

Marketers closing the reality-perception gap?

Data and analysis from the sixth fast.MAP Marketing-GAP Report throws up lots of interesting points of interest and concern for the UK's direct marketing industry, as **Antony Begley** discovers.

First created to measure the 'GAP' between what consumers are actually doing and thinking and what marketers believe consumers are doing and thinking, the fast.MAP Marketing-GAP Report has established itself as one of the most reliable and insightful annual reports available to the UK's direct marketing industry in the last half dozen years.

In it, consumers and marketers are asked the same questions, but with marketers asked to predict what consumers' responses will be.

David Cole, MD of fast.MAP, comments: "While some marketers are clinging to outmoded concepts of consumer behaviour, others are blazing a new media trail – without noticing that more than nine out of ten consumers are not following in their wake." Highlights include:

DRIVERS FOR OPENING MAIL PACKS

- For six years, personally-addressed mail, from known companies about products or services of interest are most likely to be opened
- Marketers still over-estimate the power of creative; consumers say aesthetics are the least important factor in whether to open a pack
- Marketers have awakened to the power of the sample and coupon as coupon/ sample content or suspected content are fourth and fifth most important motivations to open.

WHO OPENS MAIL PACKS?

- Almost eight out of 10 adults open mail packs, though there is a year-on-year decline of 7%
- 13% decline in those opening any mail
- 6% increase in those opening mail from companies they use.

DETERRENTS TO OPENING A PACK

- For the last three years, most of those who throw away an unopened pack do so because they are not interested in the product or company
- Both these issues have increased in significance – three quarters now cite them

- Shortage of time mentioned by 11% fewer than last year
- Marketers underestimated the three main motivations by an average of 23%
- Marketers overestimate the influence of the other – mainly aesthetic – reasons by 20%.

MAIL IS PREFERRED CONTACT ROUTE

- People prefer mail contact on most subjects
- Marketers overestimate the popularity of mail by 7%
- People like receiving direct mail much more now than they did six years ago and are four times as happy to hear about insurance, loans and credit cards and financial services...
- ... and twice as happy to hear about charities, customer magazines, cars and mobile phones
- Mail about supermarkets and entertainment are less well-received than in 2005
- Email is the second favourite channel with a continued lack of demand for contact via any media other than mail and email.

CONSUMERS' TOP 10 DM FAVOURITES

- Competitions are the most popular subject
- Supermarkets and stores are second favourite
- Banking moves into top 10 for the first time
- Mail order catalogues slide to 12th position.

LANDLINE MARKETING BETTER

- 4% increase in number who prefer landline contact from companies they use
- 1% increase in those preferring mobile
- Preference for warm SMS contact static at 2%
- Continued steady decline in preference for warm contact via all other media
- 2% drop in those objecting to cold contact
- 99% shun cold contact by mobile or social
- Marketers wildly optimistic – expect 31% to prefer cold marketing via email and equally optimistic about the number who prefer cold contact by other digital media
- Consumers are receiving more marketing info than they want across all media.

TELEPHONE PREFERENCE SERVICE

- 2% increase in awareness of TPS
- A third of marketers anticipated this
- 6% decline in numbers enrolling
- 80% would ban loan & credit card; mortgage financial services; insurance; and utilities calls
- Less than half want calls about supermarkets/stores; local restaurants/take-aways; events/entertainment; and local services/trades/shops
- Silent calls prompted 70% to register; 68% registered when disturbed in a leisure period 60% because of overseas call centres.

RESPONSE TO MARKETING CALLS

- Four out of 10 hang up immediately
- 30% wait to learn subject before deciding
- One in 20 listens to the message.

CALLS PEOPLE DON'T MIND

- People are most receptive to calls about competitions, holidays and travel, health and beauty and charity donation requests
- However, more than half 'dislike' being contacted – even about competitions
- Marketers expected four out of 10 to like quite like calls about holiday & travel offers but seven out of 10 actually dislike them.

TEXT PREFERENCE SERVICE

- Demand for Text Preference Service decreased by 4%
- Until 2009, when three quarters wanted to register, there had been a steady increase.

TEXT MARKETING

- 5% happy to receive texts from any company
- A 2% increase since 2009
- 12% don't object to texts from used brands

MOBILE MARKETING

- Since 2007, 2% happy to receive any marketing calls on mobile
- Fewer object to receiving all mobile calls 63%. ■