

Brand trust - It's in the eyes

 By [John Laurence](#)

3 Aug 2015

If you have seen any of the *Planet of the Apes* movies, you were probably amazed at how eerily human-like the apes are. Unlike some members of my family, they hold the remarkable ability to effectively communicate and display real emotion...

The creators of these apes use a little cheat to help this process.



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In contrast to normal apes, the movie primates have large whites around the iris of their eyes (sclera). If you look carefully at other animals, you will notice that humans are the only species to have this. We use the whites of the eyes to be able to judge the gaze direction of another person and thus infer valuable information about their emotions and intentions.

Having studied many hours of eye-tracking footage from advertising, I can't stress enough how important the eyes are to effective communication. If there is a human on the screen and that person is engaging the audience, then people will be looking up and down between their mouths and eyes, reading useful extra evidence into what the person is saying.

If the actor is providing a stoic, impassive performance, the audience's attention will stray to other elements of the scene. Engagement plunges, emotions flat line. You've lost your audience to the voyeuristic allure of their friends' superior Facebook existences.



Eye-tracking heat map

Trust between humans is conveyed through the eyes.

People buy brands that they trust.

The eyes are the windows to your brand.

ABOUT JOHN LAURENCE

John is MD of HeadSpace Neuromarketing and is an experienced marketer with over 15 years in the marketing and advertising industry. As well as having worked in marketing research, he has headed the marketing divisions of two blue-chip global brands in South Africa and has developed strategy for several well-known brands. Contact him on tel +27(0)83 230 8764 or email john@head-space.biz.

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