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Measuring Advertising Effectiveness



EDITED BY

WILLIAM D. WELLS

Measuring Advertising Effectiveness

ADVERTISING AND CONSUMER PSYCHOLOGY

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Contents

	Preface	ix
	I. Effects and Effectiveness	1
1	Comprehensive Measurement of Advertising Effectiveness: Notes From the Marketplace <i>Christine Wright-Isak, Ronald J. Faber, and Lewis R. Horner</i>	3
2	Research and the Meaning of Advertising Effectiveness: Mutual Misunderstandings <i>William A. Cook and Arthur J. Kover</i>	13
	Comment on Chapters 1 and 2 <i>Esther Thorson</i>	21
	II. Subtle Processing	25
3	Measuring and Assessing the Impact of Preattentive Processing on Ad and Brand Attitudes <i>Stewart Shapiro, Susan E. Heckler, and Deborah J. MacInnis</i>	27
	Comment on Chapter 3 <i>Larry Percy</i>	45
4	Advertising Effectiveness and Indirect Effects of Advertisements <i>Youjae Yi</i>	47
	Comment on Chapter 4 <i>James C. Crimmins</i>	64
5	Advertising Repetition and Consumer Beliefs: The Role of Source Memory <i>Sharmistha Law and Scott A. Hawkins</i>	67

III. The ELM Model	77
6 Conceptual and Methodological Issues in Advertising Effectiveness: An Attitude Strength Perspective <i>Curtis P. Haugtvedt and Joseph R. Priester</i>	79
7 Inference and Impact <i>James C. Crimmins</i>	95
Comment on Chapters 6 and 7 <i>William D. Wells</i>	104
IV. Cognitive Elaboration	105
8 Pretesting Advertising Using Cognitive Response Analysis: Some Conclusions and Hypotheses Based on Practical Experience <i>Peggy Levenson and Max Blackston</i>	107
Comment on Chapter 8 <i>Sharon Shavitt and Michelle R. Nelson</i>	128
9 Prediction of Long-Term Advertising Effectiveness: New Cognitive Response Approaches <i>Michelle R. Nelson, Sharon Shavitt, Angela Schennum, and Jacqueline Barkmeier</i>	133
10 Extensions of the Cognitive Response Approach to Predicting Postadvertisement Attitudes <i>Debra L. Stephens and J. Edward Russo</i>	157
Comment on Chapters 1 Through 10 <i>William D. Wells</i>	179
V. Context	181
11 Understanding Consumer Memory for Ads: A Process View <i>Jennifer Gregan-Paxton and Barbara Loken</i>	183
12 The Effects of Program Context on Advertising Effectiveness <i>V. Carter Broach, Thomas J. Page, Jr., and R. Dale Wilson</i>	203
Comment on Chapter 12 <i>Brian Wansink</i>	215

	Comment on Chapter 12	217
	<i>Abhilasha Mehta</i>	
	Comment on Chapter 12	218
	<i>Christine Wright-Isak</i>	
13	Television Viewing Behavior as an Indicator of Commercial Effectiveness	221
	<i>Esther Thorson and Xinshu Zhao</i>	
14	The Determinants of Advertising Repetition Effects	239
	<i>Pirjo Vuokko</i>	
	Comment on Chapter 14	261
	<i>Christine Wright-Isak</i>	
	Comment on Chapters 11 Through 14	263
	<i>William D. Wells</i>	
	VI. Copy Testing	265
15	A Theory-Based Approach to Pretesting Advertising	267
	<i>Larry Percy and John R. Rossiter</i>	
	Comment on Chapter 15	282
	<i>Esther Thorson</i>	
16	Top-Down, Stimulus-Based, and Bottom-Up Processes in Brand Choice: Some Implications for the Measurement of Advertising Effectiveness	285
	<i>Richard W. Olshavsky and Anand Kumar</i>	
	Comment on Chapter 16	296
	<i>Larry Percy</i>	
	Comment on Chapter 16	298
	<i>Abhilasha Mehta</i>	
17	The Measurement of Advertising Effectiveness: Empirical Learning and Application	301
	<i>Allan R. Kuse</i>	
	Comment on Chapter 17	323
	<i>Brian Wansink</i>	

18	Evaluating Advertising Effectiveness Through Advertising Response Modeling (ARM) <i>Abhilasha Mehta and Scott C. Purvis</i>	325
	Comment on Chapter 18 <i>Brian Wansink</i>	335
19	A Strategic Approach to Measuring Advertising Effectiveness <i>Thomas J. Reynolds, Jerry C. Olson, and John P. Rochon</i>	337
	Comment on Chapter 19 <i>Christine Wright-Isak</i>	356
20	Developing Copy Tests That Estimate Brand Usage <i>Brian Wansink and Michael L. Ray</i>	359
21	Evaluating the Effectiveness of Place-Based Media <i>James Lucas and David Prensky</i>	371
	VII. Afterword	385
22	An Interview With Mr. X. <i>William D. Wells</i>	387
	Author Index	395
	Subject Index	403

Preface

From the earliest days of applied psychology and scientific marketing, researchers have sought reliable and valid measures of the effects of advertising. Darrell Blaine Lucas and Stuart Henderson Britt's (1963), *Measuring Advertising Effectiveness*, was an influential early summary of psychology's contributions. Roy H. Campbell's (1969), *Measuring the Profit and Sales Results of Advertising*, was an equally influential summary of the aggregate, market-oriented approach.

This volume continues that search. It includes edited versions of papers presented at the 1994 Advertising and Consumer Psychology Conference, co-sponsored by the Society for Consumer Psychology, the Marketing Science Institute, the University of Minnesota, and the Minneapolis advertising agency Campbell-Mithun-Esty. The conference was co-chaired by William D. Wells of the University of Minnesota and Thomas Jonas, then of Campbell-Mithun-Esty. The volume also includes commentary by both academic and industry-based participants in that event. Like Lucas and Britt's *Measuring Advertising Effectiveness*, this volume seeks to unravel and measure the complex details of individual response. Like Campbell's *Measuring the Profit and Sales Results of Advertising*, it examines market-oriented outcomes from a more applied stance.

All of the chapters and commentaries show healthy tension between the more theoretical interests and dispositions of the academic community and the more applied, results-oriented interests and dispositions of real-world research. The bottom line, as the real-world participants would say, is that measuring advertising effectiveness is so complicated that, although it is both a valid, important academic topic and a consequential applied problem, neither academic researchers nor industry researchers are likely to make decisive progress without help. Instead, reliable and valid measures of advertising effectiveness are most likely to emerge from constructive criticism and mutually supportive interaction between the two camps. On that conclusion, the long history of the topic and the exchanges at this conference fully concur.

In combining the academic and applied approaches, this volume contributes up-to-date theoretical formulations, methodological advances, and optimistic views of future research. It offers partial added answers to some important problems and insightful forecasts of next steps.

The co-chairs of the conference wish to thank the co-sponsors for their essential support. We especially acknowledge the key contributions of Mary Achartz and Linda Wilson of the University of Minnesota, who managed hundreds of organizational details, and of Lara Carls-Lissick, also of the University of Minnesota, who checked and double-checked the final draft.

Effects and Effectiveness

In 1963, Lucas and Britt published *Measuring Advertising Effectiveness*, a summary of the state of the art. The first half of their review—about 200 pages—covered “measurement of advertising messages.” Its main topics were techniques of measurement, recognition tests, recall and association tests, opinion and attitude ratings, projective methods, laboratory testing and analyses of content, and inquires and sales measure. The second half covered media analysis.

