ESOMAR hits selling disguised as research

BY LYNN COLEMAN
Assistant Managing Editor

SELF-REGULATION of telemarketing activities is being called for by ESOMAR (the European Society for Opinion and Marketing Research) to stem potential backlash against marketing researchers.

At issue is the practice known as "snooping," an acronym for "selling under the guise of market research," which has become a major problem in Europe, according to Fernanda Monti, secretary-general of ESOMAR in Amsterdam.

A discussion document was drafted last year by John Dowthwaite, outgoing chairman of ESOMAR's Committee on Professional Ethics and Standards, and submitted to key marketing associations and research companies worldwide for comment. The comments received so far favor adoption of the proposal, Monti said, and many respondents suggested that the tone of the draft document is not strict enough.

Downham, a research consultant and retired head of marketing research at Unilever in London, is studying the comments and will submit a final version of the document to the ESOMAR council for approval at its February meeting.

FEAR OF LEGISLATION is the driving force behind the proposal, Monti said. Germany has passed a law prohibiting companies from calling people in their homes for any reason.

"We don't want that to happen anywhere," she said.

Because of the interdependence of European countries, legislation in one country has a negative effect on all European marketing research firms, Monti said. ESOMAR also is concerned that the growing use of telemarketing will have increasing effects on response levels to telephone research.

The general public often is unable to differentiate between marketing research and telemarketing, she said, and may become increasingly irritated by unsolicited calls, especially when they are for sales purposes.

As it stands, the draft document outlines the dangers of snooping for the marketing research industry and offers recommendations for self-regulation that may help marketing researchers avoid the difficulties of restrictions imposed from outside the profession.

The recommendations include the following:

- When marketing research and telemarketing are carried out within the same organization or group of companies, the two activities should be clearly differentiated in the minds of consumers. Different company names and business addresses should be used in conducting the different activities, even

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Without good research,
quality is shot in dark

BY JOHN R. HAUSER
and ROBERT L. KLEIN

EXPERTS IN every branch of engineering, design, and manufacturing preach the gospel of quality, and more companies are making quality part of their advertising and corporate goals.

Unfortunately, too many marketing researchers think quality is a problem for the engineers alone to solve. Or they think that their only role is to point out how bad the problem really is.

In reality, the role of marketing researchers is much, much larger.

Without good market research, the company aiming for better quality may be taking a shot in the dark, because defining exactly what quality means is a job that can be done best by market research.

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This diagram represents the information provided by marketing research and by engineering in Customer Driven Engineering.

Ease anxieties of elderly or disabled participants during focus groups

BY IAN B. CHURCH

I found that some of the participants were nervous before the session started.
Quality

CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE

Some innovative engineering groups do have a big part of the solution. A procedure called Quality Function Deployment (QFD) has been imported from Japan in the last few years and applied in a growing number of companies in the U.S. Toyota and Nissan claim QFD leads to higher quality and manufacturing-cost advantage. Ford claims to have adapted this technique to American manufacturing with great success. General Motors is committed to it for one of its new car lines. Leading high-tech companies, including Digital Equipment, Hewlett-Packard, and Polaroid understand its commitment to quality (and assure their continued competitiveness) with this focus.

The concept is simple. To assure that purchasing products to be of high quality, manufacturers must deploy the voice of the customer throughout design, engineering, manufacturing, and distribution.

They do this by first identifying their customer's needs and wants, deriving customer-based specifications that define quality in customer terms, and then focusing manufacturing resources on achieving that definition of quality.

What makes this a real revolution is the tremendous opportunity for market researchers to thrive for the first time, that, in many cases, engineers and designers are being pushed to think explicitly about who their customers are and what they need the product to do for them.

In the past, most engineers and those in the quality control business defined quality as "zero defects" or "conformance to specifications." This definition often missed the mark because it left open the important issues of exactly whose specifications were being met.

Anxieties

CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE

Sharing her feelings in the focus group.

Once trust was established, there was still the problem of the women's insecurities about their abilities to manage. Most women in this group had no more than sixth-grade educations and were defensive about proper child care practices. It came out in sessions that they didn't attend the program for fear they would be found to be unskilled.

and spouses, and they fear what lies ahead. Eager for opportunities to socialize, some seniors will participate in a focus group only to become angry if faced with issues of dependency or declining health.

During one group, it became necessary to address participants' anxieties about growing old. The challenge in this group was to come up with creative applications of gene.

The recreation department was eager to provide a normalization and was planning to incorporate these into an existing program, which included competitive activities.

Focus group research, later quantified in the survey, clearly demonstrated the importance of the measures as a new way of life.

were bright but in special programs at high school because they had a learning handicap.

Once the common bond was established, each woman began to look at her life with a new sense of potential. Friends they identified possible activities that could be done in groups or couples.

The recreation department was eager to provide a normalization and was planning to incorporate these into an existing program, which included competitive activities.

Focus group research, later quantified in the survey, clearly demonstrated the importance of the measures as a new way of life.

Anxieties could clearly recognize the value of these products for others in the group.

While denying the extent of his own disability, he contributed to the group by encouraging others to test the products and identify how they could make life more interesting.

Although Mr. S. was the most visibly disabled person in the group, he was only recently afflicted and needed time to adjust to his condition. Taking my cue from his, I did not personalize any questions to his needs; rather, tailored them to the needs of other disabled people.
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Bookshelf
Focus Groups
By Jane Parley Templeton, Probus Publishing Co., 228 N. Clinton St., Chicago, IL 60606, 315 pp., $24.95. A guide for marketing and advertising professionals that explains how to design and organize focus groups.

Quality
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2
early customer feedback, in-use analyses identify product improvements, and periodic customer input identifies solutions to problems before they undermine a product's reputation.

When CDE is implemented properly, the benefits are tremendous. Because the product is designed and built with customer input, the customer is willing to pay for the product's benefits. This means higher margins and more sales. Because engineering, manufacturing, and quality control are involved from the beginning, the key tradeoffs are made early, because

the focus is on relevant qualities throughout the design and manufacturing process, the complete costs are decreased and the product is perceived by customers as being better built.

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Our example was drawn from automobiles, but CDE applies to almost any product. The heavy-duty, fast-action feel of the keyboard, the crispness of the text on the monitor, the effective speed during an application program, and the quietness of the cooling fan affect the image of a desktop computer.

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