

9. ATTITUDE CHANGE STRATEGIES AND THE ELM

Fivestar, Inc. is a regional tire manufacturer specializing in winter tires and focusing on sales in the Northeastern United States. They have been in business for more than two decades, but remain disappointed with their market share in the winter tire industry. The original product introduction of Treadfast, their premier winter tire, stressed the price differential between the Treadfast tires and the more widely recognized national brands. Initial sales were encouraging but quickly leveled off, and Treadfast's share of the Northeastern market has proven to be less than expected.

Fivestar's advertising campaign for the Treadfast tires continues to emphasize the price of the tires, with the tagline "All the traction of the better-known tires, at a price you can afford." Fivestar's advertising budget is limited, so they have traditionally advertised the Treadfast winter tires only during the fall and early winter seasons, when most winter tires are purchased.

The Marketing Manager at Fivestar recently retired, and a new Marketing Manager, Craig Harris, was brought on board. In assessing the products that he would be responsible for, Craig was especially critical of the Treadfast winter tire. He felt that the product had significant potential in the marketplace, but that for some reason this potential had not yet been realized. During his first few months on the job, he made a proposal to senior management requesting that funds be provided to conduct a marketing research study in this area. The request was approved, and Craig hired a market research firm, Kelsey and Mackenzie Inc. (known as K&M) to conduct the study.

In the exploratory phase of the research, K&M conducted three focus groups in three different cities in the Northeast. The primary objective of these three focus groups was to identify the evaluative criteria that consumers use when making a winter tire purchase decision. Four criteria were consistently mentioned throughout each of the focus groups: (1) traction/tread, (2) handling, (3) price, and (4) warranty/expected life.

The next phase of the research involved surveying recent winter tire purchasers to establish: (1) the relative importance of each of these four evaluative criteria, and (2) consumers' perceptions of Treadfast's and three major competitors' performance on each of the four evaluative criteria (on a scale of 1-10, with 10 being the most positive). The results of this survey were surprisingly similar throughout the different segments of the winter tire market. A table depicting the typical results of this survey follows:

Attribute	Attribute Importance	BRAND SCORES			
		"Treadfast"	"Bridgelyear"	"Goodstone"	"Linemich"
Traction	35	4	8	7	9
Handling	30	3	3	3	3
Affordability	15	8	4	6	2
Warranty	20	7	5	4	5