Lucas and Britt’s summary was a blend of academic psychology, marketing theory, survey methodology, and practical experience. Real-world applications, and real-world problems and limitations, were stressed throughout.

In 1994, the annual Advertising and Consumer Psychology Conference of the Society for Consumer Psychology covered some of the same territory. Like the Lucas and Britt volume, it was a blend of academic psychology, marketing theory, survey methodology, and practical experience. And, like Lucas and Britt’s summary, it stressed problems and limitations.

There were, however, some important differences. In the original *Measuring Advertising Effectiveness*, the authors devoted entire chapters to recognition and recall. In this volume, recognition is scarcely mentioned, and recall comes in for heavy criticism. This is a sign of progress. We no longer believe that memorability, however measured, is necessary or sufficient. Instead, we know that advertisements are subtle, diverse, complex phenomena that require detailed individual investigation. We also know that *advertising effects* are different from *advertising effectiveness*, and that neither effects nor effectiveness can be evaluated in isolation.

The three chapters in this section open the discussion stressing the multidimensional nature of advertising’s diverse effects. In chapter 1, Christine Wright-Isak of Young & Rubicam, Advertising and Ronald J. Faber and Lewis R. Horner of the University of Minnesota distinguish between academic, theory-oriented studies of effects and practical, in-context evaluations of effectiveness. They delineate the differences between those two domains, and propose separate strategies for solving evaluation problems.

In chapter 2, William A. Cook of the Advertising Research Foundation and Arthur J. Kover of Fordham University distinguish among the duties and perspectives of advertising researchers who work for advertisers, advertising agencies, advertising research suppliers, and universities. They outline conflicts among those points of view and search for common interests.

The discussion, by Esther Thorson of the University of Missouri, echoes and adds to both chapters. It acknowledges the complexity of a psychology and sociology of mediated persuasion, and it stresses that, despite all differences, more and better communication among the communities is the quickest route to solving common problems.

Comprehensive Measurement of Advertising Effectiveness: Notes From the Marketplace

Christine Wright-Isak
Young & Rubicam, Advertising

Ronald J. Faber
Lewis R. Horner
University of Minnesota

When the economic environment becomes difficult, marketers demand proof of advertising's effectiveness, preferably in numerical terms. Unfortunately, few marketers can agree on what standards advertising is expected to meet, or even what constitutes definitive proof. We are in such a period now. In a time of recurring recession and in an environment of advancing globalization of companies, products, and brands, many brands are experiencing low growth in unit volume and increasing competition from private brands and generics (Eechambadi, 1993). In this business climate, advertisers want to know what they are getting for their advertising dollars. Industry researchers are often asked whether academic research will provide answers.

The proof called for is usually short term. Brand managers must account for yearly budgets to their division heads. The question asked about the advertising is whether its performance justified its proportion of last year's marketing budget. Agencies scramble to produce facts that indicate a positive evaluation of the advertising contribution. Everyone is on the defensive. Effects are hard to isolate because advertising merges with other elements of the marketing mix and with nonmarketing aspects of the message environment.

To further complicate the problem, stress on short-term evidence ignores some of the most important contributions advertising can make. In a speech to the Association of National Advertisers, Richard Costello (1991), Corporate Communications Manager for General Electric, declared that the value of corporate advertising was long-term creation and maintenance of goodwill that enhanced his company's ability to do business. He went on to state that effectiveness can be calculated by taking the difference between the market

price of GE's stock and the book value of the tangible assets of the company. However, Costello was concerned with corporate advertising. The more common situation—selling a specific product to a target market—does not lend itself to similar calculations. Nevertheless, Costello made an important point by noting that the true value of advertising is its long-term contribution to the brand. The goodwill created through advertising can reduce the cost of doing business and prepare markets for positive responses to subsequent selling efforts.

ACADEMIC RESEARCH: MEASURING ADVERTISING EFFECTS

Although long-term contribution is of vital interest to advertising practitioners and their clients, it is not frequently discussed in academic journals. Academic research tends to focus on specific elements within ads and how these elements influence viewer responses. Which dependent measure is examined is typically determined by the theory used to frame the research. This type of research might best be termed the study of advertising *effects*.

Academic research typically focuses on manipulating a few variables to isolate their respective impact. Although several effects may be tested in one study, each is usually considered separately, and no summary statement across measures is expected. Although a few academic studies have looked at interrelationships among effects (e.g., Okechuku & Wang, 1988; Stewart & Furse, 1984–1985; Stewart & Koslow, 1989), they have been the exception rather than the rule.

Are advertising effects the same as advertising effectiveness? Although the two are certainly related, distinctions between them must be clearly understood. Advertising effectiveness is concerned with making a tangible contribution to a company or brand. This benefit must exceed its cost if it is to be considered worthwhile. Effectiveness is cumulative over time and affects feelings, attitudes, and behaviors.

Assessments of effectiveness are typically made over longer time spans than measures of effects. They involve multiple exposures to ads and multiple executions within campaigns. In contrast, most effects research involves limited numbers of executions and exposures. Effects are as likely to be evaluated in an experimental setting as in a natural field setting. Effectiveness must be determined within a complex environment where other marketing activities and competitive actions greatly add to the difficulty of assessing advertising's value. For a full understanding of effectiveness we need to know which effects contribute to effectiveness, and we need to know whether effective campaigns show similar patterns.

Korgaonkar, Moschis, and Bellinger (1984) asked a large sample of advertising agency executives to describe the most and least successful campaigns in their experience. They concluded that successful campaigns “are based on market research findings; they are backed with adequate financial and mana-

gerial resources, they are based on careful media planning; and, they are likely to use messages that are perceived to be creative and unique” (p. 49). A year later, Korgaonkar and Bellinger (1985) followed up with an identically designed study with similar results. Both sets of findings focused on organizational and situational correlates of successful campaigns, with success defined as a composite score that includes sales, attitude, and awareness. Although Korgaonkar and Bellinger (1985) did not directly address the issue of how success is demonstrated, respondents in both agency and client samples agreed that a good client–agency relationship is one of the correlates. A “good” relationship was defined as consistent key personnel on both sides during the campaign’s development and a lack of client–agency personality conflicts.

INDUSTRY MEASUREMENTS: JUSTIFYING AD BUDGETS IN TERMS OF SALES RESULTS

Because “effectiveness” has tended to refer to whether the cost of advertising is returned to the advertiser in the form of current or potential sales revenue, several authors have proposed using sales as the primary criterion. However, because additional variables act as channels or barriers (we often do not know which) between message and purchase, many other authors have argued for measures of consumer knowledge and beliefs (Aaker, Batra, & Myers, 1992; Colley, 1961; Schultz, 1990). However, as Schreiber and Appel (1990–1991) argued, the exact nature of the relationship between these surrogate measures and actual sales is not known; thus what constitutes the appropriate measure of effectiveness remains highly debatable (Abraham & Lodish, 1990; McDonald, 1993; Schroer, 1990; Steiner, 1987).

To understand effectiveness in a real-world context we need to have some systematic collection of facts that tell us the probability that the intended audience saw the campaign, what intervening phenomena affected the campaign’s impact, and the net impact of those phenomena and the campaign on purchase behavior. Combining this collection of facts with data about specific ad effects may help us understand the performance of the campaigns, as well as contribute to theory development.

To further complicate the issue, we also have to consider the role of competitors’ budgets, or what the industry calls *share of voice* (SOV). It has been argued that the most appropriate measure of effectiveness is market share to market voice ratio (Jones, 1990). An additional, virtually unaddressed area is the content of the media in which the advertising message appears (Bogart, 1976).

