

An Appreciation: Margaret Henderson Blair Marketing Science Pioneer and Founder of MASB

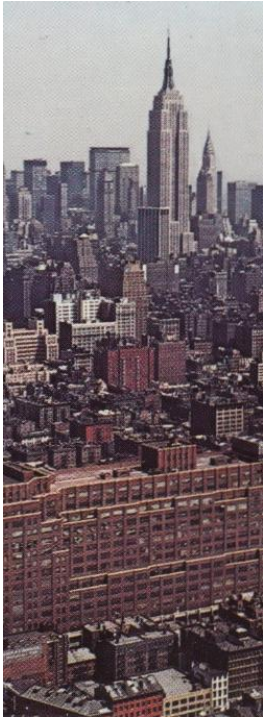


Margaret (Meg) Henderson Blair (1943–2018)

Marketing Accountability Standards Board
of the Marketing Accountability Foundation



The “Numbers Girl”



Meg’s career in marketing began in the 1960s at Schwerin Research in New York City, which assessed television advertising impact.

Meg took on the role of a human computer; tabulating thousands of test results by hand and later with a Resulta 7 mechanical calculator imported from Berlin.

Meg gained a fundamental understanding of how metrics worked and how best they could be used. She became known as the “Numbers Girl,” a nickname she often referenced in later years as a badge of honor.



Mechanical calculator used by Meg. It is still in working order.

Breaking Through the Glass Ceiling



As ARS Group President, Meg was a young, female business leader at a time when business leaders with either characteristic were uncommon

When Schwerin sold his firm, the new owners asked how their measures could achieve greater adoption. Meg laid out a vision for their adoption as standards. She became leader of a new entity, the Advertising Research System (ARS) Group.

As the young president, Meg moved aggressively to advance the state-of-the-art in measurement science. She developed a secure, off-air related recall solution that accurately predicted on-air, day-after recall scores. **The Proctor & Gamble Company quickly adopted this approach, making it an industry standard.**

Meg was also an early devotee of system automation and the quality movement.

Championing “Research-on-Research”

Meg’s numerous findings were regularly published in industry journals (**26 major pieces**). Her discovery that “an ad’s effectiveness ‘wears out’ in a predictable manner as media weight is placed behind it” became a key underpinning of *market mix modeling*.

The Editorial Review Board of the Journal of Advertising Research selected Meg’s 1987 study on advertising wearout as one of only 18 to merit the title of “classic.”

In a field where patents are rare, Meg was granted two, one for the collection of behavioral brand-preference data online, and one for empirically-based ad planning.



Summary of Major Publications and Speeches

- Blair, Margaret Henderson. “Persuasion and Recall: End of the Battle, Beginning of Knowledge.” Presented at the Advertising Research Foundation (ARF) 18th Annual Conference, New York, November 1972.
- ———. “Recall and Persuasion, Awareness and Trial.” Presented at the ARF 19th Annual Conference, New York, November 1973.
- ———. “Reliability and Validity: Fulfilling a Promise, Advancing the Industry.” Presented at the ARF Key Issues Workshop, New York, November 1981.
- ———. “Recent Learning From Three Ongoing Research Programs.” Presented at the 4th Annual ARF Research Quality Workshop, New York, September 1986.
- ———. “[An Empirical Investigation of Advertising Wearin and Wearout.](#)” *Journal of Advertising Research* 27, 6 (1987): 45–50. (Reprinted in the JAR’s 40th Anniversary “Special Classics Issue,” November/December 2000.)
- Blair, Margaret Henderson, Allan R. Kuse, David H. Furse, and David W. Stewart. “Advertising in a New Competitive Environment: Persuading Customers to Buy.” *Business Horizons* (November/December 1987): 20–26.
- Adams, Anthony J., and Margaret Henderson Blair. “Persuasive Advertising and Sales Accountability: Past Experience and Forward Validation.” Presented at the ARF 35th Annual Conference, New York, April 1989.

Summary of Major Publications and Speeches

- Blair, Margaret Henderson. “Getting Your Money’s Worth: Measuring and Managing the Impact and Effectiveness of Your Advertising Campaign.” Speech presented at the Cost-Effective Advertising Techniques Conference, Toronto, November 1989.
- ———. “Managing Advertising Productivity: Opportunities for the 1990s.” Presented at the Professional Marketing Research Society’s 1990 National Conference, Port Carling, Ontario, June 1990.
- ———. “[How to Make Our Quarterly Numbers With Advertising.](#)” Presented at the Marketing Management Workshop, August 1991.
- Adams, Anthony J., and Margaret Henderson Blair. “Persuasive Advertising and Sales Accountability: Past Experience and Forward Validation.” *Journal of Advertising Research* 32, 2 (1992): 20–25.
- Blair, Margaret Henderson. “[Moving Beyond GRPs to PRPs: Another Major Challenge for the 21st Century.](#)” Presented at the ARF Twelfth Annual Electronic Media Workshop, New York, December 1993.
- ———. “International to Global: Another Paradigm Shift.” Presented at the ARF 40th Annual Conference, New York, April 1994.

