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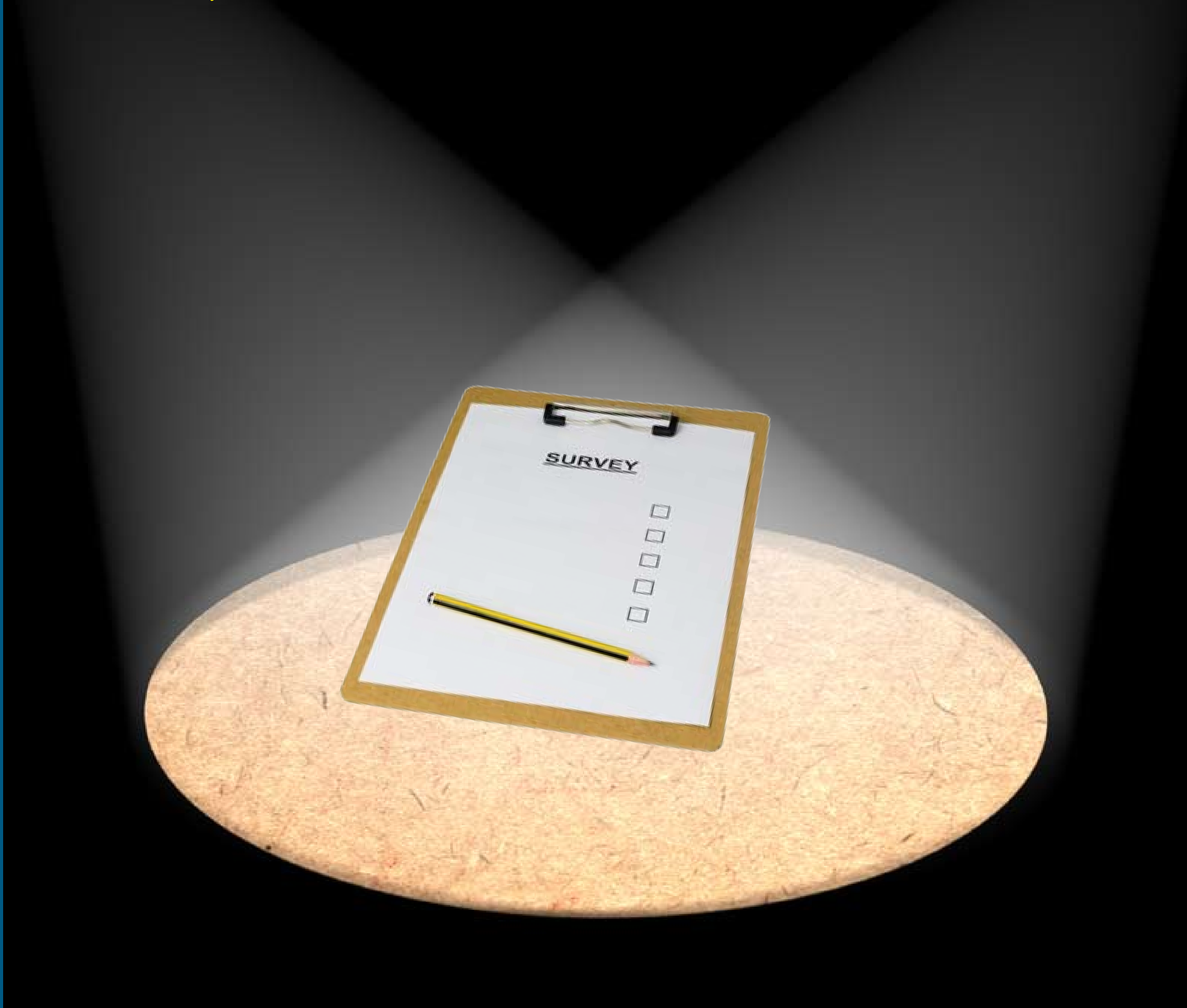
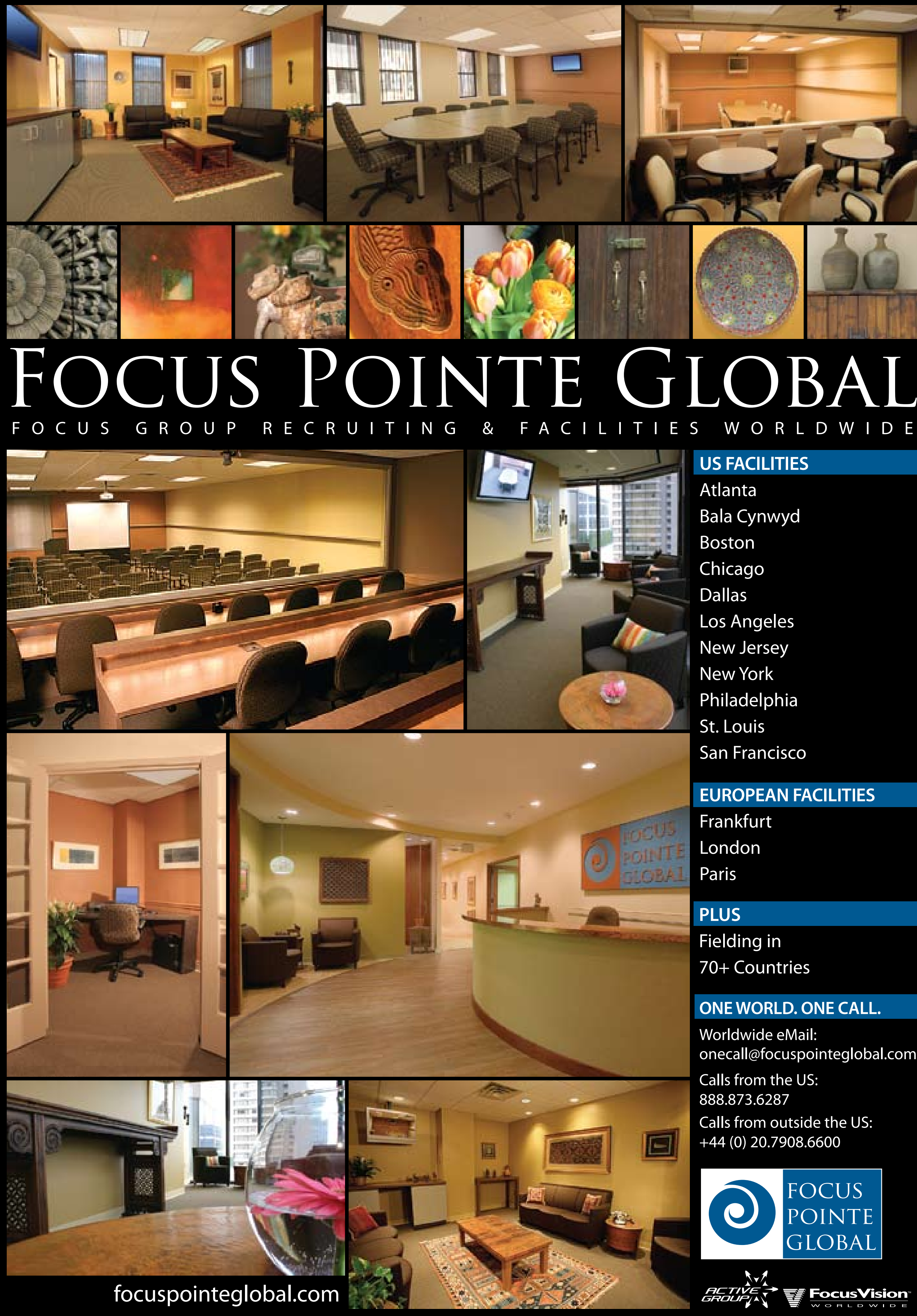
Alert! Magazine

MRA

Spotlight on Marketing Research





Alert! MAGAZINE

January 2008

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What Are People Saying About Marketing Research? The Ford Campaign Has Them Talking...

HEADLINES

COLUMNS

MONTHLY

Letter From The Editor

Before I found a home at MRA and learned about the profession and the many purposes of research, I would hang up on research calls.

If I felt that way before I knew anything about our industry, imagine how many people STILL feel this way. I'm sure their disdain and resistance comes from the "telemarketer" image given to the profession by Ford commercials and TV shows like "What Not To Wear," which tell people they are "market researchers" when in reality they are deceiving people about their real goals (more on that below) and ambushing fashion victims.

In the spirit of New Year's Resolutions, I thought a good way to start off 2008 would be to resolve to educate the public on the marketing research profession. That is why we have compiled an issue of articles that illustrate how the public views the profession.

This issue presents the results of a recent study done by CMOR's Patrick Glaser. The results illustrate the public's sentiments regarding marketing research: What they think of the profession and what they think we do.

Unfortunately, the American consumer is being spoon-fed a steady diet of detrimental and inaccurate messages. To give the public an accurate picture of our profession, we need to educate them. We need to acknowledge any current impressions and address them aggressively, accurately, and in a timely manner.

One recent driver of impressions was Ford's "Swap Your Ride" campaign. Say what you will about the campaign, the one thing it definitely accomplished was cast a light on marketing research. In this issue, a few industry leaders share their reactions to that campaign.

There are good impressions and bad impressions, we need to give the public the right impression.

I wish you all a peaceful and properous New Year.