Little in the academic literature has helped to resolve these issues. Instead, advertising effects are typically studied in controlled experiments that employ one-shot exposures to single messages over relatively short periods of time. They fail to capture the effects of multiple related messages in natural environments, each designed to achieve different changes in consumers.

An exception to this general rule was recently presented by Eechambadi (1993). He addressed:

1. The issue of long-term versus short-term time frames for assessing expected impact.
2. The fact that advertising often involves multiple objectives.
3. The problem that the link between advertising and sales is usually indirect.

His econometric approach to these problems in car sales creates a chain of evidence that estimates (on the basis of previous performance) the likely number of inquiries or showroom visits to be generated out of an expected number of recipients of the advertising message. He then anticipated the likely proportion of actual prospects included in this estimate of inquiries, and the likely proportion of actual sales of this number of prospects. By estimating each link in this chain and multiplying the number of anticipated sales times the value of each sale, he arrived at a number that estimates the value of the advertising.

This approach relies heavily on accurate information about the relationships among key variables, and it focuses on relatively short-term results. Nonetheless, it provides valuable insights into what effectiveness entails.

FOUR CRITERIA FOR DEMONSTRATING EFFECTIVENESS

Effects are clearly individual-level phenomena. Effectiveness is not simply an aggregation of effects across consumers. We might better conceive of effectiveness as a societal-level concept, observable through consensus of a community of professionals. Examination of debate within the industry indicates convergence on four main criteria for demonstrating advertising effectiveness. To be comprehensive and compelling in demonstrating value advertising professionals must do the following.

1. *Make the role of each advertising effort explicit in the context of multiple marketing goals and program alternatives.* Advertising is only one component of a broader marketing mix designed to build sales. To evaluate advertising's contribution to the larger effort, it is necessary to specify in advance what particular goals the advertising is intended to achieve. For example, advertising may be used to build a particular brand identity, to change existing perceptions, or to create trial purchase. Specifying objectives in advance allows for the establishment of specific performance criteria.
2. *Establish a chain of evidence to demonstrate the indirect linkages between the advertising, its expected impact, and the ultimate expected business outcome.* The more indirect the outcome for which advertising is held accountable, the more necessary it is for a chain of evidence to be established. This is the evaluative counterpart of defining the particular

role advertising is expected to play in the marketing mix. Not only must advertising and marketing goals be shown to have been achieved, but evidence indicating that advertising contributed to the larger marketing objectives must also be provided. Additionally, the ability to rule out non-advertising-related situational factors may also help to strengthen the desired linkages.

3. *Identify and account for the contribution of creative.* The main focus of a large portion of effects research is on the impact of specific elements of the creative message. Measures of effectiveness must also consider the contribution of creative work, but this should take the entire creative message into account and not be restricted just to specific parts of it.

4. *Recognize that advertising has long-term as well as short-term value.* Specification of the long- and short-term contribution of the advertising investment is crucial to a fair evaluation of its performance. When we set short-term performance standards we should also consider their role in long-term strategies. It has long been recognized in work on media and budget models that advertising has carryover effects (Leckenby & Wedding, 1982; Palda, 1964). Carryover effects have sometimes been subdivided into two types—delayed response and customer holdover effects (Kotler, 1971; Leckenby & Wedding, 1982). Delayed response effects occur when there is a delay between the time advertising dollars are spent and a consumer response (purchase) is made. Customer holdover effects refer to the fact that an ad can have an effect on subsequent repurchases. Thus an ad might continue to influence a consumer's buying choice not only in the next purchase situation, but in later ones as well.

A LONG-TERM VIEW OF ADVERTISING EFFECTIVENESS

Because brand knowledge and image are cumulative effects of many campaigns, it may take years to assess the full impact of advertising. Ironically, the group that stresses long-term effects the most is the critics of advertising. Critics tend to make assertions such as:

- Advertised products lead children to develop poor nutritional habits.
- Commercial messages promote materialistic values.
- Models shown in ads lead to an overemphasis on beauty and thinness for women.
- Adolescents start to smoke because cigarette ads show attractive, adventurous, and popular people smoking.
- Stress on superficial attributes (both for products and political candidates) leads people to develop poor decision-making strategies.

Although these issues involve a range of target audiences and outcomes, the common underlying theme is that consistent messages over long periods of time have important impacts on beliefs, and these beliefs influence behavior. Applied more generally to our understanding of advertising effectiveness, this theme suggests that consistent messages over time create beliefs about brands and

brand users that ultimately influence choice processes and create tangible benefits for the advertiser.

Ivory Soap provides a positive example. In 1882, Ivory ran a newspaper ad that showed a drawing of a pair of hands and a large bar of Ivory soap, followed by five dense paragraphs of copy. The first paragraph stressed that Ivory had "the fine qualities of a choice Toilet Soap" and (in bold) that it was 99 and 44/100% pure. One hundred and twelve years later, Ivory ran ads in which photographs of people dominated the page. In one case the photo showed a close-up of a 14-year-old girl; another pictured a young father and son. The only copy appeared in a strip down the right-hand side of the page. In large print, one word at a time, the copy said, "You're never too old to baby your skin." In between each word in smaller print the copy said, "no greasy creams," "no heavy perfumes," "no deodorants," "just the basics." The bottom of the column included a color picture of a wrapped bar of Ivory and the statement "99 44/100% pure," which is now a registered trademark of Ivory.

The look of the Ivory ad has certainly changed to fit the times, but even with these changes, for more than 100 years Ivory has continued to say that it is 99 and 44/100% pure. In 1882 this point needed to be placed in bold in the first paragraph. By 1994, all that was needed was a simple reminder in small print below the bar. By consistently stressing this one claim, Ivory has captured the attribute of purity (and perhaps associated attributes such as mildness and gentleness). The value for Ivory of having used this consistent advertising message is that it would now be extremely difficult, if not impossible, for any other brand to challenge Ivory on this dimension. This equity that advertising has created needs to be recognized in any discussion of advertising effectiveness.

We can easily find several other examples. When one thinks of a dependable washing machine, the first brand that comes to mind is Maytag. With years of consistent advertising, Maytag has dominated the claim of dependability and generated widespread brand awareness, even though Maytag's advertising budget is typically well below that of its major competitors. This example suggests that long-term consistent advertising messages can create an image that keeps the brand in the consumer's mind. If a company strongly associates itself with a particular attribute or image, it can afford to reduce its advertising budget or even stop advertising for brief periods of time without significantly hurting its sales. This tangible economic benefit must be considered in assessing advertising effectiveness.

Originally, Maytag stressed dependability to overcome the perceived financial risk inherent in buying a washing machine instead of a washboard. Today, in a more hectic and complex world, families are concerned about the potential loss of time and convenience that can be caused by an undependable appliance. Maytag has understood this and reexpressed its equity through the lonely Maytag repairman who is never called because Maytag appliances never break. Thus, Maytag capitalized on its initial efforts by updating its imagery to fit the times, while continuing to stand for the same value: dependability.

LONG-TERM VERSUS SHORT-TERM VIEWS OF EFFECTIVENESS

Not surprisingly, long-term effectiveness and short-term effectiveness must be assessed in different ways. Differences include type of effect examined, time period considered, measurement method, and target audience.

Type of Effects

Short-term effectiveness is best assessed by demonstrating a chain of effects that includes sales, brand perceptions, and advertising awareness or attitudes. Failure to show any of these effects would raise questions about either effectiveness or causality. The more clearly and convincingly the ties between each of these effects can be made and the greater the degree to which alternative causes can be ruled out, the more compelling the case that advertising created an impact.

