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A Mixed Supplier Data Collection Approach
By Marcello Sasso

Mobile Research has Gone Mainstream
By Tim Snaith, Ph.D.

Actionable Data = Better Service and Happier Customers for Benchmark
By Chris Cottle

MRA’s Annual Conference & Expo

Data Collection in the 21st Century: The Importance of Ethical Market Research in an Era of Big Data, Big Government, and Big Tech Tracking
By Katie Manderfield and Billy Sind

Mailings and Panels and Phones (Oh My!): The Increasingly Confusing World of Market Research
By David Dutwin, Ph.D.

Full-Service Marketing Researcher: The Impressive Evolution of the Position
By Robert N. Graff

MRA’s Annual Conference & Expo on June 4-6 includes an exciting networking event planned at one of San Diego’s premier entertainment spots – SeaWorld San Diego. Enjoy delicious cuisine, special penguin and sea lion visit, and a private performance by Shamu, the killer whale!

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MRA’s Alert! Magazine – April 2012
Seriously – who doesn’t love data? Whether from the standpoint of a marketing researcher, a marketing expert, an advertising specialist, or a consumer; data is fascinating.

How that data is collected, which methodologies and tools are used, and how the findings are analyzed is even more riveting, particularly in this transforming period when technology, social media and alternative methods are impacting our profession more than ever with new advances and opportunities. To illustrate this claim, while in no capacity inclusive, the following is a list of possible qualitative and quantitative, primary and secondary research methodologies, tools and analysis approaches:

- Auditorium Testing
- Awareness-to-Trial Analysis
- Brainstorming
- Business to Business
- Case Study
- Census
- Charette Workshop
- Clinic (or Central Location)
- Co-discovery Conference
- Communication Research
- Consensus Group
- Content Analysis
- Customer Satisfaction Measurement
- Deliberative Poll
- Delphi Method
- Depth Interview
- Desk Research
- Dialogue Techniques
- Do-it-Yourself
- Enabling Techniques
- Envisioning Techniques
- Ethnography
- Event Survey
- Fishbowl
- Focus Group
- Future Search
- Grounded Theory
- Hall Test
- Hermeneutics Analysis
- Industrial Research
- Influence Measurement
- Market Research Online Community (MROC)
- Media Research and Analysis
- Meter Techniques
- Mobile Techniques
- Mystery Shopping
- Nethnography
- Nominal Group
- Observation
- Omnibus
- Online Techniques
- Open Space Technology
- Opinion Poll
- Panel
- Participatory Rural Appraisal
- Predictive Techniques
- Projective Techniques
- Purchase Simulation
- Rapid Rural Appraisal
- Reception Analysis
- Search Conference
- Self-completion
- Semi-structured Interview
- Shadow Shopping
- Shapely Value Analysis
- Single-source
- Social Media Research and Analysis
- Sticky Dots
- Syndicated Research
- Telephone Survey
- Tracking
- Trial-to-Regular-Use Analysis
- Triangulation
- Unstructured Interview
- Usability Testing
- Uses and Gratifications
- Visioning
- Voice of the Customer
- Zaltman Metaphor Elicitation Technique (ZMET)

It’s difficult to argue that this incomplete list alone provides much food for thought. Even more assuredly, this list was much more limited even five years ago, let alone 10, 15 or 20 years ago. While every issue of Alert! includes content surrounding the specific theme of data collection, this issue in particular, shares insights regarding specific case studies and data collection methods that have recently been utilized to gain crucial data in varying scenarios. To submit a future article relating to these, or other data collection methods, tools or analysis, please contact me directly at amy.shields@marketingresearch.org.

It is also interesting and important to note that more than with any past data collection issue, articles surrounding the topic of online research came pouring in. As sometimes happens, there are some over-arching points made by different authors, however; all contributions include unique and thought-provoking opinions that can and should be considered. Thank you, as always, to all who played an important role in providing content for April’s issue of Alert!

Amy Shields, PRC is the Editor of Alert! She can be reached at amy.shields@marketingresearch.org.
More than three decades ago, Linda Piekarski joined SSI—and became one of the pioneers inventing the sampling industry. Ever since, she has helped us continue to lead the way, constantly innovating and advancing the field we created. But no matter how much things change, Linda is on a mission to ensure one thing remains the same. SSI stays true to our heritage of rigorous science, methodological excellence and uncompromising quality. So you know every project you trust to us—whether online or offline, global or local—is in safe hands. Linda wouldn’t have it any other way.

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A Mixed Supplier Data Collection Approach
By Marcello Sasso

Online panels have had a significant impact on the market research industry over the past decade. Their growth has been steady and constant, even during the economic downturn, due to a number of factors – online surveys are typically more cost-effective, provide fast responses, and companies are seeking to better understand their customers through original research.

The online approach has acquired increased consistency and reliability because it reflects the communication trends of the average population. Today, online research methodologies mimic the way the population is already comfortable communicating. Choosing which supplier/methodology is best depends on what you’re testing, where the participants are located, timing and budget.

A common assumption when selecting sample for online research is that once the target has been defined and proper quotas assigned (by gender, age, education and some specific eligibility conditions), the final result will match a reliable portion of the universe, regardless of the sample provider used. This can be true for hard to find or small targets, where there is a high probability that any sample provider will select the same people to represent the majority of the target. However, this assumption doesn’t work for all common targets.

At CE&Co, we run our own consumer panel, and also partner with other panels to enhance our coverage. Working with different panels, including our own, we have noticed variances between panel participants, related to the panel provider they came from. These differences can have an effect on the results of the research.

Although sample providers continuously broaden their coverage and expand the capacity of their online panels, local coverage of specific territories, or even single towns, it is still difficult for a single provider to cover all markets and/or segments. Because of this, it is often beneficial to use more than one supplier. When analyzing results from research conducted in this manner, small differences begin to emerge among the different sample providers. Sample from the same universe, provided by assorted suppliers, is not always equivalent – but should be. While we know the way we built our panel in Italy (50 percent selection by telephone calls, 25 percent by snowball and 25 percent by self-proposals), we are unaware of the selection criteria that other international panel providers utilize.

In situations where we suspect the sample might be biased, but we don’t know which one, nor the direction of bias, the best strategy is to use sample coming from different providers and comparing the results.

In most practical cases this is easy to say, but difficult to do. We recently had the opportunity to use this exact methodological approach, which we began to refer to as mixed supplier data collection approach.

Imagine you want to research the market for leisure and travel and to test the brand positioning of a specific hotel chain. In such research, the typical level of education, age, and travel attitude plays a fundamental role that can bias the results of the research itself. The client’s target, however, is very wide: anyone aged 18 to 65 with no particular level of education and expertise (since the opinion of expert and demanding travelers, as well as those who consider all the luxury complimentary room services to be a frill, is needed). It is important to obtain a good balance of people with and without expertise and/or knowledge about the typical service offerings of resorts, but this is something you can’t really check, since it is a self-evaluation by the participant.

There is an involuntary selection when sample providers recruit panelists. Factors such as the choice of the medium, the tone of a provider’s presentation, the attractiveness of a website (colors, graphics and style), ease of the registration process, or even the type of incentive given, all represent a factor of aggregation for each provider. Recruitment is often done by placing ads on websites and the nature of these websites is fundamental in building a profile of the recruited panelists. Let’s assume our panel provider has posted ads on websites and forums like TripAdvisor or Expedia. This procedure will have created a clustered panel that cannot guarantee unbiased answers since there will be a majority of “travel savvy” in the sample. Panelists are not recruited ad hoc, but panels are built on a continuous recruitment and replacement service, hence the composition may also be altered at different times of the year, depending on where recruitment ads were posted. Obviously, clients and research companies cannot pretend to know in advance where and how panelists were recruited, but can definitely act to prevent biased responses through the employment of more than one panel provider.

Small differences in the sample distributions might be acceptable; however, we don’t know if the dissimilarities are truly “small” unless we check. Using only one provider may lead the researcher to miss small and delicate, but very significant aspects of the consumer’s profile and behavior.

Consumers remaining loyal to a specific sample provider because they like the type of incentive offered, may already represent a cluster of people more inclined to the price factor rather than a product’s characteristics; or consumers registering with a panel because it has attractive crayon colors, may represent a cluster of people with predominant feminine attitudes; or still, those registering onto a panel because it has a cool technologic platform may contain more “tech savvy” consumers. These
are just a few examples of how sample can be a segment of the total target. In our research experience, we have come to realize that while most research can be accomplished with a single sample supplier, there are situations that require diversification of sources (even if one single provider could possibly supply the whole sample). In some cases, there is the need for a mixed supplier data collection approach.

In 2011, it was time to renew the Mayor of the city of Milan and elections were approaching. CE&Co, in conjunction with the Bocconi University of Milan, was committed to study the different approaches of new candidates during their race to voting. What type of campaign pays better? We identified two major approaches: Aggressive – a continuous attack to the rival, highlighting all the negative aspects and misses of the ruling mayor; and Propositive – paying no attention to other rivals, concentrating on the electoral program and proposals.

The target needed to represent a good mix of age, level of education, social class and zones of residency. The sample was defined as 1,200 people living in the city of Milan and willing to express their vote in the election; a perfect case to use multiple sample providers.

In order to ensure a high respondent mix and good quality of sample, in addition to our two proprietary panels managed by VIA! Research, Club Nuove Idee and Proposte & Risposte, we contacted four additional global sample providers – GMI, ODC, Proximity and SSI. All are well-known and reliable providers.

As soon as we started receiving results, we also received confirmation that our choice of methodology was justified. As the second table illustrates, the socio-demographic composition is easily spotted and it is clear that young voters are more undecided than are older voters, who have a stable and formed ideal. While VIA! has fewer males but more young voters, Proximity Panels has a lower representation of males, but more middle aged voters. As previously mentioned, these results do not affect the reliability of each sample; however, each lower representation is balanced in total by the addition of more panel providers.

The use of mixed supplier data collection approach proved, in this case, to be beneficial since the survey showed that female voters are more inclined toward a very purposeful approach of candidate, while young and male voters are more disposed toward an aggressive approach. The results of the research were used by a candidate, Giuliano Pisapia, who identified the female target as the most undecided on voting intentions and who, thanks to the results of this research, stopped attacking his rival, the ruling Mayor, and started proposing positive statements and programs for the socio-economic relaunch of the city. With an over sampling of males or young people, we would have likely been misled.

The last chart demonstrates the current political interest of panelist. It is obvious that people not very interested in politics show less solid political support, therefore, are more open to proposals from candidates. Notice that GMI respondents are more “in to” politics and, as a result, their answers can be biased according to the candidate/political party they currently support.

Marcello Sasso is the International Research Manager at CE&Co in Italy, a company that offers market research and analysis and a complete set of customer intelligence activities.
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THE MOST TRUSTED NAME IN MARKET RESEARCH.
The Dynamic Duo: Merrill and Mark Shugoll
By Amy Shields, PRC

Circa late 90s – I’m attending my first MRA conference and have the good fortune of being introduced to Merrill Shugoll, already a well-known and respected leader in the marketing research profession at that time. It was a pivotal moment, as I’ve always credited this meeting with my desire to become involved as a volunteer with MRA. What I discovered from our first encounter, which has been reinforced the longer I know her, is that Merrill truly cares about the industry, people, and the world. It is impossible to spend five minutes with her and not feel special and to not learn something. It is my sincere honor to share a mere glimpse of Merrill and Mark Shugoll’s inspiring life story with the readers of Alert! magazine.

How long have you worked in MR? What, exactly, is your role at Shugoll Research? How did you get started?

Merrill: I have worked in market research for 37 years and I am President of Shugoll Research. I began my career in market research when I joined the research division of a major advertising agency in Washington, DC. After spending 9 years with the agency conducting both qualitative and quantitative research studies, I declared my love for qualitative research and decided to go out on my own. At the same time, my mother-in-law, Joan Shugoll, who founded Shugoll Research back in 1957 decided to make me an offer I couldn’t refuse. She asked me to come on board to diversify her business. In 1984, we began providing design and analytical services in addition to data collection services for clients who needed consulting assistance.

Mark: I am the CEO of Shugoll Research. My background (Ph.D.) is in policy research. That was my first career. After Merrill joined my mother’s business, we were up late one night writing client reports when I asked her why she was still up at 2 in the morning. Merrill said she needed a partner to help her deal with the growing client load and I said, “What about me?” We both laughed, because we weren’t sure we wanted our personal relationship to also be a business one. We were not sure it was healthy to be together 24-7, but it has been amazing because we complement each other so well. So, I have been in the marketing research business for 28 years.

Tell us a little about Shugoll Research.

Merrill: As I mentioned, Shugoll Research is a full service market research firm and we conduct both qualitative and quantitative research studies for a prestigious list of clients. Qualitative research is, of course, an extremely important part of our business. We are headquartered in Bethesda, Maryland just outside of DC. We have magnificent, newly renovated focus group facilities and a large call center that provides recruiting for our clients’ qualitative studies. Recently, we acquired our major competitor on the other side of the Potomac. We now own a brand new 3-room facility in Alexandria, Virginia and two rooms in Fairfax, Virginia effectively doubling our facility and recruiting capacity to 10 spacious focus rooms. This allows us to provide complete geographic reach of the Washington, DC metro area to our clients.

Mark: Many people refer to my mom as the “matriarch of focus groups” since she created one of the first focus rooms in her home. But one of the aspects of Merrill’s and my role in the business was to turn it into a full service research company, since that is our background. Some people don’t realize that full service is half our business base.

What professionally inspires you? What do you enjoy most about working in the field of marketing research?

Merrill: I love people and always want to know what they think, how they feel, and why they do what they do. I pride myself on having unconditional positive regard for every person. I believe people sense that I am interested in them, care about them and want to listen to them. So they share willingly. I also love to interpret, translate and write up the findings for the diverse qualitative projects I manage and then make strategic recommendations to our clients so they have a roadmap for success.

Mark: I’ve found a way to merge my love of the arts with my career as a researcher. We have a large client base of arts organizations for which we perform full service research. I love working on those studies. I also love the variety of work we do: full service and field service, qualitative and quantitative, in person and online on many different topical areas in many different industries.

What advice would you give to someone just starting in the marketing research profession?

Mark: Marketing research is an enormously rewarding field. Make the commitment to learn the basics, and many exciting doors will open. Also, as you grow in your career, make time to give back to your community through charitable work. It can be as important and rewarding as your professional career.

