

MEASUREMENT AT THE SPEED OF CHANGE: DON GLOECKLER

The guiding force behind media insights at Procter & Gamble argues for new, smarter approaches to understanding consumers and media

During his nearly thirty-year career at Procter & Gamble, Don Gloeckler has established himself as a leading thinker and innovator in consumer insights. As Manager of Media Research (North America), he has been instrumental in pushing for ratings of individual TV commercials (now on tap for the first time) and for unified systems tying media use directly to purchase behavior. Recently named one of Advertising Age's Media Mavens for 2006, Gloeckler has made a substantial impact on media research after just four years in the field. KNOW recently had a chance to talk to Gloeckler about some of the key media and research issues of the moment; here are the highlights.

FROM YOUR VANTAGE POINT AS AN ADVERTISER, WHAT ARE THE KEY CHANGES IN MEDIA OF THE PAST FIVE YEARS? WHAT OPPORTUNITIES HAVE THESE CHANGES CREATED FOR ADVERTISER COMPANIES?

The number of media choices available to the consumer has grown dramatically over recent years, and many have become more personal—hand-held devices and mobile phones, for example. At the same time, consumers now are able to have more control over their media usage than at any time in the past, with the introduction of DVRs, the growth of the Internet, and more and more on-demand media.

These provide marketers with more ways to reach consumers and a greater ability to customize our communications to make our messages more relevant and, hopefully, more welcome.

HOW MIGHT THESE CHANGES ENHANCE THE ABILITY TO TARGET SPECIFIC AUDIENCES? ARE ADVERTISERS AND OTHERS TAKING FULL ADVANTAGE OF THIS ABILITY?

Better understanding of consumer's usage of media, both traditional and new, and new learning about the relationship between media exposure and purchase should enable us to communicate with consumers when, where, and how they are most receptive to product messages. We've always developed specific messages for specific target audiences. So that certainly isn't new; but I think what is new and growing is putting the media first—understanding how the target consumer uses the media, then trying to customize messages for that medium. This is certainly something that's becoming more and more prevalent in the industry.

As our understanding grows, we would hope to become increasingly effective at connecting with consumers in ways that best meet their needs and help them to make better product choices.

DO YOU SEE THIS ABILITY TO TARGET MESSAGES TO SPECIFIC CONSUMERS AS THE PRIMARY OPPORTUNITY OF THE NEW MEDIA ENVIRONMENT FOR MARKETERS? ARE THERE OTHER OPPORTUNITIES THAT COULD BE TAPPED IN THIS DIVERGING USE OF MEDIA?

I think the ability to target is certainly a primary one. As media becomes more personal and perhaps a bit less of a family experience—you may even have less co-viewing in general—I think it gives you the opportunity to target your message more specifically to the individual recipient. You may not need to think as much about the broader viewership.

SO YOU SEE SOLO MEDIA USERS AS A NEWLY IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENT?

That's interesting, because it goes both ways. I think there's certainly history and theory that tells you that sometimes consumers are more receptive to messages, and in the TV environment, there's probably less channel changing when you have co-viewing. So that co-viewing environment is a good environment, as well—it's just different. As consumers start to use more and more personal media, clearly you have more opportunity to personalize a message to them.

DO YOU ALSO SEE MULTITASKING AS SOMETHING THAT'S CHANGED DRAMATICALLY OVER THE PAST 10 YEARS, OR DO YOU THINK THAT'S PRETTY STABLE?

I think it's changed. Ten years ago multitasking probably would have looked primarily like TV and print together, or maybe radio and print; so the growing impact of the Internet has changed multitasking dramatically. If you looked at what the most common multitasking combinations are today, they are almost certainly different than before. I would think

that Internet and TV, Internet and radio, or Internet and MP3 music of some sort are probably more common multitasks than they used to be, and probably growing in relationship to the more traditional TV-and-print combination.

