Throughout this book we have been urging an eclectic approach to the creation of theories about marketing phenomena. Different approaches have their own advantages. No single approach is inherently superior. However, in this chapter we feature one particular approach, not because it produces inherently more valid and more reliable information than any other—it is not at all clear that it does. Instead, we feature the theory-in-use approach partly because it produces different kinds of insights than more conventional approaches and partly because it is an approach the reader is not likely to encounter in a formal sense. The basic message we want to convey is that people’s “theories” about their own behavior may offer special insights to the researcher that other approaches do not yield. A theory-in-use approach might fruitfully be added to but not substituted for other approaches.
CHAPTER SIX: CONSTRUCTING THEORIES-IN-USE

I hear and I forget
I see and I remember
I do and I understand.

Confucius

The argument goes that applied research is radically different from basic scientific work. . . . This implies a false comparison with the natural sciences. It is true that technical engineers could not succeed without the knowledge provided by abstract research in mathematics and laboratory experiments of the "pure" sciences. But it is misleading to draw an analogy between the natural and social sciences. Nowhere in the social realm are there unconditional laws and basic theories already well established. Quite to the contrary, it is the study of concrete and circumscribed practical problem-areas that has contributed a part of present-day general sociological knowledge.

Lazarsfeld and Reitz

Religion rests its case on revelation, science on method, ideology on moral passion; but common sense rests its assertion that it is not a case at all, just life in a nutshell. The world is its authority.

Clifford Geertz

The theory-in-use approach is a rather different approach to theory development. It may be described as a more inductive, inferential process of thinking about phenomena. The basic idea is simple: if you want a good theory of, say, selling, you should understand what a successful salesperson thinks and does. Underlying this idea is another simple notion: people often think in if-then statements. That is, individuals often think and behave in terms of "If I do this, then that may happen." These thoughts may not be very conscious or explicit, and generally the observer or theory builder can only assume that such if-then thoughts underlie particular behaviors. "Putative theory" may thus be an equally valid term for the approach described in this chapter.

Let us use personal selling as an illustration. An effective salesperson employs a number of ideas or concepts in his or her interactions with customers. A highly successful office furniture salesman will be used as an illustration here. A basic principle this salesman has described is: *initially be a consultant about a problem rather than an advocate of particular equipment or furniture.* What ideas or concepts does this particular salesman have as reflected in the principle he espouses? One idea is that of being consumer-problem oriented. A second idea is being a consultant or advisor. Implicit in this idea is that a consultant role may be

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CONSTRUCTING THEORIES-IN-USE

perceived to be more on the side of a client (the consumer). An advocate in this context would be perceived as being more on the side of another party (i.e., the supplier of office equipment). These ideas, implicit in the principle given to us by the salesman, suggest the following if-then thinking: "If I appear to be concerned with understanding the consumer's problem, and if I offer general advice about solving that problem, then the consumer will perceive me to be on his or her side and thus relatively more objective, and hence is more likely to accept suggestions I make about the office equipment and furniture I represent, and is more likely to order at least some of my equipment to solve his or her problem." It is important to point out that all the salesman gave us was the principle in italics above. The statement just provided in quotes is an elaboration of the kind of if-then thinking on the part of the salesman we believe underlies this principle.

It is possible to go a bit further. There are a few propositions implicit in this thinking process. One proposition is: the more oriented a salesperson is to understanding consumer problems, the more likely it is that the consumer will accept his or her advice. A second proposition is that the more a salesperson displays a consulting role (as opposed to an advocacy role), the more likely the consumer is to accept purchase advice. The more advice a consumer accepts, the more likely the salesperson's products are to be used in the solution of the consumer's problems. This may be shown diagrammatically (Diagram 6.1).

This diagram represents a simple theory. The theory, however, is incomplete at least as far as our office equipment salesman is concerned. This salesman also described other principles he follows. Each of these principles could be elaborated upon as we have done above. We shall focus on only one other principle: always use referrals. By referrals he meant making reference to other firms that he had worked with and that the consumer knows of and/or could telephone or visit. This particular salesman uses as referrals both firms that purchased his equipment and those that did not purchase his equipment for acceptable reasons (for example, the product line did not match customer needs), but that he felt valued his advice. Use of referrals may be very subtle as well as very explicit. The apparent reasoning behind this principle is: "If I refer to other firms I've helped, then my advice will be taken more seriously, and if I refer to firms who have followed my advice which did not involve my own line of equipment, my role as a consultant will be enhanced and I'll be perceived less as an advocate." Two propositions worth noting here are the following: (1) the larger the number of

Diagram 6.1

Salesperson's concern (as perceived by consumer) with understanding consumer problem

Display of consultant (vs. advocacy) behaviors

+ +

+ +

Consumer acceptance of purchase advice
other firms advised, the more credible the salesperson’s advice; and (2) the more that advice is perceived as not being uniquely linked to the salesperson’s line of equipment, the greater his or her overall credibility as a consultant (versus an advocate). Thus, we have in Diagram 6.2 a slightly more elaborate version of Diagram 6.1.

This diagram identifies several interrelated concepts. Undoubtedly, additional concepts and propositions could be developed from the same principles, not to mention those which could be derived from other principles the salesman uses. It is not our purpose to develop this particular salesman’s theory, but simply to indicate that he does have one which he apparently uses with considerable success. Had we suggested to our salesman friend that he possessed a rich, complicated, and well-developed theory, he would probably have taken offense. The term “theory” often implies something abstract and perhaps not especially helpful or relevant. The concepts or ideas this salesman uses are hardly abstract; he applies them almost daily. Neither are they unhelpful or irrelevant; they provide him with a very comfortable living and a sense of personal accomplishment. He would also be a bit surprised if we were to enumerate the large number of concepts implicit in the several selling principles he provided, and he would be somewhat puzzled too if we claimed they formed a complicated causal model. This surprise and puzzlement would merely illustrate the fact that few people ever bother or need to bother to identify the “theories” they use in everyday life. Because of this, we are typically not conscious of the richness of our thoughts or the fact that we use theory daily.