A long-term perspective of advertising effectiveness would focus more on cumulative perceptions. Here too, it would be important to show that outcomes match the prime focus of a brand's campaigns over the years. Because other elements of the marketing mix will normally be consistent with the long-term advertising image or benefit when a campaign is successful, it will be more difficult here to identify advertising's unique contribution.

Time Period

In the short term, effectiveness can be assessed in time periods ranging from a few minutes to a year. To directly establish that advertising made an impact, copy test results that examine attitude change immediately after exposure may be an appropriate measure. To show that the campaign affected sales, the appropriate time period may range from monthly or quarterly changes to 1 year. The time required to measure changes in brand perceptions is typically shorter.

In measuring long-term changes in brand beliefs, 10 years or longer would not be unusual. Although studies of this sort do not fit the time frames brand managers generally have to demonstrate their ability, they provide vital evidence about the importance of advertising and they increase marketers' ability to use advertising effectively.

Appropriate Outcome Measure

In assessments of short-term advertising effectiveness, the most common measurement is the change in awareness, brand knowledge, attitudes, or sales. Because it is also important to show that changes are due to advertising and not some other cause, the test brand's change scores should be compared with

those of its major competitors. This comparison can help allay concerns that the change was due to a change in economic or market conditions or some other confounding factor.

Although change is the predominant way of assessing short-term advertising effectiveness, change is not always appropriate when examining long-term effectiveness. Here, the goal is to associate a brand with a clear and recognizable attribute or image. Thus, the objective should be consistency over time rather than change. The most appropriate way to assess long-term effectiveness is to examine the strength of association between the desired image or attribute and the brand. As with short-term effectiveness, it may be worthwhile to compare the performance of the target brand with its major competitors. When a campaign has been effective, the brand will have a stronger linkage to its advertised image or attribute than any rival.

Target Audience

The final difference between the long-term and short-term views of advertising effectiveness is the target audience. Some authors have recently written about the importance of focusing just on current prospects in assessing short-term measures of advertising effectiveness (Swenson, 1994; Wells & Swenson, 1994). They argue that including nonprospects in a sample creates error in estimating effectiveness because nonprospects are unlikely to respond to advertising in the same way as prospects do.

However, when we talk about long-term effectiveness, people who are not currently prospects but who might one day become buyers may be the most important group to consider. These people do not wake up one day and become prospects for a product without prior ideas or information. Rather, they have images and conceptions about brands and brand users prior to reaching a consideration phase in buying.

If a brand can project a clear and consistent image or a strong association with an attribute, it is more likely that future prospects will remember the brand and know something about it when they reach the product consideration stage. This effect is analogous to McGraw-Hill's campaign to promote use of ads in business publications to support personal selling. In the McGraw-Hill ads, a stern looking man is seated in a chair. The copy quotes him as saying:

I don't know who you are.
I don't know your company.
I don't know your company's product.
I don't know what your company stands for.
I don't know your company's customers.
I don't know your company's record.
I don't know your company's reputation.
Now—what was it you wanted to sell me?

Below the picture, the moral of this tale is spelled out for the reader, “Sales start **before** your salesman calls—with business publication advertising.”

What was true for the role of business ads in personal selling may also be true of the long-term role of advertising for consumer products and services. By creating a clear and recognizable image or attribute association through long-term consistent advertising, advertisers can assure that future prospects will come to the buying situation with a feeling that they know the advertiser’s brand, its customers, its reputation, and what it stands for. This is another important long-term benefit of advertising.

CONCLUSION

Advertising is under increasing pressure to demonstrate that it makes a difference and is worth its cost. However, given advertising’s salience, there is a surprising lack of consensus regarding its effectiveness. We have tried to resolve some of the problems by differentiating advertising effectiveness from advertising effects. Effectiveness involves assessments of actual campaigns in natural settings, whereas effects involve responses to individual ads.

We proposed that effectiveness may best be thought of as a societal-level concept whose meaning is established by the consensus of a community of professionals. As such, a first step in future research might be to determine what information professionals use in judging effectiveness. One potential source of useful data is the Advertising Effectiveness Awards, commonly known as Effies. Entrants for this award provide descriptions of campaign objectives and background situation, creative and media strategy, and most importantly, evidence of the results of the campaign. A pool of more than 300 judges representing clients, agencies, marketing research companies, and a few academics, assess the effectiveness of each entry. The research question would be what criteria these professionals use to judge effectiveness in this context.

As useful as it might be, this information is limited to short-term effectiveness. A more complete conceptualization of effectiveness must take into account a campaign’s ability to contribute to long-term brand equity. Greater consideration of ways to measure this contribution is clearly needed.

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Research and the Meaning of Advertising Effectiveness: Mutual Misunderstandings

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Any discussion of advertising research and measurement of advertising effectiveness needs to consider advertising research as a marketing problem. If marketing is defined as the art of meeting consumers' needs, advertising effectiveness must be defined in relation to the needs of advertisers. We contend that these needs are quite diverse; we believe that these differing needs reflect important differences in definition among academic and practitioner researchers.

Such a relativistic approach may worry some readers. They may say, "What about scientific objectivity?" We say that we are examining a language phenomenon. Scientific objectivity is but an example of one language and does not represent the single standard of excellence. From our relativistic position, we attempt to articulate how this state of confusion about advertising effectiveness has evolved. We also propose some means to move beyond the present deadlock in which we talk amongst ourselves but the words have different meanings.

Four groups of people have different needs for something called advertising effectiveness: (a) advertising agency researchers, (b) syndicated advertising research services, (c) marketing managers (who nominally use the research), and (d) academicians.

Each has different sets of needs and activities, different reward systems, and different definitions of advertising effectiveness and the means to measure effectiveness. These differences do not grow smaller; they are enduring and even growing.

INDUSTRY DEFINITIONS OF EFFECTIVENESS

The role of the advertising agency researcher has changed radically in the past 10 years (Zaltman & Moorman, 1988–1989). Removed from a central position in the marketing process (O'Donoghue, 1994), the advertising researcher has three central preoccupations. The first preoccupation is ensuring that the agency's advertising looks good to the client. Two major means are open to accomplish this: qualitative research (Achenbaum, 1993) and the use of a syndicated service to pretest finished advertising. Other advertising research functions, such as market definition, tracking, or even selection of the syndicated service, are now generally reserved by clients. Second, increasing competition among agencies for scarcer business (O'Donoghue, 1994) saddles agency researchers with frequent new business pitches. The meaning of "effectiveness" here often becomes showmanship: subtly integrating (usually qualitative) research with presentations of speculative creative work. Finally, advertising researchers have another role, providing consumer depictions to the creatives. These (qualitative) depictions are often the researchers' most important contribution to advertising and ultimately to advertising effectiveness.

Many syndicated advertising research providers emphasize in-market measurement and models that translate the traditional copy research measures to sales effects (see chaps. 18 and 19, this volume). At the same time, syndicated research providers attempt to link copy quality, media weight, and scheduling to sales effectiveness. These sales-anchored validations are in response to clients' expressed needs to justify advertising expenditures (as contrasted to, say, promotion expenditures) in the most direct way possible. Although some of these syndicated services are constructed around attitude and belief change, most recent efforts have concentrated on bridging the gap between their key normative measurements and sales.

Marketing managers are spending less time addressing copy-related issues and when they do, they are treating them in the context of other elements of the marketing mix. Just as advertising is viewed by marketers today as part of a larger, more complex array of consumer communications tools, marketing itself has broadened in scope. Matters of finance, distribution, and trade relations are taking up larger amounts of the marketers' long days. Common denominators in those dialogues are sales and profits. Consequently, when advertising issues are addressed by marketing management, it is increasingly in those terms. Because advertising effectiveness is viewed in this context, it too is seen by marketing managers in terms of dollars and cents. Thus, marketing managers and providers of syndicated services are adopting similar definitions of advertising effectiveness. This is not surprising because syndicated services must market their products; they must tailor their offerings to their clients' expressed needs (Adams & Blair, 1992; Kuse, chap. 7, this volume).