How long have you been an MRA member? Tell us a little about how you’ve given back to the profession.

Merrill: I’ve been an MRA member since the mid 1970s. I am active in many of our industry associations. I first participated in MRA at the local level by chairing chapter conferences and speaking, and eventually becoming a director on the Mid-Atlantic board of directors. I attended just about every MRA national conference, came to know many members and eventually ran for a national board position and won. I have been a director at large, secretary, president-elect, president and, of course, immediate past president – the best job of all. I am still very involved in MRA. I was on the selection committee to find
our CEO, I’m working on updating MRA’s Code of Marketing Research Standards and I’m working on a very important joint MRA/QRCA project to protect qualitative research from cheaters and repeaters. I am also very active on the Field Committee for QRCA.

Mark: I’ve been an MRA member since I came into the market research industry in 1984. Merrill and I are both very committed to our industry. When we came into the business, we split up the professional industries so we could contribute to as many of them as possible. Merrill has been involved in MRA and QRCA. I have represented our company in CASRO, serving on its Board and becoming the first Chancellor of CASRO University which developed training programs for the industry.

What is your most rewarding experience or your proudest moment as a MR professional/business owner?

Merrill: I take great pride in the following accomplishments: 1) First, helping my mother-in-law grow her business into what it is today while maintaining the closest of relationships with her. She is my mentor, my best friend and the best mother and we still get to work together most days! Can you imagine how we both felt when she swore me in as president of MRA in our home city back in 2007? Second, I have built a successful marriage and business with my husband. The secret to success is to find a way to complement each other – I’m the touchy-feely qual jock. I manage human resources and he manages accountants, lawyers, etc. It works! Third, we have become a third generation market research company. Our older daughter, Cara, who worked at IPSOS ASI in Chicago, then earned her MBA from Michigan and worked at Wrigley Corporation decided to join Shugoll Research two years ago. We are so proud and it’s great to have her skills on board. Fourth, we are blessed to have Rick Seale as a partner and friend. He manages Shugoll Research’s field operations and facility services with a level of expertise unparalleled in the industry and is one of my closest advisors professionally and personally. Fifth, we have just completed our first acquisition, adding Angela Lorinchak to our management team and what she brings to the table makes us all the more proud. Together, with our incredibly talented and dedicated staff we are providing the highest quality marketing research services available anywhere.

Mark: I second all of Merrill’s accomplishments! I’m proud that we’ve created a company that cares about its staff, has given back to the community (particularly in the arts) and has given back to its industry.

What is the most outlandish or comical request you’ve ever had from a client?

Merrill: A client who markets a mental health hospital asked me to do a mystery shop and report on my findings. I mean how does one pretend to have a legitimate mental illness and credibly shop a mental hospital?

Mark: Back in the days when fax machines were prominent, when you highlighted text on thermal paper it turned green and it was hard to read. To address this problem, we had a client who tested a “hole punch roller thingy” to underline text by punching holes in it. It never worked right. When we tested it, respondents would just laugh at the product. I felt bad for the client, but the research told them this wasn’t a good idea. Probably saved them lots of money!

Before working in the MR industry, what was the most unusual or interesting job you had?

Merrill: I worked in a French consulting company and orchestrated trips for French engineers to visit nuclear power plants and other utility facilities throughout the US. I got to speak French everyday – ooh, la, la!

Mark: My dream out of graduate school was to do work that would better the education system in America. When I worked in policy research, I did numerous exciting projects in education policy. They were very rewarding.

What are your hobbies? What altruistic causes do you support?

What do you enjoy doing outside of work?

Merrill: Mark and I are passionate about the performing arts. We recently got back from London where we saw 11 shows in 6 days. We saw 4 shows in one day in NYC and didn’t have time to eat until midnight. Mark and I saw the fantastic musical Next to Normal over 20 times. Do you get the picture? We are on numerous arts boards and contribute significantly to non-profit theaters. Also, Shugoll Research underwrites a program called ArtSpeak! Visit ArtSpeak.net to learn more. I will let Mark tell you more about it. We are also avid sports fans and have season tickets to just about everything, but we especially love ice hockey – the Washington Capitals. We even got engaged at a hockey game!

Mark: Arts, arts, arts (and hockey!). We created the ArtSpeak! program 14 years ago. Its goal is to excite students about the arts and attending art events. We bring famous Broadway stars into schools and they talk about their careers, answer questions, sign autographs and sing! We’ve had the biggest stars on Broadway, people like Audra McDonald, Kristin Chenoweth, Brian Stokes Mitchell, Lea Michele and Marvin Hamlish. Over 70 artists in total. It brings us great joy to share our love of the arts with students. And when they sing they blow the roof off these school auditoriums.

Where are you originally from?

Merrill: Mark and I are originally from New York. We met in DC, but unbeknownst to us, Mark’s parents were customers of my Dad’s business in New York and our grandmothers lived next door to each other in Brooklyn and played bingo together every week. Some would say it was Bashert, which is Yiddish for “meant to be.” We have been married for 36 years. It’s hard to believe.

If you weren’t in marketing research, you would be...

Merrill: I would be a doctor. I love medicine. I know that I’d find the field fascinating, challenging and very rewarding. What could be more rewarding than saving a life or bringing a new one into the world?

Mark: I would be an arts administrator. If I knew there was a field of arts administration when I graduated, I definitely would have gone into it. Imagine the loss to the marketing research industry! (Just joking!)

Do you have a favorite quote or life philosophy?

Merrill: One of my favorites is: “Be true to your work, your word, and your friend.” Henry David Thoreau

Mark: It is important to bring art into your life and the lives of others. It is important to give back to your community, including your professional community.

To recommend an MRA member with a special story or background to be interviewed for a future Member Spotlight, please contact the editor at amy.shields@marketingresearch.org.
Data: We Can’t Live Without It

How much time did you spend thinking about your data today? I don’t mean thinking about the results, an analytic plan, or what the data are saying, but the quality, accuracy and representativeness of the data. If you are like many modern day marketing researchers, you probably spent little, if any, time doing so. When I started in this industry, there was a strong emphasis on data integrity. Data was considered the lifeblood of our industry, and just like the blood banks who take extraordinary precautions to guarantee the purity of the blood supply, all respected researchers spent a great deal of time guaranteeing the integrity of their data. Many training programs required trainees to spend significant time working in the phone center to gain a deep knowledge about data collection.

The data end of our business has never been a glamorous one. Every marketing researcher needs it, but most of us don’t want to get our hands dirty with the actual data collection. Many consider it to be at the lower end of our food chain. The actual data collectors are not always treated with the respect they deserve, let alone the burden we frequently place on respondents, without much thought to the consequences. Without data, marketing researchers would not have a job. Yet we have become complacent about data integrity. I think several things have contributed to this:

• When CATI systems were first introduced, there was a belief that computerized interviewing eliminated most, if not all interviewer errors. Note I say “belief”, because this notion has been proven wrong many times. The best phone centers still do extensive interviewer training.
• Auto-dialers eliminated much of the human touch that had previously been required with sample management. Quality checks that were once standard with sample management became less common.
• Full service research companies began closing or downsizing their call centers; seeking the efficiency of large, dedicated data collection centers. Eventually this lead to the “out of sight, out of mind” syndrome. Buying solely on price or speed became more common.
• Pay scales for interviewers continue to be suppressed. Hovering near minimum wage, we were suddenly competing with McDonalds for the same talent.
• Online research was introduced, which to describe convenience samples such as online panels. Many studies conducted online quote confidence levels and sampling errors that imply a probability sample. People feel better when quoting such parameters around phone studies, but don’t fool yourself: with the preponderance of caller ID, call screening, cell phone only or cell phone dominate households; very few telephone studies can claim to truly be a probability sample. (And, the few that can are usually conducted by universities or the government.) It has just gotten too expensive for most marketing research.

Fortunately, because the majority of marketing researchers are an honest, conscientious group who take great pride in their craft; we are still producing a quality product. Every time I question the data collection and quality on a particular study, I am quickly reassured that we are delivering a top notch product. While a lot of this comfort is a gut feeling, I take solace that the results make sense, the findings are logical, and our client can make sound decisions based on the research. Sure, we have to sort out some bad apples, and the rigor of quality assurance is not the same as it used to be – but in this age of quicker, faster; we have not given up on quality. The trick is being sure the data falls into the hands of well trained, seasoned marketing researchers. My fears about data quality are still pretty high when I think about a novice, or a non-researcher, executing a study.

I think was a good thing. It helped revitalize, and maybe even save, our industry in light of skyrocketing costs for telephone interviewing. It made marketing research available to products and services that couldn’t afford it in the past; however, it eventually lead to less concern about data quality. In the beginning, scrutiny of online data was very intense. Much time was spent validating results and selling credibility. Access to online respondents is fast becoming a commodity. Some clients are surprised to find out they have to pay anything to access respondents. While quality measures are still in place, they are much more relaxed.
• It has become common practice to use the same statistical terms that apply to truly random probability samples.

“The data end of our business has never been a glamorous one.”

I am quickly reassured that we are delivering a top notch product. While a lot of this comfort is a gut feeling, I take solace that the results make sense, the findings are logical, and our client can make sound decisions based on the research. Sure, we have to sort out some bad apples, and the rigor of quality assurance is not the same as it used to be – but in this age of quicker, faster; we have not given up on quality. The trick is being sure the data falls into the hands of well trained, seasoned marketing researchers. My fears about data quality are still pretty high when I think about a novice, or a non-researcher, executing a study.

We are now in the new frontier of crowd sourcing, social media, and new observational techniques for data collection. Rather than dismiss it because of quality concerns, let’s dig into it, see where it works and doesn’t work. Marketers are going to use the data, no matter what. It’s our job to make sure they do it right.

Ken Roberts, PRC is the Chairman of the Marketing Research Association and President of Cooper Roberts Research. He can be reached at kroberts@cooper-roberts.com.
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Thought Leaders in San Diego

Survey Monkey? Seriously?
Believe it or not, planning for MRA’s 54th Annual Conference & Expo was underway in earnest last September. If you’ve never been involved in “programming” – lots of ideation followed by recruitment – it’s a remarkable collaborative process that’s sometimes tedious, always interesting and often a whole lot of fun. In MRA’s case, “Annual” programming is driven by a dedicated committee of members headed up this year by Chuck Miller of DM2 (Digital Marketing & Measurement) and Education Chair Alice Butler, PRC, of MARC Research.

The conversation kicks off with an open ended discussion of what’s trending in the members’ research world. That’s followed by a strategy session of how to categorize those interests into tidy thought buckets, and then a comparison of notes leading to the recruitment of speakers. From those conversations and new for 2012, we’ve added seven educational sessions in four tracks covering research leadership, trends and technology, data integration and real world research.

But MRA’s conferences are about more than just speakers. There’s organized networking and exhibits, too. These can easily be overlooked, but they often are among the most valuable reasons for attending, the frosting on the educational cake, so to speak.

Key in all this is the programming committee’s understanding of the direct business benefits available to you and your company that will occur at MRA’s Annual Conference & Expo.

This year’s Annual will be held at the San Diego Hilton, a spectacular hotel overlooking San Diego Bay.

In addition to the 30 educational sessions, keynotes will include basketball great and San Diego local Bill Walton who, at 6’11,” will be hard to miss. He’s attended more than 800 Grateful Dead concerts, among other achievements, and will talk about teamwork and adversity.

Barry Jennings of Dell will explore how significant change in client needs is dramatically changing the face of marketing research and highlight the computer maker’s high-tech research approach and insights.

Dave Goldberg, CEO of SurveyMonkey, also will keynote this year’s Annual. DIY is an extraordinary phenomenon in the research world, which annoys (to be diplomatic) many traditional researchers. It’s also bringing research to the masses. Given that SurveyMonkey recently was valued at roughly $1 billion, and that Google itself just jumped into the marketing research sandbox (via Google consumer surveys – “Insights for a better product”… “Custom market research made easy” Oh boy!), we thought it would be wise to invite Dave to share his insights so you can determine for yourself if SurveyMonkey and the whole DIY trend is best viewed as a partner rather than a pariah.

I mentioned networking. Aside from the Chairman’s Reception on the first night, it’s important to shout about our second evening event.

We’ve secured SeaWorld San Diego to host a great evening of fun and networking that’ll include an MRA-exclusive performance by Shamu, the killer whale, as well as penguins and sea lions. This event is open to all attendees at no additional charge – a first for MRA – and an incredible opportunity for members to relax together.

Superficially, it’s easy to observe that face-to-face meetings are expensive and difficult to attend, but that can be breathtakingly short-sighted. Online communities and phone calls certainly have their place and often are an excellent source of facts. But viewed in a technical context, the bandwidth available to you when you’re with someone, face-to-face, particularly over a long period available to you during a two day conference, trumps anything you can do online or on the phone. The value of seeing body language, sensing comfort or unease, a hug, a wink – full interactivity – all make face-to-face meetings invaluable and the most efficient way to communicate.

That’s what MRA’s Annual Conference is all about. From a business perspective in a rapidly changing profession and business climate, it’s important for you and your company to learn, benchmark, network and grow. Oh, and there’ll be over 40 exhibitors who, aside from trying to sell you something (a noble act I might add), will also educate you into their latest/greatest products and services. One of those will be Hyundai – another MRA first – who not only will be selling cars but who also will be explaining the research that went into the brand’s design and positioning. Test drive, anyone?

Perhaps the best byproduct of MRA’s Annual is motivation, with the thought leadership built into the program’s content and attendees supplying the ideas and examples to supercharge your productivity and ROI to your company. The business benefits of your attendance are compelling, so take advantage of this opportunity and join us in San Diego, June 4-6. Shamu is waiting. We look forward to seeing you!

For detailed information or to register, please visit www.MarketingResearch.org/ac12.

David W. Almy is MRA’s CEO. He can be reached at david.almy@marketingresearch.org.
### Usability & Eye Tracking Labs

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Labs</th>
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<td><strong>CHICAGO</strong></td>
<td>Smith Research (Deerfield)</td>
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<td>AIM (Los Angeles, Costa Mesa, Long Beach)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Fieldwork LA (Irvine)</td>
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<td>Focus &amp; Testing</td>
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<td>Focus Pointe Global</td>
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<td>Schlesinger Associates (Edison, NJ)</td>
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<td><strong>FLORIDA</strong></td>
<td>Concepts in Focus (Jacksonville)</td>
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UK: +44 (0)20 7487 9290  
info@interactivevideo.com

**Website:**

www.interactivevideo.com
Mobile Research Has Gone Mainstream (Part 1 of a 2 part series)
By Tim Snaith Ph.D.

