



# Information to Drive Your Marketing Strategy

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Do people know about my product, service or brand? Are my advertising and promotions working? What do people think about my product, service or brand? Are views positive or negative? How are people using my brand? How often? How much? Where does my brand stand relative to my competitors?

Studies of awareness, attitudes, and usage (AAU) enable marketers to quantify levels and trends in customer knowledge, perceptions, beliefs, intentions, and behaviors. These are key data points in the development of an overall brand or product strategy.

Awareness, attitudes, and usage (AAU) metrics are based on the theory of Hierarchy of Effects, an assumption that consumers progress through sequential stages from brand awareness, through initial trial of a product, to brand adoption, and ultimately to brand loyalty. AAU metrics are generally designed to track these stages of knowledge, beliefs, and behaviors and also "who" uses a brand or product—in which customers are defined by category usage (heavy/light), geography, demographics, psychographics, media usage, and whether they purchase other products. Therefore, AAU studies are most useful when tracked over time and when the results are benchmarked against a clear set of competitors.

Infosurv Research constructs each AAU Survey to the custom needs of each client. However, AAU surveys all have a common set of core question sections:

- Awareness
  - *Unaided Top of Mind* – asking for the first brand in a category that comes to mind provides the most powerful measure of how well positioned that brand is in the mind of consumers
  - *Unaided Total Awareness* – following up with “what other brands are you aware of” provides a measure of the competitive set of brands in the minds of consumers
  - *Aided Awareness* – Asking for awareness of a particular brand or set of brands by prompting the names provides a measure of name recall.
- Attitudes
  - *Agree/Disagree Questions* - Consumers are provided with a series of statements that are rated on an Agree/Disagree scale to measure overall perceptions they have about a brand. For example, “This is a brand for people like me” or “Using this brand makes me feel more confident”.
  - *Rating Questions* – Consumers are provided with a series of brand or product attributes that they rate regarding performance or satisfaction. For example, “Rate how long Brand X lasts relative to the competitor’s Brand Y” or “How satisfied are you with the overall performance of Brand X?”
  - *Perceived Value for Money*: A rating assigned by consumers on their perception of brand value overall, such as, "Brand X usually represents a good value for the price that is charged." Or, the measure may be in relation to competitors, such as “Brand X represents a good value for the price compared to Brand Y.”

- *Perceived Quality or Esteem* – As with Value, consumers can rate the quality of a brand or product in isolation or relative to completion.
- *Intentions*: A measure of customers' stated willingness to behave in a certain way in regards to a particular brand. These intentions can be likelihood to recommend a brand, likelihood to purchase a brand, likelihood to switch brands, etc.
- *Scales* – All of the constructs above typically require scaled questions. A scale may be fully labeled, where each point of the scale is defined or a scale may be anchored, labeling only the end points of the scale. Scales can range from 1–5 or 1–7 or many other configurations. In general, Infosurv Research recommends a fully labeled, odd numbered, balanced scale with a defined midpoint. But, our surveys are adaptable to whatever scale with which a client is comfortable.
- Usage
  - Usage metrics are concerned with things such as purchase frequency, number of units per purchase, time and place of purchase, reasons for purchase (or failure to purchase), and how the product fits within the consumer's lifestyle.
- Psychographics, Media Habits, Demographics
  - A series of questions are asked to determine general habits and behaviors, lifestyle, beliefs, how people attain information, and demographic characteristics (age, gender, education, income, ethnicity, etc.).
  - These questions are used to classify people into like groups to better target advertising and promotional messaging.

### Getting the Most from AAU Data

While AAU Research is the most commonly used source of AAU metrics, other information sources can be integrated for a more robust understanding of your market position. Warranty cards, sales and financial data, customer service information, web and social media analytics can all be used to further illustrate your current levels of Awareness, Attitudes, and Usage.

Because AAU research usually takes place over time as tracking studies, they present additional opportunities for insight:

1. **Use AAU data to create a priori segmentation** schema. Look at customer vs. non-customer vs. prospect responses; look at different geographic and demographic characteristics. Is there a pattern to how your customers use selected products or services? AAU data can be very useful in developing marketing strategies
2. **Connect the dots in the customer's entire purchase experience.** In the auto industry, for example, individuals who have just purchased a new car show a heightened sensitivity to advertisements for its make and model. Conventional wisdom suggests that they're looking for confirmation that they made a good choice in a risky decision. By helping consumers justify their purchase at this time, auto manufacturers can strengthen long-term satisfaction and willingness to recommend. Examining AAU data throughout the entire purchase process may reveal new insights for marketers.

AAU research is a cornerstone of most companies' marketing research programs, because the information collected is fundamental to strategy as well as day-to-day business decision making. Contact Infosurv Research to learn more about conducting a high-impact and cost effective AAU program for your product, service, or brand.

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### **Case Studies to be used as Text Boxes**

#### **AAU to Support New Product Launch**

After the introduction of a new product, our client needed to understand why sales were not meeting projections. Using the Hierarchy of Effects, we determined that we need to evaluate how awareness of the new product was tracking, as well as evaluate the usage experience among those customers who were aware and had tried the product. The evidence was clear – awareness was extremely low among the key target audiences. Without awareness, our client could not generate the expected sales. Further research into the effectiveness of their advertising and marketing program revealed weaknesses that were addressed and which resulted in the desired level of sales.

#### **AAU to Understand Declining Renewal Rates**

Our client, a business-to-business services company, noticed that renewal rates were declining among their key accounts. Examining customer service satisfaction and competitive information did not reveal any reason that could be leading to this decline. An AAU project was initiated to understand how our client's services and brands were perceived in the marketplace, especially in relation to their key competitors. Our client learned that their products were perceived as "behind the technological curve" and major accounts were moving to companies perceived as more technologically advanced. Fortunately, our client was in the middle of a major technological upgrade, and was able to accelerate its implementation plans to reposition itself as an industry leader.