Marketing Practitioners and Consumer Research – Opportunities For Enhancing the Impact of Scholarly Work

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This roundtable seeks to create a forum for consumer researchers and industry practitioners to discuss the interface between consumer research as an academic discipline and consumer research and marketing as an applied practice. While marketing practitioners can benefit greatly from advances in consumer research, it appears that dissemination of new knowledge generated by consumer researchers is limited and slow. This roundtable will explore how knowledge transfer can be facilitated to make sure that advances in consumer research does not end being just an intra-disciplinary discussion but reaches its full potential by changing the way the society approaches consumer research.

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ROUNDTABLE
Marketing Practitioners and Consumer Research–Opportunities for Enhancing the Impact of Scholarly Work

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Extended Abstract
Consumer research, as it is currently manifested through members of the Association for Consumer Research, is a distinct discipline with strong ties to marketing. The field initially developed with theories from psychology and economics. As it matured, consumer research emerged into a multidisciplinary field, incorporating sociology, anthropology, geography, and history among others. Today, consumer research is a field of study that in and of itself is a legitimate and does not have to provide implications for specific audiences such as consumers, governments or businesses. As such, understanding consumer behavior for its own sake is just as important as it is to understand for instance the history of our solar system.

While the study of consumer research does not need an audience that can benefit from the research in order to be legitimate, it is well established that both policy makers and businesses can benefit from advancing theories of consumption. The question then is how to best facilitate knowledge transfer from consumer research as an academic field to marketing practice.

Knowledge that is developed by consumer researchers transfer to marketing practitioners in numerous ways. Business students get exposed to consumer research through textbooks and articles and through interactions with academic scholars. When students later enter the workforce they may bring some of that knowledge to their profession. Another way knowledge is transferred is through consulting practices, where academics share their expertise with businesses. In addition to this, joint academic and industry initiatives, such as the Marketing Science Institute provide additional forums where consumer research scholars and industry practitioners interact. Finally, marketing practitioners get exposure to consumer research through books and journals that are specifically written for a practitioner audience.

The question is whether these modes of transfer of knowledge from consumer researchers to the industry are adequate. It appears that much of the advances that are made in consumer research never reaches a wide industry audience or takes a very long time before it does. For example, the few journals that are targeting industry practitioners provide access to only a fraction of relevant consumer research. Could a better knowledge transfer be achieved, resulting in more informed and enlightened industry professionals? Are there ways in which knowledge developed by consumer researchers could be better translated to speak to the industry audience? These are examples of questions that this roundtable will address to explore how to maximize the societal impact of consumer research.