Mobile Market Research (MMR) is the hot topic with brands and research agencies alike.

The GreenBook Research Industry Trends Report (GRIT), spring 2012, provides the clearest indication of the trending towards MMR adoption. When discussing what emerging research techniques will be used in 2012, the findings indicate: “A big climber is Mobile Surveys, with clients/buyers jumping from a current 17 percent to an expected 53 percent and vendors expecting the increase to be from 24 - 64 percent.”

As specialists in MMR, OnePoint Global has written white papers chronicling and reflecting on the emergence of the mobile channel in market research. These white papers have:

• named mobile as “The 5th Research Methodology” (2008);
• recognized that “Mobile Research is Poised to Create a Tipping Point for the Industry” for the adoption of MMR (2010); and
• provided clarity on the “Critical Success Factors for Selling Mobile MR” to clients (2011).

Over the past seven years we have seen conference papers and articles that have either focused on the theoretical position and opportunities for MMR, or alternatively have presented results of singular, customized projects. In terms of outcomes, most are still suggesting best practices which are fairly simple and intuitive but don’t answer the questions that are critical to understanding MMR’s adoption as a mainstream market research channel.

To date, and to those looking in from the side lines, MMR must appear to be a series of bespoke, ad hoc projects suggesting fragmentation rather than consolidation; a view that raises more questions than answers in their minds. This view is likely supported by the relative lack of publicly viewable evidence of the execution and productization of Mobile Market Research.

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Presented over two issues of Alert! magazine (April and May), we will address this issue. The articles are designed to:

- illustrate how clients have productised their mobile research products; and
- provide you with multiple easy to read client written micro case studies.

The micro case studies are written by OnePoint clients and are typical of a larger number of projects now falling into distinct product categories that are opening up new research markets. These studies are generating in-the-moment insight unlike anything seen before, thereby also generating new revenue streams and reinvigorating market research as an industry.

April and May’s articles are logically split by the two primary methods for deploying mobile research, Mobile Originated (Pull), and Mobile Terminated (Push) surveys. This month we will focus on Mobile Originated, or Pull surveys, where the participant chooses to trigger the survey opportunity through one of the following actions:

- texting in a keyword, e.g. CHOICE to a short code number such as 91318;
- scanning a QR code on a receipt, poster, menu or magazine;
- selecting a link on a mobile website; or
- selecting a survey on a research app that they have downloaded to their mobile phone.

Each of the following micro case studies follows the same presentation format which reflects the key factors that interest clients; namely, the questions they have about MMR, e.g. what was the challenge and why use mobile? What sample, did you use? What was the cost per complete? What were the challenges and benefits etc.?

Case Study 1: Abt SRBI (full-service global research and strategy organization)

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<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>USA</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Product Name</td>
<td>OneVoice Customer Experience Tracking Study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Client</td>
<td>Confidential (Quick Serve Restaurant Chain)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Previous Technique</td>
<td>Online and IVR (Phone – Interactive Voice Response)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**The Business Challenge**

Two main reasons for adding mobile to the mix:

- Consumer communication trends – we want to make it easy for our clients to gather feedback and dialogue with their customers in the channels that customers are most comfortable with. Mobile is becoming central to how consumers (especially younger ones) communicate and socialize. To connect, you have to be where they are.
- Data quality - customers were taking our web survey via the browser on their smart phones at an increasing rate, but this created a data quality concern. We needed a mobile solution that would ensure a consistent survey experience regardless of mobile device.

**Sample/Participants**

Customers/guests that interact with our clients at various touch-points including retail, online-website, social media, etc.

**Channel**

Mobile Web (Keyword and QR code)

**Participant Brief**

The OneVoice program is based on the principle that a VOC solution must be made easy to participate in and provide actionable results. The mobile invite will ask the consumer to text in a “typical”, e.g. the brand, or a common product, keyword to launch their survey, or scan a QR code. In certain instances, we provide incentives to the respondents to increase response rates. The surveys have a simple design; focusing on overall perceptions (satisfaction and intent to recommend), key touch points (attributes and drill-downs on dissatisfaction), open-ended questions, requested contact and a link to brand loyalty efforts.

**Project Challenges**

The biggest challenge when adding the mobile mode to an existing program is maintaining survey consistency across the various modes. An inconsistent portrayal of the survey can bias survey results, e.g. if scales aren’t presented consistently and a customer has to scroll to see responses on one device, but not another. The research team dedicated much of the set-up phase to this.

We have also developed proprietary systems to ensure the secure capture and transfer of data and the integration of data across modes. In addition, we have developed proprietary quality control measures to prevent gaming, something that is very important because many programs are closely tied to corporate bonus structures.

**Benefits**

Customer and client response has exceeded all expectations.

- Data quality is consistent across channels.
- We have more than doubled the volume of feedback while reducing costs by 30 percent.

**Cost Per Complete**

Mobile is in line with other online data collection methods, but with lower cost than phone/IVR. There are several factors that influence the cost per complete in any survey solution, e.g. total survey volume, survey complexity, as well as the overall mix of web vs. mobile vs. phone.

**The OnePoint View**

This work is a great example of a CSAT program utilizing mobile to offer customers a “choice” of channel and where the mobile element is simple, cost effective and convenient. When working with clients that have numerous geographically dispersed retail units, mobile has proven it can engage and generate the high volumes of real-time insight data needed to drive business improvement.

Case Study 2: Auto Trader (the UK’s #1 site to buy and sell new and used cars, bikes, vans, trucks and caravans)

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<th>Country</th>
<th>United Kingdom</th>
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<tr>
<td>Product Name</td>
<td>Mobile Website User Experience</td>
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<tr>
<td>Client</td>
<td>Auto Trader in house</td>
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<tr>
<td>Previous Technique</td>
<td>Online (which we still use in conjunction, but not as often).</td>
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</table>

**The Business Challenge**

We wanted to solely target our mobile users to get 100 percent insight from people that use mobile. Also, the speed a survey can be created and ‘live’ is quicker, thus we can do more surveys.

**Sample/Participants**

Auto Trader mobile website users, with a goal of over 100 responses per question before using the statistics.
## Case Study 3: Symphony IRI (leading global provider of enterprise market information solutions and services)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Channel</th>
<th>Mobile Web</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participant Brief</td>
<td>Participants selected the survey link on the mobile website and answered a series of questions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Challenges</td>
<td>There is a much higher drop off than online, so mobile surveys have to be shorter, as the first question will have 400 responses and the final question might only have 100. Also, the screen is much smaller, thus the questions need to be shorter. It is also more difficult to dig deeper because people are also less inclined to specify what “other” means on a mobile.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benefits</td>
<td>The information gained is real-time; you can ask people where they are to establish location. Surveys are a lot more frequent because mobile is owned by the mobile team, whereas the survey slot on the computer based website is shared amongst many product owners.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost Per Complete</td>
<td>33 cents</td>
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### Country
Italy

### Product Name
Mobile Shopper Insight Tracker - Mobile pilot test for shopper insight, yogurt category

### Client
Leading Yogurt Provider

### Previous Technique
Online (now adding mobile to the online research and in-store personal interviews to extend digital strategy).

### The Business Challenge and Why Mobile was Used
Collect data about shopper on the POS. Through mobile survey it is possible to receive behavioural information about the shopper, as well as information about the products on the POS (barcode scan, location). Capture instant “in time” insight when the shopper is in the POS.

### Sample/Participants
The objective was 200 completions from: 1,437 panellists recruited in Rome, Milan and Napoli with mobile phone, of which 654 downloaded Sample/Participants.

### Project Challenges
- Automatic scanner of the barcode was possible with 70 percent of the sample; only when the camera of the smart phone had the auto-focus. When the smart phone failed, shoppers were asked to input manually.
- 41 percent of panelists have been localized via GPS IP record by their device with this approach.
- When the GPS was not responding, panelists were asked to write simple key words (city, store name), from which a pre-defined database list would appear to select their location from.
- 59 percent manually input the name of the store they were shopping at.
- Automatic scanner of the barcode was possible with 70 percent of the sample; only when the camera of the smart phone had the auto-focus. When the smart phone failed, shoppers were asked to input manually.

### Benefits
- The pilot results confirmed that mobile capability can be a reliable source of business insights.
- Shopper responses to questions were accurate.
- 3 percent or less of “no answer/inaccurate answer” (and only in a couple of questions).
- Business results are consistent with those generated by the traditional in-store survey methodology.
- Where possible, results have been compared to those of the Shopper Insight Study realized in 2010 for Danone with a sample of 1,600 Shopper insights to those of the Shopper Insight Study realized in 2010 for Danone with a sample of 1,600 shoppers in front of the shelf; two out of three questions asked in the two methodologies generate almost the same results.
- Business insights are relevant and pertinent.
- The new questions, not asked in 2010 study which focused on Actimel, are in line with expectations:
  - 97 percent of people are aware of the yogurt, Actimel.
  - 85 percent of those have already tried the product.
- The majority of shoppers properly referred to Actimel’s key product benefit: it helps/strengthens the immune system.

### Cost Per Complete
Each panellist was rewarded with panel points which were the equivalent to $6.60. (This included screening time and time to take the survey.)
**Case Study 4: Ipsos**

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<th><strong>Country</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Product Name</strong></td>
<td>Mobile Consultation</td>
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<td><strong>Client</strong></td>
<td>National Health Service</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Previous Technique</strong></td>
<td>Traditional consultation uses a variety of channels for data collection, with the optimum and most widely used being online self-completion and paper-based self-completion. These can also be combined with several other channels such as: white mail/letters, postcard response, emails, PDA touch screen, e.g. exhibitions, qualitative or exploratory, blogs, social networking sites, inserts in magazines/newspapers, video diaries, exhibitions/road shows, faxes, petitions.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>The Business Challenge and Why Mobile was Used</strong></td>
<td>The challenge in all consultations is engaging the younger generation and getting them to take part. Offering a simple SMS channel meant those who wouldn’t normally respond, had the option to respond via a method that was more familiar to them, at a time that suited them. It also allowed the client to gather thousands more responses for a fraction of the cost of other modes of data collection.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sample/Participants</strong></td>
<td>Consultations by their nature do not comprise of a representative sample of the target audience(s). They are merely a way to gather feedback on a particular proposal, which is open to all.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Channel</strong></td>
<td>SMS (Keyword)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Participant Brief</strong></td>
<td>Posters and flyers were put up and around various different medical practices and the keyword and number was also promoted in the local press. Each advertisement asked participants to text the word “Heart” to 85001 to give their feedback. Once their message was received, one open-ended response question was sent back to participants, asking them to choose the proposal they supported and comment as to why.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Project Challenges</strong></td>
<td>Engaging younger audiences in any consultation is tricky; using SMS allowed us to overcome this challenge.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Benefits</strong></td>
<td>The main benefit for the client was the additional responses achieved. In total we received over 22,000 responses in just less than nine weeks via the SMS channel; 30 percent of all responses achieved. This method also allowed the client to get responses from those who wouldn’t normally respond to consultations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cost Per Complete</strong></td>
<td>Costs roughly worked out to 48 cents per complete. Costs included scripting and project management, as well as the OnePoint mobile message costs. All texts were sent over a FREE text short code, meaning that there were no costs to the participant.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The OnePoint View</strong></td>
<td>Mobile is unique in its ability to enable the triangulation of real-time, location, and product choice. This technique takes the research company into the shopping environment but without the accompanied shopper experience. Surveys are self-completed on a participant’s mobile handset and provide insight that both confirms widely held product knowledge, as well as a few surprises that can have a radical effect on future products and marketing strategies.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**Case Study 5: Hall and Partners**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Country</strong></th>
<th>United Kingdom</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Product Name</strong></td>
<td>Brand and Communications Tracking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Client</strong></td>
<td>Major Manufacturer of Breakfast Cereals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Previous Technique</strong></td>
<td>Online</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Business Challenge and Why Mobile was Used</strong></td>
<td>We used mobile research alongside our online tracking to evaluate the actual (rather than stated) exposure and response to our clients advertising. Covering a range of ATL media elements (print, TV and online and, crucially, the BTL, e.g. PR and in-store).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sample/Participants</strong></td>
<td>300 respondents were invited to participate via our online tracking study for a period of 4 weeks to cover the full campaign activity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Channel</strong></td>
<td>SMS (Keyword)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Participant Brief</strong></td>
<td>Participants were asked to text in a keyword whenever exposed to the brand/product or its advertising. 10 questions were administered (plus the ability to send in pictures and videos to supplement their insight).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Project Challenges</strong></td>
<td>The key challenge faced was to get enough responses to smaller media elements, e.g. online, to be able to confidently assess response.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Benefits</strong></td>
<td>Real time feedback on the success of the communications activity and ultimately the ability to make actionable recommendations to optimize performance during the campaign (rather than afterwards).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cost Per Complete</strong></td>
<td>1. Mobile survey = $2.22 2. Panel = $4.28 3. Reward level = $15.85</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The OnePoint View

Mobile is unique in its ability to enable the triangulation of real-time, location, and product choice. This technique takes the research company into the shopping environment but without the accompanied shopper experience. Surveys are self-completed on a participant’s mobile handset and provide insight that both confirms widely held product knowledge, as well as a few surprises that can have a radical effect on future products and marketing strategies.
These five micro case studies are indicative of a growing number of mobile research products that clients are taking to market.

In next month’s article, “Mobile Research Has Gone Mainstream - Part 2”, we will focus on Mobile Terminated, or Push research products where participants who have signed up or given their permission are sent an invitation, notification or reminder to take a mobile survey. The client written micro case studies will be presented by SatMetrix, Allegiance, Maritz, and Nielsen, amongst others.