The ideas in the preceding paragraph are also reflected by the noted anthropologist Clifford Geertz in his essay, “Common Sense as a Cultural System.” Two particular observations in this essay are especially relevant here. The first observation Geertz makes is that common sense is “a relatively organized body of considered thought, rather than just what anyone clothed and in his right mind knows.” Thus, there is much more to common sense than ordinarily meets the eye. Common sense represents the most pervasive body of

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\begin{align*}
\text{Salesperson's concern with understanding a consumer's problem} & \rightarrow + \rightarrow \text{Consumer acceptance of purchase advice} \\
\text{Display of consultant behavior} & \rightarrow + \\
\text{Use of referrals} & \rightarrow + \rightarrow \text{Credibility of salesperson as a consultant}
\end{align*}
\]

Diagram 6.2

\[\text{Ibid., p. 7.}\]
thought we possess. Of course, there is a tendency (which the reader may be experiencing right now) to discount the intellectual value or profundity of common sense. This is related to Geertz's second observation: "... it is an inherent characteristics of common sense thought precisely to deny [that it is a relatively well-organized body of thought] and to affirm that its tenets are immediate deliverances of experience, not deliberate reflections upon it."* 

Thus, the old dictum that "there is nothing so applied as a good theory" has considerable truth. Also, the process of creating theories from principles may involve a gradual transfer from conscious to subconscious thought. After much experience, consciously developed principles become embedded in the subconscious as habits. The behaviors these principles give rise to become customary, perhaps even automatic ways of doing things.†

Before we discuss the rationale for a theory-in-use approach and outline the specific steps in using a theory-in-use strategy for building theory, the following brief points should be made concerning our illustration.

1. Not every successful salesperson in the same industry dealing with the same customers will rely on the same principles. Other effective salespersons may have different theories that work well for them.
2. Even if basically the same principles were identified, different salespersons might enact or put them into use differently.
3. Other observers might identify concepts and propositions other than those we identified. More than one set of propositions might logically underlie a given principle.

We shall return to these points shortly.

**Why a Theory-in-Use Approach**

It is important to understand the rationale for employing a theory-in-use approach in the development of marketing theory. The basic rationale lies in the very definition of knowledge, the pursuit of which is a major reason for building a theory. Perhaps the best definition of knowledge is provided by a well-known sociologist of knowledge, Burkart Holzner:*  

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†The reader who is interested in pursuing this idea further should consult the literature on psychological scripts. A good introduction may be found in R. C. Schank and R. P. Abelson, *Scripts, Plans, Goals and Understanding: on Inquiry into Human Knowledge Structures* (Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 1977), esp. Chap. 3.

"knowledge" can only mean the mapping of experienced reality by some observer. It cannot mean the "grasping" of reality itself. In fact, philosophical progress has produced the conclusive insight that there can be no such thing as the direct and "true" apprehension of "reality" itself. More strictly speaking, we are compelled to define "knowledge" as the communicable mapping of some aspect of experienced reality by an observer in symbolic terms.

Knowledge, then, is the mapping of experienced reality. It is our own picture of what we hold to be true. Different salespeople may experience differently the reality of selling the same product to the same customer and hence map out or describe differently what they "know" about selling to that customer. Similarly, different theory builders observing a given salesperson in interaction with his or her customer might describe this selling process differently (i.e., have different maps) and in ways which may not necessarily agree with the way the salesperson or the customer see it. Holzner and Marx state this more abstractly: "Yet all knowledge originates in an observer and retains the stamp of the observer's peculiar relation to the experiential base." Knowledge, and especially theory, is ultimately personal. Knowledge may have many ways of being valid, but it is still socially and psychologically construed. This simple but important point is perhaps the one point on which all contemporary philosophers, sociologists, psychologists, and historians of science are in agreement.

If knowledge is the mapping of experienced reality, an important way of uncovering knowledge is to learn about the maps that are held by people with appropriate experiences. A person with an appropriate experience might be an especially successful salesperson if we are concerned with a theory of personal selling, a successful product manager if we are concerned with a theory of product management, and so forth. (The criterion of "success" will be examined shortly.) If we learn what knowledge guides their behavior, we might have a theory which has pragmatic validity: it works for at least one person. One might then look at several cases in search of commonalities of knowledge which seem to underlie effective practice. We emphasize practice because it is practice which provides the reality that people experience and hence is the basis of what constitutes knowledge for them. Because that knowledge carries their unique personal imprint (determined by various social and psychological factors, we might prefer to call that knowledge a "theory" to suggest a degree of tentativeness or caution in its use by others without adequate testing.

A theory-in-use approach is not a substitute for other ways of understanding the world of behavior among managers, distributors, buyers, or whomever it is we want to theorize about. Rather, a theory-in-use approach is necessary to help augment our understanding of the behavioral world as we ordinarily study it.

using focus group interviews, mail surveys, personal interviews, laboratory experiments, and a variety of data analytic techniques. Theories-in-use interact with the behavioral world. The understanding of one requires the understanding of the other. Argyris and Schon make this point very well.9

Theory-building is reality-building, not only because our theories-in-use help to determine what we perceive of the behavioral world but because our theories-in-use determine our actions, which in turn help to determine the characteristics of the behavioral world, which in turn feed into our theories-in-use. Consequently, every theory-in-use is a way of doing something to others (to one's behavioral world), which in turn does something to oneself.

In this chapter, discussion is limited to successful practices as a basis for illustration. A theory-in-use approach should also include unsuccessful practices. If, for example, we consistently found the same principle(s) to be used by unsuccessful practitioners, we might conclude that the underlying proposition or theory has been falsified and we can rule it out as a possible explanation of the phenomena we are concerned with. Additionally, if the same principle appears to be used in the same way by both successful and unsuccessful practitioners, we can conclude there are very likely to be important concepts and propositions missing from our theory which, if present, would explain why the principle may be true in both cases but not be associated with the same result. For example, two salespeople working under identical circumstances may both display an identical fashion consultant-like behavior and elicit consumer acceptance of advice. Closer inspection of the situation may reveal certain demographic variables to be relevant. For example, the more years of experience in the industry customers perceive a salesperson as having, the more likely they are to accept the salesperson in a consultant role. Thus we would add perceived relevant years of professional experience as a new variable which influences the impact of consultant-role behavior on the consumer acceptance of purchase advice. Had we not examined cases of unsuccess where the original proposition didn’t appear to work, we would not have sought an additional important variable. Had we looked only at unsuccessful instances of the use of the original proposition, we would have discarded it as being untrue.

One very important caveat must be used when one is focusing on successful and unsuccessful practitioners. It is possible to be right (and hence successful) for the wrong reasons. Also it is possible to be wrong (and hence unsuccessful) but have correct reasons. Under certain market conditions (such as very high-quality products, strong demand, an active rule of reciprocity) a salesperson who is very unskilled intellectually and interpersonally might be successful in terms of contracts closed or some other criterion of success. Under very unfavorable market conditions an otherwise highly skilled salesperson might be unsuccessful.

