Advertising & IMC

Principles & Practice

ELEVENTH EDITION

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Advertising & IMC

PRINCIPLES & PRACTICE

11e

Does Advertising Make Smoking Cool?

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In 1991, I began a program of research on tobacco-use prevention through advertising and the mass media. I wondered how often people saw advertisements for products shortly before experiencing the products. It occurred to me that advertising exposure and product experience were perhaps most likely to occur concurrently in the case of cigarette advertising and encounters with smokers. In 1991, cigarette advertising on billboards was ubiquitous and 20 percent of high school seniors smoked daily, so I reasoned that adolescents might see cigarette advertisements and peers smoking concurrently. I also reasoned that encounters with smokers would often be ambiguous.

Looking at the literature, I could find few controlled experiments on cigarette advertising. However, surveys indicated there was a strong association between adolescents' perceptions of smokers and smoking initiation. With the assistance of coauthors, I completed two research projects that documented that cigarette advertisements can prime adolescents' positive beliefs about smokers and thus alter their social encounters with smokers. Specifically, cigarette advertisements serving as primes can favorably bias adolescents' perceptions of peers who smoke and thus increase their intent to smoke. One of our papers on this topic received the Best Paper Award from the *Journal of Consumer Research*. I continue to conduct research in this area.

I am told that my tobacco-related research has been cited by expert witnesses in legal cases such as the federal tobacco case, in legislative hearings, and in US Attorney General meetings. I believe that some academic research should be conducted to inform public policy and that if research is not designed for this purpose, it likely will not have this effect.

Sources: J. A. Bargh, M. Chen, and L. Burrows, "Automaticity of Social Behavior: Direct Effects of Trait Construct and Stereotype Activation on Action," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 71, no. 2 (1996): 230–244; C. Pechmann and S. J. Knight, "An Experimental Investigation of the Joint Effects of Advertising and Peers on Adolescents' Beliefs and Intentions about Cigarette Consumption," *Journal of Consumer Research* 29, no. 1 (2002): 5–19; C. Pechmann and S. Ratneshwar, "The Effects of Antismoking and Cigarette Advertising on Young Adolescents' Perceptions of Peers Who Smoke," *Journal of Consumer Research* 21, no. 2 (1994): 236–251.

Do your professors and instructors talk about the research they conduct? Above is an example of one professor's research about cigarette advertising that has practical implications for the tobacco industry and policy makers. Of course, advertising can be used to either promote or discourage smoking. This research tests the idea that anti-cigarette advertising may unintentionally prime (or prepare) teens to think that smoking is cool. The Principled Practice feature explains how this researcher used experimental studies to determine the impact of advertising on behavior.

Sometimes in experimental research the measurements are electronically recorded using such instruments as MRI or EEG machines or eye-scan tracking devices. Electrodes can be used to monitor heart rate, pulse, and skin temperature to determine if people have a physical response to a message that they may not be able to put in words.

Emotional responses, in particular, are hard to verbalize but may be observable using these types of sensors. Hewlett-Packard Company, for example, wired a group of volunteers with electrodes to see how they reacted to photos of people smiling. The study found that there were obvious differences in brain activity in people looking at photos of smiling people, particularly pictures of children smiling. New *computer-vision* software attached to high-resolution cameras is trying to read expressions on faces to determine viewers' responses during such activities as watching a movie trailer or shopping online.[15] And *eye-tracking* technology, a retina-tracking camera hooked up to a computer screen that projects images, has long been used to watch how readers and viewers scan print and video. It is now being used to test shoppers' attention to shelf designs and store layouts.[16]

In practice, quantitative and qualitative methods are often used together in a complementary way to give researchers both the description and understanding of consumers that they need. The Lean Cuisine example showed how qualitative research may be used to help explain quantitative research insights. Likewise, because qualitative research is often exploratory, it may be used first to help develop quantitative tools such as surveys or experiments.

