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Alert!

MAGAZINE

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24 Listen Up Research Suppliers: Here's What End Users REALLY Need

By Karole Friemann, Market Research Project Management



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Letter From The Editor


As we all know, an End User is someone who purchases the research. They use the research and turn it into a new product, service and much more. They are the super-stars and A-Lister celebrities of market research.


In her article on page 24, Karole Friemann shares the list of things that are and should be on an End User's mind when investing in research.

But these days, most of the focus on research is geared toward the race to the White House. During election years, the focus is always on polls and research: Why are there so many polls, which polls are reliable, who's doing the polls, how much money are companies making from the parade of polls. In his bimonthly column (page 40), Peter Van Brunt

discusses how election years, in his opinion, are actually bad for the market research profession.

"Push polls" (aka "political telemarketing") are often considered bad for the profession's reputation. But not all polls are push polls. In his article on page 20, Pollster Gary Langer shares with you his perspective on the proper and improper usage of polls.

In this issue you will also find articles from Dan Prince (page 6) and Frederick Feld (page 33). As always, I welcome your comments on the content you read in *Alert!* and encourage you to share this publication with your peers and colleagues. 

Connie Yan, Publications Editor, MRA
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As a marketing researcher, it's vital to understand Kelly. And to find others like her who are passionate about your client's brand. But people with eclectic interests can't always be found in homogeneous sampling sources. Just because they buy diapers or fly a particular airline doesn't mean they're right for your sample.

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Research-Based Marketing Campaigns

Strong Medicine for the Healthcare Industry

By Dan Prince, Catalyst Healthcare Research

Never has the healthcare industry's competitive landscape been so crowded, and never has research been so important in cutting through the clutter to reach today's savvy consumer.

American healthcare is increasingly "consumer-driven" and while industry players – hospitals, doctors, insurance plans, and pharma companies—each retain significant power, the consumer is becoming more influential. Hospitals in particular are feeling the pinch, challenging healthcare management teams throughout the country to change their marketing strategies to compete.

Fifteen years ago, when we first started doing work for HCA, hospitals directed around 90% of their marketing efforts toward doctors, because doctors virtually controlled the decision on the services patients would get and where they would go for those services.

Today, as in so many other industries, the consumer has more information and greater authority. For example, doctors routinely see patients who arrive with information printed from the Internet and who expect to play a collaborative role in their own care. More fundamentally, health plans now offer consumers more choices among doctors, hospitals, and even diagnostic and surgery centers—and expect the consumer to make the decision.

Competition is fierce and the need to understand the consumer's viewpoint is increasingly critical. As a result, healthcare is becoming more like many other consumer-oriented industries in America where marketing research is often central to making both strategic and tactical decisions.

In the past few years, we have seen a marked increase in projects where the voice of the customer has driven hospital decision-making. HCA TriStar hospital Parkridge East is among those reaping significant rewards from their investment in research. I recently talked with Parkridge East's Director of Marketing, Pat Holloway, about how our research has helped focus the hospital's marketing dollars.

Q: Why did Parkridge East bring research into its marketing mix?

A: A number of factors came into play. First, we had a new CEO and a new Marketing Director who needed a better understanding of the marketplace. At the time, we were also facing declining market share and increased competition, especially in the area of obstetrics. To effectively focus our marketing and advertising efforts, we felt it was very important to gauge and validate perceptions of consumers in the marketplace about our brand versus the competition.

Q: The research design for this project was a little different in that it became a three-way

collaboration between Catalyst Healthcare Research, your ad agency, and Parkridge East. How did that arrangement work out for you?

A: Honestly, at first, I wasn't sure how it was going to work. To my surprise, everyone put their egos aside and worked very well together. It was a true team approach. Strong communication was definitely the key. It helped to build trust.

Catalyst hosted a collaborative design session right off the bat to make sure everyone's interests were well represented. They designed a comprehensive approach that began with a market-wide telephone survey to determine a baseline for awareness and acceptance of our brand relative to the competition.

Key attributes and themes emerging from the research were then delivered to our agency which in turn created messages and images that we tested in focus groups.

The end result was a market-tested ad campaign featuring doctors instead of the patient testimonials being used by our major competitor.

This was a highly successful exercise for

(Continued on page 32)






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'End Users, Speak Up...Speak Out, Your Opinion Counts!'

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

This issue is dedicated to MRA's End User clients. MRA defines an end user as a company, organization, or agency that uses the results of research to make better informed decisions regarding the marketing, sales, and/or promotion of their product or service. They are the originator of the request for marketing research and the ultimate user of research findings.

An end user may be a manufacturer, service provider, institution, government agency or any entity that originates the research and uses the results to further their marketing objectives.

Preparing for this month's article, I asked a few of my "end user" clients what matters to them—what they fear, what they need, their research plans for the coming year, etc. It was a great experience because it gave me the opportunity to open valuable and important dialogues with my clients.

Two of the common themes that came out of the conversations were number one, the ability to communicate with each other and, number two, my ability to share with them new ideas, trends and methodologies. It was clear that my clients truly felt these two "themes" would be most useful to them and their respective industries.

Being a great communicator is key to any relationship. Look up "communication" in the dictionary and you will find that it derives from the Latin word *communicare* which means to "impart, share," or literally, "to make common."

Effective communication is the sharing of information, a coming together of two unique points of view—the communicator's and the person being communicated with. Sometimes those points of view are in sync, other times they are in conflict; but they


are always distinct.


No one's perspective, experience, interpretation, concerns, goals or mood is the same as yours. Understanding this is essential to making powerful connections. If you take nothing else away from this article, remember this statement: effective communication is always a two-way street.

As researchers, most of us excel at asking questions; we're also pretty good at giving our own opinion. On the other hand, some of us are not great listeners. Really "**being present**" and hearing what matters most will ultimately make you better able to connect with people, and also help them to understand you.

Being an **effective listener** is probably the single most important quality of a great communicator. In my opinion, being present means acknowledging others with all of your senses and looking for clues to understand not only the statements made but also the

meaning behind them. It is quite simple really—ask questions (which we do best) to clarify that you understand the other person's thoughts and feelings!

End Users, we are focusing our attention on you—**Speak Up...Speak Out!** We want to know what matters most to you, what do you want, what do you fear, and what do you need? Please communicate with your research providers so that together you can establish the best possible relationship. **Remember communication is a two-way street.** 

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

"The single biggest problem in communication is the illusion that it takes place."

-George Bernard



Get Your Game Face On: Tools You Can Use to Succeed In Your Next Big Project

By Lawrence Brownell, MRA's Chief Executive Officer

As many of you know, I am a big football fan. I've noticed that each NFL team has at its press conference a backdrop featuring their team logo and the logo of their main corporate sponsor. While this isn't unique for sports and entertainment, it certainly would be for our industry.

What would our industry be like if every time a client/end-user issued or repackaged a product that also said "brought to you by ACME Research?" The closest we come to this scenario are the omnibus surveys from our pollsters. But in these situations the product is actually the survey results so in essence the pollster can be considered the client.

Perhaps we'll never have Big Macs or Pepsi with a research company's name on the advertising or packaging, but I would suggest that researchers should have enough confidence in their work quality to feel comfortable potentially being in such a position.

If every research company and individual researcher were willing to take the stand "I am willing to let everyone know that my research led to this," it would dramatically change the face of research. There is no room for caveats or explanations on packaging or advertising, which forces consumers to make some interesting choices.

Let's hypothesize that the next great technology company comes to me and says, "we want you to be the market researcher for our product and we will place on the package and at the bottom of every advertisement 'this product was developed and improved for consumer use through research done by Brownell Market Research.'"

After my initial glee at free advertising, fear would set in. Probably the same fears many of you are currently contemplating. I call them the Big Five:

- Will the client stick to the advice I've given or deviate from what my research report determines?
- What if the client goes into "lowest bidder mode" and I can't do the job to my standards?
- What if the client doesn't have a clear

understanding of what they are truly trying to determine?

- What if I can't get a representative sample?
- What if the scope of work dramatically changes as the project progresses?

In this scenario I keep it simple: My name is my business and my priority is to keep my business.

So if the client deviates from what my report determines, I say thank you very much, but I cannot let you place my name on the package or in the advertising. My findings do not support your direction and I value my reputation for quality.

If the project is bid like a gross of potatoes, I thank the client for their interest and respectfully ask them to consider me in the future where projects like this are considered based upon the value of the product.

They are risking significant dollars on the decisions this research recommends. I want them to be successful and I don't want to say "if only we could have..." After all, the general public has a long memory... as do other clients.

The research process is a partnership so if I have a client who doesn't have a clear understanding, I do what I can to clarify matters for them. If they are new to research and don't understand the process, it's my duty to educate them. If as an outsider I notice something they haven't considered, and which is relevant to what they are trying to determine, I point it out. I do whatever I can do to ensure that research is effectively performed.

