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April 1994

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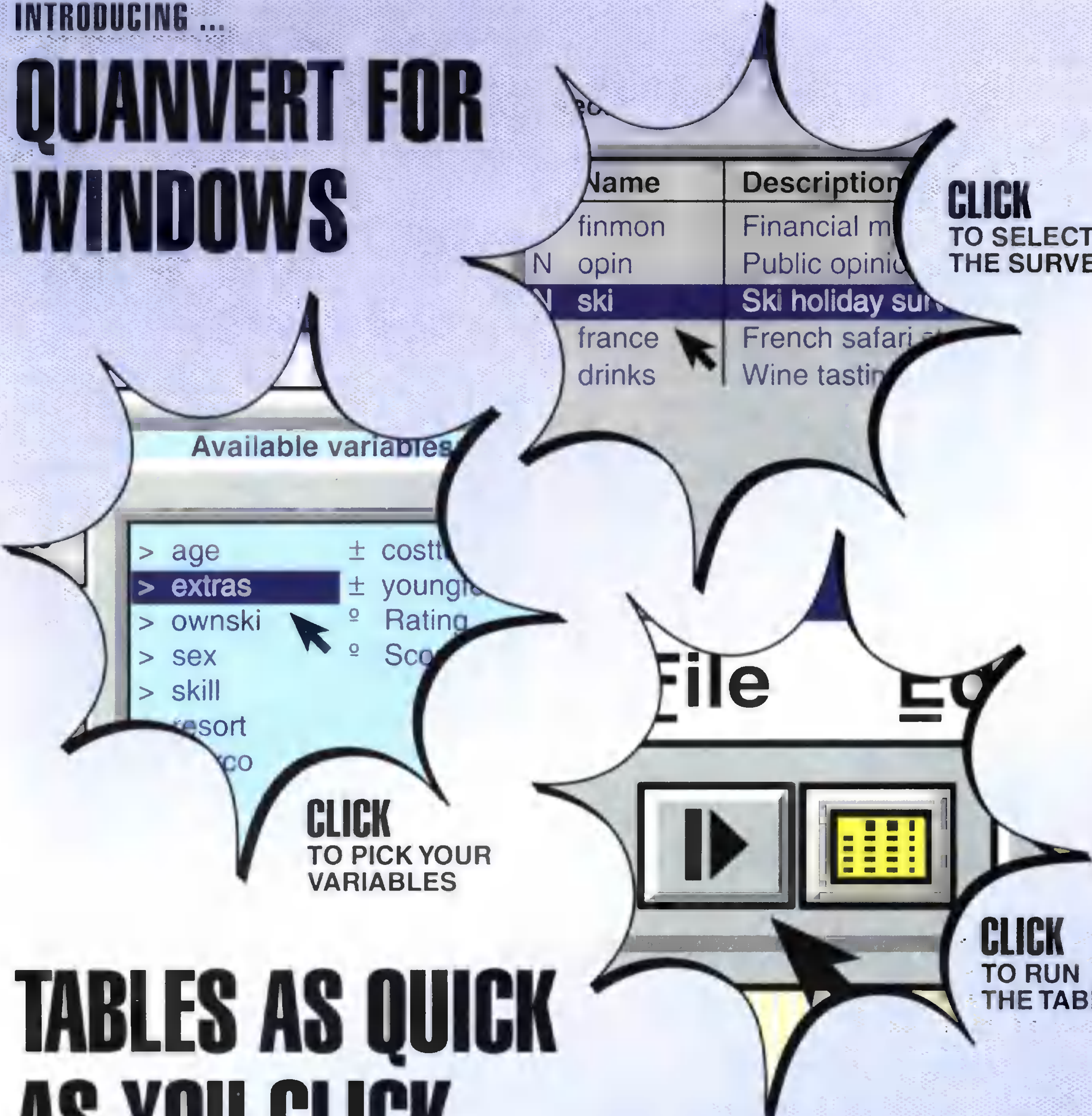

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Research with contractors paved the way for a new name for Allentown Pump & Gun. Photo courtesy of Allentown Pump & Gun.

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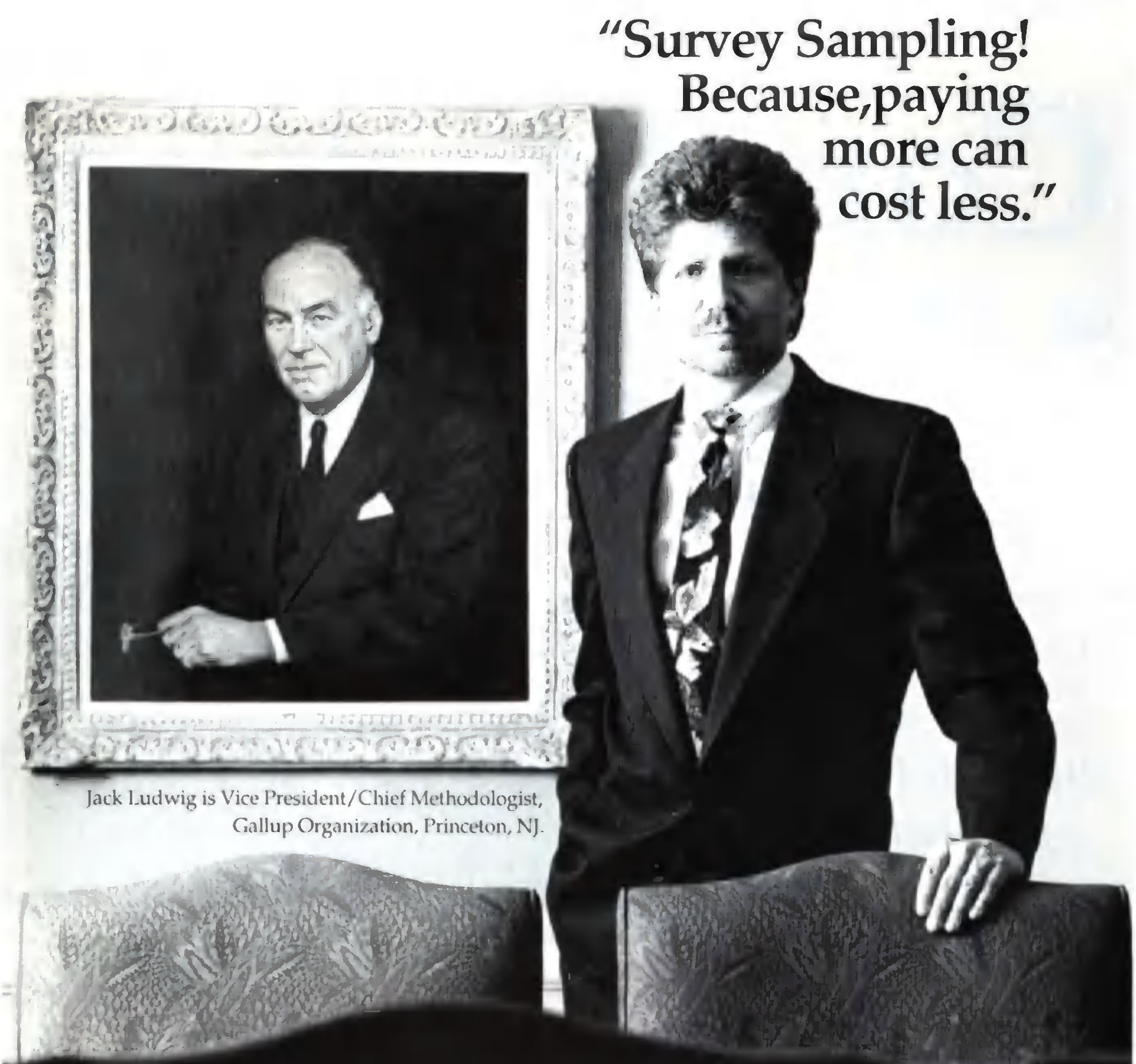

Jack Ludwig is Vice President/Chief Methodologist, Gallup Organization, Princeton, NJ.

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Constructing a new name

By Edwin P. Slaughter

Research leads old-line company to change name, launch new product

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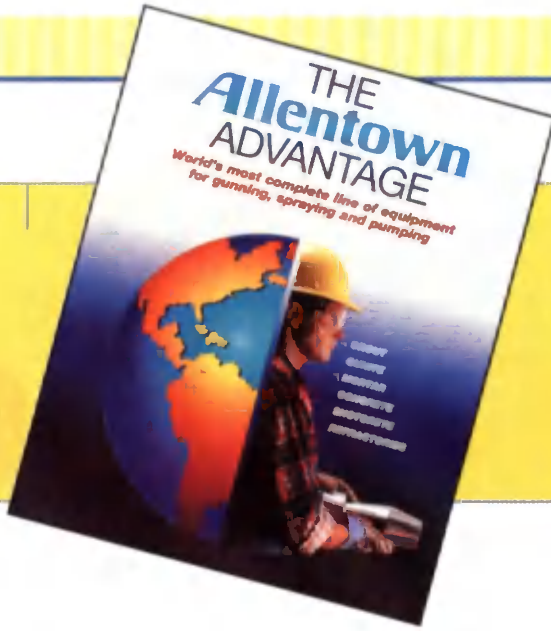
Editor's note: Edwin P. Slaughter is director of Parkwood Research Associates, Allentown, Pa.

The decision to change a company's name is one that shouldn't be made without adequate research. The information a properly conducted survey obtains not only can justify the step but also guide the choice of a new name and provide additional insight into the marketplace. One company survived the transformation successfully and launched a new era of growth in the process.

Allentown Pneumatic Gun, Inc. was one of the oldest and most respected names in the construction industry, dating back to 1916, when it developed the gunite process for the application of concrete. From the beginning, the pneumatic "guns" used to apply gunite and other cementitious materials have remained the company's primary products. While many other suppliers entered the field over the years, the small, privately held company in Allentown, Pa., continued to hold a small but respectable share of the market.

In 1963, William C. Roberts succeeded his late father as the company's



Based on its research, Allentown Pneumatic Gun changed its name to Allentown Pump & Gun to better reflect its current product line.

president. Within the next decade, he witnessed increased competition, changing technology and a new breed of customer coming into the picture. Roberts responded by initiating research toward the development of wet process equipment, the concrete pumps he rightly recognized would some day take over many of the applications originally handled by the dry process guns.

After several exploratory ventures into the pump field, Allentown refined the hydraulic swing-tube technology it had pioneered earlier and began to reap the benefits of its prior efforts. By the late 1980s, its Powercreter pump sales were rapidly increasing while its gun sales leveled off. In 1992, when the company was acquired by Master Builders, Inc. to operate as an autonomous unit, Roberts (now director) saw the new association as an opportunity to position the company for new growth. But how should the company be positioned?

His principal concern was the company's name — did it effectively communicate the company's position?

The basic questions he needed to answer were

(1) How well recognized was the company's name today?

(2) Did potential users associate the company's name with the products it offers?

(3) What was the company's reputation in the marketplace vs. competition?

To obtain the answers, Allentown retained Parkwood Research Associates of Allentown, Pa. Parkwood took the assignment a step further, designing a survey that would yield not only the basic information required but also additional data that would facilitate Allentown's planning: that is, the potential for expansion into new markets and the demand for a new specialty product by concrete contractors.

Interviewed contractors

For this project, Parkwood Research Associates interviewed 300 contractors who had attended the 1993 World of Concrete Show in Las Vegas, Nev. The sample of attendees was provided to Parkwood by The Aberdeen Group, sponsor of the show. Interviewing was conducted by telephone during August and Sept. The margin of sampling error one can reasonably expect from a 300-case sample is +/- 6 percentage points.

The questionnaire was designed to qualify respondents in terms of both their business activity and specific function. Only those who identified themselves as buying decision makers for either wet or dry process equipment (pumps or guns) were considered qualified.

The list posed several problems, none of which proved insurmountable. A number of registrants were not actively engaged in concrete contracting but were merely affiliated with contractors. Even among those who were contacted initially, there were a sizable number who sub-contracted the pumping and placing function, so Parkwood obtained the names of sub-contractors for those instances. Interviewers made as many as 10-15 callbacks to reach respondents who were out on the job and available only at certain times.

New name was easy

The survey achieved its primary purpose of measuring awareness and providing direction for the name-change decision, and it also yielded a wealth of valuable marketing information.

Based on the results, the new name was easy to arrive at. "Allentown Pneumatic Gun" is who the company is and has been. Furthermore, the

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The value of retaining customers

Study by North Carolina lender guides customer retention efforts

Oy Oavid Oshan and Kristin Triplett

Editor's note: David Oshan is quality process manager, and Kristin Triplett is communications specialist, at First Union Home Equity Corporation (FUHEC), Charlotte, N.C.

First Union Home Equity Corporation (FUHEC), a nationwide second mortgage lender based in Charlotte, N.C., recently discovered that if it could keep its customers on the books one month longer it would gain 6% net interest income per year.

That figure was derived from an extensive study on customer retention that was launched as FUHEC began to place an emphasis on its total quality management processes.

For FUHEC, one driver of the customer retention study was the realization that the cost to originate a loan is over $800, while it costs only $112 to service and collect a loan.

The customer retention study was initiated by Jim Maynor, FUHEC president, and spearheaded by David Oshan, quality process manager . "This study is important to FUHEC because various businesses, particularly sales organizations, spend time getting new customers and not as much time keeping those customers. We want to learn how to keep the customers we have," says Maynor.

FUHEC is a wholly owned subsidiary of First Union National Bank of North Carolina (FUNB), the ninth largest bank holding company in the nation, with assets exceeding $72 billion. First Union Corp. is based in Charlotte.

FUHEC began originating second

mortgages in the 1950s and has grown from a small southeastern company to a $2 billion operation with a network of approximately 150 branches spanning 39 states. FUHEC has a National Accounts Group located in Charlotte that derives home equity referrals from national companies such as USAA, a financial services organization dedicated to serving present and former U.S. military officers and their families. FUHEC offers a complete range of closed-end second mortgage products and home equity lines of credit and currently serves approximately 76,000 customers.

