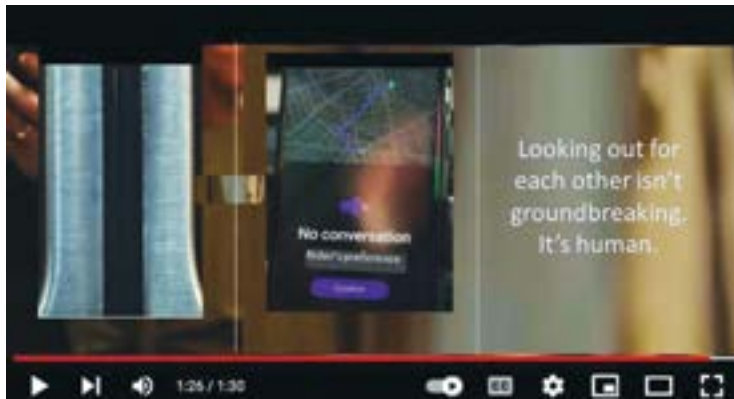




Watch this Amica Insurance ad at <https://tinyurl.com/Amica2024>

Which **brand personality** trait does this commercial create the most?

- Sincere —
- Exciting —
- Competent —
- Rugged —
- Sophisticated —

Photo Quiz

15.1

Synopsis: The commercial opens with a man running down the steps of a subway station, but the doors close barely a second earlier. The commuters inside were too busy reading their phone screens to stop the door from closing. Next, we see a woman holding an umbrella in the rain getting into a ride share where the driver sees a message on his phone: "No conversation. Rider's preference." So, the driver drives aloof and sad. Next, a food delivery person shows up at an apartment door and the customer texts "You can leave it at the door." At a supermarket, the self-checkout is stuck and the customer looks in vain for store help. Next, we see two cars on the road brought to a halt face-to-face due to an accident, and an Amica representative picks up the phone in real time. From this point on, the commercial depicts a re-enactment of the same scenes except that this time there is human-to-human, face-to-face interaction: e.g., the food customer opens the door, the rideshare rider engages in conversation, the subway commuters hold the door open for the person running to board. And then the tagline: Amica: Empathy is our best policy. (Created by the ad agency Mother.)

BRAND COOLNESS

What makes a brand cool? This question has long perplexed marketers. Marketing scholars Caleb Warren and Margaret Campbell recently provided a research-based answer. They found that to be cool, brands have to have bounded autonomy. Autonomy can be defined as having a will of one's own and acting according to one's will, one's character, without being constrained by consideration of others' desires or expectations. Others' expectations are, naturally, reflective of how things are done by people at large, i.e., what the prevailing norm is. Autonomy defies prevailing norms. That means to be cool, products or brands must be unconventional, different from the existing brands in form or in substance.

However, such autonomy must be bounded—that means it should be a modest departure from the norm, not an extreme departure. It should still not cross over into the zone of the unacceptable. Unconventional yes, but unacceptable no. Of course, not everyone embraces cool brands. Researchers also found that only consumers with some need for autonomy embrace cool brands. Autonomy entails standing apart from the crowd; coolness requires being on the edge. The two go together.

A brand can be cool either in its substance (brand's performance and design) or in the image it creates by association or through communications. Thus, iPod was cool on arrival because of its functionality and aesthetics, but also because its ads showed images of silhouettes of hip people sporting white earbuds. Old Spice became cool largely due to its unconventional (but not offensively so) ad campaign featuring Isaiah Mustafa in *The Man Your Man Could Smell Like* commercials.

Further reading: Warren, C. and Campbell, M. (2014), "What Makes Things Cool? How Autonomy Influences Perceived Coolness," *J. of Cons. Res.*, 41(2), 543-563.

