

Charles Leech

Partner & Executive Vice President (Qualitative) at ABM Research Ltd.

Toronto, Canada Area, ON, CA

Consumer Insights Philosopher-Guru slash Real World Semiotic
Multidisciplinarian

Biography

Engaging, articulate, passionate, thought-provoking advocate for the role that culture and language (of all kinds) plays in the construction of our daily fabric. Charles is currently a partner at ABM Research, a 'global boutique' qualitative research house specializing in brands and consumer insights. For the last 12+ years he has been a pioneering advocate for the use of semiotic analysis in market research, having spoken extensively on the subject at conferences, workshops, symposia, and off-sites around the world. Semiotic analysis is a powerful qualitative tool used to mine insights about consumers, brands, and categories by examining all forms of communication as a sign system that requires 'encoding' and transmission before it can be 'decoded'. It is currently used by an impressive slew of global blue-chip CPG clients to provide a deeper layer of understanding than that offered by more cognitive, consumer-facing research. Prior to joining ABM Research, Charles completed his PhD in Applied Semiotics and Media Studies at QUT in Australia, and a cum laude Master of Arts in Mass Communications Research from the University of Leicester's CMCR in the UK. Now at ABM, he is responsible for designing, executing, project managing, and reporting on a wide range of qualitative research initiatives, including focus groups, IDIs, ethnographic observation, and in-home interviewing.

Availability

Keynote, Moderator, Panelist, Workshop, Host/MC, Corporate Training

Industry Expertise

Beverages - Alcoholic, Advertising/Marketing, Market Research

Areas of Expertise

Brands, Branding, Culture and Semiotics

Affiliations

MRIA, ESOMAR, QRCA, MRA

Sample Talks

Exploring The Subconscious Through Semiotic Analysis: What's really going on underneath the form and function of design?

Semiotic analysis is an academic literary theory co-opted by market research to illuminate the deep cultural codes that consumers use to make sense of everything from tech design elements to television advertising. Dr Leech will explain the principles and application of semiotic analysis and how thinking about ergonomics and human factors in a semiotic way will enrich design with a deeper layer of consumer behavioral insight.

Education

University of Toronto - Victoria University

B.A. (Hons) English & Religious Studies

Queensland University of Technology

Ph.D. Applied Semiotics & Media Studies

Lisgar Collegiate Institute

University of Leicester

M.A. (summa cum laude) Mass Communications Research

Glashan Public

Accomplishments

Professional Researcher Certification 'Expert' Level (MRA)

Professional Researcher Certification at the 'Expert' level, from the Marketing Research Association

Testimonials

Stan Caplan

I first heard Charles speak on Semiotics about 10 years ago and it was a memorable experience because of the eye-opening content and his engaging style of presentation. Since then I have invited him to speak on three different occasions and every time he has made me look like a genius as an event organizer. Audience engagement with Charles during his talk and feedback I got afterwards made it apparent they resonated with him. One reason for that is Charles' preparation. He worked with me to understand my objectives and the nature of the audience and then tailored his talk accordingly. I highly recommend him to anyone else who wants to wow an audience interested in consumer insight, marketing, research, advertising and related topics.

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