Using implicit associations to define the future sound of Electric Vehicles

Insight Show, June 30th 2011

Kay Robinson

Global Marketing Manager, Harman International Automotive Division

Jerome Linder

Director, Brandphonics – MMR Research Worldwide Ltd.

www.mmr-research.com

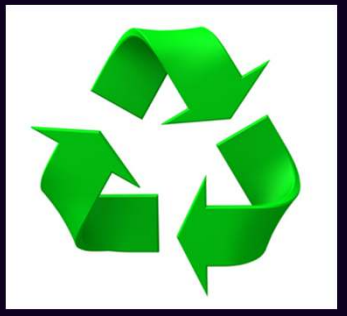
With comments..

I started by asking the audience how many of them were most likely to own an EV in the next 10 years

brandphonics
making brands whole

HARMAN

New technology evolution or (r)evolution
=
New Challenges



brandphonics
making brands whole

HARMAN

Sound

The lack of sound of EV engines is a key challenge because:

Safety – Driving experience

brandphonics
making brands whole

HARMAN

Car Manufacturers don't create sound, they ask experts to do it for them

HARMAN

HARMAN designs, manufactures and markets a wide range of audio and infotainment solutions for the automotive, consumer and professional markets.

20 mio vehicles equipped
$3,5 bn in Sales in 2010
11k employees, 3 continents

HALO SONIC™

- HARMAN and Lotus Engineering partnership
- Have developed two noise management solutions:

cancel unwanted noise inside the car

generate the desired sound of an engine

brandphonics making brands whole

HARMAN

Vehicles can sound however we want them to sound

Possibility to change the sound when we want

Adapting strategy to evolution of the market

Opportunity to create signature sounds for brand, type, model, context !

Great Potential = Great Challenges

- Where do we start? > Blank sheet
- Many directions
- Many questions

brandphonics making brands whole

HARMAN

The most appropriate sound is the one that is the most coherent with the type of vehicle, brand and context

brandphonics
making brands whole

HARMAN

2 similar cars in the same context may have the same engine noise on paper – a hum, but a Ford will most likely sound different than a BMW – the question is how different? Well that depends on the meaning we associate with each brand, type of vehicle and thus sound.

Brand	Type	Context	Sound
Ford	Family Car	Urban Traffic	Hum
BMW	Family Car	Urban Traffic	Hum

Friendly
Fun
Youthful

Serious
Respectable
Sophisticated

brandphonics making brands whole

HARMAN

The most appropriate sound is the one that is the most coherent with type of vehicle, brand and context