If I can't provide a sample that ensures a high confidence in the decision maker, I don't produce the research. If I use a panel sample which could have volatility because of who from my list participates, I cannot give this to a client, unless of course when things go wrong I want the world to blame.

"Scope creep" is one of the most common concerns I hear from researchers. When the scope

(Continued on page 22)



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The 2008 Presidential Race And The Research Profession

By Howard Fienberg, Director of Government Affairs, CMOR

With the presidential primary elections in full swing, researchers should consider which candidates may best suit our profession's unique interests. Once you've decided, get involved in those candidates' campaigns to help Shield the Profession in the next administration.

CMOR has compiled some details on the candidates' positions as they may impact survey and opinion research – and followed that up with links to the candidates' Web pages.

Selected Candidates' Positions

John McCain (R) on internet access taxes:

"I continue to fight against internet taxes, and I'm glad that we just expanded that ban for seven years... I have always supported, and, in fact, have taken the lead on making the ban permanent. I'll tell you why they don't want to do it – it's because they want to keep coming back to you for contributions, and tell you that we need to make it permanent."

John McCain (R) on data security:

"I've taken the lead on legislation that would ensure that companies have in place general data security policies. Every company that has to have security policies to deal with the ID threat, and would provide notice to consumers when data breaches happen. I think the best solution is continued consumer education and business innovation to try come up with further safeguards."

Barack Obama (D) on internet privacy and security:

"Strengthen privacy protections for the digital age and will harness the power of technology to hold government and business accountable for violations of personal privacy."

"Require that parents have the option of receiving parental controls software that not only blocks objectionable Internet content but also prevents children from revealing personal information through their home computer."

"Provide robust protection against misuses of particularly sensitive kinds of information, such as e-health records and location data that do not fit comfortably within sector-specific privacy laws."

"Increase the Federal Trade Commission's enforcement budget and will step up international cooperation to track down cyber-criminals so that U.S. law enforcement can better prevent and punish spam, spyware, telemarketing and phishing intrusions into the privacy of American homes and computers."

"Make government data available online in universally accessible format."

Mike Gravel (D) on internet privacy and security:

"There are many areas where I'm not that keen to expand government police powers. Obviously the private sector can do a lot with these security systems coming forth very rapidly with new iterations and you get it all the time whether its McAfee or others that tell you here just upload this



and keep yourself current. Well that is fine but I think that we need the punishment situation."

Ron Paul (R) introduced the Identity Theft Prevention Act (H.R. 220), which would "halt the practice of using the Social Security Number as an identifier by requiring the Social Security Administration to issue all Americans new Social Security Numbers within five years after the enactment of the bill."

Mitt Romney (R) on internet access taxes: "I do not want to see internet only taxes as you described them or access fees or email charges and so forth. We do enough taxing in this country and let's not add more taxes. I'd rather see the tax for innovation reduced rather than expanded."


Hillary Clinton (D) in a speech on privacy issues criticized lax enforcement of the HIPAA Privacy Rule and proposed the position of a "privacy czar" within the executive branch.

She also proposed a "privacy bill of rights" saying, "we need a new set of consumer protections that boil down to three basic rights:

First, people have the right to know, and to correct, information which is being kept about them.

Second, people have the right to know what is happening to their personal information when they are cooperating with a business and to make decisions about how their information is used.

And third, in a democracy, people have the right and the obligation to hold their government and the private sector to the highest standards of care with the information they gather.

These rights should be basic to all of the commercial transactions we undertake and be part of a basic privacy bill of rights that has to be adhered to by every commercial information gatherer or marketer." 

(Compiled with the aid of TechCrunch, Geek the Vote and Privacy Journal)

Discover more about the issues at the following Presidential candidates' Web sites:

John McCain campaign:
<http://www.johnmccain.com>

Hillary Clinton campaign:
<http://www.hillaryclinton.com/>


Mike Gravel campaign:
<http://www.gravel2008.us/>

Mitt Romney campaign:
<http://www.mittromney.com>

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

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For a **Distinguished Service Award** nomination form, visit: http://www.mra-net.org/DS_Award.pdf
Fax completed forms to 860-682-1010.

The 2008 Honorary Lifetime Membership Task Force:

Merrill Shugoll (Chair), Shugoll Research
Donald J. Marek, MRIL
Mimi Nichols, Nichols Research, Inc.
Shirley Shames, Performance Plus/Boston Field & Focus
Peter Van Brunt, ReData, Inc.

Please consider any current or retired member who meets the following criteria:

- Is in good standing with MRA;
- Has volunteered at the Chapter and National level for at least 10 years;
- Is an outstanding individual who has been in the profession for at least 20 years, during which a strong commitment was demonstrated to the Association and the profession.

Each nominee will be evaluated and considered by the Task Force. If a recipient is chosen, he or she will be honored at the MRA Annual Conference.

To recognize a fellow MRA member for the **Honorary Lifetime Membership Award**, e-mail sarah.walsh@mra-net.org or aisha.terry@mra-net.org or fax them at 860-682-1010.

Include name of nominee, description of the individual's contributions to the profession and MRA, and your phone number.

These awards will be presented during the Awards Luncheon at
MRA's Annual Conference, June 4-6 in New York, New York.

All Submissions Are Due By 5:00 PM EST, April 18th.

THE USE AND . . . MISUSE OF POLLS

By Gary Langer, ABC News

I recently made the following comments at the annual conference of the World Association for Public Opinion Research in Berlin – in part commenting on a keynote address by the sociologist Kurt Lang, and also reflecting on my own approach to the work we do. The session was entitled “The Use and Misuse of Polls in Politics and the Media.”

The day before yesterday I got the following message on my BlackBerry: “Two simultaneous car bombs outside the health ministry in central Baghdad killed seven people and wounded 23 on Tuesday. There was also another car bomb attack near Sadr City in Baghdad; eight people were killed and 22 wounded. Three earlier car bombs killed a total of nine people and wounded 28.”

A day previous I received a rundown of available video shots from that day’s violence: “#052: Shows Baghdad’s Jamila district – U.S. troops and Iraqi police at the site. Close up of wreckage of car. Grieving men hugging each other and crying.”

“#040: Shows wide shot of the bombing site. Remains of the car bomb. Man is shouting at his friends, ‘Here comes the Americans, be aware ‘cause they shoot randomly.’”

Receiving these messages over the last two days did not put me in an ideal frame of mind to hear Kurt Lang’s keynote address at this conference on what polls cannot tell us about public opinion. Having just completed our fourth national public opinion poll in Iraq, I am far more focused at the moment on the essential nature of what polls *can* tell us about public opinion, often in a unique and irreplaceable way.

Let’s take Iraq. If we want to know what’s

occurring there – the living conditions, the extent of the violence punctuating daily life, the attitudes that spring up from these experiences, the implications for our place and policy in Iraq – there is nothing more fundamental than for us to go to a random, representative national sample of Iraqis and ask them. And then to independently and accurately report their answers.

I’ve had many a grizzled newsman waggle a finger at me and intone, “Polls are no substitute for good reporting.” They’re right, but for the wrong reason. Good polling *is* good reporting. You hear talk of “polls and pundits” when in reality good polling is anti-

pundit. A good poll, honestly done, chases away the spin and speculation that exist and even thrive unchallenged in its absence.

Kurt’s concern as I heard it is that public opinion as expressed in polls is substantively inadequate to direct public policy. That seems in his view to represent a fundamental flaw since he describes the effect of polls on policy as “the ultimate payoff from polling.”

I don’t see that as our purpose. Indeed, to portray our efforts to know and understand public opinion as an enterprise whose ultimate aim is to impose majoritarian rule on our elected officials is to draw an exaggerated caricature.

“At ABC News we try like hell to produce good research. But we burn just as many calories trying to kill bad research.”

It’s a good straw man to help support the point that we need to be mindful as well of other, anecdotal, expressions of public sentiment. I’m OK with that.

Public opinion polls don’t end the debate on any subject. Salience matters. Expertise matters. Available options, political realities, economic constraints – all these and many more frame policy choices. But I’d hope we’d never argue that public opinion deserves anything less than a full setting at the table.

Our real aim, like any reporter’s, is to cover our beat, fully and well. Covering the public opinion beat enables us to give voice to those who lack it, to assess conditions and attitudes independently, and to inform our judgment across a range of issues with valid, reliable data. This is what we bring to the table with our polling in places like Iraq and Afghanistan – and every bit as much with our polling at home in the United States.

But here’s where life gets tricky. I’ve been talking about good polling – good data. It lends authority. Substance. It elevates our reporting above mere anecdote into the realm of empiricism. Numbers carry a weight – a heft – that I personally suspect is no less than biblical in origin. You know the phrase the “writing on the wall?” Anyone remember what it said?

