Comparing the ROI of print, radio, and TV ads

- Does viewer involvement carry over to ads?

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- FocusVision videoconferencing
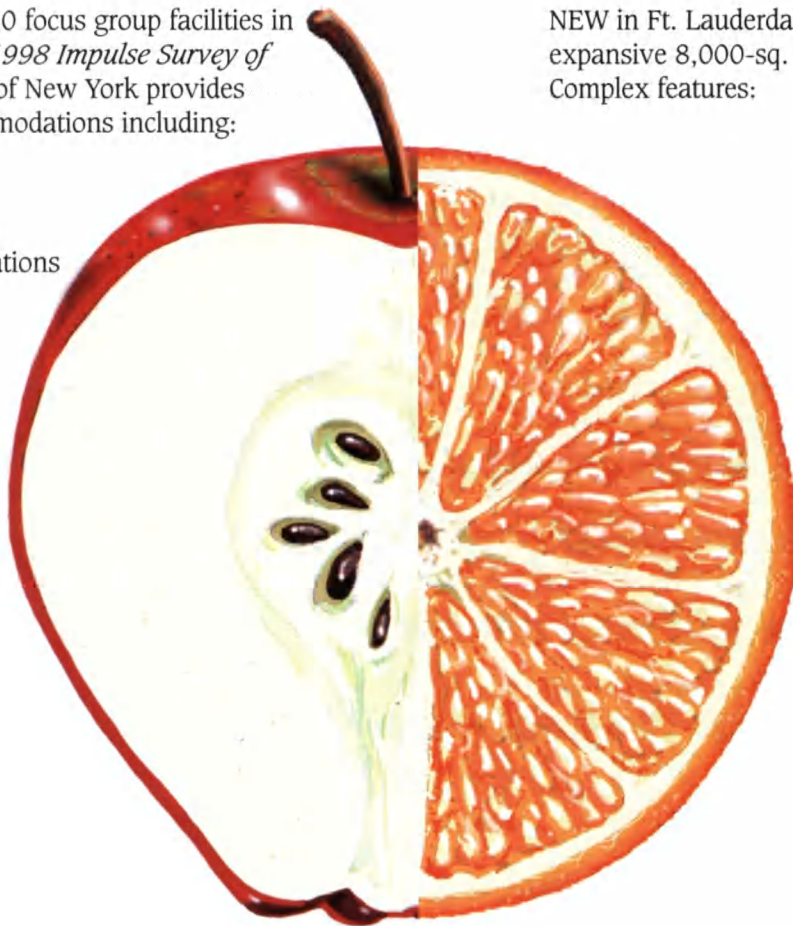- Kitchen facilities
- Cafe WAC

Specializing in business, medical, technical, consumer and financial respondents.

IN THE "BIG ORANGE"

NEW in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida, WAC's expansive 8,000-sq. ft. Focus Group Complex features:

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- Accommodations for up to 25 client-viewers
- On-site recruiting
- FocusVision videoconferencing
- Kitchen facilities
- Cafe WAC

Specializing in consumers of all ages, plus medical, technical, business and financial respondents.

QUIRK'S
Marketing Research Review

Volume XIII, Number 3   March 1999

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DEPARTMENTS

Do TV ads make kids want to buy?

Preliminary findings from a study of kids' reactions to commercials provide insight into the continuing debate over whether television commercials stimulate America's children to desire the products they see. The Kid Ad-Traction study, a national study of more than 800 children age 6-17, was completed by CME KidCom, the kid marketing unit of the Campbell Mithun Esty (CME) ad agency.

The findings show that television commercials earning high rankings among kids for their entertainment value, while impacting recall, do not necessarily translate into product desirability. "The perception that the commercials kids favor automatically induce them to desire what's being featured doesn't necessarily hold up," says Christine Fruechte, CME KidCom general manager. "We've discovered a gray zone that puts conditions on how kids decide what they want to buy. An additional, essential component is needed to result in a motivating formula.

"Generally, the commercials kids identified as most motivating are for toys, fast food and clothing," Fruechte says. "These are products that are appropriate for them, and they're also products which they can enjoy and purchase themselves." The top 10 motivating commercials cited (in rank order) were Sony PlayStation; Nintendo 64; Barbie; Taco Bell/McDonald's; Burger King; Laser Tag; Tyco Remote Control Car; Giga Pet/Nike/Volkswagen; Legos, and Levi's.

Most of the kids surveyed (69 per-cent) said a commercial motivated them to want the brand featured because it included actual demonstration of the product, its features and benefits. Conversely, that same reason drew a mere 15 percent response for making a commercial their "favorite." Humor or "being funny," which garnered more than half the responses for their favorite commercials, hit the cellar at 2 percent for being motivational. "Kids seek immediate gratification, and they want information like adults do," Fruechte says. "They want to see how a game works, what the food looks like, see what the product does — what's in it for me." Fully 90 percent of the children surveyed agreed that "it's important a commercial tell me something about the product."

Of 303 commercial mentions, ads for the following brands landed in the kids top 10 "favorites": Budweiser, Pepsi, Taco Bell, Nike, Dairy Management (milk), Salon Selectives, Denny's, Miller Lite, Sprite and Snickers. Five of the brands (Budweiser, Pepsi, Nike, Dairy Management and Snickers) were also identified as favorites in the initial

Vision care consumers blind to branding

A study by CDB Research & Consulting Inc., New York, reveals that 94 percent of prescription lens wearers cannot name the brand of lenses they own, despite efforts by vision care product manufacturers to market products directly to the consumer.

More than three out of four people (77 percent) have difficulty seeing without corrective lenses — a problem that increases dramatically with age. People who are 55 and older are twice as likely require corrective lenses than adults under 35. As Baby Boomers in America continue to mature, they are demanding more vision care goods and services than ever before. Industry manufacturers have capitalized on the expanding vision care market by developing products that cater to the taste and sensitivities of America's Baby Boom generation. "One area that shows real growth potential is prescription sunglasses," says Dr. Larry Chiagouris, managing director, CDB Research & Consulting Inc. "Only 2 percent of people who wear glasses purchase prescription sunglasses."

Of the 400 people surveyed, 87 percent feel they have access to the best vision treatment possible, an opinion that has not changed over the past year. Eyeglass wearers, however, have some complaints: 38 percent say that the worst part about wearing glasses is that they are hard to keep clean. The second most common complaint (19 percent) is that glasses are uncomfortable to wear. "We found it quite interesting that young people are the most sensitive to their appearance in glasses," says Chiagouris. "People under 35 were four or five times more likely than others to complain that the 'worst part about wearing glasses is that it makes you look unattractive,' " he says. Not surprisingly, 21 percent of people under 35 years of age wear contact lenses exclusively — the highest percentage of any age group. For more information call 212-367-6858.

Rent a virtual focus group room

Protocon, Inc., New York, has opened the Virtual Research Room (VRROOM) service. Market researchers can now rent virtual focus group rooms like they would traditional focus group rooms. The service is available for any moderator, research company, or corporate marketing or advertising department to conduct on-line studies. The service uses the iSession communication technology from Seattle-based Sessio.com. Clients can view the proceedings on-line, and can secretly ask moderators to direct probing questions during a session. For more information call David Bradford at 212-390-5633 or visit the company's Web site at www.vrroom.com.

Software puts brand testing history into one package

RSC, The Quality Measurement Company, Evansville, Ind., has introduced a new software system which puts all the elements of one brand's market research advertising testing history into one software package. The new software system, outlook Gain, will include the company's ARS persuasion scores (which evaluate a brand's advertising strategy or finished TV commercial), the diagnostic elements which comprise the commercials (i.e. brand differentiation, the use of humor, etc.) and digitized videos of each commercial.

According to RSC, the outlook Gain is designed to allow an advertiser to watch different commercials, compare ads which had high and low ARS persuasion scores and to easily identify specific factors associated with a brand's successful and non-successful ads. With the new software, for example, a brand manager of a popular brand might watch several hundred TV commercials of that particular brand in a few hours as opposed to spending several days exam-

Research Calendar
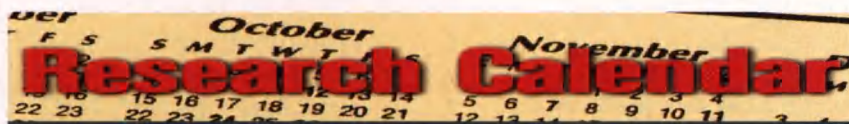
SPSS MR USER CONFERENCE: SPSS MR will hold its first international user conference, SumIT99, at the Grand Hotel Reykjavik in Reykjavik, Iceland, on April 19-21. The conference will include presentations on topics such as data mining and Web data collection and breakout sessions on Web surveys and data modeling, among others. For more information visit the SPSS MR Web site at www.spss.com/spssmr/sumit99 or the Iceland Tourist Bureau Web site at www.arctic.is/itb/.

LATIN AMERICAN MARKET SEMINAR: Strategy Research Corp. (SRC), Miami, will hold its fifth annual Latin American Market Planning Seminar, themed "Market Planning for the New Century," at the Miami Airport Hilton on April 22 from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. The presentation of the 1999 Latin American Market Planning Report will include information on 19 countries and 69 urban markets and will include talks by experts in international business and strategic market planning. For more information call 305-649-5400 or visit the SRC Web site at www.strategyresearch.com.

SENSORY EVALUATION WORKSHOP: As part of its workshop series "Issues in Sensory Evaluation," Tragon Corporation will hold a workshop entitled Descriptive Analysis on May 3-5 at the Sheraton Palo Alto, Palo Alto, Calif. The program will focus on development of a descriptive capability; subject selection and training, sensory language development; test design and analyses, comparison of QDA and other methods. For more information call 650-365-1833 or visit the company's Web site at www.tragon.com.

AAPOR ANNUAL CONFERENCE: The American Association for Public Opinion Research will hold its annual conference on May 13-16 at the Tradewinds Resort in St. Petersburg Beach, Fla. For more information vist the organization's Web site at www.aapor.org or call 734-764-1555.

RESEARCH AMERICAS CONFERENCE: The Canadian Advertising Research Foundation and the Advertising Research Foundation will co-sponsor the Research Americas Conference on May 16-18 at the Marriott Eaton Centre in Toronto. Among other topics, the conference will focus on "how much knowledge can and cannot be transferred within the Americas." For more information call 212-751-5656 or visit the ARF Web site at www.arfsite.org.

CLARITAS CONFERENCE: Claritas, Arlington, Va., will hold its annual Precision Marketing Conference, themed "Advancing the Science & Art of Marketing," from May 17-19 at the Fairmont Hotel in Chicago. Sessions will cover customer acquisition and retention, channel management, sales support, Internet marketing and business-to-business marketing. The conference will also feature a trade show and an interactive solutions lab. For more information call 800-678-8110 and press "4" or visit the company's Web site at www.claritas.com.

ENERGY MARKETING RESEARCH: The American Marketing Association will hold a conference on energy marketing research at Adam's Mark Hotel, San Antonio, Texas from May 23-26. For more information call 312-648-0536 or visit the organization's Web site at www.ama.org.

ining individual commercials. This historical research measurement data allows effective selling propositions for one brand to be revised and tested for relevance to related brands in the advertiser's product line-up. RSC's database is estimated to contain more than 50,000 TV advertising strategies and commercials. For more information call 812-425-4562.

New service from Cahners In-Stat Group

Cahners In-Stat Group has launched its Call Center Service, expanding the company's Voice and Data Communications Group, which includes market analysis of the voice messaging, interactive voice response and computer-telephony integration markets. The service will provide market research and analysis covering many facets of the call center industry, including: automatic call distributor (ACD) and other hardware markets; customer contact and customer service software solutions; Internet-enabled call centers; network-based and distributed call centers; emerging technology developments; and international industry issues and opportunities. Headquartered in Newton, Mass., Cahners In-Stat Group is a high-technology market research firm and part of Cahners Business Information, a publisher of specialized business publications. For more information call 617-630-3900 or visit the company's Web site at www.instat.com.

Ketchum updates PR research guide

The 1999 edition of "A Guide to Public Relations Research," a 90-page research reference manual for PR professionals, is now available from Ketchum, a New York public relations firm. The publication has been expanded to include sections on PR measurement and evaluation and selected PR research computer software packages, in addition to an expanded listing of worldwide secondary data sources and bibliographic references, including Web addresses. The guide, prepared and updated by Walter Lindenmann, senior vice president and director of Ketchum's research and measurement department, contains eight major sections, including a checklist of things PR practitioners ought to consider whenever they do research and a comparison of six different types of research approaches that are often used in public relations. It also contains a glossary of terms commonly used in PR research and a bibliography. The manual is available for $25 per copy. Checks or money orders should be made payable to "Ketchum Research and Measurement" and sent to Walter Lindenmann, Ketchum Research and Measurement Dept., 292 Madison Ave., New York, N.Y., 10017. Purchase orders are not accepted.

New projector from InFocus

InFocus, a Wilsonville, Ore., maker of

In a management restructuring, *NFO Worldwide, Inc.*, Greenwich, Conn., has promoted the following executives to president of their respective areas: **Joseph M. Migliara** - North America, **Dr. Hartmut Kiock** - Europe, and **Patrick G. Healy** - AustralAsia & the Middle East. Migliara was previously president - consumer packaged goods and healthcare. Kiock is the chairman of the management board of Infratest Burke. Healy will continue as chief financial officer of NFO. Previously, Healy was president - corporate products and systems development and chief financial officer, and was also responsible for NFO's operations in the U.K. and Middle East. In addition, NFO has appointed a five-member executive committee that will be responsible for the overall management and coordination of the company's global operations. The committee will be composed of **William E. Lipner**, NFO's chairman, chief executive officer and president; Migliara; Kiock; Healy; and Charles B. Hamlin, president - interactive and technologies group. Within the new management structure, Hamlin will assume additional responsibility for NFO's U.S.-based international research group. He will continue his current responsibilities for NFO's interactive and high tech/telecommunications companies and will manage NFO's strategic planning and corporate communications functions.

In other NFO news, **Allen R. DeCotiis**, in order to spend more time with his family, has resigned his position as president of financial services and international operations for NFO Worldwide. DeCotiis will continue to be responsible for the company's domestic travel and leisure business, while overseeing the transition of responsibility for NFO's financial services business and international operations.

George Conboy has joined *Dialogue Resource, Inc.*, a Fairfield, Conn., research firm, as vice president.

Marypat Corbett has been promoted to senior account representative

Corbett

at *Doane Marketing Research,* St. Louis. She was also named director of international agronomic market research alliances.

Steve Phillips and **Surinder Siama** have been appointed vice president in the worldwide services division of *BAIGlobal*, a Tarrytown, N.Y., research firm. In addition, **Larry Herman** has joined the firm as vice president, **Peter Fushan** has been named vice president and **Eileen Kalminson** has been promoted to vice president. **Christopher Batenhorst** was named vice president of the firm's competitive tracking services division.

Douglas Berdie has been promoted to president of the strategic marketing services division of *Total Research Corp.*, Princeton, N.J.

Rudy Bublitz has been named regional sales manager for the Midwest at *DBM Associates*, a Whitehouse Station, N.J.-based provider of interactive voice response data collection systems.

Gary Shaw and **Nora Wittman** have been named senior vice presidents at *FRC Research Corp.*, New York.

Macro International, Calverton, Md., has promoted **Peg Anthony** to vice president.

Clearwater Research, Inc., Boise, Idaho, has promoted **Michael Willmorth** to study director/public sector and **Bud Roach** to human resources director. In addition, **Heidi Aldous** has joined the firm as research technical assistant.

Edwin Rupert has been hired by *Brintnall & Nicolini, Inc.*, a Philadelphia-based health care consulting and research firm, as senior research associate.

Michael Richarme has been named vice president/client services at *Decision Analyst*, an Arlington, Texas, research firm. Also, **Elizabeth Horn** has joined the firm's statistical science group.

The Arbitron Company, New York, has changed its advertiser/agency services division in Los Angeles. **Alisa Joseph** has been named national manager, consumer information services; **George Brady** has been named Western manager, advertiser/agency services; **Debbie Lahm** has been promoted to account manager, advertiser agency services; and **Stacie DeArmas** has been named product training specialist.

The Quest Business Agency, a Houston marketing communications firm, has added **Stephanie Litwins** as research analyst.

CMS Research, a Toledo, Ohio, interactive voice response (IVR) research service bureau, has licensed ARCS, an IVR data collection and recruiting system from DBM Associates, Whitehouse Station, N.J. DBM Associates and CMS Research will administer conference satisfaction surveys at the Advertising Research Foundation Convention and InfoPlex show on March 15-17 at the New York Hilton.

NFO Worldwide, Inc., Greenwich, Conn., has implemented a new structure to manage its global operations. The company has been organized into three strategic segments — North America, Europe, and AustralAsia & The Middle East — with a separate president responsible for each segment. In addition, the operations of the segments will be coordinated and harmonized by a newly appointed executive committee. (*See this month's Names of Note section for more information on the individual appointments.*)

Clearwater Research, Inc., Boise, Idaho, reported total billings for 1998 at just under $3.6 million, up 70 percent from 1997. In the last eight years, annual growth has been over 50 percent each year.

BAIGlobal, a Tarrytown, N.Y., research firm, has branded its qualitative research division under the name of Qualitative MarketView. BAIGlobal designed the brand based on input from its qualitative clients. Qualitative MarketView will also serve as the qualitative division of Market Facts Inc., BAIGlobal's parent company.

ACNielsen Corporation, Stamford, Conn., reported 1998 operating income, net income and earnings per share each increased by more than 50 percent. Net income rose 59.4 percent, to $57.2 million, while diluted earnings per share reached $0.96, an increase of 54.8 percent over the prior year. Reported earnings include an after-tax expense of $9.2 million, or $0.15 per share, for Year 2000 system modifications, and a negative after-tax impact of $8.1 million, or $0.14 per share, from foreign currency translation.

A new research firm, **Global Quest Inc.**, has opened at 50 Portugal Cove Rd., St. John's, Newfoundland, A1B 2L9, Canada. For more information contact Melissa Miller, president, at 709-726-4251 or at globalquest@nf.sympatico.ca.

Principia Products, Inc., a manufacturer and distributor of optical mark reading technology for survey processing, has moved to 16 Industrial Blvd., Suite 102, Paoli, Pa., 19301. Phone 800-858-0860. Fax 610-647-8771.

Total Research Corporation, Princeton, N.J., announced second-quarter and six-month results for the periods ending December 31, 1998. The firm reported record revenues of $9,625,625 for the second quarter and net income of $539,486, or diluted earnings per share of $.04. This compared to net income of $407,525, or $.03 per share on revenues of $8,749,086 for the same quarter in the prior year. Net income grew 32 percent and revenues by 10 percent over the same three-month period of the previous fiscal year. Net income for the first six months was a record

War Stories

True-life tales in marketing research

By Art Shulman

Editor's note: "War Stories" is a regular feature in which Art Shulman, president of Shulman Research, Van Nuys, Calif., presents humorous stories of life in the research trenches. He can be reached at 818-782-4252 or at artshulman@aol.com.

Cary Silvers of *Modern Maturity* magazine reports conducting a focus group with seniors on magazines. A particular respondent always provided the same answer to all the questions he was asked. For example, when asked why he read a particular magazine, he explained, "Because Jesus told me to." When asked why he read particular articles within the magazine, again, "Because Jesus told me to."

This answer was not very helpful to the client, who realized in order to reach this type of respondent, he'd have to target Jesus in advertising.