Connie Yan, Publications Editor
connie.yan@mra-net.org

Online Panel Survey Design (Sampling, Questionnaire Design, Engagement) Expert Panel Discussion

MRA Annual Meeting, Atlanta GA October 25, 2007

Introduction: Lawrence E. Fisher, Roosevelt University, and IMRO Board of Governors, Moderator
Part 1: Quality and Consistency in Online Sampling (Ken Strunk, Burke, Inc.)
Part 2: Questionnaires for Online Fielding: Special Considerations (Lawrence E. Fisher, Roosevelt University)
Part 3: Engaging Online Respondents (Donna Wydra, Socratic Technologies)

Editor's Note: [Wydra's presentation will appear in next month's *Alert!*]

Introduction

Lawrence E. Fisher, Roosevelt University:
Hello and welcome to an informative series of discussions which together provide a comprehensive approach to best practices to make online research even better.

We will emphasize those actions we can take which are well within our reach to improve data quality, serve the needs of end users, and cultivate healthier, happier respondents at the same time; that's the goal.

A perfect questionnaire administered to a perfectly drawn sample of totally engaged respondents is the ideal. Let's aim high! Respondent cooperation and getting the survey design right are two parts of the same puzzle; that's a point of view the three of us share.

You will first hear from Ken Strunk on improved sampling practices. Then I will reappear to address the unique needs of questionnaire design for online fielding. Next month,Donna Wydra will discuss the important requirement of engaging respondents during a survey.

IMRO INTERACTIVE

Quality and Consistency in Online Sampling

By Ken Strunk, Burke, Inc.

Online data quality is currently one of the most discussed topics in the research community. You would find it challenging to attend a research event where this topic is not being addressed on some level. Multiple pieces of the sample design can be controlled to advance the effort.

This article will touch on evaluating sourcing (particularly with panels) while directing attention to sample composition, management and execution. It's one thing to be aware of best practices but another to actually make them a standard. I selected this topic, even though some points may seem simplistic, because I believe that this area has been somewhat overlooked as a key ingredient to the overall quality of online projects. My hope is to draw attention to some practices that might be taken for granted as standards while providing tips on best practices in online sample management.

When selecting a partner for panel, the conversation must move beyond size, response rates and profiling, as these may not provide an adequate evaluation point. These are very necessary to know, but not enough alone to use for partnering decisions. The real key to partnering is collaboration.

Researchers have to get involved with the sample source to determine depth and breadth of knowledge that exists on the panel's front line, their internal quality initiatives and any R&D that has been done showing the investment taken to assure the validity of the resource. There are a lot of good things happening in this space and you need to be diligent about seeking out those resources with quality initiatives and standards that mirror your own. The only means to accomplish this is through an intense level of engagement with your panel partner. It's not all doom and gloom as many would like to have you believe, this space requires special handling.

One key area that often gets less face time but can introduce significant problems is the delivery or execution of the sample plan. You can have a seemingly well managed panel but some very inexperienced front line resources, or a lack of standards which can dilute the true quality of the sample. From our experience, there is a great deal of "order taking" that goes on when sourcing panels across the industry with a real lack of specificity to the sampling plan. The conversations surrounding the inability to reproduce results using panels from period to period have received a great deal of air time.

While a real challenge, our experience indicates that variability can be driven primarily from period to period by inconsistent sample management. Fluctuation in panel makeup is not normally large enough month to month to explain differences. The reproduction of results *is* consistently achievable with the proper controls and oversight. Professional sample management on panel projects should be a key focal point to assuring successful execution. It makes little sense to spend weeks developing questionnaires or weeks doing analysis but an hour on your sample plan and management by placing your order for *data*. Consistency doesn't just happen.

Some key areas of concentration:

1. **Conduct feasibility tests with the panel source**. Determine true audience reach within your study parameters and qualifiers. You should never be surprised that a market or geography does not contain the volume or types of respondents you need; this is avoidable to a degree. Incidence tests are fairly inexpensive and provide early indicators for trouble spots.

   Incidence tests are basically the deployment of a few hundred brief screeners to test the waters in case your projections are off. This is extremely helpful and valuable if your study is large and has a questionable incidence. It can be an indicator of a "go" or "no go" and save you a good deal of money. It might also spawn some additional conversations regarding other options before you go full throttle or over promise.

2. **Conduct "soft" sample launches.** We recommend deploying 10% of estimated sample needed to test the survey, incidence and other key drivers. For an extremely large study, 10% might be too high so adjust accordingly.

(Continued on page 8)

Online Panel Survey Design Panel Discussion

(Continued from page 7)

3. **Verify the true length.** Eliminating extremely long or short survey takers from the average will help you provide a better representation of the true length as at the early stages of a project these averages are normally used to set the appropriate incentive level. Setting the incentive inappropriately high or low has a negative impact. This has a particularly large impact on the "drop off" if the incentive is not in line for different routings of the survey. Seems basic, but it is not done consistently in our experience.

4. **Place demographic classification questions up front in the survey.** This helps to ensure proper proportions are *screened* to match population statistics and allows for the early detection of under-represented groups in the sample. It also can aid in identifying potentially fraudulent respondents. Placing the standard classification questions at the end of the survey can make impossible certain levels of demographic balancing of the sample.

5. **Document the sample plan for the panel source.** Certain critical levels of balancing are not uniformly practiced and must be communicated and even controlled by the researcher. Be certain to define the type of balancing required. It can often be interpreted differently than you intend.

    Points to consider: Click thru, screeners, completes? What are you balancing towards? Online population, total population, households, 18+? You must determine if you need screener balancing or quota (complete) sampling. Understanding the impact and appropriateness of each method is critical.

    Also, be sure that the sample source understands the difference between the methods; the devil is in the details. The example below shows a case study of two balancing methods and the outcome of each in some simple distribution forms.

Example:
To set the stage, this study looked at frequent business travelers. Realizing that we would encounter incidence variation across demographic groups, we determined that our "screener balanced" method provided us the best solution.

This method allowed for the representation of our market in the proper proportions, as opposed to some type of "complete quota" method that would over/under represent most demographic segments. Our attempt was to potentially eliminate weighting by creating this "RDD" type method.

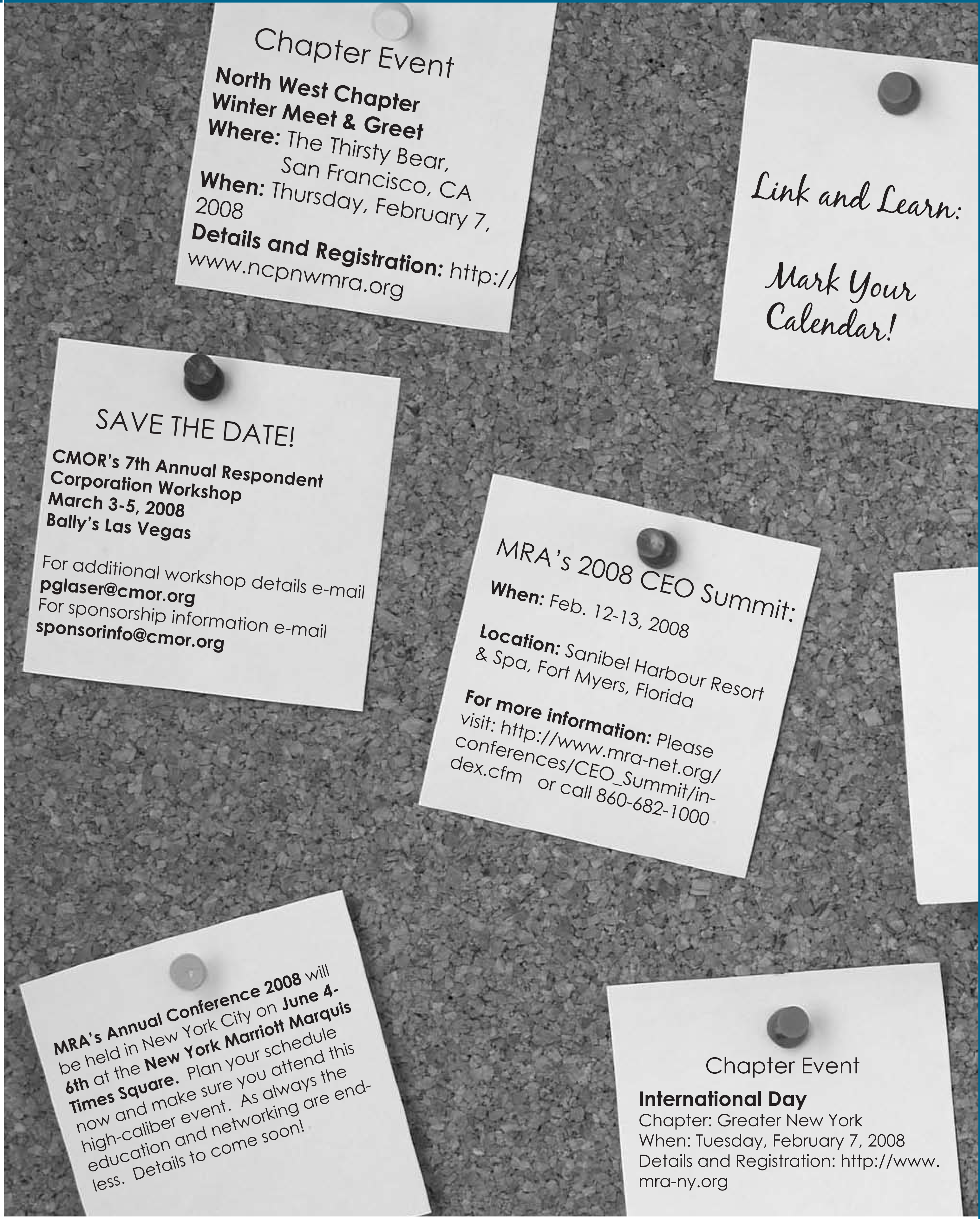
The quota method column in the slide (please see slide on page 32) illustrates the proportion of completes that would have been obtained through that method; the screener method column illustrates the true fallout from a forced rep sample of screeners to reach 1500 completed surveys. The over/under column shows the difference that would have been experienced using one method over the other.