“Mene, mene, tekel, upharsin” – “numbered, numbered, weighed and divided” – “Numbered, the Lord has numbered your kingdom and come to its end; weighed, the Lord has weighed your kingdom and found it wanting; divided, the Lord has divided your kingdom and parceled it out.” So ended the days of Belshazzar, grandson of Nebuchadnezzar, in Babylon – as it happens, in today’s Iraq.

If such is the clout of numbers, we have to be damned careful with them.

News organizations, in particular, have for far too long indulged themselves in the lazy luxury of being both data hungry and math phobic. It is unacceptable – more than ever these days, when we swim in a sea of what I call manufactured data, produced not to portray public opinion independently and accurately but to promote a product, a policy or a point of view. Data cooked up on the cheap – often via the internet – to grab a quick headline, to please a paying client, perhaps innocently to

(Continued on page 23)

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Chief Executive Column

(Continued from page 11)

changes dramatically, methodology may need to change, fielding method may need to change, and of course costs may need to change. This is when our profession tries to fit a square peg in to a round hole.

If my company's name is going on the product, I just don't do it. I must have this understanding with my client. When this change occurs, we will have "x" hours to agree to the new scope, performance expectations and costs. If we can't agree, I can't do the job. The world doesn't understand—nor does it care—that I was limited... The world only sees my name and the fact that the product failed

Flipping the coin, as a client I would respect and do business with a provider who took my projects this seriously. Knowing that this company is going to guarantee that I make a good decision, because their name is on it, has great value. We all say we do this, but do we really? Do we eliminate the caveats on the front end and only perform projects on which we can make this unequivocal statement?

If you answer yes—and I hope every member of MRA can—then I suggest you do two things: ask your clients to create a page on their websites and list the projects you have performed for them. Ask them to rate you publicly by using MRA's Exchange Evaluation Program (EEP).

Quite frankly, everyone in the profession should be rating their clients and vendors using MRA's EEP. Full disclosure is the answer to quality challenges. EEP will greatly improve the confidence in research and in your company. It is fair and equitable as both the client and vendor in any transaction can be rated.


If you're not yet familiar with it go to MRA's Web site (www.mra-net.org), click on Research Resources at the top of the page, and scroll down to select EEP.


Of course being at the top of your game demands that you know your stuff. From my travels last year, the best education happened at two venues: MRA's conferences and CMOR's Respondent Cooperation workshop.

Our conference in San Francisco last June was the best attended research conference in North and South America. More than 1,000 people came to learn and network, with specialty education for

end-users/clients, CEOs and every element of the profession. Our track system gave participants pertinent specific education for all segments, while providing a global networking environment.

The CMOR Respondent Cooperation workshop remains the best educational environment for those who manage or supervise this area for their company. Phone, online, qualitative, whatever: if you're trying to create a comprehensive strategy to improve your respondent interaction and rates, this program delivers through well-researched techniques.

These vital programs help attendees stay current. More importantly, they let participants confidently declare that they would publicly put their name on a product today and that they're prepared to do the same tomorrow. 

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



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Corporate Member 

The Usage Of Polling At ABC News

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misinform, perhaps actively to disinform.

At ABC News we try like hell to produce good research. But we burn just as many calories trying to kill bad research.

Years ago, with the support of management, we set up a polling standards and vetting operation. First we developed fair-minded but rigorous standards for what survey research we will and will not report. And then a procedure by which any survey being considered for air at ABC News goes through my unit first – or is supposed to – for a review in which we check it out, and either clear it for air or kick it out the back door.


It's the same as what reporters are supposed to with any other alleged news that comes in: we verify it before we report it, because that's our job. And doing our job protects our credibility. And our credibility is our stock in trade.

I've been on this little crusade for a decade now and it's gradually getting traction, because if there's nothing a reporter loves more than a good story, there's nothing a reporter hates more than being wrong. Except perhaps getting used. Purveyors of manufactured or just shoddy data use us in ways we must be aware of and protect against.

And so we are. My friends at the Associated Press – where I started my career

27 short years ago – have put in place polling standards and vetting modeled on our own. Last year my counterpart at *The New York Times* took me to lunch, picked my brain, reviewed our operation – and put in place polling standards and vetting in her newsroom. The new polling director at *The Washington Post* is my old assistant director at ABC News; I'm thinking he picked up a trick or two along the way.

In the end, Kurt's right – polls are imperfect. He's right – we need a range of intelligent, meaningful inputs to inform our judgment and to help our leaders shape policy. Journalists need – without question – to see that it's not all just numbers, to recognize the difference between good data vs. bad, reliable vs. unreliable, independent vs. manufactured – to make these distinctions and to report accordingly.

But for all that – after a week of military assessments, Congressional testimony, a presidential address, rebuttals from the other side – if you really want to know what's going on in Iraq – you could do worse than going over to ABCnews.com and taking a look at our latest poll there. 

Gary Langer is the Director of Poling at ABC News. He can be reached at gary.e.langer@abc.com. 



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Listen Up Research Suppliers: Here's What End Users REALLY Need

By Karole Friemann, Market Research Project Management

If researchers looked at custom (primary) market research from the End User's perspective, we would learn that in many ways they resemble customers we study for other businesses.

End Users want research results the day they determine they need them—when they are trying to address a business issue and find they need information about a group of people that isn't available.

End Users evaluate market researchers on whether we deliver *the information they need* on time and within budget. Quality — the expertise, creativity and skill to produce results—is assumed, unless we demonstrate it shouldn't be.

To End Users, "on time" means that researchers deliver results in a time frame that enables them to meet their business objectives; it is not the date researchers tell them is realistic or ambitious.

To End Users, "within budget" means the final cost does not exceed the cost researchers quoted when the project was approved, regardless of the increases due to adjustments in research objectives or target populations made afterward.

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Listen Up: This Is What End Users Need

(Continued from page 24)

End Users don't need to know how a car is built to drive it, or how the telephone works to use it, and they don't need to know how research results are produced in order to use them. So, if they are dissatisfied with their custom market research, we can't expect them to tell us how to improve.

There are two criteria that must be met for custom market research to provide value to End Users and the businesses that employ them:

1. Results must accurately represent the target population
2. End Users must be able to appropriately apply results to resolve the issue that prompted the research.

Market researchers usually have no qualms about accepting responsibility for the first; it is responsibility for the second that causes consternation. But if we agree that the business paying the bill does not realize a benefit unless results are appropriately applied to address the

issue that prompted the research, we should look for ways to ensure that outcome. Here are a few suggestions for research suppliers:

- Ensure that clients designate a client project manager for every custom market research project.

Ask the person requesting market research to designate a project manager for the custom market research project. The research requester should be told that the client project manager will be responsible for project coordination and for ensuring that all client tasks are performed well and on time.

A client project manager should be identified and contacted before you bid on the project. (If the company requesting market research support has its own market research department, the person requesting market research support will often be the research project manager, but that isn't always the case. Always ensure a client project manager is designated for the project.)

- Contact the client project manager to determine how much market research and project management experience he/she has. Do not be surprised if the answer is little or none. The less experience a client project manager has, the more support he/she will need from you.

- Develop tools to help clients perform the most critical task in the custom market research project—Define the business issue that prompted the research request and clarify expectations for how custom market research is expected to help. Give them to the client project manager. Ideally, the client manager already has these tools, and the End User referred to them when writing the research request. Don't count on it.

Management consultant Peter Drucker said, "Management by objectives works if you first think through your objectives. Ninety percent of the time you haven't." The same can be said for defining the business issue that prompts a research request.

Due to the urgency of most business issues, researchers often design methodologies and estimate project costs before clients have fully thought through the business issue and identified how research is expected to help. Providing tools that help clients define and communicate how research is expected to help their business

helps them and you.

- Give the client project manager a project timeline with client tasks highlighted. For each client task indicate the person responsible to see that the task is accomplished (the client project manager), and the person or persons expected to perform it.
- Set up a meeting with the client project manager to review the timeline and discuss inputs and outputs expected from each client task. Suggest that the client project manager review the timeline with the research sponsor/requester, and other business associates as appropriate.

Be sure that your project timeline includes the following critical client tasks and indicates the person(s) responsible for performing them. The tasks mentioned in each bullet can be addressed at the same "meeting."

Project Initiation Tasks

- Define the actions, decisions, or strategies that will be made based on research results and identify the business associates who will make them. (Research Requester/Sponsor)
- Contact the persons expected to take actions, make decisions, and formulate

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Listen Up Research Suppliers

(Continued from page 29)

strategies based on research results (End Users), and ensure that they or their designated representatives are on the project team. (Research Requester/Sponsor)

- Review and, if appropriate, revise: the definition of the business issue, anticipated actions/decisions/strategies that will be based on research results, and the end users expected to take them.