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9 Chris Argyris and Donald A. Schö, Theory in Practice: Increasing Professional Effectiveness (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1974).
Thus, degree of success may not always or consistently be a good indicator of the quality of a theory-in-use.

A theory-in-use approach partially reflects two research traditions. One is single-subject research; the other is grounded theory. Single-subject research is a well-established methodology. It is represented both by the case history or case study approach and the single-subject experimental design approach to research. The single "subject" may be a single person, a single family, a single organization, community, and so forth. In fact, many of the major—even classic—contributions to knowledge in the social sciences are based on single-subject research methods. Sigmund Freud, Jean Piaget, Erving Goffman, and Margaret Mead are social scientists whose pioneering work involved single-subject research. Single-subject research is in fact in widespread use. The very use of the case study approach to teaching marketing knowledge assumes that case research or development is a valid way of uncovering knowledge of sufficient validity to warrant its use as a teaching foundation. Donald T. Campbell, once a critic of the case study approach, has since rather strongly endorsed this approach as a means of building theories and both validating and invalidating them. He concludes that: "After all, man is, in his ordinary way, a very competent knower, and qualitative common-sense knowing is not replaced by quantitative knowing. Rather, quantitative knowing has to trust and build on the qualitative including ordinary perception. We methodologies must achieve an applied epistemology which integrates both."

The notion of grounded theory is also relevant to a theory-in-use approach. This notion has been best articulated by Glaser and Strauss. A grounded theory is one which is discovered from data carefully obtained from sound social research. Concepts must be carefully chosen on the basis of their possible relevance to the phenomenon being explored and their level of abstraction must be specified. They must be carefully operationalized, with sampling biases identified and validity and reliability tests performed. The resulting data are subsequently interpreted in light of the patterns they display. Grounded theory is increasingly used in social science research. In certain ways the interpretation of factor scores and the specification of factor labels, especially in survey feedback exercises where respondents or subjects analyze their own data, is an instance of

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10Donald T. Campbell, "Qualitative Knowing in Action Research," Kurt Lewin Award Address, Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues, Meeting with the American Psychological Association, New Orleans, September 1, 1974.

11Ibid.


grounded theory. The investigator uses the multivariate technique of factor analysis to help respondents provide theoretical insights. (Whether factor analysis itself is an instance of grounded theory is a matter of debate which need not be pursued here.)

A somewhat different perspective suggests that a grounded theory approach has always been widely used but that the formal presentation of this work, such as publication in scholarly journals, misrepresents it as having been developed in a logical deductive mode. In fact, it is suggested that the logico-deductive approach has never really been used in the social sciences, and rather little used in the physical and natural sciences.

Using single subjects, be they persons or small- or large-scale organizations, as a source of data and developing theory from these data appear to be both common and fruitful methodology in social science research. This will generally involve qualitative research or a sort of participant observation in which the theory builder acts as both reporter and elaborator. This requires face-to-face interaction with the subject and a closeness with the subject characterized by social intimacy and confidentiality.

A theory-in-use approach involves considerable interaction with individual subjects. For this reason single-subject research methods are relevant. However, it is very important that multiple subjects be used. A sample of a few theory holders is insufficient. It is not possible to specify a particular minimum sample size. However, since a theory-in-use approach is primarily intended as a way of discovering theory as opposed to testing theory, one rule of thumb is to stop when the ideas you obtain from new subjects begin to get redundant. Redundancy, of course, is important. It is necessary to have enough cases to know that a given idea is not unique to the circumstances of one particular subject. In general the number of cases required for discovering a theory that merits refining and testing is considerably less than that required for actual testing of a formalized theory.

An Excursus on Mapping

The concept of mapping, introduced in the preceding section, is central to the definition of knowledge and thus central to any approach to theory building.

Consequently, a short excursus on the nature of maps is in order before we specify various steps involved in mapping theories-in-use.

Webster defines a map as a representation of an area. An area can represent either geographical space or the scope of a particular concept, operation, or activity such as one's area of expertise or academic field of concentration. Maps help us find our way around various areas. They do so by specifying what boundaries exist, where particular places or phenomena are located, and where these places belong. This “belongingness” derives from an overall view of an area that identifies where things should be in relation to one another. For example, if a map of the United States were presented to you and the city of Chicago were located in California, the immediate response would be that the map is wrong. Why? Because Chicago should be in Illinois, where it really is located. It is important to stress that this map has as its boundary the United States. If it were a world map, there could have been three or four places Chicago could have been, since more than one city in the world has been called Chicago.

This brings up the importance of specifying the function of a map. Why is the map created and how will it be used? Road maps are constructed so that a person wanting to travel from one area to another can do so in an efficient manner. The word “efficient” is used because people might still reach their destination without this particular map although not without considerable trial and error. Maps reduce trial and error because they are constructed on the basis of the past experiences of others; they summarize the experiences of others who had similar intentions (traveling on land from A to B) and have already made the trip. In this sense, the map is both socially constructed and communicated by numerous others. The social construction and communication occur as a number of people travel the same route and agree that the map is an accurate representation. This occurs because the route is of particular significance to these people; a lot of people need to travel this particular route, albeit for many different reasons. Thus, some routes are identified in greater detail than others on any particular map, reflecting both the importance of the problem and the diversity of the people involved.

Maps must be constructed so that they are easily communicated to others. The actual communication of the content of the map reflects the diversity of those using it as well as the social bond that links them. That is, the map must be of a particular form and incorporate symbols that the majority of people can understand and use. Think of the confusion that would result if all road maps were in the form of mathematical formulas or relied on celestial navigation charts! The specificity of the symbols used and their interrelationships should be compatible with the people involved and their intentions. Further, the scale on the map indicates the degree of accuracy required by those using it. Road maps

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are constructed with fairly broad scales (1 inch = 50 miles), reflecting the fact that general orientation rather than specific direction is the main purpose of these maps. However, city maps use narrower scales since specific direction is required.