A lot of interesting people show up at focus groups. Moderator Saul Cohen of Saul Cohen & Associates reports conducting a chewing tobacco group, where one of his respondents was man weighing over 400 lbs., dressed in studded leather, who revealed that Mu'ammar Khaddafi was his hero!

Wonder how often the following happens, as it did to an unnamed moderator: after being told a focus session was being videotaped, a woman jumped up, covered her face, and ran out of the facility, stating she could not participate in the session if it was taped!

A criminal? An Amish person? A terribly vain individual?

Janet Pizzarello from Sorensen Associates recently found again how shoppers at the point-of-purchase are willing to be really honest in answering survey questions. In an observation and in-store intercept study, consumers were being interviewed about the reasons they purchased certain products from the infant toy sections of a mass merchandiser. One man explained, "My wife just dropped our $300 digital phone in our swimming pool and I was trying to find a toy phone juvenile enough to give her as a Christmas present. I looked at the Barney phones but they weren't childish enough. This one from Fisher-Price is just perfect!"

Researcher Jag Nair reports a focus group he was involved with, led by a female moderator, where one male participant, for reasons unknown to the moderator, kept talking about his sex life. She tried to change the subject, but he persisted. She finally succeeded when she asked what the product category under investigation had to do with his sex life. He couldn't muster a response.

Some people think everything has to do with sex. Also, some wives of columnists think that's the way their husbands think. [*Some editors and some readers might agree with some wives of columnists.*-Ed.]

Doug Conwell of the *Tampa Tribune* tells about a potential respondent who told the interviewer that she couldn't do a survey because she was naked. In my book, this is not a good reason for not participating in a survey, unless it's a door-to-door survey. Or a mall intercept.

Moderator Louise Kroot-Haukka reports conducting a group with women — at least they were all dressed like women — including one person Haukka was sure wasn't a woman. Or not all woman. Haukka still doesn't know if her respondent was a transvestite, a cross-dresser, or a hermaphrodite. Haukka reports that he/she was a wonderful respondent who other respondents looked up to, at least in terms of opinions of the food category they were discussing.

Haukka also reports conducting a group session with men where consumers had to taste a food product served in individual bowls. As they began eating, one man pointed out, "It's moving!" Haukka thought the movement was simply liquid in the bowl, but then others in the group also noticed what turned out to be small bugs crawling in the bowls.

Soon, the discussion inevitably turned to the extra protein the product now contained. After Haukka explained that the bugs weren't supposed to be there, the conversation went on as normal.

The men did cease tasting the product, however.

In future issues, we'll report on more quirky, loopy and strange happenings in the world of market research. If you'd like your story to be told — anything related to research is usable, from spilling soup on your client's new suit to cute answers respondents provide on questionnaires — please call me at 818-782-4252 or, better yet, write it up and fax it to me at 818-782-3014 or e-mail me at artshulman@aol.com. ◖Q◗

A promising new data viewer and publisher from ISPC Software

Also, news from the software epicenter: what's happening with Microsoft, Windows and Office

By Steven Struhl

Editor's note: Dr. Struhl is vice president and senior methodologist at Total Research, Chicago. He can be reached at SMStruhl@aol.com.

Last month, we promised you a fascinating look at new developments at Microsoft — fascinating, that is, assuming you're interested in that sort of thing. We also started our last review with a discussion of the incredible proliferation of new software. Those of you who do not have the February *Quirk's* readily at hand will have to take our word for it that it included weighty ruminations, and the usual dosage of facile sarcasm and poorly disguised accusations. We fully intended to focus on the Microsoft story this time. However, as you will see, still another worthy software title came to our attention — which proves how right we were about the rapid pace of software development.

The new product: ite from ISPC

The product that we discovered, and which many of you doubtless would find very useful, is called ite. This comes from a smaller, not-yet-famous London-based company, ISPC. Once you get the hang of using this program, it can do remarkable things with crosstabulated reports that could well add an extra dimension to the work you produce.

ISPC's ite Professional actually is a linked set of programs that takes ordinary crosstabulations and makes them into something new and more useful. The many functions it performs include organizing, sprucing up, indexing, electronically formatting, and readying tables for distribution. It also generates a table of contents for your report automatically (or with your intervention), and puts data into a format that you can distribute on disks or over the Web. Beyond this, it includes search features, makes charts, and lets users select and paste output directly into word processors or spreadsheets without retyping. In the Web version, it creates hyperlinks between report pages, and allows users to bookmark interesting content or even to make scrapbooks of the pages they find most informative.

There's more. In addition, the program is smart enough (with a little prompting from you) to process tables from nearly any source. These include statistics and crosstabulation programs (such as SPSS, SAS, Quantum, Microtab, Mentor, or PTT) or databases (such as FoxPro, Delphi, Access and Oracle). Its authors claim it even can

handle the output from many "home-grown" programs written in FORTRAN, Pascal, awk, and so on. There is one small caveat here, namely that you must do a little pre-processing with tables from recent versions of SPSS. The program now creates tables as objects rather than as text, so you must first get SPSS to export the tables to the ASCII format before using ite to add all its extra features.

This program clearly fills a need, but how to categorize what it does is another matter. If you use the ite system, you can clear away those awful volumes of crosstabs (that seemingly accompany every study) from your desk and your clients' desks. You also can put an end to the hours you typically spend searching through paper documents, by using ite's efficient tables of contents, indexing and searching. In the bargain, you can save dozens to thousands of trees, depending on how many paper-based sets of tables you normally distribute.

Since ite's maker ISPC is based in England, we are presuming that users there find meaning in this program's subtitle, "the electronic fiche," that your reviewer does not. At the moment, the best description I can come up with is "electronic table organizer and distributor, with neat search, formatting, and Web features," or perhaps "Hondo, supreme boss of crosstabulations." I'm afraid, though, that these terms mostly show why I am not making my living as a creative writer. Maybe ISPC should open a contest to find a new descriptive handle for this program.

Very alert readers with highly retentive memories may notice some similarities between this program and the SPSS Smart Viewer discussed in the last issue. However, as ite accepts output from many programs, and it adds useful features like tables of contents and indexing, it clearly does more than view output.

If you wish to think of ite as a competitor to the SPSS Smart Viewer, though, then ite wins on price. This does not mean that the program is exactly free, though. The ite Publisher is not sold, but licensed for an annual fee of $1,800 a year. You also need to get the accompanying browser to send copies of the reports to anybody. You either can buy a single copy of this for $399 (as a one-time purchase), or do what ISPC clearly prefers, and get an "unlimited" distribution license for another annual fee of $2,200 a year.

The ite Web Publisher is sold as an extension to the regular ite Publisher and costs another $1,800 a year. When you consider that the Internet version of the SPSS Smart Viewer costs about $20,000 — and this does not include free upgrades to new versions, then you will start to see that ite is something like a mid-price solution.

Trouble in paradise: areas of DOS prompt operation and a "dongle" required

Just so you know this is a typical effort by your reviewer, here come some complaints about this program. While
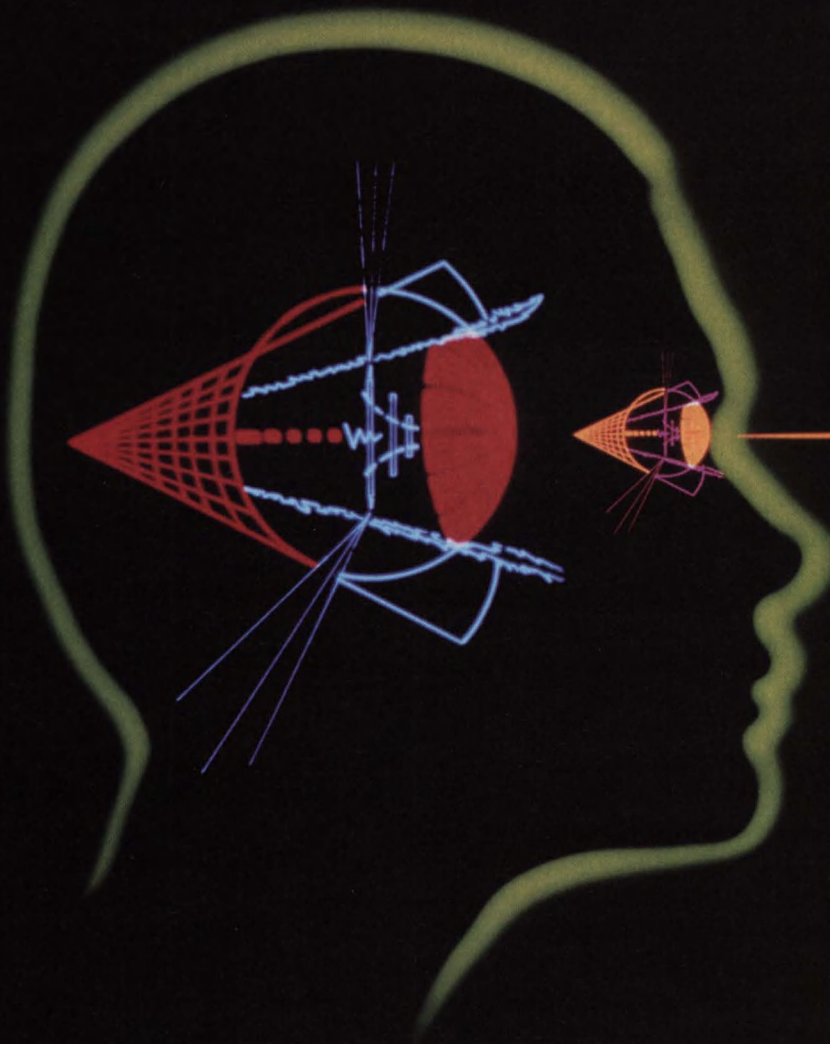
I n the minds of many advertisers, if you want a television ad to be its most effective, you place it on a show watched by a lot of people in your target market. But what if certain shows, from ratings winners to also-rans, do a better job of engaging their viewers? And what if that engagement carries over to the commercials, thereby enhancing their ability to communicate and persuade? Is your commercial better off being seen by fewer — but more involved — viewers?

These were just some of the questions behind "Engaging the Viewer," a study conducted last summer by Starcom Media Services, the media division of Leo Burnett advertising in Chicago. "A big issue at the moment in the media industry, among people buying and selling television time, is about the value of program environment," says Kate Lynch, research director of Starcom. "Does the right environment make people pay more attention to the commercials? Different kinds of programs attract different levels of attention. Does that have an effect on attention to the commercial breaks and then on people's recall or awareness or what they take away from the commercials?"

Using NASA-developed technology administered by Blue Bell, Pa.- based Capita Systems Inc., a subsidiary of Capita Research Group Inc., Starcom used brainwave analysis to measure respondents' involvement in a TV show and a series of commercials, to find out if their engagement in the show carried over to the ads that followed it. "I've been looking for different technologies or methods to try and evaluate [involvement] for years. We've done day-after recall studies, we've done focus groups, we've done lots of different things. But [using brainwave analysis] interested me because it was a truly objective measure and something that we could do a pilot study on quite easily," Lynch says.

Contrary to the *ER*-like imagery it conjures, Capita's brainwave measuring equipment is non-invasive and doesn't require affixing pads to wor-

Effectiveness by association?

Study seeks to determine if a TV viewer's involvement in a program carries over to ads

By Joseph Rydholm, QMRR editor

ried brows with sticky gels. Rather, the apparatus resembles a pair of headphones, says David Hunter, president and CEO of Capita Systems. "We have improved the NASA technology with a new headset on which we have a patent pending. It takes EEG measurements continuously from the surface of the head and converts them into an ENGAGEMENT INDEX℠ [EI] five times per second through a proprietary algorithm NASA developed during 10 years of research. We define engagement as the amount of electrical activity in the cognitive portion of the brain," Hunter says.

"In terms of methodology, it has some aspects of what you would see with a dial test but we feel that this measure offers additional information to what you would get from a dial test," says Kristina Farago, marketing director, Capita Systems. "And, it's objective. You're not relying on a respondent to turn a dial. They just sit there and watch."

Viewer engagement

"Engaging the Viewer" was designed to find out if different programs produce different levels of attention/involvement; if different attention levels carry over into the commercial break; and if viewer engagement has an effect on communication or recall of the advertise- ments.

The respondents were pre-recruited to be regular viewers of one or more of the four dramas used in the study. The programs were chosen for their ability to hold their audience (based on syndicated measures) and their cost per rating point (CPP) differential. Starcom wanted to determine if an expensive CPP show was more successful at engaging the viewer than a cheaper CPP show, and if so, by how much. "We were finding, using our media data, that the cheaper programs were very cost-effective, but clients would say they still wanted to be in the expensive prime-time programs because people

Using recognition-based tracking to compare the ROI of print, radio and TV

By Donald E. Bruzzone and Lizabeth L. Reyer

It is very common to have campaigns that include advertising in a variety of media: print, radio, TV, etc. It is not as common to have a good answer to the question "Which is best? Which reaches and affects people at the lowest cost?" In short, which provides the most "bang per buck" for my product, in my markets, today? Can you even make valid comparisons of the impact of ads and commercials?

This is a case history from a continuing recognition-based tracking study by BlueCross BlueShield of Minnesota that shows a way to answer all of these questions.

Ever since health insurance became so competitive with the introduction of HMOs and all the other new forms of coverage, BlueCross BlueShield of Minnesota became very serious about marketing and the role of advertising. They weren't sure they wanted to go along with the conventional wisdom about the need for advertising and the types of advertising that worked best. They wanted solid evidence.

A team from BlueCross BlueShield of Minnesota looked at the more traditional telephone tracking surveys

where you ask if people recall seeing or hearing any advertising for health care plans, and if so, which ones. They had two major concerns about that approach.

First, it is not very accurate or precise. When somebody says they recall your advertising you don't know if they recall your present advertising or your previous advertising. Or even if it is your advertising. They could be remembering your competitors' advertising. When a person looks at an ad and says "Yes, I recognize that as an ad I have seen before," you have a much more accurate and discriminating measure of the advertising they were actually exposed to.

Secondly, ad recall does not do a very complete job in identifying those actually reached by the advertising. The team was impressed with the evidence showing the number that can recognize advertising they have seen before is two to three times greater than the number that can recall that same advertising from memory. When you are trying to see if the advertising affected the people who

noticed it, recognition gives you a much more complete picture of the number who actually noticed it.[1]

The team was also impressed with the evidence on the limitations of recall-based research from two major industry-wide studies in the early '90s. First was the ARF's Copy Research Validity Project. It showed the standard day-after recall test, which had been the standard of the industry for over a quarter of a century, didn't perform much better than flipping a coin when you were trying to predict if Commercial A was going to be better than Commercial B.[2]

That created enough of a furor that a second industry-wide study based

Figure 1

on a larger collection of the same kind of expensive, but highly reliable, split cable tests addressed the issue: IRI's "How Advertising Works."[3] The evidence was the same, but the conclusion was stated even more strongly. Ad recall was not related to sales.

BlueCross BlueShield of Minnesota didn't want to spend any more than was necessary. So they also

Keys to successful advertising in the Asian-American market

By John McKay

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Advertising can play a crucial role in making Asian-Americans feel welcomed and appreciated. Because so few national firms currently advertise to Asian-Americans, the few who do are building tremendous brand loyalties in their category. To reach Asian-Americans effectively, they must be made to feel the ad is directed to them and that they are the audience. Culture-based, in-language advertising is the key.

Mainstream ads are in English, yet most Asian-Americans are not com-pletely at ease with the language. When they open an Asian-language newspaper, few if any mainstream marketers communicate to them with ad copy in their native language. Research findings from numerous research studies have consistently substantiated the powerfully positive impact in-language marketing com-munications have on Asian-American customer attitudes, corpo-rate image perceptions and purchase behavior.

Sensitivity and understanding on the part of the marketer are required to deliver ads that appeal to the many Asian nationalities. Marketers should not assume they know how a partic-ular group likes to be portrayed in advertising. They must avoid using cultural stereotypes in advertising,

store displays and sales literature, and avoid imposing anything patronizing, condescending or gratuitous in the marketing message. Marketers should also avoid communication mistakes by identifying any differences in the meaning of words and phrases among subgroups. By keeping these consid-erations in mind, marketers can cre-ate a positive image in their adver-tisements to the Asian-American community.

Asian-Americans are impacted by distinctly different cultural themes than the general American popula-tion. Advertising messages that are effective with mainstream audiences may not work with Asian consumers, so there is a need to tailor the mar-keting message to involve and impact the Asian customer. While each Asian

culture has different nuances, all share common traits: reverence for family, a high level of responsibility, respect for elders, honoring traditions, importance of unity and harmony. Ads that incorporate these cultural themes are likely to win the respect and appreciation of most Asian cultures:

1. Importance of family. Ads aimed at most Americans seem to emphasize personal choices, independence, and leisure time outside the family — themes that appeal to American society where individualism is valued. Yet these advertising strategies are likely to be less impactful among Asian groups. In contrast to mainstream families, ads aimed at Asian-Americans should instead emphasize family unity as a means to achieve financial success and social status.

Asians are highly family-oriented and typically include an extended family within one household. Many Asian cultures believe strongly in community and avoid any notoriety for individuals. There is a saying in these communities that "the nail that sticks up gets hammered down." Thus advertisers should avoid showy displays of personal wealth or individuality.

Advertising to Asian-Americans should instead portray the family as the focus of daily life. Men and women should be portrayed in traditional gender roles. The decision-maker in the house is usually the mother, and the product should not offend her sensibilities. A more effective advertising message for all Asian groups would be to position the product as helping to improve family health and lifestyle.

2. Cultural heritage. Acknowledge the group's heritage and uniqueness and the company's respect for that heritage. Since most Asian-Americans are first-generation and conservative in their social and political views, ads should incorporate an appeal to their strong motivation to achieve prosperity. The Asian immigrant tends to respond most favorably to ads that recognize their need to both meld with their adopted society and to remember what they left behind. An advertiser should focus on the ways in which its product or service can enrich the Asian customer's life and serve as a symbol of prestige.

3. Corporate history, size and stability. Asians have great respect for qualities such as company size, age, and stability which give ads an air of credibility to Asians. Ads which demonstrate a company's long history, sound financial structure, and

> **Asians are highly family-oriented and typically include an extended family within one household. Many Asian cultures believe strongly in community and avoid any notoriety for individuals. There is a saying in these communities that "the nail that sticks up gets hammered down." Thus advertisers should avoid showy displays of personal wealth or individuality.**

dependability are more likely to succeed with Asian-Americans than with mainstream customers, as Asians tend to have a greater inherent trust for the familiar.

4. Subtlety and tradition. Subtlety

and tradition are positive themes that tend to appeal more to Asian-Americans than to mainstream audiences. For example: AT&T bluntly tells mainstream America "We want you back," but it politely informs Japanese Americans in Japanese that "We are waiting for your call." Advertisers should also be alert for mixed messages in their products or promotions. Many Asians follow numerology, for example, so an innocent combination of numbers in a promotion could have hidden meaning to the targeted Asian audience.

An ad must be positioned so Asian-American customers can identify culturally with it. If, for instance, a beverage ad shows two young Caucasian men playing sports, few Asian-Americans would pay attention to it. The ad could be effectively targeted to Asian-Americans by portraying two Asian men drinking the beverage at a picnic with their family. The ad would have a greater impact on, and a higher level of recall among, the large majority of Asian-American customers who saw it, as it integrates familiar and motivating themes of family, culture and tradition.