6.3 Understand how to choose appropriate research methods and collect data.

Choose Methods and Collect Data

This section focuses on the types of research used in message development and the research situations where these methods are typically used. Consumer research methodologies are often described in terms of the type of data they produce: numeric (quantitative) or verbal/behavioral communication (qualitative). Data for both of these methods might be collected in person, by telephone, by mail, through the Internet or cable TV, or by a computer kiosk in a mall or store.

Quantitative Methods

We have stated that most quantitative research in marketing communication is survey based; however, consumers can also be contacted in malls where they are invited to participate in experimental research.

Survey Research   In a survey, questionnaires are used to obtain information about a wide range of people's attitudes, knowledge, opinions, media use, and exposure to particular messages. **Survey research** is a quantitative method that uses structured interviews to ask large numbers of people the same set of questions. The questions at the end of the survey often include more personal information such as age, income, and education level. Surveys can be conducted in person, by phone, by mail, or online.

An example of a company doing its own survey research is Toyota, which undertook a huge two-year study of ultra-rich consumers in the United States to better market its upscale Lexus brand. A team of nine Lexus employees from various departments was designated the "superaffluent team" and was sent on the road to interview wealthy car buyers about why they live where they do, what they do for enjoyment, what brands they buy, and how they feel about car makes and models. One surprising finding was that these consumers don't just buy a car; rather, they buy a fleet of cars because they have multiple homes and offices.[17]

Incentives are important when doing surveys. As Karl Weiss explains in the Matter of Practice feature, you should choose an incentive that is appropriate for your audience, perhaps $5 or $10 in cash, a drawing for a Wii or iPhone, or even just a summary of the results. Different audiences have different interests, so make your incentive appealing to them. Be careful, however, not to bias your results in the process. If you are studying airline travel behavior and your incentive is a PlayStation, don't be surprised to find that most of those who complete the survey are

Photo: Janine Wiedel Photolibrary/Alamy Stock Photo

Survey research can be conducted in person and is often conducted in malls, supermarket aisles, or other public places.
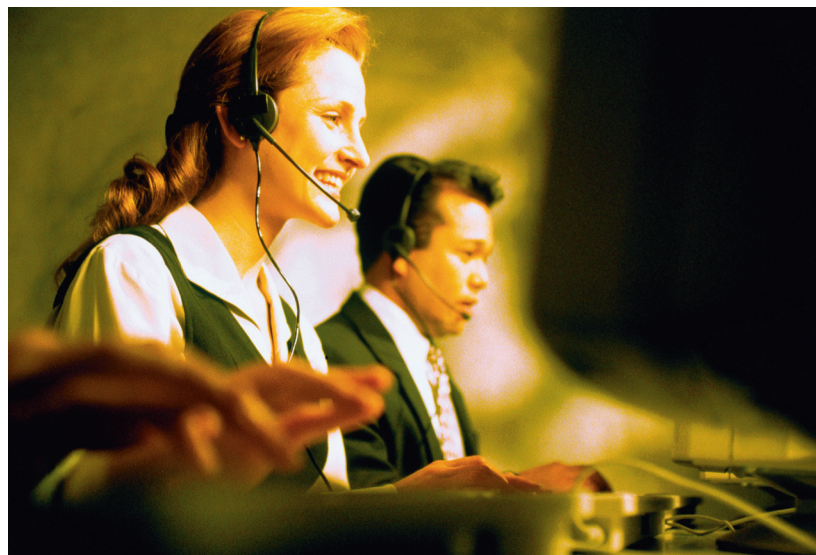

Photo: RON CHAPPLE/Getty Images

Phone surveys are commonly used. Often they come from commercial call centers where many people hired by a research company staff a bank of phones. In recent years, the contact is made through electronic dialing, and when respondents answer, the call is transferred to an interviewer.

males under 35 years old. "Opinionators" are people who sign onto consumer market research survey sites as paid panelists. They are asked their opinions on everything from product design, to television commercials, to sales promotions.[18]

There are two big questions to consider in designing a survey: how to build a representative sample of people to be interviewed and what method is best to collect the data.

