



Marketing Research Association  
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# Alert!

PRESIDENTIAL PERSPECTIVE

## Returning to "Normal" In Times of Tragedy

By Carl Iseman, Assistance in  
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MRA President,  
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**"A journey of a  
thousand miles  
must begin with a  
single step."**

— Lao-tzu



Carl Iseman,  
MRA President

As I sat down to write this latest editorial, I tried to envision the world as we knew it before September 11th, and like most Americans, had a difficult time. Although these tragic events are slowly slipping from prime time, it has made an indelible impression

on the psyche of the American landscape, and beyond. The questions that have been asked remain—How do we recover from such a tragedy? Will we ever truly recover from the devastation? How will those of us who have been directly affected by this tragedy recover? How do we explain to our children that they must go on living and not let this deter us from living "normal" lives?

The same questions can be asked of our businesses. How do we accommodate this change? How

can we return to normal when many of our clients face business imposed travel restrictions, or are afraid to travel far from home? The answer I keep coming up with is that we must move forward, no matter how painful it is.

Complicating the situation is the economy and its impact on New

York and the rest of the country. Already we've heard of the rippling effects...no more airport interviewing, clients unable to afford to travel, clients whose companies no longer exist, and the list goes on. As someone who regularly uses focus group facilities in New York City, I have a concern:

When things have settled down, will there be anyone left to handle my groups? How long can these facilities, moderators and full service research companies survive if no one wants to go anywhere near "the city?"

Instead of focusing on what has happened to us, let's focus on what we can do to tip the balance back in our favor. Let's spend our energy supporting our colleagues who were directly affected, with the hope that little by little, we can return to some semblance of "normal." For my part, I've told my staff that any recruiting we don't have the capacity to handle will be subcontracted to facilities in New York City. It may seem like a small step, but as the philosopher Lao-tzu once said, "A journey of a thousand miles must begin with a single step."

Now imagine: What if every focus group facility across the nation used their colleagues in New York to help out when they have the need to subcontract, wouldn't it make a difference? It might. It might make the difference between laying off that experienced recruiter or holding onto them for another week or more.

I don't mean to be simplistic, but these are times that require our creativity, resourcefulness and some personal sacrifice. Although our world has forever changed, surely our collective steps can shorten the journey to "normalcy." How many other ideas are out there that could help over the long run? What steps can you take on this journey? I know you've heard me ask such rhetorical questions before, and frankly, the response has been quite limited. This time I'm hoping that you've been thinking similar thoughts and that by the time this is published, you've already started to do your share to help your colleagues in need.



**Legislative Watch:  
Do You Know the Law? page 3**

**MRA Conference Schedule  
2002 page 12**



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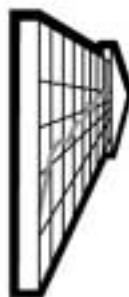


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# Do You Know The Law?



By Donna Gillin,  
Director of Government Affairs,  
Council for Marketing and  
Opinion Research (CMOR),  
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**Do you know if New York  
State's do-not-call law  
exempts research calls?**


**Does California law require  
consent from a respondent  
to monitor a telephone  
interview?**

In answer to the preceding questions: the New York do-not-call law implicitly exempts research calls and under California law, respondents would have to consent to the monitoring of telephone interviews.

It is important that every member of the research community be aware of the laws that affect survey research. As part of its efforts to educate the research industry regarding such laws, the Council for Marketing and Opinion Research (CMOR) has published information regarding the state do-not-call registry laws, e-mail solicitation laws, and telephone monitoring consent requirements.

Each of these publications provides valuable information for attorneys representing companies in the survey research com-

munity and/or survey research professionals concerned about these laws. The publications are available free of charge to CMOR members, to nonmembers for a fee and at a reduced rate for nonmembers who belong to a CMOR member association such as the Marketing Research Association (MRA). For additional information on how to receive these publications, visit CMOR online at [www.cmor.org](http://www.cmor.org) or contact CMOR's Director of Government Affairs, Donna Gillin, at 631-696-2544 or via e-mail at [dgillin@cmor.org](mailto:dgillin@cmor.org).

CMOR will continue its efforts to educate the research community about pending and enacted legislation that could impact research. For further details on CMOR's Government Affairs efforts, please visit the CMOR Web site at [www.cmor.org](http://www.cmor.org). 

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## Letters to the Editor



Marketing Research Association

### To the Editor:

I don't generally send e-mails or letters of appreciation or complaint to magazines, but I'd like to congratulate you and the MRA magazine Staff on an outstanding issue of *Alert!* this month.

It was informative, well-laid out and full of interesting and readable articles of genuine use to MRA members. Carl Iseman did

an excellent job of communicating MRA's current state of affairs and reporting results of the recent MRA survey; I was glad to see Len Homer's article on questionnaire wording; and Josef-Konrad Radomski's article on Computer Viruses was absolutely outstanding. Every MRA member should read it, heed it and distribute it to company staff.

Thanks for a great job!

— Hank Copeland  
President  
Pulse Train/Star Data  
Systems, Inc.

### To the Editor:

Re: September article, "Words:  
They Can Make or Break Your  
Questionnaire"

Thank you for the walk down

memory lane. [As the author] I truly feel ancient. I wrote this article in the spring of 1982. In reviewing it after so many years, I find that it is still relevant. I suspect there are many more archived articles that could be resurrected. Keep up your search.

— Leonard M Homer, Ph.D.  
Homer Market Research  
Assoc., Inc. 

### Submissions To *Alert!* Always Welcome

Submissions to *Alert!* are welcome at any time and should be sent to Brucie Izard, Newsletter Editor, at MRA Headquarters, 1344 Silas Deane Hwy., Suite 306, PO Box 230, Rocky Hill, CT 06067-0230. Articles are edited for content, length and interest to MRA members. The deadline is the 1st day of the month preceding publication.

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# Nominating Committee Announced

**Submitted by Peter Van Brunt, ReData, Inc., MRA President-Elect**

**"I am pleased to announce that I have been able to assemble a very talented and representative group of volunteers to serve as this year's nominating committee."**

One of the first responsibilities of the President-Elect of MRA is the selection and chairing of the Nominating Committee for the purpose of choosing candidates to run for the next Board of Directors. This is an important responsibility because identifying prospective leaders of the Association plays a big part in the direction that our Association will take in the future. We look for candidates who not only will advance our Strategic Plan, but who also have the insight and the vision to help our Association thrive and play an essential role in fulfilling the needs of our members as well as advancing the research profession.

I am pleased to announce that I have been able to assemble a very talented and representative group of volunteers to serve as this year's Nominating Committee:

Ed Bergo, *West Group Research*  
 Elyse Gammer, Ex-Officio as Manager,  
*Professional Standards Committee*  
 Laurence Hills, Jr., *Microtab Incorporated*  
 Judy Hominy, *Pat Henry Market Research*  
 Betsy Peterson, Ex-Officio as Executive  
 Director  
 David Phife, *Directions in Research*

Recommendations for candidates are not just generated by the nominating committee. The entire membership is encouraged to help with the process. Please review the criteria for selection outlined below, and fax (860-257-3990) or e-mail ([betsy.peterson@mra-net.org](mailto:betsy.peterson@mra-net.org)) any suggestions you

might have to Betsy Peterson at MRA Headquarters. Your assistance will help assure that we have the best possible candidates.

The four major competencies that Board members need to be successful are:

- financial knowledge/understanding
- visionary capacity; that is, the ability to imagine a desired future for the organization
- strong communication skills
- ability to empower others, i.e., the ability to see the "big picture"

The timeline for the nominating committee is as follows:

- **November:** Nominating Committee finalizes 2002-2003 election slate
- **January:** Board candidates are announced in the January issue of Alert! and on the Web site
- **March:** Election ballots are mailed to members and the results are tabulated by MRA's accounting firm
- **April:** Board and candidate notification of election results is complete
- **May:** Newly elected Board members are announced in Alert! and on the Web site
- **June:** 2002-2003 Board of Directors is installed at the Member Forum during the 2002 Annual Conference in Washington, D.C.

We look forward to receiving your suggestions. 



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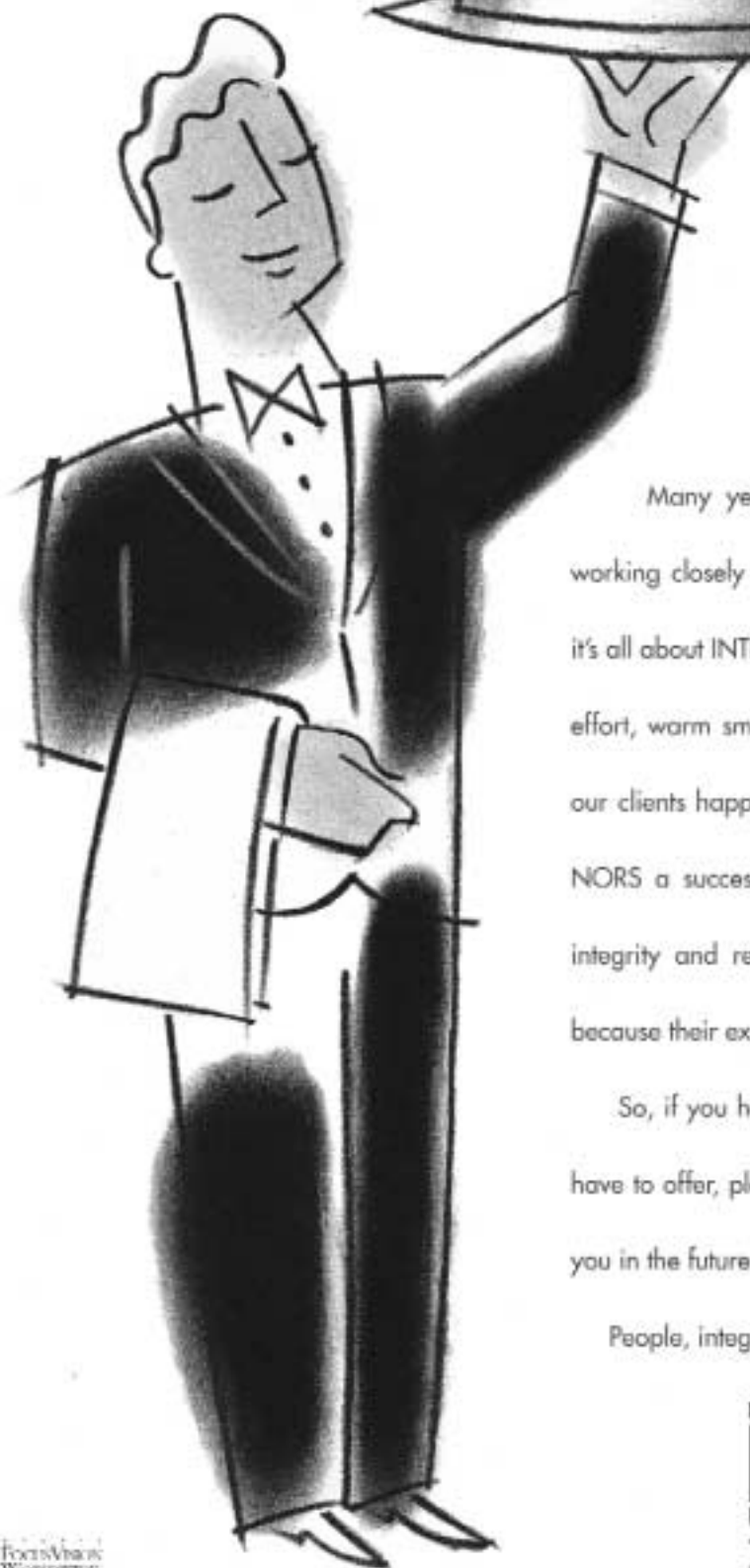
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**Nonmembers are welcome to submit a proposal.**