ACADEMIC DEFINITIONS OF EFFECTIVENESS

What do academicians define as effectiveness? Perhaps the best way to characterize academic research practice is to contrast it with that of practitioners.

Table 2.1 presents our evaluation of that contrast. The subjects of the 1993 Advertising Research Foundation Workshops agendas provided the key practitioner issues. This agenda is contrasted with academicians' articles in the 1993 issues of the *Journal of Advertising*, *Journal of Consumer Research*, *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, *Journal of Marketing*, and *Journal of Advertising Research*. Generally, the topics explored by practitioners centered on measurement and strategies; academicians, by contrast, were more concerned with theory.

Table 2.2 attempts to reach one higher level of abstraction, contrasting the more general research orientations of practitioners and academicians. Not surprisingly, these general orientations suggest that academicians are most concerned with understanding as an end rather than as a means to action. Even though many of the academic articles had sections labeled "Implications for Marketing Managers," the implications seemed to be self-evident or difficult to execute. Therefore, by extension, for the academic audience, effectiveness was defined in the language of theory, not practice.

TABLE 2.1
Practitioner Versus Academic Research Orientations

	Practitioners ^a	Academicians ^b
What's new/changes	X	
Advertising measurement ^c	X	
Advertising strategy	X	
Viewer data/ media measurement	X	
Branding/brand equity	X	
Specific measurement tools/sales effects	X	
General theory		X
Advertising response/affect/attitudes		X
Consumer decision-making models		X
Integrated communications		X
New products/line extension		X
Organization of marketing/marketing research		X

^aARF Workshops in 1993. ^bArticles on advertising research (1993) in *Journal of Advertising*, *Journal of Consumer Research*, *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, *Journal of Marketing*, *Journal of Advertising Research*. ^cDefined as specific copy research techniques and issues about specific measurements and their relationship to some payoff measurement.

TABLE 2.2
Practitioner Versus Academic General Orientations

	Practitioners ^a	Academics ^b
Application	Now; generally only to immediate practice	Not necessarily now. Perhaps application only to theory, not practice
Model	S→R	S→Affect→R
Focus on	Measurement	Theory
	“Results”	Consumer
	What affects my work	What affects larger structures
	Inputs (brands, advertising)	Structures/affects
	Action based on results	Understanding to understand

^aARF Workshops in 1993. ^bArticles on advertising research (1993) in *Journal of Advertising*, *Journal of Consumer Research*, *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, *Journal of Marketing*, and *Journal of Advertising Research*.

WHY DIFFERENT DEFINITIONS OF ADVERTISING EFFECTIVENESS?

The term *effectiveness* involves demonstrating that some effect has occurred. It shifts emphasis from descriptive approaches to causal ones (whatever “causal” means). Despite these common threads, it should be apparent from our brief descriptions that advertising effectiveness means different things to those four audiences. Why is this? Does our answer to the “why” provide some clues as to a rapprochement among the different groups of researchers?

We believe that the crux of the problem was laid out by Wittgenstein in his idiosyncratic version of language theory. Wittgenstein (1953) stated that language comes from what people do, their actions and behaviors. Therefore, the different nature of the academic and practitioner occupations means that words (even the same words, such as *research*) have different meanings.

Wittgenstein wrote about “language games” to describe the languages associated with different activities. See Table 2.3 for a simplified description of language games. The marketing managers’ highly pragmatic, financial-results-oriented activities and the academics’ highly conceptual activities have very different “rules” of how to win and who is winning and even of what winning is (Kover, 1976). Consequently, even when academicians and practitioners use the same words, effective performance means vastly different things.

In the starkly different contexts of the faster changing business world and the slower changing academic world, the meanings of familiar words are diverging even more than in the past. Although academicians and practitioners may use the same words, they are not necessarily talking about the same things. Because practitioners are behaving differently today, the terms they use have different shadings from what they have had in the recent past. *Effectiveness* has come to mean either sales results or some kind of accepted surrogate for sales

results. Previously accepted measures, such as attitude change, are slowly being left behind (or relegated to qualitative research, particularly focus groups) as pressure increases for advertising to justify itself against alternative forms of promotional spending.

No matter how good or bad business has been recently, managers of publicly owned companies must convey to present and would-be stockholders that things are going to get better next quarter or sooner. The resulting short-term focus has altered the behavior of these firms and of those who work there in several significant ways. The meaning of such terms as *sample*, *brands* and *brand equity*, *loyalty*, *advertising impact*, and, of course, *effectiveness* has radically changed even though the terms are the same. As the activities change, the words remain but the meanings gradually transform.

For practitioners, profitability is not the only financial construct gaining marketing management attention. Accountability is also a focus. Emphasis on “absolutes” is being replaced by emphasis on “relatives.” The frequently heard question from marketers today, “How much should we be spending on advertising?” is a surface manifestation of the accountability issue sometimes expressed as “What is my advertising spending doing for my bottom line?” This is a shorthand version of the real question for which management is seeking an answer: “What is my advertising spending doing for my bottom line relative to other elements of the marketing mix?” This latter question forces comparisons among advertising, consumer promotion, trade promotion, customer service, and other ways in which marketers can seek to improve profitability. When measuring advertising effectiveness, academicians seldom consider such issues.

Following the lead of marketing practitioners, the major syndicated services have begun to concentrate heavily on relating results studies to sales. An example is the joint advertising effectiveness modeling by NPD and McCollum/Spielman Worldwide. In a recent presentation of their model, Poling (1994) indicated that although attitudes are a critical part of this model, attitudes are inside the black box (see also Mehta & Purvis, chap. 18, this volume). It is sales that are visible and, for now, sales are the core trend in evaluation.

TABLE 2.3
Language, Word Games, Meaning
(An Oversimplified Précis of Some of Wittgenstein’s Later Theory)

Basic idea: “meaning as use”
No “logic of language” but a vast collection of practices, each with its own meaning.
The grammar of each language is a kind of logic based on the different activities for which each language is used. “Language games” are any and all of the language-using activities in which we engage. Wittgenstein sees a multiplicity of language games; they differ according to the activities of which they are a part.
The meaning of a word is its use in the language. That use is tied to the activity with which it is used.
“To understand a sentence means to understand a language. To understand a language means to be master of a technique” (Wittgenstein, <i>Philosophical Investigations</i> , 1953, Par. 199)

LOSS OF OBJECTIVITY

As a result of their emphasis on single (if essential) measures of effectiveness, marketers apparently are willing to sacrifice researcher objectivity to gain researcher expertise in business contexts and languages. Researchers can be used to “sound like science” even as they lose objectivity. Perhaps this is one reason (beside that of perceived costs) for the growth of qualitative research. The format of qualitative research allows for greater “latitude” in interpreting findings, particularly those that can be shown to sound like sales influence (Achenbaum, 1993). Decentralization has reduced the behavioral distance between the researcher and the marketer and probably has reduced the language gap as well. The narrowing of that distance may be a danger for applied researchers as they become more similar to marketers. The greater the similarity between research practitioner and marketer, the greater the gap between the research practitioner and academician.

