers, just like consumers, respond to creative storytelling .

B2B brands often think that buyers want pure facts and figures, but this product-centric approach can overlook what truly resonates with people.

As James explains,

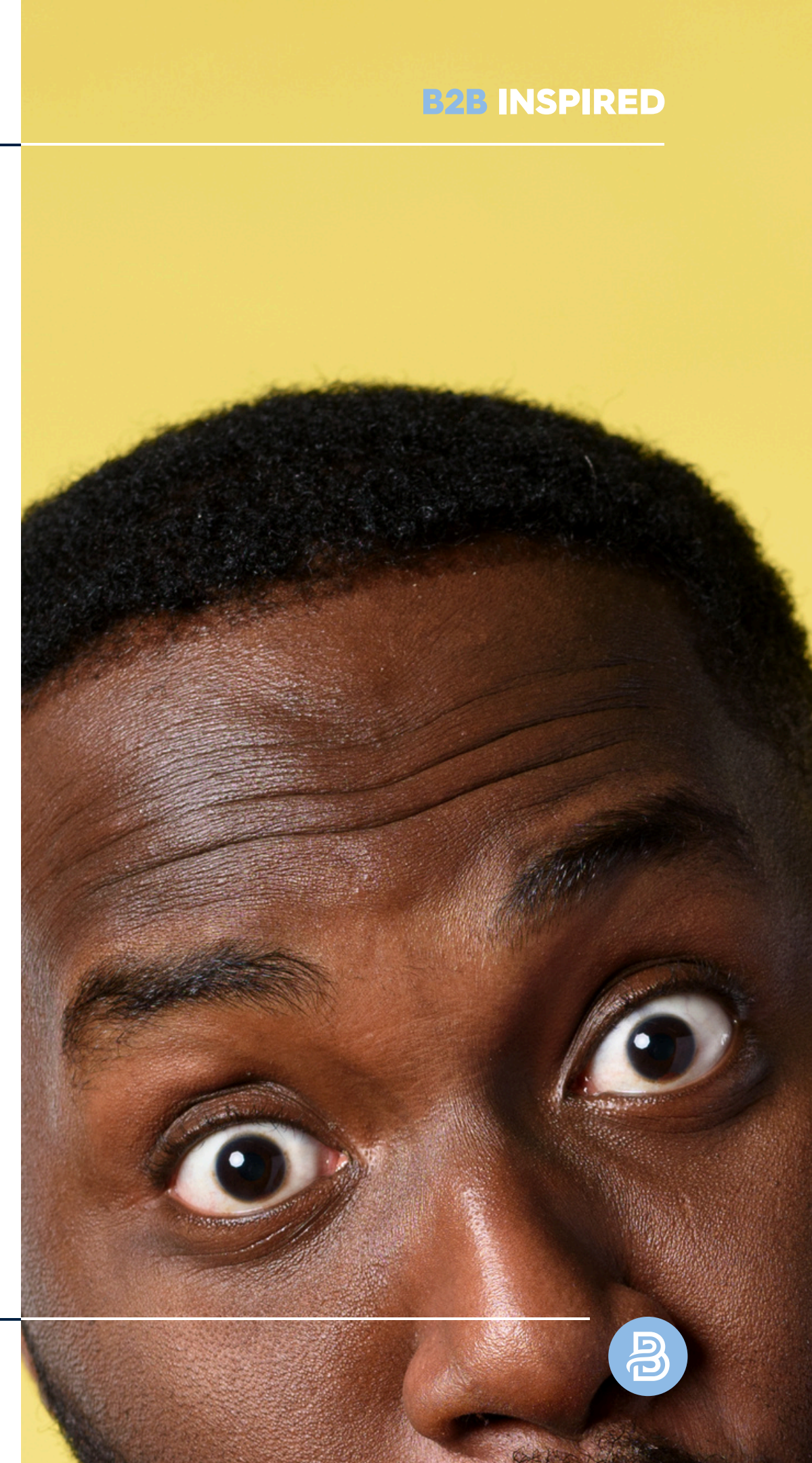
*"The way that brands are built is exactly the same in B2B as it is in B2C."*

**James Hurman**  
Founder/Co-founder of  
Previously Unavailable  
and Tracksuit



Business buyers, just like consumers, respond to creative storytelling that's relevant and engaging.

Brett describes this storytelling approach as the "nods and eyebrows" effect: a great idea starts with familiar truths that make the audience nod, but it should end with an unexpected twist that raises their eyebrows. By balancing professionalism with creativity, brands can stay relevant without losing credibility.







The research is clear:

creativity works.

For brands ready to move beyond safe, product-centric messaging and build campaigns that connect, here are three guiding principles to keep in mind:

**Lead with Emotion:**

Campaigns with emotional appeal generate stronger returns. In B2B, where trust and relationship-building are crucial, emotionally resonant messaging stands out and helps brands stay memorable.

**Clearly Communicate Value:**

Creative storytelling isn't about being flashy—it's about conveying value in a way that connects with your audience on a deeper level. Define your product's value and make it meaningful to the people you're reaching.

**Take Calculated Risks:**

Dull campaigns come at a high cost. By embracing bold, thoughtful creativity, B2B brands can achieve greater impact and drive loyalty. As Field's research shows, the ROI on creativity is high; it's an investment that pays off in both brand building and sales growth.

At BlueOcean, we help B2B brands discover the right mix of creativity, strategy, and insight to move beyond the ordinary. Because in B2B, as in all marketing, the most memorable ideas don't just inform — they inspire.



"Creativity isn't a luxury—  
it's essential to competitive  
advantage"

— PETER FIELD





# B2B INSPIRED

At BlueOcean, we aspire to learn and share as much as we possibly can to inspire fellow Kiwi B2B marketers to be some of the best and brightest in the world.

Follow the WE DO B2B podcast and join the community of marketers who are making waves across New Zealand and abroad.



# WE DO B2B

We eat nothing but B2B marketing for breakfast, lunch and dinner. To find out if we could be a good fit to work together, and get some of this action, please contact us.



## CONTACT US

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