Deadline for presentation submission: December 14, 2001.  
Please contact Linda Schoenborn, MRA Headquarters  
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# 2002 Respondent Satisfaction Measurement Study

By Jane Sheppard,  
Council for Marketing and  
Opinion Research,  
jsheppard@cmor.org

**Money or nothing  
rules incentives.  
Studies with  
face-to-face contact  
or interaction  
preferred over  
phone, Internet or  
mail studies. New  
data continues to  
support prior  
learning.**



Jane Sheppard

The main objectives of this study were to:

- Monitor survey participation satisfaction among respondents
- Provide feedback that may aid in improving questionnaires
- Communicate to

respondents that the research industry is caring and listening.

The short term benefit for participating companies is to compare their survey quality to industry norms, and understand what survey techniques and tools work better with respondents than others. The analysis shows what the drivers of a good survey experience are, so that these lessons can be applied to individual survey practices.

## Methodology

Specifically, the following question was appended to the end of all surveys for every study type (phone, mall, mail and Internet), and survey length, topic and other key indicators were tracked.

*Thank you very much for taking part in this survey. Because consumers like you are such a valued part of what we do, I'd like you to think about the survey you just participated in. On a scale from 1 to 10 where 10 means "It was a good use of my time," and one means "It was not a good use of my time," which number between 1 and 10 best describes how you feel about your experience today.*

Data was collected from 1,016 studies with a sample size of 558,836 respondents and entered in a Web-based data entry form. Dr. Steve Everett, The Everett Group, designed and performed the analysis.

## Satisfaction and Interview Type

Pre-recruited interviews received the highest satisfaction score of 8.7 over any other methodology. Mall (8.3), disk by mail (8.2) and central location tests (CLT) (8.1), also fared well. All three of these methodologies required the respondent to be involved actively using a computer or conducting an activity or task and may be seen as more valuable use of their time. Studies using hands-on interactive material receive higher satisfaction

scores (8.1 vs. 7.7) than those without some type of interaction.

## Satisfaction and Incentives

Money is still the preferred incentive with a satisfaction rating of 8.2 over the use of sweepstakes (6.3) or other tokens of appreciation (7.3), such as products or gift items. In fact, no incentives receive higher satisfaction scores, pulling in a 7.7 than those with incentives offered. Once the respondent gets into the survey exercise, many respondents think it's worthwhile to participate.

However, incentives other than money are related to higher satisfaction scores for phone surveys. As for the mail survey, money isn't related to higher satisfaction either. It is possible that the small dollar amounts of incentives typically sent with mail surveys leave respondents believing their time isn't worth more than the dollar or so that was included.

## Satisfaction and the Introduction

When interview length is mentioned to respondents in the introduction, satisfaction scores are higher in pre-recruited (8.8 vs. 8.6) and phone (7.8 vs. 7.5) studies.

The mention of the subject in the introduction is most effective in pre-recruited (8.8 vs. 8.6) and mall (8.4 vs. 8.1) studies.

Overall, the statement referring to "no sales" is very effective for all studies in general, however, satisfaction scores are the highest for CLT (8.4 vs. 8.1) and Internet (7.9 vs. 7.6) studies.

## Satisfaction and Interview Length

Satisfaction scores were highest (8.1) with studies 10-20 minutes in length, closely followed (8.0) by studies 26 minutes or longer. However, the studies longer in length are related to the mall, pre-recruited and CLT studies that have some type of interaction. Even though the study length was much shorter with phone, mail, or Internet studies, those modes of interviewing appear much less satisfying.

## Satisfaction and Study Types

Concept/product studies (8.5) generate the highest satisfaction levels with customer satisfaction close-

*Continued on page 8*

## 2002 Respondent Satisfaction...

*Continued from page 7*

ly behind (8.4), while tracking studies are least satisfying (6.7).

### Preliminary Conclusions

- Respondent satisfaction and cooperation are driven by different variables. A study element associated with higher satisfaction may pose problems for achieving initial cooperation.
- Incentives have a complex, nonlinear relationship with respondent satisfaction. Money is preferred for most studies or nothing at all.
- Interview length also shows no easily interpreted, linear relationship with satisfaction.
- Overall, satisfaction tends to increase as respondent involvement in the task increases.
- Novel administration tech-

niques can yield higher satisfaction scores.

- Hands-on or moderated activities tend to score higher on satisfaction.

### Preliminary Recommendations

- Consider incentive choices thoroughly. Money tends to be the most effective incentive driver for satisfaction. However, in many cases, satisfaction can be equally high with no incentive.
- Keep study introduction as short as possible since "less is more." A statement about "no sales" is very effective for most studies.
- Make interviews and/or surveys as involving and interesting for respondents as possible.
- Use the mean satisfaction scores as yardsticks for assessing your own respondents' satisfaction with the research experience.

The study results continue to support the value of CMOR's Recommendations to Improve Respondent Cooperation, affirming that the researchers' ultimate objective is to ensure that with every contact:

1. Respondents will participate in surveys willingly
2. Respondents are informed about the survey's intentions
3. Respondents will be satisfied with the survey experience
4. Respondents will be willing to participate again **!**

## Did You Know?...

The MRA Calendar Online has moved to the home page of our Web site! Under "Upcoming Events" you'll find industry events happening in the next 30 days. Click on any event for more details. You can also search the calendar to get events by organization, keyword or date.

See our Web site [www.mra-net.org](http://www.mra-net.org) for a more complete list of events.

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# Marketing Transformation— Research for the Bottom Line

**By Michael Mermelstein,  
Evans McDonough Co., Inc.,  
MRA Board of Directors  
Secretary**

**"The ESOMAR  
Conference presented  
an opportunity for  
different associations  
from around the  
world to meet and  
discuss issues  
impacting the conduct  
of research in their  
countries."**

The 2001 ESOMAR (The World Association of Research Professionals) Congress, Marketing Transformation – Research for the Bottom Line, was held in Rome, Italy from September 23–25. Over 1,000 delegates from 66 countries attended the Congress this year.

Many American delegates who planned on attending were unable, due to the events of Sept. 11, leaving a 25% representation. For those of us who made the trip, we found a very warm, heart-felt welcome, with good wishes and hopes that everyone we knew or were related to were safe.

The theme of the Congress focused on transformation, and the challenges and opportunities for research in the future. The program included presentations on the changing nature of research in society, business, consumer insight and customer relationship management.

Keynote speakers included: the CEO of Telecom Italia Lab, the Worldwide Marketing Director of Fiat Auto, and the CEO of Philips Design. Topics of discussion ranged from market success in times of change, to using brand communications to enhance corporate values, and achieving business sustainability. The final session was a provocative keynote talk by a Futurologist for British Telecom's Communication Consultancy Group.

A second focus was the presentations and panels explaining the work of RELEAS. RELEAS (Research Leadership Summit) is a three year process to identify the challenges and opportunities facing the research profession. Meeting in early 2001, the summit established committees to review different facets facing the profession. At the Congress, the committees discussed their work to-date, followed by panel discussions. One session considered a possible redefinition of research aimed at improving the perception and perceived value of research by the consumer, as well as by business leaders. A second session discussed the client-supplier relationship from the client's perspective. Finally, a third session outlined its work on the affects of data privacy, and the threat posed by other possible worldwide legislation and regulations. There was also a call for forming a worldwide effort to combat such legislation, patterned after the effort being made by the Council for Marketing and Opinion Research (CMOR) in the U.S.

In addition to the presentations and discussions, over 45 companies offering worldwide samples, various types of software for the research profession, and research and field services from around the world, exhibited at the Congress. The exhibits were informative, interesting and useful in learning about new methods and tools to enhance the services we offer our clients.

The ESOMAR Congress also presented an opportunity for different associations from around the world to meet and discuss issues impacting the conduct of research in their countries. This meeting, called GRAN, met on the Sunday before the Congress began, and included representatives from 35 associations and 29 countries. Peter van Brunt (Marketing Research Association (MRA) President-Elect) and I attended this session as representatives for MRA.

At this meeting, we discussed legislative threats to the research profession. Ireland, Austria, Greece and Poland recently faced efforts from regulators to control public opinion polls, making it difficult for them to carry out their research. These efforts were thwarted by ESOMAR and other association actions. Another discussion focused on data protection (privacy) legislation, which impacts the whole marketing research process. In both cases, ESOMAR developed strategies to explain to legislators and regulators the reasons why research should be exempt from privacy laws. One argument is the strong self-regulation efforts of the profession. Self-regulation helps legislators apply appropriate rules and avoid restrictive legislation.

The last discussion focused on the idea of creating quality standards. There are several countries that have official national standards. EFAMO, a British association, is leading an effort to develop International Standard of Organizations (ISO) standards to be adopted and accepted on an international basis. These efforts, among other things, would create standards for general sales conditions, precise definitions, and management of sub-contractors. The goal is that as the profession matures, it will be more professional and responsible.