THE ACADEMIC PERSPECTIVE

The need system for academicians is focused on creating theory (Kover, 1976). Advertising effectiveness can be (and often is) defined by criteria other than sales: greater insight into the structure of consumers’ decisions, more understanding of attitude and attitude change, ever more abstract models. It is not necessary within that language to come up with sales changes (or their surrogates).

For the outsider, the academic enterprise seems to be a disjointed series of individual efforts, a set of loosely connected clusters of people and orientations. Each cluster has its own particular orientation—cognitive, semiotic, cultural, and so on—and each orientation selects a definition of effectiveness that best fits its own measurements.

These differences, these language differences between practitioners and academicians and within the academic world, mean that communication, in the sense of shared understanding, is very difficult (Brinberg & Hirschman, 1986). Practitioners deride academicians as distant, fragmented, not applied, not concerned with the real world, and not caring. Like creatures of the Galapagos Islands, they are cut off from the academic foundations that gave them origin. Academicians deride practitioners as atheoretical, using sloppy research, not building, and not caring. Like poor cousins, they press their noses against the window to view what seem to be huge research funds used to repeat the same dull projects. Both are right. And wrong.

How can applied researchers act as translators between these different activity structures? An appeal to empathy will not do. The reward structures, themselves a part of the activity structure (Ayer, 1985), are quite different

between the two spheres and offer little promise of motivating incremental changes in the differing activity streams. Still, there are some possibilities.

1. Can the reward structures be changed? Is it possible that practitioners can be rewarded for expanding knowledge? In the early 1980s, Irv Gross recommended that DuPont institute sabbaticals for marketing researchers as they had for chemists and physicists.
2. Can new structures be created? Can companies and agencies form small theory units? Can academic institutions form applied units?
3. Can crossover people be treated and rewarded differently? Can they be used to find and recruit others who can benefit both business and the academy?
4. If different languages are results of different activities, can activities be found that can draw both kinds of people into joint effort? The question of effectiveness is one such effort.

A SHARED TASK

In our view, working in a task-oriented environment in which shared activity is the key, in which the rewards (both internal and external) come from successful completion of meaningful goals, in which the two groups must work together is the most promising way to overcome the language barrier.

We believe that the emergence of the new infotainment options that have taken off in recent years have created a sense of urgency that could generate this kind of effort. As the home computer muscles its way into the living rooms and family rooms of the United States, it is creating new communications imperatives. As the virtual community flashes into existence, the traditional ad agencies are virtually out of the picture.

Leading advertisers are telling their agencies that dramatic changes are necessary. At the annual conference of the American Association of Advertising Agencies in May 1994, Edwin Artzt, then CEO of Procter and Gamble, proclaimed, "From where we stand, we can't be sure that ad-supported TV programming will have a future in the world being created—a world of video-on-demand, pay-per-view and subscription television" (Yahn, 1994). He called for an industry summit and focused ad agencies on the new media issues.

We believe and propose that this call, and the complex series of developments that precipitated it, represent the single best hope for overcoming the language barrier between academicians and practitioners. We also believe that the importance and the magnitude of the problem offer substantial rewards to cooperative efforts that call forth skillful applications of the unique abilities and perspectives of both parties.

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Comments on Chapters 1 and 2

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Chapters 1 and 2 demonstrate why advertising effectiveness is sufficiently difficult and intriguing to warrant the focus of an entire volume. Interestingly, these important chapters approach advertising effectiveness in quite different ways. Chapter 1 by Wright-Isak, Faber, and Horner suggests that what ad effectiveness really means is debatable, and that there are some consistent rules concerning how it should be approached. Chapter 2 by Cook and Kover agrees that ad effectiveness has a number of different definitions, and asserts that all have value. What is needed in view of these differing definitions is a system of cross-talk among those holding the different definitions, so that the whole enterprise can move ahead more quickly and effectively. In spite of their differing orientations, however, these chapters offer insights into the issue. I showcase these insights, and then offer some further thoughts about how the two approaches can be reconciled and about how both chapters provide significant insight into advertising's rapidly changing world of new media and new technologies.

Both chapters distinguish between what academicians and practitioners in advertising research are actually doing. Academicians are looking mainly for generalizable statements about how features of ads determine their impact. They are almost never interested in how well a particular brand performs in the marketplace. Practitioners, on the other hand, are interested solely in just that impact. Only when a campaign is in the development stage are practitioners even vaguely interested in generalizations about the influence of ad features—features such as ad length, the psycholinguistic structure of the language used in the copy, how illustrations relate to copy points, the category of emotion that is elicited by the ad, or the number of nouns in the headline. Even at the time of ad creation, it is likely that creatives believe that the uniqueness of the ad and how it captures meaning are more important than any set of rules about what features work best (see similar comments by Crimmins, chap. 7, this volume).

So is the academic study of advertising effects completely useless? No. It is just that the purpose of academic advertising research is not to aid practitioners, but to develop a psychology and sociology of mediated persuasion. In such a social science, the structure of messages is linked to internal and external behaviors via a set of generalized rules or laws. Eventually, this body of knowledge may become sufficiently well developed to be used by anyone

interested in figuring out how to persuade via the media. Presently, however, this knowledge is ignored by most advertising practitioners.

As the authors of both chapters observe, practitioners are mostly interested in knowing whether ads create enough impact to warrant their cost. This means that the focus is on individual ads for individual brands. There is virtually no interest in generalizations across brands. The practitioner is not selling all brands, just one. What makes the practitioner's question difficult is, first, the complicated and variable linkage between exposure to ads and persuaded behavior (e.g., purchase). Second, getting a fix on all the relevant occurrences in the linkage is expensive. Both of these facts have led to a situation in which, although a lot of claims are made about measuring advertising effectiveness, most of those claims are only that. There is not much in the way of scientifically valid data to support them.

So what do we do when academicians provide little or nothing of relevance to advertising effectiveness issues, and practitioners who know what they want do little to provide valid demonstrations? Chapter 1 suggests that when the term *ad effectiveness* is used, everyone must accept four criteria for investigating effectiveness. First, it needs to be clear to everyone involved what the goals of the advertising are in the first place. If the goal is to improve the percentage of people who recognize the brand as representing a particular category of product, then that effect is what must be tested. If the goal of the advertising is to increase the number of inquiries received, then that effect is what must be tested.

Second, the authors suggest that how advertising fits into the chain of events in the marketing effort must be identified. This criterion appears to be closely related to identification of the goal(s) of the advertising. Creating greater brand recognition is an event very early in the chain from ad to purchase, but one might argue that it is critically important. If consumers do not know that Compaq sells computers, they will not know to ask about them, and may be more hesitant to try one when it is recommended by their local computer dealer. To determine whether advertising is effective under these conditions, it would be necessary to first establish that indeed more people were coming to know that Compaq made computers, and that dealerships where advertising was heavier had salespeople who reported greater receptiveness in the showroom. In other words, when advertising is not designed to drive a sale directly, its stated purpose must be demonstrated, and how that accomplishment is eventually related to a sale must also be examined. Only then can ad effectiveness truly be demonstrated. Reynolds, Olson, and Rochon (chap. 19, this volume) make similar comments.

Third, Wright-Isak, Faber, and Horner point out that an ad is more than the sum of its individual parts. It may create emotion, be easy to understand in terms of its linguistic structure, and have an optimal number of words in its headline, but it is more than these features. It is a whole message, the impact of which must be measured.

The last requirement that Wright-Isak, Faber, and Horner suggest is that advertising effectiveness is likely to have meaning both in the short term and

the long term. Short-term effects occur as a result of one or two viewings. Long-term effects occur as a result of many viewings—the effects of which are presumably cumulative. It is clear that one of the reasons that advertising has been losing out to promotion is that short-term effects of advertising are often much less than those of promotion. Promotions, on the other hand, are likely to have little or no positive long-term value.