Photo © 1994 J. Wes Bobbitt

FUHEC's customer retention study was driven by the fact that it costs over $800 to originate a loan, while it costs just $112 to service and collect one.

Retention important

FUHEC utilizes a total quality management philosophy which is the centerpiece of the strategic planning process and employs the Malcolm Baldrige criteria as its Blueprint for Ongoing Success. The Baldrige criteria have seven broad categories of evaluation, including customer satisfaction. Within customer satisfaction, customer retention is one of the most important criteria and has emerged as a leading priority within First Union.

To learn more about customer retention, FUHEC conducted secondary research on other companies. The first step was to determine which companies are top performers in customer retention. Material from several sources was analyzed, including articles from *Newsweek* and the *Harvard Business Review*, benchmarking documents from Xerox and excerpts from a summary of the Consumer Bankers annual conference held in Tucson, Ariz.

Among the companies identified as leaders in retention was USAA. AT&T Universal Card Services and MBNA, both among the largest credit card services providers in the nation, were also singled out. Retention rates for these companies ranged from 90-98%.

According to a study completed by the Council for Financial Competition, a financial services group, the average retention rate in the banking industry is between 80-85%. Currently, FUHEC's average retention rate is consistent with industry averages.

FUHEC also met with Bain & Company in Boston, an international management consulting firm, and had extensive discussions with a former AT&T executive and a retention specialist from USAA. These meetings gave FUHEC valuable information about the practices that contributed to world class retention rates.

Among the practices discovered were the distribution of surveys to customers who closed their accounts and the use of information systems to cross-sell or identify customer demographics. USAA, for instance, uses demographics to market product lines to fulfill a lifetime of needs. For example, one USAA company may sell a middle-aged homeowner a life in-

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Tips for selecting the best methodology for industrial marketing research

By Chris Van Berveer

Editor's note: Chris Van Derveer is president of Van Derveer Industrial Research, New York City.

Many marketing managers face a common dilemma at the conclusion of a strategy planning session for their companies. They develop, or are presented with a requirement to conduct, market research. And while the company may understand the specifics of the research data it requires, it is left up to the marketing manager to select the best methodology for gathering that data.

Not only must the most accurate method of managing the work be selected but the chosen method must conform to a strict budget for the work as outlined by management. The purpose of this article is to guide industrial research managers through the four major methodologies: telephone and mail surveys, focus groups, and personal interviews. Though these methods are also used in consumer research, there are vast differences in how questions are asked and, of course, industrial questionnaires never ask lifestyle questions, as they have no direct effect on product purchasing.

Telephone surveys

Telephone interviewing is by far the most popular methodology used in industrial marketing research. The method is quite rapid — large populations may be surveyed and critical market data may be returned to your offices within weeks after surveying has begun — and it's accurate, because pre-screening procedures ensure that the person most knowledgeable about the survey topics is interviewed. But telephone surveys can be limiting due to their length — usually 12 to 15 minutes of a manager's time — and the fact that great detail cannot be developed from them.

Also, it's a waste of time to describe the visuals or layout of products through phone research. If designs are discussed, they must be pre-mailed to respondents and be in front of them at the time of the survey; a more expensive process indeed! Telephone surveys are always much less expensive than personal interviews and are slightly more costly than mail surveys, of course depending on how those mail surveys are managed.

It's best to use telephone when you require a rapid turnaround, do not need highly detailed data, and need data which is projectable. In justifying management decisions, which may involve investing millions of dollars, the data that you base your plans on must reflect the real statistics of the audience. If you conduct 50 interviews, for example, to gauge the opinions of 6,000 electrical distributors, you could develop data that is highly inaccurate. As a matter of fact the final result may vary ± 15-20 percent from any mean that is developed in the project. This variance is not acceptable for planning purposes. Any decision based upon it could result in a marketing disaster.

Real, projectable samples begin at a sample size of 100 interviews (a ± variance of 10 percent). For most industrial projects a sample size of 300 interviews within a specific market segment will return a result with a variance from the mean of ± 5 percent. In industrial research several hundred surveys will usually achieve your goals as the number of industrial purchasers may number in thousands, as opposed to consumer goods buyers, who may number in the tens of millions.

Mail surveys

This technique comes and goes in popularity. I believe it is currently out of favor, but as the winds change so may its standing. Companies with limited budgets for research often turn to mail surveys because the initial outlay is small and they may have used them in the past. These firms will always get

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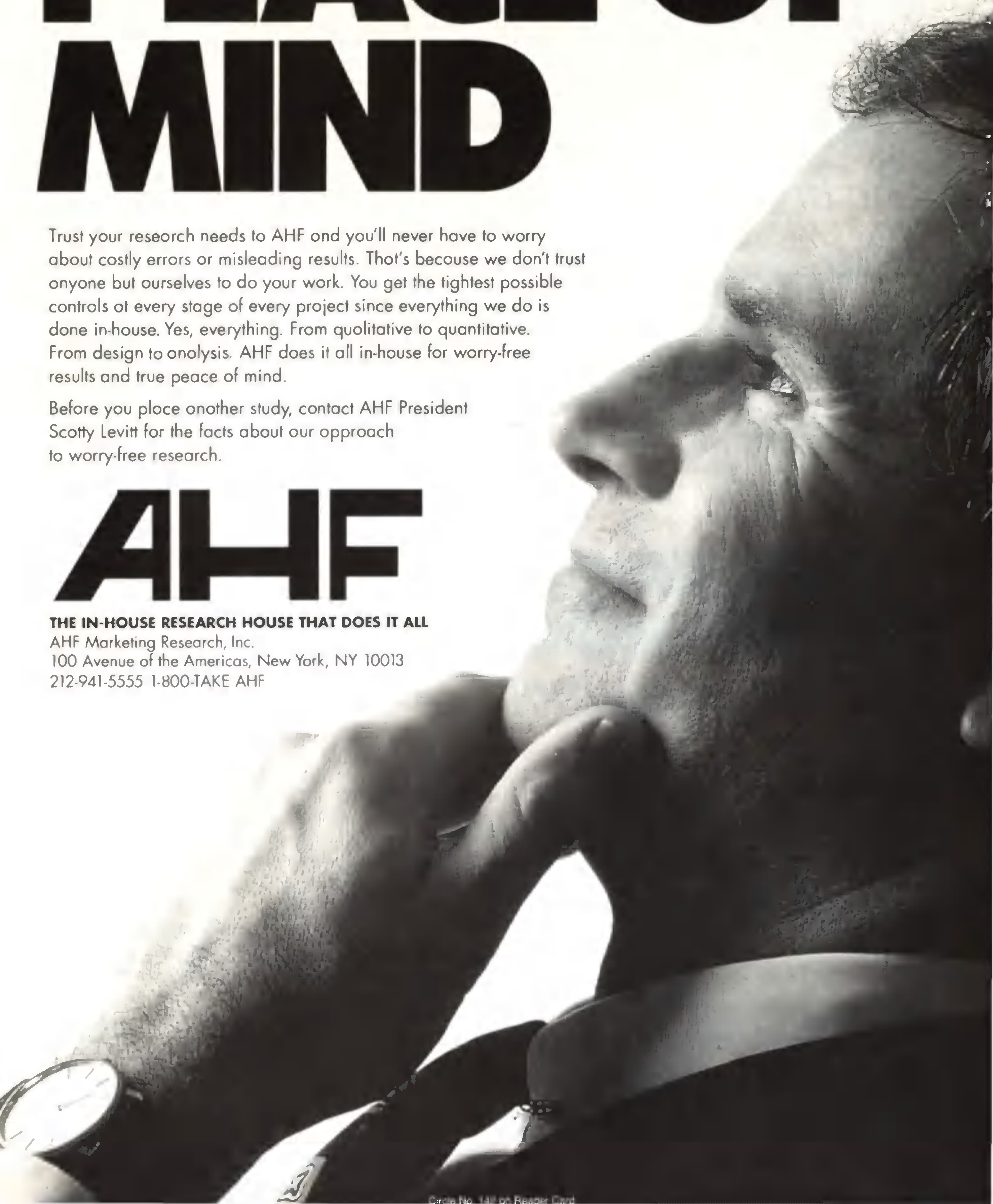

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Data Use

Single item attitude measures:

The biggest rip-off in survey research

By Jonathan E. Brill

Editor's note: Jonathan E. Brill, Ph.D., is principal of Next Generation Research, Solon, Ohio.

Today more and more organizations are conducting attitude research projects such as customer satisfaction surveys, advertising concept studies, and corporate image surveys. This is both good and bad. It's good because, when properly implemented, an ongoing program that measures consumer or business market perceptions can help organizations be more competitive and profitable. But it's bad because such programs rely on accurate assessments of attitudes, and typically there is far too little accuracy in today's attitude surveys. Symptomatic of the dearth of accuracy is the widespread use of single-item survey measures.

Accurate attitude assessment through survey research requires that attitude measures be reliable and valid. A survey measure is said to be reliable if its observed value or score can be replicated with little variance — that its observed value can be relied upon, so to speak. A measure's validity is established when there is strong evidence that the measure represents what it is intended to represent exactly — nothing less and nothing more. In attitude research, such measurement objectives can rarely be realized through use of a single item in a survey.

Validity compromised

Validity is almost always compromised through the use of single-item measures for the simple reason that very few phenomena of interest evince only single perceptual aspects. Thus it typically is impossible to capture the entire domain of the phenomenon of interest in just one question.

Consider, for example, measuring satisfaction with a restaurant. Because there are several (obvious) dimensions of a restaurant that may contribute to a customer's satisfaction — e.g., food, service, ambiance, price — a single-item measure such as, "How satisfied are you with this restaurant?" (accompanied by an appropriate rating scale) will not suffice. It is simply not reasonable to presume that all respondents will consider all four of these aspects, only these four aspects, and each of these four aspects with identical degrees of importance when formulating their satisfaction ratings.

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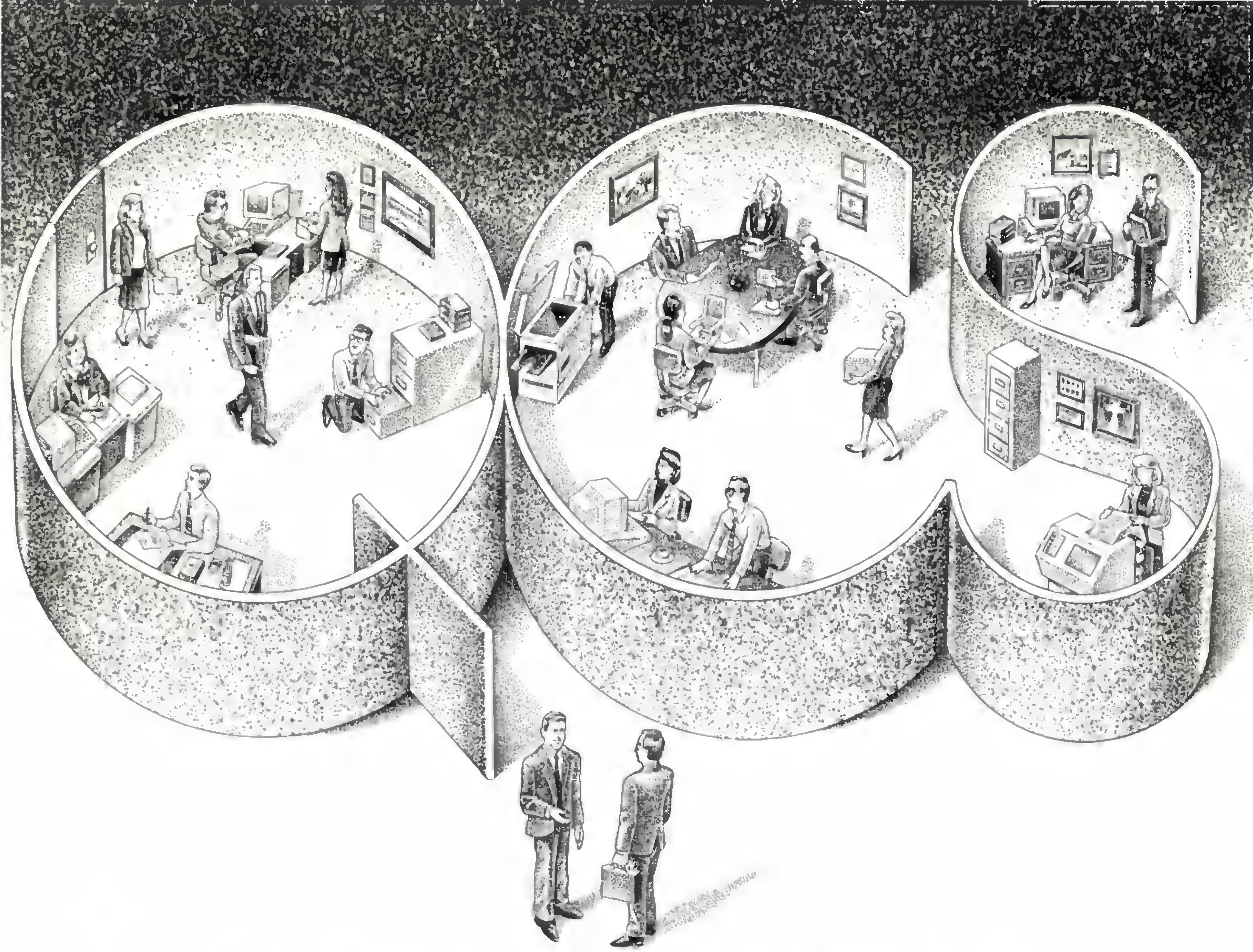

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faction surveys might lead one to believe, to ask about each of these four (hypothesized) dimensions separately with a single question for each. There are two salient reasons for this.

The first is, once again, a validity issue. Returning to the restaurant example, it should be clear that using a single item for each hypothesized dimension (i.e., food, service, ambiance and price) suffers from precisely the same problem that "How satisfied are you with this restaurant?" does: Surely each hypothesized dimension is reflected by several aspects.

