

It sometimes happens that research submitted in support of advertising claims is found to be inadequate. In order to assist advertisers and agencies in commissioning research, the following guidelines are furnished:

1. Selection of research practitioner or research house

The research should be commissioned with a research practitioner or research organisation that subscribes to the SAMRA (Southern African Marketing Research Association) Code of Conduct for Market Research in Southern Africa and/or the ICC/E.S.O.M.A.R. International Code of Marketing and Social Research Practice.

In-house research, either by the advertiser or his agency, is not acceptable in substantiation of advertising claims.

2. Research requirements

The following information must be disclosed in the report:

2.1 Background

- 2.1.1 for whom the study was conducted;
- 2.1.2 the purpose of the study;
- 2.1.3 names of subcontractors and consultants performing any substantial part of the work.

2.2 Sample

- 2.2.1 a description of the intended and actual universe covered;
- 2.2.2 the size, nature and geographical distribution of the sample (both planned and achieved); and where relevant, the extent to which any of the data collected were obtained from only part of the sample;
- 2.2.3 details of the sampling method and any weighting methods used;
- 2.2.4 where technically relevant, a statement of response rates and a discussion of any possible bias due to non-response.

- 2.3 Data collection
 - 2.3.1 a description of the method by which the information was collected;
 - 2.3.2 a description of the field staff, briefing and field quality control methods used;
 - 2.3.3 the method of recruiting Respondents; and the general nature of any incentives offered to secure their cooperation;
 - 2.3.4 when the fieldwork was carried out;
 - 2.3.5 (in the case of “desk research”) a clear statement of the sources of the information and their likely reliability.
- 2.4 Presentation of results
 - 2.4.1 the relevant factual findings obtained;
 - 2.4.2 bases of percentages (both weighted and unweighted);
 - 2.4.3 general indications of the probable statistical margins of error to be attached to the main findings, and of the level of statistical significance of differences between key figures;
 - 2.4.4 the questionnaire and other relevant documents and materials used (or, in the case of a shared project, that portion relating to the matter reported on).

The report on a project should normally cover the above points or provide a reference to a readily available separate document that contains this information.

It should be noted that the SAMRA Code also contains Guidelines for “Interviewing Children and Young People” and “Pharmaceutical Marketing Research”.

3. Notes on the application of the SAMRA Code

Particular attention is drawn to the following:

3.1 Sample

A sample must represent the universe geographically and demographically and be scientifically drawn using unbiased criteria.

For a sample to be fully representative of its target universe every person in that universe should have an equal or known chance of being included.

Survey results can only be applied to the universe covered.

3.2 Sample size

Surveys based on probability samples are subject to a statistical margin of error. If the advertiser wishes to make advertising claims based on research findings he must make sure that the sample is large enough to “allow” for possible sample variations. For practical purposes the maximum margins or error for probability samples of different sizes are as follows:

Sample size	50	100	200	400	1000	2000
Margin of error	± 14,1%	10,0%	7,1%	5,0%	3,2%	2,2%

3.3 Questionnaire

Special attention should be given to ensure that the questions asked are “fair” and unbiased.

4. Publication of results

The advertiser or agency should be able to produce evidence that the Research Practitioner accepts as accurate the claims that are based on the research. This makes it imperative that the advertiser and/or Agency discuss the publication of the findings with the Research practitioner. Where possible, it is advisable to state as an objective of the research that it is intended to use the results of the research for publication.

In this regard it should be noted that Rule 27 of the SAMRA Code of Conduct states that “If the Client does not consult and agree in advance the form of publication with the Researcher the latter is intitled to:

- (a) refuse permission for his name to be used in connection with the published findings; and
- (b) publish the appropriate technical details of the project (as listed in the Notes to Rule 25).

5. Application of the SAMRA Code

Any query or problem about how to apply the SAMRA Code in a specific situation with regard to ASA requirements should be addressed to the ASA.

6. Conclusion

Research used in support of advertising claims must be able to stand up to detailed scrutiny. Agencies and advertisers are advised to assess the likely acceptability of a survey before fieldwork is undertaken. It may even be advisable to obtain an opinion from the ASA or a knowledgeable third party.

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