It’s a sound that conveys the same values; the same meanings

brandphonics making brands whole

HARMAN

Brand, vehicle type, sound meanings are

Implicit associations

what we feel, our impressions,
and the meanings we associate

intuitive, non-conscious

brandphonics
making brands whole

HARMAN

3 types of Implicit Associations

Functional **Emotional** **Abstract**

Conceptualisations

Conceptual associations

brandphonics making brands whole

HARMAN

4 rules of Conceptual Associations

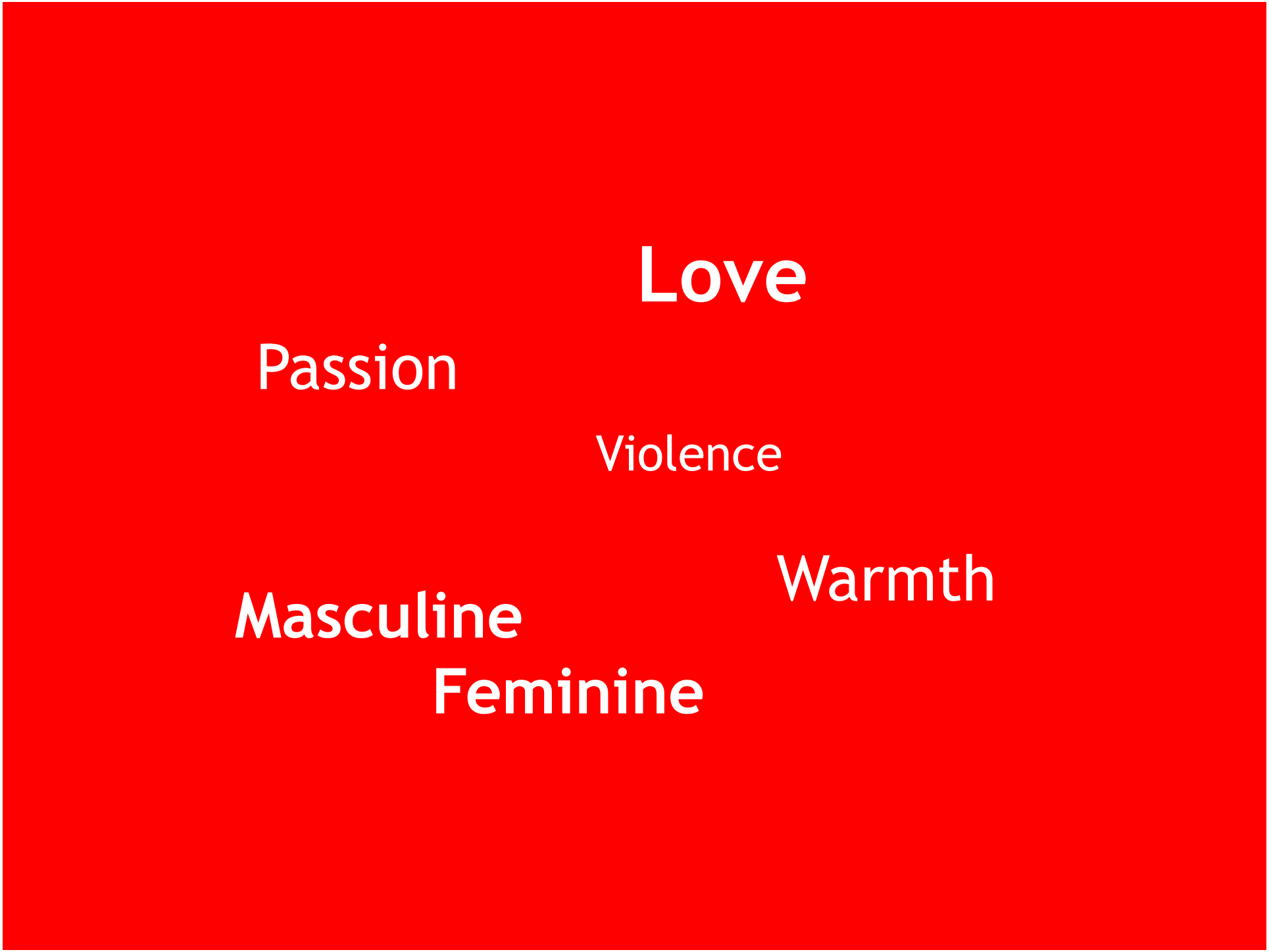
brandphonics
making brands whole

HARMAN

1. Everything has a Conceptual Cloud

brandphonics
making brands whole

HARMAN


Love
Passion
Violence
Warmth
Masculine
Feminine

2. Conceptualisations play a key role in decision making

brandphonics making brands whole

HARMAN

If we had to choose a home insurance policy from 4 policies of the same price, but from 4 different companies we would still choose a company rather than another because of the meaning we associate with them – i.e. we choose Zurich because we feel an insurance should be serious and confident..

ZURICH	AVIVA	direct line	HALIFAX
Serious	*Dependable*	*Friendly*	*Traditional*
Confident	*Uncomplicated*	*Honest*	*Serious*

3. Knowing the implicit associations is a condition of success

brandphonics making brands whole

HARMAN

‘*Most liked*’ doesn’t mean ‘*most successful*’

‘*Most successful*’ doesn’t mean ‘*most liked*’

These are just 4 examples that show that explicit measures (liking, preferences, opinions) are not enough to create a successful product, the market is full of examples; brands that really want to differentiate need to take into account the implicit and this at all touch points (i.e. sound for EV, packaging, ads, product)

4. Implicit associations are hidden, non-conscious, intuitive

Yet accessible with the right tools!

brandphonics making brands whole

HARMAN

Brandphonics was specifically designed to reveal implicit associations

quantitatively

by allowing consumers to express how they feel

intuitively

brandphonics
making brands whole

HARMAN

How?

By giving consumers:

Conceptual Lexicon

Simple & Intuitive Data collection Methods

Analysis:
Conceptual profiles
Comparative measures

brandphonics making brands whole

HARMAN

Back to our research..

Using implicit associations to define the future sound of Electric Vehicles

brandphonics making brands whole

HARMAN

Complete Research spectrum

1st stage – Explorative research - Opinions

- Understand needs & expectations towards EVs & petrol cars
- Define what type of sounds are most appropriate for EVs - explicitly

2nd stage – Explorative research – Conceptual Associations

- Reveal conceptual meaning of vehicle types and sound prototypes
- Provide different sound directions; incl. conceptual sound mapping

3rd stage – Creation of sound concepts (electric/synthetic and replica petrol)