For example, potential aspects of one's evaluation of the hypothesized service dimension include (but are not necessarily limited to) attentiveness of the server, the promptness of the server in responding to requests, the promptness of the host or hostess in greeting patrons, the courtesy shown by the host or hostess in greeting patrons, the efficiency with which the host or hostess seats patrons, the general courtesy exhibited by the server, the general courtesy exhibited by other staff (such as buspersons), the general helpfulness shown by other staff, and the accuracy of the food order.

The second reason asking about each of the four hypothesized dimensions is not the solution is related to reliability. Single-item measures are widely recognized to be inherently less reliable than measures using multiple items because of the potential for error associated with survey administration and the recording of the respondent's evaluation.

Respondents may be moody or elated at the time of survey administration, which may lead to overly negative or positive ratings. Alternatively, boredom may cause respondents to become lazy as they consider their responses which, in turn, may lead to the recording of unintended or otherwise inaccurate evaluations.

In contrast, when the ratings of related (i.e., intercorrelated) multiple items are added together to form a single measure, such errors tend to average out. Thus, these multi-item measures, commonly referred to as "scales," offer greater stability or consistency in the summed rating values than in the value of any individual item. This means that the reliability of single-item measures can always be improved through the addition of a second, strongly correlated item.

Smaller error

A further advantage of multi-item scales over single-item measures is that, for any given sample size, the mean value of a multi-item scale will have a smaller standard error than the mean value of any individual item (i.e., any single-item measure). Astute managers will not overlook this point, because it means that the use of multi-item scales, rather than single-item measures, has the potential to reduce research expenditures considerably.

Smaller standard errors provide greater statistical power,

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The central location facility is 24' x 24' and accomodates up to 50 participants. The room is wired to provide audio and video feeds to the focus group viewing room. Includes a built-in easel and wet bar.

All recruiting for focus groups is conducted from The Research Center's 40-line telephone bank (equipped with CRT and ACS Query interviewing software). The Research Center uses a duplicate number database system to help insure the highest quality recruiting.

Annie Sampagna-Reid and Chris Balthaser manage The Research Center. They have over twenty years combined experience recruiting focus groups and central location tests in the Denver market. Their goal is to provide clients with the highest quality recruiting and the best facilities in Denver.

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A process approach to business-to-business research

By John Moran

Editor's note: John Moran is a principal of J.J. Moran & Associates, a marketing/quality consulting firm located in Westlake Village, Calif.

The voice of the customer needs to become more important in the business-to-business decision process. In the atmosphere of downsizing and process reengineering, companies are being forced to get as much value as possible from every dollar spent on business-to-business research. At the same time, they are being called on to integrate customer requirements to a much greater extent. Focus groups can assume an important role by becoming integrated into the client's decision process.

A focus group-based process can address both of these needs by combining existing marketing and quality tools. Focus groups are an excellent way to capture the voice of the customer. They are a very palatable form of market research that can simultaneously entertain and inform. However the nature of this research tool can make it difficult to relate the qualitative, anecdotal nature of the findings to specific decisions. A structured-process approach can address these shortcomings without compromising the rich, conversational nature of focus groups.

The process

Structured input — A questionnaire or graphic approach such as perceptual mapping or conjoint analysis can be used to structure and capture the mindset of focus group participants prior to the discussion. I typically use a questionnaire early in the session to

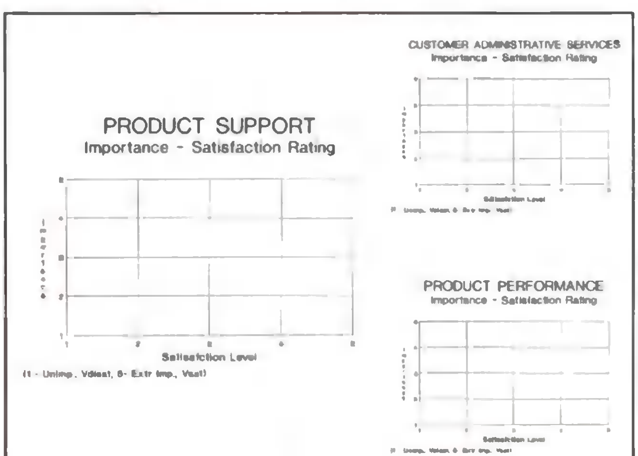

FIGURE 1

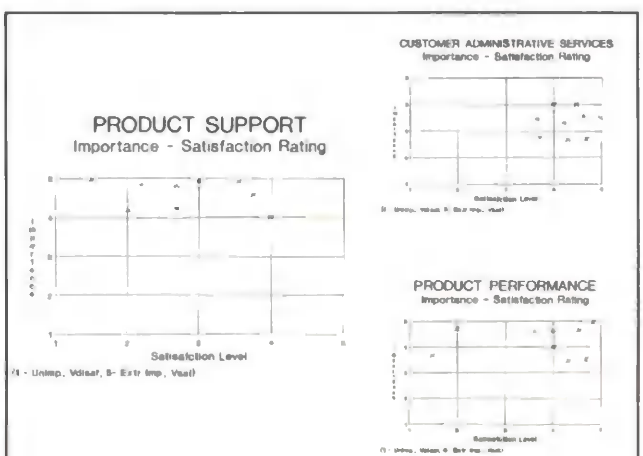

FIGURE 2

allow all respondents to gather their thoughts prior to the discussion. This step is particularly helpful for those who may be swayed or drowned out by more aggressive respondents.

For example, Figure 1 shows a mapping questionnaire used to gather respondent importance and satisfaction ratings with three major elements of customer satisfaction. At the beginning of the group, customer support elements (product support, customer administrative services, and product performance) are defined and respondents are asked to plot their satisfaction and the importance of each element to their particular operation.

The discussion — Prior to the discussion, responses can be plotted to present both overall group consensus and outlier responses. The discussion then focuses on the motivations, needs and applications behind respondent choices.

Figure 2 shows the results from the group. Typically, I will plot the feedback for all to see and use the results as a discussion starter. For example, the results show:

• high importance but a wide range in satisfaction for product support;

• administrative services are less important but the group's satisfaction level is both higher and more consistent;

• finally, two members of the group appear to have distinctly different levels of satisfaction with product performance.

I've found the visual feedback to be an important facilitator that adds considerable value to the group discussion.

Implementation — As part of the quality function deployment process,

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Sexual harassment news has changed men's behavior

As awareness of the potentially career-derailing hazards of sexual harassment has increased, flirtatious activities in the American office have diminished significantly. A survey by Chilton Research, Radnor, Pa., for *Men's Health* magazine indicates that a majority of men (66%) are more careful about what they say and do around female co-workers as a result of the recent proliferation of news about sexual harassment. The telephone survey of 500 men, conducted in January, also reveals that while sexual harassment of men is still not a significant factor in the modern office, black men are far more likely to be harassed than their white colleagues. Nearly one-fifth of the black men questioned said they had been sexually harassed by someone in a position of power over them. Only 3% of white men reported such treatment.

In general, men who are harassed, the survey shows, are unlikely to report it. Among those questioned, 15% said they would feel insecure about turning in their female co-worker. Men who earn less that $15,000 per year (36%) are least inclined to report such behavior on the part of a female colleague. Only 5% of those questioned earning between $35,000 and $49,000 a year said they would feel insecure about reporting harassment. However, 17% of those earning over $50,000 annually said they would feel insecure about reporting a female co-worker for sexual harassment.

Among men who reported that they had been sexually harassed, 50% of those between the ages of 35 and 54 said they had reported the incident to someone in authority, while only 35% of those aged 18 to 34 said they had blown the whistle. Notably, two-thirds of the black men who reported having been harassed said they reported the behavior to someone in authority. Only 30% of the white men in the same category said they reported the incident.

The survey results indicate that black men (79%) are more likely to report greater caution about what they say and do around the office than white men (65%). Married men (43%) are more likely to report being sexually harassed than unmarried ones (33%). And southern men (50%) are more likely than men in the Northeast (25%) to report sexual harassment. Men in the West (23%) would feel most insecure about reporting a female co-worker for sexual harassment, while men in the Midwest (10%) would feel the least insecure about it. The news about sexual harassment has had the greatest impact on men in the West, where 72% said they are more careful about what they say and

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Auto, vacation ads prove most popular

When it comes to getting the attention of consumers, ads for cars and travel win because they're interesting and informative. And the phenomenon applies to both television commercials and magazine ads, according to a survey conducted by Roper Starch Worldwide, Mamaroneck, N.Y.

As for entertainment value, TV ads for soft drinks and fast food triumph, as do magazine ads for soft drinks and vacation spots. Ads for feminine hygiene products get the worst marks.

Among TV commercials for products in 20 categories ranging from headache remedies to cold cereals, those for automobiles (36%), vacation destinations (35%) and travel services such as hotels, car rentals and airlines (29%) are considered interesting and informative by the largest number of people. The most entertaining commercials, according to the survey, advertise soft drinks (36%), fast food (31%) and athletic/running shoes (26%).

Opinions about print ads are similar, with ads for automobiles and vacation destinations (37% each) getting top marks for information, and those for soft drinks (27%) and vacation spots (26%) earning top ratings for entertainment. (Respondents were asked about print ads for products in 19 categories, most of them the same categories as were used to gauge TV commercials.)

The Roper Starch survey is based on a national sample of 2,006 men and women, 18 years old and older. Respondents took part in face-to-face interviews in their own homes.

Advertisements for products in other categories fared less well in the public eye. Survey results indicate that few people think commercials for feminine hygiene products and deodorants are interesting and informative (11% each). The public deems commercials for computers (7%) and feminine hygiene products (5%) the least entertaining.

Magazine ads that fared poorly were those for household cleaning products and liquor, each of which was considered interesting and informative by only 6% of the respondents. The least entertaining print ads are for feminine hygiene products (5%) and cigarettes (6%).

The Roper Starch survey also inquired about the types of ads people find in bad taste. The largest number of people named commercials for feminine hygiene products (39%), while beer commercials (22%) were the second most frequently cited. The smallest number of individuals think commercials for vacation destinations or travel services are in bad taste (2% each). Feminine hygiene print ads, like TV commercials, are considered

continued on p. 31

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Names of Note

The following appointments and promotions have been made at *Nancy Low & Associates Inc.*, Chevy Chase, Md.: **Barbara Steinwurtzel** has joined the firm as vice president, research; **Wayne Opel** has signed on as recruitment specialist; **Rich Blevins** has been promoted to vice president, finance; **Paul Bohne** has been named advertising and direct response manager; **Patricia Kauffman** and **Susan Lopez Mele** have been named senior associates; **Yolanda Kearse** has been promoted to senior accountant; and **Amy Rakowski** has been promoted to associate.

Susan Richardson has joined the *Seagram Classics Wine Company*, Rutherford, Calif., as product manager. She will be responsible for the company's Monterey Vineyard line and its new product program.

Sharon Mutter, a client service representative for *DataSource*, Indianapolis, has been installed as president of the Marketing Research Association's Great Lakes Chapter.

William W. Boyd and **Larry Labash** have been elected to the board


Boyd


Labash

of directors of *Market Facts Inc.*, Arlington Heights, Ill. Boyd is chairman of Sterling Plumbing Group Inc., Rolling Meadows, Ill. Labash is a senior vice president of Market Facts and manages the largest client service unit in the company.

Amy Blonder has become a partner in *Newman-Stein Inc.*, New York.


Blonder

As a member of the company's senior management group, Blonder will continue to be responsible for project

continued on p. 47

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Research Company News

Healthcare Communications Inc., Princeton, N.J., has formed **Veterinary Communications Inc.** VCI will operate as a separate division and will specialize in promotion research related to veterinarians and the cattle- and swine-producer markets. Calvin "Cal" Probst, who founded the animal health studies division of HCI, has been licensed to continue and expand studies to match the needs of these highly specialized markets. He will still operate out of the HCI offices in Princeton.

Total Research Corporation, Princeton, N.J., has signed a letter of intent to acquire **Kapuler Marketing Research Inc.** (KMR), Arlington Heights, Ill. Under the terms of the agreement, Stanley Kapuler, current president of KMR, would head up the Kapuler Marketing Research division of the combined companies in addition to becoming a senior vice president of Total Research. Kapuler Marketing Research would become a subsidiary of Total Research, and the combined entity would have annual revenues in excess of $17 million. The acquisition would be for a combination of cash and restricted stock, with a two-year earn-out paid in restricted stock. At press time, the scheduled closing date for the acquisition was March 31.

In a separate move, the **Delphi Group** of Total Research Corporation has named the six members of its alliance of specialists that provide quality improvement clients with data-driven, customer-focused solutions for process enhancement and cultural change. Members of the alliance are Best Practices Benchmarking and Consulting Inc., Lexington, Mass.; EXL Group, Nashua, N.H.; The Geneve Consulting Group, Barrington, Ill.; The Pacesetter Group, Princeton, N.J.; Total Research Corporation, Princeton, N.J.; and Wm. M. Schiemann & Associates, Somerville, N.J. The alliance is designed to expand the scope of quality management services each company can offer its clients.

Detroit-based **Crimmins & Forman Market Research Inc.** recently opened two new facilities. One is a high-tech focus facility and office complex in Southfield, Mich. The other, called Consumer Research Center, is a 2,000-square foot mall facility at Westland Mall in Westland, Mich. The new offices join the company's existing field office in Lathrup Village, Mich., and mall facility at Wonderland Mall in Livonia, Mich. The company says the expansion moves have increased its mall, WATS room, field, test kitchen and focus capabilities.

Chicago-based statistical software supplier **SPSS Inc.** has expanded its scope in the European market by establishing a fully owned subsidiary in Paris (Boulogne - Billancourt), France. The move was coordinated with the release of the French version of the company's SPSS for Windows software. SPSS France will market and sell the complete line of SPSS products with a concentration on the SPSS for Windows product line. The general manager of the Paris office is Catherine Gallou. The address is: SPSS France SARL, 72-74 Avenue Edouard VAILLANT, 92100 Boulogne, France. Tel. 33-1-4699-9670. Fax 33-1-4684-0180.