Common terms
Locational: The formatting of a survey or the app such that all function buttons are presented in the local language.
Mobile Originated: When the survey request originates from the participants’ mobile phone. They are requesting a survey by triggering it by, for example, texting in a keyword to a short code, or by scanning a QR code. Also called Pull or keywords surveys.
Mobile Terminated: When you upload a permission-based panel or recipient list and you send the first message or survey invitation to their mobile phone. Also called Push surveys.
Keyword: The word that you will present to your participant (on a receipt, Snipe menu, poster, TV advertisement, outdoor ad screen etc.), along with the short code they should send that keyword to, e.g. text the word CHOICE to 85001 (UK), or 91318 (USA).
QR Code: A type of two-dimensional barcode that can be read using smart phones and dedicated QR reading devices that link directly to mobile web surveys, text, emails, websites, phone numbers and more.
Short Code: Special telephone numbers, significantly shorter than full mobile phone numbers, that can be used to send and receive SMS and MMS messages from a service provider’s platform and the participant’s mobile phone, e.g. send SMS to 85001 (UK), or 91318 (USA).
Geolocation: The identification of a participant’s location by initializing the GPS function on their handset, or triangulating them between radio masts, and then reporting this in reporting software which identifies fixed or tracked locations for movement.

Tim Snaith, Ph.D., is the Chief Research Officer and co-founder of OnePoint Global, a mobile research and interaction company. Tim can be reached at tim.snaith@onepointglobal.com.
Actionable Data = Better Service and Happier Customers for Benchmark
By Chris Cottle

Data Collection: Evolving Methods for a Changing World – At Benchmark Senior Living, the theme of this month’s Alert! magazine is a fact of life: the world is changing fast and with this change comes the necessity for new approaches in data collection and market research.

Benchmark Senior Living opened its doors as an assisted living community in 1997 at a single location in Centerville, MA. At that time, the average age of a resident was 82 and the average stay was almost three years. Since its founding, Benchmark has strategically expanded to offer a full spectrum of services, including independent living, traditional assisted living, specialized assisted living for the memory-impaired (including Alzheimer’s and dementia care patients) and respite stay programs.

Increased life expectancy and the explosion of the US Baby Boomer generation have created an unprecedented number of consumers with a need for the full range of Benchmark’s services – either for themselves or family members. The Baby Boomers of our society (which are increasing in numbers by 10,000 every single day) are now making life-changing decisions in their lives and that of their parents.

Now operating in six Northeastern states in 46 distinct communities, the average age of a Benchmark Senior Living resident is 87 years old. The resident population is more diverse, more medically compromised, and competition for residents more fierce than in the past. Additionally, the recent recession has created financial difficulties for some families that impact all senior living communities. Seniors are putting off moving into a community until a crisis occurs, necessitating the move. Unlike the past, it is not uncommon for a resident to move out within the first three months. Many leave to move in with relatives; others leave for another facility that better meets their financial resources or physical needs.

The increasing use of computers among families – and even among residents – is another change in the past decade, making it competitively advantageous for Benchmark Senior Living to use online tools and social networking sites to reach out to consumers and their families.

Benchmark’s Market Research Objectives
During the slump in the economy, occupancy rates declined and length of stay (LOS) decreased, with industry wide occupancy rates dropping to 86 percent in 2008. The industry wide rates have increased slightly to 88 percent; however, Benchmark enjoys occupancy rates of 94 percent – far outpacing the competition. The average LOS in the late 90’s was a little over three years; today it is slightly under two years. Benchmark has a 2.2 year LOS. The cost of acquiring a new customer is so expensive that communities commonly do not start making a profit until month three, making it clear that any move out within 90 days has a detrimental impact on profits. Competition is so strong, it is crucial to deliver superior customer service and ensure that needs of both residents and families are met.

Although residents comprise the primary target market (and may be the one who made the decision to live at a Benchmark facility), Benchmark considers family members just as important in marketing and retention efforts. In many cases, family members make the decision for the resident. Additionally, family members are usually nearing retirement age themselves, making them a strong secondary target market.

With all of these factors in mind, Benchmark set forth to develop specific research goals and objectives.

Research Goal
To quickly and easily gather periodic and real-time customer satisfaction data to be used to initiate changes resulting in:
• increased customer satisfaction;
• reduced move-out rates;
• increased customer loyalty scores; and
• the ability to identify employees who most exemplify the company’s culture of caring.

Research Challenges
Benchmark’s competitive advantage is its caring and nurturing associates. The company continuously strives to offer world class senior living experiences as defined by the senior and his/her support network of friends and family members.

Need for more consistent real-time feedback gathering and reporting
For years, the company had been gathering customer feedback using a traditional paper system. When a family member called with a complaint, the manager at the facility registered the comment in a log book along with details on how and when it was resolved. Unfortunately, only negative comments were recorded and the feedback wasn’t compiled in a way that gave Benchmark executives any meaningful metrics.

Need for quicker, more cost-effective survey tools
The more formal feedback Benchmark collected from residents and their families on an annual basis was also proving ineffective. An outside market research organization administered and analyzed the paper-based survey, which often took months – much too long to offer Benchmark actionable insights about its current customers or their needs.

Need to integrate employee feedback with customer satisfaction levels
Benchmark Senior Living believes in recognizing employees who demonstrate commitment and respect for the residents they serve. This proactive approach to fostering excellence, accountability and integrity requires the ability to elicit
customer feedback, identify and resolve problems in real time and reward specific staff members who best exemplify the company’s culture of caring. Since staff attitudes impact resident satisfaction and engagement, Benchmark needed to integrate feedback about employees and measure satisfaction levels across its properties.

**Solution**

**Incorporating Voice of the Customer technology to capture actionable insights**

Benchmark sought a timely and flexible way to gather market research and glean actionable data that could be used to increase customer satisfaction. Several Web-based Voice of the Customer (VOC) survey platforms were evaluated before deciding on one that was comprehensive, customizable and easy to use.

Benchmark was able to replace its paper complaints log with a Web-based VOC system that gathered positive and negative comments from multiple channels (phone, paper, online). To maximize participation, Benchmark highlighted the new feedback process to family members via website tools, targeted emails emphasizing the “green” advantage of the new electronic solution, and social media sites that family members and residents were already using. Additionally, flyers about the new system were included with monthly invoices.

The company also began surveying approximately 3,800 residents and 12,000 family members at three critical time frames: 7, 30 and 90 days after the resident moved in, to ascertain how the resident is adjusting to the transition and whether or not associates are anticipating and meeting their needs. Associates are also surveyed at these three points – 7, 30 and 90 days after hire, to assess their transition process, level of engagement and job satisfaction.

Further, the company uses the platform to perform annual surveys of residents and families to measure overall customer satisfaction and perceptions. The surveys enable Benchmark to capture the customer’s overall impression of the company and to measure and track trends in customer loyalty (measured by Net Promoter Score - NPS).

**The Proof is in the Results!**

Each week, Benchmark analyzes verbatim comments the VOC platform has gathered and sends reports to senior managers in each of the residential communities. If negative feedback is received, Benchmark is able to meet with the resident and their family to resolve the issue right away. Managers also are able to publicly recognize and thank associates who have been identified by residents for their commitment and caring.

Trend information gleaned from the VOC data has led to operational changes and creation of new initiatives, including the establishment of a customer advisory board. Analysis of VOC data helped Benchmark realize that the most difficult time on residents is typically 30 days post-move (into its communities); the timeframe that generates the lowest satisfaction scores. Benchmark has been able to better set expectations for residents from the outset and watch for transition difficulty one month into their engagement with residents. As a result, Benchmark’s laser focus has enhanced the customer experience at the 30 day mark and increased NPS by 10 points in the first quarter of 2012.

Specifically, Benchmark has used the feedback and survey results culled from the VOC system to help reduce the number of residents who move out within the first six months. The number of people who moved out of Benchmark residences between April and October 2011 was 12 fewer than it had been during that same time period in 2010. At a yearly fee of $60,000 per resident, that
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...important is truly understanding the challenges and hopes of your clients and peers?

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Dave Goldberg, CEO, SurveyMonkey

**What We can Learn from the Socialization of Super Bowl Ads**
David Brandt, lead, Socialized Research and Neuroscience, Ipsos Open

**Bridging the Gap between Primary Research and Existing Databases**
Scott R. Laing, Principle and Managing Director and Chris Robson, Principle and Chief Scientist, Parametric Marketing

**What’s in a Name? Unlocking Powerful Brand Names through Market Research**
Lisa Bertelsen, Global Director, Research Insights and Nik Contis, Global Director, Naming, Brand Development and Leadership, Siegel+Gale

**Data Integration: Help is on the Way!**
Emily Pattat, Director, Marketing Research & Analysis, ALSAC/St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital

**Marketing Effectiveness Study – How to Measure Daily Deals**
Eric Rasmussen, VP, Market Research, Groupon.com

“Driving” Towards Golfer Insights: New Media Enhances Qualitative Methodology
Don Hein, Research Analyst, PING Golf and Jon Last, President, Sports and Leisure Research Group

Social Media Research: Blending Traditional and New Research Methodologies for Maximum Results
Jacqueline Anderson, Director, Product Development for Social Media and Text Analytics, J.D. Power and Associates

B2B → B2P: Marketing Research Tactics that Recognize B2B Professionals are People Too
W. Todd Brown, Director, Marketing Research, LexisNexis Risk Solutions

Collaboration: A Global Study into How People Work
Brian Green, Senior Researcher, Insight and Exploration, Herman Miller Inc.

Inspiring Insight Activation through Visualizing the Consumer
Claire Brooks, President, and Jeff Myers, Creative Associate, ModelPeople, Inc.

Implementing a DIY Online Survey System Across Your Enterprise
Lisa Wolfe, Senior Director, Consumer Insights, DeVry, Inc., and Ryan Smith, CEO, Qualtrics, Inc.

Focusing Your Presentation on Expertise, Not Evidence
Curt Freitag, Area Market Research Manager, Abbott Diabetes Care

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CEO Reception  
**Sunday, June 3; 6:30 – 8:30 pm**  
*Pre-registration required.*  
**New!** C-Level executives are invited to attend the CEO Reception to make high-level connections while enjoying the evening air and fabulous food. This exclusive outdoor event will make it easy to add to your contact list by providing ample time to connect with your executive colleagues.

Expo Grand Opening  
**Monday, June 4; 5:30 – 6:30 pm**  
*New!* The perfect opportunity to explore the Expo and connect with colleagues. Enjoy a cocktail and light-bite while chatting with exhibitors and learning about cutting-edge product, service and technology solutions. Designated Expo hours are also offered between education sessions. Don’t forget to participate in the special Expo activities for a chance to win exciting prizes!

Chairman’s Reception  
**Monday, June 4; 6:30 – 8 pm**  
*Event included with full registration.*  
Enjoy San Diego’s lovely weather and beautiful sunset during this attendee favorite. Fabulous cocktails and hors d’oeuvres will be served outside in a fun and festive atmosphere. This Reception provides the perfect venue to reconnect with old colleagues and make new professional connections.

Evening at SeaWorld San Diego  
**Tuesday, June 5; 6:45 – 9:30 pm**  
*Event included with full registration.*  
Mingle a bit more with your colleagues at the exciting SeaWorld San Diego. Enjoy socializing and delicious cuisine then catch the private MRA-only Shamu show. And don’t be surprised if a couple of friends waddle by you during the reception. It’s all part of your conference registration (and experience)!

Buddy Program  
*Pre-registration required.*  
New MRA members and first time Annual Conference attendees may choose to be paired up with a veteran member who will help you make new business acquaintances and get the most out of your Conference experience. Contact lisa.lockwood@marketingresearch.org for a buddy or to help mentor a new attendee!
Sunday – June 3
3:00 PM – 7:00 PM  Registration
6:30 PM – 8:30 PM  CEO Reception

Monday – June 4
7:30 AM – 7:00 PM  Registration
Track  CEO Symposium  Trends & Technology  Data Integration  Real World
9:00 AM – 10:00 AM  Executive Exchange  Information is the Difference that Makes a Difference
Rob Stone, Ph.D., Market Strategies International, Jim Bryson, 20/20 Research, Inc., and Elizabeth Ellers, Univision Communications, Inc.

Executive Exchange & Networking Break

10:00 AM – 11:00 AM  Story Telling & Data Visualization
Information is the Difference that Makes a Difference
Hal Bloom, Sage

Asked & Answered: Focusing Your Presentation on Expertise, Not Evidence
Curt Freitag, Abbott Diabetes Care

11:00 AM – 12:00 PM  Executive Roundtables
Inspiring Insight Activation through Visualizing the Consumer
Claire Brooks and Jeff Myers, MarketPeople, Inc.

12:00 PM – 1:00 PM  Lunch

Tuesday – June 5
7:30 AM – 8:00 PM  Registration  Breakfast
Track  CEO Symposium  Trends & Technology  Data Integration  Real World
9:00 AM – 10:00 AM  Managing New Digital Research Methodologies to Ensure Holistic & Successful Research
Robin Boyar, thinktank

What’s In a Name? Unlocking Powerful Brand Names through Market Research
Lisa Bertelsen and Nik Contis, Siegel+Gale

An Insights Director, a Brand Manager, and a Lawyer Walk into a Bar...
Julian Cohen, Beam Global Spirits & Wine

What We Can Learn From the Socialization of Super Bowl Ads
David Brandt, Ipsos Open Thinking Exchange

10:00 AM – 10:45 AM  Expo

11:00 AM – 12:00 PM  Reaching the New American Reality
Elizabeth Ellers, Univision Communications, Inc.

Peter Leimbach, ESPN

Social Media Research: Blending Traditional and New Research Methodologies for Maximum Results
Jacqueline Anderson, J.D. Power and Associates

Marketing Effectiveness Study: How to Measure Daily Deals
Eric Rasmussen, Groupon.com

12:15 PM – 1:15 PM  Lunch

1:30 PM – 2:30 PM  Speed Learning

The Evolution of Qualitative Research
Jim Smith, Illuminare Labs

If You Can’t Beat ’Em, Join ’Em: Implementing a DIY Online Survey System Across Your Enterprise
Lisa Wolfe, DeVry Inc. and Ryan Smith, Qualtrics, Inc.

