



THE NEW TECHNIQUES FOR HANDLING CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR

DINU, G[abriel]; TANASE, A[drian] - C[ostinel]; DINU, L[oredana] & TANASE, F[lorenta] - D[iana]

Abstract: *Market research has never been a model in terms of professional ethics. But these findings link market research field to that of science fiction in terms of their implications. Neuroscientists have used laboratory research to sketch a map of brain activity responses to the desires and needs for certain products. About this new field is said to click the buy button in the consumer's mind.*

Key words: *consumer, behaviour, neuromarketing, MRI*

1. INTRODUCTION

Consumer behavior research marks the progress every year, gaining new approach.

In a direct relationship with post-industrial society, stand new ways to influence consumer behavior. In this respect it refers to satisfying consumer needs. Postmodernism is seen as a major conceptual background that enables a superior understanding of changes in contemporary society, by an increasing number of researchers in marketing.

Postmodernist social orientation was characterized by emotions and feelings, and postmodern consumer looking more like for a way to relate with others in communities, and less than looking for a way to make sense of life. Consumption is no longer perceived to be a priority and overcontrolling of the social interbond, but is secondary and subordinated to the social bond. Postmodern man is looking for products and services, not so much for their use value, functional or symbolic value, but especially for their value to establish social relationships.

The new techniques for studying consumer behavior shall contribute to the decision process by triggering direct act of acquisition, which will influence companies from top down and bottom-up, with big corporations setting the base of their own research departments of consumer behavior.

Anticipating consumer behavior, identifying ads that consumers remember, selecting media channels that are the most accessible can be made through new methods that combine several specialized disciplines, such as neurology, and marketing. With this revolutionary tool and daring, the neuromarketing, researchers distinguish personal patterns to those taken (received) in research groups.

2. METHOD AND RESULTS

The fundamental science underlying neuromarketing is neurology, which study how the brain creates the mind. In other words neurology is how the brain causes us to perceive, to think, to make decisions, to feel emotional, to communicate. Techniques used in neurology are psychophysiology (planning / levels detection), magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) Magnetoencephalography (MEG) and electroencephalogram (EEG). The most interesting tool is MRI neuromarketing. This technique is used in specialty practices, the seriousness of this practice being the subject of TV specials, where patients move in and out of cars which make noise and different sounds.

The prominent professor Sean Kelly at Harvard University

said that marketers have even used hypnosis in groups of market research for specific market topics.

The current challenge is the use of science to discover the subconscious of consumers. Studying consumer subconscious techniques was born at Harvard Medical. In the late '90s, marketing professor Gerry Zaltman and his collaborator began scanning people's brains at the request of different companies.

Consumers' brain research through neurological instruments has become a boom in past years in the U.S.

The new discovery has reached climax following the research conducted by Clinton Kilts, a professor and vice president of the Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences Department, expert in addiction and author of numerous professional papers at Emory University Hospital, USA. The research was continued by BrightHouse Institute for Thought Sciences, where Clinton Kilts became manager, using neural findings of Emory University Hospital. The Institute has an advertising agency whose clients are: Coca-Cola, Pepperidge Farm, K-Mart and Home Depot.

BrightHouse Institute has begun using magnetic resonance imaging, traditional technology used in health, to create images of brain activity to reveal what people feel for things, for certain products and services, much more accurate than people can explain through their feelings.

BrightHouse Institute methods are based in part on an experiment that Kilts conducted in early 2002. He gathered a group of research subjects and asked them to look at a number of products, assessing how much they liked or disliked them. Then while their brains were scanned by the MRI scanner, he showed them pictures of the products again.

Brain scan results surprised him. When watching the image he observed that whenever a subject saw a product, he identified it as one to which he was very attached to, it could be observed that that product would represent the person a lot. Thus his brain showed increased activity in the median prefrontal cortex. That brain region is associated with the identity of each individual, with self-image.

In market research, these methods study sensory feedback, cognitive and emotional stimuli of consumers to products or services. The brain scan reveals areas of brain activation sequence. Pleasure, interest and desire to buy is activated in all segments of the public, but only on the basis of hierarchy.

In a study published not long ago, called "The source of neurons", researchers monitored the brains of 67 subjects who tasted Coca-Cola and Pepsi. Half of the subjects chose Pepsi to Coke, MRI images in the cortex of the brain, revealing activity in the region for thinking and in the region of emotions and memories.

The results show that Pepsi should have half the market, but consumers actually drink Coke for reasons related less to taste and more about brand. However it should be noted also that the studies showed that Pepsi is sweeter and Coke is stronger. Many people who prefer small quantities of Pepsi would probably like to consume an entire bottle of Coke to one of Pepsi, because people were tired of his sweet taste.

When subjects learned that they drunk Coca-Cola, three quarters of them said that it is better for the sake of brand and less for the sake of taste.

Human brain is often viewed as a "black box", something rather mysterious. Marketers undertake activities" advertising, direct marketing, sales target set, target market. The results of these marketing efforts can be measured in time, sales, preferences and other. We understand quite well the beginning and the end but not the middle part, which is vital. The middle part is the mind of consumers.

Neuromarketing has contrary opinions. Since the BrightHouse Institute supports it because they created it, another entity should have been formed to oppose the scientific approach. This is about the American Association Commercial Alert.

