
UNIT 7 ADVERTISING RESEARCH - ROLE AND TRENDS

Objectives

After going through this unit you should be able to

- have an overall understanding of advertising research,
- explain various kinds , of advertising research,
- discuss the tools and techniques of major types of advertising research,
- interpret the merits and demerits of major types of advertising research

Structure

- 7.1 Introduction
- 7.2 Kinds of Advertising Research
- 7.3 Measuring Awareness
- 7.4 Measuring Recall
- 7.5 Measuring Attitude
- 7.6 Measuring Brand Usage
- 7.7 Copy Testing
- 7.8 Syndicated and Custom Research Techniques
- 7.9 A Word of Caution When Conducting Research
- 7.10 Summary
- 7.11 Self Assessment Questions
- 7.12 Further Readings

7.1 INTRODUCTION

Importance of advertising research can hardly be over-emphasised. If conducted properly, research can reveal many hidden facts. David Ogilvy, mentioned that "advertising people who ignore research are as dangerous as generals who ignore decodes of enemy signals." Advertising research broadly serves two purposes:

1. provides direction, and
2. provides benchmarks for measuring success/failure

7.2 KINDS OF ADVERTISING RESEARCH

Advertising research covers a gamut of research done for evaluation of advertising campaigns. These range from copy test to strategy tests to brand personality to media research. Each of these are further sub divided. For the ease of understanding, research can be broadly classified into following categories:

- Recall Measurement,
- Attitude Measurement,
- Brand Usage,
- Pre-testing,
- Post-testing, s Copy testing,
- Media Research, and
- Custom Research.



Each of the above mentioned research is used at different stages of advertising campaign. The stages start from the conception of a brand strategy and creatives' and go on to till the time the campaign is over. Apart from the above mentioned research there are also syndicated research available. Important research are discussed later in the chapter.

7.3 MEASURING AWARENESS

Awareness is generally regarded as a measure of knowledge without reference to source. Although the primary interest in advertising evaluation is knowing if there is a relationship between the advertising and consumer awareness, establishing this relationship is not usually possible. There are four primary methods of measuring awareness;

1. Yes-or-no questions. Example: "Have you ever heard of Annapurna Atta (flour)?" Yes No Although the yes-no questions are simple to administer and tabulate, no information is gained beyond the direct answer.
2. Open-end questions. Example: "What companies you can name that package flour?" In this instance, more information is obtained than in yes-no situation, but no relationship to the advertising campaign can be inferred.
3. Check list questions. Example: "Which of the following products does Kissan Company manufacture?". Flour Ketchup Ginger Sauce . Here the answers are easily obtained, although the range of answers is restricted. As in open-end and yes-no questions, no connection with the advertising campaign can be developed.
4. Rating scales. Example: "How would you rate Kissan's Flour in comparison with other brands of flours you have used?" Better , About the same as Not as good as With this approach, a measure of familiarity is achieved, but differences among the person doing the rating make it difficult to combine answers or interpret the exact results. Additional scales or other approaches are sometimes used to make this form of measurement more reliable.

Measurement of awareness through these techniques is quick and fairly low cost because it can be done through the mail or by telephone interview. The results are easy to tabulate and generally straight forward. These advantages are balanced by the lack of knowledge of a significant change in awareness; that is, awareness may have been higher before the campaign than after. Another disadvantage of this is, it is difficult to determine the source of awareness. Awareness may or may not have come from the advertising campaign.

Activity 1

Conduct a small awareness research among your friends and find out the awareness levels of Pillsbury Flour.

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7.4 MEASURING RECALL

In advertising evaluation, recall can be determined by the amount of knowledge consumers directly relate to the advertising: The campaign should be identifiable as the source of that knowledge. Recall is normally used to determine to what extent advertising messages have been retained by consumers. Although it is a tenuous one, the assumption is made that recall of an advertising message and purchase behaviour



are somewhat related. Thus, recall is believed to be an important measure for the advertising campaign. Awareness can be measured aided or unaided:

1. Unaided recall. Example: "Can you recall any brands of flour being advertised in last few weeks?". The respondent is given no clue as to what brand is being investigated or what additional questions might be asked. He or she must recall any or all advertising messages seen in the past and relate them to the question. The assumption is made that advertising remembered without any clue from the interviewer is stronger than that remembered with some direction.

2. Aided recall, Example: "Do you remember seeing or hearing any advertising for Kissan's Flour recently?" The respondent's reply is aided by the brand name. Rather than trying to remember all flour advertising, the respondent can concentrate on the particular brand. Care must be taken that not too much aid is given or the respondent may resort to guessing rather than recalling.

The major advantage of measuring recall is that it allows measurement of at least one aspect of the advertising campaign. If the respondent remembers the campaign message or portions of the actual advertising, a direct correlation can be made. The main problem is that recall and purchase behaviour may not be directly connected. In other words, the person may recall the message, but that message may not influence the purchase decision. In addition, because over the year many campaigns appear quite similar, the respondent may actually recall a previous advertising message and put it into the context of the present campaign. It is often difficult to identify or isolate specific campaign features.