Why do maps remain useful over time? They do so because the phenomena they represent are relatively stable. If the road between Pittsburgh and Chicago changed its course every month, most maps would be useless to the majority of people. Maps could be constructed, but they would have to be changed on a regular basis. However, you could study these changes and see if regularities existed and construct a new map that is seasonally adjusted. This is what celestial maps, in fact, accomplish. The planets move in a manner that precludes the construction of one map that would tell you at any particular point in time where a planet is located or where you are in a particular ocean. However, since celestial maps are constructed in a manner that concentrates on the relationship between planets, if one planet is located, many others can be precisely located even if their absolute position changes over time. Thus, although positions change, the relationship stays the same, as this relationship is relatively enduring over time.

This latter point must be emphasized, since mapping, as the concept is used in this book, follows the celestial rather than the road map course. It is the dynamic relationship between objects or ideas that we are attempting to map.

Why do maps change? The fact that maps change over time reflects both the social nature of their construction (such as the people who make them change) and the dynamic nature of the phenomena involved. People don't always follow maps—either intentionally or unintentionally. Unintentional deviation occurs because of miscommunication of the contents of maps; that is, people don't always understand the symbols involved or interpret them in the same manner as those who constructed the map. The result is what we call "getting lost." While some people see this as a great mistake and argue about how to get back on the right route, others explore the uncharted area. This exploration can lead to the discovery of better routes between two points or even altogether new points. This is reminiscent of the "aha" experiences of scientists who, while pursuing one goal, find something quite different. Exhibit 6.1 contains a tongue-in-cheek illustration. The new routes or new points change the content of the map, but change it only within the original boundaries. Similar changes can occur in an intentional manner, as when the early explorers deliberately mapped out the United States or astronomers map out the universe. Again, it is important to note that these maps are constructed with certain boundaries and symbol systems in mind. Changes are seen as filling in the map rather than constructing a whole new map.

Constructing a whole new type of map, such as a topographical versus geographical map, requires changes of a more extreme nature. The old phenomenon is now "seen" and represented in a whole new way, with different
Exhibit 6.1
On Experimental Design

I constructed four miniature houses of worship—a Mohammedan mosque, a Hindu temple, a Jewish synagogue, a Christian cathedral—and placed them in a row. I then marked 15 ants with red paint and turned them loose. They made several trips to and fro, glancing in at the places of worship, but not entering.

I then turned loose 15 more painted blue, they acted just as the red ones had done. I now gilded 15 and turned them loose. No change in the result; the 45 traveled back and forth in a hurry persistently and continuously visiting each fane, but never entering. This satisfied me that these ants were without religious prejudices—just what I wished; for under no other conditions would my next and greater experiment be valuable. I now placed a small square of white paper within the door of each fane; and upon the mosque paper I put a pinch of putty, upon the temple paper a dab of tar, upon the synagogue paper a trifle of turpentine, and upon the cathedral paper a small cube of sugar.

First I liberated the red ants. They examined and rejected the putty, the tar and the turpentine, and then took to the sugar with zeal and apparent sincere conviction. I next liberated the blue ants, and they did exactly as the red ones had done. The gilded ants followed. The preceding results were precisely repeated. This seemed to prove that ants destitute of religious prejudice will always prefer Christianity to any other creed.

However, to make sure, I removed the ants and put putty in the cathedral and sugar in the mosque. I now liberated the ants in a body, and they rushed tumultuously to the cathedral. I was very much touched and gratified, and went back in the room to write down the event; but when I came back the ants had all apostatized and had gone over to the Mohammedan communion.

I saw that I had been too hasty in my conclusions, and naturally felt rebuked and humbled. With diminished confidence I went on with the test to the finish. I placed the sugar first in one house of worship, then in another, till I had tried them all.

With this result: whatever Church I put the sugar in, that was the one the ants straightway joined. This was true beyond a shadow of doubt, that in religious matters the ant is the opposite of man, for man cares for but one thing: to find the only true Church; whereas the ant hunts for the one with the sugar in it.


Symbol systems and boundaries. This is akin to Kuhn's paradigm shift. From a social standpoint, great effort is expended to justify the need for the "new" map, its accuracy as well as its communication to others. Creating new types of maps is more difficult than filling in current maps, although both are necessary if phenomena are to be adequately mapped. Filling in one map many times leads us to consider a whole new map as it becomes clear that the old map doesn't cover all the points we want to reach.

Let us consider now in the context of marketing some of the issues about socially constructed maps of experienced reality which we have been illustrating primarily in terms of road maps. The reader has undoubtedly encountered several different definitions of the term "marketing." Different definitions reflect
AN EXCURSUS ON MAPPING

the different ways in which the phenomenon of marketing is experienced by different people. The way one person experiences or "sees" marketing is no more or less real to that person because another person experiences the phenomenon differently. The symbols used to communicate about marketing phenomena are generally agreed upon and are usually word symbols such as market segmentation, product line, day-after recall, and cents-off coupons. In fact, the subject matter indices of basic marketing textbooks are all nearly identical in their listing of key words which are symbols of the phenomena they describe. This is not to say that the structure flavor of the books' contents are identical. Each book, while using common symbolism (marketing terms), conveys the unique imprint of each author as a participant-observer.

Maps change as new points are added or new routes are added to correct existing points. Consumerism is an illustration of a relatively new point or area of study in marketing. Discussion of strategic planning is an illustration of a new (to marketing) route for achieving certain goals just as new techniques for evaluating advertising copy or the application of operations research techniques for solving certain logistical problems represent new routes which may have been intentionally or unintentionally discovered.

The shift to a broadened concept of marketing to include both profit and nonprofit agencies and a view of marketing as an exchange or transaction system involved a more extreme change in mapping. As we noted earlier, such paradigm shifts involve the expenditure of great effort from a social standpoint to justify the need for a "new" map. Debates about these "new" maps still persist many years after their initial appearance.

One important point needs to be developed further. We have talked about maps being socially construed. This implies several things. First, how one person views marketing is a function of how he or she learned about marketing initially. We are all influenced in our thinking about marketing by other people—people who taught our courses, people who wrote our reading materials, people we studied with, people who employed us, and people we worked with. What we believe about differences between product marketing and service marketing or between industrial as opposed to ultimate consumer marketing is a function of the particular socialization process we encountered (say, what our academic instructors thought, what our firm's sales training program stressed).

Second, demands for expertise are made of us by clients or customers. A salesperson is thus likely to give special prominence in his or her map to marketing as a selling phenomenon. A person responding to the needs of nonprofit agencies is likely to give greater prominence to marketing as a generic phenomenon, while a person responding to the needs of, say, the shipping industry is likely to display more of an operations research orientation to marketing. Thus, special interest groups that consume marketing expertise may influence what a given marketer sees as prominent in marketing at a given time and thus how he or she experiences marketing.