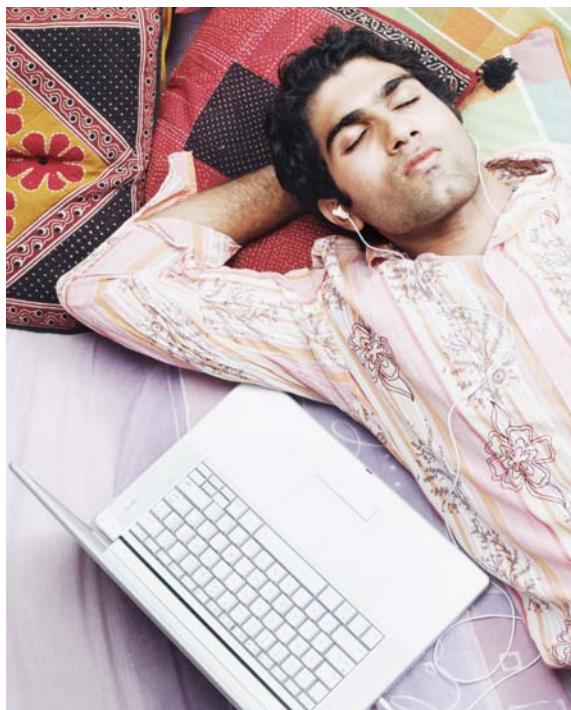
LOOKING TO THE NEXT FIVE YEARS, WHAT DO YOU SEE AS THE RATE OF MEDIA CHANGE? GIVEN THIS, WHAT SHOULD WE THINK ABOUT—AND ACT ON—IN MAKING OLD AND NEW MEDIA WORK TOGETHER?

I expect to see more of the same—more new media choices and even more consumer control over the use of the media they select. We will need to redouble our efforts to better understand our consumers and how they want to receive information about the products they use. New capabilities such as Project Apollo offer us the opportunity to better understand consumer media behavior holistically across media and to directly link media usage to product purchases.

WHAT WILL BE THE PRIMARY MEASURES OF ROI THAT MARKETERS WILL BE TURNING TO IN THE COMING YEARS?

I've never been very good at predicting the future. However, it's clear to me that whatever metrics are developed, they need to be directly linked to consumer behavior and capable of reflecting the impact of the growing number of consumer touchpoints.

WHAT WOULD YOU SAY ARE THE KEY CHALLENGES TO USERS OF RESEARCH IN TODAY'S MARKETPLACE?



It is increasingly difficult to be sure that consumer research reasonably represents diverse consumer targets that are defined in relevant ways. Additionally, research companies offer techniques and measures that claim to deliver new and valuable learning. The marketer needs to carefully assess how the data are collected, how well the data represent the target population, and how actionable the data are for decision making. I'm not an expert in data collection, but it's clear to me that we need to be good researchers when it comes to figuring out the best way to interview today's diverse populations

I think it makes good sense to think about respondents as participants in the research process. I'm not sure that we often think of them that way; we think of them almost as targets, as opposed to participants in a

process with us. I think we owe it to them as researchers to figure out how they want to be communicated with, just like marketers try to figure out how their consumers want to be communicated with. How can we best enable them to take part in the research process in ways they're comfortable with and that engender trust?

I also think we owe it to marketers to be sure that we truly—as market researchers—represent the diverse populations of today, in particular populations like unacculturated Hispanics. Acculturated Hispanics are relatively easy to find and to connect with; but populations that are not as acculturated are more difficult and are important to be understood.

CAN YOU GIVE AN EXAMPLE OF WAYS THAT CONSUMERS MAY BE MORE OR LESS COMFORTABLE BEING INVOLVED IN RESEARCH, OR GIVING ANSWERS TO RESEARCHERS—WHERE WE COULD BE APPROACHING CONSUMERS IN DIFFERENT WAYS?

