data is changed. Instead of people being invited to a large hall or ballroom, randomly selected or prerecruited subjects are called on the telephone. Subjects are given the same rating instructions as in the auditorium test; they listen to the hook and provide a verbal response to the researcher making the telephone call. Callout research is used to test only newer music releases. (The reliability and validity of using the telephone for call-out research is better than using the tele-phone for auditorium testing because only a small number of songs are tested in callout.)

While callout methodology is ade-quate because only a few songs are tested, the limitation on the songs tested is also the methodology's major fault. Well-designed callout research involves testing a maximum of 20 songs because subject fatigue sets in quickly over the telephone. Other problems include the distractions that are often present in the home, the poor quality of sound trans-mission created by the telephone equipment, and the fact that there is no way to determine exactly who is answering the questions.

Even with such limitations, many radio stations throughout the country use callout research. Since callout research is inexpen-sive compared with the auditorium method, the research can be conducted frequently to track the performance of songs in a particu-lar market. Auditorium research, which can cost between $20,000 and $40,000 to test approximately 600–800 songs, is generally conducted only once or twice per year.

Programming Research and Consulting

Several companies conduct mass media re-search. Although each company specializes in specific areas of broadcasting and uses different procedures, they all have a com-mon goal: to provide management with data to use in decision making. These companies offer custom research in almost any area of broadcasting—from testing call letters and slogans to air talent, commercials, music, importance of programming elements, and the overall sound of a station.

Broadcast consultants can be equally ver-satile. The leading consultants have experience in broadcasting and offer their services to ra-dio and television stations. Although some of their recommendations are based on research, many are based on past experience. A good consultant can literally "make or break" a broadcast station, and the task of a consultant is probably best described by E. Karl (2009), a former leading international radio consultant who was asked to describe what a consultant does for a radio station. He said:

> A consultant works with research data to help a station's management team design its overall strategy. A consultant puts research information into a package that will make sure the target audience's most important programming elements are on the air, and that the station is positioned correctly in listeners' minds. A consultant also helps market the station to attract listeners to try out the station. The consultant does anything from designing music rotations, creating "clock hours" on the station, and selecting air talent . . . to developing televi-sion commercials to advertise the station, executing direct marketing campaigns to ask listeners to listen, designing website content, and working with the station staff to make sure the "promise" of the station's position stays on track.

Performer Q

Producers and directors in broadcasting naturally want to have an indication of the popularity of various performers and en-tertainers. A basic question in the planning stage of any program is this: What per-former or group of performers should be used to give the show the greatest appeal? Not unreasonably, producers prefer to use

the most popular and likable performers in the industry rather than taking a chance on an unknown entertainer.

Marketing Evaluations, Inc., of Manhasset, New York, meets the demand for informa-tion about performers, entertainers, and per-sonalities *(www.qscores.com)*. The company conducts nationwide telephone surveys using panels of about 1,250 households and inter-viewing about 5,400 people 6 years of age and older. The surveys are divided into seven types of "Q" scores, such as the Performer Q, TVQ, and Cartoon Q. The Performer Q por-tion of the analysis provides Familiarity and Appeal scores for more than 1,000 different personalities. The Target Audience Rankings provide a rank-order list of all personalities for several different target audiences, such as women aged 18–49. The target rank tells pro-ducers and directors which personalities ap-peal to specific demographic groups.

Focus Groups

The focus group, discussed in Chapter 5 and on *www.wimmerdominick.com*, is a com-mon research procedure in electronic media research, probably because of its versatility. Focus groups are used to develop question-naires for further research and to provide preliminary information on a variety of top-ics, such as format and programming changes, personalities, station images, and lifestyle characteristics of the audience. Data in the last category are particularly useful when the focus group consists of a specific demo-graphic segment.

Miscellaneous Research

The electronic media are unique, and each re-quires a different type of research. Here are examples of research conducted by and for stations:

Market studies. A market study inves-tigates the opinions and perceptions of the entire market, usually within a specific age range, such as 25–44. There are no require-ments for respondents to meet in terms of station listening or viewing, and the sample matches the population distribution and makeup of the market.

Format studies. A format study for a radio station involves a sample of re-spondents who listen to or prefer a certain type of music. These respondents are asked a series of questions to determine which stations provide the best service in a variety of areas, such as music, news, traffic reports, and community activities.

Format search studies. The title of the study explains its purpose—to find an available radio format in a given market. An experienced researcher can accurately predict a potential format hole with a specif-ically designed three-module questionnaire.

Program element importance. A pro-gram element importance study identifies the specific elements on radio or television that are most important to a specific audi-ence. Station managers use this information to ensure that they are providing what the audience wants.

Station image. It is important for a sta-tion's management to know how the public perceives the station and its services. Public misperception of management's purpose can decrease audience size and, consequently, advertising revenue. For example, suppose a radio station has been CHR (Contempo-rary Hits Radio) for 10 years and switches to a Country format. It is important that the audience and advertisers are aware of this change and have a chance to voice their opinions. This can be accomplished through a station image study, where respondents are asked questions such as "What type of mu-sic does WAAA-FM play?" "What types of people do you think listen to WAAA-FM?" and "Did you know that WAAA-FM now plays Country music?" If research reveals that only a few people are aware of the