The appropriate (optimal) method was the screener method. Interestingly, when we approached panel partners with this project, no one suggested the screener method. We use this method on 65-70% of our projects to get at true base sizes. You can see the quota method would have wildly over - and underrepresented some groups. This would have required extensive weighting to correct and driven our incidence to a level that the cost of our data collection would have increased 250%.

One of the lures of online research is certainly speed but speed can create issues with data quality. Depending on the study, we recommend a minimum time in data collection of seven days for consumer projects and often longer for B2B. There was and still is a reason we have algorithms on the telephone side to rotate call times, force weekend dialing and provide multiple attempts.

While there are certainly projects that have a scope that a short data collection cycle perfectly accommodates, 80% of our custom work requires a week to properly deploy, remind and balance samples. Respondents become disenchanted when every other survey closes before they can respond or quotas fill quickly because of oversampling; proper staging is critical and often undervalued. The

(Continued on page 32)



'Educating people about our industry is the first step...'

By Colleen Moore-Mezler, MRA President, Moore Research Services, Inc.

Andre Agassi once said, "Image is everything."

As human beings, we are critiqued from the moment we wake up to the moment we go to sleep. Our lifestyles, our clothing, our looks, our car, our significant others, are all put in front of a judge daily. Therefore, it should come as no surprise that our choice of profession gets the same amount of evaluation. But how does the public view market research?

> "Another misconception of marketing research is that we are telemarketers. This comes with the territory."

Truth be told, those not in the profession may not understand marketing research. On the outside, research is very scientific. It is crunching numbers, finding statistical differences and determining the level of error. (Somewhere out there, all the right-brained people of the world are yawning.) Sure, numbers are a huge part of research but they are not the only factor.

Another misconception of marketing research is that we are telemarketers. This comes with the territory. People constantly feel like someone is trying to sell them something. We have been trained as a society that if it sounds too good to be true, it probably is. So, when people come to my facility to participate in research for the first time, you can't blame them for being a little skeptical. However, once they participate in a study with us and realize we just want to pay them for their opinions, they are more than happy to come back (and tell all their friends about it too!).

So is this what the public thinks of us? I sure hope not. Marketing research is one of the most exciting professions out there. It is not just numbers (even though they are a huge part). It is about discovering people's opinions on products or services. It is about determining consumer behavior. It is finding out what makes people purchase certain items. Without research, companies could not evaluate their services or products to others in their industry.

Every day is different in the life of a researcher. And every day I am grateful for being in a profession that I find so rewarding. I do realize that not everyone in the world completely understands the benefits and the excitement surrounding marketing research, but I do know that we can help shape their image. Educating people about our industry is the first step to helping our image.

Andre Agassi got it right-*image is everything*. No matter what we do, how we do it or why we do it, someone is out there judging it.

Colleen Moore-Mezler, PRC is the president of Moore Research Services, Inc. She may be reached at colleen@moore-research.com

The MRA Nominating Committee presents the following election slate:

PRESIDENT-ELECT

KIM LARSON
Information Alliance

(Unopposed for a one-year term)

DIRECTORS AT LARGE

END USERS
(Vote for 1 for 2-Year Term)

DAVID ASHLEY
Department of Homeland Security

REBECCA GRAHAM
MeadWestvaco Corporation

LINDA LYNCH
Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Massachusetts

DIRECTORS AT LARGE

DATA COLLECTORS
(Vote for 1 for 2-Year Term)

GINGER BLAZIER
Directions in Research

MAGDA COOLING
Opinions of Sacramento

ANGELA LORINCHAK
Metro Research Service

DIRECTORS AT LARGE

RESEARCH SUPPLIER
(Vote 3 for 2-Year Term)

ELISA GALLOWAY
Galloway Research Services

ANNE HEDDE
Lightspeed Research

CARLA LINDEMANN
Issues & Answers Network, Inc.

VICTOR WALSH
National Data Realty

GEORGE WILKERSON
Flake Wilkerson Marketing Insight

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Trincity Industrial Estate
Macoya, Tunapuna
Trinidad, West Indies
Trinidad and Tobago

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Erin Care
Itracks
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Tamra Deprez
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Dubai, United Arab Emirates

Kevin Holston
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To become a member of MRA, please call:
860-682-1000 or visit http://www.mra-net.org

Do Not Call Registry Update

By Howard Fienberg, Director of Government Affairs, CMOR

Numbers added to national DNC Registry to be permanent

This Fall, the House Energy & Commerce Committee passed H.R. 3541 and the Senate Commerce Committee passed S. 2096, both of which would make permanent the addition of numbers to the national Do Not Call Registry. Numbers currently expire after **five years**, and the Registry already consists of about **145 million numbers**, including both residential landlines and cell phones. The Federal Trade Commission (FTC), the federal agency that operates the Registry, has also stated that no numbers will expire, pending Congressional action.

Since legitimate survey and opinion research calls are outside the scope of (and therefore implicitly exempt from) the national Do Not Call Registry, these bills would have no direct negative impact on the survey and opinion research profession. ***However, researchers should be prepared for a wider variety of negative responses and concerns from respondents, mistakenly presuming that a telephone surveyor is a telemarketer breaking the law.*** An important tool for the survey and opinion research profession in responding to such concerns, improving respondent cooperation and deflecting future potential legislative interest, is an internal do not call list.

CMOR
Shielding the Profession

For more information on state and federal Do Not Call laws, and best practices for internal do not call lists, consider the new Telephone Component of the CMOR Compliance Guide http://www.cmor.org/cg/.

FTC cracking down on DNC violations

In the past few months, the FTC has taken numerous actions against companies accused of violating provisions of the federal Do Not Call Registry, leading to nearly $7.7 million in civil penalties. Violators have included popular companies/brands, including Ameriquest Mortgage Company, the adjustable-bed seller Craftmatic and alarm provider ADT.

The FTC charged Ameriquest with improperly calling consumers on the Registry whose numbers had been obtained from third-party lead-generators. Meanwhile, the Justice Department, on behalf of the FTC, is pursuing a case in a California federal court against Global Mortgage Funding for making hundreds of thousands of calls to consumers on the Do Not Call Registry.

According to the FTC, the agency has filed at least 34 actions against companies and individuals who have violated the law and the agency has obtained more than $16 million in penalties. Businesses can expect the agency to be at least as aggressive in the coming year.

Canada nearing implementation of DNC Registry

While Canada has been working on a national Do Not Call Registry since 2001 and in fact passed a law in November 2005 to create one, it remains in the creative process; the Registry is not expected to be up and running until sometime in 2008.

However, this Summer, the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) released implementing regulations. Thanks to the efforts of CMOR's Canadian counterpart, the Marketing Research and Intelligence Association (MRIA), the Registry only applies to telemarketing and sales and **will not** include calls for survey and opinion research purposes. However, CRTC regulations **will** require all exempted organizations (political parties, pollsters, etc.) to maintain their own do-not-call registries.

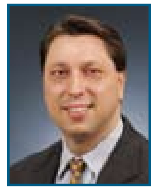
Links

- National Do Not Call Registry: https://www.donotcall.gov/
- CMOR Compliance Guide: http://www.cmor.org/dref
- CRTC news release: http://www.crtc.gc.ca/eng/NEWS/RELEASES/2007/r070703.htm
- Marketing Research and Intelligence Association (MRIA): http://www.mria-arim.ca

Howard Fienberg is the Director of Government Affairs. He may be reached at hfienberg@cmor.org.

CMOR is the only industry association actively performing the duties of watch dog on federal and senate issues. CMOR's offices are based in Washington, D.C.

Disclaimer: The information provided in this article is for guidance and informational purposes only. It is not intended to be a substitute for legal advice. CMOR advises all parties to consult with private legal counsel regarding the interpretation and application of any laws to your business.



CHIEF EXECUTIVE COLUMN

By Lawrence Brownell, MRA's Chief Executive Officer

This issue focuses on the public face of research. If you have been reading my columns over the past four years, you know this is a topic about which I am very passionate. The profession, in my opinion, has not done a great job of defining itself. We have allowed others to define us and we have attempted to differentiate ourselves from groups like telemarketers and spammers, but we have not actively defined ourselves.

This is even more apparent after my recent visit to Logan, Utah. MRA member Steve Larson has been teaching a research class to public relations majors at the state university there. As part of an experiment, we gave each student a free student membership. Prior to this, we did a survey to test their knowledge and feelings about the profession. I was interested on this rare warm December day to discover how they would respond in focus groups with MRA Past President Merrill Shugoll.

"*Research is important, but not for me.*" *"Too much math."* Is this really what we want students graduating in journalism, marketing, public relations and business thinking?

In the 1990s, MRA stood alone and attempted to change this with local media through our grassroots "Your Opinion Counts" program. This program worked with our chapters to disseminate its message to local media. The goal was to inform the average person in regards to the importance of research. In smaller markets it did gain some traction. But the program waned as interest in maintaining it did.

We have now given this service mark to CMOR for use (See page 48). CMOR has taken it, applied a logo and a Respondent Bill of Rights, and created a vetting program for respondents. The program is designed to demonstrate that if contacted by a member of the program, the respondent is being contacted by a legitimate survey or opinion research entity.