Criticism to Emory University about neural findings were strengthened by the principle that universities are places where it clears the mind and not for commercial purposes.

This is because, at physical level, neurological research in marketing is conducted using magnetic resonance on human subjects. Magnetic waves can harm subjects if they have metal inside their body (cardiac prostheses, rods, etc.). or if they wear metal such as coins or jewelry. Risk which subjects undergo is low, however, this does not mean that there is no possibility. Subjects undergoing these tests report dizziness or nausea because of brain investigation in the drum of the MRI equipment.

We wonder then how can a technique which aroused so much criticism, can be used , and have gathered so many subjects in "focus groups". The answer is simple: each subject is paid for participation in these experiments.

We must highlight a statistical aspect regarding this practice, namely that there were never problems during a brain scan.

It was definitely discussed the moral conduct of some market companies, which using such techniques had an unfair advantage over other companies which did not have the financial resources and therefore could not enjoy the almost certain results of this technique.

Large companies include the cost of such research in the annual budget. Magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) are not yet as expensive as one might think, being a little more expensive than average costs of other types of research, but not everyone can afford.

Many financially potent companies have learned about images of the brain and were really eager to use them to get results for their sales department. An example is DaimlerChrysler, which used technology among young people at the University Ulm in Germany, to highlight types of car design they preferred.

The popularity of this instrument has made it to be used even in the field of political marketing in the United States, obviously. Professor Marco Jacobin, of California University, Los Angeles, has made several studies on the political issue regarding election loyalty against George Bush Jr., John Kerry and Ralph Nader. In the first election campaign after the attacks of September 11, 2001, neuromarketing techniques were also used.

We also noted that in the United States after 2007, interest in neuromarketing fell slightly, as is still seen as an expensive technique, that on the one hand, on the other hand, companies who had financial resources to use the technique got the results and now they use them and competitors do not have the resources needed to use it.

After 2002, these market research methods were developed in Europe, especially Germany, France and Austria, the first attempts were related to when a customer comes in contact with a new advertisement. However a difference appears. Because research by MRI is very expensive, Europeans use electroencephalogram a cheaper neurological tool.

Romania, the country we live in, is ready for such market

instrument only at a theoretical level, as there aren't the necessary resources for implementation of such an approach, being a subject far too distant from the realities we live.

3. CONCLUSION

The best neuromarketing product is anticipating consumer behavior, identifying ads that consumers retain, the selection of media channels that are accessible and how consumers personal patterns differ from those taken (received) in research groups. Marketers will use these techniques to better measure the consumer's preferences and the question whether we like a product will be closer to the truth. This discovery will help researchers to create marketing products and services with an unique and practical design, and companies to handle more brain responses.

The Neuromarketing tells the marketers what consumers react to, which could be the color of the container, which makes it sound to vibrate, or idea which they have and that consumers would embrace it.

Most importantly, perhaps, merit of this technique is to have opened means of using it in more areas, to establish certainty about some market aspects through brain scanning. So, specialists in the field can learn how the human brain responds to the advertisement and they can improve to perfection a popularity of a brand appealing to a sample of consumers who are shown some pictures while being inserted into a machine and subjected to a radio-magnetic flow.

It is important to determine for the future what suddenly stopped the rising of a marketing tool with a huge success through its positive results of which some companies enjoy today, lack of money or criticism coming from consumer protection associations?

About this revolutionary new method of research of consumer behavior has been said many, beyond justified criticism this practice has proved a huge success. No one would have thought a few years ago, that the resounding success of some products on the market is due to neuromarketing. Answering the question why buy a product is clear: the selling shop knows in advance that we like that product.

Besides talks for and against violation of human brain, response to our study with straight answers as consumers has been created, and hence to the coming out of new techniques has been only one step. The new technique also appeared in Harvard, with Professor Gerry Zaltman on forefront and is based on conscious and unconscious retrieval of thoughts using neurobiology, psychology, semiotics, linguistics, art theory, called ZMET (Zaltman Metaphor Elicitation Technique).

Finally, as young professionals, we can tell that we would like to use in a research such a tool, but as its use is very financially difficult even for well known companies, we are pleased to discuss this issue, hoping that you will do the same thing.

4. REFERENCES

- *** (2004) <http://www.cognitiveliberty.org> – Reading the consumer mind, *Accesed on: 2010-04-17*
- *** (2004) <http://www.economist.com> – Inside the mind mind, *Accesed on: 2009-11-22*
- *** (2005) <http://www.immediacconnection.com> – Media maze: neuromarketing, part I, *Accessed on: 2010-04-13*
- *** (2005) <http://www.neurolinguistic.com> - Gli strumenti d'analisi del Neuromarketing: Schemi consensuali e pensieri, *Accesed on: 2010-04-22*
- *** (2006) <http://www.liberation.fr> - Ça veut dire quoi ce mot?, *Accesed on: 2010-04-16*
- *** (2008) <http://www.commercialalert.org> - Neuromarketing Could Make Mind Reading the Ad-Man's Ultimate Tool, *Accesed on: 2010-04-12*
- *** (2008) <http://www.alternatives-economiques.fr> - Peut-on "fabriquer" des clients?, *Accesed on: 2010-04-10*