- Define and prioritize research objectives. Specify research deliverables and support that end users will need to translate results to anticipated business actions. (Research Requester/Sponsor, End Users on the Project Team, Client Project Manager, Supplier Manager, Research Designer(s))

- Review project cost; finalize research objectives, and give approval to go forward. (Research Requester/Sponsor, End Users on the Project Team, Client Project Manager, Research Designer(s))

the information needed to take anticipated actions, decisions, or strategies.*

(Research Requester/Sponsor, End Users on the Project Team, Client Project Manager, Supplier Project Manager, Researcher(s))

**Researchers should provide tools that help end users: review drafts; understand what information will be obtained to support each research objective; make comments and suggest changes; specify additional information they need that is not addressed in the draft.*

Research Reporting & Presentation Tasks

- Present & discuss the full research report with the client project team. Discuss how findings impact anticipated uses for results, and End User deliverables. (Research Requester/Sponsor, End Users on the project team, Client Project Manager, Supplier Project Manager, Researcher(s))

Research Design Tasks

- Review drafts of research instruments to ensure they will provide

Results Implementation Tasks

- Review, approve, and comment on proposed actions, decisions, and

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strategies based on research results. (Research Requester/Sponsor, End Users on the project team, Client Project Manager, Client Researchers on the project team)

This task is vital but often not performed. We don't drive a new car without checking if there's gas in the tank and a pilot doesn't fly a plane that has just been serviced without running through the flight checklist, but many clients spend a lot of money for research without taking an hour to check that end users have correctly interpreted results.

By helping clients and end users navigate the research process, researchers can help them transform research results into business results—a victory for all of us.

Karole Friemann has managed market research staff for over 20 years and currently manages product development for Market Research Project Management. She can be contacted at knfriemann@comcast.net.

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Consumer insights helped Parkridge East Hospital position neonatal intensive care services to differentiate its brand in the crowded Chattanooga, Tennessee market.

(Continued from page 7)

us. We tapped into mega-brainpower, streamlined the process, received buy-in for results, made confident decisions, and got validation of final product – all in one project! What more could you ask for!

Q: What were the biggest takeaways from the research?

A: The telephone study showed the hospital’s true market position and share of mind among consumers, consumer preference for key service lines, especially the neonatal intensive care unit (NICU). Many people may not know this, but the NICU is among the most lucrative service lines for hospitals, and the research we conducted helped us discover ways we could capture more “share of mind” as a prelude to building market share.


Q: What changes did you make as a result of the research?

A: The research resulted in the development of an actionable marketing plan and a fresh, new ad campaign, including outdoor ads and highly-effective radio spots featuring our doctors.

Q: How has the ad campaign worked?
A: Very well. After our campaign hit the airwaves and the roadways, we saw an increase in the total number of births at Parkridge East as well as an increase in the number of insured patients.

Most importantly, we received an uptick in the number of admits to the neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) which was one of the outcomes we were hoping to realize. The radio ads we produced specifically addressed the NICU as a competitive strength. The research helped us create a message that really resonated with parents facing high-risk deliveries. They checked out our hospital and ultimately decided to use our services.

Final Observations:

While much of the attention in professional publications and conferences understandably goes to covering “what’s new,” this project demonstrates the underlying value of “tried and true” research methods, especially when applied in a practical and collaborative manner. As such, it is a critical reminder of the value researchers can create for their clients. 


Dan Prince is the President of Catalyst Healthcare Research. He can be reached at dan.prince@CatalystHCR.com. 


Protect Your Business With This Policy!

By Frederick Feld

You reach agreement with a new or existing client to complete a research project. The negotiation is completed; the client turns to you and asks if you are insured against errors and omissions in the conduct of your professional activities. What do you answer? Your standard business liability insurance policy, if you have one, will pay those sums that you are legally obligated to pay as damages because of bodily injury or property damage to another, subject to the terms of the policy.

Bodily injury means bodily injury, sickness or disease sustained by a person, including death resulting from any of these at any time. Property damage means physical injury to tangible property, including all resulting loss of use of that property.

Any errors or omissions you make in the course of completing the project for your client and upon which he relied and acted, resulting in loss, usually financial or to which money value can be attributed, is not within the above definitions. A separate policy of insurance is required. Consider adding this additional insurance protection to your portfolio even if your client does not require you to. 

Frederick Feld is a retired Insurance Executive. He can be reached at Feld37@hotmail.com. 

***Please stay tuned for developments in this area from MRA.**





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self starter possessing extensive knowledge of market research techniques and methodologies, marketing database design and implementation, marketing, and statistical modeling is required. Must also have extensive knowledge of primary and secondary research processes, forecasting techniques, and be able to interpret research data and present findings.

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A formulator/manufacture located in Kansas City, Missouri is seeking an individual to coordinate and implement market research for sales and product development.

Job duties are: Establish research methodology and design format for data collection, such as surveys, opinion polls and questionnaires. Analyze available data and prepare reports. Prepare reports and graphic illustrations of findings. Contract with outside suppliers for market research needs. Conduct formal and informal focus groups. Collect data on customer preferences, buying habits and profiles. Travel with product development manager and sales personnel to develop understanding of various markets serviced and product needs. Gather data and research reports on new products, competitive products and companies. Gather and examine information relating to sale of company products. Conduct market research. Analyze factors such as pricing, distribution, and product performance. Provide statistical reports and recommendations. Bachelor's degree in marketing, business, or statistics with a research concentration. At least one year of experience in market research and custom research projects from design phase through finished product. Experience with qualitative and quantitative research. Analytics skills and ability to make relevant and insightful conclusions based on data results; Communications and people skills; Proficient in SPSS and Microsoft office suite programs (especially Excel and PowerPoint). Experience in the green industry or chemical industry a plus. Travel required in this position is: moderate We provide a comprehensive benefit package including health, life, disability and dental insurances, along with a flexible benefit plan, a 401(k) retirement savings plan and an employee stock ownership plan. Qualified candidates should submit their resume and salary requirements to: open_positions@hotmail.com.

Account Executive

Entertainment research co seeks Account Executive. Aggressively sell full line of syndicated market research products. Minimum 2 years sales experience and ability to demonstrate sales success required. Apply for this job on our Web site: <http://www.epollresearch.com/corp/aboutus/careers.view>

Manager, Client Development – LA

Entertainment research co seeks LA-based Mgr Client Development. Aggressively build new business. Proven track record with 3 years Market Research sales exp essential. Apply for this job on our Web site: <http://www.epollresearch.com/corp/aboutus/careers.view>

Director, Client Development - LA

Ent/Media research co seeks LA-based Dir Client Development. Manage sales team, build new synd/custom biz. Min. 3 yrs sales mgmt exp in mrkt resrch sales or related required. Apply for this job on our Web site: <http://www.epollresearch.com/corp/aboutus/careers.view>

Qualitative Client Services Manager

Perception Research Services (www.prsresearch.com), founded in 1972, is a leader in marketing communications research, conducting over 600 qualitative and quantitative research programs in the U.S., Europe, Asia and Latin America annually. Our primary focus is on Package Design and Point of Sale. Clients include Procter & Gamble, Kraft Foods, Johnson & Johnson, 3M, and many others. PRS, a company of 100 employees, has its headquarters in Fort Lee, New Jersey, approximately ten minutes from New York City.

The Client Services Manager (CSM) will support our team of focus group moderators, whose travel makes them difficult to reach. There will be a great deal of client contact. Responsibilities will include screener development; coordinating between the moderators, the sub-contracted field facilities and vendors, creation of facility memos and advisories, monitoring progress of recruits, written re-screener development and coordinating with internal PRS teams and departments. Supporting several moderators at the same time requires strong attention to detail, the ability to multi-task, strong prioritization skills, and the ability to work under the

(Continued on page 36)

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(Continued from page 35)

pressure of constant client deadlines. Please fax a resume and cover letter to Gay Gershoni at PRS (201) 346-1616, or e-mail ggershoni@prsresearch.com. Salary: To be determined, based upon experience. Please state current salary level.

Market Research: Field Assistant

Perception Research Services (www.prsresearch.com) founded in 1972, is a leader in marketing communications research, conducting over 600 qualitative and quantitative research programs in the U.S., Europe, Asia and Latin America annually. Our primary focus is on Package Design and Point of Sale. Clients include Procter & Gamble, Kraft Foods, Johnson & Johnson, 3M, and many others. PRS, a company of 100 employees, has its headquarters in Fort Lee, New Jersey, approximately ten minutes from New York City. Our field department needs a full time person with experience at a mall field service, focus group facility, or central telephone facility. Experience interviewing, coding, editing, recruiting or supervising necessary. E-mail ggershoni@prsresearch.com or fax Gay Gershoni, 201-346-1616.

We are looking for a highly motivated **DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS** with qualitative market research experience to join our winning team to assist the Vice President in directing and overseeing all functions of QI, including but not limited to project management, host/hostess staff and recruitment. Work with the Vice President in making sure projects are completed within the agreed upon financial parameters. Act as liaison between client and various departments. Assist Vice President with continued growth, strategic initiatives and profitability. Requirements are: Bachelor's Degree or equivalent and ten years related experience, or equivalent combination of education and experience, minimum three years management experience, focus group experience and/or market research experience good working knowledge of Excel and Word, detail oriented, ability to multi-task and service oriented. We offer a competitive compensation package. This position is located in Sherman Oaks, CA. Qualified candidates, e-mail your resume to resume@isacorp.com or fax to (818) 756-7476.