4th stage: Sound concept evaluation

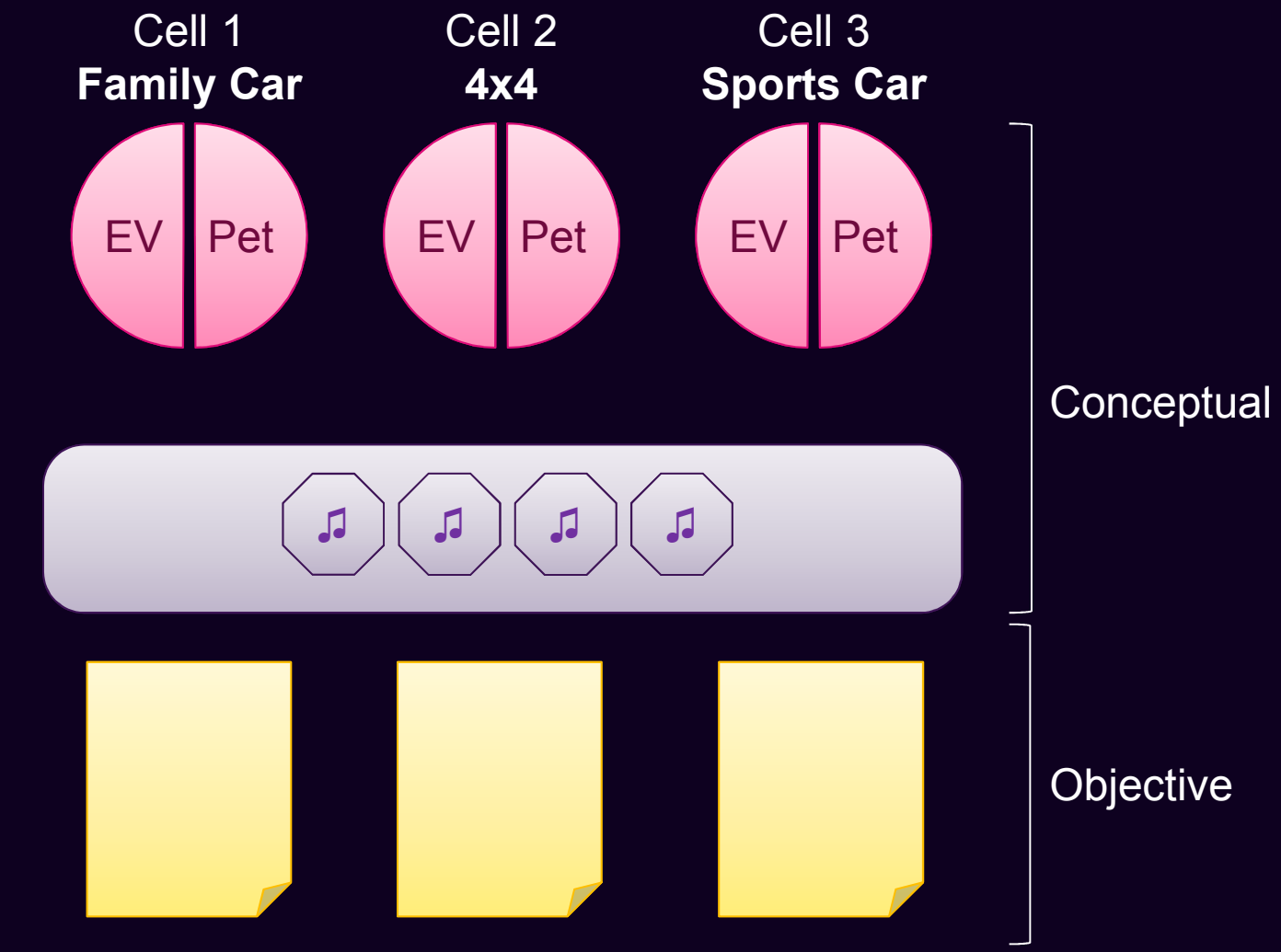
- Conceptual profiling of new sound concepts and car types
- Conceptual profiling of selected brands
- Measure of brand and concept fit; conceptual sound mapping

5th stage – Development of Sound Toolbox

brandphonics making brands whole

HARMAN

Stages 1-2 : The Methodology



brandphonics making brands whole

HARMAN

Setting the scene

Stage 1 – Opinions

- Type of engine sound is linked with the driving experience
  - 4x4, sports cars, younger drivers > replica petrol (60%)
  - Family cars: equally divided between electric/synthethised and replica petrol (50/50)
- Sound level of 'petrol engines' should be the same (4x4, sports, young) or quieter (family, women)
- Sound level of 'electric engines' should be
  - Quieter (all)
  - As well as modern and smooth, rather a 'hum' or 'whirr' (tick list)

brandphonics making brands whole

HARMAN

Setting the scene

Stage 1 – Opinions

- Sound needs to be linked to acceleration/deceleration
- Sound level should increase when accelerating and decelerating

- Respondents are highly interested in the ability to change sound to suit context

- Respondents believe the sound should differ and be recognisable by manufacturer and by type
  - Linked with driving experience

Clear indication of the great potential for Harman to develop sound signatures

brandphonics making brands whole

HARMAN

Stage 2 – Conceptual Associations

brandphonics
making brands whole

HARMAN

Stage 2 - part 1

- The research provides us with complete emotional and functional profiles for all car types and potential engine types

