Editorial

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As I write this Editorial, a further flurry of news reporting in the UK highlights further so-called ‘greenwashing’ by firms. Greenwashing, according to the Oxford English Dictionary is ‘disinformation disseminated by an organization so as to present an environmentally responsible public image’. The term first arose in the early 1990s, with use of the word appearing as the title of an article in the 1991 March/April issue of the *Mother Jones* investigative social justice magazine (www.motherjones.com). As political parties in many markets vie with each other for the greenly moral (or should it be morally green) high ground, consumers are also engaged. Whether we like it or not, suggests a recent BBC report, ‘every purchase on the shop floor of life carries environmental implications’.¹ How should marketers approach this issue? Is it an opportunity for differentiation, for cynical greenwashing or otherwise? Are marketers, as responsible for a firm’s communications, implicated? And are consumers sufficiently convinced by marketers’ claims to ethical behaviour and their own convictions to change their behaviour? This, it would seem, is ripe territory for targeting, measurement and analysis.

A recent poll in the UK *Observer* newspaper suggests that consumers are not convinced by marketers’ claims.² The newspaper’s (admittedly only 1,000-respondent strong) survey asked ‘Some people say that advertising products as “ethical” is often just a ploy to get us to spend more. Do you agree or disagree?’ Fully 69 per cent of respondents agreed a little or a lot, although we might have issues with the wording of the question and the survey methodology. The survey also sought to counter some of the populist suggestions about a groundswell of young eco-warriors: those most likely to buy ethical products and pay more for the privilege were in practice

apparently older, wealthier women. Understanding green purchase intention, we might suggest, requires a somewhat more thorough investigation.

Fortunately, we have an interesting paper in this issue of the Journal that seeks to do just this. D’Souza, Khosla and Taghian explore the segmentation possibilities afforded by the extent of consumers’ environmental beliefs. Randomly sampling main food buyers, and employing a cluster analysis that allowed environmental attitudes to be cross analysed with price and quality preferences, they reveal some distinctive groupings of response that might prove susceptible to careful targeting.

As marketing extends its reach into new sectors and into new kinds of organisations, so the requirements for market *analysis* become more diverse. Two papers in this issue explore the make-up and motivations of two very different kinds of market: not-for-profit athletics and the customers of online auctions. Understanding the motivations of individual donors to intercollegiate athletic programmes is the subject of Rodoula Tsiotsou’s paper. The growing role of individual and corporate contributions to sports, education and cultural activities is a significant feature of contemporary culture. Sports sponsorship activities alone in the US will provide \$9.9bn of funds in 2007 (66 per cent of total sponsorship in the US) according to sponsorship.com. Differentiating donors’ motivations is a critical requirement for marketers and fundraisers within prospective recipient organisations. Tsiotsou concludes that it is possible to identify particular considerations which highly motivated donors find to be important. These include trust, an understanding of the values and prestige of the school, and the sense of ‘belonging’.

Gregory Black’s analysis of the determinants of success for online auctions benefits from access to

detailed transaction data from two eBay retailers in the US. His careful study is the first real attempt to understand the differential price sensitivity of different kinds of consumers to eBay auctions. Important considerations will include the location of the bidder (urban or rural and in terms of time zone) and their gender. For example, the timing of auction ending times could be manipulated to favour 'prime Internet time' within particular time zones.

Editorial Board member Tom Breur fulfils the Journal's brief in respect of *measurement* this issue with his contribution addressing one thorny issue of measuring campaign effectiveness: closing the loop in the testing, measuring and tweaking of increasingly complex and overlapping campaigns. But he also engages with a further objective of the Journal in terms of its practitioner readership: this is a very useful and accessible review of some key issues relating to testing within the practical commercial environment. He concludes that longitudinal monitoring of data mining models and marketing execution will be increasingly critical in determining their effectiveness.

Finally, two papers continue our search to more fully understand the nature of customer loyalty in different markets and measures that can enhance that loyalty. Fred Reichheld's book 'The Ultimate

Question' suggests that a good net promoter score is a key contribution to a profitable relationship marketing strategy.³ Chatura Ranaweera cautions that positive attitudinal dispositions do not always lead to profitable customers. His study of customer intentions within contractual and subscription-type relationships in the telecommunications sector reveals some counter-intuitive findings. Vázquez Casielles and Alvarez Álvarez's study delves deeper into consumers' purchasing process in relation to brands and develops recommendations and strategies useful for loyal, as against nonloyal customers.

Looking ahead, the Journal is planning a special issue on *mobile marketing* in 2008. The closing date for papers is 1st October, 2007 and more details can be found at the back of this issue.

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- 3 Reichheld, F. (2006) 'The Ultimate Question: Driving Good Profits and True Growth', Cambridge: Harvard Business School Press.