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Copper Mountain

March, 1991

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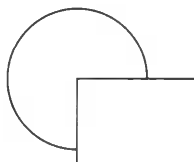
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Vol V, No. 3

March, 1991

Cover
Copper Mountain's research uncovered skiers' perceptions of the Colorado resort. Photo courtesy of Copper Mountain.



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Publisher
Tom Quirk

Managing Editor
Joseph Rydholm

Editorial Advisor
Emmet J. Hoffman

Marketing Associate
Evan Tweed

Circulation Director
James Quirk

Business Manager
Marlene Flohr

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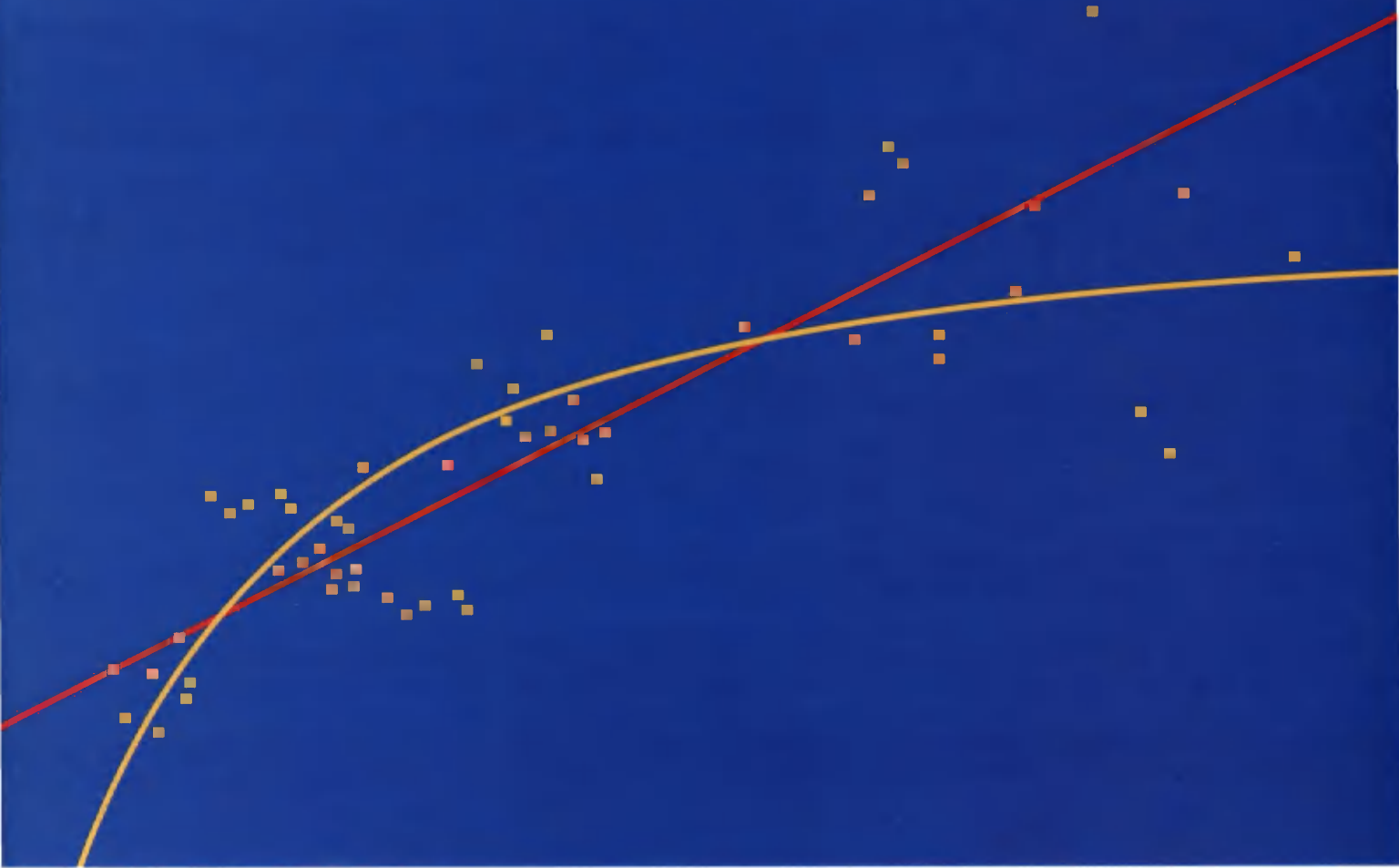
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Retaining heat

Research and a strong marketing program keep

by Joseph Rydholm/
managing editor

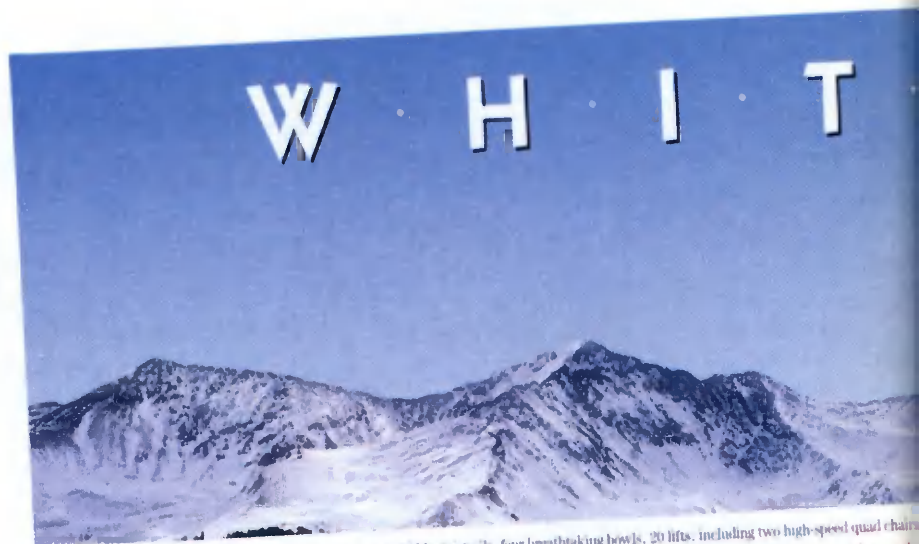
The U.S. ski industry has had its ups and downs in recent years—courtesy of uneven snowfalls, a fluctuating economy, and fewer people taking up the sport. In many regions, these and other factors have tightened markets, increased competition, and forced ski areas to step up their marketing efforts to lure people to the slopes.

For example, in 1986-7 Colorado's Copper Mountain saw a 20 percent decline in business from one of its main market segments, what it calls "front range" day skiers—younger people who come up from the Denver, Boulder, and Colorado Springs areas to ski for the day. At the same time, Copper Mountain's competitors, which had come on strong with special promotions, did excellent business. Some of the decline was attributable to these promotions, but through its research, Copper Mountain uncovered another culprit: an image problem.

Research conducted after the '86-7 season found that though Copper Mountain was well-respected as a "skier's mountain" because of its challenging variety of runs, skiers felt that it lacked the exciting nightlife and similar elements offered by other resorts.

"Our research showed us that the public, especially the active, single skier with a high disposable income, didn't feel that Copper Mountain was the 'in' place to ski. It didn't have the *chutzpah* of some of the other areas," says Kelley Davidson, vice president of marketing, Copper Mountain.

Using this information, Copper Mountain and Atlanta-based Austin-Kelley



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C O P P E R M

Advertising designed an advertising and marketing campaign around the theme "White Hot" to position the resort as an exciting place to be. Now in its third season, the campaign is still going strong.

Chairlift interviews

Copper Mountain conducts an average of 3000 one-on-one interviews per season, for which an interviewer accompanies a skier on a chairlift ride to solicit his or her impressions of several service areas—from the performance of the parking attendants to the ski conditions—and to find out about the respondent's skiing habits and preferences (how often they ski, where they ski and why, etc.).

"If they say they're skiing less, we want to find out why, to learn more about the conflicts and challenges they have to overcome to go skiing. And what we're seeing over the years more and more is that people just do not have the time.

Often, the theory is that people don't have the money, but it's basically the time," Davidson says.

The respondents are also asked about their awareness of advertising for Copper Mountain and for other ski areas. "If they do have awareness, we dig a little deeper to get some specifics on where they saw the advertising, etc. And we also make references to competitors' advertising to get recall and to get ratings of their favorite ads," Davidson says.

"People have been extremely responsive to participating in the surveys over the years, not only to the one-on-one surveys but any time we do a mail survey, we get about a 70% return. The skiing experience is something people enjoy talking about. They like sharing their thoughts, attitudes and perceptions of it.

"We stay very close to our research because we've learned a lot from it. We do a half-dozen to a dozen focus groups a season, enough to give us an authentic

Copper Mountain's business hot



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O U N T A I N

baseline. We uncover elements that we can respond to during the season from the focus groups and we also test some of our advertising, our campaign themes, and some new products that we're considering to find out what the market reception is."

Focus groups

To delve deeper into perceptions of Copper Mountain and other ski areas, focus groups were held in 1987 with a number of skiers who had taken the lift survey. They were separated into two age groups, over 35 and under 35. Both groups said they were interested in great skiing, but those over 35 were concerned with things such as the availability of baby-sitting and ski instruction, while those under 35 were more interested in entertainment options at Copper Mountain, says Lisa Durand, manager of research, Austin-Kelley Advertising.

"The under 35 group wanted to know, 'Is it fun? Are there things to do that

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C O P P E R M O U N T A I N

would make me want to spend some time there? What can you do to entice me to stay overnight instead of doing it as a one-day commute?"

"One of the things we asked specifi-

cally in the research was, what is it that you like about Copper Mountain versus some of the other areas, like Breckenridge, Vail, or Aspen? It came out that Copper Mountain was a great skier's mountain, but it wasn't an exciting place to go. It wasn't like Vail, for example, where there were neat bars and nightclubs."

Concepts tested

During the focus groups concepts for the White Hot campaign were tested against Copper Mountain's existing campaign, "Share Our Secret," which played off the area's reputation as a skier's mountain. When the two were presented to the respondents as concept statements without any accompanying visuals or graphics, the "Share Our Secret" cam-

continued on p. 40

Colorado's Copper Mountain has used the White Hot tagline throughout its TV, radio and print advertising to position the resort as an exciting place to be.

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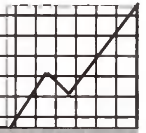
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Optimizing the advertising message for Second City Bus Service

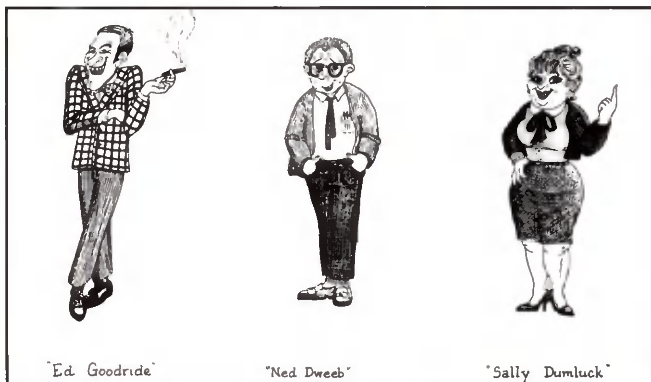
by Robert Roy

Editor's note: Robert Roy is vice president and general manager of the Chicago office of Total Research Corporation. This article is a sequel, if you will, to his October, 1990 Data Use article, "Conjoint evolves into discrete choice modeling," which told the story of Ed Goodride, acting director of the Second City Bus Service, and his efforts to use data analysis to climb the corporate ladder. Ed has succeeded in moving up a rung and now he's set his sights on going further--with the help of his trusty research analyst.

The People:

Ed Goodride: Was the acting director of Second City Bus Service, but thanks to low-life politics and a well-applied study utilizing discrete choice modeling, Ed is now the full director.

Research Analyst: Never identified by name in the previous article, we now know he responds to "Ned Dweeb."



Sally Dumluck: The valedictorian of her high school class, she was known as "Little Sally Dumluck," but the addition of 50 pounds ended that.

The Situation:

Ed Goodride has spent the last several weeks congratulating himself on becoming the director of Second City Bus Service. As director, he has discovered that an advertising agency was awarded the Second City account a year or so ago. On one hand, Ed was pleased to learn of the existence of the agency, but on the other hand he was wondering what the ads should attempt to communicate.

