Building Bridges

Bright. Bold. The Carlson School’s interdisciplinary approach to marketing is bringing creative new ideas into focus with rigorous research. Practitioners, policy-makers, academic peers, and curious, motivated students all benefit from the cutting-edge marketing insights that emerge from research at Carlson.

The Institute for Research in Marketing helps disseminate this research into the wider community. We reach out to marketing executives, government officials, students and alumni, and the press through conferences, a speaker series, and the commissioning of topical white papers. We also build enduring relationships with practitioners that lead to the real-world adoption of our faculty members’ work. Through an advisory board of leading executives from international firms, the Institute invites real-world marketing experience back into the school. Advisory board members’ knowledge of best practices and their grasp of pressing marketing issues help blend rigor with relevance in the scholarly research conducted by Carlson faculty.

The Institute provides both a venue and support for dialogue, helping Carlson School marketing faculty generate thought-provoking insights about companies, consumers, and communities.
Putting Research into Practice

Research at the Carlson School is not only rigorous, it’s timely and relevant. Practitioners and policy-makers seek out our faculty’s insights and apply their findings to real-world problems.

> **Professor Barbara Loken** co-edited the National Cancer Institute monograph *The Role of Media in Promoting and Reducing Tobacco Use*. In the monograph, Loken and colleagues present conclusive evidence that tobacco marketing and the depiction of smoking in movies promote youth smoking. They also demonstrate that current quit campaigns may be ineffective or even counter-effective. Loken has spoken to audiences in Washington, D.C., Mumbai, India, and other venues across the world, urging a new approach to smoking cessation.

> **Associate Professor Kathleen Vohs**, a well-known consumer psychologist, recently participated in a Capitol Hill symposium on the convergence of consumer behavior and healthcare. Vohs has earned a number of honors, including a McKnight Presidential Fellowship and the inaugural SAGE Young Scholars award, with her creative studies on will power, self-control, and the physical and psychological effects of money.

> **Professor Akshay Rao** and Carlson School doctoral alum **William Hedgcock** are among the vanguard of neuromarketing researchers looking inside the consumer mind. Using leading-edge fMRI technology, these experts are examining cerebral activity while consumers make decisions. Seeing this process in action may help educate buyers faced with tough choices and show retailers how to make the consumer’s decision problem easier.

> **Professor and Department Chair George John** and **Associate Professor Om Narasimhan**, along with Carlson School doctoral alum Xinlei Chen, used the 2002 acquisition of Gatorade by PepsiCo to explore the relative merits of switching marketing channels, finding a practical methodology for assessing the unobservable costs and total impact of a channel switch. Consistent with the authors’ analysis but contrary to press predictions, Gatorade has not switched to a “direct to store delivery” distribution model.
Serving the Discipline

Carlson School marketing faculty are internationally known as prolific scholars. They contribute to the discipline of marketing through their academic leadership. Carlson marketing faculty also serve on the editorial boards of some of the premier peer-reviewed marketing journals in the world, including the Journal of Consumer Research, Journal of Marketing Research, and the Journal of Marketing. As board members, their principal task is to evaluate and certify the methodological correctness, theoretical sufficiency, and substantive importance of manuscripts submitted to the journals.

