

## Research: Peter would rather live in Peterborough

Could it be that Gary is more likely to be a gardener, Catherine a consultant, and Nadine a nurse? Or is this mere drivel? Research has shown that letter concordance between people's names and the choices they make does indeed occur. The psychological processes at the root of this can provide marketing professionals with valuable information. They have even come up with a name for it: *name letter branding*.

Brendl, Chattopadhyay, Pelham and Carvello studied whether people actually have a preference for brand names that contain letters from their own name. They checked this by first having respondents state their first name. They were subsequently offered two identical products with different brand names: one brand name was made up of the first three letters of the respondent's first name and completed with 'oki', and the other name also ended in 'oki'. The result was that the majority of respondents preferred the brand name that contained letters from their own first name.

The question is now whether abovementioned preferences translate into actual behaviour. Research shows that there is no universally valid connection between the preference for a name and subsequent behaviour. But the researchers did find such a link in cases when there is a concrete need. Abovementioned researchers have shown that when someone has above average hunger or thirst, he/she has a stronger preference for a brand name containing letters from his/her own name. The conclusion is that the effect of name letter preference comes to the fore when there is a certain, concrete need to fill.

We can conclude from all of this that concordance between a person's name and a brand name can influence the *preference* for a brand product. *Behaviour* will only be influenced when an actual need comes into it. So in the end we can conclude that someone called Peter will be more likely to settle in Peterborough than in nearby Leicester.

*Reference(s)*

Bendl, C.M., Chattopadhyay, A., Pelham, B.W., Carvallo, M. (2005), Name letter branding: valence transfers when product specific needs are active. Journal of Consumer Research, vol.32, no.3, p.405-415. \*

\* : Available in the EURIB library.