CLAIMS

We claim:

1. A method in a computing system for automatically prescribing an allocation of resources to a total marketing budget for a distinguished offering, with the goal of optimizing a distinguished business outcome for the offering that is expected to be driven, at least in part, by the allocation of resources to the total marketing budget, comprising:

receiving qualitative attributes of the distinguished offering from a user;

retrieving an experimentally-obtained average total marketing budget elasticity measure;

adjusting the experimentally-obtained average total marketing budget elasticity measure based upon at least two of the received qualitative attributes of the distinguished offering; and

using the adjusted experimentally-obtained average total marketing budget elasticity measure to determine an allocation of resources to a total marketing budget that tends to optimize the distinguished business outcome.

2. The method of claim 1, further comprising persistently storing the determined allocation of resources.

3. The method of claim 1, further comprising displaying the determined allocation of resources to a user.

4. A computer-readable medium whose contents cause a computing system to perform a method for automatically prescribing an allocation of resources to a total marketing budget for a distinguished offering, with the goal of optimizing a

distinguished business outcome for the offering that is expected to be driven, at least in part, by the allocation of resources to the total marketing budget, comprising:

receiving qualitative attributes of the distinguished offering from a user;

retrieving an experimentally-obtained average total marketing budget elasticity measure;

adjusting the experimentally-obtained average total marketing budget elasticity measure based upon at least two of the received qualitative attributes of the distinguished offering; and

using the adjusted experimentally-obtained average total marketing budget elasticity measure to determine an allocation of resources to a total marketing budget that tends to optimize the distinguished business outcome.

5. A method in a computing system for automatically prescribing an allocation of resources to each of one or more activities to be performed with respect to a distinguished offering, with the goal of optimizing a business outcome for the offering that is expected to be driven, at least in part, by the activities, comprising:

receiving information from a user characterizing attributes of the distinguished offering;

for each of the activities, determining an elasticity measure *derived from* experimental results for one or more offerings that, while distinct from the distinguished offering, are determined to be similar to the distinguished offering based on the received information characterizing attributes of the distinguished offering, the elasticity measure indicating the predicted effect of the activity on the business outcome; and

using the retrieved elasticity measures to generate an allocation of resources for each of the activities.

6. The method of claim 5 wherein the determining comprises:

using the received information characterizing a first portion of the attributes of the distinguished offering to select an elasticity measure corresponding to experimental results for offerings whose first portion of attributes are characterized in a similar way; and

adjusting the selected elasticity measure based on using the received information characterizing a second portion of the attributes of the distinguished offering.

7. The method of claim 5, further comprising automatically committing resources to at least one of the activities in accordance with the allocation generated for those activities.

8. A computer-readable medium whose contents cause a computing system to perform a method for automatically prescribing an allocation of resources to each of one or more activities to be performed with respect to a distinguished offering, with the goal of optimizing a business outcome for the offering that is expected to be driven, at least in part, by the activities, the method comprising:

receiving information from a user characterizing attributes of the distinguished offering;

for each of the activities, determining an elasticity measure derived from experimental results for one or more offerings that, while distinct from the distinguished offering, are determined to be similar to the distinguished offering based on the received information characterizing attributes of the distinguished offering, the elasticity measure indicating the predicted effect of the activity on the business outcome; and

using the retrieved elasticity measures to generate an allocation of resources for each of the activities.

9. The computer-readable medium of claim 8 wherein the determining comprises:

using the received information characterizing a first portion of the attributes of the distinguished offering to select an elasticity measure corresponding to experimental results for offerings whose first portion of attributes are characterized in a similar way; and

adjusting the selected elasticity measure based on using the received information characterizing a second portion of the attributes of the distinguished offering.

10. The computer-readable medium of claim 8 further comprising automatically committing resources to at least one of the activities in accordance with the allocation generated for those activities.