Marketing Faculty

- **Professor Rohini Abluvalia**
  PhD, The Ohio State University

- **Professor Mark E. Bergen**
  PhD, University of Minnesota

- **Assistant Professor Tony Haitao Cui**
  PhD, University of Pennsylvania

- **Assistant Professor Jane E.J. Ebert**
  PhD, Harvard University

- **Assistant Professor Vladas Griskevicius**
  PhD, Arizona State University

- **Associate Professor Robert Hansen**
  PhD, University of Wisconsin

- **Professor Michael J. Houston**
  PhD, University of Illinois

- **Professor Deborah Roedder John**
  PhD, Northwestern University

- **Professor George John**
  PhD, Northwestern University

- **Professor Barbara Loken**
  PhD, University of Illinois

- **Professor Joan Meyers-Levy**
  PhD, Northwestern University

- **Associate Professor Om Narasimhan**
  PhD, University of Southern California

- **Professor Akshay R. Rao**
  PhD, Virginia Tech

- **Professor R. Kenneth Roering**
  PhD, University of Illinois

- **Professor Robert W. Ruekert**
  PhD, University of Wisconsin

- **Associate Professor Carlos J. Torelli**
  PhD, University of Illinois

- **Associate Professor Kathleen D. Vohs**
  PhD, Dartmouth College

- **McKnight Land-Grant Professor**
  McKnight Land-Grant Professor

Leading the Conversation

Marketing research at the Carlson School is provocative and impactful. Our work is framing the national and international conversation on a wide variety of topics ranging from types of distribution channels to how political candidates should frame their messages. International media outlets look to our faculty for their insights and expert opinions. From cognitive neuroscience and persuasion to brand dilution, materialism, and shopping environments, our professors provide commentary on developing stories and offer perspectives on their own research that is relevant and applicable to practitioners. Carlson faculty have become go-to experts for highly respected news organizations like The Economist, The New York Times, BusinessWeek, TIME Magazine, National Public Radio, CNN, and the BBC.

Institute Staff

- **Rebecca D. Monro, MBA**
  Associate Director

- **Letta Wren Christianson**
  Program Coordinator
Lighting the Way

Researchers at the Carlson School have ideas with impact. Our original and cutting-edge work is published in the top journals, cited by academic peers, and acted upon by thoughtful practitioners around the world. With 26 articles published or forthcoming in the most respected, peer-reviewed marketing journals in 2009 alone, our faculty continue to be among the most productive group of scholars in the world, lighting the way for new research in the field.


*Current or former Carlson School doctoral student
Assistant Professor Jane Ebert’s teaching and research focus on consumer goals and behavior, particularly as they’re affected by time.

In Ebert’s most recent publication, she created four studies with her co-authors Daniel Gilbert (Harvard) and Timothy Wilson (University of Virginia). Ebert found that people used different prediction methods called “forecasting” and “backcasting” to anticipate how an event like a purchase might make them feel. When forecasting, decision-makers predicted their future feelings by first imagining how they’d feel if an event occurred, then imagining how that feeling might change over time. Using backcasting, however, subjects first imagined their feelings in a future period, and then considered the effects of a more current event.

The backcasters, Ebert learned, were more optimistic about their purchase decisions. “People make a lot of decisions based on how they think their choice will make them feel. We found that we could easily change a consumer’s expectations of those feelings,” Ebert observes. Even a subtle change to hypothetical ad copy so that it encouraged backcasting by invoking a customer’s feelings before giving a product pitch, Ebert found the buyers expected to like the trip more.

Consumer behavior research is a fruitful area of study for Ebert. “Quote.”

Most of us think of peer pressure as a bad thing, but when it comes to the environment, Assistant Professor Vlad Griskevicius thinks it might just be the key to unlocking beneficial behavior. Social norms are, Griskevicius shows, low-cost and effective marketing “levers.”

In a recently published Journal of Consumer Research article, Griskevicius and his co-authors designed two simple experiments with hotel towel reuse programs to highlight this effect. Traditional placards outlining a hotel towel reuse program were already fairly effective with guests, but when the researchers rephrased the signage to appeal to social norms, the results were striking.

“By subtly and tastefully informing guests that the majority of other guests – and, in particular, guests in this room – reused their towels at least once during their stay, we spurred a significant increase in towel reuse.” Griskevicius, a social psychologist by training, notes that he simply hoped to examine the motivation of pro-social behavior in a real consumer setting, but, “considering that many hotel guests never even read the cards in their hotel rooms,” he was amazed at the team’s clear results. It made a big difference to emphasize just how common the “common good” was.

