Abstract

The prevailing view of advertising is that it should be persuasive. Advertising can then engender differing consumer attitudes to brands, and these differing attitudes can in turn affect consumers’ choice of brands.

We here report on three findings which point away from such a causal role for attitudes. First, that the content of many advertisements does not appear to be of an overtly persuasive or indeed differentiating kind. Second, that brand users’ expressed attitudes to competitor brands’ users tend not to differ greatly but are generally similar. Thirdly, that when attitudes to a brand do change, this does not precede behavior change but follows it.
Advertising and Brand Attitudes

Neil Barnard and Andrew Ehrenberg

1. INTRODUCTION

The theories of persuasive advertising that are still largely accepted today focus on brand differentiation and emphasize change (e.g. “adding values”). Consequently, brand advertising is supposed to portray the brand as different and preferably better than its competitors, thus changing or intensifying consumers’ thoughts and feelings about the brand and hence affecting their behavior towards it.

But the content of many advertisements and extensive evidence on the general nature of consumers’ attitudes to brands are not at all consistent with this “persuasive” view of advertising and its effects in the consumer’s mind.

In particular:
1. Many advertisements do not appear to embody persuasive messages and are not overtly trying to persuade.
2. Customers’ beliefs about their brands are if anything rather similar from brand to brand. The brands tend to be seen by consumers as competing and more or less substitutable, rather than really differentiated.
3. In the medium term, aggregate brand attitudes are generally stable. When they do change, such changes follow rather than precede the associated change in behavior. This casts serious doubt on the supposedly causal powers of consumers’ brand attitudes.

Section 2 looks at the content of advertisements, at what they actually say to people or are generally taken to imply. A simple typology is introduced to classify advertisements into a number of potentially persuasive and non-persuasive message categories. There appears to be much more of the non-persuasive kinds than there would be if advertising practice conformed to the persuasive theory. Yet it is not often claimed that such “non-persuasive” ads are less effective than persuasive ones. And systematic evidence to that effect is yet to be reported.
Next, brand beliefs are examined in Section 3. The evidence here is that, while some brands are especially sub-category differentiated, others do show up in the data, brands tend to be seen as rather similar. Customers’ attitudinal beliefs are usually measured (e.g., the percentage saying “Tastes Nice”) are predominantly similar from brand to brand, almost irrespective of the particular attribute concerned. There are too few perceived differences between brands to account for brand choice generally.

And while it is well-known that brand beliefs at the aggregate level are generically stable in the medium term, individual consumers’ expressed beliefs are variable over time. On average, only about 50% of respondents associate the same brand with an attribute when reinterviewed. It is therefore true to say whether such attitudes influence the strong causal power often attributed to them. But since each brand’s overall belief scores hardly change between successive interviews, the “variable respondents” are merely associating the given attribute with some other brand. This would be unlikely if they had been persuaded to see the brands as really different.

This perceived similarity of brands also suggests that, insofar as persuasive advertising is intended to differentiate the brands and persuade consumers accordingly, it does not generally succeed in doing so. This is not to say that persuasive differentiation cannot happen, but simply that mostly it doesn’t. “Persuasion” cannot rank as the major or main explanation of why and how advertising works.

Section 4 examines the evidence available to us when attitudes and behavior are in fact changing. It points to attitudes changing after a behavior change, coming into line with behavior rather than directly causing it. This is at odds with the Advertising —> Attitudes —> Behavior sequence underlying the persuasive view of advertising. Again, this is not to say that this persuasive sequence can never happen, but that is a rare and not a commonplace occurrence.

In marked contrast to the persuasive view, the non-persuasive brand publicity theory of advertising focuses on brand salience, not brand differentiation. Advertising publicizes the brand, keeping it in the public eye. This weak-force theory emphasizes reinforcement rather than change. How it differs from the persuasive view is spelled out in “Advertising is Publicity not Persuasion,” Ehrenberg-Bass Institute Report 4 for Corporate Members. It is consistent with and supported by the evidence summarised in this paper.

