

Editorial:

The Innovation Issue

GEOFFREY PRECOURT
Editor in Chief
geoffrey.precourt@
warc.com

THE EDITORIAL MISSION of the *Journal of Advertising Research (JAR)* most clearly is grounded in history—of the exacting mixture of business, art, and science that uses the laboratory of experience to inform and direct intelligent advertising.

With the breakneck speed of innovation in all kinds of marketing, history happens a lot more quickly than it ever has. And, as innovation drives advertising, so it reshapes the research that seeks to understand marketplace dynamics. That process is the focus of a special section in the current *JAR*. It is also the target of two important articles—from two of the research industry's most eminent thought leaders—that explore the need for the practice of marketing to adjust to new marketing realities.

For Alan Wurtzel, president/research and media development at NBC Universal, the problem is fundamental to the very roots of market research: "It's the crisis in measurement," he writes in "**Now. Or Never,**" a Viewpoint column that begins on p. 265. "You can't sell what you can't measure," Wurtzel writes, "and, unfortunately, our measurement systems are not keeping up with either technology or consumer behavior. This isn't just about television; the problem extends across all media platforms. And it's not about the lack of data. The fact is, we are *drowning* in data."

How serious is the problem? Wurtzel answers: "We're at a defining time in our industry's history. We need to seize the opportunity to create new measures for a new media age. If we waste this chance—if we go back to our 'business-as-usual' jobs—we do so at our collective peril."

In "**The Opportunity for Marketing 'Simplification,'**" a Books/Commentary offering (see p. 260), Joel Rubinson, chief research officer of the Advertising Research Foundation (ARF), uses behavioral economics [specifically, two new books—*Predictably Irrational—Hidden Forces That Shape Our Decisions* by Dan Ariely (Harper, 2009) and *How*

We Decide by Jonah Lehrer (Houghton Mifflin Co., 2009)] to demonstrate how recent history has re-focused marketing—in some cases, in the wrong direction.

Rubinson writes: "Traditional economic approaches that assume that people make decisions by trading off *all* features of *all* alternatives to maximize utility are wrong. Instead, people use simplifying heuristics to get through complex decision making. For example, people naturally classify alternatives into categories and then eliminate broad sets of alternatives. They consider alternatives in succession and take the first one that meets their needs. . . . More marketers need to turn their innovation energies toward inventive ways of simplifying people's lives rather than just adding more products to the line—additions that actually are subtractions in that they often make decision making even harder."

The orientation is different, but the findings between Wurtzel and Rubinson are disturbingly simple: Is too much data compromising our ability to turn from theory into practice? Can too many messages based on too much research get in the way of the fundamentals of marketing?

How do we make certain that more doesn't become less? That history doesn't move so quickly that we cannot take the time to absorb its lessons? Four major papers in this issue provide some insight into how innovation can build bridges as well as barriers:

- In "**This Event is Me!**" authors Angeline G. Close, Anjala S. Krishen, and Michael S. Latour step inside the same shopping world that Joel Rubinson visits to discover which in-store messages are most likely to drive consumer behavior. It's the kind of insight that can turn retail marketing in consumer-facing directions: "When entertained shoppers like the promotional events and wish for more of such promotions, they

tend to think more positively about the sponsor, view the promotional event as a good way to highlight the sponsor, and desire to shop more at the retail sponsor." In other words, the more a promotion aligns with consumers' self-perceptions, the more likely they'll be driven to purchase.

- **"How Rich-Media Video Technology Boosts Branding Goals"** (authors: Leah Spalding, Sally Cole, and Amy Fayer)—the product of a study conducted by Google and Dynamic Logic—cautions that marketers need to step back and study the tools of technology even as the digital supply chain keeps churning out new products and services (see p. 285). "The results suggest new strategies for improving brand campaign performance based on advertising format choice," the research demonstrates. The authors' conclusion: "*Plan ahead: Think about your format preferences and branding goals as early in the process as possible to avoid limited choices due to impending deadlines.*"
- At The Coca-Cola Company, the constant need to move product is enhanced by a new SPAN (Segmentation of People, Attitudes, and Needs) capability that links proprietary consumer research with syndicated lifestyle and media research on a global scale. The result, as authors Clodagh Forde, Stan Sthanunathan, Dave Patten, and Geoff Wicken present in "**A Classic Formula**" (see p. 266), is "better portfolio planning and targeting, more targeted connections and media planning, and more effective and more efficient media investment."
- Just because the Super Bowl comes at just about the same time every year does not mean that marketers have stopped—for any number of its Roman-numeraled years—reinventing its marketing application potential. Most recently, market-

ers have become acutely interested in consumer-generated responses before, during, and after the game. At Inner-scope Research, authors Caleb J. Siefert, Ravi Kothuri, Devra B. Jacobs, Brian Levine, Joseph Plummer, and Carl D. Marci contend that "Not all advertisements . . . generate the same degree of buzz"—the spontaneous chatter that comes hand-in-hand with paid media advertising, and, by doing so, reconfigures the total return a marketer may realize from a TV spot. "This was the first study that examined individuals' continuous biometrically-based response to the Super Bowl advertisements," the authors observe in "**Winning the Super 'Buzz' Bowl**" (p. 293). "As expected, the overall pattern of findings suggested that advertisements producing higher levels of emotional engagement produced more online buzz."

