Research to understand and influence game buyers’ evaluation and purchase process

The Challenge
Electronic Arts (EA) is one of the world’s leading video game publishers, but a rapidly changing industry challenged top line growth. New platforms and devices are rapidly emerging, and there was increased competition from companies that hadn’t existed even a year before. EA understood that even the highest quality game will only be successful if people know about it, can find it, and choose it over alternative titles. EA needed a comprehensive approach to identifying where they can maximize their impact on the purchase process.

What We Did
Chadwick Martin Bailey (CMB) conducted a two-part study to quantify the path to purchase and purchase facilitation aspects of the shopping process. In partnership with qualitative firm, BigInsightz, we developed a multi-phase approach. The work included:

- Deep-dive, in-home in-depth interviews to uncover the motivations that influence decision making.
- In-store shop-a-longs at major game retailers, identifying over 50 discrete “touch points” that gamers interact with along the path to purchase.
- Fielded a comprehensive online questionnaire administered to 4,000+ game buyers, to determine the factors and decision-making stages that influence awareness, consideration, and desire before consumers enter a store.
- Quantified the duration of the typical customer decision journey, and set guidelines for EA’s marketing opportunities throughout product launches.
- Conducted TreeNet-based predictive analytics to build a very strong model (92% of cases correctly classified) to prioritize which media sources and other touch points were most associated with eventual purchase.

How They Used It
The results of the research allowed EA to understand the duration of the typical customer decision journey, and set guidelines for EA’s marketing opportunities throughout the product launch. The research also provided another powerful tool to triangulate likely ROI for specific media sources by incorporating this with Marketing Mix data.

About Chadwick Martin Bailey
CMB is an AMA Gold Top 50 market research partnering with a select group of the world’s leading brands. Founded in 1984, CMB collaborates on game changing initiatives including market identification, Segmentation, invigorating brand health, rejuvenating tired trackers, driving loyalty, advocacy, and product and service development.

“The work helped us understand how paths varied among customers. We saw that one of our key segments was engaged heavily in digital media and much earlier in the launch cycle. This really helped us with our Battlefield 3 marketing, where we were able to tailor our creative to effectively differentiate the behaviors of groups of customers and act accordingly. It also reinforced what we were seeing in ROI analysis based on Market Mix modeling, and made us even more confident there. It has helped confirm that we’re making the right decisions by investing more marketing dollars into digital and video.”

-Zach Anderson, VP Marketing Science and Analytics at Electronic Arts