Editorial

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It seems we now live in an age where the explosion of new channels has created a state of continuous partial attention among consumers. It's not uncommon for the average consumer to be found sitting at their laptop, with the television on, while using their phone. The exact combination of channels will obviously vary, but the point is that the predilection of today's consumer for simultaneous consumption of media poses a considerable challenge for marketers. In this issue, Don Schultz expands upon the content of a previous paper in Vol. 8, no.1, where he considered the importance of Media Synergy when approaching this challenge. In *Media synergy comes of age — Part I*, Schultz reports on findings from the Simultaneous Media Usage database, which has been collected in the US for the past six years. This is the first part of a two-part paper, the second, following next quarter, discusses how CHAID analysis can be used to develop predictive models of media usage by consumers. Today, it is more important to measure how effectively media is consumed by the audience than to develop a costly, optimised distribution system for communications. The real skill in media planning now is in identifying which individual media vehicles most efficiently distribute the marketer's promotional messages — with the least waste.

Of course, our audiences not only have the opportunity to consume a vast array of different media, they also have the means to contribute to it. Web 2.0 technology in particular has contributed to the rise of consumer as content provider, collaborator and even brand participant. As a result, the online world is alive with personal information and online databases which, when combined with existing, more traditional data sources, presents marketers with the opportunity to glean deep new insights and create ever more valuable information about customers and prospects. However, this wealth of information can easily throw up unforeseen data quality issues. In *Data Quality is Everyone's Business*, Tom Breur argues that data quality management is an important avenue for creating sustainable competitive advantage. The two-paper series examines the consolidation of disparate data sources, proposes a data modelling paradigm and explores how to ensure ongoing data quality via a system development method for best alignment between stakeholders.

Our next paper takes a cold, honest look at customer centricity and asks a question that some may find uncomfortable: does customer centricity make good economic sense — or does long-held marketing thinking need to be reprogrammed? Edward Kasabov and Alex J. Warlow chart the growth of 'customer compliance' businesses, examining the strategies of a group of businesses that have automated their marketing and fulfilment functions. The authors put forward the view that many businesses are not practising customer centricity at all. Rather, they are making their customers compliant to their management systems. Given these organisations' considerable competitive advantage over companies that operate on the customer centricity concept, which is the true way forward?

If the above paper is cause for discomfort, then there may be more to come when the Government introduces a new Equalities Bill in the autumn. An interview with Trevor Phillips, Chairman of the Equality and Human Rights Commission and Caroline Waters, Director of People and Policy at BT raises the issue of segmentation and discrimination. Commercial organisations may have to defend themselves against evidence that their marketing processes and distribution strategies compound the disadvantages of groups that are most subject to discrimination. It may no longer be acceptable to disregard segments of the community on the basis that they are 'hard to

reach' and we may soon find ourselves reviewing our marketing and segmentation practices accordingly.

Finally, our case study this quarter is the 2008 IDM BPA Silver award winner, Virgin Media. It reveals the detail behind the programme, created by the Rapier agency, that resulted in no less than a complete brand turnaround for Virgin Media in less than 12 months.

As usual we conclude with this quarter's recommended Abstracts and Reviews (p. 67).

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