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Product & Service Update

SRC plans survey of U.S. Colombian population

Miami-based Strategy Research Corporation has been awarded a contract to produce the 1994 Market Study of U.S. Colombians — the first study of its kind. The purpose of the study is to develop a demographic and attitudinal profile of the U.S. Colombian community and to provide information on the best ways to reach it. The study is partially underwritten by a grant provided by the Colombian government to the Colombian Accuracy Project, an association whose members include Colombians currently residing in the United States who are active in business and education. Its members are volunteers who share a desire to publicize the size and nature of the Colombian population of the United States. SRC will survey 825 Colombians living in the United States. The survey will include 275 personal interviews in each of the three largest Colombian markets: New York, Miami and Los Angeles. Based on estimates, these three markets combined represent 48% of all U.S. Colombians. The following information areas are currently expected to be included in the questionnaire: demographic profile, attitudes about Colombian heritage, language patterns, media use, shopping patterns/product use, ownership patterns. For further information, contact Dick Thomas at 305-643-5553.

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Washington Researchers offers seminars

Washington Researchers, Ltd., has scheduled its 1994 spring seminar series in Washington, D.C. The four-program series will provide attendees with intelligence-gathering and analysis techniques. Upcoming topics and dates are: How to Find Information About ANY Company, April 6-7; Practical Competitive Analysis Techniques, April 8; Maximize Electronic Sources of Business Intelligence, May 19; How to Find Information About Business Units and Private Companies, May 20. For more information contact Ellen O'Kane at 202-333-3499.

Claritas to host conference at Disney World in May

The Fourth Annual Claritas Precision Marketing Conference, to be held May 1-4, 1994 at Disney World in Orlando, Fla., will feature marketing executives and experts from a variety of industries plus more than 50 small-group break out sessions. The small group sessions will explore precise solutions to marketing challenges in the automotive industry, banks and insurance marketing, direct mail, electronic media, newspapers, retail and market segmentation. The theme of the conference is "solutions in action." General sessions will feature speakers from a variety of disciplines: Ruth Otte, president of Discovery Communications, will talk about the cable industry; Brian Owen, president and CEO of MapInfo, will discuss GIS technology; Martha Farnsworth Riche, director of policy studies at the Population Reference Bureau, will speak about emerging demographic trends; Cheryl Russell, vice president of the New Strategist, will talk about baby boomers and her new book, *The Master Trend*; Michael Sullivan, president of Michael Sullivan & Associates, will talk about the senior market; Watts Wacker, managing partner with Yankelovich Partners, will discuss current consumer attitudes and beliefs; and Michael Weiss, author of *The Clustering of America*, will talk about his new book, *Latitudes and Attitudes: An Atlas of American Taste, Politics, and Passions*. The registration fee for the three-day conference is $645. For information call Flo Saforo at 703-739-3173.

Ruf debuts new market segmentation system

Ruf Corp., Olathe, Kan., has introduced its Principle Interrelated Category Statistics (PICS) system. PICS is Ruf's new business-to-consumer and business-to-business market segmentation system. It uses interrelated category statistics to separate customer data into accurate segment criteria, which is used to target potential customers. PICS is a decision-support tool, developed to augment Ruf's mathematical modeling and cluster market segmentation systems. The econometric modeling components utilized in this system allow dynamic relationship analysis of consumer and/or business prospects that transcends the traditional household income or SIC code as a selection criteria. For more information, contact Kurtis Ruf at 913-782-8544.

FAQSS Guide released by Optimum Solutions

Optimum Solutions Corporation has published a new 16-page guide called *The FAQSS Guide to Automated Data Capture Technology*. The guide provides an in-depth explanation of the FAQSS automated scanning system. The FAQSS scanning system converts raw data into usable information. Unlike "bubble-type" scanning systems, FAQSS has virtually no format restrictions. It can scan any format, any paper, any question — which allows surveys to be information-driven, not form-specific.

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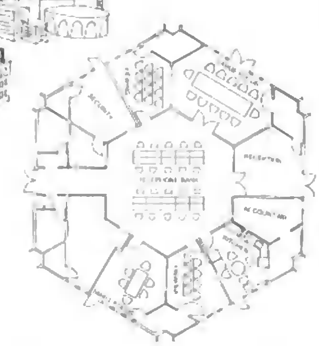

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Constructing a new name

continued from p. 7

"Allentown" name seemed to be well recognized and respected within its current market. At the same time, "pumps and guns" are what the company makes and markets. Accordingly, the company needed to be associated with these new products rather than the "pneumatic guns" which no longer represented the company's principal product line.

the dominant force in the marketplace, consistently received higher ratings than Allentown for performance in such key areas as parts availability, service and technical support, and overall performance. The contractors' positive assessments on these factors are extremely important to the company's overall image, because the respondents rated these same factors as very important in their selection of pump suppliers.

"We were particularly pleased with

Allentown™ PUMP & GUN
Dependable Under Pressure

Thus, Allentown Pump & Gun was introduced to the marketplace on January 4 at this year's World of Concrete, the industry's major trade show and exposition.

Research showed that national awareness of Allentown Pneumatic Gun was relatively low compared with major competitors. Fewer than half (46%) of the contractors surveyed had ever heard of Allentown Pneumatic Gun, and only 5% specifically mentioned Allentown Pneumatic Gun as a company that came to mind in association with wet-process pump manufacturers. Additionally, more than half of the respondents were unable to identify the kinds of products the company makes. Furthermore, awareness levels of the various pump manufacturers reflected their respective market shares.

Results also demonstrated that Allentown Pneumatic Gun had a good overall reputation among contractors who had experience with the company. Only one other manufacturer,

One of the most important conclusions drawn from the survey was that there is a strong but untapped demand for Allentown's new "all-purpose" pump. More than two in every five contractors (42%) said they would be very (19%) or somewhat (23%) likely to purchase such a pump for their respective companies sometime during the next three years.

those results," Roberts says. "They reinforced our belief that there was sufficient opportunity to move ahead with our plans for growth and expansion in the market for concrete pumps."

Strong demand

Of equal and perhaps greater value was the marketing data obtained. Parts availability, service/technical support and reputation for performance, the attributes on which Allentown received high scores, were rated most important to users, while price, distribution and delivery were of lesser importance.

One of the most important conclusions drawn from the survey was that there is a strong but untapped demand for Allentown's new "all-purpose" pump. More than two in every five contractors (42%) said they would be very (19%) or somewhat (23%) likely to purchase such a pump for their respective companies sometime during the next three years. That type of pump was more appealing to concrete contractors than to general contractors. The concrete contractors said they were significantly more likely to purchase one or more for their companies.

Interestingly, the likelihood of purchasing an all-purpose pump varied according to whether or not the contractors had heard of Allentown. Among the contractors who were aware of the company, 31% said they were very likely to purchase while, in contrast, only 10% of those unaware reported being likely to make a purchase within the next three years.

The relatively low awareness of the availability of an all-purpose pump, coupled with the likelihood of purchase, reaffirmed Allentown's confidence in the pump it had developed and facilitated the company's decision to make its new AP-10 the focal point for product promotion in 1994.

Made the right moves

Armed with the supportive data obtained by sound research, the company that introduced gunite to construction launched a new chapter in its already lengthy history under the new name — Allentown Pump & Gun — with an expanded product line. The company is confident that increased sales as well as follow-up research will prove it made the right moves at the right time. ❑

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Customer retention

continued from p. 9

surance policy, and another may sell that individual's children an automobile insurance policy. All of the companies researched track retention regularly.

For its part, FUHEC is exploring the possibility of introducing a survey of customers who pay off their mortgages to determine whether the pay off was controllable or due to a management or pricing issue.

Currently, FUHEC has several surveys in place, such as a quality customer service survey, an ongoing customer survey, and a survey of non-takers (those who are approved for a mortgage but who don't use FUHEC). They serve as FUHEC's primary gauge of how it is meeting its company priorities: customer satisfaction, employee satisfaction and long-term viability.

Most profitable customers

A main goal of FUHEC's customer retention study was to determine strategies for keeping the most profitable customers. The study used various measures to calculate customer retention rates, the length of time a customer keeps their loan open (customer duration) and the profitability of various customer groups.

From the study, several customer profiles emerged which reflect different duration and profitability thresholds. Once these profiles were established, the financial impact of keeping customers longer was developed. These profiles were based on the average loan life expectancy.

Various demographic factors were analyzed to determine the effect on loan duration. After analyzing many of the components, the ones that stood out as having the largest impact are:

- Income — aggregate income presented by the customer on their loan application;
- Loan source — the source of business that referred FUHEC the loan;
- Market value — appraised market value of the home;
- Profession type — job status;
- Mortgage Type — mortgage position (refinance of first mortgage or second mortgage);
- Credit history — credit rating at time of application; and
- Loan size — amount of money that the customer borrowed.

This information was used as a basis for building customer profiles, which were developed by tabulating the above data based on various loan life thresholds. An example of a threshold was the average income, market value and loan size for customers that paid their loans off between one and two years. Four customer profiles were defined based on demographic data obtained from the 33,000 customers who paid out (closed their accounts) between 1991 and 1993.

They are:

Profile 1: *The Mobile, Affluent Customer*. This customer has the highest income, market value and loan amount and is generally a white-collar professional. The loan life is under two years.

Profile 2: *The Career Ascending Rate Conscious Customer*. This customer is slightly younger than the Class 1 customer with an ascending income, mid-range loan amount and is a white- or blue-collar employee. The loan life is between two to three years.

Profile 3: *The Value Driven Customer*. This customer is most representative of FUHEC's portfolio, encompassing a broad income range, market value and loan amount. The loan life is between three to five years.

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Profile 4: *The Payment Driven Customer*. This customer has a lower income, a lower market value, a smaller loan and is generally a blue-collar employee. The loan life is over five years.

The breakouts based on years were based on the overall percentage of customers who paid off within the specific time horizons listed above. Within each time horizon, unique income, market value, loan size and loan source classifications stood out.

The profiles were used to estimate profitability per customer. For example, the Class 1 customers had the lowest loan life expectancy but because the average loan size associated with these customers was highest, the profitability impact of keeping these customers longer was highest.

The study found that if FUHEC kept all customers who paid out in 1993 one month longer, it would have earned over $750,000 in net interest income annually. If FUHEC increased its retention rates by one percent it would mean an additional two months in net interest income, or over $1.5 million.

Overall, the study found that if FUHEC kept all customers who paid out in 1993 one month longer, it would have earned over $750,000 in net interest income annually. If FUHEC increased its retention rates by one percent it would mean an additional two months in net interest income, or over $1.5 million.

Synthesizing information

Once FUHEC's retention rate was derived, various factors that contribute to retention rates were analyzed. These factors were: office age (how long the office has been open), market values, mortgage position (refinance of first mortgage or second mortgage), level of branch personnel experience, and market size.

Market size, branch experience and market values had the largest impact on retention rates. Market size has a large impact on retention rates because it is an indicator of how competitive various markets are. FUHEC discovered that in larger market areas retention rates tended to be lower.

Using information from the study, a formula was derived to give operational managers a working methodology to integrate retention data and allow them to determine which branches have high and low retention rates and develop strategies for improvement. For example, one of

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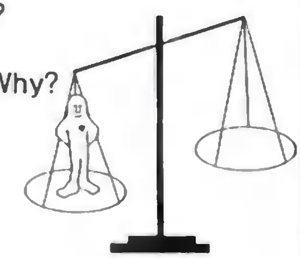

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FUHEC's largest branches, in Edina, Minn., now has a full-time employee who is devoted to managing payoffs. Her task is to retain customers who are at a high risk of paying off their loan and leaving FUHEC.

Research of FUHEC's portfolio indicates that customers payoff for a variety of reasons. Most payoffs are either a refinance into another FUHEC loan, a refinance into a mortgage with another company or a decision by the customer to sell the property, which requires the mortgage to be paid. Since FUHEC refinances are not considered lost customers, data derived from the study didn't include these customers.

The final component of the study was the compilation of a Scoring Guide for Payoff Prediction. This model takes several demographic and management factors such as income, market value and market size, and breaks them into various scoring thresholds. With this model, branch managers can develop a prediction of how long their customers will keep their loan with FUHEC.

Validated assumptions

All of the data learned in the customer retention study was recently shared with FUHEC's leadership team. The data validated many widely-held assumptions and highlighted the importance of proactively managing relationships with customers. Leaders are now using the information to streamline the goal setting process within their respective areas.

Customer retention has recently been incorporated into each leader's STEP Plan, or performance outline, for the year. Mike Blackthorn, coordinator of all the broker branches (branches that derive loans from third-party, fee-driven referrals) in the network, feels that the customer retention study has revealed vital information about how he can expect the branches in his group to perform. "Now that we know more about loan duration, we can begin to plan a strategy to better manage customer retention," says Blackthorn.

Reports that identify customers who are likely to pay off their loans early based on income, market value, loan size and loan source are now being developed for all of the branches in FUHEC's network.

The final component of the study was the compilation of a Scoring Guide for Payoff Prediction. This model takes several demographic and management factors such as income, market value and market size, and breaks them into various scoring thresholds. With this model, branch managers can develop a prediction of how long their customers will keep their loan with FUHEC.

Eventually, FUHEC's goal is to incorporate the scoring guide into an automated branch system, now in development, which will link FUHEC branches to the main office. After the system is in place, when an application is entered into the computerized system, a predicted number of months will be estimated for the life of that loan. FUHEC will then solicit customers by mail about six months before it is predicted they will pay off the loan. Lists of customers who have been solicited will be sent to the branches where they will also be contacted by phone.

By using these approaches FUHEC can now differentiate customer groupings and effectively manage customer relationships to meet its goal of retaining its most profitable customers. ❑

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Survey Monitor

continued from p. 21

in bad taste by the largest number of people (34%). Men and women alike find such ads to be in bad taste. Cigarette and liquor ads — which are not shown on TV — are considered in bad taste by over a quarter of the public.

Four in 10 people said either that they don't consider TV commercials for products in any of the 20 categories to be in bad taste (26%, a voluntary response), or that they don't know (17%). For print ads, the numbers are nearly identical: 27% and 17%, respectively.