Data Integration: Help is on the Way!
Emily Pattat, ALSAC/St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital

Targeting is Not a KPI: What Audience Data Really Means to Advertisers
Dave Martin, Ignited

3:45 PM – 4:30 PM  Expo

4:30 PM – 5:30 PM  Anticipating the Unexpected: Emerging Trends in Online and Mobile Privacy
LaToya Rembert-Lang, J.D., LL.M., MRA

Jim Smith, Illuminare Labs

Bridging the Gap Between Primary Research and Existing Databases
Scott R. Laing and Chris Robson, Parametric Marketing

The Making of a “Smarter Planet”
Annette Krotsch, IBM, Jim Kraus and Mike Nash, KS&R

6:30 PM – 9:30 PM  Evening at SeaWorld San Diego

Wednesday – June 6
7:30 AM – 11:00 AM  Registration  Breakfast
8:30 AM - 9:15 AM  Membership Meeting & Awards
9:15 AM – 10:15 AM  KEYNOTE: Increase Business Intelligence, Leverage Social Media and Join the Revolution in Innovation – Barry Jennings, Dell, Inc.

Keynote: DIY Tools and the Changing World of Marketing Research – Dave Goldberg, SurveyMonkey

10:15 AM - 11:00 AM  Expo

11:00 AM – 12:00 PM  The Survey Research Town Hall: Clearing the Confusion with MRA’s Tag Team
Howard Fienberg, PLC, and LaToya Rembert-Lang, J.D., LL.M., MRA

Technology Exchange: What’s Next for Marketing Research
Michael Rosenberg, JP Morgan Chase & Co

“Driving” Towards Golfer Insights: New Media Enhances Qualitative Methodology
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Big Government, Big Tech, Big Data. As market researchers, we ought to be paying close attention to the explosion of data collection in the public sphere. After all, this is our realm, and we know how to do it right. But in an era of unbridled web tracking and an anarchistic-tempered virtual realm, we need to be careful not to let our ethical practices go by the wayside.

The truth is: ethical research begets better insights.

Here in the market research sector, we are in a unique position to convey to the rest of the world how to ethically acquire proper information - by keeping the emphasis on respecting the consumer, even if it sometimes seems at odds with what a company wants. That might put us in opposition to some of the invasive web tracking and privacy infringement issues surrounding the big tech conglomerates, but it also puts us a bit at odds with governmental policies that may stifle our ability to gain quality insight.

However, before we sell our souls to the world of unregulated web analytics, or confine our research with over-regulated data practices, let’s remember what we, as market researchers, set out to do in the first place: acquire quality information in an ethical manner. Let’s consider why we ought to proceed with caution when it comes to establishing our future data collection practices.

The Big Tech Challenge

The Backwards Business of ‘Tech Tracking’

As tempting as a web analytics free-for-all may be, there is cause for concern when it comes to the data collection practices of many online outlets. Hardly a day goes by without a headline condemning the privacy infringements of a major tech company. Cue two of the most popular tech sites in the world: Google and Facebook, both of which are repeatedly scrutinized for privacy policy opacity.

Yet, every time Facebook issues a privacy update, or Google is featured in an expose, consumers, e.g. free users, paying their way with cold hard data, air their dismay, citing privacy infringement, and in some cases, charging ‘Big Brotherism’ and espionage. But despite their complaints, consumers sign on, check in, update their profiles, and issue a peeved, albeit resigned, status update.

The question is, how long will consumers stand for tricky tracking, in spite of their protestations?

Poor Personal Data Management Breeds Brand Distrust

The zeitgeist is starting to reflect a widespread distrust in tech companies’ ability to adequately protect personal information - which, as we know in the MR world, is cause for concern when it comes to gleaning valuable data. According to Pew Research’s latest study on search engine use, 73 percent of respondents said that they would not be OK with a search engine tracking searches and using the information to personalize future searches, citing invasive privacy practices. Furthermore, two-thirds of search users see personalized search as a bad thing.

Given that, and the fact that both searches and custom-personalization continue, what’s next? Negative consumer sentiment, that’s what.

One needn’t look farther than today’s paper, the home page of Mashable, or CNN’s Twitter feed for evidence that negative sentiment is on the rise. Google is currently facing a class-action lawsuit for its new streamlined privacy policy (data collecting boon), citing the change as a felony offense. This follows close on the heels of an entirely different class-action lawsuit filed a mere month ago. Facebook is in hot water, again, for fostering government surveillance, including monitoring by the IRS and Homeland Security. Despite denying the claims, the companies are far from back-pedaling. In fact, as of this writing, Facebook just released a new privacy policy for data collection that removed the word ‘privacy’ altogether.
Brand Distrust Leads to the Weakening of Insight

Even so, some might ask; if data exploitation truly concerned users, why would they continue to provide their information? A current scan of culture sentiment evinces that users are increasingly dodging invasive data trackers and buttoning up. Here’s just a sampling of articles that have recently surfaced: “Everyone’s Trying to Track You On The Web: Here’s How to Stop Them” [LifeHacker], “How to Divorce Google” [PC World], “How to Keep Web Advertisers From Tracking You [Today/MSNBC], and “Secure Your Browser: Add-Ons to Stop Web Tracking” [Wired News]. There’s even a new app on the market, Disconnect, which prevents Google, Facebook, Twitter, and other info-collecting powerhouses from tracking users’ data.

In other words, it may now be wise to question the accuracy of data gathered from a climate that is so publically distrustful of the process.

The Big Government Problem

Over Regulation Can Lead to Underwhelming Insight

The comScore-supported Consumer Privacy Bill of Rights issued by the White House aims to rekindle consumer trust by regulating and implementing data privacy policies. Included among the many points that seek to quell current consumer concerns regarding data collection and privacy are consumer control, transparency, and security. In acquiring quality research, the field of MR is well rehearsed in proper practices regarding these very fields:

Consumer Control: Market researchers know that there is little value in an insight that isn’t purposeful or when it manifests via takeaways that have been coerced. We want targets that are active, aware, and willing to provide their opinions genuinely and without manipulation.

Transparency: A degree of transparency is fundamental to all quality market research. Whether we’re telling focus groups about ‘the guys behind the glass,’ or about the audio or video recording devices in the room; transparency fosters a more comfortable, trusting, and therefore honest environment for consumers. Despite the fact that respondents knowingly submit themselves to these measures, it is in our best interest as market researchers to be transparent about the process.

Security: Companies expect their market researchers to keep their data collections under lock and key. Moreover, market researchers know that when consumers feel like their personal data is safe and secure, they are, understandably, willing to be more vulnerable and honest. It’s why we tell consumers that their recorded insight won’t wind up on YouTube. We’re not trying to be (too) cute; we know that if they feel secure, their opinion will be all the more meaningful.

But government regulation brings with it the risk of regulating us right out of quality insight. Especially if market research is to be perceived in the exact same way as tech companies are when it comes to data privacy legislation.

Recently, the MRA issued the article, New FTC Data Privacy Report Poses Challenges to Marketing Research; a new installment in the ongoing coverage of government-backed privacy law. When it comes to this new territory of legislation, the MRA brings up several key concerns for our field, including: the potential for first-party collectors to exploit consumer ‘opt-ins’ by tracking users across unrelated websites; the distinction between research and commercial activities; and data minimization and retention regulations. Lastly, we should all be wary of the notion of ‘self-regulation’ found throughout many of the government proposed bills—which has the potential to grant the government far more say in how we collect insight than perhaps they ought to have, while putting us at risk for not following proper ‘self-regulating’ protocol. And it might go without saying; there is also consumer mistrust in any area of heavily-backed government regulation, but especially concerning the Internet.

We have been collecting data for years. It’s necessary that we be distinct from the new web tracking tech powerhouses when it comes to data privacy policies issued by the government.

MR 2.0

Our field, as integral to the world of marketing and advertising as it is, is often short-changed. So the temptation to dive head first into the unchartered territory of unregulated web tracking and analytics is great, but there’s a cost; consumer distrust, lawsuits, weak insight.

Still, we must remain vigilant that our ethical practices are not limited by over regulation. It’s clear we are needed - now, more than ever, but short sightedness might weaken the integrity of our field. Integrity can be the characteristic that defines market research as an important and authoritative field in the age of Big Data.

It’s worth mentioning that Nielsen recently issued their web analytics privacy and cookie policy to the public, without government or big-tech partisanship. Among the numerous vows to protect consumer discretion, the company disclosed how they gather online data by including what technology they use and with whom they share it. While they admit they have less control of information that is passed onto third party holders, they provide an emboldened opt-out form so that consumers can be assured their information stays out of the agency’s hands.

The market research industry has been gaining quality insights and consumer feedback, gauging emotional sentiment and brand messaging since Google was nothing but gibberish. Let’s be honest: we’ve done it without conceding to a government-backed Consumer Bill of Rights, to boot.

We must ensure our data-collection practices not be mistaken for unruly web analytics, invasive cookie tracking, and data privacy manipulation tactics. Collecting information needn’t be the exploitative, conniving practice that has been haunting headlines as of late. As market researchers, we know this better than anyone. Data is integral to learning about our minds, our behaviors, and our interests. It follows, then, that the process by which it is collected must be revered just as much, if not more so. After all, when it comes to taking on Big Data and rendering quality insight, who are consumers going to trust? Ethical research is our industry’s selling point, precisely.

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Survey research is past its golden age. It did not last long: about 25 years.

At its height, nearly 98 percent of Americans owned a landline telephone, and most of them were listed in the white pages. Furthermore 1+ listing (or now more commonly 3+ listing) techniques made the dialing of these telephone numbers cost effective.

How fast things change. Now, only two out of three households own a landline telephone, and many of them refuse to pick up the phone when they see a strange number on their caller ID. One-hundred blocks have lost some of their efficacy, in that 1+ listing techniques may now be throwing away not just non-working and business numbers, but up to 10 or even 15 percent of all numbers routing to actual households. The Internet has afforded survey researchers a methodology that violates the cardinal rule of scientific survey research (random selection); however, it is so inexpensive as to be downright irresistible. Cell phones can be called, but at much lower rates of efficiency than landlines, and then one has to deal with weighting that properly accounts for the probability of selection that goes with respondents potentially having two types of telephones (which is done routinely - not without issues). Finally, we have alternatives to sampling by Internet or phone, namely, sampling by address. This solves most problems inherent in Internet or phone surveys but has issues of its own.

What is a survey researcher to do? The answer, quite simply, is to know your product. When there is full understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of each sampling approach, researchers can make appropriate choices as to which method makes the most sense for their project. Therefore, there must be a number of criteria with which to judge each sampling approach. I would argue that the most important criteria are: coverage, response, cost, timeliness, and breadth of applicability.

Traditionally, the two most important criteria in determining the level of quality for survey research are coverage and response. Coverage is the percent of one’s target population that has a chance to be sampled with a given sampling approach. For example, let’s consider a survey of Hispanics using only landline listed white pages sample, limited to those with recognizable Hispanic last names. This sampling approach to surveying Hispanics has been popular because while Hispanics are about 14 percent of the population, this approach will reach a Hispanic household over 70 percent of the time, saving substantial survey costs compared to a simple random digit dialing survey. It turns out though, that only about 65 percent of Hispanics own a landline telephone, the rest owning only cell phones; and about 30 percent of Hispanics overall have a recognizable surname that is listed in the white pages. As a result, only about 20 percent of Hispanics are covered by a surname landline design. So the question then becomes, is a sample of these 20 percent representative of the other 80 percent? Research shows that on a host of variables, they are similar, and on a host of others, they are grossly different. If you are trying to get accurate survey estimates of Hispanics, you roll the dice when using only surname landline sample, a strategy that only covers about 20 percent of all Hispanic households.

With regard to coverage, the strongest approach is address-based sampling. Briefly, address-based sampling uses the Computerized Delivery Sequence File of the U.S. Postal Service as a basis for sampling households. The database covers nearly every address in the U.S., and therefore covers nearly 100 percent of the population (excluding the homeless). Dual-frame landline/cell-phone RDD designs also attain coverage near 100 percent, but from there the numbers drop quickly. Landline designs only cover 70 percent, missing broad swaths of the young and other sub-populations. That said, landline designs can still attain reasonably high coverage rates of surveys of older populations, where there are still relatively few households that are cell phone-only. Finally, there is the Internet panel. If we total up all people who belong to any Internet panel today, we find that perhaps there are two million such Americans. In other words, Internet panel survey respondents (what one noted survey researcher derisively has called “the members of a survey club”) cover only about 2 percent of the population. Yet, on a wide range of measures, Internet panels do well in comparison to more methodologically rigorous approaches. Like the earlier example with surname landline sample, there are also many studies that document substantial differences between Internet panel data and more representative approaches. Whatever claims are made as to the validity of data attained by Internet panels, the fact remains that when using such panels we are hoping that the 2 percent represent the other 98 percent.

Response is our second criteria. Response has been bandied about as the gold standard for survey quality: Higher response rates mean a better study. Unfortunately, in my experience, I have seen response rates calculated with all types of odd assumptions, the majority being branded as an official “AAPOR” or “CASRO” response rate, even when the math is different than what is defined by those standards. So contrary to popular belief, response rates are not always

1 In this article I use the term “white pages” as a shorthand for the range of available public databases where telephones are listed, such as InfoUSA, Experian, Axiom, TargusInfo, etc.

2 The vast majority of telephone numbers are either non-working or routed to businesses. 1+ listing techniques extract from the random digit dialing pool of numbers all numbers belonging to a 100 series (999-999-0000 through 999-999-0099) in which none of those 100 numbers are found to be a white pages listed household. Because listed households cluster in specific 100 blocks, this technique has been extremely effective at reducing the number of non-working and business numbers one has to dial in order to find numbers belonging to households.
using the same yardstick. As well, a half dozen highly regarded research articles have found that lower response rate studies, while having a greater chance for error, do not tend to exhibit appreciably greater degrees of survey error compared to studies that attain higher response rates. Nevertheless, response rates still persist as the most visible and looked-at measure of quality in surveys today. How do the various sampling methods stack up with regard to response? The answer is: it depends. Telephone surveys of the general population can attain response rates as low single digits and as high as 50 to 60 percent. Web Internet panel response rates are trickier to calculate but tend to be on the low side of this scale, and address-based designs attain response rates usually a little lower or on par with telephone surveys. In the end, response is about the level of effort put forward by the survey vendor. With maximum effort, telephone surveys can attain slightly higher response rates than address-based surveys, and substantially higher response rates than Internet panels.

Differences in cost, my third criteria, are probably widely understood by a large number of readers of this magazine. In short, Internet panels can be rock-bottom inexpensive. A typical 15-minute survey of 1,000 people in the general population, depending on effort/response rate commitments, might be $15 per complete using an Internet panel, compared to $40 for telephone (dual-frame) and about the same amount for address-based designs. Clearly Internet panels are the winner here.