This program is what I call an important trench or base effort for our public relations purposes, but not sufficient if we are to be aggressive in telling our story. It tells our story well for those who go looking for it. But we need to put our story in front of people, to proactively create awareness.

I hope that you will all get to know Bruce Mendelsohn, our new Director of Communications. Bruce has a strong public relations background and we intend to fully utilize his skills in developing mainstream messaging to represent the industry. We are actively seeking out collaboration with other associations and client companies that might help us tell our story.

I have a strong feeling that 2008 will be like many Presidential campaign years, where polling will be in the spotlight and scrutinized. Since this will be the area the media will scrutinize, it is our entry point for 2008. We will use these opportunities to discuss the value and credibility of polling and all forms of survey and opinion research.

If you receive calls this year asking for your opinion, a statement on or general information on polling or other forms of research by the media, I ask that you start by referring them to MRA's Press Page on our Web site (http://www.mra-net.org/press/index.cfm). This page provides journalists with the solid background information they need.

You can then refer them to Bruce or me, who will provide them with people knowledgeable in the specific area of their story. We will track these stories and post them in the Press Room.

Additionally, we will approach media outlets with stories that help to define our industry and promote the value of research. To assist us, I challenge client companies to e-mail stories of incidents when research was done well and had a meaningful impact on their bottom line. I would also like to hear when research was not done well. You can e-mail these stories to Bruce at bruce.mendelsohn@mra-net.org.

The first step in creating positive public awareness is collecting information and building internal awareness. We have a great story. Every year billions of dollars are spent to help decide how trillions of dollars are going to be spent or earned. That is a compelling message.

We represent the voice of the average person. It sounds like an arrogant statement but I ask you: if not us then who? Only legitimate survey and opinion researchers can accurately capture and relay these voices without distorting them.

Help us to convey these powerful messages with your stories and feedback.

To respond to this article, e-mail Larry Brownell at executivecolumn@mra-net.org

Congratulations to the following Professional Certified Researchers:

The following individuals have attained the PRC designation. We welcome them into the ranks of professionals who have met a set of rigorous criteria that encourages high standards within the profession. By attaining this Certification, they have demonstrated a desire to assert their professional standing and committment to career development.

Shane Abel
Leroy Abrams
Dean Abt
Jennifer Acosta
Kim Adams
Susan Adelman
Jeffrey Adler
Thomas Adler
Eva Aimable
Gail Airoldi
Isabelle Albanese
Adele Albert
April Alexander
Mark Alison
Jill Allen
Chanttel Allen
Vicki Allen
Heidi Alpren
Gary Altschul
Melissa Amezquita
Joseph Anderson
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Guy Antonioli II
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Robert Arnett
Grace Ascolese
Laurie Ashcraft
Renee Ashley
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Nancy Ashmore
Kimberly Atkins
David Atkins
James Atkinson
Raman Attri
Elida Avina
Sam Azar
Talat Azhar
James Bachwitz
Dorothy Bacon
Mary Baehr
Tobin Bailey, Jr
Cris Bain-Borrego
Scott Baker
Bhanu Bandi
Jane Barger
Walter Baric
Sona Barnes
Susan Barnett
Alvaro Barraza
William Bartlett
Christy Bauer
Sandra Bauman
Jude Bayley
Leon Beard III
Robert Beaulaurier
Harriet Beegle
Randa Bell
Carrie Bellerive
Tobey Belsky
Raymond Benack
Ivette Benitez
Amy Benner
Justin Bennett
Jaclyn Benson
Russell Berkau
Jim Berling
Adam Berman
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Betsy Bernstein
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Kelli Best
Veerandra Bethina
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Celeste Blanchard
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Ginger Blazier
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Have YOU Driven A Ford Lately?

Ford's controversial "Swap Your Ride" campaign has been a hot topic within the marketing research profession. Members of the industry are reacting differently to the campaign, but one thing is for sure, it definately shines the light on marketing research. Industry leaders Merrill Dubrow, Don Goldberg, Jon Last and Merrill Shugoll share their reactions.

"I think the immediate negative reactions that I heard from MRA board members were misplaced. I actually thought the ad was a positive for market research to a large extent. To me, the line acknowledged that market research was a part of modern life, and that it had become so innocuous that it would be easy to hide something controversial (car swaps disguised as research) behind it. This should be viewed as a success for the industry. The one aspect that did give me a little pause was the tone of voice—it was a little too snide. But all in all, I did not think it was bad."

-Don Goldberg
Qorvis/iQ Research & Consulting

"Let me start and say I don't agree with the Ford Swap Your Ride campaign. They state we didn't tell them we were from Ford. They told them they were doing market research. They also state "we didn't tell them what to say." Is that what researchers do? The research industry in the United States is over 8 billion dollars. Maybe I am going out on a ledge here, but I am thinking that none of that research is done with companies who tell respondents what to say.

I don't own a car made by Ford, but if I did, I don't think I would feel really good that a company needs to misrepresent itself for a promotion. Please understand–I don't have a problem with the concept; to swap your ride makes sense to me. But the Ford team is very smart and could have come up with something more creative without taking a shot at this great industry. In a way Ford created a FAKE market research company…"

-Merrill Dubrow,
Treasurer, MRA
M/A/R/C/ Research

"Obviously, the campaign caught my attention...and it bothered me to an extent, as someone who is actively trying to encourage respondent cooperation for legitimate studies. Is Ford implying that it takes an MR plea to get consumers to consider their vehicles? If so, then there's a pretty sad commentary on the well-chronicled struggles that company has had in "moving metal", as well as a rather dark suggestion that MR has a certain credibility that would compel people to try a product that they wouldn't otherwise.

But I think what has caused some of the uproar among our peers is consistent with my first reaction to the Ford spot, which was to the seemingly perjorative tone of the voiceover when he said, "We told them that it was market research." Maybe I'm overly sensitive, but I found that to be condescending and insulting to the profession, as if he's suggesting that they were able to pull the wool over people's eyes by suggesting that something as simplistic as marketing research compelled consumers to take a test drive. That could be construed as insulting to the profession. It's also hypocritical, because Ford does an awful lot of marketing research. We have actually done recent work for them."

-Jon Last, PRC
President-Elect, MRA
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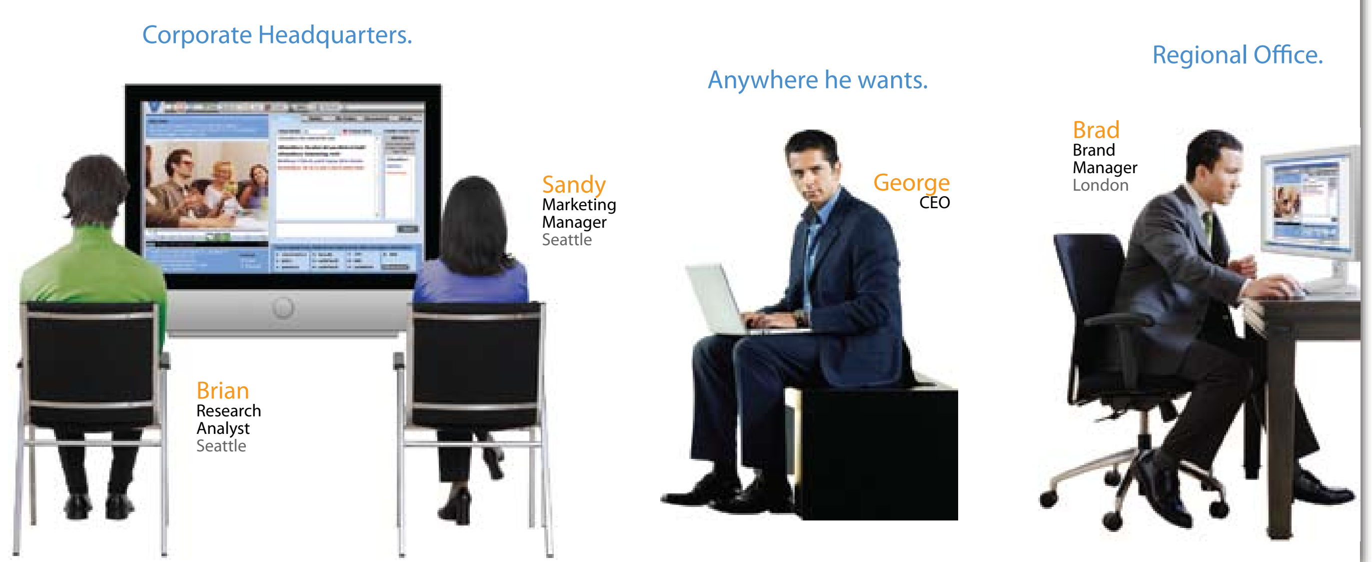

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These volunteers stepped forward to support MRA's initiative to provide training on a variety of cutting-edge marketing research and business management topics. Their time and dedication is much appreciated!

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For more information regarding PRC, please contact Certification Manager Jennifer Cattel at 860-682-1000 or at jennifer.cattel@mra-net.org.

Thank You Howard!

Howard Gershowitz is the Executive Vice President and Co-founder of Mktg Inc. a telephone data collection facility located in East Islip, New York. Since 1982 Mr. Gershowitz has been heavily involved in the marketing research industry, serving as President of the Greater New York Chapter of the Marketing Research Association (MRA), and on the national board as the Association Treasurer and President. He has served on the national Board of Directors three times since 1979.

