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AN ANALYSIS OF THE FREQUENCY OF READERSHIP AND INFLUENCE  
OF A HOME FURNISHINGS TRADE MAGAZINE

THESIS

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Market Place is a home furnishings trade magazine circulated free to approximately 35,000 employees in the home furnishings industry. The problem with which this investigation is concerned is that of determining whether three demographic characteristics, including type of business, position, and experience, affect frequency of readership or influence of the magazine.

Questionnaires were mailed in the spring of 1975 to a random sample of 1,000 recipients of Market Place.

Analysis of the data showed that, although most of the recipients have a high frequency of readership of Market Place, the groups hypothesized to read most frequently and to be most influenced by the magazine did not read and were not influenced most frequently.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

A home furnishings trade publication is designed to provide employees working within the industry with information that is pertinent to their work. Studies by communication researchers have proved that some trade publications are important sources of information for businessmen. In the case of many trade publications, industry employees receive the publication at no charge. High frequency of readership and, thus, subscription renewals are not necessary to continue publishing. Therefore, although some advertisers demand that the trade publications in which they advertise be quality products, there is a tendency among the publications not to provide the most useful, informative content.

Market Place, a home furnishings trade magazine, is circulated free to employees in the home furnishings industry. Market Place has been published for fifteen years and has never had its readership studied.

#### Statement of the Problem

The problem of this study was that of determining how frequently recipients of a free trade publication read the publication and whether they are influenced by its content. Specifically, this investigation studied to what extent

recipients of Market Place read the magazine and whether specific content of the magazine influences the professional lives of the recipients.

#### Purpose of the Study

Readership studies of trade publications have been neglected somewhat by communication researchers. Because of their specialized content and readership, trade publications have the potential to be highly influential in the industries they serve. The extent of such influence and the overall usefulness of trade magazines can be ascertained best by surveying readers. Not until the contents' usefulness is determined can the existence of a magazine be justified.

The readership of Market Place has never been studied during the fifteen years of publication. The varied readers represented by Market Place's circulation, which was 34,928 at the time of this study, includes executives who function in various management capacities of businesses that sell retail home furnishings.

Home furnishings encompasses many classifications of merchandise, including furniture, bedding, wall coverings, floor coverings, and decorative accessories, to name a few. The variety of jobs the readers perform and the variety of merchandise with which they work make difficult the magazine's task of providing interesting and useful information. Thus, a readership study of Market Place was undertaken to determine how adequately the publication performs this task.

Specifically, the purpose of this study was to determine to what extent recipients of Market Place read the magazine as a whole; to what extent they read specific types of articles, specific editorial sections, and advertising; and to what extent they are influenced by such content.

This study also described the type of business in which each participant was involved, his job classification, and how long he had been employed in his job in order to ascertain whether such characteristics affect readership and the extent of influence the magazine had on his work.

#### Hypotheses

Market Place is designed to provide current, useful information about a variety of home furnishings subjects to people who work in the industry. Generally, editorial content and advertising are directed toward readers who are primarily engaged in retail furniture and decorative accessories/gifts businesses and who work as administrators or buyers in those businesses. Furthermore, Market Place content is designed to appeal to people who have worked at their jobs in their businesses for relatively short periods of time. Such people are possibly most likely to refer to a trade magazine for information about the industry in which they are working. More experienced industry members are possibly most likely to depend on their experiences and personal contacts made in the home furnishings industry for information useful to their work in the industry.



Therefore, the following hypotheses have been formulated for this study:

1. A reader primarily engaged in retail furniture and decorative accessories/gifts businesses tends to read Market Place more frequently than a reader engaged in other types of businesses in the industry.
2. A reader employed in an administrative or buyer position tends to read Market Place more frequently than a reader in a non-administrative or buyer position.
3. A reader employed at his current job in his current business for five years or less tends to read Market Place more frequently than a reader employed at his job for more than five years.
4. A reader primarily engaged in retail furniture and decorative accessories/gifts businesses tends to be more influenced by the content of Market Place than a reader engaged in other types of businesses in the industry.
5. A reader employed in an administrative or buyer position tends to be more influenced by the content of Market Place than a reader in a non-administrative or buyer position.
6. A reader employed at his current job in his current business for five years or less tends to be more influenced by the content of Market Place than a reader employed at his job for more than five years.

### Definition of Terms

Home furnishings industry. The business of retailing merchandise, including furniture, decorative accessories, bedding, gift items, wall coverings, floor coverings, window coverings, lighting fixtures, glassware, and flatware.

Industry employees. Employees of the home furnishings industry who work in administrative, buyer, sales, or marketing capacities for retail stores; or interior designers who sell retail home furnishings to their clients.

Trade magazine. A magazine in which the editorial content and advertisements are primarily concerned with information of special interest to a specific industry, and which circulates to the employees of that specific industry.

### Delimitations

This study was limited to those people working in the home furnishings industry who have been selected by the publisher of Market Place to receive Market Place. The circulation of the magazine is limited to executive-level employees of interior design firms and of home furnishings retail stores which the current edition of Lyon Red Book<sup>1</sup> indicates to have the best possible credit rating.

This study was limited further to the readership and influence of editorial section and categories of articles

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<sup>1</sup>Lyon Red Book (New York, 1974). The publication is generally acknowledged as the authority for credit references for businesses in the home furnishings industry in the United States.

contained in the magazine, rather than specific articles that have appeared in particular issues.

### Major Assumptions

This study assumed that employees in the home furnishings industry have sufficient interest in Market Place and in their professions to respond to a survey; the employees constitute a homogeneous group in which the members share this interest; a questionnaire could be developed that could provide the desired information; and a random sample could be taken from the magazine's mailing list that would be representative of all the readers of the magazine.

### Background

#### Trade Publications

According to an historian of business publications, David P. Forsyth, trade publications emerged during the fifteenth century when news letters were first printed by the Fugger family in Europe and circulated to European merchants. These letters were designed to provide information on merchandise and prices to businessmen.<sup>2</sup>

The first trade publication in the United States is generally considered to have been The New-York Prices-Current, established in 1795 and the first of its kind to remain in publication for more than only a few years. In addition to

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<sup>2</sup>David P. Forsyth, The Business Press in America 1750-1865 (Philadelphia, 1964), p. 12.

price and merchandise information, The New-York Prices-Current occasionally commented on commercial happenings.<sup>3</sup>

Forsyth said that reporting and interpreting of trends and major events relating to business by a trade publication can be recognized during the late nineteenth century in publications such as The Printer.<sup>4</sup> As the number of trade publications has increased during the twentieth century, standards for editorial content in such publications have been established. In order for the publications to serve specific industries, they need to fill a need that is not served otherwise by the communications industry.<sup>5</sup>

The current issue of Business Publication Rates and Data lists more than 3,400 business publications in the United States today.<sup>6</sup> Most of these publications are designed to serve a similar purpose: "To provide the very latest information available, in the form of news and advertising, to special groups of people who need this information to do a better, more efficient job in their respective fields."<sup>7</sup>

Concerning magazines in particular, business publications potentially can supplement industry textbooks by

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<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 35.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 238.

<sup>5</sup>Siegfried Mandel, editor, Modern Journalism (New York, 1962), p. 526.

<sup>6</sup>Standard Rate and Data Service, Inc., Business Publication Rates and Data, LVI (September 24, 1974).

<sup>7</sup>Mandel, op. cit., p. 528.

providing the most recent information on various industry activities. Because of a magazine's format and publication schedule, a trade magazine can supplement trade newspapers by providing in-depth, interpretive reporting of industry information. The facility for in-depth, interpretive reporting gives the trade magazine potential for unlimited influence within the industry it serves. Whether this potential is being fulfilled by specific trade magazines deserves investigation.

#### History of Market Place

Market Place was established in 1961 by Exhibitor Services, Inc. in Dallas, Texas. Principals of Exhibitor Services, Roxanna Ward Starry and Van Lander, functioned as publishers as well as editors and advertising directors of the magazine during its first seven years of publication.

The magazine was founded to serve home furnishings retailers in the southwestern states of Texas, Arkansas, Louisiana, and Oklahoma. Frequency of publication was set at six times a year, generally once every two months on dates determined by the six major wholesale home furnishings markets that served retailers in the Southwest. The publication was circulated to approximately 11,000 home furnishings employees who worked in the four southwestern states. Editorial content during the first seven years of publication was limited to general news about the home furnishings employees who received the magazine, news about

southwestern home furnishings firms, and news about wholesale home furnishings markets in the Southwest.

In 1968, in a private transaction, Roxanna Starry purchased Van Lander's interests in Exhibitor Services, Inc., and, consequently, in the Market Place magazine subsidiary. An editor was employed for the publication in order to effectively separate the magazine's editorial and advertising functions. Coverage of business trends, home furnishings style trends, and legislative reports, as well as general industry news was established as standard editorial content. The magazine's circulation was increased to approximately 17,000 with the addition of more executives and interior designers working in the home furnishings industry in the United States.

In 1971, the circulation of Market Place again was expanded. Recipients who were newly added to the mailing list included more than 1,000 commercial interior designers in the southwestern United States who sold commercial furnishings, including hotel, school, and office furnishings, to name a few. Editorial coverage also was expanded in 1971 to provide information of specific interest to the newest readers. An advertising sales staff was organized and employed in order to accommodate the increasing number of advertising clients.

Efforts to make the magazine suitable for national distribution were initiated in 1973, when the magazine added a special editorial section to report information relating to

the international trade of home furnishings. Editorial features were broadened to reflect the national scope of the industry. Circulation was expanded to several thousand home furnishings employees in the remaining states west of the Mississippi River.

With the April, 1974 issue, the magazine's distribution was expanded to about 8,000 more home furnishings employees who work in the eighteen states east of the Mississippi River. Total circulation of the publication at the time of this study was 34,928. Current editorial content, as described by Roxanna Starry and printed in Business Publication Rates and Data, included "products available . . . , trends in categories of home furnishings, varied aspects of home furnishings business, personalities and related general news,"<sup>8</sup> on a national level. Because of the range of home furnishings merchandise at a variety of prices with which the magazine's readership is concerned, a variety of merchandise and prices is represented in the editorial content and in the advertising attracted by the publication.

#### Review of Recent and Related Studies

The success and failure of efforts to communicate through printed media have been studied by communication researchers for several years. In an article published in 1954, Charles E. Swanson listed criteria for deciding what content should be included in a printed message for that

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<sup>8</sup>Standard Rate and Data Service, Inc., op. cit., p. 507.

message to be effective. The criteria include:

1. The message should gain attention.
2. The message should successfully transmit the intended message.
3. The message should arouse personality needs in individuals.
4. The message should suggest ways to meet the personality needs.<sup>9</sup>

Swanson and other researchers acknowledged the importance of recognizing the qualities necessary for effective communication, and commented about the potential influence of printed media. Magazines in particular are credited with having potential for unlimited influence. This potential was described by James Playsted Wood:

Magazine influence in the United States is pervasive. It is continuous pressure, constantly moulding the ideas of many millions, both the leaders of public opinion and the followers. Although this influence is difficult to prove, cause and effect are discernible in given instances.<sup>10</sup>

James L. C. Ford commented that trade magazines, in particular have high potential for influencing their readers and, consequently, the industries they serve. Ford said, "The industrial publication is a public spokesman for the

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<sup>9</sup>Charles E. Swanson, "Procedures and Effects of the Printed Media," Mass Media and Education, Fifty-third year-book of the National Society for the Study of Education, Part II (Chicago, 1954), pp. 148-149.