Beer commercials, however, received mixed reviews. According to the survey, nearly equal numbers consider them entertaining (25%) as those who think they are in bad taste (22%). More men than women find them entertaining (28% to 21%), while more women find them in bad taste (25% to 18%).

The study was part of a Roper Reports survey, a research service of Roper Starch Worldwide. Contact Deborah Johnson at 914-698-0800 for more information.

401(k) plans continue to grow

Already among the most popular and widely used company benefits in the United States, 401(k) retirement saving programs continued their rapid growth in 1993.

By the end of the year, more than 17 million Americans were participating in 401(k) plans being offered by nearly 209,000 companies, according to Access Research, an employee benefit consulting firm in Windsor, Conn. The company says 401(k) assets rose 17% during 1993 to $480 billion and will more than double in the next five years, surpassing $1 trillion by the end of the decade.

One reason for the growth, according to the company, is the high participation rate among employees. Almost 75% of eligible employees participate in the average plan. Account balances are growing, too, as workers see the benefits of the plans. The account balance of the typical participant is more than $20,000, with annual contributions averaging nearly $3,000 per person, according to Access.

Most workers appear to be playing it safe. A guaranteed investment option remains the most popular choice among employees by a wide margin. In plans where a guaranteed option is offered, it usually attracts 50% of all participant-directed assets.

This probably will change, however, as a result of recent federal regulations that encourage employers to provide multiple investment options, and expanded retirement planning and investment education to employees in 401(k) plans.

Access predicts that small companies will be responsible for most of the growth in the number of new 401(k) plans. The firm forecasts a 50%

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increase in the number of small businesses (5 to 100 employees) sponsoring 401(k) plans during the next five years, and a 21% increase in plan formation among companies with 100 to 500 employees. Call Robert Wuelfing at 203-688-8821 for more information.

Teens inclined to help . . . kind of

Most folks view teenagers as nasty little people who like nothing better than annoying their elders. Mary Eberly has reason to believe otherwise. The Ohio State University psychology graduate student has completed a study which suggests the perception that teens do not help out around the house is not necessarily accurate. Her findings, reported in the *Journal of Early Adolescence*, indicate that teens' helpful behaviors are related to the quality of the parent-adolescent relationship. In fact, parents who were perceived as more warm toward and accepting of their adolescent children reported receiving more help than parents who were perceived as cold and rejecting.

Most studies on adolescents and their families concentrate on negative aspects of the relationship, Eberly says. Her study, conducted under the guidance of Ohio State psychology associate professor Raymond Montemayor, was the first to specifically ask parents about their children's unsolicited helpful acts.

For the study, Eberly randomly selected families with children in grades five through nine from the enrollment list of a central Ohio suburban school district. To be eligible, both parents had to reside in the home and the child could not be undergoing therapy.

A total of 85 families, 29% of those eligible, agreed to participate in the study. Children ranged in age from 10 to 15; 44 were male and 41 were female. Families were paid $15 for their time.

Eberly asked the parents 15 questions about their child's inclination, or disinclination, to offer unsolicited help around the house. Children completed a questionnaire on their perceptions of their parents' behavior, including how much they felt accepted or rejected by their parents.

The study revealed that daughters were more likely than sons to do helpful things. Mothers were more likely than fathers to receive help. In most cases, parents reported kids being less helpful as they grew into their mid-teens. This makes sense in light of other studies that show an increase in conflict between kids and parents as adolescents age, Eberly says. However, the mother-daughter relationship didn't fit the mold. Mothers indicated no drop-off in daughters' helpfulness as the girls grew into their mid-teens, which surprised Eberly, because the mother-daughter relationship is the most contentious during adolescence, and Eberly expected acts of helpfulness to decline.

Eberly found that after adjusting for age, the stage of puberty had little to do with helpfulness, except between mothers and sons. Mothers reported that their sons were generally less helpful as they physically matured no matter what their age.

Finally, Eberly found that children who felt more accepted by their parents were generally more helpful. This was especially true for father-son and mother-daughter pairs. After controlling for age and physical maturation, acceptance became less influential in predicting kids' helpfulness toward their opposite-sex parent. For more information call Martha Carroll at 614-292-4973.

Chasm between rich and poor blacks grows

A new study done by Packaged Facts Inc., New York, reveals that the African-American market is, to a greater degree than ever, divided into two separate economic classes. The top income segments are making inroads toward prosperity, while the lowest are falling further behind the mainstream. The firm attributes the trend to relatively recent attempts to address the economic limitations created by segregation. While the poorest blacks are still feeling the effects of years of limited access to education, capital and other economic trampolines, better-off members of the community have been able to take advantage of the mobility created by changes in society, and they have reaped rewards. Packaged Facts contends that African-Americans who have taken the first step up on the economic ladder are no longer limited to the lowest rungs. But other blacks, who are still reaching for the first rung, are watching the ladder being pulled farther and farther away. For more information call 212-627-3228.

Public tunes in to infomercials

Just a few years ago, hardly anybody knew what an infomercial was. Now, more than 58% of the adult U.S. population has watched an infomercial, and

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14% of U.S. adults have bought a product or service they saw in an infomercial, according to Gallup & Robinson, a Princeton, N.J.-based advertising and marketing research firm.

These results come from a recent Gallup & Robinson survey. They are based on a national probability sample of 1,287 respondents, over 83% of whom had engaged in some direct response behavior (e.g., bought or sought additional information from offers received in the mail or through other media) within the past year. The 805 participants in the survey were culled from this group.

The survey discovered that infomercials appeal to both men and women across all ages and income levels. Among people who had indulged in some direct response behavior recently, 77% were familiar with infomercials, 70% had watched an infomercial and 17% has purchased an infomercial-advertised product. Rather surprisingly, men in this group were more aware of infomercials, more likely to watch them and perhaps even more likely than women to have made a purchase via an infomercial. A solid majority of both the men and women who participated in the survey (82% and 72%, respectively) said they were aware of infomercials, while 76% of the men and 65% of the women had watched an infomercial, and 19% of the men and 15% of the women said they had purchased a product via an infomercial.

Not surprisingly, folks in the survey under 50 were more likely to have watched an infomercial, but those over

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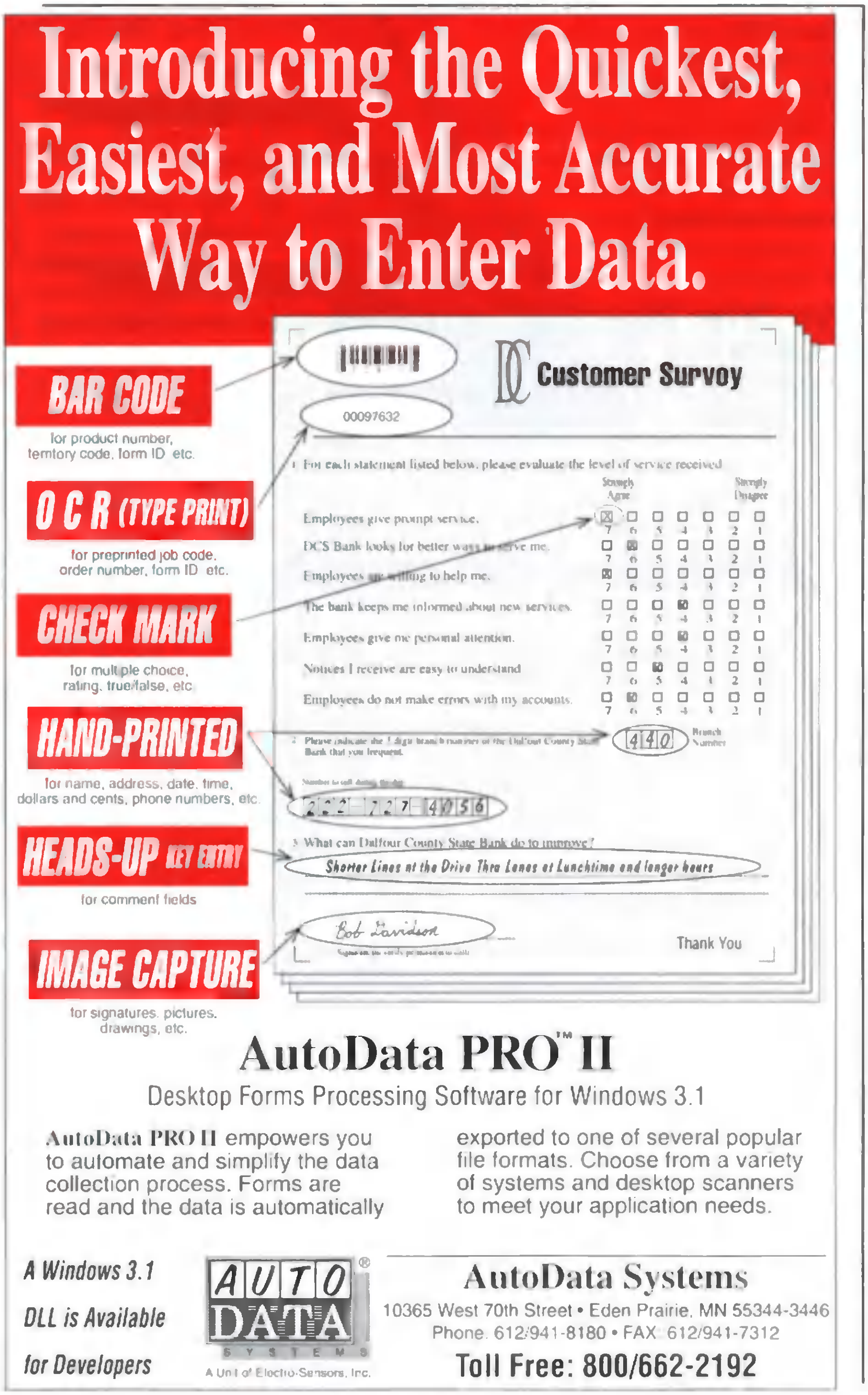
50 showed significant familiarity with the advertising format. While 83% of respondents ages 18 to 34 and 84% of those 35 to 49 reported having watched an infomercial, 55% of those over 50 said they had. The percentages of those who had purchased via an infomercial were roughly analogous: 18% of the 18- to 34-year-olds, 19% of the 35- to 49-year-olds and 14% of those over 50.

Higher income also translated into more familiarity with and a greater tendency to purchase via infomercials. Of those participants with incomes greater than $50,000 per year, 84% indicated that they had watched infomercials, and 19% indicated that they had made purchases of infomercial-advertised products. Of those with incomes below $30,000 a year, 61% indicated that they had watched an infomercial, while 14% had made purchases.

The study also found that people believe that the products and services advertised on infomercials are more innovative than those advertised on regular TV commercials. On the other hand, they also perceive infomercial products to be less reliable, poorer in quality and less of a value. For more information call Jane Sherry at 609-924-3400.



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Consumers sour on health care debate

Based on the input of 670 shoppers surveyed during October and November 1993, the Consumer Network Inc. put together *How Consumers Feel About Health Care Reform*, a market feedback report. In it, the Philadelphia-based research company finds that consumers are unhappy with the attitudes of American doctors toward them and with the amounts doctors charge for their services. In addition, or perhaps because of these feelings, consumers understand very few of the terms used in the health care debate (only 27% of those ages 30 to 49 understand the meaning of "managed care"), and what's more, they are not even trying to understand.

Consumers have tuned out the debate for a variety of reasons. They think doctors may get the come-uppance many think they deserve. Drug companies, with their outrageous prices, may get their come-uppance, too. They also say that the issues change too fast to follow and that consumers have no control over the outcomes anyway. Many believe that prices may actually be lower when the dust settles, but in the meantime, the debate doesn't seem focused on the issues understood by consumers who already have insurance.

Over 80% of the Consumer Network shoppers between the ages of 30 and 49 believe that what the doctors and the AMA are most interested in is protecting their own high incomes. Less than 30% believe that doctors are the best thing about American medicine or that it's important to end up with a health care system that keeps the doctors happy.

How Consumers Feel About Health Care Reform also reports that consumers 30 to 49 want health care cost reform but have a set of priorities that includes reducing consumer waiting time and paperwork, as well as reducing the costs of drugs and doctor visits. Fewer than one-third of respondents understand or care enough about universal access to consider it a priority. For more information call Mona Doyle or Charles Ebner at 800-220-1134.

Public remains sweet on fancy baked goods

Premium sweet baked goods continue to be one of the most popular ways for Americans to sate their sweet teeth, and the phenomenon doesn't appear to coming to halt any time soon. The New York consulting and research firm FIND/SVP predicts that retail sales of premium sweet baked goods will total $7.61 billion in 1998.

In 1993, retail sales of premium sweet baked goods in the United States totaled roughly $5.06 billion. The market has grown at a compound annual rate of 9.3% since 1989, when it totaled about $3.54 billion. Retail sales of all sweet baked goods added up to $14.35 billion in the United States in 1993. This was up from roughly $10.71 billion in 1989, representing a compound annual growth rate of about 7.6%.

FIND/SVP forecasts that retail sales of sweet baked goods will total $20.49 billion in 1998, representing a compound annual growth rate of 7.4% for the next five years. During the same period sales of premium sweet baked goods will climb at a compound annual rate of 8.5% to reach $7.61 billion by 1998. Premium products will increase their share of the sweet baked good market from 35.6% to 37.1%.

Marketers have found that consumers are not looking for new taste sensations when they buy sweet baked goods. On the contrary, they want the products to taste the same way they always have. Within this marketing context, it would be unwise to position a product as exotic or different.

Several important demographic trends are affecting the premium sweet baked goods market: The aging of the baby boom generation; changes in family structure; and the increasingly familiar dual-career family. Each of these trends has had a positive influence on the market for premium baked goods. The only thing posing a risk to premium baked goods' increasing popularity is the conflict between health and indulgence. Better educated and more affluent consumers, the traditional mainstays of the market for premium sweet baked good, are also the ones most likely to adopt healthier diets, keeping them away from sweets. Not surprisingly, therefore, the leading trends in new product introductions are lower fat content, the absence of cholesterol or preservatives, single-serve packaging, premium or superpremium quality, easy preparation and microwavability.