(Actually, Ed didn't really use or think of the word "communicate." His comment was more on the order of, "Yo, what

should the ad say? 'Bada-bing, bada-bang!' ") These pithy comments were made to Ned Dweeb, who, as we all know, is housed in the third basement of the bus company building.)

Taking "Mister" Goodride's comments as a directive, Ned started his research exploration with a few well-designed focus groups. Out of those focus groups came a list of attributes that could be used in an advertising campaign:

- Fast
- More productive time
- Inexpensive
- Climate Controlled
- Near your destination
- Safe
- Comfortable

This list was presented during an oral report to management (Ed Goodride). Whereupon, Ed responded, "Let's go!"

"But Sir," mumbled Dweeb, "let's go with what? I've been reading that advertising theory says that people can't assimilate a message that contains seven items."

"They can't what?!" Ed exploded.

"What I mean, Mr. Goodride, is that we should limit our advertising message to at most three statements."

"Well, fine, fine, Dweeb, let's find out which are the most important, and then let's go!"

So, off went Dweeb to measure the impact/importance of each potential advertising statement. Dweeb interviewed enough people of the right type (we won't bother with the sampling stuff right now). It seems that while he was in the third basement, Dweeb had nothing better to do than to read past issues of the *Marketing News*. By some strange turn of luck, he read an issue dated September 13, 1985 containing an article written by John Morton that described a new technique to help evaluate advertising. This got Dweeb's attention. It was an application of conjoint analysis that included measuring what is termed "interaction" effects. The output from this measurement technique is a score for each attribute. In Dweeb's study, these scores for the seven attributes were obtained:

	Main Score
Safe	1.00
Inexpensive	0.73
Fast	0.54
Comfortable	0.51
More productive time	0.46
Climate controlled	0.35
Near your destination	0.29

Dweeb realized that "safe" has about three times the impact of "near your destination." Also, our boy Dweeb realized that "inexpensive" is about twice as effective as "climate controlled." With this information in hand, he was about to approach Ed Goodride and recommend an advertising platform that emphasized safety, economy, and speed. That is, he was about to when Sally Dumluck put her head through the door. (When we say "through the door," we actually mean that her head penetrated the door!)

"Hiya, Ned! Whatcha up to?" Sally said. While she extracted herself from the door, Ned explained the situation. Sally replied, "Yeah, that's great stuff. Sleazeball--I mean 'Mister' Goodride--should like that. Did you say you were going to recommend the use of the three top scoring attributes?"

Adjusting his pocket protector, Ned nodded and said, "Yes."

"But Neddie, John Morton pointed out that we had to pay attention to interactions as well as the main score for each

attribute."

A little bit surprised and ashamed, Ned said, "Oh?"

"Sure, doll, let me show you." Sally looked through the output and came up with Exhibits A and B.

"Neddie, in Exhibit A, the main score for each attribute is shown but so are the interaction effects. You might think that the best two-attribute message would be 'safe' and 'inexpensive.' But look, doll, the best two-attribute message is actually 'safe' and 'fast'!" Dweeb had to admit that Sally had a point when she wrote this:

$$\text{Safe/Fast } 1.0 + .54 + .19 = 1.73$$

$$\text{Safe/Inexpensive } 1.0 + .73 - .14 = 1.59$$

"Ms. Dumluck, I see what you mean! The main score for 'safe' (1.0) and the main score for 'fast' (.54) when added together along with the interaction of safe and fast (.19) gives us a score of 1.73. But when we do the same thing for 'safe' and 'inexpensive', the total is 1.59. So we do have to look at the

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interactions as well as the main scores for each attribute! And that's why you put together Exhibit A, eh?"

"You got it, Tootsie," said Sally.

EXHIBIT A

Main Score	Comfortable Effects							
	Safe	Inexpensive	Fast	Comfortable	Time	Climate	Destination	
1.00	Safe	--	-.14	+.19	-.19	+.12	+.10	-.06
0.73	Inexpensive	-.14	--	-.12	-.02	+.05	.00	+.16
0.54	Fast	+.19	-.12	--	.00	+.10	-.08	-.19
0.51	Comfortable	-.19	-.02	.00	--	-.10	+.23	+.09
0.46	Time	+.12	+.05	+.10	-.10	--	-.15	+.13
0.35	Climate	+.10	.00	-.08	+.23	-.15	--	-.12
0.29	Destination	-.06	+.16	-.19	+.09	+.13	-.12	--

EXHIBIT B

Main Effects				Interaction Effects			Total Impact
Benefit 1	Benefit 2	Benefit 3	Benefit 1/2	Benefit 1/3	Benefit 2/3		
Safe (1.00)	Fast (0.54)	Time (0.46)	+.19	+.12	+.10	2.41	
Safe (1.00)	Inexpensive (0.73)	Time (0.46)	-.14	+.12	+.05	2.22	
Safe (1.00)	Inexpensive (0.73)	Fast (0.54)	-.14	+.19	-.12	2.20	
Safe (1.00)	Fast (0.54)	Climate (0.35)	+.19	+.10	-.08	2.10	
Safe (1.00)	Fast (0.54)	Comfortable (0.51)	+.19	-.19	.00	2.05	
Safe (1.00)	Inexpensive (0.73)	Climate (0.35)	-.14	+.10	.00	2.04	
Safe (1.00)	Comfortable (0.51)	Climate (0.35)	-.19	+.10	+.23	2.00	
Safe (1.00)	Inexpensive (0.73)	Destination (0.29)	-.14	-.06	+.16	1.98	
Safe (1.00)	Time (0.46)	Destination (0.29)	+.12	-.06	+.13	1.94	
Safe (1.00)	Inexpensive (0.73)	Comfortable (0.51)	-.14	-.19	-.02	1.89	

"Golly, Ms. Dumluck. I think I understand Exhibit B, too. Now, just let me figure this out. Let's see, hmm... We still have the main effects for each benefit, right?"

"That's right, Dweeb-boy. By-Research, I think you've got it!"

"Okay, I'm on a roll. And I see you still show the interaction effects for the first and second benefits. So, 'safe' is still 1.00 and 'fast' is still .54, and their interaction is +.19, just as before."

"Oh, Dweebie, you're so cute when you're right," Sally said as she patted Ned on the head.

"But now, you've added the interaction effects on the first and third benefits (safe and time [+12]), along with the interaction of the second and third (fast and time [+10]). Now, the main effects and the interactions sum to 2.41; and you've done this for other benefits combinations, too. Say, you really were the high school valedictorian, weren't you?"

"Of course, Neddie dear, did you think I was just another drop-dead bod with no brains?" Sally replied batting her eyelashes as she sashayed out the door.

Saved by Sally, Ned Dweeb met with Ed Goodride and recommended the advertising platform of safe, fast, and provides more productive time. "What do you think, Mr. Goodride?" Ned timidly asked.

"Bada-bing, Bada-bang! This should get me in good with the boys upstairs. Glad I thought of it," Ed said through a haze of cigar smoke.

Walking rather than taking the elevator to the third basement, Ned mused, "'Bada-bing, Bada-bang'? Dang, I've got to look that up in the *Marketing News*!"

The ad agency produced the ads, ridership increased, and Ed Goodride redefined the meaning of sleaze.

A few days later, Ned Dweeb was walking down an alley in the Chicago Loop and saw written on the wall:

*If conjoint is your main attraction
you'll maximize your satisfaction
by showing the gang (bada-bing, bada-bang)
the benefits of interaction.*

Credits:
Original Analytic Thought: John Morton
Limerick: Bob Bisciglia
Artwork: Karen Cullen



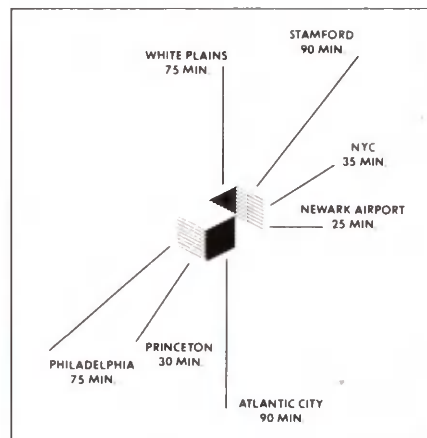
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A fresh approach

Research helps Grant/Jacoby develop new advertising

by Pamela F. Nagel

Editor's note: Pamela Nagel is account research manager for Chicago-based Grant/Jacoby advertising.

**Stokely
USA**

If you're planning to update the image of an old line brand, you need to find out a few things first. For example, what does the manufacturer know about the brand and its competition? What do consumers want from the category? What do consumers believe about the brand? And what is the competition saying?

Answers to these basic questions provide the foundation for developing strategically sound advertising messages. Our agency's work for the canned vegetable division of Stokely USA, Inc. is a case in point. Based in Oconomowoc, Wisconsin, Stokely USA processes, packages and markets a broad range of food products including vegetables, fruits, and juices.

Originally known as Oconomowoc Canning Co., its name was changed to Stokely USA in 1983, after it acquired the Stokely brand name, to reflect the importance of the branded grocery business in the company's strategic development. Prior to Oconomowoc Canning's purchase of the brand name, advertising for the Stokely brand had been inconsistent. And for the past several years Stokely products were advertised only via retail flyers and free standing inserts, counting on trade deals to move product.

In March, 1990, when Grant/Jacoby was given the assignment to develop an advertising campaign for Stokely USA, we knew we were in for a challenge.

What made this assignment especially exciting was the fact that Stokely had recently refocused its mission to revive the brand and its managers were eager to break new ground.

During the next six months, we at Grant/Jacoby used our Strategic Development system. Through this comprehensive, systematic process we used research to guide the strategic thinking that lead to our current campaign for Stokely USA.

Grant/Jacoby's immersion in the canned vegetable category for Stokely USA began with a collaborative agency/client review of internal research, published category information and competitive advertising. From Mediamark Research Inc. we learned that more than 90% of U.S. households purchase canned vegetables. However, consumers on the whole have very little brand loyalty, often switching between a few brands within an acceptable set.

We also knew from primary research that while consumers want fresh taste, they don't believe canned vegetables can taste as good as fresh. Our claim would have to link Stokely with fresh taste but not overpromise. And it would have to be supported in a believable way.

In further discussions with our client we learned that Stokely cans have a white, "Flavor Guard" lining. Stokely pays a premium for the lining to help preserve the natural taste of its vegetables. National competitors don't have this white

lining. And while some regional competitors do, they don't talk about it in their advertising.

Brand equity

In the mid-1970s a campaign had run for Stokely which took place in the town of Stokely USA. But since then only sporadic advertising had been run. So we needed to examine Stokely's brand equity and ultimately determine ways to leverage it to our advantage. If consumers held certain perceptions about Stokely vs. the competition we would have to account for them in our marketing efforts.

Grant/Jacoby and the people from Stokely became intrigued by the potential range of images which could be associated with the entire brand name, Stokely USA. We all felt there might be a renewed opportunity to link it with fresh taste, the key category attribute. But without consumer input we'd be operating blind. Our next steps would be critical.

Focus groups

We conducted several focus groups and through a series of projective techniques consumers told us about their images of Stokely vegetables and "a place called Stokely USA." In half of the groups we exposed a written concept of Stokely USA and the people who lived there. We then asked consumers to select from about 50 pictures of people and places that best matched the concept.

In the other half, consumers chose pictures that best represented their view of Stokely USA based solely on the name.

continued on p. 42

for Stokely USA



Corn.



We know you like it. We know you like it fresh and sweet.



And here in Stokely USA...



we pick our corn at the height of freshness..



and can it immediately.



Speaking of cans, here in Stokely USA we use a special white liner in ours, to keep the corn tasting like corn, not like a can.



For the absolute best corn we can grow



Fresh from Stokely USA.



In testing, consumers said that this spot--known as "Corn Demo"--had both uniqueness and broad appeal.

The value of verbatims

by Tim Huberty

Editor's note: Tim Huberty is advertising research manager with Minneapolis-based Fallon McElligott advertising agency.

A few years ago, this agency did an advertisement for a local marketing research company. The ad asked a very simple question: "Are you spending too much money on research to find out that you're spending too much money on research?" The ques-

tion was a good one that becomes more relevant with each passing day.