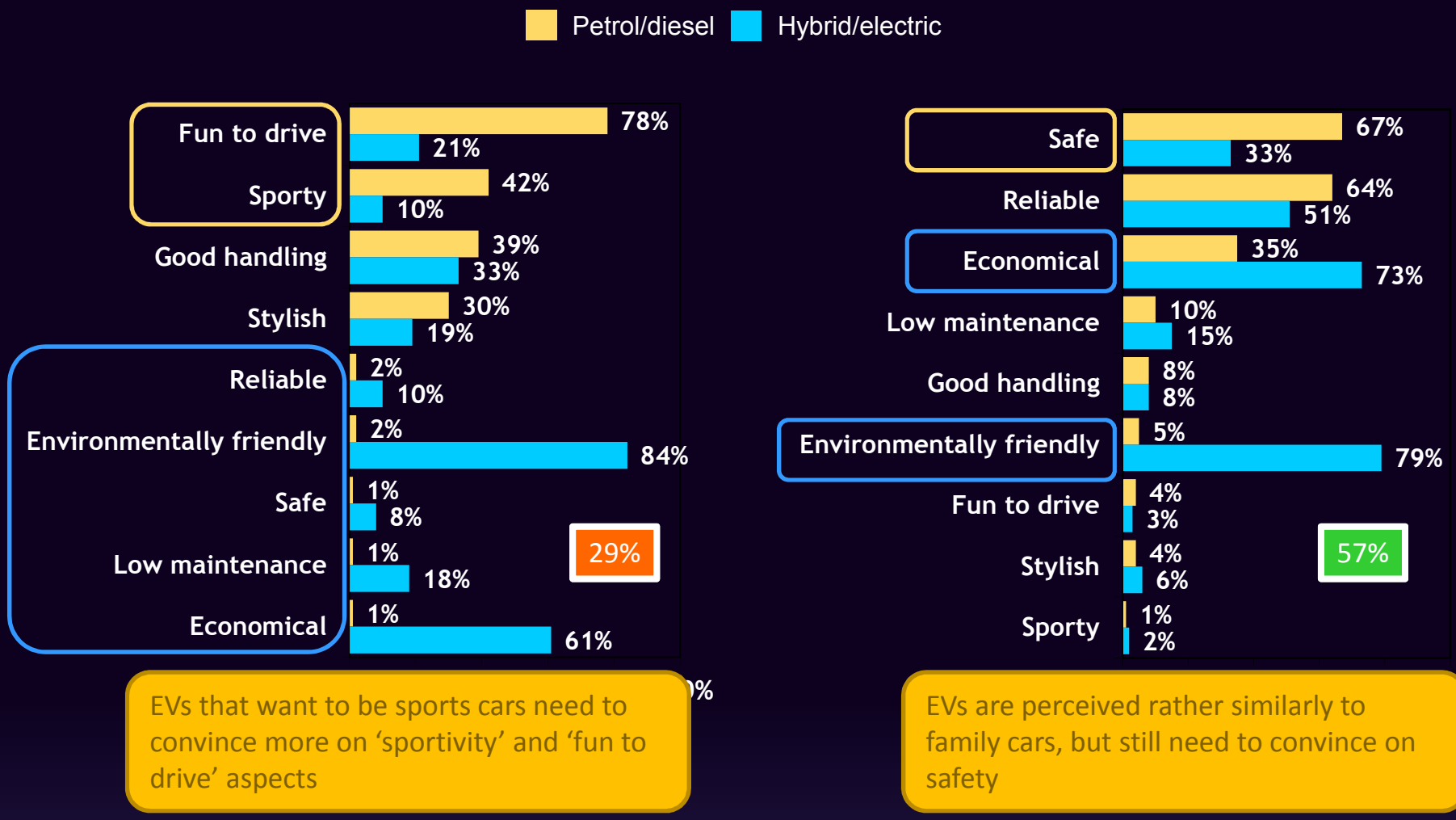
	Family	4x4	Petrol
EV	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓
Petrol	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓

brandphonics making brands whole

HARMAN

Functional profile example

Sports Car vs. Family Car



EVs that want to be sports cars need to convince more on 'sportivity' and 'fun to drive' aspects

