Discovering the answers to tomorrow’s marketing questions. That’s what the marketing faculty at the Carlson School do. Their research and scholarship ultimately influence business strategy, shape public policy, and inform what students are taught in the classroom.

The Carlson School’s Institute for Research in Marketing is the engine that links sophisticated research to practical problems facing managers. The Institute conducts forward-thinking forums for business professionals, policy makers, and students; commissions white papers; and engages the media to disseminate new research findings world-wide.

Our forward approach, which marries rigor and relevance, is greatly enhanced by our advisory board. This collection of industry leaders interacts with our marketing faculty to provide a context to important theoretical research.

Meaningful discovery > It’s our passion.
Perception of power
Specializing in cross-cultural consumer behavior and global branding, Assistant Professor Carlos J. Torelli explores the connection between power and cultural values. In “Culture and Concepts of Power,” Torelli and his colleagues find that European Americans experience the concept of power as something to be used for advancing one’s personal status. In contrast, Hispanics often view power as a vehicle for helping others. For businesses, these conflicting views of power have implications for branding global products and services, the ways in which cultures process information about others and the world, and consumer attitudes and behaviors toward those over whom they have power.

When do people really go ‘green’?
Assistant Professor Vladas Griskevicius, co-author of “Going Green to Be Seen: Status, Reputation, and Conspicuous Conservation,” explores consumer motives behind buying “green” products. The research found that, when in public, people’s preferences for green products increase because most people want to be perceived as caring for the environment. However, when people shop alone online, they tend to prefer products that enhance comfort over green products. In addition, status motives increased the desirability of green products especially when such products cost more—but not less—relative to non-green products. For entrepreneurs and companies looking to capture the green market, the findings suggest they should demonstrate their products being used and purchased in public.

Brand insights
Professors Barbara Loken, Rohini Ahluwalia, and Michael J. Houston’s new book, Brands and Brand Management: Contemporary Research Perspectives, is part of the Marketing and Consumer Psychology series from Psychology Press. With contributions from some of the top names in branding research—including Carlson School faculty, alumni, and distinguished industry executives—the book appeals to students, faculty, and marketing professionals with an interest in research findings and deepens their understanding of how consumers view brands. The book is available at www.psypress.com.

Branded component contracts: the co-branding balance
From Dell computers with Intel processors to Reese’s Peanut Butter Ice Cream Cake at Friendly’s, each year we see a growing number of co-branded products. George John, marketing professor and department chair, provides best practices for creating these component partnerships in “When Should Original Equipment Manufacturers Use Branded Component Contracts with Suppliers?” John and his colleagues expose the motivations and implications of firms choosing a branded component contract. Specifically, firms are likely to choose these contracts when the component adds differentiation (leveraging motivation) and when the component vendor has made significant component customization investments (safeguarding). The research also offers useful insight of the pros and cons that managers should consider when contemplating branded component contracts.
As part of one of the leading public research land grant universities in the country, Carlson School marketing faculty are continually contributing new and illuminating research that is published in top academic journals, cited by academic peers, and acted upon by practitioners around the world. In 2010, our faculty will have had 24 articles published in the most respected, peer-reviewed journals.

Illuminating Research


* Current or former Carlson School post-doctoral and doctoral students.
Research in marketing at the Carlson School is thought-provoking and influential. In the past decade our professors have ranked among the top cited in the nation. Provocative topics ranging from how to define “green” to how to establish fair pricing strategies are framing the conversation for national and international media. Sought out for expert opinions, new insights, and predictions for “what’s next,” the marketing faculty at the Carlson School possess a prescient and sharp understanding of the vital issues and trends shaping our field. The source of motivation in decision making, how evolutionary biology effects purchasing decisions, and the significance of brand personalities are just a few of the areas where our professors provide commentary on business matters and offer perspectives on their own research that are relevant and applicable to practitioners. Carlson faculty are go-to experts for highly respected news organizations like The Economist, The New York Times, BusinessWeek, TIME magazine, National Public Radio, The Wall Street Journal, and the BBC.