Amplifications of the main text, technical details and references are given in the Appendix.

2. WHAT ADS SAY OR IMPLY
In this section we consider the overt messages in advertisements. Note that the ads aim to do, nor even what people individually “take away” from them, but what consumers generally agree, when suitably asked, ads more or less explicitly say or seem to say. Do they think any particular ad actually contains a persuasive message, projects an image or identity, or potentially generates an emotional response which could motivate consumers to prefer the brand to its competitors? We think the contents of many ads would not be felt to be like that.

There are, it seems trite, about six different kinds of thing — broadly speaking and keeping it simple — that advertisements for a brand actually seem to say, show, or directly imply. The first four seem at least potentially persuasive:

1. Hard Sell — Some ads shout at us (“Buy Me!”, or even “Buy Me NOW!” or “Cut Price!”; “Buy While Stocks Last!”).
2. Give Reasons — Others provide “reasons” for buying that brand, either specific ones (“Has Hazelnuts”) or more general claims (“Better”, “Different” or “New”). Or less functionally perhaps that brand X is for the young or the with-it.
3. Convey Feelings — Some ads are designed to engender an emotional response which could colour one’s feelings towards the brand, e.g. that it is warm, caring, and friendly.
4. New News — Ads for a new brand or ads announcing a new feature (“Now has airbags”) are informative. Some at least may seem persuasive, i.e. might change people’s minds. But they may simply be letting them know that brand A has the feature, where they are already predisposed to act once they are aware of it.

In contrast, two other kinds of ads do not really try to be persuasive:

5. Reminders — Many ads just display the brand name (though often in creative ways). They are simply or not so simply — just wanting to say “Here I am”: e.g. “Nikes”, “Always Coca-Cola”, “No 5 Chanel”, etc.
6. A Good Example of the Product — The ad says that X gets clothes clean. But the “benefit” seems to be used as a talking point to publicize X, not as a differentiating selling point for X (i.e. consumers tend to believe that detergents generally get clothes clean).

We are exploring how many ads fall into something like the above broad message types (in a project using full reproductions — Print and TV — “The Form that Advertisements Take” — FAT). Informal results so far suggest that there are more of the “non-persuasive” advertising formats – possibly far more – than is generally acknowledged. We are working to systematize the evidence. But if half or more of all ads turn “non-persuasive” without their being widely castigated for it, can a persuasive theory still be a candidate for how advertising generally works?

Effects vs Intent
There is however also the major question of effects: whether those ads which appear to carry persuasive messages do actually persuade. (And conversely perhaps, whether apparently persuasion-free ads might in fact “persuade”?). On the face of it strongly persuasive effects seem unlikely. Experienced consumers know pretty well what the products and brands they usually purchase are, and that a lot of ads simply see lots of ads without constantly rushing out the shops, changing their brands, or — it seems — frequently changing what they think or feel about them.

Nonetheless, both the public and many marketers still often think that what is advertising is persuasive — “Why else would advertisers advertise?” We think that this is a misuse of persuasive, if the ads neither seriously attempt nor succeed in getting consumers to do or feel things they wouldn’t otherwise do or feel (i.e., convert the indifferent or ill-disposed, or make substitutable brands seem very different). In any case, as we show next in Section 3, consumers’ brand beliefs are generally different. They reveal the similarities between brands that they. There does not seem to be much brand differentiation forso-called persuasive advertising to claim the credit for.

3. ATTITUDES TO COMPETING BRANDS
If brands were generally seen as differentiated from one another — either functionally or through their advertising and/or or other aspects of the marketing mix — this should show up in consumers’ beliefs about those brands. But as we now describe, the general picture across a variety of product categories is that brands are seen as rather similar (although not of course the same). Some differences between brands are noticed, but they are rarely a dominant factor in consumers’ choice.

The basic finding in Section 3.1 is that buyers or users of competitive brands usually do not differ greatly in how they see the brands they buy. The beliefs of brand A’s customers about Brand A are close to the beliefs of brand B’s customers about Brand B.