Through its Entenmann's and Freihofer's operations, Kraft General Foods remains the largest player in the premium fresh sweet baked goods market (excluding cookies), according to FIND/SVP. Pepperidge Farm Inc. dominates the market for premium packaged cookies. For more information call James Demas at 212-645-4500.

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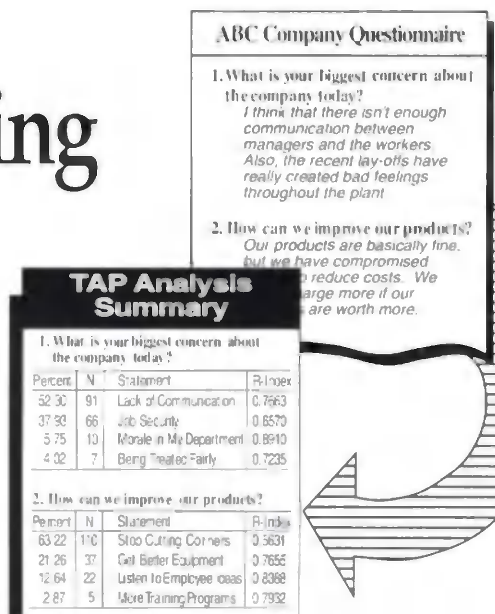

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Process approach

continued from p. 17

which involves translating the voice of the customer into product design or company support efforts, the data can be used to drive the construction of a preliminary "house of quality" (HOQ), where the emphasis is on specific implementation actions to address customer needs and requirements. The HOQ can form the basis for the moderator's report, a follow up client workshop, or both.

Figure 3 shows a preliminary HOQ where the plotted results of our focus group have been related to specific implementation alternatives under consideration. Even though the focus group results are not conclusive they form an important backdrop to understand the satisfaction/importance data we have collected.

Tying these preliminary results to decision alternatives can be extremely valuable. Although a complete description of the HOQ is beyond the scope of this article, Figure 3 shows how our HOQ not only captures the group's satisfaction and importance scores, it more importantly relates them to four alternative projects under consideration. Our HOQ chart shows the customer training project as a clear first choice for the following reasons:

- The relative importance is the highest (31%);
- It also has a strong impact on the most important, least satisfied customer service — product support;
- It is relatively easy to implement (viz., the organizational difficulty score of 3).

Benefits

I have used the above process for a wide range of assignments including both new product development and customer satisfaction. With new product development conjoint analysis can be useful to address the relative attractiveness of specific product design attributes. For customer support and service oriented projects the perceptual mapping approach described above worked best. I've found the front end questionnaire adds to rather than detracts from the discussion. Most participants respond well to the mixture of "hard" and "soft" research approaches and appreciate the time to mull over their position prior to the discussion.

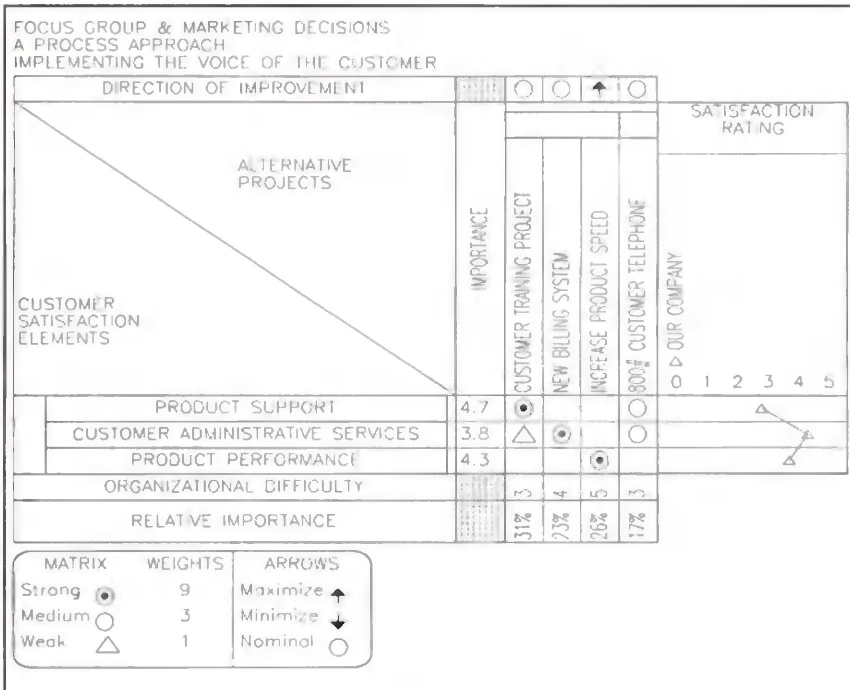

FIGURE 3

Most important, this process directly addresses a major client requirement, namely the implementation of decisions that will be influenced by the research. The importance of recognizing this element and integrating it into the research design cannot be overstated.

The process can also be helpful in defining and focusing on areas of importance and definition prior to embarking on more expensive quantitative research to address more representative populations or different market segments.

Summary

The focus group process needs to be reengineered to make it more responsive to client needs. We need to take a wider view of our "conversation with the market" and integrate it with other marketing and quality tools. Focus groups should be viewed as an important element in a process designed to add value to the client's decision process. ❑

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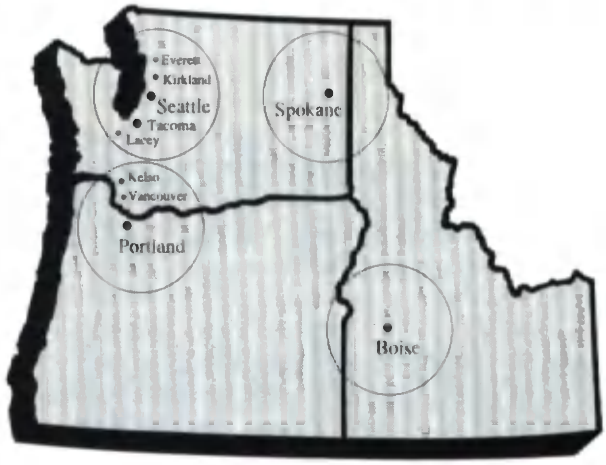

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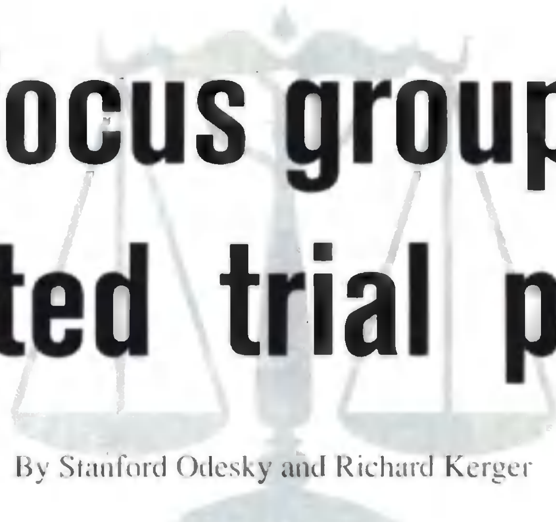
Using focus groups for a simulated trial process



By Stanford Odesky and Richard Kerger

Editor's note: Stanford Odesky is president of Stanford Odesky and Associates, a market research firm located in Toledo, Ohio. Richard Kerger is an attorney with Marshall and Melhorn, also based in Toledo.

The playwright has completed his task. The producer has raised the funds. The director has found the actors and actresses and moved through the rehearsal process. The play is ready to open.

But before it reaches Broadway, most plays are given a test "on the road." This allows the cast to work out any rough parts. The director and the playwright can improve the pace. Concepts can be modified. When the production moves to the Great White Way, the likelihood of success is significantly enhanced. The alternative, moving directly to Broadway, is less expensive but substantially more risky.

Many legal trials have a far greater economic potential than the best New York shows. Yet they have traditionally "opened in New York," largely because there was no equivalent of the small Connecticut towns used for off-Broadway openings.

That is, until the simulated trial process came along. While the format may vary, it generally involves the presentation of a trial through extended opening statements to a jury selected by a trained professional to reflect the demographics of the jury that will ultimately try the case.

Try out arguments

Simulated trials offer two main benefits. First, they allow lawyers to try out their arguments before unveiling them in the courtroom and assess a jury's reaction to certain features in a case. In the past, the way to test these various points has been to bore one's friends and relatives with a disjointed presentation to see how they react. Secretaries and other lawyers in the firm can be found occupying the same unfortunate role.

Second, while most attorneys spend considerable time preparing for trials and presenting arguments to juries, only a rare few have actually had the opportunity to watch the deliberation process. We all recognize it would be helpful to have that opportunity, but no one had really come up with an effective way to do it.

A key element of the trial simulation is the selection of prospective jurors. In most cases, quotas are established — based on consultation with lawyers and judges — on the demographic makeup of the average jury in the given court's jurisdiction. Respondents are qualified on age, sex, education, race, employment and other criteria.

These simulations are most often held in law firm conference rooms. They may consist of a presentation only of remarks from attorneys, but witnesses can be presented to the extent desired. Exhibits can be used. A lawyer representing one of the parties simply divides his loyalties for the moment and presents the opponent's case. The "judge" can be anyone; In-house counsel for the client is perhaps the best person for that role. The deliberation process is monitored and recorded by a video camera. After the verdict has been returned, the lawyers can speak with the jury to conduct additional inquiry.

In some simulations, the jury is slanted toward a given demographic profile. When this happens, the lawyers want to test part of the case against one important demographic, such as elderly individuals or college graduates. The disproportionate core can serve as their own jury, with the "representative" group meeting separately, or they can be individually interviewed and excluded from the jury process. In one simulation we used a double jury (i.e., 16 people) that was split randomly into two groups to come to a decision. (They came to the same end result, but used different criteria.)

An example

To explain the process a bit more, let us assume a case involving alleged age discrimination resulting in the termination of an employee. The plaintiff is a former executive who is 66 years old. The company contends that the decision was based on economic necessity, but is uncertain as to how the issues will be viewed by a jury.

After discovery has been concluded, and about one month before trial, a simulated trial is held. A large conference room is booked in an office building. A market research firm is contacted and asked to arrange for 12 to 15 people to be available for four or five hours on a Saturday morning.

The lawyers determine which demographic profile they wish to observe and give the marketing firm a list of the sort of people they wish to have present. The marketing firm then conducts telephone interviews to recruit them. Typically the prospective jurors are told they will participate in a market research project and will be paid for their time. The rate of pay varies based on time involved. We have had some last four hours and at least one took two days.

Since the cases that benefit from this approach are often larger ones, there are ordinarily two or more lawyers handling them. One of the lawyers is selected to present the opponent's case. Determining which lawyer will represent the client and which will represent the opponent depends in part on the goal of the simulated trial. Is it to be a trial run? Is it to assess jury response to a particular issue? Is it to give a client an indication of how a jury would analyze the case to help a settlement analysis? There is no right answer to these questions, but they are among the factors that should be considered.

The ideal setting is a large conference room with an adjoining smaller room. In the smaller room sit the clients and others who are interested in the proceeding. A video camera is set up in the large room to cover the jurors, and perhaps another camera to cover the attorneys and/or witnesses, again depending upon the purpose of the presentation. Someone is designated to serve as judge and a brief jury charge prepared.

All of the participants, other than the jurors, remain in the small room during the arrival of the jurors. Then, the contact for the marketing firm will enter the room and explain what the nature of the "market test" will be. The identity of the party sponsoring the event is not disclosed, although it is important to have the plaintiff and defendant identified.

Care must be exercised to make certain that jurors identified with one or the other party are not a part of the panel. This should be left to the marketing firm. If the community is a smaller one, you may have to hold the mock presentation in an adjoining county to avoid polluting a jury pool.

With the jurors seated, the judge gives brief introductory remarks about the kind of case involved and who will be making presentations. Then the lawyers conduct a limited voir dire. This is done more to screen out anyone who might have some bias that could skew the result. For this reason we recommend starting with a pool of 12 to 15, although we have never asked any juror to leave.

Next, the lawyers make what are most accurately characterized as extended opening statements, freely using exhibits as they deem appropriate. If necessary, witness testimony might be presented, either through videotape or in person.

At the conclusion of the presentation, the jury charge is given and the judge and the lawyers retire. A camera operator is left in the room and

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jurors deliberate. After a verdict has been returned, or at a point at which it appears a verdict will not be forthcoming in a reasonable time, the lawyers and the judge return and can conduct further interrogation of the jurors. This can focus on some of the stylistic issues, as opposed to the more important issues in the lawsuit that deal with the substance of the claims. Depending upon the jurors' reaction, theories can be changed or claims modified.

Fascinating experience

It is a fascinating experience, regardless of the outcome, to watch the deliberative process. The jurors miss points that the lawyers thought were terribly important and will pick up on issues that the lawyers simply had not thought to be issues. The economic value of the case can be better analyzed after these laypersons have had their chance to give a view through their verdict.

In seconds, the jurors forget that the camera operator is present and that this is a demonstration. People champion their ideas vigorously. Indeed, in one of the simulated trials, two male jurors began moving toward a fist fight before the floor person calmed things down.

What the lawyer sees is the dynamic of the jury process, the flow of ideas, the different personalities that appear from people who seem innocuous on the jury panel.

The most valuable insight is that the traditional wisdom about selection of the foreperson as being most important is not necessarily true. Selection of the foreperson during the voir dire process is not that difficult for an experienced lawyer. Certainly one or two people can be viewed as having that role.

But the role taken by jurors who can only be described as talkative become crucially important. That is, people who would not be identified as having the personality strength necessary to be forepersons nonetheless play a very active and potentially influential role in the negotiation process. They talk a great deal and skew the deliberations, with the result being a fairly radical shift in either the amount to be awarded or, in some instances, even in liability.

This insight is invaluable in the trial of any jury case since it sensitizes the trial lawyer to the problems such people can present.

Purpose can vary

As noted earlier, the purpose of these proceedings can vary a great deal. They can be done to help a witness become comfortable with testifying, and to have some feedback on credibility. Or to test a jury's ability to follow particular arguments, or to assess how the jury will react to a very emotional but essentially irrelevant aspect of a case.

