



Fundamentals of Advertising Research

FOURTH EDITION



ALAN D. FLETCHER
THOMAS A. BOWERS



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Fundamentals of Advertising Research

Fourth Edition

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**Fundamentals
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Fourth Edition

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Preface



Previous editions of *Fundamentals of Advertising Research* have been used in undergraduate courses in advertising research, advertising management, advertising campaigns, public relations, and marketing research. In some courses, it has been used as the sole textbook; in others, it has been the primary textbook, supplemented by small introductory paperback books on statistical methods. In some courses it has been the unifying resource, supplemented by numerous journal articles and heavy use of outside assignments. Although the textbook was originally written for undergraduate advertising students, it has been used at the graduate level as well. Faculty members have used previous editions in courses in mass communication research, advertising research, public relations research, and marketing research. The primary use of this text at the graduate level has been as a supplementary source of information about research techniques and descriptions of major advertising research suppliers.

... **Changes in the Fourth Edition**

In the advertising research business, companies come and go, and their services change from one year to the next. That is why the major changes for this fourth edition are in Part Three: Syndicated Research Sources. By the time you read this, there will have been new alliances, mergers, and closures, and some ongoing companies will have added new services and revised existing ones. Most of the companies included in Part Three are well established and well known in the industry.

In other parts of the book, we have added or modified conceptual material while trying to preserve the book's most commonly identified strengths—its practical approach and straightforward style.

Chapter 2 gives improved coverage of psychographic or lifestyle research such as VALS. We have also added material on the development of single-source data on media usage and purchasing decisions. In Chapter 4 we have deleted some secondary research sources and added new ones, giving special attention to electronic databases. And we have added a short chapter on qualitative research methods.

In several early chapters we have included short cases for analysis. They are designed to provide examples of situations in which research has potentially important applications.

The chapters in Part Three have been rewritten to include new sources and updated samples of existing sources. For each research service, we provide brief descriptions of the research method used, the types of reports offered, and instruction on how to read the reports. We have placed emphasis on the concepts that are reported and have minimized technical detail. In the last chapter we have revised the discussion about future developments in advertising research.

... **A Message to Students**

It is clear that most students in advertising and marketing research courses have no intention of becoming research professionals. Yet they recognize that throughout their careers, they will be using research supplied by someone else. They realize the importance of being able to differentiate good from bad research. That is one reason that the best advertising and marketing programs typically include a research course as a requirement for all students.

Many students approach a research course with some apprehension. In undergraduate advertising programs that do not require a research course, some students avoid it altogether. Don't be afraid; *Fundamentals of Advertising Research* is written largely in nontechnical language and is intended to be readable. According to student evaluations of previous editions, a major strength was readability. "It's not threatening." This readability has not changed in the fourth edition. Upon completing the introductory research course, many students have commented that it wasn't as difficult

as they had expected. There's nothing mysterious about research; good research uses lots of common sense. If you feel intimidated, don't be.

... **Acknowledgments**

We wish to thank several colleagues who reviewed one or more editions of this book and made recommendations for additions and other changes. These reviewers include Arnold M. Barban, University of Alabama; Donald Jugenheimer, Fairleigh-Dickinson University; Timothy Bengston, University of Kansas; Conrad R. Hill, University of Rhode Island; Leonard J. Hooper, University of Florida; William Miller, Ohio University; Joseph Pisani, University of Florida; Richard Tino, University of Bridgeport; Donald Vance, University of Miami; Wei-Ma Lee, University of Texas-Austin; and Tsan-Kuo Chang, Cleveland State University.

Alan D. Fletcher
Thomas A. Bowers
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The Nature of Research

Advertising research is becoming increasingly important as manufacturers face more uncertainty and risk in advertising and other aspects of their business. They are encountering increased competition from other manufacturers in their product categories. Many competing brands are very similar to each other, and it is difficult to promote differences. For that and other reasons, the majority of new products or brands introduced each year are unsuccessful.

Retailing, especially in the food industry, has changed with the introduction of scanning machines that read product codes at the checkout counter. Advertising media have changed dramatically, too. Consumers have many more media alternatives to choose from, and advertisers face a bewildering choice of options in which to advertise. Media costs have risen while economic conditions have forced many advertisers to reduce advertising expenditures.

The consuming public has changed in many ways, too. Older age segments are growing in size. Lifestyles are also changing, and consumers are becoming more concerned about the quality of life and about their health and the environment.

As uncertainties increase, advertisers face greater risk and have to rely more on research to guide their decisions. Advertising research can answer questions about the nature of the market, appropriate advertising strategies, message effectiveness, and media audiences.



But advertising research cannot answer all questions. Properly conducted, it can reduce uncertainty by narrowing the range of alternative decisions. It must also be conducted at a reasonable cost; in some cases the costs of research outweigh the benefits. In other words, advertising research may not always be the answer.

In this section, we examine the uses and limitations of advertising research and place it in the perspective of an advertiser's decision-making process. Chapter 1 explores the need for advertising research in more detail, discusses the role of intuition, stresses the importance of relating costs to benefits of research, compares advertising and marketing research, and explains some categories of research: applied, basic, methodological, descriptive, exploratory, and explanatory. Chapter 2 describes how advertising research is used at different stages of the advertising process, including target market definition, positioning, pretesting, posttesting, and audience research. It also discusses how needs for advertising research may vary according to the product's stage in its life cycle. ■