<sup>10</sup>James Playsted Wood, Magazines in the United States (New York, 1956), p. 364.



industry and, if intelligently and ably directed, a respected leader."<sup>11</sup>

Studies have confirmed that magazines are important sources of information for business leaders. Executives rely on magazines to provide information related and unrelated to their businesses. Research conducted by Raymond A. Bauer, Ithiel De Sola Pool, and Lewis Dexter showed, "Despite the other demands on their time, businessmen do much reading of . . . magazines."<sup>12</sup> The results of their study of the reading habits of businessmen indicated that about half the respondents read two or more news magazines and two or more general business magazines. Nine out of ten of the business leaders reporting said they read two or more publications devoted to information about their specific business.

There is an insufficient amount of information available on past readership studies, partly because of lack of interest among researchers to conduct such studies. In an article published in 1958, Wilber Schramm emphasized the need for more readership studies:

It is strange and hard to explain why journalism researchers--who of all scholars have the most right to believe they know what happens in the act of producing newspapers, magazines, and

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<sup>11</sup>James L. C. Ford, Magazines for Millions (Carbondale, 1969), p. 130.

<sup>12</sup>Raymond A. Bauer, Ithiel De Sola Pool, and Lewis Dexter, "American Business: Channels of Information," Reader in Public Opinion and Communication, edited by Bernard Berelson and Morris Janowitz (New York, 1966), p. 339.

radio and television programs--have not contributed more than they have to the analysis of these communicators and what they do.<sup>13</sup>

A second reason why information on readership studies is not plentiful may be that such studies are not made public. Magazine staffs have been conducting or contracting for readership surveys for years, but the results were intended for use by the magazine and not to be made public. Wood confirms the popularity of magazine readership surveys to establish the effectiveness of magazines:

The product put forth by an industry this size cannot be manufactured by hit-or-miss methods. Every device is used to insure a product which will be approved by the mass public which it serves and which supports it. Modern means of assistance to editorial judgment are in use throughout magazine activity. National sample surveys are used to measure public reaction to magazine contents. The purpose of these interviews, conducted through personal interrogation and by mail, is to discover what stories, articles, and features are read, how closely they are read, and by what kinds of people. Editors use the findings to help them decide what types of fiction and articles will be most widely and appreciatively read.<sup>14</sup>

The results of a 1962 readership survey of Journalism Quarterly are available and have been helpful in developing this study of Market Place readership. Leslie G. Moeller and Richard W. Budd reported on the survey in Journalism Quarterly. The survey's purpose was to study "the nature and degree of use, attitudes toward content, attitudes

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<sup>13</sup>Wilber Schramm, "The Challenge to Communication Research," Introduction to Mass Communication Research, edited by Ralph O. Nafziger and David M. White (Baton Rouge, 1958), p. 14.

<sup>14</sup>Wood, op. cit., p. 265.

toward editorial policy, and attitudes toward research in mass communications . . . ."15

The survey instrument was a mail questionnaire, used instead of personal interviews to save time and expense. Content of the magazine was classified into thirty types of articles, and readers were asked to indicate their frequency of readership of each type. Respondents could choose from "Nearly Always Read," "Often Read," "Occasionally Read," "Almost Never Read," and "No Response" for each category of article.

Readers also were asked how frequently they used whole issues after the first reading. Possible responses available for this question included "More Than Once a Week," "Once a Week," "Once in Two Weeks," "Once a Month," "Once a Year," "Never," "No Response."

Reasons for reading the journal were questioned, with respondents choosing an answer from among, "Learn Something," "Believe I Should Read It," "Intellectual Satisfaction," "Habitual," and "Required Reading."

Respondents also were asked to indicate what they believed to be the primary purpose of the magazine. Researchers provided nine possible responses including "Reporting of Research," "Evaluation of Trends in Education," and "Keeping Abreast of Change in the Field."

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<sup>15</sup>Leslie G. Moeller and Richard W. Budd, "Readership of and the Attitudes Toward Journalism Quarterly," Journalism Quarterly, XXXIX (Autumn, 1962), 471.

Researchers also asked participants questions concerning the readers' use of several types of the magazine's articles, preference for types of articles, opinions concerning specific qualities of the articles, and magazine preference from a selection of journalism publications.

A review of related literature indicated that the procedures and methods used in the Journalism Quarterly survey have influenced several later surveys of business and professional publications. In particular, the techniques used by Moeller and Budd were used by Bob J. Beames in 1971 when he surveyed the readership of Texas Outlook, a Texas state teachers' magazine.<sup>16</sup>

The participants in Beames' study were questioned concerning their readership of the magazine and the perceived influence the magazine's advertising and editorial content had on their work. Beames used a four-point scale, involving "Never," "Some," "Often," and "Always," responses relating to frequency of readership and uses of the content. The respondents also were asked to rate, according to preference, types of articles included in the magazine.

Beames hypothesized that the position, experience, sex, and school district size of the respondents affected the respondents' readership of Texas Outlook. He failed to find evidence to support his hypothesis. The results of Beames'

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<sup>16</sup>Bob J. Beames, A Readership Survey of the Texas Outlook (Greenville, Texas, 1972), p. 42.

survey also showed that the demographic characteristics of the respondents did not affect the influence exerted by the magazine on the respondents.

## CHAPTER II

### METHODS AND PROCEDURES

In order to test the hypotheses of this study, effective methods and procedures for collecting data had to be developed. This chapter describes the procedures used for data collection and analysis.

#### Procedures for Collecting Data

Data collection for this study included five stages: selecting a random sample from the Market Place mailing list; developing the survey instrument, including a questionnaire and cover letter; pre-testing the instrument; administering the instrument; and developing and distributing a follow-up postal card reminder.

#### Selecting Random Sample

As various communication researchers have indicated, the numbers involved in studying readership of a publication with a large circulation demand that the researcher limit himself to a random sample of the population. Researchers such as Mildred Parten<sup>1</sup> and George Gallup<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Mildred Parten, Surveys, Polls, and Samples: Practical Procedures (New York, 1950), pp. 290-293.

<sup>2</sup>George Horace Gallup and Saul Forbes Rae, The Pulse of Democracy (New York, 1968), p. 70-72.

suggested that inaccuracies frequently occur in communication research because of a too-large sample. Market Place had a circulation of 34,928 at the time of this study and a sample of 1,000, or 3.5 per cent of the population, seemed an adequate and manageable number to survey.

Roy Carter suggested a sampling technique which was used by Bob J. Beames in his study of Texas Outlook. The procedure, which was adapted for this study, involved writing the numbers one through thirty-four on small squares of paper of equal size. The numbered squares were placed in a container and were mixed so that each number had an equal chance of being selected. One piece of paper was drawn from the container. The number eighteen had been written on that piece so the name that corresponded to eighteen on the Market Place mailing list was the first member of the sample. Thereafter, each thirty-fourth name that appeared on the list was selected.<sup>3</sup>

#### Developing the Survey Instrument

Questionnaires in the studies reviewed for this study were considered in developing a questionnaire for Market Place readers. Market Place publisher Roxanna Starry and associate publisher Elaine Petranek were consulted for suggestions, and many of them were included in the questionnaire. (Appendix B)

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<sup>3</sup>Roy C. Carter, Jr., "Field Methods in Communication Research," Introduction to Mass Communication Research, edited by Ralph O. Nafziger and David M. White (Baton Rouge, 1958), pp. 288-290.

A four-point scale, explained by Parten and adapted for the Texas Outlook and Journalism Quarterly studies, was used in this survey. The scale for the questionnaire included these four categories: "Always," "Often," "Sometimes," and "Never."

The questionnaire included questions seeking three personal characteristics of the respondent, including his type of business, his position, and his experience. This demographic information was necessary to test the hypotheses of the study.

In addition, the questionnaire contained twenty-three statements and questions relating to the frequency of readership of the magazine as a whole and of specific articles, editorial sections, and advertising. Reader reactions to the degree of influence exerted by specific types of articles and sections in the publication also were sought.

For all but one of the twenty-three items, the respondents were asked to circle a number which most nearly corresponded with their actions or attitudes concerning the magazine. Reader reactions were recorded according to the positions on the scale: "Always," "Often," "Sometimes," and "Never."

For one item which concerned the respondents' use of advertising in Market Place the four-point scale was not used. Respondents were asked to indicate their reactions to advertising in Market Place. Three possible responses were provided.



Since three of the six hypotheses related to frequency of readership of Market Place and three related to the influence of the magazine, approximately half the items on the questionnaire dealt with frequency of readership and half dealt with influence. Depending on whether it concerned readership or influence, each item on the questionnaire was intended to test three hypotheses, or one hypothesis relating to each of the three categories of respondents.

Other questions included on the questionnaire sought information about the readers' preferences for editorial content of the magazine and for a group of home furnishings trade magazines currently in publication.

The survey instrument also consisted of a cover letter that explained the purpose of the study and gave the respondents general instructions for completing the questionnaire. (Appendix A)

#### Pre-testing

After the questionnaire was completed, sample copies of the questionnaire were prepared and distributed to a group of twelve home furnishings employees who were chosen from the Dallas, Texas, area for pre-testing of the questionnaire. Each of the six possible types of businesses included on the questionnaire was represented by two of the participants. The Market Place mailing list was consulted to confirm that the employees selected did receive the magazine at the time of the pre-test but were not

among the sample of 1,000 which was selected to receive the final questionnaire.

The instrument was delivered personally to the participants. The completed questionnaires were collected the next day. The twelve participants were told they were involved in a pre-test so that they would express reactions to the questionnaire and make comments and criticisms about the questions and statements. Specifically, the participants were asked to point out any statements or questions that appeared confusing or ambiguous. Their suggestions were incorporated in the questionnaire.

#### Distributing the Survey Instrument

The survey instrument was mailed on February 10, 1975 to the randomly selected sample of 1,000 readers. The instrument consisted of a one-page cover letter stapled to a three-page questionnaire. A stamped, self-addressed envelop was included to facilitate returns.

#### Postal Card Reminder

A postal card was mailed to each of the original participants who had not returned the questionnaire by February 24, 1975, two weeks after the instrument was mailed. The reminder requested that the questionnaire be completed and returned if the participant had not already done so, and thanked the participant for his cooperation if he had returned the questionnaire. (Appendix C)

The questionnaires, before they were mailed, were consecutively numbered to correspond with a master list of the original participants. A notation was made on the master list when each numbered questionnaire was returned, so that only the participants whose response had not been received were mailed the postal card reminder.

#### Procedures for Analysis of Data

Before the data could be interpreted, it had to be arranged into a logical and manageable form. This involved coding and sorting the information on the returned questionnaires, tabulating and analyzing the data.