Mr. Gershowitz was involved in the initiation and development of The Marketing Research Institute International, a distance learning program to teach the Basics of Marketing Research. This program was developed in conjunction with the University of Georgia. Mr. Gershowitz was the Advisory Board Chair from 1997- 1998.

A founding Member of the Council of Marketing and Opinion Research (CMOR), Mr. Gershowitz has served for almost 10 years as the National Legislative Chair and Board Chair since its founding in 1992. He is currently involved in the ongoing industry effort to defend the research industry from any adverse legislation on both the state and federal level.

A frequent speaker on industry issues, Mr. Gershowitz recieved the MRA's Distinguished Service Award in 1997. He was awarded the Honorary Lifetime Membership award by MRA in 2004.

In 2007, Mr. Gershowitz led the formation of the MRA Endowment Fund, a program designed to aid the educational track of potential researchers. Scholarships will soon begin being awarded. To support the Endowment Fund, please contact MRA at 860-682-1000.

After years of leadership and service to the marketing research profession, Mr. Gershowitz is retiring to pursue a career in financial services and asset management.

Q.)You entered the profession years ago and have since been a dedicated member. What factors helped you choose marketing research?

I chose marketing research as a career upon the suggestion of my wife who was working in advertising. My partner and I owned a company that utilized Wats Lines that we were only using during the daytime hours even though we were paying for unlimited 24/7 usage. My wife contracted with marketing research agencies in her position in advertising and suggested we pursue that option to best utilize our telephone lines.

Q.) How has the profession changed since you first started?

The marketing research profession has gotten much more dependent on the use of technology to both collect and analyze data to be used in client decision making. People who enter the field are much more career focused and look upon the industry as a long term opportunity to create a good life. The industry has received more respect from upper management in client companies who use our research to make critical decisions.

Q.) Of your many achievements, which one makes you proudest?

I am most proud of being honored by my peers with the Distinguished Service Award and ultimately with the Honorary Lifetime Achievement Award. My friends always knew that I was unwilling to compromise when I thought I was right in my desire to advocate on behalf of our Association and industry, and I never was shy in voicing my opinion.

Q.) Where do you think the profession is heading?

I hope the profession will continue to thrive in both size and quality of education and training. It is never easy to strive for quality when the mantra is always quicker and cheaper, but hopefully our members will always take the correct road when working for clients.

Q.) As a seasoned member of the profession, do you have any advice to offer someone just entering the profession?

If I were entering the profession today, I would strongly urge new members to attend as many industry meetings as possible to get the most rounded education and to learn and understand the basic tenets of marketing research. There should be only one way to complete a project, and that is the correct way. Understand the methodology, and look under the hood while trying to diagnose any problems with a study will ensure a quality product. The answers should always be available.

Q.) What do you plan to pursue after leaving the profession?

Upon leaving the industry I plan on entering the financial services industry and work in the area of hedge funds and fund of funds. I have never taken the easy path, which in this case would have been to stay with my company for another 10 years, but at the age of 58 I needed to climb my next mountain.

Q.) Do you plan to stay involved in any way?

I will still retain my ownership in Mktg Inc., and plan on keeping in touch with those friends and industry colleagues that I have developed during these past 29 years. I have been in a great partnership with my business partner Steve Gittelman for almost 32 years, and I hope to help him in any way that I can going forward.

Q.) What is your fondest or most amusing memory?

If anyone has a copy of the play "Hello Alice" which I was a part of in 1982, please burn the tape. We were a group of almost 50 researchers who thought that we had Broadway talent and performed a Spoof on Marketing Research in front of almost 800 people. I have never performed in dancing tights since, nor ever will.

Thank you Howard for your commitment to the profession and advancement of its efforts.

Online Panel Survey Design Expert Panel Discussion

(Continued from page 8)

Keys to successful panel partnering – Reducing Variability

- Balancing methods
  - Screener Balanced Method – Screening respondents in proportion to how they exist in the actual population until you reach the overall desired quota (a perfect rep base of screeners).
  - Quota Method – Forcing completed data to match proportions
  - Drastic differences – which method was appropriate?

Gender	Population Proportion	**Quota Method - Comps**	**Screener Method - Comps**	Over/Under
Males	49%	735	1110	-33.78%
Females	51%	765	390	96.15%
Age - Males				
21-29	21%	315	300	5.00%
30-39	27%	405	450	-10.00%
40-49	26%	390	360	8.33%
50-59	19%	285	330	-13.64%
60-65	7%	105	60	75.00%
Age - Females				
21-29	20%	300	390	-23.08%
30-39	26%	390	540	-27.78%
40-49	26%	390	300	30.00%
50-59	20%	300	240	25.00%
60-65	8%	120	15	700.00%

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3

promise of *faster/cheaper* is simply not *better* in most cases. Also, reminders are very important as early and late responders can be different demographically and attitudinally. We frequently increase response by 20-25% by employing strategically placed reminders. Most panels offer two reminders per respondent – we deploy in 48-72 hour blocks from initial invitation for consumer, 3-5 days for B2B. If your partner doesn't offer reminders, it is in your best interest to insist these be a standard.

Another frequently discussed topic is the presence of undesirables in our data. These are respondents that, through multiple failures within the survey, have been deemed to provide no value to the overall exercise; frequently referred to as liars and cheaters. Our recent tests indicate that number to average 14%-15% on a typical high incidence study with higher levels detected as length increases and incidence drops. The identification and elimination of this data is critical. There should also be a process where these respondents are returned to the sample source where their behavior can be further evaluated.

To wrap up, this is not just a panel issue when we look at quality. There are many things that can be operationalized that will have immediate, positive impacts. I have described a few of these in this article. Develop your own best practices and make them stick.

Ken Strunk is the Director of Data Collection, Sampling at Burke, Inc. He can be reached at ken.strunk@burke.com

Questionnaires for Online Fielding: Special Considerations

By Lawrence E. Fisher, Roosevelt University

Lawrence E. Fisher: Let me open with a brief comment to follow on Ken Strunk's point about "Frauds and Cheaters" accounting for some 14% of online responses. That's a huge figure! Doug Rivers (Polimetrix and Stanford) has reported that if 10% of completions are submitted by frauds and cheaters, unless they are identified and removed before analysis, the effective sample size reduces by approximately 40%. So, to Ken's point, not only do frauds and cheaters fail to contribute, they actually do damage. At ten percent incidence of frauds and cheaters, the ending sample size target of 150 has the statistical stability of 90. And now Ken suggests that the 10% working estimate may be understated by 40%!

We can reduce cheating by designing the questionnaire to do everything it needs to do. And, as we'll see, the online questionnaire needs to do more than merely provide a tool for launching questions and collecting responses.

Textbook definitions focus on a single component function of questionnaires: "A questionnaire is a formulated method for collecting data from respondents. The function of the questionnaire, in a word, is *measurement* (Feinberg, Kinnear & Taylor, 2008). Despite the advanced publication date of this text, I suggest to you this is "old school" with regard to online fielding.

In the online environment the questionnaire has to do more than just pose questions and tabulate answers to those questions. It has to "multitask." In any survey that is self-administered (rather than interviewer-administered) the questionnaire has to do extra work. Not only does it have to avoid discouraging the respondent, it has to proactively encourage and engage.

As we know, response rates are dropping. Why? We could have the wrong respondents, or we could have the right respondents with the wrong degree of engagement. I'm focusing here on the damaging role of the wrong questionnaire contributing to an unsatisfactory online experience for respondents.

Respondents have been "telling" us that there is something wrong with our online questionnaires since the inception of Internet research more than 12 years ago. Bill MacElroy published in the *Journal of Online Research* (2003) work comparing respondent online satisfaction reported by respondents through fifteen different surveys. Respondents who were satisfied overall with the online study were able to describe the questionnaires as "well written." There is a direct correlation between overall satisfaction with taking the survey and the quality of the questionnaire, looking through the eyes of the respondent.

Donn Dillman put it well during his presidential address to the American Association of Public Opinion Research: "When the shift is made to self-administered surveys, then the question of how to get respondents to provide

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Opportunity Knocks

Position Vision: Innovation Consultant

Experience Base
- 10 years marketing experience in comparable industries with five years in a senior management position.
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- Ability to plan and manage at both the strategic and operational levels.
- Experience in building and managing an outstanding market consulting team.
- Understanding of B2B and B2C client demands.
- Practical knowledge and experience with research design, market insights, strategies, and product service development applications.

Skill Set
- Outstanding conceptual, analytical and strategic skills.
- Ability to work well with creative personalities, objectively assess creative work and effectively steer creative development to a higher level.
- Ability to juggle multiple projects simultaneously with thoroughness and precision in a fast, rapidly changing environment with tight deadlines.
- Demonstrated ability to recognize, prioritize, and evaluate general market trends and specific growth opportunities.
- Be a role model for the company culture and act as a right-hand to the CEO.
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- Leadership through influence.
- Ability to deliver strategic insights, provide recommendations, and give a powerful presentation.

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- Innovative.
- Curiosity minded and inquisitive, coupled with a high energy level, while balancing practical leadership.
- Effective at reading the client, proactive.
- Harmonious working relationships with other people.
- Committed to industry and client knowledge.
- High-level of personal accountability.
- Strong work ethic.
- Executive (boardroom) presence.