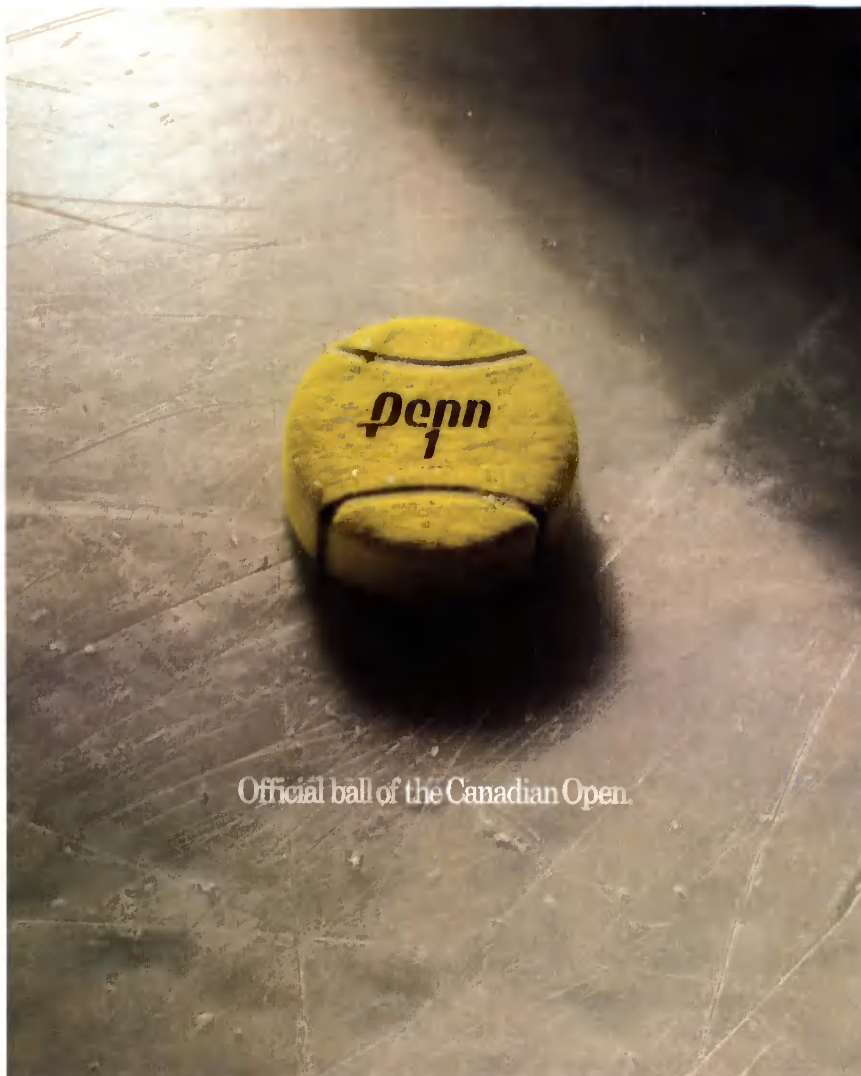
Even those people who believe they are not spending too much money on research are often not getting full value for their research dollars. Marketing researchers often spend thousands and

thousands of dollars to dredge up answers to all sorts of problems plaguing their businesses. Ironically, for just a few dollars more, they could add a "third dimension" to their numbers. By tacking on a few well-placed open-ended questions, the value of their information could grow significantly.

Marketing researchers are trained to study numbers. Academic research courses often focus too heavily upon sample sizes and statistical significance, ignoring common sense consumer responses. Rather than building grid upon grid, chart upon chart, training field people to follow up with a well placed, "Why do you say that?" can often make the difference between good research and great research.

Furthermore, without exception, we have found that the research audiences, be they clients or creatives, relate more easily to words and sentences, rather than cold, unfeeling numbers. Verbatims have personality; they capture the essence of the human soul. Unfortunately, research people hide behind safe numbers while research audiences crave to hear from real people using real words to describe real reactions to real products.

In this article, I will share how verbatims have helped increase the value of marketing research dollars for both Fallon McElligott and our clients. We have found that asking open ended questions and carefully probing for consumers insights has helped us in virtually every type of research we do, including focus groups, telephone studies and personal interviews.



Focus groups

Reporting the results of focus groups is often difficult, especially to those who did not personally observe the groups. Usually, the presenter gets up, and with the aid of a few bullet points, attempts to convey what took place during the group sessions. Simultaneously, he or she attempts to valiantly express how various participants were trying to express themselves.

A few years ago, quite accidentally, this focus group moderator decided that he was fed up with listening to focus group tapes. Out of desperation, I began hiring a typist to transcribe the tapes.

continued on p. 44



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Quirk's Marketing Research Review

Are you penalized for testing commercials in “rough” form?

by Harvey Magier

Editor’s note: Harvey Magier is president of New York-based Consumer Outlook, Inc. This article is adapted from a presentation made last July before the ARF Copy Research Workshop.

Many advertisers initially test their commercials in a “rough” format—animatics, photomatics and ripomatics—to identify the most viable candidates and provide insights for executional refinements. But do “rough” commercials accurately reflect the impact of their “finished” counterparts? More specifically,

- Do finished and rough commercials elicit similar patterns of response?
- Are finished commercials more apt to create positive attitudes for the advertised brand or service? Are they more motivating, relevant or newsworthy than rough executions?
- To what extent does a finished format enhance perceptions of the commercial presentation? Is this format more entertaining, empathetic or likable than rough commercials?

To answer these questions, we compared the performance of rough and finished commercials using normative data derived from Consumer Outlook’s Audience Response Profile (ARP) copy testing system.

Methodology

ARP provides a comprehensive profile of all possible reactions to the advertising message and commercial presentation. The technique consists of personal, one-

on-one interviews among target audience respondents in geographically dispersed markets. Each respondent is shown two exposures of a single test commercial and asked:

- five ARP open-end communication questions, and
- to rate 52 standardized ARP statements via a six-point “agree strongly” to “disagree strongly” scale

The 52 statements are categorized into 11 discrete evaluative factors. Four of these relate to the critical advertising message:

- motivation
- relevant news
- reinforcement
- motivation

The remaining seven factors cover the array of reactions to the execution itself:

- entertainment
- empathy
- realism
- uniqueness
- not complex
- good taste
- mood

This analysis is based on mean factor data developed from the ARP rating battery. Comparable samples of finished and rough commercial tests were drawn from Consumer Outlook’s ARP normative base. They were matched in terms of equal representation across ten broad product categories (e.g., household products, beverages, services, etc.) and further balanced by client, within category. This yielded matched samples of 186 commercials per format—each repre-

senting approximately 10,000 respondents.

Findings

Factor correlations

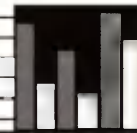
Do the inter-relationships between factors differ by commercial format or are they relatively constant? If they differ substantially, how can rough commercials serve as a valid barometer of consumer reaction?

The following chart shows the correlation of the factor “relevant news” to the remaining ten ARP factors, for finished and rough commercials.

Product Factors	“Relevant News”	
	Finished	Rough
Motivation	.69	.69
Reinforcement	.74	.71
Credibility	.57	.50
Executional Factors		
Entertainment	.53	.52
Empathy	.61	.58
Realism	.60	.55
Uniqueness	.18	.22
Not Complex	.30	.22
Good Taste	.59	.54
Mood	.36	.32

For both finished and rough commercials, “reinforcement” is the factor most highly correlated to “relevant news”—“uniqueness” is the lowest. In general,

continued on p. 51



Survey of ad agencies shows effects of Gulf war

One-third of independent advertising agencies worldwide say advertisers have pulled ads off the air and out of print because of the Persian Gulf war, according to a recent survey of independent advertising agencies conducted by 3AI (Affiliated Advertising Agencies International), the world's largest network of independent advertising shops.

The survey also showed that advertisers in Europe, Asia, South America, Canada and Australia are more likely to cancel ads than those in the United States.

Conducted in late January, the survey polled independent agencies around the world on the Persian Gulf war's effect on advertising. More than 50 of 3AI's 90 member agencies participated in the survey.

"About 30 percent of our U.S. members said advertisers had pulled ads because of the war," said Patricia Parker, president, 3AI. "In Europe, Asia, South America, Canada and Australia, the figure was significantly higher—40 percent."

3AI member agencies cited various reasons for ad cancellations, including advertisers' concerns over depressed consumer spending during war time and weak sales in the tourism, automobile and export businesses.

Others, such as Christer Delding, media and print production manager, Thor & Co., Stockholm, Sweden, said, "Some companies with TV advertising are pulling spots because they do not want to be connected with the war."

Parker noted that many agencies which hadn't seen an impact on advertising were witnessing an increasing uneasiness

among advertisers, particularly with respect to the war's long-term economic impact.

To a lesser extent, advertisers are developing new ads and changing existing ones because of the war. Again, this trend is more pronounced in Europe, Asia, South America, Canada and Australia, where 27 percent of the agencies said advertisers were creating new ads, compared to 19 percent in the U.S. Another 20 percent of independent agencies worldwide said they had received war-related copy changes from advertisers.

"Some clients are questioning the appropriateness of humor in advertising," noted Phil Karsh, co-chairman, Karsh & Hagen, Denver. Other agencies have noticed heightened advertiser sensitivity to the use of war themes.

Interestingly, only six percent of the agencies worldwide said advertisers were creating ads that commented on the war.

As for returning to regular ad schedules, agencies in the U.S. are much more confident than others. "In the United States, 79 percent of the agencies said advertisers either already have returned—or will return in one month—to normal ad schedules. Only 11 percent expect advertisers to refrain from resuming normal ad schedules until the war's end," said Parker. "That compares to Europe, Asia, South America, Canada and Australia, where 47 percent of the agencies don't envision a return to normalcy until the war ends."

Parker added that agencies outside the U.S. are also less likely than their U.S. counterparts to continue traveling. More than half of the agencies said they or their clients had changed travel plans, compared to 31 percent of the agencies in the United States.

continued on p. 26

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NAMES OF NOTE



Betty Grudzinski has been promoted to research development manager of the *Miami Herald Publishing Co.* In addition, Riley Kirby has been promoted to research applications manager.

John H. Costello, president of *Nielsen Marketing Research USA* will assume the additional title of chief operating officer. **William G. Jacohi** has been named president and chief operating officer of *Nielsen Media Research*.

Charles A. Sena has joined *Audits & Surveys Inc.*, New York, as vice president in the firm's Marketing Division. Previously he was with SAMI/Burke. In addition, **Elizabeth P. Lou** has been promoted to vice president-survey data processing. And **Sharon Samet** has been

promoted to vice president-field operations.

Jerry Ice has been appointed vice president, marketing and business development for *Herron Associates*, Greenwood, IN.



Ice

Bruckman

Carol Bruckman has been promoted to senior vice president/director of re-

search at *Cramer-Krasselt* in Chicago.

CACI Marketing Systems, Fairfax, VA, has appointed **Paul Davies** managing director.

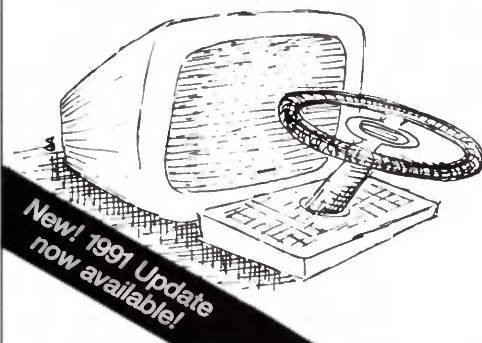
Marketeam Associates, St. Louis, has named **David M. Tugend** vice president, client services.

Robert S. Bengen has been named director of marketing research for *Samsonite Corporation*.

Rich Houghton has been appointed director of operations at *Attitude Measurement Corporation*, Southampton, PA. Also, **Kristin Petersen** has joined the firm as a project director.

continued on p. 27

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Marketdata, New York, has a new fax number, 516-791-7759.

Tucson-based **Nordensson Lynn Advertising** and **NLS Public Relations** have added a full-time research division.

Trinet, Inc. has sold its national database business to American Business Information, Inc. Trinet will continue selling its focused business directory and local list products under the new corporate name of **Contacts Influential, Inc.**

ACG Research, St. Louis, has remodeled its focus group facility. For more



information, contact Vicki Savala at 314-726-3403.

CSI has opened a new qualitative research center in downtown Boston: Focus on Boston, at 400 Atlantic Avenue,

adjacent to the Boston Harbor Hotel. Telephone: 617-338-9636. Fax: 617-338-9236. Paul L. Bolden is managing director.