#### Sorting and Recording Returns

Returns were coded and sorted as the questionnaires were received. Within two days of the mailing, completed questionnaires began to arrive. During the two weeks before the postal card reminder was mailed, 159 questionnaires were returned. During the two weeks following the mailing of the postal card, 72 more were received. Returns continued to be received until early April, 1975, at which time 273 questionnaires, or 27.3 per cent of the sample, had been received.

Nine of the respondents failed to provide the requested demographic information and their responses were not used because such information was necessary for cross comparison of data and for testing the hypotheses. Therefore, 264 questionnaires were deemed usable for the study.

### Tabulating the Data

When the information had been coded from each of the 264 usable questionnaires, percentages were computed for each of the six types of businesses with respect to the four-point scale. Also percentages were computed for each of the two positions and for the four categories of experience.

Concerning their use of advertising in Market Place the respondents selected one of the three possible choices. All the responses to each choice were tallied and percentages were computed for the choices to determine which choice received the highest percentage of selection by each of the respondent groups.

Concerning the respondents' preferences for specific types of articles, editorial sections, and advertising in Market Place, the respondents' selection of first, second, and third choices were recorded according to their demographic data. The responses were totalled and percentages were calculated.

Since the item did not test the hypotheses of this study, the categories of respondents were collapsed and a single table was prepared for all the respondents, without regard to the demographic data. This table compared the various content categories with the three preference choices. Percentages of the total respondents to each preference choice were calculated for each cell.

The final table, divided into three sections, reported the respondents' preferences for four home furnishings

trade magazines, including Market Place. For each magazine, the respondents' selection of his first, second, third, and fourth choices was recorded in the cell corresponding to the personal data the respondent had supplied.

This item, like the previous item, was requested by the Market Place publisher and was not intended to test the study's hypotheses. Therefore, the respondent categories were collapsed and a table was prepared which compared the four magazines with the four preference choices without regard to the personal data. Percentages of the total respondents to each preference choice were calculated.

Tallying the responses in each table showed there was no consistency in the number of replies to the twenty-five items on the questionnaire. Although there were 273 returned questionnaires, 264 of which were usable for the study, almost every respondent failed to reply to at least one item. For example, although 264 responded to the first item, only 221 responded to the twenty-third question.

#### Analysis of Data

Various responses were compared by categories in order to determine significant differences. A chi square test for significant difference was applied to each of the three categories of demographic data in the twenty-three tables.

David Manning White and Seymour Levine discussed the usefulness to communication researchers of the chi square test.

Essentially, the major use of chi-square in communications research is what we call the test

of independence. What we are testing in tests of independence is whether or not any sets of variables, traits, or any classification we use are independent . . . . The purpose of the  $X^2$  is that of determining whether obtained frequencies differ significantly from theoretical frequencies, i.e., frequencies we might expect on the basis or chance.<sup>4</sup>

The .05 level of significance was considered acceptable for this study.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>Seymour Levine and David Manning White, Elementary Statistics for Journalists (New York, 1954), pp. 53-54.

<sup>5</sup>John T. Doby, editor, An Introduction to Social Research (Harrisburg, 1954), p. 89.

## CHAPTER III

### SURVEY RESULTS

Questionnaires were mailed to 1,000 readers of Market Place of whom 264, or 26.4 per cent, returned questionnaires usable for the study. This chapter describes the information from each item in the order the items appeared on the questionnaire. Data are presented in tables only for the items which had results especially meaningful to this study.

#### Demographic Data

The first three items on the questionnaire sought demographic data. Fifteen respondents, 5.7 per cent, reported they were engaged in the business of commercial interior design; and twenty-two respondents, 8.3 per cent, said they worked in the residential interior design business.

TABLE I

#### PERCENTAGES OF RESPONDENTS ACCORDING TO TYPE OF BUSINESS

Type of Business	Percentage of Respondents
Commercial interior design. . . . .	5.7%
Residential interior design . . . . .	8.3
Furniture and decorative accessories/gifts . . . . .	30.3
Furniture . . . . .	40.2
Decorative accessories/gifts. . . . .	11.0
Floor coverings . . . . .	<u>4.5</u>

(264)

The respondents engaged in furniture-related sales were the majority of the respondents in this study. The type of business represented by the largest group of respondents was "furniture," with 106, or 40.2 per cent, whereas the second largest group was "furniture and decorative accessories/gifts" in which eighty, or 30.3 per cent, returned questionnaires. Together, these two groups were represented by 70.5 per cent of the respondents.

The decorative accessories/gifts-related fields had fewer respondents than the furniture groups, with twenty-nine, or 11 per cent, saying they were engaged in decorative accessories/gifts.

Floor coverings was represented by the least number of respondents of the six types of businesses. Twelve respondents, representing 4.5 per cent of the total, said they were primarily engaged in the floor coverings business.

TABLE II

## PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS ACCORDING TO POSITION

Position	Percentage of Respondents
Administration, buyer . . . . .	79.9%
Sales, marketing. . . . .	<u>20.1</u>
	(264)

Of the 264 respondents, 211, or 79.9 per cent, said they held administrative or buyer positions in the industry. Fifty-three respondents, 20.1 per cent, reported they worked at sales or marketing jobs.



TABLE III

## PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS ACCORDING TO EXPERIENCE

Experience	Percentage of Respondents
1-5 years . . . . .	17.1%
6-10 years. . . . .	15.9
11-25 years . . . . .	38.2
26 years or more. . . . .	<u>28.8</u>
	(264)

The majority of the respondents, 67 per cent, in this study have more than ten years of working experience in the home furnishings industry. Of the 264 respondents, 17.1 per cent said they had less than five years of experience, 15.9 per cent said they had six to ten years of experience, 38.2 per cent reported they had eleven to twenty-five years of experience, and 28.8 per cent said they had worked in the industry for more than twenty-five years.

## Readership and Influence

The frequency of readership of Market Place and the influence of the magazine were examined by using the data from the next twenty-three items.

Twenty-two of the items solicited responses of "Always," "Often," "Sometimes," and "Never." The twenty-third item did not solicit responses on the scale, but all twenty-three items were analyzed by the same methods, including tabulation of frequency, calculating percentages, and testing significant differences, in order that the results could be compared for each item.

For only a few of the twenty-three items there was significant difference among the respondents in the three categories. When significant difference was found, the groups which had been hypothesized to read most frequently and to be most influenced by Market Place were found not to read most frequently or to be most influenced, and the hypotheses were rejected on that basis. Since the hypotheses were rejected for all categories for every item, this fact is not repeated in the discussion of the data for each item.

#### Readership of Market Place

The fourth item on the questionnaire concerned the respondents' overall readership of Market Place. Of the 264 respondents, 101 said they read the magazine always and ninety-four said they read it often, showing 23.2 per cent and 35.6 per cent respectively for the two categories of frequency. This shows a high degree of overall readership of the magazine for all types of business, positions, and levels or experience. When the two categories of frequency are collapsed, the percentage of respondents who read the magazine always and often is 73.8 per cent. Only 26.2 per cent of the 264 respondents said they read the magazine sometimes or never.

Respondents in the furniture and decorative accessories/gifts business reported the highest frequency of readership with 47.5 per cent reading the magazine always. This group was followed by the residential interior designers who said

TABLE IV  
 FREQUENCY OF READERSHIP OF MARKET PLACE

Frequencies of Readership	Respondent Categories											
	Type of Business				Position				Experience			
	Commercial interior design	Residential interior design	Furniture and decorative accessories/gifts	Furniture	Decorative accessories/gifts	Floor coverings	Administration, buyer	Sales, marketing	1-5 years	6-10 years	11-25 years	26 years or more
Always	20.0%	45.5%	47.5%	34.0%	37.9%	25.0%	37.9%	39.6%	37.8%	40.5%	31.7%	46.1%
Often	46.7	22.7	37.5	33.0	34.5	58.4	35.5	35.8	33.3	38.1	37.6	32.9
Sometimes	26.7	18.2	12.5	25.5	27.6	8.3	20.4	20.8	24.5	16.6	25.7	13.1
Never	6.6	13.6	2.5	7.5	...	8.3	6.2	3.8	4.4	4.8	5.0	7.9
Total	(15)	(22)	(80)	(106)	(29)	(12)	(211)	(53)	(45)	(42)	(101)	(76)

45.5 per cent read it always. The "commercial interior design" group apparently does not read the magazine as frequently as the other groups; only 20 per cent said they read it always. However, 46.7 per cent of the "commercial interior design" group said they read it often, showing that 66.7 per cent of that group either read it always or often. This combined percentage, although it indicates relatively high frequency of readership by commercial interior designers, was the lowest percentage of the groups in this category.

More people in sales and marketing positions read Market Place always, although more readers with administration and buyer positions responded to this item. Administration and buyer readers are the ones for whom the magazine is written, yet they reported low frequency of readership of Market Place.

People with twenty-six or more years of experience appear to read the magazine most frequently. Table IV shows that 46.1 per cent of the readers with more than twenty-five years of experience reported they read always, while the "11-25 years" group reported they read less frequently, with 31.7 per cent reading always. The "11-25 years" group was the largest group of respondents in this category, with 101 responding.

Although the "25 years or more" group had the highest percentage who always read Market Place, they also showed the highest percentage of "never" responses.

### Readership of Marketing and Merchandising Articles

The fifth item on the questionnaire regarded respondents' readership of marketing and merchandising articles. Out of 249 who responded to the item, 80.3 per cent indicated they read marketing and merchandising articles always or often. Only 1.6 per cent of the respondents reported they never read such articles.

In the category of businesses, 42.3 per cent of the "furniture and decorative accessories/gifts" group reported they read the articles always, followed by the "decorative accessories/gifts" group with 41.4 per cent, the "furniture" group with 36.7 per cent, and the "floor coverings" group with 36.4 per cent saying they read them always. Although the percentages for these four groups varied only slightly the percentages were considerably higher than those recorded for commercial and residential interior designers, who showed 14.3 per cent and 15.8 per cent respectively.

The two interior design groups, however, indicated high percentages of respondents who read the articles often, and no residential interior designers said they never read the articles. Commercial interior designers represented the highest percentage of readers in this category who never read the articles.

### Influence of Marketing and Merchandising Articles

The sixth item on the questionnaire concerned the extent of influence marketing and merchandising articles had

on the readers of Market Place. The results indicated that the influence of such articles was not as great as was the frequency of readership.

The item asked the respondents to indicate how frequently marketing and merchandising articles provided ideas they could adopt in their work, and drew responses from 245 of the respondents. Only 23.7 per cent indicated the articles always provided such ideas, compared with 36.1 per cent who indicated they always read the articles. However, only two per cent said the articles never provided such ideas. The greatest percentage of respondents, almost 50 per cent, indicated the ideas were provided only sometimes.

The "decorative accessories/gifts" group in the "type of business" category had the largest percentage, 27.6 per cent, answering "always." This percentage was only slightly higher than the "furniture" group's percentage, which was 25.5 and the "furniture and decorative accessories/gifts" group's percentage, which was 24.3. Commercial interior designers showed the lowest percentage with 14.3 per cent saying the articles always provided ideas, and the highest percentage with 7.1 per cent saying the articles never provided ideas for them. No respondents in the "furniture and decorative accessories/gifts" and in the "floor coverings" groups reported the articles never provided ideas.