**Impact of the Institute**

**Marketing Faculty**

Professor Rohini Ahluwalia
PhD, The Ohio State University
Professor Mark E. Bergen
PhD, University of Minnesota
James D. Watkins Chair in Marketing
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
McKnight Land-Grant Professor
McKnight Presidential Fellow
Associate Professor
Robert Hansen
PhD, University of Wisconsin
Professor Michael J. Houston
PhD, University of Illinois
Professor Deborah Roedder John
PhD, Northwestern University
Curtis L. Carlson Chair in Marketing
Professor George John
PhD, Northwestern University
General Mills/Pillsbury Chair in Marketing
Marketing Department Chair
Professor Barbara Loken
PhD, University of Minnesota
Professor Joan Meyers-Levy
PhD, Northwestern University
Holden-Werlich School-Wide Professor of Marketing
Associate Professor
Om Niranjan
PhD, University of Southern California
Professor Akshay B. Ran
PhD, Virginia Tech
General Mills Chair in Marketing
Assistant Professor
Joseph D. Redden
PhD, University of Pennsylvania
Professor Kenneth Roering
PhD, University of Iowa
Professor Robert Rustad
PhD, University of Wisconsin
Professor Akshay B. Ran
PhD, University of Minnesota
Associate dean of undergraduate programs
Assistant Professor
Rachel Shacham
PhD, New York University
Assistant Professor
Carlos J. Torrelli
PhD, University of Illinois
Associate Professor
Thaddeus D. Vohs
PhD, Dartmouth College
McKnight Presidential Fellow
While it has been traditional to view the price system as a kind of "economic autobahn," with prices adjusting rapidly to changes in supply and demand, new research has uncovered a surprising new stop light on the pricing superhighway—the number 9.

Over 8 years Professor Mark Bergen and colleagues tracked scanned prices of 29 product categories sold at a Midwestern supermarket chain. They followed 474 consumer electronic goods sold on the internet for 2 years. The results showed that the number nine is the most frequently used end number for the penny, dime, dollar, and ten-dollar digit.

"Those 9-ending price points are quite resistant to change, acting like a stop light on price movement," says Bergen. The 9-ending values stay constant while other numbers change far more frequently. "When 9-ending prices do change—when the light turns green—the size of the change is larger, and is often in multiples of dimes, dollars, and ten-dollar increments."

While the ubiquity of these 9-ending values, and their role in price rigidity, has been part of the folklore of pricing, the paper, “Price Points and Price Rigidity,” by Bergen and co-authors Daniel Levy (Bar-Ilan University), Dongwon Lee (Korea University), Haipeng Chen (Texas A&M University), and Robert J. Kaufman (Arizona State University), is the first to document the link between price points and price rigidity across so many products, stores, price levels, and retail formats. This leads to entirely new ways of thinking about the price system.

"Perhaps it is better to think of prices as moving through city streets during rush hour, rather than a superhighway. They are often resting at price points, waiting there until the lights change, then moving quickly to the next stop light in intervals of dimes and dollars," says Bergen. "Look at the price of the products you buy," says Bergen. "Check to see if it ends in a 9. More often than not it does. And the price may remain the same for a long time, but if it does change it won't be by just pennies."

If you know at least one teenager you are likely familiar with teen materialism. Many adolescents are driven to acquire trendy and expensive items including high-end handbags, cell phones, and MP3 players. Teenage materialism itself is not new, but it has steadily accelerated over the last few decades and Professor Deborah Roedder John wanted to know why.

John and co-author Lan Nguyen Chaplin (Villanova University), originally found a connection between self-esteem and materialism. As a teen’s self worth declines, he or she looks to purchase expensive items for a boost. "Material goods compensate for all those negative feelings we have about ourselves," says John. This link yielded another important finding about how materialism develops from childhood to adolescence. Materialism increases from childhood to the early teen years but then drops as they move into the later years of high school. This mirrors the ups and downs of self-esteem as children and teens grow older.