The fourth criteria timeliness is also an area where Internet panels thrive; however, telephone research can be quick as well, given a survey vendor with enough resources to “blitz” the study. Certainly, address-based designs lag given the need to print letters, mail them, and wait for responses from invitees. It is difficult to properly execute an address-based design in less than a month.

That brings us to our last criteria, breadth of applicability. There is a wide range of opinion regarding Internet panels on this criterion. An executive from a large Fortune 500 company once called me and said that she had been satisfied with panel data for a wide variety of purposes, but she now had an issue in which she needed “the right answer” and therefore was asking for a dual-frame telephone survey. Other researchers will not touch panels, no matter what the topic or goal. It seems a majority of researchers have some level of comfort conducting experimental studies on Web panels (for example, message testing studies comparing multiple messages against each other), although are far more wary when it comes to producing actual survey population estimates.

Address-based designs work well for very small geographic areas, since one can precisely target by address, a task that is getting harder to accomplish every year in telephone research, and is often impossible with an Internet panel (because the panel will not have enough members in a small geographic space). Yet, address-based designs tend to get quite expensive if screening is required – if the study is trying to interview a small sub-population, like parents of children ages six and under-- and more so if multiple languages are required. As such, studies of, for example, Hispanics are better conducted via telephone, where screening is less expensive, as is interviewing in multiple languages.

Telephone studies still offer the greatest flexibility in their applicability. They hold the “middle” ground in terms of being reasonably efficient, fast, and adaptable, while still maintaining some cap on costs.

A final consideration is the hybrid study. One can design a study that keeps costs low but overcomes the representation gap between Internet panels and other types of research by combining the two approaches. There are a number of techniques available today (with varying levels of success) to statistically “blend” panel data with other types of data. The same is true for multiple approaches within telephone sampling, and with telephone and address-based hybrids.

In the end, the choices for survey researchers in terms of sampling and data collection are varied and complex. This is a blessing rather than a curse, for now we have multiple options. Among other questions, researchers should ask how important is it that my data represents the entire population of whatever group I am interested in? How timely is the issue, and do I have the time to reach out to harder-to-reach respondents? How do I want to spend my resources? It is better to have fewer completed interviews that I can be confident in, or more interviews of less of the population? It is up to researchers to conduct cost-benefit analysis of the options available and to choose the option that best suits their specific study.

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Full-Service Marketing Researcher: The Impressive Evolution of the Position
Robert N. Graff

A full-service marketing researcher’s job is to understand their client's research needs and apply the best methodology to help answer their research questions.

But have you ever stopped to think about all the decisions that need to happen to best execute the research and address the client’s research questions? To explore the options, let’s take a look at the past and make a connection to where we are today with respect to modality selection and its various components.

The Good Old Days
Let’s concede that hindsight can often make the past seem much simpler than it was; decisions made then were just as important to the research process as current decision-making is. When considering the state of supplier-side marketing research a couple decades ago, and analyzing the tools available, it was much more limited and simple, in scope and design. The research process itself was, in many cases, much stronger with respect to fundamental MR principles than what we see present day. In the past, sampling and data validation were often held in higher esteem than in today’s environment. With respect to modality selection, researchers had fewer options than they have now; utilizing telephone, mail and mail research to a greater extent, with other options for consideration being low. Sample sources were fewer, better defined, and a stronger area of expertise. The survey sample itself was frequently probability sample - meant to truly represent the broader population as a whole - and samples were released in a more defined, structured manner to ensure greater response and representation. Data quality was always an important issue and validation was regularly a standard part of the process, although the process of validation was much more straightforward because it often meant simply calling back a certain percentage of completes to make sure the respondent’s answers were accurate and honest.

To be fair, hindsight is never crystal clear. We either consider the past to be when things were done the ‘right way’ or we consider it to be an archaic, inefficient version of what we do today. Neither is entirely and absolutely true, so while I simplified some of the components above, remember that much like questionable fashion and hair trends of the 1970s and 1980s, we can only look forward and hope it gets better.

Contemplate the burden of administrative responsibilities on the researcher in decades past and how drastically different it is from today. The percentage of labor hours included in a project proposal to account for data entry, hand-coding, and other heavy-administrative tasks was enormous. Technology and the development of research-specific tools have helped improve the efficiency by which we conduct research, which has freed the researcher to focus on and dedicate more time to the client.

The Evolving Researcher
What does a full-service researcher do today that’s different? When we think of building relationships with clients; how we focus on their needs and work diligently to most effectively bring about actionable insights, there is very little distinction. The differences surface when exploring the ways in which we accomplish research tasks to derive insights.

Consider the following job description:

Wanted: Full-Service Marketing Research Professional
We are looking to hire an experienced marketing research professional with a wide variety of skills. The ideal candidate will have expertise in both qualitative and quantitative research methods, and will have a thorough understanding of traditional, online, and social media engagement and purchase behavior. The candidate will be an expert in consumer psychology and segmentation, fluent in several languages, proficient in HTML, CSS, JavaScript, and Photoshop, have a thorough understanding of cloud-based hosting and virtualization strategies, comfortable developing mobile apps and mobile-enabled websites, comfortable moderating in-person focus groups as well as webcam focus groups, community sites, and discussion boards, and be able to connect the dots from data to insights for our clients. This candidate will have expertise in panel and database management, sampling, quality control systems, usability testing, and thoroughly understand issues relating to response rates and reach with any given population. Must have experience with SAS, SPSS, and building business intelligence dashboards. A graduate degree in Demography is not required, but is preferred.

Does this seem realistic? What course of study would you enter in college to acquire the skills necessary to be a fully-accomplished marketing research professional? (My guess is that you walk into the registrar’s office at the local college and ask to sign up for everything they offer.) Obviously researchers don’t have to be experts in all of the areas above, but the skills list does highlight a great deal of the components that collectively make up the current full-service research environment.

Consumer Behavior Changes and Technology
Consumer behavior is evolving and marketers are doing all they can to keep up with the trends, unsuccessfully in some cases. Marketing researchers in turn are doing what they can to support the marketers in their efforts to understand the consumer. This process isn’t new; so what’s changed? The shift in the ways in which consumers research products, the influencers of consideration, the empowerment of the buyer – all have roots in new technology. Social media and social peer-to-peer communication provides consumers with real-time
access to everything from comparison shopping sites to recommendations from friends or previous users of an item. The resulting level of shopper empowerment is significant and has important ramifications for marketers and marketing researchers.

Media Fragmentation Provides Tremendous Opportunities for Research

Change means opportunity. The more things change, the more important the understanding of the change is to our clients, and the more valuable researchers become to the process. What does media fragmentation among consumers have to do with marketing research? It turns out, a lot.

Hello, my name is Rob and I have a 17-year old son. If you have a teenager, or a young adult, in your household, you’re very familiar with some of the behavioral changes we try to make sense of and might be willing to join me in a support group. To be fair, there’s no making sense of some of the things teenagers do, but they are the group that oftentimes drives the changes in behaviors that we try to capture for marketing purposes. Think about what teenagers and young adults do in a typical day. They text their friends all day long, walk around with at least one ear bud coming from their head with music emanating that’s too loud to comprehend, watch mindless TV while instant messaging their friends on Facebook or playing video games. They’re using devices such as iPods, tablets, phones, TVs, laptops and PCs, all at the same time. We’re either watching the future geniuses of society who are able to somehow manage and filter all media from so many places into a comprehensible stream of data, or we’re witnessing how overwhelmed new consumers are with respect to media and marketing. The truth is, with so many options available, consumers will create their own customized experiences across products, media, and devices, and on their own terms.

How does a marketer reach this new consumer to present them with a message and engage them with your brand? What’s an effective way to create a connection that will last beyond a single point of contact? What do new consumers value and why? These questions aren’t new, but the points of emotional engagement and connection with respect to a brand are evolving and it’s the understanding of the new methods of connection that become so important to the process. The Urgent Need for Research

With all the options available to consumers, and with marketers scrambling to fully understand how these options impact consumer choice and decision-making, there is a pressing need to quantify, qualify, summarize and more deeply explore the issues. This is what marketing research does. This is the industry in which we operate; therefore, the explosion of options available to consumers, along with a trend towards consumer empowerment, means the opportunities for research and insights are plentiful.

Research Decisions – A Couple Examples Related to Execution

It’s important to look at how we execute a research study and try to show parallels between marketers’ understanding of consumers and how it impacts our decisions for research study execution.

Let’s start with an approach to sampling for a traditional consumer products survey utilizing an online data collection approach, assuming an incidence of 30 percent or higher. The decision may be to pull research sample from a large online research panel, non-probability sampling, and target a ‘rep’ outgo, balanced according to census data across a few standard data points. In this scenario, we might be able to effectively hit the target, properly represent the important demography and geography, and potentially behavioral components necessary for the data collection stage.

If, however, the sample isn’t so broadly defined, we will see limitations introduced to panel representation in groups such as young adults, males, older adults, singles, ethnicities, and certain levels of education and income. We need to be creative and think of other approaches to reach and represent these targets. This might include the use of niche or specialty panels, adopting a river sampling approach, targeting social media sites specific to the target(s), purchasing email lists, utilizing phone recruitment, or other options.

Researchers need to have an understanding of what these consumers do, where they spend their time, where and when they’re most willing to respond to our message (in this case a survey invitation), and provide an experience that matches expectations. Of equal importance, they need to understand metrics that enable the decision-making, e.g. reach, response rates, targeting ability, frequency, click/open rates, and more.

Moving on to the decisions we make with respect to the survey, or research instrument, we utilize for data collection: A simple online survey can quickly become more complicated when we consider the introduction of media, graphics, interactive choice tasks, audio and video elements, and the devices we choose to offer the survey. The considerations at this point range from what we can do, to what we should do within the context of the survey, to maintaining data integrity and an engaging experience for respondents. Researchers ideally should present media in the way most similar to the real world presentation so that we gather the proper perspective, e.g. the respondent’s reactions. But limitations, due to consumer usage/adoptions patterns or device-specific restrictions, make these questions more involved. If you want to show a video within a survey, for example, there are certain devices that will make this easier or more difficult. Case in point - certain Apple products no longer support Flash video types. If your respondent base consists of users of Apple products (and you’re trying to show a video in Flash), your presentation won’t work for some users and their representation in the overall data set will be limited.

Just as marketers do, researchers need to understand the variety of devices used by respondents, and levels of usage, so that we can maximize the survey experience and account for as much representation as possible. Representation means more than just demographic and geographic considerations. It means having a thorough understanding of consumer usage patterns, the penetration and usage rates of certain devices and access points, technology adoption levels of the groups in your respondent pool, and the functionality of devices as it relates to the stimuli presented within a research study.

Many Hats – A Bright Future

If it seems that the new full-service researcher needs to wear many hats to be successful, it’s because it’s undeniably true. If a client wants to conduct a mail or telephone survey, we need to be able
to accommodate. If a client wants to go online with a project, survey-based or qualitatively, then we need to be able to present the best options, not from our own perspective but from the perspective of what’s best for the research objectives. We need to fully under the suite of products that new tools and technology provides and be able to effectively include them in the research experience. If a client wants to capture in-the-moment research, we need to understand the products that can help capture this information and best bring it to life. We need to continue to chase the consumer as marketers do so that we fully understand what’s happening in the categories and industries in which we operate; and this chase means keeping up. At times our industry has not done a great job of staying ahead of changes, or of adapting quickly to new concepts and ideas. The new full-service researcher seems to be taking this to heart and as a result is becoming a bigger part of the process, providing value to our clients and being ahead of the questions. From execution of research projects to insights-generation, the full-service marketing research professional has a lot to do, and a lot to consider. The industry continues to evolve and the new researcher is well-prepared to address all the questions and considerations that are inherent in the position.

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Benchmark evaluated several options and customized a data collection process that works for their organization and enables them to gather the type of data they need. They made their needs known and searched for vendors who would work with them to accommodate their needs. Benchmark was able to use the data collected to act on insights and make improvements that resulted in higher customer satisfaction.

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Transparency in Online Research: The Cure to All Our Ills?
By Victor Lange

At a recent online conference in Las Vegas, a panel brought forward eight of its local respondents for a candid examination of how our survey-takers behave and how they view the online research process.

The market research blogosphere lit up almost immediately in response, each with its own reactions and, as we in the online research industry have become accustomed to, recriminations. While the specific lessons learned from these respondents are important, the context of this revelation is just as critical for the industry. The long silence of sample sources regarding the nature of their product is coming to an end as the industry finally begins to struggle in earnest with the challenge posed by the quality of online research. This is a change we should celebrate, but it is not the end of our troubles. As answers become more abundant, end-users must acknowledge their own responsibility to know which answers they need, and how best to interpret them.

Online research has achieved a questionable reputation in its short life. From the beginning, critics derided the very nature of the mode as inapplicable to the general population. But in the world of market research, practical concerns of cost and rapid results prevailed. Few asked questions about panel company methods, and those who did received only vague assurances in reply. This opacity hid many ills, but as the method aged, the problems have persevered. The same respondents take studies multiple times, many pay no attention to the questions they are asked, caring only for the incentives they receive, and panel companies, who are suffering from a dwindling supply, remain happy to pay them for as many surveys as they care to take.

These revelations seem to cast online research in a dire light, but we should not be too hard on ourselves for tolerating them so long. When market research relied on random-digit telephone dialing for its consumer samples, a long tradition of academic research informed our methods and determined our sampling frame. As RDD became less viable, and costs pushed researchers overwhelmingly to online panels for their solutions, we were driven to a realm of non-probabilistic sampling that was not only different, but also largely unexplored. By and large, the research that was needed to determine the rules of the game in the field of online research had not been done. Even if these rules had been known, the unwillingness of panel companies to reveal their methods at the time would have made them difficult to apply.

There is a change in the wind: transparency is in vogue. This is not only in reference to respondent quality, but also consistency, accuracy and sourcing. This change brings with it a great deal of potential. In order for that potential to be tapped, the responsibility now lies with thinking researchers to take a less passive role in approaching their research. Random digit dialing was probabilistic and we did not need to worry about ‘sample frame’. We were provided with demographic quotas and sample calling rules that had to be followed, and that was enough. The complexity of online research demands a higher level of transparency between sample provider and researcher. The issue is one of actionable clarity; much of the transparency we have seen is a compendium of difficult to use information. The question has become, what do we need to know and how can we best use it?