In the category of positions, there was less than 2 per cent difference between the two groups for each of the four responses, though the "sales and marketing" group had

TABLE V  
 INFLUENCE OF MARKETING AND MERCHANDISING ARTICLES IN MARKET PLACE

Frequencies of Influence	Respondent Categories											
	Type of Business					Position			*Experience			
	Commercial interior design	Residential interior design	Furniture and decorative accessories/gifts	Furniture	Decorative accessories/gifts	Floor coverings	Administration, buyer	Sales, marketing	1-5 years	6-10 years	11-25 years	26 years or more
Always	14.3%	15.8%	24.3%	25.5%	27.6%	18.2%	23.5%	24.5%	14.3%	30.8%	13.5%	39.7%
Often	28.6	26.3	37.8	25.5	34.5	27.3	31.1	28.6	35.7	33.3	27.1	30.9
Sometimes	50.0	52.6	37.9	46.9	34.5	54.5	43.4	44.9	45.2	33.3	57.3	29.4
Never	7.1	5.3	....	2.1	3.4	....	2.0	2.0	4.8	2.6	2.1	....
Total	(14)	(19)	(74)	(98)	(29)	(11)	(196)	(49)	(42)	(39)	(96)	(68)

\*Indicates significant difference among respondents in this category.

a slightly higher percentage, with 24.5 per cent answering "always," than the "administration, buyer" group, with 23.5 per cent answering "always."

The "1-5 years" group had the lowest percentage of the four "experience" groups, with 14.3 per cent responding "always," and the highest with 4.8 per cent responding "never."

The data in this category was found significant at the .05 level. The respondents with more than twenty-five years of experience, of whom 39.7 per cent reported the articles always provided them ideas, were probably responsible for the significant difference. That group also had the highest percentage when the "always" and "often" frequencies were collapsed, and none of the respondents in the group said the articles never provided ideas. Though the magazine has assumed that readers with the most experience tend to rely on their own experience for marketing and merchandising ideas, the data suggest respondents with the most experience rely on Market Place articles more frequently than respondents with less experience.

#### Readership of Articles About Personalities and/or Businesses

The seventh item on the questionnaire concerned how frequently the respondents read articles about personalities and/or businesses.

The "residential interior design" group had the highest percentage of the types of business, with 41.2 per cent of those respondents reading the articles always. The "floor coverings" group had the lowest percentage, with 18.2 saying



they always read, followed by the "furniture" group, which was the largest group represented in the category and which had only 23.9 per cent respondents who always read the articles. The businesses and personalities with which Market Place articles deal are usually related to the furniture field since most of the magazine's readers are involved in that field. However, this data indicates the articles do not attract the readers for whom the articles are written as frequently as they attract other types of readers.

The "sales, marketing" group showed a slightly higher percentage with 30.6 per cent giving "always" responses, compared with the "administration, buyer" group with 28.6 per cent saying they always read the articles. Although there was only a slight difference between the percentages of the two groups for the four categories or readership, the data indicates these articles were not read as frequently by the "administration, buyer" group, which is the largest group and the group for whom the articles are written.

In the "experience" category, respondents who indicated they read the articles most frequently had twenty-six or more years of experience, with 39.7 per cent answering they read always. The groups which indicated they read the articles least frequently were the "11-25 years" group with only 18.1 per cent reporting they always read the articles, followed by the "1-5 years" group in which respondents reported the highest percentage, 4.5, who never read articles about personalities and/or businesses.

Influence of Articles About Personalities and/or Businesses

The influence of articles about personalities and/or businesses was not as great as the readership of such articles according to the data from the eighth item. The item asked respondents how frequently articles about personalities and/or businesses provided ideas which could be adopted in the respondents' work. Of the 245 respondents, 22 per cent answered "always," 27.3 per cent said "often," 45.3 per cent said "sometimes," and 5.3 per cent answered "never."

The percentages calculated for the types of business indicated the same percentage (31 per cent) of the "decorative accessories/gifts" group found ideas they could use from the articles as said they always read the articles. This was the highest percentage of "always" responses among the six groups for the eighth item. As on the item concerning frequency of readership, the "floor coverings" group had the lowest percentage (18.9 per cent) of "always" responses concerning the influence of these articles.

The respondents with twenty-six or more years of experience recorded the most "always" responses (32.4 per cent) and the least "never" responses (2.9 per cent). The respondents with five years or less experience, for whom these articles are generally written, recorded a low percentage (15.9) who were always influenced by the articles, and the highest percentage (9.1) of the four groups who were never influenced. However, this group indicated an overall high frequency of readership of the articles when 34.9 per

cent reported on the seventh item that they always read articles about personalities and/or businesses.

#### Readership of Style Trend Articles

The ninth item on the questionnaire sought how frequently respondents read style trend articles. The results indicated such articles may have special interest for certain groups of Market Place readers.

For example, the respondents in the "position" category who work in administration or buyer jobs showed a slightly higher percentage of "always" responses and a slightly lower percentage of "never" responses than did the respondents in sales and marketing jobs. Of all the items on the questionnaire, the "administration, buyer" group showed a higher influence and readership than the "sales, marketing" group on only a few items. One possible reason for such response to this item is that style trend articles in Market Place are written to advise wholesale buyers what the style trends are in home furnishings merchandise. The group that includes buyers, therefore, may be more interested in style trends than the group that includes salesmen and marketing experts.

The residential interior designers, who reported a high percentage of "always" responses to only a few items, showed 42.1 per cent who read the articles always. This group followed closely the "furniture and decorative accessories/gifts" group with 48.3 per cent reading always. Residential interior designers, of all the groups in this category,

TABLE VI  
 FREQUENCY OF READERSHIP OF STYLE TREND ARTICLES IN MARKET PLACE

Frequencies of Readership	Respondent Categories											
	Type of Business					Position					Experience	
	Commercial interior design	Residential interior design	Furniture and decorative accessories/gifts	Furniture	Decorative accessories/gifts	Floor coverings	Administration, buyer	Sales, marketing	1-5 years	6-10 years	11-25 years	26 years or more
Always	28.6%	42.1%	48.7%	38.8%	48.3%	36.4%	43.4%	39.2%	51.2%	42.5%	36.5%	45.7%
Often	50.0	47.3	38.5	38.8	31.0	45.4	38.9	41.2	25.6	42.5	43.7	40.0
Sometimes	21.4	5.3	12.8	19.3	20.7	18.2	16.2	17.6	18.6	15.0	18.8	12.9
Never	....	5.3	....	3.1	....	....	1.5	2.0	4.6	....	1.0	1.4
Total	(14)	(19)	(78)	(98)	(29)	(11)	(198)	(51)	(43)	(40)	(96)	(70)

probably would be particularly interested in style trend articles because such information is especially important to the work of designing residential interiors using the fashions which are most current.

Table VI shows that the "1-5 years" group in the "experience" category had more than 50 per cent who said they always read style trend articles. This percentage of "always" responses, the highest recorded by the group for any item on the questionnaire, may be due to the fact that the group's lack of extensive experience in the industry hinders the group members from detecting and evaluating trends in relation to their own experience.

#### Influence of Style Trend Articles

The tenth item asked how frequently style trend articles influenced the buying decisions of the respondents.

The residential interior designers in the "type of business" category, who reported on the ninth item that 42.1 per cent read style trend articles always, reported that only 17.6 per cent are always influenced by the articles. However, all but 5.9 per cent of that group said they were influenced by the articles always, often, or sometimes. The "decorative accessories/gifts" group, which reported a high percentage (48.3) who read the articles always, reported the highest percentage (37 per cent) who were always influenced by the articles about style trends. The group reported a low percentage of "never" responses, also.

TABLE VII  
 INFLUENCE OF STYLE TREND ARTICLES IN MARKET PLACE

Frequencies of Influence	Respondent Categories											
	Type of Business					Position					Experience	
	Commercial interior design	Residential interior design	Furniture and decorative accessories/gifts	Furniture	Decorative accessories/gifts	Floor coverings	Administration, buyer	Sales, marketing	1-5 years	6-10 years	11-25 years	26 years or more
Always	21.4%	17.6%	24.4%	16.1%	37.0%	16.7%	20.7%	25.6%	26.2%	23.7%	16.8%	24.3%
Often	21.4	29.4	38.5	30.1	29.7	41.6	31.3	39.5	28.6	21.1	32.6	42.4
Sometimes	42.9	47.1	34.6	45.2	33.3	25.0	41.9	27.9	40.5	52.6	41.1	28.8
Never	14.3	5.9	2.5	8.6	.....	16.7	6.1	7.0	4.7	2.6	9.5	4.5
Total	(14)	(17)	(78)	(93)	(27)	(12)	(198)	(43)	(42)	(38)	(95)	(66)

The respondents who had administration or buyer jobs in the "position" category, indicated a lower percentage who were influenced by the articles than who read the articles. Only 20.7 per cent of the respondents engaged in administration or buyer positions were always influenced, although 43.4 per cent had reported they always read the articles. The sales and marketing respondents reported 25.6 per cent who said they were always influenced, but 39.2 per cent who said they always read style trend articles. Though these articles, which are especially written for buyers, have high readership by the group which includes buyers, almost 50 per cent of that group reported they were only sometimes influenced.

The "1-5 years" group in the "experience" category showed the highest percentage who read the articles always and also the highest percentage (26.2) who were influenced always by the articles. However, when the "always" and "often" frequencies were collapsed, respondents with more than twenty-five years of experience showed a higher percentage (66.7) who read always or often than the respondents with less than six years of experience who showed 54.8 per cent who read always.

#### Readership of Business Trend Articles

The respondents' frequency of readership of business trend articles in Market Place was sought with the eleventh item on the questionnaire.

The percentages recorded for this item by all groups were high in "always" responses. Overall, 41.9 per cent of the 246 respondents answering this item said they always read the articles, 39.4 per cent said they often read, 17.9 per cent said they sometimes read, and only 0.8 per cent reported they never read the articles.

Among the types of business, the commercial interior designers registered a relatively high percentage of "always" and "often" responses, compared with that group's responses to other items on the questionnaire. When the percentages for the "always" and "often" frequencies were collapsed, 85.7 per cent of the commercial interior designers indicated they read the articles always or often. The "floor coverings" group registered the highest percentage (54.5) who read the articles always. This percentage was the highest of "always" responses the group showed for any item. Since commercial interior designers and many floor coverings retailers deal with businesses, it follows that these two groups should be particularly interested in articles about business trends.