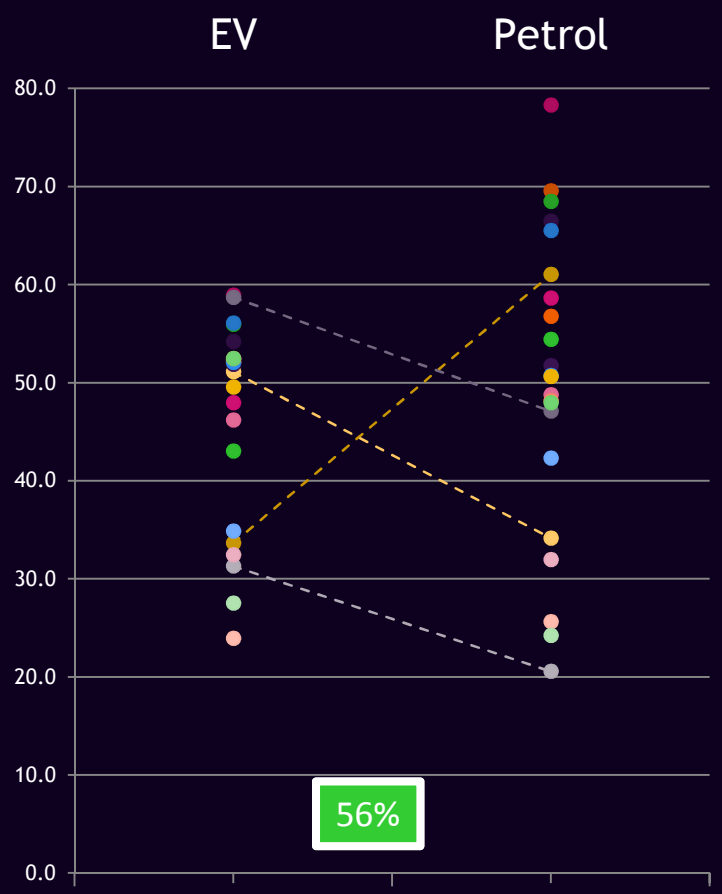
EVs are perceived rather similarly to family cars, but still need to convince on safety

Emotional profile example

Family Car

Key Emotional Equities

- **Trustworthy**
- **Trendy**
- Easygoing
- Confident
- Approachable
- **Adventurous**
- Quirky
- Traditional
- Irritating



Key Emotional Equities

- **Trustworthy**
- **Reassuring**
- Confident
- Approachable
- Easygoing
- Traditional
- Trendy
- Quirky
- Irritating

brandphonics making brands whole

HARMAN

Stage 2 - part 2

- 4 potential engine sounds are tested
- The research provides us with:
  - An explicit measure of their appropriateness vs. car type
  - complete emotional and functional profiles of 4 types of potential engine sounds

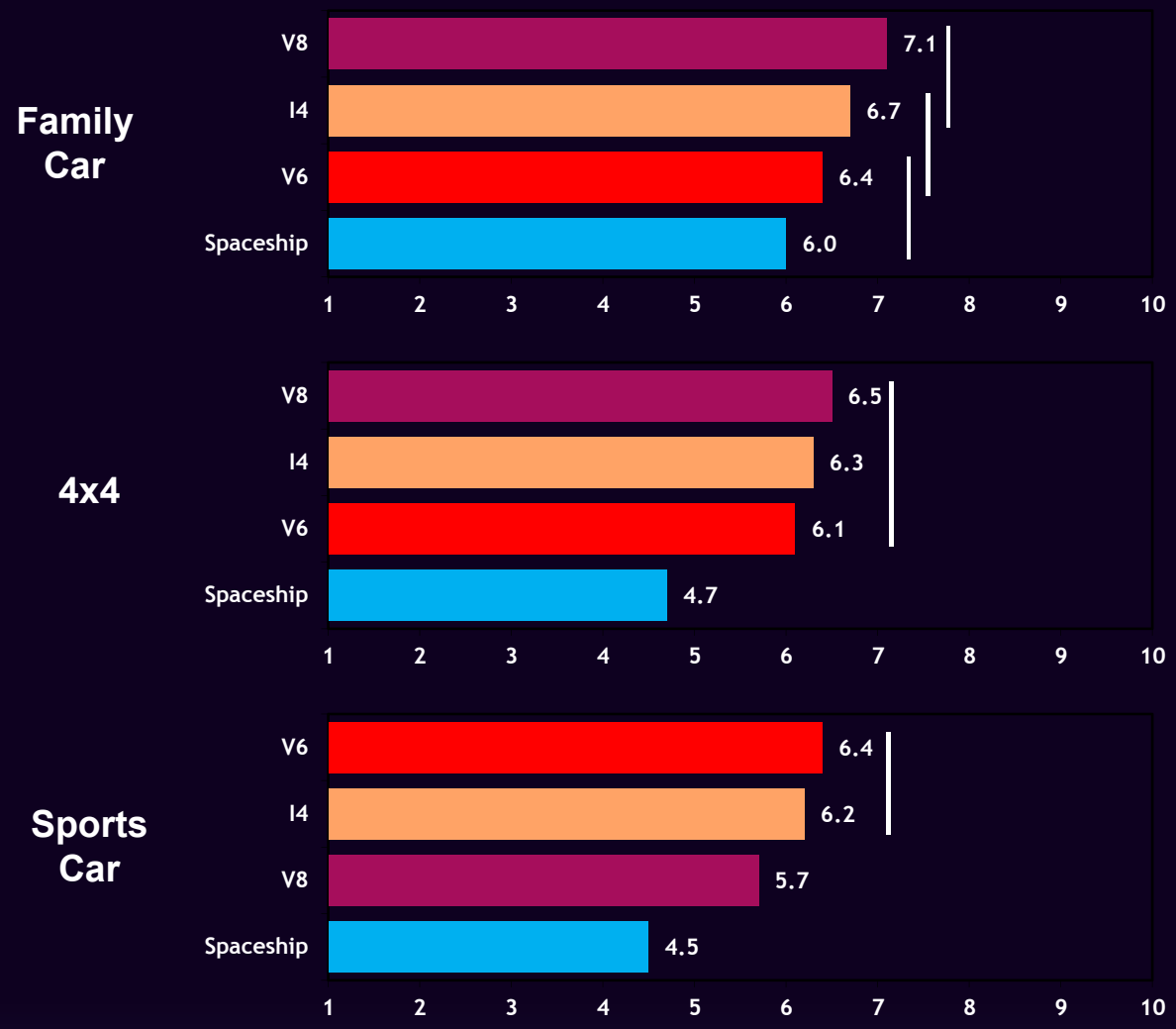
EV – Spaceship	Petrol 4 Cylinder	Petrol V6	Petrol V8	EV
✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓

