

## MSI CALL FOR RESEARCH PROPOSALS ON “SHOPPER MARKETING”

The term “Shopper Marketing” has recently emerged to reflect a change in how manufacturers and retailers understand and relate to the overall “path to purchase.” To stimulate new thinking, the *Marketing Science Institute* (MSI) and the *Association for Consumer Research* (ACR) are jointly sponsoring a research competition on challenges related to Shopper Marketing. We anticipate awarding 8-10 research grants ranging from \$3,000-\$20,000 to support high-quality empirical research on critical questions in this area.

Why introduce the new term Shopper Marketing? Over the past ten years, there have been profound changes in shoppers’ behavior due to changes in the technological and business landscape, such as the emergence of new shopping “tools” (e.g., the ability to search for product/pricing information anywhere anytime – outside or inside the traditional store.) **The resulting changes in shopper behavior pose a number of new managerial and academic questions, as well as casting some important “old” questions in a new light.** These changes are influencing firms in many industries, including consumer packaged goods, durable goods, health and financial services, etc. Manufacturers, retailers, and advertisers are seeking ways of reallocating their resources to more effectively influence shoppers, both inside and outside the “store.” Manufacturers increasingly recognize that brand management, in-store services, and store or category management activities (which have typically functioned independently) must work together to effectively influence consumption and shopping behaviors in today’s increasingly rich multi-channel, multi-media environment.

**Definition of Shopper Marketing:** For the purposes of this Call, Shopper Marketing encompasses all marketing actions that influence a person’s purchase journey, from the point at which the motivation to shop first emerges through the entire “path to purchase” (including returns and repurchase). This path includes influence processes and touch points that occur:

- Outside the store: prior consumption experiences, social media and other social influences, family and life situation, characteristics of the home, office, online, and mobile environments, traditional and new media and channels
- Inside the store or channel: display, retail environment, in-store media, store layout, social and service experiences.

**Importantly, it also encompasses interaction effects between marketing efforts at various points of contact between the firm and people at different stages along the shopper’s “path to purchase.”**

Some examples of current challenges facing marketing managers include (but are not limited to): What factors—ranging from habit and inertia to peer-to-peer interactions (online and off)—affect the “path to (re)purchase” in B2C and B2B markets? What are the implications of emerging social and mobile media for the metrics and management of marketing communications, branding, CRM, etc.? With the rise of social media and media fragmentation, what sources of information will consumers regard as most trustworthy and persuasive (and why)? What are the most effective strategies for using the brick and mortar store as a “medium” for communicating with consumers/shoppers at point of purchase?

## RESEARCH PROPOSAL COMPETITION

**Proposals must be received by May 15. Funding decisions will be announced by June 30, 2010.**

**Topics:** Research proposals must address a novel problem within the realm of shopper marketing, with a balance of rigor and relevance. Topics appropriate for the research competition include (but are not limited to) the following:

- how people's motivations influence search and shopping behavior

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- how groups and social networks influence preferences and behavior
- goal seeking behavior (e.g., "shopping trip missions")
- search and purchase behavior in multi-media, multi-channel environments
- non-conscious processing of stimuli
- emotional responses to manufacturer and retail brands, and associated stimuli
- impulsive or habitual shopping behavior
- the role of prior purchase, service, or consumption experiences with manufacturer or retail brands on their influence on subsequent purchase behavior

Proposals are likely to draw upon diverse theoretical perspectives and methodologies. Studies may be conceptual or empirical; they may involve combinations of methodological approaches including literature reviews, comparative studies, observational and ethnographic studies, natural, laboratory, or field experiments, and so forth.

**Evaluation:** Proposals will be evaluated by a special set of reviewers:

- Kusum Ailawadi, Dartmouth College
- Ruth N. Bolton, Marketing Science Institute
- Stephen J. Hoch, University of Pennsylvania
- J. Jeffrey Inman, University of Pittsburgh (Chair)
- Donald R. Lehmann, Columbia University
- Deborah J. MacInnis, University of Southern California
- Baba Shiv, Stanford University

Funding decisions will also be guided by an advisory committee of industry experts:

- Bill Bean, Worldwide Director, Global Shopper Insights, Colgate-Palmolive Co.
- Ed Gawronski, Vice President Digital Marketing, Kohl's Corporation
- Robert Woodard, VP Global Consumer & Customer Insights, Campbell Soup Co.

While there are no formal guidelines for formatting proposals, submissions should include:

1. A one page summary.
2. A clear statement of the expected contribution to marketing theory and practice, as well as an explanation of the specific ways the proposed research will contribute to the extant literature.
3. A brief background section introducing the research problem and offering a succinct summary of the relevant literature. (Note: An expanded literature review may be included as an appendix.)
4. A list of research questions, models, or hypotheses describing the issues to be studied, the researchers' initial insights or beliefs, and what should be learned from the study.
5. A detailed description of the proposed research design, methodology, model to be used, analysis plan, etc. Methodological details will play a critical role in the evaluation process.
6. A timetable with dates of key research milestones, deliverables, and expected completion date.
7. Funding or support needs (typically, an itemized budget).
8. Vita(e) and full contact information for all of the researchers involved in the work.
9. Proposals must be no more than 15 double-spaced pages; however the summary, vita(e), and appendices/exhibits will not be counted toward the 15-page limit.

Please feel free to include as appendices any additional information that might help reviewers evaluate your proposal, such as drafts of questionnaires or research materials, details of the sampling plan, an extended literature review and/or hypothesis development, detailed explanations of statistical analyses, modeling plans, or datasets to be used, etc.

E-mail submissions to Ross Rizley, Research Director, Marketing Science Institute, 1000 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge, MA 02138, USA; Telephone: 617.491.2060; E-mail: [Ross@msi.org](mailto:Ross@msi.org). Please indicate that your submission is in response to this call.