



FROM THE EDITOR'S BLACKBERRY™

If I happen to walk by a Starbucks unexpectedly, I try to think of reasons to go in. What better review could a retailer hope for? Even if I buy a bottled drink—the same one I can get in the supermarket—the ability to enjoy it in a Starbucks makes it a treat.

On a recent day, I settled into a Lower Manhattan Starbucks with a delicious hot coffee and saw something I'd never seen before—two people in the same coffee shop reading the same book. It was Malcolm Gladwell's *Blink*. With remarkable ease (or so it seems), Gladwell has graduated from ubiquitous business speaker to Oprah-ready bestseller. If there is a *venti latte* among business gurus, I would venture to say it is Gladwell—at least for the moment.

Of course, Starbucks and *Blink* (and iPod and Google) are case studies in getting past what Gladwell famously termed the “tipping point”—the point at which “cult” success morphs into mass acceptance through some combination of intrigue, quality, and hipness. Though luck is no doubt involved in this process, it is not as mysterious as we might assume; as John J. Lewis points out, there is a *science* to consumer choice—science being a process by which observations of what *has* happened help us predict what *will* happen.

This issue of *KNOW* also brings you a conversation with the legendary chairman and founder of Starbucks, Howard Schultz, who tells how the coffee chain became a worldwide presence—and extended its brand into music and beyond—while maintaining a connection with its customers that is the envy of all other marketers.

To provide a deeper level of consumer understanding, market researchers cannot be satisfied with the tools they have been leveraging for the past ten or twenty years. In “Consumer Information and the New Complexity of Decision Making,” Ellen Veccia focuses on a powerful tool—forced-choice techniques—that more accurately simulates the way consumers choose and often provides clearer guidance for marketers.

Just as the array of buying options facing consumers has exploded in recent years, so too has the complexity and number of science issues being played out in the realm of public policy—from cloning to stem cell research.

“Helping Americans Make More-Informed Choices About Science Policy,” by Jon D. Miller and William McCready, chronicles a pioneering effort to bring coverage of key scientific topics to local television stations.

David C. Tice's “The Digital Dilemma” reports on choice-related research undertaken exclusively for this issue of *KNOW*—a study of families who are hanging back when it comes to adopting some of today's hottest devices and services.

One could argue that the holy grail of measuring and guiding choice would be establishing a connection between lifestyles, product consumption, and media use. “Leveraging the Connections Between Media Choices and Lifestyle,” by Maura E. Clancey and Robert L. DeFelice, reports on an important experiment in that direction—a segmentation based on a unique database that incorporates media time and product preference. Stay tuned for more news of this groundbreaking project.

If one medium is hard-wired into the process of consumer purchasing more than any other, it is arguably YellowPages. How is this extraordinary vehicle working to meet the challenges—and opportunities—of the Internet age? Burt Michaels tells us in “Putting a 21st-century Spin on a Powerful Selling Vehicle.”

We are also pleased to present *KNOW*'s first Thought Leader Forum in this issue; Jonah Bloom, Randall Rothenberg, and Barry Schwartz have given us some exclusive insights into their perspective of how and why consumers choose.

We hope you find that *KNOW* is growing and continuing to surprise and inform you. It is your magazine, so feel free to rewrite and rethink it—capriciously or otherwise. Your needs and concerns are its reason for being; let us know how it is living up to that task, and tell us how we could do better.



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