



Imagination Report: Getting Real With Segments

Sometimes we have to clean up after others. An apparel company had paid a big supplier six (maybe seven!) figures to conduct a segmentation study. Consumers included males and females of all ages. Big Supplier concluded that the number of segments into which this universe could be divided was . . . three. This just didn't seem like enough!

We were given the assignment of trying again. It should have been the obvious thing to do, but we proceeded by identifying segments separately for males and females, and for different age groups. Yes, there was usually a more fashion-forward segment in each subgroup, but they were often very different. This proved to be a far more useful and credible classification—for only four figures.

You can't just throw your data in the computer, push a button, and get out a useful segmentation. You have to think once in a while and use your imagination.

A Conference

The Marketing Research Association (MRA) has long represented the research industry, and the Minnesota/Upper Midwest chapter has been quite vigorous in recent years. We commend an upcoming conference to you for which, no coincidence, we will be a sponsor.



Date: September 21, 2006
What: Be Nimble, Be Quick, Jump Higher
Faster Smarter
Location: Earle Brown Heritage Center
Minneapolis, Minnesota
Details: Juli Geske-Peer, Questar,
651.905.7898, jpeer@questarweb.com

"Juicing the Orange"

While we are discreet about our client list, it has been our privilege to work closely with Fallon Worldwide ever since we opened for business. Pat Fallon and Fred Senn, Chairman and Chief Learning officer, respectively, have just published a worthy book recounting their experiences with a number of breakthrough campaigns and brand strategies.



We've played small roles in several of these projects, and are delighted to have been mentioned once in the book.

It all began with, and continues to be about, "creative leverage." That has specific meaning in the world of advertising, but we like the idea of working smarter instead of just spending more.

We highly recommend the book, as it is an enjoyable read and full of brilliant marketing thought.

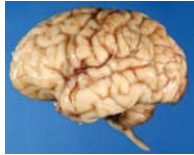
Prediction Market Update

As of this writing, the modal bet in one market is for 110 "severe weather events" throughout the world in 2006. If you are in the insurance or other businesses, this matters a lot.

Another market predicts that 125,000 U.S. troops will be in Iraq on December 31 of this year. And the peak spot price this year for a barrel of oil is predicted to be—\$98. Ouch.

Brain Science and Marketing

We will not pretend to do justice to any one—much less all three—new tomes relevant to the practical marketing implications of what



scientists now understand about the human brain (or "mind" if you prefer). Let's just say they are extremely important to anyone associated with marketing communications and/or research (i.e. most of us).

At the top of our list is Erik du Plessis' *The Advertised Mind*. The author is a veteran of ad research who ably reviews modern brain science and then applies it directly to many nagging issues in the practice of advertising and research thereon. For starters, what causes the brain to pay attention to commercial messaging at all? If our lower brain does not "tag" that stimulus with an emotional charge, we won't even notice it. After that, the job of the ad is to build and reinforce memories of the brand (not "purchase intent"; the brain doesn't store intents. It just stores memories).

We happen to have an hour presentation on this book available should your organization want to know what the fuss is about in more detail.

Malcolm Gladwell made a mark for himself with *Tipping Point*, but the sequel called *Blink: The Power of Thinking Without Thinking* is at least as relevant in our business. The brain can learn, decide and lead us to action in ways we are sometimes not even aware of. We like to think of ourselves as acting "rationally" most of the time. We can and do, but growing evidence shows that a great deal of our behavior is not the end product of conscious thinking.

Why, then, do we persist in asking consumers why they bought a product, or liked a spot? The reality is that they (and we!) truly don't "know" why we have done certain things or felt certain ways.

Timothy Wilson in *Strangers to Ourselves: Discovering the Adaptive Unconscious* goes into greater depth as to what actually goes on.

His term is "confabulation", which is making up explanations after the fact. Even though we are not necessarily conscious of it, the (lower) brain learns and adapts. This is a basic survival mechanism, after all! If asked to account for some action or feeling generated by the unconscious, we can usually make something up. But that doesn't make it the "real" explanation.

Like du Plessis, his depiction of how the mind works helps to better understand how, when, and why advertising works. More to the point, it challenges much/most conventional copy testing methods, both quantitative and qualitative.

We have a new thought-paper on brand and tracking research that reflects these and other new ideas. You may be getting a copy soon, or you may download it from the "Branding and Advertising" section of our website.

We Know Where You Are

One paper we heard at the annual Advanced Techniques Research Forum reviewed interesting work being done on shopping patterns within retail stores. With GPS transmitters mounted in shopping carts, the store can collect mass quantities of movement data. If that can be tied to actual purchases, then the possibilities are even greater. What works for "clicks" is also good for "bricks."

The biggest challenge is digesting and summarizing all that data. How long do people stop at any one location? From "point A", what are the odds of proceeding to "point G" or "point T"? What combinations of locations are likeliest to be shopped on the same trip? Least likely? Knowing which direction a cart is facing, the retailer can tell if in-store signage, television, etc. is pointed in the optimal direction.