Taking his research in another direction, Griskevicius has recently looked at a phenomenon he calls “conspicuous conservation.”...
Several years ago, Elda Macias, now director of market segments at Ameriprise Financial, had decided that she wanted to expand her career horizons. And the more she heard about the Carlson School’s Executive MBA program, the more it appealed to her. “I was really impressed by Carlson, especially after I had a chance to talk with former students. In the end, choosing Carlson was the best decision I could have possibly made.”

As a student, Macias found that the diversity of her high caliber classmates was itself an advantage of Carlson’s executive program. “The faculty were able to tap into the broad experience of our student group. We had such a wide variety of backgrounds, with people in the military, manufacturing, HR, and small business owners. The opportunity to focus and learn to work together, to go through an intense program and build a lasting network among the Executive MBA students, those were huge benefits.”

Eventually, Macias landed her current position at Ameriprise Financial. “It was absolutely the job I wanted at the time I wanted it – the perfect job.”

Now in corporate marketing for the financial planning leader, Macias works to identify groups of consumers who are underserved by the financial services industry and tailor programs to their distinct needs. She focuses, in particular, on market segments such as women and the LGBT community. “In this capacity, I put the lessons from my Carlson School finance and marketing strategy classes into action. I’m working from a marketing perspective on how to speak to these unique consumers, but also how to train Ameriprise financial advisors to understand and find solutions for the specific needs of each group.”

My time in the CBE taught me to approach a company from an external perspective, pull together my analysis, and then confidently express my opinion on the best strategy.

In his role as director of shopper marketing with ConAgra Foods, Daniel Marple works with retailers to develop insight-driven marketing solutions that speak directly to shoppers. Marple credits his participation in the Carlson Brand Enterprise (CBE) with helping him quickly understand the dynamics and strategic priorities of an innovative venture. “My time in the CBE taught me to approach a company from an external perspective, pull together my analysis, and then confidently express my opinion on the best strategy. For Carlson students – and their future employers – that experience is a huge advantage.”

Recently, Marple helped ConAgra, one of the leading branded and commercial food products companies in the U.S., create an exclusive marketing campaign for its retail partner SUPERVALU. Marple’s team determined that SUPERVALU’s shoppers were looking for products that offered a combination of affordability, convenience, and family appeal. They used extensive customer research to develop “Save Tonight,” a comprehensive marketing campaign tailored to the needs of the SUPERVALU shopper.

“Shopper marketing has become a critical way for ConAgra to drive business results with our retail partners,” Marple shares. “And our efforts are paying off, winning marketing awards and customer loyalty.”

Because of his Carlson School training, Marple feels confident building collaborative campaigns, even as the competitive landscape changes. “ConAgra realizes that consumer value is beyond price alone, and I try to convey that value in our marketing campaigns. I enjoy that I can bring my brand management experience to bear every day as ConAgra discovers insights and creates growth initiatives with our customers.”
Connecting with Practitioners

The Institute for Research in Marketing’s Advisory Board is made up of senior level marketing executives from national and international firms. These talented practitioners help ensure the relevance and rigor of the Carlson School’s research in marketing and provide guidance on the most urgent topics in the marketplace. As the Institute evolves, our board has come to represent an array of industries and services, and we welcome fresh partnerships with top-level corporations and thought-leaders.

Real Business, Real Beauty

Philippe Harousseau, Unilever

Philippe Harousseau is the Vice President of Brand Development for Skin Care and Cleansers, Unilever North America. He has spent over two decades with Unilever’s personal care business, working in marketing capacities in Paris, London, New York, and now Englewood Cliffs, NJ. His experience with Unilever’s interactive and database marketing spurred a keen interest in innovative consumer interactions and new media.

Prior to his current position, Harousseau was the Marketing Director for the Dove Skin and Masterbrand US division of Unilever. He unreservedly led the launch of Dove’s iconic Campaign for Real Beauty in the US, raising awareness of Dove’s mission to challenge stereotypical views of beauty and to inspire women to take great care of themselves. “Quote about Dove campaign.”

“Quote about working with the board at Carlson.”

Close.