Market Research Project Managers

Kantar Operations, the North American operations group for Kantar, is one of the world's largest marketing re-

search, insight and consultancy networks. We are currently seeking Project Managers at various levels of experience to join our team. We have tremendous opportunities in domestic and international accounts, as well as management and non-management positions. Our project management teams have presence across North America including our headquarters office in Naperville, IL and our remote offices in Chicago, IL; Los Angeles, CA; and Fairfield, CT. The Project Manager (PM) is the single point of contact between Kantar Operations and stakeholder companies from pre-field to post-field across data collection methodologies. The PM is responsible for the timely delivery of quality data gathered in the most cost effective manner. PM's are involved in consultation of study estimation, overall study design, sample sources, vendor selection, vendor management, briefing guides, study launch and ongoing management of the study. The PM is responsible for ensuring that the project meets timing and budget expectations, which requires detailed problem analysis and a solution orientation. The PM must proactively troubleshoot and propose effective solutions while maintaining strong relationships with the stakeholder teams across North America. Qualified candidates will have a Bachelor's degree in marketing, business administration, project management or related field. Prior market research and/or project management experience strongly desired. Demonstrated experience in relationship building, problem solving and a strong client orientation required. Must have strong analytical, organizational and communication skills with the ability to maintain good time management while prioritizing and delivering against multiple deadlines. For more information, please visit our Web site at: www.kantaroperations.com. Send resume and salary requirements to: usjobs@kantaroperations.com.

MARKET RESEARCH SPECIALIST/ANALYST (Job #050/08)

In this position, you'll perform complex research in support of management and business decisions, primarily to assist in marketing analysis. You must have a 4-year degree, with coursework in marketing, sociology, research methodology, statistical analysis, economics, business administration, or social sciences. You must also must have 1+ year's experience in market research as a supplier or a client, 1+ year's SAS experience, 2+ years' experience writing research reports. A qualified candidate has experience in quantitative and qualitative research methodology, surveys, and sampling. Knowledge of MS Excel is required. Resumes will not be accepted without a completed TG application, available at www.tgslc.org.

org. For more information, e-mail human.resources@tgslc.org or call (800) 252-9743.

RESEARCH SPECIALIST/ANALYST (Job #037/08)

In this position, you'll perform complex research on matters that relate to business, administrative, operational, and/or public policy issues. You'll also apply SAS programming to maintain and develop reports while meeting internal and external customer requests. You must have a 4-year degree with major work in business administration, public administration, government, economics, computer science, mathematics, sociology, statistical analysis or research methodology, 1+ year's experience with SAS, and 2+ years' experience writing research reports. Knowledge of statistical concepts and research methodology is essential. Resumes will not be accepted without a completed TG application, available at www.tgslc.org. For more information, e-mail human.resources@tgslc.org or call (800) 252-9743.

RESEARCH ANALYST (Job #041/08)

This position has the same responsibilities as the research specialist/analyst, but you'll also occasionally lead research project teams. This position also requires the same qualifications. Additionally, you must have 3+ years' experience writing syntax in SAS and 3+ years' experience writing research reports. You must also have knowledge of statistical concepts and research methodology and the ability to handle data merges. Position requires knowledge of MS Excel. Equivalent experiences may substitute some qualifications. Resumes will not be accepted without a completed TG application, available at www.tgslc.org. For more information, e-mail human.resources@tgslc.org or call (800) 252-9743.

To view more or place job listings please visit:
<http://www.mra-net.org/media/onlineclass.cfm>

Baking A Conference

By Kimberly Nevers, Education Manager, MRA

As MRA's new Education Manager, I have many responsibilities: two of the most challenging include planning two major conferences.

In my rather obscure observation of things, I've come to understand that planning a conference is a little bit like making a cake. First, you must begin with only the finest "ingredients." In the case of MRA, our finest "ingredients" are our volunteers. They are dedicated business owners, managers, supervisors, and researchers who give their time to support MRA's vision.

Once you have gathered the "ingredients," you must then mix them well. The mixing represents the work that the volunteers do to gather quality presenters for MRA's educational program. And, as we all know, if a cake is not mixed well, the batter will be lumpy. The same is true for our educational programming efforts. To prevent our "batter from being lumpy," our volunteers work hard to seek qualified, knowledgeable speakers who will make our education program smooth—just like the batter!

The baking part comes next. This must be supervised carefully, as we don't want our cake to be overcooked or undercooked. The same is true with our conferences.

The "baking" is all of the behind the scenes work by the staff and volunteers who ensure that MRA's

education conferences offer the best "flavor and consistency" for educational content. The recruiting efforts, the marketing efforts, the administrative efforts, and most importantly, the member support in attending MRA's conferences that all go into "baking" the cake.

Lastly, the icing on the cake represents how pretty it looks when we present it. Our "icing" is the smiles on the faces of the members and non-members who attend MRA's conferences to greet old friends and to make new ones. It is the positive comments we receive about the quality of the education sessions and suggestions for future offerings.

If you plan to attend MRA's Annual Conference on June 4, 5, and 6th—and I hope you do—please remember the efforts that have gone into putting on such a tremendous occasion.

The volunteers' time, the staff's dedication, and the members' support combine to make MRA's conferences so delicious and professionally nutritious!

Kimberly Nevers is the Education Manager at MRA. She can be reached at kimberly.nevers@mra-net.org.

Visit: http://www.mra-net.org/conferences/AC_08/index.cfm

Note: If you're interested in working with MRA's Education Workgroup, please contact Marisa Pope, Workgroup Chair, at mpope@jacksonassociates.com.

A Movement In The Profession, A Victory For Respondent Cooperation

By Patrick Glaser, Director of Respondent Cooperation, CMOR

CMOR
Shielding the Profession

There has been a lot of recent concern over data quality—whether research results are accurate and reliable. How do we look at the issue, and exactly how should we define it? These questions motivated CMOR to look into this threat to research from the End User's perspective. After all, the End User ultimately determines whether the research is working. There are many problems that can bias research, but what do End Users recognize as the leading threats?

To answer this question, CMOR facilitated an exchange with a small group of End Users through a blog, a survey, and several informal discussions regarding what threats were seen as the most menacing.

The biggest threats were seen as problems caused by declining respondent cooperation, online panel quality, and the proliferation of "do-it-yourself" research technology. Furthermore, End Users generally viewed problems within the survey research profession as something for which responsibility is jointly shared by both supplier and End User alike. We all have the responsibility to turn things around.

These concerns have been mirrored elsewhere—suggesting that End Users, research suppliers, and other stakeholders all recognize the same trends. For example, M/A/R/C CEO (and MRA Board of Directors Officer) Merrill Dubrow asked a group of colleagues 'what are the top three issues in research.' The major themes that developed centered on respondent related issues—length of questionnaire, boring surveys, declining cooperation rates, and varying quality of online sample providers.

Dubrow posed a follow-up question on his personal blog 'what can we do about these issues?' This time, the answers resonated with some compelling arguments—problems stem from a lack of education, a lack of innovation in data collection techniques, a lack of cohesion among the profession, and a lack of tough, specific professional standards.

The Dubrow blog reflects the greater movement within the survey research profession—a call for order and a hunger for increased professionalism.

Over the past several months, there have been numerous efforts to address the issue of data quality. Several professional associations (CMOR, MRA, IMRO & ARF) have investigated solutions. It looks as though the profession may be headed on a definitive journey toward a more solid, disciplined manner of conducting research.

In a roundabout way, this answers one of respondent cooperation's most substantial barriers to change: the tragedy of the commons. Why should one organization amend its practices to be more respondent friendly when a competitor may simply maintain the status quo and reap the collective gains?

A collaborative solution to data quality (much of which reduces to respondent cooperation) that provides clear standards offers great hope of turning around respondent cooperation trends. (Imagine standards which clearly promote [and enforce?] respondent ethics as well as an exciting survey experience!)

A concrete shift in the way we engage respondents, across the board, should rapidly alter how the public thinks, feels and acts towards the idea of participating in research.

After a long period of rapid growth and innovation, the survey research profession has expressed the collective desire and will to review and make improvements where necessary.

The associations are spearheading this effort, and they need participation and support from all stakeholders within the profession to get it done.

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.

Disclaimer: The information provided in this message 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.

Presidential Election Years Are Bad For Our Profession!

By Peter Van Brunt, PRC

Why would I say this, given all the extra quantitative and qualitative research work generated by the elections?

Let's examine what is happening, and why I believe election research ultimately harms our profession.