Activity 2

Conduct a small research to find out the recall levels of any brand of writing pens being advertised currently in print medium.

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7.5 MEASURING ATTITUDES

Recall and attitude tests are often combined in an attempt to determine if there are major differences between consumers who remember the advertising message and those who don't. Attitude tests are also used to measure changes in consumer perceptions of a brand, or degree of acceptance of various claims made in the advertising.

Five basic techniques are used to measure attitudes:

- 1. Direct questions. Example:** "How would you describe the use of Kissan's Flour for baking?" Only a favourable or unfavourable attitude toward the product is measured. The level or degree of feeling is not possible. As a result, this approach may be combined with a rating scale.
- 2. Rating scale. Example:** "How would you describe the self-measuring spout on Kissan's Flour packages?" Very easy to uses , Easy to use , Neither easy nor hard to use , Hard to s a y , Very hard to use . Although scales are easy to apply and tabulate, the main problem is correlating the views of the respondents. A "Very easy to use" answer by one person may be the same as an "Easy to use" response from another. A rating scale does not discriminate sufficiently to permit a precise line to be drawn between the various attitudes.



3. **Checklists, Example:** "Which one of the following is most important to you when you purchase flour?" Price, Package, Ease of availability, Reputation of manufacturer. The attributes can be easily ranked by the respondents and easily tabulated by the advertiser. The primary problem, however, is that there is no assurance that most important factors have been isolated and listed on the questionnaire. In addition, the meaning of each question is not always totally clear. For example, does "Reputation of manufacturer" mean the same thing to all respondents?
4. **Semantic differential tests. Example:** 'Would you say the user of Kissan's Flour is:

A good cook _____ A poor cook
 Extravagant _____ Price conscious

Paired opposite descriptive words or phrases are separated on a scale. The respondent is allowed to check the place on the scale where the product would be rated. Thus, the respondent's attitude towards the product can be determined. The scale is easy to use and the results are simple to tabulate. The major problem with this type of measure is that the scale may not be interpreted by all respondents in the same manner.

3. **Partially structured interviews. Example.** "I would like you to tell me some of your feelings about baking and the ingredients you use, such as flour, butter and eggs." In this approach, an attempt is made to allow the respondent to discuss the general topics area and reveal attitudes about the brand without using a specific set of questions. Although the interviewer knows the general areas about information and attitudes will be sought, the use of the unstructured interview allows the respondent an opportunity to indicate areas of interest that might not have been previously considered.

Attitudinal tests are viewed as an important element in advertising campaign evaluation. A favourable attitude is considered to be an indication that the person is more likely to purchase a brand than if he or she has unfavourable attitude. As a result, the changes in attitudes are regarded as more important in advertising evaluation than awareness or recall. Unfortunately, there is little evidence that a favourable attitude will always result in behavioural change, such as purchase of a brand. The use of attitude measurements is also open to question because it is very difficult to obtain an accurate measure of people's attitude about any subject.

Activity 3

Find out by attitudinal test whether consumers of candies (toffees) would like to switch over to chewing gums or not. If not, then why not.

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7.6 MEASURING BRAND USAGE

Brand usage is the ultimate measure of the effectiveness of an advertising campaign. Although it has been stressed that, for the most part, advertising should be considered only on the basis of communication efforts, in some instances, advertisers want to trace sales results. This is done by measuring such things as movement of goods through store audits, pantry audits, and consumer panels. When consumer interviews are used, they consist primarily of a series of questions about past, present and future brand



usage For example:

1. "What brand of flour do you normally purchase?"
Kissan's _____ Pillsbury _____ Kohinoor _____
2. "What brand of flour did you buy last?"
Kissan's _____ Pillsbury _____ Kohinoor _____
3. "What brand of flour do you think you will buy next?"
Kissan's _____ Pillsbury _____ Kohinoor _____

By using this type of consumer questionnaire, primarily on a pretest post test basis, changes in purchasing habits can be measured. When these usage changes are combined with tests of awareness, recall and attitudes, determination of the effects of an advertising campaign is sometimes possible. The attempt to relate advertising to sales is sometimes fruitful when all variables can be controlled, although the relationship is somewhat tenuous. (Note that actual purchase behaviour can be observed through in-store scanner data. However, as in the survey methodology, changes in purchase patterns cannot be attributed to advertising.)

Activity 4

Find out the brand usage pattern of Colgate Toothpaste in your house.

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7.7 COPY TESTING

Copy testing is normally done before the campaign starts. Questions like: Will a proposed copy theme be effective at achieving advertising objectives? Does the set of advertisements that make up an advertising campaign create the desired interest level and image? Will an individual advertisement attract the attention of the audience?, are answered by copy testing.

