Disseminating Transformative Consumer Research: Getting Research Results Out of the Tower and Into Consumers’ Lives

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Quite simply, this roundtable focuses on how to talk to real consumers about our research findings. At last year’s ACR meeting, the Transformative Consumer Research (TCR) Task Force called members to develop and act upon the ideas for enhancing the quality of consumers’ lives. This roundtable was developed with this spirit in mind. The purpose of the Disseminating TCR roundtable is twofold: 1) to further develop and clarify appropriate mediums for reaching consumers with transformative research, and 2) to bring to light existing resources where synergistic interest in substantive TCR topics generates opportunities for collaboration in the dissemination of transformative research to consumer audiences. Particular questions to be addressed include: Where, how, and to whom should our findings be communicated? Who should/could be involved in dissemination the findings? How can we leverage relationships to facilitate the information dissemination? Experienced and aspiring transformative consumer researchers will find value in the session.

[to cite]:


[url]:

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Advances in Consumer Research
Volume 34, © 2007

ROUNDTABLE
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BACKGROUND–TRANSFORMATIVE CONSUMER RESEARCH
In the report on the ACR Task Force on Transformative Consumer Research (TCR), David Mick describes the mission of TCR as making “…a beneficial difference in the lives of consumers, both present and future generations, through the chosen focus and conduct of specific research, and in the communicating of its implications and usefulness. More simply stated, TCR is “…consumer research in the service of quality of life.”

In addition to identifying a number of substantive topics for Transformative Consumer Research, members of the inaugural Task Force on TCR acknowledged the importance of disseminating transformative research in a form comprehensible to and valued by consumers. Task force members recommended several strategies including, special issues of academic journals, special symposia and published proceedings, development of the “for consumers” section of the ACR website, creation of the position of ACR chief communications officer, and development of media aimed at the general public. This initial dialogue provides a framework and some strategic options for moving the relevance of consumer research findings closer to the consumer.

ROUNDTABLE PURPOSE
In the spirit of the Task Force’s call to develop and act upon the ideas that emerged from the initial dialogue, the purpose of the Disseminating TCR roundtable is twofold: 1) to further develop and clarify appropriate mediums for reaching consumers with transformative research, and 2) to bring to light existing resources where synergistic interest in substantive TCR topics generates opportunities for collaboration in the dissemination of transformative research to consumer audiences.

ROUNDTABLE STRUCTURE AND CONTENT
The proposed Disseminating TCR roundtable will include: 1) members of the inaugural Task Force on Transformative Consumer Research, 2) researchers actively involved in substantive topics relevant to transformative consumer research, and 3) experienced and aspiring consumer researchers interested in making their research relevant and accessible to consumers.

Panelists will be asked to share personal experiences with research projects in the area of TCR, and to discuss appropriate mediums and possible resources for disseminating their findings to consumers. It is expected that the ensuing discussion will stimulate interest in seeking synergistic collaborations with the express purpose of disseminating transformative research to consumer audiences.

Particular questions to be addressed include: Where and how should our findings be communicated? Who is the audience? Who should/could be involved in dissemination the findings? How can we leverage relationships within university environments to facilitate the information dissemination? How can we leverage information collected by state and federal agencies (e.g., needs assessments) and how can we leverage their existing relationships with consumers to communicate our findings?

There are several potentially valuable outcomes of this roundtable. One would be a better understanding of how the “For Consumers” section of our ACR website should look (e.g., Who is the audience? How should the information be communicated? How can we leverage relationships within university environments and within consumer interest groups and agencies?). Another outcome would be exploring new publication options and collaborations with ACR for newsletters, books, and so forth that are aimed at the general public and its welfare. Another outcome would be exploring the development of a volunteer or partly-paid Communications Director position at ACR, a person who would have a large role in coordinating publicity and new findings related to ACR’s venture in Transformative Consumer Research.