The focus of advertising targeted to Asian-American consumers should be on developing brand loyalty and market strength through in-language and culture-based marketing programs that are linked back to the Asian-American community. In developing advertising targeted to Asian-American consumers, it is important to make sure the following considerations are incorporated in the campaign:

• demonstrate recognition and respect for their cultural heritage;

• communicate in Asian languages via media channels they use;

• emphasize customer education rather than the "hard sell";

• incorporate culturally significant occasions, themes, or items;

• tailor the message to the culture, language, and needs of the target segment, so they will identify with the ad and recognize that they are the target audience. 〔Q〕

Getting the most out of your copy test

By Simeon Chow

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A conflict exists between the ability of traditional advertising testing methods to provide creative guidance and diagnostic information while at the same time aiding management with the crucial decision of whether or not to use the advertising. This problem has stimulated firms to seek methods capable of helping both the development of advertisements (concurrent-development research) and the determination of which of several executions should be used in a campaign (post-development testing). Toward this goal, we report the development of a measurement approach and model designed to estimate the impact of variations in advertising copy on beliefs, attitudes, and purchase intention.

This measurement approach is guided by three important considerations: (1) the constraint of extending standard copy-test methods without needless complexities or burdensome added cost; (2) the necessity of grounding our procedures in well-developed, hierarchy-of-effects communications theory; and (3) the ultimate goal of providing managers with an actionable copy assessment procedure which provides richer diagnostic information than more traditional techniques. The primary benefits of this new approach

are its diagnostic insights by:

• providing creative guidance for the improvement of future copy;

• serving as an aid to judgment for a go/no go decision on copy; and

• relating findings to the overall advertising strategy.

Our copy-testing method, call SEQUENCE (Structural EQUations Estimation of New Copy Effectiveness) extends previous advertising copy-testing research by permitting an assessment of the strength of the linkages among brand beliefs, brand attitudes, and purchase intention without additional data-collection costs. Since comprehension of ad copy is routinely evaluated, and attitude measures taken, we envision this model as a low-cost addition to many standard copy-testing procedures used by advertisers and agencies.

The effects of advertising

Ad testing serves as a check of whether creative executions of advertisements are "on strategy" — that is, that they are capable of producing the communication effects that will achieve the communication objectives and positioning for the brand. Recall (brand awareness) measures have generated controversy over the years and, as a result, are not as influential as they once were. Recall and persuasion are conceptually two very different kinds of advertising effects, and one should never be used as an automatic proxy for the other. Thus, ads are often tested separately for these two effects. However, many in the advertising research community have concluded that persuasion-based measures of ad effectiveness are superior to traditional recall measures.

If persuasion is the desired outcome for effective advertising, then there are five communication strategies possible:

• introduction of new salient criteria used to evaluate brands within a product class;

• changing the saliency of brand beliefs based on existing evaluative criteria;

• changing the strength of these brand beliefs;

• changing the strength of the linkages among brand beliefs, brand attitudes, and purchase intention; and

• changing beliefs concerning competing brands.

The proposed methodology evaluates all of the above possible communication strategies. The PACT principles (PACT Agencies, 1982) emphasize that sound copy-testing methods should be firmly grounded in communications theory. In the SEQUENCE Model, brand beliefs are viewed as the building blocks of brand image and preference. In order to affect changes in attitude toward a brand, it is necessary to change something about consumers' belief structure with respect to the brand. Therefore, focusing on changes in global measures of brand attitude alone is insufficient to permit an assessment of how or why the observed changes were obtained. Anchoring on global measures of attitude as indicators of success retards the learning process of advertisers and agencies with respect to the reasons for differences in the effectiveness of alternative ad executions.

Our model is also consistent with DAGMAR guidelines (Colley, 1961)
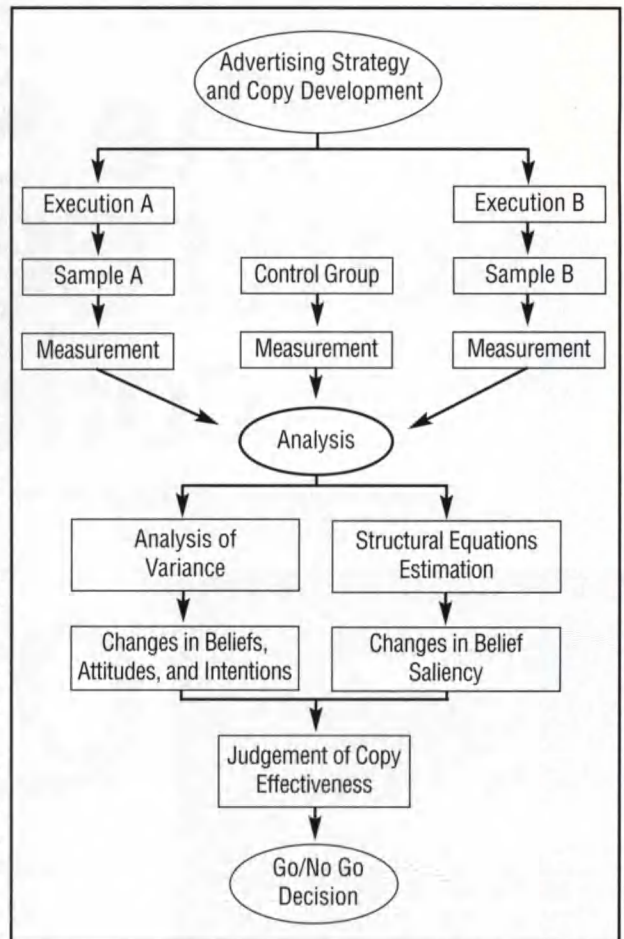
in that observed communication effects (not exposure or frequency) are evaluated systematically against explicit, communications-oriented, advertising goals. Colley argues that advertising results are best assessed within a hierarchy-of-effects theoretical framework and must be evaluated against advertising goals using benchmark measurements developed prior to implementation. SEQUENCE supports the use of multiple-item measures in a hierarchical framework, thus permitting explicit recognition of how random measurement error may (1) attenuate the precision of estimators and (2) reduce the power of statistical tests of hypotheses. The basic steps in the SEQUENCE copy assessment procedure are depicted in the flowchart.

SEQUENCE assumes the establishment of actionable, communications-oriented advertising objectives and the specification of advertising strategies designed to reach these objectives. At least one execution of the strategy is then developed and submitted to the SEQUENCE testing procedure. In the above figure, two alternative executions are compared to a no-exposure control group; however, more alternatives could have been tested. After exposure to the alternative ads (or without exposure in the case of the control group), multiple measures of brand beliefs, brand attitudes, purchase intentions (and ad attitudes if desired) are collected. These data are then subjected to two types of analysis. First, similar to traditional copy-testing methods, analysis of variance is used to examine differences in the effectiveness of the executions for changing beliefs, attitudes, and intentions. Second, structural equations estimation procedures are used to assess simultaneously the relationships among brand beliefs, brand attitudes, and purchase intentions for each experimental group.

Based on an overall evaluation of the ability of the competing executions to shift beliefs, attitudes, and intentions, and to modify the salience of key brand beliefs in a direction consistent with strategy, a go/no go decision is made. Insights gained from these analyses provide feedback for future copy-development efforts. In sum, we propose an approach to advertising-stimulus measurement and assessment that assumes a learning process and draws heavily on well-established multiattribute attitude theory. Recent advances in covariance structure modeling are applied to evaluate simultaneously the reliability and validity of our measurement model, the strength of modeled relationships, and the overall goodness of model fit.

Repositioning a toothpaste brand: a case study

In this section, we describe a straightforward application of SEQUENCE to the toothpaste industry. For a more technical example and explanation on how specific advertising effects are considered, see Chow, et al (1992).

The advertiser has identified two salient toothpaste benefits, one a cosmetic benefit (tooth whitening and breath-freshening) and the other a pro-

tection benefit (cavity prevention and tartar control). The advertiser desires to reposition the brand known for its cosmetic effects as a toothpaste that is also superior with respect to the protection benefit. A successful advertisement should lead to an improvement in average belief strength with respect to protection and a strengthening of the relationship between beliefs about the brand's protection characteristics and attitude toward the brand.

Method

Measures taken from one group after exposure to an execution were compared to the reactions of a control group of people who were not exposed to the ad. Differences on the measures are ascribed to the effects of exposure. A shopping mall intercept sample of 350 respondents was obtained. Two hundred respondents were exposed to the ad, while 150 respondents comprised the no-exposure control group. Likert scales were used to capture the extent of a respondent's agreement with the following belief statements: (1) keeps breath fresh for hours (Fresh), and (2) provides maximum protection against tooth decay (Protect). Brand attitude was measured on a single five-point scale anchored by excellent-poor. Purchase intentions were captured on a single five-point scale anchored by very likely-very unlikely.

Step 1: Test for differences in mean belief strength on the Fresh and Protect beliefs. Differences in mean attitude and purchase intentions scores between the execution and the control group were also tested.

Step 2: Estimate a model with Fresh and Protect as antecedents of brand attitude and brand attitude as the sole predictor of purchase intentions for each of the two groups. Direct comparisons via chi-square difference tests of the strength of the linkages between the variables are made. The objective of these statistical tests is to determine whether or not the ad affected the salience of the target belief, Protect. This is accomplished by comparing the magnitude and the sign of the path estimates between the

target belief and attitude for each of the groups.

Step 3: Check to determine if the ad had any unexpected negative effects on the strength or salience of the other brand belief, brand attitudes, or purchase intentions.

Results

As desired, mean belief strength for Protect was significantly stronger for the ad group than the control group (mean = 4.06 and 3.83, respectively; $p < .01$, one-tailed test). Further, brand attitudes (ad mean = 3.47, control mean = 3.18; $p < .01$) and purchase intentions (ad mean = 3.33, control mean = 3.10; $p < .05$) were significantly enhanced by exposure to the ad. The other brand belief, Fresh, was not affected by ad exposure ($p = .28$). These results suggest that the ad effectively communicated the ability of the brand to prevent cavities while not detracting from beliefs regarding its cosmetic properties.

Traditional copy testing procedures often stop with this comparison of means. However, the ad may have had other effects on respondents beyond this observed shift in belief strength. In particular, we would hope that the repositioning strategy also affected the salience of the targeted belief. However, an ad which successfully enhanced belief strength regarding a targeted benefit but which also reduced or eliminated the salience of that benefit to brand attitude would accomplish little. Therefore, it is necessary to test changes in benefit salience, as well as mean shifts. In SEQUENCE, this is done by simultaneously estimating the model described previously using a structural equations estimation procedure. Without complicating the example, we have omitted the description of fit statistics. We note, though, that the model fit the data well.

We begin by examining the effect of ad exposure on belief salience. The key parameters are the regression coefficients reflecting the strength of the relationships between beliefs, Fresh and Protect, and brand attitude.

First, in the no-exposure group, the influence of Fresh and Protect on brand attitude was estimated to be roughly equal (b = .411 and .370, respectively). In the ad group, the influence of Protect on brand attitude was enhanced (b = .542), a result which is consistent with the advertiser's strategy, while the influence of Fresh on brand attitudes remained essentially unchanged (b = .454). A chi-square difference test confirmed that only the increase in salience for Protect was statistically significant ($c2(1)$ = 5.59, p < .05).

In summary, SEQUENCE analysis revealed in a copy test that the advertisement successfully enhanced consumer beliefs regarding the cavity protection afforded by use of the toothpaste brand. In addition, the salience of the protection belief to brand attitudes was enhanced significantly without adversely affecting brand attitude or purchase intentions. Thus, the path analysis results, in combination with the results of traditional tests of mean differences, pro-

vide strong support for the efficacy of the ad.

Reading too much

Through SEQUENCE, the decision on which execution, if any, to adopt is made with more complete information and would depend on the advertiser's evaluation of the total package of effects observed in comparison to a control group. A common problem is reading too much into a copy test result by seizing on one or two multiple comparisons, as is commonly done with ANOVA results. Our example is very straightforward, with only two belief items. However, in many copy tests, a large battery of belief items are assessed by the respondents. The likelihood of falsely concluding that a significant difference exists when it does not (Type I error) increases when multiple comparisons of mean differences are possible and there is no recognition that a certain proportion of comparisons will be significant by chance. This problem is lessened by

accounting for all the effects of beliefs simultaneously in a structural equations framework.

SEQUENCE is designed to help management evaluate new copy alternatives before placement. The system is intended to: (1) rapidly predict a new copy's effect on brand beliefs, attitudes, and purchase intentions; (2) produce actionable diagnostic information that can be used to improve the copy execution; and (3) permit evaluation of alternative copy executions. We believe the procedure provides more information with respect to the evaluation of advertising copy than traditional approaches at about the same costs; therefore, its diagnostic value is high. [Q]

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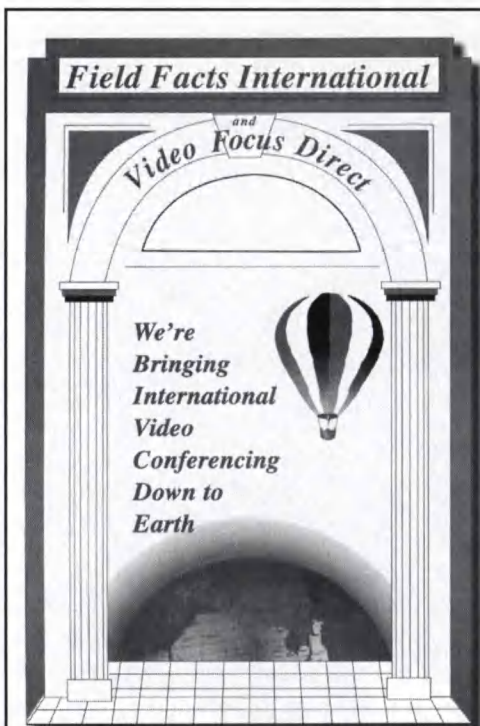
Advertising and packaging:

Your product's voice and face

By Gene Leichter

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Your product has a name. Advertising gives it a voice. Packaging is its face. All three work together to create an identity.

Advertising, name and packaging should work together to promote your brand. The package should clearly communicate the name and convey the image of your brand. Advertising prominently featuring the package and frequently mentioning the name will help educate consumers, making it easier for them to recognize your product in the store.

We recently copy tested two near-ly identical print ad executions. One version included the package, while the other version excluded it entirely. It was no surprise that recall scores, brand image and product ratings were all higher for the ad that included the package. Viewers of the ad that included the package should also have an easier time locating the package in the store.
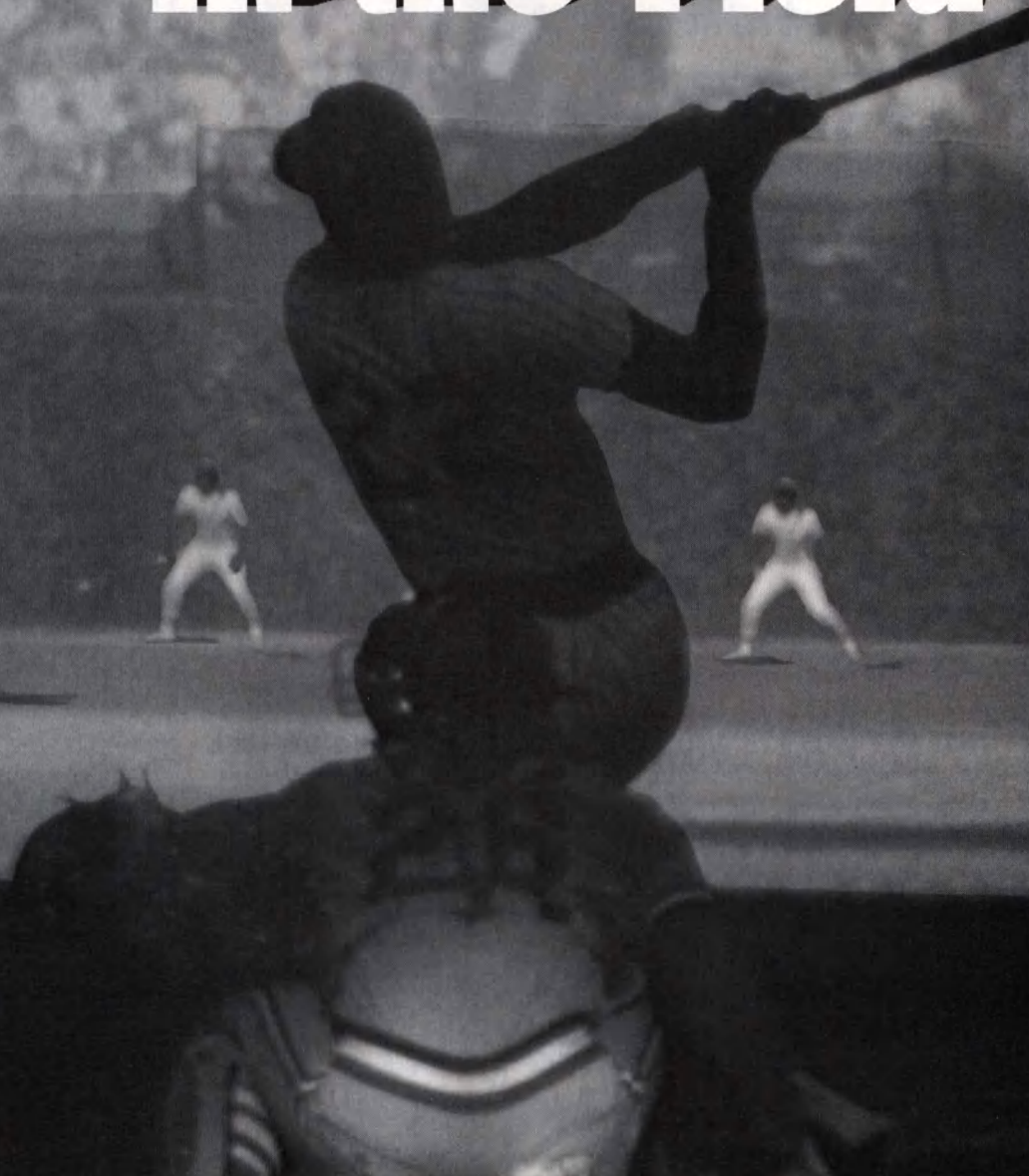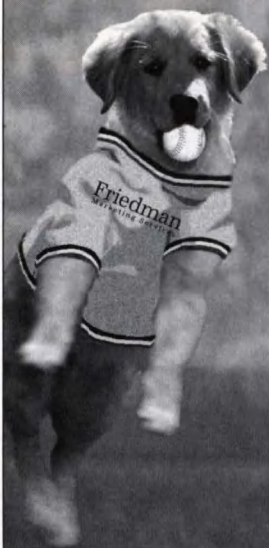
New products need effective advertising to create an identity. Unwilling to spend for adequate advertising, a client was planning to rely entirely on a new product's package to promote the brand in a recent launch. We conducted consumer research to evaluate the visibility, readability, communication and overall impact of the package.

The new product's package was highly visible on the shelf, obtaining quick attention from consumers. Eye-tracking data showed that the brand was usually the first one noticed on the shelf and was studied more intently, dominating consumer attention. However, cognitive measures such as brand recall and recognition from tachistoscope tests were low. There was a disconnect between visibility and cognition. Consumers' visual attention was drawn to the package, but brand name recognition was non-existent.