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Director, Market Research
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Are you a talented highly motivated senior researcher? POSITION SPECIFICATION
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Attn: Misty Klobucher
321 SW Water St.
Peoria, IL 61602 E-mail: mistyk@simantel.com
Phone: (309) 674-7747

Economist
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Analysis and Forecast - data analysis from various sources including publicly available and proprietary housing/ economic data, indices and surveys 3. New Product Development – new research initiatives to produce timely value-added products for the real estate industry and association members Qualifications - The ideal candidate will possess the following skills and work experience: • Graduate degree in Economics or related field (or Bachelor's with significant experience) • Superior writing and communication skills required • Experience with econometric and data software such as Eviews, SPSS, and/or SAS • Experience in a consulting or association environment, desirable NAR offers a collegial, supportive, quality-driven team, compelling compensation and benefits, and a convenient Union Station/Capitol Hill location. For confidential consideration, send letter of application, resume and salary requirements to: **HR-DCNAR@realtors.org.** Please include "Economist" in subject line. No phone calls, please. EOE M/F/V/H.

Market Research Manager

OCLC Online Computer Library Center, Inc. is a nonprofit, membership, computer library service and research organization dedicated to the public purposes of furthering access to the world's information and reducing information costs. Tens of thousands of libraries around the world use OCLC services to locate, acquire, catalog, lend and preserve library materials. We are currently seeking candidates for a Market Research Manager position at our Corporate Headquarters in Dublin, Ohio. This position analyzes and recommends courses of action for primary and secondary research to support decisions on corporate initiatives, such as mergers and acquisitions, business planning, new product development, etc. Incumbent will manage the process of providing current, valid business information on the information industry (competitors, partners, suppliers, or companies that are potentials in any of these categories) to all business units, regions and executive management as required to support the decision-making needs of the organization. Incumbent will proactively identify and manage the development and creation of reports to the OCLC membership. These reports will involve both primary and secondary market research: surveys, focus groups, interviews, review of other companies' research, and review of alternatives in the industry. Requirements include a Bachelor's degree in Marketing, Information Science, Communications, or related field; minimum 10 years' market research experience; demonstrated ability to assess and communicate key competitive environment information and primary market research results to management; experience as a researcher and manager in business-to-business markets with primary and secondary market research knowledge/skills; excellent written and verbal communication skills, as well as the ability to give compelling presentations; and experience developing market research reports or white papers for external audiences. OCLC offers competitive salaries, an excellent benefits package including medical, dental, vision, life insurance and tuition reimbursement. OCLC is situated on a beautiful 100 acre campus with an on-site fitness center and provides the opportunity to work in a progressive technological and global organization. Candidates for the position should go to **http://www.oclc.org/careers/default.htm.** Click on the job of interest and build a personal profile per the instructions. OCLC Online Computer Library Center, Inc. is an equal opportunity employer. OCLC maintains an ongoing commitment to equal opportunity and affirmative action, and seeks to sustain a diverse workplace.

Associate Manager, Retail Insights

Madison, NJ

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We currently seek an Associate Manager, Retail Insights at our location in Madison, NJ. Selected candidate will be responsible for managing business research for multiple brands in support of an assigned business unit. This will encompass designing & executing various studies including price elasticity modeling, marketing mix modeling, trial and repeat/cross purchasing/ source of volume/buyer group analysis, market structure studies, and efficient assortment.

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* Provide insightful analysis and interpretation of study results as well as specific recommendations and implications on a timely basis to maximize actionability and follow up to determine that information needs have been satisfied.

-Manage ad-hoc data requests on assigned brands regarding IRI, IMS, and Spectra.

* Work closely with assigned IRI account team personnel on assigned projects.

* Assist in developing presentations for key Wyeth Consumer Healthcare initiatives, inclusive of new product launches, retail pricing objectives, brand strategies, etc.

* Participate in the annual preparation of Long Term Strategies and Business Plans for assigned brands.

* Participate in select Key Account Partnerships to provide analytic expertise as necessary.

* Assist in developing category and brand strategies in conjunction with Marketing by assimilating all relevant data and knowledge.

-Initiate & design programs/tests to optimize the effectiveness of our marketing spend.

-Understand targeting opportunities for our brands.

-Understand shopper opportunities by trade class / by account.

-Further our learning on Marketing Drivers; in conjunction with Marketing Mix modeling, better understand how to optimize our resources within brands and across brands.

* Monitor marketplace dynamics to identify opportunities/ risks and recommend appropriate research to address significant trends or issues.

-Understand business performance.

-Global competitive benchmarking at the brand and company level.

-Source of gains/losses.

-Understand habits/usage of our consumer.

REQUIREMENTS

* Bachelor's degree required; MBA preferred.

* 2-3 years experience in analytic/research techniques, such as, Retail Scanner Data Analysis, Household Panel Data Analysis, Store Group Analysis, Test Market Design & Analysis, and Geo-Demographic Analysis/Spectra. Direct Business Research or Category Development desired.

* Demonstrated understanding of market data practices & principles.

* Knowledge of broad scale market research information and business decision-making.

* Experience working for packaged goods marketers, advertising agencies, and/or research supplier companies in OTC drug industry preferred.

* Demonstrated technical, analytical and written/verbal communication skills, as well as the ability to demonstrate independent judgment.

* Project management & quantitative analytic skills.

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Market Research Senior Account Manager

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Online Panel Survey Design Expert Panel Discussion

(Continued from page 33)

any answer, the role of question wording, and the trappings of how questions are delivered, pose new issues that need to be understood." As an industry we repeatedly neglect good advice such as Dillman's as our questionnaires get longer, drier, and more burdensome to complete.

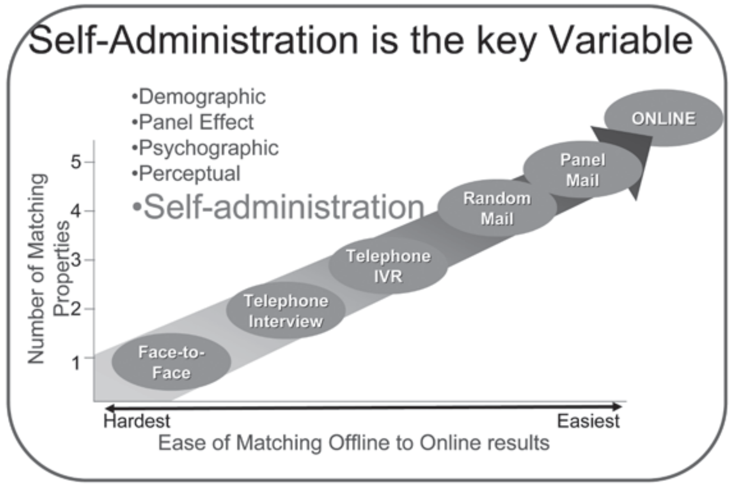
During the heyday of conversions from offline to online fielding there were legitimate trepidations about consistency. Very often we'd get a request from the client, "Please write my online questionnaire to match *exactly* my current offline survey. Since we're changing the data collection technique, let's keep the survey tool the same so we can control at least one variable." The intent is to reduce variations in questionnaire design as confounding factors when comparing data collected through different techniques. While well intended, instructions such as these are misguided.

Marketing research textbooks, even the most current, invariably discuss interviewer-assistance as an unmitigated good thing for quantitative research in general. Interviewers have the opportunity to clarify questions ("Tell me about that…" or "...if at all"), to probe and to encourage. By mimicking online the style of the interviewer-administered questionnaire, however, the online survey runs the risk of either misleading the respondent into providing bad information, or to discouraging the respondent, or both.

The University of Michigan Survey Research Center recently published guidelines about how long a face-to-face survey can be. Face-to-face can be up to 75 minutes, and telephone caps out at 30-40 minutes. Naresh Malhotra (*Marketing Research*, 2007) recently reported data showing the ability of skilled interviewers to use personal contact to extend face-to-face survey (interview) length and reduce refusal rates by 7%. These studies describe an inverse correlation between the length of survey engagement and interviewer presence. The implication for online research is that tolerance levels for long surveys are dramatically less. As we know all too well, tactics to sustain respondents to completion on the more burdensome Internet surveys are not working. Shorter online surveys are better surveys.

Ease of recruitment and making it difficult for respondents to terminate once they've been recruited are only two of the challenges facing our industry. We don't want to force people to remain in surveys when they are uncomfortable or committing "fraud."

To illustrate, I have drawn a schematic which illustrates the challenges of converting or comparing offline to online results, based on ten years of literature on the topic.



The four data collection techniques at the top of the arrow – those that most closely resemble online research results – are self-administered; there are no interviewers doing the work.

In western Europe face-to-face continues to be the data collection technique of preference. Face-to-face poses the most difficult transition to Internet, with five factors likely mis-matched (interviewer presence, panel sourcing, perceptual, psychographic and demographic).

The lag in adoption of Internet research in western Europe in my opinion, has very little to do with Internet penetration, and much more to do with the history of panel-based research which is largely missing in Europe, but so prominent in the US.

Household Panels in the US go back to the 1940s, with MRCA leading the way in 1941, joined later in the same decade by NFO (now TNS), Market Facts (now Synovate), and NPD. The transition to Internet-based research in the UK, therefore, requires an acceptance of a new way to collect data (the Internet) and a new way (for many UK researchers) to source data (namely, convenience panels, through which double opt-in for online research can be assured). Internet adoption in the US faced only a single hurdle. The other three differences (psychographic, perceptual and demographic) are more easily controlled.