Overall, this year's Congress presented an opportunity for marketing research professionals to reconsider how they've done business in the past and transform how they do it in the future. **!**

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# Researchers' Retreat



Marketing Research Association

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- Means of motivating to produce better results
- Enhancing confidence in dealing with ever-changing business/industry needs



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## Schedule:

Thursday, January 31	Dinner	Time to be determined
Friday, February 1	Seminar	8:30 am - 4:00 pm

Look for additional information in the next issue of The Alert, visit the web at [www.glcmra.org](http://www.glcmra.org), or contact Terilyn Reber Vaught at ACNielsen BASES at (859) 905-4384.

# Who's Your Competition? Exploring Mickey Mouse Customer Service

By Josef-Konrad Radomski,  
Vice-President, Megatab,  
jk@megatab.com

**"[Customer service] goes beyond Walt Disney's promise to 'create happiness by providing the finest in entertainment to people of all ages, everywhere.'"**

Anyone who has ever visited Walt Disney World may have noticed the excellent customer service they've received while waiting in line to ride Splash

Mountain, while ordering a smoked Turkey Leg from an outdoor stand, or buying tickets to the parks and attractions. This was certainly my reaction after a recent trip there, and it started me thinking.

My first reaction was, "Wow! The people working the parks sure are friendly." But other words—courteous, polite, helpful, available, and odd—also come to mind. The service was exceptional. Employees were doing whatever they could to make sure each visitor's experience was a magical one. And unbelievably, this mentality ran deep, not only throughout the parks, but at the resorts and hotels, and even at your local Disney Store.

It goes beyond Walt Disney's promise to "create happiness by providing the finest in entertainment to people of all ages, everywhere." It's ingrained in the Disney culture and is a big part of the experience, or show, you get with the price of admission. That's why Disney calls its customers "guests," and refers to its staff as "cast members." To them, it's more than just for show—it's serious business. While there are many facets to Disney's customer service philosophy, one of the key aspects is the competition.

Your initial reaction might be to name other theme parks, Universal Studios or any of the many Six Flags locations for instance, but you would be incorrect. Disney competes with Federal Express, Microsoft, GE, L.L. Bean, and any blue chip company you can think of. They are, in effect, in competition with any company that can raise customer expectations. Think about it. Guests have no problem waiting in line for 20 minutes, anticipating a boat ride with the Pirates of the Caribbean, but these same people become very impatient when the slow-moving line at the bank takes half that time. This is because Disney knows there's going to be a few lines, and makes sure you're entertained during your wait with music

## PART ONE OF A Two-Part Series

and sound effects, set pieces, pre-shows, and décor that puts you in the mood and into the storyline.

Now imagine your bank doing the same, but minus the pirates and their cutthroat behaviour, even if it might be ironically appropriate. Maybe your bank can improve the wait in line with a lounge area complete with comfy sofas and the latest business magazines, or by hanging small televisions on the ceilings airing financial reports, news, or maybe even cartoons.

Part of this competitive philosophy is that Disney believes its Guests compare experiences across businesses. If another company, no matter what business, satisfies their customers better than you do yours, you will be compared to them in a negative light.

Does that mean if your company specializes in data collection, data processing, or analysis, you should be weary of companies selling fast food, hockey sticks, and your neighbourhood drug store? In a word, yes. They are your competition too.

Think about the last time you checked into an airport and dropped off your bags. You probably repeated the dreaded airline mantra of, "I hope my bags don't end up in Hawaii." (Unless, you were going to Hawaii, of course.) But then, you don't have that problem with FedEx. You simply, and with blind faith, drop your important tables and analysis report into a FedEx pickup box, and somehow you know it will get to its destination the next morning, whether it's Atlanta or the middle of the Nevada desert. Yet, why is it that while both your airline and FedEx are doing close to the same thing—moving your belongings from one destination to another—you're less worried about FedEx coming through with its promises?

### Expectations

You've come to expect FedEx will guarantee your packages will be hand delivered from point A to point B. It's a part of their new "Drop Everything" motto. And now, you're moving that expectation to your airline. If they're both doing the same thing, why can't they both do it equally well? Think about the last time you called up several field companies to bid on a project. Did one of

*Continued on page 12*

# Confidence is a wonderful thing.



## Question is, how confident are you?

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## Who's Your Competition?...

*Continued from page 11*

them get back to you in an hour, and did another take two days?

Both companies are in business doing the same thing, yet one responded to you faster than the other. After price and other details are weighed, the company acting faster to answer my questions would probably get my bid. They've already built up my expectations that they understand deadlines, and take their business seriously. I might perceive the other company to be slacking off, or too busy to give my project the attention that it needs.

Did the company with the fast response time also have a polite and pleasant phone manner? Bonus. I would almost expect their interviewers to be like-minded. While some might argue that the customer service offered by Disney is a little extreme at times, I feel that after a week there, I have been affected and I am now less tolerant when it comes to dealing with sub par service. Is there anything wrong with: hoping the waitress at my nearby sushi restaurant asks me if I'm having a nice day and gets my order right; expecting that my dry cleaner's promise that a suit will be pressed and ready for 5:00 p.m. is kept, and I'm not dealing with his lame excuses when 5:30 p.m. comes around; or if the surveys I was expecting to start data entry on arrived on time, as the courier company pledged.

Aside from building my expectations, my trip has also made me think about how I do business, and what changes I should implement if I want to improve myself and compete with the Mouse.

Am I too brusque with clients when I'm under a lot of stress? Do I make a good impression when new clients call and ask about the services we offer? And while I'm good at keeping promises, what can I do to not just meet deadlines, but have client deliverables ready well before they're due? In our industry, that would be the equivalent of Disney "magic."

It's a bitter pill to swallow when you think about your customer base, and wonder how many of them may have been a Disney Guest at some point in their lives, or how many might have called FedEx to pick up a package and gotten a quick blast of wonderful customer service. And then wonder how their expectations might have been raised.

Is the Disney Guest buying a Tigger mug and some Mickey Mouse-themed Christmas Ornaments this month, treated better and with more courtesy than when they call your company up for a marketing research-related service? If so, then you're also competing with Disney.

*Next month, I'll look at how Disney conducts its marketing research—what it calls Guestology—and how those simple lessons can be applied to your company. !*

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# Young Adults, Emerging Technology and Investing: The New Way of Doing Business

By David Morrison,  
TWENTYSOMETHING™ Inc.  
www.twentysomething.com

**One-third of all  
U.S. millionaires are  
35 years of age or  
younger.**

The worlds of investing and emerging technology are rapidly converging with today's 18–34 year-olds aggressively paving the way. Young adults represent both active investors, more than any preceding generation at that age, as well as the greatest concentration of early adopters for emerging “hi-tech” products and services. Of particular importance, TWENTYSOMETHING™ INC.'s groundbreaking TECHINVEST™ study has also uncovered the fact that young adults of the new millennium are leveraging technology to gain a competitive financial advantage that was pure science fiction only a few years ago. This may partly explain why one-third of all U.S. millionaires are 35 years of age or younger.

This article will focus on notable findings from one key chapter of the TECHINVEST™ study that segments today's online young adult market into three distinct investor profiles:

- Upwardly Mobiles
- Curious Bystanders
- Indifferents

Such market dissection provides a rarified and insightful glimpse into the current and future market potential of young adult consumers, their unique subcultures, and the awesome paradigm shifts that are starting to reverberate in industries as far reaching as banking/insurance to personal computing and wireless communications.

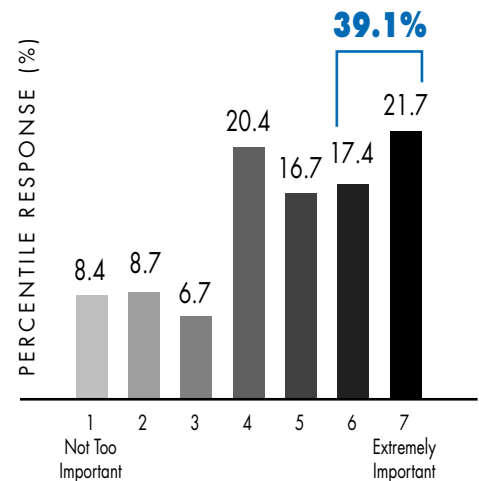
The study is based on a recent survey of young adults, investing, and technology, conducted among a nationwide sample of 18–34 year-olds, all with Internet access. Most significantly, we uncovered the fact that neither age nor income function as the sole indicators of investing involvement or preferred technology “tools.” While the emotional maturity and personal net worth of a consumer can have a profound impact on investing behavior and related product usage, how a particular respondent perceives the importance of financial planning can play an equally important role, if not more so.

## Setting the Stage: The Perceived Importance of Financial Planning

Most of the 18–34 year-olds interviewed online

feel that financial planning is an activity that shouldn't be treated lightly. When asked to rank its importance, responses skewed towards “extremely important” with 39.1% of the respondent sample providing a top two box score rating and nearly one quarter (21.7%) providing the highest possible rating (Figure 1).

Figure 1



By segmenting the responses based on perceived importance ratings, our firm created three “skeletal” labels. We then took a relatively novel approach to uncover statistically projectable (and strategically relevant) information to flesh out the skeletal classifications. Carefully constructed data mining strategies were blended with interpretive extrapolation based on TWENTYSOMETHING™ INC.'s exclusive focus on the young adult market and multi-category experience, as well as respondent verbatims elicited by the survey.

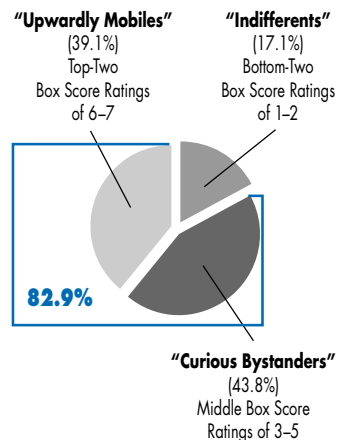
As Figure 2 indicates, at least 82.9% of the young adults online appear primed to invest or are already actively engaged in such activities. This cornerstone finding corresponds to ongoing research, which indicates that today's young adults are both saving a greater percentage of their incomes and doing so at an earlier age than preceding generations.