The Question Box has changed its name to **Ask Southern California, Inc.** The firm will remain at the same location. Contact Sue Amidei at 714-744-2744 for

more information.

Margery Isis Schwartz, formerly of Eastern Airlines and Market Segment Research, has formed her own marketing research company, **Aspen Research, Inc.**, at 401 Miracle Mile, Ste. 411, Coral Gables, FL, 33134. Telephone: 305-444-9788. Fax: 305-444-9670.

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Produce consumers profiled

"Fresh Trends 1991: A Profile of the Fresh Produce Consumer," a series of three reports on today's fresh fruit and vegetable consumer, is now available from the Produce Division of Vance Publishing Corporation. Each report includes a narrative overview of results from the

1991 survey and demographic variation in responses, as well as comparisons of data from four previous surveys. Taken as a representative sampling of the American population, "Fresh Trends 1991" reveals a consumer interest in fresh produce that continues to build.

The survey results are based on a sampling of 1,390 U.S. households. The

households, part of the roughly quarter-million in the panel of Chicago-based Market Facts Inc., completed the survey questionnaire by late October. Survey results were compiled and analyzed jointly by Market Facts and Vance Research Services.

The reports include computer tabulations that segment responses by gender, age, household income, respondent occupation and education, marital status, household size, geographic region and market size. For more information, call 913-451-2200.

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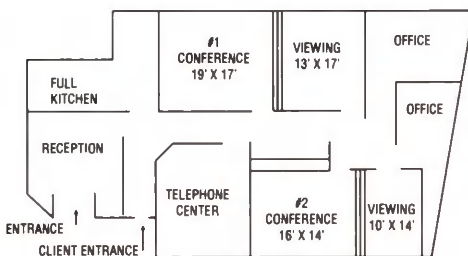
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New X-Windows platform

The Washington Operations of Grumman Data Systems introduce an X Windows-based applications development platform, Decision Support X Windows (DSX), for geographic information and related data in marketing and sales operations.

DSX is nonhardware-specific, so it can run on any commercial, ruggedized, or military hardware product that supports X Windows version 11, C development language, a commercial relational database management system (RDBMS), a UNIX or VMS operating system, and TCP/IP or DECnet network protocol.

DSX is a family of five integrated software components that provides the graphic, geographic information management, and relational database capa-

bilities common to most decision support systems. DSXBase serves as the backbone of the system by performing initialization, window management and pulldown menu duties. High-level commands of all components, as well as site-specific application commands, are selected from the same pulldown menu. DSXDraw is the interactive drawing capability for creation, manipulation, and retention of color graphic displays. DSXGeo is the integrated geographic information management and map display capability. DSXDatabase is for interactive graphic display and manipulation of relational database representations. The DSXToolkit manages user interface software tools (buttons, pop-up windows, etc.) with which custom color graphic man-machine interfaces can be developed.

DSX meets many requirements of decision support applications without additional software development. Administrative tools allow efficient tailoring of each DSX component for custom applications. For more information, contact Thomas Fagre, Grumman Data Systems, 6862 Elm St., McLean, VA, 22101. Telephone: 703-556-7400.

MarketPlace:Households canceled

Lotus Development Corporation and Equifax Inc. announced the cancellation of Lotus MarketPlace:Households, a CD-ROM database product of names, addresses, and marketing information on 120 million U.S. consumers, originally scheduled for shipment this month. The companies said the decision to cancel the product came after an assessment of the public concerns and misunderstanding of the product, and the substantial, unexpected additional costs required to fully address consumer privacy issues.

C.B. (Jack) Rogers, Jr., Equifax president and CEO, said: "Equifax is a technology leader and, equally important, a pioneer in the area of consumer privacy protection in the information industry. While we remain committed to using the most sophisticated technology available, we are equally committed to maintaining

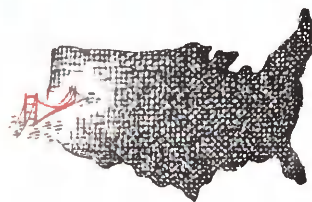
the delicate balance between legitimate information needs of business and consumers' privacy concerns."

"Unfortunately, Lotus MarketPlace:Households is at the apex of an emotional firestorm of public concern about consumer privacy," said Jim Manzi, Lotus' president and CEO. "While we believe the actual data content and controls built into the product preserved consumer privacy, we couldn't ignore the high level of consumer concern. After examining all of the issues, we have decided that the

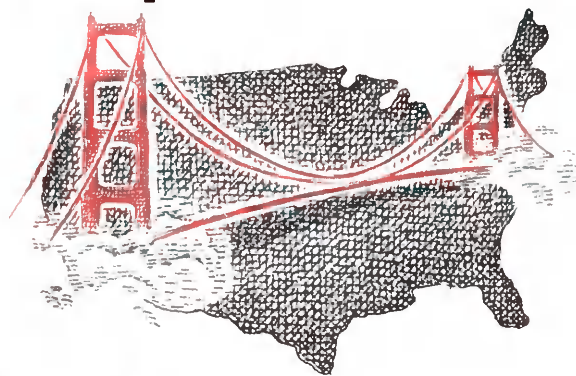
cost and complexity of educating consumers about the issue is beyond the scope of Lotus as a software provider.

"Technology is radically changing the way we work, and, more importantly, how we use information. Balancing the advantages of easier access to information with the individual's right to privacy is only the first of many new issues our industry will grapple with in the coming years," Manzi said.

continued on p. 48



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Survey Monitor

continued from p.18

Women perceive "glass ceiling" in workplace

International Survey Research Corp (ISR) has released results from a survey of 50,000 employees in 18 major U.S.

companies which examined attitudes toward a variety of issues related to the "Glass Ceiling" effect. The Glass Ceiling effect maintains that women promoted into managerial ranks are generally blocked from top management positions. ISR's conclusion: While there is evidence of a Glass Ceiling effect, women still maintain a more positive outlook

toward their job when compared to men.

An active hypothesis in American business holds that women unable to move into upper management will be less positive towards such things as promotion opportunities and performance evaluation. Indeed, ISR found that:

- women in upper management are less likely to hold positive attitudes toward their job as compared to women in super-

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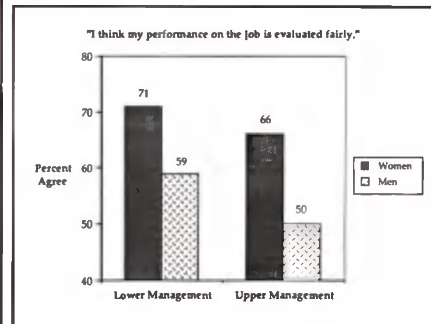
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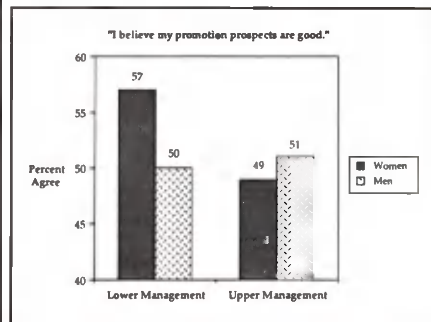
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visory or lower management positions.

The results also indicate that as women are promoted to higher levels of management, they become more cynical about the fairness of company management and less optimistic about their opportunities for advancement.

These beliefs are also evident in women's broader views of management practices: women in upper management are more likely to report that their supervisor "shows favoritism" and less likely to believe that management supports equal employment opportunities. They are less likely to believe that their "promotion prospects are good" or that training opportunities are available to increase their eligibility for a better job.

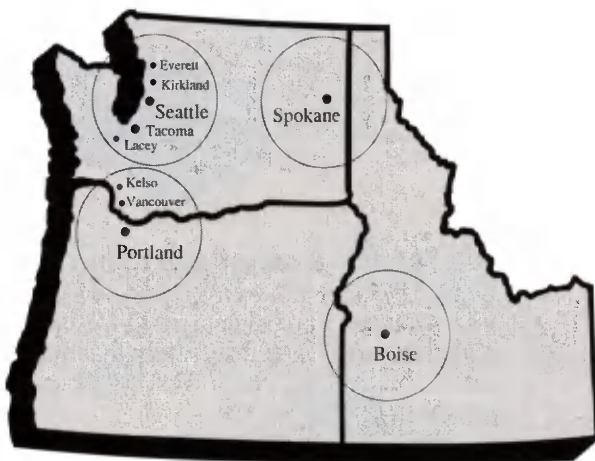


A similar pattern of results is found when women at differing levels of education are compared: women with more education are less likely to hold positive attitudes toward their job as compared to women with less education. This finding may be due to the fact that women with higher education are more likely to be promoted to higher levels of management—positions where the Glass Ceiling effect is likely to be operative.

Despite evidence of the Glass Ceiling

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- Medical
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effect, ISR reports that women are much more positive about their jobs as compared to men. While the difference between men and women is seen at all levels of management, it is particularly pronounced at lower levels of management where women are much more likely to feel positively about their job. At upper levels of management, the differences between the job attitudes of men and women is less apparent. On the issues of management's support for equal employment opportunities and fair decisions, the differences between male and female attitudes at the highest levels of management blur into insignificant variation.

ISR concludes that as women are promoted upward, they adopt a more negative outlook toward their employer, one which more closely resembles their male colleagues. However, despite perceptions of a Glass Ceiling on promotion opportunities, women in general are still more likely than men to hold positive attitudes toward their job.

Names of Note

continued from p. 22

Jonatban Reed has joined Jefferson Davis Associates, Inc., a Cedar Rapids-based marketing research firm, as a research analyst.

The Vanderveer Group, Ft. Washington, PA, has announced a reorganization of senior management. **Gary Silverman** has been named chairman of the board. **Marc Julius** has been named president, market research and consulting, **Frank J. Smith**, president, physician communications, and **Gail E. Keppler**, chief operating officer. Together, Julius, Smith and Keppler will form the office of the president, responsible for the day-to-day operations of the company.

Linda Krannich and **Gary Sande** have been promoted at Rockwood Research, St. Paul. Krannich was named data processing supervisor, Sande was named senior spec writer/system manager.

Tanya Mabon has been promoted to account manager, client services, with Cincinnati-based *MATRIX Marketing, Inc.* In addition, **Julie A. Holbein** has been named senior account manager, client services.

Michael H. Mallace has joined the Phoenix office of *Winona Market Research Bureau, Inc.* as account director.

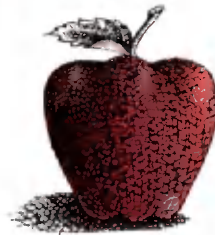
Ellen L. Good, president of *Focus*



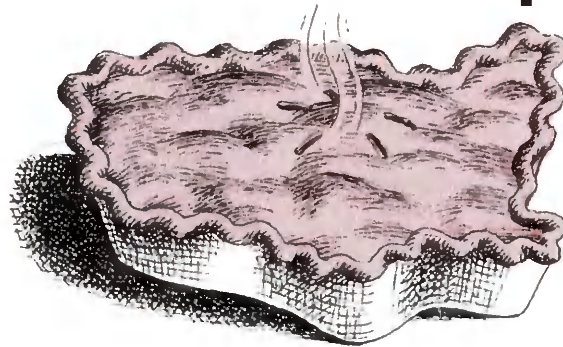
Good

First, Inc., Wellesley, MA, has been named chairperson of the Qualitative Research Consultants Association Professionalism Committee. The committee's mission is to consider professional issues facing qualitative researchers in the United States and Canada.

Stephen Kotvis has been named director of marketing for the Mass Merchandising Division of *MPSI/Retail Systems, Minneapolis.*



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Principles of rapport—focus group moderation

by David Farlow

Editor's note: David Farlow specializes in the qualitative aspects of research design and methodology with a special emphasis on moderating focus groups with Answers Research, Solana Beach, California.

The main objective of focus groups is to gain a greater understanding of the market by eliciting the perceptions, opinions, and feelings from each of the individual group members about the subject of interest. As a moderator, I am always looking for more effective ways to elicit this information. Once I know I have a good discussion guide and have properly selected the focus group participants, the quality of the information that I get is very dependent upon the amount of rapport I develop with the participants.

This article will show you how to use extremely effective communication techniques for developing rapport so that you can obtain the information you need from focus groups. We will look at two very powerful methods, neurolinguistic programming and analytical persuasion, and discuss some common sense techniques for putting people at ease.