Third, there are certain systemic influences which are social in nature. People
with common interests in the same phenomenon, such as marketing, form professional associations such as the American Marketing Association, Association for Consumer Research, American Association of Advertising Agencies, and so forth. These associations and other interest groups have various cultural artifacts such as magazines, journals, conferences, and research awards programs. The social or cultural artifacts, in turn, shape the further development of the field. That is to say, they influence the mapping activities of people who experience marketing. By these groups' granting or withholding of professional recognition, they encourage or discourage people in marketing with respect to particular activities. And, of course, it is the activities we engage in that set the limits of realities we experience.

What are the limitations of maps? First, the term “map” is an analogy and should be used as such. The term aids in thinking about phenomena but in no way implies that this is the only way to understand or experience the world. This brings up the crucial point that maps are representations of phenomena and are related to particular functions and groups. Thus, maps are contextual in nature. A road map is useless to an astronomer charting the universe, but useful if the astronomer wants to travel by vehicle across the country to a conference.

Second, maps are limited to certain boundaries; these boundaries, while not immutable, nonetheless define the area within which the map is most likely to be used with predictable results. Airline pilots could use road maps to fly by, but the results, particularly at major airports, would be disastrous.

Third, although maps are related to particular groups and functions, they should be constructed so that they are route-neutral. A map should represent an area in such a way that it is indifferent to starting points and destinations. Users will not all be going the same way nor traveling for the same reason, so maps must accommodate diversity while still providing organization and consistency.

Fourth, the map used determines the routes taken and what is allowed to be on the map. Maps sensitize us to some routes while also systematically diverting our attention from other routes. The “fish net fallacy” makes the point clearer. Suppose an ichthyologist travels the seas using a fish net of two-inch mesh; fish that are less than two inches in length will escape him, and when he pulls up the net he will find only fish two inches or more. An observer may be tempted to generalize that all fish are two inches long or more. Until he analyzes his method of fishing, the conclusion will go unchallenged. Mapping experiences can result in similar problems. Thus your preferred method of mapping should be clearly specified and periodically reviewed to scrutinize which particular routes are being missed.

Finally, the mapping of experiences surfaces the question: Are all experiences mappable? Is there a determinancy to marketing whereby, if we search long enough and develop the right tools, we can map all dimensions of marketing activity? However, the efficaciousness of these dimensions changes in such a way that the map itself is never complete or final.

Steps for Developing Marketing Methods

In the development of marketing methods, a special role is assigned to theory development. There are steps involved in this process, some of which are detailed in this chapter.

Step 1. Identify the need for a new or revised methodology.
Step 2. Develop a conceptual framework.
Step 3. Test the framework in a controlled setting.
Step 4. Apply the methodology in real-world situations.
Step 5. Evaluate the effectiveness of the methodology.
Step 6. Revise the methodology based on feedback.
Step 7. Implement the revised methodology.
Step 8. Monitor the impact of the methodology.
Step 9. Refine the methodology further.
Step 10. Disseminate the methodology to relevant stakeholders.
Step 11. Continue to improve the methodology based on new insights.

Note: The method of fishing is an example of a common fallacy in mapping experiences.
activity? This misses the point to some degree. We are not saying the marketplace is a machine that is a well-ordered and logical chain of cause-effect relationships. Rather, mapping allows us to develop representations of marketing activity that are useful within particular contexts and with particular goals in mind. Other representations could be developed with different goals in mind. However, once the context and goal of a particular mapping have been set, then the efficacy of a mapping can be judged along certain dimensions such as reliability, validity, feasibility, and managerial implications. The map, as well as changes in it, becomes a better representation only insofar as it improves along these dimensions, which are developed and changed through social interaction and communication among the various individuals or groups who have a stake in its ultimate use. Thus, the dimensions chosen and the particular representation or map that is constructed is not determinate in any immutable lawlike way.

Steps for Identifying Theory-in-Use

In the discussion below we shall identify several steps involved in identifying theories-in-use. We shall then illustrate these steps in greater detail. The special role of researcher creativity is treated at the end of the chapter.

Step 1. Identify appropriate theory holders. A theory holder is a person or group of people who are effective practitioners in the context of concern.

Step 2. Specify the indicators of effective practice. The indicators may be verbal statements or various behaviors. The best indicators are those which may be observed unobtrusively. While in the example at the beginning of the chapter we relied on statements made by the office equipment salesman, it would be better still to observe him in interaction with customers in a way in which our observation did not influence his behavior or thesis.

Step 3. Develop principles that describe the observed behavior or practice. This involves a statement which appears to govern what is observed.

Step 4. Identify the concepts involved in each governing principle.

Step 5. Describe the linkage(s) between concepts in each principle in propositional terms.

Step 6. Identify and describe possible linkages between concepts in separate principles.

Step 7. Know the "mapping" of the theory holder.

Step 8. Know the "mapping" of the theory builder.

Step 9. Collect several cases and develop syntheses.

Step 10. Identify ineffective practitioners and perform Steps 3 through 9.

Step 11. Identify the propositions that are common to both successful or effective practitioners and those who are ineffective.
Step 12. Determine whether the impact of the common propositions are for the unsuccessful or ineffective practitioners simply overwhelmed by the force of emulated "wrong" propositions or principles or whether other variables are operating which haven't been specified yet.

An Illustration at the Market Level

We shall illustrate these steps using new product design as a context.

Step 1. Identify appropriate theory holders. In this instance we have selected a highly successful consultant in industrial design. This particular person is much sought after by major firms to assist them in the design of products ranging from wine glasses to asbestos gloves. He had training in marketing but little engineering sophistication. He does have an exceptionally well-developed ability to determine what people like. Because of this person's success in designing products with substantial market acceptance, we were particularly intrigued by the reality of product design as he experiences it. It must be recognized that many factors unrelated to him and not under his control affect the success (and lack of success) of the products he designs. Also, many of what he considers his best designs from an aesthetic standpoint are not feasible from an engineering standpoint and thus never reach a stage of being test marketed. Maybe some of these would be dismal flops as far as consumers are concerned.