*Continued on page 14*

## Young Adults...

Continued from page 13

Figure 2



While Upwardly Mobiles, Curious Bystanders, and Indifferents may very well exhibit several overlapping characteristics reflecting a generation's collective consciousness, a comprehensive look at these subsets clearly reveals that each subset has unique needs, preferences, fears, and aspirations. Moreover, each profile reveals a distinctive relationship with emerging technology as far as personal investing/finances are concerned.

### Upwardly Mobiles

Comprising 39.1% of the sample, Upwardly Mobiles are acutely aware of the importance of long-term financial planning. Comments from this group reflect a high degree of category sophistication as well as involvement. Upwardly Mobiles are more likely to be older (45.3% are 28-34 years of age) and nearly twice as likely to be married (35.8%) versus the Indifferents. This subgroup is demonstrably more likely than the other subsets to use emerging technologies to become more educated on the topic of financial planning, as well as to conduct research and complete transactions. As the following respondent quote indicates, Upwardly Mobiles are quick to embrace the Internet because of its inherent benefits for convenience, increased control, and greater productivity.

"Electronic financial transactions have become the heart of my bill paying and investing strategy. I utilize my online trading accounts regularly in an effort to maintain my long-term retirement and investment portfolios."

Upwardly Mobiles are fiercely independent, and they view proper financial planning as a means of minimizing future financial uncertainty (i.e., the path to personal empowerment). The underlying behavioral driver is the quest for self-control over their professional and personal lives. There's an underlying fear of being "trapped" in a job later in life that can be mitigated with early (and aggressive) planning in the present. They acknowledge living in a chaotic and uncertain world and recognize that early financial planning can provide both near-term as well as long-term peace of mind.

"Retirement plans, Social Security, and anything else that says you are saving for your future is usually a lot of 'bull.' You have to watch out for yourself and take [responsibility] to make sure you are taken care of when you get to retirement age. Otherwise you will work your whole life paycheck to paycheck."

Upwardly Mobiles are bearish on Social Security and believe that other future supplemental sources of income are absolutely essential. This subset believes that it will need additional sources of income above and beyond Social Security to comfortably retire; this mindset represents a dramatic departure from past generations.

"I know that there will not be any Social Security when I reach the age to receive it so I have to prepare my finances now, at age 29, to live comfortably at the age of 65."

Such pessimism regarding the future of Social Security is well founded since the U.S. government reports that the program is expected to become insolvent in 2038 A.D. To add perspective, today's 18-34 year olds would be between 55-71 years old at that time – precisely at retirement age when Social Security income will be needed most.

### Curious Bystanders

Curious Bystanders, comprising 43.8% of the young adults interviewed, are modestly interested in financial investing but haven't been fully activated. We believe that this market segment exists in such magnitude because it continues to be overlooked by the traditional financial/investing community.

"I recently signed up for a 401(k) at work and, as I start to earn more money, it has become apparent to me that investing is crucial to my future."

"I'm just starting to think about investing... because of the kids and our new home."

Curious Bystanders are more likely to be older (47.3% are 28-34 year olds), male (61.8%), and twice as likely to be married (39.7%) versus the Indifferents. Given their concerns about future financial independence, this market is primed for on-target advertising and marketing.

Curious Bystanders represent a unique new business opportunity because they have little brand loyalties (if any) and would be highly receptive to the first firm that addresses their specific mindset and lifestyle. This segment is primed for on-target advertising and marketing.

Continued on next page



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ment would require a somewhat different call-to-action. A two-pronged message that (1) highlights the relationship between long-term planning and personal freedom, and (2) demonstrates that such planning can begin with a small amount of money could trigger this large, dormant market. We strongly believe that a category first-mover with an on-target implementation strategy could generate an enviable long-term competitive advantage. An industry leader could further increase market penetration or a relative category newcomer might be able to generate instant market share.

### Indifferents

Indifferents, comprising only 17.1% of the sample, expressed little or no interest in financial investing/planning. They typically lack the perceived discretionary funds or are too focused on the present. Indifferents are more likely to be younger (40.0% are 18-22 years old), female (54.9%), and half as likely to be married (19.6%) versus the Upwardly Mobile or Curious Bystanders. Many Indifferents feel powerless to participate in financial investing at the present time because of their limited monetary resources or lack of category comfort or interest.

"I don't worry about investing right now... there's plenty of time for that in the future."

"I can't afford to plan for [my] financial future because I cannot afford to pay for financial responsibilities right now!"

"Hmmmm, I know it's important but I just can't bring myself to care."

Several Indifferents clearly demonstrate that ignorance and/or status quo bias are the

primary obstacles blocking category involvement. Age is frequently touted as a reason for not planning among younger Indifferents who are likely to use a lifestyle argument to bolster their lack of category involvement. It merits noting that an Indifferent may, in actuality, be letting another household member handle the finances such as a spouse, parent, guardian, or professional. Since many Indifferents avoid investing because of a vague phobia concerning personal finances, it is probably best to focus on key influencers or gatekeepers when appropriate.

### Three Internet-Related Products/Services: A Case in Point

The charts in Figures 3-5 consistently demonstrate how usage of emerging financial products and service technologies directly corresponds to category involvement. (Charts represent market penetration on a per profile basis.)

Without question, Upwardly Mobiles are the most likely subset to leverage emerging technologies, especially Internet-based services. The fact that Personalized Financial Websites and Automated Online Billing Services Accounts are either "low fee or no fee" rules out any price bias that could be associated with potentially higher personal incomes or discretionary funds. (Such services are frequently provided free of charge by investment firms and banks as a means of promoting site stickiness, online traffic, and brand loyalty.) While income may play a role insofar as "smart" phones are concerned, since these Internet-capable cellular phones are obviously more expensive than their traditional counterparts, supporting respondent quotes suggest that other dynamics are most certainly at play. These themes resonate through all three chart sequences as usage is highest among Upwardly Mobiles and lowest among Indifferents.

Continued on page 16

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## Young Adults...

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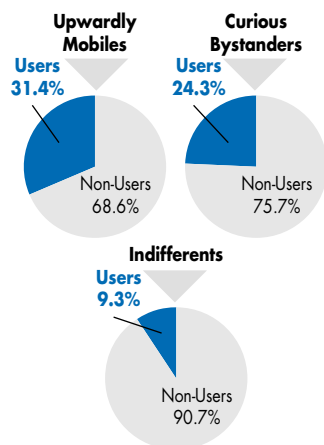
Upwardly Mobiles are quick to see the benefits of new technologies, especially Internet-oriented offerings, and embrace them to their advantage. Members of this young adult subset are the true early adopters within this genre and may very well be leveraging "hi-tech" products or services in ways that marketers may not even be aware of.

### Final Thoughts

Having specialized in young adult consulting and research for over a decade, TWENTYSOMETHING™ INC. has watched young adults become increasingly more self-reliant in the face of increasing societal adversity and economic uncertainty. This oft misunderstood audience is savvy, highly independent, resourceful, resilient, forward-thinking, and exceptionally comfortable with new technology. (To potential detractors

Figure 3

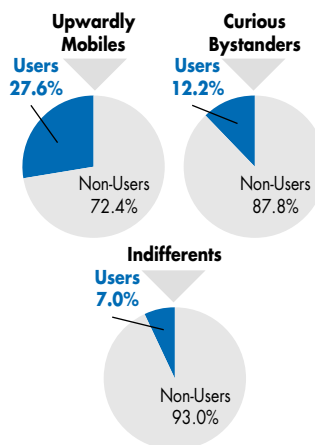
### Automated Online Billing Services Accounts



tors that might cite the "boomerang" phenomenon of recent college grads moving back home, one can easily argue that this phenomenon is a logical reaction to market dynamics and represents a highly rational response since a greater share of earned income can be allocated either to discretionary spending or investing.)

Figure 4

### Personalized Financial Website Accounts

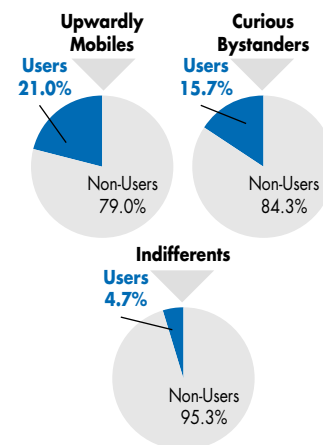


Today's young adults represent a new breed of consumers for financial service providers and "hi-tech" companies. They are marrying later and deferring childbearing; thus, freeing up greater discretionary income for investing and new technology. This market seeks to counter any future adverse economic "surprises" by aggressively planning for the unexpected. And, lastly, there is a widespread obsession with wealth accumulation as the media still continues to portray twentysomething millionaires on prime-time. (It should be noted, however, that financial independence is more likely to be viewed as a gateway to personal freedom rather than the all-access pass to luxury goods.) Thus, the majority of traditional strategies, products, and communications associated with financial planning programs for young adults may be outdated. Such historic approaches are not necessarily relevant to today's 18-34 year olds.

Young adult investors are driven much more by endogenous (e.g., internal) motivators such as the desire to be self-sufficient and independent. Consequently, a "call-to-action" that addresses this market's unique needs can tap a largely missed business opportunity. Most importantly, it is critical that marketers recognize that the

Figure 5

### "Smart" Cellphones (Internet Capable)



three demo/psychographic groups uncovered within the TECHINVEST™ survey suggest that the market is by no means monolithic, and successful strategies must leverage the powerful themes that both connect as well as differentiate these important subsets. So, forget the erroneous "slacker" stereotype and remember that this cohort represents the world's first truly wired generation. The implications will be profound across a variety of businesses and are already creating powerful paradigm shifts that will inevitably redefine how marketers who can successfully reach young adults will laugh "all the way to the bank."

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# Validation—The Audit

By John Elrod, *The New Generation Research Group, Inc., The Management Notebook, Vol. 4, No.1*

**I have six serving men who taught me all I know. Their names are: WHO, WHAT, WHERE, WHEN, WHY and HOW.**

— Attributed to Rudyard Kipling and used as this outline

## WHAT is validation?

Validation is the procedure used to confirm the fact that an interview was conducted according to all specification and instructions and with the person indicated by the name, address and/or telephone number of the questionnaire. Validation is the process of verifying the questionnaire, field instructions, respondent address or location, demographics, telephone numbers, source of telephone numbers, and interactions between interviewer and respondent—which can include attitudes, interviewer “persona” and other things involved in the process of marketing research interviewing.

