



Marcus Thomas LLC Tests Hypothesis for Troy-Bilt Creative Development

>Abstract

Troy-Bilt® works with Marcus Thomas LLC to develop marketing communications, including television advertising campaigns. As part of its creative development, Marcus Thomas needed to understand what motivated the yardwork enthusiast, and what makes television advertising most effective within the lawn and garden industry. Marcus Thomas developed a hypothesis that “consumers who are in the market to purchase a product process television advertising differently than those who are not in the market for lawn and garden equipment.” It used an online survey employing a control group, with embedded video, to test this hypothesis and develop the subsequent ad campaign. www.marcusthomasllc.com; www.troybilt.com

>The Scenario

Troy-Bilt is a leading manufacturer of riding mowers, walk-behind mowers, tillers, cultivators, trimmers, edges, log splitters, snow throwers and garden tools. It needed to find the right message for its newest television advertising campaign. It worked with Marcus Thomas to craft this campaign, and Marcus Thomas needed to understand the motivations of the yardwork enthusiast.

As part of creative development, Marcus Thomas did exploratory research about people who enjoy yardwork versus those who tolerate it. It also developed a hypothesis to test. “Consumers who are in the market to purchase a product process television advertising differently than those who are not in the market for lawn and garden equipment.” While companies often assume this to be true, Marcus Thomas wanted to know for sure.

>The Research

To test its hypothesis, Marcus Thomas developed a sampling plan that required four major cells of participants:

In-market for lawn/garden product	Not-in-market for lawn/garden
In-market for control product	Not-in-market for control product

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The Marcus Thomas screening process used the standard exclusion to reject people who were members of the advertising or research industries. It also screened for age, gender and television viewing habits. Only then did it determine in-market/not-in-market status for the client's category and the control category.

It also set quotas by geographic location of the residence of the participant to ensure that all geographic regions of the client's market were reflected and to capture any geographic variations. One thousand people participated in the study.

The Marcus Thomas hypothesis proposed that in-market participants would recall the ads and the messages differently than those not in-market. To test this hypothesis, a video was embedded within the online survey. It featured an eight-minute segment of a DIY Network show ("House Crashers"). Embedded within the segment were four 30-second television ads at what would have been natural commercial breaks. Two ads featured paint (paint was chosen as the control group product) and two featured lawn and garden products. One of the ads was produced by Marcus Thomas; the other three were ads that were currently running at the time on television. Within each category (lawn/garden vs. paint), one ad was brand-focused while the other was product-focused. The order of the ads within the video segment was randomized across all participants.

The primary measurements were unaided recall (where participants are asked to recall what commercials they have seen, without assistance or prompting with lists, brand symbols, etc.), aided recall (where participants are shown a list of possible ad sponsors and asked if they remember them), most memorable commercial moments, and how ads affected their perception of the brand or product.

>The Results

Research provided clear direction for Marcus Thomas in the development of Troy-Bilt ads and some unexpected differences in the ways ads were processed among the different groups of respondents.



>Discussion Questions

- 1 Define the sample parameters for the Troy-Bilt/Marcus Thomas study.
- 2 Discuss the sample design for the Troy-Bilt/Marcus Thomas study.
- 3 What are the advantages and disadvantages of the control group to test the hypothesis?
- 4 Evaluate the measurement scales used in the Troy-Bilt/Marcus Thomas survey.
- 5 What question would you develop for Q27.
- 6 Evaluate the questionnaire structure and organization.
- 7 What are some advantages and disadvantages of using an online survey for this study.

>Source

This case was developed from interviews with and material provided by Jennifer Hirt-Marchand, associate partner, strategic insights executive, and Edwige Winans, associate research director, of Marcus Thomas, LLC., with the permission of Troy-Built.

TV Advertising Effectiveness Research Questionnaire

October 11, 2011

INTRODUCTION – The purpose of this survey is to gather your opinions about a home improvement video. In total, the survey will take approximately 25 minutes to complete. Thank you for your time and feedback.

Q1. Which of the following do you or anyone in your household work for? (Select all that apply.)

[RANDOMIZE]	
An advertising or public relations agency	[Terminate]
A marketing research company or department	
A company that manufactures, maintains or sells lawn and garden equipment	
A home improvement or hardware retailer	
A company that manufactures or sells paint	
An airline company	[Continue]
The automotive industry (car manufacturer or retailer)	
None of these	

[next page]

Q1B. Approximately how much TV do you, yourself, watch on a daily basis?

- ☐ Less than 1 hour [Terminate]
- ☐ 1 to 2 hours
- ☐ 3 to 5 hours
- ☐ More than 5 hours

[next page]

Q2. In which state is your primary residence located? [pull-down menu]

[Quotas: West Region x%, Northeast Region x%, Midwest Region x%, South Region x%. For a list of states within each region, please refer to the appendix section of this document.]