Communications questioning about the brand revealed that consumers were not sure how to pronounce the name. Although consumers saw the brand, they were reluctant to say the name. The package had strong shelf impact, but it needed the benefit of radio or television advertising to familiarize consumers with the name.

In the last example the marketers

Companies that routinely test advertising before it is shown will make major modifications to the package or label without the benefit of consumer input. As I recently told a client who had asked about the need for package testing, "What good are high brand recall scores and purchase intent ratings if they can't find your package on the shelf?"

had more than half the battle won. The true challenge is to develop packaging that has shelf impact and is easy for consumers to find. The store shelf is a critical battlefield for your brand. Over one third of all packages are not noticed by consumers viewing a shelf

and over two thirds of all purchase decisions are made in the store. These facts underscore the importance of strong shelf impact.

Companies that routinely test advertising before it is shown will make major modifications to the package or label without the benefit of consumer input. As I recently told a client who had asked about the need for package testing, "What good are high brand recall scores and purchase intent ratings if they can't find your package on the shelf?"

Package testing is often used to determine if current users can find new packaging or to measure the visibility and shelf impact of a new package. To determine which new package designs should be tested, marketers need to understand how consumers will view and react to the new package designs. They should always take the time to see it in the way consumers will experience it, on the shelf next to the competition.

A leading OTC brand that dominated its category and occupied most of the shelf space allotted was considering a new package design. The objective of the design change was to create a unified packaging system for the brand using one color. It was hoped that the new design would heighten visibility, while achieving a cleaner, more modern look. All of the current packages in the category, including theirs, were very dark. The decision was made to make the new design white, to heighten contrast with the competition.

One look at the test shelf and it was obvious that the new design would not have the desired impact. The new white package design created a "billboard" highlighting the dark packages of the competition. By changing to a white design, they would be relegating their brand to the background, focusing attention on the competition.

Your product has a name. Advertising gives it a voice and packaging is its face. Your job is to make sure it doesn't get lost in the crowd! [Q]

Seven signs of fallout from the information explosion

By Stephen R. Elson

"The faster things change, the more information we need to deal with it." (Alvin Toffler, author of *The Adaptive Corporation*, *The Third Wave* and *Future Shock*.)

As a nation, we've shown ourselves to be world masters at generating information. Pack more stats, more facts, more bytes into every minute: this is the course to which much of American business has committed itself. Our entire society may, in fact, be founded on the American standard of information. As Thomas Jefferson put it: "The informed citizen is the cornerstone of democracy."

Information can thrill us, motivate us, and change us. It can be as valuable as gold. Right now, however, we are at war with information. The language of combat shows up again and again in terms such as information explosion, information sickness, data smog, and information fallout.

Here are some — but indeed not all — the signs of information fallout:

1. Despite all the information at your command you seem to know more and more about less and less. In his superb article in *Technology Review*, ("Data Smog: Surviving the Info Glut") David Shenk quotes pollster Andrew Kohut as saying that data-crowded people "throw their hands up and say, 'Well, I'm going to focus on this very narrow part of the world.'" Shenk says the Internet promotes this trend, and further "This response is one reason for the troubling level of social polarization plaguing the United States. We face a paradoxical spiral in which the more information we come upon, the more we narrow our focus and retreat into different spheres of knowledge. We are, as writer Earl Shorris says, 'A nation of lonely molecules.'"

2. Your information has become self-generating and you can't stop it. Too much unfiltered information is a brain-freeze. It becomes gobbledygook. The inevitable mental response is decision avoidance.

3. You've invested in a new workstation with a built-in treadmill — and you're working overtime to pay for it. We've learned to say no to drugs and limit our intake of junk food but we haven't learned to say no to information.

4. Your attention span is getting shorter. I repeat, your attention span is getting shorter.

5. You've stopped long-range thinking. So much information is available on any given topic that energy can be wasted on solving the smaller stuff, so that we never get a chance to raise our eyes and look into the distance, or out the window.

A case study of our information society: the deregulation of utilities

By virtue of the insulation enjoyed through lack of competition, utility companies have had to cope with far less information than other businesses that compete for share of a market.

Marketing demands differentiation. Marketing demands communication. Differentiation and communication are information-dependent. Suddenly — relatively speaking — utilities have been forced to take a crash course in making friends with a public to whom they previously only sent a bill. With good information management, that bill can become a marketing device.

But relationships take work. To make matters even more interesting, modern marketers now must approach consumers not as manageable masses, but as whimsical individuals. That means more information, more strategizing, more research. New products and promotions. More data. . .

Consider Kenneth Lay, CEO of Enron, for example. Here is a man in search of relationships in a big way. A *Business Week* article with Gary McWilliams' byline presents Lay as "the most visible and feared advocate of opening the nation's $215 billion retail electricity market to competition." It targets his desire to make Houston-based Enron "a champion retailer" in markets all over the country.

If Lay is on the right track, the 600-person Enron Energy Services division formed last year will move rapidly to fulfill its mission — to develop retail services such as long-term, fixed contracts that would offset the risk of dramatic price changes, or a program that would allow customers to roll energy payments into home mortgage payments.

Good, innovative thinking. But has Lay backstopped his people with a plan for the day-to-day business of managing the vast amounts of information that testing and marketing these service concepts will generate? Is he prepared to build the databases which will not only support promotional mailings but tie back to provide valuable analysis?

He ought to be anticipating, right now, the stress level of managers who'll have to review this future data surge and make recommendations that higher-ups depend upon to make growth decisions. A simple information management system that automatically reports data not as numbers but as more easily assimilated charts and graphs is one tool that could help alleviate this problem.

And if Lay isn't thinking in these terms, there is a good chance one of his competitors — like Stephen W. Bergstrom, president of rival Electric Clearinghouse Inc. — is.

6. You've made mistakes based on contaminated data. The partner of this symptom is loss of faith in gut instincts.

7. In order to keep up, your life consists of the immediate past and the immediate future — you have no time for the present moment.

Just how widespread is the problem? In his book of essays, *Burning Down The House*, educator Charles Baxter says this about our dilemma:

"In postmodernism, speed and information, combined through data processing, have moved into cyberspace. It is no wonder that the metaphor of the superhighway has stuck and has become an instant international cliché. But when speed is made to be the defining feature of action, violence is usually not far away, violence defined here as the loss of control under conditions of great velocity. . . .Our fascination with violence is equal to our fascination with data processing: they are two coins in the same pocket."

Baxter goes on to equate the potential danger and violence of speed with the necessity of coping with information. He points up the anxiety and tension computer workers frequently display, and believes that their very stillness enhances the perceived speed by which information travels. Yes, stillness is very much our modern posture, whether in front of computer terminal,

movie screen or windshield.

The challenge now is not to produce more data faster — although we will — but to make more intelligent and productive use of information through new and improved processing, linking, visualization and management techniques.

Decisions, decisions

In a 1996 article in *The Humanist*, Richard R. Nethe coined the term "data tsunami." Nethe, for 30 years an advisory quality engineer specializing in data analysis for IBM, states "It's not . . . surprising that so many of our decisions no longer work in the modern environment that we have created . . . that so many of our decisions, even when made on reliable data, turn out to be wrong. We are simply not designed to make decisions that take into consideration the long-range effect, nor are we equipped to handle a multitude of factors simultaneously. . . . Speed and volume are now favored over integrity and depth."

Yet, although the sociosocietal effects of overabundant information look messy, we had the intelligence to create the Information Age in the first place and we have the intelligence to contain and direct it, if we so desire. If we turn our finest and most creative thinkers loose to solve the next challenge of the information age we can discover how to make information our servant, not our master.

Here are six ideas you can start with to begin clearing up information fallout. Of course, the ideal solution is customized solutions to specific problems, but this is a start.

1. Take regular information breaks. Look at all your information sources — cell phone, fax, PC, television, newspaper, Internet, e-mail — and assess what's essential and what is superfluous. If you're getting the same information over and over, turn something off.

2. Get a fresh perspective. Call in the experts. There are companies whose entire reason for being is to domesticate the information monster. Let them do their job and make it easier and more productive for you to do yours.

3. Ask yourself not, "What's next?" but "What's right?" Are you contributing the problem or to the solution? Be honest.

4. Learn what others are doing successfully to reduce "the data tsunami." Learn how to stop receiving unwanted e-mail, get off junk mail lists, or as David Shenk does, put your television in the closet except for preselected viewing hours. Don't be subject to technological tyranny. You may not need that upgrade, that new electronic gadget — unless it truly contributes to making life easier.

5. Join a committee to clean up information fallout around your office. Talk about writing shorter, more precise memos and reports. Rediscover how to have brief phone communication. Make data visual; it's easier to understand and compare, and is far more entertaining to the brain.

6. Remember the great mother of Invention: Necessity. Invent a solution for yourself and if it works, share it. 🔥

Survey Monitor

CME Kid Ad-Traction Study released in March 1998. However, when respondents were asked how much — a little, a lot, or not at all — they wanted the products featured in their favorite commercials, disparities emerged. The highest rating for "want it a lot" was only one in four children (25 percent) for Denny's, despite the restaurant's top 10 commercial appeal. For the two beer brands (Budweiser and Miller Lite), kids overwhelmingly (82 percent) did not want the product at all. "From these results, it's obvious likability does not, by itself, automatically equal desire," Fruechte says.

Humor, music and story line remain the most essential elements to likability as identified in last year's study. Salon Selectives, an adult hair care product line, had few wanting the product, yet was cited as popular mainly because of the memorability of its musical theme, "Who's That Lady?" "The purpose of advertising is to develop brand preference among consumers," says Fruechte. "Entertainment is essential for effective marketing to kids, but used alone it can overshadow meaningful product messages. Combining entertainment with a demonstration of product benefit is the ideal, especially for kids."

An example is the Taco Bell campaign, featuring the talking Chihuahua. In addition to being a Top 10 commercial favorite, 83 percent of the children surveyed said the commercials motivated them to want the Taco Bell products advertised. Many respondents cited the food particularly and could recall if the product featured was a taco pizza or nachos — reflecting a successful application of relevancy. Yet Taco Bell's seeming success is not universal — the study underscores the nuances within a kids audience. Among boys, ages 15-17, Taco Bell ranked in their top 10 most disliked commercials, with nearly half saying "they see the commercial too often," indicating the vulnerability of messages to wear-out due to overexposure.

"More than adults, the marketing landscape for kids is incredibly complex," says Fruechte. "Gender and peer pressure are factors, as is the media spending a campaign receives. Focusing on a clearly defined target is as critical to success as is the need for an entertaining and relevant product message." For more information call Dennis Smith at 612-347-1328.

Make your Web site a site to see

To find out how consumers discover Web sites and what drives them to return after their initial visit, Cambridge, Mass.-based Forrester Research surveyed 8,600 households and compiled the responses in its 1998 Consumers & Technographics Media Field Study. Forrester asked on-line consumers to select the sources they use most frequently to acquire Web addresses. Results were not surprising: Internet resources win. Fifty-seven percent of those on-line use search engines to find Web sites. Across all Technographics segments, this is the most popular way to receive Web addresses. E-mail messages and links from other Web sites are also frequently used as sources for URLs.

Twenty-eight percent of consumers said that they find out about Web sites by word-of-mouth. Career-motivated consumers put more weight on suggestions from acquaintances than those who are entertainment- or family-motivated.

Magazines are the best traditional media. Magazine ads are used just slightly less than word-of-mouth and far more than other traditional media ads. TV commercials, though used infrequently, are more effective than newspaper ads or radio commercials.

Banner ads are a dead end. Only 7 percent of consumers said they used

banner ads to find URLs. More than half of on-line consumers have never clicked on a banner advertisement. Of those that have, 69 percent do not remember the last banner ad they clicked on.

Forrester explored the reasons why consumers return to Web sites, and found that experiences rather than trusted brand names drive consumers back to sites. Content is No. 1: it drives 75 percent of consumers to return to their favorite Web sites. Content quality is especially valued among career-motivated consumers.

Site design is No. 2. Consumers gravitate back to sites that have an intuitive interface and download quickly. Speed and cutting-edge technology are particularly valued among entertainment-motivated consumers.

Consumers want current content. All on-line users, particularly career- and entertainment-motivated consumers, return to Web sites that are updated frequently.

Promotions, chat, and games fail to drive repeat traffic. Few consumers go back to Web sites for promotions like coupons and incentives. Furthermore, chat and on-line games are not compelling enough content to cause the majority of users to repeatedly visit a site.

Brand is a losing battle. Few consumers revisit Web sites due to brand. This holds true across all Technographics segments — with the exception of Media Junkies, who are slightly more brand-conscious than the other segments.

Web site designers and marketers should adopt these tactics:

• Web sites need to be sticky. Sites must build content that provides utility to the user. Providers must ask themselves questions such as these: What problem can I help users solve? What task can I make easier? What new product will improve a user's on-line experience? In addition, a site must update content frequently and focus design efforts on ease of use and speed. Search engines are critical. Take the time to ensure that your site comes up as a choice when potential visitors use a search engine.

- Drive customers to invest time in your site. Users prefer to customize sites for themselves rather than have custom content pushed to them. Sites that can draw customers to set up content that they value, such as custom portals like My Yahoo!, will create loyalty with their customers. Many types of information are suitable for self-directed customization, such as stock quotes and analysis, e-mail news services, detailed regional weather information, and television and movie schedules.

- Be prepared for multiple access points. Consumers are beginning to use a variety of wired devices, from PCs and PDAs to digital cell phones, to access information. For the sake of simplicity, users will look to use the same providers across devices. Sites must be prepared to connect with their users, regardless of how many ways they choose to contact them.

For more information visit the company's Web site at www.forrester.com.

Sales of school uniforms are soaring

A survey by The NPD Group, Inc., Port Washington, N.Y., shows school uniform sales reaching $900 million at retail during 1998. According to NPD's School Uniform Report, about 7 percent of all dollars spent on children's apparel last year went toward school uniforms. During the month of August, 11 percent of all childrenswear dollars were spent on school uniforms. "School uniforms are a significant trend impacting the childrenswear industry," says NPD director Lucy Effron. "The trend is expected to continue, with more major metropolitan school districts, such as New York, instituting policies this year."

According to NPD, just over a third of school uniform dollars are spent in discount stores. Chain stores have the second largest market share at 25 percent. Specialty stores have 20 percent of total sales, and department stores have 7 percent. Cost is the key driver in determining where school uniforms are purchased, cited by more than half of survey respondents as their most important deciding factor. Convenience is the second most important purchase driver, followed by school requirements and store reputation.

School uniform items are less likely to be purchased on sale than other childrenswear items, NPD reports. However, households where children wear uniforms generally spend less on children's school clothes. Those who purchased school uniforms spent an average of $104 on school clothing during the first three quarters of last year, while those who did not purchase school uniforms spent an average of $185. New York and Los Angeles are the top two markets for both school uniforms and total childrenswear. However, many other top childrenswear markets are not yet top markets for school uniforms. As more and more cities jump on the uniform bandwagon, major markets may shift, creating new challenges for those now in or looking to enter the business.

Top 10 Markets for School Uniforms

New York
Los Angeles
Sacramento, CA
Chicago
Seattle/Tacoma
Houston
Washington, DC
Pittsburgh
Wichita, KS
Baltimore

Top 10 Markets for All Childrenswear

New York
Los Angeles
Chicago
Philadelphia
Boston
Washington, DC
Detroit
Atlanta
San Francisco
Cleveland

"For retailers and manufacturers who don't want to lose out on this growing portion of the childrenswear

business, it will be necessary to emphasize how they've made their offerings and stores more convenient," says Effron. "Local or regional managers will need to develop connections with school districts and be completely familiar with where their schools stand on dress codes. The school uniform business is different from the rest of the childrenswear business, and only those who take the right approach will make the grade."

NPD's School Uniform Report is based on purchase data from NPD's nationally representative American Shoppers Panel of 16,000 households and information collected from a special analysis of over 350 households who purchase school uniforms. In addition to profiling the typical school uniform wardrobe, the report addresses pricing, distribution channels and how uniforms affect other childrenswear purchasing in these households. The study focuses on apparel for ages 4 to 13. For more information call Lucy Effron at 516-625-4289 or e-mail her at lucy_effron@npd.com, or visit the company's Web site at www.npd.com.

Increased age, increased spending

American men between the ages of 50 and 54 have the greatest spending power and the highest average annual salary, according to a MetLife Mature Market Institute analysis and the MetLife Statistical Bulletin. MetLife is a New York financial services firm.

These older Boomers and pre-Boomers, born between 1944 and 1948, choose to spend a smaller percentage of their incomes, and save more than younger Boomers. A greater part of their spending is discretionary in nature. They spend less on necessities such as food, shelter, apparel and other household related outlays for operations, supplies and furnishings. In addition to saving a higher percentage of their incomes, they have more discretionary income available for such items as education, food consumed away from home,
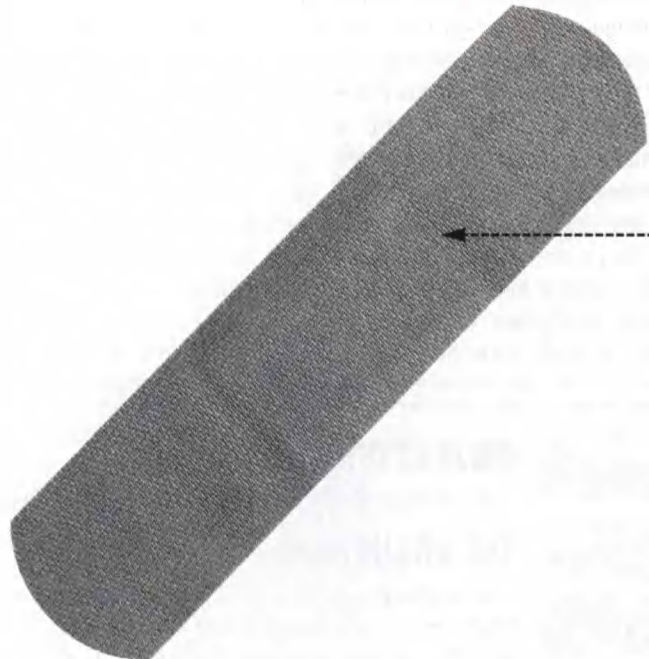
travel, cash contributions and in all likelihood, place a greater emphasis on the quality of the goods and services they purchase.

Men in the 50-54 age group currently earn an average of $52,738 per year, a full 25 percent more than all men working full-time. Women currently reach their earning peak at age 45-49. But, as Boomer women with longer work histories move into the 50s age group, the pattern for peak earnings may change and more closely resemble that for men.

"These figures should be especially significant to businesses and marketers as they look to the future, since the 50-54 age group not only has the highest discretionary income but also is one of the nation's fastest growing demographics," says Sandra Timmermann, director of the MetLife Mature Market Institute.

"Over the next 15 years, businesses that have the foresight will redesign products and services and adapt their marketing strategies to Americans in their early 50s. Those who do not will miss a window of opportunity," Timmermann says. "As the Statistical Bulletin states, by the year 2010, those aged 50 to 54 will increase by eight million people, with individuals in their 50s totaling 30.5 million in the year 2000 and 42.8 million by 2015, amounting to 13.8 percent of the population. That is an extraordinary amount of collective buying power."

Businesses should also take note of the increasing ethnic diversity of the 50+ population. The percentage of white non-Hispanics in their 50s will drop to 72.5 percent of the population in 2015, from 79.7 percent in 1995. This compares with an increase of 1.8 percent for Blacks to 12 percent of the population, a 4.2 percent increase for Hispanics to 11.2 percent of the population and a 1.5 percent increase for Asians to 4.6 percent of the population, also between 1995 and 2015.