In the mid-1970s, Richard Bandler and John Grinder developed a model of human experience and communication called neurolinguistic programming (NLP). Since that time NLP has been used effectively in a wide variety of fields, including sales, management, negotiation, education, psychotherapy, creativity, decision making, etc.

Bandler and Grinder developed NLP by systematically analyzing exceptional communicators so that their methods could be taught to others. The first people they modeled were in the fields of individual and group psychotherapy. It was in group therapy where some powerful techniques were discovered that apply directly to moderating focus groups.

How does group psychotherapy apply to moderating focus groups? For psychotherapists to be effective, they must be excellent communicators. They must develop trust and rapport with their clients, creating an environment where their patients feel safe to express how they feel. As moderators, we want to create this same type of environment so that each focus group participant feels comfortable enough to express his or her opinion and have it accepted.

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Techniques for persuading people have always been with us. Robert Cialdini, an experimental social psychologist, in his book *Influence* discusses the principles of analytical persuasion. These principles operate at the unconscious level and have been used with great success by people in the sales profession. With skillful use of these principles, people will react in certain predictable patterns, unaware that

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these principles are being used to influence them. These same principles can be used when moderating focus groups to:

- Establish rapport
- Encourage robust discussions
- Elicit deeper and more meaningful responses
- Ultimately get the information you need

Establishing preliminary rapport

After the focus group participants have arrived and processed the necessary forms

in the reception area, have someone from the facility direct or escort them to the meeting room. Meet the participants at the entrance to the meeting room and invite everyone to help themselves to the refreshments. After everybody is in the room, join them in eating or drinking for a few minutes before you start the discussion.

The rule of reciprocation

At this point, you have already invoked several principles of persuasion and establishing rapport. First, by providing

them with refreshments you invoke the rule of reciprocation, which says that we should repay, in kind, what another person has provided us. This means that they feel they have an obligation to somehow repay you for providing them with refreshments. This is a powerful persuasion tool.

To use this rule to its greatest advantage with a focus group, the participants should see you, the moderator, as the benefactor of the refreshments. There are several ways to do this. One is by inviting them to help themselves to the refreshments. You can also coordinate with the facility personnel to say to the participants that, "the moderator has some refreshments waiting for you," to strengthen the association. Also remember that the rule of reciprocation is working in your favor because you are paying them.

You may or may not be able to use the suggestions above because of the logistics and physical environment of the focus group facility. But the main goal is to somehow associate yourself as the benefactor of the refreshments.



Farlow

At this point, you may be wondering if you are biasing the group to an extent that they will give you the answers they think you want to hear rather than their honest opinions or perceptions. The objective of using these techniques is to create a very safe environment for the participants to express their opinions. Later in this article, I will discuss how to set up this environment using the "team effect" and by asking questions in such a way that any biasing effect you may have on the group will be minimized.

Using association with the luncheon technique

You've also associated yourself with a very pleasant activity, eating and drinking. Research has shown that people become fonder of people and things they experienced while eating. This is known as the "luncheon technique." It was dis-

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covered by Gregory Razran in 1938 and has its roots on Ivan Pavlov's famous conditioning research with dogs.

People usually associate a good and favorable feeling when they eat, and if you are with someone while they are eating, the good and favorable feeling is associated with you. If this seems a little far fetched and you don't believe it works, just remember that Pavlov's dogs didn't believe it would work either and they still salivated. This is unconscious behavior and people are not aware of what is happening.

The principle of similarity

By eating with the participants, you now have something in common. You are like them. People tend to like people who are like them. This is the principle of similarity. The more we are like the people we want to influence—in almost any area including physical appearance, speaking style, body language and vocabulary—the more they will like us and ultimately cooperate with us by answering the questions we ask.

Preliminaries

Start the discussion by introducing yourself. Tell the participants that they are being video or audio taped and observed. I also tell them the reasons for taping the discussion, which will appeal to their interests or egos.

For example, "Some of you may have noticed the mirror behind me. There is a person behind it who is taping this discussion. The reason why this discussion is being taped is because what you say is very important to us. Some very important decisions will be made based upon what you have to share with us and we do not want to lose any of your valuable input. Another reason for taping is because I want to give you my complete attention during the time we have together. The reason we have a one way mirror is because the camera man doesn't want to disturb you and it makes people more comfortable."

Encouraging shy participants

One of the problems during focus groups is that some people will be swayed by the group and not voice their opinions.

Once you have established rapport and created a safe environment this problem is minimized. However, there is another tool of persuasion called the team effect that can elicit more participation from a shy respondent. People will generally do more for a team than they will do for themselves. If a participant feels that he is part of a team, then he will be more willing to speak up for the team's point of view.

This team, however, is not composed of the other focus group participants. The team that empowers a shy individual is the team of all the other people who are just like him who are not in the focus group. How do we get the participant to feel like he is part of that team? Here is one way of phrasing it: "What we are looking for during this discussion are your opinions, perceptions, and feelings. There are no wrong answers. Your opinions are very important to us. The reason I say that is because each of you represent a much larger number of people out there who are just like you. It is very important that we understand the opinions and per-

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ceptions of these people and you are the ones that already know what those opinions are. So remember that when you express your opinion, you are really speaking for a great many people whose opinions are very important."

Ground rules—the power of “because”

Ground rules are necessary to achieve your objectives in the limited amount of time you have with the group. They let everyone know what is expected so that there are no surprises. One useful tech-

nique when reviewing the ground rules with the group is the use of the word “because.” Simply stated, use the word “because” when you are giving the reason for the ground rule.

The word “because” has a tremendous amount of power. Ellen Langer, a Harvard social psychologist, demonstrated the power of the word “because” in an experiment. When she asked people waiting in line to use the library copying machine: “Excuse me, I have five pages. May I use the Xerox machine because I’m in a rush?” 94% of the people com-

plied. When the request was “Excuse me, I have five pages. May I use the Xerox machine?” only 60% of those asked complied. The third request was “Excuse me, I have five pages. May I use the Xerox machine because I have to make some copies?” What was absolutely amazing was that this request was honored 93% of the time—almost as much as the first request, even though all she did was state the obvious, and use the magic word “because.”

You may want to go back to the section in this article called Preliminaries and see how often the word “because” is used. Here are some examples of how I use the word “because” when I am reviewing the ground rules:

“Please, no side conversation because we want to get everybody’s opinion and we’ll have a difficult time hearing it if more than one person is talking.”

“There may be times when I have to cut someone short because we have a limited amount of time to cover all the topics and I want to make sure I get you out of here on time.”

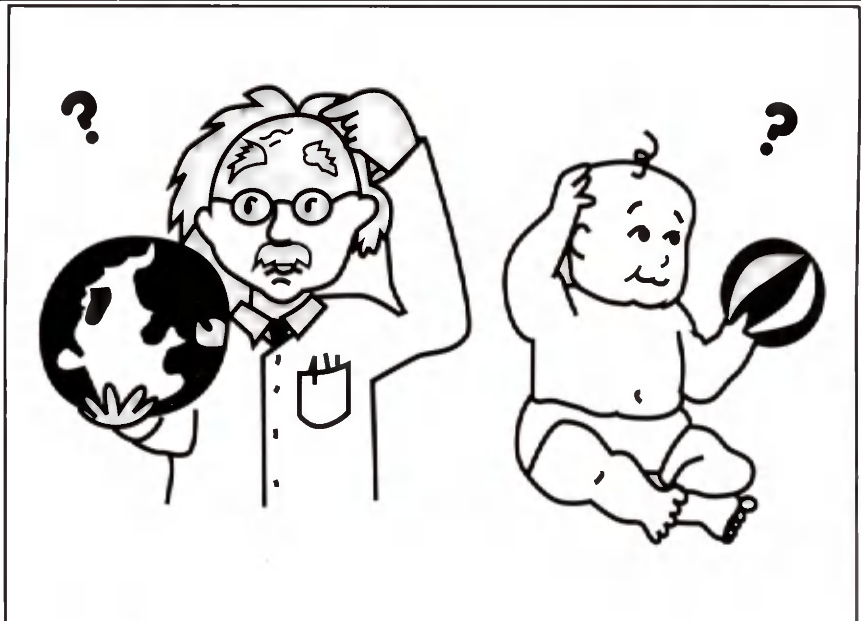
You get the picture. Use “because” whenever you can because it works!

Establishing a positive environment

Immediately before discussing the subject at hand, have the participants introduce themselves to the rest of the group. As part of their introduction, have each participant tell the group the most positive thing that happened to them that day. Set the example by telling the group your most positive thing, then pick for your first few introductions people who look like they had a pretty good day.

As you go around the room, some people will “forget” to mention the most positive thing. Remind them to mention it, and make sure everybody participates, but not to the point where they get annoyed. Remember the objective is to create a positive environment. The mood that you as a moderator want to set up is upbeat and playful. Some people may say they have not had anything positive happen to them all day. If you get that response, ask them, “What could have been positive for you today?”

The purpose of this is to cause them to think about something pleasant. People who are thinking about pleasant things



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are generally more cooperative and supportive of other group members. The final outcome of this process is that people will feel more comfortable with you and the rest of the group. Comfortable people are more likely to participate in more robust discussions. This process also gives you a feeling for the group members so that when you start the discussion you can direct your questions accordingly.

Mirroring

After establishing rapport with the group and getting them into a positive state of mind, you want to maintain rapport as the discussion progresses. There are a number of ways to do this.

One of the most effective ways is an NLP technique called mirroring. This is simply matching a person's behavior. The easiest way to do this is to match the person's body posture. If the person leans back in their chair, you lean back in your chair; if the person has her hands under the table, you have your hands under the table.

You do not want to be blatant about this by matching every move he or she makes

at exactly the same time. Do it elegantly, so that the person is unaware of what you are doing. There are two ways to do this. One is to wait a few seconds before you mirror them. This will eliminate a lot of rapid gestures that you would not want to mirror. The other is to wait until you speak before mirroring them. It is a very natural thing for people to change body position when they begin to speak.

When most people first learn about mirroring, they feel uncomfortable about doing it because they think people will notice what they are doing. Unless you are blatant about it, people will not notice. They will feel drawn to you and not know why. If someone does comment on it, admit it and tell them that you are doing it so they will feel more comfortable in the group. Then keep doing it. In the years I have been mirroring people, no one has ever said anything about it.

Another reason people feel uncomfortable about it is because they feel sneaky and manipulative. I view mirroring as a way of showing the utmost respect for the person by going out of my way to com-

continued on p. 50

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Copper Mountain

continued from p. 7

paigned scored the highest. But when the White Hot concept was paired with an illustration, it elicited a strong positive reaction.

"People looked at the visual and said, 'Oh, look at all that powder! I won't be disappointed if I go to ski there.' The White Hot concept made people excited about the mountain and showed that it was a great place to go skiing." Durand

says.

Copper Mountain has used the White Hot campaign each year since its introduction in 1987-88 season, adapting the theme to suit the target audience and medium used. "Our goal was to make sure that everywhere you turned, Copper Mountain was going to be identified with White Hot, from TV and radio, to print spots, lift tickets, off-site brochures, everywhere that there was Copper Mountain, it was White Hot," Durand says.

For example, one print ad bearing the White Hot tagline shows a skier sending

up a snowy wake as she hurtles down a powder-covered slope near majestic mountain peaks. A television spot featuring Denver Broncos quarterback John Elway sending up the r'n'b classic "(I'm a) Soul Man" with "(I'm a) Snow Man," finishes with the "Copper Mountain is White Hot" tagline.

"By taking the White Hot tagline and using it with upbeat, driving music in our TV spots and carrying that theme through our print, it has really positioned Copper Mountain as the place for the person that has the active lifestyle. It's the place to be energized," Davidson says.

To further enhance its image with the younger, cutting edge skier, the resort has also opened its arms to ski boarders, who use a single board rather than two skis to "surf" down the slopes. "All the other resorts were discouraging people from ski boarding," Austin-Kelley's Lisa Durand says, "but research is telling us that the skier population is shrinking, so since we can't increase the size of the pie, let's increase our share of it, so Copper Mountain decided to encourage people to come and ski board."

Three segments

The younger skier is just one of the three main market segments that Copper Mountain serves, Davidson says. The second market is the adults from 25-49 who come to the resort for an extended stay. "They have an active lifestyle, they're the kind of person that wants to get out and experience rather than vegetating on their vacation. They want to be physical and have a sense of accomplishment. That's the kind of person that stays six or seven days with us."