[next page]

Q3. Do you own or rent a property with a yard that you, yourself, maintain?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No [Terminate]

[\[next page\]](#)

Q4. Which of the following projects are you currently involved in or do you plan to complete in your own home within the next 12 months? (Select all that apply.) [\[randomize\]](#)

- ☐ Kitchen remodeling
- ☐ Interior or exterior paint work
- ☐ Basement remodeling
- ☐ Attic remodeling
- ☐ None of these

[\[next page\]](#)

Q5. What is your involvement with the following purchase decisions?

[Randomize]	Primary decision maker	My spouse/partner and I are equally involved	I am not as involved as my spouse/partner	I do not get involved with these decisions
Lawn mower and other outdoor power equipment	[Continue]		[Terminate]	
Paint				
Pressure washer				
Grill/BBQ				
Kitchen remodeling				
Basement remodeling				

[\[next page\]](#)

Q6. Which of the following do you, personally, own or plan to purchase within the next 12 months for your household?

[Randomize]	Own and plan to purchase within the next 12 months	Do not own, but plan to purchase in the next 12 months	Own and do not plan to purchase within the next 12 months	Do not own nor plan to purchase within 12 months
Walk-behind lawn mower (gas or electric powered)	[Quota: 50% – in market]		[Quota: 50% – out of market]	
Riding lawn mower				
High-definition TV				
Flat screen TV				
Sports equipment (treadmill, etc.)				
Grill/BBQ				
Pressure washer				
Hot tub				

[After this question, we have two groups of respondents: IN-MARKET and OUT-OF-MARKET. The quotas by gender and age group below need to be the same across IN-MARKET and OUT-OF-MARKET respondents.]

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Q7. What is your gender?

- ☐ Male [Quota: x%]
- ☐ Female [Quota: x%]

[next page]

Q8. In which of the following age brackets do you belong?

- ☐ Under 21 [TERMINATE]
- ☐ 21-31 [Quota: x%]
- ☐ 32-46 [Quota: x%]
- ☐ 47-65 [Quota: x%]
- ☐ 66+ [TERMINATE]

UNAIDED BRAND AWARENESS – [randomize the order of Q9 through Q11]

[next page]

Q9. What brands of outdoor power equipment (lawn mowers, tillers, trimmers, etc.) are you aware of? List as many brands as come to mind. If you don't know any, please write "don't know."

Q10. What brands of paint are you aware of? List as many brands as come to mind. If you don't know any, please write "don't know."

Q11. What brands of BBQs/grills are you aware of? List as many brands as come to mind. If you don't know any, please write "don't know."

[next page]

Q12. What shows or programs do you like to watch on TV? (Select all that apply.)[randomize]

- ☐ DIY/home remodeling shows
- ☐ Mysteries and murder series
- ☐ Classic movies
- ☐ Travel shows
- ☐ Reality shows
- ☐ Documentaries
- ☐ Gardening or landscaping shows
- ☐ Other

[\[next page\]](#)

For the next 10 minutes, you will be watching a segment of a TV program. Watch the segment in its entirety and when you are done, press “continue” at the bottom of the screen to start answering questions.

VIDEO STIMULUS – Each participant will view one video with four commercials embedded in random order. Survey delay function activated; no one can move forward with questions before 9 minutes 30 seconds.

“Continue”

[The purpose of the following two questions is to introduce further distance from stimuli.]

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Q13. Have you seen this program in the past?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ I do not know

[\[next page\]](#)

Q14. What was the name of the show host? [\[randomize\]](#)

- ☐ Josh Temple
- ☐ David Bromstad
- ☐ Scott McGillivray
- ☐ Bryan Baeumler
- ☐ None of these
- ☐ I do not know

UNAIDED BRAND AND COMMERCIAL RECALL

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Q15. What brands do you remember being featured in the video (including during commercial breaks)? List as many as you can think of.

[\[next page\]](#)

Q16. Do you remember seeing commercials during the video?

- ☐ Yes [\[Continue\]](#)
- ☐ No [\[Skip to Q21\]](#)

[[next page](#)]

Q17_1: You mentioned remembering seeing commercials in the video. What is the first commercial that comes to mind and what was it about? (Please be as detailed as possible).

Q17_2: What brand or product names was the commercial for?

Q17_3: What specific elements do you remember about this commercial? (Please be as detailed as you can.)

Q17_4: What does the commercial make you think or feel about the brand or product? (Please be as specific as you can.)

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Q17_5: Do you remember seeing other commercials in the video?

