

Hermeneutics as a Method of Historical Research The Edsel Show as a Case Study

Dave Bussiere, University-of Windsor, CANADA

At its most basic, hermeneutics posits that understanding is found within a text. Recent research has shown that the definition of a text can be expanded to include all kinds of discussions. This article looks at hermeneutics as a historical research method, by focusing on the October 13, 1957 broadcast of the Edsel Show. The failure of Ford's Edsel line in the early 1960s is one of the best-known stories in business – so much so that the term Edsel is used synonymously with the word product failure. The Edsel Show, an often-ignored component of the promotional mix, provides an excellent case study option. The article includes a detailed discussion of six steps of the hermeneutic method: text selection, familiarize, unitize, analyze, conceptualize and synthesize.