The next question to tackle was how parents and peers contribute to materialism in teens. To answer this, John conducted further analyses to see if parents and peers can influence materialism by affecting self-esteem. Parents are often blamed for pressuring contemporaries to buy the coolest brands of clothes or electronic gadgets. Parents are often blamed for setting a bad example for their teens—putting too much emphasis on having more and better possessions.

However, John’s evidence suggests that parents and peers can also have a positive effect. "These two groups are the most important sources of emotional support, psychological well-being, and feelings of self-worth in the lives of teens," says John. "We found that teenagers with supportive parents and friends have higher self-esteem, which makes them less materialistic."

The outcome is clear—being supportive not only makes for happier teenage years, it can also reduce the unrelenting requests for expensive items during adolescence.

Supportive parents can reduce materialism in teens • Deborah Roedder John

Deborah Roedder John

Academic Highlights

Price points and price rigidity • Mark Bergen

If you know at least one teenager you are likely familiar with teen materialism. Many adolescents are driven to acquire trendy and expensive items including high-end handbags, cell phones, and MP3 players. Teenage materialism itself is not new, but it has steadily accelerated over the last few decades and Professor Deborah Roedder John wanted to know why.

John and co-author Lan Nguyen Chaplin (Villanova University), originally found a connection between self-esteem and materialism. As a teen’s self worth declines, he or she looks to purchase expensive items for a boost. "Material goods compensate for all those negative feelings we have about ourselves," says John. This link yielded another important finding about how materialism develops from childhood to adolescence. Materialism increases from childhood to the early teen years but then drops as they move into the later years of high school. This mirrors the ups and downs of self-esteem as children and teens grow older.

The next question to tackle was how parents and peers contribute to materialism in teens. To answer this, John conducted further analyses to see if parents and peers can influence materialism by affecting self-esteem. Parents are often blamed for setting a bad example for their teens—putting too much emphasis on having more and better possessions.

However, John’s evidence suggests that parents and peers can also have a positive effect. "These two groups are the most important sources of emotional support, psychological well-being, and feelings of self-worth in the lives of teens," says John. "We found that teenagers with supportive parents and friends have higher self-esteem, which makes them less materialistic."

The outcome is clear—being supportive not only makes for happier teenage years, it can also reduce the unrelenting requests for expensive items during adolescence.

Supportive parents can reduce materialism in teens • Deborah Roedder John

Deborah Roedder John

Academic Highlights

Price points and price rigidity • Mark Bergen

If you know at least one teenager you are likely familiar with teen materialism. Many adolescents are driven to acquire trendy and expensive items including high-end handbags, cell phones, and MP3 players. Teenage materialism itself is not new, but it has steadily accelerated over the last few decades and Professor Deborah Roedder John wanted to know why.

John and co-author Lan Nguyen Chaplin (Villanova University), originally found a connection between self-esteem and materialism. As a teen’s self worth declines, he or she looks to purchase expensive items for a boost. "Material goods compensate for all those negative feelings we have about ourselves," says John. This link yielded another important finding about how materialism develops from childhood to adolescence. Materialism increases from childhood to the early teen years but then drops as they move into the later years of high school. This mirrors the ups and downs of self-esteem as children and teens grow older.

The next question to tackle was how parents and peers contribute to materialism in teens. To answer this, John conducted further analyses to see if parents and peers can influence materialism by affecting self-esteem. Parents are often blamed for setting a bad example for their teens—putting too much emphasis on having more and better possessions.

However, John’s evidence suggests that parents and peers can also have a positive effect. "These two groups are the most important sources of emotional support, psychological well-being, and feelings of self-worth in the lives of teens," says John. "We found that teenagers with supportive parents and friends have higher self-esteem, which makes them less materialistic."

The outcome is clear—being supportive not only makes for happier teenage years, it can also reduce the unrelenting requests for expensive items during adolescence.
Diane Harper

Growing up in Minnesota and attending the University of Minnesota as an undergraduate, Diane Harper has always been familiar with the Carlson School. “I knew it as a great institution that graduated leaders in many industries,” she recalls. “I felt receiving an MBA from the school would open a lot of doors for me.”