- We measure their fit with a conceptual EV profile

brandphonics making brands whole

HARMAN

Explicit measure of Appropriateness



V8 L4

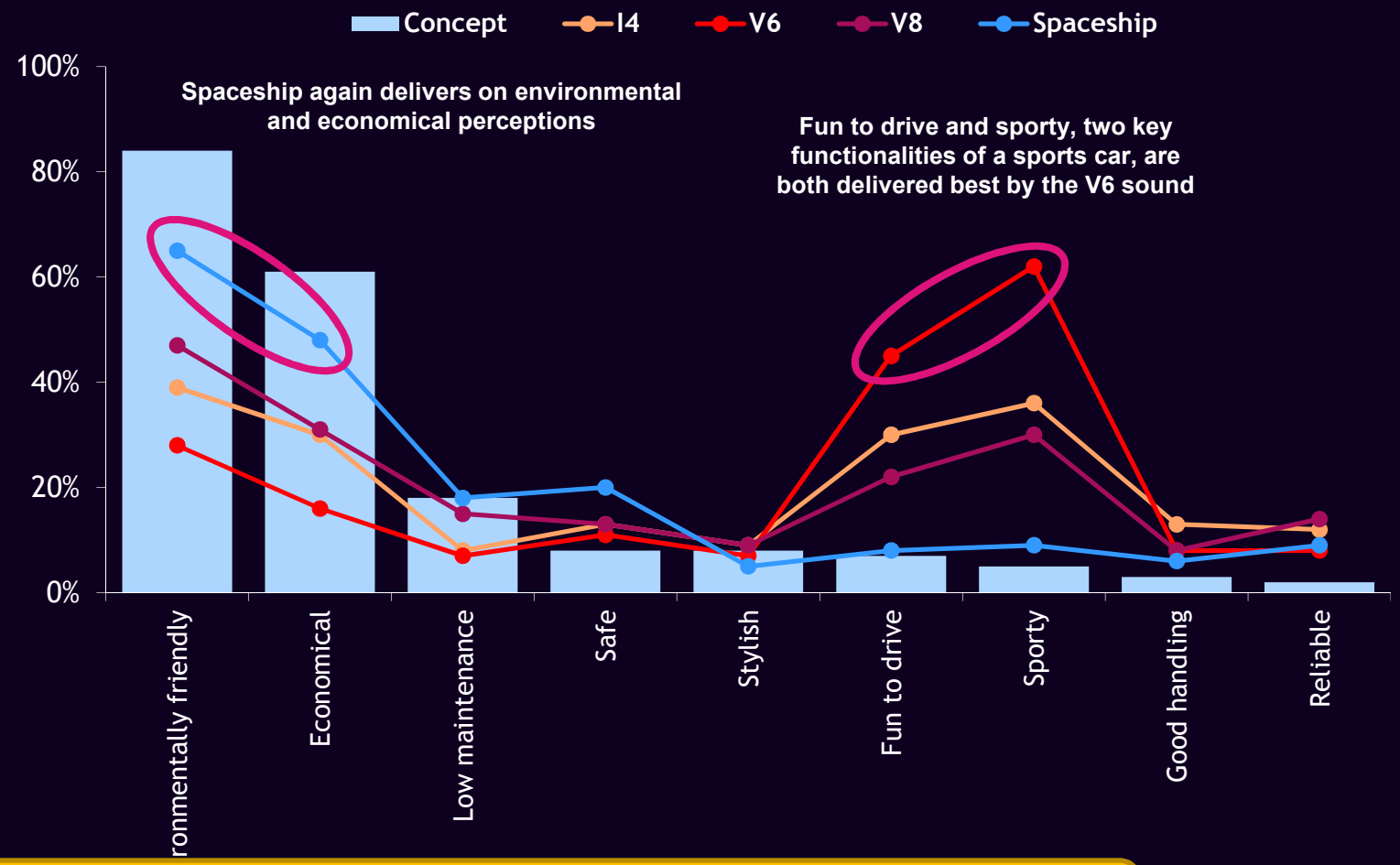
V8 L4

V6 L4

brandphonics making brands whole