Step 2. Specify indicators of effective practice. One indicator of effective practice is that the designer is hired repeatedly by the same firms. They must feel he does something right. Another indicator of effective practice is that he has very diverse clients with diverse problems. The designer's ability to range across a wide variety of problems suggests a set of generic skills, that is, knowledge that can be applied in different circumstances. This provides a kind of convergent validity to his knowledge. As indicated above, not all the success or lack of success experienced by the products he designs can be attributed to him. The lack of a real need for a product may cause a technically well-designed product to fail, or a poor promotional campaign may lead to the same result. Also, the presence of a very strong demand may contribute to the success of even a poorly designed product if the product offers some help to buyers and there is no better alternative. Thus to establish effective practice one must be able to attribute with reasonable accuracy some responsibility for a product's success to the product designer. Once this is done, the researcher may then ask the theory holder—in our case a product designer—to describe what he or she knows. For example, we asked the designer to tell us what rules of thumb he would prescribe if he were a guest speaker before a group of students in an introductory course in industrial design. Several statements were given to us, a few of which (slightly paraphrased) are presented below:
Statement 1. Learn what is liked by the product's ultimate user and then design, redesign, and redesign still more until they tell you that you've got it (the user's likes) captured in the shape or label.

Statement 2. Learn what you like and make sure that it is not what your redesign efforts are trying to improve upon.

Statement 3. Learn what the buyer wants more of and less of in using a package or label.

Statement 4. Not everyone has the same aesthetic preferences; more than one design is often necessary.

These four statements are selected for discussion from among a larger array of statements given us because they relate to certain established ideas the reader will be familiar with in the marketing literature. Other statements concerned interpersonal and intraorganizational issues (how to deal with engineers, how to overcome the bad aesthetic taste of an executive's wife who insists on viewing preliminary design sketches, and so on).

Step 3. Develop principles that describe the observed behavior or practice. The first statement above might be cast more formally as the following marketing principle: During the concept testing and test use stages of product design, it is important to identify potential attribute gaps as perceived by buyers and redesign the product to minimize these gaps. An attribute gap is the discrepancy between a buyer's actual perception of an attribute or characteristic of a product and how that buyer would prefer to perceive that attribute. The greater the sum of all attribute gaps, the less likely the buyer is to buy the product. Gaps may exist concerning a very large number of attributes. It is necessary to determine which attributes are most salient to buyers and whether significant discrepancies or gaps exist. This may be done by initially having representative buyers react to the basic concept of the product or to a prototype of the product or to a limited trial use of the product.

Again, the industrial designer gave us only Statement 1, which suggested to us that the above principle might be operating. The discussion in the preceding statement reflects the kind of thinking that is associated with the principle and that presumably the designer also has in mind. This also reflects sound marketing practice as reflected by others in the product development field. Let us proceed now to the principles underlying the other statements.

The second statement was: Learn what you like and make sure that it is not what your redesign efforts are trying to improve upon. The basic marketing principle involved appears to be the following: During the concept testing and test use stages of product design, it is important to identify potential product designer-caused attribute gaps (which may adversely affect acceptance of the product) and redesign the product to minimize these gaps. A designer attribute gap is the discrepancy between what is a desired state of a product's feature as perceived by the designer and the actual status of that feature. For example, the designer may feel the wine goblet has too little stem (that it is too thin or too
short), given the size of the bowl, when in fact the present stem is the preferred size as far as buyers are concerned or is correct given engineering or breakage considerations. The earlier designer biases or attribute gaps are identified, the earlier they may be corrected and the more effective the research and development process may be.

The third statement was: Learn what the buyer wants more of and less of in using a package or label. For example, what is supposed to result from the use of a new package? Less slipping of a carton from a child's hand? An easier way to read the listing of ingredients? Fewer burns when mixing chemicals? The basic principle this statement suggests is to design products that have both incremental and preventive effects. Incremental effects are produced by product attributes that increase the amount of some desired effect. More attractively designed and more comfortably worn safety equipment is more likely to be used by employees, and hence employee safety is likely to be increased. Attributes having preventive effects keep an undesired event from occurring. A milk carton for institutional use with a spigot keeps milk from spoiling as quickly as it does with an open-pour mouth container. This spoilage prevention attribute also has an incremental effect: money is saved. Similarly, the increase in employee safety resulting from more attractively designed and comfortable equipment also lessens employee absenteeism due to accidents. The designer indicated that those features which can be described to product managers as having both incremental and preventive effects (although these terms weren't actually used by the designer) were more likely to be accepted than features that had or were perceived to have only one type of effect.

The fourth statement reflects the fact that buyers are not all the same in their preferences and that different preferences may require different product design responses. This, of course, concerns market segmentation and product differentiation. More specifically, the underlying principle is: If discernibly different buyer groups exist, consideration should be given to the need for correspondingly differentiated product designs. The more important the differentiating characteristics of the buyer groups, the more important it is to take these characteristics into account in designing products. The product designer indicated that he also uses this idea in his approach to managers who make final decisions on what designs will be selected.

Step 4. Identify the concepts involved in each governing principle. We shall link the execution of this with Step 5.

Step 5. Describe the linkage(s) between concepts in each principle. The first principle discussed in Step 3 (see Table 6.1) involves at least three concepts or ideas: innovation testing among consumers, identification of buyer-perceived attribute gaps, and design development process effectiveness. Thus the following proposition or relationship is also implied by the principle: The greater the level of product design testing among buyers, the greater the likelihood of identifying buyer's perceptions of attribute gaps. A second proposition implicit in the same
<table>
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<th>Statements</th>
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<td>The greater the level of differentiation among buyers, the greater the likelihood of capturing buyers</td>
<td>The more easily buyers can be segmented on the basis of different attribute values, the more effective the product design process.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The greater the level of design testing during product development, the greater the likelihood of capturing buyers</td>
<td>The earlier attribute gaps are identified, the more effective the product design process.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The greater the level of product testing during the design stage, the greater the likelihood of capturing buyers</td>
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principle is: The more attribute gaps identified, the more effective the product design development process. Concerning this last proposition, problems may be identified earlier in the development process through testing, thereby saving resources which might otherwise be expended on design features that would later have to be modified at greater expense. These two propositions are shown in Diagram 6.3.

A basic idea or concept in the second principle is the early identification of designer attribute gaps. This involves the following propositions: The greater the level of design testing among buyers, the greater the likelihood of identifying designer-caused attribute gaps. Also, the earlier designer-caused attribute gaps are identified, the more effective the overall design development process. These two propositions (numbers 3 and 4) are shown in Diagram 6.4.