The third market, skiers who have come to ski at neighboring areas such as Keystone or Breckenridge, are targeted with a specific campaign to encourage them to ski Copper Mountain while they're in the area. "We may not get the lodging revenue from them but if we can get them to ski with us, we may get lift ticket and food and beverage revenue," Davidson says.

Joint marketing

That campaign is one part of the joint marketing efforts of the Ski The Summit Association, formed 12 years ago to link the Copper Mountain, Keystone and



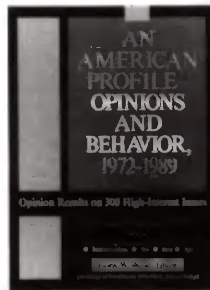
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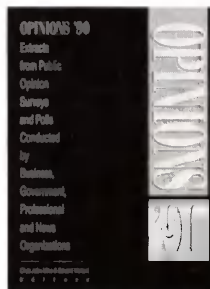
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Breckenridge areas. Through co-op advertising, an interchangeable lift ticket that gives skiers access to all three areas, and free shuttle buses, the group is able to offer skiers an attractive variety of options.

"Our attitude is that we can do more collectively than we can individually. Whether skiers are sleeping at Copper or Keystone or Breckenridge, we know that they're going to ski all three resorts. That gives us a better marketing position against places like Vail, Steamboat, and the Utah and California resorts because right here just a few minutes apart we have four mountains run by three resorts for them to ski, and they can do it with one ticket."

High awareness

The White Hot campaign has been quite a success, Davidson says. Copper Mountain's ongoing research has shown high



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Unlike other resorts, Copper Mountain welcomes ski boarders.

awareness levels for the White Hot theme, the number of front range day skiers has jumped each year, and the promotional efforts done in conjunction with the ads have generated a high number of inquiries.

"The campaign has proven itself. We saw an increase in all of our revenues, in our skier days, our lodging room nights. And the theme is continuing to carry us right now. We're one of the few ski resorts that is performing very well this season. A lot of the other areas are down 20-30 percent. We're even with skier days with last year and we are up in budget and revenues.

"I think we'll fine-tune (the campaign), but we'll continue to use White Hot because the research showed us that the mountain, our actual hard product, is the most important thing to skiers. It's the element we provide for their experience and it's a white hot product." □

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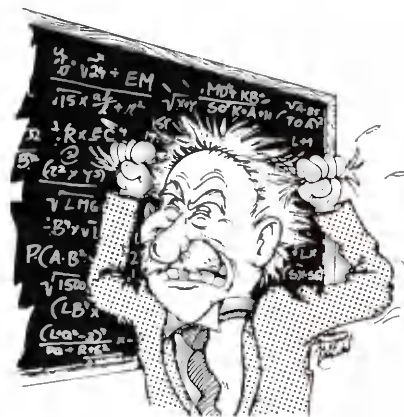
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Stokely

continued from p. 12

After comparing their choices, with and without exposure to the written concept, we knew we were on to something.

In all the groups, regardless of the order exposed, consumer perceptions were remarkably consistent:

"Stokely USA is a farming community." "It's made up of people with strong moral values, but they're open to new ideas." "They're hard working, family- and community-oriented...the kind of people you'd enjoy knowing."

For consumers, these images translated directly into the types of vegetables they'd expect from Stokely USA. "They'd be fresh, wholesome...the kind of foods you'd feel good about serving your family."

These findings convinced us that working with the theme of Stokely USA could help create positive perceptions for the brand. But strategically we knew that whatever we did had to be unique to Stokely. In any case, a me-too "heartland" campaign was out of the question.

The Grant/Jacoby creative department came up with a variety of different storyboards embracing this position. Then

Stokely USA

through a series of discussions with our client about key brand issues we narrowed the field to two. The next question was, how would consumers react to each campaign?

Animatic research

Animatic research would help us decide which of the two executions best met our objectives relative to each other, and on an absolute basis against other advertising in the category. We selected Video Storyboard Tests, New York, to conduct the research because of its basic methodology, extensive bank of normative data and reasonable cost.

Both executions fared well among consumers for communication, but one clearly stood out when compared to the norms. "Corn Demo," as it was called, is a lighthearted spot set on a farm in Stokely

USA in which actor Sterling Robson explains Stokely's philosophy on picking corn at the height of freshness, canning it immediately, and preserving that freshness with each can's special white liner.

The spot significantly exceeded category norms for many key measures. What made these results so unusual was that typically, when an execution scores well on uniqueness it is less likely to have broad appeal. This one had both. Our position supported by Stokely's white Flavor Guard lining was seen not only as unique but also of wide importance.

Diagnostic information further confirmed the execution's competitive strength. Consumers were quite taken with Sterling Robson, the primary spokesperson for Stokely canned vegetables and with what he had to say. Grant/Jacoby selected Sterling because he's a down to earth kind of guy but with his own unique style. He tells our product story with the conviction we'd expect from a farmer who grows vegetables in Stokely USA.

Extensions of the campaign came right from the tone of the original spot. Four of the extensions were, "Mabel Hays and her husband on peas from Stokely USA," "Sterling with a word and a song about

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Stokely USA," "Erle Hug with an explanation of Stokely's new Gold 'N White corn," and "Charlotte Tressler with a poem about Stokely tomato juice."

The remaining question became, "But will the campaign move product off the shelves?"

Tracking methods

While Stokely began planning for test markets Grant/Jacoby began developing advertising tracking methods. The first wave of research would provide a benchmark measurement of brand equity prior to any advertising. Successive waves would gauge movement based on advertising exposure.

Ideally we would have liked to compare the findings with actual sales data, but our client has not obtained the data yet. Instead, we're paying close attention to claimed past three month purchase and attitudinal shifts.

So far the news looks good. With the introduction of television advertising, unaided purchase recall of Stokely vegetables increased significantly. Stokely also achieved significant improvements in attitudes toward our primary message as well as strong improvements for all other key attitudinal measures. □

Unique and relevant

Grant/Jacoby knew it was on the right track with the Stokely USA campaign when tests of the storyboards for the "Corn Demo" spot found that consumers felt it had both a unique message and relevance (or broad appeal).

"If you can find a message that is both unique and relevant, I think you have a good message," says Dave Vadehra, president of Video Storyboard Tests, the New York-based firm that conducted the tests of the Stokely campaign. "The two very rarely work together, because the more generic the message, the more relevant it is. If you want a unique message, you have to settle for a message that is less relevant and less generic. 'Fresh milk' is a very relevant message, but the problem with a generic, relevant message is, it's never persuasive and it's never unique, because you can't buy milk that is not fresh, or detergent that doesn't make your clothes 'whiter than white.' The problem with most advertising is that the commercials are

category generic rather than brand specific," he says.

Citing the example of a detergent maker that began touting the leak- and spill-resistance of its packaging in its ads, Vadehra says that creating a unique position for a product or service in the market requires advertising that communicates unique product benefits. "If you go through the list of benefits for a detergent, a leak-proof carton is probably the 30th most important reason, but since the other 29 have become generic, relevant messages, you have to find a unique positioning. You can't do it by making your message 'whiter than white' or 'brighter colors.' All detergents offer those benefits. The only way you can do it is, for example, by presenting a leak-proof carton. That makes it unique. And you will often find that people buy that brand because it doesn't leak. That is the benefit."

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Fallon McElligott

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With these transcribed tapes, I soon discovered that I had a ready source of "footnotes" when preparing my presentation and final report. More importantly, when presenting the results, I found that clients could much more readily relate to the actual words participants were uttering.

A few case studies: I was moderating groups for a client of one of the agency's subsidiaries, McCool and Company. The client, DataCard Corporation, is the largest manufacturer of plastic cards and related systems in the world. A series of groups were conducted in two markets among DataCard's customers and non-customers. The product managers knew what their customers and non-customers were saying, but it took the impact of verbatim



comments during a focus group presentation to drive home the differences between perception and reality to the salespeople sitting comfortably in the presentation:

"The manufacturer of your card needs to be in tune with the graphics standards of every network that he's required to put embossing work on. Some vendors don't have the camera-ready or the standards of what we need to put on the back."

Another example in which we used verbatims to forcefully communicate focus group findings was for our own client, the Aveda Corporation. Once again, the people "behind the lines" did not have the benefit of personally observing every group. Therefore, hearing the results "straight from the horses' mouths" (in the horses' own words) proved to be much more

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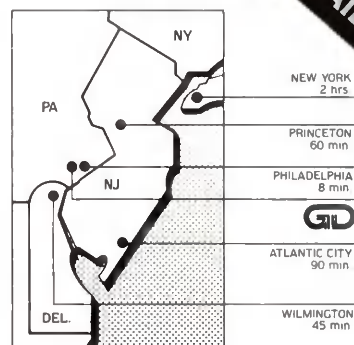
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helpful—and enlightening for developing long range marketing plans. Again, the key is in allowing consumers to express themselves in their own words:

"If you take care of your carpeting and you clean it every year, it's not going to wear out in 10 years. It's going to last 20. The same thing happens to your skin. And in 20 years, if you clean your carpet every year, it's still going to look better than your mother's did in 10 if she never cleaned it. It's the same thing with your skin. It's just taking care of what you've got and doing the most with what you have."

Telephone studies

In this day of computer-assisted interviewing, many researchers have completely forgotten the value of a well-placed probe after one of the countless rating statements which make up too many telephone interviews. Writers of telephone studies often times think that unless an answer can be given in a one-word syllable, it's not worth asking. However, we have found that the learning starts when probing for the why after consumers tell us the what.

Using verbatims certainly works when conducting tracking studies. A few years ago, we were conducting periodic tracking for Penn Racquet Sports. For this study, we had always asked the typical tracking questions—brand awareness, brand usage, advertising awareness, etc. However, one wise account person suggested that we go beyond asking simple advertising awareness, and probe for what respondents remembered specifically about the ads. At the same time, interviewers were instructed not to be satisfied with simple answers. They were told to tap into the emotions behind the answers. Indeed, as the following verbatim suggests, the Penn tennis ball advertising was working—at a wider range than we had initially suspected.

"Their ads show the balls bouncing to the same height. The conditioning and the quality control make an excellent ball. They are a lively and very durable tennis ball. They last a long time."

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advertising campaign aimed at buyers and planners for one of our media clients. As with most of the agency's advertising campaigns, we knew that we were going to conduct a benchmark wave before the campaign began. However, rather than simply collect awareness levels, we decided to add a few probes at the end of the "typical" tracking interview. In this case, instead of simply asking media buyers and planners how likely they would be to recommend the publication to their clients, we also decided to ask them why they would (or would not) recommend the publication. This "benchmark" tracking data became immediately usable, letting our client to know the current perceived strengths and weaknesses of the publication:

"I'm very likely to recommend it. It contains independent articles and is very well written. Its audience is different from other publications. It certainly has a place for my financial and credit card needs which is the area I would certainly use them."

"I'm very unlikely to recommend it. I'm not just familiar with the magazine. I haven't been exposed to it. No one's ever tried to sell me on it and I don't know if I've even purchased one."

Personal interviews

At Fallon McElligott, we have taken advantage of verbatims in conducting "communications checks" for several years. A "communications check" is the agency's means of measuring if a campaign is on strategy. We conduct these communications checks for several of our clients, positioning them as a means of collecting qualitative information with a quantitative sample. Although a quantitative sample of 75 one-on-one personal interviews is most often used, most of the questions are open ended and demand a heavy amount of coding. However, we feel this opportunity of "getting inside consumers' heads" is well worth the time and money. Answers to these upfront open-ended questions enable us to probe for what is working in each execution, why it is working and how it is working. The extensive use of consumer verbatims

provides both agency and client with a thorough understanding of how consumers actually feel about the executions.

A few years ago, we produced a rather controversial television campaign for a retail financial client. This series of seven commercials featured a comedy troupe taking a rather irreverent look at bankers and their habits. The client was concerned about how such a campaign "would play back home." We realized that simple numbers would not be reassuring enough for a campaign like this. Thus, interviewers were told to probe extensively so that we could also feel what respondents were feeling. The research must have been a success as the campaign went on to win several awards, including a Gold Lion at Cannes.