If you take unacculturated Hispanics again, we need to understand: Are they on the Internet or not? Are they more comfortable participating in the process in a face-to-face interview, perhaps, versus a telephone interview or even a self-administered questionnaire? Maybe they're not as comfortable participating on a one-on-one basis—maybe they'd rather participate in groups or with peers. I don't know the definitive answers to any of those questions, but those are the kinds of things that I think we need to understand and explore.

WHAT DO YOU THINK MARKET RESEARCH VENDORS SHOULD BE DOING TO HELP CLIENTS ASSESS DATA QUALITY?

Number one, I think market research providers need to clearly communicate the way their data are collected and help the user understand the representativeness of the data. It can be a very difficult thing to project. What are the response rates, the completion rates? How many people did you try to contact? How many of them were you actually able to interview? It's basic good market research practice that just needs to be employed and communicated. We need to help marketers understand how representative the data are that we present to them, so they know how much faith to put in it.

BUT DO YOU THINK THE GROWTH OF ONLINE RESEARCH HAS RAISED NEW QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS? OR IS IT JUST THE SAME QUESTIONS IN A DIFFERENT SETTING?

I think it's the same questions, just on new methodologies. Any time you get into a new methodology, the questions are raised. I think if we went back twenty-five or thirty years, and looked at the growth of telephone interviewing versus face-to-face interviewing or mail panel research, we would find the same questions being raised there—how representative is a telephone interview versus a face-to-face interview? How representative is a self-administered mail questionnaire versus a face-to-face interview? Similarly, how representative is the Internet relative to these other methodologies?

HOW CAN WE CREATE MORE SOPHISTICATED MODELS OF HOW MEDIA INTERACT? BESIDES ENGAGEMENT, WHAT ARE THE MEASURES THAT REALLY MATTER IN TERMS OF MEDIA USE?

We need better and more holistic data and analysis that help us understand the relationships among media and the impact of media exposure on product purchase. This is the impetus for single-source data methodologies such as Project Apollo. Most of today's tools for understanding consumer media behavior are not capable of providing timely, multimedia usage information and linking that to purchase behavior.

WHAT OUTCOMES NEED TO BE MEASURED—IS IT ALWAYS JUST VOLUME? HOW CAN THE CONSUMER INSIGHTS COMMUNITY WORK MORE EFFECTIVELY WITH RETAILERS, COUPON COMPANIES, AND INTERNET RETAILERS?

Understanding the impact of marketing activities on sales is probably always valuable. However, sometimes we have to be satisfied with “short-of-sales” measures, such as purchase intent, trial, or changes in brand image.

If the MR community wants to work more effectively with its customers, it needs to think of us as consumers and work hard to better understand our interests and needs, and then work with us to design affordable solutions that best meet those needs.

IN A BROADER CONTEXT, HOW CAN COMPANIES THAT USE RESEARCH DO MORE TO TAKE CONSUMER INSIGHTS INTO THEIR OPPORTUNITY IDENTIFICATION PROCESS? ARE THERE INNOVATIVE WAYS THAT WE SHOULD BE USING RESEARCH TO GUIDE SOMETHING MORE THAN JUST AN IMMEDIATE DECISION?

There's a communication loop between marketers and consumers. We listen to them in order to understand their needs; we develop products to try to meet those needs, we tell them about those products, then we communicate with them to try to understand whether the product met their needs. And the better we listen to their needs, the more successful we'll be. I don't think that's anything new; just an outgrowth of what we've been doing for years—at least at P&G—as we try to put the consumer at the center of the equation.

Note: Project Apollo is a joint venture between Arbitron, ACNielsen and Nielsen Media Research to develop a single-source, consumer research panel for the collection of multimedia exposure (e.g., TV, Radio, Print, etc.) and resulting product purchase information. The panel uses Arbitron's proprietary “Portable People Meter” and ACNielsen's “HomeScan” handheld scanner as primary data collection instruments. The panel is currently in pilot test in the US and is being underwritten by six major advertisers, including P&G.