The third principle introduces the concept of having both incremental ("more of") and preventive ("less of") effects resulting from a particular design. We shall describe this as a combination effect. Thus the following proposition (number 5) is suggested: The greater the level of design testing among buyers, the greater the likelihood of identifying opportunities for combination effect designs. This is shown in Diagram 6.5.

The fourth basic principle introduces two additional ideas or concepts: the ease of segmenting buyers on the basis of attribute gaps, and the desirability of design differentiation. These concepts suggest two more propositions. One (number 6) is: The more readily buyers can be segmented on the basis of different clusters of attribute gaps, the more evident it is that design differentiation is desirable. The other proposition (number 7) is: The greater the level of design design differentiation is desirable. This is shown in Diagram 6.6.
testing among buyers, the greater the ability to determine the desirability of design differentiation. These two propositions are presented in Diagram 6.6.

Step 6. **Identify and describe possible linkages between concepts in separate principles.** The concepts in the various principles have been linked and described in the form of propositions. The diagrams indicate that some propositions involve a common concept and thus are linked with one another. This is evidenced more clearly by the solid lines in Diagram 6.7, which is a display of several related concepts that may explain, in part, the thinking and behavior of the industrial designer. There may be additional relationships as suggested by the dotted line. For example, the early identification of buyer-perceived attribute gaps may lead to an identification of designer-caused attribute gaps (and vice versa). Also, the more evident it is that design differentiation is desirable, the more effective the design development process will be (since differentiation can be undertaken early in the process).

Step 7. **Know the "mapping" of the theory holder.** It is important to gain an understanding of the various psychological and sociological factors which could influence how the theory holder makes sense out of his or her experienced reality. For example, an industrial designer with a strong background in engineering but no background in marketing might display a rather different set of behaviors or give us a different set of statements than those given by the person in our example, who had an M.B.A. in marketing but no engineering experience. The person with formal engineering training would be more aware of the emphasis placed on those factors and less aware of the emphasis given to marketing factors. Thus the person would tend unwittingly to underreport the actual reliance on marketing factors just as our informant tended to say little about engineering factors until we presented Diagram 6.7 to him. When shown Diagram 6.7, he indicated that it was a reasonable expression of the four statements, but when elaborating, he proceeded to provide additional statements not given us earlier. Many of these additional statements included technical engineering issues.

**Diagram 6.6**

**Diagram 6.5**
Step 8. *Know the "mapping" of the theory builder.* Theory holders may be unaware of the importance of certain factors. These factors may or may not actually be used by the theory holder, as suggested in Step 7. In our own mapping of the designer's theory, we undoubtedly "tuned in" and "tuned out" principles and concepts another listener would have filtered differently. Many of the issues discussed in Chapter 7 are appropriate considerations at this step.

Step 9. *Collect several cases and develop syntheses.* It is, of course, desirable to collect maps of experienced reality from multiple theory holders. This increases the likelihood of identifying new concepts. Also, overlap among theory holders in the concepts they use and the way these concepts are interrelated may suggest a core theory. Also, focusing on differences among theory holders and asking why the differences may exist may suggest new ideas which explain why these differences exist. These ideas may become an important part of the theory.

Step 10. *Identify ineffective practitioners and perform Steps 3 through 9.* Knowing what principles do not work effectively suggests propositions that are incorrect and hence are to be ruled out. It is true that successful practitioners may be a source of principles and hence propositions that do not work; however, a richer source would be ineffective practitioners. Let us consider first why it is important to identify wrong propositions. In all likelihood, effective practitioners will not be using all principles (propositions) that could be useful. In effect, their theories-in-use may not be fully complete; that is, they may not yet have identified all relevant variables. Those principles they do not use may contain relevant and appropriate propositions which, in turn, contain relevant concepts. The set of unused principles is potentially very large. We need to at least reduce the size of this set. One way of doing this is to determine which principles in the
set of principles unused by effective practitioners are used by ineffective practitioners. We cannot automatically conclude that these principles and their implied propositions are wrong. However, we would want to allocate our time to discovering other principles in this set whose a priori likelihood of being correct is now higher.

Once we have identified an ineffective practitioner, we would perform Steps 3 through 9. Developing syntheses (Step 9) may be more difficult in that the number of wrong principles is probably greater than the number of correct principles. Thus, there may be less overlap in the principles used by ineffective practitioners. However, it is only where there is convergent invalidity that we would feel comfortable in rejecting particular propositions.

Step 11. Identify the propositions that are common to effective and ineffective practitioners. In this step, we isolate the propositions in use that are common to both effective and ineffective practitioners. It is also important to note what other unshared propositions may impact those which are shared.

Step 12. Determine reasons why shared propositions have differential impact. Let use assume that we have identified Proposition A as one which is practiced by several successful salespeople and several unsuccessful salespeople. Several possibilities exist concerning the validity of Proposition A, including the following.

1. Proposition A is actually valid but the unsuccessful salespeople are doing so many other things wrong that the beneficial consequences of using Proposition A cannot overcome the total negative effect of these wrong practices.

2. Proposition A is actually invalid but the successful salespeople are doing so many other things correctly that the negative consequences of using Proposition A cannot overcome the total positive effect of the correct practices.

3. The validity of Proposition A is mediated by other unspecified variables. This was illustrated earlier when we suggested that enacting consultant-like behaviors could lead to greater customer acceptance of advice if the salesperson was perceived to have the requisite experience to give sound advice. If the salesperson is not perceived to have this experience, then the more he or she tries to behave like a consultant the more suspicious or less trusting the customer will be and the less likely the professed advice is to be accepted. To explore this type of possibility, we have to hold constant the effect of other unrelated propositions which could affect the sales outcome. Basically, we ask the following question: If this were the only proposition operating, what other variable we hadn't considered before could account for its having a beneficial impact in one set of cases and a negative impact in another set of cases?

Consider an industrial design example. Assume we have explored the theories-
in-use of several successful as well as unsuccessful industrial designers. Let us also make two other simplifying assumptions: (1) that most designers in both categories practice principle 4 in Table 6.1 from which we derived proposition 6 (see Diagram 6.6), and (2) that we can hold constant the effects all other variables in Diagram 6.7 and in the comparable diagram we might have developed for the unsuccessful designers. Alternately we could assume that proposition 6 is the

Exhibit 6.2

A Primer for Yacht Salesmen: Stress Romance—But Don't Go Overboard
Norwalk, Conn. — Anyone can sell brushes door-to-door, but moving $500,000 yachts is trickier. Here are three rules of the game, gleaned from salesmen at the huge In-the-Water Boat Show here.