## WHO performs validation?

Someone other than the original maker or collector of the information should be the validator, conducted by a knowledgeable neutral third party. Validation can be performed by the data collection company and/or client in person, by telephone or by mail.

## WHERE is validation done?

Validation is done at data collection agencies, at the research supplier, at the research end-user, and at third party companies that may do this as a full time or as a fill-in function. At WATS facilities phone validation is often used as fill-ins to even workloads.

## WHEN is validation done?

Validation is done before, during and after the interview is conducted. The most popular form of validation is to check on “face-to-face” interviewing. Face-to-face includes: door to door interviewing, mall intercepts, and recruiting of “virgin” respondents of database recruiting for qualitative (focus groups and one-on-ones) and quantitative studies, such as central location taste tests. Data based studies are often checked before the interviewing is conducted. Below is the BEFORE, DURING and AFTER for validation.

- **BEFORE**—This “before the fact” checking is done by a field agency checking their own newly recruited respondents or checking prospective respondents from their existing database, for recent past participation. Validation is done by the field agency, when qualifying respondents. People are asked if they have participated in a study (e.g. focus group) in the past. Another validation check is where the field agency or the client (e.g., moderator) puts the prospective respondents through the

Duplicate Number Search to check for past participation, checking across all participating field agencies in the market.

- **DURING**—Validation is done during mall intercept studies, as onsite check by supervisors. If the job specifications call for the field agency to validate 10% of their work, this is done by the local supervisor, often as the field work continues to progress.
- **AFTER**—Most validation of consumer interviews is done as soon as possible after the work is completed by the field agencies. When the completed interviews and validation sheets arrive at a research supplier, they are ready to be validated. Some suppliers send their work to an outside phone validator, or validate themselves, or a combination of the above, or do no validation at all.

## WHY is validation done?

Validation is done to satisfy the “goodness” of the information. Bad data, at best, muddies an analysis. At worst, bad data can lead to incorrect conclusions and recommendation, and to bad marketing decisions. Did validation fail in the following two true stories?

## TRUE STORY #1

### Did Telephone Validation Fail?

A taste test was fielded on December 12, in three geographically different malls. The study incidence was very high and was for a snack product. The study among teens was to be out of the field on December 15. Because of Christmas shopping, most mall research shuts down around this time. Again, because of the time of year, it was felt there would be enough teens in the mall to achieve a quota of 50 respondents. When the supplier got the results from the three mall locations, they did their phone validation (in early January). In the mall in question, the phone validation contacted five people (10% phone validation of the 50 teens). Usually with phone validation of teens, you don't get to talk to the teens. Whatever transpired, the research supplier was satisfied with the validation. The results in the malls were such that two malls had significant results to Product A beating B.

That means that of all the teens in each of the two malls, at least 32 of 50 had to choose Product A. In the third mall, the results were 50-50, and not significant. The report was written, and when the third mall was included, the overall preference for Product A was not significant. In April of the fol-

*Continued on next page*

*Continued from previous page*

lowing year, the client research end user had the Duplicate Number Search performed, as a free trial, on the same three mall taste test data. In the findings for the 50-50 preference mall, 45 of the 50 respondents' mothers had been in a door-to-door test more than a year before. What was the probability that all these teenagers would have been in the mall and qualified, and been chosen, for this interview, and all living within a few blocks of each other?

It turned the mall agency owner/supervisor did five teens in the first day, but couldn't get others. The supervisor went back to her over-one-year-old validation sheets and copied the names and telephone numbers of people in the earlier door-to-door study. When the details of this story came to light, the supervisor was quoted as saying, "No harm was done." She had

the first of the 45 people choose Product A, the second person chose Product B, and so on, so that when all people were counted no one got hurt as there was "no preference."

### **TRUE STORY #2 Did the Duplicate Number Fail?**

In a multi-market mall study, which was put through the Duplicate Number Search, one market (let us call the field agency "X") came through with no duplication, whereas most other markets in the study had over a 10% duplication. The study was also telephone validated. The telephone validation results were so negative concerning the work of field agency "X," that the market had to be redone. The research supplier's standard for the field interviewing was that four interviewers were to do eight interviews each and that a briefing and practice interviews were to be conducted.

In the case of this "X" agency, there were 15 interviewers completing the 32 interviews, or slightly over two interviews per interviewer. The interviewer with the most interviews did four interviews. The reason the Duplicate Number Search did not find any matches was that there were none to be found. In a study of 82,515 mall interviewers, only 38% had any duplicates (62% had none). A disproportionately low number of duplicates are found with interviewers doing one or two interviews. Interviewers who do one interview, ("ACES") represent 11% of interviewers, and only 10% of these interviewers have any duplicates, versus 42% of all the other interviewers having duplicates. (Not shown in table below.) Almost an equal number of interviewers (10%) do two interviews, and only 18% of these interviewers have duplicates. Telephone calling the "X" field agency interviews found that most telephone

numbers did not exist (not assigned, not working, disconnected, etc.) Usually interviewers use the same set of friendly numbers, with changes in the names of the respondents. Although the supplier client has not used "X" again, the supplier, as many other research suppliers, allow interviewers to have one or two interviews. The moral to this story is that both the Duplicate Number Search and telephone validation are needed to check on the quality of the field work.

### **HOW is validation done?**

How validation is done is based on what is being validated as well as why. The following sections of this paper address the process of how various activities or standards affect the kinds of validations. These are grouped:

- Bidding considerations, prior to fielding a research study
- Activities during the fielding

*Continued on page 22*

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## Validation...

*Continued from page 19*

the study

- Activities after the fielding of the study

Many of the standards are excerpted from, or ideas taken from those of a major manufacturer's survey research standards.

### Auditing the Interviewing Process Prior to the Field

#### ***The keys to auditing are the standards to be set for the validation***

Standards should be objective, even though much of the process is subjective. The subjective can be looked at, as in the mind of an individual; the objective, as the computer program which will always arrive at the same conclusion given the same set of facts. Both objective and subjective evaluations are needed to set up good validation.

### Bidding

(One set of standards) for estimating field costs:

#### ***Considerations in Bidding Face-to-Face Interviews***

- No interviewer may be assigned more than one-fourth of any phase of the total city quota, which may not exceed 25 door-to-door or 50 central location tests (CLT). No in-home questionnaire should exceed 30 minutes, no CLT questionnaire should exceed 20 minutes.
- No respondent may participate in more than one test concurrently. A fairly common practice allows an interviewer to have more than one interview on her clipboard at once.
- He/She asks all people intercepted if they have some hard-to-find characteristic in the population, (say smokers of brand X) then asks the next most difficult screener

and so forth, until the high incidence characteristic questionnaire is reached. This is not allowed—but remember this raises the cost of the study.

- Each respondent must be screened individually. If respondents are pre-recruited, each respondent must be individually rescreened upon arrival at the test site.
- For door-to-door and reversed directory screened studies, the client should know who is controlling the study. It is best if the research supplier controls the preparation and checking of the sampling instructions as opposed to the field agencies. Maps should be used and maintained for every city worked. Individual starting points should be generated for each study. Separate instructions should be provided telling how to work the areas assigned. At the supplier level, when the study comes back from the field, the research firm should check that the interviews obtained match the areas originally specified.

Today, specialists are available in mapping land for door-to-doors as well as verifying if the people lived in the areas assigned. Computer mapping and electronic reverse directories have made the assignment task easier, but has not helped much in determining where interviewers feel safe and are willing to interview.

#### ***Considerations in Bidding Other Than Face-to-Face Interviews***

- No interviewer should be assigned more than 50 telephone interviews or one-fourth of all telephone interviews in a given study.
- In general, a minimum of three attempts should be made to reach a respondent in a random telephone study; also a minimum of

three attempts to reach a specific respondent on callbacks could be considerably higher.

- All phone interviews must be conducted from a central location phone facility. Interviewing from interviewers' homes is not permitted.

Reminder calls do not constitute an interview. Telephone questionnaires should not exceed 15 minutes.

- It is best if you specify the name of the source of your telephone lists.
- In terms of mail studies, the mail panel house, or the research supplier should outline in the bid:
  - a) Whether a screened panel already exists and the date of this screening
  - b) The length of the questionnaire (minutes for telephone and pages for self-administered questionnaires)
  - c) The number of versions of the questionnaire
  - d) The number of open-ends
  - e) Who the primary respondent will be (e.g., female head, adult males, primary users)
  - f) Size and weight of stimuli (must it be returned?)

In estimating field costs, you can definitely get a lower price for the work if all these rules or standards are not adhered to. The point of the bid is to spell out what you will get, and what you will lose, by amending these rules. Spell it out and pay for what you want.

### Auditing the Interviewing Process during the Fielding of a Study

- Each marketing research study must have a complete set of instructions for the field. These instructions must reiterate standards, such as the need for individual screening, the need to keep respondents separated, etc.

Specific instructions explaining questions or questionnaire procedures are required. Whenever possible these instructions should be printed directly on the questionnaires.

- A field kit containing all the documents and special handling instructions for products, show boards, etc., which are going to the field. It is suggested that this field kit also be sent to the client and other designates (e.g., advertising agency) for their files. Also, any changes in the questionnaire or field instructions after the original material has been sent to the field should be confirmed to the field in writing via fax, with copies to all field kit holders.
- Each interviewer should be briefed on each study. If replacement or additional interviewers are needed, each is briefed personally before doing any interviewing. The briefing should always include a practice interview, reviewed by the supervisor, with feedback given to the interviewer prior to the start of interviewing. Practice interviews are to be returned to the research firm for review and retained with the study materials.
- In the supervisor instructions there is a requirement in terms of number of days the study should take, the incidence of finding people who qualify for the questioning, the number of interviewers needed to complete the job, the number of questionnaires to be completed by each interviewer, and so forth.

### Auditing the Interviewing Process after the Fielding of the Study

The three areas that may be considered for auditing the interviewing process after the study has been returned from the field are shown below. *Continued on next page*

quantitative work the respondent interview record sheets (called validation sheets), which show each interviewer's work, are important in the analysis. Only telephone Validation and the Duplicate Number will be discussed in detail.

1. Telephone calling of respondents who have participated in the research study.
2. Matching telephone numbers of current respondents against a database of past respondents' telephone numbers, i.e., The Duplicate Number Search. (For qualitative work this happens before the fielding as a check on the respondent's interview history.)
3. Other special kinds of validation include: (a) checking door-to-door respondent areas and reverse telephone directory; (b) tests of surveys conducted by telephone, either WATS or local telephone.