Sampling and Data Collection   A technique called sampling is used to find interviewees because, in most cases, it is cost prohibitive to try to interview everyone in the population or target market. Instead, the people interviewed are a representative **sample** of the larger group, a subset of the population that is representative of the entire population. For survey research to be an accurate reflection of the population, those who participate must be *selected at random*, which means every person who belongs to the population being surveyed has an equal likelihood (probability) of being chosen to participate. **Random sampling** also allows researchers to make valid use of statistical analyses on the data obtained and generalize the findings to the larger population. That is the main reason why random sampling is the basic requirement of opinion research and polling, which you hear about every time an election comes around.

For years, phone number lists in phone directories gave researchers the perfect source from which they could draw a random sample. However, phone lists have become much less reliable in recent years because many households have dropped their landlines in favor of cell phones.

A number of market research companies specialize in creating samples, particularly for online research. They try to identify appropriate groups based on the targeting decisions of a client—for example, certain demographics or usage rates—and then define the locations and size required as well as the methods for reaching these people. This method is used by Ameritest in doing online tests of commercials.

Online Survey Research   Since survey research first began, the way researchers have gone about collecting data from respondents has seen almost constant change as new technologies have made such research more cost efficient. Since the 1950s, research methods that involve personal interaction have moved from door-to-door interviews, to phone interviews, and now to online surveys. Online surveys now make up half of the $3.3 billion spent on market research.[19] As Karl Weiss explains and as his diagram shows, the internet has opened up new opportunities for collecting data (see the Matter of Practice feature on the next page).

A good example of how a company can gain significant benefits from online survey research is the QuikTrip Corporation (QT), an $11 billion privately held firm operating more than 700 convenience stores in 11 states (www.quiktrip .com). Because the company is very customer-centric in its thinking and decision-making, it developed a unique platform of its own for quickly and efficiently gathering customer research on a regular basis. The company calls it QT-Connect, and it allows the company to gather customers' opinions on new ideas, existing products, its advertising content, purchase frequency, store design, and even color preferences on QT's packaging. Nearly 80,000 of QT's customers are enrolled and complete short online surveys in exchange for free products and discounts. With QT-Connect, the research team can get feedback within a few days—or even a few hours—from thousands of QT's customers on virtually all aspects of its business. Throughout the process, QuikTrip ensures the data are valid and reliable so the results of the statistical analyses are objective, repeatable, and conclusive.[20]

In addition to survey research, the Internet can also be a useful tool for monitoring online behavior. Jason Cormier, cofounder of social-media agency Room 214, explains that marketing communication data can be based on interactions on social networks

Billings Because...
Help us define Billings' identity
5 Questions. 5 Minutes.
You chose Billings, tell us why.
www.brandbillings.com
Take the Survey.

Photo: Courtesy Billings Chamber of Commerce /Convention and Visitors Bureau

SHOWCASE

A rebranding campaign for Billings began with a broad survey of people involved in the business of supporting the city. For online surveys to work, they need to be supported by an invitation to participate that showcases an easy-to-use message.

The Billings, Montana, "Trailhead" brand identity campaign, which was described in more detail in Chapter 5, was provided by John Brewer.

Online Marketing Research

Karl Weiss, *President, Market Perceptions & Healthcare Research*

Remember when surveyors came to your door with clipboards in hand, asking to come into your home to ask you some questions about a new product idea or some different advertising approaches? Unless you're well over 50 years old, you probably don't.

Times have changed, and conducting surveys by going door to door was replaced by telephone interviewing in the 1960s. Someday you can tell your children, "When I was growing up, marketing researchers used to call people on the phone to do surveys," and that will seem about as foreign a concept to them as door-to-door interviewing does to most people today.

There are many reasons for the current shift from phone to online surveys, but they are largely the same as when door-to-door interviewing switched to phone. It was cheaper, it was faster, and the quality of the data was better. The Internet allows us to gather data so much faster because tens of thousands of requests can be sent out via email in a matter of seconds, and it's much less expensive because the data are all captured by computer rather than live interviewers. Although the quality of the data has been the greatest obstacle facing widespread acceptance of online surveying, the continued declines in people participating in telephone surveys have diminished the randomness (and representativeness) of telephone survey data.