The situation is similar to the arc of pharmaceutical commercials over the last decade. In the beginning, companies were happy to market their drugs as miracle cures without flaw. Reasoning that poor decisions might be made without proper disclosure, however, an onslaught of litigation coupled with court decisions and a tide of consumer activism saw to it that transparency prevailed. We are now accustomed to hearing a list of side effects and conditions of unacceptable risk at the end of each pharmaceutical commercial. The disclosures in these ads; however, would not be useful if we did not understand them. It is an apt metaphor for market research – we can be told a litany of information about recruiting, invitations, and incentives, but without understanding the requirements of our own research, there is no way to act upon it.

Further, we must hear what we need to know. The pharmaceutical companies did not willingly volunteer to be transparent; they feared it would hurt business. They needed to be coerced into divulging the information, and similarly, information concerning the sample we use must be sought out. While it is up to the producer to attempt to ensure a quality product, once that product hits the market, only the consumer can determine whether it meets their needs. Sometimes, not all of the information that is needed to make that determination is readily available. Users of online sample, whether they be end-users or researchers, should be aware of the challenges they face in attaining quality data, should know which questions to ask to determine how those challenges are being confronted, and recognize satisfactory answers to those questions when they hear them. Although we may be reluctant to admit it, not all problems originate with the sample source. We must take an active role in assuring data quality as well by designing surveys that minimize respondent aggravation and fatigue.

There are a number of issues with online research in general that users of online sample need to be aware of; and there are questions about those issues that we could be asking of sample sources in order to further cooperation toward the mutually desired end of consistent and accurate data.

What sort of survey-taking behavior should I expect from my respondents?
Different sample sources draw their respondents from different parts of the Web. Those in traditional online panels tend to be older and unemployed or...
retired and social network respondents tend to be a younger crowd. Beyond questions of demography, however, sample sources differ vastly in the sorts of respondents they deal in. Often, sources that provide favorable incentives can count on a large, long-tenure population of those veteran survey respondents who have tested the various options on the market. These professional respondents exhibit more conservative tendencies toward new technology, but tend to answer surveys as honestly as they are able, committing few quality faults. Social network sources, on the other hand, or other sources of previously untapped respondents, tend to be early adopters of technology. These individuals, being unaccustomed to the survey-taking experience, are unfortunately often disengaged.

Thoughtful consideration of how these differences in consumer behavior will affect results in an online study can be useful, but the distinctions in quality pose a critical question to the researcher: “How can I ensure the reliability of my data?” Disengaged respondents do not represent merely a source of random error, but have actually been shown to be biased toward positive responses, which will bias survey results. Although quality metrics are a positive for any study, it is especially crucial to ensure they are in place when a source’s respondents are inexperienced survey-takers. When an inexperienced source is used, over 10 percent of the data can often be compromised by quality issues. Inquire with sample sources what can be done to avoid inviting low quality respondents to surveys. If methods in place are no more sophisticated than standard de-duplication, it will be necessary to build quality tests into the survey itself so problematic respondents can be removed and replaced after the fact.

Where, exactly, did the sample come from?
As panel companies have become more transparent about their methods, a fact that is becoming strikingly clear is that there has been extensive intermingling of the panels for any large or difficult study. In the bronze age of online research, this revelation may not have been particularly troubling, but that was before analysis demonstrated clearly that the behavioral characteristics of respondents differ from panel to panel. On a single-wave study, the effects of outsourcing are ambiguous. If outsourcing is used on a tracker, however, and these outsourced completes do not always fall into the same demographic cells, it could lead to artificial changes in the data.

It must be clear whether your study only appears feasible because your sample source is outsourcing a large number of completes to other companies. If so, this can cause problems, not only because the proportion of your source’s partners might be variable from wave to wave, but also because the composition of the partner itself is now an open question. Without knowing exactly who is providing the sample to complete your study, and exactly what their sourcing practices are, there are any number of dramatic and artificial changes that could occur in your data.

Can I expect my tracking study to give consistent results?
End-users should also be aware of the introduction of new, untapped sources to old panels. The online panel paradigm is no longer sufficient to keep up with demand, and social networks seem a plentiful source of fresh respondents. These ‘new’ respondents are going to be behaviorally different, and will often be less acclimated to online research, leading to lower quality data.

Changes are inevitable. Our sources of respondents are going to dry up and be replaced, and not necessarily with sources that are directly interchangeable. However, these changes should be rare and due only to necessity, not mere convenience. Researchers must ask not only to be told when the sourcing for a tracking study will change, but also the specific nature of that change. Where are new respondents coming from? Combinations of sources that have been demonstrated to be behaviorally similar may present few difficulties. When new respondents are of a completely different origin, however, this is unlikely to be the case. There are methods to correct for this. Behavioral balancing methods such as those proposed by GMI, SSI, and Mktg, Inc. can help to minimize the impact of a sourcing change on one’s data.

Is my study part of a router? How is that router designed?
Many sample providers are aggressively implementing routers. Routers are undoubtedly in their best interests as they are a very efficient way of ensuring that as many respondents as possible who wish to take a survey can do so with a minimum of frustration, and likewise can help speed the completion rate of surveys in the field by funneling appropriate respondents where they are needed.

For the client, routers can pose numerous risks. While some would argue that the safest router is none at all, the simple fact is that routers are here to stay. It is important to avoid being distracted by the minor differences between routers, and focusing on the attributes that pose greatest risk to a study in the field. These are the issues of bias and respondent fatigue. The researcher should be aware of which studies share a router, in order to ensure as little bias as possible is created by sharing respondents with those with a similar subject matter. Also, the researcher should ask how many screeners a respondent can be subjected to before finally being directed into a survey. The longer respondents have been in the system, the less patience they will have for the survey that is their ultimate destination.

It is important to remember that the shortcomings of online research are not the fault of sample providers, even if at the end of the day, the quality of our data rests on the respondents they have given us. Costs and changes in the way the world communicates have driven quantitative research toward its current state; flaws and all. Not all of these issues have perfect solutions, but even beginning to address them can go a long way in improving the reliability of data collected online.

Improving online research is a cooperative undertaking between the sample sources, the research companies, and the end-users of that research. While sources are rightfully beginning to accept the presence of flaws in their product and are attempting to correct them, they cannot be expected to know the needs of their clients before those clients know themselves. With smarter procedures on both sides of the online research relationship, we will no longer need to take the accuracy of our results on faith, but will instead be able to rationally defend them.

Victor Lange is Science Officer and Project Analyst at Mktg, Inc. He serves as a consultant to clients on issues of data quality in online market research.
Information, information, information. That’s where all the power lies these days, in retail no less than in business at large.

No wonder the French call computers and computer science l’informatique. As a retailer, no matter what level of the market you occupy, wouldn’t it be a great advantage to harness all the information that’s available, to understand how your customer base is shopping outside your own four walls? Wouldn’t it be empowering to be able to attract a new segment of customers you didn’t think was in your market sector, whether that’s discount or luxury? There’s a surprising piece of research we’ve just done which may help retailers across the spectrum do just that.

Starting with the idea that the socio-economic stratification we’ve recently been reading about across over to the retail world – with the higher-end consumer shopping exclusively at luxury retail outlets and the lower-income buyer shopping at discount stores – we undertook a study of 17 high, middle, and low-end chain stores, looking at spend patterns over a 6 month period to get an understanding of cross-spend among the various levels. The aggregated data consists of segments of anonymous cardholders with similar spending patterns, matched against categories of retailers.

What we found should come as good news to retailers across all segments. Not only do high-end shoppers tend to “cross the street,” buying designer clothing at luxury department stores or high-end apparel retailers, then picking up bargain-priced clothing at discount chain stores or eating in quick-serve restaurants; but over a 6 month period in 2011, in our analysis of aggregated transactions at 17 high-end brands, we found that a remarkably consistent portion of spend by regular shoppers at high-end stores was at discount stores.

Among several high-end retailers we studied in terms of cross-spend, a whopping 18 – 20 percent of the frequency of cross-spend in this segment was at quick service restaurants. Discount department stores came next with 4 – 6.5 percent frequency of cross-spend. Chain drug stores commanded more than 3 percent. In percentages of actual amount of cross-spend – the percentage of the aggregated high-end shopper’s total spend – eating places once again top the list at 8 – 9 percent, while discount department stores weigh in at a not-insignificant 4 – 6.5 percent.

Similarly, we also found that discount and “aspirational” shoppers are buying luxury brand goods in addition to lower price point merchandise. In our study of lower-end chain store cross-spend, discount shoppers frequented department stores, women’s apparel stores, and brand name sporting goods stores more than 2 percent of the time; and the amount of these cross-spends showed up between 2 – 3 percent of their total budget.

We’re calling these crossovers “affinity plays” – high-end shoppers clearly have an affinity for bargain hunting and spend segregation, and lower-end shoppers still want their brand names and luxury goods. With the knowledge gained from our aggregated sample, we can infer that there is enough movement between these sectors that retailers may gain significant advantage by teaming up with one another to attract customers. In other words, creating a bridge between luxury and discount could probably encourage greater customer loyalty, and might inspire customers to spend more at the retailer that gets the balance right.

Chain store retailers should also consider the possibility of expanding their partnerships with value-adding brands, as well as using analytics to help retailers make informed decisions about stocking and geographic planning.

What can discount retailers do to encourage their high-end crossovers to put more items in the basket? Some chain store retailers have made it their business to shift their merchandising to take advantage of these affinity plays—appealing to both the desire for luxury brand image and the need for a lower price point. What they offer is a fun, bargain-rich shopping experience, as well as fashionable merchandise. We’ve found through looking at aggregated transaction data that this marketing strategy holds broad appeal for both ends of the market.

Could a discount marketer that appeals to the aspirational shopper actually shift market share away from a luxury outlet? And vice-versa?

Based on our analysis of these segments, we think this is very likely. Discount retailers that manage to be “cool” for upscale shoppers – by creating shopping experiences that make bargain hunting fun and aesthetic – will clearly win out in this affinity play over those who simply offer “cheap.” Luxury brands that make the shopping experience not snobbish, but inspiring, will continue to find customers from across the board willing to stretch to their price point. Accepting and understanding the new reality of shopping fluidity can help inform chain store retailers, luxury and discount alike. If retailers pay attention to the data analytics on what their customers buy, when, and where, they can strategize to capture shifting consumer sentiment, align their products with market demands, and achieve better returns.

Andrew Mantis leads the MasterCard Advisors Information Solutions – Merchant practice. He can be reached at Andrew_Mantis@mastercard.com.
Dear MRA Members,

This year’s ballot for the Marketing Research Association’s 2012-2013 Board of Directors election is the next step in an exciting new governance strategy. MRA’s Board must be comprised of visionaries who can critically and objectively recognize opportunities and deal with the unknown. They must have the time and resources to devote to Board services.

To identify our slate for the 2012-2013 Board of Directors, the Nominating Committee reviewed candidates to lead MRA going forward in consultation with the Board, headquarters’ staff and others. Each is a strategic thinker, has proven leadership qualities and supports the mission, vision and values of MRA. The candidates are running unopposed for each designated position.

As I take over as MRA’s new Chairman of the Board and Ken Roberts, PRC, moves into the position of Immediate Past Chairman, we must select a new Vice Chairman. Jill Donahue, your candidate for Vice Chairman, is a current member of MRA’s Board and its Executive Committee. Committed to MRA’s future success, she has demonstrated the ability to balance visionary, conceptual ideas with a pragmatic, realistic perspective that will benefit all member segments. I urge you to support her candidacy.

As a member of MRA, you have the privilege of casting your vote for the 2012-2013 Board of Directors. Please review all the candidate’s credentials and exercise your right as a member to vote, submitting your ballot promptly. Thank you!

Sincerely,

Debby Schlesinger-Hellman, PRC
Vice Chairman, 2011-2012
Chairman of the Board, 2012-2013
Nominating Committee Chair
To vote for a candidate, place a mark in the box next to the name of the candidate to signify your selection. Each candidate is running unopposed for a designated position. There are five candidates; you may cast a vote for each one. Sign and mail your ballot to be received by May 10, 2012. You may also vote online at membership.marketingresearch.org/vote.

**VICE CHAIRMAN One-year term** ................................................................. JILL DONAHUE □

“Marketing research continues to play a critical role in nearly all business decisions, making MRA’s role in the marketplace more important than ever. It is an honor to be able to continue collaborating with fellow MRA Board members, the membership and staff in MRA’s growth and success, and to help further develop MRA as the recognized leader and advocate for our profession.”


*Degree(s):* BA – Communications, Northeast Missouri State University; Graduate of MRII “Principles of Marketing Research” program

*MRA Involvement:* Secretary, MRA Board of Directors (2010-2012); MRA Board of Directors (2003-2005; 2007-2009); End User Workgroup Chair (2006-2008); Salary Survey Task Force (2004-2005); Branding Task Force (2003); Professional Development Council (2001-2005); Conference Program Committee (2001)

**TREASURER Two-year term** ................................................................. VAUGHN MORDECAI, PRC □

“I am currently the President of an organization that supports MRA. In this role, I have primary responsibility for the management of the financial aspects of this business. I enjoy finance, digging into financial statements, and I know my way around accounting systems. I have a strong interest in the success of MRA and its members and affiliated organizations. I believe that the best is yet to come for MRA and that our organization can strongly contribute toward the success of our quickly evolving industry. I will work hard to contribute to MRA’s success and the success of its members.”

*Professional Record:* President, Discovery Research Group (2004-present); Vice President/General Manager, MVL Data Collection (2005-2012); Account Executive, Discovery Research Group (2003-2004); Vice President of Project Operations, PGM Inc.

*Degree(s):* MA – Sociology, Idaho State University; BA – Psychology, Idaho State University

*MRA Involvement:* MRA Board of Directors (2010-2012); Bylaw & Policy Task Force (2009-2010); Nomination Committee (2009)

*MRA Chapter Involvement:* Southwest Chapter – Past President’s Advisory Council (2011-2012); Treasurer (2009-2011); Immediate Past President (2008-2009); President (2007-2008); President Elect (2006-2007); Membership/Volunteer Committee (2008-2009); Programming Committee (2007-2006); Marketing & Communications Committee (2005-2006)

*Other Involvement:* Sociology Graduate Program Advisory Board, Idaho State University (2010-present)

**SECRETARY Two-year term** ................................................................. TED DONNELLY, PHD, PRC □

“I am passionate about the marketing research industry and the role MRA plays in enriching the profession. There are key initiatives I see as paramount to our industry’s well-being. In particular, compelling continuing education programs, the elevation of professional standards through certification, and government advocacy are just a few of the areas I plan to help MRA prioritize as the Association continues to pave the way to a brighter future.”