HARMAN

Functional profiles of Sounds vs. EV

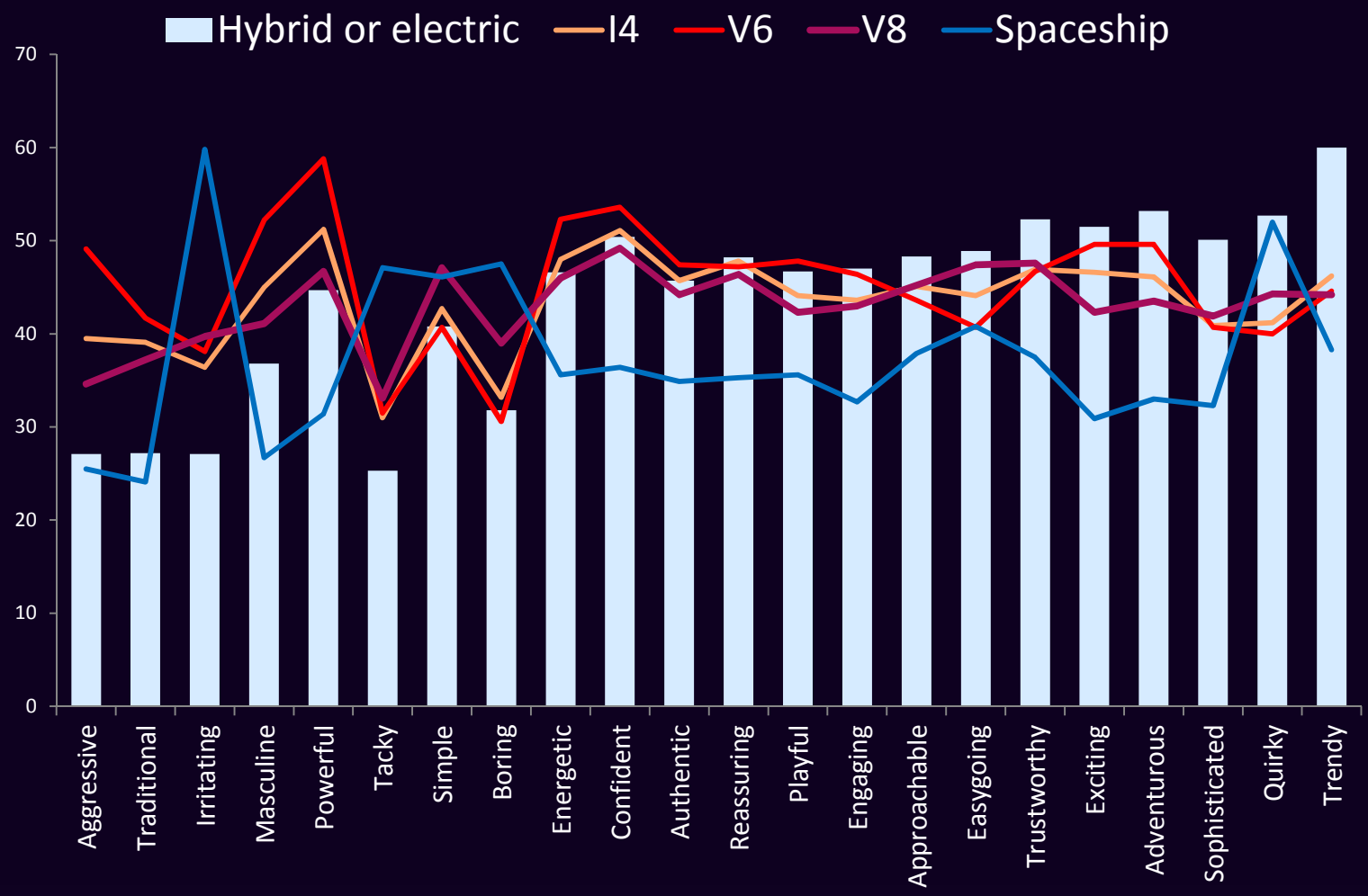


This shows that even a silly sound like the spaceship conveys functional associations such as 'environmently friendly'