In the "position" category, the "administration, buyer" group again registered a higher percentage (42.4) who always read than did the "sales, marketing" group, which recorded 39.6 per cent. Since the business trend articles in Market Place deal with wholesale business and the "sales, marketing" group is primarily concerned with retail sales and marketing, it follows that the administrators and buyers whose work



TABLE VIII  
 FREQUENCY OF READERSHIP OF BUSINESS TREND ARTICLES IN MARKET PLACE

Frequencies of Readership	Respondent Categories											
	Type of Business					Position		Experience				
	Commercial interior design	Residential interior design	Furniture and decorative accessories/gifts	Furniture	Decorative accessories/gifts	Floor coverings	Administration, buyer	Sales, marketing	1-5 years	6-10 years	11-25 years	26 years or more
Always	35.7%	29.4%	48.1%	38.8%	41.4%	54.5%	42.4%	39.6%	42.9%	36.8%	34.4%	54.3%
Often	50.0	64.7	36.4	38.8	34.5	27.3	40.4	35.4	33.3	42.1	43.7	35.7
Sometimes	14.3	5.9	15.5	20.4	24.1	18.2	16.2	25.0	23.8	21.1	19.8	10.0
Never	.....	.....	.....	2.0	.....	.....	1.0	.....	.....	.....	2.1	.....
Total	(14)	(17)	(77)	(98)	(29)	(11)	(198)	(48)	(42)	(38)	(96)	(70)

mostly involves wholesale dealings should read business trend articles more frequently

Respondents with twenty-six or more years of experience had 54.3 per cent who always read the articles which represents the highest percentage of "always" responses of the four groups in the category.

#### Influence of Business Trend Articles

With the twelfth item on the questionnaire, respondents were asked how frequently business trend articles in Market Place influenced the business decisions of the respondents. Although readership of such articles was high, as indicated on Table VIII, respondents showed they were not influenced as frequently by business trend articles.

Of the 242 respondents, 22.7 per cent said they were always influenced, 34.3 per cent said they were often influenced, 40.1 per cent said they were influenced sometimes, and 2.9 per cent reported they were never influenced. A possible reason why frequency of influence of these articles was considerably lower than frequency of readership would be that the respondents' businesses were not directly affected by the national business trends reported in the magazine, though the respondents were interested in staying informed on such trends.

Although influence was not as frequent as readership, the "commercial interior design" and "floor coverings" groups reported high percentages who were influenced always.

The two groups reported 28.6 per cent and 25 per cent respectively, which were the second and third highest percentages shown in the category.

The two types of positions showed only slight variation between the percentages recorded by each for the four frequencies. In the "administration, buyer" group 22.9 per cent said they were always influenced and 3 per cent said they were never influenced, compared with the "sales, marketing" group in which 22.2 per cent said they were always influenced and 2.2 per cent said they were never influenced.

The "1-5 years" group reported 26.2 per cent who were always influenced by the articles, followed by the respondents with twenty-six or more years of experience who said 25.4 per cent were always influenced. Both of these groups recorded high readership frequencies, as indicated on Table VIII, though the "26 years or more" group had a slightly higher frequency of readership. Perhaps the group with less experience was more influenced because members had less experience in detecting and evaluating business trends and relied on the trade magazine for assistance in making business decisions.

#### Readership of Articles About Legislative Action

How frequently respondents read articles about legislative action related to the industry was questioned with the thirteenth item. Of the 241 respondents, 28.6 per cent reported they always read such articles, 33.2 per cent said

they often read, 33.6 per cent said they sometimes read, and 14 per cent said they never read such articles in Market Place. Although not a large percentage reported they always read the articles, a small percentage said they never read the articles, but the greatest percentage of readers said they read the articles either often or sometimes.

Among the types of business, the commercial interior designers reported the highest percentage (35.7) who read always and the highest percentage (50 per cent) who read the articles often. This group was followed by the "furniture" group with 29.5 per cent reading always, the "furniture and decorative accessories/gifts" group with 28.8 per cent reading always, the "decorative accessories/gifts" group with 28.6 per cent reading always, the "floor coverings" group with 27.3 per cent reading always, and the residential interior designers with 20 per cent reading always. Possibly the commercial interior designers reported a high frequency of readership because, of the six groups represented, that group must work with more government regulations concerning the furnishings of public buildings than the other five groups.

The percentages of responses to the four frequencies only varied slightly among the groups in the "position" and "experience" categories. The salesmen and marketing specialists showed the highest percentage (31.9) in the "position" category who always read the articles. The "26 years or more" group showed the highest percentage (34.3) in "experience."

Influence of Articles About Legislative Action

The fourteenth item asked respondents how frequently articles in Market Place about legislative affairs stimulate them to become involved in legislative matters. The item drew one of the most negative responses of any item.

Of the 244 respondents, only 16 per cent reported they were always influenced by legislative action articles, 16.4 per cent said they were often influenced, 36.1 per cent said they were sometimes influenced, and 31.6 per cent said they were never influenced. The percentages of "never" responses were almost as large as the percentage of "always" and "often" responses combined.

Perhaps the frequency of influence is lower than the frequency of readership for these items because respondents were mostly independent and, generally, professionally unorganized so that means of becoming involved in legislative matters are not readily available to them.

The "furniture" group showed the lowest frequency of influence, with only 11.5 per cent saying they were always influenced and 40.6 per cent saying they were never influenced by the articles.

The "administration, buyer" group reported a lower percentage (14.6) who said they were always influenced and a higher percentage (33.3) who said they were never influenced than the "sales, marketing" group.

The group with the most experience, the "26 years or more" group, appeared most influenced by the articles, with

TABLE IX

INFLUENCE OF ARTICLES IN MARKET PLACE ABOUT LEGISLATIVE ACTION

Frequencies of Readership	Respondent Categories											
	Type of Business						Position			Experience		
	Commercial interior design	Residential interior design	Furniture and decorative accessories/gifts	Furniture	Decorative accessories/gifts	Floor coverings	Administration, buyer	Sales, marketing	1-5 years	6-10 years	11-25 years	26 years or more
Always	14.3%	18.8%	16.7%	11.5%	27.6%	18.2%	14.6%	21.7%	14.3%	18.4%	13.6%	19.1%
Often	28.6	18.8	19.2	12.5	13.8	18.2	16.2	17.4	14.3	10.5	15.6	22.1
Sometimes	42.8	37.4	37.2	35.4	27.6	45.4	35.9	37.0	21.4	39.5	42.7	33.8
Never	14.3	25.0	26.9	40.6	31.0	18.2	33.3	23.9	50.0	31.6	28.1	25.0
Total	(14)	(16)	(78)	(96)	(29)	(11)	(198)	(46)	(42)	(38)	(96)	(68)

19.1 per cent saying they were always influenced. The group with the least experience, the "1-5 years" group appeared least influenced, with 50 per cent saying they were never influenced by legislative action articles.

#### Readership of "Foreign Exchange"

The frequency of readership of an editorial section titled "Foreign Exchange" in Market Place was questioned with the fifteenth item. "Foreign Exchange," which is published in every issue, consists of feature articles and news stories that relate to the international trade of home furnishings merchandise.

The results indicated that, although overall the readership of the section was not as high as most other content, certain groups in each category read the section more frequently than other groups.

Among the types of business, both residential and commercial interior designers indicated they read the section more frequently than the other four groups in the category. Of the residential interior designers responding, 29.5 per cent said they always read the section and 17.6 per cent said they never read it. Of the commercial interior designers responding, 28.6 per cent said they always read it and 14.3 per cent said they never read it. These percentages indicate a considerably higher frequency of readership than the "furniture" group, which showed only 12.4 per cent who always read and 44.3 per cent who never read

"Foreign Exchange." Both groups of designers generally work with much imported furnishings and that, perhaps, was why a larger percentage of designers read the section.

Respondents in sales or marketing positions showed 28.3 per cent who read the section always, compared with 17.5 per cent in administration or buyer positions who reported they read it always. The articles, however, are directed to wholesale buyers who are interested in buying imported furnishings to sell to retail customers in the United States. The articles' primary interest to people who work in sales or marketing jobs would be to assist them in selling the merchandise which had been imported by the buyers associated with their businesses. Perhaps this was the reason the respondents working in sales and marketing positions indicated a higher readership of "Foreign Exchange."

Since the international trade of mass merchandise in the home furnishings field has developed in the past few years, perhaps that was why respondents with less experience indicated they read the section more than respondents with more experience. The "6-10 years" group showed the highest percentage who read the section always, followed by the "26 years or more" group with 22.6 per cent, the "11-25 years" group with 17.9 per cent, and the "1-5 years" group with 14.3 per cent.

#### Influence of "Foreign Exchange"

The sixteenth item drew the least positive response of all the items. The item asked how frequently "Foreign Exchange"



content influenced the international trade activities of the respondents.

Readership of this editorial section was comparatively low, as indicated in the discussion of the fifteenth item, and that was one reason the item drew such a negative response. A reason why the frequency of influence was lower than readership may be that many respondents were not engaged in international trade and, therefore, had no activities to be influenced.

Of the 234 respondents, 14.5 per cent reported they were always influenced by "Foreign Exchange," 12.4 per cent said they were often influenced by it, 18.8 per cent said they were influenced sometimes, and 54.3 per cent said they were never influenced by the section.

Many home furnishings retailers engaged in the decorative accessories/gifts type of business import much of the merchandise they sell, and perhaps that was the reason that group registered the highest frequency of influence in the "type of business" category. The group reported the highest percentage of "always" responses (24.2), the highest percentage of "often" responses ( 17.2), and the second lowest percentage of "never" responses (41.4).

The respondents working in sales and marketing positions reported a higher percentage of "always" responses (21.3) and a lower percentage of "never" responses (42.5) than the "administration, buyer" group, which reported 12.8 per cent who were always influenced and 57.2 per cent who were never

TABLE X

INFLUENCE OF "FOREIGN EXCHANGE" IN MARKET PLACE

Frequencies of Readership	Respondent Categories											
	Type of Business					Position					Experience	
	Commercial interior design	Residential interior design	Furniture and decorative accessories/gifts	Furniture	Decorative accessories/gifts	Floor coverings	Administration, buyer	Sales, marketing	1-5 years	6-10 years	11-25 years	26 years or more
Always	14.3%	17.6%	13.9%	11.1%	24.2%	16.7%	12.8%	21.3%	11.9%	18.4%	12.4%	16.9%
Often	21.4	11.8	15.3	6.7	17.2	16.7	11.8	14.9	16.7	10.5	11.2	12.3
Sometimes	28.6	29.4	15.3	17.8	17.2	25.0	18.2	21.3	14.3	18.4	19.1	21.6
Never	35.7	41.2	55.5	64.4	41.4	41.6	57.2	42.5	57.1	52.7	57.3	49.2
Total	(14)	(17)	(72)	(90)	(29)	(12)	(187)	(47)	(42)	(38)	(89)	(65)

influenced. The respondents in sales and marketing jobs also showed higher frequency of readership for this section, as indicated in the discussion of the fifteenth item.

#### Readership of "Specifications"

The seventeenth item asked respondents how frequently they read an editorial section titled "Specifications" in Market Place. "Specifications" is published in every issue and includes feature articles and news stories that relate to the commercial interior design aspect of the industry. The section, therefore, is written especially for commercial interior designers.

The only category in which a significant difference was found was the "type of business" category. The groups primarily responsible for the significant difference probably were the residential and commercial interior designers. Although "Specifications" is primarily designed for commercial interior designers, more residential interior designers (41.2 per cent) read the section always than commercial interior designers (28.6 per cent). However, when the frequencies of the "always" and "often" categories are collapsed, 92.9 per cent of the commercial interior designers read the section always or often, whereas only 70.6 per cent of the residential designers read it always or often.