11. One or more computer memories collectively storing a generalized marketing elasticity data structure, comprising a plurality of entries each for a different business offering profile, each business offering profile specifying a set of qualitative offering attributes that distinguish the business offering profile from the other business offering profiles, each entry containing an elasticity measure indicating the effect on a business outcome of a marketing activity and being experimentally determined from a group of business offerings each having the act of qualitative attributes specified by the entry's business offering profile,

such that, for a distinguished business offering having the qualitative attributes specified by a distinguished one of the profiles but not among the group of business offerings on which the elasticity measure of the distinguished business offering profile's entry is based, the elasticity measure indicated by the distinguished business offering profile's entry may be used to automatically specify an allocation of marketing resources to the distinguished business offering.

12. The method of claim 1 whereas the distinguished offering is offered by a distinguished business, and wherein the experimentally-obtained average total marketing budget elasticity measure is experimentally determined from offerings offered by businesses other than the distinguished business.

13. The computer-readable medium of claim 4 whereas the distinguished offering is offered by a distinguished business, and wherein the experimentally-obtained average total marketing budget elasticity measure is experimentally determined from offerings offered by businesses other than the distinguished business.

CLAIMS

1. A computing system, having one or more central processing units, configured to prescribe an allocation of resources for a distinguished offering, the computing system comprising:

a component configured to receive qualitative attributes of the distinguished offering;

a component configured to retrieve a stored first measure derived from offerings that do not include the distinguished offering;

a component configured to select adjustment factors associated with the qualitative attributes of the distinguished offering based upon at least one of the received qualitative attributes of the distinguished offering;

a component configured to adjust the first measure based upon the selected adjustment factors; and

a component configured to use the adjusted first measure to determine an allocation of resources for the distinguished offering.

2. The computing system of claim 1 wherein the distinguished offering is offered by a distinguished business and wherein the first measure is determined from offerings offered by businesses other than the distinguished business.

3. The computing system of claim 1, further comprising:

a component configured to commit resources for the distinguished offering in accordance with the determined allocation of resources for the distinguished offering.

4. A method in a computing system, having one or more central processing units, for automatically prescribing an allocation of resources to a total marketing budget for a distinguished offering, the method comprising:

with at least one of the one or more central processing units, receiving qualitative attributes of the distinguished offering;

with at least one of the one or more central processing units, retrieving an experimentally-obtained average total marketing budget elasticity measure;

with at least one of the one or more central processing units, adjusting the experimentally-obtained average total marketing budget elasticity measure based upon at least one of the received qualitative attributes of the distinguished offering; and

with at least one of the one or more central processing units, using the adjusted experimentally-obtained average total marketing budget elasticity measure to determine an allocation of resources to a total marketing budget that tends to optimize the distinguished business outcome.

5. The method of claim 4, wherein the qualitative attributes of the distinguished offering includes at least two attributes selected from the group consisting of industry newness, marketing innovation, new information, market share, and advertising quality.

6. A method in a computing system, having one or more central processing units, for automatically prescribing an allocation of resources to each of one or more activities to be performed with respect to a distinguished offering, the method comprising:

with at least one of the one or more central processing units, receiving information characterizing attributes of the distinguished offering;

with at least one of the one or more central processing units, for each of at least one of the one or more activities, determining a measure

derived from experimental results for one or more offerings that are each distinct from the distinguished offering; and

with at least one of the one or more central processing units, using the determined measures to generate an allocation of resources for each of the at least one of the one or more activities.

7. The method of claim 6, wherein determining the measure derived from experimental results for one or more offerings that are each distinct from the distinguished offering comprises:

using the received information characterizing a first portion of the attributes of the distinguished offering to select a measure corresponding to offerings whose first portion of attributes are similarly characterized.

8. The method of claim 7, wherein determining the measure derived from experimental results for one or more offerings that are each distinct from the distinguished offering further comprises:

adjusting the selected measure based on information characterizing a second portion of the attributes of the distinguished offering.