dphonics
making brands whole

HARMAN

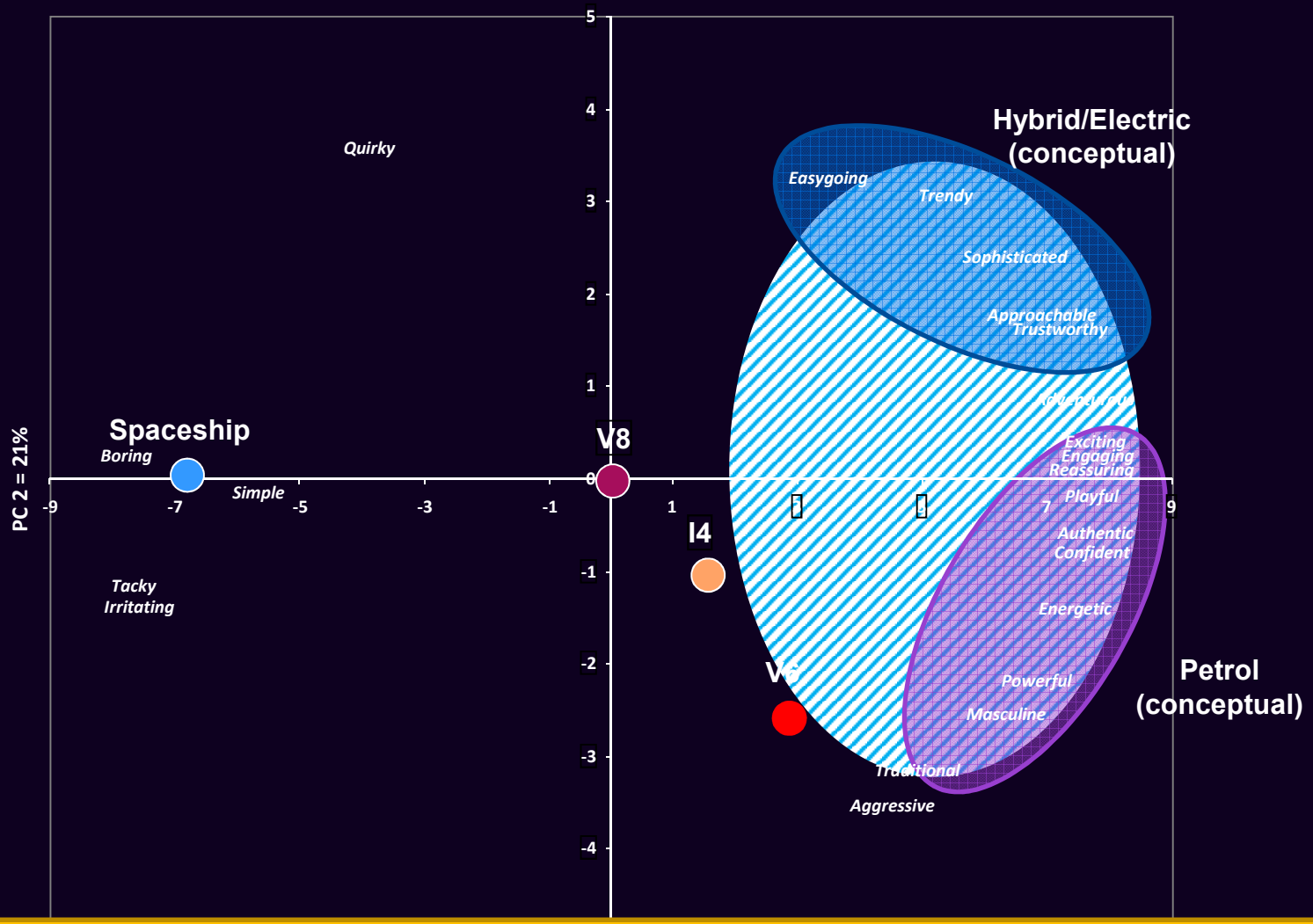
Emotional profiles of Sounds vs. EV



brandphonics making brands whole

HARMAN

Emotional Sound Mapping – Sports Car



With this map we can see how each engine sound is located relative to the conceptual profiles of the EV and Petrol engines. In order for sounds to be relevant to these car types, Harman needs to shape engine sounds that fall into the patterned area.

This mapping gets even more strategically effective when we include brand and car type profiles. Which will be the case in the 4th stage.

Defining the future sound of Electric Vehicles is about -

brandphonics
making brands whole

HARMAN

- Understanding the explicit and the implicit -

- Understanding the functional and the emotional of ALL elements (brand, vehicle type, engine type) -

Aligning all touch points to create a coherent and engaging driving experience

brandphonics HARMAN

I wanted to finish with the revealing quote from Martin Lindstrom I found on Fastcompany.com 2 days earlier

When a brand truly lives its vision across every touch point and in every possible scenario - predictable and unpredictable, it becomes clear how [strong] the brand is

If a brand can [express] its core values without resorting to a detailed description, then the brand becomes a full representation of its vision

Implicit !

Martin Lindstrom
Fastcompany.com
June 27, 2011

What's interesting about this is that he's talking about business cards!

Like sounds, like shape, every touch point needs to convey the values of the brand – it takes Brandphonics methodologies to reveal exactly what they are…

Thank you

Jerome Linder – jerome@brandphonics.com
@brandphonics

Kay Robinson – kay.robinson@harman.com