This research is done to find out whether the creatives' used will have the desired effect on the audience or not. An entire category of copy testing is designed primarily not to test the impact of a total ad but to help creative people understand how parts of the ad contribute to its impact. Techniques used in this are given below:

Qualitative Research: Focus groups research is widely used at the front end of the development of an advertising campaign.

Audience Impressions of the ad: Many copy tests add a set of open-ended questions to the procedures designed to tap the audience's impressions of what the ad was about, what ideas were presented, interest in the ideas, and so on.

Adjective checklists: This uses a checklist questionnaire which includes adjectives that allow advertiser to determine how warm, amusing, irritated or informative the respondent it to be. Several of these checklist contain phrases like: "I can see myself doing that....", "I can relate to that...", and so on.

Physiological measures: Several **kinds** of instruments are used to observe reactions to advertisements. In general, they attempt to capture the changes in nervous system or emotional arousal during exposure sequence. Gadgets used primarily consist of eye camera, pupillometrics and Conpaad.

7.8 SYNDICATED AND CUSTOM RESEARCH TECHNIQUES



A number of syndicated research services specialise in the evaluation of individual advertisements and, on occasion, advertising campaigns. Because these services vary so greatly in methodology, we are only covering the major ones.

Television Rating Points (TVRs):

This research is used in measurement of television audience. In India, as of now, two companies do this kind of research. The viewership measurement is specific to the time bands. Usefulness of this research is that it helps in formulation of media plans. Advertising campaigns can benefit from perfect targeting by using this research.

Press Readership:

Comparable of Television Rating Points is readership survey (IRS 1998). This reassert is used in measurement of readership of various print vehicles. Again, like TVRs this research helps in perfect targeting. This research is used primarily while doing, media planning for a campaign.

As far as custom research are concerned there are many existing today in the market. Various research companies have developed their own models and offer to do research for advertisers on the basis of their models. For example, one of the research company offers following research services:

Add+Impact: This is a pre-testing and evaluation system. It uses qualitative and quantitative approach to measure the emotional pre-disposition of consumers towards creative idea.

Ideamap: A computer based product optimisation system that goes towards understanding and gauging from among many concepts options to arrive at an optimal combination of concept elements and allows fine tuning for maximum impact towards making a campaign effective.

Activity 5

Visit a research company and find out atleast 5 research models they use and how they use them.

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Starch Tests

This is a form of media research done to find out the impact of placing (position) of the advertisements on different pages of a publication. Starch measures three degree of readership:

1. Noted: The percentage who remember having previously seen the advertisement in the issue or a publication;
2. Associated: The percentage who saw any part of the ad that clearly indicates the brand or advertiser; and
3. Read Most: The percentage who read 50% or more of the written material in the advertisement.

Starch test throws light on the correct size of the advertisements, difference



on impact in cases of left hand page v/s right hands, page, difference on impact when using a colour advertisement and a B&W advertisement.

7.9 A WORD OF CAUTION WHEN CONDUCTING RESEARCH

For the purpose of "evaluating" the evaluation, certain questions should be asked about the research itself. Although numerous considerations can be cited for any research study, Simon Broadbent has suggested four important ones:

1. *Is the sample representative?*

Obviously, the respondent in the evaluation sample should be members of the target market to whom the advertising campaign is directed. The advertising may do an excellent job of communication the sales message to women 35 to 45 years of age. But that's of little value if the target group for whom the advertising message is directed is young men 18-30 years.

2. *Does the respondent understand the questions being asked?*

Too many times, in follow-up interviews it has been found that the respondents didn't actually understand the questions they were asked. As a result of this misunderstanding, garbled - or even worse misleading or incorrect information was obtained. To be able to reply with the information sought, the respondent must understand the question being asked.

3. *Are the conclusions drawn from the advertising campaign evaluation substantial?*

Leaping to conclusions is prevalent in advertising evaluation. Because so much time and effort have gone into the campaign, the creators are sometimes inclined to explain away problems or assume as accepted things that might not be true. The research conclusions reached in the campaign must be solely on the information gathered and reported with minimum of explanation required.

4. *Was the sample large enough*

A frequent problem in advertising evaluation is finding enough respondents who have seen or are familiar with the advertising to make an adequate evaluation of it. For meaningful conclusions to be drawn, the sample base should be of a sufficient size to be statistically accurate.

7.10 SUMMARY

Research findings help individuals and organisation to take the right decisions. The significance of research is growing by leaps and bounds in the current business environment. In this unit our focus is on advertising research, its role, relevance, types of advertising research and the merits and demerits of each of them has been discussed.

7.11 SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

1. How research is helpful in better advertising planning? Discuss.
2. What are the various pre-testing techniques. Compare and contrast their relative advantages and disadvantages.
3. Media research is becoming an industry in itself. What are the reasons? ,How media research is helpful in advertising planning and execution.

7.12 FURTHER READINGS

Admap, NTC Publications (various issues)
Advertising Management, David A. Aaker & John G. Myers. Prentice Hall. Journal of Marketing Management, Institute of Marketing, UK, (various issues). Harvard Business Review Journal, (various issues).