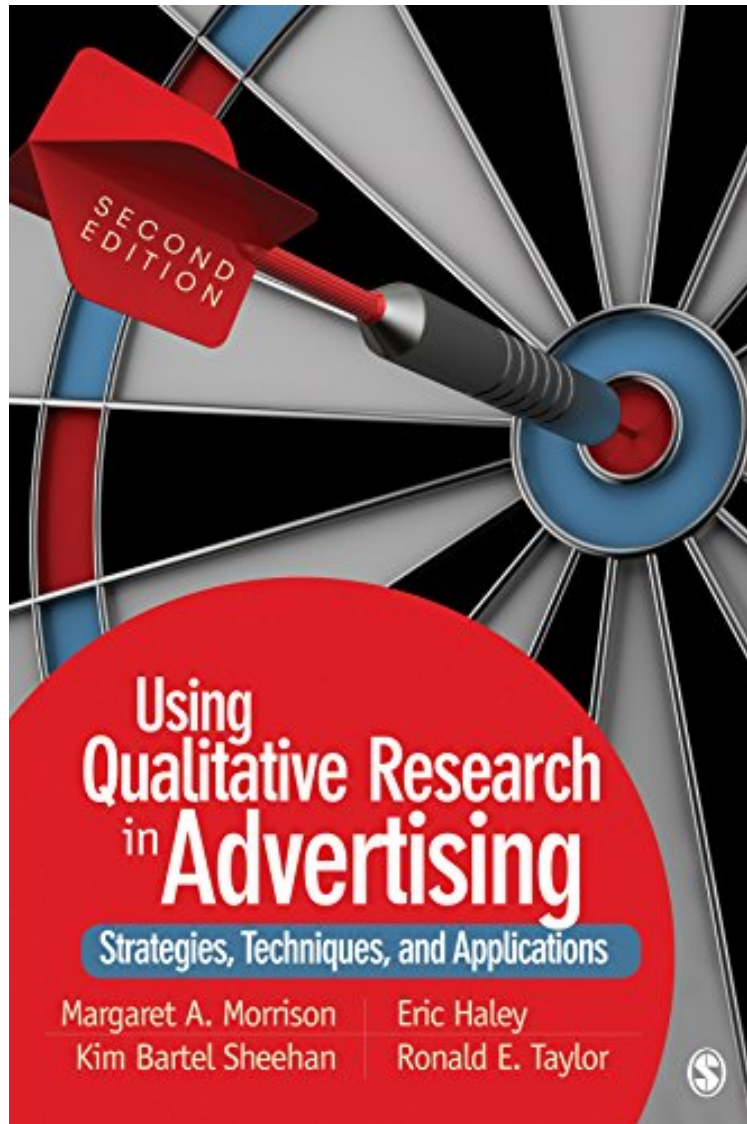


Using Qualitative Research in Advertising: Strategies, Techniques, and Applications

Margaret A. Morrison, Eric E. Haley, Kim B. Sheehan, Ronald E. Taylor
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This Second Edition remains the only book to discuss both theory and application of qualitative research techniques to inspire great advertising and build strong brands. Using a step-by-step approach created for students considering advertising careers and for those currently working in the advertising industry, this book explains what qualitative research techniques are designed to do. The text describes how these techniques aid in uncovering insights useful for advertising strategy development, creative development, and post-campaign evaluation. Practical information and discussions on interviewing, projective techniques, focus groups, and online/social media applications positioned within a theoretical context illustrate the value of qualitative research in the real world.

About the Author Eric Haley is Professor in the Department of Advertising at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. He received his Ph.D. from The University of Georgia in 1992. He teaches a variety of advertising courses and a doctoral seminar in qualitative research. He is an active research consultant helping national clients with custom research information needs. His publications have appeared in the *Journal of Advertising* and the *Journal of Current Issues and Research in Advertising*. Ronald E. Taylor is Professor and Director of the School of Advertising and Public Relations at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. He earned an A.B. in Journalism at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and M.S. in Advertising, and Ph.D. in Communication at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. He has taught a course in qualitative research methods at Tennessee for the past 15 years. Dr. Taylor is interested in European advertising and advertising regulation. He has lectured in France and conducted research in France, Belgium, and Spain. Margaret A. Morrison is Professor in the School of Advertising and Public Relations at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. She received her Ph.D. from The University of Georgia in 1996. She has taught classes in media planning, account planning, qualitative research, and advertising campaigns at Tennessee since 1995. Her work has appeared in various outlets such as *Journal of Advertising Research*, *Journal of Advertising*, *Journal of Current Issues and Research in Advertising*, and *American Journal of Public Health*. Kim Sheehan is Assistant Professor at the University of Oregon's School of Journalism and Communication. She received the Ph.D. from the University of Tennessee in 1998. Her teaching and research interests include online consumer behavior and research methods, and advertising creative strategy. Her research has appeared in *Journal of Advertising*, *Journal of Advertising Research* and the *Journal of Public Policy and Marketing*. Excerpt. copy; Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved.

INTRODUCTION Advertising, as you've probably noticed, surrounds every facet of your life. Indeed, industry estimates suggest that more than \$480 billion will be spent on advertising in 2001, with over half of that in the United States alone (Coen, 2001). That translates into millions of ads, all vying for the attention of consumers. In some instances, advertisers are looking for the attention of very specific, targeted groups of consumers (e.g., adults aged 25-54 who are liberal, recycle regularly, entertain at least twice a month, and have minimum household incomes of \$75,000). In other instances, targeted audiences may be more general (e.g., working moms). Regardless of the target, marketers have become very savvy in using research to create messages that are relevant, timely, and motivating to the audience they want to reach. This is a book about how to use a particular type of research—qualitative research—to inspire great advertising. Qualitative research refers to the meanings, concepts, definitions, characteristics, metaphors, symbols, and descriptions of things (Berg, 1989, p.2). It is an approach to research that uses a variety of methods and involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to whatever is the focus of study (Denzin Lincoln, 1994). Its greatest utility is in discovering underlying meanings and patterns in relationships. The character of qualitative research makes it and its associated methods extremely useful for uncovering complex consumer insights that can lead to successful advertising. In writing this book, we've tried to adopt a consumer perspective. That is, we're convinced that great advertising comes only from an understanding of consumers' want and needs. And, in order to understand those wants and needs, the consumer needs to be consulted and integrated at virtually every step of the research process. In short, the strategies and techniques outlined in this book are based on something called an account planning philosophy. We'll talk about this philosophy in just a moment. We wrote this book for several different audiences. Primarily, account planners will find this book a valuable resource, particularly given the few formal training programs that are around today. In a national U.S. survey of account planners that we conducted, only 45% of respondents reported that they had received formal on-the-job training (55% didn't receive any formal training), and 95% reported receiving only informal on-the-job training. Less than half of respondents reported receiving training in qualitative research methods. Qualitative methods was one of the most cited areas by planners when we asked them, "In what areas do you feel you need more training?" Yet our survey also uncovered that qualitative methods are commonly used by account planners. Given that account planners are often involved in qualitative research but receive little training in how to use qualitative methods, we saw the need for a book that planners can turn to as they go about the difficult task of trying to develop consumer insights. Of course, account planners aren't the only ones who might find value in this book. Others who might find this book helpful include research suppliers who, given their relationship with account planners, want to understand the role of qualitative research a bit better; advertising agencies, who will find it a useful addition to the reference libraries; and training programs and universities offering

classes in advertising.