

# DISPATCHES™

Insights On Brand Development From The Marketing Front

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## BEHAVIORSCAN®--FOR YOUR BRAND

We've always liked that simple, crisp definition of marketing that goes something like this: "Marketing is the science and art of getting target customers to sustain or change their behavior in a way that favors the brand (and, ideally, not the competitors' brands)." Such a definition squarely focuses on that one thing in the organization marketers are responsible for that no one else is—affecting behaviors. Thinking back on the days when Information Resources, Inc. first married the emerging retail technology of scanning with cable-separated households, you have to give them credit for their choice of brand name to market the new service: BehaviorScan®. This was to be - at the time - a revolutionary form of market research that would quantify in *actual* purchase behaviors (as opposed to *reported* purchase behaviors from traditional research methods like interviews). And, armed with legitimate consumer behavior data, marketers would finally be able to see what advertising truly affected behavior and what didn't.

It may be hard to imagine now what marketing was really like before this accurate, data-driven look at consumer behaviors was available. But it's even harder for us to imagine winning as marketers today without insisting upon an in-depth understanding of the brand's Target Customer/Consumer behaviors. We think there are at least three places in the brand-building process where capturing this understanding is absolutely critical: in defining the Target Customer/Consumer for the brand's positioning; in determining the brand's Marketing Objective; and in discovering and articulating the Insights required for new product and new communications. Let's take a quick look at each of these...

**1. Defining the Brand's Positioning Target** - In our training workshops, we consistently urge our clients to define their Positioning Target Groups using six essential criteria: demographics, psychographics, driving attitudes about the category/class, current usage in the category/class, "telling" behaviors, and functional/emotional needs to be met. Of these six, the one that is most often misunderstood (or simply overlooked) is the telling behaviors. We call them "telling" because, when properly identified, they literally tell the target's psychographic story in action. For example, if we were to say that the brand's target could be psychographically labeled "cautious medicators," then we would expect to see telling behaviors like the following to give evidence of this mindset:

- They take analgesic compounds only after trying other, non-medicating methods of relieving pain...lying down, taking a walk in the fresh air, using a heating pad (or ice-pack), getting a massage, and the like;
- They typically read the label very carefully and most often under-dose or strictly adhere to the recommended amount;

- They will seek out their doctor’s advice before trying any new compounds; they may also use the internet or have on hand in the home a drug encyclopedia to read up on the various pain relievers and their potential side effects.

Having specified these real, “evidence of mindset” behaviors (gleaned from our in-depth understanding of the target), we are in a much better position to affect their future behaviors through all of our brand positioning efforts.

**2. Determining the Brand’s Marketing Objective** - You would think that this one would be a no-brainer, right? After all, given that the marketing objective is literally a measurement of the customer/consumer behavior we want to sustain or change, it is virtually impossible to set one without first understanding current behaviors. And yet, each week we hear marketers state their marketing objectives in non-behavioral terms (“increase unaided brand awareness 15%”) or in imprecise terms (“increase per capita consumption”—OK, but how, exactly? Through increased frequency? Via more ounces consumed at each occasion? By getting more household members to use the brand? By turning lapsed or light users into moderate users?). Why these mental lapses? The most probable answer is that many marketers just don’t know enough about their target’s current behaviors. Maybe they lack the data; or maybe they simply are not asking the right questions.

One of our favorite movie scenes from the past comes out of *Patton*. It’s the scene early in the story when General Patton arrives at his new headquarters to take over command and finds that no one can answer his questions about their mission and individual tasks—until he awakens a sleeping soldier who, when asked what he is doing, replies simply, “Trying to sleep, sir.” To which Patton responds, “Go back to sleep soldier. You’re the only one around here who actually knows what the hell he’s trying to do.” Picking up from this, how can any marketer win in the marketplace without knowing precisely what behaviors she is trying to affect—and by how much?

**3. Discovering and Articulating Insights** - We believe that customer/consumer insights are best understood and expressed in two dimensions: the “IN” or *attitude* inside the target’s mind, and the “SIGHT” or *behavior/non-behavior* that results from that very attitude. For example, consider the hypothetical young adult whose attitude about drinking milk runs something like this, “I drank milk as a kid to help me grow; but I’m all grown up now and don’t see why I still need it.” This is an attitude he holds with some conviction. And the resulting behavior reflects that attitude: he no longer drinks milk except for very specific food accompaniment (like with his favorite chocolate chip cookies). With this two-dimensional understanding, the milk marketer is in a good position to overcome this barrier to increased milk consumption...one way might be to remind the former moderate-to-heavy milk drinker of all the other foods he also thinks milk tastes great alongside. Said another way, the milk marketer’s in-depth understanding of the target’s current, “behavior-driving” attitude enables him to devise strategies for different behaviors that can favor the brand (or, in the case of “got milk?” the category).

Looking at just these three areas - Target Definition, Marketing Objective, and Insights—is a little like doing your own “behavior scan” of your brand-building efforts. To which we say, Scan-on!

## BOATS & HELICOPTERS:

1. At least twice a year, make it a point to spend a half-day or so with your market research team and do an “inventory” of all the customer/consumer behavior information already available. As part of that, perhaps each person on the brand team could take responsibility for summarizing the most compelling learnings from each source. Before ending the sessions, identify what additional behavioral learnings are needed and set a plan to get at them.
2. When setting the brand’s marketing objective(s), aim to literally lay out the “math” that will lead to achieving the brand’s business objective (like volume). In other words, if the desired marketing objective behavior is competitive switching, try to stipulate how many or what percentage of a key competitor’s light, medium, and heavy users you expect to win over—and for how many occasions...and how much collective volume would those levels of conversion yield?
3. As a sure-fire check of any marketing initiative your brand invests in (promotion, sponsorships, advertising, merchandising), always see if you can say precisely *how this initiative will affect the target’s behavior* or on what basis you would expect the initiative to influence the behavior you seek. You’ll be surprised how asking something as basic as this will influence your own decisions about what to implement and what not to implement.

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