These four criteria for evaluating advertising effectiveness are unarguably important. They are probably most important for practitioners because they are based on the goal of the practitioner—that is, to index the impact that advertising has on marketing objectives and compare that impact to its cost. They are also important for academicians with the goal of developing a social science of advertising because they help explain why the knowledge the academicians are producing is unlikely to prove particularly interesting to practitioners. I hasten to say, however, that sometimes a finding that crops up first in academic research on advertising (i.e., the predictive value of attitude toward the ad) can prove quite useful to practitioners.

A comment made by Wright-Isak, Faber, and Horner provides a good segue into the chapter by Cook and Kover. Wright-Isak et al. say that “advertising effectiveness is a societal level concept whose meaning lies within a community of professionals” (p. 4). Cook and Kover point out that different research communities have different meanings for ad effectiveness, and that the communities do not communicate very well because although the meanings are different, the words used are not. Cook and Kover articulate four such communities. The first are ad agency researchers, the second are researchers at syndicated research companies, the third are marketing managers in companies marketing brands, and the fourth are academicians.

Quite rightly, Cook and Kover note that these four communities have different goals. Ad agency researchers want to make their agency’s work look good to the client, have material to use in new business pitches, and be able to paint a detailed picture of the potential customer for creatives who have to communicate to that customer. Syndicated researchers want to help clients compare an ad’s impact to its cost. Marketing managers are generally interested in the same thing. Academicians are interested in what the authors call “theory,” generalized social science laws that link general characteristics of ads to responses to ads.

Whereas Wright-Isak et al. suggest that the practitioner definition of ad effectiveness is the one that should be adopted, Cook and Kover suggest that if the four ad research communities are forced to interact with each other, a new definition of ad effectiveness may emerge—one that combines the best of the several communities. Cook and Kover even go so far as to suggest how the communities might be formed; for example, having practitioners visit as professors and having universities form applied research units. Most importantly, they suggest that new media technologies have created a situation of enough uncertainty that agencies and advertisers might be willing to invest in think tanks of the type Cook and Kover recommend.

The bottom line is that advertising effectiveness, a phrase used by both academicians and practitioners, is not understood at all in the same way by the two groups. The Wright-Isak et al. chapter suggests how the phrase should be understood, and what research should therefore look like. The Cook and Kover chapter concludes that the various parties using the term should get together in a serious, long-term enterprise to understand what advertising effectiveness really means.

In the chapters that follow, the reader will clearly see these distinctions. Interestingly, however, not all the distinctions are predictable based on whether the authors are academicians or practitioners. In some cases (e.g., Percy & Rossiter, chap. 15), the academicians are much in agreement with the criteria set up by Wright-Isak et al. If Cook and Kover are right, what we really need is more and better communication among the communities, and this volume will likely prove an excellent starting point for that to occur.

Finally, it should be noted that advertising effectiveness is not going to become less important with the coming of the information superhighway. No matter whether the advertising occurs in an electronic newspaper or magazine or in interactive television, the question of its effectiveness will be critical. If we can build toward a science of mediated persuasion that can identify generalizations about the components of a campaign and how they operate, then this knowledge will serve us well, no matter what the technology.

II

Subtle Processing

Chapters 1 and 2, and the comments that follow them, stress differences between the academician's theoretical orientation and the practitioner's profit-based concerns. At times it seems as though the needs and values of academicians who are interested in developing a psychology and sociology of mediated persuasion and the needs and values of practitioners who are interested in measuring real-world effects are so far apart that the two groups (if they are groups) have little, if anything, in common.

The chapters and discussions in Part II present strong evidence to the contrary. Even though the three chapters in this part all describe classically "academic" experiments, they offer new ways of thinking about important profit-oriented questions. Chapter 3 asks if advertisements are effective even when the audience is inattentive. Chapter 4 asks if an advertisement's context affects its effectiveness. Chapter 5 asks if repetition enhances persuasion. To all three questions, the answer is "yes."

These chapters and the comments on them demonstrate the productivity of academician-practitioner interaction. They note potential applications and they go beyond the obvious to propose extensions. They raise important issues for both academic and applied research.

Chapter 3 is authored by Stewart Shapiro of the University of Baltimore, Susan E. Heckler of the University of Arizona, and Deborah J. MacInnis of the University of Southern California. Chapter 4 is authored by Youjae Yi of Seoul National University, Korea. Chapter 5 is authored by Sharmistha Law and Scott A. Hawkins of the University of Toronto. The comments are by Larry Percy, a former advertising agency research director who is also a textbook coauthor and an independent consultant, and by James C. Crimmins, Director of Strategic Planning and Research at DDB Needham Worldwide, a multinational advertising agency. Both Percy and Crimmins are authors of other chapters in this volume.

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Measuring and Assessing the Impact of Preattentive Processing on Ad and Brand Attitudes

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A typical yet frustrating situation for advertisers is that consumers pay little or no attention to advertisements. For example, they are likely to be engaged in conversation or driving when exposed to broadcast ads or reading an article when a print ad is present. Conventional wisdom holds that the resulting low levels of ad processing under such conditions reduce the ad's effectiveness, because conscious processing of ads is thought to be necessary for ads to impact consumers' preferences. Indeed, a number of measures of advertising effectiveness (i.e., recall, recognition, comprehension) assume consumers are aware of and can remember an ad.

Recent research in psychology suggests that information that is present but "ignored" can, in fact, be processed, albeit at a nonconscious, preattentive level. Furthermore, recent theory suggests that this type of processing can lead to changes in judgments about the preattentively processed information (i.e., increased liking for the ad and brand), even though consumers cannot recall having seen the preattentively processed stimulus before. Even more interesting is that some empirical work in an advertising context has shown that preattentively processed stimuli can affect consumer judgments about an ad or brand (Janiszewski, 1988, 1993; Shapiro & MacInnis, 1992).

Unfortunately, past research is limited in demonstrating that observed effects are due to the preattentive processing of ads as opposed to alternative explanations. Moreover, there currently exists no stringent methodology for stimulating or measuring preattentive processing. Of particular concern is whether the

methodology ensures that no conscious processing of the ads occurs during the exposure and measurement activities. If, however, these methodological issues were resolved, and if preattentively processed ads were shown to impact consumer judgments, we would have evidence that exposure itself is, in some situations, likely to affect consumers' brand judgments. Thus, substantially new theory about advertising exposure and consumer information processing would be evidenced. Moreover, we would have novel insights into alternative measures of advertising effectiveness. For example, if advertisements that are ignored still affect brand attitudes, care must be taken in interpreting measures of advertising effectiveness based solely on recognition, recall, or comprehension.

The purpose of this research is threefold. First, a new, more stringent method designed to investigate preattentive processing of print ads is tested. Second, using this new method and novel indicators of preattentive processing, more convincing evidence will be given regarding the relationship between preattentive processing and consumer attitudes than has been offered in the past. Third, a direct comparison is made between the impact of consciously processed and preattentively processed ads on consumers' attitudes toward the ad and brand.

LITERATURE REVIEW

As indicated in greater detail later, emergent literature in advertising and psychology suggests that individuals can process information that is just outside the focus of attention, even though they are not consciously aware of it. The processing of this information has been shown to influence individuals' judgments about (i.e., affect their attitude toward) the stimulus processed preattentively. Before discussing this literature in more detail and describing the issues examined in this research, we first describe preattentive processing, and distinguish it from related research streams. Table 3.1 guides the discussion.

