

## The visionaries

“Online opens up the brain and drops its resistance to change”

## Robin Wright

President of Engine and WCRS

Region: UK

Interview by Kate Bulkley

A longtime advocate of the arts and business, Robin Wright has spent his 40-year career in advertising, starting as a copywriter and leading the management buyout of agencies Engine and WCRS from Havas in 2004. But what really turns on the peripatetic Wright is the human brain.

He is president of both Engine and WCRS and he continues to be involved with campaign development – recently becoming the subject of a blogpost when he was spotted on the London underground sporting a ring made of a block of Lego, one of his agency's clients. For the last several years Wright has spent a lot of time studying brain science, even publishing a book on the subject in 2007:

*The Peacock's Tail and the Reputation Reflex: The Neuroscience of Art Sponsorship.*

TV and online and what Wright calls

“experiential marketing” are all parts of the media mix but a better understanding of how the brain processes information is crucial to developing campaigns and content for brands that will resonate more effectively with all of us.

“Many of the decisions made by consumers, certainly about what brands they buy, are made emotionally and this comes from a certain part of the brain called the amygdala and it is the area television is very effective in reaching,” he says.

So while identifying and collecting ‘big data’ may be the flavour du jour among television executives, Wright argues that it is the emotional and not the rational part of the human brain to which we need to pay more attention.

“Old-fashioned TV is having something of a revival, partly because the part of the brain that makes big decisions is the emotional part and that is where television reaches,” explains Wright. “TV is good at reinforcement but it is not particularly good at changing people's behaviour. Online on the other hand is very good at that because with every click of the mouse it's behaviour and that opens up the brain and drops its resistance to change.”

For Wright, putting the engagement generated through online media together with the reinforcement attributes of television and then adding what he calls “experiential media” is the Holy Grail.

He cites the recent Lynx Apollo campaign, which has TV, online and the experience of winning a ride in space as component parts for selling this particular men's deodorant.

“The great campaigns either instinctively or by using brain science find ways to leverage broadcast television, online media and experiential,” says Wright. “This is the most exciting place to be.”

Brain  
science