While those in their early 50s have and will have relatively high incomes, most will not retire until they are forced to do so. According to the MetLife Statistical Bulletin, early retirement will result in a reduction in pension benefits, which will be too great for the average individual to absorb. The Bureau of Labor Statistics indicates that, on average, an individual retiring at age 55 in 1993 with 30 years of service under a defined benefit plan and with final annual earnings of $45,000 would only be able to replace 21.5 percent of his or her pre-retirement income. By contrast, the same person retiring at age 65 with 40 years of service would be able to replace 35.6 percent. In addition, the sooner one retires, the more chance that inflation will erode purchasing power.

"With an uncertain future for Social Security, escalating health care costs and inflation, along with the desire for people in their 50s to remain productive, it comes as no surprise that the majority of Baby Boomers will not retire before age 65 and some will retire even later," says Timmermann. "This will also mean that people in their early 50s will understand the importance of saving more, which will have an impact on the financial services community."

The analysis found:

• Between 1995 and 2010, the number of individuals aged 50 to 54 will increase by more than eight million.

• In 1996 about four-fifths of the civilian non-institutional population 50-54 was active in the workforce.

• The average earnings for men aged 50-54 in 1996 was $52,738, some 25 percent above the average level of earnings for all full-time working men.

• The mean earnings for women aged 50-54 is $29,407, 3.7 percent above the average for all working women, but by ages 55-59 they fall to $27,937, 1.5 percent below the average for all women workers.

• On average, men reach their earnings peak in the first half of their 50s, whereas women reach their earnings peak between ages 45 and 49.

For more information visit the company's Web site at www.metlife.com.

In-store studies grow in importance

In the retail environment shoppers don't have to "remember," they're already there. The store shelf and shopping experience can be part of the stimulus.

By William J. Hruby

Editor's note: William Hruby is a market research and advertising consultant with nearly two decades of packaged goods marketing experience.

A quandary exists for packaged goods marketers: Consumers often think about crucial product or marketing issues only while they stand at the shelf. Yet research is most commonly conducted in malls, mail panels and other locations far removed from the point-of-sale. The fact that 100% of all buying decisions are ultimately made at the shelf favors the case for in-store research.

Go where the shoppers decide to buy. To capture those fleeting points which translate into product A being selected over product B, consumers must be intercepted in the store where top-of-mind issues are present. Meet that same consumer in a mall two weeks later, and, **IF** you can get them to speak with you at all, it is highly unlikely they can remember their purchase decisions, awareness of brand options, motivations for purchase, etc. And certainly not with the same degree of accuracy as an interview conducted at the point-of-purchase.

Participation is a major and growing problem for traditional research methods. Mall wave-off rates (shoppers who refuse to even be approached) hover around 90%, compared to in-store wave-offs which are more typically 30-50%.

In a recent issue of *Marketing Research* (Spring, 1998), authors Bearden, Madden and Uscategui summarized this point. In their report they emphasize that the pool of qualified respondents is drying up. Their concern: "Lack of representativeness resulting from refusals to participate . . . jeopardizes the accuracy of survey results. Evidence suggests that the *decline in participation rates is already occurring and may accelerate.*"

Three questions you should ask: Prior to going to field, cutting edge market researchers ask themselves three questions, according to Dr. Herb Sorensen of Sorensen Associates

1) What information is needed?

2) Who has that information?

3) Where are they; and are most capable of providing the information?

For packaged goods researchers involved in concept, prototype and related phases of product development who rely on Product Guidance Research, the answers often point to in-store research.

Sorensen Associates has available over 40,000 retail locations in the U.S., and the technology to execute fieldwork in a few days. This infrastructure is at the foundation of the firm's reputation for conducting demographically structured studies at the neighborhood level.

Researchers now have new and better options for collecting consumer information - *at the point of purchase.* ∎

Purchase-intention surveys can take you only so far; marketers would also do well to observe consumers in real buying situations.
Harvard Business Review
May-June 1998

Product & Service Update

continued from p. 11

data/video projection systems, has introduced the In Focus LPTM1200, a 1200-lumen, native XGA (1024 x 768) projector for the conference room. The InFocus LP1200 delivers features such as picture-in-picture display, digital zoom, electronic keystone correction, and built-in PC card slots and four inputs (two computer, two video).

Dual source display provides instant-on, picture-in-picture capabilities. This feature gives presenters the option to view a second spreadsheet on top of the first, add a video clip to play alongside displayed data or switch between two simultaneous presentations at once. With the touch of a button, drawings, schematics or spreadsheets can be shared. The LP1200 offers electronic zoom and electronic focus, allowing the versatility to present from anywhere in the room. Featuring a color palette of 16.7 million colors, the native XGA-resolution, 20-pound LP1200 handles high-resolution business graphics, while 250:1 contrast and polysilicon LCDs ensure saturated colors and crisp detail in graphics, spreadsheets, video and data. For more information call 800-294-6400 or visit the company's Web site at www.infocus.com.

Reports profile French Internet use

Motivaction International, a Viroflay, France-based research firm, is now offering reports on the use of the Internet in France. One report, "Evolution of the Internet in France 1997/1998," provides a general picture of the Internet in France and in the other French-speaking countries (Canada, Belgium, Switzerland), looking at topics such as Web popularity, household multimedia equipment, and profiles of Web surfers. For more information call Alain Dinis at 33-1-39-24-53-18 or e-mail to adinis@motivaction.fr.

Web site offers e-commerce articles

The Electronic Commerce Research Room (www.wilsonweb.com/research/) is offering free access to articles on on-line selling and store development. Dr. Ralph Wilson is the virtual librarian to the Research Room's 1,500 articles on how-to build successful on-line stores, accept credit cards on-line, learn from industry case studies on Internet sales and more. The stacks at Wilson's Electronic Commerce Research Room organize the discipline of on-line selling into 43 categories. A short list of categories includes store design and internal marketing, cost-cutting measures, demographics and shopping behaviors, fulfillment issues, transaction systems, and shopping software technologies.

Although a number of articles are available to read for free, full access to the Electronic Commerce Research Room is included with a subscription to Wilson's e-mail newsletter *Web Commerce Today*. For more information visit the company's Web site or call 916-652-4659.

Data Use

ite's browser is strictly a Windows program, its main "publisher" runs from the MS-DOS prompt, using the old command-line format, complete with "switches" and required syntax. That is, when you start the publisher, you are staring at an empty DOS window waiting for you to enter commands. Many of you may have forgotten, blissfully, that such a thing exists — while others of you may even be young enough never to have seen one. Now, I know many macho programmers will find it very manly (or "existentially authentic") to type in complex commands. Your reviewer, however, could live very comfortably without ever worrying again whether the correct command is "itepub a:tables –r (5:125-132)&(6)&(8)" or some variant with square brackets, and/or dollar signs, and/or alternate spacing — or something else entirely.

Certainly, you can learn the syntax, but expect to thrash around a few times before you create your first successful document. My question to the folks at ISPC is a simple one: With all the power of Windows to create menus, buttons, selectors, etc., why ask users to go through this?

A more up-to-date program interface not only would be welcome, but would allow users to hit the ground running. Nobody likes to stumble on their first meeting with new software, and it seems many users would with ite. Its current command line-based structure can always be left as an option, but it seems to limit the program's acceptability to new users if it is the only choice.

Finally, the loudest complaint goes toward the "dongle." This is an awful device that must sit directly on the parallel port of your computer for the program to run. In olden times, dongles appeared on a few other programs, but users rightfully hated them, and so they mostly have disappeared. These little monsters present several problems. If you have more than one program with a dongle, you most likely will have constant trouble, since each dongle typically wants to be first in line at the parallel port. You would need to be back behind the computer continually replacing these beasties so they did not conflict with each other.

Also, dongles can cause printer and scanner timing problems. Many newer printers and scanners (that still use the parallel port) need to communicate in both directions with the computer. Dongles can disrupt the timing of communications, or stop them entirely, thereby rendering your printer and/or scanner useless. Finally, there is the space problem. Dongles protrude from the back of the computer, which can (for instance) cause the computer not to fit onto a shelf or into some other space any longer.

The people at ISPC say that if you hate the dongle even half as much as I do, they will give you a copy of the program that does not require one. Since dongles, like all security devices, can be defeated (and there is plenty of free software on the Internet that does precisely this), they serve mainly as a punishment to honest users. In your reviewer's opinion, it is time for ISPC to abandon these awful and outdated little devices.

If ISPC feels it is mandatory to have security to protect themselves from market researchers who would otherwise abuse their software licenses, then they should put "drop-dead dates" into their programs (as SAS does). This is simply a small piece of code that prevents the program from running once its license period is finished. A drop-dead date can be defeated fairly easily, but if users are determined to cheat, then they will find a way to cheat the dongle as well.

A quick overview of ite

This program serves a truly worthy function, as it creates electronic reports that go well beyond traditional paper-based crosstabulations. In fact, ite shows us the next step in what traditional crosstabulations can become. It can do remarkable things, such as indexing your tables and creating a table of contents for them. Also, it can put the same electronic documents on disks or on the Web. It has many other capabilities that make it highly worthwhile, functionally. Once you learn how to use this program, you should find the results really pleasing.

Still, this program needs some work. To create the

reports, you must contend with a command-line-based DOS box, and so must learn, or relearn, the art of typing in commands with fairly complex "switches" and syntax. In the Windows environment, this looks and feels like an anachronism, especially as the browser that comes with the program takes full advantage of the power that Windows can offer. In short, you must have some patience to get the full strength of the program working for you. Then, finally, there is the dongle. If you buy the program, insist on having a version that does not require one to run.

ISPC has the basic ingredients of a really fine program here. They have some ambitious plans for the future, such as adding statistical testing where possible to tables that do not have this — which would certainly be a major breakthrough in making output more useable. This is one program that encourages very high hopes, and deserves careful attention. If ISPC can just remove some small rough edges, ite could become an essential for market researchers and all others who need to distribute crosstabulated data.

One last surprise

As a postscript, ISPC had a chance to read this review before publication and, amazingly enough, have pledged themselves to make product improvements in response to two of the suggestions made here. Specifically, they will set to work immediately on giving users the choice of using a full Windows interface in all parts of the program. Even better, they promise to eliminate the need for the dongle.

What can we say about this? Perhaps a good start is: "Thank you for listening and responding." These skills are rare anywhere — and are particularly so among software companies. We are truly impressed.

You can reach ISPC at their toll-free number 888-833-4243. (Remember there's a five-hour time difference between their London headquarters and Eastern Standard Time.) You can also visit their Web site at www.efiche.com or send them e-mail at info@efiche.com.

On to Microsoft

Here we bring you to the focal point of Windows software development: none other than Microsoft. We'll be looking at their major products of today, and trying to gaze ahead to Windows 2000 and Office 2000, which may be closer than you think — or want.

Apparently when you ask Microsoft its own question, ("Where do you want to go today?"), the answer is "everywhere." Microsoft continues its push to get smaller versions of Windows into everything with more processing power than a toaster. (Don't laugh now, because I'm sure that by 2002, only appliances like vacuum cleaners will still come with standard Pentium, or 586, processors.)

On the other side, Microsoft is developing furiously an integrated Windows product line that will work both on regular desktop PCs and on huge, centralized servers. Microsoft understands as well as anybody the great vulnerability inherent in the PC-centered model of computing that they now dominate. Having been among the vanguard that caught IBM sleeping at the dawn of the PC, they do not want to be overtaken now.

Connctivity a key

Looking at Windows 98, we also can see the great importance Microsoft places on connections between the PC and the outside world. For one thing, everything in Windows 98 looks like a Windows Explorer window. This includes (for instance) the Control Panel that lets you fiddle with the settings on your PC. For those of you who somehow missed Windows 95, the Explorer is the Windows file manager, and also looks a lot like the Microsoft Internet Explorer Web browser. This way, no

matter where you go or what you do with your PC, it looks like you have never left home.

In any event, we can see that Microsoft envisions connectivity as the next big change in computing. They apparently are planning for the day, in the not-too-distant future, when you will have a nearly seamless integration of content residing in your PC, on the Internet, and on any other computing device in the world.

Solutions allowing greater connectivity may be closer than you think. The big thinkers on the subject of course disagree on the nature of the problems to be solved, but many simplify them into two major components. One is the so-called data backbone, or overall capacity of the world to handle the increasing flood of messages that will inevitably follow once we all get connected. In the U.S., at least, this problem has just about been solved. For instance, Qwest, a company that you most likely have never heard of, is just now finishing a backbone across the U.S. that will have roughly 20 times the bandwidth (or capacity) of AT&T, MCI, Sprint and WorldCom combined. Similarly, Motorola has just launched an unprecedented private network of 66 low-altitude satellites for data communications.

These are just the beginnings. These massive build-ups, together with the "packet switching" technology that made the Internet possible — and that allows many communications to share one data line — will give us ample capacity to fill our entire existences with computer messages.

The main barrier is the so-called "last mile" problem. This involves getting the data over the relatively short distance from the local switching station, over the standard copper telephone wires, and to you, the user.

You likely will not be surprised to find that Microsoft expects to do this for you as well. At least, a consortium proposing a new communications technology exists, consisting of none other than Microsoft, Intel, and whatever remains of the Bell companies after they finish devouring each other. This group has devised a new method of data transmission called variously ADSL, DSL, or G-Lite (and probably many other official names).

DSL (or ADSL, or G-Lite) works over existing phone lines, and promises to deliver data at something between 340Kb and 1,500Kb per second, as opposed to the 56.6Kb possible with a new modem. This technology definitely works, and it even has appeared in a few select markets.

You can find a wide variety of other contenders squaring off against the "Microsoft-Intel-Bell" group. (Incidentally, that's one name you definitely can say has a "ring" to it.) (*Ouch!* — Ed.) Primary among these competitors is AT&T, which just bought cable-TV giant TCI, and which is working furiously to convert their entire cable network to digital signals. This ultimately will give AT&T access to about 40 percent of U.S. households, via the technology it is backing, the cable modem.

The cable modem promises an unlimited open line to the Internet, just as the cable box on the TV provides open

access to cable TV. (This may seem unusually dull, but we should point out that you do not need to dial the cable provider every time you turn on your television—and that the Internet just is not the same yet.)

Cable modems look really promising, with the only unknown being actual transmission speeds once the lines get heavy use. Apparently, heavy Internet traffic will do little, if anything, to slow down ADSL, but cable modems can be expected to suffer from slower performance as the lines get busier. At least, that's the story for today.

Other, even more unusual technologies are being announced every few months, or even weeks, and upgrades to both cable modems and ADSL seem likely. At least, both sides have sent out press releases promising still-better technology. As anybody who has dealt with the industry knows, with software, an announcement of a product as practically the same as having the actual product.

This battle should be quite interesting to watch. It seems entirely unclear which of today's big competitors, if any — in the name of connectivity — finally will claim the right to vacuum all the spare change out of our pockets.

About Windows 98

If you are now running Windows 95, you may well ask if you need the upgrade. The answer is a definitive "yes." While Windows 95 does most things that Windows 98 does, remember that its newer sibling reflects three more years of development. Also, and as importantly, Windows 98 reflects three more years of updates, patches, and plain bug fixes.

In addition, Windows 98 adds a highly useful feature, the 32-bit file allocation table (or "FAT 32," as the software industry has so charmingly called it). This not only works better and faster than the old 16-bit file table (or FAT 16, as you might expect), but it actually gives you back disk space. Expect the new allocation system to give you back some 30 percent or 40 percent of hard drive space that you have lost due inefficiencies in the old system.

Beside all this, Windows now can run all sorts of disk maintenance activities efficiently at night, when you are not (or at least should not be) working. Under Windows 95, the scheduler for these activities never seemed to work quite right, at least for your reviewer. Windows 98 has made vast improvements in running computer maintenance without your active assistance.

Now, you can simply leave the PC alone and it will do the cleanup while you rest. It will defragment (or clean up) the hard drive and test for, and repair, any defects in the surface. Microsoft's new task scheduler also runs software from other manufacturers, like Norton's anti-virus sweep. Windows 98 even does a good job switching off the PC's monitor if the monitor is new enough. In short, you can finish your work, walk away, and never need to turn off your PC if you so choose. (People still argue about the merits of "powering down," but it seems to work just fine to leave the PC on to do the dirty work at night. As long as

the monitor goes off, the PC does not draw much power, either.)

A major Windows 98 warning

You need only exercise one precaution before installing Windows 98, but this is an important one. Namely, **if you have any anti-virus software running, you must completely disable it, if not uninstall it, before starting to set up Windows 98.**

If you do not completely disable the anti-virus software, it may well "wake up" as you install Windows 98 and then block the rest of the installation. This happened on one of your reviewer's machines, and it was not pretty. Microsoft could not offer any good solution to this problem, nor even a reasonable "work-around." Ultimately, fixing the resulting mess required eradicating the Windows registry. The registry is an enormous, unfathomable area that keeps track of all your hardware and software so that Windows can find them. Its destruction, then, meant reinstalling every piece of hardware and software on the PC. Not fun.

Now the good news

Aside from the one installation problem with anti-virus software that Microsoft should have warned about and did not, Windows 98 has behaved quite well. It has added several useful features to its Explorer file manager — or at least got the old ones to work correctly — and seems to operate a little more smoothly than Windows 95. It has more flexibility, and lets you have more control over what appears on the desktop (which still looks like the background of the screen to me).

Windows 98 gives you more and better information about your system, and does a better job than Windows 95 in resolving conflicts in the computer's hardware. (These can happen, for instance, when two or more added devices — like scanners, fancy sound cards, modems, digital cameras, etc. — demand to use the same "IRQ" or address space in memory.) In fact, Windows 98 sailed past a problem that continuously eluded Windows 95, involving the modem and sound card that came installed with my PC (no brand given to protect the innocent from legal action). Oddly enough, Windows 98 gave me a message saying that I would need to fix the conflict "manually," but then took care of it anyhow.

Windows 98 also comes with a nice surprise added to it, namely, what appears to be the entire Windows 98 Resource Kit. In book form, this runs about of 1700 pages, and officially is priced at $70. It includes everything you ever wanted to know about Windows 98, and more, and is loaded with extra little utilities and other add-ons that may be just what you want.

Windows: still sticking in a few places

Unfortunately, this new Windows has not entirely eliminated problems inherent in its predecessor. Windows still

relies on three definitely restricted memory areas (or heaps) called respectively, "User," "System," and "GDI." These areas remain the same size, no matter how much memory you add to your machine. As you run more programs, these areas get more taxed.

Most unfortunately, many programs seem to leave "garbage" in these areas after they close. This means that the memory available to use in these areas slowly gets depleted as Windows runs. When memory gets too low, Windows stops running. The only way to replenish these areas is to restart Windows.

Whether Windows 2000 resolves these problems remains to be seen. This is an open request to Microsoft, then. We all understand that Windows is so complicated that no group of 10 people can understand it all. However, we honestly believe that you can solve the problem of taking out programs' garbage — if you set your collective minds to it. Show us that there indeed is a Santa Claus, and put an end to this problem. Thank you.

Help with — but not a solution to — the memory problem

Windows at least includes a nice little utility in its "system tools" called the resource meter, which doesn't solve the memory problem, but can warn you of upcoming trouble. You can set this to turn itself on at start-up time, and then it will give you ample advance warning about when the system is starting to run low.