So what does that mean for marketing research beyond an evolution in data collection methodology? Gathering data by telephone was an improvement in data randomness by being able to draw a better random sample. It also offered a reduction in cost because conducting surveys by phone is cheaper than going door to door, not to mention an improvement in timing. Although online surveying has further reduced both the cost of the data collection and even more dramatically reduced timing to gather the information, it has not been able to maintain the same quality when it comes to the representativeness of the data. With telephone surveying, almost every person in the United States has a phone number, and telephone directories provide a pretty good listing from which to draw a sample, and if you want to do even better, the phone numbers can be randomly generated so that even unlisted numbers are included.

For online surveys, there is no directory of all email addresses in the United States, but emails of various market segments can be purchased through list brokers. And even though most people today have an email address, there are significant differences between those who do and those who do not, representing not only the "digital divide" but even differences in how those who have computers with Internet access utilize this technology. Some only text and hardly ever check their email addresses. Some simply have not set up an email address to begin with.

Without a comprehensive directory from which marketing researchers can draw a sample, we cannot know how well our results reflect those of the larger population. And spamming people at random to complete a survey does not go over well in the Internet age, even if such a directory existed. The rules of the game have changed, and marketing research needs to adjust. Participants who do surveys online almost always have signed up to do so, joining an online panel where they get paid to do surveys. People who choose to join an online survey panel may be quite different from those who do not, likely thinking it is a fun way to make a little extra money on the side. Do you belong to a panel? How about your classmates? If there are different motivations for choosing whether or not to join a panel, those differences in thinking style will be reflected in the data gathered, creating a possible bias in the results.

But it's not all bad news—online surveying provides us with many new opportunities, such as the ability to present images, sounds, videos, and websites to participants for their review prior to answering questions. It's the new world of marketing research, and with the challenges come many new benefits.

such as Facebook. In Chapter 5, you read about the Billings, Montana, rebranding campaign, a campaign that was launched with an online survey of more than 1,000 people.

Qualitative Methods

Surveys are the most common quantitative research methods, but certain types of surveys both with individuals and groups can also be used for probing and to gather more insightful responses. In addition, qualitative methods take researchers into homes and stores to watch how consumers behave.

In-Depth Interviews   One qualitative method used to survey consumers is the **in-depth interview**, which is conducted one-on-one using **open-ended questions** that require respondents to generate their own answers. In a personal interview, the researcher asks questions to the consumer directly. The primary difference between an interview and a survey is the interviewer's use of a more flexible and unstructured questionnaire. This type of research method was used by the Lexus "superaffluent team" we discussed earlier. Interviewers use a discussion guide, which outlines the areas to be covered during the session.

The discussion guides tend to be longer than surveys, with questions that are usually very broad. Examples include "What do you like or dislike about this product?" and "What type of television programs do you like to watch?" Interviewers probe by responding to the answer with "Why do you say that?" or "Can you explain in more detail?" Interviews are considered qualitative, and because they use small sample sizes, their results cannot be generalized to the larger population.

Focus Groups   Another qualitative method is a **focus group**, which is a group interview of 6 to 10 users and potential users of a product who are gathered around a table to discuss some topic, such as a brand, product category, or marketing communication. The objective is to get participants talking in a conversational format so that researchers can observe the dialogue and interactions among the group. It's a *directed group interview*. A moderator supervises the group, providing direction through a set of carefully developed questions that stimulate conversation and elicit the group members' thoughts and feelings in their own words. Other qualitative tools can also be used with groups, such as asking participants to create posters, diaries, or poems or to complete exercises in day mapping or memory associations (i.e., what comes to mind when you think of something, such as a brand, situation, or location).

Focus groups can be used at any step in the planning process, but they are often used early in information gathering to probe for patterns of thought and behavior that are then tested using quantitative research tools, such as surveys. Focus groups are also useful in testing creative ideas, exploring a consumer problem or need, and exploring various alternatives in message strategy development.