Most people don't need a $280,000, 46-foot cabin cruiser. To sell them one, it helps to ignore depressing topics like seasickness and the cost of moorage and fuel, while emphasizing the romance of nautical life that feeds every boat lover's inner fires.

Harry Bernstein, a salesman at Schatz Bros. Marine Center in Brooklyn, is doing just that on Pier A. His male-model good looks—fashioning teeth, a deep tan, blue linen blazer, and khaki slacks—blend seductively with dozens of gleaming white hulls, baking in the autumn sun. Mr. Bernstein's patter evokes the atmosphere of cocktail hour at a quiet anchorage. No storm warnings here.

2. “Never try to close a sale. Lay back and let the customer decide what he wants to buy and how it should be equipped.”

Existing boat owners, not yachting newcomers, are the best sales prospects, says Mr. Bernstein. That's because most people with boats are afflicted with the urge to buy something bigger, faster, or just more expensive.

“I'd like to get a little more boat speed,” says an elderly gentleman in an ascot. “You know, so I could get out to the Grand Banks for a little fishing and get back the same night.” The salesman nods sympathetically.

3. The cut of a customer's clothes is a quick way to sort out potential big spenders from sightseers, but the rule isn't infallible.

Viking 43-foot Diesel, S187, 170.

Larry White of Rex Marine Center Inc. in South Norwalk has just salvaged a $430,000 contract on a 50-foot Hatteras luxury cruiser. The sale nearly got away. “This guy was here last year but he dressed in old work clothes and everybody ignored him.”

Adds Mr. White: “Just try to remember that sometimes that dirt under their fingernails is from burying money in the back yard.”


The Read-

The Role of

Concluding

Theories-i
only proposition to have any real impact on the effectiveness of the design development process.

The question we must ask is, why are some people more effective than others in the design development process when both groups can equally readily segment buyers on the basis of attribute gaps and thus determine how desirable it is to differentiate design? To answer this question, we must look for a phenomenon we have previously overlooked. This may require going back to our informants or reprocessing the information they have already given us. In either case we may obtain a new insight. For example, we might notice or be told that the availability of financial and nonfinancial resources affects the ability of designers to experiment with differentiated designs once it is evident that such differentiation is desirable. The more successful designers may have more assistants available to help develop alternative designs than do the less successful designers. Thus successful designers may tend to generate more ideas (since they can receive help in developing these ideas) and hence have a greater pool of designs to select from, a situation that in turn enhances the effectiveness of the design development process. Thus we would add a new variable to our theory: the ability to respond to evidence of the desirability of design differentiation. Under the simplifying assumptions we have made, this new variable would account for the differences in the success of the two groups of designers.

The Reader's Turn

An article in the Wall Street Journal contained an offering of rules for selling yachts (Exhibit 6.2). These rules reflect the experience of apparently successful sales personnel. Read Exhibit 6.2 carefully and spend a few minutes thinking about the rules. Refer back to the steps for constructing theories-in-use. Can you develop a theory for selling yachts?

Concluding Observations Concerning Theories-in-Use

The Role of Researcher Creativity

The discussion thus far may suggest that the researcher has little opportunity for creative value added in developing theories-in-use. If the researcher merely provides a descriptive map of the theories held by, say, purchasing agents concerning supplier behavior, this might be correct. In this case it is the purchasing agents who are acting as the major creative agents in uncovering a theory of supplier behavior. It would be unfortunate if the researcher did not go
beyond simple journalistic reporting or only assumed the role of translator. The researcher, when examining the theories-in-use of multiple purchasing agents among whom there is variation on significant dimensions, has an opportunity for discovering the importance of these dimensions and developing an explanation of how they work. Creativity is also involved in determining what dimensions are potentially important, in monitoring these dimensions, and especially in explaining how or why they are important. Since individual purchasing agents are generally not in a position to observe variations on different dimensions in the theories of other purchasing agents, they are less able to offer insights on these issues.

Additionally, the researcher who is developing a general, more formal theory on the basis of several individual theories-in-use has an opportunity to (1) discover existing relationships among concepts that were not evident to the purchasing agents, and (2) propose new relationships which could enhance purchasing agents' understanding of supplier behavior.

It was said earlier that the theory-in-use approach is just one approach and should not be used to the exclusion of others. There is opportunity to be creative in the blending of insights from different approaches. For example, there may be a real or apparent contradiction between what a theory-in-use approach suggests is important and what other approaches have suggested. Very substantial creativity may be required by the researcher to reconcile this contradiction.

**Micro-Macro Application**

The examples used in this chapter reflect rather micro-level applications of the theory-in-use approach. In all instances individuals were the unit of analysis. However, the approach is equally appropriate when focusing on other more macro units of analysis such as formal organizations or subgroups, a market segment, an industry, or other groups. In such cases the verbal statements or guidelines of individual members of these large units of analysis are important. However, nonverbal statements in the form of action assume more importance as indicators of guidelines from which propositions would be derived. This is also the case when one is mapping theories concerning social processes such as social change.

**Summary**

This chapter has suggested that researchers and practitioners are both theory holders and theory builders. Often researchers are more concerned with formal theory, which might be expressed as a causal model consisting of concepts with explicit empirical referents connected to form testable hypotheses under carefully controlled experimental conditions. Practitioners, on the other hand,
are generally more concerned with informal theory based on everyday observations (versus controlled experiments), having less than precise concepts (versus explicit empirical referents), and being related to one another intuitively (versus in rigorous testable relationships). The informal theories built and maintained by practitioners in their everyday activities represent an important source of insight for the researcher concerned with formal theory. By mapping these informal theories and applying their own creativity, researchers may gain insights into marketing phenomena which might not otherwise be obtained.

A methodology for eliciting theories-in-use by practitioners was developed. Certain problems in selecting appropriate theory holders among practitioners were mentioned, as was the unresolved issue of sample size. Although no example was presented to illustrate the point, it is important to repeat here that a theory-in-use approach is equally useful in uncovering theories held by formal organizations and other multimember units of analysis such as markets, industries, and social groups.

In many ways a theory-in-use approach is an exercise in reconstructed logic, although the reconstruction is performed by another party. It is one person's reconstruction of another person's or group's logic. This very act of reconstruction may introduce or exclude subtle yet important ideas. Thus there is a good deal of putativeness in developing theory-in-use.