The Problem

As we all know, election years generate a lot of research work. Thousands of quantitative surveys are conducted on the phone and online, and many focus groups are conducted. All this would

"As the elections progress and the research process tries to overcome increasing respondent overexposure and burnout, it is easy for surveys to arrive at incorrect conclusions."

seemingly be good for researchers, and it is good for our short-term bottom lines.

It is the long-term effects which concern me. These days not only are surveys being conducted by candidates' pollsters, but also by hundreds of national and international press organizations. Let's face it: our election process fascinates not just the American public, but because of our position as a superpower, it fascinates the entire world. Every news organization wants to be able to predict the election results.

The Elephant in the Room

For many years we have been dealing

with issues resulting from dropping respondent cooperation. For some time, telephone cooperation rates have been around 20% or less. Online rates (except for some panels) are even lower.

When screening questions (likely voters/party affiliation/geography/gender) are added to the mix, it is very easy to get samples which are no longer representative. Pollsters do their best to adjust for an inconsistency by using quotas, but when that doesn't work they frequently use weighting to get things back in "sync." Unless this is done very carefully, these techniques all too often can lead to incorrect results.

As the sheer volume of polls and surveys being conducted builds toward the primaries and general elections, the few qualified respondents who are willing to participate are called upon more frequently. This results in their losing interest in further participation.

This can be particularly acute in small geographic areas. Some of the respondents participate so often that they fall into the area of being "professional respondents." This is clearly problematic.

Political advisors and pollsters frequently classify potential voters as strong supporters for a particular candidate or party, or undecided/weak supporters whom they feel can be swayed. As part of their efforts to understand which way the undecided/weak supporters are leaning they frequently target this group in their research.

This group thus becomes the one which is most likely to be approached multiple times and which experiences the most "research burnout."

It is also the group where respondents are the least secure in their support and beliefs. When asked in surveys who they are going to vote for, they are the most reluctant to say, and may even lie to prevent being in a situation which makes them feel uncomfortable. They suffer the most from overexposure to surveys and they quickly fall into the group of non-participants—further driving down the cooperation rate.

Incorrect Results

As the elections progress and the research

process tries to overcome increasing respondent overexposure and burnout, it is easy for surveys to arrive at incorrect conclusions. This is clearly what happened in New Hampshire and Iowa.

The press has tried to place the blame on the undecided voters, but they are fooling themselves. The problem is the number of polls being done. Both of the states I mentioned have small populations, and the few who did answer their phones or participated online were harassed day after day by pollsters.


The media love to quote the error rates (based on random sampling theory) for their polls, but they ignore the fact that in most cases they are not doing random sampling, and they certainly ignore the fact that errors in research are cumulative. In truth the error rates for their work are much higher than the ones they state. These problems exist not only with random samples.

Those utilizing panels have similar problems. They also end up going to the same well too often, and their respondents quickly become too savvy about the process to give truthful answers.


Conclusion

Overexposure to research results in decreasing cooperation and an increase in the number of professional respondents. This is not a short-term (election only) problem; it impacts all research beyond political research. It drives up the cost of our work and makes it harder to get accurate results. Budgets don't go as far.

Highly publicized inaccurate political polls can call into question the credibility of all our work. This makes it harder to convince our clients and our corporate bosses that our work is accurate and credible.

As I stated at the beginning of this column, the elections are bad for our profession. 

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. This column is a bi-monthly feature. Please keep in mind that my remarks do NOT reflect the opinion of MRA or necessarily their authors. This column is intended to inspire comments and dialogue. Send your praises/comments/rants/objections to counterpoint@mra-net.org. 

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



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Profession News/Announcements

MRA's **Exchange Evaluation Program (EEP)** allows users to rate their experience with business partners and view the ratings on potential partners. Before you contract to buy or sell research, look at your potential partner's ratings. Post ratings today! Researchers love feedback. Register today to start utilizing this free industry service.

Directions Research has promoted **Matt Gallogly** to Senior Research Analyst, **Karen Smith** to Senior Research Manager. **Eric Bardun** has been hired as an Automation Specialist and **Mark Neack** as Production Services Assistant.

By participating in **YOC** you can distinguish your organization as one that maintains a respondent's rights and as a legitimate research organization. Join your fellow researchers in improving respondent cooperation and protecting the research profession. Visit www.your-opinion-counts.org.

Survey Sampling International has hired **Volker Andresen** as Marketing Manager, Europe.

Proudfoot Consulting has named **Samuel J. (Sandy) Zusmann, III**, Global Vice President of Marketing.

Directions In Research has hired **Pablo Smith** as VP of Business Development and promoted **Ginger Blazier** to Senior Vice President.

We understand you're busy and you can't always fit in scheduled Webinars or fly across the country to attend one of MRA's high-caliber conferences. **Education On-Demand** makes it easy for you. Now you can view the education you missed from conference or that important Webinar from the comfort of your computer at a time convenient for you. PRC credits do apply. Check out <http://www.mra-net.org/eevents/eod.cfm>

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2008-2009 Board of Directors Election



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e-mail: info@mra-net.org Web: www.mra-net.org



Dear MRA Members,

Enclosed is your ballot for the Marketing Research Association's 2008-2009 Board of Directors election.

The Nominating Committee reviewed, according to established criteria, recommendations provided by the Board of Directors, Chapter Leaders, Headquarters Staff and general Membership. We contacted candidates to ascertain their willingness to run on the Board slate, and the slate was published in *Alert!* and on the MRA Web site for your review.

As stated in the MRA Bylaws, all candidates receiving a plurality of the votes cast shall be declared elected, including those running unopposed.

If an unopposed candidate is someone for whom you would vote, then do so by indicating on this ballot.

You as an MRA Member, will finalize this process of Board selection by completing your ballot. We ask that you review the candidates and the credentials that are presented here to make an informed decision. Exercise your right as a Member to vote for the candidates of your choice, then mail your ballot promptly. Thank you!



Sincerely,

Jon Last
Nominating Committee Chair and 2008-2009 President

Nominating Committee

Our sincere thanks to the 2008 Nominating Committee for all of their hard work that resulted in the presentation of this slate.

- Lawrence Brownell–Non-Voting
- Terry Hansee
- Carl Iseman
- Jon Last–Chair
- Don Marek–Non-Voting
- Joe Ottaviani
- David Phife
- Merrill Shugoll
- Paul Valdez
- Peter Van Brunt

Cast Your E-Vote for the Board Candidate Election

By MRA Staff

Following up on last year's popular and successful e-proxy, this year the MRA again offers members the convenience of an e-proxy when casting your ballots in Spring 2008.

"E-proxy makes voting as easy as answering an e-mail," clarifies MRA Chief Executive Officer Lawrence Brownell. "We want to encourage all MRA members to exercise their power to vote on important issues like whom they choose to represent them on the Board of Directors."

Traditional electronic ballot voting allows each person to submit, via e-mail, his or her completed ballot directly to the party tallying the votes. Because MRA's state of incorporation (New York) prohibits this type of voting, we worked with legal experts to devise the proxy method.

Under the proxy method, MRA members can send a proxy electronically and still adhere to New York State law.

How Proxy Voting Works

Because members have many choices in the upcoming Board election, we've implemented the specified proxy method by which our members can cast their e-ballot for their preferred candidates.

Under the specified proxy method, members select their candidates and then direct an Executive Committee member to submit their selections via specified proxy. The proxy tells the Executive Committee member exactly how you want your vote to be cast.

For this year's elections, you will receive your ballot materials (candidate background information and ballot) in *Alert!* and via e-mail. After you review the candidate biographies and information, please indicate your proxy on the electronic ballot and return it as a specified choice; that is, a proxy that directs exactly how you want your vote to be represented.


Please note that the voting use of an Executive Committee member's name does not necessarily reflect his or her stance on the candidate for whom you vote. It's merely a way for a trusted Board leader to present your proxy.

A couple of notes you need to know about MRA's e-proxy process:

- Live links can get caught in spam filters, so check your "junk e-mail" occasionally in March and April to be sure that our e-mail isn't trapped there
- If you have elected not to receive e-mails from MRA, you will receive a paper ballot via regular mail OR you can choose to send your proxy to us online at www.mra-net.org

If you have any questions, please contact MRA Headquarters.






KIM LARSON, PRC
“My involvement with MRA on a Chapter and National level, in addition to my experience working with government, university and private industry, gives me unique insight into several different economic communities. I am committed to MRA and have enjoyed the benefits of the many opportunities to volunteer, and I hope to continue to contribute to MRA in any capacity.”

Professional Record: Information Alliance: President (2001 - present); Discovery Research Group of Utah: Director of Telephone Operations, Phone Center Operations Manager (1990 - 2001); Nutri-Systems, Inc.: Regional Marketing Manager (1989 -1990).
Education: MBA, Utah State University; BS Management and Human Resources, Utah State University.
PRC: PRC Expert CEO/Owner Data Collection Company (2005-Current)
MRA National Involvement: National Board Executive Committee (2007- Current), Chair, Membership & Chapter Work

Group (2004 - 2007), National Board Member 2005 – Current, Membership Structure Task Force Chair (2005-2006), Member Needs Assessment Task Force Chair (2006), Chapter Relations Task Force Chair (2005-2006), Treasurer Training Task Force Chair (2005 – 2006), Vice-Chair, Membership & Chapter Council (2003 - 2004), National Strategic Planning Committee (2004), Member Needs Assessment Task Force (2003), Blue Book Task Force (2003), Skills Enhancement Committee (2002).