"It's a cute commercial. It makes you laugh so you're more apt to watch it. It might be worth checking into since they're making it easier to bank."

"I thought it was cute, entertaining. It was not honest at all. It's convenient to bank there, but they have terrible cus-

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tomers service. The commercial was nice. Go to the bank and they are rude."

At the same time, verbatims are also extremely valuable in communicating to creatives what is right—and not wrong—about an execution. At Fallon McElligott, the role of advertising research is to identify problems, but never to propose solutions. Thus, we go out, talk to consumers, "get inside their heads" and return to tell the creatives what's working—and what's not.

Last fall, we tested several rough mock-ups of a proposed campaign for one of our clients. During the one-on-one interviews, we collected our share of pre- and post-exposure measurements, but, once again, focused most heavily on what consumers were feeling. We discovered that we had a "clutter busting" campaign—but consumers had problems remembering who the sponsor was:

"It was right to the point. It caught my interest and was short and direct and a subject that interests me immensely. But you need more information. I felt that after watching the commercial, I wanted to know much more about what was said."

"Wow! Powerful stuff. I often think about that kind of stuff, but I don't think I could ever pull it off. Actually, it made me think of my parents and all the hardships they went through. Yes, I thought about my parents. My father died when he was only 60. That ad really makes you appreciate what we have now, doesn't it?"

Ironically, neither respondent was able to name the sponsor of the ad. But we used the intensity of the consumer verbatims to convince the client to stick with the campaign, while the creatives did their own fine tuning. After further "fine tuning," the ads were produced and have gone on to perform admirably in the marketplace.

As noted, verbatims are much more valuable in communicating to creatives what people are feeling about the ads—and why they are feeling that way. At the same time, they can be significantly more important than column after column of numbers. For some reason, creatives have

a natural aversion to numbers, but they can readily relate to words.

A few weeks ago, the results of an internal communication check were being presented to a creative group. One writer reacted quite negatively; in fact, he went bonkers. As one table of numbers followed another, his behavior became much more irrational. Finally, realizing that lives could be in danger, I began soothing him by reading verbatims. After two, he quieted down. By five, he was downright contrite. By seven, he was shaking his head, saying, "Well, they sure are stupid, but if that's the way they

feel, I guess that's the way we gotta go."

That little story, more than anything else, conclusively demonstrates the true value of verbatims. Numbers have their purpose and should not be ignored. However, they often provide only a small glimpse of the big picture. Verbatims are the words of people, the reason the research is being done in the first place. A few well-placed open-ended questions will add a valuable "third dimension" to your research and enable you to get every penny possible out of your research budget. □

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Product and Service Update

continued from p. 25

System offers computer access to data collection agencies

No one can dispute the significant impact that PC's have had on the data collection industry. Both CATI and CAPI interviewing are now quickly becoming the norm instead of the exception. In addition, research companies are using personal computers for such diverse applications as modeling and analysis to presentation preparation.

While personal computers have increased our productivity and quality, the power and utility of PC's utilizing electronic communications has not yet been fully exploited. The ability to connect PC's using telephone lines presents the opportunity to share information in new and exciting ways. Not only can data be exchanged between the multiple offices in large field agencies, but users of these agencies now have the ability to become part of the electronic networks.

The Sherlock System, developed by Equifax/Quick Test, is a dial-in bulletin board designed to allow users to access to information from a multi-location data collection agency. Users can dial into Sherlock using any PC and virtually any communications software. Once logged into the system, users have the following options:

Leave Specifications for a Bid

Users type in the specification for a bid which is then broadcast over the mall network. The bids are calculated in the

local markets and the user is contacted by phone or fax with a complete bid within f hour.

Leave a note

Users type in messages such as postponements, specification changes etc. The messages are automatically routed to the appropriate field locations.

Retrieve Job Status

Users retrieve cumulative job status reports for any jobs currently in the field. The reports can be run by location or summarize for the entire job. Termination points to be tracked are defined by the user to duplicate the exact pencil and paper status form that they currently use. In addition, the computer calculates incidence by market as defined by the user.

Retrieve Data Files

Users can download files to their own PC. These files can either contain raw data or finished tables. Once the data is brought back to the user's PC it can be processed as usual. That is, the raw data can be passed through a tabulation system and the finished tables can be printed out.

Electronic Brochure

Users can find out about specific mall locations. The data include facility address, anchor stores, hotel recommendations, restaurant recommendations, directions from airport and demographics. If the user is connected to a printer, the information can be printed directly from the screen.

How It Works

The Sherlock System is made up of a multitude of custom business programs and communication systems. First, the system uses an electronic mail system that allows messages to be sent to any and all mall sites with the push of a button. In addition, job status is tracked using proprietary data base management programs that have been developed over the past 3 years. Finally, the system uses an unattended communications package which polls each location every night to retrieve data and job status reports.

Security

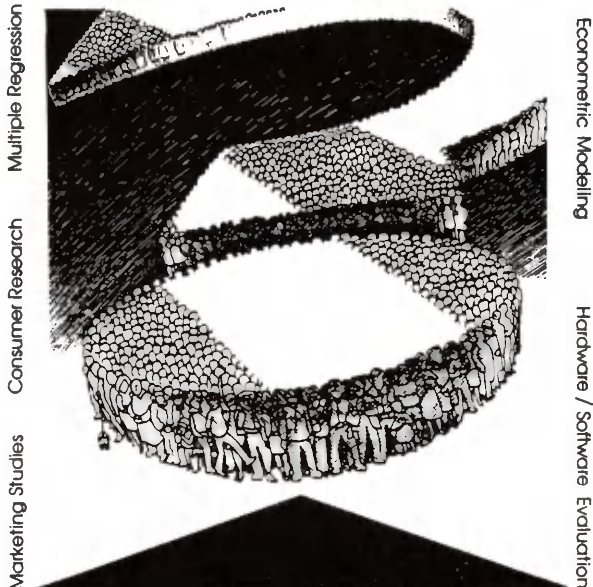
Data security is always a concern when users are allowed to dial in to a central computer. To eliminate the risk of unauthorized access to data, the Sherlock System use two levels of security. The first password users need to know gets them into the main system. In order to retrieve data on a specific study, users need to know a second password which is user-assigned and linked to the job number. Users can change the password assigned to their jobs as often as they would like.

The Future

Currently in development is an entire system that provides user specific capabilities. For example, one manager wanted to use Sherlock to keep track of two salespeople. Now the salespeople simply dial into Sherlock in the morning and report on the prior day's activities as well as outlining their current day's agenda. When the manager calls into Sherlock to retrieve his daily job status reports, he also checks the information entered by his salespeople. Of course, no other user is allowed access to this manager's data.

For more information, contact David Schafer at 508-872-1800.

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Association of Business Publisbers studies advertising effectiveness

The Association of Business Publishers (ABP) has recently released business-to-business advertising study results. Included in the report is information on advertising effectiveness as it relates to frequency, continuity, concentration, color, and spreads. The purpose of the report is "to help both advertisers and agencies to analyze the advertising effectiveness of the specialized business press and to get the most out of their advertising investments."

The ABP report includes information on a number of studies which show that specialized business publication advertising reaches more people than any other promotional or sales effort—including one-on-one sales calls. One example used is a study conducted by a major U.S. manufacturer who found that product advertising reached 68% of the buying influences at plant of an important prospect while sales calls reached only 11%, direct mail reached 8%, and trade shows reached 0%.

Another study referred to by ABP conducted by Cahners Research of 9,200 prospects and 53 different manufacturers found that 60% of those who had requested product information as a result of advertising did not know that "this company" manufactured "the product advertised" before seeing the advertisement. A somewhat similar study conducted by Technical Publishing analyzed the responses to 37 ads run in eight publications over a two year period and found that 67% of the respondents had been unaware of the advertised products before seeing the ad.

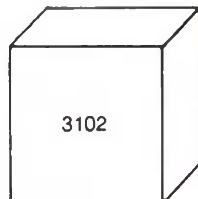
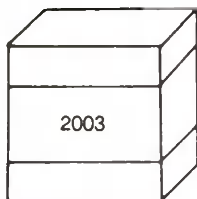
A portion of the ABP report dealt with the importance of

frequency in an advertising campaign. Citing another Cahners Research study which analyzed "Remember Seeing" scores for 3,117 advertisements from 696 companies, ABP reported that the scores increased in direct proportion to increased advertising frequency. Running less than three ads in a 12 month period resulted in an index of 81, while running 12 to 17 increased the index to 112. Running 24 or more increased that index again, to 143.

Increasing frequency, without changing advertising materials, can result in more product inquiries and sales. The ABP report provides two specific examples of product advertisements which did not change over a period of time and where inquiries continued throughout their lifetime. Another study reported that the higher the exposure rate to a single product advertisement the higher the sales. According to the ABP report advertisers and agencies, having seen their ad dozens of times in the process of producing and trafficking it, can get bored and believe it is necessary to produce a new advertisement. They have reached the saturation point but do not realize that their target audience has not.

The report also provides information regarding the effect of advertising continuity. Two studies showed that publication advertising recall dropped by more than 50% three weeks after exposure. Another study analyzed a company's advertising in a single publication over a seven-year period. The company ran a total of 36.5 pages of advertising during a three year period. Then it stopped advertising. At the end of those first three years, 68% of the magazine readers said they were familiar with the company. Four years later, without additional advertising support, only 44.9% recognized the company.

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Principles of Rapport

continued from p. 33

municate at his or her level—very much like I would learn a few phrases in a foreign language if I were traveling to another country.

There are also other ways to mirror people. You can match facial expressions, breathing, voice tone or tempo, or their choice of words. Dr. Albert Mehrabian of UCLA's psychology department determined that 55% of meaning is conveyed nonverbally with body language; 38% is conveyed from how we speak, i.e., tone, volume, inflection, speed, etc.; only 7% of meaning is conveyed by the words. The best way to start is to match body posture and as that becomes an unconscious behavior for you, begin to add the other ways of matching, one at a time, and find out which ones work best for you.

The principle of similarity, again

The reason why matching and mirroring work so well is because of the principle of similarity. When you match or mirror a person, he perceives that you are like him and will start to like you. The process is unconscious and is one of the most powerful ways of creating and maintaining rapport.

"What" versus "why" questions

Another NLP technique is to ask "what" questions rather than "why" questions. The reason for this is that when you ask "why" questions people feel defensive and have a tendency to "dexify" (defend, explain, justify) what they said. "What" questions get the focus onto the product rather than the person. For example, ask, "What was it about Brand X that was

better than Brand Y?" rather than, "Why did you pick Brand X over Brand Y?" Or, "What makes you say that?" rather than, "Why?" Phrasing questions in this manner is particularly useful when probing with a follow up question.

Sometimes when the moderator asks a question the participant gets stuck and says "I don't know." Since most of the questions in a focus group are asked to elicit an opinion, people almost always have an answer which is more useful than "I don't know." Sometimes they have a hard time expressing it.

One way of assisting a participant to access a more useful answer is to say, "I understand that you don't know, but if you did know, what, in your opinion, do you think it would be?" This question may look pretty silly as you read it, but in many cases this will remove the mental block that people have towards answering a question. What does this phrase accomplish? First of all, we are agreeing with them that they don't know. This maintains rapport. Next we pose a question which allows them to access the part of the mind that thinks it "knows" and permit it to give a response which does not have any right/wrong association with it, i.e., an opinion.

Many times clients want to know what feature or pricing schedule will cause people to buy their product. Many moderators will ask a direct question such as, "What would make you purchase this product?" Sometimes people get stuck or they may give answers that don't give much information. When this happens, try asking, "I want you to imagine that it is two weeks from now and you have already purchased Brand X, what was it that caused you to buy Brand X?" When the question is phrased in this way, the

participants are usually much freer with their opinions. Most people find it easier to recall information from an imagined past rather than having to imagine information from a real, but uncertain, future.

Concluding the focus group

At the conclusion of the session, you have all the information you need and all you have to do is dismiss the group. Do you still need to maintain rapport? Absolutely! And the reason is not so much for the group's benefit as it is for your benefit. When you conclude a focus group discussion, thank the group for their input and let them know how helpful they have been.

One of the things I like to do after the group has been dismissed is to personally thank those participants who made a real contribution to the discussion. I do this because it causes me to appreciate what these people have done to make the discussion successful. Also maintaining rapport with the group will keep you sharp for the next group if you have back-to-back sessions.

