Morgan K. Ward, Ph.D.

Marketing & Consumer Behavior Expert Witness
Qualified as an expert witness in federal and state courts
LinkedIn | SEAK Profile | Website
mkward.expert@outlook.com | (773) 294-0403 | Boulder, CO

Professional Summary

Academic researcher and testifying expert witness with expertise in marketing, consumer behavior, brand and consumer perception, and survey research. Brings more than 20 years of experience conducting and evaluating consumer and marketing research in academic, applied, and litigation settings. Expert witness work addresses questions involving consumer perceptions, marketing and advertising communications, branding, and marketplace behavior, including the design and evaluation of consumer surveys and rebuttal expert analysis. Experience spans intellectual property, false advertising, consumer deception, and other matters in which marketing practices or consumer perceptions are at issue, with experience in federal and state court proceedings.

Areas of Expertise

Litigated Claims & Analytical Areas

- Trade Dress Infringement & Source Attribution
- Secondary Meaning & Acquired Distinctiveness
- Branding, Positioning & Marketing Strategy
- Marketing Communications & Advertising
- Methodological Rebuttal & Survey Critique

Subject Matter Expertise

- Status Signaling & Luxury Consumption
- Consumer Perception & Brand Identity
- Consumer Deception & False Advertising

Education

- Ph.D. in Marketing (Consumer Behavior), University of Texas at Austin
- Master of Intellectual Property (M.I.P.), University of New Hampshire Franklin Pierce School of Law -- In Progress
- M.B.A. (Concentration: Marketing), University of Texas at Austin
- Graduate Fellowship, Harvard University (Non-Degree Program)
- B.S. in Business Management (Major: Textiles & Apparel), Cornell University

Expert Witness Experience

Anne Barlow and Joy Radabaugh v. Tyler Gregory Okonma a/k/a Tyler, the Creator, Golf le Fleur, LLC, Louis Vuitton USA, Inc. and Converse, Inc.
(U.S. District Court for the Western District of Texas, Waco Division)
Role: Rebuttal Expert (Plaintiff)
Status: Matter settled before trial; no Daubert challenge filed.

Issue: Alleged copyright infringement involving luxury consumer products.

Contribution: Rebutted defense expert opinions regarding consumer perception, branding, and the commercial significance of the challenged works.

The Collection LLC v. Porsche Latin America, Inc.
(Circuit Court of the Eleventh Judicial Circuit in and for Miami-Dade County, Florida)
Role: Rebuttal Expert (Plaintiff)
Status: Testimony admitted; no Daubert challenge filed.

Issue: Alleged free-riding and brand dilution in a luxury multi-brand retail environment.

Contribution: Rebutted two defense experts regarding luxury positioning, service consistency, and consumer expectations. Analyzed internal marketing materials to evaluate exclusivity claims against industry benchmarks (e.g., J.D. Power).

M3 Girl Designs LLC v. Blue Brownies LLC
(U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Texas)
Role: Expert Witness (Defendant)
Status: Testimony admitted; judgment affirmed on appeal.

Issue: Trade dress infringement and secondary meaning in the children's jewelry market.

Contribution: Designed and conducted a consumer perception survey with over 700 participants to evaluate source attribution and recognition. Authored a declaration and two rebuttal reports addressing fatal methodological flaws in the opposing expert's analysis.

Prior Professional Experience

Academic Appointments

Emory University, Goizueta Business School – Atlanta, GA
Adjunct Faculty, Marketing (2026–Present)
Assistant Professor of Marketing (Tenure Track) (2016–2025)
Conducted original research in consumer behavior, focusing on brand perception, identity signaling, and symbolic consumption.

- Published peer-reviewed articles in top-tier academic journals.
- Presented research at leading academic conferences (e.g., ACR, SCP) and invited seminars at peer institutions.
- Developed and taught undergraduate, MBA, and Ph.D. courses in Consumer Behavior.

Southern Methodist University (SMU), Cox School of Business – Dallas, TX
Assistant Professor of Marketing (2010–2016)

- Conducted original research in consumer behavior; published peer-reviewed articles.
- Managed behavioral research lab, including study design, participant recruitment, and data quality control.

Applied Brand Strategy and Consulting

McMillan | Doolittle LLP
Affiliate Consultant (2004–2021)

- Advised retail and private equity clients on concept development, repositioning, and trend forecasting.
- Designed and executed primary research (e.g., quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews) to generate insights that shaped brand strategy.
- Conducted brand due diligence for private equity clients, evaluating market fit and consumer demand.

Abercrombie & Fitch (Hollister Co.)
Associate Merchant (1999–2001)

- Founding member of the Hollister Co. launch team; managed category planning and seasonal line development for the women's assortment.
- Collaborated on pricing strategy, visual merchandising, and in-store storytelling for national rollout.

Peer-reviewed Publications

- Lowe, M., Jo, W., **Ward, M. K.**, & Vohs, K. D. (2025). "The Sound of Status: Product Volume as a Status Signal of Dominance or Prestige," *Journal of Marketing Research*.
- Umashankar, N., **Ward, M. K.**, & Dahl, D. (2017). "The Benefit of Being Friends: Complaining After Service Failures Leads Customers with Strong Ties to Increase Loyalty Intentions," *Journal of Marketing*.
- **Ward, M. K.,** & Broniarczyk, S. M. (2016). "Ask and You Shall (Not) Receive: Relationship Signaling Results in Registry Rejection and Worse Gift Choices," *Journal of Marketing Research*.
- **Ward, M. K.,** & Dahl, D. W. (2014). "Should the Devil Sell Prada? Retail Rejection Increases Aspiring Consumers' Desire for the Brand," *Journal of Consumer Research*.
- **Ward, M. K.,** & Broniarczyk, S. M. (2011). "It's Not Me, It's You: How Gift Giving Creates Giver Identity Threat as a Function of Social Closeness," *Journal of Consumer Research*.
- Berger, J., & **Ward, M. K.** (2010). "Subtle Signals of Inconspicuous Consumption," *Journal of Consumer Research*. (Lead Article).

Courses Taught

- Consumer Behavior – Undergraduate, MBA, Ph.D.
- Fundamentals of Marketing – Undergraduate, Executive MBA
- Marketing Communication; Advertising – Undergraduate

Honors and Awards

- *Outstanding Reviewer Award*, Journal of Consumer Research (2017) – Recognized for excellence in critiquing methodological rigor.
- *Marketing Science Institute (MSI) Young Scholar* (2017) – Awarded to potential leaders of the next generation of marketing academics.

Professional Memberships and Service

- American Bar Association (ABA)
- International Trademark Association (INTA)
- American Marketing Association (AMA)
- Association for Consumer Research (ACR)
- Society for Consumer Psychology (SCP)

Continuing Education

- Trademarks and Unfair Competition Law (LAW-719)
  Emory University School of Law | Spring 2026
  Instructor: Theodore H. Davis Jr., Esq.

- How to Write a Bulletproof Expert Witness Report
  SEAK, Naples, FL | January 8–9, 2026

- How to Be an Effective Expert Witness at Deposition and Trial
  SEAK, Naples, FL | January 10–11, 2026