



## In search of target groups, most marketers still out of focus.

One of the the biggest challenges every marketer is faced with every day is the need to aim the product or service at a defined target audience. The traditional way has been to make the product, distribute it, and hope consumers will flock to it. Even in the year 2010, much of Indonesia's marketing efforts will be limited to the same kind of efforts that worked a hundred years ago.

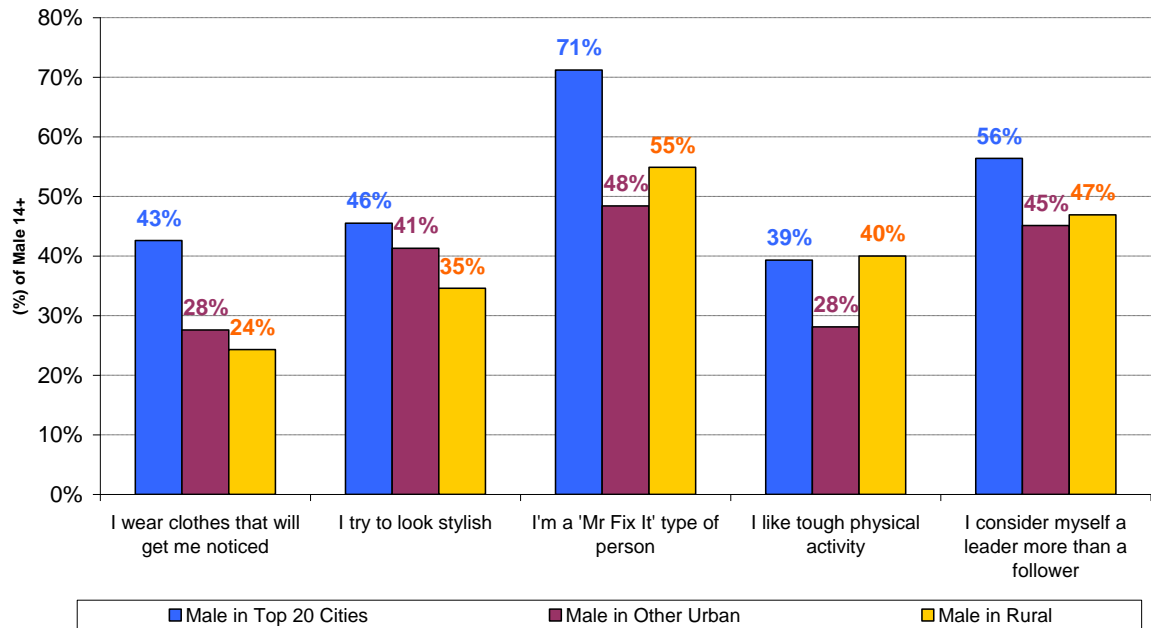
Even the trained marketer searching for homogeneous target groups is constrained by blunt old instruments and traditional sources of knowledge. Visiting pundits from the biggest names in global marketing also assume that not much is available. The requests for basic demographic data is puzzling, and that's a polite understatement. If all women in Sumatra, 25-34 years in age, from B and C socio-economic strata behaved the same way, reacted the same way to the same stimulus, what need could there possibly be for a marketing wizard?

If the pinnacle of target audience definition is "people with teeth" for a toothpaste, "women with hair" for a shampoo, or "people with legs" for a motorcycle, accountants could create the product and the tea-lady could write the advertising campaign. If you think my examples are ridiculous, you would be amazed at many of the conversations I have with prospective clients every month. If I believe I am exaggerating, I would have to say only a little just to make the point. But on a more serious note, some of those conversations are laughable except of course they aren't funny.

You would think that in this day and age, with resources now available, the marketing chiefs in the country would have become at least a little wiser. To cut to the chase, simple questions can now be given simple answers. Reliably, with robust data backing those answers. One simple example is "Intenders". Instead of a bald, gray or fuzzy demographic, we can now ask "how many people are intending to buy a car" and you would get a clear answer. Not just a car, but a new car, a big car, a small car, an SUV. Then you would know who they are, not just where they live or how old they are, but also how much they earn, what car they drive now, right down to which newspaper they read or TV program they love to watch.

From cars to credit cards, holidays to homes, those questions have accurate answers today. Not just homes, but intentions to remodel or repair homes as well. Not estimates or "guesstimates". If you are selling women's fashion, you want to know more than the fact that there are some 80 million women in Indonesia 14 years and older. It might help to know that half of them are rural women, but you would be wrong to write them all off. A good starting point is to ask how many women agree with a statement like "it's important to look fashionable" or "I try to look stylish". Take a guess. You'd be amazed at the different but not-so-obvious answers from rural, big city and small town women. You don't have to ask a man who's been married at least three times to know that all women aren't all the same. One man's opinion has no statistical reliability anyway, even if he was unfortunate enough to have married so many times. But it would sure help to know how many are fashionable, or stylish, or both. Then, who they are and where they live and where they shop, for more clues that are the building blocks for a professional marketing plan.

ALL MEN ARE NOT CREATED EQUAL



Ask your marketing chief today where he or she acquires market knowledge from and you'll probably be told about retail audits, customised trackers and focus groups, all conducted in the big cities. They are about as useful, as reliable, as focussed as heavy artillery to hit a clay pigeon in the air. In reality, most products and services in today's Indonesia have the overwhelming majority of their customers, both present and future, outside the top 20 cities. What does your marketing guru know about those people who aren't big city folk? Precious little, is the likely answer. That's where most marketers, most media owners and a few media agencies still reside, mentally. Among them the biggest names in business, but certainly not the best. Historical advantage is a major weapon but ignorance can be lethal.

Savvy marketers get that. Roy Morgan Single Source is one resource that has the answers to questions, from the basic to the sophisticated. It is Indonesia's biggest syndicated survey with over 25,000 respondents 14 years and older interviewed each year. Almost 90 per cent of the population is covered, from the cities, towns and villages around the country. The data is updated every 90 days. If there is a better resource that gives you a 360-degree understanding of your target group, use it. Please tell this columnist about it too.

Answers don't jump up by themselves and poke the brand manager in the eye, they need the simple but pertinent questions to be asked. Just like when you're lost, you ask someone reliable for directions, not the blind beggar at the street corner. It's not rocket science. But like most tools, good insights need seasoned marketing minds to extract value. They need to ask the right questions, get the right answers, then take decisions based on a lot more than the opinion of the CEO (who is probably an accountant).

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