### Telephone Validation

Telephone validation started in 1968, at a central location telephone facility of General Foods in White Plains, NY, now Kraft Foods, Inc. Validation is organized by interviewer, as the checking is on each interviewer's work.

### Tips for Telephone Validation

- Each interviewer should have conducted at least five interviews, so that at least two could be recontacted. (That's 20%, the old 10% rule applies if each interviewer does at least 10 interviews.)
- Each interviewer should have a minimum of two interviews checked, and a minimum of 10% of each interviewer's work. When phone validating a typical study with one-fifth of interviews having one or two interviews, it is more common to have to call 30-50% of interviews, to determine if the interviewers are to be accepted.
- At least two attempts should be made to reach a respon-

dent for validation, preferably on different days.

- Completed validations should be from different days of an interviewer's work, minimally AM and PM if the interviewer worked only one day.
- What is asked of the respondent, should follow the original questionnaire and the respondent should be told this is not another interview.
- No telephone calls after 9 pm, respondent's time. If a respondent was interviewed at a Houston, Texas mall, but resides in Los Angeles, California, she should be interviewed between 5 pm and 9 pm Pacific time on weekdays, or weekends until 9 pm.
- Rules should be established to end the validating of each interviewer. If the first interview checked is an invalid phone number, what do you do to maximize the probability that your interviewer is okay? The easier thing to do is to establish ratios of "good" to "bad" validations for all interviewers. For

example: an interviewer did five interviews. The first two called are valid. End calling.

What do you do when an interviewer does not test "okay?" The rule for many is to throw out the interviewer's work. Others will keep those respondents who tested valid, even if most of the interviewer's work was bad.

Set a rule. For example, an interviewer did 10 interviews in a mall over three days. The validator has a program established that sets a 3:1 good to bad ratio for interviewer acceptance. Contact #1 is a disconnected number, #2 finds a valid questionnaire, #3 is valid, #4 if valid, ends the check of that interviewer. If not, calling continues until the 3:1 ratio is met.

There are computer validation programs available that will set most calling parameters. These will give you hard copy by interviewer and market, which you may send back to the field for their information and action. **!**

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# Online Research: A Positive Alternative to Collecting Data

By Beth Mack, i.think.inc,  
bmack@ithinkinc.com



Uncertain economic times have everyone looking for ways to reduce costs while still delivering the quality product and the level of customer service upon which we have built our businesses.

For companies doing focus groups and surveys, the Internet offers a very cost effective, productive avenue. And, while the Internet is still very new to many researchers, it has proven itself to be an excellent tool for producing reliable data much faster, and less expensively than traditional methods.

Cost and time efficiencies offered by the Internet are really at the core of why companies would consider online research, but there are tradeoffs of which companies should be aware.

The Internet is a wonderful method for reaching a lot of people quickly. However, as the novelty of

answering surveys online begins to wear off, respondents are less likely to want to volunteer their time. In fact, most people participating in online surveys expect some sort of remuneration, but it is normally very small number. And in terms of fielding manpower, it is perhaps the most efficient means available to collect opinions from a large number of people.

Speed is another positive aspect of online surveys. In fact, there is little comparison between using the Internet and traditional telephone or mail surveys. Normal telephone surveys can take weeks because it is a one-to-one process. By definition, the interviewer must be on the phone with the respondent to administer the questionnaire. This means the respondent has to be willing to spend time on the telephone with the survey company. With online systems, it is just as easy to send 10,000 e-mails to 10,000 potential respondents as

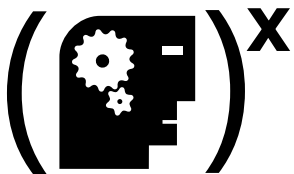
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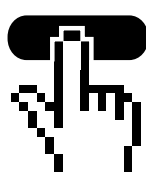


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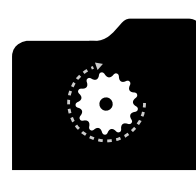
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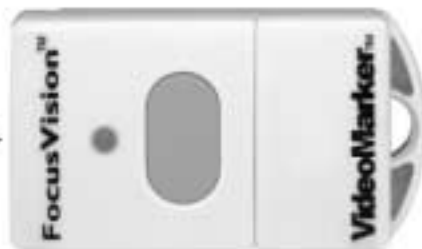


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## Online Research...

*Continued from page 25*

it is to send 1,000, and it can be done simultaneously. The respondents can answer the survey at their convenience which means, for example, that my company can be collecting information from 300 people at once which is not possible with telephone surveys unless you hire 300 telephone interviewers. The efficiencies of such a system are obvious.

For focus groups, companies can find huge savings in reduced travel budgets and time savings. Focus groups can be done from a single location while participants can be in one city, nationwide or worldwide, depending on the parameters set by the researcher.

While not really a cost savings issue, another advantage of online i.focus groups is the availability of transcripts. For traditional methods, the costs of receiving transcripts, plus the time involved, have almost eliminated them from inclusion in the process. With online surveys and focus groups, transcripts are included in the price and are available almost immediately, which many researchers find truly helpful and useful in the process of interpreting data.

One concern among researchers is that the Internet is still a very new medium and therefore isn't as tested as some methodologies. Some researchers compare data over several years which isn't possible when a new method is introduced. To offset these concerns, I can say from my own experience that when we first started, almost six years ago, one of our first clients conducted parallel studies to confirm the usefulness of online data. Over the course of two years they conducted more than 75 studies, concluding that

decisions made based on Internet data vs. mall-intercept data were identical.

The other concern among researchers about using the Internet is being sure that the person taking the online survey is who they say they are. Security is provided by the online survey supplier's software and database, which work in conjunction to ensure the validity of the survey respondent. Safeguards must be built in so that people aren't allowed to change answers, and to ensure respondents provide the same demographic information over time.

We've discussed how people are saving money using online surveys, but people should avoid cutting corners and select a company with a proven track record of providing online data. It is all well and good to collect the data, but if a company can't retrieve that data and provide it to the customer in a manner that is useful, then the survey is of little use. There are Internet companies (with databases to sell) springing up that are not research companies and don't understand how critical data retrieval is. If a company is pitching you an amazingly low price, be sure the company is truly a research company that has safeguards and systems in place that not only will collect accurate data, but can supply that data to you in a useful form.

Internet research has proven itself to be a time saver, reducing turnaround time to a few days versus weeks with traditional methods. And, data shows that the Internet is considerably less expensive than telephone, or mall intercept data collection. And it's much faster than mail surveys.

In times of slimmer budgets, the Internet is a welcome partner in delivering data in a cost efficient manner. **L**

# How A Focus Group Facility with Full Service Capabilities Can Help You

By Brett Watkins, MRP/Ci

**As a moderator, I've often found that the better facilities are those that have knowledge of the entire process.**

I was told by a fellow focus group facility owner, whose opinion I value a great deal, that as a full-service research firm, we couldn't conduct our focus group facility business as well as he could because "it's not what you primarily do." In essence, because it was one of our divisions, and we offer a varied portfolio of research services, we weren't the optimal solution for focus group services. While I let him know right away that I didn't agree with that statement, I never explained my position (though, of course, neither did he). In fact, there are so many advantages to working with a facility that has full-service capabilities that every moderator should weigh these advantages considerably in their selection process. These advantages include: familiarity with the process and the expectations placed upon the moderator, the ability to anticipate needs and be proactive in problem solving, and when necessary, the ability to review work to ensure it meets specifications.

As everyone knows, the more familiar a vendor is with its clients and its processes, the better they can serve them. As a moderator, I've often found that the better facilities are those that have knowledge of the entire process. As an example, let's assume that your company chooses an insurance company that doesn't know that moderators travel a lot. Your company's insurance carrier could have included a rider to the firm's business policy that includes rental car insurance, eliminating the need to purchase policies from rental agencies. However, since they don't know the job description for a moderator, they don't offer this value-added service, and in turn your company incurs thousands of dollars of additional fees and wasted time at the rental counter. What do you think the likelihood is that the next insurance company that knows this fact will have a good shot at winning your business? If their product is comparable, the answer is likely, because you trust that the new insurance company knows your business needs.

It is no different in focus group facility rentals. Full-service companies are familiar with a moderator's needs because they know what it's like to have two weeks to pull four cities and eight groups together. They are familiar with reporting deadlines immediately after groups are completed. They are familiar with all of the nuances of quali-

tative research. If your facility understands the pressures you are under because they've been there before, there is a greater likelihood that they will be more responsive and work more diligently (like you are) to get the job done right. Full-service companies will also save you a lot of time because you don't need to explain your project in as great a detail as you might for a non-full service agency. They are cognizant of the demands for time that is placed upon the moderator or project manager, and communicate the data needed quickly and efficiently.

Similarly, full-service firms can better anticipate your needs. When you last called a facility to book a date for your focus groups, did they ask:

- Where you would be staying and if you needed help with your accommodations or travel arrangements?
- How much interaction would you require with the facility for recruiting purposes, and if a lot, did they obtain all possible contact information to reach you whenever, wherever?
- Ask what type of clients you would be hosting for the focus groups, and the level of service they would require? (This is a very important question because some clients want to be catered to, some want secretarial service available to them, some want to be left alone, and others want something in between.)

The facility should also ask you about your recruiting and the purpose behind the project. If the facility knows what you're trying to accomplish, they can accommodate your needs more readily. Telling your full-service facility your study objectives can save you invaluable time, because it enables them to anticipate what your needs are and get to the heart of the project. They'll know what questions to ask and what questions not to ask. Advanced problem solving skills aren't always available in focus group facilities. You're better off asking the project manager what his or her experience is and how well they know the research business. Those that work in full-service firms typically have experience from both sides of the glass. You may not need this level of service, but wouldn't you rather have it if and when you do need it?

Finally, a full-service firm can be your consultant,

*Continued from previous page*

helping you with your time by either writing the screener for you, reviewing it to ensure it meets all of the specifications, and using on-staff moderators to bounce ideas off of and problem solve. While this may not be a free service, it can be worth every penny if you've got a long list of deadlines and insufficient time to complete a successful focus group session. A full-service agency may also have other services that you might need for your project: phone surveys, transcribing, statistical analysis of quantitative data, questionnaire development, etc. In general, finding a provider who can provide multiple services makes

the moderator's job easier. For smaller companies or one-person outfits that moderate focus groups, having this resource can be invaluable to save you precious time, time that you can spend with your clients or finding new ones.