In the "position" category, the "sales, marketing" group and the "administration, buyer" group each showed approximately the same degree of readership with 50 per cent

TABLE XI  
 FREQUENCY OF READERSHIP OF "SPECIFICATIONS" IN MARKET PLACE

Frequencies of Readership	Respondent Categories											
	*Type of Business					Position					Experience	
	Commercial interior design	Residential interior design	Furniture and decorative accessories/gifts	Furniture	Decorative accessories/gifts	Floor coverings	Administration, buyer	Sales, marketing	1-5 years	6-10 years	11-25 years	26 years or more
Always	28.6%	41.2%	27.6%	14.1%	24.1%	25.0%	21.3%	29.1%	23.8%	29.7%	16.1%	27.9%
Often	64.3	29.4	15.8	13.1	24.1	25.0	20.8	16.7	14.3	21.6	18.3	25.0
Sometimes	7.1	17.6	36.9	41.3	27.7	41.7	33.9	37.5	38.1	35.2	43.0	20.6
Never	....	11.8	19.7	31.5	24.1	8.3	24.0	16.7	23.8	13.5	22.6	26.5
Total	(14)	(17)	(76)	(92)	(29)	(12)	(192)	(48)	(42)	(37)	(93)	(68)

\*Indicates significant difference among respondents in this category.

reading the section always or often, and approximately 50 per cent reading it sometimes or never. As Table XI shows, there was almost no difference between the frequency of readership for the two groups.

The data indicate the highest frequency of readership in the "experience" category was registered by the "6-10 years" group with 29.7 per cent saying they always read and 13.5 per cent saying they never read. Frequency of readership by this group, however, was only slightly higher than the frequency registered by the other groups.

#### Influence of "Specifications"

Respondents were asked how frequently "Specifications" influenced their commercial interior design activities. Responses showed a significant difference among the respondents in the "type of business" category only, just as significant difference was found for the item that concerned readership of "Specifications."

An unusually large percentage of residential interior designers answered that they read "always" and "often" in the category dealing with type of business. This group is possibly responsible for the significant difference found among respondents in this category. Of the residential interior designers, 66.6 per cent indicated they were influenced by "Specifications" always or often. The commercial interior designers showed 64.3 per cent who were influenced by the section always or often.

Overall, this item drew the second most negative response of all the items on the questionnaire. All the groups in the categories dealing with position and experience showed more than 50 per cent who were influenced only sometimes or never by the section. One possible reason for such negative responses may be that many of the respondents were not engaged in any commercial interior design activities.

#### Readership of "Stereoscope"

"Stereoscope" is an editorial section published in every issue of Market Place. The section includes feature articles and news stories which relate to the residential interior design aspect of the industry. This section is written primarily for residential interior designers. The nineteenth item on the questionnaire asked respondents how frequently they read the "Stereoscope" section in Market Place.

A large percentage of the residential interior designers, 43.8 per cent, for whom the section is written, said they read this section always. In fact, 81.3 per cent of that group reported they read "Stereoscope" always or often. This response was the highest percentage of readership recorded for the group on any item.

Although the residential designers showed a great deal of interest in the "Specifications" section written for commercial designers, the commercial designers do not show as much interest in the section written for residential designers. The "commercial interior design" group showed that

TABLE XII  
 FREQUENCY OF READERSHIP OF "STEREOSCOPE" IN MARKET PLACE

Frequencies of Readership	Respondent Categories											
	Type of Business					Position					Experience	
	Commercial interior design	Residential interior design	Furniture and decorative accessories/gifts	Furniture	Decorative accessories/gifts	Floor coverings	Administration, buyer	Sales, marketing	1-5 years	6-10 years	11-25 years	26 years or more
Always	28.6%	43.8%	27.0%	17.4%	30.8%	18.2%	22.0%	35.7%	22.5%	35.2%	20.4%	25.4%
Often	14.3	37.5	31.7	21.7	23.1	27.3	26.2	23.8	25.0	29.7	22.6	28.6
Sometimes	35.7	12.5	28.4	31.5	34.6	54.5	30.4	33.3	30.0	24.3	39.8	22.2
Never	21.4	6.2	13.5	29.4	11.5	•••	21.4	7.2	22.5	10.8	17.2	23.8
Total	(14)	(16)	(74)	(92)	(26)	(11)	(191)	(42)	(40)	(37)	(93)	(63)

28.6 per cent of them read "Stereoscope" always, with 14.3 per cent reading it often. These percentages were the second lowest shown for "always" and "often" responses in the category.

In the "position" category, the respondents engaged in sales and marketing reported 35.7 per cent who read the section always, compared with 22 per cent engaged in administration and buyer positions. Selling of home furnishings which often requires some knowledge of interior design, may be a reason the respondents in sales or marketing positions read this section.

Concerning experience, Table XII shows that the "6-10 years" group indicated that 35.2 per cent of them always read the section, followed by the "26 years or more" group with 25.4 per cent, the "1-5 years" group with 22.5 per cent, and the "11-25 years" group with 20.4 per cent who read it always. Although "Stereoscope" is written generally for people with little experience, the data suggest that the group which reads most frequently has between six and ten years of experience.

#### Influence of "Stereoscope"

The twentieth item asked how frequently "Stereoscope" influenced respondents' activities in residential interior design matters. The respondents did not appear to be highly influenced by the section although they said they read the section frequently.



A significant difference was found among the respondents in the "type of business" category. The residential interior designers, for whom the section is written, were probably responsible for the significant difference.

Twenty-five per cent of the residential interior designers indicated that they were always influenced by the section, and 37.5 per cent said they were often influenced. Respondents reporting the highest percentage who were "always" influenced, however, were in the "decorative accessories/gifts" group, which showed 28.6 per cent who were always influenced. That percentage is almost as large as the 30.8 per cent of the group who reported they read the section always. Apparently frequencies of readership and influence were almost equal.

Twenty-four per cent of the "sales, marketing" group said they were always influenced, compared with 16.2 per cent of the "administration, buyer" group. These percentages, though lower, correspond to the percentages relating to readership of the section in that the "sales, marketing" group reported a larger percentage reading always than the "administration, buyer" group reported.

The respondents with more than twenty-five years of experience indicated the largest percentage (23.4) in the experience category who read always. Although the section is written for readers with the least experience, the data suggest, for no apparent reason, that readers with the most experience are influenced most frequently.

Readership of "Market Meanderings"

"Market Meanderings" is an editorial section published in every issue of Market Place. The section includes short news stories about people and businesses in the industry. The twenty-first item on the questionnaire concerned how frequently respondents read this editorial section.

Within the categories, one of the highest frequencies of readership registered by the "furniture" group in the "type of business" category for any item was on this item. Respondents engaged in the furniture business reported 71.5 per cent who read the section always or often. Although much of the content in "Market Meanderings" is related to the furniture business, so is the content of most other articles and editorial sections. This section, however, contains shorter articles than the other sections and this section can be easily scanned. Perhaps readability of the section was what caused a greater percentage of the group to say they read it always or often than to say they read other sections always or often.

Respondents in sales and marketing positions indicated 42.6 per cent who read the section always, compared with 29.7 per cent of the respondents in the "administration, buyer" group. However, when the responses for the "always" and "often" frequencies are collapsed for the two groups, the "administration, buyer" group shows 71.8 per cent and the "sales, marketing" group shows 70.3 per cent who read always or often.

In the "experience" category, 37.7 per cent of the respondents who had more than twenty-five years experience reported they read the section always. Possibly the section was read more frequently by this group than by the other groups because people with the largest amount of experience in the industry were most likely to know the people or businesses about which the short news stories are written.

#### Influence of "Market Meanderings"

On the twenty-second item, which examined the influence of the "Market Meanderings" section on the respondents, the only significant difference among the respondents in the "position" category shown on any of the items was found.

The group responsible for the significant difference in that category was probably the "administration, buyer" group, which reported a considerably lower frequency of influence than did the "sales, marketing" group. Only 23.4 per cent of the respondents with administration or buyer jobs said they were always influenced by "Market Meanderings," whereas 34.8 per cent of the respondents with sales or marketing positions said they were influenced by the section always. The "administration, buyer" group reserved a large percentage of responses for the "sometimes" frequency, with 37 per cent saying they were influenced sometimes, compared with 23.9 per cent of the "sales, marketing" group.

The percentages recorded for the four frequencies in the "type of business" category closely paralleled the percentages

TABLE XIII

INFLUENCE OF "MARKET MEANDERINGS" IN MARKET PLACE

Frequencies of Readership	Respondent Categories											
	Type of Business					Position					Experience	
	Commercial interior design	Residential interior design	Furniture and decorative accessories/gifts	Furniture	Decorative accessories/gifts	Floor coverings	Administration, buyer	Sales, marketing	1-5 years	6-10 years	11-25 years	26 years or more
Always	28.6%	23.5%	26.9%	22.8%	30.8%	27.3%	23.4%	34.8%	22.7%	29.7%	19.4%	34.4%
Often	28.6	35.3	47.4	31.5	26.9	27.3	37.0	32.6	36.4	29.7	37.6	37.5
Sometimes	42.8	35.3	23.1	43.5	30.8	36.4	37.0	23.9	34.1	35.2	41.9	23.4
Never	....	5.9	2.6	2.2	11.5	9.0	2.6	8.7	6.8	5.4	1.1	4.7
Total	(14)	(17)	(78)	(92)	(26)	(11)	(192)	(46)	(44)	(37)	(93)	(64)

\*Indicates significant difference among respondents in this category.

recorded by the types of businesses concerning readership of the section, where the "furniture" and the "furniture and decorative accessories/gifts" group showed high frequencies of readership.

The data on Table XIII show that the group which represents the most experience indicated the highest percentage, 34.4 per cent, who said they were always influenced. This percentage corresponds with the percentage recorded by the group for the twenty-first item, where 37.7 per cent indicated they always read the section.

#### Readership of "New & Notable"

The twenty-third item asked respondents how frequently they read "New & Notable," an editorial section which is published in every issue and which reviews the newest home furnishings merchandise.

A comparatively high frequency of readership was recorded for this item. Of the 236 respondents to the item, 40.7 per cent indicated they always read the section, 32.6 per cent said they often read, 22.9 per cent said they read it sometimes, and only 3.8 per cent reported never reading "New & Notable."

Within the categories, the "administration, buyer" group reported a higher frequency of readership than did the "sales, marketing" group. This was one of only a few items on which the "administration, buyer" group indicated more "always" responses (42.7) than the other group (32.6).

TABLE XIV

FREQUENCY OF READERSHIP OF "NEW & NOTABLE" IN MARKET PLACE

Frequencies of Readership	Respondent Categories											
	Type of Business				Position				Experience			
	Commercial interior design	Residential interior design	Furniture and decorative accessories/gifts	Furniture	Decorative accessories/gifts	Floor coverings	Administration, buyer	Sales, marketing	1-5 years	6-10 years	11-25 years	26 years or more
Always	38.5%	35.3%	48.0%	39.1%	32.0%	33.3%	42.7%	32.6%	51.2%	35.9%	30.4%	51.6%
Often	46.2	29.4	35.1	33.7	24.0	16.7	32.6	32.6	26.8	33.3	42.4	21.9
Sometimes	15.3	29.4	15.6	25.0	28.0	41.7	20.5	32.6	17.1	30.8	22.8	21.9
Never	••••	5.9	1.3	2.2	16.0	8.3	4.2	2.2	4.9	••••	4.4	4.6
Total	(13)	(17)	(77)	(92)	(25)	(12)	(190)	(46)	(41)	(39)	(92)	(64)

Since the group is especially concerned with buying wholesale merchandise, it follows that the editorial section dealing with the newest furnishings available to buy would have special interest to the group.

