

# GETTING TO THE HEART OF A PRODUCT LAUNCH

*A launch is a difficult thing. There's a lot on the line, a significant investment in resources and months' worth of hard work. And it might all go spectacularly wrong.*

# A CHALLENGING PROCESS

A launch is much like spaceflight, when you think about it. And while we are less concerned about explosions, some aspects of our launches are tougher than a rocket scientist's. Hear me out.

You see a rocket launch has been calculated, simulated and tweaked to the nth degree.

The fundamental physics and chemistry are predictable and follow formulae. We, on the other hand, are at the whims of human nature. Largely predictable, yes, but if loo-roll shortages tell us anything, it's that there's always an element of chaos at play.

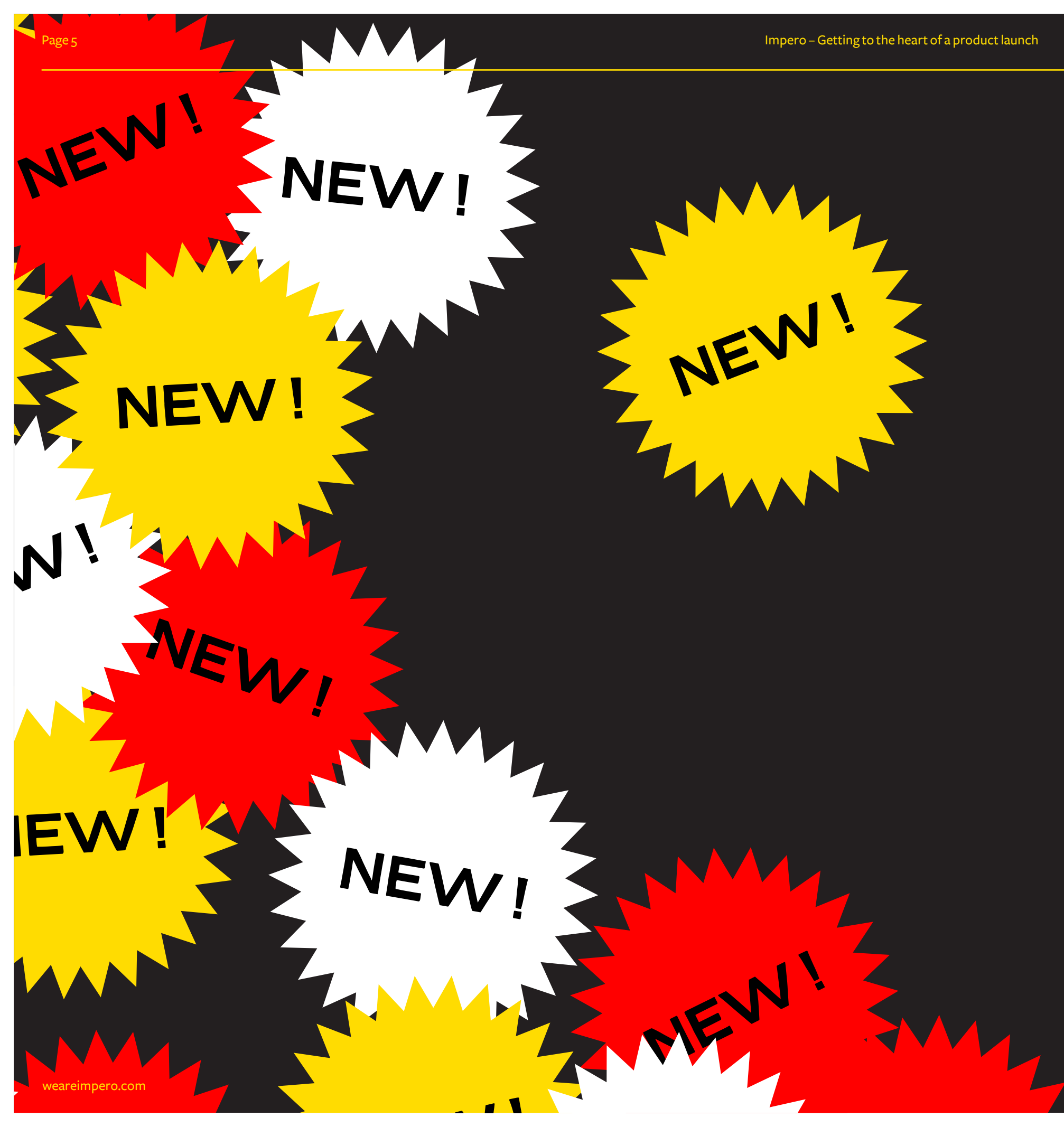
**75%** OF THE 30,000 ANNUAL  
LAUNCHES **END IN FAILURE**

# UNDERSTAND YOUR AUDIENCE

So what does this mean for brand launches? Fundamentally, we need to understand our audience and what our launch means in their lives. We need to understand why they will take any interest, and how we will get their attention in the first place.

This is easier said than done, because as marketers, we are immersed in the world of our products and campaigns. our

consumers are thinking about their own work, their bills, the new Netflix drop, their Insta, what to make for dinner, and maybe, if we're lucky, some brand communications.



Having something new does give us a chance to stand out, because new is sexy and stimulates the synapses with dopamine. We're wired to take notice, because back in the day, new could mean something to eat (or something that might eat you). The trouble is, it is short-lived, and in the background, another 29,999 products are being launched too. In some categories like fashion, the new and the launch is the job done, and then back to readying the next one. Compared to automotive, where a product might have a years-long lifespan, then momentum and longevity become significant consideration.

# **THE** **THREE THINGS** **TO KEEP IN MIND**

# 1 UNDERSTAND WHY THIS LAUNCH/NPD EXISTS, AND WHO IT IS FOR

Again, this might sound obvious, but the first questions to ask yourself are: who is this for? Why are we putting this product into the world? Innovation for its own sake will rarely take the market by storm, it needs a reason to exist.

Are you looking to launch something for your existing customers, or to appeal to new ones?



## *Launching for new consumers?*

Think about what are your brand's attributes you need to dial up. Corona's new introduction of a draft offering, for example, leverages the highly iconic lime serve with specially designed glassware.



## *Appealing to new consumers?*

You need to understand the drivers of the category, and perhaps drop some of your brand's baggage — a fresh start, if you will. Look to examples like Vodafone where the network shed its stuffy and corporate perception amongst GenZ by launching a modern sub-network, VOXI, complete with an influencer and UGC-led campaign.

Alternatively, break with convention and look outside your category, like we did for Beefeater Pink. Understanding that consumers drink with their eyes led to the Pink Your Gin campaign, which focussed on dialling up the fun and grammable aspect of gin-drinking.



# **2 NOVELTY IS NOT ENOUGH. DON'T THINK BIG, THINK LONG.**

Remember that newness will only carry you so far. So we need to think beyond a 'Big Idea' that creates a spike in attention, and develop a 'Long Idea' that will be relevant over the weeks and months beyond the launch itself. Get emotional – go beyond the rational and speak to a real truth in your audience's lives, with something rooted in culture.

# 3 GET IT NOTICED AND MAKE IT FAMOUS

Think about what you can do to shake things up, to cut through all the competing calls on your consumers' attention. For example, our work with Beefeater Pink not only stood out in a visually arresting way, but also used the world's first scented poster campaign on the London Underground.

# THANK YOU.

*For more information: [coris@imperodesign.com](mailto:coris@imperodesign.com) | [pr@imperodesign.com](mailto:pr@imperodesign.com)*