The following are recommendations for online questionnaire design that come directly from survey respondents:

- **Include "Don't know" options.** The reluctance to provide "don't know" options is part of the legacy of face-to-face fielding that exists in all countries, some more than others. While not offering a "don't know" option may work in interviewer-assisted fielding conditions, the decision to exclude "don't knows" is ill-advised online. If you are paying an interviewer to conduct face-to-face or telephone research you don't want to make it easy for respondents to avoid answering, to leave any data on the table. That said, the "don't know" option is useful to include on the Internet. Respondents report discomfort when they have to choose a Likert scale response when they truly don't know. Even the mid-point "3" signifying "neither like nor dislike," does not acceptably replace the "don't know" option for many.
- **Pose direct questions:** There is no need for "indirect" approaches online. Respondents bristle when confronted with such phrases as "People like you…," "People you know," or "Other people say…" There's more candor online that makes these kinds of tactics unnecessary and oftentimes counterproductive. Likewise, online severely reduces the need to introduce counter-bias ("I guess everybody's served private label product but told guests it was branded. Tell me…"). Take advantage of enhanced candor online.
- **Don't Overcorrect on sensitive topics:** Online fielding reduces the need to move from sensitive to insensitive questions: "Were you born in the same month as your best friend?" followed with, "Have you shoplifted this month?" Likewise there is no need to label sensitive materials online with "A" "B" or "C" in order to avoid the respondent having to say the word (e.g., "pornography"). Instead, the word or phrase can simply be selected online.
- **Don't insist on answers to all questions:** Programming enables researchers to require completion of *every* answer on a page before permission is granted to continue to the next page in the survey. If "don't know" options are not provided, we recommend enabling skips (within limits), to provide dispensation to respondents who honestly don't have an opinion or perspective on a survey question. For example, after a particularly frustrating experience, one respondent wrote to the panel operations team, "This is ridiculous, I do not know the answer and I have no way of finding out, but you insist on an answer. HOW COULD THAT HELP ANYTHING WHEN IT WOULD BE A LIE?" (caps in original e-mail).
- **Open-ended questions work:** Textbooks and common practice generally oppose open-ends. Pre-coded response formats are strongly preferred over "open ends." In the opinions of many, open ends are a waste of time and of "no value to the researcher" (McDaniel, *Marketing Research*, 2006).

  Open-ends, however, have inherent value to the respondents, allowing for contributions beyond pre-coded options, enabling them to an opportunity to disambiguate or to clarify, to request dispensation when forced to choose a less than fully satisfactory option on a survey. In a word, open-ends allow respondents to *contribute*. And, in creative designs, allow survey takers to respond to contributions from *other* respondents.

As in the other areas needing improvement in online research, questionnaire design affords an opportunity for providing better quality results while protecting survey respondents who constitute an endangered resource.

The perspective of respondents to our requests to participate in the survey activity identifies questionnaire design as an area for growth and development. The "hand-wringing" and recent emphasis on rooting out respondents who are "frauds and cheaters" is seriously limiting our ability to see other fundamental problems serving those consumers who have contributions to make. Let's not miss this opportunity to respond to respondents.

Lawrence E. Fisher is a professor in the Graduate Program in Integrated Marketing Communications at Roosevelt University. He can be reached at lefisher@roosevelt.edu

***Please stay tuned next month for Part 3 of this panel from online research expert, Donna Wydra of Socratic Technologies.**

“Real Solutions” From The 6th Annual Respondent Cooperation Workshop

By Patrick Glaser, Director of Respondent Cooperation, CMOR

This year’s “Real Solutions to Respondent Cooperation” Workshop was another successful event thanks to the Workshop attendees, volunteers and presenters. In its sixth year, the Workshop has continued to grow in attendance and breadth of content.

CMOR
Shielding the Profession

Five “Take-Aways”

The goal of CMOR’s Respondent Cooperation Workshop is to provide attendees with information and techniques that they can immediately bring home and apply within their companies and organizations. To that end, the Workshop features presentations that deal with concrete solutions and practices, as well as breakout brainstorming discussion sessions in which attendees can learn practices that their colleagues have been implementing to tackle issues of respondent cooperation.

Here are just five “take-aways” from the many solutions presented at the Workshop:

1. The introduction matters!
CMOR has begun a regular experimental study that will show the effect that different phrases used in survey introductions have on respondent cooperation. Preliminary findings (for online panels) show that introductions promising gift cards, cash drawings and cash incentives gain greater cooperation than other, less tangible incentives such as frequent flyer miles or receiving study results (P. Glaser CMOR).

2. Support the respondent’s decision-making process…
People make decisions based on a number of factors: their sense of autonomy, competence, relatedness, value, etc. Address these needs throughout the survey. For example, emphasize autonomy to respondents by explicitly offering them (and noting their) control over certain factors; noting their ability to review the survey introduction, move on to the next question at the time of their choosing, etc. (J. Lorch, SSI).

3. Go off-script (a little)…
Allowing interviewers (in telephone surveys) to have some freedom to connect with the respondent at the beginning of the interview can lead to improved respondent cooperation. (M. Cralley, Arbitron).

4. Tailor introductions to national origin.
Hispanics may be more likely to participate in research if they are approached with their national origin in mind. Cultural differences should be respected when contacting respondents for interviews. One way to do this is through tailoring language to the specific country of origin. For example, there are at least 10 different ways to say the word “girl” in Spanish- choose the one that fits your respondent’s background (JCA, Latin Visa).

5. Additional offerings can help retain online panelists.
There are numerous services a panel organization may offer to maintain membership. A few examples of include a member Web page, raffles and sweepstakes, surprise appreciation awards and support via e-mail and phone (C. Disogra, Knowledge Networks).

These are just a few of many concrete solutions that were presented to attendees at the “Real Solutions” Workshop. If you didn’t attend in 2007, there’s always next year! The CMOR Workshop Program Committee is busy planning the Workshop events for our next conference only a few months away!

Please Join Us in March!

The next workshop will be held from March 3-5th at the Bally’s Hotel in Las Vegas. Registration is now open and sponsorship opportunities are available. For more information, please go to www.cmor.org.

Patrick Glaser is the Director of Respondent Cooperation, CMOR. He may be reached at pglaser@cmor.org.

CMOR is the only industry association actively performing the duties of watch dog on federal and senate issues. CMOR’s offices are based in Washington, D.C.

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Why Are So Many Researchers Upset By A Ford Commercial?

By Peter Van Brunt, PRC

You are probably aware that a whole lot of researchers are upset because of a recent Ford TV commercial called "Swap Your Ride." Some researchers were upset enough to contact their research associations and demand that the commercial be "pulled" from the airways. CMOR has gotten involved, it has been a hot topic on Merrill Dubrow's Blog, and the MRA board has discussed it.

Why are so many researchers upset by this ad campaign? Let's examine the commercial, and why I think so many are upset.

The commercial makes reference to the fact that the participants who swapped their rides for a week were told that they were participating in "Market Research." Some researchers feel that this is sugging (selling under the guise of research). However, it isn't really. The participants were not given a sales pitch, and simply were involved in a product placement test (the kind researchers do all the time). The test was followed by an IDI which was recorded, and clips from some of the IDI's were used in the commercial. This is all fairly standard research practice.

The commercial tells us that they told the participants it was "market research." This reference is made for two reasons:

1) It explains why the participants didn't question their being filmed during the IDI portion, and

2) it emphasizes to the viewer the fact that the responses were not scripted. This reinforces a belief in the public that MR is a mechanism to get candid responses. This is something the MR profession should support. The commercial does not malign MR in any way.

So why then are researchers upset by this commercial? Is it because research was being used to support a commercial activity? Are they upset by the fact that the respondents weren't told that Ford was sponsoring research to be used for advertising? Advertising research has been around for many years, and MR is always after candid, unbiased answers.

I think the true reason some researchers are upset is because they felt that no "real" research was being conducted. The process was entirely done by the ad agency to support the ad campaign. These researchers are upset that someone else is using their techniques to make an effective ad. They feel threatened because their "techniques" have been co-opted.

The MR profession has been under attack for some time from non-MR people co-opting MR techniques and passing their work off as MR. This occurs on the Web all the time, and certainly there are lots of qualitative sessions (focus groups and IDI's which are not managed by researchers).

MR does not have exclusive use of certain techniques. The fact that MR was the purpose stated to get the participants to give candid and true comments, and that the commercial used this point to emphasize this to the viewer, is something we should support. After all, this has been our message for a long time; if you want to know what the public thinks, MR is the tool to use. I think we should stop worrying about this Ford commercial and, given the commercial's success, we shouldn't be surprised if others follow Ford's lead.

Peter Van Brunt, PRC is a Past President of MRA and is an Honorary Lifetime Member.

About this column. *This is an Op-Ed column for Alert! Magazine. I plan to write a column every other issue. Please keep in mind that my remarks do NOT reflect the opinion of MRA or necessarily their author. This column is intended to inspire comments and dialogue. Send your praises/ comments/rants/objections to counterpoint@mra-net.org.*

**Select responses may be chosen for publication in Alert! Magazine.*

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Who Says Marketing Research Doesn't Work?

(Continued from page 40)

"Not the Ford Motor Company. In fact, Ford must strongly believe that marketing research is the answer to boosting car sales. In its recent "Swap Your Ride" advertising campaign, the car company uses marketing research as a "ploy" to get consumers to swap their own vehicles for a Ford for an entire week and provide feedback on their experience.

Of course, the advertising shows consumers waxing eloquent about Ford's cars. After seeing the commercial, I couldn't help but think if those who were less complimentary about Ford's vehicles were thrown under the proverbial wheel. Now, there's a novel approach! Take respondents who don't like your product and run over them.