We feel that any case that has significant economic importance will benefit substantially from this proceeding, whether the case settles or not. Indeed, the videotape of the deliberation could be used as a device to convince the other side to settle, assuming it is sufficiently compelling.

We have used this process in cases involving various issues including product liability, lender liability, employ-

continued on p. 53

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Product & Service Update

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Opinionmeter introduces next-generation polling machine

A new interactive, automatic opinion-polling machine is available from Opinionmeter Inc., Los Angeles. The machine is especially suited to customer service research in lobbies of multibranch businesses. Placed on a

stanchion adjacent a queue line or exit in a service lobby, it lets customers self-administer their own computerized surveys while they wait in line. The Opinionmeter V provides state-of-the-art computer sophistication for data retrieval and manipulation. Questionnaires can be changed in minutes. Weighing only 5 pounds and measuring 7 inches by 9 inches by 19 inches, the compact machine can be rotated from branch to branch to provide a customer satisfaction index. Opinionmeter Inc. is expanding internationally and offering exclusive licenses for all medium to large U.S. cities as well as for some remaining international territories — especially Canada, Mexico, South

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America and Australia. For more information, contact Bob Strickland at 310-821-4126.

Banks can test compliance with new Philips analytical tools

Philips & Associates, a St. Louis-based market research and consulting firm, has developed a set of analytical tools that banks can use to test their compliance with community reinvestment regulations. Community Reinvestment Act performance has become a critical and costly compliance issue under the Clinton Administration's proposals for bank examination. Philips & Associates has developed a series of tests to identify a lender's strengths and weaknesses with regard to CRA compliance. Banks can use these tests to take rectifying steps before being told to do so by compliance examiners. For more information, contact George Philips at 314-895-8727.

FIND/SVP offers D&B credit reports to small- and medium-sized business

FIND/SVP Inc., New York, is offering Dun & Bradstreet credit information to its clients. An agreement between the two companies allows FIND/SVP to access and supply its clients, especially small- and medium-sized business, with D&B Business Information Reports covering more than 10 million businesses. The reports, for which FIND/SVP charges $55, can include financial, payment and public record information, as well as the business history and operations. The agreement also allows FIND/SVP to make available D&B's Summary Reports, which contain just the business history and operations, for $35. For more information, call FIND/SVP's Beth Rubin at 212-645-4500 or D&B's Pamela Spiridon at 908-665-5105.

Q/Media introduces multimedia creation software for Windows

Q/Media Software Corporation, Vancouver, British Columbia, has introduced Q/Media for Windows CD-ROM Version. Contained on one compact disc, the software is a multimedia creation tool that comes with Tri-Digital Software's DigiClips Special Edition, a 500MB multimedia clip library featuring digital video, voice, animation, music, sound tracks, backgrounds and graphic images. The software also provides an intuitive interface so that users can leverage their knowledge of other applications. Without programming, scripting or conversion, files created in other software can be brought into Q/Media for Windows, which also integrates multiple media formats, enabling users to simultaneously play back many different types of clips on-screen. Q/Media for Windows CD-ROM Ver-

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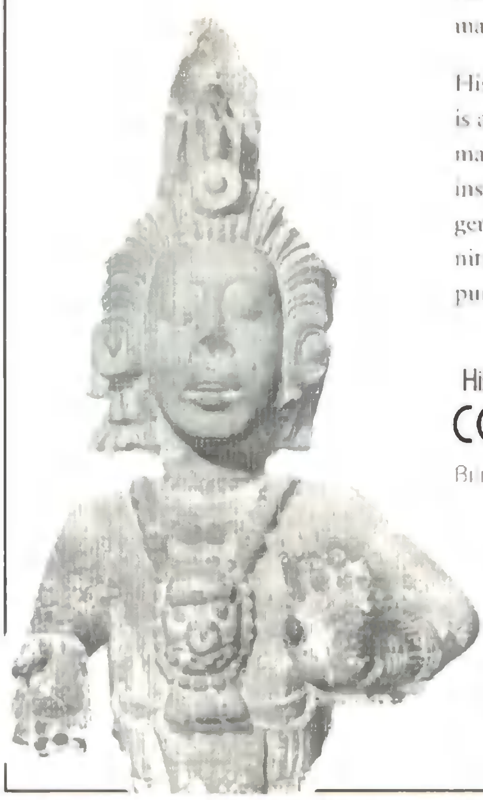

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sion with DigiClips Special Edition contains 210 multimedia elements: 75 video and 50 voice clips; 50 background bitmaps; 15 WAV audio files together with 10 MIDI files; and 10 FLI animation files. The software requires Windows 3.1, a 386SX PC with 4MB of RAM, VGA, mouse and a CD-ROM drive. (A 486 PC with at least 8MB of RAM, sound card and CD-ROM drive is recommended.) The suggested retail price of the package is $149. For more information call Denis Paquette at 604-879-1190.

California retail info available

The California Retail Survey has released its 1994 version, a 490-page analysis of 520 local retail markets throughout California. The annual publication provides coverage of retail market performance in every city and county in the state. Using actual sales results from 319,000 retailers, the publication tracks and analyzes short- and long-term retail trends for each of the 520 retail markets. Market reports include 11 years of sales and outlet data through 1993, in addition to 16 proprietary analytical measurements that provide insight into each market's strengths and weaknesses, short- and long-term growth rates and demographic data. All sales and outlet data for each local market are broken down by 45 types of retail stores. In addition to the database of market statistics, the 1994 edition of the survey provides more than 800 charts that identify important market trends. Local markets are assigned relative ranking scores for growth, size, market share, retail business formation and average store volume. The publication's price is $160. For more information call 916-486-9403.

Investext adds bond research to its online database

Highly specialized corporate and industry bond research reports are available on Investext, the Boston-based Investext Group's flagship database of investment research. The new additions provide hard-to-find financial data on public and private companies not usually covered by equity analysts. The reports are prepared by fixed-income analysts at more than 60 contributing firms in-

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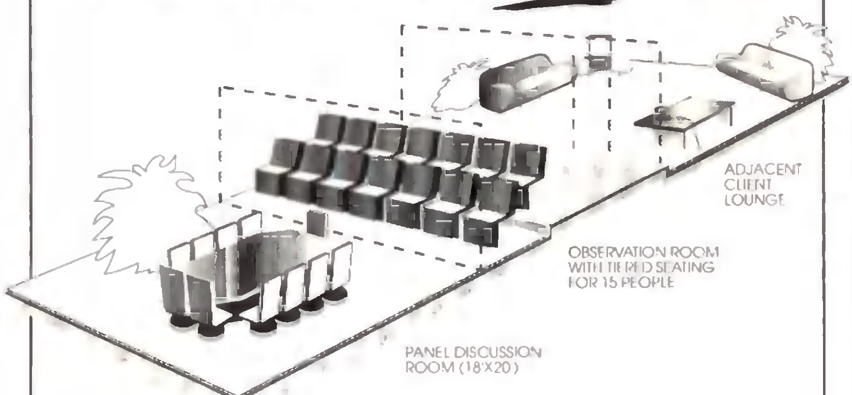

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Chinese-American report available

Asian Perspective Inc. has completed a study describing the lifestyle and consumption preferences of Chinese-Americans in New York City. The study focuses on various products and services including insurance, banking, investment, liquor, automobiles, personal care products and electrical appliances. The company has also made available its Asian-American demographic overview, which is based on the 1990 Census. It is a concise presentation of Asian demographic statistics. The Chinese-American report is for sale, while the demographic overview is available for free. For more information contact Grace Chin at 212-431-1282.

GIS database for Northern Virginia

Spatial Insights Inc., a geographic information services company based in Arlington, Va., is now offering a Northern Virginia Digital Database. It is designed to be used with desktop mapping or GIS to perform site location, competitive analysis and demographic profiling. Standard components include transportation layers, demographics and existing shopping centers. Customized versions of the database, which integrate user-supplied data such as customers locations, can be generated on request. For more information call Lynn Marie Fasciano at 703-522-2114.

Youth market symposium to be held in early May

The seventh annual symposium on the youth market will be held on May 5-6 at the Boston Harbor Hotel in Boston, Mass. Speakers include Dr. Valeria Lovelace, vice president, Sesame Street; Joanna Jacobson, senior vice president, Converse; and Amy Churgin, associate publisher, *Seventeen* magazine. For more information call Karen Forcade at 617-720-6060 or 617-723-1254 (fax).

Names of Note

continued from p. 22

management and client services. Additionally, she will remain involved in strengthening the company's international capabilities.

Gregory McMahon has been promoted to senior vice president at *Market Facts*, Arlington Heights, Ill. Working out of the company's New York offices, McMahon will continue to supervise a diverse group of clients and industries while specializing in the health care field.

McMahon

Pine

Ben Pine, president of *Pine Company*, Santa Monica, Calif., has been elected president of the Southern California chapter of the *American Marketing Association*. As president, Pine intends to increase corporate sponsorship of events and encourage companies to enroll more members in the organization.

Regina Utz has joined *Rockbridge Associates Inc.*, Vienna, Va. As market research analyst, she will be responsible for project management, analysis and reporting.

Barry Goldblatt has been named executive director, market research worldwide for the consumer products franchises of *Johnson & Johnson Consumer Products Worldwide*, Skillman, N.J. Goldblatt will have responsibility for the company's research in support of franchise strategic plans.

Michael H. Cottle has been appointed director, North American sales, for *MapInfo Corporation*, Troy, N.Y.

Paul Prekopa has joined Edison, N.J.-based *Bruskin/Goldring*. He been added to the company's client services team.

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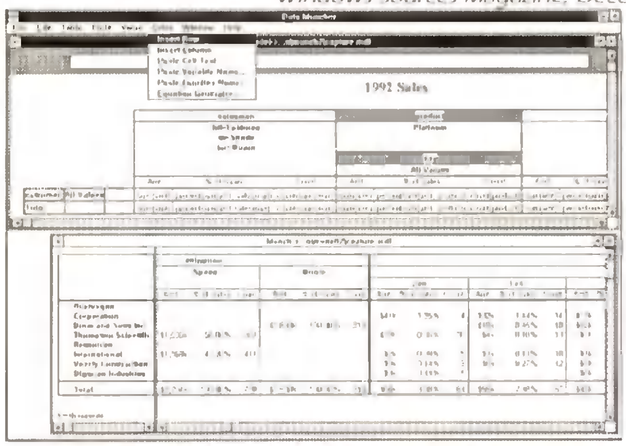
Windows Sources Magazine, December 1993



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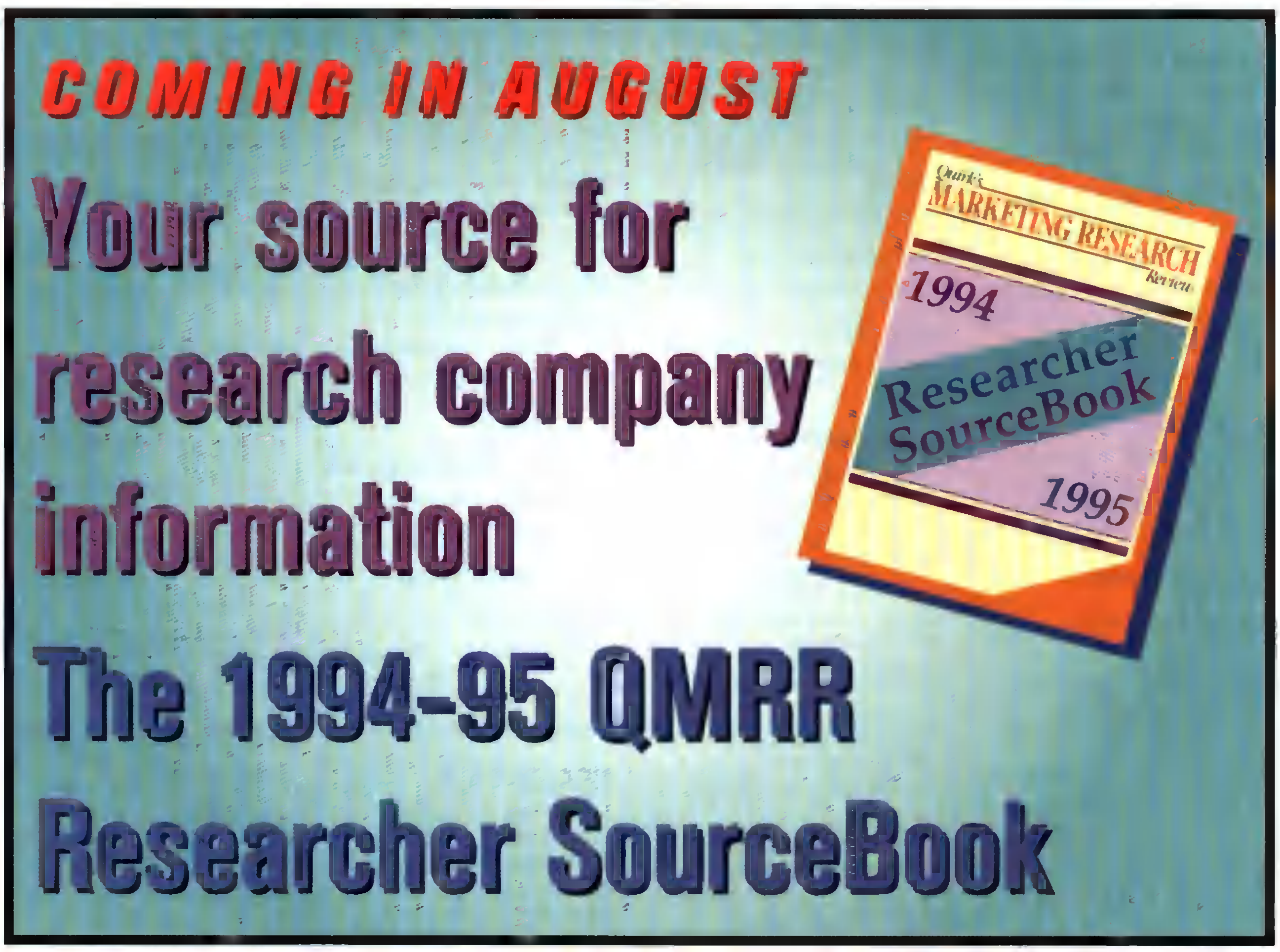

Simulated trials

continued from p. 40

ment litigation, medical malpractice and libel actions.

