

The Necessity of Research in Marketing

Harold A. Innis

fadedpage.com

*** A Distributed Proofreaders Canada eBook ***

This eBook is made available at no cost and with very few restrictions. These restrictions apply only if (1) you make a change in the eBook (other than alteration for different display devices), or (2) you are making commercial use of the eBook. If either of these conditions applies, please contact a <https://www.fadedpage.com> administrator before proceeding. Thousands more FREE eBooks are available at <https://www.fadedpage.com>.

This work is in the Canadian public domain, but may be under copyright in some countries. If you live outside Canada, check your country's copyright laws. IF THE BOOK IS UNDER COPYRIGHT IN YOUR COUNTRY, DO NOT DOWNLOAD OR REDISTRIBUTE THIS FILE.

Title: The Necessity of Research in Marketing

Date of first publication: 1940

Author: Harold Adams Innis (1894-1952)

Date first posted: October 23, 2026

Date last updated: October 23, 2026

Faded Page eBook #20261042

This eBook was produced by: Hugh Dagg, John Routh, Brittany Jeans & the online Distributed Proofreaders Canada team at <https://www.pgdpCanada.net>

The Necessity of Research in Marketing

By HAROLD A. INNIS

The Commerce Journal, Annual Review, The University of Toronto
Commerce Club, 1940

The appearance of *The Story of Advertising in Canada—A Chronicle of Fifty Years* (Ryerson Press) by H. E. Stephenson and Carlton McNaught of A. McKim Limited, with a foreword by Mr. C. T. Pearce, president of that organization, on the occasion of its fiftieth anniversary is a landmark in the history of Canadian marketing. The book is essentially a history of the oldest advertising agency in Canada, but it is also a pretentious effort to cover the whole subject. It includes accounts of the use of advertising in the retailing of goods to consumers, male and female, and has 120 pages of illustration. An extensive index, by name and subject, enables one to find a description of the experiments of numerous firms in the marketing of foods and beverages, clothing, household equipment, conveyances from the buggy to the automobile, entertainments from circuses to cinemas, finance especially during the war, land, and scenery. The media of the advertiser are described in chapters on newspapers, periodicals, posters, pamphlets, motion pictures, and the radio. As would be expected the history and work of the advertising agency are given in detail. The book is an important contribution to the study of marketing in Canada.

The volume's strong and weak points are due precisely to the fact that it has been written by men associated with an advertising firm over a long period. There is far from adequate reference to the development of other advertising agencies and while it might be ungrateful to say that it is in itself effective and extensive advertising for a single firm, there would be truth in the statement. It could not be otherwise in a book of this character and perhaps one has no right to complain of the inclusiveness of the title. But this comment suggests more crucial limitations of which the general lack of criticism of the subject as a whole is the most striking. The volume is too largely concerned with advertising advertising. The results are evident in a cheery easy reading style and a continuous assumption that advertising has been responsible for the enormous expansion of Canada since the nineties.

Scant attention to the subject before that period is accompanied by an almost complete absence of intensive studies of the numerous subjects mentioned in the volume. It is all foreground and without perspective. We are told much of the successes but little of the failures and yet a study of the difficulties would throw important light not only on advertising but also on the whole fundamental problem as to why certain inventions “take” and why they take at some times rather than others. Why do business men criticize advertising agencies for their general optimism and their lack of constructive criticism? Why do they complain that they sell advertising more effectively than they sell goods? What are the implications of the development of advertising to the growth of art in Canada? What has been the significance to literature? How far does literature in Canada depend on the support of advertising and what are the advantages and disadvantages of this dependence? How far does advertising influence editorial policies and how far does it affect politics directly and indirectly? That such questions have been discussed slightly or not at all is an indication of the limitations of the volume and of the subject.

All this is not to belittle the importance of advertising but to suggest that the time has arrived for emphasis on a more mature approach. There are numerous other indications that this is the case. To cite one illustration: For two years the Advertising and Sales Club and the Department of Extension in the University of Toronto have sponsored a series of lectures by a wide range of authorities on the various aspects of marketing. The first series was published under the editorship of Professor H. R. Kemp, *Canadian Marketing Problems*. But the interest in the basic problems of research lags far behind that of Great Britain and the United States. It may safely be predicted that this interest will rapidly develop so that at the end of another half century this volume may be considered as a milestone which brought to an end the period of immaturity.

The period covered by the volume has been dominated by newsprint as the important media and with general expansion in newspaper circulation and newsprint production, advertising has not been faced with serious difficulties. The emergence of the radio has brought new problems in its effect on other advertising media especially the periodicals. The period of experiment with radio advertising has in many ways only begun and the task of the advertising agency has become one of developing effective technique with the new media and of co-ordinating it with the adjustments in periodicals and newspapers. The waste in advertising incidental to a period of readjustment demands intensive study and research. The effectiveness of advertising in relation to each commodity will be determined by the

character of the research. To an important extent advertising has depended on research in the United States, but the problems of new technique will have particular characteristics for Canada. The war will involve far-reaching changes in the Canadian economy in terms of industrialism and urbanization with which advertising must hasten to keep pace. The necessity of extensive training in the broad fields of the subject will become even more imperative and to it must be added the demand for research.

TRANSCRIBER NOTES

Misspelled words and printer errors have been corrected. Where multiple spellings occur, majority use has been employed.

Punctuation has been maintained except where obvious printer errors occur.

A cover which is placed in the public domain was created for this ebook.
[The end of *The Necessity of Research in Marketing* by Harold A. Innis]