*Professional Record:* Managing Director, Baltimore Research (2009-present); Vice President of Research, Baltimore Research (2005-2008); Director of Research, Baltimore Research (2002-2005); Adjunct Professor, Johns Hopkins University (2003-2004)

*Degree(s):* PhD – Consumer Behavior & Advertising Research, University of Edinburgh; MS – Business Studies, University of Edinburgh, BS – Psychology, Penn State University

*MRA Involvement:* MRA Board of Directors (2010-2012); MRA Investment Committee (2011-2012); Chair, PRC Board (2010-2012); PRC Board (2008-2010); PRC Review Committee (2012); Chair, PRC Development Committee (2008-2010); PRC Development Committee (2006-2008)

**DIRECTOR AT LARGE Two-year term** ...................................................... JANET BALDI □

“My involvement in MRA, on both the Chapter and National levels, has given me such an incredible sense of satisfaction that I am very excited and honored to have the opportunity to serve on the National Board. I feel that my greatest strength – my interpersonal skills – will make me a true asset to the Board. I am committed to forging relationships and fostering new ideas that will allow us to make the Association even stronger than it is today.”

*Professional Record:* Senior Vice President, RTi Research (2000-present); Field Manager, FRC Researcher (1992-2000); MRA Involvement: Chair, Webinar Committee (2004-2006); Nominating Committee (2006)

*MRA Chapter Involvement:* Greater New York Chapter - President (2010-2011); Secretary (2005-2007); Board Orientation Manual (2009-2010); Membership Development (2009-2011); Program Co-Chair NY/Philly Joint Chapter Event (2005-2007)

*Other Involvement:* Data Collection Program Co-Chair, CASRO (2008)

**DIRECTOR AT LARGE Two-year term** ...................................................... JIM BRYSON □

“I have been active in the market research industry for over 25 years serving in leadership roles in several industry organizations, including MRA. As Founder and CEO of 20|20 Research, I guided a traditional qualitative fieldwork firm through a transition to become one of the leaders in the global online qualitative research industry. MRA has a unique opportunity to dramatically improve its industry profile and I am honored to potentially be a part of that.”

*Professional Record:* CEO, 20|20 Research, Inc. (1986-present)

*Degree(s):* BBA, Baylor University; MBA, Vanderbilt University

*MRA Involvement:* Government Affairs Committee (2008-present); Trends & Technology Committee (2008-present)

*Other Involvement:* President, QRCA (1999-2002); President, The Joseph School (2010-present); Board of Directors, Baptist Standard Publishing (2011-present)

**DIRECTOR AT LARGE** ............................................................................. WRITE IN CANDIDATE

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Mail ballots to: Vote Clerk · Marketing Research Association · 1156 15th Street NW, Suite 302 · Washington, DC 20005
The Standards and Ethics Committee: Who Are We and Why Do We Exist?
By Jay White, PRC

Let’s get the basics out of the way and then delve into specifics. The mission of the Standards and Ethics Committee is to develop, maintain, disseminate, and enforce the highest standards of practice and professionalism within the marketing and opinion research profession. Specifically, the Committee is charged with the following overall objectives:

• to maintain standards of practice and professionalism within the MRA membership;
• to lead the marketing and opinion research profession in developing and updating high standards of practice, addressing ethical dilemmas and questions, and in providing guidance for the professional and appropriate practice of marketing and opinion research methods; and
• to provide guidance and education to MRA membership, the marketing and opinion research profession and external stakeholders on the professional and appropriate practice of marketing research.

While I have recently accepted the post of Chair for this important committee, as a practicing research professional, I have also long had strong personal thoughts and opinions about conventions and conferences. Aren’t they great?? New places, new faces, interesting discussions (some more entertaining than educational), cocktails, hors d’oeuvres, small talk, cocktails, dinner, small talk, cocktails. (Repeat cycle the following day.) Yes; conferences are the “Oral Feast.”

It is my belief that even the “not so corporate” attendees realize these annual gatherings are, in fact, a revenue stream for the sponsoring organizations. MRA is no exception and I certainly have had more than my fair share of state hopping. North, East, South and West – MRA has blanketed the nation several times in the last half century. Of course, MRA is not alone; many trade organizations have done likewise. After each MRA conference, I ask myself, “Is this, my flagship research organization, more than just boondoggle sport?” (A pretty face, so to speak.) Or, “Where’s the Beef?” Sure, there are dozens of roundtable discussions where members exchange ideas, concerns and changes to the industry. Clients and internal customers, some considered very research savvy and others not so much, are often hot topics. Creative ideas, filled with “what ifs” and “is that legal?” often emerge.

Exiting a session, one might hear comments such as, “That guy knows his stuff”, “I’m just as smart as that speaker”, “Doesn’t apply to my market”, or “Sounds great but it will never work”. Often, horror stories are recalled with one attendee trying to top a story with an even more horrific tale of mistreatment. Yet through all the conference window dressing and spilled verbiage, there are many, many questions left unanswered. The nucleus of a particular concept may be tossed to the wind, ununnourished and abandoned.

Upon arriving home, I’ve routinely wondered about the miscellaneous conversations I’d heard during the previous three days; about the sincerity of an attendee’s frustrations and whether there really are rules that address the previously mentioned concerns and protocols. As I look at the file folder on my desk marked, “The Code of Marketing Research Standards and Ethics Committee”, my AHA moment hits me. This folder contains the essence of what we, as market researchers, are all about. It contains a window into MRA’s very reason for being. This Code is our tablet from Sinai, our Holy Grail, and our conscience. Am I being too dramatic? I think not!

My mind wanders back to the conference and I ask myself if the answers and solutions are contained in MRA’s Code of Marketing Research Standards. Eureka! While many answers are contained in the Code, a myriad of additional items also need to be added. After all, all important documents need periodic review and alteration. The Code (excuse me, OUR Code) is no different.

I am happy to report that the entire document, the Code of Marketing Research Standards, is in the process of being redesigned to meet the needs of today’s marketing research community. A committee of 7 well-accomplished

Continued on page 53
The White House on February 23 released its long-awaited white paper on online privacy, proposing a “Consumer Privacy Bill of Rights.” Based on a report from the Department of Commerce, on which MRA filed comments in January 2011, the paper proposes a variety of expectations and demands of how companies should treat consumers online and outlines a process to achieve them, including stakeholder meetings to encourage and pressure private entities to enact “codes of conduct” in accordance with the White House’s concerns.

In introducing the paper, President Obama said: “I am pleased to present this new Consumer Privacy Bill of Rights as a blueprint for privacy in the information age. These rights give consumers clear guidance on what they should expect from those who handle their personal information, and set expectations for companies that use personal data. I call on these companies to begin immediately working with privacy advocates, consumer protection enforcement agencies, and others to implement these principles in enforceable codes of conduct. My Administration will work to advance these principles and work with Congress to put them into law. With this Consumer Privacy Bill of Rights, we offer to the world a dynamic model of how to offer strong privacy protection and enable ongoing innovation in new information technologies.”

The White House’s Consumer Privacy Bill of Rights includes the following principles, based on the Fair Information Privacy Practices (FIPPs):

- **Individual Control:** Consumers have a right to exercise control over what personal data companies collect from them and how they use it.
- **Transparency:** Consumers have a right to easily understandable and accessible information about privacy and security practices.
- **Respect for Context:** Consumers have a right to expect that companies will collect, use, and disclose personal data in ways that are consistent with the context in which consumers provide the data.
- **Security:** Consumers have a right to secure and responsible handling of personal data.
- **Access and Accuracy:** Consumers have a right to access and correct personal data in usable formats, in a manner that is appropriate to the sensitivity of the data and the risk of adverse consequences to consumers if the data is inaccurate.
- **Focused Collection:** Consumers have a right to reasonable limits on the personal data that companies collect and retain.
- **Accountability:** Consumers have a right to have personal data handled by companies with appropriate measures in place to assure they adhere to the Consumer Privacy Bill of Rights.

The White House aims to convene a “multi-stakeholder process” whereby “stakeholders who share an interest in specific markets or business contexts,” come together in “transparent, open
forums” to develop enforceable codes of conduct for US companies. Although the Administration called for comprehensive privacy legislation from Congress, it also called for giving the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) the power to enforce these voluntary Codes of Conduct. In reality, the FTC already has that power, under its existing authority (in Section 5 of the FTC Act) to enforce private companies’ adherence to their privacy promises.

All of this is designed to further “the goal of increased international interoperability” – primarily, to satisfy a radically different privacy model in Europe and get the US deemed as providing “adequate” privacy protection by European standards. If that happened, the US would no longer have to fuss around with binding corporate rules and the Safe Harbor in order to transfer EU data to the US.

While MRA shares that goal, we’re not convinced that simple “harmonization” with foreign privacy laws and practices presents the perfect solution. Europe’s economic decline does not lend itself to a winning argument for why the US should emulate the European Union’s data privacy regime. Innovative data businesses generally develop and grow in the US, not in Europe, and we are hesitant to give up that competitive advantage.

This leads to a problematic rhetorical point in the White House proposal; the concept of a “right to privacy”. As explained by the Technology Policy Institute, this would be a massive remaking of the US privacy regime: “Rights are absolute. Once we label something a right, we’re saying we’re beyond the point of considering its costs and benefits.” If there were no costs involved in the EU privacy model, we’d probably have implemented it in the US by now.

MRA looks forward to continuing discussions and the multi-stakeholder privacy process. As with comprehensive privacy legislation in Congress, the devil is more in the details than in the concepts. We will continue to focus our attention on the actual details and the real or expected impact on survey and opinion research – in the US and around the world.

Howard Fienberg, PLC is MRA’s director of government affairs.

While there may be an ever increasing number of marketing research conferences on the scene, few have a published code of standards and ethics in their respective toolbox. One of the many goals of my Committee is to deliver the newly revised Code of Marketing Research Standards at MRA’s Annual Conference in San Diego.

Jay White, PRC, is CEO of Baltimore Research and Chair of the Standards and Ethics Committee.
Advanced Focus is Pleased to Announce the Promotion of Two Employees.

Brad Solomon has been named President of Advanced Focus and is in charge of operations. Sara White has been named Vice President and is in charge of all day to day operations as well as facility management.

Rudy Nadilo to Head Annik’s Global Research Practice

Annik Technology Services Pvt. Ltd, based in New Delhi, India has made Rudy Nadilo Senior Partner heading the Global Research Practice. The former CEO of Greenfield Online, Mr. Nadilo has been with Annik since April 2010.

US Chamber Names CETRA Language Solutions Finalist for 2012 Small Business of the Year Award

The US Chamber of Commerce in Washington, D.C. named CETRA Language Solutions, of Elkins Park, PA, one of seven finalists for the 2012 DREAM BIG Small Business of the Year Award, sponsored by Sam’s Club®. CETRA Language Solutions will be honored during America’s Small Business Summit, May 21 to 23, in Washington, D.C., where a national winner will be announced and will receive a $10,000 cash prize, courtesy of the US Chamber.

Resolution Research Welcomes New Addition

Resolution Research is excited to be working with their newest member, Madelyn J. Jones, one of Denver Business Journal’s recognized Forty Under 40 award receivers. Madelyn comes to Resolution Research after four years with Denver based BBC Research & Consulting. There she managed quantitative and qualitative research on a number of assignments ranging from issues of women’s health and leadership, economic impact analysis, and disparity studies for large transportation organizations.

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Confrmit Turns Up the Heat on Voice of the Customer with Expert Appointment

Confrmit is increasing its focus on the fast-growing VoC market with the appointment of Karine Del Moro as Marketing Director. Joining the company after working as a Customer Experience consultant, Del Moro was previously at Satmetrix, and has considerable knowledge about best practices in customer experience management. She has been instrumental in developing thought leadership around Voice of the Customer in Europe in the last five years.

EOS Marketing & Communications Leaps Forward

In January, EOS joined forces with Emmy Award-winning journalist Kimberley Kennedy, in a unique partnership to offer a comprehensive, hands-on media and communications training program called EMPOWER. Kennedy has more than 25 years’ experience covering hard news, features, and entertainment for WSB, WXIA, and CNN.

Research Now Announces Appointments and Promotions of Several Executive Leaders

Research Now, an e-Rewards company, announced the appointment of two of its London-based staff to oversee the Client Development divisions in Northern Europe. Chris Dubreuil and Ben Hogg have been promoted from their previous roles as Vice President of Client Development for the United Kingdom to Senior Vice President of Client Development for Northern Europe, and will have dual accountability for revenue in this region. Additionally: John Rothwell has rejoined the company in a dual role as Executive Vice President of Supply, Research Now, and President of e-Rewards’ portfolio companies. Rothwell was the first employee of e-Rewards in 1999 and was instrumental in its founding and early growth, having developed the original business plan. John Tan has been promoted from Senior Vice President of Global Operations to Executive Vice President of Global Operations, and will continue to oversee the operational initiatives of the company. Martin Filz will be stepping down from his role as Managing Director for EMEA and APAC to pursue a new opportunity within the market research industry. Miles Worne, Chief Strategy Officer, assumes additional leadership as Managing Director for EMEA. Worne will continue to lead the group’s strategy and development efforts with a specific focus on new growth opportunities and emerging technologies; James Burge, Managing Director for APAC, will join the Executive Leadership Team and report directly to Knapton. Burge will continue to lead the growth and development of the Asia-Pacific business.

Directions Research Announces Two Promotions and a New Hire

Directions Research Inc. (DRI) has promoted Erin Fettets to Senior Project Manager. Erin manages projects from questionnaire design through final reporting. Hannah Peters has been named Account Manager. Hannah is actively involved in research design, data analysis, presentation of findings and general client services. Andrea Rehkamp has been hired as a Research Assistant. Prior to joining DRI, Andrea had experience from Fidelity Investments and Kroger. In her new role she assists research analysts in the preparation of client-ready reports.

Send press releases and announcements to Amy Shields, PRC at amy.shields@marketingresearch.org.
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