When we turn to the exceptions, the differences between brands that are actually perceived. Some attitudinal differences show up for a specific brand or brands (the “Partly Descriptive” deviations discussed in Section 3.2). They often reflect
Advertising and Brand Attitudes
Ehrenberg-Bass Institute Report 3 for Corporate Members

PAGE 8

Table 1: Beliefs Among Brand Buyers
(Free-choice, adjusted for DJ*)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Toothpaste UK</th>
<th>“Promotes Strong Healthy Teeth”</th>
<th>Average of 12 Attributes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Market Share Order</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colgate DC</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macleans</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crest</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colgate BMG</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aquafresh</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gibbs SR</td>
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<td>53</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mentadent P</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ultrabrite</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*See Appendix

3.1 Customers’ Brand Beliefs Are Similar

Table 1 illustrates that a brand’s customers largely see the brands similarly. Typically, in a survey for UK toothpaste, 55% of the customers of the brand leader, Colgate Dental Cream, thought that it “Promotes Strong Healthy Teeth,” a very similar 57% of customers of the 8th biggest brand, Ultrabrite, thought that about their brand. These percentages have been adjusted to take account of the Double Jeopardy effect — see Appendix. The unadjusted scores were 71% for Colgate DC and 51% for Ultrabrite. (The unadjusted scores for all 12 toothpaste attributes are summarized in the first column of figures in Table 4 below, i.e., the free-choice percentages among the regular buyers of each of the brands. The more detailed numbers are also available, e.g., Dall’Olmo Riley 1995).

Similarly, the DJ-adjusted response percentages for each of the twelve different toothpaste attributes covered in the survey (e.g., “Fights Breath Odour,” “Gets Teeth White,” etc.) mostly differ little from brand to brand, though several are significant. These differences relate to functional differences and tend to identify product sub-categories. Little of the variation in belief scores is thus truly brand-specific (and then only if the campaign or theme for the brand, like “Kind to the Hands” for a particular UK washing powder — Barwise & Ehrenberg 1985). Overall, the extent of perceived brand differentiation seems remarkably modest.

3.2 The Main Exceptions: “Partly Descriptive” Deviations

Some attribute responses do however stand out for particular brands, or more usually for certain subgroups of brands. Table 3 illustrates such “Partly Descriptive” attributes for the toothpaste brands: Crest is high on “Flouride For Kids” and Ultrabrite on “Strong Flavour”; Mentadent P high on “Removes Plaque”; and so on. Any such perceived difference for a brand is therefore captured as a significant, and in practice highly repeatable, deviation from a brand’s expected score (allowing for the trend with market share and also for the overall response level for that attribute, which is much lower in Table 3). Over the wide range of data analysed they account only for some 10% to 15% of the total observed variation in belief scores.

Many of these “descriptive” deviations relate to functional differences and tend to identify product sub-categories. Little of the variation in belief scores is thus truly brand-specific (and then often related to the running advertising campaign or theme for the brand, like “Kind to the Hands” for a particular UK washing powder — Barwise & Ehrenberg 1985). Overall, the extent of perceived brand differentiation seems remarkably modest.

3.3 Further Exceptions: “Minor” Differences

There are often also “minor” differences between brands which differentiate them within their lookalikes. Examples are different bottle-top or car-door-handle, or for Muesli, say, the degree of sweetness or the proportion of raisins and/or dried banana. Such “minor” features can markedly influence peoples’ responses in this way if they see the brands as very different.