The only reasonable detractor I've heard regarding working with a full-service agency is competing interests: that the agency may attempt to steal your client. To protect everyone's interests, the problem is extremely easy to solve: non-compete/non-disclosure agreements. Most full-service companies have these handy because they need them to work with their own full-service clients. If

you're concerned that they may be a competitor, ask them to ship you a signed copy. I'm a firm believer that any business that isn't willing to put its work and reputation on the dotted line isn't worth doing business with.

An old saying states that you have to walk in another person's shoes before you can understand what kind of life they've had. This is true in business as well. Our company conducts a lot of business relationship research in the business-to-business sector, and the trends continue to move towards closer relationships between clients and vendors. The more each company knows the other's

needs, the better the products and services they can provide. Partnerships are sought after as competition becomes fiercer, so that companies can have an advantage over their competitors. In focus group research, using full-service research agencies results in moderator's clients getting the very best experiences in service, which in turn means more business for the moderator. Since clients care about getting great data, consider partnering with a full-service facility, where you will work with people who not only understand your business, but also have walked in your shoes. 

## Southwest Chapter of MRA Awards Scholarships


### Congratulations to the eight 2001 SW Chapter MRA Scholarship Award Recipients!

The Southwest Chapter of the Marketing Research Association announces the success of the Second Annual Scholarship Program, offering monetary awards to members and employees of member companies. The program was developed to encourage and assist educational pursuits among those employed in the marketing research industry. Course work eligible for assistance was broad, in order to allow applicants to enhance or develop skills primary, as well as ancillary to marketing research. Education could include such topics as software applications, moderator training, writing techniques and the Principals of Marketing Research, sponsored by the National MRAII.

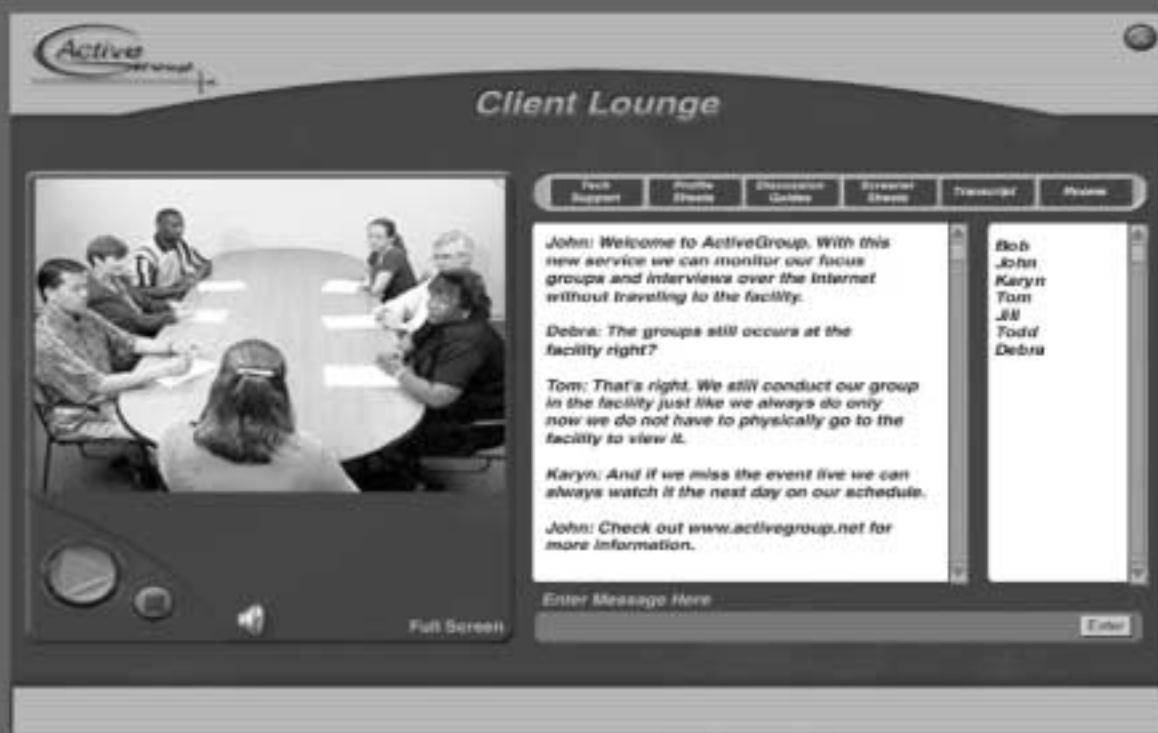
The Program was so well received in the year 2000, the board this year decided to award up to \$5000 in scholarships. Explained Scholarship Committee Chair, Nancy Hayslett, "This was such a good opportunity for the Chapter to demonstrate its support of continuing education that we wanted to do as much as possible for as many applicants as we could."

The eight 2001 SW Chapter MRA Scholarship Award recipients are:

- Gloria Mellinger**, Survey Sampling, Inc, Principals of Marketing Research, MRII Institute, University of Georgia, \$500 Award
- Carmen Muniz**, Galloway Research Service, Introduction to SPSS Syntax, \$500 Award
- Gabriel Maltos**, Galloway Research Service, Introduction to SPSS Syntax, \$500 Award
- Stephanie Smith**, WestGroup Research, Fundamentals of Moderating, Riva Training Institute \$500 Award
- Melissa McCumber**, Galloway Research Service, Beginning Access Class, Award \$450
- Charles Dickinson**, Clearwater Research, Inc, Introduction to ArcView, Boise University, Award \$500
- Thomas Hogan**, Galloway Research Service, Managerial Economics, University of San Antonio, Award \$450
- Andrea Feher**, Survey Sampling Inc., Global Management Integration, Sacred Heart University, \$500 Award

We congratulate the winners, and applaud their efforts. 

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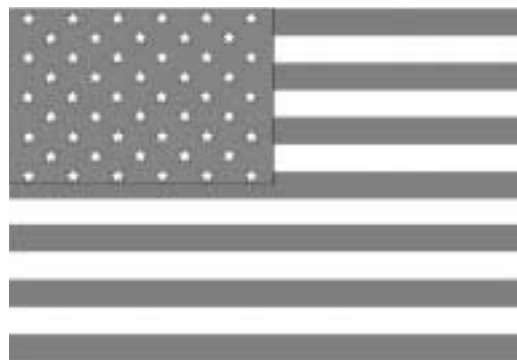
# Standards of Respect: The American Flag

**"A thoughtful mind, when it sees a nation's flag, sees not only the flag, but the nation itself; and whatever may be its symbols, its insignia, he reads chiefly in the flag of the government, the principles, the truths, the history which belongs to the nation that sets it forth."**

— Henry Ward Beecher

Recently more and more business have begun flying the American flag in a show of support for the United States. This being the case, there is a Flag Code that formalizes and unifies the traditional ways in which we give respect to the flag. This code also contains specific instructions on how the flag is not to be used.

- The flag should never be dropped to any person or thing. It is flown upside down only as a distress signal.
- The flag should not be used as a drapery, a covering for a table or desk, or for any decoration in general. Use of blue, white and red stripes is available for these purposes. The blue stripe should be on the top.
- The flag should never be used for any advertising purpose. It should not be embroidered, printed or otherwise impressed on such articles as cushions, handkerchiefs, napkins, boxes, or anything intended to be discarded after temporary use. Advertising signs should not



be attached to the staff or halyard.

- The flag should not be used as part of a costume or athletic uniform. A flag patch, however, may be used on the uniform of military personnel, firemen, policemen and members of patriotic organizations.
- The flag should never have placed on it, or attached to it, any mark, insignia, letter, word, number, figure, or drawing of any kind.
- The flag should never be used as a receptacle for receiving, holding, carrying, or delivering anything.
- When the flag is lowered, no part of it should touch the ground or any other object; it should be received by waiting hands and arms. To store the flag it should be folded neatly and ceremoniously. The flag should be cleaned and mended when necessary.





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# e is for everything??...

by **Philippa Gamse,**  
*CyberSpeaker<sup>SM</sup>*

**"The true challenge now—which personally I see as a great opportunity, is to understand all the ways in which using the Internet can help your business..."**

I am often asked: "Why would a local company, with a large investment in trained, professional sales people need a Web site?"

Great question! And you might be thinking the same....

Maybe you already know many or all of your potential customers, maybe you have very defined processes and production cycles that don't change very quickly, maybe you're suspicious of the Internet "hype"—especially now that so many e-companies are falling by the wayside.

But we also know that the Internet isn't going away. 407 million people are now estimated to have access—that includes 167 million in North America, and 113 million in Europe. Younger people increasingly spend more time online than watching TV.

The true challenge now—which personally I also see as a great opportunity, is to understand all the ways in which using the Internet can help your business, and from this to strategize the best investment of time and money. It's here to stay, so how can the Internet benefit your business—and what's currently going wrong?

There are some key elements that prevent many Web site owners from maximizing the potential of their Internet-based activities:

**Tunnel vision on sales and new business:** it takes at least five times the time and expense to

acquire a new customer as it does to keep a current one. Your Web site can be a great tool for providing ongoing customer service and support—and achieving significant cost savings to boot!

Most people access the Internet for information on products and services that they either use now, or are considering buying. So, your Web site can be a great place to provide ongoing customer support for your products. If you're worried about giving away trade secrets to your competition, place these in a password protected area. The best way to build your content is to compile a list of questions that your customers most often ask. These may be sales related, but can also cover operations, quality assurance issues, etc. If you don't already know the questions, have your receptionists and sales people keep a note pad for a week. Then, put the questions, together with the answers, on your site. This provides a 24 hour a day, seven day a week availability of service for your customers, whether your office is open or not. And, it can save significant costs in terms of telephone support time.

**Not "asking for the business:"** I know this sounds obvious, but how many sites have you seen where it's quite unclear what the site wants from you? Every page of your site should have a strategy, and be clear about inviting visitor interactions to achieve your goals. Many times when a new client comes to me for e-business strategy consulting, I ask them a few seemingly simple questions: "Who are your markets? What do they  
*Continued on page 35*

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**Abstract:**

This highly-acclaimed guide to online market intelligence has been fully revised and updated. The July 2001 edition directs novices and experts alike through an exhaustive list of online research location sources and strategies.