The doors that have opened for the ’89 alum’s career have led her to senior-level positions at companies such as Kraft Foods and General Mills. Today, she is senior vice president for IPSOS, a large international research firm that develops strategic partnerships with clients and enables them to maneuver obstacles and capitalize on opportunities in brand building, communication, and innovation. IPSOS has clients in the consumer packaged goods, financial services, and media and entertainment industries.

“I have worked in multi-national consumer products companies as well as in research agencies that consult for these companies,” says Harper. “The breadth of challenges and opportunities I deal with every day is always changing. I can say that my Carlson School education provided me with a level of business acumen that has enabled me to become a strong business person who is able to leverage consumer understanding to influence pivotal business decisions.”

Harper still has strong ties to the marketing department and the Institute for Research in Marketing, having been an Institute advisory board member from 2006–2010. “I have found being involved with the Institute to be a great opportunity to stay current with research in the field of marketing and to network with others in the business field,” she says. “My career progression and success has been due in large part to my Carlson School education and my continued involvement.”

Jeff Hunter

Jeff Hunter’s day-to-day challenge is to find new and innovative ways to glean a treasure trove of insights from consumer perceptions and attitudes for General Mills. The fruits of his labor help guide the Minneapolis-based, multi-national food company in creating and implementing strategic insight solutions ranging from advertising to new product development.

“I like to ask simple questions of people whom I trust to give objective and thoughtful answers,” says Hunter, an executive of the company for the past 21 years. He often turns to his former Carlson School marketing professors for their perspective on how best to garner information from consumers. “Those conversations are often the starting points for additional exploration for my team,” he says.

Hunter’s connection to the Carlson School marketing professors began in 1985, when he chose the school to pursue his MBA. “At the time, the school was reinventing itself, and I was impressed with the administration and faculty’s passion and commitment,” says Hunter. “They wanted to create a top-notch business school, and they were making the investments to accomplish their goal. It was a really exciting time.” His continued thirst for innovation and strategy keeps him linked to the school and his professors almost two decades later.

For the Carlson School, it’s never just a one-way association. The marketing faculty recognizes Hunter as a talented individual with insightful perspectives and practical knowledge to offer, and they often invite him to participate in conferences and provide his points of view on various school programs. The Carlson School provides its graduates with an ever-growing supply of collective resources and information through programs like the Institute for Research in Marketing to which they can contribute and share. It enables graduates to keep their fingers on the pulse of marketing’s critical issues and trends.
Research Redefined

The Institute for Research in Marketing’s advisory board is comprised of key national and international marketing industry leaders. These practitioners are actively engaged with Institute-affiliated marketing faculty and present valuable insight that helps direct current and future research in marketing. 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.

Bryan Maach, Cisco

“Whether charting the waters of brand management, understanding the effects and moderators of brand dilution, or applying the latest thinking on pricing optimization, the perspective and intellectual resource that the Carlson School marketing faculty provides has been significant to our company,” says Bryan Maach, Vice President of Market Research and Analysis for Cisco Systems, Inc.

Maach, an Institute for Research in Marketing advisory board member since 2007, and his team cover a wide range of critical issues including opportunity analysis, forecasting, long range planning, original market research, and infusing customer perspective into product development efforts. “In today’s competitive and fast moving business environment, infusing academic research into marketing practice has become essential to sustained success,” Maach believes.

For example, the rise of social media has taken the marketing world by storm and has been central to Cisco’s “Human Network” campaign. Having access to an academic understanding of the drivers, advantages, and disadvantages of the medium based on empirical research has enabled Maach and his team to strategically shape their campaign in innovative and effective ways.

Additionally, Maach appreciates the practitioner expertise represented on the advisory board. “For the three years that I have been a part of the Institute, the network and experience the board provides has been an invaluable resource for me in developing our marketing and customer insight capabilities at Cisco.”