Table 2: The Attitudinal Responses Among All Consumers (UK Toothpastes in order of market share: typical attributes)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Toothpaste UK</th>
<th>“Strong Healthy Teeth”</th>
<th>Av. 12 Attributes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Market Share Order</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colgate DC</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macleans</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crest</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colgate BMG</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aquafresh</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gibbs SR</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentadent P</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ultrabrite</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3: Some “Partly Descriptive” Deviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Toothpaste UK</th>
<th>“Partly Descriptive” Attributes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Market Share Order</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colgate DC</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macleans</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crest</td>
<td>44*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colgate BMG</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aquafresh</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gibbs SR</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentadent P</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ultrabrite</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*High or Low deviations from the general downward patterns

PAGE 9

Ehrenberg-Bass Institute Report 3 for Corporate Members
ence an individual consumer’s on-going brand preference, once they have experienced it (“I like this Muesli better”). But generally these preferences are not widely shared — the differences are not important enough to be copied by the competition (and hence they remain differences, but “minor”). They are therefore seldom measured in tracking studies. Nor are they transitory — if ever – featured in the brand’s advertising. The existence of such real but “minor” brand differentiation does not seem seriously to challenge the general similarity of brands, in the context of advertising.

3.4 Individuals’ Expressed Brand-Beliefs Vary Over Time

Individual consumers’ expressed brand-beliefs vary over time. On average, only about 50% of respondents associate an attribute with the same brand at two separate interviews (Castleberry et al. 1994, for intervals of a month up to a year in the UK or 18 months in the US). This varies significantly both by the level of the response (Dall’Olmo Riley et al. 1997). The 50% who do not give the same response as last time associate the brand with some other brand (since the overall level of brand-belief responses are relatively stable even over time: there is no “leaky bucket” type erosion, see Castleberry et al. 1994). The finding holds across both “mainly evaluative” and “partly descriptive” attributes and thus brand-belief associations are not unique in any way. The “moveability” of these expressed associations between brands therefore reflects the perceived similarities of the brands. Consumers would be unlikely to respond in this variable way if they saw the brands as generally different. This reinforces the evidence that “brands are brands” as already presented in Section 3.1.

Overall, customers’ attitudes to competitive brands are similar. The clue why brands have very different market shares is, as we stress elsewhere (e.g. Ehrenberg et al. 1998), that they have very different numbers of customers, and not that these customers believe very different things about each of their brands.

4. Behavior Changing First

The persuasive view of advertising emphasises change, through its influence on consumers’ thoughts and feelings about the brand (i.e. Advertising → Attitudes → Behavior, basically).

But for much of the time both brand attitudes and behavior are pretty stable. And when change does occur, the evidence we describe here is of Attitudes changing after Behavior rather than preceding it (i.e. Beh → Att, not Att → Beh). This casts considerable doubt on the causal assumptions of the persuasive view.

The case for attitudes tending to follow behavior is in three parts. First, only about 50% of respondents associate an attribute with the same brand at two separate interviews (Castleberry et al. 1994, for intervals of a month up to a year in the UK or 18 months in the US). This varies significantly both by the level of the response (Dall’Olmo Riley et al. 1997). The 50% who do not give the same response as last time associate the brand with some other brand (since the overall level of brand-belief responses are relatively stable even over time: there is no “leaky bucket” type erosion, see Castleberry et al. 1994). The finding holds across both “mainly evaluative” and “partly descriptive” attributes and thus brand-belief associations are not unique in any way. The “moveability” of these expressed associations between brands therefore reflects the perceived similarities of the brands. Consumers would be unlikely to respond in this variable way if they saw the brands as generally different. This reinforces the evidence that “brands are brands” as already presented in Section 3.1.