A **friendship focus group** takes place in a comfortable setting, usually a private home, where the host has recruited the participants. This approach is designed to break down barriers and save time in getting to more in-depth responses. For example, one study of sensitive and

Photo: Robert Marmion/Alamy Stock Photo

In-depth interviews are conducted one-on-one with open-ended questions that permit the interviewee to give thoughtful responses. The informal structure of the questions allows the interviewer to follow up and ask more detailed questions to dig deeper into attitudes and motivations.

Photo: Spencer Grant/PhotoEdit

Focus groups are conducted around a conference table with a researcher serving as the moderator working from a list of prepared discussion questions. The session is usually held in a room with one-way glass so that the other team members from the agency and client can observe the way respondents answer the questions.

insensitive visuals used in advertising directed to African-American women found that a self-constructed friendship group was easier to assemble and yielded more honest and candid responses than a more traditional focus group where respondents are recruited by a research company.[21]

The web is not only a tool for online surveys, but also for online focus groups based on the idea of getting a group of brand loyalists together in a password-protected online community. Online research company Communispace has created some 225 online communities for marketers, including Kraft Foods, Unilever for its Axe brand, and Charles Schwab.

Online focus groups are sometimes considered to be **crowdsourcing**, which refers to aggregating the wisdom of Internet users in a type of digital brainstorming. In a search for "collective intelligence," crowdsourcing collects opinions and ideas from a digital community.

Customer Suggestions and Feedback   Dialogue creates new ways to listen to customers. In the traditional communication model we described in Chapter 5, customers' responses, or *feedback*, are gathered primarily through research. In newer approaches to communication, however, feedback is achieved by monitoring more interactive forms of marketing communication (personal selling, customer service, online marketing, social media) as well as the responses and customer-initiated dialogue that comes through response devices such as toll-free numbers and email addresses.

Informal feedback has always been available in stores through suggestion boxes and customer satisfaction cards and surveys. Target took that idea online by publishing an ad in the *Wall Street Journal* asking customers to "Tell us what more we can do for you." Some 627 respondents emailed suggestions. Target then published the suggestions and the company's responses to them in two-page ads. It was a novel way of eliciting comments, listening to them, and then responding. Starbucks, like many other companies, uses an online suggestion box incorporating the practices of crowdsourcing. MyStarbucks Idea is a website for Starbucks customers to contribute ideas, join the discussion, and vote on the ones they like best. Check it out at https://ideas.starbucks.com/.

Panels   An **expert panel** gathers experts from various fields into a focus group setting. This research tool can stimulate new ways of looking at a brand, product, or customer pattern. More commonly, however, a marketing panel or **consumer research panel** is an ongoing group of carefully selected people interested in a topic or product category. A standing panel can be maintained over time by a marketer as a proprietary source of information or by a research company whose clients provide topics for the panel members' consideration. Panels can gather in person or be contacted by phone, mail, or the Internet. An example of this type of research comes from "cool hunters" and trend watchers who may use proprietary panels to track new fashions and fads.

Observation Research   Like anthropologists, observation researchers study the actual behavior of consumers in settings where they live, work, shop, and play, acting as what Shay Sayre referred to as "professional snoops."[22] Direct **observation research** is closer and more personal than most other types of research. Researchers use video, audio, and cameras to record consumers' behavior at home (with consumer consent), in stores, or wherever people buy and use their products.

Lululemon, a women's athletic apparel chain, has built a mini-empire based on an unexpected strategy: it doesn't stock a lot of merchandise, and it cultivates a sense of scarcity. How does it work? The company doesn't use a lot of standard marketing research techniques, such as focus groups, but its executives spend hours each week observing customers, watching them shop, and listening to their comments and complaints so as to optimize and tweak the stores' offerings and merchandising.[23]

A marketer may rely on observation in the aisles of grocery, drug, and discount stores to watch people as they make product selections. Grocery shopping might seem like a mundane, mechanical activity, but look around next time you're in a store and watch how your fellow shoppers make their product choices.

Cool watchers, researchers who keep tabs on emerging trends, also use observational research when visiting places and events where their target market gathers. The Consumer