- ☐ Yes [[continue to Q18_1](#)]
- ☐ No [[skip to Q21](#)]

[[repeat Q17_1, Q17_2, Q17_3 and Q17_4 three more times \(Q18, Q19 and Q20\). Do not make answers mandatory, as respondents may not remember all the commercials. Rephrase Q18_1, Q19_1 and Q20_1 to say, "What other commercial do you remember seeing during the video and what was it about?".](#)]

AIDED BRAND AWARENESS AND RECALL

[[next page](#)]

Q21. [[ALL](#)] Which of the following brands are you aware of? (Select all that apply.) [[randomize](#)]

- | | |
|----------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Brand A (Lawn and Garden) | <input type="checkbox"/> Brand B (Paint) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Brand B (Lawn and Garden) | <input type="checkbox"/> Brand C (Paint) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Brand C (Lawn and Garden) | <input type="checkbox"/> Brand D (Paint) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Brand D (Lawn and Garden) | <input type="checkbox"/> Brand E (Paint) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Brand E (Lawn and Garden) | <input type="checkbox"/> Brand F (Paint) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Brand F (Lawn and Garden) | <input type="checkbox"/> Brand G (Paint) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Brand G (Lawn and Garden) | <input type="checkbox"/> None of these |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Brand A (Paint) | |

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Q22. For which of the following brands do you recall seeing a commercial during the video? (Select all brands that you recall even if you already mentioned these brands previously.) [[randomize](#)]

- | | |
|----------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Brand A (Lawn and Garden) | <input type="checkbox"/> Brand B (Paint) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Brand B (Lawn and Garden) | <input type="checkbox"/> Brand C (Paint) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Brand C (Lawn and Garden) | <input type="checkbox"/> Brand D (Paint) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Brand D (Lawn and Garden) | <input type="checkbox"/> Brand E (Paint) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Brand E (Lawn and Garden) | <input type="checkbox"/> Brand F (Paint) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Brand F (Lawn and Garden) | <input type="checkbox"/> Brand G (Paint) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Brand G (Lawn and Garden) | <input type="checkbox"/> None of these |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Brand A (Paint) | |

[Respondents who selected Lawn and Garden Brand A, Lawn and Garden Brand B, Paint Brand A or Paint Brand B AND answered “No” to Q16 will be answering Q17-Q20 before proceeding to Q23 or Q24 based on the logic below. All others follow the logic below.]

[Respondents who selected Lawn and Garden Brand A in Q22 continue to Q23; those who did not will skip to Q24.]

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Q23. Having seen Lawn and Garden Brand A commercial, when you think of Brand A, do you consider it to be ... (Select all that apply.) [[randomize](#)]

	Yes, very	Yes, a little	Neutral	No, not very	No, not at all
Attribute A	5	4	3	2	1
Attribute B	5	4	3	2	1
Attribute C	5	4	3	2	1
Attribute D	5	4	3	2	1
Attribute E	5	4	3	2	1
Attribute F	5	4	3	2	1

[[next page](#)]

Q24. [[All](#)] What brands of lawn mowers do you own currently or have owned in the past? (Select all that apply.) [[randomize](#)]

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Brand A | <input type="checkbox"/> Brand F |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Brand B | <input type="checkbox"/> Brand G |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Brand C | <input type="checkbox"/> Other, specify |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Brand D | <input type="checkbox"/> I do not currently own a lawn mower |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Brand E | |

[\[next page\]](#)

Q25. What brands of paint have you used in the past? (Select all that apply.)[\[randomize\]](#)

- | | |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Brand A | <input type="checkbox"/> Brand F |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Brand B | <input type="checkbox"/> Brand G |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Brand C | <input type="checkbox"/> Other, specify |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Brand D | <input type="checkbox"/> None |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Brand E | |

[\[next page\]](#)

Q26. Which of the commercials in the video do you remember seeing before today? (Select all that apply.) [\[randomize\]](#)

- ☐ Commercial A (Lawn and Garden)
- ☐ Commercial B (Lawn and Garden)
- ☐ Commercial C (Lawn and Garden)
- ☐ Commercial A (Paint)
- ☐ Commercial B (Paint)
- ☐ Commercial C (Paint)
- ☐ None of these

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For the last question, Q27, Marcus Thomas developed a proprietary semantic scale anchored by opposing attitudinal statements, each reflecting some aspect of yardwork enthusiasm. We can't reveal the scale, but how would you craft such a scale? What constructs and concepts would you include? How many differential points would you use?

The survey is over. Thank you for participating!

APPENDIX

State	Region Quotas
Connecticut	[Quotas: Northeast Region x%]
Maine	
Massachusetts	
New Hampshire	
Rhode Island	
Vermont	
New Jersey	
New York	
Pennsylvania	
Illinois	[Quotas: Midwest Region x%]
Indiana	
Michigan	
Ohio	
Wisconsin	
Iowa	
Kansas	
Minnesota	
Missouri	
Nebraska	
North Dakota	
South Dakota	
Delaware	[Quotas: South Region x%]
District of Columbia	
Florida	
Georgia	
Maryland	
North Carolina	
South Carolina	
Virginia	
West Virginia	
Alabama	
Kentucky	
Mississippi	
Tennessee	
Arkansas	
Louisiana	
Oklahoma	
Texas	

State	Region Quotas
Arizona	[Quotas: West Region x%]
Colorado	
Idaho	
Montana	
Nevada	
New Mexico	
Utah	
Wyoming	
Alaska	
California	
Hawaii	
Oregon	
Washington	