In the "experience" category, the groups representing the lowest and the highest levels of experience reported 51.2 and 51.6 per cent respectively of "always" responses, considerably higher percentages than the other two groups. Apparently, home furnishings employees with the most and the least experience are most interested in reading about the newest merchandise.

The type of business which showed the highest frequency of readership was the "commercial interior design" group. The business of this group is perhaps less concerned than any of the groups with the merchandise reviewed in "New & Notable," so there is no apparent reason for this high frequency. The commercial interior designers, who recorded 38.5 per cent of "always" responses and 46.2 per cent of "often" responses, was followed closely by the "furniture and decorative accessories/gifts" group, the group for whom the section primarily is written, which indicated 48 per cent who read the section always and 35.1 per cent who read it often.

#### Influence of "New & Notable"

Although a greater percentage of administrators and buyers said they read "New & Notable" than the percentage

of salesmen or marketing specialists, the "administration, buyer" group did not indicate it was influenced more frequently. This information was shown in the results to the twenty-fourth item on the questionnaire, which sought data on how frequently respondents were influenced by "New & Notable."

The position which showed the higher percentage of "always" and "often" responses was the "sales, marketing" group in which 33.3 per cent said they were always influenced and 38.1 per cent said they were often influenced. Of the administrators and buyers who responded, 30.4 per cent said they were always influenced and 35.1 per cent reported they were influenced often. Apparently, although administrators and buyers read the section more frequently than members of the other group, they find the section less influential than do members of the other group.

The types of business which indicated the highest frequency of influence were the same two groups which indicated they read the section most frequently. The "furniture and decorative accessories/gifts" group reported 37.3 per cent who were always influenced and 38.4 per cent who were often influenced by the section.

Concerning experience, respondents with more than twenty-five years of experience indicated the highest frequency of influence with 73.1 per cent reporting that they were influenced always or often. This group was followed by the "1-5 years" group, which said 69.8 per cent were influenced always or often. The groups representing the



most experience and the least experience in the category, therefore, reported the highest frequency of readership and influence by "New & Notable."

#### Readership of Advertisements

Advertisements were the only content in Market Place that were not editorial in nature with which this study was concerned. The twenty-fifth item on the questionnaire concerned the frequency of readership of advertisements by the respondents.

Overall, the responses to the item were comparatively positive. Of the 244 respondents, 36.5 per cent said they always read advertisements, 37.3 per cent said they often read them, 23.8 per cent reported sometimes reading them, and only 2.4 per cent said they never read advertisements.

Among the types of business, respondents engaged in decorative accessories/gifts business reported the highest percentage, 50 per cent, who read advertisements always. This was the highest percentage of "always" responses recorded for this group on any item. Perhaps, since this field is served by thousands of manufacturers who manufacturer an enormous amount of merchandise and whose merchandise lines are constantly changing with fashion trends, people who work in the field find reading trade advertisements helps them stay informed on the merchandise available. No other group must work exclusively with as much merchandise which is altered as frequently.

TABLE XV  
 FREQUENCY OF READERSHIP OF ADVERTISEMENTS IN MARKET PLACE

Frequencies of Readership	Respondent Categories											
	Type of Business					Position					Experience	
	Commercial interior design	Residential interior design	Furniture and decorative accessories/gifts	Furniture	Decorative accessories/gifts	Floor coverings	Administration, buyer	Sales, marketing	1-5 years	6-10 years	11-25 years	26 years or more
Always	21.4%	35.3%	36.4%	36.2%	50.0%	25.0%	35.8%	39.5%	42.9%	37.9%	26.9%	44.6%
Often	71.5	47.1	45.5	28.7	26.7	25.0	39.3	28.0	36.7	35.1	40.9	33.9
Sometimes	7.1	17.6	16.9	30.9	23.3	41.7	22.4	30.2	16.3	24.3	30.1	20.0
Never	....	....	1.2	4.2	....	8.3	2.5	2.3	4.1	2.7	2.1	1.5
Total	(14)	(17)	(77)	(94)	(30)	(12)	(201)	(43)	(49)	(37)	(93)	(65)

Since the advertisements in Market Place usually present the merchandise available from manufacturers, and since respondents who work in administration or buyer positions showed higher readership of the editorial section that reviews new merchandise, it follows that those respondents would indicate higher frequency of readership of advertisements than the respondents in sales or marketing jobs. In the "administration, buyer" group, 75.1 per cent indicated they read advertisements always or often; whereas, in the "sales, marketing" group, 67.5 per cent indicated they read them always or often.

The two experience groups which indicated highest frequency of readership of "New & Notable" also indicated highest frequency of readership of advertisements. The "1-5 years" group reported 79.6 per cent who read always or often, and the "26 years or more" group reported 78.5 per cent who read always or often. These were followed by the "6-10 years" group reporting 73 per cent who read always or often, and the "11-25 years" group reporting 67.8 per cent who read always or often.

#### Influence of Advertisements

The twenty-sixth item, which concerned the influence of advertising on the respondents, did not solicit responses using the four-point scale. Instead, respondents were asked to indicate the activity which best described their response to advertisements in Market Place during the past year. The

choices included, "Making a Purchase," "Seeking More Information," and "No Response to Any Advertisements."

The item was answered by 221 respondents, a comparatively low number. This item, as well as the twenty-seventh and twenty-eighth items, which also drew low numbers of responses, was contained on the final page of the questionnaire. Perhaps respondents tired of responding and failed to go on to the third page of the questionnaire, or perhaps the fact that the three items on the third page took more effort to answer since they did not employ the four-point scale was responsible for the low numbers of responses.

The data from the twenty-sixth item indicated that, of the 221 respondents, 37 per cent had made a purchase, 52.6 per cent had sought more information, and 9.4 per cent had not responded in any way to advertisements in Market Place.

The "furniture and decorative accessories/gifts" group in the "type of business" category reported all except 4.6 per cent had responded to advertisements either by making a purchase or by seeking more information. This group showed the highest percentages who had responded, followed by the "furniture" and "commercial interior design" groups with all but 10 per cent who indicated they had responded, the "decorative accessories/gifts" group with all but 11 per cent who indicated they had responded, the "residential interior design" group with all except 12.4 per cent who indicated they had responded, and the "floor coverings" group with all except 12.5 per cent.

The administrators and buyers, who reported higher frequency of readership of the advertisements than the other group, also reported higher percentage responding to the advertisements. All except 8.5 per cent of the "administration, buyer" group said they had responded by either making a purchase or seeking more information. All except 10.3 per cent of the "sales, marketing" group said they had responded to the advertisements.

The two groups with the least amount of experience indicated higher percentages who had responded than the two groups with the most experience. All except 8.4 per cent of the "1-5 years" group and all except 7.5 of the "6-10 years" group reported they had responded to the advertisements. All except 20.2 per cent of the "11-25 years" group, and all except 17.7 per cent of the "26 years or more" group said they had responded. Perhaps respondents with the most experience have long-standing sources for merchandise and are less likely than respondents with the least experience to shop trade advertisements of new sources of new merchandise.

#### Preferences for Market Place Content and for Home Furnishings Trade Magazines

The two final items on the questionnaire were included on request of the Market Place publisher. The items were intended to supply information about the respondents' preferences for specific editorial content and for specific home furnishings magazines including Market Place. These

two items were not intended to test the six hypotheses of this study.

### Preferences for Specific Content

The twenty-fourth item on the questionnaire concerned the participants' preferences for specific content in Market Place. The item asked respondents to rank according to their personal preferences, the content they believed most worthwhile. Only first, second, and third preferences were sought. The eleven types of content offered as choices were the same eleven types of which readership and influence had been examined with previous items.

TABLE XVI

#### PREFERENCES FOR SPECIFIC CONTENT IN MARKET PLACE

Content Categories	Per Cent Preference Ratings			
	1	2	3	Total
Marketing and merchandising articles	49.5%	14.0%	10.7%	74.2%
Personalities and/or business articles	2.6	9.5	8.5	20.6
Style trend articles	19.8	23.5	14.7	58.0
Business trend articles	11.0	24.0	16.9	51.9
Legislative reports	0.6	1.1	5.7	7.4
"Foreign Exchange"	.....	.....	1.1	1.1
"Specifications"	0.6	2.8	1.1	4.5
"Stereoscope"	.....	1.1	1.1	2.2
"Market Meanderings"	1.1	6.7	4.0	11.8
"New & Notable"	4.9	10.0	17.0	31.9
Advertisements	9.9	7.3	19.2	36.4
Total	(182)	(179)	(177)	

Table XVI shows that, among the 182 respondents who chose any of the eleven types of content as their first choice, 49.5

per cent ranked marketing and merchandising articles most worthwhile. Of the total responses, marketing and merchandising articles were ranked first, second, or third by 74.2 per cent.

The second and third most preferred content categories were style trend articles and business trend articles, respectively. Advertising ranked fourth among the categories in percentages of total responses, followed by "New & Notable," which ranked fifth.

The two least preferred categories of content were "Foreign Exchange" and "Stereoscope," which claimed only 1.1 per cent and 2.2 per cent respectively of the responses.

#### Preferences for Home Furnishings Trade Magazines

The final item on the questionnaire sought respondents' preferences among four home furnishings trade magazines. Participants were asked to rank according to their personal preference, the home furnishings trade magazines they believed most worthwhile. This statement was followed by a list of four magazines including Market Place, arranged in alphabetical order.

Market Place was considered most worthwhile by 41.6 per cent of the respondents to this item and least worthwhile by only 6 per cent. When the columns representing the first and second choices were collapsed, Market Place was ranked first or second by 82.3 per cent, followed by Professional Furniture Merchant, which was ranked first or second by 48.3 per cent.

TABLE XVII  
 PREFERENCES FOR HOME FURNISHINGS TRADE MAGAZINES

Magazines	Per Cent Preference Ratings				
	1	2	3	4	Total
<u>Furniture World/ Furniture South</u>	13.0%	28.2%	35.8%	23.0%	100.0%
<u>Market Place</u>	41.6	40.7	19.4	6.0	107.7
<u>NHFA Reports</u>	13.7	14.5	23.9	45.0	97.1
<u>Professional Furniture Merchant</u>	31.7	16.6	20.9	26.0	95.2
Total	(161)	(145)	(134)	(100)	

The table suggests that Furniture World/Furniture South was the third most preferred, slightly below Professional Furniture Merchant. Furniture World/Furniture South was ranked first or second by 41.2 per cent of the respondents. NHFA Reports was ranked first or second by only 28.2 per cent. NHFA Reports also ranked least preferred by the greatest percentage of respondents.



## CHAPTER IV

### CONCLUSIONS

#### Summary

Six hypotheses were formulated for this study. The data collected for the testing of hypotheses did not support any of the hypotheses.