You need to do this in several steps, so take a few deep breaths and then try to follow us on this expedition. First, you go to "Settings" in the "Start" menu, and choose "Task Bar and Start Menu." You then choose the "Start Menu Programs" tab, and click the "Advanced" option button (although one of the other choices probably would work also). You will then see a display of all the programs listed in the "Start" menu. So far, this is not too bad, right?

Now you will need to find the resource meter's icon — it's buried well down, beneath two submenus. Click on "Programs," then go to "Accessories." Once there, go down another level to "System Tools." The icon for the resource meter should be there, unless you somehow missed installing this when you set up Windows 98. If the icon is indeed there, then you can drag it to the group called "Startup."

If the resource meter icon is not there, you may need to rerun the installation program for Windows 98, and specifically request that this be added. This may seem like a nuisance — and to an extent it is. The new Windows, though, does not insist on reinstalling many parts of itself just to insert a feature or two, and this makes adding things you omitted relatively painless.

Once you have the resource meter, it gives you a quick visual reading on the state of the three critical "heaps." The meter changes from all green when everything is fine, to yellow when Windows is getting fatigued — and then to

red when "resources" are dangerously low. (This means it's definitely time to restart.) Even without the meter running, Windows will send a message to you when it is terribly low. By then, though, it is sometimes too late to save your work from the impending crash.

More about the resource meter and the "trays"

The resource meter sits in a special area of the screen called "the tray." This actually should be called the "right tray," since you now have a left tray (which doubtless has

utility called Quickres. This is another nice feature that may or may not come installed, but it is definitely there on the Windows 98 CD-ROM, waiting for you to find it. Quickres lets you change the resolution and number of colors displayed on your monitor, on the fly, without needing to restart Windows. (This control is good to have if, for instance, you want to work with nearly infinite colors in a graphics program, but also at times need to use older programs that cannot exceed 256 colors.) Without Quickres, any change in screen resolution or in the num-

some other official name) that includes programs you can run immediately. The figure shows you the "task bar" gracing the bottom of the screen on one PC (we'll let you guess whose) with its tray areas.

A look at the task bar illustrates the many things Windows 98 can do at once. Most of the items in the right tray are running, or dormant, in the background. At the left edge of this tray, we find Norton's (as in Norton Anti-Virus) and Microsoft's task schedulers. (Norton's scheduler could probably go away, but it ain't bothering anything, so I'm not bothering it). After these two, we have the audio controls, Norton Crash Guard (which often resuscitates programs just as they are about to fail), the speaker volume control, and our new friend, the resource meter.

Following all these, we have another neat Windows

ber of colors displayed requires you to restart Windows, so this is a fine addition to consider.

To the right of this, we have a nice freeware utility called "KillTimer," which AOL users will love. It works only with AOL, and disrupts some of its most obnoxious behaviors. This utility dispatches all those stupid AOL messages asking if you are done yet, and also prevents AOL from logging you off involuntarily. (You can find this with many other free or low-cost software goodies on a Web site called "No Nags." I get to this site at this address: www.noguska.net/nonags/index.html.

However, No Nags has — as of the time of writing this article — a lot of local transmission points, so you may want to check its main page to make sure you are accessing it at its point nearest to you. Using a closer location tends to speed download times, which you will find high-

ly desirable once you see all the free software — tested and evaluated — stockpiled at this site.

We wind up at the right side of this tray with the fax software controller, and another nice utility called Quick View Plus that lets you get a fast look into almost file without opening its accompanying application. Quick View Plus is shareware, meaning that you are supposed to pay a small sum for it if you use it and like it. Your reviewer finds it well worth the modest outlay required.

The left tray has more pre-installed items than the one we just discussed. That is, these are present when you start Windows 98 the first time, or shortly thereafter, and you need to decide whether they stay or go. From the left of this tray, we have a nice button for starting our old friend AOL. (To all you cynics out there, I am sorry to say that AOL has been working more reliably than several other services with more cachet that your reviewer has tried and dropped.) Following this, we have Launch Outlook (the all-in-one scheduler/calendar/e-mail reader program), and "display the desktop." Completing this left tray, we have the very useful "start Windows Explorer," and a not-so-useful program that's supposed to clean out memory, but doesn't help much with the resource problem (but anyhow, that one was free).

The overall view of Windows 98

In short, we strongly recommend Windows 98, but don't expect that all the pitfalls in previous versions have been resolved. Go out and get it — it's that simple. It just works better.

Note that we have not tested this as a "server" program, and only with individual PCs, so we cannot comment on its ability to handle network-administration tasks.

Getting more out of Windows 98 on your PC

The absolute number-one reason that you will find Windows 98 running slowly is too little PC memory. You really need to have 64MB of

RAM, or more, to do true "multitasking." (By the way, we should note that 64MB is exactly 24MB more than the entire capacity of the hard drive on my first PC about 10 years ago. That hard drive cost about $800 at the time, and the PC was a real killer machine, with 1 whole MB of memory.) Anyhow, now RAM is cheap, sometimes less than $1 per MB, so it pays to upgrade.

If your PC cannot accommodate more than 64MB of memory, perhaps it's time to upgrade the whole machine. Most older PCs have a market value of about $0, so perhaps you can donate the machine, or find an 8-year-old to take it. (Your author's oldest PC now resides with his 8-year-old, and it — not the 8-year-old — is happily running Windows 95, maxed out with a 486-upgrade processor and 8 whole MB of RAM.)

Another upgrade that may help an older machine is a new hard drive. With extended IDE drives in the 6GB to 8GB range going for about $150 at the time of this writing, it also pays to upgrade. We cannot suggest much use for the old drive except as a paperweight, or for giving to the 8-year-old. Do not leave the old disk hooked up for sentimental reasons. Just having an aged and sluggish hard drive on the system tends to slow your entire PC considerably.

Incidentally, there is some fine and inexpensive software out there that will help you over the considerable hurdle of switching hard drives. Just check your local PC superstore for more details.

Office 97 update

Office 97 has now had its second "service release," or set of patches and bug fixes. These patches almost always fix things that could affect you at the worst possible time. If you have not done so already, go to the Microsoft site and find out about getting this service release today. You either can download this release, or get it free via CD-ROM from Microsoft. As this release runs to about 21MB, you may not have much luck downloading it. (Your author

tried three times, with the file transmission failing irreparably at between 11MB and 13MB in each instance.)

Please note that if you did not install service release 1, you will need to do this before you can proceed to service release 2. If you have not made the first upgrade, the CD-ROM is your best solution, as it has both service releases. The first release alone addressed some 600 bugs or problems — although this figure seems worse than it is, because many bugs arise only with specific combinations of hardware and software running. Given the thousands, if not millions, of possible ways in which you can combine PC components and PC programs, maybe needing to fix a few hundred possible problem areas is not so bad. You decide.

By the way, service release 2 still has not cured all the problems that Office 97 can develop. We will have more about this later.

What about Office 97? (Sorry I assumed everybody with Windows has it.) If you do not have this yet, seriously consider getting it now. Microsoft's Web page (www.microsoft.com) has an announcement posted that anybody buying Office 97 from now on will get a free upgrade to Office 2000, once it comes out.

Office 97 mostly adds many good features to its predecessor. It at last allows you to join cells in a spreadsheet or a Word table both vertically and horizontally. (Older versions only allowed horizontal merging.) PowerPoint files are not nearly as enormous as they used to be, since they now have a new format.

Actually, all the file formats are new, as most of you doubtless know. This has caused many headaches in sharing files with people who do not have this new version. Microsoft has added various patches that make sharing across program versions somewhat less burdensome, but the proliferation of file types is a real pain.

Excel now has a real Visual Basic editor in back of it. This is a vast improvement over its old system for

handling the programming of controls and special features that you can add to your spreadsheet — if you have the interest and inclination. Excel actually generates program code in Visual Basic when you "draw" any of its predefined controls on the Excel screen. Now it's much easier to see what you have done, by looking at the code in the editor. It's all very nicely laid out for you. Help for Visual Basic is truly extensive, although some explanations are in something only faintly resembling English.

Excel unfortunately has taken away a good feature while adding other nice ones. In older versions, with little bother, you could add a menu specific to one workbook. Now if you add a special menu, it appears in all your workbooks every time you run Excel. If you want a special menu in one workbook, you have to write code eliminating all the old menus as the workbook opens, then substituting all new menus, and then at closing, restoring all the original menus.

If anybody at Microsoft is listening out there, please bring back the old, simpler system. Many of us miss it.

Excel also has lost some speed in opening for some mysterious reason. Even on a fast Pentium machine with loads of memory, it spends some time calling up an essential module called "funcres.xla." I hope that a fix for this is in the works.

More Windows 98: it practically updates itself for you

Microsoft also has automated updates for Windows 98. You simply get onto the Internet, then select the item from the "Start" menu that says "Update Windows 98." Many of these upgrades give you more system security, since thousands of people are out there trying to punch holes in Windows (there's an unintended metaphor in that, somewhere). You probably will want to make a habit of calling this feature into use every week or two.

While you are there on the Microsoft site, you probably will want to check for patches and upgrades for Office 97. As we mentioned earlier, this too is still a work in progress. Upgrades and patches for Office have appeared on the Microsoft site at least every weeks.

Office 2000 and Windows 2000 loom closer than they seem

Just as we promised at the beginning of this article, we will read the tea leaves, and try to predict what Microsoft will do in the near future.

Yes, indeed, Virginia, new versions of Office and Windows are on the way. You author was even offered a late "beta" (or test) version of Office 2000, but as he has something of a regular life, has declined it for now. I did take a close look at the one entirely new application in Office, called PhotoDraw. Otherwise, comments about the program rely somewhat on Microsoft's Web site, and more importantly, on the many critics who have dissected early versions of this product.

An Office 2000 preview

Most indications are that this new Office will be even bigger, with still more features than the current version. As mentioned just above, its major change will be the inclusion of a new PhotoDraw application. This is one piece that has been conspicuously absent from the Office Suite. We will discuss this new application right after this general overview of the new Office.

One new feature promised in connection with Office 2000 is "use-sensitive menus." That is, items that you do not use will either move down the menu, or disappear entirely after time. The descriptions that your reviewer has seen do not make it clear if items actually will vanish — and if so, if we can turn this innovation off and leave it that way.

I can see moving rarely-used items down the menu, but disapprove heartily of their vanishing. Just because you do not use a feature for

a while does not mean you never will use it. Learning exists as a possibility in this world, but removing choices entirely from the menu seems to imply that it does not.

You may also be able to load features into Office 2000 as you need them, which would be fine if you could somehow know what they did for you, and when. I believe that Microsoft has to do more to make its products understandable if this is the direction in which they are going. For instance, I cannot find any way anywhere to get a printed listing of all the macro keys assigned in Word, and what they do. (Perhaps some clever reader knows this; I'm sure this is the kind of tip we all would like to have.)

One piece of good news is that Microsoft promises we will not have yet another set of "backward-incompatible" file formats, as we did with Office 97. Thankfully somebody at the software giant realized that not everybody upgrades, and that the three file formats now required for all Office users (of various vintages) are enough for anybody.

Many other features promised are small, but useful. All the applications will show you what a font looks like — and not just its name — when you look through the pull-down font menu. The figure following gives you an idea of how that would work, showing the menu from another piece of software that already knows how to do this.

Word also promises to add the ability to wrap text around the table. In versions to date, tables always force text above and below, even if there's ample room on the sides. This new feature should help documents look more professional.

PowerPoint is expected to introduce a three-paned window, with the slide outline to one side, and a space for adding notes on the bottom. This seems like a basically well-intended idea, but we probably will all need to go out and get 21" monitors to see all the details in all the panes.

Throughout the suite, toolbars should become easier to customize. Now you need to go through several steps to add a new button (performing some function that you want to access quickly) to the toolbar. Office 2000 promises to make this process simpler. In one step, it will show all the buttons you can choose, and allow you simply to check the ones you want and uncheck the ones that you do not.

The new PhotoDraw 2000

Microsoft here has made a brave entry, creating a single program that

can handle both photographs and drawings, applying all sorts of touch-up magic and special effects to either. It may not seem like a huge accomplishment to handle both photographs and drawings in a single program, but these have special meanings — and limitations — in the world of computers.

We will step back for a few moments here, and review the differences between "bitmaps" and "vector-based images" on the computer. A few years ago, the distinction seemed quite simple. Bitmaps were collections of dots. As you magnified a bitmapped picture, the rough edges in the dots became apparent. The jagged, square-looking image of a magnified bitmap came to stand for all things generated by a computer — or at least all bad things — for some time.

Vector-based pictures are based on lines, polygons and other shapes, and fill patterns. Early vector-based work tended to look fairly primitive in its own way, as the shapes you could use were limited, and special effects like shading, textures, and special lighting (such as shadows and highlights) usually were not even possible.

The best thing about vector-based illustrations is that their quality does not degrade as they expand. A smooth line remains smooth at any magnification, and the higher the resolution of your printer, the better the results tend to look. For instance, the True Type fonts provided by Windows (and the equivalent fonts provided by the Macintosh) are based on vectors. (You may not think of typefaces as artwork, but to your computer that is precisely what they are.) As you use printers with higher resolution, these fonts look better and better. Coming from a professional-quality machine, they will be indistinguishable from the text in a finely produced book. This advantage holds for all vector-based illustrations.

The artistic distinctions blur

Artistic types, and practical working illustrators, of course felt dissatisfied with the limitations in both basic types of image. Soon enough, the software development community found some ingenious ways to expand the capabilities of both bitmaps and vectors.

Corel Draw was the first PC-based program (gaining wide adherence) that bent the boundaries, giving vector illustrations more of the good features of bitmaps, and vice versa. For instance, even early versions of Corel Draw had special methods of filling vector-based "objects" with realistic looking textures. These textures included such "looks" as different types of stone, paper, fabric, and purely fantastic objects like "cosmic noise." The better the printer, the more realistic (and detailed) these textures look. (We should note that Corel Draw is just being used as an example here, because it has the largest share of sales of any high-end illustration program. You can find many other remarkable graphics programs, some of which even do things that Corel does not.)

Gradually, graphics programs like Corel added many other features. For instance, some give you the ability to change flat objects into three-dimensional ones with many different types of shading and perspective. Some programs even allow you to generate a shape, specify how it becomes three-dimensional, rotate it on all three axes, change the perspective, and so on. You also can fill vector-based objects with bitmapped images in all sorts of ways. In addition, rather than just drawing simple lines, you can create effects that look

like various brushes, pencils, pastels, and so on.

If you would like to see how sophisticated vector-based artwork has become, just go down to your local computer superstore, and look at Corel Draw 8's carton. The image you see there, which looks remarkably like a photograph of a famous film star of the 1930s and 1940s, is in fact an entirely vector-based drawing. (The star in question is Hedy Lamarr, who sued Corel for using her likeness without compensation to sell their program.)

Getting back to bitmaps, options for manipulating these have increased dramatically also. For instance, several programs allow you to "trace" this type of image, turning even very complex photographs into vector-based art that you can push, pull, and tweak in many ways. Most programs let you add special effects to any image. These typically range from the basics (such as touching-up the color balance, brightness, sharpness and contrast) to some really wild ones, such as making the image look like it is embossed on paper or engraved in various metals. (These effects are really convincing, by the way.)

Some programs even have automated procedures for fixing common flaws in photographs, such as the dreaded "red eye" caused by photo flashes. Most can remove the "speckling" or benday dot patterns that appear in newspaper pictures, remove scratches from images, and so on. In short, there's a whole world of tools out there, many of which you will never use unless you are a professional artist.

About Microsoft's PhotoDraw

After that lengthy introduction (perhaps more than you ever wanted

to know about illustration), let's go on to the new Microsoft program. As you now may realize, Microsoft is treading into highly competitive terrain here. They have priced their new product (assuming you buy it alone, without the rest of Office) about in the middle, at $99. At the top end, you have programs like Corel Draw (about $250 for an upgrade from an earlier version or competitive product), Adobe Photoshop (about $200 for an upgrade version), and other more specialized programs that can range over $1,000.

At the low end, you have several surprisingly powerful contenders, including a remarkable program selling for about $40, called Micrografx Windows Draw 6. This program comes, unsurprisingly, from a company named Micrografx, which has been making fine and reasonably priced graphics software in relative obscurity for years.

You likely will not need the full range of effects that a program such as Corel Draw can produce — although it is fun to play with, especially for a former technical illustrator like your reviewer. Therefore, the more pertinent comparison would be between Microsoft's PhotoDraw and a lower priced competitor, such as Micrografx's Windows Draw 6.

The Micrografx product, Windows Draw, actually consists of three modules, one for drawing (Windows Draw), one for editing photographs and other bitmaps (PhotoMagic), and one for editing 3-D objects. Therefore, it lacks the "all in one" feeling that Microsoft's PhotoDraw has. And, as the figure shows, you can do many "cool things" with PhotoDraw.

However, when we compare these programs feature-for-feature, Micrografx most often has the practical advantage. For instance, the Micrografx product (PhotoMagic) wins easily at editing and touching up photographs or screen-captured images. (Neither of these programs captures images from the screen; that task requires yet another piece of software, for instance, HiJaak Pro.)

Seven cool things you can do with PhotoDraw

Your reviewer assiduously tried using both programs to touch up a scanned photograph that had been pasted, slightly askew, into a Word document. Microsoft's PhotoDraw mysteriously attached a large area of blank space to the top of the image, and then would not allow this to be removed. Because of the extra area on top, I never could successfully straighten the picture. With the Micrografx product, I could resize the image exactly as I wanted, using its crop tool. Then I could rotate the image, in increments of 0.01 degree, until I had it as well aligned as possible.

Micrografx also offers a superior cloning tool that allows you to pick up a portion of an image and copy it elsewhere. In their product, you have two brushes, one that copies a portion of the image, and another that deposits what you have copied. You can change the size and relative positions of these brushes, as well as the transparency (or opacity) of the image you copy, and how the edges of the copied area blend with the original image.

In fact, the illustration showing the PhotoDraw 2000 logo at the heading of this section quickly was reworked with the Micrografx product. It allowed for the seamless

removal of a large banner in the image reading "30-day free trial version." (All right, so your reviewer is a little on the cheap side.) Trying to do similar surgery on the image with Microsoft's product ended in repeated failures.

Both drawing programs (which handle the vector images) have plenty of sophisticated features, although not all the same ones, and are probably about evenly matched. Both should do a good job of creating original artwork and modifying (vector-based) clip art.

This leads us directly to one final advantage of the Micrografx program. Namely, it comes with excellent collections of clip art and fonts that differ from — and therefore add to — the choices already available with the other applications in Microsoft's Office Suite. PhotoDraw simply uses the clip art that you already have with applications such as PowerPoint.

Overall, then, expect Microsoft's PhotoDraw to add new capabilities to the Office Suite. You can in fact do many new tricks (or "cool things" in Microsoft's terminology) with this program. However, it lacks both features and capabilities for editing photographs and other bit-mapped images, even when compared with a lower-priced competitor. If what you want is a way to add some new touches to your drawings, and a program completely integrated with the rest of Office, this would be a good choice for you. However, you can find more value for the money in other programs, with one strong example being the Micrografx Windows Draw 6 program.

On to Windows 2000

Windows 2000 promises to meld the technologies in its "consumer" operating system (Windows 98) and its "server" operating system (Windows NT) into one integrated — if huge — entity. Microsoft also promises that this new version of its operating system will mostly rely on the core structure or architecture of the NT product, but inherit the best of both Windows.