MRA Chapter Involvement: Southwest Chapter Advisor (2004 – Current) Southwest Chapter Past Presidents Committee (2003 - Current), Immediate Past President (2002 - 2003), Treasurer (2002 – 2005, 2007-2008), National Chapter Event Committee (2002), President (2000 - 2002), Chapter Celebration Committee (1999 - 2003), Las Vegas Planning Committee (1999 - Current), Secretary (1999 - 2000).
Other Business/Organization Involvement: Liaison for “Utah Smart Site Program” with the State of Utah Dept. of Economic and Community Development and Utah State University; Utah State University, Guest Lecturer (2001 - present). Member of AAPOR, CASRO, and CMOR.



DAVID ASHLEY, PRC
“The combination of government, business, and academic marketing research has provided me with a unique perspective on the industry. Additionally, I have extensive MRA institutional knowledge by virtue of my having served on the MRA programming committee for many years and my service as Mid-Atlantic Chapter President. Additionally, I have experience serving on university and chamber boards – so I am aware of how boards function.”

Professional Record: Department of Homeland Security-Program Analyst (2003-Present); Adjunct Faculty (Univ. of Maryland, George Washington Univ., and Johns Hopkins Univ.)(1999-pres-


ent); U.S. Small Business Administration(1999-2003); Director, Small Business Development Center at the University of New Mexico (1996-1999)
Education: MBA, University of New Mexico; BA, University of North Carolina; Hansard Scholar, University of London
MRA National Involvement: Programming Committee Member (2003-Present); Programming Committee Chair (2004-2005); Chair – MRII Textbook Examination Methods Committee(2006-present)
MRA Chapter Involvement: Mid-Atlantic President (2007-2008) (2005-2006); Nominating Committee (2005-Present)
Other Business/Organization Involvement: Board Member – Marketing Research International Institute(2006-present); Principal – Baker Street Analytics, LLC (providing marketing research consulting)




LINDA LYNCH, PRC
“As one of the first members of the Northeast Chapter of the MRA to receive my PRC, I take great pride in the professionalism of our industry and will use my energy and creativity to support and enhance public and corporate respect for all of us. I feel strongly that the client/end user perspective is extremely important to the success of the MRA and will represent that to the best of my ability. I also strongly support collaboration where it makes sense among the various market research organizations (AMA, CMOR, CASRO, etc.) so that our profession and industry benefit to the fullest extent possible and will work to be sure that happens..”

Professional Record: Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts-Market Research Director (1997-present); Senior Market Research Consultant, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts (1995-1997); Vice President, First Market Research (formerly Becker Research) (1984-1995) Senior Project Manager, First Market Research (formerly Becker Research) (1979-1984)
Education: BSBE, University of Delaware (1973); M.Ed., University of Delaware (1979)
MRA National Involvement: Professional Research Certification Review Committee (2005- present); End User Advisory Committee(2006-present)
Other Business/Organization Involvement: Member of AMA (national and local) (1999-present); Member of AAPOR/NEAAPOR (national and local) (1999-present)

Directors At Large: End User



REBECCA GRAHAM, PRC
“It would be my pleasure to serve on the Board of Directors representing the End User constituency. Because of my immense involvement in the End User advisory group since its early stages, I am keenly aware of the needs of the End User membership. Because of my experience in a Fortune 500 company in a leading Marketing Research role for 8 years, my knowledge of the needs of End Users is first hand. I have taken on a leadership role in the End User group as the Conference Program Chair for the End User Track at both national conferences annually. I have been the liaison between the End User Advisory Board and the MRA Conference Program Committee to formulate the most valuable conferences for you. I seek opinions of many and represent the best interests of the group as a whole. I am open-minded and love a challenge. I look forward to working along-side members of the prestigious Marketing Research Association.”



GINGER BLAZIER, PRC
“Having had the opportunity to serve on the National Board for the past 2 years, has been a very invigorating and fulfilling experience. I have seen first hand the many accomplishments that have been achieved due to the diligence, dedication, and knowledge the people on the MRA board and its committees possess. We have made such great strides in many areas, such as education and technology, which has resulted in positive advancement for our members and industry. In addition, I have been very active with the Southern California chapter, where we have been very successful in implementing many new educational and networking programs. There is far more that I would like to accomplish on the National Board and I welcome the opportunity to continue to serve the association and its members.”

Professional Record: Directions In Research -VP Business Development (2004-2007); Directions In Research-VP Operations(1999-2004); National Research Corporation-Consultant-Operations Manager(1998-1999); Freeman, Sullivan & Associates-VP Operations (1996-1998)



ANGELA LORINCHAK, PRC
“Over my 17 years in market research, I have served on numerous committees as a volunteer and as a chairperson. I have been involved in the production of many guidelines and best practices documents that are published by MRA. My involvement at both the national and local level combine over 15 years of working with the MRA. I feel that my experience in focus group facility management will help MRA take our organization to the next level. My goals, if elected, will include but not be limited to being the “voice” for focus group facility owners in order to help keep this profession alive and moving in the right direction.”

Professional Record: MeadWestvaco-Marketing Research Supervisor (2007-Present); Senior Marketing Research Analyst at MeadWestvaco (2003-2007); Marketing Research Analyst at MeadWestvaco(2000-2003)
Education: MBA, Marketing & Management Concentration, St. Bonaventure University; BS, Business Administration Marketing Concentration, Elmira College
MRA National Involvement: End User Advisory Board Member (2005-Present); End User Advisory Board Co-Chair (2007-Present); MRA Conference Program Committee Member – for End Users (06/2007-Present)
MRA Chapter Involvement: New York Chapter Member (2000-Present)
Other Business/Organization Involvement: Member of American Marketing Association (2000-Present)

Education: AA. – Business Management
MRA National Involvement: Director at Large (2006-Present); Membership & Chapter Relations Committee; 2004 Fall Conference Task Force Committee Chairperson; New Definition Task Force
MRA Chapter Involvement: Offices: Southern California MRA Chapter - Advisor(2007-Present); Southern California MRA Chapter – Past President(2006-2007); Southern California MRA Chapter – President(2005-2006); Southern California MRA Chapter – President-Elect (2004-2003); Southern California MRA Chapter – Director at Large (2003-2004); Meet & Greet Committee(2005-Present); Regional Education Committee(2005-2007); 2005 – 2006 SoCal Chapter Nominating Committee(2004); Scholarship (2003-2004)
Other Business/Organization Involvement: AMA Member / SDAMA Member; AAPOR Member; PAPOR – local Pacific chapter of AAPOR – VP on Executive Council (Present); PAPOR – local Pacific chapter of AAPOR – Membership Chair(2005-2007); HMCA - Hispanic Marketing & Communication Association – Member & Advisor (2005-Present)

Professional Record: President/Owner – Metro Research Services, Inc. (1997-Present); VP – Metro Research Services, Inc.(1995-1997); VP of Operations – Decision Data Collection(1994-1995); Research Director – Metro Research Services, Inc. (1991-1994)
Education: BS Business–Marketing – concentration in Research - Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University - 1991
MRA National Involvement: BSW (2002-Present); EWG (2004-Present); Numerous volunteer positions on task forces (2000-Present)
MRA Chapter Involvement: Mid-Atlantic Chapter President (1994-1995); President – Elect (1993-1994); Various board positions (1992-1999)
Other Business/Organization Involvement: Member of BBB, Fairfax and Alexandria Chambers of Commerce, AMA, and CMOR





MAGDA COOLING, PRC

“As one of the first to receive the coveted PRC designation, I am fully aware of the importance of staying on the cutting edge of our ever-evolving industry. As my work in the local chapter and national committees show, I am extremely passionate in leading the way in promoting the mission and values of the Marketing Research Association to our members and customers. ”

Professional Record: Partner, Opinions... of Sacramento (1993-Current); Interviewer/Supervisor/Manager, Research Unlimited (1984-1993)
Education: Associates of Arts, Liberal Arts, Cosumnes River College, Sacramento
MRA National Involvement: Business Services Workgroup, Vice Chair (2007-2009); Membership Recruitment Task Force, part of the Membership and Chapter Workgroup (2005-Current); Business Services Workgroup, New Affinity Program Lead (2005-2006); Business Services Workgroup, PEP Advisory Team (2005-2005); National Conference, Co-Chair: Volunteer and Registration Committee (2003-2003); National Conference, Co-Chair: Volunteer and Registration Committee (1997-1997)