* * *

Beyond the current issue, the most important piece of buzz here at *JAR* is the news that that Douglas West has signed on as our executive editor. The appointment follows a long, diligent search conducted by the ARF and WARC, our publishing partners in the United Kingdom. "Doug West has a distinguished reputation as a scholar and a thought leader in the field of marketing," said Robert Barocci, ARF president/CEO. "The *Journal* remains an important initiative for our organization and its membership. And we expect to continue to aggressively grow it into an even more influential publication."

At WARC, which also publishes *Admap*, *Market Leader*, and the *International Journal of Advertising*, Matthew Coombs, publishing director, said, "Doug West's experience of marketing extends far beyond any single classroom or any single university. His grasp of the profession truly is global. And his background as a

journal editor, reviewer, and author will give us an edge as we continue to develop the *JAR* as the leading publication of its kind."

West is professor of marketing at the University of Birmingham (U.K.) as well as visiting professor at Henley Business School. He has published widely in the advertising and marketing press and was editor of the *International Journal of Advertising* from 2004–2008. He is author of *Direct and Interactive Marketing* (Oxford University Press, 2001) and *Marketing Strategy: Creating Competitive Advantage* (Oxford University Press, 2006).

And he's appeared in these pages, most recently in December 2008 ("The Antecedents of Offensive Advertising in Modern China," with Gerard Prendergast and Wahleung Cheung) and in June 2004 ("The Definition and Measurement of Creativity: What Do We Know?" with Jaafar El-Murad).

The changes that West will bring to the *Journal* will manifest themselves as we continue to upgrade the quality of our content and the variety of viewpoints from contributors. "My goal is to enhance *JAR's* reputation as one of the world's most prestigious marketing journals," West explained, "and to ensure that *JAR* publishes only the highest quality business-oriented scholarship."

As the universe of advertising and marketing has become more complex, the variety of submissions from leading academics all over the world have increased in number and in scope. To that end, Doug West has embarked on a complete review of editorial inventory and developed new guidelines for future submissions.

You'll find our new guidelines on the last page of this issue. In accordance with those policies, "Manuscript submission will be judged promptly and primarily on the depth and scope of the ideas and their

contribution to the field," West explained. And, to reinforce the mandate for topical, engaging, fresh, and informative content, the review board will ensure a thorough academic vetting in advance of publication. Moreover, as West wrote in the revised guidelines, "The *JAR* is written and edited to be read, not deciphered." To that end, both reviewers and editors also will place a premium on clarity of presentation, with the assumption that every *Journal* paper can be read and understood by an audience with widely diverse backgrounds, both in the study of advertising and in its practice.

"*JAR's* review policies and procedures will reflect current best practice, and be at least as good as its peer journals in advertising/marketing," West continued. "All conceptual approaches and methods will be welcomed. Papers that are highly

readable, lively in style, and engaging in content will move to the top of the list.

"We're working with the Advertising Research Foundation and WARC to produce a magazine that will be a scholarly version of the most current and engaging marketing periodical—a *Harvard Business Review* of the advertising/marketing world," the *Journal's* new executive editor added. "And we want to do so with the kind of immediacy and currency with treatment of topics that would be front-page material for the front page of *Advertising Age*."

As our guidelines state, it is essential that the subject of the reported research have news value and relevance to practitioners. Preference will be given to articles that report field or laboratory research or offer models and analyses of substantive or widely recognized data sets. Because we'll be placing a new premium on

moving from proposal to paper, we'll also be using our website more powerfully, posting issues themes and regularly updated submission information. To the same end, we'll also request that all queries and papers be submitted electronically through the *JAR* website at www.journalofadvertisingresearch.com (where you also may meet our editorial advisory Board members and review our detailed editorial policies).

The full impact of Doug West's arrival may be an issue away, but we're already at work on our December package of papers with a number that will examine the tangled web of metrics that support different media. And, in doing so, we'll try to discover some common grounds that can be useful in cross-metric analysis.

As always, we welcome your reactions and your contributions. 