It will be quite intriguing to see exactly what gets into the final mix. We will wait, but not with bated breath. One thing we know for certain is that Windows 2000 will be delivered late.

Most recent press releases suggest that the product will emerge first in a server version, and then, at some time later, as a desktop (or consumer, or end user) product. The desktop version would be the one most Windows users will want. The server version should be still larger and more complex than the desktop one, with many features beloved by network administrators, concerning security, firewalls, installation on multiple PCs, and so on.

This server version looks like serious overkill when measured against typical daily user tasks — such as writing a letter to aunt Minnie, firing up an expense report, sneaking questionable content off the Internet, or creating a virus that will bring down the global telecom system.

How much of a lag can we expect between the two versions? "Six months" seems to be the modal response. Six months is special computer-talk code for "Your guess is as good as mine," or "We just might have a problem here." We have deciphered this secret code based on observing that the next version of any product always is "two months away."

Whatever the timing of the final versions of Windows 2000, what they contain should prove to be fascinating. Mixtures and inheritances almost always are. This in fact reminds your reviewer of an anecdote that you might find moderately amusing, if your interests include some of the fine arts. The story goes that Isadora Duncan, the noted dancer, approached George Bernard Shaw, the noted playwright and crabby old man, with a innovative

proposition. She told him that they should do all that was needed to have a child together, because it would be a kind of ubermensch (or in politically correct English, superbaby), combining his brains and her body. "No," said Shaw. "Think of what would happen if it got my body and your brains."

Let's hope, then, that Microsoft hits on the right mix of features for each of its key audiences. Windows NT has always been described and promoted as the system of choice for heavy-duty uses. It also has a reputation as relatively crash-proof (at least compared to regular Windows). However, it suffers from a more awkward look and feel, and limited ability to hook up with different types of hardware.

Also, Windows NT has a reputation for being quite hungry for memory. I suppose, though, that Microsoft thinks this latter problem is going away, since even modest Pentium-class machines generally can hold up to 128MB of RAM — and some newer machines can accommodate over 1 gigabyte (1,024MB). That second figure, at least, should be plenty for a couple of generations of operating systems.

Regular Windows (of the Windows 95 and 98 varieties), by contrast, will get by on a paltry 32MB of memory quite nicely. At least it can if you are using no more than three average-size applications at one time. As we discussed earlier, regular Windows also tends to get tired and/or crash in no more than 40 hours (by my estimates) with moderately intensive use. With regular Windows, though, you can run many, many types of hardware, and all of your favorite older programs, going right back to the primitive days of DOS if you want.

Certainly, nobody could find much to fault in regular Windows' appearance — or as the industry likes to have it, its "look and feel." (All right, it's moderately foolish to have "Shut Down" on the "Start" menu, but if that's the worst we have to live with,

we're fine.) Microsoft promises that Windows 2000 will both look nice and behave properly.

More size and more features do a new operating system make

No doubt, still more features will get into the Windows operating system for regular end users as well as for the server crowd (network administrators, ISP operators, and related types). A few months ago, we saw some mentions of voice recognition becoming part of the operating system. This is interesting, and can work fairly well, but requires plenty of RAM to work smoothly (probably at least 128MB, if current voice recognition offerings give any hint). Also, your author can tell you from personal experience that the computer still does a bad job recognizing you if you have a cold or the flu. Finally, if you manage to get pneumonia, you might as well hang up the voice recognition microphone until the next season.

Over the last month or two, though, mentions of voice recognition in the upcoming release of Windows have diminished. Maybe this is fading in importance as Microsoft's program developers realize what a daunting task they have in front of them, in trying to stitch together two systems that are not yet truly compatible. Perhaps Microsoft was never that serious about voice recognition in the next iteration of Windows, in any event. Maybe they just hoped to steal a little thunder from Corel's Word Perfect Suite, which comes with the highly competent Dragon System's "Naturally Speaking" as a standard feature.

Don't be misled, though — somewhere out there, visionaries are busily creating a world in which we will be urged to issue voice commands not just to computers, but to all sorts of other objects. In the future, we can expect to have everything listening to us, including cars, appliances, and even clothing. (Yes, I did see an apparently serious mention in print

by somebody — presumably not on a visit from another planet — of that last possibility. Still, I remain somewhat mystified about what type of conversation I am supposed to have with my boxer shorts.)

In any event, it looks like computer manufacturing economies are going to make sure we all have at least one incredibly powerful machine in the near future. Intel is predicting that by mid-2000 (as in six months before 2001), the average PC — someplace in the $1,000 to $4,000 range — should be running a Pentium III in the 600MHz to 733MHz speed range. (The Pentium II is about ready to join other old processors in the PC museum. The scheduled debut for the III is March 17.) Even "value" PCs—those selling for less than $1,000 — in this scenario could have Intel's Celeron Pentium, running at 500 or more MHz.

As of February 9, a company named Free PC emerged, with the promise of delivering PCs costing nothing for those willing to "share information about themselves" and promising to view a certain amount of "advertising and communications" on the Internet. This sounds revolting, but it too should pass. If prices drop any more quickly than they have, we might expect PCs to be given away as promotions in boxes of breakfast cereal.

Whatever the upcoming scenario, more computing power seems to ensure that Windows will remain with us, at least for the near future.

Your reviewer recalls, way back in the days of the 386 (about 1992), that some software developer at Microsoft said speed was not an issue, since the 586 processor would handle Windows easily. In those ancient times, I foolishly thought we wouldn't see anything like this available and affordable for at least 10 to 15 years. Now, my-12 year-old is complaining that the 586 PC, handed down to him two years ago, is too "pokey." And so, the inevitable trail of hardware and software upgrades continues. It may not be much, but at least it gives your reviewer something new to write about at any time.

Again, all questions and positive comments are welcome; you can reach the reviewer at this e-mail address: SMStruhl@aol.com. Complaints should be sent directly to the magazine (although we seem to have forgotten that address), preferably by barge, and in invisible ink. [4]

Effectiveness

pay more attention to them. And I would say, 'Well, how do we know that?' " says Lynch.

"We wanted to answer client questions and give ourselves more confidence in the way we plan our television buys. There were a lot of gut feelings and myths in this market-place about what was right and what was wrong and it seemed very few people had ever evaluated them. Today's television world is so different than what it was 10 years ago. You have so many different choices."

The study used a sample of men and women aged 25-50. Respondents completed a demographic questionnaire and then watched one of two videos on a standard TV. Each tape contained an expensive and an inexpensive program and the same group of commercials. Tape 1 contained Program 1, a high-cost show, followed by six commercials and Program 2, a low-cost show, followed by six more commercials. Tape 2 contained Program 3, a different low-cost show, followed by the same six commercials and then Program 4, a different high-cost show, followed again by the same six commercials as those at the end of Tape 1. After viewing the tape, respondents completed a questionnaire on their interest in and attentiveness to the programs they had just watched.

Lynch was initially concerned about the small samples. "Capita said 10 to 12 was fine and I said, 'I'd be more comfortable with a few more.' But actually when we evaluated eight or nine to see how stable the results are, they were fine at 10 and 12," she says.

"The more specific you are about the questions you're asking, the better results you're going to get, even more so with this kind of technology because you're looking at small samples and you need to be focused on your recruitment criteria, any pre- and post- questions that you ask, and the actual segments of the programs and the ads that you're showing them."

Impact lasted

The research found that the commercials after the higher EI-scoring programs earned higher EI scores. "It was surprising how much more effective the ads were in this particular environment. That's not going to be the case for all commercials but for the ones we tested it was," Lynch says.

And higher cost didn't necessarily lead to higher engagement. Program 2 (a low-cost show) and Program 4 (a high-cost show) earned the highest EI scores. "We could distinguish a difference between the programs and it wasn't always related to the marketplace's traditional valuation [based on the cost of ad time]. There were significant differences in attention levels and they did impact attention to the ads. The patterns we saw applied to just about every test we did. If there was a difference it carried throughout the break," Lynch says.

Respondents' preconceived feelings about a show affected their subjective ratings of it but didn't carry over to the show's EI. The program with the highest CPP as well as the highest Nielsen ratings earned the highest subjective scores and EI measurements. In contrast, one of the low-cost/low-rated programs earned high EI scores from respondents who hadn't seen the show before. The two shows earning lower EI scores kept loyal viewers engaged but didn't hold the attention of casual viewers.

"The study has made us feel a lot more confident about some of the changes in clients' television schedules that we've been recommending. We've also had lots of ideas for new things we can test. We feel strongly about the importance of putting the ads in the right programs," Lynch says.

More projects in mind

Lynch says she has a number of projects in mind based on client questions. If the right application comes along, she'll use brainwave analysis again. "It was the perfect methodology for what we wanted to test. It's an innovative technique. We won't use it for everything but it's another in our array of tools.

"I think we feel more comfortable overall with our understanding about how TV advertising works. There are a million things you can learn and you just need to keep digging. It's not acceptable now for me to say 'I don't know.' I've got to try and get some of the answers." [Q]

ROI

looked at a variation of recall-based telephone tracking surveys. To try to avoid the problems of recall and get closer to recognition, the interviewer reads a description of the ad or commercial to the respondent. Results from this approach published by Eric DuPlessis[4] convinced them this was only a halfway solution. The number that qualified as having seen the ads increased, but only half as much as they do in a true recognition test.

Another consideration was the variety of advertising they wanted to test, and that got back to the basic objectives of the study. They wanted to find out where the firm stood in terms of all the advertising about health plans being conducted in the market during that period. And, the campaign was a brand-building effort so they wanted to see if any of it was having an effect on the image of health plans among the population as a whole.

The advertising to be evaluated included seven print ads, six TV commercials and two radio commercials. Only about half were for BlueCross BlueShield of Minnesota. The rest were for competitors.

Methodology

How do you get a recognition-based test of media as dissimilar as that? One way is to approach people at random in malls and invite them into an interviewing facility where all the ads are shown and all the commercials are played. That is a perfectly valid approach, one that BRC has used thousands of times. But one of the requirements here was to keep the cost down. So we wanted to avoid those relatively expensive personal interviews.

How? We started by calling a random cross section of households throughout their marketing area. The objective was to see if the advertising was increasing people's awareness of the firm and making them think more favorably of it. So the first two things we asked were how familiar they

were with the health care plans in the area, and which were best in a number of attributes. Then we played a radio commercial to them over the phone. The name of the advertiser had been bleeped out, so in addition to asking if they recognized it, we could find out if it communicated the most important piece of information any advertisement has to get across. We asked if they remembered who it was for.

The phone interview was kept short and stripped to the essentials for good reason. At the end we said we would like to show them some pictures and ask questions that would be in a questionnaire we would mail to them; 650 said they would fill it out and return it. After a single follow-up, 62 percent did. That gave us 405 respondents who completed both the telephone and the mail surveys. This is the sample that the remainder of the

Figure 2

results are based on. Each page of the mail questionnaire contained BRC's standard battery of diagnostic questions. Pages for the print advertising included a copy of the ad with the name blocked out (Fig. 1, p. 23).

To see if they recognize the TV commercials we show a photo board and script (Fig. 2). Again, all references to the advertiser are blocked out, and the same set of diagnostics are included.

BRC has been testing the recognition of commercials using both personal interviews, where people see the actual commercial on a monitor, and this type of mail questionnaire for more than 20 years. We have scores of directly comparable parallel tests that show there is a correlation of .88 between the percent that recognize commercials in these mail surveys and the percent that recognize them when they see the actual commercial. That means the mail surveys give you 77 percent, or most of what you get from personal interviews.

But the cost of doing it this way is just about half of what it costs to do it with shopping center intercepts and personal interviews. So you are trading-off a known and relatively modest decrease in accuracy for a sub-

Figure 3
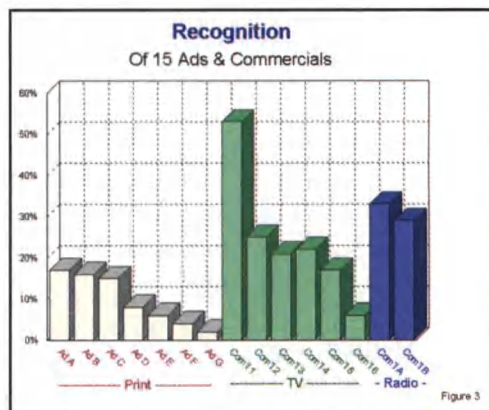
stantial decrease in cost. With budgets for print advertising often being smaller than TV, this can make recognition-based tracking of print feasible for a lot more print campaigns. Further, this is a service targeted to

Figure 4

Figure 5

Campaign Reach by Type of Media

(Total Recognized any TV - 41%, Total Recognized any Print - 23%, Total Recognized any Radio - 45%)

Figure 6

Advertising Response Model
TV Commercial 5

Better Than Average Performance
Average Performance
Below Average Performance

virtually everybody, so this approach also helps overcome the upscale skew inherent in mall intercept interviewing. What did we find in this case?

Results

Figure 3 shows the percent that recognized each of the 15 ads and commercials in the test. It varied widely, from a high of 53 percent for one TV commercial to a low of 2 percent for one of the print ads. The two radio commercials came in second and third.

Figure 3 shows why those favoring print might be reluctant to get into a head-to-head comparison between media. Usually you will find fewer people noticing ads. But you don't usually spend as much on your print campaign, and that has to be factored into a study like this. Figure 4 shows what was spent to run each of the ads and commercials in this study.

Expenditures that covered the year before the test varied widely. But the variations don't match the differences in recognition — not one bit! The odds that we are going to turn up meaningful differences in advertising efficiency have just increased.

The recognition scores also show something else: the percent of the public being reached by each medium, and by each combination of media. The pie chart in Figure 5 shows print reached a total of 23 percent. TV reached 41 percent. That was a relatively small difference, considering the average expenditure for airing the TV commercials was more than double the amount spent to run

the average ad.

Why were people more likely to notice some of these ads or commercials and ignore others? The battery of diagnostic questions in Figures 1 and 2 produces the advertising response model, or ARM, shown in Figure 6, and that tells you why. This ARM is for the commercial shown in Figure 2.

This model was described earlier in a 1996 ARF talk[5], so we won't go into detail about it here. It is enough to note the white areas. They show people noticed this commercial because its warmth and appeal generated a greater than average amount of empathy. Further, the high level of relevance people found in the message also contributed to the greater than average score for purchasing inter-
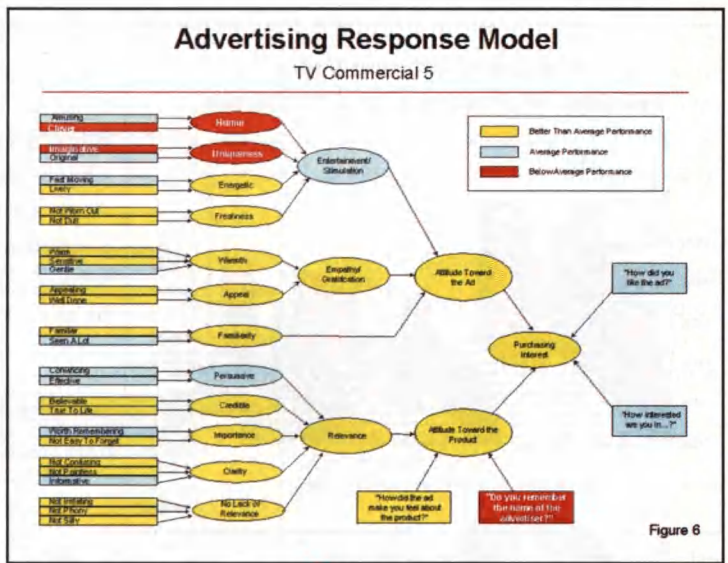
Significant Attitude Shifts
Associated with Recognizing Ads & Commercials

Figure 7
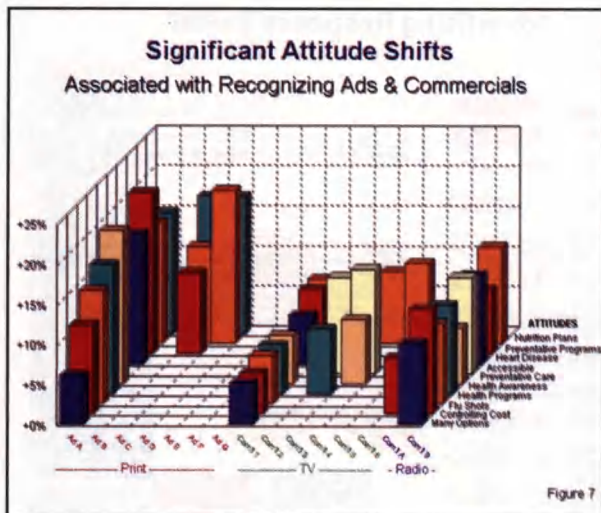
est. That's unusual. Today most commercials capture attention through their entertainment value.

Two of the below-average performance scores were for a lack of humor. The third gives reason for concern. The number of recognizers who knew who it was for was below average. A commercial can't help you if people don't realize it is about your product or service. This wasn't a fatal flaw because all of the advertising it was competing against was also below average in getting the name across. And although the number that knew who it was for was below average, the number was still substantial: 37 percent.

Capturing attention and getting the name across are two essentials that are still overlooked all too frequently in advertising research. If you don't capture attention and get the name across, the magic of advertising doesn't even have a chance to start working. But now that we have measured both, we are ready for the next key question.

Did these ads and commercials have any effect on the people they did reach? We measure that with attitude shifts.

Named Advertiser As The Best
Average for 10 Attributes - By Types of Media Recognized

Figure 8
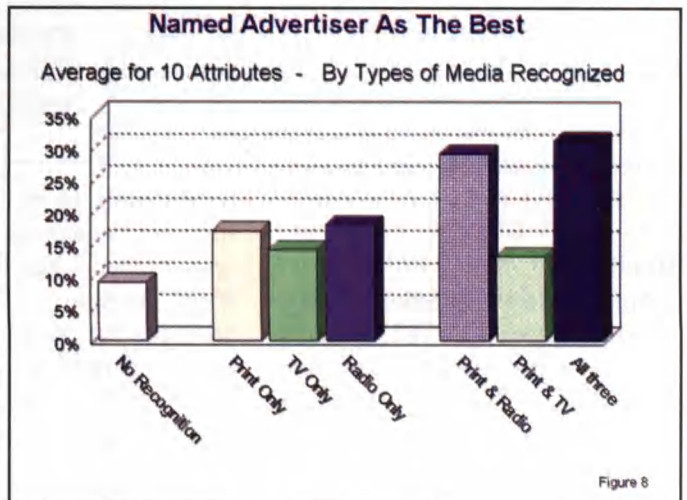
We asked which health care plan they felt was best on 10 different attributes. We asked that in the first part of the telephone interview so the advertising we showed them later couldn't affect their answers. Then we looked to see if those who recognized an ad were more likely to name the advertiser than those who didn't see the ad. The results are shown in Figure 7.

If the percent naming the advertisers was significantly higher among those who noticed the advertising, that generated one of the bars on this chart. You'll find that seeing some ads and commercials is associated with significant lifts on almost all attributes. Others only had shifts on a few attributes, and some showed no significant effects. You see some differences between the media. Earlier we had seen that print ads tended to be noticed by a smaller segment of the population. Here we see those who noticed print ads tended to show the biggest improvements in attitudes. That was true for some, but not all of the ads.

