Chapter 5
Can Marketing Research Build Brand Loyalty?

When marketing research firms create surveys, they do so to solve problems and give answers to company executives on how to grow their businesses.

From evaluating customer behaviour to anticipating demand, good research can dig deep into the minds of the target market to establish what they think, feel, like, and dislike, and how they will behave under certain criteria.

Take the Subaru brand as an example. Marketing research on car purchasers has shown that owning a car is considered by many to be a human experience. Subaru customers tend to bond with their vehicle, and some will even give it a name. In light of this new information, ads now stress the human experience when advertising for vehicles like Subaru’s sport utility. In addition, previous advertising campaigns had been primarily focused on the male customer, but surveys today show that women make the majority of decisions when purchasing a vehicle. The market has clearly changed, and because of the research done, dealerships are now aware of that change and are able to incorporate new trends into their marketing campaigns and sales techniques.

In the 1920s, research was no more than a one- or two-word answer to a question. Today, research firms such as Burke Incorporated in Cincinnati log every detail of a consumer’s attitudes, opinions, and beliefs in order to best identify what they need or want from a product. Methodologies used today embrace new media technology as creative ways to reach the customer. Web and telephone interviewing practices produce some of the best results.

In order to establish the right plan for each client, Burke employees will first sit down with the client to determine the problem or question that needs to be addressed. It is the client that ultimately comes up with the problem. The better the research plan is, the better the results will be and the more successful the outcome for Burke’s clients. Next, a process is developed to create a sample that represents the population of the target market in question. A research methodology is designed and then implemented. Mall intercepts, telephone surveys, mailers, and internet studies are some of the methods available for use in any one research study. Research data are then digitally entered, sorted, categorized, and tailored for presentation to the client. The goal is a focused solution to the client’s problem.

Marketing research can be gathered through quantifiable methods, but also through qualified methods. Information regarding a person’s beliefs and attitudes can be quantified (for example, the number of people in a market sample that feel a certain way about how a vehicle impacts the environment), however, using qualified approaches, such as the focus group method, will yield a more in-depth answer to some of the less quantifiable questions.
Today, companies like Subaru rely heavily on what people think, what they believe, and how they behave in certain life situations. Research firms like Burke Incorporated know just how to make that information come to life for a company. Once that information is ready for use, the game of brand loyalty becomes easier to win.

Sources
1. For more information about the Subaru experience, view the Pearson Education PH Video Gallery Marketing 2005 video in this package.
2. For more information on Burke Incorporated, view the Person Education PH Video Gallery video in this package.

Questions
1. Can marketing research predict the future needs of consumers?
2. If you wanted to find out what consumers want in a new sport utility vehicle, what information would you gather?
3. Can marketing intelligence play a part in the above-marketing challenge?