In the lender liability proceeding, the simulation jury became concerned over a totally innocuous issue concerning one of the documents. Neither counsel for the plaintiff nor the defendant had ever considered that this aspect could be an issue, but it was extremely troubling to the mock jury. The presentation at trial dealt with the issue and eliminated the confusion over that point.

In the product liability action, counsel for the company was extremely concerned about whether any jury could deal with the causation aspect in view of the horrible injuries sustained by the young plaintiff. The simulation jurors could, and a unanimous verdict was returned for the defendant. While the extent of the injuries could not be portrayed with complete accuracy since the involvement of the plaintiff was not possible, the pictures used and the description of the injuries seemed sufficiently clear to provide an accurate assessment.

In the libel action, a hotel chain sued a television station for allegedly false statements concerning the hotel's discrimination against black customers and its failure to pay real estate taxes. The case was presented to a simulated jury before trial, since the damage claim made by the plaintiff was $50 million. The defense was modified following the simulated jury trial. Subsequently, a defense verdict was returned after a six week trial.

A side benefit, if you will, is that the representatives of the party get a chance to see how the jury process works. In that sense, it leads to more informed decisions about the trial process and can help the lawyer in working with the client to make the decision to settle or go to trial.

Additional uses

There are additional ways to use this general process. For example, before filing a lawsuit, or shortly after receiving a complaint, a focus group might be convened. The people would again be selected by someone trained to demographically replicate the jury in the area in which the case is pending. The case would be discussed with them to determine their reaction to various claims and defenses. Having this information at an early stage might alter the development of the claim or the presentation of the defense and assure a successful result.

Another benefit is that the attorney presenting the other side has the opportunity to truly think about the case from the other lawyer's perspective. Developing the information necessary to present the issue from the opponent's side can lead to insights in one's own case. Holes which did not seem to exist suddenly loom large. Witnesses change character. Arguments with which you had previously been in love seem very unattractive.

The lawyers also get a chance to work on the case at a slightly earlier point than they otherwise might. The lawyer presenting the client's case has the equivalent of the "road test" given the Broadway play, at least as far as the opening statement is concerned. Similarly, any witness presented has the same benefit.

Confidentiality agreements

There is the danger of having the information leak out, but with appropriate care in selecting the simulation jury, that can be minimized. We have asked for the execution of confidentiality agreements by the jurors in some cases. However, they may lead to more mischief than they are worth. Put differently, we doubt very much that the participants ever give much thought to the idea of selling their information to the opposing party. To the extent that disclosure is a concern, it would not be difficult to simply change names of the parties.

By holding the presentation relatively close to the trial date, the cost in lawyer time is minimized since much of the work would have been done to prepare for trial anyway. The cost of conducting the screening to select the jury, payments to the jurors and the actual holding of the proceeding itself will run in the neighborhood of $7,500, with a like amount for time in preparing the opposing party's case.

Still, while we recognize that the cost may be a problem in certain cases, we feel it is almost inexcusable for this process not to be used in any significant case. ❑

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Tips

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data back but I have always questioned the accuracy of what is returned to them.

Mail surveys are erroneously believed to be much less expensive than telephone. A mail survey must gain a 50% level of return to develop data which is accurate to measure the statistics of the audience. The reason a 50% return is required is due to the inherent inaccuracies of the process. The major problem is the quality of the response. When the survey arrives in the office, anyone can fill it out and return it. By contrast, telephone respondents are pre-screened.

In terms of expense, the initial mailing may, at first, be cheaper than a telephone survey. However, if your first wave of responses is only 20% of the group, you must then continue to send several waves to get up to 50% of the sample. By the time you have conducted your third wave and taken about six months to do it, you will have spent as much or more on a per survey complete basis for mail vs. telephone.

It's best to use mail when your group has the time to wait and you want to develop data that is more detailed than the data you can get from a telephone survey. Depending on the patience of your audience, mail questionnaires can be many pages in length. In addition, product designs can be pictured and rated — something you can't do with telephone.

Typically, I would recommend against mail for all of the inaccuracies that it has. If you have used mail research in the past, change to telephone by trimming the number of questions and by scripting them in a tele-conversant format. If you are receiving a 50% return level, and you know through experience that you are getting the best respondents and must cover many topics, by all means continue to use mail.

Focus groups

The most important thing to keep in mind about focus groups is that they are not samples that are projectable to an overall market audience. This is only a qualitative technique and is used as a way of conceptualizing issues, not exactly measuring them.

A group is about two hours in length and usually consists of up to ten qualified and pre-screened respondents. Focus groups are simply structured discussion sessions where companies question informed users about specific topics and/or product requirements. Clients often ask me how many focus groups are necessary to evaluate qualitative issues for one market segment. I usually recommend three, because if we conduct three groups we can better search for a consensus of opinion. Focus groups are especially useful in defining issues so that they are accurately presented on telephone or mail survey projects that may follow the groups.

It's best to use focus groups when you do not fully understand the issues facing you in a new market, where the topics evaluated may be complex, and where group interaction may bring out opinions better than other techniques. This concept of group interaction is the key to success in this methodology. Not only can detailed opinions be gained, but when respondents are allowed to interact, new and creative insights may be developed. Typically, telephone or mail surveys, which are very scripted, do not challenge the respondent to creative heights. As I mentioned, take what you learn in the focus groups to design the quantitative research that follows.

Personal interviews

Compared to the other three techniques, personal interviews are by far the most expensive to conduct on a per survey complete basis. The major part of this expense, of course, is the cost of traveling to far flung interview sites. However, for specialized applications, personal interviews may be the only option for developing high quality data.

It's best to use personal interviews when the nature of the data you require is detailed and you have a large budget. Typically, the interviews last up to an hour and can be used to cover scientific, financial, engineering or other complex topics that cannot be well evaluated through the other three methods. The technique is especially well suited to visuals or display of products for rating of their features and abilities. For the sake of credibility, it's important that the interviewer you use is a technical expert on the topic.

Finally, personal interviews, regardless of the survey topic, are many times conducted with high profile executives who can't be reached through other survey means. This interview technique is more respected by executives and as such they may accommodate it while rejecting other methods. Keep in mind that many executives require hefty incentives to be encouraged into the interview process.

This article, of course, can't cover every aspect of why each method may be best to meet your requirements for data. But by employing the general tips we've discussed, you can get your industrial research off to a solid start. For more information call me at 800-531-9025. ❑

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Data Use

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thus allowing the use of smaller sample sizes. Reducing the required sample size, perhaps from 400 to 200, with no loss of statistical power, can more than compensate for the added cost of developing and using multi-item scales instead of single-item measures.

In cases of tracking studies where a survey is repeated again and again — commonplace for corporate image surveys, advertising effectiveness studies, customer satisfaction research, and other total quality management survey programs — the cost savings can be huge. Best of all, the validity and reliability of the data will have been greatly enhanced which, in turn, empowers management to make decisions with increased confidence in the accuracy of the research findings.

> *A further advantage of multi-item scales over single-item measures is that, for any given sample size, the mean value of a multi-item scale will have a smaller standard error than the mean value of any individual item (i.e., any single-item measure). Astute managers will not overlook this point, because it means that the use of multi-item scales, rather than single-item measures, has the potential to reduce research expenditures considerably.*

Rip-off

For these reasons, single-item attitude measures represent the biggest rip-off in survey research. Skilled researchers know this and try to avoid using them. In my opinion, research companies that develop questionnaires without multi-item scales for measuring attitudes are either ignorant, lacking the statistical expertise necessary to construct and evaluate the adequacy of multi-item scales, or not concerned about the reliability and validity of survey findings. Regardless of the reason, these research companies cost their clients more over the long haul in terms of research dollars and profitability of business decisions.

In the face of today's increasingly competitive business environment and ever-tightening budgets, responsible managers must aspire to realize greater value from their research dollars. Shrewd managers will respond to this challenge by insisting on the use of survey research organizations that are truly capable of delivering the high quality attitude measurement that today's business climate demands. ❑

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Trade Talk

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and looks for unexpected results — findings that contradict one or more of her stories about the marketing environment. If she finds a surprise, the manager carries out an unstructured, multi-stage process to make sense of the unexpected result. This process can be viewed as a dialogue between the result and a set of tools at the manager's disposal [including analysis of scanner data, discussions with peers, and market research]. Next, the manager tells the story to share her insights with peers and superiors, developing a common understanding. Finally, the manager creates an official story that she uses to 'sell' new marketing approaches to people outside the product manager organization — the sales force and supermarket buyers."

Goldstein cites an example to show how scanner data and other sources of information (from the "set of tools" mentioned above) fit together.

In analyzing scanner data, one Butler product manager was perplexed by poor sales of a new "light" variety Butler product in the Southern region. He began creating a story to explain the poor sales by talking to the regional sales manager, who guessed that Southerners didn't consume as much of this variety as people in other areas.

"With this tentative hypothesis," Goldstein writes, "the product manager then entered into a dialogue. The first

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Listing Additions

Please note the corrections to the following listing from the 1993 Directory of Focus Group Facilities (corrected text in bold):

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tool he used was a scanner data analysis, comparing sales of Butler and competitor products of this variety in the South and in other regions. The manager found that Southerners consumed about as [much] of the competitor's light variety as did people in other regions.

"The product manager then redefined the problem as one of taste. He came up with a hunch of his own: Butler's light variety does not taste as good as its competition to Southern consumers. The manager tested this hunch using a new tool. He hired a market research firm to conduct blind taste tests. These tests showed no differences between Butler and its competitors in flavor.

"The product manager finally came up with a third hypothesis: that the South regional sales force was doing a poor job of convincing supermarkets to stock Butler light variety. The scanner data supported this hypothesis, showing that sales of light were relatively poor in the South. He accepted this hypothesis because he saw no plausible alternative. Through this sense-making process the manager modified his stories about regional differences in product sales, about the taste of his product, and about the effectiveness of the South regional sales force in introducing new varieties."

Little analysis

In general, Goldstein found that the product managers at Butler did very little statistical analysis to understand the data, even though they had the proper training and computer software to do so.

Because time constraints are one of the main reasons for this, Goldstein suggests that computers may hold the key to more effective analysis.

"Easy-to-use computer-based tools — possibly built using executive support systems software — would make it easier for manager to spot a decline in sales at a national level and 'drill down' to find the regions or products that might be causing the decline. Alternatively, computer-based intelligent agents or insight generators could scan the marketing database to identify marketing problems or opportunities. . . . Since product managers often do not have the time to carry out a market-level weekly or monthly analysis of the data if no major problems are apparent at the national level, these agents can help them find an important local trend that they might otherwise have ignored until it affected national performance. . . ."

Stories may be answer

How to persuade managers to do more sophisticated analyses? Stories may be the answer, Goldstein says. Since product managers structure their knowledge of their use of analytic tools as a set of stories, if they are going to use more advanced techniques, they have to develop additional stories about the use and benefits of more sophisticated statistical techniques.

"To accomplish this, managers must first be trained in how to use these tools to analyze scanner data," Goldstein writes. "The abstract lessons that they learned in statistics classes must be applied to this real-world data set. For example, they must learn how to use regression to examine the impact of price on sales. Stories about the use and benefits of these techniques must be created. A few experienced product managers could work with statistical experts on relevant problems. If these teams succeeded in discovering new truths, and if their success led to measurable improvements in product performance, stories about the use of statistical models and their benefits could spread to other product managers and the use of statistical models would increase."

Of course, there's no substitute for experience, and Goldstein's research found that without the product manager's experience, the scanner data is just numbers. It's up to the user to put it all together. ❑

The report, "Product Managers' Use of Scanner Data: A Story of Organizational Leaning" (report number 93-109) is for sale by MSI. Call 617-491-2060 for more information.

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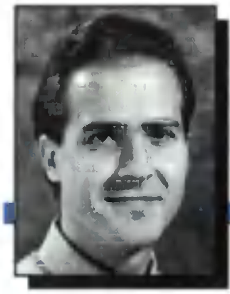

Trade Talk

By Joseph Rydholm/QMRR editor

Using stories to making sense of scanner data

The folks who study human behavior for a living say that one of the ways we make sense of our world is by constructing stories. Whether it's something that happens to us or something we see on the news, some of us structure the events as a story to organize our knowledge of the world and present it to others.

According to a recent study, product managers use the same approach to make sense of their scanner data.

The study, "Product Managers' Use of Scanner Data: A Story of Organizational Leaning," is available as a working paper from the Marketing Science Institute (MSI). MSI is a non-profit organization, based in Cambridge, Mass., devoted to investigating marketing related issues.

The report's author, David K. Goldstein, is assistant professor of business administration at Boston University. As part of a larger study of the use of scanner data at five grocery manufacturers, Goldstein interviewed six product managers and two information support personnel at a $200 million subsidiary of a major grocery manufacturer, which is given the fictitious name Butler Foods in the report. He interviewed the Butler employees six months after the company bought scanner data for the first time and three months after it had begun using the data companywide.

Goldstein sought to answer four questions:

1. How are product managers using scanner data?
2. How does the analysis of the data help them learn about changes in their marketing environment?
3. How does this learning affect their decisions on pricing, promotion design and new product evaluation?
4. How does the data affect their relationship with customers and fellow employees (salespeople)?

To learn how each subject worked with the data, Goldstein collected archival data from them which he used to construct a database describing how each subject used the scanner data. He then searched for patterns by comparing that information to what he learned in the individual interviews.

Four-step process

Goldstein netted two main findings. First, product managers complete a four-step process to analyze scanner data, change their stories and share learning with others. Second, managers analyze small subsets of their scanner data. These analyses are guided by experience, which is organized as a series of stories.

Here is Goldstein's description of how one product manager worked on a set of data using the four-step process: "First, a manager examines the [scanner] data

continued on p. 56

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