Obviously, audiences were not expected to believe the study results reported in the advertising because a voiceover comes on air to assure us that survey participants weren't coerced into extolling Ford's virtues. At this point, it's hard to say if Ford should be admonished for intentionally lying to the public about the purpose behind the "Swap Your Ride" effort or for assuming study participants usually don't or can't think or speak for themselves. A lack of respect for consumers and for the discipline of marketing research is communicated both in the content and tone of the advertising.

I hope the advertising increases sales for Ford, although the commercial certainly does not suggest participants in the research had any inclination to buy Ford's cars after trying them. At the end of the commercial, one of the study participants asks if he can keep the Ford he tried. Take note that he doesn't ask if he can buy it! Talk about the ultimate incentive to participate in a marketing research study."

-Merrill S. Shugoll
Immediate Past President, MRA
Shugoll Research

(Continued from page 37)

individuals in Strategy, Marketing, Media, Creative and Technology to help drive results for our clients.
Opportunities available in Boston, NY, Chicago, Detroit, and Atlanta
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Understanding Respondent Motivation

By Pete Cape, Survey Sampling International

As an industry, we understand little about why people take part in research and, perhaps more importantly, why they do not. We pride ourselves on being able to formulate questions and research studies to describe and explain the manner of consumer activities and behaviors. However, regarding the key issue of why people will not take part in research, we are hamstrung by our own methods: we simply cannot force someone to answer a survey if he or she has no desire to participate in marketing research.

The more general use of online access panels to conduct research brings this question into sharp relief. Panels by their nature are comprised of people willing and able to participate in research. If we do not learn from history regarding response rates, we may be forced to repeat them with online panels with disastrous consequences.

Therefore, we need to look to other disciplines to better understand this aspect of consumer behavior and to adapt our industry where needed to increase response rates.

This article briefly outlines the latest thinking in the field of psychology relating to human motivation and how the marketing research industry can use this thinking to reduce non-response (a more in-depth discussion on this topic can be found on the SSI Web site: http://www.surveysampling.com/quality_white.php). By understanding the psychology of the online interview, and by using specific words and phrases, researchers will create questionnaires that encourage feelings of autonomy, competence, relatedness and value.

Theories of behaviorism suggest that to elicit a response there needs to be a stimulus. And for the stimulus to be effective on an ongoing basis, it needs to be re-enforced. Survey researchers, however, have generally been loath to offer "stimulus," i.e., incentives, for surveys based on the premise, "If we pay this time, we will have to pay every time, and they will want more!" In addition, most traditional research practitioners are not particularly concerned with the re-enforcing aspect, instead wanting a "fresh" sample for each project.

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, in the form of a pyramid, posits that humans have needs they seek to satisfy in a rank order: physiological; safety and security; love and belonging; and esteem. At the top of the pyramid is self-actualization. In 1970, Maslow placed the desire to know and understand, and the aesthetic needs, above self-actualization. According to the theory, a lack of these needs being met causes anxiety.

Indeed, research has worked by appealing to esteem needs – interviewers ask for help with an "important" survey and they tell respondents that they have been chosen to take part in this research. Marketing research associations have marketed the industry in terms of "your opinion counts" *(Ed. Note: Please visit the Web site sponsored by CMOR, which focuses specifically on "Your Opinion Counts": www.youropinioncounts.org)* and political opinion polls are given great credence in the media.

Thanks to the Internet along with other factors, however, the myth of esteem is being broken. The public now knows that marketing research is conducted for commercial reasons and clients spend billions of dollars on research, little of which ends up in the hands of the people giving their time, effort and knowledge.

Self-Determination Theory (SDT) assumes that people are active organisms, with innate tendencies toward psychological growth and development, who strive to master ongoing challenges and to integrate their experiences into a coherent sense of self. Social context can either support or thwart the natural tendencies toward active engagement and psychological growth.

SDT distinguishes between intrinsic motivation – doing something because it is inherently interesting or enjoyable, and extrinsic motivation – doing something because it leads to a separable outcome. Tasks completed with intrinsic motivation are characterized by high quality, creativity and enjoyment on the part of the doer.

One interesting finding of SDT research is that rewards can undermine intrinsic motivation because rewards undermine autonomy. This contradicts what behaviorist psychology would predict.

Cognitive dissonance theory helps marketing researchers understand the process leading to the choice to do a survey or not. By recognizing that people have knowledge of marketing research and other related cognitions, researchers will reduce dissonance in survey invitations and personal approaches.

SDT has interesting implications for how research should be positioned both before and after the interview. Feelings of autonomy and perceived competence must be fostered to encourage the respondent to take part in research. The end of the survey process has tended to consist of too much of a "thank-you" and a "if you have any doubts about our bona fides please call" – actions, almost guaranteed to produce feelings of discomfort. Feedback on survey performance is something researchers may have to learn to give along with the appropriate mechanisms and language for giving it.

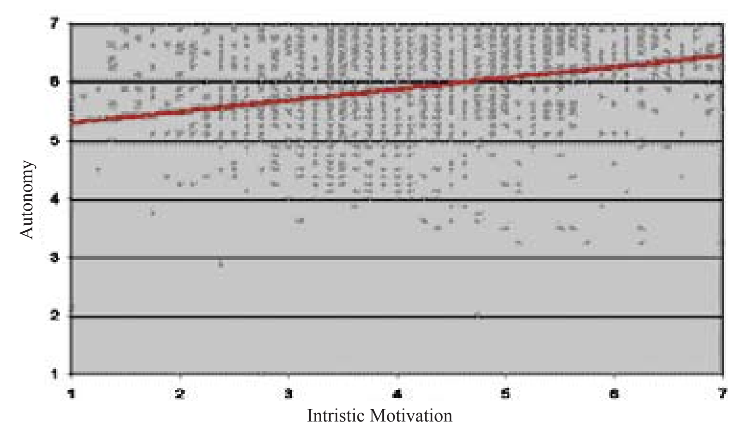
If researchers move people along the SDT motivation continuum towards intrinsic motivation, the result should be better response rates to surveys and more enjoyment, effort and creativity on the part of the panelist leading to better quality research.

To further expand on the implications of psychological approaches to surveys, SSI conducted research within its online panel. SSI's survey appealed to panelists' sense of community and the importance of the research, stressing that they would be helping to shape the future direction of the entire panel. A total of 1,423 interviews were conducted across all age ranges and both genders.

Four potential future reward schemes were tested along with SSI's existing charity and prize draw mix; four interview lengths were tested, respondents being randomly assigned to an interview length group.

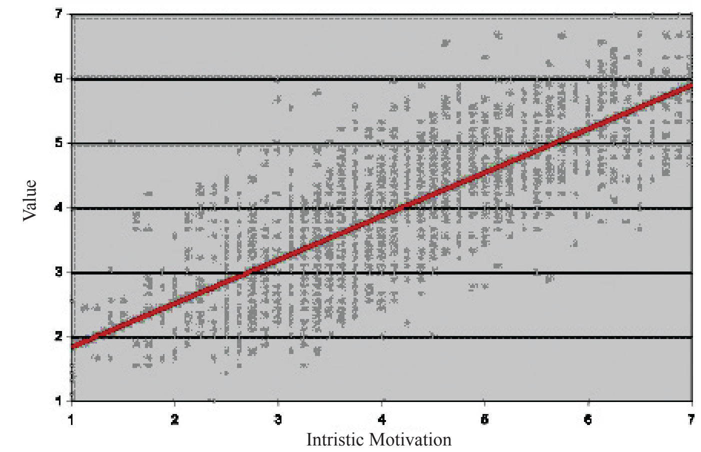
At the end of the study, the survey presented the panelist with a standard Intrinsic Motivation Inventory questionnaire to assess interest/enjoyment, value/usefulness and perceived choice while performing the activity. The measure of perceived choice (autonomy) generally scored highly. It is, however, positively correlated with intrinsic motivation

Autonomy Vs. Intristic Motivation



The measure of value/usefulness is more clearly correlated to intrinsic motivation and produces scores across the range.

Value Vs. Intristic Motivation



This finding offers great potential to increase intrinsic motivation by demonstrating the value of the research, either personally, to others, or to the sponsoring company. Feedback regarding the uses of the research could further entrench feelings of value and therefore intrinsic motivation. Naturally, any promise of usefulness must be backed up by reality, autonomy supported and, where necessary, competence and relatedness also stressed. Also, the survey instruments themselves must be of sufficient quality so as not to undermine any conception of usefulness.

Small encouragements need to be present in the survey. Effective phrases must become second nature to researchers using online methodology, including:

- "Thank you very much for choosing to do this questionnaire." (Autonomy)
- "We appreciate that some surveys can be quite difficult to do, and that this one took some effort." (Competence)
- "We hope that any changes we make will better meet your needs and the needs of other people like you." (Relatedness)
- "Your opinions will be closely considered as we assess whether or not to change the rewards scheme." (Value)

The research stresses a successful online interview hinges on the questionnaire – the only means of communication between researcher and respondent. Improving the respondent experience in online survey taking is one way to ensure high response rates.

Pete Cape is the Knowledge Director of Survey Sampling International. He can be reached at info@surveysampling.com

Profession News/Announcements

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JTMarketing Corp. has announced the opening of their new **Los Angeles office.** JTMarketing has acquired LA Marketing Company.

Fogerty Services has named **Kelly Fielder** National Field Supervisor to lead client services.

G&S Research was awarded a **2007 Ethics Award** by the Better Business Bureau of Central Indiana.

Directions Research has announced the promotion of **Scott Miller** to Information Systems Manager. **Elizabeth Allspach** has joined Directions as a senior project manager and **Nick Schulkers** has joined as a project management research assistant.

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