

# MARKETERS GET IT WRONG

Marketers misunderstand consumer motivations, according to the results of the latest Marketing Gap survey. Martin Croft reports

**M**arketers significantly overestimate the impact of aesthetic elements in getting consumers to open and read direct mail packs, according to new research.

Only 7% of consumers say they open direct mail because of 'the design', according to the sixth annual fast.MAP/DMA Marketing-GAP Tracking Study. The report, which asks consumers a series of questions about how they respond to direct mail and then asks marketers what they think consumers said, found that 6% of respondents open direct mail because of an 'attractive envelope'; and 3% do so because of 'colour'.

Marketers, however, thought the percentages would be 35%, 34% and 25%, in that order.

The chief reason consumers open direct mail is because it is 'from a brand/company I know', followed by 'interested in the product or service' and then 'personally addressed to me'. In fourth and fifth place, however, were because 'it may contain a coupon/voucher' and because the recipient can 'see it contains free sample/voucher', on 40% and 35% respectively.

Marketers thought these two answers would be 47% and 43%.

Two-thirds of consumers (65%) say

they occasionally redeem coupons or vouchers (whether they get them via direct mail, e-mail, newspaper advertising or other means), 21% said they do so regularly and 14% said they never do so. Only 3% of marketers estimated the number of occasional redeemers correctly, while 22% got the other two figures right.

David Cole, managing director of online research company fast.MAP, says the results suggest marketers are "illogical" in their thoughts about consumers and coupons. He adds that they "vastly underestimate the number of shoppers who sometimes redeem coupons" but overestimate the numbers who regularly do so.

## Marketers claim to take a targeted approach, so they should expect shoppers to do the same

David Cole

More than half the consumers polled – 55% – said they never misredeem coupons, a statistic that only 5% of marketers got right.

Marketers were also way off the mark when it came to guessing what value of coupon would motivate consumers. More than half (52%) of the shoppers who responded to the survey said they would redeem a coupon worth £1; 47% said they would redeem a coupon worth 50p; and 40% would redeem a coupon worth 20p. Only 17%, 13% and 8% of marketers, in that order, got the figures right.

he argues, suggesting "they imagine there is a subset of shoppers who collect and use every coupon they can lay hands on, misredeeming them wherever necessary."

Cole adds: "Isn't it far more likely that there are only a few slavish redeemers, but many shoppers who will occasionally bother to save and redeem a coupon when they either want to sample the product or if it's for the kind of item they like? Marketers claim to take a targeted approach, so they should expect shoppers to do the same."

### The 2010 fast.MAP Marketing-GAP Tracking Study

Source: Fast.MAP/ DMA Marketing-GAP Tracker

What makes you decide to open/ read a direct mail pack? Please tick all of the answers, which you think apply.

Year	2010		2009	2008	2007	2006	2005
	What consumers actually said %	What marketers think consumers said %	Consumers	Consumers	Consumers	Consumers	Consumers
From brand/company that I know	55	44	50	55	56	47	51
Interested in the product or service	47	51	42	50	46	42	50
Personally addressed to me	45	42	47	51	49	43	-
May contain a coupon/voucher	40	47	44	-	-	-	-
See it contains free sample/voucher	35	43	38	39	40	36	43
Local services or events	21	26	21	27	24	21	28
Because it's a competition	19	33	19	21	20	18	23
Interesting package	19	40	15	15	19	17	21
Looks fun / humorous	10	27	8	10	11	10	14
The design	7	35	3	6	6	6	7
Attractive envelope	6	34	4	6	6	6	7
The colour	3	25	1	3	3	3	3