Summary of Major Publications and Speeches

- ———. “Maximizing the Effectiveness of Television Advertising.” Presented at the European Society for Opinion and Marketing Research (ESOMAR)/ARF Worldwide Electronic and Broadcast Audience Research Symposium, Paris, May 1994.
- Blair, Margaret Henderson. “Persuasive Advertising: Short-term and Long-term Effects on Business Results.” Presented at ESOMAR’s 47th Annual Congress, Davos, Switzerland, September 1994.
- Blair, Margaret Henderson. “The Global Paradigm: Using a Standardized Measurement Within Countries and Across Borders.” Presented at the Institute for International Research (IIR) International Marketing Research Forum, New York, October 1994.
- ———. “The Role of Marketing Research in Continually Improving Advertising Productivity Worldwide.” Presented at the ARF Eleventh Annual Copy Research Workshop, New York, November 1994.
- ———. “An Emerging Renaissance in Advertising through a T. Q. Approach for Maximizing Productivity.” In Transcript Proceedings of rsc T. Q. Advertising Success Forum I. Evansville, IN: rsc, 1995.
- Jones, John Philip, and Margaret Henderson Blair. “Examining ‘Conventional Wisdoms’ About Advertising Effects With Evidence From Independent Sources.” *Journal of Advertising Research* 36, 6 (1996): 37–59.

Summary of Major Publications and Speeches

- Blair, Margaret Henderson. “A Quality Management Approach: Improving the Advertising-to-Sales Track Record.” Presented at the American Society of Quality’s 52nd Annual Quality Congress, Philadelphia, May 1998.
- Blair, Margaret Henderson, and Michael J. Rabuck. “Advertising Wearin and Wearout: Ten Years Later. More Empirical Evidence and Successful Practice.” *Journal of Advertising Research* 38, 4 (1998).
- Blair, Margaret Henderson. “A Quality Management Approach to Improving the Advertising-to-Sales Track Record: New Answers to Three Critical Questions.” Presented at the ARF 45th Annual Conference, New York, March 1999.
- Blair, Margaret Henderson, and Hans-Willi Schroiff. “Advertising: Today’s Sale or Brand Building for Tomorrow?” Presented at the ARF 46th Annual Conference, New York, March 2000.
- ———. “Today’s Sale or Brand-Building for Tomorrow?” *Quirk’s Marketing Research Review* (May 2000): 44–53.
- ———. “Wann Wirkt Werbung — Heute, Morgen Oder Gar Nicht.” *Planung und Analyse* (January 2001).
- Blair, Margaret Henderson, and Allan R. Kuse. “Better Practices in Advertising Can Change a Cost of Doing Business to Wise Investments in the Business.” *Journal of Advertising Research* (March 2004).

Founder of MASB

In 2004, a group of marketing professionals and academics called The Boardroom Project saw a need to increase the contribution of the marketing function through the development of standards for marketing performance measurement and processes.

The Marketing Accountability Standards Board was founded, and the leader that emerged for this new movement was Meg Blair.



A Decade of Marketing Accountability



Meg worked to increase CMO effectiveness and make the marketing field better for all.

Serving as founding President and CEO, she led MASB through its first decade, creating awareness of the issues and helping establish the first of many game-changing projects, including Brand Investment & Valuation, Improving Financial Reporting, and the Common Language Marketing Dictionary.



Meg addressing Summer Summit 2016 in Atlanta

Foundation Chair



Summer Summit 2016 in Boston

After relinquishing her leadership role in MASB, **Meg continued to serve as Chair** of the Marketing Accountability Foundation until her unexpected, untimely passing.

Industry Accolades

For her contributions to the advancement of marketing science, Meg received the 2005 **Distinguished Practitioner Award** from the Academy of Marketing Science and the **Lifetime Achievement Award** from the Advertising Research Foundation in 2012.

She was recognized as a **MASB Trailblazer** in 2017 for embodying the spirit of marketing accountability and being instrumental in carrying out the MASB mission.



Winter Summit 2016 in Islamorada

Friend and Mentor

Meg had a keen eye for seeing the potential in people and served as a mentor to many marketing professionals and academics.



MASB members share anecdotes about Meg at her home in Islamorada, Florida, during Winter Summit 2016.



Former ARS employees gather in Evansville in 2018 to share stories and toast Meg's life.

Please feel free to share your Meg stories



**Thanks for the leadership,
mentorship and friendship, Meg!**



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