



## It All Begins with Mind Share

Mind share simply put, is the consumer's recall of companies or products in a competitive category. Consumer (or customer) refers to the entire pool of potential buyers in that category. Also known as name recognition.

As we weigh competing budget priorities, why should we care?

Well, we are reminded that mind share is the first step of the marketing continuum that leads to a purchase. If we are not on a consumer's mind when they form their intent to buy, our product will not be considered.

Recognition needs to be recent. If your product is intended for repeat purchases, then recognition needs to be periodic and ongoing.

Beyond recall, a consumer is more likely to buy your product when they recognize the brand's attributes and understand the product's value. Not in isolation from competitors, though. You'll want to factor in how others have positioned and marketed their product.

Along the marketing continuum, visibility leads to recall. Next, education leads to understanding the product or company. If what I perceive to be true about it is relevant to my material and emotional needs, that leads me to a purchase decision.

Your objective is for your product to start out as the one perceived to be the closest match to the consumer's needs at the time they intend to purchase.

## Measuring Mind Share

Consumer research is essential to estimating and understanding your brand's mind share among its target audience. A simple awareness and attitude study can be used to determine your brand's dominance in the minds of target consumers. These can be conducted cost efficiently via telephone, intercept interviews or online. Basic information can give you a barometer of your position in the minds of potential customers:

- When asked what brands in your category come to mind, is your brand mentioned spontaneously?
- When given the names of brands that are not mentioned spontaneously, is your brand recognized as a player in the category?
- What attributes, both positive and negative, are associated with your brand? With your competitors?

Focus groups among current customers and category users who are aware of your brand but have not tried it should be conducted prior to the awareness and attitude study. The data from the focus groups help determine the specific attributes that should be included in the questionnaire and help the marketer understand and apply the survey results by providing insight into which brand attributes are important to consumers in the category.

## Get On My Mind

A variety of marketing tactics garner target customers' attention and lead them down the path to purchases. The winners drive a brand's distinct positioning vis a vis competitors, promise clear value to the target customer – and deliver! Those who maintain a high profile during tough economic times are likely to be the brands of choice when a customer's purchasing power improves.

**Advertising**, long a tradition to break into a market and grab consumer recall, has continued to stretch its form. Modern tactics lead to logos, slogans and creative plastered on everything. The 20<sup>th</sup> century toolbox included strategic messaging delivered through vehicles from print, TV and radio to billboards, bus stops and movie product placement.

**Sports marketing** exploded in the 1980s with saturation of product names and logos on stadiums, merchandise, vehicles and athletes.

**Cause related marketing** became a popular and effective marketing approach in the '80s with a combination of advertising and promotional elements.

The second half of the '90s will be known for **Internet and e-mail marketing** through banner ads, online pop up surveys, sweepstakes, and affiliate programs.

### Mind Share Leads to Market Share

**Presence on a consumer's mind is the first step required for a company or product to be considered for a purchase or investment or a referral.**

**Public relations** is a fundamental driver of mind share. Ongoing media education and relationships that result in coverage may provide the recall and credibility you need. Ultimately PR contributes to deepening the consumer's understanding by educating the public about your company or product's benefits and the timely problems you help solve. An effective PR program strikes a balance between quality and quantity.

Public relations means more than media relations. It refers to strategic communications with the many audiences that affect the success of your business. Other tactics include: executive speaking engagements, collaboration with strategic organizations, newsletters, educational forums, letter campaigns, and participation on community boards and industry associations.

**Promotions** represent the marketing tools designed to build a continuous buying relationship or push a purchase. Done well, they bring a leg up on competition, motivating the consumer to buy your product. They often require action by the consumer to benefit. Tried and true promotions include: special retail pricing, special packing, frequent buyer programs, sweepstakes, sampling, and event sponsorships.

**Guerilla marketing** is the extreme form of promotion and event marketing. Popular during the dot-com craze, a campaign might feature samplers wearing costumes and performing stunts. When on-strategy, not only is the stunt memorable, but the brand is RECALLED!