9. The method of claim 6, further comprising:

with at least one of the one or more central processing units,

for each of the at least one of the one or more activities,

committing resources to the activity in accordance with the allocation generated for the activity.

10. The method of claim 6, further comprising:

with at least one of the one or more central processing units,

for each of the at least one of the one or more activities,

displaying an indication of the allocation of resources determined for the activity.

11. A computing system, having a processor, configured to automatically prescribe an allocation of resources to a total marketing budget for a first offering, the computing system comprising:

a component configured to receive qualitative attributes of the first offering;

a component configured to retrieve an average total marketing budget elasticity measure derived from offerings that do not include the first offering, wherein the average total marketing budget elasticity measure is derived prior to receiving the qualitative attributes of the first offering;

a component configured to retrieve a data structure comprising a mapping of a plurality of possible qualitative attribute values to adjustment factors;

a component configured to, for at least two of the received qualitative attributes, determine a non-zero corresponding adjustment factor, wherein each corresponding non-zero adjustment factor is associated with a particular type of qualitative attribute in the data structure;

a component configured to, for each non-zero adjustment factor

determine a corresponding value from the average total marketing budget elasticity measure, and

apply the adjustment factor to obtain an adjusted derived average total marketing budget elasticity measure; and

a component configured to use the adjusted derived average total marketing budget elasticity measure to determine an allocation of resources to a total marketing budget.

12. The computing system of claim 11, wherein the first offering is by a first business, and wherein the average total marketing budget elasticity measure is derived from offerings by businesses other than the first business.

13. The computing system of claim 11, wherein the component configured to apply the adjustment factor to obtain the adjusted derived average total marketing budget elasticity measure is configured to apply the adjustment factor at least in part by adding the non-zero adjustment factor to the corresponding value from the average total marketing budget elasticity measure.

14. A method in a computing system, having one or more central processing units, for automatically prescribing an allocation of resources for a first offering, the method comprising:

with at least one of the one or more central processing units, receiving qualitative attributes of the first offering;

with at least one of the one or more central processing units, retrieving an average total marketing budget elasticity measure derived from offerings that do not include the first offering;

with at least one of the one or more central processing units, for one or more of the received qualitative attributes of the first offering,

comparing the received qualitative attribute of the first offering to the retrieved average total marketing budget elasticity measure, and

based upon the comparing, identifying one or more adjustment factors, each adjustment factor corresponding to a set of pre-established rules; and

with at least one of the one or more central processing units, adjusting, based upon the adjustment factors, the derived average total marketing budget elasticity measure to specify an amount by which the average total marketing budget elasticity measure is to be modified.

15. A computing system, having a processor, configured to prescribe an allocation of resources to each of one or more activities to be performed with respect to a distinguished offering, the computing system comprising:

a component configured to receive information characterizing attributes of the distinguished offering;

a component configured to select, for each of the activities, an elasticity measure derived from historical marketing data for one or more offerings, wherein the one or more offerings do not include the distinguished offering and wherein each derived elasticity measure is derived prior to receiving the information characterizing attributes of the distinguished offering;

a component configured to, for one or more of the received qualitative attributes of the distinguished offering,

compare the received qualitative attribute of the distinguished offering to the retrieved average total marketing budget elasticity measure; and

a component configured to identify, based upon the comparing, one or more adjustment factors, each identified adjustment factor corresponding to a set of pre-established rules;

a component configured to adjust, based upon the adjustment factors, the elasticity measure; and

a component configured to use the adjusted elasticity measure to generate an allocation of resources for each of the activities,

wherein at least a portion of the information characterizing attributes of the distinguished offering is used in selecting the pre-derived elasticity measure.

16. The computing system of claim 15, further comprising:

a component configured to commit, for each of the activities, resources to the activity in accordance with the allocation generated for the activity.

17. The computing system of claim 16, further comprising:

a component configured to display, for each of the activities, an indication of the resources committed to the activity.