A majority of research on advertising effects focuses on consumers' conscious processing of an advertisement (Stream I in Table 3.1). In this research, respondents' primary task is to direct their attention to the information in the ad, and they are fully conscious of what the information is (i.e., they have the ability to acknowledge that they are being presented with the information; Kihlstrom, 1990). Research in this area typically focuses on the effects of

TABLE 3.1
Distinguishing Streams of Research in Information Processing

<i>Streams of Research</i>	<i>Attentional Focus on the Ad vs. Surrounding Context</i>	<i>Who Determines Whether the Ad Achieves Awareness</i>	<i>Is Awareness of the Ad Achieved?</i>
I. Conscious processing	Ad	Consumer	Yes
II. Preconscious processing	Ad	Advertiser	No
III. Preattentive processing	Surrounding context	Consumer	No

processing different types of ads on consumers' memory (e.g., Childers, Heckler, & Houston, 1986; Costley & Brucks, 1992; Heckler & Childers, 1992; Keller, 1987), beliefs (e.g., Lutz, 1975, 1977; Mitchell & Olson, 1981), and attitudes (e.g., Edell & Staelin, 1983; MacKenzie, Lutz, & Belch, 1986; Mittal, 1990).

A second, less heavily researched stream labeled preconscious processing (Stream II in Table 3.1) focuses on respondents' processing of information typically presented at such a fast rate or in such a degraded form that it cannot be consciously perceived, even though they focus their attention directly on the spot where information is being delivered. Respondents are unaware of the existence of this information because it is presented subliminally (i.e., just below the perceptual threshold; Marcel, 1983a, 1983b; Moore, 1988; Reber, 1985; Synodinos, 1988). A main characteristic of this phenomenon is that the denied access to consciousness of information is controlled by the advertiser (i.e., information is deliberately presented below the perceptual threshold). Although there is evidence in both marketing and psychology for the existence of subliminal perception, evidence for its effects on consumers' attitudes and behaviors is unclear. The research remains controversial and the practice is generally regarded as unethical.

A third and distinct research stream labeled preattentive processing (Stream III in Table 3.1) focuses on respondents' "processing" of information that is just outside their focus of attention. Such would be the case, for example, when consumers flip through a magazine looking for or reading a particular article (thus focusing their attention on the article), and in the process "overlook" the many ads to which they are exposed. Like research on preconscious processing, this research stream deals with situations in which consumers are unaware of the nonattended information. Unlike research on preconscious processing, however, consumers, not advertisers, are responsible for denied access of information to consciousness (i.e., they are not conscious of it because they are paying attention to something else, not because advertisers control the nature of the exposure).

Given the enormity of advertising clutter (Britt, Adams, & Miller, 1972; Webb & Ray, 1979), and given that consumers are often involved in tasks that occupy their attention and thus limit their opportunity to attend to and process ads (MacInnis, Moorman, & Jaworski, 1991), understanding the potential impact of ads processed at a preattentive level is important.

Some research on preattentive processing has appeared in the marketing literature. In the studies conducted to date, consumers were exposed to a mock newspaper containing several articles and target ads. Ads, either pictorial or verbal in nature, were placed to either the right- or left-hand side of an article in the newspaper. Subjects were told to read the articles, and were later tested for their liking for and recognition of the target ads. This research examined situations that facilitate preattentive processing (Janiszewski, 1988, 1993) and provided evidence that preattentively processed ads and brands are evaluated more favorably despite the fact that consumers cannot remember having previously seen the ads (Janiszewski, 1988, 1993; Shapiro & MacInnis, 1992).

Unresolved Issues

Despite these intriguing results, several issues need to be resolved before one can feel confident about the effects of preattentively processed information on ad and brand attitudes. These include issues regarding (a) the control of attention during the exposure activity, (b) the identification of valid measures of attention, (c) the identification of valid measures of preattentive processing, and (d) the measurement of any differential impact of attentive versus preattentive processing of ads on ad and brand attitudes.

Controlling Attention. Studying preattentive processing requires a method that controls the focus of attention so that attention is focused on the surrounding context and not on the ad. Unfortunately, prior methods have had consumers simply read a mock newspaper—a procedure that allows consumers considerable freedom to glance at the surrounding ad content. For example, 20% of the consumers in Experiment 3 of Janiszewski's (1993) study claimed to recognize the target ad, suggesting that these consumers used conscious versus preattentive processing to process the target ads. Although some conscious processing may be a natural part of the typical consumer viewing context, it is not desirable for the careful study of preattentive processing.

Measuring Attention. In addition to providing a method that provides greater control over attentional focus, it is necessary to have some independent measure of attention so as to determine that processing is indeed operating at a preattentive level. Previous studies by Janiszewski (1988) and Shapiro and MacInnis (1992) did not provide this evidence. Janiszewski (1993) did provide eye tracking data in one experiment to provide "online" evidence of attentional focus. However, individuals can devote attentional resources to information not in focal view (Posner, 1980; Sperling & Melchner, 1978). Thus although eye tracking data may accurately reflect where consumers are focusing their attention, it does not accurately reflect where subjects are devoting attentional resources. Moreover, eye tracking equipment is cumbersome and certainly does not reproduce normal viewing behavior. Ideally then, measures of attention that do not interfere with normal viewing behavior, and that provide better insight into the allocation of attentional resources are needed.

Measuring Preattentive Processing. In addition to measuring the allocation of attentional resources, independent measures are needed to demonstrate that preattentive processing has occurred. All information, whether processed consciously or at a preattentive level, activates a memory representation of the material. This activation, known as priming, increases the likelihood that the activated stimulus will be retrieved from memory. If consumers process a brand name at a preattentive level, there is a greater likelihood that they will mention that name when asked to name brands in the product category than if they had

not been exposed to the brand name at all. Therefore, evidence of this priming effect is necessary to support that preattentive processing has occurred. Priming is often assessed using an implicit memory task (Graf & Schacter, 1985; Schacter, 1987) in which individuals' memory performance is shown to be facilitated even though they report no awareness of having been exposed to the object before. Janiszewski provided no independent measures of priming. Shapiro and MacInnis (1992) did use an implicit memory task to assess priming, however due to the small sample size (all *Ns* less than 9) further investigation is needed before any conclusions can be reached.

Measuring the Differential Impact of Attentive Versus Preattentive Processing

Finally, it seems important to examine the impact of preattentively processed ads on ad and brand attitudes compared to ads that have been processed at an attentive (conscious) level. From the standpoint of measuring advertising effectiveness it would be interesting to determine whether ads processed preattentively create ad and brand attitudes that are as favorable or perhaps even more favorable than ads processed at a fully attentive, conscious level.

The objectives of this research are thus (a) to develop and test a method that will control attentional focus and measure the allocation of attentional resources, (b) to show a direct link between preattentive processing, and ad and brand attitudes, and (c) to investigate the differential impact of preattentively versus attentively processed ads on ad and brand attitude.

With respect to the last two objectives we expect that:

- Processing an ad in a preattentive manner will prime the brand depicted within the ad and thus create an implicit memory trace for the brand even though recognition of the ad will be at levels no greater than that expected by chance.
- Processing an ad in a preattentive manner will lead to an increased evaluation of the ad and brand even though recognition of the ad will be at levels no greater than that expected by chance.
- Ads processed preattentively will create ad and brand attitudes that are as favorable or more favorable than ads processed attentively.

RESEARCH METHOD

Controlling and Measuring Attentional Resources

One of the primary contributions of this research is the development of a new methodological tool that allows the researcher to retain a high level of control in the exposure process while presenting subjects with realistic information. Specifically, to gain better control over subjects' use of attentional resources,