

Research Tips From The Marketing Workshop

The Influence of Advertising

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HOW NOT TO MEASURE THE INFLUENCE OF ADVERTISING

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In today's world, with all the tools we have for measuring and tracking the impact of advertising and advertising programs, the lack of sophistication, and the lack of a basic understanding of how advertising works, is truly amazing.

Do you believe that the purpose of advertising is to get the viewer to like the ad? We believe that the purpose of advertising is to cause a specific action that leads to purchase, such as increasing brand awareness, communicating a relevant and important message, and motivating consumers to consider buying the brand.

Yet, many ads are judged "effective" or "not effective" based on such a simplistic measure as "liking the ad," even though there has never been any proof that this is relevant to anything else. In fact, many studies have shown just the opposite: sometimes ads which are disliked are really effective on key measures such as motivating purchase, and many ads which are liked are totally ineffective at communicating anything meaningful to the audience. Many readers will recall some of the 'best liked' ads broadcast during Super Bowls - for products and services that later faded into obscurity. Viewers liked the ads but did not buy, or even remember, the products.

Recently I was reading an online newspaper and a pop-up appeared: ("We interrupt your reading to ask you to participate in a survey.") Being a marketing researcher, I was curious, and as there was no security screening for the survey, I continued.

The 'test' of the commercial consisted of questions like this:

- 1) How much did you like or dislike this ad? (positive to negative scale)
- 2) What did you like about the creative in the ad?
- 3) What did you dislike about the creative in the ad?

And that's it. While purchase interest was finally asked later in the survey, this question should have been asked first, right after the ad exposure and before all of the diagnostics. Perhaps as a respondent I missed something. Maybe they tested multiple ads with different respondents, so they compare the purchase interest of different ads, and of course I only saw one ad. But even so, what would have been the harm in getting more information about the communicative abilities of the ad?

There were no questions asking for recall of the brand name of the product advertised. Nothing about the message of the ad. No questions such as: Was there anything you



found of particular interest? Was there anything confusing or unclear? Was there anything hard to believe?

Are answers to these questions not important? Why were they not asked? After all, being an on-line survey, there is little additional cost to ask these questions.

At [The Marketing Workshop, Inc.](#), we are skilled at the art and science of marketing research. We believe a multi-modal approach, using both qualitative and quantitative methods, ensures better results because the two disciplines act as a check-balance system, increasing our holistic knowledge of what consumers think and do.

Test ads they way they shold be tested and don't hesitate to contact one of our senior consultants today to discuss how the art and science of research can take the guesswork out of your marketing.

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