This invaluable resource enables you to streamline your research process and identify the most accurate research sites. Written by Robert Berkman, the editor of *The Information Advisor*, *Finding Market Research on the Web* brings you the most current information available.



For example you'll find:

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## e is for everything...

Continued from page 33

want from you?" and "What do you want from them?"

Sounds easy enough. But often, there are visitors to your Web site that may be different from your traditional customers—and sometimes, you either currently offer or could create new products or services that they'd buy. Thinking through all the possible audiences for your site, and all the ways in which you might interact with them is really crucial in creating your Web strategy. So is knowing who you expect to be looking at each page of your site, and what you want them to do.

**Under-utilising e-mail:** E-mail is a powerful tool when used appropriately (and an awful one when not!) It can be used for marketing, customer service, public relations, in-company memos, business research...and much more. Look at your real-world communications—could e-mail save you time and expense? E-mail marketing can be done without the costs of design printing, and postage associated with traditional direct mail. It's almost free of

charge! And if it's offering brief, valuable content, most of your contacts won't object to receiving it—although of course if they do, you must take them off your mailings. But, with a few subtly embedded links to key pages in your Web site, it can be a great traffic generator. Your own database of customers, prospects and other contacts is the best place to start—and take every opportunity to nurture that. Ask visitors of your Web site to sign up for your newsletter, product alerts, or other materials. If you buy any lists, be very careful that they're bona fide and you won't be accused of spamming recipients. And whatever you do, answer your e-mail! Lack of e-mail response is always one of the biggest customer service complaints around e-business.

So, consistently mine your customer list. Send them targeted, relevant e-mails; grow your business relationships electronically!

Let's say it again—the Internet isn't going away. Today's challenge lies in understanding how to use it to maximize your market reach, optimize the efficiency of your operations, and achieve the best overall return on your online business invest-

ment. © Copyright Philippa Gamse, 2001. All rights reserved. ■

Philippa Gamse, "CyberSpeaker<sup>SM</sup>", is a professional speaker and e-commerce consultant. She helps her clients develop e-business and marketing strategies to gain maximum competitive advantage. Philippa can be reached on 831-465-0317, or at [www.CyberSpeaker.com](http://www.CyberSpeaker.com). This article was originally published in three installments in the *This article was originally published in three installments in the Foundry Trade Journal*, 2001.

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**Field Supervisor** – Growing, respected research supplier seeks an experienced Field Supervisor to assist Field Director. Position requires 5 plus years experience selecting, monitoring and directing data collection suppliers with the ability to ensure projects are completed within cost/deadline requirements in a high quality manner. A self-directed, well organized candidate who is able to work in a fast paced environment, is detail-oriented and can manage multiple projects simultaneously and demonstrates excellent communication skills is preferred. E-mail resume along with salary requirements to: [Lynda@Shiffrin.com](mailto:Lynda@Shiffrin.com)

**Research Consultant** – Galloway Research in San Antonio is seeking an experienced Research Consultant. Qualified candidates will have:

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  - Excellent writing/verbal skills
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## NETWORKING NEWS

### PEOPLE IN THE NEWS

**Albuquerque, NM** – Sandia Market Research is pleased to announce that **Laurie Meyerer** has been named General Manager.

**Detroit, MI** – Consumer Pulse, Inc. is pleased to announce that **Sandy Patton** has joined their team as Manager of their WATS center.

**London, England, U.K.** – Global Market Insight (GMI) announces the appointment of **Tariq Mirza** to the newly created position of Vice President, Sales and Marketing, GMI Europe.

### ANNOUNCEMENTS

**Port Charlotte, FL** – John Heakin announces the opening of North American Insights' second office in Port Charlotte Town Center. Serving the southwestern portion of Florida between Sarasota and Ft. Myers, Port Charlotte is a large, high traffic, enclosed mall with good demographics. The manager of this facility is Margaret Wildes, a fifteen year veteran of data collection, who comes to North American Insights from Mid America Research's De Soto Square Office in Bradenton. Margaret will be assisted by Lisa Johnson from Heakin Research's Houston Galleria Office. For booking information, call Sandy Lewis at the Chicago Headquarters, 708-747-1100. ■

# Unleashing the Killer App: Digital Strategies for Market Dominance

By Larry Downes, Chunka Mui. Edited by Nicholas Negroponte

**This book provides a simple outline of how the digital revolution continues to change the way we do business.**

*Paperback—272 pages Revised edition (March 2000)  
Harvard Business School Pr; ISBN: 1578512611*

Technology is driving today's economy because it is the prime force creating growth in almost every industry. In *Unleashing the Killer App: Digital Strategies for Market Dominance*, Larry Downes and Chunka Mui look at the dynamics of the changing nature of technology, and its potential to create "killer apps." The authors describe a killer app as a product or service that "winds up displacing unrelated older offerings, destroying and re-creating industries far from their immediate use, and throwing into disarray the complex relationships between business partners, competitors, customers, and regulators of markets." Examples of killer apps throughout history include the Welsh longbow, the pulley, the compass, moveable type, and the Apple Macintosh. And today, with our increasingly networked economy (for example, the World Wide Web), killer apps are appearing all around us.

*Unleashing the Killer App: Digital Strategies for Market Dominance* is divided into three major sections. The first section defines digital strategy and discusses the role digital strategy has played in history. The authors also take a look at the evolution of e-commerce, the forces that are shaping it, and the strategies that will enable companies to successfully implement e-commerce in the future.

The second section discusses what companies need to do in order to develop their own killer apps. In this section, Downes and Mui argue that the dominant trend behind the proliferation of killer apps is a combination of Moore's Law and Metcalfe's Law, two laws that are changing how businesses interact with each other and with their customers. To exploit these changes, the authors outline twelve points for designing a digital strategy to help readers identify and create killer apps in their own organization. The book includes dozens of examples of how killer apps were discovered and implemented by other businesses.

Finally, section three explains how companies can take the killer apps they have developed and



integrate them into their current business strategy. The focus here is on the early stages of designing the new strategy.

*Unleashing the Killer App: Digital Strategies for Market Dominance* provides a simple outline of how the digital revolution continues to change the way we do business. These concepts and ideas will also change the way individuals perceive the technological marketplace. Downes and Mui provide readers with a new perspective and help readers understand the integral role digital technology plays in their business.

Given the rapid revolution of new technology this book caters to both those that are new to the technological arena and those who have been using technology for years. *Unleashing the Killer App: Digital Strategies for Market Dominance* provides an excellent framework for rethinking the nature of business in today's wired economy. No matter the size of your company or the nature of your business, there's probably a killer app lurking somewhere. This book will help you find it. **1**

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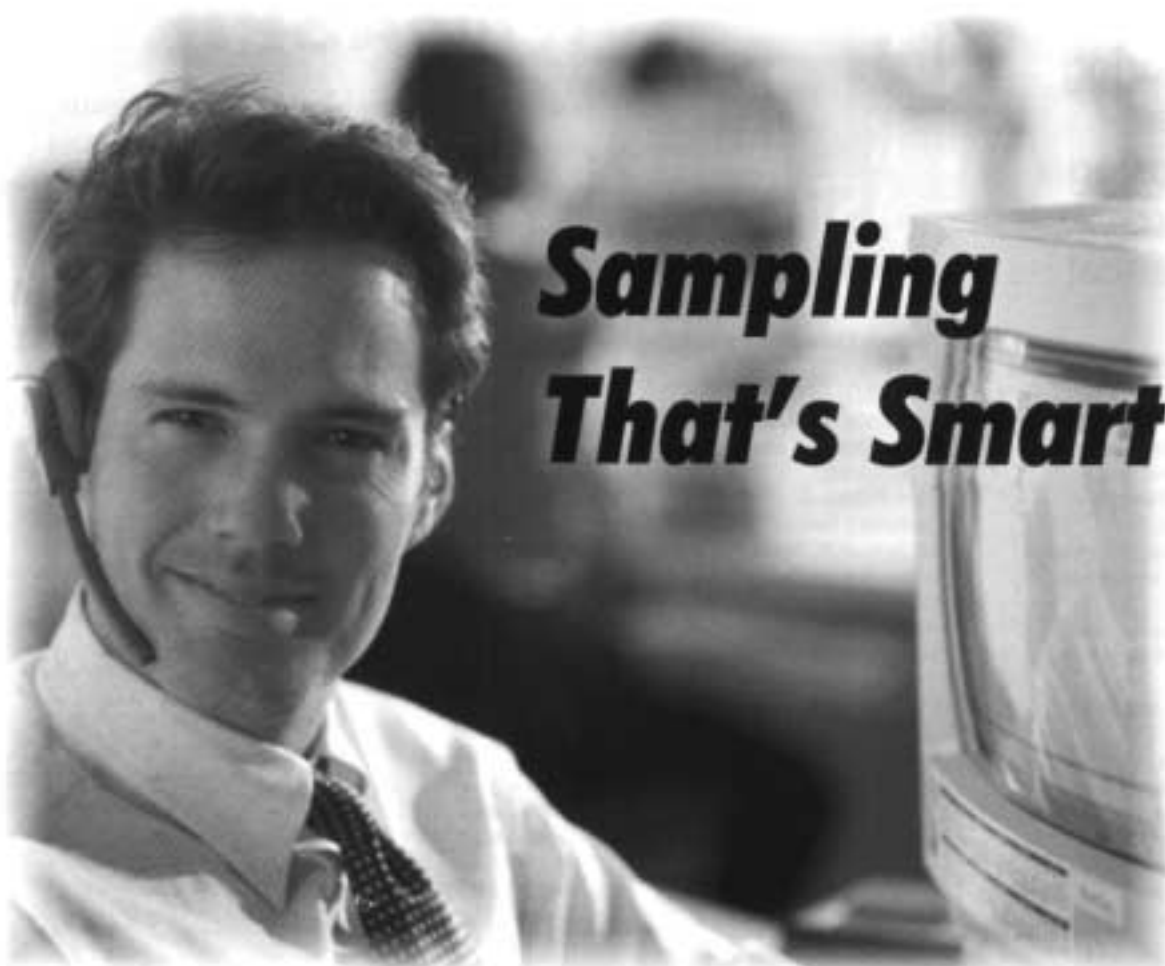
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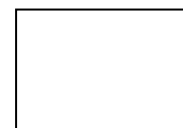
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