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### Table 4: Attribute Beliefs by Buying Frequency (12 typical free-choice beliefs for 8 leading brands in share order)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Toothpaste</th>
<th>UK</th>
<th>Buyers of Each Brand</th>
<th>Light</th>
<th>Lapised/ Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Market Share Order %</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colgate DC</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>18</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macleans</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crest</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colgate BMG</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>18</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aquafresh</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gibbs SR</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentadent P</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ultrabrite</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 5: Attribute Beliefs and Brand Penetrations (Average free-choice Beliefs for Toothpaste)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Toothpaste</th>
<th>UK</th>
<th>Average Beliefs</th>
<th>Buyers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Colgate DC</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macleans</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>18</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crest</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>18</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colgate BMG</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aquafresh</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gibbs SR</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mentadent P</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ultrabrite</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**“Buyers” are typically “Bought once a month or more often.”**
This relationship between the belief levels and brand size is again striking and important. But its causal direction is once more ambiguous. The correlation in Table 5 could still be due to people's beliefs causing them to choose the brand (Att → Beh), or to their buying or usage experience causing the beliefs to emerge (Beh → Att). Thus their expressed intentions will only know months ahead that they will change. Indeed, for each individual a specific belief is usually associated with a number of brands. It therefore seems much less likely that such generally variable associations could play a causal or decisive part in choosing one repertoire brand rather than another but mentioning a particular brand could well follow recently bought it. Having multiple associations is not a sufficient basis for choice.

In contrast, if brand attitudes mostly result from buying and usage experience (i.e. Beh → Att), as the evidence of Sections 4.3 and 4.4 suggests, then the fact that consumers mostly have stable repertoires of two or more brands would lead to the variable of multiple brand attitudes that are observed.

5. DISCUSSION

In this report we have considered the nature of much brand advertising and how it ties in with the general evidence on brand attitudes. Contrary to the persuasive view of advertising:

1. Many advertisements do not overtly differentiate the brand or present it in an persuasive way. Thus it seems highly unlikely that customers can, even in principle, motivate (in terms of reasons or emotions) consumers to prefer one brand over its competitors;

2. The evidence is that brand A's customers' attitudes to brand B are not very different from each other. There's not much in practice for so-called persuasive advertising to claim the credit for;

3. It might be expected that slowly dying brands, being bought by fewer and fewer people in the future, should have low intentions-to-buy. And that subsequently successful new brands, with more and more people going to buy them, would have the high scores. Particularly if Att → Beh generally held.

But the evidence of Figure 1 is to the contrary: the above-normal "I" is high cases are for the slowly dying brands. And the below-normal "I" is low" ones are for the new and subsequently successful brands.

This is because:

1. Old and slowly dying brands, or for 2. New subsequently successful brands.

Figure 1: Intentions-to-buy "I" and Brand Usage "U"

- An old slowly dying brand has a lot more lapses buyers than a stable brand of similar size, and some of these lapses buyers still express an intentions to buy (as in Table 4). This results in higher than normal scores.

- The opposite occurs for a new brand: it has almost no lapses buyers since it did not exist more than six or twelve months or so ago. Hence a successful new brand has a short fall in its scores. It takes quite some time to acquire the "normal" number of lapses buyers, bringing it into line with other established brands.

In both cases the change in behavior precedes the consumer's attitudinal response – i.e. their expressed intentions-to-buy. The brand attitude evidence is consistent with attitudes emerging from behavior rather than directly leading to brand choice.

1. A new subsequently successful brand:

Reported results for both new and fading brands from Y&R's Brand Asset Evaluators appear in line with this, although they were not initially interpreted in terms of consumers' past behavior, as here (Agres and Dubitsky 1996, p.24).

Furthermore, in neither case do consumers' intentions, i.e. an overall attitude which supposedly relates explicitly to the future, actually predict future changes in behavior. Indeed, consumers seldom know months ahead that they will change their brand-choice behavior, or when. Thus their expressed intentions will only be predictive when they go on doing what they already have been doing, i.e. to go on buying the brand.

4.4 Minor Differences

Another clear cut instance of behavior change arising first, before attitude change, is with consumers' reactions to a brand's minor or secondary attributes (noted in Section 3.3).

Minor brand attributes, although at times decisive for some individuals in their longer-term preferences between otherwise close substitutes, are where a clear set of cases where brand usage (i.e. experience or "behavior") virtually always comes before an attitude about the attribute (and brand) is formed.

4.4.1 DISCUSSION

We have already noted in Section 3.6 the variability in individuals' brand-belief associations: that where interviewed, on average only about 50% associated an attribute with the same brand as before, whereas the other 50% shared the same attribute with some other brand.

