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# Editor's Desk

## What Do We Know About In-Store Marketing?

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Amazon has shocked the retailing world with its sophisticated data-analysis mechanisms, which examine every customer interaction and, in turn, create optimal changes in its marketing mix. The path to purchase will never be the same.

In this issue's special section, "What We Know about In-Store Marketing," columnist Gian M. Fulgoni (comScore, Inc.) kicks off the package of papers with "**Will Digital Commerce and Analytics Be the Death of Traditional Brands?**" (please see page 146), a discussion of the pressures that digital commerce has placed on traditional in-store retailers and brand managers. Fulgoni explains that research done by comScore and UPS "among 5,000 online shoppers showed that 29 percent first headed to Amazon when they wanted to search for a product." That number is so daunting, he continues, because it is "nearly twice as many as those who used search engines and equal to the total number of those who said they used specific retailers' various channels."

The comScore cofounder further warns that "national-brand manufacturers should worry about fast-growing e-commerce brands sold directly to consumers, which threaten established brand equity." What's more, national name brands "have to contend with the growth in private-label brands, many of which have seen significant improvement in quality and whose price point is attractive to consumers."

"**Understanding the Shopping Experience and Its Implications for Malls as Marketing Media: Attracting and Retaining Customers through Fashion, Service, and Improved Food Options**" (please see page 151), by Haiyan Hu (Morgan State University) and Cynthia R. Jasper (University of Wisconsin–Madison), examines the nature of the shopping experience in detail, both qualitatively and quantitatively. The study's 22-item scale allows an empirical measurement of customers'

perceptions about various aspects of their experiences. The authors "chose to focus on behavioral measures, such as visit frequency, average expenditure per visit, and average spending on food per visit, as outcomes of shopping experience."

After extensive development and refinements, the final scale reflects eight separate aspects of the overall shopping experience: escapism, browsing, socialization, activity, fashion shopping, uniqueness, service, and aesthetics. With that architecture in place, the authors found that "the shopping mall increasingly is viewed as a meeting place, community center, and important entertainment venue, not just a place to purchase goods and services." Hu and Jasper further suggest that "consumers still view shopping malls as the primary destination for fashion goods" and that "marketing efforts in the shopping mall ought to promote shopper socialization, encourage further exploration of unique and novel items, and present a community-based space that cannot be found through other channels, such as the Internet."

An important aspect of in-store shopping involves the use of attention-getting cues to allow particular brands to resonate effectively with the customer. One area where the variety of options has grown significantly is in green (or eco-friendly) products. Although an increasing number of mainstream companies are considering the viability of stressing green aspects of their products on their packaging, it still is not clear how this change will affect the purchase behavior of consumers.

In "**The Efficacy of Green Package Cues for Mainstream versus Niche Brands: How Mainstream Green Brands Can Suffer at the Shelf**" (please see page 165), Stacy Wood and Stefanie Robinson (North Carolina State University) and Morgan Poor (San Diego State University) study the effects of green-packaging cues for mainstream brands and their effects on consumer

perceptions. The authors argue that in “all consumption decisions, consumers must weigh multiple attributes, and, increasingly, those attributes include a belief in the social responsibility of the product or brand.” They add that this “is especially true regarding environmental sustainability as the social good.”

The broad-based study found that “the green cue served to decrease significantly choice share of a mainstream brand within an all-green consideration set.... [It] is not surprising that the superficiality of many products touted as green soon became apparent to consumers and to public opinion, and a backlash against greenwashing arose.” What does this mean for mainstream brands? The authors counsel that although “green product lines from mainstream brands can be successful and garner significant market share, they are served best by existing quietly in that space rather than by emphasizing their environmental friendliness.”

In “**The Real Estate Value of Supermarket Endcaps: Why Location In-Store Matters**” (please see page 177), the last paper in the series, William Caruso, Armando Maria Corsi, Svetlana Bogomolova, Justin Cohen, Anne Sharp and Pei Jie Tan (Ehrenberg-Bass Institute, University of South Australia) and Larry Lockshin (School of Marketing, University of South Australia) used direct observation in a variety of supermarkets in the United States, Australia and New Zealand along with eye-tracking glasses and field-of-vision data.

They found that when they used “weighted averages, there was 24 percent more foot traffic past endcaps at the back of the store compared with the

front (64 percent front, 88 percent back).” They also found that “there was 30 percent more visual reach at the back of the store compared with the front (54 percent at the back, 24 percent at the front).” The authors suggest that their findings provide evidence “that people use the back of the store more during shopping trips for navigation between aisles.” They also state that “traffic at the front of the store is only greater in the first and last 10 percent of shopping trips, because shoppers either are entering the store or are exiting at these times.”

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An important issue in advertising is the nature of gender portrayals. In the Speaker’s Box essay, “**Are Portrayals of Female Beauty in Advertising Finally Changing?**” (please see page 133), Kathryn Pounders (University of Texas at Austin) highlights the dilemma for the advertising business that there are no “one size fits all” rules. She adds, “Women are seeking to be portrayed authentically, not as unhealthily thin or large.” This is a perfect lead-in to our latest call for papers:

**CALL FOR PAPERS:  
GENDER IN ADVERTISING**

In light of the increasingly complex view of gender from a psychological perspective, scholarly research is needed regarding the changing nature of gender affiliation and advertising impact. The issue here is how advertisers accurately can portray consumers in the ways they would like to be portrayed to reflect their chosen gender orientation. This is important for targeting particular consumer segments. The

changing nature of role-portrayal depictions and lifestyle settings in advertising makes this an important topic. The potential for alienation is always something for advertisers to avoid, and the need for prescreening of advertisements with target respondents is greater now than ever.

The *Journal of Advertising Research* therefore is calling for research into gender issues in advertising. The deadline for submissions is January 31, 2019. Following is an indicative but not exhaustive list of possible areas for submissions:

- highly attractive models versus normally attractive models in advertising;
- the fine line between sexy and sexist advertising;
- metrosexual images and segmentation;
- LGBT and transgender depictions in advertisements;
- unreal expectations based on ideal imagery in advertising;
- male images and advertisement likability;
- androgyny and unisex portrayals;
- nudity in advertising;
- gender as psychology as opposed to sexual makeup.

We are looking for immediately actionable research findings, and as a result we are calling for empirical papers. Given our strong practitioner readership, please place particular emphasis on practitioner implications of the research findings.

As always, I look forward to your questions and feedback.