MRA Chapter Involvement: Northern California/Pacific Northwest Chapter : Immediate Past President (2007-Current), Membership Committee (2000-Current), Las Vegas Joint Chapter Conference – Chapter Task Force (1995-Current), Member (1993-Current), President (2006-2007), Treasurer (2004-2006), Director-At-Large (2003-2004), Past President (2001-2003), President (2000-2001), President Elect (1999-2000), Secretary (1998-1999), Director-At-Large (1997-1998)
Other Business/Organization Involvement: Member/Volunteer, American Marketing Association, Sacramento Valley Chapter (1996-Current); PTA Member and School Volunteer (2002-Current); Member, Sacramento Ad Club (2005-Current); Member, American Association of Public Opinion Research, Pacific Chapter (2006-Current); Troop Leader, Girl Scouts, Heart of Central California (2007-Current); Member, CMOR, Your Opinion Counts (YOC) Member Approval Committee (2007-Current); Soccer Referee, Laguna Youth Soccer League (2005-2006); PaceSetter, American Cancer Society Making Strides Against Breast Cancer (2005); Team Manager, Elk Grove Community Services District, Basketball (2005-2006); Team Member, Susan Komen, Sacramento Chapter, Race For The Cure (2006); Team Manager, Laguna Youth Soccer League (2006); Co-Leader, Girl Scouts, Tierra Del Oro (2006-2007)



ELISA GALLOWAY, PRC

“For 30 years I have committed myself and my company to promoting the mission of the Marketing Research Association. With the support of my colleagues, I would like to build on my past work with the association. I believe the keys to fostering excellence in the practice of our profession and enhancing our image in eyes of clients and respondents is through creating and promoting ever richer and more comprehensive educational opportunities and venues. ”

Professional Record: Galloway Research Service, Inc. San Antonio Owner - President (1980-Current); Central Texas Interviewing Services, Austin - Director of Market Research Services (1977-1979)

MRA National Involvement: MRA Board of Directors – Director at Large (2005-2007); Education Workgroup Chair (2004-2007); Professional Development Council - Vice Chair and Member positions (2000-2005); National Conference Program Committee Member – Seattle (2000); Fall MRA Conference Program Committee Chair – San Antonio (1999 AND 1979); Professional Development Content Review Committee Member (1997-2000)
MRA Chapter Involvement: Southwest Chapter Director at Large (2007-Current); SWMRA Past President Advisory Council (2004-Current); SWMRA President (2002-2003); SWMRA President Elect (2001-2002); SWMRA Director at Large (2000-2001); SWMRA Las Vegas Program Committee (2000-current); SWMRA Scholarship Program Committee (2002 -2006)
Other Business/Organization Involvement: President of the San Antonio American Marketing Association (2005-2006); Board of Directors San Antonio American Marketing Association (2007-Current); AMA National Professional Chapters Council Member (2006-2007)

Education: BA Economics University of Maryland; MBA University of Texas at Arlington
MRA National Involvement: MRA Board (2005); IMRO President (2005); IMRO Board of Governors (2003-current); IMRO/ MRA Online Data Quality representative, ARF Online Quality Council (2007-2008)
MRA Chapter Involvement: Greater New York Chapter Member
Other Business/Organization Involvement: Finance Director and Advisory Board Member – Master of Science in Marketing Research – U of Texas at Arlington (2002-current); CMOR Government Affairs Committee (2008-current); Lightspeed Research Board of Directors (2000-current); Casro – Committee for Code Revisions – Internet Research (2007); Esomar – Guidelines for Market Research using the Internet (2005)



ANNE HEDDE

“ I am energized by the opportunity to serve the industry through a high quality, forward-thinking organization such as the MRA. The Marketing Research industry is facing unprecedented changes including new platforms and techniques while clients are demanding better quality and more effective research. My experience with the MRA and other industry organizations will help us reach our goals as an industry.”

Professional Record: President & Group CEO – Lightspeed Research (2001-current); Chief Financial Officer – Lightspeed Research (2000-current)



CARLA LINDEMANN, PRC

“ I am energized by the direction in which MRA is going – and I am deeply committed to help sustain as well as continue that growth. I am proud to be affiliated with such a progressive organization, and MRA has certainly contributed to my professional growth and development over the years. It is time for me to become involved again and give back to MRA in any way I can.”

Professional Record: Issues & Answers – Chief Operating Officer (2007-Present); Issues & Answers – Executive Vice President (1994-2007); Issues & Answers – Director of Operations



VICTOR WALSH, PRC

“ After 16 years of benefiting from this dynamic organization, it is a great opportunity to be able to pay back some of what I have received by serving on the Board. At a time when our industry is facing tremendous outside challenges in an ever changing environment, including technological and financial challenges, I can offer a fresh perspective, new creativity, dependability, and reliability. I am passionately committed to promoting data quality as a key factor in strengthening and distinguishing our association.”

Professional Record: Thoroughbred Opinion Research (National Data Questing) – Vice President Bus. Dev. (2003-present); The Analytical Group – Account Executive (2001-2002); Western Wats Center – Sales (1991-2001)



GEORGE WILKERSON

“With over 20 years experience in the marketing research industry, and now as the leader of a fast growing and innovative marketing research firm, my commitment to and immersion in the issues that impact our industry is deep. Long an advocate for certification of individuals and firms, I would be excited to serve the industry through A period of time that I believe to be crucial to its growth.”

(1988-1994)
Education: BA, Political Science, UNC Chapel Hill
MRA National Involvement: Director At Large – Board of Directors (2004-2006); Business Services Work Group (2007-Present); Blue Book Task Force (2003); Professional Development Council (1998-2001); Alert! Editor (1996-1999)
MRA Chapter Involvement: Greater New York Chapter President (2002-2003); Board of Directors, Greater New York Chapter (1999-2002)&(2003-2004)
Other Business/Organization Involvement: American Marketing Association – Marketing Research Council (1993-1997); Received MRA's Award of Excellence (2000)

Education: Brigham Young University, Marriott School of Management; Bachelor's in Accounting & Business Management
MRA National Involvement: Information Resources Council Chairman (2000-2001); Professional Development Council Chairman (1999-2000); Professional Development Council Vice Chairman (1998-1999); Business Resource Council (1997-1998); Sponsorship Committee for Annual Conferences (2002-2007)
MRA Chapter Involvement: Southwest Chapter Board (2007-2008); Southwest Chapter Vice President (2004-2005); Southwest Chapter Board (1998-2004); Southwest Chapter Membership Committee (2007-2008); Southwest Chapter Conference Committee (1998-2008)
Other Business/Organization Involvement: American Marketing Association Chapter Treasurer (1994-1995); Boy Scouts of America Merit Badge Counselor (2004-2008); Neighborhood In Action District Chairman (City Government Volunteer) (2004-2008)

Professional Record: President – Flake-Wilkerson Market Insights, LLC (2000-2005); Chief Operating Officer - Flake-Wilkerson Market Insights, LLC (1996-2000); Vice President Division Manager – Maritz Marketing Research (1991-1996); IT/Systems Manager – Maritz Marketing Research (1984-1991)
Education: BBA – Computer Science – University of Central Arkansas
MRA National Involvement: Member (1990-Present)
MRA Chapter Involvement: Ethics Committee (2003-2004)
Other Business/Organization Involvement: AMA (1990-2005) Organization is a member of CASRO



2008-2009 Board of Directors Election Ballot

Please vote for the candidates of your choice by placing a check mark in the box next to his or her name. Return this card to our accountant (see address on reverse) by mailing it in an envelope.

Only signed ballots will be counted and must be postmarked no later than April 18, 2008.

Unopposed candidates **must have check mark** to count as a vote

**Directors At Large
End Users**
(Vote for 1 for two-year term)

☐ David Ashley

☐ Rebecca Graham

☐ Linda Lynch

President-Elect
(Unopposed for a one-year term)

☐ Kim Larson

**Directors At Large
Data Collectors**
(Vote for 1 for two-year term)

☐ Ginger Blazier

☐ Magda Cooling

☐ Angela Lorinchak

**Directors At Large
Research Supplier**
(Vote for 3 for two-year term)

☐ Elisa Galloway

☐ Anne Hedde

☐ Carla Lindemann

☐ Victor Walsh

☐ George Wilkerson

Your Name: _____

Your Signature: _____

Mr. Michael P. Sweeney
Certified Public Accountant
945 Hopmeadow Street
Simsbury, CT 06070

All Ballots must be post-marked by:
April 18th, 2008



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Glastonbury, CT 06033
www.mra-net.org (860) 682-1000
e-mail: info@mra-net.org Web: www.mra-net.org



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- ☐ None of the above

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keeping together is progress;
working together is success.
—Henry Ford

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Upcoming Conferences

June 4-6, 2008: MRA Annual Conference and RIF
Marriott New York Marquis

Nov. 3-5, 2008: MRA Fall Conference and RIF
JW Marriott Las Vegas

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