Summary

I have discussed a few powerful techniques during this article that I have found to be extremely useful. I hope they will be as useful for you. Upon first learning of these techniques, most people are fascinated. Some are skeptical. The only way to see if they will work for you is to try them.

Some people are turned off by the techniques because they perceive them as manipulative rather than influential. The techniques can most certainly be used to manipulate. Or they can be used to influence. My belief is that the difference between being manipulative and being influential is a difference of attitude. We cannot not have an effect on people. Everything we do somehow affects others. I perceive manipulation as affecting others in a self-serving manner without consideration for them. I perceive influencing as affecting others while making a conscious decision to create situations where everybody benefits.

My attitude as a moderator is to create an environment where it is safe for the participants to share their perceptions, opinions and feelings and have them feel that their input is valued. When I do that, everybody wins because the participants, my client and I all get what we want from the focus group. □

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Testing

continued from p. 17

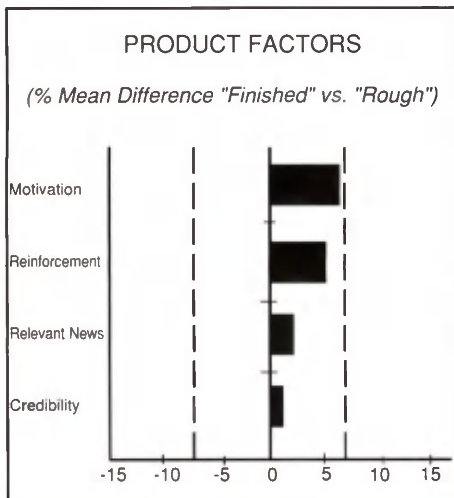
the executional factors exhibit a lower correlation to relevant news than do the product factors. However, across all factors, there are only minor differences in correlation between rough and finished commercials on relevant news. This pattern holds true when we compare each of the factors versus each other.

In summary, the patterns of factor correlations for rough and finished commercials are similar. Thus, the relationship between factors is relatively constant, and not affected by commercial format. However, while consumer patterns of response are similar, this does not necessarily imply that they react as favorably to both formats.

Relative ratings

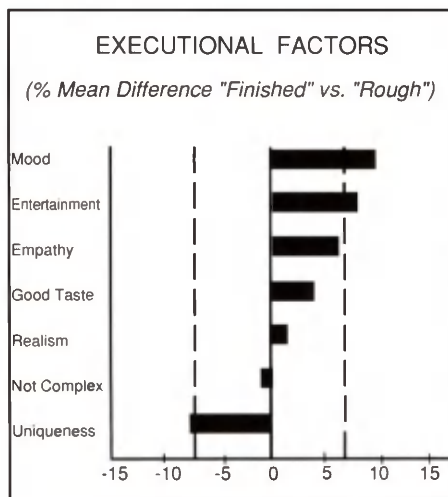
Are the levels of consumer response similar for both formats or do finished commercials engender more favorable reactions? The following chart compares the percent mean differences for the product related factors—those measuring consumer reaction to the strategic product communication. The percent mean differences are calculated by dividing finished mean ratings by rough mean ratings.

Bars to the right show that finished commercials received higher mean factor ratings than rough commercials; bars to the left show that finished commercials receive lower mean factors ratings than rough commercials. The broken lines at plus and minus seven percent show the difference generally needed for significance at the 90 percent level of confidence for a typical sample size of 100 respondents.



Finished commercials received higher rating levels than rough on all product factors. However, these differences are not significant. Finished and rough commercials generate almost identical mean rating levels on the factors of credibility and relevant news. Importantly, relevant news has been found to be the one factor most predictive of on-air recall levels and persuasion scores. Thus, while finished commercials do enjoy a marginal advantage to rough, this advantage is relatively narrow and not significant on the critical product factors.

Now, looking at the executional factors—that is, the factors which relate to commercial presentation—we see a wider variation than found for the product factors.



Finished commercials enjoy a significant advantage on the emotionally related factors of "mood" and "entertainment," plus a marginal advantage on "empathy." The presence of "real" people and the ability to show live action in finished commercials probably accounts for this enhanced consumer emotional involvement.

The fact that rough commercials are more apt to be considered unique is not surprising, given the consumer unfamiliarity with this format. Yet, the rough format does not appear to influence perceptions of commercial "realism."

Conclusions and implications

Based on these findings, we can conclude that:

- Rough and finished commercials evoke similar patterns of consumer response—that is, virtually identical factor correlations, within format.

- Finished commercials do not create meaningfully stronger positive attitudes toward the brand—and are at parity to rough on the critical factor of relevant news.

- Finished commercials are significantly more emotionally involving and entertaining than rough executions.

- Although rough commercials are perceived as somewhat more unique than their finished counterparts, they're viewed as equally realistic.

There are a number of implications suggested by these results.

- Rough commercials can be used with confidence to determine consumer reaction and response to the strategic product message; the incremental value of a finished format is marginal in terms of its effect on product-related perceptions.

- The fact that finished executions are more emotionally involving than rough does not usually create a problem—clients typically test pools of commercials with similar formats. However, in those instances where rough executions must be evaluated vs. finished, consideration should be given to weighting the rough commercial data to reflect these differences.

- Rough executions relying heavily on emotion or imagery should be in a format that closely approximates finished, e.g. ripomatic or photomatic. This is particularly true for executions using "star" talent or with a strong action orientation. □

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Please add the following facilities to the 1991 Directory of Focus Group Facilities:

Please note the following correction to the 1991 Directory of Focus Group Facilities:

Add the contact name Ralph Rhoades to the listing for Tucson-based Field Market Research.

Please add the following facilities to the 1990 Directory of Telephone Interviewing Facilities:

Epley Marketing Services, Inc.
Brenton Financial Center, Suite 370 15 15 9 0
150 First Avenue N.E.
Cedar Rapids, IA 52401
Ph. 319-363-6101
Contact: Sharon Ayers, Mktg. Coord.

Hispanic Marketing Research & Communications, Inc.
4550 NW Loop 410, Suite 140 38 20 12 12
San Antonio, TX 78227
Ph. 512-736-2000
Fax 512-736-2004
Contact: Dr. Naghi Namakforoosh, Pres.

Hispanic Marketing Research & Communications, Inc.
801 Nolana, Suite 310
McAllen, TX 78504
Ph. 512-687-3500
Contact: Dr. Naghi Namakforoosh, Pres.
1,3,6,7B

Hispanic Marketing Research & Communication, Inc.
4550 N.W. Loop 410, Suite 140
San Antonio, TX 78229
Ph. 512-736-2000
Fax 512-736-2004
Contact: Dr. Naghi Namakforoosh, Pres.
1,3,4,5,6,7B

Lexington Opinion Research
131 Prosperous Place, Suite 19B
Lexington, KY 40509
Ph. 606-263-4999
Fax 606-263-2838
Contact: Alice M. Greene, Field Dir.
1,3,6,7B

Lockney & Associates
1 Wildwood Drive
Parkersburg, WV 26101
Ph. 304-863-8004
Contact: Linda Long
1,2,3,4,5,6,7A

Nancy Low & Associates, Inc.
5454 Wisconsin Ave., Ste. 1500
Chevy Chase, MD 20815
Ph. 301-951-9200
Fax 301-986-1641
Contact: Patricia Kaufman, Fac. Mgr.
1,3,6,7A

Research Data Analysis
450 Enterprise Ct.
Bloomfield Hills, MI 48302
Ph. 313-332-5000
Fax 313-332-4168
Contact: Leanne Schuster, Proj. Dir.
1,3,6,7C

Three Cedars
533 N. 86th Street
Omaha, NE 68114
Ph. 402-393-0959
Contact: John Lee, V.P.
1,2,3,4,6,7C

Please note the following correction to the January 1991 SourceBook Supplement:

The Answer Group
4665 Cornell Rd., #150
Cincinnati, OH 45241
Ph. 513-247-2200
Fax 513-489-9130
Contact: Lynn Grome

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Trade Talk

continued from p. 54

consumers to analyze shopping habits; and to the beach on a hot July day to talk with young girls about feminine hygiene products.

"We were pitching an account and we new that teenagers would be very important to us as a target audience. It was July, and it seemed like the best place to reach teenaged girls was at the mall or at the beach, so that's where we went to find them and talk about their lives and their goals, what their concerns and preferences are.

"People think that doing research among teens is difficult, but I just haven't found that to be the case. If you get them in a comfortable situation, they're willing to tell you anything. They're aware of the world, and they're very willing to share their opinions and be taken seriously by adults. I've really enjoyed the research that I've done with them."

Her personal touch with consumers also appears to have given her a friendly relationship with her agency's creative staff—something not often found at ad agencies, where the research and creative camps typically maintain a state of mutual distrust caused by their skirmishes in the research vs. creativity wars.

"We have a close-knit clan here and one thing that has been good for me is that I think the creative team feels I'm sensitive to their issues. Part of my job does include taking rough work out to the consumer for input either before the commercials are made into animatics or before they're produced in a final manner. Often times creative people are reluctant to have researchers take their work to consumers because it's easy for them to feel threatened or to feel like they're going to have to change everything because somebody in New Jersey said they didn't get it.

"But we try to sit down and talk about the best way to approach consumers with their work. And I think they're far more receptive to listening to my interpretation because they have come to see me as the representative of the consumer rather than someone they don't really know very well. They

would much rather have me taking their work to consumers than a stranger, so to speak."

When she tests storyboards with consumers, she prefers to do so in a one-on-one interview. "I find that when you present storyboards in a focus group it is more difficult to get a diversity of opinion or to get the shy consumers to speak up when there is someone who is quite vocal about how they feel about something. So I feel that it's worth it to take the time to do it on an individual level."

The creatives often observe these sessions to learn first hand how consumers feel about their work, Cohen says. "They want to come and hear what these people have to say. There is a constant communication between the back room and myself. I don't wear an earphone because I find them distracting but (the observers) are free to interject at any point with questions or anything they want probed and I will usually convene to the back room after every interview."

While testing is often done in conjunction with clients, Cohen says that the agency itself likes to pre-test ideas and executions with consumers before going back to the client with work. "We want to get a feeling for how the work has been received by consumers and see if we can head off at the pass any potential problems, especially problems in communication. Those are things that can often trip you up and they're so easy to fix or adjust before you go to the client with the work."

As an account planner—a relatively new addition to the list of ad agency job descriptions—Cohen says she has the freedom to "float around" between the creative department and account management.

"One thing that I have found about account planning is that it is less a defined discipline and more something that everybody practices in their own way. I've adapted to a particular way of working with the people here at the agency. We're a medium-sized agency with about 250 people and we're used to working in relatively small groups. People tend to work across disciplines, whereas in a large agency people tend to be somewhat more focused on someone's job description. Here I've found that the boundaries are a bit more flexible." □

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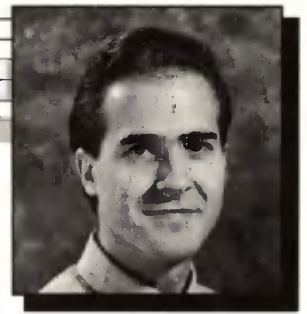
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by Joseph Rydholm
managing editor



Up close and personal

When Allison Cohen conducts research, she likes to get personal with the respondents. The philosophy at Ally & Gargano, the New York ad agency where she works, is that the more the creative staff knows about its target audiences, the better the creative process will be. As senior vice president and director of account planning, part of Cohen's job is to uncover the feelings of those target audiences and pass them on to her co-workers.

"I really have been positioned as someone who can help the creative team find out information to make their job of developing advertising easier. I like to put the emphasis where possible on helping them find out up front what it is they need to know before they start making the ads."

Along with the traditional qualitative and quantitative methods, Cohen uses on-site interviewing when it's appropriate to the project, whether she's researching for a new business pitch or for a client's ad campaign.

"One of the agency's goals is to develop consumer focused

strategies that result in consumer focused advertising. To do that, I like to talk to consumers where they are, or where they're thinking about using the particular product or service that we're interested in. I find that you get fresh insights that way and people are either close to the decision-making process or the usage occasion so it's easier to get the kind of information we're after rather than having it be historical and based on memory."

The quest for that information has sent her—with video camera often in tow—on a variety of ethnographic missions to: the living rooms of chocoholics to chronicle their sweet obsession; the kitchens and cupboards of



Cohen

continued on p. 53

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