Cost Per Person
Reached and Affected

PRINT ADS	
Ad A	
Ad C	
Ad D	
Ad F	
Ad E	
Ad G	
Ad B	*
TV COMMERCIALS	
Com'l 1	
Com'l 4	
Com'l 3	
Com'l 5	
Com'l 2	*
Com'l 6	
RADIO COMMERCIALS	
Com'l A	
Com'l B	

$0.00 $0.50 $1.00 $1.50 $2.00

* (Over $2.00)

Figure 9

Synergy

This type of information can be used to answer many key questions about the performance of advertising campaigns. But this is a session where we are comparing media, so Figure 8 shows how this type of tracking data can be used to compare media and see if there is any synergy to be gained from using a combination of media.

Starting at the left, the white bar shows when we averaged the scores for all the attributes, we found that among those who didn't recognize any of the advertising, 9 percent named the advertiser as best. The next three show the results for those that recognized advertising from only one of the three media. It shows that in this case print was better than TV and about the same as radio, but the differences were relatively small. The last three bars show larger increases are associated with exposure to several media. Those reached by print and radio show the two work better in concert than separately. Those reached by print and TV show no such synergy.

ROI

To get to our final measures of return on investment we combine all of this into a measure of overall impact for each ad and commercial. We take the percent that recognized

an ad or commercial and multiply it by the average shift among recognizers — the increase in the percent saying the advertiser is best. For the population as a whole, that gives us the lift that was related to noticing that ad or commercial. In short, the percent reached and affected. We projected that to the population, and divided the total amount spent to run the ad or commercial by the number reached and affected. That produced Figure 9 showing the cost per person reached and affected by each of those ads and commercials.

Now we have some results that are clear-cut and easy to read. Some of these ads and commercials are reaching and affecting people at a very low cost per person. Others are off the chart. The mathematically sophisticated may recognize this as an asymptotic function. As the number of people reached and affected by an ad or commercial approaches zero the cost per person approaches infinity. Hence the off-the-chart scores.

These final results are specific to this type of product, in one market, where one specific set of ads and commercials had been running prior to the test. Our intent is to show this type of study can be done for any product in any market. We don't mean to imply the differences we found among media in this test are typical. But with those important

qualifications out of the way, let's look at what we found. Print ads were certainly competitive with commercials. Each medium had at least one ad or commercial that was unusually cost efficient.

Both print and TV had ads and commercials that were so inefficient that they were off the scale. We didn't have enough radio commercials to show how much variation we might find in that medium.

The most important thing this study

showed was there are enormous differences in the cost per person reached and affected by ads and commercials. A company that is running those efficient ads and commercials is getting a lot more for their advertising dollars. These differences are related to the creative side of the advertising. It is not related to the medium. The best of the print ads reached and affected people at a lower cost than the worst of the TV commercials. And the best of the TV commercials were more efficient than the worst of the print ads.

Did we meet our objectives? We wanted to get a fair comparison among media, so we used recognition to see how many actually noticed each ad and commercial. Recognition isn't anything new in testing print advertising. Daniel Starch started using it in the 1920s. Starch tests and similar ad readership studies are still being done. But there is a key difference: They check recognition of ads among people who have read a specific issue of a magazine. That can certainly be useful, but it doesn't give you a basis for comparing ads and commercials. We met that need by doing recognition-based tracking among a cross section of the entire market. We didn't incur the higher cost of using personal interviews to show things to people and control the order in which they are exposed. We did it all with a combination phone and mail survey.

Valid comparison

This, then, is what we worked out as an answer to that opening question. We feel it shows you can make valid comparisons between ads and commercials, and when you do, you can find situations like this where advertising in print can prove every bit as effective as advertising on TV. [Q]

[1]Documentation of these points and additional references are found in several sources: Schaefer, Wolfgang: "Recognition Reconsidered," *Marketing and Research Today*, ESOMAR, May 1995; Singh/Rothschild/Churchill: "Recognition vs. Recall as Measures of TV Commercial Forgetting," *Journal of Marketing Research*, 2/88; Krugman, Herbert E., "Low Recall and High Recognition of Advertising," *Journal of Advertising Research*, Feb/Mar 1986: BRC Technical Memo # 58, BRC, 1983.
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Research Industry News

$1,060,419, or diluted earnings per share of $.08, on revenues of $19,695,071 as compared to net income of $760,040, or diluted earnings per share of $.07, on revenues of $16,991,111 for the corresponding six-month period of Fiscal 1998. This represents a 40 percent growth in net income and a 16 percent growth in revenues over the same six-month period of the prior year.

Publications Resource Group, Inc., North Adams, Mass., has received $500,000 in an initial round of venture capital funding from Berkshires Capital Investors (BCI) to fund the future growth of the company. PRG is a retailer of business information, with more than 3,000 market research reports and industry newsletters available at www.prgguide.com and through the PRG Guide catalog. The funding will be used to add additional publishers to the 180 which now make up the PRG library, as well as enhance PRG's marketing efforts.

Delaware Research Co., Wilmington, Del., has a new e-mail address (DeSearch@nettaxi.com) and a new Web address (www.concentric.net/~scraps13/del.htm).

Polaris Marketing Research, Atlanta, has installed an automated interactive voice response system and an Internet survey system. In addition, the firm has upgraded its CATI hardware and software.

SPSS Inc., Chicago, has announced its development plans for Clementine, the flagship data mining product of recently acquired Integral Solutions Ltd. Upcoming releases in the Clementine product line will add the ability to work effectively with larger databases in a client/server environment; the ability to export models that include related data management functions as well as calculations and predictions; and additions to the statistical capabilities of Clementine via both the addition of algorithms and tighter integration with SPSS. "Clementine plays a key role in our future plans," says SPSS president and CEO Jack Noonan. "We see Clementine as a rapid analysis environment — a 'workbench' for people to create models that deliver on the promise of data mining. With these plans, we expect Clementine's unique and highly visual user interface and underlying architecture will become an interactive front-end to an increasingly rich set of analytical methods. In addition, improvements to scalability mean that customers will be able to work even more effectively with the very large data volumes in today's data warehouses. Lastly we plan to provide both enhanced and new deployment vehicles which will give users greater ability to deploy the models they develop to transform their organizations."

MasterCard, Purchase, N.Y., has launched a new company, **Transactional Data Solutions** (TDS), which will provide aggregate and other non-consumer specific marketing information from anonymous card transactions for use by merchants in better managing their businesses. This "benign" use of transactional data can help a merchant measure performance, plan marketing, conduct mass media advertising and better understand customers by using focused demographics. Rather than using individual name and address information, the new discipline of transactional research collects anonymous information from previously conducted transactions to aggregate buying behaviors based on demographic, lifestyle, and media preferences. TDS' first information product, Merchant Advisor, uses data that does not connect cardholder names, addresses, phone numbers or e-mail addresses to any transactions. Merchant Advisor will be available in the first quarter of 1999. TDS is a joint venture of MasterCard International and Symmetrical Resources Inc., Deerfield Beach, Fla. For more information visit www.tds-mastercard.com.

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Fax 515-282-4535
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Denise Essman, President
Location: Office building
CR, OR, 1/1, VE
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25x19   Obs. Rm. Seats 18

Please add the following firm to the 1999 Data Processing/Statistical Analysis Directory:

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Letters

Susie Sangren's Data Use article in the January issue reminds me of little promotion items that some research companies used to mail out in the 1960s, usually in the form of circular slide rules made of cardboard that told you the standard error for a given sample size, or vice versa. From the point of view of Statistics 101, there is nothing wrong with it. From the point of view of practical market research, Statistics 101 is simplistic and often misleading, for two reasons:

The article points out, correctly, that the response rate must be considered when determining sample size; it does not point out that if the response rate is substantially lower than 100 percent, the error computation is relevant to the population actually represented by the respondents, not the population from which the random sample was drawn. The resulting error of non response, which is not addressed by the statistical computation, is usually more important than the random sampling error, and is usually a bias rather than a random plus/minus error.

The second reason is that the standard formulas apply under certain conditions. This fact is evident from Exhibit 1 in the article which purports to show sample sizes needed in order, for example, to have 95 percent confidence that a 5 percent incidence projection has an error range of ±15 percent, which implies the nonsensical possibility of a negative incidence.

Tom Semon
Research Consultant in Marketing
Englewood Cliffs, N.J.

Susie Sangren responds:

Your main concern is about distinguishing reality from technical elegance, whereas my article focused on purely the technical understanding of simple random sampling.

I was aware of the non-response problem, but that is a topic for another article. Instead, I chose to stress in the beginning that ". . . the sample size calculated is the number of completed surveys required to achieve a certain level of confidence and error rate . . ." (p. 18)

Your second concern is about Exhibit 1. Sample sizes calculated for the "yes" proportion estimates below 15 percent (i.e., one is very sure that there is no chance of seeing "yes") are impractical, and should be discarded. I agree with you, especially when the sample sizes are reduced to almost nothing when this occurs. They were there for presentation purposes only.

In regards to the article, "In Pursuit of Software" (February 1999), I was disappointed to see that Mr. Struhl passed over one of the better statistical software packages available: Statview, by SAS Institute. Not only is Statview (www.statview.com) an excellent product produced by one of *Fortune*'s "best companies," but it is also available in true Mac/Power Mac format as well as Windows — unlike many of the other products reviewed.

Additionally, Statview recently received the *Macworld* Editor's Choice Award for "Best Science and Engineering Software" for the second time since 1993. Now, I realize statisticians bristle at the thought of working in the Mac format, but I've used Statview as the preferred stat package in my business since founding it 10 years ago. Combined with Apple's System 8.1, it's proven to be stable, easier to learn (than SPSS which we also own), and integrates well with MS Office 98 and other Mac applications.

I challenge you and Mr. Struhl to broaden your perspective and remember that we're not all PC-based. Nor are we all statisticians solely, though our work forces us to use similar tools.

Gerry Cain
Owner/Consultant, T.I.P. Marketing Research
Instructor, University of Kansas, Lawrence

Joe Rydholm responds:

Gerry, I'm sorry we've given you the impression we're anti-Mac. In fact, we're far from it! Our magazine is compiled and produced using Macs (I'm typing these words on one right now) and I have two Macs at home, so I know what it's like to be a Mac user in a PC world.

I also know Steve Struhl isn't anti-Mac, though, like most people, he works mainly on a PC. Steve very graciously reviews software for us in his spare time (even if it means battling pneumonia, as he did with the February installment!) and he chooses the software he reviews based on its interest and relevance to market researchers, not on its platform.

In closing, while Steve is our resident software reviewer, he doesn't have to be our only one! Statview sounds like a nice program, so if you would like to send in a review of it or another stat program for the Mac, I'd be happy to work with you.

Trade Talk

ment to one of the marketing executives and walks away.

After the researcher has gone, one marketer turns to another and laughs. "Isn't that just like a researcher? We're looking for the height and he gives us the length."

Speaking of e-mail, I'd like to encourage and invite you to send me some! My address is joeqmrr@uswest.net. Plaudits and/or brickbats are welcome, as are story ideas, observations, anecdotes, and more "lovely metaphors." (No chain letters, please!)

I've heard the pundits who cry that e-mail will be the death of letter-writing. I'd like to think that it may help the gentle art of correspondence, by making the task simpler and more direct. Rather than having to compose your letter, print it, address an envelope and then stamp and mail it, now you simply open your e-mail program, compose your mail, and send it with the click of a button. And it won't take three or four days for your missive to reach its destination. Three or four seconds is more like it.

Specifically, I'd like to get feedback on the magazine, what you like or don't like, what kinds of stories you'd like to see more or fewer of. Perhaps you've worked on a research project and would like to submit an article about it or have us consider writing something about it . . .

Your input is also sought on some ideas I have for upcoming issues. For example, in our May issue I'm planning to include a few stories about interactive voice response (IVR) research. We've covered the topic in the past but recently we've been receiving more phone calls from readers looking for information about IVR. And I've noticed more research firms promoting their IVR capabilities, so I think some articles are in order. (And May being our telephone interviewing issue seems like the best place to put them.)

Some of the callers have wondered about response rates and other issues surrounding IVR, so I'm planning a kind of "FAQ on IVR" to answer several questions. If you have specific questions on IVR you'd like answered, drop me a line. (If your firm has used IVR for a research project and you think your experience would make a good story in our magazine, let me know!)

Internet/on-line research is another topic that readers always seem to have questions about. Our annual Internet/on-line research issue is coming in July and I'm planning on compiling a buyer's guide to choosing an on-line research supplier (thanks to a visitor to our Researcher Forum on the QMRR Web site [www.quirks.com] for the story idea!). Once again, if there are questions you'd like answered, let me know. My plan is to talk to providers and users of Internet/on-line research and get their tips and suggestions. If you have some thoughts on the matter, I'd love to hear them — by e-mail or snail mail! [Q]

Start those letters coming

My subject this month is electronic correspondence. First off, taking a cue from War Stories compiler Art Shulman, here are two bits of research-related wit e-mailed to us by reader Jerry Travis.

Travis labeled the first one, supplied to him by a friend, "a lovely metaphor."

A man was floating in a hot air balloon and suddenly realized he was lost. He began reducing his height and soon spotted a man down below. He lowered the balloon further.

"Excuse me," he shouted, "can you tell me where I am?"

"Yes, you're in a hot air balloon, hovering 30 feet above the ground," the man on the ground said.

"You must work in marketing research," said the balloonist.

"As a matter of fact I do," replied the man. "How did you know?"

"Well," said the balloonist, "everything you have told me is technically correct, but it's of no use to anyone."

The man below thought for a moment and then said, "You must work in marketing."

"I do," replied the balloonist. "How did you know?"

"Well," began the marketing researcher, "you don't know where you are or where you're going, but you expect me to be able to help. You're in the same position you were before we met, but now it's my fault."

Travis also sent us this tale:

A group of marketing executives were given the assignment to measure the height of a flagpole. So they go out to the flagpole with ladders and tape measures, and they're falling off the ladders, dropping the tape measures — the whole thing is just a mess.

A market researcher comes along and, seeing what they're trying to do, walks over, pulls the flagpole out of the ground, lays it flat, measures it from end to end, gives the measure-

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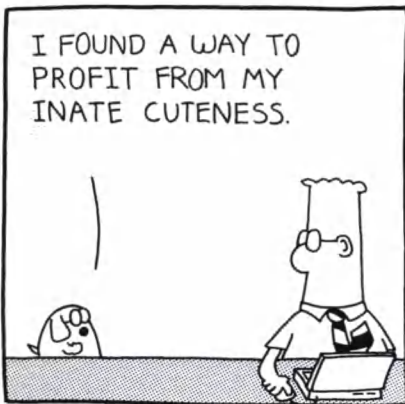
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> Marketing Research Analyst, **Ford Motor Co.**

> Excellent! Best professional seminar I've been to. Content was practically oriented. Speaker excellent! Presented information in an extremely "user friendly" manner. Energy level was phenomenal.
> Manager, Marketing Research, **Bausch & Lomb**

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Chicago ...... Apr. 19-21	Seattle .... Oct. 25-27	
San Francisco . May 17-19	San Diego .... Nov. 15-17	
Toronto .... June 7-9	New York .... Dec. 13-15	
Miami ...... July 7-9		

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104. Questionnaire Construction Workshop

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Chicago ...... Mar. 29-31	Boston .... Sept. 13-15
Atlanta .... Apr. 26-28	Miami .... Oct. 18-20
Seattle .... May 24-26	San Francisco Dec. 6-8

105. Questionnaire Design

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Cincinnati ..... Feb. 18-19	Cincinnati .... Aug. 12-13
Chicago ...... Apr. 1-2	Miami .... Oct. 21-22
Seattle .... May 27-28	San Francisco Dec. 9-10

201. Focus Groups: An Introduction

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202. Focus Group Moderator Training

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Cincinnati ..... Apr. 13-16	Cincinnati .... Sept. 21-24
Cincinnati ..... May 18-21	Cincinnati .... Nov. 2-5
Cincinnati ..... June 22-25	Cincinnati .... Dec. 14-17

203. Focus Group Applications

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Cincinnati ..... July 26-28	

204. Qualitative Research Reports

Cincinnati ..... Apr. 22-23	Cincinnati .... Nov. 11-12
Cincinnati ..... July 29-30	

205. Qualitative Research with Children

Chicago ...... May 6	New York.... Sept. 10

206. Interviewing Executives & Professionals

Cincinnati ..... Mar. 11	New York .... Sept. 30
Chicago ...... July 15	

301. Communicating Marketing Research

New York ..... Jan. 20-22	San Francisco July 6-8
Cincinnati ..... Mar. 1-3	Cincinnati .... Aug. 23-25
Dallas .... Apr. 6-8	Chicago ..... Oct. 6-8
Boston .... May 10-12	New York .... Nov. 29-Dec. 1

401. Managing Marketing Research

Cincinnati ..... Mar. 4-5	Cincinnati .... Aug. 26-27
Boston ...... May 13-14	New York .... Dec. 2-3

501. Applications of Marketing Research

New York ..... Jan. 7-8	Cincinnati .... Aug. 5-6
Cincinnati ..... Feb. 11-12	Chicago ..... Sept. 30-Oct. 1
Atlanta .... Mar. 25-26	San Diego .... Nov. 18-19
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502. Product Research

New York .... Feb. 16-17	New York .... Sept. 2-3
Chicago ...... June 3-4	Cincinnati .... Nov. 22-23

504. Advertising Research

New York .... Mar. 11-12	San Diego .... Aug. 12-13
Chicago ...... May 27-28	Cincinnati .... Nov. 11-12

505. Market Segmentation Research

New York .... Mar. 9-10	San Diego .... Aug. 10-11
Chicago ...... May 25-26	Cincinnati .... Nov. 9-10

506. Customer Satisfaction Research

New York .... Mar. 16-17	Cincinnati .... Sept. 14-15
Chicago ...... June 8-9	Atlanta ...... Dec. 6-7

507. Analysis and Interpretation of Customer Satisfaction Data

New York .... Mar. 18-19	Cincinnati .... Sept. 16-17
Chicago ...... June 10-11	Atlanta ...... Dec. 8-9

601. Translating Data into Actionable Information

New York .... Jan. 18-19	Cincinnati .... July 26-27
Dallas .... Mar. 4-5	Chicago ..... Oct. 4-5
Toronto ...... June 10-11	New York .... Dec. 16-17

602. Tools and Techniques of Data Analysis

New York .... Jan. 26-29	New York .... July 20-23
Cincinnati ..... Feb. 23-26	Cincinnati .... Aug. 17-20
Boston .... Mar. 30-Apr. 2	Chicago ..... Oct. 12-15
Atlanta .... May 11-14	Dallas .... Nov. 15-18
San Francisco . June 15-18	

603. Practical Multivariate Analysis

New York .... Feb. 2-5	Cincinnati .... Aug. 31-Sept. 3
Boston .... Apr. 13-16	Chicago ..... Oct. 19-22
San Francisco . June 22-25	Atlanta ...... Nov. 30-Dec. 3

604. Data Analysis: A Hands-On PC Based Workshop

Cincinnati ..... Feb. 8-10	Cincinnati .... July 28-30
Cincinnati ..... Apr. 26-28	Cincinnati .... Oct. 25-27

701. International Marketing Research

New York .... Feb. 18-19	Miami ...... Nov. 4-5
Chicago ...... June 28-29	

702. Business to Business Marketing Research

Cincinnati ..... Mar. 8-10	New York .... Sept. 27-29
Chicago ...... July 12-14	

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Cincinnati . . . . Nov. 2-12

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