

Editorial:

Lessons from a Legend

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THE EDITORS OF the *Journal of Advertising Research* perceive themselves as more than mere guardians of a passive vessel of quality content. On occasion, in fact, we embrace the findings of our papers even as we go about the task of assembling an issue.

For instance, in “The Economic Value of Celebrity Endorsements” (see page 149), authors Anita Elberse (Harvard Business School) and Jeroen Verleun (Barclays Capital) make a convincing argument that the proper kind of endorsement can affect the appeal of a product or service. In fact, they write, the right kind of partnership with the right kind of spokesperson can drive both sales and stock price.

We listened to the lesson about the value of association with superlatives. And, in the section that begins on page 196, you’ll see a tribute that honors and celebrates the work of Andrew Ehrenberg (1926–2010), the pioneering marketing researcher whose work touched brand buying, television viewing, consumer attitudes, and reaction to price changes. Indeed, it was Ehrenberg whose work in identifying and defining empirical generalizations changed the theory and the practice—and the art and science—of marketing research.

“It seemed natural,” Ehrenberg wrote of his work in 2006, “like the bits of science I had picked up at school. I didn’t set out to be different.”

Ehrenberg *was* different, however, as he demonstrated in these pages time and time again. His work appeared in the first volume of the *Journal* in 1961. And, in the nearly five decades since that initial appearance and his death in 2010, his research and writings appeared here 20 times, making this a smarter publication that always gave its readers an edge.

The guest editors who assembled the nine papers of Ehrenbergiana—Philip Stern (Loughborough University, United Kingdom); Malcolm Wright (Massey University, New Zealand); and Byron Sharp (Ehrenberg-Bass Institute for Marketing Science at the University of South Australia)—have treated the body of his work with the reverence and respect it fully deserves. Yet, they’ve also used it as an occasion not just to look back but to step ahead and advance the legacy of the twentieth century’s most profound market researcher.

Just as we hope that the lessons from the life and learnings of Andrew Ehrenberg will bring energy to this issue, so do we expect that other papers—from other distinguished authors—will resonate.

In “The High Stakes of Sweepstakes: Too Much of a Good Thing Can Demotivate Digital Consumers” (please see page 167), Caroline Wilcox (University of Rhode Island) and Arch G. Woodside (Boston College) ask a question central to this particular essay: “How much does simplicity affect a customer’s behavioral response?” Digging down, they ask, “Do customers find dense information desirable? Can a marketing e-mail offer too much? Does increasing the number of choices available to a consumer actually reduce response?”

Once again, we’re going to pay heed to our authors’ good work. And we’re going to harken back to Andrew Ehrenberg, who passionately believed in the power of a simple message. This issue is chock-a-block with the kind of thought-leadership that demands immediacy.

Enough with the Editorial. Turn the page and get on with the issue. And, as always, we welcome your comments at jar@thearf.org 