This finding suggests that individuals' expressed brand-beliefs are often neither very firmly nor uniquely linked to the brand. Indeed, for each individual a specific belief is usually associated with a number of brands. It therefore seems much less likely that such generally variable associations could play a causal or decisive part in choosing one repertoire brand rather than another but mentioning a particular brand could well follow recently bought it. Having multiple associations is not a sufficient basis for choice.

In contrast, if brand attitudes mostly result from buying and usage experience (i.e. Beh → Att), as the evidence of Sections 4.3 and 4.4 suggests, then the fact that consumers mostly have stable repertoires of two or more brands would lead to the variable of multiple brand attitudes that are observed.

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on the causal presumptions of the per-
cept of the brand. The alternative view that advertising publicizes the brand, reinforcing and oc-
casionally nudging to how many consum-
ners the brand is salient, is however in line with the content of much brand advertis-
ing and ranking) is reported in Barnard &

Ehrenberg (1990). This showed that free-
choice results are replicated by the two 
forced-choice techniques used there ex-
cept that the Double Jeopardy trend with 
brand share among a brand's regular 
buyers is less marked, as expect-
ed. (The theory of Double Jeopardy ex-
plains it primarily as a statistical selection 
phenomenon which occurs when people 
make free choices among items which 
are identical except for their market-size—e.g. 
McPhee 1963, Ehrenberg et al 1990.)

Table 1a shows the category that, 
as in Table 1 just for toothpaste, the average 
attitudinal response percentages among 
the regular buyers of each brand vary lit-
tle from brand to brand, implying that 
each brand's customers see the brands as 
rather similar and not markedly different. 
The similarity in the brand belief scores 
is most clearly seen in the DJ-adjusted 
percentages, but is still notable in the ob-
served percentages with their fairly mod-
est downward trend with market share. 
The Double Jeopardy or DJ effect (see 
above) has been removed from the ob-
served scores in Table 1 by using a simple 
linear numerical correction procedure to 
adjust the scores (essentially that the at-
titudes scores vary systematically by about 
0.4 percentage points for each buyer per-
cent point).

Next, Table 4a shows that the likelihood 
of associating a brand with an attribute 
belief varies directly with the frequency of 
buying the brand, as for toothpaste in Ta-
ble 4 in the main text. Across each of 
the nine categories here, a brand's regular cus-
tomers are much more likely to endorse a 
positive statement than its "light," "lapsed" 
or "newer" buyers are. The similarity of 
the scores for the various brands within 
each buying frequency group (shown here 
without any adjustment for DJ) again sug-
ests the similarity of the brands.

Table 1a: Beliefs among Brand Buyers
(9 Categories observed, and adjusted for DJ)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>US &amp; UK</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Market Share Order</td>
<td>Obs %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st Brand</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd *</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd *</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th *</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5th *</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6th *</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7th *</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8th *</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Finally, Table 5a shows how the respondent-weighted population belief scores vary directly with the brands' penetrations. As noted in the main text, the large differences between brands arise because a large brand has more regular buyers and fewer lapsed/never buyers than a smaller brand does. And regular buyers score higher attitudinally than the others, as in Table 4a. It is not that the brand scores differ much within each buyer grouping (as Table 4a showed).

Typically Measured Attribute Beliefs
The attribute beliefs covered in the 9 UK and US product categories analysed are typical of those measured in conventional U&A surveys and tracking studies. Although factual in expression and tending to be somewhat functional, some or even quite a few do have "emotional" or at least "subjective" aspects or undertones, e.g. "Fun for Children to Eat".

The question is whether more emotional aspects, e.g. caring, friendly or cool, cannot also be adequately summarised in a few well-chosen words to show up any big differences between brands.

References and Further Readings


Ehrenberg-Bass Institute Report 4 for Corporate Members – Advertising is Publicity not Persuasion (see www.MarketingScience.info)