Hypothesis I: Since the respondents who said they were engaged in retail furniture and decorative accessories/gifts type of business did not read Market Place content more than any other group, the hypothesis could not be supported. No significant difference was found among the six groups in their frequency of readership.

Hypothesis II: Since the respondents who said they were employed in administration or buyer positions did not read Market Place content more than the other group, the hypothesis could not be supported. No significant difference was found between the two groups in their frequency of readership of the content.

Hypothesis III: Since the respondents who said they had worked in their current jobs for five years or less did not read Market Place content more than any other group, the hypothesis could not be supported. No significant difference was found among the four groups in their frequency of readership of the content.

Hypothesis IV: This hypothesis could not be supported because the respondents who said they were engaged in retail furniture and decorative accessories/gifts type of business were not influenced by Market Place more frequently than any other group. No significant difference was found among the six groups in their frequency of influence.

Hypothesis V: Since the respondents who said they were employed in administration or buyer positions were not influenced by Market Place content more frequently than the other group, the hypothesis could not be supported. No significant difference was found between the two groups in their frequency of influence.

Hypothesis VI: This hypothesis could not be supported because the respondents who said they had worked in their current jobs for five years or less were not influenced by Market Place more frequently than any other group. No significant difference was found among the four groups in their frequency of influence.

More than half the respondents said they read the magazine as a whole and all except the "Foreign Exchange" and "Specifications" sections always or often. All the types of articles and editorial sections influence a majority of the respondents always or often except the articles about legislative action, the "Foreign Exchange" section, the "Specifications" section, and the "Stereoscope" section.

The types of content most preferred by the readers were marketing and merchandising articles, style trend, and

business trend articles. These three types showed the highest frequency of readership and the highest frequency of influence, and they were indicated to be most preferred by the readers who responded.

The least popular types of content included the two sections, "Specifications" and "Stereoscope," which are specially written for commercial and residential interior designers, two groups which represent small percentages of the total respondents.

People engaged exclusively in the furniture aspect of the industry represented the largest group of readers who responded to the survey. Yet that group tended to read the magazine less frequently than the other groups and did not appear to be influenced as frequently by the magazine as the other groups.

Market Place is written primarily for people engaged in the furniture and decorative accessories/gifts type of business, and that group indicated high readership of all except a few of the types of content studied in this survey. Members of that group also indicated they were highly influenced by almost all of the magazine's content. Apparently, the magazine does reach people in the type of business for whom the magazine is written.

Readers employed in sales and marketing positions indicated they read all except two types of content more frequently than did readers employed in administration or buyer positions. They also indicated they were influenced

more frequently than administrators or buyers by all but one type of content. Since the magazine is written primarily for administrators and buyers, the largest group, it may be concluded that the magazine does not reach the people the position for whom it is written as often as the people in the other positions.

The magazine has assumed that readers with the least experience in the home furnishings industry are most likely to read and to be influenced by Market Place content. The respondents who reported having the most experience indicated, for almost every type of content, that they read and were influenced by the content more frequently than readers with less experience. Perhaps the content of Market Place has not been as elementary as the magazine has assumed, or perhaps readers with the most experience were the most interested in staying informed on the aspects of the industry covered by Market Place. Whatever the reason, the data indicate that the magazine does not reach readers with the least experience for whom it is written as often as it reaches readers with the most experience

#### Suggestions

The data suggest that the staff of Market Place could strive for improvements in several areas. Although the overall readership of the magazine was shown to be high, articles on legislative action were shown to have particularly low frequency of influence, and three editorial sections including "Foreign Exchange," "Specifications," and "Stereoscope,"

were shown to have particularly low frequency of readership and influence.

Articles on legislative action, which were shown not to exert much influence on readers, might be improved to the extent of stimulating the readers to become involved in legislative affairs relating to the industry. The "Foreign Exchange" section might be improved to the extent that the articles are related to those readers not engaged directly in international trade. The readership and influence of the "Specifications" and "Stereoscope" sections might be improved by making the content of those sections also relate better to readers who are not interior designers.

The type of business in which readers reported the lowest overall readership and influence was the floor coverings aspect of the industry. In order to attract and influence this group, the magazine could begin to include articles or an editorial section which relates directly to people in the floor coverings business.

Since administrators and buyers indicated they read the magazine and were influenced less frequently than salesmen and marketing specialists, the magazine could concentrate on improving articles that directly relate to the administration of home furnishings businesses or to the buying of wholesale merchandise, in order to attract and influence those readers more frequently.

If some of the magazine's content were presented clearly for the least experienced industry employees, such employees

might read Market Place more frequently and be influenced by the magazine's content more frequently.

Since the results of few studies of the readership or influence of trade magazines are available to the public, more studies should be done to ascertain the usefulness of such communications media. One area for future study could concern a detailed demographic breakdown of Market Place or of any trade magazine readers. The Market Place staff does not know the demographic characteristics of the readers and has no understanding of what content might be most useful to readers based on the size stores in which readers are employed, the price range of merchandise sold by the stores, the geographic area in which stores are located, and so forth.

Future studies of Market Place or of other trade magazines might receive a higher percentage of returned questionnaires than were received in this study if a second questionnaire is mailed to the sample. Returns of questionnaires were relatively low in this study, with only 273 of the 1,000 questionnaires, or 27.3 per cent, returned.

A possible reason for this low return is that the magazine is received free and many readers may not regard it as important enough to participate in a study of it. Since the magazine has doubled its circulation in the past three years, and added approximately 8,000 of the total 34,928 readers less than one year before this survey was done, perhaps many participants were not sufficiently familiar with the magazine to respond to the questionnaire. Mailing of a

second questionnaire as well as the follow-up postal card may have increased returns.

The 264 returned questionnaires which were usable for the study contained responses by all or most of the respondents to the items on the first two pages of the three-page questionnaire. However, the number of responses decreased on the third page. Although 244 respondents answered the final question on the second page, only 221 respondents went on to answer the first item on the final page. The second and third items on that page attracted only 182 and 161 responses respectively.

Perhaps the questionnaire used for this study was too long and respondents did not take the time to complete the questionnaire. Perhaps respondents were tired of responding so did not make the additional effort to answer the final items. The percentage of responses might be increased if the most difficult questions are included at the beginning of the questionnaire used for future studies of Market Place or other trade magazines.

APPENDIX A

SAMPLE COVER LETTER

February 10, 1975

Dear Market Place reader:

You are one of the 1,000 readers of Market Place selected at random for participation in a readership survey or Market Place as part of my thesis for a Master of Arts in journalism at North Texas State University.

The purpose of the study is to determine what portion of Market Place you read and your evaluation of the effectiveness of its content. The study is being sponsored by Market Place and is being conducted with the full cooperation of the publisher. Your response may influence the content of future issues of the magazine.

The attached questionnaire looks lengthy, but it has been simply designed so that you might complete it in a few minutes. No identification is sought and you will not be referred to by name.

Please take a few minutes now to complete the questionnaire and to return it in the stamped, self-addressed envelope I have provided.

The questionnaire you have received is important to the study of Market Place. I need your response to help make the results useful.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Harriet H. Greaney



APPENDIX B

SAMPLE QUESTIONNAIRE

For each question, indicate the answer that applies to you. The personal information is necessary. PLEASE DO NOT SKIP ANY QUESTION.

1. In what type of business are you primarily engaged?  
(CHECK ONE)

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial interior design                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Furniture                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Residential interior design                | <input type="checkbox"/> Decorative accessories/gifts |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Furniture and decorative accessories/gifts | <input type="checkbox"/> Floor coverings              |

2. Which function best describes your job? (CHECK ONE)

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Administration, buyer | <input type="checkbox"/> Sales, marketing |
|--|---|

3. How long have you been employed in your current job category in the business in which you are currently engaged?

- |                                     |   |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1-5 years  | <input type="checkbox"/> 11-25 years      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 6-10 years | <input type="checkbox"/> 26 years or more |

The following statements have been designed to determine how often you read specific content in Market Place and to determine how much effect that content has on your work. Circle the number which best reflects your reaction to each statement. PLEASE DO NOT SKIP ANY STATEMENTS.

	ALWAYS	OFTEN	SOME-TIMES	NEVER
4. I read <u>Market Place</u> :	1	2	3	4
5. I read articles about marketing and merchandising:	1	2	3	4
6. Marketing and merchandising articles provide ideas I can adopt in my work:	1	2	3	4
7. I read articles about personalities and/or businesses:	1	2	3	4

	ALWAYS	OFTEN	SOME - TIMES	NEVER
8. Articles about personalities and/or businesses provide ideas I can adopt in my work:	1	2	3	4
9. I read articles about style trends:	1	2	3	4
10. Style trend articles influence my buying decisions:	1	2	3	4
11. I read articles about business trends:	1	2	3	4
12. Business trend articles influence my business decisions:	1	2	3	4
13. I read articles about legislative action related to the industry:	1	2	3	4
14. Legislative reports stimulate me to become involved in legislative matters:	1	2	3	4
15. I read "Foreign Exchange:"	1	2	3	4
16. "Foreign Exchange" influences my international trade activities:	1	2	3	4
17. I read "Specifications:"	1	2	3	4
18. "Specifications" influences my commercial interior design activities:	1	2	3	4
19. I read "Stereoscope:"	1	2	3	4
20. "Stereoscope" influences my residential interior design activities:	1	2	3	4
21. I read "Market Meanderings:"	1	2	3	4
22. "Market Meanderings" informs me about industry happenings:	1	2	3	4
23. I read "New & Notable:"	1	2	3	4
24. "New & Notable" informs me about the newest furnishings available:	1	2	3	4
25. I read the advertisements:	1	2	3	4

26. Within the past year I have responded to the advertisements in the following manner: (CHECK ONE)

- ( ) Making a purchase                      ( ) No response to any  
 ( ) Seeking more information              advertisement

27. Rank according to your personal preference, the Market Place content you believe most worthwhile. RANK ONLY 1ST, 2ND, AND 3RD.

- \_\_\_\_\_ Marketing and merchandising articles  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Personalities and/or business profile articles  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Style trend articles  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Business trend articles  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Legislative reports  
 \_\_\_\_\_ "Foreign Exchange"  
 \_\_\_\_\_ "Specifications"  
 \_\_\_\_\_ "Stereoscope"  
 \_\_\_\_\_ "Market Meanderings"  
 \_\_\_\_\_ "New & Notable"  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Advertisements

28. Rank according to your personal preference, the home furnishings trade magazines you believe most worthwhile. RANK ONLY 1ST, 2ND, 3RD, AND 4TH.

- \_\_\_\_\_ Furniture World/Furniture South  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Market Place  
 \_\_\_\_\_ NHFA Reports  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Professional Furniture Merchant (PFM)

APPENDIX C

SAMPLE POSTAL CARD REMINDER

February 24, 1975

Dear Market Place reader:

Recently you received one of 1,000 questionnaires mailed to randomly selected Market Place readers. I have not received your completed questionnaire yet. If you have returned it, thank you for cooperating. If you have not, please take a few minutes now to complete and return it. Your response is important in my Master's degree research project and may help determine future content of the magazine. Thank you for your help with this project.

Sincerely,

Harriet H. Greaney

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